AHST 4342-001 (87272)
History of Media and New Media Art
Fall 2019

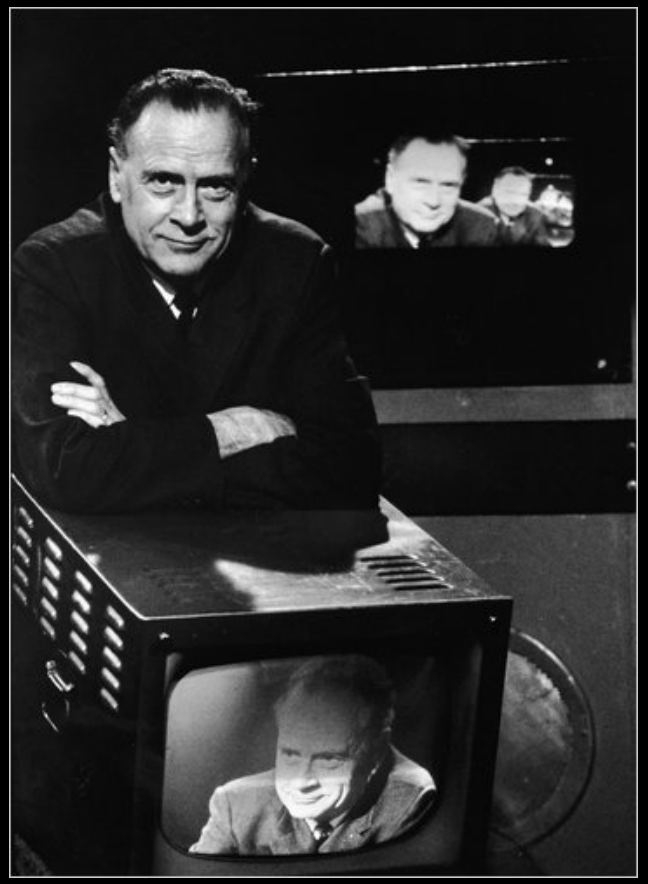
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
University of Texas at Dallas
Arts & Humanities

Tuesdays-Thursdays 10:00-11:15
Class Location: CB 1.222

Office Hours: Thursday 11:30-3:00 (please be sure to make an appointment via email or in person!)
Office Location: ATC 2.704

Contact: terranova@utdallas.edu
www.charissaterranova.com

Tuesday 08/20/19
Course Introduction: What is New Media Art?



Media theorist Marshall McLuhan with TVs – an example of "recursion" or the technological nesting of images

This class focuses on the history of art, science, and technology, a field referred to as “media art” or “new media art.” We will look to the role of scientific and technological mediation in works of art and architecture, that is to say, the ways in which science and technology function to shape and midwife the form of a work of art or architecture. The first month of the course is devoted to the deeper history of the genre of new media art, after which it focuses on various forms of analogue and digital algorithms in twentieth- and twenty-first-century art. This latter portion of the course entails a close reading of the course textbook, Hannah B. Higgins and Douglas Kahn’s *Mainframe Experimentalism: Early Computing and the Foundations of the Digital Arts*. The class traces new media art across mediums, media, and devices, including painting daguerreotypes, photography, chronophotography, television, computers – and analogue and digital algorithms. This course is writing intensive, with short written assignments based on the reading due each week.

Goals of Course:

- Learn and engage the history of science and technology within art, 1832-present.
- Learn the philosophical meaning and artistic incarnation of medium, media, and mediation.
- Learn how to think critically about the history of media and new media art, and its cultural and political ramifications.
- Learn how to identify the salient and successfully formal components of a work of art, whether a painting or a performance.
- Habituate close and analytical reading of texts.
- Hone critical writing skills through weekly written assignments.

Requirements:

- Students are required to attend every scheduled class meeting, complete the assigned reading prior to class, and participate with verve and gusto in class discussions.
- Students are required to complete all written assignments and come to class ready to discuss weekly reading assignments.

Attendance Policy:

- Students are allowed two unexcused absences after which every unexcused absence will result in a deduction of ½ grade in the computation of the final mark.
- Absences will be excused with a doctor's excuse.
- Absences for religious holidays are excused. [See links below.]

Readings:

The reading assignments are available in your textbook and at the Docutek website listed below:

- Textbook: Hannah B. Higgins and Douglas Kahn, *Mainframe Experimentalism: Early Computing and the Foundations of the Digital Arts*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012.
- Docutek:

  Link: http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=2441

  Password: shape

Classroom Meetings:

This course meets twice a week. Tuesdays will be devoted to a lecture from the professor and note-taking by students. Thursdays will be devoted to classroom discussion of the reading and note-taking by students, driven by a powerpoint presentation given by the professor and questions from students.

Writing by Questioning – Reader Response Papers:

Students will submit a one-page reader response paper (no more than 250 words) **every Tuesday** starting **Tuesday August 27**. Papers that exceed this length will be marked down accordingly. Responses should be based on a question about the reading, and then, by way of this query, briefly and cogently summarize the week's reading assignment. The goals of these papers are to: 1.) show that you have completed and understood the reading assignment and 2.) improve your writing skills. Each assignment should be formatted according to the following requirements:

- Submitted printed and in paper each Tuesday
- Left-hand justified heading with name of student, course number, professor's name, date
- Followed by your question as a title, center justified underlined or italicized
- Double spaced
- 12 pt. font
- 250 words
- Do not use the first person or passive voice. Write objectively using the active voice.
  - Passive voice: "The lecture was given by Cynthia."
  - Active voice: "Cynthia gave the lecture."
- Model your writing after that of sophisticated journalism outlets.
- Avoid hyperbole.

NOTE ON DATES AND ASSIGNMENTS: I do not accept late reader response papers submitted outside of class unless related to an illness that has been corroborated by a doctor's excuse. I do not accept digital reader response papers.

Grading:
Your grade in the course will be calculated from the following percentages:

- Written reader responses 14 assignments x 7.14% =100%

Standard UTD policies regarding classroom behavior, religious holidays, withdrawals, etc.:
https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5003
http://provost.utdallas.edu/
http://www.charissaterranova.com/syllabi/utd-policies.htm

Schedule:

<u>Tuesday August 20-Thursday August 22</u>
Course Introduction: What is New Media Art?
Medium, Media, Mediation, Remediation and Recursion, an Introduction to Terms
- Edward Shanken, *Art and Electronic Media* (London: Phaidon, 2009) 10-53. DOCUTEK

<u>Tuesday August 27-Thursday August 29</u>
From Painting to the Daguerreotype
-Sarah Kate Gillespie, "Mechanical Imitation," in *Samuel F. B. Morse's Gallery of the Louvre and the Art of Invention*, ed. Peter John Brownlee (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press/Terra Foundation for American Art, 2014) 100-110. DOCUTEK

<u>Tuesday September 3-September 5</u>
Photograph: The Construction of Vision
- Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 2001) 3-26. DOCUTEK

<u>Tuesday September 10-Thursday September 12</u>
Chronophotography: Capturing Time and Movement in Image
-Dimitrios Latsis, "Landscape in Motion: Muybridge and the Origins of Chronophotography," *Film History* Vol. 27, No. 3 (2015) 1-40. DOCUTEK

Tuesday September 17-Thursday September 19

Introduction to Mainframe Experimentalism

-Hannah B. Higgins and Douglas Kahn, Introduction, *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 1-16.

-Grant Taylor, ”The Soulless Usurpers: Reception and Criticism of Early Computer Art,” *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 17-37.

Tuesday September 24-Thursday September 26

Thinking Machines

-David Bellos, “Georges Perec’s Thinking Machines,” *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 38-50.

Tuesday October 1-Thursday October 3

New Tendencies, Op Art, and Gestalt Psychology

-Margit Rosen, “ ‘They Have All Dreamt of the Machines – and Now the Machines Have Arrived’: New Tendencies – Computers and Visual Research, Zagreb, 1968-1969,” *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 90-111.

65.

Tuesday October 8-Thursday October 10

Sound and Algorithms: Between Alvin Lucier and John Cage

-Christopher Cox, “The Alien Voice: Alvin Lucier’s *North American Time Capsule 1967*,” *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 170-186.

-Robert A. Moog, “An Introduction to North American Time Capsule 1967,” *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 187-188.

-Alvin Lucier, “*North American Time Capsule 1967*,” *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 189-194.

Tuesday October 15-Thursday October 17

Fluxus and Computers

-Hannah B. Higgins, "An Introduction to Alison Knowles's *The House of Dust*," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 195-199.

-Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "The Book of the Future: Alison Knowles's *The House of Dust*," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 200-208.

-Dick Higgins, "'Computers for the Arts' (May 1968)," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 292-297.

Tuesday October 22-Thursday October 24

Sound, Algorithms, and Performance Art

-Douglas Kahn, "James Tenney at Bell Labs," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 131-146.

Tuesday October 29-Thursday October 31

Early Computer Art: The Stuttgart School

-Christopher Klütsch, "Information Aesthetics and the Stuttgart School," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 65-89.

Tuesday November 5

Mainframe Experimentalism, TVs, and Distributed Networks

-William Kaizen, "Computer Participator: Situating Nam June Paik's Work in Computing," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 229-242.

Thursday November 7 No Class Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Conference, University of California, Irvine

Tuesday November 12-Thursday November 14
Experimental Exhibitions
-Edward A. Shanken, "In Forming *Software*: Software, Structuralism, Dematerialization," *Mainframe Experimentalism,* 51-65

Tuesday November 19-Thursday November 21
Hallucinations and Hippie Modernism
-Zabet Patterson, "From the Gun Controller to the Mandala: The Cybernetic Cinema of John and James Whitney," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 334-354.

Tuesday November 26-Thursday November 28 No Class Fall Break

Tuesday December 3-Thursday December 5
Immersion and New Media Art
-Gloria Sutton, "Stan VanDerBeek's Poemfields: The Interstice of Cinema and Computing," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 311-333.

