

tour de fence 1

heath bunting and kayle brandon



imprint 4
inviting to explore 5
about fence 6
about us 7
applications 8
why choose tour de fence 9
tour de fence values 10
on fence 11

<http://www.irational.org/heath> . <http://www.irational.org/kayle>

this booklet is published as part of the workshop „tour de fence“ held by heath bunting and kayle brandon in february 2003 at künstlerhaus bethanien in cooperation with the transmediale 2003

published by the media arts lab at künstlerhaus bethanien www.media-arts-lab.org

edited by gerrit gohlke

artist statement by heath bunting and kayle brandon (6-10)

text by gerrit gohlke

graphic design by südost typografik berlin, matthias gerber and svend wennick

printed by druckerei steffen friedland

translations by lucinda rennison

distribution by vice versa vertrieb . dorotheenstrasse 4 . d-12557 berlin . germany . viceversa@comp.de

© 2003 by the artists, the authors and künstlerhaus bethanien

ISBN 3-932754-33-6

this publication has been made possible in part by schering kunstverein, berlin.

inviting to explore

foreword

5

borders are crossed over using passports. for steep rock faces you need a ticket for the cable railway. and the most difficult terrain is best entered in cyberspace. true or false?

tour de fence is the answer to your real needs. while the internet promised to level out all barriers, tour de fence enables you to surmount the fences out there that people erect to obstruct your way every day. from wire netting to rustic fence, from steel door to close security system, tour de fence offers you the necessary know-how for unhampered movement. tour de fence is the direct way.

learn offroad mobility within high security architecture. cross over stretches of land in the right direction. penetrate the underground area of your city. tour de fence puts an end to the relocation of your movements into virtual space. use the tour de fence! become a tour de fence amateur team. pass this handbook on to others. propagate tour de fence.

by doing so you will become part of the international tour de fence community. as a reader, a free-climber or by sending one of the 24 tour de fence postcards in this book.

participate now! tour de fence's vision is to do what we want.

about fence

embraced in control

6

tour de fence acknowledges fence as metaphor for private property. fence as a supposedly temporary, often mobile barrier performing functions of inclusion and exclusion, entrapment and guided freedom, decoration, safety, user boundary, protection from hazard, flow control, visual screening and user separation.

fence is a permeable filter system defining permitted use and users. light, wind, insects, water, plants and sound pass unhindered while high order life forms such as humans, fish, cattle and cars are engaged:

development of fence.

up to now the vertical has generally been private while the horizontal public. increasingly, vertical fences are being rotated to the horizontal and enlarged over large areas of land, as all use and users are embraced in total control.

tour de fence recognises the transformation of framed freedom into restricted open-range roaming; the re-alignment of unknown possibilities into known repeatables. users are permitted to skate across flattened surface of fence, but not to pass through – the fence is everywhere.

about us

a wide range of solutions

7

tour de fence's vast experience consisting of over 15 months of research, practice and implementation of social projects worldwide, have enabled tour de fence to grow and become a leading player in perimeter insecurity systems art markets. founded in 2002, tour de fence strategy was to become an innovative group with the specific aim of critique, circumvention and re-perception of fence systems, perimeter technologies, and communication strategies for the electronic art industry. the group's commitment to innovative actions and quality has ensured that tour de fence has established itself as one of the very top names in the international fence controllers co-op.

tour de fence techniques are used worldwide by professional anybodies and anyones to penetrate property enclosures.

tour de fence has established a global network of distributors and representatives throughout 2 countries. International operations are continuously growing as a result of the group's ongoing investments in new technologies and new techniques developed with the group's commitment to expression in mind.

tour de fence strategy focuses on expanding its line of techniques and to provide its participants with a wide range of solutions implemented with the latest techniques.

