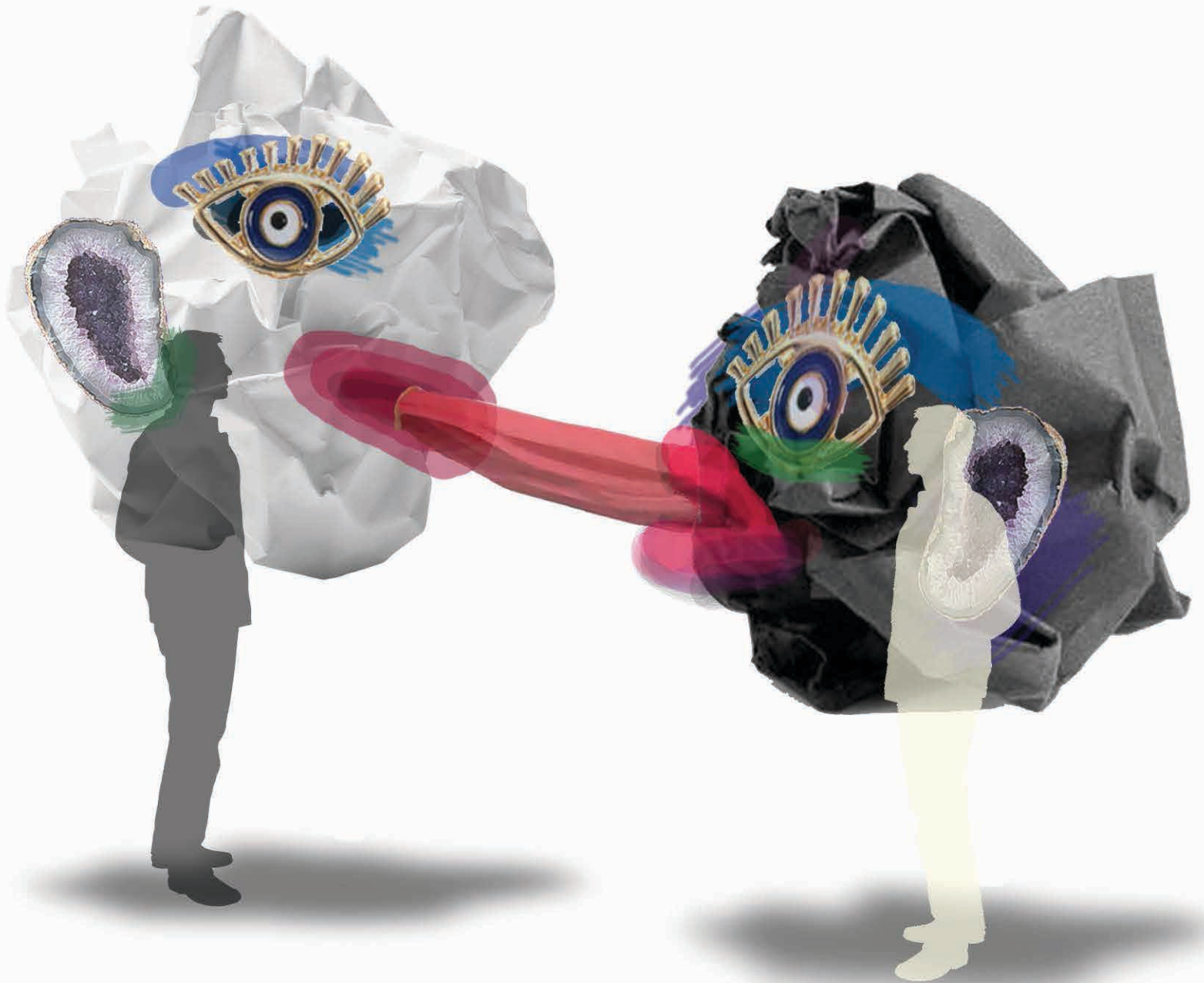


TALKING HEADS ONLY TALK



Currents New Media Proposal 2019  
Marshall James Kavanaugh  
Augustus Dejenbrock

Title:

# TALKING HEADS ONLY TALK

an immersive, interactive art installation

by Augustus Deppenbrock  
and Marshall James Kavanaugh

In a wonderland of “fake news” and misguided perceptions, the giant heads of two characters TWEETLE and TWIDDLE arrive to offer some semblance of harmony. Two seemingly oppositional trains of thought are put forward and onlookers will try to make sense of the subsequent conversation projected upon a tongue-tied stream. Participants are invited to go down the rabbit hole within these giant masks and offer their textual talking points to complete the closed-circuit dialogue. Through digitized poetry, typing machines, and projected imagery, a simulated text message conversation begins. But where do the algorithms behind a black mirror or of the human mind itself break down and provide more disconnection than real connection? When *talking heads only talk*, perhaps the conversation will always only represent two separate entities expressing themselves without response to the other. If we’re lucky, maybe between the lines, we’ll see how the two compliment each other’s absurdity.

