

VIDEO INN AND WESTERN FRONT PRESENT

LUMINOUS SITES

10 VIDEO INSTALLATIONS

**VIDEO
GUIDE**

ISSUE 37
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TOMIYO SASAKI
FEBRUARY 25 TO MARCH 23
VANCOUVER ART GALLERY
750 HORNBY

BARBARA STEINMAN
FEBRUARY 28 TO MARCH 29
PRESENTATION HOUSE GALLERY
333 CHESTERFIELD, NORTH VANCOUVER

PAUL WONG
MARCH 2, 8:30 PM
SEARS/HARBOUR CENTRE PARKADE
500 WEST CORDOVA

CORNELIA WYNGAARDEN
MARCH 6 TO 29
CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY
555 HAMILTON

IAN CARR-HARRIS
MARCH 6 TO 29
WESTERN FRONT
303 EAST 8TH

MAX DEAN
MARCH 6 TO 29
OR GALLERY
1729 FRANKLIN

DAVID TOMAS
MARCH 6 TO 22
COBURG GALLERY
314 WEST CORDOVA

RANDY & BERENICCI
MARCH 7 TO 27
PARK PLACE
666 BURRARD

KATE CRAIG
MARCH 7 TO 27
PARK PLACE
666 BURRARD

VERA FRENKEL
MARCH 13 TO APRIL 4
COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL GALLERY
837 DAVIE

REVIEWS

FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THE EXHIBITION AND PERIPHERAL EVENTS PHONE 688-4336 OR 876-9343

DESIGN: STEVEN A. GILMORE



This exhibition was made possible by the generous support of The Canada Council, The Cultural Initiatives Program of the Department of Communications, the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Centennial Commission, the Government of British Columbia through the BC Cultural Fund and Lottery Revenues, with additional funding from the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation, the Vancouver Foundation, the Vancouver Artists League through the Department of Communications Special Granting Programme for Vancouver to celebrate the Centennial. Thanks to all the participating galleries, Matrix Professional Video Systems Inc., Canadian Pacific Air Lines, Roland Canada, Systems by Rascoes, Gray Beverage Co. Ltd., and Seaboard Advertising Co.

Luminous Site

LUMINOUS SITES is an exhibition of video installations taking place in nine Vancouver galleries and city spaces beginning at the end of February and continuing until April 1986. Canadian artists including Kate Craig, Paul Wong, and Cornelia Wyngaarden from Vancouver, Ian Carr-Harris, Vera Frenkel, and Randy & Berenici from Toronto, Barbara Steinman and David Tomas from Montreal, Max Dean from Ottawa, and Tomiyo Sasaki from New York have been invited to present site-specific works involving the video medium. The works represent a range of personal styles and approaches to the use of video in an arts context, linking an aesthetic history with contemporary communications technology. Artistic priorities in the

various works encompass the areas of painterly use of colour and light, the sculptural designation of form and space, the social discussion of content, theatrical references to cultural motifs, the contemplation of place and time, and the realities of the technical presence.

In these installations the viewer enters into a site-specific construct in which the audio and video elements project into the space and effect it in distinct ways. The sculptural parameters are defined by these non-material forms as much as by the physical elements of the installation which act as landmarks within the electronic presence, defining its context. The installation is experienced on the multiple levels of sensual and didactic, connotative and evocative information

in which the viewer is encompassed. The dynamic presence of the video installation, with its convergence of the physical and the electronic, focuses the aesthetic discussion on developing a language which includes technical media in the tradition of art.

LUMINOUS SITES invites Vancouver audiences to participate in this dialogue which has been centered primarily in the Eastern cities of Toronto and Montreal. This selection of works is derived from a pan-Canadian context and is representative of the current range of the genre, the video installation. LUMINOUS SITES is a Video Inn / Western Front presentation curated by Daina Augaitis and Karen Henry.

INTEGRATED MEDIA GRANTS INCREASED TO \$25,000

The Canada Council, at its March quarterly meeting, approved a recommendation to increase integrated media grants to \$25,000 from \$15,000. The recommendation was made by the Media Arts Section, which administers the Integrated Media Program, on the advice of the Media Arts Advisory Committee.

The increase is effective for the fiscal year 1986-87, and applies to the two competitions this year whose deadline dates are May 1 and October 1.

The Integrated Media Program was begun in 1983 and is open to professional artists or non-profit arts organizations. Integrated media include computer processing or

imaging (visual and acoustic) or system control, videotex and teletext, laser techniques, videodisc and optical storage media. Council assistance for artists working in integrated media includes grants for research and/or applications of the technologies and media listed above as well as grants for the production of specific works of art.

Applications are assessed by selection committees made up of artists and others knowledgeable in the combined concepts, aesthetics, technologies and media being presented by the applicants. Applicants are notified of the results of their application approximately 10 weeks after the May 1 or October 1 deadlines.

For more information on the program, contact Denis L'Esperance or Tom Sherman, (613) 237-3400.

CORRECTIONS

In Volume 7, number 4, we published an article on SoftVideo. We had printed some incorrect information. "Vento Divino" by Linea Maginot Group is not distributed by SoftVideo anymore, but is distributed by Tape Connection. SoftVideo does distribute "Perfidi incanti", "Corpo", "Suicidi omicidi acrobatici", and others.

We would like to thank Robert Red-Baer from Japan for his comments on the article in Vol.7, No. 5, entitled "Videotape Study". He notes: "In the fifth paragraph it says, 'For quality it's important to use only the slower speed (tape speed) - the slower the better. Generally manufacturers' specs are done at the slowest speed.' Shouldn't 'slower, slowest' be replaced with 'faster, fastest'?"

EDIT

So much has happened since the last issue. First, there was Luminous Sites: 10 video installations presented in Vancouver. It was a massive project which went off very successfully thanks to the curators, Daina Augaitis and Karen Henry, and a host of others. We have chosen to focus on the 10 Video Installations for this issue of *Video Guide*. We hope that the reviews, artist statements, and photos will give you a taste of what these Canadian Video Installations were like.

What else has been happening? So much, and so little time to sit and record it. There has been the conference "Strategies For Survival"; Paul Wong's case against The Vancouver Art Gallery and Luke Rombout; the protesting of Bill C; ANNPAC/RACA (tenth year) Annual General Meeting; and the ongoing work of keeping our centres alive and moving.

The focus on Video and the Media Arts has been healthy for us. But we do have a lot of work ahead of us. With continuing cut-backs, lack of educational outlets, mounting legislation geared towards censorship of our work . . . when is there time to be a productive artist/producer?

Video Guide hopes to be a vehicle for solutions to these problems. With this in mind, we are looking for writers who have these concerns and more. To make *Video Guide* a better publication, we need your support, and we need it now and tomorrow and in the future.

We want your subscription, your articles, your photos, and you producing. For deadlines and writers fees, please write or send your work to the Editorial Board, *Video Guide*, 261 Powell Street, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V6A 1G3, or call (604) 688-4336.

Shawn Preus
for the Satellite Video Exchange Society

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CONTENTS

- 2 LUMINOUS SITES - THE INTRODUCTION
EDIT
- VANCOUVER GUIDE
- 3 FIFTH ANNUAL VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
- 4 AS A WIFE HAS A COW - CORNELIA WYNGAARDEN
reviewed by Sara Diamond
- 5 CLAY COVE, NEWFOUNDLAND
PARK PLACE, VANCOUVER - KATE CRAIG
reviewed by Sara Diamond
- 6 BODY FLUID (1986) - PAUL WONG
reviewed by Keith Wallace
- 8 SPAWNING SOCKEYES - TOMIYO SASAKI
reviewed by Jackie Goodwin
- NATIONAL
- 9 ON TV - IAN CARR-HARRIS
reviewed by Chris Creighton-Kelly
- 10 RUNE - RANDY & BERENICCI
reviewed by Karen Knights
- 12 LOST ART: A CARGO CULT ROMANCE - VERA FRENKEL
- 14 CENOTAPHE - BARBARA STEINMAN
reviewed by Jill Pollack
- 15 THROUGH THE EYE OF THE CYCLOPS - DAVID TOMAS
- 16 SCANNING
- 18 PROTOTYPE, 1986 - MAX DEAN
reviewed by Todd Davis
- GLOBAL
- 19 BIG SCREEN / SMALL SCREEN
by Jamirte Trott

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The Fifth Annual Vancouver International Film Festival

WOMEN IN FOCUS



Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo

Women In Focus accepted with great pleasure the invitation of the Vancouver International Film Festival to program a portion of the 1986 Festival which ran from May 23 to June 26. As part of this program, Women In Focus invited three filmmakers to accompany their films to Vancouver: Alanis Obomsawin (Quebec), Louise Carré (Quebec), and Anne Wheeler (Alberta). We are also pleased to announce that novelist Jane Rule appeared with director Donna Deitch and actress Helen Shaver at the premiere screening of *Desert Hearts*.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Ornette: Made In America (USA)

Shirley Clarke's stunning documentary about jazz legend Ornette Coleman.

Eye Of The Mask (Canada)

Filmmaker Judith Doyle spent one winter travelling with the revolutionary theatre group "Nixtayolero" to remote areas of Nicaragua. *Mask* is a compelling portrait of a country struggling to revitalize traditions which have withered under a long period of colonization and modernization.

Desert Hearts (USA)

Jane Rule's acclaimed novel "Desert of the Heart" at long last appears on the big screen. Two women fall in love against the backdrop of black-jack tables and slot machines in 1950's Reno.

Richard Cardinal: Diary of a Metis Child (Canada)

Richard Cardinal is a moving docu-drama based on the diary of a young Metis man who committed suicide at the age of 17 - after years of being shuffled among a total of 28 foster homes and institutions. His story reveals a sensitive and courageous spirit caught between two worlds. Filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin attended the screening.

Las Madres De La Plaza De Mayo (USA)

Nominated for an Academy Award this year, *Las Madres* documents the struggle of the mothers of Argentina to gain recognition for 30,000 of their children who 'dis-

appeared' during the so-called "Dirty War" of the 1970's. Filmmaker Lourdes Portillo attended the screening.

A Question of Loving (Qui A Tiré Sur Nos Histoires D'Amour?) (Canada)

A bittersweet film which tells the story of the last summer spent together by a fiercely independent, idealistic woman and her teen-aged daughter who has her own ideas of what life has to offer. Filmmaker Louise Carré attended the screening.

Loyalties (Canada)

In this world premiere dramatic feature, director Anne Wheeler uses the friendship of two women, one white and the other native, to explore the devastating consequences of child abuse. Anne Wheeler and actress Tantoo Cardinal attended the screening.

The Practice of Love (W. Germany/Austria)

An exceptional and provocative treatment of the murder mystery genre from experimental film artist Valie Export.

A Trilogy (Canada)

Barbara Sternberg's acclaimed visual essay about memory, knowing, and consciousness.

The Man Who Envied Women (USA)

Yvonne Rainer's non-narrative extravaganza which lampoons everything from sexual politics to global conflict.

Diary For My Children (Hungary)

Márta Mészáros re-creates the Hungary of her childhood in this story of a young girl caught up in the social upheaval and political intrigue of the Stalinist years.



Loyalties

As A Wife Has A Cow

CORNELIA WYNGAARDEN

reviewed by Sara Diamond

As an artist and a feminist, one of the issues which confronts me in my day-to-day living is the way the world is reflected back to me via the mass media. My experience with the world seems to be at vast variance with the official imagery. Mass media has formulated an authority by pretending an objectiveness which has transformed this imagery into "The Big Lie." Although it may not always be necessary to address this issue in terms of feminism, the way to deliver an alternative imagery is often central in video experimentation. Satire, although often used to deconstruct mass media imagery, falls short of the goal because it usually involves the use of this imagery in its attempts, thus reconfirming its power and romanticism.

The reference to Gertrude Stein, by the borrowing of the title of one of her books for this piece, is meant to pay homage to the restructuring of language in her many literary portraits. *As a Wife Has a Cow*, the video installation, is constructed both as a landscape and a portrait. Within this installation there is the appearance of the traditional imagery suffused with alternatives. This sets up a framework of otherness. Within the traditional "Country Western" landscape the traditional tough-talking "Marlboro Man"-type cowboy goes through a gender blur and is replaced with the "Marlboro Woman". The sensational campfire one-upmanship stories are replaced by mundane stories of rural life. Instead of cowboys riding wild bulls, the small town ranchers ride wild cows. The mundane becomes meaningful and reconfirms that landscape is indifferent to gender and stereotyping and, at the same time, maintains its intimacy and lyricism.

The portrait of the woman ranch-hand develops as she tells different stories which eventually become an evolving monologue revealing her charismatic character.

The goal is to create an environment where people can explore their own insights to gender stereotyping. The extent of contradiction with mass media representation has been deliberately held to a subtle level. The aim of this work is substitution without confrontation.

— Cornelia Wyngaarden

Cornelia Wyngaarden is an independent producer/artist who has worked for a number of years in co-operative artist groups in Vancouver. She has taught video workshops at Video Inn and Emily Carr College of Art and Design. Her videotapes have been widely shown, both nationally and internationally. She recently premiered *As a Wife Has a Cow* at the Holland Festival in Amsterdam, and she has been invited to participate in an upcoming festival in Germany.

