

Who is your magazine aimed at?

When we considered devoting a monograph to publishing, we combined the ideas that we had sketched out over the last few months. We can sum them up as being an interest in analysing artistic practices in connection with the economic and social changes that information technologies bring about.

At a time when media concentration is impoverishing and homogenising the world of communications, we think these small publishing initiatives, that are experimenting with new formats and contents, are in some ways having an impact on social and cultural relations, and are a reflection of the dynamism of contemporary society.

This concern led us to design a forum for magazines that would question the function of art and creative activity at the present time, and would deal with the changes that are taking place in the creation, management and distribution of contents. We decided to pose a series of questions to various established magazines from distinct origins to discover and disseminate the ideas that they are working with:

What perspectives regarding the creation and production of contents have you created your editorial project?

Who is your magazine aimed at?

What are the dissemination and promotional vehicles that you are most interested in for your magazine?

In order to open a critical debate, give us your assessment of Zehar.

We hope that this initiative proves to be interesting and that it helps to encourage debate and cooperation between projects. We are grateful to those who have taken part, and we hope to meet up with you again. ■

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01 Metronome

I produced the first Metronome in May 1996 in Dakar. I had realised that, as a curator interested in inter-scenic dialogue, I could now begin to define certain working parameters that might be more precise, less linked to exhibition-making, and more acutely concerned with how to circulate information and contacts between artists within a global context. Metronome took its cue from the concept of the 'organ', but without the overtly politicised connotations. As a publication it aimed to provide a platform for formulations in image and text that could not be contained within the conventional formats of art journalism, production or display.

The first issue, produced in Dakar, included Paul Virilio and Catherine David alongside the Senegalese philosopher Issa Samb, interviews with Mark Sealy, Joshua Compston, and the South African artist Penny Siopis. Through this heterogeneity, I wanted to create jump-plugs between intellectuals and artists working in different centres of today's world. If Metronome travelled to different locations, then a reader might pass through someone he or she knew into someone else's work that they had not previously encountered. It operated with a combination of neighbourhood ease and professional curiosity, rather than a pushy emphasis on what one has to know. Since then I have worked and lived for longer periods of time in different cities including Berlin, Basel, Frankfurt, Vienna, Oslo, Copenhagen, and London, each time producing a new Metronome with a new format, reflecting research projects undertaken with artists and writers.

Metronome's audience was then—and still remains—artists and professionals, rather than a wide public interested in issues pertaining to contemporary art. It circulates through the contacts that I make, the people who have worked within it, and word of mouth. It is sold in very few bookstores and is currently connected to a private gallery in Paris. I regularly receive letters or emails from people who are interested in acquiring individual editions, or a full set of issues, having heard that they are all quite different from one another, and that they cross generations and locations. There is no menu of potential contributors leading up to a new issue. Instead, gradual contacts established during the research period are key to the inclusion of the final cast. Recent Metronomes have dealt with speech, the future of art academies, and localised comedy, but essentially it is a methodological platform.

Through Metronome, I try and get artists and writers to deviate from their own style, their own orthodoxies, and to out test proto-ideas within the publication. I want to know if it is possible to produce 'promiscuous work' alongside the things that artists show, or write about, or publish in their usual stream of activities. Maybe Metronome, in providing a kind of a test space, can be more open in terms of access and transfer than something where you have to read an A-Z of context and background knowledge.

With Metronome, there are questions that are central: How do we, as professionals, actually learn about other practitioners? Do we need greater precision in the reconnaissance of potential collaborators? What forms of 'documentation' can protect those forms of knowledge that do not strive for fast-canonisation or cannot be easily contained within today's overriding concerns for consensus? I try to initiate situations in which artists can actually research and produce new work and further, in a rather idiosyncratic way, I am concerned with investigating in greater detail to whom this work is being directed.

So for me it is a way of configuring inter-scenic communication that is really very specific to artists and writers. It is not meant to be an elucidation of what goes on in a particular city or country. Metronome is like a short circuit for artists and intellectuals into germane art practices. But it does imply that if you take a copy of Metronome and go to Dakar, for example, you could find it easier to make contact with a group of artists, or an intelligentsia, through the aid of this publication. ■

Contribution by Clémentine Deliss, editor and publisher of Metronome, magazine published in London.

02 MAL DE OJO

Today anyone can edit something; all you have to do is press File/Edit. The actual contents take shape and materialize at the same time as they emerge. The crude material flows out without hiding its defects, which are as beautiful as truth itself. If you need to express yourself and have something to say you'll have no problem finding the right resources. It has become difficult to isolate the "action" from the "document" that accompanies it with which increasingly becomes blurred. Publishing as a separate activity has lost the power to promote ideas, and as it is now used to operating after the event, all that is left for it to do is to record the long series of corpses that our civilisation has been built on.

In the nineties we enthusiastically joined the Utopian trend that tried to face up to the dominant methods of cultural production, by attacking the double front formed by the concentration of the media and the logic of business, through activities that helped to shift the new scenario towards different aims from those advocated by the logic of power and money. This meant not just subverting contents, not even in the separate and artistically overexploited process of the transformation of codes (in the semantic and syntactical fields of established culture, to put it in the respective terms that determine both of the modes in which entertainment culture is expressed: concentrated and scattered). In addition, it needed to be an openly pragmatic intervention, focusing on specific modes of production and symbolic transmission, that was linked to a more wide-ranging process of social transformation and criticism, more concerned with its effects than with being original or "finished".

For years we went over the tricky terrain of "unauthorised publishing" (photocopies, fanzines, lampoons, graffiti), that was going through a new, successful period with the return of a culturally conservative government. These aimed to recover forms of expression that had proved to be effective in periods when there was less media coverage, but which had taken shape at the same time as contemporary society. These kinds of experiences made up for their objective lack of resources by acting according to the logic of "symbolic capital," which works in the opposite way to material accumulation. It avoided the obstacles that the system imposes on the free circulation of ideas (ownership rights, control records, political correctness, artistic fetishism), by taking advantage of the effects of meaningful dissonance and by exacerbating the contradictions in the system. They didn't aim to provide a model for society or the artistic community, but to transmit by contagion a perception of the world, and a way of acting on it, that could be adopted by anyone who didn't feign literary conceits. Given the limited resources that they operated with, which have to be understood not as a temporary influence on their activity but as a prerequisite of marginalized elements in the face of persistent provocation by the powers that be, there is no need to justify the effectiveness of these initiatives. Necessity, having become a virtue, also became a "style", and this style also established itself where it represented just another "trademark" of distinction.

The "conquest" of the Internet was embarked on with the same intention and similar aims. The Internet seemed to fulfil, in a truly pragmatic sense, our ideal of immediate communication with a wide-ranging presence in the system of reflections and projections that makes up culture. We didn't consider this presence in the celebratory uncritical terms that advertising in this medium seemed to demand, but, without losing sight of it as such, we conceived of it as a new battleground which was no more or no less exceptional than others that have also been taken over by the powers we are confronting. When the Internet itself is the subject of our reflections, we try to adopt the same critical attitude towards it as we do to the other technologies that overwhelm human beings, without this critical stance involving giving up or backing down.

Despite this, although we have never produced a specific project for the internet, we can now positively assess its role, both in disseminating our proposals

and in shaping a (hazy) civil resistance zone. This is a role that, when the Utopian phase of its development has begun to get left behind, has nevertheless remained a long way from what it promised to be. The world has become more unequal, oppressive and violent since the internet came into being. Its use as a means for the flight and promotion of capital has ended up greatly overshadowing its responsible, critical use. Although we cannot blame the internet itself for the effects it has had, the confusion is no less, nor are its obvious effects any more evident. This is not the place to list the factors that have prevented this medium from fully developing its potential; it is enough to state that they are linked to the fact that it falls within an untenable economic system that the networks offer no response to, and that its possibilities will not be displayed without a transformation at another level.

Today the situation is less open and our perception of the medium is less naive. Our perspectives have also become more humble. Hakim Bey, the ideologue of “electronic resistance” has changed his “hit and run” discourse to one that proclaims the need to forge structures that aim to last. However, we are committed to structures that are neither materially or formally indebted to any manifestation of the political or commercial powers that be, where we can keep up our hopes and the possibility of free thinking and non-conditioned consumer habits.

The mutual support network created by small alternative publishing companies throughout the country that we are currently involved in (www.alte-diciones.com) aspires to coordinate this aim in difficult times. ■

Contribution by Luis Navarro, promoter of “Industrias Mikuerpo” and member of the editorial team of MAL DE OJO: Cuadernos de Crítica Social, published in Madrid by the Maldejojo Collective. <http://www.sindominio.net/maldejojo>.

AFTERALL

03

Afterall was established as an academic journal — literally in that it was funded and housed within a London art academy at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design. Our initial impetus was simply a growing unease at the lack of what we would call ‘serious’ writing about the work of artists. By that I think we initially meant writing that took the work of artists as a starting point to think differently about social or political questions, and writers who felt art could address questions about our collective future. To the extent that we have a position as a journal, it is one that unashamedly privileges creative work as a trigger or tool for investigating contemporary life.

We wanted to be broad in our definition of ‘creative’ and to include film makers and architects within the frame. We also felt the permissiveness of visual art as an open terrain in which people were welcomed who could not find a home elsewhere was something to be celebrated and actively encouraged.

For these reasons we decided to have a fairly rigid system of four-five artists per issue with two texts each on their work or their approach. Alongside that we commission two longer, expansive essays that take a more general approach or a longer view of social, historical or psychological developments in art practice.

As the journal has developed, we have become more interested in the relationships between the artists we select and the way each issue might be read horizontally as well as vertically, with imaginary conversations between the artists suggested by the texts or the longer essays. But this desire is always tempered by a fierce resistance to the simplification of the ‘theme issue’ and an emphasis on the reader finding their own connections between the individuals.

At this stage, after 6 issues, we are happy with the direction and the quality of writing we have maintained. However, various ideas have not always been able to fit into the rigid format and for this reason we are starting to fundraise for an Afterall imprint in

which looser collections of writings or specific questions can be addressed in book form.

We can also see more clearly that the journal has to mature in terms of its own political position, at a time when a new concern with emancipatory strategies and ways of avoiding a simple affirmation of democratic capitalism are vital. In terms of content, we would happily place ourselves in the ironically idealist camp or ‘nihilism with a positive attitude’ to quote one contributor, Shep Steiner. This means that our hopes for the journal’s contents are that they will trigger activity and a questioning of the economic and political status quo, however marginal or forlorn we know our efforts to be.

We want to journal to contribute to an intellectual discourse and to resist the trivialisation of culture and the speedy consumption of images that much of the media are engaged in. We are less interested in a mass market and want to remain dependent on public funds as well as advertising income from galleries in that classic contemporary capitalist compromise that we hopefully all understand by now. As there is no such thing as purity (thankfully) and the market is not only exploitative, we would be happy to be on regular magazine shelves as well as in specialist art bookshops.

Glibly, I could say an audience that is interested in the artists we feature. Beyond that I hope it is interesting to people who are not only concerned with art but want to find out how current creative expression might impact on society. We certainly have to improve our distribution and marketing if we are to reach such an audience, but these things do and should take time and we are slowly building up a good subscription base. Part of our purpose also is to be a reference journal for the artists and to have a long term value for people interested in those individuals. For this reason, we want to be in as many libraries and universities as possible and try to concentrate our limited marketing resources on those areas. ■

Contribution by Charles Esche and Mark Lewis. AFTERALL Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry, is edited in London and published by Central Saint Martin College of Art & Design.

04 esculpiendo MILAGROS

The idea for esculpiendo Milagros (Carving Miracles) came out of a music workshop. It was a result of the fact that we were all annoyed and dissatisfied with the critics in the establishment papers and magazines. The aim of laying the foundations of a new way of thinking about music runs through all its pages. Of course, we were aware that there were traditions in rock, jazz and contemporary music criticism, and we wanted to bring them up to date in a country (Argentina) that knew nothing at all about them. To do this, we placed the emphasis on four main points. Firstly, improving the quality of the information. Producing a magazine about music written by people who knew what they were talking about. This would be a magazine which didn’t contain the errors resulting from ignorance that were a characteristic feature of other magazines. Secondly, a critical magazine is exactly what we wanted it to be: a way of reflecting on everything to do with music from a viewpoint far removed from the dogmatism that so much of the discourse on jazz and rock betrays.

As a corollary to what we’ve just said, we decided to focus our proposal on two basic approaches: a serious conceptual work that would take advantage of the knowledge provided by various disciplines (musicology, philosophy, sociology, art criticism, etc.) without abandoning a style that was closer to journalism, and a detailed monitoring of the historical, social, political and economic contexts that determine cultural phenomena. In the end, this led us to expand our scope considerably. Esculpiendo Milagros provided coverage of experimental trends that receive little attention in our country or indeed the rest of the world. Rock from outside the English-speaking world, free jazz and improvisation, kinds of contemporary music that are far removed from mod-

ernist traditions, find a place here that nobody had provided them with before now. Other forms of cultural expression such as films, video, art, photography, and literature also formed part of the magazine’s concerns. Recently we have once again been paying attention to the social movements, groups carrying out cultural sabotage and the new forms of protest that have emerged within the context of the so-called globalisation process.

