

OPERATING COST  
A CREATIVE PROJECT  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

BY  
WILLIAM MUELLER  
TED NEAL – ADVISOR  
BALL STATE UNIVERSITY  
MUNCIE INDIANA  
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## **Abstract**

‘Operating Cost’ is an exhibition of artworks with a narrative of how public relation, marketing, and advertising campaigns can persuade the public opinion and how we as consumers are to handle that information. The work is constructed primarily with cast concrete, a material that is known for its aesthetic value in modern architecture and is the most widely used building material. It is viewed as strong and resilient when in fact it can be brittle and require frequent maintenance. Our perception of the world around us is not always correct and quite often, it is shaped by firms that seek to do so for ulterior motives. This work challenges the viewer to think critically about the information that we take for granted.

## OPERATING COST

WILLIAM MUELLER

### **Statement of Problem**

‘Operating Cost’ is an exhibition of artworks with a narrative of how public relation, marketing, and advertising campaigns can persuade the public opinion and how we as consumers are to handle that information. We are told to buy products we do not need with money that we do not have from jobs that do not pay us enough. Clever influences of persuasion are all around us from direct methods such as traditional billboards, product placement, and endorsements. They also present in more subtle ways from how a store lays out the floor plan and where certain items are stocked, to highly researched linguistic studies used to change the public view of an idea for political gain. News headlines have turned to clickbait material and are measured in success by television ratings.

A major driving force for this work was my BA in Communications with a concentration in Advertising. We were taught how to manipulate the mind to coerce viewers to either spend their dollar on our client’s product or to align their thoughts with a specific idea. Neither of these choices were particularly beneficial to the viewer but our goal was to make them think that it was. This entire process felt highly unethical to me and this work is an expression of my thoughts on the experience.

How are we supposed to operate in a nation that constantly drives a loaded narrative to change the way we think for their gain? It is impossible to escape from the reach of some clever campaign and we are all subject to persuasion despite our hopeful thoughts that we are above it. The work in this exhibition is made to shine a light on a few ways that we can view aspects of society through a different lens on how this machine is running. This body of work explores these

ideas of becoming aware of these manipulating forces around us and processing that information to make a self-guided decision of how to manage this information.

## Review of Influences/Literature

### Influences

#### Packard Jennings

Appropriating pop culture references, Jennings uses familiar language to convey his narratives. Coining the term ‘shop-dropping’, Jennings would create toys and leave them in stores for viewers to encounter his work outside of a traditional artistic context.<sup>1</sup> Jennings is also the main contributor to the Destructables website which is a spin off instructables.com. The website publishes instructions from artists or revolutionaries for people at home to recreate for free. The information on Destructables is focused at educating its viewers on safe practices of protest and create civil dissent.<sup>2</sup> At the time of this exhibition, the website no longer is available and there is no information as to why it went away.



Anarchist Action Figure<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Urbina, Ian. “Anarchists in the Aisles? Stores Provide a Stage.” The New York Times. Dec. 2007. <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/24/us/24shopdrop.html>

<sup>2</sup> Sarkar, Christian. “The Real Revolutionary: The Art of Packard Jennings.” Fix Capitalism, Saving it From Itself. Oct. 2015. <http://fixcapitalism.com/the-real-revolutionary-the-art-of-packard-jennings/>.

<sup>3</sup> Jennings, Packard. *Anarchist Action Figure*. Photograph. <http://www.globalcorpocracy.com/2016/05/10/packard-jennings-art-as-intervention/>.

Jennings' alternative methods of exhibiting work as well as his commentary on capitalism has shaped my thoughts for this exhibition. The idea of making the showcards on a dollar bill was influenced by his use of familiar everyday objects to reach his viewer in an unsuspecting way.

