



**FLORIAN JENETT**

Catalogue 2010

## **One Perfect Cube**

Three synchronized clocks, master clock, metal board and frame

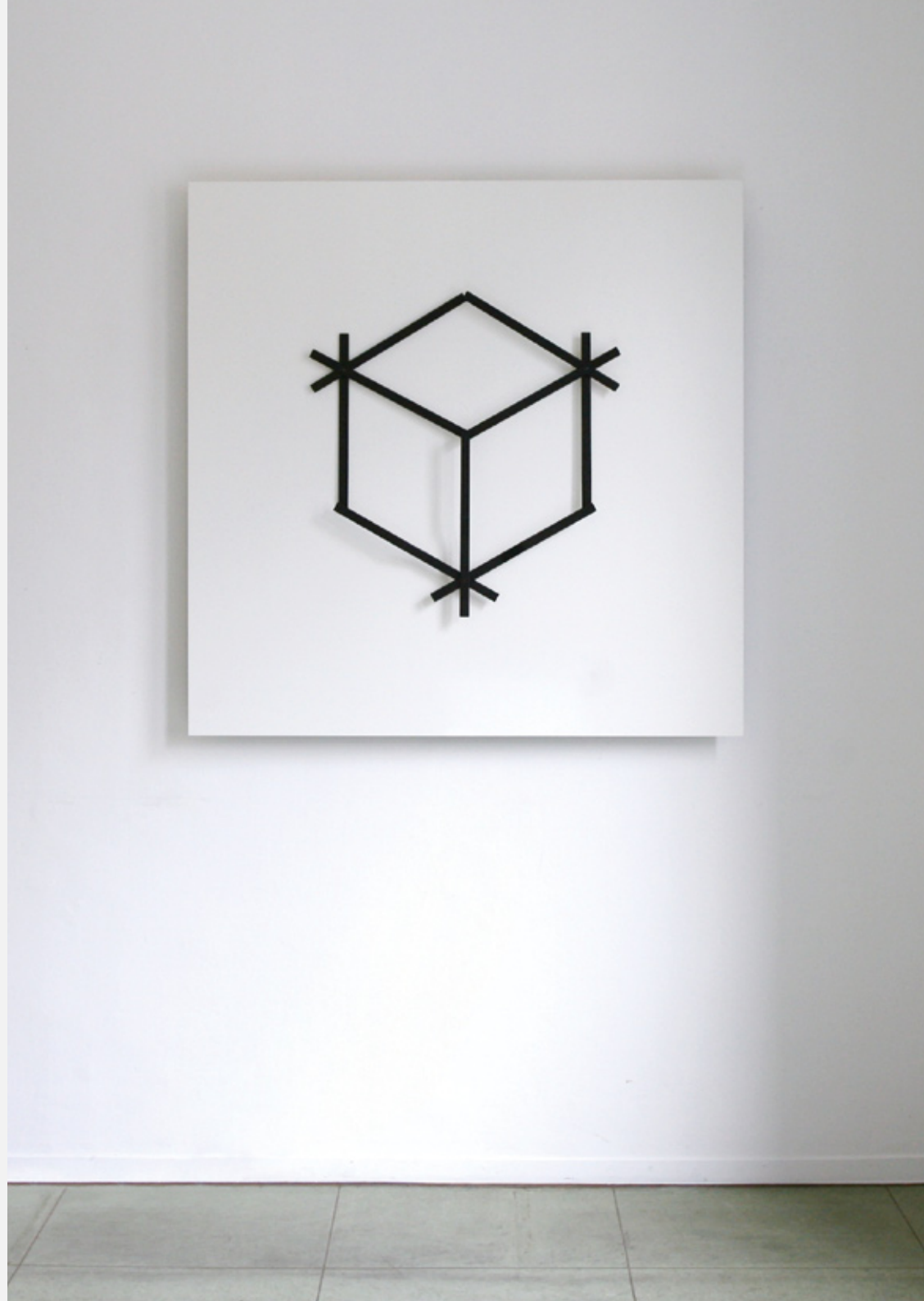