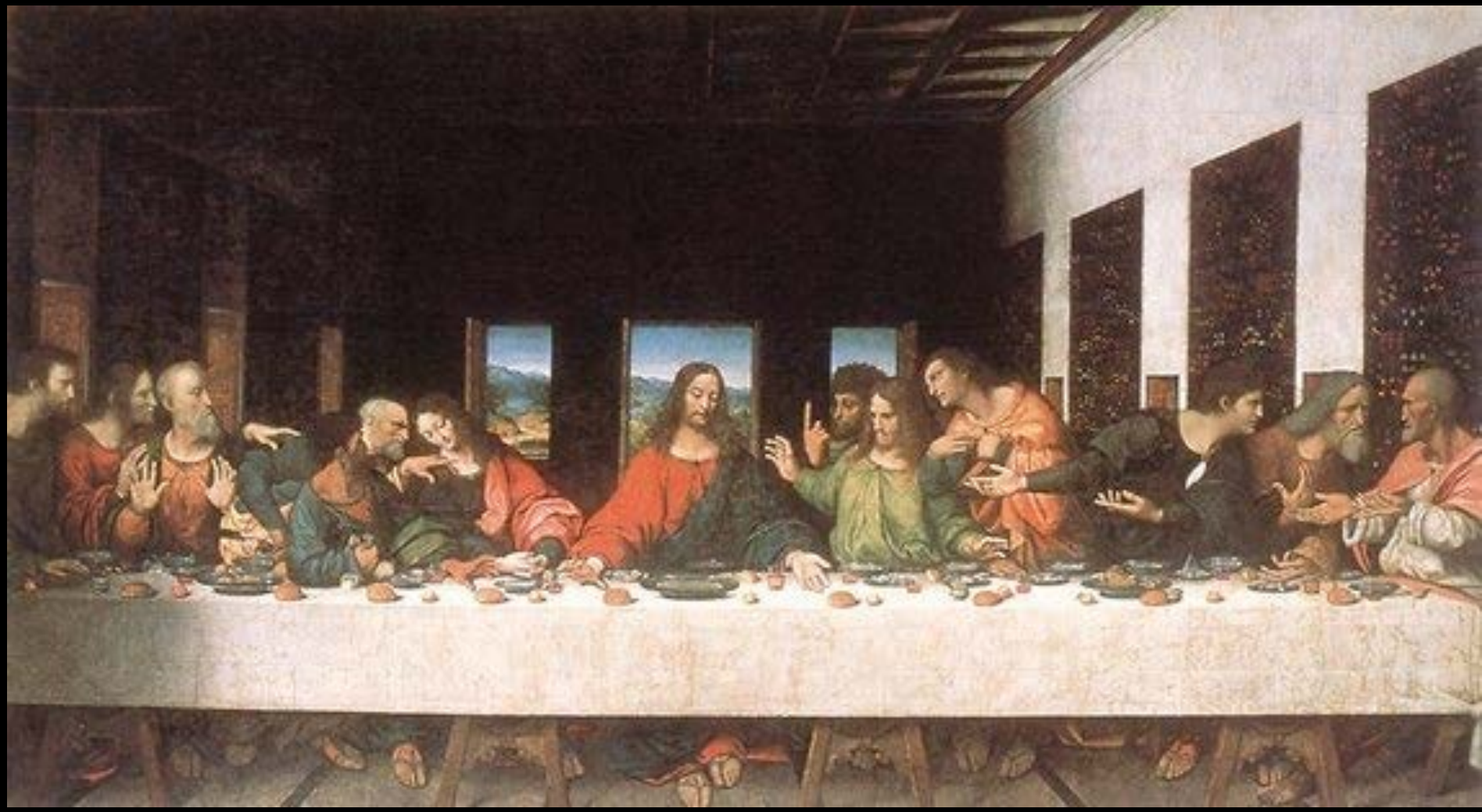
Themes of Today's Discussion

- Defining "new media art"
- Deep Time -- History (and Geology)
- Deep Time of Art, Design, and Technology
- Deep Time of Media Art
- Techniques of Vision
- Existentialism in Art
- Existential Nature of Technology

What is new media art?

- **New media art** is a genre that encompasses artworks created with **new media** technologies, including digital **art**, computer graphics, computer animation, virtual **art**, Internet **art**, interactive **art**, video games, computer robotics, 3D printing, cyborg **art** and **art** as biotechnology.
- Sometimes it is referred to as “Media Art.”
- This class focuses on the history of this genre and how it transforms conventional art, the human sensorium, and aesthetics.
- Our goal is to understand the new modes of critical thinking and awareness bodied forth in and by new media art.

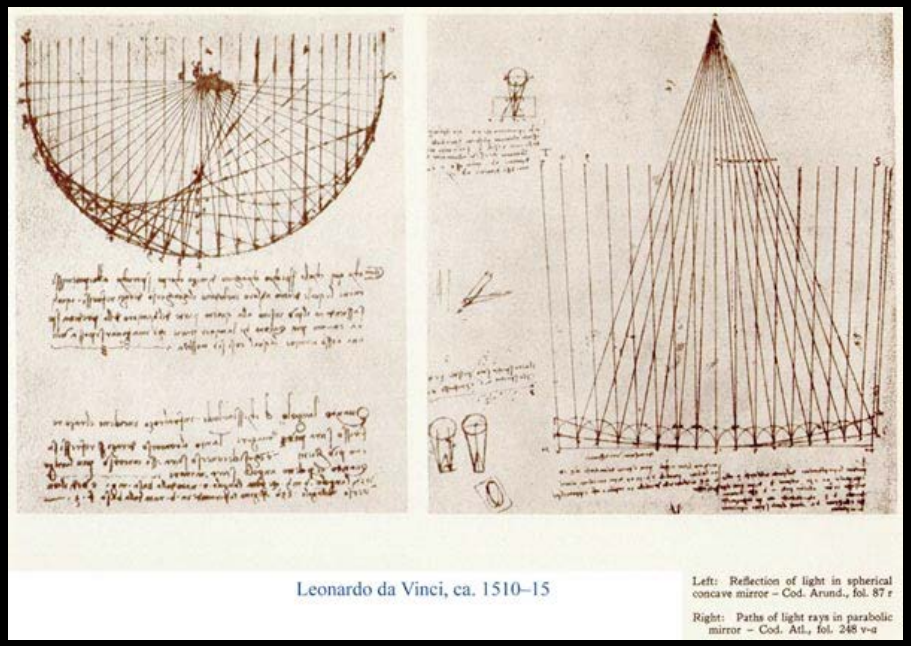
Art, Architecture, Technology and Deep Time



Leonardo da Vinci, The Last Supper, 1520

Optics:

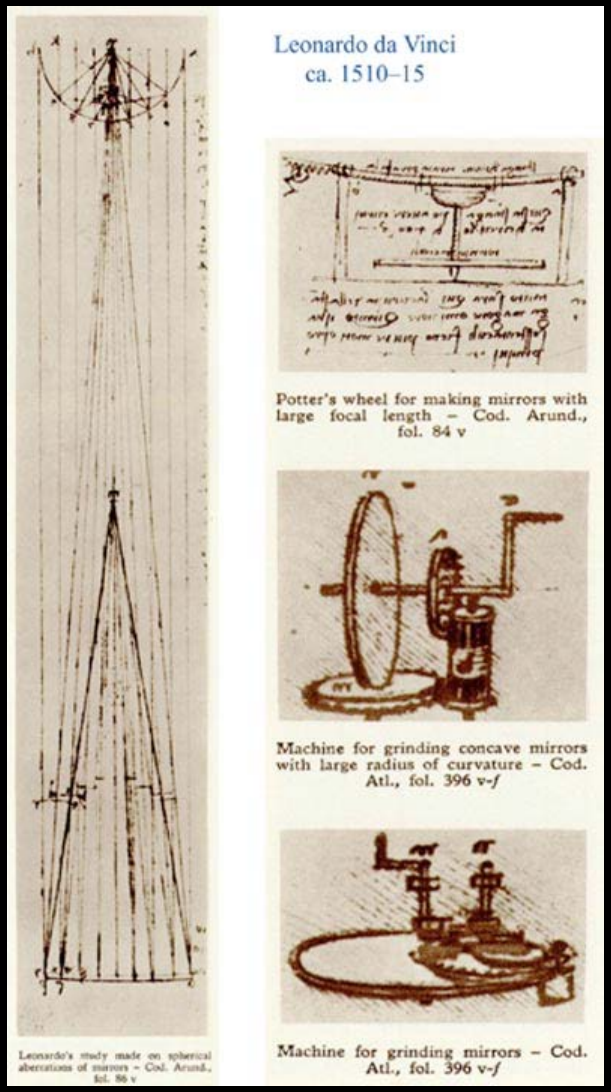
The scientific study of sight and the behavior of light, or the properties of transmission and deflection of other forms of radiation. Here we see figures from Leonardo da Vinci's surviving notebooks showing his interest in the optical properties of concave mirrors as well as in ways to use machines to replace skilled manual labor for their manufacture.



Leonardo da Vinci, ca. 1510–15

Left: Reflection of light in spherical concave mirror – Cod. Arund., fol. 87 r

Right: Paths of light rays in parabolic mirror – Cod. Atl., fol. 248 v-a



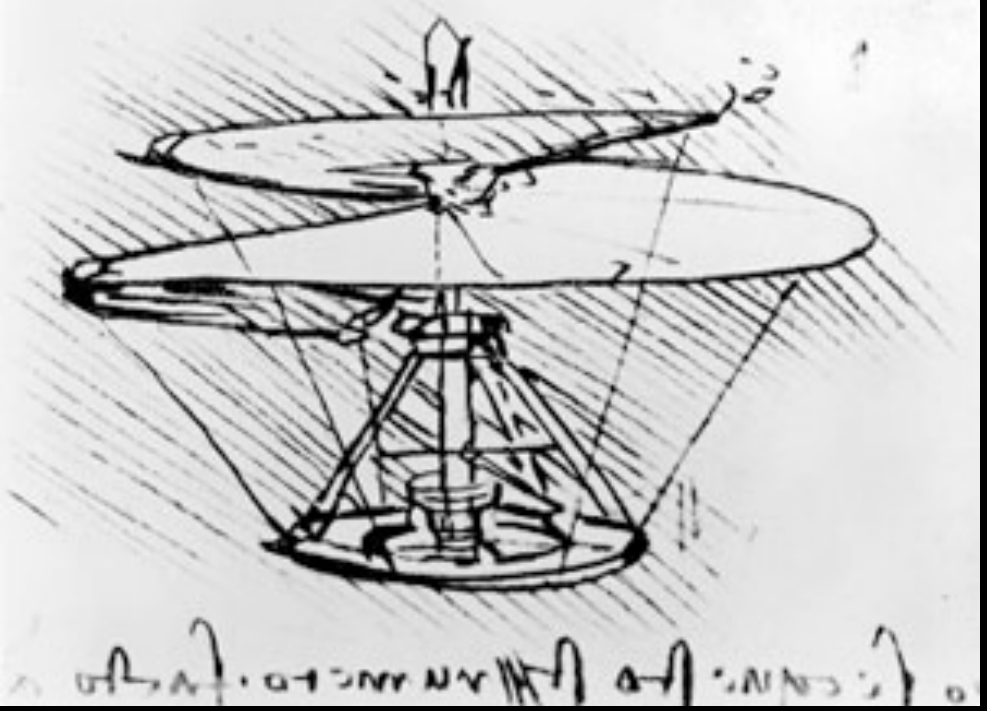
Leonardo da Vinci
ca. 1510–15

Potter's wheel for making mirrors with large focal length – Cod. Arund., fol. 84 v

