Recently, I interviewed Woody and Steinunn Vasulka and Eric Siegel about their upcoming shows... Woody and Steinunn are presenting a program of their videotapes at Max's Kansas City and Eric will be showing his tapes at the Raindance loft.

Eric Siegel, unlike many people involved in video today, has a vast technological background from which to draw upon and it is this combination of creative and technical ability that gives his work its own flavor. I spoke of the Synthesizer that he worked on in San Francisco. In his own words, it is "the synthesizer. It has a keyboard and a number of knobs and a program panel where you can set up a specific kind of abstract program on your own. And you can program in the keyboard so you can use the keys for different things and they'll do other things as well." This instrument has been "designed in such a way so that it can be played on the networks. So a person can sit down and play this thing as if they're going to give a visual concert right into the video viewer."

His new program at Raindance will be an edited version of a tape he did recently in San Francisco of the Cockettes. The program that the Vasulkas have put together for Max's will be shown once nightly for 3 days, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, starting Feb. 8. Each program will be different although some tape segments will be repeated.

They use a wide range of techniques and subjects... from realistic sketches to abstract patterns using music to complete their environment. One of the highlights of their presentation is a half hour tape of many moods of Jackie Curtis. A rather technical perfection seems to be Woody Vasulka's primary guide toward editing. He resists the urge to edit tape down to those two pure minutes of "message" because he feels that the message is in seeing things as the videotaper does. Every mistake, every effort that goes into conveying the video scene to the viewer is a revelation for him. In this way, he says, one is really using the medium of tape to its fullest. In most situations, the cameraman is only a tool that shoots a certain angle or a certain shot and the end result is not a reflection of him but something rather anonymous, that has been saved from the fail to the cutting room floor. I asked him if he didn't then think that this non-editing would be likely to produce rather lengthily uninteresting tapes for audience viewing. To this he replied that "some people always do the things that are quite uninteresting. And if I would arrive to that discovery in my case I probably would give up."

Unlike many of the video groups around today, the Vasulkas are into an heavy political bag. Their interests draw them more towards theatre, dance and most anything that is happening that is interesting. Both Woody and Steinunn have been born and raised outside of the U.S. and I feel Steinunn best expresses their feelings when she says "I don't have to be liberated... I am."