

## Press Release

# 404 Object Not Found What remains of media art?

International congress concerning the production, presentation and preservation of media art

**19. – 22. June 2003 in Dortmund**

<b>Venue</b>	Westfälisches Industriemuseum Zeche Zollern II/IV Dortmund/Germany, Grubenweg 5
<b>Organisation</b>	media_art_net dortmund > Museum am Ostwall > hardware medien kunst verein > Kulturbüro Stadt Dortmund
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<b>Partners</b>	<b>The Netherlands Media Art Institute</b> , Montevideo/TBA, Amsterdam <b>C3, Center for Culture &amp; Communication</b> , Budapest <b>Prof. Hans Dieter Huber</b> , Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Stuttgart
<b>Patron</b>	<b>Dr. Gerhard Langemeyer</b> , Lord Mayor of the City of Dortmund
<b>Main support by</b>	<b>European Commission</b> , Culture 2000



**Kultur 2000**

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## Introduction

The **media\_art\_net dortmund**, which is a co-operation between the Museum am Ostwall, hardware medien kunst verein and the city of Dortmund's cultural department, has been initiated with the financial assistance of the European Commission's program „Culture 2000“ a year long research project, which examines the questions of production, presentation and particularly the preservation of media art.

Further partners are, amongst others the **Netherlands Media Art Institute**, Montevideo/TBA in Amsterdam, the **Center for Culture & Communication**, C3, in Budapest and **Hans Dieter Huber**, Academy for Visual Arts, Stuttgart.

To begin with, the research project concentrated on various interdisciplinary **case studies** focusing on concrete works (for example a video installation by **Diana Thater**) to examine the problems and issues involved in the presentation, documentation and preservation of media art.

The **congress** „404 Object Not Found. What remains of media art?“, which takes place in Dortmund from the 19. – 22. June, is to be understood as (interim) conclusion, public platform and the climax of the project. In addition to the presentation of the case studies, which have been completed up till then, additionally international experts will be invited to present their projects, talk about their experiences, problems and theories on the subject of production, presentation and preservation of media art.

## The congress

The **priority** of the congress lays explicitly in bringing together numerous international initiatives and people of various professions, with different interests and skills, who have dedicated themselves to the complex problems involved in the presentation, production and preservation of media art. At the same time the congress seeks to create a forum for intensive discussions about specific works of art and/or specific questions. The aim is to initiate long-term co-operations that extend beyond the four days of the congress. The research project and the congress both support an open attitude of knowledge exchange - in the sense of “open source” philosophy.

During the last 10 years standards have been developed to preserve video tapes. In contrast to this the research concerning the set-up, the reconstruction and the documentation of complex **video/multi media installations** is still quite young – especially in Europe. Not to mention **software- and net based art**, which is hardly even taken seriously as cultural heritage. This is the reason why the congress will especially focus on the issues of installations as well as software- and net based art.

On the one hand the congress discusses the **technological and methodical aspects of preservation** (storage, migration, emulation, re-interpretation,...) as well as the demands placed upon the **documentation** of media art: **data bank concepts** (e.g. the data bank of the Variable Media Art Initiative) as well as open and standard documentation methods. The question is also to be posed, if it can be expected or indeed demanded that artists, during the **production** process, should take into consideration the long-term conservation of their work or compile complex documentation about it. And which „**low-budget**“ **solutions** can be considered, that would also allow institutes with a limited budget to present, document and preserve media art?

At the same time the discussions taking place during the congress will consider **art-theoretical reflections on media art**, for example concerning the problems of its hardly definable „materiality“, its often process orientated, instable nature as well as the specific spatial and contextual conditions of many media art works. In this cases the idea – or rather ideology – of preservation or reconstruction (e.g. of complex video installations) has at the very beginning already lost its „original“ or „authentic“ object of referral.

And what role do the specific ways/situations of the production play and those of the perception of media art, as well as its social („interactive“) nature? Another theme of the congress will be, amongst others the question of how net and software based art can be collected, exhibited and preserved.

In addition to a series of **lectures** the congress is composed of **workshops** in which the content of the lectures can be discussed in further depth and additional projects will be presented. Media and art historians, artists, curators and restaurateurs will contribute to the congress as well as computer scientists, technical assistants of artists or representatives from the ICT industry.

Additionally the congress encompasses various „**side steps**“: Questions of documentation and reconstruction will also be examined using the example of **Anna Oppermann's** installations. The artist, who deceased in 1993, created complex paper based „ensembles“, which can not be classified as belonging to the sector of media art in a classical sense, but however, in terms of aspects of „authenticity“ and „reconstruction“ pose similar questions.

Parallel to the congress the **exhibition** „On Translation: Das Museum“ by Antoni **Muntadas** will take place at the Dortmund Museum am Ostwall. As part of the congress the exhibition will be visited in order to reflect on, amongst other things, the specific problems of the presentation (as an interpretation) of media art in museums, especially taking into account works that originally were conceived as interventions in public spaces, as a video conference or internet projects.

A **panel** should finally discuss which requirements must be placed on institutions, curators and exhibition sites as well as institutes of further education, culture politics and grant models to ensure a long term and in particular a decentralized infrastructure for media art, its production, presentation and conservation.

**Further information concerning the congress and its background can be found at:**

<http://www.hartware-projekte.de/programm/inhalt/eueng.htm>