

NEWS ROOM

Artists in New York and The Netherlands combine efforts in a project, for exchange between both sites, called NEWS ROOM.

The realm of expansion is global, the twin sites are but beginnings, the public need is plain. How?

In Romania, before the death of Ceaucescu, it was illegal for a public assembly of people to meet and discuss politics.

In the United States today, and on occasion elsewhere in the West, it is illegal for a public assembly of people to meet and discuss with evidence, to review, or compare and contrast, or critically replay, any portion of what is broadcast as television news.

Yet as The New York Times, Los Angeles Times and others reported, the overthrow of Ceaucescu was accomplished chiefly by a shift in the practice of television news. The Communist dictatorship, a Times reporter wrote, had been replaced by a "videocracy."

If television is so important in Romania, but if any practical public review or discussion about television is illegal in the United States (or most other Western countries), what does that suggest about political freedom, or freedom of the press and speech, or simply that right of a citizen in the West to go to a library and review a number of articles from a wide range of sources?

The public need is plain to change the terms of access, for public review and analysis, to the news footage of TV.

Artists in New York and Amsterdam take upon themselves the right and obligation of assuring open discussion, backed with evidence, of what goes out over the TV as news. Hence the establishment of NEWS ROOM. Hence the operation of publicly-accessible sites, not unlike public libraries, where telecast information is recorded and ready for review, analysis and attack.

The need here is not just one of free speech and free press, with all the press organs subject to review in an open field of competition and scrutiny. The need here is not just one of enforcing again the principles of John Milton's *Areopagitica*, a foundation of free thought, with both the right to debate, and the danger of being ridiculed in debate. The need here is also, more basically, one of opening up the Twentieth Century to critical re-evaluation, and of opening ourselves to the information required for survival in the Twenty-First—most acutely, information about the catastrophic decline of the global environment, and technologies able to reverse that decline.

Regardless of whether there is a warming trend, regardless of actual rates of ecological change, sweeping global changes must occur, quickly, in the extraction and combustion of natural resources. As the East-West paradigm collapses, a far greater danger to survival looms forth. It must promptly be met.

(1) Wild habitat, in forests, in oceans, on prairie, in marshes, must be restored, becoming part of the economic fabric, worldwide.

(2) Mineral fuels, such as oil, natural gas and uranium, must no longer be used, to be replaced by non-polluting energy sources, worldwide.

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No one disputes these facts. Absent now is mobilization of opinion towards worldwide restoration of wild habitat, notably in the tropics, and towards worldwide surrogation of mineral fuels by other energy sources, notably offshore. A new world has come upon us, a world in which the challenge is chiefly ourselves, in which we the human race must clean up our act or else, with no human enemy, not substantially, and with no scarce pie to cut up, not meaningfully, so that a new media must arise in response.

We offer NEWS ROOM. We offer a space in which all the tributaries of news feeds from sources around the world, including satellites surveilling the world, are gathered for presentation—for psychological onslaught on consciousness—in one ocean of information. We offer a space which replicates the world condition, the world status, and which allows people there to position any news story within a context of global political change and global ecological crisis.

At any time, many feeds arrive in the space. At any time, some of the feeds are selected and screened. At any time, some balance among the feeds, including archived material, is achieved, as if to reflect the world in a microcosm, as if to make the globe a theater. And, at any time, given the giant facing wall maps of the world with the geopolitical situation (i.e., property possession) on one side and the ecological situation (i.e., property degradation) on the other side, one can coalesce the incoming feeds towards the task of gradually aligning the political arrangements with ecological necessities. We speak of facilitating a transformation in the political fabric of the planet, towards a resolution of the ecological impasse.

Helmut Schmidt appeared recently on German television to declare that now, with the dissolution of the East-West blocs, there should be no tendency whatever towards any national unification. Rather, there should be a movement, spanning all of Europe, towards an "übernationen Lösung"—a solution that is beyond nations—which solves the ecological crisis. There should be a post-national mobilization to deal with the post-national, or pan-national, problems facing the species at large. The mobilization may be region by region, ecological zone by zone, but certainly not nation by nation.

NEWS ROOM is established towards achieving what Schmidt says is vital now.

It starts as two spaces in two continents, with a bridge of telecommunication and air transport in between, but it spreads therefrom among a galaxy of cities, worldwide, towards restructuring information and political paradigms so that a global ecology can be assured—with humans included, perhaps.

NEWS ROOM NEW YORK
212-941-0401

AMERICAN FINE ARTS COMPANY
13 JANUARY - 3 FEBRUARY 1990

NEWS ROOM AMSTERDAM
31-20-249919

MUSEUM FODOR
19 JANUARY - 4 FEBRUARY 1990

As legal aspects are worked out, and as new sites are set up—now envisioned, Wall Street New York, Tokyo, Rotterdam, Zurich, Paris, Cologne, Belgrade and Stockholm—there will be an information web for open political discussion in response to television as the key medium for political power today, each in a space, NEWS ROOM.