Sean Kerr
a loop is a loop
30 May - 20 June, 2015

Lydia Kronawetter

A floorboard under foot.

A monitor at my feet.

Cables by my shoes.

A bucket, a sound, a drip.

A floorboard under foot.

A monitor at my feet.

Cables by my shoes.

A speaker, a sound, a hiss.

When interrogating the relationship between the rooms of North Projects, the only way to grasp the whole of Sean Kerr's installation *a loop is a loop* is to collaboratively construct an understanding through repetition. Repeating my steps, repeating my responses, repeating my thoughts. With each iteration, a level of reflexivity and complexity is added to what initially appeared as a crude assortment of redundant technologies. Renegotiating the value traditionally accorded to the materiality of art objects, the idea of a new discursive repository is introduced. Through temporal and spatial complexities, *a loop is a loop* defiantly resists the modernist ambition of temporal stillness, instead highlighting the interactive, generative and algorithmic tendencies of locative 'new media' art.[1]

Traditionally it is the artist who experiences the creative process; the viewer appreciates the product through aesthetic experience. By disrupting the conventions of object-oriented institutions, the 'viewer' in fact becomes 'user' in *a loop is a loop*. In adopting a user-centric practice, Kerr leads the audience to reconceptualise the idea of artworks as a "self-contained monolith."[2] Bi-directional in nature, there is an unassailable two-way communication between the user and the work. By perverting the conventional notions of physical and psychological distances in *a loop is a loop* the audience and curators must repeat a semi-choreographed series of actions, allowing the process, not just the product, to be become part of the work.

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[1] Nora Almeida, "Dismantling the Monolith: Post-Media Art and the Culture of Instability", *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2012, p.3
[2] Ibid, p.7

The collapsing of long-held boundaries between mass-produced commodities and fine art objects is an important tenet of the 'new media' project. Originally coined by Felix Guattari, the "post media-era" as he terms it describes a transitional period when individuals could subvert the role of mass media through appropriation.[3] Kerr's proposition implicitly redefines the parameters of the gallery object through his appropriation of multiple extension cords, a pair of buckets, a television monitor, a ladder and perhaps most importantly, the gallery environment itself. The buckets must be manually emptied and refilled by the curator each day, affording an unstable and dynamic component to the work. Further, motion sensor technology and a live-streaming feed transform the audience's interactions into components of the work. An ensemble of functional components, each is engaged within the one interlinked system; medium to apparatus, apparatus to audience. As such, meaning is made by activating and maintaining the role of the user through a network topology. A nebulous space to define, *a loop is a loop* affords these 'user operations' which in turn highlight questions of intentionality and interpretation common in many 'new media' works.

As humans, we discern external information through sensory experiences, with said sensory stimulations evoking internal consciousness. In Kerr's work, the aesthetic and social implications of technological media that define, package and distribute information are reinvestigated. Thinking of art as a subjective social representation and technology as an instrument of absolute rationality is fundamentally quashed. As Edward Shanken explains in *Art in the Information Age*, "for many artists working in the intersection of conceptual art and art-and-technology, the particular visual manifestation of the artwork as an object was secondary to the expression of an idea that becomes reality by stimulating it."[4] The interactive feedback of information creates a loop in itself, making the work responsive as a real-time topology. The interaction between user and medium creates a symbiosis; an environment of total immersion. A recurring process; the end of which is connected to the beginning.

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[3] Dominico Quaranta, "The Post Media Perspective", *Rhizome*, 2011 (page unspecified)
[4] Edward A. Shanken, *Art in the Information Age: Technology and Conceptual Art*, The MIT Press, Vol. 35, No. 4, 2002, p. 434