# FCJ-098 'Web 2.0′ as a new context for artistic practices

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2 The economic model for what is called 'Web 2.0′ is based on promoting the desire to share and exchange things, an attempt to make profits from the voluntary collaboration of its users and its potential for compiling data and making them available to the public. The new companies operating on the Internet base their role on promoting cooperative communities and managing access to the data and files contributed. This business model increasingly tends not to sell any product at all to the consumer, but rather sells the consumer to the product, integrating the user and the files he or she contributes into the actual service being offered.

**The inclusive logic of 'Web 2.0′**

3 The user and his or her contributions are the main content being distributed by networks. They channel and use as an economic force the desire felt by a multitude of users to be part of social networks, to share and make public their interests, to dialogue, to communicate with others, to express themselves publicly, to feel useful, and to cooperate. That is, what is exploited (if we can understand something like that happening today in the field of networks) is users' capacity to produce sociability and their desire to do so. Now the actual user (instead of only his or her needs) is the true origin and destination of new technological developments.

4 The inclusive logic of Web 2.0 is based on an elementary principal: the more users there are, the better a given application or social network will be. That is, there is a value to volume. The quantitative becomes qualitative in this second stage of the Web. And since the quantitative is one of the key elements of today's production, it is understandable that the new companies on Web 2.0 are striving to generate a need for belonging and participation, to stimulate our need to feel tied to a group, a digital community, to collaborate and contribute things to share them on the new social networks (be they videos, photographs, comments, etc.). One thing we must keep in mind is that even those people who do not want to contribute to the conformation of these gigantic collective databases will do so collaterally by using them, involuntarily increasing the value of those applications because the routes they use will be offered as orientative data for other users. For example, on many Web sites, once a user has purchased something, he or she is offered information about what products other people bought, what they were interested in, and so on. The way Web 2.0 works is based on managing to add the user to the available information. That is why it has been so often said that today, we are all turning into software components or 'bionic software', and that Web applications 'have people inside them'. A recurring simile is comparing Web 2.0 to the 18th century automaton that played chess because a person was hidden inside it. [1]

5 The 'input' for the new Web is the users themselves; however, that does not mean that there is open possession of the databases they generate. Although the majority can be used freely, they are the property of the company that manages them, which also holds the rights to how they will be used in future. This has led to intense criticism, leading to the inevitable development of an intense parallel movement to the one for 'free software': the movement for 'free data'.

6 The fact that the central axis of Web 2.0 today is the production and management of social networks proves that it brings together social and economic production. Companies on the new Web try to produce social life, human relations, in an extremely profitable strategy that does not distinguish among the economic, emotional, political and cultural. The design of forms of human relations comprises the instrumental base of production. The new businesses of today are the new economy of the immaterial.

7 The promotion of collective experiences of users, the enhancement of emotional interactions among participants, and making the aggregation of information originating in those networks based on affinity groups possible has required the development of huge efforts to advance in 'social software'. This refers to software used to manage the needs and potentials of aggregating data, exchanges and communicative interactions among users in the on-line social networks.

8 In this respect, identifying art works as 'social software', which would seem to fit with what we may understand by the term 'net.art 2.0′, would influence the idea that the most committed art practice would aim to reconfigure the ways in which personal and social interactions take place on today's Internet Web. Of course, many of the principles of what was called more or less improperly

'Relational aesthetics' (Bourriaud, 2002) are found, in fact, in the area of the new networks, one of its best possible fields for future development.

**Power 2.0**

9 With the process of involvement and inclusion of individuals in economic production and subjective systems which are part of the Web, the new forms of power today are trying to organize our entire lives. In the current network society, power blends into life, becoming abstract. It is no longer exercised over individuals; instead, it circulates through them (we all more or less consciously make it circulate) with the result that it seems logical that the most effective devices for the exercise of power are based on participatory logic, on flows of social activity.

10 In contrast to efforts at homogenization, of treating everyone in the same way, the economic logic of Web 2.0 is based on differentiating and singling out each procedure or allowing each person to use it their own way. The goal is for there to be nothing we can be against, by offering a super-abundance of free choices and freely taken decisions. There is a proliferation of constant strategic games of personal initiatives and freedom. The system aims to correspond to the multiplicity of singularities forming the connected multitude by forcing the multitude into submission through its involuntary conversion into a transmitter of the new forms of power.

