

**From *Software*—  
Information Technology**

**Its New Meaning for Art**

# **Exhibition at the Jewish Museum: *Software, 1970***

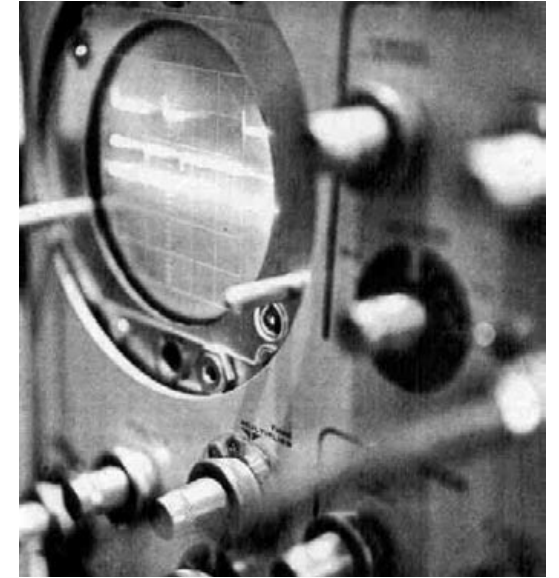
**Curated by Jack Burnham**

**Documentation of projects by Theodore H. Nelson,  
the Architecture Machine Group, and Les Levine,  
Nicholas Negroponte**

**Participating artists: Vito Acconci, David Antin, Architecture Group  
Machine M.I.T., John Baldessari, Robert Barry, Linda Berris, Donald  
Burgoyne, Paul Conroy, Agnes Denes, Robert Duncan Enzmann,  
Carl Fernbach-Flarsheim, John Godyear, Hans Haacke, Douglas Hue-  
bler, Joseph Kosuth, Nam June Paik, Alex Razdow, Sonia Sheridan,  
Evander D. Schley, Theodosius Victoria, Laurence Weiner**

# ***Labyrinth***

- **Interactive Exhibition's catalogue by Ted Nelson**
- **The first publicly-accessible text on a computer (hypertext)**
- **Allowed users to consult artist files and other computerized documents**



# Seek



# **Seek**

- **By Nicholas Negroponte,  
Architecture Group Machine M.I.T.**
- **Housed gerbils with metal blocks in a cube,  
blocks were rearranged by their movements**
- **Newly grid-like versions by the gerbils' designs**
- **"I remember watching one gerbil who stood motionless on his little kangaroo matchstick legs, watching the Great Grappler rearranging his world. Gerbils are somewhat inscrutable, but I had a sense that he was *worshiping* it. He did not move until the block started coming down on top of him" (Ted Nelson, *Dream Machines*)**

# ***Cremation Piece***

- **By John Baldessari**
- **Interring the ashes of his paintings in the wall of the museum behind a plaque**
- **Materials: performance, black and white photographs, newspaper clipping**



# ***Room Situation***

- **By Vito Acconci**
- **“standing near a person and intruding on his personal space.”**



# Systems Burn-Off



# ***Systems Burn-Off***

- By Les Levine
- Used a system called *Systems Burn-Off* Residual Software to submit photographs he had taken
- Interactive video installments
- Definition of the

software : hardware  
= media : art  
= information : object

# ***Systems Burn-Off***

- Stated that most art “ends up as information about art,” *Systems Burn-Off* was *art as information about information about art*, ( adding a level of complexity and reflexivity onto that cycle of transformation about in media culture )
- The artwork as an object was secondary to the expression of an idea that becomes reality by simulating it

# Summary

## The goal of *Software*

- **Focusing sensibilities on the fastest growing area in Art and Technology**
- **Instrumental in redefining the entire area of esthetic awareness**
- **Software: no longer connected with machines presented the 'programs' of artists expressing ideas or art propositions**
- **New media artists: Roy Ascott, Nam June Paik, and Lynn Hershman**

# Summary

- Before *Software*, Computer Art seen as *cybernetic serendipity*; duplication or mimicking of previous art forms or master's works.
- Jack Burnham sees a vision of new media art in investigation and implementation of cultural process via computation
- Understanding of new media art =  
Beyond Norbert Wiener's Cybernetics  
+ software model