

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
NEW AMERICAN FILMMAKERS SERIES

VIDEOTAPE SHOW

With the advent of videotape in the early 1960's, television underwent a major technological renovation. Filmed and live programming was suddenly replaced by an electronic process which recorded both sound and image simultaneously. Massive in size, expensive to operate, videotape equipment long remained totally in the province of the broadcasting industry. Recently however, smaller and less expensive videotape systems have become available to the consumer market and many people have begun to assemble videotape "studios" in their own homes and lofts. From these "studios" have emerged a new breed of television technician and artist, free to experiment with many of the basic concepts of video rarely explored in the industry.

Many uses have been made of videotape by the new video artists, ranging from minimal art tapes to use of video as a political form of communication. The Whitney Museum's VIDEOTAPE SHOW is not a survey of the many diverse works now being produced in the videotape field. Such a program would have been impossible to assemble properly in the short time that the Video Show has been in preparation. It was decided instead to limit the program to tapes which focus on the ability of videotape to create and generate its own intrinsic imagery rather than its ability to record reality. This is done with special video synthesizers, colorizers and by utilizing many of the unique electronic properties of the medium.

It was this aspect of video which I found particularly exciting - for it explores the creation of a whole new range of visual sensations. Unlike film, the video image has a constantly moving electronic dynamism, which when explored and exposed, creates an acute awareness of electrical energy. It is as if we can actually see the electrons forming their own infinite patterns and movements. It is this which has fascinated many videocartists, and some of their explorations into this new visual and kinetic realm are represented in this show.

Videotape art is still in its infancy and all the artists I have spoken to are painfully aware of this. This show represents the beginning of a new art form and hopefully it will be viewed with this perspective in mind. It should also be noted that some of the tapes are not entire pieces, but excerpts from longer works. Showing excerpts is usually frowned upon in film and most of the other arts - and rightly so in many cases. However, video is, I believe, an exception to this rule. Almost all video pieces are made in real time with little or no editing. This is due partly to the nature of the medium as well as the difficulty in editing $\frac{1}{2}$ inch videotape. Video is also a very relaxed and spontaneous art form, therefore many artists do not feel a composition has a fixed beginning, middle or end. It is for these reasons that I have included excerpts in this show. I might add, that no tape is excerpted or edited without the complete permission and agreement of the artist.

I would like to express my thanks to Elmer Smalling, Lu Lessard and the Teletape Organization as well as the other contributing members representing the Videotape Producers Association and the videotape industry for making this show possible. Thanks also to Computer Image Corporation for creating the title sequence which begins each show, and George Corran for designing the special video environment.

Woody and Steina Vasulka have contributed long and hard hours helping to edit the show and have provided the inspiration to begin this project and carry it to completion. My deepest thanks and appreciation to them and the other videotape artists who participated in the show.

--David Bienstock
Curator of Film

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
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PRESENTS

A SPECIAL VIDEOTAPE SHOW

VIDEO PROGRAM II
(December 9 - December 16)

Please note that Skip Sweeney's FEEDBACK originally scheduled for this show was presented in Program I. LONG SOUNDS replaces this selection.

ERIC SIEGEL PLAYS THE SIEGEL VIDEO SYNTHESIZER with Eric Siegel. Produced by Jackie Cassen for NET-TV, New York.

In 1960, as a high school student of fifteen, Eric Siegel won second prize in the New York City Science Fair for a home-made closed circuit television system constructed from second hand tubes, microscope lens and junk parts. Since then he has pioneered in the engineering of unusual video equipment most notably his video synthesizer and colorizer (which was used to colorize the following tapes used in the Whitney Show: Key Snow, Elements, Feed Fields Back, See Mudra Guld, and Aleph Null) His early tapes Psychedelevision and Einstein inspired other video artists to experiment in abstract video.--D.B.

"The Electronic Video Synthesizer was created to enhance the interface between the Video artist and the people. Each human being is enshelled in his own perception of reality. Rational logical communications have their severe limitations. The communications which take place on the Aesthetic Abstract level - deal with the inner tune of a being. Its like the DNA code of the artist speaking to the world - Since we all perceive different worlds, in the same world - it becomes our necessity to find witnesses - when we find the ultimate witness...we find love. The current trend towards Religion and god is in a way a frustrated attempt to find the ultimate witness. One can not do without a witness. What you see on the screen is my attempt to get a witness deeper into your being."--Eric Siegel.

