

9.

Vox Populi

Don Ritter



Vox Populi provokes everyone to act the leader regardless of riches, origin or political connections. A projected crowd yells 'speech, speech' and invites the visitor to speak from behind a lectern. When the visitor talks into the microphone, his/her voice is amplified, and texts of political speeches are projected in front of him/her on a small screen. The crowd reacts approvingly or disapprovingly to various extents depending on the level of persuasiveness of the voice.

Don Ritter's interactive installations are concerned with human behaviour. How do people work together? How do they behave behind a microphone? How do they overcome their fears? Ritter acts like a researcher, demonstrating his ideas through experiments. But the viewer cannot step back and watch others behave, s/he is directly involved in the situation being created. The meaning of the work is conveyed through the viewer's immediate personal experience. In *TV Guides* from 1995 Ritter confronted us with the power of

television. While you are sitting on a comfortable couch, texts on the television screen urge you to sit still. If you sit very still, you can enjoy watching a popular soap series, but as soon as you move, the show is interrupted by noise.

Don Ritter is a writer and new media artist.