## **Ai Weiwei**

Ai Weiwei's work is heavily engaged in political activism, and it is openly critical on China's stance on democracy and human rights. Weiwei also uses pop culture references in his work alongside historical Chinese art and craft materials. Weiwei was sent to jail for 'tax fraud' during a government crackdown where dozens of bloggers, human rights lawyers and writers also had similar fates. Most went to jail for 'inciting subversion of state power' which was the term used for anyone critical of the Communist Party rule. Weiwei was detained for 81 days in a 4m by 4m padded cell with no windows and was never allowed outside. He paced his cell for 5 hours a day to get exercise and estimated that would cover about 15 to 20 km. Weiwei was eventually released without ever going to trial after global protests. He speaks about this event and the 'soft detention' he was under inside of his own studio. He quotes Ludwig Wittgenstein in an interview, "A man will be imprisoned in a room with a door that's unlocked and opens inwards; as long as it does not occur to him to pull rather than push." He goes on to say that soft detention requires your participation.<sup>4</sup>

His statement parallels the disciplinary concept of The Panopticon which was introduced by English philosopher Jeremy Bentham. The theory consists of a central observation tower

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<sup>4</sup> "Chinese Artist Ai Weiwei Describes His 81 Days in Prison- And the Extreme Surveillance, Censorship, and "Soft Detention" He's Endured Since. Artspace. Dec. 2018. [https://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews\\_features/qa/the-most-shocking-image-i-can-remember-is-seeing-myself-in-the-mirrorchinese-artist-ai-weiwei-55832](https://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/qa/the-most-shocking-image-i-can-remember-is-seeing-myself-in-the-mirrorchinese-artist-ai-weiwei-55832)

placed in the center of a circle of prison cells. From the tower, the singular guard can see inside any of the prison cells, but the prisoners cannot see inside of the tower. The guard may be looking in the other direction or not even there at all. The prisoners never know if they are being watched or not but would conduct themselves in a proper manner under their own judgement. Michel Foucault goes on to critique The Panopticon as a ‘cruel, ingenious cage’ because it induces the inmates to a state of conscious visibility which assures an automatic functioning of power.<sup>5</sup>



Han Dynasty Urn With Coca-Cola Logo<sup>6</sup>

While our stories are drastically different, I admire Weiwei’s ability to tell his own story through his work while making the work accessible and relatable to people. Finding the balance of having the work be personal, yet open is difficult and it is done extremely well. While my

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<sup>5</sup> “Ethics Explainer: The Panopticon. The Ethics Centre. Jul. 2017. <https://ethics.org.au/ethics-explainer-panopticon-what-is-the-panopticon-effect/>

<sup>6</sup> Weiwei, Ai. *Han Dynasty Urn with Coca-Cola Logo*. Photograph. <https://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/events/ai-weiwei-the-liberty-of-doubt/>.



work comes from a personal experience about my education into advertising, I strive to make the work accessible and open to a viewer without including too much of my personal bias and baggage.

## **Barbara Krueger**

Barbara Krueger's work targets consumer culture and is very anti-capitalist while addressing cultural constructions of power, identity, and sexuality. Krueger is most know for her works of black and white photos collaged with the iconic Futura font with a red background. This designed was later ripped off by the brand Supreme for their trademarked logo. A 'hypebeast' parody company released merchandise in response titled 'Supreme Bitch' and when they trademarked their logo, Supreme sued them for 10 million dollars for a logo that they initially stole from another woman. Kruger responded to this with a blank email with a word document titled fools.doc that said "What a ridiculous clusterfuck of totally uncool jokers. I made my work about this kind of sadly foolish farce. I'm waiting for all them to sue me for copyright infringement."<sup>7</sup> Kruger does not address the name as to not bring more attention to the company but still comments on the fallacy that is Supreme's attempt to be an icon of the punk world which is inherently anti-capitalist while selling white t shirts for over \$2000.

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<sup>7</sup> Furman, Anna. "The Right Has No Trouble Speaking Their Rage: Artist Barbara Kruger on America in Crisis." The Guardian. Feb. 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/feb/13/barbara-kruger-los-angeles-frieze-art-fair>



I Shop Therefor I am, Barbara Kruger<sup>8</sup>

The search for identity through objects is present in Kruger's work and is something that I have been influenced by. The conversation being had in the wall of espresso machine crates is a thought that comes from pop artists such as Kruger. We feel a desire to purchase commodities because we believe that it will make us more of ourselves. Finding your identity this way is impossible but is another idea that we believe because of empty promises that we are told to believe.