applications

tailor made solutions

8

airports

prisons

military sites

industrial plants

housing estates

civic spaces

borders

gouvernement buildings

civilian compounds

why choose tour de fence

9

sophistication and integration

experience: tour de fence has gained more than 15 months of field experience in the perimeter social market. handling some of the most sophisticated projects which involved both harsh and pleasant topographic areas combined with mild and severe weather conditions. tour de fence's skilled personnel and wide range of advanced perimeter infiltration systems have provided participants with their required tailor made solutions.

technology: tour de fence has developed cutting edge techniques and has continually been extending its innovated project lines, using high and low technique know-how capabilities. the mass investment in DIY has enabled tour de fence to offer its participants the very best independent solutions.

integration: whenever required, tour de fence's advanced permeable systems integrate with any installed passive fence and external devices such as active beams & microwave, cctv, hands, lights, speakers, sirens, feet and more. this integration provides a high and reliable level of insecurity with a higher rate of false alarm and maximum intrusion penetration resolution.

tour de fence offers turn-key projects which include field consulting, supply of required equipment, provisioning of overall operation norms, operator and osmosis training.

our vision: tour de fence's vision is to do what we want, as an innovative global leader in the trespass industry, offering perimeter systems implemented with state-of-the-art technology. we always put safety and human rights first.

tour de fence values

creating situations

10

tour de fence looks to the creation of situations where fences are inviting to explore.

tour de fence hopes to accommodate a lively welcoming atmosphere.

tour de fence employees hold vast experience in development, installation and after play services.

tour de fence amateur teams combine advanced technology with personal high level of service which creates a winning environment.

we are fully committed to the professional development and growth of all of our colleagues, throughout their careers.

we consider our participants as our friends thus, constantly supporting them.

we encourage up and over play-time.

find out about the nature of aesthetic borders

the promise of the internet was to overcome spatial borders: at first a matter of war tactics, as a viable distribution of military power, then scientifically, as a network of distant research centres, and finally as a utopian longing for the abolition of social restrictions. a technological promise of liberation was proclaimed to a surprised audience. what had still been dominated by social hierarchies yesterday would be a community of freely itinerant individuals tomorrow; individuals no longer tied down by any power or restricted by any barrier. neither bodies nor places of residence would establish borders – and certainly not state customs areas or the boundaries of private estates. „our identities have no bodies“ according to the populist prophet of the internet's early years, pronouncing the declaration of independence of data space. „we must declare our virtual selves immune to your sovereignty“, john perry barlow announced to astonished state authorities in davos during 1996. people wanted to believe him, and quite by chance they were experiencing neither recession nor war at that time. (1)

this utopian belief in the freedom of the „new home of mind“ did not even last for five years. the concerns who had wanted to produce wealth in a context liberated from the regularities of tendering accounts perished. the hope for a lawless sphere with no security regulations vanished. and the parallel aesthetic universe in which sponsored activists had produced art – „not for sale“, but with serious political intentions – disappeared, too. for not only the political utopia internet was of such short duration. the interdisciplinary features of this utopia were no more than a brief interruption in the operating history of society, either.

but for less than a decade, it seemed as if an art which did not deny the outside world could actually change the rules and restrictions of the world. debates about democratisation and security, the economy and war were held by activists who had settled in an undefined territory; journalists, artists, political functionaries and, in some cases, technocrats. but the aesthetic mediation of the message was always an important aspect of their projects. art introduced irony into the still anarchic cyber world, and created both a comprehensible language and an autonomous self-image for technical innovation. art was a suitable label, for with it there was no necessity to be anything else.

and so prevailing over borders became an artistic discipline. even when the museums had been collecting internet art for some time, the net artists attacked the commercialisation of the world wide web, parodied public efforts for security and satirised the brave new world. attacking networks developed into a specialist practice of aesthetic praxis. and the infiltration of corporate culture became a genre of new art. but was this art still art?

on 5th august 1994, when heath bunting launched his appeal to the world to ring up, en masse, the telephone kiosks around king's cross station in london (2), his audience had an intimation of the way in which electronic anarchy could alter public space. „this event will be publicised worldwide“, he proclaimed in his internet announcement. In this way street art became ripe for the world market, and the new Net art had revealed its creed: not only to extend public space with data space, but also to make data space into a public space.

