

In what way is it possible to put the viewer, by using live video integration, in virtually variant or different contexts and thereby change the viewer's way to think and behave?

Does this live video integration make a difference to awareness and consciousness of oneself just by recognising oneself as part of an action?

Is there a difference when an image of oneself is presented in a personal contact rather than being distributed on social networks?

Postsensation

An artistic research project investigating the human self-perception under postdigital conditions

My aim is to research new ways of exploring and inquiring self-perception under postdigital conditions. By using live-video techniques in interactive video installations I aim to develop and refine recently discovered methods of user integrated installations.



Deep Depiction

Still from the video installation
Joerg Auzinger

This research will take the form of developing new interactive live-video installations and reflective analyses of the research process. There will be a final presentation in form of an Exhibition, Salon evenings and Lectures. This artistic research proposal describes my approach concerning my planned interactive live-video Installations, my targets, my open questions and the methodology that I have followed until now and how I would aim to further develop it.

In developing interactive installations which integrate the viewers into the work by using live video technology, I explore constructions of reality and possible changes of our concepts of reality. A reflection of a (post-)digital mirror produces a confrontation with your own observation. The generated visual worlds lead to changed possibilities of self-description and self-expression and ultimately to a change of self-perception.

Face detection systems for example are increasingly conquering our digital devices. Our faces are seen and recognized by machines. These machines are able to see us, but we can not see ourselves simultaneously as seen by them. This artistic research project can be seen as a tool to change our perspectives and allow ourselves to observe us as an observer and getting new insights from this approach.

Abstract

Mirror reflections

Through my installations I put the viewer virtually in a different environment and in a different plot and thereby he/she is able to observe him/herself!

The aim is to develop video installations where you can see a projection with a short film plot which tells a narrative story. Small cameras installed in the room are filming the viewer. This material will be used to create a live video footage that will be integrated into the video installation material using live key technology.

The viewer can see him/herself and becomes the main character of the story. The plot changes and gets a new and different meaning through the appearance of the viewer within the story.

My artistic research fathoms, by using artistic methods, the peculiarities of interpersonal communication and the role of the individual in a world shaped by postdigital phenomena. I seek to explore and study the roles of the individuals in participatory and linked forms of society and want to amend these roles with additional material and visualise them with a new perspective.

Beyond technical devices, the digital as an idea alters our manner of thinking and acting. It is therefore no longer a simply technical cause anymore, rather it is a way of life which affects the whole human race. Therefore my work is focused on the role humanity in a postdigital era, in which biological, cultural and digital systems collude. It broaches the influence of digital technologies onto the cultural transformations and the resultant self-perception of the human being.

Live video material of the observer is going to be inserted in completed film scenes and plots, so they will merge with each other and appear as a homogeneous cinematic creation. The live recordings in which the viewer is incorporated as an active component in the film lead through the observation of the observation over the self-perception into a self-reflection. In this way the observer receives a temporary view onto a system outside his own perception. The viewer therefore becomes a first-person narrator, and apparently becomes a passive observer in the reflection on the digital screens too. These reflections refer to the visual universes which are stuck in the minds of the viewer.

The installation should be recognised as a thought-provoking impulse to win a new form of self-awareness, and also find a new insight about the context of humanity in its habitat, in which we are embedded. By constantly using and observing data and images on our omnipresent screens, the imaginary becomes more and more important to us and modifies our view of ourselves and on our self-awareness and the world around us. We begin to perceive ourselves through others and experience others over (social) media. The self-awareness evolves therefore progressively in medial and virtual spaces.

My interactive installations attempt to fathom and visualise this paradigm shift, in an artistic way, by filming and displaying the viewer and demonstrating this film material without any time delay. My work illustrates a new relation of observation and the things we see. The staging of the installation is in a way where the viewer becomes a part of the plot.



Blind Spot:
The observation of the observer
Mirror Object I
Mirror with half closed blinds
Joerg Auzinger

Therefore the consuming of the visual becomes the reflection of the individual. The viewer enters into the sudden interaction with the things he/she sees on the screen and is caught by him/herself as a consumer which has a passive observer role as well. Self-observation and the observation of others are leading, in a subtle way, to a resonant system between subject and object, which unveils that the observer becomes the observed. My installations represent the mode of process of the relationship between human beings and their environment.



Second View
C-Print
100 x 100 cm
Joerg Auzinger

How can live video integration of viewers, if you put them in virtually in variant or different contexts, change their way of thinking or behaving?

When one recognizes oneself as part of an action, does this live video integration make a difference to awareness and consciousness of oneself?

Does it make a difference if I present a picture of myself in a personal contact, or distribute it on social networks?

How does communication over digital channels change our consciousness, our embeddedness in the world and the way we relate our perception to the world on the inside and the outside? What influence does digital technology have on the cultural transformations and on the human self-perception? How does it affect my self-awareness and the way I think, when my actions are displayed and recorded on a screen? How does the digital reflection of the observer change when filters, in form of different video material, are pushed in between, meaning virtual spaces and situations, which respectively alter the context of the situation of the image? How does the audience evaluate their experience being faced by themselves? Do I feel under surveillance or maybe caught too? Does the introspection replace an innocent observer?

