

**Proceedings of the
European Society for Aesthetics**

Volume 7, 2015

Edited by Fabian Dorsch and Dan-Eugen Ratiu

Published by the European Society for Aesthetics

esa

Proceedings of the European Society of Aesthetics

Founded in 2009 by Fabian Dorsch

Internet: <http://proceedings.eurosa.org>

Email: proceedings@eurosa.org

ISSN: 1664 – 5278

Editors

Fabian Dorsch (University of Fribourg)

Dan-Eugen Ratiu (Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca)

Editorial Board

Zsolt Bátori (Budapest University of Technology and Economics)

Alessandro Bertinetto (University of Udine)

Matilde Carrasco Barranco (University of Murcia)

Josef Früchtl (University of Amsterdam)

Robert Hopkins (New York University)

Catrin Misselhorn (University of Stuttgart)

Kalle Puolakka (University of Helsinki)

Isabelle Rieusset-Lemarié (University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

John Zeimbekis (University of Patras)

Publisher

The European Society for Aesthetics

Department of Philosophy

University of Fribourg

Avenue de l'Europe 20

1700 Fribourg

Switzerland

Internet: <http://www.eurosa.org>

Email: secretary@eurosa.org

Proceedings of the European Society for Aesthetics

Volume 7, 2015

Edited by Fabian Dorsch and Dan-Eugen Ratiu

Table of Contents

Paul Crowther

The Need for Art, and the Aesthetics of the Self: A Copernican Turn 1-21

The Aesthetics Group

*Turn, Turn, Turn: Civic Instrumentalisation and the Promotion of
Autonomy in Contemporary Arts Funding* 22-45

Gemma Argüello Manresa

*Participatory Computer-Based Art and Distributed
Creativity: the Case of Tactical Media* 46-67

Zsolt Bátori

Photographic Deception 68-78

Alessandro Bertinetto

Gombrich, Danto, and the Question of Artistic Progress 79-92

Stefan Bird-Pollan

Benjamin's Artwork Essay from a Kantian Perspective 93-103

The Branch Collective

Towards Gesture as Aesthetic Strategy 104-114

Camille Buttingsrud <i>Thinking Toes...? Proposing a Reflective Order of Embodied Self-Consciousness in the Aesthetic Subject</i>	115-123
Ilinca Damian <i>On What Lies Beneath the Process of Creation</i>	124-136
Wiebke Deimling <i>Moralism about Propaganda</i>	137-147
Daniel Dohrn <i>According to the Fiction: A Metaexpressivist Account</i>	148-171
Damla Dönmez <i>Saving 'Disinterestedness' in Environmental Aesthetics: A Defense against Berleant and Saito</i>	172-187
Luis Eduardo Duarte Valverde <i>Net.Art as Language Games</i>	188-196
Colleen Fitzpatrick <i>Empathy, Anthropomorphism and Embodiment in Vischer's Contribution to Aesthetics</i>	197-209
Jane Forsey <i>Form and Function: The Dependent Beauty of Design</i>	210-220
James Garrison <i>The Aesthetic Life of Power: Recognition and the Artwork as a Novel 'Other'</i>	221-233
Aviv Reiter & Ido Geiger <i>Kant on Form, Function and Decoration</i>	234-245
Carmen González García <i>Facing the Real: Timeless Art and Performative Time</i>	246-258

Nathalie Heinich <i>Beyond Beauty: The Values of Art — Towards an Interdisciplinary Axiology</i>	259-263
Kai-Uwe Hoffmann <i>Thick Aesthetic Concepts — Neue Perspektiven</i>	264-279
Gioia Laura Iannilli <i>The Aesthetics of Everyday Life: Suggestions for a Reconsideration of Aesthetics in the Age of Wearable Technologies</i>	280-296
Jèssica Jaques Pi <i>Repenser Picasso. Le Désir Attrapé par la Queue et les Iconographies Culinaires de l’Absurde et de la Stupeur</i>	297-316
Mojca Küplen <i>Art and Knowledge: Kant’s Perspective</i>	317-331
Iris Laner <i>Science, Art, and Knowing-How: Merleau-Ponty on the Epistemic Qualities of ‘Experimental Practices’</i>	332-362
Regina-Nino Mion <i>The Unpredictability of the Political Effect of Art</i>	363-369
Vitor Moura <i>Kundry Must Die — Stage Direction and Authenticity</i>	370-390
Michaela Ott <i>Aesthetics as Individual Affections</i>	391-405
E. L. Putnam <i>‘Bring a Camera with You’: The Posthumous Collaboration of Ahmed Basiomy and Shady El Noshokaty</i>	406-415
James Risser <i>Sensible Knowing in Kant’s Aesthetics</i>	416-427

Salvador Rubio Marco <i>Philosophizing through Moving-Image Artworks: An Alternative Way Out</i>	428-438
Lisa Katharin Schmalzried <i>Beauty and the Sensory-Dependence-Thesis</i>	439-463
Niklas Sommer <i>Schiller's Interpretation of the 'Critique of the Power of Judgement' — A Proposal</i>	464-475
Tak-Lap Yeung <i>Hannah Arendt's Interpretation of Kant's 'Judgment' and its Difficulties</i>	476-493
Elena Tavani <i>Giacometti's 'Point to the Eye' and Merleau-Ponty's Painter</i>	494-511
Daniel Tkatch <i>Transcending Equality: Jacques Rancière and the Sublime in Politics</i>	512-528
Connell Vaughan <i>Authorised Defacement: Lessons from Pasquino</i>	529-551
Oana Vodă <i>Is Gaut's Cluster Account a Classificatory Account of Art?</i>	552-562
Katarzyna Wejman <i>Plot and Imagination Schemata, Metaphor and Aesthetic Idea — A Ricoeurian Interpretation of the Kantian Concept of Imagination</i>	563-578
Zsófia Zvolenszky <i>Artifactualism and Inadvertent Authorial Creation</i>	579-593