Given the type of material that we provide coverage of, our magazine is aimed at open-minded readers who are keen to find out about what is happening on the modern cultural scene. All in all, we are aimed at people who are interested in social and cultural experiments that to a certain extent keep alive certain traditions which appeared in the counterculture of the sixties. Esculpiendo’s stance is markedly internationalist. To mention but a few examples, Latin American psychedelia, Slovakian pop, Taiwanese cinema and German photography appear side-by-side in its pages without any problems. We are aware that a discourse like this is aiming at readers with a reasonable level of spending power, something that has become almost completely impossible in the context of the crisis in Argentina. Nevertheless, we vigorously reject any kind of elitism, snobbery or superior attitudes, which we have often been accused of by our critics. Indeed, our very activities show that the opposite is the case. Only a strong commitment to democracy and a high degree of enthusiasm have enabled a group of people to carry on with a project that has now been running for ten years without any kind of financial reward or any real power over the decisions taken by the mass media.

The Argentine context is too hostile for a magazine of this type. Esculpiendo Milagros has readers in places as varied as Europe, the United States and Latin America, and it is highly respected among experimental musicians. However the economic situation makes it impossible to attempt to export it on a more or less large-scale basis. The internet is one option that we are analysing. The situation of the graphic media in our country is exasperating, and it is even worse for a magazine that finances itself through its sales and a small amount of advertising. We think that working closely with record labels, magazines and other independent initiatives in various parts of the world could underpin the project, as would getting support from cultural institutions. Esculpiendo’s survival depends on its ability to become internationalised. In this respect, we are seeing how the land lies as far as the possibilities of publishing the magazine in Spain are concerned. ■

Contribution by Norberto Cambiasso, editor of esculpiendo Milagros, magazine published in Buenos Aires.

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NEURAL

05

www.neural.it

Neural began in 1993 as a magazine with the aim of investigating the social and cultural uses of new technologies in various aspects of what was then known as cyber culture. Our editorial approach was to support and construct in time the development of 'new media culture'. I think that the three subjects we cover in our magazine are of strategic importance for understanding the social and cultural changes in this field. First of all, hacker activism, that is, engaging in political activism using modern technologies, first of all on the internet; then electronic music, which has influenced a great many other musical styles, with its instant production methods; and finally, new media art, among other things, net art, which because of its very nature faces up to all the problems of modern art, including its endless capacity to reproduce works and the impossibility of defending an 'original'. These are definitely three exceptional points from which to observe the changes that the electronic revolution is bringing about. Neural deals with all this, but keeps the motto 'Think globally, act locally' well in mind. In fact, independent editorial projects often suffer from either being far too rooted in local questions, so that they end up by talking about the same people who read the magazine in a kind of closed circle or, on the other hand, they become excessively uncritical and overexcited about everything that is going on elsewhere, placing far too much emphasis on all those experiences that take place a long way from their own area. I think that the most beneficial approach is to have well-established roots in your own country and in your own culture, but to constantly contrast these with other experiences and other potential perspectives. In this way, by maintaining the required degree of respect for the history that you share, you manage to achieve mutual enrichment. Finally, nurturing your relationship with your readers is of prime importance, as they are the people on the outside with the most important vision of the editorial product itself.

We are interested in promoting reflections and original ideas on the use of technology in culture in all those circuits that are potentially interested in this, both in Italy and abroad. In any case, the groups of people most closely involved in our contents are hackers with a sound cultural background, who often adopt a critical constructive stance towards the very technologies that they handle in such a surprisingly active way; electronic musicians and fans of this musical genre, who have learned how to instinctively exploit sound using computers with their own personal techniques, to transform the reality and virtual reality of sound using innovative methods; and finally, media artists who magnificently describe and conceptualise the paradoxes and contradictions of our relationship with machines.

We are mainly interested in 'active' readers, those who not only enjoy the magazine, but can also apply its theories and practices in their everyday work or for their own personal interests. From the considerable amount of feedback that reaches us by e-mail each time the magazine comes out I can personally verify that this is the case with quite a lot of our readers. We would also be interested in attracting people who have never completely got involved with these technologies, but who have a great deal of experience in their respective cultural fields, as they could contribute original opinions that have not been published before, as well as considerably enriching the current debate.

Despite the fact that I can only partly understand Zehar, for obvious linguistic reasons, I did appreciate the contents regarding the reflections and debate that focused on artistic, social and international political affairs, which I think are competently produced with a great deal of variety, despite the fact that each issue is devoted to a single subject. The use of Basque in some of its articles provides appropriate support for an extremely valuable linguistic heritage. To sum up, Zehar seems to pay a great deal of attention or give an overall perspective to the questions that it deals with, although it doesn't neglect its roots in its own local environment, which is typical of

'open minded' publications. The graphics deserve a separate mention as, although they are developed on most of the pages in a neat "cage-like grid", they manage to surprise and interest you by using artistic images and photos that in almost all cases have not been seen before, while respecting the original resolution. They might not be designed to be printed in top-quality editions but in video format or daily newspapers, and this provides a highly effective idea of cultural synthesis between different media. ■

Contribution by Alessandro Ludovico, editor in chief of Neural, the Italian new media cultural magazine since 1993.

Mute

06

When Mute switched from its trademark *Financial Times*-pink newspaper format to a more standard slick magazine and scored a distribution deal with *Time Out*, the mainstream press (*The Guardian* and *Spiegel Online*, for example) took the opportunity to grab the newsy angle and run stories on the magazine positioned to become what *Wired UK* could not. Even while *Wired UK* was up and running, assistant editor Hari Kunzru and section editor James Flint were already moonlighting at Mute — for free, just like all the other writers and designers. The attraction may have been the freedom to write at length about Deleuze, to ask "Is Cyberspace Postmodern?" and then take countless column inches to try to come up with an answer, or it may simply have been the people involved, many of them former art students who ran their office more like a studio than an office. These are exceedingly pleasant and generous people, or at least the three that I've met are. Josephine Berry and Micz Flor, who's recently picked up a prize in Germany for his online artwork, were the most recent to come through Berlin, introducing the online version of Mute at a conference on Net literature. Pauline van Mourik Broekman preceded them by a few months when we took part in a panel on online journalism during the Transmedia festival, part of which involved several discussions about the future of the Net in Europe and vice versa — you'll need to know that as you read on. Context established, let's get on with it.

David Hudson: Tell me about Mute's beginnings. Pauline van Mourik Broekman: Mute actually originated first time round at the Slade School of Art, where Simon Worthington, now my co-editor and co-publisher, made a sporadic magazine called 'Mute' that came out in a variety of formats. He made it with Daniel Jackson, Helen Arthur and Steve Faulkner, all artists at the Slade, too.

It had a completely open submission policy, sending out calls for contributions about two months before it came out and the format was different each time. One was in a matchbox, one was as a hardbound art woodcut collection — the call for contributions was a piece of standard size MDF board that people had to send back in as a woodcut — and one was a tabloid newspaper printed in a run of 10,000 and distributed by hand and van all over the UK.

This last one, kind of a spoof on the sensationalist English press, but with quite political content, I think spurred Simon on to thinking he would like to do that again more seriously. Whilst he started an MA in the US at the California Institute of the Arts, he decided to do Mute again, but only if he was seriously interested in the topic it dealt with (its last incarnation, though fun, started to feel too random subject-wise and not worth all the time, emotion and money he had put into it).

We met a few months after. As I had become slightly disillusioned with art, both the social questions to do with my own, which was very private, sort of mythopoetic Joseph Cornell-like collages, and with that I saw around me. I'd always had an interest in writing also, so we decided to do Mute together.

By that stage Simon had decided that the publication he wanted to do should be about art and tech-

nology which he'd been getting increasingly interested in, both practically and theoretically. The books we set ourselves to read were a pretty obvious crop: Donna Haraway's *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, Bruce Mazlish's *Fourth Discontinuity*, etc., and from this we wrote out an essay detailing the issues we thought were important in relation to the art, culture, society and technology interfaces.

As both of us were artists, we weren't exactly wired into a network of theorists and journalists who could contribute. The essay functioned like an exploration of ideas we thought were important and an invitation to contribute at the same time. We got quite a lot of response to it from people we didn't know as the envelopes and print-outs changed hands frequently. All of which managed to be compiled in our first free Mute.

The pilot which came out in November 1994 — eight pages, distributed anywhere that would take it, free and with essays by Suhail Malik, Sheep T. Iconoclast, John Paul Bichard, Michael Worthington (no relation), Esther Leslie and William Shoebridge, most of whom still contribute regularly.

Our approach was quite naive, very much what artists would do. I think this has been its asset and, financially, its weakness, but overall, I think it's been good because it's forced us to grow gradually, learning in relative seclusion and catering very clearly to a particular community, which was small and learning with us.

At first, there was a lot of antipathy, several turned-up-noses from the gallery scene, but we were enjoying it lots because we were slowly finding a whole group of contributors and friends who crossed over different areas of knowledge and expertise — philosophy, linguistics, design, architecture, computer programming, biology, etc. — all of whom were really interesting and made Mute the interdisciplinary thing we hoped it could be.

If I look back and try to take stock in a more general way, I can say that the motivations behind Mute were to create something that included material on topics that we felt were both exciting artistically and socially urgent, many of which the arts didn't seem to be reflecting on with any efficacy at the time, and to do that in a myriad of writing styles that acknowledged the ambivalence of the situation we were in. That is, to not fill the magazine with the kind of critically hyper-confident armchair philosophising you find in a lot of places.

Another variant of this is that we slowly realised — and I have to stress that none of the issues that we have done are in any way 'perfect' or 'exemplary' — that the relationship between practice and theory was really important and that we also had to have an informative, news-like function about what artists were doing and where. Over time, this meant structuring the newspaper more clearly and including more reviews, etc.

Secondly, to be more reflective and critical than the American 'hype' magazines like *Wired* which, though we found them fascinating, did seem to have quite an a-historical line sometimes and a nearly religious belief in the power of technology 'an-sich' to be able to turn societies around in beneficial ways. Although neither of us were particularly steeped in the political discourse around technology, we intuitively felt that that was an important grounding to what we were doing. ■

Contribution by Pauline van Mourik Broekman, editor of *Mute*, magazine published in London.

07 QUADERNS

1. Quaderns aims to critically analyse the present by reflecting on the contemporary conditions for the production of culture, town planning projects, architecture and art. We understand the present to be the active setting in which the possibility of creating contents occurs. These are not a mere accumulation of interchangeable possibilities: they determine trends that have an effect on the landscape.

2. Culture, architecture and art are no longer produced in spaces that supposedly contain self-absorbed objects that have no meaning outside themselves. In fact, they are produced through units of interwoven discourse; through what we could call an exchange space.

3. This exchange space takes in experiences, practices and reflections from a wide variety of origins. The starting point of each issue of Quaderns is a single thematic argument used as a guideline to structure materials from a variety of sources. The questions affecting architecture, art and town planning naturally have a social, ecological, geographical, anthropological dimension, etc. which we feel is exactly what should form the framework of analysis in which the questions in the project are raised.

4. We often define the magazine as a narrative area, and a space in which a series of textual and visual discourses give rise to a landscape. This would be a discourse-based landscape that creates the possibility of non-immediate paths running through ideas and shapes. Therefore we are talking about the construction of a narrative space with distances, and this can be understood as a landscape with texts and works, which produce a sequence of events that explains a story that readers can look through as they see fit.

5. The differences between producing an architectural project, publishing a magazine or preparing a photographic documentary piece that records an aspect of a city or specific area are becoming blurred. What we are especially interested in with regard to these practices is their operational capacity; they are considered to be the act of producing and transmitting meaning, although we recognize the difference made by the conditions in which they produce their respective material and the context in which they are shared.

6. In order to expose the extent to which different fields, contexts, disciplines, products and works impregnate each other, concepts are thoroughly investigated by cross-analysing variable sets of values. Each set of values in an analysis has certain different implications and establishes certain specific connections with other disciplines to reveal aspects that remain hidden using an approach with a different set of values.

7. The most problematic and interesting works and projects are those that are able to record initially unforeseen aspects. These are projects that gradually take shape and change with the evidence discovered in a joint reformulation process with the place in which they are set. They are produced as a result of a comprehensive process that has not been defined beforehand and are able to modify the conditions in which they are produced as they record what is going on around them in a sensitive medium.

8. We understand the place to be a wide-ranging context: that is, it is a result of the superimposition and interaction of the actual physical characteristics of the place with other social and cultural aspects that form part of the productive and economic fabric. This notion of a broad, not strictly physical context, opens up a field that has been little explored regarding the interrelationship between an intervention and its surroundings or supporting medium.

9. Within this framework of opening up architecture, art, and town planning to other sensibilities, Quaderns has dealt with questions ranging from those on an apparently small-scale, but with a great bearing at urban and regional levels (as is the case with experimental housing and the treatment of interstitial public space), to questions about the environment, inhabited space, urban development or mobility, and about how contemporary globalisation processes are formalized. ■

Contribution by Jorge Mestre and Juan Bercedo, editors of *Quaderns*, magazine published in Barcelona.

08 ERREAKZIOA-REACCIÓN

Erreakzioa-Reacción was set up in 1994 as a multidisciplinary artistic/cultural/activist creative space connected with the subject areas of art and feminism. What encouraged us to set up the Erreakzioa project was seeing the work that groups like Guerrilla Girls, WAC were doing in other countries, or, closer to home, Bildwechsel, an audiovisual feminist cultural initiative in Hamburg that distributes and disseminates works on video by female artists. We had not heard of any similar initiatives around here. It was obvious that there was something missing and that we needed to carry out an experiment of this kind to help to discover and understand certain mechanisms that end up excluding female creative artists in our own cultural and artistic world.

