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CASE

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Neural nació en 1993 como una revista con el deseo de investigar el uso social y cultural de las nuevas tecnologías, en sus diferentes matices, de lo que entonces se denominaba *cyber culture*. El planteamiento editorial fue el de defender y construir en el tiempo el desarrollo de la "cultura de los nuevos medios". Pienso que los tres temas de nuestra revista son estratégicos para la comprensión de los cambios sociales y culturales de este entorno. En primer lugar el *hacktivism* (*hacker activism*), es decir, las prácticas de activismo político a través de las tecnologías contemporáneas, primeras entre todas en la red, luego la música electrónica que ha influido en muchísimos otros estilos musicales, con sus inmediatas modalidades de producción y por último, el arte de los nuevos medios y entre otros el net.art, que se confronta por su misma naturaleza con todas las problemáticas del arte contemporáneo, incluso la infinita capacidad de reproducción de las obras y la imposibilidad de defender un "original". Ciertamente se trata de tres puntos de observación privilegiados para los cambios que está aportando la revolución electrónica. De todo ello habla Neural, pero teniendo bien en cuenta el lema *Think globally, act locally*. Efectivamente, a menudo los proyectos editoriales independientes sufren o de un excesivo arraigo en las cuestiones locales, terminando por hablar de las mismas personas que leen la revista en una especie de círculo cerrado o bien, por el contrario, se hacen portadores de una excesiva y acrítica exaltación por todo lo que ocurre en otro lugar, enfatizando desmesuradamente todas las experiencias vivi-

das lejos del propio territorio. Creo que lo que más beneficia es tener bien afianzadas las raíces en el propio país y en la propia cultura, pero confrontándose continuamente con las otras experiencias y otras posibles perspectivas. De esta forma, manteniendo el necesario respeto a la historia recíproca, se consigue aportar un enriquecimiento mutuo. Finalmente, habrá que defender prioritariamente la relación con los lectores, que son los que desde el exterior tienen la visión más importante del propio producto editorial.

Nuestro interés es el de impulsar la reflexiones e ideas originales sobre el uso de la tecnología en la cultura, en todos los circuitos potencialmente interesados, en Italia y en el extranjero. De todas formas, las categorías más implicadas en nuestros contenidos son los "hacker" con un buen *background* cultural, que a menudo asumen posiciones críticas y constructivas hacia las mismas tecnologías que manejan con sorprendente actividad, los músicos electrónicos y los aficionados a este género de música, que han aprendido a manejar los sonidos con los ordenadores, de forma instintiva y con técnicas particulares, transformando la realidad y virtualidad sonora con métodos innovadores y, por último, los medios artistas que logran describir y conceptualizar espléndidamente paradojas y contradicciones de nuestra relación con las máquinas.

Estamos interesados principalmente en un público "activo", es decir, que no sólo disfruta de la publicación, sino que puede aplicar sus teorías y prácticas en su trabajo cotidiano o para sus intereses personales. Este es el caso de buena parte de nuestros lectores, por lo que pude comprobar personalmente, con una cantidad considerable de feedback que nos llega por correo electrónico, cada vez que sale la revista. Nos interesaría implicar también a la gente que nunca abarcó completamente las tecnologías, pero que tiene una gran experiencia en sus respectivas ramas culturales, puesto que podría aportar opiniones inéditas y originales, además de enriquecer significativamente el debate en curso.

En relación a Zehar, a pesar de que yo puedo comprenderlo sólo en parte, por cuestiones lingüísticas obvias, aprecié los contenidos de la reflexión y debate orientados hacia cuestiones artísticas, sociales y políticas internacionales, que me parece que están desarrolladas con competencia y de manera muy heterogénea, a pesar de que cada publicación está planteada de forma monográfica. El uso de la lengua vasca en algunos de sus contenidos defiende como es debido un patrimonio lingüístico muy valioso. En resumen, Zehar parece que otorga una gran atención o perspectiva global a las cuestiones tratadas, pero manteniendo sus raíces en el entorno local que le es propio, típico de las publicaciones *open mind*. Un discurso aparte merece la gráfica que, aún siendo desarrollada en la mayoría de las páginas en una ordenada "cuadrícula de jaulas", logra sorprender e interesar con el uso de fotos e imágenes artísticas casi siempre inéditas, utilizadas respetando la resolución original —tal vez no pensada para ser impresas en ediciones de gran calidad, sino en formato de vídeo o prensa diaria— y dando una idea tan eficaz de la síntesis cultural de los diferentes medios. ■

