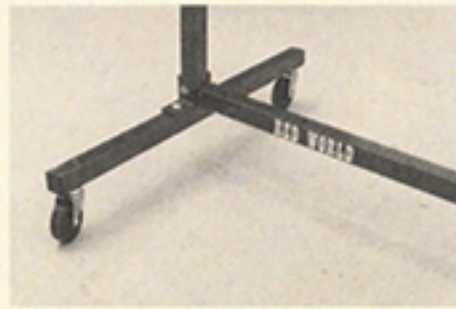


# LURE MODULE RED WORLD

David Schafer





## RED WORLD

*Red World* is an absurdist play in which the historical figures of Senator Joseph McCarthy and comedian Red Skelton become actors within a sculptural stage. Mounted on a mobile framework with two-channel audio emanating from opposing speakers, the work combines found recordings from radio broadcasts, television appearances, and public speeches into a fragmented dialogue that collapses political rhetoric and popular entertainment into a single performative space. What begins as comedy gradually slips into farce, where humor no longer offers relief but reveals the instability of authority itself. Rather than functioning as documentary, the sculpture operates as an apparatus of reenactment, exposing the theatrical construction of persuasion, spectacle, and ideological performance.

Drawing upon Bertolt Brecht's concept of epic theater, the work resists narrative resolution in favor of critical distance. The audience is not asked to identify with either figure but instead to observe the mechanics of performance as a form of political production. McCarthy's paranoid anti-communist rhetoric and Skelton's populist comedy emerge as parallel modes of public address, each mobilizing repetition, stereotype, exaggeration, and emotional affect to organize social relations. Their voices become uncannily interchangeable, revealing how laughter and fear can function as complementary instruments of persuasion.

The work also embraces the tragicomic logic found in the theater of Samuel Beckett, where comedy persists in the face of historical catastrophe and language gradually detaches from stable meaning. As fragments of speech circulate between opposing speakers, voices oscillate between wit, menace, confession, and propaganda, producing moments that are simultaneously comic and deeply unsettling. The recordings are not presented as historical documents but as active performances whose rhetorical force continues to circulate beyond the moment of their production. Detached from their original contexts, they return not as memories but as persistent cultural forms that continue to organize the present.

*Red World* performs as a theater object, an architectural device that stages the collision of voices rather than bodies, allowing sound, language, and material form to enact the uneasy proximity of entertainment and political power. By transforming archival recordings into an ongoing theatrical event, the work demonstrates how historical performances can outlive the conditions that produced them. Their gestures, voices, and rhetorical strategies continue to shape contemporary public life, where comedy, spectacle, and political persuasion remain inseparable.



