The Media - Arts street media lab opened in 1999. It was towards the river, a few blocks east of Cabool. The lab was a content generator, a factory, post not proto-Warhol. It operated off and on for two plus years. Content: meditations on film and digital editing, digital representation of art/science practice, the effect of IT on social organization, 9/11, the millennium, comic books, and Orwellian media culture. This street smithy had a simple task: take a stab at writing a history of a future and sketch a navigational chart out of a maelstrom. Chart follows.
The virtual ambient jockeys, or the “VAJ” as they were then called, kept a Lab Journal. It was a tech check list, project status report, a back-forth, and complaint forum. And maybe somewhere in that Journal is a map still to be deciphered.
mapping tools to steer through tangled intersections of information networks and street corners
The media Lab was located in an windowed first floor corner in downtown St. Louis. Housed in the Lab was a changing inventory of com-
puters, photo imaging and editing equipment, projectors, screens and monitor walls, as well as those dj/vjs who migrated from Cabool.
These post text dj/vj artists continued to use digital collage techniques as they sampled the riches of data banks and networks. “Digital art,”
for a lack of a better word, was projected on screens and monitor walls facing the street. Inside cameras looking out on the street added
an interactive component. Passers-by were the Lab’s customer/consumer. As a form of public street theatre, the Lab critically investigated
the role of media by on our culture by using the producers and consumers of media interchangeably, as actor and as audience. This
concurrent, synchronous state of consuming and being consumed is the essence, the hallmark of new media. It is also the dominant DNA
of our culture. The Lab was both an animated tableau and a viewing station into the digital city. The Lab, as an example of an urban design
prototype for the digital city, was an experiment in recursive urbanism. The Lab’s topical subject-matter included meditations on film and
digital editing, digital representation of art/science practice, the effect of IT on social organization, 9/11, the millennium, comic books, and
Onwellian media culture.

ART FACTORIES

This paper described the development of urban prototypes to map the spatial dynamics of the band, critique traditional cultural practices,
and resist the “Spectacle.” What follows is video footage documenting media artists experimenting with new mapping tools. They use digital
technologies as mapping tools to steer through tangled intersections of information networks and street corners. This video footage records a
street front media lab. The lab was the venue for cartographic experiments. It was a viewing station, an ocular device offering a line of sight into
a networked city, this new civic ensemble made up of bricks, concrete and data packets. The lab is offered as a prototype for the networked
city.

DESIGN PROTOTYPES FOR A NETWORKED CITY - AOIR

The lab occupied a windowed first floor corner in a downtown building where various applications and delivery systems were showcased
24/7. Housed in the lab was a changing inventory of fat data pipes, computers, photo imaging and editing equipment, projectors, screens and
monitor walls. The artists who manned the lab, or virtual ambient jockeys as they were called, offered passers-by a chance to watch digital
media types at work. They used digital collage techniques as they sampled the riches of data banks and networks. Their work – the evening’s
digital amalgam - was projected on screens and monitor walls facing the street. Cameras inside, looking out on the street, added an interactive
face. The lab was a stage for an ongoing “info age” critique. It played out over and over, night after night. It was also a viewing station into a
networked city. It was an ocular device offering a line of sight into tangled virtual information infrastructures and street corners.

THICKENING THE WORD AND THE RETURN OF THE TRICKSTER

The lab was a blended place, a straddled one. It was on the street, a sort of polis update: Release 99…. The lab wrapped a windowed corner
in downtown St. Louis. Artists used digital collage, remix to create new urban narratives, to map and remythologize the streetscape. It was
street theatre, a tool to advance synthesis and awareness, with the hope that it might lead to collective action.

THE CARTOGRAPHER’S DILEMMA
In a world that is always coming to us already emptied, stripped, re-mix breaks it up and circulates it again, and sends it back down the road of reuse, an ecology of images in its most literal form, a sustainable development of sound and visual images.

