

Campus

Visual art showcased Festival brings cutting edge exhibits to BG

by Dan Jordan
writer

"Video Installation," the visual component to the 11th Annual New Music and Arts Festival, combines conceptual imagery and technology into modern art.

Crashing thunder beckons the viewer to a three-sided white wall centered by a small lightning bolt. On further investigation, the bolt is revealed to be a small crack with images of light and dark emanating in the background. This is the reality a viewer "drowns" in while viewing this work.

Rita Myer's "In the Drowning Pool," on loan from the Long Beach Museum of Art, is one of two video installations on display in the Fine Arts Gallery.

Myer portrays humankind versus the elements. A row boat — moored to a rock — is

tossed about by the destructive forces of nature. A video display screen behind the boat provides the backdrop for the setting.

Images of smoke, fire and lightning are interwoven with moments of serenity. Myers focuses on the duality of existence — destruction and regeneration within the environment.

"We look for the things that challenge borders of art for the New Music and Arts Festival. We tend to bring in more technological development, people who have very unusual things," said Jacqueline Nathan, director of the Fine Arts Gallery.

"Video installation is a combination of not just imagery on the screen, but a physical installation as well. It becomes an experience, not only watching an image, but it becomes more complex when one is placed within a certain environment," she explained.

"Vocalizations," a collaboration between artist Steina Vasulka and singer-composer Joan La Barbara, is a 15 minute piece encompassing nine video monitors.

Vosulka, a native of Iceland, moved to the United States in 1965. She is co-founder of The Kitchen, an alternative art gallery in New York City.

In "Vocalizations," film footage of nature and industry are electronically manipulated to create gyrating patterns and designs. The effect emulates a video lava lamp, and La Barbara's vocals have been made inarticulate for the exhibit.

The exhibition will continue through Oct. 17. Admission is free to the public and gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 2-5 p.m. on Sunday. In addition, the exhibition will also be open on Friday, Oct. 12 at 7 p.m. in conjunction with the musical portion of the festival.



Photo by Stephanie Lewis

Senior Film Studies major Autumn Lovejoy finds there is more to this crack than meets the eye. It is part of the Video Installations exhibit which is on display in the Fine Arts Gallery until October 17.

FREE T-SHIRT TO FIRST 6,000 BGSU STUD

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VOCALIZATION 1.

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video (1986)

The collaborative work between video artist Steina and I (Joan La Barbara) began early this year when Steina and her husband and partner, Woody Vasulka, developed an interactive system that allowed my voice to intercut and pass secondary video images into a primary one. The specific sounds made by my voice affect the shapes and patterns of the bleed-through. This work will eventually be extended and performed in real time, i.e., live.

Joan La Barbara, dubbed "the reigning vocal wizard of the avant-garde," is a composer, performer, media artist, writer and pioneer in experimental and extended vocal techniques. She has won numerous awards and honors for her work including four National Endowment for the Arts fellowships (in Visual Arts, Music Composition, Solo Recitalist, and Inter-Arts programs), radio commissions in Europe and America, and a composer-in-residency from the DAAD Berliner Künstler program. Her career began in the early 70s as the vocalist of choice for major contemporary composers, including John Cage, Philip Glass and Steve Reich. She has premiered numerous works especially composed for her unique vocal qualities. La Barbara has produced five albums with her own compositions: *Voice is the Original Instrument*, *Tapesongs*, *Reluctant Gypsy*, *as lightning comes*, *in flashes* and *The Art of Joan La Barbara*. In recent years, she has appeared with the Houston Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic's New Music Group, on the San Francisco Symphony's New and Unusual Music series and the New York Philharmonic's Horizons '84 Festival.

Steina Vasulka was born in Iceland, attended the Music Conservatory in Prague from 1959 to 1963, and joined the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra in 1964. The following year she moved to the U.S. and has since been a seminal force in the development of the electronic arts 1970, both as co-founder of The Kitchen (a major exhibition center in New York City), and as a continuing explorer of the possibilities for the generation and manipulation of the electronic image through a broad range of technological tools and aesthetic concerns. Her videos have been exhibited and broadcast extensively in the U.S. and Europe. In 1978, she had an exhibit *Machine Vision* at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, N.Y. Since moving to Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1980, she has produced a series of video tapes relating to the land, and an installation entitled *The West*. Named a Guggenheim Fellow in 1976, Vasulka is the recipient of numerous grants.



LOCAL NEWS

Video Installations opens Friday in BGSU Gallery

"Video Installations," a new exhibit at the Bowling Green State University Fine Arts Gallery, goes on display Friday.

The special exhibit is among the events planned as part of the 11th annual New Music and Art Festival.

"Video Installations" features two works: "In the Drowning Pool" by Rita Myers and "Vocalizations" by Steina Vasulka in collaboration with composer and singer Joan LaBarbara.

In conjunction with the exhibit, Myers will be on campus to discuss her work at 7 p.m. Friday in 204 Fine Arts Gallery. An opening reception in the gallery will follow her talk. The event is free and public.

Both Ms. Myers and Ms. Vasulka have achieved wide recognition for their work in video but each expresses quite distinct con-

cerns. Ms. Vasulka explores images in movement, while Ms. Myers attempts to express a sense of the transcendent, according to Jacqueline Nathan, director of the Fine Arts Gallery.

