At the New Mexican in Santa Fe.

Columbia University in the arts, an edito

Ruth Lopez, a former journalism fellow at

found near Las Alamos, N.M., where the

made from discarded military equipment

tions fabricated as a series of tables, are

"They just have to overcome human frail-

tively little time to take it apart. Something

Mr. Vasulka is a media artist, combining

video, computer technology and traditional

machinery in his work. It had taken him

months to put everything together and rela-

tively little time to take it apart. Something

was amiss, but Mr. Vasulka appeared calm.

"The machines want to work," he said.

nuclear bombs that fell on Japan were

created. They turn, they twist, they reach out,

they reach back, often eerily in response to

motions of viewers. Each is accompanied by

a system of projectors, speakers, screens,

lights and sensors through which each type

of behavior is controlled. The result, titled

"The Brotherhood," carries overtones of

the destruction the Japanese experienced

from American raids at the end of World

War II, although nothing was made of that

point in the planning of the show or the

catalogue that accompanies it.

The show, Mr. Vasulka's first on his own,

opened at the Intercommunication Center in

Tokyo on July 17 and runs through August.

The media museum was established in 1997

by the Japanese telephone giant, N.T.T. Visi-

tors to "The Brotherhood" Web site, www.concentric.net/tables, will be able to view

the exhibition. Because of the scale of the

project, "The Brotherhood" had spilled out

of its studio to a work space at the College

of Santa Fe several miles away. Mr. Vasulka

spent long days split between two locations.

These are blue-collar artists," Mr. Hisa-

nor said. "Sometimes media artists will

do nothing by themselves. They have engi-

ners and special staff to do everything."

While it is true that the bulk of the cre-

ation of "The Brotherhood" stayed in Mr.

Vasulka's hands, he would be the first to

point out that he was hardly alone.

"This is no longer something I can claim

as a private work," he said. "This is the first

Continued on Page 36
time I've reached beyond my individual capacity. One always thinks that one can do it all, but that's not true." Mr. Vasulka had to bring in experts, for instance, after he enlarged his concept by incorporating MIDI (musical instrument digital interface), a communications system that enables electronic musical instruments to interact with one another.

"There were so many walls we had to crash through," said Ms. Vasulka, explaining that the project included several computer languages. "In the old days, Woody could go in with a soldering iron and fix the problem." she said. "But if a code breaks, we are defenseless."

The Vasulkas, leading figures in the history of video art, were co-founders in 1971 of the Kitchen, the experimental media space in downtown Manhattan. Their collaboration started in the early 60's when they met in Prague, where Woody was studying film and Steve was a laboratory assistant. His installations began to take on a more sinister tone inspired by the machinery of war. He also turned away from making only video images and began exploring the relationships between objects and space.

For Mr. Vasulka, "The Brotherhood" is the expansion of an idea that began in 1980 with a construction called the "Theater of Hybrid Automata" (now "Table II"). That installation explored both actual and virtual space. The device at the heart of this construction is a celestial navigator, a piece of military hardware originally designed to chart air interception. A long metal creature, a cross between a giant praying mantis and a dinosaur, rises out of the base of a hospital operating table. Mr. Vasulka will direct the "Maiden" with a computerized violin on opening night. In his artist's statement, Mr. Vasulka says that the theme of his installation is male identity and mankind's compulsion to reorganize nature. "The Brotherhood" neither argues for a reformed agenda nor defends a male strategy," he wrote. Later, he added, "I think art should be as far away from life as possible."

Mr. Vasulka's intentions are far-ranging. He is fascinated by the 'discreet antagonism' between art and science and continua to examine objects in space that have 'some self.' But as "The Brotherhood" neared completion, what seemed to concern the artist was the strange situation with, as he put it, the show business aspect of art. His bigger commissions will come with bigger expectations.

"I never believed art should be expensive," he said, clearly overwhelmed by the cost of resources during the last few months. "I seem to be facing an industrial involvement with logistics of organization, communication, mechanization, tools. I don't think that's the right direction. If I could find an articulate group of Luddites, I would be interested in joining them."

But that could have just been fatigue talking. For now, Mr. Vasulka will have a show in Tokyo at a time when many galler-