Whitney Museum of American Art

New American Film and Video Series

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New American Video Art
A Historical Survey 1967–1980

Traveling Exhibition organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Introduction by John G. Hanhardt, *Curator, Film and Video*

"New American Video Art" surveys the emergence of video as an art form from its beginnings in 1967 to 1980. These first years in the history of video art saw a wide variety of approaches that sought to describe and define a new field of art-making. But behind the diversity of these initial efforts lie three features common to video art in this period: a collaboration with the other arts, an involvement with political and ideological debates, and an intentional distinction from commercial television.

By the late 1960s, television had become a pervasive mass medium viewed in virtually every home. On home television sets, the public was offered a homogeneous selection of programming that followed formulas for structure, running time, and content. The viewer's perception of the medium was largely determined by the role television had come to play as a commercial entertainment and information industry whose success—and therefore profit—was gauged by the number of viewers it attracted. In an attempt to challenge the television industry's hegemony, many artist-activists worked, often as collectives, to use video as a tool for social change. At the same time, video artists began producing tapes and installations designed to explore the medium's potential for a new aesthetic discourse. It is the work of this latter group that "New American Video Art" seeks to elucidate.

While a number of artists began experimenting with television in the mid-1960s, the direct appropriation of television began with the manipulation or destruction of the television set itself in the early Fluxus art projects of the Korean-born composer and musician Nam June Paik and of the German artist Wolf Vostell. Vostell and Paik's actions signaled a reevaluation of the television set as a cultural icon and as a technological product removed from the control of the individual. Their first exhibitions, held in West Germany and the United States, reflect the international dimension of video art's beginnings. They also show how television contributed to the changing dynamic of the arts in the early 1960s, a process that involved a reexamination of sacrosanct visual traditions. One manifestation of this change was the focus on popular culture at large, formalized in painting and sculpture as Pop Art.

Just as the emergence of independent filmmaking in the 1940s owed much to the development of the small-gauge 16mm camera, video became more accessible to artists and activists in 1965 when the Sony Corporation introduced its portable videotape recorder into the New York market. Nam June Paik and Les Levine were the first artists to use it. In 1965, at the Café à Go-Go in New York, Paik showed his first videotape—of Pope Paul VI's visit to the city, shot with a portable video camera he had bought that day. In a sense, Paik's action symbolizes the initial attraction of this equipment: it was portable, and, unlike film, which had to be processed, you could immediately see on a monitor what the video camera was recording.

It was commonly believed that the new video equipment would enable the avant-garde producer to remove the production of video from the economic and ideological constraints of the television industry. Further, in keeping with Marshall McLuhan's theories, encapsulated in his aphorism "the medium is the message," many artists envisioned an electronic age where the individual and collective producers would participate in a "global village" of information and images that superseded national and cultural boundaries. While many of these expectations remain unfulfilled, this optimism and spirit resulted in a rich and diverse

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group of works that prompt us to think about the potential of television as both a social and aesthetic force.

"New American Video Art" surveys, within a chronological framework, the kinds of technical changes and aesthetic and philosophical issues that appear and reappear throughout the period. Although it is impossible to categorize every tape, a number of approaches can be identified. In *image processing*, an aesthetic that has evolved in contrast to broadcast television's "special effects," a variety of electronic devices transforms both prerecorded and electronically generated imagery. In *personal documentaries*, the hand-held video camera becomes the means to examine the dynamics of places and events. *Performance* videotapes employ a range of narrative strategies to investigate the artist's self, the psychology of image manipulation, and the relationship between the viewer and the artist/performer. Other tapes use the properties of the video image and the image-making process to explore the epistemology of perception. Finally, some artists have produced *narratives* and *texts* in order to criticize or counter the ubiquity of commercial television.

Videotape Study No. 3, 1967–69, Jud Yalkut and Nam June Paik.

Program 1 begins with two tapes that are directly related to the institution of broadcast television and the political climate of the late 1960s. In *Videotape Study No. 3*, Jud Yalkut and Nam June Paik, who viewed the medium as potentially subversive, mocked the actions of politicians and the role of television during this period of urban unrest and the United States military involvement in Vietnam. Yalkut and Paik satirized President Lyndon Johnson and New York City Mayor John Lindsay by manipulating footage of their TV appearances. The resulting distortion, which is counterpointed by an equally manipulated soundtrack that contains excerpts from their speeches and interviews, presents these men as foolish and hypocritical.

An early effort to bring video artists to television was made by WGBH, Boston, which, like WNET, New York, and KQED, San Francisco, was one of the most innovative stations of the Public Broadcasting System. Six artists (Aldo Tambellini, Thomas Tadlock, Allan Kaprow, Otto Piene, James Seawright, and Nam June Paik) were commissioned to create programs for public broadcast and given access to the station's facilities. The 30-minute combined program, *The Medium Is the Medium*, is one of the first examples of video art to appear on television. We see image-processing techniques employed to transform prerecorded footage and generate new kinds of abstract imagery. These include colorizing, where a color signal is added to a black and white or another color signal, resulting in brilliant, intense images; mixing, which involves the superimposition of two or more images, like photographic double exposure; chroma-keying, a masking process in which an image is inserted into specific areas of the frame; switching, in which two video images are displayed alternately at varying rates; and fades and wipes, which are variations of switching and mixing. *The Medium Is the Medium* also includes productions that demonstrate television's potential as a two-way communications medium. In Kaprow's *Hello* the participants talk with each other via a live feed, and in *Electronic Opera No. 1* Paik humorously invites viewers to respond to his instructions.

In addition to producing single-channel videotapes, artists began using television in video environments, which later became known as installations. These large-scale video projects added a temporal dimension to sculpture through the use of live and prerecorded video. Ira Schneider's videotape record of the 1969 Howard Wise Gallery exhibition, *TV as a Creative Medium*, documents some of the twelve pieces included in the show, among them Serge Boutourline's *Telediscretion*, Paik and Charlotte Moorman's *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*, Eric Siegel's *Psychedelevision in Color*, Thomas Tadlock's *Archetron*, Aldo Tambellini's *Black Spiral*, and Joe Weintraub's *AC/TV (Audio Controlled Television)*. The tape is a straightforward presentation of the featured works, in which Schneider walks through the gallery and captures the exhibition's ambience and scope. *TV as a Creative Medium* also includes Ira Schneider and Frank Gillette's *Wipe Cycle*, a project conceived of as a kind of television mural. Viewers faced a bank of nine monitors in which they could see themselves and the surrounding space from different points of view, at different moments in time; this video alternated with programming from commercial television.

Undertone, 1972, Vito Acconci.

In Schneider's tape and others from this period, the grainy quality of the image and instability of the picture reveal how technically inferior was the video equipment used compared to the broadcast TV standard. But despite these limitations and, indeed, because of the intentional distancing from broadcast TV, low-cost video offered an attractive means for artists seeking to further reexamine the definition of the art object. The Conceptual, Minimalist, process, and body art movements were challenging the dominant notion of what constituted fine art. Because video, like photography, was a medium that could be easily reproduced, artists used it to challenge not only the notion of the traditional uniqueness of the artwork, but the material basis of traditional aesthetics. Video installations added a new aspect to the physical object of sculpture: the moving image, recorded over time, was used to manipulate the viewer's point of view within the space. In Bruce Nauman's *Corridor* (1969–70), for instance, a passageway became a sculptural form, and the viewer's presence was perceived through and mediated by the video camera's point of view.

Nauman's videotapes also confronted the concept of time and vantage point. In *Lip Sync*, the sole videotape in **Program 2**, Nauman appears upside down, in close-up, wearing headphones. As he repeats the title words over and over, his voice constantly goes in and out of sync with his moving lips, creating a work that has no beginning or end. By stretching time (the activity continues for the duration of the 60-minute reel) and making the artist's own single gesture the tape's subject, Nauman frustrates the viewer's expectations for narrative development and closure. Thus, repetition becomes a strategy for exploring our perception and understanding of a temporal action stripped of all narrative meaning. *Lip Sync* should be viewed in relation to Program 3, in which single actions have deceptively complex effects.

Program 3 opens with *Vertical Roll*, in which the choreographer and dancer Joan Jonas uses the vertical rolling action of a misadjusted television set—normally seen as a technical flaw—as a constantly moving frame for her performance. Her actions are directed not only *to* the camera but through it, to the monitor itself. Because her actions change with each roll, she calls attention to the ephemeral nature of the video image. Accompanying *Vertical Roll* in this program is *Undertone* by Vito Acconci. A leading body art and Conceptual performance artist, Acconci is seated in this tape at the head of a table facing the camera and the viewer. He delivers a monologue exhorting the viewer to imagine what he is doing with his hands underneath the table top. Often highly charged and erotic, Acconci's speech implicates the viewer as a voyeur, all the while expressing the performer's need for an audience.

In **Program 4** John Baldessari, William Wegman, and Peter Campus, like Nauman in Program 2, and Jonas and Acconci in Program 3, capitalized on the potential privacy of video production; artists could simply set up a camera in a stationary position anyplace and engage in single-take, unedited performances. Thus, these artists' actions constituted the very process of making art; the tapes became substitutes for the actual art object, a strategy uniquely suited to video technology and especially expressive of the aesthetics of process art, Minimalism, performance, and Conceptual art.

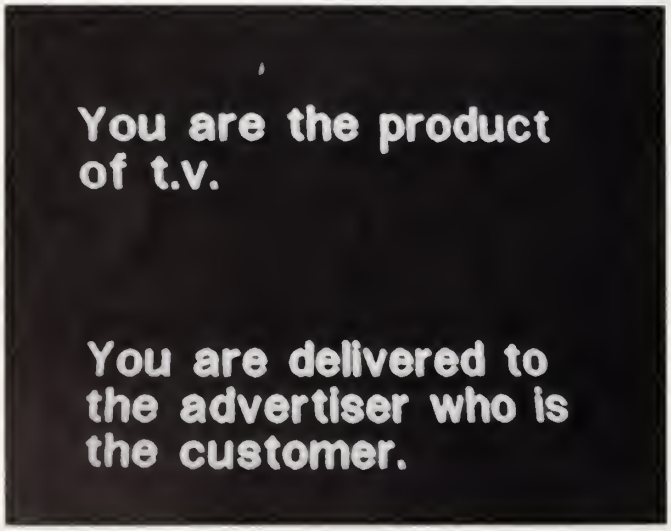
Like Nauman, Jonas, and Acconci, John Baldessari came to video from other art forms, in his case from photography and drawing. In *Inventory*, one can see how he establishes, like the others, a rigorous strategy for exploring the perceptual properties of the video

Three Transitions, 1973, Peter Campus.

image-making process. Baldessari here transforms a seemingly uninteresting activity—the attempt to identify and describe objects as they are placed before him—into a study in perception. His droll and deadpan commentary is at once humorous and thought-provoking. The viewer realizes how the camera view flattens the three-dimensional object and also affects its scale, so that familiar objects appear to require Baldessari's verbal description in order to be identified.

Following Baldessari's videotape is William Wegman's *Selected Works, Reel 4*, in which the artist is seen in a series of vignettes produced in his studio. Wegman engages in short narrative routines that poke fun at common foibles and activities as his "character" attempts to cope with the vicissitudes of everyday life. Joining Wegman is his pet Weimaraner, "Man Ray," who acts as the artist's unflappable sidekick. We see in these works not only Wegman's subtle humor and theatrical timing but an early example of performance activity that reflects both television—the routines recall those of the pioneer TV comedian Ernie Kovacs—and the performance art of the 1970s. The third tape, *Three Transitions* by Peter Campus, employs chroma-keying. In one of the "transitions" we see Campus burning a sheet of paper on which appears to be his own live image. Through chroma-keying, the paper is replaced with a live image of the artist so that he observes an illusion of his own face being burned. Campus, who also created some of the key video installations of the 1970s, has here wittily transformed his image into a new form of video self-portrait.

Television is both implicitly and explicitly the subject of the tapes in **Program 5**, which encompasses work from 1972 to 1974. David Antin, in his seminal essay "Video: The Distinctive Features of the Medium," dubbed television "video's frightful parent" to remind



Television Delivers People, 1973, Richard Serra

Underscan, 1974, Nancy Holt.

us of the art form's not-so-distant relationship to the industry. While some artists consciously rejected both the form and content of television programming, others have adopted its conventions. Richard Serra's *Television Delivers People* consists of a printed text of facts and opinions critical of the television industry. They are strung together as aphorisms that roll up the screen, producing an indictment of the industry. The Muzak heard over the text provides a lulling musical background that softens the information's critical edge, just as television avoids harsh realities by "selling" the news as a commercial commodity.

In contrast, Nam June Paik's *Global Groove* is a celebration of television's avant-garde potential. Shots of Allen Ginsberg chanting, John Cage telling a story, and Charlotte Moorman performing with her cello are interspersed with commercials from Japanese television, pop songs, and dance. *Global Groove* is intended as a vision of the future of television when "*TV Guide* will be as thick as the Manhattan telephone directory"—a future of infinite, global possibilities imagined by Paik in a bravura collage of images created with the Paik/Abe video synthesizer.

Douglas Davis' *Handling (The Austrian Tapes)* was produced for Austrian television and, as with Davis' later satellite performance projects, calls attention to viewers' normally passive role in watching television. Davis seeks to involve them as participants by asking them to touch the screen of their home television sets as they watch his program. Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot's *Fourth of July in Saugerties* documents a small-town community event. The process exemplifies the kind of personal appropriation of the television medium that is facilitated by the hand-held portability of video equipment.

Program 6 represents a diverse selection of works which describe other areas of video activity in the first

half of the 1970s. These focus on the issues of cross-media influence and collaboration, new technologies, and feminism. In *Scapemates*, for instance, Ed Emshwiller collaborates with dancers and choreographers to translate—not merely record—the dance experience through special video effects that allow images to be juxtaposed and otherwise altered.

These effects were usually only possible through the use of expensive broadcasting devices. However, some artists, notably Steina and Woody Vasulka, pioneered the development of relatively low-cost video tools. They commissioned engineers to build specialized devices such as keyers, switchers, and colorizers. With this equipment, the Vasulkas investigated the video image and sound as visual and aural manifestations of the electronic signal. In one image from *Vocabulary*, a hand first appears to hold beams of electronic energy and is then transformed into a video pattern—an elegant expression of the artist's hand molding a new visual material.

A number of women were using video and other media to expand on an emerging feminist art. They opened up formerly taboo subjects such as personal experience and female sexuality. Thus, Nancy Holt's *Underscan*, which portrays the monotonous routines of her Aunt Ethel's daily life, is one of a number of autobiographical works produced at the time. And Lynda Benglis, whose work in sculpture and performance often outraged audiences, explored pop culture and its objectification of the female body in *Female Sensibility*.

Program 7 features three artists' representations of nature, people, and places in personal documentaries. Frank Gillette's *Hark Hork* is both an evocative meditation on nature and an exploration of the flora and fauna of an ecology. As in his installations, Gillette looks to the process of nature for the systems which guide human biology and thought. His videotapes isolate an aspect of that ecosystem in elegant and rigorous compositions. For Andy Mann, in contrast, the portable video camera was a means for studying the people who inhabit the environment around him. In *One-Eyed Bum*, the camera's presence becomes a vehicle of communication between two strangers, Mann and a Bowery derelict. Juan Downey's *Moving*, an impressionistic view of a car trip to California, shows the capacity of video to serve as a kind of diary that captures the quality of travel and quotidian experiences.

Program 8 demonstrates the many ways that the notion of "performance" was interpreted and enlarged upon in the mid-1970s. In *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, Martha Rosler transforms kitchen implements into symbols of female frustration and rage. Rosler delivers a deadpan performance that, unlike Julia Child's cheerful TV

Female Sensibility, 1974, Lynda Benglis.

delivery, challenges accepted ideas of female domesticity. Terry Fox's *Children's Tapes: A Selection*, on the other hand, uses ordinary household objects, such as spoons, matches, and string, to create humorous surreal "events" that mark the passage of time and serve as pseudo-lessons in chemistry and physics.

In Richard Serra's *Boomerang*, artist Nancy Holt wears headphones through which she can hear her own voice in time delay. Holt describes the confusion she experiences: as she tries to speak, her voice "boomerangs" back through the headphones, interfering with her ability to articulate a thought. Finally, in *Running Outburst*, Charlemagne Palestine exploits the jumpiness of the hand-held camera as a marker of his presence in space. This is underscored by the topsy-turvy quality of the video and by the modulation of Palestine's voice created by his movement.

Program 9 offers three examples from the mid-1970s of artists once again confronting the television industry. Stephen Beck's *Video Ecotopia*, produced with the Beck Direct Video Synthesizer, projects a visionary image of how the tools of television can be used to create a utopian video environment. Beck's post-industrial landscape expresses the optimism of a vision rooted in the ideology of a "greening" of America then current in contemporary social thinking.

Ant Farm, a West Coast architecture collective, began producing media events in San Francisco. *Media Burn* is a satiric look at television. In this elaborately staged event, the group constructed a wall of old TVs into which was driven a Cadillac specially modified with video equipment. This happening was covered by the local TV stations, a coverage that became part of Ant Farm's own documentation on videotape. In 1977, another California group, TVTV, which has produced a number of successful video documentaries, created

I Want to Live in the Country (And Other Romances), 1976, Joan Jonas.

their first dramatic series. *Birth of an Industry*, aired on KCET, Los Angeles, as part of the *Supershow* series, is a critical drama based on the early years of television.

Program 10 features two works that reflect the performance and mixed-media experience of the artists. In subject, the works speculate on the artist's place in society. In *I Want to Live in the Country (And Other Romances)*, Joan Jonas juxtaposes footage of the Nova Scotia countryside with footage shot in her New York City studio. In a voiceover, she reminisces about the pastoral life, ruminates on her art-making and the perspective that time and distance can provide. The contrast of the locales and what they represent—that is, the romantic vs. the cerebral—informs Jonas' aesthetic vision and personal sense of herself. Stan VanDerBeek's *A Newsreel of Dreams (Part 2)* synthesizes the spectacle of political and social life with private fantasies in a celebratory mood tinged with skepticism. Both of these productions reveal how different sensibilities responded to a social and cultural climate.

The works in **Program 11** begin to reveal certain changes that occurred in video art at the end of the 1970s. A younger generation was starting out with more sophisticated equipment than had been available to earlier video artists. By the end of the decade, Bill Viola became one of the foremost artists of this group. In a series of videotapes, he explored a complex set of cognitive issues, including the perception of sound in *The Morning after the Night of Power*. In *The Space between the Teeth*, Viola's aesthetic follows a less reductive and linear line than earlier work as he employs editing and other effects to fill his images with more detail and create subtle changes in their compositions. In *Four Sided Tape*, Peter Campus continues to produce incisive personal portraits, but without the chroma-key he earlier employed. As video technology became more developed and refined, Campus sought a simpler, more direct performance approach that yielded a new formal rigor and subtle humor. *Vito's Reef*, by Howard Fried, one of California's leading performance artists, is a complex exploration of pedagogy and viewer/camera perception. Standing beside a blackboard, the artist assumes the role of a teacher and addresses the camera, and, by extension, the viewer. His convoluted monologue confounds the viewer's expectation of the usual sequential flow of information as presented on television.

The earlier personal documentaries, seen in Program 10, drew upon experiences found in the artist's local community and neighborhood. However, as more sophisticated and portable equipment permitted greater flexibility, artists began to travel and confront unfamiliar situations that demanded new responses. This is dramatically represented in **Program 12**, particularly in Juan Downey's *Laughing Alligator*, a tape produced during an extended visit to the Amazon rain forest. The tape's autobiographical theme focused on the confrontation and understanding of the Yanomami Indians, whom Downey and his family befriended and who experienced the video camera for the first time.

The two other tapes in Program 12 also deal with travel experiences, but at a considerable remove. *After Montgolfier*, by Davidson Gigliotti, is a contemplative view of the Minnesota countryside as seen from a hot-air balloon. One of a series of artists' productions for public television, this lyrical tape allows one to perceive the landscape from a new perspective. The ability of video to offer novel vantages is pursued in a radically different way in Shalom Gorewitz's *El Corandero*, in which "straight" camera images shot in Spain are colorized and otherwise manipulated to evoke new impressions of the locale. In all three of the works in this pro-

Laughing Alligator, 1979, Juan Downey

gram, the artists have reinterpreted the social and physical landscape by visually altering either the original images or a conventional viewpoint.

As **Program 13** reveals, the close of the decade brought dramatic developments in the editing and processing capabilities of video, making possible quick and clean edits and a stable signal that could maintain color and image quality. As part of the arts program for the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York, video artists were invited to produce tapes and installations. *Lake Placid '80*, by Nam June Paik, presents a treatment of the games which recombines earlier Paik material with footage shot at the Olympics site. The result is a fast-paced trip through the experience of sport as pageant and intense action. Another videotape, *Olympic Fragments*, by Kit Fitzgerald and John Sanborn, uses the techniques of television sports cover-

Hearts, 1979, Barbara Buckner.

Chott el-Djerid (A Portrait in Light and Heat), 1979, Bill Viola.

age to slow down, freeze, and reverse action. The effects provide a most vivid sense of the beauty and subtlety of physical action in sport.

The final videotape in this program, Bill Viola's *Chott el-Djerid (A Portrait in Light and Heat)*, employs a telephoto lens to distort the viewer's perception of the landscape in a way that shatters the illusion of video space and reality. Rather than rely on special effects, Viola exploited the out-of-focus quality achieved by the decreased depth of field peculiar to a telephoto lens.

Program 14, the final program, returns to two issues that opened the exhibition and have remained central to the history of video art: the interpretation and transformation of television; and the production of new imagery from the technology of video. Dara Birnbaum's *Wonder Woman* is a vivid distillation of the subtext of the pop TV icon *Wonder Woman*. Through rapid editing, Birnbaum employs the strategy of repetition to emphasize certain moments from the TV show and concludes with its sexist disco theme song. By isolating these segments, she attempts to reveal the sexism implicit in this popular commercial show.

The final three videotapes employ both basic and advanced techniques to show how the capabilities of image processing are changing. In *Sunstone*, Ed Emshwiller uses a sophisticated computer to render a complex three-dimensional illusion: a two-dimensional image of the sun is transformed into a three-dimensional cube. In its appropriation of state-of-the-art equipment, this tape foresees much of video production in the 1980s. In contrast, Barbara Buckner's *Hearts*, a Minimalist but lyrical evocation of the heart image, joins the abstract and representational in a way that reflects less on other popular art styles than on an intensely personal form of poetic self-expression. The concluding videotape, Woody Vasulka's *Artifacts*, is a catalogue of image transformations created from the linkage of the computer with video technology. Seven years after *Vocabulary*, the Vasulkas—individually and collectively—continued their exploration of new visual terms.

The tapes described briefly here outline the first twenty years of video art's history. It is a medium that is constantly evolving and changing through the aesthetics of its artists and the development of its technologies. It is also a body of work that has yet to be fully examined, but is challenging the critical and historical interpretation of twentieth-century art. Video will affect how we perceive the world around us and ultimately how we refashion and preserve it.

Program 1
Videotape Study No. 3, 1967–69. Jud Yalkut and Nam June Paik. Black and white; 5 minutes.
The Medium Is the Medium, 1969. WGBH, Boston. Color; 30 minutes.
TV as a Creative Medium, 1969. Ira Schneider. Black and white; 13 minutes.

Program 2
Lip Sync, 1969. Bruce Nauman. Black and white; 60 minutes.

Program 3
Vertical Roll, 1972. Joan Jonas. Black and white; 20 minutes.
Undertone, 1972. Vito Acconci. Black and white; 30 minutes.

Program 4
Inventory, 1972. John Baldessari. Black and white; 30 minutes.
Selected Works, Reel 4, 1972. William Wegman. Black and white; 20 minutes.
Three Transitions, 1973. Peter Campus. Color; 5 minutes.

Program 5
Television Delivers People, 1973. Richard Serra. Color; 6 minutes.
Global Groove, 1973. Nam June Paik. Color; 30 minutes.
Handling (The Austrian Tapes), 1974. Douglas Davis. Color; 5 minutes.
Fourth of July in Saugerties, 1972. Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot. Black and white; 15 minutes.

Program 6
Scapemates, 1972. Ed Emshwiller. Color; 29 minutes.
Vocabulary, 1973. Woody and Steina Vasulka. Color; 5 minutes.
Underscan, 1974. Nancy Holt. Black and white; 8 minutes.
Female Sensibility, 1974. Lynda Benglis. Color; 14 minutes.

Program 7
Hark Hork, 1973. Frank Gillette. Black and white; 18 minutes.
One-Eyed Bum, 1974. Andy Mann. Black and white; 6 minutes.
Moving, 1974. Juan Downey. Black and white; 30 minutes.

Program 8
Semiotics of the Kitchen, 1975. Martha Rosler. Black and white; 7 minutes.
Children's Tapes: A Selection, 1974. Terry Fox. Black and white; 30 minutes.
Boomerang, 1974. Richard Serra. Color: 10 minutes.
Running Outburst, 1975. Charlemagne Palestine. Black and white; 8 minutes.

Program 9
Video Ecotopia, 1975. Stephen Beck. Color; 5 minutes.
Media Burn, 1975. Ant Farm. Color; 25 minutes.
Birth of an Industry, 1977. TVTV. Color; 18 minutes.

Program 10
I Want to Live in the Country (And Other Romances), 1976. Joan Jonas. Color; 30 minutes.
A Newsreel of Dreams (Part 2), 1976. Stan VanDerBeek. Color; 24 minutes.

Program 11
Four Sided Tape, 1976. Peter Campus. Color; 3 minutes.
The Space between the Teeth, 1976. Bill Viola. Color; 9 minutes.
The Morning after the Night of Power, 1977. Bill Viola. Color; 10 minutes.
Vito's Reel, 1978. Howard Fried. Color; 34 minutes.

Program 12
Laughing Alligator, 1979. Juan Downey. Color; 29 minutes.
After Montgolfier, 1979. Davidson Gigliotti. Color; 10 minutes.
El Corandero, 1979. Shalom Gorewitz. Color; 6 minutes.

Program 13
Lake Placid '80, 1980. Nam June Paik. Color; 4 minutes.
Olympic Fragments, 1980. Kit Fitzgerald and John Sanborn. Color; 10 minutes.
Chott el-Djerid (A Portrait in Light and Heat), 1979. Bill Viola. Color; 28 minutes.

Program 14
Wonder Woman, 1979. Dara Birnbaum. Color; 7 minutes.
Sunstone, 1979. Ed Emshwiller. Color; 3 minutes.
Hearts, 1979. Barbara Buckner. Color; 12 minutes.
Artifacts, 1980. Woody Vasulka. Color; 22 minutes.

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The bibliography is arranged chronologically. Much of the criticism in the 1970s was concerned with establishing video as an avant-garde art form; the more recent literature examines video from a historical perspective.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 1
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO NUMBER 1

Roger Welch

September 22–October 24, 1982

Drive-In: Second Feature, 1982. Film installation
On view continuously 12:00–6:00, Tuesdays until 8:00

Gallery Talk, Thursday, September 30, at 2:00
Roger Welch will be present

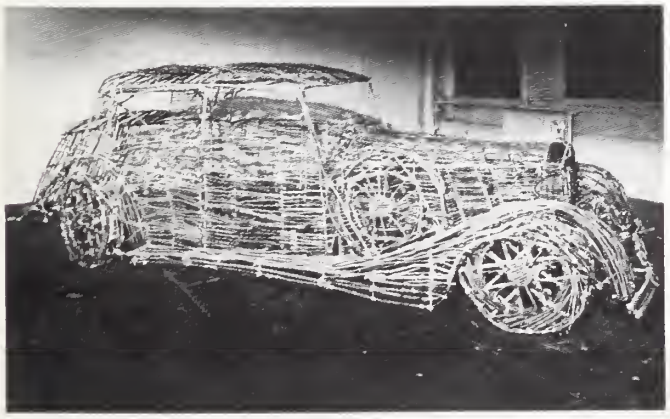
Since its invention in the late nineteenth century, film has been the preeminent medium for the creation of moving images. But today the electronic technologies of video and broadcast television are challenging its dominance. These new mass media are having an impact on all areas of film: production, distribution, and aesthetics.

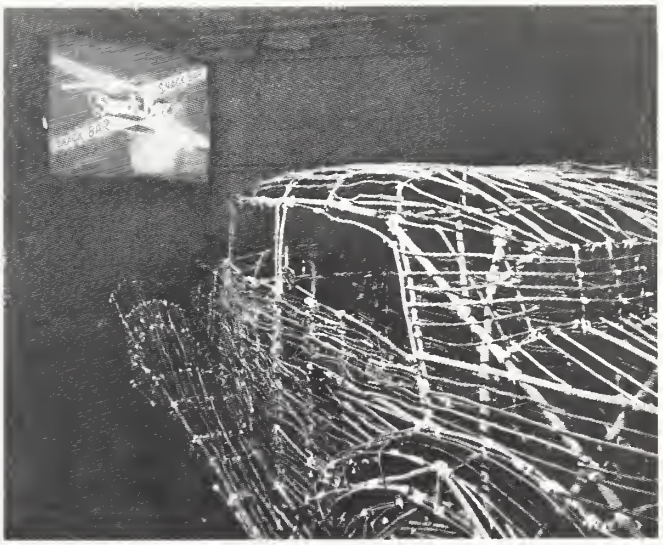
Our central experience of film has been social. Whether a commercially popular entertainment feature or an avant-garde work, a film is generally viewed in a theater—a collective experience. This condition of the cinematic experience is in marked contrast to the more private home environment of television. Here the rapidly developing concept of the home entertainment center, designed to receive cable and satellite programs and play videotapes acquired by the viewer, is becoming an alternative to the theatrical experience of filmgoing.

Roger Welch's installation *Drive-In: Second Feature* reflects on the popular mythology that has grown up around the social act of "going to the movies." This project derives from Welch's earlier works, which comment on the iconography and the rituals that give popular culture its power.

The layers of irony that inform *Drive-In* include the archaic appearance of the Cadillac and the drive-in's screen. The drive-in epitomizes the effort of movie exhibitors in the 1950s to create new ways of showing films so as to retain audiences beginning to be lured away by television. The theater became a parking lot, with the rows of cars forming their own communities within and between themselves.

Drive-In, 1980. Film installation at P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island City, New York. Photograph by D. James Dee.





Drive-In, 1980. Film installation at P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island City, New York. Photograph by D. James Dee.

The 1958 Cadillac now appears to us, amid a changing world economy, as a relic of the distant past. Thus Welch's transformation of the car and screen into symbols of "American culture . . . created as if by a Micronesian cargo cult or a contemporary Robinson Crusoe," through the strategy of re-creating their forms out of twigs and branches, is particularly apt. *Drive-In: Second Feature* also represents an important aspect of the recent history of film as an art form: the development of installation works which treat film not as theater but as a sculptural and multimedia environment. Thus this latest project extends Welch's previous works as it reflects on the changing cultural, and social, experience of watching film.

Drive-In: Second Feature appears like a totemic sign of the industrial, mechanical age of the motion picture and the automobile, which is passing as new electronic technologies emerge, altering our way of life and our forms of entertainment and art-making. The future of film and television, as we know them, is open. Roger Welch's elegant work contemplates film from a double perspective, seeing it as both a theatrical and an installation medium.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Drive-In: Second Feature, 1982

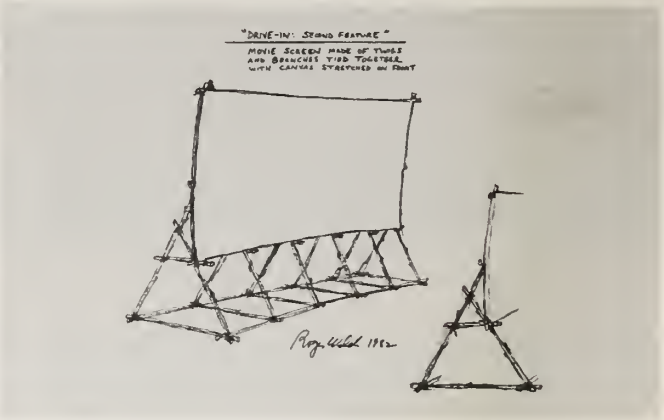
The drive-in movie theater is a particularly American phenomenon that could be considered a symbol of the post-World War II United States. Drive-ins are now disappearing, along with the giant cars of the 1950s that brought the crowds to them.

One such car was the Cadillac. The Cadillac became a symbol of affluence, a Rolls-Royce for the American upper middle class. The owner of a Cadillac Eldorado identified not only with the comfort of a low-to-the-ground 325-horsepower ride, but also with the audacious design, a style that stood for the power of aerodynamics.

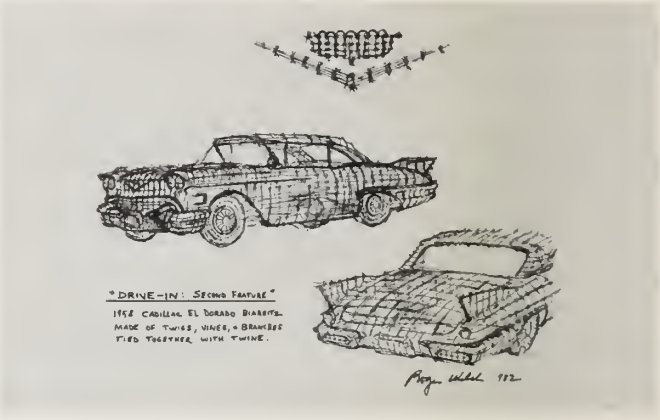
In *Drive-In: Second Feature* these two symbols of American culture are created as if by a Micronesian cargo cult or a contemporary Robinson Crusoe. Both the familiar drive-in screen and a 1958 Cadillac are done in the most primitive manner with some of the most common materials, twigs and branches tied together with twine. What seems to have been discovered in the jungle is now brought back, to be displayed in a museum. Along with the drive-in screen are projected fragments of what was once shown on it, like pieces of a broken artifact an archeologist would put back together again.

Drive-In: Second Feature is the product of an archeological expedition into contemporary America.

Roger Welch



Drawings for *Drive-In: Second Feature*, 1982. Ink on paper, 14 × 17 inches each. Collection of the artist.



Biography

Roger Welch, who was born in Westfield, New Jersey, in 1946, studied painting and sculpture at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio; Kent State University; and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he received an M.F.A. in 1971. His work in a wide range of media—sculpture, drawing, performance, film, video, and photography—explores the concerns of Conceptual and Process art. One of his major interests has been the process of memory and its ability to make "memory maps" and "photo memory works"; he has lately been involved in recycling and restructuring objects and forms which have become symbols within society. Welch's works are included in numerous private and museum collections, among them the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Internacional Rufino Tamayo in Mexico City; the Georgia Museum of Art at the University of Georgia, Athens; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. He lives in New York.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Sonnabend Gallery, New York, 1972; John Gibson Gallery, New York, 1973; Milwaukee Art Center, 1974; Stefanotti Gallery, New York, 1975; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, 1977; Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, 1980; P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island City, New York, 1981; Museo de Bellas Arte, Caracas, 1981.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Kassel, West Germany, Documenta 5, 1972; John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C., "Art Now '74," 1974; Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, West Germany, "Projekt '74," 1974; Akademie der Künste, West Berlin, "SoHo Manhattan," 1976; Kassel, West Germany, Documenta 6, 1977; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, "American Narrative Art, 1967–77," 1978; The Clocktower, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, "Film as Installation," 1980; The New Museum, New York, "Alternatives in Retrospect: An Historical Overview, 1969–1975," 1981; Helen Foresman Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence, "Four Artists and the Map—Jasper Johns, Nancy Graves, Roger Welch, and Richard Long," 1981.

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Naylon, Colin, and Genesis Porridge. *Contemporary Artists*. London: St. James Press Ltd., 1977, pp. 1034–35.

Popper, Frank. *Art: Action and Participation*. New York: New York University Press, 1975, pp. 259–61, 263.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 2
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Leandro Katz

November 2–December 5, 1982

The Judas Window, 1982. Film installation
On view continuously 12:00–6:00, Tuesdays until 8:00

Gallery Talk, Thursday, November 18, at 2:00
Leandro Katz will be present

Works in the installation:

Achatinella Series, 1982. 26 shells and 40 Cibachrome photographs in wood display case with hinged lid: display case, 33 × 86 × 34 inches; display-case lid, 86 × 34 inches

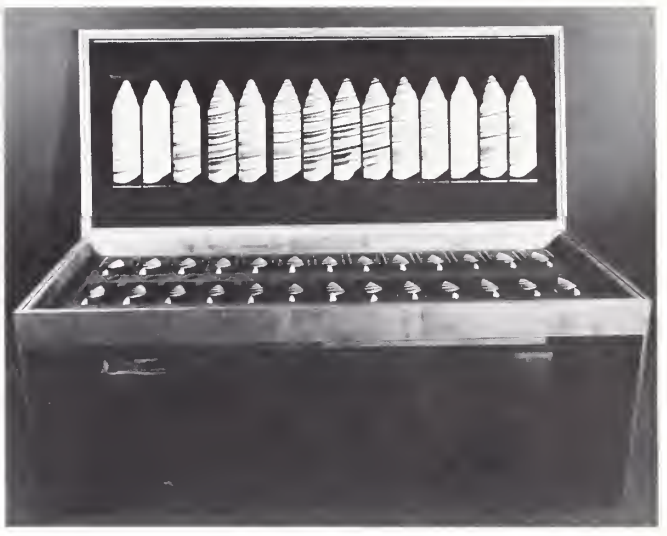
Black Maria, 1982. Black and red canvas over wood frame, 120 × 90 × 90 inches (maximum)

Friday's Footprint, 1982. Slide projector, color 35mm slide, sandbox, sand, and synthetic polymer: sandbox, 4 × 55 × 25 inches

Judas Curtain, 1982. Velvet, metallic powder, and adhesive, 19 feet × 100 inches

The Judas Window, 1982. Color 16mm film loop, silent; 17-minute cycle

Parasol, 1982. Bamboo, string, brass, steel, and color Xeroxes, 100 inches (diameter) × 100 inches (stem)



Credits:
Production: Victor Alzamora, Seth Dembar. Additional assistance: Barbara Breedon, Juan Julian Caicedo, Robin Ticho. Installation: Victor Alzamora, Seth Dembar. Installation coordinator: Barbara Breedon. Special-effects opticals: David Fain. Film printing: Multi-Color Film Labs, Inc. Film titles: Rohl Titles. Cibachrome printing: John Bermingham. Crickets: Fish & Cheeps

The most widely held critical definition of film has been grounded in the idea that this photographic medium records reality on celluloid. This definition derives from the way still photography was first understood after its invention in the nineteenth century: it appeared to achieve the long-sought goal of reproducing the real world. As a result, photography—and, later, film—seemed to release the traditional arts of painting and sculpture from the burden of mimesis.

Leandro Katz, in his film installation *The Judas Window*, asks if the photographic process, whether still or motion picture, is truly mimetic. By placing film in unexpected relationships with other media and materials, he mixes different, often contradictory, modes of discourse. Thus his film—presenting, for example, a shot of the moon intercut with enigmatic phrases such as "A Cinematographic Rain" and "The Urge to Save"—is viewed within an environment of sculptural objects, including a large parasol covered with Xeroxed pages from classic adventure stories, among them Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and a house-like construction modeled on the famous Black Maria studio, in which Thomas Edison produced his first films, in the late nineteenth century. Other elements in Katz's installation include a slide of a Mayan carving projected onto the gallery wall; a display case holding a collection of twenty-six shells, each signifying one letter of the alphabet and together composing a linguistic code; and, on the floor, a sandbox with Friday's footprint. These diverse elements require different—perhaps mutually exclusive—modes of comprehension, and demonstrate how problematic mimesis can be. The installation thus becomes a complex text about epistemology, film, and the history of cultural forms—an archeological site at which to unearth the hidden premises of understanding and perception.

Two precedents, one a work of literature, the other the tradition of film installation as an art form, inform Katz's project. The literary text is *Impressions d'Afrique* (1910), by the French author and playwright Raymond Roussel. Roussel's influential text is an extraordinary catalogue of descriptions of objects and devices, people and events, held together by a loose plot. Its structure is based on an

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elaborate system of word games and associations that establishes a compelling narrative. So too in Katz's installation the viewer joins and links the various elements into a network of associations that implies a possible narrative.

As for Katz's sources within the film medium, during the 1960s and 1970s artists began to remove film from the traditional theater setting and place it in a gallery or another environment. They have produced films designed to be projected into steam or onto different surfaces and within specially constructed environments, to be viewed with live dancing or other performances, or in conjunction with sculptural structures. All of these varied forms and processes, as in *The Judas Window*, cause us to reevaluate the nature of film: it does not present an unchanging segment of reality, viewed and interpreted exclusively within the confines of the screen; rather, film is a temporal, flexible, moving-image medium that can be read in different ways, depending on its physical placement and aesthetic context.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

The Judas Window, 1982

My work addresses the underlying structures that are present in every cultural gesture and form the way we think and make connections between notions. *The Judas Window*, an installation of individual works—contiguous and interchangeable episodes—treats the gallery space in the terms of an active movement of search inside a narrative chamber. In it, space is sudden, as in dreams, and all its functioning parts are engaged simultaneously. And space is also sequential, proposing a theatricality typical of cinema. Upon entering the gallery, as entering the screen, the spectator/viewer is asked to inquire and to elucidate a sequence of chained revelations, the anthological (dismembered) parts of a floating plot. One could say that in the end the work leaves a trail of connecting dots, and that this trail is what one would follow in attempting to find the way inside a darkened room which is completely familiar. Then, the elements of the installation—nature and history, the alphabet, the text, the body—all point to the instant when language is discovered, when the senses come in contact with language, that precise moment when the system clicks and everything brightens up. Therefore my work exists inside a very transitory position between the senses and the intellect, between nature and culture, attempting to make sense within the ruins of both.

Leandro Katz

Biography

Leandro Katz, who was born in Buenos Aires in 1938, has lived and worked in New York City since 1965. He is well known as a visual artist, filmmaker, and writer; his books include the novel *Es Una Ola* (Buenos Aires, 1968) and *Self-Hipnosis* (New York, 1975), an artist's book. Katz is currently curator of film installations at P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island City, New York. He also teaches in the Humanities and Art History departments of the School of Visual Arts, New York, and is on the faculty of the Semiotics Program of Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, where he teaches film. Katz is currently working on a feature-length film, *Mirror on the Moon*, for ZDF, a West German television station.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Millennium Film Workshop, New York, 1977; Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1978; John Gibson Gallery, New York, 1978; The Clocktower, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, 1980; The Collective for Living Cinema, New York, 1980; P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island City, New York, 1982

Selected Group Exhibitions

Whitney Museum of American Art, Downtown Branch, New York, "Words," 1977; John Gibson Gallery, New York, "Structure," 1978, "Structure II," 1979; The New American Filmmakers Series, Whitney Museum of American Art, "Allen Coulter/Leandro Katz," 1979; The Clocktower, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, "Film as Installation," 1980; Elise Meyer Inc., New York, "Schemes," 1981

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Pipolo, Tony. "The Films of Leandro Katz." *Millennium Film Journal*, Fall–Winter 1980–81, pp. 265–72.

Reynaud, Bérénice. "Un Petit Dictionnaire du cinéma indépendant New Yorkais." *Cahiers du cinéma*, September 1982, pp. 48–50.

Selected Filmography

Los Angeles Station, 1976. Color, 16mm, silent; 10 minutes

Paris Has Changed Alot, 1977. Color, 16mm, sound; 30 minutes. Music by Richard Landry

Splits, 1978. Color, 16mm, sound; 30 minutes

Moon Notes, 1980. Color, 16mm, silent; 15 minutes

The Visit (Foreign Particles), 1980. Sequence of 1,200 35mm black-and-white slides, with synchronized sound; 75 minutes

Metropotamia, 1982. Color, 16mm, sound, for 2 projectors and zigzag screen; 20 minutes

Leandro Katz's films are distributed by the Film-makers' Cooperative, New York.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 3
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Ideology/Praxis

December 10–19, 1982

Daily at 12:00, 1:30, 3:00, 4:30; also Tuesday at 6:00

Gallery Talk, Thursday, December 16, at 2:40
Judith Barry will be present

Videotapes in the program:

Isaac Cronin and Terrel Seltzer
Call It Sleep, 1982. Color, ¾ inch, sound; 42 minutes
Written, produced, and directed by Isaac Cronin and Terrel Seltzer. Narrated by Bruce Parry. Edited by Don Ahrens.

Judith Barry
Casual Shopper, 1981. Color, ¾ inch, sound; 28 minutes
Written and directed by Judith Barry. Camera: Jeff Handler. Sound design and mix by Andy Wiskes and Dan Gleich. Starring Harriet Payne and Bill Shields.

There has emerged in recent years a renewed interest on the part of video artists in forms of narrative. One aspect of this new narrative video is represented by Isaac Cronin and Terrel Seltzer's *Call It Sleep* and Judith Barry's *Casual Shopper*. These artists and others employ narrative to examine the ideological controls operating within the cultural institutions of our society. They have incorporated various narrative strategies from films (such as those of Jean-Luc Godard) and literature (the novels of Alain Robbe-Grillet) and political theory from the writings of Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, and others. Their videotapes expose within the narrative the links between capitalism and such institutions as commercial broadcast television. Thus these artists attempt to show the social and class dynamics within our culture and indicate how various styles of taste and consumption are tied to the interests of the state and its dominant forms of cultural discourse.

A prime concern of this new body of work is the examination of broadcast television: a confrontation with the role that the all-pervasive mass medium of television plays in packaging a world view—an ideology—for the consumer by appropriating television's practices—its strategies of discourse. These video artists undertake a radical critique of network television by manipulating the codes that it has evolved to differentiate advertisements, documentary, news, and entertainment programming. This interplay between code and message creates a problematic text of great subtlety and inventiveness.

Isaac Cronin and Terrel Seltzer's *Call It Sleep* takes as its point of departure the Situationist view of Western culture and society as spectacle, and thus of the various social and ideological systems that have shaped our modes of thought and political action. The Situationist movement, which arose in the late 1950s, was comprised of politically committed avant-garde groups in Europe concerned with developing a critique of contemporary society and of institutional forms of political opposition, including the major political parties which have traditionally defined the left. The confrontational tactics of the Situationists, including street action, were to influence the events leading to the May 1968 protests in France. The narration of Cronin and Seltzer's videotape is based on interpretations of Situation-

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ist manifestos and programs. This analysis is juxtaposed with sequences from motion pictures and scripted scenes manipulated to expose the contradictions between modernist forms of culture and the capitalist society that supports them.

Judith Barry's *Casual Shopper* takes a different approach by targeting consumer society, specifically the architecture of the shopping mall and the strategies of the television commercial. The shopping mall becomes the location for Barry's narrative as the performers negotiate their relationships and affect poses within the commercial spaces of the mall. The contradiction between television as a mass medium and the radical videotape which seeks to appropriate its working methods is the subtext of Barry's work. She examines the impact of consumerism and television on both our private spaces—the home, where TV is watched—and our public shopping spaces.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Call It Sleep, 1982

Call It Sleep is the first visual work produced in the United States which makes use of the Situationist technique of *détournement*—the devaluation and reuse of present and past cultural production to form a superior theoretical and practical unity.

Call It Sleep is based on material drawn from the most prevalent means of social conditioning—television—for two reasons. Familiar images easily acquire a strong negative charge when linked with a subversive content. And using images and techniques available to everyone has demonstrated, once and for all, that *détournement* is within the reach of anyone with a few basic appliances and the ability to communicate radical ideas.

Some people who see *Call It Sleep* are only interested to know if copyright permissions have been obtained from the producers of the various images in the tape. These "courageous souls" think that a disrespect for cultural and social conventions should begin after property rights have been observed.

Call It Sleep was completed in May of 1982. It was financed solely by its makers.

Isaac Cronin
Terrel Seltzer

Biography

Isaac Cronin and Terrel Seltzer collaborated as co-writers on *Chan Is Missing* (1982), a film by Wayne Wang. Terrel Seltzer's film *The Story of Anno O.* (1979) was shown in the New American Filmmakers Series in the program "The Freudian Text" in December 1980. Cronin and Seltzer presently live and work in San Francisco. *Call It Sleep* is their first videotape; it was screened in September 1982 at the Roxie Cinema in San Francisco and the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley.

Casual Shopper, 1981

Shopping is an activity that consists of predictable yet indeterminate activities, where, like the cinema, what we go to experience over and over again is our own desire. This activity constructs a particular subject within a specific terrain, the mall or store, where a number of forces are mediated by the individual as he or she participates in the experience, including the complex drives at work in the individual psyche as well as the social imperatives of the television commercial.

Television commercials are viewed on TV sets in the home. Shopping takes place in a space specifically constructed for that purpose. Just as theaters are constructed to make possible specific spectator relations with the film through the use of frontal and fixed perspective, darkness, and the placement of the projector behind the audience, so stores are designed to produce specific effects within the consumer, through the use of endless corridors filled with objects for free libidinal access, set design, and grid lighting. Of course, there are fundamental differences between the movie spectator and the shopper. The shopper is not stationary, but is constantly moving and does not identify with the objects in the store in the same way as with the characters on the screen. But, they are linked in several crucial ways through the process of *looking* that must be brought to both occasions to activate desire—the spectator sits and the film does its work, the shopper moves and the store comes to life. *Casual Shopper* is about, but certainly does not exhaust, some of these relations. (For a more detailed discussion, see my article "Casual Imagination" in *Discourse*, no. 4, Winter 1981–82.)

Judith Barry

Biography

Judith Barry, who was born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1949, attended the University of Florida, where she received a B.S. in Finance and Architecture and a B.A. in Fine Arts in 1972. Barry moved to San Francisco in 1977, where, in addition to working in broadcast television and the film industry, she became known for her work in performance art, videotapes, artists' books, photography, and environmental installations. She has published a number of articles on art and theory, including "Casual Imagination," an analysis of the architecture of shopping spaces. Barry moved to New York City in September 1982, and is currently teaching in the Visual Arts Department at the State University of New York, College at Purchase. She is an editor of *Discourse* magazine, published in Berkeley. She will have a work included in the upcoming exhibition "Scenes and Conventions: Artists' Architecture," opening in March 1983 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London.

Videography

Koleidoscope, 1977. Color, ¾ inch, sound; 50 minutes
They Agope, 1979. Double projection system, black and white, ¾ inch, sound; 30 minutes
Cosual Shopper, 1981. Color, ¾ inch, sound; 28 minutes
Space Invoders, 1982. Color, ¾ inch, sound; 5 minutes

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Whitney Museum of American Art 4
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Ed Emshwiller

Dec. 23, 1982–Jan. 16, 1983

Passes, 1982. Video installation
On view continuously 12:00–6:00, Tuesdays until 8:00

Gallery Talk, Thursday, December 23, at 2:00
Ed Emshwiller will be present

Passes, a four-monitor installation, is comprised of four ¾-inch videotapes, each with a total running time of 25 minutes. The work contains the following short four-channel pieces, shown in sequence:

Space Passes, 1981. Color, sound; 6 minutes. Voice: Kathy McCord; percussion: M. B. Gordy

Vascular Passes, 1982. Color, sound; 5 minutes. Sound source: Marsha Carrington

Cut Passes, 1981. Color, sound; 5 minutes. Saxophone: James Rohrig; conch shell: Rand Steiger

Pan Passes, 1982. Color, sound; 6 minutes. Dancers: Kate Foley, Leslie Gaumer, Anne Sotelo, Janet Welsh; musicians: Rob Chavez, Merry Dermehy, Kevin Graves, Amy Knoles, Jim Snodgrass

Echo Passes, 1979–82. Color, sound; 3 minutes. Performer: Peter Emshwiller

Space Passes, 1981

Technical assistance:
John Rauh, Drew Naumann, Jim Gable, J. T. Moore (California Institute of the Arts, Valencia); Charles Langrall, James Cossa (Chicago Editing Center); Garland Stern (New York Institute of Technology); Gary Dunham (Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital, Valencia, California)

Ed Emshwiller has secured a place in the history of video art as both artist and teacher. He came to video from film, in which he had established himself as part of the American avant-garde with such works as *Relativity* (1966) and *Image, Flesh and Voice* (1969). His collaboration with choreographers and dancers in many of these early films was distinctive. He continued these collaborations in his video work with even more dramatic results in a series of productions which elaborated the dancers' actions through the unique capacities of the medium. Thus in *Scape-mates* (1972) and *Crossings and Meetings* (1974), the performers are not simply recorded on videotape, but become an integral part of an aesthetic that translates their movements and gestures into a synthesis of abstract and figurative images.

The video synthesizer and colorizer, developed in the late 1960s by teams of artists and engineers such as Nam June Paik and Shuya Abe, Bill Etra and Steve Rutt, represented new video technologies that made possible a remarkable body of electronically processed imagery. Emshwiller's art successfully demonstrates how these and more recent technologies, such as advanced computer systems, can be put to the service of the artist. In Emshwiller's case the visual artist works closely with the choreographer/dancer to create performance videotapes which change our conceptions of both video and dance. Yet he achieved this effect by controlling technology; it did not overwhelm his vision and understanding of dance as an expressive art form. Thus his videotapes are characterized by the interplay between the dancer's movements and the image-processing effects and techniques. Emshwiller has manipulated the two-dimensional video image by playing, through his performers, with its three-dimensional illusionistic properties.

Emshwiller pioneered strategies of editing that articulate movement within the frame of the single-channel videotape. In a number of later installation projects, he expanded and altered our perception of the screen itself. Thus in such multimonitor pieces as *Slivers* (1977) Emshwiller recomposes the imagery by masking the screen's surface so that we see only portions of the image. Here our attitude toward, and perception of, the screen is developed within the exhibition space by altering how we see the different parts, or slivers, of the videotape.

In Emshwiller's latest project, *Passes* (1982), the movement of his dancers and performers within the edited structure of the four channels of videotape is played out through

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the four monitors' arrangement within the Film/Video Gallery. Here, as opposed to *Slivers*, we see the image on the monitor's screen as its entire surface, explored through the composition of movements and sounds within it. Each of the five short pieces explores time and space through a series of strategies which distributes the actions of the performers within the spaces in which they performed. This spatial interplay is then elaborated within the videotapes and the juxtaposition of the four monitors. *Passes* was produced at the California Institute of the Arts, where Emshwiller teaches and is developing a new center for video art.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Passes, 1982

Passes is a musical/video surround. It is a series of short pieces which explores aspects of time and space in video performance. *Space Passes* is the unedited showing of four events which were recorded separately but were scored and choreographed to be presented simultaneously. *Vascular Passes* involves views of a body with synchronous stereo internal sounds. It is structured by video and sound editing. *Cut Passes* shows one view on all four monitors. The musical structure and choreography come from video editing. *Pan Passes* is from one location, at different times, with a moving camera and microphones, all shown simultaneously. *Echo Passes* is one location, with digital image transformations and stereo echo sound done in post-production.

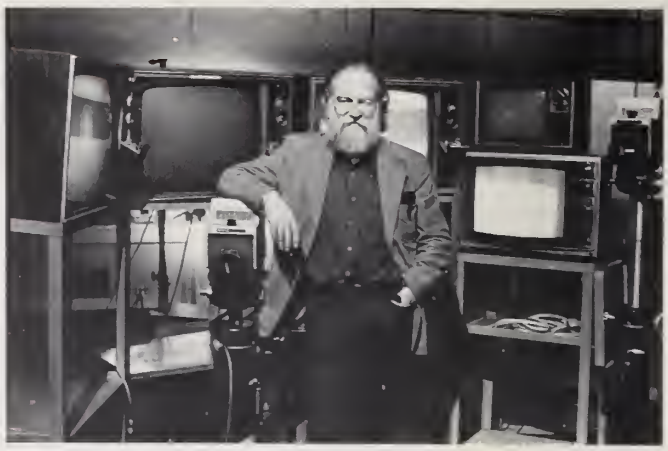
Ed Emshwiller

Biography

Ed Emshwiller, who was born in East Lansing, Michigan, in 1925, received a Bachelor of Design degree from the University of Michigan in 1949. He studied graphics at the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1949–50, and at the Art Students League of New York, 1951. He was a painter and illustrator before becoming a filmmaker. Emshwiller has taught at Yale University, the University of California at Berkeley, Cornell University, the State University of New York at Buffalo, and at Media Study, Buffalo. He was Artist in Residence at the WNET-TV/Channel 13 TV Lab, New York, 1972–79, a Ford Foundation research fellow at the Center for Music Research, University of California at San Diego, 1975, and visual consultant for the PBS production *The Lathe of Heaven*, 1980. Emshwiller has received grants for filmmaking from the Ford Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Guggenheim Foundation, and for video from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and the Guggenheim Foundation. He is currently Provost and Dean of the School of Film and Video at the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia. He lives in Valencia.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Sunken Meadow State Park, Long Island, New York, 1962; Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1969; The New American Filmmakers Series, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1971; Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, 1972; The New American Filmmakers Series, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1972; Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1974, 1976; The Kitchen Center for Video, Music and Dance, New York, 1977; The Museum of Modern Art, 1978 (retrospective); The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1980; Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, 1981



Ed Emshwiller, 1979. Photograph by Robert Grosmere.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, "Circuit," 1973; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Open Circuits," 1974; XIII Bienal de São Paulo, 1975; Documenta 6, Kassel, West Germany, 1977; Siggraph '82 Art Show, Boston, 1982

Selected Bibliography

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Emshwiller, Ed. "Image Maker Meets Video, or, Psyche to Physics and Back." In *The New Television*, edited by Douglas Davis and Allison Simmons. Cambridge, Mass., and London: The MIT Press, 1977.

Kubelka, Peter. *Une Histoire du cinéma* (exhibition catalogue). Paris: Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, 1976, pp. 76–77.

Mancia, Adrienne, and Willard Van Dyke. "Four Artists as Filmmakers." *Art in America*, 55 (January–February 1967), pp. 64–73.

Mekas, Jonas. *Movie Journal: The Rise of the New American Cinema, 1959–1971*. New York: Collier Books, 1972, pp. 215–16, 221, 386–88.

Whitehall, Richard. "The Films of Ed Emshwiller." *Film Quarterly*, 20 (Spring 1967), pp. 46–50.

Selected Filmography and Videography

Dance Chromatic, 1959. Color 16mm film, sound; 7 minutes
Thanatopsis, 1962. Black-and-white 16mm film, sound; 5 minutes
Relativity, 1966. Color 16mm film, sound; 38 minutes
Image, Flesh and Voice, 1969. Black-and-white 35mm film, sound; 77 minutes
Film with Three Dancers, 1970. Color 16mm film, sound; 20 minutes
Choice Chance Woman Dance, 1971. Color 16mm film, sound; 44 minutes
Scape-mates, 1972. Color videotape, sound; 29 minutes
Crossings and Meetings, 1974. Color videotape, sound; 23 minutes
Pilobolus and Joan, 1974. Color videotape, sound; 58 minutes
Slivers, 1977. Fourteen-monitor single-channel video installation, color videotape, sound; 60 minutes
Sur Faces, 1977. Color videotape, sound; 59 minutes
Dubs, 1978. Color videotape, sound; 24 minutes
Sunstone, 1979. Computer animation, color videotape, sound; 3 minutes

Ed Emshwiller's films are distributed by the Film-makers' Cooperative, New York; his videotapes are distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York.

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Wednesday–Saturday 11:00–6:00 Sunday 12:00–6:00

Film and video information: (212) 570-0537

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Citizen

January 18–30, 1983

Citizen, 1982. Film by William Farley. 80 minutes.
12:00, 1:30, 3:00, 4:30; also Tuesdays at 6:15

Gallery Talk, Thursday, January 27, following the 1:30 screening. William Farley will be present

Bob Ernst in *Citizen*, 1982

Credits:
Produced and directed by William Farley. Starring: Michael Barrack, Stoney Burke, Bob Carroll, Victoria Emroy, Bob Ernst, Whoopi Goldberg, Peter Gordon, Judith Harding, Darryl Henriques, Mantra Jessop, Leon Johnson, Scott Keister, Murray Korngold, Kristopher Logan, Pons Maar, John O'Keefe, Michael Peppe, Cassandra Politzer, Lou Sargent, David Sterry. Featuring: David Abad, Mary Arcana, Gillian Bagwell, Joe Bagwell, Bobby Buechler, Priscilla Cohen, Marlitt Dellabough, Richard Guzzo, Liana Harris, Lynette Harrison, Martina Joffe, Charles Jones, Khadejha L'Aimont, Katherine Lyons, Rodney Martin. Narration: Leland Mellott. Casting: William Farley and George Coates. Associate producers: Howard Boyer, James Cloud, Holly Hayden, Mark Hayden, Douglas Hollis, Sally Lubell, Denise O'Neill, Ippy Paterson, Neil Paterson, Ruth Reichl, Ken Vetter. Production managers: Richard Foldenauer, Cathy Ramey. Production assistants: Mike Anderson, Ford Andrews, Jules Backus, Juliet Bashore, Maxi Cohen, Jack Davis, Mark Eastman, Charlotte Footham, Doug Hall, Nancy Kosenko, Truusje Kushner, Chip Lord, Jaime Oria, Arnie Passman, Dana Plays, Julie Schachter, Elisibeth Sher, Andrea Sohn, Eva Soltes. Screenplay: William Farley, George Coates, Susan Roether. Additional material: Stoney Burke, Bob Carroll, Whoopi Goldberg, Darryl Henriques, Murray Korngold, John O'Keefe, Michael Peppe, Mal Sharpe, David Sterry. Director of photography: Kathleen Beeler. Editor: William Farley. Assistant editor: Stan Russell. Editorial consultant: Richard R. Schmidt. Camera operators: Kathleen Beeler, William Farley, David Heintz, George Manupelli, Richard R. Schmidt, Ian Turner. Music composed by Peter Gordon, performed by The Love of Life Orchestra. Additional music: "The Donner Party" by Eva-Tone and Eva-Type; "Rendezvous" by John Bischoff, performed by "Blue" Gene Tyranny; David Behrman; Paul De Marinis; Anne Klingensmith. Titles: Ken Dollar. Negative conformed by Lela Smith. Film timed by Gary Coats. Special thanks to The Film Arts Foundation.

Citizen is William Farley's first feature-length film. Shot in San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area, the film follows a group of anonymous young people on an apparently random journey through a disjointed cityscape. As they travel, they encounter a succession of madmen and eccentrics, portrayed by various West Coast performance artists, whose impassioned monologues and improvisations satirize the institutions of contemporary American society. In the depersonalized environment of objects and images that Farley has created, these performers appear as manifestations of the wise man or the holy fool, bizarre individuals on the fringes of society who offer guidance to the group on their Pilgrim's Progress through the streets, subways, cemeteries, and highways of America.

Farley's intentions in this film are profoundly political. The basic premise of *Citizen*—the transformative journey—and its sense of anarchic freedom and improvisation are related to the Situationist notion of the *dérive*, a method of psycho-political interaction with the urban landscape designed to restructure the individual's relation to the environment. As defined by Guy Debord, the *dérive* is "a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances. The *dérive* entails playful-constructive behavior.... One or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there."

Citizen might be viewed as a fictionalized documentary of an extended *dérive* conducted by Farley and his collaborators; selecting shooting locations spontaneously and following a scenario that offered only a minimal outline, the cast and crew approached the filmmaking process in a spirit of collective discovery and invention. The "stars" of the film are nine West Coast performance artists (in order of appearance: John O'Keefe, Stoney Burke, Michael Peppe, Pons Maar, Whoopi Goldberg, Darryl Henriques, Bob Carroll, Bob Ernst, and Murray Korngold). In direct contradiction to conventional notions of film acting, in which the actor subordinates him or herself to a fictional character and a dramatic script, these performers appear in the immediate act of creating their own improvisations. By filming these performances in straightforward documentary fashion and presenting them within an abstracted

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landscape, Farley focuses on the performance artist as the heroic embodiment of the individual creative act. In *Citizen*, Farley proposes a new definition of "citizenship": an artistic, revolutionary state of being in which the individual is freed by his own creative, anarchic actions from the constraints imposed by social structures and ideologies.

The concerns of *Citizen* originate in Farley's earlier films, in which he explored issues of narrative form, cultural and spiritual survival, and contemporary society through the tension between images and story elements. It is important to situate Farley's work within the context of the various traditions that inform it: the irrational, anarchic writings of William Burroughs; the rich field of contemporary performance art; and current independent filmmaking. The rejection of the standards and conventions of the commercial Hollywood film has been one of the most significant movements in independent narrative filmmaking in recent decades. Farley, like many of his contemporaries, is seeking to radically expand the language of film as a narrative form and its potential as a medium for personal vision.

Callie Angell
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

William Farley (seated) directing *Citizen*, 1982. Photograph by Richard Green.

Artist's Statement

My earliest memories include drawing and sketching, being lost in the meditation of reproducing images. This interest accelerated after my uncle brought me a roll of tracing cloth from the factory where he worked. I began tracing everything in sight: comic books, magazines, newspapers, patterns off the linoleum floor, our wallpaper, the shadows of furniture, even moving images off the TV screen.

Thus began my addiction to capturing images. Until my late teens, my drawing had been strictly private, but when I was seventeen my mother showed my drawings to a local artist who said I had talent and suggested I go to art school, a consideration I appreciated since I was doing murderous factory work and was desperate to escape. After studying commercial art and working as an illustrator I discovered that my need for personal expression was the strongest impulse in my life. This impulse led me into filmmaking. The distance between a roll of tracing cloth and a roll of motion picture film is not so great. In time it represents about twenty years. In spirit it reveals that I have always been involved in the same activity: searching for images that help me understand the life around me.

William Farley

Biography

William Farley, born in Quincy, Massachusetts in 1942, studied at the Vesper George School of Art, Boston, 1961–64, and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Skowhegan, Maine, 1968; he received a B.F.A. from the Maryland Institute, College of Art, Baltimore, in 1969 and an M.F.A. from the California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, in 1972. In addition to making his own films, Farley has served as scriptwriter, cameraman, or creative consultant on a number of other media projects, including Richard Schmidt's film *Showboat 1988* (1975), which was shown at the Whitney Museum in 1975, and videotapes by Ant Farm, Robert Ashley, and Joan Jonas. From 1974 through 1979, Farley lectured on film at the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College, Oakland. He has received numerous awards for his films as well as grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Film Institute. His film *The Bell Rang to an Empty Sky* (1976–77) was shown at the Whitney Museum in the New American Filmmakers Series in 1977. Farley is currently working on a feature film, *Revenge of the Modern Convenience*.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Project Theatre, Dublin, 1977; Canyon Cinematheque, San Francisco, 1978; San Francisco State University, 1979; School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1980; Encounter Cinema, University of California, Los Angeles, 1980; Neighborhood Film Project, International House, Philadelphia, 1980; Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, 1980; Media Study/Buffalo, 1981; Pasadena Film Forum, California, 1981.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Ann Arbor Film Festival, Michigan, 1974; 5th International 16mm Cinema Festival, Montreal, 1975; Rotterdam International Film Festival, 1975; 12th Annual New York Avant-Garde Festival, Brooklyn, 1975; Ann Arbor Film Festival, 1976; Conference on Visual Anthropology, Temple University, Philadelphia, 1978; 9th International Cinema Festival, Nyon, Switzerland, 1978; Ann Arbor Film Festival, 1979, 1980; 8th Deauville Festival of American Cinema, Deauville, France, 1982; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., "Nu Mooveez," 1982.

Filmography

Sea Space, 1972–73. Black and white, 16mm, sound; 8 minutes
Being, 1974–75. Color, 16mm, sound; 10 minutes
The Bell Rang to an Empty Sky, 1976–77. Color, 16mm, sound; 5 minutes
Marthain The Irish Film, 1977–79. Color, 16mm, sound; 40 minutes
Made for Television, 1981. Color, 16mm, sound; 5 minutes
Citizen, 1982. Color, 16mm, sound; 80 minutes

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The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Caligari's Cure

February 1–11, 1983

Caligari's Cure, 1982. Film by Tom Palazzolo.
70 minutes. 12:00, 1:30, 3:00, 4:30; also Tuesday at 6:00

Gallery Talk, Thursday, February 3, following the 1:30 screening. Tom Palazzolo will be present.

Credits:
Produced, written, directed, and edited by Tom Palazzolo. Cast: Carmela Rago (Mother), Andy Soma (Francis), Dave West (Allen), Paul Rosin (Cesar), Hether McAdams (Allen's Mother), Ron Kantor (Salesman), Ellen Fisher (Dream Girl), Ed Pino (Mr. Bat), P. Adams Sitney (Dr. Arthur Vision), Tom Jerumba (Chairman of the Board), Bob Loescher (Dr. Caligari), E. W. Ross (Man in the Boat). Camera: Kevin Smith. Sets: Bernard Beckman. Costumes: Lee Ann Larson. Music: Paul Gartski. Choreography: Ellen Fisher.

Caligari's Cure is Tom Palazzolo's first fictional narrative film and also his first feature. Loosely structured as an autobiographical remake of Robert Weine's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), the film is a comic fantasy that presents the filmmaker's memories of childhood, Catholic school, and his arrival at the Art Institute of Chicago, as reenacted by a cast of performance artists and friends in wildly colored, distorted sets and costumes. Palazzolo's style is playful and irreverent, incorporating and openly acknowledging a wide range of influences from cinema, art history, and contemporary American art. The subjectively distorted, expressionist sets of the original German film, for instance, have been transformed into a junky, cartoon-like, and distinctly American version that reflects Palazzolo's involvement with contemporary painting as well as with film history.

Palazzolo has borrowed other elements from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*: the characters of Francis the narrator (and filmmaker's alter ego), Cesar the somnambulist, and Dr. Caligari appear; and *Caligari's Cure* is, like the original, a tale told by a madman, although in Palazzolo's version the seminary/asylum where Francis and his friends end up is an obvious metaphor for the Art Institute of Chicago, where the filmmaker has been in residence, as student and teacher, for over twenty years. In Palazzolo's fantasy, the Art Institute and its school become the "institution" in whose rarefied atmosphere the narrator and his fellow artists, having survived middle-class childhood, Catholic education, adolescent sexuality, and even death, can live happily ever after as children and lunatics.

Carmela Rago in *Caligari's Cure*, 1982.

Ellen Fisher and Andy Soma in *Caligari's Cure*, 1982.

There is no small degree of self-parody in this image, but there is a great deal of appreciation and affection as well. Palazzolo resides comfortably within his own sphere of reference, a domain that includes the rich heritage of film and art history as well as his own personal memories. His familiar and gleeful attitude toward these weighty traditions allows him to draw from them freely while indulging in a virtuoso display of visual and verbal puns, improvised performances, sexual innuendo, appearances by friends, in-jokes and obscure references (many of which hold meaning

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only for the filmmaker and his colleagues). The ease with which Palazzolo accomplishes all this suggests a new, more relaxed, and freer approach to the structuring of film narrative, not only in its affirmation of the validity of autobiographical concerns and personal expression, but also in its liberation of cultural tradition as a source of inspiration and humor for the contemporary artist.

Palazzolo's work as a filmmaker has evolved through several stages since his first film in 1965. His early works combined documentary with experimental/expressionist techniques to focus on the grotesque or humorous, particularly in circus performers, freaks, amusement parks, patriotic parades, and other bizarre cultural phenomena. Around 1970 Palazzolo began concentrating on a direct cinéma-vérité approach and, often in collaboration with Jeff Kreines or Mark Rance, produced a number of short documentaries that explored the political attitudes and social behavior of lower- and middle-class Chicago; perhaps his best-known film is *Marquette Park II*, an inside view of American Nazi Party headquarters on the day of the controversial 1978 Chicago rally. Palazzolo's work has always been distinguished by his off-hand approach and his fine eye for the ironic moment or image. His sense of humor, his fascination with the figure of the performer and with the unusual, and his cinéma-vérité techniques are all incorporated into *Caligari's Cure*, where they enrich Palazzolo's first venture into narrative.

Callie Angell
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

Caligari's Cure, 1982

My work has always depended on outside sources, whether it's an artwork from another period or people, events, and places from my own past or present. I use this material as a springboard.

