Laurie Anderson
How the medium really became the message

Edgar Arceneaux
Can you create art and be socially useful?

Daniel Richter
On confronting tradition

Jean-Michel Othoniel
Whisper it softly – beauty's back

Malerie Marder & Philip-Lorca DiCorcia
A visual conversation
The Institute of Social Hypocrisy: The Sound of Downloading Makes Me Want to Upload
Edited by Victor Boulet

When it comes to the Internet, many of us are downloaders, readers, watchers, mouse-dickers—but who among us are the true uploaders? Should we rely so much on their efforts, informed as they are by the particular interests of the uploading type? Victor Boulet, an artist who among other things runs the Institute of Social Hypocrisy in Paris (ArtReview recently reviewed a project of his that involved locking up a curator for a week and feeding him only whale meat), initiated this rather wildly assembled book project on the difference between uploading and downloading as two types of social activity, which features contributions from Oliver Laric, Nina Pearlman, Bill Drummond, Hans Ulrich Obrist (of course) and Keren Cyter, among others. Email correspondence from the contributors is included, as well as imagery (as seems to be the fashion with artists’ books about the Internet, the porn industry as metaphor is given rather a lot of space here; there’s a whole section of images under the category of anal gape, contributed by Edie McKay), which, in a replication of the way that everything sits together on the Internet, no matter how inappropriately, exists alongside a more amusing contribution from Cyter about her addictions to uploading material—manically creating groups, events and a MySpace page for a character called ‘John the funny hamster’, complete with pictures and videos of hamsters running on keyboards. Well, that’s freedom for you. We conceive of all this, points out Pearlman, as a kind of public space, though in reality the online public are often just traffic on private property. LMF

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Verso’s Radical Thinkers series, now in its fifth set, are groups of slender, elegant volumes, their covers featuring minimal line drawings, that not only present important critical works but are also specifically selected to meet the needs of the moment. This new set has largely been chosen for a generation attempting to resist the culture of cuts, and accordingly, several of them are works which consider, at a technical level, alternative ways in which art and society might be organised. So we have Jameson on the methods of Brecht, Dechor's revisiting of The Society of the Spectacle (1967) and Jeremy Bentham’s writings on the Panopticon, which had such great influence on Michel Foucault. As Baudrillard writes in Passwords (2003), also printed in this series, words ‘have a life of their own and, hence, are mortal’, and so, with this edition, his vehicles of meaning will happily transport their living message to living readers.

Laura Mclean-Ferris

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