

art **now** is a programme dedicated to contemporary art. Exhibitions include recent work by emerging and established artists from this country and abroad. The art **now** series aims to provoke discussion and awareness of new and unfamiliar art relevant to Britain today.

BRITAIN
TATE

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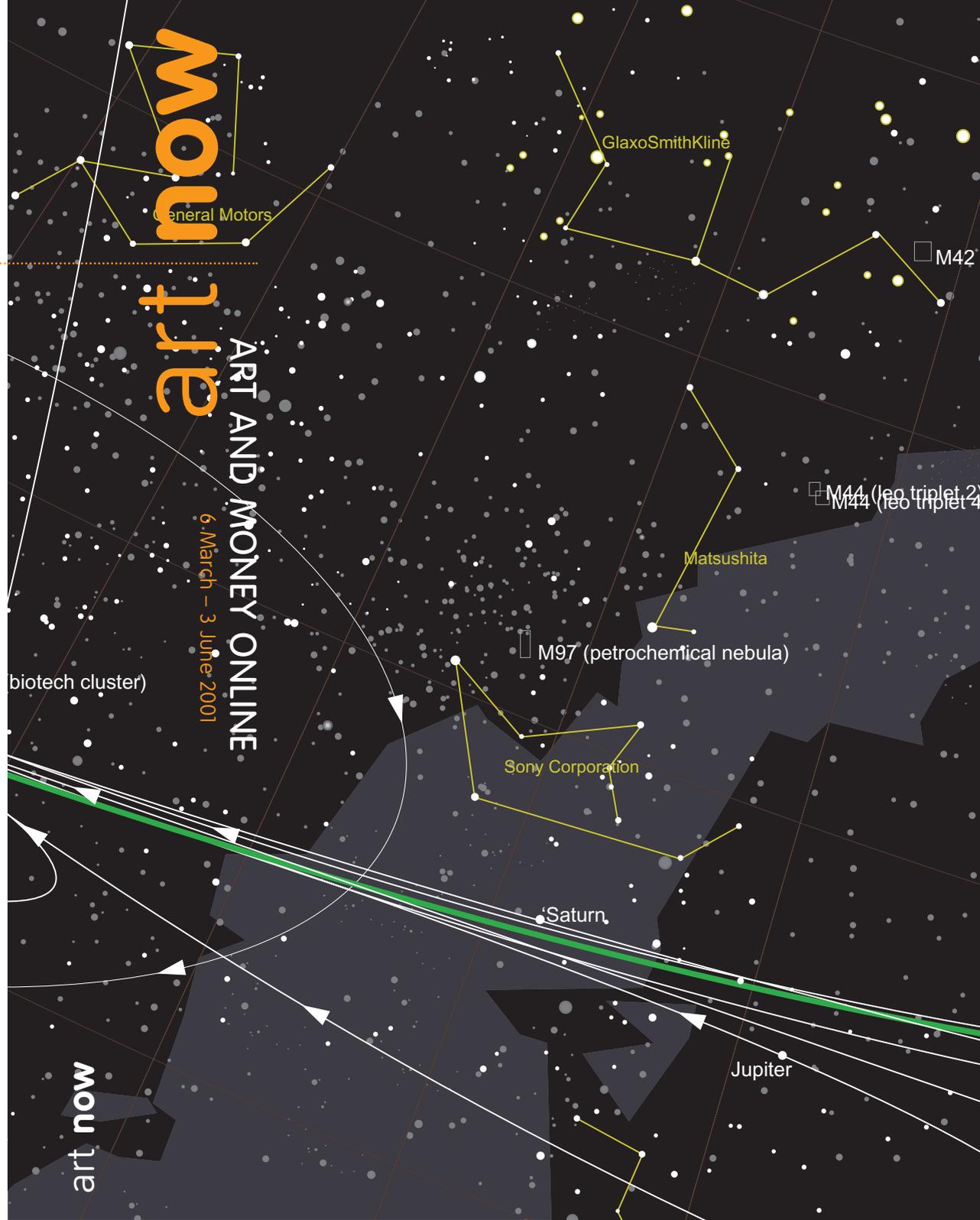
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Exhibition selected by Julian Stallabrass, Lecturer in Art History at the Courtauld Institute of Art and former Paul Mellon Centre Fellow at Tate Britain.