My method of operation produces a new perspective on media. My artistic research concerns and influences the basics of human perception, our comprehension, and our relation to the world and the people in it and therefore creates a space for the unthought beyond market-orientated art manufacturing. The idea of my art is to seek new insight and knowledge in a methodical and systematic way.

Exposé

Self-perception under postdigital conditions in real-life and virtual realities

„Mirror, mirror on the wall...“ The gaze in the mirror couldn't confirm Snow White's stepmother's unique appearance, but she could become aware of herself and identify her own reflection. The story of Narcissus in Greek mythology is a different one. He became condemned to fall in love with his own reflection on water as a punishment for the rejection of the nymph Echo's love and therefore experienced his image as someone else. If we replace the magic mirrors with the black mirrors of digital social media channels, the Grimm's tales, the mythology of Narcissus and Plato's allegory of the cave take on a whole new meaning.

As a media artist, I work on an interface between analog and digital and work out, by using artistic methods, the peculiarities of interpersonal communication and the role of the individual in a world shaped by postdigital phenomena. My work is located between art, natural sciences and technology and focuses on the relation between nature, man and machine, as well as sociopolitical aspects of a technology-based communication society.

In my interactive installations, in which the observer is keyed in live via video technology, I explore the construction of reality and the inherent alterations of our conception of reality. Therefore I pursue interdisciplinary artistic approaches and realise my projects in an interactive and participatory manner. My artistic work raises questions, these questions are asked in visual way.

Precisely ten years ago I participated in a widely acclaimed exhibition, which generated great international interest, named „Postmediale Kondition“ and was conceptualised by Peter Weibel. This exhibition took place at the Medialab Madrid, Centro Cultural Conde Duque as part of the ARCO 2006. In this exhibition I presented an interactive video installation called „Switch Enlightenment“. The major question at that time was: „What impact do new and old media have on society and what correlation exists between them?“. This question has been a very controversial issue in media art in those days and became a major question in my artistic work.



Blind Spot:
The observation of the observer II
C-Print
70 x 100 cm
Joerg Auzinger

Since then the postdigital discourse has shaped my visual research as a visual artist. In particular to that effect, what digital or postdigital leaves behind in the non-digital field, or rather how do digital beyond digital devices affects our modality to think and act in our daily routine? Terms like “post-internet“ and „postdigital“ are closely related to an artistic discussion with technology, which doesn’t necessarily deal with the digital as such, but rather with life itself since the digital revolution beginning more than 40 years ago has become the digital age we live in nowadays.

One decade after the issue corresponding to the „Postmedial Condition“ we now face, with a temporal distance, a major evolution concerning this sociocultural phenomena through massive enhancement of the hybridisation of media. We become aware, that in the postdigital era, terms like analog or digital are irrelevant, because these terms turn out to merge and conquer all aspects of our life. Pre-digital conditions are not tangible and imaginable, by now.

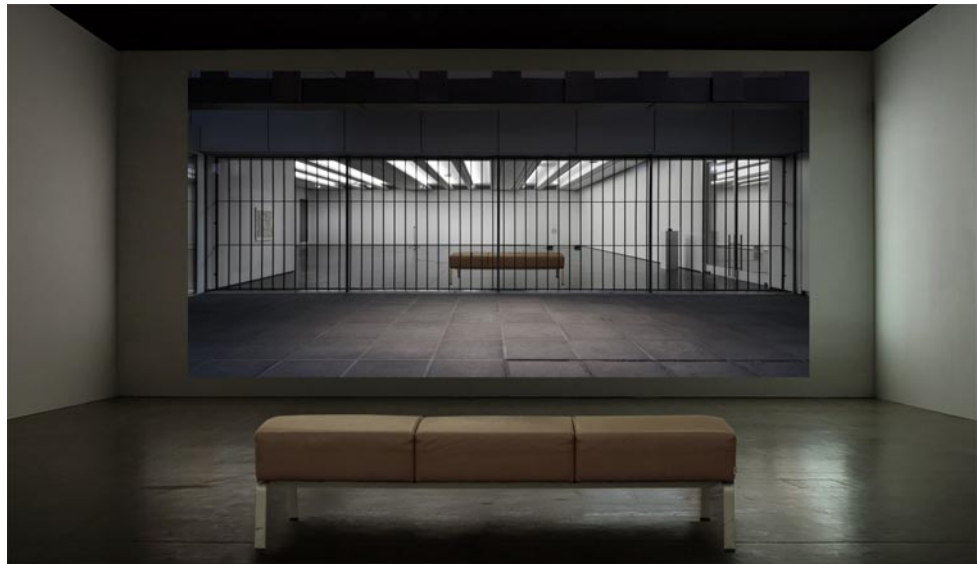
If digital devices become smaller and more and more invisible and progressively incorporated in our daily life, the digital tends to become embedded in human perception and in our way of life as well. Therefore the digital is no longer simply a technological cause, but rather a form of life which affects the entire human race. Neither can the digital materiality be reduced on the screens, nor can the software be decreased on the hardware.

This involves an immensely spread out reality, which on the other hand prepares and requires the reality that we perceive. By installing decisive concepts like the postdigital, we develop possibilities to include and intervene the infrastructural composition of reality.

