

Ryan Wolfe

FIELD OF GRASS

& SKETCH OF A FIELD OF GRASS

Materials: individually programmed circuits,
motors, sand, artificial grass

Physical Size: Variable

Series of 10 site-specific installations

2005-p

Video available on request.



ABOUT "FIELD OF GRASS"...Sketch of a Field of Grass explores the idea that a memorable time, place or experience can be condensed in a singular, physical object that embodies the essential qualities of that experience. It is one in a series of sketches that encapsulate the experience of watching the rise and fall of a summer breeze across a field in a single blade of grass (or a series of blades of grass). This particular sketch is comprised of eight blades of grass. Each blade is computationally autonomous, possessing the ability to sense and respond to its local environment independently. A simple networking protocol is used to propagate "wind" down the network of grass, blade by blade. To these blades of grass, this data-based wind is as real and physical in its impact as a more physical wind would be.

The technology has been designed to be modular. Future sketches in the series can be scaled up in size merely by adding blade "nodes". Other variations between sketches will include changes in the software algorithms that control movement and the generation of wind. The technology developed for this piece is ultimately scalable to a grid network, allowing for an entire gallery space to be transformed into a dynamic kinetic experience. This piece could have more-easily been developed with the use of a large computer controlling all of the nodes at once, but the individual response each node has to its local surroundings is an important conceptual element of the sculpture. Just as in a real field, each blade responds to the wind in a slightly different way. Each blade is both physically distinct and simultaneously part of a larger aggregate phenomenon. The emergent behavior that comes from the interrelation of independent nodal behavior interpreted in a group context is fundamental to the overall aesthetic effect. -R. Wolfe, 2006

DAM, STUHLTRAGER GALLERY . 38 MARCY . AVENUE . BROOKLYN . NY 11211