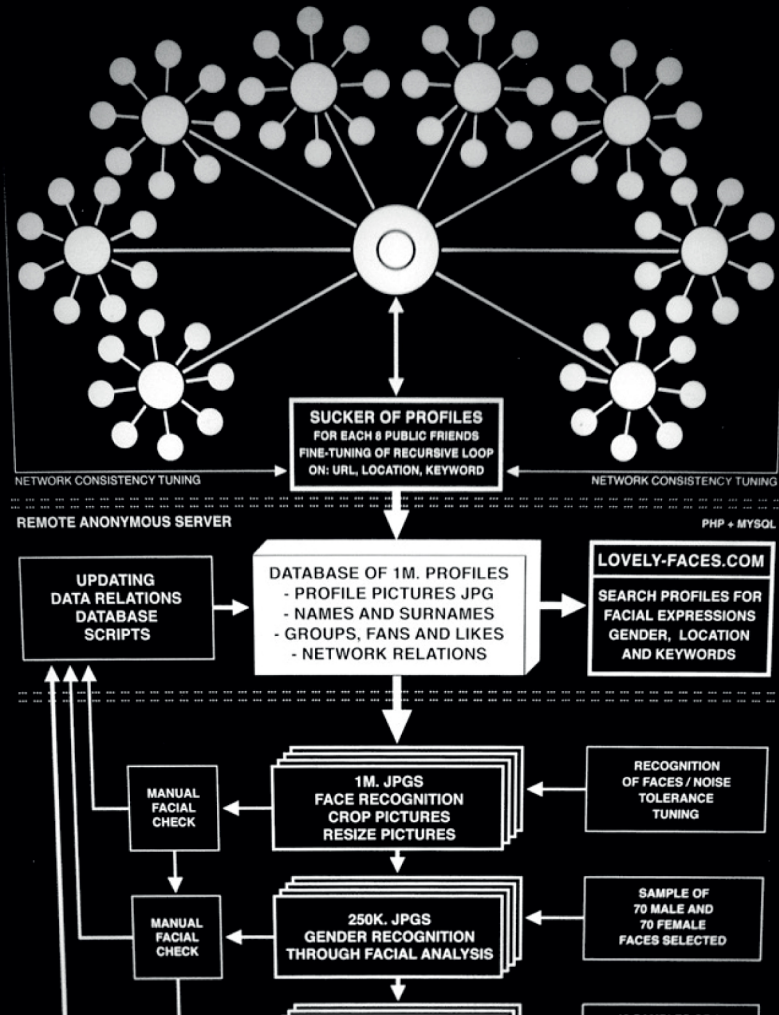Bruce Sterling

SCULPTING THE FLOW OF REALITY

Bruce Sterling

SCULPTING THE FLOW OF REALITY

It's conceptual art, but it leads him into the streets of London to distribute free credit cards.
