

# Medium is the message

Psychology



"The Medium is the Message" The medium is the message is a phrase that challenges the idea behind the artwork, which was coined by Marshall McLuhan. McLuhan warns us that we are often distracted by the content of a medium. The true value of a medium is how can it be used to enhance our collective experience and understanding within society. It can discuss the meaning that the form of a medium embeds itself in the message, creating a symbiotic relationship by which the medium influences how the message is perceived to the audience. This phrase can be communicated through Damien Hirst and Stelarc artwork. Damien Hirst works are very conceptual and dramatic which leaves the audience looking for a message. For example he's artwork "The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living" which consists of a tiger shark preserved in formaldehyde in a vitrine. Damien Hirst is aiming to fry the mind by influencing how the message is perceived to the audience but he does so by setting up direct, often visceral experience, of which the shark remains the most outstanding. In keeping with the piece's title, "the shark is simultaneously life and death incarnate in a way you don't quite grasp; suspended and silent, in its tanks". This is when the audience starts to question; "The Medium is the Message". The artwork gives the innately demonic urge to live a demonic, deathlike form but we still don't understand its intention and values; what is it promoting and how does it contribute to society? It is like Hirst is intending to make the medium an unquestionable aspect of art. Some people say the medium is telling us it is a visual metaphor for the crossing-over to death, which we think will never happen or the desire to be displaced. Stelarc is also a very conceptual and dramatic artist who expresses he's form through the use of he's own body. Stelarc idiosyncratic performances often involve robotics or other relatively

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modern technology integrated with his body. In Stelarc's suspension works, we reach a level of existence where the body becomes a medium of experiments in order to discover its limitations. He inserted fishing hooks into his skin and pulled the flesh. " It is an action illustrating form-stimulus interacting with the body". We discover that the placing of the exhibition contributes to the message of the medium. As an audience we question what is the message within this work. Is he trying to promote the body or is he trying to change the viewer's idea of the body. In Stelarc's view he is exploring the body's limits, as well as its future. The medium points out the psychological and physical limitations of the body. Stelarc believes it is important to recognize that we live in an informational overloaded society. Ideas are cheap and unless you follow through with them, they lack authenticity. But as an audience we are unquestionable on what to think. The body has become a medium with a message. In conclusion both Damien Hirst and Stelarc explore the phrase " the medium is the message". We discovered that the object is the main message within an artwork. It conveyed that the medium embeds itself in the message, creating a symbiotic relationship by which the medium influences how the message is perceived to the audience.