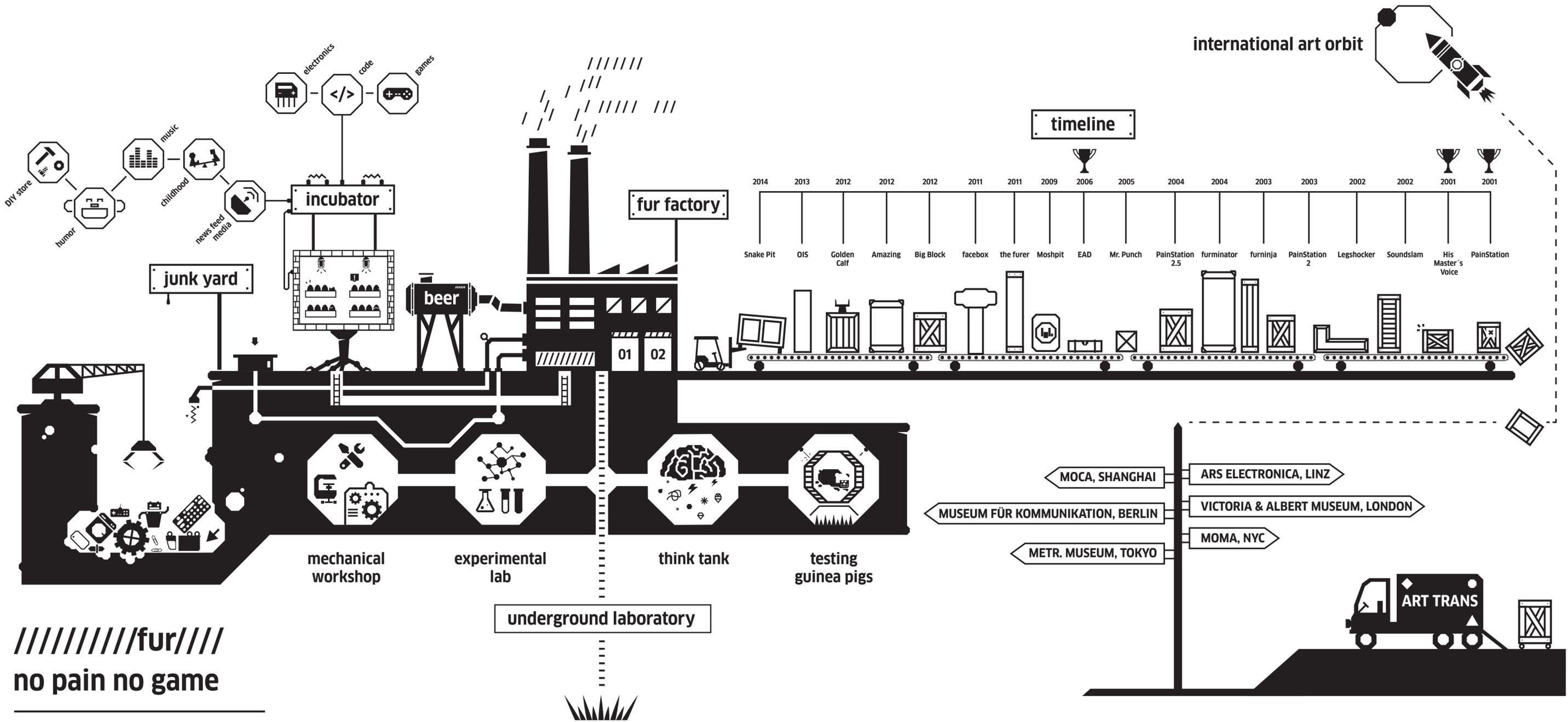


//////fur//// no pain no game



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March 16th – June 26th 2016

Museum für Kommunikation Berlin
Leipziger Straße 16
10117 Berlin-Mitte

Tue 9 am–8 pm
Wed–Fri 9 am–5 pm
Sat, Sun and on holidays 10 am–6 pm

mfk-berlin.de | goethe.de/spieltrieb



//////////fur!!!
no pain no game

A computer game that punishes mistakes with real pain. The smallest social network in the world. Balls activated – as if by the hand of a ghost – via singing. A flipper game played with steel bullets at the player's eye level. **Volker Morawe** and **Tilman Reiff's** multisensory artifacts are a counter-proposition to the advancing alienation of electronic input/output device users. The two tech-artists stage their central artistic inquiry into an alternative user interface as an intense human-machine-human encounter. Since 2001, their quick-witted instruments have been exploring the boundaries between human beings and their gadgets – and that, not always only with caution. Also known as *//////////fur!!!*, the artists focus on the tactile interface. They want to make art physically tangible – and that, outside the comfort zone. The duo's worldwide debut individual exhibition, entitled **no pain no game**, presents selected works that in various ways invite interaction.

