

Welcome to the balcony.

The balcony is outside, is on the street in the open air. It is a platform. It's an idea, sometimes hard to reach, it is generous, it is there to give you more options, to make you feel free. A veranda above ground, a place for a breath of fresh air. The balcony is both public and private. It is a space and a movement at the same time. You can be seen or remain unnoticed. You are welcome on the balcony, to escape the warm enclosure of the social web, to address, to talk to the people outside your algorithm bubble. You will not get arrested on the balcony, you can choose to be anonymous on the balcony. The balcony is a gallery, balustrade, porch and stoop, it is outside and inside. The balcony is part of the Ecuadorian embassy, it is within the context of the internet. Online AND offline, AFK, IRL, BRB and TTYS. The balcony is the the Piratebay announcing to keep up their services by way of drones. Balcony is IRC and BYOB, balcony is Speedshows, online performances, Telecomix, Occupy and even Google automated cars. The balcony-scene creates community instead of commodity. Nothing is to be taken seriously. Every win fails eventually. The Balcony scene is proud of the internet, and what was built with pun, fun, wires, solder, thoughts and visions of equality. Nothing is sacred. The balcony is lit by screens, fueled by open networks, and strengthened by retweets. On the balcony the ambitions are high, identities can be copied, and reality manipulated. Hopes are given and inspiration created, initiative promoted and development developed. The balcony is a soapbox in the park. The balcony is connected. The balcony is connecting. You do not have to be afraid on the balcony, we are behind you, we are the masses, you can feel the warmth from the inside. Speak on the balcony, free from the storefront, free from the single white space, but leaning into people's offices, bedrooms and coffee tables, leaning into everywhere, clouds that say I. Contemporary art that rediscovered its freedom through the reminders of lost freedom on the internet. Orz to net.art, fluxus, conceptual and performance art. Art with too much theory is Auditorium, and kitsch is living room. Inspired by homebrew technologies and communication on open networks, creating art in the spirit of the internet, resisting territories, be it institutional and commercial art hierarchies or commercial information hierarchies. Heading from the internet to the balcony that is everywhere. The pool is always closed.

Written on the way to the balcony, August 2012

by  
Constant Dullaart

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Creative Commons 3.0;  
contact: [constantdullaart@constantdullaart.com](mailto:constantdullaart@constantdullaart.com);

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## Glossary:

*Ecuadorian embassy* – referring to Julian Assange who, on August 19th, 2012, and again on December 21st, 2012, read a speech to the public and the global media from its balcony. Ecuador grants him asylum, but the police would arrest him once he puts a foot outside the building; the balcony was thus leaning into a *disputed form of public space* in personal, legal and media-related dimensions simultaneously

*AFK* – Internet slang: *away from keyboard*

*IRC* – Internet relay chat, old name of a typed online dialog

*BRB* - internet slang: (I will) *be right back*

*TTYL* -internet slang: *talk to you soon*

*IRL* – internet slang: *in real life*

*BYOB* – *Build your own blocks*, programming language for children, also: bring your own bottle; slang for a self-organizing party

*Telecomix* - activist hackers building autonomous internet facilities to help e.g. Syrian opponents

*Speedshows* – Exhibition concept for net art: hit an internet café, rent all the computers they have and run a show on them for one night. -> <http://speedshow.net/>

*ORZ to ...* – *posture emoticon* from China, or: *kautau*, or “banging your head”; it is an image of a kneeling person in three letters: the head is this O, the arms and shoulders are this r, the hips and kneeling are this Z (or: 2); put together it makes an image: Orz , in German language: “kotau machen”; ORZ has an ambivalent meaning, quote: “This stick figure represents failure and despair. It is also commonly used for representing a great admiration,- sometimes with an overtone of sarcasm -, for someone else's view or action.” (wikipedia)