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NEWS

Rants & Raves

G.H. Hovagimyan

G.H. Hovagimyan is a New York-based artist, one of the first to begin experimenting with digital and online work in the early '90s. He has curated and participated in shows since the early '70s and his practice has encompassed poetic manifestoes, "faux conceptual art," and a notorious 1994 public billboard commissioned by Creative Time titled Hey Bozo, Use Mass Transit, among many other projects. The co-creator (with Peter Sinclair) of the "techno-driven word jam" Rant/Rant Back/Back Rant, it seemed clear that Hovagimyan would be a natural ranter and raver.



G.H. Hovagimyan

RANTS

Reality TV and "Punk'd":

Part of art's potential to transgress is its ability to send up or make fun of the bourgeoisie. Now, reality television has institutionalized transgression, turning it into just another bourgeois titillation. MTV's "Punk'd" is a prime example of typical reality TV degradation. I watched one episode where a host is set up as the object of a prank. While he dines at a fancy restaurant in the Hollywood hills, his Rolls is swapped for a duplicate. Later, as he is about to retrieve it, a thief makes off with the purloined conveyance and crashes into some scaffolding surrounding a house, causing tremendous damage. The host is then questioned by a couple of patrolmen who arrive at the scene of the crime. In the end, he's told that the whole ordeal had been an elaborate hoax and is surrounded by the show's crew for a celebrity hug-fest. Reality TV is filled with this type of cruel humor. The sequences and set-ups are different but the result is always degradation. This is the type of amorality that produces Abu Ghraib. Can someone say, Abu Ghraib TV?

The Bush Administration and Steroids:

I could fill reams of paper ranting about Bush and his supporters. It's telling that in a series of 2004 speeches he chose to zero in on steroid use in sports. This from an administration whose creed seems to be "win at any cost." Anyone who goes to a gym can identify people who use steroids. They are liars and cheats and puffed-up monsters. Their terrifyingly misshapen bodies are inflated reflections of Bush's soul.

The IFC Media Lab:

The mainstream media has always been clueless when it comes to new media art. This seemed to be changing when the Independent Film Channel launched a website allowing anyone to upload short videos and to vote on other peoples' stuff. The highest ranked videos are shown on the IFC cable channel. I immediately uploaded a couple of my own videos. Since I have two email accounts, I joined twice and voted for myself twice. My two votes of 10 (the highest score possible) put me at number one in the "top ranked" category. This lasted about five minutes until the original top ranked video once again became number one. I decided to play a game. I found ten videos that hadn't been voted on and gave them all a ten. This knocked off all the top rankers, but not for long. All the original top tens were back on top in a matter of minutes. The voting was rigged! Either IFC has the server programmed to promote certain films or the producers are running hacks on the site to juice up the vote count. In any case, it's a fraud. If you look at the videos that are the most watched you'll see numbers like 15,000 views. This is statistically impossible. It's also an easy hack and yet another symptom of win-at-any-cost culture. You're either a winner or a loser, rich or poor, famous or nobody. There's no in between.

EntertainMe



gh hovagimyan
Other, 2:09
2001
English

Average Rating

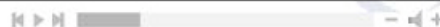
4.15

19 votes

188 views

Log In to Rate This Film

SEND TO A FRIEND >



Screen grab of

G.H. Hovagimyan's video
EntertainMe (2001)
From medialab.ifc.com

RAVES

Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Wave Hill in the Bronx:

The Botanic Garden is a real treat. On Easter Sunday after church all the families photograph their children in Easter outfits in front of the flowers. Wave Hill, a public garden and cultural center, is also a local jewel. It has an art program that shows work with environmental themes. Noah Baen, who runs Wave Hill's Family Art Project, is an environmental artist and a latter-day Robert Smithson. He's worth checking out.

New York New Media:

Net.Art is supposed to be over but that's just not true. It's alive, vital, and expanding in New York. The [thing.net](#) website is being re-tooled by Rob Murphy into a drupal blog site, [Rhizome](#) is revamping under the leadership of Executive Director Lauren Cornell and Editor/Curator-at-Large Marisa Olson, and [Eyebeam](#) has introduced a reBlog system on their website which is publicly available as an open source project. The newest entry to the Net.Art community is [Perpetual Art Machine](#) (PAM), an online gallery and database of video art and a traveling video installation. Admirably, New York's museums have thrown significant support behind new media arts. PAM is currently supported by the Guggenheim and the Whitney Museum's online project [Artport](#) gives new media artists a chance to make commissioned online work.

LMCC's Swing Space Program:

The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's is the first alternative space program I've seen in a while that is open-ended enough to allow experimental art in unused office spaces. One project, [Collective Incubator](#) by a group called [Nsumi](#)

, was a hangout place for future artist collectives. Offering free consulting services in a space "specifically designed with downtown temps, temporary workers, interns, and freelancers in mind," Nsumi also hosted sub-meetings of various grassroots organizations that wanted to interact and develop linked projects.



Nsumi
 Installation view of *Collective Incubator* (2006)
 Kit-making area at LMCC Swing Space
 Courtesy Nsumi

DIGit and Podstock:

Europe has always had major film and new media festivals. Now upstate New York has a festival that is gaining some credibility. **DIGit** started as a film festival and through the efforts of Pat Carullo, the Creative Director of the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance in Narrowsburg, NY, this year it has expanded to include various forms of new media, from handheld to kiosk, sound art, and hacking. There are seven different venues and events take place over two weekends: August 19–20 and August 26–27.

The two ultra-cool events to go to are the Roebling Bridge performance on August 24 and Podstock at the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts on August 27. During the Roebling Bridge performance the audience will be on the bridge (a one-lane former hydraulic canal built by John A. Roebling), while loudspeakers are stationed on either side. The headliner will be a French sound art collective called Locus Sonus. Podstock will be a chance for video artists of all stripes to bring their video iPods and plug them into large screens at the Bethel Woods Arts Center. That's right, the old Woodstock hippie site has been transformed into a shiny outdoor concert hall and several multi-media centers, and Podstock is conducting an open call for media artists:

Philip K. Dick's *A Scanner Darkly* and Rotoscoping:

Last summer I read every book and story Philip K. Dick wrote. Dick is arguably the greatest American author of the late 20th century. Hollywood has made several of his stories into movies, among them *Minority Report*, *Blade Runner*, and *Total Recall*. Premiering as a film in July, *A Scanner Darkly* is Dick's deep drop into late '60s drug culture. If that isn't temptation enough, director Richard Linklater uses a digital animation technique called rotoscoping, turning film into a cartoon.

G.H. Hovagimyan is an experimental digital artist working in a variety of forms. He was one of the first artists in New York to start working with the internet in the early '90s. His work ranges from hypertext works to digital performance art, video, and installations. Recent awards include: 2003 fellowship from Experimental Television Center, 2003 TAM Digital Media Commissions, 2002 Artists Fellowship from Franklin Furnace, 2002 pilot artist in residence program from Eyebeam, NYC.

For more information on G.H. Hovagimyan, visit:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._H._Hovagimyan
<http://nujus.net/gh>
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