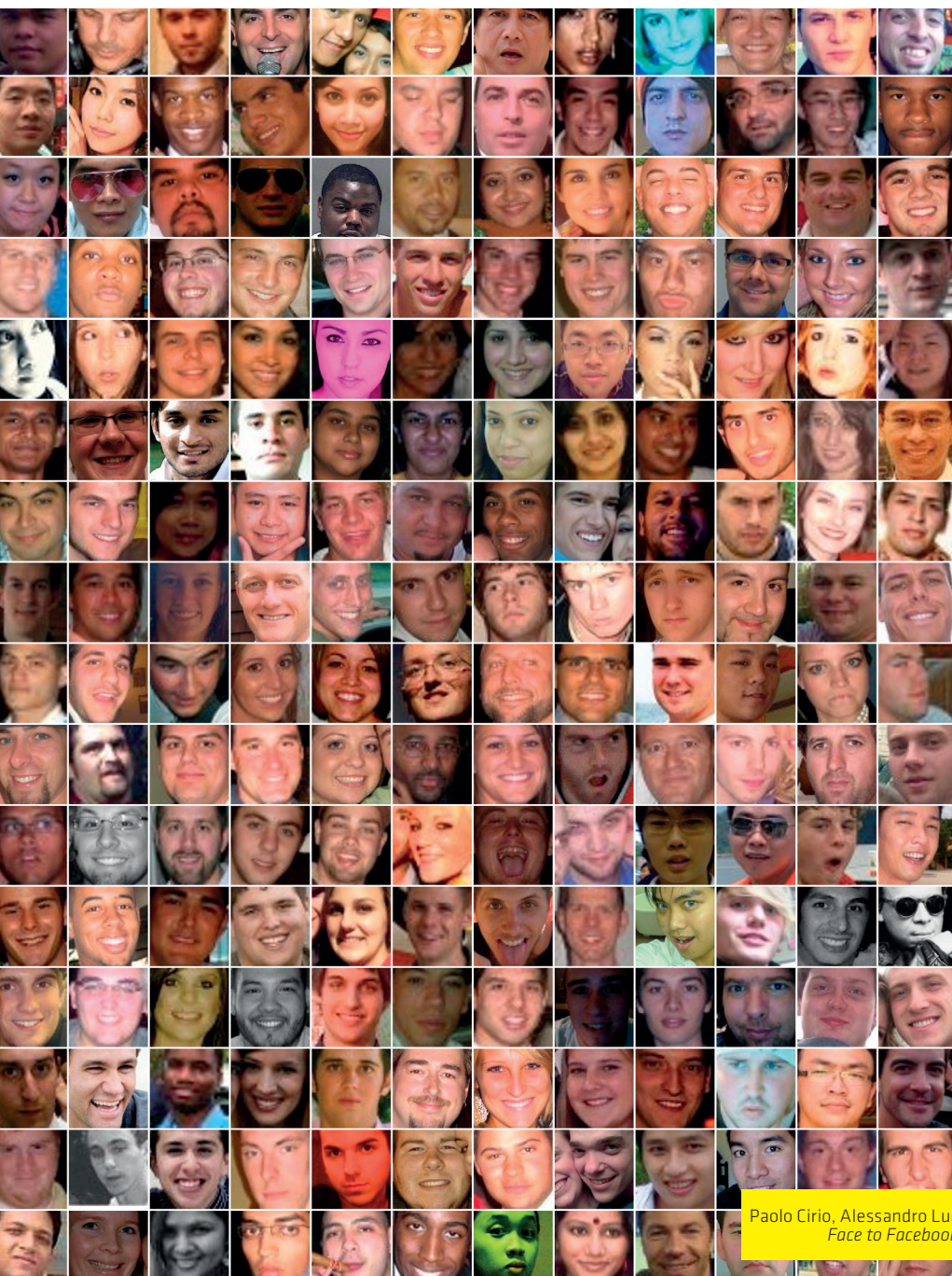
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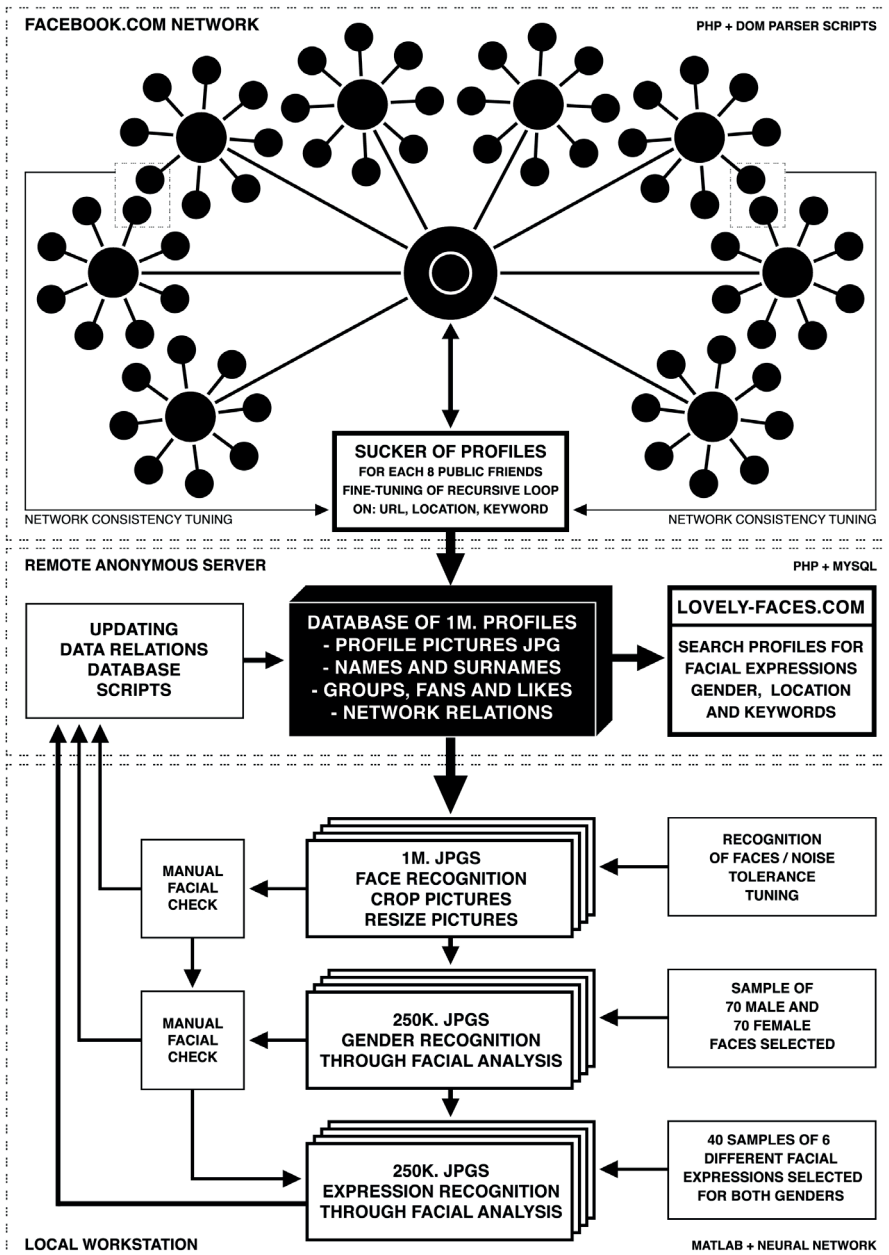
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FACEBOOK.COM NETWORK

