Stephanie Boluk
Patrick LeMieux
Dan Tankersley

tilt/SHIFT

September 15 - October 8, 2014
Western Oregon University
Cannon Gallery of Art

In the summer of 2014, the Cannon Gallery of Art invited Stephanie Boluk, a scholar and media theorist from Pratt Institute, and Patrick LeMieux, an artist and game designer from Duke University, to undertake a collaborative residency with Daniel Tankersley, an artist on faculty at Western Oregon University. From July 7 to 17, these three artists engaged the gallery, the campus, and the state of Oregon to produce ***tilt/SHIFT***, an exhibition of a dozen new artworks comprising a network of photographic images, graphic user interfaces, media archeology, and site-specific art.

The term “tilt-shift” refers to a photographic technique in which the angle (tilt) and position (shift) of a lens are skewed in relation to the film or digital sensor. This can be used to effect a kind of hyperselective focus, blurring all but a thin, sharp plane within an image--often producing miniaturized or toylike appearances. The same narrowing of visual attention is enacted by a “manicule,” the miniature, pointing hand that first appeared in medieval manuscripts and is commonly used to represent the mouse cursor in computer operating systems. Click, drag, tilt, shift: both tilt-shift photography and the manicule icon operate according to an aesthetic of selection.

Paper or plastic? Coke or Pepsi? iPhone or Android? In the 21st century, selection expands from the conscious choice of individuals into a collective nonconscious--a cultural ideology structuring attention and desire. Upvote, like, heart, favorite: ubiquitous media platforms like Google and Facebook aggregate billions of individual selections into an invisible economy of clicks, flowing through The Dalles like the waters of the Columbia River. From a giant shift key to tilt-shift photography, and from shifted and tilted gallery furniture to the shifts and tilts of arcade play, ***tilt/SHIFT*** renders the culture of selection visible by appropriating its aesthetic.

Western Oregon University, the community of Monmouth, and the surrounding landscape of the Pacific Northwest provided a focal point and vital support for this exhibition. Special thanks to Paula Booth, Spencer Miller, Tony Kment, Mark Schroeder, Lexie Widmer, and Jann and Tom Tankersley for tilting and shifting their schedules to accommodate the residency.

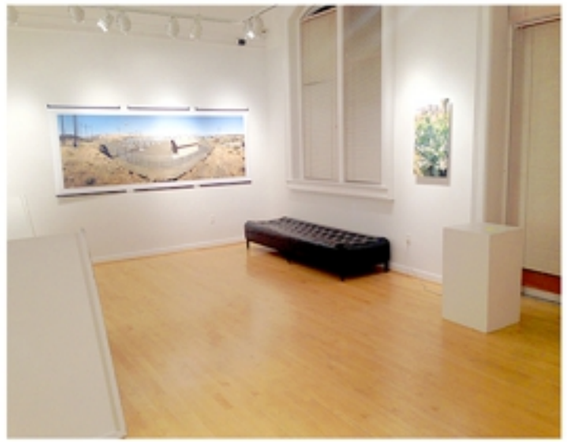
Dan and Gail Cannon Gallery of Art

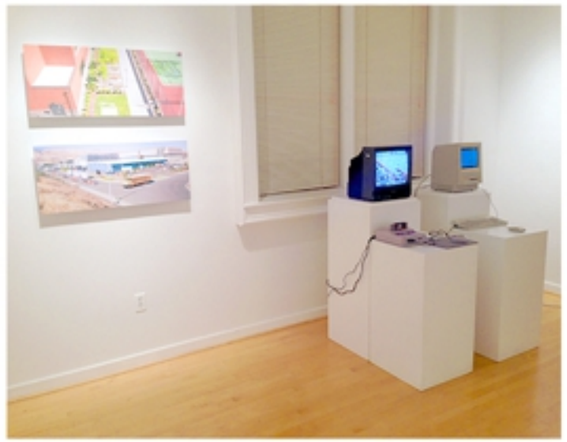
345 N. Monmouth Ave.
Monmouth, Oregon 97361

Monday-Friday, 8am–5pm and by appointment
(503) 838-8607 or email boothp@wou.edu


shift


shift





Read Me

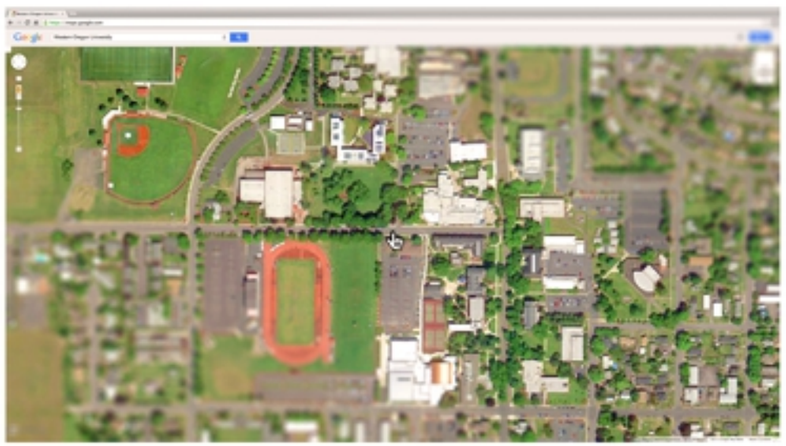
dimensions variable
Mickey Mitts, binder, plinth, hook
July 2014

Please wear the gloves to inspect the book.

