

Carroll / Fletcher

Constant Dullaart

Selected Press

Alex Greenberger, 'Constant Dullaart Named Winner of 2015 Prix Net Art', *Artnews*, November 2015

ARTNEWS

CONSTANT DULLAART NAMED WINNER OF 2015 PRIX NET ART

BY *Alex Greenberger* POSTED 11/17/15 4:23 PM

Yesterday, the Prix Net Art named its 2015 winner: Constant Dullaart, a Dutch artist known for his conceptual work that deals with the way software and technology sometimes seem to perform on their own. Dullaart is the second winner of the Prix Net Art, which is held in co-operation with the Chronus Art Center, Rhizome, and the Tsinghua University Art and Science Media Lab. The jurors for this year's prize were journalist Josephine Bosma, Whitney curator Chrissie Iles, and critic Domenico Quaranta. The prize comes with a \$10,000 award.

In the past, Dullaart has staged a number of interventions using Internet-based mediums that investigate the effects of image-processing technology. Having organized projects in which he ponders the death of the URL, and in which art-world Instagram accounts [get an even 100,000 followers](#) through various purchases, the young Dutch artist has gotten a lot of hype in the past few years for his attention-grabbing work. Dullaart is represented in London by Carroll/Fletcher, in Paris by XPO Gallery, and in Berlin by Future Gallery.

The Prix Net Art jurors also gave an award of distinction to the German collective Weise7, made up of artists Julian Oliver, Gordan Savicic, Bengt Sjolen, Danja Vasiliev, and others. Weise7 has become known less for producing objects than setting up experimental spaces in which artists can become educated about networks and hacking. Through this secondary prize, Weise7 has been awarded \$5,000.



Constant Dullaart.
ARAMBAR/VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

'Constant Dullaart Wins Prix Net Art', *Artforum*, November 2015

ARTFORUM

POSTED NOVEMBER 16, 2015

Constant Dullaart Wins Prix Net Art

Rhizome, the Beijing-based Chronus Art Center, and Tsinghua University Art and Science Media Lab today announced that Dutch artist Constant Dullaart has been awarded the second annual Prix Net Art, an international prize for internet art that comes with an award of ten thousand dollars. A five thousand dollar award of distinction was also granted to the Berlin-based collective Weise7. Dullaart will discuss the future of net art during a new art and technology conference presented by Rhizome and the New Museum in January 2016.



The jury which decided the winners this year comprised critic Josephine Bosma; Whitney Museum curator Chrissie Iles; and critic and curator Domenico Quaranta.

Zoe Kleinman 'Facebook 'fake army' launched by artist', *BBC News*, November 2015



Technology

Facebook 'fake army' launched by artist

By Zoe Kleinman
Technology reporter, BBC News



constant dullaart

A Dutch artist is compiling thousands of fake Facebook profiles, all named after soldiers who fought in the US revolution in the 18th century.

Constant Dullaart's 'army', staffed via two volunteers, will be dispatched to add likes to various posts across the social network.

He told the BBC that he wants to protest against what he calls the "quantification of social capital".

It is a violation of Facebook policy to create a fake account.

Facebook uses various techniques, including pattern recognition, to try to halt the spread of fake activity.

The artist admitted that he has not discussed his plans with the firm.

'Declaring war'

"It might be that Facebook will notice and will start to kill them off," he said.

"If I'm using the analogy of the soldiers - in that sense I feel like I did declare war on this idea that quantified social capital represents quality."

Constant Dullaart intends to bring together artists, philosophers and critics to decide what his fake army should do.

"It will be interesting to have a commission deciding who deserves the extra social attention," he said.

He expects the project to last for up to two months but said he could not be sure about the life expectancy of his invented troops.

"It is not my intention to run it as a business model... but [creating fake profiles] is an enormous industry that deserves the attention."

He is basing the profiles on real members of the Hessian army from the late 1700s but declined to give the names of those he has chosen.

There are currently around 1,000 of them on the site, but there could eventually be up to 20,000, he added.

Instagram equality

For a previous art project he purchased fake Instagram accounts and set them up to follow 30 real Instagram users from the art world.

He was trying to give every account he chose 100,000 followers, he said.

One gallery owner complained to Instagram, which is owned by Facebook, that the influx of followers was making it difficult to identify genuine collectors and enthusiasts.

"I wasn't trying to drown out his business," the artist said.

"I wanted to equalise a lot of artists to make them equally important."

Jonathan Jones 'Army for hire: the artist employing ghost soldiers to invade Facebook', *The Guardian*, November 2015

theguardian

Army for hire: the artist employing ghost soldiers to invade Facebook

In resurrecting an 18th-century mercenary army, Constant Dullaart has found a novel way to skewer the social media empire



'There's a huge market in fake accounts' ... Constant Dullaart's *The Possibility of an Army*, shows the Attack of the Prussian Infantry during the Battle of Hohenfriedberg, by Carl Röchling Photograph: Screengrab



