

created meticulous three-dimensional simulacra of these versos with the assistance of craftsmen, artists, and forgers. Nine of these sculptures were displayed in "verso" (all 2008), propped with their (unpainted) recto sides facing the walls and raised off the floor by rectangular wooden blocks covered with gray carpeting, as if ready to be hung or moved to another space. The results were surprising. Who would have thought that *Verso (Les Demoiselles d'Avignon)* would look so barren, with three semi-translucent horizontal plastic panels affixed to the stretcher bars in order to protect the canvas and only a couple of labels indicating loans of this major painting to exhibitions in Canada and France during the '60s? Other *Versos* are more garrulous, with scratched surfaces, nicks, old nail holes, exposed nails and screws, stains, writing in pencil, jottings in ink, chalk marks, inscriptions in felt pen, tape marks, glue residue, and discolored, peeling, and brittle labels. As with all of Muniz's mature works, we are asked to rely on our memory of things seen—though here, we are invited to recall the right sides of paintings of which we are shown only the title, size, and format.

Who would have thought that the *Demoiselles* was only this large, when its monumental, painted figures make it appear so much bigger? These constructed sculptures remind us that pictures are in fact tangible objects, whose materiality may be denied through pictorial means. An adjacent gallery featured meticulous re-creations of the back sides of famous photographs, like *Verso (View of Astronaut Footprint in Lunar Soil)* and *Verso (Exhibition Conversation, Khrushchev & Nixon)*, their surfaces littered with annotations, rubber stamp marks, glue residue, and yellowing pieces of taped newspaper articles. "verso" showed Muniz at his best.

—Michael Amy



Above: Jim Campbell, *Last Day in the Beginning of March*, 2003. Light bulbs and custom electronics, dimensions variable. Right: Mark Scheeff, *Want (continuous)*, 2003–08. Thermal receipt printers, paper, and custom software, dimensions variable.

PITTSBURGH

Jim Campbell and Mark Scheeff

Wood Street Galleries

Except for certain advanced robotics, technology seems fundamentally incapable of expressing sentiment. The complicated and sultry landscape of emotion—that which makes us human—is seemingly absent from circuits and gadgetry. However, sculptors Jim Campbell and Mark Scheeff, whose works appeared together in "Text Memory," use expressively neutral electronic devices to convey genuine (and potent) feeling.

In *Last Day in the Beginning of March* (2003), Campbell, an MIT-trained electrical engineer, creates a "rhythmic narrative" from fictionalized memories of the last day of his brother's life. The walls of the installation are sheathed on all sides by black plastic scrim and lined with metal-framed boxes that contain gently glowing, emotionally evocative phrases like "The Drugstore (fluorescent lights)," "medication levels," and "trying to get rid of bad thoughts." Spotlights hang near each box, some brightening, others dimming, an effect that suggests how



memories grow ambiguous over time. The light over "2 telephone calls" stutters, as if mimicking the sound of a ringing phone.

An endless soundtrack of rain transports visitors back to the day in question and, eventually, to a dark corner of the artist's mind, where the memories seem to reside. As we voyeuris-

tically inspect Campbell's private catalogue of moments, we feel protected from the potentially anguishing cascade of events outside. Although Campbell remains elliptical about the precise cause of his brother's death, his idiosyncratically packaged memories ask something universally human and extremely moving: What

can we hold on to after the tangible is gone? And how does our mind tag and retrieve the traumatic?

Using custom electronics and LCD material, Campbell also creates intimate portraits of his parents. In *My Heartbeat, 12 a.m. to 8 a.m. January 12th* (1996), a black and white photo of Campbell's aging father is shielded by several layers of electrified privacy glass that grows hazy, then clear, to the recorded beat of Campbell's heart. In *My Breath, January 1996, 1 hour*, a scallop-edged photo of his mother is rhythmically hidden, as if the artist himself were exhaling on the glass. The works are a kind of mournful homage, demonstrating how Campbell's existence both perpetuates (and eclipses) that of his parents: as long as his heart beats and he breathes, they will be remembered; when he dies, their memories will be obscured.

In *Want (continuous)* (2003–08), Scheeff, a Stanford-educated mechanical engineer, also expresses poignant human emotion through technological means. A wide room is littered with receipt-sized paper recording information from three on-line databases. Sheets contain prayers, personal ads, and patient requests for organ donations. Every 20 seconds, another sheet is emitted from three ceiling-mounted printers. The sheets descend like ticker-tape and accumulate in piles on the floor, emphasizing that human desire is relentless. Each of the three kinds of requests reveals exquisite human vulnerability. Some land face-down, never to be read; others bear the shoeprints of passersby.

By using electronics to convey human experience, Campbell and Scheeff come closer than ever to presenting technology as an emotive medium. With their work, technology shakes off its clinical austerity and initiates an emotionally infused conversation with the viewer.

—Savannah Schroll Guz



Above: Doug Aitken, *Migration*, 2008. 4-projection outdoor installation, dimensions variable. Below: Marisa Merz, *Untitled (Living Sculpture)*, 1966. Aluminum, dimensions variable. Both works shown in "Life on Mars."

PITTSBURGH
"Life on Mars"

Carnegie Museum of Art
 Last year, for the first time since its inception in 1896, the Carnegie International was organized around a specific thesis—"Life on Mars." The theme, selected by curator Douglas Fogle, was inspired by David Bowie's 1971 song, "Life on Mars," which describes a world spinning out of control and asks whether Mars is a place to escape

to or a place we're already at. According to Fogle, he approached this overarching theme hypothetically, through a selection of work that uses vulnerability as a strategy to mirror the susceptible aspects of human society.

Despite its aim to explore rhetorical questions about the nature of humanness in this fundamentally irrepressible world, the vagueness of the theme allowed for the inclusion of almost any kind of work.

Sadly, the territory explored in the International was not terra incognita, but well-trodden ground. There were no aliens amid the 40 branded artists, and no idiosyncratic surprises loitered among the 200-plus works—with the exception of Maria Lassnig's outrageously bizarre self-portraits. The prominent New York galleries of Barbara Gladstone, Tanya Bonakdar, and Anton Kern represent over a third of the selected artists, and despite the fact that 17



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