These mechanisms mean that the work of many female artists is still ignored and, under an outward appearance of normality, is not sufficiently recognized.

Erreakzioa has always aimed to create work and question the hegemony in representative art from contexts that offer cultural and political resistance. In Spain there is no established feminist tradition as far as artistic practice and criticism is concerned; feminist discourse, which is more highly developed in other countries, is often unknown here, and does not go beyond a general demand for human rights. Our first fanzine brought together a series of works about gender and included a list of Basque female artists, in order to draw attention to, albeit initially only numerically, the presence of women in the world of art in the Basque Country.

The second, *Constructions of the female body*, was presented together with some lectures and video sessions.

The third, entitled *Who is free to choose?* dealt with the work done by antimilitarist groups and women. In our publications we wanted to include translations of texts that had not been published here, which might be useful to broaden people's perspectives and to stimulate them to carry on, by providing an invitation to dialogue, debate and criticism.

Through the various proposals put forward by the collective we have been able to reflect on the situation of women in the world of art or on subjects such as the new technologies and cyberspace. We have exhibited a series of works that are currently dealing with researching, documenting and distributing information about art and feminism. We have also been able to get to know the work done by other collectives who are fighting against misogyny, racism, homophobia or abuses in the family in our societies. In 1997 Arteleku gave us the task of coordinating the international seminar-workshop *For your eyes only: the feminist factor in relation to the visual arts*. Our latest works have been the publication of two videos, and at the present time we are preparing two new publications.

Erreakzioa was formed to bring together people and projects for which feminist attitudes, gender deconstruction, or the queer theory were reference points, as well as to create a network of contacts, and to exchange information, provide support, and disseminate and produce projects. Up to now the proposals have been put into practice in the form of publications (ten up to now), lectures, exhibitions, videos, workshops or seminars. They have not been carried out at regular intervals or in a set format. We have collaborated with other groups and/or publications such as LSD, Fé, SEAC, Brumaria or Zehar.

As for the specific case of Zehar, who we had the opportunity to work with a few years ago, as it is a publication that has emerged from Arteleku's artistic sphere, we think that it shares with the latter a development and evolution that have run in parallel with its contemporary artistic environment: for this reason it has achieved a degree of increasing complexity in its texts and reference points, which at the present time have established it as one of the few publications in the Spanish art world capable of provoking debate.

Finally, Erreakzioa has taken part in the presentation of the book *Counter-sexual manifesto* by Beatriz Preciado, which was held recently. Counter-sexuality,

as she herself says, demands that sex and gender be understood as complex cyber-technologies of the body, and calls out for an urgent queerization of nature. In the same sense, at Erreakzioa we have always aimed to show, and we are still working to demonstrate, that artistic practices themselves are technologies that our bodies are structured with, and as a result are places where gender relations and the construction of sexuality are also set.

Marie-Hélène Bourcier in the preface to the manifesto says "There isn't one classical or modern author who Preciado doesn't fry over the low heat of feminism or the queer theory until they disintegrate". This is what we are working on; the network is up and running and is already reaping its fruits. ■

Contribution by the collective Erreakzioa-Reacción, feminist magazine published in Bilbao.

n.paradoxa

web.ukonline.co.uk/n.paradoxa/index.htm

CASE ■

09

n.paradoxa began on the web in December 1996 as an online journal, hosting articles by women writers with information pages listing books and journals on contemporary women artists; women's arts organisations, websites and, later, women's film and video festivals. The name is a form of ironic identity (a noun, n. and a feminine paradox) derived from Donna Haraway's discussion of a parasite called *mixotricha paradoxa* which lives in the gut of a termite in South Australia. As a paradigm for feminist research on the visual arts, it seemed apt for 3 reasons 1) the parasite survives by attracting others to live on it 2) it reproduces by division and 3) its discovery reveals the value in seemingly obscure forms of research as well as the time and effort needed for interesting discoveries. n.paradoxa's ambition was to be a meta-site and reflect an international view of feminist research on contemporary women artists with women contributors from around the world. The underlying policy of the journal is based on this active research principle.

In January 1998, n.paradoxa went into print as a bi-annual journal. This move was partly opportunity, but also recognition that the art world does not use the web except as a marketing tool and it is in the art world that women artists most need visibility and good critical coverage. In this the journal paradoxically reversed the trend of many art magazines who develop a condensed web-form, largely to market the printed form. n.paradoxa continues on the web but the printed volumes have separate content and publication schedule and a different, if overlapping, audience. Although mail order sales for the print version are truly international, book shop distribution for the printed journal is limited to the UK and Northern Europe. The main audience is composed of artists, curators, art historians, University lecturers and students. The "free" web version, while theoretically accessible to all, has in fact steadily gained an audience by word of mouth, by listing on search engines and in University libraries because of its value to students and lecturers as an important resource. The print version is sold to many University and art school libraries. The idea of an academic community, sharing and exchanging knowledge and insights, remains important.

n.paradoxa is the only visual arts site on the internet and in print which publishes feminist research work on contemporary women artists. n.paradoxa considers itself as continuing the legacy offered by earlier feminist art journals (sadly now defunct) like LIP (Australia) or Heresies (USA). Although there are many feminist cultural journals (embracing all the arts, but especially film and literature), none of these specialise in the visual arts, and although there are a few women's art magazines reviewing work primarily in their country of publication, none of these are international in focus. n.paradoxa publishes work from 8-12 different locations in the world in each volume in print, emphasising the differences amongst women artists (which are more than a matter of geo-political location) as well as the divergent approaches to interpreting their work. For example, the Women

and New Media (Volume 2) included discussion of cyberfeminism from USA, Russia, Finland, UK, Slovenia, Canada and Germany and a film festival in Iran. Exhibition reviews are not included —as the number of solo and group exhibitions of women artists worldwide is enormous— instead, in-depth analysis, interviews and features are published on women artist's work or projects. In recognition of the growing volume of writing about women artists and feminist issues, many art journals have since the 1970s dedicated special issues to women artists or feminist theory — as Zehar has also done (a list is given on the website). Book reviews and website reviews are also published.

To date, after 5 years in print and nearly 7 online, n.paradoxa has published work from over 40 countries. This international exchange touches on many different currents in feminism and attempts to renegotiate the stake for women artists in local/global debates about contemporary art. While professional women artists are ubiquitous throughout the world and feminism itself is also a global political phenomenon, the exchanges between feminism from different geo-political locations remain quite limited, especially in the visual arts.

One of the common misconceptions about feminism is that it represents one view, when in fact the voices and the political perspectives within feminism are very diverse. One of the ambitions of the journal is to publish work which analyses these differences, while offering new in-depth discussion of the work of women artists. The question of both representation and the level of critique are two determinants in selecting material for publication in its pages. There are no regular contributors, breaking the typical reviewing/correspondent mode of other art magazines. Themes are used to structure each volume and increase the range of ideas presented from different parts of the world, from (Eco)feminism (Volume 9), Economies/Exchanges (Volume 8) or a special performance volume, About Time (Volume 5) and another on Sculpture/Installation (Volume 4). Alongside the articles, artists are also invited to present their work in commissioned artists' pages, utilising the photo-text format of the printed page. Artists to date have included Carolee Schneemann, Esther Ferrer, Icelandic Love Corporation, Fiona Hall, Yoshiko Shimada and Chila Kumari Burman. ■

Contribution by Katy Deepwell, editor of n.paradoxa: international feminist art journal, magazine published in London.

marks(s)

www.markszine.com

10

The concept of an online quarterly had been with me for a couple years before the first issue of mark(s) released in June of 2000. My original vision of the publication offered a degree of autonomy with design and content. The design goal was to create a minimalist structure which would quietly support the work of artists, an aesthetically pleasing space where new artistic work of various media and genres could co-exist. Content is the product of two visions, that of author/educator Chris Tysh, editor of the poetics/language section and my editorial vision/curatorship of the visual arts section. Non-fiction appearing in the 'zine has been co-edited by Chris Tysh and myself. However, the publishing of mark(s) is not merely a demonstration of cultural activism by two people, but an acknowledgment of those who have made current cultural and social issues their lifework.

An interesting and crucial difference in publishing online versus traditional print media is the accepted reference to an online publication as a 'site' or 'location' in digital space while a print publication holds the status of personal property, an object to be held. This adds a performative aspect to online publishing which can be very seductive and private when viewed on the computer screen even while existing in a digital 'public' space. In addition to this is the low cost/extended quantities and 'shelf life' of online media. These factors open the door to experimentation and

risk-taking in digital publishing that is cost-prohibitive for those utilizing 4-color print publishing, while concurrently offering an on-going, immediate forum amongst publisher, publication and audience. These basic characteristics of online publishing combined with personal vision and aesthetic practices are the primary considerations in the visual and structural development of mark(s) and the creation and production of its content.

Recent developments in technology export many classical typographical techniques (i.e. leading, letter spacing) from the print media to internet-driven content enabling the building of a textual page which adheres to the vision a writer has of his work. This ability has been very important in the creation of the site as a desirable publishing venue to a wide variety of artists. Additional experimentation with hypertext, particularly with the Harryman-Trachtenberg collaboration (v1.04, March 2001) has been used to extend the possibilities of the language for the viewer. These same new methodologies, coupled with application-derived formats allow experimental treatment of traditional visual art objects, opening new, interesting perspectives of the work. Finally, retaining past issues in the same virtual space, available through internal links, creates the sense of an evolving, holistic entity, a familiar, easily available destination and, as with traditional media, an appreciation for new works by familiar and new artists.

The same factors that open up possibilities for design and personal expression (publication reinvented as public space, ability to contain cost/extension of deliverable quantities) predicate a more intimate relationship with the viewer. Admittedly, a cursory overview of this disembodied digital venue appears antithetical to the notion of personal intervention; however, a closer look at the digital, horizontal methods of distribution support this proposal. Distribution is achieved through links from poetics and art portals, academic lists, email release announcements to subscribers and advertisements in a network of alternative newspapers. In this scenario, the viewer has the opportunity to physically attach to not only the 'zine, but to the actual site (the server) of creation, the original data. The final step of production and delivery for any internet site therefore comes from the viewer, who upon accessing a destination through a link redraws the data on his/her computer screen, recreating the page.

The primary audiences targeted via portals and lists are global, academic and cultural communities; it is from this sector that we gather content and gain the greatest segment of our viewership. Their support is vital to mark(s) in its mission of 'expanding access to contemporary cultural productions' and we have received 'links,' access points to mark(s), from many institutions. The addition of a small promotional campaign in national (US) alternative newspapers expands awareness of the 'zine to a new, broad demographic base.

Independent publishing is an activist statement that supports and extends those artistic and political expressions usually considered resistant to the market-driven publishing arenas. By giving artists a venue to address the concerns and issues in their work to a wider audience and creating a dialogue outside of the established art hierarchy, independent publishing promotes a cultural dialogue and fosters vis-a-vis a critical stance, our notions of art and language. ■

Contribution by Deb King, editor in chief of mark(s), online magazine published in Ferndale, Michigan.

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11 Publishing in 3D

For this issue of Zehar on the theme of Thinking About Publishing, I was initially invited to contribute in my capacity as editor of make: the magazine of women's art, a post which I held for one year over 4 issues (June 2000-May 2001). During this time, we were able to redefine the territory of the magazine somewhat and focus on high quality women's practice, wherever that may be found, through features, reviews and artists' pages wrapped in four new commissions for the cover by LA-based artist Pae White.

One recurring frustration that I have encountered when dealing with paper-based publications, either for make or parallel curatorial projects, has been that omnipresent video and so-called 'new media' work is seriously compromised when represented in print. It is impossible to convey on a flat page the dynamics and sound of works that should be viewed in real time. What unites many such contemporary works is the influence of the digital, which may be felt in current artistic practice in ways as diverse as the editing of a 35mm film to the creation of a Real Time 3-D interactive artwork. This factor, combined with a working knowledge of digitally-generated contemporary architecture and a passion for computer games, led me to devise a new approach to publishing: ionic.nifca.org. As the name suggests, this project was developed for the internet, a realm where 'publishing' is used as a term for adding one's own content to the growing mass of globally-accessible information. The internet has consistently been appropriated by artists to disseminate their work, through representation and by making works specifically for this new medium. However, rather than adopt the 2-D properties of net art and the traditional system of clicking on links between flat html pages, it was intended that ionic.nifca.org would provide a forum for viewing real time artworks in a 3-D interactive environment.

In the realm of architecture, modelling software such as 3D Studio Max — with its integral engineering 'knowledge' — allows contemporary architects to design buildings entirely in the digital domain. But, what kind of space would result if no building was demanded as the end result and this software was pushed to the limit? When I approached research-based architects OCEANNORTH (a collective with offices in Helsinki, Oslo and London) to create a space for presenting artworks, it was with this question in mind. The brief was to explore the boundaries of new technology as far as possible, to dismiss the constraints of Cartesian space and create an atmosphere without walls that would form the perfect environment for viewing art. Taking into consideration current games technology, it was decided that ionic.nifca.org should be fully interactive, giving the audience the possibility to control their passage through the space, and Juha Huuskonen and Arto Chydenius developed a new tool for designing interactive environments utilising the Finnish Sumea games engine.