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<sup>8</sup> Kruger, Barbara. *I Shop Therefor I Am*. Photograph. <https://theartgorgeous.com/10-quotes-prove-barbara-kruger-genius/>

## Literature

### Adam Curtis, *Century of The Self*

Part 1 of this four-part series focuses on the nephew of Sigmund Freud, Eddie Bernays. Bernays invented public relations in 1920 and built the foundation for the way we market goods, services, and information today. His research is based upon appealing to unconscious desires in order to push his client's agenda or goods. His first famous campaign was titled "Torches of Freedom". The tobacco industry was limited in its audience because of the public view that women should not smoke. He staged an event during the Easter Parade in New York City where he paid women to simultaneously smoke a cigarette in front of a massive audience. This was at the time of the first wave of the feminist movement, and he tapped into their desire to become liberated and to be seen as equal to men. This stunt was meant to liberate women, it was to increase sales for the tobacco industry. His writings would later be used tactically by Joseph Goebbels, minister of propaganda for the Third Reich to alter the German view of the Nazi party.<sup>9</sup>

This video series does a great job on informing the viewer the thought process that is behind the companies that seek to persuade the public. This film is a direct influence for the content of this body of work and a synopsis of what was taught in my undergraduate experience.

### David Pye, *The Nature and Aesthetics of Design*

While this book is not a direct link to the conceptual value of this work, design is inexplicitly linked to marketing. Pye writes that design is not limited by technique but by

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<sup>9</sup> Curtis, Adam. *Century of Self - Part 1: "Happiness Machines"*. BBC, 2002. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnPmg0R1M04>.

economy. Furniture was, at one point, made with hard wood and the surface of the furniture was the material that it was made from. To make it more affordable, furniture was made from plywood that was covered with a hard wood veneer. Today if you walk into the maze of IKEA, furniture built from particleboard with a plywood veneer can be found. Pye also coined the term *workmanship of risk* to which he defines as workmanship using any kind of technique or apparatus, in which the quality of the result is not predetermined, but depends on the judgment, dexterity and care which the maker exercises as he works. These values and the idea of tacit knowledge of material and processes carry into the making of this work.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Pye, David. *The Nature and Aesthetics of Design*. London: The Herbert Press, 2007.

## Description and Images of the Artworks

### The Clock



The clock is constructed from cast concrete and features laser engraved markings stained with milk paint for the numbers. The hands are CNC milled from bronze with a brushed patina. This clock features a traditional hour and minute hand that conveys a conventional approach of the 24-hour day. Behind the clock face is a system of laser cut acrylic gears that drives a third hand. This additional hand makes one rotation every 250 years. This number is significant considering the research conducted by Sir John Bagot Glubb. Glubb was a British soldier, wartime scholar as well as an author. Considering every major empire in the last 3000 years, the average age until its downfall is 250 years and is steadily getting shorter over time.<sup>11</sup> This device

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<sup>11</sup> Lamy, Alexandre. *The Fate of Empires and Search for Survival: Sir John Glubb*. William Blackwood & Sons Ltd. <http://people.uncw.edu/kozloffm/glubb.pdf>

measures this statistical duration. This clock is currently set to represent the United States. It was founded in 1776 which makes it 246 years old. Statistically speaking, the US will fall in four years.

A clock measures time in a circular format, twice a day the hour hand revolves around and on the next day, it does the same thing. The same cyclical nature can be seen with the rise and fall of an empire, Glubb writes of the six stages that every civilization goes through: the age of pioneers, conquest, commerce, affluence, intellect, and decadence.<sup>12</sup> Once these six stages have been completed, another society rises in the place of the former. Using a clock, it mimics this cyclical nature of how these stages are continuously moved through until the cycle is started again. This clock makes no statement as to what will happen and does not come with any guarantee. This number is only a statistical average. It is not intended to be a doomsday declaration, nor does it promote this idea. It simply presents information as any other data does. The quiet format of this clock removes any opinion bias towards the data delivered. It also is similar to the way that people react when confronted with information that is critical. Every day, news headlines warn us of dangers of political, environmental, cultural problems but they are brushed off and not taken with any severity. We approach news of these matters as if the problems will just go away because it will be dealt with by someone else.

The one thing that it does declare is that the United States, the same as the rest of the empires collected in the data, will fall. In the last two years alone, almost 900 thousand people

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<sup>12</sup> Lamy, Alexandre

have died from covid<sup>13</sup>, over 1000 have died from police brutality<sup>14</sup>, unemployment hit 15%<sup>15</sup>, the White House was taken over by domestic terrorists, and a president for the first time in history failed to give up the seat of power peacefully.<sup>16</sup> These events do not describe that of a safe, secure country.

