THESIS: IN A BASEMENT ON THE INTERNET

Summary
By Sanne Flyvbjerg

The thesis *In a Basement on the Internet* is a critical and spatial analytical examination of the interface exemplified in contemporary New Media Artwork. Based on the view that our individual and cultural world is highly influenced by modern technology, I investigate the increasingly significant term of the interface.

Through analyses of Tony Oursler's *System for Dramatic Feedback* (1994), Kassandra Productions *Xposition REVERSE* (2006) and Jeppe Hein's *The Invisible Labyrinth* (2006), respectively, I examine how the contemporary art scene primarily uses technology as a tool to generate and illustrate the situation of the interface as something that influences and includes the physical surroundings of both artwork and participant. Through this, the selected artwork stages a discussion of the interface that both affect our understanding of self and reality implicitly and explicitly.

Consequently, the conventional understanding of the interface, which is especially connected with the relationship between user and computer, proves to be insufficient and calls for redefinition and expansion. Whereas the traditional definition is strongly focused on the user's perception of the spatial potential of two-dimensional representations this new artwork suggests that the discussion of the interface is or should be concerned, rather, with three-dimensionality and bodily experience in a broader and more material sense. The participant is perceptively and actively invested in the situation of the interface and emphasizes it as something taking place in space, through space and through perception and bodily action.

Through analysis of the theoretical views on technology in contemporary aesthetic theory I argue that there seems to be a polarised tendency of a materialistic, relational and body-orientated discourse on one side (ex. Nicolas Bourriaud) and a representational media theory on the other (Lev Manovich, Mark B. N. Hansen). Although opposing each other in many ways, poststructuralist and visual theory influence both sides, and they both prove to be insufficient in grasping the very tangible aspects of these artworks.

As readers of Maurice Merleau-Ponty will know *Phenoménologie de la perception* cannot be considered a conventional method of approaching modern technology, however, I conclude that the constitution and perception of the phenomenological subject can help redefine the understanding of the interface and illuminate how the interface not only concerns the subject confronted with modern technology, but also with a technologically mediated spatiality that challenges the physical surroundings in which the meeting takes place.