Unmovie

2002–
flash python data base weblication, interactive network installation composed of Wall,
Stage, Stream and Bubblecam / http://www.unmovie.net / wall dimensions: 520 x 390 x 90 cm

/* def begin (Unmovie, empty): */
def __init__(self, darkness):
try: perspective of time

If one may speak of beginnings in cinema any longer,
Unmovie begins in dense darkness. Not as a cinema
house but crystallized as a "time-image"[1] object, a
koan-like fountain bubbling blackness in ZKM's cav-
ernous "Future Cinema" space, jet-black calligrapher's
ink evaporating in a glass aquarium well, air pumped in
breathing irrational op- and sonsigns out at exactly
one second per second via webcam, *Unmovie*'s *Bubble-
cam*, to the *Unmovie* portal alongside *Unmovie*'s syn-
thespian *Stage*, an "any-space-whatever"[2] updated
to "any-cyberspace-whatever" for "actor-mediums,"[3]
software language "bots," algorithmically hyperscript-
ing — no beginning or end — cyberanthrological travels
along a neverending *Stream* of "code-images"[4] flow-
ing from the growing *Unmovie* database of "found"
Net videos and their *Unmovie*-authored descriptors
(a second hidden script). *Unmovie* starts already
echoing Hamlet's "Time is out of joint" remark, releas-
ing time from its chronic[5] sensory-motor role in cin-
ema. *Unmovie*'s time frame, aionically[6] enumerates
rather than denominates screen space, animating
"noo-screens"[7] out of time in a game of "afterlife"[8]
for cinema.

try: wall==screen

If one may speak of beginnings in cinema once again,
Unmovie begins with the *Wall*. ZKM built *Unmovie* a
standard, hollow, whitewashed, partition museum up-
right. *Unmovie*'s "uncurtain" wall acts as interactive
code-image display presenting the logo-, op- and
sonsign goings-on on both the *Unmovie Stage* and
Stream, as well as all readymade devices carrying the
data to and from its interactors; a PC, an Ethernet
hub, speakers and, baroquely, power and transmission
cables, through which *Unmovie* data comes and goes,
hanging by handmade hooks of glass and bronze. The
Unmovie Wall screens its entire virtual and actual
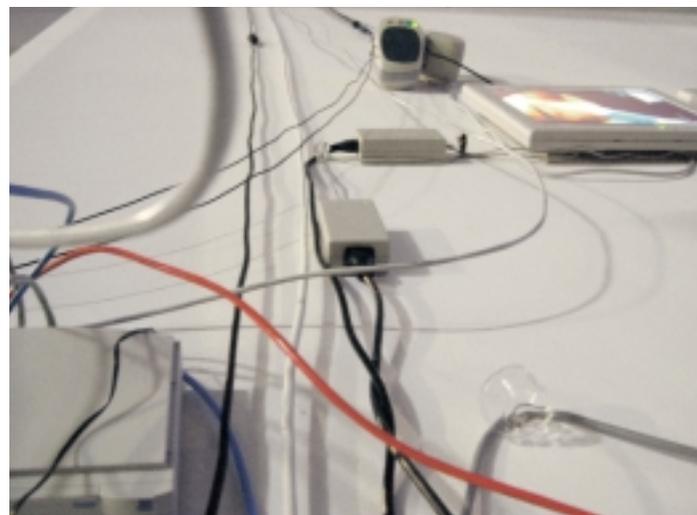
1   Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II :
    Time-Image*, Athlone Press,
    London, 1989. *Time-image*:
    "… a little time in its pure
    state: a direct time-image
    which gives what changes
    the unchanging form in
    which the change is produ-
    ced" (p. 17); "… time is no
    longer the measure of move-
    ment but movement is the
    perspective of time" (p. 22).

2   For an "any-space-what-
    ever" see Deleuze, op. cit.,
    p. 8: "The connection of the
    parts of space is not given,
    because it can come about
    only from the subjective
    point of view of a character,
    who is, nevertheless, absent,
    or has even disappeared,
    not simply out of the frame.
    but passed into the void."

