Dear Mr. Vasulka -

I am sorry for leaving your screening.

Inasmuch as it appears rude, I believe you can understand that some of us have limited levels of endurance - I do not feel incapable of grasping innovative concepts, but I question the necessity of using effects on-the-voices so interminably. It doesn't seem to add anything to the point you are making, and serves to weary the viewer... keep it up, though, and best wishes.

Flora Fauna, St. Music Calendar.
Joanne Kelly Adds TV to Dancing

VIDEO FREE AMERICA:
Spearheading San Francisco Video

If memory serves, tiny television monitors began to make a timid appearance in dances during the early 60's, as an adjunct to movement activity. They were nothing fancy, merely showing black and white pictures on tiny 12 inch screens. Their very presence, though, had a shock value that could also be noted for the Advent color-projection set, whose picture had to be measured in feet rather than inches, and that occupied the dance program with Joanne Kelly on Friday evening at 541 Broadway. It was one spectacular measure of the technology-rich 70's.

San Francisco Chronicle

Mon., April 17, 1972

Video Free America

Novel Medium Opens in S.F.

By Paine Knickerbocker

San Francisco's most recent novelty, which may well be a significant pioneering demonstration of a new documentary and/or entertainment medium, opened over the weekend at the studio of Video Free America, 442 Shotwell street.

Two separate programs were shown: "All the Video You Can Eat" at 8 on Friday night and "Carol & Ferd," which will continue to be previewed at 8 p.m. on Saturdays until its theatrical release later this spring, when it is expected to open here and in New York.

The Friday program, which will also be repeated weekly, is a collection of varied shorts: abstract, erotic, experimental and radical, illustrating the many expressions of video. Eleven monitors on one side of the room carry the images. These are controlled by a selective operator so that the monitors may carry different scenes and patterns, although at times they are identical. It is dazzling.

Skip Sweeney has been working for several years on an hour-long experimental program that needs further editing, called "My Father Sold Studebakers," which is tentatively scheduled to be shown on the PBS series "VTR - Video and Television Review" this fall. "Illuminatin' Skip Sweeney" was shown in the 1975 VTR series hosted by Russell Connor.

The talents of Skip Sweeney and Joanne Kelly, still mostly underground, should be seen by more people in and outside San Francisco. Perhaps their combined works will help San Francisco regain a leadership in the arts, since Mayor George Mascone claims that the proposed San Francisco Performing Arts Center "is not just for the elite."
Two programs of videotape will be presented at the Whitney Museum between December 3 and 16. I saw the press previews of the two programs, and I recommend them both. Not that they are particularly outstanding; rather, they are very well selected, as if a fair introduction to videotape were on going in the "abstract" use of videotape, per se. I think meaning that these two programs avoid the straight recording of reality and concentrate on video art, which is equal no less "abstract" than any other medium. I was particularly interested in two programs by Skip Sweeney, which was shown the following Sunday. It was much closer to traditional film. He did offer one color abstract and one half-documentary/full-synthesiz- ed piece intermingling scenes of a tape with synthesized elements. The main concern was a long documentary dealing with recollections of his family's life, particularly in an attempt to explain the reasons of the relationship with his father after his father's funeral. There were interviews with other members of the family as well as with people who knew and worked with Skip Sweeney (who owned a Studiobaker dealership.) Video is an ideal medium for documentary work because of its ease of handling and the fact that the recorder can be tuned on for a long period and left to gather accurately whatever is happening in front of it. The only difficulty that I perceived was the intensely personal nature of the tape getting in the way of its audience effectiveness. The nuances of his family's interpersonal relationships and the opinions people expressed of him, his father, etc., are only interesting up to a point, unless of course you are the artist himself. However, I was not so much interested in Skip Sweeney, but perhaps those tapes which do not hit so close to home are more objectively edited. Activities on tape, on the other hand, were more self-critical than one would have expected. The only difficulty that I perceived was the intensely personal nature of the tape getting in the way of its audience effectiveness.

