

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO

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Uri Tzaig
Gallery 400
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Strongly influenced by the dichotomous provincial and global political viewpoints of his native Israel, Uri Tzaig examines social mores, role-playing, and gamesmanship in "Duel," a four-year survey comprising video, photography, and sculptural installation. Circumscribing the dynamics of conflict (whether individual, religious, or nationalist) within lexically biased works that fluctuate between metaphor and analogy, Tzaig typically elucidates the inherent duality of institutional meaning, or meaning in general.

Pretext consists of a table displaying black-and-white posters that depict irregular, spherical shapes overlaid on columnar Hebrew text. These forms are interspersed with diffuse, organic images resembling landscape and/or anatomical structure. A mirrored disco ball lay discarded to one side of the installation. *The Universal Square* is a videotaped soccer match whose straightforward trajectory has been subverted with the introduction of an extra ball, and the elimination of a refereeing system. Simultaneously abstruse and poetically autobiographic, vertiginous text by Tzaig that espouses philosophical and political viewpoints is superimposed on the screen.

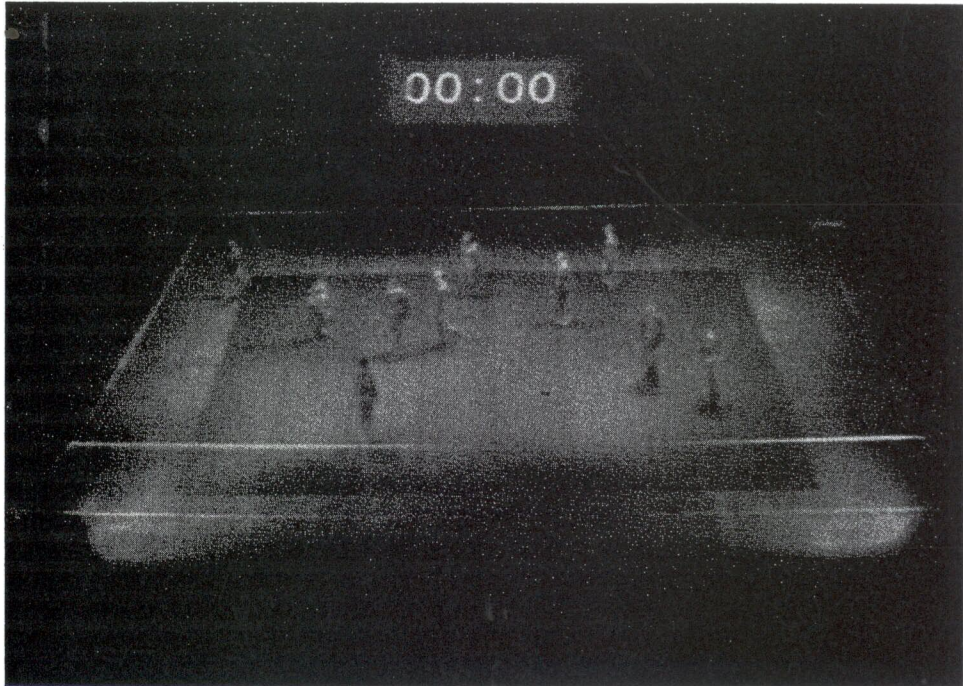
Visualized within the subtly manipulated sports arena are ambiguous strategies of psychological positioning and a concomitant physicality. Tzaig often incorporates choreographed movements of dancers and athletes, the conduits of their bodies ascribing meaning through the vicissitudinal systems of an at times unwieldy posturing.

Diverging from such overt references to gaming strategy, the video *B/W* silently pans snow-covered mountains that are alternately blinding white, ski-tracked, or forested, their surfaces fluctuating between abstraction and representation. This allusive, mesmerizing rumination seems to allow for recognizable points of reference only as means to establish distinctions of scope and texture, or between

objective and subjective perspective. Characteristic of Tzaig, the work plays on issues of center and periphery, linearity and divergence, and employs a disorienting perspective as a way to access otherwise liminal terms of knowledge. Eschewing the pragmatic in favor of the paradoxical within game-based models that would otherwise dictate closure and resolution, Tzaig's work elicits a kind of tautological self-referentiality. In this framework, not losing doesn't mean that you've won, and an elapsed time-frame doesn't necessarily entail the stoppage of play.

Olga Zdanovics is a foreign-born writer.

Uri Tzaig
∞, 1998. Still from video. Courtesy of Gallery 400.



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