

V!RUS12

RADICAL MODERNS

a n o 2 0 1 6 y e a r
s e m e s t r e 0 1 s e m e s t e r

revista do Nomads.usp | Nomads.usp journal
ISSN 2175-974x | CC BY-NC
DOI 10.4237/virus_journal

MODERNIST ECHOES IN ELECTRONIC ART Karla Schuch Brunet

How to quote this text: Brunet, K.S. 2016. modernist echoes in electronic art. *VIRUS*, [e-journal] 12. Available at: <<http://www.nomads.usp.br/virus/virus12/?sec=5>>.[Accessed 00 Month 0000].

Karla Schuch Brunet is Doctor in Audiovisual Communication, Lecturer at the Institute of Humanities, Arts and Sciences and at the Post-graduation Program on Culture and Society at the Federal University of Bahia, UFBA, Brazil. She develops projects of interaction among art, science and technology.

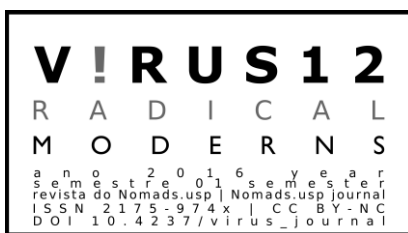
Having in mind questions concerning the Art & Coding, I decided to interview some artists to find out how they relate to code in their own artwork. In this text I intend to introduce to *VIRUS* journal readers Ioann Maria, a new media artist, audiovisual performer, and coder. I would say that Ioann Maria is a perfect example of an artist who works in reverberation of modernist concepts. Especially because she has an attitude of rupture, trying to understand word's complexity and creating new methods/processes through her code, math, and art. She does it in her everyday practice on a hacker lab. Her art belongs mainly to outside of the mainstream commercial galleries. According to Ioann, processes, freedom of expression and experimentation are important to produce art nowadays.

Ioann Maria was the artistic director of LPM Live Performers Meeting, the world's biggest annual meeting dedicated to live video performance. Besides that, she was also part of Dorkbot Alba – *people doing strange things with electricity* – and is the co-founder of Edinburgh Hacklab, the first Scottish hackerspace, a place dedicated to collaborative interdisciplinary experimentation.

It is commonly said that women don't code and women are not interested in hardware or software. However, in my working environment I can see many women coding and engaged in developing electronic art. Ioann Maria is here as an evidence that women do code and enjoy it.

Karla Brunet (KB): *Ioann, you have a great variety of artworks ranging from robots and interactive art installation to audiovisual performance. Could you please tell us a little about your background and the artwork you do? When did you start working with media art? What were your interests in this field of art? Did you always work with media art or have you started by other art forms?*

Ioann Maria (IM): I first started working with media art about 9 years ago. I did VJing as part of choreography for a music show. VJing started for me a domino effect. Since I needed original footage for the tour, I started shooting videos,



editing, making animations, creating special effects. I was very attracted to the idea of telling stories with pictures. My feelings about music and visualization of those feelings. My very personal live cinema screenings.

Only later I discovered that I could draw and went to the art school where I focused on fine arts. That was entirely new - so manual! A whole new way of narrative. I found charcoal and oil paint to be my favourite medium there.

KB: *When did you started to code/program? What was your first code piece? Which language did you use?*

IM: It's hard to recall exactly but I am guessing that the first code I've written was in Processing. I liked to visualize math functions and write algorithm - driven graphics. I found it fascinating that there is this programming language I can create art with. Moreover, I liked that generative aesthetics. The language seemed accessible, fun to learn and easy to play with. That was astonishing for a layman like myself who haven't had anything to do with actual programming. I would have never imagined that it was just a beginning of an exciting journey that opened a new chapter in my life.

KB: *Do you code your work? Can you program? Which language do you use or feel more comfortable coding?*

IM: My early experimentations in multimedia arts made me curious of computing. I wanted to know how things work. I believed that knowing the fundamentals of Computer Science would give me a broader picture and understanding of technologies I am working with. I have changed my direction of research, studied for Maths certification, then went to study Computer Science. Those few years of researching subjects previously completely unknown to me gave me a great new perspective on possibilities and more confidence in what I was doing.

KB: *Do you enjoy coding or not? Could you talk a bit about that?*

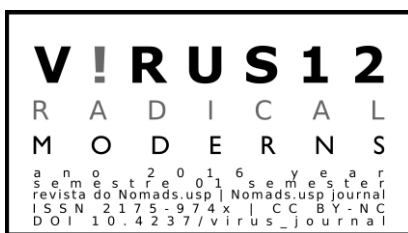
IM: Creative coding, which is present in my artwork, makes this great connection between mathematics, logic and computation, and arts. It is a special combination, I find harmony in it. I do love coding. It is as if your thoughts, visions and imagination were going through this algorithmical filter and coming out as this new resonant unearthly being.