Depth of Field

60 x 30 inches
inkjet prints
July 2014

Triptych of tilt-shifted, rooftop photographs of Western Oregon University in Monmouth.



Tilted Shift

48 x 20 x 10 inches
plywood, latex, zinc
July 2014

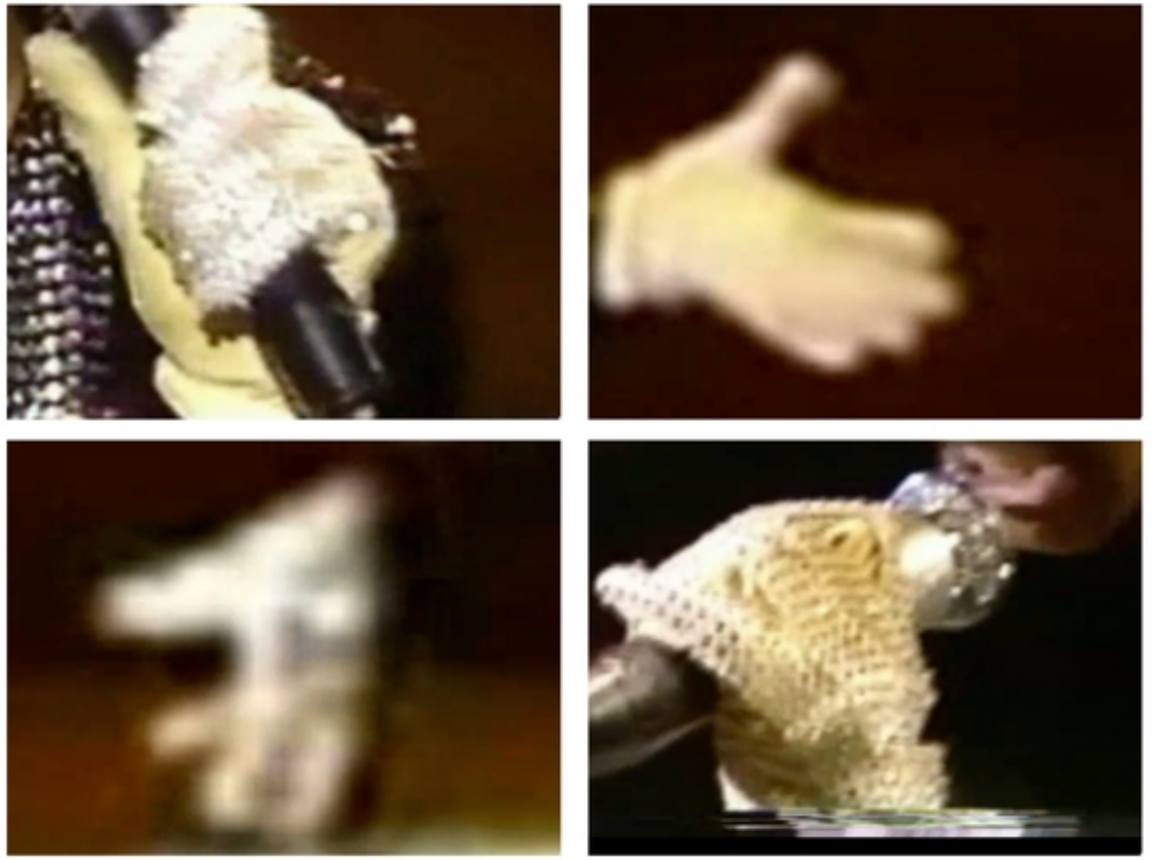
A giant shift key, built to scale and tilted against the wall.


shift

This is Not a (Half) Pipe

10 x 8 x 5 feet
skateboard, plywood wall divider
July 2014

Tilted and shifted away from the upright position, the Cannon Gallery's movable walls undergo a transformation to become sculptural objects in their own right. Referencing the classic caption floating beneath the photorealistic pipe in René Magritte's *The Treachery of Images* (1928-29), this (half) pipe plays with the "magic circle" of significance that both art galleries and skate parks produce. That is not a grinding rail, it's a park bench; that is not a (half) pipe, it's a piece of gallery furniture; and that is not a pipe, it's a painting of a pipe. From Magritte to Super Mario, the magic circle of art and games produce semiotic warp zones for conceptual experimentation, opening thresholds to new worlds or making useful links within familiar territory.