VIDEO TUNNEL by Dimitri Devyatkin (7 min.) 1971

Being able to actually see yourself on a TV monitor the moment it is televising you is one of the main and essential differences between video and film. Dimitri Devyatkin uses this principle combined with pre-recorded tapes to create an interesting study in perception and psychological feedback.--D.B.

LONG SOUNDS by Richard Felciano (8 min.) Made in 1968 at the KQED Experimental Television Project (now the National Center for Experiments in Television, San Francisco).

LONG SOUNDS is the second half of an early video work by composer Richard Felciano entitled Trio for Speaker, Screen and Viewer. It was originally conceived for broadcast television and was the first work to invite the participation of the broadcast audience by suggesting viewers "play along" with the composition on commonly available household objects (in Long Sounds, electrical appliances). In this work the sound and image elements of the television experience function independently, each using material that is indigenous to it and not derived from the other artistic forms such as theater and film which have traditionally comprised broadcast television: the music is purely electronic, synthesized through a Buchla system; the images abstract and two-dimensional."--(notes from N.C.E.T.)

ALEPH-NULL by Shridhar Bapat and Charles Phillips (12 min.) 1971

"This tape is an example of pure video feedback. Abstraction is achieved and controlled by electronically "recycling" a video signal through a loop that includes cameras, a monitor and mixers. The "roughness" of the tape results from the fact that it was a spontaneous unrehearsed take."--Shridhar Bapat.

FEED FIELDS BACK by Richard Lowenberg (12 min.) 1971

Richard Lowenberg begins his tape with the electronic particles which constitute the video image. Built on this is all the imagery we are familiar with, from old movies to day time quiz programs. FEED FIELDS BACK is both a study of the components of the medium and its content, as well as the mysterious other forces which constitute it.--D.B.

POINT OF INFLECTION by Stephen C. Deck and Richard Felciano (8 min.) Excerpt. made in December, 1970, at the National Center for Experiments in Television, San Francisco.

"POINT OF INFLECTION is a study of a diamond which evolves into a complex variety of rhythms, textures and patterns. It is a collaborative work by two artists working directly with electronic instruments: the visual portion by Stephen Deck on the Deck Direct Video Synthesizer which produces television images without cameras or other optical devices; music by Richard Felciano on a Buchla Synthesizer. POINT OF INFLECTION was made in real time, without editing or other "post-production" processes, and as such is a piece unique to the electronic medium, in which the artist making and the viewer's experiencing can take place in the same time duration." -- (notes from N.C.E.T.).

VIDEO COMMUNE (excerpt) by Nam June Paik, Directed by David Atwood. Produced at WGBH, Boston. (6 min.) 1969-70.

Nam June Paik is one of the early pioneers of video. The video synthesizer used in this piece was created by Nam June Paik and Shuya Abe, an electronics engineer who, according to Paik "knows that science is more beauty than logic." The section I have selected typifies the sense of immediacy and joy people can have when seeing their faces transformed by the magic of the Paik synthesizer. Nam June Paik's vision of video is one which allows for as much fun and improvisation as possible - and this short section gives us a glimpse into one new area of video exploration.

--David Bienstock

DESCARTES by Joanne Kyger, Videomix by Robert N. Zagone, (11 min.) Made in 1968 at the KQED Experimental Project (now the National Center for Experiment in Television, San Francisco).

"DESCARTES is a poem written for the video experience by San Francisco Bay Area poet Joanne Kyger which was generated by Descartes' "A Discourse on Method". As in the philosopher's work, the video piece is composed of six parts; poetically and visually, each section peels off layer after layer of thought, seeking, in the course of the work, reconciliation of the mind/body dualism. Videomixer Robert Zagone utilized widely different techniques for the six discrete visual parts, including feed-back inverted split screens and video tape delay."--(notes from N.C.E.T.)

