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Bodies in motion

by Edward J. Sozanski, December, 3, 2004



In four projected videos at Moore College of Art and Design, alumna Janet Biggs presents a fascinating and occasionally mesmerizing meditation on the subtle dynamics of sustained bodily motion.

A large, three-screen installation juxtaposes the methodical galloping of a horse on a training treadmill — a beautiful thing to behold in its own right — against the more graceful exertions of buoyant humans "walking" while submerged 10 feet in a swimming pool.



In a two-screen piece, young male wrestlers confront each other in measured feints and parries. Suddenly the action speeds up, and body slams to the mat become so violent that one winces involuntarily.

Each piece contrasts synchronization—most evident in "Apraxia" which depicts two elderly swimmers moving in harmony— with instability and loss of control. Human actions become symbolic of nature's tendency to drift toward entropy.



This parallel becomes more evident with repeated viewing, which the works encourage. The cumulative effect is like a visual mantra that easily becomes transfixing.

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Image information (top to bottom):

"Avitan", 2003, three channel video installation

"Apraxia", 2002, single channel video

"Tegretol", 2003, two channel video installation