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In describing Pre-Columbian America, Tzvetan Todorov concludes that "the necessary memorization of laws and traditions imposed by the absence of writing determines, as we have seen, the predominance of ritual over improvisation." Television, of course, dispenses with writing, requires eidetic interpretive sophistication, and achieves audience empathy through devices of recognition, of ritual. Perhaps this is to say that writing (reading) is technologically superior to television — though the praxes of each entail parallel trances, analogous social traces. Some works (e.g. David Smith and Lee Murray's Continuous Entertainment (USA), Petr Vrána's Mediènporosie (Media Parnetics) (West Germany, 1987), City Group's Valvegrind (New Zealand, 1985/6)) incorporate specific ritual, performance, or quasi-shamanistic elements, which serve to emphasize the works' distance from social norms, or more specifically from text, from writing. Stein's Lilith (USA, 1987) uses focalplane shifts and frame-grabbing to enthrall our gaze, to transfix and hypnotize us; then her protagonist, cobra-like, darts across the paradoxical landscape (that has become Stein's signature), with a sibilant and ambiguous voice; her image inscribes, indelibly, the fact of presence, but — ironically and impossibly — without the content or context of presence.

Woody Vasulka's The Art of Memory (USA, 1987) is strikingly analogous in its aims, if not whatever in its strategies. The linchpin of the work is his title's invocation of Ad Herennium (Anon., ca. 86 BC) — the founding text for the memory techniques of Roman rhetoric — and (more particularly) of Robert Fludd's Ars Memoria (1619), which introduced the "Memory Theater."

Juan Downey's La Madrepatria (The Motherland) (USA, 1987) is an intimately personal yet "traditionally" artistic (balanced, elegant, judiciously articulate) echo of his Chilean homeland. Here, the interplay between surrealist/psychological elements and formal design rhythms is translated into a reciprocal but immiscible flow between the intimacy of home and family relationships, on the one hand, and formal societal contexts, on the other.

Armin Heurich's Last Rites (USA, 1987) "colonizes" technology — demanding "my tools," over and over, in an overbearing and theatrically authoritative tone — a gesture focused more pointedly by the decontextualizing device of his continuous swish-pan — an invasive gesture that makes of "tools" an Other. This fascination with claiming the terrain of tools functions as a decentralizing mechanism, since it implies ownership, either personal or collective. Heurich has
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steina</td>
<td>Lilith</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>6:00 (excerpt)</td>
<td>Santa Fe, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hermann Würzer</td>
<td>Flim</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>Linz, Austria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ardele Lister</td>
<td>Zoe's Car</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>New York, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walter Gramming</td>
<td>Groszgen</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Berlin, West Germany</td>
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<td>Kaspar Hauser Stirb</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>5:00 (excerpt)</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Smith &amp; Lee Murray</td>
<td>Continuous Entertainment</td>
<td>1986</td>
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