Van Gogh TV—Live and Real-Time Television
Pompino Project

Live stage A.A

Live stage A.B

Calling Europe

WELCOME TO POMPINOWORLD

1390

APA372 5 AI.
USA/Parteien/Demo
kraten 11.Jul. 90
Wahlparteitag der Demo
kraten 1992 in New York
Washington-Die Dell
gierten wählten Ron
Brown zum Parteivor
sitzenden. Das mehrtä
gige Spektakel soll im
Madison Square Garden
über die Bühne gehen.

**Punktestand POMPINO
Kandidat 1:   86 Pkte**

MAILBOX
HAMBURG
CONNECTED

APA → VGTV
NACH LÄNGEREN
KURSSCHWANKU
DES US DOLLARS
HATT SICH DIE DE
UTSCHE MARK W
DER STABILISIERT
DIE DAIMLER BEN
AKTIEN HABEN SI
BOSCH MIT 2.0.3.
DIE AUSSAGEN D
ISRAELISCHEN O
KE NE NEUIGKEIT
UNRUHEN WEITE
SICH AUS DIE EIN

ROOM 42
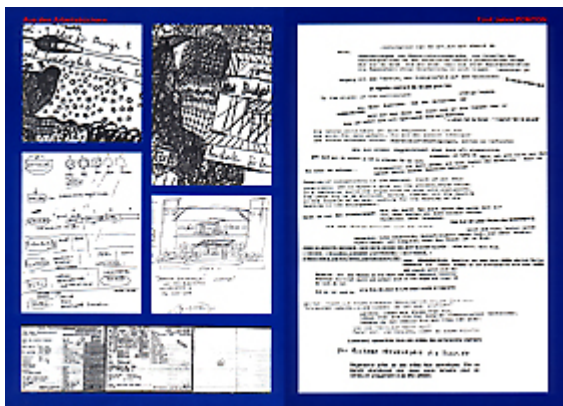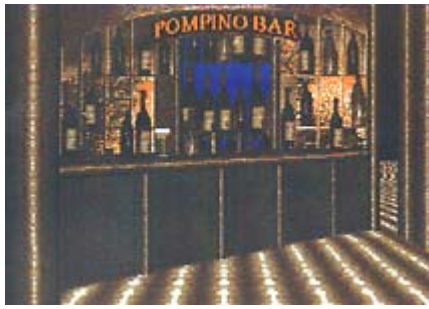AUSTRIA
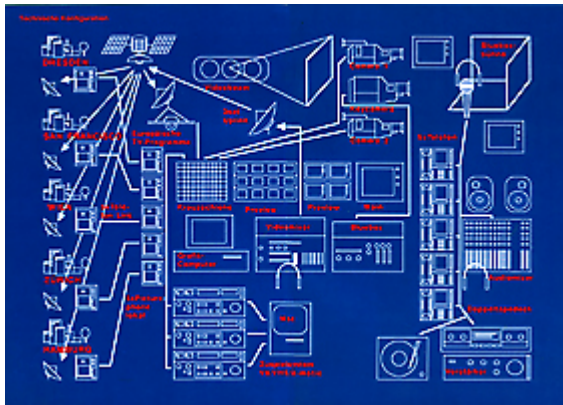
Technical Configuration

Television Participation

Europe is challenged to participate!

The game "Hotel Pompino" was developed as a consequence of a live television project by Van Gogh TV in order to communicate even more directly with the spectator, who becomes a participant instead of just a spectator. Participation can be accomplished by personal appearance in the program, over telephone, over video-telephone or through the mailbox.

Direct Television Democracy

The spectator can become a participant with a cable or a satellite dish to receive the 3sat broadcast. Video phones have been installed throughout Europe by Ponton, allowing the spectators to switch on as commentators or jury members. Computer users can send in written text with electronic mail over telephone lines.

