SEAN RASPET

NEW GALERIE

Selected press

ARTFORUM

"Images Rendered Bare. Vacant. Recognizable."
STADIUM
548 West 28th Street, Suite 636
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As Facebook feeds and Tumblr streams send digital images further from their indexical referents with every passing "Post," the only image whose integrity cannot be eroded is the image that never laid claim to any: the stock photo. And while the strategic appropriation of stock images has become something of a generic plug-in itself, curator Karen Archey keeps the conversation critical with "Images Rendered Bare. Vacant. Recognizable." The title's punctuated rhythm echoes Rachel Reupke's *10 Seconds or Greater*, 2009, a fifteen-minute montage of staged, stilted interactions, all intentionally infomercial-ready. Her delightfully multicultural cast trade toothpaste-commercial smiles over vegetable-laden chopping blocks or wipe their brows as if after a hearty but sweat-free workout. For the adjacent projection, *Frieze Stock Footage*, 2011, Oliver Laric took a slow-motion camera

View of "Images Rendered Bare. Vacant. Recognizable.," 2012.

around the Frieze Art Fair, erasing the specific context of the fair with footage of overtly generic events such as "energy drink poured into cup," "cigarette falling," or "urinal," which features liquid shimmering like confetti over the porcelain surface. Yngve Holen splashes his neuro-themed mood boards with digital renderings of water, a substance fundamentally not able to be scanned.

If these artists nod to the semantic disjuncture inherent in the digital image, Sean Raspet gives form to that frustration. Starting with photographs of police reports stuffed in manila envelopes, Raspet folds in neutral scenes, like the tiled floors of fast food restaurants. The resulting visual accumulations are printed on vinyl banners that hang in imperfect overlap, suggesting browser windows on a desktop screen. Selected excerpts reappear as icons on coffee mugs, ordered online through a photo-personalization service and then stacked on the floor in a pyramid of packaging material. Installation shots of these arrangements are then inserted back into the piece, in what Archey terms "a self-cannibalizing archive." This archive ultimately leaves no access; at its root, the documents remain sealed. The images of information are made as "happily vacant" as the staged stock photography of the surrounding works.

— *Kate Sutton*

SEAN RASPET
NEW GALERIE

ART PAPERS

SEAN RASPET
NEW YORK

The sculptures, installations, and contractual works featured in Sean Raspet's exhibition *As If Written In* reflect the ways in which consumer society produces "free" time in the service of consumption, thereby folding leisure back into labor [The Kitchen; September 10—October 23, 2010]. This suggests the infinite temporality at play in the closed and recursive systems of production and labor. Raspet articulates this production of surplus time by taking up recognizable tropes of labor such as a commercial mop, factory clocks, and manila folders. He also enlists signifiers of leisure such as storefronts and window displays and institutional communication systems such as an institutional phone system, a gallery floor space, and a contractual agreement. In this, he points to the operational ubiquity of self-reflexive systems.

This varied material is fractured and repeated into iterative works that come together to shape the exhibition narrative. *(3 inflections)*, 2009-2010, revolves around three clocks. *(Inflection)*, 2010, enlists a mop. In both works, shards of mirror face the object with enough distance to both reflect and distort it. The mirrors reflect the object back towards itself, expanding the clock or mop through repetition while also distorting and fracturing it visually. Similarly, *Folder (a Novel)*, 2010, stages two chairs and an office, on which three packets of instructions are laid out for review. These are based on Raspet's work for the census bureau, where specifics such as names, places, and things are abstracted or written out, an experience of statistical objectivity that also shapes didactic texts. Raspet similarly unsettles our sense of place in *Background Processes*, 2010, where fourteen semi-transparent vinyl banners are arrayed as a maze for us to navigate. The banners juxtapose various desaturated images of reflections in storefronts and display windows taken from the artist's daily life in consumer culture. This juxtaposition flattens out the experience referentially while illustrating the idea that producing more of the same is a false expansion.

