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Cerde Ramo Nash
Florian Faelbel
Richard Kongrosian
Alexandre Lenoir
Martin Tupper
David Vincent

Public Key

apexart curatorial program

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Florian Faelbel Some works shown in 2001
154/1915 hours with Felix Lenoir and David Vincent
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Public Key: an encrypted art in a transparent society

The transparent society that is emerging doesn't seem to be the one that the cybernetic intended, a rational democracy where feedback protocols would have assured an optimal regulation of common behavior. In fact, with the development of information technologies, instances of power do not become transparent to citizens, but rather citizens become transparent to instances of power. In addition to the transparency claimed by governments (nothing that citizens do should escape the authorities) is the transparency as understood by the transparent data processing the user takes no notice of.

The world of art is also organized according to this asymmetrical reciprocity. The processes of legitimization escape artists to a large extent and nothing they do eludes the control of a media system that instantaneously records and recycles all attempts at subversion into entertainment. In this context, it becomes increasingly uncertain that the form of an exhibition is viable as a critical measure. In a transparent society artists should devise secretive forms and cryptic art.

Cryptography is the art of rendering a message unintelligible to those who are not on its receiving end. Art has always had a cryptic dimension, one that is more or less involuntary and acknowledged. But at a moment when art no longer seems like a micro-culture among others, elitist strategies are evolving toward more communal strategies. Encoding has become a condition of survival in the face of domination by the mass media and its related industry and products. Escaping to the protected space of an artistic institution at the very moment this space risks losing all legitimacy by continuously adapting itself to the demands of the neo-liberal set, art only retains its independent nature at the expense of an encoding

process that renders it compatible with other social practices while allowing it to maintain its autonomy.

When speaking of cryptic works, one refers to artistic projects that are not commercial, not media driven, not spectacular, not decorative, not institutional. They are projects that risk being situated outside of the artistic institution and risk not explicitly proclaiming their status as artworks. The works presented in this show cannot conform to these criteria since they are actually shown. But because they are declarations of intention or illustration, they could indeed indicate a new perspective, one that reconsiders artistic practice at the center of the informational paradigm.(1)

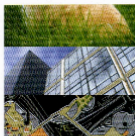
Philippe Blanc

Philippe Blanc finished his artistic training as a developer, and doesn't claim any artistic activity. He is also the developer of the "bot" engine which was presented by the Cerde Ramo Nash at the Guggenheim Museum (Première 1998). The project presented in Public Key centers on the default naming of images recorded by digital cameras.

Users of these cameras often put their photos on line without making an effort to change their names. Result: millions of images on the Internet carry the same name. For example, all the original photos taken with a Nikon camera will be named DSCN001. Blanc has programmed a search engine that scans the network and creates a slide show conjoining all images it finds by methodically following its digital classification. All of this yields a complete record of all that is photographable.

Dr. Brady

The insurance of anonymity and respect for private life is often achieved through the use of a pseudonym. In the art world, the use of pseudonyms and heteronyms have essentially reflected criticism of bourgeois ideology on the part of the artist, a



Philippe Blanc DSCN slide show, 2002
web search software and video projection

