



SCREENS HOME



<https://sites.google.com/site/chauvinmultimedia/>

IDENTITY USURPATION # 2: THE INTENTIONS

An art work in the shape of an acknowledgment, participative and in network realized by Gerard Chauvin

Uploaded on line by Loris Chennebault

DETAILS OF THE DEVICE

A computer connected to a cyber sex network is installed in a bedroom.

On the bedroom door, the presentation of the installation.

By crossing the door, the viewer faces the screen of the computer which has three images introducing three identities: a man, a woman, a transsexual.

The viewer is expected to usurp one of these identities and browse the network, to look for contacts and respond to them.

On the network, real contacts as well as fictional and artistic ones are provided, without any possibility of making the difference.

An in-between period with permeable borders is established halfway between pornography and art, between censorship and permission...

Time slots are set for these virtual meetings.

IDENTITY USURPATION is a participative installation which is defined as a relational space.

This work consists in infiltrating the field of cyber sex and considering it as a possible area of artistic and performative research (* 1). It is also the way to verify how we live our fantasies in the virtual sphere and thus measure the place of the body in these new approaches of sex. (* 2) This kind of distancing from the body, often also involves a construction of identity. Whoever develops this fiction, thinks it as superior to his/her own image, if it is sometimes simply for him or her to confess the inability to express oneself with the own body, his/her own language and his/her own identity.

In order to describe this identity shift, the project involves the viewer in a device allowing him to connect himself to a cyber sex network and puts at his disposal an image of someone else to represent him and serve as an avatar. He must make a choice between three people: a man, a woman, a transsexual.

The available characters are the emanation of a stereotyped view of woman, man or transsexual, each of them being made of accessories related to these identity constructions through culture and education... Since we all are "transvestites", as Judith Butler suggests it in "Gender confusion" (* 3), it is the possibility of fancy dressing (the drag) which would prove that gender is nothing but fiction and performance, that to different degrees, we all are "transvestites." Any gender is a performance without an original, starting with femininity and masculinity. We all are copies without an original.

The viewer is thus supposed to choose the identity which appears to him to evoke best the one he could be, which testifies best of his desires and fantasies, of his wish to offer the best conditions to the other ... Then will emerge between him / her and the contacted person a "presence effect". In this respect, Bertrand Gervais quoting Baudrillard says (* 4): Interactivity disintegrates, bringing with it the uniqueness of the experience and the immediacy effect of representation. If, as Baudrillard puts it with the simulacrum, "[it] is no longer imitation or repetition or even parody. It is a substitution of the signs of the real to the real" (* 5), the discovery of its limits results in a deconstruction of the simulacrum itself. The myth unravels. It is after all nothing but a device and a representation which efficiency should not fool us and lead us to believe in the absence of mediation.

(* 1) An in-between period with permeable borders is established halfway between pornography and art, between censorship and permission...

(...) In web art, artists often exploit infiltration strategies, gambling with the institutional borders of their works. The critical use of pornography codes for instance belongs to the strategies which blur the limits between art and non-art. As Joanne Lalonde puts it, "several hypermediatic works among the most visited openly exploit the viewer's visual and libidinal curiosity. Their success chiefly hinges on two elements: the sexual nature of the content and the non-stop transmission (...)"

Bertrand Gervais – « L'effet de présence. De l'imédiateté de la représentation dans le cyberspace »
<http://www.archipel.uqam.ca/570/1/pr%C3%A9sence-arch%C3%A93.pdf>
<http://archee.qc.ca/>

(* 2) (...) The heaven of the Net is obviously without any bodies. The innumerable gambles with identities are made possible only because of the disappearing of the face. Internet is a fantastic masking institution. Hidden behind a temporary and reversible identity, the internaut has no fear anymore to look at himself after any action. No one knows he is a dog. Cyber sexuality totally fulfils the imagination of the body's disappearance, and even of the other.

The text substitutes for sex, the screen for flesh. Eroticism reaches the supreme stage of hygiene with the virtual body.

No fear anymore of AIDS or any sexually transmitted disease, nor of harassment with this angelic sexuality which even makes it possible to endow sex and identity of one's choice, thanks to the anonymity of the Net. David Le Breton, « L'adieu au corps », Paris, Métailié, 2000

(* 3) Judith Butler, « Trouble dans le genre », Ed. La Fabrique, 2005

(* 4) Bertrand Gervais – Études littéraires, UQA, « L'effet de présence. De l'imédiateté de la représentation dans le cyberspace »
<http://www.archipel.uqam.ca/570/1/pr%C3%A9sence-arch%C3%A93.pdf>

(* 5) Jean Baudrillard, « Simulacres et Simulation », Paris, Gallilée, 1981. p. 1