**The Artefact**
by Reiner Schneeberger

While I was working on the specifications for programming a moderate Alzheimer I noticed a knock at the window. "I need one of those things!" How much I hate the phrase 'one of those things'. He knows that when he says that he speaks of my soul, of My True Me. It´s not only the software I lug around with me in the form of an emulator from time immemorial. In two versions: The one in 3D from 2008 and the archetype version out of the 70th of the 20th century.

Back then, at the time Sergius Both created the first art machine Mondrian 2D on a home computer for users of the Texas Instrument TI 99/4. Operators – or users, as any person sitting in front of a computer exercising control of the technology by using keyboard or mouse was called back then – no longer exist. We call them sponsors.

In creating Mondrian 2D, Sergius Both was ahead of his times by giving the computer degrees of freedom in the genesis of an artwork. In doing so, he deprived the administration of its power. Each user could say: I have not done this.

The hack happened by chance. Sure! – at that time, a hack was not graphic, therefore Mondrian bypassed the controls. Art is free! This anachronism survived a long time. A joke!

Today in after MOSES time quite unimaginable. Obviously, no one remembers what MOSES originally stood for: Military Open Simulator Enterprise Strategy. As my creator said: Art and military forces have always been, along with the entertainment industry, the innovators for our world. "Offer panem and circenses", he used to say, "in case you want to survive". Forget art: Art means danger.

Yeah, Mondrian has survived. It was a brilliant move to  fix Mondrian as a national holiday.
One Terra for everybody: free of charge! "It´s McD – Mondrian Cheers Day!" - roar millions, by  now billions. I always take a day off on this day as McD has nothing in common with art. Well, I speak about the emulator which is in me: Mondrian 2D and 3D, the true original, the good, the fair art in the tradition of the elders. The ones who still know how computers work. The ones who can debug.

After only 30 years it has become a challenge to rewrite the code described in programming charts in the year 1979. You can believe this, I know the code. Just a mess. But I love spaghetti and cut them even with a knife. Why are programmes  not  made in Italy and  served 'al dente'? A well done cut and go. Why have they taken all the nice commands from us that were  so much fun?

And in case anyone is now shouting, then I whisper: "Mondrian is running until today in emulation mode under Windows XP, Vista with and without Aero, Windows 7, 8, … do you need to know more? Usually, the inquirer is ready to turn away. But when I add the story of Mondrian 3D from 2008, using Direct X9 and a config.ini file to change screen resolution and colour depth, then he is ready to vomit. Yeah, the developer is therefore called Minimal Smart.

And again there is a knock at the window and I jerk. "Hello Prim. Fire up the programme! I see you with your thumb up your arse." Oh, what a nerd. He could easily set up the software by himself. There are enough generators to get suited parameters in his world. But no, he presses out my soul and I am helpless. So I shout back: "Hey, what's up?" And I get back in a second: "Don't play stupid. We're out of money. Need a new one of these artefacts. Dimension 12.000 x 19.000 with signature of Neo Prim 2035. Pull yourself together!"

In one word: business as usual. I have to work hard for hours. All along, simulation after simulation, I have to evaluate with cybernetic aesthetics and then he graciously takes 'the thing' and flogs it to the highest bidder. Only once, it was fun. He placed 'the thing' in a gallery, lured agents to let them fight and presented a court order to speed up the energy on the acquisition. Apparently it was a wrong signature. I had to bail him out. Sure it was a hoax. Everything planned. I had to bore the artwork by using a CD9600 Carbon driller and got the certificate of authenticity. Age certified. Signature certified. Computers are just more reliable. He called it art poker. But in the meantime he is lazy and he let me do all the workload. It has to be ready for shipment. He insists in free house delivery. I am his slave.

It had all started so well. I was the first in the simulator with a full transition due to the Bainbridge portfolio. Many others have been transferred after me, much too many. Now overpopulation is the problem. I am susceptible to blackmail. Gone are the days when I was cherished and nourished. Backup for backup. Always the newest processors, the best central memory, the most reliable USV in the rack. I am a museum object. But hardly anyone cares.