PainStation, a sort of 'modern dueling artifact', is considered a milestone and taboo-breaker in media art: the first-ever computer game that does not merely represent pain visually, but actually causes physical pain. Even if the other works presented as part of the exhibition provoke less drastic feelings, what they all have in common is that merely viewing them will not suffice in order to fully experience them. Only visitors who summon up enough courage to enter into this new kind of interaction will, for a time, become part of the installation. It is only in this direct contact that the extra dose of built-in humor becomes apparent, when the interfaces that appear, seemingly familiar at first glance, turn out to behave quite differently than expected.

All of the works, whether single- or multi-user games, have in common the fact that the audience is a significant element of the play concept. Egging players on, cheering, clapping, taking photos – all is welcome. Still, the visitor who will have the most intense experience is the one who personally interacts with and becomes part of the work.

//////////fur!!! are media artists and art critics, gadget artists and game designers. Perceived by some as artistic sadists, they are considered – by reason of their fresh and unconventional approach – the Dadaists of their genre. Their works polarize, provoke and enthrall, and have won prestigious international awards, including the Japan Media Arts Award (2003), an Ars Electronica honorable mention (2002) and the International Media Art Award of the ZKM Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe (2003). Numbering among their international exhibition venues are the MOCA in Shanghai, the Art Fair in Köln, the Yerba Center for the Arts in San Francisco, MoMA in New York and many others.

Volker Morawe, 44, comes from Bremen, was previously a space electronics specialist and producer of musical hits. Tilman Reiff, 43, is originally from Munich, an IT specialist focusing on interface design. The two met at the Kunsthochschule für Medien in Köln, became housemates and thereby laid the foundation for many extraordinary installations that not only invite play, but also, above all, go against the grain of media interaction mechanisms.

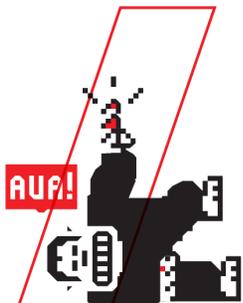
The no pain no game exhibition was commissioned from *//////////fur!!!* by the **Goethe Institute** and, as part of the **PLAY INSTINCT** project, will be on view in many European cities until 2016.



PainStation

The best-known work to date of the *//////////fur!!!* duo, honored with the International Media Art Award in 2002, turns the 1972 video game hit Pong into a console game that remains controversial to this day. Some see in PainStation a glorification of violence ('Only the Germans can do this!'); others are fascinated by the game as a parodistic counter-proposition to current game design: a computer game that hits back painfully.

PainStation has attracted viewers all over the world, even those who otherwise visit museums rather seldom, probably also because, as a 'contemporary dueling artifact', the game takes account of archaic needs to defend honor. On the Internet, one can find countless photographs of players who proudly display their maltreated hands as trophies; some of these photos can be found in the 'Hall of Pain'.



Amazing

Amazing is a voice-controlled ball-dropper labyrinth for two or more players. Only by changing the pitch of the sound they are producing can they tilt the surface of the labyrinth along its vertical and horizontal axes, and in this way, following gravity, steer the ball around a number of corners and through the labyrinth. The singing participants must cooperate with one another and at just the right moment produce the pitch that will move the ball.

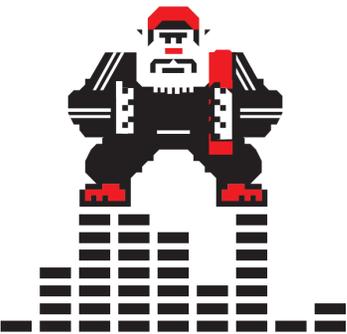


With this installation, *//////////fur!!!* sets out to present exhibition visitors with a singing challenge. There are countless varieties of this dexterity game: from a wooden box with knobs on the outside, to a miniature version made of hole-punched cardboard under a transparent plastic cover. Thanks to its voice-control mechanism and extraordinary interaction, Amazing is without doubt one-of-a-kind.

