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what
an
artist
looks
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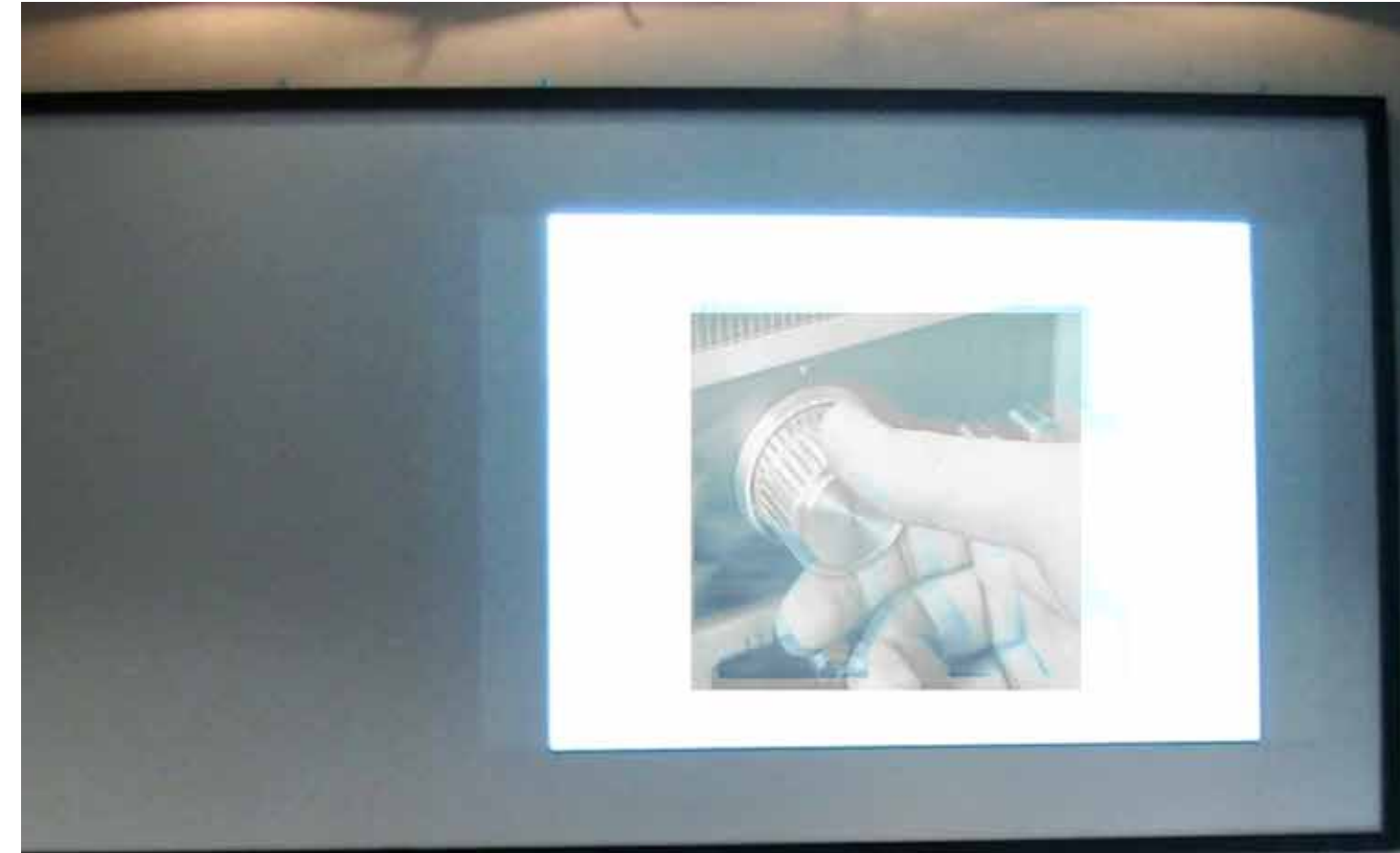
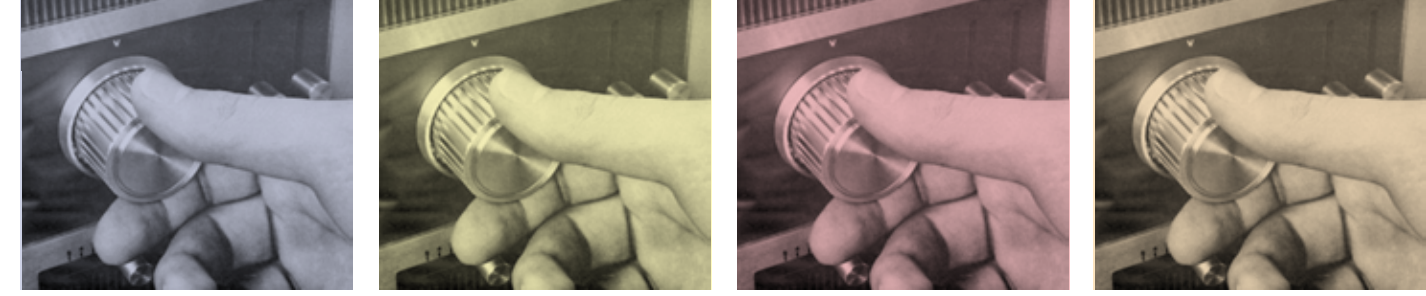


