

## **Introduction to the first electronic edition** ***Low Power Society***

*How to improve the world: you will only make things  
worse.*

*John Cage*

In the spring of 2003 I walked near the lake Maggiore, in Locarno, Switzerland, together with [Giorgio Alberti](#) – since many years a good friend.

[René Berger](#) had introduced us in the 1980s. Then, we all were involved in the celebrated *Locarno Video Art* and *Electronic Art Festivals*,

directed by Rinaldo Bianda, René Berger and Lorenzo Bianda. Many people, like Nan June Paik, Steina and Woody Vasulka, Bill Viola, Edgar Morin, Tim Berners-Lee, Pierre Levy, Francis Ford Coppola, Basarab Nicolescu, Joseph Brenner, Francesco Mariotti among others were present in those amazing festivals, whose also included lectures and debates on art, science and philosophy.

It was late afternoon, bright deep blue in 2003 and I peacefully walked with Giorgio Alberti, a PhD on informatics, MBA at Fontainebleau's INSEAD, former successful manager who became contemporary art collector and specialist on art and alchemy.

He was fascinated with studies that showed the modernity of John Kenneth Galbraith's thoughts, with whom he personally met some years before. «Today, everything is easy for children and teenagers. They have, almost automatically, computers, cellular phones, CD and DVD players, and almost unlimited quantity of software, music

or movies. Everything became fast and automatic. When these children will grow up our world will be profoundly changed. There is no longer the old idea of personal effort to reach something. Everything turns around low price. We created a *low price society!*».

He was right. After that moment, in the next five years, I developed this project, which is dedicated to Giorgio Alberti.

In 2006, we were together at the art and science International Meeting [\*The Spirit of Discovery\*](#), in Trancoso, a small and wonderful medieval city in Northern Portugal, where I had created the [\*Arts, Sciences and Technology Foundation – Observatory\*](#). In that Meeting also participated the philosopher and scientist Joseph Brenner, from the United States; the genial [\*Roy Ascott\*](#), from England, who is one of the most important artists and philosophers of the cyberspace all over the planet; Alex Adriaansens, founder of the legendary contemporary art nucleus

[V2 Organization](#) in Rotterdam, the Netherlands; Gyorgy Darvas, crystallographer and science historian, from Hungary; the architect [Marcos Novak](#), creator of the concept of *liquid spaces*; the Portuguese architect Gonçalo Furtado; the American conceptual artist [Dove Bradshaw](#); the Swiss Peruvian artist Francesco Mariotti; the Polish artist Monika Weiss and the Portuguese writer and artist António Cerveira Pinto.

In that Meeting Giorgio Alberti presented a lecture titled *Amores-Eros & Low Power Society*, which later was published in the *Technoetic Arts* in which I was the guest editor.

In one of the first evenings, we all were together for dinner on a large round table and started a brainstorm about Giorgio Alberti's ideas and the concept about a *Low Power Society* was born.

In the beginning of the next year, Giorgio Alberti made an International Meeting at the Monte Verita Foundation, in Ascona, Locarno, Switzerland, which turned around the ideas that founded the *Low Power Society* concept. That Meeting was titled *The End of a Belief, Towards an Era of Underdevelopment*.

In 2007, again in the same city, and once again during the art and science International Meeting [\*The Spirit of Discovery\*](#), also organized by the *Arts, Sciences and Technology Foundation – Observatory*, we continued our reflection about the concept, this time generating work and discussion groups. My lecture, then, was titled *Low Power Society* and it was the base of this book.

In that year, beyond Giorgio Alberti and I, other people were present: again Roy Ascott and Joseph Brenner – who also presented a lecture, very interesting, about the subject: *Transdisciplinarity, Logic and the Low Power Society*; the Spanish philosopher Carmen Pardo;

the Spanish philosopher and neurologist Pedro Marijuan; again the Portuguese philosopher and writer Antonio Cerveira Pinto; the Italian musician Leonello Tarabella; again the American artist Dove Bradshaw; Jay Kappraff, mathematician of the *New Jersey Institute of Technology*; the artist, also American, Rosemarie Castoro; and the celebrated English violoncellist Audrey Riley.

In those Meetings, René Berger was always present, participating from Lausanne, Switzerland, through electronic systems.

In the next year, in 2008, Giorgio Alberti organized an International Meeting especially dedicated to the subject, again at the *Monte Verita Foundation*, in Switzerland.

In that same year, 2008, in New York City, the plastic artist [Marcia Grostein](#) was wondered with the concept and appeared the idea to make a great exhibition unveiling questions that conventionally have been considered as exclusively pertaining to

economy or sociology but that in fact are esthetical ones. René Berger had already made it at the *World Economic Forum*, in Davos, in the 1990s, even if not specifically on a *Low Power Society*.

Nina Colosi, creator of the [Streaming Museum](#) in New York, quickly and enthusiastically embraced the idea. Soon, Paul Goldberg – who beyond expert on financial systems also is a recognized jazz musician – became the producer for a future contemporary art exhibition about the subject.

This is a brief history about how the *Low Power Society* concept was born. In the end of the book there is a timeline of the events that determined the concept until now.

When I finished the book, I received the sad news that Daniel Charles – a kind friend, great and generous philosopher who I always profoundly admired – had passed away. Even if he was not directly involved with the original project, I decided

to also dedicate this work to his memory. Giorgio Alberti is the true father of the concept.

The book is divided, without precise boundaries, in two parts – a first one more oriented to philosophical questions; and, then, a part more dedicated to the concrete world. Everything fluctuating in a flux, with no chapters or departments.

Images in books are more frequently placed on left pages and the text on the right ones – because our left cerebral hemisphere, more oriented to literature, covers more the right visual field. Here, that tendency is inverted. In its electronic version, the graphical design shows two pages in only one.

It is not a book about the future, but yes about the present, which already is past. It is not about judgments of value, if this or that is right or wrong – as I reinforce sometimes in the text.



Also, it is not an absolute approach – and yes, a door for new ideas, for new approaches.

It is not to improve the world. Only wide open eyes – on text and visual worlds – at the human scale of a universe in permanent metamorphosis.

***Emanuel Dimas de Melo Pimenta***  
***New York 2008***



*NEST, artwork by Marcia Grostein, New York 2008*