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What is so Important: Experimental Media

A question that has continued to bother me is how and why to make art in 2026. Experimental art has allowed me to create art out of mystery and try to visualize answers to recurring questions, even though I can't always see an answer. The process of creating helps me move closer to that answer. Experimental processes is a game of problem solving and puzzle making. Connecting pieces together in order to move closer to a bigger picture. Being able to synthesize objects, materials, and ideas in order to come up with a new forms of expression. Experimental media is a way for me to visualize problems and explore new understandings.

Experimental media has changed over the years, often times being mistaken with conceptual art. Experimental media emphasizes the process as art, conceptual art places emphasis on the object as art. Both *Selections from "Indigenous Experimentation."* by Victor Masayesva and *"Aboriginal Media Art and the Postmodern Conundrum: A Coyote Perspective"* by Steven Loft were written over 2 decades ago placing them both before modern technologies takeover. Masayesva talks about how Indigenous artist were some of the earliest experimenters of technological media - despite how difficult it would have been to access and the distance it would create from Indigenous communities (167). In 2026, access to technology has changed, it has been distributed among the majority of the globe, yet attention and visibility are still controlled by the market. Academia, and media institutions that have access to distribution have barriers to access making it so any media has been distanced from traditional indigenous understanding and existing.

Art and culture find ways to unconsciously influence each other, in a time of fractured meaning, understanding and connection are harder to find than ever. In *"Aboriginal Media Art*

and the Postmodern Conundrum: A Coyote Perspective” Steven Loft discuss memory as cultural formation and the ways knowledge unconsciously transfers between generations through our ancestors. Taking a more neutral stance on the interrelationship between artwork, artist and culture focusing on the potential of a world inspired by each other.

One question that stuck with me from the article was “What is so important that is must be shared? What risks are tribal people willing to take to make this available” (167). This is something I am often thinking about, and I had not thought about it in the context of risk or sacrifice before. Experimental media should be “risk” taking, but also considerate of its potential impacts. Although the media climate of 2026 make it difficult to predict how, why, and where media has a takes meaning. The act of documentation become a risk as a media is constantly abstracted and misrepresented across time and space. Interestingly, Loft predicts this “real time” problem describing it as the “constant and participatory engagement” with technology or discuss the interrelationship of things and its constant demand for attention (94). Additionally Loft explains the *A Coyote Perspective* by showing how fire the (trickster/shapeshifter) is a metaphor for technology. I like thinking about technology like this, it will not progress how we expect it too, “neither inherently benign or malevolent (94), but something that can be used for for positive “personal and communal” existence (95)

Loft cites Masayesva’s on “Indigenous Aesthetic, like each tribal language it not a profane practice, a basic human protocol, or merely a polite form of etiquette and transaction, but rather, it is the way in which we are heard and commune with the ancients(94). Loft also talks about what it means to fit into a a particular cultural aesthetic, specifically what it means to be a considered an "aboriginal aesthetic" (90). Loft argues that artist operating as resistance, cultural sovereignty, and identity politics could be consider Indigenous because of "aesthetics' but

because of the ever-changing connected relationship between art, history, and people. Thinking about what it means to “For Native people, memory is history. And it is also the present and the future” (91) For Indigenous media artists, technology has been away to defy colonist modes of representation because they are on an open web based realm (94). This is especially compared to the barriers to asking traditional art -painting, sculpture, and museums.

Experimental media has always existed outside of these norms (however even within the experimental sphere there are still barriers to access). Lido TV is an example of current experimental media that is in direct conversation with media, education, the web - and barriers to access. Lido TV (structured like a children's show) subverts expectations by presenting topics (Colonialism, race, and violence) in a context digestible and understable. Lido Pimienta sets are interestingly minimalist and subdued reminiscent of corporate marketing strategy. Pimienta also uses puppets a classic of television, but (one in particular seems to be wrapped in skin) is eerily decorated. Lido is showing the contradictions of making media in 2026 and references the cost and the past in the construction of her set.

Using and subverting differing forms of media aesthetics is recurring idea in experimental media creation. In the workshop *Analog Mayhem*, Ed Video showed many different way of creating and seeing media. The instruction emphasized play and developing style through process. The collection of equipment was collected and repurposed in this room to blend of sound, technology, light, music, and people. This experiment allows individuals to work together to create a visual and auditory experience defying the conventions of traditional art making and viewing. Yukkin’s practice also seems to subvert recognizable aesthetics and media; through (for a lack of a better phrase!) just doing it!. This message is something that I have continued to

reflect on. Starting the process, problem solving, playing lead to understanding and meaning. I reflect again on the question, What is so important that it must be shared? What are the risks?

Citations:

Loft, Steven. Selection from “Aboriginal Media Art and the Postmodern Conundrum: A Coyote Perspective.” *Transference, Tradition, Technology: Native New Media Exploring Visual & Digital Culture*. Walter Phillips Gallery Editions in association with Art Gallery of Hamilton & Indigenous Media Arts Group, 2005, pp. 89-96.

Masayeva, Victor. Selections from “Indigenous Experimentation.” *Transference, Tradition, Technology: Native New Media Exploring Visual & Digital Culture*. Walter Phillips Gallery Editions in association with Art Gallery of Hamilton & Indigenous Media Arts Group, 2005, pp 173-177.

Pimienta, Lido, *Lido TV Episode 1- Colonialism*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POeNJmkrCow>

ED Video Workshop, Analog Mayhem (2026 University of Guelph)

Yukkin Artist Talk (2026 University of Guelph)