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MONTAGE: UNMONUMENTAL ONLINE

FEBRUARY 15, 2008 - MARCH 23, 2008 | RHIZOME.ORG/MONTAGE

MONTAGE: UNMONUMENTAL ONLINE

Digital material is never natural. It is either generated or repurposed, and always pre-inscribed with meaning. It settles in sediments, turning the Web into a veritable billboard land: a frenetic free market in which corporations, private citizens, and fictional conglomerates all wave their own signs. The Web is a landscape rich with fiction, contradictions, and disjuncture. The new quickly becomes obsolete, and the old is continually revived. Internet-based montage, the assemblage of distinct materials into a new whole, is therefore both an inevitable and perpetual accident and an emerging, illuminating art form.

As the fourth layer of "Unmonumental," an exhibition that explores the contemporary appropriation and reinvention of collage techniques, "Montage: Unmonumental Online" frames Internet-based assemblage as part of a shared, historical discourse, and yet specific to a particular landscape. Cutting and pasting, breaking apart and reassembling, ripping and remixing, the artists in the exhibition extend the radical practice of collage to the Internet and demonstrate how previously tried techniques can engender rich, new artistic practices. True to the copy-and-paste culture in which they work, and through the incorporation of found digital images, sound, video, or code, these artists interpret collective desires, frustrations, and fantasies recited online. As exemplified in John Michael Boling's *Three Way Guitar Solo* (2006), three side-by-side YouTube videos of men playing electric guitar, or Oliver Laric's *50 50* (2007), which interlaces fifty video reenactments of the rap icon 50 Cent's songs, or Cao Fei's *I Mirror* (2007), a provocative documentary of life in a virtual world, these works do not critique mass culture, but rather its consumption, internalization, and performance.

"Montage: Unmonumental Online" demonstrates how the field of Internet-based art has become a vast, diverse, nuanced one—a discipline that responds to new forms of commerce, identity, and culture, and creates a critical space within a burgeoning new medium.



BIO

Born 1978, East Corinth, ME / Lives and works in Philadelphia, PA
 Michael Bell-Smith's work—in animation, video, Web sites, pictures, and audio—explores the ways in which technology mediates culture and personal experience. Recent exhibitions and screenings include, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville, Paris; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; and Galeri F15, Moss, Norway. His work has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Time Out New York*, and *Artnet*.

MICHAEL BELL-SMITH

MICHAEL BELL-SMITH

Subterranean House (Oonce Oonce) (2007)



Subterranean House (Oonce Oonce) (2007) is a reworked excerpt of Bob Dylan's seminal "electric piece" (a film set to the score of his song "Subterranean Homesick Blues") in which the legendary rocker holds up the provocative song lyrics on cue cards for the camera. Bell-Smith's modification draws a line between the protest culture of the 1960s and the frenetic youth culture of today. To construct *Subterranean House (Oonce Oonce)*, he digitally altered one sequence of the original piece, wiping the cue card of text and replacing it, frame by frame, with the single word "oonce"—the onomatopoeic vocalization of the archetypal house beat. He then replaced the original song with a repetitive, pared down house beat. These simple alterations contrast Dylan's music, with its focus on lyric, narrative, and political agitation with contemporary, instrumental dance music and club culture. In *Subterranean House (Oonce Oonce)*, Dylan, one of the first visible proponents of the electric guitar in mainstream music culture, is left looping endlessly in the ambivalent consequences of his musical legacy.

PROJECT URL

rhizome.org/bell-smith

MAIN SITE

michaelbellsmith.com

BIO

Born 1983, Rome, GA / Lives and works in Athens, GA
John Michael Boling is the creator of
google.com
and is a founding member of the Nasty Nets Internet-surfing club.



JOHN MICHAEL BOLING

Guitar Solo Threeway (2006)

John Michael Boling's *Guitar Solo Threeway* (2006) offers a literal take on parallel montage in film, while placing three video sequences in simultaneity with each other. The videos are culled from YouTube and feature an extraordinarily common video posted to the popular Web site: the guitar solo. The pieces are selected for their similarities. On the occasion of a user deleting one solo, it is promptly replaced with another, fished from a seemingly bottomless pool of such portraits. Much like the artist's *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (2006), which features YouTube videos of exactly those things, this piece makes use of an important artistic tradition: the one-liner. Yet, in this case, the subjects of the video are just as engaged in the process of quotation as Boling is. As Boling's anonymous muses pose and strum before the camera, they recite and repurpose rock star fantasies, ubiquitous daydreams that come with their own genre conventions.