Jonathan Jones

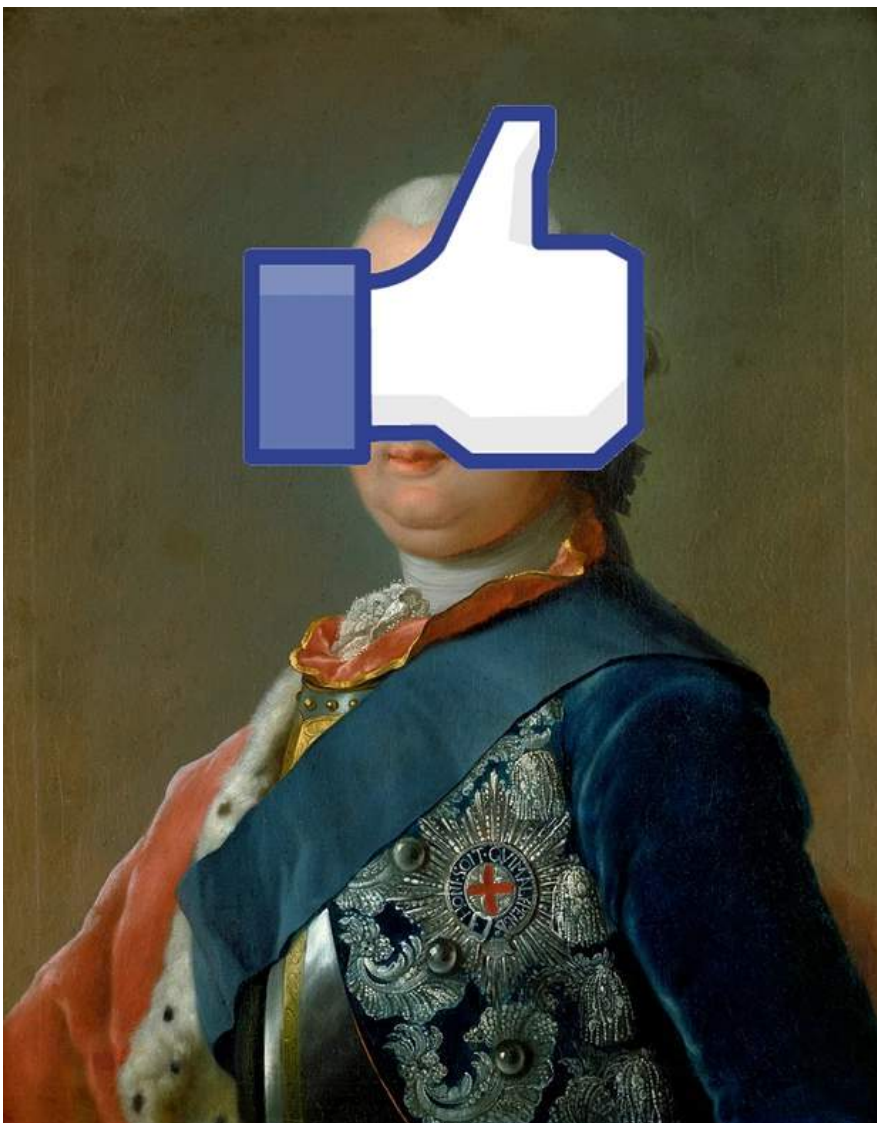
Monday 9 November 2015 16.37 GMT

Constant Dullaart uses the internet to expose the internet. The Dutch artist, who once hunted down [the first ever Photoshopped image](#) – so he could see it *before* it was altered – is now taking on the ultimate champion of digital fantasies: Facebook.

He's hiring a ghost army of 18th-century soldiers to attack the most mighty empire of today. His online art intervention, called *The Possibility of an Army*, will expose the

ease with which fake identities can be created online. He has enlisted people to open Facebook accounts with the names of mercenary soldiers hired by Britain in the American war of independence. He is literally creating a fake army of dead men.

“There are already enormous armies of fake accounts,” says Dullaart. “There’s a huge market in selling YouTube views and every kind of social media engagement ... I get frustrated when I see social media quoted as validation of a cultural practice.” Even museums, he claims, use faked responses to enhance their reputations. The providers of such services “make money by giving you big numbers. They generate random behaviour so they look more real. And they’re all around.”



Leader of the avant avant-garde ... Frederick II of Hesse-Cassel, painted by Johann Heinrich Tischbein, liked by

Dullaart.

The integrity of all that happens online seems to be crumbling. Those reviews on Amazon? [A lot are fake](#), according to the online retailer, which is suing more than 1,000 people for their “false, misleading and inauthentic” reviews of books and other commodities. Instagram? The myth has been blown wide open – with users queuing up to reveal sadder realities behind their images using the hashtag [#socialmediaisnotrealife](#). Are these long overdue exposures just more internet ephemera? Or could this be the beginning of the fall of social media?

We all know the online world is riddled with false identities; what Dullaart is saying is that it is a mass market. The chatter of social media is a way of selling us stuff, manipulated by hidden persuaders. His fake army on Facebook is there to test, as he puts it, “how much you need to bypass identity checks”.

Dullaart’s volunteers created PVA – phone verified accounts – with the names of real, but long dead, soldiers in the army of the lost state of Hesse-Cassel. In the 18th century, when Germany was still a patchwork of small states, Frederick II of Hesse-Cassel hit on a brilliant way of enriching his domain: he hired out this well-trained army to fight other peoples’ wars. The Hessians, as they were known, were a regular army for hire. Their most famous ([in America, infamous](#)) employment was on the British side against the American revolution.

“The economy of the Hessian state got a big boost,” says Dullaart. The profits were used in an Enlightenment campaign to improve society. It’s eerily appropriate that they have now returned as a band of Facebook mercenaries, their identities marshalled in the inauthentic, money-spinning world of social media.

“I see Facebook as a very American product, exporting a very American popularity culture,” says Dullaart. The original Hessians fought in the US and have been caricatured as brutal mercenaries, but in reality they “behaved honourably”, he says. “They actually freed a lot of slaves.”

[The Possibility of an Army](#) is at Schirn Kunsthalle museum in Frankfurt on 10 November.

