Orbis Tertius

Marcel Duchamp, *3 stoppages étalon* (1913-14)

...now fate had set before me something much more precious and painstaking. I now held in my hands a vast and systematic fragment of the entire history of an unknown planet, with its architectures and its playing cards, the horror of its mythologies and

the murmur of its tongues, its emperors and its seas, its minerals and its birds and fishes, its algebra and its fire, its theological and metaphysical controversies-all joined, articulated, coherent, and with no visible doctrinal purpose or hint of parody...

During a first coursing in photogravure with EGS, the importance of screens in the layered production of a copperplate for print-making dawned on the participants. Myself included. The use of screens—with their variety of mesh —was invented by George Meisenbach in 1882. Before that, the technique used was *aquatint*. What interests us here is what they do, not what they are.

In photogravure, screens are what make the ink take to the copperplate, to which an image has been etched. On TV, the screen appears as *white noise* outside broadcasting hours. So, whether it is *ink* or *light* the principle is the same. It constitutes the logistics of conveying an image from information, *marked* or otherwise *recorded*. The same holds true of computer-screens.

The connection between the print-screens and TV-screen appears in EGS work as an artist. In his performance-installation with the rollers **(2/7)**, a large video-projection provided his work—opening creates, exhibiting the rollers, and mounting them as 3-legged creatures—with a *backdrop*. A decisive link in the genealogy of *proximal* surfaces conveying various *remote* viewing-modes.

It is interesting, in historical retrospective, to note that the end of the first period of photogravure, corresponds with the early technological beginnings of TV (Philo Farnsworth, 1927). Because it is sandwiched into the multiple layers of the process, it could provide us today with a *forensic* technology to investigate the archaeology of modern-time surfaces born of *preprint*-repro.

That is, in the history of the surface as an optical illusion: the *swarm* intelligence, by which the surface *mirrors* an important feature of human intelligence which is to *screen* and *select*, as the active components of *interception* (much like the *horizon* and *vanishing point* in perspective-drawing, manages to *transpose* the optical workings of the human eye): recording *impressions*.

The affordance of mirroring is *not* mimetic: the palette of print-making techniques explored by EGS in his MFA, re-effects scanning, computing, chalking, burning, industrial preprint operations, gelatine transfer, alcohol baths, rinsing, etching, polishing, inking and printing. A multi-layered process that includes technologies from *stone-age* tech to *post-industrial* digital tech.

It brings to mind an almost geological layering of *early* and *late* human technologies. Which means that the photogravure technique itself is *saturated* with context (which, for instance, the isolated computer screen isn't, or only poorly). The screen is sandwiched in between a beginning and end that are materials-based: the information element is produced by shaping pressures.

That is, defining in between *shaping pressures*, resulting from re-effecting *form* and *matter*, in which *testing* and *goal-seeking* are taking place alongside/ conjointly. The human-artefact mirroring occurs as techniques are determined to do the same as humans can *do* by themselves, but through procedures and know-how that are *completely different*. And so re-effects *another* difference.

To successfully mirror something that is *remote* in an a proximally available artefact (e.g. a *print*), is contained by the gap/difference between the human and technical procedures that are doing the *same thing*, though in very *different ways*: it allows us to *intercept*—layering the gap between *here* and *there*—the location as a category of *time*. Human, technical and *orbis tertius*.