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**Miltos Manetas**

1998

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It started in Milan -for me- in 1994. Then in New York in 1998.

In 94 I got married- sooner or later we all did- to laptops and in 98 with the internet.

Married? If that's the case, a divorce would be possible. Indeed recently, most of us left the 94 laptop-wife for a smart-phone lover. But internet is here to stay. More than our spouse, the internet is our kid, the child we have with... hardware.

We try hard to forget this unappealing fact. The Gospel of the "network" speaks to us about wireless, data clouds, connected magic.

In 1998 - the year that GOOGLE was founded- our Odyssey of fingers begun. We used to touch computers through their mouse, then through their little pussy (touchpad), now we are shamelessly touching the screens of our tablets. Our eyes are hooked but our mind escapes through our fingers. All that would NOT be possible if some kind of "skin-of-reality" was not involved. That's exactly where oil on canvas meets the eye: on the depiction of that skin...

Interesting isn't it? Because to be sure that something exists, a Painter needs to represent it.

In some way, the World was already wireless when in 1998, I decided to start painting its cables! 1998 was the year the "theatre of reality" was hiring new actors and I tried to introduce them all: videogame gear, external hard drives, joysticks and digital cameras. All that was already around but it was in 1998 that everybody acknowledge living among them. But something else- very important - start happening in 1998. "Real" space start multiplying... We began register dotcom/dotnet/dotorg... Words never felt so fascinating! Even our own name became a better name (on May 25th, 1998 I registered Manetas.com). Art.com and Love.com were also registered that year while War and Sex were already a dotcom from 1995. It was from 1998 we all started becoming Citizens of the Internet and if today there's an Internet Pavilion to represent our art at the Venice Biennial, it is because of the spirit of 1998.

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