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Allowing new priorities

All thoughts and actions come from each person's priorities and what one considers important to strive for and achieve. Since every person is influential and connected to another, one person could easily adopt the priorities of another. The way our society is structured comes from a set of specific priorities that have developed throughout history. These parameters guide everyone's way of life and, as Rushkoff states, "Our economy, our religions, our politics... Everything was a program designed to do something. Some of those purposes may be long forgotten, and some may not be proceeding according to the plan. But they were programs all the same." (10). Each period of human history has functioned under a system of parameters pertaining to a specific time and place. These frameworks have grown and evolved to keep humanity alive and better its conditions. At this moment society is going through several continuous experiences and challenges of various sorts that reflect the parameters of our time. Challenges such as climate change, racism, class inequality, state violence and application of new technologies are just a few that affect us today. Through these happenings humanity is asked and challenged to revise their current priorities and parameters and change them in order to keep growing and evolving in a healthy way.

The current priorities and parameters that society lives with are based on and carried out through driving forces that are shared by most of society. Most of humanity is driven by fear, "I" driven and visually driven. All of these express energy that keeps current guidelines alive and does not allow the mental space to let new guidelines emerge and older ones change. In order to have space for new ways of thinking and new areas to explore, humanity needs to rethink, explore, experiment and redesign. Each person's mission is to find out what they are responsible for and challenge themselves to create a positive change. If everyone was able to know their voice and find the energy to carry out change there would be an abundance of actions undertaken allowing evolution to happen. Right now the main driving forces that society lives by are very few and specific and do not allow for growth. There has to be some way that society can allow itself the freedom to look at its

priorities and challenge them.

At this moment it seems that technology is mostly moving along with these driving forces and therefore creating less space for change. At the same time, technological innovations create a pressure and anxiety pushing people to keep acting and living in the same way. Lanier states “People are pointlessly diluting themselves on culture, intellectual, and spiritual levels of fawning over digital superhuman phenomena that don’t necessarily exist.” (8). People are getting lost in these new technological advances without awareness of how and why this happens. With the power to change it, society as a whole continues to let these programs dictate its being. It is not just the way one works and communicates. In the end this lack of change winds up negatively affecting and changing society’s entire way of living based on the interconnectedness and timelessness of technology. There are events that humanity has less control of, like unexplored areas like space or natural disasters; but when it comes to technology one seems to forget that society has complete control over it and one does not necessarily have to take it for what it is. Technology is made by people for people and one cannot be blinded by how big or “magical” it seems to be. “These environments in which we’re all spending so much of our time these days - the websites and social networks where we do our work and play - they are not nature. They have been constructed by people (or at least for people) with real agendas. They want us to believe certain ideas, spend our money on certain things, and connect to other people in certain ways.” (Rushkoff, 8). If people constructing technology are being driven by the same priorities that society has been living under then society will continue in the same path. However, if influential people can start exploring new priorities and guidelines for living life then technology can be a powerful tool for the rest of society. “Just as words gave people the ability to pass on knowledge for what we now call civilization networked activity could soon offer us access to shared thinking—an extension of consciousness still inconceivable to most of us today.” (Rushkoff, 14).

At this moment society is changing the world through technology to suit itself; to make each person’s life “easier” instead of using technology to change ourselves to suit the world. Humans want everything and everyone to please them, they do not see they are part of a greater world and humanity needs to evolve in order to keep on coexisting with this world. In order to evolve, humanity needs to reach an extension of consciousness and to do so one has to start recognizing and

analyzing the current drives that are setting the current priorities.

Fear Driven

Fear does not allow for change. Living in fear makes the structure where society lives under even harder to break and there is no room for imagination. Every person, family, country has been through difficult experiences and based on these, decisions in the present time are taken. It is important to learn from the past and grow but this should not cancel all hope and trust. Most of the fears come from the past and one carries these misconceptions that do not let people create relationships. If society instead of looking and acting based on the past, started seeing everything from their ideal future, if it would be motivated by dreams and hopes and not fears and misconceptions then all of the present actions would change with that in mind and would eventually become reality. Fear has been a parameter that society has dictated for itself therefore it is possible for it to be seen and recognized and eventually not let decisions and actions come from it.

Technology has been inspired in times of war due to fear. The mechanics behind it are creative and important but if these inventions were coming out of a desire to help and unite, the technological advancements would be different and greater. Besides noting how fear influences technology during wars, it can also be seen daily in the technology we use. Technology can become a tool to see this fear and transform it. It can also help us look and imagine the future instead of focusing in the past. Right now in social media one can see language, words and visual elements where fear is conveyed and influential. Most of the websites have “error” and “attention” pages that bring back a fear that if one looks closely there is really no need for it. There is an exaggeration of usage of exclamations marks and the bright color red. These are subtle experiences but when a person interacts with these every day in several sites, one really starts to believe that not getting the latest clothing will affect their social life. The website LinkedIn creates an imaginable range whenever it tells the user when someone has viewed their profile, when it shows how many visitors one has had in a month and knowing how the user’s popularity is ranked among their connections. If the user is “popular” then everything is “good” but if it is not then fear can take over. And most importantly it is setting a structure where it tells people when they are valuable and when they are not. This is not healthy or true but because it is sad and the way it is being conveyed, one can take it as the truth. Instead there

can be sites where it connects people from different backgrounds and skills to teach and learn from one another. A digital space based on overall growth and not competition. A place where everyone is valuable.