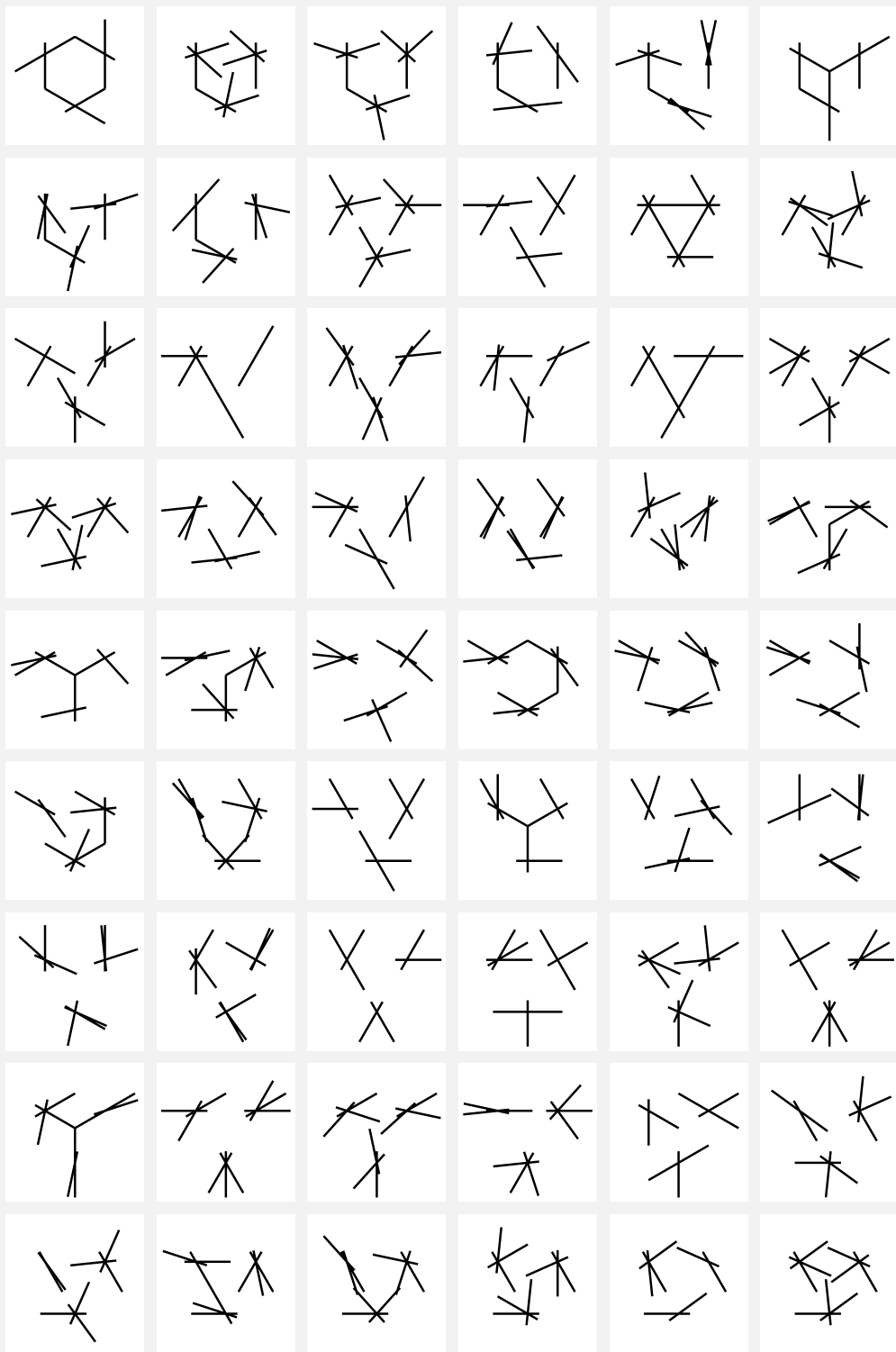
122 x 122 x 20 cm

2010

Every one of the 800 printed copies of this catalogue has a unique cover showing the work at one moment within 24 hours.