Michael Manicule

dimensions variable
video loop
July 2014

On March 25, 1983, Michael Jackson made music history by performing the first moonwalk during a performance of “Billie Jean” on Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, Forever. During this performance, Jackson also donned a single, white, sequined glove for the first time. Both the moonwalk and the glove would become iconic, signature images within the pop singer’s repertoire. In this algorithmically edited video of Jackson’s performance, open source data from Evan Roth and Ben Engebreth’s *White Glove Tracking* (2007), was used to zoom in on just the glove.

// 490 frames (~16.3 seconds) of data from *White Glove Tracking* (2007) by Evan Roth and Ben Engebreth

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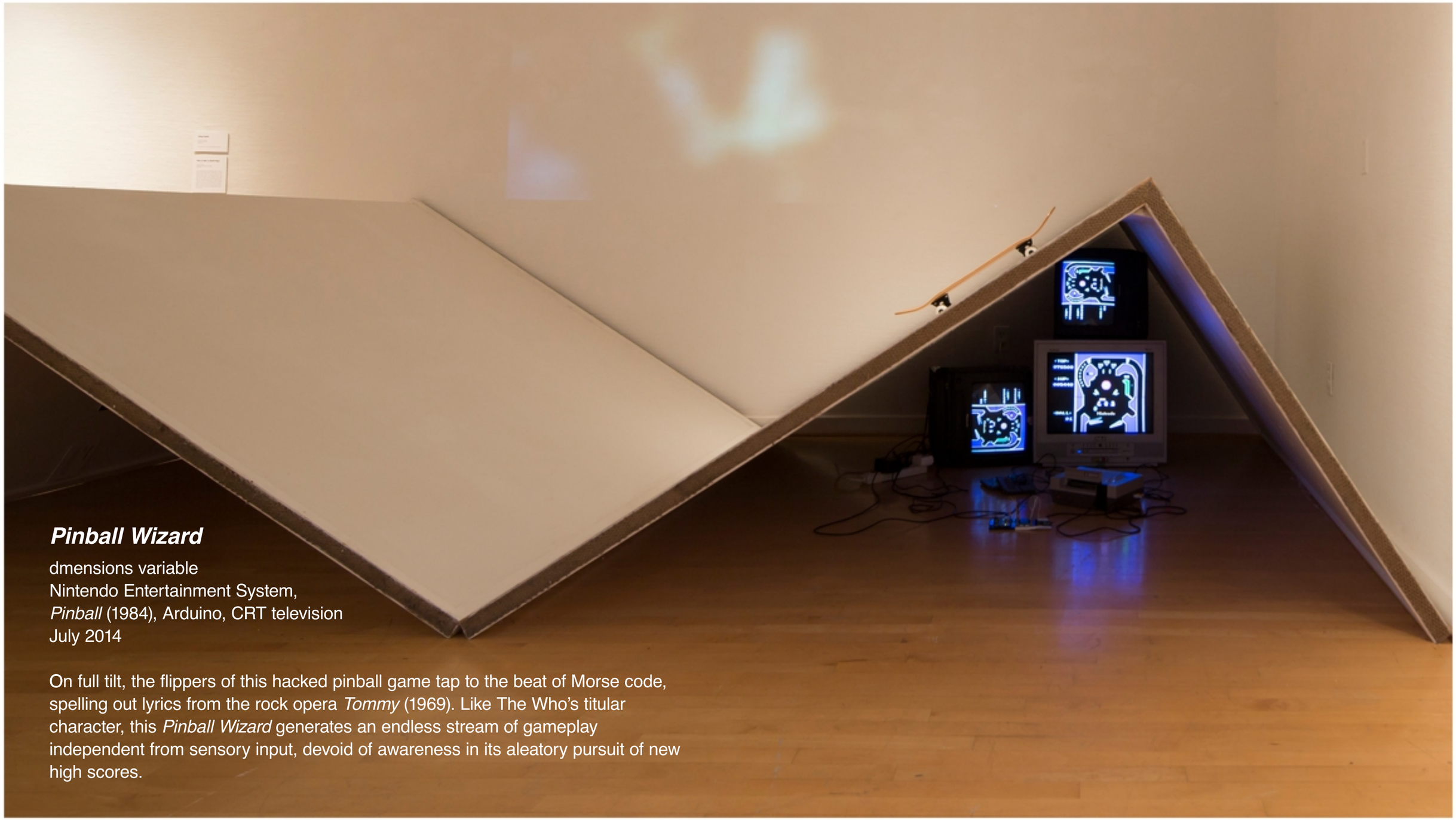


Pinball Wizard

dmensions variable
Nintendo Entertainment System,
Pinball (1984), Arduino, CRT television
July 2014

