

ROUND ONE!

You are involved in an “improvisational realtime/performance media art event” at the moment called ‘[No Media](#)’, where participants are explicitly discouraged from preparing before they take part, or from [creating documentation of any kind](#). I was lucky enough to see the first iteration of No-Media at [GLI.TC/H 2112](#). I think my favourite performance involved a collaboration between Evan K hl (of [Vaudeo Signal](#)), [Curt Cloninger](#) and yourself, scrambling to get something, anything, to work. The mania of this performance stood out because of its simplicity. At base I was watching a blindfolded anarchic poet stammering over ambient noise, but it really felt as if something important had happened, especially once you realised your contribution wasn’t working. I wanted to start from this stripped-back position. Before we talk about media, why no media?

[NO-MEDIA](#) was initially a performance experiment proposed by [Jason Soliday](#) for GLI.TC/H 2112 >> && [Jason](#) + [Jeff](#) + I have continued organizing ‘em since. The premise is this: artists w/any kind of performative discipline (realtime A/V, jazz, dance, expanded cinema, noise, comedy, spoken word, etc) sign up. They get randomly paired w/two other performers at a random point in the evening (no one knows when or who until their names show up on the screen). They perform for 10mins. You’re not allowed to prepare any material (bring what tools/gear/props you want but there’s NO time set aside for preparation) and there’s NO documentation.

So far they’ve been a lot of fun, very messy + very inspiring. Re:my performance with Curt and Evan at the first [NO-MEDIA](#), I’m not totally sure if this is the ‘something’ you refer too... but for me there was a point a few mins into the performance where I realized what I was trying to do (some google chrome live coding) wasn’t going to work... and I stopped... and I looked over at [Evan](#) and [Curt](#)... and totally changed my game plan... I don’t want to go into detail re:what I started to project on a blindfolded [Curt Cloninger](#)... cause I don’t want to break the second rule of [NO-MEDIA](#) (no documentation ;)

Your recent video essay, [an open letter to Apple Computers](#), garnered a lot of support from glitch art / (new) media art communities. Can you talk about the politics of this work, and how it relates to glitch art methodologies?

My personal relationship w/Apple is as complicated as it is b/c of glitch >> intentionally invoking glitches is usually a kind of misuse... and when you misuse Apple technology the (often invisible) politix embedded in their systems become very clear + am forced to reconcile ‘em. The video is about that impossible reconciliation between my tech dependencies && my politix. I made the video for a screening organized by [JonCates](#) of remixes of work from the [Phil Morton Memorial Archive](#) + is a [re]mix/make of his 1976 video tape [General Motors](#), where Phil, an artist and professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago at the time, addresses similar issues re:his + his community’s relationship to && dependence on technology && tech-industries. As a professor at the same school + artist w/in the same community (nearly 40yrs later) dealing w/very similar problems w/similar industries... it seemed an appropriate

issue to tackle && appropriate format to tackle it in.

Many of your projects tap into the “democratizing” potential of digital art, from your work to [crack open codecs](#), through to your recent [New Media One-Liner](#) on [The New Aesthetic](#), where you programmed and openly distributed a heap of scripts and libraries for anyone and everyone to mess around with.

Yea, one thing those two pieces have in common is my interest in the ‘tutorial’ as a form (+ pedagogy in general). theNewAesthetic.js is an executable-essay / open-source javascript artware-library for quick [re]production of 'New Aesthetic' compositions and related new-media art tropes. So by that I mean it's literally a functional tool/utility with thorough documentation, examples and video tutorial, but it's also an essay + my comment/critique on the whole NA conversation. The source code to the library can be read as a kind of code-essay. Similarly, the Glitch Codec Tutorial is a lesson in hacking video codecs to make glitch art, but also a video essay on the assumptions/influence digital systems make/have on us + their embedded politix + glitch's potential (as a practice) to make us aware of these assumptions/influence.

Now that ‘the glitch’ has broken through into mainstream culture as a technical, aesthetic trope, does the glitch still have this political potential? Or is it merely a visual style?