PROJECT URL
rhizome.org/jmboling

MAIN SITE
google.com/



BIO

Born 1954, Greenville, MS / Lives and works in Atlanta, GA
 William Boling studied drawing and painting at Georgia Highland College, Georgia State University, and at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Rennes, France. For twenty-five years he has practiced law while maintaining an active engagement with poetry and visual arts. He is currently a partner in the Atlanta-based law firm of Powell Goldstein, LLP and serves on the adjunct faculty at the University of Georgia School of Law where he lectures in his area of specialty, health care law and policy. Boling's small press, Fall Line Arts Press, has recently published *Moving Gone Dancing*, the critically acclaimed poetry collection of Mildred White Greear. Boling's press also serves as the imprint for some of his own art and photographic work including *Photographs from O'Connor Country*, *Peel*, *Because They Come That Way*, and other short-run and artist's books. These and other photographic works are included in private and public art, library, and special collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Emory University, Bard College, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, and the Window Gallery at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.



cathie12 (12) ★★

WILLIAM BOLING

You Ain't Wrong (2007)

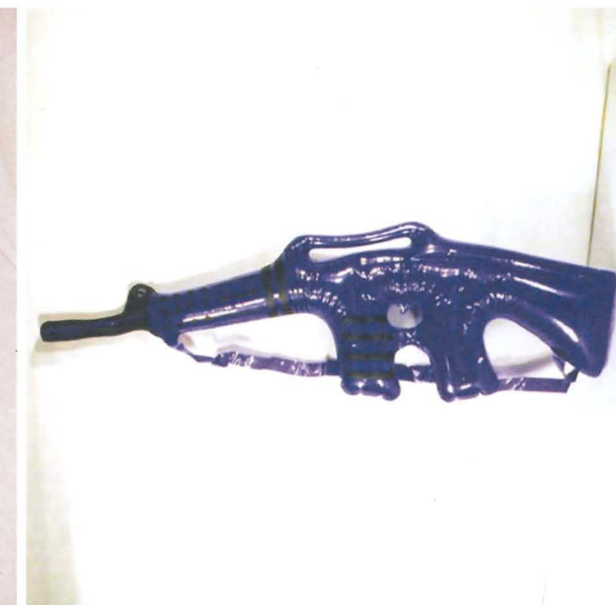
William Boling's work reflects on the status of found and vernacular photography in the era of Web commerce. The artist has compiled a large archive of product photos placed by their owners on the online auction sites eBay (USA) and TradeMe (New Zealand). For his project *You Ain't Wrong* (2007), seemingly random juxtapositions of images from the respective sites simulates a dialectical fusion between the two, leaving the viewer to imagine and fill in the meaning created in these mergers. This project evolved from Boling's earlier eBay-only project, called *Peel* (2006), but suggests an added layer of ethnographic context. In this sense, the artist manages to bring the now very "traditional" techniques of photography and montage into the realm of digital narratives.

PROJECT URL
rhizome.org/wboling

MAIN SITE:
youaintwrong.com



ect (12419)

