VIDEO BY STEINA AND WOODY VASULKA

For nearly a quarter of a century Steina and Woody Vasulka have remained at the forefront of exploration into the formal and interactive possibilities of the electronic moving image. Founders of The Kitchen in New York in 1971, they were among the first to establish multiscreen video as an art form. Steina, a concert violinist, was the first to integrate live interactive video into musical performances, inspiring a generation of high-tech performance artists. Woody is world renowned as a visionary pioneer of electronic image processing; and he remains on the leading edge today, having moved into digital image synthesis and interactive multimedia.

Tokyo Four

Steina lived in Japan from November 1987 to May 1988 on a fellowship from the US/Japan Friendship Commission. There she recorded sixty hours of video with a camcorder. She let the tapes sit for a year, then began working on them in May 1989. Now, more than two years later, there is Tokyo Four, her sixth multiscreen composition. It is organized around five categories of imagery: Buddhist priests meticulously grooming their Zen garden on New Year's Eve; train conductors monitoring rush hour crowds; elevator girls bringing a superfluous but charming High Touch to the high tech world of the shopping malls; reminding SHoppers to watch their umbrellas and not to forget their children; a section about food, beginning with the vertiginous fisheye lens in a supermarket; and an emotionally charged meta-choreography of a dance troupe's performance and curtain call.
No form of moving-image art comes as close to musical composition as multiscreen video, where the different channels of image and sound are equivalent to musical polyphony, functioning like voices (instruments) in a musical ensemble. And no multiscreen work is as spectacularly musical as Steina’s. She works as a composer would, playing on the visual equivalents of timbre, texture and tone. Tokyo Four is the audiovisual equivalent of a string quartet. Sometimes one screen is the melody and the others are accompaniment, then it changes. A musical syntax emerges from this visual point/counterpoint organized around duration, interval, rhythm, repetition and series.

In one compositional strategy Steina begins by assembling a long single-channel segment which represents the "melody" or what she calls the ground track. She makes three copies of it and inserts new images into each channel as accompaniment. Sometimes she records the ground track in reverse motion, which, in her musical terminology, "breaks the line" (the linear progression) making it easier to start inserting other images. She often works on all four channels simultaneously, using time code to bring them forward synchronously. They don’t always have the same edit at the same point but they progress simultaneously toward a unified conclusion, like a musical canon.

Her compositional devices include flipping or reversing an image (right becomes left) and controlling its speed so that the same action begins at different times on different screens, playing at imperceptibly different speeds, then gradually they all synchronize at the same speed. These strategies are especially effective in the final movement when the female dancer is bowing. The Strauss waltz (the music the dancers were using) would be banal without the manipulations of Steina’s spectacular visual matrix,
which transforms it into something at once exotic and poignant.

Art of Memory

Art of Memory is not only Woody Vasulka's most famous work but must be counted among the most acclaimed and widely exhibited works in the history of video art. Three and a half years in the making, Art of Memory has won numerous awards and has been exhibited countless times around the world since its premiere in November 1987. There were three major sources of inspiration for the tape -- Vasulka's childhood memories of newsreels of world conflict; historian Frances Yates' book The Art of Memory; and the engravings of the 19th century Romantic illustrator Gustave Dore. Vasulka took from Yates not only the title of his videotape but also one of the tape's two organizing principles, that of "putting thoughts into a landscape." Yates writes in The Art of Memory about mnemonic devices used by classical Greeks and Romans. In preparation for his long orations Cicero would walk through a temple noting the number and positions of the columns, assigning to each column one of the topics of his speech. When debating he would visualize his temple walk, recalling the points of his speech with a perfection that would leave his opponents defenseless. The mnemonic architectures in Vasulka's tape are newsreels, photographs and texts as "memories" of major conflicts of the 20th Century -- World War II primarily, but also the Russian Revolution and the Spanish Civil War. The movies, photos and book pages ("leafing through history") do not fill the screen but instead are mapped onto shapes or objects that either float above the landscape of the American Southwest or are continuations of it.
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November 29, 1991

Woody Vasulka
Route 6, Box 100
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Woody:

It was good to talk to you regarding your upcoming show.

The dates for the exhibition are January 25 - March 22, 1992.

Enclosed please find a xerox of the floor plan of the gallery. After you have had a chance to look at it, please give me a call so we can start mapping it out. The best number to reach me is 303/640-2252. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely yours,

Deborah C. Jordy
Associate Curator
Modern and Contemporary Art

enclosure

DCJ/jf

THE DENVER ART MUSEUM
100 West 14th Avenue Parkway
Denver, Colorado 80204
Telephone 303/640-2255
LIST OF DINNER INVITEES

MR+MRS  DON YANNACIDO
703 Dellwood Ave
Boulder, CO 80304

Virgil & Joanne Grillo
921 Spruce St
Boulder, CO 80302

MR+MRS  BOB COGGESHAW
(I'LL HAVE THE ADDRESS SHORTLY)

A mailing list for the opening
forthcoming.

Best, Steven
FAX TRANSMITTAL

Date: 12.18.91
To: STEVA VASVICA
Firm:
Fax Number: 505.473.0614
From: DEMETR JONDA
Department: MLC DEPT
Phone: 303) 640-2252 Fax: 303) 640-5627
(Please call if you do not receive all pages)

Number of pages, including this sheet: 3

STEVA-

Here is every page, along
of spaces for you to work.

Thks,
DELL

cc: JAY HALLMAN

John Conn
Date: 12-23-91
To: Woody & STRINA VASUCA
Firm:
Fax Number: 505-473-4614
From: D. Jones
Department: MMD Dept.
Phone: 303-640-2252 Fax: 303-640-5627
(Please call if you do not receive all pages)
Number of pages, including this sheet: 3

Woody & Strina —

I'll talk to you today,
I will be in the Main
after 2:30 today

Best,

[Signature]
Denver Art Museum
Debra Torcher, Curator
(303) 840-2252 (and photography work returned)

NEA grant, no money found
Gene Youngblood - writing?

Budget
The money $12,000 - combined fee & rental
Need: 9 monitors ($ave $)
US & Hardware
Shipping: extra
Wiring: extra

Installation: Opens January 24 - March 22, 1971

Wooden Art of Memory, single channel
outside side
projected at the monitor

Staged, altered sound

Tokyo Tower, four channels, four channels
28 mm continuous

Wooden - Spinning / unspinning onto multiple
1) Width: 3'5" 42"
    Height: 3'5" 42"
    Depth: deep enough for the VCR
    The pedestal should be at least 5 ft. open in the back with a shelf for the videotape reader.

2) NO

3) MAILINGLIST FAXED TUESDAY

4) We need to be involved with the installation.
    Fly out: 24 morning.
    Return: 25 evening (last flight)

5) Steina will talk to John Emerson

6) Virginia Gillmore + spouse
    Don Yanozito + 1
    Bob Cooperstall + 1
SYNCHRONIZER

VCR

TV

Cables

VCR

Oversize Monitor

32" (36"

How long?

Need
## Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Code</th>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Priority Options</th>
<th>Delivery Options</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Standard Overnight Service (Delivery by next business day)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Constant Surveillance Service (CSS)</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dry Ice</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other Special Services</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Signature:**

**Release:**

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**Revision Date:** 8/11

**Format:** ROT4

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**Printed in USA**
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