



ADVERTISEMENT



11-09-11

Steve Jobs Wasn't The Einstein Of Our Generation, He Was The Picasso

Steve Jobs wasn't a technologist, or even a scientist, though the result of his genius will impact both technology and science for decades to come. Instead, he was a sculptor, an artist who foresaw how we would embrace the shift from tools, to what tools can do.

BY STEVEN ROSENBAUM

3 MINUTE READ

The next ten years of tech promise to be entirely different than the decade just ending.

Why? Does it matter? And how can we embrace the shift from tools, to what tools can do?

It turns out that Steve Jobs knew this all along—and the devices he built and the ecosystem he created were optimized not for technology, but for the creation of art.

The easy characterization of Jobs is as an inventor, the Albert Einstein of our time. But that's not quite right. Jobs wasn't a technologist, or even a scientist, though the result of his genius will impact both technology and science for decades to come.

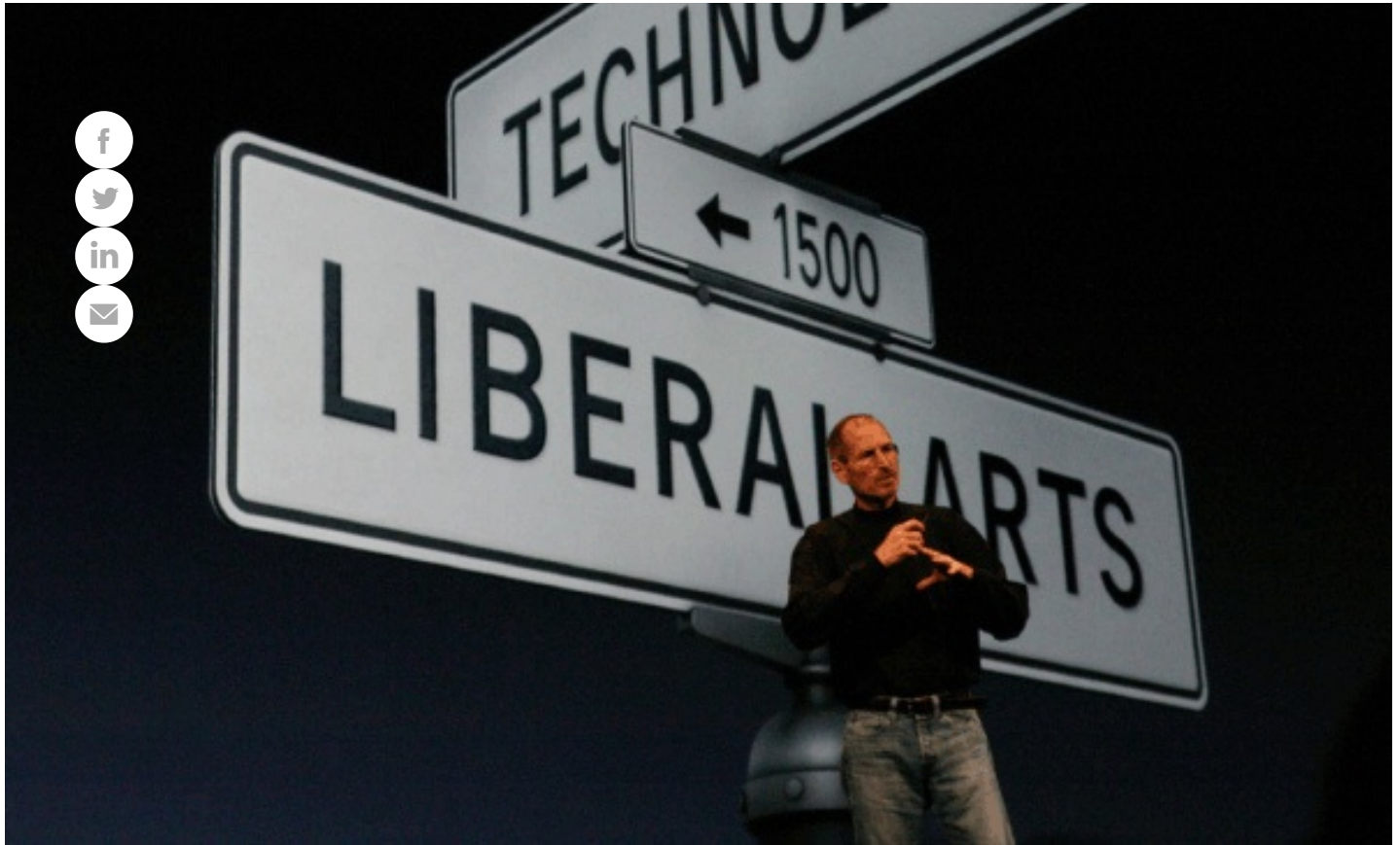
Jobs was a sculptor, an artist. A difficult, driven, passionate artist who stood at the crossroads of technology and liberal arts. He knew this so clearly that he put a street sign on the projected image behind him at the March 2nd launch of the iPad2.

