become 'generic' only in certain segments. Like many other cities with a colonialist past, Sao Paulo is an intensely segmented city, with social, racial, economic and cultural borders dividing it like the Berlin Wall — a metaphor that we heard quoted quite frequently. This segmentation protects the Generic City, while other quarters, or segments located outside the city boundaries, are decidedly 'un-generic', 'dirty' and 'specific'.

The Generic City has no identity. Yet, identity is not something that is the same for a city as a whole. People possess or develop a clear sense of 'home', even in the most decrepit neighborhoods. Local people have an intuitive knowledge that allows them to distinguish between a street in Kreuzberg and Mitte, between Manhattan and Brooklyn, between Bras and Pinheiros. The identity that is constructed in such urban environments is a heterogeneous composite of different symbolic matrices, social, cultural, familial, that are local as much as they are translocal. A possible counter-hypothesis to Koolhaas would therefore be that only few places are generic cities, and only a fraction of these will remain generic for longer periods of time. The generic stage is not the final stage, but one of the first characteristics of many human settlements.

The project *IO_dencies* asks how, suspended between local and global activities, urban characteristics are enhanced, transformed or eradicated, and it investigates whether the extension of the urban environment into electronic spaces might allow for changed qualities of urbanity. Is communication technology the catalyst of the Generic City, or is it the motor for another, transformed notion of urbanity and public space?

In Tokyo, the technological permeation of the social space is accepted without the social resistance that we find in Europe. Technology is used especially to make the ritualized social communication even more perfect, smooth and characterless or generic. Digitization is supposed to prevent any kind of social noise or acoustic disturbance. In Tokyo, the *IO_dencies* project therefore developed software structures that could create a noisy, irritating network of experimental events between the urban components.

In Sao Paulo, on the other hand, we were

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COTIS

Contemporary technologies trace a curve through time and space, a trajectory from the earth towards the heavens. Gathered beneath the Genitron clock in Paris, counting down the seconds until midnight 2000, our eyes turn upwards towards the sky in the hope that the twentieth century will hit escape velocity – the techno-theology of the ejector seat. What is forgotten in this gesture, or perhaps denied, is the parabolic curve of gravity's rainbow: the trajectory back towards the earth in the swan-dive of an inevitable vertigo. The Arc of the Covenant. The Arc of Triumph. The (meta)physics of what-goes-up. They constitute the sacred sites of modern crash location, and they are the media-spectacles which *COTIS* seek to invert and infect.

COTIS stands for *Cult Of The Inserter Seat*. We are part of a global collective who seek to reintegrate the body into the material matrix. In search of the ultimate fusion between humachines and the plenum, it becomes imperative to invert the notion of innocence inherent in any 'return to the earth'. We propose to do this by reversing the telescoping of distance offered by high-speed travel and the spectacular vectors of the media-industrial complex. By digging into the earth and continuing the momentum of the crash, *COTIS* articulates the transcendent trigonometry of technology. These tunnels create a network which links into a constellation of impact points to create a zodiac for subterranean stargazers. Thus one tunnel from a particular crash site may intersect with one from another, forging a rhizomatic network of extended terminal velocities. *COTIS* containers mark these nodal points in a gesture designed both to orientate and punctuate. This reverse cosmology navigates the digital transarchitecture of the Internet, affording an opportunity for organization still based on that of the smouldering wreckage of the surface.

confronted with a ruptured, fragmented and explosive urban space (in terms of social/political/economic inequalities and exclusions). Here, there were fewer technological strategies, the public sphere knew a different order and there were different parameters of public forms of agency. For *IO_dencies Sao Paulo*, we created possibilities for the collaborative articulation of urban texts and experiences. The Sao Paulo interface allows the participants and Internet users to express, condense and confront urban experiences on several concrete and intuitive levels.

Machinic Agency

In a previous Knowbotic Research project, *Anonymous Muttering* (1996), the question of possibilities of collaborative agency and intervention in urban environments was posed from a very intuitive, yet also rather critical point of view. The project confronted the visitors with an experience of high intensity of urban processes, which they could influence without being able to control them. The frustration sparked by the lack of feedback on one's action highlighted the degree to which processes of subjectification rely on the feedback that we receive on our actions.

Contemporary cities are covered with successful and failed attempts at leaving such traces and creating such feedback loops. The noise from roaring cars and ghetto blasters, the ubiquity of graffiti and tags, stickers and other lasting marks, and even temporary and permanent pieces of architecture are clear attempts at creating a lasting visibility and presence in the urban environment. Viewed from a cultural and political perspective, however, this kind of visibility is rather powerless if it is not coupled with opportunities to act and intervene in the public arena.

