Ryder Ripps' interest in social-networking-ethnography-as-conceptual-comedy (see also his project "The Sound of Facebook") dovetailed into the creation of his own social networking environment *Dump.fm*, which started as a New York-based project for gif artists, but which has expanded to such an extent that he has, ironically or not, considered an IPO. [95]

Dump.fm, a continuous stream of user-created or repurposed web junk, is based on the premise of "talking with images": one can, for example, take the url of one participant's post, and immediately splice it with another url, with an eye to immediate commerce with images, the surprise combination, or the visual pun, rather than image-authorship strictly conceived. It is isomorphic with Flarf, in that the hastily recontextualized and modified gifs and jpgs, exchanged in a real-time semianonymous community, tend towards the cute, the cloying, the un-P.C., the "not O.K." [96] Yet because it is a free-floating environment, rather than a stand-alone net art "object," it has developed in ways that complexify any notion of coherent approaches and specific ontological properties, accommodating methods and uses that do not fit under the rubric of a manifesto.

One can, however, map out a few dominant "artistic" approaches to the site. The distinct properties of found gifs—they loop, they are short, they are lo-memory, they are lo-res, they have no sound, they are embedded in web page or browsers—generate a variety of overlapping modes that are familiar to media and art historians. There is a predominant amount of gestural analysis enabled by the frenetic repetition of the form—an effect popularized by Dara Birnbaum's feminist scratch video, albeit here in less P.C. modes. The fallout of the democratic proliferation of these techniques is that these repetitions, while still showing up both the automatisms of cultural performance and its unconscious, are no longer an experiment in political consciousness-raising or media literacy. (Compare Birnbaum's *Technology Transformation*, for example, to remixing gifs of out of control African-American women in the audience of one of Oprah's potlatch giveaways.) There is a large contingency of gifs and jpgs that explore glitch, data error, and other self-conscious media interventions. Many times, these are the types of gifs that are considered "works of art," such as Petra Cortright's "Hands1" [97] (who is not a Dump participant) or the work of mirrrroring (who is). There are instances of conceptual archive animations and art history remediations (there's a great reconstitution of Ernie Gehr's *Serene Velocity* by FAUXreal, [98] utilizing only available digital thumbnail stills from the experimental film's web mentions), digital baroque remix-scapes (harem-discos with all your favorite gifs in one frame), and meme-riffing (the

most well-known of which from *Dump.fm* is the "Deal with It" meme, for which they provide a "Deal with It Maker.") These modes, of course, mix and interpenetrate (blingscience's Blingee repurposings somehow find the secret tunnel between kitsch and absolute art; they are sparkly yet austere in their sparkle-constraint). In addition, because one can easily add and recombine various forms of glitter text, image-text, and plain chat, there is, in the word-images of starsalmon, the possibility of "epic trash new media text poetry but then fug da police," reconstituted like a ransom letter from a glam punk alien. [99]

Dump users have not, as of yet, held out open arms to the more pretentious trend of cinemagraph gifs, which basically seem like a fine arts reaction to the cheap anti-aesthetic of net art. While their emergence points to a rising consciousness of the importance of small-form, non-narrative cinematic effects to the liveliness of the Internet, the cinemagraph currently consists almost exclusively of tasteful tableaux, shot with expensive SLR cameras, dotted with fashion models, high living in tony environs, and other signifiers of conspicuous consumption. Revolution of revolutions, these meticulously composed stills suddenly exhibit motion! The images of pretty girls with uncannily moving hair were tiring from the get-go. That *Dump* users will not suffer such ponciness is testament to some overriding consciousness, a tacit agreement to valorize the unvaluable. Or it could be solely an issue of bandwidth restriction—memory limitations creating aesthetic boundaries when the medium does not. Or, perhaps, Dump users would welcome cinemagraphs to their digital village if the cinemagraph did not come out shooting with glocks and Gucci, proclaiming its superiority over the animated gif, thus forging a dubious distinction between gifs and cinemagraphs that will no doubt be boringly policed in the future, if they last that long.

Nevertheless, in their embrace of real-time, spontaneous discourse with digital junk, *Dump.fm* users espouse an ambiguous relation to the enforced scarcities of the art world. On the one hand, because *Dump.fm* values spontaneous participation but also because, for better or for worse, it much of the time gets taken over as a teenage chat rumpus room, there is little patience with work that attempts to be too crafty, or that doesn't deal with bottom-barrel internet grotesques for freak-show gawking, or that seems to come from anyone over twenty with any art world cred. One racks up more "likes" in the dump rating system if the dump is a quick turn-over of another dump, rather than something painstakingly composed in Photoshop or AfterEffects: more cred for projectile than for project. There's a whole "genre" of dump participant who rarely, if

ever, composes or recomposes images, but instead merely posts asignifying snaps from his or her webcam, [100] exerting casual presence as a dump star, as if trying to win the slow bicycle race of artistic inactivity and unambition.

