

LEARNING FROM THE SIXTIES

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“After three thousand years of explosion, by means of fragmentary and mechanical technologies, the Western world is imploding. During the mechanical ages we had extended our bodies in space. Today, after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned.”¹ “New information technologies organize the space of production along a hierarchy of activities and functions, made up of networks and flows which take the social division between intellectual and manual labor to its extreme limit.”²

The re-publication of Marshall McLuhan’s *Understanding the Media* signals a return to the 1960’s, a return that allows us, at a distance of thirty years, to consider the implications of the technological euphoria that held the imagination of

an earlier generation of architects. I propose to present a paper that discusses the first “wired” generation of architects in order to discuss how the questions currently asked about technology and the postindustrial world—especially those of tectonics, tactility and the body—have been rehearsed at least once before and what insight this moment in recent architectural cultural might lend to current debates.

- 1 Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding the Media: The Extensions of Man*, (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1994), p.3.
- 2 Manuel Castells, *The Informational City: Information Technology, Economic Restructuring and the Urban Regional Process*; (Cambridge; Blackwell Press, 1991), p. 71

Editor’s note: The full text of this paper was not available at the time of publication.