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"Technical Difficulties". Curatorial challenges resulting from the presence of new media in the art of the 20th and 21st centuries

New media in the art of the 20th century, which extended the artistic repertory to include digital image recording tools, electronic devices and creative programming, not only opened up a field of exploration for artists, but also posed unprecedented challenges for curators¹. They experienced a cultural (r)evolution just like all the other stakeholders of the culture market, for whom contact with the ever-faster flow of information and new forms of imagery was something radically new. The review of selected curatorial positions based on working with new media in the 20th and 21st centuries can be conducted primarily from the perspective of relations with technologies, usually taking into account the restrictions they impose but also their inspiration to embark on bold visions with new possibilities. Apart from dealing with “technical difficulties”², the curators taking the risk of exhibiting new media art also had to face prejudice on the part of conservative decision-makers representing art institutions as well as lack of understanding on the part of the public and even art critics. The problem did not disappear with the spread of knowledge about the specific features of digital imagery or online culture and the increasing affordability of technology. Technical limitations returned years later, albeit in a different form; most of the projects in the history of media art require constant, specialized conservation and keeping alive by techniques such as

» 1 I always refer to both female and male artists and curators.

» 2 The term and the title of the text are references to the polemic published by *Artforum* between curator Lauren Cornell, publicist Brian Droitcour and art critic Claire Bishop. See L. Cornell, B. Droitcour, “Technical Difficulties”, *Artforum* January 2013, vol. 51, No. 5, <https://www.artforum.com/print/201301/technical-difficulties-38517> [access: 08.06.2019].

e.g. emulation³. The difficulty is further exacerbated by technology itself; while exhibiting a work that is nowadays part of the history of new media, the curator sometimes has to decide whether to use for this purpose an analogue monitor from the time of the creation of the work, or a contemporary high-definition digital image projected from a beamer. One must not overlook the misunderstandings in the art world itself, where there are still two separate narratives, which Lev Manovich noticed as early as in the 1990s and defined parallel fields of art, respectively: [Alan] Turing's land and [Marcel] Duchamp's land⁴. The former was supposed to refer to art conditioned by technological progress, while the latter was to refer to the slightly ironic position from the field of conceptual meta-art. The above division still holds today, as evidenced by the debate triggered by Claire Bishop's article in *Artforum* (2012), where the author failed to see the potential of media art despite its many years of existence⁵.

From the very beginning, however, the experimental art of new media aroused interest among curators who specialized in it. They represent three generations, the first of which includes: Jack Burnham, Jasia Reichardt, Howard Wise. The second one is e.g. Timothy Druckrey, Christiane Paul, Peter Weibel, and the third one: Inke Arns, Sarah Cook, Lauren Cornell, Steve Dietz, etc. Not only did they promote innovative art through curated exhibitions, but they also wrote theoretical texts about it, often educational, due to the pioneering nature of the issues addressed. Often originally active in photography, film and video art, they were well acquainted with the problems of the presentation of art which utilised "time-based" or "lens-based" media, in which the form of recording and reception of mediated images was important. With time, two types of curatorial positions developed in the world of art, divergent in their approach to new media art. One attitude results from the conviction that there is a need to popularize little-known, niche issues of technologically advanced art through its presence at exhibitions and institutions of mainstream artworld. This attitude can be called inclusive, because it consists in introducing works representing a technological niche into the traditional world of art. The second position is more exclusive, i.e. one that is oriented specifically, represented by a still relatively small group of curators organizing exhi-

» 3 Emulation in IT means a simulation of operation of a given platform or program, usually to recreate the programming environment or an earlier generation platform, often outdated. See E. Wójtowicz, "Emulacja jako metoda i metafora", *Kultura Współczesna* 4(84)/2014, p. 40-50.

» 4 L. Manovich, "The Death of Computer Art", *Rhizome* 1996, online: <http://rhizome.org/discuss/view/28877/> [access: 8.06.2019].

