

Feedback #2: Marshall McLuhan and the Arts

Group exhibition

January 27 - February 24, 2018



Exhibition view, Feedback #2: Marshall McLuhan and the Arts, 2018

Participating artists:

Peter Blegvad, cyboption.life (Stephanie Ballantine, Lena Chen, Esben Holk), Adam Harvey, Mogens Jakobsen, Marshall McLuhan (Archivmaterial), Christof Migone and Ioana Vreme Moser

Exploding out of the wreckage of World War II the early cyberneticists Norbert Wiener and Claude Shannon, sketched out a future where even thinking could be automated. Marshall McLuhan saw in the electronic information of global instantaneous mass-communication of the satellite and tv-age, the end of the rational tradition of enlightenment Humanism, and the emergence of a 'Global Village' and 'Global Theater' where people would be caught up in their interconnectivity and develop new social art forms. This exhibition project elaborates the most basic of cybernetic principles, that of feedback. Here contemporary artists reflect on how experience of our technological context forms how we perceive and understand our world, the feedback loop between observation, memory and imagination.



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This exhibition is also accompanied by archival materials from McLuhan's radical publishing practice, social cybernetics in print from a scholar who burst out of the academy to embrace the popular forms such as the magazine, paperback book, and most importantly tv, with a message that was so tuned to the new media. This made McLuhan a superstar. McLuhan consciously instrumentalized his celebrity status to experiment in realtime with a nationwide audience. Never before or since has a scholar of communication played such a public role in our understanding of technological change.

The pace of technological transformation, automation and globalization has resulted in massive human migration, precarization, displacement and new transitional modes of existence. The Internet, built to maintain command and control of the US military in an extreme emergency has become a commercialized infrastructure where unprecedented new forms of communication and exchange are emerging. Publics are formed and dissolved algorithmically according to need, no longer on the level of opinion or knowledge, but according to advanced social cybernetics of politics and the advertising economy.

The medium is the message, the artists hear the message and propose emergent emblems of concern. This project examines how the utopian instincts of artists can help guide us in a world where the action happens beyond the senses and where even the notion of place, public or politics is always shifting under our feet.



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In partnership with **transmediale 2018 face value**, the Berlin instance of the project, curated by **Baruch Gottlieb** and **Marie-José Sondejker**, features exhibitions of contemporary art, the radical publishing practice of Marshall McLuhan, documentation, symposia, discussions, performances and other events that are spread over four locations in Berlin: Humboldt University department of Media Theory, EIGEN + ART Lab, HKW and the Marshall McLuhan Salon at the Embassy of Canada.

Text by Baruch Gottlieb

Photos: Eike Walkenhorst

A RECURSIVE EXHIBITION, SYMPOSIUM AND WORKSHOP SERIES

A project by West Den Haag in cooperation with transmediale 2018 face value

Partners:

**transmediale/
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West



Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en
Wetenschap



Botschaft von Kanada



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