On full tilt, the flippers of this hacked pinball game tap to the beat of Morse code, spelling out lyrics from the rock opera *Tommy* (1969). Like The Who's titular character, this *Pinball Wizard* generates an endless stream of gameplay independent from sensory input, devoid of awareness in its aleatory pursuit of new high scores.

```
// Initialize variables
int LEFT = 13; int RIGHT = 12; int START = 11; int time = 120;
void setup() { pinMode(LEFT, OUTPUT); pinMode(RIGHT, OUTPUT); pinMode(START, OUTPUT); Serial.begin(9600); }


// Declare lyrics to "Pinball Wizard" by The Who
char lyrics[1076] =
"EVER _ SINCE _ I _ WAS _ A _ YOUNG _ BOY.IVE _ PLAYED _ THE _ SILVER _ BALL.FROM _ SOHO _ DOWN _ TO _ BRIGHTON.I _ MUST _ HAVE _ PLAYED _ THEM _ ALL.BUT _ I _ AINT _ SEEN _ NOTHI
NG _ LIKE _ HIM.IN _ ANY _ AMUSEMENT _ HALL.THAT _ DEAF _ DUMB _ AND _ BLIND _ KID.SURE _ PLAYS _ A _ MEAN _ PIN _ BALL.HE _ STANDS _ LIKE _ A _ STATUE.BECOMES _ PART _ OF _ THE
_ MACHINE.FEELING _ ALL _ THE _ BUMPERS.ALWAYS _ PLAYING _ CLEAN.HE _ PLAYS _ BY _ INTUITION.THE _ DIGIT _ COUNTERS _ FALL.THAT _ DEAF _ DUMB _ AND _ BLIND _ KID.SURE _ PLAYS _
A _ MEAN _ PIN _ BALL.HES _ A _ PIN _ BALL _ WIZARD.THERE _ HAS _ GOT _ TO _ BE _ A _ TWIST.A _ PIN _ BALL _ WIZARD.SGOT _ SUCH _ A _ SUPPLE _ WRIST.HOW _ DO _ YOU _ THINK _ HE _ DO
ES _ IT.I _ DONT _ KNOW.WHAT _ MAKES _ HIM _ SO _ GOOD.HE _ AINT _ GOT _ NO _ DISTRACTIONS.CANT _ HEAR _ THOSE _ BUZZERS _ AND _ BELLS.DONT _ SEE _ LIGHTS _ A _ FLASHIN.PLAYS _ B
Y _ SENSE _ OF _ SMELL.ALWAYS _ HAS _ A _ REPLAY.N _ NEVER _ TILTS _ AT _ ALL.THAT _ DEAF _ DUMB _ AND _ BLIND _ KID.SURE _ PLAYS _ A _ MEAN _ PIN _ BALL.I _ THOUGHT _ I _ WAS.THE
_ BALLY _ TABLE _ KING.BUT _ I _ JUST _ HANDED.MY _ PIN _ BALL _ CROWN _ TO _ HIM.EVEN _ ON _ MY _ FAVORITE _ TABLE.HE _ CAN _ BEAT _ MY _ BEST.HIS _ DISCIPLES _ LEAD _ HIM _ IN.AN
D _ HE _ JUST _ DOES _ THE _ REST.HES _ GOT _ CRAZY _ FLIPPER _ FINGERS.NEVER _ SEEN _ HIM _ FALL.THAT _ DEAF _ DUMB _ AND _ BLIND _ KIND.SURE _ PLAYS _ A _ MEAN _ PIN _ BALL.";


// Parse lyrics; call letter
void loop() {
  for (int i=0; i < 1075; i++) {
    if (lyrics[i] == 'A') { A(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'B') { B(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'C') { C(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'D') { D(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'E') { E(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'F') { FF(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'G') { G(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'H') { H(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'I') { I(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'J') { J(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'K') { K(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'L') { L(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'M') { M(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'N') { N(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'O') { O(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'P') { P(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'Q') { Q(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'R') { R(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'S') { S(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'T') { T(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'U') { U(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'V') { V(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'W') { W(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'X') { X(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'Y') { Y(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == 'Z') { Z(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == ' _ ') { space(); }
    else if (lyrics[i] == '.') { line(); }
}  }


// Parse letter; call code
void A () { Serial.print('A'); dot(); dash(); wait(); }
void B () { Serial.print('B'); dash(); dot(); dot(); dot(); wait(); }
void C () { Serial.print('C'); dash(); dot(); dash(); dot(); wait(); }
void D () { Serial.print('D'); dash(); dot(); dot(); wait(); }
void E () { Serial.print('E'); dot(); wait(); }
void FF () { Serial.print('F'); dot(); dot(); dash(); dot(); wait(); }
void G () { Serial.print('G'); dash(); dash(); dot(); wait(); }
void H () { Serial.print('H'); dot(); dot(); dot(); dot(); wait(); }
void I () { Serial.print('I'); dot(); dot(); wait(); }
void J () { Serial.print('J'); dot(); dash(); dash(); dash(); wait(); }
void K () { Serial.print('K'); dash(); dot(); dash(); wait(); }
void L () { Serial.print('L'); dot(); dash(); dot(); dot(); wait(); }
void M () { Serial.print('M'); dash(); dash(); wait(); }
void N () { Serial.print('N'); dash(); dot(); wait(); }
void O () { Serial.print('O'); dash(); dash(); dash(); wait(); }
void P () { Serial.print('P'); dot(); dash(); dash(); dot(); wait(); }
void Q () { Serial.print('Q'); dash(); dash(); dot(); dash(); wait(); }
void R () { Serial.print('R'); dot(); dash(); dot(); wait(); }
void S () { Serial.print('S'); dot(); dot(); dot(); wait(); }
void T () { Serial.print("T"); dash(); wait(); }
void U () { Serial.print('U'); dot(); dot(); dash(); wait(); }
void V () { Serial.print('V'); dot(); dot(); dot(); dash(); wait(); }
void W () { Serial.print('W'); dot(); dash(); dash(); wait(); }
void X () { Serial.print('X'); dash(); dot(); dot(); dash(); wait(); }
void Y () { Serial.print('Y'); dash(); dot(); dash(); dash(); wait(); }
void Z () { Serial.print('Z'); dash(); dash(); dot(); dot(); wait(); }


// Parse code; output to NES
void dot () {
  digitalWrite(RIGHT, HIGH);
  delay (time);
  digitalWrite(RIGHT, LOW);
  delay (time); }

void dash () {
  digitalWrite(LEFT, HIGH);
  delay (time*3);
  digitalWrite(LEFT, LOW);
  delay (time); }

void line () {
  Serial.println();
  digitalWrite(START, HIGH);
  delay(time*3);
  digitalWrite(START, LOW);
  delay(time*3);
  digitalWrite(START, HIGH);
  delay(time*3);
  digitalWrite(START, LOW);
  delay(time); }

void space () {
  Serial.print(" ");
  delay(time*6); }

void wait () {
  delay(time*2); }
```