Participatory Computer-Based Art and Distributed Creativity: the Case of Tactical Media^{*}

Gemma Argüello Manresa[†]
Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Lerma

ABSTRACT. In this paper I will argue that Computer-based artworks, specifically those that are participatory, are creative and valuable because not only encourage the maker's creativity, but also the audience's actual creativity, since the artwork is not just an artefact created for appreciation, but it is also created for inviting the participants to interact with it in order to make it completely function according to what it is designed for. I will use the concept of distributed creativity in order to support this argument and I will analyze Participatory Computer-based artworks, specifically the case of Tactical Media.

I.

For many people computer-based artworks seem to lack some properties any artwork should have in order to have any artistic value. Dominic McIver Lopes[‡] analyzed four arguments that have been used to deny that computer-based artworks have artistic value: the argument of creativity sink, the argument from the vanishing work, the argument from mind numbing and the argument from mind control. Here I will explore the first one, which goes as follows:

- (1) A work has value as art only to the extent that it expresses the creativity of its maker.
- (2) Computer-based artworks inhibit their maker's creativity.

^{*} This paper was made possible with the support of the Programa para el Desarrollo Profesional Docente (PRODEP), SEP, UAM-PTC-484.

[†] Email: gemma.arguellom@gmail.com

[‡] Dominic McIver Lopes, *A philosophy of Computer Art*.

- (3) So computer-based artworks lack artistic value².

I will argue against the idea that the artwork has certain necessary properties so it can “express the creativity of its maker” (2), and in favour to the idea that Computer-based artworks, specifically those that are participatory, not only encourage the maker’s creativity, but also the audience’s actual creativity, because the artwork is not just an artefact or an object created for appreciation, but also it is designed for inviting the participants to interact with it in order to make it completely function according to what it is designed for. These kinds of artworks, i.e. Tactical Media (that will be analyzed in this work), enable the interaction of the work with different audiences, which are also users, and they can only be fully completed if the artwork functions properly, like any other computer-based artwork. And also, these types of artworks only work if the users participate in the art-making process at some level or the users participate with the display in order to make it function in different contexts.

Participatory art is a category that can include other well known art categories, such as street art, urban art, site-specific art or public art; or even it is included on different content-specific art categories and art movements, i.e., political theatre, political cinema, Situationism, Happening or feminist art, to name a few. The same happens to the terms Computer Art, Digital Art or New Media, that intend to describe extremely different artworks, from those in which the computer is a mean to produce something that will be shown in different displays, i.e. an interactive installation, to artworks that are produced and run by a computer, i.e. a net-art work. They cover a very complex field of artistic practices, and they are in an ongoing process of constant redefinition of which are the proper properties that describe them the best. For that reason I prefer to call these kinds of artworks Computer-based art.

Computer-based art enables any user to interact with different interfaces. According to Florian Cramer and Matthew Fuller “in computing, interfaces link software and hardware to each other and to their human users or other sources of data³.” And they offer the following typology of

² Ibid., 29.

³ Florian Cramer and Matthew Fuller, “Interface,” 149.

interfaces⁴:

1. Hardware that connects users to hardware.
2. Hardware that connects hardware to hardware.
3. Software, or hardware-embedded logic, that connects hardware to software.
4. Specifications and protocols that determine relations between software and software.
5. Symbolic handles, which, in conjunction with (1), make software accessible to users; that is, “user interfaces”.

If Computer-based artworks are computer based, a computer mediates them, and if they are interactive in a computing broad sense, the output is accessible to another user than the one who designed the interface. For that reason most Computer-based artworks’ interfaces fall into 5, and for the present purposes I will divide them as:

1. Computer-based interactive artworks.
2. Computer-based interactive participatory artworks.

Computer-based interactive artworks are those in which it is designed an interface any user can interact with, changing in a constrained range the information shown in the display. In this kind of Computer-based artworks the artist designs interfaces that give the user a limited range of the inputs and the outputs that will be shown in the display. They are appreciated as long as the user is interacting with the interface, like most interactive installations, works of net-art and some of the software artworks. However, there are some paradoxical cases where the interface is also designed as 4, so it can produce by itself new information depending on the input given by the artist or any user, like David’s Cope “Emily Howell”, the Story generator algorithms (SGAs) or “AARON”, the software program developed by Harold Cohen that creates original artistic images.

Computer-based artworks function like those utterances that have a performing function. They are acts in which the performance makes sense

⁴ Ibid.

by actually using the interface by following certain instructions or inferring how to use it. However, in contrast to Computer-based interactive artworks, in Computer-based participatory artworks the user not only change the information shown in the display, but her inputs feed the information shown, that is, the user has more control on the information displayed.⁵ These artworks are not only appreciated when the user interacts with the interface, but also when the user acknowledges how her inputs generate the information shown in the display. That is the case of some works of Tactical Media. Finally, there are other participatory cases where users can also change the interface pre-designed given if they want to. This situation is possible when artists develop DIY (Do it yourself) hardware and use open source programs that are intended to be intervened by any user at any time, like the Graffiti Research Lab artworks, a Tactical Media arts collective that let anyone use and change the hardware and the open-source software they programmed for their projects, like the L.A.S.E.R Tag.

In addition, some Participatory Computer-Based artworks are participatory in a political sense, like most of the non-Computer-based Participatory Art, since people can take actively part in the actions prescribed in order to try to achieve different political goals like making people aware of their context or encourage them to transform or intervene in different social, political and cultural issues. Thanks to computing technology, these practices have changed not only with regard to the medium used but also in relation to the concepts we traditionally use to think about them.

