

# Jordan Crandall

## — Drive (Track 6)

1998-2000, two-channel video installation, DVD, 12 min

## — Heatseeking (Course Track)

1999-2000, single-channel video installation, DVD, 7 min

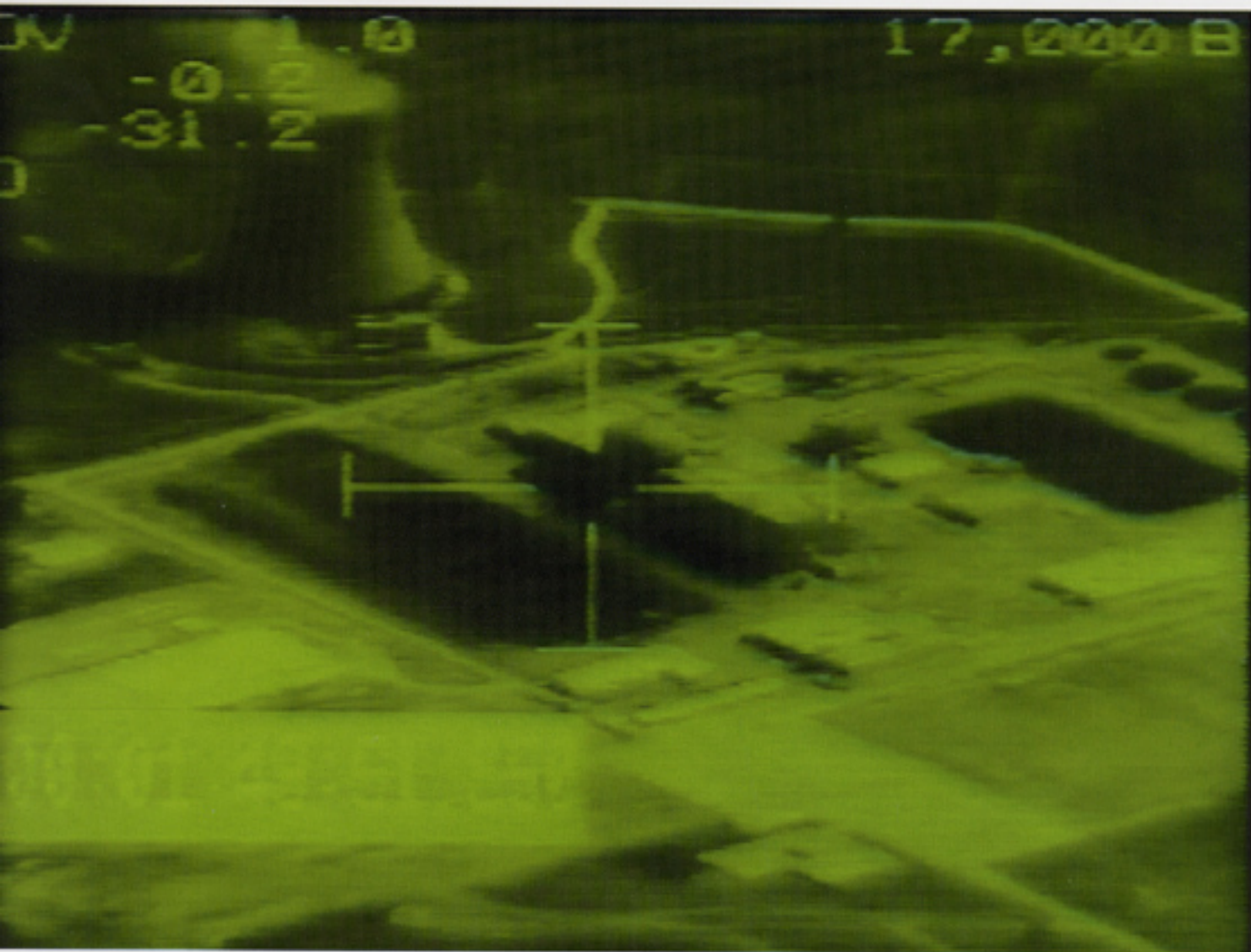
Andy Warhol as a cartoon figure in the "Miraclemen" comic: "Do you like this existence, Andy? Oh, sure. It's wonderful. I like being a machine. It's what I always wanted to be. You see, I used to carry a camera with me everywhere I went. Now my eyes are cameras, recording all they see. I don't need tape recorders any more - I am a tape recorder. This is heaven."<sup>2</sup>