Beyond the physical space of the gallery, Raspet also enlists the exhibition checklist to point to more conceptual works by divulging his manipulation of The Kitchen's infrastructure. For *Untitled (Hold)*, 2010, a telephone call placed on hold is automatically forwarded through three of The Kitchen's telephone lines for the duration of the exhibition, thus simultaneously denying these lines the capacity to circulate content and casting them as excess within the institution. Similarly, *Untitled (Sublet)*, 2010, exceeds the spatio-temporal limits of the exhibition. For this piece, Raspet has sublet a standard casket-sized rectangle of gallery floor space from The Kitchen for as long as he will continue to make rent payments, thus addressing the illusion of control through purchasing power. The last work on the checklist, *, 2008-ongoing, requires the visitor to sign a confidentiality agreement before its viewing. The agreement prevents the signatory from discussing the work, thereby denying the possibility of any social and collective meaning-making for the piece. By taking up the fragmented, repetitious, and extraneous character of recursive systems, *As If Written In* opens up a space for thinking their preemption of agency, knowledge production, and communication in commodity culture.

—Amanda Parmer

SEAN RASPET
NEW GALERIE

MOUSSE

The Fragrance of Coins

Sean Raspet
interviewed by Kevin McGarry

Recently Sean Raspet has been mining what escapes into air, exploiting the chemical makeup and poetic densities of substances like cola and oil. As physical, psychic, and economic determinants of 21st Century energy, he unravels their blueprints in labs and through keystrokes, into paradoxical, polysensory variations that reclaim the power and timeliness of dematerialization.

Recentemente Sean Raspet ha preso ad analizzare l'intangibile, sfruttando la composizione chimica e la densità poetica di sostanze come la Coca-Cola e il petrolio. Intese come variabili fisiche, psichiche ed economiche dell'energia del Ventunesimo secolo, l'artista ne svela in laboratorio la composizione e, attraverso l'utilizzo di formule, elabora variazioni paradossali e polisensoriali che rivendicano il potere e l'opportunità della dematerializzazione.

Untitled (Police Incident (2)) 3, ((2007-2012) 2007-2011, 2012. Courtesy: the artist and Stadium, New York

MOUSSE

Kevin McGarry: *This patent for the chemical difference between Coke and Pepsi is a profoundly pop metaphysical piece of poetry, where did it begin for you with the two sodas?*

Sean Raspet: I started the first draft of the Coke vs. Pepsi patent in the winter of 2012. I've been interested in this idea of formulation and of thinking about my artwork as a reformulation or a changing of different variables within an overall composition. Just before this I'd done a sublet project, which is almost like a derivative scheme I would say. It's a chain letter or loop of sublets taken on by arts organizations, they're the only ones that have signed on for it, although I always wanted to extend it into other areas. In the end there were ten different organizations—SculptureCenter, Printed Matter, Studiolo…—subletting very small spaces from each other. In most cases there was no physical alteration of the space, it just became a legal transfer of the space or of the rights to use it. These abstract, legally defined entities were something that was very interesting to me, the ability to define a structure through language, through a purely legal structure. I think the Coke and Pepsi project actually came out of that: trying to define a physical entity in a legal language.

KMG: *I always thought cola recipes were closely held secrets, how did you get them?*

SR: A machine heats up a compound or a mixture at a very slow rate, one degree centigrade per minute for instance, and as things gradually heat up, each compound has a different evaporation boiling point, so gradually different things evaporate. This is coupled with a mass spectrometer, which, as the compound is boiling, shoots ions at the compounds to create ionized fragments that can then be measured by their weight and to identify which compounds are which.

KMG: *Did you collaborate with a lawyer on the writing of the patent?*

SR: No, actually I had been set up with one through Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, but then they had to do a conflict of interest check to make sure they could work with me on the project, and it came back that they couldn't do it. The reason is, if they represented me in this Coke vs. Pepsi thing, then the entire firm could never represent Coca-Cola *or* Pepsi. Once we figured that out, I spoke to California Lawyers for the Arts and they said, yeah pretty much no one is ever going to agree to do this with you. So I wrote the whole patent myself. I'd actually written the patent for something else in the past, so I'm familiar with the structure and that's a component I'm very interested in. I see it as similar to a programming language. It's operational, so whatever you say in law within a certain frame becomes true just by virtue of saying it. I see it as an actual way of creating an entity through language.

KMG: *On this other wall you have the keys cut to represent the physical make-up of the two sodas, and with the fragrance of old keys and coins set on the ground between them, the three pieces feel very strongly triangulated.*

SR: I came up with the piece about the coins and keys smell somewhat separately from the patent project, but at a certain point I realized they come together because I'm thinking about Coke and Pepsi sort of just as numbers, as algorithms of storing value. In some sense the material composition of Coke is only a value storage algorithm. Behind all of this work one of my main interests is dealing with the condition of financialization, of derivatives, of different spatial parameters and ontological parameters of what is an object under a heavily abstracted economy.