The giant heads of two characters TWEETLE and TWIDDLE are suspended from the ceiling. They face each other with an open stare ready to engage in an open dialogue from opposing trains of thought. Between them are two digital typewriter docks / keyboards connected to an infinite scroll also suspended from the ceiling in a wave-like stream of consciousness tongue-tied in discourse. Participants are invited to enter the rabbit hole within these giant masks in order to complete the closed-circuit dialogue between these two characters.

Inside both masks, participants are confronted with imagery aligned with the subsequent identity of the character they choose portrayed by a display screen suspended at eye level in front of them, as well as lighting and the painted interior of the head they sit inside. Inside TWEETLE, the aesthetic is of the shadow-polarity with imagery of war, poverty, anger, and despair, while TWIDDLE propels the participant into a bright world of peace, community, love, and tranquility.

Through text prompts upon the display screen, participants are instructed to engage in a text conversation with the character across from them. TWEETLE is asked to answer ego-shattering questions and type an array of retorts that border on the insulting, while TWIDDLE is queried with an assortment of empowering messages that deepen their relationship with their peer and they are encouraged to respond with light-hearted compliments. To both participants the conversation appears like a text message chat, like what we're used to on our cell phones, where they see what they type and receive a message from their peer after a few seconds delay.

By way of an algorithm, that both connects and distances this peer-to-peer network, what both participants receive is different from what their actual peer is sending them. Inside the head of TWEETLE, the participant will receive questions of banality like "What do you do?" and baits to their anger in the vein of Shakespearean cuts of wit (ie. "I bite my thumb at you, sir"). Inside the head of TWIDDLE, everything is "love and light" with a resounding chorus of poetry expressing unending compliments upon the participants innate beauty. The imagery and text on both sides of this simulated conversation is G-rated and doesn't go too deep beneath the skin, so to be playful instead of too overly impactful to the participants' experiences. Participants will engage in this dialogue for 3-5 minutes before a text prompt tells them the conversation has ended.

To spectators who surround this installation, they perceive the messages of the two participants as pop ups projected like thought bubbles upon the infinite scroll between them, with only the remarks that each participant types in real time. The "conversation" will look chaotic to any average onlooker, but with any luck there will be some semblance of narrative that forms about how two people are never quite having the same conversation, when a black-mirrored device sits between them, and even with the visceral experience of typing out our experience to another, we must step outside the mask of our own projections to truly have a dialogue with our peer.

EXAMPLES OF TEXT PROMPTS:

TWEETLE

“What do you do?”  
*ANSWER IN THREE WORDS*

“How do you make money?”  
*ANSWER IN FIVE WORDS*

“Thou luxurious mountain goat.”  
*WRITE A COMEBACK IN FIVE WORDS*

“Thy tongue outvenoms all the worms  
of Nile.”  
*WRITE A COMEBACK IN FIVE WORDS*

“You scallion! I’ll tickle your  
catastrophe!”  
*WRITE A COMEBACK IN FIVE WORDS*

“More of your conversation would  
infect my brain.”  
*CONVERSATION HAS ENDED*

TWIDDLE

“What inspires you?”  
*ANSWER IN THREE WORDS*

“How do you give to your community?”  
*ANSWER IN FIVE WORDS*

“Your heart inspires me to swoon.”  
*WRITE A COMPLIMENT IN FIVE WORDS*

“Thank you. Your verse holds merit.”  
*WRITE A POEM IN FIVE WORDS*

“You bring light to my world, like the  
moon upon ocean waves crashing upon  
my forlorn shores.”  
*WRITE A COMPLIMENT IN FIVE WORDS*

“It was so nice to talk to you. Goodbye,  
my friend.”  
*CONVERSATION HAS ENDED*

Some other examples of sources for Text Arrays:

- Selected @realDonaldTrump tweets
- Selected News Headlines
- Love Poetry by Pablo Neruda, Maya Angelou
- Selected lyrics from popular love songs