ARTNEWS

NEW PROJECT BOOSTS INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS FOR ART WORLD ACCOUNTS

BY *Dan Duray* POSTED 09/30/14

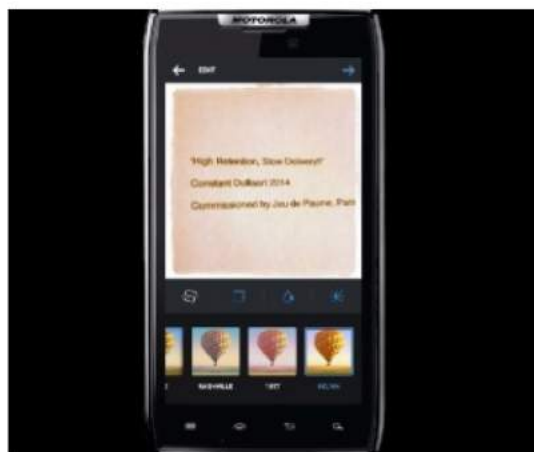
The artist Constant Dullaart has launched a new project, commissioned by Jeu de Paume, that aims to level the influence of a handful of players on Instagram by buying followers for certain accounts so that all have an even 100,000. Among those to receive followers are the likes of the Zach Feuer and Gagosian galleries, artists Jeff Koons and Petra Cortright, curators Karen Archey and Brian Droitcour, and Performa.

The project, *High Retention, Slow Delivery*, emerged from Dullaart's thinking about social media and saw the accounts begin to receive thousands of followers about a week ago.

"I quit Facebook in 2012, I gave away my passwords during a performance in the New Museum in New York and at that time I was annoyed with this idea that one person would be more 'liked' than another," Dullaart said over the phone. "It was kind of like in high school, like how much one person would be more popular than the other person."

On Instagram, as he says in a video and text that accompanies the piece, influence is almost more important, since influence there can have real consequence. Art is sold on Instagram, or people discover artists based on the authority of the account that introduces them to new work. "Audience is a commodity," he wrote, adding "They can be used to influence politics, by supporting political causes online, and even add relevance to art."

"We live in a representation of a world which we can influence in ways never imagined," he continued in the manifesto. "Let's do so performatively. Social bank accounts raised to the



FROM THE PROJECT SITE

same level to stimulate a utopian image of a shared responsibility for equality within a conscious user group, as a mere reminder of painful racial, financial and other social inequalities so much harder to destroy.”

Dullaart purchased 2.5 million fake followers from a site he described as “buysocialmedia.com,” through eBay, haggling over the price but eventually paying \$5,000 for them, \$2,000 over the original commission sum. Then began the difficult process of deciding which accounts to “equalize.” There were certain accounts he would have loved to bring to 100,000 followers, but it would have been too expensive to do so. Hans Ulrich Obrist, as it happened, was already fairly close to 100,000, which meant he hardly needed it but, Dullaart said, “If I hadn’t included Hans Ulrich Obrist, there would be this single art kingpin who wouldn’t be included in this equalization.” And Jeff Koons had relatively few followers, but could he leave out Jeff Koons?

The process will continue for the next few weeks. Asked if he was worried about discussing his project publicly, and thus alerting the authorities at Facebook (which owns Instagram), Dullaart said he didn’t mind if he was somehow shut down. “This is a symbolic gesture,” he said. “It exists within this realm of the poetic gesture.”

For his next project he hopes to clone himself via Instagram followers, by trying to find a way to incorporate his own photos into the kinds of bots he’s hired for this current project

Jeppe Ugelvig, 'Constant Dullaart at Carroll / Fletcher', *DIS*, July 2014



discover
THE DIS BLOG

Constant Dullaart at Carroll / Fletcher



July 10th, 2014 by Jeppe Ugelvig



In his 'Jennifer in Paradise Series', Constant Dullaart revisits this image by John Knoll. Endlessly shared on the internet, the original high res version is impossible to find.

Remembering Jennifer in Paradise: Constant Dullaart at Carroll / Fletcher, London

The Dutch artist Constant Dullaart investigates the infancy of the world wide web, in particular the specific virtual semantics and consumer climates that have arisen from its birth. Currently exhibiting his first solo show in the UK at Carroll / Fletcher Gallery, Dullaart navigates through and beyond post-net nostalgia (no comic sans and glitch aesthetics here), exploring the correlation between digital mediation and traditional, craft-based art forms. His focal point is global and symptomatic of the infinite, virtual space that connects every citizen of the globe with a wifi-connection.

With 'Terms of Service' (2012/14), he has created a website that transforms the Google search box into a mouth that recites Google's ever-changing privacy policy, a manifestation of the absurdity of digital pedagogy and information accessing. At the same time, Dullaart shows the audience how local and young the Internet is; Steve Wozniak's (co-founder of Apple) family photographs from 1984 (the dawn of the digital era) and abstractions from Bill Atkins' (creator of Macpaint) first computer drawings reveal how the Internet has been subject to a corporate hegemony from the very beginning.

With his project 'Jennifer in Paradise Series' (2013-present) Constant Dullaart has created one of the most important pieces of virtual archeology as of yet (an area of study that will surely gain popularity in the next couple of years). Here, he redistributes and mediates a stock-like image of a topless woman reclining on a beach in Bora Bora, an image so recognizable and ingrained in our collective virtual memory that it is impossible to signify. The image was originally taken in 1988 by John Knoll, one of the original creators of Photoshop, and it was subsequently used as an example of the first digitally manipulated photograph ever. However, high-resolution versions of the image were never officially distributed, and despite the wide circulation and appropriation of the image, it is now practically impossible to find online. Meditating on this 'extinction', Dullaart acts as an archivist and tries to restore the image while processing it through current Photoshop filters – he even reached out to Jennifer in a public letter published on [Rhizome](#) in September last year, in an attempt to assert the need for such digitally-mediated histories to be discovered and discussed. Constant Dullaart's solo show 'Stringendo, Vanishing Mediators' is an important reflection on digital history as well as the visual, semantic and political components that constitute our virtual climate. Until July 19th.



