

MK12's 26 Inspirational Things

Keynote by Timmy Fisher of MK-12 Summary by Rebecca Tegtmeier

Timmy Fisher is an artist and co-founder of MK12, a design and filmmaking collective whose work constantly challenges the boundaries between narrative structure and experimental storytelling. MK12 has been sought after to direct numerous commercial and network-based projects and has provided graphic design, animation and film titles for feature films such as Quantum of Solace, The Internet's Own Boy and Particle Fever. MK12's experimental & short film catalogue has been featured in many international film festivals and exhibitions over 15 years, including Sundance, South by Southwest, The Sao Paulo Biennial, The Zurich Design Museum, The Walker Arts Center, Art Basel & Prix Ars Electronica, amongst others. Their film Overload — a collaboration with NY-based painter Brian Alfred— was inducted into the Guggenheim's permanent collection.

Timmy Fisher closed out day two of the MODE Summit at the Science Gallery in Dublin. He entertained and enlightened the MODE participants by sharing 26 things that inspires the authentic and amusing work of MK12. He opened the keynote presentation with a motion reel highlighting 13 years of MK12 dynamic logos. The logos represent the collective's years of growing into themselves, constantly reinventing and readjusting who they want to be and what type of work they want to do. Their work balances both self-initiated and client-driven efforts and blends methods, techniques, and theories from both design and art.

The original four founding members of MK12 met in the 1990s while they were students at the Kansas City Art Institute. They began to collaborate on short films, experimenting

with narrative and challenging the methods of motion design. In an effort to make their practice lucrative, they took their motion art form into the business space. Short films became motion reels that primarily showcased what they were interested in. Their work quickly gained the attention of people outside of the Kansas City area and they landed many large-scale commercial projects in the film and music industries. After 16 years, their main mission remains to be the same, to make new things. In order to do this, they look to the world for influence rather than their peers in the industry. Their 26 inspirational things is presented via the alphabet and offers insight into what makes MK12 tick. The summary of each inspirational thing follows and links to various MK12 pieces follows chronologically.

A: Archigram Collective

An avant-garde architectural group practicing in London during the 1960s. This group of futurists used visual space in ways that created false hyper-realities. This inspired MK12 to deconstruct and reconstruct kinetic typography as seen in most of their work.

4D Softcore Sweater Porn

<http://mk12.com/MKXII/portfolio/4d-softcore-sweater-porn/>

B: Brazil

A dystopian science fiction film produced in 1985 that experimented with visual storytelling and melded different mediums.

C: Chichicastenango

An indigenous town located in the highland mountains of Guatemala. The beautiful colors and people are the reason MK12-ers frequently visit this inspiring place. On one such trip a couple of books were purchased during their travels, "How to Get a Date" and "How to be a Ninja". The two books along with the amazing experiences of Chichicastenango inspires the chaotic juxtaposition of ideas and elements their work.

Ultralove Ninja

<http://mk12.com/MKXII/portfolio/ultralove-ninja/>

D: Drive-ins

An classic American experience that is quickly vanishing provides a cultural community hangout for those that attend. The animations typically shown during intermission moments between double-features inspired MK12 for their festival piece, *Follow the Sun*. It offers their own wild and odd alternative to these intermission animations.

Follow the Sun

<http://mk12.com/MKXII/portfolio/follow-the-sun-3/>

E: The Elegant Universe

A 1999 non-fiction about theories of physics written by Brian Greene. Inspired the 4D space used in their kinetic piece, *Infinity*.

Infinity

<http://mk12.com/MKXII/portfolio/untitled-01-infinity/>

F: Found photos

MK12 has consistently used found photos as a source for quick experimental storytelling.

Sunkenlust

<http://mk12.com/MKXII/portfolio/sunkenlust/>

G: Gordon Matta-Clark

A New York artist of the 1970s that made site specific installations by cutting into building structures and removing the pieces. He then photographed the results of the physical deconstruction. MK12 practiced this technique on a digital level.

H: Hunter S. Thompson

Famous author of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. He puts himself in his own work, much like MK12 does frequently.

I: Iginio Lardani's

The title designer for *Fistfull of Dollars* and *The Good Bad and the Ugly*. His Italian perspective took westerns into a new space. This, along with the work of Gordon Matta-Clark and Hunter S. Thompson inspired the MK12 self-financed, psychedelic, western short-film, *History of America*. The short-film gained Sundance attention and blurred the lines between motion graphics and animation.

