

CART 351 REFLECTION 2

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Olia Lialina's web-based artwork "My Boyfriend Came Back from the War" (MBCBFTW) created in 1996 is called a pioneering work of internet art because of its contributions to artistic expression. Internet art in the mid-1990s was still at its experimental stages where Olia's work brought many new possibilities for the artists where they could think of storytelling through interactivity. User Interaction wasn't as vast then as it is now but these genres of artworks or the research behind coming up with ways to incorporate art in understanding the web were the start. The term, net.art was an accidental experiment itself. In 1995, Vuk Cosic, a soviet artist encountered an encrypted email and observed these two words net and art separated by a dot(.) it was interpreted by him as art created on the internet (OGOSHI, "Net.Art Concept").

The 1990s was a pivotal time that contributed to the history of the internet and its role in society, culture, and art. Simultaneously, as artists and thinkers were trying to understand the web as a new medium, filmmakers were also trying to search for the meaning behind cinema as an art form. It started raising challenges like answering broader societal concepts such as representation, agency, and communication in the digital age (Rhizome, "Speaking in Net Language"). Filmmakers on the one hand were trying to explore ways to tell meaningful stories and internet artists were working with meaningful interactions that can shape audiences' narratives and experiences.

Olia Lialina's artistic approach shown in "My Boyfriend Came Back from the War" initially were inspired by structured narratives and visual storytelling in cinematic language. This took a drastic shift when the artist decided to shift focus towards net.language instead of cinematic (Rhizome, "Speaking in Net Language"). She achieved this by focusing on interactivity where the audience has the freedom to choose their path within the story and interpretation of the artwork. This further highlighted the web's unique expressive capabilities that were explored by the artist to challenge the traditional cinematic norms, departing from more of a passive experience and arriving at an active one.

The artwork is a great example of multilinear structure in a montage, where some fragments split and give the audience options to choose from and direct the narrative. It tried to embed multiple messages using HTML elements but nothing comprehensive further strengthening its open-to-interpretation nature.

Bibliography

1. Rhizome. "Speaking in Net Language: My Boyfriend Came Back from the War," November 10, 2016. <https://rhizome.org/editorial/2016/nov/10/my-boyfriend-came-back-from-the-war/>.

2. OGOSHI, Antonio Coelho [. "Net.Art Concept." *Medium* (blog), August 4, 2022.
<https://medium.com/@AntonioJSCoelho/net-art-concept-802068c38d30>.