11 However, in this second stage of the Web, we should speak not of power but of the relations of power, given that dominion is not a unilateral relation here, but rather it operates through power plays that are mobile, unstable, based on diffuse circulation strategies and the transmission of individual initiatives and freedom.

12 We could even say that in the context of the new culture of digital participation, politics can only be conceived properly as the organization of social interactions. Ideally, the most appropriate political model would be that inherent to the connected multitude itself, self-organizing its interactions in the full exercise of its decision and participation possibilities. The autonomy of politics, as a notion that implies separation or representativity, would thus no longer have any meaning. This political and social model would begin to take form today in those forms of organization distributed in networks, in the multiplicity of all the connected singularities, characterized by that Spinozan thought, where beings are constituted through desire, through the pleasure of being alive.

**'Amateur' creativity**

13 If we look back in time to the beginning of the Internet network, the contents it offered were generated by professional suppliers who incorporated a variety of information on their Web sites, and users were essentially consumers of that information. On Web 2.0, in contrast, many service platforms such as *MySpace*, *YouTube* or *Flickr*, allow their users to participate in community, collaborating and sharing files, photographs, videos, etc. They even transform and re-edit them (e.g. jumpcut) in such a way that users are no longer mere consumers of information but also suppliers of contents. Therefore, ideally, Web 2.0 would be a Web 'for' users and also generated 'by' users, on the basis that any of its services improves if more people use it. Essential catalysts of this process are the large blogs for uploading photographs and videos, as well as the huge development of 'do it yourself' platforms proliferating on the Web.

14 The fact that anyone can be a producer and distributor of visual and audiovisual materials of all kinds has led to an unstoppable, intense 'amateurization' process of the creative practices that statistically comprise a significant part of the contents available on-line. This 'amateurization' is clearly a contrast to the professionalism that characterized the 20th century on all levels. In today's world, that former concept of a given individual as the exclusive location of "artistic talent" and the accompanying suppression of that talent among the 'great masses' no longer has any meaning. It increasingly belongs to the past, following the extreme attenuation of all divisions of work (which Marx saw as the main cause of that suppression).

15 Undeniably, many hopes have always been focused on the conversion of consumers into producers of means. For Guy Debord, to cite one example, there was no possibility of freedom in the use of time unless one possessed modern instruments for constructing everyday life. Only through their use, he said, could one progress 'from a utopian revolutionary art to an experiential revolutionary art' (Debord, 1977: 122). Hardt and Negri proposed the conversion of the multitude into an autonomous agent of production and that could be channelled through trying to achieve

free access to and control over the primary means of biopolitical production, which would also involve the production of subjective means. Those are knowledge, information, communication, and emotions which certainly constitute the primary elements of the production fabric of our time.

16 An increasingly minor part of aesthetic innovations occur nowadays in a professional or industrial environment. Many of those aesthetic innovations occur in the "social fabric" formed by users; that is, after industrial production (Söderberg, 2004). That is why there has been talk of an emerging process of 'democratization of innovation' (von Hippel, 2005), or of 'open innovation' (Chesbrough, 2003), related to the "customer-made" formula. It implies an active connection between companies and users in the production of goods and services. What is happening is that this way, consumers are becoming producers of certain products, which means they are both consumer and producer, giving rise to the newly coined term 'prosumers'.

17 The contradiction between producers and consumers is certainly not inherent to current digital means. And while that is true for creative fields, it is even more so in information technology environments. The 'blog phenomenon' is clearly the best example of the emergence of massive 'amateurization' of the production of information and opinion. Almost all of the large information media include a section for blogs or even what some call 'citizen journalism' or 'participatory journalism'. Spaces like *Wikinews* have proliferated, where information and articles are written by readers, and they can decide what news they want covered.