As a Wife Has a Cow is an acute commentary on the values associated with masculinity and femininity. Based on a series of alternately amusing, cryptic, and wistful tales from the observations of woman rancher Keely Moll, the installation inverts the traditional cowboy image, replacing it with a capable and sympathetic "cowgirl."

As with any first-person narrative, the tale relies on the teller, and credit for the success of this work must go in part to Moll. The androgyny of the heroine is both delightful and spell-binding, for Moll becomes a role-model for men and women — she carries the traditional sex appeal of the cowboy. The mysterious is also an important element of the narrative, for Moll does not "tell all", she in fact reveals little about herself but alot about the world around her. The adventures of two women friends in New York, the pain of a tough rancher with stomach cancer, an absurd truck accident with endless impossible details, the tribulations and triumphs of the child whom she raised, all collide, building our curiosity about the narrator while humouring us.

Wyngaarden works with her subject intimately, carefully allowing us appropriate fragments from Moll's life. She moves the work beyond story-telling into an effective visual and audio parable. The installation incorporates six monitors, placed on six bales of hay. They are carefully synchronized and the images begin in unison, change to contrasting imagery, and then return to synchronization. Moll always faces herself when she speaks, a comment on her honesty, one presumes.

The oral history and rolling landscape of the B.C. Interior where she ranches battles with slomo cowboys riding bucking cows at the local rodeo. The cowboys bite the dust, but Moll, who has a symbiotic attitude to the environment, blends into the landscape when she rides herd. The artist provides us with images of Rock Creek, Moll speaking in a variety of locations on the land, and the heroine at work. The rodeo repeats at regular intervals throughout the narrative, reminding us of the myth-surrounded ranchlife, while parodying it. One would note here that it is often women who are parodied in parallel mass culture situations.



The monitors are arranged in a circle within the gallery space; they face each other. The audience can stand on the periphery or enter the corral: we can be spectators at the rodeo, complicit with its struggle to tame nature (the female principle), or part of the herd. Whatever position one takes, the installation is seductive. The rolling hills sparkle like emeralds, the grass is high, the movement slow until we are jolted back into the sweat and tension of the rodeo. Slide guitar audio alternates with the processed sounds of indignant and bucking cows. The artist allows just enough time to engage in the relaxed moment before reminding us that it in our culture, it is threatened.

The title of the work derives from a quote from Gertrude Stein, herself a mistress of parody. Stein figures prominently, which is appropriate given her pioneering role both as gender-bender and as female art critic and writer. Not only the artist, but Moll herself, quotes from Stein; we are party to the role model's role model.

In the context of Vancouver, with a large audience, many of whom are familiar with the province's interior landscapes and lifestyles, the installation dispelled some of the lasting myths of Frontier Life. But one wonders at its meaning in urban Europe. (It premiered in Amsterdam.) Is the North American cowboy icon resilient enough to allow the installation to subvert it, or does Moll, and life in the B.C. Interior, appear amusing and idiosyncratic, defeating the intention of the work?



photos by Chick Rice

KATE CRAIG



Clay Cove, Newfoundland

In 1979 I was invited by the Memorial University Art Gallery to participate in VIDEOSCAPE: NEWFOUNDLAND EDITION. It was the first video event on The Island and included workshops, a video exhibition and the production of new work. It is from this circumstance that the visual and audio content for this installation originated.

The people of Newfoundland call themselves *Islanders* and the place *The Island*. The land is rugged and beautiful and isolated. The Islanders are a well-travelled people full of fun and imagination. They are tenacious survivors and lead a rigorous life. To go there is to enter a world of new experiences. In the detailed sounds and images of this audio and video installation I have tried to capture some of the qualities of life on The Island.

The St. John's harbour fog horn plays a major role in the installation and the trickle of a brook and the sound of the sea as it meets the shore is heard. The black and white video image examines in detail the rock patterns along the shoreline of Clay Cove, a small cove in Bonavista Bay. The black and white transparencies describe the colour of the rock.

Edythe Goodridge talks about the history of the coastline. Basque, Portuguese, French, and English settlers coming from the sea to the land used marine as well as fauna and flora descriptions to name the various coves, arms, runs, inlets, bays and tickles. Most of the coastline was named on the maps of the 14th and 15th century explorers and fishermen.

The music of the Wonderful Grand Band reflects the vitality of the music of The Islanders. It addresses contemporary life and at the same time retains the traditional musical values. Music on The Island lives.

Pat Duff describes in detail the diet and cuisine of The Islanders. During a memorable evening we sat down to tea with her family and discussed flipper, scrunchin, jigs dinner, peas pudding, figgy duffs, and all manner of food and wine.

At Park Place, East meets West. The viewer is invited to the 31st floor to sit and enjoy the view north over Vancouver Harbour, on the West Coast of Canada and at the same time get a hint of life on The Island.

— Kate Craig

Kate Craig is co-founder of the Western Front in Vancouver and, since 1976, the Director of the video program. She has collaborated on many productions, and her own tapes have been shown extensively throughout Canada and Europe. Her repertoire also includes performance work, and she is a member of the Canada Shadows Players.

Park Place, Vancouver

This economical installation provided an effective commentary on the two coastlines of Canada, linking and separating West and East Coast landscape and culture. Situated on the thirty-first floor of the swank Park Place office tower, overlooking Canada Place and the city's high rise skyline, Craig made site-specific use of the view.

The work took up half of the floor. Comfortable chairs were placed by the panoramic windows, allowing the viewer to relax, survey the world outside the window, and listen to an audio tape of Newfoundland recipes for home wine-making. On three of the windows, negatives of closely photographed rock formations were framed by the skyline, office buildings, and sea. The geological patterns were strikingly similar to the shapes, reflective windows, and layered architecture of some of Vancouver's newest buildings.

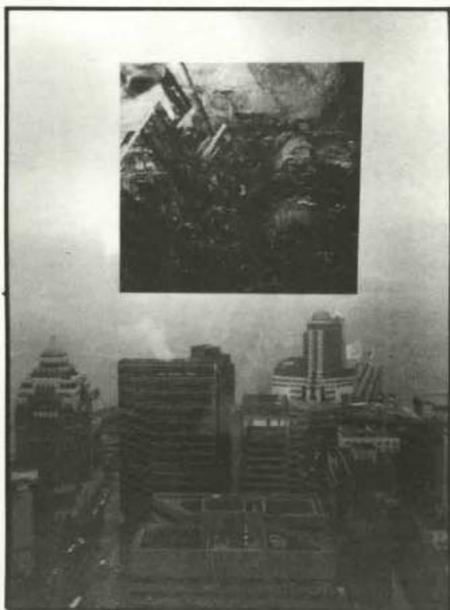
In one corner, a television monitor displayed a tape loop of black and white images from the Newfoundland coast: shale, pebbles in water, decaying wood, all recorded with the minute close-up detail that is this artist's signature. Water gurgles in the background, melding with the Newfoundland voices on audio tape.

The piece worked on a number of levels. It was pleasurable and relaxing to sit before the tape loop, monitor framed on either side by skyline, and watch and hear the timeless images and sounds of the coast. The artist suggested that people bring their lunch to picnic by the windows and the video — an appropriate suggestion but a subversive one. It was hard to jar back into reality after contemplating the natural landscape.

Fortunately, this work was not simply a merger between landscape painting and video art. The contrast between human-made monoliths lacing the seaview, railway tracks and industrial sites, roads and distant traffic with microscopic patterns of nature provided implicit commentary on how derivative human design is. The close-up images offered visual counterpoint to the complex detail of the urban environment, encouraging scrutiny. The conflict between the internal, unfinished concrete space where the installation was located, the commercial content of the view, and the natural imagery and oral testimony from the East Coast suggested that the values of upwardly mobile Vancouver and the more traditional East Coast were not just coastlines apart.

In form and content, it offered a sharp contrast to the epic statement on human culture, *Runes*, by Randy and Bernicci, which took up the other half of the installation space. *Runes* built upon the internal, unfinished concrete space with crumbling sculptures built from grey letters, forms reminiscent of construction and archeological digs, and video images of decaying construction sites. Kate Craig's piece worked with the external site: the view from the thirty-first floor. The two installations worked in harmony.

This was one of the Luminous Sites that was located outside of the gallery context. The visual language of *Clay Cove, Newfoundland; Park Place, Vancouver* allowed a reading by a popular audience, while providing some insights into the coastal environment.



photos by Chick Rice

reviewed by Sara Diamond

Body Fluid (1986)

PAUL WONG

reviewed by **Keith Wallace**

Body Fluid involves the use of live and pre-recorded video, large-screen projections, lighting effects, mechanical devices and performers. This one-night performed installation is a further exploration of the sensuous and addictive qualities of the video medium, specifically, the aural and visual sensations of television. *Body Fluid* is a structuralist work isolating and rearranging the elements of light, sound, and motion in the context of an underground urban work area — the trucking turntable.

Since 1973, Paul Wong has created numerous installations, performances and multi-channel video tapes. His work has been seen in galleries, cabarets, and warehouses where he consistently seeks out and responds to the specifications of site. *Body Fluid* is a further exploration of cultural and technical aspects of his latest performance held at Video Culture Canada in Toronto, 1983.

Paul Wong is a founding member of Video Inn in Vancouver. He has worked in video and photography and multi-media performance and installations, and he has shown internationally in video festivals and exhibitions such as the Holland Festival, Canada House in London, and the History of Video Art, Museum of Modern Art, New York, as well as others.

The ramp that descends to the Sears Parkade in downtown Vancouver and terminates at a giant truck turntable was the setting for Paul Wong's video performance/installation *Body Fluid*. It was a fitting location for a spectacle based around popular culture mythology, down in the guts of a major department store and a host of 48 other stores that make up the one-stop shopping of Harbour Centre Mall. The turntable, a good 30 feet in diameter, is the delivery point for masses of consumer goods that are pumped into the stores and bought up by a public fed by the advertising media.

The truck turntable was divided into three sections by huge video screens, the floor littered with technical equipment and crew. It brought to mind a TV soundstage where crews, equipment, and lights demand as much space and attention as the centrestage event, but are miraculously absent from the screen at home. For live audiences at a television studio, the technical activity is a part of the excitement, for they are witness to the split-second coordination necessary to a successful production. The audience for *Body Fluid* was gathered to one side of the turntable, equally aware that the crew and equipment were not going to disappear, but were an integral part of the mechanics.

The performance itself had a cast of six. The fog machines were activated to inject instant atmosphere

whereupon the first performer, the Biker, rode down on his motorcycle from the "real" world at street level onto the centrestage spotlight of this "dream" world to play a lonely sax solo. He was the rebel, the Bruce Springsteen look-a-like, improvising his music as an expression of independence and choice. Since the 1950's the rebel has remained a symbol of freedom from authority, and has been embraced by popular culture as a survivor and hero in an antagonistic world. The leather vest, jeans, boots, and tattoo is the stock costume to emulate such an image, and in the 1980's it is an image anyone can easily purchase.

An eerie synthesizer soundtrack begins, the turntable moves, the light changes focus, the Biker disappears into the fog, and our second performer, a costumed Baton Twirler, glides into centrestage as another, but quite opposite, cultural darling — the wholesome youth who performs what is expected without question. Quite unlike the Biker who creates his own music, she submits to the authority of her twirling batons. She is not one to cause trouble, her image is dictated by conformity.

Again the turntable moves and we are introduced to the Furniture Stroker, a garish 1950's "glamour girl." She plays the necessary accoutrement to glitter-up the image of any advertisement or game show, one whose forced smile and mannered gesticulations direct the viewers gaze towards some consumer object or prize. Meanwhile, the video screens project live and pre-recorded imagery of the performers — they literally become larger than life, mirrored from all angles with the magic of technology. The cameras act as our voyeuristic eye.

Interjected into the Furniture Stroker's appearance was Chinavision, a woman dressed in communist Chinese army fatigues and with a gun as her fashion accessory. Her fierce stare, like those found illustrated in heroic Chinese posters, is as mannered as the Stroker's and determinedly directed towards some future goal. She is a popular cultural ideal from quite another framework, responding to quite another set of values. Her presence sets a tone that serves to amplify cultural differences and the role models we accept as the norm.

Two Posers consecutively appear on the scene for their cameos. The first is poised atop a revolving stand, changing his statuesque positions, the second lifts weights. Both are topless, jeaned, and clearly modelled after Calvin Klein ads where the rebel, innocence, and glamour are all wrapped into one neat package. They are a 1980's vision of ideal beauty as projected in the advertising media.

These solo vignettes expanded into a cavalcade collage of impressions with a Poser narcissistically tracing his body with a video camera, the Stroker holding a mirror to her face or holding up a globe of the world like Atlas, and Chinavision walking on stage with a ghetto blaster, a symbol of communication with the outside world, but one that also represents western consumerism. Disco lights

flash, the tempo builds. Finally there is a blackout. It's over.