Gordon Comstock, 'Jennifer in paradise: the story of the first - Photoshopped image', *The Guardian*, June 2014

theguardian

Culture > Art and design > Photography

PHOTOGRAPHY BLOG



Jennifer in paradise: the story of the first Photoshopped image

One holiday snap has been manipulated thousands of times on thousands of computers. Here's how a woman on a beach in Bora Bora taught the whole world to tinker with pictures



Jennifer in Paradise.tif – the picture Photoshop co-creator John Knoll took of his future wife Jennifer in Bora Bora. Photograph: John Knoll

It hardly looks like an image that shook the world. But this photograph, taken in 1987 by John Knoll, could be as central to the modern visual vernacular as [Eadweard Muybridge's shots of galloping horses](#) or the first use of perspective.

Its subject is Knoll's then-girlfriend Jennifer, topless on the beach in [Bora Bora](#), gazing out at To'opua island. The young couple worked together at [Industrial Light & Magic](#), Lucasfilm's special-effects company, and were enjoying some well-earned R&R after working 70-hour weeks on the film [Who Framed Roger Rabbit](#). Looking back, Jennifer says: "It was a truly magical time for us. My husband actually proposed to me later on in the day, probably just after that photo." Little wonder that John would name the photo Jennifer in Paradise.

But the image was to become much more than a record of a perfect moment. At ILM, Knoll had encountered a cutting-edge piece of hardware known as the [Pixar Image Computer](#), one of the first that could be used to manipulate images. "I thought it was amazing," he says. "The fact that you could take an image from film, scan it in and turn it into digits and then manipulate those numbers and put it back out on to piece of film – it meant that there was literally no limit to what you could do to it in the middle."

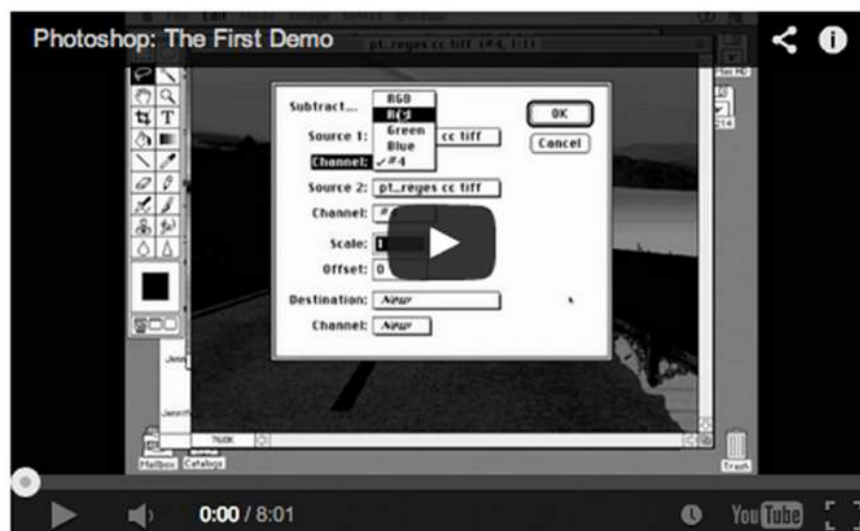
The Pixar machine cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and the image-processing [software](#) was so complex it required a specially trained operator. So Knoll was somewhat taken aback when he visited his brother Thomas, who was reading for a doctorate in computer vision at the University of Michigan, and discovered that he'd developed some similar software that could run on a much cheaper Macintosh Plus. Knoll began to chivvy his brother into pushing the application further. "It was really just a hobby at first," he says, "but I kept asking him to add more features."

Eventually they had something that John believed they could sell. The only problem was, with so few digital images available at the time, it was hard to demonstrate what their new application could do. Visiting friends at Apple's Advanced Technology Group lab, Knoll took the opportunity to use one of their flatbed scanners, also rare devices then. The only picture he had to hand was that 6in x 4in print of his wife in Tahiti.

In this way, Jennifer in Paradise became the first colour image used to demonstrate the software they had started to call Photoshop.

"It was a good image to do demos with," Knoll recalls. "It was pleasing to look at and there were a whole bunch of things you could do with that image technically." And maybe there was something in it that hinted at the kind of more perfect world that Photoshop might reveal. Knoll would leave a copy of the software in a package including the picture at the companies he'd visited. Often he'd return to find that the programmers had cloned his wife.

To celebrate Photoshop's anniversary, Knoll revisited these early demos in a [YouTube video](#).



The idea captured the interest of Dutch artist [Constant Dullaart](#), who rebuilt the picture from screenshots of the video and made it the centrepiece of [his new London show](#), Stringendo, Vanishing Mediators. "Given its cultural significance," he says, "just from an anthropological point of view I thought it would be interesting to examine what values the image contains. The fact that it's a white lady, topless, anonymous, facing away from the camera. And that it was his wife. He offers her, objectifying her, in his creation for the reproduction of reality."

Dullaart's work seeks to expose the technological structures that inform modern visual culture. For him Jennifer in Paradise is a key artefact, the original Photoshop meme. As such, he believes, it belongs in the public domain. His misappropriation of it is a protest.

John Knoll seems unconvinced. "I don't even understand what he's doing," he says, bristling at the idea of the image being reconstructed without permission (ironically using Photoshop).

Jennifer is more sanguine. "The beauty of the internet is that people can take things, and do what they want with them, to project what they want or feel," she says.

Dullaart's reverence for the picture may be extreme, but it is hard to overstate Photoshop's importance. David Hockney, who was invited to test the program soon after its release, predicted that it would spell the end of film [photography](#). And although, as Knoll is quick to point out, photos were being altered long ago in Soviet Russia, it was only Photoshop that democratised that ability. In a way Jennifer was the last person to sit on solid ground, gazing out into an infinitely fluid sea of zeros and ones, the last woman to inhabit a world where the camera never lied.