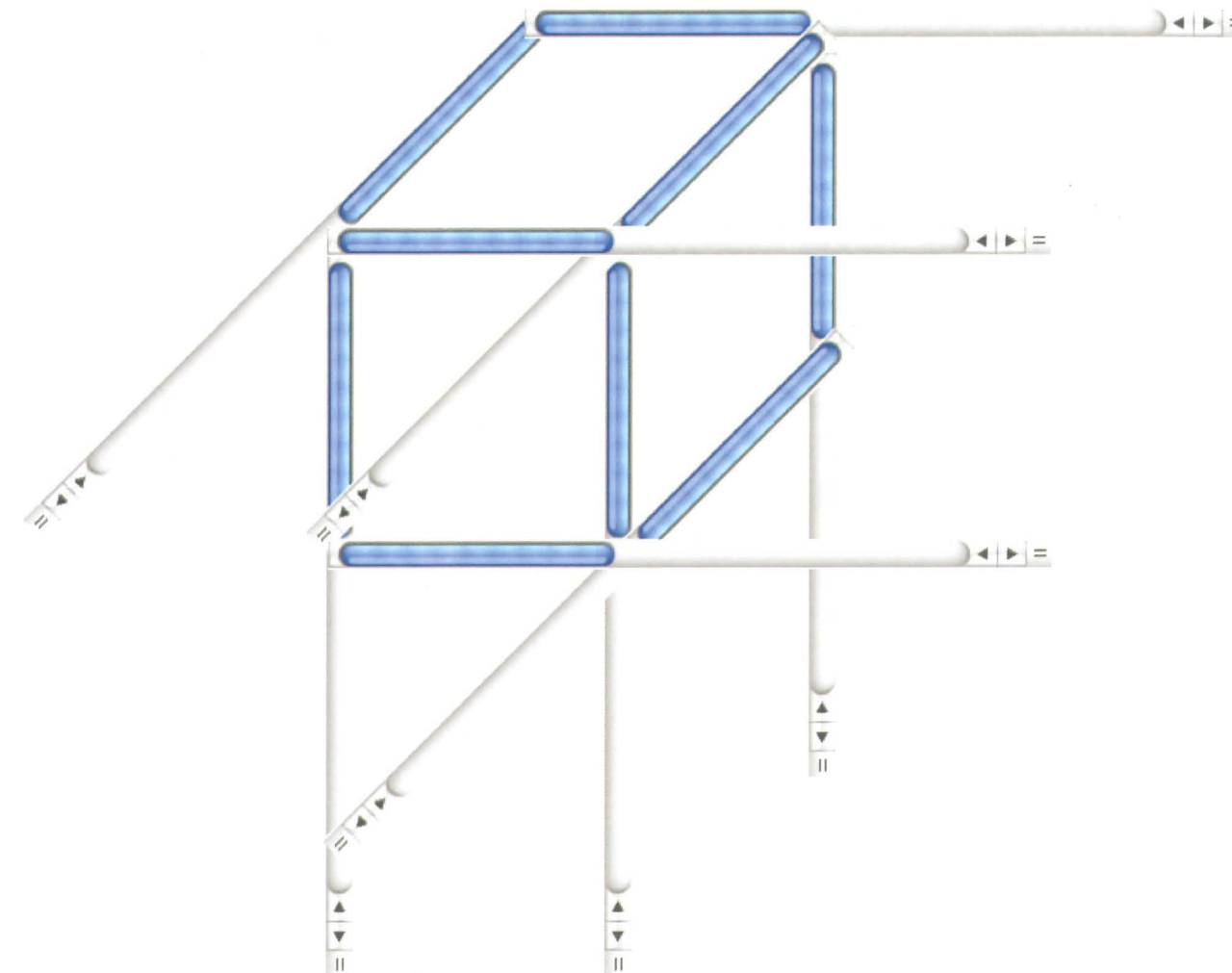


CHARLES BROSKOSKI

BIO

Born 1982, Fort Worth, TX / Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

Charles Broskoski's work has been shown most recently at La Vitrine in Paris, and Gallery F15 in Oslo. He is the founder of supercentral.org.



CHARLES BROSKOSKI

CUBE (2007)

Charles Broskoski describes his *CUBE (2007)* as a “fake three-dimensional cube made out of Mac OSX scrollbars.” The piece relies on multiple frames of reference ranging from Minimalism and modernism to a screen-based outlook on the navigation of social reality. While many Internet artists employ material from other sites as building blocks in their own work, Broskoski has constructed an armature out of very visual elements normally considered to be outside of the frame. Thus, he puts an updated spin on the often witty process of reclaiming discarded material for new conceptual means.

PROJECT URL
supercentral.org/9

MAIN SITE:
rhizome.org/broskoski

CAO FEI

BIO

Born in 1978, Ghangzhou, China/ Lives and works in Beijing, China
Known for her multimedia installations and videos, Cao Fei is acknowledged as one of the key young artists emerging from mainland China. She mixes social commentary, popular aesthetics, Surrealism, and documentary conventions in her films and installations. Her works comment on the rapid and chaotic changes that are occurring in all facets of Chinese society.

Cao Fei has created artworks such as *COSPlayers*, *Hip Hop Series*, *Whose Utopia*, *My Future is Not A Dream*, and, most recently, *i.Mirror* and *RMB City*. A selection of her recent exhibitions includes "Brave New Worlds" at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, "China Power Station: Part II" at the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art in Oslo, "Everyday Miracles" at the 52nd Venice Biennial, the Istanbul Biennial, the Lyon Biennial, "The Real Thing" at the Tate, Liverpool, and "China Power Station: Part 1" at Battersea Power Station at the Serpentine Gallery in London.

CAO FEI

i.Mirror (2007)

China Tracy, the avatar of artist Cao Fei, is the protagonist of *i.Mirror*, the twenty-eight minute, three-part documentary staged in "Second Life," the vastly popular virtual world built and maintained by its users. Her experiences, including travel, mundane encounters, a complicated romance, and the forging of friendships, are extensively recorded as is the way her virtual life impacts and overlaps with Cao Fei's own. While China Tracy's rich second "life" provocatively suggests new kinds of relationships and global cultures, the overarching mood of *i.Mirror* is one of melancholy. The documentary presents an elaborate picture of how fantasies, frustrations, and hopes manifest in dense new worlds online, and yet are moored irrevocably to their offline origins.