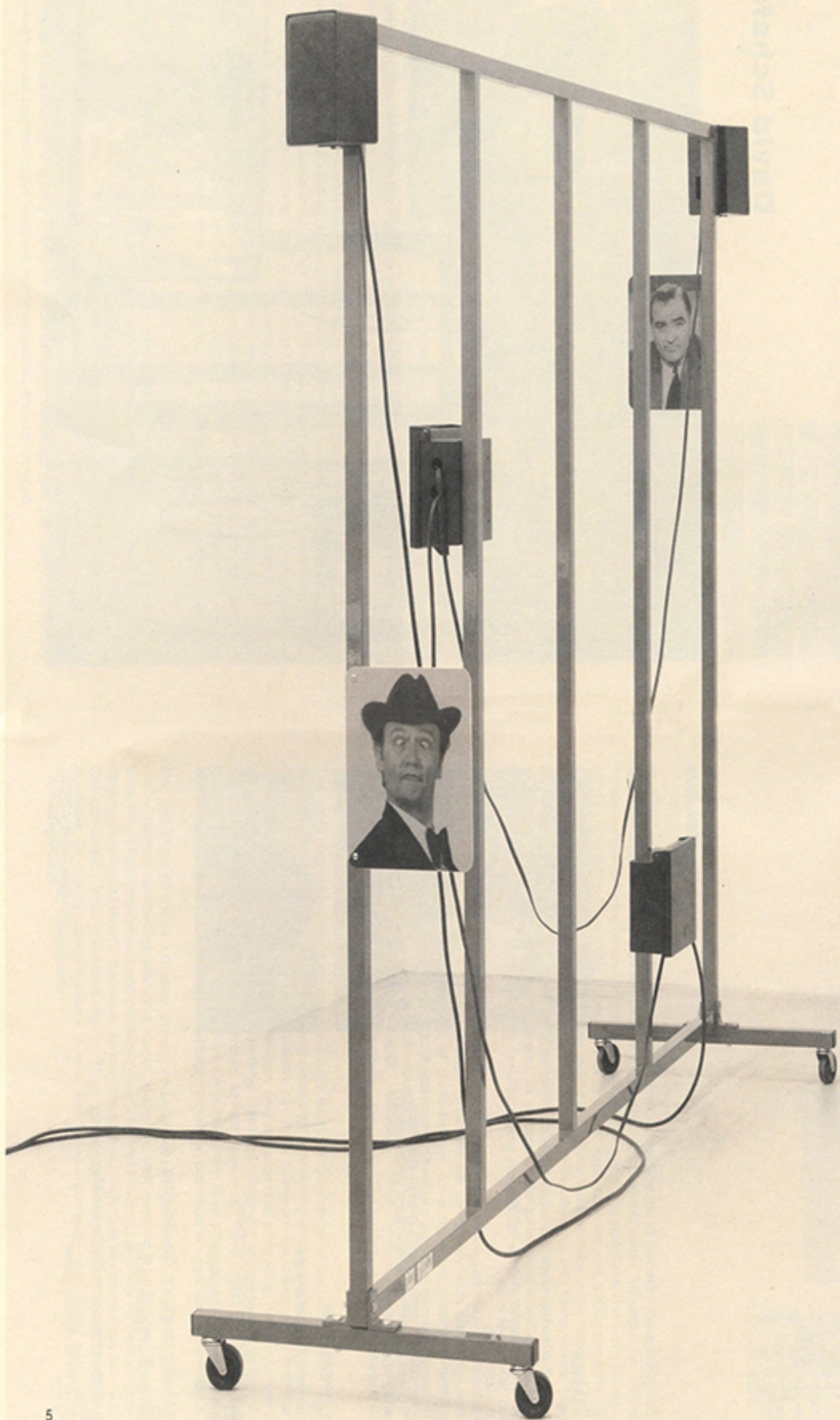
## LURE MODULE

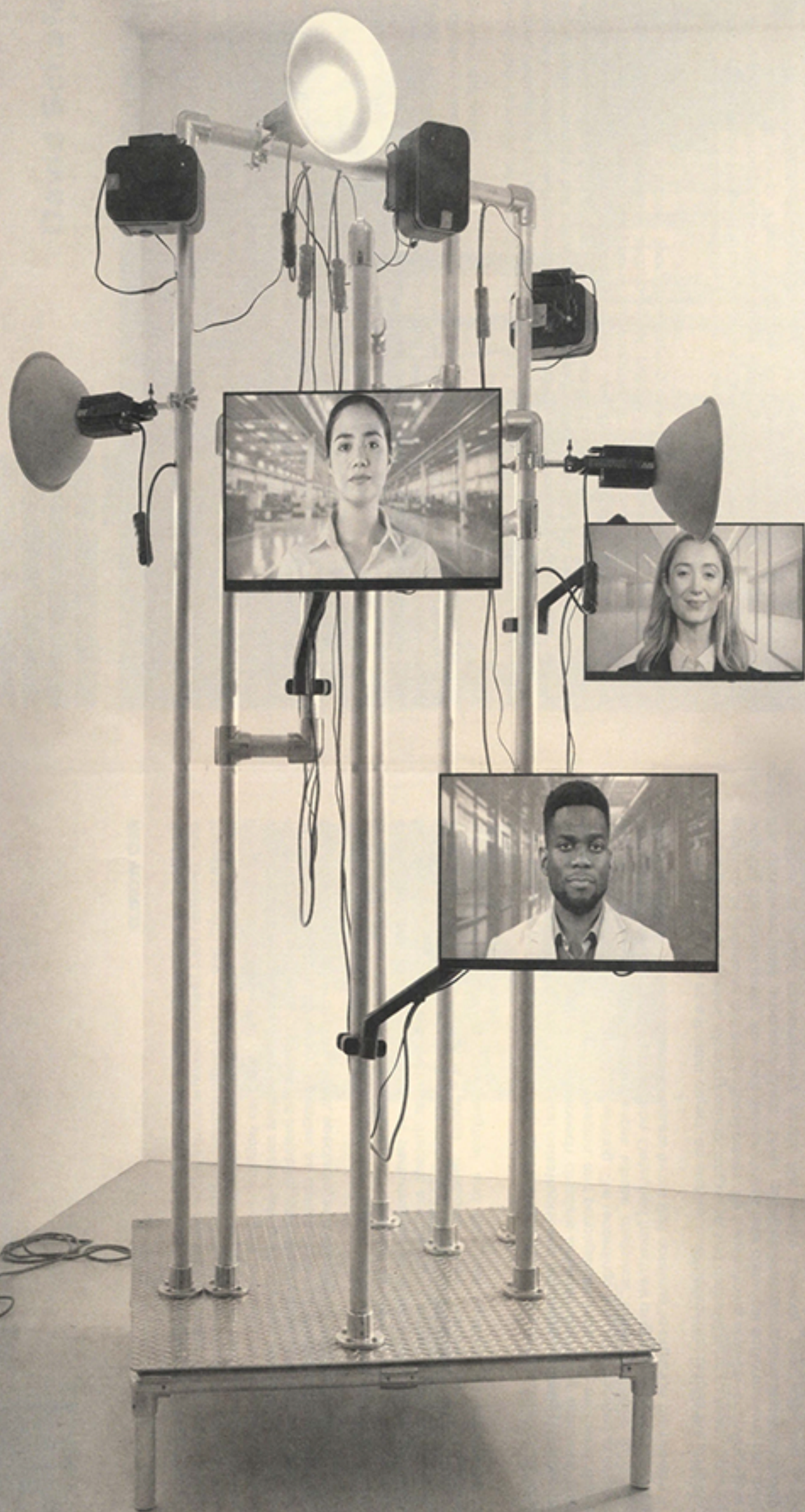
*Lure Module* stages an institutional conversation among three AI-generated avatars, an engineer, a data scientist, and a corporate manager, whose dialogue examines the ethical tensions surrounding artificial intelligence, digital marketing, and automated decision-making. Rather than representing individuals, the avatars function as institutional voices, performing the competing logics of technological optimism, corporate efficiency, and algorithmic governance. The characters were shaped in part by Catherine Liu's critique of the contemporary Professional Managerial Class, whose members increasingly mediate between technological systems, corporate institutions, and public life.

