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In Mexico we usually have access to second generation or older devices, and therefore it is a collective effort to keep them working as long as possible. We are great importers and consumers of counterfeit and piracy products, creating a breeding ground for hacking and recycling.

The production of art involving technologies reflects this particular context. There is a recurrent critical stance in the use of devices that in many occasions are transformed or employed in ways that subvert its original purpose. The social, political and economical circumstance of the country frequently derives in projects with social contents and a highly critical discourse. There are important efforts in Mexico, including institutions that specifically support the production of art and technology, grant programs and festivals. And many other entities either official or particular that without being their specialty, recursively insert in their programs such demonstrations.



Fig. 1: Opinion leader/video stills/fictionalized news



Fig. 2: SEFT-1/3D render/probe in exploration



Fig. 3: SEFT-1/website/www.seft1.net

Opinion Leader is a piece I produced commissioned by the Arte Alameda Laboratory (LAA) for the SINERGIA exhibition, under the curatorship of Karla Jasso in September 2008. That show was the result of a seminar whose central theme was the reform of the Energy Law; during those months the future of Mexican oil was discussed not only on the legislative level but also from the perspective of public opinion. The country was immersed in a media war in which the only thing clear was the struggle of special interests. The piece resulted on a study of the mass media, specifically televised news and its role in the creation of public opinion. It is an investigation of the employment of image as a tool for validating discourse. See: [www.ivanpuig.net/lider.html](http://www.ivanpuig.net/lider.html) [Fig. 1]

In a growing interest, some spaces traditionally devoted to modern and contemporary art are commissioning and displaying works of electronic and media art. Such is the case of the National Museum, MUNAL, which is now

co-producing with the Multimedia Center (CMM) among others, the project in which we are currently working, SEFT-1 (Manned Railway Exploration Probe), that is part of a curatorial project by José Luis Barrios and Daniel Garza-Usabiaga.

It is a trans-disciplinary project of art, for public diffusion, which proposes the exploration of railways in disuse as a point of departure for reflection and investigation; their historical relevance, their social implications, their current circumstances and contexts. It deals with spatial relations, knowledge, movement, experience, the memory and the roads in relation to tools and their obsolescence, two poles of the social experience of technology: utility and disuse. And the way that ideology of progress marks its historical time. It explores stretches of abandoned railways by means of a vehicle that can carry a crew of two Rail-nauts. The results of the SEFT-1 encounters will be constantly uploaded to the project's webpage, [www.seft.net](http://www.seft.net). Through its site, the public will be able to follow the exploration, monitor the state of the probe, its location. Routes will be traced on maps layering three important moments in the country history: early 19th century, early 20th century, and actuality. Along the journeys, materials gathered by the probe will be shared with people in passing-by settlements, so the experience works both ways and the probe becomes a story carrier. [Fig. 2] [Fig. 3]

I believe that art can participate in social transformation, with a real political power, and the use of technologies in the context of developing countries such as our, has a great discursive strength to generate critical thinking.