John Knoll, now chief creative officer at Industrial Light & Magic, is proud of the impact that Photoshop has had on the world. "Any tool can be used for good or bad," he says. "It's really the ethics of the artist using it."

Asked about Dullaart's dream of taking her and her husband back to Bora Bora to recreate the picture, Jennifer laughs. "Oh no, no, no," she says. "That's not OK."

Louisa Elderton, 'Constant Dullaart: Future Gallery & IMPORT Projects', *Frieze*, 17 November 2013

frieze

Constant Dullaart

Future Gallery & IMPORT Projects

The Dutch artist Constant Dullaart considers contemporary modes of accessing information, exploring the dynamics of reality as perceived through the transparent computer screen. Curated and installed across two Berlin spaces, Future Gallery and IMPORT Projects, along with online components, Dullaart's most recent project, 'Jennifer in Paradise', explored the Internet's opacity, highlighting the extent to which onscreen data is manipulated and controlled, enhanced or deformed.

The web's potential to demarcate a wholly democratic, transparent space in which people freely operate is, arguably, naively Utopian. It's a timely subject, given the ongoing Edward Snowden case. Counter to its promise of being a completely open platform, the Internet is not only monitored, it's an arena in which information is filtered, distorted and, most cleverly and deceptively, presented as unmediated content.

The show at Future was underpinned by *Jennifer in Paradise* (all works 2013), a low-resolution print of a woman reclining on a beach in Bora Bora. Another iteration of the image was emblazoned across the span of the wall at IMPORT, containing an encoded message within its giant pixels. Originally taken in 1987 by John Knoll, the co-creator of Photoshop, this photograph was the demonstration image for the programme's users to explore and test the software. It became ubiquitous, widely distributed and repeatedly manipulated by the public. Surprisingly, though, the image is now almost extinct, nearly nowhere to be found online, aside from low-res traces. Restoring the image here, Dullaart acted as archivist, illuminating the genesis of image-doctoring while nostalgically suggesting a time when photography's authenticity was still conceivable. A letter to 'Jennifer' from the artist – which Dullaart posted on Rhizome.org, then tweeted to the muse herself – almost reads like a love letter, if not to Jennifer herself then perhaps to a past space in which reality was less malleable: 'Sometimes, when I am anxious about the future of our surveilled, computer-mediated world [...] I imagine myself travelling back in time [...] And just sit there with you, watching the tide roll away.'

In both exhibitions, Dullaart explored the relationship between virtual reality and its symbiotic link to our physical, material being. At Future, *YouTube as a Sculpture*

About this review

Published on 17/11/13

By Louisa Elderton



Constant Dullaart, *The Death of the URL*, 2013, installation view at IMPORT Projects

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(*moulding*) is a monochromatic, 3D version of the Mac's rainbow spinning pinwheel. Almost indistinguishable from the gallery's own decorative features, the work playfully reinterprets this familiar icon; now physically manifest, we continue to wait and watch the form, which still wastes time and leads to nowhere.

A new body of glass works appeared in both venues, the material a recurring metaphor for our computers' myriad windows (Windows software, the screen's glass, the Internet as a window to the world). A UV print on glass, *Untitled (Lascaux Cows)*, comprised layers of graffiti-like marks that partially reveal cave paintings in Lascaux. Posing questions about the filtering of information via the Internet and its potential to obscure rather than reveal meaning, the imagery for the piece derives from Dullaart's 2012 online work <http://untitledinternet.com/>, in which the viewer is directed to Google, only for the subsequent pages to be obscured with random mottled brushstrokes that shield the information. Printed onto glass, the images become artefacts: digital filters objectified.

Works such as those from the group 'Thomas Knoll, series' (2013) were both sculptural and painterly, employing thick, variously patterned glass frames that visually distorted appropriated photographs by John Knoll's brother and Photoshop co-creator. Colourful images of snow monkeys and soaring bald eagles are perceived through deceptively dotted or swirled walls of glass. Even the creators of Photoshop fall victim to eventual misrepresentation – the politicized effects of their own innovation.

In the context of Dullaart's broader practice, the glass pieces felt less dynamic and affecting than his performative online platforms or video installations, which employ cannily subtle references to non-transparency. One such work is the dual-screen projection of a triple-X domain functioning in real time, *The Death of the URL*, which hung centrally in Import Project's space. Exploring the rise of the keyword search and subsequent demise of the URL, a generative algorithm finds and lists browser data histories, as codes of <http://xxxxxx> (... and so on) continually appear. Here, the URL is powerfully presented as a sentimental cipher, suggesting a freer Internet from the past, where software companies were less involved in mediating our search habits.

Dullaart's combined exhibition and online project illuminates our virtual landscape, whose construction moulds an illusory sense of freedom. These windows are, in fact, semi-permeable. Are we aware enough? With more people looking at screens on a daily basis than at paintings or out of windows onto the physical world, 'Jennifer in Paradise' encouraged a timely assessment of the material impact of virtual control mechanisms.

Louisa Elderton

MOTHERBOARD

Constant Dullaart, URL Killer

May 8, 2013 // 04:15 PM CET

TWIN TOWERS AT WINDOW OF THE WORLD THEME PARK IN SHENZEN CHINA. PHOTO BY CONSTANT DULLAART

Breathless ache history. The strange comment [Constant Dullaart](#) left on my wall sounded like him, but I knew that it wasn't. He was at that very moment doing a performance at the New Museum called "Terms of Service." The Berlin-based Dutch artist's master stroke was to give away his Facebook password to the audience. This sort of thing—letting others hack his Facebook account—is the kind of stuff he does *all the time*.

