

Macu Moran interviews Jenny Marketou, 2008
For Video Art World, Art in Movement

1) Which characteristics have been present in your investigations?

As an artist, my interest in hypothetical boundaries or the space between interior/ exterior, psychic/social, and private/public has created interesting confusions in working with the immaterial of new media. Combining and connecting the analog world, the physical space of the exhibition site with the digital forges and pulses or pauses, allows the participant to maneuver through the installation space to contemplate, reflect and formulate new discourses. Like the in-between activities it seeks to investigate; my work lives between various fields: part nomadic, part tangible sculpture, part virtual, part performance, part open source, part participatory and part fun.

2) What issues have your artwork been focused on? How they have evolved over time?

My work takes an added dimension when understood in terms of my previous work and the trajectories of my personal history. Born in Athens growing up in a family who were active members of the socialist party in Athens Greece and this gave me an alternate analysis of history that was complimented by my studies in New York City. I think I spent a lot of time trying to question the formal issues that related to art, and like many of my contemporaries I tried very hard to look for other examples of work, for different models of how to make art more political and how to use my projects as a journey that moves between past and present, east and west, dreams and reality express my identity, gender and experiences of displacement, urban geography, and the reality of every day life from a different point of view.

My current art practice and research is related to the concept of new media, open culture, gift economy, live imaging and tactile technologies with non-linear narratives. I am developing my ideas by employing video, performance, installations, screen-based work, social interfaces, Internet and found objects. My interventions are done primarily in the public space and require participation or contribution from the viewers. Creating a scenario for the development of a 'play network'. My main interest is in creating tools and positioning the body of the performer/participant where the codes and rules that regulate and control everyday activity can be made explicit and therefore accentuating arbitrary boundaries and possibly subverting them.

3) Which techniques do you love / have loved during your career?

Methodologies, tools and materials are always contingent on the needs of the moment and the project I am working on. Although my major in my graduate studies was photography since then I have worked with video, Internet, performance, installation.

But at the core of all my projects is the attempt to integrate social responsibility within contemporary art making. The work I do evolved from a frustration with what I perceive to be the continually hermetic state of art. Many times I felt the need to venture out beyond the sheltered confines of the art gallery or any sanctioned space exclusively purposed for the viewing of art and intentionally agitate the boundaries between art and everything else. This was not to the exclusion of working in galleries, as that network for the display of work is still vital and occupies an important support system. But the range of strategies I have utilized over the years are attempts to disrupt established or complacent viewing habits and further push open the possibilities for contemporary practice beyond that which was standardized by museum culture.

It is amazing, and sometimes enervating, to consider that even after a century of experimental art making that attempted to break down the barriers between art and life (the everyday), even at times doing away with the term artists are still faced with a very limited viewership that is predicated on traditional notions of connoisseurship and rarefied knowledge. The average viewer would not look to art to find social critique.

4) Which influences can you see in your body of work?

I've benefited a great deal from recent work on the history of certain senses, on how the eye or ear is trained to perceive in certain ways and to certain ends. Harun Farocki's work, for example, has been of help to me in the way it surveys a myriad of sensory (mostly visual) disciplines. In such practices, eyes expect to see only certain things, and cannot see others. Or in */Hearing Things/*, Leigh Eric Schmidt shows how certain Enlightenment technologies, or even proto-cinema Vaudeville entertainments, taught ears not to listen for the supernatural. I should also mention aesthetic traditions foregrounding my work go from the sixties and seventies performative-based sculpture and installations by Lygia Clark, Yoko Ono, Joseph Beuys, Hans Hackae, to the urban strategies of the Situationists and the anarchitecture of Gordon Matta Clark, and Archigram and finally the open source culture, Pop Art, TV games and graffiti.

6) What do you think your work has brought into the World?

In addition to my art practice I have taught, lectured, curated and I have published books. In my art practice using different medium of expression and working internationally and residing in different countries at times force me to see and sometimes experience the world from different viewpoints seeing things we might not have the habit of and exciting my imaginations. All different methods of expression has pushed my practice as well as the cultural institutions that I have worked with to create appropriate exhibition networks and situations so the public can have access and can participate in these new types of artistic practices and interfaces where everything from the visible world can be seen and experienced in with new emotion and sensitivity.