

The Natural Machine - Or the sublime Machine; Metal Dinosaur

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Forward

The following was written as a project proposal for my final metalsmithing class at Wayne State University. I was tasked with writing a proposal for a specific body of work which explained the concepts and design choices that would go into the resulting art pieces. The project ultimately veered off in another direction, but this proposal still stands as a description of what could be. A 'hypothetical-art,' if you will. In reading this proposal after the class's completion, the written descriptions of the would be (or could be/should be) work carry a weight that a physical object cannot. There is something capable of an incredible grabbing of consciousness in a work that only exists as description: whose only material is the imagination of the reader (and thus viewer) themselves.

The proposal for this hypothetical work describes and seeks to understand the relationship that modern humans have with immense machines. The most apt comparison I could draw with this relationship is with dinosaurs, perhaps those that existed in the Jurassic Park movies. Modern machines are the new force of nature, one that is simultaneously made by humans and completely out of their control.



Comparative Data (Averages):

Garbage Truck - 16,260lbs

Human – 185lbs

Heil DuraPack® 5000 Rear Loader population growth (30 years) - 20,000 Human population growth (past 30 years) - 2.5 billion

We have built and continue to build an environment around ourselves that when compared to us as a species determines the human race as the vast inferior. The machine does not reproduce uncontrollably; thus, it can never overpopulate. It contains more mass and raw power than a few thousand of us put together. The machine will always beat us at our own game, both literally (ie. chess), and through metaphor, as I hope to demonstrate through this proposed body of work.

The game which it always seems to win is not the human game, though. Our own game is the machine game that is played by man and only ever won by the machine. The engineer (or the team, who for the game's purpose is summarized as an individual) who designed and built the Heil DuraPack® 5000 Rear Loader did not win the game of maximum efficiency garbage collection and hauling. The metal-clad-ten-wheeled-dinosaur did. And years from now when the standard of efficiency increases and the engineer needs to build the DuraPack® 6001, it is not said engineer who surpasses his preconceived limit of value, but the resultant and fulfilling machine.

In this way, the human is barely a player in the game, and serves as essentially the water boy, convinced that the water he gives to the thirsty quarterback is as important as the game winning touchdown his quarterback throws. This described relationship between creator and the created is in need of further examination. *The object* is the prime catalyst to describe this relationship as a part of formal sequence, as the word and its said formal sequence holds the context of both the machine and the game, in a stationary manner that allows for sensory examination and contemplation without the added pressure of deciphering image, narrative, or implicit-explicit agendas.

In the creation process and final execution of said objects, facilitation of a tactile recollection of memory will be sought. A similar primal and instinctual reaction as is felt when a garbage truck roars and stomps in front of an apartment: an object so recognizable and commonplace in the frequency of its occurrence yet so foreign and alien in its vast measured superiority; in its victory in the Game.

Potential Material Execution:

- Metal blue drum barrel, cut vertically and twisted into a cone. <https://www.ebay.com/itm/255786201840>
- Fabricated sheet metal box, similar to housing for Emco lathe, painted red and interspersed with iron tubing. Stock image 1 stock image 2
- Fabricated sheet metal dumpster, with open lid, painted yellow and filled with concrete

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