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*“The philosophers have only interpreted the world,  
in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.”*

Karl Marx, Theses on Feuerbach

## Tilt! or As time goes by

The art of putting reality into the picture

What has a pimped-up family car got to do with the protest culture? Or with all those bizarre “racing animals” in Florian Jenett’s drawings, his gigantic inflatable dome in the midst of a church nave? Or even with the strange garbage skip the artist three years ago took for a spin along the banks of the River Main together with some buddies. Finally, the clock that keeps ticking permanently with such melancholy that the longer one listens, the more one forgets the time? On the face of it: nothing.

That said, we would introduce the artist from a completely different angle if Jenett’s oeuvre wasn’t so coherent and, given his relatively young age, so surprisingly consistent conceptually. At first sight everything in his oeuvre, whether his early works still firmly rooted in the medium of drawing or his increasingly elaborate and complex installations, seems to revolve around mundane objects. Everyday perceptions, if you like, whose appearances and processes can literally be found in the street, presenting to him the material for his eternally surprising art which, in its own right, can sometimes be called funny.

One good example is the worn-out Toyota which Jenett, while still a student, presented jazzed up with a couple of cardboard spoilers as the cheap yet perfect backdrop for any suburban youngster’s macho dreams (“WÜ-ZP-200”, 2003); or the protest posters designed for and against the world and its mother, photos of which he downloaded from the Net (“Adding Up Our Differences”, since 2006) simply so as to be able to exhibit them in isolation and taken out of context as expressions-turned-images of abstract desires, fears, and utopias.

Evidently, key to Jenett’s oeuvre are less the objects themselves but what he does to them, namely his attempt to change the world not in a Marxist sense but, quite on the contrary, by interpreting and reinterpreting it over and over again. And by visualizing it for himself and the beholder. Which then makes it take on a different look altogether. The common denominator to which all his previous works can be reduced is, therefore, purely formal. That said, Jenett’s artistic method, if you so will, balances precisely on the dividing line between, on the one hand, media and social, academic or technical systems (e.g., codings, definitions and functionalities) and, on the other,

their being sabotaged between the poles of construction and deconstruction, de- and recontextualization. A concept that has basically applied since his student days. However, the red thread that runs through his creative work has never been accentuated with such convincing and stupendous clarity as in his more recent works, be this “1t ct”, “Phishing At The River Of News” (both 2009) or even “One Perfect Cube” (2010).

When for his ongoing installation “Phishing...” Jenett downloaded the ever so annoying banner ads live and unfiltered from more than 9,000 news portals on the Internet and then made this motley mix of colorful advertising images wander across one or two dozen screens, he not only beat the so-called information society along with all its cheap talk of knowledge, availability and transparency at its own game. For his pleasantly unobtrusive installation highlights the fact that at least there are some interests being expressed. Or that noble goals, commercial or social interests, or even clandestine criminal activities viewed from a neatly abstract perspective are not so different after all – or simply cannot be distinguished.

Jenett’s answer to the dilemma and by extension to the system is, however, as bafflingly simple as it is subversive in an almost anarchic sense. He merely resolves the contents and contradictions. In nothing but pure, ornamentally adorned surfaces that move from one screen to another and another. A softly adulating ad flow, with nothing behind it but – emptiness. In a negative yet equally so in a positive sense which, given the permanent media overkill, can nearly be construed as meditative.

By contrast, “One Perfect Cube” appears as a pure form at first glance, as an animated drawing undergoing a perpetual metamorphosis, whose creator is not quite sure about which shape it is finally going to take. Or, in fact, what it was once before. How is one to know? The image is structured by nine lines, conceived from the hands of three clocks, three lines of which move across the face at one time, tick-tock, according to the same congruent rhythm, as it were, seemingly culminating in clear, minimalist forms before they get condensed into compact bodies, tick-tock, only to disintegrate promptly into particles that are chaotic, or simply light as a feather and somewhat highly poetic. A new image with every second. With each one of these utterly abstract images doubling up as a kind of *memento mori*.

