

weekendreview

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CATHARTIC USER INTERFACES. Love it or hate it, we're participants in a co-evolutionary journey with technology. We're delighted when it works, offering us convenience, freedom from repetitive tasks and entertaining escapades from reality. We're enraged when it doesn't, quickly changing from technophiles to technopaths. Perry Hoberman's installations explore the indeterminate and hazy relationship between the technological and the individual, setting up challenges of flesh versus metal. His show's title work, "Cathartic User Interface," lets visitors express emotions about their place within this post-human age. Slamming mouse-like balls at a wall of obsolete PC keyboards triggers a frustrating onslaught of multimedia projections and discordant sounds distilled from computer error messages. "Timetable" examines the concept of time as a consumable commodity, which has its basis in the production of goods. It implies that, if it is possible to buy our time from us, then we also become commodities. Assaultive images play upon an eight-foot circular table activated by dials, which act as clocks, gauges, speedometers, and switches controlled by multiple users. Finding a way out of this chaos seems to involve the realization that the time of our life should be spent producing ourselves and not things that enslave us: "Systems Maintenance" blends and bends the rules of the real world and the virtual one, where software simulates 3-D environments on a 2-D screen. Hoberman presents three versions of a furnished room — one life-sized, one dollhouse-scaled, one displayed on a computer monitor. Video cameras record each variation and merge the trio of images into a single large projection. Viewers manipulate this kinetic constant state of becoming. If one superimposes these geometric forms upon each other, a sympathetic resonance of bright color occurs which counters the materialist worldview of isolated, objective elements. This choice seems to have parallels with a common desire to connect with others on the same "wavelength" as us. Yet those who prefer to misalign the shapes, applying disordered stimuli to a disordered system, still somehow create a degree of order within the disorder. *Through May 18. Wood Street Galleries, Downtown. 412-471-5605.*