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Mouchette

BECAUSE I'M AN ARTIST TOO ....

By Martine Neddam

SO WHAT IS IT?

Mouchette.org

BROWSE ME

By Kathryn Shinko

Like many people, I literally stumbled onto mouchette.org a few months ago while searching for something (arguably) unrelated. I found myself on a forum page and could tell immediately by the lurid, mis-joined background, the oversized text, and the complete reliance on tables for formatting that the site was an old one. So why, I wondered, does it still exist? And why hasn't it been updated?

The homepage is even more 'vintage' (which is a nice way of saying that it is a relic from the internet ice-age): a pixelated background of close-up roses replete with twitching flies and a photo of a girl whose eyes are averted. As with the forum page, there is absolutely no formatting whatsoever. The entire site, I began to realize, must have been constructed through HTML.

Before exploring further, I detoured to the wiki page. If you are not familiar with mouchette.org, I suggest you do the same before visiting the site: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mouchette.org

What intrigues me the most is that the site was created in 1996, when web construction was in its infancy. Though the site has undergone many revisions due in part to a lawsuit threat by the widow of the director of the film upon which the concept of Mouchette is based, the coarseness of the design has maintained its integrity. Fourteen years later, the site has been crowned as a net.art object which has been exhibited internationally (namely, the Candy Factory in Tokyo) and has won numerous awards. Yet despite its recognition, the creator of the site is still unknown.

And despite it being so old, it's wholly interactive. Clicking on one link leads you to a plethora of others, and with each bizarre page you feel an intensifying urge to keep exploring. One page lists a column of erotic thumbnails and by clicking on, say, the one of a girl biting her finger, you are brought to a page with a box in which you are encouraged to describe your experiences with 'eating yourself and liking it'. In the background, the tiny thumbnail of the girl biting her finger is enlarged to nearly the entire screen, and it becomes obvious that these images were created by the artist touching her face to a remarkably detailed scanner which captured details that are only visible when you come centimeters away from someone's face in real life: pores, freckles, rogue hairs, lip crusts. It automatically evokes personal memories of intimacy, and all of the powerful feelings attached to them. And of course, let's not forget that at such magnification, any swatch of flesh looks ambiguous; you will probably find yourself doing a few double-takes to discover that what on first glance might look like an X-rated organ is actually an innocuous lip crevice.

And then, should you click on another link, the story takes a sharp turn. Here, over a backdrop of engorged and rotting fruit flits a gray button with the words 'It's Me!' How can you resist wanting to press it? Naturally, once you realize that catching it is hard with the way it swirls around the screen, you want to press it that much more. And when you do, you are directed to a black screen in which Mouchette

SUICIDE ID: 22927
you are on top of a tall building basking in the light of a beautiful spring morning. birds chirp peacefully along with the horns of angry cars down below in the busy streets. you are getting a little hot in your inflatable pig costume, and a little »»»»»»»»»»

http://www.mouchette.org/

types (not in real-time of course, but the effect is still there) that you have killed her by clicking on that button. She viciously accuses you of being a killer — a killer! — and continues to bemoan how sad she is to have died.

On this page, you are confronted with a black screen, a tiny candle gif, and instructions to find the shells in the dark by clicking on them. If you click on the link 'I live in your illusion' you are directed to this absurd, but thankfully not offensive, drawing. Other pages like this — flippant, amusing, playful — exist, but it's not all fun and games. Just as with the 'It's Me!' scenario, one stray move can switch the story from flirtatious to absolutely terrifying, thus adding another element to its interactivity. If you happen to visit the page m.org.ue, secret!, meet my parents, and lullaby, you will be assaulted by either disturbing music, images of pulsing red meat and a tagged foot, or the sounds of a woman gasping. If you enter the page cat you will be scared to death by an oversized image of a cat's open, bloody jaws shaking around the screen and paired with a blown-out cat's scream. At the bottom is a button with the words 'Kill this Cat!' but the trouble is, the button moves along with the shaking picture. It is unfortunately much harder to catch this button than the It's Me! one, because the movement is quicker and because, well, not many people can think straight when they're terrified. This is why I have not activated the links to these pages, but I do want to mention that these 'sudden twists' are particularly important to consider when evaluating the interactivity of the site because they are, in my view, a poignant metaphor of most real-life relationships. I do think that this is why some people are fascinated by Mouchette regardless of whether she is 'real' or not — the range of experiences she offers us, and their confusing and reasonless twists from affectionate to hurtful, makes her seem real.

This phenomenon explains why, on the Suicide Kit page where Mouchette asks what the best way to kill yourself is if you are under thirteen, there ensues page after page

of serious and real responses from people who have 1) felt compelled enough to divulge their inmost thoughts and most traumatic experiences to her and 2) simultaneously submitted their email address. There are countless opportunities to submit secrets and contact information all over the site, and to add an even more complex layer of interactivity, Mouchette supposedly does keep in contact with the people who have submitted their information to her. I only say 'supposedly' because I refuse to do it. So, Mouchette.org has earned its title of a net. art object not only through its gruesomely-designed yet alluring array of interactive pages ranging from the innocent to the obscene, but through the questions it raises about electronic identity, honesty, anonymity, and safety.

While now it is obvious that the site was created specifically for art's sake, I cannot help but envy (and at the same time pity) those who discovered it years ago and were left to decide for themselves if it was truly geared for artistic effect, or simply the result of some obsessed and strange young girl whose preoccupation with death and sexuality have made her — or rather, the idea of her — famous. It also asks the question of whether such an effective site can be created with today's web design capabilities, or if it is the deft handling and the ambiguity of the HTML formatting that delivers such an immense range of experiences. Can such a thing be gotten away with today with the public awareness of the internet, or could it only have emerged from that specific point in time when — before Facebook, before Myspace, before Yahoo and Wikipedia and Aol became household names — most people really had no idea what the internet was?

Kathryn Shinko is an artist, designer.

Shinko, Kathryn (2010) So What is It? Blog 30 Days of Figaro. http://figarogirl. wordpress.com/2010/08/28/so-what-is-it/ (28 August).

