

NIGHT VISION

Jordan Crandall

Christoph Draeger

Joy Garnett

Adam Hurwitz

Bill Jones

John Klima

Joseph Nechvatal

Ben Neill

Jonathan Podwil

Radical Software Group

Essay by Tim Griffin

Right: Mark Daggett
(Radical Software
Group), *Untitled*
(*Carnivore client*),
2001, digital still
from Director appli-
cation.

Cover Image:
Jonathan Podwil,
still from *Airport*,
super 8/digital ani-
mation, 2000.



NIGHT VISION

Curated by Joy Garnett

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9/11 that led to the idea for this show.



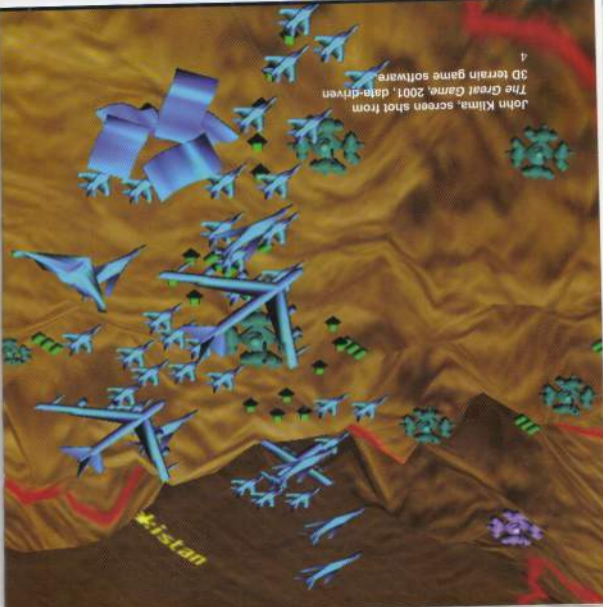
Night Vision

By Tim Griffin

Jordan Crandall,
still from *Drive* (Track3),
1998-2000, DVD.

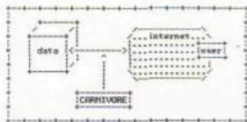
Is there such a thing as “the desert of the real?” The phrase, lifted from the techno-Zen dialogue of *The Matrix*, has lately provided a platform for critical debate: a metaphorical allusion to a moment when, somehow, the spectacular dimension of contemporary culture might rupture and disintegrate before your very eyes, leaving Westernized experience stripped of its 21st-century, seamlessly cinematic veneer. The electrosphere, loosely defined as those ethereal layers of an audiovisual lexicon that have accrued during decades of pop culture—and which are colored by a hyperreal flora of ever more refined and enhanced communications systems—dissipates to leave behind only raw, unadulterated physical material. It’s as if the body could somehow meaningfully detach itself from its

John Klima, screen shot from
The Great Game, 2001, data-driven
3D terrain game software.



cornea and still remain whole; as if the hard physical environment around us could be truthfully divorced from the soft visual information that composes a significant portion of our daily experience and inevitably informs the ways in which we orient ourselves.

Perhaps that dualism, whereby reality and media exist at opposite poles of experience, is by now itself a desert. Media




Radical Software Group, Diagram
for *Carnivore CPU #1*.

should no longer be considered as some extraneous force, but rather as an augmentation of the spectrum of possible encounters with the world. In the same way that technology affects our sense

of geographic space revising its value by allowing information to be transmitted all but instantaneously from point to point across the globe—so it affects ordinary perception. Optically speaking, for example, night is no longer strictly night. Seen on television through the lens of nocturnal military operations, it harbors a green glow worthy of Whistler's harbor scenes, and these midnight portrayals provide the same subliminal depth charge within consciousness. Our altered sensibility recalls Oscar Wilde's idea that 19th-century Londoners did not see the urban fog until the Impressionists had painted it. Metaphors infiltrate real living.



Ben Neill & Bill Jones, *Life During Wartime*, 2001, Real-time interactive video.



Jordan Crandall, still from *Drive (Track 3)*, 1998-2000, single projection video installation, 16mm film, satellite-derived photography, digital video from wearable DVcam, Hi8 video, Hi8 video with monocular night vision attachment, and computer animations transferred to DVD.

Physically and emotionally speaking, intimate space is no longer strictly intimate. On the one hand, intimate space is monitored, obtaining those informational, bureaucratic attributes that function under the sign of surveillance. In other words, all space is at once concrete and abstract, as it is codified and assumes legislative character, becoming the stuff of coordinates. Any city is a potential target, for example, the sense of which only heightens bureaucracy's mesh with corporeality.




Adam Hurwitz, *Apparatus*, 2000, 24x24 in., oil on canvas.

On the other hand, details about events in distant territories are delivered to your doorstep yet are portrayed, paradoxically, as things that are as distant and uncontrollable as the cold fronts that appear in the sweeping graphics of evening weather reports. The same is true even when the event reported takes place on your own block: The gale-force winds of an evolved, postindustrial complex sweep continuously through daily life, but still reveal themselves


Joseph Nechvatal.
*ick cOde (n)
everdrOid: the
sacre andrOgyne*
(diptych), 2001,
70x100 in.,
computer-robotic
assisted acrylic
on canvas.
Courtesy Julia
Friedman Gallery,
Chicago.







Joy Garnett, *Cluster*, 2000,
60x78 in., oil on canvas.
Courtesy Debs and Co., NY.



only in visual thunder that erupts in the mirage-like, distant clouds of a mass news reportage.

This increasingly schizophrenic marriage of the concrete and abstract, of simultaneous intimacy and remoteness, may define our era. Digital devices—from cell phones to music players—dissolve into nearly nothing, becoming weightless communications networks nested in the pocket or hooked around the ear. Even the military's mind-bending emblems of pure, physical force feed the paradox: It is a time when Air Force pilots, even in war time, readily admit that they are on the verge of being replaced by unmanned fighters and spy planes that would do all the flying for them. While everything is ever more controllable, it is also ever more ethereal-enmeshed, embedded and wired into the points of views to which we have access, everywhere and nowhere at once.



Christoph Draeger, stills
from *Crash*, 1999, DVD.





Adam Hurwitz, *Test*, 2000, 54x72 in., oil on canvas.



Artists

Jordan Crandall, Christoph Draeger, Joy Garnett, Adam Hurwitz,
Bill Jones, John Klima, Joseph Nechvatal, Ben Neill, Jonathan
Podwil, Radical Software Group (Alex Galloway, Producer).

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