Extimacy

Sen. Barack Obama made his first visit to Afghanistan today before he embarks on his tour of the Middle East and Europe aimed at bolstering his foreign policy credentials.

EXTIMACY
Art, intimacy and technology
Es Baluard, Modern and Contemporary Art Museum
Palma, Mallorca (Spain)
January 28th – May 4th, 2011

Artists:
Gazira Babeli (SL)
Clara Boj y Diego Díaz (ES)
Martin John Callanan (UK)
Grégory Chatonsky (FR/CA)
Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (MX/CA)
Paul Sermon (UK)
Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau (AT/FR)
Carlo Zanni (IT)

Curator:
Pau Waelder

The intimate is Other

Within the immense flow of data exchange, the new technologies have given rise to an interdependence between the spheres of the private and the public, between interior and exterior, leading us to divulge, in an increasingly natural way, our experiences, thoughts and feelings, extending the circle of intimacy to the point of sharing our inner life with the invisible, abstract audience of Internet users. What was personal becomes collective, that which belongs to others becomes one's own and intimacy is no longer something to be preserved, something maintained in the innermost circles, but is projected in all directions, in an eccentric movement. Intimacy thus becomes extimacy, borrowing the term coined by Jacques Lacan to define the existence, within the innermost part of the self, of a "foreign body", that which is external and yet is an integral part of the ego.

We need to share our intimacy because what we are is defined as much by our subjectivity as by what is around us. Combining art and technology, several artists have worked on the new parameters of the self, body, interpersonal relationships and intimacy brought by new media. Their artworks allow us to think about the ways in which the mobile phone, email, chats, social networks and other communication systems modify, enhance or determine our way of relating to others.

Extimacy. Art, intimacy and technology is a group exhibition which brings together the work of acclaimed and promising artists with a solid background in the field of media art. Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Paul Sermon, Gazira Babeli, Clara Boj and Diego Díaz, Gregory Chatonsky, Carlo Zanni and Martin John Callanan explore in their projects the different aspects of a complex and yet simple concept: extimacy.

ARTWORKS

Gazira Babeli
The Bathers (2010)
Physical scripted environment

You walk naked on a beach modelled after Es Trenc (Mallorca). The beach is populated by naked avatars, all of them wearing the hat and sunglasses of Gazira Babeli. As you mingle with them, Beavis Palowakski, a voyeur smoking a cigar, insults you. The Bathers is a playful recreation of the idyllic scenes once depicted by Manet, Renoir, Cézanne, Picasso and many others.

Clara Boj and Diego Díaz
Identidad Fan (2009)
Computer, webcam, custom software, projector

A teenager's room: the desk, the computer with webcam, posters and photos of her music and movie idols. Upon approaching the installation, the visitor's face is recorded by the webcam. Custom software identifies the area of the face and sends this image to the projector, so that the visitor's face is superimposed over those of the famous people in the posters.
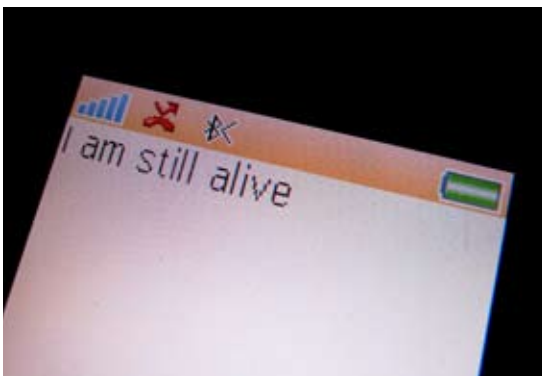
Martin John Callanan
I Am Still Alive (2009)
Computer, custom software, wireless network

A hidden transmission device is continually searching for visible and open devices (mobile phones, laptops, etc) within a local area. On discovering a device a simple message is sent, which reads: "I am still alive" (translated to the official local language). I Am Still Alive is active at various times and in various locations; details of which are not disclosed.

Martin John Callanan
The International Directory of Fictitious
Telephone Numbers
(2010)
Computer, custom software, telephone,
printed directory

The International Directory of Fictitious Telephone Numbers is a collection of telephone numbers that are designated never to function. Their purpose is to be reserved indefinitely for use within drama or film productions so that unsuspecting people aren't disturbed by inquisitive viewers.

Enquires were made to the telecommunication regulators of each nation state. All possible numbers for each country with such reserved ranges are ordered and listed in The International Directory of Fictitious Telephone Numbers.

The printed directory is accompanied by an apparently normal looking telephone. This telephone has been reprogrammed and reconstructed to automatically dial the numbers from the Directory, at random. The dialling tone is followed by the numbers being dialled, then the response: a dead tone indicating no number, or a recorded message stating that the number is not in use, from a telephone exchange in any part of the world. The telephone then hangs-up before selecting another number to dial at random.