The focus of my interactive installations is the role of humans in the postdigital era, in which cultural and digital systems collude, and I want to discuss the influence of digital technologies onto the cultural adjustments and human image or rather the human self-image as a result of this influence and its adjustments. We constantly produce vast amounts of visual material, which is stored in social media memory, and can be provided to the user for prompt consumption.

My visual world will be completed by live video material of the observer. Every viewer becomes an active participant and therefore an essential part of my artistic work. As a visual artist I want to confront the audience with visual worlds and cinematic scenes. My work will be staged in a way where the viewer is always a part of the set scenery. Therefore visual consumption becomes a reflection of the individual, a reflection as an encounter with the observer’s particular perception.

The beholders immerses themselves unexpectedly in the events of the happenings and catch themselves becoming the consumer with a passive role as a spectator. Therefore self-observation and the observation of others lead, in a subtle way, to a resonant system between subject and object, which leaves the observer as the observed (Observation of the second order). The live performances in which the beholder is involved as an active part of the motion picture, leads through the observation of the observer into a self-perception and furthermore into a self-reflection, in which the viewer is able to achieve a temporary gaze onto a system outside his/her own perception. My installations make people aware of the mechanisms and the relationship between man and his environment. These findings are the basis and the assumptions for my artistic research.



Postopia
installation view
without a viewer

Electronic media seem to satisfy the needs for encounter and physical and emotional contact. But the desire for a collective experience in physical presence is left unsatisfied. The postdigital therefore offers a range of speculative strategies, attempting to build a complex architecture of imagination within contemporary institutional, economical, ecological and technological limitations and possibilities.

The omnipresence of the internet, as a cultural mentality, has already left the net and has indeed conquered the physical world and has become the attitude of the whole society. As far as possible we live in a world, in which the contradictions between analog and digital are starting to dissolve. The current relation between analog and digital can be described as a complex entanglement in this postdigital world. The multiplicity of data, which is sent via digital media, affects our way of thinking and our memory.

I am interested in exploring the question; What impact does the medial presence on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, etc. have on the perception of the individual, and if and how it affects the user? We constantly generate images and texts, share loads of material in the social media channels. Do we always think of the target audience or even of a higher authority, as Robert Pfaller expresses? And are we aware of ourselves by doing so?

While producing data, such as images and texts, we outsource our memories into a technical device, so we don't need to occupy ourselves with this information anymore. You don't have to remember anything anymore, but rather save and temporarily store this information in your smartphone. So, are these pictures which we generate really our own or do we generate collective material, which is relevant in the bubble of my social contacts? I try to explore these questions, by holding up a virtual mirror to the beholder.

I am interested in the interaction between truth and reality. As a part of my research I intend to cooperate with institutes and universities to study this question in depth manner. I aim to involve the scientific results which discuss perception.

The perception of a person is an absolutely personal experience. It is what a person thinks about his or her environment, and it is how the person looks at the world around him/her. It is more of a psychological concept than anything physical like sensations. Two different people can have different perceptions about the same thing. Perception is what a person wants to believe, their personal opinion. People of different generations or people of different religions or people from different backgrounds have a difference of opinion only because they perceive everything differently. Perception and sensation are different mostly because sensation is more physical. Perceptions are individual thoughts of individual people.

We produce more photographs and selfies as we ever did before and immediately post them online in social media and wait for a „like“ from the community. How important is self-perception when it faces its` presentation and representation to the external world? Is it possible that self-awareness is affected by a gaze into the (post-)digital mirror?

Most of social media is built on self-portrayal and attention. Facebook's major intention is keep us as users or consumers for as long as possible on their platform, to increase the benefit of the service, gather data, data we want to see. It is also a matter of the interaction between the public and the private sphere. If my selfies belong in the public domain, where does my private sphere remain then? If I demonstrate my face in public, does the personal have to be withdrawn into the intimate then?

Is there a loss of perception because of the intense self-portrayal?

We are looking for constant attention. We are under pressure from our social media bubbles. Does, under these circumstances, the attention for ourselves fall by the wayside? By sharing everything, I have to hold on to my personality in one way or another. And how my personality look and how can I broach this issue?

We are digitally omnipresent, and able to record every moment and post it on Instagram and Facebook within seconds. My installations try to explore an opposite position by slowness and through a contemplative approach.

In my work the observer sees him/herself not only for a short period of time, but for prolonged period and therefore the viewer has the possibility to look at him/herself and observe his/her actions. How does this experience influence me?

Do I feel awkward or embarrassed to observe myself over a longer period?

The time interval of this compelled self-confrontation is of great relevance. In the face of the abundance of visual media, that permanently surrounds us, the mere reflection of a live-video camera seems simple and mundane. It's a way of breaking it down to a trivial action. You are merely filmed and face yourself in another environment. In my experience this small act has a tremendous effect and creates an odd sensation within the observer.



Whistleblower
C-Print
70 x 100 cm
Joerg Auzinger

Therefore the surrounding in which the viewer is located in is important. Through technical means I pace the beholder in completely unfamiliar spaces. To explore and filter out, how separate spaces and situations affect the observer, is another objective of my research. I want to intensify and expand this field of research in the future, and seek to find new content, as well as surroundings, which correlate well with the version of the mirror.