3   See Deleuze, op. cit., p. 20:
    "… what might be called
    professional non-actors, or,
    better, 'actor-mediums,'
    [are] capable of seeing and
    showing rather than acting,
    and either remaining dumb
    or undertaking some never-
    ending conversation …"

4   See Deleuze, op. cit., p. 267:
    Code-images occur "(w)hen
    the frame or the screen
    functions as instrument
    panel, printing or computing
    table, the image is con-
    stantly being cut into an-
    other image, being printed
    through a visible mesh, slid-
    ing over other images in an
    'incessant stream of mes-
    sages,' and the shot itself is
    less like an eye than an over-
    loaded brain endlessly ab-
    sorbing information …";
    code-images compute, con-
    nect and visualize data algo-
    rithmically for globally
    minded "noo-screens."

Unmovie
2002
installation views: ZKM |
Center for Art and Media
Karlsruhe, 2002
© unmovie; VG Bild-Kunst,
Bonn 2003
photos © Philip Pocock

character as a "table of information."[9] The *Unmovie Wall* is its screen. Walls are screens, always have been. The earliest documented wall acted as a windscreen for dwellers on the shore of Olduvai Lake in Africa 1.8 million years ago. During the last Ice Age, sturdy palisades appeared to screen predators and belligerents from communities within. And at the same time, the cave wall acted as virtual screen, in Grotte Chauvet screening a manual for survival on the outside for spectators inside. The *Unmovie Wall* presents itself as actual and virtual screen at once.

def __Unmovie__(chronic, aionic):
try: time crystals

"Time is the moving image of eternity," states Plato in *Timeaus*. This equation applied to motion picture media governs analog and digital sensory-motor scenarios but it flips when applied to time- or code-image hypermedia. *Unmovie*'s *Stage* is hacked and

scripted to generate and compose an endless hyperscript. Devoid of an end and therefore without a beginning users online always enter the *Stage* game in the middle, the standing now (nunc stans). The *Stage* dialogue code poetically encourages topic words to emerge and subside. Topic words are the key that unlocks the floodgates to *Unmovie*'s database of internet-sampled and subsequently scripted Net videos. In concert with the incessant streams of artificial consciousness unfolding on *Stage*, an equally never-ending digital video *Stream* containing cyberanthropological travels online is "irrationally" cut and shared 24-7 on Internet-anywhere noo-screens. The permutations of narrative undercurrents rippling the surface of the Stream are mind-boggling. Still that is not to be confused with *Unmovie*'s program of non-narrative meandering about time itself. If film is a river in time, *Unmovie* is an ocean-image forever. The count of anonymous digital video clips in the database currently numbering 7500 factors out a logogenetic self-organizing logic for the *Stream*, with the *Stage* and *Stream* scripted to act as co-editors, so montage

5 The Chronos cosmological myth recounted in the "Theogeny" of Hesiod (2700 BP) sequels his creation myth in a most time-telling manner. Chaos, the origin spawned Gaia, Goddess of Earth. With Uranus, God of Sky, she bore Chronos, God of Time, who hated his father for hiding him on Earth. With his mother's help Time castrated Sky or Heaven and tossed his genitals into the sea, their foam spawning Aphrodite, Goddess of Love. In short, chronological time, the past, present, future, killed aionic time, the eternal present. As consolation timelessness was replaced by libidinal love on a conspiring chronocentric Earth in a myth that is a fable perhaps for Hollywood until Now.

6 The adjective "Aionios" is coined in Plato's *Timeaus* "to denote that which has neither beginning nor end, and that is subject to neither change nor decay, that which is above time, but of which time is a moving image" (37d8).

7 "Noo-screen" (Greek *noos* for "mind") denotes the progressive integration of translocally shared screens, digital interfacing to an evolving "noosphere" as described by Teilhard de Chardin in *The Formation of the Noosphere* (1947): "No one can deny that a network (a world network) of economic and psychic affiliations is being woven at ever increasing speed which envelops and constantly penetrates more deeply within each of us. With every day that passes it becomes a little more impossible for us to act or think otherwise than collectively" (http://www.tecnoetic.com/noosphere/).

