

MACHINESCAPE

by

Sena Clara Creston

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate

Faculty of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Major Subject: ELECTRONIC ARTS

Approved by the
Examining Committee:

Tomie Hahn, Thesis Advisor

Shawn Lawson, Member

Benjamin Chang, Member

Brent Green, Member

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Troy, New York

August 2012

ABSTRACT

In this thesis paper my aim is to describe how the evolution of my art-making process and practice through my six previous artworks has led me to produce my newest work, *Machinescape*. While working through these past pieces my development went through three stages—from a realization of the significance of the environment, to a stage of looking at the animation of the work, and then to consideration of the materials and practices used to build a piece. *Machinescape*, the culmination of this process and the main focus of the art portion of my thesis, is an installation built with my conscious awareness of its environment, animation and materials.

The thesis, reflecting these three stages of development, is organized by sections devoted to environment, animation and materials. In the environment section of the thesis I will explain how constructing enterable environmental installations has been an attempt for me to encourage my viewers to have an activated experience within, and a candid and holistic response to, the artwork. The animation section of the thesis explores how animating artworks has been an attempt for me to imbue my sculptures with life-like qualities in order to facilitate pathos in my viewers, encouraging them to form an emotional relationship with the artwork. In the materials section of the thesis I will examine how my consideration of materials has been an attempt to fabricate believable imaginary worlds that resonate pointed meaning for my viewers. Finally, I will discuss the significance of these considerations in building *Machinescape*.

Machinescape is a kinetic installation comprised of consumer electronic equipment, reworked to animate components of a satirical sculptural landscape. Discarded electronic devices have been stripped down to their mechanical systems,

gaining new function as the puppeteers used to animate interpretations of the earth's natural systems: water, land and sky.