

OPERATING SYSTEM
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Documents submitted to the Faculty of the University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the
Master of Fine Arts in the Department of Art

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ARTIST STATEMENT

My work deals with the intersection of technology and evolving modes of thought about its role in our lives. I often approach this subject matter by introducing cyclical animations and video, small scale sculptures, audio, and collage, all of which are presented and mediated through easily accessible and often secondhand materials and technologies. The worlds that result from this combination exist simultaneously as enclosed systems, parallel realities, and portals that allow us influence the behavior of another realm.

As one working with what appears to be outdated technologies, a distinction should be made between a) *technology as media*, the way we send and receive information, and b) *technology as hardware*, the physical tools and devices that assist us in our daily lives. Our relationship with technology as a *medium* drives the innovation and eventual obsolescence of the *hardware*. In using *technology as hardware*, I am free to adapt these materials to my needs as an aesthetic strategy-combining the kinetic, the reflexive, and the interactive with more traditional formal elements such as line, shape, space, color, and duration. I am challenging the concept of obsolescence by creating parallel or alternative uses for commonplace technologies, hopefully extending their lifespans as they are supplanted by newer models. Whether such tools are old or new, I approach them with the excitement of their possibilities rather than the purposes for which they were designed.

My practice is one of exploration, deconstruction, and reconstitution. This is particularly suited to the use of technology as an artistic medium, because it requires me to constantly learn and adapt. I have been spending much of my time researching and applying principles of analog electronic circuitry. The switching on and off of circuits-the binary extremes of voltage that allow electricity to ebb and flow-this is the DNA of digital information. As these modules of opposing states are combined into incomprehensibly complex systems, they begin to approximate and simulate that which we formerly considered to be the 'real world.' My exploration of devices does not simply satisfy my need to tinker and hack-it gives me greater insight into the cultural and philosophical ramifications of our networked society.