Launched online and in 'real space' in Helsinki and London in February and March 2002, the content of ionic.nifca.org reflects the widest possible scope of the way in which the digital enters artistic production. In an ongoing process, artists are invited to contribute existing works while new, site-specific, works are being commissioned. The first of these was *Body Deluxe*, an interactive work in Flash by Danish artist Jakob Boeskov, a work that investigates the implications of biotechnology in a commercial market place, specifically in the field of human cloning. Accompanied by a text from biotech sceptic Jeremy Rifkin, this project takes an ironic look at the kind of humans that parents will be advised to clone, warning the user against certain unprofitable combinations such as 'This clone is genetically disposed to drug addiction and a tendency towards incompatibility with corporate structures!' Similarly exploring human intervention into natural processes, in Saskia Holmkvist's video *System* (2000), a 'woman's voice tells us three different stories. One takes place in China, another in Libya and the third in Australia. They all deal with the unexpected consequences that decisions taken in haste can have on the environment.'¹

Embracing the language of computer walkthroughs

in *Untitled (Friedrich Passage)* (2001) Tobias Bernstrup's 'animation is inspired in part by the cult-acclaimed computer game Half Life. With an unidentified mission we move steadily forward. Weightless, we are taken through an exclusive shopping mall, the shops are closed and it is devoid of people, only the escalators are in motion.'² Gunilla Klingberg's digitally generated video *Spar Loop*, 2000 pushes 'the aesthetics of retail to its limit. Her starting point is the logotypes of different supermarket chains, which are transformed into a mutating, psychedelic pattern. The experience is like looking into a kaleidoscope, where different constellations of colour and shape are constantly interchanging. The image is mesmerising, sometimes verging on subliminal.'³ Also produced entirely digitally, Petri Raappana's highly coloured projects are an experiment in interactive visual pleasure that have been originated for nightclub situations. At the other end of the technology spectrum, Simone Landwehr-Traxler's video tableaux are a low-tech exploration of familiar scenarios and cautionary tales. In the fields of photography and multi-channel video, Phil Collins has been investigating humanity in areas of conflict, from Belfast to Belgrade. Meanwhile, following his photographic and text documentation of performances that parody the tradition of Performance Art, David Sherry has made an excruciating work on video that explores an ancient tribal ritual.

The relationship between image and sound is paramount in ionic.nifca.org and the space has its own soundscape that recedes to make way for the sound of the artworks. *Hang Ten Sunset* (2000) 'is the first in a series of animations in which Katarina Löfström chooses to work with different kinds of light. In this particular work, she tackles one of the most difficult motifs, the sunset. Löfström avoids the pitfalls of sentimentality and kitsch by abstracting the image and introducing music to accompany the work.'⁴ Scottish artist Susan Philipsz makes works solely comprised of sound. In *The Internationale* — which was made for Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, the first country to gain its independence from former Yugoslavia — the artist's voice is heard intermittently singing the communist anthem. It has been said that this is 'probably one of the simplest and clearest articulations of Susan Philipsz's practice — bringing together on-going concerns of situatedness and escape... She addresses and, in fact, subtly critiques the evocative nature of sound that acts as an emotional and associative trigger in the listener's memory.'⁵

As ionic.nifca.org is still in the process of defining its audience, it is impossible to predict exactly what that will be. It is hoped that the average gallery-goer or magazine reader will be interested to visit the space — and people are encouraged to spend as much time in there as they would in a gallery—you would be very welcome to visit <http://ionic.nifca.org>. ■

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- 3 Stina Högvist, from the BLICK catalogue, op cit.
- 4 Marianne Hultman, from the BLICK catalogue, op cit.
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Contribution by Rebecca Gordon Nesbitt, curator of the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art in Glasgow.

With special thanks to the Nordic Council of Ministers in general and Marianne Möller in particular for initiating the Network North programme which greatly assisted the development of this project.

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12 **centrodearte.com**

Centrodearte.com is an on-line journal of contemporary art and critical thought, which views art as a complex social, economic and political phenomenon. In centrodearte.com we want to work on the contradictions that we encounter in the world of art and we are looking for new means of production, presentation and dissemination of art. Our aim is to set up a space from which to question traditional formats and models of exhibition in order to investigate new relations and experiences; to create a place for meeting and exchange between geographically remote places and/or people that are nonetheless close in their interests and involvement.

We are interested in the web as a space which is generating new relations and as a tool which enables decentralised work and which helps to create networks of collaboration. For an ever greater number of artists, activists, writers, musicians, programmers and amateurs in general, the internet is a valuable tool and of great assistance at a time in which communication is practically monopolised and information directed. We think it is fundamental that the artists and other people involved in cultural management know about these new tools and take up a position in the world of information.

Geographically, we operate mainly in Spain, Portugal and the Americas, places where situations of cultural/social interest are currently occurring, which are reflected in many of the cultural projects with which we are collaborating.

The publication is theme-driven. It reflects, through different sections (essays, interviews, forums, etc.), on a specific cultural aspect and on its impact on everyday life. With each edition we produce a project-on or off the internet-in collaboration with people who know about the subject in question and we publish complementary material, such as brochures, CDs, DVDs or printed books.

Our publication is aimed at a very broad public; at everyone interested in current cultural events.

Our main, though by no means only, channel is the internet. Depending on the specific project we're working on we use other media and we are trying to filter into other circuits. One example is *Ventanas, visibilidad en una oficina* [Windows, visibility in an office], a visual anthropological project we produced with the first edition of centrodearte.com, which questioned the use of the label Latin American art as a blanket term covering an extremely plural situation, which is widely used by the art institutions and the market. We tried to disseminate the project at art spaces and we had it coincide with the dates of ARCO. We got a lot of word-of-mouth publicity for *Ventanas* at ARCO, and many of the people who were in Madrid at the time came to our offices to see it.

The workshop we did with the second edition, *Read*Write*Execute** examined the web as a political space which is generating new social relations —centring on the area of art's relations with culture and society— and on subjects such as copyright/left, access, censorship, autonomous dissemination and online surveillance, etc. At the same time we explored the technical and ideological advantages of establishing strategies of collaboration and networking.

For this reason, we try to have maximum online dissemination between networking groups, but also between people who do not work directly with "new technology" but who are working on collaboration models.

In the project we're working on at the moment, *El texto es la imagen*, we're trying to penetrate and involve circuits of graphic design, music and fashion.

Zehar has been a reference point for people like us working in cultural production, for the way it deals with the complexity of contemporary thought and artistic activity at an international level. As a magazine it's grown in consonance with the development of cultural models and we have a huge respect for it for its consistency and the critical tone it's managed to maintain. ■

Contribution by Esther Regueira and Emilia García-Romeu, editors of www.centrodearte.com, online magazine published in Madrid.

13 **Ciclo: a project on the edge**

www.ciclo.net

The first issue of Ciclo magazine (www.ciclo.net) came out in September 1999, but it was set up and began to take shape a few months before this: March 1999 was when the publishing project actually started. Ciclo is a project that first began because there were no free magazines about cultural trends for young people in Saragossa. In the wake of this modest initial idea and after numerous meetings, a group of acknowledged, highly trained, enterprising people, who above all were young and resourceful, decided to formalize what we have known up to now as Ciclo.

However, as part of the preparation process in this project certain clear courses of action were established. Ciclo was not only going to be a magazine in the traditional paper format; the concerns and requirements of young people nowadays with regard to technological questions also made the creation of a digital magazine over the internet a fundamental aspect in its development, as the new technologies are the future of communication in the world and both formats are necessary to transmit information and reach the broadest possible readership. Acknowledging the differences that exist between both formats, Ciclo.net has been set up with the specific aim of not being a mere reproduction of the version on paper, as was the case with the more traditional media, but rather of adapting to the channel that it uses by taking advantage of certain resources of the technology itself. Another of the aspects which took shape more clearly as the project progressed was that the paper format was not just a project in Aragon itself, but that the cultural concerns of its members could be transmitted to the rest of the country with decent coherent organization, and this is how Ciclo.net has been disseminated throughout the rest of the world.

As each issue of Ciclo magazine has taken shape, the characteristic feature of its contents has mainly been the predominant eclecticism of its reports, interviews and news stories. With an editorial staff closer to contemporary than to traditional concerns, Ciclo has promoted diversity as a basic feature from the very beginning. Music, cinema, art, design, the internet, literature, there is room for all of these in the magazine. Despite the fact that a number of issues have specifically focused on music, there is always plenty of space for other subjects, all of which are dealt with from a lively point of view which faithfully reflects the personality of the team of professionals that founded Ciclo. The magazine is open to aspects of contemporary life, but does not try to indoctrinate readers or tell them what to think. Let readers have their say! Let them judge whether their personal tastes are reflected in this eclectic varied approach.

As well as providing content, Ciclo.net offers certain additional services that are extremely useful and simple to use, such as an extensive comprehensive directory, a download section where you can find all kinds of software, an audio section where you can download and listen in streaming format to various MP3s, as well as a comprehensive selection of the best radio stations on line on the internet. One of the most popular services are the forums, where visitors have the opportunity to exchange opinions and information. Finally the people who use the web page also have a chat service.

Given that the subject matter of the magazine deals with how young people use their free time, the target readership ranges from 16 to 39 years of age, although no age group is excluded. In fact, studies by the National Institute of Statistics have concluded that, after television, the medium most used in their free time by the 14 to 34 year-old age group is the magazine. The kind of reader that Ciclo is aimed at is any young leisure consumer with an interest in culture. This kind of reader includes adolescents, university students, liberal professionals and all kinds of workers.

As it is a free magazine, the paper version is not distributed in the traditional way through newsagents, but consists of handing out Ciclo in places frequent-

ed by the target readers. *Ciclo* is especially sensitive to the fact that a satisfactory comprehensive distribution process is one of the factors bearing most directly on the success of the magazine. For this reason the experience gained over more than two years has resulted in a highly comprehensive distribution network both in terms of quality and quantity. Our readers get their magazine by merely going to have a drink in their usual bar or café, buying records, going out on the town, going shopping, going to school or university, to the library, to the cinema, and so on.

One feature of *Ciclo* from the beginning has been that its geographical expansion has been one of the guidelines in its growth. Going beyond the borders of Aragon has been one of the reasons why it has established itself as one of the most prestigious and popular free magazines nationwide. *Ciclo* is currently being distributed in the following cities: Barcelona, Madrid, Zaragoza, Huesca, Bilbao, San Sebastian, Vitoria, Valencia, Castellón, La Coruña and Palma de Mallorca, as well as also being available in other cities and towns through selective deliveries to all kinds of establishments. These places include Palencia, Gijón, Teruel, Cuenca or Navarre. It has achieved all this in just two years. As time goes by, other cities in Spain will also be able to enjoy a magazine called *Ciclo*. ■

Contribution by Alberto Cortés, editor of Ciclo, magazine published in Zaragoza.

14 ESETÉ

ESETÉ began as a medium for contemporary creative art, and a laboratory of ideas and processes where we could search for different ways of producing and communicating. We thought that the cultural trends magazine format (visual-contemporary-dynamic) was much more effective than others when it came to getting to know new people or organizations to work with, and it made it easier for us to reach a wider audience than one from just the world of art.

It is a challenge for us to face up to a quarterly thematic project that we try to make as different as possible from one issue to the next. We are endlessly negotiating with collaborators and advertisers, as well as among the editorial staff itself. We need to take quick decisions that often do not depend on ourselves, assume responsibility for mistakes and solve them efficiently, or at least more and more efficiently... and all this really makes you get your act together. The problem to a certain extent is, how not to lose that kind of freshness along the way that working in a more organic, carefree or chaotic way gives you.

Our intention is not to end up being the editors of a more or less trendy magazine, but rather to be able to produce more interdisciplinary projects that look for specific situations to operate in, and function like a creative communications or PR agency.

As it says in our commercial dossier: "ESETÉ is aimed at a modern, participative public that is in need of new experiences. They have a medium to high standard of education and mainly consist of professionals, students and tourists. A public who are interested in what is going on around them, who are regular consumers, who require original information focusing on a cultural scene understood in a wide-ranging sense: (fashion, music, art, technology, places of interest, etc.)". This is how we sell ourselves and from this point on, we hope that each one of them takes the hint in their own way to form a public and group of collaborators that are as varied as possible.

We are aiming at people who want to learn and do things; people who are used to looking at magazines... we don't know whether they are used to reading them or to thinking about what they show; we hardly ever do that. We imagine that our readers may be like ourselves... it would be good if this wasn't the case.

Disseminating the magazine is a complicated, vital matter, because we are not just talking about producing a series of pages that look good one after the other, but about distributing the entire print run properly so that it finally reaches the readership that we want to address.

Specialized distribution channels for this kind of magazine either do not exist in the way that we would like to imagine them or are not ready to absorb large print runs, (more than 10,000 copies.) However, they do provide very direct access to your target readers, as the latter know where to go and look and are always on the lookout for new things.

Mainstream channels are too large-scale and a magazine like ours, because of its typology, (size, contents, time it has been on the market...) almost becomes invisible; with the paradox that at the same time they turn you into a more democratic product, so to speak.

With a more small-scale distribution system, point by point, you get to where you think you ought to be and the contact with your readership is much more direct; however, it does mean complicating your procedures a lot.

In the end we work using a mixed system; we try to deal less and less with the business side of things and get professionals to do it. At the moment we are focusing a lot of our efforts on making ourselves known, (we are still a brand new magazine with fairly limited distribution) and on attending events connected with modern culture, where we can mix with other professionals from the medium and reach an audience that, because they go to these events, presumably might have some interest in a proposal like ours.