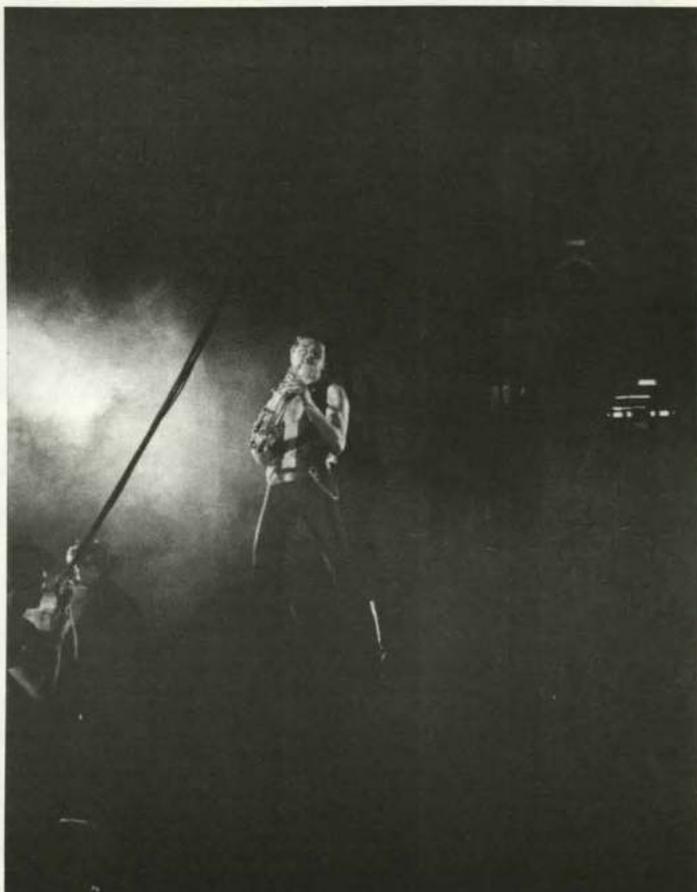
Body Fluid continues Wong's exploration and obsessive fascination with popular culture, which he sees as possessing more power and influence upon the public's attention than does something as important as politics. Society is submissive to the dictates of advertising media and TV setting the standards and desires for self image and sense of security. The mass media and its technical tricksterism have the capabilities of incredible seduction: slick and exciting manipulations of reality are geared to transform the mundaneness of everyday life. It suggests that by following its example, believing in it, our lives can be more self-assured, glamorous, and successful. We might even be liked more.

Wong is aware of all these aspects, the falseness of their claims, and when it comes down to it, this performance has a lot to do with surfaces. These popular cultural ideals do not project intellect or feelings; there is no radiation of "person" underneath the surface appearance. They are in fact like the TV projections, all image. The performers are literally dressed in their image, any depth of being is overwhelmed and silenced.

There are distinct parallels between this work and Wong's 1981 video *Prime Cuts*. Both explore the realm of television, advertising, and media icons. *Prime Cuts* looked to the sunny but empty side of the modelling world. It was a life that appeared desirable, but one didn't know why, for it was equally vacuous. *Body Fluid* has moved to different territory — from the glare of the sun to the dankness of the dark. It was a Moral Majority vision of hell — the fog, the throbbing beat of the music, the obvious suggestion of sexuality. The squeaky-cleanliness of the Baton Twirler revolves into a narcissistic fetishization of self-image, an endless circle that leads nowhere. In terms of site, these popular culture ideals are the emanations or ghosts of consumerism that the delivery turntable represents.

Yet the work does not appear to take any judgemental stand, and like *Prime Cuts* sidesteps any sense of rhetoric as to whether Wong's attitude is one of approval or disapproval; that is left up to the viewer. Through his pageantry of impressions, all Wong seems to be doing is objectifying the issue, presenting familiar images in a new context. There is no narrative, emotion, or overt content. When the performance ends, it does just that — ends. We are left with a wealth of images, yet with nowhere to direct their significance. At least 15 people were on stage, acting out their choreographed parts to produce an engaging spectacle, but all that remained after the fog lifted was a void. For Wong, it was a way of both exercising his fascination with popular culture and exposing its emptiness. Like TV, one was seduced and mesmerized by the technological magic, but the glossy surface, once peeled away, had nothing underneath.

photos by Carole Segal



Spawning Sockeyes

TOMIYO SASAKI

Spawning Sockeyes (1982) is a two channel, multi-monitor installation work. The primary images are of the Pacific sockeye salmon during their spawning season. At this period of their life cycle, the sockeye's usually silver-grey body takes on a dramatic colouration of green and red. This is also the end of the life cycle for the Pacific sockeye salmon.

Through repetitive editing, the movements of colour and texture are accentuated. Time is distorted and reconstructed — giving one a sense of change and changelessness.

This work was taped in British Columbia at Adams River in October, 1982.

— Tomiyo Sasaki

Tomiyo Sasaki is a Japanese Canadian living in New York City. Her video work explores aspects of realism and nature, using the formal qualities of the recorded video image, abstracting and deconstructing it through repetitive editing, modulating time to create new cycles of visual poetry. Her work has won recognition in the United States and Japan and is currently showing at the Stadische galerie im Lenbachus in Munich.



Photo by Chick Rice

reviewed by Jackie Goodwin

Spawning Sockeyes, a two-channel, multi monitor work by Tomiyo Sasaki, was presented at the Vancouver Art Gallery from February 25 to March 23. The installation, twenty Sony television monitors strewn amongst many considerable boulders, took up a large corner of the main floor lobby. *Spawning Sockeyes* captures the spawning cycle, transposing one of nature's most vivid and colourful life and death cycles into an entirely urban environment. The screens alternately monitor fish struggling upstream and the sparkle and twinkle of light playing on the water's surface. The sockeye salmon, at their most brilliantly coloured phase of life, wriggle and leap in the shallow water, batter their bodies on the rocks, and ultimately die in the process of laying their eggs.

Tomiyo Sasaki recorded *Spawning Sockeyes* at the Adams River near Vernon, B.C., where she was born. She now lives in New York City.

The installation was located in the main lobby of the Vancouver Art Gallery, just in front of the children's gallery, at the west entrance. It is an active and noisy space; traffic flows by outside the doors, at the left of people standing around watching the video. If I had been watching salmon in a river in nature I would have been sitting on a rock at the water's edge. The installation was the first thing you saw coming in the west door, but it could be missed altogether from the main entrance.

Tomiyo Sasaki's description says, "Through repetitive editing, the movements of colour and texture are accentuated. Time is distorted and reconstructed — giving one a sense of change and changelessness." The change and changelessness, the reality of nature, are suspended in time and place. The video holds the images as they exist at that moment, although the process of spawning is seasonal.

Watching the video of this incredible, dramatic, life/reproduction and death process creates both contact and distance from the real process of the death of the sockeye. The installation itself creates a verisimilitude that transforms rock and Sony monitors into a river bottom, and simultaneously instills a remoteness, a removal from any involvement with the natural setting. Standing in the gallery lobby I felt alternately part of and distant from the life and excitement flowing past me on the screens. At times I lost the screens and the gallery; the rocks and the images on the screens blended and I was at the river's edge watching the light, the colour, hearing the splash of water hitting rock and the slap of fish in water. I was transported. But then the reality of the gallery, the traffic outside the door, the chatter of passing gallery patrons, the rigid randomness of the perfect, hand picked boulders reminded me of how far away I was from it all. The blending of nature into the urban setting can only emphasize the disparities.

The textures and colours in *Spawning Sockeyes* are stunning. The water-smoothed rocks, gray-green like a river bottom, and the images of water flowing between them, the sound of rushing water, the continuous flow of life and movement, all join to mesmerize a viewer. The result is a mood of peaceful contemplation.

In a culture entirely attuned to experiencing life through a television screen, the utter naturalness of the subject matter makes a glaring statement about the situation of people and their relationship to their environment. The video brings that environment, or an excellent approximation of it, into contact with people. They can be included in its wonder, but experiencing life through a screen erases the wonder of the world it shows. The conundrum is, can the magic of nature be experienced when that experience is not a primary contact? Alternately, the excitement and magic of the video representation sets the imagination to speculating on the magnificent scope of the medium itself. *Spawning Sockeyes* shows a limitless image, a life process that, while seasonal, never ends. The flow of the water over the rocks, the living things in the water, the continuous hum of the water over the rocks — the observer is locked into timelessness by the simultaneous stasis and movement. The video medium is well suited to the image of the river flowing past the one spot on the shore.

Spawning Sockeyes is a beautiful and stimulating installation. It illustrates the wonderful scope of the video medium. The quiet, meditative sense of nature at your feet, the act of being absorbed by life around you, is captured in this piece. The alternating images give the feeling of life, movement, and something eternal. *Spawning Sockeyes* creates a momentary quiet space in a busy environment.



Photo by Chick Rice

On TV

IAN CARR-HARRIS

reviewed by Chris Creighton-Kelly

I have a number of concerns about what artworks can accomplish, and they fall roughly into two intersecting categories. These have to do on the one hand with their suggestiveness and the meanings they can construct dialectically in the imagination of the viewer by virtue of their permissiveness; and on the other hand with the intentions of the artist — who holds at least responsibility for the existence of the work — in directing meaning and presenting to the social consciousness of the viewer particular codes of value. When taken together, and all artworks exhibit both these categories, they act to define and to counter our own individual productions of meaning. They both produce and deny those productions.

For artworks to produce meaning, they must be specific. That is, we must have a point of departure, an identity from which as viewer we can move. For artworks to deny meaning, the references denied must be not only specific, but their identity must be clarified, whether through representations of language or through mimetic construct.

As with all my work, the piece in this exhibition, *On TV*, derives from my conviction that we understand things for ourselves out of specific encounters which embody their own particular penetration of social value.

— Ian Carr-Harris

INTRODUCTION

How to evaluate art? The spirited cultural movements of this century (Social Realism, Dada, Pop, Feminism, to name a few) which have asked the sister question — What is art? — reverberate even in the current conservatism of contemporary artistic practice. Yet criticism languishes. The traditionalists prefer the endless self-referencing of art world cant, the studied mannerisms of an elite comfortable with privilege. The fashion nihilists offer us every kind of personal decadence dressed up as commentary, rapidly pretending history doesn't exist. The progressives, while frequently having something to say, are so preoccupied with political correctness that critique is reduced to rant and cultural propaganda, an insult to inquiry and imagination.

But to return to the question: I cannot pretend an answer. Especially not within a form — the art review — which itself aspires to a type of closure, the opinions and summation of an "expert." But the work under scrutiny here, *On TV* by Ian Carr-Harris, begs some commentary on criticism. By its intention, its presence, and even its ambiguous title, it is clearly a form of critique. What I propose to do, then, is situate the work within three different contexts of meaning, both as a way of elaborating on the artist's installation and in an attempt to deal with ways of understanding criticism as part of a social process. I will try to evaluate *On TV* in terms of its status as art object, in terms of the artist's intentions, and, finally, in terms of its broader social meaning.

ART OBJECT

The work is immediately imposing both in its visual scale and its loud audio component. Directly in front of the far wall of a narrow gallery stands a huge sculptural television screen. The immediate impression is one of video projection. The image, though a still frame, flickers. The familiar scan line of video is clearly visible. On closer inspection, the enclose-the-technology-in-a-black-box projection unit is revealed as a slide projector with a spinning wheel in front of it. Already a wry contradiction is evident — a video installation with no video! Between the screen and the projection unit lies a wonderfully constructed bed, large enough for at least two persons. Despite the overall formality of the piece, the bed with its rumpled covers is inviting. It immediately conjures up not only its own obvious pleasures, but also those associated with beds and television sets. In addition, the screen acts as a kind of pastoral window, so the bed seems serene, gazing out on a nondescript meadow scene portrayed in the projected slide. Again pleasure — the bed and the natural world.

All this is made even more remarkable considering the nature of the accompanying audio. Upon entering the installation, the viewer is subjected to a cycle of five minutes of loud static television noise followed by a half minute of silence and then ten minutes of dense, lecture-like spoken word. It is amplified through a large black

speaker which sits just behind the projection unit. No attempt is made to disguise the power cords or connecting wires; the technology, in as far as it is visible, is part of the installation. The immediate challenge of the work becomes how to deal with the sound. It at once both demands attention and distracts from the more subtle visual information. Because the subject under discussion is complex, it is difficult to relegate the text to an ambient aural position. And to listen carefully requires full concentration. In three visits to the gallery, I observed seven people — none of them stayed for the complete lecture.

But perhaps the audio is not the point. The work is overwhelmingly sculptural. Great care has been taken in the construction of the fake video screen and the bed. Carr-Harris has gone to elaborate and elegant lengths to give us video without the video. And he is clearly alluding to something about the gaze, the art gaze, the gaze of privilege, the male gaze, and perhaps the television gaze. This is, of course, the problem of a purely textual reading, of the characteristic stance of the critic, the need to make authoritative conclusions about the meaning of forms. This terror of formalism leads at best to limited understanding, at worst to a critical arrogance. This is especially true with contemporary video when a significant number of works are dressed in the emperor's new clothes.



