Artist Statement by Jonathan Bachrach   2008-02-15

My artwork comprises an artistic and scientific examination of mind, body and society. Specifically it explores the intersection of sensory motor modalities and the challenges and mysteries of motor control, perception, representation, and emergent phenomena. I am driven by a deep curiosity and utilize a wide range of techniques to get at the truth. I find that art and science are more similar than different, and feel that a multidisciplinary approach is crucial. Making artwork is akin to a scientific inquiry: it starts with questions and results in some answers and always more questions. On the other hand, art allows for the introduction of scientifically inadmissible techniques and processes that bring about radical results, and thus, hand in hand, art and science can make vast discoveries.

I am interested in building a dialog with fellow artists and with the public as an ongoing investigation. I set up experiments that tease out an idea while involving the public in the discussion. I find that the creation of an artist collective (the Collision Collective) and the curation of shows gives me additional insight towards making art and towards living a life of art. Furthermore, I often collaborate with artists in order to create larger and more encompassing works than I can create alone.

I am particularly drawn to movement and the sculptural form. I find that space-time behaviors are exhilarating, and most of my work involves choreographic aspects. I aspire to create a new kind of physics with its own laws playing out other worlds with parallel systems of equations and producing a strange grace chock full of revealing surprises. I am interested in how bodies interact, how intimacy is attained, how minds work, and how societies function.

I am particularly interested in issues of intimacy, sociology, and the nature of life itself. I believe that technology can add to and start to unlock the mysteries of the human experience. Powerful artwork to me works at all levels, but I am driven by a need to provoke thoughts and starts conversations.

Equally important to a philosophical journey, art making is a journey in aesthetics. I believe in developing aesthetics in a deep and systematic fashion, cultivating taste and building upon it. Every piece of my artwork incorporates aesthetic discoveries and my aesthetic toolbox is constantly growing with each piece.

I strongly believe that developing entirely new art-making programming languages produces tremendous leverage towards understanding a phenomenon and creating great artworks. Quite simply, unless one can name something, one can not represent it in any powerful way. Creating phrases and sentences brings additional traction and inventing syntax and semantics gives unprecedented power. Ultimately, the ability to communicate and to execute expressions written within an invented programming language allow for the testing of theories and the development of a set of reusable building blocks. The language defines and confines what is thinkable and expressible, and therefore, being able to create new programming languages allows me as an artist to break into uncharted artistic territory.

I focus on installations and performances that create drama, powerful experiences and invite more participation. I am excited about occupying space and integrating art into architecture and onto the stage. I am constantly exploring ways to make new media more volumetric and visceral so as to be as engaging as human performance. I am also perpetually exploring interactive mechanisms that can invite / relate the audience and performers more fully into / to the piece and to ultimately involve them and set up a worthy dynamic. Finally, I am drawn to the use of sculpture and public art towards creating ritual.

I am deeply influenced by the work of Harold Cohen and Miller Puckette. They were my mentors at UCSD and IRCAM and they taught me the skill of breaking down artistic ideas into computational steps, to use representations to codify artistic processes, and to develop languages to enhance the creative process.