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Abstract

New media art was essentially defined in its beginnings by a technodeterminism linked to the enthusiastic use of new technologies and media, which was not accidental but contextualised by a compact Californian ideology stemming from the link between the Californian bohemia of the last decades of the 20th century and the advanced smart technologies (virtual reality, the internet) and neoliberalism. A notable part of the early projects of new media art belonged to modernism and the post-avant-garde due to the strong emphasis on technological and media innovation, thus departing from contemporary art, defined by the medium's characteristic opening up of social issues and the involvement of artistic activism. In the present day - influenced by the social and cultural paradigms of the Anthropocene (Capitalocene) - new media art - focused on applications, algorithms and services - is also taking on social and political functions and entering the broader field of contemporary art. This text explores the dual nature of new media art applications in the present: they have a new media specificity and often demonstrate innovation in this field, but they also perform a role in activism, the critique of anthropocentrism, ecological and political engagement, and education for new media literacy.

The article also proposes the periodisation of global tendencies in new media art.

Keywords: new media art, technodeterminism, Californian ideology, game philosophy, artificial intelligence, environmental art, Anthropocene

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The Social and Philosophical Foundations of New Media Art: New Media Art Projects in the World of Gaming, Social Media, Artificial Intelligence and Activism

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Summary

This text deals with the philosophical and social ideas framing the most recent trends in new media art, which is increasingly integrated into a part of contemporary art that is also conceptually challenging and often interacts with science, politics and economics. Another focus of this article and a major stimulus for this art is the philosophy of games, for example, the writings of Caillois and Gadamer. The projects discussed in this text intertwine new media and technical innovations with social and conceptual content. These innovations are also linked to new platforms in such works, such as drones, artificial intelligence and the space station. Two seemingly incompatible examples demonstrate how ideas and concepts have been gaining traction in the early decades of the 21st century: the cryptocurrency Bitcoin and projects by the Yes Men duo. With Bitcoin, the dematerialisation of the artefact and its leakage from the umbrella institution (art) has spread from (avant-garde and modern) art to financial markets (in art, the umbrella institution of art has been destabilised by the canons, and in the financial sphere, the role of national banks has been destabilised), while the Yes Men (from 1996 onwards) deconstruct professional politics and destabilise the strategies of both political organisations and multinationals through parodies, pranks, identity takeovers, fake news and subversive affirmation (Arns's and Sasse's concept).

The article proposes the periodisation of global tendencies in new media art. It examines three periods of new media art, showing the different approaches of the artists and activists, the use of different authorial poetics and philosophies, and the different modalities of the products of this art, which range from heavy electronic installations and performances to algorithmic works and cognitive services, with a strong emphasis on software. In the third and current period (from 2008 onwards),

environmental themes have emerged as a major challenge to new media (and contemporary) art today. The inclusion of non-human agents has come to the fore, allowing for new perspectives on life and the world.