Viewers approach this clock with their own projections for this country. People from the far left to the far right, everywhere between, and those who refuse the binary will bring their opinions of our country into this conversation. There is one thing that will be certain during this discourse, statistics are not an opinion and while they have a calculated degree of error, they are descriptive of data that is continuing to repeat itself.

## **Record Player**

The record player is fabricated from an Audio Technica Model No. AT PL-50 purchased for \$40. It was taken apart and reassembled onto a laser cut acrylic sheet. This is then mounted into a cast concrete body that has laser etched indicators. The buttons are cast bronze and patinaed from a burnout of FDM prints. The record is laser etched acrylic. It was made by taking WAV files and running them through a processor that converts EQ waves into data points. These data points then run through a second processor that converts them into a vector line and spirals it to match the format of a record. The A side of the record is Tennessee Ford's song "16 Tons"

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<sup>13</sup> Sullivan, Becky. New Study Estimates More Than 900,000 People Have Died Of Covid-19 in U.S. NPR. May 2021. <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/05/06/994287048/new-study-estimates-more-than-900-000-people-have-died-of-covid-19-in-u-s>

<sup>14</sup> Haddad, Mohammed. How Many People Have Been Killed By US Police Since George Floyd?. Al Jazeera. May 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/25/how-many-people-have-police-killed-since-george-floyd>.

<sup>15</sup> Parker, Kim., Minkin, Rachel., and Bennett, Jesse. Economic Fallout From Covid-19 Continues to Hit Lower-Income Americans the Hardest. Pew Research Center. Sept. 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/09/24/economic-fallout-from-covid-19-continues-to-hit-lower-income-americans-the-hardest/>.

<sup>16</sup> Finchelstein, Federico. What the History of Coups Tells Us About Trump's Refusal to Concede. Nov. 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/11/16/what-history-coups-tells-us-about-trumps-refusal-concede/>.

and the B side of the record is the audio from a General Electric advertisement during their Ecomagination campaign that used this song as background music.



The advertisement was made in 2005, a year that the US imported 160 million dollars of petroleum. The campaign was the make coal production seem more environmentally friendly in order to change the public’s perception of what is in fact a leading contributor to greenhouse emissions. The video from the advertisement included men and women wearing less than OSHA approved clothing, oiled up and ‘working’ in a coal mine. The tag line at the end of the video claimed, ‘harnessing the power of coal is looking more beautiful everyday’.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> General Electric. “Ecomagination.” *Model Miners*, 2005. Song: Sixteen Tons by Tennessee Ford. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6ueDHn2HTk>



Capitalism tends to use whatever means necessary to continue the pursuit of profit. In this case, it ignores concerns voiced for workers' rights, chooses to ignore, and further, lie about its negative impact of environmental impacts as well as promote the sexualization a toxic form of the ideal body in order to promote the coal industry.

In addition to the problematic nature of the video from this ad, the audio is equally problematic. The song was written by John Travis in protest of the coal industry. Workers lived in company housing and their rent was automatically taken out of their pay. For what was left over from their pay, they received in work vouchers that were only redeemable from the company store. They never received money and had no way of accruing any savings which forced them to continue working for the coal industry to afford to live.<sup>18</sup>

The quality of the audio produced by this record is that of a poor reception from an AM radio. This audio is reminiscent of the quality that would have come out of recordings of the time it was first written. When listening to a record, we tend to be more acute in our listening than we would in other ways such as driving a car with the radio on. This work removes the audio from its context of a television ad which would often not be contemplated and plays it on a device where we listen more critically. If we pay more attention to advertisements instead of spacing out during them, we just might think about what is actually being sold.

## **The Pendulum**

The pendulum is a cast concrete bob that weighs 150 lbs. suspended by a steel cable from the rafters in the gallery. It is pulled back in its arc and held by a plane of glass mounted to the floor with angle iron.