Zehar is an art and ideas magazine that has occupied a niche for a long time that nobody wanted, or was able or dared to move into. It has fulfilled a very important task fostering and disseminating culture, and has helped a lot of us to learn about things or to reflect on aspects which we otherwise might not have had access to. But perhaps recently it has become just that free magazine published by Arteleku that periodically arrives in your letter box and which, if you are not really interested in the subject or attracted by the front cover, you can't really be bothered about because it reminds you of something that you already know about.

Maybe we are not especially objective observers because we know all about it right from the inside, but we think that it needs a change of direction, to stand out from other similar magazines that have been coming onto the market and, in some way or other, to woo or surprise its subscribers once again. It needs a new format, to be more changeable, and have a wider variety of contents, etc.

This sounds like show business culture and it probably has quite a lot to do with this: with surviving while maintaining a critical stance, adapted to Arteleku's current needs, in a highly competitive context that is changing dramatically. ■

Contribution by Ricardo Antón and Txelu Balboa, editors of ESETÉ, magazine published in Bilbao.

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SUBLIME: art + contemporary culture

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The perspectives for creative work that have led us to set up an editorial project like *Sublime* are based on symbiosis, exchange and the creation of a network of cultural activities that is gradually becoming widespread throughout Spain, Europe and the world.

Our aims include promoting up-and-coming artists who present specific artistic projects for the magazine. We also hope that the magazine provides an outlet for a new generation of critics that might have difficulties finding ways of publishing their articles, while these are also backed up by contributions from established national and international critics. To create a magazine in which you can contrast various interpretations of what modern art is and everything that surrounds the world of creative art.

Sublime began on a fortnightly basis as a future reference and guide to the current artistic scene, and it focuses on new cutting edge trends in modern art and all the very latest artistic expression.

The conception we have of *Sublime* is open and is constantly evolving; we do not aim to develop a static project, and personal and group dynamism and development are a vital part of our activity.

Sublime tries to pay as much attention as possible to two basic elements that form part of the general conception of the project: the content and the design of the publication.

The magazine has been conceived as an accessible alternative within the national editorial scene; it will be disseminated in galleries and institutions, universities etc. As its distribution system may well be pioneering in the field of national art, its dissemination will depend on the success of this initiative. It is based on the idea that the gallery owner and/or institution will buy a number of magazines at a very low price and then give them away to customers, students and visitors. As it is free it is sure to be widely circulated, so we are offering a top-quality product for almost nothing. We are basically interested in the magazine reaching people and not getting left in the warehouse. This is why we decided to try and make sure through this distribution strategy that the final reception process is successful; we are trying to offer the public accessible modern art that is somewhat removed from the physical presence of the work of art, as well as artistic projects placed in the hands of the recipient.

In each issue of the magazine we create a project that an artist takes part in, handing over six full colour pages to him so that he is completely free to carry out a project, in return for producing a cover for us for the same issue. We think that it is an interesting way to interact with artists, and take the creative process out of the traditional sphere of the white cube, as the projects only exist inside the pages of the magazine.

We think that Zehar is performing a very interesting function as a go-between and intermediary element that serves as a link between the creative world of Arteleku and contemporary society. We also feel that it is a publication containing certain features that make it a forum for debate and the expression of opinion between the artistic community connected with the publication and the rest of society. ■

Contribution by Avelino Sala, editor of Sublime, magazine published in Gijón.

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16 ESQUERP

As far as publishing magazines is concerned our editorial project began in October 1985 when issue number 0 of Fenici magazine came out. However before this we had formed the group, 'Stpigues i Entenguis Produccions' (Know and Understand Productions), which for 3 years, from 1981 to 1984, had sent out about 10,000 limited circulation copies by post, in a bid to provide an alternative, free, critical publication, and as a communication system close to postal art. One of the main reasons for carrying out these projects was that we lived in Reus, a town that at the time, and even today, does not have enough on offer to boost the modern culture sector, so we wanted to try and normalize (dreadful word!) the situation.

Up to 1993 we published 10 issues of Fenici with an average circulation of 2,000 copies. The first was published as photocopies and the last in video format, including issues printed on a rotary press, offset, silk screen format, etc., including vinyl records, cassettes and offprints with Spanish and English translations in some issues; all this was done using an approach that was close to being object-based.

In our naivety and ignorance of the medium we believed that every three months we could publish a magazine with alternative content dealing with several disciplines and giving special emphasis to local creative artists, and that we could finance it with advertising and distribute it through standardized channels in bookshops. When the situation turned out to be more problematic than we had envisaged—we couldn't manage to bring it out at regular intervals, and there was limited interest from advertisers and no possibility of standardized distribution—we decided to change our initial approach and produce monographs in order to restrict ourselves to just one subject, reach a more clearly defined readership and adapt how regularly the magazine came out to getting the funding required to take on all the publishing costs through grants or subsidies that would enable us to distribute the monographs free. With this new approach we produced the last two issues of Fenici, devoted to audio-poetry and video.

From 1994 up to the present day we have continued to publish monographs; 13: 11 on paper, one CD and one CD-ROM. Since 2000 we have opened up a new line with the first 2 issues of Esquerp. This free magazine, with a circulation of between 1,500 and 2,000 copies, publishes (in Catalan with an English translation) interviews with contemporary creative artists from various disciplines. Issues carry no advertising thanks to subsidies from institutions, basically the Municipal Cultural Activities Institute in Reus and the Department of Culture of the Catalanian Autonomous Government.

The approach that we have adopted in the various issues we have published has been the result of the actual evolution of the few people who have been responsible for producing them and of the help from a great many people who have offered their work without expecting anything in return. It also needs to be borne in mind that there are very few independent platforms that allow creative artists to express their opinions.

In the beginning it was considered more as a tool to promote experimental works that would be difficult to disseminate; however in time we have tended to provoke debates on highly topical subjects that are of interest to the public. If we look through the titles of the monographs we find: *Artista/Públic*, *Em Preocupa el Dirigisme Cultural que Exerceixen els Govers*, *Del Jardí de Maria* (a compilation of texts by writers from French Catalonia), *Talp Club* (a summary of the activities carried out by this modern culture programme during 1996), *Vigència de la Metàfora*, *Perifèria* (with versions on paper and on CD-ROM), *Ensenyament i Cultura Visual*, *In Situ Audiopoètiques 2*, *Trienni* (a CD audio compilation of three years of activities from the *Talp Club* programme), *Ideologia_Adhuc*, *Ideologia_2*.

Apart from the conviction with which we tackle the various subjects that we dealt with in the monographs, we need to bear in mind that our tight budget does not allow us to use elaborate printing techniques. This means that we have to restrict ourselves

to publishing using one kind of ink, which puts us at a clear disadvantage compared to the different magazines that base their contents on advertising, the excellent quality of their design, images and the light-weight nature of the texts that they contain, to the detriment of the complexity of the subjects that they are dealing with. This forces us, if such a thing is possible, to put even more emphasis on the quality of our content and the usefulness—and appropriateness—of the product that we are preparing, leaving aesthetic caprices to one side.

Since the magazine is free, it is distributed by promoting it, or by attending events or visiting institutions that are close to us in spirit, and handing it out; that is, at experimental music concerts, poetry recitals, art exhibition opening ceremonies, chats, faculties, art schools, etc. This enables us to reach a public that is receptive to our approach. We also take the subject that we are dealing with in the monograph into account when it comes to choosing these places. Collaborators are given as many copies as they want, which has a beneficial effect on distribution.

I understand that we have developed in parallel: we have started out from areas that are not part of the established artistic circuits and we have flexibly adapted issues to the needs that were required at each moment. I think that achieving this in a country where the average number of issues published by each magazine that comes out of the standardized channels of the big publishing companies is three or four is a minor miracle. ■

Contribution by Francesc Vidal, editor of Esquerp, magazine published in Reus, Barcelona.

17 CARTA

The editorial project and exhibition "Eat or not to eat" deals with the relationship between the visual arts and food and hunger from the end of the 17th century up to the present day.

It consists of a programmed series of research projects that began at the end of 1998 and will finish, in their first phase, on November 20, 2002 when its two exhibitions, film/video season and catalogue/magazine will be presented at the Salamanca Art Centre. We have referred to a "first phase" as the original project, given the response we have had in international circuits as far as works from the second half of the 20th century are concerned, has forced us to reduce the initial idea and postpone for the 2003-04 season, in places and institutions that are still to be defined, both the part devoted to 19th century art and the official announcement that we have made calling for projects. The idea came from a group of artists who are putting it into practice with help from certain critics and theoreticians whose concerns are close to ours. We would like to stress that this is a project, as ambitious as they come, promoted, developed and organised mainly by artists (among others, Dario Corbeira, Francisco Felipe, Lila Insúa, Galileo Tejero, Carlos Jiménez and Eugeni Bonet). At the present time, focusing on 20th century art, we are handling a collection of more than 1300 works and 4000 documents about the image projected by art as far as food and hunger are concerned. Although we didn't intend to, we have entered a discursive information network formed by artists, institutions, galleries, theoreticians, gourmets, cooks, sociologists and journalists, amongst others, who are interested in the subject we are working on.

The project is being carried out for better or worse from a studio, not an office; turning a studio into a laboratory over two years to promote and manage ideas without having an object-based final product to market, store or destroy, is not an easy task in times and places like these, where devising, researching and managing visual proposals outside the museum/institution is still unusual.

CARTA began as a necessity in an area plagued with difficulties. We are backed up by an unconventional institution (the Salamanca Art Centre, CASA) in the troubled waters of the organization of a European Cultural Capital and our authors do not belong to

any of the families from the establishment with real and/or de facto power in the province of contemporary Spanish art. This, according to our criterion, involved a risk that we had to counteract by the only means at our disposal: our work and knowledge of the subject we were dealing with. Our best and worst predictions have been confirmed and surpassed; as many obstacles have been placed in our way on the inside as opportunities on the outside. The bulletin is proving to be useful in providing information, and in trying out, suggesting and outlining the ideas that prompt us to put on an "exhibition". It has taken shape as a clearly communicative element that puts us in touch with the outside world; otherwise this contact would have been short-circuited or simply cut off.

Almost all of us who are taking part know about the difficulties an art magazine can have if it does not fall within what is moderately acceptable. CARTA is aimed at people who are at the point where Art, Communications, Social Sciences, Politics, and Gastronomy intersect. We produce an inexpensive quality publication that we neither love nor are indifferent to and which is being well received and is fully achieving its initial aims.

Its format is defined by an editorial dealing with topics like the presentation of the project, hunger and new cuisine, texts by specialists like Arning, Jiménez, Simón, Bonet and Hartung, interviews with authors like Adrià, Ducasse, Ruscadella and Berasategui, recipes by artists like Spoerri, Matta-Clark, Levine and Miralda, texts by and interviews with Petras, Vázquez Montalbán, Chomsky, Sloterdijk and others, texts by new authors and the recovery of critical texts involving authors like Tejero, Expósito and Fefa Vila, and information and news about both CASA and how the project itself is going.

We couldn't provide an assessment of Zehar in isolation from contemporary Spanish art with its successes, misfortunes, enthusiasms and frustrations. Along these lines Zehar and Arteleku seen from Spain seem to us like a huge breath of fresh air; seen from the Basque Country they look like a miracle. We would like to stress that our favourite magazines are After All, Grey Room and Brumaria.

As for the social and cultural changes that have taken place in the last few years, Zehar, like almost all the contemporary art scene in our milieu, is still on the up and up but with the omissions that we are aware of: let's reconcile ourselves, for better or worse, to the latest run-of-the-mill proposals but without a great deal of any genuine rethinking about the norms of behaviour of the various agents in the framework of art. It would be nice if Arteleku's director's stated wish to "de-materialise" workshops and pieces by artists were accompanied by a more critical approach, attitude and collaborations within Zehar. We think that it is extremely rewarding to learn about the relations between Le Corbusier and femininity or modern art in Beirut. However, Spanish art in the last 25 years, which is a dysfunction that we only know the symptoms of, and which is a subject that we approach extremely carefully, needs critical forums that can assess its intricate landscape. We think that this matter is still pending for Zehar, and for many others. The thing is that Zehar can, and surely must, provide the means to diagnose what others, quite reasonably, keep quiet. ■

Contribution by Dario Corbeira, editor of CARTA, information bulletin published by the Salamanca 2002 Consortium.

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18 PARABÓLICA

The thematic area from which PARABÓLICA aims to develop its contents is modern art and adjoining socio-cultural spheres. We are interested in modern culture as a setting for activities; that is why we are especially interested in the contact zones on the edge of the world of art because it is there, since they are not clearly defined, that the most interesting ideas and projects are being carried out.

It is difficult to find circuits to disseminate magazines like ours in with a circulation of less than two thousand copies. You practically have to build them up yourself. We are starting to disseminate our magazine on the basis of contacts from a previous publication, "arte/facto", which some of us were involved in, i.e. a mail shot aimed at people who are interested, specialized bookshops and art schools and centres in Spain and Latin America.

From the very first meetings at which we planned to publish PARABÓLICA we thought of using the internet as part of the publication; not as a reproduction or virtual version of the paper edition but as its natural dimension on the Net, by taking advantage of the operating capacity that the internet provides for communication between individuals and the transmission of information.

What basically interests us about the Internet is access to information, dialogue between individuals and the construction of fields for debate that it makes possible. Through the web-page we hope to provide links to other pages related to the contents that each issue of the magazine produces and to gradually expand and debate on these contents on the web-site with contributions from visitors who wish to take part.

We see the internet as a huge data base for public use which at the same time, being open and tolerant, is a great space for socializing people. Its capacity to transmit information, spread knowledge and experiences and its low cost are favouring the creation of cultural networks, of "cultural fields" based on the common outlook and interests of its users. It facilitates the emergence and display of contexts and the formulation of courses of action on specific aspects that are shared by groups of individuals.