18 However, many people see this growing hegemony of the amateur as a danger, considering the cultural model of Web 2.0 to be an 'oclocracy'; that is, mob rule, one of the specific ways democracy can degenerate (Keen, 2007). These standpoints rest on the suspicion that society, though it has all the media at its disposal, has nothing to say, or worse, is 'unable to make the necessary social use of them' (Enzensberger, 2000: 68). Faced with these issues, it seems only sensible to view the field of participation that was opened by the evolution of networks as a horizon full of possibilities for achieving many of the social and political objectives that Debord and Enzensberger, among many others, set forth decades ago. Moreover, we can say that the Web today may have reached a first stage of true fulfilment of its communicative and social possibilities, offering us a glimpse of what may someday become actual proof of Dan Gillmor's statement that identified "us" with 'the media' ('We, the media'—Gillmor, 2004).

19 At the political level, the new collaborative paradigm of the second stage of the Web protagonized by that connected multitude that expresses itself and shares on networks is one of the clearest steps toward the effective existence of a social model that considers a 'democracy of the multitude' (in keeping with the thought of Occam, Marsilius of Padua, or Spinoza, among others) as the absolute form of politics. Accepting this standpoint, the connected multitude, an infinite multiplicity of active singularities, could be considered in its most emancipatory and creative potentials, as the origin of a politics not over life but of life, that is, a clear example of the introduction of 'the power of life' into politics.[2]

20 The connected multitude poses no threat to individualism, given that homogenization is not a part of its constitution. It is a multitude that has nothing to do with the concept of 'the masses' which played a major part in political thought in the past. To the contrary, we should consider its presence as our most efficient, promising possibility for resistance in the face of attempts at an undifferentiated unification, attempts at the destruction of individual singularity that has always been the goal of the traditional mass communication media.

21 However, one inevitably must admit that 'amateur' creative production is plagued with repetition and imitation, as examples of singularity in that milieu are statistically extremely scarce in relation to the number of participants. However, behind the repetition and what is of no interest we should also be able to see the vitality underlying that show of free creation and public sharing, as well as imagining with Blochian hope all that it promises. For there is nothing sterile about this intensification of creativity on everyone's part; nor about the independence of their productions from any professional context of receivers and any compensation other than that of making those creations available to the public, free of charge.

22 On the Web, a whole new field of social opportunities is arising from the creative and communicative potentials that are taking form in the infinite number of social networks and cooperatives that make up Web 2.0. This progressive indifferentiation between information

transmitters and receivers means, above all, that the production of representation and the ordering and organization of contents is no longer a monopoly of professionalized sectors.

23 Anthropologically speaking, the most important characteristic of the majority of the images and videos we see on photoblogs and videoblogs is that they do not depict other, possible worlds or even variations and extensions of this one. Instead, the images portray the world we inhabit. They are images of our life in this world, life that aims to intensify itself through permanent self-representations and visual records of events and pleasure. Millions of photographs and videos of all kinds of things and moments have escaped from their former privacy in private albums and are now available to millions of people. A community is thus created of people taking part in a representation that fundamentally is also a reflection of themselves.

24 Each photograph, each video that is uploaded onto the Web is a small sample of its authors' lives. In sharing it, they are trying to pass along their enthusiasm to others. Their aim, beyond publicly communicating any particular experience, may be to feel a certain kind of 'communion' with many others in the experience they share through that file. For all expressions of life, especially all images of pleasure, always seek the confirmation of their experience through the figure of the collective, and at this time that is completely possible.

25 In this new context, the most effective criticism can only now be conceived in terms of creating something new, as a production of alternative imagined realms. Maybe we should even accept that we can now only interpret the world by transforming it, recreating it. The clearest foundations for the proposal are to be found, without a doubt, in Foucault, for whom political resistance, conceptualized only in terms of negation, would represent only a minimally effective form. Thus, resistance should be understood as the creation of new forms of life, of a new culture, where minorities should affirm themselves 'not only as far as their identity but also as a creative force' (Foucault, 1994: 741). They also propose the development of an alternative ontological base, centred and sustained by the multitude's creative and productive practices, for its constituting force would be the product of its creative imagination, which would configure its own constitution (Hardt and Negri, 2002: 43).