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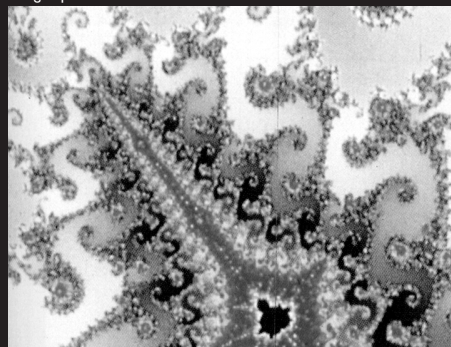
Neural 1993. urtean sortu zen, orduan “ziber kultura” izendatzen zenaren teknologia berriei emandako gizarte eta kultura erabilera aztertu nahi zuen aldizkari gisa. Argitalpenaren ikuspegia “komunikabide berrien kultura” defendatzea eta haien garapena denboran eraikitzea izan zen. Uste dut gure aldizkariaren hiru gaiak estrategikoak direla ingurune horretako gizarte eta kultura aldaketak ulertzeko. Lehenik eta behin, “hacktivism” izeneko dugu (*hacker activism*), hau da, aktibismo politikoaren jardura, sarean lehenengoak diren egungo teknologien bitartez; ondoren, musika elektronikoa, haren ondoriozko ekoizpen modalitateen bitartez, beste musika estilo askotan eragina izan duena; eta azkenik, bitarteko berrien artea, eta net.art izeneko haien artean, daukan izaerak berak arte garaikidearen arazo guztiei aurre egitera bultzatzen duena, baita operak erreproduzitzeko gaitasun mugagabeari eta “jatorrizkoa” defendatzeko ezintasunari ere. Egiaz, hiru ikuspegi ezin hobek dira iraultza elektronikoa ekartzen ari den aldaketetarako. Neural aldizkariak horretaz guztiaz hitz egiten du, oso kontuan hartuta, hala ere, *think globally, act locally* leloa. Eta halaxe da; izan ere, askotan independenteak diren argitalpen proiektuak erroduegi geratzen baitira arazo lokaletan, eta azkenean aldizkaria irakurtzen duten pertsonen buruz hitz egiten dute, era horretan zirkulu itxia eratuz; edo, bestela, gehiegikeria eta kritika eza erakutsita, asaldatu egiten dira beste nonbait gertatzen den guztiaren aurrean, eta norberaren lurraldetik urrun gertatzen diren esperientziak gehiegi goraiatzat dituzte. Uste dut onena norberaren herrian erroak ondo finkatuta edukitzea dela, baina, betiere, beste esperientzia eta ikuspegi batzuekin alderatuta. Era horretan, elkarren arteko historiari erakutsi behar zaion errespetua mantentzen da, eta elkarren arteko aberastasuna lortzen da. Eta, azkenik, lehentasuna eman beharko zaio irakurleekiko harremana mantentzeari, horiek baitira, kanpotik begiratuta, argitalpenaren ikuspegi garrantzitsuena daukatena.

Gure interesa da, kultura alorrean, teknologiaren erabilerari buruzko hausnarketak eta ideia originalak bultzatzea, horretan interesaturik dauden zirkuitu guztietan, bai Italian, bai eta atzerrian ere. Hala eta guztiz ere, gure edukietan gehien ikusten diren kategoriak “hacker-ak” dira, kultura oinarri ona dutenak, eraginkortasun harrigarri erabiltzen dituzten teknologien aurrean, askotan jokabide kritikoak eta konstruktiboak izaten dituztenak; baita musikari elektronikoak eta musika mota horren zaleak ere, soinuak ordenagailuen bitartez eraldatzen senaz ikasi dutenak eta beren teknikak erabiltzen dituztenak, eta, horrela, soinu errealtate eta birtualtasuna bitarteko berritzaileen bidez eraldatzen dutenak; eta, azkenik, arte komunikabideak, makinekin daukagun harremanaren paradoxa eta aurkakotasunak era ezin hobean deskribatzea eta kontzeptualizatzea lortzen dutenak.

