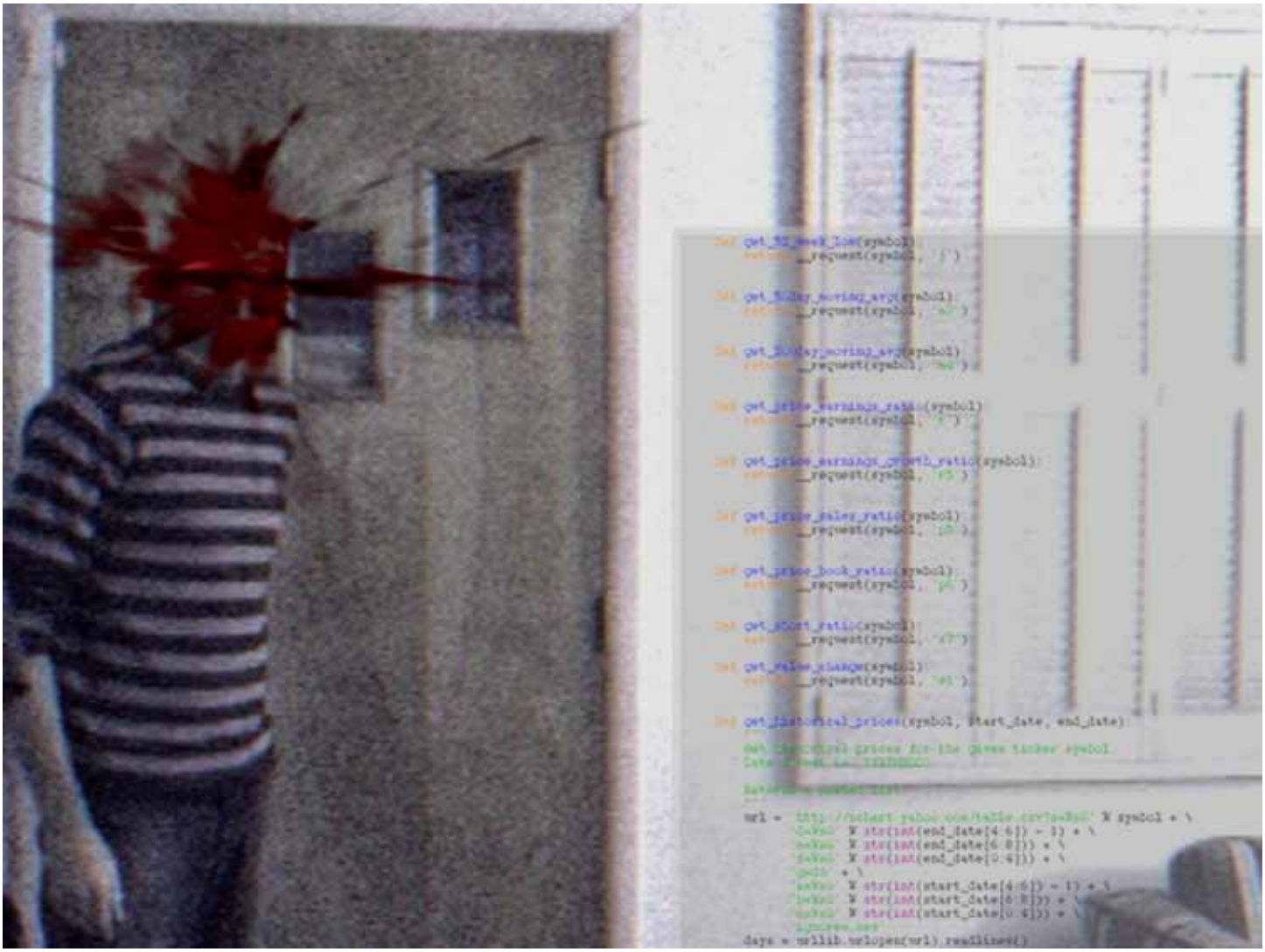
net & software art; interactive media

The work in this first section consists of projects that are ongoing, in progress, and the most current. The following sections start and complete in a near-chronological order.

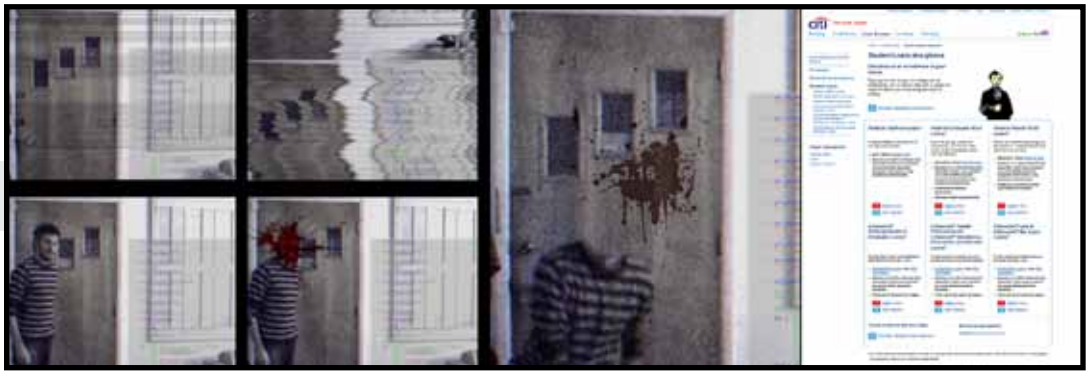
These projects all involve features of interactive New Media. Each uses aspects of the internet, software aesthetics, and networks. All of these works solicit user interaction to some degree. In addition, much of the content is dynamic - making it difficult to present in print form.

Much of my work existing online and in computer code is currently being used as a platform where I host the development of a central character. Projects describing the evolution of this idea are presented more clearly toward the end of this portfolio in the *Booth* section. That body of work is an extended narrative exploration into principles of New Media. Essentially, I use the interactive New Media platform as a fluid topographical space where I trace and document this character during an evolution through information and research. This process is largely a part of my current artistic practice, but not the sole limiting factor regarding my exploration of interactive networks.

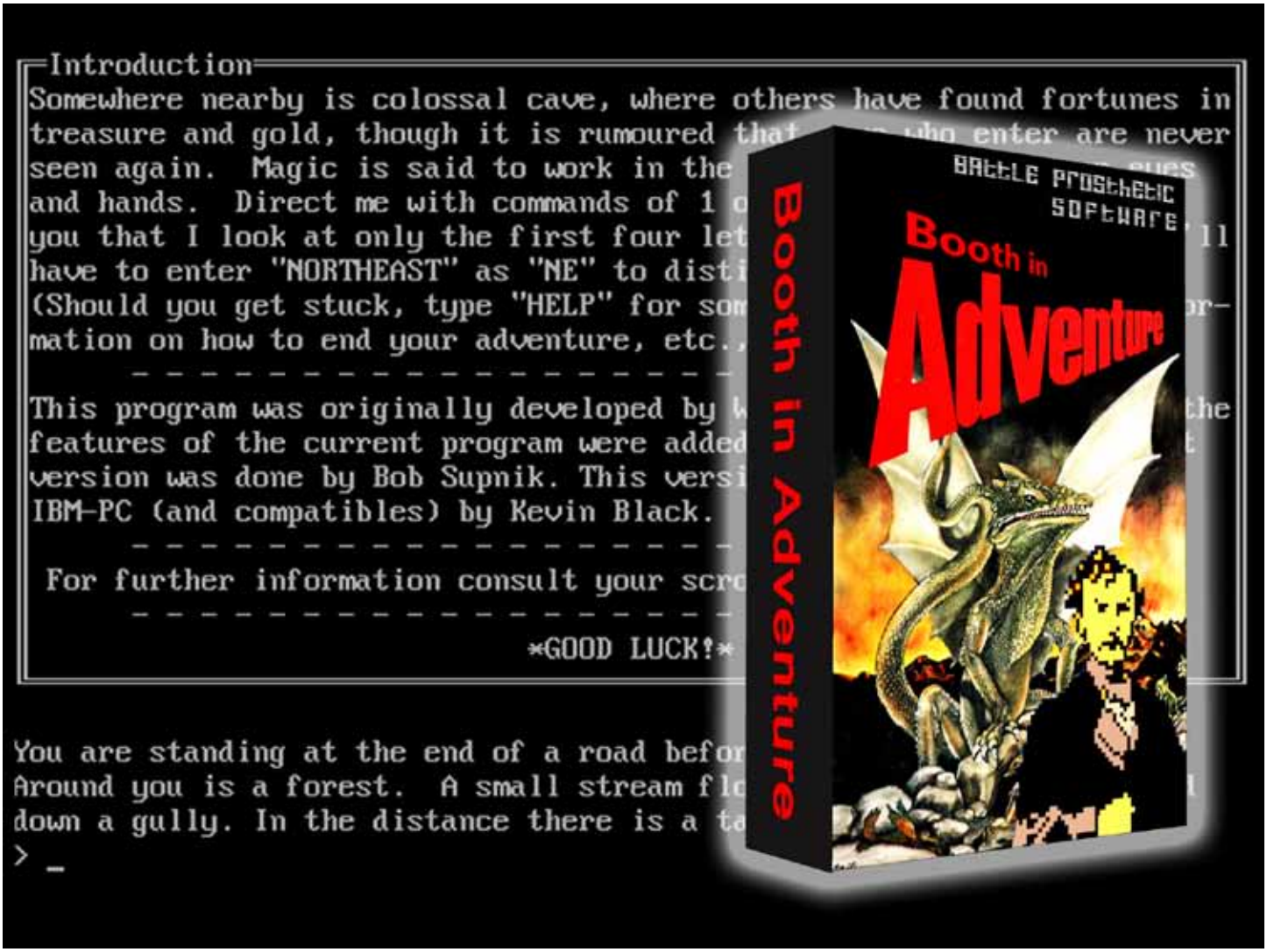
Other projects here consider themes relative to the 'in-between' spaces created at junctures of the physical and virtual. Often, a piece is initiated in response to something with political or social implications in the physical world. Such works, are then intended to grow from virtual spaces as software interventions calling attention to a difference of consideration. Technically, my New Media work exists as a core of information driven by programming code that ultimately seeks manifestation in the physical. This is often attempted through the creation of a resulting interactive object, or through the participation of users interacting with the projects.



