Info About the Project

Dictionary of Online Behavior was started during TeYosh' master studies of design at Sandberg Institute, Amsterdam(NL) and was first published in 2014. It is an ever-growing project, changing and growing with the new tendencies on social media. In 2017 TeYosh redesigned the project's website and invited other artists as collaborators on the project.

The project was exhibited in two solo shows, in Parobrod Gallery (Belgrade, SRB) and in NEVERNEVERLAND (Amsterdam, NL). The latter was generously supported by Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst. Furthermore, the project was presented on many festivals and group exhibitions worldwide, such as Planet Hype exhibition in MOTI museum (Breda, NL), Postscreen Festival at Millennium Gallery (Lisbon, PT), FILEfest (São Paulo, BR), Athens Digital Art Festival/ADAF (Athens, GR) and at the galleries such as Eigen+Art Lab (Berlin, DE) and Bureau Europa (Maastricht, NL) among others.

The project consists of the website (dictionaryofonlinebehavior.com) which introduces new terms needed for communication in the world of social media. Each term is presented through explanation and suggestions for use, but is also illustrated through a format that is a symbol of digital culture - custom made gifs. The concept of Dictionary is also presented in a short movie available on the website and vimeo (https://vimeo.com/131928130).

Project Statement

When communicating people use all five senses, most of all, sight and hearing. Over ninety percent of all meaning is communicated nonverbally. But what signs and symptoms can we rely on when we don't see a person we are communicating with, as it happens in computer-mediated communication?

The use of electronic devices has to some extent changed the communication, but the appearance of social networks has created a new set of phenomena in communication, adding a layer to our relationships and, more widely, to the perception of the world around us. While communicating online people find themselves in entirely different situations and judge the behavior of others by new parameters. The online conditions ask for a new set of concepts and a different intuition we adopted in order to read and analyze internet-based communication. By defining and analyzing this newly emerged language we get a fresh perspective on our reality that consists both of offline and online lives intertwined.

The words in the Dictionary are ephemeral: they are sure to disappear with the changes in social media. But they are valuable for the very same reason: they describe a moment in history when the online relationships are still not a norm. At this point, we still know the dual meaning of a "friend" and differentiate online friends from the ones we shook hands with. Dictionary of Online Behavior describes a moment of time in which we live, a view from the perspective of the last generation that had a chance to grow up in the offline world and get to know the online world as

something "new", something "other". Dictionary of Online Behavior acts like the artifact of our time and a legacy to millennials' grandchildren.

A few more words on the project - Artist Statement

When we express ourselves in the online realm we are limited to the interface of social network that we're using. When communicating in offline life we get a lot more information besides the words being said. We conclude from voice, we react on gesture or mimics, but since social networks don't provide us with this kind of information our idea is to explore what would be the suitable substitute for body language in online life. In online life, we can click like, but we cannot literally feel it. So, what do we feel or think when we click like, what does it mean for us? Since social networks are quite limited in possibilities for expressing while humans are quite complex creatures, there has to be a space where all this human complexity is expressed while communicating online. Exactly that space is what we are aiming to explore. We, humans, attach meaning to a predefined interface structure so that every like does not have the same value.

Social networks have changed the way we treat the world around us. We know that people that we only meet once will stay our friends on Facebook for years and we'll be updated on their life details. With everyone being a few clicks away from us, the notion of a stranger is disappearing. Our urges have changed as well - we create a story of our life. Ordinary people have gained the audience to whom they present their lives on a regular basis. Dictionary of Online Behavior explores how social networks have changed the way we react to our everyday life and how they take part in our social and emotional life. By this project, we defined and designed terms that explain situations, actions, new habits, modes of expressions and social norms that users of social networks encounter daily.

We say for this project that it is multidisciplinary because it consists of three main aspects: socio-psychological aspect, linguistic aspect and of course design aspect. All three aspects were very challenging to work on and we approached the project from different perspectives.