There is also programming I do apart from art-related coding. I love shell scripting. I also work on technical projects which main requirement is code's functionality.

KB: *How is the creative process of coding of your work? Do you conceive something and then you go coding for it? Or do you play around with code and come up with ideas for artwork?*

IM: For long-term projects I like to plan my work. I know what I want - I look for the most efficient way to accomplish it. But there is so much of creative process going on while just fooling around with code. You "sketch" it, you let the unexpected happen, one idea inspires another. Many of my smaller projects have started this way.

KB: *Do you collaborate with engineers/programmers? Or other artists/scientists? If yes, how do these collaborations take place? Could you describe shortly this relationship in collaborative works? Do you think it is important that you are the one who does the code of your own work or do you prefer to work with programmers?*



IM: I do collaborate with professionals of various disciplines. Depending on the project, that would be musicians, composers, dancers, engineers, other programmers. I love to collaborate with people who know so much more than I do, I find it stimulating. I have learned a lot working with big brains and I am infinitely grateful for it. Sessions at Dorkbot Alba - 'people doing strange things with electricity' were probably the most interesting and productive collaboration. That is where scientists, artists and researchers meet to experiment and learn from each other. That is where I learned electronics, worked on DIY biofeedback tools. My time at Dorkbot also resulted in working on my very first robot - Artificial Rat. Not only Dorkbot had a positive outcome on my personal work, our meet-ups have motivated us to open the first Scottish hackerspace - Edinburgh Hacklab (2010), which is active till this day. This I find an example of the best reward of fruitful collaboration.

KB: *What is your current artwork project?*

IM: I decided to take a break from live audio-visual performances, hide and work on something more 'static'. I am in the process of editing a short film I have directed in collaboration with Academic Film Center Belgrade. It is also the first time that I am working solo on music that will be the soundtrack for the film. Most of the work on audio is being done coding and patching. Every now and then I give talks and lectures related to hacktivism, online anonymity, Internet privacy and freedom of expression. Right now I am editing my new documentary on the legacy of Agent Orange, a defoliant used by US military during the war in Vietnam, and its dreadful consequences on generations of Vietnamese people. I am looking forward to releasing the film soon.

Therefore, if you think of Kandinsky, or any of the cubists, futurists, or minimalists, they were the inspiration for many of the artists nowadays working with art and coding. They showed it was possible to do art away from realism, art could be abstract, could surprise the audience with unpredictable results. Just as modernist artists had a rupture with patterns and rejected traditions, Ioann Maria also searches in art a tendency to face problems with new technology and practices of today's everyday life.

Since our world nowadays is totally mediated by software – the food we eat depends on software, as our social relations do, the taxes we pay, our entertainment and transportation – all depends on software. To be modern nowadays is to understand software that surrounds us. It is a modernist echo on art to be able to manage software that is part of our art. Doing art with Adobe belongs to the past, to the 90s. We need today artists to be radical and to be an active part of this coding society we are living in.

