Artificial Stupidity could stand some intelligence

Column by Bill Jackson

A phone call came into The Tech last week looking for Eric Hughes. He claimed to have discovered that a man named Eric Hughes had called the office to ask about a story about him. His message said that he had been taped performing his show on the steps of MIT at the MIT Student Union, and that it would be worthwhile for The Tech to speak to him about it. I begged for this assignment.

When he called back, I answered the phone. It turns out that he performs an "oral/visual" show at experimental theater, sometimes on campus, and not on the street. He refers to his show as "Artificial Stupidity and Dada Processing." He just wanted to let me know that he's going to be at The Tech on Tuesday, October 9th. I agreed to talk to him after a couple of messages on my answering machine and one hour at the news office, he finally agreed to meet at The Tech, as I had originally suggested.

Eric Hughes

He arrived at The Tech's office five minutes early, carrying a couple of bags and portfolios, resembling a craggier and slightly older Nick Nolte. He quickly informed me that the man was Nick Nolte's emotional stuntman. I don't think those are too dangerous or difficult emotionally for Nick.

Hughes has worked at MIT in various capacities, he claims, including a stint writing technical papers for the Energy Lab and one as a volunteer researcher for the same day Brissie Project back in 1980 and '81. He also taught IAP courses here, and seems to simply love the Institute. "Look at the old place!" He exclaimed while looking out the window. Mass. Ave. I was immediately worried.

He is currently a "marketing manager for an MIT start-up company." Now, he says, the new ABC show America's Funniest Home Videos "has stepped on the toes of ? Mass. Ave. performing, and will probably do the same for the institute."

I asked him what sort of show he does. He answered, "I do a one-man show which is a sort of an experimental show, a variety show which is sort of a satire on high-speed, technological concepts." His own impression was that Hughes is a brainy genius-nerd type. According to the "MIT Jog Chronicle," he handed me document after document after document. (Please turn to page 9).

Hughes has a shirt made entirely of UPC product codes, which he once wore to the back was a Velcro backpack, which is hueless. "The music, dance, and theater spaces, including "Schema D," are for Theater and Dance, and will provide him with a certain possibility to do his own interpretation, eliminating the fact that they are part of the academic departments. He asked if any of the other Tech staff members wanted to listen to him explain that they were probably too busy. He seemed to understand.

He even brought in a review of his performance-act show from an Oct. 1984 issue of The Tech. Thoughtfully, he circled the parts where the reviewer discussed the various problems and incompatibilities of his show.

That's the beauty of Hughes. He provides his own interpretation, along with..." (please turn to page 9).

Letters to the editor

School of Humanities expansion plans threaten student activities

The blueprint for this takeover of student assets is a 1996 document titled "The Undergraduate Association of the School of Humanities." The document allocates funds to student activities and services for extracurricular student activities. This departmental land-grab is being carried out in secret, with no involvement by student groups. Student groups, which are actions those of... Our committee is certainly in favor of more and better humanities classes. Yet, we feel that the School of Humanities has a serious problem of thinking, cynical, and destructive. Their worthwhile goals must not be compromised by an audience of drastically reduced quality of life for students and the involutionary disboding of popular student activities.

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