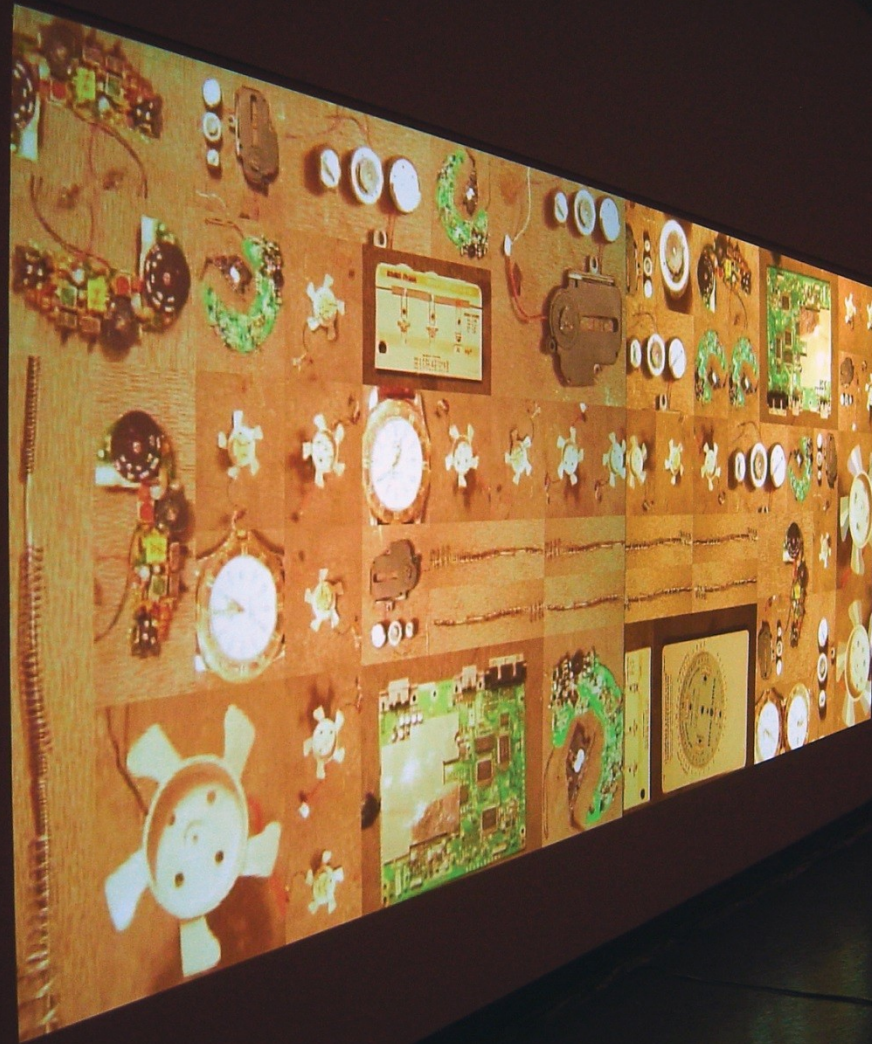
OPERATING SYSTEM

A game is an enclosed universe that operates by its own logic in the same way that any system operates. It has rules or laws, and each time it is played it exists on a separate and unique plane of reality. The project you see fulfills a similar function - it is in a state of equilibrium between a series of thresholds. As the viewer, you are a foreign agent that has been introduced to this environment. Simultaneously, you are entering a shrine, a portal to another way of thinking. The creator of this world is the unseen work in this installation. It is a persona, an individual and collective fabrication of a new mythology, unknown if it is a present, a past, or a future. Each object is an idea that seems to be drawn from a similar existence that you and I experience.

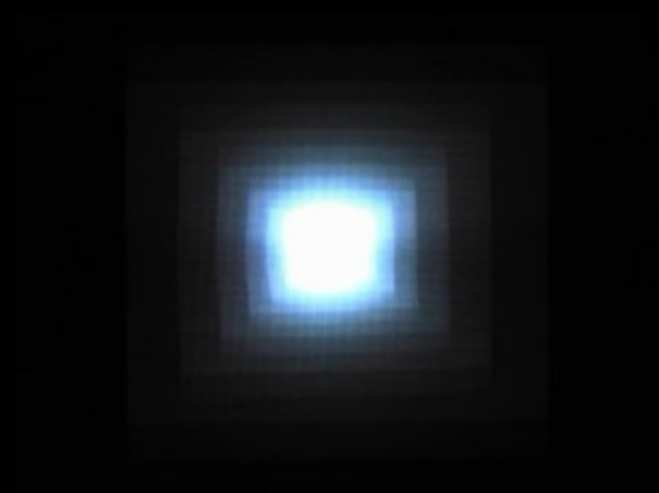