The Stage

The action takes place on different stages.
1. The blue box
2. The live stage
3. The table
4. The network

In the blue box, the candidate must orient himself in a digital world. On the live stage it is mainly a matter of unmediated, personal tasks that are adapted to given themes and surroundings. The user must master detailed and active tasks in the micro- and macro-spheres that are set out on the table. The connection between various places in the world is achieved with the network (telephone, video phone, mailbox, news ticker).

Winning = Broadcast Time

On any one day, numerous candidates will play against each other. The candidate must react within a complex structure of participation, following rules that are specific to the game and the jury. Points are played for. 0 to 6 points can be acquired for a given jury and game situation. At the end, the person with the most points wins. The first prize is free broadcast time on the next day. The won broadcast time varies from 5 to 15 minutes. The candidate can do as he wishes during this time and may even make use of the technical facilities of the studio. The loser is swallowed by a computer-animated waste-disposal unit and his participation, for the time being, is at an end.

The Game with the Imaginary Worlds

The classic goal of every game is winning, losing, and entertaining. In addition, the participants of Hotel Pompino experience daily situations in imaginary game and picture worlds. And that's also a reason for the subjective aspect of the game.

A New Eloquence in a Public Space

Van Gogh TV wants to offer the spectator an opportunity to go beyond the simple choice among favorite shows. Play situations are available where he can express himself in a unique way with images and sound. With this opportunity, Van Gogh TV sees the opportunity for a new people's art that seeks renewal through the public media.

Van Gogh TV considers as its main objective to assist the spectator to overcome his roll as a manipulated commodity of the media, who cynically calculate how information can be made palatable in order to sell paid commercial advertisement—the real basis for existence of the media.

The function of the media is to act as a buffer for social politics that no longer answer for their actions. Instead the spectator is given the information almost in time, but actually too late to react. The spectator becomes an alibi, because he knew everything but did not do anything. Television is a means for controlling and influencing the people using the trinity of hypnosis, compulsory consumption and bad conscience.

The moment that all being and striving is recognized as senseless is the time to turn on the television (from Dr. B. Heidersberger).

Hotel Pompino

The lead actors:
The candidate = Hotel guest

The moderator = Pompinos special hotel service
The jury = Hotel management, hotel reception
The technicians = Video installers, hotel detectives

Try to image the following:

The candidates enter the arena and from then on they are hotel guests with the special task of going (or traveling) through the rooms. They compete with one another for points and time. They travel from the basement through all the floors up to the topmost floor.

The structure of the rooms is partially digital and partially real. The tasks are determined by the particular structure of the space and are completely dependent on the whims of the hotel personnel. An example is the abuse room, where the one who can be the most abusive wins the most points–if not for the fact that the jury's pacifist days are over and it has no patience for abuse and disgrace. To this extent, the tasks are also means of forcing the hotel guests to adapt to the political, economic, and social climate of the hotel or, on the other hand, to challenge or change the prevailing structure.

The Jury—The Judgement

In the studio after each game sequence, the jury allots the points and is able to freely express its opinion—while on air. After that, the video-phone jury does the same and, finally, the public is given an opportunity to assess the proceedings. It will become difficult to keep up with the journey through all 44 hotel rooms!

Chance, Luck, and Gastronomy

To be more precise, everything is orchestrated from this room, i.e., everything perceivable or that can be done by the guests. Here the hotel guest has to come to terms with the requirements that such a game of chance brings with it. Sometimes things get a bit topsy-turvy in the hotel. The lights might even all fail suddenly, but the technical staff guarantees an entertaining 100 minutes each day. For a week there will be daily reports from the hotel with daily changing themes in order to give a many faceted view of this special Pompino hotel. Of course the professional dress of the hotel personal will change to suit the theme. The same goes for the inner decor of the hotel and the dress of the guests.

In short: the guests will be hounded, abused, challenged, and inspired. At the Hotel Pompino the guest is customer, king, farmer, beggar, and superstar. The guest has the chance to climb (naturally with the elevator) and can, in the best case, go to Pompino heaven.

