

> ArtFacts Cloud

Søren Thilo Funder & |Toke Lykkeberg

Based on data from [ArtFacts](#)

Computer images: *Christian Jacquemin*

Voice: *Line Ellegaard*

Project web site: [The art world on display at the Copenhagen art fair 2010](#)

Project video: [Cloud Video](#)



ArtFacts Cloud présenté à Copenhagen Art Fair 2011

The art world on display at the art fair (15.9.2010)

Article copied from [ArtFacts Web Site](#)

At the exhibition "Right where" fairgoers can view the world's 10.000 highest ranked artists through 3D-glasses. Here you will be informed about artists and art. But is the project also art in itself?

By: **Line Ellegaard**

Cloud is a collaborative project between artist Søren Thilo Funder, French researcher Christian Jacquemin, and you, Toke Lykkeberg, curator and director of the artist-run space IMO in Copenhagen. Where did the idea of Cloud come from?

When IMO was invited to curate State of the Art we thought - at an art fair jam-packed with art - what can one show that is somewhat different? Our first idea was to show something, which was not art. The artists AVPD and Ferdinand Ahm Krag suggested scientific visualisation-models, which look like abstract art though it's not. Shortly afterwards I met up in Paris with the computer scientist Christian Jacquemin from the national centre of scientific research, CNRS. He immediately understood our interest in scientific use of imagery and gave me a crash course in so-called 3D visualisation. Christian and I agreed to work on something very complex - that is the art world. We soon agreed that this project wasn't just scientific, but also immensely concerned with aesthetics. So we asked an artist to join us, namely Søren.

The data, which your visualisation of the art world is based on, is taken from Artfacts.net, an enormous database with over a quarter of a million artist biographies. Most people know Artfacts because of their ranking of all these artists. But one can also find info about who has shown where, with whom and much more. Why did you choose to use Artfacts?

Artfacts is very interesting for several reasons. But not only that: it seems still harder to ignore. Although many people in the art world distance themselves from this idea of a ranking system, I think most artists know more or less where in the ranking they belong. Artfacts is not only an observatory of the art world. It is also a lighthouse. Artists, curators, collectors and so on orientate themselves through that website. Artfacts is also shaping the system that informs it.

Which data have you chosen to focus on and why?

In Cloud the 10.000 highest ranked artists have been plotted into a three-dimensional coordinate system. Through the 3D-glasses one can see three axes that shows the artists' age, their success on the market and their institutional success exhibitionwise. Furthermore we highlight gender and geographical origin. When all this information is shown together these categories interdependence becomes clear. One can see how long-dead American or European male artists like Andy Warhol, Pablo Picasso and Bruce Nauman are doing really well compared to for example living African women. These patterns appear banal and scientifically sound, yet at the same time Cloud can seem bewildering and confusing for most. We hop to show how a database like Artfacts can be equally enlightening and obscure. We could have presented the art world as simple as the weather in the weather forecast. Instead we have a voice-over which explains viewers what they are looking in a, at times, groping, questioning and abstract manner.

What can you explain about the voice-over in Cloud?

Søren had the idea that the voice-over should be a sober and poetic data-voice like the one in Godard's film Alphaville. We thought the reference was fun. Alphaville is set in a futuristic city but shot in Paris in 1965. The future in the film is thus also the contemporary city of 1965. It's the same with Cloud. The data-voice is speaking in past tense about a highly curious and by-gone art system, which the audience is simultaneously right in the midst here at the art fair.

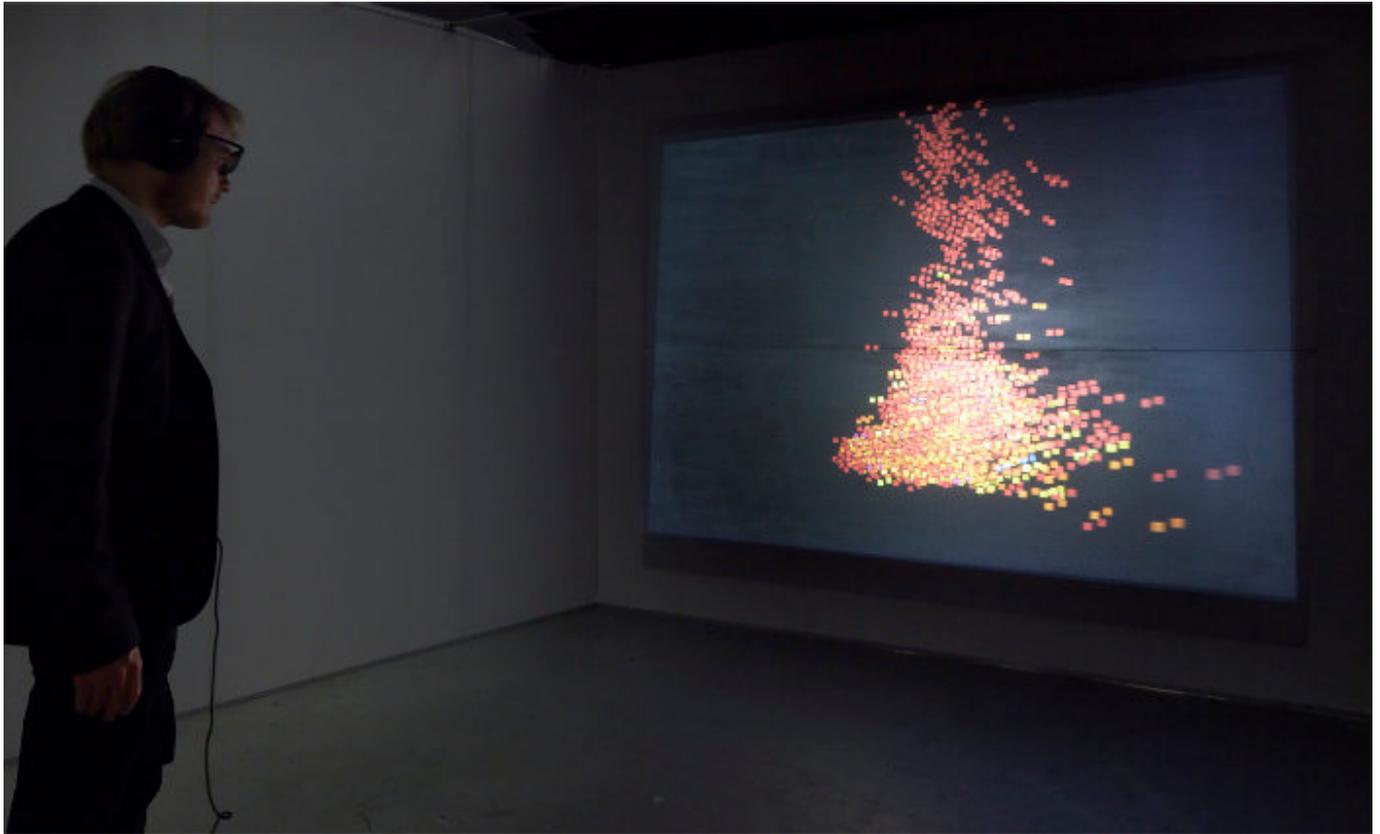
How would you describe Cloud - is it a project about art or an artwork in its own right?

A lot of art today is concerned with itself. That is partly because art is going through a sort of an identity crisis: Who am I? Well, I don't know, but it's a question that we are very preoccupied with at

IMO. But hopefully, Cloud is not only about art. Perhaps you could as well have asked me whether Cloud is science or about science.

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