In general, Computer-based artworks can be distinguished according to the two main principles that traditionally have been used to differentiate Computer-based art: the medium used and the conceptual grounds each practice assumes. In accordance to a medium-based definition, for example, locative media includes those practices that use mobile phones, GPS and web mapping and Net-art includes those artworks that are designed for the user's interaction on the web, using the computer screen as the display. The last kind of Participatory Computer-based art, the political, includes, i.e., different computer-based practices like locative

⁵ For an early distinction between interaction and participation see: Söke Dinkla, "The History of the Interface in Interactive Art." However, according to my distinction some artworks, like Jeffrey Shaw's, are not strictly participatory, but computer-based interactive objects where the range of inputs and outputs is wider.

media and Tactical Media. However, in contrast to locative media that it is basically defined by the medium used, Tactical Media includes many medium-defined practices, like locative media, so for the present purposes it is better to use the conceptual framework it is assumed to distinguish this practice from the rest.

2.

Tactical Media is a kind of digital activism (art + activism). A broad definition of activism consists in a practice that directs an action in order to support, critique or oppose a political, social or even an environmental issue. However, the relation between activism and art specifically using technologies is relatively recent. As Christiane Paul sustains, we can trace back the origins of activism to the 1960s when many artists used the potential the portable recording video technologies had in order to “address issues of documentation and representation in the context of control over media distribution.”⁶ During the 1990s the Internet made possible the advent of net-art⁷, a practice that initially assessed different political issues in and outside the art world, but also it opened a door to the use of

⁶ Christiane Paul, *Digital Art*, 203.

⁷ An early reference of the term net-art can be found in the work by Heath Bunting “Own, be Owned or Remain Invisible” in 1998, a hyper textual site in which every word functions as a hyperlink that brings the user to another website. In the hypertext we can read what follows:

“When I was on the street I was always looking for new tools, and I was always looking to do battle with the front-end though I hesitate to say the front end of what, exactly. For me the real excitement of the net was that it exposed many different types of people. Also, the new medium gave someone like Heath who had little or no resources - the chance to engage head on with large-scale organisations. I’ve always attacked big things. When I was a kid I always used to pick fights with people that were bigger than me. I suppose I’ve carried on doing it, though now I’m fighting multinationals, or large belief systems. I grew up in Stevenage, too, which although it seems very pleasant jobs, grass, good transport it is in fact an incredibly violent place. It s to do with the top-down plan of the whole place and all the areas are designated, for example. I think that s where I got my hatred of large forms. People think it’s a shame that there’s no central body in London. I think that’s great.

This year is the one in which Heath has really begun to get recognition by the burgeoning European digital arts scene that conference hops its way around the continent from one year’s end to the next. This is the year, he says, that net art is going to be absorbed

the web for developing new ways of activism. During the same decade the Tactical Media appeared in the context of “the sudden availability of cheap “do-it-yourself” media, public access to the Internet, and reports about tactics of underground information exchanges formerly employed in communist Eastern Europe” that “provoked intellectual and experiential exchanges between programmers, artists, activists, and theorists in the search for new approaches to media activism.”⁸ The term Tactical Media emerged in an event called Next 5 Minutes (N5M) in Amsterdam, which in 1996 was called Tactical Media. The term for the organizers of this event “refer(ed) to a critical usage and theorization of media practices that draw on all forms of old and new, both lucid and sophisticated media, for achieving a variety of specific non-commercial goals and pushing all kinds of potentially subversive political issues.”⁹

Following avant-garde art manifests, David Garcia and Geert Lovink defined the term in 1997 in their manifest “The ABC of Tactical Media” as follows:

“Tactical Media are what happens when the cheap ‘do it yourself’ media, made possible by the revolution in consumer electronics and expanded forms of distribution (from public access cable to the internet) are exploited by groups and individuals who feel aggrieved by or excluded from the wider culture. Tactical media do not just report events, as they are never impartial they always participate and it is this that more than anything separates them from mainstream media.

A distinctive tactical ethic and aesthetic that has emerged, which is culturally influential from MTV through to recent video work made by artists. It began as a quick and dirty aesthetic although it is just another style it (at least in its camcorder form) has come to symbolize a verite for the 90’s.

Tactical media are media of crisis, criticism and opposition. This is both the source their power, (“anger is an energy”: John Lydon), and

into electronic art in a big way”. http://www.irational.org/_readme.html Accessed October 1st, 2015.

⁸ Beatriz da Costa and Philip Kavita (eds.), *Tactical Biopolitics. Art, Activism, and Technoscience*, xviii.

⁹ Critical Art Ensemble, *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media*, 5.

also their limitation. Their typical heroes are; the activist, Nomadic media warriors, the praxter, the hacker, the street rapper, the cam-corder kamikaze, they are the happy negatives, always in search of an enemy. But once the enemy has been named and vanquished it is the tactical practitioner whose turn it is to fall into crisis. Then (despite their achievements) its easy to mock them, with catch phrases of the right, "politically correct" "Victim culture" etc. More theoretically the identity politics, media critiques and theories of representation that became the foundation of much western tactical media are themselves in crisis. These ways of thinking are widely seen as, carping and repressive remnants of an outmoded humanism¹⁰."