» 5 See C. Bishop, "Digital Divide: Contemporary Art and New Media", *Artforum*, September 2012, p. 434-442 and F. Cramer, "When Claire Bishop Woke Up in the Drone Wars: Art And Technology, the nth Time", [in:] *across & beyond – A Transmediale Reader on Post-digital Practices, Concepts, and Institutions*, ed. R. Bishop, et al., Sternberg Press, Berlin 2016,

» p. 122-134.

bitions devoted solely to media art, often also exclusively in institutions with such a profile⁶. With the cyberculture euphoria of the 1990s and the emergence of Internet art, curators such as Steve Dietz, active in the alternative world of online culture 1.0, made their debut and popularised online art. The first signals testifying to the importance of the new medium and the context of art were recognized by Magdalena Sawon and Tamas Banovich from the private New York Postmasters Gallery. Almost simultaneously, curators representing the world of mainstream art continued to make mistakes, a case in point being Catherine David's and Simon Lamunière's inclusion of net.art works in documenta X (1997) on computers which were offline, which triggered criticism of the artists from this field of art. However, the Internet art environment was autonomous from the very beginning; female artists (Olia Lialina, Cornelia Sollfrank) and their male colleagues (Alexei Shulgin, Wolfgang Staehle, Vuk Ćosić) successfully curated exhibitions held in a manner endemic for the Internet. In the 2nd half of the 1990s, Ćosić wrote: "The net is the FINAL context for a work of net.art, and by choosing to avoid the curators, an artist doesn't necessarily become inaccessible, nor does his/her/its work"⁷. The declaration to reject cooperation with professional curators did not, however, contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about the unique nature of new media art in the art mainstream. It was only a few years later that the mutually kept distance was shortened and recognised art institutions started to notice the potential of new media, gradually including them to their permanent collections and taking the risk of keeping and constantly updating their archives. At present, globally renowned mainstream art institutions usually reserve positions for curators specialising in media and/or digital art, as witnessed by the many years of employment of Christiane Paul at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. The singularity of curatorial work, however, depends to a large extent on the character of a given art institution, i.e. the degree of specialisation in the field of new media. Looking at the history of new media art from the perspective of exhibition institutions, Dieter Daniels proposes a division into three phases of development:

- heroic (1960s-1970s),
- institutionalisation (1970s-1980s),
- specialised institutions (1990s)⁸. He moreover notes a characteri-

» 6 Researching the history of digital art from the perspective of the early 21st century, Christiane Paul mentions 46 important exhibitions of new media art (1965-2002) along with the names of their curators. See C. Paul, *Digital Art*, Thames & Hudson, London 2003, p. 218-219.

» 7 V. Ćosić, *net.art*, 1998 <http://www.worldofart.org/english/98/98vuk2.htm>
» [access: 8.06.2019].

» 8 D. Daniels, "Whatever Happened to Media Art? A Summary and Outlook", [in:] *across & beyond...*, op. cit., p. 44-62.

stic paradox: with the establishment of these specialised art institutions focused on the presentation of new media, digital technologies ceased to be highly specialised⁹. Furthermore, the curators of the 1970s, who entered a hitherto unknown area of technology-dependent media, could not have been aware of the problems posed by technoprogeria, i.e. the accelerated ageing and extinction of media genres. This ignorance was still present in the 1990s even in art institutions with otherwise valuable achievements in the presentation of media art, such as the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie in Karlsruhe¹⁰. This also applies to works of art, which depend not only on a specific platform or even a software version, but also on the dynamics of the Internet as their primary context. A case in point is the problem with the conservation of Douglas Davis's interactive work *The World's First Collaborative Sentence* (1994), inactive for nearly two decades of online existence due to an outdated technology¹¹. In 2013, a team of specialists from the Whitney Museum in New York, headed by Christiane Paul, curator of the New Media Department, decided to leave two versions of the work in the museum's collection: a technically viable but not genuine one and a "frozen original" with all the defects that had arisen in the two decades of its online life¹².

