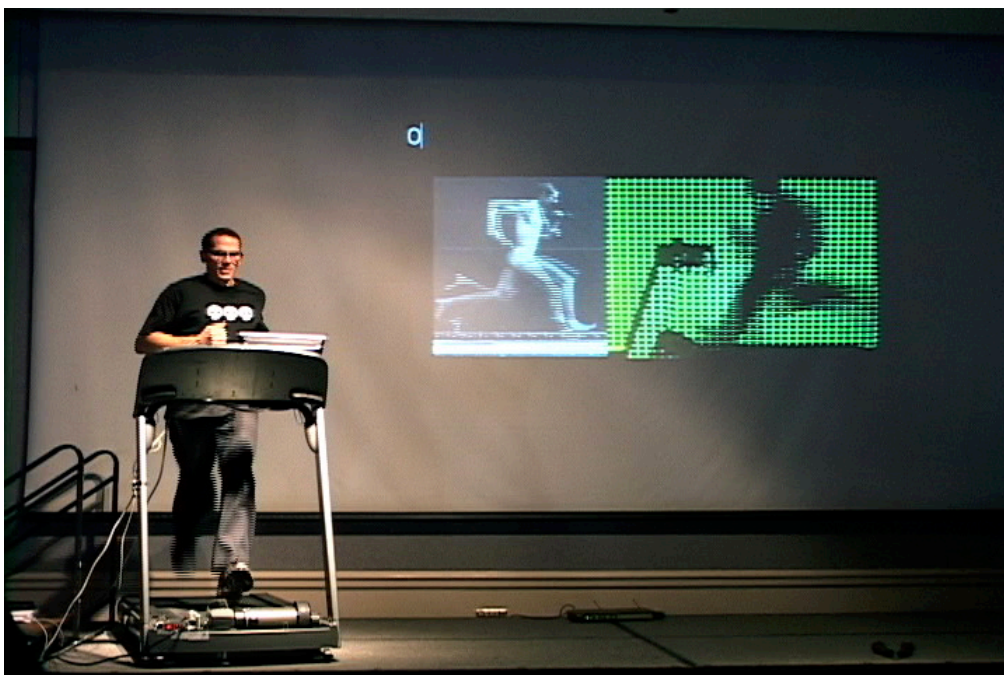# *Dreadmill*

By Marcel O'Gorman

ARTIST STATEMENT:

The buzz generated by "mobile technologies" over the last decade or so can only be seen as ironic given the anatomical situation of human beings in contemporary North America. We live in a culture of dispersed, interconnected screens, a mode of existence that, if anything, demands a *decrease* in physical mobility. Escalating rates of obesity and diabetes are clear evidence of technoculture's grip on the human body. As Paul Virilio has suggested, technocultural beings are merely "mobile-on-the-spot." The most prominent strains of postmodern philosophy have only exacerbated the situation by proclaiming that the body is no more than a thing to be overcome, a rotting tether that binds an otherwise limitless, fractured subjectivity. In the words of Stelarc, "The Body is Obsolete."

With this in mind, I developed "Dreadmill," a treadmill hardwired to a laptop so that a runner's speed and distance control an interface in Macromedia Director. In its first instantiation, "Dreadmill" served as a live performance piece in which I ran 5-7 kms, generating a multimedia projection and lecturing to the point of exhaustion about the impact of technology on the body. I have performed "Dreadmill" at several galleries and institutions across North America. This piece will be followed up by two more projects in a "Triathlon" series that merges biofeedback and visualization technologies with narratives of progress and death denial.

By mobilizing the body as the dreadful engine of a finite technological narrative, "Dreadmill" works against technoculture's delusions of mobility and infinity, and reminds us that "our bodies aren't going anywhere."

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BIOGRAPHY:

Marcel O'Gorman is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Waterloo and Director of the Critical Media Lab. In addition to his artistic work with physical computing and architectural installations, O'Gorman is the author of books and articles about the future of the humanities in a digital culture, including E-Crit: Digital Media, Critical Theory and the Humanities (University of Toronto Press, 2006) and New Media / New Methods (Parlor Press, 2008), co-edited with Jeff Rice. His most recent research/creation activities investigate the "collusion of death and technology," a concept that he calls "necromedia." Samples of his work may be viewed at http://marcelogorman.net .

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