8 Gilles Deleuze, op. cit., p. 270: "The life of the afterlife of cinema depends on its internal struggle with informatics. It is necessary to set up against the latter the question which goes beyond it, that of its source and that of its addressee."

9 Gilles Deleuze, op. cit., p. 265: "And the screen itself, even if it keeps a vertical position by convention, no longer seems to refer to the human posture, like a window or a painting, but rather constitutes a table of information, an opaque surface on which are inscribed 'data,' information replacing nature, and the brain-city, the third eye, replacing the eyes of nature."

Axel Heide, OnesandZeros,
Philip Pocock, Gregor Stehle
Unmovie
2002
flash python database
weblication at
http://www.unmovie.net
screenshot
© unmovie; VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn
2003
photo © Philip Pocock
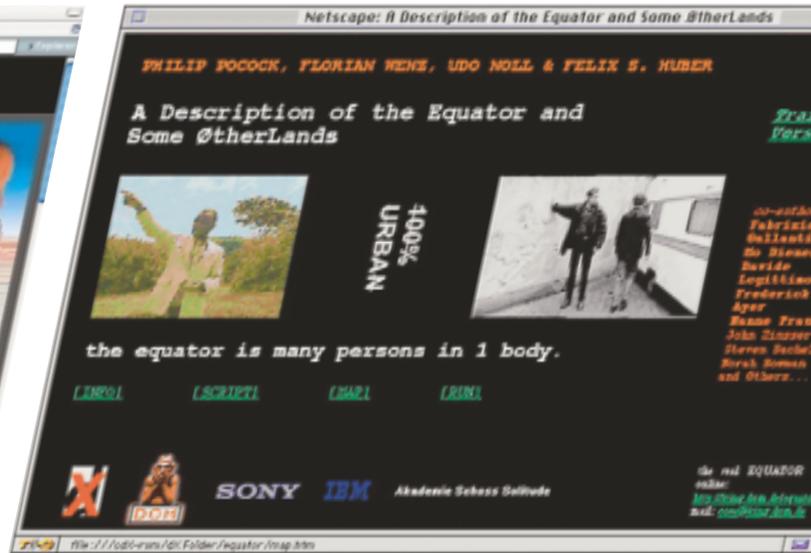
Felix Stephan Huber, Udo Noll,
Philip Pocock, Florian Wenz
*"A description of the Equator
and Some ØtherLands"*
1997
open-access database cinema
http://www.aporee.org/equator
screenshot
© the artists; VG Bild-Kunst,
Bonn 2003
photo © Philip Pocock

becomes "montrage" steered moment for moment in concert with user dialogue in the company of actor-mediums on *Stage*. These bots may not remember each other's lines but they store new vocabulary and syntax from human users in their "brains," affecting their language down the hyperline. What appears to have passed (past) on *Stage* and in the *Stream* is actually associative recall, memories arriving in the present, crashing if you will. What is foreseen as future possesses an intention lent to it by poesis alone, an instance about to be driven forth from a chaosmos of potential presents. *Unmovie*, appealing to artmaking's first premise, reverses Plato's "time-as-moving-image-of-eternity" equation, where time==Chronos and eternity===Aion, to become hypercinematically "eternity-as-moving image-of-time," issuing a timeless present as long as electricity allows, initiated by, yet remaining out of frames of passing time. *Unmovie*'s crystal ball turns chronocentric media inside-out, freezing time like some cultural quantum mechanic metaphysical equivalent spinning from Schroedinger's "time-independent equation" (1933) or the paradoxical quantum gravity Wheeler-Dewitt equation in which time disappears altogether (1965). *Unmovie* deals with the "problem of time," a zone of concern in the arts, humanities and sciences more and more, conjectured to "become to the twenty-first century what fossil fuels and precious metals were to previous epochs."[10]

*A Description of the Equator
and Some ØtherLands*
Equator aka *ØtherLands* is database cinema "performed" simultaneously along the Earth's Equator in Uganda, on the Java Sea, and along Cyberspace's virtual one of "corresponding identities." *ØtherLands* authors and online users participate in creating and linking their fragmentary whereabouts, transforming linear cinema and a linear equator into a tangled mesh of stories, much like life itself.