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<sup>18</sup> Moore, Rick. Tennessee Ernie Ford, "Sixteen Tons". American Songwriter: The Craft of Music. 2018. <https://americansongwriter.com/tennessee-ernie-ford-sixteen-tons/>

A pendulum is a metaphor often used in political analogies. It exhibits something swinging past a neutral point and pushing into a singular direction until the weight of it overcomes the energy used to get it there. That weight has built up potential energy that sends it back in the opposite direction. It constantly seeks the neutral point and gets closer with each swing. This same process happens in the political realm viewed from the lens of the Overton Window. This window is the range of policies acceptable to the mainstream population at a given time. Policy is always changing, and the window follows it. Since 1989, the presidential party has switched after each candidate.<sup>19</sup>



The theory of the Overton Window can be an extremely beneficial tool to use to persuade peoples decision making. It offers a window of what we currently view as acceptable and what

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<sup>19</sup> Every US President Listed. The Guardian. 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2012/oct/15/us-presidents-listed>

falls outside of the frame is what we would consider radical and further, unthinkable. By proposing something that is unthinkable, it will get rejected, but it paves the way for a more moderate view in the direction towards something more radical. On a larger scale, it has changed the way we view political candidates. After Trump's presidency, the window was so far right that it made Joe Biden seem truthful in his democratic party affiliation. Biden voted in favor of the invasion of Iraq, multiple pieces of legislation deregulating the banking industry, the 1994 welfare reform bill, and the 'tough on crime' 1994 bill that has led to mass incarcerations. This shift in of the window has made actual progressive candidates like Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders seem radical.

The plane of glass is holding the pendulum back and prevents it from swinging towards its desired location the same way a political party wishes to keep the window on their end of the spectrum. For the bob to return to its neutral location, the glass must shatter similar to how there is always fallout with any political shift. Glass is fragile, just like the egos that are holding the Overton window.

### **The Espresso Machine**

The espresso machine is disassembled from a Mr. Coffee Model No. 2132815. The internal components are stripped from the housing and modified to fit inside an acrylic box. This box keeps the heat from the espresso machine off the concrete and the concrete off the moving parts. It is assembled inside of a mold and then cast in a block of concrete. The finished product is food safe and fully functional. It is finished with laser engraved indicators and is accompanied by two slip cast ceramic cups made of black porcelain fired to cone 8.



The original coffee maker sells for \$50. This upgraded housing increases the aesthetic value of the machine but does nothing to improve the quality of espresso that is made. While the espresso machine inside of the housing is vented with brass tubing to allow heat to escape, it will over time degrade and eventually break itself. It is no remedy and makes a poor attempt to resolve any issues that may have been going on before this process, if anything, it adds to them while having the perception of permanence because of its materiality. On initial inspection by a viewer, they may consider desiring this device because of its design. The price on the other hand might deter them. Most of the goods we purchase in big box stores that are produced of moderate quality comes from labor that is outsourced overseas to keep the cost low. When we do seek for high end goods, labor costs rise drastically because of the need for a highly skilled person to create them. In turn, this espresso machine would fetch a price tag of around \$2000, a price similar to existing brands such as Breville and Jura.

Next to the machine is a wall of 72 crates designed as product packaging for this maker. They are constructed from plywood and 1x2's to carry the weight of this product, coming it at 65 lbs. The intention of this wall is to further deflate the value of this product. As a unique, bespoke product, this can retain some value as a high-end designer good that holds value in its uniqueness. But, when sitting next to an abundance of itself, it inherently loses value, it is no longer one-of-a-kind. If you walk into an apple store, they have hundreds of their products inside, but you do not see them. You see the single floor model, and this makes the consumer falsely inflate the importance of it in their mind.<sup>20</sup> They believe themselves to be apart of an elite group if they own one of these devices. In a recent ad from Apple, that they have titled 'Welcome to the Club'<sup>21</sup>, they are becoming more direct in this focus to make consumers believe that they are participating in an exclusive group. If you walked into the store and are aware of their entire inventory, this mirage falls and the truth that 43% of smartphone users are in possession of their products.<sup>22</sup> The fact is that it is not limited, exclusive or special, but their tactics make one believe that it is.

## **The Gears**

The wall of gears at the end cap of the gallery is assembled from concrete cast into a polystyrene mold. The polystyrene is CNC milled and adhered to a Masonite board to form the mold. These gears weigh between 15 and 50 lbs. depending on their size. They are mounted on the wall by wooden dowels and are mechanized by a ½ HP stepped down motor. This motor

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<sup>20</sup> Kaputa, Catherine. 5 Marketing Tools Apple Exploits to Build the Hype. Fast Company. Sept. 2012. <https://www.fastcompany.com/3001650/5-marketing-tools-apple-exploits-build-hype>

<sup>21</sup> Apple. "Welcome to the Club," September 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fVFsbcbXbI>.