As far as glitch's political/social potential specifically, sometimes folks have a hard time understanding the obvious political ramifications b/c they conflate glitch (as a concept, a moment, a break) with the aesthetic its more commonly associated with; it's becoming more important to separate these two things: glitch art && glitch aesthetics (or better: the aesthetics of digital artifacts). There's obviously a venn-diagram overlap going on here, but not everything that loox 'glitchy' is actually a 'glitch' (or break in a system). For example, a datamoshing filter in a title sequence of a hollywood film might render the text with digital artifacts, but nothing's actually 'glitching' (technically or conceptually). Likewise, not all glitch art loox 'glitchy.'

A great example is Glitchr, the online [[facebook](#), [tumblr](#) && [twitter](#)] handle of artist + social media Interventionist, Laimonas Zakas. Glitchr has made it his mission to find + exploit bugs + holes w/in social media systems. His work is often formally 'glitchy' but not in the compression artifact sense, but in the 'zalgo' (overlapping/spilling unicode characters) sense. Though, my favorite glitchr posts aren't formally 'glitchy' at all. A couple of times he's managed to post animated images on a facebook post && folks go crazy; a barrage of comments quickly follow below along the lines of “OMG how did you do that? show me show me show me” ...and shortly after facebook will “fix” the bug/work. This leaves a frozen image the comments below now functioning as testimonials, and in that moment these [often] invisible politix embedded w/in the system are brought to the fore.

This is the kind of perspective/approach many of us involved in the [GLI.TC/H](#) (as in the confernece/festival/gathering, not to be confused w/ your project [gliti.ch karaoke](#)) are interested in. While most of us are also interested in the aesthetics of artifacts, this is different from (though

it overlaps w/) our interest in the glitch as a break, a tactic, a slippage, an intervention—this is where it can become political.

I can read your work as a network of attempts to intervene in the course of things (for better or worse; with aesthetic, technical and/or social results). But the role of human intent in that disruption is trickier to determine. You motivate subjects to empower themselves through “[instigated complexities or stumbled upon accidents](#)”¹ that are by definition beyond their control. How do you deal with this contradiction? Is there a ‘glitch politics’? And if so, is it more about human ‘intervention’ or the intervention of the glitches themselves?

[the perceived contradiction]: can encouraging a digital practice like glitch art which compromises control still grant folks digital agency? Absolutely (we’re only compromising *partial* control afterall). Databending101 (a la [stAllio](#)!) for example: pick the pic you wanna hack (choice) + where && by which means (choice), then see what happens (chance); while the details w/in the composition of artifacts are usually beyond our control, it’s in peaking under the hood + the realizations/perspective that comes w/it that as practitioners/users/netizens we gain agency... not in the production of objects/artifacts.

I like this “network of attempts to intervene”, I think definitely the majority of my better projects are nodes in an “intervention network” >> I’m thinking my [artwarez](#), [tutorialz](#), [installations](#) (virtual+physical), [courses](#) && [organizational efforts](#) >> worx/efforts which require participation. Personally, I’m less interested in *aesthetic functionalism*—in producing an object/artifact which is itself an end meant to be ‘experienced’ or contemplated for its own sake. I’m interested in adding nodes to a larger network >> participating in specific conversations [internet culture, digital rights, intellectual property, media && digital literacy, human>computer interface/relationships, etc]; I do this by contributing projects that are often literally meant to be ‘used’, usually as a way to introduce/enable others to a convo + share my point/poke on/in/at a convo. Again, this is why I’m so interested in tutorials as a form, it can be a utility and an essay simultaneously.

in re:to ‘glitch politi[x]’ + human/glitch: I think glitches are human artifacts more so than digital ones. Computers don’t make mistakes, People do; programmers leave memory leaks, users input bad data... the computer will ‘bug’ out in the same predictable way given the same bad data, we only call that moment a ‘glitch’ when it catches us off guard. That moment can then become political when we leverage it as a tactic for political use: to call out the influence of predominantly invisible systems.

Second-Half Questionnaire:

¹ Briz, Nick. *Glitch Art Historie[s]: contextualising glitch art - a perpetual beta*, in “READER[R0R], GLI.TC/H 20111”. pg. 55. <http://gli.tc/h/readerror>, 2011.

Age: 27

Location: [Chicago, IL](#)



How long have you been working creatively with technology? How did you start? +
Describe your experience with the tools you use. How did you start using them? +
Where did you go to school? What did you study?