In principle, PARABÓLICA is basically aimed at the world of art and culture in general. The magazine is going to be distributed in universities, art centres and amongst groups of artists in Spain and Latin America. As we hope to interact with our readers, we are interested in gaining access to a critical readership, that consider culture to be a setting for activities and debate. When you think about the person looking at what you do, you always think about yourself as a member of the audience and I don't know if that is a very satisfactory criterion to use. ■

Contribution sent by Julian Ruesga, editor of Parabólica, magazine published in Seville.

19 ROJO magazine

www.revista-rojo.com

"Perspective is the aspect of descriptive geometry that draws up the graphic rules governing how a three-dimensional object is represented on a plane surface; in the plural, it also describes things that are expected to be possible in the future."

SINTONISON is a group of people who spend all their time creating images, spaces and sounds. These are microclimates shrouded in a unique way, which give off essences before they fade from your vision, from your hearing and from your mind....

ROJO is a curatorial project. It is an experimental magazine, open to collaborations, on paper and online, that is completely free to disseminate the ideas and work that we select by creative artists-collaborators from all over the world. It displays their work in its purest state and deals with subjects such as communications and graphic design, fashion, plastic arts, photography, cuisine, advertising and architecture, with a single clear aim: to arouse a great deal of curiosity.

ROJO was created so that creative artists could display their work and interact with each other. This is why we hold parties to launch each issue and why we want our collaborative work, if possible, to be carried out between several collaborators who do not know each other. We want ROJO to be a medium for EXCHANGING ideas between people, so that we can all have a point in common from where we can get together.

ROJO has defined itself as "a curatorial project", as it acts as a CURATOR in its most artistic sense and as a curer for creative artists who at a given moment need to give free reign to their creativity so that the results can be seen by a wide audience.

THE WAY WE WORK is very simple: we look for people to work with; we explain to them the three basic rules for collaborating with us; creative artists hand in their finished work; we put together the programmed issue of the magazine, in which by combining work by different artists we form a single entity; we present an issue of ROJO magazine with a party (or two or three...; it depends); we distribute it, we promote it, we enjoy it and... then we start again; if possible, avoiding any stress.

The present at ROJO is currently quite clear. ROJO is its collaborators; it is everyone who hands in work in the hope that it will be published; on just one condition: that one day it will be published. It is also a great many people who help us to distribute it, to look for more collaborators, to organise events all over the world, who mention us in the press, etc. as well as providing financial support. We have a few sponsors who understand what readership we are aiming at. They understand our working philosophy and they provide us with almost unconditional support: people from ADIDAS, Pepe Jeans, Barcelona City Council, Diesel, Altoids... thanks to them, ROJO exists at the present time and has prospects for the future... ROJO is a great group of people, and each and every one of them shares part of the responsibility for ROJO. By writing these lines I'd like to thank them all; right from the bottom of my heart.

The paper version of ROJO is currently distributed selectively in specialised bookshops, modern cultural centres, shops selling fashion and design items, shops and restaurants in museums and cultural foundations, graphic design, architecture, communication, and photography studios in cities such as Barcelona, Madrid, San Sebastian, La Coruña, Santiago de Compostela, Granada, Alicante, Elche, Castellón, Zaragoza, Palma de Mallorca, Ibiza, Menorca, Lisbon, Alcabideche, Milan, Rome, Naples, Paris, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Edinburgh, London, Berlin, Vienna, Brussels, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Geneva, Zurich, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Santiago de Chile, Santa Fe de Bogota, Medellín, Mexico City, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Seattle, San Luis Obispo, Toronto, Tel Aviv, Tokyo, Melbourne and Bandung.

ROJO also has an online version, produced by SUPERMEDIA, that has been set up to house interactive work which is permanently open to collaborations by creative artists and collaborators from all over the world. ■

Contribution by David Quiles, editor of ROJO magazine published by Sintonison in Barcelona.

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LA MÁS BELLA: FROM FANZINE TO BELLAMATIC

What first drove us to produce an open and experimental magazine (La Más Bella) was the need to create a platform in which we could publish work by the three of us who first set up the project and a place where we could publish what our friends and people close to us were doing. We took that decision at the time (ten years ago in Madrid and environs) because mainstream publications offered no openings for those of us who had little or no artistic 'curriculum vitae', and we felt it had to be easier to publish our own work than start fighting to get into the 'established' magazines. To be honest, there was no sense of an intentional rebellion on our part against existing art publishers or magazines. There was, however, a general regret for the passing of some emblematic publications of the 1980s, magazines identified with what became known as the 'movida madrileña' [the Madrid scene] (a movement, incidentally, which had long since expired and with which we had connections). As we say, we had no conscious desire to confront the existing situation, because it scarcely interested us, although there were some important exceptions, such as *El Canto de La Tripulación*, which acted as a model for a project that was managed by the same people who published in its pages. This philosophy of a self-managing publishing project encouraged us to create La Más Bella, and ten years on, we still firmly believe that it is valid, and we believe in the possibilities of self-publication and autonomous and individual management (or management by small groups) of publishing projects in parallel with the usual commercial circuits. We do not want to make what we consider to be the mistake of trying to be like 'them': of seeking large readership figures; of feeling bound by the idea that everyone has to like what we do and that it has to have a great impact; of wanting to enter into distribution circuits which quite simply do not care about us. You have to address people who are interested in listening to you - and try to go a bit further. The opposite approach is simply a continuous source of frustration.

From the very outset, the formal aspect also played a fundamental role in La Más Bella; we sought experimentation not only from a graphic point of view but in terms of a complex and overall publishing product. Given that the pages of La Más Bella were open to pure experimentation by artists, to their freest and most personal works, simply offering a blank sheet of paper was not enough. Hence our obsession with constant experimentation in formats and supports, which have often even led us away from the printed page. Our philosophy was closer to the notion of the artist's book than that of a magazine for distributing content.

Our latest project, BELLAMÁTIC, forms part of this philosophy, but it seeks to go further: rather than content ourselves with making a magazine into an artistic object, we want to make distribution of the magazine an art object too. BELLAMÁTIC is an automatic vending machine, a prototype designed to sell magazines (La Más Bella and others), books, CDs and original works... created by artists and groups with whom we have contact. In short, it consists of making the entire publishing process (including the act of buying the magazine for money) an artistic action.

We all know that this type of publication or project is only of interest to a very small circle of people, often the artists and publishers themselves, and it is these people we trust will buy our publications. Clearly, publishers need to have the skill to distribute their publications as widely as possible, but they also need to have a clear idea of what type of product they are offering and how many people are interested in it. There is nothing sadder than to see magazines and books piled up in warehouses - money and raw materials wasted in the name of high cultural ideals, backed by objectives which were perhaps too pretentious. Maybe publishers should publish by and for those people who are going to be receptive. This may mean small publications and a limited distribu-

tion and impact of our work, but it will always be better than pulping entire print runs. The newsagents, the large sale outlets and the distributors are not necessarily the only means of promotion and distribution. Indeed, newsagents are not the natural outlet for this type of publication, and never have been. But mail, word of mouth, certain bookshops and galleries and most definitely the Internet allow very direct distribution to people who are interested in specific publications. Nearly everyone knows where to go in their city to find an independent experimental artistic publication.

At first sight La Más Bella might seem to have little in common with publications like Zehar, but at the end of the day, we believe they are two sides of the same coin; our magazine is primarily devoted to formal experimentation, and this has often led us away from the printed page, to something closer to the artist's book; Zehar experiments and investigates mainly from a position of theory and debate, but also through formats, in this case theoretical and different, analysing contemporary art from varied and not always artistic perspectives. The two fields of publication undoubtedly need and complement each other, and contribute to offering a closer and more precise vision of contemporary creation. ■

Contribution by Diego Ortiz & Pepe Murciego, editors of LA MÁS BELLA magazine published in Madrid.

ACTO

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We can get some guidance on publishing an art magazine, for example, as far as the reader is concerned, really you should only write for people who really want to read, that is, for your fellow men; or to put it another way, write the magazine that you would like to read yourself. As for its distribution, publish it with a complete disregard of whether these fellow men are few or many, even regardless of whether they exist or not as such; now then, once you have published it, make it easy, as far as you possibly can, for other people to get to read it. As for its contents, face up to modern art with a total lack of regard for the current situation, or rather, be completely aware that the current situation is a dictate. To put it another way, try and point out the radical nature of artistic activity with a lively critical attitude both regarding the dictates of History and of the present time, and do so in both cases for the same reasons.

To carry out this task the university system, which is our case, might be an exceptional place, (despite its small-mindedness,) from which to observe the current situation with regard to works and ideas about art with the right degree of independence, as long as we avoid the academic fear of failure, of course. As far as all this is concerned we should not forget that the theoretical and historical discourses on art in our recent past have been written, to a large extent, by institutions that were directly involved in its development. In the last century the institution of the Museum (with its corollary of exhibitions, publications, festivals and congresses) was definitely more responsible for writing the history of modern art than the corresponding departments in the institution of the University. In the specific field of the arts, the way that the Museum has acted to provide legitimacy, in real time, for certain trends has led it to interact with the tendencies shown by the Market, and this has made it both judge and judged, not only as far as the practical evolution of the arts is concerned but also with regard to their theoretical interpretation. As a result we need to produce a careful, reasonable reinterpretation of the histories that the Museum, Market and University have given us; especially, with regard to that phenomenon which is still extremely difficult to interpret that we call the avant-garde.

To finish, I am attaching ACTO's generic approach which was set out in issue number zero and which could well sum up everything that I have said here: "Its intentions are those that common sense advises for this kind of initiative, which is especially to provide a review of preconceived ideas about modern art and the histories of art that have been produced

with these. We are talking then, about launching a magazine that fulfils the main task that it has been given: a magazine that invites us to read and go back to —and therefore, to criticise in their premises— current discourses on art and the practices that are constructed over these.”

As it obvious that this is what it aspires to, and not what it is, the difference between these would be the stretch of road that we still have to travel along. ■

Contribution by José Díaz Cuyas, editor of Acto, magazine published by the Cultural Society for Contemporary artistic philosophy. Vice-chancellor's office for the Extension Department at La Laguna University.

BRUMARIA

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Brumaria is a project by artists for the construction of a forum for studying, reflecting on and making proposals about art, and which aims to put into circulation theoretical and practical material dealing with artistic and aesthetic ideas and their relationship to the social and political structures that are inherent to them.

As a project by artists, Brumaria cannot be divorced from the work carried out by the people behind it, as it is in keeping with their present ideas and stance as creative artists at the present time to work as individuals qualified to carry out critical activities both by putting into practice different kinds of artistic proposals and by theoretical reflection channelled through various formats.

The breeding ground for the currently much-trumpeted crisis about the presence of modern Spanish art on international circuits, which in the past seemed to be restricted to salon and café discussions, is the mediocrity of recent artistic output which has abandoned research, criticism and debate, to name but a few qualities, for a more chaotic evolution; it is really difficult for us to find an area of culture in our country more exposed to historiographical mediocrity than the visual arts. And all this has happened in a historical period like the present day in which unidirectional messages are backed up by the remnants of the mediocre reactionary attitudes of the eighties which are still alive today and exercise an influence that would be unimaginable in other Western countries. One result of this is another of the most painfully evident aspects of the current plight of the arts in our country: their scandalous detachment from contemporary cultural, social and political practices that help to set up organs fostering critical rationality and radical autonomy and democracy. Brumaria, through the wide variety of its approaches, aims to try and find a way to help to restore the links between these organs and contemporary artistic practices.

As far as the magazine is concerned, this is reflected in our aim to promote a plural, varied, multidisciplinary team of collaborators, including people who are not strictly from the visual arts but who are close in spirit to the stated aims of this project.

Brumaria is a project that its most direct collaborators and editors have thought about, debated and reflected on at length; it has started behind schedule and, inevitably, with financial problems. However, it has also begun with the satisfaction of a job well done. We would like the boundless capacity for dissection and analysis displayed by Sloterdijk or Negri to serve as a catalyst for artistic energies in this period and field, which are urgently in need of reflective impetus. In our case, this impetus has led Brumaria to adopt a policy that generally identifies with global resistance movements.

Then, suddenly, at the end of the summer, after it had been overdoing on biennials, Juan Muñoz's death restored contemporary Spanish art to that precarious state of lacking a father figure that it has never really accepted. Suddenly, with the New Year approaching, the mini-war in South Manhattan broke out. This was the result of the confluence of two great tragedies: that of an arrogant, violent, inward-looking empire that erects new barriers and creates poverty every-

where; and that of the resounding failure of the various Islamist regimes to politically administer the absolute power that they exercise so unjustly. This relocated political activity beyond the reflective, ideological mediocrity that the apologists for neo-liberalism and the end of history had been trying to sell day after day.

It is in these times that we are publishing; and in these times we are mounting a bitter, optimistic tripod, with sections formed by art, aesthetics and politics that fit smoothly into the sphere of the real world. ■

Contribution by Dario Corbeira, Marcelo Expósito and Gabriel Villota, editors of Brumaria, magazine coordinated by Francisco Felipe and financed with support from: Arteleku, Artium, MACBA, Injuve and contributions from its members/promoters and subscribers.