The History of America

<http://mk12.com/MKXII/portfoliomk12-the-history-of-america>

J: Jim Woodring

A Seattle-based comic book author and surrealistic artist. He was the creator of the anthropomorphic cartoon character Frank.

K: Komposition in Blau

A 1935 Oskar Fischinger classic that was produced when he was running from the Nazi's in Poland. (Timmy suggested sharing this fact with stressed out art and design students.) The work influenced MK12 in their animated abstraction of a painting by Brian Alfred, *Beauty in Danger*. The piece references the obsolete animation techniques of color theory and pattern not typically used in contemporary motion design practice.

Beauty in Danger

<http://mk12.com/MKXII/beauty-in-danger/>

L: La Jetée

A French science fiction short film made by Chris Marker in 1962. The short film uses still photos to tell a story about a post-nuclear war experiment in time travel. Timmy highly recommends checking it out: <https://vimeo.com/46620661>.

M: Mutual Musicians Foundation

An institution in Kansas City formed in 1917 by Kansas City's Local 627, African-American Musicians Union. Jazz musicians go here to play after their gigs and remains active and open to those that can find it in the 18th and Vine historic KC jazz district.

N: NASA

Timmy believes that any US tax-payers money going to telescopes and satellites is really going to CG artists in a basement somewhere for them to create the beautiful and amazing space images we frequently see today. These images inspire a lot of their work but specifically what they did for the documentary about CERN's Large Hadron Collider and the Higgs boson, *Particle Fever*.

Particle Fever

<http://mk12.com/MKXII/portfolio/particle-fever-fvx-reel/>

O: Otto Messmer

The creator of Felix the Cat, which was technically the first animated character for the screen.

P: Patrick McGoohan

The actor for the 1960s British television series, *The Prisoner*. Timmy's father introduced him to these secret agent shows at the young age of 8. The series was his first glimpse into narrative storytelling.

Q: Quality Comics

An American comic book publishing company that was in operation from the late thirties through the late fifties, they influenced the Golden Age of comic book era. The company

was committed to figuring out the next step in comic and sequential art forms. Their commitment inspired MK12's opening game intro for Green Day Rock Band video game.

Green Day Rock Band Game Intro for Harmonix

<http://mk12.com/MKXII/portfolio/harmonix-green-day-rock-band-game-intro/>

R: Robert Brownjohn

An American graphic designer who is most famous for his two James Bond title sequences, *Goldfinger* and *From Russia with Love*. Following in his footsteps, MK12 had the opportunity to create their own James Bond title sequence for *Quantum of Solace*.

Quantum of Solace

<http://mk12.com/MKXII/portfolio/quantum-of-solace/>

S: Science Fiction Digest Magazines

As a kid, Timmy was enamored with the painted collage covers of these magazines. These covers later were an inspiration for the illustrated, painterly aesthetic for the short film MK12 started producing in 2012. *Man of Action! II Ashes of Vengeance*, is a work in progress that merges live-action and animation techniques.

Man of Action! II Ashes of Vengeance

<http://www.whoissteveelvis.com/>

T: Tommy Fisher

A teacher, cartoonist, collector, and most importantly, Timmy's dad. He's the main source of Timmy's pop culture knowledge to date.



U: Ubik

A 1969 science fiction novel by American writer, Philip K. Dick. Introduced shifting concepts of reality.

V: Vertigo

The Italian one-sheet, designed by Saul Bass. John Whitney did the spiral image on the poster, which was an early example of CGI simulation imagining.

W: Will Eisner

He was one of the earliest cartoonists to work in the American comic book industry and was popular for his experiments in content and form.

X: Xylophone Players

Because...what else?

Y: YJs

A local Kansas City snack and coffee bar located in close proximity to the MK12 studio. It offers the local community a place where people can go to relax or have fun. Live jazz and frequent weird parties liven up the area. "I feel like I can be an adult and wear a cape, that's totally cool and we should all be doing that," says Timmy.