Machine for grinding concave mirrors with large radius of curvature – Cod. Atl., fol. 396 v-*f*

Machine for grinding mirrors – Cod. Atl., fol. 396 v-*f*

Leonardo's study made on spherical aberrations of mirrors – Cod. Arund., fol. 86 v



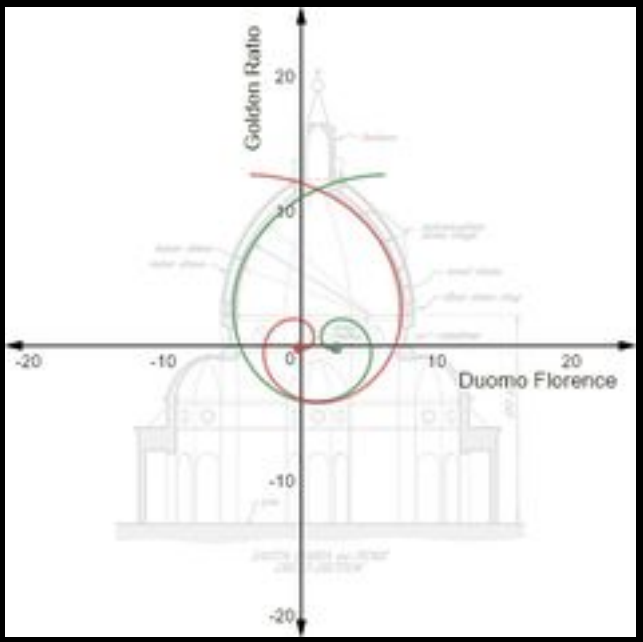
Leonardo Da Vinci, Ornithopter Flying Device, 1480

Leonardo Da Vinci, Armored War Vehicle, 1485

Filippo Brunelleschi, Duomo, 1480, Florence, Italy

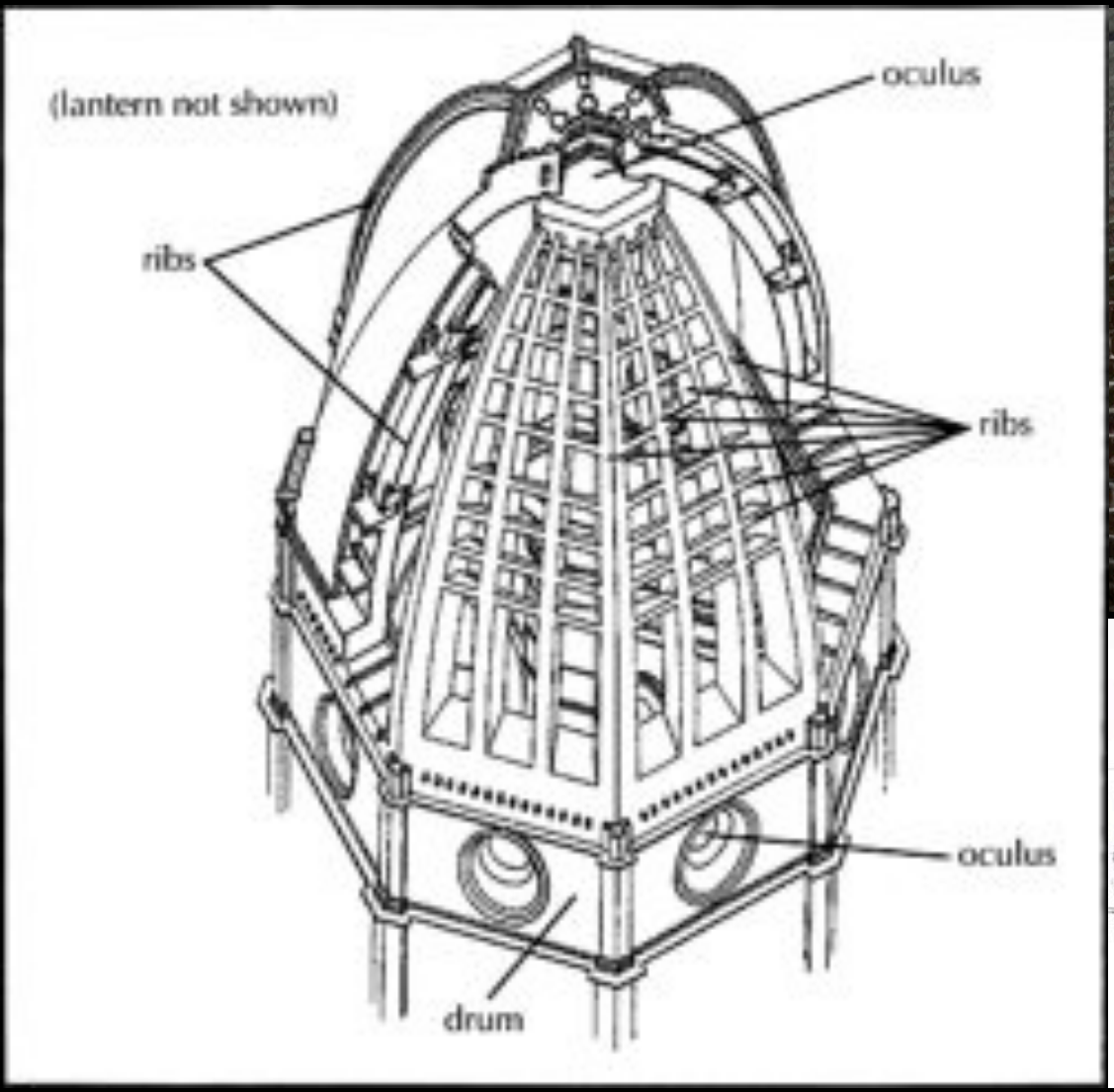
Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446)

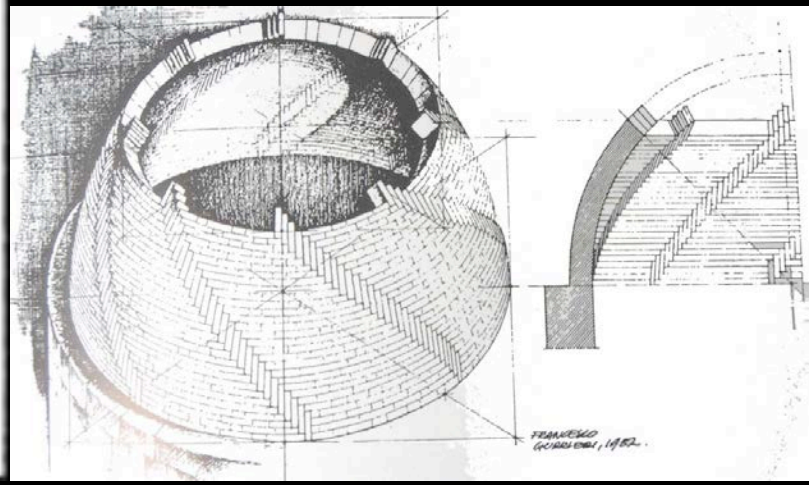
"Which man, whatever harsh or jealous, would not praise Filippo when seeing this enormous construction rise to the heavens, so vast that it could cover all the people of Tuscany with its shadow, and executed without the aid of beams or wooden struts." -- Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), in the prologue of his treatise on perspective, "De Pictura" (1435)



Giuseppe Fattori (1818- 1888)
The Florentine architect Brunelleschi proves his theory on the construction of the Cathedral dome with the aid of an egg

an eight-sided dome with an interior and exterior membrane





By using a double-shell design, Brunelleschi made the structure far lighter than a solid dome of this size. He wove the bricks into a herringbone pattern to give the dome additional solidity.

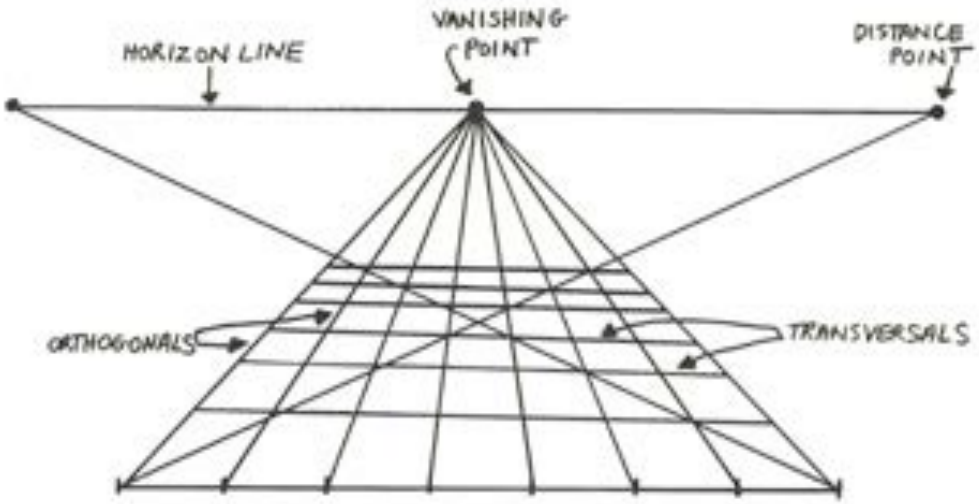
Filippo Brunelleschi, Duomo, 1480, Florence, Italy

Technology and Techniques of Vision

Technology as legerdemain…

How are technology and a techniques of vision at work in this painting?

