Technological Difficulties

Annotated Bibliography

Industrialization is said to have started with the advent of the printing press. My art has always reflected industry, power, and environmental concerns. Being primarily a printmaker I find it hard to reconcile the fact that what I do was the frontrunner for modern industry. Industrialization and the growth of new technology have left us with a huge mess. In the currently self-absorbed capitalist North American culture, technology has served as an implement for laziness. There are many issues associated with this growth in consumerism and industrialization, including: destroying natural resources, health problems, and apathy. If big businesses ceased to cut every corner to make maximum profits, there might be a chance for our external and internal environments to revitalize themselves.

This bibliography shows my exploration through books and articles that explain and speak to the questions and thoughts I have about technology.


Lewis Mumford speaks to his own theories on the origins of Industrialization. Instead of the customary belief that industry started with the industrial revolution, this book discusses the advent of the printing press as the possible beginning of industrialization. The printing press was the first machine used to make mass quantities of reproduced goods. Mumford documents the evolution of technology through three specific periods: Eotechnic, Paleotechnic, and Neotechnic. This book also speaks to the idea that societal conventions are what led us to this point of industrialization, and not that the machine brought the blight on us.


This article discusses the effect of global climate change on human health, more particularly the effect of climate change on specific communities. Hotter temperatures breed more diseases. Some communities may see little to no health effects come from the rise in temperatures, while others may feel this change acutely. The author stresses the fact that many communities that are within the range of anticipated health risks do not have adequate healthcare to combat potential future problems.

This book speaks to a number of different ideas, hot and cold media, media as an extension of us, and that the media is the message. McLuhan uses the words media and technology interchangeably. What I found interesting was the discussion of the effect of media on our perception. This quote sums it up for me: “All media exists to invest our lives with artificial perception and arbitrary values.”

Carr, Nicholas. “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” **The Atlantic.** July/August 2008:

This article muses on the question of the effect of the internet on our ability to process information in a useful way. The advent of technology has changed the way we communicate, and how we handle information. Online databases and journals make it easier to access information, but this new technology also causes people to study things out in a less meaningful way. The author closes with this quote: “As we come to rely on computers to mediate our understanding of the world, it is our own intelligence that flattens into artificial intelligence.”


This article talks about the good and bad things associated with viewing art through reproduced images. The good being the broader possibilities for education in relation to art, many people now have access to images that in the past would have only been available through expensive travel to a museum in a different country. The bad is the subsequent reliance on that reproduced image for the full spectrum of potential meaning in that work of art. The author quote Benjamin, who stressed that art was meant to be seen in the context of its dialectic.


This article discusses the effects of the Donora tragedy. In late October of 1948 Donora, a steel town southeast of Pittsburgh became one of the most notable cases of lethal air pollution. The steel mill, trains and residential use of coal created excess air pollution in the valley and surrounding areas on a daily basis. Due to a cold air weather system, these acrid pollutants became trapped in the air close to the ground. For several days the people of Donora breathed in all of the emissions released by the plant which were unable to disperse into the atmosphere. The steel mill continued running during this smog, which claimed 20 lives, and left an excess of 600 ill. This incident paved the way for the clean air act of 1955.

This article discusses how new technologies can track certain behaviors, and ways in which people make decisions and why. This seems like an impossible and flawed venture to me. I don’t think it will ever be possible to replicate human perception. This is just another example of how businesses strive to use technology to cut corners of service and expenditure to maximize profits. This article does speak to how art, science and technology inform and influence each other.


This article discusses the correlation between the emergence of conceptual art, and intensive artistic experimentation with technology. Conceptual art and art that dealt with technology have closely related themes. The author speaks to the failure of some software based artists and exhibitions.


Architects have found themselves using current technologies to create conceptual works or art instead of functional buildings. By pushing the boundaries of what classically is considered “art” these non-functional functional architectural forms bring up a number of questions that relate to ideology associated with works of art.


This article is an overview of digital art and how it relates to conceptual art and current ideology. A quote from this article sums the whole thing up: The ubiquity of technology has also affected its place in our Western, post-industrial culture: “From subject, it has become object. No longer a wonder, its sole use cannot legitimize an art project. Rather, as digital tools become as readily accessible as the pencil and clay, mastery tends to be about pushing technology to the back of the stage, where it really belongs.”


This article addresses the shift in the importance of aesthetics as technology changes societal constructs. Art has become increasingly marginalized with the growth of mass culture, commercialization, and development of new information technologies. The author argues that due to this increase in the importance of technology art has no power; technology is progressively draining it of force and significance.

   The author talks about the sociological study of the affect of nuclear weapons on all aspects of human life. There are many questions left unanswered by academia on the social consequence of nuclear proliferation.


   Benjamin talks about the then “new” processes of film and photography and how they change human perception of the visual world. Benjamin thinks that something is lost through mechanical reproduction that sensitivity to time and place are missing.