KMG: *Can you elaborate on how you engage that economy?*

SR: There's the mortgage crisis of 2007–2008. Mortgages are abstractions of actual parcels of land. They become pooled and there's a derivative written for it, and there's a credit swap based on that derivative contract, and there's another level of speculation based on that… You can say at that top level it's purely abstract and there's no relation to the ground level, but that's not exactly true. There's a relationship there, and for me what's interesting is to look through that material relationship, and to try to identify what actually is that material happening up at that top where these gigantic, extremely abstract-seeming transactions are happening. A mortgage-backed derivative, people might say, oh it's just an abstraction, it doesn't actually exist, but I think it's more interesting and maybe more productive to say that it does exist, let's look at the parameters of this *object* or this *entity*.

KMG: *How did metal, specifically, enter this equation, with the keys?*

SR: With metal it's going back to the idea of financial abstraction and coinage, that being one of the initial modes of abstraction in culture. The development of coins allowed for equalizing otherwise incommensurable, even opposite, things. Of course coinage has this very physical, tangible form as well. And it also has a smell. Its smell is actually a result of its interaction with the body. A new coin doesn't really smell like anything, but as you handle it the grease and sweat from people's hands that comes in contact with the metal causes these different ionization processes, and that's actually the smell that you get when you smell an old key or an old coin.

KMG: *Coins are holding a code for value and the value of keys are the codes they hold for access…*

SR: Yeah, they both have this capacity for duality, of being a mechanism that operates within a symbolic sphere, while also being this simple clump of matter that interacts with the body. So my interest was to take that and to synthesize that, to take the airspace above a hand, which is where you smell the results of skin degradation, to take those numbers of different compounds and then to produce a synthetic fragrance from that. To me this seemed like a really interesting way of thinking about the entity of exchange.

KMG: *What are some specific new projects you're working towards?*

SR: One thing I want to show at Jessica Silverman this fall is kind of a reconstituted crude oil. Crude oil is actually one of the most complex mixtures on earth when it comes to analyzing it and figuring out what kind of compounds are in it. There have been a lot of studies about what is actually in crude oil and there is lots of variation. But they generally use a certain percentage for jet fuel, a certain percentage for plastics, some for gasoline, kerosene, petroleum jelly and stuff… so what I'm going to be doing is taking all of these things in certain proportions, recombining them and mixing them to get back to a reconstituted crude oil substance. Then, as another project, I'm also planning to sample the air space in the gallery to make a cleaner that smells like that air space, kind of like the coin fragrance.

KMG: *Almost the olfactory equivalent to noise cancellation?*

SR: Yeah, but I think it will be interesting because it should actually be intensified. Whenever you perform the analysis in the lab, you always miss a couple things that might actually be responsible for a substance's smell. There's always some sort of variation with how we analyze it. So I'll be taking a scent profile of the air space of the gallery and making a condensed fragrance out of that so when they clean their surfaces it will produce an intensified version of the smell that's already in the space.

KMG: *When I first saw your work you were mostly showing these suspensions in hair gel, how did that bring you into this arena of experimenting with all these immaterial constructions?*

SR: I was actually really focused on images and stock photography back in 2007 or 2008, and then a couple things happened. For one, I was kind of tired of it, but then also there was this saturation within the art world of stock photography, so I've gone in a different direction with my work. But for a while I was showing these banner pieces, and the hair gel pieces. More recently, over the past few years, I'd say it's been a lot of these contracts, legalese, and text works, and also in the last few years chemical equations and product formulations for me have been a way to conjoin interests in material substances that are circulated in culture, cosmetics and whatnot. It's in chemistry where things become their most concrete and their most abstract at the same time. Phenomenologically, aside from smell, interestingly, you don't have a way to recognize the difference between propylene glycol and sodium laureth sulfate unless you're dipping your hands in them. You can actually maybe smell the distinction, but otherwise you need an entire language system to administer their differences.

