

TRANSMISSION II: AIRBORNE

As part of the New Museum's on-going Transmission series, free103point9 collaborated with the New Museum's Anne Barlow and Defne Ayas to present the Media Lounge exhibition *Airborne* April 9 - June 4, 2005.

Airborne profiled new projects by New York-based artists who investigate the aesthetic, sonic, and socio-political aspects of the wireless spectrum.

Selected from an open call, artists 31 Down, Paul Davies, Melissa Dubbin + Aaron S. Davidson, Tarikh Korula, LoVid, neuroTransmitter, and Mendi + Keith Obadike expose otherwise fleeting and invisible transmissions through conceptual projects, networked installations, live streams, and audio-visual works.

We are awash in waves and flows, invisible electromagnetic streams carrying sounds and images, digits and codes, information of all sorts. Our ears and eyes momentarily capture these flows, as do radios, cell phones, TVs, and computers. Incorporeal as air and sea, these currents are nonetheless charted by the institutions of power, cordoned by the lines of property, subjected to the regulations of the state, and routed into the game of capital.

Airborne makes manifest these ethereal electronic currents and the interests they fuel. The participating artists imagine new forums and venues for the circulation of data and its transgressive potential, while tapping into these streams in order to divert their flows and reconfigure the social, political, and personal dynamics of electronic information.

-Christoph Cox

Christoph Cox is an art critic and philosopher. He is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Hampshire College in Massachusetts.

31 Down, "Wanderlost"

31 Down is a Brooklyn-based theatre group that uses radio transmission to expand the traditional boundaries of the performance stage. In *Wanderlost*, 31 Down tackles personal privacy issues and the paranoia surrounding new technologies by eavesdropping on live police scans to search for clues in the world of the dispatcher. Employing the central motif of a 1940s-style detective radio program featuring the fictional case of missing nightclub singer Helen Tremble, *Wanderlost* creates a tension between fact and fiction.

Paul Davies, "Prayer Antenna"

As part of his ongoing series, *Religious Technological Artifacts*, New York-based Canadian artist Paul Davies presents *Prayer Antenna*. In the form of an ornately ordained helmet that has the appearance of a porcupine with antennae quills, *Prayer Antenna* is fitted with sufficient surveillance technology to receive signals from the gods. As Davies writes, "The *Prayer Antenna* allows visitors, or "suplicants," to put their heads into the helmet to receive sounds in the right ear from the God of the Right Shoulder, and in the left ear from the God of the Left Shoulder."

Melissa Dubbin + Aaron S. Davidson, "Last & Lost Transmissions"

In a two-fold project entitled *Last & Lost Transmissions* collaborating artists Melissa Dubbin and Aaron S. Davidson focus on lost and found messages. In *Last Transmissions*, the artists rebroadcast an amalgam of final messages made by individuals—a disc-jockey signing off one last time or a lost sailor's plea, creating an opening into divergent narratives. In *Lost Transmissions*, the artists collect and rebroadcast, radio messages that have been lost during the process of transmission. Dubbin and Davidson offer the messages a chance to be found by devoting a small, temporary radio station to their re-transmission.

Tarikh Korula, "Chop 10"

Exploiting the techniques of current commercial radio practice, *Chop 10* re-mixes a live, dynamic assemblage of commercial radio streams as a commentary on the current state of regulated radio. As *Chop 10* moves from one Arbitron-rated Top Ten radio station in New York City to the next, the hyper "scan" makes it impossible to discern any single station's content, resulting in a jumpy, never-ending parody of commercial radio.

LoVid, "Ether Ferry"

LoVid (Tali Hinkis and Kyle Lapidus) is concerned with the preservation and materialization of information that is lost or ignored in mainstream media. In *Ether Ferry*, LoVid manipulates signal breakdowns and establishes a tactile relationship to technology. *Ether Ferry* features a live video feed generated by an electrical signal simultaneously broadcast between multiple video transmitters and receivers. The change in the relative locations of the transmitters and receivers affects the resulting video produced by the system.

neuroTransmitter, "12 Miles Out"

12 Miles Out is a new work by the collaborative group neuroTransmitter, who make creative use of low-power radio broadcasts. In *12 Miles Out*, neuroTransmitter explores offshore pirate radio— particularly the notorious Radio Caroline—that originated from a fleet of radio ships transmitting off the European coast from 1964 until 1990 in defiance of international broadcasting regulations. An "antenna-drawing" of a ship attached to a radio transmitter sets the scene for the radio broadcast in *12 Miles Out*. The audio component mixes ambient sound recordings of an ocean voyage, archival material from Radio Caroline broadcasts, and audio that references the shift in oceanic territorial boundaries as related to sovereign and global economic interests.

Mendi + Keith Obadike, "4-1-9 or You Can't Watch A Masquerade by Standing in One Place"

4-1-9 references an e-mail based money transfer scam, commonly believed to originate from Nigeria. Drawn to the structurally identical narratives of these unsolicited e-mails— that convey various African tragedies in less than five hundred words—conceptual artists Mendi and Keith Obadike present a work that incorporates text-generated sound, a video game, and net.art. Displayed in the form of an ATM machine, the work explores the structure of tragedy, archetypal African identities on the web, and the notion of scams. *4-1-9* invites audiences to engage with the project by choosing from a menu of transactions: "statement," "withdrawal," "deposit," and "balance." Participants can, for example, choose to listen to elements common to each letter, such as apologies and no-risk guarantees, and customize their own 4-1-9 letter by selecting narrative elements of their choice.

Public Program

AIRBORNE LIVE

Wednesday, May 4, 2005, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Damian Catera, Joshua Fried, and Gregory Whitehead presented performances that mix, manipulate, and respond to conventional content broadcast on the radio. These performances were also broadcast live on free103point9 Online Radio at www.free103point9.org.

Damian Catera, "deComposition NYC v.3"

deComposition NYC v.3 is an improvised performance for three radios and a laptop computer.

Joshua Fried, "Radio Wonderland"

Old shoes, a real steering wheel (from a Buick 6), and a laptop turn live commercial FM into recombinant beats and grooves.

Gregory Whitehead, "Adventures in Screamlanland: notes from the International Institute of Screamscape Studies"