

COMMENTS ON THE WORKS

KUTLUG ATAMAN

99 Names, 2002

It is in many religions, including the Sufi sect, this kind of movement growing into trance. For me it was more about like this religious experience being something intellectual but at the same time sexual, so it more like this line from the animal to the intellectual, which then covers the entire human existence. But also, it is called *99 Names*, because it's about a book in the Sufi sect, that defines god in 99 names, some of them very violent, some of them very pacific, some very wise...

Kutlug Ataman

JOHN BALDESSARI

Six Colorful Tales: From the Emotional Spectrum (Women), 1977

In his photographic works, Baldessari uses the symbolic associations ascribed to colors as a signifying barometer of cultural and psychological meanings. *Six Colorful Tales* is a series of episodes — including *Caught Red Handed (Shelley)*, *Feeling Blue (Diane)*, and *Apoplectic Violet (Christine)* — in which six women speak about pivotal incidents from their pasts. Each woman is seated against the same neutral backdrop; Baldessari tints the image according to the emotional content of the stories. The hue of the background immediately shades the viewer's response to the teller and their tale, demonstrating the inherent power of color to evoke emotional associations and tone. Each woman recounts bizarre, often startling events in her life with a matter-of-fact inflection that lends a deadpan, surreal humor to the narratives..

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PETER FISCHLI & DAVID WEISS

Visible World, 1986

Visible World (1987-2000), a kind of traveler's journal, presents an archive of nearly 3,000 photographs taken by the artists on various travels throughout the world.

GEORGE HADJIMICHALIS

Plan showing the positions of Lighthouses in the Archipelago. The Four Orientations

North, South, East, West of Lighthouse no. 7540 positioned at the Akra Pappas, Ikaria, 1991

First of all, there is a ground plan, a map of the Archipelago. At the lighthouse "Pappas" which is situated at the western tip, also named Pappas, of the island of Ikaria, two lines intersect dividing the area into 4 regions: north, south, east and west of the cape. This creates four itineraries always beginning and ending at the same cape. Each route follows and observes the lighthouses it meets and, using the *List of Lighthouses*, records atmospheric conditions depending on the intensity of their lights: those conditions that determine visibility at each given moment and thereby determine us, i.e. our position in the dark, in the night of the Archipelago.

George Hatzimichalis

GARY HILL

Wall Piece, 2000

I have no place. No feet. I've lost the vague idea of limbs. Legs feel more like logs arranged for a fire. I

remember a dream of holding the other's heart in my hand for a moment I live the pulse of another being. Then it was over and I gave it away to a hungry animal. Lush sensations have ceased. I have no mouth, no scream, no voice within. I only listen to an imaginary sound I might make. I am supersonic and alien. I have the feeling of being a fuselage. Am I walking? Sitting in a chair? Killing? Eating? Could it not be any of these things — any and all simultaneously? Where am I? I can't remember at will. It can only be described as something holy for fear of something completely other. Parts come back not quite like what was before but the connection is certain. [...] Difference exists only through sound; a wall of sound. Can I go through it? Can I go through with it? Where is it now, where does it reside? What does it feed on? Why does it flicker? Nothing approximates its speed. It's something from the outside. Way outside. I didn't think this. This is not me. I'm not accountable. It wasn't thought out. It has no relation to thought. This is that hole that everything must pass through. I'm going now before it comes. Will I know when it comes? Will it approach with signals? Will there be a moment of recognition?

© 1996 by Gary Hill, Extract from the transcription of the spoken text

REBECCA HORN

Buster's Bedroom, 1990

Micha, the film's main character, admires Buston Keaton. Apart from trying to mimic him by putting herself in dangerous situations, she also does everything in her power to find out all she can about him. Her research takes her to the sanatorium where Keaton spent the last days of his life: Nirvana House. The institution's inmates, left unsupervised after their doctor's unexpected death, satisfy their every peculiar desire but display no inclination to escape. After a series of trials and tribulations, Micha finally escapes from the sanatorium. In Horn's only cinematic 'happy ending', Micha's search for this mythic figure ends in success.

Stamatis Schizakis

ILYA KABAKOV

The Cycle 10 Characters, 1968-1975

Ten albums (facsimile edition, 1994-1998)

Once, while writing his biography, he suddenly ran into a situation, which for some reason he could not attribute to the biography of one person, although it was only talking about "him," but could easily attribute to the biography of multitude of people. He was terribly surprised and was even frightened by such a circumstance. After all, he perfectly understood that it referred to him only. Nevertheless these different personages had so unexpectedly and distinctly appeared before him, and so clear and comprehensible were their personalities that he even heard voices uttered by each one.

