

conclusions

We live inside the media. You could say that we dream media, we are *mediated*. “Media equal real life”¹ concluded researchers Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass, contending that people relate to media in the same way that they relate to other people or places.

Chapter 1 of the dissertation, *televisual terrain* traversed this field and its implications.

It introduced Humberto Maturana’s idea of the individual’s interface to the world. This perceptual apparatus, the interface, is not just like a filter through which information is passing, rather it is an active construction of the world in response to what is happening in the environment. Therefore *televisual terrain* posited that since the environment is increasingly media saturated, so is our most intimate interface to it.

This media saturation is found not just in domestic space but is reinforced whenever we enter public space through the incursion of large screens and other forms of advertising.

The chapter *screenworld* articulated the changing face of architecture as a support for information and narratives of consumption. It posited the idea of architectural media space and discussed some of the ways in which people and artists build resistant spaces.

In order to speak about the mediated world, artists use (and reuse) a variety of media as their tools, both in terms of media content and its expression or form. Media reuse by artists has become an essential and critical form of practice. In *mediazone* I argue that, given that we are media, and our media are as real as anything else, 'appropriation' from a position 'outside' media is no longer tenable. The *mediazone* argument showed that, in the 1960s and 1970s, this 'outsider' position was the underlying assumption. This 'outsider' position underwent significant shifts in the following decades, to a position now where artists speak from within the global media flows.

Paralleling this shift were the implications of McLuhan's insight that the content of one medium is always another medium. Bolter and Grusin call this representation of one medium in another *remediation*, and argue that it is a defining characteristic of new media. They write that each act of mediation depends on other acts of mediation, arguing that: "media are continually commenting on, reproducing, and replacing each other, and this process is integral to media. Media need each other in order to function as media at all."² Remediation provides a useful conceptual frame with which to view the works in *mediazone* and *netspace*. These works act by ways of affiliation, resonance and contagion.

Remediation undermines the idea of a purity of materiality that was sought by the early proponents of video art. This concept, derived from the writings of NY critic Clement Greenberg was then influential. It is to be noted that it was an extremely useful concept, as it acted as way of theorizing what artists were doing in abstract expressionist painting in the late 1950s. The focus on materiality articulated how the art object could be freed from its referent to stand alone as a thing in the world. However, what initially had been a liberating idea became institutionalized and limiting to artists.

The discussion of materiality and remediation which has been presented here is useful to future researchers in the new media field. There is nothing redundant about artists examining a singular media in detail, as Bill Viola and others did with video in the 1970s and as artists do today. The difference inherent in the concept of remediation to the Greenbergian truth to materials idea is that it sees no radical break from medium to medium. Instead *remediation* sees media as networked and connected. As in any form of practice, one seeks to know one's tools in detail to work properly with them, to find all their potentials. This is what the artists examined in both *mediazone* and *netSPACE* are doing, but what we see is no longer one material or another being used and examined, but instead layers of materials, and these works embody their references to particular places and times.³

Artists discussed here revel in materiality multiplicities. Consider the internet works of Jason Gee, of Victor Liu See-le and the graphic layers which articulate the transmission path in *Airworld* by the McCoys. These layers of materiality exponentially alter the original idea of truth to materials through the deployment of clusters of medial resonances, affiliations and contagions.

The artists discussed here do not only work with the materials' expression and its formal qualities. Taking the same position of 'inside' the media flow, artists work with the remediation of content. The dissertation articulates these content-driven references in terms of the constitution of media spaces as they embody audience memory. As *televisual terrain* articulates, these spaces are geographical, historical and temporal. The artists' tools are therefore those of selection and composition. *Mediazone* looks in depth at the kinds of media content selections artists have made for specific ends. These resonate over time with other works within the history of art. These works amplify

characteristics and aspects of media at a particular time, as in for example *Win Place or Show* by Stan Douglas. Or they highlight the effect media has on the construction of subjectivity as seen for example *Brittaney Love* by Kate Murphy. In the riotous *Larry Emdur's Suit* we witness ecstasy turn to pathos as artist Emile Zile journeys through media glory and subsequent rejection.

The dissertation makes connections that may not yet have been made, with television, media and architecture. It links artists who may not have previously been linked together, for example the artists detailed above – to create a rich and strange set of contagions winding through contemporary art practice, focused around artists who reuse media and all that this reuse implies.

As this dissertation has shown media engenders spaces and communities. Each of these spaces has its own version of audience memory. These memories are our memories, and hence are open to being explored by artists outside of the bounded space, the 'new space of enclosure'⁴ of copyright law as commonly understood. A new way of thinking is necessary to the 'ahistorical and litigious corporate viewpoint currently defining copyright.'⁵ The dissertation provides arguments as to why this reuse of media is a valid and increasingly necessary area of practice. Necessary, as within these new spaces of enclosure we write our history, and to counteract it being written for us, artists and others need to be able to examine in detail the media environment, our *new nature*.