Bereziki “aktiboa” den publikoa interesatzen zaigu; hau da, argitalpenaz gozatzeaz gain, horren teoriak eta praktikak eguneroko lanean edo daukan interesetan erabiltzen dituen publikoa. Horrelakoa da gure irakurleen gehiengo, neuk frogatu ahal izan dudanez, aldizkaria kaleratzen dugun bakoitzean, posta elektronikoz iristen zaigun feedback kopuru handiari esker. Teknologia erabat onartu ez dituen, baina teknologien barruko kultura esparruetan esperientzia handia daukan jendea ere geureganatu nahi genuke, iritzi berri eta originalak ekar bailitzake, eta ematen ari den eztabaida era nabarmenean aberastu baitezake.

Nahiz eta nik, hizkuntza dela eta, Zehar guztiguztia ez ulertu, nazioarteko arte, gizarte eta politika auzietara bideratutako hausnarketaren edukiei eta eztabaidari erreparatu ahal izan nien, eta, nire ustez, gaitasun handiz eta era heterogeneoan garaturik daude, argitalpen bakoitza monografikoa bada ere. Eduki batzuetan euskara erabiltzeak balio handikoa den hizkuntza ondarea defendatzen du, beharrezkoa denez. Laburbilduz, badirudi Zehar argitalpenak esparru orokorreko arazoei arreta handia eskaintzen diela, baina erroak bere lekuan mantenduz; hori ohikoa izaten da *open mind* erako argitalpenetan. Grafikak aipamen berezia merezi du, eta orri gehienetan kaiola moduko lauki-sare ordenatuetan garatzen bada ere, harridura eta interesa sortzea lortzen du, ia beti berriak diren argazkiak eta arte irudiak erabiltzen dituelako —edizio zainduetan argitaratzeko pentsatutako erresoluzioa ez dutenak, baizik eta bideo edo egunkari moduko edizioetarako pentsatua, baina beren horretan argitaratuak— eta komunikabide guztien kultura sintesiaren ideia eraginkorra ematen duelako. ■

Imagen publicada en **Zehar 40**



Heinz-Otto Peitgen & Peter H. Richter
El conjunto del Mandelbrot 1986

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Neural began in 1993 as a magazine with the aim of investigating the social and cultural uses of new technologies in various aspects of what was then known as cyber culture. Our editorial approach was to support and construct in time the development of 'new media culture'. I think that the three subjects we cover in our magazine are of strategic importance for understanding the social and cultural changes in this field. First of all, hacker activism, that is, engaging in political activism using modern technologies, first of all on the internet; then electronic music, which has influenced a great many other musical styles, with its instant production methods; and finally, new media art, among other things, net art, which because of its very nature faces up to all the problems of modern art, including its endless capacity to reproduce works and the impossibility of defending an 'original'. These are definitely three exceptional points from which to observe the changes that the electronic revolution is bringing about. Neural deals with all this, but keeps the motto 'Think globally, act locally' well in mind. In fact, independent editorial projects often suffer from either being far too rooted in local questions, so that they end up by talking about the same people who read the magazine in a kind of closed circle or, on the other hand, they become excessively uncritical and overexcited about everything that is going on elsewhere, placing far too much emphasis on all those experiences that take place a long way from their own area. I think that the most beneficial approach is to have well-established roots in your own country and in your own culture, but to constantly contrast these with other experiences and other potential perspectives. In this way, by maintaining the required degree of respect for the history that you share, you manage to achieve mutual enrichment. Finally, nurturing your relationship with your readers is of prime importance, as they are the people on the outside with the most important vision of the editorial product itself.

We are interested in promoting reflections and original ideas on the use of technology in culture in all those circuits that are potentially interested in this, both in Italy and abroad. In any case, the groups of people most closely involved in our contents are hackers with a sound cultural background, who often adopt a critical constructive stance towards the very technologies that they handle in such a surprisingly active way; electronic musicians and fans of this musical genre, who have learned how to instinctively exploit sound using computers with their own personal techniques, to transform the reality and virtual reality of sound using innovative methods; and finally, media artists who magnificently describe and conceptualise the paradoxes and contradictions of our relationship with machines.