In order to extricate himself from this strange delusion he began to make unique albums, a special mixture of conditions, drawings and explanations, each of which personified a certain personage, a special part of him. This is how large groups from the then and more *Characters* appeared.

He undertook once to describe his life, mostly so that he could find out from this description who himself was, now that he had lived more that half of his life. Once he described everything calmly and circumstantially, he expected to elucidate and lay out before his memory everything which had happened during his years and thereby disclose all the events which transpired during them.[...]

He reflected on this circumstance. What to do? On the one hand, he was one, so to speak; if he looked in the mirror and saw himself, but on the other hand, thinking about something, he saw in himself not one, but many.

He made a decision : unite all these "many and diverse" into a kind of artistic whole, but allow them to

enter into arguments, outdo one another, but let all express themselves in turn. Let each of them have his right to vote completely and full in complete eternal silence, say everything that he knows, and tell his story and ideas to full expression. With that it would be possible to relax. With this decision he suddenly felt the cacophony, which had agitated him uninterruptedly inside since the last time he resolved to describe his life, grow quite. It was not surprising, for this was the noise of many voices, each of which try to shout out its neighbors, so that it could be heard. Now all was quiet, as if each of the eternal voices concentrated and calmly prepared to wait its turn.

With whom to begin? Who had the right to self – expression first? The “Master” had the cloudiest notions concerning this. He decided to let each talk one after the other, stand before him with his account of the world, and then it would be possible to compare, choose, and determine who is more important, more significant... [...]

Ilya Kabakov

Extracts from the text “The Person who describes his life through characters”,
Ilya Kabakov: 1969 -1998, Bard College Center for Curatorial Studies Museum, New York, 2001

Yael Kanarek

Heart in Heart, 2004

Heart in Heart is over half a mile of sheer organza ribbon onto which the artist transferred the kernel files of the Linux operating system line by line. Hung from the ceiling, the sheer organza ribbon also contains text from all of the love letters from Chapters 1 and 2 in the *Traveler's Journal*. This work is a meditation on the ephemeral quality of source code and how it operates when taken out of its native environment. The inner lower hook holds the love letters and the higher external hook holds the source code.

Traveler's Journal, 2000-2006

Chapter 1 (2000), *Forever*

Chapter 2 (2002), *Destruction & Mending*

Chapter 3 (2006), *Object of Desire*

Online work

Courtesy of bitforms gallery nyc and the artist

Traveler's Journal

Traveler's Journal (worldofawe.net) is an ongoing multimedia project that I began in 1994. The project centers on the *Traveler's Journal*, a diaristic and epistolary narrative of a traveler who searches for a lost treasure in the parallel world called Sunset/Sunrise. The narrative is not restricted to one medium, but is expressed through net art, sculpture, prints, music, performance and more, to augment the underlying concept of a 'world.' Each expression of the narrative explores another aspect of the connections between language, travel, geography and technology. The first two chapters look at the intimate relationship we form with digital technology, along the lines of Marshall McLuhan's position on technology as extensions of our body. The third chapter considers the role of languages as defining border and space..

Chapter 1: *Forever*, 2000 <http://worldofawe.net/site/works/files/web/chap1.php>

It establishes the old-school computer interface as a storytelling device and the environment where we piece together the story. It draws on the intimacy one has with one's computer; intimacy to describe a fantastical world: Sunset/Sunrise is a desert terrain. It's a world but not necessarily a planet. Possibly round or flat or both, or neither. Time is suspended at dawn or dusk. Death is undefined. Sometimes, long shadows travel around, as the main light source (perhaps a sun) glides below the horizon, but never across it. Gravity is optional. Water is optional and an algorithm replaces thirst.

Eating is minimal. Like a graveyard for all the hardware and software ever created, objects from Earth end up in Sunset/Sunrise. No mail system. No wireless. Love letters are written and left behind. Sunset/Sunrise is a limitless space

Chapter 2: *Destruction & Mending* <http://worldofawe.net/site/works/files/web/chap2.php>
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art commissioned the second chapter, *Destruction & Mending*, in 2002.

The second chapter is a body that contains its own memory of destruction and mending. Destruction takes place when the traveler steps into an old minefield and explodes in many different directions. The love letter *Bits* begins the process of mending, which is referenced by the duct tape on the screen. The love letter *Pearl*, draws relationships between skins: interface, human and land. A pearl given by the lover to the traveler is the vehicle by which these connections are made: the traveler walks the land, as the pearl travels his/her body, as it travels from page to page (bulging through the duct tape). Place your cursor on the bulge and a "system" message tells where the pearl is in the body ... but whose body? Chapter two maps to the traveler's body and the viewer's simultaneously as an internal landscape.

