



"The Possibility of an Army", Constant Dullaart

WORKS SHOULD TRAVEL IN TIME

A CONVERSATION WITH CONSTANT DULLAART

You do not need a special film, surface, wrap, anti-insects, stamps, stamps, humidity. But digital creativity also needs care

MARTYNA TURSKA: We met at the **Transformation Digital Art** (<http://www.li-ma.nl/site/article/transformation-digital-art-2018-international-symposium-digital-art-preservation>) **symposium organized by LIMA** (<http://www.li-ma.nl/site/about>) , **during which the practitioners of preserving and restaurants living - because of interactive, constantly evolving - digital art were discussed. The organizers invited artists, researchers and representatives of museums and cultural institutions to answer the burning questions: who should care for digital art and how to deal with works on behalf of the institution. You represented the interests of artists.** **CONSTANT DULLAART:** (<http://www.li-ma.nl/site/article/transformation-digital-art-2018-international-symposium-digital-art-preservation>)

Yes, although I am quite reluctant to take part in such conferences. Despite the relatively large experience in the artistic and digital world, I can not perform on behalf of all artists. I prefer to talk about my own experiments with alternative conservation methods. And this starts with documentation, which is an extremely troublesome task.

Why?

When I make a performance, the greatest compliment is for me, if someone wants to record it, archive it on my phone, document it myself - that he was and saw it. The viewer decides that my art is important, meaningful. I do not want to set standards, according to which my art is to be appreciated in the future.

Maybe, however, we want digital work to last forever.

Rapidly changing societies make us position art in time, because art is always a kind of response to the realities. Many works are appreciated after a long time, when we know its context. And that is why, among other things, you need access to works from the past. Artists rather do not approach their work on the principle: "I am asking you, it is my work, I have nothing more to say". They want to provoke discussions, take part in them. Works should travel in time.

The reception of art also changes thanks to the development of technology. Are there rules according to which these unused works should be kept? How to archive them so that they can

be issued in the future?

With digital art it is so much easier that you do not need a special film, surface, packaging, anti-insects, stamps, stamps, humidity levels. However, digital work also needs care. In order to establish some rules of archiving, you must first ask artists about what they need most in order to be able to use the works in the future. And the most common answer is that artists want institutions to keep their works. And in order to build the artist's trust in a cultural institution, which after all will be standing between him and the collector, one must give her the tools to understand the work as best as possible. On the other hand, the institutions must have the freedom to make decisions, for example regarding the issue of future work in technologies which do not exist yet.

Constant Dullaart

One of the key figures of the post-Internet artists movement. Instead of creating work from scratch, Dullaart uses existing websites or search engines, treating them as "found objects". It distorts them and reconfigures witty. Author of the works of "Revolving Internet

(http://therevolvinginternet.com/) " - a page
that shows the browser (but working)
that rotates in the browser window, "
The Disagreeing Internet
(http://thedisagreeinginternet.com/) ", " The
Sleeping Internet
(http://thesleepinginternet.com/) " and "
OOOooo
(http://oo
"

The motto of your symposium was "I want to break free" ("I want to free myself")? Do you want to get rid of some of your work?

There is no way to look after them forever. My work from 2008 is still supported, but only by me. Only I know all the technical secrets. And I have enough of it.

Have enough of this, and what happens when an artist dies? How to get access to work then? No codes?

Without the manual of the work?

Exactly. If the works are bought by collectors or institutions, they have greater potential for survival.

