

From Translating To Transcoding

group exhibition
curated by
Société

Cory Arcangel
Gert Aertsen
Carl Andre
Matthew Biederman
Otto Berchem
Jane Benson
Alec De Busschère
Detanico & Lain
Lars Fredrikson
Pierre-Philippe Hofmann
Farah Khelil
Takahiro Kudo
LAB[au]
Le Corbusier & Iannis Xenakis
Matan Mittwoch
Julie Morel
Joachim Olender
Jacob Riddle
Thomas Ruff
Karin Sander
Yann Sérandour
Venetian Snares
VOID
Hannah Weiner
Wennig & Daubach

From Translating To Transcoding

The term 'transcoding' originates from the field of computers and more precisely from the conversion of one digital format to another. However, this terminology appears more and more in the cultural context as a new paradigm beyond common media theories. It addresses the issue of correspondence of signs where one medium operates within another.

Today we draw with algorithms, copy/paste in paintings, think in resolution and photograph or sculpt in 3D. All illustrate transcoding of two spheres - the artistic and the technological one. This isologic approach has been addressed in Fluxus and concept art by the term of intermedia and now emerges in form of transmedia. The exhibition explores the trans-lation/-coding of signs in between different forms of expression as a possible reading of actual artistic production.

From Translating To Transcoding

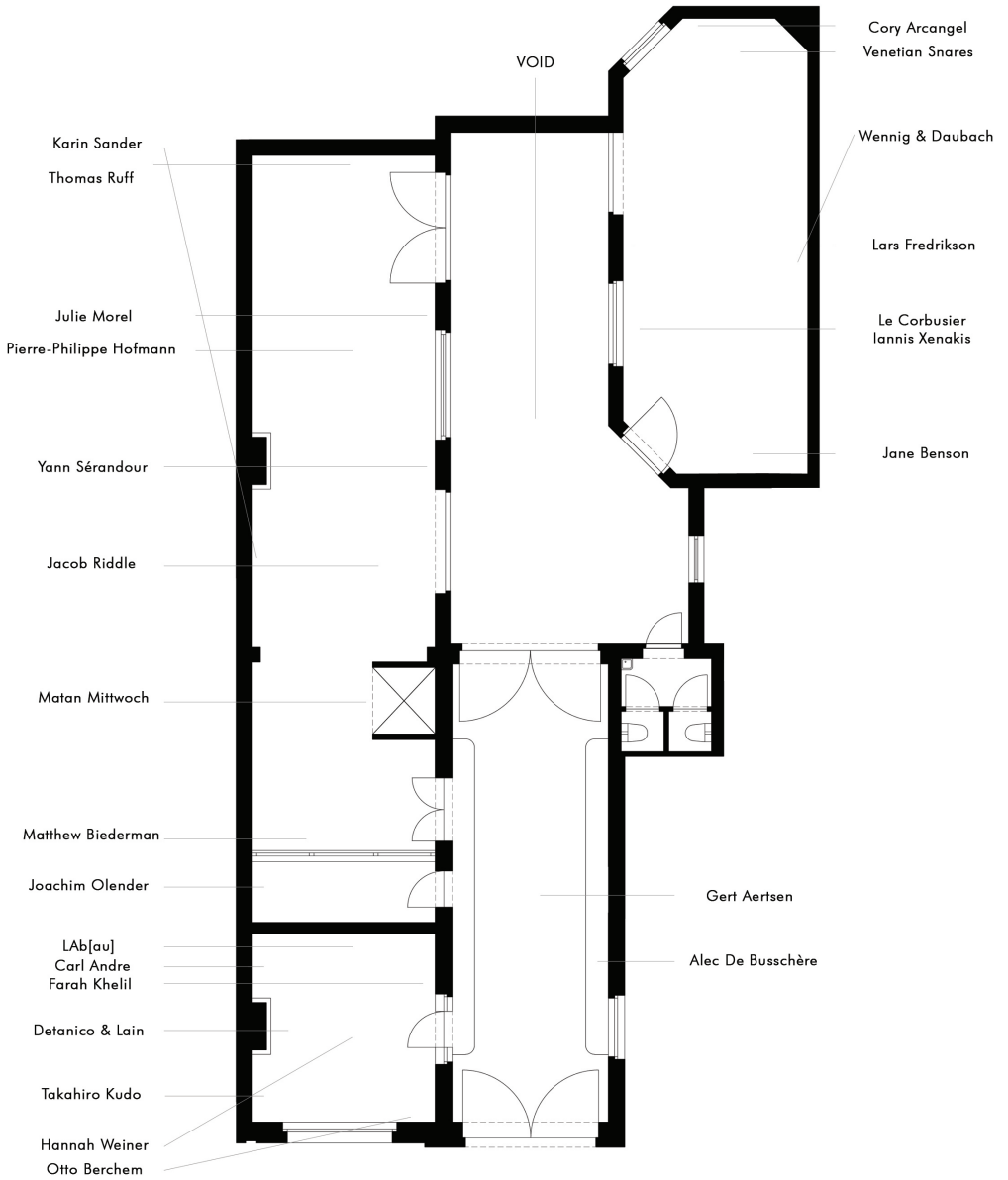
Le terme «transcodage» vient du domaine des ordinateurs et plus précisément de la conversion d'un format numérique en un autre. Cependant, cette terminologie apparaît de plus en plus dans le contexte culturel comme un nouveau paradigme qui dépasse les théories courantes sur les médias. Elle aborde la question de la correspondance des signes qu'un média opère au sein d'un autre.

