

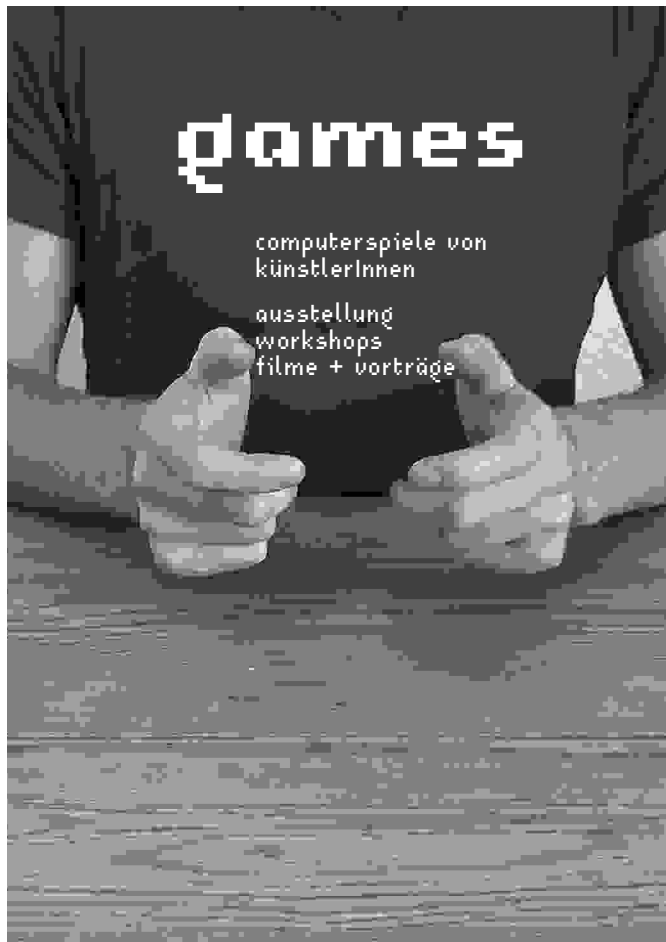
games

Computer games by artists

October 11 – November 30, 2003

former Reserveteillager at Phoenix West
in Dortmund-Hörde, Hochofenstraße/ Corner Rombergstraße

PRESSE RELEASE



Lucien Alma / Laurent Hart, F
Cory Arcangel, USA
Norbert Bayer, D
Tom Betts, GB
Pash Buzari, D
Leon Cmielewski / Josephine Starrs, AUS
Arcangel Constantini, MEX
Vuk Cosic, Slovenia
Aurelien Froment, F
fuchs-eckermann, A
Beate Geissler / Oliver Sann, D
Margarete Jahrmann / Max Moswitzer, A
Jodi, E
Joan Leandre, E
Mongrel, GB
Tilman Reiff / Volker Morawe, D
Anne-Marie Schleiner /
Brody Condon, USA
Jan-Peter E.R. Sonntag, D
Space Invader, F
Jon Thomson / Alison Craighead, GB
Olaf Val, D
Yang Zhenzhong, CHI
Lars Zumbansen, D
and others

A project by
hardware medien kunst verein +
medien_kunst_netz dortmund

in co-operation with
dortmund-project + LEG NRW

Concept: Tilman Baumgärtel
Curated by
Tilman Baumgärtel, Hans D. Christ, Iris Dressler

Main support by



GEFÖRDERT VON MINISTERIUM
FÜR STÄDTENBAU UND WOHNEN,
KULTUR UND SPORT DES LANDES
NORTH-RHINE-WESTPHALIA

NRW.

kulturstiftung des bundes

Introduction: hardware at Phoenix West / Dortmund - Hörde

From October 2003 to the end of 2004 the **Reserveteillager** – a disused spare part warehouse – at **Phoenix West** will be host to the events and exhibitions of **hardware medien kunst verein**. Phoenix West is a redundant blast furnace site in Dortmund-Hörde.

The owner of the 110 hectare site Phoenix West is the Landesentwicklungsgesellschaft (county development association) in North-Rhine Westphalia. They, together with, the “dortmund-project” are planning to create here the infrastructures necessary for new business sectors, culture and leisure amenities. The **2000 square meter** “Reserveteillager” has been recently redeveloped and is now in use as a multifunctional dortmund-project event hall and thus is also at the disposal of hardware.

The first hardware medien kunst verein project at Phoenix West is the exhibition **games. Computer games by artists**, which takes place from October 10th till November 30th, 2003. The exhibition is based on a concept by the media art theorist **Tilman Baumgärtel** (Berlin). Another exhibition is planned for 2004 within the framework of the City of Dortmund’s **International Culture Festival** in conjunction with Switzerland. Additionally the **Nam June Paik Award** will be presented here in 2004, an international and highly acclaimed media art prize awarded by the Kunststiftung NRW (Art Foundation of North-Rhine Westphalia) since 2002.