The very obvious movement of the hands, the never ending metamorphosis of the drawing leaves no doubt about that. Like wilted tulips or a broken glass in a Baroque painting. Only that in Jenett’s originally and formally strict drawing of a garden a new surprising, at times wondrous, flower appears every single moment, no matter how short it may be. Only to disappear again in a flash. Just once, every 12 hours in fact, resembling the precision of clockwork, the original image, the actual motif is depicted in the shape of a cube, a stable geometrical form that as such, one is tempted to say, successfully withstands the metamorphoses of time and also the world. And is, tick-tack, gone.

Admittedly, not 12 hours, not 24 or even 48 sufficed to capture the image as such in its perpetual action of finding and losing itself, of consolidation and dissolution, of growth and decay, which never stops time, but changes with every new moment. Fresh and rather beautiful to behold, something that is graphically inscribed in it, and just like the drawing as a pure form and a self-contained system continues on its daily rounds. And, in so doing, unhinges itself like linear time at the drop of a hat.

It may therefore be concluded that good old Marx was quite right when he argued along the following revolutionary lines in his thesis, again contra Feuerbach: “The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and human activity can only be described as *artistic practice* and understood in an artistic context.” Admittedly, I cheated, Marx never uttered these words as such, and art would not have been the first thing on his mind. That said, they sum up Florian Jenett’s art rather well.

Christoph Schütte



## Adding Up Our Differences

Database, animation loops

2006 –



A self-designed database intended for the compilation of photographs of protests and demonstrations predominantly taken from the Internet forms the core of the ongoing work “Adding Up Our Differences”. Every single entry in the database consists of a photograph along with the text (usually in English) displayed on the banners of the demonstration documented in the picture. This structure makes it possible to search the database for protesters’ placards on the basis of the texts featured on them. The result of such a search is a bunch of statements and opinions grouped under a particular search key. Just like a public opinion barometer they indicate the connotations carried by the particular search term.

Some of the search results from the database are given the visual form of an installation. In this case, one bundle of search results at a time is turned into an animation loop that is projected onto a surface, which corresponds to the sum of the placards. In this installation-based form the texts have been extracted from the photographs and thus taken out of their original context. Arranged in several levels above one another, the texts in each bundle are aligned in the central term that is common to them all.





?

HEAR

WHO PART OF

The "TRUTH" is

DOES IT EXIST?

COMING OUT!

CASUALTY  
OF WAR



## Lookahead

PVC coated fabric, blower, fixing  
12,5 x 12,5 x 11,5 m  
2010





## One-two in the red light district

Florian Jenett's exhibition "Lookahead", 10 – 21 May, 2010,  
Weissfrauenkirche, Frankfurt/ Main

The countervailing thrust of "*Projections of the future and the effects they have on decisions in the here and now*"<sup>1</sup> is the subject matter of Florian Jenett's installation entitled "Lookahead", on display in Frankfurt's Weissfrauenkirche.

A gigantic geodesic dome has been placed anachronistically plumb in the middle of the church's nave. From a purely formal perspective, the futuristic white round cupola with its net composed of polygons is in dialog with the architectural features of the large church hall and the line pattern on the minimalist natural stone tiles on the ground as it is with the round stained church windows high up in the room. The connection of object and space is emphasized particularly in those moments when sunlight shimmers through the stained windows, its reflections immersing the dome's white outer shell in a fleeting game of colorful projections.

Visitors step from the passageway through a pressure gate into the air-filled balloon. White on the outside yet colored on the inside, the dome's inner skin surprises with its shimmering variety of different facets bearing details of large advertising motifs that have been artistically altered. The illusion of a single prevailing focal point has been dispensed with altogether.

The cozy refuge provided by the dome in the midst of the protective space that is the church relates the concepts of freedom and being locked away. The visitors find themselves in a hermetically sealed interior space that is equally an imaginary place of refuge, in the midst of the everyday reality of what is a special urban hot spot in Frankfurt's red light district.

