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HUGE ADVERTISING SCREEN AT FLINDERS STREET STATION SHUT DOWN FOR WEEKS

On 25th of November, Kyle Magee, who calls himself an “advocate for democratic media systems”, sprayed a fire extinguisher full of paint onto the largest digital advertising screen at Flinders Street Station. Over two weeks later the screen is still dark and covered in paint..

Rather than an act of petty vandalism, Mr. Magee’s actions are a simple non-violent expression of his political opinion that corporate advertising, and the corporate media it funds, is antithetical to democracy. He stated: “Allowing for-profit corporations and their advertising to dominate the mainstream media of our supposed democracy is like allowing organised criminals to run the justice system: it is a laughably absurd conflict of interest. I cannot believe that as intelligent people, who apparently believe in democracy, we accept this outrageously corrupt for-profit media/advertising system.”

Kyle Magee has been protesting against advertising in public spaces for over a decade and has been jailed many times for his interventions. His protest against public space advertising is a symbolic protest against the entire for-profit media advertising system (his website is www.democraticmediaplease.net). His last action in Melbourne was a similar action utilising a fire extinguisher against digital screens in Melbourne central station:

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6922191/Vigilante-armed-fire-extinguisher-filled-paint-s-prays-obnoxious-advertising-screens.html>

Charges of “marking graffiti”, initially laid over this incident, were ultimately dropped by Victoria Police, who stated : “Due to the reluctance of the victim being forthright with providing information around ownership as well as costs of damages for the Television screens Victoria Police were unable to proceed with the charge of Criminal Damage.”

For Mr. Magee, hope for democracy and the future is bound to the prospect of a democratic media system, he stated: “The global democratic crisis of illegitimate corporate influence in the preceding decades has lead to rising inequality, inaction on climate change and the continuance of the idiotic concept of perpetual-growth economics. The for-profit media/advertising system must be legislated out of existence, and that will require nothing less than a world-wide uprising from the people. We need a global democratic revolution in terms of media if we are going to survive as a species.”

After the first Covid lockdown in Melbourne, Mr. Magee travelled to Queensland to pursue climate activism against the new Adani/Bravus Carmichael coal mine. He shut down coal ports before locking on to conveyor belts on three occasions, before climbing on top of an Adani coal train and immobilising it for 24 hours

(<https://www.facebook.com/FrontlineActionOnCoal/videos/431622061993586>)

The action at Flinders street station was broadly praised on Reddit's r/Melbourne, with users venting their frustration at the constant encroachment of advertising in their daily lives. One user wrote: "Warms my poor, dear, little heart to see so many of you supporting this action and railing against the visual and psychological cancer that is advertising."

(https://www.reddit.com/r/melbourne/comments/z3z4ax/so_someone_has_just_thrown_paint_over_the_huge/)

Mr. Magee has no intention of ending his protest, which for him is a life-or-death battle for his children's future. "If the future of the world is anything to look forward to, people will look back and wonder why so many accepted a media system so clearly corrupt and unfit for democracy."

ENDS

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Video footage/photos/links