

## **Response to Chapter 15, “REALTIME – Radio Art, Telmatic Art, and Telerobotics: Two Examples”, Heidi Grundmann from the book “At a Distance”**

By Randy Horton

As the title suggests, Chapter 15 of “At a Distance” describes two examples of artwork that deal with ideas of realtime, telematic and telerobotic artwork. The chapter demonstrates the role of intermedia in art practices but also stresses the importance of collaboration and documentation in art practice.

The first example of telematic art the author presented was called “CHIP RADIO”, (1992). It was a realtime musical performance that took place in three distinct physical spaces and broadcast on an Austrian radio program. The music was performed in by musicians in their own studio, but was also played by their telematic counterparts in another studio altogether. While a musician was performing in one space, others could see their video representation and also see their actions being played on instruments physically located beside them. The artists used a variety of control devices including a virtual glove, a telerobotically connected violin and midi and computer keyboards.

The piece itself could not be realized if it were not for the collaboration and support of a number of people and organizations. The reading articulates how the “Institutional Framework” was essential to the performance. For the event to occur the...

*“Museum of Modern Art in Vienna and the Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck simultaneously served as the site... ...The telephone lines were provided by the ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation) and by the OPT (Austrian Post and Telecommunications).”(pg 316)*

In addition to the infrastructure support, specialists from telecommunications, robotics and artistic fields had to collaborate, problem solve, and overcome hurdles. The multi-disciplinary collaboration presented a blending of ideas and media knowledge that is difficult to classify. In this respect, the process of CHIP RADIO was one of intermediary exploration.

The second work of art presented in Chapter 15 was called “REALTIME”,(1993) was almost an extension of the earlier CHIP RADIO performance piece. In a similar fashion as the earlier work, “REALTIME” was a concert performance piece which occurred simultaneously in separate studios. Musicians located in different places, but connected through a circular network. Their compositions were broadcast – in real time on both television and radio stations located in Austria.

Once again the work required infrastructure support, collaboration and teamwork. This support was applied to all aspects of the projects, including documentation. Even with these resources documentation was problematic. The author states how network events like the two examples can only be viewed as versions of the original.” This would

indicate that the original event has a certain aura, and repeating the installation may not provide the same experience. For this reason, many people who experience the work, will only experience it through its documentation.

The chapter provides some great examples of how artwork and art practice can evolve. It also illuminates the ideas of realtime, telerobotics, intermedia and the need for collaboration in art practice.