

FAQ

■■■■■ WHAT IS DOWNLOAD FINISHED? ■■■■■

The website **DOWNLOAD-FINISHED** transforms and re-publishes films from P2P networks and online archives. Found footage becomes the rough material for the transfiguration machine, which translates the underlying data structure of the films onto the surface of the screen. The original images dissolve into pixels, thus making the hidden data structure visible. Through **DOWNLOAD FINISHED**, file sharers become authors by re-interpreting their most beloved films.

■■■■■ WHAT HAPPENS IN THE INSTALLATION EXHIBITED AT THE CABARET VOLTAIRE? ■■■■■

The installation translates **DOWNLOAD FINISHED** from the web, where it is actually situated, into the exhibition space. Light bulbs represent the constant downloading of input materials, which, as soon as they are 100% downloaded, are transmogrified into a five-minute film. The downloading halts and the output is shown on the video projector.

■■■■■ WHY USE FOUND FOOTAGE? ■■■■■

Found footage is a filmmaking term which describes a method of compiling films partly or entirely of footage which has not been created by the filmmaker, and changing its meaning by placing it in a new context.

Found footage refers to the term *objet trouve* – found object – of art history. The *objet trouve*, introduced by Marcel Duchamp into the art world in 1917, continues to arouse media and public hostility, even though today it is an accepted practice in fine art. Through various further developments from Dada to Surrealist, Fluxus and Pop Art, the *objet trouve* or readymade continues to pose the question of what is art? And what makes it art?

The actual transformation process used in **DOWNLOAD FINISHED** also makes reference to the Cut-up technique and the Structural Film movement. Using the Cut-up technique, originally an aleatory literary technique in which a text is cut up at random and rearranged to create a new text, **DOWNLOAD FINISHED** transforms the data structure of the input footage to bring the material shape of the film to the surface. The material shape of the film becomes crucial, the content peripheral.

■■■ WHAT IS THE CHARACTERISTIC STRUCTURE OF P2P FILMS? ■■■

Before a film, originating either from a camera take or a DVD, is digitized and fed into a file sharing resource, it has undergone several transformations. It has been digitized, encoded and compressed, applying complex mathematical transformations to the original data. A film found in a filesharing network is the sum of [>1] the original film, [>2] the work of the mathematicians who laid the theoretical foundations for [>3] the programmers who designed the encoding software and the codec and [>4] the file sharer who finally uses all that software to intentionally make the [>5] film widely available. The processes behind [2] – [4] usually stay invisible, leading to the wrong assumption that [1] = [5]. **DOWNLOAD FINISHED** transforms [5] such, that the processes behind steps [2] – [4] become visible and show that films found in file sharing networks are actually collaborative works. The transformation process in **DOWNLOAD FINISHED** shows the collaborative effort behind the sharing of cultural contents and clearly shows that [1] ≠ [5].

■■■ HOW EXACTLY IS THE FOUND FOOTAGE INPUT TRANSMOGRIFIED? ■■■

For lossy video compression several techniques to save space are applied. The one **DOWNLOAD FINISHED** exploits is that of delta frames. Unlike the original film, an encoded film does not consist of 25 full images per second: The amount of full images is reduced to save space, and the parts in between full images (key frames) are calculated on the fly. The frames generated from the differences between key frames are called delta frames.

By simply deleting the key frames of a film the file data is transmogrified to reveal the nature of the found footage files as a collaborative work with a very complex data structure.

■ ARE THE PROCESSED FILMS MINE? ■

Yes. And for that matter: they belong to everyone else, as well. After processing, you are free to save your film (or anyone else's, for that matter) to a DVD, write a nice exposé and send it off to a filmfestival of your liking. Or cut the film up and insert parts into other filmworks. Make a music video. Extract stills. ■■■■■