PHP + DOM PARSER SCRIPTS

NETWORK CONSISTENCY TUNING

NETWORK CONSISTENCY TUNING

SUCKER OF PROFILES
FOR EACH 8 PUBLIC FRIENDS
FINE-TUNING OF RECURSIVE LOOP
ON: URL, LOCATION, KEYWORD

REMOTE ANONYMOUS SERVER

PHP + MYSQL

**UPDATING
DATA RELATIONS
DATABASE
SCRIPTS**

DATABASE OF 1M. PROFILES
- PROFILE PICTURES JPG
- NAMES AND SURNAMES
- GROUPS, FANS AND LIKES
- NETWORK RELATIONS

LOVELY-FACES.COM

SEARCH PROFILES FOR
FACIAL EXPRESSIONS
GENDER, LOCATION
AND KEYWORDS

**MANUAL
FACIAL
CHECK**

**1M. JPGS
FACE RECOGNITION
CROP PICTURES
RESIZE PICTURES**

RECOGNITION
OF FACES / NOISE
TOLERANCE
TUNING

**MANUAL
FACIAL
CHECK**

**250K. JPGS
GENDER RECOGNITION
THROUGH FACIAL ANALYSIS**

SAMPLE OF
70 MALE AND
70 FEMALE
FACES SELECTED

**250K. JPGS
EXPRESSION RECOGNITION
THROUGH FACIAL ANALYSIS**

40 SAMPLES OF 6
DIFFERENT FACIAL
EXPRESSIONS SELECTED
FOR BOTH GENDERS

LOCAL WORKSTATION

MATLAB + NEURAL NETWORK

Facebook is already a vast dating-site of sorts, and much of what goes on there is invisible to common users. Facebook and its corporate allies are already aggregating, contextualizing and fabricating, all the time. They never ask permission of the users to restructure the data that Facebook users naively contribute. And neither does Paolo; he rarely asks permission, either.

The engineers and the interface designers of Facebook spend amazing amounts of time and energy contemplating elaborate sets of charts, boxes and arrows. This is what they are paid for, and their efforts look remarkably like the charts, boxes and arrows on display in the Aksioma exhibition. Periodically, there is an upgrade review in which the boxes and arrows are reinterpreted and rearranged – commonly in a way intended to generate more money.

However, those professional attempts at reshaping commercial reality don't always succeed. Reality is resistant to change and reality seems to have an anticommercial bias. For instance, the lamentable MySpace has just as many boxes and arrows as Facebook, yet MySpace is bleeding away its users and transforming into a ghost town. Friendster is already a ghost town, where the arbitrary reality of its programmers has long since ceased to flow through the boxes and arrows. These may be vast young industries, but their mortality rate is colossal.