Photo by Chick Rice

ARTIST'S INTENTION

Where then to go for further understanding? How to "get" the meaning? Faced with this dilemma in the 60's, audiences and finally critics turned to the artists themselves for answers. Instead of assuming that some universal meaning can be gleaned from the physical properties of the piece, one might actually ask, "What are the artist's intentions?" Or as Raymond Williams puts it more completely,

I am saying that we should look not for the components of a product but for the conditions of practice. When we find ourselves looking at a particular work, or group of works, often realizing, as we do so, their essential community as well as their irreducible individuality, we should find ourselves attending first to the reality of their practice and the conditions of the practice as it was then executed. And from this I think we ask essentially different questions.

Ian Carr-Harris is a developed artist with a significant body of work behind him. He is also a teacher at The Ontario College of Art. Pedagogy, as much as art, is his concern. And so to return to the lecture. Perhaps the audio is indeed the point after all! Here the artist lays it out for us. Yes the gaze is important. And in fact, it has been since Eduard Manet's pre-impressionist painting *Luncheon on the Grass*. In the painting a naked woman sits at a picnic in the forest with two fully clothed male companions. Carr-Harris suggests, as have other critics, that as the viewer/voyeur (male) attempts to appropriate the naked body, he is confronted with an equal and deliberate gaze from the subject. Not only will she not easily be consumed, she forces the issue of who is constructing whom out in the open. As the artist explains in the audiotape,

As we stand before the painting, we become physically aware that in spite of our attempts to define experience as discrete and narrational — as standing safely outside ourselves — we are actually, in reality, immensely vulnerable to dislocation. Luncheon on the Grass defines a set of relations that exist primarily not within the painting, but between the painting and the viewer. . . . In distressing us, and making us accept responsibility for this distress, Manet constructs a position of disturbance for the viewer which can, and finally must, be addressed self-critically.

Carr-Harris clearly wants the installation to be seen in terms of the audio information. His intentions seem both critical and user-friendly. What we might learn about the construction of subject/object from Manet's work does have a bearing on how we "gaze" at TV. Having been disengaged from a normalized reality by the visual components of the piece, the artist then attempts to place the viewer in the "reality" of art history. This seems to be an appropriate strategy to challenge not only art or the work itself, but, in fact, the gaze or watching in general. Why then is the tape so unlistenable? Delivered in a monotone, written in a dense style, and amplified at an imposing decibel level, the spoken word is more hindrance than resource.

Nevertheless, it is possible to say that the work succeeds within this framework. Carr-Harris wants to undermine the television gaze, wants us to question our role in its construction, wants us to acknowledge our complicity in television watching. Even a cursory listen to the tape points the viewer in that direction. The problem is what to do when you get there . . . most viewers of television do not know who Manet was, let alone the significance of a specific painting.

SOCIAL MEANING

Which brings me rather neatly to a third context of evaluation. Ian Carr-Harris states about *On TV* that it "derives from my conviction that we understand things for ourselves out of specific encounters which embody their own particular penetration of social value." Given our current collective understanding of "reality" itself as being socially constructed, it is easy to concur with the gist of his assertion. And there is continuing and prominent discourse about television's 'penetration of social value' in newspapers, magazines, and educational journals.

But ultimately, *On TV*, despite its pointed critique, misses its target. This is not entirely Carr-Harris' fault. Nor specifically the fault of the Western Front, where one is admitted by intercom to an unmarked building to view the exhibit. And the curators, to their credit, made serious and successful attempts to give "Luminous Sites" a high profile. (I can't remember the last time I saw video reviewed in the *Globe and Mail*.)

And, clearly, I cannot exempt myself from this art-autonomous system. This review will be read by perhaps a hundred persons at most; maybe ten percent will have seen the installation. I know the artist will probably read it, and the curators, but beyond that, who knows? Maybe no one. Can these activities be explained? Justified? Is this one-on-one dialogue between two interested men of the arts simply a quaint 18th century notion? Today's irrelevant critic . . . a monk hacking on a word processor.

When I pressed Carr-Harris about the accessibility of *On TV* to the larger audience concerned with television, he fell back on two very modernist arguments. First, he recognizes the gallery as a privileged site, but a valid one nonetheless. It is not his intention to be accessible; he feels he is dealing with an educated audience and they will understand. I asked four of the seven persons I observed if they could describe *Luncheon on the Grass*. None could. Secondly, he suggested that the artist cannot be so preoccupied with contemporary social meaning, that he saw the work as part of a continuing dialogue with art history, and that it will only be properly evaluated in relationship to that history. In such a context, the title of the work *On TV* is a bit like false advertising.

And so, finally, how to evaluate art? As a work in the contemporary "tradition", *On TV* is both sensual and elegant and, at the same time, both imposing and disorienting. As they say on TV, I'd give it a seven. From the perspective of the artist's intentions, it is worth a nine. Ian Carr-Harris has an intelligence of significance and integrity to offer. But if evaluated in a social context, the work fails. Ultimately, *On TV* falls into the trap that the artist has so poignantly cautioned us about. Echoing the Dadaists, performance, and modern feminists, he asks us to question the very assumptions of our looking, to examine our willingness to construct the gaze. It is a warning that should be heard. But given the very assumptions of the art context he willingly places it in, the question persists: "Who is listening?"

Rune

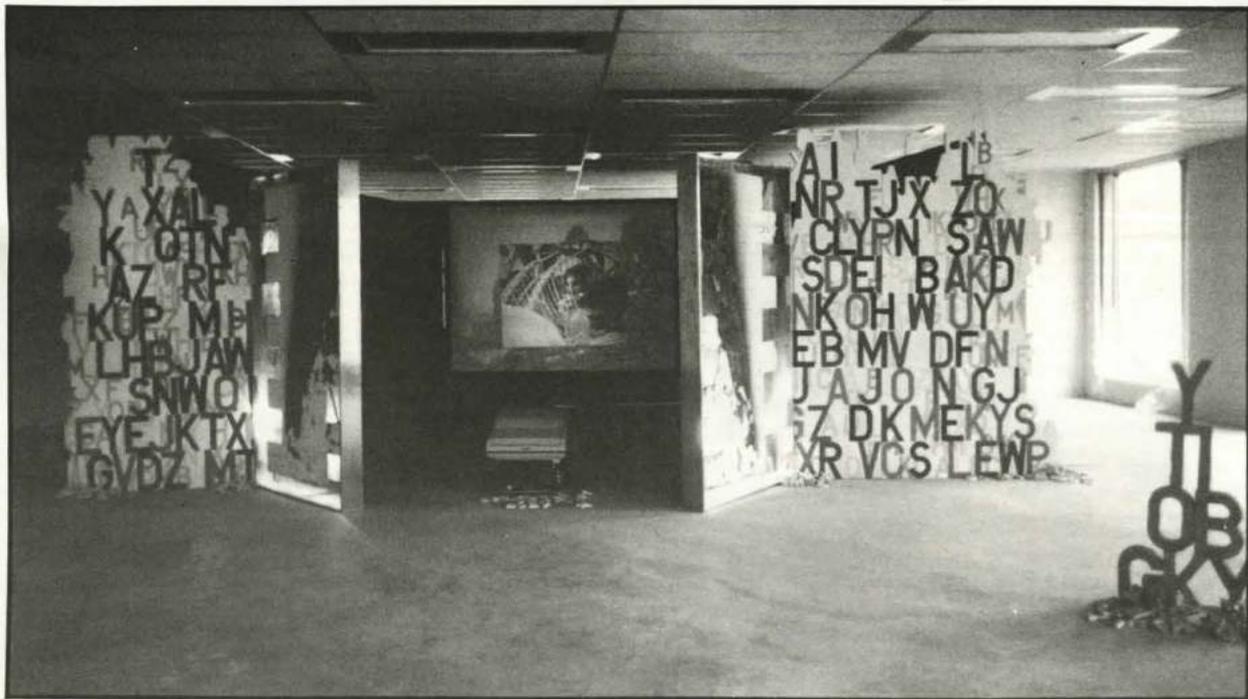
RANDY & BERENICCI

Composed of separate and interrelated constructions, this piece weaves together an intricate fabric of myth, ritual, artifact, icon, chance, and adventure into a temple to the age of information built from the ruins of language, media, and mass communication — a post-modern monument which conjures the myth and magic of foreign exotic worlds and ancient archaic civilizations.

Rune is comprised of works in progress over the past five years and includes film footage of modern ritual in Asia, audio and video loops, constructions and mechanical devices.

Randy & Berenici are multidisciplinary artists who have worked in collaboration since the early 1970's to produce performance, video, and installation artworks. They have performed throughout North America, Europe, and Asia, and have exhibited video tapes and installation works internationally.

Randy & Berenici incorporate the time, context, and location of each event into their artwork. Through the use of recurring symbols, motifs, and metaphors, they create a kind of language in time and space that attains the same internal ends as speech. Their artwork utilizes electronic media, sound, projection, theatrical effects, installation, and action to create changing site-specific tableaux.



photos by Chick Rice



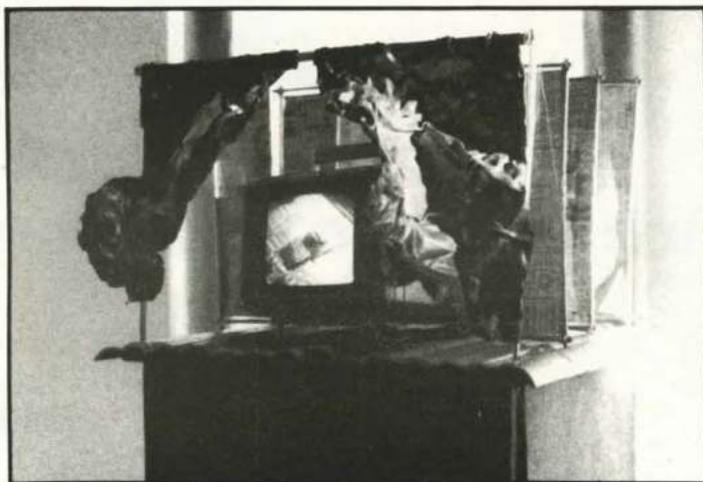


photo by Chick Rice

*"The lord whose oracle is in Delphi
neither speaks out nor conceals,
but gives a sign."*

— Heraclitus

When traversing the bridge spanning the ticky-tacky which is Expo, it is difficult to believe that the body of water beside it is an important element of a sacred landscape and that an oracle lies not too far beyond, in a pink highrise on the pink horizon.

When the four natural elements of mountain, tree, stone, and water reside in one spot it is considered a sacred whole. As we knock back our third pitcher of cut rate beer on Grouse Mountain, and look down swimmingly on the unfolding landscape, we are witness not only to that giant disco ball glittering on False Creek, but to a site with the qualities of ancient Delphi. Grouse and its companions are our Phaedriades. Randy and Berenicci supply the oracle.

Rune takes its name from the ancient script of Northern Germanic tribes. It is still unknown whether runes were used mainly for mystical purposes or for regular communication, an ambiguity used to advantage in this work.

The artists have constructed a temple of sorts, a ruin of human communication which embodies both despair and optimism, which speaks to the culture which struggles at the base of the construct. The temple resides on the barren 31st floor of Park Place in Vancouver's financial core. The interior is unfinished: the floor length windows overlook the vista of the concrete jungle. Through this creative act, Park Place symbolically joins the ranks of the Babylonian ziggurats or the pyramidal temples of Asia or pre-Columbian Mexico. It is highly appropriate that an office tower, built in part as an optimistic response to the pre-supposed Expo legacy, should house the oracle which pronounces on its ideological inevitabilities.

Rune addresses the nature of language and its connection to the quality of the culture which embraces it. The site is highly appropriate, as is the theme, in a Province where the government's rhetoric is the worst kind of blatant, unrepentant doublespeak, and in a culture which denies the intuitive, the mysterious, the sensuous and unpredictable aspects of humanity in favour of the Teutonic.

The installation is a collection of constructions scattered along a directed path. The first set is eerily reminiscent of our collective nuclear nightmares: remnants of fallen structures bravely cling to fragile three dimensionality. In spite of the destruction they can still be architecturally defined as corners, walls, and foundations. These are not simply ruins, but ruins fashioned from Roman Letters, from language. Their appearance is, in every sense, concrete.

Two of these three pieces incorporate video monitors. A beam of light tentatively explores the black nether regions of once magnificent structures revealing corroded pipes, leaking joints, and shattered windows. The solitary beam and pointless meanderings speak of a lone survivor, searching for promise and finding none, all the while stumbling further into the endless subterranean depths. The repetitive clatter of a modern world, wailing sirens, the rumble of helicopters and subways, weave through the sounds of impersonal mass communication: not-in-service recordings, police radio bulletins, recitations of winning lottery numbers, and recorded flight information.

The works are flooded with blue light, their concrete finish colder because of it. The ruins speak of an apocalypse worthy of a temple with an address like 666.

There is a short, empty gap between this concrete, western world and the second set of constructs which evoke the mysterious east. The sound from one intrudes on the other, a fragile link like a conversation attempted by two people, one on either shore. There is evidence of western intrusion here: a few scattered remnants, hints of imperialism. There is also evidence of a similar destruction yet an ancient and obscure form of communication lingers on, waiting to be rediscovered.