# TALKING HEADS ONLY TALK

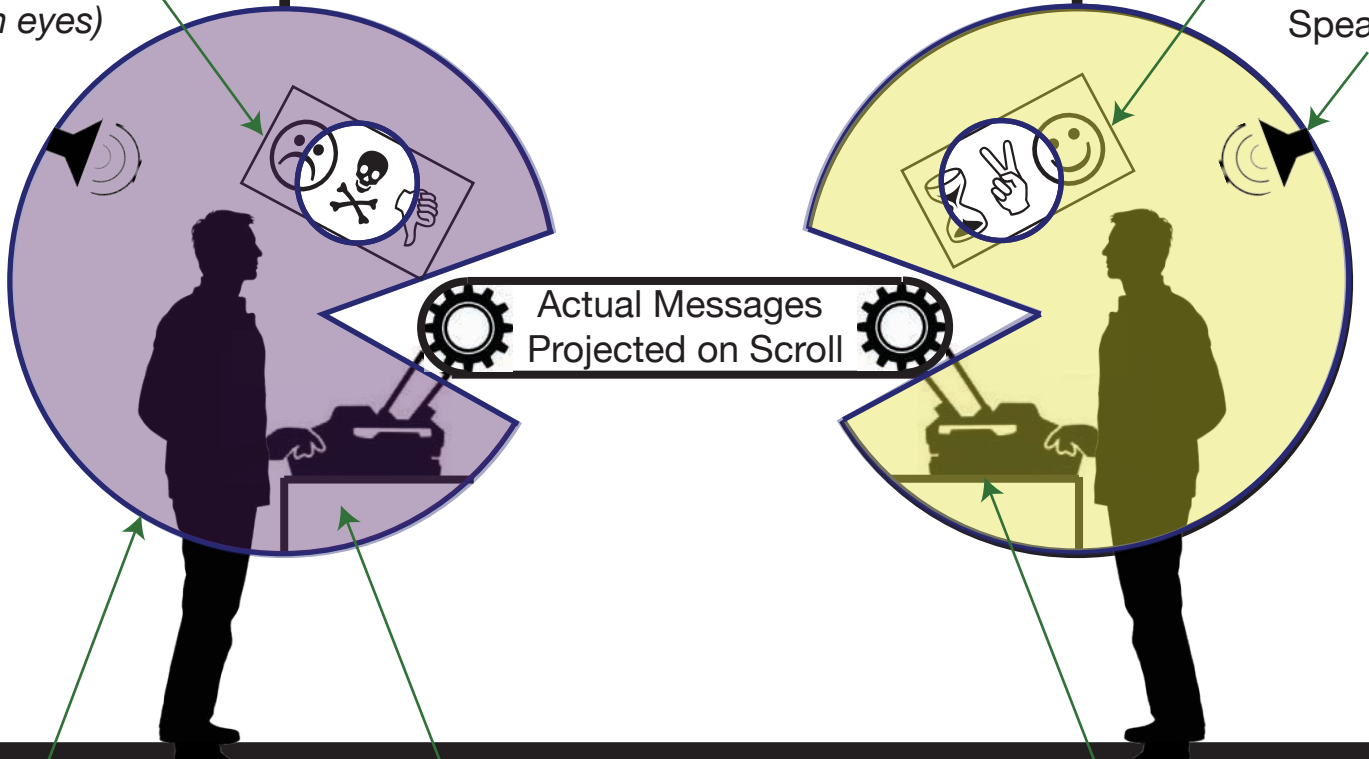
*Elevation Detail*

Structure Suspended (200 lb) or Freestanding with Steel Pipe Legs  
(electric will run down chain or up leg)

Negative Loop  
Message Screen  
(Partially visible  
through eyes)