Tomb Treasure

32 x 21 inches
inkjet print
July 2014

YOU ARE LYING IN A CAVE. A MAZE OF TWISTY LITTLE PASSAGES STRETCHES BEFORE YOU, ALL DIFFERENT. NEARBY ARE A FOREST, FARMLAND, AND VAST FIELDS OF VOLCANIC ASH. A LARGE STREAM OF DATA FLOWS AROUND YOU.

>>

Media Ecology #GoogleBerries

32 x 21 inches
inkjet print
July 2014

Blackberries grow outside the Google Data Center at The Dalles, enjoying the currents of the Columbia River while Google sucks the juice from nearby hydropower and the neuropower of the billions of clicks and queries. The sweat of users' brows precipitates into the data cloud that drives Google's emergent ecology. Despite community expectations, the company is said to employ only about 150 people in The Dalles. The windowless building built by human hands is not meant for human occupants.

Natural Power

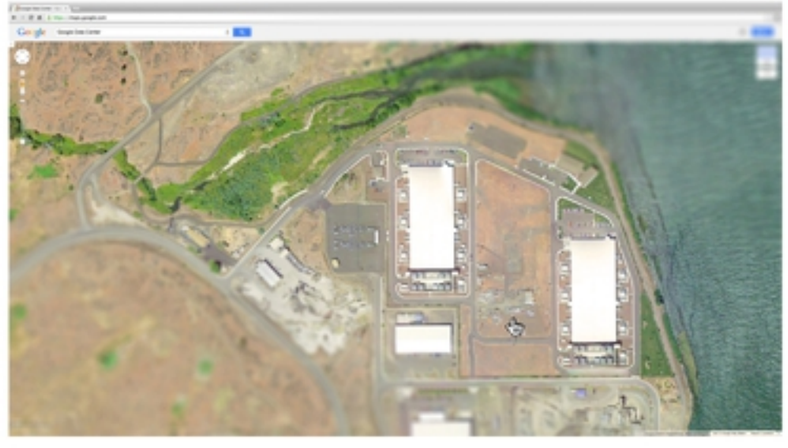
108 x 36 inches
inkjet print
July 2014

This panoramic view depicts the Google server farm located next to a power station at The Dalles, an ancient and storied nexus for communication among people. The character and composition of the Columbia River has transformed many times in major ways. With the arrival of Google to its bank, the river reflects once more a shift in human activity, energy, and prosumption. Camouflaged against the rolling hills of the gorge, the Google server farm joins the viewscape with ground, river and sky nearly seamlessly. The server farm bu ilding that has sprouted up and slowly expanded for less than a decade visually blends with basalt flows from fifteen million years ago. Beige concrete and a blue stripe match ambient colors as if Google had always been there, a natural structure within the volcanic and watery terrain.

Server Farm #GoogleBroccs

18 x 30 inches
inkjet print
July 2014

Broccoli flourishes in OSU's "Imagination Garden" directly outside Google's windowless building that continuously farms the attention of millions of users. The servers are the material substrate of the data cloud. A product of Google's collection of private information (data captured, stored, and processed at The Dalles), the cloud is a prime example of what Mark Hansen calls "atmospheric media"--ubiquitous and embedded media acting to ideologically structure everyday experience. Meanwhile, on the public nature trail around the data center and from the perspective of the garden, the corporation projects an appearance inviting and generous, nourishing and terrifying, imagic and kinetic, ephemeral and secretive, materially propertied and panoptic.