In a world that is always coming to us already emptied, stripped, re-mix breaks it up and circulates it again, and sends it back down the road of reuse, an ecology of images in its most literal form, a sustainable development of sound and visual images.

in Transit, AIT. AIT was the “public art wing” of Metro. Metro owns and operates the St. Louis metropolitan public transportation system. The first glimpse of how a street looks sounds when information networks are injected into a concrete public streetscape. The client was Arts and monitor walls facing the street. Remix was used to create new urban narratives, to map and re-mythologize a streetscape. The client got dowed corner on a downtown street. Artists were mixing and remixing things in the windows. Night after night tableaux framed virtual jockeys is There a Digital Future Landscape Terrain?- Landscape Architecture Site/ Non- Site AD of reuse, an ecology of images in its most literal form, a sustainable development of sound and visual images.

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lab case studies
Case study 1

FIRST AND THIRD, Judith Barry

New York based Judith Barry came to St. Louis the week of November 14th for a collaborative presentation hosted by Washington University Graduate School of Art and MediaARTS Alliance. Barry was presenting “First and Third,” a video projection featuring commentary on the immigrant experience in America. This work dealt with the immigrant experience in America via memorable images and voices seen and heard from the street corner in the lab’s windows. The subjects in “First and Third” were projected in extreme closeup. This allowed Barry to fill an entire window panel about 6 feet high and wide with a “face.” Setting the work in a window overlooking an urban landscape - making the faces appear to be the cornetions of the building - reinforced how individuals bringing their lives to this country have become the “building blocks” of America.

Case study 2

dDNA (d is for dancing), Nell Tenhaaf

Nell Tenhaaf’s work addresses cultural implications of new technologies, and how digital representation links art practice to the biosciences and ArtBioLife. She forge connections between the scientific and artistic worlds, both through works critiquing scientific claims and works in which she adopt as a “scientist’s persona.” In this piece Toronto artist Nell Tenhaaf took footage from St. Louis salsa and jitterbug classes and superimposed an animated strand of DNA to make it appear in the midst of the classes, projecting the final footage in the lab’s windows. Those who came to view this work used the piece as a jumping off point for a larger discussion on dance and cultural mores.

Case study 3

AN AUDIO DIALOGUE, Beige

Paul Davis, Joe Beuckman, Joe Bomn and Cory Arrangel of the digital art collective Beige set up an audio dialogue between an “inside and outside.” Sound-generating materials were planted on the street and in the MediaArts lab. Captured sounds — people, cars and buses — were processed by these Beige in-house programers. All was looped and repeated, pitch and playback speed changed. In this “sound capturing” there were no electronic instruments or sound generating sources. Every sound used had its source in some real event. Sounds were captured by the microphones: be it people talking into them, cars and buses passing, the performers inside the MediaARTS space giving instructions to the audience outside. “Sum-sound” was played back and combined into a musical framework and broadcast into the street.

Case study 4

script excerpt - the Media Arts documentary: “Passersby can watch digital media artists work and create while their work is simultaneously projected on the screens lining Tucker Avenue. Media Arts focus is on the process of creation as well as the final product. In the modern world of scanners, graphic programs and the internet, any image that can be produced can be reproduced. To see the artists’ work is to gain greater respect for the artists’ output. This lab incubator is a museum without walls. It engages its audience in the creative process.”
A preachy piece about media saturated environments played on a continuous loop for ten straight days, twenty-four hours a day. It started out this way, and went on and on.

Digital convergence will affect us spatially. The interchangeability, interactivity, and interconnectedness of data, broadcasting, telephony, film, music, education and imaging will alter the places where we congregate. We will meet, share our stories, and build community in media saturated environments. Who will determine the nature of these environments, and what aesthetic and critical criteria will they use in fashioning the public gathering places of tomorrow? ..........What about that recently post-pubescent socially dysfunctional junk food eating cyborg wannabe or the kid next door?