Student Loans
2010 - Present (DEV)

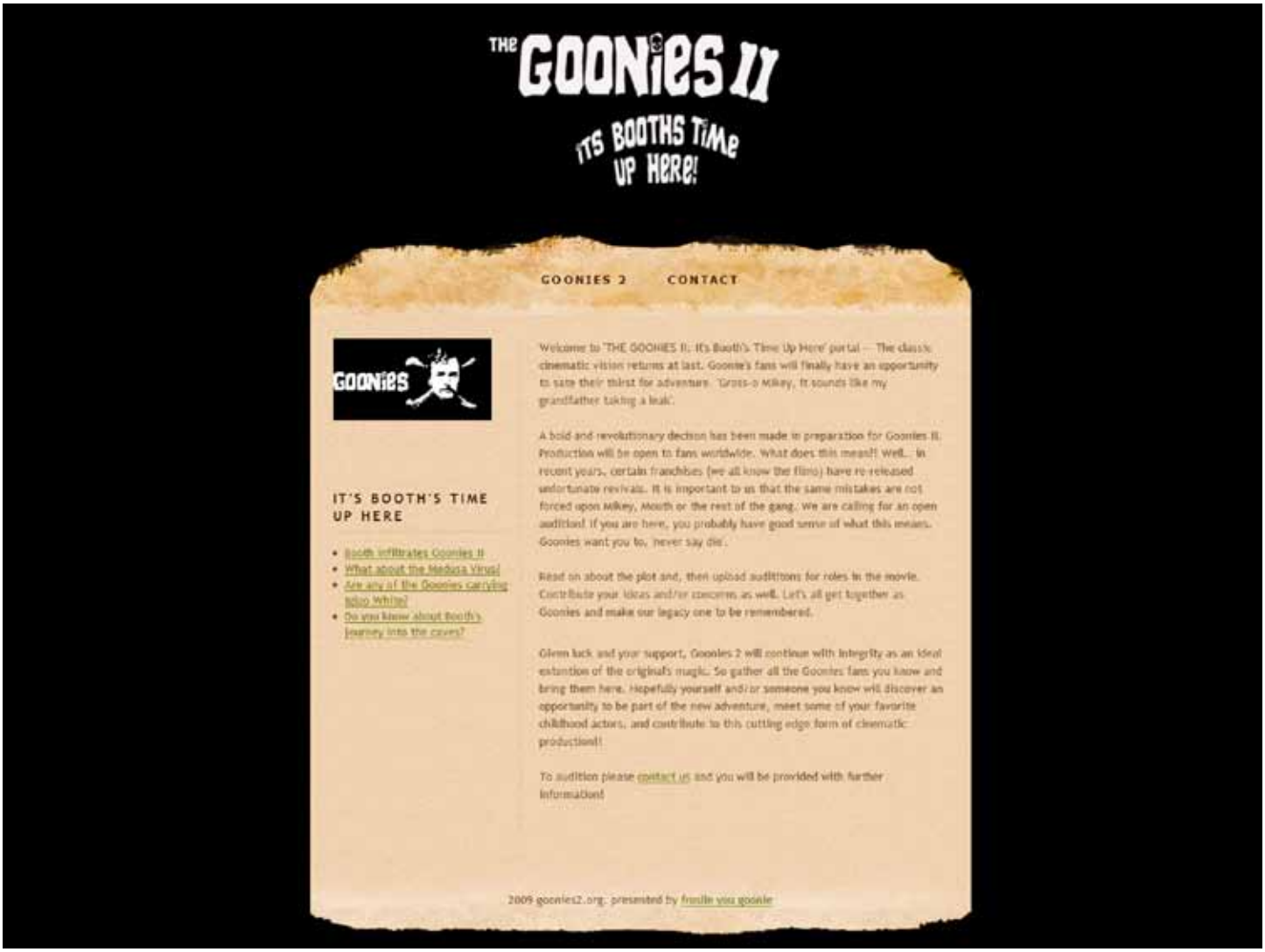


Student Loans is an ongoing project involving myself and other acquaintances who deal with debt institutions on a regular basis. The work consists of a video that is tied via programming to 'real-time' stock figures relative to each of the participants' lending organizations. The video displays the lendee stuck in a cycle of standing, or coming through a door. Ultimately, their head explodes leaving an imprinted blood spatter on the wall. The splatter reveals the current stock quote parsed from an online source. The custom software was created using the Python programming language, and feeds through Adobe Flash for video interface.



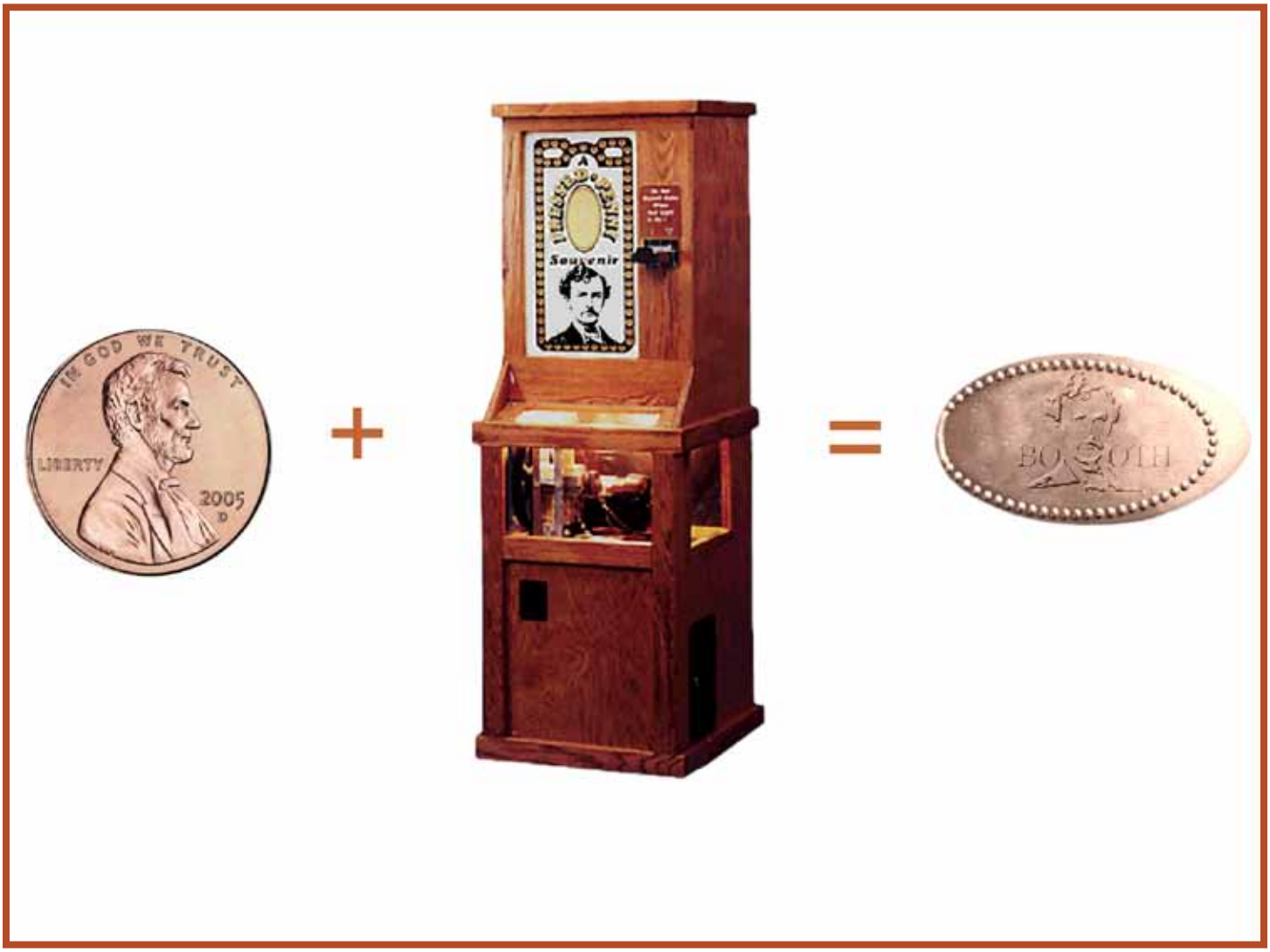
Booth in Adventure
2007-Present

Essentially a work of narrative intervention, Booth in Adventure uses the original interactive fiction Adventure! as a vehicle. The avatar, Booth, is developed as it moves through various forms of media. In this work the avatar literally enters the code programmed to create the game. By rewriting the code, the game is changed to include Booth as part of the narrative. A player moves through game according to the original structure discovering new information regarding this intervention. This version was initially developed in 'Inform' – a programming language for interactive fiction. It is currently being re-developed for distribution through the iphone.



