

Raise Your Flag!

Domenico Quaranta

Written on the occasion of "Raise Your Flag! The first Speed Show in Barcelona". Curated by Domenico Quaranta for The Influencers 2011 - <http://theinfluencers.org/>
Saturday, April 16, 2011
Borner Cyber Café - C/ Barra de Ferro, 3 - 08003 Barcelona, Spain

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The Speed Show Exhibition Format - <http://fffff.at/speed-show/>

«Hit an Internet-café, rent all computers they have and run a show on them for one night. All art works of the participating artists need to be on-line (not necessarily public) and are shown in a typical browser with standard plug-ins. Performance and life pieces may also use pre-installed communication programs (instant messaging, VOIP, video chat etc). Custom software (except browser add-ons) or off-line files are not permitted. Any creative physical modification to Internet café itself is not allowed. The show is public and takes place during normal opening hours of the Internet café/shop. All visitors are welcome to join the opening, enjoy the art (and to check their email.)» **Aram Bartholl**, *SPEED SHOW Manifesto*, 2010

Concept

Since the mid Nineties, the Internet proved to be a powerful platform for artists who wanted to bypass the traditional art system and bring their work directly to the spectator (more often a user, a collaborator or a prosumer), outside of any institutional framing.

After the first, pioneering years, for many artists the Internet stopped to be the only legitimate platform of activity, and most of them reconciled with the art world. However, today the Internet is still a radical environment, that is often chosen to make things and explore possibilities not available elsewhere. It is still the place where, in Björk's words, you can start your own currency, make your own stamp, protect your language, make your own flag and raise it. It is the studio, the exhibition place and the audience. It is the place where art happens without frames and labels, where it meets popular practices and occasionally becomes one thing with them. It is, as video was in the Seventies, “the vacancy of art”.

The art that happens there may sometimes migrate elsewhere, but while on the Internet, it often requires its own contexts and platforms. Some of them are started by artists, and often perceived as artistic projects themselves: relational platforms where art, in the best net.art tradition, happens in the dialogue, in the connection, in the exchange, in the collective manipulation of images, data, archives, myths.

Raise Your Flag! is, in a way, a tribute to the two frame projects it happens within: the *Speed Show* series, started by artist Aram Bartholl in 2010, which reclaims a public space - an Internet cafe - as an exhibition space; and the festival *The Influencers*. The show collects works that are, above all, platforms: places of gathering, discussion and organization of online and offline events; production platforms offering simple tools that may help you to join the never ending flow of works; curated or open content aggregators; group blogs; individual artworks that are, themselves, the starting point of an evolving creative process.

Our tip to the user is not only to look at them, explore and enjoy their contents; but also to get involved, contribute, create and share new contents and, when not possible, to steal the idea, upgrade it, start a new platform and raise your flag.

Artists:

Ryder Ripps, Scott Ostler, Tim Baker & Stefan Moore (US); Jon Rafman (CA), Parker Ito (US), Micah Schippa (US), Tabor Robak (CA) & John Transue (US); Iocose (IT); Ryan Trecartin & David Karp (US); Anonymous; Oliver Laric (DE); Aaron Meyers (US); Aaron Koblin (US) & Daniel Massey (ME); Spirit Surfers (US); Jonathan Vingiano & Brad Troemel (US).

Projects:

Ryder Ripps, Scott Ostler, Tim Baker and Stefan Moore (US)

[Dump.fm](http://dump.fm), 2010 – ongoing - <http://dump.fm/>

DUMP.FM is a website allowing pictures to be used for realtime communication and collaboration. Users can send image URLs (which display instantly in the chat), upload locally from their hard drive or post pics right from their webcam. Since its launch, contributors are involved in the ongoing development of a new vocabulary, consisting of static and animated images, appropriated or self produced contents, internet memes and webcam screenshots and whatever you can use to say something.

Jon Rafman, Parker Ito, Micah Schippa, Tabor Robak, John Transue

[Paintfx.biz](http://paintfx.biz), 2010 – ongoing - <http://paintfx.biz/>

PAINT FX is a tumblr where the administrators share abstract “paintings” they created using in the most banal way the most common options (defaults) provided by image editing softwares. Though you can’t contribute to the flow, you can easily go home, open your favourite image editing program and start contributing to the digital painting avant-garde making your best to avoid a “signature style”. As PAINT FX said in an interview, “Styles are over. All hail the brand.”