It is important to me to fathom these studies of self-perception within my installations by holding discussions with the beholders.

Postopia
Installation view
including the viewer

you can see yourself
in a different context



In the framework of a presentation or exhibition the possibility of feedback from both the visitors and users is planned. This includes the involvement of the exhibition visitor into the research process by questioning her/his perception. It will be part of my research project to work out how to work out how this process could ideally be designed. I would like to have conversations and discussions to talk about the experiences of the individual and would like then incorporate these findings into my work.

We slip into roles, we are avatars in computer games, we surround ourselves with augmented reality systems, we are wearing virtual reality glasses to expand our experiences and we are interacting using smart devices and share all of these experiences with our social communities.

**But what effect do all interaction possibilities have
if my visual senses do not perceive me?**

Coupled with the constant possibility of interaction, the impact is the opposite, the outsourcing of participation and enjoyment, a retreat into a social letting be, an interpassive retreat. The concept of interpassivity, as described by Robert Pfaller, also plays an important role in my installations. Instead of enjoying yourself, the Interpassive lets others enjoy themselves for you. My installations could also be called interpassive instead of interactive. You can only see, but you can not change anything as in the classic idea of interaction. You can not change, push or influence anything, except yourself. Basically, you can only watch yourself and the surrounding within the projection. Interpassivity is a reciprocal process that describes an interaction between the individual and society.

Coupled with the idea of the interpassive, Pfaller's reflection on the "innocent observer" is also pertinent. The existence of a fictitious audience is considered, which may be the virtual addressee as a higher instance of a social media posting for example. This raises the following question for me: For whom do I stage my selfies or my food porn snapshots? For my bubble? For the "innocent observer"? For my friends? For me? Is it a digital reminder not to forget something or maybe is it the aim to get attention? I'm interested in the question of what role I play in this constellation.



Postopia
Installation view
including the viewer

you can see yourself
in a stage situation
in front of an audience

My working method generates a new perspective on media. Media is not simply a matter, but rather a process, which influences its conditions of existence by itself. This fact enables the rise of alternative media-cultural perspectives. The various temporalities and the spacial intersections, which are occupied and produced by the analog in relation to the digital, contain techniques, which are derived from the styles of a collage.

These generated visual worlds lead to modified possibilities of self-description and self-portrayal and last but not least to a change of self-perception. Usually we perceive ourselves through others and we observe the others through media. Self-perception results therefore more and more in medial and virtual spaces. It is impossible that reality exists separately from humans, but rather requires human beings to take his/her part in the composition of reality. It is also a question of how to invent cultural concepts and confrontations with technological transformations, which leads us to the possibility of a different usage of media technologies.

By constantly using and observing data and images on our omnipresent screens the imaginative becomes more and more important and alters our view on ourselves and the world around us. My interactive installations attempt to explore and visualise this paradigm shift, in an artistic way, by filming the observer and immediately showing this video material without any time delay.

The beholder therefore becomes the narrator, as well as the apparent passive viewer in the mirror reflection of the digital screens, which refer on the visual universes of the memories in the minds of the observer. The installations can be seen as an impulse to gather new knowledge about oneself, as well as finding new methods of perception concerning human beings in context of our embedded world. Therefore the installations provide innovative possibilities visually to initiate an internal process, which may have an effect on the external and the ordinary.

I also want to broach the issue of the paradigm shift of image reproduction techniques and modified layers of perception, which are developed in this way.

This altered form of image display leads to a transformation of the world into other perspectives. Another issue is the increasing complexity of visual media in digital communication and the modified perception through the illustration process in postdigital life forms. Therefore a distinction between the digital and physical world becomes obsolete.

My work explores the meaningful hypothesis of the constructivist thinking too, in particular from the three most important representatives, who all have different focuses: Ernst von Glaserfeld (linguistics), Heinz von Foerster (cybernetics) and Paul Watzlawick (psychology). Usually Radical Constructivism is associated with these three names. I aim to verify the validation with the aids of my work under the sign of the postdigital age. Generally I want to ask, how far is the hypothesis of media theory still valid, in the light of a radical perspective on media.

Postopia
Installation view
including the viewer



I see my work as a further development of digital media art with a recollection to the beginnings of the media age, because just as the mass media had massively influenced our society at that time, we are now experiencing a similar phase of changes through the integration of digital and virtual everyday situations. There are artistic approaches that enable viewers to actively intervene in environments, by using virtual reality technology, augmented reality, audio control or gesture control systems. However, there are hardly any comparable works of art which deal with the integration of the viewer into the scenery the way my work aims to, most likely because they do not want to put the viewer into the center of attention so directly. I often miss a confrontation with present social phenomena in a lot of our contemporary artworks.

I consider my work to be an art-based research, artistic visualisation as a profit of insight through transdisciplinary working methods and an interdisciplinary cooperation in the tension between artistic practice and science. I pursue my artistic research in ways of a creative solution, whereby the findings of my research become both, artistic products and methods at the same time.

I try to reflect, recording the present reception of my creative process and my artistic output and want to offer these reflections to an artistic discourse and to a scientific field of research. I consider my art to be an exploratory way of accessing the world, visualised cultural studies and philosophy, connected to aesthetic sensitivity, creative practice and reflexive confrontation.