I am acting as a conduit for this paradigm, an anthropologist and archaeologist, a scholar and theologian, a critic and evangelist, attempting to understand and present the culture or person that created this series of symbols. This tablet serves as a Guide, a Course of Action, a Game Board, a Map, a Spiritual Relic, Program or Sequence of Operations. It is a vehicle for interpretation, guided but not directed.

Inside you will find circuits oscillating between extreme states - HI and LOW, ON and OFF. This is the DNA of digital information, perhaps even the seed of our drive for classification of perceived reality. The central hub is an exercise in infinity - image and sound are reflected, recorded, and transmitted in an loop that we experience as feedback. The configurations on the right and left are loose affiliations of ideas that are neither opposed nor aligned. The light and air in these sections are susceptible to interference, as is the nexus of feedback in the center. When we contaminate this equilibrium, we become a part of it.

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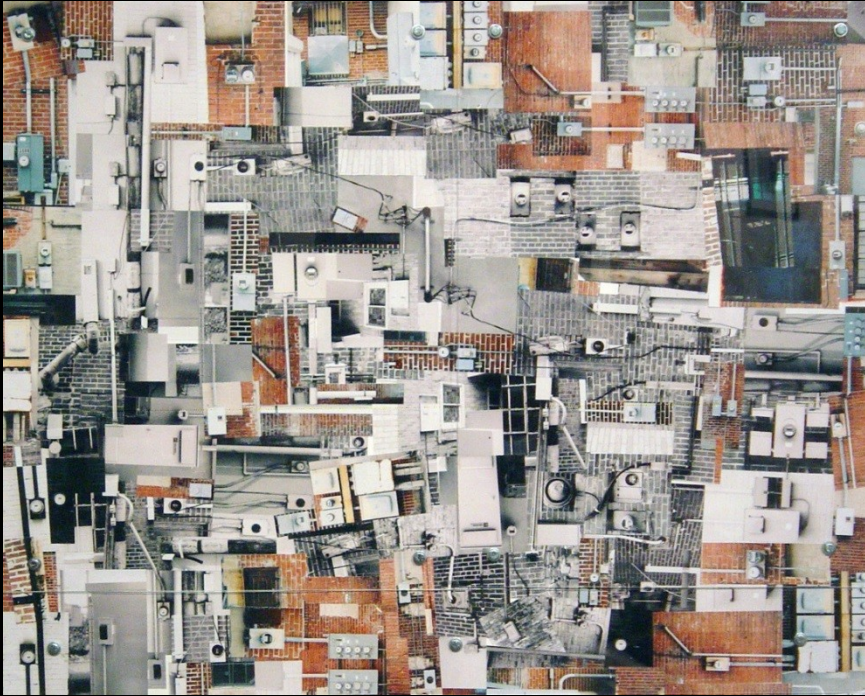