We are mainly interested in 'active' readers, those who not only enjoy the magazine, but can also apply its theories and practices in their everyday work or for their own personal interests. From the considerable amount of feedback that reaches us by e-mail each time the magazine comes out I can personally verify that this is the case with quite a lot of our readers. We would also be interested in attracting people who have never completely got involved with these technologies, but who have a great deal of experience in their respective cultural fields, as they could contribute original opinions that have not been published before, as well as considerably enriching the current debate.

Despite the fact that I can only partly understand Zehar, for obvious linguistic reasons, I did appreciate the contents regarding the reflections and debate that focused on artistic, social and international political affairs, which I think are competently produced with a great deal of variety, despite the fact that each issue is devoted to a single subject. The use of Basque in some of its articles provides appropriate support for an extremely valuable linguistic heritage. To sum up, Zehar seems to pay a great deal of attention or give an overall perspective to the questions that it deals with, although it doesn't neglect its roots in its own local environment, which is typical of

'open minded' publications. The graphics deserve a separate mention as, although they are developed on most of the pages in a neat "cage-like grid", they manage to surprise and interest you by using artistic images and photos that in almost all cases have not been seen before, while respecting the original resolution. They might not be designed to be printed in top-quality editions but in video format or daily newspapers, and this provides a highly effective idea of cultural synthesis between different media. ■

Contribution by Alessandro Ludovico, editor in chief of Neural, the Italian new media cultural magazine since 1993.

Mute

06

When Mute switched from its trademark *Financial Times*-pink newspaper format to a more standard slick magazine and scored a distribution deal with *Time Out*, the mainstream press (*The Guardian* and *Spiegel Online*, for example) took the opportunity to grab the newsy angle and run stories on the magazine positioned to become what *Wired UK* could not. Even while *Wired UK* was up and running, assistant editor Hari Kunzru and section editor James Flint were already moonlighting at Mute — for free, just like all the other writers and designers. The attraction may have been the freedom to write at length about Deleuze, to ask "Is Cyberspace Postmodern?" and then take countless column inches to try to come up with an answer, or it may simply have been the people involved, many of them former art students who ran their office more like a studio than an office. These are exceedingly pleasant and generous people, or at least the three that I've met are. Josephine Berry and Micz Flor, who's recently picked up a prize in Germany for his online artwork, were the most recent to come through Berlin, introducing the online version of Mute at a conference on Net literature. Pauline van Mourik Broekman preceded them by a few months when we took part in a panel on online journalism during the Transmedia festival, part of which involved several discussions about the future of the Net in Europe and vice versa — you'll need to know that as you read on. Context established, let's get on with it.

David Hudson: Tell me about Mute's beginnings. Pauline van Mourik Broekman: Mute actually originated first time round at the Slade School of Art, where Simon Worthington, now my co-editor and co-publisher, made a sporadic magazine called 'Mute' that came out in a variety of formats. He made it with Daniel Jackson, Helen Arthur and Steve Faulkner, all artists at the Slade, too.

It had a completely open submission policy, sending out calls for contributions about two months before it came out and the format was different each time. One was in a matchbox, one was as a hardbound art woodcut collection — the call for contributions was a piece of standard size MDF board that people had to send back in as a woodcut — and one was a tabloid newspaper printed in a run of 10,000 and distributed by hand and van all over the UK.

This last one, kind of a spoof on the sensationalist English press, but with quite political content, I think spurred Simon on to thinking he would like to do that again more seriously. Whilst he started an MA in the US at the California Institute of the Arts, he decided to do Mute again, but only if he was seriously interested in the topic it dealt with (its last incarnation, though fun, started to feel too random subject-wise and not worth all the time, emotion and money he had put into it).

We met a few months after. As I had become slightly disillusioned with art, both the social questions to do with my own, which was very private, sort of mythopoetic Joseph Cornell-like collages, and with that I saw around me. I'd always had an interest in writing also, so we decided to do Mute together.

By that stage Simon had decided that the publication he wanted to do should be about art and tech-