True, up to now nobody's been able to do it, so: *Alles Linz*!

Pompino World

The above-mentioned concept of play is based on extraterritorial media philosophy. There is Europe, there is Linz, there is the Hotel Pompino that shines its eloquence over the whole of Europe. But even something that sounds so simple has a trapdoor (already giving clues: pay attention in room 5!). But that's how one gets into Pompino world, and the Hotel Pompino broadcasts only in unmediated connection with Pompino world. To be more precise, the Hotel Pompino broadcasts over and beyond itself. The guests have the best chance to get into this world by traveling through the rooms and will be ever more strongly drawn to the Pompino sphere of existence. For the spectators, it is more complicated and requires more free play. The Pompinos lead the guests on their journey through the rooms and the Pompino world.

Pompinos and the New Tourism

You are the hotel guides, the tourists, the politicians, the psychologists, the jokers; and you have therewith a multiplicity of areas in which to work and an intimate relationship to the guests. The excitement of using a game to break into a new world is immense, and many other games will be influenced by this excitement. The Pompino world is different. It will influence and open up possibilities for all times, and it will be difficult for many to find their way back to Europe. On the other hand, the cross regional cooperation on a technical level within Europe is easier and interactive. The influence is palpable, old-worldish, historically significant, and intentional.

Europe 1992

But Europe will learn and profit from the feedback it receives from the Pompino world inhabitants, where previously only an elite fragment of its inhabitants have been able to break through to new shores. During the journey, the guest will experience a new reality, and will be confronted with his inculcated attitudes when he has to adjust to new situations in the hotel. The sense of time will be shifted, as with any vacation travel. So far, so good. The integrity of the player will only change in the later phases of the game. Because of the ritual of the game there will be the appearance of normality, and the guest will appear so much the more benevolent in new spheres.

Every room will yield new experience, perspective, and knowledge. That is the way to Pompino world.

At the end, when he/she ceases to ask just what Pompinos are, then she/he is on course and may say "I was *Pompino*" (from Prof. M. Hentz).

The Live TV Concept

"The interconnected interplay of technical and creative potential is what interactivity is" (from S. Vanasco).

Since the "performance experience," it is a central tenet of media art that the means of interactivity be used to investigate new spheres. The fluctuation of all things that no longer show themselves as such, as fluctuating appearances, are to be reproduced in new ways. The work process will again be an important part of artistic work. The democracy of technology will return to the screen. Video and computer images will be projected that are pertinent to the themes and action of the game.

Television Art and Media Eloquence

The main artistic interest of Van Gogh TV is to find a new TV language, one however that does not lose its sense of ongoing process.

Experimentation is the highest law.

A change in the work is the increasing cooperation of other artistic disciplines with each project. Teams, consisting of international artists, work with themes that are related to the medium of television. Just those classical artistic disciplines (drama, set, and costume imagery) must develop their own languages. With the live character and the corresponding acceleration of the sequence of events, technology becomes the most critical part of the

broadcast. Live broadcasts always have to count on breakdowns and hitches, and this should be looked upon as an essential part of each broadcast. On the other hand, the new TV language must be understood by the TV audience. We understand this language as being sound and picture simultaneously and therefore an artistic answer to the modern world.

Live is art.

Dear Benjamin,

I find the idea with the spaces good, since it establishes an easily comprehensible semiotic framework, although, in order to be able to become universilizable areas of the imagination, more concentration is needed on basic poetical patterns (in the sense of Bachelard). That would mean a little less video game and a little bit more representation of space—concentrated on semiotic representation of basic mythical patterns (father, love, struggle, death, sibling rivalry, etc.). Even for those who don't recognize them as such, there is an abundance of related, semiotically definable representations that constitute fields of association that can be comprehended even before they are rationally identified. Of course the multimedia interdependencies work only to the extent that they make use of such fields of association. Naturally, some work is needed to effect the transfer, but in principle that's not too difficult.
Hope to hear from you soon,
Yours ever,

Calling Europe

The Project for the World Exhibition in 1992 in Seville

The Ponton European Media Art Lab realises a combined radio-television installation. It foresees the opportunity of tying together all of the countries of the European Community, where a telephone number can be dialed at local rates and the caller switched into a conference call (chatterbox).

