

Devil on a Dam (2010)

Russell J. Chartier, *video*

Paul J. Botelho, *music*

The piece *Devil on a Dam* portrays the fragile emotional and cognitive state of a woman's final moments as she writes her death note. The piece stands as a record of the woman's fleeting perception of isolation to the decaying world that slowly envelops her.

The video aspect of the piece was created by layering organic images of the act of writing together with distortions and manipulations of broadcast equipment output error messages and other abstractions. The output messages represent the subject's alienation to the outside world, while the dense layerings of writing depict her inner thoughts and being. Various matted and keyed distortions were employed to weave together the organic imagery with the manipulated and distorted, abstract depiction of the woman's thoughts and emotions.

The musical aspect is comprised of fragmented audio samples taken from the composer's one-act opera *the falling*. The theme of the opera, *i am*, is comprised of a collage of five melodic vocal fragments juxtaposed with a harsh, crackling, noise-based sound. The piece was input into software, authored by the composer, which "shattered" the input sound into a user-defined number of fragments in a stochastic rhythm. The textures generated through the software were then layered, along with other manipulated and found sounds, to create the musical component of the work.

An important aspect of the collaboration between Russell J. Chartier and Paul J. Botelho is the principle of synchronicity. The video artist and the composer never work directly with one another's work during the collaboration. Only the specific duration of the piece is agreed upon and no other communication in regard to the work is made during the collaboration. Solely upon the completion of both the video and music components is the work realized. The artists call this process *a collective subconscious*, a term which refers not only to the exclusionary creative actions which take place in their collaborative effort, but more broadly as the commonality that permeates betwixt the artists and those close to them.