

How to limit the overheating of the atmosphere linked to energy consumption without imposing process of revamping the economy which will be costly from the financial and social point of view?

How to prevent cutthroat development if co-development is not rewarded and the geographical apportionment which privileges the small and medium-sized cities is accentuated? In little over ten years, there will be an 80% increase in the rate of development.

Without a staunch commitment, water and air will continue to be the main victims of the ultraliberal ideology which is winning out on both shores of the Mediterranean.



LIQUID VIEWS (1993-98)

MONIKA FLEISCHMANN
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"Get close to the source. Look at it and discover yourself. Touch your own image on the surface of the water. Watch how it disintegrates".

"Liquid Views" is a poetic proposal, intimate and at the same time metaphoric, based on the idea of Narcissus. Described by Ovid, painted by Caravaggio, revisited by Oscar Wilde and many other authors in art and literature, Narcissus' figure has always been a synonym for the self-assurance, the conceit, and the egocentricity of the individual before a symbolic mirror.

In the virtual mirror presented by "Liquid Views", the individual is confronted with his image as reflected in the water of the spring, but also confronted with a representation of himself. As he lets himself be seduced and interacts with his picture on the mirror, it disintegrates and is transformed into a simulation until it finally merges into the algorithmic hybridism of the water. The integrity of the body loses its stability and stops being a reliable reference in defining the individual in the virtual world. His identity becomes more and more distant from the physical body and is submerged in a bottomless and endless virtual ambience, becoming, as Flusser said, "a project of possible worlds".

"Liquid Views" is understood, in turn, as a metaphor for the act of being "on-line"; that is to say, in our "second nature" as "navigators" immersed in the telecommunications world. Over the "high seas" of cyberspace, the identity of each individual is transformed into a flow of variable and interchangeable data, in which each one is completely free to change or redefine his identity, and all he has to do is alter his own source of information.

While artists pose the question of personality and "ego" in a world that is becoming more and more mediatized, the possible answers remain in the users' hands. As Julian Beck used to say, "the most important virtual trip is the one which leads to ourselves"



WATER AND/IN ART

PETER WEIBEL

The use of water in art is a universe of multiple functions between being a material, a model, a medium and a metaphor.

WATER AND PAINTING

The history of painting is from the beginning linked to water as material. First the colour itself is dissolved through water and in water. Then the colour is bound to its carrier medium, be it tissue or stone, through water again. Supported by glue the watercolour became relatively immune to influences of moisture and friction. The history of the art of aquarelle, of aquatinte and gouache is the history of explorations of the possible relations between water and colour as materials of expression, from Dürer, of whom it is said to have "discovered" the aquarelle like Jan Van Eyck has "discovered" oil painting, to E.W.Nay. The liberation of colour from the form, the free floating of colour fields, of colour stripes, of colour tracks, of colour patches and spots, in modern art was supported by the experiences with aquarelle techniques and can be interpreted as an assimilation of aquarelle techniques into oil painting. The use of the synthetic colour acryl has accelerated and enhanced this assimilation. This invasion of aquarelle techniques into oil painting expresses the desire and search of the painters for a transformation of a fixed, rigid, determined structure into a liquid open undetermined structure. The liquid quality of water slowly changed the use of water as material to the use of water as model. The liquid quality of water became the model for the freedom of expression. The dripping of colour, the flow of colour becomes from Jackson Pollock to Louis Morris to Hermann Nitsch the favorite means of expression of freedom. The liquid quality of water became the metaphor of freedom. This metaphorical use of water is still valid in the age of cyberspace. When Marcos Novak is dreaming of a dynamic architecture which is not stable and deterministic he speaks of "liquid architecture". The promises of water, which is what we are culturally conditioned to expect from water, are transferred to architecture. After watercolours we have to expect in the future water-architecture, probably more as model and metaphor developed by the traditional medium of painting is still so strong that even cyber architecture has to pay credit to it, like media art.

WATER AND MEDIA

Media artists have taken over this quadruple function of water from painting, but at the same time have shifted the emphasis. Above all they have in the beginning amplified and intensified the use of water as material. Water was not linked any longer to colour and therefore not used any longer as a means of expression. In media art, the art of technical reproduction and machine-assisted image making, water became the pure anti-dot. Water was the natural material par excellence. In the