

Below: Jordan Crandall, *Drive*, installation with *Machine-Images*, laser stereolithography on aluminum shelf, eye-scanning identification device, 1998. All images courtesy Sandra Gering Gallery.

Right: Jordan Crandall, *Drive*, *Machine-Image Module*, digital video, super8 film, 16mm film, formatted with motion-analysis software and database applications, transferred to DVD, DVD player, video headset, 1998.



Jordan Crandall | Drive

I went to check out Zuma Digital's office. I used to go to school with Blaine, the creative director. And since I got my gig in the Internet world, I was curious to explore its environs. If I discovered a medium that could channel a vision of fast, densely interactive hypermedia, then my visit would have been worthwhile.

At the studio, production was under way. Running computers were arrayed on desks, and a pile of digital Betacam tapes from various TV stations and movie studios waited to enter the careful process that would turn them into DVDs, a process that often takes 40 times longer than real time to perfect the encoding into standard MPEG 2 format.

We soon decided to take a cab downtown to the Sandra Gering Gallery, and on the way Blaine took out a palmtop DVD player and placed a disk for *Spawn* inside. An interactive menu allowed us to link to various aspects of the product's second layer: credits, a cast list, a Spanish version of

the film. It was good to see that the video production was crisp and rich, and to see such excellent quality on a palmtop screen in the back of a cab highlighted its convenience. You could readily take this machine on a Thanksgiving excursion via Greyhound, or into bed.

At Sandra Gering, the gallery was dark. A curving pair of long walls, which would have connected if not for the gallery space on either end, featured the contrapuntal projections of Jordan Crandall's DVD-based installation *Drive*. As I entered the gallery, I saw one wall filled with a 13-minute loop of non-narrative sequences edited together to generate a visual sense of rhythm. The viewpoint of an urban navigator—diced to convey a fractured, hyperactive momentum—competed for mindscape with a sort of chamber piece on a second wall, in which a dark interior is traversed by an anonymous figure, seen from behind as he moves slowly toward

an unknown object. The viewpoint in both scenarios zooms in and focuses, zooms out and pans, exhibiting details while shifting perspectives rapidly.

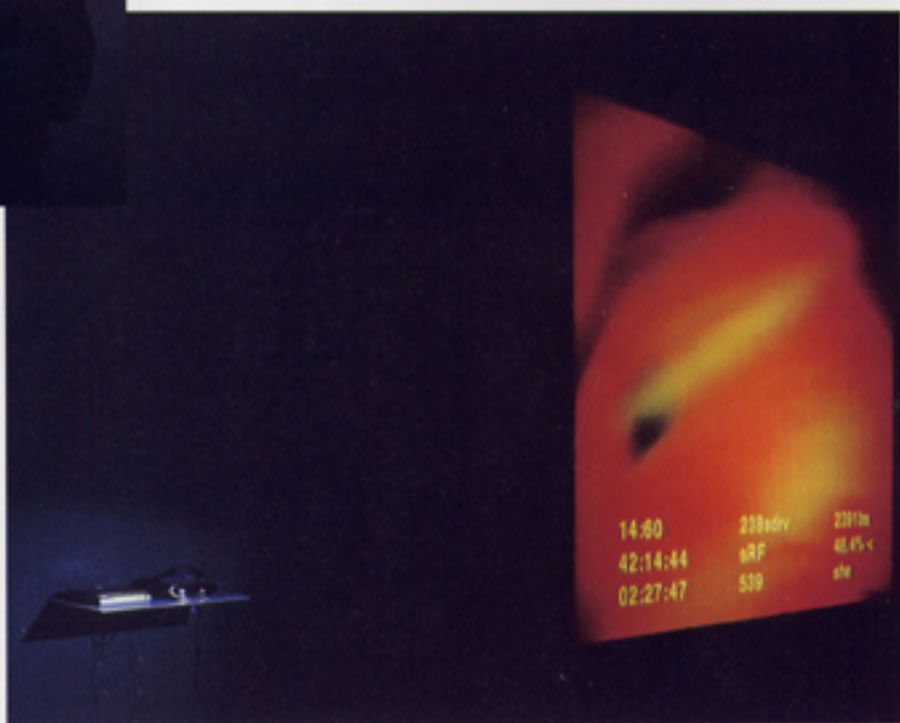
There is no sense that a story is going to be offered. I did not have a problem with this. And it would not have occurred to me if I hadn't brought my friend Fitzcarl Reid along the second time I saw the show. He did not know what to make of the installation: when he looked at a video, he looked for a story. After exhausting the wall projections, Fitzcarl introduced himself to the artist. I put on a pair of Sony's Glasstron eyeglasses, which were connected to a portable DVD player. These output the content into translucent lenses, which made it logical to experience a shifting palimpsest of portable video + gallery space + projected video while scanning the walls. I heard Fitzcarl speaking with Crandall, telling him that he wanted to say something about the work but couldn't think of what to say.



Left: Jordan Crandall, *Drive*, Machine-image Module, digital video, super8 film, 16mm film, formatted with motion-analysis software and database applications,

transferred to DVD, DVD player, video headset, 1998. Wearing headset.

Below: *Drive*, installation with Machine-images.



Crandall laughed with good humor. After learning that the man in the video was an actor, Fitzcarl declared that he looked for a story when presented with video, but he couldn't figure out what the story was here. There was briefly some talk of movies, and Fitzcarl revealed that he was an artist himself, indicating that he worked with non-electronic material.

I wondered if I could offer something to the conversation, while being mediated by the Glasstron glasses. "This makes me want to refine my thought process," I said, not sure whether I could make myself understood. "The time lag between the movement and the projected data captured by the motion-tracking software makes me think of the lag between speech and speech recognition. It reminds me how important it is to pay attention." I found myself making a fist and smiling, growing intent as my mind integrated with the verbal machine being invented by our collective presences. "It's

easy to look at something and to respond by accessing data stored in your warehouse of memories, but to dynamically generate a genuine response containing novel information takes a lot more."

Although there is no sound, the movement on the screen generates a virtually audible sense of rhythm. (The word for this is synesthesia.) A sense of its compositional balance and texture can be gleaned by thinking of a traditional drum and bass track, with the breakbeats mapped to the twitching urban landscape, and the bass emissions to the fugal interior of the travelling man/scape. I say man/scape because his motions have been tracked by the artist, using motion-tracking software, and recorded in a database. The data generated from this process has been used to map the actor's motions, in neon green, over his moving body. This is called an overlay. Between the motion of an arm and the rippling green graph it engen-

ders is a subtle, visible time lag that is analogous to the lag between speech and speech recognition. What we see is the space between perception and understanding. We perceive and we project, something analogous to certain theological constructs. What do we perceive? God in all His manifestations. And what do we project? Reality. For there is no divinity but God. We are surrounded by Him. Love travels the urban matrix; love travels the hard drive; God travels the matrix of the human mind, seeking a one-to-one mapping with Himself. The mind of the human information processor seeks the mind of the computer; each quickening toward an ecstatic electric embrace.

Drive is a piece about union which made me want to refine my thought process, so that the time lag between perception and understanding would be iteratively reduced to nil. *Drive* is about the speed of love.

—Adnan Ashraf