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There can, it seems, be no peace with the undemocratic dictatorship of the management of public knowledge in an information era. Knowledge is, it seems, unethically exploited by corporations that seize ownership of

information resources that should properly be freed for the public benefit of the planetary population. Seen from this stark point of view, the elaborate software structures of Google, Amazon, Facebook and Visa are mere obfuscations. These enterprises, familiar to all of us, are the constructors of a false social reality.

They are circuit-ticking contrivances for generating false information consciousness. Every Paolo Cirio effort is a propaganda of the deed intended to illuminate this mordant state of our public affairs.

Paolo Cirio, *P2P Gift Credit Card*, 2010

The colossal popularity of Google, Amazon, Facebook and Visa – they are well-nigh beloved everywhere, except in China, Iran and North Korea, and even there they have their ardent fans – may seem to make this a distinct minority viewpoint. However, this bothers Paolo Cirio not at all. On the contrary, it allows his artistic fame to grow with the gigantic size of his enemies. Paolo's fame is indeed growing, around the world, and probably his fame grows most of all among the employees of Google, Amazon, Facebook and Visa. Not the

shareholders, not the users – these profiteers and victims merely represent two classes and sheep. It is the constructors of the systems, those who patch the crumbling codes together every day, who are the key demographic for artworks of this kind.

These are the people most likely to appreciate the ingenuity of his efforts. They are under attack, and they are offered appeal; they are the battleground where the boxes and arrows mingle.

Paolo Cirio
P2P Gift Credit Card
Aksioma | Project Space
Ljubljana, 2011

Bruce Sterling
SCULPTING THE FLOW OF REALITY

PostScript^{UM} #7
Series edited by Janez Janša

To je konceptualna umetnost, toda vodi ga na londonske ulice, kjer deli brezplačne kreditne kartice.

Paolo Cirio, »oblikovalec podatkov«, vedno »strukturira nepričakovane oblike«. Navadno mu te prinašajo tožbe in grožnje s smrtjo. Toda kar vidite tu, so tokovi resničnosti, kot jih zaznava Paolo, osnovni tokovi, ki jih »oblikuje«. To je analiza, ki njegovo umetniško ustvarjanje omogoča in zaradi katere je v nekem smislu celo neizogibno – je njegova zgodovinska javna dolžnost.

Samo programerji razmišljajo tako kot 32-letni italijanski umetnik. Človek lahko v vsem življenju – tudi kljub intenzivnemu političnemu angažmaju ali ukvarjanju z avantgardno umetnostjo – nikoli ne naleti na »razčlenjevalnik kode PHP + DOM« ali »nastavljanje konsistentnosti omrežja«. V Paolovem svetu pa so take stvari danost.

Očitno je, da mu sestavljanje teh shem prinaša določen estetski užitek. Všeč mu je njihov videz, toda predvsem ga zanimajo možnosti, ki mu jih ponujajo za intervencije. To so zemljevidi ranljivosti, zbrani – z eno besedo – za hekanje. Paolo ne more pustiti resničnosti, da sama mirno teče skozi nize okvirčkov in puščic; resničnost je treba hekati.

Podatke oblikuje s sredstvi in metodami, značilnimi za sodobno spletno oblikovanje: združevanje, konstruiranje in kontekstualiziranje. Kakih milijon profilov na Facebooku, na primer, lahko »združimo« in na nov način »kontekstualiziramo« – računalniško iskanje privlačnih obrazov – ter potem »konstruiramo« v nenamerno zmenkarsko spletno stran.

Facebook je že tako nekakšna obsežna zmenkarska spletna stran in večina tega, kar se tam dogaja, je navadnim uporabnikom nevidna. Facebook in njegovi korporacijski zavezniki že zdaj ves čas združujejo, kontekstualizirajo in konstruirajo.

Uporabnikov nikoli ne prosijo za dovoljenje za preurejanje podatkov, ki jih ti naivno prispevajo. Paolo pa tudi ne – tudi on le redko prosi za dovoljenje.

Facebookovi inženirji in oblikovalci vmesnikov porabijo ogromno časa in energije za tuhtanje o zapletenih nizih shem, okvirčkov in puščic. Za to so plačani in plod njihovega dela je izjemno podoben shemam, okvirčkom in puščicam, ki so na ogled na razstavi Aksiome. Redno izvajajo posodobitvene preglede, pri katerih okvirčke in puščice reinterpretirajo in prerazporejajo – navadno tako, da bi ustvarjali več dobička.