Mouchette.org

KILL THAT CAT
KILL THAT CAT

http://www.mouchette.org/cat/index.html
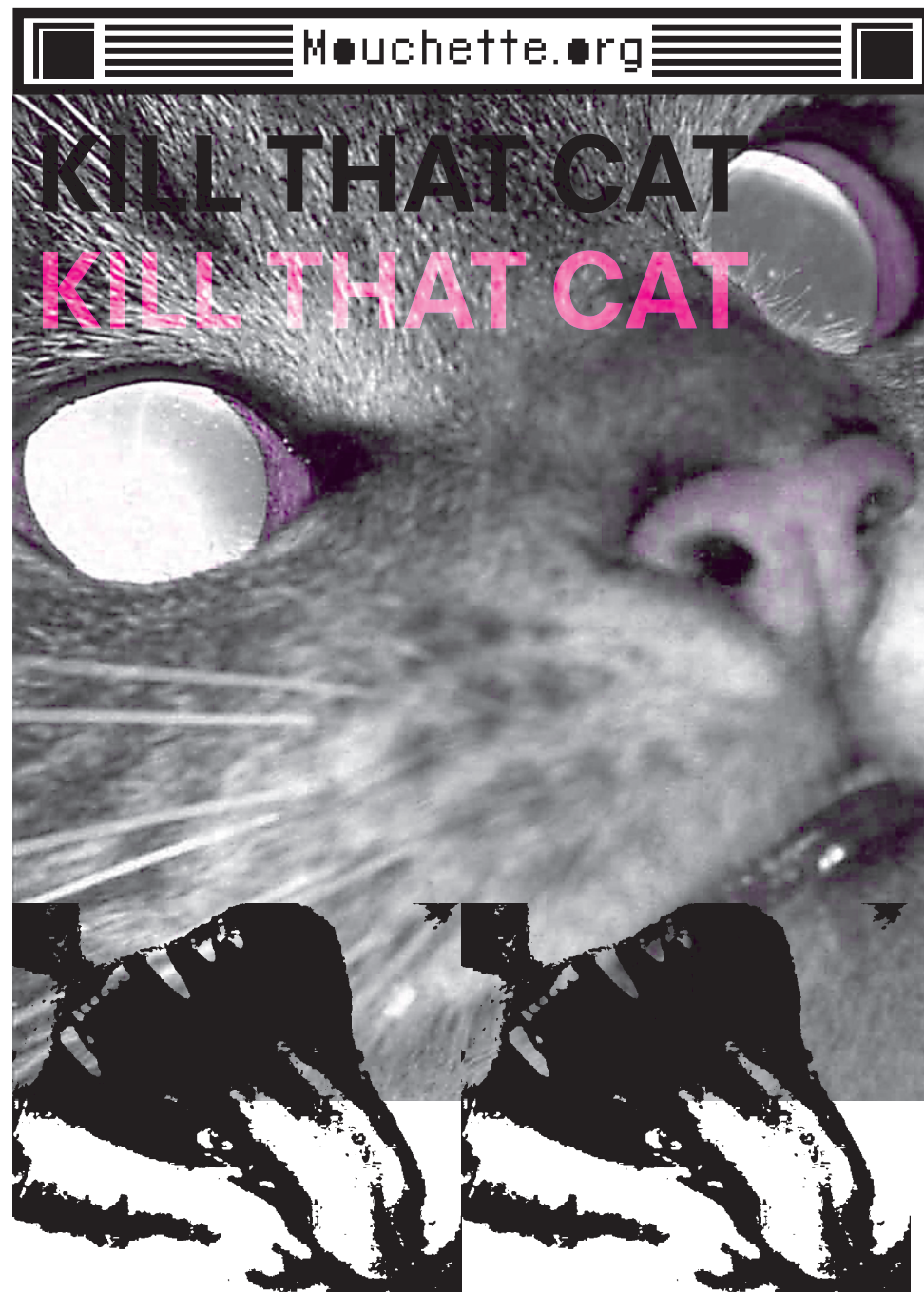
IMAGINARY FRIENDS

By Paule Mackrous

What fascinates me the most about Martine Neddam's virtual characters is the many ways in which one can talk about them. They are, indeed, quite complex artworks. Watching them over an over, I always find something that I haven't seen before. Although Mouchette was put online more than 10 years ago (1997), and despite the fact that the novel and movie from which Neddam's character was inspired were created 40 and 70 years ago (1937 and 1967), the issues she embodies are very actual: children mistreatment, suicide and identity construction among pre-teen girls. It is also the case for another artwork, David Still. Though this one was made after the expansion of the

Web 2.0, the artist didn't use the 2.0 platforms to create it. But her virtual character embodies important issues related to it.

With Mouchette and David Still (Xiao Qian is a little bit different) Martine Neddam has created pre-set imaginary friends for big people to use. What is an imaginary companion? According to Jersild (1968), an imaginary companion may be 'defined as an imagined creature (person or animal) or thing that is usually vivid (it has its own vitality of its own and is as experienced by the one who has the companion)'. If we look at some of the movies, where the topic of imaginary friends occupies center stage (Drop Dead Fred for example), one can see that they are not only fantasies created by children. They play a major role in the construction of identity as they do for our relation to the world. They are expansion of the self and in that way, they give a great deal of self-consciousness to their 'creator'.

THE PARARADOX: THEY ARE NOT MYSELF BUT THEY ARE PART OF MYSELF

Entering Mouchette's website, one could think, at first, that it's an artist's website. But as the Netsurfer navigates through the links, he quickly becomes suspicious. Mouchette is 13 year-old. The links that he will find in the browse me scroll window are about sexuality, death, suicide. One could think that it's a bad joke and leave the website. Others will think Mouchette really exists. Although the website is obviously fictitious (i.e: m.o.r.g.u.e, dead fly) we still see proofs of her existence: pictures of the little girl, big shot of her face licking the screen or other pictures showing her in the city. She also addresses herself directly to the Netsurfer. Mouchette boldly calls out the said Netsurfer on different issues, asking, for example, 'what is the best way to kill yourself when your are under 13?' She also answers emails and, in that sense, even if it's tangible or not, Mouchette 'exists' for those who participate in the artwork.
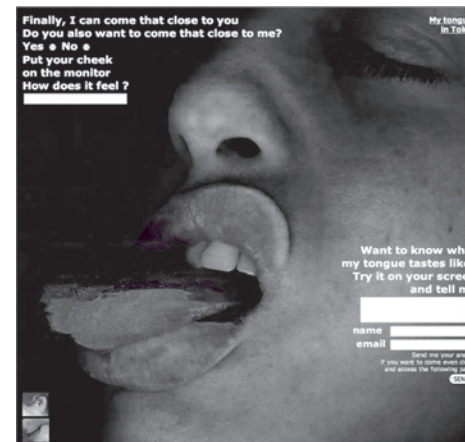
www.mouchette.org/flesh/tong.html

But at a certain point, the Netsurfer is invited to enter Mouchette's Network. He can obtain a password that will enable him to 'become Mouchette'. He can upload his texts and photographs into the website and answer Mouchette's emails. He then realizes that although her identity feels like unique, it is, in reality, multiple. The Netsurfer can be a part of the said identity. The experience of the artwork changes here. Mouchette is not someone

real, a character, or, as we just mentioned, ourselves. She is all of that. This strange blend makes her become an imaginary friend, an extension of our identity that we experience as both dependant and independent of us.

The same thing occurs in David Still, but a little differently. From the beginning, the Netsurfer is asked if he wants to become David Still. He can use pre-set messages or emails of his own that he will send from Still's email account. He can answer the character's emails, he can also change the FAQ (frequently asks question) which become FAAQ (Frequently ask and answer questions). Of course, this participative set up creates problems. People have used David Still to insult other people or fraud companies. David Still is, for some people, a mean guy. In contrast, for others, he is a really cool guy. But beside this constructed identity spreading into the Web via emails, David Still has his own life story that he said it could be ours. Brief extracts of it can be read on the website and pictures of his youth until now can also be watched. The man on the picture exists. He says he is David Still, but he also says that we are him. We feel that we can control the character, but at the same time, we realize that he, this multiple he, has the power to control us. The artist behind this is the one that has the most power in all that, but she can't control all the emails that have been sent under the name of her own character! This shows not only that we never really know someone on the web, but rather that every action we do on the Web is fashioning our identity and that every single fact we believe is, in return, fashioned by many people. How true is David Still?
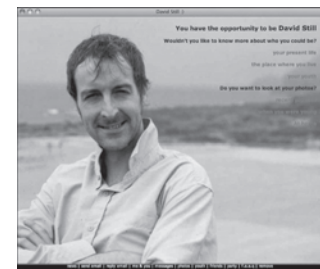
Martine Neddam's recent platform Virtualperson.net
that allows everybody to create a virtual person

David Still and Mouchette both reflect on identity construction as being an open hypertext. They also reflect on the way we control our image through the symbolic figures inhabiting us. The net artwork represents the all important intertextuality of the identity itself. In Mouchette's case, each medium (literature, cinema, webart) expresses something different. This shows that those issues are not new with the Web, but they are, in reality, modified because of the new possibilities made viable by the latest means of communication. It also points out the fact that a figure, like Mouchette, belongs to everyone and is not subjected to copyright.

