

Energie_Passagen Glossary

The title of the project »Energie_Passagen« is based upon the understanding of language and information as intellectual energy. It is further derived from Vilém Flusser's use of the term »passage« as journey and it also refers to Walter Benjamin's »Passagen-Werk«. The principle of using an artistic installation as a measurement device refers to Albrecht Dürer's book on measurements.

1) Energy: The term energy is derived from the Greek word *energía* and means effective force or activity. The understanding of language as intellectual energy is the basic theme of »Energie_Passagen«. Language as principal public element is examined as linguistic space in context of the public space. The objective consists in identifying locally effective (linguistic) forces, in »measuring« these and in making visible the »genius loci«, i.e. the spirit of a place.

2) Linguistic Space: The linguistic space which is part of the public space is formed by different and heterogeneous linguistic statements of all intellectual forces locally present. The language of politics, of the media as well as the inhabitants' city talks have an impact on this place. The metaphor of the linguistic space as the city's invisible dynamic architecture is the starting point for the attempt to measure energy flows of the urban space.

3) Network of Terms: Visualization of contextual relations among different terms of the information flow. Electronic dictionaries are the basis for the automated determination of the context existing among these words.

4) Passage: Vilém Flusser defines »passage« as a journey in which individual elements form fragments of a larger context which one »passes through« in order to condense individual impressions as parts of a whole to a tangible picture. Flusser's use of the term passage has to be understood against the background of nomadism, i.e. the contemporary mobile lifestyle of the »telematic society«. This corresponds to a thinking in relations in contrast to a »sedentary« thinking in fixed categories.

Walter Benjamin's method of text »montage« in his »Passagen-Werk« is inspiration to this project. Just as the cultural theorist tries to »do without all apparent interpretation and to allow meanings to emerge purely based upon the shocking assembly of material« [»auf alle offenbare Auslegung zu verzichten und die Bedeutungen einzig durch schockhafte Montage des Materials hervortreten zu lassen«, Adorno], in a similar but more contemporary form, newspaper texts are fragmented and presented to the actors as new »montage«. The users are confronted to always new constellations of terms and thus derive new contexts.

FLUSSER, Vilém: Medienkultur. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1997.

<http://www.zeit.de/2004/12/Passagen-Alpen>. (24.10.2004) Passage as »the expression of a movement in which the human being tries to recreate (compute) himself in a world ground to dust and electronic pixel)«.

Vgl. BENJAMIN, Walter: Das Passagen-Werk. Gesammelte Schriften. Vol. V. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1982.

5) Measurement: »Energie_Passagen« acts as a measurement device and historically relates to Albrecht Dürer's »The Art of Measurement« (1525). Dürer understands »the art of measurement« as »the right reason for all painting« [»den rechten grundt aller malerey«]. According to the idea that the city represents a linguistic space, verbal statements and texts in the urban space represent energy flows. They are »measured« by interactive and technology-based processes. Thus, visual and onomatopoeic statements emerge in »Energie_Passagen« based upon these measurements. Cf. DÜRER, Albrecht: Unterweisung der Messung. Nürnberg 1525. 3. Edition, Nördlingen; Uhl, 2000.

6) Information Flow: This term originates from communication theory and means the continuous exchange of necessary information between sender and recipient. In »Energie_Passagen«, texts (from a newspaper) are analyzed, reduced to their catchwords and presented as information flow in a floor projection. This visualization of data flows offers a non-linear and dynamically generated access to language and information.

Moreover the installation refers to the necessary free flow of information which will be required for the future of the global information society. This relates to the currently planned changes of copyrights and, more generally, of civil rights in a digital society. <http://www.attac.de/wissensallmende/> (24.10.2004)

7) Living Newspaper: The interactive de-construction of the newspaper by fragmenting and transforming its original contents facilitates a new way of reading and understanding.

The term »Living Newspaper« historically refers to socially critical theatre plays of the USSR around the year 1917, to Brecht's and Piscator's »epic theatre« of the 1920's as well as to American theatre plays during the »New Deal Arts Program« in the 1930's.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA04/mccain/audiohist/intro5.htm>
(24.10.2004)