

doodlevision

The Doodle Down the Ages



Pictographic Tablet, Mesopotamia. Ca. 3100-3000 BCE

It is safe to say that doodling has been around at least since the oldest cave paintings (that would be since the Aurignacian period (about 40,000 years ago)).

Around 3200 B.C. pictographic record keeping in clay began in Mesopotamian society. Pictures were drawn in clay to convey information and some of the tablets that have been found have included random decorated edges and images on the margins of the dried clay pieces.

Moving considerably forward, the Medieval monks called doodles “probaton pennaе (proving of the pen). Doodling seems to be an integral part of human nature, there are medieval manuscripts that have margins covered in scribes names written over and over or the same spiral patters repeated in random order and margins.

It seems intuitive expression through doodling is an integral theme for humankind as long as we've been on earth.

Before the 20th century doodle wasn't actual about drawing, the closest term in English was scribble (but of course, scribbling is not doodling).

Prior to the 20th century, the term doodle wasn't actually about drawing at all, it was a way to describe someone who was idle. Linguistic historians think that the initially the Portuguese word for foolish (doudo) and the low German word for foolish (dudel) amalgamated to the Samuel Johnson Dictionary definition of doodle as "a trifler, an idler" (published first in 1755).

Doodle as we know the term nowadays seems to have come from Mr. Russell M. Arundel who wrote a book called "Everybody's Pixillated" (1937). He defined doodles as: "a scribble or sketch made while the conscious mind is concerned with matters wholly unrelated to the scribbling."

In his writing he put forward the idea that a developed or, civilized man's natural state was one of "pixilation". An enchanted state that was pixie-like and buried beneath the cloak of business and modern life's cares. He believed that doodling could help us revel the pixieness that we all possess no matter how far buried by the worries and woes of modern living. In defending his point of doodling as a way to tap into what I believe we could now call intention and intuition, Mr. Arundel used examples of mid-century leaders like Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Cab Galloway; saying that they used doodling as a sort of meditation to get to the core of decisions and situations.

The idea of doodling took off from there (if only with a relatively short burst of attention), even W H Auden wrote a poem about man's search for meaning, substance and identity in an ever-changing industrialised world. He seems to have been aware of the Arundel's idea, in his work "The Age of Anxiety" published in 1948, he describes

***"...Moulds and monsters on memories stuffed
With dead men's doodles, dossiers written
In lost lingos, too long an account
To take out in trade, no time either..."***

There is a strong argument that most of us are now on the same search in response to our hyper-developing totally distracting technological world and that

perhaps doodling can help people and their organisations connect with what seems to be missing from a lot of our modern days – connection...

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