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Cover

Lise Autogena and Joshua Portway detail from first sketch for constellation map, *Black Shoals Stock Market Planetarium* 2001
Re-created by Simeon Portway
Courtesy the artists



ART AND MONEY ONLINE

Imagine looking up at a night sky that is also a live representation of the global Stock Market. Each star represents a company. Fed by massive streams of live financial information, they glimmer and pulse, immediately flickering brighter whenever their stock is traded anywhere in the world. Digital creatures, a form of artificial life, inhabit the complex star field, feeding off the trading, much as stockbrokers do. This is *Black Shoals Stock Market Planetarium*, by Lise Autogena and Joshua Portway, one of the works comprising *Art and Money Online*.

The exhibition explores the impact of commercialisation on the Internet, an issue that has greatly concerned online artists over the last five years. The rapid growth in the use of the Net – partly business-, and particularly finance-led, and partly

brought about by the unified interface of the World Wide Web – has not only given artists a large potential audience for their work, but has also profoundly changed the character of the online community. It is now more diverse and less cohesive, and (some would argue) more passive, less engaged in talking than in gazing and shopping.

Each of the works in *Art and Money Online* embodies a different response to this new condition, focusing upon private financial networks, the commercial vulgarisation of Net culture, and an alternative online culture of collaboration and gift-giving.

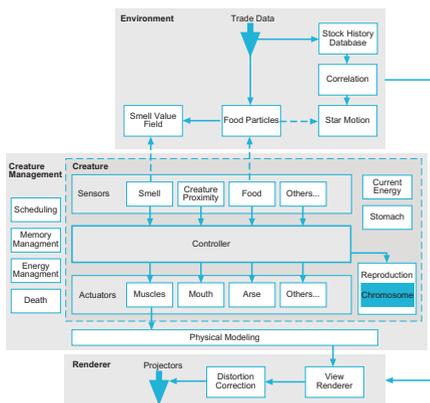
While the Net is often thought of as a public space, most of it consists of private systems over which financial and business giants trade and communicate. Autogena and Portway's *Black Shoals* illuminates a part of this system, using a novel form of data visualisation.

Stock market data has been an attractive source for artists to draw upon, not least because it has a proven link to cultural trends and the performance of the art market. In various works, the overall rise and fall of the market has been tied to the flow of fountains and even the hemlines of skirts, but the data in *Black Shoals* processes each share price individually. While the markets have an immediate effect on all our lives, for many they seem remote as the stars. In *Black Shoals*, viewers look upon the sublime spectacle of the markets in action as the ancients gazed at the night sky, immersed in data and searching for patterns that might disclose the future. Furthermore, the artificial life creatures that inhabit *Black Shoals* adapt and evolve as they apprehend what success means within the parameters of their world; they may come to have an instrumental purpose, being cousins to the

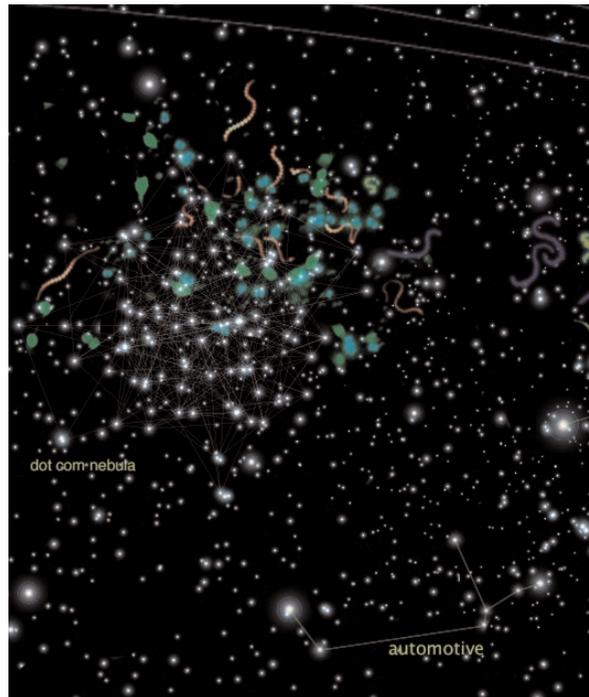
automated trading programs already active on the world's exchanges.

Black Shoals is an extremely ambitious project, and it is indicative of the collaborations between artists, academics, scientists and engineers that have been facilitated through the Net. Autogena and Portway have been fostering such links for some time (for example, in Autogena's project on the theme of breathing initiated in 1997; see www.autogena.org/Breathing/home.html) yet their piece for *Art and Money Online* is at once a new form of knowledge, and a tart comment on the aspiration to grasp and reduce all data to a single frame.