<sup>22</sup> Miller, Chance. iPhone Loyalty Rate Continues to Exceed 90%, New CIRP Data Shows. 9to5Mac. Oct. 2021. <https://9to5mac.com/2021/10/28/iphone-loyalty-rate-data-switchers/>

subsequently drives a system of wooden pullers behind the wall, out of the view of the public, which dials the RPM from 40 down to 2. The gears are static until triggered by the time clock. When a viewer uses the Acroprint time clock to punch in with their showcard, a delayed relay closes the electric circuit and mechanizes the wall for thirty seconds and then shuts off again until the time clock is used again.



Being cast out of concrete renders them quite useless to any practical application except this singular one. Traditional gears are made from machined metal to perform their job with very little wear. Concrete is a material that is associated with strength but in this small-scale application it is extremely fragile. These gears will break, they are abrasive to each other and will grind at themselves until the weaker one gives way and chips off. For this system to work, everything needs to work. Once a gear fails, it will no longer be able to provide movement to the next one.

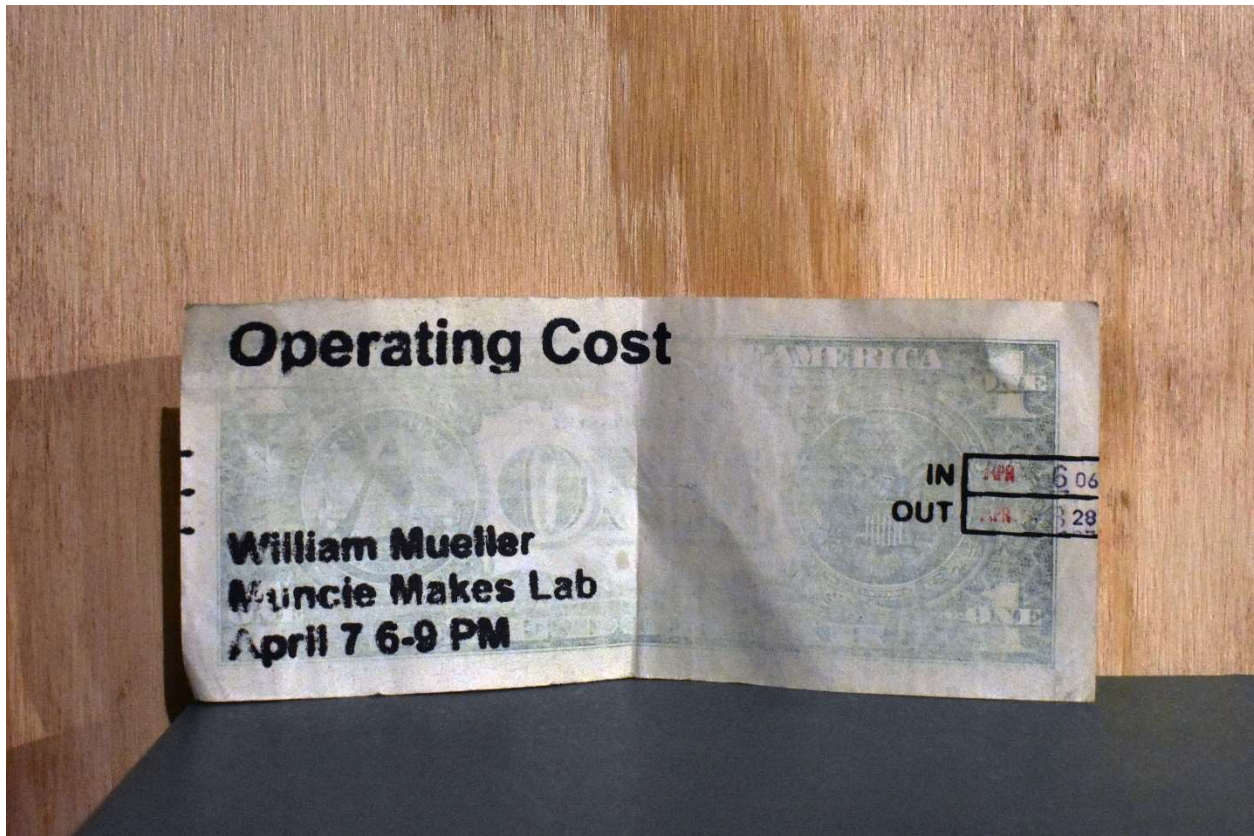
There are different sizes of gears depending on the number of teeth that it possesses, the more teeth, the larger the gear. The smaller gears in the system spin faster than the larger gears while the larger gears drive with a higher torque. This system exhibits our current labor force. There are some who are forced to work at a higher rate without being able to put out the power that others have. Subsequently, those who have more power, are not forced to work as much. This system with inequalities throughout is just as abrasive as the concrete and at some point, is going to fail. The smaller gears are likely to give way first due to their higher speed and encountering another gear at a higher rate than the ones with more teeth. A 20-tooth gear that is rotating a 40-tooth gear has a 1:2 gear ration. For every 2 turns the smaller gear does, the larger does one. This means each tooth will come in contact with the other twice while the larger one only experiences one contact. Once the smaller gear fails, the larger one will cease to move as well. The rich depend on the poor to continue working to maintain their progress. Once they no longer have a labor force, their income will cease to continue just as the gears will. Just because something is currently working does not mean that it is sustainable and will continue doing so.