The socio-psychological aspect was based on exploring human behaviors and various roles that we take in communication. Once we have a new term we have consultations with a sociologist, but also we were asking the reactions from people. Our focus group was mainly young Europeans. We made it part of our research because it was important for us not to describe our personal connections to the social networks but to define how other people behave in online conditions as well as how they perceive it. A lot of feedback that we got was extremely important part of the project.

From linguistic perspective we wanted terms to be words coined mostly from both non-digital and digital world. A perfect example is Thrillification, that combines "thrill", which is used mainly in offline language, while "notification" is a word very present in the online language. There are already many original expressions that have emerged from the use of social networks such as

"selfie" or "cyberbully" and that influenced the culture, changed human habits and inspired us to work on such a project. While defining we were discussing already existing words such as IRL. This is a popular abbreviation that stands for "in real life" and that we consider being wrongly defined because what we're trying to say with this work is that real life is both what we do online and offline. Online life is real life to the same extent as offline life is.

In a sense of design, we were inspired by pop culture and aesthetics of the internet. Sometimes it was difficult to illustrate the essence of the term because often the term represents just a sentiment. While aiming for aesthetics that combines the elements of the online world and offline world most animations became surreal.

When exhibiting the project in MOTI and NEVERNEVERLAND we physically made the desert scene from Dictionary of Online Behavior movie. The desert represents a place where time stands still. It provides a sense of infinity and timelessness, juxtaposed to the fast-changing hypes of social media. It is sort of a look from timeless perspective to a passing digital era, with the reference to Dalí's painting Dripping Clocks.

Many times we were asked what was our stand towards the changes that we are describing and whether this project is a support or a critique on contemporary phenomena in communication. The main motive to work on the Dictionary is to verbalize what we already know intuitively and to get a better insight of current world and how relationships develop in it. Some of the terms introduced are a criticism within their pure existence. Others are simply there to define the forms in which our emotional life has migrated from the offline to the online. By doing so, Dictionary of Online Behavior gives an insight into where our communication is going.

On Dictionary of Online Behavior (by Geert Lovink)

"How to visualize social media critique, that's the question of the TeYosh collective. The Frida Kahlo and Remedios Varo couple of our Instagram age developed a method to capture the internet hype by isolating virtual objects such as logos and interfaces in order to alienate them in a friendly, seductive way.

How do we capture a culture that emerges overnight and disappears at the same speed? Archiving is one answer, the other is transition into another terrain: a mimetic dance with content with the aim to lure meaning out of the smooth elements. Understanding social media is an immanent impossibility. We need to step back, outside, copy-paste the all too visual into a parallel realm, in order to get a new perspective.

TeYosh's *Dictionary of Online Behavior* is an example of an open artwork, as once defined by Umberto Eco. We all know that the Web is a river, a metaphor once introduced by Dave Winer. We users, sitting along the bank of the Web river, we watch the content flowing by—and add our bit. It is a never finished work. The fluid nature is a feature, not a bug. Eternal work on our common temporality, that's our *Kulturideal*. A work that's finished is considered outdated, obsolete. Much

like the wiki (the collaborative online editing software), the idea is to add, change, and delete entries.

TeYosh adds new entries to the multi-media database—one at a time, easily switching platforms, from television videos to websites, exhibits to photo sharing sites. Their strategy is neither moralistic nor documentary in nature, in the very centre of their operation is a retro form of pleasure, taking us back, from the crude manipulative Facebook newsfeed to strange 3-D encounters with the Anonymous Other in Second Life. We are invited to return to a renewed sense of freedom and possibility, going back from the real to the virtual.

The move from interactive navigation to a film and video work seems regressive. When art invites us to reflex, step back it evokes a nostalgic feeling. That's when resistance emerges: the romantic impulse that leads to anger, eager to find ways to start again—all wrapped up in 21st century interactive painting."

Geert Lovink,
Amsterdam, June 12, 2017