KUNSTVEREIN MEDIENTURM

OVERSTIJGEN. TRANSCENDING THE MEDIUM

Jan Robert Leegte, Peter Luining

Opening: Sat 01.04.2006, 7.30 p.m., curator: Sandro Droschl
In the frame of: contemporary art in graz
Guided tour: Maria Riskova, Sun 02.04.2006, 2 p.m.
Period: 02.04.-27.05.2006, tue-sat 2-6 p.m.
Location: Kunstverein Medienturm, Josefigasse 1, A-8020 Graz

Downloads: www.medienturm.at/presse/OVERSTIJGEN
Contact: +43.(0)316.740084, office@medienturm.at, www.medienturm.at

Exhibition

The Amsterdam-based artists Jan Robert Leegte and Peter Luining work on re-modernistic up-dates and transmissions of digital media. Leegte (at present artist in residence) deconstructs architectural and sculptural experiences by questioning the perception of material and space in relation to their expansion in data spaces. In his installations and online works Luining deals with the dynamics of the internet in order to redefine the source material of the underlying software, it´s code.

Jan Robert Leegte studied architecture at the Technical University in Delft and fine arts at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam. Leegte has a strong focus on deconstructing the architectural and sculptural experience. In the tradition of conceptual sculptors as Donald Judd and Bruce Naumann, Leegte tries to understand and expand the physical experience.
A central tool in his work is the computer. As the computer interface has create an interactive space used by billions daily, the concept of physicality is slowly being expanded. By introducing the screen material back in the spatial context, Leegte tries to have the viewer question the perception of material and space. Leegte started exploring the sculptural properties of internet browsers and software in general in 1997, using buttons, scrollbars, and table borders in online installations; in earlier sculptural works he used unusual materials, for instance creating walls from sheets of Xerox copy paper or large slabs of brown packing paper. The various elements of the browser window appear to have a striking physical reality, gained through user familiarity, interactivity and animation. Most people consider the scrollbar to be a virtual object, not weighted with any realworld significance, but in use it triggers reactions such as frustration, anger, and boredom-induced clicking. Reactions like these suggest a subconscious acceptance of the inherent ”reality” of these objects.

In the show OVERSTIJGEN Leegte will present around three pieces. The installation “Scrollbar” consists of a single scrollbar projected on a strip of wood lying nonchalantly in the space. The indicator bar is randomly repositioned every 10 seconds, giving the piece a “life”, but almost not affecting the sculptural focal point of the work. Opposing to “Wall Panelling” this work is all about sculpture, experiencing material, physicality and sculptural presence. Added also is the recognition of the “material” being an industrial standard. The work tries, in continuation of “Brillo Boxes” by Andy Warhol, to see the mental sculptural weight added by industrial mass use.

The installation “Wall Panelling” consists of a digitally enhanced traditional wall panelling. The panels, originally bevelled using framing and boarding in wood, are replaced by a projection of frames generated by the computer. The computer panelling references to standard computer user-interface look and feel opposing to the standard wood panelling used in interior architecture. Each panel is programmed as a diaphragm, using a Brownian random algorithm. This created the panelling to be in a constant change of composition. Also the light intensity is in change, as when the diphragm is closed the panel is bright, and when open, dark. “Wall panelling” is an installation probing the users architectural experience, making the solid building bubble and slowly turn fluid.

Peter Luining studied contemporary philosophy in the mid 80‘s. After his study he became active in the Amsterdam VJ-scene. He started fiddling with computers, made 3D animations and also directed video-clips. In 1995 the character of his work changes dramatically when he discovers the net and the relative easy way interactivity could be achieved by using webpages. After doing some obscure net performances, Luining first got international recognition with his work “clickclub”, which he presented at the Transmediale festival in Berlin. This netpiece distinguised itself from nearly everthing at that time because of the way the user could and could not interact with its sounds and images. Since 1997 Luining‘s work is turning towards a kind of minimalism, while maintaining his earlier research of the dynamics of the net. An important milestone in his work is “BGO MUI*5” (2002), an interactive public artwork for the Dutch Department of Justice. Inspired by the problems he faced by setting up this large public artwork his work starts to become more conceptual and begins to aim at the basic material of computersoftware, which is computercode. Meanwhile Luining is a well known artist, who has shown various shows.

