

mind | *medley*

Manifesto

*“Man may be excused for feeling some pride at having risen,
though not through his own exertations, to the very summit of organic scale,
and the fact of his having thus risen, instead of having been aboriginally
placed there, may give him hopes for a still higher destiny in the distant future.”*

- Charles Darwin, The Descent of Man

Onwards, and upwards.

Initiated in 2015, MindMedley is founded as an organization and think-tank concerned with topics related to the human condition, technological change, and future life. It is founded with the aim to fulfill three purposes in particular:

1. Spreading awareness that the world is changing rapidly.

The smartphones in our pockets today have more computational power than all of NASA had back in 1969 when it sent two astronauts to the moon. But the ones we have, are in fact a million times cheaper, more than a thousand times more powerful and over a hundred thousand times smaller.

In merely 25 years the rise of the internet changed the way we connect, work, learn, purchase, sell, and entertain ourselves. In many different areas it radically changed the way we live our lives. According to futurist and serial inventor Ray Kurzweil, we won't experience 100 years of progress in the 21st century, it will be more like 20,000 years of progress at today's rate.

As the world is becoming more and more complex, the mechanics and understanding of concepts we are confronted with every day: work, life, death, purpose, fulfillment, connection, love - are on the edge of being redefined.

2. Examining how the world is changing - and which boundaries are getting blurry.

Boundaries that once were supposed to be clear, in common thought, are rapidly becoming more blurry than ever. We used to think there was a clear distinction between the human built, made, world, and the natural world 'out there'. But as both the planet, and the human being, are more and more becoming design spaces, our traditionally held boundaries start to dissolve.

As Brian Arthur, author of the book *The Nature of Technology* describes it: "We are moving from an era where machines enhanced the natural - speeded our movements, saved our sweat, stitched our clothing - to one that brings in technologies that resemble or replace the natural - genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, medical devices implanted in our bodies." The natural and artificial, born and made, nature and techne, are quickly becoming indistinguishable.

Furthermore, man and machine, the real and the virtual, and the self and other, are concepts that will be in urgent need of being explored and redefined.

The stories of the 21st century will evolve around our exploration, experimentation and resolution around the questions: "What does it mean to be human?", "What is natural?" and "Where are we going?". It is exactly these questions that act as MindMedley's fuel for intellectual exploration and creative expression.

3. Constructing new guidelines, narratives, for how to live our lives and find meaning.

Man is in constant search for meaning, it is literally our only psychological defense against the incomprehensibility our lives and the inevitability of our own death. After God, according to Nietzsche, supposedly died, we try to find it in communication, service and understanding. To lose meaning, or to watch it slip away, or to slowly feel as though the world has left you behind, is to stare oblivion in the face and let it consume you willingly.

When our world becomes so complex, it can become an easy move to fall back on simple ideologies, beliefs or actions that give us a sense of certainty. It's how we cope with change that is too rapid. We might be able to make rational sense of the world, but in our core, we are driven by deep emotional needs and desires.

What are the stories, the narratives and guidelines, on a personal and cultural level, that may guide us to not only survive, but thrive in such a world? Slowly, but surely, with putting deep effort in thinking through scenarios, exploring different views and trying to see them from interdisciplinary angles, we might be able to create guidelines on how to live in a world that is changing more rapidly every year.

Medleys of Mind.

Why did we choose the name 'MindMedley'? There is a variety of reasons.

1. Mind is in Dance with the World.

First of all, MindMedley refers to the dance between our minds and our environment. They are a medley of the internal and external, of nature and nurture. And even in every day actions, we are in constant dance with the tools and systems around us. They shape how we behave, and how we think.

We are not merely standing in our environment, as the individualist might say, but we are in active collaboration with it. The designed is designing us back, making it vital to think about the systems in place that define us.

2. The Greatest Minds Mixed into Medleys

When we try to look into the future, we can only look as far as the shoulders of the giants before us take us. Fortunately, we can stack them. MindMedley aims to combine the ideas and perspectives of thinkers, philosophers, artists, scientists, poets and creators to create new compositions of thought. New mashups of cultural memes and an infocology of insights.

3. The Medley of Minds with Born Minds

A third reference is to the possible merger of human minds with other human minds, potentially radically changing the way we connect, work, and experience emotions. This concept is known as meta-intelligence, or so-called hiveminds. It's an idea that's been around in popular science-fiction literature for years, but that seems to become a major focus of technology companies and government institutions.

4. The Medley of Minds with Made Minds

What would happen if we would merge our minds with artificial structures? If we could 'upload' or 'upgrade' our rationale, and extend our mental capacities? Would we still be human if we replaced our minds, bit by bit? With the emergence of a broad variety of artificial intelligence and increasingly capable tools to replace parts of us with inorganic replicas, an immense variety of potentially ecstatic, but also dystopian, scenarios become possible.

5. Culture is a Medley of Mind.

In the Anthropocene, it's the human that has become a geological force. Everything around us that we call 'made', was conceived in a mind similar to that of yours, and built upon the ideas before it. Mental models turned into experiments, constructions and creations. Our culture, in the widest sense, but also in the more traditional way of pointing to music, art and literature among others, is a remix of what came before it, and what happened during its creation.

The Method.

1. Balancing between the academic and the popular.

It's been a challenge for ages; going wide and shallow, or narrow and deep. The connection between science, and the public, often seems lacking. From the side of the scientist, their research often stands far from the everyday, while at the other side: the public doesn't have a faint idea of what's being researched.

The way to introduce ideas, philosophical ideas and scientific discoveries is to creating stories, cloaked in suitable aesthetics that are appealing, that relate to the non-expert. Stories that start of in his or her world, and then, just like the Hero's Journey, take the viewer or participant on a journey to a strange land of possibility and danger. The world of tomorrow.

There's a real possibility in today's world to have more and more people engaged in discussions about our future by triggering their attention with videos, virtual reality scenes, images and other digital media and leading them to more in-depth research when they're engaged.

2. Telling stories using existing and emerging platforms.

Attention is quickly becoming the new currency. Whether something instantly triggers us often determines if we pay our attention to it. The dramatically increased complexity of the world forced us to step into a multitasking condition where we try to cope with the information overload of the world around us.

It hasn't just change our behavior in the digital space. It actually impacts our behavior in the meatspace, if you will, as well. We often just don't read books for fun anymore, or have the attention to tune into a three hour documentary.

Experimentation with existing platforms but tailored to the changing needs, for example the publication of micro-books; books no longer than 50 pages, combined with the use of social platforms and emerging storytelling tools, will be part of the awareness-spreading toolbox.

Education, art, spirituality, and other forms of culture help us realize our potentials. They help us to reflect on how we live our lives, and how they relate to the bigger picture.

MindMedley aims to provide a fresh framework and new narratives to fill our old storytelling needs in an age where the battle of our attention is becoming more real than ever.

mind | *medley*

Copyright © 2016 MindMedley.
All rights reserved.