V!RUS12

R A D I C A L
M O D E R N S

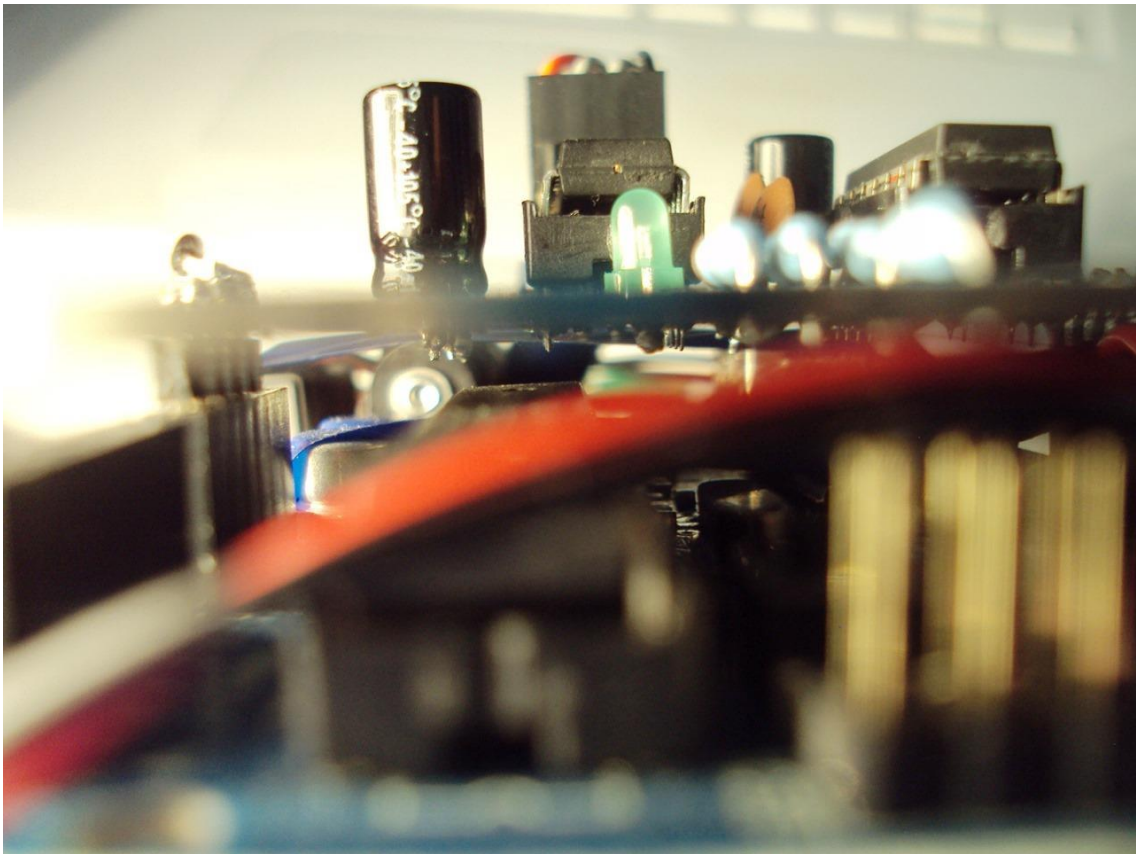
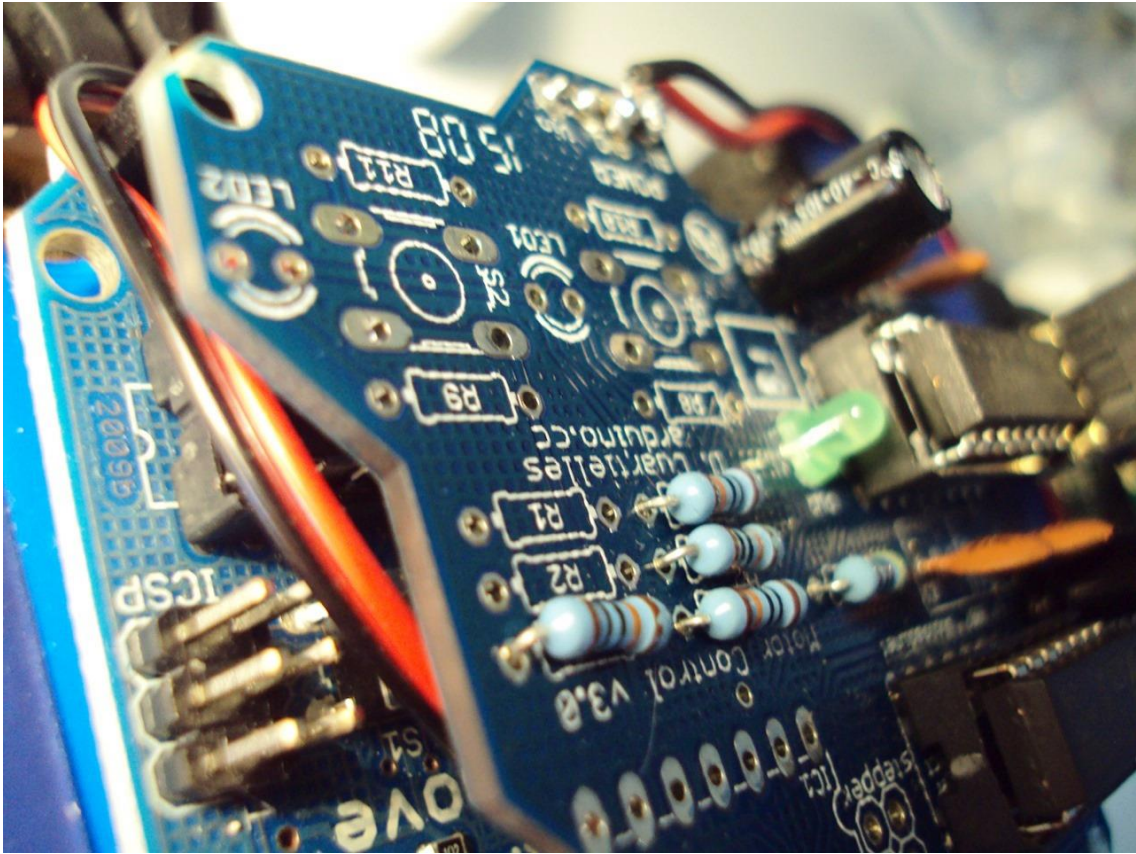
a n o 2 0 1 6 y e a r
s e m e s t r e 0 1 s e m e s t e r
r e v i s t a d o N o m a d s . u s p | N o m a d s . u s p j o u r n a l
I S S N 2 1 7 5 - 9 7 4 x | C C B Y - N C
D O I 1 0 . 4 2 3 7 / v i r u s _ j o u r n a l