PROJECT URL

rhizome.org/caofei_part1
rhizome.org/caofei_part2
rhizome.org/caofei_part3

MAIN SITE:

lombard-freid.com

Courtesy of the artist and
Lombard-Freid Projects, New York.



JESSICA CIOCCI

BIO

Born 1976, Lexington, KY / Lives and works in Providence, RI
Jessica Ciocci went to college in Massachusetts. She has also lived in Kentucky, North Carolina, and Rhode Island. She has been working with the group Paper Rad since the end of 2000. She enjoys art in the forms of music, pictures, words, and strange discoveries in all spheres of life.



JESSICA CIOCCI

instient.mash (2007)

Jessica Ciocci, a member of the East Coast collective Paper Rad, describes *instient.mash* as “a part (at any moment or space on the Internet) of a whole that can never be seen.” It is a collage of visual materials present in the artist’s life at a particular time, including images from works in progress, an excerpt from a novel Amazon.com mailed her by mistake, components of a slideshow the artist gave on the subject of her e-mail in box, and photographs of a Wal-Mart near her Worcester, MA home. Paper Rad’s works are rich, anarchic, and yet tightly woven assemblages. In this independent project, Ciocci constructs a work that is more dissolute, presenting a “reality-based reality” of the artist working in a dense cross stream of images, information, and plans.

PROJECT URL

rhizome.org/ciocci

MAIN SITE:

paperrad.org

BIO

Born 1986, Santa Barbara, CA / Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY
Petra Cortright studies at Parsons School of Design in New York.
She is a member of the Nasty Nets Internet-surfing club.

PETRA CORTRIGHT

PROJECT URL

rhizome.org/cortright

MAIN SITE:

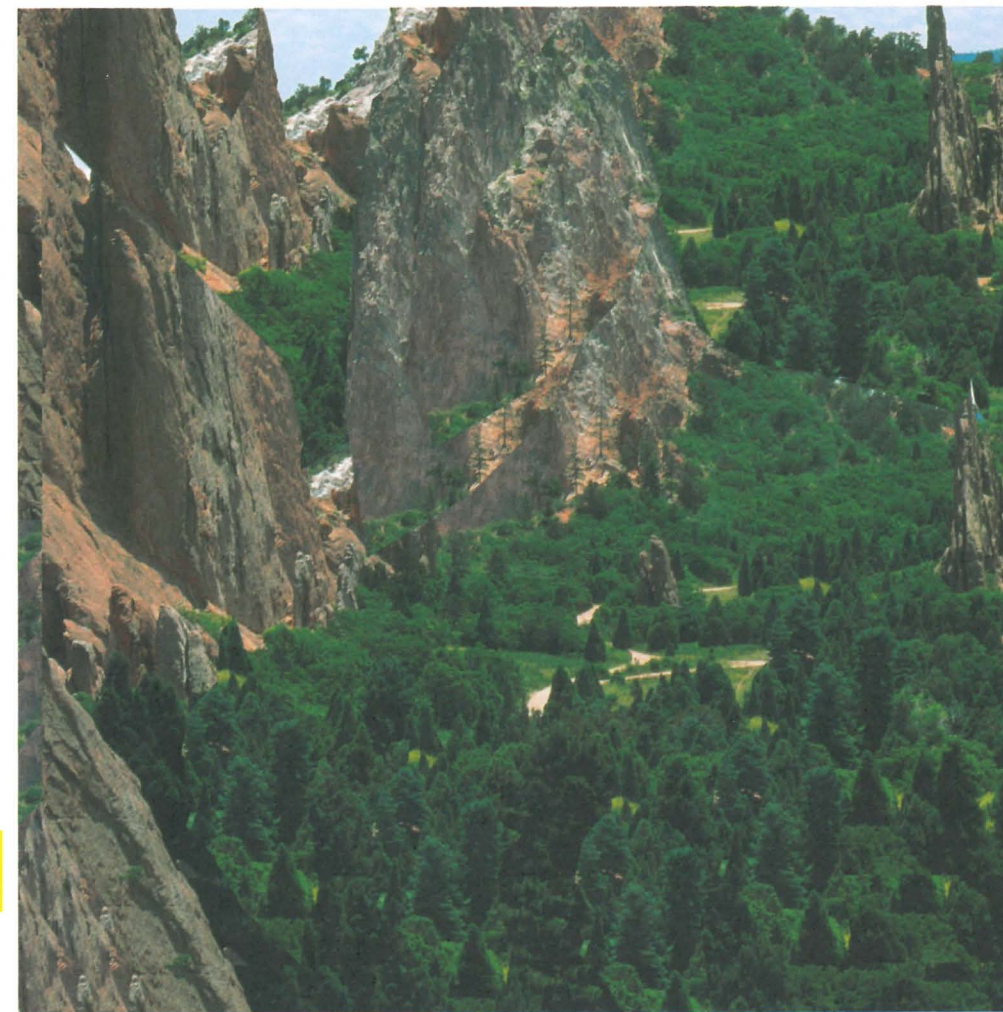
petracortright.com

PETRA CORTRIGHT

Landscape 5/15/05 (2005)

