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Experimental: The Composition of Decomposition

Experimental media is more than just a type of art; it is a conscious act of violating the norms in order to discover how they work. While commercial media strives to conceal flaws such as pixels, editing, and microphones in order to keep us involved in a tale, experimental media lifts the veil. It is a method of breakdown. I describe "experimental" as a concept-driven practice in which the medium is pushed to its limits, with the emphasis on how the work feels rather than what the work is about. It is art that takes risks, breaking traditional norms to create something altogether new. To create the concept, artists employ artistic skills like color, animation, and conversation while breaking all norms. Artists have a tendency to push the medium beyond its limits.

Even if the message is not immediately clear, I believe that the concept lies at the center of experimental work. The content is only the means to an end. Artists frequently have to drive the vehicle until the engine EXPLODES in order to arrive at their destination. This was personally shown when Ed Video brought in their analog equipment. Artists that use "glitch" as an aesthetic, scratch physical film, or code their own video synthesizers demonstrate that the medium is a physical body that can be controlled and damaged.

The focus on the "break" distorts the viewer's perception. Instead of a traditional beginning, middle, and end, you have a subjective experience. You are not being told a story; instead, you are being immersed in a sensation. It shifts away from delivering obvious answers and toward creating an experience that forces you to ask questions.

You can't talk about experimental media in Canada without talking about Marshall McLuhan. His famous saying, "the medium is the message," serves as the foundation for this entire method. It implies that the way we distribute information, the structural aspect of the technology itself, and how it affects us are more important than the actual content.

I used this theory on a sound collage I created two years ago. I wanted to reproduce the experience of an overdose I had in 2022, but I didn't want to just "describe" it in words. Instead, I employed *Détournement*, a strategy in which you hijack mainstream culture and redirect it for your own objectives. I combined popular drug tracks with discovered audio and harsh "noise" to create a sense of complete confusion. The "message" was not the lyrics of the songs, but the turmoil itself. By defying the traditional norms of music theory and the DAW, I was able to evoke an emotion rather than simply represent an event. The overdose was the source of the confusion.

My practice is influenced by artists that use media as a laboratory. These media are more than just influences; they demonstrate how "process" can be more significant than "result."

Alex Da Corte is an expert at transforming the "familiar" into the "alien." He employs the glossy, high-saturation aesthetic of commercial advertising and pop culture.

Consider using ketchup bottles, Eminem, or Disney characters in weird, immersive installations. His work is relevant to my approach because he pits "good taste" and consumer aesthetics against each other, producing a psychological realm that is both enticing and terribly frightening. Stan Brakhage became well-known for completely avoiding the camera. He invented "closed-eye vision" by scratching and painting directly on film strips. He reminds me that the physical substance of the media is just as vital as the image it conveys. *Wavelength*, directed by Michael Snow, is a well-known example of "structural film." It is basically a 45-minute slow zoom across a room. There is absolutely no "plot," yet the zoom creates a suspenseful atmosphere. It demonstrates how a single technical method may serve as the foundation for a complete notion. Lisa Steele's piece *Birthday Suit* shows her standing naked in front of a static camera, pointing out each scar on her body. It's "experimental" because it views the body as a map or document. There is no editing; the idea is to capture the camera's raw, unwavering stare.

In this course, I am also studying how humans communicate. Traditional broadcasting involves "one-to-many" news anchors and talk show hosts speaking to a million quiet viewers. This is transformed into a "many-to-many" or "one-to-one" dynamic by experimental broadcasting.

This brings up the concept of tactical media. It is about using "cheap" or accessible technology, such as DIY radio, Zoom, or public access TV, to challenge mainstream media's polished, corporate image. For me, experimental video is not a "movie"; rather, it is a moving painting or a visual extension of sound frequency. If you're

a musician, your video should be more than just a "music video"; it should be a visual representation of the sound you're generating.

I want my work to challenge the "safe" narratives we encounter every day. I'm experimenting with mediums and technology to elicit emotion and drive people to confront issues they may otherwise ignore, such as oppression or suffering. I do not want to make art that is "beautifying" or gives easy answers for easy entertainment. I want wicked imagery with questionable meaning. Swag with existentialism.

Most people do not fully comprehend an idea until they feel or experience it. By employing sound and video to replicate revolution or struggle situations, I hope to move beyond "showing" and into "inducing." Although I may not be able to have them accurately experience what I have (which might result in PTSD), I do want them to have some understanding of the experience. I do not want the audience to leave the room feeling at ease. I want them to depart wondering why things are as they are. I'm not only making art by turning the normal into the uncommon, I'm attempting to cause a rupture in the way we perceive the world.