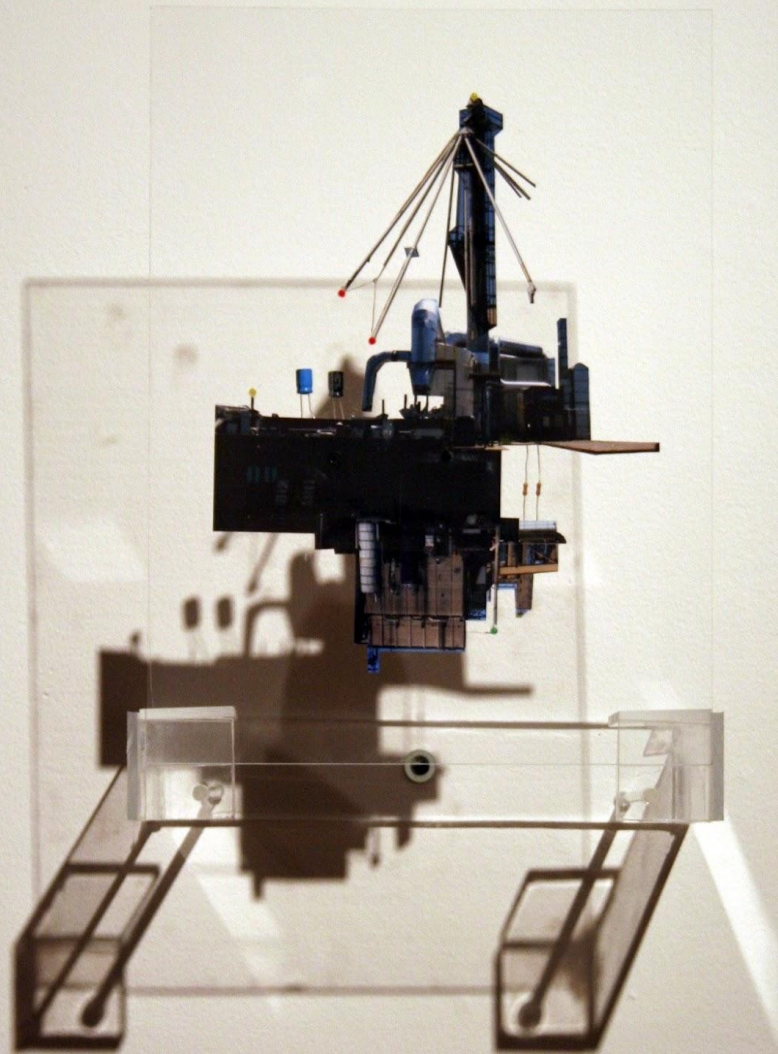








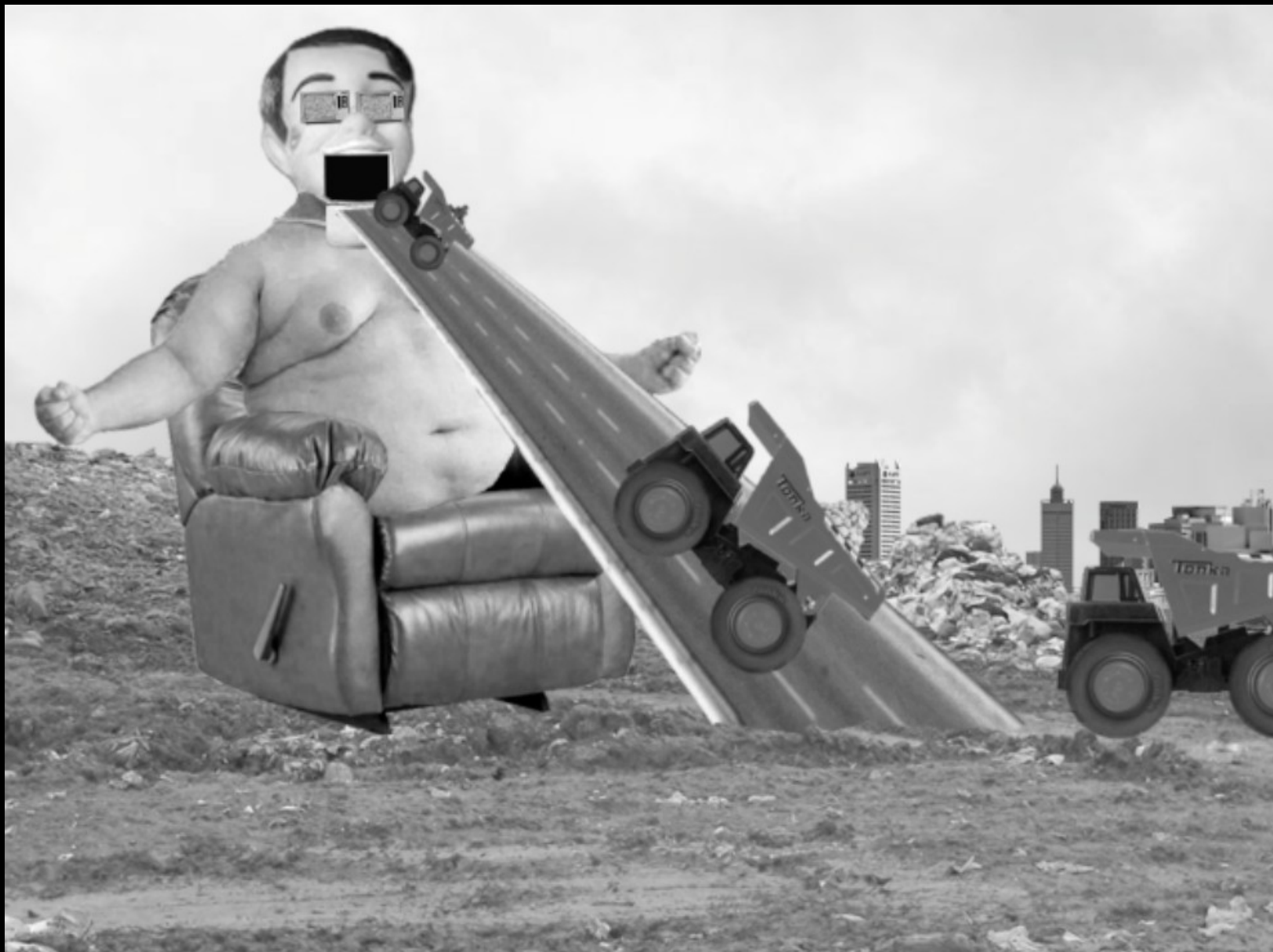