Originally from Southern California, the work of Petra Cortright is deeply influenced by an appreciation of plants, animals, and ecosystems. Her projects often attempt to reconcile the visual language of computers (software interfaces, ASCII code, animated

gifs, and instant-messaging idioms) with the rhetoric of the "natural image." In *Landscape 5/15/05 (2005)*, Cortright pastes together layers of outdoor photos in an image that makes "use of repetition originating from itself," meaning that the patterns inherent to each vista determine the overall pattern of the greater visage. The seams between each constituent element are simultaneously obvious and subtle, creating a virtual rupture in the perception of natural space, as the viewer's eye follows the horizon of this fantasized terrain.



CHRIS COY

BIO

Born 1980, Provo, UT / Lives and works in Salt Lake City, UT
Chris Coy is an artist and member of the Nasty Nets Internet-surfing club. Online, he frequently goes by the handle Seecoy

Click to resume

CHRIS COY

Superman II point 0 (2007)

Chris Coy (a.k.a. Seecoy) likes to employ existing narrative and technological structures in the formation of his work. In this case, the artist essentially recreates the scene in *Superman II* when the "bad guys" are banished from planet Krypton into a prison dimension contained within a rotating flat plane. The title *Superman II point 0* (2007) is a play on Web 2.0 social networking sites. For this work,

PROJECT URL
rhizome.org/coy

MAIN SITE:
seecoy.com

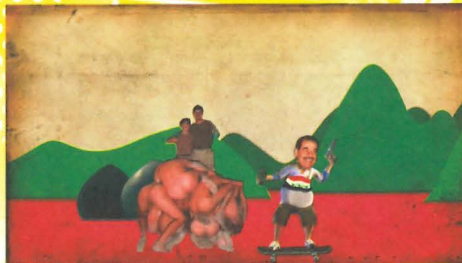
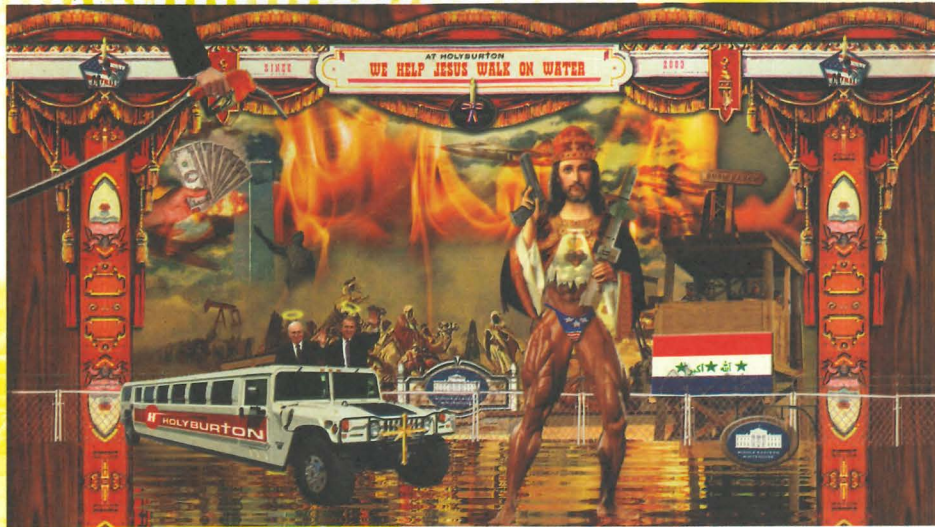
Coy employed a MySpace "photo cube" utility to affect a visual similarity between stills from the film and the moment of banishment. This cinematic excavation extends our understanding of montage to encompass not only a joining of shots in a sequence, but also a merger of tools and ideas.



KENNETH TIN-KIN HUNG

BIO

Born 1976, Hong Kong, China / Lives and works in New York, NY
Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung is a new-media artist. He works in various media including Internet art, interactive installation, video animation, and performance. He won the VIPER International Award for the Internet in Switzerland and was given an Honorary Mention for Net Excellence in the 2002 Prix Ars Electronica. In 2007, Hung received the Media Arts fellowship from Renew Media, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, to develop an online game about global warming.