Remediation/BIG DAN

This psychosexual cerebral adventure by Alan Brunettin took Remediation out of the “rarefied world of media theorists” and put it right on the street where it belongs, when it inserted girlie web images into “Radio Patrol and Big Dan’s Mobsters,” a 1930s detective comic book, a BIG LITTLE BOOK.

AGIT-PROP - STREET THEATER

AGIT-PROP was a collaborative work of MediaARTS, HotHouse Theatre Co., and New Line Theatre. In the style of political street theatre, audiences were offered the opportunity to observe the impact of information technology on traditional narrative and dramatic art forms and a demonstration of the effect of information technology on social organization and social protest.

“Children of D” by Paul Guzzardo and Ben Kiel was constructed as a three-minute “contrived promotion” for an upcoming feature film, D stands for Drosophila. Drosophila melanogaster - the fruit fly - research and genome sequencing has revolutionized our knowledge about the connections between DNA and human behavior. “Children of D” was both a spoof on Hollywood blockbuster films and a serious mediation on DNA sequencing and sociobiology.
We're Watching - Do You Care?

With their backs to downtown picture windows, digital artist Ben Kiel and Joyce Rudinsky pushed a mix. Their assemblage included: a stew of internet images, video feeds from inside cameras looking out, old film clips and shotgun text. The Kiel-Rudinsky blend was projected on wrap-around street corner screens. Passersby saw passersby, themselves, all wrapped in a detritus poetic slam...of sorts.

Film Festival

"Remediation Fractal" was a "performance docudrama." Media artists shot and edited a film at a kick-off party for the St. Louis International Film Festival. They used the party for a meditation on the nature of film and digital editing. Playing with "process" the artists used montage to map the divergence of new media from traditional media and film. They juxtaposed images from the party with textual commentary about mixing, cutting, image, and time. While assembling it into the "documentary," they simultaneously projected the editing process on party walls. The remix didn't stop there. They wove Carl Dreyer's famous silent film "Joan of Arc" into the mix. It was a fractal stew.

Intersections

An orthogonal city plan met an orthogonal cemetery plan in INTERSECTIONS. Night after night there was all night "shuffle and dissolve" between steady cam mounted video footage from Buenos Aires's Recoleta Cemetery and a live camera peering out of the media lab onto the street.

Flood Wall

The St. Louis flood wall and its scrub foreground was "the hood" for a multi media installation. A volkswagen was retrofitted as "an extreme projector boom box." The tailgate set for sound. The luggage rack for the two projectors. Looped and off-sync videos were projected from rack to wall. Site was a long vanishing Mississippi flood wall. Sculptural chimera was the set. The fire dancer was a bonus.
From: jcavett@hearstsc.com
To: zio11@mindspring.com
Sent: Wednesday, September 19, 2001 5:21 AM
Subject: Re: please take care of

I am still searching for the Big Dan Mobsters series. I will need to review the details of the use to seek the proper fees.

Ita Golzman
09/17/2001 10:54 AM

To: James R Cavett/ES/Hearst
cc:
Subject: please take care of

Jim,Please take care of this.
Audra our attorney wrote a note regarding this email. She wrote:
Radio Patrol is ours. Big Dan Mobsters, can’t find, but it may be part of same strip. Mark Johnson might know. Please let’s do this only if we can get money.

Thanks,
Ita

Forwarded by Ita Golzman/ES/Hearst on 09/17/2001 10:44 AM
"paul guzzardo" on 09/03/2001 11:31:26 AM

To: Ita Golzman/ES/Hearst
cc:
Subject: copyright

Re: Radio Patrol

Dear Mr. Golzman

This inquiry is directed to you to determine if the Hearst Corporation currently holds the copyright on the following:

Radio Patrol and Big Dan Mobsters based on the Famous Newspaper Strip by Eddie Sullivan and Charles Schmidt.