This dissertation shows that media are real, that the experiences of living inside the mediated environment are real. Robert Riley, in conversation with Joshua Decker says "television is a medium that migrates images wander off the screen into the memory, to become a public presence..... The engineered space of television certainly impacts

perception and vision. Simulated experiences on television are experiences none the less.”⁶ I strongly argue throughout the dissertation that the sophistication and pervasiveness of the construction of a mediated real is accelerating. Curators and cultural institutions must defend choices made by media reuse artists to protect the artists and their work from legal antagonism. The Intellectual Property regime starts from the premise that ideas as realized through media have a clear beginning and an end, however what the dissertation has argued is that these ideas and images, as Robert Riley says above, “wander off the screen into memory,” into the public sphere, and as shown throughout the dissertation, into artists’ works.

In thinking through issues of intellectual property and artist reuse of media the dissertation affirms that for those without a public arena there is nothing but *political death*.⁷ Media reuse by artists constitutes one such public arena, albeit a personal one. Artists who chose to take this path often take the path of *risk*, the risk that their works may not be shown or worse, particularly in the war-on-terror contemporary environment.

As outlined in the studio report, there were two ways to translate into Chinese characters the exhibition title **PROBE**. One was to do with scientific method, seeing artists as akin to scientists. The other, and my preferred choice, was the word *probe* seen in the light of taking risks, or exploring somewhat dangerous territory, where there are mountains to climb but equally mountains to fall from. Clearly what the dissertation argues is the idea that artists take risks in their work when they delve into the mediazone.

In his introduction to *The Return of The Real* Hal Foster writes of the “fundamental stake in art and academy: the preservation, in an administered, affirmative culture, of spaces for critical debate and alternative vision.”⁸ Media reuse needs its own protected yet

boundless space, to give us a vision of the direction of things to come, as well as things that have been.

¹ Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 2000, pg 58

² Ibid., pg 55

³ For example a work may feature early black and white television footage coupled with Super8 film. Adding to this complexity is the fact that all these image types, which formerly embodied their 'truth' to a particular time and place, no longer necessarily do so in the digital environment. It does make a difference to know whether an artist actually shot film or put an 'old film' software filter onto a piece of footage, or generated it entirely within the space of the computer. It makes a difference to me as an artist, as a curator and as a writer, as it references the discipline in particular ways (consciously or not). One way is not better than another, rather these differences of facture are to be seen in terms of reading and of appreciating the work in all its richness and depth. Equally, to generate a work entirely within the space of the computer which uses the effect of black and white television and Super8 film, speaks to specific media contagions. This dissertation does not dwell inside the realm of the computer generated and its possible simulacrum of *media-effected* resonances, yet the arguments presented here lay the foundation for this examination.

⁴ Yann Moulier Boutang, "Los nuevos cercamientos: nuevas tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación, o la revolución rampante de los derechos de propiedad" Unpublished Paper. Quoted by Martin Hardie in the unpublished paper "A Shape of Law to Come?" private email, June 2003

⁵ The fact is that now everything must be framed at its inception by legal framework. The Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco on October 2 2003 hosted COPYART, where a diverse group of artists and scholars discussed, from progressive legal and art-historical perspectives, the history of appropriative art as well as legal strategies for the protection and sharing of creative works. Panelists included Lawrence Lessig, Stanford University Law professor and founder of the public domain activist organization Creative Commons, sound and visual artist Christian Marclay, and art historian/cultural theorist Jennifer Gonzalez. They sought answers to questions such as: what is the history of appropriated images, objects, and texts? How are artists and their works protected by law? What changes are ahead in intellectual property rights and the economics of new media art? Another way of thinking is necessary to the ahistorical and litigious corporate viewpoint currently defining copyright.

⁶ Joshua Decker and Robert Riley in conversation "Talking Television" (cited online 9 June 2003) <http://www.postmedia.net/02/decker/riley.htm>

⁷ Jose Luis Brea, <no more tv> revised version for the "Tele[visions]" catalogue text, Kunsthalle Vienna, 2001 (cited online 30 June 2003) <http://207.21.242.176/as/art/circles/decker%202.htm>

⁸ Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real*, 1996, xvii. quoted by Francis McKee in "A Touch of Evil: I saw Satan Fall Like Lightning (Luke, 10:18)" cited online 6/4/03, www.variant.randomstate.org/2texts/Francis_McKee.html