KENNETH TIN-KIN HUNG

Because Washington is Hollywood for Ugly People (2007)

Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung's video *Because Washington Is Hollywood For Ugly People* (2007) is as visually outrageous as the often absurd political realities it parodies. Hung has created a rich iconography for his own work, which includes famous figures from both the entertainment and governmental spheres in high-adrenaline, Hollywood-style displays of bravado, libido, and general visual bombardment. George W. Bush's face is merged with Jennifer Aniston's, and Dick Cheney and Condoleeza Rice are romantically linked to other world leaders in a cavalcade of imagery found on the Internet. Exploiting the tropes of pop mythology, the piece considers contemporary power relations and pressing foreign policy issues, while revealing the cacophony of political messages offered to us by mainstream media.

PROJECT URL
rhizome.org/hung

MAIN SITE:
tinkin.com



BIO

Born 1968, Stanford, CA / Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY
Nina Katchadourian grew up spending every summer on a small island in the Finnish archipelago. Her work exists in a wide variety of media including photography, sculpture, video and sound. She is represented by Sara Meltzer Gallery in New York and Catharine Clark Gallery in San Francisco. Her work has been exhibited domestically and internationally at venues including P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, the Serpentine Gallery, New Langton Arts, Artists Space, the Palais de Tokyo, and SculptureCenter. She has received grants and awards from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, and the Anonymous Was a Woman Foundation. In 2006 the Tang Museum in Saratoga Springs exhibited a ten-year survey of her work and published an accompanying monograph, *All Forms of Attraction*.

NINA KATCHADOURIAN

The Continuum of Cute (2007-08)

The Continuum of Cute investigates the term "cute" via pictures of animals collected from the Internet. The images are arranged as a spectrum ranging from the extremely cute on one end and the extremely uncute on the other, with multiple intermediary or combinatory states in between. The cropping and selection of the animal images call to mind the wallet-sized portrait that a person might carry of a child or loved one, and as such also indulges the anthropomorphic qualities that are so often embedded in our sense of what is "cute." With all the animals lined up side by side for comparison, *The Continuum of Cute* also has the uncomfortable air of a giant interspecies beauty contest.

PROJECT URL

rhizome.org/katchadourian

MAIN SITE:

ninakatchadourian.com

Courtesy of Sara Meltzer Gallery and the artist.

NINA KATCHADOURIAN



BIO

Born 1981, Istanbul, Turkey / Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

OLIVER LARIC

OLIVER LARIC

50 50 (2007)

PROJECT URL
rhizome.org/laric

MAIN SITE:
oliverlaric.com

The Web-based video *50 50* (2007) compiles fifty amateur performances of songs by rap icon 50 Cent into seamless, uninterrupted tracks. Like a collaborative karaoke performance between culturally and geographically disparate singers, the segments—all taken from YouTube—each feature a young person rapping 50 Cent lyrics over the original song. The power of *50 50* pivots on its most basic assumption: the Web is saturated with 50 Cent performances and, on a broader level, youth are saturated with the desire to embody the values 50 Cent represents. These values are laid plain in his album title, *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*, but the crucial aspiration not explicitly mentioned is fame—to be a celebrity, to be in front of the camera, to be watched—a widespread aspiration Laric throws into sharp relief.



BIO

Born 1971, Moscow, Russia / Lives and works in Stuttgart, Germany
Olia Lialina is a pioneering Internet artist and theorist as well as an experimental film and video critic and curator. Lialina studied film criticism at Moscow State University, and graduated from there in 1993. She was one of the organizers and, later, director of Cine Fantom, an experimental-cinema club in Moscow founded in 1995 by Gleb Aleinikovm. Since 1999, she has worked and taught at Merz Akademie in Stuttgart.