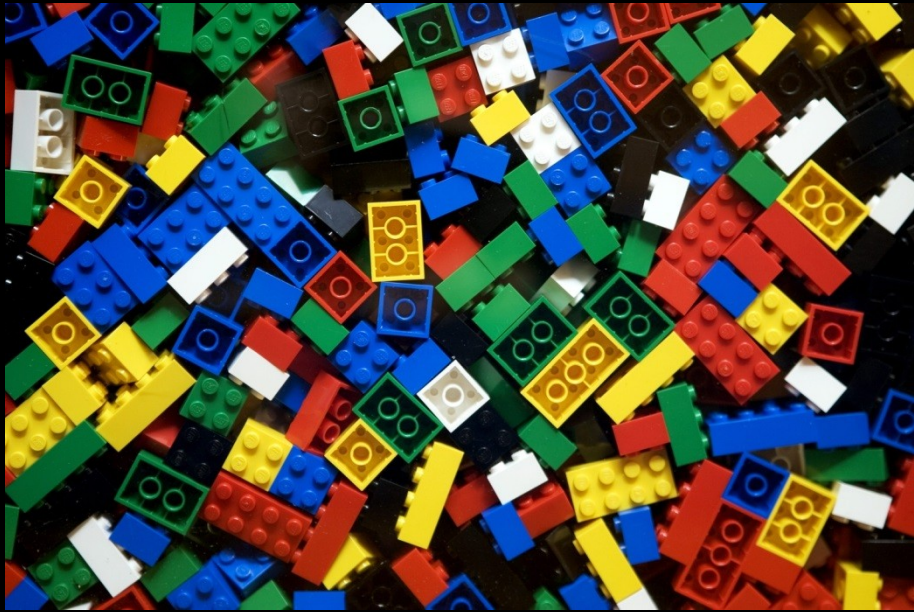














