

Work with Ann Lee

„Work with her, in a real story, translate her capabilities into psycho - logical treats, lend her a character, a text, a denunciation, and address to the court a trial in her defense. Do all that you can so that this character lives different stories and experiences. So that she can act as a sign, as a live logo.” (Philippe Parreno)

Angela Bulloch, who had been asked to participate in the project „No Ghost Just a Shell” invited me to work with the figure of Ann Lee as a product designer.

In contrast to many videoworks I decided to design objects for Ann Lee, which are supposed to act as connections between her virtual and our real world.

They are hybrids between art-and designobject, they find use in a self-supporting way. Beyond that they will function as exhibition-objects in the context of the „No Ghost Just a Shell”-project in Cambridge and Eindhoven.

The tasks of the objects come from stories which will be told only in fragments here.

Ann Lee Stories

The figure presents herself for storytelling: a picture and a name is all we need as a projection-screen for our phantasy. Ann Lee has changed from a shortlived Manga-figure into a modell of any imaginable fictional construct. Ever since she has been circulating in the processes of artistic application.

„No Ghost Just a Shell” uses Ann Lee as a medium in which different media and artists are communicating. This way the exhibition-project is gaining meaning and international interaction. In the accumulation of passages, the endless combination of worlds Ann Lee can split into multiple personalities. From parallel perspectives she is looking at her virtual surroundings.

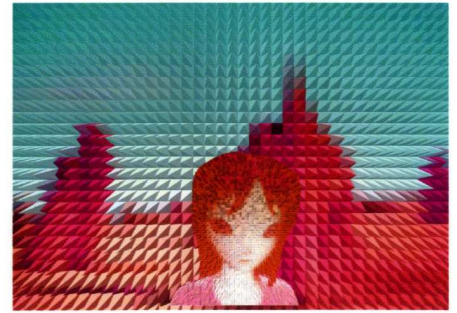
It can be easy to identify with her: when I think of a story for Ann Lee, she will talk any language, she fulfills personal wishes and phantasies. She then becomes a part of us, a part that is transformed from our imagination into the virtual where it then exists. So the real and the virtual are dynamically entangled.

But the visitors of an exhibition are not integrated in this process.

How can a clearer connection between Ann Lee’s virtual surroundings and our real world be established? How can production and reception approach the other?

Virtualising of reality and the virtual becoming real

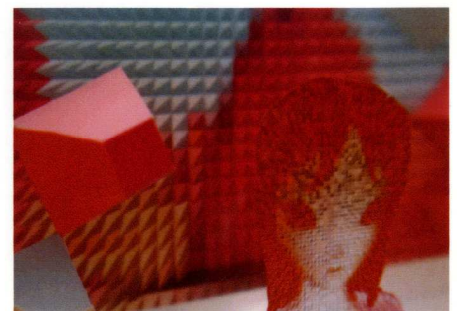
Since Ann Lee was redesigned by Philippe Parreno and Pierre Huyghe, she has been circulating in virtual space as a cyper-creature to



Ann Lee in „Pyramid World”



„Space Warp”: pyramid-elements materializing



„Space Warp”: change of dimension

be modelled. She is roughly based on a 3d-grid. Although obviously just a computerfile, Ann Lee can still act as a creature that is stimulating our phantasy. As „users“ of this artificial/art-creature we are feeling responsible for her further existence and the quality of her adventures

Since Ann Lee exists because of the imagination of her „users“, we want her to go on rotating and want to enlarge the circle of storytellers. The „users“ shall interact with the figure and mentally step into her virtual world.

The ability to virtualise something hasn't started with the computer-technology. We own this ability biologically and have transferred it onto different technologies.

The computer is a virtual machine; our interaction with it via keyboard, mouse and system makes us forget its machine-reality.

When we look vis-à-vis into a virtual reality, we see sort of a reflexion of an imaginary world. Like the image of a mirror the monitor just simulates the existence of something behind its surface.

Still this reflexion can be stepped into, data-structures can be explored and experienced. We can see, hear and with special equipment even touch them. We can move in them and be »moved« by them.

The synesthetic kind of interaction makes us experience the virtual as something real. This is questioning not only the status of virtuality but also of reality. The combination of the terms »virtual« and »real« may be not as paradoxical after all.

Complicated electronic systems enable us to connect our bodies with the cyber-reality and represent them as interactive images in the virtual space.

When we with the help of simulation slip into a virtual body this experience stays reduced to lengthen the own body into a kind of in-between-space. To actually act in the virtual world, we have to finally leave our body behind.

The body stays excluded from the reality of cyberspace. It just serves as an interface which is anchored in our »here«.

Real Connections

If we don't want to put on a datasuit or step into a so called »cave«, but instead would like to meet Ann Lee's world in a more direct way, we must invent a connex between the virtual and the real.

If parts of the cyberspace materialize into our reality, we can meet Ann Lee on the object level.

This way interaction with things out of her surrounding will be possible.

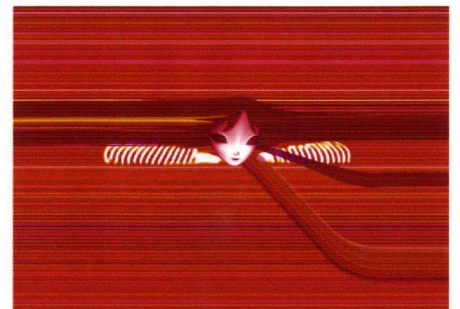
Instead of immersing into the digital space we can make a tactile experience with objects which leaves no doubt about their real exist-



Ann Lee in the „Growing and Collapsing World“



„Space Warp“: growing elements...



