



## TECHO-SURREA

HALUK AKAKCE'S VIDEO INSTALLATIONS

When Brooklyn-based digital artist Haluk Akakce moved to the United States from Turkey in 1995, he thought he was being followed by a television camera. He had been so inundated with Western TV shows and movies, his natural assumption was that there were cameras everywhere.

Fortunately, it is due to this familiarity with what he calls the "transnational subculture flow" that he felt compelled, quite comfortably, to create art that commented on these phenomena, which have now morphed into ubiquitous Internet usage. With an inquisitive eye fixed on our insatiable appetite for information, Akakce began making video installations that explore our relationship with technology and the supposed new found freedom we have gained through it.

Akakce's first video, *The Measure of all Things* (2000), combines live action and digital animation to create a series of techno-surreal landscapes. Slogans appear ("promise of a better life") which segue into images of a primordial soup that give birth to a futuristically dressed pregnant woman. Eventually, floating sphere primitives take shape in a DNA-type structure. Collaborating with

imaging company d-box and composer Michael Vecchio, Akakce takes us through his version of genesis – the birth of a new relationship between man and nature through telecommunications.

"It is about the basic human desire for ultimate freedom and the perverse solution generated with the birth of the information age," explains Akakce.

"It is a parody of contradictions of situations generated around the analogy of paradise – Biblical – and the contemporary nature of paradise – a simulation." Akakce discovered that "the more free we want to be in this world, the more connected we have to be."

It's another sense of freedom, however, that attracts Akakce to the digital medium. Trained as a fine artist at The Art Institute of Chicago, he began his career painting and drawing but uses digital animation tools to save money. "The freedom it gives to create your ideal setting is what's attractive to me." Akakce's newest piece, *Depositoria*, will be showing at PS1 Contemporary Art Center in Long Island City through February 2002.

Heather Waterman