Bresson's Mouchette (Final scene)

Nowadays, and even before the advent of the Web, we are all virtual character:

Au fond, tout le monde est devenu un personnage virtuel à partir du moment où quelqu'un fait des choix, l'exprime et le construit dans un medium (translation: in fact, everybody has become a virtual character as we make choices, express them and construct them in a medium).
–Martine Neddam

TANGIBLE, INTANGIBLE AND CREDIBLE
Numerous allusions of their virtual aspects let us think that Mouchette and David Still are intangible (for example, David Still lives in the sail tower, Mouchette has the website address around her toe in m.org.ue.) and, therefore,

that it is possible to invest them. They are a synthesis of all paradoxes that we find on the web: Mouchette is both dead and alive, David Still is both 'still' and in movement, the characters are both us and not us. What does it mean to be alive on the Web? What are the relations between our web presence and our tangible presence? When does the stillness of a photography published on the web get vivid? What is real? What is fictitious? Can't we say that the real is only a matter of believing. Is identity tangible anyway? If we believe, not in the sense of a religion, but simply in the sense of credibility, isn't it real then? To exemplify this, Mouchette, which is you, me and everyone, had a legal proceedings attested by the SACD's (a society defending author's rights in France) cease and desist

notice personally addressed to Mouchette for having illegally used images from the Robert Bresson film called *Mouchette*. Martine Neddam's artwork is a remediation of Bresson's movie, just like Bresson's movie is an adapation of Bernanos book! The Web offered the artist the possibility to explore the narrative and the movie into a multi-linearity reflecting both the media and the generation for which she did it. The interactivity offered the possibility to implicate the Netsurfer into the issues that Mouchette embodies through time. Apparently, Bresson's wife didn't see it as an adaptation, but rather as contradiction with the 'real' (?) Mouchette's story. And above all, she addressed the letter directly to Mouchette! This letter now replaces the section containing the images of Bresson's movie in the artwork. It is definitely taking part in the experience of Mouchette now. By doing that Bresson's wife made this new Mouchette even more alive. She is now part of the narrative!

When we broadcast ourselves, I believe we are less creating an identity than creating imaginary friends for us and for others. These little extensions of ourselves have a life of their own despite the fact we think we can control them. We abandon them, in a way, to this hypertext and, in return, they are linked and fashioned by others. In some case, these imaginary friends can be very productive for our creativity, especially if we are conscious and open to the Web possibilities …

Paule Mackrous is editor of CIAC's e-Magazine.

Mackrous, Paule (2010) Imaginary Friends. Blog Effect of Presence. http://effetdepresence.blogspot. com/2010/02/imaginary-friends.html (9 February).

PERFORMING IDENTITY

By Hanne-Louise Johannesen

This presentation deals with theoretical aspects of 'self-staging' and staging the other as strategies connected to the Internet. It aims to point out the conditions of the online human being. I am trying to grasp a contradicting desire of concealment and exposure that is at work at the Internet, and thereby focus on the paradox of erasure and inscription. A paradox that points at least in two directions; one of being your self through a non-manipulated real time media the other of performing the other by building a myth around an unknown identity. The structure of the presentation will develop from the human conditions on the Internet, via the Internet as a space of potential performance to the act of performance itself. An act where I will use the notion of seduction as the element that is able to withhold suspense of the performative act. To clarify my thoughts I will introduce the Internet art project Mouchette.

HUMAN

But first I would like to frame the human conditions of the internet-dominated era. Idealising the body is as old as representing the body. The human body has always been trapped in our mind as something imperfect, something that we, ever since the Fall of Man, have to cover up in our every day life and improve at any given occasion. The human being connected to the Internet is no exception but fits perfectly in this history of representing the human body.

We are seamlessly adapting the computer technology in our minds and bodies to enhance our possibilities of success and survival. The ideal body is represented through computer technology. And no doubt this is a unique opportunity for a new and expansible practise of bodily improvement. New social relationships and artificial enhancements are waiting to be imagined and identified in this hybridizing of the human being and technology. A hybrid summed up in the term cyborg which is a 'theorized and fabricated hybrid of machine [the computer connected to the Internet] and organism' in the words of Donna Haraway (Haraway 1991)

Cyborg is short for cybernetic organism and was introduced in the middle of the 20th century by Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline (Clynes & Kline 1960). The issue then was a unification between man and the precision and repetition of the mechanical machine. With the development of the computer the machine has changed towards virtuality, variation and complexity, and with it the cyborg has to develop life partly connected

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR MY ART TOUCH THE FLY IN MY EYE
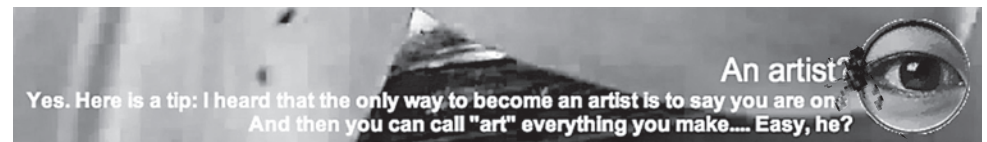
to virtuality, variation and complexity – but also disembodiment. And with disembodiment you could claim that we loose our inscription in the world – because to inscribe is to write in, to place the mark of one thing within another. The measure of inscription is not visibility itself but rather modification or displacement of a substance. The physicality of digital writing celebrates the loss of inscription by the possibility to remove all traces even from the act of erasure itself. What is undone could be understood as never done. Digital inscription is of another order than any previous inscription, closer to the act of speaking without a witness or drawing in sand.

This raises some fundamental questions: 1) If we loose our inscription as the foundation of being in the world, will our lives be as if not lived? 2) How can we modify the surrounding substance, when any modification is volatile and erasable? 3) Are we doomed to perform disembodiment?

THE PERFORMATIVE SPACE
– A POST-MEDIA EXPERIENCE

Now I will place the cyborg in the performative space of the Internet, that besides being performative it is a post-media experience. Post-media because the Internet seems to contain all other medias, and thereby disappears as a media itself.

On the Internet different strategies of appearances are used, not only by inhabitants of virtual communities but also by artists communicating with others or framing identity. Some of these strategies are connected to panoptical power relations, where 'self-erasement' has become an active tool or a desire to hide in the panopticon. The art project Mouchette with the introducing text My name is Mouchette, I live in Amsterdam, I am nearly 13 years old… (www.mouchette. org) is a good example of erasement or blurring of true identity as an artistic strategy. The real identity of the artist behind Mouchette is hidden and always questioned. The artist is thereby building up a myth around the self,

sustained by the many surrounding web-pages. Mouchette (French for Little Fly) is supposed to be a young girl on the edge of puberty, who has been raped and abused by close ones. In a coquette way, through images and sounds with an underlying sexual appeal, Mouchette exposes details from her gruesome past and announces that she will commit suicide when she reaches the age of thirteen. The creation of Mouchette is based on Robert Bresson's film *Mouchette* from 1967 (which again is based on a novel by George Bernanos from 1937), where a 14-year-old girl, lives a miserable existence in a little French village. Bullied by her father, compelled to look after her dying mother and her baby sibling, she has been robbed of her childhood. It is a harsh story of a young girl's irreversible descent into misery and self-destruction.

In the Internet version of Mouchette the sadness of the story withholds, and Mouchettes self-destructive theme from the film seems to have been transformed into erasure of identity. What is interesting in the online story is the myth of identity that replaces the actual identity of Mouchette, as the text in one of the links on the web-page supports:

I think I understand your motives for pretending to be a 'middle aged white man'… or for that matter a 13 year old girl from France living in Amsterdam… than who you really are… A 13 year old black girl from Haiti living in an unglamorous neighbourhood in a metropolis by a polluted great lake; Toronto.