OLIA LIALINA

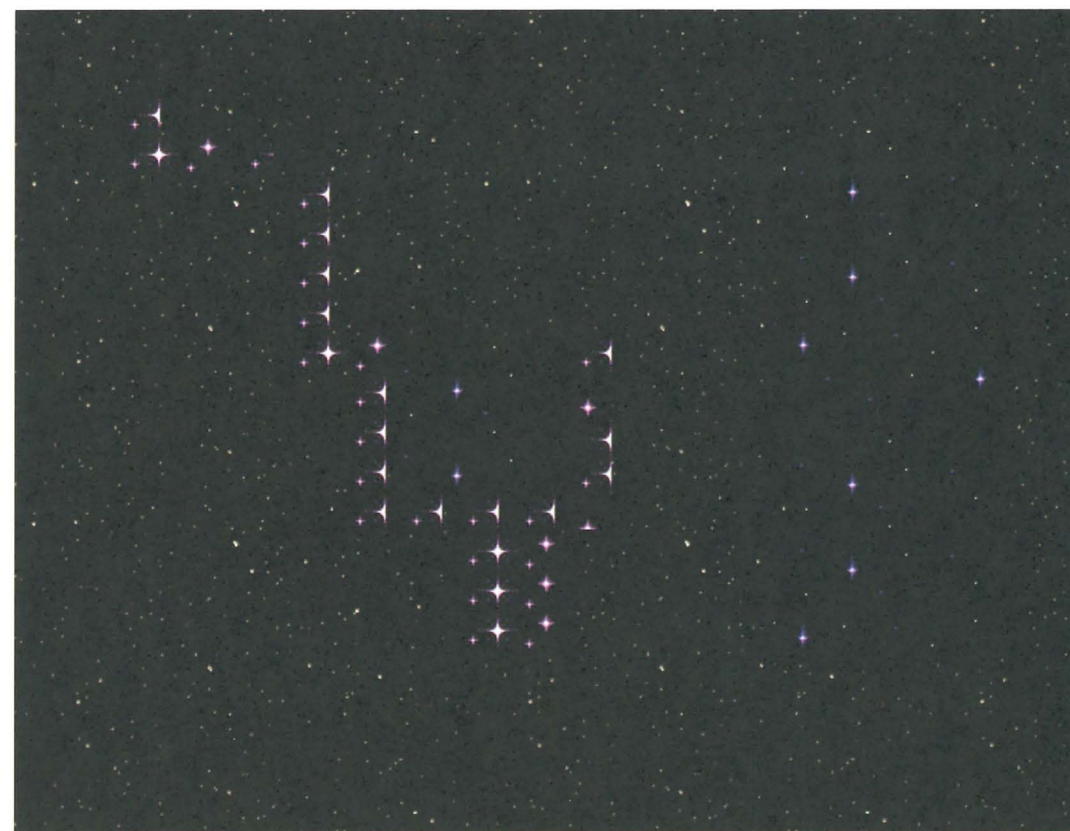
OLIA LIALINA

Some Universe (2002)

PROJECT URL
rhizome.org/lialina

MAIN SITE:
art.teleportacia.org

Some Universe (2002) is a picture of an expansive cosmos, a seamless Web page that appears to scroll infinitely, but is, in fact, bounded by and constructed of many different images Lialina culled from personal Web sites. A seminal Internet artist, Lialina's work addresses the evolution of Web imagery, the use and disuse of icons, and their underlying cultural resonance. *Some Universe* is a snapshot of a collective habit: the rampant use of stars online. The piece calls attention to the conception of the Internet as an alternate universe, uncharted and never-ending, and also to the fact that this conception is tied to a particular moment when users gravitated towards the now-outdated gif file format. *Some Universe* speaks critically to notions of "cyberspace" and "utopia" online, while simultaneously pushing forth an aesthetic of beauty for the Web.



GUTHRIE LONERGAN



BIO

Born 1984, Los Angeles, CA / Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA
Guthrie Lonergan's work approaches home computing as pop culture. He questions his own excitement for the freedom of DIY culture—specifically the democratic spirit of the Internet—highlighting the Web's most mundane personal content to create work that feels both refreshingly humble and depressingly dismal. He focuses on the preset defaults of consumer-level technology (iPhoto slideshows, YouTube videos, etc.), and how these establish a foundation of banality for homemade culture. Relying on these presets, he approaches the Internet from the most basic user's perspective. His role is half artist, half Internet surfer. Most of his work is exhibited on his Web site, theageofmammals.com. He is also a co-founder of the Nasty Nets Internet-surfing club.

GUTHRIE LONERGAN

Internet Group Shot (2006)