Methods of integrating the viewer

I've worked on some different kind of interactive installations over the last few years. Mostly an interface is implemented that gives the viewer the opportunity to change the scenery. In my cases, these interfaces are often switches or sensors that respond to pressure, distance or sound. Motion detection or face detection systems can also be used to control a setting. In all these possibilities, a signal will always be generated, which affects the used image material and changes the visual substance and the result is usually displayed on a screen. Increasingly, I came up with the idea of involving the viewer directly without allowing him/her the possibility of any interaction, except the „interaction“ of just being present.



Void Screens
Installation view
including a viewer

The first implementation of this idea is many years back. Years before my studies, I had one of my first exhibitions in 1994, where visitors were brought to the center of attention. In this exhibition project, called „Analog“ which I realized together with my artist colleague Christian Bretter, a vienna-based concept artist, visitors were invited to come to an empty gallery. A video camera at the entrance area was filming every single person entering the exhibition space. Portraits of every visitor were made. These artworks were printed on canvas with a special printer in a short period of time and mounted on canvas frames. The artists became workers who only put the works into practice. Finally 100 portraits were created on which the first 100 visitors were to be seen. The finished portraits were hung up in the gallery room and so the final exhibition was created by the visitors.

The idea that the work was first created by the visitor or by the viewer made me so fascinated that I came up with the idea of trying live video.

Some years later, the work **Void Screens** was created, in which the idea of live video integration was first implemented. In the installation Void Screens the viewer sees a showcase as it can be found in every museum. However, the content of the showcase is empty. If a person comes into the eye of the video camera, which is barely visible on the wall, the person sees him/herself and sees him/herself as a reflection on the surface of the glass box. The viewer finally becomes an exhibition piece in the museum. However, the visitor is not inside the glass, but outside as a subtle reflection. It seems that the viewing person is standing in the room where the glass box is standing. In fact, the viewer stands before the projection that represents the space. The viewer is only part of the installation until he/she leaves the area in front of the projection. Without a viewer, the showcase would be empty. With the observer, he/she is reflected by the glass, but is still separated from the inside of the box by the glass.



Blind Spot:
The observation of the observer
Arrangement of the two projections

Another work that picks up the method of the live image is my installation **Blind Spot: The observation of the observer**. In this installation will be a scene from Alfred Hitchcock's film classic rare window divided into two screens so that two opposite projections are created.

A spatial situation in the exhibition space is thus reconstructed, as is also the case in the film. So the linear structure of the medium film was transformed into a three-dimensional solution. On one side you can see a projection showing a window with the protagonist observing someone with his camera. Actually he is watching the alleged killer on the other side of the courtyard - opposite the house - which he suspects behind the window shutters in the opposite window. The two projections thus correspond to the two opposite windows. When the visitor enters the room, he/she stands exactly between the two projections and will be observed by the main actor's camera. The visitor is pushed between the two projections, and a further level of observation is created. The viewer is now in the middle between the two screens. He/she can only watch one screen at a time.

The cameras are positioned in a way that the viewer just sees him/herself from behind. On the one hand, he/she sees him/herself in the mirroring of the lens of the camera and, on the other, he/she sees him/herself behind the blinds of the opposite window. If the viewer turns around, he/she sees him/herself from behind.

This creates a situation where you feel constantly watched. The observer takes several positions of the observation in this installation: On the one hand, he/she is watched by the protagonist with the camera, while at the same time he is standing in the other screen behind the blinds at the window. he/she becomes subject and object simultaneously. The visitor is an observer and will be observed at the same time. As a visitor to the exhibition, he/she realistically takes another viewing position. The person is a visitor and watches the artistic work. But also, he/she is being watched by two video cameras. This results leads to a nesting of observation perspectives that raise the familiar film scenes with the integrated viewer to a new meaning.



Postopia
Poster for the installation

Currently I am working on the installation **Postopia**, which will be finished in Sommer 2018. Postopia is also an interactive video installation with viewer's live material integration, dealing with people and human habitat. The installation consists of a large-format video projection, as well as a bench that can accommodate up to four people. The footage shows vertical aerial videos of the undeveloped human space of action, the nature that surrounds us, such as our living environment, our habitat and our residues, the traces left by man in the landscape, a surface that is changed by humans. But these the traces of man are barely visible in the film.

These landscape shots, filmed with a camera drone, show only the "natural" habitat of humans and their effects on the earth's surface and represent thereby an as true as possible view of the natural environment. Based on the assumption that we are in the era of the Anthropocene, in which man acts as a formative force, these landscape shots are filmed in the form of a slow scanning of the surface. The quiet and slow camera flights are showing a neutral and equivalent image of the world from a sublime and almost superhuman perspective in which man takes a shaping but subordinate role. The drone videos consist of vertical aerial shots without camera pans or zooms and show the surface of the earth as highly aesthetic and contemplative imagery. Human interventions in nature and the aesthetics of cultivation are visualized in abstract images. The beauty and geometry of everyday life is made possible and made visible through the vertical aerial images.