26 The development of the participatory possibilities of the Web today has certainly facilitated the construction of new circuits of value and meaning charged with great creative autonomy and a notable subversive capacity. The creative potentials of the diversity of the connected multitude hold great potential which is already being activated. And that given the fact that almost all offers for participation in the current Web are formed by a studied system of economic management. The development of that huge power to create and share is incomparably more important in the new stage of the Web than anything that business parasites can obtain from it. The possibilities of production of differentiation and singularity that appear on the networks are much more powerful than the patterns of repetition and imitation of stereotypical commercial and professional models which, statistically, comprise the majority of contents on those networks.

27 However, many detractors of Web 2.0 see that interest in other people's images, videos, experiences, opinions and private lives as similar to what already happened with the 'Big Brother' television phenomenon. A certain fascination for what is not worth reading, seeing, or hearing, which means the Web is being filled with records of completely irrelevant events, following the overbearing logic of 'you are the information'.

28 What is definitely happening is an abandonment of privacy at all levels, perhaps because we are increasingly less able to understand it and value it, given that it practically does not exist in our lives. Today the multitude of users on the large participatory Web platforms upload videos and photographs of their most personal experiences, making them public, showing no hesitation but rather enjoyment in giving access to images of their private life to anyone who comes across them or looks for them. Perhaps an explanation lies in a certain effect of a new stage in the process of exteriorization. In the 1960s, McLuhan pointed out that people were beginning to wear their brains outside their skulls and their nerves outside their skin, and subsequently there was an enormous exteriorization of memory through the development of personal digital storage systems (1964). Today that exteriorization has taken another step, where users store things in memory systems they do not even own. That is, the collective memories of the large Web 2.0 platforms that have become gigantic files, eliminating any relation of necessity or dependence linking privacy and a space that is private or with limited access.

29

A new challenge of the utmost importance in the field of 'non-amateur' creation is posed by the fact that much of the visual production that is enjoyed and shared on the networks is not made by professionals in image-making fields. We might say that today one gets a glimpse of what Rousseau proposed in his Carta a d'Alembert (1758), where he suggested that public festivities replace theatrical performances. 'Place a post crowned with flowers in the centre of a town square, gather the townspeople, and you will have a party. Do something even better: offer the audience as the performance; turn them into the actors' (Rousseau, 1994).

**Art 2.0?**

30 Admitting that Rousseau's idea fits the present does not mean that the role of the artist has dissolved in the infinite stream of unintentionally artistic, or purely amateur, images and visual productions. At this point, in the field of the networks, the possible differences between 'art' and 'not art' are a matter of nuance in terms of the intensity with which each creation reveals and expands upon the essential aspects and potentials of living and of the critical consciousness possible in that connected multitude.

31 The most effective artistic thought would not be limited merely to forming part of the expression of the vitality of the productive multitude. It would also generate the most intense evocations of the infinite wealth of differences that form the connected multitude, while also revealing the multitude lying beneath each single subject. In this sense, if the on-line multitude is formed by infinite subjects that, like atoms, move and find each other according to 'clinamens that are always untimely and exceptional' (Negri, 2005), then perhaps it is an essential mission of artistic practices to show the emancipatory potentials that, still dormant, lie beneath the exceptional and single nature of those clinamens.

32 What we could call 'art' in the context of Web 2.0 is certainly what most reinforces our belief in the potentials of the connected multitude, in its possibilities for the free production of critical thought and new life. That all means that art, the optimal form of resistance in the context of the new networks, would be an extreme herald of the constituting power of the multitude. That is, the world that the multitude can build is foreshadowed in the best artistic proposals, always manifested from the demands of interpretive thought, of critical and meaningful communication. Through the most interesting artistic proposals an attempt, at least, would be made at a poetic reconfiguration of the social interactions of the connected collectives.

33 Given the above, an essential aspect in assessing the relative interest of 2.0 creative productions would be the degree of intensity with which the creations express and foreshadow a form of 'liberated freedom' as opposed to freedom as merely a business strategy, which is what the majority of 'amateur' creative production is subject to. Thus, the success of any given artistic proposal in the Web 2.0 context would depend on its capacity to evoke in the interior of the singularity of that specific creation not only abstract aspects of the life of a global space but above all the tensions of renewal and transformation, of critical thought, pleasure, more freedom and more singularity that are inherent to the connected multitude.

