Summary of
THE IMAGE-MAKING PICTURE ART PROCESS --
EXPLORING THE SOCIAL DIMENSION
(an art event)
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While such activity is, can, and does remain art for many, other artists feel impelled to investigate
looser modes and media, such as laser beam photography,
video and film, behaviorist phenomenology, the dance,
storywriting and telling. (Pincus-Witten, 1973)

The basic assumption is that every artist works in the present. The objects (Art) that he produces are lessons about the environment which he
wears like a mask. The artist through his mask, his art, his idiosyn­
cratic set of goggles, is very much a part of the present. The artifact
(Art) which the artist produces describes his world and, as a consequence, anticipates the future. Most artists are unaware of the critical role
they play (few would admit to a status that resembles that of a social
navigator). They, like most of us, do not think of the objects (art)
they produce as new information which has little or no prior existence.
They (the artists) are busy making their art, stirring up our perception
with their products, and all the while are equally amazed when contro­versy
occurs as the result of a new interest, a new concept, a new application,
or a new technology. They are social navigators simply because they are
in a better position to anticipate change because they are working in the
present -- that is what all artists do. The non-artists will have difficul­ty
with this idea because those persons are not involved in the present,
and have difficulty with any kind of new information. Coping with new
information is an unsettling experience because it never fits easily into
old categories.

One way of dealing with the problem, then, is to involve everyone
in the art-making process. Not the old art process, but the new art
process of the present. This proposal attempts precisely that kind of
experience. It is an art event which fits no previously well-defined cate­
gory. At the same time it places each participant clearly in an environ­
ment traditionally oriented to artist-to-artifact space, that is, the
picture plane. Most of the participants will sense this and rest comfort­fully with a procedure which is going to produce a picture, even a portrait
of the group interacting as "artists".

Procedures

The event requires a minimum of twenty participants and must be an
even number, 20, 22, 24 maximum. The participants are gathered in a room
with two SX-70 Polaroid Instant Film Cameras. Each participant will be
assigned a number by a random method of selection that determines the order
of interaction. Instructions will read as follows: Each participant
will photograph another participant (only one). Your number is the
order of procedure: #1 photographs #2, #2 photographs #1, etc..
Your number also determines the distance, subject to camera: #1 = 1
foot, #2 = 2 feet, #3 = 3 feet, and so forth. This automatically elimi­

ates any necessity for traditional picture-making value concepts;
figure-ground arrangements, value, saturation, illusory space, etc. In
other words, old information is not our concern. As the process continues,
the image system takes over: #1 takes the photo of #2, #2 takes the photo
of #1, and each passes the camera leap-frog fashion #1 to #3, and #2 to
#4, and #3 to #5, #4 to #6 until all twenty participants have taken each
other's photograph.

While this happens, a third person, the presentor as group leader,
will also document each encounter with a photograph. This purpose is to
provide external documentation as a kind of third eye - a profile of objec­
tivity. We conclude the art event by arranging the photographs in sequen­
tial order on a grid-like pattern upon the wall: twenty participants =
20 prints + 20 external images each quite different as to configuration.

Question: What do we look like as a group? What does the "portrait"
tell us about ourselves or, better still, what has the process (Art) which
produced the image contributed to our understanding of the present?
Spirited discussion is anticipated, and the lesson will be displayed as
new information about the PRESENT/FUTURE to be shared with the whole
conference.

References
Pincus-Witten, R. Theatre of the conceptual-autobiography and myth.