SEAN RASPET
NEW GALERIE

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NEW GALERIE

Selected texts

IMG MGMT: Untitled

by SEAN RASPET *on* OCTOBER 11, 2010 · 5 COMMENTS

I.   In the past one might have imagined that were they to break/puncture a photograph that it would shatter like a mirror, or exhibit a literal rupture—i.e., tear like a piece of paper. In the present, a viewer is more likely to imagine that a semi-intelligent semi-transparent liquid would seep out, itself both a lens and a healing balm. It would subtly reconfigure the image's silvery surface layers, and implement slight adjustments, making it more palatable to the viewer. It might then become a point of interfacing with a second layer—a portal rather than a punctum.

II.   Our daily life is peppered with little dabs of the sublime. Images increasingly depict a luminous hybrid space of pure [image] circulation—frozen or fleeting abstractions that refer to their own looping trajectories through time. Partially originating in the sped-up long exposure photos of motorways common to the 80s and earlier (while implicitly evoking the contemporaneous build up of the US's missile program, along with neon signage, the Nike swoosh, the Esprit squiggle, et al.), streaking light effects now augment a substantial portion of production logos, web pages, computer backdrops and advertisements of all sorts. Sometime after their initial depiction of the acceleration within the every day, they became more abstract in form. They began to visualize the nascent information architectures and the implementation of fiber optic cable networks that were carrying this information (images) to various corners of the earth "at light-speed" along an "information super-highway". In this liberated form (liberated in part by new techniques of digital image production) they served also to visualize and proliferate certain neo-liberal, utopian ideas of the 1990s that heralded a globally-integrated, post-conflict, post-historical epoch (a la Francis Fukayama)—a perpetual now, buoyantly illuminated and weightlessly incorporating all previous stages of development. Arising in this rhetorical climate they formed the backdrop for these attempts to tie the new phase of unfettered capitalism with the liberating promise of geographically unfettered information.

While their motion may conjure to mind quantum collisions, satellite orbits, or a tendril-like, swarming algorithm, the underlying impetus and guiding principle of each jet of light is that of global circulation. It presents itself as one path in a virtual topography of real and imagined networks of information and commerce (presumably, at each given instance, as the suggested path of the individual consumer/viewer—a guiding light in a labyrinthine terrain). It is one component in a complex composed of innumerable points of light, and from the act of pointing, incorporating, and touching upon outside masses. From this continual absorption, it derives its energy and libidinal charge—like a mercurial electron of desire (or a liquefying capital flow). Tellingly these depictions often exhibit a circularity of orbit; a feeding back into themselves in an elliptical (and often slightly erratic—therefore presumably intelligent) self-referentiality. This structure parallels the increasingly self-referential autonomy of financial markets and the information economy as divorced from material production (though not quite).

As a beam of light jumps metonymically, capriciously, from object to object in an advertisement for Sprint Wireless, we can (and indeed we are prompted to) extrapolate each instance of this common motif as part of a larger whole: we imagine that this luminous tendril continues to flow into the Nightline logo, where it then branches off into a Canon and a Windows advertisement before looping around into a glowing Hermes ribbon, which is made from the same spectral plasma as the University of Canterbury's web page and the iPhone's screensaver. These images present single facets of an integrated ad campaign/network/mass vision that is continually branching out and incorporating all relevant details and entities into its fold. Each image is a marker that says: "this has been incorporated" or "this is participating" in conjunction with its individual logo.

Not surprisingly these light effects tend to be especially prevalent where the commodity being offered is information, entertainment, or experience as in the case of television news or motion picture production. As such this imagery has done a great deal to develop a public perception towards the idea of a commodity as a pure abstraction. It has helped to map a change in the spatial imaginary and to form an understanding of (and desire for) the experience economy as a visceral sensation. In doing so, it transfers the site of the commodity's allure from an imagined inner essence to a supporting network that surrounds and propels it. The desire is located not inside but outside in the act of participation within the network, and the accompanying potential for overflowing frisson.

While the network that these images ostensibly refer to is a conflation of a commercial network (i.e. of global shipping patterns and financial transactions) and that of information architecture (both its physical installation and its abstract, imagined pathways, or animating spirit), the unstated prize is, of course, the viewer/consumer's ability to take part in a social network. From this exchange, a shared economy of experience and knowledge is offered back to the viewer. However, the operation which mediates these activities exists alongside and somehow in between these conceptions: that is to say the parallel network by which images refer to themselves and include other compatible images; acting in ways that are semi-autonomous and distinct from the networks of commercial circulation and information topology. It is for this process that the vast array of light imagery serves as both example and metaphor.