On dessine aujourd'hui avec un algorithme, on fait du copier/coller dans les peintures, on pense résolution et on photographie ou on sculpte en 3D. Tout cela illustre le transcodage de ces deux sphères - la culturelle et la technologique. Cette approche isologique a été abordée dans Fluxus et l'art conceptuel par le terme d'intermédia et émerge maintenant sous la forme du transmédia. L'exposition explore la transposition/codification des signes entre différentes formes d'expression comme une lecture possible de la production artistique actuelle.

From Translating To Transcoding

De term «transcodering» vindt zijn oorsprong in het domein van de computers en meer bepaald in de omzetting van het ene digitale formaat naar het andere. Deze terminologie verschijnt echter meer en meer in de culturele context als een nieuw paradigma dat verder gaat dan de gangbare mediatheorieën. Het behandelt de kwestie van de overeenstemming van tekens van het ene medium naar het andere.

We tekenen nu met algoritme, kopiëren/plakken in schilderijen, denken aan resolutie in de fotografie en beeldhouwen in 3D. Allemaal illustreren ze de transcoding van deze twee sferen - de culturele en de technologische. Deze isologische benadering is in Fluxus en conceptkunst behandeld met de term intermedia en komt nu naar voren in de vorm van transmedia. De tentoonstelling verkent de vertaling/codering van tekens tussen verschillende uitdrakkingsvormen als een mogelijke lezing van de huidige artistieke productie.



Gert Aertsen

The Alphabet of Nature
2016

Courtesy: The Artist

In Hebrew language each character represents how the lips and tongue should be positioned. In this he found proof of the innate and universal nature of language. Van Helmont's essay inspired Aertsen for his research on the deconstruction of the mechanics of speech. In an attempt to create his proper universal language, he created a series of objects and sounds for the installation 'The Alphabet of Nature'.

Alec de Busschère

As if it were
1999

Courtesy: The Artist

«As if it were», by Brussels artist Alec De Busschère is a good example of a approach, refering directly to the practice and formats of conceptual art, while extrapolating them to our time. In this example, the starting point of the work, of the process, is a quotation from Lawrence Weiner: «as if it were « recalling his language-based art, but using technology that did not exist in the 1960s and which today is an integral part of language practice. Each line of the work corresponds to an automatic translation using the AltaVista algorithm. After 22 iterations through French, Italian, German ... the original quote became: 'one leaves that directly'. Reading it line by line, the viewer witnesses this transformation of meaning step by step - he witnesses the failure or error of the system.

Carl Andre

Sans Titre
1973

Courtesy: Baudoin Lebon Gallery

While he is known primarily for his sculpture, Carl Andre also produced poetry from the early 1950s to the mid-1970s. Andre's poems, which were typed on a manual typewriter or hand-written, can also be read as drawings. They relate directly to the artist's three-dimensional work in that they incorporate the word as a compositional module, much like his signature use of bricks or metal plates. Loosely narrative in structure, the poems often include historical references and traces of autobiography. The poems obliquely evoke character and setting while incorporating various literary forms such as the sonnet, opera, or novel.

Otto Berchem

Revolver
2013

Courtesy: Collection Veys - Verhavert

Otto Berchem's work explores social and visual codes, focusing on the relationships between language, architecture, history and poetry. In his work « Revolver », the artist continues his investigation of signs, human relations and codes, using his chromatic alphabet and exploring different possibilities with it. By using colours to replace words and letters and inspired by his time in Bogota, Columbia, Berchem creates a palette of revolt and revolution.

