

## Secondary Transludic Borders



Borders exist to demarcate and control properties. Their delimitation and demarcation takes place simultaneously on a personal and general ground. Borders are installed inside bodies and outside in the public space.

The enactment of borders allows the control and the appropriation of global production for the benefit of different power structures. These powers are in conflict with each other. The classic capitalistic forms of control over production struggle with the actual postfordist methods of value reproduction and service- providing are made possible via technology. If as C. Marx predicted space annihilation with the use of time is a constantly increasing necessity for the capital, then transcending a continuously re-determination of borders either on geographical or on social grounds forms a parallel necessity as well. Similarly, a need arises for the modification of perception regarding the meaning of boundaries for individuals and social groups. The means used today –thanks to and via technology- for the transcendence of any kind of borders/limits is the global extension and diffusion of all kinds of vectors.

McKenzie Wark claims: A vector is defined as any medium through which something is moved into space. Transportation vectors circulate objects and subjects as global commerce goods and the universal labour power. What circulates in communication vectors is information.

The new class that controls the vectors (vectoralists), especially those of communication, is very often in opposition with the traditional capitalistic class. Vectors' forming presents different variations; their analysis and expression go much further than the "fetishism of the technique" and the representation modes that are so commonly used in the art world. In the western hyper-developed countries, people's lives are deep in the vectors. For better or for worse. What brings future is for the moment an object of claim.

# \$ LIFE

Such a vector is the online virtual environment of Second Life. Its main characteristic is that its form and development is up to the users. Based on the open source software, it constitutes a social experiment of novelties production, both in the field of information hold and use and in the different forms of organising a global social space. At the same time, it is also a market that is based on soft –so far- rules, that are still however strict rules of the late capitalist reproduction.

Personal Cinema aims with the present project principally to broaden the notion of all kinds of borders, as these are formed in and through the vector space of Second Life and to explore and extend their interaction with the limits and the ways of seeing the real 'first' life.



## Topics

### Introduction – identity

What we call self is a temporary construction. As a French man put it once: "self is the label of existence".

The perception for this construction differs in real and virtual life. In real life, the physical presence of one's self is fixed by a series of conventions that function as borders in perception. Thus, the self is perceived as a precise, continuous and concrete identity. If self is the measure of reality, then self is as well the measure of border marking.

Moreover, in real life self is a temporary construction obscured by the imposed obligations of belonging to a nation, gender, religion, culture etc. In virtual environments this is revealed simply by the fact that You are the one that creates the image of the avatar that represents You. You can change avatars at any time, or even use simultaneously more than one. Traces of the tactics of these transformations can be found in real life (labour market, immigration, nomadism) but only in virtual environments the post-modern identity as a self – aware identity, finds its complete representation.

Personal cinema intends to use Second Life, an MMORPG (massive multi-user online role playing game) as a 3D virtual environment space to explore and investigate the "set and the settings" of the borders in relation to the several following topics aiming to examine especially the correspondences between borders in real and in virtual life.



- **Gender / sexuality / appearance:**  
 while in real life the social contacts and the gender are dominant to acquire work, accommodation, entertainment, education , in contrast in Second Life, switching between sexes reveals the hidden possibilities people have. For instance, women are not inferior to men in physical strength; they do not have to choose between having a career or a child, feeling guilty for their decisions. Sexual perversions do not lead to marginalisation or victimization as in real life. On the contrary, they often become playful situations that help in understanding and accepting one's particularities.
- **Nations / communities:**  
 The establishment of boundaries in real life forms zones of exclusions for individuals and social groups. Virtual environments as Second Life allow the rehabilitation of marginalised individuals and groups, coming from different geographical locations around the world.  
 On the other hand, in virtual worlds a possibility is given for individuals to form groups and nations and this phenomenon carries the danger of self identification based on the common prejudices. Consequently, the creation of personal spaces that exclude anything 'alien', means the devitalisation of the common ideological features that are essential in composing the social texture.
- **Land property / land borders**  
 In real life, almost since ever, land owning and property rights have been legislatively established and have come to be considered natural and out of doubt. New technologies of information circulation have inevitably changed the rules. The ways of the established methods for the creation of 'artificial dearth' at the physical capitalist production space reappear in virtual environments, but in a much softer form still.  
 Virtual land is defined by the rules of the software used. Second Life uses an open source system [that is indeed a method of novelties' development] but is far from being a free software application. Free software goes much further than open source by being a social movement that distributes copyright freedom and collaboration between the users of information. The difference between these two, in the case of virtual environments as Second Life, is very important when it comes to property and borders in relation to the ownership of virtual land and virtual goodies (commercial or free). Land can be bought, can be exploited or donated by the user but it is always under the control of the 'open source' game system. It is never fully controlled by the user.

