

JORN EBNER  
Summary of works

Background to my online works is a series of performance works, which I like to refer to as sculptural activities. With works such as *Mobile Energy Field* (1997) on show at the Fondazione Antonio Ratti in Como this year or *Mobile Settlement* (1998) with the Grizedale Society in the Lake District, England, I pursued a notion of sculpture in which objects, actions, and a record of those actions are assembled in configurations that could be changed according to the exhibition situation. The works could also be updated with new actions: they embody a possibility for continuous change. The works also require the viewer to make the connections between the individual components; I understand these as networks of meaning. (<http://www.kx-kampnagel.de/nov01/jorn.htm> shows an installation of Portable Garden at KX in Hamburg, 2001)

In 1999, Grizedale published my artists' book entitled *Handbook for a Mobile Settlement*. The book combined graphic and photographic elements in two parallel narrative sequences, in which the graphic elements tentatively illustrate the photographic sequence. In the following year, I developed this format into a slide work, *Flower Equation* (2000). This was my first digitally produced work. It combined two parallel visual narratives across a sequence of 40 images. Both works also fed into my later production of artists' eBooks.

At this point I received one of the New Media Scotland commissions to produce what was to become my first internet work, *Life Measure Constructions* (2001), which continues from my sculptural activities. Yet this work replaces the artist as a performer and hands over the action to the user.

With the medium, there were also formal problems that I wanted to deal with. First, the browsers, whose interface designs I dislike; second the prevalent visual forms that I felt were driven by photography and stylish graphic design. I saw *Life Measure Constructions* as a drawing, as something that avoids the way, visual forms on the net were dealt with. As a drawing I understand a form of projecting, of thinking, something that doesn't have to be fully formulated but is the visual encapsulation of an idea. In my case, the idea is related to one's life, the ways of orientation, of decision making, of navigation.

The formal questions of how to deal with the browser fed into my next work, *Lee Marvin Toolbox* (2001), which was awarded the Kunstpreis des Medienforums München. In content, the work continues my sculptural activities: it is conceptualizing possible objects that may be of aid in particular situations in life. Formally, it breaks apart the browser interface, disrupting the flow of surfing the net. The visitor has to react and engage with the work which then opens in small javascripted windows to form graphic pattern on the screen. The browser is treated in relation to the screen rather than as a self-contained monitor. At the same time, a soundtrack starts once the first window opens. The song, Lee Marvin's *Wandering Star*, tells of restlessness, of moving about. The song, in this way, sings about the kind of mobility I had in mind when working with sculptural activities. For the internet work, it was an apt reflection on the dichotomy of mobility and stasis that is embedded in the materiality of the net. The components of *Lee Marvin Toolbox* are also available for download as MP3, Pdf, and Projector files, again emphasizing their mobility.

At the same time, I became interested in eBooks when a friend of mine who worked for an eBook publishers called "Rocketbooks" said that the devices available then would not allow picture books with colours. Only Acrobat's Reader allowed the kind of artists' book I had in mind. When Acrobat started to allow the interaction with Javascript, I got excited by the possibility of parallel books, hidden books and sub books that were impossible with printed matter. I subsequently made six PDF-based eBooks, four of which incorporate parallel and sub-books which open through hidden links in the main book. A special programme had to be written that opened the main file when the container-folder was double-clicked. For the books, I wanted to create a container structure, a website that was both library and a decorative sequence of imagery. The overall structure became *Leif Codices* (2003)

in which I developed the use of small javascripted windows in a more dynamic way. Drawing sequences travelled across windows, or opened in parallel windows that offered something akin to the split screen in video art. The way I see it, the sequence of animations popping up in sequences of windows, is the static component in the work. The eBooks can be downloaded and disseminate to people's computers. The HTML eBook *O[c|k.]tober* connects its news imagery with current news web sites. The eBooks are the mobile components.

My last internet-based work *Leonardo Log*, focussed on extending the form of animated drawings that travelled across various small javascript windows. In response to Gerfried Stocker's comment that *Lee Marvin Toolbox* was more literature than visual art, I reversed the structure. Rather have text as the trigger of imagination, here each animation triggers a text that is collected in the Log window. The text is pre-written, yet as each animation consists of randomly called movieclips, the texts vary slightly. Each collection of words in the log will differ from previous ones. The resulting 'poem' can be sent as an email. This function hides behind squiggly lines, as does all the other navigation.

After this trilogy of works, the next body of works, *Portable Landscape*, used the forms of animated drawings from my web-works in a small number of video works and integrated these with objects, drawings on paper and an artists' book. For the book, I commissioned the German media theorist Ralf Adelman to write a speculative essay on the relationship between landscape and internet. Rather than write about this interest of mine myself, I wanted a book that builds a relationship between my visual thinking and theoretical thinking that is close to my work. His writing takes the analysis of landscape and internet beyond a comparison of metaphors and accentuates that both have a very personalised interaction.

For me, the focus on the viewer / user situation was always a sculptural element, something related to objects as a mirroring device to one's existence.