The early curatorial decisions to present experiments created via computers, robotics or telematics art are first and foremost a story of clashes with resistant technology and lack of understanding regarding the reception of these works. The introduction into art circulation of works that were still formally conventional but innovative in terms of the creative process, mediated by a programmable machine, was not an easy process. The then technophobia of people of culture, mainly based on the fear of dehumanization, resulted in these works being denied the status of art, which was all the easier because in fact the first of them were not created by artists with academic education background, but by amateurs, e.g. engineers employed in institutions with access to expensive computing machines. Hence the euphemism included in the title of one of the first exhibitions presented at the Howard Wise Gallery in New York, *Computer*

» 9 Currently, we can see a crisis of institutions established in the third phase, which can be proved by the motto of the 2019 Ars Electronica Festival, which refers to the midlife crisis of the digital revolution. The Festival Curators, Gerfried Stocker and Christine Schöpf, are among the leading organizers of exhibitions of new media art.

» 10 I wrote about this in *Fragile*, analysing e.g. the case of the CD-ROM *Magazin artintact* (1994-1999), published by ZKM Karlsruhe. See E. Wójtowicz, "Poza cyfrowy niebyt. Strategie utrwalania sztuki Internetu", *Fragile*, No. 2(24) 2014, p. 25-29.

» 11 See <http://whitney.org/Exhibitions/Artport/DouglasDavis> [access: 08.06.2019].

» 12 M. Ryzik, "When Artworks Crash: Restorers Face Digital Test", *The New York Times*, 09.06.2013 <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/10/arts/design/whitney-saves-douglas-daviss-first-collaborative-sentence.html> [access: 8.06.2019].

Generated Pictures,¹³ created by A. Michael Noll and Bela Julesz, employees of Bell telephone company¹⁴. The above show nearly coincided with an equally pioneering European exhibition of generative computer graphics, curated by Max Bense, with works by Frieder Nake and George Nees¹⁵. The potential of new, programmable means of expression was thus recognised almost simultaneously by a German philosopher and an influential New York art dealer, yet the latter did not have a commercial success as none of the exhibited works were sold.

The presentation of issues that were at the time limited to the initiated and accepted with moderate enthusiasm in the art world was not an easy curatorial task. It was difficult to convince artists to experiment with computers and to secure relevant financial resources (the glitches of the then machines literally devoured exhibition budgets), and to present new issues to the public in an accessible way, often as epoch-making. Jasia Reichardt met this challenge perfectly, organising the ground-breaking *Cybernetic Serendipity* exhibition at the ICA in London (1968)¹⁶. On display were e.g. a kinetic robot *Rosa Bosom* by Bruce Lacey and the interactive sculpture *SAM (Sound Activated Mobile)* by Edward Ihnatowicz, as well as more convention works as e.g. hyperrealist paintings by Lowell Nesbitt depicting IBM computers. The exhibition had primarily an educational character in the broadest sense of the word: it was to familiarize British society with the mysterious sphere of advanced technology and “cybernetic artefacts”¹⁷. Despite the success of *Cybernetic Serendipity*, “Ms. Reichardt was primarily concerned about the fact that only some examples of ‘computer’ art stood a chance of making it to the museum”¹⁸. “Time, costs and technical difficulties”¹⁹ stood in the way.

A much more difficult task was faced by two curators trying – independently and vying with each other – to address the issue of the emer-

- » 13 The exhibition *Computer Generated Pictures* took place in Howard Wise Gallery, NYC, in April 1965.
- » 14 A. Michael Noll, “The Howard Wise Gallery Show of Computer-Generated Pictures (1965): A 50th-Anniversary Memoir”, *LEONARDO*, 2016, vol. 49, No. 3, p. 232-239.
- » 15 The exhibition *Generative Computergrafik* took place in February 1965 in the Studien-Galerie des Studium Generale of the University of Stuttgart in the Federal Republic of Germany.
- » 16 The exhibition *Cybernetic Serendipity: Computer and the Arts* took place in 1968 in the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. It was to attract between 40,000 and 60,000 visitors. It was described e.g. by Marek Hołyński, the author of the first Polish book about computer art, but he did not mention the curator’s name. See M. Hołyński, *Sztuka i komputery*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1976, p. 23-27.
- » 17 J. W. Burnham, “Estetyka systemów inteligentnych”, transl. K. Biskupski, [in:] *Zmierzch estetyki – rzekomy czy autentyczny?* vol. II, ed. S. Morawski, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1987, p. 207.
- » 18 *Ibidem*, p. 208. When writing about “computer” art in 1970, Burnham used inverted commas, just like Hołyński in 1976.
- » 19 *Ibidem*.