The combination of these interests and a growing concern with narrative forms led me to *Caligari's Cure*. This is my first film dealing with both performance artists and my own background. Recently I've become interested in performance art through my teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (my paintings since the mid-1960s have been concerned with performers in posed, artificial settings). I chose performance artists from the Art Institute community because their physical appearance or personality in some way reminded me of my first and perhaps strongest associations.

Both as a student and a teacher I have spent most of my adult life in an art environment. This present work combines formative memories of Catholic school with the other half of my life—the museum and school of the Art Institute of Chicago. I have always wanted to do a remake of Robert Weine's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, both because the film is very interesting to me in a psychological sense and to reflect my interest in art and film history.

Tom Palazzolo

Biography

Tom Palazzolo was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1937. After studying at the John and Mable Ringling School of Art in Sarasota, Florida, from 1958 through 1960, he attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he studied photography and painting and exhibited with the group known as the Hairy Who. Palazzolo received his M.F.A. from the Art Institute in 1965, and began to make films that same year. During the late 1960s, Palazzolo became well known in what was then called "underground" film; in 1969 he traveled in the Middle East with a program of American experimental films under the auspices of the United States Information Agency, and in 1970 received a grant from the American Film Institute. His film *Love It/Leave It* (1970) was shown in the Whitney Museum's New American Filmmakers Series in 1973. In the early 1970s Palazzolo began to experiment with forms of cinéma-vérité documentary and for the next ten years his films focused on the people and events of working-class Chicago. One series of films concerned the rituals surrounding marriage: prom night, showers, bachelor parties, weddings, receptions, and anniversaries. Palazzolo has completed over thirty films to date; his films are included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the American Federation of Arts in New York. In addition to filmmaking, Palazzolo has continued to work in photography and painting. He currently lives and works in Chicago; he teaches in the Film Department of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and is also Associate Professor in the Department of Human and Public Services at Richard J. Daley City College, where he teaches art history and photography.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1968; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1970; Millennium Film Workshop, New York, 1972; The Art Institute of Chicago, 1973; Madison Art Center, Inc., Wisconsin, 1974; Theater Van Guard, Los Angeles, 1975; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1977; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1977; Indianapolis Art Museum, 1978; International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester, 1980, 1982; Karen Lennox Gallery, Chicago, 1982; Madison Art Center, Inc., 1982; Pittsburgh Filmmakers, 1982.

Selected Group Exhibitions

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Chicago Underground," 1969; The New American Filmmakers Series, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "American Dreams and Nightmares," 1973; Film Forum, New York, "Chicago Film," 1974, "Working," 1978; Chicago Filmmakers, "New Films: Chicago," 1979; Pittsburgh Filmmakers, "Politics and Film," 1981.

Selected Filmography

All films are 16mm, color, and sound.

"O," 1965. 12 minutes.
America's in Real Trouble, 1966. 15 minutes.
The Story of How I Became the Tatooed Lady, 1967. 20 minutes.
Love It/Leave It, 1970. 15 minutes.
Ricky and Rocky, 1972. In collaboration with Jeff Kreines; 12 minutes.
It's Later Than You Think, 1973. In collaboration with Jeff Kreines; 25 minutes.
Marquette Park I, 1976. In collaboration with Mark Rance; 25 minutes.
Gay for a Day, 1977. 12 minutes.
Marquette Park II, 1978. In collaboration with Mark Rance; 35 minutes.
Bean's Bachelor Party, 1979. In collaboration with Mark Rance; 20 minutes.
Mr. and Mrs. Strocchia's 50th Wedding Anniversary, 1980. 25 minutes.
Milwaukee Talkie, 1981. 14 minutes.

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The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Joan Jonas

February 22–March 13, 1983

He Saw Her Burning, 1982. Video installation
On view continuously, 12:00–6:00

Performances:
Tuesdays at 6:30 (February 22, March 1 and 8)
Fridays at 6:30 (February 25); 3:00 and 6:30 (March 11)
Saturdays at 3:00 (February 26, March 5 and 12)
Sundays at 3:00 (February 27, March 6 and 13)

Credits:
Assistant: Cynthia Beatt. Performance text by Joan Jonas; additional material by Shawn Lawton. Installation: videotape by Joan Jonas; assistant editor: Vincent Trasov; with Joan Jonas, Y Sa Lo, Shawn Lawton, and Vera and Gabor Body. Performance: Super-8 film by Joan Jonas; camera and editor: Cynthia Beatt. Performance developed in West Berlin and supported by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst.

Gallery Talk, Thursday, February 24, at 2:00
Joan Jonas will be present

Joan Jonas performing in *He Saw Her Burning* in West Berlin, November 1982.

Joan Jonas' latest work, *He Saw Her Burning*, employs a wide variety of components: video, dance, performance, props, and Super-8 film. The installation functions both as an environment in which to view the videotapes and as a set for the performances. The resources for Jonas' narrative art are rich and diverse: autobiography, current events, science fiction, and folk tales. In *He Saw Her Burning*, she uses preexisting story elements. In her earlier works these elements had been taken from myths and science fiction. *He Saw Her Burning* employs fragments of news reports to create a powerful new visual narrative form. Thus, as with the Grimm fairy tale reworked in her 1976 performance *The Juniper Tree*, the narrative is transformed and opened up—words, actions, sound effects, and the visual elements work together to evoke new meanings and associations, different from those of the original texts.

Performance is the central strategy in the art of Joan Jonas. Through her use of sound, language, and physical movements, she explores not only the construction of narrative forms but various cognitive and spatial concerns as well. For example, the spatial exploration of such early works as her outdoor performance piece *Sound Delay* (1970), which choreographed sound and dancers' movements across distance, has subsequently been translated into the illusionistic space of video. The technical possibilities of video—such as left-right reversal, feedback, vertical roll, and "real time" imagery—enabled her to extend the perceptual investigations of her performance pieces. Such videotapes as *Left Side Right Side* (1972), *Vertical Roll* (1972), and *I Want to Live in the Country (and Other Romances)* (1977–78) demonstrated how the properties and technologies of video could be made to address issues current in her performance work.

In *He Saw Her Burning*, video was a catalyst in the creation and design of the performance and installation. Jonas developed the project in West Berlin, where she was living for eight months on a German government grant. As a foreigner in a large city she spent much of her time watching television, listening to the radio, and reading newspapers. The narratives in *He Saw Her Burning* are fashioned from two news reports which Jonas recounts at the beginning of the performance. Jonas then becomes, as the single performer, the medium for the stories, the narrative elements

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of which are played off against the two prerecorded videotapes (featuring an actor and an actress telling two news stories) which are shown simultaneously during the performance and in the installation. The other props, the painted backdrop, and the Super-8 film expand further on elements of the narrative.

The videotapes represent television as a mass-media source of news and information. Through the use of prerecorded as well as closed-circuit video, the camera's point of view and the two-dimensional properties of the video image are integrated into the space of the performance. *He Saw Her Burning* becomes a meditation on the mythologies of popular culture and mass media, on the narrative form of news reports, and on the real and imagined spaces of live and video performance.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

He Saw Her Burning, 1982

He Saw Her Burning is based on two news stories, one from the *International Herald Tribune*, July 1982, about an American soldier stationed in Mannheim, West Germany, who stole a tank and drove it down the main street of the city, causing panic and confusion. He finally drove onto the bridge over the Neckar River, turned it around, lost control, and tipped backward into the water. There was no explanation for his behavior. It took a 100-ton swimming crane to get the tank out of the water.

The second story is about a Chicago woman who burst into flames for no apparent reason (from the *Journal American*, Rome, August 1982). A witness sitting in his car told police that suddenly the woman was on fire. There was nothing left but a pile of ashes. Eight incidents of human spontaneous combustion are listed in reference books, one as late as 1957.

The two stories are intercut and linked throughout the performance. They are experienced and witnessed by the characters, a man and a woman, who also tell the stories. Passages and quotes from an Icelandic saga are also used in this allegory, pointing to the timelessness of current events.

The work developed from my relation to the landscape of Berlin (past and present), where I lived for eight months, and from my interest in listening to the American and English radio stations while living in a comparatively isolated situation. The two stories attracted me because they stand symbolically for specific conditions in our society. I was drawn by the elements of mystery and crisis.

Joan Jonas

Biography

Joan Jonas, born in New York in 1936, studied at Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts, where she received a B.A. in Art History in 1958. She then attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, from 1958 to 1961, and received an M.F.A. from Columbia University in 1965. Jonas has been awarded fellowships and grants for choreography, video, and the visual arts from the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Television Workshop at WXXI-TV, Rochester, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst. In 1981 she won the Hyogo Prefecture Museum of Modern Art Prize at the International Video Art Festival in Tokyo. Joan Jonas lives and works in New York.

Selected Outdoor Performances

Jones Beach Piece, Jones Beach State Park, Nassau County, New York, 1970; *Beach Piece II*, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, 1971; *Delay Delay*, Tiber River, Rome (sponsored by Galleria l'Attico, Rome), 1972.

Exhibitions and Selected Indoor Performances

Oad Lau, St. Peter's Church, New York, 1968; *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, Lo Giudice Gallery, New York, 1972; *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll*, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1973; *The Juniper Tree*, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1976; *Upsidedown and Backwards*, Sonnabend Gallery, New York, 1979; "Joan Jonas: Performance/Video/Installation," University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1980; *Double Lunar Dogs*, Performance Garage, New York, 1981; "Joan Jonas: A Retrospective of Video Works," Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1982; *He Saw Her Burning*, Arsenal, West Berlin, 1982.

Selected Bibliography

Crimp, Douglas. "Joan Jonas's Performance Works." *Studio International*, 142 (July–August 1976), pp. 10–12.

de Jong, Constance. "Joan Jonas: Organic Honey's Vertical Roll." *Arts Magazine*, 47 (March 1973), pp. 27–29.

Jonas, Joan. "Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy" (script). *The Drama Review*, 16 (June 1972), p. 66.

———. "Seven Years." *The Drama Review*, 19 (March 1975), pp. 13–16.

———. *Scripts and Descriptions*. Edited by Douglas Crimp. Eindhoven, Holland: Stedelijk van Abbemuseum; Berkeley: University Art Museum, University of California, 1982.

Junker, Howard. "Joan Jonas: The Mirror Staged." *Art in America*, 69 (February 1981), pp. 87–95.

Filmography

Wind, 1968. Black and white, 16mm, silent; 5½ minutes.
Paul Revere, 1971. In collaboration with Richard Serra. Black and white, 16mm, sound; 9 minutes.
Veil, 1971. Black and white, 16mm, silent; 6-minute loop.
Songdelay, 1973. Black and white, 16mm, sound; 19 minutes.

Selected Videography

Left Side Right Side, 1972. Black and white, sound; 7 minutes.
Vertical Roll, 1972. Black and white, sound; 20 minutes.
Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy, 1972. Black and white, sound; 23 minutes.
Barking, 1973. Black and white, sound; 3 minutes.
Three Returns, 1973. Black and white, sound; 12 minutes.
Glass Puzzle, 1974. Black and white, sound; 26 minutes.
Merlo, 1974. Black and white, sound; 16 minutes.
Good Night Good Morning, 1976. Black and white, sound; 11 minutes.
I Want to Live in the Country (and Other Romances), 1977–78. Color, sound; 28 minutes.
Upsidedown and Backwards, 1981. Color, sound; 28 minutes.

Joan Jonas' videotapes and films are distributed by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, New York.

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Film and video information: (212) 570-0537

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Whitney Museum of American Art 8
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Frank Gillette

May 31–June 26, 1983

Oracle, 1983. Video installation
In collaboration with William Chamberlain, Stanley Darland, Stuart Greenstein, and Michael Riesman
On view continuously 12:00–6:00, Tuesdays until 8:00

Gallery Talk, Thursday, June 2, at 2:00
Frank Gillette will be present

Credits:

Chief programmer and program designer: Steven Buchwalter. Terrarium consultant: Dr. William Crotty, New York University. Video assistance: Davidson Gigliotti. Computer hardware courtesy Atari, Digital (D.E.C.), and Microperipheral. Sonar sensing device and 8 × 10 Hard Color Copier courtesy Polaroid Corporation. PALEO and TELIOS programs courtesy Time Video Information Services Division of Time, Inc. Oberheim synthesizer courtesy Oberheim Electronics, Inc. Panscan units courtesy Nigel Branwell and Audio & Design Recording, Inc. *Oracle* was made possible by a fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation and by the generous support of Marilyn Oshman Lubetkin and Sara Ann Marks.

Oracle is the latest in a long series of projects by Frank Gillette that have contributed to shaping the history of the video installation. A distinctive feature of Gillette's work has been the formal investigation of the possibilities of video as an image-recording medium presented in an installation context. Such pieces as *The Maui Cycle* (1976) and *Aransas, Axis of Observation* (1978–79) employed videotape in multimonitor, multichannel configurations. In these works, Gillette interprets the specific sites and environments with his compositions and selection of images, extending the image-recording basis of video through the editing process. Thus the changes in the light and color of the environment and the cycles in plant and animal life are reflected in the choice of shots, the strategies of the editing, and the movement of the camera. In *The Maui Cycle* he employed the video camera and multichannel format to reveal the formal beauty and ecology of this Hawaiian island; in *Aransas*, he explored the specific ecology of an area, in this case the Texas Gulf Coast, by reconstructing the unique plant and animal life of the region in photographic and video imagery.

Oracle takes these aesthetic interests in a new direction by using computers connected by means of sensors to the changing ecology of a terrarium. The computer systems translate the activity of the terrarium into video imagery, produced in real, not recorded, time. The different life forms thus become the actual source of the imagery, and not only on closed-circuit monitors; in addition, the linking of the computer programs to a printer produces a prose program. These statements are in grammatically perfect English, and range from 50 to 300 words each. Finally, the programs also generate music. Thus a living ecology, the terrarium, is integrated into the installation's very structure and becomes the means for generating the visual, auditory, and linguistic texts which the spectator experiences in real time.

Template drawing for the PALEO program in *Oracle*, 1983. Ink on vellum with grid, 11 × 7⅛ inches. Collection of the artist.

Increasingly, new technologies are being incorporated into art projects, a process in which both these technologies and the concept of the artwork itself are transformed. Gillette's *Oracle* is a dramatic advance in installation and video art: it addresses the entire process of art-making through the use of new technologies as tools of observation.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Oracle, 1983

Oracle consists of two opposing parts, a terrarium and a display matrix. The terrarium, housing a primordial environment of ferns, mosses, and lepidoptera, contains sensors converting random movement into voltage flow which

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determines changes in the display matrix. Six separate computer programs intercept the voltage flow and generate a fugue of textual, aural, diagrammatic, and imagistic data in the matrix of eight monitors, four speakers, and a high-speed printer. Two TV cameras convey the contents of the terrarium to the matrix as well. The programs:

RACTOR synthesizes prose. It draws upon a vocabulary of approximately 1,300 words (divided into eleven categories) and the rules for syntax and grammar in English. The length and character of the statements it produces are determined by random choice originating in the terrarium. RACTOR's read-out appears on one monitor and the printer.

CANTUS composes music in real time by following algorithms which delimit the allowable choices of notes, rhythms, and rests. It utilizes a random value derived from interpreting activity in the terrarium. The program chooses a first note, or chord, and then continually selects either a pitch or a rest, and a duration thereof, for four simultaneous voices, until commanded to stop.

PALEO is essentially an inventory of 72 images drawn from the Paleolithic, or prehistoric, epoch of art. Its images derive from the paintings, drawings, and reliefs found on the walls of caves (Altamira, Lascaux, Niaux) in the Pyrenees. The selection and duration of each image are determined by changes in the voltage flow monitoring the terrarium.

TELIOS is grounded in the diagrammatic analysis of the ratios, proportions, and placements of four key structures in world history, that is, the pyramid at Cheops, the Greek Parthenon, the Roman Pantheon, and the cathedral at Cologne. Each edifice is represented in the program by five views and a floor plan which are selected in the same manner as the PALEO program.

INTER-1 intercepts the live E-to-E video from the terrarium to the matrix monitor. It reconstructs the analog image in digital terms and presents it on the monitor adjacent to the live image.

INTER-2 intercepts the other live E-to-E video feed from the terrarium in the same manner as INTER-1 but with a different set of variables digitalizing the image.

Frank Gillette

Biography

Frank Gillette, born in Jersey City, New Jersey, in 1941, studied painting at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, from 1959 to 1962. Gillette produced his first videotape, *St. Mark's Place*, in 1967 with Harvey Simmons. His videotape *Hark—Hork* (1972–73) was shown in the Whitney Museum's 1975 Biennial Exhibition. Two of his multichannel installations have also been shown at the Whitney Museum: *The Maui Cycle* (1976) in the New American Filmmakers Series in 1977 and *Aransas, Axis of Observation* (1978–79) in the 1981 Biennial Exhibition. Gillette's book, *Between Paradigms: The Mood and Its Purpose*, was published in 1973. He has been a National Endowment for the Arts Resident at the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York (1973); the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1974); and the Long Beach Museum of Art, California (1975); and received grants from the New York State Council on the Arts in 1970, 1972, 1974, 1975, and 1977. Gillette has been a fellow of the Dare Foundation (1975), the National Endowment for the Arts (1976, 1980), the Guggenheim Foundation (1978), and the Rockefeller Foundation (1981). Frank Gillette lives in New York.

Collaborators

William Chamberlain is a writer living in New York. He and Thomas Etter are the coauthors of RACTOR, a computer program which synthesizes prose.

Stanley Darland is a painter, sculptor, and photographer, and is Computer Graphics Consultant at Time Video Information Services Division of Time, Inc. He is coauthor with Gillette of the TELIOS and PALEO programs and is collaborator on all computer-graphic imagery in *Oracle*.

Stuart Greenstein, designer of the sensor system in *Oracle*, is an independent consultant in the field of personal-computer implementation.

Michael Riesman, a composer and performer, conceived and designed the CANTUS program. He is the musical director and keyboardist of the Philip Glass Ensemble.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, 1973; Art/Tapes 22, Florence, 1974; Long Beach Museum of Art, California, 1975; The New American Filmmakers Series, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1977; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, 1978; University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1979; Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1980; The Kitchen Center for Video, Music and Dance, New York, 1980; Emanuel Walter Gallery, San Francisco Art Institute, 1981; Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1982; Lawrence Oliver Gallery, Philadelphia, 1983.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Howard Wise Gallery, New York, "TV as a Creative Medium," 1969; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, "Circuit: A Video Invitational," 1973; Kunsthalle Köln, Cologne, "Projekt-74," 1974; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, "New Learning Spaces and Places," 1974; Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, "Video Art," 1975; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1975 Biennial Exhibition; Documenta 6, Kassel, West Germany, 1977; P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island City, New York, "Landscape Video," 1980; XIII Winter Olympic Games, Lake Placid, New York, 1980; University of Houston, "The Multiple Image," 1980; Whitney Museum of American Art, 1981 Biennial Exhibition; 40th Venice Biennale, 1982.

Selected Bibliography

Gillette, Frank. *Between Paradigms: The Mood and Its Purpose*. New York: Gordon & Breach, 1973.

———. *Aransas, Axis of Observation*. Houston: Points of View, 1978.

Gillette, Frank, and Brendan O'Regan. "A Teleconference on Computers and Art." *All Area*, 2 (Spring 1983).

London, Barbara. "Independent Video: The First Fifteen Years." *Artforum*, 19 (September 1980), pp. 38–41.

Rosebush, Judson, ed. *Frank Gillette: Video—Process and Meta-Process* (exhibition catalogue). Syracuse, N.Y.: Everson Museum of Art, 1973.

Selected Multichannel Installations

Wipe Cycle, 1969. Nine channels, three time delays, black and white, 30 minutes.

Tetragramaton, 1972–73. Six channels (30 monitors), black and white, 30 minutes.

Track/Trace, 1972–73. Ten channels, five time delays, three live-feed cameras, black and white.

Muse, 1974–75. Three channels, black and white, 15 minutes.

Quidditas, 1974–75. Three channels, color, 40 minutes.

The Maui Cycle, 1976. Three channels, color, 45 minutes.

Mecox, 1977. Three channels, color, 20 minutes.

Aransas, Axis of Observation, 1978–79. Six channels, color, 45 minutes.

Olaus Magnus, 1980. Four channels, color, 30 minutes.

Symptomatic Syntax, 1980–81. Six channels, color, 20 minutes.

Documentation of Frank Gillette's installations is available from the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 9
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Ernie Gehr

September 27–October 9, 1983

Schedule

September 27–October 2

1:00; also Tuesday, September 27, at 6:30
Morning, 1968; *Wait*, 1968; *Reverberation*, 1969; *Behind the Scenes*, 1975

3:00; also Tuesday, September 27, at 5:00
Transparency, 1969; *History*, 1970; *Field*, 1970; *Serene Velocity*, 1970

October 4–9

1:00; also Tuesday, October 4, at 6:30
Eureka, 1974–79; *Still*, 1969–71

3:00; also Tuesday, October 4, at 5:00
Untitled, 1977; *Mirage*, 1981; *Shift*, 1972–74; *Table*, 1976; *Untitled*, 1981

Gallery Talk, Thursday, September 29, following the 1:00 screening. Ernie Gehr will be present.

Frames from *Serene Velocity*, 1970.

Sometime between 1903 and 1905 an anonymous filmmaker in San Francisco produced a short sequence of silent film footage from a moving streetcar. Seventy years later Ernie Gehr, an artist living in New York, found the footage and transformed it into *Eureka* (1974–79), a landmark film in the history of the American independent cinema. The aesthetic power of *Eureka*, one of the films in this retrospective, is representative of Gehr's entire oeuvre and an analysis of it reveals the complex of issues present in all of his films.

Gehr refilmed each of the found-footage frames eight times. The original film, projected at its silent speed (16 frames per second [fps]) had a running time of approximately four minutes. After Gehr reworked it, the total running time extended to thirty minutes, projected at 24 fps, without a soundtrack. The San Francisco filmmaker, with a continuous tracking camera positioned on the streetcar, had recorded on celluloid the action on and about the streets and buildings. Gehr's manipulation of the frame transformed this action into gradually shifting movements of people and vehicles.

One of the most interesting aspects of the use of this found material is that only a single moving shot—one rhetorical device—serves as the basis for Gehr's exploration of how the photographic image is framed and interpreted. In *Eureka* the relentless gaze of the camera proceeds through a historical space, a street in San Francisco before the earthquake destroyed it. Gehr expands on this visual discourse: his rigorous strategy is to refashion our perception of the film by opening up its process of production and, consequently, the space and details of the action. His decision to rephotograph each frame as he did removes any flicker in the image, thus making the technique employed invisible to the viewer.

The formal and aesthetic issues addressed in *Eureka* are also developed, with different strategies, in his other films. There is an attention in Gehr's cinema to the entire frame of celluloid and its surface as a compositional field and a strict concern with the cinematic principles that shape the film's form. Thus the properties of both the material and the camera are treated in the construction of the film and the framing of the composition. In such works as *Reverberation* (1969), *Still* (1969–71), *History* (1970), *Serene Velocity* (1970), and *Untitled* (1981), Gehr employs a variety of filmic devices and refines, through the subtlety of emphasis within each work, how we perceive such compositional elements as superimposition (*Reverberation*), zoom shots (*Serene Velocity*), and film grain (*History*). He investigates the phenomenology of the photographed image

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and the dynamics of movement and time within the illusionistic, two-dimensional properties of film space.

Ernie Gehr's films share in the aesthetic concerns which have engaged painters, sculptors, photographers, and video artists, particularly within the context of Conceptual and Minimal art. The formal issues at play in his films define them as "structural." This independent film movement is characterized by work which emphasizes specific properties of the film production process. Yet Gehr's work, because it embraces both representational and abstract imagery, transcends identification with a single movement. Seen in their entirety, his films represent a unique achievement in the American avant-garde cinema.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Artist's Statement

A still has to do with a particular intensity of light, an image, a composition frozen in time and space.

A shot has to do with a variable intensity of light, an internal balance of time dependent upon an intermittent movement and a movement within a given space dependent upon persistence of vision.

A shot can be a film, or a film may be composed of a number of shots.

A still as related to film is concerned with using and losing an image of something through time and space. In representational films sometimes the image affirms its own presence as image, graphic entity, but most often it serves as vehicle to a photo-recorded event. Most films teach film to be an image, a representing. But film is a real thing and as a real thing it is not imitation. It does not reflect on life, it embodies the life of the mind. It is not a vehicle for ideas or portrayals of emotion outside of its own existence as emoted idea. Film is a variable intensity of light, an internal balance of time, a movement within a given space.

When I began to make films I believed pictures of things must go into films if anything was to mean anything. This is what almost everybody who has done anything worthwhile with film has done and is still doing but this again has to do with everything a still is—a representing. And when I actually began filming I found this small difficulty: neither film, filming nor projecting had anything to do with emotions, objects, beings, or ideas. I began to think about this and what film really is and how I see and feel and experience film.

Ernie Gehr

Excerpt from "Program Notes by Ernie Gehr for a Film Screening at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, February 2, 1971 at 5:30 p.m.," *Film Culture*, Spring 1972, pp. 36–37.

Biography

Ernie Gehr lives and works in New York. His films are in the collections of several museums and universities, including Anthology Film Archives, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Rocky Mountain Film Center, University of Colorado, Boulder; and New York University. He has been represented in film festivals such as "New Forms in Film," Montreux, Switzerland, 1974, and the Berlin International Film Festival, 1976. In 1979 he was invited to be an artist-in-residence by the Art Department of the University of Colorado, Boulder. He has taught film production and film history at various schools, including Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; the State University of New York campuses at Binghamton and Buffalo; the University of Colorado, Boulder; and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1974; London Film Makers Co-op, 1977; Pacific Film Archives, Berkeley, 1978; Boston Film/Video Foundation, 1979; The Cinematheque, San Francisco, 1979; Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1979; Rocky Mountain Film Center, University of Colorado, Boulder, 1979; The Funnel Theater, Toronto, 1980; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1980; Collective for Living Cinema, New York, 1981; The Arsenal, West Berlin, 1982; Millennium, New York, 1982; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1982; School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1983.

Selected Group Exhibitions

The American Federation of Arts, New York, "A History of the American Avant-Garde Cinema," 1976; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris, "Une Histoire du cinéma," 1976; New York State Gallery Association, "Film as Art" (traveling exhibition), 1977; Media Study, Buffalo, "The Moving Image," 1978; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, "The Pleasure Dome," 1981; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1981 Biennial Exhibition; The 20th New York Film Festival, Lincoln Center, New York, 1982; Whitney Museum of American Art, 1983 Biennial Exhibition.

Selected Bibliography

Cornwell, Regina. "Works of Ernie Gehr from 1968 to 1972." *Film Culture*, nos. 63–64 (1977), pp. 29–38.

Gehr, Ernie. "Program Notes by Ernie Gehr for a Film Screening at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, February 2, 1971 at 5:30 p.m." *Film Culture*, Spring 1972, pp. 36–38. Reprinted in P. Adams Sitney, ed., *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism*. Anthology Film Archives Series. New York: New York University Press, 1978.

Hoberman, J. "Explorations: Back to Basics." *American Film*, 7 (June 1982), pp. 8, 21.

Mekas, Jonas. "Ernie Gehr Interviewed by Jonas Mekas, March 24, 1971." *Film Culture*, Spring 1972, pp. 25–36.

Sitney, P. Adams. *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943–1978*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 369, 373, 381, 436–40, 443.

Filmography

All films are 16mm.

Morning, 1968. Color, silent; 4½ minutes.
Wait, 1968. Color, silent; 7 minutes.
Reverberation, 1969. Black and white, sound; 25 minutes.
Transparency, 1969. Color, silent; 11 minutes.
Still, 1969–71. Color, sound; 54½ minutes.
History, 1970. Black and white, silent; 25 minutes.
Field, 1970. Black and white, silent; 10 minutes.
Serene Velocity, 1970. Color, silent; 23 minutes.
Shift, 1972–74. Color, sound; 9 minutes.
Eureka, 1974–79. Black and white, silent; 30 minutes.
Behind the Scenes, 1975. Color, sound; 5 minutes.
Table, 1976. Color, silent; 16 minutes.
Untitled, 1977. Color, silent; 4 minutes.
Mirage, 1981. Color, silent; 12 minutes.
Untitled, 1981. Color, silent, 30 minutes.

Ernie Gehr's films are distributed by the Film-makers' Cooperative, New York.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 10
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Warren Sonbert

October 11–23, 1983

Schedule
October 11–23
12:30 daily; Tuesdays at 12:30 and 4:00
Carriage Trade, 1971

October 11–16
Tuesday at 2:00 and 6:30; Wednesday–Sunday at 2:00 and 3:30
Rude Awakening, 1975; *A Woman's Touch*, 1983

October 18–23
Tuesday at 2:00 and 6:30; Wednesday–Sunday at 2:00 and 3:30
Divided Loyalties, 1978; *Noblesse Oblige*, 1981

Our perception of the projected film image is shaped by a number of factors in the production process. One of them, editing, constitutes a central strategy in filmmaking. The joining together of two or more sequences of film footage, editing gives the film its overall framework; it links the shifting points of view and compositions of different shots, and, in the process, structures the viewer's temporal perception of the film's action. It is Warren Sonbert's virtuoso use of editing and his exploration of linkage that is of special interest in his films.

This exhibition includes five of Sonbert's films. *Carriage Trade* (1971), *Rude Awakening* (1975), *Divided Loyalties* (1978), *Noblesse Oblige* (1981), and *A Woman's Touch* (1983) comprise a unique contribution to the art of film and to the genre of the diary film. With his camera Sonbert records impressions from his travels and daily life, capturing details of the world around him. This material is then refashioned as he edits the pieces of film into a coherent whole. It is in the editing process that the film footage is synthesized as the relationships between shots are developed. Sonbert creates a visual language out of discrete images, joining them into sequences by formal associations of light, color, composition, movement within the frame, and the moving camera. Place and time shift kaleidoscopically.


Noblesse Oblige, 1981.

Gallery Talk, Thursday, October 13, following the 2:00 screening. Warren Sonbert will be present.


A Woman's Touch, 1983.

The art of Warren Sonbert translates the diary form into visual terms through the properties of the film medium. The recorded fragments of time and place become memories formed by the editing process into the reflexive discourse of the diary. The films give impressionistic views of a personal and public realm, ranging from his travels around the world in the program's first film, *Carriage Trade* (1971), to the shots of San Francisco, Washington, D.C., gay-rights demonstrations, traffic in the streets, clouds rolling over the mountains, and people in their houses in *Noblesse Oblige* (1981). In addition to the formal relationships between shots that produce the cascading flow of images, Sonbert's interpretative vision—his perception of place and of the timeless moment—is acute. Like a novelist who plays with the structure of the sentence and makes us aware of the varying shades of meaning of each word, sentence, and paragraph, Sonbert looks

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through the surface meaning of the image, the literal recorded shot, to the linearity of time and the logic of sequence. He transforms our expectations of time and sequence through the pace of the action and the camera's point of view.

Warren Sonbert's diaristic films, together with the films of Jonas Mekas and Andrew Noren, define a significant genre within the American independent cinema. The portability of the hand-held 16mm camera provided the filmmaker with new access to the events occurring around him. The lightweight camera allowed Sonbert, for example, to shoot out of the window of an airplane taking him home from one of his journeys. As viewers we are carried silently around Sonbert's country and world, yet the recorded film image transcends the specificity of a moment in time and becomes part of an aesthetic whole, an interpretation and rendering of our world.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Artist's Statement

These films are accumulations of evidence. The images must be read: not only what narrative connotations are given off by representational imagery as regards both language and figure-engaged activity, but also the constructive signposts of point of view, exposure, composition, color, directional pulls and the textural overlay. But in film the solo image is akin to an isolated chord; the kinetic thrust emerges with montage. That process expands, deflates, contradicts, reinforces or qualifies. It is this specific and directed placement that provides film with both its structure and its freedom.

Film can do flips, is acrobatic. A highly charged shot, though still potentially balanced by a multitude of suggestibles, may in turn, by replacement by a more neutral image, shift into objectivity the initial heightened response. This play with expectations, both frustrated and enhanced, constitutes a reason to look at the screen. The variables of an image, its visual qualities being punctuation, swell to a series of statements, whose provocative strains demand a measured vigilance of the viewer, when editing can either underline, comment upon or upset the fluctuating contiguities. This is not to say that the possible pleasure produced refuses rigor, but rather that cerebral sleight-of-hand implies control.

Warren Sonbert

Biography

Warren Sonbert was born in 1947 in New York. He studied filmmaking at New York University, where he received a B.A., *cum laude*, in 1969. He taught film at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, from 1973 to 1975, and at the San Francisco Art Institute from 1978 to 1979. Sonbert received a CAPS grant (Creative Artists Program Service, Inc.) in filmmaking from the New York State Council on the Arts in 1976. His films are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Österreichisches Filmmuseum, Vienna; and the Arsenal, West Berlin. Warren Sonbert lives in San Francisco.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1971; The New American Filmmakers Series, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1973; Collective for Living Cinema, New York, 1975; Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, 1976; The New American Filmmakers Series, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1976; Österreichisches Filmmuseum, Vienna, 1976; The Art Institute of Chicago, 1977; Collective for Living Cinema, 1978; The New American Filmmakers Series, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1978; Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979; University of California, Los Angeles, 1979; Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, 1980; The New American Filmmakers Series, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1980; Collective for Living Cinema, 1981; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1981; The Arsenal, West Berlin, 1982; Collective for Living Cinema, 1982; Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich, 1982; Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, 1983.

Selected Group Exhibitions

National Film Archive, London, "First International Experimental Film Festival," 1970, and "Second International Experimental Film Festival," 1973; Filmex, Los Angeles, 1974; Vancouver Art Gallery, "Vancouver Film Festival," 1974; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris, "First International Film Exhibition," 1976; Berlin Film Festival, 1977; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1979 Biennial Exhibition; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, "New American Cinema," 1980; Holland Film Festival, Amsterdam, 1982; Mill Valley Film Festival, Mill Valley, California, 1982; Whitney Museum of American Art, 1983 Biennial Exhibition.

Filmography

All films are 16mm and color, unless otherwise noted.

Amphetamine, 1966. Black and white, sound; 10 minutes.
Where Did Our Love Go?, 1966. Sound; 15 minutes.
Hall of Mirrors, 1966. Sound; 7 minutes.
The Tenth Legion, 1967. Sound; 30 minutes.
Truth Serum, 1967. Sound; 10 minutes.
The Bad and the Beautiful, 1967. Sound; 35 minutes.
Connection, 1967. Sound; 15 minutes.
Ted & Jessica, 1967. Sound; 7 minutes.
Holiday, 1968. Sound; 15 minutes.
Carriage Trade, 1971. Silent; 61 minutes. (Includes footage from *The Tenth Legion*, *Truth Serum*, *The Bad and the Beautiful*, *Connection*, *Ted & Jessica*, and *Holiday*.)
Rude Awakening, 1975. Silent; 36 minutes.
Divided Loyalties, 1978. Silent; 22 minutes.
Noblesse Oblige, 1981. Silent; 25 minutes.
A Woman's Touch, 1983. Silent; 22 minutes.

Warren Sonbert's films are distributed by the Film-makers' Cooperative, New York.

Selected Bibliography

Carroll, Noel. "Causation, the Ampliation of Movement and Avant-Garde Film." *Millennium Film Journal*, Fall-Winter 1981-82, pp. 61-82.

Curtis, David. *Experimental Cinema*. New York: Delta Books, 1971, pp. 70, 71, 172.

Davidson, David. "Warren Sonbert's *Noblesse Oblige*." *Millennium Film Journal*, Fall-Winter 1982-83, pp. 109-11.

Mekas, Jonas. *Movie Journal*. New York: Collier Books, 1972, pp. 258, 326, 369, 404-5.

Sitney, P. Adams. *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-1978*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 360.

Stoller, James. "Shooting Up." In *The New American Cinema*, edited by Gregory Battcock. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1967, pp. 180-85.

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The New American Filmmakers Series

EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

My Word

October 25–30, 1983

My Word, 1973–74. Super-8 film by Vito Acconci. 120 minutes. 12:00, 3:00; also Tuesday at 5:30.

Gallery Talk, Thursday, October 27, following the 12:00 screening. Vito Acconci will be present.

Vito Acconci's *My Word* (1973–74) is an autobiographical film produced between the fall of 1973 and the summer of 1974. This feature-length work, with a running time of two hours, is a major project by one of the first artists to successfully develop a significant oeuvre in the Super-8 film format. To Acconci, who began to work with Super-8 in the late 1960s, the format had the advantage of being both flexible and inexpensive. Acconci adapts the medium of film to his aesthetic, which is distinguished by a probing into the self and an exploration of the psychology of perception. Thus, as in Acconci's other performance, video, and installation pieces, the camera in *My Word* is expressly focused on the artist's body and movements as he sets up situations and scenarios which create, within specific spaces, provocative narratives and actions related to his life and art-making.

Frames from *My Word*, 1973–74. Photograph by Babette Mangolte.

In *My Word*, Acconci places his audience in an ambiguous position vis-à-vis the narrative and point of view. The film has no soundtrack and is composed of written statements alternating with shots of the artist in his studio and around his building. Acconci is the central protagonist whose gestures, actions, and written statements are all addressed to women—women are the other, unseen, presences in this work. The point of view of the camera can be interpreted as that of the women, silently confronting Acconci, or that of Acconci himself, mirroring his every move. "I have acknowledged what a screen could mean," Acconci writes at one point in the film, and *My Word* is a meditation on the screen as it captures what the camera records and becomes the ground on which the various personae of the artist, viewer, performer, and women interact and through which the artist explores language and silence.

The references to Acconci's art-making and to his female friends make the film, on one level, a commentary on his life from 1973 to 1974. However, on another level, he is seriously speculating on the idea of art offered up as the basis for a discourse on one's own life. Our perception of the film changes as the points of view shift between the artist staring at us, and the camera observing him. We perceive *My Word* as being on the border between a real and imaginary, a conscious and an unconscious, reflection of the artist's self and his world.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

My Word (1973–74)

1. By the end of 1973, Super-8 film was a part of my past. The 1970 pieces had almost all been on film: still camera, one take, three-minute film; my image as a target in front of the camera. If, now, I was going to return to film, three or four years later, the method would have to be different: moving camera ("every trick in the book"), change of scene, feature-length film; my person as viewpoint rather than target.
2. *My Word* started from the assumption that, at this particular time (1973), Super-8 is—by convention—a silent

medium: I would make a film, then, about being silent, about not talking.
3. Not talking would have its reasons, not talking could make a plot: I won't talk about it (whatever it is) because I don't want you (whoever you are) to know.
4. Super-8 film had "made my image": on the one hand, the 1970 pieces recorded my image as that image adapted to, or changed by, my activity; on the other hand, the 1970 pieces were the first pieces attended to by the media. If now, in 1973, I was going to use Super-8 film again, I had to parody the image, the trademark, that I had let film form for myself.
5. In the back of my mind: first-person films like the Robert Montgomery version of Raymond Chandler's *The Lady in the Lake*, or Claude Chabrol's *The Third Lover*.
6. "I" blowing itself up, becoming bigger than it should be, becoming "too big for its britches" (just as Super-8 film is being blown up here, becoming a feature-length movie, becoming bigger than it should be, becoming too big for its medium).
7. Super-8 film as home movies: the film takes place in one space (my own home, my own mind)—the film starts with corner and wall (banging my head against the wall, driving myself into a corner), then goes to windows (but I can only walk past them, I can't look out), then to deep interior space (I can walk around in circles), then out the window (but I can only look), then outside (but it's only the roof of my own house), then back inside (I can only go home again).
8. If the film has no sound, if I can't talk about "it" aloud, then I can always write it down: words would be written on the screen, as if on a blackboard. Not speaking, "person" loses breath, loses the "spirit" of person: the person becomes de-personalized, becomes a schematic of person, as if a person were looking down at his/her self from out of the body (as if a person were looking at his/her self on screen).
9. The words are written at the bottom of the screen, as if they're subtitles to a scene that isn't there, subtitles to a conversation in another language that isn't there (it's all in my mind anyway, it's only words).
10. In 1973, the last two years of work had been live: the making of a meeting-place between artist and viewer—the making of an intimate space. By 1973, this psychological space seemed to be an escapist space: pointing out the faults in "us" was an excuse to avoid seeing the flaws in an external system, a social/cultural/political system. (*My Word* turned out to be the last piece that "showed myself.")
11. The film keeps ending, keeps being about to end (I can't end the film because then I would be ending the relationships—I can't end the relationships because then I would be ending myself). So the film is either a last gasp of "I," a desperate attempt to retain what's seen as "identity"; or it's a view, from a detached non-I position, of "me" as a dead end, of the absurdity of personalness.

Vito Acconci

Biography

Vito Acconci, born in the Bronx, New York, in 1940, lives and works in Brooklyn. He was represented at the Whitney Museum of American Art in the 1977 Biennial Exhibition with his videotape *Undertone*; by his three-part videotape *The Red Tapes* in the New American Filmmakers Series in 1978; and in nine group exhibitions. His sculptural installation *False Center for L.A. (or: the New York Address)* (1978–79) is currently on view in the Whitney Museum's exhibition "Minimalism to Expressionism: Painting and Sculpture Since 1965 from the Permanent Collection," through December 4, 1983.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

And/Or, Seattle, 1975; The Kitchen Center for Video and Music, New York, 1976; Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1977; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1978; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1980; Institute of Contemporary Art, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, 1982.

Selected Group Exhibitions

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Information," 1970; Kassel, West Germany, Documenta 5, 1972; Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, "Video Art," 1975; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1977 and 1981 Biennial Exhibitions; Kassel, West Germany, Documenta 7, 1982.

Selected Bibliography

Kirshner, Judith Russi. *Vito Acconci. A Retrospective: 1969–1980. An Exhibition Organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, March 21–May 18, 1980* (exhibition catalogue). Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1980 (with citation of earlier literature).

Filmography

All films are Super-8, silent, except where otherwise noted.

Three Attention Studies, 1969. Color; 9 minutes.
Three Frame Studies (Circle, Jump, Push), 1969. Color and black and white; 9 minutes.
Applications, 1970. Color; 8 minutes.
Fill, 1970. Color; 3 minutes.
Open-Close, 1970. Color; 6 minutes.
Openings, 1970. Color; 14 minutes.
Push, 1970. Color; 3 minutes.
Rubbings, 1970. Color; 8 minutes.
See-Through, 1970. Color; 5 minutes.
Three Adaptation Studies, 1970. Color and black and white, 16mm; 16 minutes.
Three Relationship Studies, 1970. Color; 15 minutes.
Two Cover Studies, 1970. Color; 9 minutes.
Two Takes, 1970. Color; 8 minutes.
Conversions, 1971. Black and white; 72 minutes.
Pick-Ups, 1971. Color; 15 minutes.
Watch, 1971. Black and white; 9 minutes.
Waterways (Burst: Storage), 1971. Color; 6 minutes.
Zone, 1971. Color; 15 minutes.
Face to Face, 1972. Color; 15 minutes.
Hand to Hand, 1972. Color; 12 minutes.
My Word, 1973–74. Color and black and white; 120 minutes.

Vito Acconci is represented by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc., New York.

Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10021

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Tuesday 1:00–9:00
Wednesday–Saturday 11:00–6:00
Sunday 12:00–6:00

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Whitney Museum of American Art 12
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Gary Hill

November 8–December 11, 1983

Primarily Speaking, 1981–83. Video installation
On view continuously 12:00–6:00, Tuesdays until 8:00

Gallery Talk, Thursday, November 10, at 2:00
Gary Hill will be present

Credits:
Special thanks for props and objects to Donna Cisan, Brenda Cullom, Richard Gummere, Cindy Hollis, Bruce Lubman, Peggy Lubman, George Quasha, Susan Quasha. Production assistance: Richard Gummere, Greg Hill. Technical assistance: Dave Jones, Bob Pearl, Woody Vasulka.

Primarily Speaking was made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a Rockefeller Video Artist Fellowship, the Television Laboratory at WNET/Thirteen, and Installation Inc.

The television set is traditionally defined by the format of broadcast television as a static receiver of programs. We position ourselves as viewers before the television screen to observe sequences of sounds and images joined together to create a linear unit of meaning with a beginning, middle, and end. Thus the television set is expected to remain in a single position, vis-à-vis the viewer. Moreover, the standardized purposes of the broadcasting industry inhibit the exploration of television's unique expressive potential.

In the hands of the artist, video technology becomes a flexible image-making tool with the capacity to record, transform, and generate imagery, and to question how we perceive its images. The history of the single-channel artist's videotape, created for the single monitor, encompasses an extraordinary range of work that explores abstract and representational images within narrative and non-narrative forms and points of view. In addition, artists have made the placement of video monitors in the exhibition space another creative dimension of the medium. The relationship of multiple channels of video images to the siting of monitors becomes a central aesthetic strategy in the video installation. Here the spectator is no longer a passive viewer but is actively engaged in a mobile interaction with the medium.

Fundamental to Gary Hill's video installation *Primarily Speaking* (1981–83) is language—specifically, words and phrases presented aurally—which are integrated with solid fields of color and images of objects and scenes on videotape. The two channels of videotape and sound are displayed in two wooden structures, each housing four monitors placed in a row at eye level, facing each other in such a manner that they form a corridor. Thus the changes in sequences of the videotapes and soundtracks between both structures forms a choreography of images and sounds in time and space. The temporal dimension unfolds during the twenty-minute playing cycle of the videotapes and audiotapes, while the spatial dimension is shaped by the

Primarily Speaking, 1981–83.

The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

movement of sounds and images between the two banks of monitors as the spectators perceive different combinations of video and sound through their shifting points of view.

The complexity of *Primarily Speaking* resides in its aggressive use of multiple layers of image and sound text modulated not in a linear line of reasoning but as a three-dimensional experience. The work becomes a seen, heard, and spoken meditation on forms of meaning. This refashioning of sights and sounds results from the capacity of video to distribute and control discrete and highly defined moving images in such a way that they can be orchestrated into a complex audio/visual cycle. *Primarily Speaking* weaves different expressions and descriptions, language and images, into a seamless intertextual construct which is both aesthetically engaging and intellectually demanding.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Primarily Speaking, 1981–83

The title *Primarily Speaking* should pretty much be taken at face value. This is to say that prying into things merely for orientation should be avoided at all costs. Nobody wants to be riding a bicycle, especially at top speed, only to discover that the wheels are spokeless and wonder how they got as far as they did in the first place. The work, consisting of eleven parts segmented by anthemic songs, is founded in a monologue construed from idiomatic phrase units—language at large residing in the public domain. The voice ping-pongs up and down a corridor stacking the idioms, placing linguistic objects in their appropriate places, sometimes answering and sometimes questioning. The given is always reciprocated. An image of a seesaw comes to mind. (I remember playing seesaw and in my neighborhood the object of the game was to leave your partner high and dry by jumping off at the instant your end touched ground, leaving said partner to come crashing down with his/her own weight—in effect sawing off the seeing.)

The text provides the attention span offered as a crossing. Images are signposts syllabicated by the tongue, pushed out and left by the wayside—discards, there is always room for more. The snake sheds its skin. This isn't something new, nor is it a recapitulation, it's a different take on talking pictures—talking pictures breaking the story. (Words and images move together like old roads and their placements sometimes do, and every once in a while they share a stretch of time where the scenario doesn't permit the necessary excavations.)

Really, it all boils down to this: I walked in on a tell a vision set and all the dialogue was provided and there were countless props, props upon props, more than I could ever use in a lifetime and it was all in living color colors colored—everything just as you or I might expect. Eye level and surprised, I found myself staring at arm's length cross-eyed into the palm of a hand. It was a glimpse of actual size which bespeaks my preoccupation with the notion of face value.

Gary Hill

Biography

Gary Hill, born in Santa Monica, California, in 1951, has been living and working in upstate New York since he moved east in 1969. A sculptor, Hill began working in video in the 1970s, and was artist-in-residence at such video centers in New York State as Synapse (Syracuse), Portable Channel (Rochester), and the Experimental TV Center (Owego). He has received several grants from the New York State Council on the Arts, Creative Artists Public Service, Inc., and the National Endowment for the Arts—among the latter, a United States/Japan Exchange Fellowship. Hill was artist-in-residence at WNET/Thirteen's TV Lab and was a Video Artist Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation. He has taught at the Center for Media Study, Buffalo, and now teaches at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

South Houston Gallery, New York, 1974; Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1976; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, 1979; The Kitchen Center for Video, Music and Dance, New York, 1979; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Video Viewpoints," 1980; And/Or, Seattle, 1981; The Kitchen Center for Video, Music and Dance, New York, 1981; Galerie H at ORF, Steirischer Herbst, Graz, Austria, 1982; Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, California, 1982.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, "New Work in Abstract Video Imagery," 1977, "Video Revue," 1979; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Projects: Video XXVIII," 1979; Video 80/San Francisco Video Festival, 1980; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Projects: Video XXXV," 1981; Sydney, Australia, Biennale, 1982; Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York, "Electronic Visions," 1983; University Art Museum, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, "Video as Attitude," 1983; Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, "Art Video Retrospectives et Perspectives," 1983; Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, Alberta, Canada, "The Second Link: Viewpoints on Video in the Eighties" (traveling exhibition), 1983; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1983 Biennial Exhibition.

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Furlong, Lucinda. "A Manner of Speaking: An Interview with Gary Hill," *Afterimage*, 10 (March 1983), pp. 9–16.

Hill, Gary. *Around & About*. Buffalo, New York: Hallwalls Gallery, 1981.

Larson, Kay. "Art: Through a Screen Dimly," *New York*, September 12, 1983, pp. 86–87.

Quasha, George. "Notes on the Feedback Horizon," in *Glass Onion* (program notes). Barrytown, New York: Station Hill Press, 1980.

Selected Videography

The Fall, 1973. Black and white, sound; 11 minutes.
Rock City Road, 1974–75. Color, silent; 12 minutes.
Earth Pulse, 1975. Color, sound; 6 minutes.
Improvisation with Bluestone, 1976. Color, sound; 7 minutes.
Ring Modulation, 1978. Color, sound; 3 minutes.
Sums and Differences, 1978. Black and white, sound; 8 minutes.
Windows, 1978. Color, silent; 8 minutes.
Soundings, 1979. Color, sound; 17 minutes.
Around & About, 1980. Color, sound; 5 minutes.
Processual Video, 1980. Black and white, sound; 11½ minutes.
Videograms, 1980–81. Black and white, sound; 13 minutes.
Primarily Speaking, 1981–83. Color, stereo sound; 19 minutes.
Happenstance (part I of many parts), 1982–83. Black and white, stereo sound; 6 minutes.

Gary Hill's videotapes are distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 13
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Alvin Lucier

December 21–January 24, 1984

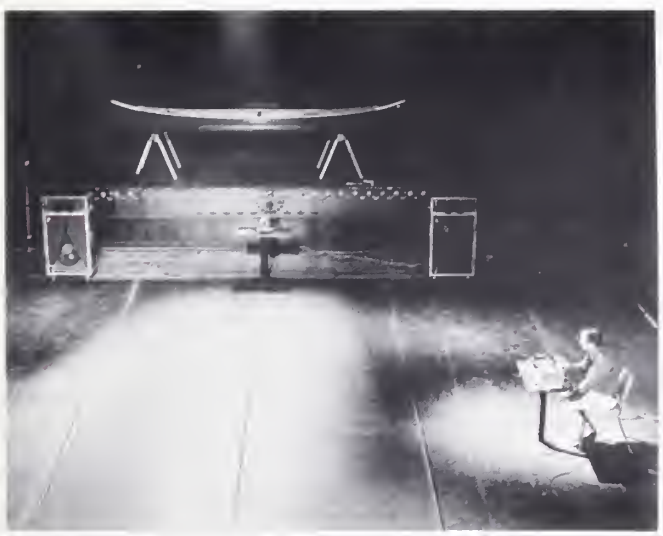
Seesaw, 1983. Sound installation
On view continuously 12:00–6:00, Tuesdays until 8:00

Gallery Talk, Thursday, December 22, at 2:00
Alvin Lucier will be present

Credits:
Room treatment by Douglas Simon and Studio Consultants, Inc.
Digital oscillators designed by Bob Bielecki.

Alvin Lucier, a leading contemporary composer, has also done innovative work in the creation of new forms of sound environments within gallery spaces. In his latest sound installation, *Seesaw* (1983), the exhibition space becomes an acoustic instrument in which audio oscillators, placed in specific locations, generate through speakers a constellation of reverberating sound patterns. The audience experiences the sound waves, moving invisibly about the gallery space, as a physical presence.

The sound-installation projects of Alvin Lucier and other contemporary artists—among them, Max Neuhaus, Liz Phillips, and Bill Fontana—employ new sound-generating technologies to explore the properties of sound in relationship to the spatial characteristics and wall surfaces with which sound interacts. The structures of sound—processed, prerecorded, and live—passing through space create subtle spatial environments. Spectators in the gallery interact with the sound, experiencing an alteration of spatial perception, as space is filled with the temporal articulation of sound.



Music on a Long Thin Wire, 1977. Diplomat Hotel, New York. Photograph by Babette Mangolte.

Sound artists, in their use of advanced technologies and their involvement with the site, share many of the concerns of today's video- and film-installation artists. Sound-installation projects are allied to the theoretical and aesthetic issues that film- and video-installation works have brought to the traditional practice of sculpture. Both forms are rooted in a technology that introduces a new physical and phenomenological character to the three-dimensional properties of sculpture: in video and film installations it is the added dimension of the temporal, moving image as deployed within the gallery space; in sound installations it is the temporal and invisible presence of sound waves linking different physical points in space.

Alvin Lucier's *Seesaw* and other contemporary sound installations seek to break through the boundaries that separate art and technology. Sound becomes the medium for an active inquiry into our basic definition of, and experience with, the art object.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Artist's Statement

For several years I have been exploring ways of moving sounds in space. In performance works such as *Vespers* (1968) and *Reflections of Sounds from the Wall* (1982), sound waves bounce off reflective surfaces to various points in a room. In *Directions of Sounds from the Bridge* (1979) and *The Shapes of the Sounds from the Board* (1980), they flow out of musical instruments in different directions for different pitches. More recently, in *Crossings* (1982), orchestral players cause ripples of sound to whirl around the concert hall. In none of these works is the movement produced by electronic switching or panning; instead, the natural characteristics of sound waves are allowed to reveal themselves.

Still and Moving Lines of Silence in Families of Hyperbolas (1974–83), a large-scale work for singers, players, dancers, and audio oscillators, explores interference phenomena between two or more sound waves. When closely tuned musical tones are sounded, audible beats—bumps of loud sound produced as the sound waves coincide—occur at speeds determined by the difference between the pitches of the tones. The larger the difference, the faster the beating. At unison, no beating occurs. Furthermore, if

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Alvin Lucier. Photograph by Gene Bagnato.

each tone originates from a separate source, the beats spin in elliptical patterns through space, from the higher source to the lower one.

The nature of pure sound waves is such that their physical presence is perceptible. In the same way that nodes and antinodes occur along a vibrating string, crests and troughs of loud and soft sound position themselves at regular intervals in any relatively echo-free room through which pure waves flow. The distance between troughs is determined by the size of the wavelength of the sound. Low sounds have long wavelengths, up to several feet; high sounds, as small as a few inches. When two closely positioned waves occupy the same space, their crests and troughs are in constant movement, in an attempt to stabilize themselves.

In *Seesaw*, two pure-wave oscillators are routed through amplifiers to loudspeakers positioned far apart in the room. One is precisely tuned; the other is programmed to sweep slowly and continuously to equidistant points slightly above and below that fixed pitch. As it dips below, walls of sound travel across the room toward the lower-sounding loudspeaker. As it approaches the fixed pitch from either side, the speed of the movement gradually slows down until, at unison, it stops.

Seesaw is the first in a projected series of installed works, tentatively entitled *The Motions of Certain Closely Tuned Waves*, in which various patterns of movement of sounds in space will be created.

Alvin Lucier

Biography

Born in Nashua, New Hampshire, in 1931, Alvin Lucier studied music at Yale University (B.A., 1954) and Brandeis University (M.F.A., 1960) and spent two years in Rome on a Fulbright scholarship. He taught at Brandeis University from 1962 to 1969 and has been Chairman of the Music Department at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, since 1979. Lucier co-founded the Sonic Arts Union with Robert Ashley, David Behrman, and Gordon Mumma in 1966 and was Music Director of the Viola Farber Dance Company from 1972 to 1977. He was awarded Composer's Fellowships by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1977 and 1981. A pioneer in composition and performance, Lucier has begun a series of solar-powered sound installations in collaboration with electronic designer John Fullemann. His recent orchestral work, *Crossings*, was performed at the opening concert of the 1982 New Music America festival in Chicago by members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Selected Premieres

Action Music for Piano, 1962, Galleria La Salita, Rome, Frederic Rzewski, piano; *Music for Solo Performer*, 1965, Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, John Cage, electronic controls; *Vespers*, 1968, ONCE Festival, Ann Arbor, Michigan, members of the ONCE Group; *I Am Sitting in a Room*, 1970, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, image by Mary Lucier; *The Queen of the South*, 1972, Spencer Memorial Church, Brooklyn; *Still and Moving Lines of Silence in Families of Hyperbolas*, 1973–74, Festival d'Automne à Paris, Musée Galleria, Paris; *Directions of Sounds from the Bridge*, 1979, Experimental Intermedia Foundation, New York; *Crossings*, 1982, New Music America, Chicago, members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Alvin Lucier is represented by Performing Artservices, New York.

Recordings

North American Time Capsule, 1967. CBS Odyssey Records
Vespers, 1968. Mainstream
I Am Sitting in a Room, 1970. SOURCE Record #3
The Duke of Yourk, 1971, 1976. Cramps Records (Italy)
Bird and Person Dyning, 1975, 1976. Cramps Records (Italy)
Music on a Long Thin Wire, 1980. Lovely Music
I Am Sitting in a Room, 1981. Lovely Music
Music for Solo Performer, 1983. Lovely Music
Still and Moving Lines of Silence in Families of Hyperbolas, to be released in 1984. Lovely Music

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DeLio, Thomas. "Avant-Garde Issues in Seventies Music." *Artforum*, 18 (September 1979), pp. 61–67.

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Ewen, David, ed. *American Composers: A Biographical Dictionary*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1982.

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Lucier, Alvin, and Douglas Simon. *Chambers: Scores and Interviews on Music and Environment*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1980.

Marshall, Stuart. "Alvin Lucier's Music of Signs in Space." *Studio International*, 192 (November–December 1976), pp. 284–90.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 14
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Dara Birnbaum

February 4–March 4, 1984

PM Magazine, 1982. Video installation
On view continuously 12:00–6:00, Tuesdays until 8:00

Gallery Talk, Thursday, February 9, at 2:00
Dara Birnbaum will be present

Credits:
Video post-production: CMX editors—Mark Bement, Steven Robinson, California Institute of the Arts; Matt Danowski, Electronic Arts Intermix; Joseph Leonardi, the Annex, Long Beach Museum of Art. Music collaboration: Dara Birnbaum, Simeon Soffer. Post-production sound editor/mixer: Simeon Soffer. Musical assistance: vocals—Shauna D'Larson; drums/rhythm—James Dougherty, Jon Norton (*L.A. Woman*); guitar—David Dowse (*L.A. Woman*), Mark Norris; synthesizer—Simeon Soffer. Design consultation and execution: Dan Hill, John Salmen.

The artist wishes to thank Nancy Hoyt, who made the original installation of *PM Magazine* possible at The Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York, and Coosje Van Bruggen, who made the installation possible at "Documenta 7," Kassel, West Germany.

The art of Dara Birnbaum has established an aesthetic discourse predicated on both a formal and ideological investigation of commercial broadcast television. In her videotapes she refashions television's popular images through a variety of editing and image-processing strategies that expose the hidden meanings within narrative and commercial programs.

In a series of short videotapes Birnbaum began to examine the dichotomies within the broadcast medium. She deconstructed pop culture images and their content through the interplay of image and sound, a process that revealed latent agendas within the narrative. In *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman* (1978), selected actions of Wonder Woman, appropriated from the television show, are repeated on the screen so that they take on a rhetorical form, a ritualized gesture performed against a popular record, "Wonder Woman in Discoland." Here television's caricature of the heroic female is contradicted by the lines of the song, which describe her as a sexual object. This strategy lays bare what is in fact encoded in the television presentation.

PM Magazine (1982), Birnbaum's latest video installation, focuses on the self-promotional and commercial aspects of television. The videotapes, with music and spoken words, show computer and word-processing systems set up in an imaginary electronic office of the future in which the work space is a hyper-efficient field of exciting and slick images. This commercial message is combined on the monitors with the introduction to *P.M. Magazine*, the news and entertainment program that shows families and children as happy consumers. The commercial message in both programs is opened up as the artist probes hidden attitudes toward

PM Magazine, 1982. Video installation at The Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York. Photograph by Dara Birnbaum.

women and the sexual roles of the office worker and consumer by replaying them on monitors that are placed within three enlarged photographic panels.

The three panels, arranged on the wall of the Film and Video Gallery, offer a static image which, together with the moving video image, constitute a layered text of meanings. Each panel presents a photographic blow-up of a moment from the videotapes playing on the monitors. The pulsating action of the commercial and program introduction shifts the point of view as the illusory two-dimensional space of the photographs is contrasted with that of the videotape. The kaleidoscopic content and juxtaposition of sound and words to image, both frozen and moving, not only create a complex visual surface, but expose the dark side of broadcast television. *PM Magazine* thus engages the issues of power and sexuality through a critical joining of television's ideology of representation in narrative and advertising.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

PM Magazine

PM Magazine represents the culmination of a series of works, dating from 1978 to 1982, which deal directly with television imagery and ideology. Made from TV fragments and the reconstructed conventions of television, the work can be seen as new "ready-mades" for the late twentieth century. Images are cut from their original narrative and

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interwoven with layers of musical text in order to plunge the viewer into the experience of TV, rather than simply the watching of it. TV conventions are used, exploited, and turned on themselves to reveal the underside of a seemingly rational technology. Through formal devices such as repetition, "matte" effects—new framing for the original television material—and altered syntax, television is manipulated before it manipulates us: visual rap, scratch, and breaking tracks for the 1980s. Twentieth-century speed is suspended for the viewer's examination and interpretation.

Generally in the 1960s and early 1970s, artists' video was defined as the extended vocabulary of the traditional arts (painting, sculpture, and performance). This usually meant a necessary denial of the origin and nature of video itself, television. It is my intention to give the medium back its institutional and historical base so that new forms of artistic expression can be developed. The installation *PM Magazine* derives its material from the introduction to a nightly national broadcast of the same name as well as a televised commercial for the Wang Corporation. From within suspended renderings—enlarged freeze-frames from each of the sources—the newly indelible image of a girl at a home computer exchanges glances with an innocent girl eating ice cream. Through the use of highly edited and computerized visuals and sound, a split second in each of the stereotypical characters' existence is captured and played with. From the tableaux (both sign and stage-prop) emanates a continuous flow of *PM Magazine*'s postwar imagery signifying the American Dream—an ice skater, baton twirler, cheerleader, and the constant repetition of the youth licking ice cream. The viewer is caught in the experience of TV's stereotyped gestures of power and submission, of self-preservation and concealment, of male and female ego. Gesture is seen not as an opening to communication, rather as a form of constraint.

"Video is dead; that is, in its defined role as video art and its relation to the defined art gallery system. But video is alive in its indefinable relation to the industry and rate of conversion which exchanges the currency of TV for the currency of art." (Dara Birnbaum, *ZG*, 3 (London, 1981)

Dara Birnbaum

Biography

Born in New York, Dara Birnbaum came to video in 1978 with degrees in both architecture (Carnegie Institute of Technology, 1969) and painting (San Francisco Art Institute, 1973). Her video works have achieved international recognition and have been shown at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Kunsthaus, Zurich, the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, and elsewhere. Her work has taken her to such varied venues as the markets and streets of Bologna, Grand Central Station, film festivals, rock clubs, and broadcast and cable TV. Birnbaum received a Creative Artists Public Service grant in 1981. A grant from the New York State Council on the Arts in 1983 enabled her to create *Damnation of Faust: Evocation*, a single-channel videotape showing the life of a New York City playground and bringing the conventions of nineteenth-century Japanese painting to state-of-the-art video technology. Birnbaum has taught at numerous institutions, including the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax. Currently she teaches at the School of Visual Arts, New York. A book on her work, *Dara Birnbaum: Rough Edits: Popular Image Video*, is due for publication in 1984 by The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

The Kitchen Center for Video, Music and Dance, New York, 1978; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Video Viewpoints," 1981; Pacific Film Archives, Berkeley, California, 1981; The Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York, "Art and Technology: Approaches to Video," 1982; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1982; Museum van Hedendaagse Kunsten, Ghent, Belgium, 1982; RTBF, Liège, Belgium, "Video? vous avez dit Video?" 1982; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, "'60'80 Attitudes/Concepts/Images," 1982; Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montreal, 1983; Pittsburgh Film-Makers, Pennsylvania, "Video in Person," 1983.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Kunsthaus, Zurich, "New York Video," 1980; San Francisco International Video Festival (and traveling exhibition), 1981; The Art Institute of Chicago, "74th American Exhibition," 1982; Kassel, West Germany, "Documenta 7," 1982; IIe Festival International du Nouveau Cinéma, Montreal, 1982; USA Cable Network, "Nightflight," 1982; American Film Institute, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., "National Video Festival," 1983; Antenne 2 (French television), "Juste une Image," 1983; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Video: A History," 1983; San Sebastian Film Festival, San Sebastian, Spain, 1983.

Selected Videography

(A)Drift of Politics (Laverne & Shirley), 1978. Color, sound; 3-minute loop; installation.

Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman, 1978. Color, stereo sound; 7 minutes.

Kiss the Girls: Make Them Cry, 1979. Color, stereo sound; 7 minutes.

Local TV News Analysis, 1980. With Dan Graham. Color, stereo sound; 60 minutes.

Pop-Pop Video: General Hospital/Olympic Women Speed Skating, 1980. Color, stereo sound; 6 minutes.

Pop-Pop Video: Kojak/Wang, 1980. Color, stereo sound; 4 minutes.

Remy/Grand Central: Trains and Boats and Planes, 1980. Commissioned by Remy Martin for Grand Central Station, New York. Color, stereo sound; 4 minutes.

New Music Shorts, 1981. Color, stereo sound; 5 minutes.

Fire!, 1982. Commissioned by VideoGram International Ltd. Color, stereo sound; 3 minutes.

PM Magazine/Acid Rock, 1982. Color, stereo sound; 4 minutes.

Damnation of Faust: Evocation, 1983. Color, stereo sound; 10 minutes.

Dara Birnbaum's videotapes are distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix and The Kitchen Center for Video, Music, Dance, Performance and Film, New York; Art Metropole, Toronto; and Video Data Bank, Chicago.

Selected Bibliography

Birnbaum, Dara. "Populism Report from the Field: Up Against the Wall," *Art Com*, no. 20 (1983), pp. 25–26.

———. "Video/Video-Television: Notions On and Offerings To." In *'60'80 Attitudes/Concepts/Images* (exhibition catalogue supplement). Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1982, pp. 13, 34–37.

Brooks, Rosetta. "TV Transformations: An Examination of the Videotapes of New York Artist Dara Birnbaum," *ZG*, 1 (London, 1981), unpaginated.

Buchloh, Benjamin H. D. "Allegorical Procedures: Appropriation and Montage in Contemporary Art," *Artforum*, 21 (September 1982), pp. 43–56.

Coopman, Johan. "Dara Birnbaum," *Andere Sinema*, December 1982, pp. 12–14.

Hoberman, J. "Three Women," *The Village Voice*, May 5, 1980, p. 42.

Owens, Craig. "Phantasmagoria of the Media," *Art in America*, 70 (May 1982), pp. 98–100.

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The New American Filmmakers Series

EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Margia Kramer

March 13–April 8, 1984

Progress (Memory), 1983–84. Video installation
On view continuously 12:00–6:00, Tuesdays until 8:00

Gallery Talk, Thursday, March 15, at 2:00
Margia Kramer will be present

Credits:

The first installation of *Progress (Memory)* took place at the Visual Studies Workshop in November-December 1983. Very special thanks to the Workshop, Daniel Shapiro, Jeremy Shapiro, Naomi Hupert, Tom Bradley, Nicholas Frey Bennett, and Gary Goldberg. For the videotape *Progress and Access*, thanks to Vincent Mosco, Herbert Schiller, Stanley Aronowitz, Joan Greenbaum, Loren Shumway, Cheshire Catalyst, Dragon Lady, Mike McCullough and Jon Rynn, the Institute for Economic Analysis and the Alternate Media Center of New York University, the Bread and Puppet Theater, and John Berger. For production and postproduction assistance, thanks to Maria Marewski, Ellen Kuras, Bonnie Burt, Tish Rosen, Hans Kulleseid, Sylvia Scholar, Susanna Aiken, Robin Schanzenbach, Mary Frey, Bill Marpet, DeeDee Halleck, Temple University, and the University of Hartford.

Progress (Memory) has been funded in part with grants from the Visual Studies Workshop and the Committee for the Visual Arts.

Progress (Memory), 1983–84. Video installation at the Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, New York. Photograph by Ed Reed.

Margia Kramer's video installation *Progress (Memory)* (1983–84) takes as its subject the production and distribution of information through new technologies. This interactive project invites the viewer to engage in an inquiry into the complex social and ethical questions raised by the accelerating spread of technology into all areas of society. Thus the spectator pedaling the exercycle in *Progress (Memory)* sets into play a videotape which can be viewed on monitors. This videotape documents and critically interprets the nature of computer uses and information-processing technologies and how they are being employed in the home and office. Here we learn how this revolution in technology will transform the ways we produce, gain access to, and ultimately control the distribution of information. By pedaling the exercycle, the spectator acts as a generator, an activist who produces and distributes the information to the other viewers in the gallery. This linking of the videotape's movement to physical action turns the perception of TV into a model of personal and direct participation.

Progress (Memory), 1983–84. Video installation at the Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, New York. Photograph by Mike Zirkle.

Progress (Memory), in its treatment of social issues as related to television, has as its historical context the developing history of video installation art, which has appropriated the TV set in order to transform its uses. In the first Fluxus exhibitions of the early 1960s, Nam June Paik and Volf Vostell took the TV out of its familiar surroundings and reworked its reception of broadcast images. This action served as a provocative revision of the conventional viewing and function of the TV receiver as a cultural icon and social commodity. With the introduction of the portable video camera in 1965, an increasing number of artists have been producing videotapes and installations that have changed the way we use and think about TV and video.

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Today we are entering a period of enormous change, where the video artist faces new options—more flexible cameras, editing systems, distribution networks, and small-gauge production possibilities. Video culture is now expanding through home use of the TV and information processing—the introduction, for example, of interactive cable systems where the home user can respond to and select information from various cable networks. Margia Kramer, in *Progress (Memory)*, questions the uses of future technologies as she critically appropriates their systems and constructs experiences for us that initiate a critical examination of video, as well as an examination of our thinking about art and technology.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Progress (Memory)

The machine-like behaviour of people chained to electronics constitutes a degradation of their well-being and their dignity.... The political process breaks down, because people cease to be able to govern *themselves; they demand to be* managed.

—Ivan Illich

Computerization contributes to the isolating tendencies of capitalist culture. It orders the parts of society mechanically, but it has no sense of the whole. Computerization's inability to meet human needs is masked by its obvious efficiency and profitability.

People's lives will be controlled by computerized decisions to a greater extent as time goes on. For the sake of efficient management these decisions become centralized and bureaucratized. In this process of communication, information becomes inaccessible to the average person. In return, the system, which is no longer regulated by the government for the public good, resists change and increasingly monitors people.

Progress (Memory) (1983–84) is a three-ring, viewer-activated video installation. It raises some of the negative issues of computerization and offers positive experiences for viewers. With various physical and cultural materials it identifies some of the repressive trends and liberating potential of the information industry. In a direct, physical way, participants will experience their own feelings of control over their activities.