Chapter 3: *Object of Desire* <http://worldofawe.net/site/works/files/web/chap3.php>
The third chapter, *Object of Desire*, received support from the Rockefeller Media Fellowship.

Object of Desire focuses on a mythological relationship between an individual and an uncharted landscape in a parallel world. This relationship is developed as a construct of language. To detach the single voice from a specific cultural identity, it is split into three languages: English, Hebrew and Arabic. Rather than a literal, one-to-one translation, these three languages overlap and mix to create a trilingual story space. This approach emerges from an observation about the important role of language in defining border and space on the Internet and in the physical world. *Object of Desire* includes 15 diary entries, several languages and downloads from four servers in Ramallah, Tel Aviv, Izmir and New York.

The *Traveler's Journal* resists defining the gender of the traveler or the lover. Elements of English grammar allow gender to remain ambiguous. For example, 'you' can apply to either a man or a woman. This grammatical grey area allows visitors to subconsciously define the traveler and lover in their mind. However, neither Hebrew nor Arabic allow for such ambiguity. The division of gender applies to people, animals, objects, hmmm, and God, of course. This leads to a complicated set of references; as the Jewish-Christian-Muslim traditions connect men to God, they reinforce the male form as a voice of authority. To maintain the neutral position of the narrative, I have made special adaptations to the Hebrew and Arabic by adding animated pictograph of an eye and placing it when the references to the traveler and lover are made, thus one can switch gender through the reading.

NINA PAPACONSTANTINO

Sylvia Plath: The Missing Journal, 2008

The motivation for this work is Sylvia Plath's writing and her relationship with Ted Hughes who, it is said, had concealed one of her journals.

Through the process of tracing the text from Plath's *Journals*, the trace of the writing is revealed, the force of its imprint on paper; the intensity and the texture in relief created upon the white colour as in a 'hidden' narrative, like an undecipherable code.

Nina Papaconstantinou

STEVE RODEN

Moon (both receiver and transmitter... there now remained), 2008

moon (both receiver and transmitter...there now remained) was specifically inspired by the recent discovery of some drawings done with an apparatus designed by Edward Leon Scott, called a phonoautograph in France in 1850. The apparatus created a 'drawing' by engraving sound with a needle into a soot covered piece of paper. The audio is a 10 second fragment of a girl, possibly Scott's daughter, singing the French lullaby: *au clair de la lune*.

Since the original process went from sound to drawing, I wanted to take the recent playback and turn it back into a drawing. The first step was to coat 16 strips of 16mm film with different colors of ink. I then took each strip, and with my eyes closed listened to the 10 seconds recording and scratched into the ink with a needle - becoming a kind of human phonoautograph machine. I then had the images transferred to video, and slowed the film speed down so that each colored segment with the lullaby transcription was 10 seconds long. Next, I watched the moving lines and tried to use them as a kind of score, humming lower tones when the lines were moving left and higher tones when the lines were moving right. I did this with the whole film four times, and then depending on the density of the lines in a 10 second section, I used either one, two, three, or four of the voices. The entire thing was improvised.

The title is two sentence halves from Rilke's text *primal sound*, in which he talks about making recordings in grammar school using cardboard tubes, wax, and wire brush bristles.

Steve Roden

SHELLY SILVER

Suicide, 2003

Suicide shares aspects of the travelogue and the visual essay, even as it probes the boundaries of first-person narrative storytelling.

"Amanda suffers from an inability to direct her desire into the normative paths of home, job, family, relationships that would allow her to connect and live socially. These paths are blocked, so that her desire must take other, more circuitous, anarchic and fantastic directions, exploding almost indiscriminately onto everyone and everything around her. This is of course a sad state of affairs for Amanda, but the film visually and aurally thrives based on this dilemma, as this desire bounces everywhere else, onto everything she hears (we hear) and she sees (we see)".

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BILL VIOLA

Anthem, 1983

Anthem originates in a single piercing scream emitted by an eleven-year-old girl standing in the reverberant hall of Union Station in Los Angeles. The original scream of a few seconds is extended and shifted in time to produce a primitive "scale" of seven harmonic notes, which constitute the soundtrack of the piece. Related in form and function to the religious chant, *Anthem* describes a contemporary ritual evocation centered on the broad theme of materialism – the architecture of heavy industry, the mechanics of the body, the leisure culture of Southern California, the technology of surgery, and their relation to our deep primal fears, darkness, and the separation of body and spirit.

Bill Viola