ging information society and of the computer as a creative tool. In 1970, two such exhibitions were opened in New York City with titles that promised an interest in new technologies: *Software and Information*. The former, held at the The Jewish Museum, was curated by Jack Burnham²⁰, while the latter was prepared in the Museum of Modern Art by Kynaston McShine²¹. The *Information* show, ultimately hosted at MoMa, proved to remain in “Duchamp’s land”, focusing on conceptual information systems, to a lesser extent relying on technology. By contrast, the *Software* exhibition, while it went down in history thanks to its very innovative concept, was a technological and budget failure and discouraged conceptualists who experimented at that time with technology art, e.g. Hans Haacke. The artist criticized the idea of using a computer to count the votes of the visitors to the exhibition as part of his *Visitor’s Profile* project because the machine was unreliable. However, Jack Burnham’s theoretical thinking was truly ahead of its time²², since he predicted e.g. that computers would trigger an “evolution of the communication model of art” and will “reorganise the world of social values”²³.

Jack Burnham, comparing his own experience with that of Jasia Reichardt, pioneer with respect to the presentation of computer art, highlighted similar problems faced by both of them as curators: art institutions were not interested in supporting such projects, not to mention the acquisition of such works for their collection, while artists, in his opinion, “had not yet fully understood”²⁴ the potential of the new tools. In fact, Burnham spoke quite moderately about the artistic value of the works created in his time, recognizing that the only thing that counts in the experiments with “computer” art is “their value as experiments and the fact that they make us think about the consequences of the existence of a new tool of extraordinary importance”²⁵.

This extraordinary importance anticipated by Burnham became prominent in the last decade of the 20th century after the emergence of cyberculture and an alternative art circulation connected with net.art and new, interactive (multi)media. The ability of the net.art community to self-organize and take on various, also freely interchangeable roles (artistic, cu-

» 20 *Software. Information Technology: Its New Meaning for Art*, The Jewish Museum, New York, 1970 and Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1970-1971.

» 21 Files of the exhibition *Information*, MoMA, 1970, <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2686> [access: 7.06.2019].

» 22 See E. A. Shanken, “The House That Jack Built: Jack Burnham’s Concept of “Software” as a Metaphor for Art”, *Leonardo Electronic Almanac* 6:10/November 1998, <http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-journals/LEA/ARTICLES/jack.html> [access: 7.06.2019].

» 23 J. W. Burnham, *Estetyka systemów...* op. cit., p. 223.

» 24 *Ibidem*, p. 208.

» 25 *Ibidem*, p. 207, 215.

ratorial, theoretical) became apparent very quickly. In 1997, Alexei Shulgin, experimenting as a net.artist and curator, announced the *Desktop Is* project, inviting all, irrespective of whether or not they were professional artists, to take part²⁶. His *First International Online Desktop* Exhibition gathered a few dozen works stored on the artist's server turned into a 24/7 art gallery, accessible from any place on the globe. The two criteria along with the absence of selection were decisive for the phenomenon of presenting art in the net.art era: the internet became a kind of "artists' run space". Such novelties as the intangible nature of a work as well as the low capacity internet, a limitation to the creativity, helped to develop relevant curatorial positions. One of the most important curators of this time is Steve Dietz, who has been organizing exhibitions of electronic, computer and telematics art for over 20 years. His impressive achievements make him an expert in the field of presentation within the walls of galleries and museums of works which are interactive, intangible and endemic for the Internet. Dietz, himself not a net.artist but aware of the ethos of this current of art, contributed to its popularization by organizing one of the first exhibitions of net.art intended strictly for network conditions: *Beyond Interface: Net Art and Art on the Net*²⁷. It was accompanied by the conference *Museums and the Web* (1998). Held in Toronto, it helped curators and museums interested in the promotion of new, technology-conditioned forms of artistic expression to exchange their know-how and the best practices²⁸. As Steve Dietz stressed in the introduction to *Beyond Interface*, which was at the same time a worldview manifesto: "the Net is both a sufficient and necessary condition of viewing/experiencing/participating"²⁹.