The artist has on several occasions proclaimed to reveal his or her identity, but the truth has never been stated. Mainly because any connection with the project seems to blur the authenticity of any claimed identity.

This is a ground plan of a physical gallery space where the revelation of Mouchette's identity was announced to take place in 2002. It was arranged by the artist Anakin Koenig (http://www.akairways.com/) at

Mouchette.org

TOO MANY EYES?

Postmasters Gallery in New York. Mouchette is placed in an inflatable space that is composed of three layers of clear plastic. A person at the entrance makes sure that there are only two visitors at the same time inside the entire installation. The visitor will never know if the other is the embodied person behind the Mouchette identity. The visitor becomes a potential Mouchette.

The strategy of concealment has worked as intended in this case because any claimed identity is questionable. Suspense is staged and to sustain the element of concealment and confusion, it is now possible to take over the identity of Mouchette for a period of time. – I could be Mouchette – in fact I am Mouchette, – though I have no permission to age her. Because if Mouchette turns thirteen the consequence will be suicide and the end of story. Mouchette maintains to live in the period of life where identity is formed. Suicide is thereby the end of story in different ways. It is the end of the identity-shaping-process, the end of premature sexuality as well as of life.

With the example of Mouchette I am pointing at the Internet as a space of performance – performance of identity, representation, seduction and desire. A performative space is a user oriented or user required space. The inhabitant of virtual space is understood as a participant rather than a visitor, rather using the space than being in space. The implementation of information technology has set out explicitly the understanding of space as loaded with information. Information waiting to be related through the performance of users.

The foundation of space becomes interactive and related to relations. The human body and mind becomes part of this network of relations – humans become cyborgs that have to perform in cyberspace – an information-loaded and non-linear space. You have to perform to use the potential of space. To explore the interactive space of Mouchette you have to participate in her life. Immersed

into cyberspace you leave the secure position of the voyeur, and inscribe into this space beyond inscription. You have to invest yourself on a higher level with the risk of failure and vulnerability. The mental inscription might be the one with the highest impact and the Internet or Cyberspace in general seems to be very effective as a medium of mental inscription, because of the immaterial substance and the loss of the comfortable seat of the voyeur.

The performative act of Mouchette is operating at the boundary between presentation and representation. Being in cyberspace is a real-time-based experience that becomes temporary and nomadic – it becomes presentation. The act of presenting forces the inhabitant to immerse the mind in a boundless media that goes post-media in danger of blurring the balance in the panoptic space of power and possession.

Post-media is a practice that knows no boundaries or discipline. It is driven by desire, intuition and curiosity. Within post-media practice there is an intensified redefinition of relationships between individual and collective means, private and social spheres and terms of success and failure. Judging these dualistic values looses its relevance. By the ongoing questionable identity play of Mouchette, the paradox of being the self and performing the other becomes inseparable and the difference seems to be irrelevant to know. Users become producers operating in an expanding physic and virtual space, where no sense of a specific person, group or event is taking the lead. I am able to become the producer of Mouchette.org and invite others to join me. The post-media state is a practice of addition without accumulation (Slater 1998).

Post-media is in opposition to the mass media and is characterised by small, diverse, distributed networks of operators who make use of the new, digital means of production and distribution. Post-media practice grows out of the networked activities where former boundaries caused by the use of different media has disappeared from the epicentre.

http://www.mouchette.org/flesh/tong.html
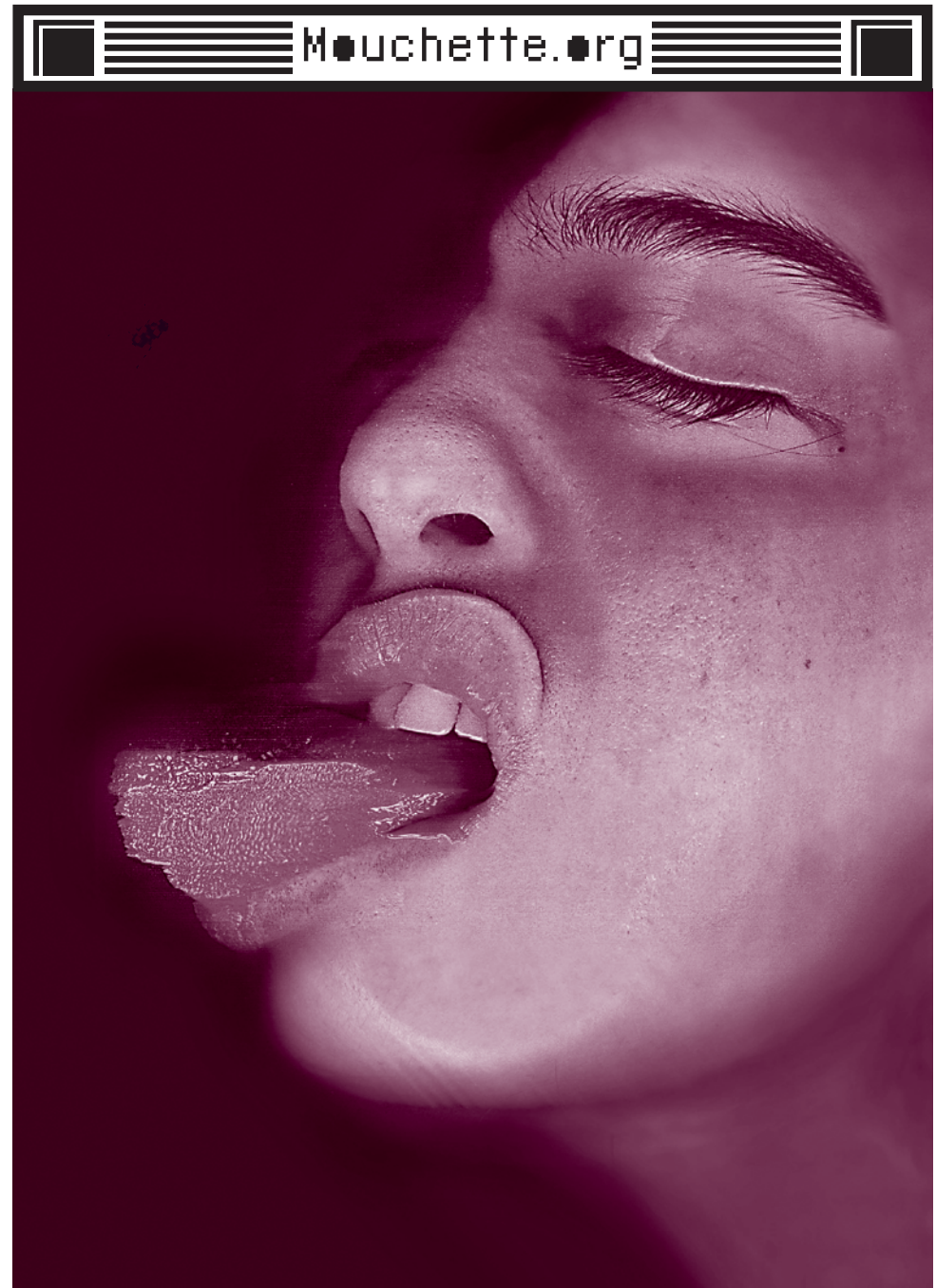
Someone talked about the flesh-eating nineties (Arthur Kroker) – about a sterile and meatless cyberspace. But as I see it cyberspace as media has become invisible and open to embodiment. Even though Cyberspace is virtual it feasts in flesh.