The commercialisation of the Net has produced a strange mix of participatory and corporate culture which Jon Thomson and Alison Craighead have long been mining for their work. Among the most



Lise Autogena and Joshua Portway
System architecture for
Black Shoals Stock Market Planetarium 2000
Courtesy the artists



Lise Autogena and Joshua Portway
detail from *Still life with creatures* 2000
Concept sketch
Courtesy the artists



Thomson and Craighead
CNN Interactive just got more interactive 1999
Screenshot
Courtesy Mobile Home, London

prominent of British net artists, they make pieces that approach online anthropology, holding up the bizarre habits of net users to the art audience. Some of their work has drawn upon the strange pages that people devote to their pets, for instance, or has examined the specific cultural forms that have proliferated on the Web such as the cutesy graphical animations with which people decorate their sites. There is little point trying to trump a culture that throws up such eccentricities as pages devoted to dancing hamsters and varieties of digestive biscuit, and Thomson and Craighead don't try, instead throwing a frame around the material they select just sufficient to let the viewer take a step back and gape.

While much of their work has been produced for the Web, Thomson and Craighead have always worked in gallery spaces with installation and video works,

and have thought a great deal about how online works can function in art spaces. For *Art and Money Online*, they will show *CNN Interactive just got more interactive*, which allows users to select emotive, if tawdry, soundtracks to accompany the news of the day on the CNN website. This simple but effective intervention draws attention to concerns about the increasing difficulties in separating out the two halves of 'infotainment', especially on the Web where another distraction is only ever a click or a frame away.

Redundant Technology Initiative, a group of artists based in Sheffield are, as their name suggests, concerned with the truly extraordinary waste that is characteristic of the computer industry. Machines are rendered apparently useless in the space of a few years, long before the end of their components' lifespan. RTI persuade companies to give them their 'old' machines

and use them either for works of art or for their community computer space. Using donated machines and free Open Source software, they come close to achieving their goal of 'no-cost technology'. The main cost of their activity, of course, is labour but for many people in the Sheffield area, one of the most deprived in Europe, time is plentiful. Users of the computer centre who help out can earn RTI credit slips that can be set against the centre's fees. In their creation of an alternative micro economy, RTI offer an exemplary practice, and one that is in sympathetic alignment with the anti-corporate culture of many Internet activists.

While RTI is best known for stand-alone banks of computer monitors and installations using disassembled computer components, they have recently been working with material drawn from the Internet. For the exhibited work, *Free Agent*, they will

use donated machines to make a large-scale display of material from the many websites that purport to offer their users free goods. Here reclaimed hardware and free software are directed at sites that desperately, if dubiously, offer the user something for nothing.

Art and Money Online is not precisely an Internet art exhibition, though all the pieces included draw on data from the Internet. Unlike works that exist only online, each work here needs the gallery space to best show its physical or projected form. The offer of something for nothing on the Web is an issue that carries us beyond these hybrid works to art that only exists online. An online work by Thomson and Craighead is a gift to its viewers, and has no material presence. Anyone can easily make perfect copies of it for free, or copy the code and use it in their own works. This is plainly an unfamiliar type of art work, different



Thomson and Craighead
Triggerhappy 1998
User-led installation
Courtesy Mobile Home, London



Redundant Technology Initiative
Networked Lowtech Video Wall 2000
Refurbished computers and monitors running free software
Installation at Fort Lux, Fortress IJmuiden, Holland. Courtesy lowtech.org

even from many of the most radical works of conceptual art which retained some sliver of materiality that was seized upon as they were drawn into mainstream art institutions. The ownership and status of online art works is a difficult matter for the art world, mired in traditional craft practices and habits of patronage, just as the sharing of audio files is terrifying to the music industry.

Art and Money Online is a way of exploring the interaction between online art and the museum. Each have things to offer one another: the museum brings online artists audiences they would otherwise find hard to reach, for it is easy to languish in obscurity when the Web is full of brash and wealthy commercial sites; online artists give the museum a crucial link into a rapidly changing and alien culture. As other new media, photography and video for instance, became

accommodated by the museum, perhaps they changed too much in their transformation into gallery works, and the museum did not change enough. The challenge of online art is greater, and holds out the hope for a democratic and participatory transformation of art. Even so, the resistance of the art institutions, and above all of the art market, is strong and dangerous. There is a risk that this kind of exhibition becomes a stage in the domestication of Internet art, as online culture and the art world make the necessary adjustments for cohabitation. The intended purpose of this show is different: to allow art audiences, many of whom have only the vaguest idea that Internet art exists, to glimpse its possibilities; and to highlight the issue of online commercialisation and illumine the resistance that has emerged in response.