Gradually, art intended for and created in the Internet came to be recognised by institutions, first of all in the USA: The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis or New York's Dia Art Center, then the Whitney Museum (and the biennials organized by this institution) or MoMA in San Francisco. In Newcastle, UK, the first conference devoted to the specific nature of curating new media was held already in 2001³⁰, while Tate Gallery held an intermedia program between 2008 and 2010, with a net art gallery

» 26 A. Shulgin, *Desktop Is* (1997-1998), <http://easylife.org/desktop/> [access: 7.06.2019].

» 27 This exhibition was held in two consecutive editions. Documentation of both is still available at: https://www.museumsandtheweb.com/mw98/beyond_interface/00_artists.html [access: 7.06.2019].

» 28 The conference was attended by over 150 participants from 20 countries: <https://www.museumsandtheweb.com/mw98/speakers/index.html> [access: 27.06.2019].

» 29 In his texts, Dietz highlighted exhibition titles with double-spaced letters. See S. Dietz, *beyond.interface.net art and Art on the Net II*, 1998, https://www.museumsandtheweb.com/mw98/beyond_interface/dietz_pencilmedia.html [access: 27.06.2019].

» 30 See S. Cook, B. Graham, S. Martin (ed.) *Curating New Media*, BALTIC, Newcastle/Gateshead, 2002.

which had solely an online presence³¹. As Sarah Cook, an active curator and a researcher of media art curating, observes, in the early 21st century the key questions were: “funding, audiences, institutional support, and professional development”³², while in less than a decade, fundamentally new issues emerged. In 2007, just before the media social revolution, Cook asked about the role of curators who filtered user-generated content, being rather a spokeswoman for independent curating, critical of institutionally supported curating. At the same time, art created (and curated) in the “Turing land” was heading towards institutionalisation; numerous festivals were organized, media outlets and collections were established within art institutions of recognized origin, and the ease of exhibiting intangible works was praised. The optimistic rhetoric of the first years of cyberculture, however, lacked the ability to analyse in-depth the problems posed by unreliable technology. At the beginning of the global economic crisis, in 2008, ICA Director Ekow Eshun decided to close the Live and Media Arts department, arguing that “media art lacks depth and cultural accuracy”³³. Ultimately, due to growing institutionalisation, a question posed by Sarah Cook in the initially free yet commercially inviable net art became of paramount importance: “Has curating killed net.art?”³⁴. The reply is far from easy since net.art could be hit by both institutional petrification and persistent presence within a “self-marginalising alternative”³⁵. Steve Dietz’s call was no longer sufficient; as early as 1999 he indicated, following Gerfried Stocker, the artistic director of Ars Electronica Festival, that museums and institutions with educational ambitions in the field of art should become not so much venues of presenting the art of new media but rather platforms of its production³⁶. This proposal was not implemented despite successful attempts to establish and run an art institution under the guidance of conscious curators. An example here is Peter Weibel’s work for the ZKM New Media Art Centre in Karlsruhe and his, significant exhibition *Net_Condition* (1999–2000)³⁷, or the operation

» 31 There were a dozen or so works in the gallery. The curator of the intermedia programme at the Tate was Kelli Dipple. http://www2.tate.org.uk/intermediaart/archive/net_art_date.shtm [access: 8.06.2019].

» 32 R. Debatty, *Interview with Sarah Cook, We Make Money Not Art*, 30.05.2007, http://we-make-money-not-art.com/interview_with_17/ [access: 27.06.2019].

» 33 D. Daniels, “Whatever Happened to Media Art?”, [in:] *across & beyond...*, op. cit., p. 44.

» 34 S. Cook, “Has Curating Killed net.art?”, *AN Magazine*, March 2000, http://www.nettime.org/absoluteone.ljudmila.org/sarah_cook1.php [access: 08.06.2019].