Since Garcia and Lovnik's Manifesto, it was clear that the concept of tactics that characterizes Tactical Media was taken from Michel de Certeau's distinction between tactics and strategies. According to Certeau a strategy is an action that someone, who is in a power position, performs against other(s) based on a careful calculation of the relative power each other has¹¹. On the contrary, a tactic is an action done from a powerless position when those who hold the power leave an opportunity to act¹². For Tactical Media practitioners nowadays it is better to act tactically by the creative use of the representations given by the society in order to resist or revert those imposed or institutionalized by those who hold the political power,

¹⁰ David Garcia and Geert Lovink, *The ABC of Tactical Media*. In: <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-1-9705/msg00096.html> Accessed October 1st, 2015.

¹¹ According to de Certeau a strategy is "the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be managed." Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 35-36.

¹² For de Certeau a tactic is "a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to keep to itself, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection: it is a manoeuvre "within the enemy's field of vision," as von Billow put it, and within enemy territory." Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 37.

instead of developing strategies that try to produce new revolutionary representations in order to transform the actual political sphere, like those the socialist avant-garde artists intended to do. Regarding this distinction Garcia and Lovink wrote:

“Awareness of this tactical/strategic dichotomy helped us to name a class of producers of who seem inequity aware of the value of these temporary reversals in the flow of power. And rather than resisting these rebellions do everything in their power to amplify them. And indeed make the creation of spaces, channels and platforms for these reversals central to their practice. We dubbed their (our) work tactical media¹³.”

There is not one way to act tactically for Tactical Media practitioners. As Rita Raley¹⁴ argues, there are different forms of Tactical Media and there is not yet a consensus between practitioners on which are the “proper” tactical practices, although they agree to dissent to the contemporary economic and political systems. According to the Critical Art Ensemble, “a collective of five tactical media practitioners of various specializations including computer graphics and web design, film/video, photography, text art, book art, and performance¹⁵”, Tactical Media is a “form of digital interventionism¹⁶” with the following characteristics:

- (A) “The tactical media practitioner uses any media necessary to meet the demands of the situation¹⁷.”
- (B) “While practitioners may have expertise in a given medium, they do not limit their ventures to the exclusive use of one medium. Whatever media provide the best means for communication and participation in a given situation are the ones that they will use. Specialization does not predetermine action¹⁸.”

¹³ David Garcia and Geert Lovink, *The ABC of Tactical Media*.

¹⁴ Rita, Raley, *Tactical Media*.

¹⁵ In: <http://www.critical-art.net/>. Accessed October 1st, 2015.

¹⁶ Critical Art Ensemble. *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media*, 7.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 8.

- (C) “In conjunction, tactical media practitioners support and value amateur practice both their own and that of others¹⁹.”
- (D) Tactical media is ephemeral. It leaves few material traces. As the action comes to an end, what is left is primarily living memory²⁰.

According to (A), (B) and (C) Tactical Media artists adopt Culture and Art Appropriation for their tactical approach. Since “the already given and the unsaid are the material of a tactical media event²¹” Tactical Media practitioners appropriate technologies, other artworks and popular culture images. For example, in the artworks of Joseph DeLappe “In Drones We Trust” (2014), “Hands Up Don’t Shoot!” (2014-15) and “Sea Level Rising” (2015), are “Crowd Sourced, Participatory Rubber Stamp Currency Interventions,” the artist invites people to intervene bills with stamps with icons designs that represent public and private policies that have affected the population, specifically those related to war and environmental damage. Then people have to send him back “one image of a stamped bill, noting location and date where the bill was stamped and put back into circulation²²”, so every image can be viewed in a Tumblr website created for each project.

Tactical Media artists defend that their artistic practice is performative. However, following (D), their works are closer to the Happening²³, than to Performance Art, which is more determined by the performer’s actions. In fact, in Happenings, as Susan Sontag noticed, there are neither actors, nor stages, nor plots, but participants who perform actions in different settings. There is not distinction among a set, props and costumes. As Sontag said “the Happening takes place in what can best be called an «environment», and this environment typically is messy or disorderly and crowded in the extreme, constructed of some materials which are chosen for their abused, dirty and dangerous condition²⁴.” Happenings lack con-

¹⁹ Ibid., 9.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 8.

²² In: <http://www.delappe.net/intervene/rubber-stamp-currency-interventions/> Accessed October 1st, 2015.

²³ For an complete review of the history of Happening see: Mariellen R. Sandford, *Happenings and other acts*.

²⁴ Susan Sontag, “Happenings: an Art of Radical Juxtaposition.”

trol of the duration of the performance, they are ephemeral, but most importantly there is not distance between the performers and audiences, so audiences become performers as well. Most Tactical Media artworks are ephemeral and despite in some cases, like in Joseph DeLappe's artworks, there is a distance between the artists behind the virtual space and the users in the physical space, the interfaces are designed in order to interact with audiences in such a way that the audiences, and the artists, programmers and engineers that produce each project participate in the creation of the artwork, and all together perform actions which consequences are unpredictable.

Tactical Media uses electronic and digital interfaces in order engage participants in specific political actions. Interfaces provide multiple possibilities of different kind of interactions, but in many cases they are designed and programmed by Tactical Media artists in order to develop projects where they loose control of the artwork, because, if the user is not intended to have any restrictions, the results of every project are unpredictable. As a Computer-based Participatory art, the preference for tactics has contributed the Tactical Media practitioners to privilege the ephemeral over the static and to act in a performative space where there is not a detached audience, but users that participate in the construction of the whole work.

However, Tactical Media is not only an appropriationist practice. It is also a form of digital resistance²⁵ where actions can be performed as acts of electronic civil disobedience (ECD). Following the principles of traditional civil disobedience²⁶ (CD), the Critical Art Ensemble defines

²⁵ See: Critical Art Ensemble, *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media*; Critical Art Ensemble, *Electronic Civil Disobedience & Other Unpopular Ideas*; and Critical Art Ensemble, *The Electronic Disturbance*.

