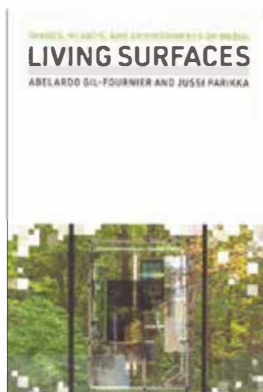


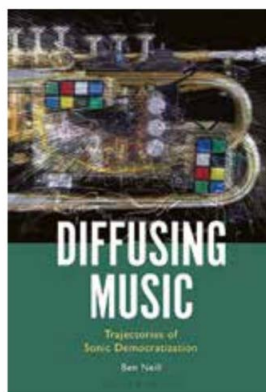
BOOK REVIEWS



A. Gil-Fournier and J. Parikka
Living Surfaces
The MIT Press — book
ISBN 978-0262547956

It is not only the comparison between the representation of land in the past and the present that should exclusively influence our awareness of the current ecological crisis, which is often presented as evidence in social media posts and memes. Although it exemplifies our perception of change over time, we would need a higher discourse to comprehend the intricate phenomena involved. *Living Surfaces* examines the Earth as a surface, a medial, ecological, thermal skin that we mostly perceive as an assemblage of images. The nature of these images is then examined as chemical, material, descriptive and practical, combining the interpretation of representation and materiality, for example 'visual agriculture' and 'operational photography'. It is a process that the two authors define as 'environmental imaging'; a process that intertwines all these different material and cultural aspects in a new, fascinating and inspiring synthesis. Gil-Fournier and Parikka have been working together for some time, merging theory and practice in texts and art installations. This includes the related *Lumi*, a video essay in which historical photographic datasets are organised through the lens of a fictional synthetic intelligence programmed to 'repaint landscapes' as part of a 'climate restoration initiative' - the perfect complement to this excellent book.

neural.it/76/001



Ben Neill
Diffusing Music
Bloomsbury Publishing — book
ISBN 978-8765109205

Some people are lucky enough to share their career path with people who, over time, prove to be pivotal in their respective fields. Ben Neill, in his long career as a musician and academic, has seamlessly combined his personal experimental practice while working with other important musicians (such as his mentor LaMonte Young), along with an abiding interest in the evolution of music as a cultural system. First and foremost, he is the inventor of the Mutantrumpet, a hybrid electro-acoustic instrument that fuses brass with electronic processing, while his performances have consistently pursued his passion for the evolution of music. This book is based on the parallel paths between his professional career, his encounters, and the various radical changes in music composition, production and distribution that he has experienced since the 1980s, while reflecting on those changes that have happened since the second half of the 20th century. It is a unique account that combines personal and universal perspectives, describing the path of the 'sonosphere' (a concept by Pauline Oliveros), from its break with the consolidated structure of the song and its execution to the 'superabundance' of the 100 million tracks available on Spotify, retracing these paths with relish and a consistent approach towards the near future of generative machines.

neural.it/76/002



CG-ARTS
Japan Media Arts Festival, 1997-2022
CG-ARTS — book
ISBN 978-4903474717

Within Japan, which still remains relatively inaccessible to the West, there has been a long-standing pronounced and outstanding tradition of the production of new media art. A few institutions have played a key role in this, and CG-ARTS was certainly one of them, organising the important Japan Media Arts Festival for 25 years, from 1997 until 2022. With a specific combination of categories ranging from early 'web' to music videos, animation, manga, entertainment and legitimate 'art', articulated differently over the years, it provided an essential cultural bridge, especially between European and Japanese art and technology production. The festival covered a crucial historical period that began with the consolidating role of the Internet in society until the beginning of AI. This comprehensive book of more than eight hundred pages is a luxurious encyclopedia of the festival, where every single award-winning project is presented with data, images and texts. Guided by a stylish and efficient graphic design, one can flip back and forth in time, finding references and surprises, but also a clear and consistent perspective that mixes a variety of ideas and techniques. Most of the well-known Japanese media artists are represented here, as well as an elite group of Western artists, offering a truly unique cross-section of the field.

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