PRESS RELEASE

CORY ARCANGEL (BEIGE)
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NERDZONE VERSION 1

APRIL 2 - MAY 22 2005

Press Conference: Friday, April 1 2005, 10.30am
Opening: Friday, April 1 2005, 6pm

In the early 1980s, the 8-bit Nintendo NES game console revolutionised the entertainment market. From then on computer technology was no longer used purely for work purposes, but also for the masses as a medium for entertainment. In his works, Cory Arcangel (b. 1978) makes use of the games console, long since overtaken by millions of bits, and 'hacks' into its games. The progress of some games is interrupted and short-circuited, and they are reduced to their monochrome picture backgrounds, while other games are given a new narrative. Underlying the works is not just a nostalgic idea, but also an evaluation and reinterpretation of the games system, as well as an interest in composing electronic minimal music using 8-bit technology.

For the very formalistically reduced work *Super Mario Clouds V2k3* (2003) Arcangel takes as his starting point Super Mario Bros, undoubtedly one of the best-known games. All the graphic elements of the original game have been removed, except for the clouds, which travel slowly along. While references to monochrome painting can be discerned in the monotonic pictorial structure, the work can equally be interpreted as an ironic commentary on the development of traditional cloud painting, which in art history terms is seen as the starting point of abstract painting. In the documentary film *How to Make Super Mario Clouds* (2003) computer laymen are given an explanation of how to programme their own Super Mario clouds. In *Japanese Racer Game* (2004) the original course of the game is likewise interrupted to make it unplayable – the racing car that should steer the player through the coarsely pixellated landscape has been eliminated. The game becomes a journey through a landscape of psychedelic colours. In *Super Mario Movie* (2005) the game Super Mario Bros is used once again as a source, though a narrative is generated here by way of a contrast, whirling the hero Mario through an extremely hallucinogenic world of colour reminiscent of German 'absolute' film techniques.

I Shot Andy Warhol (2003) can be interpreted as a tribute to Andy Warhol, the founder of Pop Art, who was unrivalled in the way he worked with unfamiliar pictorial material and industrial techniques of reproduction. Here the player slips into the role of Valerie Solanis who tried to assassinate Warhol in 1968. Armed with a plastic pistol the player must try to shoot the digital Andy Warhol. *Super Slow Tetris* (2004) and *Space Invaders* (2004), both well-known games classics, are supposedly distinguished by a highly participative character. But players' anticipation will end abruptly - the monotony and slowness of the games leave behind an empty feeling of frustration.

Arcangel's interest in electronic minimal music is demonstrated most clearly in the work *Nipod v. 2* (2004). This relates to an Ipod that was created for the Nintendo games console. Arcangel, along with Paul B. Davis, Joseph Beuckman and Joe Bonn, founded the programming collective Beige, which also issues records and is responsible for many experimental Internet projects. The record *The 8-Bit Construction Set*, which offers samples of music from 8-bit consoles came out under the Beige label. In its artistic works Beige tries to formulate a criticism of the media, pointing to the fact that society is at the mercy of a programming 'dictatorship'. The 'autonomous' status of the artist is especially endangered here; insofar as he uses computer programmes as an aid in his creative work, he can only evolve within the parameters specific to each programme.

!PERFORMANCE!

With only a DVD player, a collection of commercially available Simon and Garfunkel DVDs, and a laser pointer, Cory Arcangel will be giving a lecture / performance detailing his relationship with the famous American Duo. Expanding on his sense of minimalism, this lecture will demonstrate that media need not even be altered for a compelling artwork to emerge.

Performance by Cory Arcangel on Saturday, 2 April 2005 at 10pm at the migros museum für gegenwartskunst. With Bar !

!INFORMATION!

For further information please contact the exhibition curator: Raphael Gygax.

More information can be found online at:

www.beigerecords.com/cory
www.post-data.org/beige

A comprehensive exhibition catalogue with an essay by Raphael Gygax will be published by JRP/Ringier.

Public guided tours: Sundays, 3 & 24 April, 8 & 22 May at 3pm, and Thursday, 14 April at 6pm

Sunday, 8 May: Museum Day – entry to the museum free of charge!

Opening times
Tues. /Wed. / Fri. 12am – 6pm, Thurs. 12am – 8pm, Sat. / Sun. 11am – 5pm

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The migros museum für gegenwartskunst is an institution of the Migros Culture Percentage:
www.kulturprozent.ch