Dance: Joanne Kelley With Tape By ANNA KERELOYGT Joanne Kelley, who lives and works in San Francisco, presented a dance concert that used videotape and live performance Friday night at the Triton Books loft, 349 Broadway. On first acquaintance the program seemed proper to describe Miss Kelley as both a dance choreographer and a video filmmaker. The point of her perfor- mance, however, was that there was no separation between these activities, and in this respect she was quite success- ful. "Tahmar," as she called her concert, turned out to be an experiment in the use of video tape as an artistic medium. It was a self-effacing, autobiographical statement. Contrary to what one might expect, the abstract separation was present in the very title of the piece. "Tahmar" means "lake" in the Assyrian language, and it was related to new works by Miss Kelley. She has been working with video tape for about one year, and the program is a sort of summary of her work to date. The piece grew more abstract the more it was related to "Tahmar," the medieval Queen of Georgia who lived because in film the precedents are sheer physicality and expense of dealing with film. It is a natural impulse

By FRED GARDNER Television, table out the hour of your epiphany has come. Those of you who have heard the call and stood en- trance in the appliance sec- tions of department stores seen video tape, at the University of California Art Movement's Tape of All Fringe series, for the next month. About 25 sets, (how can one count them in the ecstasy of the moment?) like the walls of the Princeton Gallery, three or four in color, beaming lines of programming that may put the sets into a per- manent state of electronic shock. These instruments will probably never again be fit for the staid face of more commercial viewing. Presented by Video Free America in conjunction with the Pacific Film Archive, the series offers video tape fea- tures from the electronic underground. WHAT DOES IT all mean? We are in the age of the instant, as our grown up children play with $1000 tops, capturing their own images in acts, naughty, defiling, and self assertive. Is Narcissus secretly sitting in the cathode tube, apparently laughing?

VFA's interest in video focuses on the craft of the medium. The group exhibits that it is exploring the medium as a primary, a new kind of communica- tion, a method that has yet to be trans- ferred to the scale of the set. For VFA, it is an undefined, some of the op- erating terms—feedback, pure feedback, black and white feedback—of the working barriers, but the group is adept in providing clear descriptions of its theories. VFA, has worked on everything from video tape series to a recording of a July 4th mini concert at Berkeley to special material for a group of patients. VFA's interest in abstract graphics, often dil- erently keyed to the sound of a long-synthesized, has produced several short films, none of which have been shown at the Whitney Museum in San Francisco.

**Television**

1972

Working from a script by Gibson, Rigbey, and Sweeney, the director, has done a brilliant and important job of staging. With Arthur Girnso (no relation of All That Jazz Arthur) and Video Free America, Kilfin has inte- grated a videotape video with a performance and a film with a story. The film, with a fairly strong "mixed media" theater, I have ever seen. The work of Skip Sweeney, on a large screen that serves as a black wall for the background, creates consonances and dissonances between the live actors and the tape images that become the dramatic and poetic tissue of the play, the interplay real flesh and the filmed image, the space-memory of All That Jazz.

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Video Showings & Performance

VFA sponsors videotape showings every Sunday night with the participating videomaker present to discuss his/her work with the audience. The showings are the only weekly offering of video in San Francisco. Because of this, the showings have become a meeting ground for working artist/producers and their public to meet and discuss developments and the state of the art. Work by Bill and Louise Etra, Stephen Beck, Doris Chase, Mobile Image, Charlemagne Palestine, Max Almy, Paul Kos and others has been shown. Works are screened on a seven foot Advent video projector or a multi-monitor set up, as the individual artist/producer chooses. The showing space is also large enough to accommodate video performance works as well as more traditional single channel presentations. In addition to the weekly showings, VFA sponsors a number of special event performances on Friday and Saturday nights which vary from dance to theater to music. Often these special events also integrate video as part of the performance.

Independent Production

VFA is available to produce independent productions, both closed circuit and broadcast oriented projects. Some examples are "Independent Production" tapes including "Toy Story" and "Babylonian Paisley". In 1974, VFA became interested in reaching a broader audience with its work, and naturally turned to broadcast television. In 1975, WNED-TV aired "Illuminatin' Sweeney", a half hour video art program by Skip Sweeney, a co-founder of VFA. In 1976, VFA produced a documentary "Town Meetings" funded by the California Council on the Humanities & Public Policy, and was aired on closed circuit cable TV.