Positive Loop  
Message Screen

Speakers



Entry Door Through  
Back of Head

Electronics Compartment

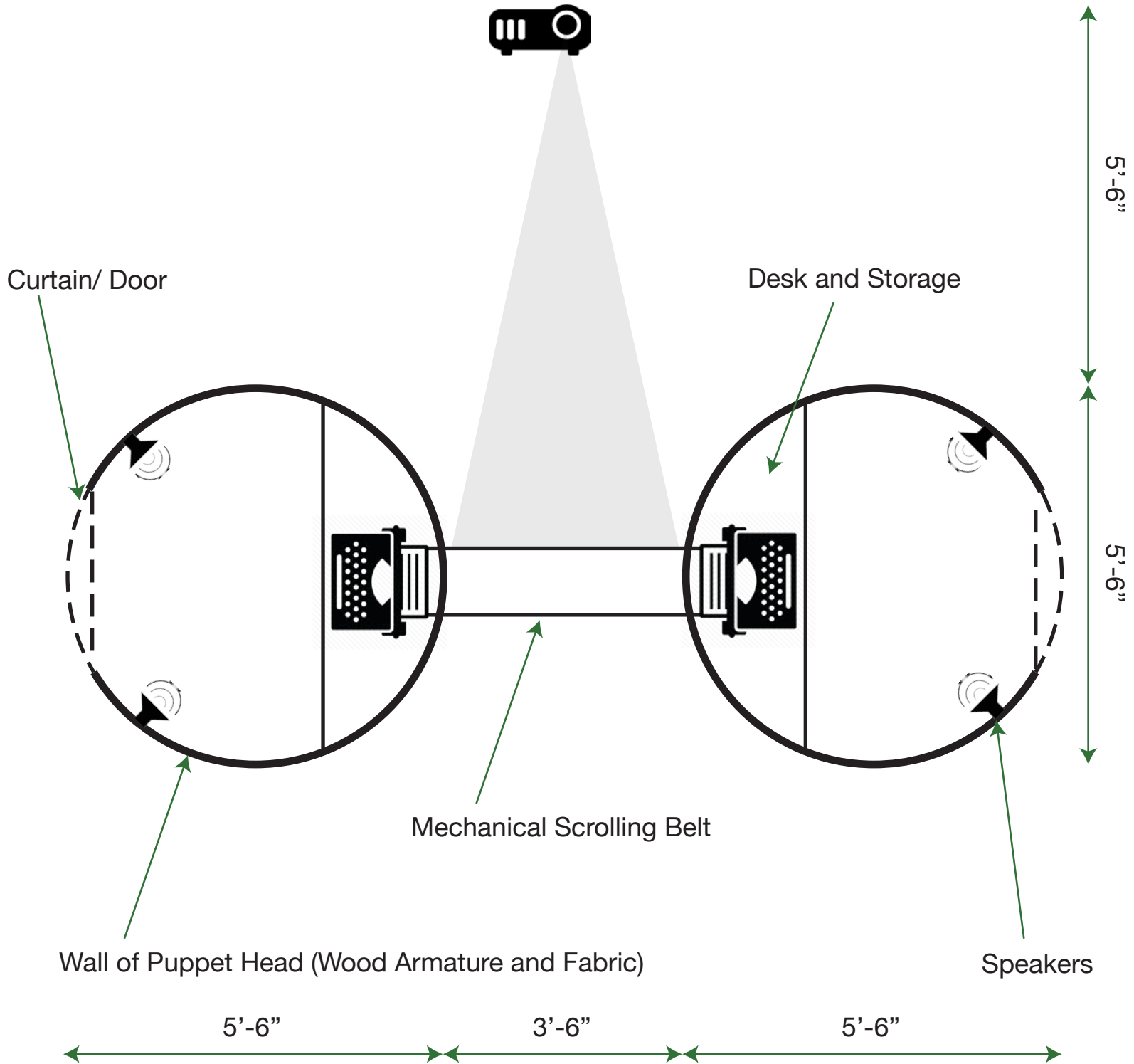
Modem -Typewriters

14'-0" Approx Width

# TALKING HEADS ONLY TALK

Plan

Projector Box Suspended Above or on Ground



## EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED BY CURRENTS NEW MEDIA

- 2 Mac Computers/Macbooks capable of running Unity-developed program files
  - Both computers must have two DisplayPorts to connect to screens/projectors, for two separate displays.
    - or some other wireless method of connecting to display screens / projectors is more than welcome and open to suggestion
- 2 projectors with HDMI input
- 2 display screens, small-medium size with HDMI input
- 4 HDMI cables
- 2 Mini DisplayPort to HDMI adapters
- 2 separate computer speakers (prefer Bluetooth connected to connect to computers)
- Chain or other heavy-duty material to suspend TWEETLE and TWIDDLE from head mounts to ceiling mounts
- Ceiling mounts
- 4-6 power strips
- 2-4 extension cords

Both Augustus Depenbrock and Marshall James Kavanaugh would like to attend opening weekend of Currents New Media Festival, as well as be there a couple days beforehand to install the immersive sculpture. Marshall James Kavanaugh will remain in the area for the month of June for any debugging that may arise.

- 1 round trip plane ticket for Augustus Depenbrock
- lodging for both artists for opening weekend

## EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED BY ARTISTS

- TWEETLE and TWIDDLE head apparatuses
- head mounts
- Unity-developed program files
- 2 digital typewriter docks / keyboards
- USB cords for typewriter docks / keyboards
- apparatus for Infinite Scroll
- lighting