The physical structure originated through a generative process in which previous works were reinterpreted using artificial intelligence and translated into a three-dimensional architectural framework. Constructed from Speed Rail, a modular system commonly used in theater production and commercial display, the framework evokes a provisional stage, exhibition scaffold, and industrial apparatus simultaneously. Three photo lamps project outward from the structure, illuminating the audience rather than the performers and implicating viewers within the systems of observation, surveillance, and data extraction that the work examines.

Developed through an extended collaboration with generative language models and refined through careful editing, the script allows machine-generated language and human revision to become indistinguishable. Fragmentation, repetition, and contradiction are not simply stylistic devices but traces of a distributed authorship in which neither human nor artificial intelligence fully controls the conversation. Echoing Samuel Beckett's recursive dialogues, Antonin Artaud's visceral theater, and Bertolt Brecht's strategy of critical estrangement, the work avoids narrative resolution in favor of exposing the performative structures of contemporary technological culture. Each avatar occupies a familiar institutional setting, a factory floor, data center, or executive office accompanied by an ambient soundscape.

Rather than presenting artificial intelligence as neutral, *Lure Module* treats it as an active producer of institutional speech. Language, architecture, light, and sound operate together as an apparatus through which institutional authority is rehearsed and reproduced. The work proposes AI less as a technology than as a form of contemporary dramaturgy, a system that scripts roles, distributes expertise, and organizes behavior before any human performer enters the stage. The dialogue explores how expertise itself has become a form of cultural authority, shaping not only technological development but also the values through which technology is justified, communicated, and normalized.





Torrance Art Museum  
3320 Civic Center Dr.  
Torrance, CA

Curators  
Sue-Na Gay  
Max Presneil

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*Lure Module*

2025

Speed rail, fixtures, hardware, media players,  
speakers, flatscreens, brackets, photo lamps,  
AI generated avatar videos, cables

Video: 20 minute loop

114" x 48" x 48"



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*Red World*

2018

powder-coated steel, casters, plastic, speakers,  
MP3 players, misc. hardware, wire, vinyl lettering

Audio: 2 hours

76" x 24" x 91"



2

*Lure Module Script*

2025

Epson print on Epson paper

37" x 37"



4

*Lure Module Headshot: Engineer*

2025

Epson print on Epson paper

20" X 12"

4

*Lure Module Headshot: Data Scientist*

2025

Epson print on Epson paper

20" X 12"

*Lure Module Headshot: Corporate Manager*

2025

Epson print on Epson paper

20" X 12"