2. Neil Gaiman and Mark Buckingham, in: *Miraclemen*, 19. Eclipse Comics, Forestville, CA, 1999, quoted from Scott Bukáman,

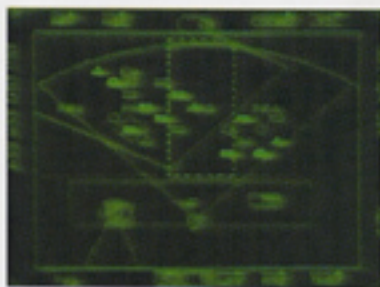
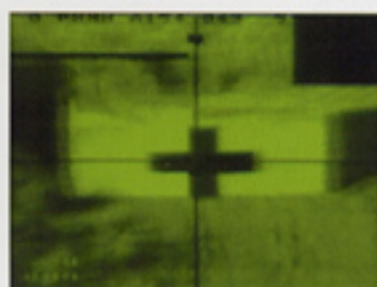
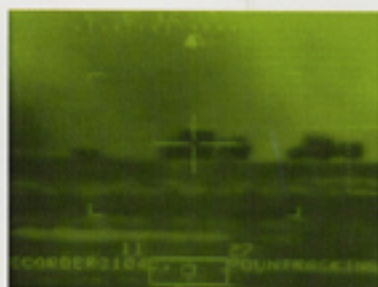
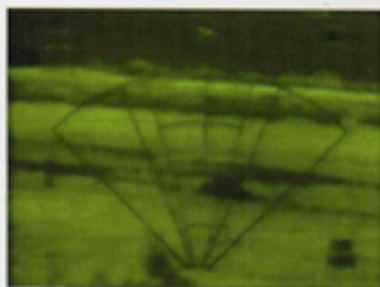
Terminal Identity: The virtual subject in postmodern science fiction, Durham and London 1993, p. 326.

Jordan Crandall's work *Drive* (1998-2000) consists of a series of seven films which, in terms of content, deal with the combination of traditional ways of seeing and new technological methods of image generation. Crandall has combined traditional cinematographic methods with military target finding technology, tracking systems and pattern recognition programs. *Drive, Track 6*, subtitled *Projectile/Gaze* the "arming of vision" is powerfully visualized in two projections. One shows an extreme close-up of a man's face. The camera is directed towards his eye, yet his gaze keeps the penetrative intensity of the camera at bay. In slow motion we see how the eyelid slowly closes and opens again to renew contact with the observer. On the film projected opposite, we see found footage of military high-tech technology; radar and infrared shots, target lock-on systems, computer images that are specialized in locating, classifying and identifying moving war machines. The human gaze is contrasted with militarized visualization practices, and compared with a projectile.

