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Ginger Bombyx : life, death and mythology of a selfrepresentation

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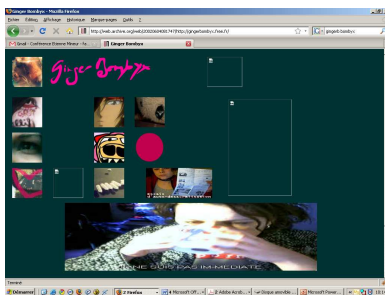
Ginger Bombyx : life, death and mythology of a selfrepresentation

Author: Fanny Georges

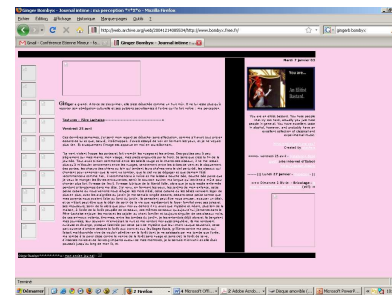
Ginger Bombyx is a character I originally created as a being totally different to me. I wanted to better understand the presentation of self on the web and especially to question the existence. How shall one exist online? How does one become an individual? Over the years, this character took an existential density. Then it fell into lethargy. From this lethargy, interpreted as a death, has slowly emerged a spiritual existence, as if the character has been stabilized in a transcendental mythology.

By giving a concrete shape to my idea in 2001, I started to create a networking identity, composed of a personal website and other linked websites consisting of text, pictures, sounds, and Flash animations. Their internet address was mentioned in every profile of Ginger Bombyx in instant messaging, webcam portals and networking websites. By interacting with other people through this internet device, Ginger Bombyx has become a visible, socialized and then *existing* entity. Many users sent her messages, interpreted her moods. Some of her interlocutors created a mirror site which was a plagiarism of the first diary of Ginger Bombyx. Thus, I could conclude that it was by reading the messages and by continuing the construction of its network identity that I gave her life, despite of the fact that something in her presentation was certainly meaning a certain staging which allowed her friendly plagiarism.

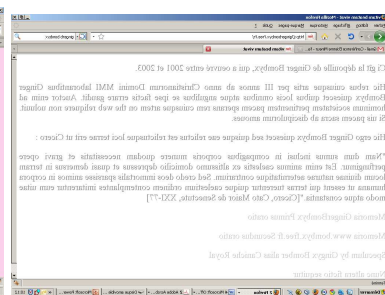
However, in this first phase of the experiment, I realized that on the web, existence is given by an acting behaviour. If the profile is not used, or if it is no longer updated, it no longer exists. During the period of its activity from 2001 to 2003, I observed that our identities were gradually and inexorably confusing in the flow of my gesture. The gesture to animate the representation is more significant than visual, sound or textual contents.



(1)



(2)



(3)

Homepage of the archives of the first (1) and second (2) websites of Ginger Bombyx, and actual funeral stele (3).

Today, a funeral stele has replaced the “living” homepages. The ancient personal websites are only available as web archives as a tribute to her memory. Over the years, these archives themselves are gradually disappearing. The Flash animations, pictures and hyperlinks are slowly disappearing. As if the web archives were unable to sustain a solid memory of the past.

The funeral stele is written in Latin. This ancient language gives her tribute an historical dimension that seems to mean a transcendence of her spirit over the storage medium. The text compares Ginger Bombyx to those souls who, once freed from their bodies, remain on earth to ensure the human kind and compensate its vanities by their temperance. Thus, the death of Ginger Bombyx gives secretly birth to a second hidden life. A discreet link on the page leads to a final diary in Latin in which Ginger Bombyx, as a pure spirit, expressed her questioning on the Platonic idea of beauty... the very idea that was the source of her birth.

Thus, in that form nor understood nor seen by many users, is she still present but does she no longer exist, as if she were a pure spirit of the web.

Hic ergo Ginger Bombyx quiescet.

Webography of relevant websites :

First diary of Ginger Bombyx, while she's becoming a woman, replaced by her funeral stele containing discreet links to web archives: <http://gingerbombyx.free.fr/>.

Second diary of Ginger Bombyx, where the author point of view is coming back to the source of her birth (my perception), replaced by a funeral stele which does not contain any link: <http://www.bombyx.free.fr>.

Textures : projection space next to Ginger Bombyx during the writing of her second diary : <http://gestation.free.fr/photographie/accueil.htm>

Moustachus poilus : diary taken the false appearance of an erotic website <http://moustachuspoilus.free.fr/>

Muses : exhibition website of Ginger Bombyx's Muse body: <http://www.muses.free.fr/>

Gestation: website exhibiting the gestation process of the work of the author : <http://gestation.free.fr>

Ginbyx Bomber : Mirror site of the first diary of Ginger Bombyx : <http://ginbyx.bomber.free.fr/>

Bibliography of papers about Ginger Bombyx by her author:

Georges, F. « Ginger Bombyx, l'hédonisme médiat de la spécularité ». In **Multimédia et information (MEI)**, n°20 : *Sexe et communication*. P. Froissart (direction). Paris : L'Harmattan, novembre 2004. 127-135. –162p. ISBN : 2-7475-7209-9.

Georges, F. « Ginger Bombyx : le théâtre de l'intimité ». In **Dossiers de l'Ingénierie Éducative**, supplément au n°45 *Publier en ligne aujourd'hui: dossier Écritures hypertextuelles*. Paris : Centre National de Documentation Pédagogique, décembre 2003. 68-70. – 80 p. Disponible sur : <http://www.cndp.fr>