



## IMMERSIVIA

at Santorini Biennale

A transcript of the opening speech

Είμαι περήφανη γι' αυτό και σας εύχομαι κάθε καλό για το μέλλον.

Immersive Interactive Art is like photographic art, a genre where you need technical equipment you don't find in nature. Quite complex tools are needed to make this form of art. Today, you need tools to explore it, to immerse in this kind of art, to look around, to walk inside, and to see and feel the depth.

James K. Morrow, author of *Towing Jehovah*, wrote in 1981 "Sozyo made 4-D equipment. The image had height, width, depth and a fourth D that eluded precise definition. It was called Presence. Somehow, you felt that the subject was there in the room with you. You could seemingly walk up to it, savor its fragrance, finger its texture, and rub a few eons' grime off its contours."

Such worlds are created by artists, by the selected contributors to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Santorini Biennale. They come from in United States (Molly Bloom, Juliette Surrealdreaming, Tansee Trilum, PatriciaAnne Daviau), The Netherlands (Hyde Hackl), Germany (Art Eames, Moewe Winkler), France (Gem Preiz, Cherry Manga), United Kingdom (Exy Atreides), Italy (Mistero Hifeng, Nexuno Thespian), Brazil (Uan Ceriaptrix), Greece (Navah Dreams), Finland (Ink van Helsinki, Stem van Helsinki), Japan (Mikati Slade), Denmark (Venus Adored), and other places we are not sure if the entries in the files are true like VJ Quantum from Togo or the First Girl on the Moon 'FGOTM'.

Even an Artificial Intelligence, an AI has applied and was selected: the owl Neruval - he messaged he will pay the registration fee when arriving in Santorini in a few days. Let me read what he sent as a quantum mail. "Sadly I am stuck in a sun storm next to the Tannhauser gate. I took a break to eat some nuts at The Restaurant At The End Of The Universe. I have to tell you the nuts taste so good. The bag shows they are made by Yannis Nomikos. I must meet this guy. Sadly the connecting flight from Calyptica Prime to Santorini was canceled so I have to sign my message to the visitors of the Biennale via the script I attach. Just put the script in a noob and the hands of the sculpture will move and message to you what I have to say".

Luckily one artist has sent in a noob as a contribution so I could place the script into the sculpture, which is just piece of software in LSL language. Now the noob made by Art Eames can move hand and fingers and sign messages to us. What the message the owl is signing to us we don't know. Maybe it is an extinguished language? Maybe the hand does not even sign to us? Maybe the owl met Roy Batty at the Tannhauser gate to give him the words for the

famous Tears in Rain Dialogue in the movie Bladerunner? Maybe he is the hitchhiker in Douglas Adams Guide through the galaxy? Maybe he is the next super gamer in an apocalyptic world earning more money from e-sports than a football professional? Maybe the owl speaks this way to ones like himself? So many languages are gone or are becoming extinct. I speak of Assembler, Fortran, Algol, Pascal, Cobol, PL/1 -- of languages once used to make computer art. Only a few works drawn on paper in the 60s and 70s exist in museums -- but most of the makers and their tools are gone. The fate of extinction will happen with the works you can now explore in IMMERSIVA. Time is running much faster now. We need the servers and the tools conserved and preserved so we may experience these worlds in the future, and to look back to understand how our world once began to turn. You see it all day long that our world is going digital – and it is a fast going. Some now having the 5<sup>th</sup> generation of an i-Phone don't know how a telephone looked 25 years ago. Do they know that phones could not take pictures or access the internet 10 years ago?

The signing of a coded message by hand and fingers out of a virtual world by the owl might be the first ever to make us think what is going on inside Google, Facebook, NGA and other data monsters that we don't understand. What does the artist say? What code is this? All artists in the IMMERSIVA break the barrier of creating the real impossible. All artists are messaging inside a computerized world. At this stage in computer technology we are knocking on the doors of the digital society. On the other hand, this Biennale in 2016 is right in time before the doors begin to close to make room for the next stage of technology. Maybe the next years will become the singularity of immersive experiences. Maybe in time only the AI, the owl we once made with the ability to update code on his own, will understand what keeps our world going. I say in my short stories the AIs are running on femto speed, and the human brain on milliseconds. That's like what light speed is to quantum speed. You may have heard in the news that the Chinese have launched a rocket to space that shall communicate with the ground using quantum effects, and this way being faster than light. Right now we don't know how fast quantum communication will be. Scientists say, at least 10.000 times faster than light – for this is experimental proof, but maybe it happens with infinite speed. So that the owl sends a quantum mail fits to hard science. That he sits at TRATEOTU – The Restaurant At The End Of The Universe – and eats SantoNuts show we shall take his message light, like Douglas Adams does in his stories. That brings me to the Fish. “Thanks For All the Fish” I have to say to the contributors who followed the invitation to step out of the hidden, and to show and to create some new works for the Biennale in Santorini.