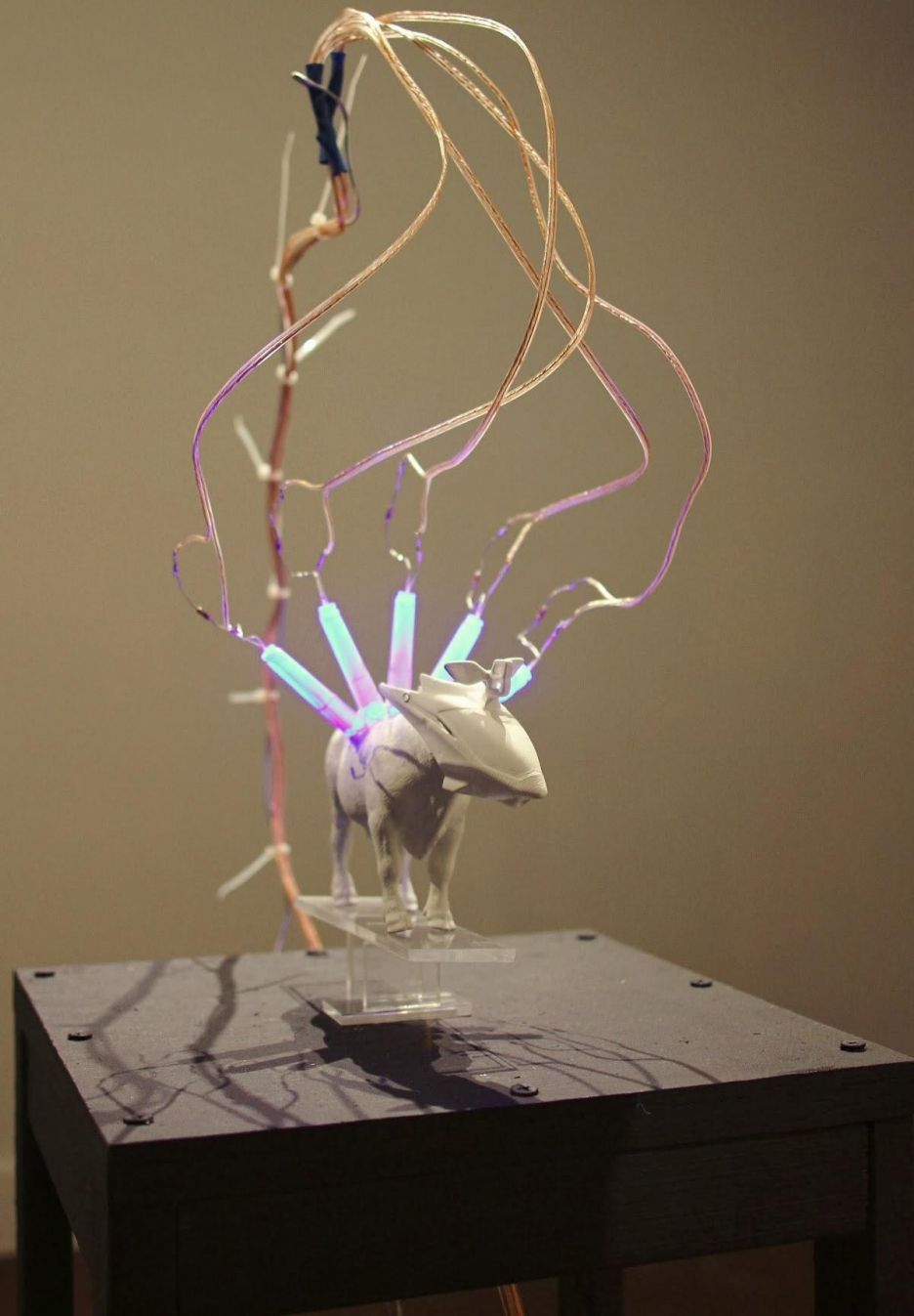


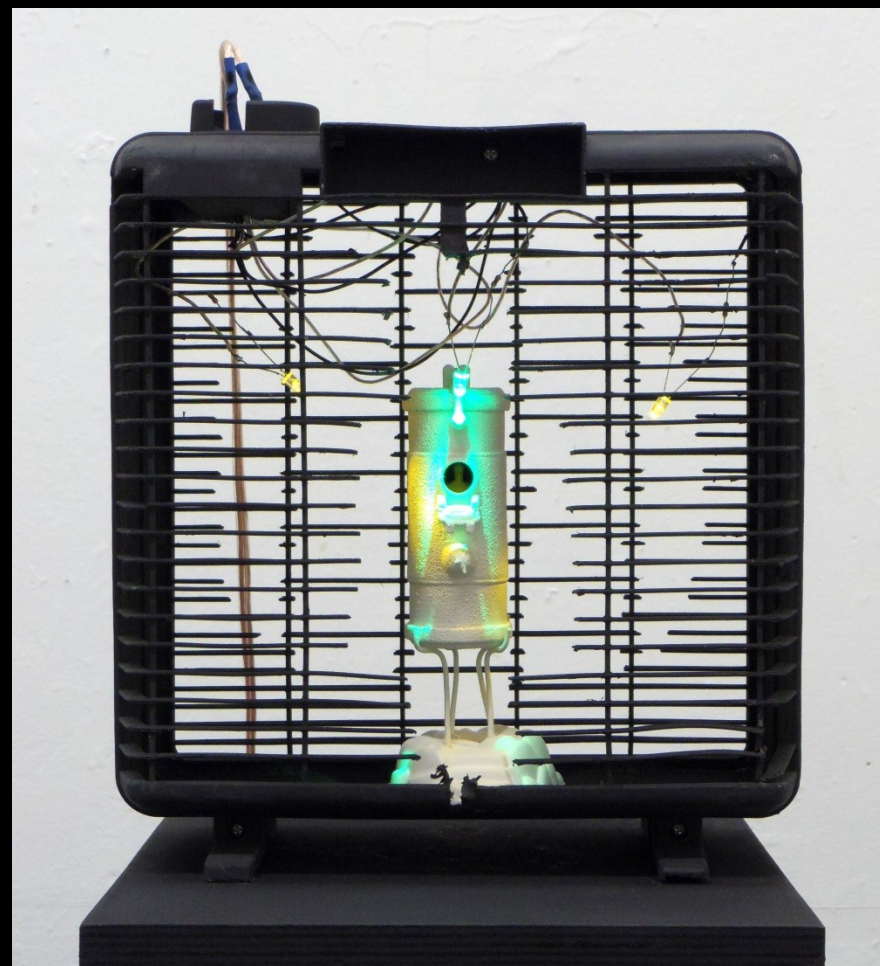