²⁶ According to Bedau civil disobedience are "acts which are illegal (or presumed to be so by those committing them, or by those coping with them, at the time), committed openly (not evasively or covertly), nonviolently (not intentionally or negligently destructive of property or harmful of persons), and conscientiously (not impulsively, unwillingly, thoughtlessly, etc.) within the framework of the rule of law (and thus with a willingness on the part of the disobedient to accept the legal consequences of his act, save in the special case where his act is intended to overthrow the government) and with the intention of frustrating or protesting some law, policy, or decision (or the absence thereof) of the government (or of some of its officers). Hugo Adam Bedau, "Civil disobedience and

this non-violent form of resistance as:

“a nonviolent activity by its very nature, since the oppositional forces never physically confront one another. As in CD, the primary tactics in ECD are trespass and blockage. Exits, entrances, conduits, and other key spaces must be occupied by the contestational force in order to bring pressure on legitimized institutions engaged in unethical or criminal actions. Blocking information conduits is analogous to blocking physical locations; however, electronic blockage can cause financial stress that physical blockage cannot, and it can be used beyond the local level. ECD is CD reinvigorated. What CD once was, ECD is now.²⁷”

Many actions of ECD are acts of hacking and blockage of information systems. For example, the Electronic Disturbance Theatre (EDT) performed the following action, commissioned by the Ars Electronica Festival in 1998:

On April 10, 1998 the NYZapatistas in conjunction with the The Electronic Disturbance Theater sent out this call for action:

Flood Net: Tactical Version 1.0²⁸

<http://www.thing.net/~{}rdom/zapsTactical/zaps.html>

personal responsibility for injustice,” 51.

²⁷ Critical Art Ensemble, *Electronic Civil Disobedience & Other Unpopular Ideas*

²⁸ “Designed as a collectively actuated electronic civil disobedience tool, FloodNet inverts the logic of wide open propaganda pipes by flooding network connections with millions of hits from widely distributed, fully participatory nodes. FloodNet enables a performance of presence, which says to Mexico (and its close ally the United States): we are numerous, alert, and watching carefully. On April 10, 1998 FloodNet Tactical Version 1.0 was showcased during an Electronic Civil Disobedience action against Mexican President Zedillo’s web site. A Java applet reload function sent an automated reload request several times per minute to Zedillo’s page. Reports from participants and our observations confirmed that the more than 8,000 international participants in this first FloodNet action intermittently blocked access to the Zedillo site on that day. Tactical FloodNet’s automated features are simply used to:

1. Reload a targeted webpage several times per minute.
2. Spam targeted server error logs.”

In: <http://www.thing.net/~{}rdom/zapsTactical/foyer3.htm>. Accessed October 1st, 2015.

In solidarity with the Zapatistas we call on all netsurfers to use the automated features of Flood Net (Tactical Version 1.0) on 10th of April for 24hrs.

We will be Flooding President Zedillo's site <http://www.presidencia.gob.mx>

You could connect with your browser to a targeted web site and push the "reload" button several times for an hour (with an interval of a few seconds in between)

OR

Just keep your browser tuned to the Flood Net: Tactical Version 1.0 URL, where a Java Applet will hit reload for you.

You can also send them email using the automail system at: <http://www.newhumans.com/chiapas/automail.html>

For more information on the action: <http://www.nyu.edu/projects/wray/ecd.html>

The Flood Net URL hit Zedillo's site a total of 8141 times. Many reported that Zedillo's site was no longer responding. A second mirror site was put into action on the afternoon of the 10th at: <http://cadre.sjsu.edu/beestal/zapsTactical/zaps.html>

At this time we do not have the stats on this URL. It is also difficult to say how many hits it took for Zedillo's site no longer to respond. More research is needed in defining the specific numbers needed to move the gesture from a symbolic position to a direct action-effect²⁹.

It is easy to take these kinds of actions for cyber crime activities. However, although in this paper I will not discuss which are the consequences they have for the fields of political philosophy and law, for the sake of the argument, the difference between electronic civil disobedients and cyber criminals is that the first ones do not intend to destroy or take advantage of an individual, a corporation or an institution, but simply to use concrete tactics in order to show their discomfort and rejection of the activities of political and economic institutions and corporations by blocking their channels of information or by exposing them in different media.

²⁹ http://90.146.8.18/en/archives/festival_archive/festival_catalogs/festival_artikel.asp?iProjectID=8386. Accessed August 20, 2015.

Notwithstanding the fact that the boundaries between mere activism and Tactical Media actions seems to be very thin, Tactical Media artworks are influenced by the Situationism, the Happening and other types of performative proposals, like the Theatre of the Oppressed, the Guerrilla Art Action Group or the Rebel Chicano Art Front. Following (D) the Critical Art Ensemble, one of the main Tactical Media groups, sustains that these practices are a form of “recombinant theatre” that “consists of interwoven performative environments through which participants may flow³⁰.” This theatre is what they call a theatre of everyday life,³¹ but also a “street theater” that consists “in performances that invent ephemeral, autonomous situations from which temporary public relationships emerge that can make possible critical dialogue on a given issue³².”

Tactical Media artworks are performative acts in which the audience actual participation through the interaction with the interface is necessary for the succeeding of the work. For that reason, it makes it difficult to analyze them from a perspective of individual creativity. Most of them are the product of collaborations between artists, scientists and engineers, and even if individuals design them (like Joseph DeLappe), these works are produced in order to let the user co-create the content of the work.

3.

Most of the literature on creativity agrees that creativity is the individual’s intentional production of novel, original and valuable products that differ with the prior tradition³³. However, commonly a creative product is

³⁰ Critical Art Ensemble. *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media*, 96.