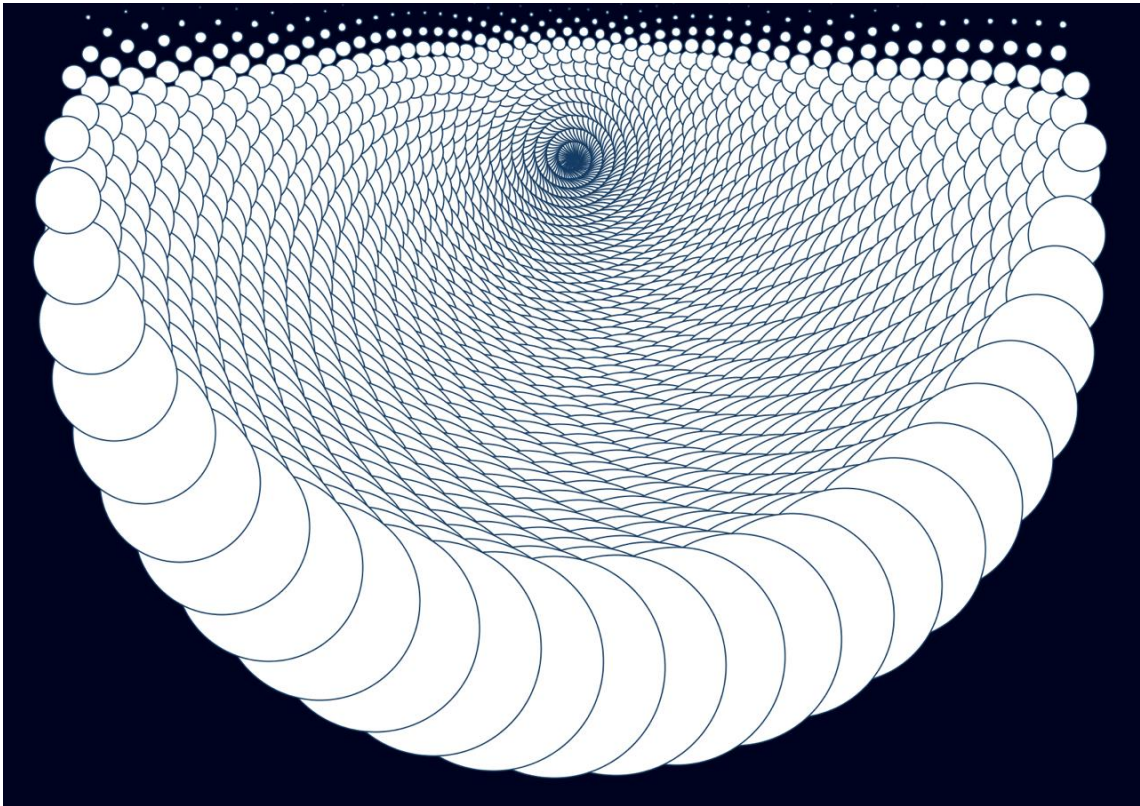
V!RUS12

R A D I C A L
M O D E R N S

a n o 2 0 1 6 s e m e s t e r
s e m e s t r e 0 1 6 s e m e s t e r
revista do Nomads.usp | Nomads.usp journal
ISSN 2175-974x | CC BY-NC
DOI 10.4237/virus_journal



V!RUS12
R A D I C A L
M O D E R N S
a n o 2 0 1 6 y e a r
s e m e s t r e 0 1 s e m e s t e r
revista do Nomads.usp | Nomads.usp journal
ISSN 2175-974x | CC BY-NC
DOI 10.4237/virus_journal



V!RUS12

R A D I C A L
M O D E R N S

a n o 2 0 1 6 s e m e s t e r
s e m e s t r e 0 1 s e m e s t e r
r e v i s t a d o N o m a d s . u s p | N o m a d s . u s p j o u r n a l
I S S N 2 1 7 5 - 9 7 4 x | C C B Y - N C
D O I 1 0 . 4 2 3 7 / v i r u s _ j o u r n a l