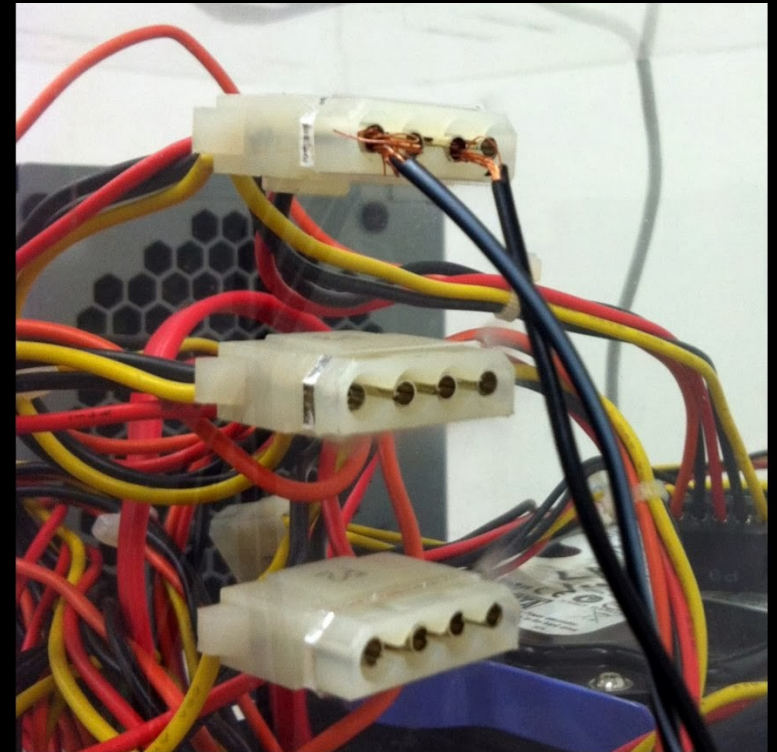
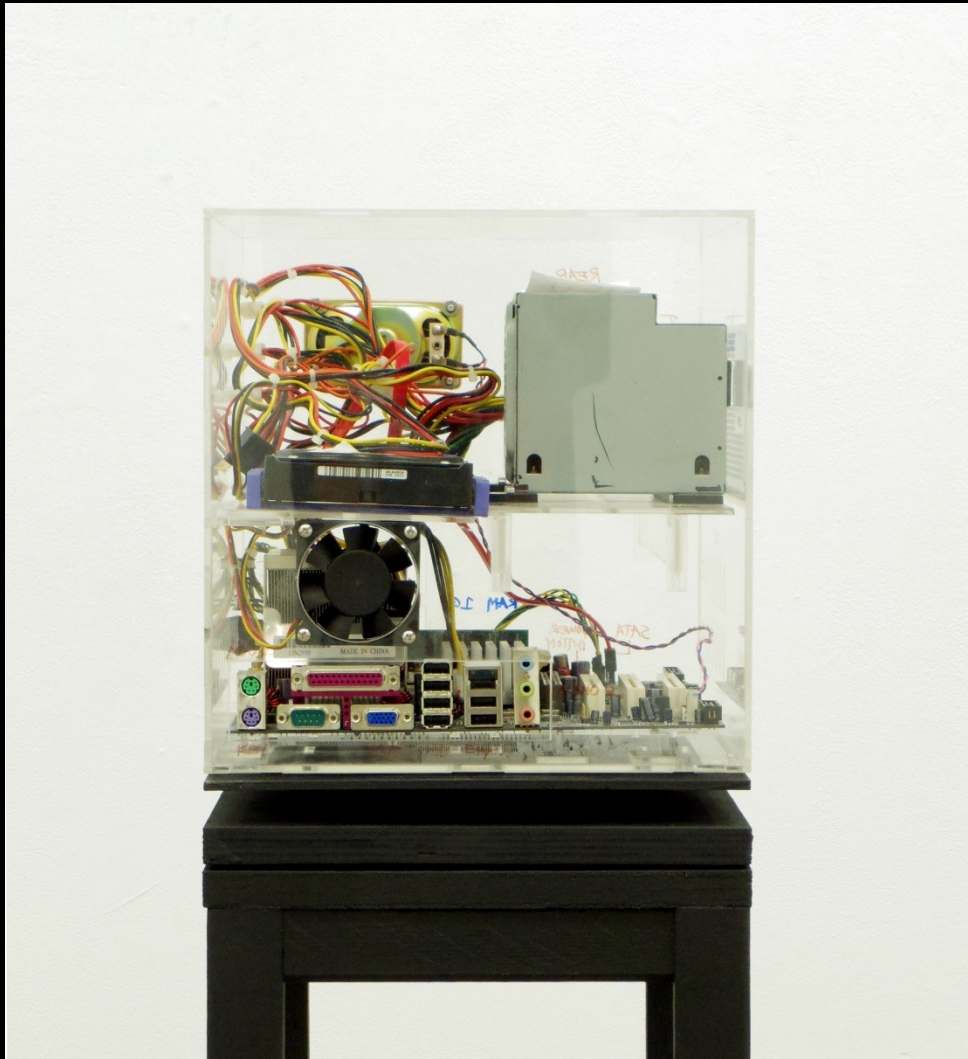