Exhibition

The exhibition **games. Computer games by artists** seeks to display the varied range of artistic approaches to the phenomenon of computer games with approximately 30 exemplary works of art. Thus, it addresses a subject, which has intensely occupied the young media art scene over the past few years.

In the works shown commercial computer games such as, "Pong", "Jet Set Willy", "Super Mario", "Tetris", "Quake" or "Counter Strike" – have been modified in various ways. Their visual aesthetics as well as their functions have been tampered with. In addition to games that can be played on computers and consoles the exhibition also encompasses installations, videos, objects and graphics.

The range of artistic strategies displayed in the exhibition spans from the adaptation of the programming code to the manipulation of the hardware through to the "translation" of digital scenes and motifs into the language of analogue visual media and objects.

All works shown in the exhibition display a constructive rather than simply reactive approach towards the hardware and software of the rapidly expanding computer games industry. The artists utilise the given standards, whilst at the same time deconstructing them with subversive gestures and infusing them with new meanings.

games. Computer games of artists seeks to display the varied range of artistic approaches to the phenomenon of computer games with approximately 30 exemplary works of art. The works deal with different aspects of computer games: for example their binary logic of winning/loosing or on the assumed predictability of the game's outcome. Also, the flexibility of role and identity allocation is examined within game scenarios. Other works concentrate on the creation of an alternative reality in the 3D-space of computer-generated game scenes (and thus on the interaction between simulation and reality) or question the apparent unequivocalness of hard and software, the console and computer and even the infallible black box.

A **catalogue** will accompany the exhibition. It will be presented towards the end of the exhibition (November 29).

Programme

On Sunday, the 12th of October several **artists will** be available to **personally present their work** at the exhibition.

Additionally, the artist Olaf Val (Cologne) will run a **workshop for young people** within the context of the exhibition.

There will also be a **film and a lecture programme** (21st - 23rd November), which sets about addressing the issues involved in computer games and film.

On Saturday, **29th November**, during the **presentation of the catalogue** accompanying "games. Computer games of artists ", Peter Carp and Jan-Peter E.R. Sonntag (Berlin) will show their new production, "Bowling am Tiber"- a theatrical cineastic installation for 2 actors, sound effect machine, 3 video projections, 4 channel sound system and an interactive motion tracking control system.

Parallel to the "games" exhibition, the project **AudioArchitekt** by artist **Anja Kreysing** will be shown in the "Reserveteillager". It has been developed in 2002 during Kreysing's media art scholarship, awarded by the government of NRW.

Dates

October 10, 2 pm	Press conference
October 11, 7 pm	Opening
October 12, 1 - 5 pm	Presentations by artists
November 21 - 23	Films + Lectures
November 29	· Presentation of the Catalogue · Performance/Installation „Bowling am Tiber“ · Party
November 30	Finissage

Works in the exhibition (choice)

RetroYou nostalg (2003) by **Joan Leandre** (E) represents the type of work, which radically alters the function and graphical interfaces of computer games through software modification. The work is based on a commercial flight simulator. With the game's own editor, its navigation, spatial orientation and fundamental structures have been manipulated in such a way that spatial orientation is practically impossible. The manipulation of the software not only interferes with the functioning of the flight simulator but also shakes the illusionary potential of virtual space.

A similar strategy - the dissolving of game interface through software manipulation - can be found in the installation *QQQ* (2002) by **Tom Betts** (GB). The modification of the Ego Shooter game "Quake" takes, as starting point, a basic ingredient of modern computer games- three-dimensionality. Betts breaks through the surface of the 3-D animated game architecture making the different layers of its construction visible. Mobile surfaces and coloured elements thereby create a space which is apparently in perpetual flow.

Whereas with these and further works the exhibition concerns itself primarily with the modification of programming codes of existing games, in *Super Mario Clouds* (2002) by **Cory Arcangel** (USA) the manipulation of the game's hardware is in the forefront. A "Super Mario" Nintendo cartridge was manipulated in such a way that in the end all that remained were the characteristic white clouds in a blue sky. In addition to the work itself the, "Cracker Manual" is also on show, which documents step-by-step the manipulation the artist made.

Olaf Val's (D) installation *SwingUp Games* (2001) again takes the hardware as a starting point: his interactive computer game represents a variation on the classic game, "Tetris". It is independent of screen and console, thus reduced to transparent sheets hanging freely in space to which light diodes are attached that can be controlled by players. The transparency of the hardware is here elementary and thus the workings of the game are made visible.