now aesthetic computer interfaces embarked upon an agitating double life, whereby it was never clear whether politics were becoming ironic or whether the ironic was becoming seriously involved in politics. on irational.org, heath bunting's information and project server, there is an ascii image of a plant whose icons contain links to texts critical of the pharmaceutical industry (3). within this kind of practice, aesthetics are a reference to their own limitations. „communication creates conflict“, to quote irational-org in 1995 (4). or does artistic communication merely reproduce conflict in a parasitic way?

this question concerning the limitations of art was being posed by the established art business around the same time. however, the strategy of irational.org went a step further than exhibitions in museums that criticised genetic technology. irational.org assimilated the whole spectrum of subversive media strategies from pirate radio to industrial parody. reaction times were short, and the internet served as a platform for rapid communication. the action at king's cross remained the model for art's handling, not only of the public, but also of itself. the question of whether non-art could be art soon became superfluous, for here art was shown how to deal with its own loss of effectiveness: by disregarding questions of genre and accelerating its variability, but above all by means of an agitating integration of political activity.

this irony of dual use demonstrated to the art world of the nineties what was missing in art: not a reflection on its limitations and failings, but a constant change to social action. however, by the end of the decade there came an alteration in the basic prerequisite to such an ambivalent strategy. the optimism of rapid reaction was lost in the expanses of popular online marketing. the „virtualisation“ of social relations multiplied knowledge and slowed down action. and the more determinedly political protests used the Internet for agitation, the less stable their credibility seemed due to the plurality of the spectacle.

overcoming borders? had the new aesthetic world really made the borders of national states surmountable? was it still possible to recognise clear contours of security policy in the internet? if internet art sought to overcome borders, what had happened to those borders?

since 2001, heath bunting has been running a „borderxing guide“, an information network on how to overcome borders. (5) at several dozen european information bases, the user can find out what routes to take in order to overcome europe’s borders without state authorisation. but at the same time, bunting limits the access to this information. the data bank can only be used at the bases intended for the purpose. the viewer at other locations sees only an empty page. „by giving a physical location to the information we take for granted as being online, bunting has made a digital project that requires movement“, according to jonah brucker-cohen. the user becomes mobile. his movement becomes real. where aesthetics were previously made permeable to increase the speed of the political, now virtual space has opened up to real space: „for the sake of elite power, human movement is restricted and information and money mobilized,“ says bunting. the borderxing guide „intends to suggest the reversal of this whereby humans are encouraged to move and the immaterial is restricted.“

the outcome of this practice is not just politics, but – sport. or perhaps art, after all? when heath bunting and his partner kayle brandon walk a circular line around the british city of bristol in order to cross over, or if necessary to break open every territorial border of property along the way, no one can say whether they are making an example of inviolable symbols of public order, or just testing the suitability of calculated conceptual spheres for reality. is net art taking the

promise of data net theories – to overcome borders – literally here? is „tour de fence“ a typological project about the constancy of the conflict between property and aesthetic movement? and when the „tour de fence“ protagonists work simultaneously on tunnelling – as if they wanted to demonstrate that the underground cannot be found on a network server – are they not insisting on the exploitation of public space, as around king’s cross in 1994?

undeniably, the declaration of independence from social order requires more than an internet dialup protocol. it is better, therefore, to find out about the nature of aesthetic borders and real concepts by climbing up a high security fence. according to bunting, initially it is enough to sit astride the barrier. in order to facilitate access, „tour de fence“ is not a web project. it is a consulting agency, a workshop, a seminar with „after play services“, as they say. after the demise of the internet utopia, we can take that quite literally.

gerrit gohlke

- 1) john perry barlow: a declaration of the independence of cyberspace. 8th february 1996.
see: www.eff.org/~barlow/declaration-final.html.
compare pit schultz and geert lovink: anti-barlow. in: be magazin, no. 4 (october 1996), p. 53-57, www.bemagazin.de
- 2) <http://www.irational.org/cybercafe/xrel.html>
- 3) http://www.irational.org/mvc_bio
- 4) <http://www.irational.org/tokyo/index.html>
- 5) <http://www.irational.org/borderxing>