This telephone conference will in turn be broadcast over an AM radio station for reception throughout Europe.

The Aspects

The idea is an electronic community encompassing all of Europe.

Our experience shows that a communication medium, when switched into a general broadcast system, represents a particular stimulus. The momentum accumulated through this process is such that it becomes self-sustaining and founds itself as an institution.

The Realization

A part of the effort is the cooperative work with the different national postal and telecommunication authorities. To realize this, there must be an accessible telephone number (e.g., 1992) at local calling rates connected to a chatterbox.

Broadcasters must have a suitable location and frequency or, alternatively, a relay station system.

The broadcaster will be present with all the necessary technical facilities, as a sculptural exhibit, in Seville.

The project and the telephone number will be made known through appropriate publicity work.

Ponton Projects from 1986 to 1991

1986 Ars Electronica, Linz—Containercity/Mobile Unit
1987 Documenta 8, Kassel—Mediabus/Radiostation
1987 Frankfurter Bookfair—Radio Project
1988 European Media Art Festival—TV Project/Van Gogh TV
1988 Videonale, Bonn—Mediabus
1989 East Europe Tour DDR, Poland, USSR—Mobile Unit
1989 Ars Electronica, Linz—TV Project/Van Gogh TV/3sat
1989 European Media Art Lab—Foundation in Hamburg
1989 Hochschule für bildende Künste—TV Symposium/Hamburg
1990 Universcity TV—Foundation/Hamburg and Berlin
1990 Summer Festival Amsterdam—Cable TV Project
1990 Ars Electronica, Linz—Satellite TV Project
1991 Television Task Force—Lecture Tour/USA
1991 Riga—TV Project/USSR

Mailbox Smileys

Fantasy Work Provoked by the Perception of Text Smileys

:-) The original Smiley
;-) Blinking Smiley
:-(Frustrated Smiley
:-| Indifferent Smiley, barely grinning
;-| Indifferent Smiley, succinct
:- Indifferent Smiley, "Hm-hm"
8-| Suspense
:-/ Surprised (or singing) user
):-ª "Just about mischievous remark," "He-he"

Enough for the basic Smiley types.

Here are a few that are somewhat more unusual:
(-: User is left-handed
%-) User has stared at a green computer screen for the last 15 hours
:*) User is drunk
(:) User is a robot
8-) User wears glasses (or is a swimmer)
B:-) Glasses are pushed up onto the forehead
B-) User wears sunglasses
0-) User wears diving goggles

(-) User wears Ray Ban glasses
8:-) User is a little girl
:-)ª8 User is a big girl
:-{) User has a moustache
:-=) User has a Charlie Chaplin moustache
:-#) User has a rather unkempt moustache
:-{} User uses lipstick
{:-) User wears a toupee
&:-) User has curls
:-(In this case the user is a vampire
:-7 User has just made a wry remark
:-* User has just eaten something sour
:-ss User has a cold
:'-(User is crying
:'-) User is laughing until the tears come
:-ü User is squealing
:-# User wears braces
:^) User has a snub nose
:v) Snub nose, but other way around
:-) User is just about to lose his nose
:´) User comes from a private school in Switzerland
:-& User is uncommunicative
=:-) User has spiked hair
-:-) User is a punk rocker
-:-((real punk rockers don't smile)
:=) Two-nosed user
+-:- In this case the user is the Pope or the head of some other organized religion
':-) User has accidentally cut off an eyebrow while shaving this morning
,:-) The same, but on the other side
|-I User is drowsy
|-0 User yawns
0-) User is a diver
:-0 User is a smoker
:-? User smokes a pipe
0:-) User is a saint
:-P Nyahhhhh … (tongue sticks out of the corner of the mouth)
:-S User has been blathering incoherently
.-D User is laughing (at you!)
:-X User's lips are sealed
:-C User mutters darkly
´|-) In this case the user is Chinese
´|_(Chinese user who doesn't like this kind of joke
@= User favors leading a nuclear war
*´:-) User is wearing a bobble cap
d:-) User with a baseball cap
:-9 User licks his lips
%-6 User gaga
(:-) User wears a Walkman
(:| User is an egghead
´:-| Idiot (with a dunce cap)
K:P User is a little kid with a propeller cap
@:-) User wears a turban
:_0 Quiet, please!
:-: Mutant Smiley