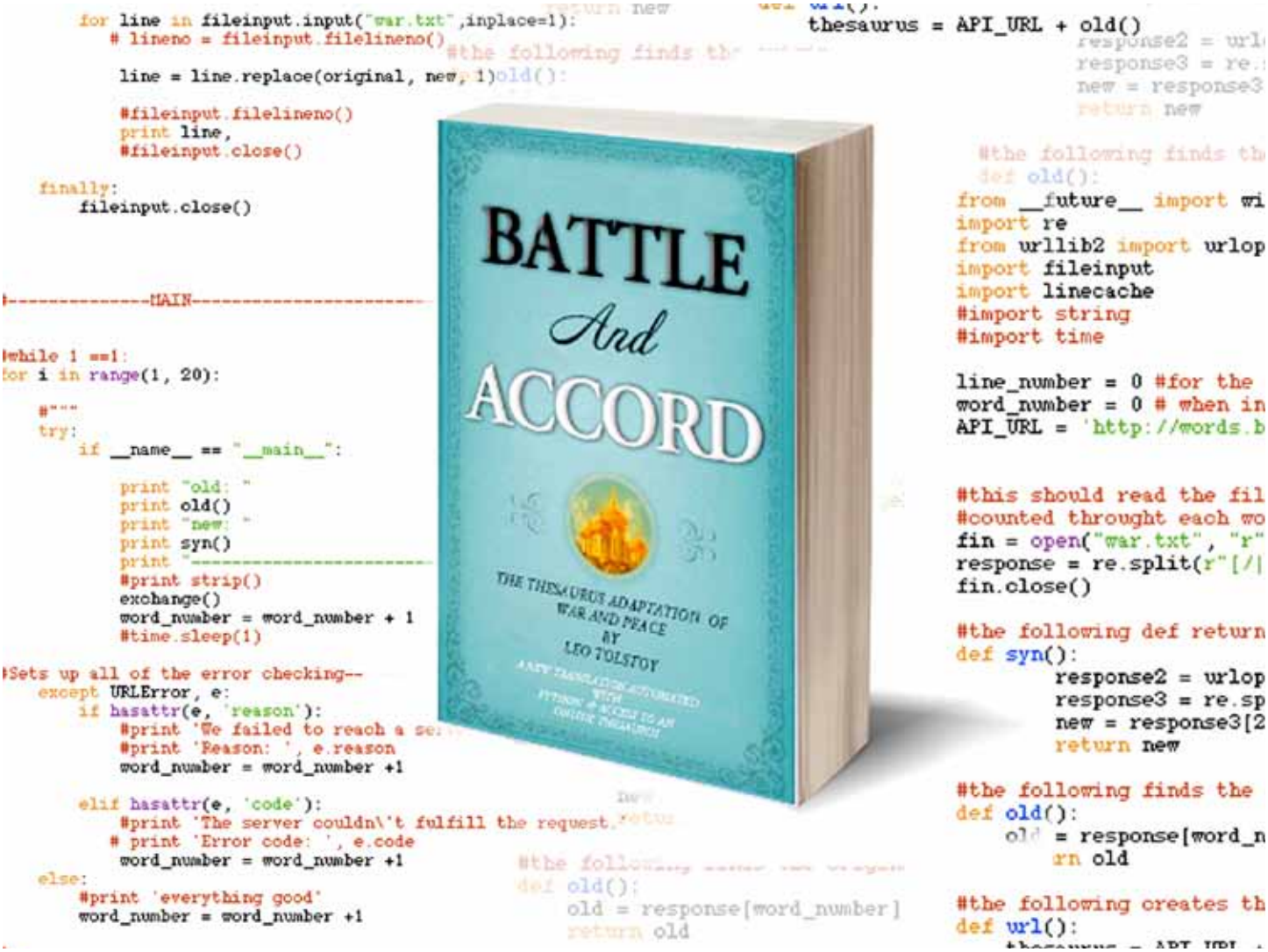
Goonies 2
2009 - Present (DEV)

Goonies 2 uses the popular 80's film as a vehicle to attract fans. The original movie, The Goonies , has continued to develop a hidden cult following of people eager for a sequel since its release in 1985. This project borrows from their collective desire. Enticing visitors, the Goonies 2 website requests information regarding participation in a hypothetical sequel. The plot also serves as a narrative path for an avatar, Booth, that is on a journey through much of my work. Ultimately, the goal is to entice a 'Cease and Desist' order from Warner Brothers; consequently, the visitor information will combined with this order to continue the work in a series of Copyright infringements.



Booth Penny Progress (2010)

Booth Penny is quite simple. A traditional souvenir penny crusher machine is available for users to transform their pennies into keepsakes imprinted with Booth's image. The work is designed and awaiting funding; ultimately, the machine will be constructed by a company that produces similar penny crushers for tourist locations. The pennies will also be available online for free through ebay.com. The concept has evolved from a previous work where pennies are transformed through the process of electroplating. Pennies enter a solution that strips the copper away and coats it over a bust of John Wilkes Booth. The piece has generated a life online through several political blogs and will continue exist as a work integrated with the internet.



Battle & Accord
2010 (DEV)

Battle & Accord is and adaptation of 'War and Peace' by Leo Tolstoy. Custom software reads the text and translates each word into a thesaurus equivalent. The software is written with the Python programming language. As each word from the text is read into memory, the program accesses an online thesaurus and parses the replacement from there. The final product is a complete thesaurus-derived version of 'War and Peace,' which is ultimately re-printed in book form titled *Battle and Accord*. The book starts and completes its cycle online as it is made available through Amazon.com. Essentially, the project works as an antithetical approach to 'natural language processing'. An example of the text follows:

"Heavens! what a deadly attack!" replied the prince, non in the least disconcerted preceding this reception. helium had equitable entered, exhausting an embroidered tribunal uniform, knee joint separate breeches, and shoes, and had preeminent on his embrace and a unagitated look on his level face. helium wheel spoke in that refined French in which our gramps non solitary wheel spoke simply thought, and with the gentle, arch intonation instinctive to a adult male of...

playing with toys &machines

The following section displays selected works created between 2002 and 2006. Many of these pieces grew initially from exercises in learning electronics, and clearly show an interest in playful objects. I transitioned from traditional media to New Media around 2002, while creating animations from my paintings and drawings. The opposite page displays a series of mechanical paintings I developed as a desire to move toward the electro-mechanical grew.

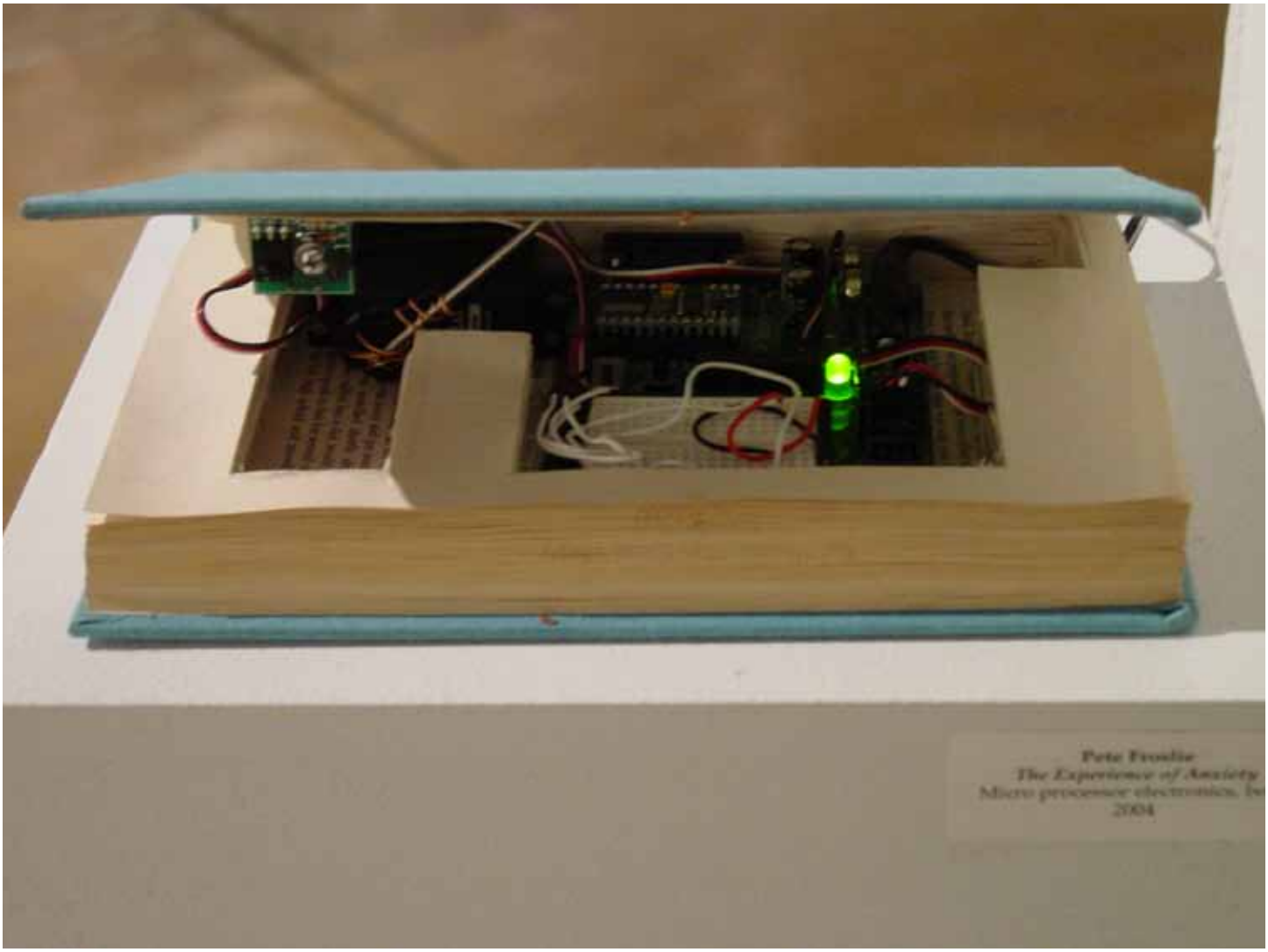
Interactivity is the focal point of the work in this section. Much of the work grows out of a playful relationship between electronic infrastructure and toy-like surfaces. Many of the pieces rely on nostalgic vehicles as they are adapted and automated with retrofitted technologies.

With little Knowledge of electronics, I started making electronic work at the most basic of stages. As I advanced my understanding of the necessary tools, I began to incorporate micor-processors and sensors. I often refer to my creative process as ‘hermit crabbing’, as I continually move such electronic innards from one piece to the body of another.

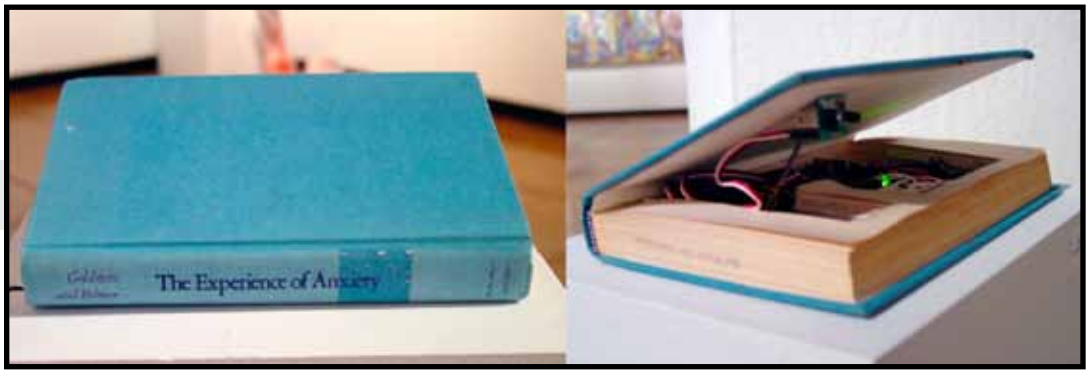
Several of the works attempt to emulate emotional behaivors interacting backward from the machines.

