

## Postproduction and circulation

– *contemporary examples of avant-garde strategies?*

Since the early nineties, an ever increasing number of artworks have been created on the basis of preexisting works; more and more artists interpret, reproduce, re-exhibit, or use works made by others or available cultural products. This art of postproduction seems to respond to the proliferating chaos of global culture in the information age, which is characterized by an increase in the supply of works and the art world's annexation of forms ignored or disdained until now.

Nicolas Bourriaud<sup>1</sup>

The panel will discuss the concept of creative consumption and postproduction as means of artistic expression. Three digital art projects will be examined; the media artist Ann Lislegaard's art works *Science Fiction 3112-3114* (2007, 2008 and 2009), the music project, *ThruYOU* by the remix-artist, Kutiman (2009) and the interactive, real time net art work *Wefeelfine* by Jonathan Harris (2006).

The art projects can be seen as part of the phenomena of shared culture, that is, free access, circulation and free distribution of cultural products, which determines the field of aesthetics both within and outside of the art sphere in still undiscovered ways.

All works are related to what could be called the strategy of remixing and hence they actualize a re-thinking of the original-copy dichotomy. With differing weight and in different ways, the art projects continue a dadaist tradition of *objets trouvés* - assembled elements – and the negation of the autonomy of art, which Peter Bürger sees as central to the historical avant-garde<sup>2</sup>.

The panel will discuss the applicability of existing avant-garde theories to the strategy of remixing and the concept of postproduction.

The panel thus explores how contemporary artists, in the tradition of historical avant-garde movements, make use of pre-existing material and in what ways new forms of social interaction, circulation and distribution provides a venue for a new avant-garde for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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<sup>1</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud: *Postproduction – Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*. New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002

<sup>2</sup> Peter Bürger: *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, University of Minnesota, 1984

## Utopias within the institution

### – Ann Lislegaard's installations *Science Fiction 3112-3114*

Anne Kølback Iversen

This presentation will be focusing on the Norwegian/Danish media artist Ann Lislegaard's art works *Science Fiction 3112-3114* (2007, 2008, 2009), which serve to demonstrate the artist-as-consumer<sup>3</sup> as expressed through the postproduction and recirculation of pre-existing cultural products – in this case landmark science fiction movies from the last four decades.

Musicology and performance or 'happening' theory in the *fluxus*-tradition provide us with a terminology to describe the cut-ups, loops and sound spaces produced by Lislegaard as a re-actualization of *avant-garde* or neo-avantgarde devices that historically served to criticize and question traditional, institutional *comme il faut* practices and the idea of the unique artist as well as the unique work of art.

Additionally Lislegaard's works correlate to the idea of a 'unmonumental' or 'open' work of art that carries an amount of information but resists to communicate a message.<sup>4</sup>

Working inside traditional institutions of the art sphere, however, the eclectic and transaesthetic characteristics of Lislegaaard's installations do not mainly function as tactics of subversion but are examples of how original avant-garde critique is recuperated by the art institution on the one hand and the capitalist flow of goods on the other.<sup>5</sup>

What function or role of the artist is displayed through the *Science Fiction* works by Ann Lislegaard?

How can we understand the modes of utopia articulated in Lislegaard's work?

*Interestingly, the work was first installed site specifically in a residential area in Copenhagen, where it was played from speakers hidden behind air vents in a wall bombed with tags and graffiti. As its frenetic and strangely intimate sound was heard by passers-by and reverberated off of familiar buildings, it established a parallel temporal and spatial frame, and a new speculative use value of this everyday space.*

Lars Bang Larsen (2007)

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<sup>3</sup> Boris Groys (2003), Nicolas Bourriaud (2002)

<sup>4</sup> Umberto Eco (1989) and Brandon la Belle on John Cage (2006)

<sup>5</sup> Peter Bürger (1989), Guy Debord (1967) et.al.