In short, the image of the commodity has been superseded by the image of its channels of exchange, or furthermore by an abstraction for pure exchange (social, informational or commercial). If we imagine these images not separately, but (as is their demand) as part of a continuous phenomenon (or epiphenomenon) the overall effect is to imply an ever-expanding, ever consolidating network of self-reflexive images—images that are about this ever expanding network and that through their proximity to other images, draw them into the network as well. Put another way: rather than a commodity being replaced by its image, the current shift is towards an image being replaced by an abstraction of the imagined network in which it circulates.

III. Increasingly, images must have the ability to refer to multiple alternate images within a densely layered proximity. Images are selected and reproduced for their swap-ability, mutability, and modularity—their ability to sit side by side with strangers without disagreement. [1] Color schemes, lighting conditions, et al must be compatible across multiple platforms of dispersal.[2] The specific qualities of images are progressively more interlinked, moving towards an automatic consensus (or averaging) that defines the neutral terrain through which subsequent images are refracted. [3] In line with the critique of contemporary art that in order to be recognized/successful it must look like contemporary art, an image's (paradoxical) foremost criterion is that it must resemble an image.

Images that exhibit these qualities of neutrality, sociability, and recognizability are more likely to be copied/dispersed/linked to, creating an environment suitable for themselves and further setting the parameters of future images. The shifting consolidation of image parameters of course does not occur in a linear fashion, but rather happens simultaneously, (and unfathomably) across a network of dispersed images and their derivatives. Increasingly an image refers not to its subject, but to its parameters, it's meta-image. Multiple images across various platforms spontaneously point to a kind of self-supporting mise-en-scene: an internally consistent, though externally fragmented, microcosm containing a particular on-screen worldview. (This is not necessarily new, but has become a progressively more tangible operation, in light of the increasing rootless-ness of images and their accelerating speed of circulation.)

Like an anamorphic projection, a single image when, viewed from the proper angle, aligns with an assortment of related images to form a momentary, cohesive whole. Here, the angle of view is not spatial, but temporal—it occurs in the flash of recognition upon first encountering the image, and just as quickly fades into the background as a given; the logic of its world having been taken on by the viewer. In this fleeting glimpse the viewer sees reflected within the image the set of all other images that share its parameters and of which it is in some way composed—those images that are 'cut from the same cloth'. [4] This world-on-screen consists as much of its ostensible subject as of its own specificity as image (or more specifically, of the ad-infinitum reproduction of its particular image parameters).

An image is thus more the result of a process of alignment (with other images) than of reflection (of a given subject in the world). Whereas previously a photograph was believed to offer a fragmentary window onto the world, it now offers an interlinked network of related images that form a semi-autonomous image-world—a partially-enclosed mise en abyme, largely freed from the earthly duty of depicting events (but never the less beholden to its own particular set of parameters as an event in itself). The rootless-ness of images—which are no longer to be situated in a specific stratum—furthermore requires that they are able to carry their world with them (somewhat like their flesh and blood brethren). If images are mirrors dispersed in a circular fashion, pointing inward and reflecting each other, the meta-image is the vacant center that is formed as a result and to which these points collectively refer. It is their realm of (and limitation on) possibility.

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2GFR24SMEZZ2XMCVI5L8X9Y38ZJ2JD

25RZ6KW4ZMAZSLJOGBHOWNNVRNO7GU

2MBYMNCWYB49QDK1NDO19JONS66QMB

2RCC26DG67D187N9AGRCWK2JIHA7E2

2H1G5TYMNCWYM81O4OJSPX11N5VNJO

is an accumulation of CAPTCHA test results. The CAPTCHAs were transcribed by workers commissioned anonymously via Amazon.com's Human Intelligence Task marketplace—a site where labor is sourced on a per-task basis to internet users through a searchable database of work requests.

CAPTCHA tests are designed to verify that a user is human by requiring her to perform a visual recognition task (such as deciphering a distorted string of characters) and input the result into a text field. They thus screen out automated programs or "bots" from exploiting website weaknesses.

Here, the CAPTCHA finds its complement in the Human Intelligence Task—a basic skill level task that requires an end user to complete. Within the present technological paradigm, it is a menial task that hovers just above the bar of automation. The human agent becomes a black box in an otherwise automated production process.