Increment
2002

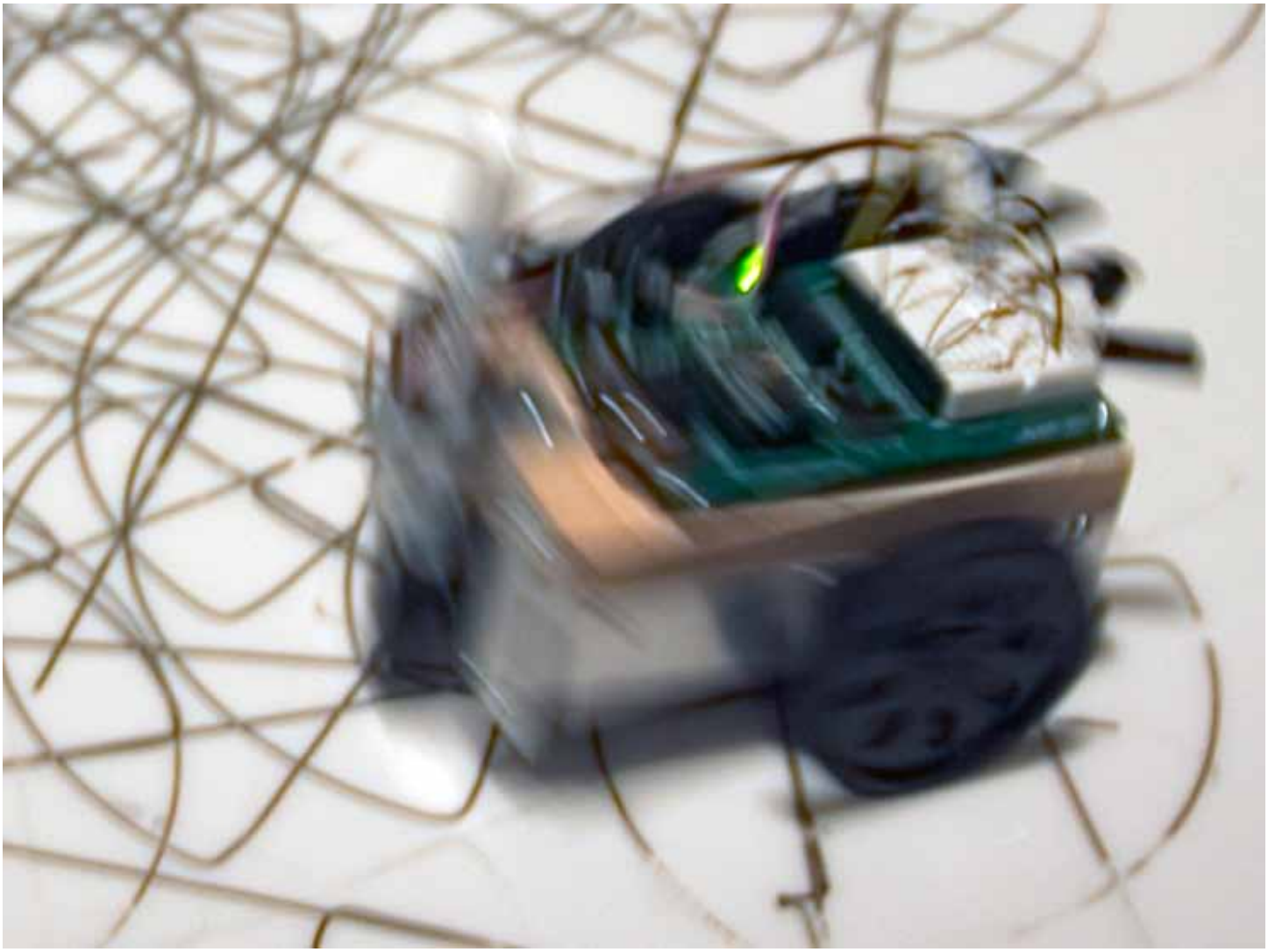
Increment consists of 27 charcoal and acrylic paintings. Each Painting is done on a thick pad of news papers. As each painting was executed, the process was shot in video using stop motion techniques. The layering of the media, and the tearing of the newspapers creates an organic animation when viweing the video.



Anxiety Book
2003

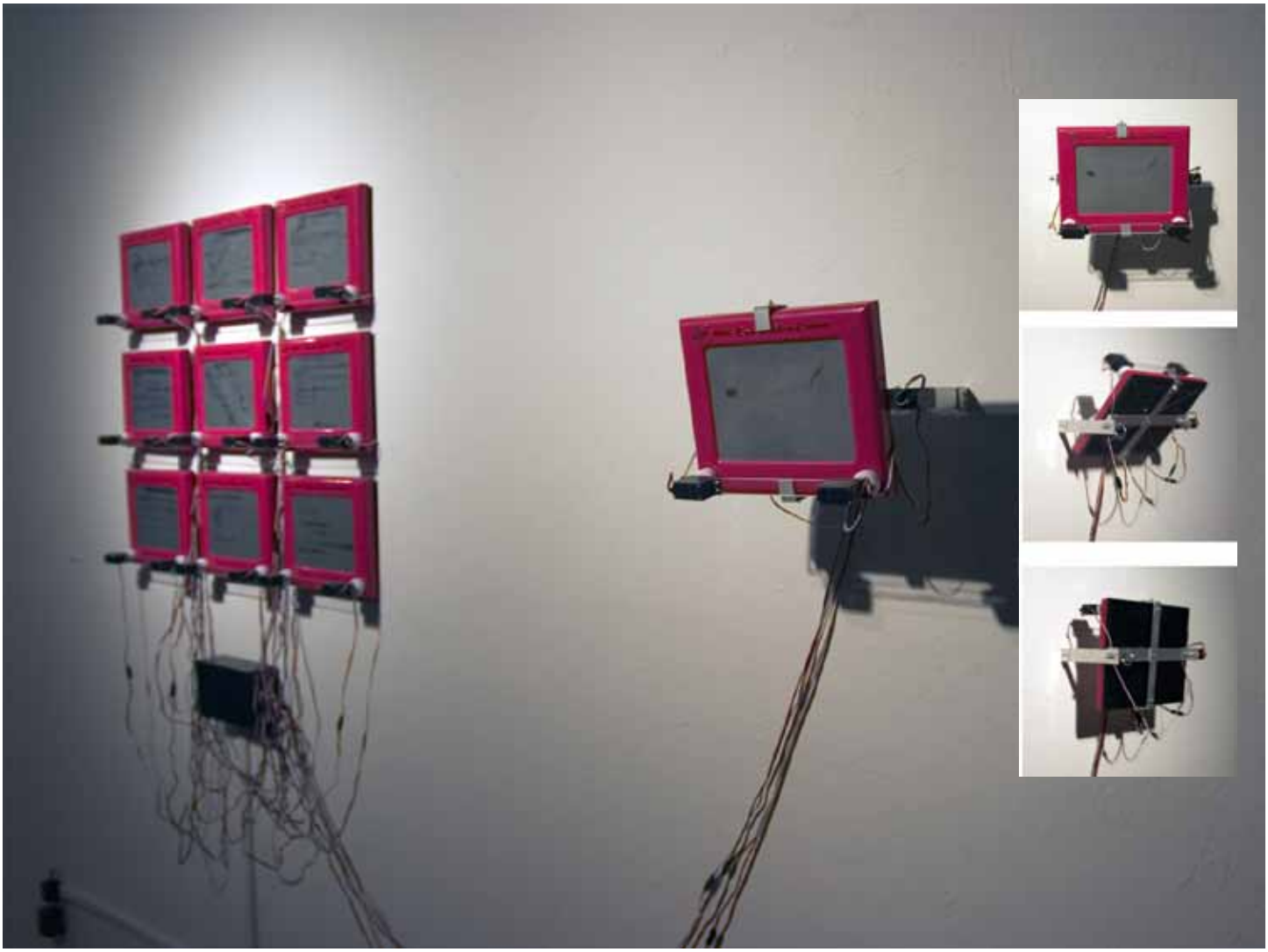


The *Anxiety Book* remains open and scans its surroundings for people to interact with it. If a viewer approaches the book it quickly snaps shut and hides for a set duration. The book then opens and scans its surroundings once again. The hollowed book contains a micro processor that responds to an IR sensor bouncing signals off of people and objects. The book is titled,'the experience of anxiety'.

