



External Space



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BUMP Television

This Could Be You

May 29 - July 16, 2020

“THIS COULD BE YOU!”

A man clad in biceps and and 16-pack abs shouts through my Instagram explore feed.

“ THIS COULD BE YOU! ”

A university recruitment ad screams at me in Helvetica while riding the subway to work:

“THIS COULD BE YOU!”

A body spray commercial where hordes of models chase after our hero with cannibalistic fervor.

(In this one I'm not entirely sure who in this scenario I could be: our semi-clueless dude-bro to root for, or the ravenous size Os pinning him down in the middle of a busy intersection.)

Apparently, I could be a lot of things.

I could be an astronaut or a mechanic. I could be a rich mogul or famous pop star. I could be a McDonalds burger flip or H&M sales associate. I could be the proud owner of a BFA or a BMW.

Or...

"This Could Be You"

An interactive video broadcast project devised by the ever frenetic internet public access "television channel", BUMP Television, posits that *I* could be *them*.

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<https://www.bumptelevision.com/you>

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A video screen greets me with a reflection of myself.

I turn my head reflexively to study my own face, my eyes fixed to the ones studying back.

I'm Narcissus, and this screen is my pool.¹

The text above me reads in an 90s Arcade font:

"THIS COULD BE YOU"

¹ In Greek mythology, Narcissus (of whom the term "narcissism" derives from) fell in love with his own reflection and brought fourth his own death because his love could not materialize.

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Below hangs the options to: **Record - Play - Upload**

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I look up to catch my eye again.

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I write in my username, and open a drop down menu of topics below the video screen.

Show And Tell...Announcements?

I've got nothing going on.

...Musical Performance

croaks out one soggy note and shudders

...Reviews...Recipes...Rants...

I could violently wax poetic about just about anything...

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Finger to my lip and eyes darting like a ravenous moth to my porch light, I stir up a bit of performance anxiety.

I look up again

"THIS COULD BE YOU"

...

The collective has an awareness about this concept: In a way, this is perhaps the most convoluted, though honest, recruitment gesture ever mechanized. However, there's nothing predatory about the air of BUMP Television. BUMP is far less invested in building up their *them*-ness as much as they are uplifting your *you*-ness.

For just about two years, BUMP Television has been broadcasting a wide array of submitted and self-generated material on their 24/7 streamed “public access channel”. In providing studio space, equipment, and workshop access, BUMP has gathered a community willing to get involved; either in the casual zeal to make some new work, or at its best in simply fucking around.

Tom Hobson, a founding member of the collective, reassures that the main goal for BUMP Television is to place importance on the “pleasure of the creative process” over output.

A synthesis of love for television, and the vintage fetishism that is associated with the broadcast form, re: high contrast analogue green-screening, BUMP Television has created a new way for regular people and emerging creatives to participate in broadcast media and television. It is a medium that is being further removed from accessibility in the wake of the internet, which sadly is succumbing to the gatekeeping that has plagued TV with an awareness of potential monetization. Gone are the days where YouTube was a refuge for the weirdos who had too much time on their hands, and particularly idiosyncratic style of humour. In our current click-based economy, misleading titles and suggestive thumbnails vie for our compensatory viewership, saturated to a point where the content (as it has been duly dubbed) is pretty transparent about its transactionary business model.

BUMP serves as a soft retaliation against this. In acknowledging the faulty quality control for “Real budget TV”, nodding their head to the string of questionable output being funded and produced on engorged platforms like Netflix, BUMP’s volunteer-based committee screens submissions that demonstrate the palpable zeal to create, rather than aspirational monetary returns.

This often results in the kooky humour and aesthetics of groups of friends simply having FUN. Like those homemade movies that a kid with their dad's camcorder would cook up, not clouded by the potential for YouTube virality. We're talking special effects such as blanket forts and ketchup as blood, or often in BUMP's case, analogue green screening and paper-mache props. Hobson describes this as the "best & worst aspects of DIY culture"², an unpretentious, unironic willingness to allow the cracks to show, and let that remain the beauty of it.

"It's valuable to be silly"³, he asserts. Silliness, a currency which BUMP Television is rich in, includes a cast of the freaks and weirdos of Toronto: underground voices willing to band together in the Toronto Media Arts Centre late August 2019 to participate in a live "telethon" fundraiser. Replete with paper-mache super mario indebted power ups; Hobson gets routinely slimed to the point in which the now drying spooze has synthesized his hair to his scalp and tweed suit.

A live audience cheers and hoots, callers routinely ring in to donate to power up or slow down their favourite racers (often their friends) to wide eyed gasps and toothy grins.

And

"THIS COULD BE YOU"

...

² Tom Hobson, in conversation with the author, June 3rd, 2020.

³ Ibid.

I choose “**Show and Tell**” and hit record.

A timer pops up in the corner counting down from 0:30:00, and my mouth runs a mile a minute.

In the heat of having nothing to do during isolation, an abundance of tchotchkes and memories have been excavated from the archeology of spring cleaning my family’s home. I muse about a small children’s timer that was once used to monitor my time-outs (and my ingenious method for making them go by faster! [...I’d just move the clock hand forward to be closer and closer to ringing])

The timer blinks red as I have 20 seconds left and before I know it I’m cut off. For good measure, as I probably wouldn’t have stopped otherwise.

I review the footage, scanning myself under the scrutiny of vanity, and hit upload.

Footage from these submissions will be posted intermittently on the BUMP Televison’s instagram page, before being collected in a “clip show” to be scheduled and broadcast on the their web channel.

Bump board member Peter Rahul dubs it a “telepresence soapbox”⁴.

A podium of the utmost access for you to say your piece, release it to the ether, and move on or hop back and on and do it all over again another time, and/or in another way.

Broadcasts of *You*s that *were* and now *are*.

Something someone sometime somewhere.

And so here I am. Sitting in my room, watching my face materialize in the mosaic of pixels coalescing into the cranial vision of my reflection on this screen.

⁴ Peter Rahul, in conversation with the author, June 3rd, 2020.

BUMP Television is not so much asserting that *I* could be *them*. But rather, *they* could be *me*.

Populated by the faces of those willing to dare to be creative, to just do or say something, and have fun for the sake of it.

And *this* could be *you*.

To get involved with Bump Television or submit something to be broadcast visit: [https://www.bumptelevision.com](https://www.bumptelelevision.com)

- James Knott