I'm lucky to have a mom who as early as I was born (I was 0yrs she was 21yrs) gave me a sketch pad + pencils but also sat me down in front of her computer, which she built (she was an amateur painter getting her BA in computer science). My mom taught me how to use Office95 when it came out (I was 9yrs) and I started making 'games' with PowerPoint's presentation mode. In middle-school/high-school I got way more into traditional media (illustration, photography and video) + went to film school (at the [University of Central Florida](#)) convinced I wanted to be a filmmaker. Even though I had been working commercially in web dev since high school (with my cousin Paul Briz who taught me HTML in NotePad! O__O), it wasn't till later in college that I realized... 'oh shit! this is what I should be making work with && about' and quickly abandoned all the romantic-notions/fetishes I had for analog materials (like film). In college I found my way to [Rhizome](#) && [UbuWeb](#) + came across rad work folks were making in Chicago && thus decided that's where I needed to be >> applied to [SAIC](#) for grad-school >> moved to Chi + am working/living here now.

What traditional media do you use, if any? Do you think your work with traditional media relates to your work with technology?

I call myself a 'new-media artist' because I use predominantly digital technologies to make work about digital culture. But I guess I could just as well call myself a conceptual +/or political +/or contemporary artist. I use the media which most appropriately gets the job done... it's 2013, so these tend to be web/digital media.

Are you involved in other creative or social activities (i.e. music, writing, activism, community organizing)?

yea definitely, I usually refer to myself as an artist/educator/organizer, the lines between these are blurry (ex: I'm really interested in the 'web video tutorial' as a kinda essay-video form + make [work in this form](#), but these [videos](#) I make are also simultaneously/literally tutorialz + I also

simultaneously teach the same material at [actual institutions](#)). I mentioned before I make work with but also about digital culture + a major focus the last few years for me has been digital rights & digital literacy >> I make work about this + I teach courses on these subjects + I organize lots of events (shows/festivals/conferences) around these themes ...these are blurry distinctions.

Who are your key artistic influences?

...should I list 'em? I've stolen ideas from a lot of folks >> some of them are dead: Marcel Duchamp, John Cage, Stan Brakhage, some of them are alive + I follow 'em online: [Joshua Davis](#), [Cory Doctorow](#), [jodi](#), [Evan Roth](#), [Squarepusher](#), [Elisa Kreisinger](#), [Cornelius](#), [Mary Flanagan](#), [Olia Lialina](#), [Alexei Shulgin](#) + many of them are my friends/collaborators/students: [jonCates](#), [jon.satrom](#), [Rosa Menkman](#), [Evan Meaney](#)... actually imma stop there and let that list feed into the next question...

Have you collaborated with anyone in the art community on a project? With whom, and on what?

Mos definitely yes!!! + my most valuable xperiences stem from these collaborations + revolve around community + this is why I moved to Chicago: to partake in these communities. For me these collaborations usually take the form of project/event-organizational ventures, the largest of which is probably the GLI.TC/H festival/conference/gathering, which I've been co-organizing (with lots of people, namely [jon.satrom](#) + [Rosa Menkman](#)) for over 3yrs now. I mentioned before the lines between artist/educator/organizer are pretty blurry >> what I mean by this is nuanced [save detailz] this is a mode of operating familiar to lots of Chicago [dirty] new-media folks which I've adopted + learned predominantly from working with [jonCates](#) (whose practice is much more nuanced/complex than I can get into + whose had an undeniable & guileful influence on me + many others here in Chi). I also work a lot w/[jon.satrom](#) [undoubtedly one of my biggest influences + one of the most brilliant artists on the planet] + currently working w/other local artists/educators/organizers like [Christy LeMaster](#) (on [splitbeam](#)) + [Jason Soliday](#) & [Jeff Kolar](#) (on [NO-MEDIA](#)) + [Joseph \(yyolk\) Chiocchi](#) (on [0p3nr3p0.net](#)) + am constantly inspired by + partaking in new-media adventures w/other presently chicago-based folks: [Aaron Zarutzki](#), [Adam Trowbridge](#), [Alex Halbert](#), [Alex Inglizian](#), [Alfredo Salazar-Caro](#), [Andrew Rosinski](#), [Ben Baker-Smith](#), [Ben Syverson](#), [Beth Capper](#), [Bryan Peterson](#), [Dave Musgrave](#), [Ei Jane Janet Lin](#), [Emily Kuehn](#), [Entro MC](#), [Eric Fleischauer](#), [Evan Kühl](#), [Grayson Bagwell](#), [Harvey Moon](#), [Jake Elliott](#), [James Connolly](#), [Jessica Westbrook](#), [Josh Billions](#), [Kevin Carey](#), [Lisa Slodki](#), [Lori Felker](#), [Mark Beasley](#), [Monica Panzarino](#), [Nick Kegeyan](#), [Patrick Lichty](#), [Paul Hertz](#), [Ryan T Dunn](#), [Sam Goldstein](#), [Shawne Holloway](#), [Tamas Kemenczy](#), [Theodore Darst](#), [William Robertson](#)...

