

ON BOREDOM

CD Rom

"As a child I was often and intensely bored. This evidently began very early, it has contained my whole life, in gusts (increasingly rare, it is true, thanks to work and to friends), and it has always been noticeable to others. A panic boredom, to the point of distress: like the kind I feel in panel discussions, lectures, parties among strangers, group amusements.... Might boredom be my form of hysteria?"

Roland Barthes

Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes

On Boredom is a CD ROM publication, curated by Susan Morris, which takes the diversely varied aspects of boredom as its theme. The publication will contain new artworks and theoretical essays by David Bate and Andrew Benjamin which contribute to critical debates concerning new technologies within the arts.

David Bate's text links boredom with the baroque: "In a popular view baroque is associated with decadence and the grotesque, as something which grew out of 'ennui', boredom. Today's culture of the 'visual', based in a logic of the photographic image, is potentially thrown into a 'baroque' deception when the indexical characteristics of resemblance are disturbed by the capacity for illusion and deception. If it is the computer that is giving a twist to the historical kaleidoscope of representation, we may find ourselves in an analogy of a baroque space".

Andrew Benjamin's text charts the complex movements between boredom and awakening: "To awake, means to arise out of a state of either delusion or lack of consciousness. Heidegger, in *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, links awakening to boredom. Boredom, however, rather than being a merely personal state pertaining uniquely to an individual is used by Heidegger to describe an age and in doing so to designate a particular philosophical task. The task in question involves both the move from the individual to a more generalised conception of the being of the being human. In Heidegger's analysis boredom holds the key. Boredom is taken as a necessary precondition to awakening".

'On Boredom' supports the production, and presents work, by nine artists who have recently begun to utilise digital technologies within their working practice. Each artist will produce a piece of digital work which explores the theme of boredom (the pilot CD included with this application shows the early stages of these works).

The CD ROM format is appropriate in that it both references and acts out (by occasionally failing to perform) our relationship with a technology which simultaneously oversaturates us with information and opportunity, yet never quite delivers enough in terms of our desire. a desire for a speed and perfection which would become indiscernible - so fast as to be standing still, doing nothing. So flawless as to become invisible.

The CD would be distributed free as a 'give-away' with [redacted] magazine, referencing junk mail or the 'freebie' which promises more than it delivers. This would be in keeping with the subject matter of the CD - Boredom - and with the technology itself which, while making great claims as an alternative to paper publications or video, disappoints by its memory limitations coping only with tiny artworks and the lowest resolution images.

"The days follow one another and resemble one another, and yet - here lies the contradiction at the heart of everydayness - everything changes. But the change is programmed: obsolescence is planned. Production anticipates reproduction: production produces change in such a way as to superimpose the impression of speed onto that of monotony. Some people cry out against the acceleration of time, others cry out against stagnation. They're both right."

Michele Huguet

L'ennui et ses discours.