

06.12.2013 - THE SPACE [8] - SEXY PRIMES

A project by Michael Pohl and Gisa Pantel.
Text by Joanna Turek.

Sexy Primes

Recently the space of the 'Department for everything else' takes on new dimensions. On one of the last Friday openings it has gained another, the virtual one. The SPACE is an online artist exhibition area, a project by Michael Pohl, who invites artists of all kinds to present their concepts and ideas in the code of the SPACE's website. This time the SPACE left the secure (?) Internet domain to present itself to a new audience, and it will do it regularly at the Ackerstraße 18.

As the audience of the Institutes' openings is highly multicultural, the introductory speech on December 6th was delivered in at least three languages. Because of the storms plaguing Europe, the author of the work called „Sexy primes”, Gisa Pantel, who lives and works in Copenhagen, didn't manage to appear at the opening. This however only opened another space - for interpretation. After a short introduction by Michael Pohl (and others) there was a time for an eternal question, how to cope with the Artwork. Topic being not easy to deal with, which is...mathematics, stimulated the imagination of visitors who just juggled with different readings of the work at the pace in which images displayed on the wall were changing. What we could see (and we still can on the SPACE project website) were the overlapping flashing numbers on the background picture of a statue of a woman. The work that could be perceived as chaotic has a hidden background in the form of the title prime numbers. A prime number is a natural number greater than 1 that has no positive divisors other than 1 and itself. The fundamental theorem of arithmetic establishes the central role of primes in number theory. Prime numbers give rise to various generalizations in other mathematical domains, mainly algebra, such as prime ideals. The earliest surviving records of the explicit study of prime numbers come from the ancient Greeks. Here we come to the woman in the background - the Greek form of representing the classical ideal of beauty. And the „Sexy primes” by Gisa Pantel are sexy, because they're unique, which is primes' distinguishing characteristic. Eventually, good that there was a bar space also, so the guests could take a break from the intellectual acrobatics. This exhibition was a challenge.