³¹ “The aim of The Living Theater to break the boundaries of its traditional architecture was successful. It collapsed the art and life distinction, which has been of tremendous help by establishing one of the first recombinant stages. After all, only by examining everyday life through the frame of a dramaturgical model can one witness the poverty of this performative matrix. The problem is that effective resistance will not come from the theater of everyday life alone. Like the stage, the subelectronic—in this case the street, in its traditional architectural and sociological form—will have no effect on the privileged virtual stage.” Critical Art Ensemble, *The Electronic Disturbance*, 165.

³² Critical Art Ensemble. *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media*, 96.

³³ For a Discussion of different approaches to Creativity see: Berys Gaut and Paisley Livingston (eds), *The Creation of Art: New Essays in Philosophical Aesthetics*; James C. Kauf-

considered valuable if it is useful (functional) in a certain degree or if it is novel in contrast to the products that precede it. However, as Vlas Petre Glăveanu suggests, “we don’t know exactly how or to whom the creative artefact is useful, and we don’t know how it is novel or what comparison is the basis of its novelty³⁴.” Instead, some have argued that something is creative if it is valuable because it has some kind of artistic or scientific merit. However, merit is matter of degree so it is still difficult to know which is the proper standard for sustaining that something has more merit than something else that was created previously or at the same time. Even though it is difficult to find out for whom some product is useful, many Participatory Computer-based artworks, like Tactical Media, are intended to perform two functions: one in relation to the actual functioning of the interface with a potential user, and another one in relation to the work’s political effectiveness.

In the discussion about Functional Beauty, Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson³⁵ established what they call the “Problem of Translation”, in which the aesthetic qualities we perceive in an object that performs a function are altered:

- 1) By the awareness of the object’s function.
- 2) If the object’s form fits that function.

The problem with 1) is that “it is unclear how awareness of, and attention to, a non-aesthetic function can alter or influence aesthetic judgments³⁶.” Then if creativity is a valuable property we use to make aesthetic judgments, the mysterious awareness of the object’s function seems problematic for any judgment based on the creativity of the object, as Glăveanu suggested. Furthermore, there is another problem, what Parsons and Carlson called the “Problem of Indeterminacy,” in which, following Roger Scruton on his work on Architecture, they argue that the function of an artefact

man and Robert Sternberg (eds.). *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*; Michael Krausz, et.al. (eds.), *The idea of creativity*; Mark Runco and Steven Pritzker (eds.). *Encyclopedia of Creativity*; Robert J. Sternberg (ed.). *Handbook of Creativity*.

³⁴ Vlad Petre Glăveanu, *Thinking through Creativity and Culture. Toward an Integrated Model*, 12.

³⁵ Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson. *Functional Beauty*.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

is indeterminate, and in consequence “whatever aesthetic character it possesses in light of its function is also indeterminate³⁷.” Therefore, if the aesthetic character an object possesses in light of its function is indeterminate, and the function is non-aesthetic, then it is also unclear how that function can influence our judgments. I will go back to these problems, but first I want to show that recent approaches to creativity not only can offer an alternative solution to these problems, but specifically for the case of Participatory Computer-Based art.

Creative processes and products are not isolated from their context. As the systemic approaches to creativity³⁸ have shown they are not excluded from the conditions given by the context of their production. Moreover, creativity also involves the interaction between individuals, objects and different contexts. The concept of distributed creativity takes notice of these relations. Distributed creativity is “a theoretical perspective” that “points not only to the role of social relations but also to interaction with artefacts and development over time for creative expression³⁹.” For Glaveanu, one of the advocates of distributed creativity:

“Creativity can no longer be said to reside ‘within’ the person, the product, etc. It emerges as a form of action engaged in by various actors (individual or groups), in relation to multiple audiences (again individuals or groups), exploiting the affordances of the cultural (symbolic and material) world and leading to the generation of artefacts (appreciated as new and useful by self and/or others). All the five terms mentioned above are relational in nature: actors are defined by their interaction with audiences, action engages existing affordances and generates new ones, artefacts can become agents within creative work, etc⁴⁰.”

The distributed approach to creativity includes the relation between actors, audiences, artefacts, actions and affordances. So, creativity can be un-

³⁷ Ibid., 50.

³⁸ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, “Implications of a Systems Perspective for the Study of Creativity.”

³⁹ Vlad Petre Glaveanu, *Distributed Creativity. Thinking Outside the Box of the Creative Individual*, 8.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 27.

derstood “as a process of perceiving, exploiting, and “generating” novel affordances during socially and materially situated activities⁴¹.” The concept of affordance comes from James J. Gibson who, from the field of ecological psychology, defined it as what the environment offers to the animal, “what it produces or furnishes, either for good or ill⁴².” An affordance is “a fact of the environment and a fact of behaviour⁴³.” And perceiving an affordance “is not a process of perceiving a value-grew physical object to which meaning is somehow added in a way that no one has been able to agree upon; it is a process of perceiving a value-rich ecological object⁴⁴.”

There are multiple discussions about the concept of affordance that have different implications in the philosophy of mind and perception that go beyond the scope of this paper. Here I will follow on one hand, Claire Michaels suggestion that “affordances do not arise as a consequence of mental operations,” and “they are action-referential properties of the environment that may or may not be perceived⁴⁵.” On the other hand, I will follow Hutchby suggestion that affordances are functional “in the sense that they are enabling, as well as constraining, factors in given organism’s to attempt to engage in some activity” and they “can shape the conditions of possibility associated with an action: it may be possible to do it one way but not another⁴⁶.” In the case of technological artefacts, Hutchby argues that the interpretations (as well as the appreciation) and uses we give to them are constrained “by the ranges of affordances that particular artefacts possess⁴⁷” since, i.e., “good designers of objects, such as door handles, light switches, coffee machines and so on, are those who are most concerned to shape the artefact so that its possible uses, its affordances, may be readily perceivable by its proposed users⁴⁸.” Therefore, as Claire Michaels argues, if we are able to perceive an artefact or an object as an affordance, it “can set up action systems to act” (Michaels, 2003: 139). However, in order to

⁴¹ Vlas Petre, Glăveanu, “What Can be Done with an Egg? Creativity Material Objects, and the Theory of Affordances,” 192.

