IDEA/International Directory of Electronic Arts
Foreword to the First Edition, 1990-1991

Such Growth

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The publication of the International Directory of Electronic Arts evokes cheers and well-wishing along with some wonderment at the impressive list of over 850 addresses presented in this volume. No matter how diverse the categorized institutions are, their number signals a fundamental change in the practice of art, life and research as we begin the last decade of the 20th century : the betrothal of forces oft considered mutually exclusive by purists of art and purists of science - that fitful engagement of opposites is approaching marriage. If many addresses make for a lively social life then there will be a glorious wedding party when the third millenium comes at anno 2000 - art and technology reunited, actually a re-wedding party, after centuries of estrangement.

A powerful presence subjectively interpreted serves as supporting evidence : the one-hundred-year-old Eiffel Tower originally feared like the devil by so many artists, finally has become a poetic monument to night and light through mature, inspired, wise art of lighting by advanced technology (while the orbiting Hubble Telescope seems to be all science for the time being ?).

When sociology conflict was not as issue - in Egypt, 5,000 years ago - art-science-technology and religion together created a magnificient world of art, belief, and make believe all "environmental". At the beginning of our age Leonardo - one person, one mind, one searcher, one creator - became a founder of modern science and engineering and a founder of modern art. His means, however, were all "traditional", his vision "conceptual". When "time" was overtaken by "speed", electricity and photography changed the world. "Indirect process" and "indirect transport" became the practice that constituted "relativity" - the reality of flight, orbit, transmission, simultaneous information. Now, 150 years after the advent of "instant image" and "instant multiplication" we enjoy and suffer global as well as interstellar communication.

One theory of the 20th century art - however dubious - is to see it evolve teleologically from fragmenting images to systemic rasterization towards "immaterial" pixel transport, i.e. "timeless" image distribution via electronic broadcasting speaking to many "in no time at all". Method and "phenomena" have been pre-occupying - now it is time for images.

Where did the "dynamic imaging" start ? With Muybridge, Balla, Delaunay ? With Eggeling, Richter, Mololy ? With "kinetic art" and "light art" of the nineteen-hundred-fifties and - sixties ? When EAT - Experiments in Art and Technology - was founded by Robert Rauschenberg and Billy Klüver and the MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies by Gyorgy Kepes ? When a dozen years later, in the mid-seventies, kinetic and video art were declared dead ? When Paik and Charlotte Moorman played "TV Bra" ? When Boulez and Stockhausen created electronic music ? When Sony started supporting art (and IBM, Digital, Siemens, Thomson) ?

During the past quarter-century four technological media have become "classics" already : video, computer, laser, holography ; others are providing large context : environmental art, sky art/space art, bio-kinetic art. The need for integrated effort and collaboration corresponds with both the basic human need for togetherness and communication and the creative lure beckoned by all things alive and lively. If we are all neighbors in this global village - or this cosmic town - then this booklet that lists centers is a printed networking tool for the poetic message. All art-science-technology effort will have to serve the regreening of the earth for a while - with much wit, with "timeless speed" ; the next all-media, all-energy Gesamtkunstwerk for integrated art-science-technology will be "nature" restored.