The contributors to IMMERSIVA at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Santorini Biennial have a totally different background. In no area of art you may find such a variety on education, age and artistic experience – from a jobless gardener to a highly skilled academic – often working together all over the globe. We call them virtual artists, which is in fact a misleading word as their work is not fluid. Alice in Wonderland reaches a new level, a level where art is made in the computer by everyone. Some might shake their heads, having a traditional understanding of art in mind. Computer and art does not fit together in this understanding and even more when such works can be experienced only inside a computer. Virtual art works may look like they were made by aliens – memories of the miniseries “The Visitors” (of 1983) and the remake in a franchise version “V” (in USA on screen between 2009-2011) may come up. V can stand for alien like versions of humans, for visitors or for victory. Time will tell if Virtual Art will survive as a term, or if other words like Immersive Interactive Art will take over. The common message for today is: This form of art is made for visits by everyone who can use a computer. There comes the word “user” from - art is made by users, by persons who can use a computer in creative ways. This art is real, it can be conserved and preserved, it is not fluid like performance art. This art is “User Created Reality” and no longer an alchemistic doing.



## USER CREATED REALITY

- or why it is no longer Virtual Art

Let me come back to photography – to give an analogy you may easily follow. It was quite a challenge to make a photo 50 years ago. To choose the right film, the right blend, the right time settings for the shutter – and the do-it yourself development on paper was a big challenge -- if you felt like a true photographer you did all by yourself. Then times might have come to step up and say: “I want to present my photos in a public space”. Some names became famous. I googled for most famous photographers over time and what I got was quite interesting. Of all the names I know from my past as a lecturer just one was mentioned in a recent blog, you know a blogger is a person who always claims to know it all and has to say a lot. The name listed in this blog I know as famous was Annie Leibovitz. No mentioning of Helmut Newton, not one the famous often controversial discussed photographers like Leni Riefenstahl or Andi Warhol. Of course time runs over the pioneers in teaching photographic art like Prof. Gottfried Jäger who lectured all this academic life long at the University of Bielefeld on generative photography as a systematic-constructive approach.

Times are widely gone where you need to know much about photography to become famous, where you need knowledge and you had to work hard to build your career up. Everyone can make nowadays great photos and post them for example in Instagram. Richard Prince takes them, copies them, makes some scratches on them and sells them for 100.000 USD and gets famous. You can be happy if he copied your photo and so your work is shown in a gallery by him. The money goes to him. You can't believe? I can give you some links so you can read on it why this is legal -- and other happenings like invisible art sold for 30.000 USD you may barely believe. Richard Prince changes some colors in your photo by flooding an area with Photoshop – and in a minute your work is marked as art. It has gained value and is shown in the most prestigious galleries of the world. A Richard Prince photography is born.

This all fits to our society where the numbers of followers in facebook count more as what or about what you are posting. The time of the user. Let us see this challenge now in the realm of virtual art.

The idea that the world is a computer was born 50 years ago in a paper by Konrad Zuse called “Calculating Universe” (published 1967 as Rechner Raum) as a theoretical model. Now the idea is taken over by astrophysics. They say it has become the best model for a deeper understanding of the universe. The idea that a world can be created in a computer for social simulation with inhabitants made in bits and bytes is described by Daniel F. Galouye in his book Simulacron-3 (also published as Counterfeit World) – already in the year 1964! The book inspired Rainer Werner Fassbinder roughly 10 years later to produce a movie “World on a Wire” (Welt am Draht, 1973) -- which found in a remastered version its way to the Berlinale 2010 and got an extended showing in the Museum of Modern Art in New York as one of the most important science fiction films in art and history.

In 2003 Phil Rosedale developed “a prim world” by using a simulator software by the University of California, better known as Berkeley. Since this time we are able to create worlds inside a computer where we can walk by a sort of representation of our self, by the Avatar. All what is inside this world is created by users. No longer one needs to be able to understand how a computer works. No one needs to repair a computer or built one out of parts – like in photography – you just click and it is there. It is not fully true “just a click”. Of course for a great result you need to develop the passion, to feel the urge, the impact, the mission of your life to be an artist. So after hundreds of hours you may say – and I repeat the words I used above for photography: “I want to present my world in a public space”.

Long time the works created there have been unnoticed in the art world outside this realm, have not been in a “public space”, they stayed “inside the machine”.

This public space is the Santorini Biennial – 2016 – having a section we call IMMERSIVIA – immersive interactive art. Everyone can enter such a world via the PC at home. It has to be a strong PC like the ones made for gaming and it has of course to be connected good to the internet, else you don’t see for example the shadows or the soft moves of the objects in the world you are stepping in.