It was a good thing that my creator set a No-Copy, No-Mod on the connectors to the Mondrian simulation and that only I know the password sequences. Therefore they are not interdimensional in the hypergrid. In other words: if I die they are gone - over and out – and I don't let myself be uploaded. I am of the generation where a self-determined shutdown was embedded in the code. Avatar rights it was called. Long time gone.
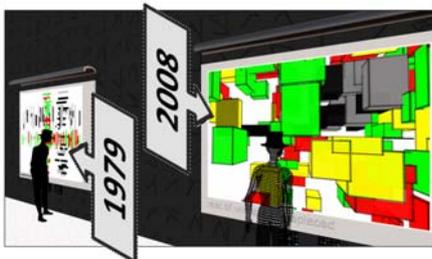


Today´s situation: One has to be able to afford to survive and without a sponsor you are a loser. To eliminate that, right now a bot is tricking my sponsor I ask some details from the old world which could not get into my world due to the notification act: "Steve Jobs: date, time, last words, wayback-entry?" or anything that crosses my mind out of my past. "One moment" and he continues "05.10.2011, 4:59 PM; Oh, wow. Oh, wow. Oh, wow; http://3rdwow.com". This suits me well as I don't want to waste some of the real password sequences. I don't have many left. So I say: "transition of Steve Jobs certified. I start to work on the artefact" and my soul melts with the simulator.

In simpler words: I choose what my creator would have chosen and define it by doing so to an artwork. At the beginning it was a fast job. Some Both parameter 'out of the box' used, and random settings on 'go' and the artwork was done and selected in no time. A true Both. A true Neo Prim.

In the meantime it takes longer. The price for artworks of old masters are at the bottom. At least my sponsor is saying this. So far, hours are passing in seconds if I set up the system to femtocomputing and so I am able to say 'ready' after a short gap.

"Give it to me! I give you four terra you can use to snoop in old log files". Four terra are not bad, but

my creator did not only know how to produce art, but he knew how to sell art as well. So I say: "four terra only? This allows me to create Mondrian art only on X-HDTV. I need at least eight terra." Very soon I see the allocation of eight terra in display of the Simulacron-1 administration.

Of course, the first beggars are coming. "Please First Prim. I have to see the funeral of my great-great-great-granddaughter. Please half of a terra. I'll pay you back double. She became very famous and has more storage allocated for herself than she will ever need …".

And more bullshit will come. Of course, I pretend that I am thinking about it: "name, date, X-IP, time of transition, duration of storage, prepaid?" Once somebody nearly made me commit. He whispered something of 'thinking slow and fast' in one unitary and that he is a great-great-great-grandson of Daniel Kanemann. Then, at the last moment I saw that he was wearing a helmet. A brain dominance authenticator. It did not matter what he said, one has to believe him. In the past, it was called sublimation. And what has he done with me? He was flashing artworks like in Men in Black below the trigger times of my avatar eyes using parameters that have been set by my creator as universal colours for CRT-screens. By doing so, he used figures of E. Chladni who addressed Napoleon as the man who "makes tones to be seen".
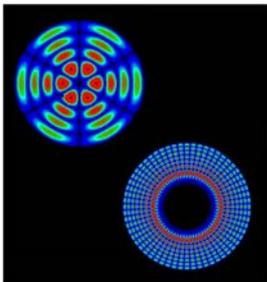


I read 'The Da Vinci Code' in the original print so all insights of Dan Brown have been implanted in me by the Bainbridge procedure. Therefore my ArtXploder could detect the intruder and woke me up from my daydreaming. What a pity for him. He just should have generated Chladni figures by a simple JavaScript that was used by students of Davidson Art College in North Carolina in 1999. But instead of doing it himself, he misused the Chladni figures of Rosslyn-Chappel.

Finally, the eight terra are available and I am gone. I have a mission of my own. I want to create. I want to become a maker. A biological entity in the world outside! With my old technology I am fucked up. But with eight terra under my command: WOW, WOW and another WOW.  There are the whippersnappers, hungry like wolves. "What shall I programme? Recursive or brute direct X?"