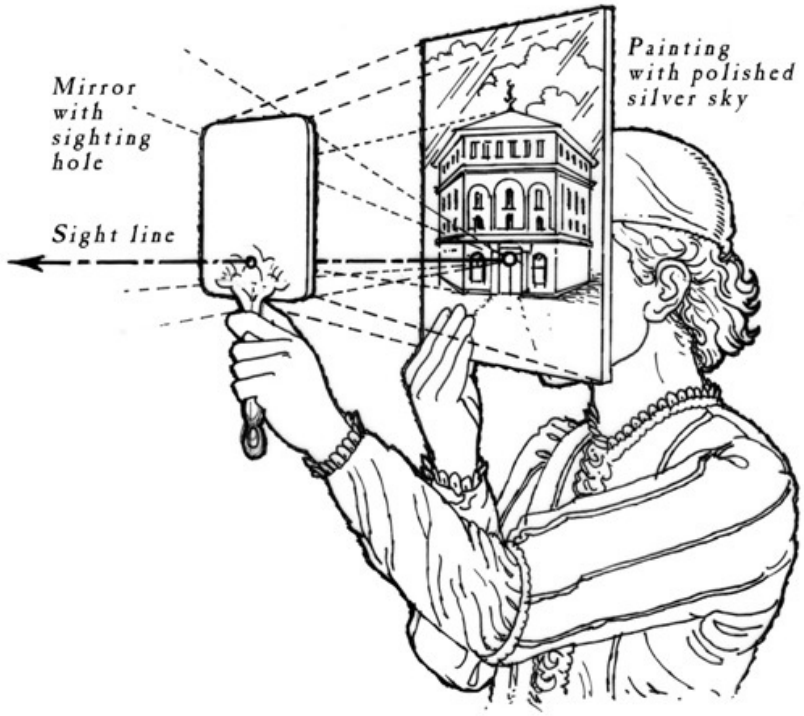
Pietro Perugino, Giving Of The Keys To St Peter, fresco in The Sistine Chapel, 1481

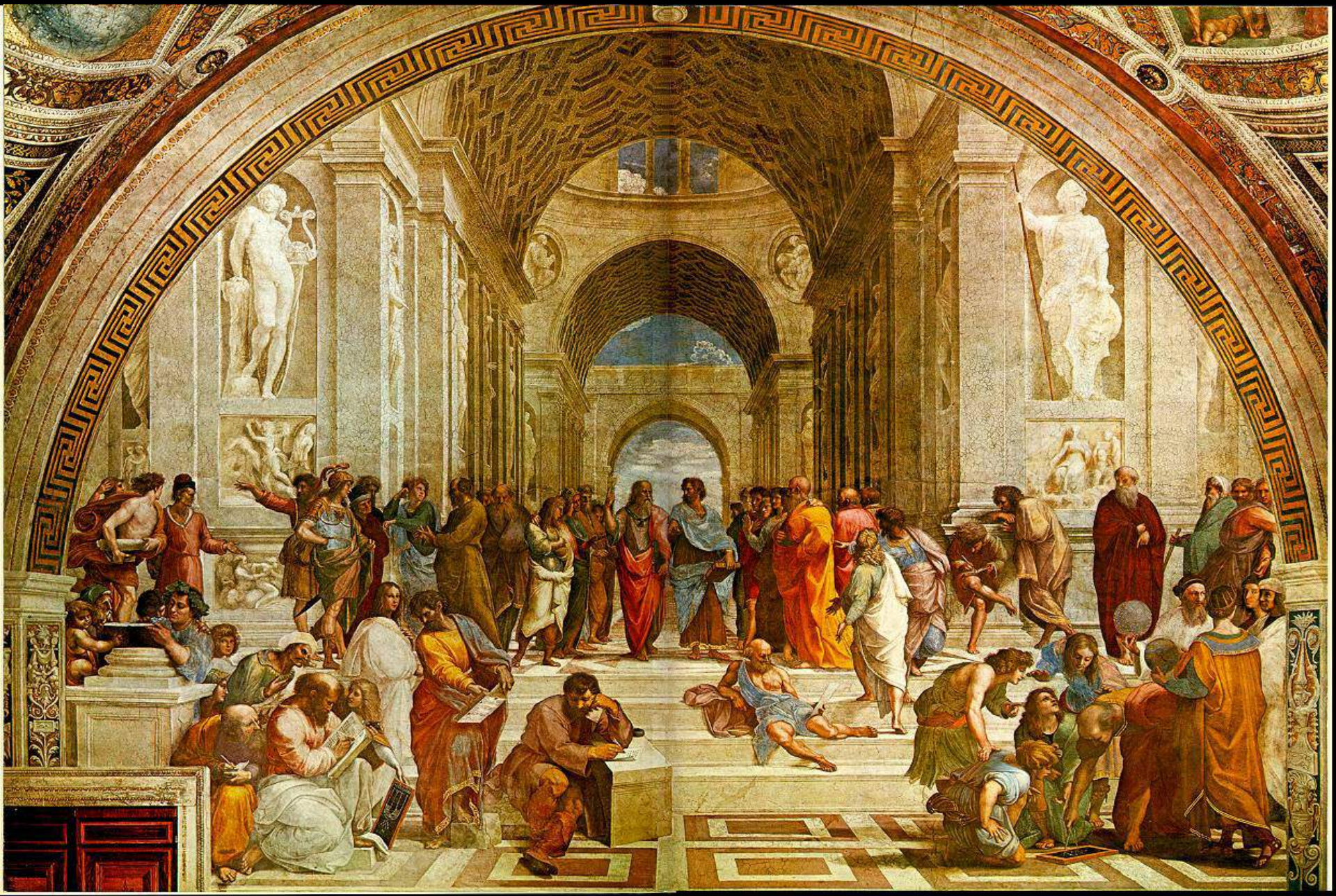


How do you make a picture realistic? Brunelleschi observed that with a fixed single point of view, parallel lines appear to converge at a single point in the distance. In a famous noted experiment, Brunelleschi used mirrors to sketch the Florence Baptistry in perfect perspective. He was able to mathematically calculate the scale of objects within a painting in order to make them appear realistic. Brunelleschi wanted his new perspective "realism" to be tested not by comparing the painted image to the actual Baptistery but to its reflection in a mirror according to the Euclidean laws of geometric optics.

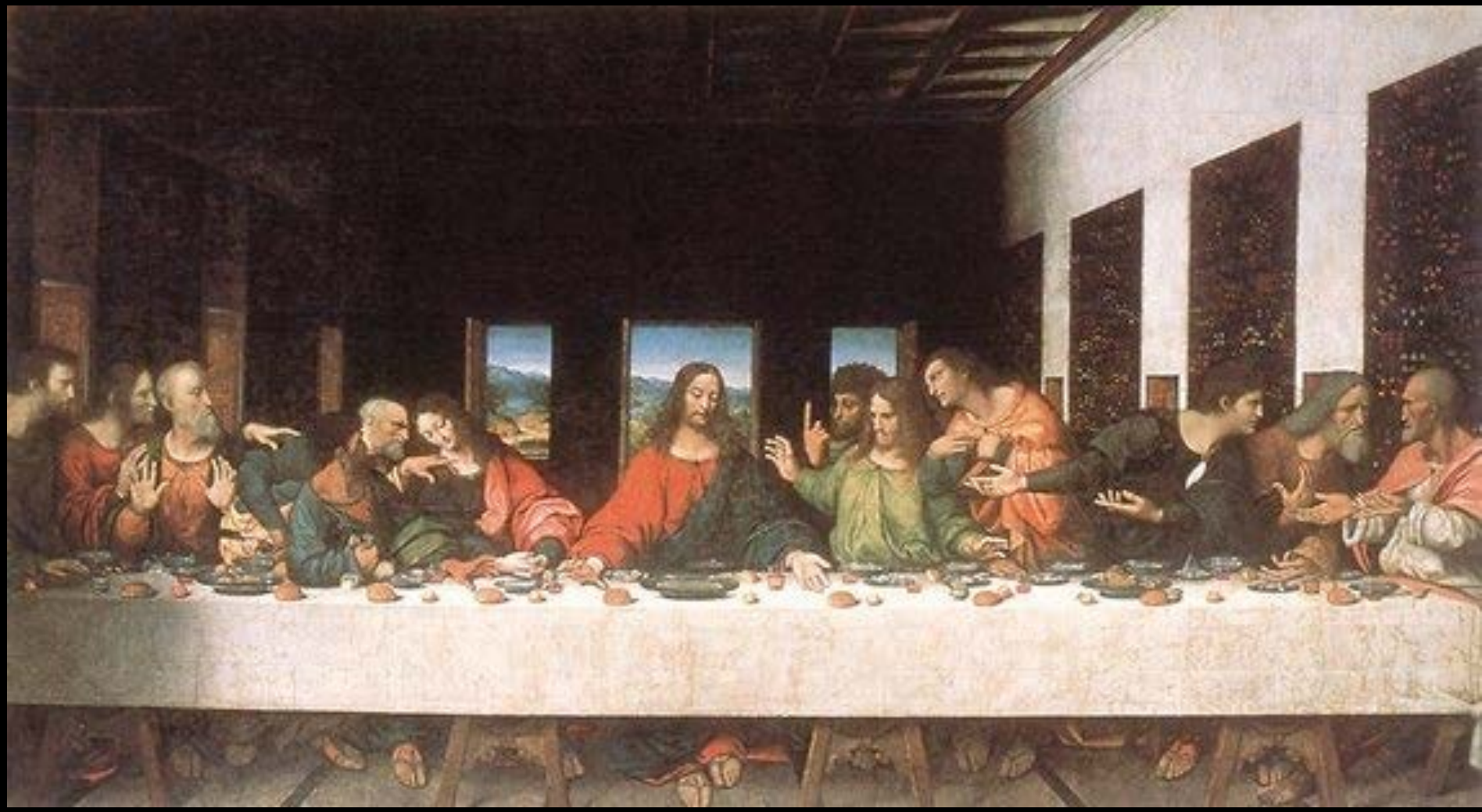
Filippo Brunelleschi, Linear Perspective, c. 1420

