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FLAG METAMORPHOSES - abstract for lecture with screening

www.flag-metamorphoses.net

1) I briefly explain my background

I'm a swiss / luxembourgish artist and have studied painting and videoart at the Academy of Fine Arts in Düsseldorf, Germany. I have realised solo projects in public areas with flag installations in Düsseldorf 1996 and Luxembourg 1997. Since 1999, my work focuses on videoart, animation and digital imagery. 2000-2004, I have realised media art projects on public screens as a member of the artists group [Strictly Public]. In 2005, the still growing flash animation series FLAG METAMORPHOSES has received funding from the Swiss Federal Office of Culture.

2) The concept of the project FLAG METAMORPHOSES

A participatory / collaborative art project - a continuously growing animation series with many authors:

The flags of every nation in the world transform into each other through flash animation.

For some hundred years, states and nations are symbolized through their flags and coats of arms. A flag may blow in the wind, but its appearance changes far less frequently than does the country which it represents. Using digital media however, we can make the symbols dance: an exploration into the meaning of imagery on flags, aiming to create interrelated associations through questioning, reassessing, fluidizing and re-mixing of diverse national iconography.

Between each two flags, scenes appear that show an aspect of the relations between the two countries.

Each artist who creates a flag animation expresses such a relation in his/her own way. FLAG METAMORPHOSES lays stress on the relations between nations and identities as changing ones: Only in the permanent re-creation of values, symbols and ways of life, in mixing with others and differing from others, cultures and societies stay alive.

3) Screening: I show and explain some of the animations

4) Finding the international artists / authors and motivate them to contribute

- translation of the concept and call into 7 languages
- I give lectures and workshops (in art events, schools and universities)
- spreading the call through websites, mailing lists, emails (to artists, festivals, universities, art institutions, ...)
- problems to reach artists in Africa, Asia (China), Arabic countries, even South America
- (email) communication between interested and contributing international artists and me; personal contacts
- curating / selection – not every animation is accepted – I explain, why

5) Public presentation - the project / animation series can be watched on various platforms simultaneously.

'slide show': images of exhibitions, screenings and public presentations

- project website (and other websites)
- film / video / media art festivals
- art galleries, museums – as INSTALLATION with selection menu for the visitors!
- public screens

This project is adequate for all audiences and contexts, also for the public space and the web, for various reasons:

- the graphical style, strong colours and hard edges look brilliant on digital video screens and computer monitors
- the topics of this animation series are about societies, politics, culture and history - genuine public themes
- in short time – duration 30 sec. to 3 min. – statements can be made without words, internationally understandable
- international artists can continue to contribute and react on new developments
- the call for participation can be published on public screens, too, with URL

(Question: how to find out about the audience's reactions?)

6) Discussion about the project and its possibilities, and / or I'll show and explain more flag animations.