A brief theory of independence

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(on the critical definitions that guide the praxis carried out in Aleph, Acción Paralela and arts.zin as a micro-constellation of independent editorial projects)

“So the model nature of production turns out to be decisive, that firstly, instructs other producers in the production process, and secondly, is able to place an improved structure at their disposal. The more consumers it leads to the production process, the better this structure will be; in a word: if it is in a position to turn readers into producers.”

—Walter Benjamin, *The author as producer* 1934

1. First paradox (it is really more a fallacious argument): that you cannot talk about this independently. Any kind of independence would have to be from something. Independence, in order to become a reality, inevitably depends on... what it aspires to not depending on; at least, in order to define itself. But this is not just a mere play on words: the structure of this logical connection is also unfortunately the structure of the entire effective, practical reality of independence — a paralogical reality, it is true, however often it occurs in history, or in the real world (or, in the phantasmagoric extended area of the symptom).

2. Let's imagine it like a cutting edge. Not a mere unsteady edge —like the ones that they analyse in disaster theory applied to the study of morphogenesis— between two fabrics, and not this gesticulative hesitant kind of difference. It's more like a fold: like a displaced point at which something ceases simultaneously to be two things that it is at the same time. It is on this very machine-like potential that a good knife, or any good sharp weapon, depends to be effective. It is something that depends on its emptied condition — a good knife-edge is not produced by reducing its thickness, but by the degree of perfection with which a fold (around a void that is defined in this gesture as its interior nature) avoids the existence of two planes that cross at this point and acquire a (dis)continuous form, (and the force it exerts inwardly later enables it to exert this force outwardly).

As it is “the place where the points meet” which is both and neither of them at the same time, living on this edge involves the dangers that a tightrope walker would experience if he were condemned to walk along a series of sharpened intertwined blades.

3. However its carnal dangerousness (which is less civic than vital) excessively fosters its fallacious venial appeals, and the emptiness (that is more paranoid than paratactic) of its rhetoric. Let's call this the second paradox of independence: the fact that it is as easy to declare independence as it is difficult to actually achieve in the real sense, (you know what I mean). With regard to how difficult it is to achieve: refer to the following. With regard to how easy it is

to declare, the fact that in this declaration it is the logic of its false consciousness that is being expressed. As Debord was to state in the penultimate thesis on his Society, it does not tend to clarify itself.

4. If the fold by which independence could be defined —never as an absolute limit, but as a degree of tension where points meet or fail to meet— had to be expressed with reference to the planes that cross at this point, these would be —if we are talking about editorial projects in the specific field of the visual arts— the institutional plane (Art) and the market. Or perhaps to be more precise, the planes formed by those initiatives that run on public resources and the others that are run on private ones —as far as we know, there are no others. If in other publishing fields it is the market that acts as an arbitrator —so independence would be defined by the distance that they manage to place in the way of its dictates— in the field of the visual arts (here, among ourselves) financing mainly comes from public funds that are distributed to a greater or lesser extent by administrative bodies. Even the remaining area that in our sphere formalises a minimum private market appears when it manages to do so to be merely subsidiary —and nearly always subsidised. Any independent initiative that emerges from civil society in our milieu, has its sword of Damocles in this unavoidable evident reality, as well as problems to establish its critical distance.

5. Having defined its cutting planes, let's also describe its folding (and unfolding) axis. At one end the limit would be the maximisation of the audience —at the other, a willingness to be critical, and to be even prepared to risk zero visibility. The former stipulates a law that is valid not only for the market —in areas where it is predominant its implacable nature is obvious, whenever audience and customers coincide— but also for the institutional domain, even when this equation does not appear to be so obvious and immediate in this. But it is, and twice over: firstly because it is legitimate to demand that what is produced with the public's money should satisfy interests that are also presumably universal (what in classical times described the common good, which is the basis of any call for public service), and secondly —an instrumental interest this time— because the equation between maximising the audience and forming public opinion has as its ultimate beneficiary the same person who has the job of authorising payment —the politician who carries out their responsibility as the person administering public services. To put it another way: here customers and audience also coincide —thanks to the self-seeking mediation of a third element that has been interposed (between institution and audience). This is a critique implemented to be useful in media circles —and the challenge and problem it faces is how to get its opinions and critical distance to pass underneath the task and real mission that it is based on.

6. At the other extreme —where its critical purpose prevails— the main risk is formed by zero visibility (the secondary risk is its resulting lack of profitability.) However, we are operating in this field and what we call independence —perhaps we ought to call it micro-dependence, or relative independence— focuses on the design of a movement that we could describe as being doubly negative: it is a non-market and non-institution at the same time (it has to be said for Krauss's admirers), even though it is aware that this double negation does not absolve it of its double-dependence, although this is less. When it formulates its structure, it excludes that fatal agreement between audience and customers which is a characteristic feature of the market structure, but it also excludes at the same time the a priori presupposition that its activities were of public interest and that these should be compulsorily covered by an extended welfare state model. To put it another way: it has an origin and a purpose —and appeals to a target— in the strict sphere of civil society, as an autonomous initiative — as well as through the free expression of their interest that the latter actually show, beyond any a priori presuppositions, through the practical effectiveness of their reading activities.

7. There are two possible conditions to make this schematic outline sustainable. Firstly: its minority nature—the more micro that the structure is, the less manipulation it requires to balance expenditure and audience share. And secondly: the soundness of its critical contents. Lacking support from tools that implement its credibility through the position of strength that they occupy in the institutional system, its only source of power (as an instigator of the public interest) comes from its participation in the free public game of argument, and of publicly displaying thoughts and contrasting them. It is true that this means that it is enormously fragile—and if you like it makes it certain that it will quickly disappear as soon as its level of cognitive interest declines—but at the same time it ensures the tremendous relevance of its existence. Operating in a highly competitive system in which practically all broadcasting activity is reinforced—either by positions of strength in the institutional system, or by various market manipulations of the audience backed up by resorting to what Bordieu called “lowering the level”—its neglected position is the best imaginable guarantee of its tremendous critical potential that its self-managed freedom of action (the production of knowledge), to provide effective contents of critical knowledge—may manage to lead to. If it manages to do so—and as long as it manages to do so.

8. There is an implicit correlation between independence and self-publishing. To put it another way, it only makes sense to talk about independence when we refer to the effective launching of a system that enables an author or a given group of authors to critically maintain independent control of all the interventions and devices that affect it when it places its product in the public realm. So in a certain sense, effectively exercising independence is a natural part of the age of critical-experimental development for a post avant-garde for whom the commitment to inherent self-questioning has ceased to act centripetally on the structure of the work itself (and its language) to aim its critical activities at the machinery that surrounds it and decides its social purpose, and at all the interventions that construct its symbolic, artistic or cultural value. For us, this is the meaning that is implicit in the slogan of the author as producer that is still valid—it is same one that so many contemporary artists (as producers, even self-producers) are making their very own at the present time.

9. The technical characteristics of electronic publishing favour the emergence of these kinds of (we could say) micro-dependent structures. Three of them in particular: 1. The low cost (relative, of course) of the infrastructure required to enable anyone who wants to do so to be able to provide a visible presence for the expression of their opinions and their active participation as far as interpretative comparisons are concerned; 2. the practical convergence in the technological domain of production, distribution and reception devices (the computer, in fact, as studio-gallery-museum or as pen-book-bookshop); and 3. their effectiveness in bringing the abstract level of critical-cognitive productivity and the effective fluctuations in the audience closer together in real time. This was achieved through a quality that is inherent to the audience of the future, (becoming readers/receivers,) in the electronic sphere: its active character—when we are talking about pull technologies.

and 10. Having described the entire structure, we will now describe the aims (and let's leave the readers to assess its possible coverage). First: the (micro)production process in the public sphere in a temporary autonomous, or if you prefer, provisionally micro(in)-dependent area—where we could present our opinions and interpretations to people, as well as our cognitive and critical production activities. Second: encouraging responsive talk-back structures that make it easier for these activities to provide opportunities for contrast even in their own space. Third: the framework of open structures with potential for operating in a rhizome constellation (by opening up hyper-links to third projects that are linkable or have actually been linked up). Fourth: the critical fragmentation of the sphere of public opinion, by opposing

the strategies carried out by institutions and the market to form a consensus and homogenised attitudes (backed up above all by tactical manipulation by the media on a scale that was unparalleled, even in this country), to introduce alternative lines of opinion. Not only its own efficiency contributes to this effect—but especially what together with Benjamin we would call its model character. This is the capacity that the activity process has to lead to the structure being reused, with different ways of implementing its use (it is here that readers/spectators also becomes users, and where they themselves play with their ability to become medium producers) of the structure that we have tested out as an experience. And fifth, to finish off: the proportion of interpretative and critical materials that make it possible for any recipient to take part in the understanding and active development of these increasingly problematic fields that form areas with complex connections to our present—as instability, and as a displaced point, as well as to the world today as a transformable historic transition that we can take part in. ■

Contribution by José Luis Brea, editor of Acción Paralela (www.accpa.org), aleph-arts.org and www.artszin.net.

24 Spector

We set up the magazine ›spector cut+paste‹ in Autumn 2000. We wanted to publish a magazine that would allow for dialogue and co-operation between different spheres of modern art, and in which the similarities between contents in individual fields would become apparent. While we were working on this we quickly realised that it was not just a question of art, but was about a specific conception of culture. What encouraged us was not so much the way that separate fields such as Theatre, Audiography, Art or Sport co-existed alongside one another; it was more that by using specific production methods you could mix and go beyond genres.

From the very beginning we realised that it was extremely important to establish a perfectly developed relationship between image, text and graphic design. We are not just talking here about the image illustrating the text, or the design giving a more attractive appearance to the magazine. What it is really all about is creating a debate between contents in these three fields. This could take the form of a reaction by one of them to others, a close agreement between author and graphic designer, or intensive collaboration during the development stage between form and content. ›Spector cut+paste‹ can be understood as a single unit that combines image, text and design, without the information aspect being pushed into the background.

We are also concerned about specific collaborations between people from a variety of fields, and we are developing new publishing formats for this. To give an example: in our second issue we started a series entitled *Missing Pieces TV*. This is a television programme that only exists in our magazine. It is a dialogue between four people, but only one of them really exists; the other three are fictitious characters from a wide variety of social and cultural backgrounds. In the first episode, the guest was the Slovenian psychoanalyst and philosopher Slavoj Žižek, who at the time was running a research project at the North Rhine-Westphalia Institute of cultural sciences in Essen. In Magdeburg, the taxi driver, Ursula Teschel; in Münster, the Biology teacher, Florian Melzig; and by Web cam in Chicago, Renata Szykowski, a writer, were also connected with “MPTV”. From these four different places, they talked about violence, taboos and self-objectivation. A lot of people took part in this programme: together with the writer Anke Stelling and the theatre critic Thomas Irmer we constructed the characters and the questions. Anne König and Jan Wenzel then spoke to Slavoj Žižek in Essen. Later on, Anke Stelling created photographs from TV pictures and we combined them with a series of photos by Michael Moser, in which empty television studios appeared that he had photographed.

This material was then used by Markus Dressen, our designer.

Experimenting with formats has led to creating independent sections in the magazine, so that we comment on articles in other magazines and Web pages by readers and friends. However we do not consider Spector to be just a magazine, as along with its editorial activities it has also worked on various artistic projects within the framework of exhibitions. In November 2001 Spector took part in the *Rotation* project, which was organised by the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art in Helsinki. In December that year, the *Reader* magazine appeared, in collaboration with the Berlin artist Olaf Nicolai, as part of the *Enjoy-Survive* exhibition at the Contemporary Art Gallery in Leipzig. In June we are going to put on a night-time show in Weimar, in which Andreas Schlegel will be putting on a performance by Elvis. For our second issue Schlegel wrote an article on *Elvis Impersonators*. This year we are going to open the *1990ff* screening room in Halle, and through this we aim to study, from an artistic point of view, the urban changes that have taken place in East German cities due to de-industrialisation and decline. We are also interested in the link between journalism and social questions. These quite different activities show us that our interests continue to reach out beyond the magazine into other fields.

In Germany we sell the magazine in art bookshops, and in station bookshops in some big cities, as well as through galleries, life-style shops, clubs and theatres.

We'd like to work with a professional press distributor, but it is not so easy in Germany for independent publications. Press distributors are mostly affiliates of the big publishing companies. In order to get your magazine accepted by a distribution company, you not only have to pay them a commission for the copies that are sold, you also have to pay a huge fixed sum in advance. As our budget is not big enough for this, we have tried to find our contacts on our own. In other countries it is distributed by ACTAR from Barcelona, so that you can get our magazine in Europe and Japan.

As we started out with our magazine from an artistic milieu, it has mainly been received up to now by artists, curators, graphic designers, writers and theatre directors. However, we are not interested in just concentrating on a "specialised readership" like these people. We would like to reach a wide-ranging readership, by using ambitious contents and formats.

We are very interested in getting our readers to write their own contributions for the ›cut+paste‹ section that we could publish. In this way we hope to extend our editorial network and continue to gain new writers for our magazine. Graphic designers and a young readership, who take the magazine with them to life-style shops, are interested in the ›spectator cut+paste‹ graphics. We hope that these readers, through the graphic design, find an easier way to reach the contents. We are also trying to make this path as easy as possible by setting a really accessible price for the magazine (4.60 Euros). ■

Contribution by Tilo Schulz, co-editor of ›spectator cut+paste‹, magazine published in Leipzig.