Atop a concrete pillar sits a small tableau like a rooftop shrine on an eastern highrise. Gold painted bamboo serves as the pillar's roof and the tableau's foundation. A small monitor is seen behind a billowed curtain. Flanking the sides and back of the monitor are miniature oriental screens, the rice paper appropriately replaced with newspaper horoscopes, gossip columns, western news, and stock exchange info.

The tiny monitor, the gold paint, sound of chirping birds, the doll house quality of the tableau — all these contribute to its delicate preciousness. The monitor features a visual loop of a small bird landing on a spread deck of cards. It selects one with its beak. The bird drops the card to feed from a human hand, then flies away as the hands open the folded card to reveal . . .

The last cave-like structure is entered by two large portals made of a burnished, brass-like material with traces of scorching on their outer face. Large projected images of Asian rituals are inserted over wandering images of temples and other artifacts of eastern religion to the haunting sounds of traditional percussion instruments.

Randy and Berenicci's blend of ritual, symbolism, and myth is similar in style and intent to the unintelligible mutterings of the oracles of ancient Greece: they establish a fragile bridge between the sacred and the profane. The viewer fills the role of the prophet in interpreting the message. The sacred in this case is humanity, the profane, the denial of it. The work exists for the same purpose that ritualistic objects and churches exist: to mediate between the two and to enlighten us on them both.

Randy and Berenicci's previous video works, such as *Unbashed Heroics* and *Once Upon a Time . . .* were tales of the abuse of power and its seemingly unavoidable cataclysmic result. Their characters are surprised and remorseful after the fact — Adam and Eve losing their world for a second time. Their observations have moralistic overtones. They function as post-modern, quasi-existentialist versions of Revelations.

I cannot help but be reminded of religious parables taught in Sunday school. The stories often began as adventures, with the characters either triumphing over evil or succumbing with remorse and shame. When Randy and Berenicci tell tales it is usually the latter. In this installation, however, the narrative is not so clear. *Rune* refers to the past and future simultaneously, to an apocalypse that has passed and is to come, to a fundamental humanity which has existed and can exist again. The viewer is drawn into the adventure as a medium into a trance or an archeologist on a dig. The traces of an event are there for the reading.

The destruction of language and the hint of the semiotic mysticism which could replace it was not appreciated by some people who came to see the work. Picking out letters one by one, and lining them up in military fashion, they tried to make words they could understand from the rubble at their feet. For some it's much easier to go back than forward.



photo by Chick Rice

reviewed by Karen Knights

Lost Art: A Cargo Cult Romance

VERA FRENKEL

Not always, but sometimes, I can recognize the lie or misrepresentation that masquerades as a received idea. When this happens, I like to bring to the question the natural contradictions that occur when different sets of conventions are at work at the same time.

In *Lost Art: A Cargo Cult Romance*, the interplay of text, voice, image, and objects allows the viewer into the space between them, permitting a clearer view. In this work, the view is of the relation of representation to art, the coming and going of ruling fictions in this regard, and what this might mean.

The arbitrariness and even madness of certain received ideas that we continue to believe has always astonished me. I think that's why I find the notion and practice of the cargo cult haunting. A cargo cult: of course! A perfect — and disconcerting — instance of the attribution of false meaning; a phenomenon which demonstrates the extremes of belief that arise out of a longing to be saved.

Debris from another culture is washed onto an island shore. Natives assemble the bits and pieces as they arrive and make them into shrines before which they worship a narrative of their own invention, often evoking a saviour of some sort. The debris which occasions the new religion is often salvaged military equipment. Practices evolve in the course of this worship which are passed on from generation to generation.

In *Lost Art*, the triggering event for the narrative of transformation and loss is the creation of an image from unrelated parts. The image is of a flying prison toilet. The actual drawing was made on August 30, 1977, at the First International Seminar on Rendering held at Banff, Alberta, a centre of many such gatherings.

As a result of combining the skills of four specialists, the work was completed: a prison toilet (plan and elevation views), with aircraft wings, rendered beautifully in three dimensions, and then carefully pin-striped and herring-boned with a small brush in the fashion of department-store catalogues prior to the use of photography.

The practitioners were:

Jean Duryea, draughtsperson for Super Secure Ware prison toilets, Wanda Nowotko, technical artist for Douglas Aircraft, Doug Haynes, painter and, at one time, renderer, and Doug Morton, painter and, at one time, herringboner and pinstriper.

One after the other, each artist added his or her skill to the work which was presented on completion to the Banff Permanent Collection.

In 1984, on a brief visit to Banff, I asked, in passing, where the flying toilet had been hung. It couldn't be found.

The videotape component of the installation is an interweaving of the original 1977 footage with documentation of the 1984 press conference launching the search for the missing work of art. These two threads are woven into a larger fabric; poetic and ironic, in which the original event takes on new meaning.

The tableaux in the installation reconstruct and re-present the settings for the key sequences which appear on the tape: the original event during which the work was created, and the press conference initiating an inquiry into its disappearance. The re-staging of these events, together with the World War I drawing board and rifle bag, effigies of various kinds made of furniture parts, palm fronds, a portion of mountain forest and an island shore painted on a free-standing wall, map some of the reference points in the work. From the main entrance, a red carpet leads the viewer to the enshrined videotape.

— Vera Frenkel

excerpt from *The Luminous Sites Catalogue*

Vera Frenkel is well known for her work in narrative video, addressing the forms of visual and oral tradition. Her work has shown in Canada and Europe. The National Gallery in Ottawa recently presented *The Videotapes: Vera Frenkel* (1985), covering thirteen years of production.



photos by Chick Rice

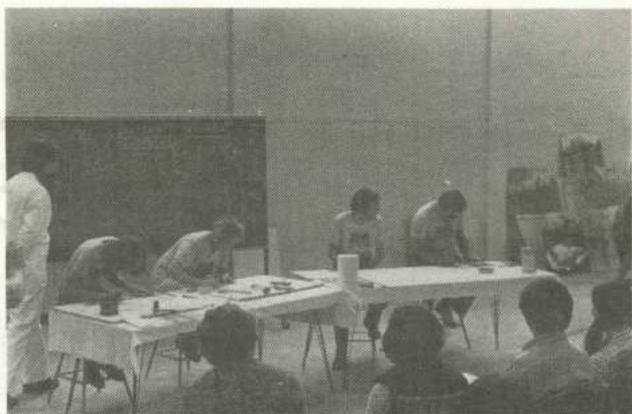




photo by Robert Kezler



photo by Robert Kezler



INFERMENTAL 6

The first international magazine on videocassettes
NEW WORLD EDITION
 A Video Map of the World

We are preparing the 6th edition of INFERMENTAL in Vancouver. For this issue we are inviting artists to send in contributions which have a connection with the following themes:

- Cross-Cultural Television
- Telepathic Music
- Poetical Economy
- New Religions

Contributions may be made in video (any format) or film (16mm or 8mm) and may be up to 10 minutes long. Material must be sent before October 15, 1986. Contributors whose work is included will be paid a fee of \$60 Cdn. Also, 50% of the income from rental, sale, or broadcast of INFERMENTAL 6 will be shared equally among the authors. Each contributor will receive a copy of the catalogue and notices of all presentations of INFERMENTAL 6. Original material will be returned to artists by first class mail as soon as the editing is complete. INFERMENTAL cannot be responsible for damage caused by mailing. The NEW WORLD EDITION will be released in February 1987.

Please send your contributions to:

INFERMENTAL 6
 Western Front
 303 East 8th Ave.
 Vancouver, B.C.
 V5T 1S1 Canada

INFERMENTAL 6
 Sulzgrütel 67
 D-5000 Köln 41
 Germany

LIFE LIKE IT
 Some Halifax Video



LIFE LIKE IT: Some Halifax Video is a package of recently produced video tapes and a performance originating from Halifax, Nova Scotia, in eastern Canada.

A seven stop Canada-wide tour has proven to be very successful in terms of audience numbers and feedback. As a result of this overwhelming response, plans for a European tour are now underway.

Cathy Quinn, video and performance artist, introduces and contextualizes the work by way of a performance entitled **Hali-Facts** in which she points to some of the conditions that affect independent video production. Cathy will travel throughout Europe from September to November, 1986.

If you are interested in booking the **LIFE LIKE IT** performance/video package, please contact one of the following people:

Cathy Quinn
 RR 2
 Porter's Lake, Nova Scotia
 Canada B0J 2S0
 (902) 462-0333

Jeanette Reinhardt
 Video Out
 261 Powell Street
 Vancouver, B.C.
 Canada V6A 1G3
 (604) 688-4336



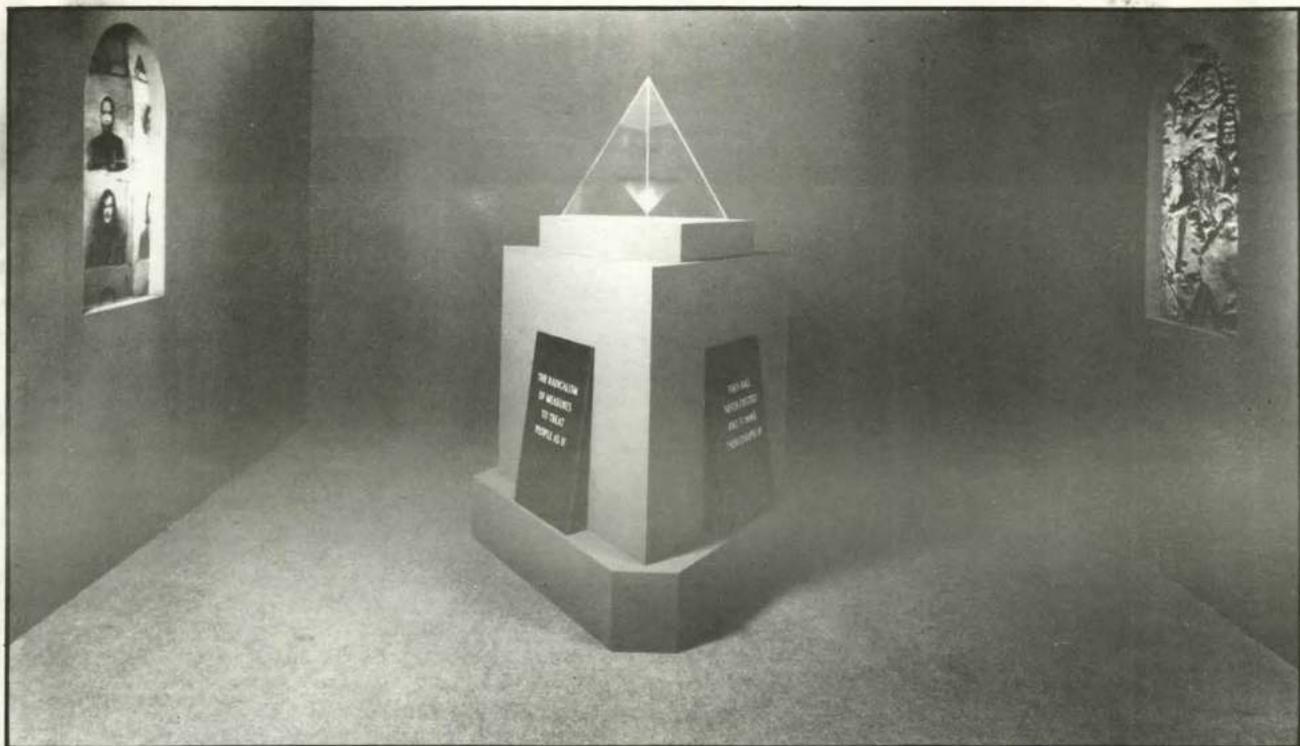


photo by Robert Keziere

Cénotaphe

BARBARA STEINMAN

reviewed by **Jill Pollack**

"As a woman, I have no country"

— Virginia Woolf

On August 2, 1985, the memorial to World War I Japanese veterans, located at Stanley Park in Vancouver, was officially re-lit: the switch to the 'Eternal Flame' was flipped.

At first it is the light which draws me in. High atop a vertical structure, a flame flickers. I knew that Cénotaphe by Barbara Steinman was part of *Luminous Sites*, a series of ten video installations, but where is the video? Hidden. Incorporated for its video-ness rather than as a documentary or a narrative vehicle. Wait a minute. It is narrative and it is documentary, the video and the whole installation. How can an electronically-generated video "flame" be both documentary and narrative? Because it stands for a flame, which it appears to be and because it is a metaphor, therefore narrative, for life lost, life disappeared. It is dim inside the room; the only sources of light are the slides and the reflection of the video monitor. Both are behind something else. The slides, a two-way mirror, and the video, a plexi pyramid. Both are contained. Trapped. Locked. Wait a minute. A minute of silence, just like on Remembrance Day. This is the same, only different. This is not about dead soldiers or only-the-good-die-young, this is about anyone anywhere who does not fit into the ruling class' idea of acquiescence, about anyone who is different (?): children, women, jews, blacks, the disabled, native people, Japanese . . . wait a minute — who doesn't fall into that category? White upper class men. Who else? The mates of white upper class men. Who else? The children of white upper class men. No, actually, some of the children probably are not in that group. They may have fallen from grace. They may

"The radicalism of measures to make people disappear . . . as if they had never existed is frequently not apparent at first glance.

