

*Twas the day of Christmas, when all through my mom's house.
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.*

*So, in boredom, I made the mistake
of checking on Twitter
which made my heart ache.*

The below is a brief conversation on net art that I ran across on Twitter on Christmas day. This is followed by some stray thoughts typed while sitting in an airport in snowy Columbus waiting for a flight to Florida and then on the 2nd day of the New Year 2011.

KiangaEllis

Internet artists seem to live in a different ghetto from other so-called emerging visual artists using Internet 4 promotion, performance.

KiangaEllis

@manbartlett Terminology is a mess. Artists making new "net art" vs the rest: different things happening for them in the Web uh 3.0 world.

KiangaEllis

Not easy for internet art to enter "the conversation" bc it isn't experienced in trad'l art settings. It's not a (luxury) commodity.#class

KiangaEllis

So far, an internet artist has to become @cory_arcangel, i.e. get that work off the desktop in2 a proper gallery + in2 the conversation.

Powhida

@KiangaEllis 'net art comes in waves. There was a hypertext room of net art in the 2000 WhiBi. Mark Amerika's Grammatron was def net 1.0

Powhida

@KiangaEllis Well, not really. Getting into a biennial is def being included in the convo. It just wasn't a v long conversation.

Powhida

@KiangaEllis define "proper gallery" and by conversation, do you mean one revolving around prices that drives @artinfodotcom@artnetdotcom?

KiangaEllis

@Powhida At the end of the day, there really has to be some object associated w the work that the right people can buy and take home. Oui?

Powhida

@KiangaEllis definitely not. I think @mriver and @twhid of #mtaa might be able to talk about that.

KiangaEllis

@Powhida "proper"=whichever gallery will get the artist noticed + in the words/on lips of people in the know abt art + who influence others.

mriver

@Powhida @kiangaellis @twhid it depends on how you define #rank in the artworld. let's talk about it later. back 2 Xmas for me

KiangaEllis

@Powhida I'm thinking about how an artist gets to the point of living well (or better) working full-time as an artist. @twhid @mriver

I'm not sure where to start. I guess I'll begin with a note to Kianga that I'm happy she is thinking about art in general and net art in specific. When I started making art located on the net in the late 90's, it seemed that only a handful of people in the world thought about it. Seeing a conversation flow across Twitter on Christmas showed me the awareness on this work has drifted out to a broader set of people.

I would also like to say that although I'm happy for the conversation, I feel it holds misconception not only on net art but the reasons to make art. So, here are some of my thoughts and opinions. They wander around a bit but that's how I'm feeling right now. Also of note before I start, MTAA is made of two people (Tim and I) and we look at the art world with different lens.

I'll start with a little rant. Forgive this part. It's kinda embarrassing.

The majority of artworks I see rehash ideals, structures and contexts that have existed for generations. I find that fact boring and sad. I see the art that is presented at art fairs increasing this percentage. I do not think money or rank are only the cause of this type of work. I have no solution for this. I'm just trying to make my own way.

What draws me to artist like Dalton and Powhida, both as individuals and together in #class and #rank, is they speak within the traditions of art but also find a ways to experiment with new forms and methods.

I began to make artwork on the Internet as a way of investigating a new public space. The work existed (and stills exists) not a solid objects but as a conversation between people and locations. I was not interested in using the net to delivery movies and pictures to you. I was using the Internet as a location. I saw no need in getting the work off the desktop and into a gallery in order to be part of a larger conversation. I was already in your home waiting for you. One just needed to look.

Yes, Cory was able to “get that work off the desktop in2 a *proper gallery*. He took forms developed in early online culture and experimental music and brought those practises to a larger audience with his work. He succeed with good work and good communication skills. (full disclosure - I’m happy to have and early print, a piece of software, a vinyl record and small painting by Cory in my collection. Whitney solo show? Yippee.). I’m truly happy for his success. I’m happy not only because he is a smart hard working and interesting artist who deserves it but also as a vindication of the work of early online artist which he is a part.

But his success did pour blood in the water. For the last few years, many online artist have focused on making “solid” objects that can be easily translated into a gallery system. Nothing wrong with making object like digital artworks but what they seemed to be making felt like Cory artworks than unique experiments within the digital world. Net artist stopped talking about online communities. We started using the phase you presented - “*the net art ghetto*.”

Luckily, the swing seems to moving back to experimentation and communication with online art as of late (thanks market crash and surf clubs?). Solid objects are becoming transitional experiments again. This does exclude showing at galleries or getting the “words/on lips of people in the know about art + who influence others.” It just gets the horse back in front of cart.

Day jobs? Good lord the subject makes me crazy. Full time artist? Most of the artist you know, emerging or established, living or dead, probable do or did something else for money besides sitting around the studio 24/7. Cory teaches. Vito still teaches. I swing a hammer. Big deal. Yes, some artist can make it all off the studio. Props to them.

I decided, when I started out, to make work that I understood would be difficult, if not impossible, to support me. This was especially true in the beginning when Tim and I spent most of our conversations about our artwork trying to explain what the Internet was about. So, swinging a hammer let me make the work I wanted to make. I got to show in museums and be noted in history books. Huzzah. Some artist who live on gallery sales will be forgotten over time. Drag.

And I have not really worried about getting the right people to know my work. Net art has always had a group of interesting artist, gallerist, curators, and critics around. It's one of the few bonuses to the whole project. You'll be broke but at least the conversation will be fun.

Anyways, the sun is going down I think I need to get some food. I don't think I touched on all that I wanted to say but hopefully we'll talk again. So, to sum up for now, art comes first and #Rank is relative. Thanks for thinking about it. Night.