## **The perpeptual Art Frame**

### **– Jonathan Harris & Sep Kamvar's netbased art piece *We Feel Fine***

Maja Laybourn

Harris & Kamvar's web based art project *We Feel Fine* can be seen as a digital collage. It continually monitors thousands of blogs for sentences that contain the phrases "I feel" or "I am feeling". These sentences form the kernal of the project, with graphical representations of the worlds current mood built from this disparate and otherwise unconnected information. The project collects 15,000 "feelings" every day; to date 13 million "feelings" have been collected and form an intimate portrait of our collective emotional landscape. Demographic information about the blogger (age, gender, location, and weather(!)) is collected along with the sentence, as well as any photos that might be attached to that particular entry.

Each feeling is represented by a dot within a two-dimentional virtual landscape. Bright dots are happy, dark dots are sad, and the diameter of each dot indicates the length of the sentence inside. The dots move energetically around the canvas, but tend to cluster around the pointer, demanding attention. When one is selected, the full sentence is displayed, along with the information of the blogger, allowing the participant to delve into individual feelings within the chaos.

The artists are information architects; by building a framework to collate and displays content created by unknown others, they play the role of both artist and curator. The *We Feel Fine* project is only made possible by the involuntary contributions of thousands of bloggers, who's work – and by the nature of personal blogs – feelings, becomes the central component of the project. This intimately links the piece with the the trials and tribulations of everyday life; further breaking the barriers between what we know as art and what we know as life.

When the work of the artist(s) is complete, the art piece is just begining. This marks a redefinition of the role of artist, in that the artists function is as a builder of a frame, upon which the work itself emerges. As Bourriaud notes: "the artwork is no longer an endpoint but a simple moment in an infinite chain of contributions".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Nicolas Bourriaud: *Postproduction – Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*. New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002

## **ThruYOU as a new avantgardistic strategy?**

### **– Kutiman's music video *ThruYOU***

Stina Hasse

This paper will discuss ThruYOU as an example of a new avantgarde. ThruYOU was released in 2009 by the remix-musician Ophir Kutiel under the artist-name Kutiman. ThruYOU is an online music video project mixed from samples of YouTube videos. In the ThruYOU videos you find the original links to all the sampled tracks remixed by Kutiman<sup>7</sup>.

The paper will consider ThruYOU as an artistic expression and as a symbol on the radical cultural innovation that has developed from internet-based peer-to-peer networks<sup>8</sup> and the sharing culture on internet communities such as YouTube<sup>9</sup>. Through new media access, research, selection, and remix of different material new music is made.

ThruYOU will be discussed in relation to firstly Bourriauds term postproduction<sup>10</sup> and secondly Burger's definition of historical avant-garde. Furthermore, Kutiman's project should be understood in relation to the alternative copyright system, *creative commons*<sup>11</sup>, developed by the Lawyer, Lawrence Lessig. Creative commons has been established as a reaction to the dispute concerning copyright issues - especially regarding musical production and distribution on the internet<sup>12</sup>.

As such, ThruYOU is an unique example of the remix culture emerging from the free culture, which creative commons represents. ThruYOU is thus not only an artistic expression, but arguably also as a political statement. The paper will argue, that these two dimensions, the artistic and the political, make possible a discussion of ThruYOU as an example of a new avant-gardistic strategy permeating popular culture.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://wapedia.mobi/en/Kutiman>, located 26/10/2009

<sup>8</sup> <http://dig.csail.mit.edu/2006/06/neutralnet.html>, located 26/10/2009

<sup>9</sup> Lev Manovich: *Avantgarde as free Software*, [www.softwarystudies.com/softbook](http://www.softwarystudies.com/softbook), 2008, located 26/10/2009

<sup>10</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud: *Postproduction – Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*. New York: Has & Sternberg, 2002

<sup>11</sup> Lawrence Lessig: *Free Culture* Penguin Press, New York, 2006

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence Lessig: *Remix*, Penguin Press, New York, 2008