

Faces

Title	Faces
Subtitle	Not provided.
Lead-in / Abstract	<p>FACES is an international mailing list that connects women: activists, artists, critics, theoreticians, technicians, journalists, researchers, programmers, net workers, web designers and educators, all women who share an interest in the media and communication arts. FACES started informally, and has continued since 1997 as a voluntary list, using free services, and continues because of a real need for women to connect internationally. Many local lists have been inspired by FACES, and projects at festivals, exhibitions and symposia have been created by list subscribers.</p>
Participants and speakers	Huffman, Kathy Rae (GB / US)
Short biography of participants	<p>Kathy Rae Huffman is director of visual arts at Cornerhouse, Greater Manchester's centre of contemporary art and cinema, since 2002. She was formerly Director at Hull Time Based Arts, in East Yorkshire. Huffman is a curator and networker, and started FACES with a group of women around a dinner table in Vienna, in 1997.</p>
Full text	<p>FACES is an international mailing list that connects women: activists, artists, critics, theoreticians, technicians, journalists, researchers, programmers, net workers, web designers and educators, all women who share an interest in the media and communication arts.</p> <p>FACES is not a chat list, but a cyber-resource, a possibility for women to share their projects, exhibitions, critical opinions, and texts. Comments on important international issues, and subjects that all women encounter are posted. Requests for project participation, as well as deadlines for festivals, job opportunities, and funding are shared openly. FACES underscores Cyberfeminism by providing a base for individuals and groups to encounter and examine the theory and practice of women working in the communication arts around the world.</p> <p>The faces list began operation in the Spring of 1997, a pragmatic response to the needs of a small but growing number of women in media. Initiated after a series of discussions that took place on the margins of European media arts and media culture events, via email, and in the dimly lit corners of bars begged the question "Where are the women?" This constant question, and the desire to find out what women were doing with new media defined a gap in the existing structures and networks. Parallel to these discussions, the Face Settings project began to create informal settings that invited women to come to the table for a good meal and to discuss their work. It was the start to what would become an international network of women in media: artists, programmers, theorists, designers, curators, activists & djs, along with with an assortment of other digital workers.</p> <p>In the Autumn of 1996, the simple solution of setting up a mailing list was introduced at a Face Settings dinner in Vienna. Even back then, it was hardly a novel or innovative approach to existing technology - but it did mark a profound shift in the practice of a small number of women. These women were already seeking out "the rest of us", researching and following up on leads, gathering contacts to women and information about their work. The faces list would provide a space for exchanging all of those details within the existing minor network and also allow that network to be more inclusive, open up to new women in the field of media. Through faces, and the network behind it, that gap in media culture has partly been filled, the need to locate the women and to know what they do has partly been met.</p>

In the nearly seven years since its inception, through informal contacts and by word of mouth, the list has grown from 30 to 50 to nearly 400 women in 2002. The number is significant - not in terms of its mass, but in terms of its quality. The 300+ women represent an incredible body of work, knowledge and output in the field of media that is phenomenal. The faces list has grown into a potent network of women that work with all areas of new technology. While the list itself provides a certain frame, what takes place within that is up to the subscribers, who use it mainly as a channel to exchange information about projects, find collaborators, and discuss events. Perhaps the most beautiful and useful side effect is that it also works as an informal bed and breakfast for faces visiting different cities.

In keeping with the emphasis on network building, faces occasionally hosts informal get togethers, dinners, and open mic sessions parallel to various media events. These real life meetings offer a chance for some good old fashioned face to face, and generate a powerful female presence that highlights how many women actually do work in media. Meetings are often generated by list postings, of FACES travelling to new cities, of projects that require participation at festivals, exhibitions or academic symposia. Many long term working associations have been started by a simple email requesting information or assistance.

Of course, in the international context of media art and culture, the question remains "where are the women?" While faces can create a marginal platform for women, not much has changed in the main programs of most media arts and culture events in the past years - they still present very little of the work women do. For this, the events organized by several women's groups and networks in the broad "neighborhood" of media culture are deeply appreciated by many faces. Despite these positive steps, the kinds of questions that have inspired these many initiatives still beg to be asked. "What gaps remain unfilled?" "Where are the rest of the women?" "What are the issues that need to be addressed?" Perhaps most important question is what pragmatic response will fulfill the needs of a thriving community of interrelated networks of women actively working with media?

Since 2002 the Faces mailing list and website is hosted by servus.at, a non commercial cultural backbone in Linz, which was facilitated by Ushi Reiter. Vali Djordjevic, Kathy Rae Huffman, & Diana McCarty founded the list in 1997. Ushi Reiter joined the team in 2003.

In December 2003, thanks to a grant from the Austrian Bundeskanzleramt - Kunstsektion we are able to renew our website. We also formed an official Verein in Austria (a not for profit company) to allow us to fundraise and continue in a more organised manner.

At the moment we are working on the redesign - expect the new site sometime around April next year. During that time we will highlight some stuff that we find interesting in our new NEWS section. We took down the old pages as the link lists are terribly out of date, However if you still want to check something you can find them here. We are currently working with list subscribers to bring ideas forward for making the FACES list more useful and personal. In this spirit of community involvement, we hope to evolve a representative series of features that will be not only useful, but also easy to use for all. Feel free to contact us if you have ideas or suggestions at mods at faces-l.net

Related internet addresses

<http://www.faces-l.org>
<http://www.fibreulture.org>
<http://www.subtle.net/empyre>