MAIL-ART – SHORT STATEMENTS ABOUT MAIL-ART
By Ruud Janssen

NEW GENERATIONS?
I wrote a text about the 5 generations in mail-art years ago. Is this still true or has the Internet generated a new generation of mailartists? I don’t know but ask the question.

THE 5 GENERATIONS:
Sometimes the mail artists are divided up into generations. The first generation, Ray Johnson who started in the NYCS with a selective group he choose to write to and asked them to play the game with him. Of course there is also the zero generation. Artists that already used the mail system for communication, art & play (Marcel Duchamp, Van Gogh maybe?) where individual artists were in contact with other artists through the mail in a creative way on a one-to-one basis. The second generation in the 60’s-70’s when FLUXUS joined up and a selective group experimented with the mail system. The third generation where mail art rapidly grew in 70’s-80’s because of the exhibitions and publications within the mail art network that spread the news to newcomers (this is where I joined the mail art network for the first time, and lots of the people I am still in contact with nowadays are from this 3rd generation). Not a limited group anymore, but a concept that anybody could take part and be a member of the mail art network really took shape. This lead to the Congress-year in 1986, where anybody could organize a congress, as long as two or more mail artists had a meeting at a certain place. The fourth generation, after the congress in 1986 organized by H.R. Fricke and Günther Ruch from Switzerland, where the mail art population grew into a very large group. Every networker only knows his selective group with whom he/she is in contact. An enormous wealth of projects and publications are made in the end of the 80’s and the beginning of the 90’s. The end of the 80’s and the beginning 90’s was also the gradual beginning of... The fifth generation, where communication was done with the use of computers. Mark Bloch (USA), Charles François (Belgium) and Ruud Janssen (in the Netherlands) already were networking with BBS’s to send out electronic mail. One of the congresses in the DND-year 1992 was done by Charles and me with a session of computer-congresses where we exchanged our thoughts without meeting. Our computers were our tools. In 1991 there was also the first networking-project REFLUX that uses the then elite system of internet, but in 1994 till now the internet became a real option to communicate for the “wealthy” countries.

STILL TRUE?
The text of the ‘five generations’ was written in 1996. Is it still true? Has nothing changed in the past decade? On the Internet newcomers discover mail-art as an art form on the many websites, forums and groups. They look for mailing-addresses and start their first explorations. But some also practice only the digital form of communication in a creative way. Is that mail-art? It the field for communication-artists just broader? Is Internet-art the new form that will embrace the mail-art spirit?

ONLY FIVE GENERATIONS? IN WHICH DO YOU BELONG? IN WHICH BELONG YOUR CONTACTS?

SIXTH GENERATION
The logic is simple. When you define 5 generations, a sixth generation will come one of these days (or have they started already?). If so, mail-art continues. If not, we are dying out. What is the essence of this sixth generation?

REACTIONS.
Normally mail-artists tend to disagree with texts written by other mail-artists. This causes more texts written by others. A fascinating element of mail-art. I always like to read these reactions. Even when I don’t agree. So when you react, do it in the form of a publication and just send me a copy...
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Photo trouvée à la brocante...SECONDE VIE!
Holland Mailart, Henk J. Van Ooyen, Viinderveen 258, 3205EJ,
Spykenisse, PAYS-BAS

Une œuvre de: Éric Bensidon, 14 rue Sauffroy, 75017, Paris, FRANCE

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Un timbre d’artiste de: Vittore
Baroni, Via C. Battisti 339,
56048, Viareggio, ITALIE
Mail-Art project "Netland"

Send your best personal Mail-Art pieces to our Mail-Art project for the "Amaze / a Maze" event. At the event visitors will open your mail and will be able to glue your pieces on a large paper construction we are going to build for the event. We will not open your mail in front. Therefore write your address at the back of the envelope. Write underneath your address also "Netland participation" so that we know that it is your participation to our Mail-Art project "Netland". Deadline: 1 January 2008. Documentation to all.

Send to:
Sztuka Fabryka - c/o De Decker Geert - Kerkstraat 290 - 9140 Tielrode - Belgium

THEME: "Merry Christmas"

Artist Jorge Restrepo (www.jorgerestrepo.com) will make an installation in the Spanish Cultural Center, Tegucigalpa, Honduras (Central America). The mail-artworks will show the reality of the world, the extreme differences in religion, social classes, justice, poverty, income, access to water, languages...of different countries...of the world. While some people are partying and celebrating, gambling...vacationing...in December, others are suffering. Jorge Restrepo will create an environment of Christmas celebration at the exhibit rooms of the Center...using the mail-art works. The observer to the exhibit will feel the sensation of Christmas decoration. When attendants look in detail to the decoration (mail-artworks simulating Christmas cards and messages) the reality of the world will appear...dramatically...in from of their eyes.

Electronic documentation to all. Please send Email address, name and postal address.

Format and medium: free. All work be exposed. No returns.
Deadline: November 30, 2007
Curator: Carlos Lanza

Send to:
Jorge Restrepo
POBox 93
Tegucigalpa
Honduras

Un 8 cm X 8 cm de: Henri Lucas, Le Scalon, 22810, Plougonver, FRANCE

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To consult all CIRCULAIRE132 previous issues, go to the following blogallery:
http://circulaire132.blogspot.com
Une œuvre de: Tiziana Baracchi, Via Cavallotti, 83-B, 30171, Venezia-Mestre, ITALIE

Une œuvre de: XYZ, 8/2 rue de Constantine, 59000, Lille, FRANCE
Somnifère - Découpez les moutons et les compter jusqu'au sommeil…
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NE PAS PLIER

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