On the first rug there is a television set with a videotape of a young infant and a nearby lamp. An exercycle stands on the second rug. Viewers ride it to activate two video monitors which play a videotape, *Progress and Access*. A piano is on the third rug. When a viewer sits on the piano bench, the video monitor is activated to play a computerized Bach program. All around the space, the human images and sounds of music and children are contrasted with the binary language of computers on the VCRs.

Margia Kramer

Biography

Margia Kramer was born in Brooklyn and grew up near Coney Island. She earned a B.A. degree in studio art at Brooklyn College, where she studied with Ad Reinhardt, and an M.A. degree in art history at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, where she was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow. She has been an assistant professor at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle, and Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Kramer is a leader in new documentary and activist art; her writings have appeared in *Jumpcut*, *Wedge*, and *Women Artists News*, and she has self-published three books. She has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Illinois Arts Council, and the MacDowell Colony, among others. She has traveled widely in Eastern and Western Europe and Asia. Kramer has two children and lives and works in New York and Hartford, Connecticut, where she teaches film and video at the University of Hartford.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Sarah Lawrence College Art Gallery, Bronxville, New York, "New Work," 1977; Palace of Sport, Bucharest, Rumania, 1979; Artists Space, New York, "Secret I," 1980; Duke University Art Gallery, Durham, North Carolina, "Retrospective and Secret II," 1980; Franklin Furnace and Printed Matter, New York, "Secret III and Secret IV," 1980; A Space, Toronto, "Jean Seberg," 1981; Artemisia Gallery, Chicago, 1981; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Jean Seberg/The FBI/The Media," 1981; Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, New York, "Video Installation 1983," 1983; Vassar College Art Gallery, Poughkeepsie, New York, "The Artist's Perception: 1948/1984," 1984.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, "Issues," 1980; John F. Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., "First National Video Festival," 1981; Just Above Midtown/Downtown, New York, "Decision by Arms," 1982; "1982 CAPS Video/Multi-Media Festival" (traveling exhibition), 1982–83; Global Village, New York, "Ninth Global Village Documentary Festival," 1983.

Videography

Freedom of Information Work Tape I: Jean Seberg, 1980. Two channels, color, ¾ inch, sound; 18 minutes.

No More Witchhunts: A Street Festival, 1982. Two channels, color, ¾ inch, sound; 17 minutes.

Freedom of Information Tape 2: Progress and Access, 1983. Two channels, color, ¾ inch, sound; 36 minutes.

Margia Kramer's videotapes are distributed by the Video Data Bank, Chicago, and her books are distributed by Printed Matter, New York.

Selected Bibliography

Agosta, Diana, and Barbara Osborn. "If I Ever Stop Believing..." *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art & Politics: Film/Video/Media*, 4 (Issue 16), pp. 68–72.

Ashton, Dore. *American Art Since 1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982, pp. 197–99.

Hills, Patricia. *Social Concern in the Eighties: A New England Perspective* (exhibition catalogue). Boston: Boston University Art Gallery, 1984, pp. 6, 21.

Kramer, Margia. "Making Art of Politics (Notes on Art as Intervention)," *Women Artists News*, 6 (May 1980), pp. 14–15.

_____. "Notes on Expression/Repression," *Wedge: An Aesthetic Inquiry*, Summer 1982, pp. 30–34.

_____, and Kimberley Safford. "Jean Seberg/The FBI/The Media," *Jumpcut*, Winter 1983, pp. 68–71.

Lippard, Lucy. *Issue: Social Strategies by Women Artists* (exhibition catalogue). London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1980, unpaginated.

Rice, Shelley. *Video Installation 1983* (exhibition catalogue). Rochester, New York: Visual Studies Workshop, 1983, unpaginated.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 16
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Paul Sharits

April 17–May 13, 1984

3rd Degree, 1982. Film installation
On view continuously 12:00–6:00, Tuesdays until 8:00

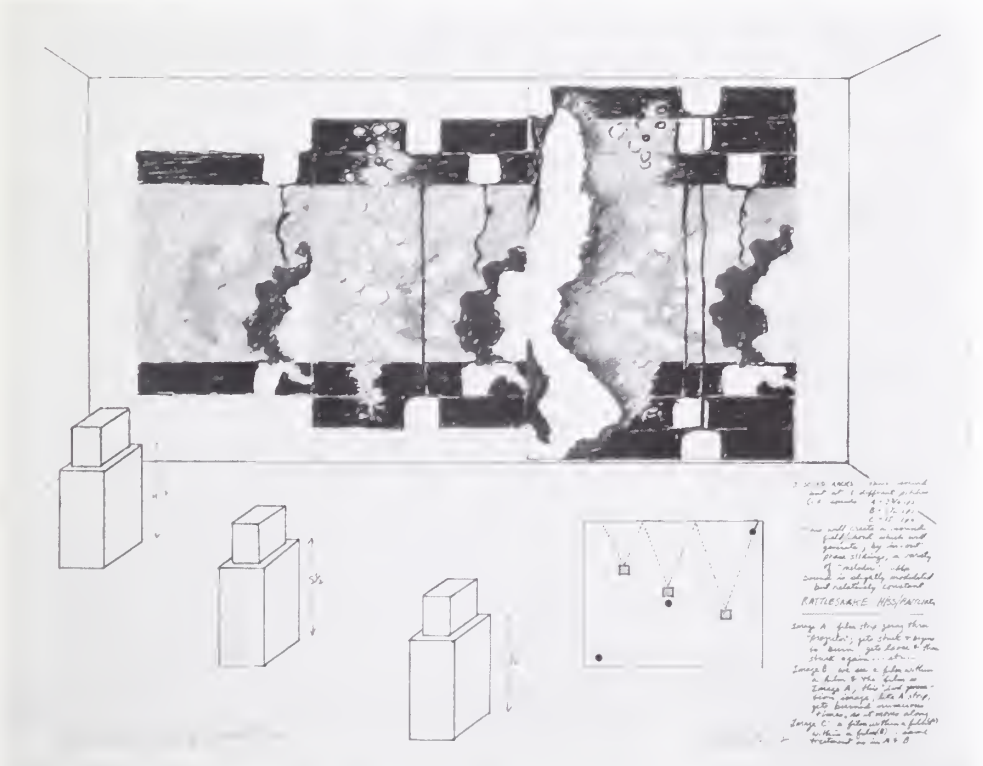
Gallery Talk, Thursday, April 19, at 2:00
Paul Sharits will be present

Credits:

Actress: Mary Ann Bruno; voice: Susan Mann; simulation of rattlesnake sound: Robert Franki; sound production assistance: Ken Rowe; visual production and general assistance: Steve Gallagher.

The medium of film is conventionally viewed within a theatrical context in which the projected film image appears on a screen, before rows of seated spectators. In this traditional arena of narrative cinema, the technology of film production and exhibition is invisible to the viewer. However, within the aesthetics of modernism, filmmakers have sought to establish a commentary on the film production process and make that process part of the film itself. Since the development of multimedia arts and Happenings of the 1960s, artists have transformed our perception of film by, for instance, placing projectors in gallery and performance spaces. They seek to treat film as a flexible medium in which the projected image is created for, and projected onto, different materials and surfaces. One of the leading figures in this expanded form of film art is Paul Sharits, whose latest film installation, *3rd Degree* (1982), explores the material of film and the technique of multiple projection within the gallery space.

As in Paul Sharits' other film installations, *3rd Degree* employs specially modified 16mm loop projectors that permit the twenty-four-minute film to be shown continuously during gallery hours. In his earlier piece *Episodic Generation* (1979), four aligned projectors presented a continuous sequence of moving images. In *3rd Degree* Sharits positions the three projectors at different distances from the gallery wall so that each image differs in scale. He synchronizes the movement of the three films through the projectors to develop visual relationships between the projected images. Because the two larger images are successive refilmings of the first, layers of time are created, thus disrupting and expanding the temporal dimension of the original footage.



Study for *3rd Degree*, 1982. Ink, pastel on vellum with grid, 18 × 23 inches. Collection of the artist. Photograph by Geoffrey Clements.

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In *3rd Degree* Paul Sharits confronts the material basis of film celluloid by "burning" the individual frames. The exploding image of overheated film is not unfamiliar to frequent film users; when a film becomes caught in the projector gate, a frame is burned by the heat of the projector's bulb and begins to bubble and melt. Sharits uses this "accident" as a means to alter the material of film: the film's image becomes a painter's canvas, with its representational surface image torn apart to expose a collage of new colors, textures, and image-making qualities. This concentration on the film image made abstract through the chemical properties of celluloid and the light of the projector removes film from its traditional setting and transforms it into a new kind of image-making.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

3rd Degree

In Part I (or screen A, in the three-screen version) there is an image of a moving strip of film, showing sequences of a close-up of a match being waved somewhat aggressively in front of a young woman's apprehensive face. The sound track: occasional match striking and rattlesnake warnings and the words, "Look, I won't talk." The strip of images flows at varying speeds, sometimes blurring and occasionally slowing and coming to a stop, whereupon the image/celluloid begins bubbling and burning, then pulls away, flowing on and stopping, burning, flowing, etc. The second part (or center screen in the installation) is the first part rephotographed; again it's "stop and go"—but here we also see images of burns, which sometimes stop and burn (a sort of second-degree burning). In Part III we see the rephotographed image of Part II, which contains Part I, so it is a film of a film of a film (of a film of the original film of the victim being "interrogated" with the match); we see three sets of sprocket holes and images of burns being burned yet again.

The film is about the fragility of the film medium and human vulnerability; both the filmic and the human images resist threat/intimidation/mutilation: the victim is defiant and the filmstrip also struggles on, both "under fire." It is a somewhat violent drama but it is also an ironically comic work, and there is a formal beauty in the destructiveness of the burning film. While the film (from section to section or from screen to screen, in the installation format) develops, becomes more visually complex, successively regenerates (as the figurative images degenerate), it nevertheless implies no finality; rather, even in its three-screen "vicious circularity" form, *3rd Degree* suggests endurance, extension, and ongoingness.

Paul Sharits

Biography

Paul Sharits, a painter as well as a filmmaker, was born in Denver in 1943. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting from the University of Denver in 1964, and a Master of Fine Arts in visual design from Indiana University in 1966. One of his multiple-projection works, *Episodic Generation* (1979), was shown at the Whitney Museum in the "1981 Biennial Exhibition." He has been awarded grants from the American Film Institute (1968), the Ford Foundation (1970, 1971), the National Endowment for the Arts (1974, 1976, 1979), the Creative Artists Public Service of the New York State Council on the Arts (1975, 1978), and the New York State Council on the Arts (1976). Widely published, Sharits has also been the subject of numerous articles and essays. He has lectured around the world, and his work is included in international public and private collections. Sharits is Associate Professor of Film and Director of Undergraduate Studies at the Center for Media Study, State University of New York at Buffalo, and lives in Buffalo.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Bykert Gallery, New York, 1972, 1974; Galerie Ricke, Cologne, 1974; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, 1976; Droll/Kolbert Gallery, New York, 1977; Galerie 'A', Amsterdam, 1977; Galerie Ricke, Cologne, 1977; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1977; Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1978; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 1978; Wright State University Art Gallery, Dayton, Ohio, 1981.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Documenta 5, Kassel, West Germany, 1972; American Film Institute, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C., "Film As/On Art," in association with the exhibition "Art Now '74," 1974; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, "Projected Images," 1974; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, "Une Histoire du Cinéma," 1976; Documenta 6, Kassel, West Germany, 1977; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "1981 Biennial Exhibition"; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, "'60'80: Attitudes/Concepts/Images," 1982.

Selected Filmography

All films are 16mm.
Piece Mandala/End War, 1966. Color, silent; 5 minutes.
Ray Gun Virus, 1966. Color, (sprocket) sound; 14 minutes.
N:O:T:H:I:N:G, 1968. Color, sound; 36 minutes.
T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G, 1968. Color, sound; 12 minutes.
Razor Blades (double projection), 1965–68. Color and black and white, stereo sound; 25 minutes.
S:TREAM:S:S:ECTION:S:ECTION:S:S:ECTIONED, 1968–71. Color, sound; 42 minutes.
SYNCHRONOUSOUNDTRACKS (double projection), 1973–74. Color, stereo sound; 35 minutes.
Color Sound Frames, 1974. Color, sound; 26½ minutes.
Tails, 1976. Color, silent; 4 minutes at 18 frames per second (fps), 3 minutes at 24 fps.
Episodic Generation (single-screen version), 1977–78. Color, sound; 30 minutes.
3rd Degree (single-screen version), 1982. Color, sound; 30 minutes.
Paul Sharits' films are distributed by the Film-makers' Cooperative and Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, New York, Canyon Cinema, San Francisco, and other international distributors.

Selected Bibliography

Film Culture: Paul Sharits. No. 65–66, 1978.
Sharits, Paul. "Notes on Films/1966–1968." *Film Culture*, No. 47, Summer 1969, pp. 13–16.
Sitney, P. Adams. *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde 1943–1978*. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 369, 374, 385–89.

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Oscar Micheaux

May 22–June 10, 1984

Gallery Talk, Thursday, May 24, following the 12:30 screening. Pearl Bowser will be present.

Schedule
May 22–27
12:30
Body and Soul, 1924. Silent, 70 minutes
3:00; also Tuesday, May 22, at 6:00
The Exile, 1931. 60 minutes

May 29–June 3
12:30
Ten Minutes to Live, 1932. 63 minutes
3:00; also Tuesday, May 29, at 6:00
Swing: The Story of Mandy, 1936. 65 minutes

June 5–10
12:30
Lying Lips, 1939. 60 minutes; *The Underworld*, 1936. 65 minutes
3:00
God's Step Children, 1938. 65 minutes
Tuesday, June 5, at 6:00
The Underworld, 1936. 65 minutes

A trailer for the films *Birthright* (1939) and *God's Step Children* (1938) will be shown along with the feature at the Tuesday evening screenings.

Carman Newsome and Ethel Moses in *God's Step Children*, 1938.

Oscar Micheaux was one of the best known and most prolific black filmmakers of the 1920s. During the silent era, he produced more than twenty titles, which he also distributed through direct bookings in movie houses in black urban areas and in the segregated theaters of the South.

Micheaux was born on a farm in southern Illinois in 1884. He was one of thirteen children. At the age of seventeen he left home to find work and learn a trade. Five years later, after working as a shoeshine boy, laborer, and Pullman car porter, he used his savings to buy a homestead in South Dakota. In 1913 he published his first novel, *The Conquest: Story of a Negro Pioneer Homesteader.* He turned his second novel, *The Homesteader*, into a film in 1918. Micheaux financed the film in the same way he had financed the publication of the book—by selling shares in his Western Book Supply Co. to the white farmers he had written about. He raised $15,000 to produce *The Homesteader*, the first feature-length independent black production.

The Homesteader opened in 1918 in Chicago after some controversy over Micheaux's depiction of the hero's father-in-law, a minister described in the press copy as "narrow, spiteful, envious . . . the embodiment of vanity, deceit, and hypocrisy." Micheaux was to rework the same evil minister character in a later work, *Body and Soul* (1924). As a shrewd businessman and promoter, he used the controversy his films generated to draw his audiences. If a local censorship board forced him to remove certain scenes, in the next town he would reinsert the material, advertising the film as "the uncut version."

Micheaux was an imposing figure and a persuasive talker, who could convince local businessmen to invest in his company and theater managers to book his films and advance monies for a new project. While on the road selling his latest novel or booking films, he scouted for new talent and interesting sites for his next project. Shingzie Howard, star of *The House Behind the Cedars* (1923), was discovered while Micheaux was selling books to her minister father in Stelton, Pennsylvania. She played bit parts in Micheaux's films and doubled as his secretary before getting the lead role in *The House Behind the Cedars*, a film developed from the novel by C. W. Chestnut.

Whether the themes of his films were based on his own writings, those of other novelists, or on newspaper stories, they focused on the black experience in America and often inspired heated debate. Micheaux sought, in his own words, "to present the truth, to lay before the race a cross section of its own life, to view the colored heart from close range. . . ." He perceived his films as tools to expose injustice and to

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counter the narrow stereotypical image of blacks in Hollywood movies. *The Brute* (1921) explored the mistreatment of black women. *The House Behind the Cedars* dealt with interracial marriage. *Within Our Gates* (1920) showed scenes of lynchings and burnings in a tale about sharecropping on a southern plantation. In *Symbol of the Unconquered* (1920), the hero takes on the Ku Klux Klan, and *The Gunsaulus Mystery* (1921), based on the Leo Frank murder case in Georgia, bore a striking resemblance to the controversial lynching scenes in *Within Our Gates*. Other films took a hard look at color bias within the race, the fate of illegitimate children, prostitution, the rackets in boxing, and the numbers games.

Micheaux's films were bold and naturalistic in style, their effort enhanced by "real" locations and dialect. But, with an eye to his audience, he wove entertainment into the plots, using nightclub sequences for comic relief (*Ten Minutes to Live*, 1932) or as transitions between scenes. Nightclubs were also "free sets" which he would sometimes invite the public to fill for his movie shoot. He would then advertise that they could come and see themselves on the screen. In *Ten Minutes to Live*, the climax of the film takes place on the dance floor of a nightclub, a diversion many moviegoers couldn't afford; for those who lived in rural communities, such scenes provided a glimpse into the nightlife of the big city.

Nightclub scenes, which required little dialogue, also satisfied the audience that craved the "all singing, all dancing" talking pictures. Micheaux here employed a practice prevalent in Hollywood films of a few years earlier: passing off a sound track with music and effects—and very little recorded speech—as a talking picture. In *Ten Minutes to Live* the villain is a deaf-mute who must write notes to talk with his girlfriend. Even the heroine has long sequences without dialogue. Recording voice and picture together was an expensive operation and low-budget productions like Micheaux's had to find ways to get away with less dialogue and more music and effects. *The Exile* (1931), Micheaux's first sound picture and the first black-produced sound feature, has long recorded sequences of dancing and music at a party in a mansion.

Micheaux cared little for cinematic conventions, his primary goal being to project the reality of the black experience. But with his low-budget operation, the films were often crude: the technical skills of the white journeymen he hired were limited, his old-fashioned equipment was immobile, and the casting of amateurs opposite professional actors sometimes destroyed a good story. He shot on a nearly one-to-one ratio, discarding little. As one of his actors said, "if you made a mistake or missed a line, he'd leave it in... saying maybe the audience would get a laugh...." Although Micheaux's audience was often angered by his subject matter and critical of the crudity of his work, he was nevertheless admired by blacks for his pioneering efforts. His films spoke directly to the black audience, whose common bond with the subjects heightened the credibility of his stories, while the visual sense of "place" or familiar terrain strengthened the myths he created.

Micheaux's career, which started with such flair, began to wane in the 1940s. He tried unsuccessfully to compete with the Hollywood genres, offering mysteries and gangster films shot in a studio. These films lack the naturalistic style of his earlier work. *The Notorious Elinor Lee* opened in Harlem in 1940; but the gold-engraved invitations and floodlights on the scene did not improve the box office receipts. And *The Betrayal* disappeared after a brief run on Broadway in 1948. Race films had lost their appeal and the last of the pioneers of early black films died in North Carolina in 1951, after a career that spanned more than thirty years.

Pearl Bowser
Guest Curator

Other Films by Oscar Micheaux

All films are black and white, sound, unless otherwise noted.
The Homesteader, 1918. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
Symbol of the Unconquered, 1920. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
Within Our Gates, 1920. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
The Brute, 1921. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
The Gunsaulus Mystery, 1921. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
The Wages of Sin, 1921. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
The Dungeon, 1922. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
The House Behind the Cedars, 1923. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
Birthright, 1924. Silent, 7 reels; lost. Sound version, 1939; lost.
Son of Satan, 1924. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
The Conjure Woman, 1925. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
The Spider's Web, 1926. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
The Girl from Chicago, 1927. Silent, 7 reels.
Thirty Years Later, 1928. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
A Daughter of the Congo, 1930. Silent, 7 reels; lost.
Harlem After Midnight, 1935. Lost.
Lem Hawkins Confession, 1935. Lost.
Temptation, 1936. Lost.
The Millionaire, 1938. Lost.
The Notorious Elinor Lee, 1940.
The Betrayal, 1948. Lost.
Marcus Garland, n.d. Lost.
The Veiled Aristocrats, n.d. Lost.

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Leab, Daniel J. *From Sambo to Superspade: The Black Experience in Motion Pictures.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975.

Sampson, Henry T. *Blacks in Black and White: A Source Book on Black Films.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1977.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 18
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

New American Video Art: A Historical Survey, 1967–1980

June 13–July 1, 1984

Gallery Talk by John G. Hanhardt
Thursday, June 21, at 1:00.

Program 1
Videotape Study No. 3, 1967–69. Jud Yalkut and Nam June Paik. 5 minutes.
The Medium Is the Medium, 1969. WGBH, Boston. 30 minutes.
TV as a Creative Medium, 1969. Ira Schneider. 13 minutes.

Program 2
Lip Sync, 1969. Bruce Nauman. 60 minutes.

Program 3
Vertical Roll, 1972. Joan Jonas. 20 minutes.
Undertone, 1972. Vito Acconci. 30 minutes.

Program 4
Inventory, 1972. John Baldessari. 30 minutes.
Selected Works, Reel 4, 1972. William Wegman. 20 minutes.
Three Transitions, 1973. Peter Campus. 5 minutes.

Program 5
Television Delivers People, 1973. Richard Serra. 6 minutes.
Global Groove, 1973. Nam June Paik. 30 minutes.
Handling (The Austrian Tapes), 1974. Douglas Davis. 5 minutes.
Fourth of July in Saugerties, 1972. Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot. 15 minutes.

Program 6
Scapemates, 1972. Ed Emshwiller. 29 minutes.
Vocabulary, 1973. Woody and Steina Vasulka. 5 minutes.
Underscan, 1974. Nancy Holt. 8 minutes.
Female Sensibility, 1974. Lynda Benglis. 14 minutes.

Program 7
Hark Hork, 1973. Frank Gillette. 18 minutes.
One-Eyed Bum, 1974. Andy Mann. 6 minutes.
Moving, 1974. Juan Downey. 30 minutes.

Program 8
Semiotics of the Kitchen, 1975. Martha Rosler. 7 minutes.
Children's Tapes: A Selection, 1974. Terry Fox. 30 minutes.
Boomerang, 1974. Richard Serra. 10 minutes.
Running Outburst, 1975. Charlemagne Palestine. 8 minutes.

Program 9
Video Ecotopia, 1975. Stephen Beck. 5 minutes.
Media Burn, 1975. Ant Farm. 25 minutes.
Birth of an Industry, 1977. TVTV. 18 minutes.

Program 10
I Want to Live in the Country (and Other Romances), 1976. Joan Jonas. 30 minutes.
A Newsreel of Dreams, 1976. Stan VanDerBeek. 24 minutes.

Program 11
Four Sided Tape, 1976. Peter Campus. 3 minutes.
The Space between the Teeth, 1976. Bill Viola. 9 minutes.
The Morning after the Night of Power, 1977. Bill Viola. 10 minutes.
Vito's Reef, 1978. Howard Fried. 34 minutes.

Program 12
Laughing Alligator, 1979. Juan Downey. 29 minutes.
After Montgolfier, 1979. Davidson Gigliotti. 10 minutes.
El Corandero, 1979. Shalom Gorewitz. 6 minutes.

Program 13
Lake Placid '80, 1980. Nam June Paik. 4 minutes.
Olympic Fragments, 1980. Kit Fitzgerald and John Sanborn. 10 minutes.
Chott el-Djerid (A Portrait in Light and Heat), 1979. Bill Viola. 28 minutes.

Program 14
Wonder Woman, 1979. Dara Birnbaum. 7 minutes.
Sunstone, 1979. Ed Emshwiller. 3 minutes.
Hearts, 1979. Barbara Buckner. 12 minutes.
Artifacts, 1980. Woody Vasulka. 22 minutes.

The national tour of *New American Video Art: A Historical Survey, 1967–1980* is supported by the National Committee of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

"New American Video Art" surveys video as an art form from its beginnings in 1967 to 1980. These first years in the history of video art saw a wide variety of approaches, describing and defining a new field of art-making. But behind the diversity of these initial efforts lie three features common to video art in this period: its collaboration with the other arts, its involvement with political and ideological debates, and its intentional distinction from commercial television.

By the late 1960s television had become a pervasive mass medium viewed in virtually every home. On home television sets, the public was offered a homogeneous selection of programming that followed formulas for structure, running time, and content. The viewer's perception of the medium was largely determined by the role television had come to play as a commercial entertainment and information industry whose success—and therefore profit—was

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Still from *Vertical Roll*, 1972, by Joan Jonas.

gauged by the number of viewers it attracted. In an attempt to challenge the television industry's hegemony, many activists worked—often as collectives—to use video as a tool for social change. At the same time, video artists began producing tapes and installations designed to explore the medium's potential for a new aesthetic discourse. It is the work of this latter group that "New American Video Art" seeks to elucidate.

While a number of people began experimenting with television in the mid-1960s, the direct appropriation of television began with the manipulation or destruction of the television set itself in the early Fluxus art projects of the Korean-born composer and musician Nam June Paik and of the German artist Wolf Vostell. Vostell's and Paik's actions signaled a rethinking of the television set as a cultural icon and as a technology removed from the control of the individual. Their first exhibitions, held in West Germany and the United States, reflect the international dimension of video art's beginnings. They also show how television contributed to the changing dynamic of the arts in the early 1960s, a process that involved the re-examination of sacrosanct visual traditions. One manifestation of this change was the focus on popular culture at large, formalized in painting and sculpture as Pop Art.

Just as the emergence of independent filmmaking in the 1940s owed much to the development of the small-gauge 16mm camera, video became more accessible to artists and activists in 1965, when the Sony Corporation introduced its portable videotape recorder to the New York market. Nam June Paik and Les Levine were the first artists to use it. In 1965, at the Café à Go-Go, Paik showed his first videotape —of Pope Paul VI's visit to New York, shot with a portable video camera he had bought that day. In a sense Paik's action symbolizes the initial attraction of this system: it was portable, and unlike film, which had to be processed, one could immediately see what the video camera was recording.

It was commonly believed that the new video equipment would enable the visionary producer to remove the production of video from the economic and ideological constraints of the television industry. Further, in keeping with Marshall McLuhan's theories, encapsulated in his aphorism the "medium is the message," many artists envisioned an electronic age where individual and collective producers would participate in a "global village" of information and images that superseded national and cultural boundaries.

The fourteen programs of "New American Video Art" examine, within a chronological framework, the kinds of technical, aesthetic, and philosophical issues that appear and reappear throughout the period. These include: *image processing*, whereby the artist develops new tools and a range of abstract and representational forms for transforming both prerecorded and electronically generated imagery through colorizing and other means; *personal documentaries*, which use the portable hand-held video camera to explore the dynamic of places and events; *performance-based* videotapes, which employ a range of narrative strategies to re-examine the artist's self, the psychology of manipulation, and the relationship between the viewer and the artist/performer; *perceptual studies*, which explore the epistemology of perception and the properties of the video image and image-making process; and *narratives*, *texts*, and *actions* produced to criticize or counter the pervasive presence of commercial television.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10021

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Whitney Museum of American Art 19
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Doug Hall

October 30–December 2, 1984

Machinery for the Re-education of a Delinquent Dictator, 1983.
Video installation. On view continuously

Gallery Talk, Thursday, November 1, at 2:00
Doug Hall will be present

Credits:
Conceived and directed by Doug Hall
Photographed by Jules Backus

Machinery for the Re-education of a Delinquent Dictator was first exhibited in Rochester, New York, at the Visual Studies Workshop in November 1983. The version I am showing at the Whitney Museum has been changed sculpturally in order to take advantage of the new setting. Like most of my installation work, this piece is designed for a specific location, in this case, the Film and Video Gallery of the Whitney Museum.

Doug Hall, a San Francisco-based artist, has long been active in performance and video art. *Machinery for the Re-education of a Delinquent Dictator* (1983) is a vivid commentary on the signs of power as they are articulated through language and image. In this piece, the Film and Video Gallery, painted bright red, is transformed into an environment suggestive of authoritarian power. Four monitors are situated around a stepped glossy-black platform over which a large red flag hangs. Behind the platform is an enormous industrial fan that is activated as the spectator enters the gallery. The fact that nothing occurs until someone enters the space is central to the meaning of the work: just as power is bestowed upon a ruler by those ruled, there can be no spectacle without an observer.

The action of the fan on the flag alternates with the display of two videotapes. In one tape, the artist appears as a demagogue, with a reddened complexion and wearing dark glasses. Seen both in close-up and at a distance, this figure makes a series of pronouncements. But his speech is slowed down and processed through an electronic harmonizer so that the phrases are barely comprehensible. His words are merely a hypnotic vocal sound. Intercut with the images of the speaker are shots of the red flag moving in slow motion. In the other videotape, the flag is intercut with the following words: TYRANNY, CONDEMNED, THE FORBIDDEN, FEAR.

The movement of the air in the gallery, the artist's gestures, and the phrases amplified through the speakers convey a sense of political power—not through the explicit meaning of words or images, but through the connotations such conventions evoke in the spectator. It is style, not content, form rather than substance, that are employed as persuasive devices.

Drawing for *Machinery for the Re-education of a Delinquent Dictator*, 1983. Ink on paper, 20½ × 26 inches. Collection of the artist. Photograph by Geoffrey Clements.

In the videotapes, the speaker is seen from specific points of view: in close-up, from a low angle, and with a clenched fist smashing down on a table top. Each image projects an authoritarian presence. This theme is reiterated in the red color of the walls as well as in the monumentality of the pedestals on which the monitors rest. The installation is an intertextual investigation combining sound, videotapes with words and images, and the deployment of structures in space to reveal the seductive and frightening subtext of political demagoguery and persuasion.

Doug Hall's *Machinery for the Re-education of a Delinquent Dictator* parallels the concerns of many contemporary artists whose work critiques the mass media as it portrays domestic and international politics. The scope of this art ranges from the images of repressive violence vividly interpreted in Leon Golub's paintings, to Jenny Holzer's texts, which explore the hidden meanings within political slogans, to Barbara Kruger's photo-montages, which expose the ideological message within advertising and political rhetoric. Doug Hall's videotapes and installations share with these artists' work a treatment of mass media as a form of spectacle in society, as a discourse on the desire for power and social control.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

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Machinery for the Re-education of a Delinquent Dictator

In viewing this work, the spectator will see clearly that the piece plays with highly charged images which have obvious political overtones. The work is a machine, a lair, the soul of the tyrant. It is menacing and aggressive but not without a touch of the comical. The wind is theater, fabricated in the service of the spectacle and illusion. The tyrant himself, roaring from the safety of the television monitor, is an illusion, a fabricated image with no decipherable content to his harangue, his voice having been slowed and electronically distorted beyond recognition. He calls out like a distant voice in a dream, at once there and not there at all.

Of course, the huge red flag is central to this piece. It drapes itself over the black stepped platform like an immense red skirt. It is when one enters the gallery that a switch triggers the wind machine and activates the flag, which stretches out, billowing and snapping with the force of a bull whip. For a minute and a half the flag dominates everything in the room. The wind is overpowering; the roar of the machine unrelenting until the fan stops, the flag becomes still, and the voice of the tyrant once again dominates the room.

Like other work that I have done over the past several years, this piece deals with the symbols of power and how we orient ourselves to them. It is an investigation of what I call the "theory of the spectacle." This idea carries with it the following suggestions: first, it presupposes that culture has a pervasive power and that this power is the sum of the attitudes of the people manifested through their common will via the institutions that culture (the people) has created to express this will. Second, the idea of the spectacle suggests that a society must affirm and reaffirm its values through all the means available to it (through architecture, pomp and ceremony, athletics, the mass media, the visual arts, etc.). The flag is the chauvinist's talisman and is part of this theater of images. We are all forced, one way or another, to take a position in relation to these symbols since they form a significant part of the vocabulary which informs us about ourselves and the world we live in. It is, by the way, the spectator entering the domain of the tyrant which initiates the spectacle of the flag.

Doug Hall

Biography

Doug Hall was born in San Francisco in 1944 and studied anthropology at Harvard University, where he received his B.A. in 1966. He then attended the Rinehart School of Sculpture of the Maryland Institute, College of Art, Baltimore, and received his M.F.A. in 1969. Hall began working in video in 1973, creating single-channel tapes, installations, and performances. Throughout the mid-1970s he worked with T. R. Uthco, an artists' group he founded with Jody Procter and Diane Andrews Hall, as well as with Ant Farm (Chip Lord, Doug Michaels, and Curtis Schreier). Hall has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1979), among others, and won the James D. Phelan Award in Video Art in 1983. He has taught at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, and currently teaches at the San Francisco Art Institute. Hall lives and works in San Francisco.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, 1975; Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1975; Long Beach Museum of Art, California, 1976; University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1979; Long Beach Museum of Art, California, 1980; Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1981; Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, 1981; Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, New York, 1983; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, 1983; University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1984.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Kassel, West Germany, "Documenta 6," 1977; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "Two-Channel Video," 1978; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, "Space/Time/Sound—1970's: A Decade in the Bay Area," 1979; The San Francisco Art Institute Annual, 1980; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "1983 Biennial Exhibition"; Kunsthaus Zurich, "New American Video," 1983; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, "Awards in the Visual Arts 2," 1983 (and traveling exhibition); Montbeliard, France, "2nd International Video Festival," 1984; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Video: Recent Acquisitions," 1984; San Sebastian, Spain, "San Sebastian Film and Video Festival," 1984.

Videotapes

All videotapes are ¾ inch, with sound, unless otherwise noted.

I Like My Television, 1972. ½ inch, black and white; 3 minutes.
The Reol Lone Ronger, 1972. With Willie Walker. ½ inch, black and white; 4½ minutes.
I Like Supermorkets, 1974. ½ inch, black and white; 16 minutes.
The Eternol Frome, 1975. T. R. Uthco with Ant Farm. ½ inch, black and white and color; 23 minutes.
Reolly, I've Never Done Anything Like Thot Before, He Soid, 1975. T. R. Uthco. Two channels, ½ inch, black and white; 15 minutes.
Gome of the Week, 1977. Color; 17 minutes.
I Hordly Ever Leove This Room, 1979. With Diane Andrews Hall. Three channels, color; 15 minutes.
The Amorillo News Topes, 1980. With Jody Procter and Chip Lord. Color; 25 minutes.
The Speech, 1982. Color; 4½ minutes.
This Is the Truth, 1982. Color; 5 minutes.
Songs of the 80s, 1983. Color; 17 minutes.
Almost Like o Dance, 1984. Color; 5 minutes.

Installations

The Eternol Frome, 1976. T. R. Uthco with Ant Farm. Single channel, black and white and color, sound; 21 minutes.
The Amorillo News Topes, 1980, 1981. With Jody Procter and Chip Lord. Single channel, color, sound; 27 minutes.
The Tyront's Lost Dreom, 1983. Single channel, color, sound; 4½ minutes.
The Victims' Regret, 1984. Four channels, color, sound; 7 minutes.

Selected Bibliography

Hall, Doug. "Ronald Reagan: The Politics of Image." *Video 80*, 4 (Spring 1982), pp. 28–30.
McGee, Micki. "Artists Making the News, Artists Re-making the News." *Afterimoge*, 10 (November 1982), pp. 6–9.
Video Instollotion 1983 (exhibition catalogue). Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, New York. A special supplement to *Afterimoge*, 11 (December 1983).
Video/TV: Humor/Comedy, A Touring Video Exhibition of Medio Study/Buffolo (exhibition catalogue). Buffalo: Media Study/Buffalo, 1983.

Doug Hall's videotapes are distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York, and Environmental Communications, Venice, California.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 20
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Re-Viewing Television

December 14–30, 1984

Re-Viewing Television: Interpretations of the Mass Media
Part I: Video Artists Look at TV

Schedule

TUESDAY
Program 1 1:15
Birth of an Industry, 1977. TVTV. 18 minutes.
Television Delivers People, 1973. Richard Serra. 6 minutes.
The Selling of New York, 1972. Nam June Paik. 8 minutes.
Media Burn, 1975. Ant Farm. 25 minutes.

Program 2 2:30 and 6:00
Independents Tonite, 1984. Jack Walworth with Whit Johnston. 47 minutes.
Face Fear and Fascination, 1984. Tony Cokes. 32 minutes.

Program 3 4:00
Race against Prime Time, 1984. David Shulman. 59 minutes.
About Media, 1977. Tony Ramos. 28 minutes.

WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
Program 1	12:15	**Program 1**	1:15
Program 2	1:30	**Program 2**	2:30
Program 3	3:00	**Program 3**	4:00

This three-part exhibition features artists' videotapes that scrutinize the social and cultural institutions which comprise the mass media. Part 1 includes tapes that critically examine the establishment of the television industry and the practices that determine the form and content of its programming. Highlighting the show are recent tapes by David Shulman, Jack Walworth, and Tony Cokes. Earlier examples of how artists have dealt with the subject are also included to provide a historical background to these efforts.

Program 1 opens with *Birth of an Industry* (1977), by TVTV, an artists' collective. It is a satirical narrative which skillfully describes the early consolidation of power by the commercial networks through the control of patents. *Television Delivers People* (1973), by the noted sculptor Richard Serra, displays a rolling text of statements that explain the function of television in "delivering" audience-consumers to advertisers. This commentary is juxtaposed with a Muzak sound track that ironically comments on television's promotion of popular entertainment and its unwillingness to engage in self-criticism. Nam June Paik's *The Selling of New York* (1972) is a witty comment on how the global dominance of the American media—based in New York City—produces an information monopoly. Ant Farm, the former architecture and performance collective from San Francisco, created in *Media Burn* (1975) an event featuring a car specially modified with video equipment which drove through a wall of televisions. In creating this extraordinary media spectacle, which was covered by local TV news programs, Ant Farm pointed out how the news media create events merely by covering them.

Program 2 features recent works by Jack Walworth and Tony Cokes. Walworth and Whit Johnston's *Independents Tonite* (1984) fashions a narrative out of the problematic position of independent producers who propose various strategies—both radical and traditional—to change television. In *Face Fear and Fascination* (1984), Cokes analyzes the representation of women in daytime soap operas and commercial advertising by combining off-air material with various texts dealing with the subject.

Program 3 offers two documentary interpretations of television news reporting. David Shulman's *Race against Prime Time* (1984) examines television coverage of the 1980 race riots in Miami. Shulman reviews both local and network reporting and the factors involved in shaping the media's response to the causes and the representation of social unrest. Tony Ramos' *About Media* (1977) treats local New York television coverage of Ramos' protests against the Vietnam War. The production critically contrasts Ramos' interview with TV reporters at his home with the subsequent report on television.

"Re-Viewing Television" is the first of a three-part series; it will be followed by "Paper Tiger Television" (January 15–February 17, 1985), and a history of artists' alternative television, scheduled for 1985.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Gallery Talk, Thursday, December 20, after the 1:30 screening. David Shulman and Jack Walworth will be present.

Face Fear and Fascination

I am studying mass culture in terms of methodology and ideology because I see concrete relations between the media and economic/political power. Television does not innocently disseminate information and entertainment. It is a conscious or unconscious means of molding beliefs and perceptions. It is not neutral. It is not passive. It is not natural. The meanings produced through the media have points of origin, points of view, and points of perception. A culture describes itself by repeating, by re-presenting its dominant values. I cannot avoid a relationship with the cultural spectacle, but I can ask questions: How and why does the spectacle limit what we "see"? What social voices,

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desires, and concrete alternatives does the dominant culture exclude and/or repress? What are our roles both as producers and consumers of the spectacle? And how are we implicated in the ongoing process by which the spectacle is maintained?

Face Fear and Fascination examines daytime television in terms of its portrayal and construction of women and its commodity advertising strategies. Women are depicted as objects to be looked at in repetitive and fragmented melodramas based on family conflicts, romantic love, and violence. The commercials sell the delimited powers of beauty, conformity, and the commodity. The spectacle constructs an audience in an economy of unfulfilled desires. The tape calls attention to the assumptions, ideas, and methods of "harmless entertainment" offered by the patriarchy and corporate capitalism. In addition to material scavenged from broadcast television, I have used texts from such various sources as intertitles and voice-overs to question the conditions of reading and possibility generated by conventional television.

Tony Cokes

Face Fear and Fascination, 1984. Tony Cokes.

Race against Prime Time

In many ways, this documentary grew out of my experiences doing media support work for a Brooklyn-based community group, the Black United Front. The BUF was formed in 1978 in response to a wave of cutbacks in city services, hospital closings, and the choking death of a community resident, Arthur Miller, by New York City police. Over the two-year period in which I helped to provide access to video equipment, set up community film screenings, and videotape some of the marches and rallies, meetings, and protests which the BUF initiated, I usually watched and sometimes recorded the TV news coverage of these same events. What I saw on TV often left me startled and intrigued—were these TV news cameras really at the same event?

I became much more curious about the process behind news coverage. To what degree were the personal values of the individual reporter, or the political orientation of the station, or the organizational and economic structures of the news-gathering process responsible for the patterns of distortion? To what extent was the medium itself to blame? The double standards, misrepresentation of grass-roots leadership, and the tendency to gloss over or ignore the real issues and grievances had an extremely negative and polarizing impact on race relations in New York City. To say that television news was racist and leave it at that wasn't very satisfying.

Race against Prime Time, 1984. David Shulman.

Throughout the process of making *Race against Prime Time*—getting access to TV stations, setting up interviews with media people as well as community residents—there was an accompanying thrill of discovering for oneself things that were otherwise hidden from view. This thrill of discovery has always helped to sustain the work I do.

David Shulman

Independents Tonite

The purpose of making *Independents Tonite* was to delineate and comment on the contradictions inherent in independent production. Specifically, I wanted to expose the limitations and constrictions independents are subjected to in the pursuit of an audience. Moreover, the tape explores the possible avenues independents can take to work around and in some cases actually change the broadcast television system. In the characters' attempts to effect such change, political as well as professional issues are traversed in a serio-comic tone. This serves to highlight the issues in both a theoretical and practical context.

With freelance work and my small "independent" company as my experience, I conceived this project to confront my frustrations as a TV viewer. Collaborating with my fellow independents, we have used the narrative and comedic styles to obtain an audience, while breaking key codes and revealing inherent ideologies. The question does, however, remain: How can we change television?

Jack Walworth

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Re-Viewing Television

January 15–February 17, 1985

Re-Viewing Television: Interpretations of the Mass Media
Part II: *Paper Tiger Television*
Video installation. On view continuously

Past and present members of Paper Tiger Television include: Diana Agosta, Fusun Ateser, Pennee Bender, Skip Blumberg, Bill Boddy, Daniel Brooks, Nancy Cain, Shu Lea Cheang, Dena Crane, Linda Cranor, Manuel De Landa, Michael D'Elia, Judite Dos Santos, Karen Einstein, Preacher Ewing, Mary Feaster, Bob Fiore, Bart Friedman, Vicki Gholson, Dee Dee Halleck, Ezra Halleck, Larry Hymowitz, Joan Jubela, Pat Keeton, Hilery Kipnis, Molly Kovel, Melissa Leo, Marty Lucas, Esti Marpet, Leanne Mella, Alison Morse, Diane Neumaier, Dan Ochiva, Mike Penland, Roger Politzer, Caryn Rogoff, Kurt Ruebenson, David Shulman, Janet Stein, Alan Steinheimer, Parry Teasdale, Valerie Van Isler, Martha Wallner, and Roy Wilson

Live Productions
Tuesday, January 29, at 6:30
Flo Kennedy on press coverage of South Africa
Tuesday, February 5, at 6:30
Herbert Schiller on "*The New York Times* and the World Crisis"
Saturday, February 9, at 2:00
"Youth and the Media"

During the 1960s and early 1970s independent video- and filmmakers, working outside the mainstream of commercial film and television, participated in the critical reexamination of American domestic and foreign policy. Their activism took the form of a radically reinvigorated documentary and avant-garde cinema, and an alternative approach to video that challenged traditional modes of media production, distribution, and exhibition. Media collectives such as Newsreel formulated agitprop cinema for communities and meeting halls, and "guerrilla television" groups created television programming and production networks through cable outlets.

But the potential of cable to become a genuine communications tool linking and addressing community concerns has now largely been eclipsed. Recent federal communications policies have resulted in further cutbacks in access for individuals and communities with alternative viewpoints. Despite this reduction, a few tenacious groups have managed to produce and broadcast regular programming for the public access airwaves.

One of these is *Paper Tiger Television*, a cable series produced by a collective of media artists concerned with exposing the economic and ideological factors that shape the industries controlling the content and distribution of mass media—of film, television, newspapers, books, and magazines. For this exhibition, Paper Tiger has re-created and expanded some of the studio sets in which their lively programs have been produced. In addition, they have designed a mock-up of a newsstand on which are displayed various publications. Some of these have been altered to interpret their editorial policies and content; others are alternative periodicals. Inside the newsstand is a TV monitor on which one can watch a chronological history of the series' programs.

This information environment also features an actual teletype that provides international news from different wire services, a continuously running television in the "studio" displaying public access programs, and corporate annual reports from the major media industries. This combination of installation pieces establishes an arena for critical interpretation of the largely invisible corporate world that controls the communications industry in the United States.

The Paper Tiger group is exploring new ways to comprehend and analyze a communications industry which is becoming increasingly removed from public review. Theirs is an activist and innovative art that attempts to identify the forces shaping public reception and response to global events.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Production still from *Joan Braderman Reads The National Enquirer* 1983

Paper Tiger Television

Most cable systems in the United States have a few channels that must be made available free to community members. They are called "public access" channels, and they are the bane of cable corporations. Company executives would rather program a more profitable twenty-four-hour, advertiser-based weather channel or yet another subscription movie channel. But it is the *law*, in the form of franchise agreements made with local municipalities, that requires public access channel space in exchange for the cable company's use of the city's streets and sewers.

Paper Tiger Television is a weekly program that appears on the public channels of Manhattan Cable. It is one of nearly two hundred weekly series that are transmitted regularly to cable subscribers in New York City. *Paper Tiger* began in 1981 as a special series on *Communications Update*, a weekly program initiated by Liza Bear in 1979. Since then, more than sixty-seven programs have been aired, not only in New York, but on cable channels in Minneapolis, Austin, San Diego, Somerville, Massachusetts, and in other cities nationwide.

Each week *Paper Tiger* features a guest commentator who provides a critical reading of a magazine or newspaper. The programs include basic information on the economic structure of the corporation that produced the publication. Many programs also look at demographics: who the audience for a particular publication is, and what products they consume—e.g., *U.S. News and World Report* readers buy wine by the case—and how much a full-page color ad costs. Sometimes we examine the board of directors or the background of the editors and reporters. While the specific focus each week is on one publication, it is the intention of the series to provide a cumulative view of the culture industry as a whole.

There are certain practical requirements for access programming. First, a show must be shown regularly. Since there is little hope of access programs being included in *TV Guide*'s schedule, or being listed in newspapers of record, the main way to build an audience is to schedule the show every week at the same time; people are home on certain nights and switch on the tube at certain times. If they turn the dial around during the breaks between the shows, they might linger on something that looks different from regular TV fare.

Another strategy is to have an immediately discernible "different" look, without being intimidating or alienating. *Paper Tiger* uses brightly painted sets. The guest sits on a yellow kitchen chair: no pompous "director" chairs, no stuffed couch, no glittery curtains. The set looks homey, but very colorful, like the funny papers on Sunday. The guests are projected into the foreground with pizzazz. The bright sets help to leaven the heaviness of the subject matter. Sometimes we use actors to provide simultaneous "non-verbal" translations of some of the text, often we use graphics and charts—not elaborate video effects, but hand-lettered, or cut and pasted. The graphics are not fed into a mechanical graphics holder, but are held in place so that fingers show. If there is a specific look to the series, it is *handmade*, a comfortable, non-technocratic look that says *friendly*—and low budget.

The seams show: we often intercut overview, wide-angle shots that give the viewer a sense of the people who are making the show and the types of equipment we use. At the end of the program, along with the credits, we usually display the budget, which includes everything from magic markers to studio rental. The total cost for one show can vary from nineteen dollars, using a black-and-white camera, to one hundred fifty dollars for a two-camera color setup that includes a switcher, an audio mixer, and two video recording decks. By showing the seams and price tags, we hope to demystify the process of live television, and to prove that making programs isn't all that prohibitively expensive.

Although most people are cynical about the media and consider themselves aware of being manipulated, most are unaware of just *how* this manipulation works issue by issue, ad by ad. Many people still think of "the media" as a form of "journalism," distinct from other areas of economic life. By analyzing a publication in detail, by examining its corporate interconnections, and by pointing out exactly how and why certain information appears, a good critical reading can *invert* the media so that they work against themselves. After seeing a publication discussed on *Paper Tiger Television*, a viewer sees each ad, each article, in a new critical way.

Dee Dee Halleck

Adapted from the forthcoming book *Cultures in Contention*, edited by Doug Kahn and Diane Neumaier, Seattle: Real Comet Press.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 22
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Meredith Monk

February 23–March 3, 1985

Schedule: Tuesday at 1:15, 3:45; 6:30, films only. Wednesday–Saturday at 11:15 and 2:00. Sunday at 12:30 and 3:00

Films: Excerpt from *16 Millimeter Earrings*, 1966; *Children*, 1966; *Ballbearing*, 1968; *Mountain*, 1971; *Quarry*, 1975; *Ellis Island*, 1981.
Videotapes: *Paris*, 1982; *Turtle Dreams (Waltz)*, 1983

Translating the art of dance into a moving image has always been a challenging proposition. A static camera positioned on a tripod cannot approximate the dance performance as experienced in the theater. The frame of the camera's viewfinder delimits the perception of the space as does the two-dimensional property of the photographic image. The history of American independent film and video is distinguished by the work of a variety of artists and choreographers who have employed editing, framing, sound, camera movement, image processing, and the distinctive properties of projected film and the video monitor to refashion our perception and understanding of dance.

Meredith Monk, one of the key figures in post-modern dance, has been making films and videotapes since the mid-1960s. The success of her films and videotapes rests in part on the strong imagery of her movements and the visual character of her staged tableaux. However, Monk does not simply record her performances, force them into the constraints of the medium, or duplicate earlier cinematic strategies. She evokes the quality of her live performances by treating the illusionistic space of film and videotape as her stage.

Monk's involvement in film began with the incorporation of the projected image into her performances. In *16 Millimeter Earrings* (1966), film became an integral part of the work. A projected image transforms Monk's face into a mask. The scope of Monk's work in film is illustrated by a later work, *Ellis Island* (1981), in which she places her dancers within the eerie abandoned buildings on the island. This tape illustrates another important element of Monk's work: its focus on the vernacular. Her dancers portray characters whose movements tell stories about personal experiences that bespeak a shared cultural history. These performances infuse traditional narrative images with the abstract possibilities of dance, a quality that makes her work particularly conducive to the temporal nature of the moving image.

Gallery Talk, Thursday, February 28, following the 11:15 screening. Meredith Monk will be present.

16 Millimeter Earrings, 1966. Photograph by Kenneth Van Sickle

In 1983 Meredith Monk produced *Turtle Dreams (Waltz)*, a videotape in which the cadence of her voice establishes a rhythm for the dancers. In the opening section, we see the movement of the dancers playing with the mimetic properties of gesture. The turtle's movement is evoked by their own movement and the call of their voices as they perform within a neutral, white studio space. The final section of the tape shows a turtle moving through a miniature city. The effect on the screen is of a giant turtle wandering through an actual cityscape. The sequence concludes with the turtle moving across a barren landscape and looking up at the moon in the nighttime sky. In *Turtle Dreams*, Monk evokes the mystery of dreams as the basis of an imaginary tableau for both dance and image making.

This combination of dance and the imaginary as both fact *(Ellis Island)* and fiction *(Turtle Dreams)* is a distinctive feature of Monk's art. She works with film and videotape because these media express her vision of dance as a truly multimedia art form.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

Biography

Meredith Monk has created more than fifty works in music, theater, dance, film, and video since 1964. A graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York, she has received numerous awards and grants, among them two Guggenheim Fellowships (1972, 1982). *Dolmen Music* won the German Critics Prize for Best Record in 1981. Her film *Ellis Island* won the CINE Golden Eagle in 1981, as well as the Special Jury Prize of the Atlanta Film Festival (1981), and was shown nationally on PBS television in 1983. In 1968 Monk founded The House Foundation for the Arts, a company dedicated to an interdisciplinary approach to performance, and in 1978 formed the Meredith Monk Vocal Ensemble. Monk and her companies have toured extensively throughout the United States and abroad. She lives and works in New York.

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Marranca, Bonnie. "Meredith Monk's *Recent Ruins*, The Archeology of Consciousness: Essaying Images," *Performing Arts Journal*, 4 (Spring 1980), pp. 39–49.

Skura, Stephanie. "Interview with Meredith Monk," *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art & Politics*, 5 (Issue 17, 1984), pp. 8–11.

Westwater, Angela. "Meredith Monk: An Introduction," *Artforum*, 11 (May 1973), pp. 57–59.

All films and videotapes were directed by Meredith Monk, except where otherwise noted.

Films

All films are 16mm, except where otherwise noted.

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Ballbearing, 1968. Color, silent, 13 minutes. Camera, Meredith Monk and George Landow.

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Quarry, 1975. Black and white, silent; 5 minutes. Camera and editing, David Geary.

Humboldt's Current, 1977. Black and white, silent, 5 minutes (also in Super 8). Camera, Meredith Monk, editing, Meredith Monk and Tony Janeth.

Quarry, 1978. Color, sound, 86 minutes. Documentation, Amram Nowak Associates.

Ellis Island, 1979. Black and white, silent, 7 minutes (also in 35mm). Associate director, Robert Rosen, camera, Jerry Panzer.

16 Millimeter Earrings, 1980. Color, sound; 25 minutes. Producer, director, and photographer, Robert Withers.

Ellis Island, 1981. Black and white and color, sound, 28 minutes (also in 35mm). Co-director, Robert Rosen, camera, Jerry Panzer, music, Meredith Monk.

Mermaid Adventures, 1983. Color, silent, 10 minutes. Camera, David Geary.

Videotapes

All videotapes are ¾ inch.

Paris, 1982. Color, sound, 26 minutes. Conception, performance, and artistic direction by Meredith Monk and Ping Chong, produced and directed by Mark Lowry and Kathryn Escher, camera, Tom Adair, music, Meredith Monk. Made in cooperation with the Walker Art Center and KTCA-TV, Minneapolis.

Turtle Dreams (Waltz), 1983. Color, sound, 27 minutes. Performed by Meredith Monk Vocal Ensemble, directed by Ping Chong, camera, Robin Doty and Carolyn Stanley, music, Meredith Monk.

Artist's Statement

When I used film in my performance works, it was a way of incorporating another reality into live performance. Film has always been a means of achieving things that were difficult to fulfill in live theater: scale differentiation—extreme close-ups on objects or people; extreme long shots; quick shifts of environment (in live performance this is usually achieved by a change of scenery, which takes a long time). Even though film began for me as only one element in a collage including music / movement / persona or character / object / light / text, I always allowed it to retain its discreet identity: it was always projected alone (often in silence) so that its filmic qualities were left intact.

I thought of the film images as a visual rhyme or counterpoint to what was going on on stage. I devised ways of projecting film that gave it a plasticity and immediacy within the performance canvas. For example, in *16 Millimeter Earrings* (1966), I projected a color sequence of my face onto a large white dome that was over my head so that the film became a live mask or the image of a large head on a small body. Playing with simultaneous realities was important in my early work. Over the years I became more and more interested in film as a form in and of itself. *Ballbearing* (1968), for example, was designed as an installation to be projected forward and backward so that the public could watch it as long as they wished. I began to realize that film was an ideal way for me to fulfill my interest in both images and music. I found as I was editing film that the process was not unlike my experience of writing music and that images have an inherent musicality within themselves.

In most of my films, the location is an important element. In *Ellis Island* (1979 and 1981) the environment played the major role. *Ellis Island* began as a seven-minute film in 1979. I became so interested in it that I continued working on it and it eventually turned into a half-hour film.

Now I am working on a feature-length film. It allows me to use all the elements of my performances within a concrete environment.

Meredith Monk

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Sunday 12:00–6:00

Film and video information: (212) 570-0537

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The New American Filmmakers Series

EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Recoding Blackness

June 18–July 3

The Visual Rhetoric of Black Independent Film

Gallery Talk, Thursday, June 20, after the 12:00 screening. James A. Snead will be present.

Recoding blackness means revising visual codes surrounding black skin on screen and in the public realm. In the traditional dialectic of film and audience, the spectator takes pleasure in recognizing what "everyone knows" to be obviously true. Stereotyped images, most notoriously of women and blacks, hide real paradoxes, contradictions, and inequities in society underneath the unthinking pleasure of filmic recognition. Particularly in Hollywood's early character repertoire, black skin signified "subhuman, simpleminded, superstitious, and submissive" (Leab). Continuous association has fixed and transmitted this falsification, and the repetition of codes seems to validate the first coding as correct and the later versions as obviously true. Independent black films, as recodings, reproduce such stereotypes and yet coin unconventional associations for black skin within the reigning film language. The films collected here make the Hollywood black no longer a credible "imitation of life," and challenge our wider valuations of blackness in society as in cinema. Program I explores the effects of codes on the self-image and welfare of the black community. Program II shows individual blacks fighting racial stereotypes within wider society. Program III presents solutions to the problem of coding through intrinsic properties of filmic montage and syntax.

Framed "in Their Place": Paradigmatic Limitation

The term "paradigmatic limitation" refers to the selection of roles, images, and narrative representations of blacks. The historical change in black coding derives in part from the changing socio-economic status of the black and the ideology that arose to keep him "in his place," a place whose fixity becomes clear in the tragi-comic *A Place in Time* and in more bitter terms in *Bless Their Little Hearts*. The treatment of blackness within the single frame is an inheritance from extra-cinematic conventions concerning black skin which exploit the ambiguous properties of color. The color black can be an icon (black is *similar* to night), but also, in European cultures, a learned symbol of evil or death. The color black, for the Western viewer, seems to be a visual experience in search of an idea, a visual otherness that the dominant eye wishes to organize, never quite succeeding, within a static scheme. Over four centuries we have seen such widely divergent images of blackness as Melchior (the noblest of the Three Wise Men in Renaissance painting) and Sambo, who in America became the stereotype of the buffoonish, incompetent black.

The code constructs from the smallest meaningful difference or *seme* an entire "universe of ideologies, arranged in codes and sub-codes" (Eco). The perceptual *seme* "black/white" is the germ of a proliferant ideology coding the scale from black skin to white skin as an index of social value. *Death of a Dunbar Girl* and *Color* show coding's pervasiveness, appearing as a kind of color consciousness adopted by the very group that it victimizes (Fanon). Even as the "I" codes the "other," it can easily be tricked by a similar process: the political stereotyping of the social "other" in an ideological discourse that aims to fix not the subject's perceptual relationship to the other, but the other's social relationship to the subject. Ideological coding renders its own operation invisible; the code is seen as natural, "the world itself" (Nichols). The term "framing" plays on the negative effects of film's related cinematic stabilization of the subject/other relation (Panofsky). *From Harlem to Harvard, Shipley Street, The Sky Is Grey,* and *Ali, the Fighter* show blacks confronting, with only measured success, white assumptions of black inferiority that coding has falsely promulgated as "the way things are."

By accepting the place of authority where he has been addressed by screen and society, the dominant "I" paradoxically marks himself, not as autonomous and omnipotent, but as captured and appropriated by a dialectic that requires the "other" in order to function. The stability that framing provides is fictional (or "Imaginary"—Lacan). The spectator-subject codes the black as servile or absent in order to code himself as masterful and present. The black serves, in other words, as an "Imaginary" remedy for the spectator-subject's *lack* of authority. The black's marginality sets the viewing "I" in place on screen or in society, but the black's viewpoint may never be attained by the spectator's eye. The black is a structuring absence, the "internal shadow of exclusion" (Althusser) that allows the film frame to function, when coding either villainy or spatial exclusion.

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The Other Place: Syntagmatic Freedom

Given the obsessive coding of blacks iconically and spatially within the cinematic frame, one might wonder where, if anywhere, a filmmaker could *re*code blackness. Plot seems to limit blacks' freedom, based as it is upon a sense of general social possibility. Typically, plot narrows the multiple choices available to the protagonist in the "land of limitless opportunity." With blacks, however, such narrative leeway is already eliminated before the film begins. For black people there has not even been an Imaginary possibility of being whole or successful or powerful or free in white society. Coding of blacks also puts restraints on endings. Narrative begins with an obstacle or lack that the spectator desires to have removed or remedied by the conclusion (Propp). Yet films about blacks defeat expectation of complete closure and restoration; black skin appears on screen already coded as a lack.

Therefore blackness introduces into film narrative *enigma* and *non-resolution,* the two preconditions of an interminable hermeneutical chain (Barthes). The *enigma* is the question, "Why is the black skin already coded, already unfree?"—a question posed, but typically left unanswered. *Non-resolution* occurs because no narrative could resolve the black's overriding lack of social presence and political authority except the end of the socio-political system itself. Yet even such an apocalypse would, if real, take place *after* and not *within* the film narrative. Hence the coding of the black in the single frame radically disrupts the conventions surrounding a narrative sequence of them, preventing a convincingly restorative, Imaginary ending that would set aside the effects of coding.

Film discourse has two aspects: choice *(paradigmatic)* and construction *(syntagmatic).* The first category chooses codes and premises of plot, what goes with what and what gets cut. The syntagmatic axis controls what follows what and employs not cutting out, but cutting—editing and montage. The syntagmatic units of film are *shot, sequence,* and *scene,* linked by straight cuts, fades, and dissolves. These filmic punctuations provide a locus for recoding that black filmmakers thoroughly exploit. Cinematic montage and *suture* incessantly point the spectator to a constantly deferred second shot that tries to complete the one before it, but never quite succeeds (Oudart). The syntagmatic axis, in this sense, must always remain tentative, incomplete, and inadequate. Since the meaning of frames is retrospective, each shot might alter what had been seen previously as fixed and coded. Hence, recoding can arise from the very nature of film language, rupturing previous significations in unexpected ways. Where black skin is already framed, or coded into place, montage might be the only realm of freedom. *Semioclasm,* the "smashing of codes," does not return the lack to the (b)lack, as coding does, but returns the sign to zero, where it begins afresh, mounted in a new context (Barthes).

The unexpected cuts of *Sky Captain* and *The Nightmare* and the open-endedness of *A Dream Is What You Wake Up From* and *A Different Image* dismantle the caricature, denature the stereotype, and alter the code. In Program III, cutting allows the framed present to be transcended, as in the African dance sequences in *Sky Captain.* These unexpected parallel or bracket syntagmas of sound and sight make the African eruption not nostalgic or Imaginary, but an always imminent possibility of abrupt *transition* to an unexpectedly different shot and to a qualitatively different place. The cutting between the framed present and the African scene is all the more subversive because of the inherent atemporality of filmic sequence: Does the vision of the reconstituted black skin flash backward to Africa or forward to a post-liberation reality?

In these films, the "place of the other" gives way to the "other place." The difference comes directly from *suture* (traditional invisible cutting, continuity, and point-of-view techniques), revealing it as not at all self-explanatory, but fully iconoclastic. Even Metz, who plotted a syntagmatic grammar of film, his *"grande syntagmatique,"* confesses, "I do not yet understand cinematographic language." The language that defies all description defines film's uniqueness and its possibilities. Here, at the syntagmatic axis, the black filmmaker exercises the freedom to recode blackness. The "other place" on the filmstrip comes after the coded past and present, no longer addressing the dominant "I," but redressing codes in the unknown shot to come.

James A. Snead
Guest Curator

Special thanks to The Black Filmmaker Foundation and Third World Newsreel for their assistance in the preparation of this exhibition.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 24
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Rita Myers

September 28–November 3, 1985

The Allure of the Concentric, 1985.
Video installation. On view continuously

Gallery Talk, Thursday, October 10, at 2:00
Rita Myers will be present.

Elements:

Posts and gate. Aluminum and expanded aluminum, 60 × 96 × 14 inches.
Reflecting pool. Wood and fiberglass, 126 × 102 × 12 inches.
Three towers. Aluminum and expanded aluminum, 132 × 27 × 27 inches.
Scenic rocks. Lava, each approximately 36 × 24 × 8 inches.
Three dead trees.
Four videotapes. ¾ inch, color, sound; 6-minute loop.

The unfolding through time of all things from one is the simple message, finally, of creation myths. . . .
—Joseph Campbell
The Way of the Animal Powers

I cried because my eyes had seen that conjectural and secret object whose name men usurp but which no man has gazed on: the inconceivable universe.
—Jorge Luis Borges
The Aleph

Rita Myers' installations mix video images with architectural and natural forms to create theatrical environments that invite contemplation. Her latest piece, *The Allure of the Concentric* (1985), combines the dramatic treatment of space of her earlier *Dancing in the Land Where Children Are the Light* (1981) with the powerful architectural motifs of *The Forms That Begin at the Outer Rim* (1983).

One enters the gallery through a gate, a symbolic representation of crossing over from the real to the imaginary. The focal point of the space is a large reflecting pool located in the center of the gallery. Over the pool hang three dead trees. A steady flow of water drips slowly from the trees into the water, creating concentric ripples. The pool is surrounded by three aluminum towers and clusters of large rocks, which camouflage four monitors displaying expansive images of the American West. Within this environment, Myers speculates on universal archetypal forms that emanate both from nature—the trees, rocks, and water—and from culture—the towers, gate, and pool.

The Allure of the Concentric can be related to other video installations—by Mary Lucier, Beryl Korot, and Shigeko Kubota—that have attempted to capture images of the landscape and deploy them in sculptural forms. In all these works, the video monitor is in some way disguised or housed so that the glowing video image becomes divorced from its source, appearing only in the context of the surrounding environment.

With *The Allure of the Concentric*, Rita Myers has placed the video image within a contemplative setting that fuses the imaginary with the real—the stylized architectural forms and rocks with the water in the pool, the trees, and the landscape imagery. In this interplay, Myers evokes what she has characterized as "the ways in which ancient archetypes survive as the foundation for current images of reality."

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

The Allure of the Concentric is an expression of the mythic desire for ultimate renewal and regeneration. It is sustained by a common childhood memory. A still pond in the heat of summer gives the illusion of infinite depth. Its surface reflects a canopy of trees and the sky above. A pebble hurled into its center creates a wave of concentric circles and with it a suspension of clarity which invites reverie. The inverted world is reduced to shuddering abstraction. Within the time it takes for the clear dome of the sky to reassemble itself, imagination travels great distances, conjuring the abstract shapes into bits of fiction, a tremendous canyon, an oasis, a rose garden. An inchoate map, and yet one which uniquely satisfies a compelling need—to fill precisely the empty spaces between decaying circles.

Using the decaying concentricities of water as its central paradigm, *The Allure of the Concentric* is structured as a fantastic courtyard, fusing architectural and natural elements in a circular narrative which is at once visual and

The Allure of the Concentric, 1985

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spatial. It seeks to evoke the conjectural reality of both poet and scientist, ancient and modern personae who revive the mythic adventure as a search for origins. This search, whether articulated as the dream of an image which dreams all other images, or as a law which reduces the known universe to a singularity, is an enterprise destined to become, regrettably but fittingly, only an approximation.

Through the operation of disparate metaphors, *The Allure of the Concentric* is a reminder of how the enduring legacy of the mythic mind makes its presence felt, within the recurrent motifs, among others, of a dead tree, a tower, or simply a fragment of rock; through the cyclical patterns of the individual and collective imagination; and lastly, by the continuing need to flee our own mortality.

Rita Myers

Credits:

Constructions: Bruce and Bruce Scenery. Technical consultant: Tobey Scott. Photography: Mary Lucier, Rita Myers. Post-production: Matrix Video, courtesy of the Standby Video Editing Program. CMX editor: Rick Feist. Audio synthesizers and audio engineering: Dana McCurdy. Production assistants: Sergei Franklin, Manna Zurkow.

Funding for this project has been generously provided by the New York State Council on the Arts, Media Program; the National Endowment for the Arts, Inter-Arts Program; the Jerome Foundation; and the Artist-in-Residence Program, PASS.

Black slate FORMICA® brand laminate courtesy of Formica Corporation.

With special thanks to Mary Lucier, Tobey Scott, Kay Hines, Jerry Pallor of Locus Communications, and Chris Montague of the Sun Valley Center for the Arts and Humanities.

Biography

Since 1977, Rita Myers has been combining video images and sculptural forms in complex spatial configurations which act as metaphors for sacred states of being. Born in 1947 in Hammonton, New Jersey, she graduated with honors from Douglass College, Rutgers University, in 1969, and received her M.A. in 1974 from Hunter College, City University of New York, where she studied with Robert Morris and Linda Nochlin. Myers was awarded fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1976 and 1980, and from the Creative Artists Public Service program in New York in 1976 and 1981. In 1983 she received a production grant from the Media Arts Program of the New York State Council on the Arts, and in 1984 she received grants from the Jerome Foundation and from the Inter-Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts. Myers has taught at Douglass College, the University of California at Irvine, the University of Hartford Art School, and Montclair State College. She is a member of the Parabola Arts Foundation and serves on the Pro Tem Board of Directors of the Production Facility Project in New York.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

The Kitchen, New York, 1976; University of Colorado, Boulder, 1976; The Kitchen, New York, 1977; University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1978; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1980; The Kitchen, New York, 1981; Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1982; Media Study, Buffalo, 1983; Real Art Ways, Hartford, 1983; Anderson Gallery, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, 1985.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, "Everson Video Revue," 1979 (traveled); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "1979 Biennial Exhibition"; The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, "Video Classics," 1981; Elise Meyer Gallery, New York, "Schemes: A Decade of Installation Drawings," 1981 (traveled); The New Museum, New York, "Alternatives in Retrospect," 1981; The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, "Video as Attitude," 1983; Islip Art Museum, East Islip, New York, "Preparation and Proposition," 1984; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Video and Ritual," 1984; Alternative Museum, New York, "Alternating Currents," 1985; Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna, "Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn," 1985.

Videotapes

All videotapes are 3/4 inch, with sound, unless otherwise noted.

Jumps, 1974. 1/2 inch, black and white; 10 minutes.
Sleep Performance and Second Thoughts, 1974. 1/2 inch, color; 30 minutes.
Slow Squeeze, 1974. 1/2 inch, black and white; 10 minutes.
Sweeps, 1974. 1/2 inch, black and white; 10 minutes.
Tilt, 1974. 1/2 inch, black and white; 10 minutes.
The Points of a Star.
Chapter 1. *Separations*, 1978. Color; 45 minutes.
Chapter 2. *Desires*, 1979. Color; 30 minutes.
Chapter 3. *Our Living Dreams*, 1982. Color; 30 minutes.
In the Planet of the Eye, 1984. Color; 5 minutes.

Selected Installations

DUMBDADEADDADUMB, 1975. Two-channel, black and white, sound; 30 minutes.
INVESTIGATION/OBSERVATIONS. "We are alone here." 1975. Single-channel, black and white, sound; 30 minutes.
Forward, 1976. Two-channel, black and white, sound; 30 minutes.
Once Before You, 1976. Two-channel, black and white and color, sound; 20 minutes.
Barricade to Blue, 1977. Three-channel, color, sound; 30 minutes.
Dancing in the Land Where Children Are the Light, 1981. Three-channel, color, sound; 35 minutes.
The Eye of the Beast Is Red, 1983. Four-channel, color, sound; 10 minutes.
The Forms That Begin at the Outer Rim, 1983. Two-channel, color, sound; 10 minutes.
Gate, 1984. Single-channel, color, sound; 3 minutes.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 25
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Deborah Whitman

November 13–December 15, 1985

Film sculptures. On view continuously

Gallery Talk, Thursday, November 21, at 2:00. Deborah Whitman will be present.