Superimposing the CAPTCHA criterion upon HIT workflow, the project closes the production loop between automated algorithm and human operator. The material that results from this procedure is contemporary labor in its abstract form: the incessant task of demonstrating that one is human, the residue of a generalized human intelligence.

For this project that material has been composed in the form of a novel. The first chapter is presented below.

Download Chapter 1 of the novel.
Sean Raspet is an artist and novelist working in Los Angeles. He is studying towards an MFA at UCLA.

"...the idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place... that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages... this whole idea belongs to our modernity."

In his 1967 essay "Other Spaces" Michel Foucault refers to the particular form of "heterotopia" of the museum and library as that which is most proper to Western culture of the 19th century. Yet what is perhaps most striking in reading this description in the present context is the extent to which it could be applied to a certain (utopian) idea of the internet. And this observation is made all the more pointed at a moment when there appears to be the beginning of a shift of the locus of art away from the museum and towards the internet – in its reception and, increasingly its production.

However, it would be misleading to imply that this is a simple and straightforward development. The heterotopia of the internet – if one can call it that – is not simply a culmination by order of magnitude of the encapsulation drive of the museum. It is also an amalgam of the fleeting temporality of that other heterotopia – the festival, combined with the phenomenology of that most basic of heterotopias, the mirror. Likewise this present-day shift away from the museum occurs in the wake of other perhaps more noteworthy developments involving the paradigm of knowledge itself.

In his 1979 book The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge Jean-Francois Lyotard details these developments, with a prescient eye towards a near-future condition of abundant, technologically-mediated information (expressed in the now-quaint terminology of "telematics," "data-banks" and "information machines"). The museum, like the University or the encyclopaedia, had historically been underwritten by a "meta-narrative" of speculative knowledge (though at times a more modern meta-narrative of the liberation of "mankind" also played a part). Based on Hegel's "system" of knowledge, each scientific discipline, university department, artistic medium – in short, every category of knowledge – played a particular role in a process by which the "Spirit" of knowledge moved towards self-knowledge or absolute knowledge, via the knowledge of its component parts.

Thus, the stability of the speculative system rested upon the stability of its component categories of knowledge, and their hierarchical organization. But by the time of Lyotard's assessment, the previously stable categories of scientific disciplines and fields of knowledge had collapsed along with the speculative meta-narrative itself. (Consider, for example, the late 1960s penchant for interdisciplinary "think tanks"). The truth requirement of empiricism had been turned against itself: every scientific statement requires a proof, but that proof in turn requires another proof, and so on – ultimately necessitating an infinitely recursive procedure in order to verify a single claim. Whereas the speculative narrative would have previously "underwritten" the necessary proof, its withdrawal was ambiguously both the cause and the effect of what Lyotard proposes as postmodern science's present condition – and its way forward.

Rather than a single system of multiple harmonious sub-disciplines, postmodern science functions more like a fragmented archipelago of localized, and incommensurate "language-games" (and for Lyotard, such language games form the discordant basis of society in general). Statements are verified as admissible not because of their correspondence with an objective truth criterion but in their adherence to a set of rules, which are in turn locally applicable to only a specific language game. These rules are fundamentally axiomatic, yet agreed upon in an implicit contract between "players." Moreover, within the microcosm of each particular language game, statements ("moves") are valued for their difference: given a modicum of plausibility, a statement is more valuable if it contradicts all previous statements, and more valuable still if this contradiction results in a re-writing of the rules of the game itself. In this fashion postmodern science moves forward, and is legitimated by producing paradoxes – what Lyotard calls parology – and it represents in fact the "anti-model" of the speculative system. As he writes:

Postmodern science – by concerning itself with such things as undecidables, the limits of precise control, conflicts characterized by incomplete information, "fracta," casptrophes, and pragmatic paradoxes – is theorizing its own evolution as discontinuous, catastrophic, nonrectifiable, and paradoxical... It is producing not the known but the unknown.