25 PARACHUTE

I have a habit by now of tracking the new, the unforeseeable, the uncalculated, what comes as a surprise, an event, what's off the beaten track, what springs from the unknown, from defeat, depression, catastrophe, be it on a very intimate, individual, or collective level. Change more often than not comes from difficult, uncomfortable situations. It is even generated by a certain uncomfortableness with what is successful. Success can seal things hermetically, leaving no chinks for anything to pass through. Because it seems to have fulfilled a given mandate, solved a certain problem, it can actually be detrimental to going further, creating change and new opportunities, or being simply open to the world out there, the vast world that is in and around each and every one of us.

The question is how one can enlarge one's field of vision, be open to transformations, let oneself be transformed, letting in something from outside, letting out something of oneself. This questioning leads to thinking out the idea of the self, a deconstruction of this notion. The fragmented self, unable to claim unity, under the impact of the course of modernity, has led to a very important interrogation of the relation between the self and the other. The constant underlying negotiation of the contemporary self and the other is central to understanding much of what is going on in contemporary art, as well as in the world today. I find the concept of hospitality to be a driving force in thinking about contemporary problems and issues. This concept has been dealt with by Jacques Derrida on several occasions. The idea of hospitality itself brings about a conception of the world as a place of hosting, of letting the other enter into one's privileged space.

In a world where so many disasters occur so frequently, affecting the history and memory of individuals and peoples, history and memory are becoming a worldwide obsession, a question which is being addressed by fascinating writers and artists whose work plays with history and memory. Plays? Shocking as it may seem, playfulness is a necessary attitude when dealing with a step outside of conventions, outside of prescribed conceptions and knowledge. Playfulness, invention, working out ideas and different points of view, are important steps in preventing us from getting stuck with the weight of history or memory, while developing analytical modes in thought and art that enable us to cut paths through the present which spring from our understanding of the past and project us into the future. This is an idea close to Walter Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, where he says: history is the tiger's leap into the future. The idea is important for Benjamin, who was constantly concerned with change, and linking the past with the present and the future. It is close to another notion which is also dear to Benjamin, that of the author as producer, which is an idea that in itself implies that one cannot be a pure receptacle of past cultures, but that when one comes into contact with the past, which in any case always means a fragment of the past, a fragmented past, one is meant to reinvent it in some way by updating the meaning of these fragments, by relating them to contemporary experience and even by projecting one's perception of these fragments into a view of the future, a constructed yet unrealized future. This operation sets one off along different paths, avoiding the closure I previously alluded to, the imperfect past, the imperfect present, leading to an otherness, to some imaginary worlds. This view of the process of history seems to me essential for developing new ways of looking and living, inhabiting the world. We come back to the idea of habitat juxtaposed with that of hospitality, a word which encompasses the Latin hospes (the host), and is linked to the notion of refuge, of allowing, welcoming the other, often an other of a different condition or origin, in one's space or habitat.

When we were preparing Issue No. 100 of PARACHUTE for the Fall of 2000 I felt that it was time to reconsider the magazine's objectives as we had stated them when we founded it in 1975. PARACHUTE was born in the aftermath of the tumultuous sixties, a period of major questioning in politics and art. The

questioning of values, economic, sexual, social, individual, the family, all came about at the same time as art was deeply questioning itself, the boundaries between disciplines, the advent of new technologies such as video, the questioning of the body, all of which led to the development of a vast new system of classification including neologisms such as land or earth art, conceptual art, body art, performance art, video art, feminist art, activist art, etc. When we examine these many neologisms we see an inspired network of varied genres, most of which have lasted up to the present day. It was the need to create an adequate critical language that spurred me to create a magazine. The idea was to seek out writers and texts that would attempt to deal with the novelty of these practices, and deal with them by using contemporary ideas being developed in related fields of philosophy and aesthetics, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, psychoanalysis, etc. Art criticism seemed to be at a standstill regarding the recognition, and even more so, the interpretation of the new works being created.

Another observation led to the creation of the magazine, and came out of the relative isolation of Montreal and Canada. Modernism had primarily championed two cities, New York and Paris, in the development of contemporary art in recent times. Either one of them had been, still was and possibly still is, a *passage obligé*, or necessary passage in terms of apprenticeship and/or recognition in contemporary art practice. But the sixties had already started to challenge the hegemony of these centers. A different sense of history and historical development was emerging. More networking was going on in the art world itself, largely proposed and propelled by groups such as Fluxus. Networking became an art in itself in some instances such as mail art. I remember being involved somewhat in the Fluxus business of developing mailing lists, and international exchange. The magazine was to come out of Montreal, the second largest French-speaking city in the world, geographically situated in the middle of North America, a mostly English-speaking continent. This still gives Montreal a distinctiveness culturally speaking. Most Montrealers are imbued with two major cultural traditions and environments, one from the United States, the other from France and Europe.

I will come back for a minute to the fact that it became possible in the seventies to create an international magazine out of a non-center like Montreal. It seems that decentralization began at this time in the art world, under the impact of an increase in what we today call globalization. The word globalization was coined in 1968, but its history stretches back years if not decades, and manifestations of it could be traced in many different fields at this point. Again to refer to the alternative movements of the end of the sixties, these appeared simultaneously in different parts of the world, reflecting distinct contexts. The art world began to function in the same way, and art movements promoting new art practices, performance, happenings and video, appeared simultaneously in different places like Japan, Brazil and Barcelona. Montreal was one of these places. A desire to affirm one's distinctiveness in one's society manifested itself worldwide in a lot of more or less predictable places. This decentering of artistic emergence was not just something that would question the hegemony of the art capitals, it had a wider agenda which also dealt with issues such as the nature of art itself, its relationship to an audience, to politics, to cultural values. The development of PARACHUTE and the almost immediate response to the magazine not only in Canada, but also in Europe and the United States, was due to the urgency being felt in the seventies to deal with the world in a completely new way, breaking down barriers of language and nation, of continents, if not art disciplines themselves.

I already mentioned that what made PARACHUTE distinctive from the start was its particular cross-breeding of European and North American culture. Montreal is Francophone, but cannot be said to be French. Montreal is also Anglophone, but cannot be said to be American. We are French and American, and PARACHUTE is the result, if not the incubator of constant interbreeding.

The profusion of sources to which PARACHUTE

addressed itself in the course of its development contributed to creating more interbreeding, in the sense that we did not keep from publishing writers of different origins, backgrounds, intellectual traditions and languages (translating occasionally from languages other than French and English). Also in the sense that eventually writers themselves became agents of interbreeding in their own writings. In this sense art criticism would counter Serge Gruzinski's affirmation that interbreeding bewilders historians because it questions our sense of time, order and causality, three concepts which are constantly being destabilized by contemporary art practice itself. Art criticism must align itself with the questioning of historical patterns and ways of addressing them. Combining intellectual traditions in order better to understand art making itself enables us to gain in depth and complexity. Art criticism then becomes explorative, attentive to difference, to the particularities of emerging cultural forms, preoccupied by the idea of grasping their difference, enhancing the works' particular critical stance and meaning. The idea of PARACHUTE was to welcome interbreeding as a phenomenon in art practice itself, as well as in criticism. Again, we come back to the concept of hospitality as culture.

This process of encouraging interbreeding and fostering the development of hospitality affirmed itself in the course of the history of the magazine. By issue number 100, it could become an agenda. The first three issues of the new PARACHUTE dealt with the 'Idea of Community', essentially therefore with questions of individuality versus collectivity, interbreeding and hospitality. I interviewed Jean-Luc Nancy for the occasion.

The new PARACHUTE emerged from the previous one somewhat like a serpent which sheds an old skin and grows a new one. Realizing that our most appreciated issues were the thematic ones which came out once a year, *Architecture, Virtual Cities, Experimental Film, New Technologies, Museums, Collections, Gardens, Fashion, The Body, Ethics, Transit, Video, Installation, Photography...* one out of four issues, it was decided that each issue would become monographic. This also came out of the realization that art creation had grown worldwide to the point that it seemed necessary to create more focus, and opting for themes could help do that, fighting what Marc Augé identifies as one of the main characteristics of this age of "overmodernism", of overabundance of information. The themes are meant to be guidelines towards finding one's way in the world of contemporary art, going deeper into layers and networks of meanings. They are meant to be analytical and not prescriptive in the sense that the idea is not to identify trends or movements (I personally believe that movements became extinct as a way of thinking and processing contemporary art historically in the 70's), but to provide an analytical context in which to operate and regroup relevant art practices. Following 'The Idea of Community', we have dealt so far with *Image Shifts* (artists whose work represents a crossbreeding of media), *Autofiction* (on artists who use personal life material in their practice), *Economies* (artists reflecting and integrating economic strategies in their practice) and *Electrosounds*. It was also decided that one issue out of four would deal with an emerging city, one of these cities in the world where it might have been hard to imagine even a few years ago that it could become a centre of inspiration and development for the practice of art, but which under the influence of specific social changes caused by different factors such as geography, demography and globalization, for example, has become a place where explorative art practices are emerging. The first of these cities was Mexico, an issue that we developed with Cuauhtémoc Medina, an art critic in Mexico. All the writers for this issue live and write in Mexico City.

The next emerging city we will be dealing with is Beirut, a chance to understand the Arab world at this time and see how the particular context is generating different ways of thinking and practising art.

Taking into consideration the fact that PARACHUTE, although it deals with current issues, has also always been a reference magazine that readers hold onto, the question of format came up, and the book format was an obvious choice. It seemed better adjusted to

the fact that PARACHUTE is an object that you keep, can put on a bookshelf, and distribute even in bookstores in the long term, rather than in the short term such as most periodicals. The fact that each issue deals with one subject likens it also to the book format. Traditionally, each issue was composed of essays and commentaries. Both have always dealt with their subjects at greater length and in greater depth than in most art periodicals. With the new format, we reserved the essays for the book itself and created a separate folded newspaper for the commentaries on current events to be inserted into every copy, and distributed separately in certain contexts, such as art schools or galleries. This newspaper is called *para-para*. Peripheral to PARACHUTE, its particular focus is to deal with current issues through different manifestations such as exhibitions, book publications, or any form of cultural production which encompasses the many current art practices.

The ideal is to create local *para-para*s in different cities, including a majority of articles on current events or phenomena in each place. The different versions could be available on the magazine's web site on the internet. This could enhance our sensitivity to multiple cultural contexts and continue in practical terms the decentering started in the 70s.

As much as the first series of PARACHUTE had a spatial feeling to its design, the new PARACHUTE seems to have emerged out of much more temporal concerns, even bodily concerns. The new design which emphasizes the use of a lot of uncropped, so-called 'bled', photographs, which spread to every edge of individual double pages, often gives the impression of being in the middle of the works being shown. The new design is in general much more tactile, reflecting a bodily, or corporal, concept of design. This same approach is apparent in the way we deal with text. Text appears in different font sizes: a regular one for the integral text, a larger one for phrases taken from the texts, and an even larger one sometimes for relevant quotations, which appear alongside texts, in the margins of the magazine one could say, highlighting ideas pertaining to the theme of the issue. The integral text is sometimes highlighted in color, reflecting the contemporary usage of fluorescent markers in reading, and names of artists appearing in texts, as well as subtitles, appear in bold type. Visually and textually, the magazine adopts the mode of the hypertext, and enables the viewer/reader to penetrate content in different ways and on different levels. This becomes not only a highly visual spatial experience, but it is also a temporal one, in the sense that one can adapt one's reading of the magazine to one's sense of time or its availability. Even a short period of attention allows one to grasp some content, some meaning. The magazine has become an experience which addresses several senses in the body, a body/mind experience. The flow of words and images, the immersion into text, colors and shapes produces meaning, which can be explored over and over again, adjusting itself to contemporary modes of being and living. These have considerably evolved over the last quarter of a century, under the influence of the faster pace of life in general, increased shiftings about and displacements of the body, communication technologies, the internet, the computer, multi-channel television and electronic environments. The quality and definition of attention have been greatly transformed under this influence. A magazine, especially one devoted to visual arts, must take this environment into consideration.

Color, because of the kinaesthetic nature of the contemporary environment and because of the fact that artists are no longer fixed into a mostly black and white idiom, became an absolute must in developing the new format. One notices that the majority of works reproduced are in color, but there is also a purely graphic use of color, which enhances the quality of installation in the magazine, creating a visual empathy with the text and images.

In the magazine's history, there has been a tradition of creating events parallel to its editorial concerns. A series of ten international conferences have been organized throughout the years questioning postmodernism, multidisciplinary, local vs. international history, criticism, art and psychoanalysis, sociology, etc. These events inscribe the magazine into

real live space, open up our pages to debate and discussion, to dialogue and human interrelations, what at this point we would also like to do on the internet. Regularly, launches are held in different cities in order for us to meet and interact with our readers. In the case of the recent launch in Mexico, they symbolize our reaching out to other communities and ways of thinking. This was also an occasion to reaffirm the fact that PARACHUTE initially comes out of what I call a culture of resistance, the kind that one develops in feeling out the constant discrepancy that exists in an environment where one speaks and thinks in one language and is surrounded by another very enveloping one which is constantly making its presence powerfully felt. This feeling, and the creative energy that can be developed out of it, can help develop links with other cultures that have been somewhat suppressed or are at risk and struggling to develop their distinctness and uniqueness in the contemporary global world we live in. Hence, the magazine's philosophy of dialogue, apparent in its rapport with art works, artmaking, artwriting, theory, design, prolongs itself on the actual terrain. ■

Nota bene : The preceding notes are excerpts from a lecture given at the University of Girona on March 2, 2002.

Contribution by Chantal Pontbriand, editor-founder of PARACHUTE, magazine published in Montreal.