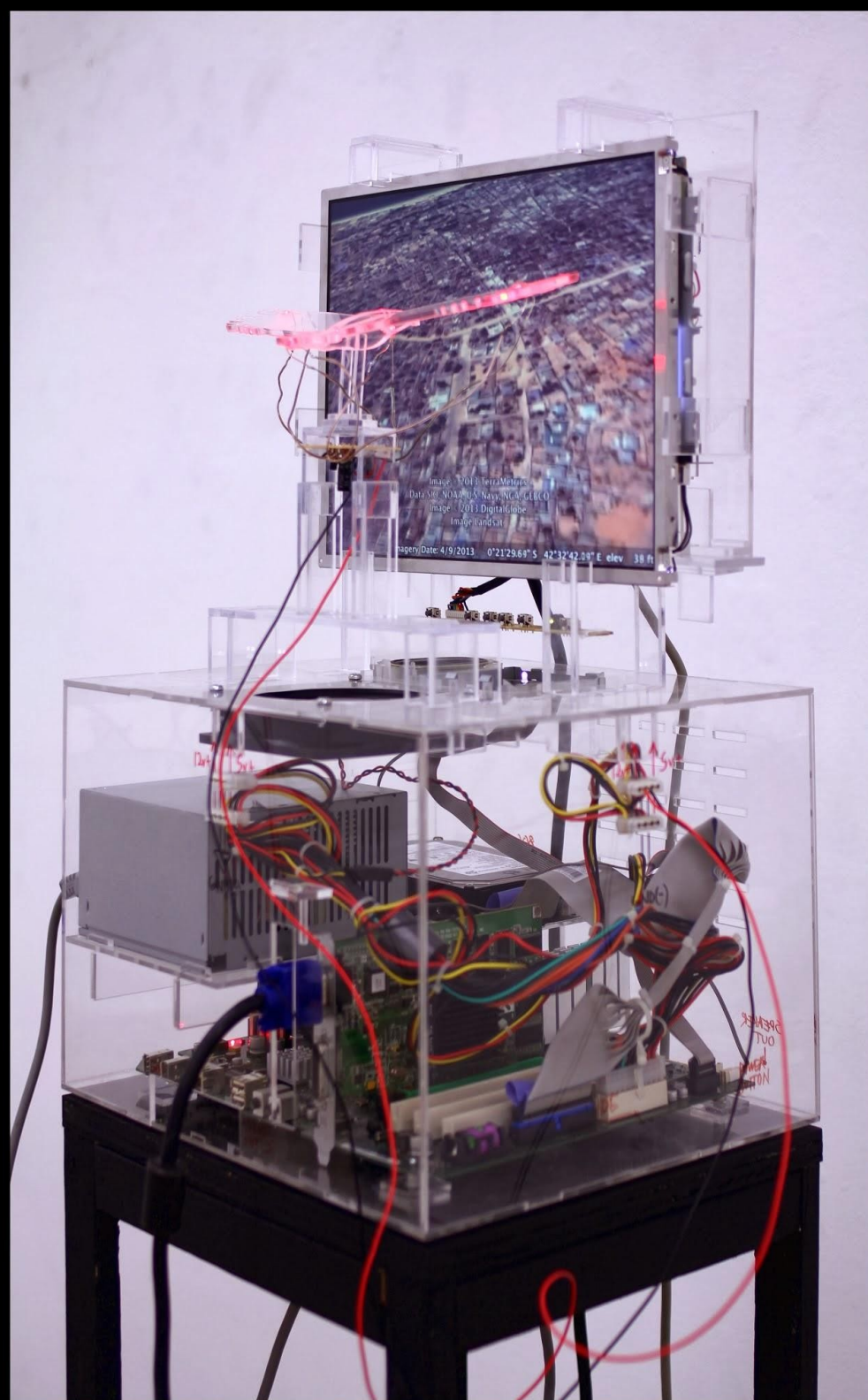
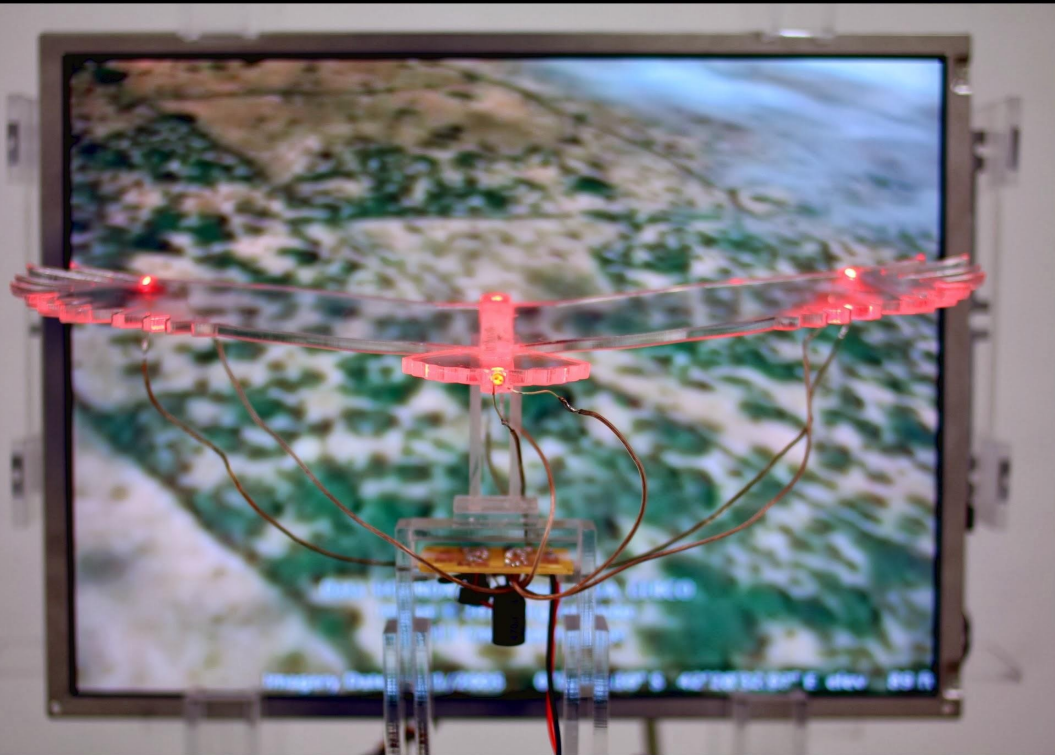
















KEY

MICROPHONE
VIDEO CAMERA
OUTPUT SOUND
OUTPUT VIDEO
SIGNAL

DISPLACED SENSORY DEVICE

The multitrack vision for this work is a suit/helmet/headphone/video goggles device.

The wearer's natural and unfiltered vision would be replaced by some sort of monitor and one or more 'outboard' cameras. The wearer's hearing would be similarly displaced. The cameras and microphones could be directional, telephoto or shotgun, wide angle or omnidirectional. This could simultaneously augment and limit our natural sensory experience.

