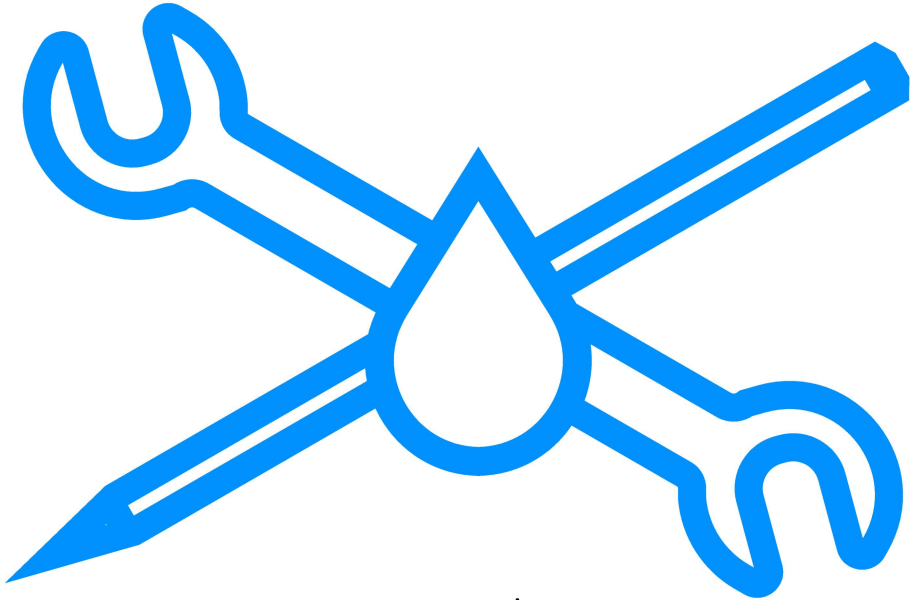


AS FLUIDO



CRAFT
ART
TECHNOLOGY

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Welcome!



This booklet is about AS FLUIDO, the dynamic instrument through which I develop software for the needs of the multimedia artist. This is the place where Craft and Art meet, and together they learn how to use computer technology.

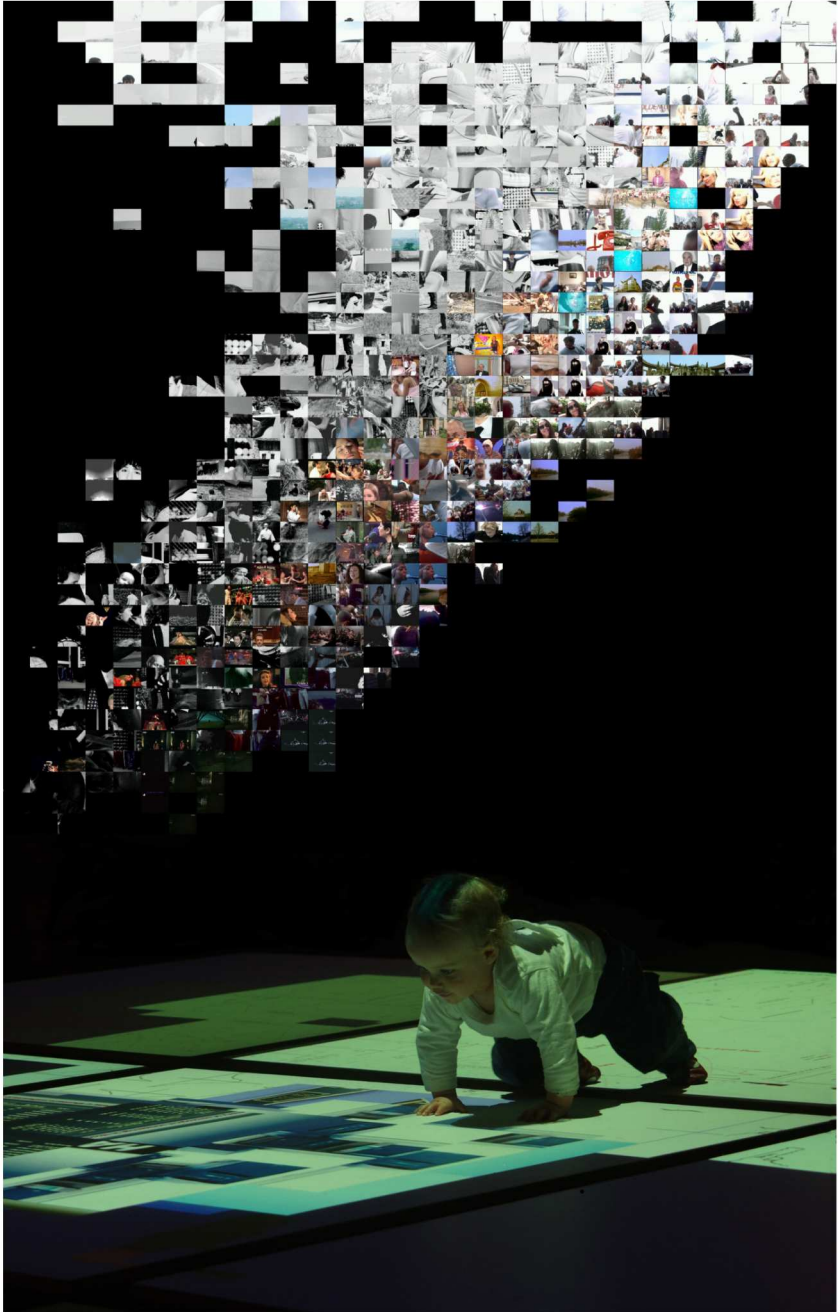
You have a bright idea to express your art through, and to make the life of your fellow human beings more interesting and colourful. You have the precise feeling that there exists modern hardware that could do exactly what you are imagining.