⁴² James J. Gibson, *Ecological approach to Visual Perception*, 127.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁴⁵ Claire F. Michaels, “Affordances: Four Points of Debate,” 137.

⁴⁶ Ian Hutchby, “Technologies, Texts and Affordances,” 448.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 453.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 449.

perceive an artefact as an affordance the user must interact with it. Interaction does not exclude, as Glăveanu suggests, the context that surrounds the artefact (it's own history) and the context of its potential users. In consequence it is possible that the user can be aware of any non-aesthetic function the artefact has when she interacts with it if she is able to perceive the potential uses it has, i.e., if someone turns on a computer with a software X and perceives it as an affordance for designing or programming something or if someone sees a button, it is possible that she pushes it in order to turn on and off what is in front of her. Nevertheless, there is a remaining problem, does the artefact have a proper function since its function seems indeterminate?

First, coming back to the “Problem of Translation” in 2) there is a problem in determining “if the object’s form fits a function.” The way this problem affects the aesthetic qualities we perceive has been analyzed in the way the work “looks fit”. However, for Computer-based Artworks the “artefact’s form fits a function” if the form lets the object function successfully, therefore the proper function of these kinds of works is fulfilled when they are operative. In contrast, for Participatory interactive Computer-Based artworks the artefact does not only need to function properly, but also its identity is determined by its function and how it is successfully fulfilled when a user interacts with it, since she is capable of perceive it as an affordance that let her to perform an action. Just as the examples of Tactical Media given, the users must interact with an interface designed as an affordance they can perceive in order to perform different actions. For example, the Institute for Applied Autonomy, an artist collective founded in 1998, dedicated to “study the forces and structures which affect self-determination and to provide technologies which extend the autonomy of human activists⁴⁹” designed the “Little Brother” a propaganda “low tech” pamphleteer robot that disseminates propaganda in urban environments. In their text “Pamphleteer: A propaganda Robot for Cultural Resistance” the Institute of Applied Autonomy describes the motivation behind the creation of the robot and its effectiveness in comparison to the traditional hand to hand distribution of pamphlets by humans:

⁴⁹ In: <http://www.appliedautonomy.com/mission.html> Accessed October 1st, 2015.

Although the internet has become an effective tool of information dissemination, handing out literature in real world public environments remains the most effective means of reaching large numbers of people in a given locality. However, activist groups attempting to utilize this technique face three obstacles which often impede their effectiveness...

In response to this need, the Institute for Applied Autonomy undertook the development of a robotic solution which automated the often dangerous practice of disseminating subversive literature to the public. The proposed benefits of such a robot parallel those long touted by the military/commercial robotics industry: 1) An ability to operate in conditions deemed unprofitably dangerous for humans. 2) An ability to work long hours without need for 'break' periods. In addition, the project was guided by the principles of Contestational Robotics [1]: namely that robotic systems designed for activist use must be inexpensive, easy to construct, and highly portable...

Field studies have conclusively demonstrated Pamphleteer's effectiveness in engaging the public, with particularly notable success in reaching notoriously difficult populations such as the elderly and supervised children. Generally speaking, the robot is capable of distributing 23% more literature to 18% more people than his human counterpart, and is capable of performing for up to 6 hours without interruption, as opposed to an observed limit of 78 minutes for an unpaid human volunteer. We expect that the next generation prototype, which utilizes more powerful batteries, will further widen this gap.

While people were much more willing to interact with the robot than with human activists, the duration of these interactions was much shorter, which further contributed to Pamphleteer's ability to outperform the human. In aggregate, humans tended to interact with the robot for no more than 10.2 seconds, as opposed to an average interaction time of 3.45 minutes with human activists. Our hypothesis is that Pamphleteer is perceived as less intelligent than a human activist, and as a result, people are much less likely to engage it in conversation. This may also explain the observed difference in risk, calculated at 2 threats of physical violence against the human and 0 threats towards the robot. This is notable because it is

possible to program Pamphleteer to be more verbally aggressive towards passers-by than human activists, even to the point of making derisive or lewd comments. We suspect the reason for this is that the behavior was mitigated by the robots overall cuteness, and may have actually enhanced public perception of Pamphleteer as a "fun" device. When passers-by were asked to rate the human and the robot on the cuteness-obnoxious scale (COS). Using a rating system in which 10 = "cute"; 1 = "obnoxious", human activists received an average COS score of 3.23, while Pamphleteer averaged an astonishing 8.56⁵⁰.

Their report shows that this Tactical Media group found that a robot is an affordance that can perform a different function from those that people commonly associate with these computer-guided machines. The same can be said of the Electronic Disturbance Theater that found in programming the possibility to develop a program to saturate websites. Moreover people were able to perceive that the function of the robot was not only perform a task, but also to bring them information, even though they found it "less intelligent than a human," "funny" and "cute."