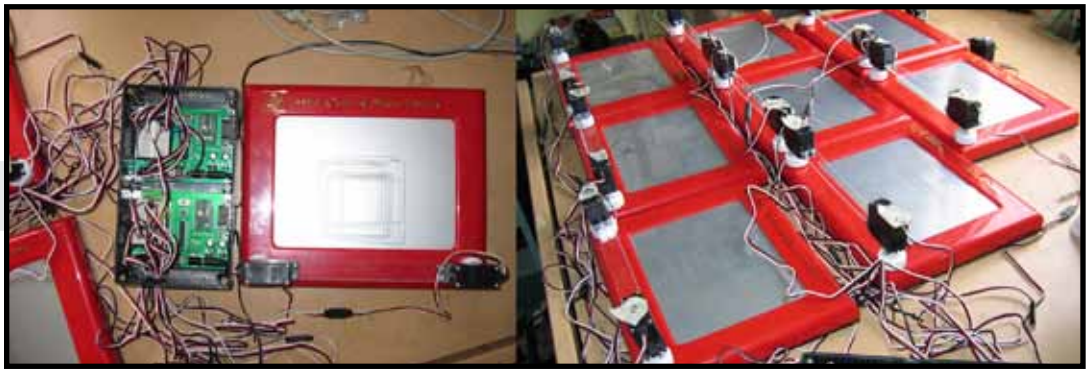


Hank & Harriet
2004

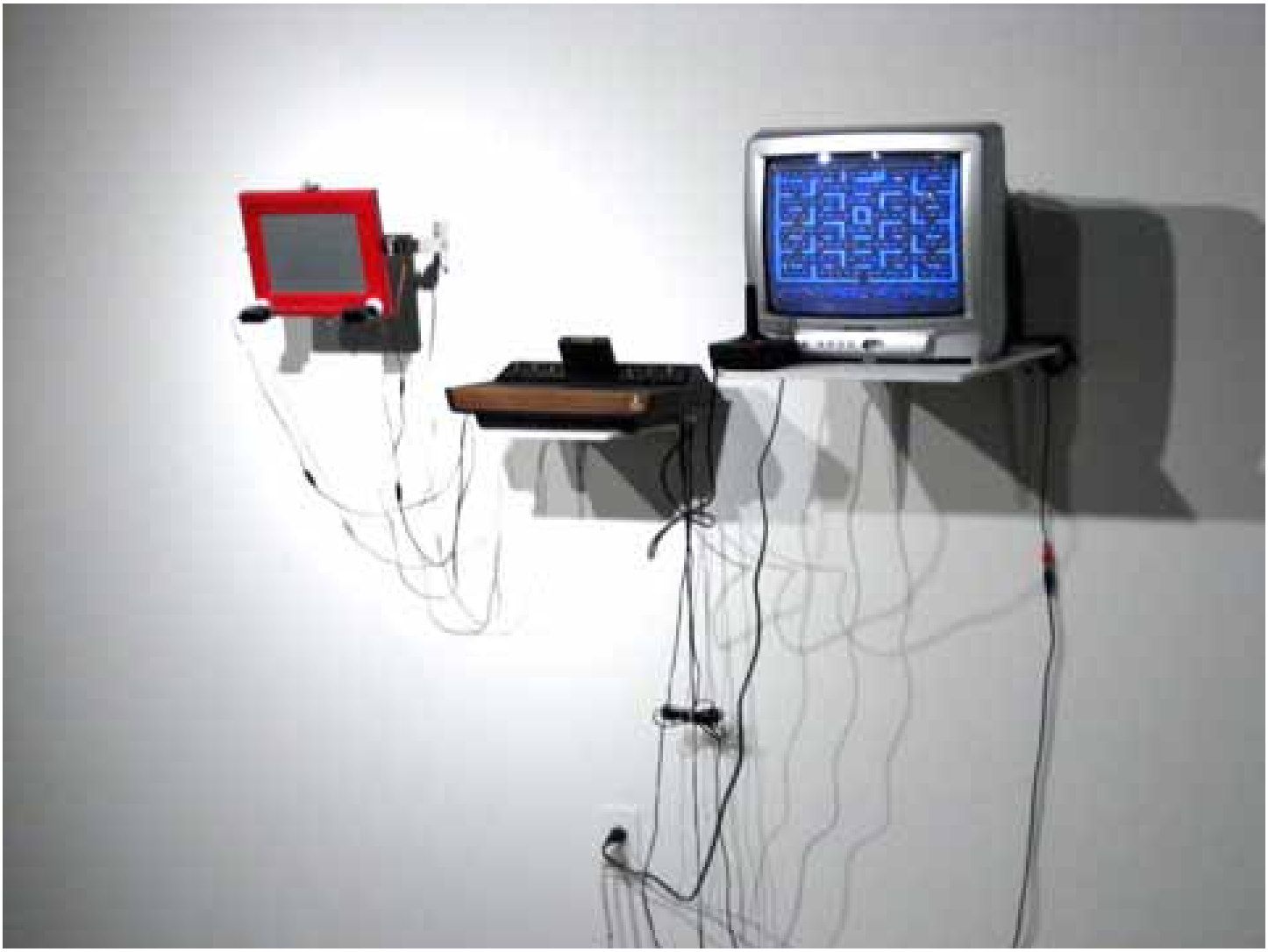
Two robots are contained within an arena. One pivots on a dry erase marker and the other pivots on a dry eraser. Each has its own personality determined by the code it is programmed with. Both will avoid one another and the walls; if they approach head-on they will perform a ‘dry erase dance’. Each is controlled independently and relies on a series of three ir emitters and receivers.



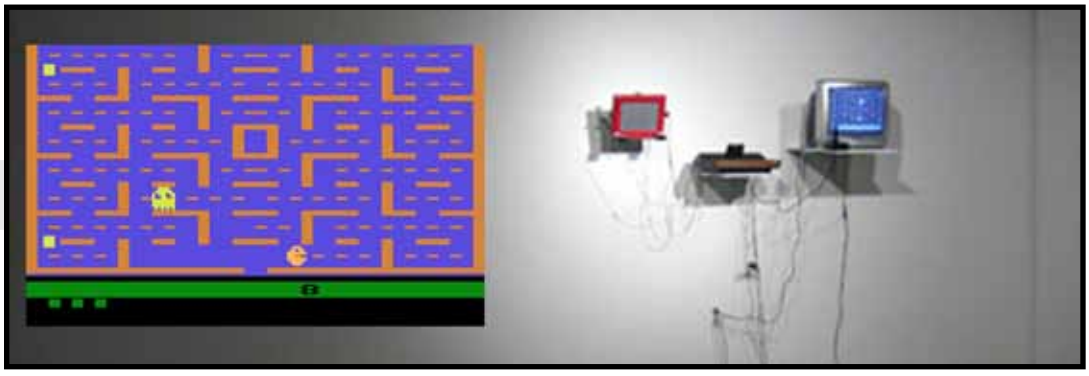
Etch a Skecth
2005



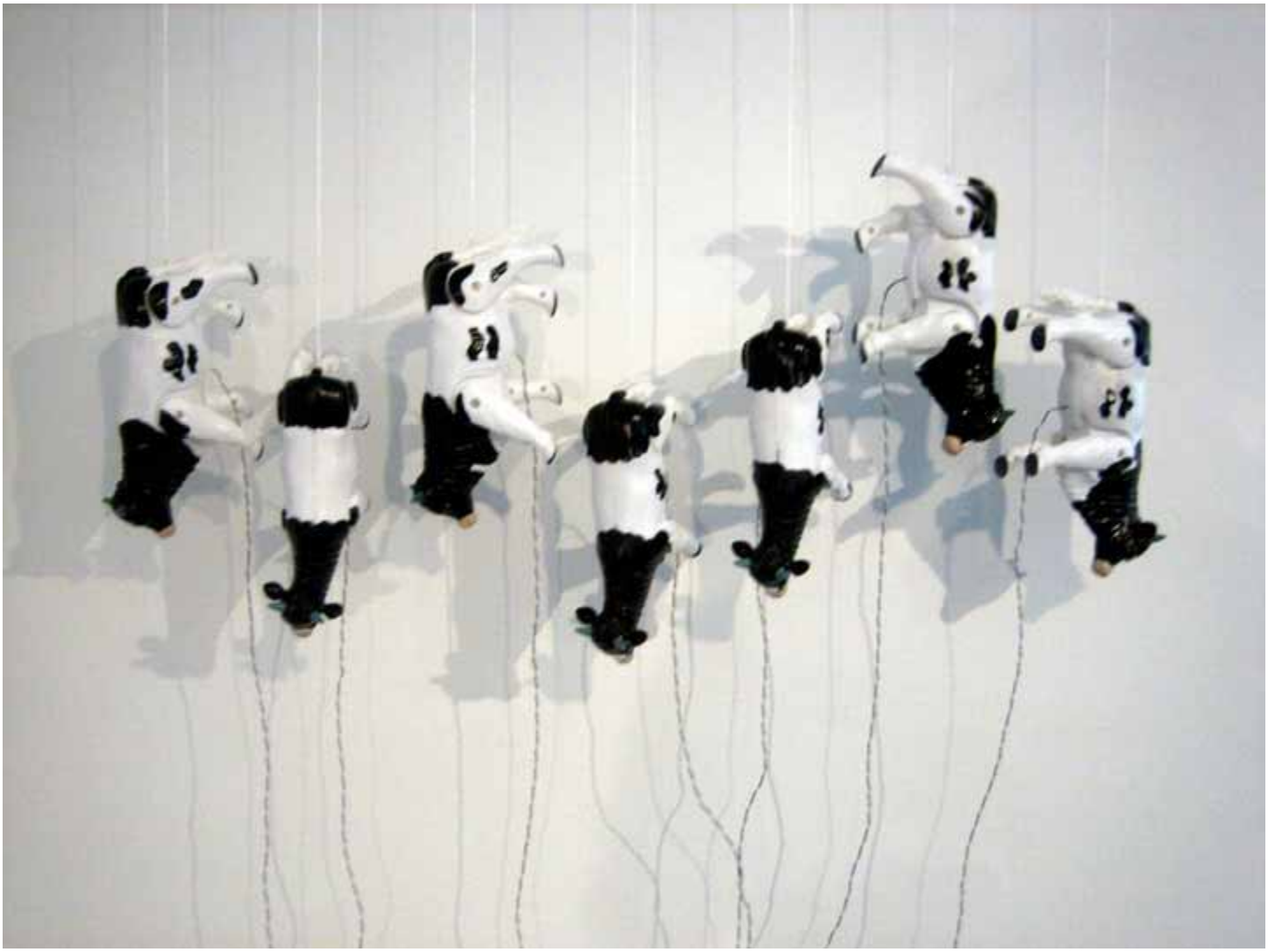
In *Etch a Sketch* there are ten etch a sketch toys drawing autonomously: one shakes itself clean. Servos are attached to the wheels of each etch a sketch allowing them to draw and scrub their surfaces clean. The underlying mechinnism is slowly revealed to a rhythmic electronic humming created by the toys and the servo motors.



Trace
2005



Trace combines two of my favorite childhood toys: Atari and Etch A Sketch. Viewers play the original Pac Man video game as the Etch A Sketch traces and draws Pac Man's motion through the game. When Pac Man dies the Etch A Sketch flips and shakes it's surface clean.