Invisible Smiley
.-) User has only one eye (Cyclops)
X-(User has just died
8:-) User is a magician
:) Gnome
:) Friendly gnome who would gladly be your friend
=(Variations on the theme
:] What would one call that?
:) Happy
:ª Hm … what?
:@ Hm … what?
:D Laugh
:I Indecisive
:(Sad
:(On the ground, destroyed
:´ Hm … what?
:[Hm … what?
:0 Scream
:,(Cry
|I Drowsy
|^o Snore
:-' Chewing, tobacco-spitting Smiley
:-1 Smiley, mildly smiling
:-! Oh!
:-$ Umpf!
:-% User is a banker
:-6 User has just eaten something especially delicious
:-q User is trying to stick his tongue into his nose
:-e Disappointed user
:-i User with half-hearted smile
:-p User sticks his tongue out at you
:-(Unhappy stubborn mule
:-) Cheerful stubborn mule
{:-) User with a part in the middle
g-) User with monocle
:-j Smiling user
:-v Talking head

collected by Kevin Johnson

Witzelsucht (vit'sel-zoocht) (Ger.) "A mental condition characteristic of frontal lobe lesions and marked by the making of poor jokes and puns and the telling of pointless stories, at which the patient himself is intensely amused."

Donald Daybell

VideoArchiv

Pompino Programmable Control Unit—Fully Automatic Archiving System.

VideoArchiv is an application for the rapid storage and retrieval of video clips in archives.

Minimum system requirements are a Macintosh Plus computer with 128K ROM, 512M RAM and System Version 6.04. Two video recorders with Control-L connectors as well as a specially developed SMPTE/EBU Time-Code-interface are also necessary.

The following illustration describes the connection between the computer and the two video recorders.
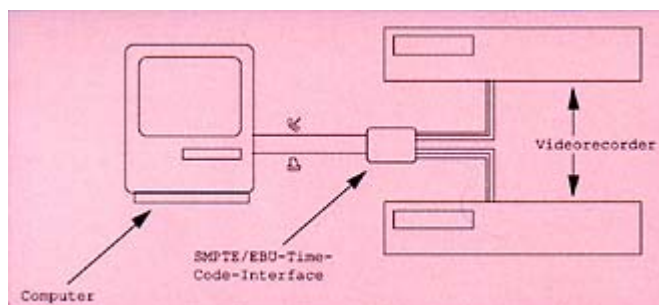
Think C Version 4.0 is being used as the developing environment. The user interface will be intuitive and consistent. The interface standards delineated in "Human Interface Guidelines" by Apple Computer will be as closely followed as possible. VideoArchiv is being developed in close cooperation with end users, guaranteeing an error-free interface suitable to the needs of the user.

The heart of the application is the functions for controlling the video recorders. In addition, VideoArchiv provides simple database functions for producing and updating indexes of cassettes and transmission schedules. The computer communicates with the video recorders through the two RS-244 connectors. Two control protocols are used; Sony's Control-L and SMPTE/EBU Time-Code. SMPTE/EBU Time-Code is used to determine the exact position of a clip on the cassette as well as setting positions for clips. Approximate control over the tape position is achieved by passing control commands through the Control-L protocol. Standard and low tape speeds are also supported.