Vseeno pa so profesionalni poskusi preoblikovanja komercialne resničnosti ne uspejo vedno. Resničnost se upira spremembam in zdi se, da je naravnana protikomercialno. Klavrni MySpace, na primer, ima ravno toliko okvirčkov in puščic kot Facebook, vendar mu uporabniki odtekajo, tako da postaja mesto duhov. Friendster pa že je mesto duhov, v katerem je arbitrarna resničnost njegovih programerjev že zdavnaj nehala teči skozi okvirčke in puščice. To so resda obsežne mlade panoge, toda njihova smrtnost je gromozanska.

Za drage, kompleksne, krhke podatkovne strukture je značilna inherentna in celo usmiljenja vredna ranljivost. Vseeno pa Paolo Cirio in njegov znani sodelavec Alessandro Ludovico ne kažeta prav veliko usmiljenja do njih. Odlikuje ju namreč nepopustljivo nasprotovanje. Povsem sta osredotočena na zgodovinske »grehe« naših soddonih podatkovnih titanov: Facebooka (vdori v zasebnost), Amazona (knjižno piratstvo), Googla (organizacijo za znanje so spremenili v navadno profitno oglaševanje) in, v nedavni londonski akciji, Visa (iz kreditiranja so naredili propadlo panogo).

Kot kaže, zaradi nedemokratične diktature upravljanja javnega vedenja v informacijski dobi ne more biti miru. Zdi se, da vedenje neetično
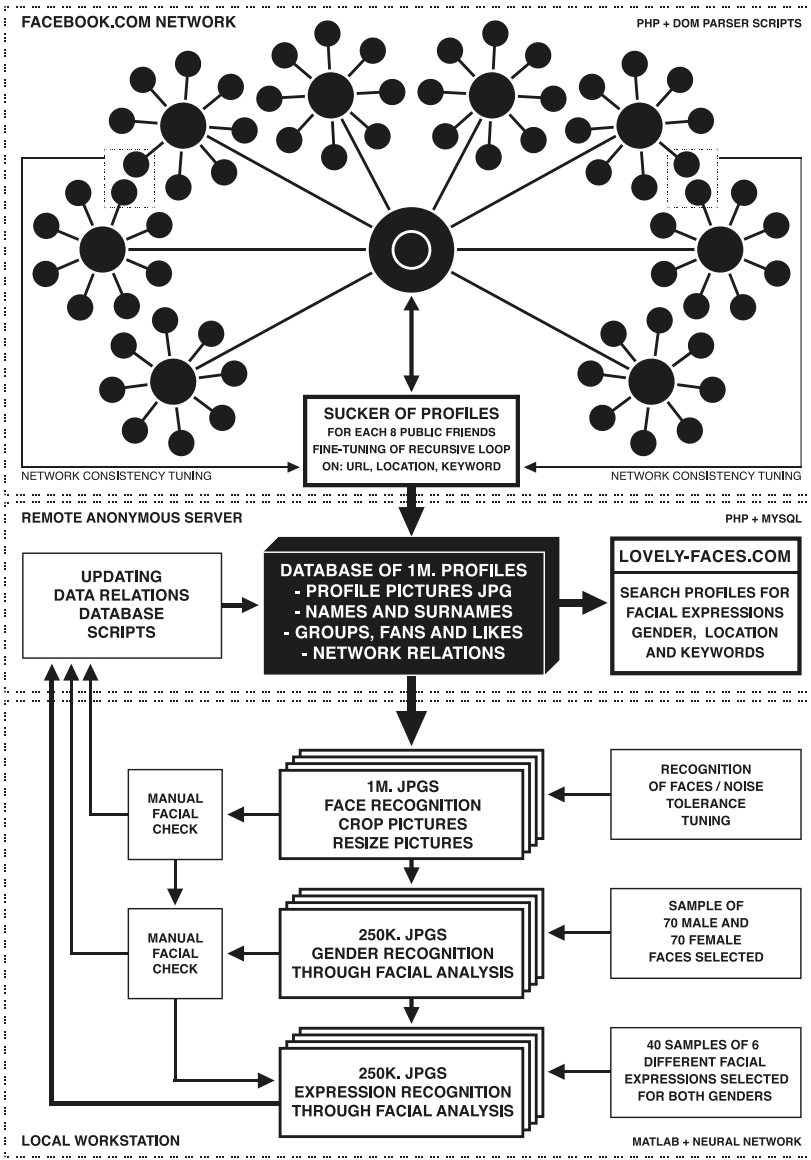

