

Fellows

Thomas Y. Levin

IFK_Visiting Fellow

Duration of fellowship

01. October 1995 bis 15. December 1995

Thomas Y. Levin

PROJECT TITLE

Archaeology of Virtuality: Histories of Simulation from Perspective to Cyberspace

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In what sense, for example, is the domain of VR any more virtual than the simulational space of single-point perspective? Is the representational space of VR simply a late stage in the history of immaterial stagings such as those proto-cinematic devices (phenakistoscope, zoetrope, praxinoscope etc.) which proliferated in the 19th century? In fact VR already has a multitude of competing genealogies - narratives of origin that trace it back alternatively to the development of tools in an upper paleolithic cave (Howard Rheingold), to the epistemic break of the Euclidean world-view (David Thomas), to the introduction of printed texts in the mid-1600's or to the invention of the stereoscope in 1838 (Allucquere Rosanne Stone). Irrespective of the model one subscribes to, the very multiplicity of such accounts itself already points to the need to think through the relation of VR to the history of representational practices out of which, in however mediated a fashion, it arose. For it is only through such an historically informed and critical retrospection that the supposed specificity - and in turn the representational aesthetics and politics - of VR can be established."

CV

Thomas V. Levin, Philosoph, Kulturhistoriker; studierte an der Yale University, Forschungsaufenthalte u.a. in Paris, Toronto, Perugia, Budapest. Lehrt am Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Princeton University. Beschäftigt sich vor allem mit Film- und Medientheorie, veröffentlichte Studien zu Siegfried Kracauer, Adorno, Lukacs.

Publications

Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler. A Psychological History of the German Film*. New edition with a newly translated 100-page appendix of Kracauer's Weimar writings on film. Edited and introduction. Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming 1995. Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament. Essays*. Translated, edited and with an introduction by T. Levin . Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994. "After the Beep: A Short History of Voice Mail" in: *Culture Lab II*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994.