



## THROUGH THE VANISHING POINT Artist Talk & Installation by David Rokeby & Lewis Kaye



*Through The Vanishing Point // McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology, University of Toronto & Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival. © Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid*

**Start: 29 May 2011, 17:00**  
**Venue: External entrance to the Marshall McLuhan Salon**  
**Embassy of Canada**

European premiere of a multi-media view into Coach House, Marshall McLuhan's legendary academic headquarters, by leading Canadian digital artists **David Rokeby** and **Lewis Kaye**.

Canadian artists David Rokeby and Lewis Kaye were commissioned by CONTACT Festival 2010 to create site-responsive works at the Coach House, drawing inspiration from McLuhan's work. The Coach House is the base for the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology, which from 1963 till his death in 1980, was a hotbed of ideas and where McLuhan conducted his groundbreaking research on the nature of communication, media and technology. At seminars held there on Monday evenings, he refined his ideas and made cross-disciplinary leaps and connections. In attendance were artists and scholars from a wide range of disciplines. They shared a common understanding that the mediated world requires analysis of the most fundamental epistemic, ontological and metaphysical assumptions.

In two separate but complementary works, Rokeby and Kaye visually and aurally construct McLuhan's persona. The exhibition illuminates the intellectual spirit of the great media prophet. As the framework for their work the artists drew from McLuhan's book *Through The Vanishing Point: Space in Poetry and Painting* (coauthored by Harley Parker), 1968, which explores the way electronic media fragments the homogeneous experience of space.



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David Rokeby's multi screen projection features images sourced from archival photographs and video recordings of McLuhan's Monday night seminars, personal life, television appearances and public lectures. Lewis Kaye's six channel sound composition uses archival recordings of the seminars – audience murmurs, discussions as well as interviews to evoke McLuhan and the history and aurality of the atmosphere at the Coach House.

### ***Through The Vanishing Point Podcasts***

These three podcast files are designed for both the Marshall McLuhan Salon installation and stand-alone listening. You can listen to these files on any sound system, but because they use binaural recordings they are best experienced with headphones, ideally with your portable MP3 player at the sound installation outside the Marshall McLuhan Salon itself.

To listen to the podcasts, please download file or stream direct from the website:

[01-Thompson Parker McLuhan download](#) (11.1Mb) (<http://tiny.cc/2vaih>)

[02 - McLuhan And Parker Through The Vanishing Point\\_download](#) (11.9MB) (<http://tiny.cc/d5dxd>)

[03-Monday Night Seminar Space\\_download](#)(9.6Mb): (<http://tiny.cc/n3ibv>)

*Through The Vanishing Point was commissioned in 2010 by the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival (Bonnie Rubenstein, curator) and the Faculty of Information McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology (Dominique Scheffel-Dunand, director) University of Toronto, Canada.*

### ***Through The Vanishing Point Participant Biographies***



**David Rokeby**

**Biography:** David Rokeby is one of the world's pioneering interactive sound and non-linear installation



. McLuhan in Europe 2011 is an initiative of transmediale in collaboration with the Embassy of Canada Berlin/ Marshall McLuhan Salon



artist. Based in Toronto, Rokeby studied experimental art at the Ontario College of Art from 1979 to 1984 and has been creating interactive installations since 1982. He has focused on interactive pieces that directly engage the human body or involve artificial perception systems. Rokeby's best-known series of installations, *Very Nervous System* (1986 to present), was first displayed at the Venice Biennale in 1986 and has since been consistently shown around the world. Rokeby won the first Petro-Canada Award for Media Arts in 1988 and the Prix Ars Electronica Award of Distinction for Interactive Art (Austria) in 1991, 1997 with Paul Garrin and again in 2002. This same year, Rokeby won the Governor's General Visual and Media Arts Award. His current work, 'Through The Vanishing Point' (2010) in collaboration with sound artist and media sciences researcher Lewis Kaye was commissioned by the Scotiabank Contact Photography Festival and the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology, Coach House Institute, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto. This site specific artwork, using McLuhan's archive of teaching and educational works, will be adapted to and installed in the Marshall McLuhan Salon of the Embassy of Canada in Berlin during the summer of 2011.



**Lewis Kaye**

**Biography:** Lewis Kaye is a sound artist and media sciences researcher. His current work, 'Through The Vanishing Point' (2010) in collaboration with David Rokeby, was commissioned by the Scotiabank Contact Photography Festival and the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology, Coach House Institute, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto. This site specific artwork, using McLuhan's archive of teaching and educational works, will be adapted to and installed in the Marshall McLuhan Salon of the Embassy of Canada in Berlin during the summer of 2011.

**Lewis Kaye on *Through The Vanishing Point*:** In 2010 I had the privilege of participating in a unique collaborative exhibition, *Through The Vanishing Point*, with Canadian electronic media artist David Rokeby. The context was the 2010 CONTACT Photography Festival in Toronto, whose theme for the year, "Pervasive Influence", explicitly drew on Marshall McLuhan's theories of media and in particular his understanding of photography. Our task was to use archival media content to reanimate McLuhan's presence within the confines of his Coach House offices on the campus of the University of Toronto. The Coach House is of course the home of the Centre for Culture and Technology (today the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology), the epicenter of McLuhan's work, and a building that despite its relative shabbiness (or, perhaps, because of it) to this day still seems to radiate his intellectual dynamism and gravitas. My contribution sought to capture and communicate my own fascination with the place – and the ideas that gestated here – through the medium of sound, while David applied his vision through multiple synchronized projections of archival image and video. This





talk will present documentation of the Through The Vanishing Point exhibition, along with a discussion of the media we drew upon, the singular importance of the Coach House as a venue, and the insights into McLuhan's ideas and processes that came from the realization of this very special, and very site-specific, exhibition.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

All events are free and open to the public but spaces are limited so please RSVP at [rsvp@mcluhan2011.eu](mailto:rsvp@mcluhan2011.eu), and arrive early to ensure enough time for embassy security.

Address:

Embassy of Canada / Marshall McLuhan Salon

Leipziger Platz 17. 10117 Berlin

U-Bahn / S-Bahn Potsdamer Platz

(Please arrive early to allow time for Embassy Security)

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