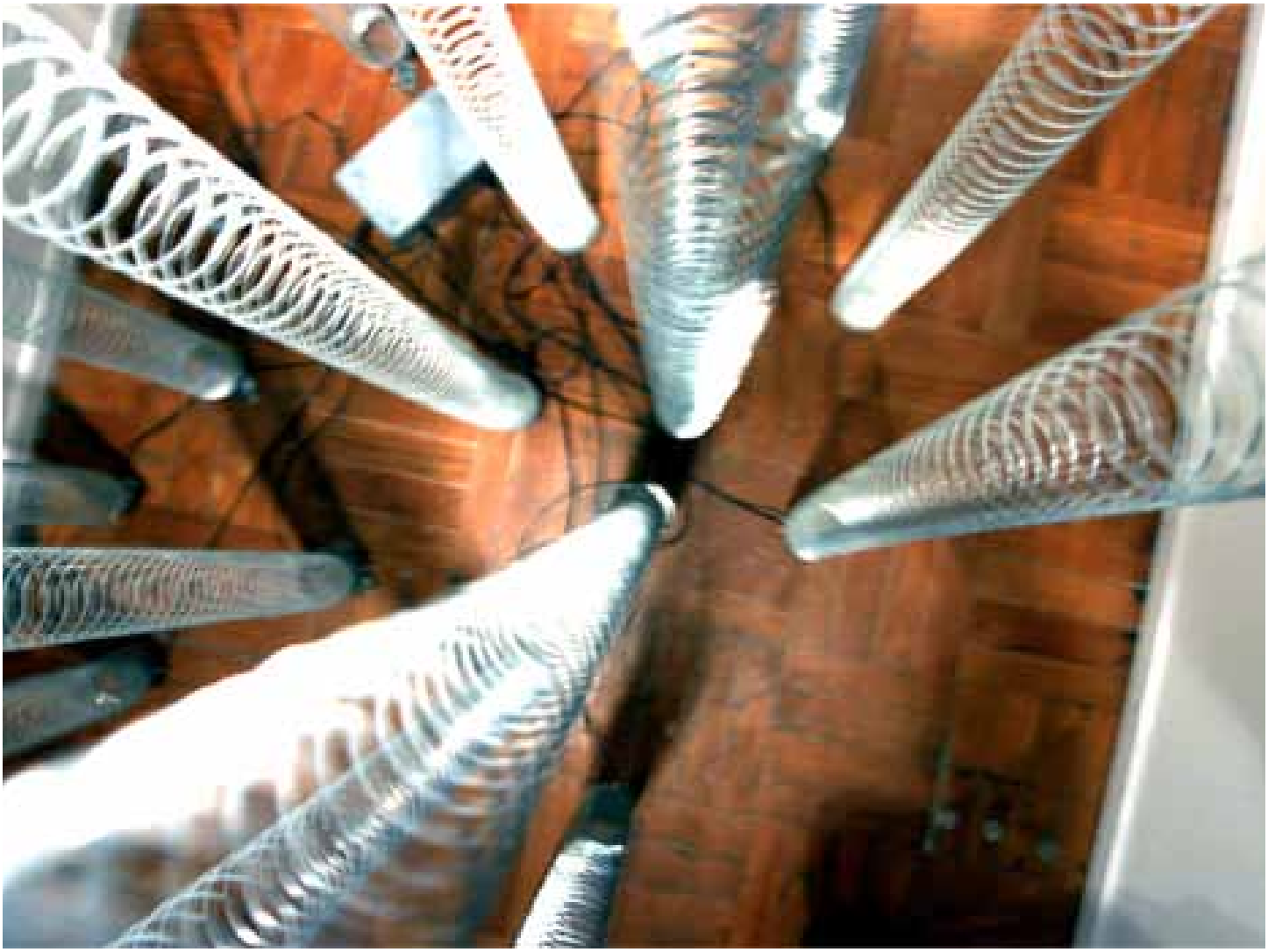


Herd
2005

Herd displays seven electronic toy cows connected to a beef heart. The cows kick and moo in response to the heart as it decomposes. The heart is changed periodically during exhibition. The heart is sealed in a jar so that the piece is less stinky. Each heart is purchased at the local grocery store.

Babble
2006

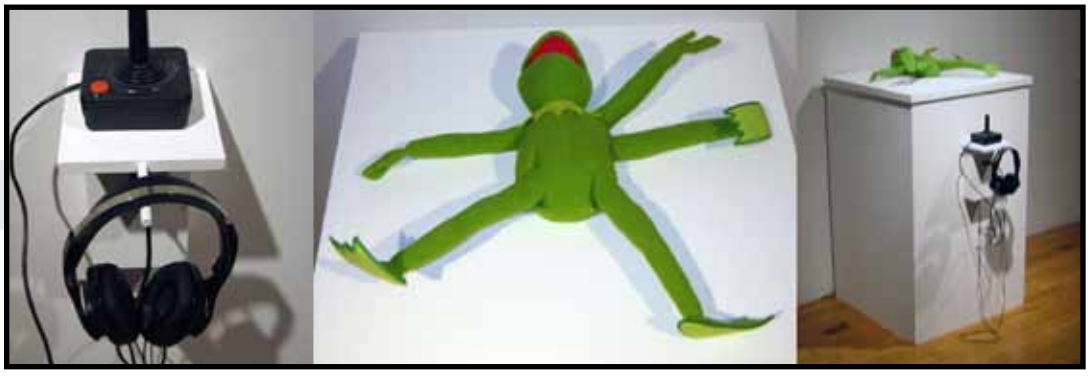
Babble consists of three toys interacting in an implied conversation. The three toys are a Speak & Spell, Speak & Math, and Speak & Read (educational toys from the 1980s). The toys are augmented by a microprocessor, speech chip and a range sensor. The toys ask viewers to, 'come closer'-- as a viewer approaches the piece the microprocessor determines their distance via sensor and executes a coded pattern. Each coded pattern causes the three toys to cross paths as they literally form electronic connections via hardware and programming. The resulting effect is a mixture of the three toys original speech processes becoming combined. The sound is sometimes quiet and sometimes abrasive.



Slinkies
2004

Multiple Slinkies are hung from supports bars. At the bottom of each Slinky there is a motor with a counter weight. Sound is created through the combination of the traditional Slinky vibration and the tapping motors on the floor.

Kermit
2006



For this piece, I cut open a stuffed Kermit the Frog toy and built an animatronic internal mechanism. There is also an additional fifth leg sewn onto the Kermit toy. Kermit is controlled with an Atari joystick located on the pedastal. Viewers can wear headphones and listen to Kermit sing his classic song, “We’re Alive”.

working with an expanded narrative

Bridging toys, technology and media functions well when I am learning new hardware, but less so when I want to dive deeper into the act of creative play. With the work involving toys, I tend to spend much of my time working organically within the hidden stuff: electronics, code and ideas. Final manifestations tend to simplify through one to one ratios between ideas and interactive objects. As a result of this simplification, starting in 2005 I began to synthesize the act of playing with my research into New Media.

Soldiers (on the opposite page) displays a shift in my studio process. Desiring a physical manifestation of the organic process (the code and electronics), I spent some time constructing a machine for this piece. Additionally, I began to think about the extended life of a work. Soldiers was developed to function as a kinetic sculpture constantly being fed information from the world; in this case, it is to be driven by crude oil barrel prices. As a seeding point, this got me thinking about the potential for a work continually evolving with new layers. The following section displays selected work from this shift in approach.

I began to develop Soldier City as a kind of hub. The core idea is that there is a simple series of floating signifiers, from which I can keep expanding new meaning - in the form of pseudo-fictional narratives. The choice for images are kept fairly obvious; for example: oil, blood, war, games, and play. Ultimately, the works in this section are built as starting locations for an expanding narrative. This is accomplished by extracting an element to give it further attention. It is a solution for the one to one ratio created with the works in the previous section.

In a crude sense, this is also a solution to the proliferation of documentation surrounding contemporary art objects. Rather than finding new methods of display for the same piece, the work can continue to evolve along side advancing New Media technologies.

Soldiers
2006

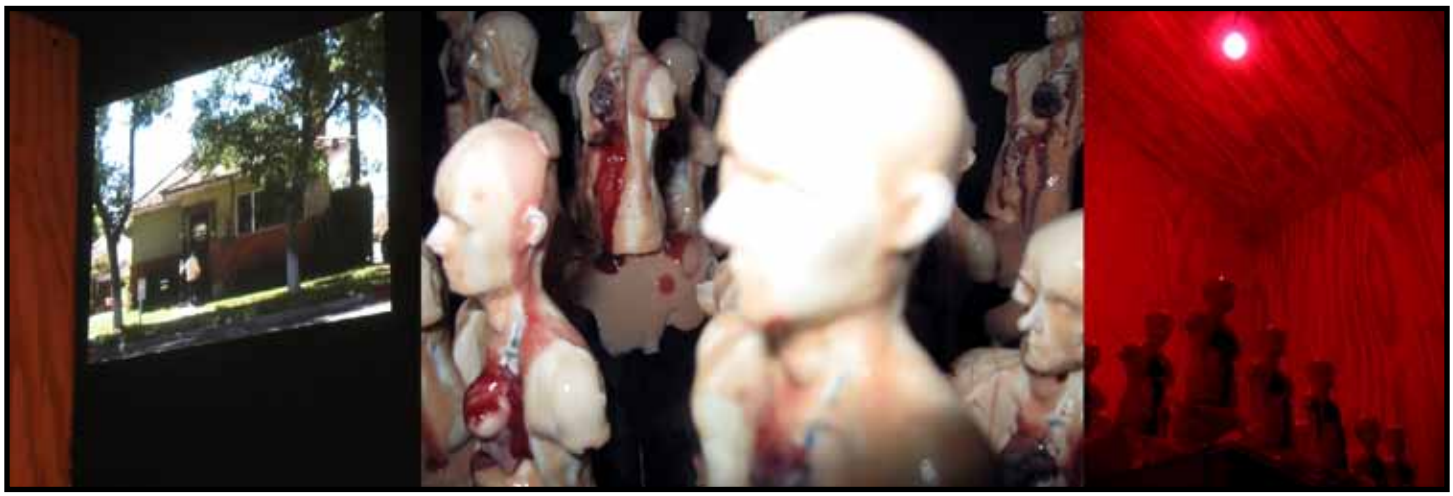
Soldiers places of a mass of plastic army men on top of a wooden structure. The army men are melted together into 25 square bricks. The bricks rise and lower at different speeds, heights and frequencies - they are attached to servo motors. The piece can be connected to the web, so that it monitors fluctuations in crude-oil prices. The patterns of movement in the soldiers creates a dizzying and audible chatter.