Tilt Me

18 x 31 x 18 inches
tilt sensor, Arduino, Mac Mini, Max/MSP, speakers
July 2014

This responsive plinth emits sine waves at frequencies correlating to the degree tilted. Please tilt the plinth.

Campus

31 x 32 inches
inkjet prints
July 2014

Diptych of tilt-shifted photographs from Google Data Center in The Dalles and Western Oregon University in Monmouth. Both corporate and university campuses require a great deal of infrastructure and maintenance. Workers depicted in these photographs labor to enable services: serving a ball for a game of tennis or serving Internet traffic. Whereas the professionals of Western Oregon University's Physical Plant keep working while students are on break, Google transports their construction teams via yellow school buses—a strange inversion of leisure and labor on two very different campuses. Increasingly, tech companies act to shift the character of the workplace away from an office toward an autonomous campus providing food, intellectual resources, recreation, and relatively little reason for employees to leave work.

Paint Me

18 x 31 x 18 inches
CRT television, Super Nintendo Entertainment System, *Mario Paint* (1992)
July 2014

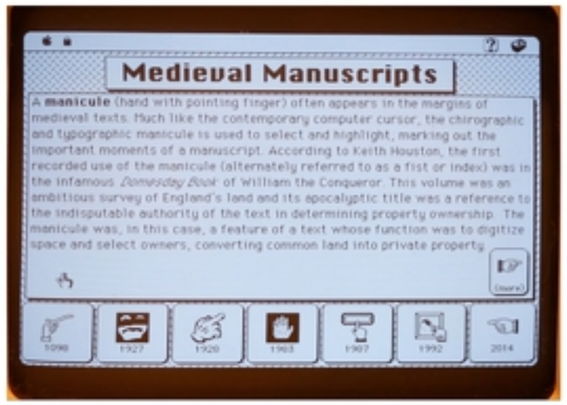
Nintendo's *Mario Paint,* complete with mouse and mousepad, was released for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System in 1992. *Mario Paint's* title screen is designed to teach the user how to control the mouse, a technology quickly emerging at the time thanks to personal computers like the Macintosh. Once the mouse is mastered, the user can set to work painting images, making music, and playing minigames. Well before the Mickey manicule was adopted within the Macintosh's graphic user interface, Mario's white, darted glove first appeared as a cursor icon in *Mario Paint.* Keeping with Japan's post-war practice of incorporating Disney's aesthetic into its animation, Mario's character design follows that of Mickey Mouse. From the longer history of vaudeville and minstrel shows to funny animal cartoons and Disney's mouse to Japanese videogames starring Super Mario, the long history of the white glove continues in contemporary computer operating systems like Macintosh OSX.

Click Me

18 x 31 x 18 inches
Apple Macintosh SE, *Hypercard 2.0* (1990)
July 2014

In 1984, Apple released the Macintosh, the first personal computer featuring a mouse, a built-in screen, and a graphic user interface. Instead of typing commands into a text prompt, the Macintosh invited users to click and drag a cursor icon across the "desktop," place documents in "files," and even take out the "trash." Shipped alongside this skeuomorphic interface was *Hypercard,* a program used to create "stacks" of slides navigated via hyperlinks—functionality that became the basis for browsing the world wide web. Susan Kare's "clicker" icon, the now ubiquitous white, right hand which appears above a hyperlink, was designed first for *Hypercard* before it was popularized within internet browsers and even Microsoft Windows in the mid 1990s. In 1997, Apple subtly adjusted Kare's original icon, transforming it into a "Mickey Manicule" with three darts and a cuff.


