

# Media Arts in Context: Notes

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## New technologies in history

### **Oil paint**

-- earliest oil paintings – Buddhist caves at Bamiyan, Afghanistan, 650s CE (walnut oil poppyseed oil)

-- Europe 1100s, began common use by Flemish artists 1400s after being used as glazes over tempera to create richer color

### **Benday dot printing**

-- process invented (by newspaper engraver Benjamin Day 1810-1889) in 1879 to create tonal variations through size and spacing of ink dots making up images.

-- In comics, the Benday dots were printed in various combinations of primary colors (blue, red, yellow) to form the colors of the characters.

-- Lichtenstein's Benday dots were painstakingly hand-painted.

## Media/Technology in historical art

### **Parthenon**

-- reliance on geometry and relation of one element to another

-- platform bearing columns higher in middle, entablature (on top of columns) curved)

-- adjusted perfect perspective from certain angles (no apparent diminution in scale)

-- columns at corner closer together to create visual impression of solid support

### **Camera obscura**

-- first developed in China: light through pinhole created inverted, exact image of object

-- 1400s evolved in Europe as (dark chamber), a room sized space with small opening containing a lens

-- image projected reversed on, but provided accurate perspective for painting

## **Muybridge**

- photographed horses' movements for race horse owner to discover if all four legs ever left the ground at same time
- arranged 12 cameras with Dallmeyer stereoscopic lens taking images at 1000<sup>th</sup> of a second apart
- experiments led to development of motion pictures

## **Stereograph**

- two photographs placed side by side, taken from different angles that copied left eye right eye experience
- 1840s two cameras took images from approximate separation of left and right eye
- mid-1850s camera developed with 2 lenses to simulate eye separation, viewed in "stereoscopic viewer" Only worked on landscapes and genre scenes, with portraits background became distorted (out of focus)

## **Moholy-Nagy "Light Space Modulator"**

- Bauhaus influenced, constructed of industrial materials
- first electric-powered kinetic sculpture (Calder's "Circus" was hand cranked)
- revolutionized human better understanding of modern technological world
- was used for special lighting and motion effects in theater and movies
- wide array of visual effects to transform nature of gallery space

## **Calder motorized sculpture**

- evolved from mobiles and stabiles in early 1930s
- addition of electric motor added greater variety of movement

## **Tinguely drawing machines**

- 1940s early machine sculpture from discarded urban materials, usually hand cranked
- 1950s produced his "metamatics" – produced abstract drawings in Abstraction/Création style (the European Abstract Expressionism) with motor or crank

## **Paik TV bra**

- altered look and content of conventional TV programs in 1960s
- used TV for expressive purposes – distorted images with magnets
- 1965 first artist to use a camcorder
- 1969 helped pioneer video-synthesizer

## **Campus**

-- like Paik, key artist in transforming video into art form

-- pioneered use of chroma-key effect, superimposing one video image onto a similarly colored area of another image. He applies blue paint to his face, and during this process another image of himself is revealed; he then superimposes his image on a piece of blue paper, which he sets afire.

-- explored limits of visual perception as visual reality

## **Birnbaum**

-- edited footage from *Wonder Woman* TV show, spliced into repetitive moments

-- an ironic statement (in the 1970s, during the Feminist Art Movement) on the contrast between power (WW superhero) and objectification of women

## **Media/Technology in contemporary art**

### **Kara Walker**

-- combined precisely cut silhouettes with programmed colored light shows

### **Jenny Holzer**

-- computer-animated billboards (with text)

-- projected light shows of politically charged statements onto buildings and other external environments starting in 1991

### **Roxy Paine PMU (Painting Machine Unit)**

-- Influenced by Tinguely's drawing machines, but more precisely programmed

-- like Tinguely, uses industrial materials

-- robotic arm spews paint, programmed for random movement back and forth and up and down

-- stainless steel frame at intervals stops process to allow each layer to dry – each piece takes up to 3 weeks to complete (factoring in drying time)

### **Tony Oursler**

-- pioneered “hybrid video” narratives in the 1990s

-- broke boundaries between video and other art forms, projecting on everyday objects and abstract sculptures

### **Paper Rad**

-- early 2000s art/music/performance/video collective from Pittsburgh, PA and Providence, RI. Created work in a wide variety of media, especially lo-fi animation, videos, zines, and dizzying web design.

-- Electronic Arts Intermix: "Funded by The Heinz Endowment for the Art's Creative Heights residency program, *Problem Solvers* is Paper Rad's ideal Saturday morning cartoon. The episode adheres to the parameters of a children's TV program—in structure (half-hour format with space for commercial breaks), method (an "economic approach to animation and script writing") and content (a story arc anchored by a "post-hippy new-age message").

### **Pippin Barr**

-- video game artist who creates unique avantgarde games from traditional 8-bit graphics (i.e. Donkey Kong, Mario Brothers)

-- building gaming experience into social media

-- early creator of what some historians call "net art"

### **Jillian Mayer**

-- explores how technology affects lives, bodies and identities through video, sculpture, online experiences, photography, performance and installations

-- investigates tension between online and physical world

### **Naoko Tosa**

-- video artwork composed of moments documented by a high speed camera at 2000 frames per second that captures movement and interaction of Japanese ink and dry ice bubbles inside of a viscous liquid

### **Miguel Chevalier**

-- generative and interactive installations – interactive carpet with sensors, thousands and programmed patterns in pixels, line, cells and geometric patterns, created randomly by motion of visitors' feet on sensors

### **Ujoo and Limneeyoung**

-- assembled multiple rotating gear wheel, motorized, running back and forth repeatedly, snagging and releasing hair...a symbol of humanity being captive to technology

### **Yung Jake**

-- digital portraits created with the help of [Emoji.ink](http://Emoji.ink), and app developed by his partner Vince McKelvie

-- portraits based on photographs, prints in UV-cured ink on Dibond

-- also creates experimental/parody hip-hop videos

### **Meow Wolf**

-- monumental, fantasy interactive art experiences, installations and exhibits combining visual, auditory and physical creative work

-- collaboration of artists, musicians, actors, computer technicians and engineers

-- within a year of opening, Meow Wolf became one of the top 4 tourist destinations in Santa Fe. They are now working on additional outlets in Colorado, Arizona, and other places.