



Nam June Paik, *Golden Buddha* 2005 (détournement of representation)



Theodor Barth w/Enrique Guadarrama Solis, *Screening representations, white noise as fertile* 2022



Clear Mountain, *Wednesday Evening Zoom Dharma discussion, 2022 (détourage)*

The goal of theory in design is to hatch agency. That is, a kind of agency hatching from experimental process and goal-seeking: not only resulting in agency, but releasing the immanently communicative potential of agency. Which resonates with anthropologist Edmund Leach's notion of *ritual*: that is, an aspect of all behaviour, namely its *communicative* aspect: or, its *criticality*.

When linguistic communication is *included* into this scope of agency, it articulates *with* agency and *through* it. In this scope, language is nothing in and by itself. Language is a plea that runs with and through agency: a lieutenant that stands by agency, on the watch for the domino-effects manifesting agency in its communicative aspect. Our apparel of artefacts are its tools and ruins.

But language can also veer to the emulation, substitution and erasure of agency. The lieutenant starts to issue orders. The result is a language that is no longer on the watch of agency. It can define *ethics*, for instance, but is no longer ethically involved. Hence the scope of theory in design, is to hatch design practices that work for the *restitution* of communicative hits and impacts.

For this reason, it will seek to involve audiences *experimentally*: in order to [prime](#) sensory-motor connections as a *basic condition* for saying anything whatsoever. Language, then, will *pace* and *lead*. But *never* force. And its approach to agency is accordingly *immersive*. It *cannot* locate itself over and above agency: that is, its assignment is *not* to represent *nor* interpret agency.

That is, *if* representation is *implicit* in interpretation. This has to be our basic assumption. Hence the post-interpretive alternative to representation is goal-seeking wired to an experimental process allowing to *screen* intentional developments. That is, to accept the emergence of intention in phenomena linked to the play of human behaviours in the *buildup* of agency, or action.

*Moving images* is a way of *screening agency*—getting *intention* up on our “radar”—the outcome is either cinematographic, or *re-effective*: breaking out of the frame, establishing a new frame, while remaining in correspondence with the previous frame. The first principle of moving images is montage (*kinetic*). The second principle is détournement/détourage ([agentive](#)).

The latter of a kind that—when accumulating—will hatch communication, at some point (or promises to): that is, an outcome that in a number of aspects is not predicted, but nevertheless reveal a noteworthy wealth of *impacts* that are much desired. That is, the acquisition lies in the impact, while the hit is not the one imagined. Then taking it into possession: as value, knowledge etc.

According to this model, the screen is continuously redefined. Or, more generically, a crossroads between postproduction, preproduction and current production: a *crossroads* between current, previous and coming. The sum of the three is a kind of movement without motion: the white noise from old TV-sets is a case in point. It is an image—*perhaps* the purest—of time itself.

That is time without motion. The swarming movement within the screen is a counterpoint to montage. Which is why we experience time in a different way when a TV is running *white noise*. As soon as there is a broadcast it becomes a receiver that transmits montage: motion picture—narrative action. However, it can also receive and transmit something else: agency beyond the frame.