



THE MEDIATED CITY

Part 2 – LA

– a multidisciplinary conferences examining “the city” a virtual, filmic, social, political and physical construct.

CONFERENCE 2

Place: Los Angeles

Dates: 01 – 03 October 2014

Woodbury University

Title: Posses | Protocol | Perp°Walks

Name: Paul Guzzardo

Abstract:

The presenter is a Plaintiff. The Defendant is a mixed arts/real estate development district in St. Louis, Missouri. The lawsuit involves platform design. The platforms are viewing stations, mirrors of a sort. The big idea behind these mirrors were to use them to glimpse ourselves sloshing about and around in Big Data. The Plaintiff began working on a brief to build them in the mid-1990s. In 2003, the Plaintiff pitched the brief to the arts district by linking brief and platforms to Marshall McLuhan. McLuhan taught at Saint Louis University from 1937-1944. Since the art district includes the University, the district developers had acquired a new media heritage site whether they wanted one or not. There is dialectic (in) play here. In 2003, the person who effectively ran the district was Emily Pulitzer, widow of Pulitzer Media Company chairman Joseph Pulitzer Jr. Pulitzer Jr. was also known for his collection of contemporary art, regarded as one of the largest and finest in the world. At the time of his death in 1993 he was a director in the arts district. His widow stepped in after he died, bringing the modernist Tadao Ando with her. Together they built a private museum in the district. This background information is a frame for three overlapping stories. Each story will be outlined via excerpted documents: emails, legal pleadings, blog posts, and press releases. The stories:

1. How a big data platform brief is traced to Understanding Media, specifically the role of artist as cartographer;
2. How a code smell contagion in the form of a sycophantic sinkhole blocked platform construction;
3. How traditional media and prosecutors have failed to respond to a vandalized American heritage site. The hoped-for endgame is viral agitprop, and what more appropriate way to celebrate Understanding Media's 50th anniversary than that.

Biography:

I am a lawyer/media activist/artist, and a current fellow at the Geddes Institute for Urban Research – University of Dundee, Scotland. I was a former legal counsel for District 34 of the United Steelworkers of America. My design praxis includes nightclubs, outdoor projections, street-front media labs, street theater, remix concerts, gallery installations, documentary film and litigation. St. Louis, Missouri is a stage for my praxis. Three other players were prelude tableau. Marshall McLuhan was there from 1937-1944. According to his biographer Douglas Coupland, McLuhan put together a “proto-Warhol factory” in St. Louis. It’s where it all began. Player number two is Monsanto. Monsanto was founded in St. Louis. First there was the father, John Queeny, then the son Edgar Monsanto Queeny. Extensions were the family business, and what McLuhan predicted was on the way, but some things you can’t see because of all the dust. And the dust leads to number three, Pruitt-Igoe. March 3, 1972 marks a tumble into a postmodern looking glass. Minoru Yamasaki’s first fall down was a few blocks from where McLuhan once taught. I use this mythic stew for my praxis. I am currently completing a book that blends praxis and myth: “Hackerspace for Myth Making – The Manual”.