Ms. Myers' "In the Drowning Pool" deals with destruction and regeneration. "Arts Magazine" described the work as "Hallucinatory, hypnotizing and chilling without being didactic or simplistic. It is video poetry."

In "Vocalizations" Ms. Vasulka has developed a visual evocation of a vocal work by Joan LaBarbara, who will be a featured guest at the 1990 New Music and Art Festival Oct. 10-14.

Ms. Myers, a resident of New York City, has received a number of awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts.

Her work has been shown in solo exhibitions and installations at the Alternative Museum in New York, the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto. "In the Drowning Pool" was previously shown at the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, Mass., and at the Long Beach Museum of Art in California.

A native of Iceland, Ms. Vasulka studied music in Prague and joined the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra in 1964. Since moving to the United States in 1965 she has been involved in the electronic arts movement. A co-founder of The Kitchen, a major exhibition center in New York City, she continues to explore ways to generate and manipulate electronic images using a wide number of technological tools. Her tapes have been seen widely in the United States and Europe.

A 1976 Guggenheim Fellow and the winner of a number of other grants, she has lived in Santa Fe for the past 10 years.

"Video Installations" will be on display through Oct. 17. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 2 to 5 p.m. Sundays. The exhibit also will be open beginning at 7 p.m. Oct. 12.

Video exhibits push the envelope of art

BLADE PHOTO BY HERRAL LONG

BY SALLY VALLONGO
BLADE ARTS WRITER

Inside Bowling Green State University's fine arts gallery, a three-sided white wall is fractured with a small but powerfully sculpted lightning bolt cutout. Through its jagged openings soft light flickers, inviting the viewer to peer through a crack to see what's going on.

Inside, a dimly lit enclosure forces an instant rearrangement of perception. A tiny rowboat bobs on turbulent water lapping rocks; the rocks are at the base of a tall screen. Over that screen play images of fire and smoke, clouds, and other natural elements, interrupted periodically by stark lighting flashes.

Welcome to "The Drowning Pool," a video installation by New York artist Rita Myers, a world unto itself with gentle stimulation for the senses. "I refer to it as a landscape scaled for the eye," said Myers, one of two artists represented in a new exhibit presenting the latest in the electronic art form. She was in town Friday for the opening.

Myers, an explorer in the world of video art, is known for her very large environmental video pieces involving many screens plus other elements, installations that often fill a room. But, she noted as a technician adjusted the projector, "it's interesting to completely contradict what you do. This piece is very small. It's completely impossible to enter into it physically.

"... It still is a landscape, however; most of my pieces are landscapes. Here, you're invited to imaginatively project yourself into that space and identify with the scale of the rowboat, to be buffeted around in the water. To kind of have an experience but through the eyes only — and the projection of one's imagination into a space much smaller. You're piecing together what you're seeing, creating the image mentally."

Stooping and squinting to create that image, a viewer is struck by the duality — moments of fierce destructive force followed by relatively tranquil emanations. That, too, is part of Myer's trademark.

"A lot of my pieces deal with this reciprocity, decay and chaos, of processes of destruction counterpointed to creation, regeneration. It feels like that is the basis for literally everything."

Myers started her art career as a sculptor, studying with minimalist leader Robert Morris, then developing what she considers very theatrical works shown at the Whitney Museum of American

Art in New York, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, and the Long Beach Museum of Art in California, where this work originated.

If Myers' work is about large-scale dualities, the nearby installation by Steina Vasulka is suggests little in the way of deeper meaning.

Here, nature-inspired images in New Age colors cavort in synch across nine television monitors stacked three deep. A blue music staff shimmers as blue note shapes bounce over it and a sound track booms a meandering mix of sounds ranging from aboriginal mouth bows to electronic manipulations of the voice.

This is "Vocalizations," an 18-minute work described as "a visual evocation of a vocal work by soprano Joan La Barbara," determinedly abstract, certainly perplexing.

Although its form loosely suggests the A-B-A of the sonata, and though recognizable images flicker across the screen, Vasulka succeeds in creating a separate reality of sound, light, and shape.

An Iceland native and former symphony musician, she moved to the United States in 1965 to join the electronic arts movement, co-founding the Kitchen, an avant-garde display and performance space in Manhattan. She won a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1976 and now lives in Santa Fe, N.M.

Hence, perhaps, the recurring, intensified images of desert and sparse forest shot from the air. Vasulka uses fast-moving loops of such scenery as a matrix over which she passes electronically generated images — raindrop and wing forms and zigzags — as if layers of gauze. She creates a checkerboard effect of alternating patterns, playing four screens against five, with a different soundtrack for either group.

The "B" section of this work is sleight-of-machine, a trick based on a fluttering arm revealed in separated color dots. It was this segment a class of BGSU art students preferred as they were introduced to this esoteric art form earlier this week. One brave woman student compared it to Music Television graphics; others seemed unable to articulate any response.

"The Drowning Pool" and "Vocalizations" are a prelude to the 11th annual New Music and Art Festival opening next week at the university in Bowling Green, O. Both can be seen on staggered performances in the gallery through Oct. 17. Gallery hours are 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. weekdays and 2-5 p.m. Sundays.



Rita Myers at the start of 'The Drowning Pool'