These aesthetic visual world will be interrupted by "image interferences" in form of intermediate cuts and inclusion of live video material. You can see a short-term change in the scene and a change of perspective, which shows the viewer sitting on the bench but placed in a different room. This point of view shows the audience in the showroom as passive observers, who recognize themselves as part of the plot due to the camera change. A surprise effect arises, which confronts the audience with the video material shown and puts them in relation to it. The live video footage is keyed into the drone footage in a way that it merges and appears as a unified cinematic work. The live material as intermediate cuts are a counterpoint to the vertical landscape shots, since the human being is at the center of the action for short moments. The counter shots show the viewer embedded in stage-like arranged interiors, which can be read as a metaphor for postdigital living spaces. The viewers are separated by glass fronts or windows from the outside world.

Originally developed as a military surveillance instrument, the drone enables a "first person view" that was previously not possible in this manner. Postopia draws a contemporary image of man in her/his environment and shows natural-looking landscapes and people as an imprint of the digital living conditions. Analogous to the change in our planet by humans there are also changes in the communication and perception of images.

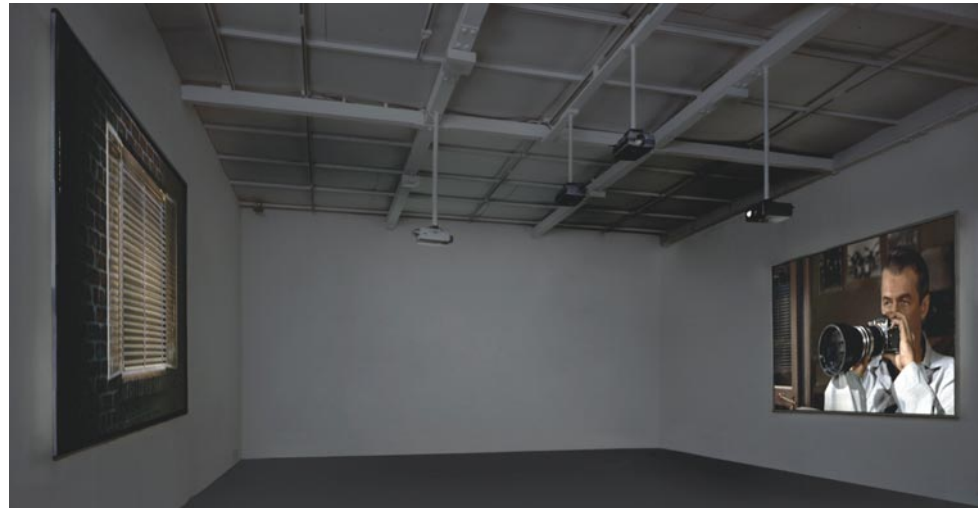
Selected examples

of my interactive installations using (post-)digital mirror techniques

Blind Spot: The observation of the observer

Interactive Video Installation

The installation consists of two video projections showing shots from Alfred Hitchcock's movie *Rear Window*. The film sequences are split up, facing each other in endless loops at each end of the room.



Blind Spot:
The observation of the observer
Installation view

One projection shows the observer with a camera angled out the open window. The opposing projection displays a window, the direct view of the observer in the opposite projection. The subject and object of observation face each other. Video cameras within the exhibition space film the visitor and feed these live video streams into the two movie sequences being projected. The viewer becomes part of the video projection. One sees one's very own reflection in the lens of the camera, meaning that the camera is observing the viewer in the space between projections. The visitor then sees him/her or herself again, in the room behind the window on the opposite side.



Blind Spot:
The observation of the observer
Projections showing the live-video
inserts of the visitors



Blind Spot:
The observation of the observer
Installation view at Pixelpoint -
International New Media Art Festival,
Nova Gorica, Slovenia



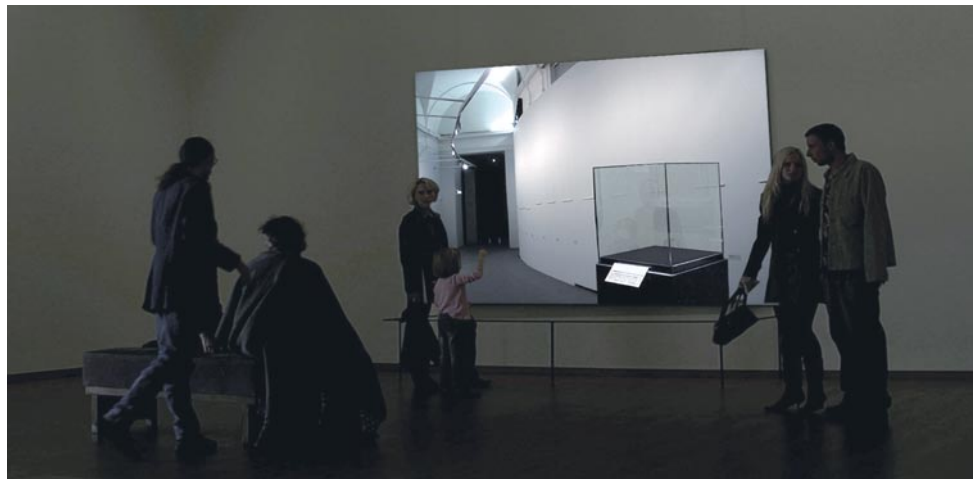
Blind Spot:
The observation of the observer
Green colored areas
showing the parts
which will be exchanged
with live video material
by using an
so-called alpha channel



