Brotherhood

The *Brotherhood* is a summary of media concepts presenting a specific domain of ideological and personal concerns. While the central theme of the *Brotherhood* revolves around the dilemma of male identity, it could be understood as arising from the general compulsion of mankind to re-organize Nature itself. This process is of course destructive to the natural order and leads to conditions of polarization and antagonism in various social and philosophical strata. It presents the male once again in the context of warfare as an expected and integral part of human evolution, in the construction and abandonment of human utopia, in perilous values of male sexuality. This work does not argue for a reformist agenda or a strategy of defence. It stands sympathetically on the side of the male but it cannot resist an ironic glance at his clearly self-destructive destiny.

While avoiding a single discipline, genre or style, the work tends to track clusters of systemic expressive primitives -- those which seem human-like yet reside within the machine.

The frustration at describing the modes of various media participation found in *Brotherhood* lies in a generic failure to interpret concepts like human or machine "intelligence." While certain electro-mechanical systems can contain a volume of cultural property, their usefulness or value can only be judged against the exclusive domain in modelling of certain human behaviors or in acquisition of procedural rituals. For example: Table IV possesses the faculty of performing physical letter writing under the control of a human voice via microphone, digital voice recognition and plotter system, thus emulating this rather complex

human activity. In the past, the term intelligence would have been freely applied to the similar machine state. Burdened with too much meaning, it is being replaced by more somber terminologies such as simple behavioral patterns or the more fashionable emergent properties of complex dynamical systems.

But the *Brotherhood* is after all an abstract piece and does not lend itself to correct analyses. If art should participate in this context, the authentic technological extensions and constraints will clearly impose themselves on the work. As of yet this is the most complex work I have attempted with requisite knowledge of various crafts: electronics, optics, engineering and computer programming.

The Tables (General Description):

Project *Brotherhood* is a complex assembly of six smaller arrangements acting in a mutually coordinated manner as a series of Tables.

The Tables are quadratic cage arrangements placed horizontally on metal table legs. Each Table contains instruments, able to produce, compose and display varied accoustic and visual structures. Additionally these clusters of technology exhibit a certain volume of behavior through digital programs or in reaction to a set of sensors associated with each Table.

Table III (Functional Description):

Table III holds two picture delivery arrangements: the first is a specialized slide projector while the other is a video projector. Each of these systems is associated with a family of images that occupy a specific projection environment: the stills

are confined to a small six screen layout while the moving images occupy an extended projection environment. Both kinds of projections share the identical pathway of a six-way beam splitter with the images distributed along six axes of cubical vectors to the six screens. During the still image sequence, the projection is intercepted by smaller screen/frames defining its own projection environment out of the general space. These small frames fold, freeing the projection path for the moving image sequence. This extended projection environment is defined by an arrangement of six projection screens, four standing on the floor plus one suspended from the ceiling. The character of the screen material lets the images appear on both sides, extending the installation's observation mode from the inner core to the outside. There the installation becomes an object with a multitude of interrelated images. The installation has additional functional elements of sound and interactivity. These provide a mode for determining the observer's presence and a certain level of participation.

Excerpt from a discussion between Woody Vasulka and David Dunn:

WV: I've incorporated vast amounts of military equipment into this piece. If you read the label on this table it's called: "Case and Rack Assembly Bomb Navigational Control." It's crazy that these things come to my house so I took this and incorporated it into my targeting system because this is what it really is. It was designed to navigate bombs so I'm using it to navigate my pictorial corridors which are basically trajectories of invisible projectiles.

DD: So that's an overt connection to this idea of Brotherhood and the machinery of war.

WV: I don't hesitate to speak about it because while I have always been intellectually opposed to it, in fact I've surrounded myself with these war machines and have adopted them. In fact the RPT robotic head in *The Theater of Hybrid Automata* is made from a celestial navigation unit that navigated the bombers for the Strategic Air Command. When I brought it to Europe and showed it to one of my colleagues in Brno, he looked at it and said: "now I know what you are doing because I was an adviser to the Egyptian military about missile navigation systems." He not only recognized the Brotherhood but became a "brother" of the Brotherhood.

DD: So, in your mind, this is becoming explicit as content. For years you have been working with surplus from Los Alamos but it was media related as appropriated materials for your studio.

WV: Now its become very naked as the content itself.

DD: It's certainly upfront in terms of this surplus material being the detritus of that culture of war. Artists here have been raiding the Los Alamos scrap yards in order to make these metaphoric expressions as a kind of critique of the nexus of science and military cultures. But what you are doing is taking very specific cast-off materials and, rather than refashioning them into a sculptural expression, resuscitating the structural intentions of these devices as a kind of pure articulation of their generative ideology.

WV: It has exactly the same purpose, to amplify the mind of its creator: the male idea of the machine's destructive power. This thing, a vestigial bombing rack,

carries the inspiration with it. When I saw it for the first time, I knew exactly that this was a piece of that soul. I didn't even know what it was until I read it later but I understood it intuitively. When I opened the box, there was a table with four legs and these racks which I later read were part of these bombing computers. I envisioned these guys sitting in the jungle, just before they went to Cambodia, programming these computers. They were probably dressed in fatigues, drinking beer, punching the code into computers mounted on these racks. So I'm trying to replicate exactly the spirit contained within this piece of metal. It is probably subconscious but very authentic: these were the machines for automatic bombing so that no one had to have the consciousness or responsibility of inflicting death. These codes are hidden to the general art strategies unless one descends to this level of intimacy where you recognize by strange instinct the role of these objects. I think it transfers subconsciously to the mind of the observer. It is this third level of involvement that really interests me rather than the obvious one.