But you have been disappointed by shrink-wrapped, do-it-all solutions.

Maybe, individually crafted software can be of help.

The computer keyboard can be used with a spirit that is akin to your own. Software works much more smoothly when it is cared for. Harmony can be a goal for engineering tasks, too.

AS FLUIDO/Carlo Prelz implies familiarity with the world of commodity hardware and Free/Open software. Your striving for harmony and surprise can be shared.



Example #1: nO-tA-tI-oN

You have a large (I mean, a LARGE) database of images, all of the same size. If they are not, there are many ways to make sure they will eventually be.

You have a handful of simple methods for ranking the images. Like: more red or less green... Any algorithm can be added, but simplicity has its magic.

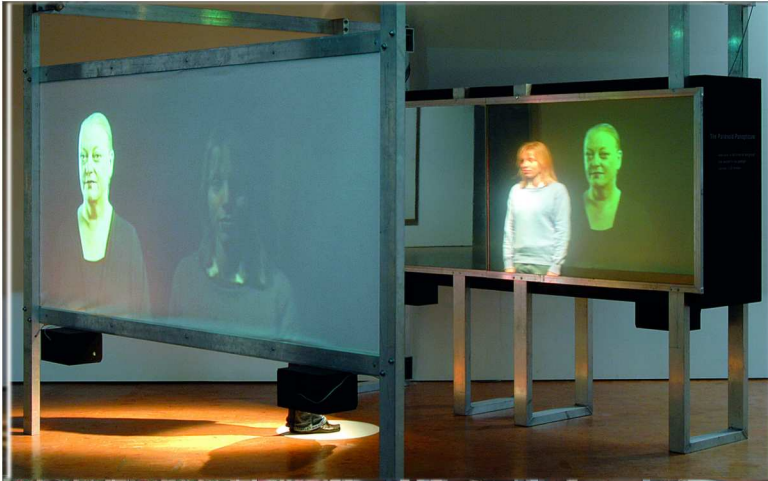
You have some video output. It can be one screen or one beamer, but a large grid of displays is what you have in your mind.

You want to be able to send the images in your database to the various screens. In a range of resolutions. The various screens must appear as one single large surface.

In a few words, you want to create an infrastructure to paint on a canvas with the images of your database. And in the course of the years, you wish to stretch the original concept to directions that are unexpected first and foremost to you.

And you want to pilot the whole thing via PD, Miller Puckette's fancy tool that artists are great friends of. But it should also be able to quietly run by itself, with or without interfacing to external sensors.

The result is Geert Mul's nO-tA-tI-oN software. A recent example of its limitless possibilities can be admired in the town-hall of Middelburg, the small town in Zeeland, itself worth a visit.



Example #2: The Paranoid Panopticum

The artist as an artisan. The installation as a solid piece of craftsmanship. The ideal environment where the triangle between Art, Craft and Technology can find a perfect application.