— Hannah Arendt,
Totalitarianism

Cool video-flames shed light on texts inscribed in granite. The flames are reflected in plexiglass, repeated in mirrors. Slides are projected from the peripherals at intervals, illuminating the installation and its intent. The work is a cenotaph, a symbolic tomb. It is a tribute to those whose history remains unrecorded.

Cénotaphe was first shown in Lyon, France (December 13, 1985 to February 2, 1986) in a building directly beside St. Joseph's prison where Klaus Barbie, former head of the Gestapo in Lyon, awaits trial.

— Barbara Steinman

Barbara Steinman began making video tapes in 1975 and more recently has been exhibiting video and multi-media installations. Her work has been shown at the Hara Museum in Tokyo, Espace lyonnais d'art contemporain in Lyon, the Musée d'art contemporain in Montreal, the Vancouver Art Gallery and other Canadian galleries. Several of her works are in the collection of the Art Bank of the Canada Council as well as private collections.

be pro-humanity. That category is awfully broad, and don't you think it is a generalization? How about saying that it is those who hold the power that are the ones who 'fit' and everyone else tries to find a banner to stand under, either inside or outside of that structure? Okay. But Barbara Steinman included that quote from Hannah

Arendt, "The radicalism of measures to treat people as if they had never existed and to make them disappear] is frequently not apparent at first glance." Is she talking about pervasive, socially-acceptable ways to stereotype, denigrate, and invalidate? Is she talking literally? Maybe both. The literal comes to mind more readily. The literal, the literal what? Connections? Victims? The dead and disappeared? What about the cliché where you are lost in a crowd? Sadly, it has become a crowd — there are so many people, so many individuals who by their physical appearance or their thinking and words have been the target of the powerful in an attempt (a quite successful attempt) to stop or destroy them. The enemy mentality. We. They. Just as Arendt's quote is at the base of the Cénotaphe, that is at the base of Steinman's piece: the mentality of divisiveness. Or maybe it is the opposite: the mentality of unity. References to Christianity, with the inclusion of the church-like atmosphere, the arched windows which remind me of stained glass windows. References to Judaism, with the quote by Arendt, who always makes me think of "Eichmann in Jerusalem" and the Holocaust. A sort of inter-faith tribunal, exposed. Are we all victims and all guilty? Wait a minute. Look in the two-way mirror. There's my face, reflected alongside a slide of soldiers, then a slide of refugees. I don't want to accept that I could be both. It's not fair. What's not fair? That all this happens all the time or that you could be (are) both a victim and an aggressor? Has Steinman really managed to make you feel all of this at once? Yes. Cénotaphe brings out a lot of unresolved and hard-to-look-at dilemmas within me. My answer is Yes when my response to some of the situations her piece discusses is No. The same circle as I walk around the triangular base of the cenotaphe. There's not enough time; there's too many things wrong; I can't change everything I oppose in the world, and I don't want to feel powerless. Wait a minute. Look what Steinman has done in just one piece of art. She has eloquently, concisely, and evocatively made you feel all of this. In just one installation, she has moved you — emotionally and intellectually. She has set up a situation where you enter into her manipulated world and given you the opportunity to stop and think about the way we treat each other. Are you changed as a result? Maybe not profoundly but each time I am presented with an unresolvable situation, I come a little closer to understanding why I have to be tolerant and patient, understanding what I want to do in my own life about it. Especially since this is a work of art, I am re-affirmed that art does have the ability to penetrate my consciousness and induce me to re-assess how I feel. Visuals do have power. Cénotaphe is a memorial and does make me wait. a minute.

Through The Eye Of The Cyclops

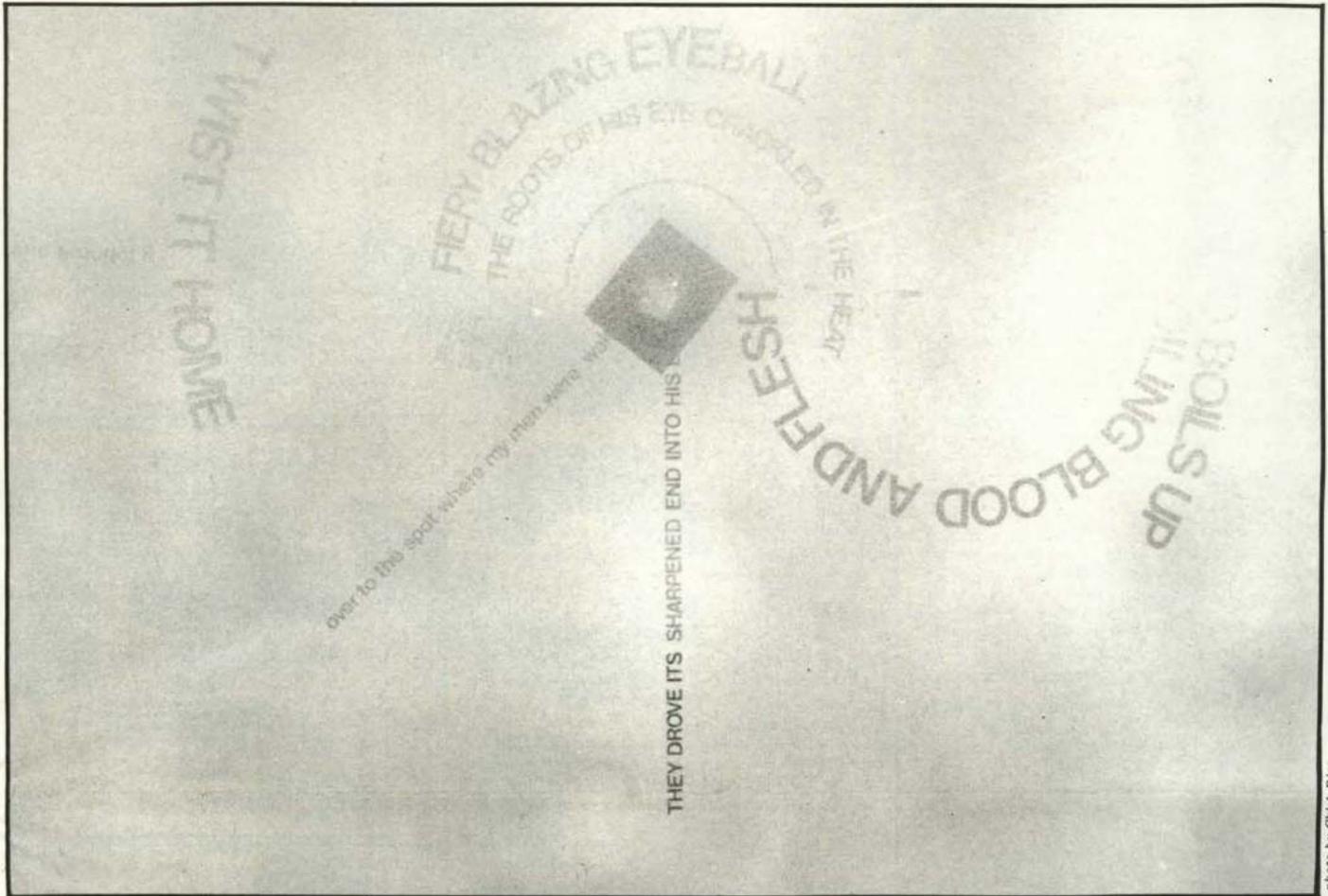


photo by Chick Rice

DAVID TOMAS

In 1904 the American historian Henry Adams noted that he had witnessed the appearance of four impossibilities in his lifetime: the ocean-steamer, the railway, the electric telegraph, and the Daguerreotype. These technological processes emerged at the height of the Industrial Revolution and, for the most part, they implied a radical redefinition of the conditions for looking and seeing. With its focus on the historical conditions for the existence of photography, my own work has developed in relation to these historical processes, the redefinition they implied, the impossibilities they embodied, and the perceptual revolution they inaugurated. It revolves around the question of the emergence of the photographic process at a particular period in time and the nature of the representation it might articulate.

But in the juxtaposition of an origin (photography) with the social and cultural conditions of my own historical existence there has emerged a second matrix of impossibilities to be identified with an other 'history', an other attempt to redefine what it might mean to look and see had we not been subject to the historical conditions which have crystallized in the form of Industrial Capitalism (the quintessential economic form of the Industrial Revolution). I think that my work can best be understood in relation to this latter strategic position, the paradox

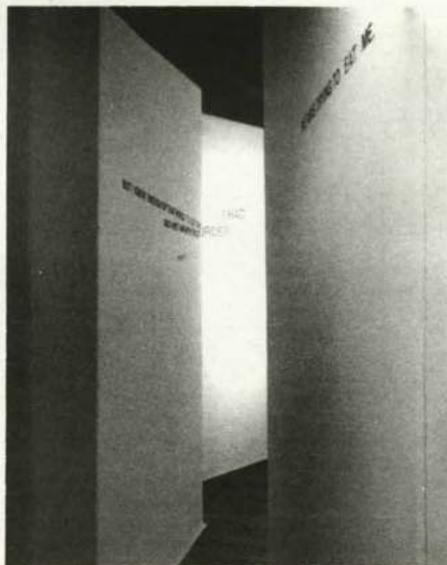


photo by Chick Rice

implied in the word "impossibility" ("that which cannot be done"), and the development of a dualistic history — an 'impossible' history which materialized in the context of the Industrial Revolution and the possibility of a 'history' which can only materialize in the shadows of that 'impossible' history, in those instants which have escaped its tyranny. My work seeks the conditions for the existence of that 'historical' possibility.

— David Tomas

Statement for the upcoming exhibition catalogue, *Songs of Experience*.
Courtesy of The National Gallery of Canada

David Tomas' work on the historical context of photography and cultural images has received much notice in Canada and abroad in recent years. He has exhibited installation work in the Simpson Gallery, Toronto and the Yajima Gallery, Montreal. He was a part of the Aurora Borealis exhibition of Canadian installation work in Montreal, 1985, and he has recently shown in Lyon, France. In 1986, his work will be shown as a part of the *Songs of Experience* exhibition at the National Gallery in Ottawa.



EVENTS

1986 S.A.W. GALLERY INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF VIDEO ART

Plans are underway for the organization of the 1986 S.A.W. Gallery International Festival of Video Art. Curated by Elke Town, a prominent and renowned video and visual art curator from Toronto, the Festival will begin in Ottawa with Opening Ceremonies and the first Festival videotape screening at the York Street Theatre on Monday, September 29th. While the Ottawa portion of the Festival will conclude on the evening of October 9th, tapes and visiting artists will have already started touring across Canada, to stop at artist-run centres from Halifax to Victoria until November 1st.

For the first time, under the auspices of the International Festival of Video Art, video installations - displays which combine the static nature of sculpture with the kinetic nature of video to explore the horizons of this relatively new medium as a means of artistic expression - will be exhibited at S.A.W. Gallery and other artsplaces in Ottawa. Intensive two-day workshops will be conducted by four visiting artists - including one Canadian - at the S.A.W. Gallery Video Co-op here in Ottawa. At press time, only two of these artists had confirmed their participation: Maggie Warwick from London, England, and Marie Andre from Brussels, Belgium. The entire program will be announced at the beginning of August. For more information, contact Bill White, the Video Festival Co-ordinator, at S.A.W. Gallery, 55 Byward Market Square 2nd floor, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 9C3. Tel: (613) 236-6181.



Golden Sheaf Awards 49 Smith Street East Yorkton, Saskatchewan S3N 0H4

AN INVITATION TO CANADIAN PRODUCERS

This year, 1986, will mark the 22nd Anniversary of the Yorkton Short Film & Video Festival Inc. The Festival continues to provide recognition for short film and video makers throughout Canada.

The Golden Sheaf Awards promote a long tradition of recognizing excellence in short film and video productions.

We invite you, as a Canadian producer, to participate in this year's competition. Our two tier adjudication and selection process will recognize sixteen categories, seven craft awards, and three special cash awards. The process of judging film and video productions in one competition will continue this year.

In addition to your production entries, won't you consider attending the Festival, Seminars and workshops of important issues concerning the industry will also be offered, as well as the 24 hour marketplace.

Hope to see you and your production October 29 to November 2, 1986.

ELIGIBILITY

Canadian filmmakers, videographers, producers, and distributors are invited to submit their original work to the 1986 Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival in competition for the Golden Sheaf Awards.

Only Canadian short productions (under 60 minutes) are accepted.

A Canadian production is defined as any production which would qualify as a certified production under the current regulations applied by the Department of Communications.

All entries must have been completed in the period between June 1, 1985 and September 1, 1986 and not have been entered in a previous Yorkton Festival.

The final decision regarding eligibility of any production will be the responsibility of the selection committee and such authorities as they may wish to consult.

MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW CINEMA AND VIDEO

The Montreal International Festival of New Cinema and Video will celebrate its fifteenth anniversary this autumn, making it the oldest international cinema event in Canada. This year's Festival will be organized along the same general lines that made its fourteenth edition so successful: like last year, activities will take place on and around the "Main" (St. Lawrence Boulevard).

Films and videos will again be screened in three locations: at the Milieu, the Cinéma Parallèle, and at the Cinéma-thèque québécoise.

Screenings will be accompanied by other activities in the same area, giving the Festival its unique character in North America, where it has become a hub for progressive and innovative cinema and video. Filmmakers, video artists, and others from the forefront of the film and video world will be among the invited participants. Also, the Film and Video Market, created to promote contacts between producers, distributors, and theatre owners, will provide the maximum opportunity for the films and videos presented at the Festival to obtain distribution in Quebec and in Canada.

This year, increased funding from the two major sponsors of the Festival, Téléfilm Canada and the Société générale du cinéma du Québec, has made it possible to hold the Festival in the best possible conditions.

To obtain Festival regulations and entry forms (Film or Video Section), please contact:

FESTIVAL
INTERNATIONAL
DU NOUVEAU
CINEMA
ET DE LA VIDEO
MONTREAL

3724 boulevard Saint-Laurent
Montréal, Québec
H2X 2V8
Tel: (514) 843-4725

VIDEO ART: Each year SFIVF highlights the finest examples of contemporary video art and independent production. Artists active in video production are invited to submit works for review by a panel of their peers, including fellow artists, curators, and critics. Emphasis is given to newer works.

AWARDS: All works selected for exhibition will receive an honorarium of \$100. Broadcast, distribution, and other showings outside of regular Festival showings will receive additional revenues contingent on agreement of the artist(s).

ENTRY: Send this completed entry form plus the required entry fee (within U.S. \$15; outside U.S. \$18) along with the videotape to the address below. Send U.S. dollars only. All submitted works must be 1/2" regardless of original format. This entry form may be xeroxed for additional copies.

Entries will not be processed and tapes will not be returned without receipt of the proper entry fee.

EXHIBITION: Exhibitions are held at a variety of sites throughout the ten day festival. Venues are selected to best present the work and allow for the largest possible audience. Museums, gallery, theater, site-specific, nightclub and broadcast exhibitions will be featured.

DISTRIBUTION: Each year, the SFIVF curates a Traveling Show to tour museums, galleries, and exhibiting institutions worldwide, for which all selected entries are eligible. The 1985 and 1986 Traveling Shows are currently touring or plan to tour the United States, France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Brazil, and Argentina. Separate contracts will be arranged to cover these showings with specified royalties accruing to the artist(s).

CATALOG: A complete catalog of the SFIVF 1986 will be published in the fall issue of *Video and the Arts Magazine*. To reserve a copy postage paid, send \$3.00 to the address below. Outside the U.S. send \$4.00 U.S. (surface) or \$6.00 U.S. (air).

All entries must be received by July 31, 1986.

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL VIDEO FESTIVAL
650 MISSOURI STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94107
(415) 863-8434

Not Confused

The Paul Wong Defense Fund
presents
COCKTAIL STORIES
with JOOLZ & PAUL WONG
Chinavision Videotapes

Saturday, July 26, 1986
8 pm to 11:30 pm
\$10.00

Legal Dressing, No Host Bar
R.S.V.P. 662-3729

Assisted by
Main Express Cafe
Lazy Gourmet
Las Tapas
Video Inn

DONATIONS can be sent to the
PAUL WONG DEFENSE FUND
c/o Maclean, Nicol, & Wong
650-1380 Burrard Street
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

LAST CALL!
for films and videos—
any subject, any length
for the 2nd Annual



Roxie Cinema, November 7-9, 1986

Deadline: Friday, August 15. Only completed works will be shown, but submission of works-in-progress is encouraged. Acceptable formats are 35mm, 16mm and Super-8 film, and 3/4" video (1/2" acceptable for preview purposes only).

For information and entry forms, contact:
Film Arts Foundation
346 Ninth Street—Second Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 552-8760



Kijkhuis
noordeinde 140
2514GP Den Haag
Nederland 070.644805

The 5th World Wide Video Festival will take place from September 9 through 14, 1986, in the Kijkhuis in The Hague. The Kijkhuis will be the main festival location, where screenings will be held from morning 'till midnight. Depending on the size of the definite selection, additional locations will be chosen.

The close collaboration with the Haagse Gemeentemuseum (municipal museum of The Hague) (video installations) will be continued. We expect to show some six installations there of which Tony Oursier's "Spheres d'Influence" will definitely be one.

If the necessary permits can be obtained, the World Wide Video Festival will present a cable television program in The Hague during the week of the festival, combining productions that are being shown in the Kijkhuis and interviews with video-makers.

Besides the works that we will be collecting ourselves, the festival will again include independent video productions that can be entered personally by artists/producers. Works have to be entered on 1/2" U-matic Lo-band cassettes or VHS preview cassettes. Artists/producers who wish to enter tapes for selection are requested to contact the Kijkhuis first, in order to obtain the entry forms. The closing date for entries is July 1, 1986.

We hope this information is useful to you. We would greatly appreciate all publicity about this festival in your own publication or through any other channels you may have access to. We will keep you informed of further developments and will send you all press material in the following months.



VIDEO SHORTS FESTIVAL
932 - 12TH AVENUE
SEATTLE, WA 98122
206/322-9010

VIDEO SHORTS SIX

Video Shorts Six announces its 1986 entry deadline is October 15. Video Shorts is the only national video festival devoted solely to short non-commercial video works. Judging will be held in Seattle before a live audience October 25 and 26.

Entries may be up to six minutes in length. There is a \$10 entry fee per tape; entrants must add \$5 for each additional entry on the same tape. Winners receive a \$100 honorarium and their works are compiled on a festival program which premieres in Seattle November 20. For entry forms and further information, write Video Shorts Festival, 932 - 12th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122, or call (206) 322-9010.

The Video Shorts Festival discovers trends in video production, recognizes excellence in video artistry and technique, and creates an archive of the best short videos each year. Video Shorts is a non-profit project, supported in part by the Seattle Arts Commission.

AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL

VIDEO ON THE RISE AT AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL

For the first time in its 27 year history, original video productions have been fully integrated into the American Film and Video Festival. Of the 400 titles in the final Festival program, approximately 40% were either originally produced in videotape or were produced directly for television or the home video market. Film and video titles will compete side by side for prestigious Blue and Red Ribbon Awards in over 50 subject and genre categories.

Symbolic of the increased role of video in the event, the Festival — known as the American Film Festival for 27 years — has officially changed its name to The American Film and Video Festival. Film and video productions will be screened interchangeably in twelve simultaneous screening rooms at the Festival site. The Festival will be held May 27 to June 1 at the Roosevelt Hotel, Madison Avenue at East 45 Street, New York City. Awards will be announced and presented in a gala Awards Ceremony on May 31.

Among the nearly 200 video productions in competition are: Jon Alpert's *Vietnam: Talking to the People*; Shelley Duvall's *Johnny Appleseed*; Elliot Kaplan and Merce Cunningham's *Deli Commedia*; Peter Rosen's *Toscanini: The Maestro*; Daniele Lacourse's *Nicaragua: The Dirty War*; NBC's *An Early Frost* and scores of others.

The top prize winners in Video Art competition — Skip Sweeney's *My Mother Married Wilbur Stump* and Guy Guillet's *Creation File* — and the Video Reportage competition (featuring segments submitted by independent television stations nationwide) — will be screened during the weeklong Festival.

Award-winning video productions will travel on a well-publicized circuit to major museums, libraries, cultural centers, and universities around the country.

Video finalists will be screened during the Festival on state-of-the-art video exhibition hardware donated by Panasonic and SONY.

THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE ACADEMY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Applications are currently available for the 1986-87 Cycle of The American Film Institute's Academy Internship Program.

Funded by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and administered by The American Film Institute since 1968, the program provides opportunities for a limited number of promising new directors to learn by observing established film and television directors in the making of a feature film or movie-for-television.

Applications are available for a June 30, 1986, deadline, by calling (213) 856-7640 or 800-221-6248 or by writing to The Academy Internship Program, The American Film Institute, 2021 North Western Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027.

The American Film Institute (AFI) is an independent, non-profit organization founded in 1967 to advance the moving image as an art form and to develop and encourage new talent.

DISTRIBUTE

Our Right to Abortion

A video documenting the National Organization for Women's "March for Women's Lives" — March 9, 1986 Washington, D.C.

Available on 1/4" and 1/2" VHS video tape and Beta max

Cost: minimum copy dubbing costs, plus any shipping and handling charges

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Mary Demetrick
Syracuse University Communications Programs
125 College Place
Syracuse, NY 13244
315-423-4172 (W)
315-476-9876 (H)

GLOBAL

AMSTERDAM, June 6, 1986

Dear artist, dear friend:

As you probably know, the circumstances for artists in the field of electronic media in Holland — production facilities — were not too bad. Just recently the Minister of Culture, not convinced of the importance of this art field, decided to cut the subvention of state-aided institutions like MonteVideo. This could have excessive consequences for production facilities for both Dutch and international artists.

Therefore, we ask you to support our campaign in the form of sending telegrams with a short, but clear, request to our Minister to convince him of the need of artistic electronic production facilities.

Your contribution in the form of a telegram or a letter could be of great help to stop the Dutch government continuing her short-sighted policy in this area.

On behalf of the artists of MonteVideo, with fraternal greetings,

Servaas

P.S. Send your wire please as soon as possible to:
Mr. Drs. L.C. Brinkman,
Minister of Culture
Postbox 5406
2280 HK Rijswijk
Holland

2. bonn

INTERNATIONALES FESTIVAL UND WETTBEWERB FÜR KUNSTVIDEOS

We are very glad to announce the 2nd Videonale, an international festival and competition for artists' videos. The 2nd Videonale will take place from September 13 to 21, 1986, in Bonn. A competent international jury will give monetary awards (a total of 5000 DM) to different video artists and, further, appoint a videomaker for a free production donated by Video-Bonn, a local production firm. A special award will be donated by the industry.

An illustrated catalogue will be published in German/English. To get more publicity for the festival we already have prepared a TV presentation. After the festival a selection of tapes will go on a tour around Germany and abroad.

The following people are responsible for the 2nd Videonale: Dieter Daniels, Bärbel Moser, and Petra Unnützer. The festival will be held at Raum 41, Wolfstr. 41, 5300 Bonn 1.

The 2nd Videonale is financed by the City of Bonn, the Ministry of Culture NRW, and the Kunstfonds e.V.

Deadline: July 31, 1986.

Important: for customs purposes it is necessary that you indicate the value of your tape as \$20 or the equivalent thereof.

For further information and entry forms contact:
VIDEONALE
c/o Petra Unnützer
Nassestr. 5
5300 Bonn 1
West Germany
Phone: 228 21 59 61.

CC

ART BANK OPEN HOUSE

Everyone is invited to attend the Canada Council Art Bank open house for the official opening of the display *The Art Bank at Work*, at the Upstairs Gallery of the Emily Carr College of Art and Design on Granville Island, Friday July 11 from 5:00 to 7:00pm. Maureen Forrester, Chairman of the Canada Council, will officially open the display. Her colleagues on the board of the Canada Council from B.C., Gordon Armstrong and Alan Ball, also will be present. The display of over 650 works of contemporary Canadian art is open to the public from 10:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday, from July 14 to August 8, 1986.

INFORMATION SESSION FOR VISUAL ARTISTS

Artists interested in finding out more about the Art Bank Purchase Program, and anyone else interested in how the Art Bank works, are invited to attend an information session (with slides) given by William Kirby, Head of the Art Bank. There will be a question and answer period. This presentation will take place at 7:00pm at the Emily Carr College of Art and Design, room 260, on Wednesday July 23. Peter Roberts, Director of the Canada Council, will be present.

Prototype, 1986

reviewed by Todd Davis

MAX DEAN

Prototype is a kinetic closed-circuit video installation that is to be seen through a ground floor storefront window. The work uses a closed-circuit video camera linked to two monitors which are mounted on a revolving metal stand. The video camera is located just inside the store window and is focussed out onto the sidewalk. The monitors are supported by arms extending from the metal base. The arms can revolve together or independently around the base in either a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction and at various speeds. The horizontal circular path of the arms brings the monitors within six inches of the walls and eighteen inches of the storefront window. The sculpture is activated when the viewer places his hands on two paper cut-outs of hands mounted on the store window. These cut-out hands also position the participant so that the video camera frames the viewer's head. This image of the viewer's head appears on both monitor screens which face out onto the street. Initially both arms revolve together but after a predetermined time period a random sequence of speeds and directions is introduced. As the monitors continue to revolve the video image becomes distorted. As soon as the viewer removes his/her hands from the cut-outs, the mechanism stops and returns to the rest position. This installation was built with the assistance of Bob Waters.