Whitman Publishing Co. Racine Wisconsin
Copyright 1937, 1940 by King Feature Syndicated, Inc

I am president of MediaARTS Alliance www.mediaarts.org a not for profit arts organization located in St. Louis Missouri. MediaARTS, in conjunction with students from local educational institutions, are examining issues of remediation in public space. We would like to use images and text from Radio Patrol and Big Dan Mobsters as part of this exercise. I would be happy to provide you further details regarding this exercise. I wanted first however to ascertain whether the copyright is held by the Hearst Corporation. I can be reached at the e-mail address or at 314-231-8784.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Paul Guzzardo

My father was a sculptor. He was born in Italy and moved to Chicago as a boy. He worked in wood, in stone and in bronze. I worked in a window. The windows wrapped a corner on a street. My medium was digital and I mixed and remixed things. The street where I made remixes was a mile from the Mississippi river. That’s where I scanned a 1930 comic book, BIG DAN MOBSTERS, and then I remixed it with gory pictures, pictures I sliced out of the Internet. I called it Remediation, and other times I just called it Big Dan, after the comic book. I wanted to take Big Dan to other places, other windows but Hearst, The publishing company that held the “comic copyright” wanted money. So Big Dan never left that street.

One other thing, before my window was window on a stage on a street, it was window in a lobby. A lobby of a St. Louis Shoe Company, Brown Shoe. They made Buster Brown shoes there for 50 years. They don’t make shoes there any more, or shoes anywhere else, anywhere around there. Buster Brown and all the shoes get out of St. Louis, but Big Dan never did.

script segment
buildbetterbarrel - nine events in new media
the opening event: window

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a fair use study

...do this only if we get the money.

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...do this only if we get the money.
Memento Mori

the lab, and Yamaski’s trade towers
web and script segments

media arts web site
The Media Lab in response to the tragic events of September 11, 2001, suspended its regular arts programming. The walls of monitors and screens were dedicated to displaying work created as a memorial to the World Trade Center victims. This commemorative included among the tragic imagery of that day the scrolling names of those lost in the attack and the text of the sad and final phone messages of victims. The lab artists mixed their own edited video shorts with these scrolling names, the transcribed calls, and Internet updates. This live collage was projected onto screens facing the street. So within a few days after the Trade Center attack, people walking in downtown St. Louis could watch digital artists wrestling with the medium as they tried to give voice to a memorial. It was a complex and beautiful performative piece. It may have been the only place in the country where something like this was done.

buildbetterbarrel script: release 1 - window
When the trade towers were attacked, I was working in the lab. There were five of us working in the windows. We stopped what we were doing. We started to make our own memorial. We included the searing images, the scrolling names of the victims, messages from the cell phones, those transcribed final unanswered mobile phone calls. Those voices became words on windows. The collage, the remix, was projected on screens facing downtown streets. A few day after September 11th people on the street stood and watched, and sometimes just walked by, as I tried to give voice to a memorial.

buildbetterbarrel script: release 2, window epilogue
The media lab closed at the end of 2001. The funding had stopped. The platform where we told stories was closed, stenced. If the lab had stayed open, I would have told stories about the ever-never-ending war that came after September 11th. That’s the story that needed to be told, right after night in those windows on that corner in St. Louis. That is the memorial that I wanted to leave behind.
Mira Digital Publishing was above the media lab. James McKelvey founded Mira. He later went on to add the mobile pay company Square Inc. to his resume. Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey was a Mira intern. He was also upstairs.

The MediaArts Media Lab closed a few months after September 11, 2001. Players and kit were scattered. Nothing on the corner to challenge the half-backed jingoistic madness on the way. Nothing to grab, wave, shout with. This was more than just a cartographer’s dilemma.

The corner where the lab mixed it up was vacant for a long while, then a tenant showed up. And again it was a venue for digital medium, albeit a different sort. The tenant was an international telecom.

It was walk-in Sprint Store.

Mira Digital Publishing was above the media lab. James McKelvey founded Mira. He later went on to add the mobile pay company Square Inc. to his resume. Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey was a Mira intern. He was also upstairs.