The boundaries between the acts of Mouchette and her surroundings is blurred by a post-media state where relations of meaning rather than media is the blurring factor. Mouchette's identity becomes a pre-orgasmic state of mind where the catharsis never occurs, and the fear of the emptiness on the other side of redemption exceeds the lack of purification.

THE DESIRE TO BE SEDUCED
Seduction becomes an element able to suspense the performative act in Internet related narratives like Mouchette. Seduction is a desire for an ever-ongoing storytelling that blends with the hypertext rather than a longing to know how it all ends.

In the case of Mouchette, the dualistic implications of seduction as a performative strategy enchant the user. To be seduced is to explore and maintain the pre-orgasmic situation. Seduction can most easily be seen when things do not try to confuse themselves with the real, but instead use play and artifice to mimic and exceed the effects of the real. The secret of seduction lies in signs with no reality behind says Baudrillard in his book *Le Seduce* from 1980. In this light I want to se Mouchette. She is seducing her visitor both by sexuality and playfulness.

The act of seduction is able to penetrate the screen that is blinding the real even though seduction is a surface play, says Boudrillard. It offers opportunity to go with the seducer all the way. It is a desire to be seduced, a flow of pure desire. The reality of pure seduction is engagement and immersion in all action, in the ability to spiral out of control and not care.

In the literal and filmic versions of Mouchette, she allows herself to go with the seductive play and loose control

– it becomes an escape from her miserable life. The result is death. In the Internet version the desire to be seduced continues to be a desire. She is only playing with death as this example from the homepage suggests. ' With the addition of the identity sharing feature the seductive act becomes more desirable than the exposure of the true identity of Mouchette.

The matrix of cyberspace holds the potential for new performative strategies and the possibility for idealizing our body by merging with this matrix waits around the corner. The performative body choosing to become a cyborg in cyberspace is free of the limiting and defining qualities of time and space one could claim. This optimistic view points at a human drive to idealize our body – a desire to fulfil an ever-present and never obtainable feeling of being insufficient. The illusion of a perfect body maintained by the artificial, is staging an unstable field of desire. It expresses a longing that functions as ground and drive in the production of identity through image, appearance and performance.

For Mouchette the perfect body is the immaterial body that is able to escape the physical assault. She is performing disembodiment. The selferasure that meant death in 1937 and 1967 has now turned into a disembodied life outside the boundaries of time and space. She is able to stay almost 13 years old and thereby stay alive. So maybe we are not doomed to perform disembodiment as suggested, but able to perform different identities, give away an identity for others to perform and choose another one for our selves.

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Johannesen, Hanne-Louise (2004) Performing Identity. PSi Conference # 10 1. http://www.staff.hum.ku.dk/hanlou/publikationer/performing_identity.html Singapore 2004

Mouchette's network
members/non members
Join Mouchette's network now?

VIEWS ON ART & PRESS PHOTOGRAPHY AUTUMN 2003

http://www.mouchette.net/

Mouchette.org

HOW TO BE PINK AND CONCEPTUAL AT THE SAME TIME

Annet Dekker in conversation
with Maritne Neddam

A: When looking back at the website Mouchette.org one could say that it was one of the first fictional personal blogs, a diary of a young girl. But moving beyond that first impression, and looking at the development through the years it has become much more. What does the character of Mouchette mean to you, what does it do?

M: Mouchette was about creating a form and not so much about storytelling. When I started Mouchette I wanted to use the notion of a character as something that transcends mediums, I saw the character as something that can be used as a form, or a container. Using a character as a metaphor allowed me to gather and structure information. I have always believed that a character, a person or an identity is a good metaphor. They can assume the identity of an institution without actually existing. In this sense, I see characters as containers that carry units of meaning.

I was very interested in exploring that idea. At its base, Mouchette shows that identity is a social, mental, or artistic construction. It's something that you put together. The idea that identity is one thing, 'Me is one,' is also an illusion, or a very totalitarian obligation.

A: How did you develop Mouchette? How has it been branded through the years?

M: Many things happened, depending on the works that I put up on the site, but it has never lost popularity. It has a sort of street credibility; in a way people really believed in it and the fake became reality. But the question of whether you're a real or fake person has become less important now, which is interesting. When I started Mouchette the idea of an alternate persona was still seen as a bizarre phenomenon, so it attracted a lot of attention. Many people posed as characters, for example, mothers would go online pretending to be their daughters, but you only heard of it when they ended up in court, which seldom happened. Through the years and with the rise of popular sites like Second Life it became less and less unusual. It is quite normal to have several e-mail addresses: a work e-mail, a private e-mail, and an old one full of spam, and they represent different personalities in each of us. Everybody has these multiple identities but they didn't create them in a deliberate way, it just happened.

Whereas in the beginning the question of whether Mouchette existed or not was very important for me, I ended up revealing the true author, but only recently and in quite a low-profile way. Secrecy was a very important part of the work; it really called on the imagination of the reader, the websurfer. While designing the work I kept wondering if the receiver would guess or imagine who was behind the character. For example, I could pretend that Mouchette was a man, but how then could I play out the sexual elements without them becoming perverted? I really emphasised the secrecy and the moments of revelation. I would send a phantom e-mail and pretend that the real author had to reveal his identity and therefore I would name an actual place,

a well-known art institution, for example, so that people would believe it.

A: Can you talk a little bit more about these physical presentations? How did you translate the virtual work into the physical world?

M: It was natural for me because I've worked for many years as an artist in public spaces and galleries. It surprised me that when I started Mouchette I was suddenly propelled into the closed field of digital media. This was very limiting for me. I always wanted to present Mouchette in as many ways as possible, always with the website at the centre, and within the context of her personality. Mouchette became the brand through which I presented various projects. I think it had an effect because I know of at least two instances when I was awarded a prize and the jury discussed the secrecy of the artist's identity, and it really attracted additional attention to the work.

A: Yes, I participated in one of those discussions. It was absolutely fascinating that after so many years, even professionals still discussed Mouchette's true nature.

M: Yes indeed, but this also happened with writers, famous writers like Romain Gary. And of course it works both ways – it has an influence on the receiver as well as on the author. Hosting another being inside yourself creates certain possibilities that trigger something. I felt it very deeply when I decided to reveal Mouchette's secret. Mouchette enabled me to escape my grown-up self, to express myself less with words and allow the story to be told more through images. It also allowed me to share parts of my own character that otherwise would not have come out, and to acknowledge that what I wanted to achieve with my art was simply to be famous and loved by everyone.

Sometimes I think that characters exist beyond us; we are merely temporal vehicles or carriers. There were often times when I

wanted to get rid of Mouchette because all the work was taking over my life; in a way I was her slave. Martine Neddam the artist was taken over by Mouchette the character, which didn't even belong to me. Mouchette first appeared in 1937 in a book by Georges Bernanos. Later, in 1967, Robert Bresson made a movie called *Mouchette,* about a French teenager who commits suicide after she is raped, and I loosely based Mouchette.org on these characters. Others have also used Mouchette.org. So it's come from somewhere and is going somewhere else and I'm the carrier in between.

A: Is this, for you, also a space where playfulness and irony come into play, the fun side of doing things? Something that is reflected in the projects you create, the coding, the tricks, but also on a conceptual level, a play with language, an urge to transform things, and push limits?