Assuming man's incarnation did, in fact, constitute his spatiality, the consequences would be considerable. Drawing on psychoanalysis, Gaston Bachelard has from this basic condition of human life derived his theory of "topoanalysis", which "*would be the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives*".<sup>2</sup> It is founded on the

notion that there exists an analogy between the internal and the external and that the two remain permanently reciprocally related. The unconscious is therefore not located in some undefined site but inhabits interior spaces, which find their matching images in the outside world. The building envelopes the vision and protects the dreamer. Ever since Etienne-Louis Boulée's (1728-1799) utopian domed structures, particularly so his "Cenotaph for Newton", buildings have depicted an integrative force for thoughts and memories, aspirations and dreams.

Florian Jenett's artificially created space-within-a-space is approximately 12.5 meters in diameter and has been composed by dismantling an icosahedron into geometric polygons that were again joined together, resembling a butterfly's wings. It is mainly by way of economic recycling of perfectly cut shapes from everyday advertising tarpaulins, in conjunction with the notion of economic maxims and an interest in the continuous systemic effects of natural principles, that Florian Jenett draws on the ideas of the iconic US progressive thinker and designer Richard Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983). Among others, it was Fuller who in the 1940s decidedly shaped the concept of the geodesic dome.

Buckminster Fuller's influence on contemporary art is, 27 years following his death, more obvious than ever: It is thanks to the thought of Buckminster Fuller that Olafur Eliasson, for example in "Blind Pavillion"<sup>3</sup>, relies on an extensive steel and glass installation to create an experience of human perception, or that such sculptures as Pedro Reyes' 2007 piece "Velotaxi" and equally Josiah McElheny's abstract sculptural works are rooted in the exploration of universal geometric forms. Even Andrea Zittel's compact futuristic "Living Units", performance installations as exaggerated images of efficient living in the most cramped conditions, are strongly reminiscent of Buckminster Fuller's somewhat whacky concepts of living.<sup>4</sup>

With his "Lookahead" dome Florian Jenett evidently finds himself among illustrious artistic company. A common feature of all geodesic domes, Jenett's "Lookahead" dome also has good stability and a favorable material-to-volume ratio. The dome's advantages as a habitat are its natural sound distribution and air circulation. Geodesic domes have excellent acoustic properties, too.

1 Florian Jenett, exhibition press release, May 2010

2 Gaston Bachelard „Poetik des Raumes“, Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, 2001, S. 35 f

3 Daniel Birnbaum „Außen“, Olafur Eliasson, Innen-Stadt-Außen, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König Köln, 2010. S. 25 f

4 Lisa Delgado „Symposium Spotlights Bucky's Artistic Heirs“, Oculus, New York, 2008







In a world in which the future is no longer safe, in which grim news of climate change, economic crises und geopolitical dilemmas cause dark forebodings not only among self-confessed pessimists, visions of the future are becoming increasingly more relevant again. Gerald Hintze, curator of the exhibition project, by emphasizing the special significance of Florian Jenett's work in a location that provides homeless people with a sheltered space, allows the artist to send a signal with his installation "Lookahead". Visually, Florian Jenett not only points the finger at cultural and social problems, but he moreover offers spectators a potential solution. In this sense, we can be curious about the future and new works by Florian Jenett. We are looking ahead mesmerized.

Zylvia Auerbach

*"The dome in Lookahead is a replica of a radar station operated on the Wasserkuppe (Rhoen) by Germany's Federal Armed Forces during the Cold War. It is composed of a quasi random pattern of facets. (...) This pattern is made up of two strikingly opposing elements: abstract butterflies which seemingly move freely among regularly arranged pentagrams. For purely rational reasons a form took shape that with its range of interpretative possibilities transform the dome into an industrial sculpture."*<sup>5</sup>

Florian Jenett's "Lookahead" is a contemporary piece set within the artistic tradition of utopian habitats and relates directly to such works as Bucky Fuller's "Dome Over Manhattan", "Clean Air Pod" by the Ant Farm group, and "Oase Nr.7" by Haus-Rucker-Co.<sup>6</sup> Similarly to Thomas Saraceno's "Air Port City", Florian Jenett confronts with his "Lookahead" dome political, social, cultural and military boundaries.

