

June 28 - July 8

curator: Magdalena Sawon
artists: Jenny Althoff/Alexander Vaindorf
and Kiki Seror

July 12 - July 22

curator: Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn
artists: Nobuhira Narumi and Lucas Michael

Apex Art Curatorial Program

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Cover: Lucas Michael *Untitled Landmind*, 2000 (detail)
Laminated C-print 40 x 30 inches

"222" is a summer program comprising two, two-per-
son, two-week exhibitions each curated by a gallerist
who selects two artists they do not represent to create a
curatorial dialogue.

222
two
curators
two
artists
two
weeks

apexart



screenlife

i hate to break this to you but there is no cyberspace
there are no web pages no virtual reality
on the internet only strings of code travel through the wires
see even i use the word travel which suggests time
and there is no time either only download speed
it's all just you who has to have a familiar hook to approach this thing
give it a reference to what you already know
you want to re create your experiences relive your life on the screen
make your fantasies come true
ha ha ha
it's not gonna happen man
but you're welcome to try

- There is not enough RAM in the whole universe to perform the task you have requested.
- The operation has failed. Would you like to try again? It will only fail again*

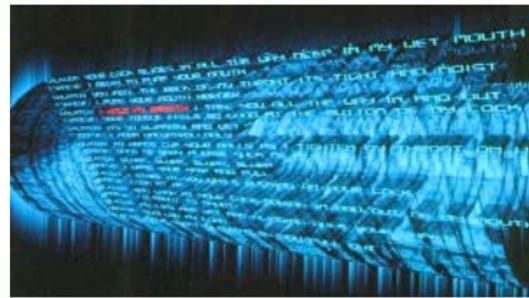
The two projects in this exhibition are a result of the artists' on-line encounters and interactions. Both of them probe the creation and experience of simulated reality of the Internet. Aside from a pragmatic information source and electronic business outlet, the Internet has increasingly become a fantasy generating dream machine for the wired masses. As another tool for imagination, the updated answer to a "live in your head" escape principle for anybody with a modem and a phone line, it allows users to remake, idealize, invent or alter their personae and surroundings. A catalyst for techno-utopia with no password required.

Kiki Seror explores the sexualization of the Net. She logs onto often unnecessarily demonized porn chat rooms where she assumes different identities, male or female, aggressive or submissive, and subsequently creates works based on the text transcripts from such encounters. Through Seror's work cybersex acquires an image. Explicit dirty talk rendered through dynamic typography is a stand-in for the absent biological body. Lust becomes erect yet deserted architecture.

Althoff and Vaindorf's installation is twice removed from the real world. And then brought back. The artists met Tanya Murphy from Seattle in Active Worlds, a

vast 3D multi-user space which allows for building complex architectural sites and communicating with visitors via chat software. "Tanya in Twiglet Zone" is a life size model of a virtual living room. Pixelated surfaces and non functional furniture replicate a part of a house created by Tanya on-line. The virtual house itself is a precise, if idealized, copy of Tanya's real Seattle home. For the installation she has been asked to give a guided tour - the guests and the host unite in the publicly private space.

Transforming and adapting their experiences into physical, material objects, these artists interpret the



Kiki Seror *Tears of Blood, Galatea Returns to the Flood*, 2000 Digital Duratrans in Lightbox 24"x48"x3" 1/3



Jenny Althoff and Alexander Vaindori, *Tanya in Twiglet Zone*, 2000 Foamcore, digital prints, plexiglass, video, computer

Net as a psychological/social construct. For them, it is the tool, the subject, but not the medium to implement ideas. The very core of the Internet is being explored in works produced directly on-line: for artists like Mark Napier, the web itself is the medium as well as the subject and means of delivery. I would like to send you to your computers to navigate through Napier's site www.potatoland.org. There, in potatoland, the web pages can be shredded, trashed and reconfigured, unwanted content can be disposed of onto digital landfill, (ro)bots can be rebuilt into new beings from preexisting elements. That's a whole lot of fantasies reformatted. Enjoy.