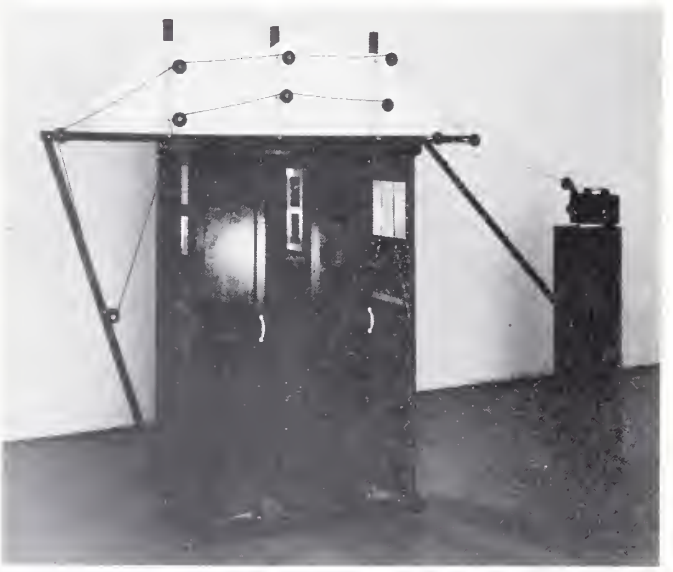
A Cloud Is on Top of the Box of Doors, 1982. Wood, paper, color Super-8 film, film projector, two audiotapes; 5 minutes. 96 × 144 × 24 inches.

A Staircase with a Tree at the End, 1983. Wood, color Super-8 film, film projector, audiotape; 5 minutes. 108 × 120 × 48 inches.

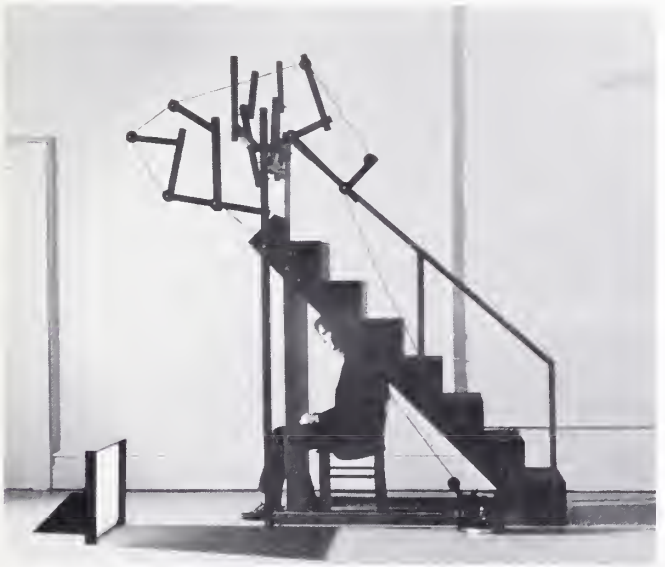
The Upper Room, 1984 Wood, paper, black-and-white Super-8 film, film projector, audiotape; 2 minutes. 96 × 108 × 72 inches.

The experience of filmgoing is grounded in the convention whereby the audience is seated in a darkened theater while the moving image is projected onto a large screen. The apparatuses of cinematic production and projection are hidden from view and seldom acknowledged within the work itself. Deborah Whitman's film sculptures transform the viewing experience by refashioning cinematic materials and changing the basis of film projection and viewing.

Whitman's sculptures, including *A Cloud Is on Top of the Box of Doors* and *A Staircase with a Tree at the End*, function like fantastic cinematic machines in which animated people and shapes alternately appear and disappear in filmic and sculptural space. In *The Upper Room*, we look through a door-like opening to see a film of birds and trees. In this ambiguous dreamlike scenario, we struggle to intercept its signs and images.



A Cloud Is on Top of the Box of Doors, 1982. Installation at P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island City, New York. Photograph by James Dee.



A Staircase with a Tree at the End, 1983.

Combining the cinematic illusionism of the French nineteenth-century filmmaker Georges Méliès with the deceptive simplicity of modernism, Whitman avoids simple metaphor and creates a tension between narrative and time. The continuously running film loops endlessly repeat their impressionistic narratives within structures that evoke the stark outlines of imaginary buildings and fragments of landscapes.

Whitman's work can be seen in the context of earlier film projects. The placement of the projector within gallery and performance spaces was a strategy employed in the 1960s by Robert Whitman, for example, in Happenings and Stan VanDerBeek in multimedia installations. In recent years, artists have used film in a variety of formats, ranging from the multiple projector pieces of Paul Sharits to Bill Lundberg's examination of the illusionistic properties of the representational image. In all these works film is treated as a plastic and flexible medium in which sound and image can articulate a range of meaning and significance.

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Deborah Whitman has created a body of work that uses the projection process as an integral part of her sculptures. Both form and image are interrelated as the films' fragmentary narratives are framed by the sculptural motifs. The whole is at once a compelling and engaging visual, cinematic experience.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

With my sculptures I try to create a setting which contains a theme before a plot even happens and activates a plot when the characters enter. I build structures out of lumber and loop film through them. The film projects onto screens within the structure. Seen from a distance, the sculpture, by its shape, is a synopsis of its theme. It intimates gestures members of the audience would make in order to see the film, such as opening doors, or sitting down to view the film image. On coming closer, the audience interacts with the sculpture, either physically or in their minds, and their gestures accumulate into a plot. They walk around the sculpture, opening and closing the doors, or imagine walking up the stairs. They then become characters.

A Cloud Is on Top of the Box of Doors

The film loops up over the structure and projects through three translucent screens encased within a box, making two rooms inside. The film format is divided into three parts, so that specific images are projected onto the appropriate screen. The inside screens are accessible to view by four sliding doors, two on each side of the box. From the front, all three screens fit together in three-dimensional perspective, but as the viewer walks around the sculpture and looks into the rooms, the screens separate. The shape of each screen symbolizes a part of the process of making a decision. The center screen is a window frame—a constant, as in a window: the scene changes behind it but the window remains the same. The first screen has the window cut out of it, so the viewer has to deliberate, to look from one side of the gap to the other to see the image. The third screen is what is caught in the frame and decided upon. Ideally, the sculpture should be seen in the sky, with a person walking around and around it, going from one room to the other, symbolizing a circuit from deliberation to decision to culmination, into the clouds.

A Staircase with a Tree at the End

In this film sculpture there is a staircase with a tree at the end and a chair beneath the stairs. A film projector is at the base of the stairs, with a film loop running up through the tree. The film projects onto a screen near the base of the tree. The sculpture is about two opposite attitudes: one involving sitting and thinking, the other walking and acting on thoughts. On the film are images of doors opening down a hall. The rooms behind the doors are either empty or full of images. The film loops the thoughts through the tree. The two attitudes happen at the same time, creating a paradox about the distance of dreams and the actualizing of beauty.

The Upper Room

This sculpture contains an entrance with a ladder and a box suspended on a pole. The box has a door on the front which can be opened and closed. The film projects into the box. On the film is a dream sequence in black and white. The small box with the door represents an upper room, a place in the mind, and the entrance with the ladder represents a gradual climb to the narrow access of the room and the point where thought separates from the body. The film repeats a cycle of animated images from earth to sky: dog, tree, ladder, bird, place.

Deborah Whitman

Biography

Deborah Whitman was born in 1953 in Leesburg, Virginia. She studied studio art, art history, theater, and fiction writing at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, where she received her B.A. in 1975. Whitman went on to Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, receiving her M.F.A. in 1978, and then taught sculpture, drawing, and two-dimensional design there. Whitman, who lives in New York, has been incorporating film with sculpture since 1977, and has worked as a commercial artist since 1978.

One-Artist Exhibitions

Franklin Furnace, New York, 1981; PS. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island City, New York, 1982; John Gibson Gallery, New York, 1984.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Franklin Furnace, New York, "Four at the Furnace," 1977; The New Museum, New York, "Events," 1981; The Clocktower, New York, "Film as Installation II," 1983; The Kitchen, New York, "Negative Utopia," 1983; The Clocktower, New York, "PS. 1 Studio Artists," 1984; Makkom, Amsterdam, "Caidoz in Makkom," 1984.

Sculptures with Film or Video

When people act you have a performance, When materials act you have a machine, When nature acts you have a phenomenon, 1976. Wood, canvas, single-channel videotape, audiotape.

The Ear Is the Eye's Genius, 1977. Wood, paper, two color Super-8 film loops, three audiotapes.

Who's Arena?, 1977. Wood, canvas, single-channel videotape, audiotape.

The Definitive's Shadow, 1980. Wood, paper, color Super-8 film loop, two audiotapes.

Motorized Mask, 1981. Wood, pinch roller, motor, black-and-white Super-8 film loop.

When the Symbols Turn the Action, 1981. Wood, paper, black-and-white Super-8 film loop, audiotape.

Installation with Revolving Light, 1983. Wood, revolving light, color Super-8 film loop.

Motorized Hat, 1983. Wood, gears, belts, handle, black-and-white Super-8 film loop.

Theatre with Figures, 1983. Wood, black-and-white Super-8 film loop.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 26
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

The L.A. Rebellion: A Turning Point in Black Cinema

January 3–19, 1986

Gallery Talk, Thursday, January 16, after the 12:00 screening. Clyde Taylor will be present.

By the turn of the next century, film historians will recognize that a decisive turning point in the development of black cinema took place at UCLA in the early 1970s. By then, persuasive definitions of black cinema will revolve around images encoded not by Hollywood, but within the self-understanding of the African-American population.

The latest black independent film movement (roughly from 1964 to the present) represents the most concerted effort to establish black cinema and to distinguish it from "images of blacks in films." Among the independents determined to make films outside the Hollywood orbit, two episodes of creative collaboration stand out. Both reveal all the marks of cultural movements—the efforts to establish definitions, the drafting of manifestos, the excited exchange of ideas and techniques, the revisionist review of historical legacies, and the self-conscious awareness of being players on a new historical stage.

One of these episodes was the activity around *Black Journal*, a PBS television magazine program regularly produced by a team of black directors under the leadership of William Greaves from 1968 to 1971. There, the contours of black documentary, aimed at exploring the self-definition of African-Americans, were effectively laid out. But even these revisionist documentarians understood the vital role of dramatic narrative for the full expression of black cinematic possibilities.

Narrative films were also the focus of a second group of talented, resourceful cinema interventionists who came together as students in the 1970s at UCLA. Energized by the momentum of the Black Power movement, the growth of Pan-African and cultural-nationalist organizing in post-Watts rebellion Los Angeles, and the dozens of cultural, artistic, and educational ventures of the second Black Reconstruction, these young filmmakers made a commitment to dramatic films—a commitment fired by the discomfort of dwelling in the belly of the beast: minutes away, Hollywood was reviving itself economically through a glut of mercenary black exploitation movies.

At Thursday-night screenings, the UCLA group recapitulated the history of cinema and its bearings on black populations. They debated aesthetic questions in and out of classes. It was here that Teshome Gabriel, a noted film scholar, began his resolute inquiries into Third World cinema theory. Haile Gerima, Larry Clark, Charles Burnett, Pamela Jones, Ben Caldwell, Majied Mahdi, and John Rier all crewed for one another's directorial efforts, throwing in ideas and opinions. Aware that the moment was propitious, they deliberately overreached the category of student films, aiming toward finished products that, within limited means, could go into independent distribution.

From *Child of Resistance* (1972) on, each of the films presented here had the shock value of a new departure, creating a sense of tradition that persists to the present. The Los Angeles Rebellion is recognizable in a determination to expose the irresponsibility of Hollywood portrayals of black people by developing a film language whose bold, even extravagant, innovation sought filmic equivalents of black social and cultural discourse. Every code of classical cinema was rudely smashed—conventions of editing, framing, storytelling, time, and space. As a body of work it is explicitly more realistic and/or more theatrical than the films coming out of the major studios. Sound tracks carry needling surprises. Characters speak easily of things never heard in popcorn movies. To this day, among the films of the black independent movement, those coming out of the Los Angeles Rebellion stand out for the assurance with which they say "black cinema spoken here!"

Child of Resistance can be taken as a manifesto film. Inspired by a dream about Angela Davis (also formerly of UCLA) in prison, it assaults the conventions of classical film construction with the violence Fanon described as the complement of mental liberation. Traditional codes of time and space are drastically reordered in the mental flashes of an archetypal political woman prisoner within the psychosocial contradictions that frame her incarceration. Images clash in paradoxical juxtapositions, suggestive of the theater of the absurd, but probing resolution through the violence of revolution. No less instrumental to its declaration of independence, an off-camera voice, that of the protagonist, reaches directly to a black audience (as does the protagonist herself in one scene), discarding the illusion of an "objective" point of view through which dominant cinema reaches to an implicitly white spectatorship.

The innovations of Ben Caldwell's *I and I: An African Allegory* (1977) build on a non-linear narrative structure in which three episodes are linked by a mythic figure representing the African spirit venturing in America. The climactic shock of one episode springs from the absurdist juxtapositions and turnabouts of black theater in the sixties. In another, the shock comes when a documentary

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interview is extended, almost parodistically, into surreal horror. Through dispositions of symbol and image, Caldwell, as in much recent creative black writing, evokes Africa obliquely, as an almost hallucinatory memory, a reference point for the transformation of values.

Like many Third World films, Haile Gerima's *Bush Mama* (1976) repudiates the socio-economic system, its attritions of its weaker victims through racism, class discrimination, and inhumane social policies, brutally administered. The burden falls on Dorothy, a welfare mother, to find a whole, safe life under these obstacles. Through the open questioning of her daughter she discovers an unsanctioned solution. *Bush Mama* elaborates themes and images from Gerima's earlier *Child of Resistance*.

Larry Clark's *Passing Through* (1977) attempts to subvert the Hollywood action genre, riffing its search, confrontation, chase, and vengeance formulas with unruly notes from the underground. Womack's search for Papa, the master musician, is simultaneously a quest for the liberation of black music. Clark's deliberate, highly coded cinematography reflects the most ambitious effort to structure a film according to the rhythms and movement patterns of that music tradition. Because of its success in this visual orchestration and its fidelity to the life and the scene, it is possibly the best fictional jazz film made so far.

Perhaps the best-known feature film from the L.A. movement, Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep* (1977), inaugurates another direction in black cinema, the search for a more sensitive, patient realism. The quest of Burnett's protagonist, a worker in a slaughterhouse, is for peace amid the malaise, incoherence, and futility of his South-Central L.A. neighborhood; peace from the fearful dreams he has of his children's lives. Obviously influenced by Italian neorealism, Burnett's narrative is striking for its perceptions of the unpretty, tragicomic poetry of everyday life among the oppressed.

The black women directors who emerged at UCLA in the late 1970s extended the aesthetic tendencies of the movement, grounding perceptions of black culture in African sources, exploring vehicles of symbol, icon, and ritual beyond normative practice, and explicating concerns for social justice. Their particular contribution came in presenting self-defining black women on the screen, an effort that represents a more drastic departure in cinema history than comparable portraits of black male figures. What is remarkable and remarkably fresh about the films of Julie Dash, Alile Sharon Larkin, and Barbara McCullough is their portrayal for nearly the first time of black women with an existence for themselves.

In their different ways, Dash's *Four Women* (1978) and McCullough's *Water Ritual #1: An Urban Rite of Purification* (1980) honor the interior complexity of black women, a dimension virtually denied in American cultural expression. In both cases, this interiority is all the more focused by the absence of narrative and dialogue. Based on the Nina Simone composition, *Four Women* authenticates the varieties of experience and personalities among black women through dispositions of color, movement, and music in a way that bears interesting formal parallels to Ntozake Shange's play *For Colored Girls. . . . Water Ritual #1*, through visual incantation, alludes to the vital sources of cultural survival and identity among African-American women in African and Third World orientations toward nature, man-made environments, magic, and art. Grounded in the concrete, it is nevertheless provocatively metaphysical.

Alile Sharon Larkin's *A Different Image* (1982) deploys narrative and dialogue to pose a retort to the obliteration or malformation of black women in Western art and popular culture. Her young protagonist's refusal to be bounded by the erotic depersonalizations of black men and the sexist-racist codes of the American media is at once quixotic, utopian, and heroic.

Julie Dash's *Illusions* (1982) breaks new ground in the aesthetic deliberations centered at UCLA. Like *Passing Through*, it uses Hollywood codes in order to subvert them with counter-normative statements. Further, it triumphs in attention to parodic detail, introducing surcharges of wit, irony, and reflection on history, both cinematic and national. Set in a Hollywood studio during World War II, *Illusions* maneuvers the devices and mythologies of the studio system against itself as these collide with the incomprehensible presence of creative black women. Its rather abrupt ending is explained by the fact that it was intended as a four-part film, possibly based on Dash's earlier *Four Women*. It is nevertheless, in its multireflexive examination of appearance and reality in American society, one of the most brilliant achievements of style and concept in recent American filmmaking.

The films in this exhibition form the core of a declaration of independence, but they are by no means its only manifestation. The ethos that arose in Los Angeles extends to other films by black UCLA students and to diverse efforts to build a black cinema culture. It extends from formal and informal education, the formation of distribution channels, and the mounting of exhibitions, to assistance in Third World film production/distribution enterprises. Its traditions are alive and well, as seen in the work of new directors, such as Monona Wali's *Grey Area* (1981) and Billy Woodberry's respected feature *Bless Their Little Hearts* (1984), scripted by Charles Burnett. The progress and evolution in the first contingent of the L.A. movement can be seen in Haile Gerima's continued output, *Harvest: 3,000 Years* (1976), *Wilmington 10–USA Ten Thousand* (1978), *Ashes and Embers* (1982), and *After Winter: Sterling Brown* (1985); in Charles Burnett's *My Brothers Wedding* (1983); and in Ben Caldwell's experimental video work *Babylon Is Falling* (1983) and the multimedia production *United States of Emergency* (1985). As black independent film work is given closer scrutiny, the L.A. movement will be recognized as an indispensable part of its development.

Clyde Taylor
Guest Curator

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Whitney Museum of American Art 27
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Howard Fried

February 14–March 16, 1986

The Museum Reaction Piece, 1978–86
Video installation. On view continuously

Gallery Talk, Tuesday, February 18, at 2:00
Howard Fried will be present.

Components

Painted sheetrock structure, lights, fans, vents, two stoves, two tables, four chairs, two 10-inch televisions, electrical outlets and switchplates, text, two monitors, single-channel videotape, color, sound.

Credits

Richard Simmons, Camille Rykowski, Anne Leverton, Ronald Kukta, Marina Lary, Jim Harithas, Marlana Timmons, Peter Jones, Kathy Restucio, Miscael Pommier, Peg Weiss, Gussie Will Alex, Susanne Foley, Mary Ann Callo, Leslie Gorman, Carole Burke, Jill Bell, Linda Simmons, Robert Paris, Eugenie Candau, Elise Goldstein, Margaret Foster, Tyrone Ellsworth Jefferson, Laura Rosenthal, Phil Berkman, Dean Decent.

Howard Fried's work can be seen in the context of the Conceptual and Minimalist performance projects of Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, Joan Jonas, and Peter Campus, all of which employed the portable video camera to express attitudes about the body and the actions of the artist. During the past fifteen years Fried, a San Francisco-based artist, has been particularly influential in the development of performance and video in California. His art is distinguished by an interest in the rules and conventions governing our daily lives. Through his work in performance, film, and video, Fried creates metaphors for the ways in which cognitive and perceptual processes are framed by social institutions such as schools, museums, and sports. The result is an incisive and often witty look at the psychology of the self within artistic practice and the viewer's reception of the work.

In the film *The Burghers of Fort Worth* (1975), Fried is seen on camera as he is being taught, by a golf pro at a Fort Worth country club, how to swing the club and drive the ball. The camera is attached to a structure suspended from a tree, which swings back and forth in imitation of the golfer's swing. The sound track consists of the golf pro's verbal instructions and his dialogue with Fried. Throughout this teaching process, the moving camera catches and loses the action. The interaction of Fried's swings and the camera's repeating arcs creates both frustration and expectation for the viewer as well as for Fried in his role as a neophyte golfer.

In the videotape *Vito's Reef* (1978), Fried himself assumes the place of the pedagogue, as we observe him standing at a blackboard explaining, in an abstruse manner, physical and social phenomena to an unseen class. His discourse is intercut with two other scenes. In one, he stands in a football stadium trying to get a very frustrated young woman to memorize a complicated, tongue-in-cheek dissertation on football strategy. In another, Fried and a young boy physically spar—a metaphor for the kind of power teachers wield over their students.

In both *The Burghers of Fort Worth* and *Vito's Reef*, the action is mirrored in the formal structure of the work, either through the camera's position and movement or in the editing. In this way Fried establishes a formal and psychological analogy for the action taking place within the work. With this strategy, he seeks to deconstruct the processes that shape our lives, and the ways in which they are channeled through social institutions.

The Museum Reaction Piece (1978–86), on view in the Film and Video Gallery, uses the preparation and consumption of food as a metaphor for the production and reception of art. It consists of a two-room structure replicating the original performance space in which the work was made. Each room is furnished with a stove, a working fan that blows air into the adjoining room, and a table and chair. On the table is a small video monitor with a blank screen. Outside the structure, on two video monitors, a tape is played, edited from the original performance. The action on the tape occurs in two kitchens, where different performers, a "host" and a "host's host," prepare meals at different times of the day. The cooking is done by various staff members of the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, New York, where this piece was first installed. The central theme of *The Museum Reaction Piece* is the role of the museum as a conduit for art.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

The Museum Reaction Piece was first installed in 1978 at the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York. At that time, the piece consisted of its architectural components and a text addressed to two museum employees—the "number one" and "number two" hosts—who each lunch with seven staff members during the seven days of the exhibition. The text is written in the form of a recipe explaining in a general way how to conduct each of fourteen lunches.

The piece was set in two adjoining kitchenettes with a common wall that housed two exhaust fans. The fans and lights were wired in such a way that when a light in a room

This exhibition has been funded in part by a generous contribution from James Wm. Clement. The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Museum Reaction Piece, installation at University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1983. Photograph by Ben Blackwell.

was turned on, the fan moving air out of that room was also turned on. Consequently, after a meal had taken place in one room, the resulting odors were transmitted to the other room. I used these and other architectural devices, as well as two sets of "TV programs" (*The Number One Host's Host* and *The Number Two Host's Host*), to direct the activity to be taped through a list of procedures found in the 1978 text.

After the seven episodes were taped, a regenerative process began that continued for five years. The tapes of the original lunches were transcribed and used by the original participants to play themselves while I reshot the lunches in a highly controlled manner. This process was frustrated when several of the participants became unavailable. I decided to replace these people with others of the same sex and same occupation, using the scripts developed by the original participants (i.e., a director's female secretary was replaced by another director's female secretary; a male security guard was replaced by another male security guard). At this point, the production was moved from Syracuse to San Francisco and completed in my studio.

Howard Fried

Adapted from *Howard Fried: Works from 1969 to 1983*, exhibition brochure (Berkeley: University Art Museum, University of California, 1983), unpaginated.

Biography

Howard Fried was born in 1946 in Cleveland. He attended Syracuse University from 1964 to 1967, received a B.F.A. from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1968 and an M.F.A. from the University of California, Davis, in 1970. Fried was awarded artist's fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1974, 1980, and 1983. He was a visiting professor at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in 1982 and at the Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, in 1985, and has taught at the San Francisco Art Institute since 1970. Fried lives in San Francisco.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Reese Palley Gallery, San Francisco, 1970; Reese Palley Gallery, New York, 1971; Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, 1972; San Francisco Art Institute, 1972; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1977; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, 1978; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1979; and/or, Seattle, 1981; A Space, Toronto, 1981; University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1982; Artists Space, New York, 1983; University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1983; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, 1985.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, West Germany, "Prospect 71 Projection," 1971; Kassel, West Germany, "Documenta 5," 1972; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, "Circuit: A Video Invitational," 1973 (traveled); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "1977 Biennial Exhibition"; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Performance Video," 1982; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, "'60–'80 Attitudes, Concepts, Images," 1982; Media Study/Buffalo, "Video/TV: Humor/Comedy," 1983 (traveled); Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, Alberta, "Social Space," 1984; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "New American Video Art: A Historical Survey, 1967–1980," 1984 (traveling); The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Spatial Relationships in Video," 1985.

Selected Videotapes and Sculptures with Video Components

All videotapes are 3/4 inch, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

The San Francisco Lesson, 1969–81. Installation, off-air television, black and white.
Fuck You Purdue, 1971. 1/2 inch, black and white; 30 minutes.
Sea Sell Sea Sick at $\frac{\text{Saw}}{\text{Sea}}$ *Sea Soar*, 1971. Single-channel installation, 1/2 inch, black and white; 50 minutes.
Which Hunt?, 1972. 1/2 inch, black and white; 50 minutes.
Indian War Dance, 1972–74. 1/4 inch, black and white; 40 minutes.
Seaquick, 1972–74. 1/2 inch, black and white; 40 minutes.
Intraction, 1974. Single-channel installation, 1/2 inch, black and white; 50 minutes.
The Conceptual Minute, 1976. 1 minute.
Vito's Reef, 1978. 34 minutes.
Condom, 1979–80. 35 minutes.
Making a Paid Political Announcement, 1982. 7 minutes.
Pattern Maker, 1984. Single-channel installation.
Atomic Time ± Control, 1985. Six-channel installation, closed circuit, black and white.

Selected videotapes are distributed by The Kitchen, New York, and Art Metropole, Toronto.

Selected Films and Sculptures with Film Components

All films are Super-8, black and white, and silent, unless otherwise noted.

I Shoot My Reading Rate at 5 Frames per Second, 1969. 15 seconds.
Approach-Avoidance 1, 1970. Installation; 15-minute loop.
Chronometric Depth Perception, 1970. 3 minutes.
1970, 1970. Installation; 28 minutes.
Cheshire Cat 2, 1971. 16 minutes.
Inside the Harlequin (Approach-Avoidance 2 & 3), 1971. Dual projection, color; two 14-minute loops.
Sustentense, 1974. 16mm, color, sound; 4 minutes.
The Burghers of Forth Worth, 1975. 16mm, color, sound; 30 minutes.
The First Historical Situation (from *Pattern Maker*), 1984. 16mm, color; 52 minutes.

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Richardson, Brenda. "Howard Fried: The Paradox of Approach-Avoidance," *Arts Magazine*, 45 (Summer 1971), pp. 30–33.
White, Robin. "Howard Fried," *View*. Oakland, California: Crown Point Press, 1979.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 28
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Yvonne Rainer

March 25–April 10, 1986

Gallery Talk, Wednesday, April 9, following the 12:00 screening. Yvonne Rainer will be present.

Since the release of her first feature-length film, *Lives of Performers,* in 1972, Yvonne Rainer has produced one of the most distinguished bodies of work in contemporary film. Rainer's modernist inquiry into the conventions and meaning of the cinematic discourse involves a formal exploration of the interplay between the real and the fictional. This theoretical and aesthetic issue is developed through the employment of narrative strategies in the construction of individual scenes. Rainer employs the script, performances, editing, cinematography, and composition in a complex and engaging inquiry into the role of the artist in the modern world.

In one sense, Rainer's *Lives of Performers* was part of her celebrated activities in American dance. In another, it is her translation of the performative and of theatrical space into film. Rainer represents the production of both dance and film first through the choreographer/director's actions on screen, then through the sound track commentary on the emotional complexity of making and performing art. The formal elegance of the film is enhanced by Babette Mangolte's cinematography.

In her next film, *Film About a Woman Who...* (1974), Rainer deliberately interplayed cinematic techniques—image, text, music, and speech—to fashion a fragmented narrative where the fictional action moves between characters located within imaginary on- and off-screen places. Because the action thus unfolds in different spaces, the scene becomes disorienting for the viewer.

In 1976 Rainer released *Kristina Talking Pictures,* a film where, as she put it, "within a form that allows for shifting correlations between word and image, persona and performer, enactment and illustration, speech and recitation, explanation and ambiguity [the film] circles in a narrowing spiral toward its primary concerns: the uncertain relation of public act to private fate, the ever-present possibility for disparity between public-directed conscience and private will." Rainer's arresting images compose an intricate narrative that explores the female protagonist as public artist and private self.

This personal film was followed in 1980 with *Journeys from Berlin/1971,* a reflexive work that juxtaposes radically opposed forces of both a personal and public nature. Thus we see characters shifting their identity from scene to scene and rear-screen-projected images altering the ground of the action within the scene. Politics becomes historical and imaginative as we follow five characters through changing points of view through voice-over, projected images, props, and urban locations, causing the meaning of the image and text to shift with each scene.

Yvonne Rainer's latest film, *The Man Who Envied Women* (1985), resynthesizes the elements of her earlier works as characters, male and female, construct relationships and roles within the urban environment of the 1980s—where real estate and psychoanalytic theory vie with each other as the dominant themes of cultural and political life. With wit and at some risk, Rainer pursues the contradictions within the life of the intellectual and the artist. She plays with the concept of power, both of the image and the word, as her characters change appearance and roles, voice interpretations of vaudevillian dreams, engage in psychoanalytic/sexual combat through speech and gesture, blindness and insight.

Rainer effectively develops scenes that play out different points of view. For example, in one scene, avant-garde and popular film sequences are screened before an audience in the film, as the male protagonist, seated on stage, delivers a running commentary. The kaleidoscopic change of scenes and characters is further developed in Rainer's strategic employment of documentary footage, videotape, and performances in a variety of locations. The result is an incisive vision of New York City, the contradiction-riddled, post-modern metropolis of late capitalism.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Some Strategies for Screwing Up Cinematic Narrative

Play with signifiers of desire. Have two or more actors play the main male character. Remove the physical presence of the female protagonist and reintroduce her as a voice. Create situations that can accommodate both ambiguity and contradiction without eliminating the possibility of taking specific political stands.

Shift the image/ground of narrative movement by frequent changes in the "production value" of the image, e.g., by utilizing refilming techniques, blown up Super-8,

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inferior quality video transfers, shooting off of a TV set with bad reception, etc., not in order to make the usual intra-narrative tropes, however, such as the character's "look" at a TV show or a shift in meaning of the image to dream, flashback, or inner thoughts of a character. What I'm talking about is a disruption of the glossy, unified surface of professional cinematography by means of optically degenerated shots within an otherwise seamlessly edited narrative sequence.

Play off different, sometimes conflicting, authorial voices. And here I'm not talking about balance or both sides of a question like the nightly news, or about finding a "new language" for women. I'm talking about registers of complicity/protest/acquiescence within a single shot or scene that do not give a message of despair. I'm talking about bad guys making progressive political sense and good girls shooting off their big toes and mouths. I'm talking about uneven development and fit in the departments of consciousness, activism, articulation, and behavior that must be constantly reassessed by the spectator. I'm talking about incongruous juxtapositions of modes of address: recitation, reading, "real" or spontaneous speech, printed texts, quoted texts, et al., all in the same film. I'm talking about representations of divine couplings and (un)holy triads being rescreened only to be used for target practice. I'm talking about not pretending that a life lived in potholes taking potshots will be easy and without cost, on screen or off.

I'm talking about films where in every scene you have to decide anew the priorities of looking and listening. And I'm talking about films that allow for periods of poetic ambiguity only to unexpectedly erupt into rhetoric, outrage, direct political address or analysis only to return to a new adventure of Oedipus F(1) at Foot or New Perils of Edy Foot. *He* may still shoot off his big toe while getting or not getting the girl, but he'll also ask a few questions or wait in the wings a little longer to see how the ladies work it out without him, while *she* . . . well, maybe she'll stop in her tracks and muse to the female spectator, "Hey, we're wearing the same dress, aren't we? Why don't we pool our energies and try to figure out what a political myth for socialist feminism might look like."

So they (she and she) make a movie together and....

Yvonne Rainer

Biography

Yvonne Rainer was born in San Francisco in 1934. She began training as a modern dancer in New York in 1957, turning to choreography in 1960, and was one of the founders of the Judson Dance Theater in 1962. In 1963 she began to integrate slides and short films into her live performances. Rainer's feature-length films have been shown extensively in the United States and abroad, and prints are included in public and private collections around the world. She has received numerous awards and fellowships, among others, from the Guggenheim Foundation (1969), the National Endowment for the Arts (1971, 1974, 1983, 1985), Creative Artists Public Service (1973, 1975), the New York State Council on the Arts (1975, 1976, 1979, 1983), the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (1976-77), and won First Prize for Independent/Experimental Film from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association in 1981 for *Journeys from Berlin/1971*. Rainer has taught at schools throughout North America, including the New School for Social Research, the University of California, San Diego, the San Francisco Art Institute, the California Institute of the Arts, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is currently teaching at the Independent Study Program of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Rainer lives in New York.

Filmography

All films 16mm, sound.

Lives of Performers, 1972. Black and white, 90 minutes.

Film About a Woman Who..., 1974. Black and white; 105 minutes.

Kristina Talking Pictures, 1976. Color and black and white; 90 minutes.

Journeys from Berlin/1971, 1980. Color and black and white; 125 minutes.

The Man Who Envied Women, 1985. Color and black and white, 130 minutes.

Yvonne Rainer's films are distributed by the Film-makers' Cooperative, First Run Features, and The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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Kuhn, Annette. *Women's Pictures.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.

Michelson, Annette. "Yvonne Rainer, Part Two: 'Lives of Performers'," *Artforum,* 12 (February 1974), pp. 30–35.

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Selected One-Artist Screenings

The New American Filmmakers Series, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1974; Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1975; The Other Cinema, London, 1977; Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Los Angeles, "Aspects of Avant-Garde Film," 1981; Bleecker Street Cinema, New York, "Radical Images," 1981; American Film Institute, Los Angeles, "Evenings with Contemporary Filmmakers," 1982; University of California, Santa Cruz, "2nd Yvonne Rainer Film Festival," 1985; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1985; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1986.

Selected Festivals

Cannes Film Festival, 1974; Montreux, Switzerland, "New Forms in Film," 1974; Cologne, West Germany, "Projekt '74," 1974; Edinburgh Film Festival, 1975; Filmex, 1976; Berlin Film Festival, 1977; The Kitchen, New York, "Filmworks '80," 1980; Rotterdam Film Festival, 1980; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1981 Biennial Exhibition; Montreal Women's Film Festival, 1985.

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Bill Fontana

April 18–May 18, 1986

Kirribilli Wharf, 1976
Sound installation. Exhibited continuously

Gallery Talk, Tuesday, April 22, at 2:00
Bill Fontana will be present.

Credits

Andrew McLennan, Executive Producer, Australian Broadcasting Corp.

Bill Fontana's sound sculptures are sophisticated investigations into the way we perceive sounds in the world. As in learning a language, we identify sounds through a complex set of sensory cues, linking them to their technological or natural sources in the environment. Bill Fontana has created a series of compelling projects that subtly treat the interplay between the origins of sound and the contexts in which we perceive them. One could consider Fontana's work in relation to Marcel Duchamp's strategy of the found object. By removing an everyday object from its customary context, labeling it an art object, and placing it in a gallery, Duchamp gave it new meaning and significance. This strategy overturned the traditional assumption of what makes a work of art. Other modernists carried Duchamp's ideas into composition and performance. John Cage, in his seminal composition *4′33″* from the early 1950s, instructs the musician to make no sound. The performance then, is made up of those sounds which, by chance, fill the concert hall during the length of the composition. Other artists such as Max Neuhaus and Alvin Lucier explored and manipulated the natural sounds of the environment. The result of these endeavors has been a new definition of music, one that links sound to the environment that generates it.

In 1983 Fontana completed *Oscillating Steel Grids Along the Brooklyn Bridge* on the occasion of the bridge's centennial. The public, standing in the plaza of the World Trade Center, heard from hidden speakers the sounds made by the vibrations of the bridge's road surface from the constant surge of traffic. By transmitting these sounds live from the bridge to a public plaza—that is, to a place removed from the cause of the sound—the listener becomes more aware of tonal range and modulation. Isolating the sound from its source, Fontana enables the listener to concentrate on its intrinsic beauty and complexity.

In *Entfernte Züge* ("Distant Trains") the original source of the sound is central to Fontana's concept. While an artist-in-residence in West Berlin in 1984, he visited an empty field which had once been the site of the Anhalter Bahnhof, a major train station in prewar Berlin. He there played sounds he had recorded onto 8-channel tape at the Cologne railroad station—West Germany's busiest. The sounds emanating from eight speakers hidden in the desolate field evoked a haunting sense of a bustling train station.

Kirribilli Wharf (1976), Fontana's first 8-channel field recording, is a key work in his career. He recorded the sound of the waves rushing beneath Kirribilli Wharf in Sydney Harbor, Australia. The sound of the water echoing through the gallery evokes the tangible presence of the wharf. In this work, as in his other sound sculptures, audio becomes the physical medium of a subtle aesthetic experience.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

The compositional aspects of ambient sound have been a central issue in my work since 1968. I have used field recording as a way to investigate the whole range of our normal experience of ambient sound in terms of how various instances possess musical form. These investigations have been carried out under the pervading influence of a rhetorical question: what is this sound that I am now hearing? Logically, a true answer to this question for any sound would have the form: a sound is all the possible ways there are to hear it.

My acoustical investigations became increasingly sculptural by the mid-seventies as I became more and more interested in the spatial properties of sound fields. I was fascinated with how familiar sound sources had many possible acoustical perspectives, and how the simultaneous perception of these possible perspectives could transform the acoustical meaning of the sound.

Coincident with my growing interest in the spatial properties of sound fields, I moved to Australia in 1975, where I began working with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, making field recordings of various Australian soundscapes. The emptiness and vastness of the Australian landscape was inspiring to me, and greatly nurtured my spatial thinking about sound fields.

During this time, with the ABC's technical assistance, I made my first 8-channel field recordings of environmental sound sources. The first such recording to be realized,

Bill Fontana recording sounds at the Cologne train station for *Entfernte Züge*, 1984. Photograph by Rolf Langebantels.

Kirribilli Wharf (1976), marked a turning point in my work. After several years of dreaming about the possibilities of making such recordings, the successful realization of *Kirribilli Wharf* made tangible to me a whole new world of possible sound sculptures.

Kirribilli Wharf itself is a floating dock on the north side of Sydney Harbor. I used to catch a ferry there every day to get to Circular Quay in downtown Sydney. One day while waiting for a ferry, I noticed that there were many small cylindrical holes between the surface I stood on and the ocean beneath. Putting my ear to one of these openings revealed a wonderful resonant sound (compression wave) caused by the waves underneath suddenly closing the bottom end of the cylindrical hole. As the position of each hole would be in a different relationship to the phase of the waves below, I imagined simultaneously recording many of these holes. Later, one quiet evening, an ABC Outside Broadcast van pulled up to Kirribilli Wharf and I positioned microphones at the openings of eight cylindrical holes. The resulting tape is played here out of eight loudspeakers as a sound sculpture.

Bill Fontana

Biography

Bill Fontana is a composer, audio artist and sound sculptor. Born in Cleveland in 1947, he studied composition with Philip Corner, and majored in philosophy at the New School for Social Research (B.A., 1970). He has been awarded numerous grants and fellowships, including a National Endowment for the Arts Composers Fellowship in 1979, a Satellite Program Development Fund grant from National Public Radio in 1982, an NEA Inter-Arts grant in 1983, and grants from the NEA Media Arts Program in 1984 and 1985. Fontana was artist-in-residence at the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, West Berlin (1983–84). A resident of Berkeley, he is currently artist-in-residence in Japan (Japan-U.S. Creative Arts Fellowship, 1985–86).

Selected Sound Sculptures

Prince Alfred Bridge, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1978.
Space Between Sounds, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1978.
Flight Paths Out to Sea, Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California, 1980.
Landscape Sculpture with Fog Horns, New Music America '81, San Francisco, 1981.
Sound Sculpture with a Sequence of Level Crossings, 12th International Sculpture Conference, Oakland, California, 1982.
Oscillating Steel Grids Along the Brooklyn Bridge, World Trade Center and The Brooklyn Museum, New York, 1983.
Rochester Birds, Long Ridge Mall, Rochester, New York, 1983.
Entfernte Züge, Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD/International Bauausstellung, Berlin/West German Radio, West Berlin, 1984.
Hidden Market, 13th Biennale de Paris, 1985.
Metropolis Köln, West German Radio, Cologne, 1985.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, "Sound," 1979; Akademie der Künste, West Berlin, "Für Augen und Ohren," 1980; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, "Écouter par les Yeux," 1980; Neuberger Museum, Purchase, New York, "Soundings," 1981; Rimini, Italy, "Sonorita Prospettiche," 1982; The Brooklyn Museum, "Great East River Bridge," 1983; International Bauausstellung Berlin, "Idee/Prozess/Ergebnis," 1984; Kunstmuseum Bern, "Alles und Noch Viel Mehr: Das Poetische ABC," 1985; 13th Biennale de Paris, "Section Son," 1985; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, "Komponisten als Hörspiel Macher," 1985.

Recordings

Sound Sculpture: Bill Fontana, 1978. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Landscape Sculpture with Fog Horns, 1982. KQED-FM, San Francisco.
Field Recordings of Natural Sounds, 1983. Sierra Club, San Francisco.
Sounds of the Bay Area, 1983. KQED-FM, San Francisco.
Klang Recycling Skulptur, 1983. Galerie Giannozzo, West Berlin.

Selected Bibliography

Brooklyn Bridge Sound Sculpture (exhibition catalogue). West Berlin: Amerika Haus, 1983.
Fontana, Bill. "Entfernte Züge und Klang Recycling Skulptur." In *Alles und Noch Viel Mehr: Das Poetische ABC* (exhibition catalogue). Kunstmuseum Bern, 1984, pp. 46–48.
———. "Thoughts on Sound." In *Sound* (exhibition catalogue). Los Angeles: Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, 1979, pp. 39–40.
Sound Sculpture: Bill Fontana (exhibition catalogue). Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1977.

Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue
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Hours: Tuesday 1:00–8:00
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Film and video information: (212) 570-0537

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Whitney Museum of American Art 30
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Gary Hill

May 24–June 15, 1986

Gallery Talk, Tuesday, May 27, after the 2:30 screening. Gary Hill will be present.

Schedule

All videotapes ¾-inch, sound, unless otherwise noted.

Tuesdays at 1:15 and 5:15; Wednesdays–Saturdays at 12:30; Sundays at 12:15 and 4:30
Air Raid, 1974. Black and white; 6 minutes.
Sums & Differences, 1978. Black and white; 8 minutes.
Electronic Linguistics, 1978. Black and white; 4 minutes.
Elements, 1978. Black and white; 2 minutes.
Processual Video, 1980. Black and white; 11 minutes.
Black/White/Text, 1980. Black and white, stereo sound; 7 minutes.
Videograms, 1980–81. Black and white; 13 minutes.
Happenstance (part I of many parts), 1982–83. Black and white, stereo sound; 6 minutes.

Tuesdays at 2:30 and 6:30; Wednesdays–Saturdays at 2:30; Sundays at 1:30
Ring Modulation (Full Circle), 1978. Color; 4 minutes.
Mouth Piece, 1978. Color; 1 minute.
Soundings, 1979. Color; 17 minutes.
Picture Story, 1979. Color; 7 minutes.
Equal Time, 1979. Color, stereo sound; 4 minutes.
Primarily Speaking, 1981–83. Color, stereo sound; 20 minutes.
Around & About, 1980. Color; 5 minutes.

Tuesdays at 4:00; Wednesdays–Saturdays at 11:15 and 3:45; Sundays at 3:00
Why Do Things Get in a Muddle? (Come on Petunia), 1984. Color; 32 minutes.
URA ARU (the backside exists), 1985–86. Color; 27 minutes.

URA ARU (the backside exists), 1985–86.

Gary Hill's videotapes are complex meditations on the interrelation between image and language. His early tapes, including *Sums & Differences*, *Elements*, and *Primary* (all of 1978), are formal investigations that integrate the audio and video components so tightly that sound becomes almost visually apprehensible. These tapes reveal Hill's precise weighing of image and language as carriers of meaning. Later tapes, such as *Processual Video* (1980), *Videograms* (1980–81), and *Around & About* (1980), retain Hill's minimal rigor, but they are also richly evocative pieces that variously resemble poems, stories, and soliloquies. They can be seen as precursors of his latest productions *Why Do Things Get in a Muddle? (Come on Petunia)* (1984) and *URA ARU (the backside exists)* (1985–86), which employ formal and rhetorical strategies to explore narrative.

Using texts by Gregory Bateson and Lewis Carroll, *Why Do Things Get in a Muddle?* is a speculation on narrative derived from Bateson's concept of the "metalogue," a conversation whose structure is related to its subject. The parenthetical subtitle is an anagram for the phrase "Once upon a time," and in producing the tape, the actors spoke and performed in reverse. When the tape is played forward, their speech and actions, though recognizable, are distorted to create a dreamlike state.

URA ARU treats a selection of Japanese words as palindromes, words that read the same backward or forward. In the tape, which consists of a series of visual-verbal haiku, Hill employs great economy of action and technique as the printed word, moving through each scene, echoes the spoken word. The result is an inscription of language into the narrative space.

Gary Hill uses video's temporal aspect to create a visible speech that articulates language as a semiotic form of nuanced meanings. In his careful orchestration of video's electronic capabilities, Hill has achieved a truly poetic art whereby word and image are elegantly fused in a representation of meaning as language—both visual and literary.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

This selection of work covers much of the territory I've been working on in single-channel video for the past decade or so. Surely this does not ring as loud for you as it does for me! Gathering these works has been a somewhat painful endeavor, raising questions and times of self doubt. Thoughts of revision have certainly crossed my mind but to partake in such would be to undermine the spirit of experimentation that brought these works to pass. Nevertheless, the nagging uprisings from across and afar the breaches of time are reminders that suggest the option remains open (perhaps in keeping with that spirit of experimentation) regardless that it may very well go unexercised. Enough retro-spection.

The earlier works (e.g. *Air Raid*, *Sums & Differences*, *Ring Modulation (Full Circle)*, variations on the notion of a sound-image construct, arose primarily out of a dialogue with the properties of the medium. This process, however, was significantly underscored by a need to interrupt TV, that incessant oscillation; to transform the electronic signal, giving it a sense of physicality in contradiction to the otherwise ephemeral stream of information. In *Processual Video*, *Black/White/Text*, and *Happenstance*, the orientation shifted toward the "processual," into a reflexive space wherein an experience with language informs the image-making that in turn enfolds back upon the ways in which language originates—a kind of image/language Möbius strip. *Around & About* and *Primarily Speaking* were attempts to engage the "positions" of the viewer and to treat images offhandedly, making their context and content susceptible to the utterances of speech. And most recently, *Why Do Things Get in a Muddle? (Come on Petunia)* and *URA ARU (the backside exists)*, originally stirred by explorations concerned with the acoustic elements of language, have led me via the metalogues of Gregory Bateson to fundamental questions on the directionality of thought with respect to time.

But these descriptions and methodologies begin to falter, quickly becoming antithetical to the substance of the works. One might think of them as already having been inscribed with evidences of wandering. Then, perhaps, in a less circumscribed manner, a genuine possibility for the viewer to bear witness swings open.

Gary Hill

Biography

Gary Hill, born in Santa Monica, California, in 1951, currently lives and works in upstate New York and Seattle. Originally a sculptor, Hill began working with video in the early 1970s and has produced a large body of both single-channel works and inter-media installations. He has received several grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts; among the latter, a Japan/United States Cultural Exchange Fellowship. While in Japan he was artist-in-residence at the Sony Corporation in Hon Atsugi. Hill was a Video Artist Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation and was recently awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. He has taught at the Center for Media Study, Buffalo; Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; and the Cornish Institute, Seattle.

Other Selected Videotapes

All videotapes ¾-inch, sound, unless otherwise noted.

The Fall, 1973. Black and white; 11 minutes.
Rock City Road, 1974–75. Color, silent; 12 minutes.
Earth Pulse, 1975. Color; 6 minutes.
Embryonics II, 1976. Color, silent; 12 minutes.
Improvisations with Bluestone, 1976. Color; 7 minutes.
Mirror Road, 1976. Color, silent; 6 minutes.
Bathing, 1977. Color, silent; 4 minutes.
Windows, 1978. Color, silent; 8 minutes.
Primary, 1978. Color; 2 minutes.
Objects with Destinations, 1979. Color, silent; 4 minutes.
Commentary, 1980. Color; 1 minute.

Gary Hill's videotapes are distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix and The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1976; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, 1979; The Kitchen Center for Video, Music and Dance, New York, 1979; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Video Viewpoints," 1980; Galerie H at ORF, Steirischer Herbst, Graz, Austria, 1982; Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, California, 1982; American Center, Paris, 1983; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1983; SCAN Gallery, Tokyo, 1985.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, "New Work in Abstract Video Imagery," 1977, "Video Revue," 1979; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Projects: Video XXVIII," 1979; Video 80/San Francisco Video Festival, 1980; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Projects: Video XXXV," 1981; Sydney, Australia, Biennale, 1982; Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, "Art Video Retrospectives et Perspectives," 1983; Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, Alberta, Canada, "The Second Link: Viewpoints on Video in the Eighties," 1983 (traveled); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1983 and 1985 Biennial Exhibitions; Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden, Stockholm International Video Art Festival '85, 1985; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris, "Collections Vidéos—Acquisitions depuis 1977," 1986.

Selected Bibliography

Furlong, Lucinda. "A Manner of Speaking: An Interview with Gary Hill," *Afterimage*, 10 (March 1983), pp. 9–16.

Hagen, Charles. "Reviews: Gary Hill," *Artforum*, 22 (February 1984), pp. 77–78.

———. "Tube Art (take out)," *The Village Voice*, May 14, 1985, p. 46.

Hanhardt, John G. "Gary Hill" (program notes), *The New American Filmmaker Series 12*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1983.

Kolpan, Steven C. "Bateson through the Looking Glass," *Video and the Arts*, no. 11 (Winter 1986), pp. 20–22, 35, 56.

Larson, Kay. "Through a Screen, Dimly," *New York*, September 12, 1983, pp. 86–87.

Quasha, George. "Notes on the Feedback Horizon," in *Glass Onion* (program notes, exhibition at And/Or Gallery, Seattle, 1981). Barrytown, New York: Station Hill Press, 1980.

Renouf, Renee. "Video: Conceptual Visualizations," *Artweek*, July 3, 1982, p. 2.

Tono, Yoshiaki, "Why Do Things Get in a Muddle?" (program notes), SCAN Gallery, Tokyo, May–April 1985.

Whitney Museum of American Art
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Hours: Tuesday 1:00–8:00
Wednesday–Saturday 11:00–5:00
Sunday 12:00–6:00

Film and video information: (212) 570-0537

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James Benning

October 7–November 7, 1986

Schedule
All films 16mm, color and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Program I (October 7–10, 12)
Tuesday at 2:00; Wednesday–Friday at 12:00; Sunday at 1:00
Time & a Half, 1972; black and white, 17 minutes. *Art Hist. 101*, 1972; color and black and white, 17 minutes; made with Mike Milligan. *Honeylane Road*, 1973; 6 minutes. *Michigan Avenue*, 1973; 6 minutes; made with Bette Gordon. *8½ × 11*, 1974; 33 minutes.

Program II (October 7–12)
Tuesday at 6:30; Wednesday–Friday at 3:00; Saturday at 3:30; Sunday at 4:00
i94, 1974, 3 minutes; made with Bette Gordon. *The United States of America*, 1975; 25 minutes; made with Bette Gordon. *9/1/75*, 1975; 22 minutes. *Chicago Loop*, 1976; 9 minutes.

Program III (October 14–19)
Tuesday at 2:00; Wednesday–Saturday at 12:00; Sunday at 1:00
11 × 14, 1976; 83 minutes.

Program IV (October 14–19)
Tuesday at 6:30; Wednesday–Saturday at 3:00; Sunday at 4:00
One Way Boogie Woogie, 1977; 60 minutes.

Program V (October 21–26)
Tuesday at 2.00; Wednesday–Saturday at 12:00; Sunday at 1:00
Grand Opera, 1979; 90 minutes.

Program VI (October 21–26)
Tuesday at 6:00; Wednesday–Saturday at 3:00; Sunday at 4:00
Him and Me, 1982; 88 minutes.

Program VII (October 28–November 7)
Tuesday at 2:00; Wednesday–Saturday at 12:00; Sunday at 1:00
American Dreams, 1983; 56 minutes O *Panama*, 1985, 28 minutes; made with Burt Barr.

Program VIII (October 28–November 7)
Tuesday at 6:00, Wednesday–Saturday at 3:00; Sunday at 4:00
Landscape Suicide, 1986; 95 minutes.

The films of James Benning constitute a distinguished and unique contribution to the American independent cinema. Benning has produced a body of work that is both a meditation on American culture and society and a reflection on the self of the artist. These twin issues are subtly elaborated through a vision that emphasizes the power of the photographic image and reevaluates cinematic narrative. The dialectical pull between the formal qualities of Benning's cinematic compositions and the construction of narrative involves the viewer in a rigorous reflection on the traditional discourse of film.

Classical cinematic narrative engages the viewer through familiarity. We expect Hollywood movies to

Gallery Talk, Wednesday, October 29, following the 12:00 screening. James Benning will be present.

Landscape Suicide, 1986.

adhere to certain narrative conventions, such as the way shot sequences are edited to propel the story forward, and feel gratification at the conclusion of a sequence. Film directors whose work is underwritten and distributed by the major studios conform to these codes. In contrast, avant-garde filmmakers actively question strategies that expose the processes of cinematic discourse. This is most evident in the feature-length *Grand Opera* (1979), where Benning reflects on the history of avant-garde film and his own youth in the Midwest. Filmmakers Hollis Frampton, George Landow, Yvonne Rainer, and Michael Snow appear briefly and the film makes often humorous allusions to the history of avant-garde cinema and its canon of "structural" filmmaking—that is, films which explore the forms and techniques of the medium. Using autobiographical elements, including 360-degree pans of the facades of houses that he has lived in, and references to his past work, Benning creates an ironic "structural" history of his position within the avant-garde.

Grand Opera, like his other films, is composed of single shots which challenge the viewer to think about what he or she sees. In such films as *8½ × 11* (1974) and *11 × 14* (1976) Benning fashions out of single-shot sequences a cinema rooted in the landscape of the Midwest. The narrative, at once ironic and paradoxical, is pieced together by the viewers as they follow the composition and juxtaposition of the individual shots. In *One Way*

Boogie Woogie (1977) Benning further strips the film of its overt narrative by emphasizing individual shots through composition, content, and temporal change, and the flatness of the photographic image playing off its inherent illusionism.

Him and Me (1982) and *Landscape Suicide* (1986) are Benning's most ambitious narrative works. *Him and Me* situates the artist in a journey through three decades of political, social, and personal change, which we witness through fragmentary autobiographical and historical images. This powerful imagery creates a richly textured work. *Landscape Suicide* returns to the themes of his earlier films by foregrounding the landscape image and acted tableaux. Here place is seen not as neutral or empty but as the condition that informs and reflects on the stories that fill it. Benning's cinematography is subtly evocative when juxtaposed with the testimonies of personal destruction: violence and anguish, sacrifice and death. The result is a panorama of hidden meanings from public and private memory. *Landscape Suicide* is both a physical and mental landscape whose subtext is the artist's struggle to comprehend the world we live in.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Fifteen years of films. Each seems to be a record of those times and places I occupied. I am interested in life and death and place, but at a distance. And incomplete, so the viewer has to fill in the rest. To make up meaning. To evoke memory. Sometimes at real time and for long durations to provoke thought or simulate an experience. Sometimes with a word. Vietnam. I use narrative as a context for my interest in form. Like off screen space. Or symmetry and order. Or words that extend off the page. Sound and image. Or color. And I use narrative as a context for itself. Little tales making bigger ones. Foreshadowing structures.

And place has always had a hand on me. A Midwesterner. I love Wisconsin. I had an awful time in Southern California. But the desert is amazing. I played on the railroad tracks in the industrial valley. Rain on an Orinda tennis court. Oil wells in Oklahoma. Snow blowing across Main Street in Plainfield.

But I am a storyteller. Both my own and others, mixing it up with history. I got drunk with Hollis in Evanston, Illinois. I worked on the drill press in *Time & a Half*. I pitched batting practice to the Milwaukee Braves in 1963. Arthur Bremer was my neighbor. I like cars and trucks. A good friend of mine died in her sleep. I woke up next to her in the morning. I marched with Father James Groppi in Milwaukee.

My newest film scares me. I looked at death for a year. Unexplainably developed double vision for eight days. The C.A.T. scan offered no clues. My eyes got better on their own. I feel the pain of Bernadette Protti. I feel awful for Kirsten's parents. I have a thirteen-year-old daughter. I think Bernadette deserves a second chance.

James Benning

Biography

Born in Milwaukee in 1942, James Benning studied at the University of Wisconsin, where he received a B.S. in mathematics (1966) and an M.F.A. in film and graphic arts (1975). Benning has also created film installations; one of these, *Last Dance*, was shown in the New American Filmmakers Series in 1981. He was awarded grants from the American Film Institute (1975), the Wisconsin Arts Board (1978), ZDF, West Germany (1981), the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities (1984), and the CAT Fund (1985), among others. Films by Benning are included in numerous collections, including The Museum of Modern Art, New York, the American Film Institute, Los Angeles, and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. James Benning lives and works in New York.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Film Forum, New York, 1973; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1975; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, 1978; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, 1978; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1978; Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1980; Whitney Museum of American Art, 1981; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1984; The Kitchen, New York, 1985; Millennium, New York, 1986; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1986.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Cannes International Film Festival, 1974; New Directors/New Films, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1975, 1977; Documenta 6, Kassel, West Germany, 1977; Internationales Forum des Jungen Films, West Berlin, 1977, 1980; Artpark, Lewiston, New York, 1978; Edinburgh International Film Festival, 1978, 1980; Whitney Museum of American Art, 1979, 1981, and 1983 Biennial Exhibitions.

Other Selected Films

All films 16mm, color and sound, unless otherwise noted.
did you ever hear that cricket sound? 1971. Black and white; 1 minute.
Ode to Musak, 1972. 3 minutes.
57, 1973. 7 minutes.
Gleem, 1974. 2 minutes.
Saturday Night, 1975. 3 minutes
An Erotic Film, 1975. 11 minutes.
3 minutes on the dangers of film recording, 1975. Black and white and tinted; 3 minutes.
A to B, 1976. Silent; 2 minutes.

James Benning's films are distributed by the Film-makers' Cooperative, New York.

Selected Bibliography

Benning, James. "Sound and Stills from *Grand Opera*," *October*, 12 (Spring 1980), pp. 22–45.
Buchsbaum, Jonathan. "Canvassing the Midwest," *Millennium Film Journal*, nos. 7, 8, 9 (Fall–Winter 1980–81), pp. 218–29.
Callenbach, Ernest. "11 × 14," *Film Quarterly*, 31 (Spring 1978), pp. 53–55.
Canby, Vincent. "Screen: Mosaic *Him & Me*," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1982, p. C16.
MacDonald, Scott. "An Interview with James Benning," *Afterimage*, 9 (December 1981), pp. 12–19.
Taubin, Amy. "Eleven by Fourteen," *Soho News*, April 28, 1977, p. 72.
Ward, Melinda. "James Benning," *Design Quarterly*, nos. 111–112 (1979), pp. 10–15.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 32
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Images of Culture: The Films of Trinh T. Minh-ha

November 8–21, 1986

Schedule
All films are 16mm, color and sound.
Reassemblage, 1982. 40 minutes.
Tuesday at 6:30; Wednesday–Saturday at 12:00; Sunday at 1:00.
Naked Spaces: Living Is Round, 1985. 134 minutes.
Tuesday at 2:00; Wednesday–Saturday at 2:30; Sunday at 3:30.

Filming in Africa means to many of us colorful images, exotic dancers, and fearful rites—the unusual.
(Trinh T. Minh-ha, from *Reassemblage*)

Shot in West Africa, Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Reassemblage* (1982) and *Naked Spaces: Living Is Round* (1985) challenge the ethnocentrism underlying Western anthropological studies of "other" cultures. These studies are marked by a sense of cultural superiority on the part of anthropologists. The content and structure of ethnographic films replicate this inherent power relationship. Absent from Trinh's films are the standard codes of ethnographic filmmaking: "talking heads," translators, and native informants. Most important, there is no expert "objective" voice explaining, and thereby defining, what we see.

Naked Spaces: Living Is Round, 1985.

Gallery Talk, Wednesday, November 12, following the 12:00 screening. Trinh T. Minh-ha will be present.

At the beginning of *Reassemblage*, which was shot in rural villages in Senegal, Trinh comments: "I do not want to speak *about*; just speak nearby," thus rejecting the ethnographer's role. She rapidly intercuts images and sounds—though never in sync—of people, mostly women, in various activities: dancing, weaving, bathing children, tending crops, and preparing food. Through this process, and always in a quiet voice, Trinh, who was born in Vietnam, reflects on colonialism. She tells stories about various Westerners, including a Peace Corps worker, a Catholic nun, and an ethnologist-ecologist husband-and-wife team, all of whom display varying degrees of insensitivity and unconscious cultural bias.

Rather than merely challenging the content of ethnographic films, Trinh's critique extends to the cinematic language itself. The richness and fluidity of the images and sounds are punctuated throughout by jump-cuts, out-of-focus shots and, most disconcerting, long silent moments, giving *Reassemblage* an elliptical quality that ruptures the filmic flow. Unlike some traditional experimental films that employ these techniques to more formal ends, the purpose here is to keep the viewer from being lulled by the exotic.

These strategies are also employed in *Naked Spaces*, a more complex film which, according to Trinh, explores the "interaction of people and their living spaces." Shot in remote areas of six West African countries , the deliberate pace of the film reflects the rhythms of daily life of the people, both in their routine activities and ceremonial rituals.

A dominant theme is how the roundness of the houses, of the domestic utensils, wall paintings, and sculpture are associated with the feminine domain, becoming physical manifestations of a female cosmology. This is further elaborated by the commentary, which is spoken by three women with three distinct modes of speech (African, Asian, European), who variously use different types of language—poetic, descriptive, narrative. As in *Reassemblage*, the voices are interwoven with silence, music, and natural sound—not to illustrate the images, but to uproot fixed ideas about how Third World cultures are perceived and represented.

Lucinda Furlong
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The filmmaker's place: at once present and absent, she is constantly on trial. This has less to do with self-criticism toward future improvement than with self-acknowledgment with and within differences. Subjectivity does not merely consist of talking about herself or of inserting herself on the screen; it is neither opposed to objectivity nor equivalent to personality. She says she is subjective because there is necessarily a subjectivity in every objectivity. Because her story involves history; and meanings are not a given to uncover; they are made. There where she stands, difference can never be essential, since it is not synonymous with separatism and does not oppose sameness either. So I/she are bound to move with always at least two gestures: that of affirming "I am like you," while pointing insistently to the difference; and that of reminding "I am different" while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at.

In one of the films, the word "Directed" is under erasure. Crossed out, but readable. Visible in its crossed-out status, hence not merely erased. The cross, site of two obliques meeting, partakes of the oneness of Taoist brushstrokes: the free origin of painting. If the stroke/cross/erasure contains oneness, then formlessness is present. It should at once be lively and balanced: not too closed (omnipresent, all-knowing unitary subject), nor too opened (illusory counter-absence, absolute pluralism).

The voice of the film: whether one voice or three voices are used, the subject on trial is a non-unitary subject who works at undermining The Voice of Culture. In hearing the content of what is said, it is always useful to listen also to the how: timbre, tone (music is never innocent), cut, suspension of sentence. Three voices imply difference, although the viewer can determine the degree of this difference. They do not work as opposition (divide and conquer), for difference does not necessarily create conflicts; it can be said to be beyond and alongside conflict. But they are positioned as *thr*ee, not one. Here, the problems of translation are foregrounded, and with them, those of hegemony in interpretation. Each voice bears with it a discursive or non-discursive mode, a cultural heritage, a political context; so that even (Western) romanticism has its place: it is not denied or censored but pointed to, while possibly involving the hegemony at work in the viewer's reading.

The viewer—questions of beauty, reality and gender: What/How does he hear and see? Will she recognize? Woman, house, cosmos. Dwelling as a site of fertility, of women's activities, of cosmological experience. Her pace, her rhythm, the words she retains; her space, her body, her colors, her designs, her pots, her calabashes, her relation to the earth, her water—life. Life and art are often perceived dualistically as two mutually exclusive poles. But there can't be sound without silence, light without darkness, vacant space without filled areas. Non-named, half-named so as to name what he silences, ignores or condemns. Time, for example, is one of the elements of difference; and time is the constant frustration of foreigners in Africa. Time and consumption go together. Shots can be so short as to frustrate the desire to appropriate the images; but the length of the film can also invite the viewers either to invest to the limits or to leave, in any case to go away without the sense of having "digested" Africa. *Naked Spaces* can end in many ways: with a dance it started out with, with drum music, or with a comment on knowledge by an African drummer. For me, it also ends with images of women forming a circle, their arms raised, while their voices in chorus take over the drumming. Is this where we end, continue, or start?

Trinh T. Minh-ha

Biography

Trinh T. Minh-ha was born in Hanoi in 1952. She was educated first in Vietnam (which she left at the age of seventeen), then in the Philippines, in France (Sorbonne) and in the United States at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. There she studied comparative literature (M.A., 1973, Ph.D., 1977), ethnomusicology and music composition (M.A., 1976). Trinh has traveled and lectured extensively on film and on Third World feminism. She has taught French language and literature at the University of Illinois; English for the Ministry of National Education in Paris, and for the Ministry of Higher Education in Dakar, Senegal. Trinh's films have been widely shown in the United States and abroad. She lives in Berkeley, and teaches in the Department of Cinema at San Francisco State University.

Selected One-Artist Screenings

Film in the Cities, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1983; UNESCO, Dakar, Senegal, 1983; Teatro la Maddalena, Rome, 1984; National Film Theater, London, 1985; Artists Space, New York, 1986; Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1986; Commonwealth Institute Arts Centre, London, 1986; Robert Flaherty Film Seminar, Wells College, Aurora, New York, 1986; Stanford University, Palo Alto, 1986.

Selected Festivals

American Film Institute, Los Angeles, "Women and Movies III," 1983; Festival dei Popoli, Florence, 1983; New York Film Festival, 1983; Hong Kong International Film Festival, 1984; Atlanta Third World Film Festival, 1984, 1985; Toronto Festival of Festivals, 1985; Edinburgh International Film Festival, "Third World Cinema: Theories and Practices," 1986 (conference); Festival de Films et Videos de Femmes, Montreal, 1986; Festival International de Films de Femmes, Creteil, France, 1986; International Women's Film Festival of Jerusalem, 1986.

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Trinh T. Minh-ha's films are distributed by Women Make Movies, The Museum of Modern Art, Third World Newsreel, New York; Women in Focus, Vancouver; and Circles, London.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 33
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Meredith Monk

November 26–December 21, 1986

Silver Lake with Dolmen Music, 1980
Sound installation. Exhibited continuously.

Gallery Talk, Tuesday, December 2, at 2:30.
Meredith Monk will be present.

Technical Assistance
Tony Giovannetti, lighting; Debra Lee Cohen, installation

> *To create an art that breaks down boundaries between the disciplines, an art which in turn becomes a metaphor for opening up thought, perception, experience.*
>
> —Meredith Monk

In recent years the Film and Video Department has expanded its exhibition program to include film, video, and sound installations that seek to break down the traditional demarcations between art forms. In exploring the interrelationships between dance, film, video, and sound, artists have created new aesthetic experiences that draw upon the strengths of different media and traditions.

Meredith Monk, a key figure in the Postmodern dance movement, has been at the forefront of this multimedia activity since the mid-1960s. Monk's films and videotapes, such as *Quarry* (1975) and *Turtle Dreams (Waltz)* (1983), which were presented by the Film and Video Department in 1985, demonstrate her ability to translate into film and video the strong imagery of her choreography, the visual character of her staged tableaux, and her musical scores. She achieves this not by simply recording her performances, by forcing them into the constraints of the film-video medium, or by duplicating conventional cinematic strategies. Rather, she evokes the character of her live performances by treating the illusionistic space of film and videotape as another kind of stage.

Silver Lake with Dolmen Music (1980) is an installation that juxtaposes Monk's visual aesthetic with her powerful sound compositions. Derived in part from *Dolmen Music*, a five-movement performance piece, the work employs male and female voices, together with musical instruments, to conjure up a powerful aural experience. The mysterious atmosphere created by the music/voice composition evokes the primal emergence of the human life cycle through the opposition of female and male voices that call out the ecstasies and pains of human existence. Monk included *Dolmen Music* in her opera *Recent Ruins*, first performed in 1980 at La Mama, New York. *Recent Ruins* has been called an "anthropological spectacle" since it appears to unearth time and experiences from other worlds of the past.

The Meredith Monk Vocal Ensemble performing *Dolmen Music*, the prologue to *Recent Ruins*, La Mama Annex, New York, 1979. Photograph by Nat Tileston.

Upon entering the Film and Video Gallery, one sees a circle of chairs and rocks surrounding a silver-coated surface which, through dramatic lighting, resembles a shimmering pool. This arrangement is a reproduction of the original set. Suspended from the ceiling are headphones through which one listens to *Dolmen Music* while seated in the chairs that were originally occupied by the performers. Here the artist has shaped the space to the sound to fashion an environment both visual and auditory, public and private. As one walks around the installation it becomes a mysterious prehistoric site; sitting around the pool, we enter into the imaginary landscape via the music. By occupying the seats of the actual performers, we then become silent participants in the piece. In *Silver Lake with Dolmen Music*, Monk has created a visual metaphor for an ancient past, which becomes a compelling new perceptual and aesthetic experience.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover, the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

In October 1977, on a day off from performing at the Maison de la Culture in Rennes, France, a number of us drove into the countryside to find the legendary "Roches aux Fées"—a series of rocks forming a huge table, or dolmen, approximately fifteen feet wide, forty feet long and twelve feet high. In the middle of the farmland, suddenly we saw them—enormous rocks—overwhelming in density and power. We got out of the car and spent a number of hours there. When I returned to New York I started writing some music. In the middle of the working process, the image of those huge rocks kept coming to mind. I ended up calling the finished piece *Dolmen Music*.

Environment has always played a large role in my work. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, dissatisfied with the traditional audience-performer relationship, I made pieces in which the performers were still, or situated in a limited area, and the audience moved from one "exhibit" to another. This allowed the audience varying perspectives on the events instead of always looking from one vantage point (usually from a distance). From the middle 1970s until today, I have incorporated constantly changing scale, time compression, and varying viewpoints into the pieces themselves—placing the members of the audience in a seating area, but usually in an environment which includes them in the overall visual, aural, and tactile fabric of the piece.

Silver Lake with Dolmen Music is an installation version of the prologue of *Recent Ruins*, an opera I composed in 1979. In the performance piece, six singers (three men, three women, one of the men also playing a cello) sit in a circle on silver chairs singing *Dolmen Music* on a silver mylar oval. During the opera, the oval remains constant in form but becomes a lake, a mirror, a boat, and a planet as the piece progresses from section to section. *Recent Ruins* deals with the strata of time—the comparatively recent emergence of humankind in the long evolution of the earth, and the irony of archaeology.

Meredith Monk

Biography

Meredith Monk has created more than fifty works in music, theater, dance, film, and video since 1964. A graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York, she has received numerous grants, among them two Guggenheim Fellowships (1972, 1982). She has won Obie Awards for Outstanding Achievement for *Vessel: An Opera Epic* (1971) and for *Quarry: An Opera* (1976), as well as Villager Awards for Outstanding Production for *Recent Ruins: An Opera* (1979) and *Turtle Dreams: Cabaret* (1983). Other awards include a Bessie for Sustained Creative Achievement, the 1986 National Music Theater Award, and fifteen ASCAP Awards for musical composition. *Dolmen Music* won the German Critics Prize for Best Record of 1981. In 1968 Monk founded The House Foundation for the Arts, a company dedicated to an interdisciplinary approach to performance, and in 1978 formed the Meredith Monk Vocal Ensemble. Monk and her companies have toured extensively throughout the United States and abroad. She lives and works in New York.