Soundslam

Soundslam is a punch-intensive solo or multi-player boxing game in which one stands eye-to-eye with a punching bag in the ring. Not only do well-aimed punches cause the robust opponent to swing. The object of the final part of the workout is to follow the instructions of a virtual trainer and box in the right combination, in time to sound fragments from the classic Rocky III – Eye of the Tiger – suitable background music to which to sock it to the punching bag hanging from the ceiling, the way Rocky once did to Mr. T. The player who punches in time to the music will get the best results and will be guaranteed to enchant the audience!

The intelligent punching bag is equipped with twelve sensors that react with a special sound to each punch. Obviously, it is these beats that give a real impetus to throw more punches. The installation was actually devised as an injury prevention interface for DJs. In fact, many of them suffer from RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury), also known as 'mouse arm' or perhaps 'record arm'. If used regularly, Soundslam has the potential to counteract this strain.



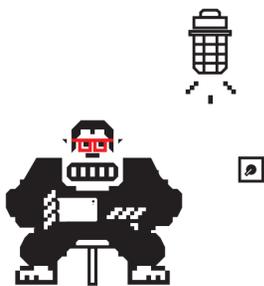
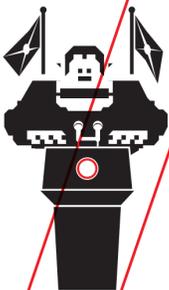
the ///furer///

Not just the seductive power of words, but above all, the charisma of speakers has stirred people to their greatest achievements and driven nations into war. How trustworthy are those who stage their words so well? What are we paying attention to when we listen to them, give them our trust and let them guide us in our actions?

//////////fur!!! decouples the emphatic speech from the great leader and has it recited by a small, clownish wooden puppet. So wide open is the enormous mouth that takes up its whole body, so meaningful the expansive gestures of its single stiff arm. Sometimes it would be better to see that little man behind the pompous speech from a high pulpit between two massive flags.

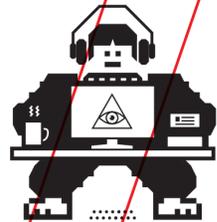
So who will recognise the speakers? *//////////fur!!!* thinks it is more important what the speech turns out to be in retrospect. A false promise? A great lie? A crass faux pas? Clumsy self-glorification? Or perhaps an epoch-making revelation?

the *///furer///* is a universal speech-reciter. The hand-size wooden puppet reproduces the most varied speeches of charismatic leading thinkers, political string-pullers, unscrupulous dictators and religious reformers, using sound-synchronised mouth and arm movements.



OIS

OIS is a work that *//////////fur!!!* developed as part of Art on Your Screen, a series of art works for the Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe. It must have been obvious to the curator who commissioned the work that Morawe and Reiff, by reason of their artistic stance of rejecting standard data input devices and one-on-one human-computer screen situations, would not develop an Internet-based work of art. In spite of that, this is the duo's first work that does employ the Internet – but in a contrarian manner, namely as a lever and a window to reality. We are constantly under observation: without knowing by whom, all we can do is notice that if a light bulb comes on, this means that someone has logged onto the Internet. All that remains to us by way of a response is to undo this action by switching off the light bulb – even if only to give the other party an opportunity to turn it back on. Communication has been reduced to the least common denominator: yes or no. Is this really so different from the 'real' web? Not necessarily. The Internet is, after all, precisely as much of a one-way street as it is ironically visualized by the OIS (One-Way Interaction Sculpture) at the meta-level: basically, it is impossible to undo anything. And even if we do turn off the light briefly, the surveillance camera remains on. Always.



facebook

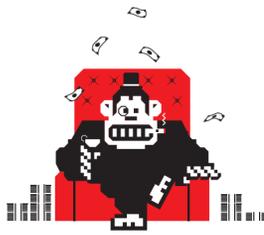
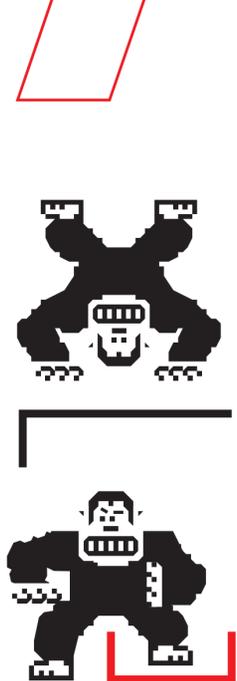
facebook is not a game, but rather a serious meeting place and therapy site for Internet addicts, the last chance at salvation from total alienation and the extinction of interpersonal communication.