Your work "The Dissagreeing Internet"

(<http://thedisagreeinginternet.com/>), **"The Speeping Internet"**

(<http://thesleepinginternet.com/>) **or "OOOooo"**

(<http://oo.ooo/>) **depend on the existence of Googl. If one day Googla is not there, you will lose them.**

This is another common feature of digital art and performance - it depends on access and perception. However, with digital art it looks a bit different. I use the computer program

NEONNETWORKS (<http://www.neonnetworks.com.au/>) that processes

the data set and, in simplified terms, can itself reprogram the codes. Then the work is no longer dependent on the platforms, but on the layout of the codes that can be memorized and reprogrammed. Therefore, it is important to store and archive not only the work, but also a description of the process of creating a work, files, codes - all software, a description of the context of the creation of the work, a contract that an artist could conclude with the institution or buyer a work that testifies to the copyright of the work , a protocol that talks about what is going to happen with the work in the future - how long the work should be "active" or whether it can be legally multiplied and available on multiple servers. All this would not only help to organize the base of works, but it would also be a good basis for allowing legal auctioning of works.

Are artists afraid of losing control over him? Or that the work will be stolen, like paintings from the museum?

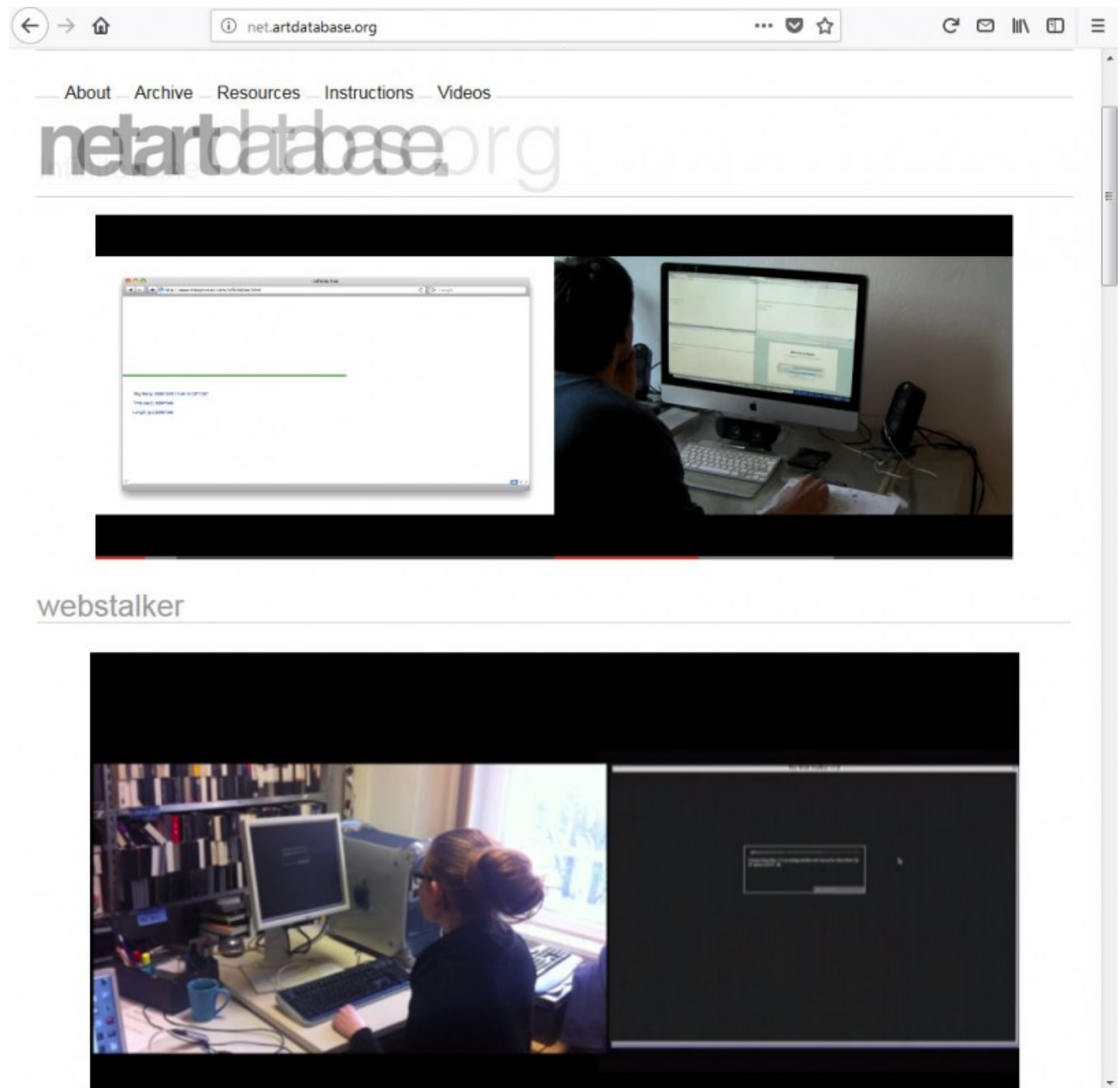
Artists do not create anything for the works to become a commodity that can be traded. But I will answer here for myself - I prefer to have input and influence on the culture that is above and beyond the framework of trade, but I think that my work can "travel" as a kind of cultural way of thinking. On the other hand, maybe thinking about work as "goods" makes it easier to think about the infrastructure for art. I am looking for a way to make my work travel in the greatest possible freedom. Therefore, perhaps, I have to delegate some of the responsibilities to the institutions.