techniques of vision



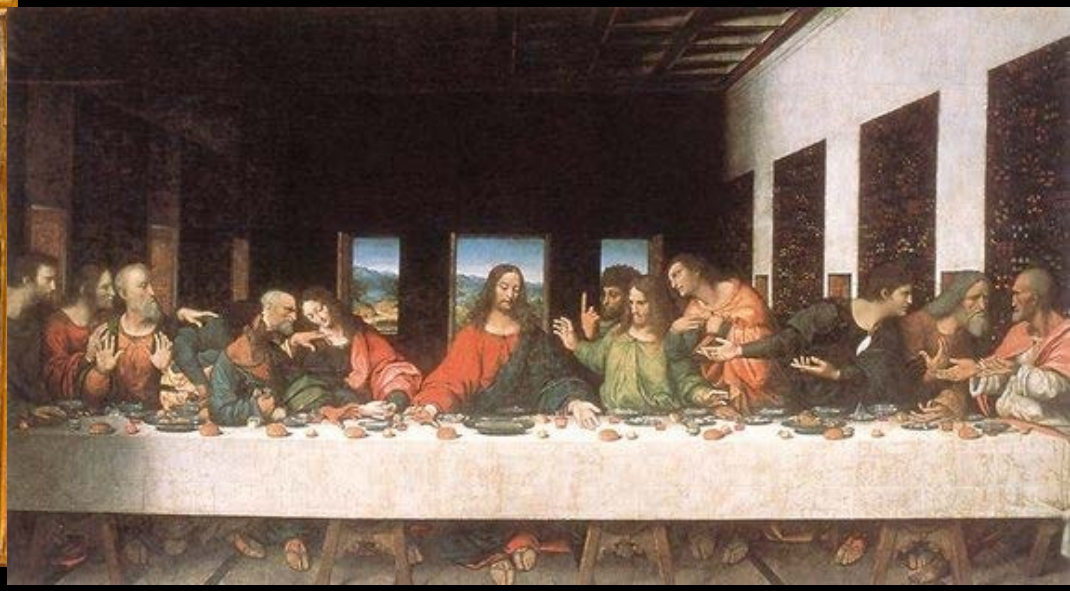


Raphael, School of Athens, 1509-10



Leonardo da Vinci, The Last Supper, 1520

Ugolino di Nerio, The Last Supper, 1324
FLOATING OR RELATIVE PERSPECTIVE

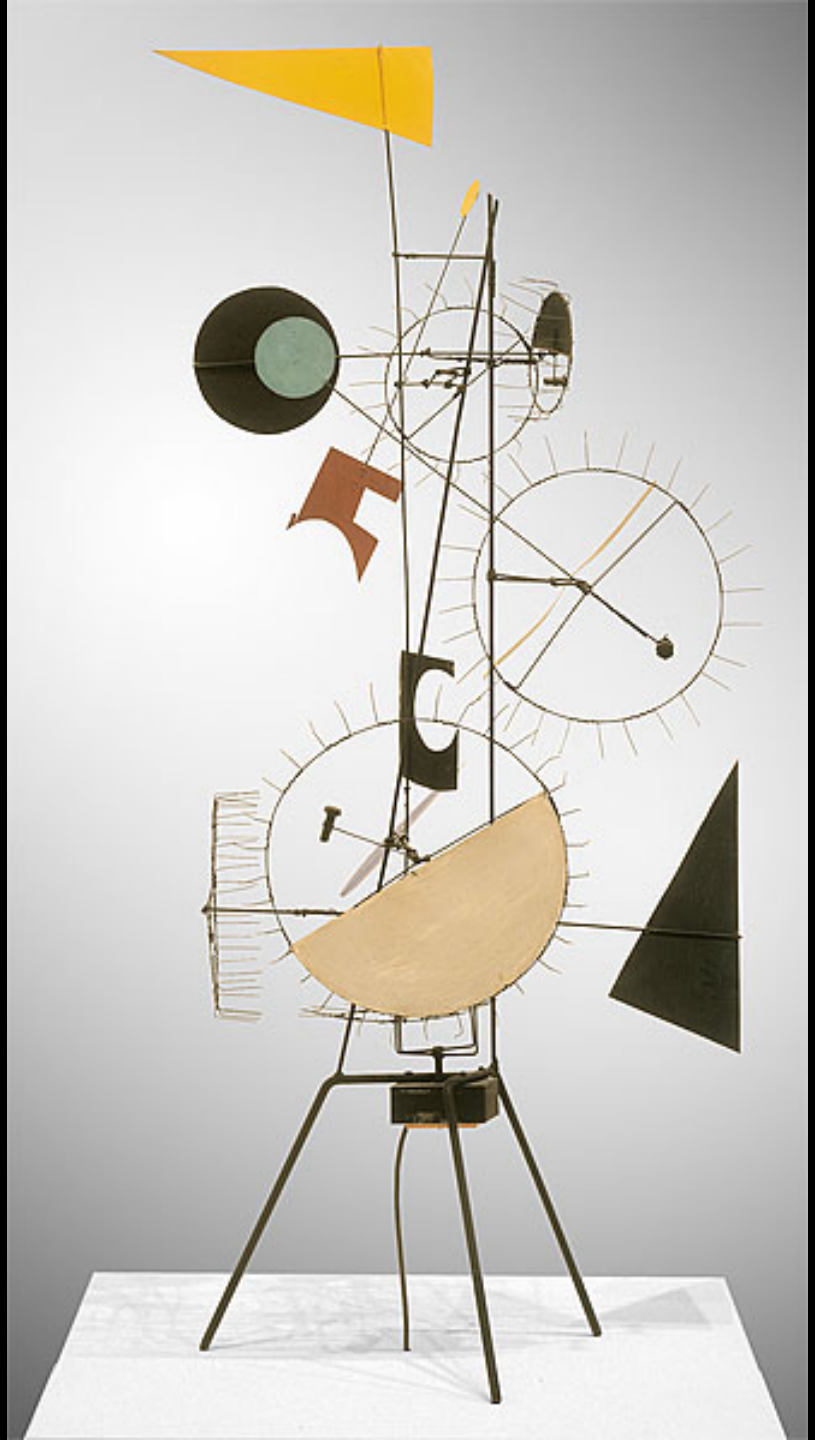


Leonardo da Vinci, The Last Supper, 1520
ONE-POINT PERSPECTIVE

New media art deals with the existential nature of technology.

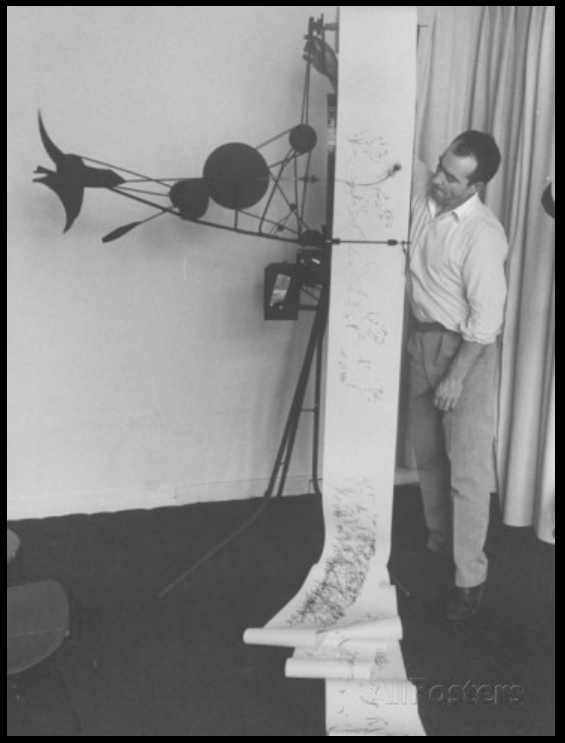
What is the “existential nature of technology”?

Jean Tinguely (1925-1991)