Mario Paint
Panasonic


Medieval Manuscripts
A manicule (hand with pointing finger) often appears in the margins of medieval texts. Much like the contemporary computer cursor, the chirographic and typographic manicule is used to select and highlight, marking out the important moments of a manuscript. According to Keith Houston, the first recorded use of the manicule (alternately referred to as a fist or index) was in the infamous Domesday Book of William the Conqueror. This volume was an ambitious survey of England's land and its apocalyptic title was a reference to the indisputable authority of the text in determining property ownership. The manicule was, in this case, a feature of a text whose function was to digitize space and select owners, converting common land into private property.
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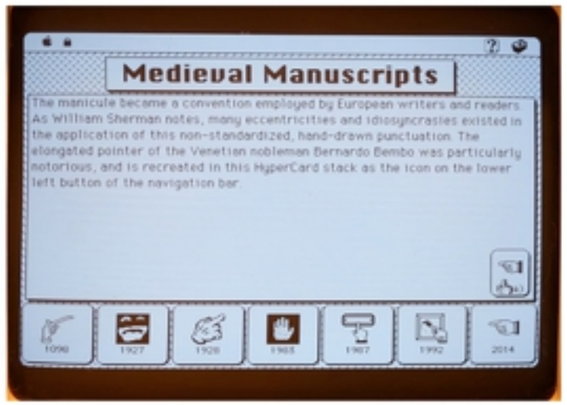
Medieval Manuscripts
The manicule became a convention employed by European writers and readers. As William Sherman notes, many eccentricities and idiosyncrasies existed in the application of this non-standardized, hand-drawn punctuation. The elongated pointer of the Venetian nobleman Bernardo Bembo was particularly notorious, and is recreated in this HyperCard stack as the icon on the lower left button of the navigation bar.
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Minstrelsy
Iconic of servant status, white gloves were a signature feature of 19th-century blackface minstrel shows in the United States. Though beginning with white performers portraying racist and stereotyped caricatures of African-Americans, eventually black artists also dressed and performed in blackface. In 1927, a film called The Jazz Singer starred Al Jolson dressed in ragged tails, white gloves, exaggerated lips, and greasepaint-black makeup. Disney's animated Steamboat Willie followed one year later, introducing Mickey Mouse (who adopted Jolson's gloves and lilting voice). Although Mickey's gloves have been disavowed as merely a contrivance to sidestep the difficulties of depicting articulating fingers in early animation, "funny animal" cartoons like Bimbo and Betty (1930), Oswald and Ortensia (1927), Foxy and Roxy (1931), and Mickey and Minnie (1928) can all easily be seen to draw upon racist caricatures inspired by minstrelsy.
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Mickey Mouse
Disney's mouse belongs to the "funny animal" tradition of comics and animation in which the addition of ears and tails to black bodies sanitized the genre of comedy inspired by the tradition of blackface and minstrel shows. Phillipa Jones writes: "Recognition of Mickey Mouse's basis in racist characterization serves to make it all the more remarkable that Apple's tiny white-gloved icon, echoing this racist heritage, has not become infamous... Its wide unchallenged acceptance seems to be a simple triumph, in Roland Barthes' terms, of a myth made to seem natural."
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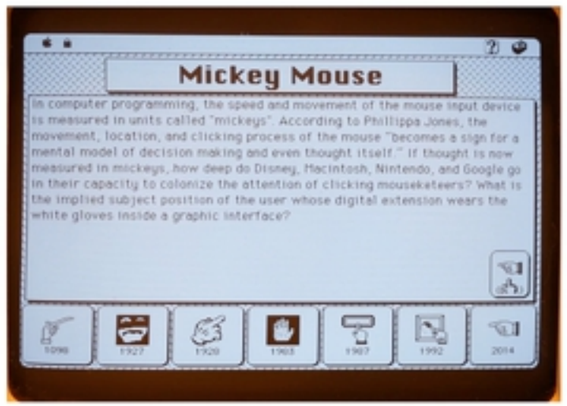
Mickey Mouse
In computer programming, the speed and movement of the mouse input device is measured in units called "mickeys". According to Phillippa Jones, the movement, location, and clicking process of the mouse "becomes a sign for a mental model of decision making and even thought itself." If thought is now measured in mickeys, how deep do Disney, Macintosh, Nintendo, and Google go in their capacity to colonize the attention of clicking mouseketeers? What is the implied subject position of the user whose digital extension wears the white gloves inside a graphic interface?
