

(IN)REMEMBRANCE [ 11-M ]

MICHAEL TAKEO MAGRUDER . 2009/10

notes:

1. Google Inc. (NASDAQ: GOOG), the leading multinational corporation specialising in Internet search technologies and cloud computing infrastructure, is publically valued at \$176.26B. (source: [www.google.com/finance](http://www.google.com/finance), accessed on: 22.04.2010)
2. Cf. [ FALLUJAH . IRAQ . 31/03/2004 ] ([www.takeo.org/nspace/ns011](http://www.takeo.org/nspace/ns011))
3. Cf. Coffman, K. and Odlyzko, A., *The Size and Growth Rate of the Internet*, 1998, AT&T Labs.
4. Cf. *Reflection (hope and reconciliation)* ([www.takeo.org/nspace/ns028](http://www.takeo.org/nspace/ns028))
5. Cf. *Continuum...* ([www.takeo.org/nspace/ns022](http://www.takeo.org/nspace/ns022))
6. Cf. *Data\_cosm* ([www.takeo.org/nspace/ns015](http://www.takeo.org/nspace/ns015))
7. Cf. *Last Days...* ([www.takeo.org/nspace/ns029](http://www.takeo.org/nspace/ns029))
8. Cf. *+ requiem +* ([www.takeo.org/nspace/ns005](http://www.takeo.org/nspace/ns005))
9. in consultation with Manifesta 8 curators Alfredo Cramerotti and Rian Lozano
10. 11-M (the Madrid train bombings of 11/03/2004)
11. a regional daily newspaper for Murcia, ES ([www.laopiniondemurcia.es](http://www.laopiniondemurcia.es))
12. Cf. Cramerotti, Alfredo, *Aesthetic Journalism. How to Inform Without Informing*, 2009, Intellect.
13. to be hosted on [www.takeo.org](http://www.takeo.org)

\* (image source) The aftermath of the 11-M train bombings at Madrid's Atocha station on 11/03/2004, in which 191 people were killed and over 1,800 others were injured. The photograph was originally released by Reuters news agency ([www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com)), and has been republished countless times on websites ranging from international news services to small personal blogs.

CONTEXT:

Information is a commodity.<sup>1</sup> Institutions of power have always sought to control its flow, selectively collecting, manipulating and directing its distribution to the masses. In the 21st century – the Information Age – the issues are the same, but now they are in real-time.<sup>2</sup>

The rise of globalised networks has made the world 'smaller' and more connected.<sup>3</sup> Giant media corporations now act as the gatekeepers of society's collective knowledge, using this treasured (and supposedly public) resource to further their own agendas, often without regard for the ethical implications of their policies and conduct. Given this situation, how can we as individuals maintain (or in some instances reclaim) the ability to express our opinions and create our own spaces for critical debate and independent reflection,<sup>4</sup> especially when such actions oppose the powers in control?

We read our daily newspapers and watch endless streams of live news broadcasts,<sup>5</sup> but in this era of media saturation<sup>6</sup> many of us have become desensitised to the reported strife and atrocities of our time. Conventional news structuring often commodifies horrific events into packages of tragic spectacle in order to increase commercial sales and ratings at the expense of providing in-depth analysis and humanistic grounding of the actual situations.<sup>7</sup> Within this context, how can we consider alternative views of historical events, derive our own opinions and emotions from them and re-examine the stories and lessons they contain?<sup>8</sup>

PROCESSES:

I. (re)investigation:

Research will be undertaken<sup>9</sup> to select a tragic event of both regional and international importance from the recent past that remains relevant to this day.<sup>10</sup> Information concerning the chosen subject will be collected, not from the archives of commercial media corporations, but instead, from online sources published by members of the general public. Materials from wikis, media repositories, blogs and social networking sites will be compiled into a digital archive that will provide the basis for a series of connected artistic interventions and works.

II. (re)integration:

A sequence of five visual compositions reflecting upon the event in question will be constructed using data gathered during the research phase. These artworks will be sequentially published over a five day period as pages within the newspaper *La Opinión*.<sup>11</sup> The same media fragments will be used to create each page, however, the individual works will differ in terms of their aesthetic vs. informational qualities. The first composition will be obscured to the point of almost complete abstraction, while subsequent works will become increasingly discernable. The intention is for the viewer to consider the series as a whole, observing the re-emergence of the historical narrative, and to reflect upon the current means through which news media is generated, manipulated and consumed.

III. (re)collection:

Once published, the newspaper artworks will begin their natural (almost ritualistic) migration to the bins and gutters of the city. Copies will be salvaged from the garbage, and will thus be reclaimed – with the cultural materials they contain – from the waste of our society. A complete set of the collected pages, aesthetically degraded by the touches of many hands and the soil of the urban landscape, will be carefully prepared using archival preservation techniques. Each page will be signed, dated and encased within a protective museum-quality frame.

IV. (re)construction:

The framed works will be displayed as a 'painterly' sequence relating to their original order, and will be installed within a pristine white cube environment to emphasise their deteriorated condition. Alongside these physical objects d'art, a series of New Media compositions will complete the gallery installation. Constructed using various digital technologies, these elements will consist of real-time audiovisuals generated from the project's source media archive. Through the careful combination of different media devices, the installation will serve as a contemplative space in which visitors can analyse the various aesthetic and journalistic approaches within the art.<sup>12</sup>

V. (re)dissemination:

Derivatives of the New Media artworks will be made freely available via the Internet,<sup>13</sup> thereby providing a wider and more accessible distribution mechanism for the project. Through this facility, the artistic research materials and outcomes will be reintegrated into the public domain as new and inherently mutable forms, thus rejoining – while simultaneously extending – the collective dialogue surrounding the event's historical, present, and perhaps even future, significance.