Iocose (IT)

[NoTube Contest](http://notubecontest.com/), 2009 – ongoing - <http://notubecontest.com/>

The Internet is full of garbage. We share everything, including thoughts that nobody will read, images and videos that nobody will look at. Yet, finding out a completely valueless content is still quite hard. The NoTube Contest allows you to apply with the most valueless video you found on YouTube. According to Iocose, “A good NoTubeContest's video makes it difficult to answer these three basic questions: Why has this video been produced? Why has this video been published? Who should be interested in watching this video?”

Ryan Trecartin, David Karp (US)

River of the Net, 2010 – ongoing - <http://riverofthe.net/>

How to express ideas without using words? Make a short video (no longer than 10 seconds), associate it to three keywords and upload it anonymously. *River of the Net* is a flow of videos created by the users, and based on the logic of the semantic web: no interface, no authors, no buttons, no dates. Not just entertainment, *River of the Net* is also a research tool for audio-visual, collaborative contents based on the issues addressed by the tags.

Anonymous (2006 - ongoing)

Why We Protest, <http://www.whyweprotest.net/>

Anonymous is the collective name shared by those who choose not to have any name. It came out of many platforms where people gathered to share anonymously their thoughts and contents, most notably 4chan. It is NOT an art project, even if what they do has been described as one of the best embodiments of Nicolas Bourriaud’s “relational aesthetics”. Why We Protest is the community platform where you can get in touch with them, follow their discussions, see what they think and why they do what they do. And maybe become one of them.

Oliver Laric (DE)

Touch My Body (Green Screen Version), 2008 -
<http://oliverlaric.com/touchmybody.htm>

What's a star out of the context that the cultural industry builds around her? Oliver Laric let internet users wonder it and propose alternative views on this subject by simply and freely altering an original product. Using the green screen technique so common in cinema and TV, Laric offered to the internet users a version of one of Mariah Carey's videoclips where everything but the main character has been deleted. In this web page, you can see how people filled the empty spaces, later publishing their own version of the video on YouTube.

Aaron Meyers (US)

3frames, 2011 - <http://3fram.es/>

3frames is a simple, evolving website that allows visitors to create and share animated .gifs using their webcam. As many other works in this selection, it is based on a very simple gesture that can be enacted and improved by everyone. Start your webcam, do anything, broadcast yourself and go viral!

Aaron Koblin (US) and Daniel Massey (ME)

Bicycle Built for 2,000, 2009 - <http://www.bicyclebuiltfortwothousand.com/>

In the age of crowdsourcing, you may have the chance to get a job that allows you to participate, through a platform such as Amazon's Mechanical Turk, in a creative project, instead of a commercial one. Even without knowing it. That's the case with *Bicycle Built for 2,000*, a wink to the first song ever synthesized by a computer, that Koblin and Massey composed using short voice clips provided by people from all over the world.

Bicycle Built for 2,000 is a poignant comment upon the ethos of the Web 2.0. When we share, are we netizens or exploited workers? Should YouTube or Facebook pay us, when we “broadcast ourselves”?

Spirit Surfers (US)

Spirit Surfers, 2008 – ongoing - <http://www.spiritsurfers.net/>

Founded by Paul Slocum and Kevin Bewersdorf in 2008, *Spirit Surfers* is one of the

first surfing clubs, group blogs in which a community of artists is involved in an ongoing dialogue, usually mediated by images. Contributors include a small number of invited artists. Most posts are separated into “boons” and “wakes”. According to Paddy Johnson, «the former are treasures brought back from a day of surfing the net, the latter images, text, or video telling us where the boons come from». But the vocabulary they developed along three years is so advanced now that any attempt to identify the “style” of a contributor, or to decode a sentence, may be a frustrating experience. You’d better enjoy it as the first explorers enjoyed hieroglyphics before decoding the Rosetta Stone.

Jonathan Vingiano, Brad Troemel (US)

Blind Mist, 2011 - <http://blindmist.com/>

Blind Mist provides a chance to see a constantly revolving display of images organized at random. All images function as links to their place of origin and will eventually expire from public rotation. To be included in the rotation of images, add your own URLs to *Blind Mist* by entering them in the input at the top of the screen. What’s more fascinating in *Blind Mist* is probably the fact that it turns the link into something as ephemeral as an eye blink. You forget to click on a link, and you loose it forever. You click on it, and you loose dozens of potentially interesting links while browsing the new tab you just opened up. But don’t complain: that’s the internet, babe!