Jean Tinguely, Metamechanical, 1954

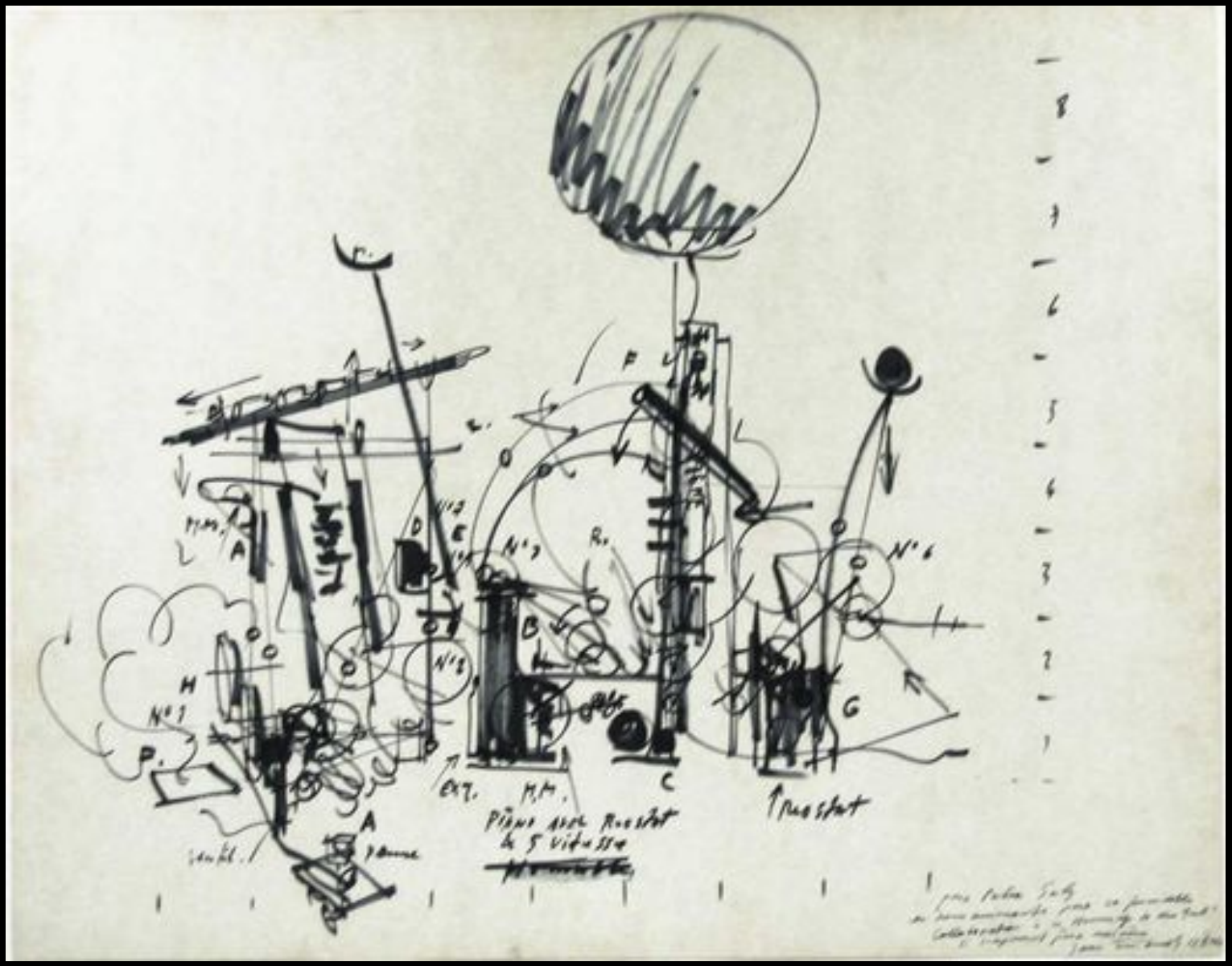
Jean Tinguely, Metamechanical #6, 1959



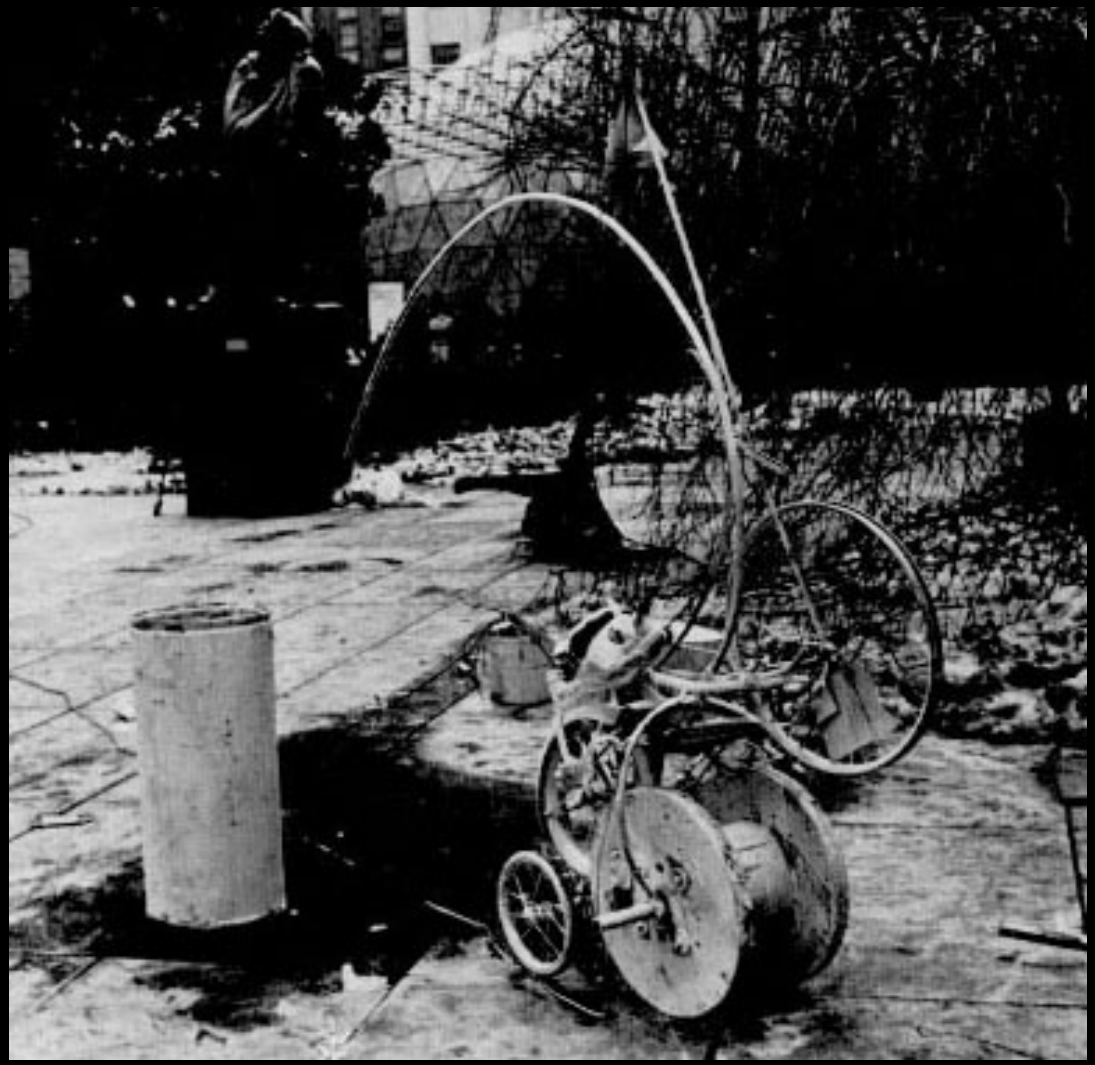
Tinguely at Iris Clert Galerie, 1959

Jean Tinguely, Méta-Matic #17, 1959

Le Mouvement, Galerie Denise René, 1955, Paris

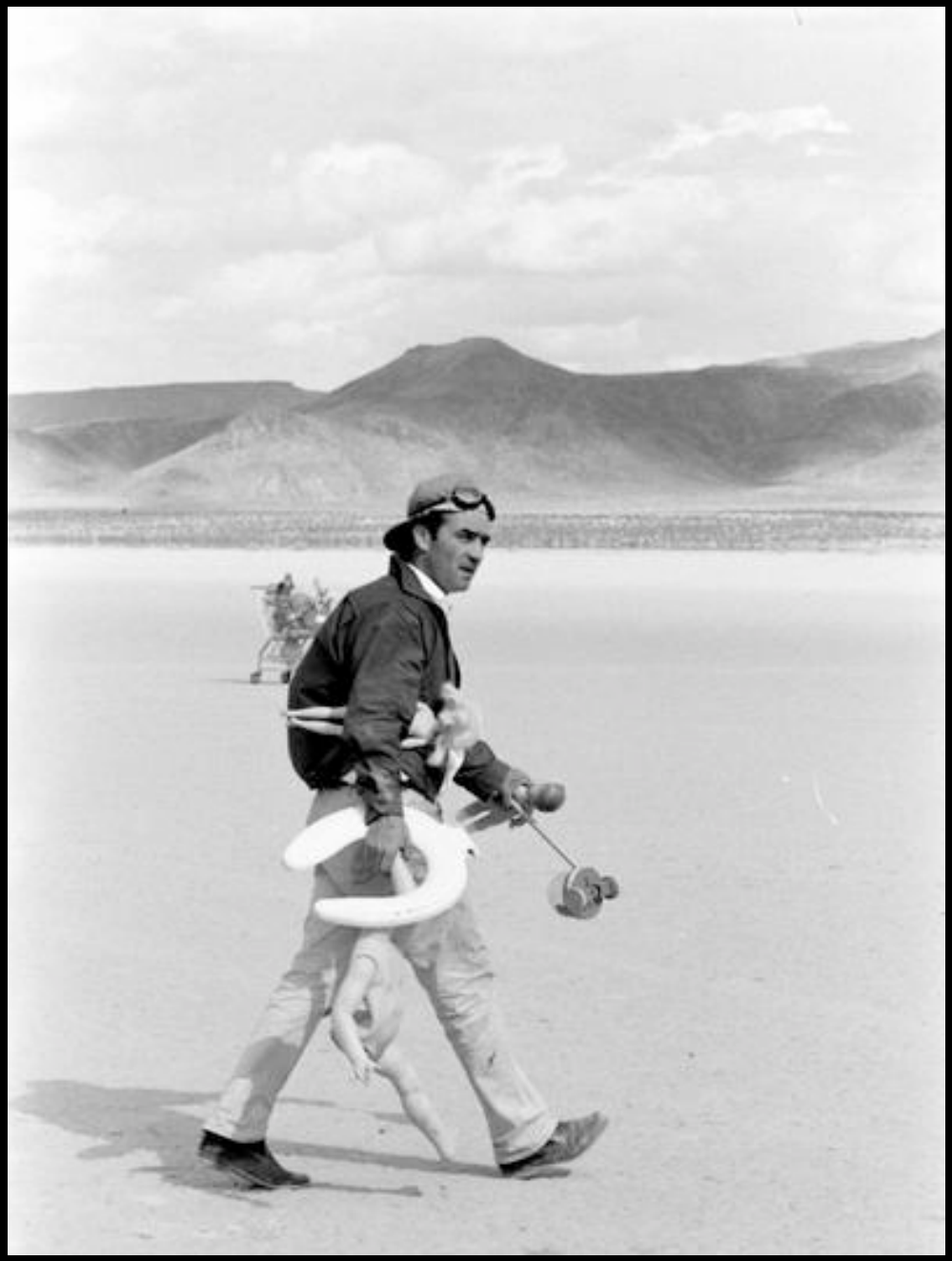


Jean Tinguely, Homage to New York, 1960



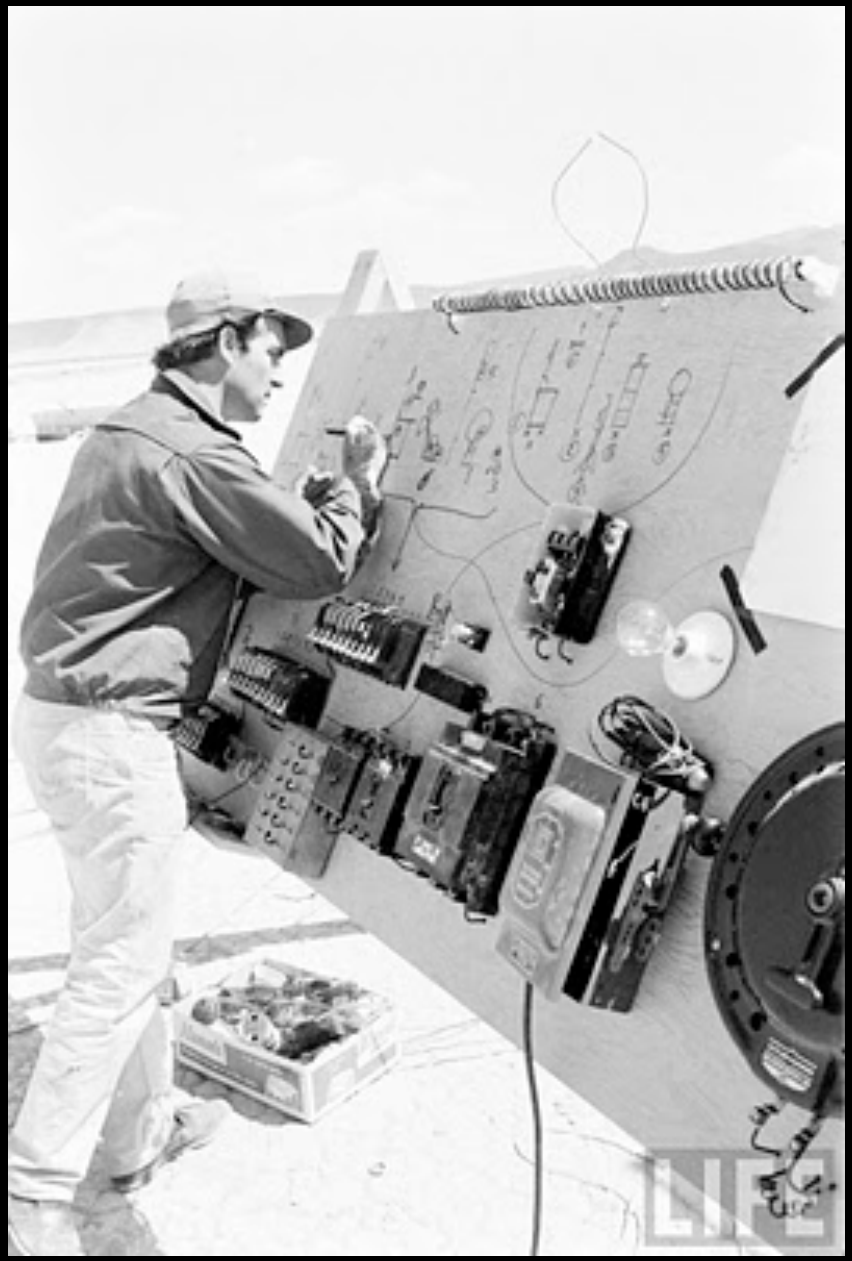
From *Time* magazine, March 1960:

“A machine that destroys itself," was the billing, and it proved irresistible to Manhattan's earnest pursuers of the avantgarde. Last week some 250 of them braved cold and slush to watch as Switzerland's Jean Tinguely fiddled and fussed with his 27-ft.-high tangle of white-painted iron in the garden of the Museum of Modern Art. An hour and a half later, the suicide-fated machine started flaming and sawing at its mixed-up insides, turned balky despite several judiciously aimed kicks from its creator, got doused betimes by an anxious fireman, and had to be finished off with an ax. Tinguely had spent three weeks preparing his gizmo, which he called Homage to New York. "New York is a phallic city," he explained, adding that he could not possibly have conceived of a suicidal sculpture anywhere else. His materials included a meteorological trial balloon, many bottles (to break), an upright piano, a gocart, a bathtub, hammers and saws, 80 bicycle wheels and sundry other items, picked for the most part from New Jersey dumps. The crowd was patient, and only booed the intruding fireman (who may have remembered that the Modern was almost destroyed by fire a scant two years ago). What the connoisseurs witnessed for their pains was an unbeautiful joke with no punch line. As the New York Times's Critic John Canaday gently put it: "Mr. Tinguely makes fools of machines while the rest of mankind permits machines to make fools of them. Tinguely's machine wasn't quite good enough, as a machine, to make his point.”