The aim of the *IO_Dencies* project is to find out whether it is possible, to develop electronic interfaces which open up new forms of agency in a situation where the city itself is being deprived of many public functions, and whether network interfaces can become useful in local as well as in global contexts. Yet, how can agency be realized when taking into account the machinic? What

Beneath the ashes, beneath the dust, the nomadic tunnellers of *COTIS* map the hypertextual co-ordinates of a cartography which survey a global Bermuda triangle, now a more abstract form.

In exposing the Enlightenment logic underlying 'air-traffic control', *COTIS* extends the legacy of human inscription upon the earth – the physical graffiti of a transitory presence. From chalk drawings on hillsides and paths trodden in deserts through centuries of architecture we have left our marks on the surface of the planet. Scars of other possibilities.

The scattered corpo-reality of impact zones produce a liminal space in which it becomes possible to retrace what it means to be mortal in the millennial moment. The body incorporates the crash, not the other way around. Thus we compel the gaze to turn from the sky to the ground, to the intra-terrestrial life-forms which fertilize the soil of future auto-pilots.

'Shock' comes from the middle-Dutch word 'schokken' – to collide. Only now the screen-fatigue of over-exposure and empathy burn-out necessitates a different strategic relationship to the sacrificial victims of the symbolic economy. As our fragile mammal brains try to decode signals beamed at us with increasing speed and accuracy, we find we become projectiles ourselves in the scopophilic logic of hyper-reality. Thus in order to counter the rhetoric of extinction we must push the fatal(istic) curve of the thanatic asymptote across the axis of its own complicity with the death drive. In simpler terms, *COTIS* exposes the closed-circuit of mediated mourning, along with the silent satellite witnesses of cathode addiction. The medium may well be the message, but the messenger moves more swiftly when there is the scent of blood and smoke in the air. The narrative baton passes from the crash through the lens to the studio to the television to the blood-shot eye in one fluid pan-optical movement. There is precious little time to blink (indeed the clockwork orange has been digitally upgraded for the information era, and we find we cannot blink).

would it mean to say that acting is the movement of the subject in the machine? What are the points of friction at which the subject and agency manifest themselves?

Acting is the production of friction, or fraction, in machinic processes. If the interface is the point and the moment of action and experience, it is also the medium that brings forth the subject and shapes its world. An interesting aspect of the connective interface would be that, through its coupling of different single-subject action-universes, it makes it possible to experience the tendential that is realized through the movement in the interface. The model of agency we are trying to realize would then be the building of connective interfaces that are sensitive and reactive to both the actions and the presence of others, as well as to the surrounding processes. There wouldn't have to be a 'collective consciousness' but only the possibility of active and responsible cooperation between different people.

http://www.khm.de/people/krcf/IO/

COTIS both initiate and interrupt this news media circuit, playing with the Olympic torch of disaster footage which the spectacle attempts to keep alight, lest there be no disasters left to (un)cover. The space shuttle explosion marks the high-fire mark of this fetishistic history. Indeed, the fact that the social psyche can tolerate – even crave – the existential violence of the black box is both an abject lesson, and one of the most important moments of post-alienated estrangement. The black box contains the sacred Scripture of a terminal identity which becomes encoded onto the recording technologies of the day. Here are etched the famous last words which can be looped and re-played for aesthetic and forensic purposes. The ghost in the machine is nothing supernatural, and yet it haunts the rigorous mortis of our post-mortem era. These are missives from the missile: the ultimate articulation before the moment of impact. *COTIS* recognizes the symbolic charge of such statements in the context of crash-culture. The black box sound-byte circulates in the media as an accursed share; the devil's part of a system which thrives on its sacrificial inclusion into the logic of late capitalism – like the terminal portraits of a lacerated Princess. Indeed, in the post-Diana mediascape it is impossible to recover the obsolescent innocence before the Fall.

COTIS is anti-apocalypse (although not necessarily anti-apocalyptic). Rejecting the neo-Cartesian discourse of technologies such as Virtual Reality and the neo-imperialism of space exploration, *COTIS* burrows into the earth to bury its containers and members in a step towards reversing the cosmology of teleological narratives. We rejoice in the memetic panic behind the Y2K problem: the millennial bug which threatens to freeze the entire system. This meta-crash coded into the main-frame all those years ago is a premise and a limit-horizon for the current installation. Whether the Y2K bug is the result of poetic myopia or a subconscious faith in the new millennium, the collision counters contemporary technocultural hubris in the libidinal economy. *COTIS* speak in tongues in order to distract those who would re-wire the Tower of Babylon.