

# TECHNICOLOR FANTASY

MM ROBINSON'S CREATIONS TAKE IMAGINATION TO A NEW LEVEL



Synthesizer (detail), 2007  
Ink Jet on Paper, 70 x 1 foot



by Amy A. Rudberg  
photograph by Jonathan Wiloughby

MM Robinson's multimedia installation, "Synthesizer," at NAB Gallery redefines techno art in Chicago with graphic design intermixed with personal-reality symbolism.

Upon entering the gallery, visitors are surrounded by a 70-foot band of multi-colored striped patterns and black-and-white imagery. On closer inspection of one panel, viewers observe a faint outline of a Warholian face appearing on top of multi-colored stripes. There are black silhouette abstractions reminiscent of Picasso's dancing women with surreal dragon-like kites overhead, and superimposed white outlined figures with raised arms. Hanging out with a giant iPod, birds rest aimlessly on a telephone line. Lincoln's statuesque face appears almost as a reminder that all of this is grounded in reality.

Spending a year designing and creating these complex layers of imagery on multiple panels, Robinson is interested in the way art is distributed and organized. He experiments with forms that can be "substrate neutral" (anything can be used as a canvas) to capture the possibilities of design. As a former figurative painter—and now focusing on new media and digitization—he is able to create art demonstrating "what it's like to be alive now and creating complexity that can be

appreciated fully and seen in a positive way," he says.

Growing up in Ohio and trained as a graphic artist, Robinson moved to Chicago seven years ago and has strived to incorporate tension in his work by taking realism to the edge of abstraction.

"I love the spectrum of the art scene here, encompassing everything from do-it-yourself projects and alternative spaces to large cultural institutions and the positive interaction among artists," he says.

Complementing Robinson's panels in the gallery, Rothsch-like images morph on the televised video in the middle of the room. Subliminal messages from a slowed-down Nirvana song flow through the room like ambient noise. The show can be interpreted as a social commentary on today's commercialism, technological influences and fascination with iconic figures, but Robinson explains, "I feel I need to represent those things, not as commentary, but as ways we interact and communicate within our culture."

MM Robinson's "Synthesizer" opens at NAB Gallery (3117 W. Lake, 312/738-1620) April 21