Paolo Cirio, Alessandro Ludovico
Face to Facebook, 2011
3 lesene plošče z 1728 fotografijami na fotografskem papirju, 1 video in 1 grafoskopska projekcija, različne dimenzije / 3 wood panels with 1728 pictures printed on photographic paper, 1 video and 1 still projection by overhead, dimensions variable
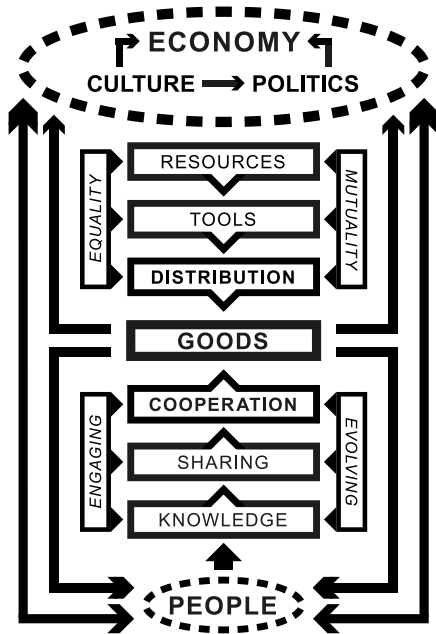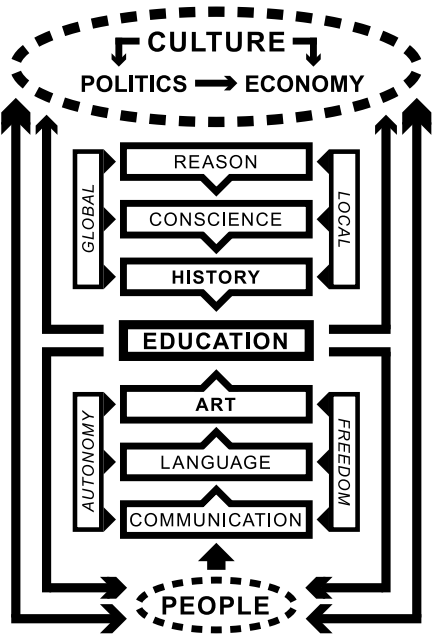

Paolo Cirio
Open Society Structures, 2009
3 (digitalni) sitotiski na pleksi steklu / 3 serigraph (digital) prints on Plexiglass, 39 x 54 x 2 cm vsak / each

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izkoriščajo korporacije, ki si prilaščajo informacijske vire, ki bi morali biti osvobojeni za javno dobro svetovnega prebivalstva. S tega ostrega stališča so kompleksne strukture programske opreme Googla, Amazona, Facebooka in Vise zgolj zamegljevanje. Ta vsem nam dobro znana podjetja konstruirajo lažno družbeno resničnost. So naprave za ustvarjanje lažne informacijske zavesti.

Vsaka akcija Paola Ciria je anarhistična »propaganda z dejanjem«, namenjena osvetljevanju žgočega stanja javnih zadev.
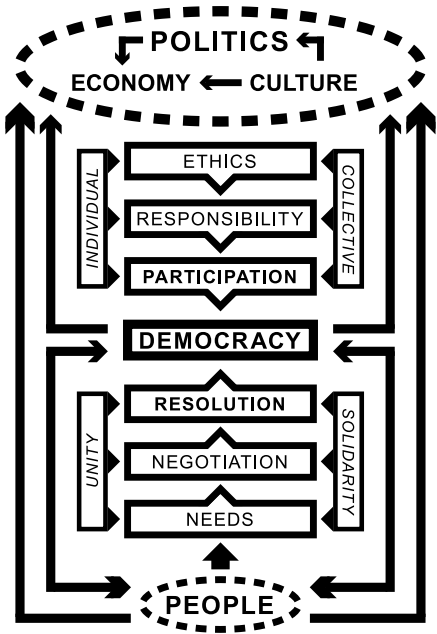
Zaradi velikanske priljubljenosti Googla, Amazona, Facebooka in Vise – priljubljeni so malodane povsod, razen na Kitajskem, v Iranu in Severni Koreji, pa še tam imajo goreče privržence – se morda to zdi izrazito manjšinsko stališče. Vendar to Paola Ciria niti najmanj ne moti. Nasprotno, zato lahko njegova umetniška slava raste sorazmerno z orjaškostjo njegovih sovražnikov. Paolova slava dejansko raste po vsem svetu, najbolj pa verjetno med zaposlenimi pri Googlu, Amazonu, Facebooku in Visi. Ne med delničarji ali uporabniki – ti dobičkarji in žrtve predstavljajo zgolj dva razreda

in ovce. Glavna demografska skupina za takšna umetniška dela so konstruktorji sistemov, tisti, ki vsak dan krpajo razpadajoče kode.

