

Arte Programmata: Open Source Remediation of Kinetic and Programmed Art

Abstract

Arte Programmata (Programmed Art) is the definition given to the works of a number of Italian artists active during the early 1960s who produced artworks based on kinetic and optical effects. The definition was introduced by Umberto Eco in 1962 for an exhibition held at the Olivetti Showroom in Milan. Exhibitions of artworks from interactive art pioneers feature issues related to the reenactment of old technologies, with maintenance representing a big challenge to preservation and haecceity. Open source software and hardware platforms such as Arduino, Processing and Fablabs are tools and centers that pioneers of interactive art dreamed about. Thanks to the support of the artists of Gruppo T, the project aims at creating open source versions of several works through the release of technical specifications: blueprints, codes, and technology. The goal is not to flood the art market with authorized fakes, but rather to preserve artworks whose fragility makes them the pariahs of contemporary art. These specifications are transformed into an information platform that enables Swiss and Swiss-based interactive artists and designers to build upon the works of art by Gruppo T during a series of hacking sessions and workshops. Lessons include Open Design, Open Knowledge, Open Hardware, and Creative Commons as means to reenact artworks by pioneers of interactive art, and FabLabs as centers for experimenting novel approaches for arts and design.

Keywords

Arte Programmata, Programmed Art, Kinetic Art, Interactive Art, Open Source, Remediation, Gruppo T, FabLabs, Open Hardware, Creative Commons, Digital Preservation

Serena Cangiano, Davide Fornari

**Re-programmed Art:
an open manifesto**

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**This project is conceived and coordinated by
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at SUPSI University of Applied Sciences and Arts
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**Scientific collaborator: Azalea Seratoni
Artists involved: Giovanni Anceschi, Andreas
Gysin, Pe Lang, ToDo.**

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1. CONTEXT

Arte Programmata (Programmed Art) is the definition given to the works of a number of Italian artists active during the early 1960s.

They produced artworks based on kinetic and optical effects. The definition of Programmed Art was introduced by Umberto Eco in 1962 for an exhibition held at the Olivetti Showroom in Milan.

2. SITUATION

Exhibitions of artworks from interactive art pioneers feature the issues related to the reenactment of old technologies. Maintenance still represents a big issue in the preservation of interactive arts, as well as a challenge to its haecceity. Recent exhibitions, such as *Small Utopia: Ars Multiplicata* at Prada Foundation in Venice showcased (broken and/or non functioning) artworks of kinetic and programmed art.

According to Massimiliano Gioni, the curator in charge of the Venice Art Biennale 2013, *Arte Programmata* is the biggest omission of contemporary art, as it challenges the idea of an artwork as unique, authorial, sellable, collectable.

3. REMEDIATION

Open source software and hardware platforms such as Arduino, Processing and Fablabs are tools and centers that pioneers of interactive art dreamed about: they were amateur technologists and tinkering bricoleurs.

Today, their example and technological innovations can be considered as means to enable the “technical” reproducibility of works of art, and at same time a way to disrupt the art system by introducing novel principles of art creation: an open manifesto.

4. PROCESS

Thanks to the support of the artists of Gruppo T, the project aims at creating open source versions of several works through the release of technical specifications: blueprints, codes, technology. The goal is not to flood the art market with authorized fakes, but rather to preserve artworks whose fragility makes them the pariahs of contemporary art.

5. HACKING

These specifications are transformed into an “information platform” that enables Swiss and Swiss-based interactive artists and designers to build upon the works of art by Gruppo T during a series of hacking sessions and workshops.

6. LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Open Design, Open Knowledge, Open Hardware, Creative Commons as means to reenact artworks by pioneers of interactive art.

FabLabs as centers for experimenting novel approaches for arts and design, and for supporting cultural institutions as well as art and design historians.

Creating a workshop format to be replicated at other fablabs and cultural centers.