...ok, imma stop there >> I realize this may read as an obnoxiously long list, but these are all folks w/out whom my work/reality would be very different, these are the folks I chat w/on a regular basis +/or collaborate w/ +/or participate w/ +/or am inspired by. I like to think the work I do is about larger digital issues (digital rights, digital literacy, networked culture, intellectual

property, etc) accessible/applicable to a global village/community well beyond my local one... but these are folks I regularly steal all my ideas from... and happen to be local.

What do you do for a living or what occupations have you held previously? Do you think this work relates to your art practice in a significant way?

yea I think this is always a great question, my students always want to know how new-media artists (at least in the States) make their monie\$ >> for me it's pretty modular: I teach new-media && digital art/literacy courses at a couple institutions here ([the Marwen Foundation](#) && [the School of the Art Institute of Chicago](#)) + I develop miscellaneous digital projects (apps, wwweb, installations) for different clients w/ [Branger Briz](#) (my cousin's agency, the same one who taught me HTML in high-school). I'd say it definitely relates to my practice... or rather that it is my practice in that I'd probably be doing something else entirely if I wasn't a 'new-media artist/educator/organizer' ...again, these are blurry distinctions.

[imma combine these]:

Do you actively study art history? +

Do you read art criticism, philosophy, or critical theory? If so, which authors inspire you?

yes && yes. I'm xtreamey interested in the parallel/perpendicular + complementing/contradicting + fringe && mainstream narratives that make up the histories of the conversations I'm invested in: media art histories, computer science histories, digital folk histories, Chicago histories, activist histories, piracy histories, etc. I read lots of criticism/philosophy/theory... I'm inspired by lots of folks: lots of contemporary/mainstream digital culture folks ([Lessig](#), [Shirky](#), [Jenkins](#), [Benkler](#), [Stallman](#)) + netstream new media art folks ([Lialina](#), [Galloway](#), the 'software studies' crowd) + academix/bloggers/podcasters I follow closely ([Katie Salen](#), [Larisa Mann](#), [Yoani Sánchez](#), [Anita Sarkeesian](#)) + the writings of many of my collaborators like [Rosa Menkman](#) && [jonCates](#). And then of course the theoretical giants that influence most of us, in particular ideas like Martin Heidegger's notion of 'enframing', that rather than looking at technologies simply as tools, we're better served by considering how they are symptomatic of our particular world view. This has been key to my understanding of technologies as indicative of prevailing ideologies >> McLuhan's perspectives too, specifically the medium-is-the-message angle, rather than getting lost in the content the media carries (and similarly the utility a technology provides) we should consider how the technology itself changes (often completely turns on its head) our relationship to each other and the world.

Are there any issues around the production of, or the display/exhibition of new media art that you are concerned about?

christ... that's a can'o'worms. I've got lots of vibez here, but I'll keep it short... one thing I think a lot about (for ex) is new-media art archives. I'm a fan of bittorrent as a technology: it's distributed/redundant && (especially for small institutions/projects) xtreamey efficient. Why don't we have more new-media art archives leveraging this technology? Where can I get the ArtBase

torrent? There's precedence for it (thinking [Jason Scott](#) && the [Archive Team](#)'s GeoCities torrent) but it's also been stigmatized + somehow branded as anti-artist-interest. Similarly, for as much as the new-media art worldz likes to talk about 'Open Source' conceptually, we've got a lot to learn (especially structurally) from that community. Why aren't more new-media art archives versioned like open-source projects? this would solve all kinds of exhibition headaches that arise when attempting to display new-media pieces that are 3+ yrs old (and thus require 'antiquated' technology)... again, this is a much larger convo, I'm being a little flippant... but I'm happy to have nuanced convos w/interested parties at more length elsewhere :)

cool! thnx for the chat Daniel ^__^
../n!ck