

Teiji Furuhashi
The Wood Street Galleries
601 Wood St.
Pittsburgh, 15222
412/471-5605

Teiji Furuhashi's 1995 *Lovers* is a rare technological art work in that when you scratch the surface of its spectacle it reveals an unfolding sense of the sublime. *Lovers* was exhibited to optimum effect here, secluded and alone, practically cloistered. It's a piece that requires the kind of quiet and shoeless attention that is pretty much out of the question in a noisy group show, even one that is partitioned off, such as the Museum of Modern Art's 1995 show "Video Spaces," where this work had its one previous presentation in the United States.

In a darkened and comfortably large room, a central seven-foot-high tower holding a bank of rotating video projectors glimmered and whirred, anchoring the space. At intervals, images of unclothed, fit-and-healthy human figures emerged from the blackness. With certainty and grace, they walked the perimeter of the room, ran, posed with arms outstretched or as if in embrace,

crossed paths, fell into the void. Beyond this—itsself pretty remarkable when rendered as life-sized video projections—the embellishments were largely restrained and included rhythmic, semi-electronic sounds, an occasional guttural breath or scrape that sounded like life in the vicinity, and narrow bands of light and projected words that seemed to represent the inadequacy of attempts to measure or confine experience.

Furuhashi's "lovers" move toward each other and even overlap in various gender combinations, but they never really connect, passing like ghosts through one another before slipping back into the void. Their pixelated visages seem to express yearning for contact, but ultimately they just proceed on their journeys. These figures, who are recognizably individuals, fade in and out of our consciousness, seemingly drawn from a hybrid of hard drive and human memory. The mood is more existential acceptance than techno-mysticism, though there might be more of the latter than I cared to pick up on. One thing of which I am certain is that nothing is more rooted in its own time than the representation of transcendence.

In *Lovers*, Furuhashi achieved through electronic means a vision of transcendence that is of its time and that is an important contribution to the developing articulation of the technological sublime—some of Bill Viola's video installations and the best of techno-pop music being other examples from my short list. Noted as the founder of the performance group Dumb Type and bearing the courageous/sad distinction of being the first openly HIV-positive gay man in Japan, Teiji Furuhashi will not grace the world with any further works, having died of HIV-related causes in 1995.

Robert Raczka is associate professor of art and gallery director at Allegheny College.

American Gothic

Suzanne H. Arnold Art Gallery
Lebanon Valley College
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As the twentieth century wanes and the twenty-first century emerges on the horizon, the uncanny specter of our first Millennium has once again appeared with a vengeance. The medieval, with its connotations of authenticity and purity, its nostalgic embrace of a chivalric and honorable past, and its intimations of unspeakable danger and worthy adversaries has resurfaced in fin-de-siècle America. Although far removed from their European origins, medieval things—novels, films, objects, historical books, and images—have an undeniable visceral appeal, as demonstrated by the success of such medieval meccas as the Medieval Times Restaurant in Anaheim, California, and the Las Vegas Excalibur Hotel and Casino.

The interest in all things medieval is not confined to popular culture—in the past several years artists have invoked medieval tropes for a variety of reasons that range from nostalgic to confrontational. "American Gothic," curated

Teiji Furuhashi
Lovers, 1995. Video installation, 30' x 30'. Courtesy of Dumb Type.

