

The art of sabotaging online ads



Eleanor Harwood Gallery

"Moroccan Wall (Ourika Valley)," by Paul Wackers.

What could be a more satisfying Internet experience than a software application that strips all advertising from Web pages, replacing the ads with works of art? That's the promise of Addendum, a free Web browser extension available for Chrome, Firefox and Safari (you can find it for download at <http://addendum.kadist.org>).

Addendum is a project of the San Francisco- and Paris-based Kadist Foundation,

a remarkable organization that promotes advanced art (and critical thought surrounding such art). According to the website, it was produced by "a group of coders who want to take more control of our browser experience!"

I've been trying Addendum for a week or so, and I have to say that, while I'm excited by the potential, the

jury is still out on the app as a work of art. The current offering (Essay #2) is by the

two-person team **Rometti Costales** (a Frenchwoman, **Julia Rometti**, and Belarusian **Victor Cos-**

tales); it consists of enigmatic micro-montages that superimpose a spiky form on photographs of rock faces. It's harmless (though occa-

Desmarais continues on E6

**CHARLES
DESMARAIS**
Art

An artful way to screen out those ads

Desmarais from page E1

sional glitches obscure content one would like to see), but unreadable; a click leads to a 54-minute film describing modern challenges to Hopi culture.

Essay #1, which I did not experience as an app, may have been more resonant, in a politically abrasive way: The pictures, still viewable on the download page, comprised historical news photographs of home evictions during the period of the Glass-Steagall Act (1933-99). Let me know what you think of Essay #3, by Mexican artist **Pedro Reyes**, launching late this month.

On the road: Courtney Fink returned my call, she told me, from her car on Highway 101, heading south. The former executive director of the alternative gallery Southern Exposure, Fink reshaped the job of arts administrator into that of artists' advocate over her 13-year tenure, before announcing her departure in July. Now she is returning to her native Los Angeles.

She moved to San Francisco 21 years ago on a lark, after studying art and art history at Skidmore College in upstate New York. She stayed to work at Capp Street Project, an artists' residency program, and at California College of the Arts after it subsumed the project, before moving to SoEx in 2002.

She came to think of San Francisco as her second home — and to be thought of as a tough

and beloved, regional and national leader in the effort to empower artists outside the rarefied world of big-money, star-making galleries and mega museums. A founder and now co-director of Common Field, “a network connecting contemporary, experimental, noncommercial artist spaces and projects across the U.S. and beyond,” she will continue to oversee that organization's rapid expansion.

She is moving to be near family, but she also has concerns about the rapid changes Northern California faces. “I’m still convinced that there’s a ton of artists trying to make amazing things happen despite the challenges, and I sometimes think the challenges fuel that. ... People are always going to be trying to make their own opportunities — that’s the history of the Bay Area; the DIY spirit is always strong.”

And what of all the art activity here lately? “In the last six months or so,” she said, “I feel like there’s some excitement and some sparks and some national attention around the Bay Area art community, which makes me excited. But it also really worries me because that attention is directed at big institutions; it’s not really directed at artists. And so, the balance seems perpetually off. ... It’s not about art, it’s about artists, for me. Without artists, these institutions are meaningless.”

International attention: San Francisco

artist **Lynn Hershman Leeson** works, teaches and exhibits in the Bay Area. Born in Cleveland, she received her master of arts degree from San Francisco State University. Her first solo exhibition here, at the William Sawyer Gallery, took place in 1970; the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archives presented a retrospective with a nice catalog in 2005.

Now, the 75-year-old Hershman Leeson and her work are the subject of an exhaustive study: a 384-page, large-format book just released in the U.S. by the respected German art publisher Hatje Cantz Verlag. “Civic Radar” is a profusely illustrated tour through a career that has championed electronic art, performance, film and feminism; texts by a diverse range of authors run the gamut from an essay by the film theorist and critic **Ruby Rich**, to a conversation with Academy Award-winning documentary filmmaker **Laura Poitras**, to what must be called a love letter from actress **Tilda Swinton** (star of the artist’s 2002 dystopian science fiction reverie “Technolust”).

Pop-up: Jessica Silverman got a deal on a storefront temporarily available across the street from her main space, so Jessica Silverman Gallery South, at 495 Ellis St., was born. The first show, through June 18, is a “mini-retrospective” of bloody feminist (you’ll see what I mean) **Tammy Rae Carland**.



Constructing Roberta Breitmore

Lynn Hershman 1975

① Lighten with Dior eyestick light. ② “Peach Blush” Cheekcolor by Revlon. ③ Brown contour makeup by Coty. ④ Shape lips with brush, fill in with “Date Mate” scarlet. 5. Blond wig. ⑥ Ultra Blue eye-shadow by Max Factor. ⑦ Maybelline black liner top and bottom. ⑧ \$7.98 three piece dress. ⑨ Creme Beige liquid makeup by Artmatic.

Lynn Hershman Leeson

“Roberta’s Construction Chart 1” (1975), by Lynn Hershman Leeson.

Last chance: Eleanor Harwood Gallery doubled down on **Paul Wackers** with the current exhibition of his paintings, expanding into additional space at its Minnesota Street Project location. The

investment pays off: I just can’t shake his eye manglers (to coin a phrase equivalent to tongue twisters?), all tangled up in my mind. The full show is on view only through Saturday, though the part in the

temporary space will run an additional two weeks.

Charles Desmarais is The San Francisco Chronicle’s art critic. Email: cdesmarais@sfcchronicle.com Twitter: @Artguy1