

Installation Proposal – “Deus Ex Machina MMV”

The current pervasive dissemination of propaganda by the pharmaceutical companies across the airwaves brings to our collective attention the ideas of self medication, engineered well being, and trust in broadcasted information. I want to create an installation which pulls both the TV set and the commercials out of their conventional relationship and into a state of suspended introspection.

The physical installation will consist of a pairs of matching televisions rotated so that the bottom of each TV is facing the bottom of the matching TV. The TVs will be stripped of their plastic casing and suspended from the ceiling of a room in a manner that places the screens facing the floor. The television pair will be, with all of the wires and circuit boards exposed, suspended above a shallow pool of water lined with black plastic.

Looping on both sets of televisions will be selected segments of prescription drug advertisements, specifically the part when they list out the potential harmful side effects. One of the pair will be playing each side effect phrase normally while the other will be playing the phrase in reverse. The audio levels on both the forward and reversed sides will be generated by a pair of speakers at either end of the space.

By separating the audio and visual sources they become self critical. The audio is generally the announcer listing out the harmful effects while the concurrent visuals are of a bright and pleasant nature.

Activating this limbo space between the glowing TV screen and the reflective water is an important conceptual component. The space needs to be large enough to encourage the viewer to investigate while at the same time small enough so that a visual reflection of the TV can be seen in the water below. The air in between the water and the TV becomes a purgatory space. Life and Death are both represented at each level in the work. The inherent risks and benefits to life are portrayed by the drug commercials above while below them rests the pool of water, the ubiquitous source of life and in this case, source of death via short circuit.

The desire to see the truth of something with one's own eyes (rather than a mere reflection in water) is the emotion that is put in conflict with the fear that one encounters when personal safety is thought to be in danger. This same desire vs. fear is paralleled in the commercials promoting both the desirable health benefits and the fearful side effects.

Cycling ideas of time represented by the same ad being played both in normal time and then in reverse with the inverse time ad on the matching TV directs attention to the greater cycles of life and death. The crossing point at which the two ads meet in linear time acts as a fleetingly temporary fulcrum in which the two balancing sides meet for an instant and then become their opposite.

This installation should be filled with enough potential energy and symmetrical information that the more participation the viewer gives the more unique feedback will resonate between the piece and the viewer. Pulling the TV set out of the home and rearranging both the physicality of the set and the content it presents becomes necessary in order to bridge the connections between the original intentions of the sponsor content and the current intentions of the artist acting as an intuitive transducer.