The application is able to work in the background, setting tape positions for both recorders simultaneously. The search process is synchronized with differing degrees of precision. With rapid rewind or forward, a tape position about two or three seconds in front of the desired position is located while the counter of the recorder is periodically queried. At this position the recorder is switched to play. Now the time-code can be read from the soundtrack of the cassette and switched to pause at the desired position. If necessary, the tape position is adjusted frame by frame.

Using the different degrees of precision of the Control-L protocol and the SMPTE/EBU Time-Codes, VideoArchiv is able to distinguish "exact" and "approximate" tape position information. The program attempts to use exact position information whenever possible. It is sometimes necessary—for instance when spooling—to use only "approximate" position information. In such cases, the program carries out a counter-reset and determines the last "exact" position recorded. Deviations are minimized in this way.

Thank you, Mark Abbate.

Ponton European Media Art Lab, Hamburg–Vienna

The Situation

The purpose of European culture should not be to define a society that identifies itself only in economic terms. It must go beyond this and initiate a dialogue between the individual spheres of society to inspire a visionary approach to culture.

The restraints of economic necessity demand a particular perception of reality. The media are no longer intermediaries but rather means that are subordinated to the economic sphere.

Economic success as the ultimate cultural value, justification and source of meaning for every societal transaction.

During the search for our own perfect entertainment, there is nothing more entertaining than meeting somebody else who is seeking his own entertainment.

Impelled by a primeval instinct, humanity created an artificial model—once called God—and lost the belief in simulated real time. This play of humanity is orchestrated on the surface of the screen, where humanity's internal image in its functions (space and time) is made obsolete.

Lived reality becomes unbearably slow and boring in face of the accelerated simulation of reality as it appears on the screen. The problem begins when people attempt to keep pace with the velocity of the moving image. Loss of models and values, loss of belief and identity—the result is unoriented consumption.

Our Consequences

Our Own Workshop

The Media Art Lab as an independent workshop, planning, production, and broadcasting station.

Economic Apparatus

With the development of an economic apparatus we've made it possible to meet the need to be mobile and flexible.

Exemplary Model of Work

Following team-oriented and individual-oriented work models, new forms of work and jobs are being developed that counteract the usual tendency towards excessive specialization. A centrally coordinated Europe-wide entity for cooperative productivity.

Researching the Live-Broadcast Model

Freeing the medium from its isolation and changing it into a provocative and realised vision— *real time television*. Electronic and human interactivity; live TV at three different levels: 1, production team; 2, live stage; 3, audience.

Advanced Interface Between Avant-Garde and Industry

A contact and meeting place for these extremes as a common attempt at inspired experimentation.

A development shop where hardware and products of industrial society are made accessible for goal-oriented projects of an artistic nature.

Testing technology to its limits.

The Commentary

Presently, the Media Art Lab considers its essential task to pose the challenge of media in order to define our social and culture position as artists and to be able to transform artistic ideas into practice.

The Media Art Lab considers itself not only a place for research, but also as a logical connection to commerce and industry. The Media Art Lab will serve as a link that inspires the entertainment monopoly (presently dictated by profit and administrative machinery).

Media Art Lab's work extends from local and laboratory-related research in electronic branches to mobile research that leads to the farthest reaches of the planet.

Media Art Lab's work extends from the establishment of broadcast models for TV and radio to realizable, live shows over satellite.

Media Art Lab's work extends from the training of interested amateurs and students to cooperative work with experts from the most diverse areas of specialization.

Ponton Media Art Lab is the first laboratory in Europe—completely organized and run by artists—that has already been practically proved since 1986.

At the Media Art Lab, artists of a new generation are at work.

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