# The Eye Transposed
An Interactive Photography Exhibit in Network Space

The Eye Transposed is an international collaborative exhibit designed to bring photography and its creative demands into the high-bandwidth network space and experiment with new communication technologies.

Thirty years ago Meridel Rubenstein and Don Foresta organized an exhibit of French-American photography transmitted by telephone. Ronald Reagan had just been elected president and, true to form, immediately eliminated all funding for international cultural exhibitions. The Director of the Paris Biennale, Georges Boudaille, contacted Foresta saying he no longer had American participation in the Biennale and could he come up with a solution. Rubenstein and Foresta had already experimented with a technology for sending images over phone lines and Foresta had started his long-term activity with the network the year before with an exchange between the American Center in Paris and the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT.

They proposed a transatlantic exchange of photos with 11 American and 12 French photographers sending each other images, the first photo exchange by telephone. In Paris the images were photographed again off the receiving screen and hung in the Salle de la Fée de l'Electricité in the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris. http://195.194.24.18/~donforesta/mambo/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=28&Itemid=71

UNRAVELING SOUND

ELEVEN AMERICAN ARTISTS SALUTE
THE PARIS BIENNAL · OCTOBER 1 1982
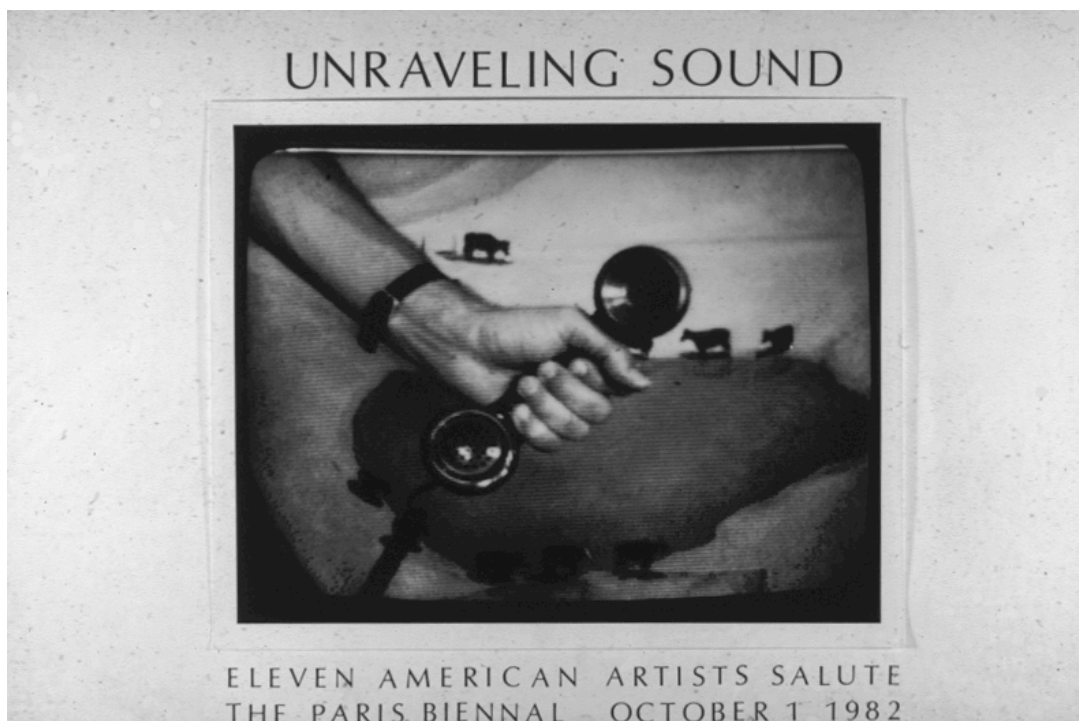
Meridel Rubenstein

In celebration of that event, we are now proposing an international exhibit of photography organized over the MARCEL network and shown in several sites around the world using the latest transmission and printing technologies. We are calling the show *The Eye*

Transposed both as a theme and as a reference to the virtual space in which it will take place.