Julian Stallabrass



Redundant Technology Initiative detail from *Landfill* 1999
Crushed non-functional computer parts
Courtesy lowtech.org

ART AND MONEY ONLINE

Tate Britain
6 March – 3 June 2001

LISE AUTOGENA & JOSHUA PORTWAY
www.stain.org/shoals

LISE AUTOGENA Biography

1964
Born Denmark
1997
Goldsmiths College,
University of London
1995
Architecture School of University
of East London
1991
West Surrey College of Art and
Design
Lives and works in London

Selected projects

2001
Channel Communication Amplifiers, Folkestone and Boulogne
Most Blue Skies, with Samy Djavidnia, European Space Agency and Richard Bantges, Space and Atmospheric Physics at Imperial College
2000
Bymobile, Aarhus School of Architecture and the Jutland Academy of Fine Arts, Denmark
1997-98
breathing productions, www.autogena.org/Breathing
1995-1997
autogena projects, Neal's Yard, London

JOSHUA PORTWAY Biography

1967
Born St. Ives
1992
West Surrey College of Art and Design
Lives and works in England

Selected projects

2001
Noodle, www.realworld.co.uk/rwmm/noodle
Code Zebra, www.codezebra.net, with Sara Diamond
2000
SHIFT-CTRL, Beall Center for Art and Technology, University of California, Irvine

Sonar, Centro de Cultura Contemporanea de Barcelona
1997-1999
Co-organised *The Summit* and *Big Game*, conferences at the Banff Center for the Arts, with Sara Diamond
1995-1997
Noodle, www.noodleheaven.net
1996
Music Engine, software
1994
Gepetto, software
1984
Sim, software

THOMSON & CRAIGHEAD
www.thomson-craighead.net

Biography

Jon Thomson
1969
Born London
1988-1991
Leicester Polytechnic
1991-1992
Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee
Currently lectures at the Slade School of Fine Art, London and The Ruskin School of Drawing and Painting, Oxford

Lives and works in London

Selected solo exhibitions

2000
Telephony, Mobile Home, London
1999
Decoder, Cambridge Darkroom Gallery
1997
Obituary, 30 Underwood Street, London

Selected group exhibitions

2001
010101, Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco
2000
Look & Feel, Beuro Friedrich, Berlin

Lets Entertain, Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis and touring
1999
Internet Works, Mediateca del Museo de Monterrey, Mexico
1998
Pandemonium UK, LIFT Gallery, London
1995-1997
Omnizone at Guggenheim Museum, New York
What difference does it make?, Cambridge Darkrooms
The Eyes of March, LEA Gallery, London
1997

Ground Control, artists exchange in Lithuania, exhibitions in Vilnius & London
1996
Ripe, Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool
Altitude, webwork at *Manifesto*, Rotterdam
Burning the Interface, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sidney
1995
Virtually Memory, Zone, Maidstone & Kunstlerhaus, Hamburg
Video Positive '95, Tate Gallery, Liverpool

REDUNDANT TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE
www.lowtech.org

Biography

James Wallbank
1966
Born Birmingham
1987
Sheffield City Polytechnic
1991
Sheffield Hallam University
1997
Founded Redundant Technology Initiative – www.lowtech.org
2000
Opened Access Space – www.access.lowtech.org
Currently works at RTI's Access Space in Sheffield and lectures internationally about creative ways to re-purpose no-cost technology.

Selected exhibitions

2000
The Low Tech Show, Shedhalle, Zurich

art now

Fort Lux, Fortress Ijmuiden, Netherlands
1999
Net Condition, ZKM, Karlsruhe
Used Future, South Hill Park, Bracknell
Lowtech Manifesto, The Next Five Minutes, Amsterdam
1998
Digital Summer, The Green Room, Manchester
Redundant Array, Lovebytes, Sheffield

EXHIBITED WORKS

Lise Autogena & Joshua Portway
Black Shoals Stock Market Planetarium 2001
Networked installation with dome projection
Courtesy the artists

Redundant Technology Initiative
Free Agent 2000-1
Refurbished computers and monitors running free software
Courtesy lowtech.org

Thomson and Craighead
CNN Interactive just got more interactive 2001
Live internet feed with touchscreen console and projection
Courtesy Mobile Home, London

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