» 35 The term used by Claire Bishop in the polemic with her adversaries defending the legacy of the art of new media. See “Claire Bishop Responds”, *Artforum* January 2013, vol. 51, No. 5, p. 38.

» 36 S. Dietz, *Why Have There Been No Great Net Artists? 1999*, <http://www.afsnitp.dk/onoff/Texts/dietzwhyhavether.html> [access: 27.06.2019].

» 37 Weibel collaborated with a six-person strong team of curators, inclusive of artists, e.g. Jeffrey Shaw <https://zkm.de/en/exhibition/1999/09/netcondition>

of the CRUMB research institute (Curatorial Resource for Upstart Media Bliss). Established in 2000 at the University of Sunderland by Sarah Cook and Beryl Graham³⁸, CRUMB provided practical and theoretical knowledge through materials posted on its website, case studies and interviews with international curators, which made up two publications published in 2010: *Rethinking Curating: Art After New Media* and *A Brief History of Curating New Media Art: Conversations with Curators*³⁹. Reviewing the latter, blogger Régine Debatty, specializing in new media culture, points to the most important questions posed in the book with regard to the profession of a new media curator⁴⁰. She stressed the limitations imposed by both technology and sponsors but also quotes an anecdote told by Cook about *The Art Formerly Known As New Media* (2005), co-curated with Steve Dietz in the Canadian Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity to commemorate the tenth anniversary of this institution. The British curator quotes a story of criticism levelled at both curators when they posted unauthorized photographs from the exhibition on Flickr, which, in the opinion of the institution hosting the exhibition was a violation of the rights of artists to the documentation of their works. It turned out that the seemingly top-level institution of new media art presentation failed to recognize and adapt to the new model of open distribution of information created by these very media. Therefore, it is not difficult to be behind the times, which is a constant danger and at the same time a paradox accompanying work in art institutions trying to follow the constantly eluding criterion of novelty. The question of whether the narrow specialization of the new media art world, including curatorial decisions and concepts, contributed to the invalidation of the division between the "Turing land" and the "Duchamp land", or whether this division became even more pronounced, still remains open to debate.

The story of the relationship between curators taking up the challenge of working with new media could prove to be a chronicle of failures and struggles with "technical difficulties" that can be understood both literally and metaphorically. Experimental technology, budgetary constraints, conceptual challenges, being misunderstood, and struggling with prejudices all contribute to an image of the world of art in which curators risked almost as much as the artists working with new media, i.e. heading for the

» 38 The institute's website has not, however, been updated since the spring of 2015: <http://www.crumbweb.org/> [access: 27.06.2019].

» 39 See S. Cook, B. Graham, *Rethinking Curating: Art After New Media*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. 2010 and eadem (ed.) *A Brief History of Curating New Media Art: Conversations with Curators*, The Green Box, Berlin 2010. The latter book includes 14 interviews, mainly with US curators.

» 40 R. Debatty, *Book Review – A Brief History of Curating New Media Art: Conversations with Curators*, *We Make Money Not Art*, 05.05.2010, http://we-make-money-not-art.com/book_review_a_brief_history_of/ [access: 27.06.2019].

unknown. It is a cliché to state that during the half-century that has passed since the first, comprehensive exhibitions of art using new media, many changes have taken place in art, culture, economy, and society. The curator and art theoretician Omar Kholeif points this out when he writes about the changes of curatorial practice under the impact of commodification of all values present in the egalitarian space of net culture⁴¹. In the contemporary “playlist culture”, the conceptual relationships are determined by algorithmisation, similarly to the mechanisms of social networking sites and of product recommendations in online commerce. Technologies have become invisible but pervasive and their presence has become unavoidable. This is addressed by Holland Cotter, an older-generation art critic, in his review of the New York Triennial *Surround Audience* (2015), curated by Lauren Cornell (a curator associated with *Rhizome* and *New Museum*) and Ryan Trecartin, an artist representing postmedia art: “if you’re expecting a »digital« show, you won’t get one, or not one that advertises itself as such. For most of the participants (...) digital is nothing special, no big deal. It’s a given. It’s reality”⁴². In this reality, almost all participants in the circulation of (post)media culture are curators: they create images, promote, present, and collect. However, the subject of their efforts are not works of art, but aesthetised and performed autobiographies⁴³. There are no failures in this world, but there is a planned policy of joy. So how do contemporary curators approach it? One example here is the activity of the DIS group as curators of the 9th Berlin Biennale (2016) diagnosing the “present in drag” with this exhibition⁴⁴. As super-artists and curators, DIS create through this exhibition their own work of art and enter into a game with the world outside art via multitasking and mimicry in their professional and semi-private incarnations⁴⁵. Their example shows that online curating practised as self-promotion involves all participants of online culture, because the reality of “post-modernity” is determined by network criteria such as e.g. aesthetic micro-trends⁴⁶. At the same time, according