34 That means in no case can we conceive of the idea of art on the networks as an element transcending life. To the contrary, it must be seen as an element able to penetrate life, affirm existence and the power of difference, of the exceptional in each of the infinite elements forming the infinity of connected lives. At the same time, we must view it as what proves the common underlying that whole world of singularities: a need to live more fully, with more shared expressions of solidarity, of a life accommodated to others not through homogenization but rather through an enjoyment of differences. Accumulating evidence of that 'common' through the celebration and identification of infinite singularities is, in a way, advancing a form of resistance that foreshadows what is affirmed in the slogan 'Another world is possible', which, as Negri writes, implies 'an exodus toward ourselves' (2005).

**Social networks and affectivity**

35 In this second stage of the Web, we see how vital interrelations are fully productive economically. A new theory of value must be put into place given that the new informational economy, the production of social networks, is based on increasingly immaterial work, almost completely based on emotional production: on the manipulation and management of emotions and sociality. Given that, we can affirm that the nature of production mechanisms of collective subjectivity are already

intrinsically emotional today. That is why, in the emotional application of social relations, the new cultural and entertainment industries are expected to possess a greater transformative capacity of the social as their major lucrative potential. That is why, to a large extent, the artistic projects that explore the world of the social networks, the places and the ways that encounters occur, dialogues and exchanges on the Internet are fundamentally approximations to the problems that arise in relation to the emotional nature of biopolitical production.

36 It seems almost impossible to question that, in the context of the connected society, the possibility of efficient political resistance should be approached from the appropriation and recognition of the emancipatory potential of the principles that form an essential part of productive biopolitical dynamics such as affection, cooperation, and friendship. The mission of the new resistance is to rescue them from their domestication by companies. That resistance should make the potential they contain for the production of a new community clear, to generate an active set-up of the principle of the common. And perhaps artistic creation (let's remember that traditionally, aesthetic experience has been considered purely emotional) is one of the best means for carrying out this rescue.

**Filtering and 'tagging'**

37 Participation and synergy in real time is what this new stage in the Web should ideally offer; that is, broadening potentials for acquiring knowledge. No one knows everything but everyone, jointly, can know everything. An extremely important step forward in collectivized, mutualised knowledge. It is the arrival of a stage of broadened 'co-intelligence", of the reciprocal production of knowledge among infinite persons, of a multitudinous cooperative development and of the increasingly open possession of knowledge, all channelled through inclusive systems, and not designed to prevent anyone from the possibility of contributing. Undoubtedly, the potential illuminators of 'general intellect' are none other than teleology of the commons on linguistic interchange and cooperation.

38 This all leads to constant attempts to apply the free software model to any field of creation and knowledge and explorations in relation to 'Commons-based peer production', are not few in number either (Benkler, 2006). That is, the study of modes of production based on the cooperation of autonomous agents in coordinating the creative energy of a huge number of persons, in which the efforts and pleasure of a multitude of singularities are joined, and in which each of its members has different abilities, very different knowledge, properties that are added up and creatively complement those of others.

39 More so than in the field of collective creation, the requirements for applying these models when the amount of available data of all kinds circulating on the Web is so huge make the tasks of tagging, filtering, and prioritization of the available information much more crucial. In fact, applying the cooperation potential inherent to the system of the connected multitude in this direction and specific applications are one of the primary operating fundamentals on Web 2.0. We mustn't forget that what can be understood as this second stage of the Web consists of 'content generated by the user' as much as 'content filtered by the user' (Dawson, 2006). That is, its primary action axis would be the implementation of strategies allowing 'collective intelligence' to act as a filter and engine for the efficient organization of the available information, and that ordering can be useful not only for the main flows on the Web but also for more specific, particular ones. Going from the task of offering 'data' to providing 'metadata' is a step forward that would also explain the complementarity of the concepts of Web 2.0 and semantic Webs, based on the incorporation of all kinds of metadata (descriptors, identifiers, etc.)

40 The essential character on Web 2.0 of activities such as classifying, tagging, selecting, voting, scoring, etc. makes data organization methods for the culture of the networks one of the areas of greatest interest in on-line artistic creation. And of all the paths initiated in the artistic themes of data filtering, identification and assessment, those focused on 'tagging' have generated the greatest interest. Examples of this path are some of the initiatives of Les Liens Invisibles and Jonathan Harris, among many other authors.[3]

41 Undoubtedly, the relation between images and identifying terms, or 'tags', is linked in the field of the theory of contemporary art to an old relation between image and word, and between art work and title. The problematic nature of the relations established between text and image, that were essential in conceptual art, have once again been activated by the new dynamic of 'tagging' as a

practice of social organization of the visual elements of the culture in which a huge field has opened up for artistic reflection.