“I” Driven

Society is not set up to believe that everyone has an important role. This structure is what maintains racism, violence, and competitiveness and makes it harder for confidence and abundance for all to exist. Currently most people have an impulse to look, think and imagine everything from oneself point of view. It is almost impossible to unconsciously put oneself in the perspective of the other. With every person keeping themselves in their own mind and space it makes it hard to connect with one another. One can say that everyone can “connect” through social media and gatherings. The connection it is being referred to is more profound where it requires energy and sometimes pain but always rewarding based on the support and love that one lives through. In order to create this relationships one has to accept that him or herself is not the only person important and to consciously give all acceptance, understanding and compassion to the other. There is nothing more rewarding than this experience and everyone in some level know this. This is the reason people crave for a partner, a wedding, more social media connections, more “likes”. Society is longing for this connection but it is not yet willing to go through the process that can be painful to open one’s mind and heart.

One day humanity will grow out of this and will be able to no longer talk and start defending and fighting for each person’s sake but for everyone’s. As one connects to another person, each other can look through each other’s eyes and there is no longer an “I”. Right now our challenge is global problems and the only way to solve them is thinking of all of ourselves as a group. One cannot design for the world when is not looking beyond him/herself. Our system does not help society to get to this point. Technology has been able to give people a look into new places where people might never travel to. This is the first part to become globally conscious. Technology has been advancing so rapidly that now it can give more than a look. A look is not enough for people to feel and get to their core to connect deeply. Visual stimulation is not enough for society to become conscious of themselves and their surroundings.

Visually Driven

In *The Eyes of the Skin*, Johani Pallasmaa states that “In western culture, sight has historically been regarded as the noblest of the senses” (15) and how certainty is based on vision and visibility and therefore truth. It is easy to notice how people plan their next move and based their beliefs sometimes solemnly through visuals. Pallasmaa explains “Vision and hearing are now the privilege sociable senses, whereas the other three are considered as archaic sensory remnants with a merely private function, and they are usually suppressed by the code of culture” (16). If humanity only had the sense of sight then it would be more understandable that humanity would base their knowledge on this one sense. Since humans can interact with more than sight with their surroundings, then the other senses must have a fundamental function, not for practical uses only but also to find certainty, truth and connection. “The dominance of the eye and the suppression of the other senses tends to push us into detachment, isolation and exteriority.” (19). If society could become more aware of their other senses that could give room for new discoveries and actions to be taken. Right now if someone does not “see results” it means whatever there are they wanted to see is non-existent at all. If society was more open and accepting of some realities to exist that are not visible to the eye then the perspective would grow. Pallasmaa believes, “the eye has certainly produced imposing and thought-provoking structures, it has not facilitated human rootedness in the world” (19).

In order to have this “rootedness” that will allow for more connection between people, humanity has to start paying more attention with how it interacts through its other senses. Right now most of technology revolves around visuals. Pallasmaa notices this, “There is no doubt that our technological culture has ordered and separated the senses even more distinctly” (16). Since the amount of time interacting with a screen is increasing rapidly, and this tool is mainly based on visuals there is more emphasis on it and less on the other ways we interact through our other senses. Being driven visually is convenient on our time because it is fast and one gets information about their surroundings almost instantly. But Pallasmaa does not believe this is something for our greater good, “The only sense that is fast enough to keep pace with the astounding increase of speed in the technological world is sight. But for the world of the eye is causing us to live increasingly in a perpetual present flattened by speed and simultaneity.” (21). As an artist, I have been feeling this fast one-dimension environment that I am living in and naturally the last project I worked on focused on finding a way to get away from it. And the sense that allowed me an escape was touch.

Touch

Diane Ackerman explains in *A Natural History of the Senses* how “Touch teaches us that life has depth and contour, it makes our sense of the world and ourself three-dimensional” (95). I do not believe society is very conscious of the effect that touch has on a bigger scale. Touch is sometimes seen as the most primitive, animal-like sense so it can be looked with inferiority. When in reality if it wasn't because of touch, evolution might not even take place, “Touch reassures an infant that it's safe; it seems to give the baby a go-ahead to develop normally.” (Ackerman, 75). And not just physically this sense helps but also emotionally, “The first emotional comfort, touching and being touched by our mother remains the ultimate memory of selfless love, which stays with us life long” (Ackerman, 79). This sense is helping create a relation between our body and our emotional make up. This relations is crucial for self-discovery that will allow to better communicate with ourselves, others and create stronger deeper relationships.

Project: Soil

As an artist, I have been feeling this fast one-dimension environment that I am living in and naturally the last project I worked on focused on finding a way to get away from it.

So for this project I focused on how to incorporate technology with other senses that were not visual to give people the opportunity to grow into their other senses and not loose and allow them to give to help each person get to another kind of information that otherwise we couldn't reach.