

Jeff Stanley **Statement** (the e-document contains hypertext) **March 11, 2011 1:30PM**

Abridged History

Before the start of this program, I developed work based on aesthetics: Beauty was important. I worried about the image. I was involved with nature and that which is visually poetic. The meaning I placed on the art object and video came from a traditional nuance in the art dialogue. Beauty and “figurative” abstraction created a universal meaning. I became conflicted, noticing this meaning may not be so universal.

I was confronted with the task of updating and recoding my work. Technology was embedding my thoughts as fast as it itself changes. It transformed my actions, daily routine, and dialogue more than an average user. I was now virtual, or at least the possibilities within the virtuality that had engulfed me. Through this transformation I developed more aggressive content. I was empowered through the theories of media aesthetics, and the language of new media. Ultimately, I developed new methods to create a new visual language.

Approaching my 30-hour oral¹, I developed an experiment, *The Forum on the Future of Mankind*, the three-act video, that reached a new expression for me with new form and content. The form: Performing characters, performing video, and performing graphics. Notice this is not performance, but the form is encased in a final Video Product. The content: A naïve character, Jeff Stanley, grows into a monster in a world he does not understand when he is indefinitely trapped by media. The method: Becoming critical (and hypercritical) towards cultural and social subjects.

2010 Remakes

In early 2010, I started a series of videos called **2010 Remakes**. I remade three videos by three different artists which contained social content and pragmatic methods. I will write about two of the videos that are relevant in context of my new work.

The first video, [SHUT THE FUCK UP 2010](#), appropriated and re-scripted from the [1984 General Idea original](#), is critical of the perception of the “artist” by mass media. This is stressed further by becoming critical of one of the art world's own figures, Matthew Barney (General Idea “used” Yves Klein in a similar way) to create critical parody of the Art World and “the critique”. I embedded the character, Jeff Stanley, into the piece to develop the persona and to develop the form of jump cuts, choice words, and body language.

[I Am An Artist 2010](#), the second video in the **2010 Remakes** series, was re-scripted from the 1975 Les Levine Original. In original context, *IAAA* was critical of the conservative view of art for art's sake. I develop the character, Jeff Stanley, and method further by scripting the artist of *IAAA 2010* into a violent businessman/gangster. The artist worships Global Neoliberal Capitalism with dollar signs in his eyes. Wall Street is signified by the gangster artist who wants more money.

¹ MFA 30-hour Oral Exam at University of Texas at Austin

With the remake, I intended to learn from the pragmatic approach. The remake is embraced by the mass media. 2010 is the year of remakes in American cinema, taking up 90% of new releases. I obviously employ lower production costs than big budget feature films. I look more to the internet: DoItYourself and YouTube types of production. I became more concerned with the aesthetics of contemporary media, constantly improving on the substance, phrasing, and design in each High Definition video product.

The internet and interactivity currently build on the language and literacy of new technologies. Artificial Intelligence is becoming a prominent subject again, after a short-lived hiatus starting in the mid-90s. At the time of 2010 Remakes, I was concerned with an institutional critique within the art world and its trends. I am not leaving this message behind, but rather I am expanding upon this phrase coined by Marshall McLuhan, "The Medium is the Message."

I see a lineage looking back to *The Forum on the Future of Mankind* and **2010 Remakes** that is not unlike the elements that construct a sentence. They activate the possibility of social change through art production. Another shift happened after making this connection, I decided to use this approach to deconstruct media literacy.

Present Exchange

My current series, **ConServer**, is a further development of the character/persona, Jeff Stanley. A work developed before my 45s, [Mass Money](#), investigates conservative mass media personalities and the national debt. The conservatives addressed in this video thrive on the paranoia of their own audience. As the character becomes more robotic (and psychotic), he becomes more human. I do not see this as a simple psychoanalysis of one individual. Simply, this character mimics those found in the media in a similar way that an Artificial Intelligence will converse with a user via an algorithm of dialogue that allows it to learn.

I think of my work as critical of trends in media, but also of the system's structure. [Hard Red Facts](#), a **ConServer** video, resembles a news broadcast complete with a network logo. I have developed a backscript involving this network, which is owned by a corporation, M.CORP for short. "M.CORP strives to advance technological difficulty on a global scale," an early quotation suggests.

The name, **ConServer**, is a contradiction: **ConServ**(ative) politics and methods. I embed myself in the concrete ideologies of the conservative to understand the concrete problems of the world. **ConServer** signifies a direction towards web based presentation, and user of new terminology and technology. Ultimately ConServer will be presented on the M.CORP website, matrioshkacorporation.com, not to be confused with jeffreystanley.net, my personal site.

As stated earlier, I have arrived here through reprogramming and recoding my thoughts and actions. There is more reprogramming and coding ahead. This process of navigating through information and expression simultaneously is difficult for a one-man production team. The experimentation present within this series, the recent video *With a Capital V*, takes the performing, physical expression, and jump cuts to an extreme level. I will continue to push the extreme aspects of the work. The extreme represents both sides.

I am working to establish Jeff Stanley, the artist, as an online presence that works as cultural “hacker” and critical “terrorist”. Jeff Stanley, the **ConServer** character, will play the simultaneous role of a 2010 [Max Headroom](#), the popular 80s anti-corporation TV personality/seller of Pepsi talking head, and the [Max Headroom pirate](#), the 80s network TV pirate that interrupted the Chicago ABC station.

Conclusion (for now) and After

With **ConServer**, I am self-ordained with the task as an artist is to develop a meaning through a visual reconstruction of media literacy. Media has for decades been seen as a tool used by and for corporations as a superstructure encapsulating our lives by means of telecommunications and television. The internet disrupts this conception for now. YouTube has the potential to empower the user, You. The ad embedded in a banner on YouTube still carries the shadow of [advertiser](#) intercepting the “pirate” transmission from one YouTube user to another.

How shall I disrupt that foreboding corporate entity further? As of a year ago, a corporation has the same rights and privileges in this country as You, the citizen. The corporation may actually have more rights, privileges, and protection than the average person/citizen/user. Staying technologically literate will be impossible if the predictions of a technological [Singularity](#)² prove accurate. By that point, you may house technological instruments in, or on, your body that will enhance your own intelligence.

I am currently taking the steps necessary to become a corporation. I will ultimately become one of the first to technologically fuse with an Artificial Intelligence. The combined efforts as a person, a virtual AI, and a corporation will provide the enhancement an artist needs today. Art and its methods must evolve as the playing field evolves. This describes the 21st century artist.³

2 Hyperlink #2: <http://www.singularity.com/>

3 I stated earlier that coverage of the dialogue involving AI (Artificial Intelligence) had died down in the 90s in the art world and elsewhere. I believe that this was a trojan horse strategy by those controlling the media to pull one over upon the average user. Technology is growing exponentially. Currently, consumers are being told that at some point in the not too distant future technology will stop this growth and they will no longer need to upgrade electronic, computers, and equipment. This is false. An artist must use a similar (albeit counter) strategy to confront the existential conflicts facing our current conditions. One term coined recently involving this approach is called Culture Jamming, this is in lineage with the Situationists, the Theatre of the Absurd, and DADA. [Culture Jamming](#) associates anti-consumerism through subversive expression on the global stage through mass media. As an artist informed about transnational organization, I must take it upon myself to initiate work reflective of this approach. Buckminster Fuller made a choice to approach the role of a designer, inventor, and architect in a similar way. This is the way things go... and they will keep going.