I know that Dullaart is a normal person, too, the kind of person that uses Facebook the way most people do. There are shots of him on Instagram standing with business owners in India and cute pictures of his dog. But Dullaart has also built some fifty websites designed to fuck with you. He has made [a bumpy roadsick replica](#) of Berlin's most important art museum. [Another website](#) has the Wiki page of the German artist Georg Baselitz, upside down (a parody of Baselitz's own style). Recently, he registered [a 38-character domain name](#) as a way of mourning the death of the URL. All of Dullaart's websites are for sale through his gallery. Which makes perfect sense now, he says. "I think there are more people looking at a screen rather than out the window or at a painting."

Dullaart (this is actually, truly, his real name) showed in thirty galleries last year, has had sixteen shows since January and is currently exhibiting at Seventeen London, Carroll Fletcher Gallery and soon at Dublin's Glitch festival, as part of [RunComputerRun](#). He has exhibitions upcoming at [Future Gallery](#) and [Import Projects](#) this September. He just returned from an artist residency in China, where he began developing a for-real company called [DullTech](#) that will factory-produce a limited-edition series of uni-codec media players for art galleries – an "always work" option for multi-screen video installations in need of a seamless repeat.

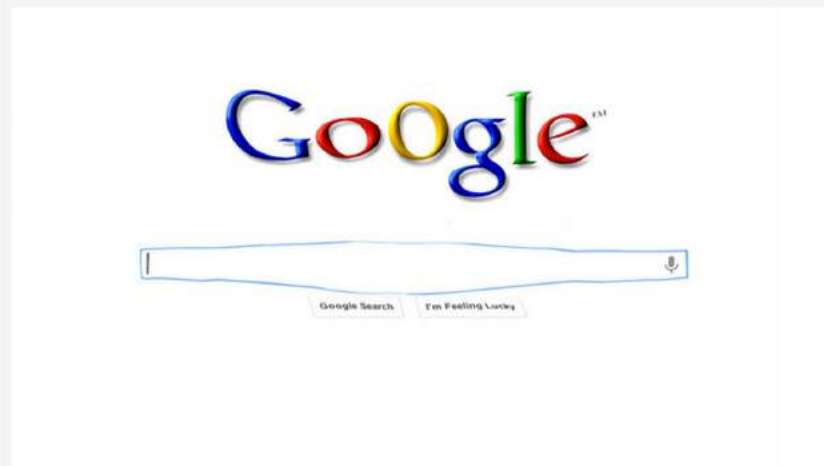


The artist

When I spoke to Dullaart at his studio in the Berlin neighborhood of Kreuzberg, he was in the midst of planning a new campaign: to get a scale model of the Twin Towers removed from a miniature world amusement park in Shenzhen, China, with a ceremony to commemorate September 11.

Motherboard: Your "Terms of Service" website turns the Google search box into a mouth that reads Google's TOS. Where did this begin?

Constant Dullaart: I was looking at how services like Google or Facebook want to be transparent, but how they show this information is secret. These terms of service agreements and how they communicate this to you, either through marketing or explaining how it works, they are saying you are agreeing with it by using it. I thought it was interesting because a lot of the Internet is viewed as public space but it's not. The Internet is basically private spaces linked together. And Google's private space is made to make a profit. The [Internet Archive](#), meanwhile, is non-profit so it has a different ideal and standards. It's the subtle extra-legal layer of reality that people are just clicking through.



Terms of Service, 2012 (<http://constantdullaart.com/TOS/>)

Tell me about how you launched "Terms of Service"?

I rewrote a standard terms of service text that made the audience realize they had an agreement with me as a performer and with the New Museum and the City of New York as a performance. It was read aloud by a girl who was doing [PR for Google](#), [Mallory Blair from Small Girls PR](#). In the meantime I was playing with the materiality of the web. I gave away my Facebook password. I wanted to get rid of my Facebook account because I didn't like it anymore, I didn't like the way it was shaping my life and how I looked at my friends. I made the passwords available. I asked that someone in the audience would change the password. It was hacked with my permission. Since I started the account and I have the agreement, I would be responsible for the identity. I don't want to be responsible, and I feel as though I should have the poetic liberty to give that identity away to someone who wants to have it.

Your most well-known website is [the Revolving Internet](#) , which literally spins Google.com like a pinwheel. How did Google respond?

Since the beginning, I was always interested in dogmas or clichés shaping the way we view the world. Google became a really big part of that. I wanted to animate that, to change that. It's not objective, it's subjective. I started animating the Google page. I thought of making the [disagreeinginternet.com](#), [thedoubtinginternet.com](#), all of these things. I made [therevolvinginternet.com](#), where the page is shown in a revolving sequence, just as the world spins. In 2011 Google blocked the i-frame and all the comments were wiped. Google blocked it probably to increase security. If you want to write to Google you have to write a support@ google address, not a person. Google also did their own rotating page—when you type in "do a barrel roll" the page spins just like mine. I got comments everywhere. Weeks before they had disabled my site. My site had three million hits. Maybe someone from Google saw it.

A DOMAIN NAME IS A
STANDARD A POETIC
GESTURE FROM THE PAST.
THE INTERNET HAS BEEN
OUT THERE FOR A LONG
TIME; IT'S ALREADY
NOSTALGIC. IT JUST
BECAME A LARGE
CORPORATE BACKYARD
AND THAT'S WHAT WE'RE
ALL FROLICKING IN.

You recently made a website called *Death of the URL*. How did the URL die?

I think it's really funny because nobody types in the domain name anymore. In my first online experiences, I would type in a domain name from a magazine. By now, you just go to Google or Facebook and you type in the keywords. Now if you share pictures, you're not going to put it on a website, you'll put it on Facebook. You're not taking control of your own data anymore.