During the symposium, you mentioned two platforms that are used for archiving and preserving digital art. I understood well that you were involved in their creation?

I was involved in the creation of net.artdatabase (<http://net.artdatabase.org/>) from the beginning . I actively use Webrecorder (<https://webrecorder.io/>) .

How it's working?

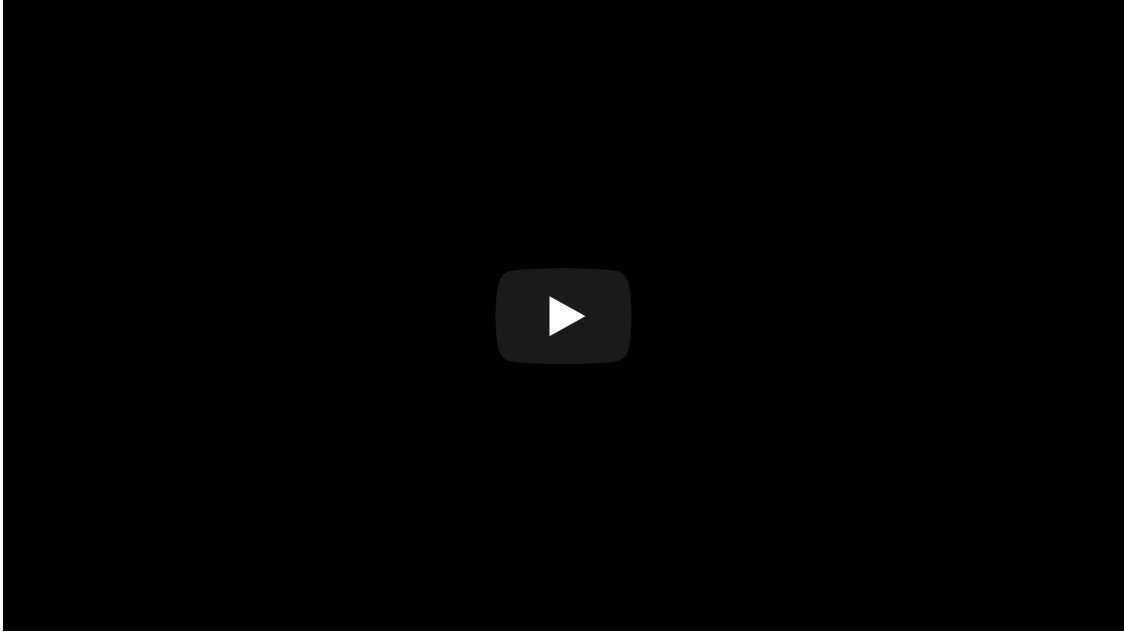
Very simply. We record two films - on the first one uses the work, watches, plays with it. We see the person and the screen on which the whole work is located. Exactly how the performance is recorded and documented. In the second film, the screen itself is recorded - the work itself. I created the net.artdatabase with Robert Sarkowski, an artist from Berlin.



net.artdatabase

And WebRecorder?

