This book is dedicated to the memory of Professor Peter Reyner Banham with gratitude and af
Vasulka has developed visually compelling techniques, which he uses to create an oeuvre based on 20th century history. The setting is the Southwestern landscape, symbolizing the grandeur and fragility of the world. The video opens in a red sandstone on a rock appears to be winged like Icarus. A tourist enters the foreground, takes a pause, then hurls a stone at it. The sky turns to geometric rain. We see new steel, fallen blazing buildings, war planes – from revolutions, civil war, world war. The footage is multi-screen, organic shapes abandoned in the desert. We recognize the face and name Oppenheimer, leader of the Manhattan Project which gave America the atomic bomb. A few lines from the Hindu Scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita: “Now I am become death, the worlds.” Vasulka’s video is like high-speed collage, into which he incorporates done photographs, slogans, and – most hauntingly – songs. These elements provide the authenticity and a resonance which suggests that we are viewing nothing less than the human race in the 20th century, and afterwards. The use of video’s advanced techniques allow Vasulka the facility of (in his words) ‘taking two-dimensional, object-like forms no longer truth-in-a-window. Truth is subordinate … to this form.’ Anne H. Hoy

“Vasulka’s computer-generated forms convey literally how memory distorts the shape; how permeable is the photograph as a container of supposed truth. She has also returned investigation of the video signal as a plastic, temporal medium, as electronic energy frequencies, unconfined by the Box (the video “frame”).’