- » 41 O. Kholeif, “The Curator’s New Medium”, [in:] idem (ed.), *You Are Here – Art After the Internet*, Cornerhouse/SPACE, Manchester-London 2014, p. 78-85. The first edition of the article came out in the 363rd issue of *Art Monthly* in February 2013.
- » 42 H. Cotter, “Review: New Museum Triennial Casts a Wary Eye on the Future”, *The New York Times*, 26.02.2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/27/arts/design/review-new-museum-triennial-casts-a-wary-eye-on-the-future.html> [access: 7.06.2019].
- » 43 See B. Groys, “Self-Design and Aesthetic Responsibility”, *e-flux*, #7 (6)/2009 <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/self-design-and-aesthetic-responsibility/> [access: 8.06.2019].
- » 44 DIS (Lauren Boyle, Solomon Chase, Marco Roso, David Toro) curated the 9th Berlin Biennale in 2016, held under the motto *The Present in Drag*.
- » 45 The fact that curators are becoming super-artists was indicated during Documenta5 by Daniel Buren, quoted by Harald Szeemann. See H. U. Obrist, *Krótko historia kuratorstwa*, transl. M. Nowicka, Korporacja Ha!art, Kraków 2016, p. 95.
- » 46 N. Stagg, “Trends and Their Discontents”, [in:] DIS (ed.), *The Present in Drag*, DISTANZ/KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, p. 99-105.

to the DIS group, art presentations have begun to resemble more and more the TED Talks, which are “theaters of competence”⁴⁷. Undoubtedly, the profound reorganization of social relations predicted by Jack Burnham half a century ago has become a fact, also in the world of art. In the circle of curators, artists, art critics and art dealers, it is now possible to have professional relations that are much more transversal and less (openly) hierarchical. This reorganization has also increased peer pressure⁴⁸ and introduced criteria of *playbour*⁴⁹. Despite the progressing egalitarianism in the world of art, including the curatorial circles, the seemingly outdated division into “amateurs”⁵⁰ and professionals has not lost its validity. However, the dividing line is more difficult to define, as it does not depend only on institutional criteria and expert opinions, but also on the support of networked commentariat, whose preferences are often determined by algorithms. A question arises whether, in the perspective of the future, such curatorial practice of a multitude of prosumers will harm art as a domain of specialist professionalism, just as institutional curatorship and the formula of retrospective exhibitions were expected to harm the art of the Internet? ●

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» 47 DIS (Lauren Boyle, Solomon Chase, Marco Roso, David Toro), *The Present in Drag*, op. cit., p. 55-57.

» 48 See B. Troemel, *Peer Pressure. Essays on the Internet by an Artist on the Internet*, LINK Editions, Brescia 2011.

» 49 The term *playbour* (*play / laybour*), which refers to the obliteration of borders between occupational work and play or relaxation was introduced by Julian Kücklich in an article dedicated to the unique characteristics of work of game designers. See J. Kücklich, “Precarious Playbour: Modders and the Digital Games Industry”, *FibreCulture journal* #5, 2005, http://journal.fibreCulture.org/issue5/kucklich_print.html [access: 22.08.2019].

» 50 See A. Keen, *Kult amatora. Jak internet niszczy kulturę*, transl. M. Bernatowicz, K. Topolska-Ghariani, Wyd. Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2007.