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DELTA VERSION

Poetics of Digital Art

Summary

Making and studying digital art at the beginning of 21st century is a thrilling and rather seductive venture.

Digital art permeates, reflects and generates a wide spectrum of the most relevant social phenomena. It is a dynamic laboratory that creates powerful means of expression and human interaction through complex interrelations of art, science-technology, politics, economy, media, entertainment and popular culture. Many contemporary digital artists are highly distinguished and the cultural sector is finding new ways of collecting, archiving, presenting, theorizing, promoting and commercializing their productions. The growing interest of academic community and general public in digital art and culture is evident in the expansion of all kinds of discourse – from manuals, journals, magazines, TV programs, films, websites and blogs, through workshops, seminars, festivals, lectures and panel discussions, to studies, monographs, catalogues, historical, philosophical and theoretical literature. Significant changes in art education are taking place with the introduction of various, often very ambitious, digital art programs.

At the same time, the creative and expressive potentials of digital art are largely unexplored, and its social consequences unexamined. Digital art and culture generate many contradictions and paradoxes ranging between technocracy, opportunism, manipulation, shallowness and arrogance on the one side, and smart, insightful, layered, comprehensive critique on the other. The rich and illuminating histories of digital art and culture are mostly obscured by the fascinating effects of digital media and the pace of change in digital technology. Also, many poetic qualities and creative

achievements of digital art remain unjustly overlooked, while some other get disproportionately advertised by the ideological authority of digital paradigm.

Delta Version: Poetics of Digital Art provides an introductory platform for the critical examination of the creative factors in digital art and culture within the conceptual, formal, technological and wider socio-political context. The book surveys various aspects of digital culture and discusses the selected projects in digital art, from the early computer art, visualization and infographics, sound art, video, animation and film, through Internet art, gaming, tactical media, generative art, interactivity, installation and performance, to BioArt, architecture and design. A substantial online resource for the research in digital art and culture will accompany the book.

Delta Version project is a part of my artistic, academic and authorial research of digital art that began in 1994. It is based upon my experiences in creating and presenting digital art, in teaching Poetics of Digital Art seminar and Transmedia Research course, running workshops, lecturing, and writing about digital art and culture. This is why I believe that it will be appealing to the reader with basic knowledge of the arts, who may find it helpful in forming the criteria for contemplating, positioning and evaluating digital art, but also to the reader well versed in the arts, art theories and theories of culture, as a source for thorough assessment of contemporary art within a broader social, technological, scientific and political context.

The title *Delta Version* comes from the method of delta coding, which is based upon storing the initial version of the file and the differences between it and its successive variants. It suggests the creative quality of change as a defining feature of digital art and culture.

Contents Overview

Chapter 1 *Introductory Remarks* presents my authorial approach, the main terms, my relation toward digital technology, the organizational structure of the contents and chapters. It also outlines my criteria for the selection and evaluation of the art projects, discusses [the importance of titles of (some of) the artworks,] the relevance

of technical details and the limitations of the reproductive materials primarily used in researching digital art.

Chapter 2 *Interpol and Deutsche Bank, FBI and Scotland Yard* presents the main factors in the emergence of digital culture, with a historical sketch of digital art and an overview of its current status. Part of this chapter is dedicated to the computer art pioneers from the 1950's to the 1990's who influenced the recent digital art. Chapter 3 *Visualization and Infographics* surveys the art projects based upon the principles of digital encoding, digital image creation and manipulation techniques, and as well as the infographic projects which use software for acquiring, conceptualizing, processing and visualizing data. Chapter 4 *Sound Art* presents digital art projects primarily created through experimenting with sound. Chapter 5 *Digital Video* is about the artistic production based upon the digital techniques for creating, recording, manipulating and distributing video. Chapter 6 *Digital Film* provides some aspects of the commercial film within the context of digital paradigm, and presents digital artworks that explore the phenomenology of commercial film and animation.

Chapter 7 *Internet Art* surveys the art projects that utilize the specific qualities of networked culture—primarily of the Internet—such as ubiquity, ease of use, (the lack of) anonymity, speed, multimedia, and interactivity. Chapter 8 *Game Art* reviews the cultural, educational, economic and political context and consequences of computer gaming, and the strategies and problems of artistic computer games. Chapter 9 *Tactical Media* presents the creative contexts of digital activism and tactical media as some of the most popular, most attractive, most ambitious and simultaneously some of the most disputable domains of digital art.

Chapter 10 *Generative Art* is dedicated to the art that uses various techniques to formalize the unpredictability of the creative process, and to aestheticize the contextual nature of an artwork. It includes the artistic approaches based upon the precisely defined procedures in conceptualizing, generating, rendering, performing and presenting the artwork, and art projects primarily created through coding. Chapter 11 *Digital Interactivity, Installation and Performance* addresses the heterogeneous field of digital interactivity, installation, performance and emerging forms in which the artists develop new participatory methods for structuring, materializing and presenting the artwork, and new techniques for the active transformation of the artwork in relation to the viewer.

Chapter 12 *BioArt* provides the historical, socio-political and technological overview of BioArt, and the related concepts such as bio-politics and bio-power. It then reviews the relationship between the BioArt projects and the biotechnological research projects that acquire the identity of an artwork.

Chapter 13 *Digital Architecture* is an overview of the artistic experiments in algorithmic, parametric and biomorphic architecture, with a focus on the projects realized with digital technology. Chapter 14 *Digital Design* is an overview of design artists and studios whose conceptual platforms and production methods rely on the digital technology.

Chapter 15 *Delta (Version)* surveys the traits of contemporary digital art and culture, and comments upon some of their issues, quirks, dilemmas, potentials and perspectives.

Second part of the book includes the utility sections.

Glossary lists the explanations of the frequent terms and expressions in digital art and culture. *Bibliography* is a list of bibliography referenced in the book. *Additional Bibliography* is a thematically organized list of literature for further research in digital art and culture. *Manuals* is a thematically organized bibliography of manuals and tutorials for digital art making. *Filmography* lists a selection of feature films, documentaries and television programs about digital art and culture. *Links* is a thematically organized list of web links for research in digital art and culture. *Chronology* is an overview of the events in science, technology, education and art that contributed to the emergence of digital culture. *Index* lists the book locations of the key words, and *Name Index* lists the book locations of names of the artists, scientists and authors.