M: Yes, absolutely. It all started with the use of English as a foreign language. In the early days of the Internet people communicated in text spaces, the MOO [ed. MOOs are network accessible, multi-user, programmable, interactive systems, used for the construction of text-based adventure games, conferencing, and other collaborative software and communication platforms]. When I talked with people, I would tell them that English was not my mother tongue, but they would forget this quite quickly, and then my language would come across as very childish. So, there I was in the MOO communicating with MIT people, who were really academic, working on code and text. I was interested in talking to them through a sort of playful interface, which the MOO was. I had this awkward feeling that they would soon forget my 'accent' and after two sentences I was just communicating in baby talk, while they were using academic language. Quite unconsciously I was training myself to find simple way to express complex ideas without emotional barriers.

I decided to take that strategy further with the creation of an online character, Mouchette, who is emotionally very direct but still can communicate ideas about art. This experience was very liberating for me. If I had used my mother tongue it wouldn't have worked because, like every educated adult, my emotional inhibitions are very strongly rooted inside the language. Using this kind of direct language in a specific way triggered something in me I didn't know I had. For example, I would say simple phrases like 'Art is what you say Art is' using the 'Duchamp approach' in a very cheeky way. If I had expressed it in French, I would have used more complex language. Mouchette gave me the opportunity to leave intellectual authority behind. This was important because I wanted to reach another audience that was present on the Internet and move beyond the art gallery and the institutional scene.

For me the irony revealed itself through the aesthetics of the site. Perhaps I can explain it with something I used to say: 'Can you be pink and conceptual at the same time?'. In the 1970s and 1980s artists from the Art & Language and conceptual art movements were very style driven, even though they pretended that appearance and personality were insignificant. But when look back, it was elegantly black and white, very stylish. Pink at that time, and even now in many cases, wouldn't be acceptable. Pink is frivolous, not serious; it's playful and certainly can't be conceptual or political.

Sometimes this attitude towards the non-pink in art makes me very angry. For example, Mouchette would never be called a political work of art, or even art that engages with the social. At best many art critics and curators see it as a funny little story, non-political and not socially engaged. This has annoyed me at times, because it is political and it does engage with the social on many levels. The idea of alternate identities is very political, as are the notions of multiple identities, and shared identities, which I

provided through Mouchette. It's even more cynical because I'm perhaps one of the few artists who have had to deal with the legal system when I was taken to court. But I also never claimed that it was political or social. I don't think that's my role, and it's not the way the work functions either.

A: Mouchette seems indeed to elude the radars of politics, new technologies and networks, which is regrettable.

M: Yes, it is, but with Mouchette I wanted foremost to create a social space, a space where people could communicate and help other people. Of course, that these things have been sorted, edited and published is in itself a political act. It's still a sort of repository of thoughts and emotions that wanted to be shared, and finally have been shared. Mouchette shows that art can penetrate people's private lives, and I believe that is a good thing.

A: You're pushing the limits of art critics and curators even further, firstly with a Fanclub and now a Guerrilla Fanshop…

M: As soon as I had a mailing list of 20 people I named this list a Fanclub. Over time I noticed that the number of visitors kept growing and that the audience also changed. New people keep on discovering the site. I believe that it's because of Mouchette's youthfulness, her combination of energy and anger that is also present in classics such as *The Catcher in the Rye*. People recognise and identify with Mouchette. For me the Fanshop is a continuation as well as a new step. I like the idea that it is situated in real life. It's another interesting form for making contact with people. I try to investigate the Fanshop as a social form and an artistic form, including the notions of fake and real. And again, it plays with the idea that an identity can be shared and also be used to offer a platform for different ideas and groups of people.

A: How do you balance between the idea of Mouchette as an identity and as a space where social exchange can take place?

M: The Western world has developed a very limited form of identity, I think. We believe that we can own ourselves, which is absolutely untrue. You're always a part of something and you switch between different identities. The Western idea of identity needs to be re-examined. I was very aware of that when I created Mouchette. I didn't want to describe someone, but I wanted to re-examine the conditions of identity as a form of social exchange. I've always seen Mouchette as a platform, not as an identity. It, or she, allows me to raise certain issues and also allows others to do certain things. It's a platform of exchange.

A: And not just of ideas, but also the sharing of identities?

M: Yes, I wanted to put forward the idea of identity as a composition. As I said the notion of a single identity is very artificial; furthermore, whatever identity you do have does not necessarily only belong to you. Its also part of, or even belongs to, everyone who interacts with it. Whatever you do to yourself, for example, if you cut your hair and a friend comes by the next day and is surprised and makes some kind of remark, then that remark could be understood as: 'You changed yourself without my permission'. I very much like the idea of identity as something that is shared. So I created an identity-sharing interface that made it possible to use or copy Mouchette. Unfortunately, it backfired after the terrorist attack in New York in 2001. I was creating David Still at the time, and was very excited about inventing another character that could be taken over by others. But after terrorism struck, anything that dealt with other identities became suspect. Terrorists could hide behind my characters. Each and every façade was suspect. What was once playful

and seductive was made into something to strike out at, something to erase. I really felt that the attack on the Twin Towers and the way America reacted to it threatened my art.

A: How do you see in this light the rise of Facebook? Do you think it might become a way of dealing with different identities again, or a place where people can play with identity?

M: No, exactly the opposite. Facebook actually started as a virtual dating site, so it's based entirely on the concept of real identities. If anything, it reinforces the very limited idea of a single identity.

A: What is Mouchette's next adventure?

M: I'm still fascinated by made-up characters, especially those that people accept as real. In this line I just finished a work *Turkmenbashi, mon amour,* an animation in which Mouchette shows us Turkmenistan and highlights the presence of its ex-dictator, the late Saparmurad 'Turkmenbashi' Nyazov. Even though he's dead, his personality is still very prominent in the capital, Ashgabat. The city is home to numerous huge golden statues and images of this extremely repressive dictator. At the same time there is a strange atmosphere of non-communication. That tension between his ubiquitous 'presence' and the silence about it was something I wanted to address. I made a sort of reportage, a documentary with photos and texts, where Mouchette describes and comments in her typically playful and ironic way. Here the play between fiction and reality is to identify these fictional elements in reality.

I think I'm bound to continue experimenting with fictitious characters in many different ways, with the ones I invent and with the ones who are already here among us. Once you've created one, you realise that our lives are full of them. They are like an army of shadows.

Translation: Mark Poysden

ZEN AND THE ART OF DATABASE MAINTENANCE

By Martine Neddam

YOUR DOMAIN NAME REGISTRATION HAS EXPIRED!
You usually receive several reminders from your registrar warning you about the impending expiry date of your domain name. The first one arrives three months before the date, which is much too early to spend any time on, so you delete that e-mail until, a few weeks later, another warning from your registrar suddenly feels like an emergency threatening to stop everything you're doing. You grab your credit card and try to renew your registration online.

The warning message, which should have come at just the right moment, never arrived because you had suppressed that old e-mail address, which you thought was only full of spam anyway.

Finally, you remember the expiry date just one day before it's due. You want to log onto the registrar's site but you don't remember which registrar it was. Network Solutions? The one from the Origins? Directnic, the cheapest, you know? Your own webhost? (Most webhosts handle domain name registrations but transfers from other registrars don't always work.)

You finally work out which of your five different registrars is the correct one, but can't find the necessary login code and password because you last used it two years ago. You eventually manage to enter the registrar's interface, but when you want to pay for renewal (three years, that's the maximum here), your credit card is rejected, and after three attempts, concerned that your credit card number is being hijacked, you stop trying,

while your domain name shows no sign of having been renewed.

Your domain name has now expired, and you receive regular warnings, but you can't find a way to contact this particular registrar, except via the website that refuses your credit card. There, you can use a support page, which sends back automatic replies with a very long code number in the subject header, but this is never followed by a real message written by a human being responding to your complaint.