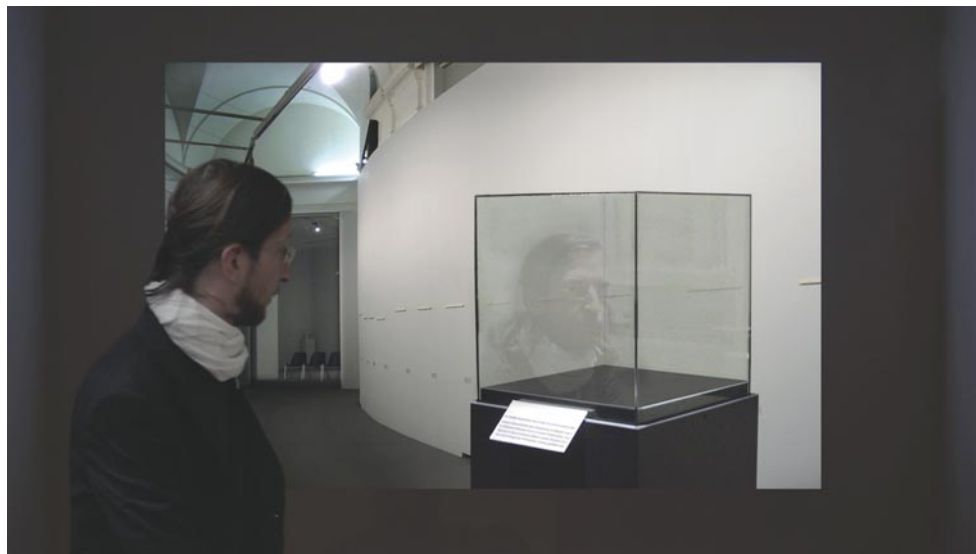
Void Screens

Interactive Video Installation

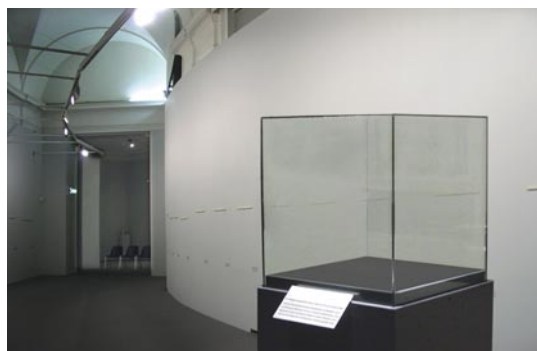
Void Screens is a thematic series consisting of an interactive, closed circuit video installation, photographic works, and a video. In this interactive installation Void Screens, the viewer stands in front of a projection showing an empty showcase in an empty exhibition room. On close examination of the showcase, a transparent, moving reflection becomes apparent on the glass surface: a video. A video camera installed in the room films the viewer and these live images are immediately fed into the projection. The viewer experiences his/herself as a museum visitor and replaces the missing object in the showcase as the subject. The person's reflection becomes part of the installation, but in reality he/she remains outside of the field of action.



Void Screens
installation view



Void Screens
installation view with visitor
Kulturzentrum bei den Minoriten,
Graz, Austria



Void Screens
Projektion without visitor

Exit

Interactive Video Installation

Exit is also an interactive video installation including the visitor. The projection shows a closed glass sliding door. A video camera, barely visible above the projection, films the viewer in front of the projection and feeds these live video images of the exhibition area into the glass panes of the projection as a virtual mirror image. Simultaneously the observer approaches the projection, the glass sliding door within the video opens and allows a view of the other side of the passageway. The viewer becomes part of the video and sees him/herself in projection. He/she can physically open the sliding door through a motion detection sensor in the exhibition room. The viewer sees him or herself as a silhouette on the reflective surface of the glass panes. A passage through the virtual glass-passage is not possible. The viewer remains on the surface and the door closes automatically after a few moments and the passage is denied. The observer just remains as a reflection on the glass. Viewers in front of the projection thus become the central element of this artistic work and the actual object and subject of the projection.

Exit
installation view



Exit
projection without viewer



Exit
projection
showing the reflecting of the viewers



Prospect: Time Smoking a Picture

Interactive Video Installation

In the interactive video installation **Prospect: Time Smoking a Picture**, the observer stands in front of the projection of William Hogarth's 1762 painting „The Time Smoking a Picture“, which portrays Chronos, the incarnation of time, blackening the painting with his pipe. He has swathed a gash in the picture with his scythe. As soon as the viewer stands in front of the projection, a video camera begins filming. The resulting live images are reduced to linear contours and fed into areas of the projection left blank. This digital “mirror image” of the viewer becomes part of the projected graphic, melding uniformly into a single image.



Prospect: Time Smoking a Picture
Installation view with visitor
at Kulturzentrum bei den Minoriten,
Graz, Austria



Prospect: Time Smoking a Picture
Projection without viewer

Comparable approaches

My artistic approach also overlaps with performative works of art and also intersects with the idea of Expanded Cinema. But most of all my work can be compared with works of early video art works using closed circuit techniques. At the very beginning of video art towards the end of the sixties the new technical possibilities made it possible for the very first time to simultaneously display the video image of a camera on a screen in real-time. This method was frequently used in the so-called closed circuit installations. Some of the most relevant media artists were using such techniques.