From the Plaintiff's deposition:

I'm also a Geddesian, and I give talks on Hannah Arendt, and all of that is based on what is called the agon, the agonistic model of creativity. My reputation has been affected by the fact that I use multiple tools and litigation as a tool for creative discourse, which is fundamental to the agon, (it) is not traditionally part of an agenda for individuals in the school of fine arts and architecture at Washington University. (d-pp. 80-82)

From the Defendant Washington University's Motion For Protective Order on Depositions:

Mr. Guzzardo testified at his recent deposition that he believes Jasmin Aber excluded him from the jury for the Follies because retired professor Lesley Laskey, who purportedly arranged some of the funding for the Follies, did not like Mr. Guzzardo because he is a lawyer who (as Mr. Guzzardo readily agreed in his deposition) likes to use litigation as a tool of his creative process. (d-p.4)



The installation details an ongoing lawsuit between the plaintiff Paul Guzzardo and two defendants: Grand Center - a private corporation with statutory development powers in St. Louis, and Washington University, a BioScience research institution. Unlike Charles Dickens' Bleak House the transactional is secondary here. This is about the role of digital media in collective consciousness and how media shapes the relation of people to places. It's also about Marshall McLuhan's role in the intellectual formation of St. Louis, and how Geddes' synoptic vision got muscled out by a sycophantic one. Project journals and looping multimedia tell the story. The journals contain press, legal pleadings and testimony. Guzzardo's documentaries and video depositions comprise the multimedia. The documentaries are "buildbetterbarrel," "the cartographer's dilemma," and "posses | protocol | perp walks." The deposition witnesses are: Emily Pulitzer, collector and founder of the Pulitzer Foundation of the Arts; Heather Woofter, teacher and chair of graduate studies at the Washington University School of Architecture; and Paul Guzzardo, lawyer and media activist/artist.

Installation Text Panel - U of Dundee



McLuhan videos-transcription bits



Marsahll McLuhan: One of the effects of switching over to circuitry from mechanical moving parts and wheels is an enormous increase in the amount of information that is moving. You can not cope with vast amounts of information in the old classified patterns. You tend to go looking for mythic forms in order to manage such complex data that's moving at very high speeds. So the electrical engineers often speak of pattern recognition as a normal need of people processing data electrically and by computers. The need for pattern recognition. It is a need for which the poets foresaw a century ago in their drive back to mythic forms of organizing experience.

Frank Kermode: In your other book the more recent one Understanding Media where you you go into all of this. You use a kind of slogan I guess. "The Medium is the Message." Would you like to illuminate that?

Marsahll McLuhan: Well I think it is more satisfactory to say that any medium be it radio or be it the wheel tends to create a completely new human environment. The human environment as such tends to have an invisible character about it. The unawareness of the environmental is compensated for by some attention to the content of the environment. The environments merely as a set of ground rules as a kind of overall enveloping force gets very little recognition as a form except from the artist. I think our arts if you look at them in this connection do throw quite a lot of light on environments. The artists is usually engaged in somewhat excitedly explaining to people the character of new environments, and new strategies of culture necessary to cope with them.

Marshall McLuhan Interview with Frank Kermode BBC - 1964

Marsahll McLuhan: The artist would seem to have been given to us as a providential means of bridging the gap between evolution and technology. The artist is able to program the sensory life or reprogram the sensory life in a way which gives you a navigational chart to get out of the maelstrom created by your own ingenuity. The role of the artist in that regard to man and the medium is simply survival.

"To get in touch" strange phrase. When a wheel and an axle are playing along together, as long as there is a nice interval between the wheel and the axle they are in touch. When the interval gets too small or too big they lose touch. The wheel is either on the hotbox - uptight, or else seized up or else falls apart. This situation of keeping in touch requires this interplay, this interface which is a kind of interval of resonance. Touch is actually not connection but interval. It is when you touch something you have a little space between yourself and that thing which resonates. And that is play. And without play there cannot be any creative work, creative activity in any field at all.

