

Systems of Systems

Paolo Cirio's solo exhibition at Giorgio Persano Gallery in Turin, Italy.

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PRESS RELEASE.

Paolo Cirio's solo show *Systems of Systems* reflects on his informational artworks in relation to the ontologies of conceptual art.

In this survey exhibition, Cirio presents new and former artworks addressing current socio-economic information systems. Through analytical, interventionist, or utopian models, Cirio reformulates information theory rooted in early conceptual art and introduces the flowchart as an artistic medium, a visual form and concept for contemporary art. Cirio's works in the age of algorithms, big data, and ubiquitous networks addresses the aesthetics, politics, and philosophy of information technology impacting all aspects of our society on a global scale.

Beyond examining existing systems, Cirio's creations are further systems inserted into the networks forming society today. The flowcharts of Cirio's systems depict the power of creation, knowledge, and agency in the information society. Cirio's flowcharts became aesthetic objects, images of operations within networks of technological, financial, cultural, and social systems. The schematic, instrumental, and functional character of the flowchart is the quintessential portrayal of the inexorable technocratic order encircling contemporaneity. The visual language of the flowchart circumnavigates the pictorial image and becomes the relevant iconographic imagery of the information age.

Cirio's work continues the trajectory of conceptual art that considers systems of information for aesthetic and social inquiries. In particular, Cirio refers to the fifty years after the coining of *System Aesthetics* in 1968, and the following exhibitions *Information* at MoMA and *Software* at Jewish Museum in 1970. With the new artwork *Foundations* in the central space of the gallery, Paolo Cirio identifies an aesthetics and history related to information systems increasingly interrelating with social fields. Giorgio Persano Gallery offers the ideal venue for Cirio's mid-career survey, given the gallery's decades-long involvement in conceptual art as well as showcasing the work of the seminal artists who were featured in the *Information* and *Software* exhibitions.

The artworks and the installations on display

With prints and artifacts utilizing the diagrammatic language of the flowchart, the exhibition premieres two new works, *Meaning* and the large-scale installation *Foundations*. Former works by Paolo Cirio include *Sociality*, *Global Direct*, *Gift Finance*, *World Currency*, *Hacking Monopolism Trilogy*, and *Open Society Structures*.

The monograph

In conjunction with the *Systems of Systems* exhibition, the new publication *Flowcharts* features Paolo Cirio's most crucial artworks utilizing flowcharts as meta-medium. This monograph documents Cirio's art through hacking, activism, and intellectual engagement from his early work in 2002 to new works produced for this solo exhibition.

Artworks presented in *Systems of Systems*

New artworks:

Foundations

2019. Inkjet on clear film.

Meaning

2019. Acrylic on engraved mirror glass.

Gift Finance

2010. Digital print on plexiglass and embossed plastic card.

Open Society Structures

2009. Serigraph on plexiglass.

Former artworks:

Sociality

2018. Digital prints on paper.

Global Direct

2014. Digital print on plexiglass.

World Currency

2014. Digital print on plexiglass.

Hacking Monopolism Trilogy Flowcharts.

2005-2011. Digital print on plexiglass.

Artworks in the monograph:

The artworks in display at the exhibition *Systems of Systems* and the following artworks:

Daily Paywall. 2014.

Loophole for All. 2013.

Art Commodities, 2013.

Flowcharts sketches, 2004-2002.

Captions of the artworks

Foundations

2019. Inkjet on clear film.

This artwork reflects on the aesthetics and ontologies of conceptual art concerning social processes.

Meaning

2019. Acrylic on engraved mirror glass.

This series of flowcharts outlines Cirio's theory of Internet semiotics forming social meaning online.

Sociality

2018. Digital laser prints on paper.

This artwork documents over twenty-thousand patents exposing socially hazardous information technology.

Global Direct

2014. Digital print on dibond.

This artwork outlines the idea of worldwide democracy as a utopia for the global information society.

Open Society Structures

2010. Serigraph on plexiglass.

This artwork is a triptych of flowcharts introducing the idea of algorithm drawing for outlining social values.

Gift Finance

2009. Digital print on plexiglass and embossed plastic card.

This artwork is a utopian monetary policy counterfeiting virtual money by issuing illicit Visa credit cards.

World Currency

2014. Digital print on plexiglass.

This artwork outlines a global currency through the formulation of an equation and trading algorithm.

Hacking Monopolism Trilogy Flowcharts

2005-2011. Digital print on plexiglass.

This trilogy of algorithms exploited the technical and economic vulnerabilities of three major Internet companies, Facebook, Amazon, and Google, reconfiguring the way they concentrate, misappropriate, and monetize large quantities of information and user interactions.