The work *Heatseeking* (1999-2000), similar to *Drive*, is composed as a seven-part series whose content also deals with how technology changes perception. *Heatseeking* was filmed in the border regions of San Diego and Tijuana and centers around the problems created by the border situation, the surveillance methods used there and the definition of borders as frontiers. In *Heatseeking (Course Track)* two golf players meet to tee off on the golf course at night. Alone in the darkness they play their game observed by a camera with night vision technology. In this strange scenery, the camera alternates between the tension-filled game between the two players and the golf course's expanse. Camera shots of the golf players in this location alternate with shots from surveillance cameras and computer-controlled search programs which makes the two protagonists appear as if they are in the system's target-finding zone. Quite unexpectedly, one of the players hits his opponent with his golf club - a fight ensues, they roll around on the ground while the camera attempts to follow them. Almost imperceptibly, aggression switches over into ambivalent eroticism. The video ends abruptly in a sequence of quick film cuts and breaks which looks as if the film has ripped. Crandall has perfected the use of a broad range of film methods in *Heatseeking*. With rapidly changing camera angles, black and white and color changes, and the use of various levels of media, the observer is confronted with a flood of images which he is hard put to process. The soundtrack heightens the surreality of the night-time golf course scene - in place of the expected swish of flying golf balls Crandall has used sound material from weapons in action, underlying the latent aggressive undertones.

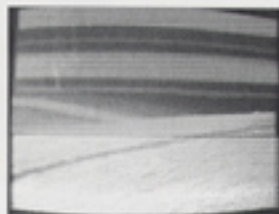


*Drive (Track 6)*  
1998-2000, two-channel video installation,  
16 mm film and processed digital video,  
transferred to DVD,  
12 min, videostills  
Jordan Crandall





*Heatseeking*  
(*Course Track*)  
1999-2000, single-channel video-installation, 16 mm film with digital video with digital animations, transferred to DVD, 7 min, videostills  
Jordan Crandall

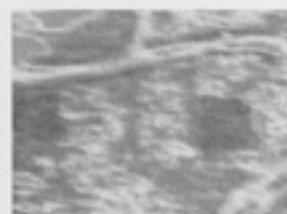


In both videos, we are confronted with the military's "strategic view" and an increasing militarization of the human gaze. The military visualization images used by Crandall are those with which we are all familiar from the media coverage of modern wars. A prominent example is the Gulf War, which was followed on television worldwide and whose images of military high-tech operations engraved themselves in the minds of viewers. Indeed, devices which were developed for military purposes have long since infiltrated the civilian market and in fact are in high demand. Switching from normal image to infrared is now a common feature of video cameras and this is enjoying ever-greater popularity.

The way we see is being altered by technical aids – these ways of generating images are increasingly defining our perception. Vilém Flusser describes the apparatus way of viewing as such: "We see everything as if we were constantly looking through a camera."<sup>2</sup> Crandall himself speaks of "militarized images."<sup>3</sup> "Tracking, targeting and identifying formats begin to seep into the way we see, behave, and desire. They enter into the very structure of perception. The camera marks the place of battle."<sup>4</sup>

Computers generate images and learn to analyze and interpret images. Computer pattern recognition image analysis describes a new kind of vision which lies beyond the central perspective. The image is the result of the process of data analysis. In his book *Techniques of the Observer* Jonathan Crary describes abstraction of the visual, the change in our perception thanks to computer-controlled viewing. He draws attention to the fact that new techniques of image production will become dominant visualization models.<sup>5</sup>

New technology influences not just our perception but also our physical being. Movement only becomes legible once the underlying patterns have been analyzed. In their studies on the human body, Muybridge und Marey have made movement readable by creating sequences. "In computerized tracking and targeting systems, however, movement is indicated differently. It is represented by way of its processing through databases. A new kind of moving image results – these new images do not so much represent movements as track them."<sup>6</sup> Computer technology records movements and analyzes them. The film *Moving Image* is altered by recording movement. Movement is not presented but data-processed. In Crandall's work, real movement and computer representation are mixed and become congruent. Modern technology constructs the body of the viewer anew. "There is a kind of mutation of images that occur in this landscape, in that images become part of processing systems, parts of apparatus that 'see back' at us. It



involves a kind of reversal of vision, displacing our location as privileged sites in the viewing exchange. We are seen, before we see. We are identified, before we identify. There are biometric systems, and other kinds of systems, which lock onto you, identify you through your behaviour patterns or biological characteristics. It is a kind of switching of positions, and this is a very important change to think about."<sup>7</sup>

Sabine Himmelsbach