

*Shih Chieh Huang | Connected: Eject Before Disconnecting*, February 27, 2009-June 21, 2009

Shih Chieh Huang's work injects art with science and technology. The artist creates site-specific installations that combine high-tech and everyday recycled materials with handyman aesthetics to form environments that are simultaneously playful, graceful, dynamic, fragile, and uncanny. Huang constructed *Connected: Eject before disconnecting* specifically for the Spalter New Media Gallery, conjuring a curious universe resembling some funky, futuristic sci-fi movie set transferred to a museum space. Electronic elements—computer parts, remote controls, motion sensors, and portable DVD players—merge with familiar objects such as toys, plastic bags, hardware-store goods, and dismantled household appliances to suggest the overwhelming influence of technology in our daily lives. Liquids, air, and lighting infuse the resulting network of parts with a sense of organic artifice, evoking a robotic body circulating energy as it glows and grows from the gallery's ceiling. Videos—featuring split and multiplied footage of wandering and blinking eyes, observing and being observed—clinch the impression of being inside an eerie transhuman organism.

In titling his work the artist appropriated a message familiar to users of Apple iPods and Mac computers. When "Connected: Eject before disconnecting" appears on the screen, it warns the user that an external device is still connected to the computer and should be properly removed to avoid malfunction. Like the various hard- and software of computer systems, the kinetic components of Huang's installations are mutually dependent, but they are also unpredictable. Spectacles of cause and effect and constant flux, they are unstable by nature: disconnection might result in damage, loss, or some erratic event. Read metaphorically, the title might refer to the threat of disconnection within the earth's ecosystem or global culture. Interactive and responsive to the viewer's movements, *Connected: Eject before disconnecting* inspires a multisensory, poetic, and personal experience. It manifests mixed feelings of optimism, entrapment, and anxiety—a result of our growing dependence on technology and the ever more rapid changes in our world.

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

ernesto deira, Taiwanese

*EX-C-FR series (green blue)*, 2008

Mixed media (plexiglass, LCD light, DVD player, plastic bags, rubber bands, power supply)

Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2010.21

Shih Chieh Huang (Taiwanese, b. 1975) describes his work as an "interchanging process between people and space." The artist's low-tech installations incorporate everyday objects, such as electronic appliances, toys, plastic bags and containers, combined with air, water, light, cables, motion sensors, computer parts and video footage. Because of their numerous kinetic elements, Huang's colorful and playful environments are constantly in flux, with elegant and strange results.