WebRecorder records the entire session of our interaction with the work. He records every step we take, every click, and leave a comment. This helps a lot during the next work demonstrations.



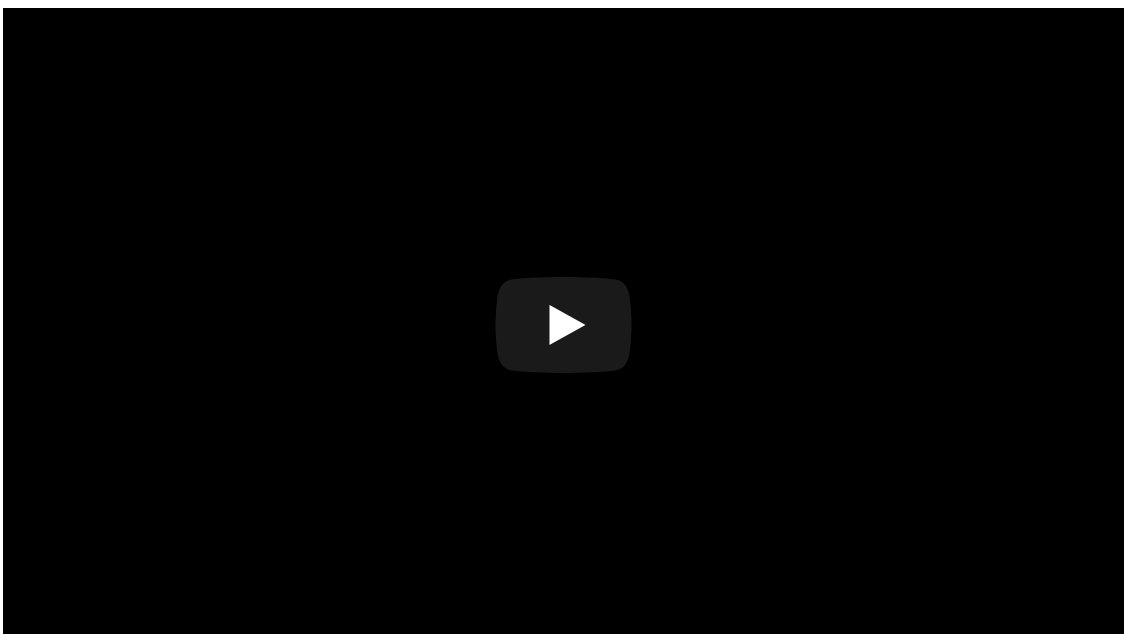
Do you think that with these tools and the Artwork Documentation Tool (<https://www.li-ma.nl/adt/>) **presented by LIMA, digital art can count on a much larger audience than "traditional" art?**

It all depends on the network of connections and distribution. I doubt that my works, because they are available on the Internet, would have seen more people than VanGogh's paintings [*laughs*]. Well, maybe someday. I do not count on "going" for my work. Generally, I have problems with counting.

You are an artist who uses the Internet as a space both to represent reality and to distort it [*misrepresentation*].

I describe myself in museum brochures [*laughs*].

Your most famous work " Jennifer in Paradise (<http://jennifer.ps/>) **" is just about this perversion?**
(<http://jennifer.ps/>) Partly. For a long time I thought about how the first black and white photography looks like, or the first colorful photograph. But it was not known what the first image of the scaffolding looks like. I found this picture of a half-naked woman on the beach converted by John Knoll, one of the co-creators of the early version of Photoshop.