Detanico & Lain

Still
2017

Courtesy: Collection Julie & Gabriel Nallet

Inspired from Ikebana, traditional Japanese floral art, the artists propose a conceptual interpretation of it. Five vases represent five letters. The number of flowers corresponds to the position of a letter in the alphabetical order. We are therefore in the presence of the term "Still", which evokes "still life". Not the way we usually translate this into French as "nature morte" ["dead nature"], but as a calm, silent nature.

Farah Khelil

Point de vue, point d'écoute (Lectures)
2012-2017

Courtesy: The Artist

An exposed music box plays a quote transcribed on score by Tunisian author Béchir Majdoub. The author writes: «thought is like the arrow stretched to the bow of the body», with reference to the curvature of the Thinker's body. The translation was transcoded in Braille in the music machine, transposed on a translucent score to be finally punctuated. The artist punctuates all the dots in Braille on the score, making each character point correspond to a musical note.

Takahiro Kudo

Untitled (Love Letter) - From Series To Whom It May Concern
2015

Courtesy: Olivier & Nicole Gevart Collection, Brussels

Takahiro Kudo offers us a love letter he wrote when he left Japan. The message in Braille is jealously hidden behind a glass. Understanding his personal story becomes a shameless investigation. Yet this obvious incommunicability activates the possibility and the essential need to continue inventing the truth.

LAB[au]

Deep Blue
2016

Courtesy: The Artist

The artwork's 43 pages describe the progression from white towards black, through 256 shades of blue. Each of the shades is visualised by a graphic representation of its binary code by the means of a 8x8 grid. This 8x8 grid is also present in some of the 'mosaique' installations and is based on the hexadecimal logic. This is the expression of the combinatory of the binary system, which is also at the base of the chess play – hence the reference within the title deepBlue.

Hannah Weiner

Signal Flags
1968

Courtesy: Private Collection

Signal Flag Poems by American poet Hannah Weiner was issued as S.M.S. [Shit Must Stop] #3 in 1968. It consists of two folded brochures. One features pictorial translations of Weiner's poems using the international Code of Signals for ships at sea. The other is a verbal translation of the same. Also included is Weiner's Long Poem for Roy Lichtenstein and a pinwheel for creating chance poetry.

Joachim Olender

Artifices
2017

Courtesy: Panoptes Collection & The Artist

Corroborating the idea of an archeology of a fire, it appears in 1637 that a large firework was organized in order to celebrate the election of Ferdinand III at the head of the Holy Roman Empire. Fearing that the public would not be able to grasp the subtleties of the fire, his Highness «wanted programs to be distributed each evening, the content of which would reveal to the eyes of the guests the artifice and purpose of the macchina that were offered there» (Treaty of fireworks for the show, 1747). The artist takes the script and operation manual of a firework to research the link in between name, instruction and representation where each firework carries the name of a flower, a color, a chemical element or a metal.

Matthew Biederman

R+G+B
2009

Courtesy: Elektra (<https://www.elektramontreal.ca>) & The Artist

R+G+B is a cyclical display of the RGB color system as a formula. The codification of color within a trichromatic system into three 8-bit numbers (creating a 24bit number) is a structure applied to the digital world. Systems have been employed in color classification systems since Goethe and Newton attempted to map and explain color relationships. In digital contexts, colors are represented and quantified with specific numeric values for the first time rather than descriptive names. In R+G+B, three numbers are on screen and count upwards from 0-255 at different speeds. When they reach 255, they reset to zero and start over. The color of each number is equal to its value, so as the numbers increase in value they also increase in color value. The color surrounding the numbers and filling the rest of the screen is equal to the red green and blue values added together.

Pierre-Philippe Hofmann

Paintless Post Painterly Project
2020

Courtesy: The Artist

At the end of the 1950s, Frank Stella's research overturned a conception of painting that was at the time largely dominated by abstract expressionism (Rothko, Pollock,...). Stella and other contemporary artists, such as Daniel Buren or Donald Judd, freed themselves from any form of expressivity. With them the work can be the result of a disembodied methodology; one can paint as one would do lengths in a swimming pool. At that time, Stella is proud to use the same tools and techniques as the handyman.

Clément Greenberg describes this private pictorial approach as a gesture of 'Post Painterly'. Once transmitted, for example in the form of a manual, the process of making a painting by Stella could then be sufficient to reproduce it at home, from a distance. It is therefore tacitly a form of d.i.y. painting, since it no longer imposes a sensitive relationship during its realization. The artist is, in a way, no longer necessary.