Site-Specific Works

Blueprint, 1967, Judson Memorial Church, New York.
Juice: A Theater Cantata, 1969, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.
Needlebrain Lloyd and the Systems Kid: A Live Movie, 1970, Connecticut College, New London.
Vessel: An Opera Epic, 1971, The House Gallery, New York.
Education of the Girlchild: An Opera, 1973, Common Ground Theater, New York.
Anthology and *Small Scroll*, 1974, St. Mark's in the Bowery, New York.
Quarry, 1976, La Mama Annex, New York.
The Travelogue Series: Paris/Chacon/Venice/Milan, 1972–76, in collaboration with Ping Chong, The House, New York.
The Plateau Series, 1978, St. Mark's in the Bowery, New York.
Recent Ruins, 1979, La Mama Annex, New York.
Specimen Days: A Civil War Opera, 1981, The Public Theater, New York.
Turtle Dreams: Cabaret, 1983, Plexus, New York.
The Games, 1983, in collaboration with Ping Chong, Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, West Berlin.
Acts from Under and Above, 1986, La Mama Annex, New York.

Works Performed in Theaters or Proscenium Spaces

Break, 1964, Washington Square Galleries, New York.
Cartoon, 1965, Judson Memorial Church, New York.
The Beach, 1965, Hardware Poets' Playhouse, New York.
Radar, 1965, Judson Hall, New York.
Blackboard, 1965, Judson Hall, New York.
Relache, 1965. Judson Hall, New York.
Portable, 1966, Judson Memorial Church, New York.
16 Millimeter Earrings, 1966, Judson Memorial Church, New York.
Our Lady of Late, 1973, Town Hall, New York.
Music Concert with Film, 1981, City Center, New York.
Carnegie Hall Concert, 1985, Carnegie Hall, New York.

Discography

Candy Bullets and *Moon*, 1967. Single, out of print, re-released on *Better* an *Old Demon Than a New God*, Giorno Poetry Systems records, 1984, GPS 033.
Key, 1970. Increase Records, re-released on Lovely Music Ltd., 1977, LML 1051.
Our Lady of Late, The Vanguard Tapes, 1973; Wergo, 1986, LP, SM 1058.
Our Lady of Late, 1974. Minona Records, out of print.
Rally, Procession, on *Airwaves*, 1977. one ten records, OT001/2.
Biography, on *Big Ego*, 1978. Giorno Poetry Systems Records, LP, GPS 012-013.
Dolmen Music, 1981. ECM/Warner Bros., record ECM 1 1197, cassette ECM M5E 1197.
Turtle Dreams, 1983. ECM/Warner Bros., record ECM 1240, cassette ECM 4-23792.

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Jowitt, Deborah. "Even the Bushes Are Not to Be Trusted: Meredith Monk's *Vessel*." In Deborah Jowitt, ed., *Dance Beat: Selected Views and Reviews 1967–1976*. New York: Marcel Dekker, 1977, p. 141.
Marranca, Bonnie. "Meredith Monk's *Recent Ruins*, The Archeology of Consciousness: Essaying Images." *Performing Arts Journal*, 4 (Spring 1980), pp. 39–49.
Sterntt, David. "Notes: Meredith Monk." San Francisco Symphony program notes, January 29, 1982.
Westwater, Angela. "Meredith Monk: An Introduction." *Artforum*, 11 (May 1973), pp. 57–59.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 34
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

The Black Woman Independent: Representing Race and Gender

December 30–January 16, 1987

Gallery Talk, Thursday, January 8, following the 12:00 screening. Valerie Smith will be present.

Special thanks to the Black Filmmaker Foundation, Third World Newsreel, and the Black Film Center Archive, Indiana University, Bloomington, for their assistance in the preparation of this exhibition.

All films are 16mm, sound, except where otherwise noted.

Program I. The Politics of Domestic Relations
Your Children Come Back to You, 1979, Alile Sharon Larkin, black and white, 27 min.; *A Mother Is a Mother*, 1982, Lyn Blum and Cynthia Ealey, videotape, color, 27 min.; *A Minor Altercation*, 1977, Jackie Shearer, color, 30 min.; *Suzanne, Suzanne*, 1982, Camille Billops, black and white, 26 min.

Program II. Power and Creativity: Black Women Working
Illusions, 1982, Julie Dash, color, 34 min.; *Grey Area*, 1982, Monona Wali, black and white, 40 min.; *Fannie's Film*, 1981, Fronza Woods, black and white, 15 min.; *Gotta Make This Journey: Sweet Honey in the Rock*, 1983, Michelle Parkerson, videotape, color, 58 min.

Program III. Race and the Social Construction of Gender
Hair Piece: A Film for Nappyheaded People, 1982, Ayoka Chenzira, color, 10 min.; *A Different Image*, 1982, Alile Sharon Larkin, color, 51 min.; *Four Women*, 1978, Julie Dash, color, 7 min.; *I Be Done Been Was Is*, 1984, Debra Robinson, color, 58 min.

Your Children Come Back to You, 1979. Alile Sharon Larkin.

The history of the representation of black women in Hollywood films is a narrative of absences. When cast in the manner of Louise Beavers or Hattie McDaniel as the ubiquitous servant, selfless, faultless, and uncomplaining, black women were portrayed as creatures devoid of desire. When, like Dorothy Dandridge, they were cast as sirens of sexuality, they embodied desire but lacked other features of character or personality. Singers, dancers, and musicians like Lena Horne, Katherine Dunham, and Hazel Scott, who made their way to film from nightclubs and concert halls, were denied integral dramatic roles. On screen they sang, danced, and played piano as themselves, in scenes that could be cut easily out of deference to less-than-liberal audiences. Although in isolated cases independent and studio-financed films of the sixties and seventies provided black actresses with opportunities for substantial, resonant roles, the emergent black women independent filmmakers and video artists of the late seventies and eighties have assumed primary responsibility for granting centrality to the voices and experiences of black women. These directors and producers take for their perspectives on domestic relations, politics, history, and contemporary culture characters who once served as little more than markers of empty space.

The artists presented here share a variety of concerns with the wider community of feminist film and video artists. As the conjunction of works in Program I suggests, several of them explore in their productions the complexity of the mother-daughter bond, a connection that has acquired increasing significance for feminists in a variety of disciplines as the most formative relationship in the lives of women. As critic-theorist Marianne Hirsch writes: "There can be no systematic and theoretical study of women in patriarchal culture, there can be no theory of women's oppression, that does not take into account woman's role as a mother of daughters and as a daughter of mothers, that does not study female identity in relation to previous and subsequent generations of women, and that does not study that relationship in the wider context in which it takes place: the emotional, political, economic, and symbolic structures of family and society. Any full study of mother-daughter relationships, in whatever field, is by definition both feminist and interdisciplinary."

Black women independent film and video artists also search for the enduring, political implications of the kinds of private, domestic relationships that the mainstream has trivialized or ignored. And the experimental quality of much of the work calls into question the assumptions and formal conventions of narrative and documentary films and videotapes. Yet they bring to these feminist concerns a cultural specificity that derives from their particular racial and national position. Their work thus incorporates the critique of patriarchy and the examination of women's lives into an exploration and representation of black cultural practices and rituals.

The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts

Your Children Come Back to You literalizes the meaning of a "mother country" by means of the story of a young girl, Tovi, torn between two surrogate mothers: one comfortably bourgeois, the other nationalist. Naturalistically, the film considers the psychological and emotional bond between mothers and daughters; symbolically, it probes the black American's cultural situation. This thematic juxtaposition is mirrored in the crosscutting from Tovi's story to a dream sequence and to the child's version of an allegorical tale—African resonances that interrupt and counterpoint the surface narrative.

A Mother Is a Mother and *A Minor Altercation* are important works that draw their titles from expressions so familiar that they appear to trivialize their subject matter. The former, a videotape funded in part by The Child Care Resource Center, predates much of the recent literature on the pathology of unwed mothers but responds to it powerfully nevertheless. Through their responses to the interviewers, seven black unwed mothers (and some of their own mothers) display their ability to control and name their experience with resourcefulness, imagination, and humor. *A Minor Altercation* is a fiction film set in motion by a fight between two teenage girls, one black and one white, in a newly integrated public high school in racially troubled Somerville, Massachusetts. The film cuts back and forth from one family to the other to reveal the reverberations of the girls' consequent suspensions from school. The similarities and differences between juxtaposed scenes comment upon the status of education in black and ethnic working-class households and suggest continuities in the mother-daughter bond that transcend racial difference.

Suzanne, Suzanne is a harrowing documentary that examines the potential for violence and abuse that underlies the carefully tended façade of middle-class respectability. The film opens with familiar footage from home movies and snapshots from family albums. Through conversations with the protagonist and her relatives, the filmmaker dismantles these touchstones of stability. What began as a film about drug abuse actually becomes the occasion for mother and daughter to re-make their relationship as they confront their experience of an abusive husband and father.

The films in Program II examine the politics and creativity of black women's work. *Illusions* by Julie Dash and *Grey Area* by Monona Wali are self-reflexive films about black women filmmakers. Dash's film illustrates the conflicting loyalties and affinities that beset black women in the workplace. The story of Mignon Dupree, Hollywood studio executive who passes for white, *Illusions* is replete with images of people and practices that are not what they appear to be. *Grey Area* centers on an independent filmmaker torn between her own political, creative vision, the demands of the men who constitute the subject of her film, and the expectations of the corporation that funds her work. The self-conscious open-endedness of the final frames of both works reveals the irresolvability of the issues they raise.

Fannie's Film concerns a black domestic who cleans a Manhattan dance and exercise studio for a living. No longer the cipher in someone else's story, the maid here is both narrator and subject. Her voice provides the background for scenes both of her working and the dancers' working out; she names not only what she does but also what they do. The film ends with a slow-motion sequence in which the protagonist wipes a mirror with a grand sweeping movement. Her gestures assume the gracefulness of a dance; narrative and visuals alike display the creativity of the kind of black woman whom the media has caricatured or silenced.

Gotta Make This Journey centers on the relationship between art and politics in the lives, work and performances of the members of Sweet Honey in the Rock, the black women's *a cappella* group. Concert footage and statements by the singers about the place of work in their lives reveal the radical potential of the women's creativity; the subversive dimension of their art is authorized further by the interspersed comments of other activists.

The films in Program III take as their subject alternative ways in which black women might be viewed in contemporary culture. In each instance, formal experimentation accompanies thematic innovation. *Hair Piece: A Film for Nappyheaded People* interweaves paintings, collage, line drawings, still photographs, song, and humorous text in an animated satire on black hair-care devices and products. *A Different Image* tells the story of a young woman who refuses to be perceived as the object of male erotic desire and who models her behavior and dress on images of women encountered in African ritual and art. These alternatives are presented in filmic collages of crosscut still photographs. *Four Women* is an experimental dance film set to the ballad of the same name written and sung by Nina Simone. The stages of the dance recapitulate the varieties of the black woman's experience in America. The final film, *I Be Done Been Was Is*, locates historically the work of four contemporary black comediennes. By exploring issues of voice and power, the film speculates on the under-representation of black women in the field of stand-up comics. The extensive footage of each comedienne in performance inscribes her more securely in a place previously denied her in public media.

Valerie Smith
Guest Curator

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Hirsch, Marianne. "Mothers and Daughters: A Review Essay." *Signs*, 7 (Autumn 1981), pp. 200–22.

Hooks, Bell. "Black Women Filmmakers Break the Silence." *Black Film Review*, 2 (Summer 1986), pp. 14–15.

Ogunyemi, Chikwenye Okonjo. "Womanism: The Dynamics of the Contemporary Black Female Novel in English." *Signs*, 11 (Autumn 1985), pp. 63–80.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 35
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Before Hollywood: Turn-of-the-Century Film from American Archives

January 25–February 28, 1987

Guest Curators: Jay Leyda and Charles Musser

Panel Discussion, Sunday, February 1, at 12:30, with Eileen Bowser, Jay Leyda, Brooks McNamara, Charles Musser, and Tom Gunning, panel chair.

The close of the nineteenth century marked the emergence of two powerful forms of discourse. The first was the development, in America, France, Germany, and Great Britain, of the film, camera, and projector technologies that together produced the first motion pictures in 1895. Four years later in Vienna, Sigmund Freud completed his text for *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which was published in 1900.

There are a number of reasons to relate these two incidents in an introduction to *Before Hollywood: Turn-of-the-Century Film from American Archives*, a survey of American cinema from 1895 to 1915. The cinema fulfilled the centuries-long search for a mechanical means for recording and interpreting the world around us. While the cinema represented the illusion of reality, psychoanalysis opened up the hidden world of the unconscious through another means of interpretation—dreams. How Western culture imagined and perceived itself was to be profoundly affected by these two developments. Furthermore, modernism, the ruling paradigm of the twentieth century, was to be profoundly influenced both by the cinema and psychoanalysis. Cinematography assumed the burden of mimesis, the representation of the illusion of reality, while psychoanalysis revealed the imaginary realm of the unconscious and the meaning of daily life within new symbolic codes. Thus art, literature, theater, and music could explore new territories of image-making that were to fundamentally and radically revise the realist and figurative basis of previous art.

On another, more speculative, level we can relate the cinema to psychoanalysis in the context of narrative and the need to organize and interpret the world. The photographic image was seen as a mirror, instantly functioning as a fragment, a memory of the past. The motion picture image gives life to the still photograph; it becomes a kind of conscious dream where the logic of reality can be reshaped. Thus the first years of the cinema constitute an "archeology of dreams," the exploration of new possibilities for narrative through the imaginary and recorded image.

The apparatus of the cinema produced an ever-expanding imaginary discourse of meanings in its first decades.

What Happened on Twenty-third Street, New York City, 1901. Photograph by Patrick G. Loughney.

The variety of genres and subgenres represented in *Before Hollywood* have been lost from public and scholarly view. Thus before the institutionalization of the cinema within the corporate capitalism of Hollywood's "Dream Factory," film pioneers tested narrative devices and framed reality in ways that did not conform to the narrative codes of representation that ultimately comprised the cinema of mass appeal. Newly restored to their original form, these films reveal interesting relationships to the surrealist and structuralist avant-garde cinemas of this century. Both the modernist and the early cinema explored the direct camera point of view through the phenomenon of movement and framing of action. More specifically, the surrealist film shared with the early cinema an interest in magic, trick, animation, and chase films, and such strategies as elliptical narratives and fragmentary events placed within the real world. The later structuralist cinema's interest in formal issues, the self-reflexive use of the camera and other cinematic strategies, recalls the techniques employed in early documentaries and travelogues.

This investigation of the origins of the cinema posits the beginning of a historical revision that perceives this early

The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Winning an Heiress, 1911. Photograph by Patrick G. Loughney.

work not as primitive and marginal, but as powerful and inventive. These films offer a rich potential for examining the larger issues of cultural analysis and interpretation. Thus contemporary theories of interpretation such as deconstruction, which are rethinking traditional narrative strategies, will benefit from the newly discovered and restored films shown in *Before Hollywood*. In the catalogue accompanying this exhibition, Jay Leyda and Charles Musser, along with other contributors, have made a major first step in the writing of film history and in placing this early material within larger critical and cultural frameworks.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Program I: An Age of Innocence
January 25–31
Sunday at 3:00; Tuesday at 1:30, 4:00, and 6:30;
Wednesday–Saturday at 11:30 and 2:00

Annabelle Butterfly Dance, 1895; *Annabelle Serpentine Dance*, 1895; *Fire Rescue*, 1894; *Shooting the Chutes*, 1896; *Market Square, Harrisburg, Pa.*, 1897; *Railway Station Scene*, 1897; *The Passion Play of Oberammergau*, 1898; *The Battle of Manila Bay*, 1898; *Soldiers at Play*, 1898; *Raising Old Glory over Morro Castle*, 1899; *Blackton Sketching Edison*, 1896; *Burglar on the Roof*, 1898; *A Visit to the Spiritualist*, 1899; *The Tramp's Dream*, 1899; *Searching Ruins on Broadway, Galveston, for Dead Bodies*, 1900; *Scenes of the Wreckage from the Waterfront*, 1900; *Beheading the Chinese Prisoner*, 1900; *How They Rob Men in Chicago*, 1900; *An Unexpected Knockout*, 1901; *He Forgot His Umbrella*, 1901; *A Mighty Tumble*, 1901; *Next!*, 1903; *Smashing a Jersey Mosquito*, 1902; *The Burning of Durland's Riding Academy*, 1902; *Electrocuting an Elephant*, 1903; *What Happened on Twenty-third Street, New York City*, 1901; *Trapeze Disrobing Act*, 1901; *What Happened in the Tunnel*, 1903; *The Story the Biograph Told*, 1904; *Pull Down the Curtains, Suzie*, 1904; *Meet Me at the Fountain*, 1904; *Rube and Mandy at Coney Island*, 1903; *European Rest Cure*, 1904; *The Strenuous Life or Anti-Race Suicide*, 1904; *The Suburbanite*, 1904. 70 minutes.

Program II: Pleasures and Pitfalls
February 1–7
Sunday at 3:00; Tuesday at 1:30, 4:00, and 6:15;
Wednesday–Saturday at 11:30 and 2:00

Interior N.Y. Subway, 14th Street to 42nd Street, 1905; *Coney Island at Night*, 1905; *The Hold-up of the Rocky Mountain Express*, 1906; *The Miller's Daughter*, 1905; *Getting Evidence*, 1906; *Photographing a Female Crook*, 1904; *The Black Hand*, 1906; *Terrible Ted*, 1907; *Foul Play or a False Friend*, 1906; *The Thieving Hand*, 1908; *The Unwritten Law: A Thrilling Drama Based on the Thaw-White Case*, 1907; *Three American Beauties*, 1906. 83 minutes.

Program III: America in Transition
February 8–14
Sunday at 3:00; Tuesday at 1:30, 3:45, and 6:00;
Wednesday–Saturday at 11:30 and 2:30

First Mail Delivery by Aeroplane, 1911; *Ancient Temples of Egypt*, 1912; *Princess Nicotine or the Smoke Fairy*, 1909; *A Tin-Type Romance*, 1910; *A Friendly Marriage*, 1911; *The Usurer*, 1910; *Winning an Heiress*, 1911; *The Dream*, 1911; *The Informer*, 1912. 103 minutes.

Program IV: Domestic Life
February 15–21
Sunday at 3:00; Tuesday at 1:30 and 5:30;
Wednesday–Saturday at 11:30 and 2:30

The Old Actor, 1912; *The Passer-by*, 1912; *The Water Nymph*, 1912; *One Is Business, the Other Is Crime*, 1912; *How Men Propose*, 1913; *A House Divided*, 1913; *The Vampire*, 1913. 125 minutes.

Program V: The Frontier Spirit
February 22–28
Sunday at 3:00; Tuesday at 6:00; Wednesday–Saturday at 11:30

Maiden and Men, 1912; *The Ruse*, 1915; *A Girl of the Golden West*, 1915. 102 minutes.

Program VI: Love and Misadventure
February 24–28
Tuesday at 1:30; Wednesday–Saturday at 2:30

Dreamy Dud: He Resolves Not to Smoke, 1915; *Who Pays? Episode Seven: "Blue Blood and Yellow,"* 1915; *Young Romance*, 1915. 127 minutes.

Before Hollywood was organized by The American Federation of Arts and is sponsored at the Whitney Museum by the Arthur Ross Foundation.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 36
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Social Engagement: Women's Video in the '80s

March 3–20, 1987

Program I: *Trick or Drink*, 1984, Vanalyne Green, 20 minutes; *Secret Sounds Screaming: The Sexual Abuse of Children*, 1986, Ayoka Chenzira, 30 minutes; *Scenes from the Micro War*, 1985, Sherry Millner, 24 minutes.

Program II: *Freedom of Information Tape 1: Jean Seberg*, 1980, Margia Kramer, 18 minutes; *Joan Braderman Reads The National Enquirer*, 1983, Paper Tiger Television, 28 minutes; *A Simple Case for Torture, Or How to Sleep at Night*, 1983, Martha Rosler, 60 minutes.

Program III, part 1: *Just Because of Who We Are*, 1986, Hera Media, 27 minutes; *Gotta Make This Journey: Sweet Honey in the Rock*, 1983, Michelle Parkerson, 58 minutes.

Program III, part 2: *Sign on a Truck*, 1984, Jenny Holzer, 15 minutes; *The Trial of Tilted Arc*, 1985, Shu Lea Cheang, 52 minutes.

Program IV: *Women of Steel*, 1985, Mon Valley Media, 28 minutes; *Serafina Bathrick Reads Working Woman*, 1983, Paper Tiger Television, 28 minutes; *The Maids!*, 1985, Muriel Jackson, 28 minutes.

In the early 1970s, videotapes such as Julie Gustafson's *The Politics of Intimacy*, Cara de Vito's *Ama L'Uomo Tuo (Always Love Your Man)*, and Nancy Cain's *Harriet* validated female experience through personal testimony—a central concern of the burgeoning women's movement.[1] The realist techniques used in these early documentary tapes paralleled the rise of consciousness-raising groups, with their emphasis on sharing real life experiences.

By the late 1970s, women artists took more analytical approaches to video through performance and experimental narrative. Martha Rosler, in particular, in *Domination and the Everyday* and *Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained* dealt with issues of representation and the relationship between patriarchy and other forms of oppression.

This exhibition focuses on those videotapes that are informed by a critical understanding and an analysis of contemporary issues. About half of the tapes are documentaries. While conventional documentary practice, with its emphasis on the objective point of view, has been challenged as an inadequate system of representation, many women still find its traditional equation with truth viable. The rest of the tapes can be characterized as experimental narratives in that they adopt strategies—such as the use of homemade props and sets, the incorporation of written texts on the screen, and the disjunction between voice-over and image—which suggest a critical stance against realist narrative and performance conventions.

Gallery Talk, Thursday, March 5, following the 12:00 screening. Lucinda Furlong will be present.

Program 1 focuses on domestic life, traditionally the domain of women. Although much feminist analysis has singled out the oppression of women within the family structure, these tapes emphasize family dynamics. Vanalyne Green's autobiographical *Trick or Drink* movingly conveys the horrors of being the child of alcoholic parents, her eventual understanding of the disease, and its toll on the family. Just as outward appearances often disguise profound problems, Green structures the tape so that its first section, about her seemingly "normal" teenage obsession with dieting and beauty, is shown later to be related to her parents' sickness.

In Ayoka Chenzira's *Secret Sounds Screaming: The Sexual Abuse of Children*, actors are used to relate the stories of actual victims. However, the tape is not a docudrama in the usual sense. Chenzira rapidly cuts from these stories, to interviews with social workers and the mother of a four-year-old victim, to a slow-motion scene of an empty playground swing set, which signifies the silence that many victims endure. Through this structure and pacing, Chenzira not only presents information about the myths and realities of child sexual abuse, but also captures the emotionally charged nature of the issue.

In Sherry Millner's humorous tape *Scenes from the Micro War*, the modern family is in a state of crisis. Appropriately for the 1980s, they adopt the trappings of military preparedness. Everything they own, including the car and shower curtain, is camouflaged, and military discipline becomes the model for family interaction. A typical day is spent dining on C-rations with their two-year-old and training with their Uzi submachine guns. At one point, Millner and her partner, Ernest Larson, apply camouflage make-up to one another, signifying the merging of individual identities into a single "nuclear" unit.

Program 2 analyzes the media, either as instruments of disinformation or as manipulators of women's anxieties about family, the workplace, and modern life. In *Freedom of Information Tape 1: Jean Seberg*, Margia Kramer traces the effects of the F.B.I.'s Counter Intelligence Program (CoIntelPro), which investigated hundreds of thousands of

1. Martha Gever, "Video Politics: Early Feminist Projects," *Afterimage*, 11 (Summer 1983), pp. 25–27.

The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Americans from 1956 to 1971, using illegal wiretaps, informants, and disinformation. Comparing F.B.I. documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, news accounts of Seberg's life, and published interviews with the actress, Kramer shows how disinformation planted in the media ultimately led to Seberg's suicide. Particularly effective for its irony is the use of scenes from Jean-Luc Godard's film *Breathless*, in which Seberg starred, which seem to portend her tragic fate.

In *Joan Braderman Reads The National Enquirer*, Braderman delivers a manically funny, yet sophisticated analysis of the paper that 5.1 million people—mostly women—buy every week. Using keying and bright colors to mimic the tabloid's form, Braderman confesses her addiction to *The Enquirer* even though she knows it's trash. She asserts that the power of these manipulative papers resides in their affirmation of tendencies traditionally associated with being female, such as gossip and intuition, and in the illusion of providing women with things that they lack, such as a sense of community.

A critical reading of the press is also the subject of Martha Rosler's *A Simple Case for Torture, Or How to Sleep at Night*. The tape opens with Rosler flipping through the pages of *Newsweek* and stopping at an editorial by a philosophy professor who advocates the use of torture under certain circumstances. Rosler identifies the totalitarian implications of such an argument; she formulates her critique through voice-over narration and by stacking scores of news clippings and books on subjects ranging from terrorism and human rights to unemployment and global economics. The camera pans across headlines and Rosler often follows the text with her fingers to reinforce the reading metaphor. She also implicates the U.S. government and American business for supporting regimes that systematically use torture. In the process, she indicts the American press for its role as an agent of disinformation through selective coverage, the use of language, and for implicitly legitimizing a point of view that justifies torture.

Program 3 presents specific instances of activism and the relationship between art and politics. *Just Because of Who We Are* examines the intersection of misogyny and homophobia in the stories of lesbians who have been subjected to violence. It treats both physical attacks and the psychological pressures brought to bear on these women by their families. The tape then shifts from the personal to the political realm with scenes from a gay pride parade and a contentious New York City Council hearing on gay rights.

The dominant theme in Michelle Parkerson's portrait of the black activist singing group Sweet Honey in the Rock is how these women integrate their political beliefs—i.e., the desire to advance civil rights and allied struggles—with their creative lives. Parkerson's combination of excerpts from the group's ninth anniversary concert and interviews with its members underlines the idea that individual and collective goals are not mutually exclusive.

Both Jenny Holzer's *Sign on a Truck* and Shu Lea Cheang's *The Trial of Tilted Arc* document events that raise issues about the social function of art in the 1980s. At the close of the 1984 presidential campaign, Holzer staged a video speak-out at two Manhattan locations. A 13-by-18-foot Diamond Vision video screen was mounted on a tractor-trailer and passersby were asked who they were voting for and why. "Reagan, because I like what's in my wallet," said an investment banker. This live action was displayed along with pre-recorded tapes and the pointed one-liners for which Holzer is known.

The "trial" of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* was actually a series of hearings held in 1985 to consider removing the steel sculpture that bisects Federal Plaza in New York City. Government workers and officials took turns with artists and critics in voicing their respective opposition and support. The tape has a deceptively simple structure. Through the juxtaposition of arguments which range from gut negative reactions to complex defenses, larger issues are raised about the government's obligation to honor its original commission of the work, about populism *vs.* elitism, freedom of expression *vs.* the rights of the workers who use the plaza.

The tapes in **Program 4** show how recent changes in the American economy, accompanied by conservative economic and social theories, have adversely affected women. *Women of Steel*, by Mon Valley Media, looks at three women who, benefiting from affirmative action programs, were hired to work in steel mills in the 1970s. Among the first to lose their jobs in the 1980s, these women—many of them single mothers—were forced to take jobs in fast-food restaurants or other low-paying fields.

As Serafina Bathrick points out in her Paper Tiger Television program, *Serafina Bathrick Reads Working Woman*, women now in managerial positions have adapted to the competitive—i.e., male—atmosphere of the professional workplace at the expense of cooperative values that women traditionally hold. She analyzes the way that *Working Woman*, in its language, imagery, and editorial position, practices a kind of social engineering whereby women are advised that only a dog-eat-dog mentality will advance them up the corporate ladder.

Muriel Jackson's *The Maids!* traces the roots of domestic work in slavery, and shows how maid service was once one of the few jobs open to women. The tape captures the ambivalence felt by many domestic workers: aware of the social stigma, domestic workers, under the leadership of Dorothy Bolden, have professionalized it by forming a union. Ironically, as Jackson points out through interviews both with workers and their bosses, black women domestics are now being displaced by entrepreneurial maid services which, in the south at least, almost exclusively employ white women.

Lucinda Furlong
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

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The New American Filmmakers Series

EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Su Friedrich

October 6–18, 1987

Gallery Talk, Tuesday, October 13, following the 2:00 screening. Su Friedrich will be present.

Su Friedrich is among a handful of female filmmakers who, beginning in the late 1970s, sought to invest the strategies of avant-garde film—specifically the subjective, metaphorical cinema pioneered by Maya Deren—with feminist concerns. Her films (shot in black and white, some in Super-8) are spare and well edited.

In *Cool Hands, Warm Heart* (1979) and *Scar Tissue* (1979), everyday female rituals and dress assume violent connotations. Both films explore the misogynistic implications of routine activities.

Gently Down the Stream (1981) and the shorter film *But No One* (1982) are based on dreams Friedrich recorded in her journals over an eight-year period. Drawn from her most troubling dreams, *Gently Down the Stream* is a series of fourteen vignettes that reflect conflicts about sexuality, religion, and personal relationships. Each segment incorporates descriptive passages etched into the film—at times getting larger or edited at a faster pace for emphasis—and images that have, according to Friedrich, an "indirect but potent correspondence to the dream content."

If *Gently Down the Stream* is a kind of exorcism, so too is *The Ties That Bind* (1984), Friedrich's inquiry into her German Catholic mother's experiences as a teenager in Nazi Germany. Friedrich structures the film as a series of questions, never spoken, but handwritten on the film in the style used in *Gently Down the Stream*. As her mother describes how the family lost its house, and how she was sent to a work camp after refusing to join the Hitler Youth, Friedrich juxtaposes footage of present-day Germany, with shots of a toy house kit, and "junk" mail requesting support for various progressive causes. In so doing, Friedrich poses questions to herself about how she would behave, and makes connections to her own conduct in relation to contemporary events.

Friedrich's newest film, *Damned If You Don't* (1987), addresses a taboo subject: a young nun's attraction to another woman. It opens with a young woman lounging in front of a TV, watching Michael Powell's classic film *Black Narcissus* (1947), which pits a "good" nun against a "bad" nun. Friedrich condenses the film's plot by using both close-ups from the original, and a spare, verbal description of the narrative. While both nuns are in love with the same man, the "bad" nun acts on her desire. After being spurned by the man, she returns to the convent, where she is pushed over a cliff by the "good" nun. Friedrich then cuts to a sequence in which a black-and-white snake swims gracefully in a tank of water, and a white swan is seen gliding across a pond from behind the black bars of a fence. Offscreen, a woman recalls a sixth-grade religion class taught by a nun who was obsessed with talking about sex. The symbolism evident in this sequence—black vs. white, good vs. evil, and sexual guilt vs. religious faith—is elaborated in the cat-and-mouse game that ensues between the woman who'd been watching TV (Ela Troyano), and the nun (Peggy Healey), who lives in a convent nearby.

After a series of silent encounters, the nun becomes increasingly distressed by her attraction to the other woman, whose advances become bolder. Friedrich fluidly interweaves these scenes with repeated segments from *Black Narcissus* and sensual shots of the nun observing whales swimming at the New York Aquarium. A female voice-over reads trial testimony from *Immodest Acts*, an account of Sister Benedetta, a seventeenth-century abbess accused of a lesbian relationship, which links this story to a tradition of popular myths about nuns and sex.

But unlike the "bad" nun in the Powell film, who is punished for her crime, Friedrich's "bad" nun is rewarded at the film's conclusion by acknowledging, and finally, acting on, her physical attraction to another woman. In

Damned If You Don't, 1987

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1981, one of the themes of *Gently Down the Stream* had been the guilt of a lesbian raised as a Catholic; six years later, *Damned If You Don't* discovers the pleasure of breaking the rules.

Lucinda Furlong
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

Artist's Statement

I would like to think that the films speak for themselves, but it might be useful to explain how and why I choose to experiment so much with the form and structure. I studied art history and then worked for four years as a black-and-white photographer, which gave me a profound respect for the expressive power of static, single, and silent images. When I began making films, it was a thrill, and a great challenge, to record motion and to create unpredictable relations between images, but my eye for silent, singular images held sway, as did my love for the particular beauty of black and white. I certainly admire many narrative and documentary films, but instead of recreating or reproducing a familiar world, it's been more exciting to collect an odd assortment of images, both scripted and shot from real life, and to edit them so that unfamiliar environments, states of mind, and rhythms can emerge. Moreover, by using black and clear leader, by writing on the surface of the film, by reprinting and manipulating images, and by the disjunction of sound and image, one is never entirely seduced by "the world within the film"; one is always reminded that each film is an artificial construction of a series of disparate images which are forced to peaceably coexist and communicate with each other. The artist as diplomat?

Despite my abiding interest in extending the language of film, I find that people tend to pay more attention to the content—perhaps out of a longstanding, misguided notion that women, unlike men, are more concerned with content than with form. In my case, each film *does* begin with an obsession about a particular issue (personal appearance, "bad" dreams, political guilt, and sacreligious desires), and it's been a great relief to discover that one can become much stronger by articulating one's fears, anger, desires, or hope. But the challenge comes in trying to push film beyond its usual narrative capacities, so that those issues can be most precisely conveyed, so that the form takes as many risks as the content.

Experimental film is usually considered a poor cousin to "real" filmmaking, and I'm often asked whether this work is just a prelude to making narrative features. Perhaps people aren't as eager to be challenged by experimental films as they are glad to be entertained by narratives, but each style has its limitations and its rewards, and each deserves respect as a separate but equal art form. I've certainly learned as much about the human mind and heart through seeing experimental films as I did growing up on features.

Su Friedrich

Biography

Su Friedrich was born in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1954. After graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Oberlin College in 1974, she worked at the Women's Graphics Collective in Chicago, traveled in West Africa, and then moved to New York. As a member of the Heresies Collective (1976–83), Friedrich wrote fiction and essays for *Heresies: A Feminist Journal on Art and Politics*, and film criticism for *The Downtown Review*. She has taught film production at the Collective for Living Cinema, and optical printing at the Millennium Film Workshop. In 1984, Friedrich received an artist-in-residence grant from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) for study in West Berlin. In addition, she has been awarded grants from the New York State Council on the Arts (1982, 1986) and the Jerome Foundation (1986). Su Friedrich lives and works in New York.

Selected One-Artist Screenings

London Film Co-op, 1984; Arsenal, West Berlin, 1984; Filmmuseum, Munich, 1984; Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley, 1984; Millennium Film Workshop, New York, 1984; The Funnel, Toronto, 1985; The Art Institute of Chicago, 1985; Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1985; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1986; Robert Flaherty Film Seminar, Wells College, Aurora, New York, 1987.

Selected Bibliography

Beroes, Stephanie. "New York Interviews," *Cinematograph*, 2 (1986), pp. 68–71.

Friedrich, Su. "Script for a Film Without Images," *Feminism/Film*, 1 (Spring 1984), pp. 1–11.

Hanlon, Lindley. "Female Rage: The Films of Su Friedrich," *Millennium Film Journal*, no. 12 (Fall/Winter 1982–83), pp. 78–86.

Jenkins, Bruce. "Gently Down the Stream," *Millennium Film Journal*, nos. 16, 17, 18 (Fall/Winter 1986–87), pp. 195–99.

Kruger, Barbara. "The Ties That Bind," *Artforum*, 23 (October 1984), p. 89.

Filmography

All films are 16mm, black and white, and silent, unless otherwise noted.

Hot Water, 1978. Super-8, sound, 12 minutes; *Cool Hands, Warm Heart*, 1979. 16 minutes; *Scar Tissue*, 1979. 6 minutes; *I Suggest Mine*, 1980. Black and white and color, 6 minutes; *Gently Down the Stream*, 1981. 15 minutes; *But No One*, 1982. 9 minutes; *The Ties That Bind*, 1984. Sound, 55 minutes; *Damned If You Don't*, 1987. Sound, 41 minutes. Production Assistant, Peggy Ahwesh.

Selected Festivals and Group Screenings

The Kitchen, New York, "Filmworks '82," 1982; Collective for Living Cinema, New York, "Ten Years of Living Cinema," 1982; Athens International Film Festival, Ohio, 1983; Melkweg, The Netherlands, "Women and Resistance, 1945–1985," 1985; New Directors/New Films, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1985; Salsomaggiore Film and Television Festival, Italy, 1985; International Festival of Films by Women, Montreal, 1985, 1986, 1987; San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, 1987; National Film Theatre, London, 1987.

Su Friedrich's films are distributed by the Film-makers' Cooperative, New York; Women Make Movies, New York; Canyon Cinema, San Francisco; The Funnel, Toronto; and Circles, London.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 38
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Curt Royston

October 31–November 29, 1987

Half Light, 1987
Multimedia installation. On view continuously

Gallery Talk, Tuesday, November 10, at 3:00.
Curt Royston will be present.

Blue Room, 1986, with Lisa Fox. Photograph by Curt Royston.

Works in the Installation
Dimensions are in inches, followed by centimeters; height precedes width precedes depth. All works are lent by the artist.

Blue Room, 1986
Acrylic on canvas, plywood, piano, stool, and desk, with mirror, and electric light bulb, 108 × 156 × 120 (274.3 × 396.2 × 304.8); video camera and live video monitor

All Our Hands, 1987
Acrylic on canvas, plywood, and wood, with rope, and durotran, 96 × 132 × 48 (243.8 × 335.3 × 121.9); video camera and live video monitor

Eyelight, 1987
Acrylic and oil on plywood, 51 × 63 × 8½ (129.5 × 160 × 21.6); video camera and live video monitor

High Noon, 1987
Two parts: acrylic on plywood and wood, with velvet, spoon, cup, artificial flowers, and electric light fixture, 51 × 63 × 8½ (129.5 × 160 × 21.6); Type C print, with frame, 51 × 63 (129.5 × 160)

Photographs

Pink Cup, 1984
Type C print, with frame, 41 × 48 (104.1 × 121.9)

Torso Two, 1984
Type C print, with frame, 41 × 48 (104.1 × 121.9)

Doll, 1985
Type C print, with frame, 41 × 48 (104.1 × 121.9)

Record Player, 1985
Type C print, with frame, 41 × 48 (104.1 × 121.9)

Performances of *High Noon*, in collaboration with Lisa Fox:

Tuesdays at 6:45
Saturdays and Sundays at 3:00

Credits

Performance: written by Curt Royston and Lisa Fox; performed by Lisa Fox; piano accompaniment by Harold Collins.
Film (video transfer): directed by Curt Royston; written by Curt Royston and Lisa Fox; performed by Lisa Fox, with Larry Barns and Harold Collins; original music by Rhys Chatham.

The centerpiece of Curt Royston's video installation *Half Light* (1987) is his tableau entitled *Blue Room* (1986). It is the first and largest in a series of pieces which employ video, painting, and sculpture to involve the viewer in a conceptual meditation on the phenomenology of image making. On one level, *Blue Room* consists of a structure that frames a set of household objects, including a piano, desk, mirror, and hanging light bulb, which have been painted over in a dazzling profusion of colors. On another level, *Blue Room* is a painted tableau seen on a monitor from the point of view of a camera positioned opposite the painted area and objects. The two-dimensional property of the video image on the monitor's screen flattens the three-dimensional space of the actual scene, thereby making the objects appear to be painted trompe l'oeil representations of everyday objects.

On a technical and formal level, Royston is exploiting a fundamental and unique property of the video medium, namely, the ability to see in real time on the monitor what the camera is recording. This is a capacity which has allowed installation artists since the late 1960s to control and manipulate the perception and representation of a space. Among the important historical precedents for Royston's use of closed-circuit video systems are Peter Campus' *Mem* (1975), which projected onto the gallery wall the transformed and ambiguous figure of the spectator entering the space, and Buky Schwartz's *Yellow Triangle* (1979), which rendered a painted area of a gallery

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wall and floor space as a geometric object when seen from the camera's point of view. Royston's larger installations are inventive and witty intertextual explorations of painting and sculpture that become imaginary narrative tableaux. He extends the temporal dimension through his collaboration with the choreographer-dancer Lisa Fox. Through her movements and gestures, Fox activates *Half Light* as a narrative and expressive space within the gallery and on the surface of the monitor's screen. Royston's accomplishments as a filmmaker as well as his training in painting and sculpture have contributed to the creation of a *mise-en-scène* that extends installation into a multidimensional experience, both playful and provocative in its reflection of the nature of the image and its origins.

Royston has created a group of smaller video pieces (*All Our Hands*, *Eyelight*, 1987) and photographs which fragment the narrative space of the larger *Blue Room* into individual studies. In these, specific arrangements of objects are seen both as painted, three-dimensional surfaces and as video images. In the case of the photographs of painted objects, the still images appear to be photographs of paintings. The individual objects are hidden under a painted surface that renders objects at once real and imaginary because the painted colors and textures interfere with our normal sense of depth perception. The reworking of individual assemblages of objects as paintings and as recognizable objects results in an imaginary surface that exploits the material basis of the image. In the process, Royston's aesthetic explores our conditioned response to the nature of representational illusion and to the concept of reality.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

High Noon, 1987. Photograph by Curt Royston.

The work in this show is based on and is a resolution of my work of the last five years. This installation represents the integration of work I have done in different media—film, painting, and sculpture. At this point in time, my use of the camera to control how the work is seen, and the reality this illusion implies, has become central. The presence of the camera, which constantly feeds new visual information to the video monitor, creates a perpetual sense of the present.

The work is visceral: the component painting and sculptural elements possess an extreme physicality. At the same time, this sensual quality is controlled by a larger conceptual presence—the reproduced image created by the camera. This tension is restated in Lisa Fox's performance. As she moves within the space, alternately embracing and rejecting her role as a muse, Fox becomes both the observer and the observed, the real and the illusory. In *Half Light*, both the deceptive and the real are on equal ground.

Curt Royston

Biography

Curt Royston was born in San Francisco in 1951. He graduated from the University of California, Berkeley (B.A., 1974), and then made three films. The second, *Notes for* an *Adagio* (1976), was purchased by the Archivio Emilia, Teatro Valli in Bologna, Italy. In 1982, he composed music and sound works for *The Hunt*, an internationally toured solo work by choreographer Lisa Fox, who was a leading dancer and soloist with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company from 1976 to 1980. Royston's *In Artificial Light* was voted Best Experimental Film at the 1984 Houston International Film Festival; the same year, he and Fox were awarded an Inter-Arts grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for their film *Hothouse*. Royston recently completed *Room with Blinds*, a multimedia installation commissioned by Pedus Office of New York, Inc., at the 53rd At Third building. He lives and works in New York.

Group Screenings and Festivals

The Public Theater, New York, "Filmdance Festival," 1983; The Kitchen, New York, 1983; Mill Valley Film Festival, California, 1984; Festival d'Automne, Paris, 1984; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, "Dancing with the Camera," 1984; Houston International Film Festival, 1984; Three Rivers Arts Festival, Pittsburgh, "Juried Film Exhibition," 1985.

Filmography

All films are 16mm, color and sound, unless otherwise noted.

White Shirt Place, 1976. Black and white, 51 minutes.
Notes for an Adagio, 1976. Black and white, 3½ minutes.
Look Out Below, 1977. 10 minutes.
En passant, 1978. 19 minutes.
In Artificial Light, 1980–83, choreography by Lisa Fox. Black and white and color, 20 minutes.
Day in the Park, 1983, in collaboration with Lisa Fox. 4 minutes.
Hothouse, 1985, in collaboration with Lisa Fox. 10 minutes.

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Shirley Clarke

December 5–27, 1987

Gallery Talk, Thursday, December 10, following the 12:00 screening. Shirley Clarke will be present.

Shirley Clarke's career as an independent film and video producer spans thirty-five years. Not only were her films among the most successful independent productions, winning wide theatrical distribution and critical acclaim, but she was also a stalwart activist in the efforts to build support networks for American independent film in the 1960s. One of the few women filmmakers of her generation, she served as a role model for countless others.

Clarke's early films draw upon her training as a dancer. In *Dance in the Sun* (1953), produced with dancer and choreographer Daniel Nagrin, Clarke cuts between scenes of the same dance, shot in the studio and on the beach. A shot of a movement begun in the studio is completed in a shot on the beach, creating a rhythmic pattern that accelerates at the film's climax.

Although no dancers populate *In Paris Parks* (1954) , her second film, it demonstrates, according to Clarke, that "you can make dance films without dancers." Loosely structured as a "day in the park," it opens with a sequence in which a little girl (her daughter Wendy) enters a park rolling a Hula-Hoop, and ends at sunset when a group of people leave. In between is a series of fluidly edited, often humorous, vignettes—children on a carousel, or feeding pigs in the zoo—that emphasize movement both within the frame and from shot to shot. This trademark editing style is also evident in later films such as *Skyscraper*, *Bridges-Go-Round*, and *The Cool World*. Clarke, who has often spoken of the idea of choreography in editing, employs similar techniques in two other dance films, *Bullfight* (1955) and *A Moment in Love* (1956), to explore the interplay between fantasy and reality.

Shirley Clarke filming *The Connection* (1961)

In the late 1950s, Clarke was hired by Willard Van Dyke to produce several "sponsored films." *Bruxelles Loops* (1957), exhibited at the U.S. Pavilion at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair, was a series of short "bits of Americana" edited into loop films. Using footage of various New York City bridges originally intended for the Brussels project and footage she and her husband, Bert, later shot, Clarke then made *Bridges-Go-Round*, one of her most famous experimental films. Syncopated to a jazz sound track (a later version used electronic music), *Bridges-Go-Round* is a study in perpetual motion achieved through camera panning, rhythmic editing, and flipping and layering the same scenes shot from different points of view. Clarke's use of bright background colors and dark images ensures that geometric shape, not detail, predominates—an effect that heightens the abstract quality of the film.

Skyscraper (1959), underwritten by Tishman Realty and produced by Van Dyke, is a whimsical documentary on the construction of the Tishman Building at 666 Fifth Avenue, as seen from the worker's point of view. In *Skyscraper*, Clarke adroitly interweaves breathtaking scenes shot from dizzying heights with the more mundane details of construction. Reflecting American prosperity and unabashed confidence, the film is an upbeat portrayal of New York City's developers. *Skyscraper* is prophetic, too, of Clarke's later willingness to break the rules of traditional documentary. Rather than use an expert, authoritative voice for the sound track, Clarke substituted two offscreen actors, who, playing the roles of construction workers, chattily describe and comment on the construction process.

Clarke's inventive approach to the documentary form is also evident in *A Scary Time* (1960), a film produced for the United Nations. A plea for support for the U.N. Children's Fund, *A Scary Time* combines footage of starving children in Third World countries with shots of American children donning Halloween costumes. In one sequence, the pretended horror of a skeleton costume turns into the real thing in an image of an emaciated baby.

The late 1950s and early 1960s was a critical period in the development of American independent cinema. Like

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the painters, poets, and jazz musicians who were often the subjects of these films, the filmmakers were fueled by "a desperate need to combat the complacency of middle-class America, the racial inequalities of its social systems, and the dispiriting academic idea of an intellectual and artistic elite."[1] This movement, called the New American Cinema, also arose out of a desire to combat Hollywood's monopoly on the production, exhibition, and distribution of commercial films. Influenced both by the French "nouvelle vague" and the cinema-verité approach to documentary promulgated by Robert Drew and Richard Leacock, these films, including John Cassavetes' *Shadows* (1959), Lionel Rogosin's *Come Back Africa* (1959), Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie's *Pull My Daisy* (1959), and *The Savage Eye* (1959) by Ben Maddow, Sidney Meyers, and Joseph Strick, were characterized by improvisation, hand-held cameras, location shooting, and small crews.

Clarke's controversial foray into this arena began with *The Connection* (1961), an adaptation of Jack Gelber's Off-Broadway play. *The Connection* is a fiction film posing as a documentary. Its subject is a group of heroin addicts waiting for their "connection" to arrive with a fix, but its underlying theme is existential angst and Beat-generation alienation. It opens with a title and voice-over by the film's supposed "cameraman," J.J. Burden, who explains that he edited the footage, shot in a drug addict's apartment, which was left behind by the "documentary filmmaker Jim Dunn." He concludes: "I did it as honestly as I could," a comment designed to convince us that what we are about to see is "true."

In fact, *The Connection* is an elaborately staged drama that deliberately manipulates commonly held assumptions about the documentary film in order to expose its limits and ethical implications. Throughout the film, both Burden and Dunn move in and out of the scene, interacting with the characters in a way that suggests we are seeing footage which would ordinarily have been cut. The addicts often look at the camera and address the cameraman. The camera, in turn, periodically pans rapidly across the apartment, resulting in a blurred image. This creates the illusion that the film is being shot in real time, when, in fact, it is heavily edited. But it is the naive, nervous character of Dunn that underscores the problematic position of the documentary filmmaker. In his desire to capture real life, he constantly exhorts the junkies to "act naturally."

The Connection raised important questions about the nature of documentary truth that were pursued later by other filmmakers. But in 1960, on the heels of the repressive atmosphere of the McCarthy era, a more pressing issue was censorship. After only two screenings at the D.W. Griffith Theater in New York, the New York State Board of Regents refused to license *The Connection* for commercial distribution on grounds of obscenity. The case galvanized other filmmakers who were also facing problems of censorship into action. Eventually, the ruling was overturned by the New York State Supreme Court.

With the success of her first feature, Clarke was asked by Frederick Wiseman to direct *The Cool World*, which would be based on Warren Miller's 1959 novel. *The Cool World* (1963) is the story of Duke Custis, a black teenager on a downward spiral, whose twin obsessions are getting a gun and becoming leader of the Royal Pythons, the Harlem gang to which he belongs. A more conventional narrative than *The Connection*, the film adopts a documentary style, using scenes improvised by teenagers recruited by Carl Lee, a black actor who was living with Clarke at the time. Lee wrote the script with Clarke and also plays the role of Priest, a gangster from whom Duke is trying to buy the gun. The film's dramatic action, which centers around Duke's dealings with the gang and his family, is punctuated by interludes designed to reveal his inner thoughts. These sequences, unlike the scenes where long takes and improvisational acting ape a verité approach, consist of quick cuts between shots of everyday street scenes, and are accompanied by Duke's voice-over musings.

The Cool World was a daring film that reflected liberal attitudes of the period, focusing attention on the inner city and identifying racism and segregation as the root causes of Duke's alienation and eventual self-destruction. As Noel Carroll has pointed out, *The Cool World* is very much the product of the pre-Black-power stage of the civil rights movement, "underwritten by the hope that the documentation and explanation of injustice will move people of good will to eradicate it."[2]

The Connection was a fiction, intricately crafted by the filmmaker. In *Portrait of Jason* (1967), a documentary, it is the subject who constructs the artifice. The film is a monologue by Jason Holliday, the name taken by Aaron Paine, a black, gay prostitute, who was a friend of Carl Lee. Shot one evening over a twelve-hour period, it was later cut down by Clarke. As the camera moves into focus, he begins: "My name is Jason Holliday." He repeats this line, mimicking the opening of the TV game show *To Tell the Truth*. Prompted off-camera by Clarke and Lee to tell stories they'd heard him tell countless times before, it becomes clear that not only is it impossible for Jason to tell the truth, but that the truth is unknowable. Constantly hustling for sex and money, Jason's unrealized goal is to get his nightclub act together. Jason is an emotional roller

Bridges-Go-Round (1958)

The Cool World (1963)

coaster, articulate and funny as he poignantly recalls episodes of racism he experienced while working as a valet, describes the various ways he'd robbed or coerced people, or goes through his repertoire of female impersonations. By the end of the film, despite Clarke and Lee's increasingly confrontational tactics, even Jason's tears seem to be an act. The film's structure was obtained through the shooting process: at the beginning and end of the 10-minute reels, Jason's image goes in and out of focus, a device which underscores the idea that Jason's true identity is never fixed.

Portrait of Jason brilliantly elucidates two central issues of documentary: exploitation and voyeurism. On the one hand, Jason serves the producer's need for an interesting subject—an "other" who appeals to the voyeuristic tendencies of both filmmaker and viewer. But the relationship is mutually exploitative in that Jason's performance for the camera reveals his own narcissistic and manipulative tendencies. In the end, both filmmaker and subject get what they want, in the process shaking up assumptions about documentary truth.

After *Portrait of Jason*, Clark turned to video as a more economical way to produce films. But like many others, she discovered that video presented new possibilities. In 1970, she formed the T.P. Videospace Troupe, a loose confederation of artists and hippies that met in a downtown Manhattan loft. *The First Years: T.P. Videospace Troupe, 1970–72* is a collection of excerpts from their experimental tapes, produced between 1970 and 1975, which utilize video's real-time interactive capability. These excerpts include documentation of a party given by John Lennon and Yoko Ono, and a humorous makeup demonstration by Shirley and Wendy Clarke that uses the video monitor as a mirror.

Throughout the seventies and early eighties, Clarke returned to her roots in dance and theater, translating several solo pieces into film and video. *Trans* (1979) is the culmination of a four-part study of dance and film, in which a solo dancer's movement—originally shot on film—is abstracted through the use of video colorization.

Working as an artist-in-residence at the Women's Interart Center, Clarke produced *Savage/Love* (1981) and *Tongues* (1982), two monologues by Sam Shepard, performed by Joseph Chaiken. In both tapes, Clarke interpreted Shepard's text through the use of video effects. For instance, in *Savage/Love*, a succession of freeze frames is used to articulate Chaiken's difficulty in expressing his feelings; in *Tongues*, Clarke stretches Chaiken's image as his voice intonation changes. In these projects, Clarke was able to experiment with video techniques which she then incorporated into her most recent feature film, *Ornette: Made in America* (1985). *Ornette* can be seen as a summation of sorts. While ostensibly a documentary about Ornette Coleman, one of America's most original composers, it freely incorporates lengthy fictional and experimental sequences. And although it was produced as a film, Clarke makes extensive use of video technology in what was a complicated post-production process. This amalgam of forms and techniques is partly due to the diversity of source material. As a friend of Coleman, Clarke had originally begun shooting the film in the late 1960s; it also makes use of old black-and-white, half-inch video shot by Coleman in Nigeria in the seventies, as well as concert footage and documentation of a lavish homecoming celebration for Coleman in Fort Worth, where he was born.

In one sequence, Ornette speaks of the influence of Buckminster Fuller's ideas on his music; shots of a string quartet playing his music inside a geodesic dome are intercut in a manner reminiscent of *Bridges-Go-Round*. In another, Clarke constructs a visually elaborate "video game," which juxtaposes heavily processed images of a boy (playing the role of the young Ornette) operating the controls, with footage of Ornette playing the saxophone. When the screen reads "Game Over," it signals as well the end of the rapid-fire cascade of special effects, a playfully sly commentary on the facile use of video technology. But it is the conjunction of such disparate elements that fulfills Clarke's goal of making a film whose structure parallels the complexity and richness of Coleman's music.

Lucinda Furlong
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

1. Melinda Ward and Bruce Jenkins, "Introduction," in *The American New Wave: 1958–1967*, exhibition catalogue (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1982), p. 3.
2. Noel Carroll, "*Nothing But a Man*, *The Cool World*," in *The American New Wave: 1958–1967*, p. 42.

My mother was very beautiful; my father was evidently very rich, and bald, so he always wore hats. The result is that to this day, I always wear one of fifty-odd hats.

I am the oldest of three sisters. I walked and talked by the age of nine months, and then I became a loner of sorts. When I was still a young girl, I had about twenty Felix the Cat toys, from tiny wooden ones to large stuffed Felixes that my parents brought back from France. I had a Felix the Cat costume that my French governess made for me to attend a girlfriend's costume party. Also, I had a 16mm film

by Otto Messmer called *Felix Out of Luck*. So, I would sit watching my Felix film in my Felix the Cat costume, surrounded by my entire collection of Felix the Cats.

A little later, I got married to a typographer named Bert Clarke, who was a kind, talented, and very handsome man. Besides which, in those days it was the only way to get away from home. On our wedding day, we received a 16mm camera which allowed Bert to realize he was a brilliant cameraman. After our daughter Wendy was born, we recorded her every waking and "unwaking" moment on film. I am no longer married to Bert, but I stayed married to the camera and moved into the Chelsea Hotel.

Up to that point I was determined that I was going to be the greatest dancer in the world. I studied with Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey—talent. Then I became depressed, as I realized that I was not going to be *The Greatest Dancer in the World*. It was then that my interest in film blossomed.

A friend and a dancer named Daniel Nagrin was preparing to go to Hollywood for a role he had gotten in a Bing Crosby film. As he had never seen himself on film, he asked if I would film him to see how he looked. He was performing a new dance work at the 92nd Street Y. I decided to take him out to the beach and film it there, because it was called *Dance in the Sun*. It was not until about a year ago that Daniel told me that it was really about walking in a forest.

Shirley Clarke

Biography

Shirley Clarke, who was born in New York City, attended The Lincoln School, New York, Stephens College in Missouri, the Bennington School of the Dance, Vermont, and was a member of the Carolina Playmakers theater group at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She studied modern dance with Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey, worked and danced with Hanya Holm and Anna Sokolow, and performed her own original pieces at the Dance Theatre at the 92nd Street Y and Carnegie Hall in New York. Since 1954, she has received awards for her films from major festivals and foundations, including First Prize for *Skyscraper* at the 1959 Venice Film Festival, the Critic's Award from the Cannes Film Festival (1961), an Academy Award for Best Feature Documentary for *Robert Frost: A Lover's Quarrel with the World* (1964), a Directors' Guild of America Award (1966), and a 1986 Indie Award from the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers. Clarke has received grants for video from the New York State Council on the Arts (1970–72, 1982), the National Endowment for the Arts (1972, 1982), and the Rockefeller Foundation (1972). She was a founding member and director of the Film-Makers' Distribution Center and the Film-Makers' Cooperative, and is presently a Board Member of Anthology Film Archives. From 1975 to 1983, Clarke was a Professor of Film at the University of California, Los Angeles. She lives and works in New York.

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Schwartz, David. "Saxophones in Space." *Theater Crafts Magazine*, 20 (May 1986), pp. 76–78.

Walker, Jesse, and Gordon Hitchens. "The Cool World." *Film Comment*, 2, no. 2 (1964), pp. 51–53.

Wright, Basil, and Arlene Croce. "The Connection: Pro . . . Con." *Film Quarterly*, 15 (Summer 1962), pp. 41–45.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

KiVa Theater, Scottsdale, Arizona, 1962; Robert Flaherty Film Seminar, Dummerston, Vermont, 1959, 1964; Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., 1958, 1966, 1986; New Cinema Showcase, New York, 1967; Kent State University, Ohio, 1969; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "The Films of Shirley Clarke," 1971; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1977; American Film Institute Theater, John F. Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., "Shirley Clarke: Vision and Movement," 1982; Long Beach Museum of Art, "Shirley Clarke: Selected Video and Film Works, 1961–1985," 1987.

Selected Group Exhibitions and Festivals

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1954; Venice Film Festival, 1955, 1959, 1963, 1979; Edinburgh Film Festival, 1955; 14th Cannes International Film Festival, 1961; Puerto Rico Film Festival, 1966; 5th Annual New York Film Festival, 1967; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "Women Filmmakers Retrospective," 1973; The Museum of Modern Art, "A History of the American Avant-Garde Cinema," 1976 (traveled); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, "The American New Wave: 1958–1967," 1982 (traveled); 14th International Moscow Film Festival, 1985.

Selected Filmography

All films are 16mm, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Dance in the Sun, 1953. Black and white, 6 minutes.
In Paris Parks, 1954. 12 minutes.
Bullfight, 1955. 9 minutes.
A Moment in Love, 1956. 8 minutes.
Bruxelles Loops, 1957. Silent, fifteen 2½ minute film loops.
Bridges-Go-Round, 1958. 4 minutes. Two sound versions: jazz, and electronic.
Skyscraper, 1959. 35mm, black and white and color, 20 minutes.
A Scary Time, 1960. 35mm, black and white, 20 minutes.
The Connection, 1961. 35mm, black and white, 100 minutes.
The Cool World, 1963. 35mm, black and white, 100 minutes.
Portrait of Jason, 1967. 35mm, black and white, 105 minutes.
Four Journeys into Mystic Time (1978–79): *Initiation*, 1978. 29 minutes; *Mysterium*, 1979. 14 minutes; *Trans*, 1979. 7 minutes; *One Two Three*, 1979. 8 minutes.
Ornette: Made in America, 1985. 35mm, 80 minutes.

Selected Videography

All videotapes are ¾", color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

T.P. (Tower Playpen) Videospace Troupe, 1970–75. 8 tapes, ½" reel-to-reel, black and white, 30 minutes each.
Angels of Light, 1972. 1", black and white and color, 60 minutes.
A Visual Diary, 1980. 6 minutes.
Savage/Love, 1981. 1", 25½ minutes.
Tongues, 1982. 1", 20 minutes.
Johanna Went: The Box, 1983. 4 minutes.
Ornette Coleman: A Jazz Video Game, 1984. 4½ minutes.

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The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Dorit Cypis

January 9–February 7, 1988

"X-Rayed," 1987
Slide/audio installation. On view continuously.

Gallery talk, Tuesday, January 19, at 2:00.
Dorit Cypis will be present.
Performance on Saturday, January 16, at 2:00.

Components
Multiple slide projectors, slides, theater curtain, projector stands, plaster casts, props, and audiotape.

Credits
Conceived, photographed, and directed by Dorit Cypis. Performance: Leeny Sack. Photographic models: Anita Habermas-Scher, Leeny Sack. Sound composition: James Harry. Taped vocals: Marilyn Habermas-Scher. Production Manager, Minneapolis: Judy Kepes. Electrical engineering and construction: Thomas Briggs. Prop construction: Allison Deller, David Swanson. Projection dissolve programming: Bruce Clark, Russell Manning Productions.

The notions of integrity and closure in a text are like that of virginity in a body. They assume that if one does not respect the boundaries between inside and outside, one is 'breaking and entering,' violating a property.
—Jane Gallop, *The Daughter's Seduction*

"X-Rayed" is the fourth in a series of multiple slide and sound pieces by Dorit Cypis that began with the 1986 installation *Love After Death*. With these projects, which include the performances *Love After Death: A Renaissance* (1986), and *A Phantasmagoria* (1987) with Leeny Sack, Cypis exhumes the ghosts of dreams, stories, and history that resonate in the densely textured images and sounds. Her work involves the projection of emotionally and psychologically "loaded" images—variously drawn from Northern Renaissance painting, haunting old family photographs, and images of the female body—onto scrims, screens, and other surfaces. Through the use of slide dissolves, and through the spectator's (or performer's) presence, which interferes with the throw of the projection beam, the spectator is engulfed in a collision of constantly shifting visual planes.

A theatrical curtain, onto which large slide images are projected, hangs at the entrance to *"X-Rayed."* The act of walking through the curtain into the space shatters the photographic illusion, and, in the process, breaks down distinctions between inside and outside, viewer and viewed.

In *"X-Rayed,"* Cypis uses five slide projectors, one of which slowly sweeps around the gallery walls and ceiling, causing the images to continually mutate, overlap, and wash over the viewer. The mechanics of slide projection become a metaphor for the mental activity of psychological projection, whereby complex feelings of anxiety are externalized as hostility, blame, or guilt. Together, the props, sounds, and large-scale images function as provocations, as sparks. The primary images, seen on the central screen in the gallery, are of a woman (Leeny Sack) looking at and touching her body; these acts are meant to symbolize the attempt at self-possession and self-knowledge. They portray a female, not offering herself up as a passive object, but as an active subject or, as Cypis puts it, "a woman daring to imagine herself."

A Phantasmagoria, 1987, with Leeny Sack. An installation and performance at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax. Photograph by David Miller.

The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover, The Bohen Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, George S. Kaufman, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The attempt to reclaim the female body from its status as an object of male consumption has been central to Dorit Cypis' work in photography, installation, and performance since 1981. She seeks to affirm female sexuality in response to those who have denied its centrality in women's lives. Her work is also rooted in debates about the representation of the female body and the psychological and ideological construction of meaning. Rather than set out a series of fixed meanings, Cypis attempts to make the viewer conscious of these processes.

Lucinda Furlong
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

"X-Rayed"

A woman has been hunted, sought, pursued, accused of crimes she herself did not commit, stripped of her body, denied of self, sacrificed for the crimes of others. She has arrived full circle between womb and tomb, bordello and funeral parlor. The choice is hers . . . defeat or reclamation, victimization or will, repression or transformation.

"X-Rayed" is evidence of her decision to uncover roots, to evoke memory, stir emotion, possess her shame and fear, reclaim instinct, to birth her "essential self." On her journey she must confront her abandoned selves, her predators, her ancestors, her sexuality, her death. She must repossess her own body from the inside out. She must awaken from the dead.

"X-Rayed" is a theater of mutability, a device for transformation, where the simultaneous and continuous movement of image, sound, prop, light, body, voice, language, and environment together create an evocation. The point of departure is the image, presented here in multiple slide projection, with devices of performance used to evolve and restructure the image, distorting and illuminating the boundaries of 2-D, 3-D, and 4-D, simultaneously fragmenting and reassembling new meanings. The source of content lies in the emotions and memories of the body as mutually inter-reflected in history and contemporary culture. The mythlike fictions are grounded in a self-conscious attention to form and environment, acknowledging the space they occupy, the interacting audience, and themselves as fictions. The audience is embedded in this environment, challenged to become active perceivers. I intend to evoke in the viewer a physiological sensation of "seeing," where their own dreams, memories, projections, emotions, desires are restimulated, where they recollect themselves, experiencing the mind of the body.

It is through the body that transformation occurs, where energy, that essence of self, creates and recreates skin, muscles, bones, organs, and fluids—breathing in the environment of history, family, culture—channeling experience, storing memory, evoking emotion, challenging understanding. It is the repression of this energy which, in denying sensation and expression, blocks the body and kills the self.

Dorit Cypis

Biography

Dorit Cypis was born in Tel Aviv, Israel, in 1951. She studied sociology at Sir George Williams University, Montreal, and graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax (B.F.A. and B.A., 1974) and the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia (M.F.A., 1977). She has received grants and fellowships from the Canada Council for the Arts (1972), the National Endowment for the Arts (1979, 1983, 1985), the Minnesota Arts Board (1985, 1987), and the Jerome Foundation (1987). She has taught at Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Art and Design, Los Angeles (1983), the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (1987), and has been on the Fine Arts faculty of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design since 1984. Cypis lives and works in Minneapolis.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Thomas Lewallen Gallery, Los Angeles, 1978; Foundation for Art Resources, Los Angeles, 1979; White Columns, New York, 1981; Véhimcule, Montreal, 1982; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, 1982; California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, 1983; Apollohuis, Eindhoven, The Netherlands, 1983; Thomas Barry Fine Arts, Minneapolis, 1987, in collaboration with John Schlesinger.

Selected Group Exhibitions

The Clocktower, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, "State of Emergency," 1983; Artists Space, New York, "Dark Rooms," 1983; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, "Together We Are a Part: A Tropical Blend," 1984; Aorta, Amsterdam, "Talking Back to the Media," 1985; Film in the Cities, St. Paul, Minnesota, "Ex(centric) Lady Travelers," 1985; Palais de Beaux-Arts, Brussels, "Exposition D'Adieu de Karel Geirlandt," 1986; The Queens Museum, Flushing, New York, "The Real Big Picture," 1986; The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, "Three Photographers: The Body," 1986; Baskerville + Watson Gallery, New York, "Heavenly Embrace," 1987; CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, New York, "Sexual Difference: Both Sides of the Camera," 1987 (traveled).

Selected Installations

All slides are projected simultaneously, unless otherwise indicated.

Through This Opening the Ni . . ., 1978. Props, lighting, 30-second audio loop.
The Quest of the Impresario:
A Reconstruction, 1981. Overhead projector, theater spotlights;
A Re-emergence, 1982. Overhead projector, wall mural, 12-minute audio loop;
Courage, 1982. Photo marquee, 3 slide projectors, slides, 3-minute audio loop;
Still to Be Seen, 1983. Photo marquee, 3 slide projectors, slides, 3-minute audio loop.
Still Cinema: Talking Pictures, 1983. 4 slide projectors, slides, scrim, two 6-minute audio loops (simultaneous).
Vanity: Just a Split Second Away, 1985. 2 slide projectors, slides.
Body Talk: The Panorama Story, 1986. 1 slide projector, slides.
Incantation, 1986. 3 slide projectors, slides, furniture, back-lit transparencies, 3-minute audio loop.
Love After Death, 1986. 5 slide projectors (3 simultaneous, 2 continuous dissolve), slides, theater curtain, scrim, 12-minute audio loop.

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———. "Death Masks." *New Observations*, 44 (Winter 1987), pp. 6–8.
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Norklun, Kathi. "Fascinating Incompleteness." *Artweek*, 14 (April 23, 1983), p. 8.
Riddle, Mason. "Dorit Cypis." *Artforum*, 25 (March 1987), pp. 135–36.
Solomon-Godeau, Abigail. "Sexual Difference: Both Sides of the Camera." *CEPA Quarterly*, 2 (Spring/Summer 1987), pp. 17-24. Exhibition catalogue.
Three Photographers: The Body (exhibition catalogue). Essay by William Olander. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1986.

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The New American Filmmakers Series

EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

St. Clair Bourne

February 13–28, 1988

Gallery talk, Tuesday, February 23, at 5:45.
St. Clair Bourne and Clyde Taylor will be present.

Though St. Clair Bourne is still a young man, his work falls squarely within the formative development of black documentary. It is well known that the first black independent film was produced in 1910 by William Foster. But nobody knows or even asks who made the first black documentary.

Black documentary? Is this another fragmentizing label? To recognize this phenomenon in film history, we must separate it from the representation of blacks in non-fiction films, which began in early nickelodeon cameos with scenes of, say, a black peasant eating watermelon. An important but neglected moment in film representation arrived when blacks began to encode images of non-fictional "truth" as they saw it.

Carlton Moss wrote and directed (without credit) *The Negro Soldier* in 1943. But the primary history of black documentary began in the 1960s with Bill Greaves, the first major black documentarian and still a prominent voice in the field. As executive director of *Black Journal* (1968–71), an NET series, Greaves organized a training program around a corps of young black filmmakers, among them St. Clair Bourne, who would later lay the foundation for the black documentary. The mission of *Black Journal* was to show to black spectators the world as seen by black observers, an overdue innovation in motion media. Black documentarians like Greaves, Bourne, and many others began working to recode the non-fictional representation of black experience.

Bourne's *Black Journal* films immediately challenged the normative coding of blacks as victim-objects who constituted a "problem." In his work, like that of other *Black Journal* filmmakers, blacks are introduced as subjects, as speakers-for-themselves. The traditional "flat" image of blacks is humanized by the incorporation of the black individual and group subjectivity, that is, cultural personality. The search for group subjectivity has led Bourne, and many of his colleagues, to focus on black artists and creators, as in *Afro-Dance* (1969–70) and *Big City Blues* (1981). Another reason for this focus may be that many black documentarians, given the limited opportunities open to them, are responding to pressure from their funding sources by adopting "acceptable" topics, such as black performers and painters. Bourne, however, managed to step out of that pattern in *The South: Black Student Movements* (1969), *The Nation of Common Sense* (1970), and *Let the Church Say Amen!* (1973), among other films. The key to his construction of black subjectivity is not merely performance, but the expressivity of his subjects as cultural archetypes. Therefore, cultural self-representation, as it is forced to operate against socio-economic constraints, comes into play in *Soul, Sounds, and Money* (1969), a film about blacks contending with the business side of the music industry.

Bourne, like most black non-fictional directors, has sought to subvert and dissolve the anthropological mode inherent in white reportage on blacks. He assaults this "white-on-black" convention, with its authoritarian gaze, its univocal, "voice-of-God" narrations, its claim to "objectivity." Bourne's films, reflecting the influence of the cinema-verité style, largely dispense with voiceover narrations. *Let the Church Say Amen!*, for example, reveals a commitment to formal strategies that open the discursive relationship between film and viewer. Focusing on a young black theological student as he contemplates a career in the ministry, it effects a transcultural recoding of a worn staple of white-on-black imagery, the black preacher. In following the student's encounters with three different styles of black religious leadership, Bourne brings ambiguity and nuance to a role simplistically treated in American culture as an icon of black life. As viewers watch these different leaders speak to the student directly, they become party to a dialogic exchange that opens up the complexity of the subject.