The show is also a celebration of the eye that sees and presents photography as a point of view. We all carry with us our own view of the world which we tend to project on everything we see. For the photographer the camera becomes an "extended" eye, a record of the interface between physical and virtual realities. It is not everything we see that we want to "capture"; we make selections based on what we wish to "freeze" as a record or simply in order to share with others. By *framing* a scene we *construct* it and what we chose to frame, as well as how we choose to depict this depends on what we actually want to say. In this sense the notion of "reality" becomes elusive, as it is our own reality which we are expressing. It is much like the found object in art, assigning symbolic sense on something through choosing it and subjectively projecting a sense into it. It is the idea that "every picture tells a story," which often challenges our idea of reality and advances the "education of perception," the role of the artist according to McLuhan. In this show we are exploring themes which tell us something about *looking* and the process of projecting who we are when we look at something. It is the story of the Eye, *The Eye Transposed.*

Oscar Muñoz, *Línea del destino* (Line of destiny). 2006, Single screen projection

At its best photography is as much an interior process as it is concerned with external appearances, revealing the *eye of the mind* more involved with asking questions rather than supplying the answers.

Artists/photographers will be invited through the MARCEL network to send work to a server site with instructions on how the work should be downloaded, exhibited, projected, printed or hung. The MARCEL network will also identify members and places where the physical manifestation of the work will be shown. Each site, working from the "raw material" stored on the server could and would be different than others according to the view of the curator. Other artists would be invited to respond in their own way to the work shown, creating a world-wide dialogue around the collected work. Open multicasting

connections would allow real-time interactivity as well. During the showing of the work, MARCEL will open connections with as many of the sites as possible to allow contact and conversation with spectators visiting the several sites of the exhibit. We imagine collaboration between institutions around the world in each continent to assure its widest dissemination.

At a curatorial level, the potential for exchange and collaboration is still to be discussed and developed in order to arrive at a workable formula. The newness of the approach demands an openness for finding the fullest potential of network interactivity and interface with the public via physical exhibition spaces, internet, mobile phones, installations, etc.

The long-term objective of the project would be to assert photography as an artistic practice in the high bandwidth network space bringing that practice into direct contact with the evolving technologies. It would assure the participation of this art form in the virtual space of the network, adding its combined world-view to our collective experience.

In this way we would hope that the highest level of human creativity would actually influence the evolution of the network rather than leaving it uniquely to technological or commercial forces. The growing importance of the high-speed network makes it imperative that art, culture and education be present and that the best and more profound aspects of humanity be represented and available in that communication space. Only through a collective effort on a large scale will we be able to claim that space for culture.

Gabriella Kardos and Don Foresta *Network Image Collaboration* 2002

<u>Interest in participation has been expressed by the following:</u>

 - **Kansas City Art Institute** (**Patrick Clancy** , Chair of Photography & New Media)
 - **Nanyang Technological University**, Singapore (**Vibeke Sorensen**, Professor and Chair of the School of Art, Design, and Media)
 - **Meridel Rubenstein**, Professor of Photography, Nanyang Technological University)
 - **Woody and Steina Vasulka** (Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA)
 - **Gabriella Kardos, (**www.gabriellakardos.com) London, UK
 - **Don Foresta** (MARCEL, Multimedia Art Research Centres & Electronic Laboratories)
- **Timothy A. Jackson**, Professor of New Media, Savannah College of Art & Design, USA
- **Laura E. Migliorino** (www.lauramigliorinoart.com), Anoka Ramsey Community College, a two year college with a large art program, part of the Minnesota State University System (MnSCU)
- **Serge J-F. Levy** (www.sergelevy.com) International Center of Photography in New York City where he is a seminar leader in the documentary/photojournalism program

Don Foresta & Gabriella Kardos
don@donforesta.net
gabriellakardos@yahoo.co.uk