PP Hofmann's proposal refers to a painting from 1959, Tomlinson Court Park I. The originality of his piece is manifold; on the one hand, he uses HTML code to describe the surface of the painting. In doing so, he permanently removes all materiality from the painting, all thickness, but he also deconstructs the concentric perception of the work; through transcription, the alternation of empty and full can now be read from left to right and from top to bottom. Secondly, the HTML proposal contains almost no technological simplification, which turns its writing into a real test of endurance. Thus, the video presented is the sum of several thousand screenshots that immortalise every change in the code.

Finally, the proposal goes beyond Greenberg's expression. It will henceforth be a painting without paint.

Matan Mittwoch

In Other Words [Untitled]
2019

Courtesy: Dvir Gallery

In his body of works, Matan Mittwoch explores technological tools that surround us and the control devices that they include. The artist aims at triggering a question concerning personalization and its limits in virtual domains, as well as its reflections on enforcement and freedom. By using rather common photographic processes, he manages to expose the tension between material and virtual, actual and fictional, genuine and staged reaching into the most basic questions humanity asks itself today regarding reality and interconnectivity.

In this particular work, artist explores the metadata's elements of the digital image merged with color codes, respectively red, green, and blue. Overlayered colored pixels and undecipherable metadata become the compositional elements for Mittwoch's plastic language.

Julie Morel

Sans Titre, (Boucles, A.F.K.)
2016

Courtesy: The Artist

The artist transposes Photoshop filters on to a three-dimensional object. Photoshop filters are the image of platitude, the wrong kind of photo. The effect. Whether it's «anti-aliasing», the effect «Solarization», the «light contour», the improper use of the selection lasso, etc., the result is often immediately recognizable.

Jacob Riddle

jpg.printing
2011

Courtesy: The Artist

All digital files are made up of information. This is the biggest difference between what is virtual and what is physical. .jpg is an acknowledgment of the digital information that creates what we view as an image. Beyond just acknowledging the image information, the code is manifested in the physical world in several different non-photographic forms. These non-photographic representations of a image's digital information draw attention to the sheer volume of information needed to create these image files. .jpg also redefines the parameters of a 'photograph'. None of the output is arranged as what is commonly recognized as a photograph; but at its core, what the audience experiences is derived from an image captured with a camera.

Thomas Ruff

nudes leb01,
1999

Courtesy: Servais Family Collection

In 2003 Ruff produced the first nudes, culling images from Internet pornography, then digitally processing them—enlarging them as far as possible—so as to cloud the crude clarity of the original images. Such images become painterly illustrations of vague desire in which anonymous women sport and pose, their erotic power modified by a muted palette and hazed resolution, while in other works from the series, the fetishistic power of the female subject is all but reduced to lush formal qualities—a cascade of thick blonde hair, the curve of pink thighs, the glossy black of a stiletto heel. Through found imagery the artist explores digital culture and the extremities of digital editing tools and compression translating them into a traditional photographic medium.

Karin Sander

XML-SVG Quellcode / Source Code
2014 – ongoing

Courtesy: Esther Schipper and Galerie nächst St. Stephan, Rosemarie Schwarzwälder

Today, computer-generated architectural designs translate spaces into 3-D renderings. The work writes out the figures and sign systems employed to represent and construct the exhibition space, thus rendering its actual source code visible. The inner architecture of the exhibition space is depicted as XML/SVG code on its walls, spelling out the very figures that are based on the volume of the space. If these source-code figures were entered into a computer, the architectural body would re-emerge in three dimensions. While the series of figures appear to the viewer as colored patterns, this readable though undecipherable language is a tangible reference to a spatial drawing which is, at the same time, a representation of the space.

Yann Sérandour

Low
2003

Courtesy: GB Agency

This print was produced from the retouch of a low-resolution image found on the Internet, reproducing a detail of Edward Ruscha's painting, *The Back of Hollywood* (1977, Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art Coll.) Painterly qualities of Ed Ruscha's work are transposed here into digitalised medium which afterwards, due to its low-resolution quality, depicts the pixelized construction of the digital imagery. Such an interplay between physical and digital worlds offers the grounds for conceptual and tautological research that can be viewed in Yann Sérandour's work.

Void

Synonym's Synonyms

2020, in situ

Courtesy: The Artist & LMNO Gallery

Synonym's synonyms is a project that questions language through the use of a writing protocol based on a sequence of a synonym, its synonym, its synonym, its synonym, its synonym, its synonym, etc. The words are embedded in the architecture, and succeed one another as their meaning continually shifts. It is a circumvolution of mental images, meanings and misunderstandings that reveal the language, the word, the act of communication and representation.