**Blog art?**

42 A key element of many blogs is that personal life, information and opinions are not separate. One of its most interesting potentials is its capacity to create collectivity through resources and positions that in many cases are merely autobiographical; that is, through subjectivity expressed, shared, and commented on. The blog phenomenon is surely the clearest return to the "self" and to subjectivity itself in the field of media, the activation of a certain 'egology'. It is about reclaiming a democratization of the possibilities of the expressive 'self', of subjectivity made public, that is shown and exhibited, as a catalyst of many other internal voices that will be encouraged to follow the exercise of a 'self', giving public voice to personal consciousness that is expressed and investigated, practiced in writing, in the collection and interrelation of things and aspects that it finds of interest.

43 Obviously, many of the propositional, creative and expressive aspects of the blog phenomenon make many of their authors define their blogs as art works in their own right. Of course, many blogs show extremely creative and poetic qualities that make them much more than alternative systems for personal and interpersonal expression and communication. Actually, the most interesting cases are true examples of the possibilities of artistic thought to act in the reconfiguration of models for communicative practices and of cultural and social criticism of networks. In many of them, we see the huge capacity that poetic activities have, through the interpretive demands of art works, to effect an intense, efficient criticism of current processes for the inclusion of the subject in the society of interconnected media. Of course, the perverse irony that characterizes the majority of 'blog art' proposals actively collaborates in the suspension (and even subversion) of the most deeply rooted expectations about the communicative interactions that we consider to be informative, normal, or useful in the present field of networks. The proposals of blog art also constitute intense questioning of whether the world is, as many blogs seems to show in their extreme intensification of the presence of an ego, a correlate of what 'I perceive', 'I feel', and 'I believe.

44 Some of the most interesting results so far of 'blog art' have emerged from projects centred on studying the recording of time innate to blogs. Only from the field of artistic propositions could we understand, for example, the extreme degree to which life is subject to recorded time in projects such as *Obsessive Consumption* by Kate Bingaman or the work titled *Eat 22* by E. Harrinson. These two examples evoke the huge set of proposals of blogs taken to the limit which are only comprehensible from the perspective of conceptual art. They refer to the complexity inherent to the time relationship established among the blog, the subject who 'posts' something, and the readers, which is none other than that relationship of life itself in the shared recording of its passage through time. These projects emphasize the fact that we are fundamentally shared time (which is exhibited and recorded on media in today's world). Due to the above, 'blog art" can be said to be an experiment not with a new media but rather of the artist in it (while being watched by many others).

**Artistic practices in the reconfiguration of communicative interactions**

45 Of special value is creativity oriented to the production of cooperative devices for activating and developing communities, of means for free communication of the parasitic behaviour of companies dominating the Web today. In fact, many of the most interesting projects we can identify within the broad group of artistic practices are centred on promoting the public domain, on how to facilitate the voluntary provision of public goods that are communicatively and experientially meaningful.

46 One of the traditional definitions of artistic creation has been a critical experimentation in language or the invention of new languages. Perhaps in this sense, many of its still to be revealed capacities will reconfigure communicative interactions in the new era of digital political activism. That is, provided that it is based on the belief that it is possible to solve many of the new social and political problems of new societies through developing a different kind of public communication. It is reasonable to think that it possesses a hugely valuable capacity to diminish the effects of the colonization of communication by economic interests.

47

And perhaps we can affirm that the role of creation most committed to social and political reflection in the new networks resides in its capacity to overcome a certain incommunicable character of the battles in the network society. There, everything seems to be legitimated on the basis of principles such as progress, communication, participation, etc., which seem to strangle all types of effective dissention. Perhaps the critical thought innate to artistic practices can help us immensely in gaining a better understanding of what we can consider as truly social with respect to some new technologies and applications that, as in the context of Web 2.0, are always presented to us as completely social media.