Gregory Chatonsky
Dance With Me (2007)
Projector, computer, custom software, audio jack
Programming / Software: Vadim Bernard

Dance with me is made of 157 videos taken from YouTube. Every video shows a young American woman performing the same R'n'B choreography. If a visitor has an MP3 player, he can connect it to the set-up. The young women then start to dance on the selected music and follow its rhythm and volume intensity exactly.

Gregory Chatonsky
Se Toucher Toi (2004)
Computer, monitor, webcam, custom software
Programming / Software: Vadim Bernard,
Stéphane Sikora
Production: Le Fresnoy studio national
des arts contemporains

By simply touching a glass surface with one's hand, one virtually manipulates a video image representing a man's and woman's hands. One can make them touch, move apart, skim. After a while, the two hands don't seem to respond any longer to the user's manual commands. They touch each other freely as the installation continues to exist simultaneously in another physical space and on the internet. What one perceives in the end is the outcome of the interaction of the others. All the interactions are recorded in a database and may be added subsequently and performed again.

Gregory Chatonsky
L'État du monde/ World State (2008)
Projector, computer, custom software, speakers
Coproduction: Year 01 / Vidéographe
The woman: Mireille Hébert

A young woman in her room. She seems ill. Sometimes she is better. Sometimes she is worse. Each of her reactions seems to respond to a secret logic. As the day goes by, she hardly breathes, she relaxes, she gets up, she collapses. Everything starts over again. Somewhere else, people die, are injured, governments are overthrown, elections are won, raw material gets scarce, negotiations are being held, treaties are signed. Everything starts over again. The state of the world is a fiction which reacts in real time to the CNN news. The young woman gets worse or healthier depending on what happens in the world.

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer
Pulse Index (2010)
58' Plasma screen, computer, digital microscope, industrial camera, metal enclosure, custom software.

"Pulse Index" is an interactive installation that records participants' fingerprints at the same time as it detects their heart rates. The piece displays data for the last 509 participants in a stepped display that creates a horizon line of skin. To participate, people introduce their finger into a custom-made sensor equipped with a 220x digital microscope and a heart rate sensor; their fingerprint immediately appears on the largest cell of the display, pulsating to their heart beat. As more people try the piece one's own recording travels upwards until it disappears altogether —a kind of memento mori using fingerprints, the most commonly used biometric image for identification.

Paul Sermon
Telematic Dreaming (1992)
Closed video circuit, HD cameras, projectors, plasma displays, beds

This is an installation that exists within the telematic network between two installation locations that function as customized videoconferencing systems. In the first location a video camera picks up a birds-eye view of a double bed beneath it - the exact 3:4 aspect ratio of video format. The camera image of a person lying on the bed is then sent to another videoconferencing system in a geographically distant location. In the second location, the digital image feeds to a video projector situated above another double bed. The live video image is projected down onto the second bed where another person is lying. A second video camera, situated next to the projector receives the view of the live life-size projection of the first person on the same bed as the second person. This camera image is then fed directly to a video monitor next to that bed, and back via the videoconference connection to the first location - feeding one more video monitor by the first bed.

Christa Sommerer & Laurent Mignonneau
Mobile Feelings (2003)
Mobile devices, pulse, touch and breath sensors, micro ventilator, micro motor, LEDs, microcontrollers, Bluetooth module

Mobile Feelings is a mobile art project where users can send and receive body data over a wireless communication network. Specially designed Mobile Feelings devices allow remote users to feel each others' heartbeat and breath from a distance. The system explores novel forms of intuitive and non-verbal communication that go beyond the conventional transmission of voice, sounds and images used in standard mobile communication. Mobile Feelings enables intuitive bodily communication between users by exploring the emotional quality of touch and breath as two of the least explored communication senses.

Carlo Zanni
Self-portrait with dog (2010)
Oil on canvas
Triptych, each panel 150 x 250 cm.

In November 2008, Carlo Zanni was caught by the camera of Google Street View when he was walking his dog on Via Gaetano Strigelli in Milan. He extracted the image from the web and ordered a large oil on canvas triptych from a company he found on the Internet.

Carlo Zanni
The Possible Ties Between Illness and Success (2006)
Data cinema

A short movie transformed by an Internet data flux and re-edited server-side when web statistics (Google Analytics) are available: the public can watch a new movie every day. The core idea of "The Possible Ties ..." is the relationship between manic-depressive illness forms and success at large, a theme it symbolically tracks through the filming of an ill man and his partner. The man's body progressively fills with stains: quantity and position depend on the number of users visiting the website (and their country of origin). The more users, the more stains, thus causing the "illness" to spread all over the body.

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Activities
(to be confirmed)

Education workshop for teenagers
Lectures by the curator and participating artists
Augmented Reality workshop by Clara Boj and Diego Díaz
Concert/ performance

Catalogue

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200 pages
Catalan, Spanish, English, German
Texts by: Pau Alsina, Gazira Babeli, Clara Boj y Diego Díaz, Martin John
Callanan, Grégory Chatonsky, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Francesc Núñez,
Paul Sermon, Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau, Pau Waelder
and Carlo Zanni.