Video Workshops

Several times a year, VFA teaches "Techniques & Technology", a "hands on equipment" six week workshop. Students learn shooting, mixing and editing for both black & white and color productions. Students also view tapes by video-artist/producers as well as read the existing literature on the state of the art. The emphasis is on "hands on equipment" though, with student video productions being aired on cable TV at the conclusion of the workshop.

Special Summer Dance-Video Workshop:

Since the summer of 1973, when Utah Repertory Dance Theatre invited VFA to teach video and dance for six weeks at the University of Utah, VFA has been offering a summer dance & video workshop. From 1974, to the present, the workshop has been held in San Francisco. This workshop offers a unique opportunity for artists from both media to work together creating synthesized dance works, documentary dance tapes, and performance works choreographed to include video projections. The summer 78 workshop will be taught by VFA staff, Joanne Kelly, as well as prominent guest teachers.

Broadcast TV

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Independent Production

VFA is available to produce independent productions, both closed circuit and broadcast oriented projects. Some examples of productions we have done in the past are from the simple (a black and white portapak document of therapy sessions), to the complex (TK-76 color ENG cameras on location, providing sound, lighting, etc. for production and editing, video graphics, etc. for post production).

VFA has experience taping events from design conferences to theater dress rehearsals to public service announcements for television. Independent production fees, timetables, etc. are determined by consultation with VFA staff.

Tape Archive

The archive includes tapes on many different formats (1/4", 3/4", 1") and displays many different styles of videowork. Included are health care tapes on parenting, VD, etc.; humor tapes by Willie Boy Walker; a tape of the theater work "History of China" by Bob Carroll; a documentary of the artist Sol Lewitt; videoart works by the Vasulkas; as well as some 200 odd other videotape programs. The archive also includes periodicals and books. Archive videotapes are screened by arrangement.

Broadcast TV

In 1974, VFA became interested in reaching a broader audience with its work, and naturally turned to broadcast television. In 1975, WNET-TV aired "Illuminating Sweeney", a half hour video art program by Skip Sweeney, a co-founder of VFA. In 1976, VFA produced a documentary "Town Meetings" funded by the California Council on the Humanities in Public Policy, and was aired on KTVU-TV. In 1977, WNET-TV Lab invited Skip Sweeney to do another program, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, which resulted in the program, "My Father Sold Studebakers". In addition to the above projects, two projects, "Gard & Fird" and "Kaddish" were originally produced in the early 70's as VFA closed-circuit video theater and were reworked for WNET-TV by producer Arthur Ginsberg, with assistance from Skip Sweeney, and were aired in 1975 and 1977 respectively.

Work-Exchange

VFA has several work-exchange positions. These jobs are office work, ticket taking for video showings, research for productions, etc. In exchange for hours logged at the above jobs, VFA offers "time" as negotiated with each individual, on VFA video equipment for work-exchange productions.

Equipment Rental

Video Free America rents:
black & white portapaks
1/2" editing
3/4" cassette editing
studio cameras
SEG (special effects generator)
Advent video projector (7 ft.)
Hearn colorizer/multi-level keyer
black & white/color monitors
microphones (ECM-50, shotgun, etc.)
lights, tripods, other miscellaneous

Equipment rents on a sliding scale for artists and non-profit groups. For ENG color camera production, refer to "Independent Production".
SELECTED WORKS FROM TAPES FROM ALL TRIBES

Wednesday, August 18
8:00 PM
Video Poetry... a collaborative effort at Washington, D.C. To provide a free airing to video participants, who in the spring offered their ideas, to the public in the present form.

Thursday, August 19
8:00 PM
Shiloh Video Games, and Video Peace Rituals... an important landmark in the study of art and performance by the Berkeley Art Film Archive and students at the University of California.

Friday, August 20
8:00 PM
A Portfolio of Charlotte Moorman... a program broadcast in Europe to coincide with her presence.

Saturday, August 21
8:00 PM
The Continuing Story of Carla's Dream... a reality trip into adopting a cultural and spiritual perspective.

Sunday, August 22
8:00 PM
The Endless Fringe... a collection of video and performance works by Bruce Leven, Billy Cretin, and Carl Methfessel.

A good note to end on.

Admission: 75c