15



16



railwalk, backwards step & dismount



TOUR DE FENCE

easton way underpass



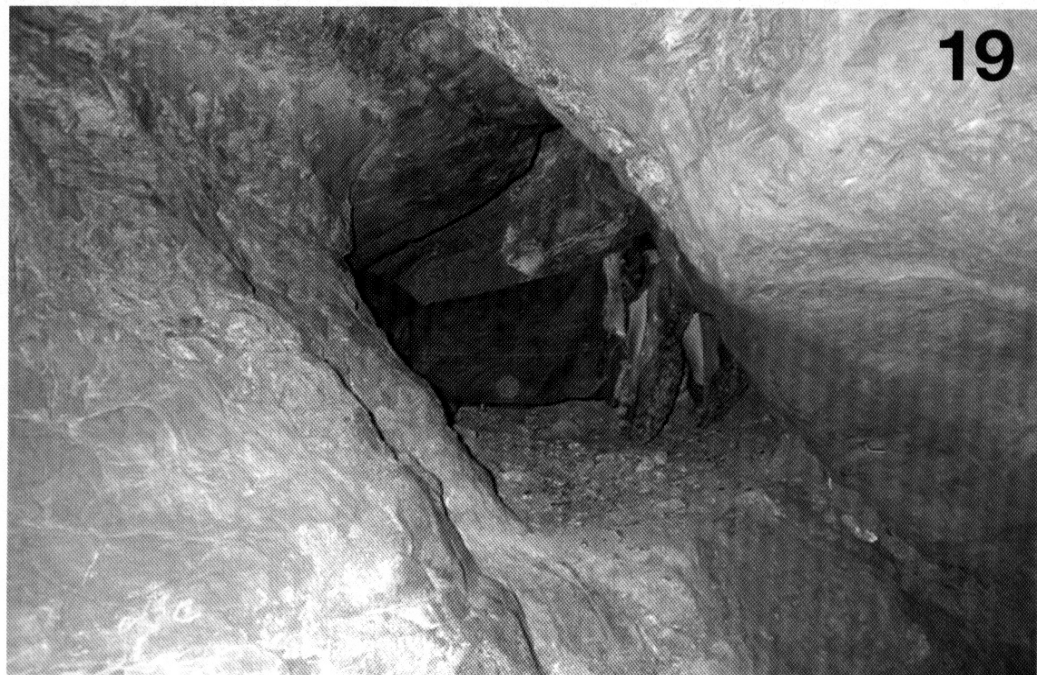
fence promenade



TOUR DE FENCE

rail hand grip & sloth movement

19



20



mercavity cave 04



TOUR DE FENCE

royal fort road

21



22



route approach contemplate



TOUR DE FENCE

dove street



railwalk backwards; streetwalk away



TOUR DE FENCE

uphill sloth technique



old market underpass

TOUR DE FENCE

redcliffe quarry

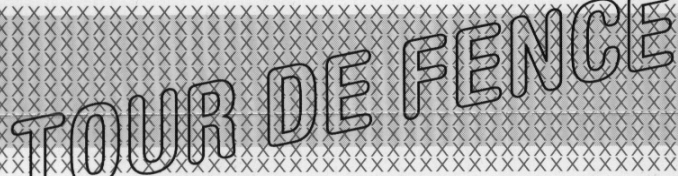
27



28



de fence cut



TOUR DE FENCE

rail hang


29



30



mosaic surface squad maneuver



TOUR DE FENCE

observatory hill cave

31



32



narrowways day 00



TOUR DE FENCE

host street

33



34




castle park

TOUR DE FENCE

launch move for verticals: pole & trunk



grid fence promenade approach



TOUR DE FENCE

narrowways day 01



road sign embrace on to stone wall

TOUR DE FENCE

royal fort road