ELEMENTS by Woody and Steina Vasulka (1971)

"We will present you sounds and images which we call Electronic Image and Sound Compositions. They can resemble something you remember from dreams or pieces of organic nature, but they never were real objects, they have all been made artificially from various frequencies, from sounds, from inaudible pitches and their beats. Accordingly, most of the sounds you will hear are products of images, processed through sound synthesizer. Furthermore, there is time, time to sit down and just surrender. There is no reason to entertain minds anymore, because that has been done and did not help, it just does not help, and there is no help anyway, there is just surrender the way you surrender to the Atlantic Ocean, the way you listen to the wind, or the way you watch the sunset and that is the time you don't regret that you had nothing else to do."--The Vasulkas.

SPECIAL ONE DAY ONLY PROGRAMS

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17

IMAGES by Ed Emshwiller

MUSIC WITH BALLS by Terry Riley

PAIK-MOORMAN-ARTIST TELEVISION WORKSHOP by Nam June Paik and Jackie Cassen

SEED DREAM by Isaac Abrams and Carol Herzer

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18

FLAY by Arwin Nikolais

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION PROJECT by Jackie Cassen, Russell Amor, Douglas Davis, Constantine Manos, Nam June Paik, James Seawright, Mimi Errard, Tsai Wen-Ying, S. Vanderbeek.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19

(See Friday's program)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
NEW AMERICAN FILMMAKERS SERIES
945 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10021
(212-861-5322)

December 23 - January 2

HILDUR AND THE MAGICIAN by Larry Jordan (90 min.)
Adventures of a fairy queen who loses her supernatural powers and becomes mortal.

January 3 - 12

VIDEO FILMS

A selection of shorts showing the exciting ways independent filmmakers are using videotape in conjunction with film.

OFF-ON by Scott Bartlett

ELECTRONIC FABLES by Jud Yalkut and Nam June Paik

THE FALL by Tom DeWitt

THE CASTING by James Pasternak

FILM FORM #2 by Stan Vanderbeek

LIFE WITH VIDEO by Willie Walker

TELEVISION LAND by Charles Braverman

January 13 - 19

ANGELA DAVIS: PORTRAIT OF A REVOLUTIONARY by Yolande duLuart (60 min.)

An award winning documentary on Angela Davis made by one of her students, Yolande DuLuart, during the controversy over her appointment as professor of Marxism at the University of California.

(short to be announced)

January 20 - 26

FOR EXAMPLE by Arakawa (90 min.)

Arakawa, the creator of the highly acclaimed film WHY NOT, explores the world of a 6 year old drunkard in this new film.

January 27 - February 2

WINTERSOLDIER by Winterfilm (90 min.)

American soldiers who served in Viet Nam testify as to their experiences there.

February 3 - 9

NEW WEST COAST FILMS

The spirit of the West Coast as captured by new films from that area.

MEDITATION by Jordan Eelson

JULY 1971 - IN SAN FRANCISCO, LIVING AT BEACH STREET, WORKING AT CANYON CINEMA,
SWIMMING IN THE VALLEY OF THE MOON by Peter Hutton

SERPENT by Scott Bartlett

(others to be announced)

February 10 - 16

ONE P.M. by Jean-Luc Goddard and D.A. Pennebaker (90 min.)

A view of Jean-Luc Goddard directing his film ONE A.M. in America, including scenes with Eldridge Cleaver, Tom Hayden, Jefferson Airplane, etc.

February 17 - 23

ANIMATION FESTIVAL

A program of shorts showing the varied uses of animation by independent filmmakers to explore their world of fantasy.

U.F.O. by Lillian Schwartz and Ken Knowlton

BLACK PUDDING by Nancy Edell

69 by Robert Breer

INSTANT FOREVER by David Lubell

OUT LADY OF THE SPHERE by Larry Jordan

RUNAWAY by Standish Lawder

THE SECRETE OF LIFE by Victor Faccinto

TURTLE SOUP by Irene Verbitsky Duga

FLOWERPOT by John Hawkins

February 24 - March 1

IMAGE, FLESH AND VOICE by Ed Emshwiller (77 min.)

Ed Emshwiller captures the human body in its infinite forms of beauty, mystery and majesty.

CANOL by Ed Emshwiller (8 min.)

March 2 - 8

OUT THERE, A LONE ISLAND by Humphrey Laynse (60 min.)

A film-poem which shows the fabric of life on a small, almost totally isolated island in the Sea of Japan.

SERVO by Humphrey Laynse (15 min.)