Ti ljudje lahko najbolj cenijo domiselnost njegovih projektov. Oni so napadeni, oni so nagovorjeni; oni so bojišče, kjer se okvirčki in puščice mešajo.

Prevod iz angleščine: Denis Debevec

Bruce Sterling
Sculpting the Flow of Reality

It's conceptual art, but it leads him into the streets of London to distribute free credit cards.

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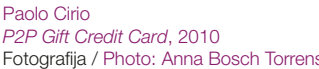
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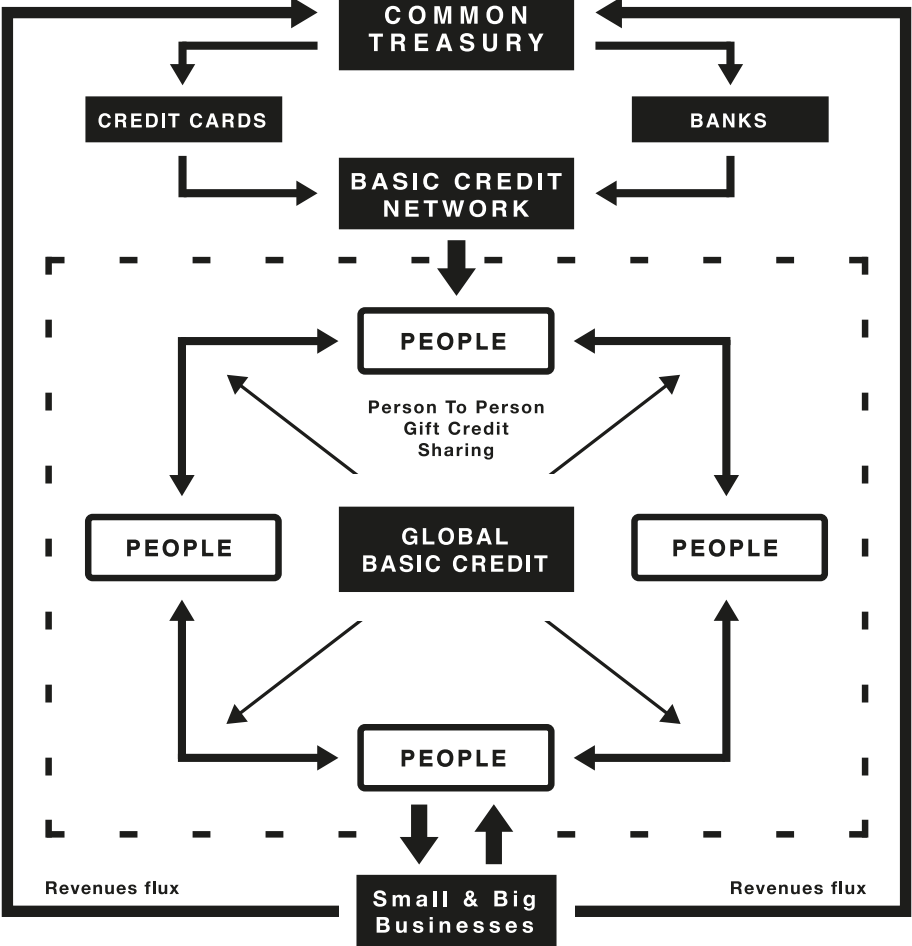

Paolo Cirio
P2P Gift Credit Card, 2010
Fotografija / Photo: Anna Bosch Torrens

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Paolo Cirio, Alessandro Ludovico
Face to Facebook, 2011
Računalniška grafika, detajl / Graphic, Detail

Paolo Cirio
P2P Gift Credit Card, 2010
Mešani mediji in 500 plastičnih reliefnih kartic, različne dimenzije / Mixed media and 500 plastic cards embossed, dimensions variable

PAOLO CIRIO

REALITYFLOWHACKED

www.aksioma.org/realityflowhacked