Cory Arcangel

Drei Klavierstücke op. 11
2009

Courtesy: The Artist

Drei Klavierstücke is a recreation of Arnold Schoenberg's 1909 op. 11 Drei Klavierstücke (aka Three Piano Pieces) made by editing together videos of cats playing pianos downloaded from Youtube. Schoenberg's Op11 is often considered the first piece of "atonal" music, or music to completely break from traditional western harmony which means it's not written in a "key". The artist downloaded every video of a cat playing piano that he could find on Youtube. He ended up with about 170 videos. The artist extracted the audio from each, pasted these files end to end, and then pasted this huge file onto the end of an audio file of Glenn Gould playing op11. (...). The work represents a humoristic but nevertheless precise commentary about the culture of transcoding, where the legendary musical piece is recreated via digital sound treatment into a dominant internet phenomenon that is a cat video.

Jane Benson

Song for Sebald
2017

Courtesy: Priska Pasquer

In *Song for Sebald*, Jane Benson explores the themes of separation and belonging through a radical encounter with the writer W.G. Sebald's novel, *The Rings of Saturn*. Benson begins with the physical text of the novel and a knife. By carefully excising every part of the text except the syllables of the musical scale - do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti - she uncovers what we might call the «potential music» of Sebald's prose: a set of notes with a full tonal range hovering both inside and outside of the novel, untethered from the original text and radically disjointed within itself.

Lars Fredrikson

Fax
1980

Courtesy : Galerie in situ - Fabienne Leclerc & Lars Fredrikson Etate

In the 1970s, Lars Fredrikson found a fax device from the army in a second-hand shop. From 1974 onwards, he made his first faxes.

These were often based on press or weather information, which he was able to pick up using radio connection methods. The information thus received is transferred directly onto a recording paper: an electrode subjects the electrosensitive surface to the passage of an electrical pulse, causing it to change colour according to the intensity of the signal.

These electrographic prints generate line arrays. They can form photographic images reminiscent of the violent subjects the artist tackled in the 1960s in his collages, or cartographic records. Fredrikson sometimes blurs these impressions through the injection of sound frequencies or the reception of cosmic electromagnetic events, such as the visual embodiment of undulatory flows that are unrestrained by the media. Lars Fredrikson's fax production experienced an intense period in the early 1970s, long before this process became widespread in domestic use in France, and in the late 1980s in the visual and telematic arts.

Extract from the text «FAX», Catalogue of the Lars Fredrikson retrospective exhibition at the MAMAC in Nice, November 2019 (ed. MOUSSE PUBLISHING 2019, page 241)

Le Corbusier, Iannis Xenakis

Philips Pavilion
1958

Courtesy: CIVA & ASBL Atomium

The Philips Pavilion was a World's Fair pavilion designed for Expo '58 in Brussels by the office of Le Corbusier. Commissioned by electronics manufacturer Philips, the pavilion was designed to house a multimedia spectacle that celebrated postwar technological progress. Because Corbusier was busy with the planning of Chandigarh, much of the project management was assigned to Iannis Xenakis, who was also an experimental composer and was influenced in the design by his composition *Metastaseis*.

The reinforced concrete pavilion is a cluster of nine hyperbolic paraboloids in which music, Edgar Varèse's *Poème électronique*, was spatialized by sound projectionists using telephone dials. The speakers were set into the walls. Varèse drew up a detailed spatialization scheme for the entire piece which made great use of the physical layout of the pavilion, especially the height of it. As audiences entered and exited the building Xenakis's *musique concrète* composition *Concret PH* was heard.

Wennig & Daubach

Playing anagrams by arbitrary attributing the major scale to letters
2019

The artist duo Wennig & Daubach explores the linguistic universe in all its dimensions: etymology, semantic density, typography... Their creations pay particular attention to words and expressions that are distinguished by an apparent banality, which is then questioned by processes of isolation or highlighting. The material that the duo works on is the power of language and the unlimited potentialities of the signs of the written word.

Their new project includes the deconstruction of language through its conversion into sound. The artists use a modular synthesizer whose sequences play words containing the same letters. For example, the group of 3 words designer, redesign, resigned represent respectively seven notes in major scale. This translation into sound creates harmony and glitch following the repetition of certain letters. The artists multiply this type of logic with different electronic instruments and by encoding several groups of notes, they show visitors the harmonic complexity that lies behind the linguistic system.

03.09.20 - 01.11.20

Thu - Sun

3 - 7 pm

Société

106 Rue Vanderstichelen

1080 Brussels

Belgium

www.societe-d-electricite.com