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In the show OVERSTIJGEN Luining will present around three pieces; The Danish Critic Jacob Lillemose writes about the installation “Formulas”: “In the digital media a picture is not simply a picture. Or rather, a picture is not itself. For it can be manipulated indefinitely, just as is done in the piece “Formulas”. Luining shows here how various so-called filters can be introduced into the Photoshop program. These filters are small extra programs, laid into Photoshop and used to manipulate pictures - in this case, Google’s home page. In its cool conceptual combination of quite simple video documentary with systematic programming ad absurdum, the work provides an insight into an artistic working process. It is characterised by a high degree of transparency, a kind of demystification of the functionality of the software, whilst creating an opening for the irrational, the absurd and the unexpected. The concrete tool-like character and the digital abstraction are woven into each other, allowing Luining to create a surplus of (aesthetic) meaning, which expands the cognitive, and not merely the functional, possibilities of the software. The work also provides associations to the 70s, when artists like Robert Smithson and Gordon Matta-Clark turned the documentation of the process of creating their works into works in themselves. Even though the very physical works of Smithson and Matta-Clark are very different from Luining’s digital works, there is nevertheless a kinship in the shared interest in the construction as an investigative and cognitive process. The work thematizes the complex relationship between software and picture, the textual and the visual, which the digital media make relevant. It makes us aware that there is always a (sub)text which codifies the visual field. Metaphorically speaking – or rather in an artistic context – the work thus poses critical questions, in part to the automatised processes of the software we use in our daily lives, and in part to the ideological codes, which influence our culture in general. Luining’s art provides us with a look behind the codes.”

*1973, Netherlands
lives in Amsterdam, artist

1992-95 studies architecture, TU Delft
1995-99 studies fine art, Willem de Kooning Academy, Amsterdam

solo shows

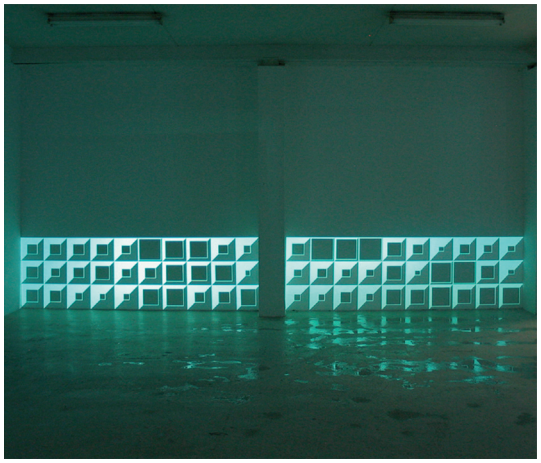
2005 “Jan Robert Leegte”, de Verschijning, Tilburg,
“Scrollbars”, Medialounge / The Media Centre, Huddersfield
2003 “artcart”, http://www.artcart.de
2000 “site:specific”, W139, Amsterdam

group shows

2005 “Techno2”, Montevideo, Amsterdam
“Three Ways of Looking at the Same Thing”, PAKT, Amsterdam
2004 “Uitgelicht 4”, Fonds voor beeldende kunsten, vormgeving en bouwkunst, Amsterdam
“Eindeloze Werken”, Nieuwe Vide, Haarlem,
2003 “Leegte, Luining, van der Spek”, Zapf Dingbats, Den Haag
“Abstraction Now”, Künstlerhaus Wien
2002 “Non Members Only”, Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam
2001 “Last Birthday Party”, de Balie, Amsterdam
“lopend beeld”, nieuwe vide, Haarlem
“untitled[scrollbars]” included in artbase, http://www.rhizome.org, USA
“pandaemonium”, the Lux, London
2000 “netAffects”, kunstvlaai, Amsterdam
“script” http://www.blindsound.com, Korea
“degrees feet inches” http://www.dfi.org.uk, UK

curatororial work

2004 “The Anatomy of the Now”, Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam



Jan Robert Leegte, “Wall Panelling”, Installation, 2005

*1961 Netherlands,
lives in Amsterdam, artist

exhibitions

2006 Art Rotterdam
Artefact, Brüssel
”Metamorfosis”, MEIAC, Badajoz
2005 Art Frankfurt
ARCO, Madrid
”Access”, Consortium, Amsterdam
”Time Canvas”, MUHKA, Antwerpen
”Overzicht 01”, Galerie West, Den Haag
”Drie manieren om naar hetzelfde te kijken”, PAKT, Amsterdam
”Changing Territories”, VAERK 05, Knapstrup Kulturfabrik, Kopenhagen
”proto_gabber 3.11”, New Langton Arts, San Francisco
2004 Stedelijk Museum (CS11), Amsterdam
2003 ”sonic light”, Amsterdam
”Leegte, Luining, van der Spek”, Zapf Dingbats, Den Haag
”Abstraction NOW”, Künstlerhaus Wien, Vienna
2002 KIMAF, Kiev
Cybersonica, ICA, London
de Appel, Amsterdam
2001 Emaf, Osnabrück
Sonar, Barcelona
LA Bienale, Los Angeles
2000 Pusan Bienale, Korea
World Wide Video Festival, Amsterdam
Art Forum, Berlin

curatorial work

2000 ”Net Affects”, Amsterdam

Peter Luining, “Formulas”, Installation, 2004