When I went to China, that's what I saw—people not taking the initiative to protect their own private space anymore. It's public space controlled by the state. In America it isn't controlled by the state, but Google and Facebook. There's this weird discrepancy between public and private space going on right now and I think Occupy Wall Street was a great example of that, a protest in a private space. The web started with a lot of ideals around it, making a world with open communication. The idealist infrastructure of the web is changing. That's important.

Meanwhile, the value of a domain name system isn't as valuable as it was because you can buy your own top-level domain name, or you just type the keyword into Google. Now many people use their Facebook page as their homepage. Their data is being aggregated through these services. A domain name is a standard a poetic gesture from the past. The Internet has been out there for a long time; it's already nostalgic. It just became a large corporate backyard and that's what we're all frolicking in. The nostalgia of the internet is broken and that's why I wanted to do the "Death of the URL." So I bought a name, 38 x's, dot xxx. It's a triple X domain, which represents porn. You have to get a token to get it agreed upon so all the name servers recognize it as a legal domain name. It's accepted as if it had porn. The whole title bar becomes a row of X's. All it says is "The Death of the URL 2013" and my name.

It's an absolute statement. Theorists wrote me and said this is the celebration of the URL. The death of literature can be a book. I'm just saying there's a necessity for viewing these types of work and artworks as nostalgia. It's a poetic gesture. It's not as important as it used to be.



Dullaart's "TOS" performance at the New Museum

You sell your websites as works of art. But your works are more expensive than buying a regular domain name, right?

A domain name costs \$10 a year.

How much does it cost as an artwork?

That's a little too public, talk to [my gallerist](#). I'm not dealing with prices anymore.

Is it hard to sell websites as works of art, in comparison to, say, paintings?

I think there are more people looking at a screen, rather than out the window or at a painting. I think there's a whole generation of artists working with this medium. There are young buyers interested in buying a piece of history. It's a very volatile medium. It's ephemeral but it's a piece of history, and you can document it. I compare it to performance art.

You've talked about 'fake neutrality' before. What do you mean by that?

It's artificial neutrality. There's this longing for [net neutrality](#). It's important and is not to be confused with this other kind of neutrality. The information is being filtered out—things which might be illegal, shocking, disturbing— but we're not aware of *how* it's being filtered. With Facebook—imagine hiring a person to stay in touch with your friends, and this person would give you a review of what your friends are up to and in the review, they are also telling you about what products to buy. This person doesn't want to lose their job so they're highlighting what your popular friends are doing. In essence, if you live in Finland, you're still hiring an American to keep in touch with your friends for you. Now everyone is hiring the same person. Even if you're the nerd at the back of the class, you're still keeping in touch with your other weird friends through that person. That "person," Facebook, wants to keep this idea of objectiveness, [but it's false. This is where the true power of manipulation lies now.](#)

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Dullaart with his Dulltech team in Shenzhen

Can you tell me more about DullTech?

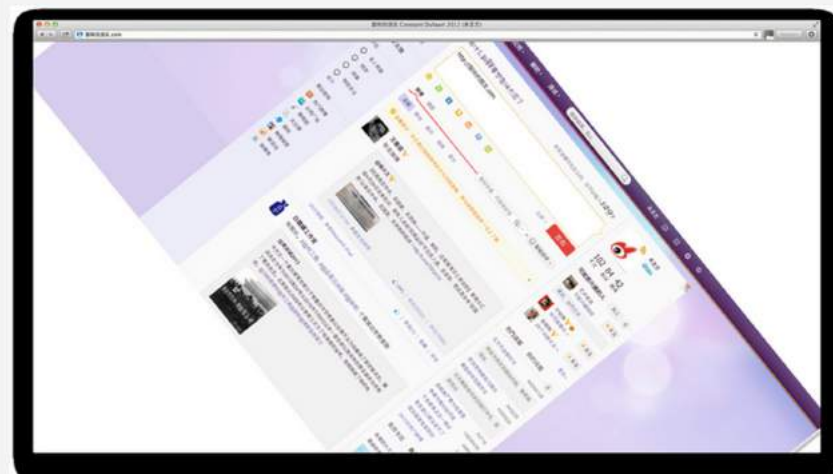
How does this factory of the world work? I decided to start my own company called DullTech (I was born with the name Dullaart, many English speakers think it's a pseudonym). I'm making technology that addresses how videos are shown in art galleries and art institutions. Typically, the media players used for art shows are way too complex and difficult to use. I saw my work, which was shot in HD format, burned onto a DVD and displayed on an NTSC screen when it was a PAL DVD. We've designed a simple, highly functional media player for institutions that show video.

DullTech is being produced in a Chinese factory. How did that come about?

It was difficult working with translators to find the companies which make media players. Most of the time it's someone assembling and someone else making parts. I found someone willing to develop a new product with me, making the product I designed. The Kickstarter will be up by the end of June.

Is it ethical to make these things in a factory in China?

Yes. I think everyone who asks that question should stop using their iPhone. Everything comes from there. This is how the system works. The best chips for this come from there. Even if I had it assembled in Germany, all the parts would come from China. Most big factories are moving inland, to factory grounds where people live and work. We're all dependent on China. If you use the internet in Germany you must realize all the routers and servers used by Deutsche Telecom, the main infrastructure provider, run on Huawei hardware. These routers, like iPhones and computers, are mostly assembled in China. There is no avoiding this. Why not go to the source and have a small company there make some more money?



Revolving Friends

While you were in China, you began working on a site called [Revolving Friends](#), which does the pinwheel thing to Weibo's front page. What was that about?