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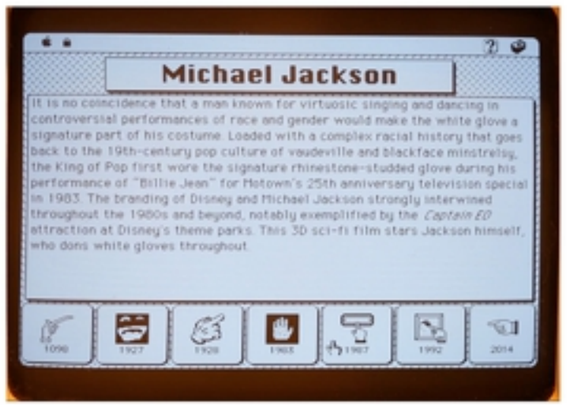
Michael Jackson
It is no coincidence that a man known for virtuosic singing and dancing in controversial performances of race and gender would make the white glove a signature part of his costume. Loaded with a complex racial history that goes back to the 19th-century pop culture of vaudeville and blackface minstrelsy, the King of Pop first wore the signature rhinestone-studded glove during his performance of "Billie Jean" for Motown's 25th anniversary television special in 1983. The branding of Disney and Michael Jackson strongly interwined throughout the 1980s and beyond, notably exemplified by the Captain EO attraction at Disney's theme parks. This 3D sci-fi film stars Jackson himself, who dons white gloves throughout.
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Mario Paint
In Mario Paint, Disney's mouse and the computer mouse are joined together. Replacing Susan Kare's clicker icon with the darted glove of Mario's hand, Mario Paint was the first videogame console to be released with a computer mouse as an included peripheral device. From the four fingers of Mickey Mouse to the five fingers of Mario, the white glove becomes an electronic extension of the player's digits in order to animate, paint, and compose music on this customizable cartridge for the Super Nintendo Entertainment system. Both Mario and the Macintosh's white, right-hand glove not only intentionally signify Mickey Mouse but also (perhaps) unintentionally signal the much longer racial history of cartoons.
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Macintosh OS
Susan Kare's "clicker" icon first appeared in Apple's HyperCard software in 1987. This 32x32 pixel art has remained remarkably consistent in the three decades since the first commercialized graphic user interface emerged, with a few exceptional transformations. Most notably, three lines were added to the hand beginning with Mac OS 10.8 in 2012. The simple additon of the three darts reinforces the connection to Mickey Mouse, Mario, and minstrelsy. As the manicule transforms from a mimetic white hand to a blackface minstrel glove evacuated of its cultural significance, the darted glove allegorizes the ways in which interface design erases the racial history of computation. The ideological desire for an immediate, transparent interface--what Apple calls "magic"--attempts to render invisible the material and historical substrate of computation to construct the seamless immersivity of technical mastery--what Heidegger would call "ready-to-hand."
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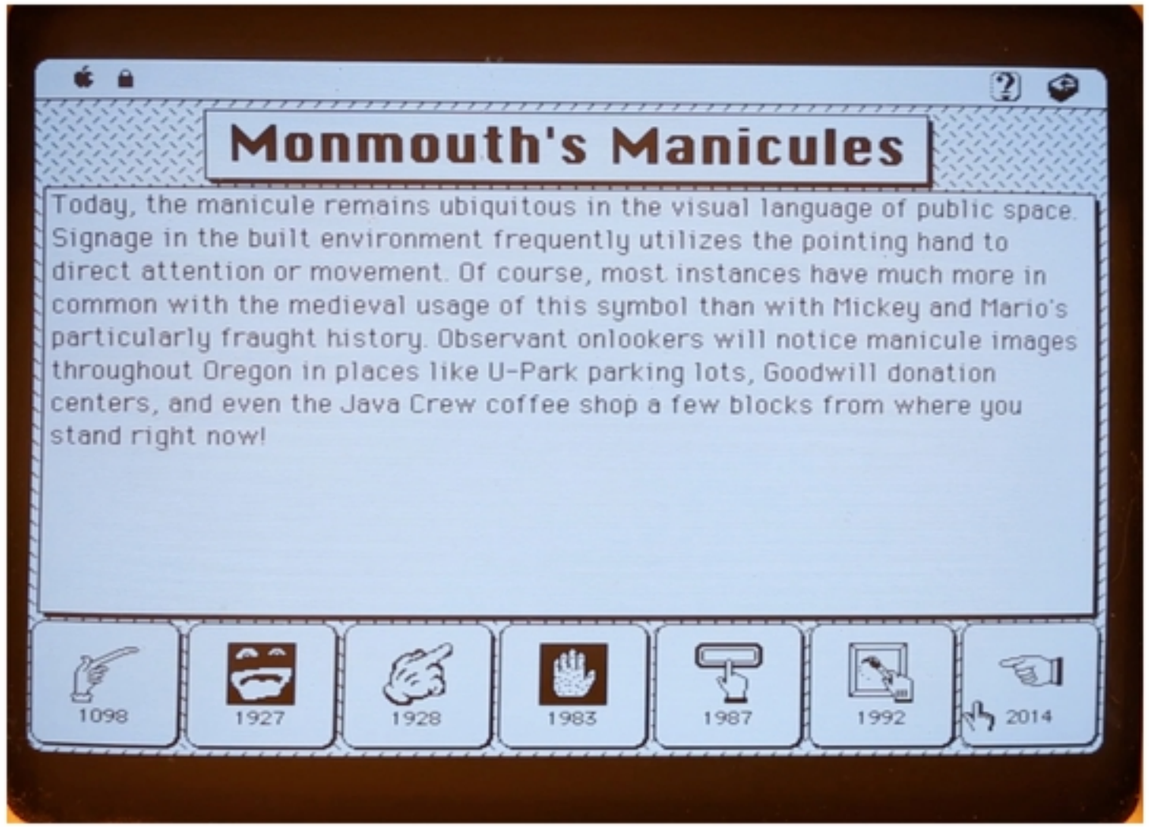
Monmouth's Manicules
Today, the manicule remains ubiquitous in the visual language of public space. Signage in the built environment frequently utilizes the pointing hand to direct attention or movement. Of course, most instances have much more in common with the medieval usage of this symbol than with Mickey and Mario's particularly fraught history. Observant onlookers will notice manicule images throughout Oregon in places like U-Park parking lots, Goodwill donation centers, and even the Java Crew coffee shop a few blocks from where you stand right now!
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