As he explained to biographer Walter Isaacson:



“When I went to Pixar, I became aware of a great divide. Tech companies don’t understand creativity. They don’t appreciate intuitive thinking, like the ability for an A&R guy at a music label to listen to a hundred artists and have a feeling for which five might be successful. They think that creative people just sit around on couches all day and are undisciplined, because they’ve not seen how driven and disciplined the creative folks at places like Pixar are.”

“On the other hand, music companies are completely clueless about technology. They think they can just go out and hire a few tech folks, but that would be like



Apple trying to hire people to produce music.”

“I’m one of the few people who understands how producing technology requires initiation and creativity, and how producing something artistic takes real discipline.”

Jobs was building what would be the world’s largest computer company, but doing so from a place that was honestly more emotional than it was intellectual. Prone to tantrums, crying binges, and demanding and often exhausting bouts of creative energy, Jobs was as far from a tech nerd as you could imagine. He was an artist, and he knew it. He sculpted in glass and silicon and emotional textures of sound and pictures.

Again, telling Isaacson:

“The older I get, the more I see how much motivation matters. The Zune was crappy because people at Microsoft don’t really love music or art the way we do. We won because we personally love music. We made the iPod for ourselves, and when you’re doing something for yourself or your best friend or family, you’re not going to cheese out. If you don’t love something you’re not going to go the extra mile, work the extra weekend, challenge the status quo as much.”

What is clear is that Jobs saw Apple as more of a band than a company. He was the lead singer, a mix of Dylan, Keith Richards, and the Beatles. The creative process was messy, often petulant, and included hurt feelings, wrong turns, and dead ends.



technology and liberal arts.”

In a 1996 interview with NPR’s Terry Gross, he explained how the blending of the humanities and computing was core to Apple’s success: “I think our major contribution was in bringing a liberal arts point of view to the use of computers...Our goal was to bring a liberal arts perspective and a liberal arts audience to what had traditionally been a very geeky technology and a very geeky audience.”

in

“In my perspective...science and computer science is a liberal art, it’s something everyone should know how to use, at least, and harness in their life. It’s not something that should be relegated to 5 percent of the population over in the corner. It’s something that everybody should be exposed to and everyone should have mastery of to some extent, and that’s how we viewed computation and these computation devices.”

And Jobs, at the iPad2 launch in March 2011, had this to say: “Technology alone is not enough...It’s technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the result that make our hearts sing.”

What Jobs had was a love of the spirit and practice of creation, but not any of the conventional artistic outlets. Instead, he turned what had been simply tools into tools that were themselves object of beauty and art. The reason why creators love apple is because Apple created a bridge between art and science, and that is the bridge to the future.

[Image: Flickr user [williamcromar](#)]

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steven Rosenbaum is an entrepreneur, author, and curator. He is the founder and CEO of the web's largest Video Curation Platform, Waywire.com [More](#)

You Might Also Like:

[This YouTuber’s correction of Scorsese’s ‘Irishman’ de-aging is embarrassing for Netflix](#)

[Delta’s ‘parallel reality’ display sounds like sci-fi, but it’s coming soon](#)

FOLLOW



FROM OUR PARTNERS [aionomi](#)



THE IC
Going Green
✉



DER
PRIVATINVESTOR
Max Otte
Vermögensbildungs-
fonds:
Diese Aktien
waren 2019
bärenstark!



ETF GLOBAL
First Leg of
Trade Pact



LATAM
INVESTOR
Now is a Great
Time to Invest
in Latin
American
Mining

IMPACT

IMPACT

How this electric vehicle ride-share company won the trust of cities without 'disrupting' them

IMPACT

The 10 best climate books of 2019

IMPACT

How Carnegie Mellon helped transform Pittsburgh into a smart city playground

CREATIVITY

CREATIVITY

How Disney blew it with 'Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker'—and why it may not matter

CREATIVITY

Here are the 7 flops from the 2010s that changed movies forever

CREATIVITY

He's Eddie Murphy, dammit, and he saved this damn 'SNL' from the gutter—again

CO.DESIGN

CO.DESIGN

One-day deliveries are breaking our cities



Why some of the world’s most hated companies are also the most profitable

CO.DESIGN

Here’s the best design content to watch on Netflix over the holidays



WORK LIFE

WORK LIFE

How to make better decisions, according to science

WORK LIFE

Bringing your whole self to work is a bad idea

WORK LIFE

5 books to read to be your best self in 2020