The duo **fuchs-eckermann** (A/GB) focuses with its work – *fluid- arena of identities* (2003) on the aspect of flexible identity creation within simulated game contexts. In a transformed level of "Unreal Tournament" players must create identities, they can steal the identity of others - and lose them again - they can clone themselves, mirror themselves and so explore a multitude of identities.

Lucien Alma and Laurent Hart (F) present another form of role playing with their work *Borderland* (2001), in which video sequences and 3-D computer animation is combined. *Borderland* places real figures as "representatives" of our everyday life in the symbolic space system of a computer game. The different characters, who represent a cross-section of our social and cultural reality, meet one another in urban deserts and post-industrial no-man's lands. In accordance to the logic of combat games, an infinite number of encounters develop on the unstable border between game and reality.

The much discussed *PainStation* (2001) by **Tilman Reiff and Volker Morawe** (2001) likewise focuses on the contradiction between illusion and reality. It is a game console, with which two people play "Pong" against each other. When a player loses a point, his hand is maltreated with electrical shocks, whip lashes and burns. The illusion of the autonomous space in which a game takes place is broken on the physical reality of the players.

A further aspect, which the exhibition highlights, is the sort of game modification that intervenes in the logic of existing games by implanting scenes into them which are frequently politically or socially motivated. **Leon Cmielewski and Josephine Starrs** (AUS) have with *Bio-Tek Kitchen* (1999), developed a modification of the Ego Shooter game "Marathon Infinity", which ironically and subversively adapts a real threatening scenario. In the kitchen of a genetic engineering amateur players fight mutated creatures. Kitchen devices and floor cloths must holdout as weapons against the approaching killer vegetable, which turns out to be part of a world-wide conspiracy to take over of the entire food chain.

Beate Geissler and Oliver Sann (D) take a stance with their video *Shooter* (2000-2001), which completely departs from the illusionary space of the computer game and turns its attention towards the players. They have filmed Ego Shooter players at LAN parties over a period of two years and documented their mimic in close-up. Successes and failures, concentration and excitement can be seen in the minimal movements and changes of expression on the faces of players. On the basis of the minimal traces visible the game is reconnected to "reality".

The work of **Norbert Bayer** (D) aka *Mister Ministeck* has also detached itself in media from the computer game. He creates mosaics from ministeck depicting scenes and figures e.g. from the early games for the Commodore C64.

Space Invader (F) adapts the 80's game of the same name for interventions in public space. His web site, which will be presented in the context of the exhibition, documents and advertises the invasion of the pixely monsters, who spread as mosaics in the architecture of numerous cities.

Credits

A project by	hardware medien kunst verein + medien_kunst_netz dortmund
In co-operation with	dortmund-project + LEG NRW
Idea and concept	Tilman Baumgärtel
Curated by	Tilman Baumgärtel, Hans D. Christ, Iris Dressler
Assistents	Silke Albrecht, Katrin Mundt
Constructions + Technic	Hans D. Christ, Uwe Gorsky
Info / Presse	hardware medien kunst verein T/F: +49 (0)231 - 88 20 240 post@hardware-projekte.de www.hardware-projekt.de
Venue	former Reserveteillager at Phoenix West Hochofenstraße/ Ecke Rombergstraße Dortmund-Hörde
How to get there	DB (train): till Bahnhof (station) Dortmund-Hörde U-Bahn (metro): U41 till Dortmund-Hörde Bus: till Dortmund-Hörde: 427, 430, 432, 433, 434, 439, 440, 441, 442 Car: A 54 exit Rombergpark, Nortkirchenstraße direction Hörde, take a left to Gildenstraße, take a left to Hochofenstraße
Press conference	Friday, October 10, 2003, 2 pm
Opening	Saturday, October 11, 2003, 7 pm
Opening hours	Tue- Fri + Sun: 11 am - 8 pm, Sat: 2 - 10 pm
Supported by	> Kulturstiftung des Bundes > Ministerium für Städtebau und Wohnen, Kultur und Sport des Landes NRW > Kulturbüro Stadt Dortmund > LAG Soziokultur NRW > Fonds Soziokultur > Heinrich Böll Stiftung NRW
Admission fee	2 EUR / 4 EUR
Catalogue	hardware medien kunst verein / Tilman Baumgärtel (ed.) Including texts by: Tilman Baumgärtel, Claus Pias, Anne-Marie Schleiner, Gerrit Gohlke, Silke Albrecht, Katrin Mundt, Iris Dressler appr. 120 pages, german / english Design: labor b, Dortmund; Revolver Verlag, Frankfurt am Main Presentation: November 29, 2003, 15 EUR

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