- **Work / commerce**

Virtual environments as Second Life, stand as the probable 3D extension of the 2D WWW [world wide waste]. That presupposes a social 3D layer on the top of the web. This stands as a mere representation of information circulation as it is perceived through press and television. In fact, we face the opposition between the comprehension of two different ways of viewing as representation and simulation. As Paffendorf claims "technologies of 'world mirroring' like Google Earth lead to global insights by giving us the big image/ view of the top side of our world (following the first space photo of the planet shot in the 50s) and therefore the decisions about people, ideas, environment and money change dramatically."

The development of micro-commerce that is happening in virtual environments like Second Life, where people exchange 'self made' products (clothes, objects, skins etc) creates relationships and constitutes a file sharing network between users completely different from the common automated upload / download relationship. That leads to the development of a new market that can really support and cover the needs of the users.

If in the developing countries people of the 1 dollar income, were given the opportunity to enter and work in a virtual environment, they would earn even ten times more, just be remaining idle.

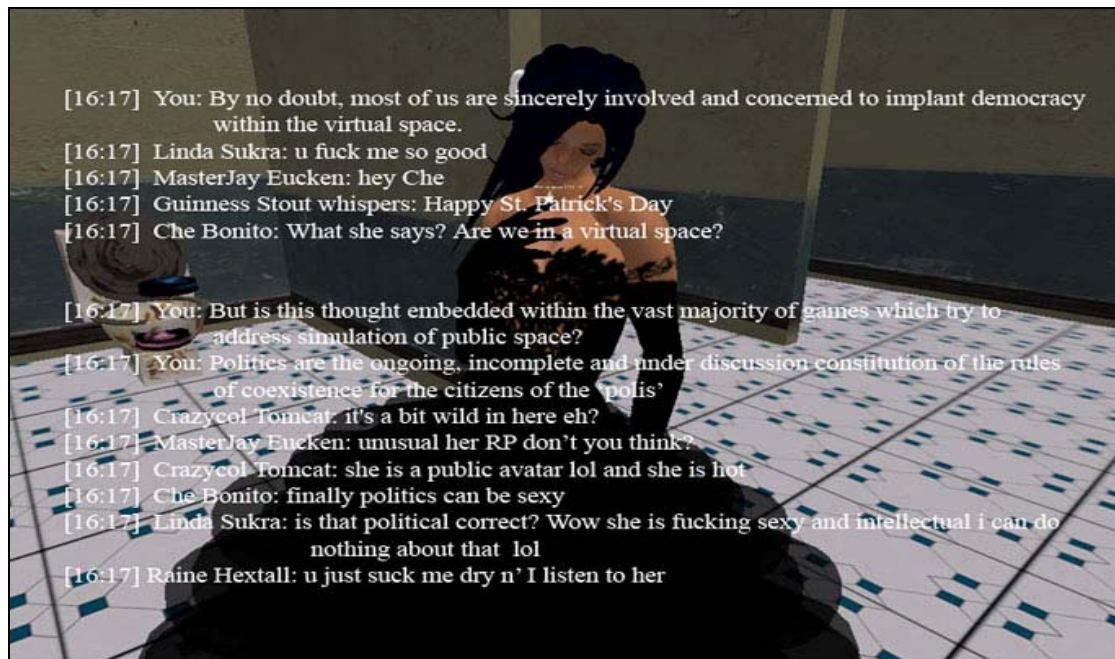
- **Languages**

Languages in Second life are incorporated in relation to the existent communities and develop elements of 'locality' into 'globality'. Combining this with work, this creates new preconditions of survival for the smaller countries.

More topics will be examined such as education opportunities, religion, politics etc in virtual environments. This will depend on the contribution and the interest of the groups and individuals that will collaborate for the project.



## Project realization schedule and presentation in Brussels's Biennial.



- For the realisation of the project, Personal Cinema will be buying land in Second Life and will set up a centre for receiving and presenting the material that will be created and submitted by the members of Personal Cinema and the artists and groups collaborating for the project. This material, depending on the artists and collaborators' choices, will have the form of online performances and activities that will be presented inside the centre as well as in other SL locations. The time and the venue where each interactive performance or event will take place will be scheduled and announced beforehand in SL, on web pages and blogs so that 'residents' can participate or watch. Video footage, animations, photos, software development of SLwiki language, texts, additional projects, games and all material related to the events will be exhibited in the virtual centre. The events and activities will continue as an ongoing project throughout the whole duration of the Biennale and afterwards.
- For the physical space of the Biennale we would need a stand with PCs, a video beamer, a projection screen/wall and a place to put on theoretical printed material related to the project and information on the possibilities for audience participation. As an online project, it will of course be accessible 24hours globally.