Live-Taped Video Corridor
Bruce Nauman
1970

Installations and arranged situations emerge especially in the seventies that included the viewer in the representative situation. The special relationship of the simultaneity of reality and depiction forms a basis for so-called closed-circuit situations. Such an arrangement refers to a closed situation of representation in which the recording medium is linked directly with the medium of representation.

An early and important work in which the visitor is integrated into the installation is „Wipe Cycle“ by Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider from 1969. In addition to its role as a mirror, video is also used in its function as an instrument of surveillance. Self-perception was also mediated through a camera eye that can change the perspective in an irritating way, as in a lot of Peter Weibels installations, for example „Kruzifikation der Identität“ from 1973 or Bruce Naumans, „Live-Taped Video Corridor“ from 1970.

In his installation „Live-Taped Video Corridor“ Nauman set two monitors above one another at the end of a corridor almost ten meters long and only 50 cm wide. The lower monitor features a videotape of the corridor. The uppermost monitor shows a closed-circuit tape recording of a camera at the entrance to the corridor, positioned at a height of about three meters. On entering the corridor and approaching the monitors, you quickly come under the area surveyed by the camera. But the closer you get to the monitor, the further you are from the camera, with the result that your image on the monitor becomes increasingly smaller. Another cause of irritation: you see yourself only from behind.

In the early phase of the medium, the confrontation with individual experiences of perception was less prominent than the interest in the general possibilities video offered for aesthetics and communication technology. Many artists were more interested in an approach that focused on media analysis. Due to its technological proximity to television, video art was often seen as an intersection between art and commercial mass communication. Particularly in the beginning, the ambivalent relationship between video and television was explored by many artists.

Meanwhile almost 50 years after the development of closed circuit installations the approach with live-video techniques seems more relevant to me than ever before, especially by using this method with regard to our postdigital age, where the social and cultural prerequisites have changed enormously. My work differs from these media art classics especially in the way that the camera image is not just connected to a monitor, but that the image will be enhanced with additionally created or generated material which leads to a new context. The technical possibility of masking and replacing picture elements or areas of the video by using luminance key or alpha-channel techniques offers new solutions that are far from artistically exhausted.

My work aims to relate to and influences the basics of our perception, our insight and our relationship with the world and therefore to create a space for the unthought beyond market-orientated art production. I consider my art to be a methodical and systematic retrieval of new cognition.

By being a guest lecturer, issuing „expanded photography“, I aimed to teach how photography can be expanded in terms of time and in terms of space. Therefore my artistic reflections could be fed into my work and be passed on to my students. The results were presented within the exhibition „No Photo“ at the department of Photography of the University of Applied Arts. The findings of my artistic research are always artistic and theoretical practice at the same time.

I want to complement and expand my new discoveries and my level of knowledge with the findings of other disciplines by using a trans-disciplinary method . I consider this to be valid for the content, as well as for the method of presentation and regarding the technical aspects too. The technical challenges of the live-key method are very high. I seek to optimise the technical details and the imaginary process and perhaps find better procedures for displaying images.



Postopia
Installation view

Short video documentation of **Void Screens**

<http://www.auzinger.net/downloads/VoidScreens.mov>

Short video documentation of **Blind Spot: The observation of the observer**

<http://www.auzinger.net/downloads/BlindSpot.mov>

Short video documentation of my exhibition titled **Publicum**

http://www.auzinger.net/downloads/Auzinger_VideoPublicum.mp4

www.auzinger.net

Summary

Artistic research questions

In what way is it possible to put the viewer, by using live video integration, in virtually variant or different contexts and thereby change the viewer's way to think and behave?

Does this live video integration make a difference to awareness and consciousness of oneself just by recognising oneself as part of an action?

Is there a difference when an image of oneself is presented in a personal contact rather than being distributed on social networks?

Methodology

By using and refining my discovered methods of live-video techniques under a changed spatial situation, I want to develop new user integrated installations accompanied by seeking new insight and knowledge via the method including effective analyses of the research process. This includes involvement by the exhibition visitor into the research process by questioning his/her perception. This artistic research project can be seen as a tool to change our perspectives and allow ourselves to observe ourselves as an observer could and getting new insights from this approach.

Project goal

Verifying a sustainable change in self-confidence through everyday use of digital networks and devices using my methods of live video technology under changing spatial conditions.

To seek experience and exchange to develop and adapt the work and to expanding my own research status through other areas of knowledge in order to integrate them into my work, such as other sciences; technology, psychology, medicine and art.

Finding ways to create an installative situation that allows a shared experience of physical presence, including personal encounters and reflections on oneself.

Form of reflexive documentation and time schedule

The research and developing process will continue simultaneously over the next two years. Research will equally consist of theory and practice. The last year of the research will be spent articulating a written thesis. The results will feed into new artistic work. There will be a final presentation including an exhibition with salon evenings, discussions and lectures. The results of the written thesis and of the events will be summarized in a final publication.

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