

INTERCOURSE

interactive transmission
machinery in progress

The File Cabinet Project / Executive Machinery

The digital age didn't kill the old hardware of information technology and the metal office furniture is now part of the new electronic communication network. Istvan Kantor's continuous interest in the file cabinet is not a simple physical fascination or aesthetic obsession with the object but it rather represents a wider theoretical involvement with robotic sculptural systems and kinesonic information mechanisms. The simple monolithic file cabinets today are linked together by computers and integrated into a giant network that functions as a world-wide information furniture machinery.

If we look at office work as an ongoing performance, we notice that people in offices continuously open and close file cabinets where hardcopies are kept even in the age of digital communication. This simple gesture of moving cabinet drawers in and out, sliding them back and forth in their inside space can be interpreted as a human-controlled engine of today's information storage machinery. Therefore we note that the exchange of information and the making of images and sounds are always connected with the same physical/mechanical movement described above.

With *INTERCOURSE*, the most recent manifestation of *The File Cabinet Project*, Istvan Kantor sexualizes this simple gesture and represents it as a principal action-interface that controls all aspects of information exchange. He also links his ongoing explo-





ration of the sculptural system and kinesonic potential of the file cabinet to the abused and eroticized human body. While the human body in Kantor's interpretation becomes a digital image that is controlled by robotic machinery and can not be touched directly, the communication hardware of information storage furniture (the file cabinet object) becomes extended by new technology and mutates into choreographed mechanisms that invade the reality of physical space. It seems like a total take-over of technology in every aspects of life, from office work to sex via entertainment. But Kantor's neoist-totalitarian vision wouldn't be complete without individual interactive intervention that becomes the engine of his machinery.

INTERCOURSE involves the audience in the direct activation and regulation of a series of video images that explore the body as an elemental engine, even as it extends in cyberspace. The file cabinet acts as transmission machinery and control mechanism for the projected images. At the same time, it also becomes animated by the robotic devices.

INTERCOURSE combines robotic sculpture and interactive video to connect old office furniture and new electronics. The simple act of opening/closing drawers of a file cabinet sets off a reaction in the other furnishing throughout the room. As the machinery of office furniture sculptures come to life, so do screened images of a naked body hooked up to electrodes. Insisting on the physical and on the presence and power of the body, Kantor entertains the possibility of transition, mutation and the beauty of the dialogue between electronics and body mechanics.

The user interface of *INTERCOURSE* is a file cabinet prepared with photocells that responds to the intensity of LED lights as we open and close the cabinet drawers. Connected to a computer chip (Basic Stamp) and running through midi interfaces, the sig-

nals are transmitted to computers and directly to the patches of interactive applications (MAX) to trigger and move the images on the screens and control the pneumatic engines of the machines applied to file cabinets. Each cabinet drawer controls a different video clip and a different machine. By sliding back and forth the drawers of the file cabinet interface, the user can manipulate the length and speed of video loops shown on large screens as well as choreograph the movements of the machines.

INTERCOURSE represents the changing ambience of the intensity of communication that feeds from every aspect of the spectacle of noise in today's technological society, including work, sexuality and art.

The controlling gestures and movements as well as the triggered images and sounds are both charged with sexual references and ironic statements concerning information technology and the business of communication.

In *INTERCOURSE* the lust of individual and corporate power is revealed in purely sexualized terms. Kantor links the office and the concert hall, communication and terror, new technology and insanity, sexual symbolism and noise.

collaborators in the making:

3D design: Kristan Horton, mechanical engineering: Kristan Horton, Glenn Orr, Stephen Richards, control system/programming: Jeff Mann

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