But can it be art if you need a tool to explore it? Photography can be printed and you see the work then on a wall, in a museum. In the worlds of Immersivia screenshots can also be taken, saved on the PC as pictures then being printed and shown like photography -- but they are not the world we are talking about. Videos are better suited to get an impression, but then the director of this video, we call them machinima, has control, decides about the way this world is presented. Be your own director and step into this world as a visitor, then try to rez (to make, to bring to ground) a first box and become a working user. You may find joy in creating for yourself. Then you may show your work to others. It becomes your reality. You really made it. User Created Reality. Maybe one of your “set of boxes” another person takes it, modifies it a little and gets famous like Richard Prince? And by this trick we are fully in as we call it IP rights, intellectual property in virtual art. I give talks about this and they can be quite long end may end in frustration and exhaustion as we want a joyful life as a user and as a creator of art.

Log in to the world from home at [login.usercreatedreality.com](http://login.usercreatedreality.com) – I have selected as provider the METROPOLIS grid which is the biggest English speaking European grid. For French speaking visitors Francogrid is the best choice and for Italian speaking users Craftgrid. The grids are server clusters providing an administration by volunteers. In total you find a few 1.000 grids run by artists themselves at home. Such a private grid can be reached via hyperjump by your avatar, but now again I offer a talk on this separately – and I copy from above – such a talk can be quite long end may end in frustration and exhaustion. First you need to do your tiny steps and rez your first box. Then you stretch it, twist it, color it, link it with other boxes to an installment. Our build your first house. Many artists started this way: my home is my castle. Beautifully castles you find in virtual words. Some are made as replicas of the most famous ones on earth like Neuschwanstein or the Tower of London or the Eifel tower in Paris.

As we want a joyful life as a user and as a creator of art we shall let it be today an easy go and so I offer you as a motivation to go on a view of the machinima WizardOz Chrome from Milano made for IMMERSIVA at the Santorini Biennial 2016 which is on YouTube and on Vid.me – just check out her YouTube channel -- <https://www.youtube.com/user/WIZARDOZCHROME>

// --> Richard Prince: <http://uk.businessinsider.com/richard-lewis-instagram-photos-100000-dollars-new-york-new-portraits-copyright-2015-5?IR=T>

List of contributors in IMMERSIVIA 2016 (in alphabetical order):

Art Eames, Germany - Cherry Manga, France - Exy Atreides, United Kingdom - Fiona Blaylock, United States (†) -

FGOTM, United States - Gem Preiz, France - Hyde Hackl, Netherlands - Ink van Helsinki, Stem van Helsinki, Finland -

Irini Korinthiou, Greece - Juliette Surrealdriming, United States - Mistero Hifeng, Italy - Moewe Winkler, Germany -

Molly Bloom, United States - Navah Dreams, Greece - Neruval, Stateless - Nexuno Thespian, Italy - Tansee Trillum, United States - Uan Ceriaptrix, Brazil - Venus Adored, Denmark - VJ Krieger, Germany - VJ Quantum, Togo - WizardOz Chrome, Italy -

Have a look at the works in the web at <http://usercreatedreality.com>

Enter the immersive world of IMMERSIVIA 2016 via <http://sb3.hypergrid.net>

Written by Reiner Schneeberger

Short profile at <http://cnn.schneeberger.de>



## **HOW TO VISIT INWORLD?**

*You can log in to the Santorini Biennale IMMERSIVA from home. You need a PC with a good graphic card and a reasonably good internet connection so the works load in a reasonable time. Two steps are needed. The first is to create an Avatar which comes for the IMMERSIVA in form of an Eye. It takes less than five minutes via <http://sb3.hypergrid.net> and you have a red, green or blue eye. By doing so we avoid questions of dress code and good looks. Use a unique password – one you never used before. You steer your avatar with mouse and keyboard like you see in the two short videos on vid.me <https://vid.me/7YHW> - for walk - and <https://vid.me/nLtI> - for camera control.*

*Then you download the Opensim version of the Firestorm viewer. There are versions for the most common operating systems <http://www.firestormviewer.org/downloads/> - For most it will be the 64-bit Windows version.*

*With Firestorm you log in with your Eye avatar to Metropolis grid and you land at the map Santorini Biennale.*

If you have questions send an email to [info@immersivia.com](mailto:info@immersivia.com)

I will be at the Imerovigli Cultural Center on Sept. 2 and 3 from 11.00 to 12.00 and from 15.00 to 17.00 h (local time) and give hourly demonstrations so you are confident on how to enter the immersive section of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Santorini Biennale.

Reiner