Den digitala konstens aktörer

En studie av datorintegrering i svensk konstundervisning
Fil.mag Lars Vipsjö

Akademisk avhandling för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen vid Göteborgs universitet kommer att offentligen försvaras i Lilla hörsalen, Humanisten, fredagen den 21 oktober 2005 kl. 10.15.

Abstract

Vipsjö, Lars, 2005. *Den digitala konstens aktörer. En studie av datorintegrering i svensk konstundervisning* (*Actors in the digital arts: A study of the integration of computers in Swedish art education*). With an English summary. Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Gothenburg Studies in Art and Architecture no 20, 314 sidor (pp), ill., Göteborg. ISBN 91-7346-543-7. ISSN 0348-4114.

The aim of this thesis is to study the establishment and development of two Swedish art education programmes that focus on digital technology. The first, *The Computer as Artistic Tool* ("Datorn som konstnärligt redskap"), was started in 1989 at the University of Skövde (Högskolan i Skövde), and the second, *Fine Arts and New Media* ("Fri konst och nya media"), was started in 1995 at the Valand School of Fine Arts (Konsthögskolan Valand) at Göteborg University. The study documents how the participating actors began to use computers in their artistic practice and the roles they adopted in disseminating knowledge about the new tool. The starting point is a paper about computer graphics that was written in 1983 in the *Teacher Training Program in Art Education* ("Bildlärarlinjen") at the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design (Konstfackskolan) in Stockholm by the artist and art teacher Veine Johansson. A follow-up of the actors and phenomena that Johansson mentions in his text yields a picture of a central player's early knowledge of the subject field and also of the international, mainly American, context and origin of computer graphics and early computer art.

The thesis includes a brief survey of the early Swedish context of this new artistic medium. During the 1960s and 1970s, computer artists normally worked together with engineers and researchers. This situation became more unusual after the arrival of personal computers in the 1980s. In 1988, Veine Johansson was engaged by the University of Skövde to design and teach a course entitled *The Computer as Artistic Tool*. The thesis describes how this course in graphic art developed into a three-year *Programme in Computer Art Education* ("Datorkonstprogrammet") before it was closed down in 1999. Prior to this, the courses in the programme had followed digital developments in a context in which interactive multimedia tools and especially the Internet became important ingredients.

The study shows that in the early 1990s there was a widespread need for education in artistic applications of computer technology that was not being met within the traditional art academies. The need was identified at grass-roots level, and a number of the artists who had taken the early courses in Skövde soon began teaching their own courses. For example, between 1991 and 1994 the artist Jim Berggren and his colleague Ann-Margret Olsson led a number of courses called *The Computer and the Fine Art Image* ("Dator och fri bild") under the auspices of the National Labour Market Board. Teachers and participants in these courses together started the associations The Computer as an Artists' Tool (Datorn som konstnärsverktyg) in Göteborg, and Artists and Computers (Konstnärer och datorer) in Malmö. During the mid-1990s these associations played an important role in the artistic digital infrastructure. In 1995, Jim Berggren's commitment to the courses he taught led to his being engaged by the Faculty of the Arts (Konstnärliga fakulteten) at Göteborg University as the presenter of a one-year course entitled *Fine Arts and New Media*. In 2002 this became a two-year course, and by 2005 it was referred to as *Context and Media*. Both in Skövde and in Göteborg, the early courses were aimed at practising artists, but later courses involved more basic education. The thesis reveals a generational difference in artists' approach to the computer medium. Whereas the early generation emphasized the computer as a tool to be applied primarily within artistic areas in which they were already established, the later, younger generation are not restricted by traditional fields and make more strategic use of digital communication media in connection with different kinds of artistic projects.

KEYWORDS: digital art, art education, art school, computer graphics, computer art, computer animation, 3d-animation, Internet art, Net art, interactive art, contemporary art, Swedish art

Lars Vipsjö, Department of Art History and Visual Studies, P.P. 200, SE-405 30 Göteborg