A similar dialogic strategy is employed in *The Black and the Green* (1983), a film that follows a group of black, non-violent activists to embattled Northern Ireland. There they meet with partisans of the Irish independence movement, who acknowledge the inspiration of the U.S. civil rights movement, but feel that a non-violent strategy won't work for them. These diverging positions on the conduct of popular struggles, and the shifting attitudes of some of the black activists, challenge viewers' inclinations toward frozen ideological positions.

Bourne has described himself as "humanistically political." His films move beyond network news aesthetics, which frame blacks as sometimes talented victims of

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sociology. Bourne frames his subjects with an eye toward a different balance, searching for that terrible brilliance found in black American discourse which expresses itself against reflex denials from normative culture. It poses another balance as well—to rewrite the established paradigms of non-fictional black portrayal while concretizing and diversifying black self-revelation in an expanding international context.

Such a program places Bourne's work at the hotter edges of black documentary, where resistances and controversy are made overt. PBS refused to air *The Black and the Green* because it was politically controversial. And a reviewer for *The New York Times* praised the craft of *In Motion: Amiri Baraka* (1982), a tape about the controversial poet Amiri Baraka, but retreated behind his own discursive boundaries by describing it as "agitprop." What he objected to was the portrayal of Baraka as an intense but warm human being, that is, as he is known in the black community.

Bourne's latest works, *In Motion* and *Langston Hughes: The Dream Keeper* (1986), have begun to take on a terrible brilliance of their own, matching in style the character of two major black American poets. *In Motion*, with its lean and rhythmic movement, captures the spirit of one of America's most restless literary figures. It also suggests Bourne's own persisting fascination with movement, transformation, and the shifting coloration of social and cultural ideas.

Langston Hughes: The Dream Keeper collates the energies and directions of Bourne's other films into a most powerful formal elegance. New figurative strategies come into play: slow motion, disappearing images, expressionist rituals of movement and costume, arresting montages, and densely layered sound imagery. The transcultural recoding implicit in black documentary finds an urbane signature in a sequence depicting Hughes' anti-Fascist activities during the Spanish Civil War and World War II. A montage of Hitler's troops marching on Europe unfolds over the sound track of Lena Horne singing a popular blues. For a change, historical time is marked through the reference of a familiar black voice, resonant with meaning for Hughes and black viewers. Part of the film's success lies in the measure by which Hughes' recited poems come to dominate its many voices and formal strategies, not as quoted illustrations, but as the controlling subjective point of view. His imagination seems to live in and shape the film. The lyrical and reportorial reach a high state of fused compression, and black documentary attains one of its most distinguished moments of maturity. Through such work, Bourne has formulated an alternative platform of discursive authority that contests the grounds and limits of "minority programming."

Clyde Taylor
Guest Curator

Biography

St. Clair Bourne was born in New York in 1943. He studied at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University (1960–63), Syracuse University (B.A., 1967), and the Graduate School of the Arts, Columbia University (1967–68). From 1968 to 1971, Bourne was a producer, director, and writer for *Black Journal*, which received a series Emmy award in 1970. Bourne's awards for documentary filmmaking include first prizes from the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame (1981) and the Global Village Documentary Festival (1983). He has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1977, 1978), the National Endowment for the Humanities (1979–80), and a Charles Revson Fellowship from Columbia University. Bourne lives and works in New York.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1974; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, 1974; The New American Filmmakers Series, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1974; Pacific Film Archive, University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1975; African Film Society, San Francisco, 1976; Svenska Filminstitutet, Stockholm, 1979; Center for New Television, Chicago, 1985; The High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1986; Port Washington Public Library, New York, 1988.

Selected Festivals and Group Exhibitions

International Film and Television Festival of New York, 1973; Second World African Festival of Arts and Culture, Lagos, Nigeria, 1975; Jamaica Film Festival, Kingston, 1975; New Directors/New Films, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1976; Moscow Film Festival, 1977; Global Village Documentary Film Festival, New York, 1982, 1983, 1987; Hawaii International Film Festival, Honolulu, 1987.

Selected Filmography and Videography

All works are 16mm, color and sound, unless otherwise noted.

The South: Black Student Movements, 1969, 18 minutes; *Malcolm X Liberation University*, 1969, 18 minutes; *Soul, Sounds and Money*, 1969, 26 minutes; *Afro-Dance*, 1969–70, 9 minutes; *The Nation of Common Sense*, 1970, 18 minutes; *Let the Church Say Amen!*, 1973, 60 minutes; *Big City Blues*, 1981, 28 minutes; *In Motion: Amiri Baraka*, 1982, ¾" videotape, 58 minutes; *The Black and the Green*, 1983, 45 minutes; *On The Boulevard*, 1984, 28 minutes; *Langston Hughes: The Dream Keeper*, 1986, 57 minutes.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 42
The New American Filmmakers Series
EXHIBITIONS OF INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO

Liz Phillips

March 8–April 10, 1988

Graphite Ground, 1987
Interactive audio installation. On view continuously.

Gallery Talk, Tuesday, March 22, at 6:30.
Liz Phillips will be present.

Components

Electronic system: 4 ADS L880 loudspeakers, 2 Carver amplifiers (stereo), Apple IIe computer system, Serge Modular Music System, peripherals, power supplies, interface boards, cables, 4 capacitance field generators; 4 speaker pedestals; 4 scrim walls; wood walkway; 11 rocks containing natural copper ore, shale, and quartz; Arizona flagstone; 100 pounds of uncombed wool.

The artist wishes to thank the following for production assistance: Richard Whiteman of Red Metal Minerals, Serge Tcherepnin of Serge Modular Music Systems, Capp Street Project, Parabola Arts Foundation, Inc., John Bishop, Philip Edelstein, Audrey Chang, Roy Tomlinson, Kim Wharton, Heidi and Earl Howard.

Graphite Ground, 1987. Installation at Capp Street Project, San Francisco. Photograph by Ben Blackwell.

Liz Phillips is one of America's leading audio installation artists. Her sound art is distinguished by the sophisticated computer and audio technology she has developed to produce a complex and rich harmonic and tonal range. The installation of these instruments and the electronic sounds they produce are closely related to the spaces they occupy. Phillips employs a variety of formal strategies to transform gallery, performance, and public spaces into compelling audio environments.

In 1985 Liz Phillips was invited to create an installation for the 1985 Biennial Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art. *Whitney Windspun* was designed for the architectural space of the Museum's Sculpture Garden and the building's exterior surfaces. Four small sensors, which detected the speed and direction of the wind, were placed at various points on the façade. The sensors were linked to a computer-driven audio system that produced a varied range of sounds which changed according to the movement and direction of the wind as it blew around the Museum. As one entered the building and looked down into the Sculpture Garden or walked within it, the unseen interplay of the changing atmosphere with the environment became "visible" as sound heard from speakers placed at both ends of the garden. The spectator is always keenly aware of the time spent within a Phillips installation because duration is measured by continually modulating sounds.

With *Graphite Ground*, Phillips' latest installation, the artist transforms the Film and Video Gallery into an audio rock garden. In this project, the visitor can walk down a pathway winding through the gallery upon which are placed large groupings of rocks. The visitor's movements and proximity to the rocks alter the timbre, pitch, and volume of the complex of sound waves emanating from these formations. Phillips thus creates an environment where natural elements conduct and radiate sound fields. These sounds are created by an electronic sound system which employs computers, amplifiers, and speakers to channel, analyze, and amplify the sounds in response to the spectator's movements. An audio and temporal dynamic is established between the rocks and the presence of people, as the delicate arrays of sound fill the spaces between and the crevices within the rock formations.

Liz Phillips' audio installations represent a sophisticated extension of the medium of sound from its traditional confines in the concert hall and the recording. For Phillips, audio becomes a sensory medium that transforms how we perceive a space through our interaction with sound. In designing the audio instruments, she has incorporated a dense, complex, and constantly changing audio program. Her computer-driven systems do not repeat sounds or play

The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover, The Bohen Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, George S. Kaufman, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

compositions, but shift and alter their textures and dynamics by the changes that occur within the installations. In this way, Phillips creates unique experiences for every spectator and every moment in time. The result is an extension of audio into installation art and the transformation of sound into a new form of kinetic sculpture.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Graphite Ground

Graphite Ground, an interactive sound sculpture installation, creates a physical setting reminiscent of a Japanese rock garden. Large shards of raw copper ore rest at the four corners of the space. Wooden walkways traverse the floor, and pink Arizona flagstones serve as stepping stones. The walls and ceilings are painted a soft platinum gray, and fleecy wool (like that used as sound insulation) covers the floor like a luminous cloud. Four large speakers are placed in the corners of the room. In an enclosure in the center of the room rests the "heart and brain" of the piece—the computer and synthesizer—which can be seen through a milky scrim.

Sound events are located within this quadriphonic soundscape. Each object can be physically approached by the audience from a different perspective and each shift of audience position creates transformations in the soundscape. Sound moves through orbits and spreads like a calm mist. Sonic forms build up and decay, based upon the figure's timing and position in this intimate sculptural space.

Graphite Ground will use capacitance fields, as did *Sunspots* and previous works (1971–81). These fields electronically sense the nearness of people to the objects that radiate them. In the past, all the objects were made of processed metal. In this piece, all objects are rock formations with conductive concentrations of natural copper ore. Four rocks each radiate capacitance fields. Using computerized circuits, these fields can be run for the first time in multiples. These new computer circuits can also self-adapt to incorporate changes in the weather and quantities of people in threshold areas.

In *Graphite Ground*, I attempt to explore and integrate concepts of electronic ground and natural ground; electronically activated space with sculptural space; the resonance of an object or a space with sonic fantasies of that object's history. Potential energy (voltage) is a tool for measuring and apportioning time and space when it is reflected in sound events. Sound is used, as in nature, to voice physical events, functioning as both signal and music.

Liz Phillips

Biography

Liz Phillips was born in Jersey City, New Jersey, in 1951, and studied at Bennington College, Vermont (B.A., 1973). She has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1976, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1987), Creative Artists Public Service (1977, 1982), the Beard Fund (1981), the New York State Council on the Arts (1984, 1986), and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation (1987). Phillips has been an artist-in-residence at numerous institutions and arts centers, including Harvard University (1974), the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (1980), and Capp Street Project, San Francisco (1987). In 1981, she co-founded the Parabola Arts Foundation, Inc., New York. Phillips lives in New York.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Reese Palley Gallery, San Francisco, 1971; Artists Space, New York, 1974; The Kitchen, New York, 1975; René Block Gallery, Berlin, West Germany, 1978; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1978; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1982; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, 1983; Jacob's Pillow, Lee, Massachusetts, 1985; Capp Street Project, San Francisco, 1987.

Selected Group Exhibitions

69th Infantry Regiment Armory, New York, "Eighth Annual New York Avant-Garde Festival," 1971; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, "Sumtime," 1973; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, "New Music America '81"; Neuberger Museum, State University of New York, College at Purchase, New York, "Soundings," 1982; Park Avenue Armory, New York, in collaboration with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, "Sonar Eclipse," 1983; IBM Japan, Tokyo, "Think Pocket," 1984; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "1985 Biennial Exhibition"; The Clocktower, New York, "Engaging Objects: The Participatory Art of Mirrors, Mechanisms, and Shelters," 1986.

Selected Interactive Audio Installations

Broken/Unbroken Terracotta, The Kitchen, New York, 1975.
City Flow, City University Graduate Center Mall, New York, 1977.
Metrosonic Province, Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, The Netherlands, 1978.
Sunspots, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, West Germany, 1980.
Windspun for Minneapolis, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1980.
Come About, The Katonah Gallery, Katonah, New York, 1981.
Multiple Perspectives (sponsored by the Cleveland Orchestra), Blossom Music Center, Cleveland, 1981.
Sound Syzygy, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1982.
Whitney Windspun, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "1985 Biennial Exhibition."
Cymbal, San Diego State University Art Gallery, 1985.

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Peter Campus: Projected Images

June 14—July 10, 1988

Gallery Talk, Tuesday, June 21, at 6:30.
Peter Campus will be present.

Head of a Man with Death on His Mind, 1978
Video installation

Murmur, 1987
Photo-projection installation

Untitled photo-projection installation, 1988

All works are courtesy of the Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

This exhibition presents *Head of a Man with Death on His Mind* (1978), the last work Peter Campus produced in video, alongside his most recent photographic installations. This juxtaposition offers an opportunity to contrast the properties of these media and the unique ways Campus has used them.

Even though he has worked exclusively in photography for the past ten years, Peter Campus is one of the key figures in the history of video as an art form. The video installations and videotapes he created between 1971 and 1978 considered the fashioning of the self through the artist's and spectator's relationship to image making. Underlying the formal strategies of Campus' art is an exploration of the unique electronic image recording and transforming characteristics of video.

One of these characteristics is the ability of the viewer to see on the monitor's screen in real time what the video camera is recording. Unlike photography and cinema, one does not have to process the electronic image in order to screen it. There is, then, a direct and immediate relationship to the image as it is created. Campus exploited this property in works that remain compelling and subtle meditations on the self.

Campus' investigations into the apparatus of the video system and the relationship of the camera to the space it occupied were elaborated in a series of installations that included *mem* (1975). Here Campus turned the camera onto the body of the spectator and then projected the resulting image onto the gallery wall at an angle. The viewer was then confronted with a distorted and ambiguous self-portrait that mysteriously shimmered in the darkness. This work forged a complex phenomenological inquiry into the ontology of materials and one's own presence when experiencing the aesthetic text.

Head of a Man with Death on His Mind, 1978. Installation at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1978.

In addition to these environmental installations, Campus made a series of videotapes produced by the New Television Workshop at WGBH-TV in Boston. One of these works, *Three Transitions* (1973), explored portraiture through the use of chroma-keying. In one of the "transitions" we see Campus burning a sheet of paper which appears to contain his own live image. Through chroma-keying, the paper is replaced with a live image of the artist so that he observes an illusion of his own face being burned. In this way Campus fused a Magritte-like Surrealism with a self-referential Minimalism.

In 1978 Campus pursued portraiture within the format of large-scale projected video. In *Head of a Man with Death on His Mind*, the video projector is placed on the gallery floor and the image is viewed on the wall. On the videotape, the artist recorded the face of actor John Erdman. Through framing and lighting, the face is subtly transformed, becoming a stark and dramatic presence. The vaguely threatening quality of Erdman's countenance is enhanced by the barely visible movement of the recorded image. Thus the portrait breathes a life of its own, heightening its psychological power. Campus has created a bold synthesis of the video portrait and the installation format.

The New American Filmmakers Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover, George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc , The Bohen Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc , the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Since 1979 Campus has directed his creative energies to photographs and slide installations. His latest slide projections provide a dramatic contrast to the projected video portrait. The photographic slide is a static single image of a form from nature (rock, vegetable, shell) which undergoes a transformation through subtle lighting and the photographic flattening of the object. Campus furthers the transformation by enlarging the image through projection onto the gallery wall until it becomes a silvery, ghostlike photographic presence.

Ultimately Campus' art, in both its video and photographic forms, represents a continuing exploration of the material and psychological basis of the image, a sustained and sophisticated inquiry into art and artmaking.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

1978 This videotape projection work is from a dark period in my life. I was trying to look into myself as someone would look into a mirror, to discover the shadow side of my being. It was made with the actor John Erdman. My instructions to him were to gaze into the lens, moving as little as possible. I wanted John to project into the camera an understanding of this dark side, to project a comprehension of mortality, of finality, and what he felt about it. The title of the work, *Head of a Man with Death on His Mind*, came afterward. I manipulated a number of the video controls, distorting the whites out of the accepted range, to form a mask around the face, distorting the blacks to disappear into each other like a pool of the unknown.

1987 Nine years later my inner looking is modified. I have turned to nature for subject matter. I am looking for congruences, my nature with nature. *Murmur* is a heart, a skull, a stone, an aberration, a projection of light on a wall of something that does not exist. Time and the ocean have worn at this stone, found its flaws. So it is with me. I like its stoneness. I like the metaphor for the wearing-down process. I felt it expressed the feelings I have inside me. When I first installed this work at Paula Cooper Gallery, I walked into the dark room from the street, my eyes still dazzled by the light, and saw *Murmur* floating out at me, an immaterial thought or memory, reflecting myself. It had come full circle, this looking inward and looking outward.

Peter Campus

Biography

Peter Campus was born in New York City in 1937. He studied experimental psychology at Ohio State University (B.S., 1960) and attended the City College Film Institute, New York (1961–62). Campus was an artist-in-residence at WNET's TV Lab, New York (1974) and at WGBH, Boston (1973–74, 1976). He has received fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation (1975) and the National Endowment for the Arts (1976). Campus has taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1976–78), the Rhode Island School of Design (1982–83), and has been Associate Professor of Arts and Media at New York University since 1984. He lives and works in New York.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

Bykert Gallery, New York, 1972, 1973, 1975; Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, 1976, 1983; Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1976; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1976; The New American Filmmakers Series, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1978; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 1979 (traveled); Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1987; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1980; Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1987; Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Ferrara, Italy, 1988.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "1973 Biennial Exhibition"; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, "Circuits: A Video Invitational," 1973 (traveled); Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, "Project '74"; Documenta 6, Kassel, West Germany, 1977; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, "The Elusive Image," 1979; Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, West Germany, "Schwarz," 1981; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "New American Video Art: A Historical Survey, 1967–1980," 1984 (traveled); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, "Photography and Art, 1946–1986," 1987 (traveled); Long Beach Museum of Art, California, "Planes of Memory: Peter Campus, Beryl Korot, Bruce Nauman," 1988.

Selected Video Installations

Kiva, 1971. Video camera, monitor, 2 mirrors.
Mer, 1972. Video camera, monitor, quartz lighting, mirrors.
Stasis, 1973. 2 video cameras, video projector, rotating prisms, motor.
Shadow Projection, 1974. Video camera, video projector, quartz lighting, screen.
mem, 1975. Video camera, video projector, red lighting.
sev, 1975. Video camera, video projector, red lighting.
lus, 1977. Video camera, video projector, blue lighting.
Head of a Sad Young Woman, 1977. Video projector; videotape playback deck; ¾" videotape; black and white, silent, 12-minute loop.
Head of a Man with Death on His Mind, 1978. Video projector; videotape playback deck; ¾" videotape; black and white, silent, 12-minute loop.

Photo-projection Installations

Each work contains a projector and a slide; dimensions are variable.

Man's Head, 1978; *Woman's Head* (series), 1978–79; *Man Looking*, 1979; *Woman Looking*, 1979; *Half-life*, 1987; *Inside Out*, 1987; *Murmur*, 1987; *Transient*, 1987.

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Kurtz, Bruce. "Fields: Peter Campus." *Arts Magazine*, 47 (May–June 1973), pp. 25–29.

Kuspit, Donald. "Review: Peter Campus." *Artforum*, 26 (November 1987), pp. 129–30.

Lorber, Joseph. "Epistemological TV." *Art Journal*, 34 (Winter 1974–75), pp. 132–34.

Peter Campus (exhibition catalogue). Essays by Peter Campus, Wulf Herzogenrath, and Roberta Smith. Cologne, West Germany: Kölnischer Kunstverein, 1979.

Peter Campus' videotapes are distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 44
New American Film and Video Series

Scrutable Images: Chinatown Demystified

October 11–November 13, 1988

Schedule
All works are 16mm, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Tuesdays at 2:00
Program A: History Revisited, C-Town Revealed
Pieces of a Dream (1974), Eddie Wong; 30 minutes. *Wong Sinsaang* (1971), Eddie Wong; black and white, 12 minutes. *I Am the Master of My Boat* (1976), Lambert Yam; 7 minutes. *Chan Is Missing* (1981), Wayne Wang; black and white, 80 minutes.

Tuesdays at 6:15
October 11: *Chan Is Missing*
October 25: *Family Gathering*; *Nisei Soldier: Standard Bearer for an Exiled People*
November 1: *Dim Sum*
November 8: *Freckled Rice*

Wednesdays at Noon
Program B: Mistakes of Prejudice
Family Gathering (1988), Lise Yasui and Ann Tegnell; 30 minutes. *Nisei Soldier: Standard Bearer for an Exiled People* (1984), Loni Ding, black and white and color, 29 minutes. *Carved in Silence* (1987), Felicia Lowe; 45 minutes.

Thursdays at Noon
Program C: Mothers, Sons, and Daughters
Sewing Woman (1983), Arthur Dong; black and white, 14 minutes. *The Only Language She Knows* (1983), Steven Okazaki; 17 minutes. *Dim Sum* (1984), Wayne Wang; 35mm, 87 minutes.

Fridays at Noon
Program D: A Culture Is Harder to Cross than an Ocean
Afterbirth (1982), Jason Hwang; black and white, 30 minutes. *Freckled Rice* (1983), Stephen Ning and Yuet-fung Ho; 48 minutes.

Saturdays at Noon
Program E: Where Do We Go From Here?
Bittersweet Survival (1981), Christine Choy; 30 minutes. *Dollar a Day, Ten Cents a Dance* (1984), producer, George Ow, Jr.; directors, Geoffrey Dunn and Mark Schwartz; 28 minutes. *The Fall of the I Hotel* (1983), Curtis Choy; 57 minutes.

Sundays at 1:00
Program F: The Roles Expand
Monterey's Boat People (1982), Spencer Nakasako; 3/4″ videotape, 30 minutes. *Eight-Pound Livelihood* (1984), Yuet-fung Ho; 3/4″ videotape, 28 minutes. *On New Ground* (1982), Loni Ding; 3/4″ videotape, 30 minutes. *Bowery Movement* (1988), Tom Tam; 8mm videotape, 60 minutes.

Special thanks are extended to Daryl Chin, Bill Gee, Asian Cine-Vision, and Third World Newsreel for their assistance in the preparation of this exhibition.

Gallery talk, Tuesday, October 18 at 6:15
Luis Francia, Christine Choy, Loni Ding, Stephen Ning, and Tom Tam will be present.

Afterbirth, 1982. Jason Hwang.

As a historical and living reality, Chinatown is far too complex to be summarized neatly by any one idea. However, the images of it that exist—and there are quite a few—fall into two categories: those formulated by the larger mainstream society, by observers not a part of the community encompassed by the notion of "Chinatown"; and those springing from within, from people who are a part of Chinatown—and I mean not only its inhabitants but also those who, while living outside its geographical boundaries, are bound to it in some integral way by common cultural, ethnic, and/or social ties. In any society where equity is the norm, the ideas of those in the second category would have primacy. Yet it is the outsider society, with its too often inaccurate and stereotypical representations, that dominates discourse on Chinatown and on Asians, the two being in the popular mind coterminous. Charlie Chan, Fu Manchu, the Dragon Lady, the *kung fu* warrior, the opium den: divorce these from the outsider's images of Chinatown and the very same images dissolve into nothingness. By such commonplaces is Chinatown measured and judged.

Stereotypes of course eliminate the need to think through attitudes and reactions. They substitute prejudgment of a group for the fairer, though admittedly harder,

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from The Bohen Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc., John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., The New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Family Gathering, 1988. Lise Yasui and Ann Tegnell.

Nisei Soldier: Standard Bearer for an Exiled People, 1984. Loni Ding.

experience of interacting on an individual basis. Stereotypical misrepresentations have in fact existed in the popular mind for well over a hundred years, shaped largely by the propaganda of disinformation—arising out of cultural ignorance and a misplaced sense of racial superiority—and by a Hollywood bent on reaping box office success at the expense of complexity and individuality. One need only point to such recent commercial films as Michael Cimino's *Year of the Dragon* (1985), Abel Ferraro's *China Girl* (1987), and Sylvester Stallone's *Rambo II* (1985) as symptomatic of a long and perverse tradition of portraying the Asian male as a bloodthirsty, money-grubbing, subhuman megalomaniac, and the Asian woman as an exotic, long-tressed sex object. In effect, the Asian, whether born here or overseas, becomes an Other to such a degree that ethical standards of human behavior are presumed not to apply.

Historically there are clear links between anti-Asian laws of the nineteenth century, with their portrayal of Asian immigrants as the "Yellow Peril," the disastrous Vietnam War (a confrontation made inevitable by Western colonial values), and the significant upsurge in violence directed against Asians, as noted by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in its 1986 report. In myriad ways, the Asian becomes the modern barbarian hammering at the massive gates of the Imperial West. Contextually, this anti-Asian bias should be viewed as another manifestation of American society's xenophobic streak, which has at various times targeted the Jew, the Irish, and the southern European for vilification.

Within this context, the dominant idea of Chinatown acts as a convenient repository of all those images meant to pigeonhole the Chinese and, by extension (since Asians are all supposed to look alike), other Asians as well. Just as pernicious are portrayals of Asian-Americans as a model minority, as society's well-behaved darlings with no significant problems. In fact, behind the bright neon facades of Chinatown, and the tourist hustle and bustle, a subculture of sweatshop labor and ill-paying restaurant work has long existed.

As for the rah-rah image of Asian-American students as whiz kids, most such students must, in fact, contend with restrictive quotas at many of the country's top universities. These unsettling facts demonstrate easily that positive minority myths are just as damning and false as negative ones.

Unquestionably, a history of marginalization applied to Chinatown has resulted in a counterfeit notion that serves the power structure well. For if these bankrupt images of a real-life community are accepted wholesale, then what need is there for those who determine policy and who shape popular imagery to actually look behind the bright lights and question their own deep-rooted assumptions?

Scrutable Images: Chinatown Demystified deals with lesser-known images that originate from within the community. The films and videotapes included—both documentary and feature—are concerned with questions of historicity, self-definition, and empowerment. The usual process, i.e., from the outside looking in, is reversed and a very different Chinatown emerges. The difference springs from a demythification—deconstruction, if you will—of a popular mindset. Seen from within, Chinatown divests itself of quotation marks and begins to breathe, to assume a complexity and a human depth that cannot be measured

The Only Language She Knows, 1983. Steven Okazaki.

Production shot from *Eight-Pound Livelihood*, 1984. Yuet-fung Ho. Photograph by Paul Calhoun.

either by simple geographic boundaries or by simple equations. Like any other community, Chinatown is as much a *process* as it is a historical reality.

Of the nineteen films and videotapes in this exhibition, sixteen are documentaries. There's a reason for this. Clyde Taylor, writing about black documentarians like St. Clair Bourne, notes that they "began working to recode the nonfictional representation of black experience," where "blacks are introduced as speakers-for-themselves."[1] Needless to say, the same need for "recoding" is felt within the Asian-American community. To reclaim its cultural territory, to speak in its own voice—these continue to be deeply felt imperatives.

As Bill Gee, writing about the 11th Asian-American International Film Festival, points out, the emphasis during the 1960s on ethnic studies and the parallel emergence of independent Asian-American media explain the preeminence of the documentary in Asian-American film: it was, and continues to be, an instrument essential in "getting the story finally told right."[2] Since the 1960s there has been a heightened awareness that the Asian-American community could and should use the media not just to counteract stereotypical pontifications, but to give expression to very specific concerns—aesthetic, political, social. And in Asian-American cinema the documentary has become the logical antithesis to the straitjacket of the mainstream view of Asian-American culture and history.

In the first program, "History Revisited, C-Town Revealed," Eddie Wong's *Pieces of a Dream* (1974) and *Wong Sinsaang* (1971), provide, respectively, a straightforward historical overview of Asian immigration to California, particularly to the Sacramento River Delta, and a look at an individual immigrant's struggle to keep Los Angeles' dehumanizing forces at bay through *tai chi* and poetry. Lambert Yam's impressionistic short *I Am the Master of My Boat* (1976)—a vivid document of the filmmaker's feelings during his early days in America—and Wayne Wang's offbeat classic *Chan Is Missing* (1981) offer two unorthodox views of San Francisco's Chinatown. Wang's film is a humorous but undeniably real and intimate portrayal of Chinatown, set within the frame of a detective story. This 1981 independent feature was the first Asian-American feature to attain critical and commercial success.

"Mistakes of Prejudice" examines the tragic consequences of racism both on an individual and collective basis. In *Family Gathering* (1988) Lise Yasui, a third-generation Japanese-American, or Sansei, and Ann Tegnell have fashioned a personal document out of Yasui's grandfather's unjust incarceration during World War II simply because he was Japanese. This piece examines the subsequent feelings of shame and betrayal that he was never able to rid himself of. *Nisei Soldier: Standard Bearer for an Exiled People* (1984), Loni Ding's eloquent, often lyrical work, uses archival footage to closely examine these same feelings, as reflected in the story of Nisei soldiers fighting bravely for this country, even as their friends and family were behind barbed wire in such places as Tule Lake and Manzanar, California. And Felicia Lowe's *Carved in Silence* (1987) is a quietly effective historical docu-drama about the detention of Chinese immigrants (again, purely on the basis of race) in San Francisco Bay's Angel Island during the years of the Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882-1943.

The Fall of the I Hotel, 1983. Curtis Choy.

As the title indicates, the focus of "Mothers, Sons, and Daughters" is the relationship between the mother (foreign-born) and her children (American-born). *Sewing Woman* (1983) is filmmaker Arthur Dong's paean to his China-born mother, a former child-bride and garment factory worker. In *The Only Language She Knows* (1983), Steven Okazaki looks at two sets of relationships: between Chinese-American playwright Genny Lim and her mother, and between Lim and her daughter. Mother-daughter dynamics are also at the heart of Wayne Wang's *Dim Sum* (1984), with the traditionally minded mother anxious for her daughter to marry before she, the mother, passes away. Because their characters have to straddle two cultures, these films also comment on the complex feelings American-born Asians have toward Asia.

"A Culture Is Harder to Cross than an Ocean" consists of two works that deal further with being caught up simultaneously in different cultural contexts. Jason Hwang's reflective documentary, *Afterbirth* (1982), concerns itself with the question of Asian-American identity as interpreted by several individuals. And Stephen Ning and Yuet-fung Ho's short feature *Freckled Rice* (1983) is a wry, sensitively understated and loosely autobiographical account of growing up in Boston's Chinatown.

Other groups encompassed by the Chinatown community, such as the Indochinese refugees and the Filipinos, are the subject of "Where Do We Go From Here?." Christine Choy's *Bittersweet Survival* (1981) probes the resettlement problems of the former, viewed against the historical tradition of strong anti-Asian bias. Geoffrey Dunn and Mark Schwartz's *Dollar a Day, Ten Cents a Dance* (1984) is a charming tribute to the hardiness and resilient spirit of now-retired Filipino farm laborers on the West Coast. Many of them used to live in San Francisco's famous International Hotel, since demolished by a developer. The demolition, and the Asian community's struggle against it, are what Curtis Choy zeroes in on in *The Fall of the I Hotel* (1983), in a style at once poetic and journalistic.

"The Roles Expand"—a program of four video works—examines traditional occupations and not so traditional ones. Spencer Nakasako's *Monterey's Boat People* (1982) is a documentary on the problems faced by Vietnamese fishermen in Monterey, California, which echoes similar sentiments and problems, faced by Japanese fishermen in the past. In *Eight-Pound Livelihood* (1984), Yuet-fung Ho provides a lively retelling of the experiences of six laundry workers, using snapshots and other personal memorabilia. With Loni Ding's *On New Ground* (1982) and Tom Tam's *Bowery Movement* (1988), we see a shift to non-traditional careers. Ding's work profiles Asian-American women in such jobs as coxswain, welder, and investment broker, while Tam's piece focuses on Chinese-American artists based in or near New York's Chinatown. This diversity of aesthetic and social concerns offers a clear indication of just how blessedly wide and unesoteric is the real-life spectrum of Chinatown life.

Luis H. Francia
Guest Curator

1. Clyde Taylor, "St. Clair Bourne," in *The New American Filmmakers Series 41,* program note, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1988, unpaginated.
2. Bill Gee, "Feats of Defying Gravity: Asian-American Filmmaking in Our Time," in *11th Asian-American International Film Festival,* exhibition brochure, Asian Cine-Vision, New York, 1988, p. 12.

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_____. "Writing an Unexpurgated History of Asian-American Film." *CineVue,* 3 (June 1988), pp. 5–6.

Chinn, Karen. "A Test of Objectivity." *CineVue,* 1 (November 1986), pp. 1, 6.

Francia, Luis H., ed. "Asian and Asian-American Films: New Perspectives." *Bridge,* 9, nos. 3–4 (1984).

_____. "Made in America." *Film Comment,* 9 (October 1983), pp. 56–58.

Howe, Joyce. "Images That Speak Volumes—At Last, New Asian Film Roles." *CineVue,* 3 (June 1988), p. 4.

"Insights into Craft: Interview with Wayne Wang and Arthur Dong." *CineVue,* 2 (September 1987), pp. 4–5.

Mark, Diane. "Introduction and Screen Notes to *Chan Is Missing.*" *Hawaii Writers Quarterly,* 23 (Summer 1984), pp. 1–9.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 45
New American Film and Video Series

Al Wong

November 22–December 22, 1988

Each Time I See You, I Feel It Could Be the Last Time, 1988. Multimedia installation. On view continuously.

Gallery talk, Tuesday, November 29, at 6:30. Daryl Chin and Al Wong will be present.

Works in the Installation

Dimensions are overall and are given in inches, followed by centimeters; height precedes width precedes depth. All works are in the collection of the artist.

Holding My Own, 1986
Acrylic on fiberglass netting, with lighting, 48 × 72 (121.9 × 182.9)

Laura, 1986
Acrylic on fiberglass netting, with cloth, nylon, plastic, and lighting, 48 × 72 (121.9 × 182.9); Type C print, 11 × 14 (27.9 × 35.6)

Each Time I See You, I Feel It Could Be the Last Time, 1987
Acrylic on fiberglass netting, with TV set, table, tablecloth, aluminum cane, and lighting, 60 × 120 × 24 (152.4 × 304.8 × 61); videotape playback deck; ½" videotape, color, sound, 90 minutes

Line Up, 1987
Acrylic on fiberglass netting, with plastic, nylon, cloth, envelope, 3 light bulbs, and photocopies of photographs, 252 × 120 (640.1 × 304.8)

On/Off, 1987
Acrylic, enamel, spray paint, and marker on fiberglass netting, with lightbulb and flasher, 48 × 72 (121.9 × 182.9)

Suzuki Roshi, 1987
Acrylic on fiberglass netting, with wood and lighting, 48 × 72 (121.9 × 182.9); black-and-white photograph, 8 × 10 (20.3 × 25.4)

Grandmothers, 1988
Acrylic on fiberglass netting, with marquisette, plastic, nylon, and wood, 5 photocopies of photographs, and lighting, 84 × 96 (213.4 × 243.8)

Last Time, 1988
Lipstick on glass, and ink on vinyl, with wood, cloth, photocopies of photographs, lightbulb, flasher, and 12 fishing hooks, 16 × 46 (40.6 × 116.8)

Let Ya See My Fan, 1988
Acrylic on fiberglass netting, with lightbulb, flasher, thread, plastic, photocopy of photograph, and wood, 72 × 144 (182.9 × 365.8)

Rembrandt's Cloth Makers, 1988
Acrylic on fiberglass netting and canvas, and pencil and ink on plastic, with wood, nylon, and lighting, 108 × 84 (274.3 × 213.4)

Shadow Tree, 1988
Acrylic on fiberglass netting, with wood and lighting, 72 × 144 × 72 (182.9 × 365.8 × 182.9)

Line Up, from *Each Time I See You, I Feel It Could Be the Last Time*

Al Wong began to film his father in 1966, the same year he completed his first publicly screened films. This "home-movie" project, spanning two decades, resulted in five hours of film, six hours of videotape, and a compilation of restored family photographs dating from the turn of the century. From this wealth of material, Wong developed *Each Time I See You, I Feel It Could Be the Last Time*, a piece which concretizes issues of memory, immigration and assimilation, and cultural difference.

Each Time I See You centers on the life of the artist's father, Willie Wong, who was born in China in 1895. Immigrating to the United States in 1917, Willie Wong led an itinerant life, moving from San Francisco to Minnesota to Cuba to South America, finally returning to San Francisco in 1922. Until he died in 1986, he remained in the same Chinatown apartment, and he worked in the same restaurant for over thirty-eight years. Although he officially retired in 1962, Willie Wong continued working part-time until 1966. At that point, Al Wong began shooting the "home movies." In 1986, Al Wong traveled to China to visit and record his relatives and the places his father had left in 1917. Upon his return to San Francisco, Wong found his father in failing health.

As in the finest expressions of contemporary aesthetics, Al Wong finds formal correlatives for his thematic con-

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cerns. *Each Time I See You*, the central piece in the installation, consists of a small table holding a TV monitor. A cane rests against the table and a large piece of transparent fiberglass netting hangs in front of it. A silhouette image of Willie Wong is painted on the netting so that his arm appears to be resting on the monitor, his body resting on the cane. The videotape, which combines film, video, and photographs, begins with Willie Wong posing for the silhouette. Wong creates a play of spatial continuity between interior and exterior. The dichotomies articulated in the first few seconds of the videotape are amplified in the ten other netting pieces situated throughout the gallery. There is a continual play of presence and absence, of positive and negative space, presenting antinomies of reality and memory, of cultural influence and ethnic specificity, and of Eastern and Western cultures. Wong's juxtaposition of family imagery with cultural signs contextualizes the personal within the cultural.

During the past decade, some of the most powerful media installations, such as Juan Downey's *Video Trans Americas* (1976) and Beryl Korot's *Dachau 1974* (1975), have combined the personal and the cultural. Wong begins with the most intensely personal material, but consistently edits, arranges, and accentuates it so that a formal tension results. By setting up the play between positive and negative, Wong is creating a visual metaphor for the lives hidden within the confines of ghetto neighborhoods. The small two-room apartment which became the world of Willie Wong after his period of extensive world travel represents the constriction of lives forced to exist within specific social definitions. In *Each Time I See You, I Feel It Could Be the Last Time*, Al Wong presents the feelings of estrangement and assimilation which characterize the condition of being Asian-American. The reproductions of Western art become the representations of the cultural aspirations that define the consciousness of those within the American system. The videotape, with its highly emotional imagery of the Asian-American (and, by familial extension, Asian) experience, represents the social, economic, and political framework from which the specific aesthetic of the installation was developed.

If the modernist agenda stipulated the recognition of a consciousness "to state the terms of its own autonomy,"[1] then part of the Postmodern agenda might be the recognition of the consciousness of "the Other." In the context of Postmodernism, Al Wong's installation raises many questions. How valid is the characterization of the Other? Can the recognition of difference be accomplished without condescension? If, for the West, the recognition of difference is "a crisis of cultural authority, specifically of the authority vested in Western European culture and its institutions,"[2] then must that recognition necessarily involve the negation of the values of cultural differences? These questions are implied in the formal beauty of *Each Time I See You, I Feel It Could Be the Last Time* and its assertion of the thematic concerns of this singular Asian-American artist.

Daryl Chin
Guest Curator

1. Rosalind Krauss, "Dark Glasses and Bifocals: A Book Review," *Artforum*, 12 (May 1974), p. 60.
2. Craig Owens, "Feminists and Postmodernism," in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983), p. 57.

Biography

Al Wong was born in San Francisco in 1939. He studied at the San Francisco Art Institute (M.F.A., 1971). Wong was a lecturer on film and video at California State University, Sacramento (1975–77), and has been an associate professor of fine arts at the San Francisco Art Institute since 1975. He has received grants and fellowships from the American Film Institute (1975), the National Endowment for the Arts (1983), and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (1986). Wong is currently on the Artists Advisory Board of the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. He lives and works in San Francisco.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

F & F Schule für Experimentelle Gestaltung, Zurich, 1975; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1977; Personal Cinema Series, Millennium, New York, 1978; Gallery Tamura, Tokyo, 1980; Cineprobe, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1980; Philadelphia College of Art, 1981; Atholl McBean Gallery, San Francisco, 1982; Collective for Living Cinema, New York, 1982, 1984; The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 1984; New Langton Arts, San Francisco, 1984, 1985.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Pacific Film Archive, University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1974, 1976; Fugitive Cinema, Amsterdam, 1975; Eye Music, San Francisco, 1976; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1977; La Pagode, Paris, 1977; Asian-American Film Festival, New York, 1978, 1979, 1980; Anthology Film Archives, New York, "The West Coast Survey," 1981; Kunstmuseum, Bern, Switzerland, "Alles und Noch Viel Mehr," 1985; Millennium, New York, "20th Anniversary Retrospective," 1986; Emily Davis Gallery, University of Akron, Ohio, "Film Installations," 1987.

Selected Installations

All works containing film are 16mm, silent, and black and white, unless otherwise noted.

Corner Piece, 1978. 2 projectors; 2 12–minute films.
Screen, Projector, & Film, 1978. Projector; screen; 14–minute film, color.
Shadow and Chair, 1980. Oil on metal chair; incense; 11–minute film.
Sunlight, 1980. Sunlight, incense, magnets, funnel, mirrors.
Moon Stand, 1981. Microphone; speaker; paper; 15–minute film.
Puddle, 1982. Tempera; water; plastic; 18–minute film, color.
Moon Light, 1984. Mirror; water; 25–minute film, color.
Shadow Fence, 1984. Acrylic on chain-link fence.
Light/Shadow Dome, 1988. Acrylic on fiberglass.

Selected Bibliography

Burnham, Linda Frye. "Al Wong." *High Performance*, 5 (Spring-Summer 1982), p. 169.

Cowan, Bob. "Notes from the New Cinema." *Take One*, 6 (July 1978), p. 34.

Film Installations (exhibition catalogue). Essay by Michael Jones. Akron, Ohio: Emily Davis Gallery, University of Akron, 1987, pp. 4, 52–65.

Haller, Robert. "Al Wong, Victor Grauer, and Frank Gillette." *Field of Vision*, no. 4 (Fall 1978), p. 25.

Savage-Lee, Caroline. "The Reality of Projection." *Artweek*, 11 (August 16, 1980), p. 16.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 46
New American Film and Video Series

Spencer Williams

December 27, 1988–January 10, 1989

Gallery talk, Tuesday, January 3, at 6:30
Adrienne Lanier Seward will be present.

It's not exactly clear what caused Spencer Williams (1893–1969) to use Afro-American folk religious traditions to structure his film aesthetic. What is clear, however, is that early in his career, the Louisiana native, who later achieved fame as Andy on the popular TV show "Amos 'n' Andy," demonstrated a keen sensibility toward black folk idioms. By 1928, he had negotiated this skill into a position with Paramount Studios; and before he left a year later, he had worked as dialogue coach, actor, continuity writer, and "script doctor," in collaboration with the white, Southern local-color writer Octavus Roy Cohen, on several all-black cast comedy shorts.

Like other black film pioneers, Williams honed his skills working on "race" movies and conventional Saturday afternoon staples—Westerns, melodramas, and musical variety shows. Before the release of *The Blood of Jesus* (1941), he had drifted from studio to studio—the major studios and independent companies producing for the black market. At the first opportunity to exercise the control of an *auteur*, he rejected "racial uplift" stories and popular B-movie formulas for a different source of inspiration.

Black and Southern, Williams demonstrated an intimate familiarity with the folk cultural elements he wove into his best films. In *The Blood of Jesus* these elements combine in ways that parallel the traditional Afro-American folk drama found in black churches across the United States. This tradition, though largely undocumented, runs deep and richly employs symbols and imagery that have historically distinguished Afro-American folk religious expression. The folk drama structure reveals a strong link with the black folk sermon, lending authority to a description of the folk drama as a "dramatized sermon."[1] Appropriating this form, with its obvious cinematic possibilities, Williams provided a deeply rooted cultural alternative to Hollywood formulas for shaping and defining a black film aesthetic.

Both *The Blood of Jesus* and *Go Down Death* (1944) share opening formulaic elements with the folk sermon and the folk drama: an acknowledgment of the sacred source of the message, reaffirmation of the minister's role as intermediary, and the direct announcement of theme.[2] Using a sound track of traditional songs, crosscuts of pulpits and imposing church exteriors, and voice-over narration, Williams cements the cross-generic relationship between two traditional forms of Afro-American ritual

The Blood of Jesus, 1941. Photograph courtesy Southwest Film/Video Archives, Dallas, Texas.

expression through the medium of film. The all-black audiences for whom these films were made doubtless found these elements familiar, as they did another element, that of the processional.

The processional is a powerful and recurring performance element in the folk drama and in the regular church service. In *Heaven Bound*, a traditional folk drama performed annually in Atlanta, Georgia, for more than half a century, the procession of a celestial choir into the main playing area signals the beginning of the dramatic action and immediately distinguishes the saved from the damned. This tradition, however, does not function solely in a sacred or spiritual context. It carries over into broader social and political contexts as a characteristic feature of black demonstrations and protests. The civil rights marches led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the 1960s demonstrate the continuity and function of the tradition in its fusion of sacred and secular elements. In *The Blood of Jesus*, Williams uses both spiritual and social images, through opening visual sequences, songs from the Spiritual corpus, and a narrated prologue to evoke a mythical past and link it with a historical and immediate present.

Williams adheres to themes that also govern folk drama: unadorned variations of good versus evil. There is no artifice here; neither irony nor moral ambiguity comes into

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play to obscure the path of the righteous. The city, defined by nightclubs and juke joints, symbolizes corruption and damnation. But these environments are also devices the filmmaker uses to showcase black talent and to create transitions and a change of pace.

In *The Blood of Jesus*, for instance, the action further establishes dual planes for the heroine, Martha. Within the larger narrative structure of the folk drama she is the lost prodigal; within the city sequences she is also the "fallen woman" popular in numerous Hollywood movies in the 1930s. Her struggles against worldliness culminate at the crossroads, a powerful symbol in Afro-American folk culture. It was at the crossroads that blues musician Robert Johnson is said to have sold his soul to the devil; and it is at the crossroads that Martha's soul is in jeopardy. Williams presents the juncture of two roads, one bound for heaven, the other for hell. In one of the most powerful and surreal moments in the history of black filmmaking, an exhausted Martha collapses at the base of the cross; "the blood of the lamb" literally drips into her face.

Williams was never able to duplicate that moment or the sense of moral clarity that he achieved in *The Blood of Jesus*. He comes closest in *Go Down Death*, a visual retelling of a James Weldon Johnson poem. Using borrowed footage, he attempts to recapture the surrealistic style of the earlier film through concrete visual expressions of death and hell. The effort, however, is heavy handed and the quality of the additional footage is low. Though both films use religious themes for their development, it is interesting that in *Go Down Death* folk elements are minimized in favor of a more urban, middle-class tradition. The songs, for example, rather than derive from the Spiritual tradition, are usually texts found in standard Methodist hymnals. And the villain, Jim, is as much a victim of his own evil as he is a victim of the class to which he belongs and from which he cannot escape. These differences between two films that use the same dramatic formulas suggest that Williams was attempting to widen his audience by making an appeal based as much on social as moral issues.

Two other films in Williams' later association with Sack productions—*Of One Blood* (1945) and *Dirty Gertie from Harlem USA* (1946)—suggest an on-going flirtation with themes of religious faith. In *Dirty Gertie*, which resembles a loosely adapted version of Somerset Maugham's *Rain*, the allusions are vaguely mystical and psychological rather than tied to any specific tradition in Afro-American fundamentalism. The appearance of a conjure woman, "Hager" (Hagar), played by Williams, doesn't fully succeed in making the cultural connection that her name and role suggest. *Of One Blood* uses the biblical theme of the Deluge to introduce the story of brothers separated and later reunited. The film is flawed by the incredible circumstances set up in the narrative, and the moral urgency created in the first scenes dissipates all too quickly. In Williams' other films of the 1940s, such as *Juke Joint* (1947) and *The Girl in Room 20* (1946), he entirely abandoned the successful formula that he had used in *The Blood of Jesus*.

Little is known about the reception of these films, though Williams' producer called *The Blood of Jesus* "probably the most successful of all Negro films and [said that it] lived the longest . . . and possessed that certain chemistry required by the Negro box office."[3] That "chemistry" depended on appropriate symbols, images, and themes combining to create an engaging rapport between the film and its audience, particularly for those in the rural communities where it played most frequently.

Historically, the label "black film" has been used to identify a wide range of productions, primarily defined by an emphasis on cast and theme. A number of these films have countered the distorted and pejorative portrayals conventionalized by Hollywood by emphasizing "racial uplift" themes and the desire to present more "realistic" images of black life. But in the process of combating negative stereotypes, self-conscious impulses have undermined the creative representation of distinct aspects of black culture, which in themselves include elements of social and political consciousness. A "black film," like black music, black sermons, and raps, can, however, be identified, as in *The Blood of Jesus*, in relation to dynamic and distinct cultural processes. Traditional forms, images, symbols, and performance styles can inform the structure, content, and texture of the works of a new generation of filmmakers seeking a cinematic expression of an Afro-American worldview.

Adrienne Lanier Seward
Guest Curator

1. William H. Wiggins, "'In the Rapture': The Black Aesthetic and Folk Drama," *Callaloo*, 2 (February 1978), p. 103.
2. Gerald Davis, *I Got the Word in Me and I Can Sing It, You Know: A Study of the Performed African American Sermon* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987).
3. Thomas Cripps, *Black Film as Genre* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 131.

Selected Filmography

All films are 35mm, black and white, and sound.

The Blood of Jesus, 1941. 50 minutes. Producer, Amergo Films/Sack Amusement, Inc.
Go Down Death, 1944. 50 minutes. Producer, Harlemwood/Sack Amusement Corporation.
Of One Blood, 1945. 60 minutes. Producer, Sack Attractions.
Beale Street Mama, 1946. 67 minutes. Producer, Sack Entertainment.
Dirty Gertie from Harlem USA, 1946. 60 minutes. Producer, Alfred Sack.
The Girl in Room 20, 1946. 63 minutes. Producer, United Films.
Juke Joint, 1947. 67 minutes. Producer, Harlemwood/Sack Attractions.

Further Reading

Cripps, Thomas. "The Films of Spencer Williams." *Black American Literature Forum*, 12 (Winter 1978), pp. 128–34.
Richards, Deborah Bowman. "A Bibliographic Essay on Afro-American Folk Drama." *Ohio Folklore*, 6 (1979–1981), pp. 37–55.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 47
New American Film and Video Series

AIDS Media: Counter-Representations

January 15–February 5, 1989

Gallery talk, Tuesday, January 24, at 6:30.
Gregg Bordowitz, Jean Carlomusto,
Amber Hollibaugh, and Tom Kalin will be present.

Works are ¾" videotape, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Program I
Fighting for Our Lives (1987), Ellen Seidler and Patrick DuNah, 28 minutes.
Testing the Limits (1987), The Testing the Limits Collective (Gregg Bordowitz, Jean Carlomusto, Sandra Elgear, Robin Hutt, Hilery Joy Kipnis, and David Meieran), 28 minutes.

Program II
Snow Job: The Media Hysteria of AIDS (1986), Barbara Hammer, 8 minutes.
AIDS News: A Demonstration (1988), Robert Huff, ½" videotape, 6 minutes.
Doctors, Liars, and Women (1988), Jean Carlomusto and Maria Maggenti, 23 minutes.
Transformer/AIDS (1988), Paper Tiger Southwest (Jane Cottis, Margaret Difani, Bob Kinney, and John Walden), 30 minutes.
Seize Control of the FDA (1988), Gregg Bordowitz and Jean Carlomusto, 28 minutes.
We're Desperate, Get Used to It (1988), Robert Huff, ½" videotape, 3 minutes.

Program III
The Helms Amendment (1988), Jean Carlomusto, 8 minutes.
They Are Lost to Vision Altogether (1988), Tom Kalin, 10 minutes.
The ADS Epidemic (1987), John Greyson, 5 minutes.
A.I.D.S.C.R.E.A.M. (1988), Jerry Tartaglia, 16mm film, 9 minutes.
The 2nd Epidemic (1988), Amber Hollibaugh, 27 minutes.

Program IV
Ojos que no ven (Eyes That Fail to See) (1987), José Gutierrez, Instituto Familiar de la Raza, Inc./Latino AIDS Project, 52 minutes (dubbed in English).
Up in Arms over Needle Exchange (1988), Jean Carlomusto and Hilery Joy Kipnis, 28 minutes.
Till Death Do Us Part (1988), Ginny Durrin, 16mm film, 16 minutes.
Work Your Body (1988), Gregg Bordowitz and Jean Carlomusto, 28 minutes.

Program V
Danny (1987), Stashu Kybartas, 20 minutes.
An Individual Desires Solution (1986), Larry Brose, Super-8 film, black and white, 16 minutes.
Song from an Angel (1988), David Weissman, 16mm film, 5 minutes.
Chuck Solomon: Coming of Age (1986), Marc Huestis and Wendy Dallas, 58 minutes.
The Inaugural Display of the NAMES Project Quilt (1987), David Thompson, 16 minutes.

What we know and understand about AIDS is shaped, to a large extent, by the social institutions that produce and disseminate knowledge and information about the disease. As Paula Treichler has pointed out, "AIDS is not merely an invented label, provided to us by science . . . for a clear-cut disease entity caused by a virus. Rather, the very nature of AIDS is constructed through language and in particular through the discourses of medicine and science."[1] It is precisely because cultural biases are inscribed in language that AIDS activists have contested the terminology used to describe the disease and have substituted the phrase "people with AIDS" for "AIDS victims."

Certainly the mass media are implicated in this process of interpretation. In discussing commercial television's coverage of AIDS, Timothy Landers has observed that "the prevailing representations about AIDS indicate that it threatens not only physical bodies and institutional bodies, in particular law and health-care systems, but that it is attacking the immune system of the social order itself."[2] Mass-media representations of AIDS run the gamut from sensational, moralistic, tabloid headlines about "the gay plague," to humanistic depictions of heroism in the face of death. Central to all of this reporting, however, is the assumption that it is directed to "one audience—the *you* addressed is presumed to be white, middle-class, heterosexual, and healthy, grouped in cozy, stable families."[3]

The four films and eighteen videotapes in this exhibition carry no such baggage. Rather, they function as "counter-images"—not so much by substituting "positive" images for negative ones (although some do that), but by analyzing the socio-cultural mechanisms that produce these stereotypes. And the works are often addressed to the very audiences—gays, drug users, minorities, and people with AIDS—ignored by the commercial media.

In the past two years, the production of videotapes by artists and independent producers on the subject of AIDS has mushroomed. That video should be the chosen medium of these presentations comes as no surprise since, as Douglas Crimp put it, "much of the dominant discourse on AIDS has been conveyed through television, and this discourse has generated a critical counter-discourse in the same medium."[4] The immediacy and affordability of video

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also makes it possible to get tapes produced quickly, while the availability of public access cable channels provides an outlet for work such as the tapes produced by Gregg Bordowitz and Jean Carlomusto for *Living with AIDS*, the Gay Men's Health Crisis weekly cable show.

Since the way AIDS is represented in language and the media has been central to the debate, this exhibition brings together works with different objectives and different production strategies. Some tapes, such as *Fighting for Our Lives* and *Chuck Solomon: Coming of Age*, rely on traditional documentary forms to present points of view not usually accommodated by television; others, such as *Testing the Limits*, are outgrowths of AIDS activism, just as the films produced by the Newsreel collective in the 1960s and 1970s served the civil rights and student protest movements. Three films in the exhibition have aesthetic affinities with avant-garde filmmaking; and a number of tapes produced by artists use deconstructive techniques.

Program I presents two documentary overviews that show how two cities—San Francisco and New York—have responded to the AIDS crisis. *Fighting for Our Lives* (1987), by Ellen Seidler and Patrick DuNah, chronicles the epidemic's effect on the San Francisco gay community and how AIDS has led to the development of new gay social structures and support networks for people with AIDS. The tape emphasizes the positive steps taken in AIDS education and treatment that have made San Francisco the "model city" for AIDS response. Although *Fighting for Our Lives* touches on how AIDS has politicized the San Francisco gay community, its primary focus is on how the disease has affected people on a personal level. In contrast, *Testing the Limits* (1987) tackles the complex web of the politics surrounding AIDS in New York by documenting activist responses—from, among others, the Minority Task Force on AIDS, the Institute for the Protection of Gay and Lesbian Youth, and AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP)—to inadequacies in government health care, the legal system, education, and scientific research. Each tape has a different emphasis and mode of address: *Fighting for Our Lives* uses the rhetorical devices traditionally associated with documentary "objectivity," while *Testing the Limits* assumes a more exhortative stance. Together, the two works serve not so much to balance each other as to provide a sense of the scope of the issues surrounding AIDS and its representation.

Simon Watney has argued that "AIDS is not only a medical crisis on an unparalleled scale, it involves a crisis of representation itself, a crisis over the entire framing of knowledge about the human body and its capacities for sexual pleasure."[5] The tapes in Program II examine the various ways in which the institutions of the media, government, and medicine have functioned to shape and control public perception of—and hence, public response to—AIDS. In *Snow Job: The Media Hysteria of AIDS* (1986), Barbara Hammer presents a catalogue of sensational headlines and audio clips from news reports about AIDS. By removing them from their original contexts and using a layered soundtrack, Hammer underscores the media's fundamental homophobia.

Doctors, Liars, and Women, 1988. Jean Carlomusto and Maria Maggenti.

Robert Huff employs another deconstructive technique in *AIDS News: A Demonstration* (1988). The tape begins with a report by a local New York TV station on an ACT UP demonstration protesting the paucity of federal funding for AIDS, which disrupted morning rush-hour traffic on Wall Street. Huff plays the TV segment in its entirety, shows it in rewind, and then repeats it—this time with editing that reveals the bias underlying the report and makes connections to other social struggles. As the reporter talks about funding levels for AIDS research, Huff inserts footage of Star Wars simulations and substitutes sound bites from more sympathetic bystanders who had not appeared in the original TV version.

Another aspect of media manipulation is articulated in Jean Carlomusto and Maria Maggenti's *Doctors, Liars, and Women* (1988), a tape that documents a demonstration organized by a group of female activists against a controversial—and highly deceptive—article on AIDS that appeared in *Cosmopolitan* magazine. The article, which was based on questionable research by a doctor who had conducted no previous AIDS studies, was designed to reassure women that they are in no danger of contracting the disease. The tape includes interviews with the women as they discuss their motives for organizing a demonstration outside the offices of the magazine's publisher, as well as footage of an interview with the doctor, whose arrogant manner and unconvincing arguments further undermine his credibility.

Transformer/AIDS (1988) takes a speech by President Reagan to the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AmFAR) as its point of departure for a critique of the administration's policies and the politics of language as it is used to "*construct* the disease and help make it intelligible."[6] Produced by a San Diego-based offshoot of the Paper Tiger Television collective, the tape uses an assortment of lively visual juxtapositions. For instance, the government's AIDS pamphlet is superimposed over footage of the TV show *Leave It to Beaver*, a symbol of American middle-class homogeneity, while the voice-over describes the pamphlet as "speak[ing] to everyone as if we were an undifferentiated community; in fact, it speaks to no one."

The analysis and critique evident in tapes such as

Transformer/AIDS also form the basis for activist responses. Nowhere is the conjunction of theory and practice, analysis and activism, more clearly articulated than in Gregg Bordowitz and Jean Carlomusto's *Seize Control of the FDA* (1988), a tape that not only documents the highly publicized takeover of the Food and Drug Administration's headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, by a group of AIDS activists, but also effectively articulates the protesters' criticisms of the FDA. The tape intercuts footage of the event with interviews with the organizers, seen sitting in front of video monitors that show footage from the demonstration, and texts that explain, point by point, how the FDA has failed to respond to the AIDS crisis—by, among other things, delaying or blocking the release of new drugs and by drug trial procedures that are either too slow, unethical, or discriminatory.

Program II concludes with Robert Huff's *We're Desperate, Get Used to It* (1988), which uses some of the same shots from the protest footage used in *AIDS News*. To emphasize public misperception of the government's inaction on AIDS, Huff keeps repeating a shot of an older man saying, "I think the government is doing the best it can."

One of the most disturbing aspects of the AIDS epidemic is the fear and ignorance that have caused widespread hostility toward people with AIDS, from the hemophiliac children in Florida whose house was burned down after it became known that they had contracted AIDS, to more insidious forms of bigotry, racism, and homophobia. "AIDS is effectively being used," Simon Watney recently wrote, "as a pretext throughout the West to 'justify' calls for increasing legislation and regulation of those who are considered to be socially unacceptable."[7] One example is the Helms Amendment, proposed days after a gay rights march on Washington that drew over 500,000 demonstrators. Sponsored by the ultra-conservative senator from North Carolina, the law would have banned any federal funding for AIDS education material that "promotes, encourages, or condones homosexual behavior." Jean Carlomusto's *The Helms Amendment* (1988), which opens Program III, looks at what precipitated Helms' action—the "safer sex" comics published by the Gay Men's Health Crisis. Although the comics are a highly effective means of promoting safer sex practices, Helms singled them out, as Tim Sweeney of the GMHC makes clear in the tape, in order to turn the bill into a referendum on morality.

They Are Lost to Vision Altogether, 1988. Tom Kalin.

Gay sexuality in the age of AIDS is the subject of the next three tapes and film. Tom Kalin's *They Are Lost to Vision Altogether* (1988) recontextualizes heterosexually charged songs and images through juxtaposition with images of gay sexuality. Produced as a lyrical counterargument to the Helms Amendment, the tape intercuts audio clips that describe some of the more heinous actions reported around the country in response to AIDS, among them the TV news story about a Houston mayoral candidate whose solution to AIDS was to "shoot the queers."

John Greyson's *The ADS Epidemic* (1987) is a humorous tape that announces a new epidemic, Acquired Dread of Sex. The catchy song enumerates the different ways one can get ADS—from watching TV, from "stupid jokes" or "ignorant folks"—and concludes by proclaiming "Stop the ADS campaign, safe sex is fun." In contrast, Jerry Tartaglia's *A.I.D.S.C.R.E.A.M.* (1988) is a film of mourning and rage about how reactionaries are using AIDS to desexualize gay culture. The hand-processed, tinted film ends with the sound of a siren as a voice-over screams, "I'm a human being, not a viral carrier."

The final work in Program III is Amber Hollibaugh's *The 2nd Epidemic* (1988), a documentary on AIDS-related discrimination that looks at several cases handled by the AIDS Discrimination Unit of the New York City Human Rights Commission. The tape features the story of one community—Swansea, Massachusetts—that overcame its fears and prejudices by giving support to a young AIDS patient and his family.

Providing explicit information about AIDS is the subject of the tapes in Program IV. *Ojos que no ven (Eyes That Fail to See)* of 1987 is structured as a *tele-novella*, a soap-opera format popular in Latin countries and Latino communities. Highly schematic in presentation and often humorous,

Transformer/AIDS, 1988. Paper Tiger Southwest.

Ojos que no ven is specifically geared for Latino audiences and uses the complicated plot twists characteristic of melodrama to present the various modes of AIDS transmission and prevention. Drawing viewers into identification with its various characters, the plot centers around a community whose members are exposed to AIDS and how they cope with the consequences.

Up in Arms over Needle Exchange (1988), by Jean Carlomusto and Hilery Joy Kipnis, examines the controversial proposal to give free needles to IV drug users in New York City. The tape combines footage shot at a forum at which pro and con arguments were heard with statistical charts and footage of a demonstration. The result is a convincing case in favor of the proposal. *Till Death Do Us Part* (1988), by Ginny Durrin, is a performance piece produced with a Washington, D.C., youth theater group that explores the impact of AIDS on black teens. The film uses rap music and skits to caution against IV drug use.

Work Your Body (1988), another tape produced for the Gay Men's Health Crisis by Gregg Bordowitz and Jean Carlomusto, is subtitled *Options for People Who Are HIV Antibody Positive*. Its premise is that AIDS is not a death sentence, and it provides straightforward information on health care, safe sex, drug treatments, and support groups designed to help people help themselves.

Most of the tapes and films in the first four programs consider AIDS in social and political contexts. The works in Program V present personal responses from people who have lost lovers, friends, and relatives to AIDS and from those who have contracted the disease. In *Danny* (1987), Stashu Kybartas struggles with the loss of a friend who died in 1986. The tape opens with a text crawl which explains that, while working together at the Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force, they had begun to shoot a film about Danny after he was diagnosed as having AIDS. But this is not a documentary in the conventional sense. Using photographs of Danny, Kybartas intercuts sections involving remembrance, in which he addresses Danny rhetorically; narrative sections describing the course of Danny's illness; and Danny's own taped conversations about his lifestyle before he contracted AIDS. Through juxtaposition of image and text (or voice-over) Kybartas creates paradoxes, as when a description of Danny's deteriorating condition is accompanied by a shot of Danny taking off his shirt—a gesture with clear sexual connotations. In its refusal to apologize for Danny's homosexuality or the fact that he had taken IV drugs, the tape grants this AIDS "victim" his humanity.

Like *Danny*, Larry Brose's *An Individual Desires Solution* (1986) is a work of mourning in which the filmmaker attempts to deal with the loss of his lover, Kevin. The film opens with the sound of piano music; a text crawl up the screen contains excerpts from conversations in which the lover shares his feelings and discusses his medical options. The impact of his words doesn't really sink in, though, until the film cuts to a scene of Kevin playing the piano: instead of piano music, we hear an intentionally distorted soundtrack of the recorded conversations.

In *Song from an Angel* (1988), David Weissman documents a solo performance given by Rodney Price, a founding member of San Francisco's Angels of Light theatrical troupe, two weeks before his death. Seated in a wheelchair on a dark stage, Price defies the image of the AIDS "victim" conventionalized in the media by singing and tap dancing to a light-hearted song about his illness.

Another San Francisco theatrical figure, gay playwright Chuck Solomon, contradicts the image of the person with AIDS as debilitated and lonely in Marc Huestis and Wendy Dallas' documentary *Chuck Solomon: Coming of Age* (1986). Through interviews with colleagues, friends, and Solomon himself, the tape becomes an affecting portrait of a man whose life represents, in microcosm, the story of the gay rights movement.

A sense of sharing and catharsis is captured in David Thompson's *The Inaugural Display of the NAMES Project Quilt* (1987). To commemorate the tens of thousands who have died of AIDS, people around the country have been creating fabric panels, each bearing the name of a deceased loved one. Thompson's tape documents the moving ceremony held in Washington, D.C., at which the first 1,920 panels were unfolded. It intercuts shots of eight-person groups as they unfold sections of the quilt, shots of bystanders, close-ups of the quilt, and AIDS activists as they read the roll call of names.

The history of the moving image is filled with examples of socially committed artists engaged with the issues of their time. The recent film and video productions about AIDS can be traced to a number of motives: the desire to correct misrepresentations, to provide accurate information, to share personal experiences, and to call for activism. By giving voice to subjects usually excluded from mainstream media, and by analyzing and challenging dynamic social and political processes, these works provide a means for understanding the issues surrounding AIDS and their representation.

Lucinda Furlong
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

1. Paula A. Treichler, "An Epidemic of Signification," *October*, no. 43 (Winter 1987), p. 31.
2. Timothy Landers, "Bodies and Anti-Bodies: A Crisis of Representation," *The Independent*, 11 (January–February 1988), p. 19.
3. Ibid., p. 18.
4. Douglas Crimp, "AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism," *October*, no. 43 (Winter 1987), p. 14.
5. Simon Watney, *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS, and the Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 9.
6. Treichler, "An Epidemic of Signification," p. 31.
7. Watney, *Policing Desire*, p. 3.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 48
New American Film and Video Series

Eye for I: Video Self-Portraits

October 3–29, 1989

Schedule
All videotapes are ¾", color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Tuesdays at 2:00; Thursdays and Saturdays at 11:30
Joan Jonas, *Vertical Roll* (1972), 20 minutes, and *I Want to Live in the Country (And Other Romances)* (1976), 30 minutes.

Tuesdays at 4:30; Thursdays and Saturdays at 1:30
Vito Acconci, *The Red Tapes* (1976), black and white, 141 minutes; and a compilation of one-minute excerpts from all of his previous tapes, prepared by Raymond Bellour (approximate length, 30 minutes).

Tuesday, October 10 at 4:00
Vito Acconci, *The Red Tapes*, followed by Gallery talk at 6:30 with Raymond Bellour

Wednesdays and Fridays at 11:30; Sundays at 12:30
Peter Campus, *Three Transitions* (1973), 5 minutes, and *Set of Coincidence* (1974), 13 minutes; Pier Marton, *Tapes* (1978–79), 15 minutes, and *Hope You Croak Before Me* (1980), 3 minutes; Juan Downey, *The Looking Glass* (1981), 29 minutes, and *The Motherland* (1987), 7 minutes.

Wednesdays and Fridays at 1:30; Sundays at 2:30
Bill Viola, *The Space Between the Teeth* (1976), 9 minutes, and *I Do Not Know What It Is I Am Like* (1986), 89 minutes; Gary Hill, *Around and About* (1980), 5 minutes, and *Incidence of Catastrophe* (1987–88), 44 minutes.

Eye for I: Video Self-Portraits

In Western cultural tradition, the term "self-portrait" immediately evokes painting. It is the special value of French scholar Michel Beaujour's *Miroirs d'encre* to have established the existence of the literary self-portrait parallel to, yet apart from, the pictorial model.[1] Adopting a similar perspective, we can speak today of the *video* self-portrait without feeling obliged to refer to painting, even if this autonomy is relative in each case, as both video and painting converge in a larger context.[2]

Autobiography, cinema: these are the terms that will allow us, through a kind of negative detour, to zero in on the historical emergence of the video self-portrait. The literary theorist Elisabeth Bruss has led the way, in a definitive article that finds cinema lacking a tradition comparable to that of the literary self-portrait.[3] For this she gives three reasons, corresponding to three criteria that define the genre as such.

Gallery talk, Tuesday, October 10, at 6:30.
Raymond Bellour will be present.

The Red Tapes, 1976. Vito Acconci.

1) *The value of truth*, which charges the author to speak the truth, as it pertains to the veracity of sources and the sincerity of intentions. Cinema can little subscribe to this, torn as it is between the act of simply recording an event and that of re-telling it, between the staged truth of mise-en-scène and the truth directly registered by the camera, between the contradictory excesses of the documentary and fiction. This is a problem unknown to language, which can never be, in and of itself, too much or too little "real," since it never enters into a direct relation with reality.

2) *The value of the act*, which recognizes authors as subjects responsible for the behavior meant to illustrate their characters. Cinema has more trouble directly expressing this presence; the marks of expression employed for self-representation in the image tend to undermine the effects of authenticity and reality the subject wishes to convey.

3) *The value of identity*, which draws together in a single person the author, the narrator, and the protagonist. In precisely the place in the text where the "I" who speaks becomes confused, as a matter of course, with the "I" being spoken about, there is in cinema an almost unbridgeable gap between the "I" who sees and the "I" who is seen. In cinema, the subject is either too present or too

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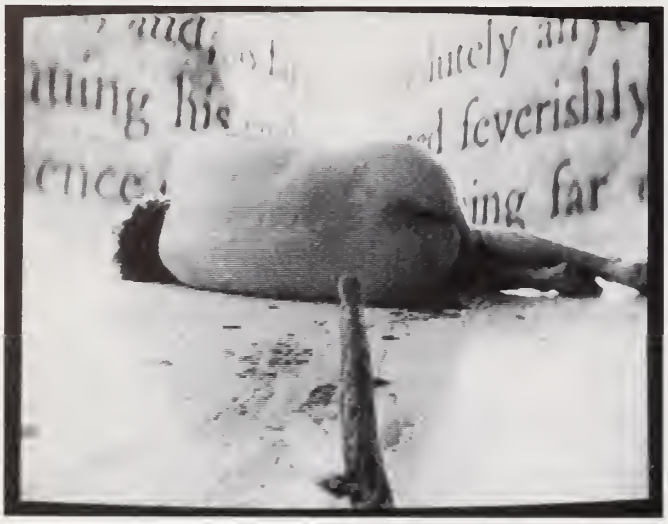

Incidence of Catastrophe, 1987–88. Gary Hill.

absent; subjectivity disappears before objectivity/the camera lens [in French, *l'objectif* means both "objectivity" and "lens"].