It is probably not a coincidence that this account of parology matches a certain understanding of how the artistic avant-garde (ideally) has operated historically, given that this was another of Lyotard's abiding interests. In any case it is not difficult to extrapolate from the erosion of scientific disciplines to the condition of erosion of artistic disciplines (theoretically, if not always in practice) within the organizational schema of the museum – having arguably already reached its apotheosis in the notion of medium specificity.
In a shift that was roughly concurrent with the move towards a postmodern science, the "language-game" of art arguably began to move towards what could be called a "game of inclusion." If speculative science played a denotative knowledge game of "this is true" with its statements, art's game could best be described as an already paradoxical game of "this is art," or simply "this is included." Art plays a double game, one that takes its own legitimation into account with each move. Within its particular language game, each "statement" is considered to be admissible as a statement/artwork if it adheres to the rule that a player must have (axiomatically, redundantly) designated the statement/artwork as a statement/artwork.1

It is perhaps this shift towards a game of inclusion that resonates most strongly with the present-day a shift towards the internet

as site: the game of art within the disciplinary rubric of the museum must function with a greater degree of exclusion, whereas the internet – given its polymorphous and rabid drive to encapsulate – easily overcomes this institutional inertia. It is within this paradigm that another potential crisis of legitimation arises – the spectre of infinite inclusion within the game of art. And it is within this situation that the assertion "this is art" appears to be losing its relevance as the game of art slides towards a terrain that may be more paradoxical and unintelligible.

So how can we conceive, presently, of a game of art that takes these developments into account? Several proposals have been put forward by artists that have been included within this exhibition. Perhaps one of the central "pragmatic paradoxes" of the shift in the site of both art and "everyday life" towards the internet are those issues surrounding questions of the materiality of the virtual and the embodiment of a subject/object within a phenomenologically dispersed network2. The locate-ability of an artwork within the network of its own documentation, to say nothing of the locate-ability of the viewer, artist or body has become a recurrent theme, with many artists following the different, incompatible logical threads that arise towards a myriad of indeterminate conclusions. Collisions of incommensurate textual, perceptual, procedural and valuation systems are prevalent with results tending towards the simultaneously incoherent and logically consistent3. Other works conceive of themselves as an amalgam of multiple (often incompatible) texts, or incorporate their own "meta-data" into their formal embodiment.

While the speculative system once at least offered the certainty of the discrete artistic medium as a stable ground with which to recursively refer back to a historical trajectory, and an accumulation of artistic "moves," in the present condition of disciplinary erosion/confusion a more overt tendency towards recursion arises. The act of turning a given frame or apparatus in upon itself4 becomes a paradoxical un/grounding "move," and an appropriately unfathomable starting/ending point. Likewise this tendency towards recursion can be seen as a visual or conceptual realization of the internet's promiscuously inclusive logic5, and it points towards the endgame of art that has encapsulated everything including itself x 10∞…

Following the definitions given above, the question arises as to whether or not art discourse and criticism – rather than remaining a separate and "incommensurate" language game predicated as a meta-discourse on art – can revise its own set of rules to account for the unaccountable and allow for the indeterminate within the scope of its legitimating frame.

1. ABSTRACT:

This overview is presented for the purpose of clarity. It is non-binding upon the other sections of this document. The terminology and the definitions used in this section are simplified and may differ from those that are used elsewhere in the document.

1.) **Entity∆** is the difference between **Entityα** and **Entityβ**.

2a.) **Entityα** is Coke (Coca-Cola, The Coca-Cola Company).

2b.) **Entityβ** is Pepsi (Pepsi-Cola, PepsiCo Inc.).

3.) ((a)Coke is / (b)Pepsi is):

      I.   a formulation;

      II.   a brand (a formulation);

      III.   a legal entity (a formulation);

      IV.   a business strategy (a formulation);

      V.   a supply infrastructure (a formulation);

      VI.   a workforce (a formulation);

      VII.   a consumer base (a formulation);

      VIII.   a set of preferences and predispositions (a formulation);

      IX.   an industry paradigm (a formulation);

      X.   a set of ongoing processes (a formulation);

      XI.   a historical accident (a formulation);

      XII.   other relevant formulations as determined herein;

The integrated formulation of all of the above formulations is ((a)**Entityα** / (b)**Entityβ**).

4.) The difference in formulation between **Entityα** and **Entityβ** is a formulation.

That formulation is **Entity∆**, the difference object.

5.) **Entity∆** has a specific concrete embodiment.

6.) The purpose of this document is to delineate parameters for the specific embodiment of Entity∆ as it exists in the world. The document will proceed by outlining and comparing several provisional formulations for Entity∆.