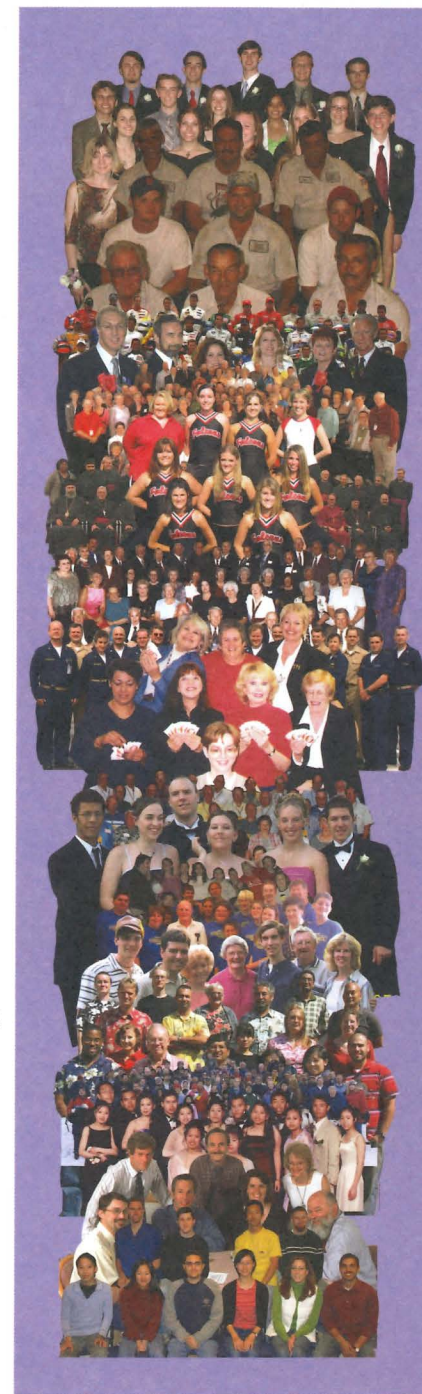
Guthrie Lonergan's *Internet Group Shot* (2006) draws on the formal conventions of amateur group portraits, and amplifies those conventions on a more massive scale. In Lonergan's extensive Web surfing, the artist noticed that the Net is heavily populated with group portraits, most of which tend to share the same properties and subjects arranged in similar formations and poses. The *Internet Group Shot* brings these people together in what purports to be a collective snapshot of the Internet. Scrolling over the individual pieces of this massive portrait causes them to pop up, emphasizing the fact that the image is made up of a series of juxtapositions that add up to a much broader (albeit tongue-in-cheek) gesture.

PROJECT URL

rhizome.org/lonergan

MAIN SITE:

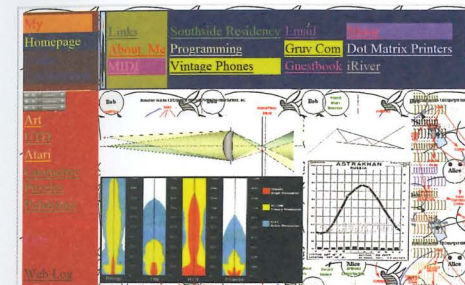
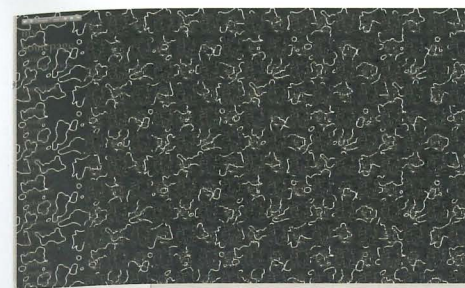
theageofmammals.com



BIO

Born 1974, Dallas, TX / Lives and works in Dallas, TX
Paul Slocum is a musician and new-media artist. Computers and computer culture are often the medium and subject of his work. He is also half of the Tree Wave project that makes music and video with obsolete assembly-language-programmed computer and video-game gear. Some of Slocum's performances and exhibitions have occurred at Transito MX, Mexico City; The New Museum, New York; Deitch Projects, New York; Eyebeam, New York; le Confort Moderne, France; README 2005, Denmark; and the Liverpool Biennial.

PAUL SLOCUM



PROJECT URL
rhizome.org/slocum

MAIN SITE:
qotile.net

PAUL SLOCUM

Time-Lapse Homepage (2003)

Paul Slocum's *Time-Lapse Homepage* (2003) signifies through accretion. This high-definition video is composed of 1,000 computer screenshots of his homepage. Complete with an upbeat score that could easily be a corporate jingle to promote a new technology, the stills display the building, erosion, and occasional complete overhaul of an ever-evolving Web site. This work provides a layered historical record of something we tend to see only in discrete units—the appearance of a homepage on any given day—while attempting to think through Web design in the language of earlier time-based media.



"Montage: Unmonumental Online" appears online at
Rhizome.org/montage from February 15, 2008 – March 23, 2008.

ARTISTS

Michael Bell-Smith
John Michael Boling
William Boling
Charles Broskoski
Jessica Ciocci
Petra Cortright
Chris Coy
Cao Fei
Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung
Nina Katchadourian
Oliver Laric
Olia Lialina
Guthrie Loneragan
Paul Slocum

CURATORS

Lauren Cornell, Director, Rhizome
Marisa Olson, Editor and Curator, Rhizome

Rhizome is dedicated to the creation, presentation, preservation, and critique of contemporary art engaged with technology. Our programs, many of which happen online, include commissions, education, art criticism, exhibitions, events, and preservation. We support artists working at the furthest reaches of technological experimentation as well as those responding to the broader aesthetic and political implications of new tools and media. Visit us online at rhizome.org

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David Rager, Senior Designer and Production Manager, New Museum

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BNP PARIBAS

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