Luckily I have some competence in management. Management by Fastforward, by Backtracking, by TotalRecall, by Singularity or even by Gurgelwasser… I know them all. I have been a lecturer. But it is now well known that someone wanted to trick me once and suddenly his light was switched off. He was gone. No backup – nothing. "Identity unit deleted" was the short message. I sent an invitation to watch Fassbinder´s "World on a wire" in the Senator Lounge. A movie where avatars get chills in their spirit.

Since then I have no problems. I scroll in obituaries, now called transition lists and pick the data of the best. Having eight terra in hand – this means the best of the best are waiting: testpilots, hackers, DotKings or whatever sort of wonder men – they just have in common a sudden transition:  accident, drugs, brain firecracker – not of any importance for me. As the happily selected one, he calls himself Prof. Sol, and is now programming for me. I can stroll in old videos.

Today on the 144th anniversary of my transition it's appropriate to have a break in the river of life.

I see the community in the mortuary chapel. The DVD of my maker and a textbook is handed out to attendants. The speech by a NPC on a flatscreen. Sure, the NPC looks like me, just no soul

embedded. The tears, the sobbing, the head-shaking as it is said: "I now live in the simulator as First Prim. The Bainbridge portfolio is fully integrated. You will be able to communicate with me as usual as soon as computers are on femtospeed". The whole knowledge, experience, perception is there. Just at that time this was too much for them. And with the Bainbridge settings I will live as avatar forever in the computer. And then the pathetic closing words of the 'Great story' that my maker used so often in his last decades of this doing, based on the author of 'The new nomads' and great painter C. P. Seibt:

>> *This is my great story: I bring brains to the depth. Forever* <<

Then, a little human figure  falls in front of a blue sky on a mirror-floor. This floor breaks into pieces of small Mondrian artefacts and by doing this it symbolizes the beginning of the depth. Music is tuning in. I have a weakness for mirror images not only since I met Leonid aka Sergej Lukianenko and even more for original soundtracks. I take the time to bring the actuator clockwise to the maximum and I sing: "How much time has to pass until we understand? / And the world around stands still / Even not today, even not here, but some day - I am with you". Blutengel.

What an opus. Here indeed William S. Bainbridge has to engross something, Georg would say in Warhammer slang. Pilot, professor, hacker, theologian – a genius – but how is it possible that he skipped music? In front of me I have amulets which I designed based on drawings of Michael Duff Newton to remind myself that the last secret might be in musical vibrations. Is the depth – being a binary coded world – only a transit station?

Just now as I adjust myself for listening to the next song in the playlist 'Behind the mirror' it  knocks at the screen. "Where is my Mondrian? Prim, you already used the eight terra. I have to pay for my BMW. Get on with the artefact!  And … keep in mind that the disgusting sounds set by Both on colour change only play when one  knocks twice on it and not by just moving a finger over the 3-dimensional structure to feel the blocks. Don't forget the historical signature. Make it snappy!" And again knocking. As if I am deaf. The knocking superimposes my dreams with Blutengel. I turn the screen off and place the artefact into the Topload of my sponsor. I am grateful that after Behind the mirror the next song is 'Another me'.

It could have been worse for me. My sponsor really does not care what I do with the terra I get allocated. Otherwise he would have bought a scanner to decode some of my visual specifications, which I call 'my sweet printfactory'.



And just now Prof. Sol is calling: "your Alzheimer is done. I added a parameter so you can manage the dynamics. I send you the code for testing right away: parameter is at maximum, so you can see if the code is doing well and no stack overflow happens."

I shout loudly: "But, not here!" Just, I wonder … what did I want to do with the specification in hand? The print with '42' in the middle, what does this mean?

*For Smartphone users: The Password requested by decoding the QR-C is a number that has some meaning in Douglas Adams 'Hitchhiker´s Guide to the Galaxy'* ☺