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::Rivets + Denizens:: Introduction: Curatorial Statement

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RIVETS + DENIZENS

collaborative curatorial models
in theory and practice

[Rivets + Denizens]

Collaborative Curatorial Models
in Theory and Practice
Curated by Ron Goldin

Introduction

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::Rivets + Denizens:: Introduction

Curatorial Statement

Ron Goldin on Feb 26 2002

rivets and denizens

A curation of curating.

A collaboration exploring collaboration.

A collision of histories and personalities.

Rivets+Denizens is an investigation and case study of collaboration strategies that are being explored by artists and curators. The title of the show suggests two different breeds of collaborator: a rivet, who is an integral, functional part of the structure it resides in, and a denizen, who lives on a collaborative structure as an inhabitant. A Rivet is more deeply set in the architecture of the system, providing a greater personal investment in the collaboration at the cost of sacrificing a panoramic view of its own inhabitation. A Denizen remains outside the structure, detached, still maintaining a distinction between the self and the system. A Denizen has a more defined blueprint of the terrain, but maintains a greater distance from the intimate relationship amongst Rivets.

What allows for collaborative curation is the constantly shifting identity of a curator, from Rivet to Denizen and back. Curators are clearly integrated members of a larger system, but our demand of curation is simultaneously opposite: to maintain a contextual objectivity -- to distinguish the framework of a system and the elements of a system as distinct entities -- to move inside and outside of the system at will. The curator alone cannot write out the roles of rivet and denizen, because curators draws much of their identity from the subject of their curation. If both Rivets and Denizens are constantly redefined in relation to one another, they are collaborating constantly by the very presence of their peers. The system maintains its coherent structure by this oscillating dynamic.

I selected a group of artists, curators, and theorists that have common experiences with contemporary applications of curating and art practice, especially dealing with collaboration. But their backgrounds and beliefs vary enough to make their take on the subject dramatically different. My curatorial position resembled choreography. The original participants in **Rivets+Denizens** were unaware of who else was involved. The purpose of this confidentiality was to create an initial phase where the collaboration existed through me, assuming the role of a communicator. Playing both Rivet and Denizen, a curator contracts the architecture from both inside and out -- the goal is to provide a context for a collision/aberration (collaboration) that will stem something new. The first step is preparing the terrain. In some cases, I worked closer with participants, as gaps in the construction needed to be filled. There were other subjects that, given the history of a particular author, were clearly appropriate and attended to.

This collaborative infrastructure is what gives **Rivets+Denizens** its self-referential quality: the participants are being curated on, they are curating themselves, they are collaborating to investigate the curation of others. The responses of the participants show a sharp awareness of the opinions others *might* share even while they were working in isolation, an anticipation of the paradigm they are sharing with other Rivets, in turn a guess at what it might be like to be a Denizen. Collaboration here occurs by a certain arrangement or layout, without spelling out a literal collaborative relationship between the participants. They understand that they cannot be read in isolation, and that their value will be dependant on the dialog of their peers. The result is overlap, agreement, difference-- a simultaneously comparable and divergent collection of perspectives. Once the topic feeds itself, the collaboration factor becomes apparent. My curatorial role will alter, relinquishing the communication monopoly and watching the collaborative architecture of ideas expand beyond my explicit intention. The result is the creation of a collaborative system with a membrane that in the end, encompasses the curator as well.

The launch of **Rivets+Denizens** coincides with the inauguration of SWITCH's open publication model. While this show has a "canonization" of original articles, content will be added as the demand for further comment and inquiry arises. Readers will contribute to the discussion by responding to existing essays, adding appropriate links of relevant projects, and bringing new topics to the table-- expanding the boundaries of the rivet/denizen relationship into the collaborative environment that networks are capable of.

Ron Goldin
02.26.02

I personally thank the initial participants in this project on behalf of myself, SWITCH, and the CADRE Laboratory for New Media, for their generous time contributions and eagerness to explore new ideas and alternatives:

**Natalie Bookchin : Heath Bunting : Beryl Graham : Patrick Lichty :
Lev Manovich : Mark Napier : Christiane Paul : Liza Sabater : Joel
Slayton : Benjamin Weil : Alena Williams**



::CrossReference

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