

Abstract

The thesis investigates the phenomenon of new media in Czech art institutions in the 1990s. This work attempts to show how this difficult-to-define concept operated in this particular historically and geographically situated language game (using a concept developed by Ludwig Wittgenstein). The new media at the time were associated with vision of emancipation from ideologically burdened traditional media and the establishment of a new democratic society based on the Western type. The thesis is based on three case studies in which new media art penetrated first into the educational institution, and later it got through to a private institution with foreign support for exhibition programmes and for the general public, and finally in the late 90s new media art reached also a governmental organization. It is the foundation of New Media Studio at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, the Orbis Fictus exhibition organized by the Soros Centre for Contemporary Art, and the formation of the department of intermedia and new media at the National Gallery in Prague. Despite the fact that new media should be linked with the restoration of the country and society in the spirit of the Western model and its new vision, interactivity, use of new technologies and opposition to the traditional media had the media artists and theorists need to settle the new media art in Czechoslovak media history. The main media theorist, whose ideas about Czech technical picture artists working with new media referred to, was a Czech-born William Flusser. The exhibition Orbis Fictus was built on the aura created around Jan Amos Comenius. Remediation process thus proceeded very problematically. This fact still reflects the ambiguous concept of collections of new media at the National Gallery.