Study for an End of the World, No. 2 , 1962

Tinguely in Nevada desert outside of Las Vegas, 1962


LIFE


LIFE

Surrealism, Technology, Biology

Above: Yves Tanguy, Heredity of Acquired Characteristics, 1936

Top Left: Jean Study for an End of the World, No. 2 , 1962

Bottom Left: Yves Tanguy, 'Azure Day' 1937

Jean Tinguely in Nevada Desert Trying Out His Self-Destruction Machine Sculpture


LIFE

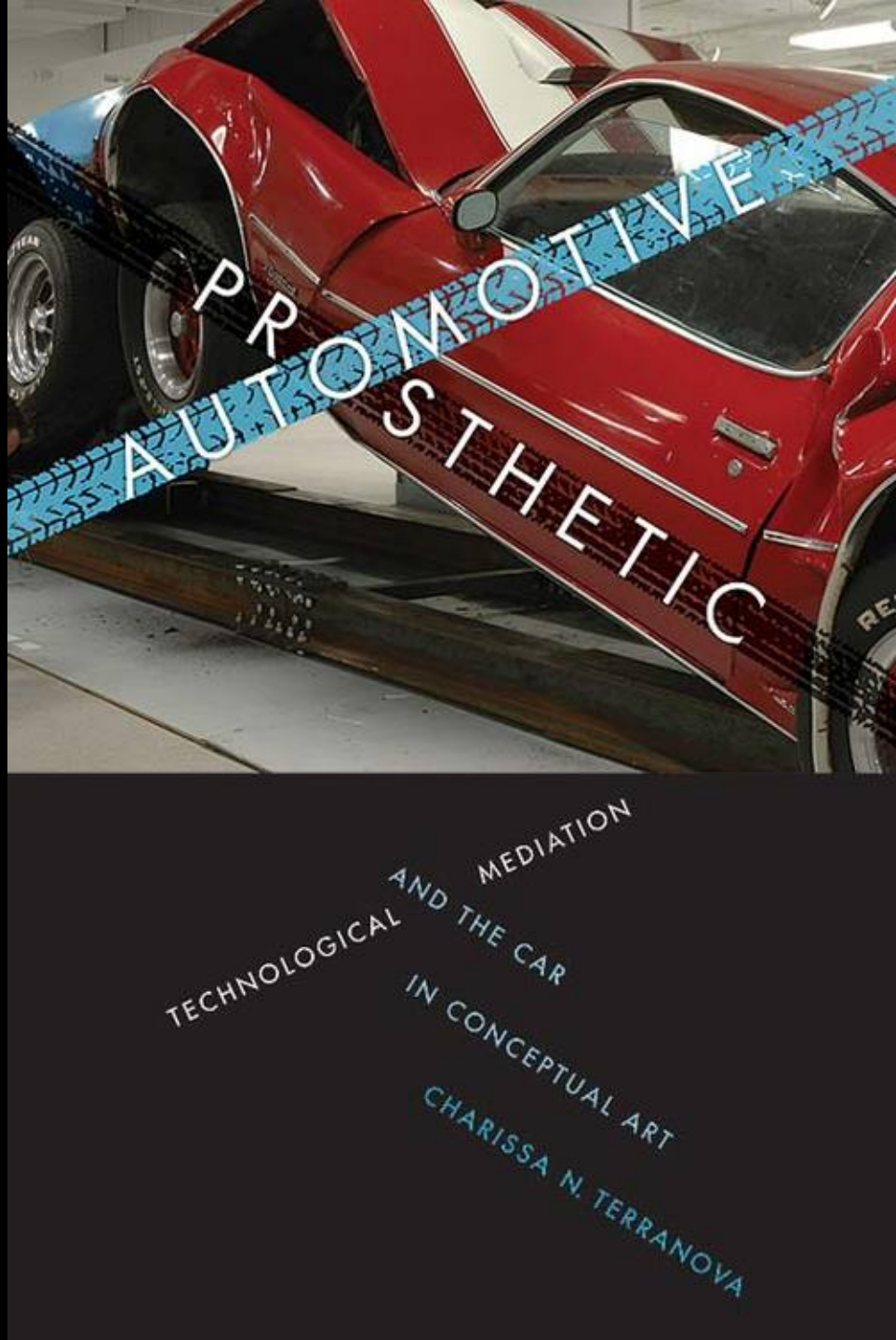
What is Tinguely's intention here?

How is destruction in art generative of meaning?

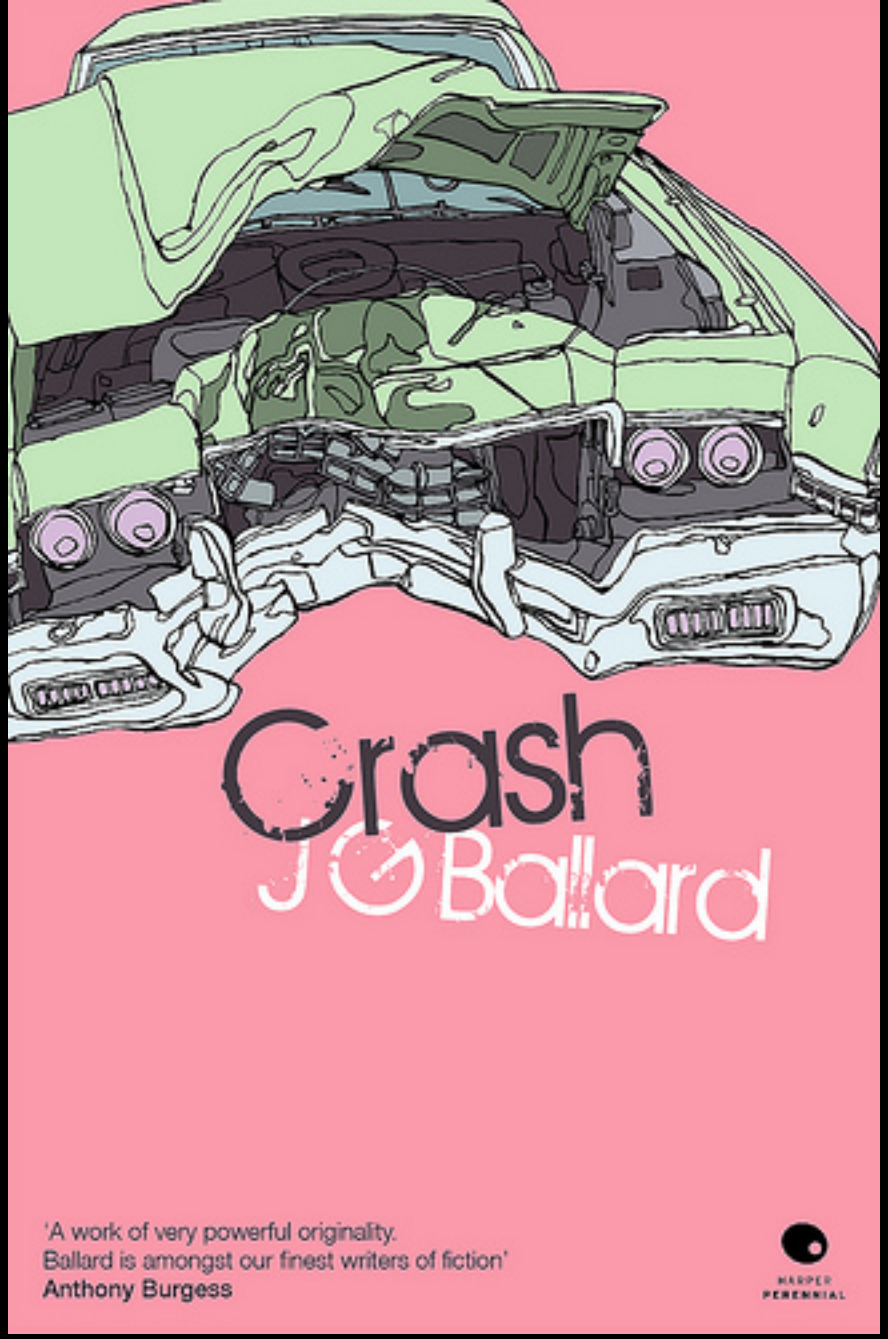
What are existential themes here?

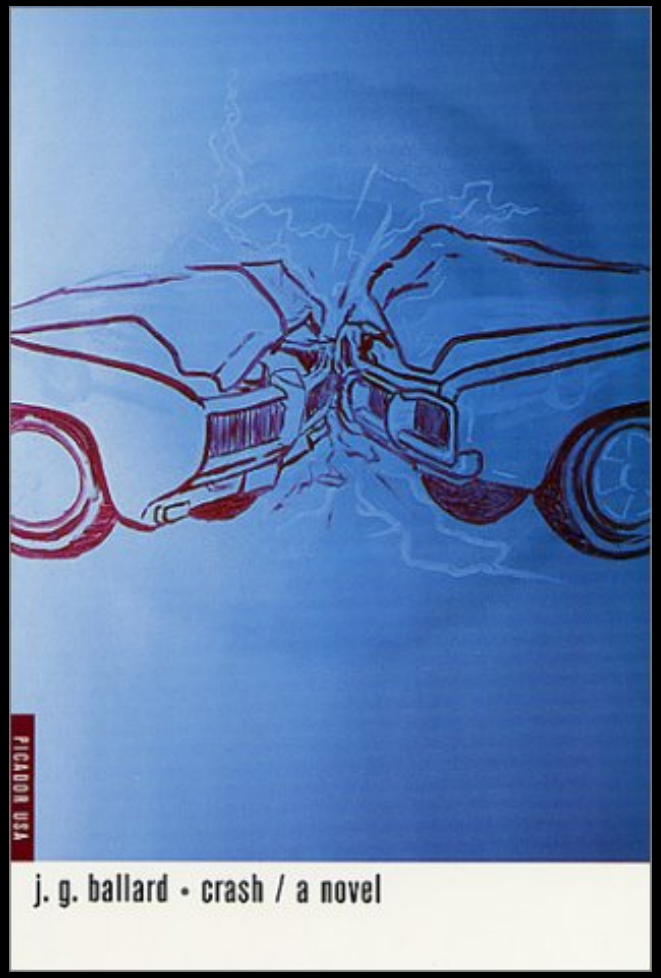
Aesthetic Experience of Technology

Automotive Prosthetic: Technological Mediation and the Car in Conceptual Art




SPEED
LIMIT
25
NO
SHOULDER





A car crash harnesses elements of eroticism, aggression, desire, speed, drama, kinesthetic factors, the stylizing of motion, consumer goods, status -- all these in one event. I myself see the car crash as a tremendous sexual event really: a liberation of human and machine libido (if there is such a thing).