Ann Lee in „Linearland“

tence.

This way we can guess what Ann Lee is perceiving in her always changing surroundings. How does she experience her parallel trips? What does she learn during them? Which tools does she need to grasp the always new and strange worlds?

With the help of objects Ann Lee and her environment can strip off some of their virtuality.

But how do these objects get from the imaginary picture area into our reality?

Space Warp

„Space Warp” is a phenomena described in science fiction. It makes time- and spacedimension movable. For example a spaceship going with warp power can slip into a »space warp« and get thrown to a galaxy lightyears away.

The main idea is the bending of the interstellar space, a distorsion of energy that behaves like a gap between universes. This way abstract moves between dimensions are possible. They are beyond any known structure of time and space.

It's the explanation for a piece of Ann Lee's cyberspace getting into our dimension of space.

Phantasmass

„Phantasmass” is the name of a phantastic basic material. It has come swelling into our space.

It is the matrix of which the imaginary is constituted. Ann Lee and all things of her world are formed from this material.

Its condition resembles ectoplasm. In biology ectoplasm is the outer layer of protoplasm in a vegetable cell. Its inside is filled with small bubbles.

In spiritualism the term is used for a white, slimy substance which is supposed to emanate from the body of a medium during a trance. In the movie »Ghostbusters« f.e. the ghosts have an ectoplasm-style appearance.

„Phantasmass” is a white goo, filled with imaginary bubbles. Phantasybubbles which reflect the mutiple stories and landscapes Ann Lee knows.

The figure Ann Lee and her objects rise out of this material.

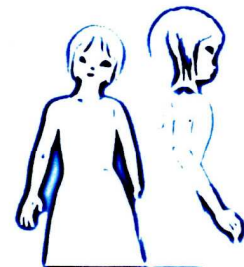
Ann Lee Tools



Ann Lee is forming out of „Phantasmass”



Ann Lee playing with „Phantasmass”-bubbles



ann lee storybook

scetch for a titlepage of my diplome-thesis

On her various journeys Ann Lee has to constantly orientate and has to learn different ways of perception. For that she can form any tool out of „Phantasmass“ and use them as transmitters.

The tools can become real to translate Ann Lee's way of perception for us. We can directly participate her sensations, they are being dubbed for us. We can try out and grasp the objects of her world.

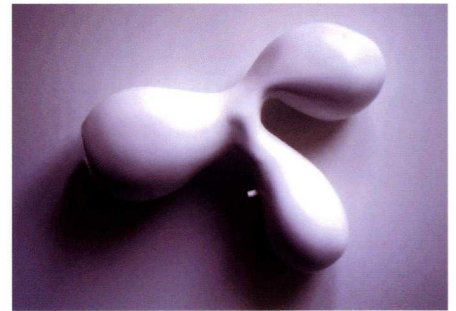
At this point our and Ann Lee's virtual reality combine. We can interact with imaginary objects since they have taken real shape.

The functions of the tools vary. They relate to visual, auditory or tactile perception and to synesthetic impressions.

Lunaphon

„Lunaphon“ is Ann Lee's tool for orientation in „Linearland“. In this country, interlaced by thousands of luminous lines, acoustic perception is very important as an extra local sense.

„Lunaphon“ herefore converts light-energy into sound which is modulated by the amount of energy.



„Lunaphon“



„Chiffrevue“

Chiffrevue

Ann Lee needs her „Chiffrevue“ in a surrounding where colours and shapes are multiplying and are unrecognizable. This happens in „Doublevisionland“.

With „Chiffrevue“ visual impressions are being put together to a deciphered image.



„Polypop“

Polypop

„Polypop“ is rather toy than tool. Ann Lee brought it along from the „Collapsing And Growing World“: a landscape that consists of constantly reconfiguring forms.

„Polypop“ helps Ann Lee to grasp spacial structures and magnetic forces.

Game

Every new „user“ of Ann Lee will, with help of the objects, be an active »player« instead of watching passively.

The presentation of the objects can explain in a narrative and visual way that the »player« should participate. The objects should, similar to a computergame, appear »action sensitive«. Their meaning and handling must be found in the situative context. If the »player« recognizes the function, the object will be a key to Ann Lee's world.

Combination, testing and grasping the tools navigates us on a way into imaginary regions.

The situation of reception can mediate the objects as potentials to be

activated.

The „Ann Lee Gamecards“ are supposed to explain narratively and graphically the usage and function of the tools. The order of actions is up to the »players«. They can invent many imaginary worlds with their own rules.

„KonnektiKit“ in the context of „No Ghost Just a Shell“

With the „KonnektiKit“ the multiple layers of „No Ghost Just a Shell“ are being shown. The knotting of the various Ann Lee worlds and the narrative approach combines ideas and space. The complexity and the possibilities of the figure are shown.

The spectators are invited to participate actively and discover a situative system step by step. The interaction is a playfull moment, while testing the objects.

They are being interpreted individually in their effect. Different kinds of perception will be obvious. Kaleidoscope-like, synesthetic impressions can be understood in different ways and can be discussed and compared.

The material „Phantasmass“ acts as an interface when the objects materialize between the virtual and the real space. At the same time it is an analogy for the process of „No Ghost Just a Shell“.

The open, continuing progress of the project is similar to a constantly changing, liquid substance.

I would like to show the tools into this process. The moment they appear as objects in our reality, they are exemplary for a virtual series of tools. The more Ann Lee stories will exist, the more tools can be invented for them.



Ann Lee in „Linearland - Episode Two“



ann lee tool



ann lee tool