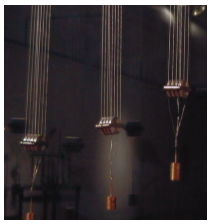
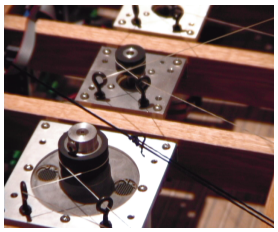
*Albatross*
mixed media, 2001-2007
dimensions variable





*Albatross* comprises a fabric form of lightweight silk gauze, thin white suspension strings, four counterweights with pulleys, four computerized capstan motors mounted in a wooden crate placed inside an antique suitcase, and a discreetly placed control computer (not shown).

The fabric moves smoothly within the space in a never-ending cycle which never exactly repeats. The motion is slow, moving through many phases: the fabric slowly traverses the floor, wafts upwards, hovers silently, slowly billows, descends, folds upon itself. The fabric form is simple and translucent, emphasizing the evanescent interplay of air, light, and motion.

*Fledgling* is a little creature floating in the air shrouded in shimmering silk fabric, moving up and down in response to its environment. It comprises a small autonomous mechanism shrouded in a fabric enclosure, suspended from a loop of string, counterweighted for smooth, quiet motion. *Fledgling* contains several sensors intended to detect nearby humans, and exhibits an ambient behavior in which it explores its one-dimensional environment, singing songs, observing the vicinity with sensors, and avoiding humans it detects.

*Fledgling*
mixed media, 2006-2007
dimensions variable

Artist Statement

As a technologist, I am troubled by the human need to anthropomorphize our machines; it carries overtones of an animistic relation to the world, not one based on a clarity of mind and perception. However, as an artist I know full well the comfort of relating to our artifacts in terms of sentience and autonomy. *Fledgling* is an attempt to explore this duality by creating autonomous behavior in a simple artificial creature designed solely to provide an ambient presence as it moves through its one-dimensional world.

I am also fascinated by the sensual meditative motions of fabric moving through air. *Albatross* is set to inhabit the air, to float above the earth. But on each drag across the floor, the roughnesses catch and snag the fabric until it rises free again. And a connection is plainly visible from the fabric through the web of string to the propulsion motors in the suitcase and the counterweights in the window. The strings silently loft the gossamer fabric through its slow ascents and descents but also ground it and define boundaries in the space.