

The Octopus

CONTRAST

Kurt Schnitters' "Merz"

This project will present a video photo montage illustrating the process of converting the Marz construction project into a 2D graphic design in an electorate environment. The intention of this was to clip and continuously distort clippings of images from the US Constitution's first amendment which was chosen to represent both current political dystopia, echoing the Marz construction built from manipulated remains of the fragmental World War II, and the electorate-relevant affiliation to media, specifically online media. Superimposed upon this initial image shows the juxtapositions of contemporary polarized perspectives as they apply to the first amendment, focusing mostly on freedom of speech, press, and religion. The photo montage medium operates to illustrate the equal importance between the project's construction process and the final piece as argued by cartographers and artists Heidegger, Steenhuisen, and Forsythe. The project begins with a foundational focus, such as the Tower of Winds, and implements symmetric groups to maintain figuratively and visual balance of power between the duplicity displayed.

ANALOGY

The Octopus

With three hearts and nine brains, the octopus is a cognitive creature and is said to be of the most empathetic and tactilely sensitive creatures on the planet. This mysterious creature eludes scientists for the physicality and how their amorphous shape-shifting capabilities and advanced technical and mechanical problem-solving capabilities allow their propensity to escape from captivity and traps. These creatures also selectively steal from humans, manipulate human technology -- sometimes complicated technology -- to their advantage (theoria), performing demonstrations of cognitive praxis with the thoria set on food or sometimes -- as far as we may know -- pure mischief. The octopus may camouflage at will and has been shown to build structures using shells, rocks and found objects, both strong potential displays of poesis. Furthermore, it has been hypothesized that cephalopods could communicate through visual system of produce polarized reflective patterns. [1] Additionally, its advanced sensory system to detect and empathize emotion poses a vast array of possibilities in octopi's abilities that we may now, at this point of existing research, may only wonder.

To our limited understanding, it derives its sensory perception through its eight tentacles, which serve not only as limbs, but constitute eight of the octopus's nine brains, holding two thirds of octopi's 500 million neurons. The sensitivity described by those who have had the rarity of studying this creature report that their ability to sense physicality and abstractions alike, such as mood, a human woman's menstrual cycle, or the detection of a smoker. Some speculation on the aptitude of these creatures' sensitivity is attributed to the reflectin, a photonic and regenerative protein found in their skin, which confers cephalopods' ability to camouflage. Scientists currently study reflectin for its highly conductive, bioelectric qualities and its regenerative capabilities. While without solid proof of the animal's use of electronics other than manipulating existing devices, with the combination of octopus's proclivity for praxis and poesis, the animal's behavior, combined with its bioelectric capabilities, invite unique possibilities for creative activity in a world

preexisting in electronic forms of communication. In essence, it may be considered that, unbeknownst to scientists, the octopus may perform some type of biologic generative or other electronic form of design, employing its praxis to form poesis. Furthermore, with its proton-conductive reflectin skin and eight extending brains, the octopus may figurative and possibly literally possess an exterior force surrounding its body, possibly fulfilling Ulmer's description of exterior-bound electrate thought process. Curious, highly social (even among other species) and mischievous, their motives of temperament, food, and other interests create an array of adaptable praxis with or without potential for poesis. The qualities that attribute to this animal's success as an electrate (or electrate-like) performer include: curiosity; ingenuity; shape-shifting; initiative; heightened sensitivity to its surroundings in both an emotive and a tactile capacity; and highly social nature and adaptively. Deficiencies are limited as little is known, but would include a short life span, deceasing shortly after reproducing, which many scientists would measure as failure of the species.

The three hearts of the octopus configure the three motives of movement: Warping (play), rotating (perspective), and sollertia (ingenuity, sometimes literally moving out of "the box"). In the likeness of the octopus, the mobile eight of the nine brains execute the aedificatio and the machinatio of the piece, while the ninth brain is represented by the design itself. The process concludes with a final division of these limbs.

[1] Mähger, L.N., Shashar, N., and Hanlon, R.T. "Do cephalopods communicate using polarized light reflections from their skin?" *The Journal of Experimental Biology*, 212: 2133-2140, Accepted April 2009. <DOI: 10.1242/jeb.020800>

THEORY

David Banash, theory of the origins and meaning of collage that views the combination of readymade elements as central to 20th-century culture.

"I argue that by employing collage techniques, artists solve the problem of making meaning in a ready-made world. Through collage, artists find ways to evade, negotiate, reflect, or sometimes undo the reification of commodity culture. Connecting collage practices across mediums, genres, art movements, nations, and times, I argue that the prevalence of the technique cannot be understood simply as the unfolding necessity of a particular medium's evolution or a localized response to specific problems, but rather reflects a truly dialectical response to the ubiquity of commodity form as it develops through mass production, mass media, and consumer culture" [2]

While my focus projects political perspectives, these perspectives, the focus ascertained from these perspectives are in relation to media in a capitalistic and media-driven, consumer society.

[2] Banash, David. *Collage culture : readymades, meaning, and the age of consumption*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp.12, 2013. Print.

TARGET TALE

Graphic Designers
The Electratic Octopus

The Octopus video

Due to the unlimited scope of this project, it is sadly created with very limited time which truncated the exploration of its nearly endless possibilities. Also, this project would ideally be a collective work. So much so that the actual entity of this project revealed itself to me as an apparatus for collective usage. What I've really created is an exquisite corps with a pseudo-autopoietic character that will continue to form. To realize the full potential of this project, it must be continued and reiterated by various "artists". (Octopus, after all, are very social creatures.)

The Rules

1. The starter image must be some type of media
2. Any media may be added so long as it is accessible to the computer desktop and can live inside of the original program (Illustrator in this instance). Other programs are not unwelcome, however. In fact, if the octopus wants to crawl into another program, it may. So, for example, if the octopus is "inside" Illustrator, then "crawls" into PowerPoint, it may steal a word or a graphic to bring back into its "tank".
3. The artist's behavior must think like the octopus. If an octopus would not do it, then neither will the active artist in this "tank".
4. The octopus may be converted, manipulated, colored, added to, clip-masked, etc., but cannot be erased. When an octopus steals from another tank, once it returns back in its tank, if it wishes to nibble on its find, it may discard the rest, but the octopus itself cannot be discarded.

OPPORTUNITIES

It is important to note that while the scope of this project exhibited in The Octopus video focused primarily on the octopus's behavior as a thief, there are a multitude of behaviors that can be mimicked. Opportunities can include but are certainly not limited to: Camouflage into other media sources; using environmental components to build a new environment; removing and subsequently regrowing body parts; exhibiting through aesthetics sentiments of empathy towards others' predispositions; incorporating aesthetics by means of code-generating programs, such as Java or Grasshopper, and/or exhibiting octopus-like behaviors among syntaxes; through technology, manifesting into 3D form; etc. The creative potential remains limitless within the confines of The Octopus's parameters. The aim of this initial project's construction merely served as a pilot to illustrate how the fundamental process can manifest. In its current manifestation, The Octopus serves as both a transmuting and cumulative work of art as well as it serves as a

game driven by creativity filtered through technology. As previously stated, the scope of The Octopus unveils endless creative potential to manifest within an electrified environment. While it may be suggested that The Octopus mimics the autopoietic behavior of AI, it is of The Octopus's creator's perspective that the intention and, more importantly, the *nuance*, of each artistic contributor's initiative that allows the Octopus's unique metamorphosis.

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