Because however casual and artless these dumps seem, many of these young participants are aware of the "insane game" of art, and ride that ever so elusive line between anonymity and non-art art, real failure and Warholian passive celebrity. The site is, albeit ambiguously, overtly attached to the art world, and there is a marked sense that many of the participants keep an eye out for potential curator-lurkers or perform for the benefit of participating *éminence grises* like Tom Moody or Ripps himself (who is all of twenty-five years old). Not for nothing has Marina Abramovich's face from her live installation "The Artist is Present" been a predominant dump meme. Perhaps, she is popular for the same reason Yves Klein became a subject for the shockumentary *Mondo Cane*: a sort of provincial "wtf" fascination with art world decadence. Or, it is a clear homage to a mother figure who simply made art out of her own presence. Dumper glasspopcorn, at fifteen years old, has gone from posting web cam picks and complaining about unrequited love and school problems to singing "avant-garde hiphop" at PS1 MoMA, an event covered by CBS. Yet, the most energy he seems to have put into a dump is taking off his shirt while demurely hiding behind a handful of graphing calculators. [101]

However, the sheer volume of his posts, and time spent on the site should have some value, and in fact, that may be where the value lies, even though the lingering ageism of the site would seem to contradict this notion that duration means something. Yet if the banal continuity of webcam Marina-wanna-bes is any key, there is the sense that hidden behind the frenetic twenty-four hour activity of this site, where you can actually feel like you've seen every image there is to see on the web, is the static image of one's unique presence in the process of transvaluation, becoming the coin of the realm. The self forms a core of authenticity within the remixing machine at the same time that it is without value, dump degree zero. By reaching out to glasspopcorn, Ripps has anointed him as the ideal user, and why not? He is outside of the system, not perverted by adulthood; he has to cope with the intolerable situation of growing up digital, but at the same time represents untapped amorphous potential for digital capital, broadly conceived. He belongs to a generation who, because of the faults of their elders, are always-already failed projects, and so the only alternative is to dump oneself. As glasspopcorn wrote in an October 25, 2010 post, using a form traditionally recognized as "poetry" (but which turns out to be a poem from another dump user, unattributed *naturally*):

i have maintained a general level of
chill since 1987
it was not easy
along the way some
pretty fucked up shit has
happened. But you know
what motherfucker?
you gotta just pull through
that shit, put on your
wrap-around oakleys and make it
rain dollars and family values. [102]

95 Since writing this sentence, Ripps has completely reversed direction. Instead of transforming his site into an aggressively promoted social networking environment, he has instead blocked new users from participating in what he is now calling "an elite real-time image chat community," with early adopters grandfathered in as V.I.P.s.

96 It is worth noting the oftentimes forgotten transcultural origins of these flarfy tendencies, such as in the Asian notion of kuso or kuso-ge (literally "shitty-games").

97 Petra Cortright, http://www.petracortright.com/animated_gifs/hands1.gif.

98 FAUXreal, http://dump.fm/images/20110517/1305682557663-dumpfm-FAUXreal-ErnieGehr-SereneVelocity.gif, *Dump.fm*, web.

99 See http://dump.fm/p/starsalmon/4225029

100 Like the chat function, the webcam functions as a territorializing machine within this more deterritorialized space. That is, the webcam has an indexical function—the presence of the person behind the camera cannot easily be faked; and because no one looks over twenty-one, the frequent use of webcam stills forces unstated rules about who can participate and how. Similarly, the use or overuse of the chat function—sometimes overriding the site's *raison d'être* of "talking with images" for long stretches of time—tends to create boundaries, subgroups, and rivalries that would not be as evident or easy to maintain if the commerce were merely with recycled web-junk.

101 Compare, for example, pepper's more complex self- presencing as he sabotages his own *American Idol* audition, in a way that becomes an inside joke for dump users. Images of pepper reacting to a scolding from the slutty sub-celebrity judges proliferate in the image stream, referencing a video in another internet environment, and turning pepper's conceptual parody into a multisite meme. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jyg_Z9QuFwE

102 Erik Stinson, "I Have Maintained a General Level of Chill Since 1987," web, October 19, 2010, http://erikstinson.tumblr.com/