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audio-visual art + vj culture

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BY CHRIS ALLEN THE LIGHT SURGEONS

We live in a world filled with information, a message saturated with references and sub-references. We navigate this sea of information without even thinking about it. Each day we are bombarded with thousands of marketed products, rehased signs and refried signifiers. Even the things we invest with our personal feelings and memories are packaged and sold back to us before we've had a chance to recognize them. Does this world imitate us or do we imitate it? Where is the edge of this mirror surface?

Sampling allows us to make a mark on this landscape that is so omnipresent, a mark that allows us to trace and find the cracks on the surface. It is a very basic human instinct. Bricolage. The savage mind. A sort of future primitive act of location in a world of dislocation. It is an act that compresses language into popular culture. It is a form of encryption, a living and evolving, viral form of language, and an extension of the tongue in conversation with itself.

Its presence in fashion, music, writing, art and design is irrefutable. It is part of the system software. It has become our modern vocabulary, an extended alphabet that transcends borders and geography, creating and connecting cracks on the tectonic plates of our different cultures. It scratches at the crust of economic exchange through intellectual property rights.

In the creative realms of art and music, it pokes at the very fabric of authorship while also being the very currency these industries are built upon. It is a living contradiction that has probably been with us as long as we've had a culture and a language.

It allows us to see the components in our language in isolation – the bricks that can then be used to construct new meanings. When it's used well it can create and subvert meaning in beautiful and amazing ways. It can reach through the lies and point to truths and generate laughter and move people to tears. When it's used badly or in vain, it promotes the erosion of meaning and truth. It brings further dislocation and becomes noise or inaudible chatter. It can make someone a millionaire from their bedroom with one hit record, or turn a true artist from their craft and destroy a potential career. It is a double-edged sword.

Everything is a copy of something else at some level or another. We are all made of DNA. So maybe it's just a question of nature or nurture. Are we just products of our environment? Is there any real truth or meaning any more? Does anyone really care as long as they can pay the mortgage and procreate?

It's as easy as pressing the record button, but its effects are far-reaching and collectively changing the world around us. Think before you rec.



#01 - FILM SEQUENCE FROM 'REEL 9'
BY THE LIGHT SURGEONS

