

Age of the Data Poets

ON THE RECONNECTION OF SCIENCE AND ART



Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, *The Trace*, Interactive Telepresence Installation.

Will Bauer

Some photos from artifact-based pieces are shown in this article. My piece *Objects of Ritual* (done in collaboration with composer Steve Gibson) was a cyberspatial ritual blurring the lines between theater and installation in which a group of participants are guided through a ritual to build a virtual world which is created and sustained by their presence, a group witnessing of ritual acts, and personalities. The world collapses and is destroyed when they leave at the end of the piece. Another piece, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's *The Trace* is a telepresence piece dealing with issues of sharing physical space via a virtual, abstracted embodiment where those sharing one's physical space are represented by crossing light beams, video "auras" projected over each participant's head, and 3D sound. These media project the presence of a remote person into a room in which the participant is present, changing their position and sound direction/volume in strict accordance to the movements of the person in the remote area. It is possible for both local and remote persons to occupy the same space/time point... but what are the implications of doing this when the only information available about the other person is the knowledge of their abstracted persona? The result is an interesting and poetic meditation on human intimacy and solitude.