Your domain name has finally fallen into the hands of 'domain-name-snatchers', the resellers of domain names. Now you'll find a porn site under your domain name, or a webpage promoting the sale of expensive domain names (why isn't yours included in the list?), or a portal redirecting you to different commercial sites organised by categories.

All your content is still exactly in the same place on your server at the webhost, but nobody will ever be able to find it without your domain name. Search engines won't be able to find it either, and because of their long-term memory and archives, will remember the old domain name forever. How long will it take you to rebuild your linkage under a different domain name and have the same ranking in the search engines? Will your domain name ever become available for a new registration?

COULDN'T CONNECT TO DATABASE
You are browsing your site, clicking on a link to review the next entry on a board and suddenly the message couldn't connect to database appears (or a much more obscure message with the same meaning). Your site

DEAD FLY

Only a minute ago I was happily flying over your plate.
And
now
I'm
dead.

IT'S ME

TELL ME

it's me

http://www.mouchette.org/fly/index.html

is there, the top of the page is there, but the dynamic content is no longer accessible.

You become aware that your dynamic content – in other words, the entries of all your users – is stored on a different server, the MySql server, which might be down while your http server is still up and running. You realise that your website is hosted on two separate servers, on two separate hard disks, which doubles your chances of downtime.

As the years go by and your users' participation continues and your database expands, becoming the most precious part of your art, you are constantly confronted with the many complexities of having a database server.

You have a local copy of your website on the hard disk of your personal computer, including all the html pages, images and Flash files, which is normal since you created all of them on that computer. But your database only exists online on the database server. You can only display your website through an Internet connection and not from a local copy.

Once your webhost went down while you were presenting a lecture about your website at a conference about art on the Internet. Out of desperation you tried to browse your site from your local copy but the pages displayed all the PHP codes instead of the dynamic content. Confronted by all this code and your evident confusion, your audience became really impatient and didn't even believe you really were the author of a virtual character. Later, you ask your database programmer if you could keep a copy of the database on your hard disk – just in case, even if it's not up to date – but he explains that the only way to do this is to run a local server, which is far too complicated for you to sort out, especially if you're using a Mac and it's pre-OSX, with OS9 not being able to run a local server.

You try to accept the situation but sometimes your relationship with the Internet feels like you are a child depending on its parents, being disconnected for brief moments each day. Sometimes you feel like you are a part of the Internet in the same way that an unborn baby is part of its mother, nourished by the umbilical cord while resting inside a soft bubble.

WE DON'T ACCEPT ONLINE DOCUMENTATION
You are assembling your documentation to apply for a grant from the Netherlands Fund for Visual Arts (Fonds BKVB). In their guidelines you read that they accept digital files and websites, but only on a CD-ROM and not online. You call them and insist that your site has a database with important user-generated content and can only run online. They explain that it's their archival policy to keep and store the information and material from all the artists they sponsor, which is why they requested your website on a CD-ROM. Besides, they want to be 100 per cent certain that the documentation is available for the jury which only meets once a month, so they don't want to run a risk with your information on a website.

So you decide to make screen snap-shots of the database, a large series of pictures that you edit to a proper size in jpg format. You add reference titles and descriptions of the contents and combine all of this in a multiple window website (not online) that you design for the occasion, and it ends up being quite an elegant simulation of the user-generated content that can be browsed online. It is time-consuming work, but the results are good enough and the grant is awarded.

Ultimately you work out that this visual simulation might prove useful, and you decide to always keep a copy of this CD-ROM with you, in your bag, so that you can provide an offline impression of your website at any given moment, on any computer.

But the next time you want to use that CD-ROM, only a year later, you discover that the javascripts supporting the pop-up windows do not function anymore; they have become outdated and are now incompatible with most browsers.

Hopefully nobody at the Fonds BKVB archives will ever look at the contents of your CD-ROM again.

DATABASE BACK-UPS
Your database programmer once made a mistake in which the time-stamp of your entire database was destroyed. All your users' entries and all the text in your database was still there, in the right categories, but all under one date: 1.1.1970.

This was an incredible disaster, but a very ironic one: you would rather have lost the entire database than just this small 'piece of time', which was, you realised, the backbone of a very heterogeneous collection of snippets of texts.

Fortunately, the webhost had a policy of a completely backing-up data every two days and could retrieve a two-day-old version of your database with the time-stamp intact. Just in time, because few hours later the back-up system would have overwritten a new back up with an invalid time-stamp.

That's when you realised the value of having a back-up system of your own and should no longer rely on the webhost performing miracles.

So, do you have a good automatic back-up system of your own now?

To be honest, you don't really know….

A good back-up system would automatically store a version of your complete database on a different hard disk every two days, and perhaps save one extra version each month in case of unnoticed damage. You discussed it with Zenuno, a very gentle database programmer who helps you run your server on a volunteer basis. Zenuno works for a Portuguese government website in Lisbon but is based in Amsterdam, and has a great deal of experience in security and back-up issues. You were reassured by his knowledge and his promise that he would set up your back-up system.

Now, writing this, you realise that you haven't discussed this particular problem with Zenuno since you first raised it, as each time you contacted him since, it was because you needed help with a different emergency, and the back-up issue wasn't part of that emergency. So you're not certain if you have a database back-up system or not, and if you do, you don't really know what it does.

RECENT UPDATES AND USER COMPLAINTS
None of the content provided by users of your site is published automatically. Everything you receive, all the reactions to the different works of online art, enters a customized moderator's interface where you read, classify, publish or delete the entries. When an entry is published the author receives an e-mail informing him of its publication, with a link that enables him to delete his e-mail address from your database, all this wrapped inside a special narrative by Mouchette, written in her house style and related to each online narrative.

You never publish immediately, you always want to wait a few days before you put the text online and notify the author. Your intention is to shape your online relationship with the participating user in order to increase the attention span from a few minutes to a few days. If the delays last too long, a week for example, the attention might be lost and your e-mail becomes a message from an intruder at best; in most cases it is marked as spam and is blocked by the spam filter.

If you go on holiday and decide to avoid all computers for a couple of weeks – which rarely happens – you hope that your users will forget about you in the same way you try to forget about them, but what usually happens is the reverse: you are flooded with complaints and insults about a 'dead site' which is 'never updated'. It's comforting to know you have such faithful participants. To thank them for their loyalty you immediately publish the complaints about a 'dead site', tongue-in-cheek, classified in the 'favourite' category, long before you publish the more serious or pleasant entries.

You realise that a number of your participants are 'hooked' on your website and you wonder what would happen if you died. How long would it take for them to give up on your site? You think that this could be the measure of the attention span of a dedicated contributor.

ON THE INTERNET NOBODY KNOWS YOU'RE DEAD…

Like all human beings you've doubtless fantasised about your own death. In which ways would you be missed, how you would be remembered, etc.?

As a virtual person you fantasise about how long Internet access to your site and your database system would survive your actual death. If you died, how long would it take your contributors to realize that nobody is maintaining the site anymore? If they send complaints about a 'dead site' nobody will publish them, so the information about the lack of maintenance will not alert anyone. Nobody will know you're dead.

Sometimes, you start to calculate mentally:

My webhosting is paid by the year and is due for renewal in August. My domain registration is paid for two years and is due for renewal in February. The registrar will delete the domain name immediately after expiry but at least the webhost will tolerate one or two months of unpaid hosting before deleting the site. My credit card number is in their system and the webhosting can be renewed at least one more year without my intervention. My credit card is renewed every two years, in January. If I die now, how long will my site stay online and what will be removed first?

