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ASCI MEMBERS MEETING - NYC, MARCH 1ST, 2004

WITH PRESENTATIONS BY CHERYL SAFREN AND DEBRA SWACK

This ASCI meeting was enlivened by not only the presentations but the spirited discussions surrounding them. And everyone enjoyed the opportunity to network, catch-up and develop new (& renew old) acquaintances.

"WARGAMES"

Debra Swack's presentation was immersed in a great deal of discussion as the group tried to understand the technological specifics of her projects and philosophy. Her "95 Variable Chimes" sound project/installation will be altered in size to relate to the environment, and it continues her interest in the shapes of sound. The concept of the interplay of sound and vibration as material form also functions metaphorically in her aesthetic for the string theory set forth by Brian Greene (Layman's Note: The essence of string theory, as Green records in his book *The Elegant Universe*, is that vibrations replace particles at the subatomic level as the building process, rather than building block, of matter and as these tiny one-dimensional filaments vibrate differently, they shape matter differently.) But the initial variables in the sound work will also be gathered digitally and edited since Swack's aesthetic includes the concept of composition. Her project titled *Playing Cards* matched cross-grids of words with grids of digital drawings to explore the subliminal associations of gender bias she finds encoded in not only words but in structures. Her interests are focused on the interrelationships between systems & their recombinations: word/image, sound/structure, pattern/form, etc., and frequently with their social consequences. Her *Digital Zoos* video projected the protective camouflage patterns from animals (created

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ASCI FEATURED MEMBER
July-August 2004



RALFONSO
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through software algorithms) into environments to remind us of the system inversion of fashion: We are attracted to their camouflage patterns, kill them, then wear their patterns for display. Her Toy Soldiers video used stop action positioning (5,000 frames and a month of editing using After Effect) to have them dance to an up-tempo love song to interfere with our normal social patterns that use and accept toys to imbed hatred. The group felt her best work used not prepublished pop music but newly created music, such as her father's chamber music composition used in relation to her video edits of carousel horses. We discovered that the word carousel means "little wars" and those cute wooden animals were initially warlike. Her use of music initiated an impassioned group conversation over the need to obtain copyright permissions for the use of music, especially since Swack's carousel piece was shown publicly at Banff. Her use of video of tree limbs manipulated through After Effects and Premiere was a study in branching systems which for Swack worked as visual correlates to a proposed biological explanation of love that argues people need other people to develop and close their nervous systems.

- please find images by Cheryl Safren at the bottom of this page

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These summaries are composed from notes and any errors and misunderstandings are accepted by the author! _____

three images by Debra Swack:

"COMPUTER GENERATED MAZES"

MAZES ARE DESIGNED BY RANDOM SOFTWARE ALGORITHMS, ARE SITE SPECIFIC, INSTALLATIONS TO BE CONSTRUCTED FROM AVAILABLE STOCKED MATERIALS, STRETCHED-PVC OVER STEEL ARMATURE, OR INFLATABLE PLASTIC



DEBRA SWACK 12/2002

[digitalmazes](#)



[carousel](#)



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