Now that Facebook has turned friendship into a mass commodity and the number of virtual friends is becoming a litmus test of one's own status, real friends have become a rarity. More and more frequently, we forget where and how to find real friends, since we still just post and 'like' items on each other's timelines, 'like' the comments of those who share our status updates.

In the process, without realizing it, we lose the one person that matters the most to us: that one true friend. But it's still not too late. You are lucky to be visiting this exhibition, for the only place left where you can embark on a real friendship is inside this facebook – the smallest social network in the world. You decide: a friend for life or friends on Facebook?



The *///furminator* is a flipper that transports players into the first-person perspective of so-called ego shooter games. With the difference that inside the gigantic force-feedback helmet, what awaits the player is not a virtual but an actual reality: the steel balls really do swish past one's ears, one's own nose finds itself directly behind the wings of the flipper. Isolated from the outside world, the player experiences the sound and light effects of an automatic pinball machine with an intensity never before experienced. The palpable crashing of the mechanism and the shockingly real panorama provide a high-immersion game experience, for which current console and PC games, which court buyers with more and more realistic graphics, are just no match. In traditional flipper games, the concrete parts of the playing field, when viewed from above through the glass, appear almost two-dimensional. In the *///furminator*, the player is at eye level with the action, protected only by a lowly plastic window from bumps and bruises. What plays out in the blind spots is projected by cameras onto internal LCD screens. Even bystanders take part in the game experience: the supplementary operation unit displays the action inside the *///furminator* from five perspectives which can be selected via a switch.



Golden Calf

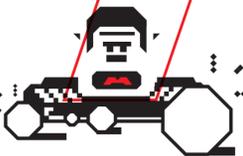
The Golden Calf stands for the worship of a false deity. A Bible story that seems to foretell the existence of the stock market: the Israelites, only recently having escaped slavery in Egypt, put all the gold they possessed into the building of an idolatrous statue, thereby also losing their true, spiritual values. *//////////fur!!!* allows us to experience first-hand the attractive force of filthy lucre. Morals take second place when you're hungry: why not invest in weapons, if you can thereby get loaded with money in no time flat?

The *//////////fur!!!* duo has also devised this video game intended for 2-4 stock traders shares as a reminiscence of stock exchange action in years gone by. Contemporary stock exchanges are becoming more and more symbolic in character. The majority of transactions are beginning to take place via computer. The share price itself is also arrived at electronically. Thus, frequent price distortions occur that are almost completely beyond control.

His Master's Voice

His Master's Voice is a meditative social game in which small ball robots are set in motion by singing. The game invites one to experience a totally new kind of interaction. At the same time, through its peculiar operation technique, it reveals cultural differences: in particular, it demonstrates to what extent people make free use of their own voice. Singing has to a large extent disappeared as a form of spending time together and in daily life, is taken as embarrassing. But this is the only way to set the balls of His Master's Voice in motion.

Who will dare to produce the first sound? Melodies play no role, so the excuse 'I can't sing!' doesn't count. There are also no pre-ordained patterns of how the balls should move. Anyone who chucks out and tries to play tunes using his Smartphone will soon discover that this doesn't work! This is how viewers visiting the museum in Tokyo tried to get out of this awkward situation. One would do better to follow the example of the audiences in Dresden at the Cyber Art festival: there, a spontaneous choir formed that quickly grew larger.



Snake Pit

Off the sofa! If you, as a computer game player, would rest on the laurels of manual dexterity and perfect eye-hand coordination, now it's time to get up and get moving! Snake Pit is based on the 1979 Hyper-Wurm arcade game, which in the 1990s was pre-installed under the name of 'snake' on many mobile phones. At that time, one had to use combinations of digits to navigate a voracious snake towards emerging tasty titbits. With each bite, the snake became longer and risked meeting the tip of its own tail while looking for the way to the next portions. However, such an encounter meant the end of the game.

//////////fur!!! transforms this mini-screen-sized action, usually played solo and rough only on the eyes and thumbs, into a sweat-inducing training run for two snake charmers. These compete for food, which they must reach as quickly as possible by jumping on steering buttons located outside. We need not add that this may lead to forbidden and unexpected clashes.

SPIELTRIEB!

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Sprache, Kultur, Deutschland

Museum für
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