Guided by Voices—Back to the Lake

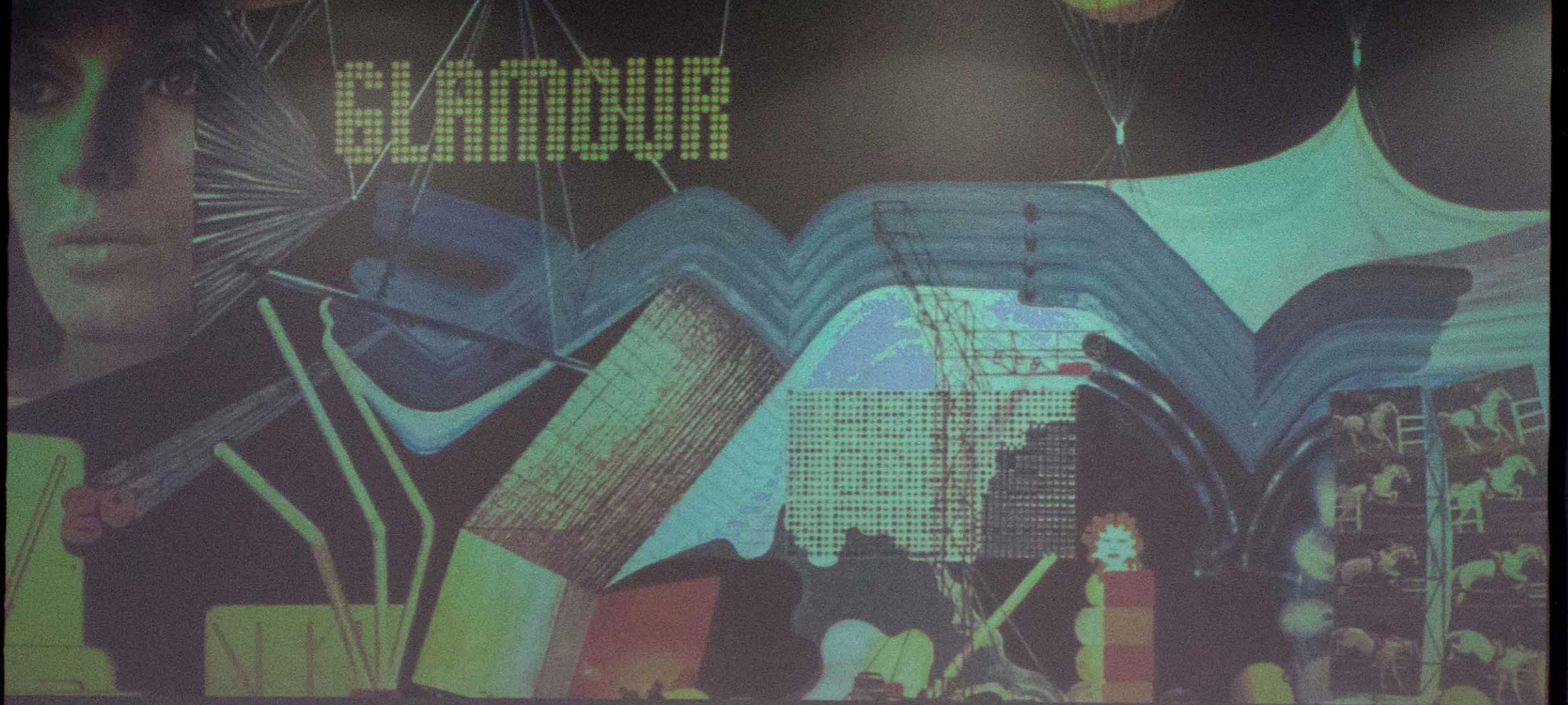
<http://mk12.com/MKXII/portfolio/guided-by-voices-back-to-the-lake/>

Z: Z-transformation

A mathematics concept, Z-transformation is a conversion of discrete time domain signals, which is a sequence of real or complex numbers. This concept led MK12 to Dr. Francis S Cooper's early pattern playback talking machine created in the 40s. The machine converted patterns of speech into other versions of audio. This machine influenced, *The Alphabet Conspiracy*, a show produced for PBS television in the 50s. All of this led MK12 to *Telephone Time*, an American drama series that featured plays by John Nesbitt who hosted the first season. Which eventually inspired their piece, *Telephoneme*.

Telephoneme

<http://mk12.com/MKXII/portfolio/telephoneme-3/>



ARCHIGRAM

SCIENCE

GALLERY