Soldier City
2006

There are multiple iterations of Soldier City -- the installation shown here is the first physical manifestation. Soldier City references video game hierarchies as well as war ‘floor games’ played among children. The piece embodies a mixture of ‘tacky’, playful and garage craft. It is full of kinetic movement, incorporating micro-processors, audio amplifiers, motors and a closed-circuit video element. Details opposite page.

Bob Smth
2009

This work stems from Bob Smith (an elderly Reno, Nevada resident) as a launching point for a fictional narrative. Bob Smith recorded life stories and memories used in this installation as an ambient soundtrack. There is an 8' cube room made of wooden panel. Inside the room there is a grotesque machine with 25 bloody torsos mounted on moving pistons. There is also a small peep hole that looks onto a toy figure wielding a bloody axe. The entrance to the room is opposed by three images implying different points in Bob's narrative. They are lit with the tacky glow of blacklights. The exterior, front wall of the room displays a wall of memorabilia from Bob Smith's past. The installation also includes a portrait of Bob made from smiley face stickers and silicon, as well as a large wooden wall mounted sculpture. There is also a projection of Bob Smith's house; every 20 minutes he walks out and his head explodes

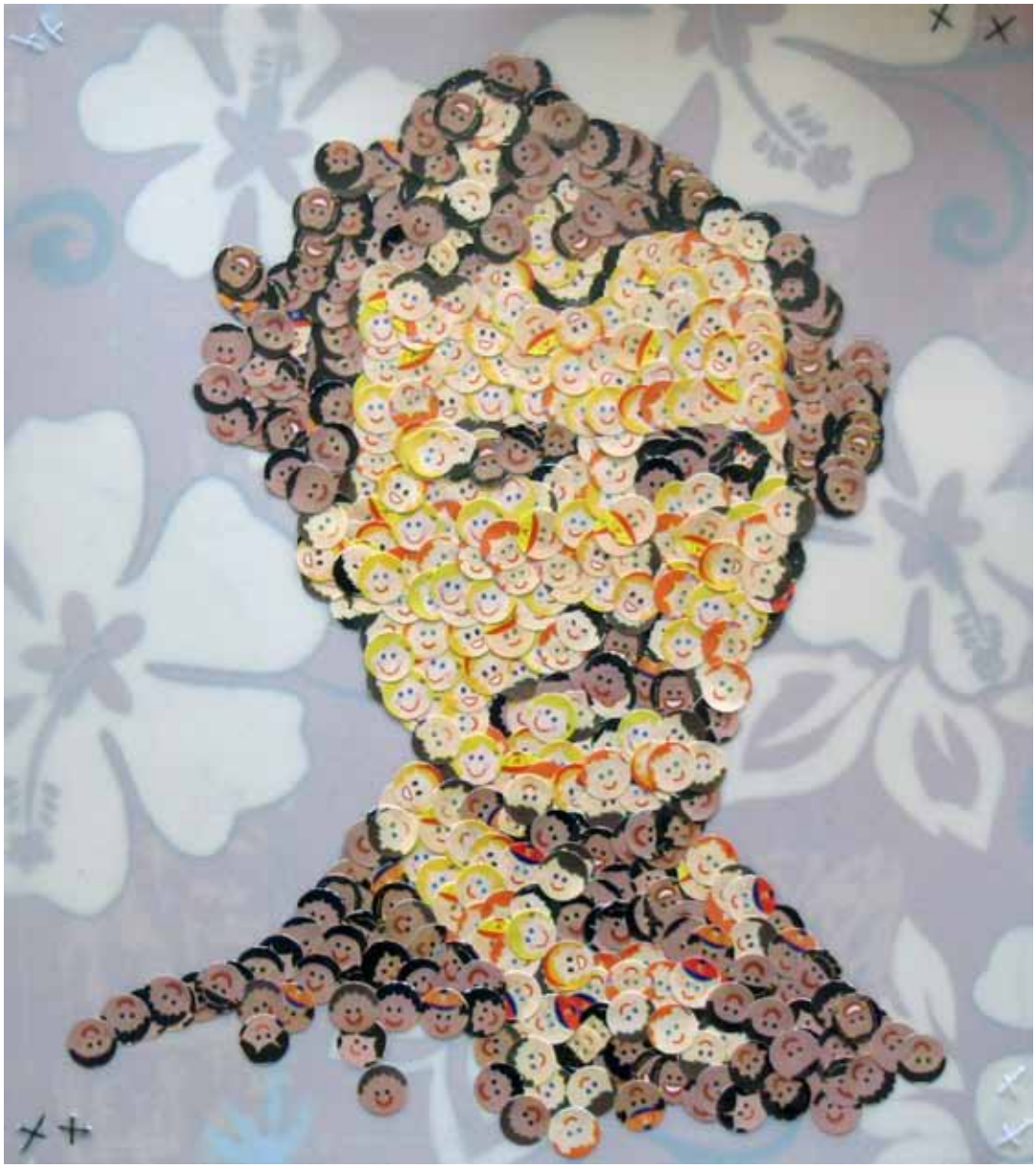


Booth

Experimenting with the expanded narratives in the previous section is similar to the world building an author must accomplish when writing fantasy stories. At a specific stage, when developing an online game based in Soldier City, I started to think about adding characters. I had also recently visited gettysburg, PA with my father. My thoughts were with the development of a character and the fashion with which history is written. I chose to start a new project centered directly on John Wilkes Booth. The intention was to start simply with his image and steal it from him by developing an ahistorical fictional version of Booth. Booth became my new hub to work from, after a stint in Soldier City, Booth was separated and focused on solely.

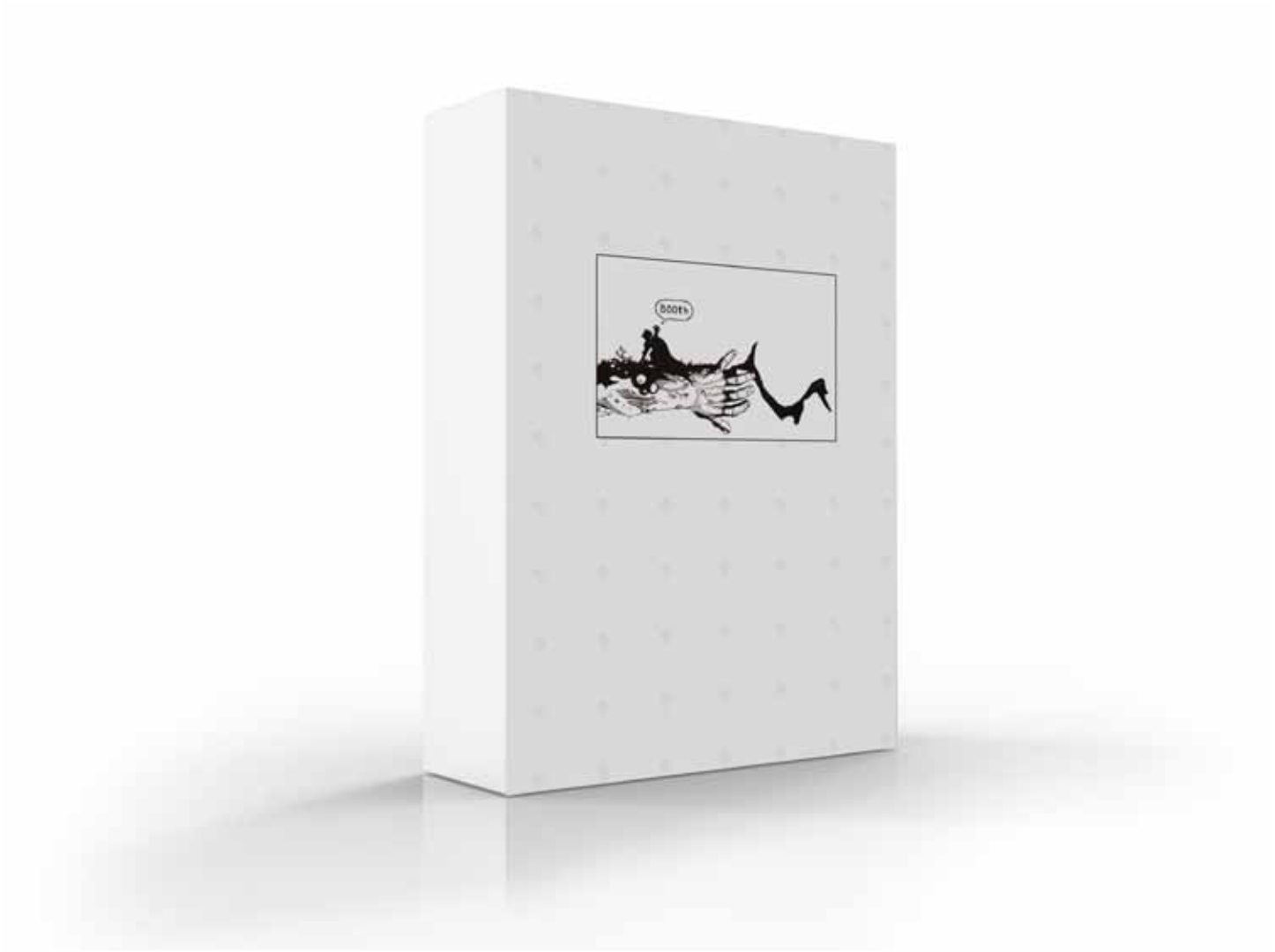
The 'Booth' project, basically a work of narrative fiction, is directed toward the reanimation of this historical figure. Booth is known in the United States as the assassin of US President Abraham Lincoln during the American Civil War. Booth is used figuratively as the 'skin' of an avatar or puppet. The control of the puppet is projected through an arrangement of expressions; including: storytelling, interactive games and installation, social intervention and more. These 'controls' are documented in an evolving book that catalogs the growth of the avatar. I consider it a summoning and re-purposing of John Wilkes Booth from history.

