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A very widespread opinion held today in the field of art –and which fuels one of the most lively present day polemics – says that the art of the media, or more precisely, art through the media prevails in contemporary artistic practice to such an extent that it defines our times and triggers new narratives. Stated briefly, the consequences stemming from this fact are as much the change in the way in which art is conceived as well as in the way it imagines and communicates things.

The matter deserves the utmost attention, because if the eighties and the first half of the nineties of the twentieth century constituted an international expansion, under the criterion of "young art" –meaning vital, contemporary-, of a postconceptualism which revealed that the conceptual and minimalist lessons of the sixties and seventies had been assimilated, the events that unfolded in the artistic scenario at the end of the past century made it clear that, perhaps without art losing its postconceptual inclination, the technological means of producing images acquired during this period an unprecedented position. The 1997 DOCUMENTA X was the show that revealed signs of the new situation.

Even if one were to gather all reservations against the prediction that says that art in years to come will basically be done with the means designed by iconographic technology -reservations which in turn are based upon the knowledge that contemporary artistic creation feeds off the most varied cultural experiences and among them the type provided by the accumulation of means and procedures linked to crafts and particular Western traditions in fine arts-, the abundant presence of these new technologies in art demands, at the very least, an analysis of the state of contemporary art in its relationships and contacts with complex processes of contemporary culture, and more extensively, with the ways politics, economy and communication articulate on a global scale, this being the space where the sensitive and creative experience of contemporary man is constructed.

As things stand now there is little use in being complacent towards the permanent inscription of technological iconography in the field of art. This is an attitude which has already been overcome by the very same dynamic of the processes that have taken place during the twentieth century, which has satisfied the desire of those who wanted to turn the media into institutionalized instruments of artistic production: creators and critics from the highest avant-garde positions, people engaged in the dehierarchization of the arts. It is even less its concern to accuse art of having forgotten its previous history, centered on the pleasure of manual work, the exacerbation of the author's gesture and the idea of singular genius, of sacrificing its status as a sophisticated practice for the sake of the spectacular and trivially seductive "Hollywood style", of giving up its domain to technologies that weigh heavily in the mass culture industry: all this the remains of the "Baudelaire syndrome" which survives the artistic legitimation of the media. The matter, then, demands that the discursive structure in which art has been inscribed and the forces that work towards its amplification and modification be reconsidered, under today's circumstances, in which the conventions of artistic representation are problematized, the aesthetic centralization of artistic practice is knocked off balance and this uncovers new possibilities of subverting the alliances which interact with other cultural spheres. To explore the productivity of this last perspective will be the aim of later articles.

## Crossing Millenniums, The Art of The Media - Part I

Written by José Antonio Navarrete

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You can contact José Antonio Navarrete at: nava01@telcel.net.ve

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