'After my death how many people will have surfed my site before it is removed?' This is an easy question and it can have a precise, numerical answer through your

web statistics, and long after your site has disappeared, the free statistics (webstats-motigo) site you are using will still provide this information to anyone requesting it.

Who has the codes, or your website, database and server IDs, and who may use them after your death?

Should you leave a will concerning all digital data? How much of your digital data will stay in the public domain and how much of it do you want to remove? Shouldn't you already be erasing your traces? What kind of peace will you find in your digital afterlife?

CAPTCHAS AND WORMS

To prevent unwanted comments from entering your database you can use captchas (titbits of warped texts, little visual riddles that can only be solved by a human mind) to block access to automatic scripts. You don't have them because you couldn't implement them in your database system, as it was built long before captchas existed. Consequently your database is trashed by several entries arriving automatically each day containing links to Viagra sites or online casinos. None of these are published on your site since you moderate all the entries, and manually delete many of these unwanted entries everyday. Sometimes they arrive as full pages, so you need to read the entire text and recognize that one entry written by a human being among all the spam.

You become infuriated by the amount of time you waste deleting spam. You think that the love of art cannot justify such an absurd daily activity. You sigh… But sometimes, while doing this, you picture yourself as a gardener sweeping away dead leaves or pulling weeds, and then you smile. Since the battle against spam and nasty scripts is lost and you don't believe any amount of codes can cure this evil, your last resort is your limitless imagination. While cleaning your database garden you start wondering if any of these unwanted messages have 'worms', or are 'worms', self-replicating themselves inside your database or replicating the spam message. You groan, your smile has

disappeared and you spend the rest of your day reading anti-virus websites finding out about the 'worms' in your garden.

IS IT ART OR IS IT SPAM?

You were one of the first to integrate the use of e-mail within your artistic practise. To advertise a new work online, your virtual character would send an e-mail recounting a personal story about her life, addressing each recipient by his or her first name. Your second virtual character was designed to share his identity, and to freely allow the use of his e-mail. He had a website from where you could send his personal stories using his e-mail, and the interface allowed you to personalise the e-mail by placing the name of the intended recipient in the subject line or inserting it in the body of the message.

At some point in the history of the Internet this type of personally addressed e-mail became a very popular device for spammers, who had also noticed how easily they could attract a recipient's attention by inserting their name everywhere, using this to simulate a one-on-one relationship. After spam filters were improved, they could easily detect this type of subterfuge and many of your art-related e-mails were dumped in your recipients' e-mail junk folders. And although you had no commercial intentions and your bulk e-mails were very, very modest in quantities, it became very difficult for your art not to pass for spam. And if your webhost received a complaint about spam abuse, he would remove your website. Explaining to your webhost that your e-mails are art, and not spam, couldn't save the situation. The only option open to you was to move your content to another webhost, until the same problem happened again. Each time the delay before your removal became shorter and after the fourth time, you resolved to stop sending e-mails.

WARNING:
SERVER SPACE AVAILABLE ON EARTH

It is a common misconception to think of cyberspace as independent of countries or

a physical location. Nothing could be farther from the truth. You often think that if your art were destroyed it wouldn't be because of censorship or related to the content of your information, but because of unfortunate local circumstances: an asteroid could fall precisely where your data is stored at the webhost, and that would be the end of your art. Very unlikely, you admit. But a fire or accident at the place where your webhost has their servers is a possibility, so is criminal destruction, if not targeting you, then possibly someone else who stores their data on the same hard disks. Google is said to have hidden the computers where they save all their users' data in a secret underground bunker, which makes perfect sense because there must be many people who would like to bomb that location and you could probably imagine yourself as one of them.

Your first webhost, Widexs.nl, was Dutch, located somewhere close to Schiphol (Amsterdam airport), and the servers were probably there too. An airplane never fell on their building, but because all the communication with the technicians was in Dutch, it sometimes added to your worries, especially when a complaint for spam abuse arrived and you had to defend your case with diplomacy. You failed. But you were rescued by a French art group who run their own servers in their own venue. They hosted you for free, being honoured to offer refuge to a banned Internet artist. They said they could afford to ignore the complaints of spam abuse since they ran the servers on their private computers. But one day the server failed. Someone had gone on holiday, leaving his computer on, but locked in a closet for safety's sake, and everyone had to wait until this person returned from his holidays to re-boot the server. Being hosted on servers run by artists wasn't the safest option either.

After this episode all you wanted was to go back to a commercial webhost. You combined your efforts with one of the dissatisfied artists from the group who

had rented a 'virtual server' at `Amen.fr`, a commercial French webhost. You paid for all the server space while only using a small part in exchange for the artist's help in running your database and setting the server configurations for you. At the time, you believed you couldn't cope with these tasks; moreover, the webhost server panels were all in French, which happens to be your mother tongue for everything, except computers.

Dangerous territorial specificities became an issue again some time later when the French police started investigating you for promoting suicide through `Mouchette.org`. That took place in Marseille, the official address of the French artist renting the 'virtual server' where you were hosted. You hired a lawyer in Marseille to defend your case, which was the closest you ever got to real crime in your entire life because you were sure the lawyer was more of a criminal than you could ever be. The lawyer wanted to address the question of territory because the accusation and search warrant were issued by the French authorities, but the supposed crime of promoting suicide was committed on Dutch territory where you had a residence permit and created your website. Lawyers in Marseille love crime so much they would use any kind of twisted reasoning to confirm its existence, including jurisprudence on the extraterritoriality of an Internet crime. Ultimately the investigating judge ruled that no crime had been committed and no charges were pressed. The lawyer still billed you for a considerable amount of money on the grounds that he had found the evidence that the servers of `Amen.fr` were located on German soil (but he didn't know why).

Now you run your own 'virtual server' at `Dreamhost.com`, an American Internet hosting company based on the West Coast, where business likes to define itself as being a dream – meaning their own, of course. They wouldn't let you fulfil your own dream of using e-mail functions as a part of your art, because they are a business, after all.

Your 'virtual server' is called 'Bernado Soares', one of the heteronyms of Fernando Pessoa, the author of The Book of Disquiet. When you're in trouble with the server or the database, you ask the help of Zenuno, the same Portuguese programmer who helped you before. This new constellation of people and places has a certain sense of poetic 'disquiet', bringing you closer to a type of 'Zen and the Art of Database Maintenance'.

'I' IS NOT THE ULTIMATE DATABASE CONFIGURATION.
How many times have you dreamt of leaving everything behind, everything that made you who you were, and move to a new, unconnected life, escape the tyranny of your ego and find new love?

You made up a new set of database configurations in charge of saying 'I' for you, a virtual character. And then another one. And another… What was left behind (and never disappeared) was something you could call a 'you', a database system exchange of characteristics. 'You' is a handy grammatical configuration that can be used for internal monologues since you're the addressed and the addressee all in one.

When writing a text about personal experience such as this one, 'you' embraces the reader inside the experience as if it had happened to him or her. After all, doesn't everyone run a database system?

Martine Neddam is the author of Mouchette.org, an artist and a professor in Visual Arts in the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam.

Neddam, Martine (2010) Zen and the Art of Database Maintenance. Annet Dekker (ed.) (2010) Archive2020. Sustainable Archiving of Born-Digital Cultural Content. Amsterdam: Virtueel Platform, pp. 1.0-1.10.

OMER FAST

Exhibition: May 14 – July 23 2011

NIMk presents the first solo exhibition by Omer Fast in The Netherlands. The show is comprised of three video installations, none of which have been seen in The Netherlands before: *Nostalgia, The Casting* and *De Grote Boodschap.*

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Meer weten? marvia.nl

because I'

artist too