

Mariele Neudecker

Still from *Those Who Came Before Us, And Us Who Are To Follow*



Mariele Neudecker, born 1965

Those Who Came Before Us, And Us Who Are To Follow

Video projection superimposed with
CCTV streaming, 2007

You Are Always On My Mind

Video, 2007

*In *Those Who Came Before Us, And Us Who Are To Follow*, the artist has collected video footage made from a hot-air balloon trip over the Land of the Dead near Luxor, taking a disorientating approach to perspective: it is almost as if we are sharing the viewpoint of the risen Ancient Egyptian dead from the afterlife.*

Time-delayed footage is projected from live CCTV video-streaming of visitors within the gallery, so that ghostly figures appear to weave through the Luxor imagery, adding another layer of perspective. On closer viewing we see objects from the daily life of an Ancient Egyptian child – a tunic, a mask, a ball.



Still (detail) from *You Are Always On My Mind*

You Are Always On My Mind considers the impressions human beings leave on the world around us. The video's narrator quotes from a text called *The Ninth Bridgwater Treatise* of 1837, which was written by Charles Babbage, the originator of the idea of the computer: 'The air itself is one vast library, on whose pages are forever written all that man has ever said or woman whispered...'

A potter throws and inscribes a pot, reminiscent of a vessel that may have been put in a tomb to provide for the afterlife. The idea that the pot could hold secrets from the tomb, alludes to a modern myth in which it is alleged that archaeologists can decipher ancient inscriptions using contemporary technology.

As the pot was turning, the groove inscribed into it by the potter recorded the background noise of the workshop. Thousands of years later, the groove can be read. This piece resonates with the Ancient Egyptian view of the afterlife – what messages are being transmitted to us from the past? What messages do we knowingly or unknowingly send to the future? Are the traces of history all around us? Technology is capable of enabling and destroying the fictions and facts with which we surround ourselves.

The Ninth Bridgwater Treatise, 1837

Charles Babbage

Charles Babbage, *The Ninth Bridgwater Treatise*, 2nd edn London, 1838.
Digitized by John van Wyhe, Ph.D., Cambridge University.

CHAP. IX.

ON THE PERMANENT IMPRESSION OF OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS ON THE GLOBE WE INHABIT.

The principle of the equality of action and reaction, when traced through all its consequences, opens views which will appear to many persons most unexpected. The pulsations of the air, once set in motion by the human voice, cease not to exist with the sounds to which they gave rise. Strong and audible as they may be in the immediate neighbourhood of the speaker, and at the immediate moment of utterance, their quickly attenuated force soon becomes inaudible to human ears. The motions they have impressed on the particles of one portion of our atmosphere, are communicated to constantly increasing numbers, but the total quantity of motion measured in the same direction receives no addition. Each atom loses as much as it gives, and regains again from other atoms a portion of those motions which they in turn give up. The waves of air thus raised, perambulate the earth and ocean's surface, and in less than twenty hours every atom of its atmosphere takes up the altered movement due to that infinitesimal portion of the primitive motion which has been conveyed to it through countless channels, and which must continue to influence its path throughout its future existence.

[...]The air itself is one vast library, on whose pages are for ever written all that man has ever said or woman whispered. There, in their mutable

but unerring characters, mixed with the earliest, as well as with the latest sighs of mortality, stand for ever recorded, vows unredeemed, promises unfulfilled, perpetuating in the united movements of each particle, the testimony of man's changeful will. But if the air we breathe is the never-failing historian of the sentiments we have uttered, earth, air, and ocean, are the eternal witnesses of the acts we have done. The same principle of the equality of action and reaction applies to them: whatever movement is communicated to any of their particles, is transmitted to all around it, the share of each being diminished by their number, and depending jointly on the number and position of those acted upon by the original source of disturbance. The waves of air, although in many instances perceptible to the organs of hearing, are only rendered visible to the eye by peculiar contrivances; but those of water offer to the sense of sight the most beautiful illustration of transmitted motion. Every one who has thrown a pebble into the still waters of a sheltered pool, has seen the circles it has raised gradually expanding in size, and as uniformly diminishing in distinctness. He may have observed the reflection of those waves from the edges of the pool. He may have noticed also the perfect distinctness with which two, three, or more series of waves each pursues its own unimpeded course, when diverging from two, three, or more centres of disturbance. He may have seen, that in such cases the particles of water where the waves intersect each other, partake of the movements due to each series.

From: www.victorianweb.org/science/science_texts/bridgewater/babbage_intro.htm

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