<sup>5</sup> Florian Jenett, exhibition press release, May 2010

<sup>6</sup> Friedrich von Borries „Klimakapseln“, Edition Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Berlin, 2010

**503**

Skip, Volkswagen Beetle frame

3,4 x 1,8 x 1,6 m

2007







The piece “503” is named after the number the skip was assigned when it was still part of the ESO fleet<sup>1</sup>. The 7-m<sup>3</sup> skip was taken out of current use and “married” to the shortened chassis of a Volkswagen Beetle.

Skips are utility objects: functional, unadorned, and somewhat honest. An uncompromising form that complies with DIN standards and features RAL colors. Their presence is of a temporary nature: they tend to turn up over night, get filled, and disappear again.

The work “503” plays with the ambivalent aesthetic of the functional. The contraption looks part utility and part military vehicle. It is big, angular, mobile, and makes its drivers feel like they rule the world, a boyhood dream come true, a “Jungsding”.

1 ESO Offenbacher Dienstleistungsgesellschaft mbH, [eso-offenbach.de](http://eso-offenbach.de)

## 1t ct

434782 eurocents, bigbag, shortened europool palettes

80 x 80 x 100 cm

2009

The piece “1t ct” (one ton of eurocents) is formally composed of a heavy-duty bulk bag (FIBC or bigbag) designed for a weight of one ton that has been filled with one ton of eurocents worth EUR 4,347.82.

FIBC bags (flexible intermediate bulk containers) are used mainly for the processing of bulk materials and can be found across a wide range of industries. On building sites they are filled with either sand or gravel, while farmers employ them for storing grain and forage. Just like these goods, euro coins are industrially mass-produced. However, from among the range of coins only the nominal value of the 1-cent coin reflects its actual manufacturing cost, alongside its material value and weight.

The sculpture is, by its form, suggestive of interpreting money as a construction material and a means that enables creativity. Yet in our imagination we immediately compute the coins' nominal value, even if it would not be as readily available to us in reality. Only the emitter, namely the Central Bank, is obliged to accept such a large amount of coins; moreover, moving a full ton is a tough job at any rate. In large quantities the form of the coin therefore deactivates the money's function, placing additional emphasis on its materiality.

The 434,782 cents are a mixture of part new and part circulation coinage. Many of them were issued in other European countries and many show visible signs of wear. Even so, these singularities disappear in the shuffle, merging instead into a shimmering mass. The different shades blend into one single image; they become one color, one structure. Individual coins get lost in the tangle and are thus no longer perceived as such. Items of money are transformed into small copperplates.











## WÜ-ZP-200

1993 Toyota Corolla station wagon, cardboard, brown packaging tape  
2003



A minimalistic modification using cheap materials turns a “suburban mom car” into a “ricer”<sup>1</sup>.

*„Back in the mid-90s, Florian Jenett wanted to go Can-Am racing. Never one to let obstacles dismay him, he ignored people that told him, “You can’t afford to go racing on a German artist’s salary” or “Can-Am racing died in 1974.” Instead, he put together the Corolla-based racecar you see here. Complete with a homemade K&N filter conversion (necessitating a hood bulge) and sans catalytic converter, it was capable of over 100mph – at which speed its handling became unpredictable.”*

Wes Siler in [jalopnic.com](http://jalopnic.com): “Obsessed With The Cult Of Cars”

<sup>1</sup> Short for “rice burner”, a pejorative describing (tuned) Japanese-made (or Asian-made) automobiles