The Acroprint time clock is chosen to mechanize the wall to immediately draw the viewer into the thought of clocking into work. Each day we go to work we activate this metaphor onto ourselves that overtime, grinds us away as well.

### **Showcard**

The showcard is printed on a washed one-dollar bill. The original ink is removed using a degreaser and scrubbed with a toothbrush. Once the bills are stripped, a slight image of the dollar remains and then they are screenprinted with the showcard information. In addition, the showcard is printed with in/out boxes. When the viewer comes to the gallery, they are first

confronted with a time clock next to the gears where they can punch 'in' and when they leave, punch 'out' which will mechanize the wall.



Once the magnetic ink is removed from the bill it is rendered useless. An atm uses that magnetic signature to understand what denomination of currency the bill is and without it, it will reject the bill.



## **Conclusion**

'Operating Cost' strives to educate the viewer on persuading information and calls them to question the motives of advertisements, campaigns, and public relations stunts. There is no correct answer, there is no way to avoid it, but one needs to be aware of these forces and reckon with them to understand our individual roles within this system. The goal is to have the viewer be critical about what they buy, think about what that company supports, and what the implications of that purchase are? Secondly, to be critical about involvements within campaigns where they market political ideas that can be radicalizing and realize that our vote is a vital expression the same way we spend our money

We should be critical in how we respond to PR stunts, to ask what the motive is to shift public's view on something. Is the motive genuine or is there something else behind the scheme? As mentioned before, there is no way out of this system, but being aware of it is the first step to learning how to live with it. Cross reference everything, question motives, research what is being said and come to your own educated conclusion on the best possible choices when using your dollar, vote, or thoughts.

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## **Exhibition Statement**

Public relations, marketing, and advertising are all avenues that influence the public. We as consumers are subjugated to thousands of these strategies every day. They shape the way we live whether we are aware of their persuasions or not. Nobody is above their subliminal power, and it is imperative that we become aware of it to understand them and learn how to live with them. This does not solely apply to marketing a commodified good, the real goal is affecting the way people think.

The work uses familiar objects and metaphors to make this work readily available and present this work in methods that are used by the agencies that are being discussed. Concrete is used to construct this work because it has an aesthetic factor that draws people in, it seems to point to a product being quality but in fact it is a very cheap material. It is also one of the worst material choices for every application of the works. While it may have some redeeming qualities, the instances that are chosen highlight its downfalls which parallels what the work does conceptually.

Navigating life in a nation that collectively spends 92.4 billion dollars on these campaigns annually is extremely challenging. It is pervasive and unavoidable. Ignoring them will only make us more unaware of their presence which in turn will cause us to succumb to their desires more readily. The only way to operate is to research their methods, understand its motives and make a calculated decision for yourself of how to move forward. The work presents a few instances and asks the viewer to question what else should be scrutinized, what they can bring to the conversation and to wonder to ways in which they choose to handle this information.

Appendix: Additional Images