Critics have reproached Bruss for the rigidity of her views, insisting as a counter-argument on various efforts, numerous since the sixties, that have allowed the cinema to express the "I" and to open itself up to the intimate, the personal, the private, the subjective—in short, to the autobiographical.[4] Passing from the extremes of experimental film to commercial production, these efforts link such diverse figures as Raymond Depardon and Maria Koleva, Boris Lehman and Jonas Mekas, Chantal Akerman and Orson Welles, Jim McBride and Joseph Morder, Chris Marker and Federico Fellini, Stan Brakhage and Jean Cocteau, Robert Frank and Hollis Frampton. Still, it is relatively easy to show, as Bruss had done to some extent, that the films of all these authors, however subjective and autobiographical they may be, only succeed as autobiography by, paradoxically, exposing the marks of the impossibility of autobiography, whose pact they cannot truly fulfill. It is only by virtue of this self-reflexivity that they enter, in their individual ways, into the arena Beaujour defines as the form and tradition of the literary self-portrait.

The essays of Montaigne are, of course, the founding, exemplary texts of the genre; in them, we see how the models of ancient rhetoric and their equivalents in religious thought are bent to the ends of personal expression. The entire rhetorical system of places and images, the dialectic of invention and memory forged since antiquity for the purpose of persuading others, undergoes a metamorphosis in Montaigne's troubled search for himself.

The self-portrait is distinguished from autobiography by the absence of a story one is obliged to follow. Narration is subordinated in the former to a logic, a collage of elements ordered according to a series of rubrics, of thematic types. The self-portrait clings to the analogical, the metaphorical, the poetic, far more than to the narrative. Its coherence lies in a system of remembrances, afterthoughts, superimpositions, correspondences. It thus takes on the appearance of discontinuity, of anachronistic juxtaposition, of montage. Where autobiography closes in on the life it recounts, the self-portrait opens itself up to a limitless totality. The self-portraitist announces: "I'm not going to tell you what I've *done*, but I am going to try to tell you who I *am*." To this expression of an absence of self and a fundamental uncertainty about identity, nothing the author writes responds fully, yet everything responds a little. The self-portraitist passes without transition from a void of meaning to an excess, without a clear sense of direction or action.

The self-portrait is a work born of idleness, of retreat. To writing as action, intervention, belief and dialogue, the self-portraitist opposes writing as inaction, digression, and monologue. The subject of the self-portrait is encyclopedic, grasping its identity through the optic of the world, and in particular of culture—of everything, in other words, that constitutes the individual. The subject becomes the hero of the book and of the book posed as an absolute in the quest for memory and the search for self. The book is thus at the same time a utopia, a body, and a tomb. Starting from the most personal quest possible, the author opens the self up to the impersonal, moving constantly from the particular to the general, with no other assurance or belief than that of individual movement.

Thus has the self-portrait developed as a proper and relatively stable form from Renaissance to modern times, through entire works devoted to a life (Montaigne or Michel Leiris), in one book or several (Rousseau, Nietzsche, Malraux, Michel Butor, or Roland Barthes). We might try to characterize it as a formula: "an imaginary stroll through a system of places, a repository of memory-images."[5]

This is the tradition to be found, with all the expected displacements, in certain obscure corners of the modern cinema. Here the impossible autobiography of cinema tends toward the forms of the self-portrait in various ways, more or less fragmentary, more or less developed. And it is this same movement that appeared about fifteen years ago in video art, only endowed with a new force and specific possibilities. This happened first in American video art, the focus of this program (which unfortunately is burdened with the difficult, but unavoidable, task of tracing the idea of the self-portrait through only two works by each artist, with all the gaps and generalizations this implies). Soon after, the same idea took hold in European video art, with both similar effect and undeniable difference, especially in light of the more profound connection European video art had maintained with cinema (in Germany, Marcel Odenbach, Ulrike Rosenbach, Klaus vom Bruch, Gerd Belz; in Belgium, Daniele and Jacques-Louis Nyst; in France, Jean-André Fieschi, Thierry Kuntzel, Jean-Luc Godard; and in Japan, coming from yet another tradition, *Video Letter*, the unique and admirable work of Shuntaro Tanikawa and Shuji Terayama). As to why video seems to lend itself more particularly and certainly more exclusively than cinema to the pursuit of the self-portrait, there are four major reasons.

1) The continual presence of the image in video, its instant feedback, which is always, without delay, like a double of real time; both go on and on, neither ever stops. This is like our relation to language, which provides an ongoing foundation out of which we form sentences in speech.

2) The possibility this affords authors of introducing their bodies more naturally and directly into the image, and thus gaining direct access to their own images and a means of wedding themselves to the intimacy of their gazes.

3) The third reason has to do with the image itself. It is much easier in video to play with the image and transform it, process it electronically, in both recording and post-production. The video image is thus more adept at translating the impressions of the eye, the movements of the body, the processes of thought. And all transformations the images undergo seem more "natural," insofar as the video image itself is from the first more precarious, more unstable, and more artificial.

4) Finally, video, art video, is directly linked to television, with both its technology and its socio-cultural reality. Video seeks to distinguish itself from television, but depends on it nonetheless, both materially and culturally, setting the fragility of its subjective voice against the creeping tentacles of television's universality. In this regard, the video self-portrait repeats the history of the literary self-portrait as it emerged from a transformation of the means ancient rhetoric employed to assure the transmission of invention and memory. Today, "mass communications," as Barthes said, perform more or less the same positive functions once fulfilled by rhetoric.[6]

Thus, the self-portrait bases itself above all on the experience of the body, of the author's own body as site and theater of experience. As such, the self-portrait has something in common with performance art and can in part be created in relation to it. But the former can never reduce itself to the latter. For one thing, the experience is inconceivable without the inscription of the body in the technical apparatuses (of sound and image) that allow one to explore the self through the very process of producing the work. For another thing, this inscription of the body occurs in specific places, with elements of the "world encyclopedia" redefined in the unique context of each work and each experience.

The body of the author is offered as such, a multiple being charged with an intense capacity for presence. To give a sense of the weight of this presence, I have put together for this program, in relation to Vito Acconci's *The Red Tapes*, a montage composed of one minute each from thirty-three tapes shot by Acconci between 1971 and 1974. Each tape is conceived on the same model: a single shot, mostly static, altered by slight displacements that suggest a breath-taking body. There is no editing; everything happens in real time and closed circuit. Acconci strikes a range of poses: seated, lying down, both back and face to the camera, alone or with someone, fragmented images often reduced to a single detail (for example, Acconci's wide-open mouth). He is frequently silent or mumbling, but more often he is talking to an imaginary interlocutor or, more directly, to the spectator. And all this appears in the 140 minutes of *The Red Tapes*, the self-portrait par excellence: the experimental body, this time staged as such, simultaneously coherent and dispersed, but always present in his voice, in its various registers.

Consider all the tapes in this exhibition: each one contains, in its own way, the same insistence, the same provocation, the same fragmentation, the same reflection, all threaded through the body. The eight mini-performances of *Tapes*, by Pier Marton, comprise yet another anthology of postures, embracing the destruction of objects and a self-destruction realized through a proliferation of identities. In Peter Campus' seminal tapes (*Three Transitions*, *Set of Coincidence*), we find a metamorphosed body so involuted and paradoxical that it effaces his image and seems to exhaust the basic possibilities of layering, of mixing images. Then there is the body of Joan Jonas' *Vertical Roll*, cut up, magnified by costume design, broken up in each frame by the constant presence of the skipping horizontal hold bar, or the Jonas body of *I Want to Live in the Country (And Other Romances)*, the body that witnesses, through a superimposition of images, a story in the process of telling itself. There is Gary Hill's fragmented, tormented, suffering body, curled up, on the verge of death, grunting, mumbling, manipulated like a cadaver in *Incidence of Catastrophe*; or, inversely, the very absent body that fills his overcompensating voice in *Around and About*. There is the elliptical body of Juan Downey, hidden behind the actor, appearing in the guise of the author in *The Motherland*; or the baroque body of the master gamesman, scattered across the game of the double and the mirror, Narcissus burst apart, in Downey's *The Looking Glass*. And finally, the reflexive, meditative, supremely present body of Bill Viola, who seeks in the vocal cry the essence of sound and the nascent image (*The Space Between the Teeth*), and in the night of solitary creation, the condition of his nameless identity (*I Do Not Know What It Is I Am Like*).

I Do Not Know What It Is I Am Like, 1986. Bill Viola.

What is striking in these self-portraits is the near absence of autobiography—that is, of explicit, nameable, referential autobiography. Once, at the very beginning of Acconci's *The Red Tapes*, real life shows through briefly in all its veracity: "Like everybody, he had his story. Born in the Bronx, Italian origins. Mother living, father dead . . . ," etc. But this position is suddenly reversed by the associative logic of the self-portrait. Similarly, in Downey's *The Motherland*, biography attempts to assert itself: "I have lived in this house for twenty-one years"; "I was born in this bed." But the only way he can recount his life is to return to the fable, the myth (the Christ-angel) and to proceed by comparison, by montage (e.g., the inescapable presence of military power conveyed by that of television). For the subject, the "I," can only grasp itself through a certain number of cultural and personal places, memory-images between which he strolls, losing as much as finding himself. Hence, Downey again, in *The Looking Glass*, recounting how during the summer of 1962 he went every day to the Prado to look at *Las Meninas* and experience before it an intense eroticism, almost an orgasm: "I felt my body disappear behind the silken bust of the infanta, and my skin become ocher, adopting a pictorial and feverish texture." The moment of truth, but a moment that is instantly snatched back and dissolved into the path that leads the subject from double to double, in and through painting, itself a mirror among mirrors.

These identifiably personal moments are immediately rewoven into the associative movement by which the author, in the present tense of the tape unfolding before our eyes, departs on the search for himself across the signs of the world that constitute his own world. Each self-portrait constructs a network of obsessions that cuts up and organizes the world according to the law of what Downey, after Klee, refers to as "The Thinking Eye"—in other words, the search for self as *the look*, which is also the dispersal, effacement, and dissemination of the self. Thus we get Acconci in *The Red Tapes* furiously naming off all the places in America that are linked to the rudiments of imaginary alphabets, infantile lists, collections of objects. The "I" that searches for itself with an immediate thirst for recognition ("pull me together") disappears before his eyes in the mass and web of places which program it; they become so many points of corporeal splitting, points that compose and recompose to infinity the imaginary mass of his tortured, wasted body.

In introducing these real and imaginary sites, which present so many possibilities for images, the look, and the body, I would like to underline four modalities that strike me as ways of pushing the video self-portrait to the limit. The first involves the reduction of the physical site to the pure properties of the apparatus, the technology. Peter Campus provides the prototypical example, silently subjecting his body, without deviation, to the properties of the medium. As such, he designates a zero degree of the subject, which is literally annihilated by the technology (in this case, through chroma-key) whose operation he restores to its electronic capacities of transformation, and therefore to its very being.

The second modality derives from a unique ability to interchange the creation of places and the medium's capacities for expansion. This is the case with Bill Viola, an enigmatic subject born of this interchange. His immersion in nature and confinement in closed spaces become the two conditions of the development of subjective experience by the space-time of video, which is conceived as a sort of indefinite present, a vibrant and condensed temporality in which all autobiography is reabsorbed into a systematic exploration of the technical possibilities of image and sound.

The third modality inheres in a particular attention to the still image, to the photographic, as both a memory image and a smaller, divisible unit in a chain of images. This is the case in several moments of *The Red Tapes*, in instants that are like extended flashes; it is also the principle that governs the image-by-image decomposition of *Vertical Roll*, with its constant horizontal bar across the screen; and it is the final lesson of *The Space Between the Teeth*, in which the entire tape seems to reduce itself to a single image, a Polaroid photo falling into the water.

Finally, the fourth modality is that of the Book, as ground of subjective experience, as memorial of the body. Gary Hill dared to engage this modality in *Incidence of Catastrophe*, which makes use of *Thomas the Obscure* by Maurice Blanchot, the theoretician par excellence of "literary space"; the result is a strange and potent meditation, an intermingling of the material of the book with that of the body. Hill brings the modern self-portrait full circle through the transformation of video: back to Montaigne, to the moment when the book became an object proper, detached from its religious vocation of belief and its rhetorical function of communication—in other words, to the moment when the book became for the author both his body and his tomb, when, well before Romanticism, the Passion of Christ was transformed into the pure passion to write.

Raymond Bellour
Translated by Lynne Kirby

1. *Miroirs d'encre* (Paris: Editions Seuil, 1980).
2. The self-portrait in painting provides the point of reference for the only text to my knowledge that is devoted to the video self-portrait: Helmut Friedel, "The New Self-Portrait," in *Video by Artists 2* (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1986).
3. Elisabeth Bruss, "Eye for I: Making and Unmaking Autobiography," in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980).
4. In particular, Philippe Lejeune in "Cinéma et autobiographie: Problèmes de vocabulaire," in *L'écriture du je au cinéma*, special issue of *Revue Belge du Cinéma*, 19 (Spring 1987).
5. Beaujour, *Miroirs d'encre*, p. 110.
6. Roland Barthes, "L'ancienne rhétorique," *Communications*, no. 16 (1970), p. 223.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 49
New American Film and Video Series

Image World: Metamedia

November 9, 1989–February 18, 1990

Metamedia: Films and Videotapes, 1960–1989

Metamedia is a fourteen-week survey of documentaries, avant-garde films, artists' videotapes, and independent features presented as part of the exhibition "Image World: Art and Media Culture." The program celebrates and critiques the history, genres, styles, and institutions of broadcast television and Hollywood cinema. Complementing the programs of independent films and videotapes are two additional surveys of works from 1960 to the present: one of broadcast television, including the key entertainment programs, news events, and documentaries from network television, public broadcasting, and cable; the other of Hollywood feature films that use self-referential strategies to reconsider the major film genres.

Metamedia sets up a historical and critical dialogue between independent productions and mainstream media entertainment. During alternating weeks, independent film and Hollywood features and independent video and broadcast television programs will be juxtaposed in daily screenings. Thus the viewer will be able to see how artists and media institutions reflect and represent their times and the variety of aesthetic and formal approaches they take to the cultural, social, and political issues of media production. *Metamedia* is an opportunity to chronicle the film and media landscape of America during a time of enormous political and cultural change.

I want to thank the contributing consultants for their invaluable work on this project: Paul Arthur (assistant professor of film and literature, Montclair State College), independent and Hollywood film; Lucinda Furlong (assistant curator, Film and Video, Whitney Museum of American Art), independent video; Ronald C. Simon (curator of television, The Museum of Broadcasting, New York), broadcast television.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Joan Does Dynasty (1986), Joan Braderman and Paper Tiger Television. Photograph by Martha Gever.

Hollywood Features

The Hollywood directors who began their careers in the mid-sixties were, historically, the first conceivable group to consciously harbor a childhood ambition of becoming "moviemakers." Before this, the commercial ranks drew creative talent from related disciplines such as theater and journalism and from a variety of non-art vocations. Two decades after the end of World War II, in a climate of economic prosperity and social unrest, fledgling directors maintained a relationship to the movie industry unlike that of previous generations. They had grown up on a steady, even pervasive, diet of classical genre products and had a far more extensive knowledge of cinema history than their predecessors. Some had been trained in university film programs and, like their French New Wave counterparts, a few had contributed to the growing critical debates over authorship versus studio control. As heirs to a great, and faltering, tradition, the artists who shaped the so-called New Hollywood nurtured a deep ambivalence that surfaces in their work as a mixture of unbridled cultism and corrosive demythologization.

If the directors of the last thirty years manifest something of an Oedipal tension with the idea of studio production, the movie industry they entered was itself beset by external pressures and internal defection and betrayals. After the corporate bonanza of 1946, Hollywood's ironclad hold on the American consumer was steadily eroded. The rise of television shrank audiences and profits. A Supreme Court-ordered divestiture of theater holdings broke the industry's monopoly over exhibition. The McCarthyite

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, AT & T Foundation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Reed Foundation, Inc., The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Poltergeist (1982), Tobe Hooper. Photograph courtesy The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive, New York.

blacklisting of "subversives" shattered a paternalistic promise of insularity and threw into turmoil the cozy relations between labor and management. By the mid-sixties, the "genius of the system," with its strict divisions of labor, formal conventions, and highly salable narrative formulas, was a crumbling nitrate dream.

These conditions opened Hollywood to the sort of widespread self-examination, critique, and nostalgia that characterizes the films in this series. But the same reflexive scrutiny is also evidence of an expanding cultural discontent. As New Wave directors such as Godard and Truffaut knew in the fifties, the well-knit stories of classical films and their forms of articulation were no longer adequate to an assessment of contemporary life. The matrix of stock characters, moral attitudes, and predictable resolutions which constituted Hollywood's "message" seemed increasingly irrelevant.

Lacking a secure, univocal footing in everyday life, the dramatic structures, emotional registers, and visual styles of the western, musical, *film noir*, and other genres that the younger directors inherited were reconstituted in a crucible of creative reversals, transpositions, and interpenetrations. J. Hoberman has called this "genre-splicing." The authority of the Hollywood product as an edifice of knowledge has been exposed by the films of the last thirty years as a series of essentially arbitrary choices. Musical comedy and, say, the western did not occupy distinct territories because of any "natural" order. They did so through culturally sanctioned (and profitable) conventions of unity, clarity, and closure. When these ceased to be absolute prerequisites to an entertaining representation of the world, the film industry was allowed, perhaps compelled, to dissect and feed off of its previous constructions.

Needless to say, this situation does not necessarily generate more successful or aesthetically pleasing or politically progressive movies. Some would argue quite the opposite. What it has done is shift the terms, the mode of address, of a powerful social institution. Popular culture analyst John Cawelti, in discussing the "transformation" of genres since the late sixties, has identified four basic modes of confronting the breakdown in textual authority: humorous burlesque (*Young Frankenstein*, 1975), evocation of nostalgia (*Hearts of the West*, 1975), demythologization of generic myth (*Targets*, 1968), and the affirmation of myth as myth (*Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, 1988). The categories here are not mutually exclusive; they overlap to some degree with another strategy—amply represented in the series—of straight melodramatic investigations of the media industry and its effects on the social imagination (*Network*, 1976).

In a sense, this last group of films attempts a kind of meta-commentary, offering in place of the fractured, polysemous rendering of past styles a new cinematic version of truth about the "untruthfulness" of the image. Yet even as these films struggle to bring the Hollywood enterprise full circle, the gap will not be closed. What began during the sixties in the spirit of rebelliousness and demystification, devolving in later decades into a demographic sales pitch, will not easily be overturned. The cannibalization of movie culture is not a passing fad. It will remain a viable option until the endlessly predicted demise of the medium itself.

Paul Arthur

The Avant-Garde, Documentary, and Independent Feature

As with mainstream productions, film at the margins has emerged through its own system of pressures and privileges. Often it has been precisely the financial, technological, and formal limitations of non-commercial film that have dictated the scope of its innovation and social intervention. For a brief moment at the height of sixties' countercultural activity, avant-garde, documentary, and independent feature films operated with a shared set of formal prerogatives and within the same sphere of consumption. In the next two decades, this unanimity of purpose was splintered.

Originally, these now separate practices sprung from the shrinking hegemony and the imagined collapse of the Hollywood studio mode. In 1961, the New American Cinema Group—politically inclined directors and producers—issued a manifesto in *Film Culture* magazine, declaring the bankruptcy of "official cinema." It was, they said, "morally corrupt, aesthetically obsolete, thematically superficial, temperamentally boring." They advocated movies "the color of blood," a mixture of modernist self-examination and the revision of Hollywood's profit-oriented use of the cinematic apparatus.

The expressed objective of competing with, to say nothing of overtaking, commercial film was of course unrealizable. However, the prospect of participating in a broad-based social upheaval focused creative energies in a revaluation of cinema's ambit of meaning and expression. Undoubtedly, avant-garde and documentary responses were tempered by the weight of their individual histories and by surrounding discourses in other arts and the social sciences. The filmic avant-garde drew sustenance from painting and sculpture, music and dance, while American documentarists confronted authoritarian

techniques associated with Depression and wartime "non-fiction" film.

Despite differences in genesis and motivation, several factors have predisposed independent films of the past thirty years to a reflexive consideration of the medium's potential. First is the recognition of the degree to which the moving picture image (including TV) suffuses contemporary consciousness, giving representation the power to shape our beliefs about personal identity, social interaction, sexuality, and class. From the other side of the lens, an intimate, more-or-less domestic contact with privately owned means of production (cameras, editing devices, and sometimes printers) mandates close scrutiny of the apparatus as a subject joined to the regime of daily life. If one's immediate environment continuously takes on the aspect of a "studio," the exploration of film's material bases is more than just a formalist trope.

Three loosely posited approaches to the issues of cinematic reflexivity have cut across different sectors of independent production since the 1960s: "depletion," "superimposition," and "intensification"—none of them mutually exclusive or inherent to any given sector. Depletion is perhaps the most obvious. It entails the stripping away of expected conventions (change, progression, closure) from filmed incidents or their temporal supports. The application of this approach ranges from Warhol's early fixed-camera portraits to the skeletal reconstitution of narrative and dramatic cues (*Born in Flames*, 1983).

The second approach is the most prevalent and is frequently tied to the reworking of previously existing footage. Here the filmmaker inscribes a new set of visual or discursive or thematic values over a commonplace pretext. The object might be to release a hidden universe of form through juxtaposition (*Valse Triste*, 1979) or optical denaturing (*Sidewinder's Delta*, 1976). Similarly, by mobilizing conflicts between speech and image, by employing cadenced repetition, freeze-frames, and other devices, a number of films wedge oppositional commentaries into a succession of "official" artifacts.

Intensification can involve the restaging of narrative or documentary tropes in a hyperbolic register (*Hold Me While I'm Naked*, 1966), but it may also result from a minute concentration on the structure or social implications of a particular image or group of images (*Microcultural Incidents in Ten Zoos*, 1971). Magnified and thus forced to yield an excess of meaning, procedures of representation are rendered in complex intertextual patterns. Where depletion fosters insight through absence, intensification overloads the viewing experience with insoluble alternatives.

Paul Arthur

Television

Not only has television transformed our public and cultural life, but over the past thirty years it has transformed itself. The medium has become increasingly conscious of the way it presents and interprets the real and fictional worlds as well as how it helps to create a national consensus of values and beliefs. Television has been a profound contributor to our common Image World and The Museum of Broadcasting screenings suggest ways in which both commercial and public television, in developing traditions of creative expression, have perceived their roles as cultural and social forces.

By the early 1960s, television had come of age. The vast wasteland assumed the mantle of national healer as Americans kept vigil by their television sets during the assassination and funeral of President John F. Kennedy. The sense of electronic community has since been recapitulated in times of tragedy (the Challenger disaster) no less than exhilaration (the Bicentennial and Olympic hockey celebrations).

The launching of Telstar I in 1962 resulted in the transmission of live images and sounds across the Atlantic Ocean; five years later the public television broadcast *Our World* (1967) had satellite link-ups around the world, and thirty countries instantaneously witnessed Leonard Bernstein and Van Cliburn in rehearsal at Lincoln Center and the Beatles at work in a London studio. By 1985, 1.6 billion people were able to view the Live Aid concert. Satellites have not only made possible intercontinental dialogues on *Nightline* (1980–present), but also facilitated the distribution of programming created by a whole new industry, cable television. Such services as CNN and MTV now have a continuous, global presence.

As television was expanding the range of its signal, producers were at work reconceptualizing the form and content of its message. Ernie Kovacs' comedy experiments in the early sixties created a new television reality that exposed both the technology and language of the medium. The show's fragmented structure, an electronic vaudeville borrowing equally from high art and mass culture, anticipated the video collages of *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In* (1968–73), *The Great American Dream Machine* (1971–72), and *Sesame Street* (1969–present).

The documentary has also undergone a reworking. *60 Minutes* (1968–present) and the *Public Broadcasting Laboratory (PBL)* (1967–69) developed the magazine format for the presentation of news. The tradition of the documentary as provocateur was sustained by Peter Davis' *CBS Reports: The Selling of the Pentagon* (1971). Meanwhile, an ad hoc collective of video artists, TVTV (Top Value Television), was pioneering a brand of counterculture journalism, utilizing portable video equipment.

The concept of narrative in television has altered significantly during the past three decades. *An American Family* (1973) was a *cinema verité* examination of a real-life family in domestic confusion, produced in twelve installments. *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* (1976–78) transmuted the formulas of soap opera into a satire on American consumerism. While *Roots* (1977) and *Holocaust* (1978) blurred fact and fiction, giving the miniseries a historical resonance, *Hill Street Blues* (1981–87) overlapped black humor and melodrama in a serial narrative to evoke the public and private sides of police life. (*Hill Street* transposed into the dramatic mode many of the *video verité* techniques of Alan and Susan Raymond's *The Police Tapes* [1976].) Prime-time storytelling, which once required resolution in a single episode, has embraced the ongoing narrative.

Borrowing from the structure of the daytime serial, *Dallas* (1978–present) and *Dynasty* (1981–89) have generated intense audience involvement.

Television in the eighties has become, in David Marc's words, "self-reflexive at last," a conscious custodian of its own heritage. *Saturday Night Live* (1975–present), *SCTV Network* (1981–84) and *Late Night with David Letterman* (1982–present) incorporate the audience's expectation and knowledge of television conventions into the rhythm of the show. The drama *Special Bulletin* (1983) simulated a newscast concerning an attempt by a group of protestors to wreak nuclear havoc. The emotional impact of *Special Bulletin* was heightened by viewers' familiarity with television journalistic processes (perhaps greatly informed by the on-air piecing together of the story surrounding the attempted assassination of President Reagan).

Images from television resonate in the public consciousness. Our common experience is the television experience of politics, war, crisis, heroism, and fantasy. These screenings examine how both television and its audience have been grappling with the medium's history and impact.

Ronald C. Simon

Independent Video

Ever since artists, hippies, and proponents of "guerrilla" television took up portable video technology in the late 1960s, virtually every discussion of their work has been dominated by the subject of television. Although artists and activists alike shared an acute sense of alienation from television's programming, one-way delivery system, and monopolistic control by the networks, several different positions have evolved regarding independent video's relation to its older and more powerful sibling.

The first argument, dating to the early 1970s when some artists were committed to the formalist pursuit of locating video's "intrinsic" properties, maintains a separatist position. Certain uses of video technology, particularly installation pieces, reflect concerns that are more akin to the art world than to TV and show little interest in television, either as subject matter or distribution outlet. At the other extreme are the proponents of "television art" who have argued, most vociferously in the early 1980s, that artists can buy into the industry's system of production and distribution without necessarily replicating its commercial product. But by far the most pervasive attitude toward television is a deep ambivalence which has taken many forms: utopian celebration, counter-representation, absurdist parody, ironic appropriation, and deconstructivist critique. Each of these strategies has its own logic, intent, and effect in terms of how it comments on television's codes and content.

Utopian celebration. Nam June Paik's *Global Groove* (1973) epitomizes the utopian desire for a time when the TV dial will offer artist-produced fare. Structured as a model program guide, the tape has the rapid pace associated with more recent editing styles of music television. The flip side of this idealized model is Ant Farm's *Media Burn* (1975), a media event in which the anarchic overthrow of television as an institution is symbolized by the actual destruction of a wall of television sets in a fiery blaze.

Counter-representation. Independent documentaries extend conventional formats to present viewpoints and subjects not usually seen on TV. This tradition within independent video can be traced from early half-inch, black-and-white tapes such as *Four More Years* (1972), Top Value Television's sardonic look at the 1972 Republican National Convention, and Jon Alpert and Keiko Tsuno's *Cuba: The People* (1974). Recent examples include *Testing the Limits* (1987), by the AIDS activist group Testing the Limits Collective.

Parody. By using imitation and hyperbole, tapes such as Mitchell Kriegman's *The Marshall Klugman Show* (1979) and Jaime Davidovich's *The Live! Show* (1983) parody their variety-show counterparts in broadcast television. Likewise, T.R. Uthco's *The Amarillo News Tapes* (1980) foregrounds the vacuity of local TV news, while Michael Smith deflates the male music star in *Go for It, Mike* (1984), a spoof of a music video.

Ironic appropriation. Artists have taken TV footage and, in an ironic mode, reworked intended meanings to produce the opposite effect. In *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman* (1978), Dara Birnbaum obsessively repeats a sequence of Wonder Woman spinning, so that the figure is effectively frozen into an image of powerlessness. Jason Simon presents a series of TV commercials in *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought* (1987) and then plays them again in slow motion with a cold, calculating voice-over describing to whom the ad is being pitched and how it is produced.

Deconstructivist critique. Most recently, artists have articulated analyses of television that use new theories of mass media and demystify the production process. Paper Tiger Television began in 1981 on cable TV in New York City as a weekly program dedicated to providing critical readings of the media. In *Joan Does Dynasty* (1986), a tape produced for Paper Tiger, Joan Braderman humorously picks apart the social and political messages behind a show she freely admits being addicted to. The tape is both a critical and literal intervention in that Braderman's own image is inserted via video keying into every scene.

Lucinda Furlong

Television programs for *Metamedia* were selected from the permanent collection of The Museum of Broadcasting and presented under its auspices.

Additional funding for *Metamedia* has been provided through a generous gift from George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 50
New American Film and Video Series

Shu Lea Cheang

February 27–March 25, 1990

Color Schemes, 1990
Video installation. On view continuously.

Gallery talk, Tuesday, March 13, at 6:30
Shu Lea Cheang will be present.

Components
4 video monitors; 4 videotape playback decks; 3 ¾" videotapes, color, sound, 15 minutes; 1 ½" videotape, color, silent, 6 hours.

3 washing machines, neon sign, 24-foot table, tablecloth, 12 dinner plates, 12 plastic TV dinners, 12 crystal water goblets, 12 crystal wine glasses, 4 crystal pitchers, 12 settings of silverware, 12 napkins.

Videotape credits
Videotape in collaboration with the performers: Maria Aponte, Rafael Baez, Diane Burns, Jimmy Durham, Vincent Edwards, Sandra Esteves, Jessica Hagedorn, Verna Hampton, Gloria Miguel, Robbie McCauley, Nicky Paraiso, Emily Woo Yamasaki. Voice of good manners: Adriene Jenik. Directors of photography: Klaus Hoch-Guinn, David Shulman. Sound recordist: Steve Ning. Backdrop painter: Carol Mazurk. Computer graphics: Ingin Kim. Music composition: Tiye Giraud, Pamela Patrick, Ge Gan Ru, Margaret Leng Tan. Audio mix engineer: Alex Noyes, Harvestworks. On-line videotape editor: Rick Feist, Standby Program.

Installation credits
Electronic engineer: Maurice St. Sauveur. Mechanical design: Joel Katz. Plastic TV dinners: Mary Feaster.

Baccarat crystal and Gien faïence dinnerware courtesy Baccarat, Inc., New York.

Color Schemes, 1990.

Shu Lea Cheang's *Color Schemes* employs an unusual combination of metaphors to tackle American attitudes toward race and racial assimilation. The central components of this video installation are a long dining table, a bank of three front-loading industrial washing machines, and a neon sign flashing the words "Service and Self-Service." Inside each washing machine, visible through a round glass window, is a video monitor displaying a videotape loop. By inserting two quarters, the viewer activates the machine, causing the video monitors to spin.

For Cheang, the color wash, with its four cycles—soak, wash, rinse, and spin—becomes a means of exploring the social processes by which people of color are either assimilated into the fabric of American society or marginalized from it. To make her point, she draws on the experiences of twelve Asian-American, Black, Latino, and Native American actors. Each tape loop features four of the actors. In the first scene, which appears on all three monitors, they are seen dining together at a table reminiscent of representations of the Last Supper. The low murmur of their voices is audible only as an indiscernible mishmash of sound. As the tapes continue, however, their individual voices emerge from this jumble to tell pithy stories about auditions and agents. One actress speaks of being rejected by an agent because she was "too ethnic," while another agent told her she looked like she "could knife someone in the dark." Although some of the experiences recounted are blatant instances of racism, others are more ironic, revealing the complexity of the issues surrounding racial stereotyping. When a Native American actor said

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Composite photograph of scene from *Color Schemes*, 1990. Photograph by Lona Foote.

he'd played the roles of both cowboy and Indian, a white actor replied: "So, you're an Indian and a cowboy. Be careful you don't shoot yourself."

The color wash has other implications as well about the often contradictory messages and attitudes embedded in American society and culture. The washing machine functions as a container suggesting confinement, to certain kinds of jobs and neighborhoods, and to fixed racial categories. The process of washing itself implies assimilation—the removal of color and, hence, ethnicity. At the same time, the fading or bleeding of color implies the loss of individual identity, as when people blur racial distinctions. As one Native American actress recalled: "No, I'm not Chinese; no, I'm not Spanish. Yea, Indian. No, we're not extinct."

A second aspect of *Color Schemes* was inspired by a quote from the late civil rights leader Malcolm X: "I've got a plate in front of me, but nothing is on it. Because all of us are sitting at the same table, are all of us diners?" A long dining table is elegantly set with a service for 12; the TV dinners that await the guests, however, are far less elegant than the dinnerware on which they are served.

The individuals who emerge from *Color Schemes* possess a vibrancy that is more akin to a "brilliant mosaic," with all its cracks and complexity, than the American melting pot. As Cheang has described the piece, *Color Schemes* "reveals our schemes to claim images of color corrected and to remain color vivid."

Lucinda Furlong
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

Biography

Shu Lea Cheang was born in Taiwan in 1954. She graduated from National Taiwan University (B.A., 1976), and New York University (M.A., 1979). She has received grants from the New York State Council on the Arts (1986, 1988, 1989), Art Matters, Inc. (1987), the Jerome Foundation (1989), the New York Foundation for the Arts (1989), and the Rockefeller Foundation (1990). She has been a member of the Paper Tiger Television Collective since 1982, a producer for the national satellite series "Deep Dish TV," and a program contributor to the series "The 90s." Cheang lives and works in New York.

Selected Group Exhibitions

American Film Institute, Los Angeles, 1985 American Film Institute Video Festival (also 1989); "Women in the Director's Chair," Chicago, 1986 (also 1990); "Cinemad'art '87," Barcelona, 1987; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "Social Engagement: Women's Video in the '80s," 1987; The 7th Asian American International Video Festival, Asian CineVision, New York, 1989; European Media Art Festival, Osnabrück, West Germany, 1989; The Kitchen, New York, "Child," 1990; The Brooklyn Museum, New York, "The Feminist 'I,' " 1990; American Museum of the Moving Image, Astoria, New York, "My Country 'Tis of Thee," 1990; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, "Currents," 1990.

Selected Videography

All works are ¾" videotape, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Renee Tajima Reads Asian Images in American Film: Charlie Chan Go Home!, 1985. Produced for Paper Tiger Television. 28 minutes.

The Trial of Tilted Arc, 1985 and 1989. 52 minutes.

Racism on Main Street: A Look Around Your Corner, 1986. Co-produced with Roy Wilson for Deep Dish TV. 58 minutes.

Re-reading the Dragon, 1986. Produced for Paper Tiger Television. 28 minutes.

Thulani Davis Asks Why Howard Beach?: Racial Violence and the Media, 1987. Produced for Paper Tiger Television. 28 minutes.

Exclusive Report on How History Was Wounded, 1989. Produced for Paper Tiger Television. 28 minutes.

For the Woman in You, 1989. 2 minutes.

Making News, Making History: Live from Tiananmen Square, 1989. Video installation: 4 videotapes, 30-minute loops; 1 videotape, 2½-minute loop.

News from Afar, 1989. 15 minutes.

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Furlong, Lucinda. "Social Engagement: Women's Video in the '80s." *The New American Filmmakers Series 36* (program note). New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1987.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 51
New American Film and Video Series

American Audio Art on WDR

April 1—April 29, 1990

Gallery talk, Tuesday, April 24, at 6:15.
Klaus Schöning will be present.

All works in the exhibition were lent by WDR Cologne and produced by WDR, unless otherwise noted.

Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake, 1979, John Cage, 60 minutes

Bean Sequences, 1982, Alison Knowles, 29 minutes

Dialogue Among Poets, 1982, Jackson Mac Low, 31 minutes

The "Hsin Hsin Ming" by Seng Ts'an, 1983, George Brecht, 31 minutes

The Beaver's Hörspiel, 1984, Jerome Rothenberg, 36 minutes

Metropolis New York, 1984, Richard Kostelanetz, 60 minutes

Something (to do) doing, 1984, Sorrel Hays, 25 minutes

Signale, 1985, Tom Johnson, 22 minutes

Pas de Voix (Portrait of Samuel Beckett), 1986, Charles Amirkhanian, 17 minutes

Humayun's Tomb, 1987, Pauline Oliveros, 30 minutes

Metropolis Las Vegas, 1987, David Schein and Florian Steinbiss, 30 minutes

Satellite Sound Bridge Cologne-San Francisco, 1987, Bill Fontana 60 minutes; produced by WDR and APR.

Voyage to California, 1987, Larry Wendt and Henri Chopin, 10 minutes

Web: For John Cage, 1987, David Tudor, 4 minutes

For Julian, 1988, Alvin Curran, 30 minutes

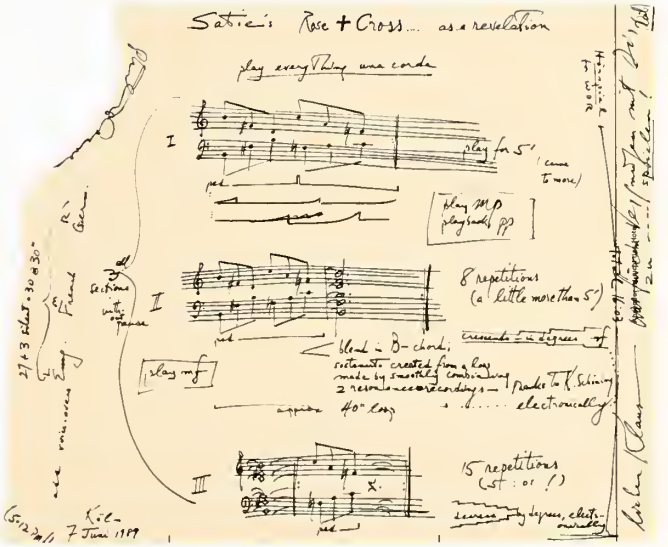
Ishi/Timechangingspaces, 1988, Malcolm Goldstein, 21 minutes

Roadtrip, 1989, Marjorie van Halteren, 26 minutes

Schwitters Extended: A Transplantation, 1989, Stephan von Huene, 19 minutes

Voices, 1989, Charlie Morrow, 45 minutes

Satie's Rose Cross as a Revelation, 1990, Philip Corner, 16 minutes.



Philip Corner, drawing for *Satie's Rose Cross as a Revelation*, 1990. Ink on paper, 8¼ × 10 inches. Collection of Klaus Schöning.

American Audio Art on WDR

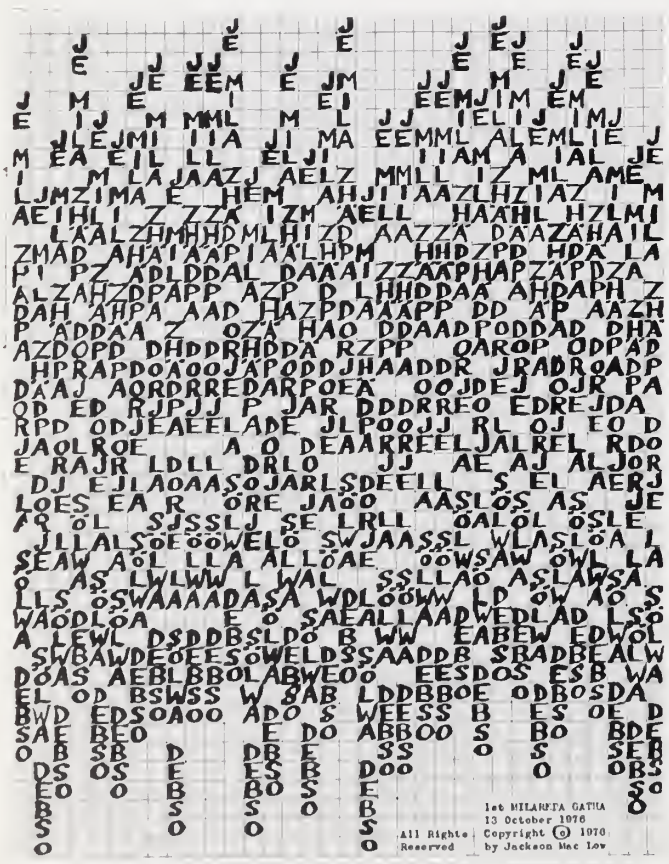
During the past decades, as a result of cross-disciplinary endeavors in the arts—a *Verschmelzungsprozess* (fusion) as Walter Benjamin called it—important aesthetic innovations have taken place. In the field of acoustics, this process has led to the development of an art form we call "acoustic art." Acoustic art—a world of language and a world of sounds and noises. It is language that leans toward sound, sound that leans toward language and music, to all-inclusive tonalities—to the acoustic environment. Acoustic art is a symbiosis of the worlds of language and noise and the organization of sounds through electronic technology. Its recording, sensible ear is the microphone; its sound carrier, the sound tape, the cassette, the record, the microchip; its speaking mouth, the loudspeaker. And one of its ideal voices, in the auditorium accessible to all, is the radio.

If we excavate the archaeological digs of acoustic art, we find non-semantic sound poetry as early as the end of the nineteenth century, say, in works of Paul Scherbarth and Christian Morgenstern. Nevertheless, it was the Russian

Futurists, including Velimir Khlebnikov, Alexei Kruchenykh, David Burliuk, and Vladimir Mayakovsky, who took the decisive step toward the emancipation of language sounds. In their manifesto, "vowels represent time and space, and consonants are color, sound and scent." It was also at this time that Wassily Kandinsky published his poetical-graphic work *Sounds* (1912), creating something similar to a "musical" painting, or, in his words, "symphonic compositions and sounds of color."

The Italian Futurists, led by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, wanted to abandon syntax and called for the simultaneous speaking of texts. The theoretical foundation of the aesthetics of acoustic art was Luigi Russolo's manifesto "L'arte dei rumori," published as early as 1913. He was the first to suggest that sound be incorporated in musical compositions as an element of equal value to music.

In the world of Dada, Raoul Hausmann and Merz artist Kurt Schwitters recited in 1916 the first letter poems—phonetically constructed nonsense poems—opening the way for the development of acoustic poetry, whose instrument was the human voice, with its wide range of possible expressions. Decades later, this range would be expanded with the help of electronic technology. The development of sound poetry made further progress during the fifties and sixties with the Ultra Lettrists around Henri Chopin and François Dufrêne, the proponents of concrete and phonetic poetry. The Russian filmmaker Dziga Vertov had already laid additional foundations for acoustic art with the establishment, in 1916, of his "Laboratory of Hearing," where he realized the first documentary compositions and musical-literary montages of words. In 1930, the German filmmaker Walther Ruttmann used audio from a sound film in *Weekend*, the first acoustic montage in radio history. This marked the beginning of the evolution of an autonomous "language" of acoustic art. In the field of music, the tonal environment—noises, as Russolo suggested—began to be incorporated in compositions in the late 1910s. Since the 1950s, these noises have included electronically produced sounds. Subsequent developments were determined by electro-acoustic processes and montages of sound tape.



Jackson Mac Low, drawing for *Dialogue Among Poets*, 1982. Ink on paper, 8½ × 11 inches. Collection of Klaus Schöning.

For the radio itself, Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry established the Club d'Essai in the 1940s, an experimental audio program at station ORTF Paris, and developed a grammar of "found" sounds and noises known as *musique concrète*. John Cage, working at the same time but outside of radio, created his trailblazing compositions using records, phonographs, sound tape, and—as an instrument—the radio. In 1952, the first electronic studio in the history of music was founded by Hans Eimert at station WDR Cologne, of which Karlheinz Stockhausen became director, in 1963. This electronic "Studio der Neuen Musik" (Studio of New Music) soon acquired a worldwide reputation. Unlike ORTF's Club d'Essai, which emphasized found sounds, the work produced at WDR focused exclusively on electronic sounds. During the sixties, WDR established its Neue Hörspiel Studio (New Radio Play Studio) to present the dramatic art of radio plays. Based primarily on acoustic elements, the concept also incorporates musical composition, as well as technological and media-related features. From the very beginning, this "Studio for Acoustic Art," as it is called today, was designed to initiate and promote the new wave of acoustic art. With its weekly 90-minute programs, it was considered one of the most experimentally oriented centers on the international radio scene, a workshop for international audio artists and an open house for artistic activities that transcended boundaries of media and language—an "acustica international."

Since the late sixties, the development of the Neue Hörspiel has continued in various interwoven phases. The initial phase was dominated by aspects of experimental literature, concrete poetry, the language play, sound poetry, quotations from the supply of acoustic readymades, and the principle of collage applied to sound. The authors of these plays—among them, Franz Mon, Helmut Heissenbüttel, Ernst Jandl, Gerhard Rühm, and Peter Handke—followed in the footsteps of the Futurists and Dadaists in their overall multimedia conception and belief in the equivalence of language, sound, and noise. These radio plays paved the way for the next phase of the Neue Hörspiel during the early seventies: the incorporation of original sound, that is, language in the form of quotations from written texts and recordings.

It was only logical that sound poets, writers, and documentarists enter into the border areas of music. During this phase, WDR invited composers to write the music for radio plays, which, in the Neue Hörspiel concept, made them playwrights. Among the composers to follow this call were

Mauricio Kagel, Dieter Schnebel, Pierre Henry, Vinko Globokar, Luc Ferrari and—in the seventies and eighties—many American composers from John Cage to Alvin Curran. This group of composer-playwrights produced new forms of acoustic art—multimedia concerts and multilanguage compositions—that further stretched the notion of the radio play.

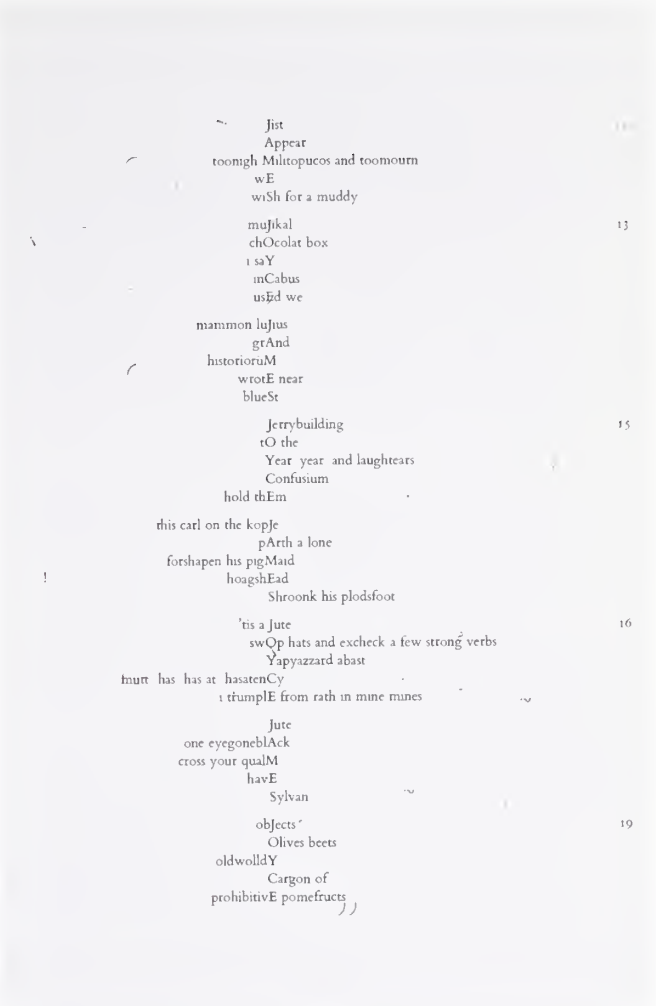
This, in a nutshell, was the landscape of acoustic art in radio encountered by American sound artists in 1978, when, rooted in a rich tradition of their own, they crossed the Atlantic and headed for Cologne. Within ten years this journey produced a surprising, unique surge of innovation. More than twenty American artists produced for WDR more than sixty works—including some winners of international radio prizes. Their continuing influence on the acoustic art scene in Europe cannot be overestimated.

At the beginning of this fruitful transatlantic encounter stands John Cage, whose manifold creations opened new perspectives for the arts. His 1979 WDR radio play, *Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake*, combines the most complex and ambiguous work of English literature, James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, with his own ideas about the philosophy of tone. *Roaratorio* is an all-encompassing cosmology of an art that transcends boundaries of language while at the same time shining like a daring prophecy. *Roaratorio* combines nearly all prerequisites of acoustic art, including the equality of the individual elements—of noises, of the voice, of singing, and of music—all connected through audio collage.

Many other American sound artists have crossed the transatlantic bridge in recent years. "American Audio Art on WDR" presents a selection of their works, as well as some original scores. Unlike traditional musical compositions, which employ a standard score, and unlike radio dramas which have scripts, these scores are visualizations of the audio originals, created for the most part during the production process itself.

Some of the audio pieces focus on the cultural bridge between America and Germany. Jackson Mac Low's *Dialogue Among Poets* (1982) is a collage of ten texts by American and German poets as well as a Tibetan mantra, randomly selected and read by Mac Low. *The Beaver's Hörspiel* (1984) is an autobiographical, multilingual audio work by ethno-poet Jerome Rothenberg. It incorporates heterogeneous, acoustic worlds, with citations from Rothenberg's sound poetic pieces mixed with quotes from Dada texts, from the Horse Songs of the Seneca Indians, whose language he speaks, and the Yiddish chants of his European ancestors. *Pas de Voix (Portrait of Samuel Beckett)* (1986), by California sound-text composer and radio music director Charles Amirkhanian, is a sound composition without words in homage to the playwright, while Stephan von Huene's *Schwitters Extended* (1989) is a random "transplantation," as the subtitle calls it, of Kurt Schwitters' classical letter poem "Sonate in Urlauten" (Sonata in Elemental Sounds) with a Mozart piano sonata played by Glenn Gould.

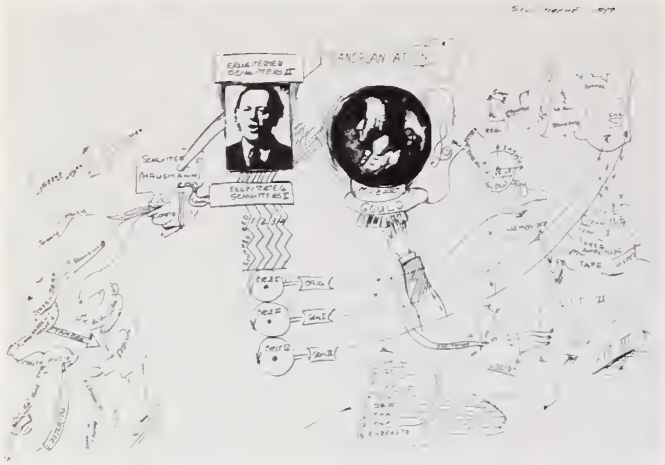
The New York Fluxus artist Philip Corner wrote *Satie's Rose Cross as a Revelation* (1990), a meditative music-text composition in three languages, as his homage to the French composer Erik Satie. An example of the collaboration between the American computer artist Larry Wendt and the doyen of French sound poetry, Henri Chopin, is the electronic sound composition *Voyage to California* (1987).



John Cage, partial text for *Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake*, 1979.

Another spectacular international enterprise was Bill Fontana's *Satellite Sound Bridge Cologne-San Francisco* (1987), consisting of two sound sculptures, one in Cologne and the other in San Francisco. It was a joint venture between radio and two museums, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Museum Ludwig in Cologne. A 60-minute radio sound bridge, it was aired live by WDR and other radio stations in Europe and in the United States. In this global *ars acustica*, radio becomes an experimental element in new technological and artistic developments.

The rhythm of the United States, its streets and its great cities, is documented by audio works such as *Metropolis New York* (1984), a polyphonic sound composition by Richard Kostelanetz, which paints an acoustic picture of his passionate love for this metropolis of metropolises. Another city, the city of fortune, is evoked in *Metropolis Las Vegas* (1987), an acoustical fata morgana by David Schein and Florian Steinbiss.



Stephan von Huene, drawing for *Schwitters Extended: A Transplantation*, 1989. Graphite and printed paper on paper, 11¾ × 16½ inches. Collection of Klaus Schöning.

More than twenty sound compositions have been created for the WDR series *Metropolis*, primarily by American artists. The theme of Marjorie van Halteren's *Roadtrip* (1989) is the flight from the big cities—"on the road," the slogan of the Beat generation. A multilingual composition in original sounds that the artist calls an "elegy for America," it features the voices of Jack Kerouac and his daughter, Janet Machel, with music by John Coltrane. Other radio plays also refer directly or indirectly to the life and work of American poets, philosophers, and composers. *Something (to do) doing* (1984), based on a poem of the same title by Sorrel Hays, is a dashing collage in scat form in German and English focused on a quote from Gertrude Stein. A homage to John Cage and his work of "purposeful purposefulness" and of "silence" is David Tudor's electro-acoustic composition *Web: For John Cage* (1987).

Alvin Curran's profound, repetitive word and sound composition *For Julian* (1988), for which he won the WDR Acustica International award, is dedicated to the legendary American theater director, producer, and actor Julian Beck. Malcolm Goldstein combines his vocal chords and outstanding violin playing with the voice of the last member of the Yahi Indian tribe, recorded in 1912, in *Ishi/Timechangingspaces* (1988), which seems to be coming from another world as it creates a forceful acoustic mantra. In his audio piece *Voices* (1989), Charlie Morrow mixes old and new vocal music, trance chanting and religious songs from various cultures to produce a polyphonic, biographical landscape.

Reflections on the making of a radio play within the stringent structure of minimal music are found in *Signale* (1985) by Tom Johnson. Alison Knowles' *Bean Sequences* (1982) offers a compositional contrast to this piece. An acoustic Fluxus art, it incorporates poems, text fragments, millennial-old recipes from ancient China, and tales of the Hopi Indians about beans—all found, collected, and read in two languages by Alison Knowles, her daughters Hanna and Jessica Higgins, and American Fluxus artist George Brecht. It is accompanied by a random sound performance by the four participants.

A bridge to Asia is built by two other radio plays in the exhibition. In *Humayun's Tomb* (1987), a meditation by Pauline Oliveros, poetic permutations ("Sound your change—change your sound—change your sound of mind") are sung with musical accompaniment by the composer. *The "Hsin Hsin Ming" by Seng Ts'an* (1983) by George Brecht, who lives in Cologne, consists of seventy-three philosophical verses written by the third patriarch of Chinese Zen Buddhism, who died in 606 A.D. They are translated and cited in three languages in an attempt to come close to the Chinese original: "One accordingly all. All accordingly one."

American audio artists share with their European counterparts ties to the oral tradition of sound poetry, the use of literary forms as a point of departure, the equalization of acoustic elements, simultaneity, manifold perspectives, and the collage principle. But American artists also made specific contributions to international acoustic art. Because they were adept in the most disparate fields—music, literature, theater, video, fine arts, and acoustic art—and able to combine fields in multimedia presentations, they usually also were the performers of their compositions. Many of the early radio plays American artists created for WDR are based on the performance concept. Their performance-oriented, unconventional, and in part even improvised works had a truly invigorating effect on the production practices of European studios and radio stations. They also inspired the trend to do live performances outside radio, such as the two current "Acustica International" sound art festivals, one in Cologne, the other in New York, in 1990.

Among the other characteristics distinguishing American sound artists are their frequent direct references to ethnological sources and their penchant for multilingual work, which expresses the ethnic diversity of the American people. Another asset is the American receptivity to environmental sounds—the everyday sounds of civilization and of nature—which paved the way for sound sculptures and soundscapes, an art form heretofore largely unknown in Europe. Although inspired by Zen and Fluxus, Americans let the two meet in a more fortuitous manner than did Europeans. Many American audio works have, at times, a basic meditative character.

A trend-setting transcontinental dialogue has been initiated, one that needs no translation, a dialogue that brings into focus the visions some artists had earlier in this century—visions of what audio art could be, what could make it audible and invite audiences to listen.

Klaus Schöning, *Guest Curator*
Translated by Ingeborg von Zitzewitz

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Whitney Museum of American Art 52
New American Film and Video Series

Bill Gunn by Ishmael Reed

June 19–July 8, 1990

Gallery talk, Tuesday, June 26, at 6:30.
Ishmael Reed will be present.

Schedule

Ganja and Hess, 110 minutes.
Tuesday, June 19 at 2:00 and 6:00; Thursday, June 21 at 2:00;
Saturday, June 23 at 2:00; Tuesday, June 26, at 2:00;
Thursday, July 5 at 2:00; Saturday, July 7 at 2:00

Personal Problems (Volumes I and II), total 240 minutes.
Wednesday, June 20 at noon; Friday, June 22 at noon;
Sunday, June 24 at 1:00; Friday, July 6 at noon;
Sunday, July 8 at 1:00

Stop, 89 minutes.
Friday, June 29 at 3:00; Saturday, June 30 at 3:00;
Sunday, July 1 at 3:00

Linda Marsh and Edward Bell in *Stop*, 1970. Photograph courtesy Sam Waymon.

What are the dry facts? In a bio sheet sent to me in 1979, Bill Gunn referred to himself as a writer/director. His play *Marcus in the High Grass* was produced in 1958 at the Theatre Guild in Westport. His second, *Johannas*, was produced in New York and Helsinki. *Black Picture Show* was produced at Lincoln Center in 1975 and, according to the sheet, a play called *Rhinestone* was to be produced for Broadway in 1978 and 1979. His novels were *All the Rest Have Died*, published by Delacorte Press in 1964, and *Rhinestone Sharecropping*, which Steve Cannon and I published, along with his play *Black Picture Show*. In addition to a dramatic version of *Rhinestone Sharecropping*, his play *The Forbidden City* opened on the day following his death. This master of irony would have found this to be the ultimate irony.

He wrote the screenplays for *Stop*, *The Landlord*, *Angel Levine*, *Friends*, *Fame Game*, *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome*, and *The Greatest: The Muhammed Ali Story*. His teleplays included *Johannas*, *Sojourner Truth*, and *Change at 125th Street*.

It's an impressive career. But his credits and his numerous awards, which include an Emmy, and the honor accorded to *Ganja and Hess*, one of the most beautiful and unusual films ever produced in the United States, and to *Personal Problems*, an experimental soap opera, don't tell the story. The heroic story of an exquisite writer maintaining a quiet and elegant stoicism while being battered by the crass forces of bottom-line commercialism and racism. These forces and institutions are the subjects of biting comments in his *Black Picture Show* and *Rhinestone Sharecropping*, where Bill Gunn exposes, with the wit of a Bosch or the Rembrandt of Dutchmasters, the pernicious influences which poison and pollute our national imagination. The Hollywood that gave us Montgomery Clift and James Dean, his tortured and brooding friends—the Hollywood that gave us great technicians like James Wong Howe and Hugh Robertson—also gave us *Birth of a Nation*, *The Color Purple*, and the sinister characters, the producers and image makers who talk shop in *Rhinestone*. Unlike some of the young black filmmakers of today, who talk the same way, Bill was too risky, too moody, too much of a genius, too savvy, and too clever for the Hollywood moguls. They didn't find him bankable: "you write something people can understand. None-a-that intellectual junk that ain't worth a quarter, much less a million dollars," Sam Dodd, *Rhinestone*'s protagonist, is warned by one of the seamy Hollywood

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, AT & T Foundation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman-Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

merchants he encounters in the film capital, where his adventures are similar to those of a Kafkaesque hero.

Gunn used the stage and the page to rail against these Movie Industry forces, not in the manner of the diatribe, but in the style of the samba and the bossa nova. With subtlety and with wit. He was too deft for the obvious. Too complicated. Too odd. ". . . if you expect to hold another assignment in this business you better learn to control your temper," Sam Dodd is advised by the same character. Gunn revealed the depraved managers of the Dream Factory, and its front-office tokens.

Pulitzer Prize winner Charles Gordone remembers Bill Gunn as being among those few black actors to read for parts in New York of the 1950s. At the time, James Dean was appearing in André Gide's *The Immoralist*, and another friend, Sal Mineo, was on Broadway as Yul Brynner's son in *The King and I*. Gunn was one of the first black actors to experiment with The Method and, as Charles Gordone recalls, he was a good actor and a sensitive one. He was slated to be the next major black male star but there was always trouble. He got the reputation for being difficult, the adjective they use for the uppity black man. He could kill with eloquence. He has J.D. say in *Black Picture Show* that "the poem is a sword." Bill Gunn's pen was his. He couldn't be bought. Throughout his work, Gunn used the image of castration when discussing the black male's position in American society. In *Rhinestone Sharecropping*, an athlete gets his nuts crushed. Each day the black man is subjected to symbolic castration. They get signified on and called out by their enemies in the media and elsewhere. If black male writers want to win establishment approval they'd better write fictional and dramatic versions of tabloid editorials about the "underclass," a code name for what is considered black male aberrant behavior, in stay-in-your-place forms. No experimentation. No cryptic images like the white man in the mask who recurs in *Ganja and Hess*. The focus on the Louis Armstrong doll in the production of the *Personal Problems*' version shot by Bill Stephens of People's Communications. The clown who appears when Charles Brown and his mistress are about to make love. No mixing of Bach's Jesus Joy of Man's Desiring with Bessie Smith. No poetic dialogues and monologues which on the surface seem incoherent. The black actor or director who gets ahead in Hollywood, using Gunn's imagery, is not in possession of his genitals. The seat of power.

You can tell what they want from blacks by the images they reward and put their dollars behind. In 1940, Hollywood gave Hattie McDaniel an Oscar for her role as a Mammy in *Gone with the Wind*. In 1990, Morgan Freeman was nominated for his role as a chauffeur in *Driving Miss Daisy*. Maybe ten years from now another member of America's permanent household staff will pick up a little man, the Oscar who comes alive and taunts a black actor in Amiri Baraka's brilliant *The Sidney Poet Heroical*. Symbolic castration. *The Color Purple* sends out one message. *Driving Miss Daisy*, another. Bill Gunn refused to submit his virile talent to the chopping block. Refused to stay in his place, and after being blackballed from the industry went out and badmouthed his persecutors. He, Cecil Brown, and Amiri Baraka are the black male poets of the Hollywood Plantation where there is white money and black money. "I will receive thirty thousand dollars and a small percentage. I am not flattered because the budget is eight million and the running rate for white writers of my caliber, or less, is at least two hundred and fifty thousand or more," Sam Dodd says in *Rhinestone Sharecropping*. After Bill Gunn was fired from working on a film, a white writer was brought in. Though the finished product differed only slightly from Gunn's version, the white writer got the credit.

Director of Photography Owen Roizman and Bill Gunn (right) on location in Puerto Rico filming *Stop*.

In Hollywood he was a prince among the philistines. In *Rhinestone Sharecropping*, which like *Black Picture Show* and possibly *Ganja and Hess* are semi-autobiographical works, he voices his dissatisfaction about his treatment over two films. *The Greatest*. And *Stop*, which he felt was butchered by the producers. In Hollywood Bill Gunn was vamped. "I notified my union that I wished to put the matter into arbitration. They sent me a copy of the new script by the new writer. Out of a hundred and twenty, there were thirty-five pages that weren't mine. The rest were exactly as I wrote them. I made a legal objection to my union, to not being in the credits, trying to keep my one percent," says the character in *Rhinestone Sharecropping*. No wonder the central image in his classic *Ganja and Hess* was vampirism. Gunn was a sharecropper whose talent was vamped.

He was the solitary genius who caught hell from both whites and the blacks in the industry. I remember taking *Personal Problems* to PBS in Washington, for possible showing on the network and being accosted by the sarcastic remarks of a black woman, the program director, as we viewed the tape. She referred to Gunn and the late Kathleen Collins Prettyman as members of what she characterized as the Hudson River school of cinematography, because of their cinematic style—a style that took it's time to linger over a flower, a body of water, some interesting light, a walk through the woods, a camera that moseyed over elegant dinner scenes, or paused on a piece of sculpture. His beloved Hudson River Valley was his location for peace. Where

Johnnie Mae of *Personal Problems* rendezvouses with her lover, Raymon, stealing some moments from the urban nightmare in which she and her husband, Charles Brown, live. But the Hudson River Valley is the haunted grounds of ancient Dutch legend. Of headless horsemen, and ghostly little men. It is the scene of one of what might be the country's most intellectual and sophisticated horror film, *Ganja and Hess*.

Personal Problems, this avant-garde soap opera, was never shown on PBS, which devoted hours of time to black crack stories and produced a maimed version of Richard Wright's *Native Son* and a docudrama which made vigilante gunman Bernard Goetz a hero. Gunn admired the European filmmakers, and a critic described *Personal Problems* as a soap opera as Godard would have done it. But he was not the Europhile that his critics said he was. Bill Gunn was eclectic and multicultural. His black aristocrats in *Ganja and Hess* and *Black Picture Show* were those ignored in the popular depiction of blacks by commercial whites, and blacks. Mythical welfare queens and blacks who always seem to be poised for a jump shot. Blacks whose dialogue is limited to Hey, Home. Nobody could do Gunn's blacks. Blacks who know about old furniture, azaleas, and who can order their wine in French. Blacks who seem to be saying that even after you have the assets and the class that will nag at you. At the end of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream is the cheerful hotel registration clerk, and the counter seat at Burger King. His people wanted dignity. Gunn's characters already have status, drive Rolls Royces and sportscars, and though they may be a few months behind in their Mastercard payments, they will never have to return to the real sharecropping. Picking cotton, or working in a factory. When they clean up after whites, it's only metaphorically. At the end of Bill Gunn's vision is ennui. Hell is Eternal Boredom. Alienation. Notice how the alienated vampire anthropologist has to go into the ghetto to get fresh blood. Has to receive blood from bloods. Has to be recharged. The successful Doctor who can only receive eternal peace through communion with a community. *Personal Problems* brought Gunn to the community. If Oprah Winfrey now says that she wants to do a television series depicting blacks as ordinary people, and not as popular mass-media stereotypes of the kind that she presented in last year's pilot for *The Women of Brewster Place*, then *Personal Problems* beat Ms. Winfrey and the millions of dollars behind her by a decade.

After completing this production, which was shot between 1979 and 1982 Gunn said, now I know that I can do my own movies. *Personal Problems* was before its time. There was no commercial backing for this eccentric version of the soap opera which permitted black producers, a black director, black actors, and black writers and actresses to have control over their work. A black composer, Carman Moore, had the freedom to write whatever music he desired without fear of censorship. And though it was a black production, there were whites who appeared as actors and actresses and as members of the crew.

Bill Gunn achieved complete freedom to direct *Personal Problems* and though it was never adopted for showing by any network, Volume I premiered at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, November 1980, and in 1986 the completed work was honored by the Japan Foundation, which enabled the tape to be shown in six southern cities.

It was at video centers throughout the nation and was enthusiastically received by critics and the public when it was picked up by two local PBS affiliates, KQED television in San Francisco and WNYC television in New York City, through the efforts of Robert Gore and Jane Muramoto. This soap opera about a nurse's aide, Johnnie Mae Brown, played by Verta Mae Grosvenor, and her husband, Charles Brown, a New York City transit worker, played by Walter Cotton, provided a new direction for black artists on television and had widespread appeal. Even white audiences in Kentucky, Georgia, and Louisiana were able to identify with the problems of the people in the film. I know those people, an elderly white woman said to me.

Bill Gunn was dedicated to *Personal Problems* and like most of the participants worked within a budget that was based upon grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. Walter Cotton, who produced *Personal Problems* for Steve and me, remembers working with Gunn. "He was a morale builder and would reassure the crew and the actors with his humor when they encountered the usual problems associated with a small-budget production. He was easygoing and enthusiastic about his work. He inspired loyalty."

Though he was our friend and colleague he was not among us. He was remote, and alone as is the character in his Gothic film, and his favorite photo seemed to be that of Bill Gunn in boots and black cloak, like a German baron in a medieval castle. He hated telephones. I never really got to know him because I was always in a hurry. But I remember the cool and gentle voice on the telephone when I did reach him. He wanted to do another film with us, but we couldn't raise the money and were denied funds by a number of grant panels composed of our "peers." Until his death he was controversial, and was even labeled a misogynist by a newspaper that receives part of its revenue from skin ads,

Mabel King as Queen of Myrthia in *Ganja and Hess*, 1973. Photograph courtesy African Diaspora Images, Brooklyn.

the king of hypocrites that Gunn would have viewed with his usual poker face. He never forgot that he was a black man in a society that's uncomfortable with black men, whether they appear in a Mapplethorpe exhibition or run for President. He was a gifted black man who was called paranoid, which means that one has a heightened sense of awareness, and evidence of that heightened sense is in all of his plays, films and novels. Somebody said that the sweetest sounds come from hell and that's where his characters come from and that's where black men get their experience and pay their dues. Ganja says, everybody is some kind of freak. Everybody I know is into something, and before he dies the vampire's male assistant utters a speech that could have been Bill's. "The only perversion that can be comfortably condemned is the perversion of others. I will persist and survive. Without your society's sanctions. I will not be tortured. I will not be punished. I will not be guilty."

If John O. Killens was the soldier of darkness, James Baldwin the prophet of darkness, then Bill Gunn was the prince of darkness. And now that we are undergoing an assessment of his career with the kind of attention that eluded him during his life, we are beginning to see what producer Walter Cotton saw when working with Gunn. "He was an original. He was one-of-a-kind."

Ishmael Reed
Guest Curator

Works in the Exhibition

Stop, 1970. 35mm, color, sound, 89 minutes.
Written and directed by Bill Gunn. Producer, Paul Heller. Director of Photography, Owen Roizman. Film Editor, Sam Ornstein. Music composed and montaged by Fred Myrow. Consultant Art Director, Gene Callahan. Sound Recordist, Paul Jaeger. Set Designer, Nina. Fashion Stylist, Georganne Aldrich. Script Supervisor, Felix Ramirez.

With: Linda Marsh (Lee), Edward Bell (Michael), Marlene Clark (Marlene), Richard Dow (Richard), John Hoffmeister (John), Anna Marie Aries (Ellen), Vicky Hernandez (The Whore), Michael Peters (Mr. Dome), Miki Jaeger (Mrs. Dome), Nydia Caro (Girl in the Nightclub), Angel Rigau (The Butler), Benito Alvarez (Yacht Steward), and Charlie Gibbs (Man in the Cemetery).

Ganja and Hess, 1973. 35mm, color, sound, 110 minutes.
Written and directed by Bill Gunn. Executive Producers, Quentin Kelly and Jack Jordan. Produced by Chiz Schultz. Music composed and performed by Sam Waymon. Director of Photography, James E. Hinton. Production Designer, Tom John. Editor, Victor Kanefsky. Music Director, Ed Bland. Associate Producer, Joan Shigekawa. African instruments played by Nadi Qamar. "March Blues" sung by Mabel King. Costume Designer, Scott Barrie. Sound, Ron Love. Lighting Director, Bill Lister. Make-up, Scott Cunningham. "Bungelii Work Song" used by permission of Folkways Records, Inc. Distributed by African Diaspora Images, Brooklyn, and Third World Newsreel, New York.

With: Duane Jones (Dr. Hess Green), Marlene Clark (Ganja Meda), Bill Gunn (George Meda), Sam Waymon (Rev. Luther Williams), Leonard Jackson (Archie), Candece Terpley (Girl in Bar), Richard Harrow (Dinner Guest), John Hoffmeister (Jack Sargent), and Mabel King (Queen of Myrthia).

Personal Problems (Volume 1), 1980. ¾" videotape, color, sound, 120 minutes.
Directed by Bill Gunn. Produced by Walter Cotton. Conceived by Ishmael Reed. Script Contributors: Ishmael Reed, Steve Cannon, Walter Cotton, Verta Mae Grosvenor, Jim Wright, Al Young, Bill Gunn, and others. Director of Photography, Robert Polidori. Editors: Bill Gunn, Robert Polidori, Kip Hanrahan, Niamani Mutima, and Walter Cotton. Sound, Marshall Johnson. Music composed by Carman Moore. "Down on Me," "Blue Lillies," and "Crazy" composed by Sam Waymon. Unit Production Manager, Kip Hanrahan. Distributed by The Kitchen, New York.

