

## **From the Virgin and the Child to Fractal Art**

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This guide is meant and designed primarily as a practical reference work and resource tool. But it also constitutes a manifesto for electronic art.

Despite the fact that electronic art has now existed for more than twenty years, contemporary art guides still fail to include it in any serious manner among more recognized art forms. In view of this fact it seemed important to us to offer a survey of spaces and organizations devoted to creation, exhibition, presentation and training in this field, such centres often occupying a marginal position in relationship to traditional artistic creation.

The medium that has been adopted for this guide is very "archaic" since we have had recourse to a printed form. The latter results from a deliberate choice. In the future, the guide may very well take the form of an electronic data bank, but so long as these banks cannot be easily accessed by all and sundry and at a low cost, we will continue with our "Gutenbergian" edition, the aim of this publication being precisely to spotlight the vitality of electronic arts, to stimulate exchanges and the circulation of information concerning activities taking place "elsewhere" or ...just next-door.

In this introduction we would like to put an end to a number of misconceptions, even though the basic ideas we wish to stress may sometimes seem to be commonplaces or self-evident.

Artistic creation is not dependent on the tool that is used to create, in the field of electronic art as in "classical" contemporary art. Everyone agrees on the fact that a paintbrush may be used to repaint a kitchen as it may be used by an artist to paint. Why not accept then that the same applies to computers ?

Electronic art is a generic term. Within this domain coexist a number of schools and artistic trends and various forms of creation. We leave it to historians and art critics to localize and name them as they have done in the case of Arte Povera, Figuration Libre (free figurative painting), baroque music or musique concrete.

There are supposedly few "true" creations and Works with a capital "W" in the field of electronic art. But how many painters or musicians listed in professional organizations ad hoc and in specialized guides produce original, stimulating and thought-provoking work ? How many artists are there whose

glory has travelled down the ages ? And if one takes a closer look, there are quite a number of interesting artists working in electronic arts : one must be prepared to make the effort, as with other artists, to go and see their works.

For the first time in its history, humanity has full control over itself and over the planet it inhabits. This power results from the scientific discoveries made possible by new calculating tools and measuring instruments.

Electronic art expresses the upheavals affecting our most deeply-rooted ideas and beliefs by using technologies as tools assisting artistic activity, as media for this creation of as the very subject of creation.

Our manner of understanding the world is becoming ever more conceptual and abstract. Electronic art also tends toward "pure" abstraction in its mode of elaboration. It is an "art created by the mind rather than by the body" (Melvin Prueitt). This does not signify that it is or must be inaccessible for the general public. Let us recall the obvious fact that culture is acquired and not innate, and in the same manner as one must be cognizant of the fundamental principles of Christianity in order to fully comprehend Western religious art, today it is necessary for one to possess the rudiments of a scientific and technical culture to "understand" the art of our time. From the Virgin and the Child to Fractal Art. The emergence of an art for the elite and an art for the masses may possibly already be discerned, providing a new field of research for doctoral students.