Using this tool to completely manipulate reality, I reworked this image myself and exhibited it later in the galleries. The development of technology has given us the tool to distort the world. The tool is available in principle for everyone. You can improve people's appearance, smile, you can erase them from the photo. Sure, this was happening in the earlier photograph, but when Photoshop started to be widely used, I began to think

about the meaning of some of its options. See, Photoshop has "HEALING BRUSH" [*healing brush*], which is most often used to remove stains from clothes. But "HEALING"? Does this mean that non-perfection is sick? This is only sick!

Apparently we need an improved version of reality.

But what culture imposes such a form of meaning on us? I wondered who created this and why? White, heterosexual men, professing a certain type of beauty . For me, it has great cultural significance - how Photoshop changes the shape of our culture. As we see human bodies, houses, places. How easily we can objectify man.



Constant Dullaart "Jennifer in Paradise" / courtesy of Upstream Gallery Amsterdam

I wanted to ask about your fake-fai-army army, or profiles of real American soldiers fighting during the American Revolutionary War in the eighteenth century. In your performance, soldiers - or rather profiles - fought with American *social media* giants , commenting on their statuses, laughing at manipulative marketing campaigns. When did you start this project?

In 2015.

And the army is growing?

Not any more. Well ... maybe there are a few active accounts, but it's hard to track down now. I was in the shadow of all activities, I had partners in Bangladesh, Philippines and Pakistan, who launched the operations needed for this project. Nevertheless, the performance seemed very real, it was designed so that the profiles would eventually be "murdered" by the Facebook branches.

You are a politically committed artist. Did you foresee that artificial profiles on Facebook would manipulate the presidential election in the US?

I started to create a fejsbukowa army to address certain issues: "Hey! Look! Facebook is a real, dangerous force! Be careful!". I will not be revealing, as I will say, that Facebook is a hellishly dangerous tool that changes the views of people or even ... people. In 2012, I left Facebook and made a film about how strongly this platform influenced my private life (https://www.liveleak.com/view?i=086_1446721343) . How great is the emotional impact on people. After 2012, everything changed. My visions, my contacts with people. Facebook is a platform

for political and business manipulation. It's not worth trusting her! After the action with Snowden, many artists began to deal with this topic. People started asking, researching, wondering about the sense of leaving traces on the internet.

However, the majority are still unaware of this danger, recently showed a referendum in the Netherlands about the protection of personal data. As it turned out, a large part of the society has no problem with the fact that their internet wanderings are tracked.

As an artist, I will not fight, I will not get involved politically. The only thing I can do is sensitize and activate awareness. I can do such funny projections, which in some circles may have their punching power. So that people could stop and think for a moment. Think about it yourself. I rejected Skype, I rejected *social media*.

You did not reject Instagram. You run your project "Phantom Love" on it.

Well, I create my poetry there. "Phantom Love" is another vanishing army of artificially constructed identities that poetically comment on photos and posts of public and political institutions. But I do not use social media for "broadcasting". I've wasted too much time figuring out whether I should have a photo from the street put on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and maybe send an e-mail or Skype, or just save. And all these channels are so commercialized that my private winks would disappear into the crowd of commercials. The worst is the sense of competition and constant evaluation. Why are we doing this?

Not to mention how these media promote certain behaviors.

The most terrible when they promote bad and sad behavior. "Today I am terribly lonely, I have breakfast, I watch TV." This is evil.

Broadcasting is one thing and the ability to be in touch with people is second. I am from Warsaw, I live in Utrecht and I am glad that I have such ease in contact with my relatives.

Sure, it's easier to find people. But it also makes us lazy.

Lazy?

It takes a few minutes to find a person's contact. Google, website.

Well, sorry, but your website (<http://constantdullaart.com>) certainly does not make it easy to find a contact quickly [*laughs*].

I like people to challenge. It's like building a relationship, it requires patience. It can not be easy. 

Author

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Edition

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Date

05/2018

tags

archiving , digital culture , digital media