

MEDIA STUDY/BUFFALO

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Videotapes by Jon Burris

Nothing to Look At

Zeno All tapes B&W, sound

Balls for the Mule

As briefly as possible, these three tapes are the points of departure for a delineation of a wide-ranging investigation in video, readily extendable to other media.

The focus of such an investigation can lie in three areas:

(1) in the observation of certain phenomena and dynamics, e.g. electromagnetic waveform dynamics, acoustics, noise and disorganization or randomness and certain modes and parameters of organization within the registrations of each medium.

(2) and (3) in those two observational systems, both mediational, both determinant, both fields of registration: the specific hardware system employed (video, audio, acoustic, photographic, et. al. systems) and the human perceptual and cognitive systems and mechanisms.

(What I am not interested in are certain qualities normally considered integral to art: metaphor, denotative convention--a language or grammar of expression--or direct expression of subjective states.)

In all of this the key concept is observation. In place of the "traditional" art concept of the work or body of work as existing within a set of internally consistent conventions which allow the maker to express his personal view of the world by wielding such conventions as he may have at his disposal to express directly his subjective view of the world (or whatever), the investigatory framework exists, in one sense, a step behind. The impulse is to define what is in some sense "reality" by defining the parameters, conditions and processes of observation. In a near tautology, reality is defined as the world as it is observed.

This is a schematic and fundamental but transitory endeavor: to discover the groundwork for the determinants of reality as defined above: of our own perceptual and cognitive mechanisms/systems and the mediational/observational properties of the various media. Each tape exists strongly as an experiment: to observe and to understand the possibilities and manifestations of the phenomena--in each case dynamic randomness--and more important, to observe and to understand our modes of perceiving and understanding that occur within each "experimental set-up".