

## Panel D3

Sala delle Colonne 2

### Animation and Movement: Exchange between Media



Holger Lang

#### Animated Memes: Rebellious Underrated Crossmedia Hybrids

As a tool for interpersonal and public communication, the Internet opened channels, possibilities, and forms that exploded in volume and quality in front of the users' faces on the computer screens. In many of these new types of online media the application of sequentially displayed images plays a key role and this fact then retroactively contributed to the discussion of intersections and enrichments between previously self-contained fields of practice and research. One of the most dynamic and volatile new formats in online communication are so-called "memes".

As Memes use existing material, they continue the tradition of working with found footage and the appropriation of available material, but reach a new, bold level of public exchange through electronic channels. Interpreting the foundations of animation from a radical conceptual point of view, the producers and the users of Internet memes show no respect for historically established theories and doctrines. Through this process, such memes represent a significant step in the democratization of mass media, which connects the possibilities of social environments in digital culture with the creative potential of unfiltered individual expression. Memes are so basic in their structure, so unpredictable in their effects, and so uncontrollable in their creation, that they are attractive and effective as a new and raw form of communication. The acquisition, adoption, and adaptation of elements from various preexisting types of mediated expression in the exponentially growing field of Internet memes also includes a subset described as "animated memes".

This specific niche of short animated loops exposes the unique quality of this advanced medium as it allows the authors to tell complex visual stories in a very condensed form. Strongly connected to social media, users are able to respond very fast to current developments in the global community. Through a very simple process, one is enabled to participate in a contextualized narrative process that connects and inspires people across all levels of society and across borders of all thinkable kinds. In addition, the subset of animated memes consciously plays with the notion and illusions of moving images and oscillates between deconstruction and reconstruction of media content. Technologically, they function on a very basic, almost crude level, but their sociological, political, and perceptual dimensions have its finger on the pulse of unprecedented achievements through already converged types of formerly traditional media.

#### Biography

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Holger Lang is an Austrian artist, filmmaker, educator and researcher. He has taught and teaches media arts, media aesthetics, photography, animation, media production and theory at the Art Department of the Webster University in St. Louis (USA) and at its Viennese campus. He produces experimental films, animation, documentary films, music videos and live productions for theater, performances, and concerts. A significant part of his artistic work has been shown in an audiovisual format, but also in exhibitions,

presentations and artist's books. Since 2010, he is running and curating an independent non-commercial gallery in Vienna.