48 It is clear in the most interesting proposals of the new 'on-line' artistic behaviours that art can make part of the information and data circulating on the networks not only consumed but also properly situated in relation to their existential elements. That is, one of the major commitments of the best artistic creations in the context of Web 2.0 would be to design new paths for taking the interpretive experience model inherent to artistic practices to the field of social and communicative interaction. It behoves us to give intensive thought to the possibilities of artistic practices in the face of an ecological recomposition of communication (Guattari, 2001). This would be a new attempt to overcome the imprisonment in the constant but banal communication process inherent in mass media, and also to define that refusal to communicate that Theodor Adorno considered as a measure of the truth of art works in a cultural system where communication is organized via manipulation in order to produce a given effect, where the former would only have an alienated existence (Adorno, 1992).

49 Due to the above, it is logical that nowadays there are quite a few artistic proposals centred on the ways the new digital social networks function. Their intention is to bring to the forefront of public attention the ways language and communicative interactions in general can be toyed with. That is, showing how the economic appropriation of free communication and the desire to cooperate is carried out, offering a poetic rendition of how the ideal of interactivity is truncated. We can only imagine that ideal as giving oneself linguistically to another, as an exchange of what one does not have, that is, what one is. The great challenge of artistic creation then is, in the boundary-crossing dynamics of human presences in network environments, to build flows of value and meaning independent of the logic of markets and corporate interests.

50 The fact that the most recent artistic proposals on the networks are so ironic and critical instead of optimistic is because Web 2.0 has been presented to us corporatively as an idyllic field of happiness, joy, friendship, sharing, and communication, all increasing endlessly. With networks today defined through these principles, there is an assumption of a blanket neutral ideology. The most critical of these art works and actions oppose the acceptance of that assumption, and will do so repeatedly. The subjects of those art works and actions coincide with specific ways the Web 2.0 works. Interpreting them demands an interpretive, critical and political reflection of the ways the Web works as well as the mediation mechanisms and socialization control predisposed by the Web.

51 It is quite likely that the interpretive values of the new 'on-line' artistic practices are based on the important possibility of opposing the disappearance o fan awareness of reality as a pace full of oppositions and frictions. That awareness is becoming increasingly difficult given that everything is veiled behind continuous telematics, set out through principles and promises always linked to communication that already impedes a perception of any contradiction whatsoever.

52 This attempt would explain that a recurring purpose of artistic practices is to reveal what interests are behind those business mediators and how they manage to regulate communicative interactions on the networks, in addition to merely making them possible.

## Author's Biography

Juan Martín Prada is the author of numerous articles and essays about digital aesthetics, and of the following books: *La apropiación posmoderna. Arte, práctica apropiacionista y Teoría de la posmodernidad* (published by Fundamentos, 2001) and *Las nuevas condiciones del arte contemporáneo* (Briseño Editores, 2003). He is a contributor to many printed and digital publications including journals such as *REIS, Red Digital*, *Papiers d'art*, *A minima, Temps d'art*, *Transversal*, Exit Books, Exit Press, *Mecad e-Journal*, or the newspaper *La Vanguardia*. He has been a member of the Art-Science-Technology commission at FECYT, the Spanish Foundation for Science

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**Notes**

[1] I refer to the false automaton known as 'The Turk', built in 1770 by Wolfgang von Kempelen (1734-1804).

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[2] According to Roberto Esposito. 'if, as Deleuze believes, philosophy is the practice of creating concepts appropriate to the event affecting and transforming us, this is the time to rethink the relationship between politics and life in a way that, instead of subjecting life to political leadership (which occurred over the last century quite clearly), introduces into the power of life into politics' (Esposito, 2006: 17).

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[3] Of the many existing proposals, the artwork titled *Subvertr* by Les Liens Invisibles may be one of the most clearly oriented to politically subvert the relations between image and word. The application *10×10* at *www.tenbyten.org*, designed and developed by Jonathan Harris, attempts to represent visually each hour as well as, through 100 images and words, the collective imagination of news at a global scale. It would influence more than any other project the possibilities of artistic practice as a visualization system of the relations of images to news events in the era of globalized communication, of the forms of its repetition and dissemination at a global level.

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Journal Note

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