

Uri Dotan

Severed Connections



We Fall basically consists of two screens made of transparent material. The material screened are two tapes that confront us with a contemporary tragedy. On one screen, Uri projects footage that he downloaded from flash news prepared by CNN; the other screen will intermittently reflect white light

The soundtrack of *We Fall* comes from two sources. One is a lyrical melody, which continuously repeats. It mutates and shifts to the point of simultaneously moving forward and backward. The second source is a collection of white noise in both bursts and sheets. On top of that are Daniel Pearl's last words before his execution. His voice goes through a continuous series of permutations and the order of his words stutter and switch in a non-linear pattern. Nonetheless, his words do not lose their original impact and new phrases evolve from the patterns. (Lee Azzarello, composer of the sound). The projection is that of the initially-released material made by the kidnappers of Daniel Pearl, the journalist working for the Wall Street Journal who was abducted on January 23, 2002 in Karachi, Pakistan on the way to what he thought was an interview for a story of possible links between Richard Reid, the 'shoe bomber' and al-Qaeda. He is reading a 'confession.'

Uri perceives this work as an interface between real and virtual space. It is virtual in conception but it also displays an amphibious nature, a kind of hybrid at the seam of different dimensions. What Uri shows us is a manipulated deconstructed 'space.' By technological means he has altered reality, he has made the real illusory. He thus makes a statement about the nature of news and information. The image under

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his 'examination' has all but disappeared. Here Uri rekindles the discourse about the nature of reality and the nature of representation, of how reality is represented. What we see is a failed representation, a failed imitation of reality. It is not mimesis, it is a manipulated image, which hints at the inadequacy of represented reality as we know it, as well as at the inaccessibility of information technology for those with whom it is meant to connect.

Uri uses computer technology itself to demonstrate this view. The Pearl drama was an actually unfolding event, but in virtual media space. The main player in it was that paradigmatic media person, a journalist—a person whose brief is to report reality. He found himself caught in a situation that defied reality. The plot commenced with a series of e-mails sent by Pearl's captors, e-mails setting deadlines for his execution, then informing the media of his death and culminating in the tape with his confession and actual decapitation.

This execution, interspersed with his confession, will be shown intermittently on the other screen, as if flickering in and out of our memory.

Uri here makes the drama a metaphor of the disconnectedness of the perpetrators and those whom they purport to represent by showing the severance, the cutting off. This action was recorded by them and circulated ironically on the World Wide Web for the consumption of us who are plugged-in.

This image of disconnectedness is shown here with the vivid colors of a Baroque painter and makes visible a violence which can only be compared to the painting of the beheading of Holofernes by the Italian painter Artemisia Gentileschi.

(Henie Westbrook)