

# Keeping track

## Digital images beg for interpretation

Time and Data

Jim Campbell

Through Dec. 22

Wood Street Galleries

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The Pitt News

From a battered Webster's dictionary comes an almost sinister whisper, filling the quiet gallery. It is Jim Campbell's voice accompanied by the broken sounds of Mozart's "Requiem." The work is titled "I Have Never Read the Bible," a book that is being read electronically — one letter at a time — all 3,186,313 of them.

A small picture of Campbell's father flashes in and out, beating to the rhythm of Campbell's heart. The photograph of his mother fades more gently, directed by the rhythm of his breath. Symbolically reminiscent of life support, a digital memory of Campbell's own life force sustains the image of his parents.

Campbell's exhibit "Time and Data" is a world of memories — digitally recorded memories. These memories are hidden, taking unusual forms; they are

transformed into art. Campbell turns to his Massachusetts Institute of Technology background to work with his electronic medium, but the memories he translates are fundamentally human.

Campbell is both a hardware engineer and artist. This show offers the opportunity to see Campbell donning his artist hat in work that fuses these two roles. Such a combination seems natural to Campbell, who finds information processing to differ from art only in its goal.

Some of the 24 works on display are interactive pieces. One pulls from the immediate past, projecting a delayed and broken video image of the room. The "memory" of people walking past is captured, realizing Campbell's goal: "The idea of your body being under the control of something else."

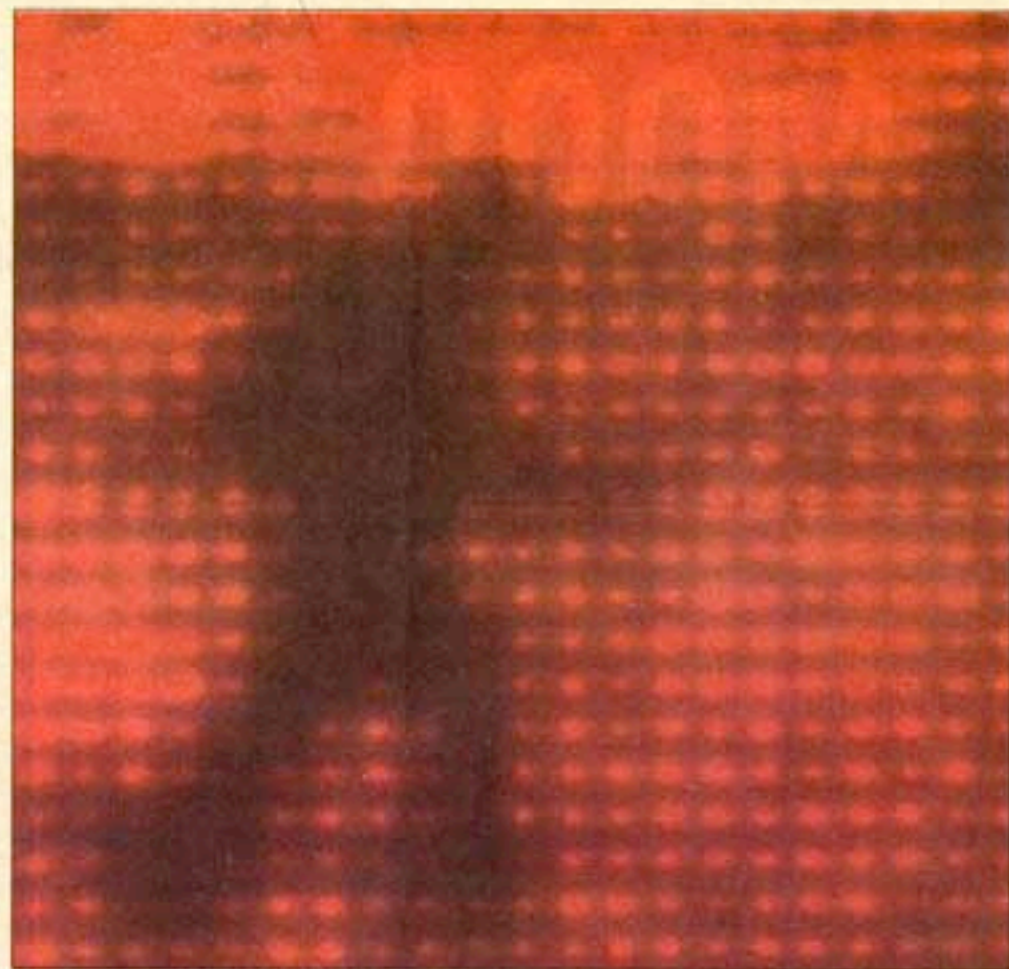
## View

The images are seen through the filter of a pocket watch, distorting the past as memories often distort

the truth.

"Untitled (for Heisenberg)" involves what Campbell calls "subliminal interaction." In a dark room the images of two "intimate dancers" are projected onto a bed of salt (chosen for its connection with human sweat). When viewed from a distance, both figures are clearly perceived. But as you step toward the images, the pixels becomes so enlarged that the intimate act is no longer perceived.

Campbell's experiments with perception continue on the gallery's third



floor. The moving images created by light emitting diodes force the brain to add detail and interpretation. Distortion is a key component and many of the LED images are seen through a filter. What fascinates Campbell about its effect is though "the filter takes information away, you see more."

Campbell's artwork takes something familiar and then "represents it in a non-literal way." He turns to film in a number of pieces and gives them a unique delivery. Many of his LED images are based on film, though they

are delivered in a way that demands more of the audience.

Campbell's exhibit also uses popular films "Psycho" and "The Wizard of Oz." He takes these motion pictures and effectively removes the motion. Both films are shown in a single frame. The result is a picture that is unrecognizable, yet captures the mood and essence of the film.

Throughout the show Campbell delivers common images in an uncommon way and does so in a manner that intrigues and begs for interpretation.