Magdalena Sawon
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*Perry Hoberman, 2000 (messages excerpted from *Cathartic User Interface*, interactive multimedia installation)

Dog Day Afternoon, appropriately held in the heat of the summer, features new work by New York based photographer Lucas Michael and Japanese conceptual artist Nobuhira Narumi. Both artists study the human condition via the landscape, the former through the lens of a camera, the latter through the eyes of a dog. While Michael's photographs take us on a trip to the desert, Narumi's video obliges us to wander the city streets, literally at dog's eye level.

Disguised as a tourist, Lucas Michael recently traveled to Death Valley, Joshua Tree, and the Navaho desert in California. For Michael, the

desert represents the last American frontier, where tourists take on the role of romantic hero, roaming the landscape like the lonesome cowboy in a country ballad, in a quest for spiritual enlightenment. Michael, as mere observer, wishes he could go to the desert "with their kind of energy." Referring to glorified travel photographs or commercial landscape photography, he gives us the ultimate travel poster with a twist.

There is a sense of alienation, of displacement, of unfulfilled expectations in these images of uneasy wayfarers moving through what has become a canned experience, continually mediated and subverted. Signs tell them where to eat, where to pee, where to look. In the artist's mind these are tourists who have been driven inward; therefore the only travel worth documenting is an internal one. Michael approaches the act of taking a photograph introspectively. Thus the title of this body of work and wordplay: Landmind. The man-made objects – walls, cars, and porta-potties – that punctuate the landscape (and blend into it, camouflaged like landmines) bring us

back to reality. We are here. Even in the desert there is no virgin space. A panoramic view is littered with footprints.

As civilization breaks "the silence of the seas," our passion for travel, with all its deceptiveness, continues to proliferate. The packaged tours, books and posters create the illusion of what no longer exists. As Claude Levi Strauss predicted, the history of the past twenty-thousand years is irrevocable.

Like Lucas Michael, Nobuhira Narumi also walks a fine line between expectation and reality, between artlessness and artificiality. Narumi, who was born in Japan and now divides his time between New York and Tokyo, investigates the human world through a dog's point of view. Attaching a micro-video camera to the dog's head (the video triggered off and on by the movement of the dog), he allows the various dogs he walks to lead him through the streets of New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong, London, and New Zealand. The dogs define his path and his work. The resulting Dog-cam Project is being shown together for the first time in New York at Apex Art.

Existing for some 15,000 years, the dog remains the closest "other" to man. As we move closer to a digital world, perhaps the dog will become the tool to reconnect ourselves to nature. The artist began to use the dog, not because of a special affinity with it, but rather to "find a way to objectively observe the human species."

In the artist's words, "they have information about nature. A dog is a kind of medicine that is especially necessary in an urban situation. In the red light district in Tokyo a dog pisses on the neon. This is an odd situation...dogs are very adaptable." They are a product of



Nobuhira Narumi, from Dog-cam Project 1998 videolook

human intervention. Within these videos, the dog is seen in all its roles, as companion, hunter, guard, shepherd, and faithful servant.

A Golden Retriever, the preferred breed in Tokyo, leads us through the crowded streets - an ironic symbol of Western culture, a suburban pet out of context in this urban setting. Narumi reminds us that "pet culture" is pervasive. The dog, man's best friend, the world's greatest surrogate child,



Nobuhira Narumi, from Dog-cam Project 1998 videolook

and vice-versa. Narumi seems to counter Descartes' belief that animals are mechanistic creatures without souls. He allows his dogs to become human activists.

The filming itself becomes a performative act, referred to by the artist as Dognet. The videos show how integral the dog is to the master's environment; however as an audience we experience the streets from the dog's point of view. Our sense of smell is heightened as our sights are lowered. A pit-bull snuffles through trash in Harlem. A Dox-Hound leaps over sheep in New Zealand. A Golden Retriever prowls the streets of the red light district in Tokyo. We are there. Narumi has taken the Dadaist gesture of walking down a street and tripping on an object that becomes a "ready-made" to the absurd.

Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn
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