I project the time-table for the Booth to be the better part of the rest of my life. The intention is grow to a manual (book) following Booth's development over that time into a series of volumes. At this point in time, I have been working with Booth since sometime in 2006. The following section includes some of the projects involving Booth. The manual gives a complete representation of the Booth project.



Booth on Vacation
2007

Booth on Vacation is created with smiley stickers and a Hawaiian shirt. The frame is made of poured plastic.



Booth Manual
2007 - present

The Booth manual is a book currently about 120 pages. The format represents computer video game instruction manuals. It is an evolving reference for the Booth fiction that is being developed as a long-term project. The intent is to continue its growth for several decades. Content in the manual gives descriptions of a variety of story elements, gallery art objects, video games, and many more features of the vast narrative. The current edition is pictured above along with images from the volume.

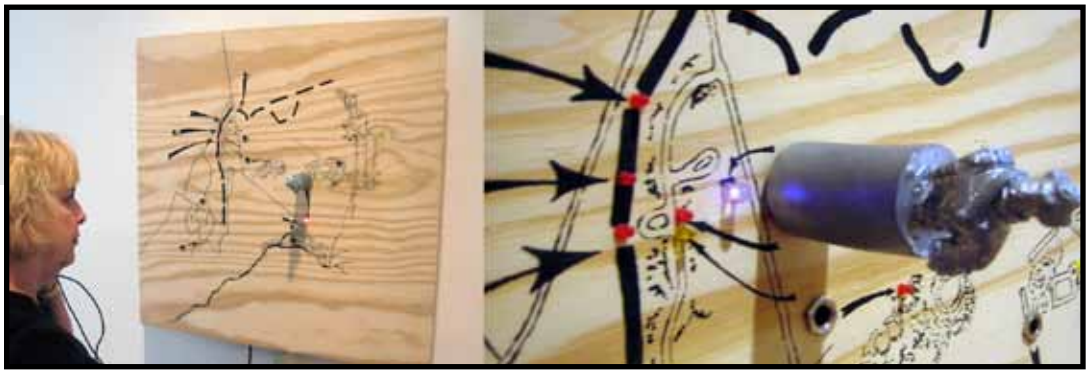
Phantom Pain
2008 (2’ X 2’)
enamel paint, plastic

The first edition of the manual is show along with the *Phantom Pain* painting. The manual cover and the painting share the same image when displayed together. The manual is available online, and is intended to be circulated with a purpose of developing a following of fans interested in Booth. The ideal situation would be for the Booth narrative to continue its expansion through the aid of such fans.

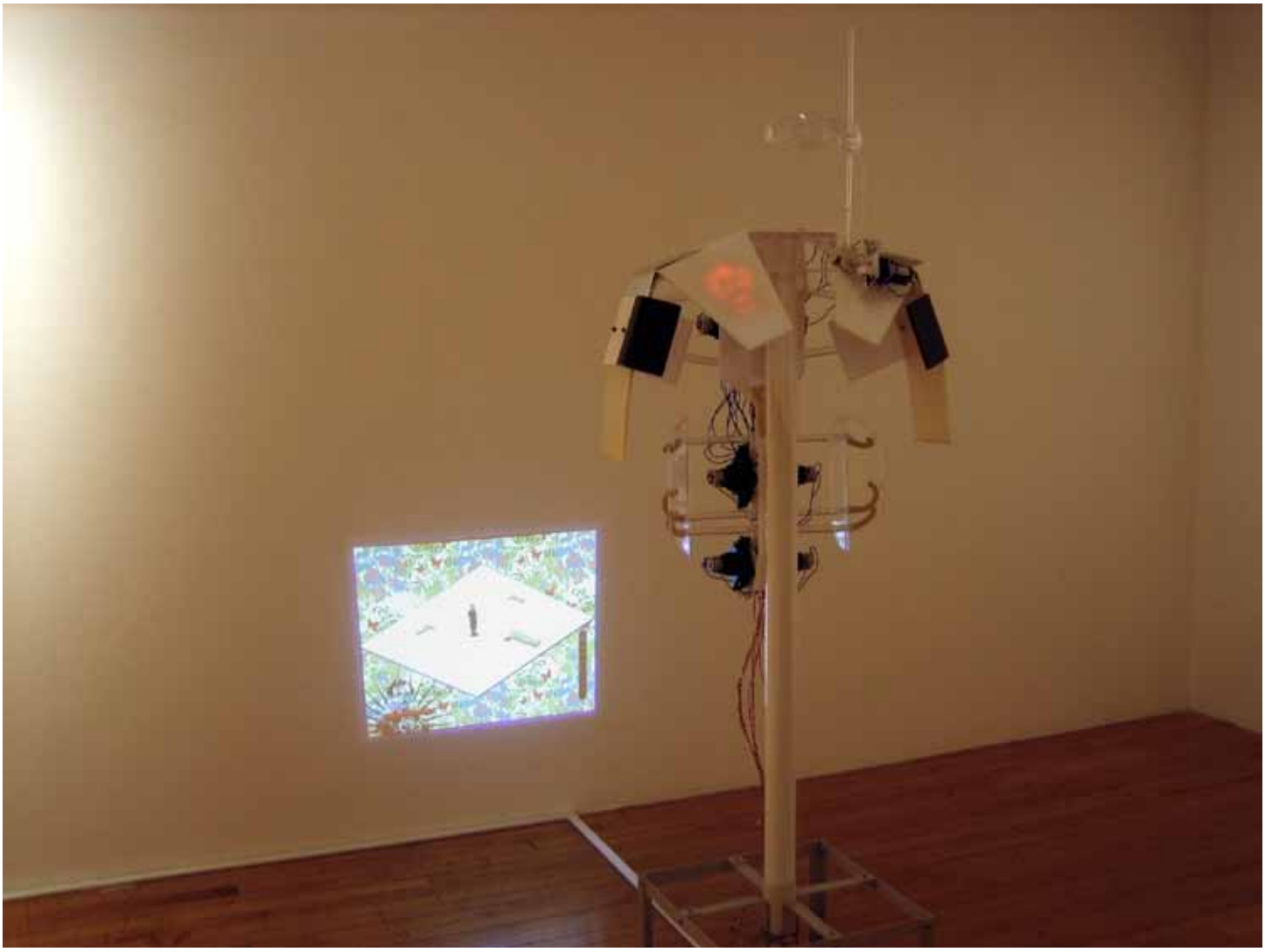
Igloo White
2008

Igloo White, a kinetic sculpture, is activated by pressing a large red arcade button located at its base. When pressed, the object plays through a narrative via moving parts, sound elements and a small computer controlled monitor. The object tells a story of Booth's failure to understand the word he inhabits. The sculpture references children's action toys such as, GI Joe and Star Wars.

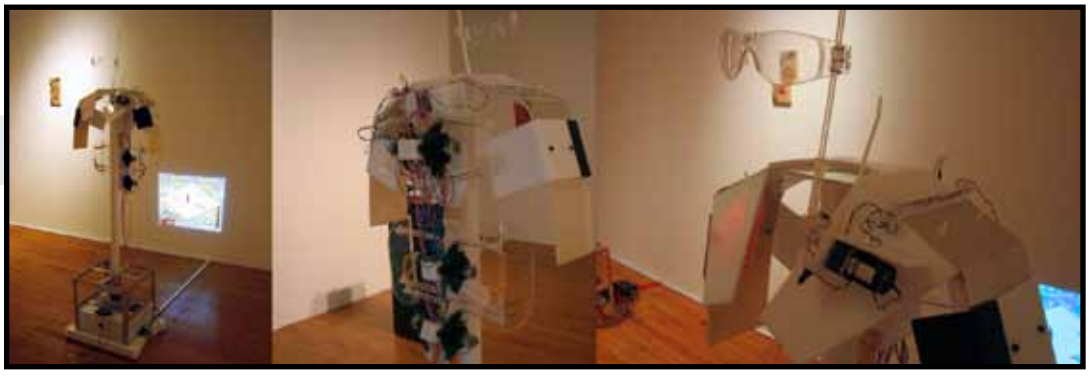
Battle Prosthetic
2008



Battle Prosthetic is an interactive audio map. The viewer moves a plug around the board much like a telegraph operators's switch. Each location on the map replays audio narratives associated with events during a fictional battle Booth is involved in.



Weeping Armor
2008



Weeping Armor is a suit that was created to fit and be worn by myself. It is displayed on the stand shown above during exhibition. The suit is automated with kinetic actions that are tied to a video game. As a player interacts with the game, the suit responds by flipping its glasses forward, blinking an array of LEDS, and starting pumps that blow air from the back. The piece originates as part of the narrative fiction following Booth in the whole of my current work. In the fiction, soldiers are trained to control weeping by wearing the armor. It forces them into a slumped position and then proceeds to comfort them by stroking their backs with air.

Bloody Orchard
2010

Bloody Orchard mixes a peep-hole diorama with an interactive audio narrative. Viewers wear headphones, stare through the small hole in the front, and press the big red button to hear the story. There is a model inside the object depicting a scene from the Booth narrative occupying my current work. The audio support creates a disturbing environment as a small character hacks a tree trunks submerged in blood. A disk full of smiley-face stickers is mounted to wall in the rear. This image fills the horizon of the image.

Journey to the Center
of the Earth
2008

Journey to the center of the Earth is an audio diorama. Staring through the front, the viewer watches as lights change corresponding with an audio narrative. The lighting patterns function as if it were a stage play setting mood according to content. Behind a prominent figure, Booth, there is landscape littered with smiley-faces and a spinning horizon that also interacts with narrative elements. In the *Booth Manual* (seen above in the portfolio), which serves as a source for the narrative and projects, the piece is advertised as an object that can be supplied with any audio a viewer may choose. The piece can be loaded with any audio via USB port in the rear.

Phantom Limb
2008

Phantom Limb displays a holographic arm floating in the middle of a bloody orchard. The limb appears as an apparition changing, and morphing as views move around the piece. The object references a narrative element within the Booth work. It is described further in the Booth manual and exists as an environment in an accompanying video game.