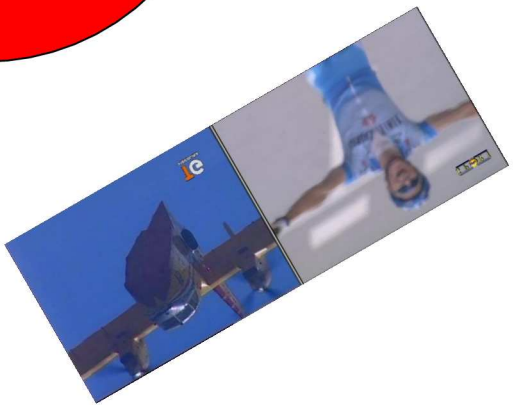
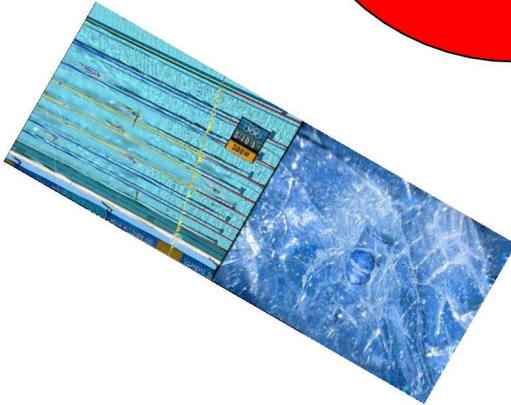
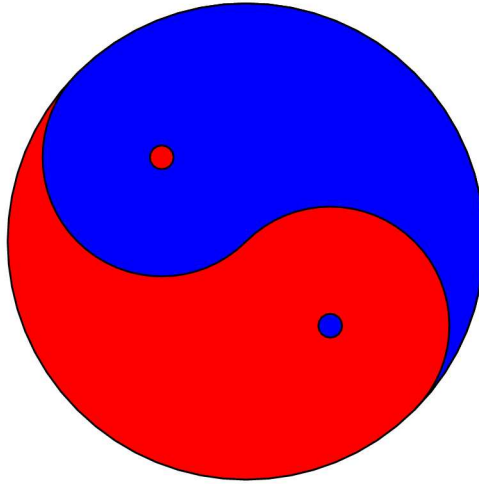
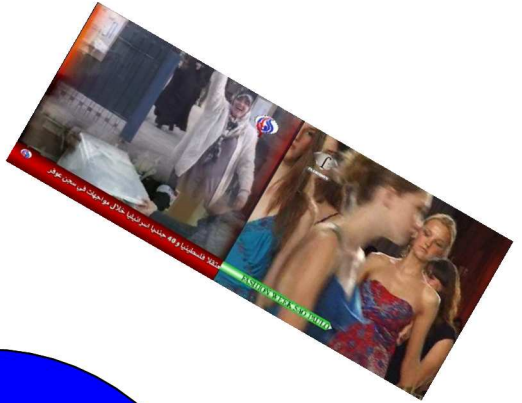
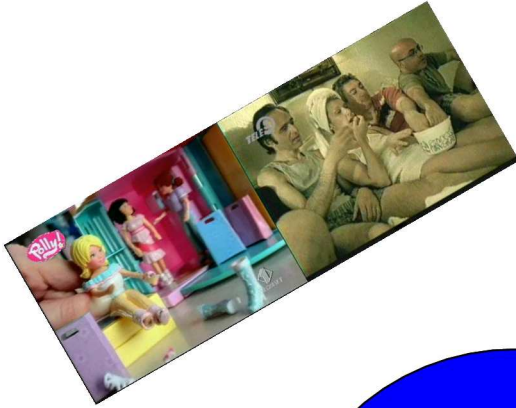
A technological novelty: Priva-Lite. A sheet of glass that, normally opaque, can become transparent by applying an electrical current. A piece of theatre by Alfred Kreijmborg.
A well-known actress, Viviane de Muynk.

The actress waits patiently, until a person triggers her to activity. "Look!" A hidden camera, from behind the transparent Priva-Lite and a semi-transparent mirror, captures the reaction of the visitor, who inevitably embraces the role of the disembodied male voice: his or her face appears on the screen, beside that of the actress!

Software creation and adaptation has all been about synergy with the artist. The keyboard has been used in sync with the saw and hammer.

Careful adaptation to the artist's exact wishes has taken years, while the object was travelling towards ever new audiences.

The Paranoid Panopticum is now part of the permanent collection of ZKM in Karlsruhe, Germany.



Example #3: Split Representation

Brainstorming starts by wondering what makes a cow a cow. The idea is to find images from two different databases, that are similar, although you can't pinpoint how. The databases have to be made up of images from television channels:

on one side, news bulletins, on the other, advertisement spots.

The key here is algorithmic research. The Net is cluttered with research papers that promise wonders, and with examples that promise to be ideal, but eventually don't work as expected.

This means it's time to learn. To experiment. At the onset, you have no idea where your research will lead you to.

A craftsman starts by strongly believing that the desired outcome is possible.
A Taoist starts by believing that whatever destination he or she will reach is going to be the ideal one.

And this specific path has generated, among other things, a permanent installation (to be admired at the HES in Rotterdam), and Geert Mul's recently published book, «Match Maker» (to be found at a bookstore near you)



Example #4: MøB

I was born with a strong desire for northern perspectives.

Thanks to the turns of life and applied goodwill
the occasion was created for an ambitious project
in collaboration with media lab BEK, from Bergen, Norway.

Along the years, the strongly elusive goal of creating
a computer-based tool that many artists could stretch
to as many directions as they are,
has been laboriously pursued.

Now there exist more than 100,000 lines in the
publically available MøB codebase. This does not mean
that there is much practical use in it - the project
almost always enjoyed immediate targets
that were not exactly that concrete.

Nevertheless, the project is a source of great interest
for the various paradigms that it has explored,
and for those that it can possibly explore
in the coming years.

Acknowledgments

For information about nO-tA-tl-oN, Split Representation,
and the many other works of Geert Mul, please refer to his site:
<http://www.geertmul.nl>.

Information about works by Hermen Maat can be found on his site:
<http://www.xs4all.nl/~maat>.

MØB's home base is at <http://mob.bek.no>. General information
about the multifaceted activities of BEK and Gisle Frøysland
can be found at <http://www.bek.no>.

For the image on the top half of P.6:

Hermen Maat
«Paranoid Panopticum» [2000]
ZKM Sammlung / ZKM Collection
© Hermen Maat, Foto: Franz Wamhof

Artwork and text:

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