



1997

Rhizome Internet

By Lila Sneed

Based on the root-like subterranean stem it's named after, Rhizome Internet has given new media artists an opportunity to bring their work up from the underground and branch out into a broader public forum.

Artist Mark Tribe recognized that in order for this innovative form of expression to push its way into the forefront of contemporary art, there must be a platform of meaningful communication among its creators. In February of 1996, he launched Rhizome, an online gathering of artists, authors, designers, programmers, musicians, curators, critics and groupies from all over the world.

"A forum for the exchange of ideas is crucial if new media art is to emerge out of its current boom as a significant contribution to the broader concerns of contemporary art," reads the Rhizome mission statement. "Such a forum will also help bring the ideas generated within the relatively rarefied world of new media art to a broader public."

New media has introduced a different dimension to the creative world. As curators and critics grapple with how to accommodate it, the Rhizome community and other related Websites are providing artists an opportunity to communicate and network with other pioneers in the field. Along with The Thing and ArtNetWeb (which, along with ada'web, Firefly, and the FDC is in an "information-sharing" partnership with Rhizome), Rhizome is one of the few sites able to provide comprehensive information and critical writing. Through its mailing list, Rhizome Raw, hundreds of subscribers discuss ideas about projects and spread the word on upcoming events. Rhizome Digest is a filtered selection of these



Rhizome has become a flourishing online art community under the watchful keyboard of founder Mark Tribe.

messages and other information, compiled weekly to provide listings, reviews and announcements for subscribers.

Roughly eight people regularly contribute content and design to the site. As chief creative officer, Tribe is responsible for Rhizome's operations and design. A graduate of Brown University's Visual Art program, he dabbles in several media, from video to virtual reality. Managing Editor Kenseth Armstead's work has been featured internationally as well as in the Whitney Museum of Art. Providing business sense to the group is cofounder Garnet Heraman, who was the marketing and business development manager at Winstar New Media, a film and Internet content provider.

"Rhizome and our new service will be one of the strongest brands among new media artists, designers and developers." — Mark Tribe, founder/creative director

Despite their efforts, Rhizome has so far remained virtually revenueless. Tribe hopes to change this situation with the launch in coming months of a new transaction-based service (name as yet unannounced) that will give subscribers access to licensable art, production tools, and talent — for a fee, of course.

"Rhizome and our new service will be one of the strongest brands among new media artists, designers and developers," Tribe says. And maybe it will be the first to make money. ●

Rhizome Internet
 Webpage address: www.rhizome.com
 Business Type: Web Community
 Phone: 212-406-8714
 Fax: 212-406-1399
 Address: 368 Broadway, Suite 403, NYC
 Date Company Founded: February, 1996
 Number of Employees: Eight
 Estimated 1996 Revenue: N/A
 Projected 1997 Revenue: N/A
 Founders: Mark Tribe, creative director (mark@rhizome.com)