Obviously it remains the problem of how these non-aesthetic (political) functions can influence our judgments. Participatory Computer-based artworks identity is established by the way its form makes it operative and by their manifest capacity for being used, if the user is capable of perceive it in order to interact with it. However, they are also intended to be used to perform a political function that depends on the way the users are convinced with their political statements in order to perceive its potential for further purposes, otherwise, the artwork might not be used for intervene, transform or challenge any social and political context. If the user shares the political point of view of the artists and wants to engage in acts of Electronic Civil Disobedience, then she is capable of perceiving how the device or interface was prescribed to be used accordingly to certain political values.

Tactical Media artists, as well other kinds of Computer-based Participatory artists, design artefacts and interfaces that function as "afford-

⁵⁰ In: <http://www.appliedautonomy.com/pamphleteer.html> Accessed October 1st, 2015.

ances” that allow the interaction with multiple users. Tactical media practitioners co-design those interfaces and artefacts and they prescribe them a performative function in order to let the users intentionally participate distributively in the creation the entire piece by performing particular actions. Then, the performative political aims of Tactical Media works are successful when the users are able to perceive and exploit the novel interfaces and devices designed by the artist as affordances that let them act and participate in the production of the work. And in some cases, like the Graffiti Research Lab, it is also possible that the users can produce novel affordances if the artists let them access to the code behind the programs, or the plans of the interfaces or devices they design.

Finally, coming back to the creativity sink argument, as Lopes argues, (2) is supported by the premise of the standardization of the art making process by using a computer. Against (2) he argues that “all media, including traditional media, standardize art making”, so “standardization is no bar to creativity⁵¹.” However, if creativity is a property we find valuable for making aesthetic judgments, this kind of artworks are creative and do not lack artistic value, since, from the point of view of distributed creativity, artists use computers as affordances that enable them to create artefacts that can be used as novel affordances. Finally, Participatory Computer-based artworks, like Tactical Media, are creative if creativity is based on the fact that they are artefacts produced as affordances (that previously were used and perceived affordances and it is possible to be perceived as novel affordances) that are in relation with different actors (artists and users), and perform different actions (creating the artefacts and participating giving different the necessary inputs to make the artwork successful). User-interfaces need the user’s awareness of the function of the artwork when she uses it, so she could be able to appreciate it and, in consequence, to make a judgment about it (like being cute or funny). Finally, Participatory Computer-based art, specially Tactical Media, needs the intervention of the medium used for creating the artwork and its identity depends on the way it fulfils its function, that can only be fulfilled if the artwork’s form fits its function (it works) and if the user is able to fully engage and participate with the artwork’s interface and the context that surrounds the

⁵¹ Dominic McIver Lopes, *A philosophy of Computer Art*, 87.

author(s) and the participant(s).

References

- Bedau, Hugo Adam (2002), "Civil disobedience and personal responsibility for injustice," in Hugo Adam Bedau (ed.) *Civil Disobedience in focus*, Nueva York: Routledge, pp. 49-67.
- Certeau, Michel de (1984), *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cramer, Florian and Fuller, Matthew (2008), "Interface," In Matthew Fuller (ed.), *Software Studies. A Lexicon*, USA: MIT Press, pp. 149-152.
- Critical Art Ensemble (2001), *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media*, New York: Autonomedia.
- (1996), *Electronic Civil Disobedience & Other Unpopular Ideas*, Nueva York: Autonomedia,
- (1994), *The Electronic Disturbance*, Nueva York: Autonomedia.
- Da Costa, Beatriz and, Philip, Kavita (eds.) (2008), *Tactical Biopolitics. Art, Activism, and Technoscience*, London: MIT Press.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly (1999), "Implications of a Systems Perspective for the Study of Creativity," in Robert J. Sternberg (ed.), *Handbook of Creativity*, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 313-337.
- Dinkla, Söke. "The History of the Interface in Interactive Art." 1994. Accessed October 1st, 2015. http://www.uiah.fi/bookshop/isea_proc/nextgen/08.html.
- Gibson, James J. (1986), *Ecological approach to Visual Perception*, USA: Psychology Press Tylor & Francis Group.
- Gaut Berys and Livingston, Paisley (eds) (2003), *The Creation of Art: New Essays in Philosophical Aesthetics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Glăveanu, Vlad Petre (2014), *Thinking through Creativity and Culture. Toward an Integrated Model*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

- (2014), *Distributed Creativity. Thinking Outside the Box of the Creative Individual*, New York: Springer.
- (2012), “What Can be Done with an Egg? Creativity Material Objects, and the Theory of Affordances,” *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 46(3), pp. 192-208.
- Hutchby, Ian (2001), “Technologies, Texts and Affordances,” *Sociology* 35(2), pp. 441-456.
- Kaufman, James C. and Sternberg, Robert (eds.) (2010), *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Krausz, Michael, Dutton, Denis and Bardsley, Karen (eds.) (2009), *The idea of creativity*. Holland: Brill.
- Lopes, Dominic McIver (2010), *A philosophy of Computer Art*. New York: Routledge.
- Michaels, Claire F. (2003), “Affordances: Four Points of Debate,” *Ecological Psychology* 15(2), pp. 135-148.
- Paul, Christiane (2003), *Digital Art*, London: Thames & Hudson.
- Parsons, Glenn and Carlson, Allen (2008), *Functional Beauty*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Raley, Rita (2009), *Tactical Media*, USA: University of Minnesota Press.
- Runco, Mark and Pritzker, Steven (eds.) (2011), *Encyclopaedia of Creativity* 2Vols, USA: Elsevier.
- Sandford, Mariellen R. (1995), *Happenings and other acts*. London: Routledge.
- Sontag, Susan (2009), “Happenings: an Art of Radical Juxtaposition,” *TEXT, Pathos der Moderne Issue*.
- Sternberg, Robert J. (ed.) (1999), *Handbook of Creativity*, New York: Cambridge University Press.