— Max Dean

This video installation cum sculpture by Max Dean (with the assistance of Bob Waters) is literally a closed-circuit system, the control of which has been handed to the viewer. Our physical access to the gallery space has been denied; viewing takes on a double role through both the gallery windows and closed-circuit video system if the viewer positions him/herself in the proper place. Control is an option if the viewer wishes to manipulate pre-designated movement of the sculpture. It is an access of constraint in conjunction with viewer operation of the regulated video unit through which the artist attempts to heighten our awareness of participation. Physical participation. Although this work permits viewing, an important aspect of the temporal parameters, it is manipulation which dominates at first encounter. The viewers operating the sculpture/installation to manifest their own slightly distorted image and the artist in his attempt to entice us into the system of subject/object become a circuitous procedure with a deviousness illustrated as the viewers' awareness of their role as a component in the electronic network situated in front of them, but accessible only under terms set out by the artist.

As opposed to the self-indulgence of religious services on any given Sunday morning, I decided to bicycle to the Or Gallery for a look at Max Dean's contribution to Luminous Sites. The mere mention of 'physical participation,' like the word 'free,' will draw me every time.

Participation has its roots in ceremony, both religious and political (or secular, if you prefer). Its development, in the sequence of visual art, reached one peak with the Body Art pieces during the late 1960's and into the mid-1970's both in England and the United States, although Yves Klein and Joseph Bueys were major contributors as well. Within this genre of 'Body as Art' we have several areas, some of which Dean slips into when developing his idea/parameters or to stress a point. Body Art crossed over many methods of execution including video, photography, film, performance, and sculpture as the artists projected usual and unusual manifestations of physicality and bodily functions. The attempt was to use any body — more often than not it was economically feasible for the artist to use his/her own body — as subject and/or object of the art work; and what has occurred in Dean's *Prototype, 1986* is a logical extension through the artist to the viewer/participant. This idea of physical participation, or even 'captured' participation, was a concept well developed in the work of artist Dan Graham who was certainly in evidence during the beginnings of video art of the late 1960's and early 1970's.

In focussing on the creative act itself, body works were yet another move away from object sculpture, or at least they were 15 years ago. If objects were utilized, they only served to reinforce aspects of the body and as extensions to it, as does the camera and double monitor unit constructed at the Or Gallery create an extension for the

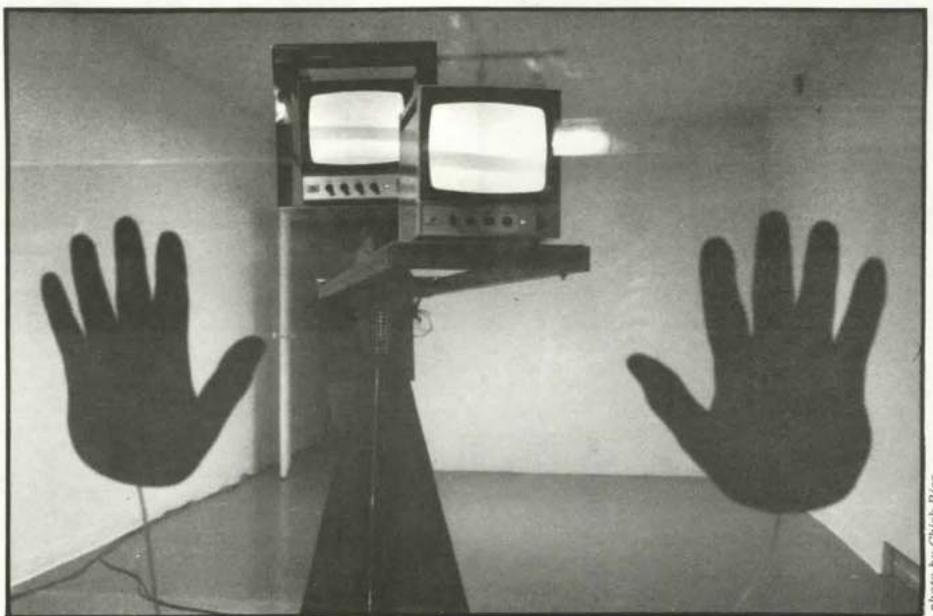


Photo by Chick Rice

viewer to become participant/artist/individual within the circuit. On another level, Dean's installation would be difficult to categorize as conceptual art which, in essence, attempts to remove the experience from art (read sculpture/installation). As I noted before, it was, at times, difficult to remove the autobiographical aspect of the artist's body from the work during the heyday of Body Art, but we were always informed that any body would do, as is the case with this installation where you, the specific individual, encounter the work to become a participant. With Dean's installation, in a style extremely reminiscent of Dan Graham's Video room pieces, he steps behind the mirror, or in this installation, the video camera, to insert the viewer as personality hoping that they will refine themselves, or itself as body, out of the circuit in order that the non-personal self will remain. If the artist, in this case Dean, was searching primarily for confrontation (which may be present in a latent form), then I missed the point and would have to say he has one hell of an overly developed and expensive mirror on his hands.

Specific areas of reference to the 'Body as Art' I feel Dean has touched upon include the following relationships. The Body as Tool. Hands have traditionally been used to create sculpture (excuse the truism), and this is also the case with *Prototype, 1986*. We the viewers are provided with the static art/sculpture and capabilities for manipulation of that art/sculpture via two switches designated by black hand silhouettes positioned on the gallery window. Let me backtrack to note that a form of participation on the viewer's part has already occurred by our movement into the video camera lens area, approximately the width of outstretched arms and one-half body height. The camera instantaneously records your presence until a decision is made by the individual to vacate the spot. Viewing the installation is possible outside of the camera's range, but manipulation requires your presence as a recorded image. You, the viewer, are faced with immediate facts concerning the situation. Since the viewer/participant is an extension of the camera and the manipulator of the piece, this can be referred to as "assisted body work." You, the viewer, as the body, complete the circuit. Again we encounter a striking similarity to Graham's work, Yves Klein's *Imprints* from the early 1960's, and the Happenings of early Pop Art.

The idea of Body as Backdrop and its related format, Body as Prop, can be seen as a common condition inherent when video utilizes immediate documentation with a specified area as its image source. We are all familiar with the multitude of video cameras increasing day by day within the environment recording movement, gesture, expression, and decision. When the body becomes a backdrop, it is set off by an object or number of objects which serve to annotate articulation. In normal circumstances the body is always in a specific spatio-temporal framework surrounded by objects which define its relationship to the macrocosm and with which it constantly interacts. This is body as prop. With Dean's installation this relationship exists only in real time (reality), not recorded time. Our physical framework is a fleeting fuzzy grey world of two rotating video monitors. The camera is

set to document only those bodies and participating bodies, as long as it/they stay within the minute range permitted. It does not record itself save for the hand switches. Nothing exists but the circuit and it is almost as if the sculpture/installation should be questioned about its lack of capabilities in capturing anything other than the participant.

If we take the Body as Prop, it enters the realm of physical object in relation to other objects around it, as one particular among other particulars. It exists in an identifiable field. Consequently, the artwork becomes more theatrical. As this option of theatrics is unfortunately denied the participant (one set of switches for operation; the length of your arms creates the maximum physical parameters) then we must believe that the artist has created a specific situation in order to indicate how the work should be understood.

If we assess the installation from the beginning, it takes on a cold and detached quality which hits home with its immediate comment on body as subject/object. Once we as viewers/individuals/participants overcome the effect of manipulation and accept our role as producers and, subsequently, objects, we set the installation in motion; and interaction, the circuit developed by Dean between us and the video unit, starts to become clear.

In real life (reality) we experience the world, however small and minimal, through our own body with other bodies viewed among the many material objects or as the object. Are we the subject and the object within Dean's piece? Strictly speaking, it is impossible to use the body as an object.¹ The corpse is the only case in which the body approaches the status of object. This could have been one reason for Dean's decision to utilize black and white monitors rather than colour. It could have also been the reason behind the rationalization behind the artist's decision to 'capture' the participant and only permit manipulation of the installation from one point. (It became an extremely confining position after several minutes.) Was it also the consideration behind his choice of lens for the camera, its distance from the window, and focal point length which allowed only a small image field with no background perceivable?

What were the outside parameters when this piece was developed? Why are they buried within the concept of the circuit? How do these parameters relate to the artist; to the installation; to the individual participants as bodies? These unknowns tend to isolate the work and force it into its broadest context leaving the piece enigmatic to the point that the interesting aspect is the questions it provokes, rather than the installation itself.

¹The territory of body as subject, object, objectification of women's bodies in advertising, denial of self, death, male/female body artists, etc., should be dealt with extensively as an article unto itself. For the sake of this writing I hope that the fine line between Body Art and Performance Art can be drawn sufficiently to allow movement to define theatrics and thus performance, while that of the static and documented works be permitted to rest within the other camp.

Big Screen/Small Screen

reviewed by Jamirte Trott

The National Video Festival Reprise in Chicago
Organized by the Center for New Television

At its best, broadcast television bids for mass sedation. At its worst, it triggers off a chain of social manipulations hoping to transpose human values into commodified goods. In different ways, and for different reasons, conventional film often does the same. Further, stigmatized by association with the medium of television, independent video-making comes out of that familiar "little box" as opposed to the big screen of the filmmaker who, by and large, likes to undermine any strong kinship between film and video. Yet, rarely does one have a chance to witness a screening showcasing close relationships between video and film and analyzing their social role.

Such opportunity came to Chicago on November 21-24 with the four-day screening of the AFI National Video Festival Reprise co-sponsored by the Center for New Television and the Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Although it included national and international producers, the Chicago Festival Reprise focused mostly on the work of that filmmaker who best reconciles differences and similarities between video and film by exploring their individual potential, and who produces the most cogent examples of film/video intersections, reversing the role of the media from a social manipulator into a vehicle of consciousness raising. That filmmaker is, of course, Jean-Luc Godard.

Most significant in the above direction were Godard's *Passion*; *Soft and Hard*, produced by Godard and his collaborator Ann-Marie Mieville for British channel 4, and *France/Tour/Detour/Two Children*, especially notorious for its intellectual strength.

Albeit paradoxical in its methods and intentions, *Passion* addresses ideologies and myths within the process of filmmaking and distribution in that while questioning the appeasing method of conventional plotting, Godard builds a rather esoteric — and perhaps elitist — emblematic kind of narrative with sequential scenes and dialogues so as to force the audience into the film's contextual deduction. Thus, while challenging the notion of autism, he simultaneously endorses it by giving priority to his own vision, not readily accessible — if not totally obscure — to the viewer. Yet, no matter how difficult or exasperating the reading of *Passion* might become, it is indeed a film of rare beauty, a film that suggests a parallel between the art of filming and the art of classical painting. It is also a film that, in spite of its obscurity, does address and create the necessity of the viewer as an active participant, even though it appears to exclude him or her with its visual and conceptual methodology.

France/Tour/Detour/Two Children, on the other hand, takes a linear format with a stationary camera point of view. Its complexity lies mainly in its intellectual depth. Made for television, this twelve-hour Godard/Mieville production, divided in half-hour series, might be an unprecedented event of television as a tool for social

deconstruction. The entire series simply presents an unseen interviewer probing the minds of a girl and a boy of grammar school age. As a voice in the background, this interviewer unpacks the content of these children's consciousness, suggesting a possible predictability of their destiny as adults. For this, the interviewer provokes the children's response on social, political, economic, and philosophical matters, pointing to the formation of their social consciousness as little more than a systematic fabrication. In this direction, each question digs at an expected answer, revealing not only how these children perceive themselves in relation to their social environment, but also how children in general seem to "become" receptacles or *tabla rasas* for the inscription of social conventions. The ultimate implication is that in spite of individual differences, in France — and no doubt in all industrialized societies — everyone becomes alike, a copy of a copy, if you will.

France/Tour/Detour/Two Children is not intended as a work of art. And in spite of its beauty and profundity, it is not. Yet it bears artistic concerns in a post-modernistic sense in that it evokes the necessity of a criterion of communication based on social relevance. This point is further stressed in *Soft and Hard*, an informal conversation between Mieville and Godard where they survey their creative process and debate new concepts of communication through television, film, and video, and other forms of art as well. Above all, the work of these two video-filmmakers further exposed the triteness and disingenuousness of conventional television. And not proposing television as a place for mere intellectual overtures, so did other film/videos in the Festival Reprise. For example, Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen's *Bad Sisters*, a film made for television entertainment, maintained a high degree of taste and discernment hardly evident in the majority of films of this nature.

For the height of Godard's social consciousness, for the brilliance of his vision, and nonetheless for the flexibility of his methods, Big Screen/Small Screen staged a coalescent space for scrutiny of artistic prejudices. That is to say, whether on a film or on a monitor screen, it is not the medium but the conceptual and creative depth that makes the work. Furthermore, by combining film and video by various producers of different nationalities, the Reprise created a reference point juxtaposing the creative and the conventional, the trivial and the exceptional. Perhaps from there, one left with a new concept of entertainment, with a sense of a new kind of television, and of one's own direction as a video or filmmaker. Either way, one was somewhat assured that television can be constructive. It can be resourceful and fantastically illuminating. And yes, it can be entertaining without losing poise and dignity. With this in mind, one might probably watch a Kevin Klein perfume ad — that claims to hold the boundaries of one's sanity within its fragrance — with a new awareness that television does not always have to promote false consciousness. One hopes it won't ... "Aaah, the smell of it!"

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