Man and Media Lecture - Centre for Culture and Technology - University of Toronto 1979

Robert Fulford : What kind of world would you rather live in? Is there a period in the past or a possible period in the future you'd rather be in?

Marsahll McLuhan: No, I'd rather be in any period at all as long as people are going to leave it alone for a while.

Robert Fulford : But they're not going to, are they?

Marsahll McLuhan: No, and so the only alternative is to understand everything that's going on, and then neutralize it as much as possible, turn off as many buttons as you can, and frustrate them as much as you can. I am resolutely opposed to all innovation, all change, but I am determined to understand what's happening because I don't choose just to sit and let the juggernaut roll over me.

Marsahll McLuhan: TV interview with the journalist Robert Fulford 1966

* Marshall McLuhan did not turn up out of a clam or god-head. Patrick Geddes and Lewis Mumford (among others) helped lead the way.

UNDERSTANDING MEDIA - The Extensions of Man, Marshall McLuhan

The serious artist is the only person able to encounter technology with impunity, just because he is an expert aware of the changes in sense perception.

Only the dedicated artist seems to have the power for encountering the present actuality.

In the history of human culture there is no example of a conscious adjustment of the various factors of personal and social life to new extensions except in the puny and peripheral efforts of artists. The artist picks up the message of cultural and technological challenge decades before its transforming impact occurs. He, then builds models or Noah's arks for facing the change that is at hand.

For in the electric age there is no longer any sense in talking about the artist's being ahead of his time. Our technology is also, ahead of its time, if we reckon by the ability to recognize it for what it is. To prevent undue wreckage in society the artist tends now to move from the ivory tower to the control tower of society.

But in the past century it has come to be generally acknowledged that, in the words of Wyndham Lewis, "The artist is always engaged in writing a detailed history of the future because he is the only person aware of the nature of the present."

Artists in various fields are always the first to discover how to enable one medium to use or to release the power of another.

...for the artist makes models of problems and situations that have not yet emerged in the larger matrix of society.

In their artistic play, they discover what is actually happening, and thus they appear to be "ahead of their time." Non-artists always look at the present through the spectacles of the preceding age. General staffs are always magnificently prepared to fight the previous war.

It is the artist's job to try to dislocate older media into postures that permit attention to the new. To this end, even though the majority of his audience may prefer to remain fixed in their old perceptual attitudes.

Artistic rule-of-thumb usually anticipates the science and technology in these matters by a full generation or more.

As our proliferating technologies have credited a whole series of new environments, men have become aware of the arts as "anti-environment" or "counter-environments" that provide us with the means of perceiving the environments itself.

The power of the arts to anticipate future social and technological developments, by a generation and more, has long been recognized.

In this century Ezra Pound called the arts "the antennae of the race." This concept of the arts as prophetic, contrasts with the popular idea of them as mere self-expression. If art is an "early warning system" to use the phrase from World War II, when radar was new, art has the utmost relevance not only to media study but to the development of media controls.

“The artist is always engaged in writing a detailed history of the future because he is the only person aware of the nature of the present.”



dispatch from a [zombie] front

Marshall McLuhan died on December 31, 1980. At the time of his death McLuhan was being left behind, forgotten, a hacker storyteller blotted out. A professor at New York University helped turn it around. Neal Postman organized a new field of storytelling scholarship. It is called media ecology. He traced it back to "Geddes's Drop," that petri dish, and he credited McLuhan with much. Postman was after myth. This is how Neal Postman ends his 1988 essay "Social Science as Media Theology." The quote is taken out of Lance Strate's "Amazing Ourselves to Death - Neal Postman's Brave New World Revisited."

The purpose of social research is to reconsider the truths of social life; to comment and criticize the moral behavior of people, and finally to put forward metaphors, images, and ideas that can help people live with some measure of understanding and dignity. Specifically, the purpose of media ecology is to tell stories about the consequences of technology; to tell how media environments create contexts that may change the way we think or organize our social life, or make us better or worse, or smarter to dumber, or free or more enslaved. I feel sure the reader will pardon a touch of bias when I say that the stories media ecologists have to tell are rather more important than those of other academic storytellers because — **the power of communications technologies to give shape to people's lives is not a matter that comes equally to the forefront of people's consciousness, though we live in an age when our lives - whether we like it or not - have been submitted to the demanding sovereignty of the new media. And so we are obliged, in the interest of humane survival to tell tales of what sort of paradise might be gained, and what sort lost. We will not have been the first to tell such tales. But unless our stories ring true, we may be that last.**