I have an account on [Weibo](#) and I saw that if you posted a picture of flowers on the day that Tiananmen Square protests, it [would be removed](#). It's like what happened with the "Facebook and Twitter revolution" in Northern Africa and in Egypt. If you post it on Facebook or Twitter, it's associated with an account and they want to associate that with a real person, and that's what the Chinese do. They have your passport number. They know where you live, who you're working with and what you're saying. You may have the freedom to do what you want but someone is always listening. If you didn't have a Weibo account, it's suspicious. Same with Facebook, if you're not publicly up there and sharing things, you must be holding stuff back. These things are incredibly tricky and it's exciting to see how China will deal with that and try to control it.

You're now working on a project to have the Twin Towers removed from the "Windows on the World" theme park in Shenzhen. Why?

The principle of making miniature versions is a tradition in art, since Alberto Giacometti and Marcel Duchamp. At this miniature world park, I would like to commemorate this world changing event in miniature. It is nostalgic, but also painful to see this outdated version of the world in modern China. I think a miniature memorial would be fitting.

Given your concern with political things, what does net art look like these days, to you?

I see a lot of net art that was produced in the 1990s, and it was way more political than it is today. It was dealing with this divide, a comparison of liberal and socialist backgrounds meeting up on the web. Now it's all referencing American pop culture and software. This is a place where to have any political involvement is rare. Everything is graphic references or gradients all the time. People are interested in aesthetics.

Meanwhile, [Pirate Bay](#) is one of the best artworks engaging with the politics of our time. It's the Woodstock of our time. People who started Woodstock let it continue and let everyone in. Its radical statements are necessary to accomplish certain outdated systems of distributing copyrighted material. The way they deal with it is incredibly interesting. [How they propose ideas and play the political system](#) can also be seen as an artwork. For me, it's really inspiring how they're still dealing with acronyms like AFK or BBK or dealing with [keeping data safe](#), maintaining a sense of privacy for black hat hackers, red hats, white hats, who all know each other and don't always do what they're told—that's actually a good thing.



"Waving Ocean," 2010 (<http://wavingocean.com>). Courtesy of Pieter Sanders and Gabriella Sancisi Collection

Art in America

NEWS MAR. 04, 2009

Constant Dullaart Re-codes the Readymade

by Brian Droiteour

The Dutch artist Constant Dullaart maintains a small collection of web pages -- or "readymades," as he calls them -- united by their common status as empty corners of the Internet. They are junkyards of sponsored links, error messages, and domains for sale that no one wants to buy. Dullaart keeps the links to these pages in one place with Delicious, a Website that lets registered users save bookmarks and tag them with keywords for easy retrieval. (Dullaart sets *Readymades* apart from the hundreds of links saved on his account by tagging them "readymade.") Delicious is a tool designed to help its users bring order to their online experience; Dullaart's *Readymades* represent a punk misappropriation of the site to track the chaos of the internet's misfired synapses.

Several of Dullaart's *Readymades* are "link dumps" -- domains registered with the purpose of aggregating cheap ads rather than publishing useful content. Some of the services offered through the sponsored links may be tenuously connected to the search terms brought the user there, or associated with the words in the URL. For instance, www.baddomainname.com includes links to domain registration services and, less explicably, to law firms, while the links at www.hopeless.org suggest suicide prevention counseling. Dullaart's selections also include squatted domains, sites bought for later resale. www.1nt3rn3t.com and www.theinternets.com have yet to find takers.

Found media are a favorite subject of Internet artists, who often evoke the anarchy of the Web by sampling oddities from its less traveled paths. Many of Dullaart's peers seek out specimens of "dirt style," a term coined by artist Cory Arcangel to describe media that look naïve, crude, or messy. (An early project in this vein involving the selection and display of entire sites was Alexei Shulgin's *WWW Art Awards*, 1995-1997, which the Russian artist bestowed on "web pages that were created not as works of art but gave us definite 'art' feeling," i.e. amateur designs whose awkward juxtapositions yielded uncanny effects.) Dullaart's *Readymades*, however, demonstrate his interest in what might be called "default" style -- the bland tables of sans serif text and soulless stock photography that frame ads for some of the most common search terms (auto insurance, cheap airline tickets, pornography), baring the underbelly of the internet's popular use.

But Dullaart's *Readymades* are more than a formalist exploration of the Internet at its most banal. They are also a study in the relationship of the index to its referent, an issue that Rosalind Krauss connected to the readymade in her 1976 essay "Notes on the Index, Part 1." Krauss defines indices as "the traces of a particular cause, and that cause is the thing to which they refer, the object they signify." She offers footprints and shadows as examples; the domain name would be an analogy to such indices in the internet, since it marks the online location of the site that appears in the browser window below. In *Readymades*, Dullaart has selected sites where the URL's content occupies the position of the referent, rather than serving as a place marker. They are domains that someone has staked out as an empty lot, or that generate a metonymic web of sponsored links. His Readymades are sites where footprints come before the feet.

In his Readymades Dullaart turns Delicious into a means of display, as many artists have done with other social media, including blogging platforms and Flickr, the photo sharing site. **It's an exceptional use of the service;** like his internet-savvy colleagues, Dullaart primarily uses Delicious to accumulate sources of inspiration. "Contemporary Semantics Beta," an exhibition that he has organized at Arti et Amicitiae gallery in Amsterdam, presents Delicious as a studio and sketchpad. It features artists whom Dullaart met by sharing links on the bookmarking site, and his curatorial strategy of installing works alongside the images that served as the impetus for their creation is meant to reflect the way that Delicious makes an artist's interests visible and public. Like Readymades, "Contemporary Semantics Beta" establishes Dullaart as a persistent investigator of new modes of constructing and relating meaning brought about by the Internet.