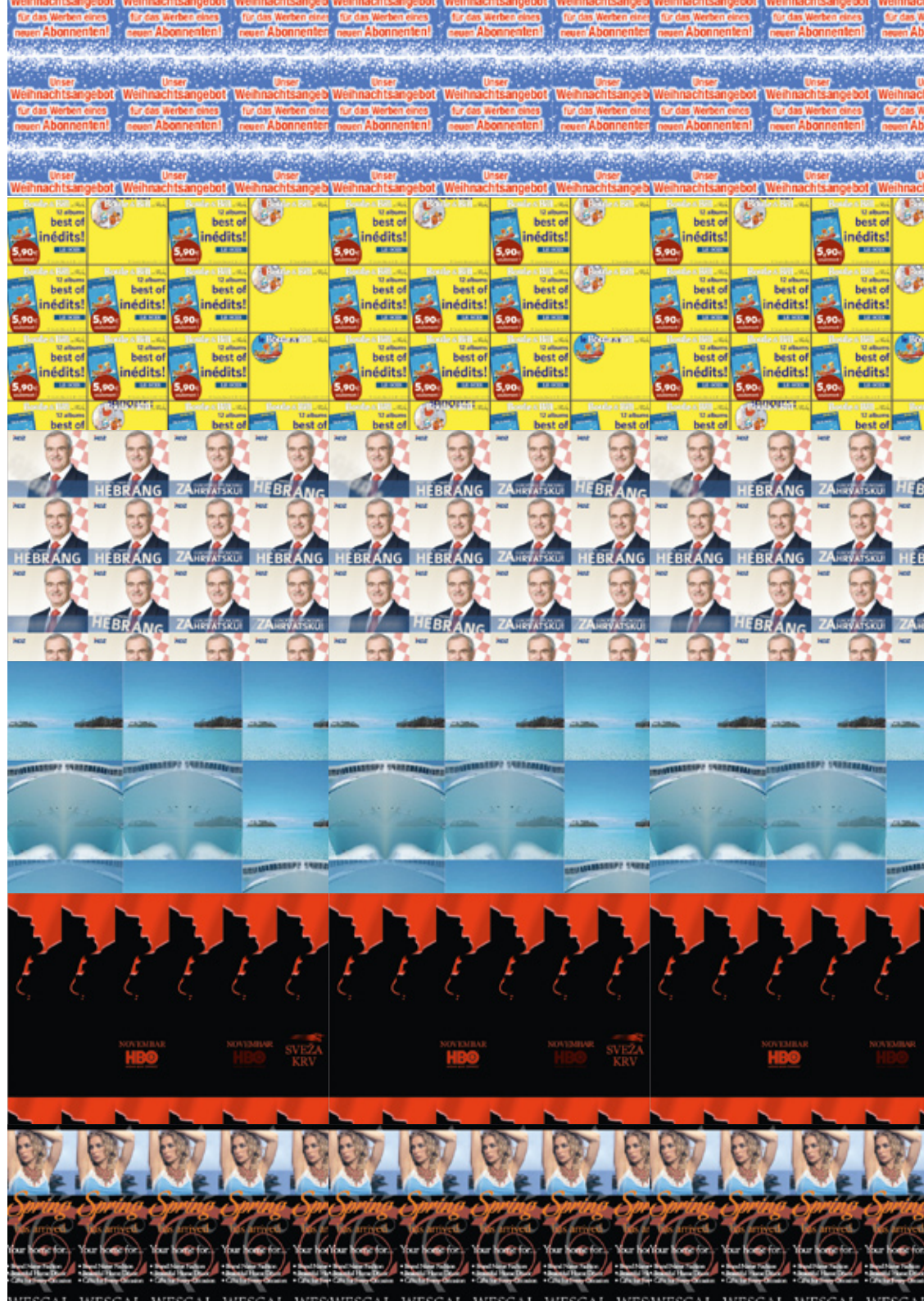
# Phishing At The River Of News

Software, CRT computer monitors, video splitters  
2009 –

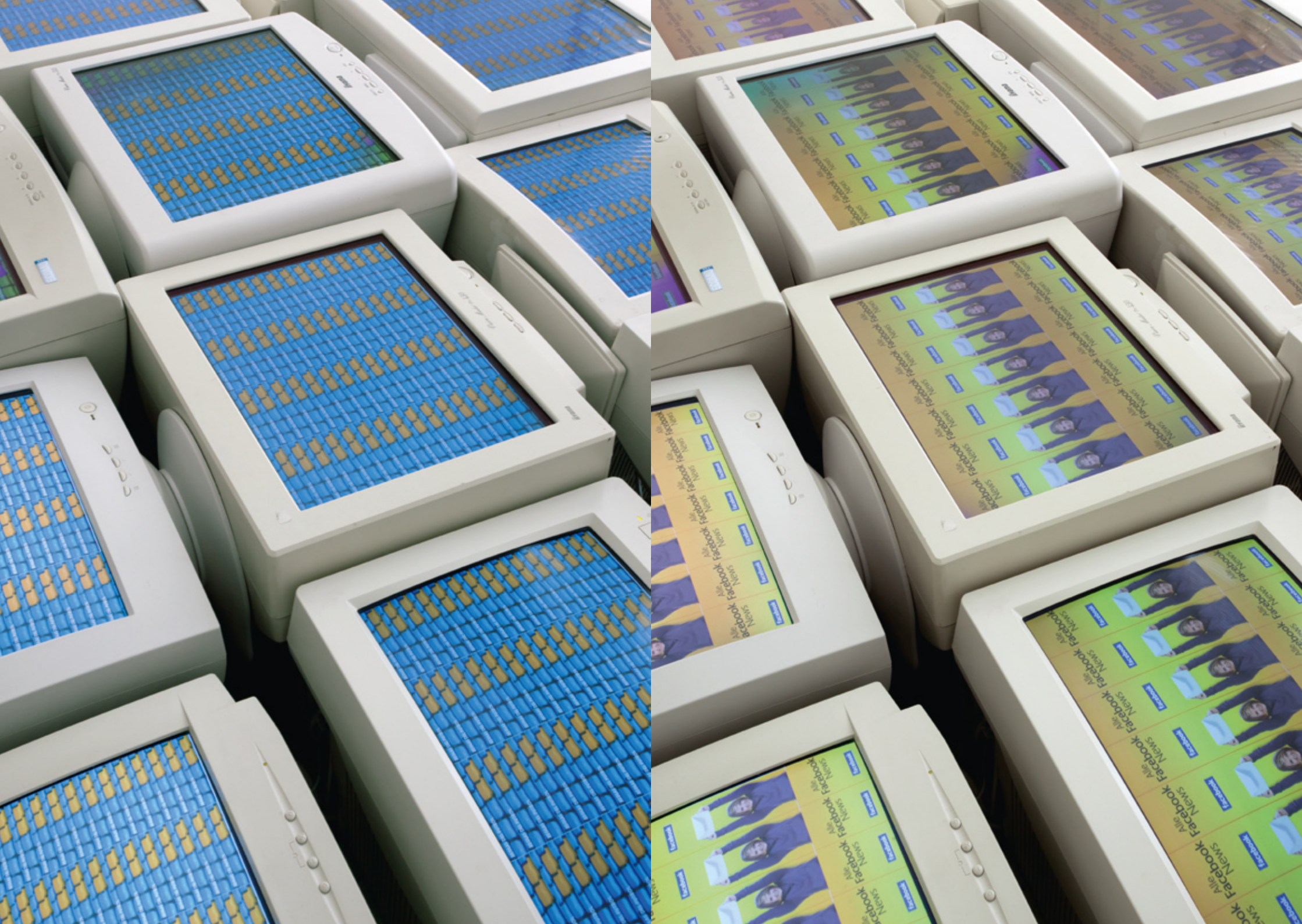


The installation is composed of a series of used CRT computer monitors of different brands, all of which have been arranged on the ground screen-by-screen and positioned on their backs. All monitors display one and the same image, produced by software that runs in the background. The image is a constantly changing pattern formed by multiples of just one Internet banner ad at a given time, which is downloaded live. The banners are taken from the home pages of more than 9000+ international news portals that are continuously read out by the software in the background.

The ad banners – live and unfiltered Internet downloads – convey a most extensive spread of content shown anywhere in the world at this very moment. Viewed from a distance, the shape and color of the ads dissolves, merging the individual screens into a single flickering, continuously changing overall image. By displaying Christmas motifs alongside ads for summer holidays, election campaigns or appeals for donations to the Haiti earthquake victims the elements also make concrete reference to everyday life. They reflect temporal and regional as well as cultural and social events of individual countries and regions.







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