JG Ballard

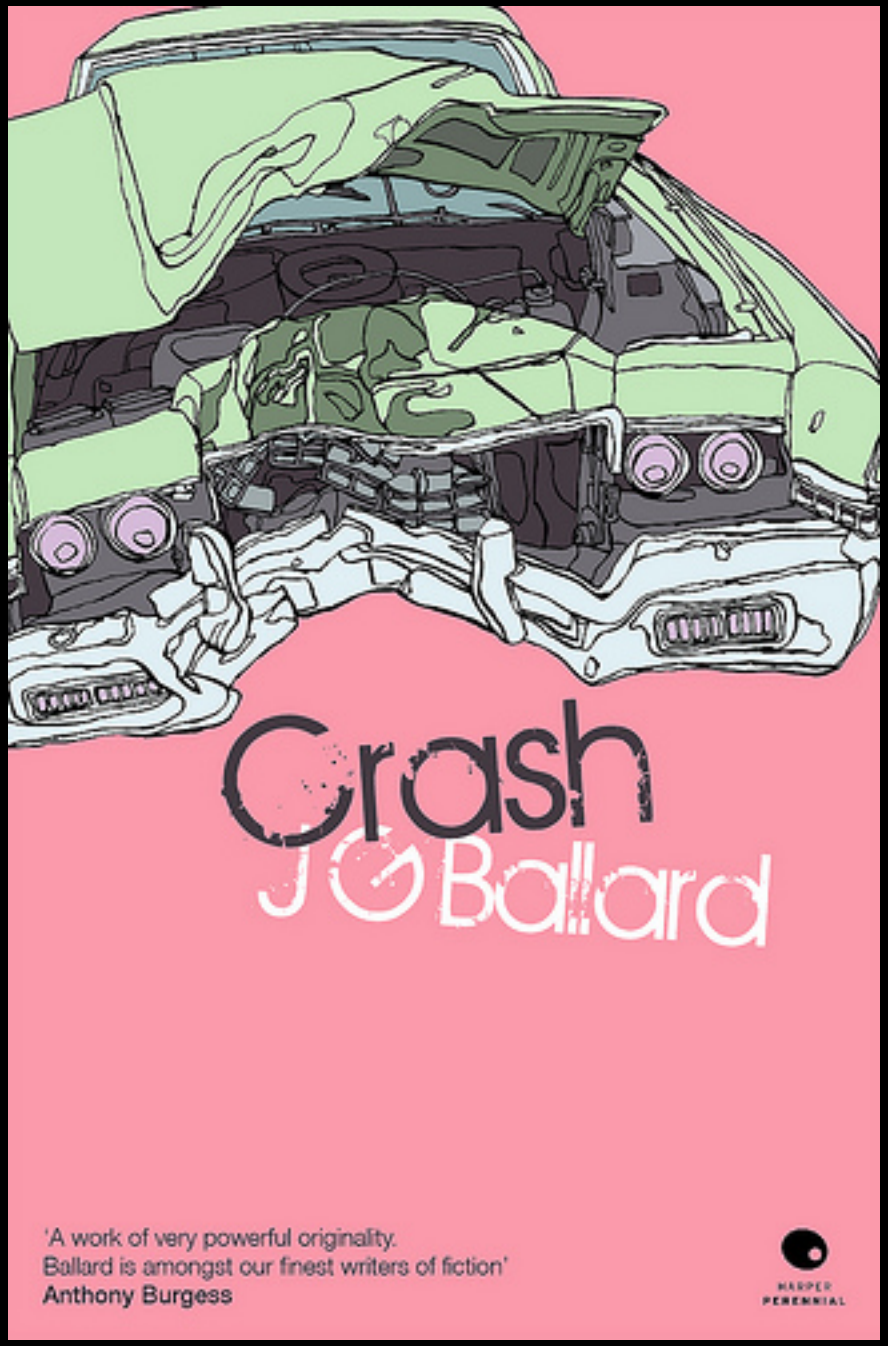
Richard Prince, Continuation, 2004-5

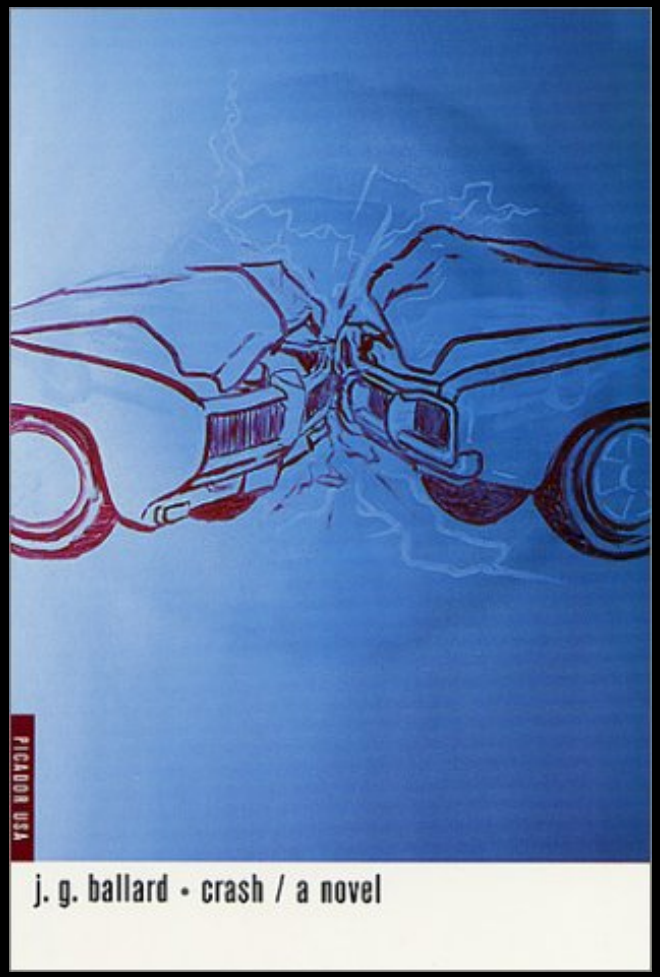
How is this existential?

Richard Prince, American Sex Drive, 2008

Is this existential or something else?

From SHE: Images of Women by Wallace Berman and Richard Prince at the Michael Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, 2009


Crash
J G Ballard
'A work of very powerful originality.
Ballard is amongst our finest writers of fiction'
Anthony Burgess
HARPER
PERENNIAL

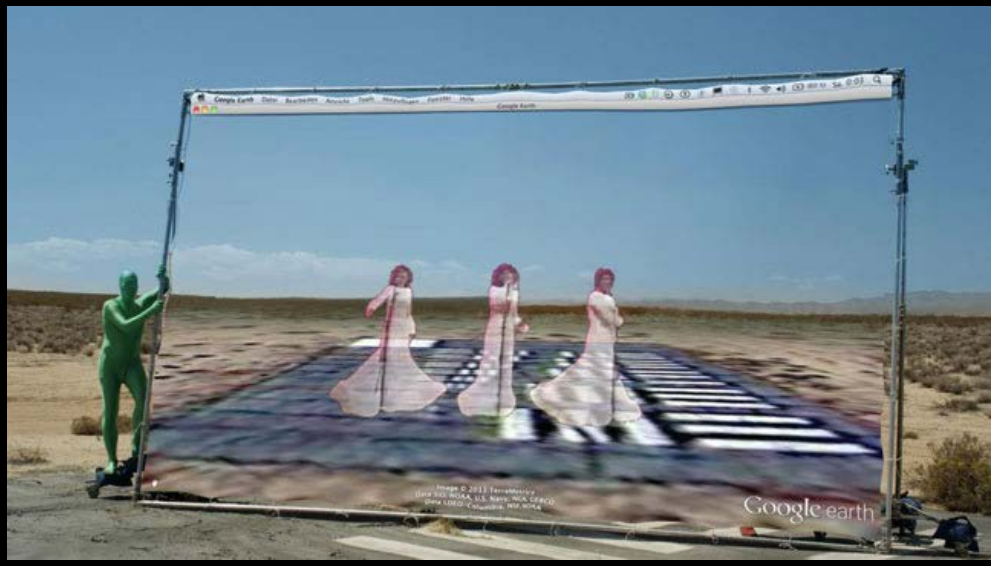

PICADOR USA
j. g. ballard • crash / a novel

Jonathan Schipper, The Slow Inevitable Death of Muscle, 2009


REMINGTON

This sculpture is a machine that advances two full sized automobiles slowly into one another over a period of 6 days, simulating a head on automobile collision. Each car moves about three feet into the other. The movement is so slow as to be invisible. It is almost impossible to watch a modern action film without at least one automobile wreck. Why do we find interest and excitement it new versions of the same event? Why are we not satisfied? Cars are extensions of our body and our ego. We buy or modify cars that reflect our personalities and egos. When we see an automobile destroyed, in a way we are looking at our own inevitable death. This moment is, because of its inherent speed, almost invisible. We have slowed the event via film and video but only from a cameras perspective. We never get to see the transformation of living breathing car too wreck in its entirety, in detail. This piece offers the viewer the ability to examine in three dimensions the collision of these cars. A moment that might take a fraction of a second in an actual collision will be expanded to take days. Car wrecks are spectacular moments. This piece by changing one of the key variables removes and changes the nature of the event. What was life threatening is now rendered safe. What was supremely spectacular is now almost static. The wreck has been broken down to its Newtonian components. We are left to contemplate our own mortality our own Newtonian components.

Jonathan Schipper



Hito Steyerl, *How Not to be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File*, 2013

https://www.artforum.com/video/mode=large&id=51651