"The equator is slow. The equator is a zone of shared ambiguity. The equator is an opaque grid of information. The equator has no doors, no windows (courtesy Leibnitz). The equator is no reason to do anything. The equator is occupying your screen. The equator is a film I'd like to see made by someone else. The equator is playing at a cinema not near you but in you."[11]

10 Gary Stix, "Real Time," in
    Scientific American,
    October 2002.

11 Philip Pocock, guest at
    "100 Days 100 Guests,"
    documenta X.

01 NETWORKED
Axel Heide, OnesandZeros, Philip Pocock, Gregor Stehle

Felix Stephan Huber, Philip
Pocock, Daniel Burckhardt,
Roberto Cabot, Elena
Carmagnani, Gruppo A12,
Udo Noll, Wolfgang Staehle,
Gregor Stehle, Florian Wenz
H | U | M | B | O | T
1999–2004
interactive database,
self-organizing movie mapping
http://www.humbot.org
screenshot
© the artists; VG Bild-Kunst,
Bonn 2003
photo © Philip Pocock

Felix Stephan Huber,
Philip Pocock
<arctic circle>
1995
digital video-performance
website
http://www.dom.de/acircle
screenshot
© the artists; VG Bild-Kunst,
Bonn 2003
photo © Philip Pocock

H|U|M|B|O|T

H|U|M|B|O|T reads in Alexander von Humboldt's book
*Personal Narrative of a Journey to the Equinoctial
Regions of the New Continent 1799-1804* and uses the
Kohonen Self-Organizing Mapping algorithm to map it
out according to emotion, time, location and keyword
parameters set by readers. Onto these clusters of
"reread" and reordered text passages, *H|U|M|B|O|T*
authors attach digital video material – passages
recorded in contemporary South America (1999–) –
not as illustrations but as correlations. Humboldt and
H|U|M|B|O|T passages interwoven produce a deep dy-
namic "cyberatlas" on screen through which its online
users may "travel" and in effect "map" a movie for fu-
ture users when recorded user "travels" get replayed.
Celebrating 200 years since Humboldt's eco-entho-
logical research, *H|U|M|B|O|T* 1999–2004, like Hum-
boldt 1799–1804, is searching for a "nature for narra-
tive" suited for a "narrative for nature."

<arctic circle>

<arctic circle> is an early "cyber-roadmovie" investi-
gating contemporary loneliness: on the one hand,
driving through a vast natural wilderness, Canada's
Arctic, where one feels no longer welcome and which
one feels is best left alone; and on the other hand,
trying to connect to others driving the Infobahn in
a new wilderness, Cyberspace, searching for signs of
life on the other side of a laptop screen. This "double
travel" takes two artists – Philip Pocock, Felix Stephan
Huber – up to, along and over the remote Arctic Circle
in Canada, where they slowly become fictional charac-
ters in their own documentary epic. Virtual co-travel-
ers join via e-mail to the site the artists build on-the-
fly from trailer parks and auto repair shop telephone
jacks.

What begins as a 1970s conceptual-style "travel-
as-art-as-information" loop develops into 1990s pulp
melodrama, when two hitchhikers, Nora and Nicolas,
hop on board, and any and all preconceived ideas are
chucked out the 1974 SuperVan window.

Months later, when two more artists – Christoph
Keller and Florian Wuest – join, they detour south to
the heat of another "circle" for *<tropic of cancer>* in
Mexico in 1996.[12] There they find themselves con-
fronted with their cultural baggage in a poor country,
and resort to poking fun at heroic artistic myths.