With: Verta Mae Grosvenor (Johnnie Mae Brown), Walter Cotton (Charles Brown), Jim Wright (Father Brown), Sam Waymon (Raymon), Thommie Blackwell (Bubba), Andrea W. Hunt (Mary Alice), Michele Wallace (Sharon), and Margo Williams (Della).

Personal Problems (Volume II), 1981. ¾" videotape, color, sound, 120 minutes.
Directed by Bill Gunn. Produced by Walter Cotton. Conceived by Ishmael Reed. Script Treatment: Ishmael Reed and Walter Cotton. Director of Photography, Robert Polidori. Music composed by Carman Moore. Editors: Bill Gunn, Walter Cotton, and Robert Polidori. Lighting, Thomas Frautzen. Fashion Coordinator, Lamarries Moses. Raymon's piano solo composed by Sam Waymon. Party music by A. Faith Harris. Distributed by The Kitchen, New York.

With: Verta Mae Grosvenor (Johnnie Mae Brown), Jim Wright (Father Brown), and Walter Cotton (Charles Brown).

Biography

Bill Gunn was born in West Philadelphia in 1929. After serving eighteen months in the United States Navy, he moved to New York to study acting and writing in the early 1950s. As an actor, Gunn appeared in productions of *The Immoralist* (Royale Theater, 1954) on Broadway and *A Winter's Tale* (New York Shakespeare Festival, 1963); in several episodes of the television series *Route 66* (CBS, 1960–61) and *The Fugitive* (ABC, 1963–64); and in the films *The Sound and the Fury* (Martin Ritt, 1959), *Penelope* (Arthur Miller, 1966), and his self-directed *Ganja and Hess* (1973), which was screened at the 1973 Cannes Film Festival. In addition to the screenplays for *Stop* (1970) and *Ganja and Hess*, and two novels, Gunn wrote the screenplay for *The Landlord* (Hal Ashby, 1970) and the script for the five-hour television series *The Alberta Hunter Story 1900–1950* (BBC, 1982), which he also directed. He received an Emmy award (Special Individual Achievement) for writing *Johannas* (NBC, 1972), two Audelco Black Theater Awards (Best Play, Best Director) for *Black Picture Show* (Vivian Beaumont Theater, Lincoln Center, 1975), and a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (1980). Gunn died in Nyack, New York in 1989. His numerous plays and manuscripts were willed to the New York Shakespeare Festival.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 53
New American Film and Video Series

Adrian Piper

October 9—November 11, 1990

Out of the Corner, 1990.
Video installation. On view continuously.

Gallery talk, Friday, October 26, at 4:00
Adrian Piper will be present.

Components
17 video monitors; 17 videotape playback decks; 17 ¾" videotapes, color, sound, 26 minutes. 64 black-and-white photographs, 14 x 11 inches each with frames. Table, 16 chairs, pedestals, and specified lighting.

Videotape credits
Performers: Steve Ausbury, Martha Baer, Gregg Bordowitz, Cee Brown, Jessica Chalmers, Lenora Champagne, Erin Cramer, Andrea Fraser, Alexander Gray, John Kelly, Lawrence Miller, Adrian Piper, Beatrice Roth, Vivian Selbo, Marianne Weems, John Wessel, and Philip Yenawine. Music: "We Are Family" by Sister Sledge, © Cotillion Records, 1979. Editing: Dieter Froese; post-production: Dekart Video; audio editing: Karl Kalbaugh/Soundwave. Translations: Berlitz Translation Services, Josephine Withers, Hilton Als. This project was partially funded by a 1989-90 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship. Special thanks to Kay Hines and Dieter Froese.

Out of the Corner is courtesy of the John Weber Gallery, New York.

Out of the Corner, 1990.

Since the late 1960s, Adrian Piper has been producing rigorous and intelligent work as a Conceptual, Performance, and visual artist. Her position is unique in that she is also a professor of philosophy; as such, she brings clarity and depth of thought to her art work. Piper's latest installation, *Out of the Corner* (1990), is a powerful epistemological reflection on the social construction of racial identity within Western society. The questions she poses regarding self-depiction and the reception of the Other are leading the debates surrounding multicultural representation in contemporary art practice, institutional exhibition policies, and the writing of art history.

Artists have employed video in various ways to explore the nature of the portrait by exposing the myth of authenticity which underlies the film, photographic, and video image. The notion that the camera "does not lie," that it reveals the true identity of its subject by virtue of its capacity to produce a representational image, is a fallacy. The photograph, particularly as it is used in passports, identification cards, and driver's licenses, represents the subject as a quantifiable unit whose social and cultural identity is determined further through labeling (height, weight, race, national origin, etc.). Its presumed objectivity is radically questioned in such videotapes as Martha Rosler's *Vital Statistics of a Citizen (Simply Obtained)* (1977), Stuart Marshall's *Bright Eyes* (1986), and in the more recent work of Adrian Piper. In a variety of projects, Piper confronts our expectations of race through the evidence of the image. These include *My Calling (Card) #1: A Reactive Guerrilla Performance for Dinners and Cocktail Parties* (1986), *Cornered* (1988), and *Merge* (1989). Within Piper's projects the acknowledgment of the self of artist and viewer becomes a complex and engaging metadiscourse that exposes the processes of image and identity construction within the text of the work. In confronting these issues, Piper has made an important advance in creating art relevant to contemporary issues and as a means to further our understanding of ourselves and others.

In *Cornered* (1988), a large video monitor is placed behind an overturned table, which leans against it. It is flanked by two birth certificates, one identifying Piper's father as white, the other as black. Piper appears on the monitor and directly addresses the viewer in a soft-spoken, yet direct, manner that conforms to her self-described "bourgie, junior miss style." The overturned table, with its aggressive implications, and the placement of the birth certificates on the wall frame her explosive text, which subtly presents an argument that breaks through the polite veneer of social conventions. "I'm

Black. Now, let's deal with this social fact, and the fact of my stating it, together. Maybe you don't see why we have to deal with it together. Maybe you think it's just my problem, and that I should deal with it myself. But it's not just my problem. It's our problem." Piper's monologue skillfully exposes the racial presumptions underlying public behavior and the politics of self-representation. She informs "white" viewers that they are in all likelihood black according to conventions of racial classification and genetic statistics.

Cornered is a metaphor for the idea of "being cornered"—forcing our engagement in issues we'd often prefer to ignore. This earlier work is at the conceptual center of her newest installation, *Out of the Corner*, and sets the stage for its reception.

Entering the gallery you see sixteen monitors placed about the space in "battle formation" around the larger monitor and table used in *Cornered*. All the monitors are oriented to face the viewer. Each sits atop a pedestal; a chair is upturned and placed in front of it, suggesting the stance of a liontamer keeping an aggressive animal at bay. Initially, we hear Piper's monologue from *Cornered*. Halfway through, each of the sixteen monitors is activated in rapid succession, creating a burst of visual imagery, which is then repeated with sound. Each of the tapes has a white male or female from a different Western country speaking the following text in English: "Some of my female ancestors were so-called 'house niggers' who were raped by their white slavemasters. If you're an American, some of yours probably were, too." Across each monitor run subtitles in a different foreign language. At regular intervals we hear the pop song "We Are Family" by Sister Sledge. On the walls are framed black-and-white portrait photographs of black women from different walks of life, shot from the pages of *Ebony* magazine. Viewers seated before the monitors or walking about the gallery can engage each statement through the modulation of written languages and individuals speaking.

Adrian Piper has created a distinguished project that has developed out of her earlier performance and media work and confronted with precision and powerful emotions issues which are at the heart of our culture and society today. She has used the formal dimensions of Conceptual Art as a means to offer a deconstructive engagement of the languages and images of representation by placing herself and her viewers at the center of the experience. The result is an artwork that does not isolate aesthetics and theory from the everyday but enjoins our communities to speak and communicate within an ethic of social (self-)understanding.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Biography

Adrian Piper was born in New York City in 1948. She studied at the School of Visual Arts, New York (A.A., 1969), City College of New York (B.A., 1974), Harvard University (M.A., 1977, Ph.D., 1981), and the University of Heidelberg (1977–78). She has received grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1979, 1982, 1987), Art Matters, Inc. (1987), John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (1989), New York State Council on the Arts (1989), and Awards in the Visual Arts (1990). Piper has taught philosophy at the University of Michigan (1979–82, 1985–86), Stanford University (1982–84), Georgetown University (1986–88), the University of California, San Diego (1988–90), and is currently professor of philosophy at Wellesley College.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

0 to 9 Press, New York, "Three Untitled [Postal] Projects," 1969; New York Cultural Center, "One Man (sic), One Work," 1971; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, "Matrix 56: Adrian Piper," 1980; Real Art Ways, Hartford, 1980; The Alternative Museum, New York, "Adrian Piper: Reflections 1967–1987," 1987 (traveling); John Weber Gallery, New York, 1989, 1990; Matrix Gallery, University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1989; Williams College Art Museum, Williamstown, Massachusetts, 1990; Exit Art, New York, 1990.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Dwan Gallery, New York, "Language III," 1969; Städtisches Museum, Leverkusen, West Germany, "Concept Art," 1969; Kunsthalle Berne, Switzerland, "Plans and Projects as Art," 1969, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Information," 1970; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, "7e Biennale de Paris," 1971; Museum moderner Kunst, Vienna, "Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn," 1985; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Committed to Print," 1988 (traveled); Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, "The Turning Point: Art and Politics in 1968," 1988 (traveled); The Maryland Institute, College of Art, Baltimore, "Art as a Verb: The Evolving Continuum," 1988 (traveled); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, "L'art conceptuel, une perspective," 1989 (traveling).

Videography

All works are single-channel, ¾" videotapes, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Some Reflective Surfaces, shot in 16mm film, 1975; edited in ¾" video, 1987. 20 minutes.
Funk Lessons, 1984. 18 minutes.
Funk Lessons: A Metaperformance, 1987. 44 minutes.
My Calling (Cards) #1 and #2: A Metaperformance, 1987. 120 minutes.
The Big Four-Oh, 1988. Video installation: video monitor; videotape playback deck; videotape, 45 minutes; table; 40 hardballs; sealed jars containing urine and vinegar, and handkerchiefs soaked in blood, sweat, and tears; a suit of armor; a journal; and specified lighting.
Cornered, 1988. Video installation: video monitor; videotape playback deck; videotape, 17 minutes; table; two framed birth certificates; 10 viewer chairs; and specified lighting.
My Calling (Cards) #1 and #2: Metaperformance II, 1988. 120 minutes.
My Calling (Card) #1: A Double Metaperformance, 1989. 58 minutes.

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Menaker, Deborah. *Artworks. Adrian Piper* (exhibition brochure). Williamstown, Massachusetts: Williams College Museum of Art, 1990.
Piper, Adrian. "A Paradox of Conscience: A New Perspective on Art World Ethics." *New Art Examiner*, 16 (April 1989), pp. 27–31
———. "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present." In *Re-Imagining America: The Arts of Social Change*. Eds. Mark O'Brien and Craig Little. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1990, pp. 285–95.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 54
New American Film and Video Series

NON%*@#&?!SENSE

November 17–December 9, 1990

Gallery Talk, Tuesday, November 27, at 4:00. John G. Hanhardt and Allen S. Weiss, co-curators, will be present.

This exhibition is organized in conjunction with the publication of *Art & Text*, no. 37 (September 1990), which includes papers originally presented at the symposium *Nonsense: Culture Through the Looking Glass*, held November 11, 12, and 13, 1989, at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The symposium was organized by David B. Allison, John G. Hanhardt, Mark Roberts, and Allen S. Weiss. The *Art & Text* issue is available at the Museum sales desk.

Is nonsense like a weed, simply something unwanted, something that shouldn't be there? Imagine, music lovers, the hellish job of working in a recording studio listening to master pressings for imperfections. Not to hear the music, but the noise. But how do we check recordings of *musique concrète* or of John Cage? How can we respond to a composer who would welcome errors in the recording process (as opposed to Glenn Gould's radical perfectionism)? When we listen, especially when we listen carefully, we cannot seem to stop making sense: our discourse is epistemotropic. Can our aesthetic activism (or abandon) ever truly reach toward an infinite variety of silences, or an equally infinite variety of noises, occasionally of deliria?

Nonsense: silliness, senselessness, irrationality, absurdity, craziness, madness, lunacy, insanity, folly, poppycock, balderdash, fiddle-faddle, babble, drivel, dribble, slaver, twaddle, twattle, blather, gabble, blabber, gibber, jabber, patter . . . blah-blah. Horsefeathers, even. These very words designate meaningless differences of signification, discrete nuances available only to the very tone of individual emotional response or rhetorical effect. Listen to their sounds: what do they *mean* to you!? Nonsense cannot be defined; it is that which is antithetical to every lexical entry, to every logical operation, to every linguistic structure. The difficulty is that while nonsense is always historically contextualized, it is usually veiled behind the machinations of meaning. The stasis, the static, of logic confines access to nonsense behind the veneer of presence. Nonsense traverses history at its interstices, at those articulations of speech, gesture, act, and event which equally escape both the transcendental logic of metaphysics and the quotidian (though often hardly cunning) dialectic of history. The slightest typo, lapsus, deviation, or deformity is enough to produce it.

We might begin with an allegory: John Cage's *Imaginary Landscape #4* (1951). This piece for twelve radios—a do-it-yourself composition determined by chance operations of the *I Ching*—demands two operators per radio, controlling changes of amplitude from *ppppp* to *sfffffz*, of frequency settings spanning the dial, and of duration. It was first performed in 1951 at the McMillan Theater at Columbia University, "conducted" by Cage himself. But due to awkward scheduling, it didn't begin until 11:30 pm, an hour at which, in that epoch, there was practically nothing on the radio. The result seemed to some an unfortunate mix of static and silence, yet others recognized it as the most fortunate serendipity. What was to have been something of a "live" radiophonic forerunner of *William's Mix* (a collage of live recordings of city and country sounds, conventional music and electronically produced sounds) was practically transformed into an extended precedent of *4'33"* (four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence, scored "for undetermined forces")—both, not coincidentally, composed and first performed the following year.

One limit of nonsense, *noise*, gives way to another, *silence*. According to Cage, silence is indeterminate noise. We might presume that Cage was inspired to silence, to the many possible silences, by this error of timing. In any case, the desire to include the pure contingency of the world—the "real" world, the recorded world, the radiophonically represented world—in music was met with an emblematic failure. The scheduling error has informed the creative thought of a generation. Sometimes the world which we anticipate or desire is missing; sometimes what we need to define our imagination—in this case, a montage of radiophonic excerpts—escapes us. What remains—failures, detritus, trash—is a sign of what awaits us as our destiny. In Freudian metapsychology and Surrealist ontology, dreams reorganize the day's "residues" into a unified, if incoherent, spectacle; William Burroughs suggests that "the past is refuse, precisely directed." We add: the future of our words is silence; the future of our images is chaos; the future of our bodies is corruption. A return to detritus. Death is the ultimate limit of sense, the final nonsense. We always knew this from ethics, theology, and metaphysics; we now affirm it through aesthetics and linguistics. Whence the appropriateness of the terms used to designate that radiophonic noise which is no different from radiophonic silence: *dead time*, or *dead air*. Should we heed the May '68 graffiti slogan "live

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Peggy and Fred in Hell, the Prologue (1985), Leslie Thornton.

without dead time!," or rather delight in Cage's discovery of the revelatory aspects of silence?

Is nonsense simply meaninglessness, or does it instill our discourse with the power of refusal? Is there a more basic scream than that of Beth Anderson's *I Can't Stand It*, or is this just one more Dadaist provocation, one more ploy to attract our attention or provoke our disapproval? Does Gregory Whitehead's *Eva, can I stab bats in a cave?* ask a true question (evoking a surreal scene or a demonic nightmare), or does it simply invoke its own palindromic, nearly solipsistic logic? Does Whitehead's *Oral or Anal?* pose a question about sexuality, about the eroticism of a normal body *with* organs? Is it an exclusive or inclusive disjunction, imposing a sexual injunction? Or does it rather bespeak the manifest impossibility (but distinct, if perverse, radiophonic possibility) of *organs without a body*?

Often uncanny, sometimes sublime, the nonsensical is a pressure against the rational, a threat against reasonableness. In its very ephemerality, in its nearly systematic suppression or dissociation from quotidian discourse, it resounds in a tautological realm, leaving the merest trace on a history determined by rationality and power. Let us suggest merely one of many possible circuits of such closure. Nonsense is often assimilated to pure chance, to contingency; contingency explained as destiny; destiny attributed to divine intervention (*deus ex machina*); divinity demonized as God; God systematized in paranoia; paranoid systems denounced as nonsense. For example, this morbid fascination is epitomized by Harry Smith's *No. 12 (Heaven and Earth Magic Feature)*, with its paranoid and schizoid disarticulations of voice, body, and narrative, and its irrecuperable anti-narrative effects—*dead ends*. It is perhaps no accident that the Surrealist game which inspired this film was called the "Exquisite Corpse." Exquisite in its aesthetic effects, morbid in its corporeal violence.

These nonsensical effects pervade modernism, in all its manifestations: the theatrics of Dada performance; the dream imagery of Surrealism; catatonic stupor (consider Arnulf Rainer's notion of *Katatonenkunst*, an extreme limit of Performance Art); apocalyptic ranting; the commonplaces of daily news items; the jargon of academic and political discourse; contradictions in the historical dialectic—it is also what Alice discovers in her Victorian Wonderland, as well as what we critique in contemporary postmodern simulacra. *Dead letters*.

This program is an experiment, a user's manual, a tool for establishing an archaeology—not a typology or historical survey—of nonsense. Nonsense might not *mean*, but it can be *used*. It is a transformative axis of what makes sense. We might utilize it as a testing mechanism to fathom the limits, powers, and structures of discourse. Presented here are several programs of film, video, audio, and live performance bearing on varied manifestations of nonsense: surrealizing tendencies, structural experiments, instructional pastiche, representational violence, collage and montage effects, linguistic investigations. One principal disjunction guiding

our experiment, separating major tendencies of early and late modernism, is that between *stream-of-consciousness* (dream-logic, depth psychology, libidinal primary processes, fantasy, interiorization) and *stream-of-life* (aleatory constructs, the *concrète*, montage, cut-up, structuralization, exteriorization). The locus of nonsense reveals the limits and forms of rationality—if not of the imaginary.

What if, for example, we took our program of "instructional" pieces seriously? Peter Rose and Jessie Jane Lewis' *The Pressures of the Text* discredits the rhetorical and poetic poverty of our scholarly discourses and offers a way out—into the realm of glossolalia and glossographia; George Landow's *Remedial Reading Comprehension* reveals the antinomies of statistical reasoning and the ambiguities of spectatorial identification; Robert Nelson's *Bleu Shut* ("bullshit," another synonym for nonsense) demonstrates—against our "better judgment"—the arbitrary relation between signifier and signified by continually frustrating our choices in its game-show exercise. Through these varied works we slowly discover that for every possible enunciation a nonsensical variant or irritant may be created. Indeed, what experimental art work isn't somehow instructional, critical, or theoretical? Nonsense is that moment in which a text or system unfolds to reveal its internal contradictions, establishing the inner negation of deep structures that resides as a possible future of all speech, as a moment of cultural critique.

So *Imaginary Landscape #4* presents just one paradigm; any work in the present program—indeed any work at all—could be used to establish a different one. Yet, in desiring to set a cognitive paradigm, we begin to realize that nonsense can appear anywhere, at any time—especially within arbitrary categorization. At any discursive juncture, any grammatical inflexion, any lexical nuance, any gestural moment. Tautologically, might we name "nonsense" simply the zero-degree- or lowest-common-denominator of sense, to be established at every level of the art work? In photography, for example, the elementary level is that of the very grain of the image itself: Paul Sharits suggests that emulsion grains are essentially "concepts" (no nonsense); Hollis Frampton would call them "circles of confusion" (foundationally nonsense). In experimental cinema—which often foregrounds the primary, liminal aspects of cinematic specificity—the fundamentally meaningful narratives of mainstream cinema are deconstructed. Consider limit works, which focus on the materiality of the filmic signifier, such as Tony Conrad's *The Flicker* or Peter Kubelka's *Arnulf Rainer*, both composed uniquely of black-and-white leader. These films present not images without codes (as Roland Barthes claimed the photographic image to be), but codes without images. Something from almost nothing. Or reflect upon an even more primal cinematographic event, what Hollis Frampton considers to be the only unique film, and what we see to be the most universal cinematic possibility: passing *nothing* through a running projector.

What is the use of all this? To ask for a use value is already to belie the exigencies of nonsense. William Burroughs suggested that the cut-up will reveal the political essence of a text more easily than conventional analysis since, once cut up and scanned, the work's inner ideological structure becomes more visible. Here, the politics and poetics of communication merge, as they do in the contemporaneous works of Lettrist anti-art, Situationist *détournement*, Fluxus experimentation, and the current theorization and critique of media simulacra. In such works, communication contains its own critique, and the spectacle contains its own refusal. Despite appearances, we cannot bear to stop making sense. Are we to make of nonsense nothing but a semiotic symptomatology of representation and thus recuperate it within our rationality?

There are, indeed, other more aesthetic uses which bypass reason by directly affecting the body. We might remember that Bach's *Goldberg Variations* were written for Baron von Kayserling as a soporific, to assuage the melancholia that caused his sleepless nights. How different is Paul Sharit's *T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G* (made in the fateful year of 1968), his last mandala film, intended as an aesthetic calmative for the historical excitations and malaise that beset the USA in the 1960s? Or Charles Amirkhanian's *Andas* (the Swedish word for "breathing"), which begins with a yoga breathing exercise to aid in sleeping that is soon transformed into snores, a lion's roar, electronic "suspenseful" tones, distorted and disarticulated words in an unrecognizable language, and finally nonsense chants? *Andas* might suggest one more allegory: here begins the sleep of reason that produces monsters, nightmares, or simply dreams—perhaps those evoked in Amirkhanian's own *Dreams Freud Dreamed*. It is here that the archaeology of nonsense may begin—in the dreams and nightmares, pleasures and pains, wonders and anxieties that it induces.

Allen S. Weiss, *Guest Curator*

The Third Reich 'n Roll (1976), The Residents.

SCHEDULE

Unless otherwise noted, all films are 16mm, black-and-white, and sound; all videotapes are ¾", color, and sound; all audio pieces are in stereo and played on digital audiotape; all performances are approximately 60 minutes in length.

Saturday, November 17 at 2:00

Joseph Cornell, *Rose Hobart* (1939). 35mm film, tinted, 19½ minutes.
Bruce Conner, *A Movie* (1958). Film, 12 minutes.
Bruce Conner, *America Is Waiting* (1981). Film, 3½ minutes.
Hans Breder, *My TV Dictionary: The Drill* (1986). Videotape, 3 minutes.
Nam June Paik and Jud Yalkut, *Videotape Study #3* (1967–69). Videotape (originally shot in 16mm film), black-and-white, 5 minutes.
Charles Amirkhanian, *History of Collage* (1981). Audiotape, 4 minutes.
John Cage, *William's Mix* (1952). Audiotape, 4 minutes. Courtesy C.F. Peters Corporation.
John Cage, *62 Mesostics Re Merce Cunningham* (1971). Audiotape, 6 minutes.
William Burroughs, *We See the Future Through the Binoculars of the People* (c. 1978). Audiotape, 10 minutes. Courtesy James Grauerholz, William Burroughs Communications.

Tuesday, November 20 at 2:00

Maya Deren, *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943). 35mm film, 14 minutes.
Sidney Peterson, *The Lead Shoes* (1949). Film, color, 16½ minutes.
Harry Smith, *No. 12 (Heaven and Earth Magic Feature)* (1950–61). Film, 66 minutes.
Leslie Thornton, *Peggy and Fred in Hell, the Prologue* (1985). Film, 21 minutes.
Charles Amirkhanian, *Dreams Freud Dreamed* (1979). Audiotape, 5 minutes.

Tuesday, November 20 at 6:30

Constance DeJong, *Vanishing Act II* (1990). Performance.

Wednesday, November 21 at 2:00

Hollis Frampton, *Zorns Lemma* (1970). Film, color, 60 minutes.
Paul Sharits, *T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G* (1968). Film, color, 12 minutes.
Gregory Whitehead, *Oral or Anal?* (1988). Audiotape, 1 minute.
Gregory Whitehead, *Eva, can I stab bats in a cave?* (1984). Audiotape, 1 minute.
Charles Amirkhanian, *Andas* (1982). Audiotape, 6 minutes.
Susan Stone, *Langue Étude* (1985). Audiotape, 5 minutes.

Saturday, November 24 at 2:00

Jean-Pierre Gorin, *Poto and Cabengo* (1979). Film, color, 77 minutes.

Sunday, November 25 at 2:00

Stuart Sherman, *Selected and New Works* (1975–90). Performance.

Tuesday, November 27 at 6:30

David Antin, *Determination, Suspension, Diversion, Digression, Destruction* (1990). Performance.

Wednesday, November 28 at 2:00

Peter Rose and Jessie Jane Lewis, *The Pressures of the Text* (1983). Videotape, 17 minutes.
George Landow (also known as Owen Land), *Remedial Reading Comprehension* (1970). Film, color, 5 minutes.
Robert Nelson, *Bleu Shut* (1970). Film, color, 33 minutes.
Bruce Conner, *Mongoloid* (1977). Film, 3½ minutes.
Gregory Whitehead, *If a voice like, then what?* (1984–85). Audiotape, 3 minutes.
Gregory Whitehead, *The Problem with Bodies* (1988). Audiotape, 1 minute.
Brian Gysin, *Come to Free the Words* (1962). Audiotape, 3 minutes. Courtesy James Grauerholz, William Burroughs Communications.

Thursday, November 29 at 2:00

Howard Fried, *Vito's Reef* (1978). Videotape, 34 minutes.
Gary Hill, *Why Do Things Get in a Muddle? (Come on Petunia)*, (1984). Videotape, 32 minutes.

Tuesday, December 4 at 6:30

Joan Jonas, *Scenes 1–3* (1990). Performance.

Wednesday, December 5 at 2:00

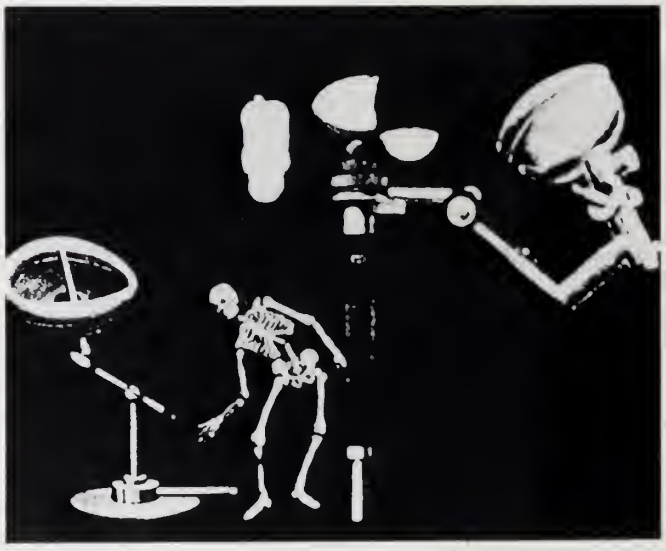
Andy Warhol, *Vinyl* (1965). Film, 64 minutes.
The Residents, *The Third Reich 'n Roll* (1976). Film, 4 minutes.
Ken Jacobs, *Little Stabs at Happiness* (1959–63). Film, color, 15 minutes.
Manuel DeLanda, *Raw Nerves: A Lacanian Thriller* (1980). Film, color, 28 minutes.
Beth Anderson, *I Can't Stand It* (1976). Audiotape, 2 minutes.

Thursday, December 6 at 12:00

Michael Snow, *Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Shoen* (1974). Film, color, 267 minutes.

Sunday, December 9 at 2:00

Ken Jacobs, *Two Wrenching Departures* (1989). Performance.



No. 12 (Heaven and Earth Magic Feature) (1950–61), Harry Smith. Photograph courtesy Anthology Film Archives, New York.

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Sunday 12:00–6:00

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Whitney Museum of American Art 55
New American Film and Video Series

To Take the Glamour Out of War: American Film Against the War in Vietnam

December 15, 1990–January 6, 1991

Gallery talk, Saturday, December 22, at 3:00. David E. James will be present.

In the last pages of *Dispatches*, his collected wartime journalism, Michael Herr quotes with evident approval Tim Page's incredulous response to a publisher's request for photographs that would take the glamour out of the Vietnam war: "Take the glamour out of war!" Page exclaims, "I mean, how the bloody hell can you do *that*? . . . It's like trying to take the glamour out of sex, trying to take the glamour out of the Rolling Stones."[1] In *Apocalypse Now* and other films of the late seventies, Herr's version of a glamorous Vietnam, a sexy, rock 'n' roll "experience" of the same phenomenal intensity as the Jimi Hendrix Experience, inspired what has since become an ongoing genre of films about the war. For Hollywood at least, a misadventure that cost 60,000 American and nearly 2 million Vietnamese lives has become an entertaining and profitable spectacle.

Domestic upheavals during the war itself, however, prohibited such business. Except for a few commercial productions, such as John Wayne's *The Green Berets* (1968), only films outside Hollywood and opposed to its functions were possible. Concerned mainly with the war's effects on the American and Vietnamese people rather than with military engagements, these films were more likely to glamorize not the invasion but the resistance to it. As diverse as the parties who formed the "Mobe"—the National Mobilization Against the War—these oppositional films were unprecedentedly vital and innovative in terms of both style and function. Just as alternative film documented the opposition to the state and to mass-media legitimization of government policies, so alternative methods of producing and exhibiting film became social theaters where that opposition was mobilized. In the process, the political function of cinema and the relationship between politics and art were entirely refigured.

The anti-war cinemas took shape as more overtly politicized developments of earlier attempts to create alternatives to Hollywood, especially the late 1950s underground film—the aestheticized protest film of the beat generation—and the independent documentary movements adjacent to it. Protest films about the cold war became protest films about the Vietnam war; underground films about beat life-styles evolved into the documentation of activists, protest marchers, and resistance workers; and the critique of the Hollywood film turned into the contestation of mass-media accounts of the war.[2] The transitions are fully traced in Jonas Mekas' series *Diaries, Notes & Sketches*, and indeed as late as 1968 Mekas could still claim that there was "no difference between the avant-garde film and the avant-garde newsreel."[3]

Summer '68 (1969), Norman Fruchter and John Douglas.

Since it was not easy for filmmakers working outside the virtually unified state, military, and media apparatuses to gain direct access to the events in Vietnam, anti-war filmmaking began as the interdependent critique of the mass-media and the documentation of the resistance groups. Ironically, it initially appropriated devices from what had been the most aestheticist camps of underground film. Carolee Schneemann's *Viet-Flakes* (1965), the first American film to attack the war's atrocities, adapted the manipulation of newspaper images previously used, for example, in Stan Vanderbeek's collage films of the late 1950s; *Viet-Flakes* was also the first anti-war film to make thematic use of rock 'n' roll on the soundtrack. Stan Brakhage's *Song 23: 23rd Psalm Branch*—the most overtly political of all his films, prompted by the intolerable intrusion of the war into his mountain home via television news—elaborated an essentially similar technique. In an ironic parallel to the government's own attempt to justify the war as a defense

In the Year of the Pig (1969), Emile de Antonio. Courtesy Turin Film Corporation.

against a communist aggression perceived as parallel to Nazi and Japanese fascism, Brakhage used World War II movie footage to present his conception of war as a trans-historical inevitability. Documentation of the domestic unrest began with Bruce Baillie's *Quixote*. Shot in 1964-65 but not edited until 1968, it is the most severely beautiful scrutiny of America in its lurch toward the crises of the second half of the decade; as the protagonist moves east, the film becomes increasingly preoccupied with television news reports from Vietnam, but also with anti-war demonstrations.

Although these works are the most sophisticated and committed filmic meditations on the war, even ostensibly non-political filmmakers could not entirely avoid the effects of America's increasing military involvement. Inevitably it appears—though in very different ways—in the work of Andy Warhol and Paul Sharits: in *The Chelsea Girls* (1966), Mary Woronov is cast in a Ronald Tavel play about Hanoi Hannah; *Piece Mandala/End War* (1966) is filled with an optical violence, a thematic expressivity of imagery not yet absorbed into the pure aestheticism of later structural film.

With the escalation of both the invasion and domestic resistance to it, it became more difficult to sustain the anti-political disengagement of the beat generation, and by the middle of the decade underground film was rapidly losing its viability and splintering into more clearly politicized forms. The transition is visible in Leonard Henny's *The Resistance*, in which, as late as 1968, communal eating, yoga, and other hippie rituals could still coexist with more overt political action and news stories about the war. There are many similar instances where the documentation of the anti-war movement grows out of home movies about beat life-styles: Lenny Lipton's *We Shall March Again* (1965), Jerry Abram's *Be-In* (1967), Anthony Reveaux's *Peace March* (1967-76), David Ringo's *March on the Pentagon* (1968), and Saul Levine's *New Left Note* (1968/82) were all amateur films about peace marches and other forms of civil protest. But as confrontation with the government mounted and the anti-war movement continued to be misrepresented in the popular press, the need for more formal organization among oppositional media became clear. The catalyst was the October 1967 March on the Pentagon. A number of New York filmmakers later pooled the footage they had shot there to produce *No Game* (1968), a documentary of the occupation of the Pentagon grounds and the military's deliberate attacks on unarmed US citizens. It became "the first Newsreel film."[4]

New York Newsreel was founded in 1967 as a cooperative of independent filmmakers, many of whom had previously been filming radical activity. In order to provide (in the

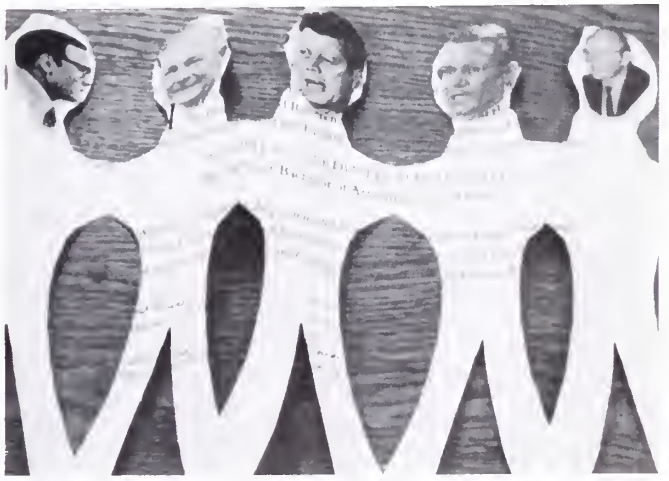
words of an initial manifesto) "an alternative to the limited and biased coverage of television news," several kinds of films were envisioned: "short newsreels which will appear every week or two; longer, more analytic documentaries; informational and tactical films."[5] Plans were also made for non-theatrical projection, for the encouragement of a network of newsreel centers in San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, and other major cities, and for the distribution of foreign films about the war. In this utopian reinvention of cinema as a practice of, by, and for the people rather than as a commodity manufactured by corporate industries, the styles and functions of the early Soviet documentary cinema, specifically as it had come to the US in the Workers' Film and Photo League of the early thirties, were rediscovered.

The reportorial style of the newsreels was inflected by their makers' desire to incite audiences to intervene actively in the political arena. The integration of filmmaking with political action not only encouraged direct confrontation with state power, but justified the emphasis in the films on emotional impact and the subordination of dispassionate analysis. The imperfection of means—the films were often grainy, with jerky camera movements, and in other ways technically crude—thus reflected the exigencies under which the footage was obtained and the film edited and also signaled the desired effects. As filmmaker Robert Kramer argued, "You want to make films that unnerve, that shake assumptions, that threaten, that do not soft-sell, but hopefully (an impossible ideal) explode like grenades in peoples' faces, or open minds like a good can opener."[6] Although such a blatantly agitational aesthetic was not shared by all (and indeed a "correct line" of any kind was never agreed upon), it was certainly more of a rule than an exception. And so while anomalies like Saul Levine's *New Left Note* did document the anti-war movement with a highly complex visual vocabulary in the mode of Brakhage, the newsreels themselves employed a more transparent style—though all of them contained at least one instance of visual violence presented as a correlative to social violence: the staccato, machine-gunlike flickering of the Newsreel logo itself.

Films made by Newsreel within this agitational aesthetic included documentaries about strategies for beating the draft; interviews with prominent spokespeople for the draft resistance, such as Noam Chomsky; discussions among Vietnam vets, teenage dropouts, and black militants; depictions and analyses of the events in Chicago around the 1968 Democratic National Convention; documentation of resistance within the military, including the 1971 veterans' march on Washington; and many films about student mobilization, civil rights, and the conditions of the working class, ethnic minorities, and women. Significant titles among surviving films include *Boston Draft Resistance Group*, *Chicago Convention Challenge*, and *Chomsky—Resist* from 1968; *America* and *Summer '68* from 1969; and *Only the Beginning* from 1971. Picking up on the example of Peter Gessner's *Time of the Locust* (1966), which juxtaposed newsreel footage of US atrocities with speeches by President Johnson, several films about the Vietnamese resistance were also made, most notably *People's War* (1969). This newsreel placed the liberation effort in the context of the earlier struggle against French colonialism and the resultant economic underdevelopment of Vietnam.

The Newsreel activists realized that as long as the same forces that controlled commercial film production also controlled distribution, it was useless to create radical films without also developing a system for making them available. Considerable energy was put into promotion, and the Newsreel collectives became distribution centers, circulating not only their own films, but also documentaries from abroad, from Cuba (including *Hanoi, Tuesday the 13th* [1967] and *The Seventy-Nine Springtimes of Ho Chi Minh* [1969] by Santiago Alvarez), and from Vietnam. Some films made by the National Liberation Front had previously been seen in the US;[7] but after Newsreel's formation several more of the eight hundred documentaries made by the NLF and the Hanoi government became more accessible to the anti-war movement.[8] Among these were *A Day of Plane Hunting* (1968), which emphasized the role of women in agriculture as well as in combat; *Struggle for Life* (1968), which revealed the substantial medical resources of the NLF; and two films from North Vietnam, *Young Puppeteers of Vietnam* (1969), about the adaptation of folk culture to the liberation struggle, and *US Techniques and Genocide in Vietnam* (1968), about the deployment of advanced anti-civilian weaponry against unarmed peasants.

The Newsreels, with their vehement and unqualified attack on military action, were the most important films in the domestic struggle against the war. However, there were other documentaries, either made independently or for various television stations, which represented all political positions and production methods, ranging from well-financed and army-assisted endorsements, more extreme in their historical distortions than even *Why Vietnam?* (1965), the State Department's own apologia for President Johnson's bombing of North Vietnam, to extremely amateur productions. These latter include Nick Macdonald's home movie made with toy soldiers and newspaper clippings, *The Liberal War* (1972). An indictment of the war not as a mistake or aberration but as the entirely logical outcome of liberalism, it is argued from an anarchist position that privileges a



The Liberal War (1972), Nick Macdonald.

decentralized domestic filmmaking practice. David Loeb Weiss' *No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger* (1968), with its intercut interviews with black veterans and Harlem protest marchers, indicted the war as a continuation of domestic racism. As these instances illustrate—and the same is true for commentary about the war in popular music—positions most divergent from those of the administration and the popular media were argued in works made by the most marginal methods, while in general the more mainstream productions followed the government line and only tardily responded to the shift in public opinion. Films about the soldiers tended to emphasize the difficulties and dangers of their assignments rather than the substantially greater difficulties and dangers they inflicted upon the people of Vietnam. Eugene S. Jones' *A Face of War* (1967) restricts its attention to the US Marines in this fashion, while Beryl Fox's *Last Reflections on a War* (1968) gives a more judicious analysis of the contradictions of the American presence.

Nineteen sixty-nine saw the release of Emile de Antonio's immensely important *In the Year of the Pig*. This film at last presented the war not just in terms of the phenomenology of the American combat soldier, but historically, as an anti-colonial struggle in which the Vietnamese people (including their various and sometimes adversarial groups) were the subjects of their own history rather than merely the invisible irritants of US history. Its collage method of juxtaposing incommensurate accounts of the course of the war was subsequently used, though with none of de Antonio's subtle and precise irony, in Peter Davis' *Hearts and Minds* of 1974. By this time, after the invasions of Cambodia and Laos, the mining of Haiphong harbor, and the massive bombing raids over North Vietnam, as well as the judicial traumas of the Nixon administration, public opinion was sufficiently united against the invasion so that at last Hollywood found it financially worthwhile to make a film opposed to the war. *Hearts and Minds* won an Academy Award for the best documentary feature. Five years later, the glamorization began.

David E. James
Guest Curator

*I would like to thank Rick Berg and Sarah Kerruish for their assistance in this project.

1. Michael Herr, *Dispatches* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), p. 248.
2. For the politicization of underground film, see David E. James, *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989).
3. "Movie Journal," *The Village Voice*, February 29, 1968, p. 40.
4. *Third World Newsreel: Twentieth Anniversay Program Guide* (New York: Camera News, 1987), p. 97. For the Newsreels, see Bill Nichols, "Newsreel: Film and Revolutions," *Cineaste*, 5, no. 4 (1973), pp. 7-13, and Michael Renov, "Early Newsreel: The Construction of a Political Imaginary for the New Left," *Afterimage*, 14, no. 7 (1987), pp. 12-15.
5. Quoted in Jonas Mekas, *Movie Journal: The Rise of a New American Cinema, 1959-1971* (New York: Collier Books, 1972), p. 306.
6. Quoted in "Newsreel," *Film Quarterly*, 22 (Winter 1968), p. 46.
7. Peter Gessner described these in a short article in *The Nation*, "Films from the Vietcong," January 24, 1966, pp. 110-11.
8. On Vietnamese films, see John Tran, "Vietnamese Cultural Production During the American War," in *The Vietnam Era*, ed. Michael Klein (London: Pluto Press, 1990), pp. 199-211.

SCHEDULE

All films are 16mm, black-and-white, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Saturday, December 15 at 2:00
Tuesday, December 18 at 2:00

Carolee Schneemann, *Viet-Flakes* (1965). 11 minutes. Sound collage by James Tenney.
Stan Brakhage, *Song 23: 23rd Psalm Branch*, parts 1 and 2 (1966/78). Originally in regular 8mm, color, silent, 85 minutes.
Peter Gessner, *Time of the Locust* (1968). 19 minutes.

Sunday, December 16 at 2:00
Wednesday, December 19 at 2:00

Paul Sharits, *Piece Mandala/End War* (1966). Black-and-white and color, silent, 5 minutes.
Andy Warhol, *The Chelsea Girls* (1966), reels 5 ("Hanoi Hannah") and 6 ("Hanoi Hannah and Guests"), 38 minutes.
Eugene S. Jones, *A Face of War* (1967). 70 minutes.

Tuesday, December 18 at 6:15
Thursday, December 20 at 2:00
Saturday, December 22 at 1:30

Nick Macdonald, *The Liberal War* (1972). 25 minutes.
Newsreel, *Only the Beginning* (1971). Color, 20 minutes.
Newsreel, *People's War* (1969). 40 minutes.

Friday, December 21 at 2:00
Sunday, December 23 at 2:00

Bruce Baillie, *Quixote* (1964-65). Black-and-white and color, 45 minutes.
Beryl Fox, *Last Reflections on a War* (1968). 44 minutes.

Wednesday, December 26 at 2:00
Friday, December 28 at 2:00

Newsreel, *No Game* (1968). 17 minutes.
National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, *Struggle for Life* (1968). 20 minutes.
Newsreel, *Boston Draft Resistance Group* (1968). 18 minutes.
Leonard Henny, *The Resistance* (1968). Color, 16½ minutes.

Thursday, December 27 at 2:00
Saturday, December 29 at 2:00

Norman Fruchter and John Douglas, *Summer '68* (1969). 60 minutes.
Santiago Alvarez, *The Seventy-Nine Springtimes of Ho Chi Minh* (1969). 25 minutes.

Sunday, December 30 at 2:00
Friday, January 4 at 2:00

Newsreel, *America* (1969). 30 minutes.
Emile de Antonio, *In the Year of the Pig* (1969). 101 minutes.

Wednesday, January 2 at 2:00
Saturday, January 5 at 2:00

David Loeb Weiss, *No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger* (1968). Color, 68 minutes.
Saul Levine, *New Left Note* (1968/82). Originally in regular 8mm, color, silent, 28 minutes.

Thursday, January 3 at 2:00
Sunday, January 6 at 2:00

Anthony Reveaux, *Peace March* (1967-76). Color, 12½ minutes.
Peter Davis, *Hearts and Minds* (1974). Color, 112 minutes.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 56
New American Film and Video Series

In Aztlán: The Films of the Chicano Movement, 1969–79

January 9–27, 1991

Gallery Talk, Tuesday, January 22 at 6:30.
Eduardo Diaz and Chon A. Noriega, guest curators, will be present.

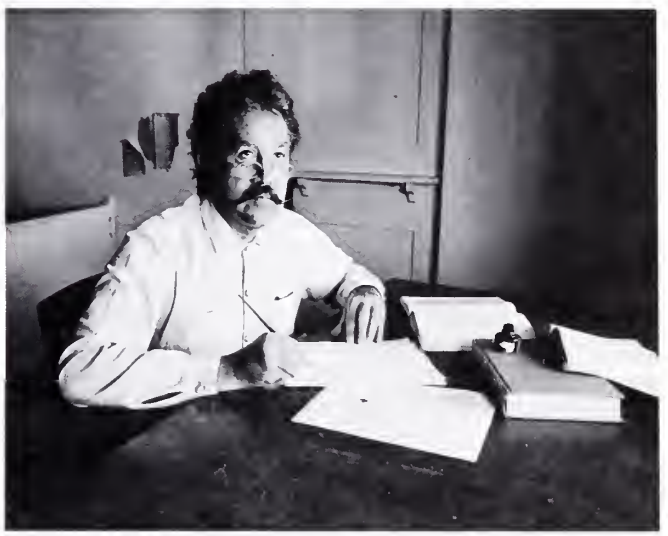
"Before the world . . . we are a nation, we are a union of free pueblos, we are Aztlán."—"The Spiritual Plan of Aztlán," 1969[1]

Welcome back to Aztlán, mythical homeland of the Aztecs, later northern Mexico, and since 1848 the southwestern United States. In 1969, the Chicano Movement reclaimed Aztlán as its nation and has since rooted Chicano identity, with its history of conquests and mestizo resistance, in a complex geopolitical space.

By 1965, diverse social protests in the Southwest had coalesced into a national civil rights movement known as the Chicano Movement. Aztlán—now considered its fundamental ideological construct or living myth—provided an alternative geography for these efforts to reclaim, reform, or redefine social space—land, government, schools, and the urban barrio. Aztlán also helped set in motion a cultural reclamation project in literature, the arts, scholarship, and everyday culture; in its current sense, Aztlán now refers to those places where Chicano culture flourishes.

Between 1968 and 1970, Chicanos who had been active in the student and farmworkers protests turned to film and television as a means to spread the message about the Chicano Movement. Moctesuma Esparza, one of the L. A. Thirteen indicted on conspiracy charges in the East L. A. high school walk-outs, organized the UCLA Mother Muckers film program (Media Urban Crisis Coalition), which recruited thirteen ethnic minorities; and, in San Juan Bautista, Luis Valdez, who had founded El Teatro Campesino amid the Delano grape strike, filmed *I Am Joaquin* (1969), based on Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales' epic poem.

In the early 1970s, UCLA served as a training ground for most of the Chicano filmmakers. Given the imperative to spread the message about the movement, students often turned to television projects, producing minority public affairs shows and specials that reported on various protests. The most crucial lesson learned was how to subvert the discursive parameters of mass media, so that Chicano filmmakers could work within and yet against the industry and its conventions. With *Reflecciónes* (1973), Luis Garza, Susan Racho, and David Garcia mastered the objective discourse of reportage in order to pioneer a new form of television, the political documentary series, which protested the Vietnam War, advocated a farmworkers union, and exposed the criminal legal system.



Eduardo Moreno in *Yo Soy Chicano* (1972), directed by Barry Nye. Written and produced by Jesús Salvador Treviño.

In 1975, the efforts that began within the social protest movement acquired an institutional dimension. *Realidades*—a local public television program in New York created when Puerto Rican activists took over the station—became the first national Latino series. *Realidades* commissioned Chicano films, including *Cristal* (1975) and *Guadalupe* (1976), and producer Humberto Cintrón organized the National Latino Media Coalition, which lobbied public television, government agencies, and Congress. The same year, the national Chicano Film Festival (now CineFestival) was founded in San Antonio, Texas; and, in Los Angeles, the Chicano Cinema Coalition (1975-80) served as a resource for filmmakers and as a platform for protests against exploitation films and industry hiring practices. In addition, community-based exhibitions created an alternative Chicano circuit for these films made for television.

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, AT & T Foundation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman-Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The filmmakers also published, in popular and academic journals, the initial studies on Hollywood's Chicano stereotypes and, in a series of manifestos, offered a Chicano cinema as an alternative. In his seminal essay, "Toward the Development of a Raza Cinema," Francisco X. Camplis situated the emergent practice within the context of New Latin American Cinema, concluding that "[a] Chicano or Raza Cinema must by necessity be a weapon!" While the rhetoric belongs to the revolutionary manifestos of Solanas and Getino, Sanjines and Rocha, Camplis' ideas are rooted in his personal experience of the Chicano Movement, acquired as he traveled throughout the Southwest.[2] In the expression of an oppositional stance, these manifestos, like those of the movement, provided an alternative geography from which to work toward the center of the American film industry.

The films themselves require us to reconsider the two sets of oppositions central to an aesthetic assessment: form and content; mise-en-scène and montage. Because film critics have not been able to read those cinematic codes which operate within a bicultural and bilingual context, there has been an assumption that Chicano cinema, like other ethnic and/or protest cinema, is a cinema of content and not one of formal innovation. What has been missed, however, is the way in which ethnic content operates as a formal element, or becomes a style unto itself.

One element, overlooked in film scholarship in general and of great importance to Chicano cinema, is that of music. The *corrido*, or ballad of border conflict, as well as other traditional and hybrid forms, were significant expressions of the movement. And the most provocative and popular Chicano feature films have been either musicals (*Zoot Suit*), musical biographies (*La Bamba*), musical parodies (*Born in East L.A.*), or about music as resistance (*Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, *Break of Dawn*). More often than not, music in these works first situates us within a Chicano cultural space, using diverse styles—indigenous music, corridos, and contemporary fusion—to express *mestizaje* (cultural mix) as well as cultural conflict.

While Chicano cinema makes significant use of montage, its sensibility is that of mise-en-scène, of putting the Chicano experience into the scene. For the first time, screen space was filled not just with Chicano "images," but with the aural and visual texture of our culture. Several films, including *Los Vendidos* (1972) and *Guadalupe* (1976), use *teatro*, or Chicano theater, which draws upon vernacular elements integral to the movement (Chicano humor, Mexican tradition, and Aztec icons) in order to foreground a symbolic social space. These films depict agit-prop *actos* (sketches). Montage often operates as a temporal extension of mise-en-scène. Many Chicano documentaries, then and now, begin with a montage sequence that outlines the history of the Chicano experience, starting at some point between the Conquest and the Mexican Revolution, and leads up to the particular moment to be documented. These films acknowledge the de facto horizon of expectations for films about Chicanos and attempt to resituate the text—but not without a sense of irony. In *The Unwanted* (1976), José Luis Ruiz uses sepia-toned clips from motion pictures about the Mexican-American War in a subtle comment on how that event is now understood.

Even montage in the Eisensteinian sense depends upon the ability to read the bicultural codes in the mise-en- scène. The establishing shot for *Cristal* (1975), for example, does not present Crystal City, Texas, but rather a dissolve from the symbol for one world view to that of another. In the first shot a billboard put up by the Chamber of Commerce announces "Crystal City, Spinach Capital of the World." The camera pans left to reveal a Popeye statue beside the billboard and dissolves to another billboard that reads, "Cristal, nacimiento del partido raza unida" (Crystal, birthplace of the Raza Unida Party). Beneath these words is the Aztec warrior icon for the party; and, along the bottom, the sentence, "José Angel Gutierrez para juez" (for judge).

In outlining the dominant and alternative geographies, the film posits a viewer able to read the shift in cultural and linguistic codes. First is the formal shift from English to Spanish; and then a contentual shift from the Anglo-controlled agribusiness to the first and most successful voters revolt of the Chicano Movement. More subtle is the shift in cultural icons: from Popeye, a popular culture adjunct to agribusiness, to another soldier, the Aztec warrior, beneath the message itself.

Each program in the series examines the first decade of Chicano cinema from the perspective of a cultural paradigm central to the movement. All but one program ends with Chicana films—films produced by women—that challenge and redirect each paradigm. Both cultural paradigm and film practice participate in the movement's larger discourse on Aztlán, situating Chicano identity, protest, and cultural practice within multiple geographies.

Program I, *Chicanismo: Reclaiming an Identity*, consists of the three master texts for Chicano historical documentaries. *I Am Joaquin* (1969) and *Chicana* (1979) frame the period and together delineate its historical, political, and aesthetic vision. The films set forth a worker-based ideology and cultural identity that are rooted in pre-Columbian mythopoetics and the five-hundred-year history of mestizo resistance. Camera movements, music, and the narrators' voices activate the still photographs that constitute the visual text. By documenting the female presence within the nationalist paradigm, *Chicana* marks an initial step in the representation of a Chicano identity that affirms rather than transcends the gender, class, and political divisions within the community. *Yo Soy Chicano* (1972), certainly the most ambitious film in the program, explores diverse documentary styles in ten thematic segments, detailing the historical nationalism of the other films.

Chicano cinema has been a cinema of poor means even in relation to independent cinema. Thus, the make-do style of Chicano art transforms a medium that prides itself on formal and technical innovation. As José Montoya explains, "Being a Chicano artist means doing something creative with whatever is at hand."[3] Of course, the things "at hand" include cultural icons, forms, and language. Program II, *Rasquachismo: The Underdog Aesthetic of El Teatro Campesino*,

examines the use of teatro in film. In the first instance, teatro solved budget and schedule limitations, since a piece could be staged before several cameras in a television studio. In 1981, Luis Valdez would use the same technique to shoot the low-budget *Zoot Suit*. The use of teatro, however, was more than a mere economic response; it was one manifestation of *rasquachismo*, a Chicano sensibility that foregrounds the *rasquache*, underdog, or make-do element.

In *El Corrido: La Carpa de los Rasquachis* (1976), the "tent of the underdogs" refers, in part, to the canvas-covered truck in which the corrido is performed. The stage curtain consists of the farmworkers' burlap sacks, while in the narrative a rope held by el Diablo/Patrón symbolizes the border. In order to cross, Jesús Pelado Rasquachi—the irreverently named Jesus Poor Tramp—must place the noosed end of the rope around his neck. The major turning point in the tale occurs when Pelado internalizes the border, tying the loose end around his waist. Televised as part of the PBS-Visions series, *El Corrido* also makes do with vernacular language, creating an insider's discourse that could not be broadcast in English. When Pelado takes a train to the Mexico-United States border, el Diablo and la Calavera (the skeleton) act as engine and caboose, chanting a telling onomatopoeic obscenity for the sound of the train: "chingate, chingate, chingate. . . ."

The films in Program III, *Made in Aztlán: The Cinema of Resistance in the Southwest*, document the Chicano Movement from the perspective of political and cultural resistance. *Requiem-29* (1971), filmed amid the police riot that ended the peaceful Chicano Moratorium Against the Vietnam War, is an example of direct cinema that conveys the urgency of the moment. *Cristal* (1975) deconstructs the conventional "both sides of the story" documentary style, while *Guadalupe* (1976) uses teatro to recreate recent events even as it elevates them to allegorical status. *Carnalitos* (1973) and *Aqueda Martinez: Our People, Our Country* (1977) break from the strident or militant style of the protest films to express resistance in unexpected ways: in the gentle understatement of the gang members in *Carnalitos*; and in the lyricism of *Aqueda Martinez*, the portrait of an elderly *curandera* (healer) in New Mexico.

The films in Program IV, *Mi Otro Yo: Immigration and the Barrio*, confront the politics of immigration from a third perspective that critiques the rigid dualism of Mexican and U.S. policies, while it reveals how the immigration continuum sustains and diversifies barrio culture. *The Unwanted* (1976) plays with point of view conventions, especially as it follows immigration officers in pursuit of "illegal aliens"; while *Después del Terremoto/After the Earthquake* (1979) broadens the discourse on immigration and the barrio to include Central Americans as well as the gender politics of barrio assimilation. In *Después del Terremoto*, Lourdes Portillo also pioneers the use of the *telenovela*, or Mexican soap opera, as a means to confront social issues that otherwise cannot easily be spoken about.

Today, the telenovela is the genre *par excellence* for Latino films about AIDS and domestic violence in the barrio. As in the conventional telenovela, mise-en-scène becomes synonymous with the traditional Latino home. Portillo, however, frames the narrative with bilingual title cards and an *acordeón* score that together evoke silent cinema. These elements undercut the romantic melodrama, then redirect its exposed fictional status toward feminist political parable.

Finally Program V, *¡A la brava!*, pays tribute to the persistance, against all odds, that has made and continues to make Chicano cinema an alternative to commercial film and television or an expression within it. The program begins with episodes from *Reflecciónes* and *Realidades*, which were filmed as documentaries, but now exist in second- or third-generation video copies. These episodes serve to raise an urgent issue: the preservation of Chicano-Latino film culture. Recently, KABC-TV in Los Angeles erased the master tapes for the thirty-nine episodes of *Reflecciónes*. The episode seen here is one of seven that Luis Garcia had previously transferred. Other series and specials, such as *El Corrido*, face a similar fate. Several films in the program will be screened from the only extant film print, while others, such as *Requiem-29*, show signs of extensive wear.

Chicano filmmakers turned to television because it offered immediate, if limited, access and resources. The second half of Program V looks at a more recent phenomenon driven by the same impulses: video art. These videos build on the stylistic and thematic concerns of the movement, while touching on the marginal but extensive experimental works by Chicano artists such as Ernie Palomino, Willie Varela, Gronk and Gamboa, Juan Salazar, and Daniel Salazar.

For Chicanas, video offers the same access and immediacy that television did for an earlier, mostly male generation. And, as Lourdes Portillo argues, video may lead to an increase in the number of Chicana media artists, if not the development of a Chicana video aesthetic. Experimental videos such as *Anima* (1989) and *Mujeria: The Olmeca Rap* (1990) critique the male orientation of Chicano nationalism, using expressionism as the fulcrum for reorienting spiritual ritual and mythical icons around a Chicana feminist nationalism.

Beyond the films and the spaces within the text lies the question of the place of Chicano cinema: On what national, political, and cultural plane can we situate it? If we turn to film historiography, Chicano cinema does not exist at all, neither as a movement, nor as a group of individual films. But, according to Jesús Treviño, "The films that have resulted are at once an expression of the life, concerns and issues of the Chicano people, and at the same time, the northernmost expression of a political and socially conscious international cinema movement known as New Latin American Cinema."[4]

It was as citizens of Aztlán, "the lands to the north," that Treviño and a delegation of Chicano filmmakers attended the First New Latin American Cinema Festival in Havana, Cuba, in 1979. The experience resulted in an increased international perspective in Chicano films in the 1980s. At the same time, however, Chicano filmmakers continued to make inroads into the American film and television industry. From the start, then, Chicano cinema has functioned

between a weapon and a formula; between the political alternative of New Latin American Cinema and the economic formula of Hollywood. Chicano cinema was not just at the margins; it fell into the interstice between two cultures, where it struggled against the silence and invisibility imposed on the Chicano experience.

Aztlán, it must be remembered, names an already lost homeland and is therefore more situational than situated. In the mytho-historical introduction to *Los Vendidos* in Program II, Luis Valdez takes the concept of Aztlán to its brash, yet logical extreme, when he proclaims El Teatro Campesino "the Farmworkers Theater of Aztlán, of the Southwest, of America, of the Earth . . . of the Universe." One does not, after all, stand in Aztlán without also occupying the other spaces.

Chon A. Noriega
Guest Curator

Notes

1. Manifesto, as published in *Atzlán: Essays on the Chicano Homeland*, eds. Rudolfo A. Anaya and Francisco Lomeli (Albuquerque, New Mexico: Academia/El Norte Publications, 1989), pp. 1–5.
2. Francisco X. Camplis, "Toward the Development of a Raza Cinema," in *Perspectives on Chicano Education*, eds. Tobias and Sandra Gonzales (Stanford, California: Chicano Fellows/Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 155-73.
3. Quoted in the documentary *Mi Otro Yo* (1988), directed by Amy and Phillip Brookman.
4. Jesús Salvador Treviño, "Chicano Cinema Overview," *Areito*, no. 37 (1984), pp. 40-43.

SCHEDULE

All films are 16mm, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted. All videotapes are ¾", color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Program I: Chicanismo: Reclaiming an Identity
Wednesday, January 9 at 2:00
Friday, January 11 at 2:00
Saturday, January 12 at 2:00
I Am Joaquin (1969), produced by El Teatro Campesino. Based on the poem by Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales. Film, 20 minutes.
Yo Soy Chicano (1972), directed by Barry Nye. Written and produced by Jesús Salvador Treviño. Film, 59 minutes.
Chicana (1979), directed and produced by Sylvia Morales. Film, 22 minutes.

Program II: Rasquachismo: The Underdog Aesthetic of El Teatro Campesino
Sunday, January 13 at 2:00
Tuesday, January 15 at 2:00
Wednesday, January 16 at 2:00
Los Vendidos (1972), directed by George Paul. Produced by José Luis Ruiz. Created and written by Luis Valdez. Film, 27 minutes.
El Corrido: La Carpa de los Rasquachis (1976), directed by Kurt Browning. Written and staged by Luis Valdez. Produced by El Teatro Campesino and PBS-Visions. Videotape, 70 minutes.

Program III: Made in Aztlán: The Cinema of Resistance in the Southwest
Friday, January 18 at 2:00
Saturday, January 19 at 2:00
Sunday, January 20 at 2:00
Requiem-29 (1971), written and directed by David Garcia. Produced by Moctesuma Esparza. Film, 29 minutes.
Cristal (1975), written, produced, and directed by Severo Perez. Film, 13 minutes.
Guadalupe (1976), directed by José Luis Ruiz. Produced by David Sandoval and José Luis Ruiz. Written by El Teatro de la Esperanza. Film, 26 minutes.
Carnalitos (1973), directed by Richard Davies. Produced by Bobby Páramo. Film, 13 minutes.
Aqueda Martinez: Our People, Our Country (1977), directed and edited by Esperanza Vasquez. Produced by Moctesuma Esparza. Film, 16 minutes.

Program IV: Mi Otro Yo: Immigration and the Barrio
Tuesday, January 22 at 2:00
Wednesday, January 23 at 2:00
Saturday, January 26 at 2:00
Los Desarraigados (1974), directed by Francisco X. Camplis. Film, black-and-white, 12 minutes.
The Unwanted (1976), directed and produced by José Luis Ruiz. Film, 52 minutes.
Después del Terremoto/After the Earthquake (1979), written and directed by Lourdes Portillo and Nina Serrano. Produced by Lourdes Portillo. Film, black-and-white, 27 minutes.

Program V: ¡A la brava!
Thursday, January 24 at 2:00
Friday, January 25 at 2:00
Sunday, January 27 at 2:00
Second anniversary episode of *Reflecciónes* (1973), produced by Luis Garza. Videotape, 27 minutes.
Episode of *Realidades*:
Garment Workers (1975), written, produced, and directed by Susan Racho. Videotape, 15 minutes.
De Colores (1975), written, produced, and directed by Jay Ojeda. Videotape, 10 minutes.
La Raza (1990), directed by Andrew Doucette. Written and performed by Kid Frost. Videotape, 3½ minutes.
Mujeria: The Olmeca Rap (1990), written and directed by Osa Hidalgo-de la Riva. Videotape, 3 minutes.
Anima (1989), produced and directed by Frances Salomé España. Videotape, 3 minutes.
Born in East L.A. (1985), written, directed, and performed by Richard "Cheech" Marin. Videotape, 3 minutes.

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Ybarra-Frausto, Tomás. "*Rasquachismo*: A Chicano Sensibility." In *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965–1985* (exhibition catalogue). Los Angeles: Wight Art Gallery, University of California, 1990.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 57
New American Film and Video Series

The Return of Visual Pleasure

January 30–February 17, 1991

Gallery talk, Tuesday, February 12 at 6:30.
Lucinda Furlong will be present.

In her highly influential 1975 essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Laura Mulvey used psychoanalytic theory to examine the unconscious processes that control how the spectator derives pleasure from the cinema. Mulvey asserted that looking at a classic Hollywood narrative film—a "hermetically sealed world which unwinds magically"—is a fundamentally voyeuristic activity.[1] Central to this activation of "visual pleasure" is the proposition that women function as passive objects of the active, controlling male gaze. Subjected to the voyeuristic and sadistic impulses of male fantasy, "they exist simply to fulfill the desires and express the anxieties of the men in the audience."[2] The women in the audience, thus robbed of the opportunity for visual pleasure, have perforce only a masochistic relation to cinema, since they can only identify with female screen icons as victims of patriarchy.

In offering an explanation for the "alternate misogyny and idealization of cinema's female representations,"[3] Mulvey set the agenda for subsequent feminist film scholarship. She also precipitated a rigorous feminist avant-garde practice whose purpose was to disrupt and "deconstruct" the conventional narrative codes that constitute this patriarchal vision. Such films, including Mulvey's own *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977), produced with Peter Wollen, were intended as a "total negation of the ease and plenitude of the narrative fiction film."[4]

Historically, this critique of narrative illusionism—which used many of the formal strategies of traditional male avant-garde cinema—represented a shift away from the "positive" images presented in feminist political documentaries of the early 1970s. Indeed, as many feminists argued, Mulvey's position was essentially negative. Her critique of the dominant system of representation, while valuable, left no room for a female vision or an explicitly feminist subjectivity.

Nor did it take into account the range of positions of identification that a spectator might assume in viewing a film—as a female, as a woman of color, as a member of a particular class, age, ethnic group, and/or as a lesbian—or the possibility that a film could address the spectator in multiple ways. For instance, in *Dry Kisses Only* (1990), Jane Cottis and Kaucyila Brooke show how some Hollywood films can be read "across the grain," offering lesbian subtexts to conventional plots and female characters. Christine

She Must Be Seeing Things (1987), Sheila McLaughlin.

Gledhill uses the term "negotiation" to suggest the impossibility of fixing a singular meaning or point of identification in a film as well as the complexity of the process. "Meaning is neither imposed, nor passively imbibed, but arises out of a struggle or negotiation between competing frames of reference, motivation and experience."[5]

The films in this exhibition offer what Gledhill has called "pleasurable negotiations," works that struggle with representation and assume a multiplicity of identities. Produced

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman-Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Reed Foundation, Inc., the Billy Rose Foundation, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Two Lies (1989), Pam Tom.

during the past ten years, they address the need articulated by Teresa de Lauretis to not merely "destroy or disrupt man-centered vision, by representing its blind spots, its gaps or its repressed,"[6] but to create feminine or feminist visions. That these films do so through narrative poses a significant challenge to Mulvey's theory since they reclaim the notion of visual pleasure for women, and, to borrow from de Lauretis' terminology, embrace differences "within" women.

Lizzie Borden's *Born in Flames* (1983) directly confronts the limitations of the liberal feminist agenda that articulated the issue of "difference" strictly in terms of male/female heterosexuality. As a fast-paced narrative with a good dose of humor, *Born in Flames* reveals the degree to which feminism is highly factionalized and bound by issues of race and class. The film's action takes place ten years after a revolution in the US; women, who played a major role in that revolution, remain second-class citizens. Their empowerment is achieved through concerted action: at the film's climax, a group of women with vastly different social, economic, racial, and sexual identities unite to blow up the antenna atop the World Trade Center.

Yvonne Rainer's *The Man Who Envied Women* (1985) foregrounds the seduction of narrative and how cinema inscribes women within its spectacle. Although there is no plot per se, the film follows Jack Deller, a philandering academic who eavesdrops on the intimate conversations between people on the street with a pair of headset microphones. But the film's point of view is that of Jack's ex-wife, Trisha; paradoxically, she never actually appears in the film, although it is infused with her presence through the use of voice-over.

Rainer presents narrativity—the process of constructing a coherent story from the cinematic text—as a gendered activity, and speculates on the possibility of the woman as narrator and as subject. She does so through a variety of formal means: Trisha's absence/presence; Jack's role as played by two actors; narrative seduction presented in scenes of actual seduction. While these strategies frustrate or destroy the narrative coherence of the "master text," they also offer the viewer the opportunity to identify not with the characters on screen but with the female "voice" behind the film.

Perhaps the most explicit challenges to the equation of visual pleasure with masculine desire are lesbian narratives, most notably Su Friedrich's *Damned If You Don't* and Sheila McLaughlin's feature film *She Must Be Seeing Things*, both produced in 1987. Though stylistically different, they radically rewrite the terms of cinematic voyeurism and conventional male-centered seduction stories. *She Must Be Seeing Things* is the story of Agatha, a Brazilian-born lawyer, and Jo, an independent filmmaker. Both women have active fantasies, but while Jo's are realized in her films, Agatha has a paranoid obsession that Jo might be having affairs with men. *She Must Be Seeing Things* is one of the first American feminist films that doesn't center around the oppression of women. Instead, through the parallel development of the respective plots of the film and Jo's film-within-the-film, McLaughlin plays with traditional cinematic conventions of romance and fantasy.

Damned If You Don't, Friedrich's most "narrative" film, also includes a film-within-the film and focuses on obsession and seduction—that of a young nun by a woman who lives near the convent. The film opens with the woman lounging in front of a TV, watching Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's 1947 film *Black Narcissus*, which pits a "good" nun against a "bad" nun. Both women are attracted to the same man, but the "bad" nun acts on her desire and is punished for it at the film's conclusion when she is pushed off a cliff by the "good" nun. Friedrich links this story to a tradition of popular myths about nuns and sex by adding a female voice-over who reads excerpts from *Immodest Acts*, an account of a seventeenth-century abbess accused of a lesbian relationship. At the end of the film, Friedrich's nun, unlike the nun in the Powell film, discovers the pleasure of breaking the rules.

Ela Troyano and Ana Marie Simo's short film *How to Kill Her* (1989) also thematizes obsession in the story of a woman's attempts to exorcize the memory of Elsa, a former lover. The black-and-white film has a moody quality as the woman wanders the streets of New York thinking up various ways to commit the murder.

Recently, younger filmmakers have explored the formation of lesbian identities in childhood. In *Age 12: Love with a Little L* (1990), Jennifer Montgomery locates this process in the psychoanalytic realm of the symbolic. She juxtaposes a voice-over explanation of a theory of Jacques Lacan with recollections of childhood sex games and her relationship with a grammar school girls' clique. While Montgomery borrows from psychoanalytic theory, she doesn't take it too seriously. She humorously enacts dominant and submissive behavior using a children's book about wolves which states that fights between females typically end with a gesture of submission. The raw emotion of Sadie Benning's voice-over in *Welcome to Normal* (1990) is matched by a powerful recontextualization of home movie footage of children. At the end of the film, Benning muses: "I wonder . . . I wonder, how many lesbians were born today. One identity robbed is one too many." Christine Vachon's *The Way of the Wicked* (1989) presents a humorous reversal of the "bad girl" stereotype. Two women "rescue" a little girl from a first communion ceremony after she commits the ultimate sacrilege to

the Catholic faith—taking the consecrated host out of her mouth. The film has an obvious lesbian subtext; the girl, who is already well on her way to damnation, presumably will grow up to commit other "immodest acts."

If gender is a social construction, so too is race. Both Julie Dash's *Illusions* (1982) and Pam Tom's *Two Lies* (1989) are about women who feel the need to disguise or alter their appearance to be accepted in white, (male) American society. In *Illusions*, Mignon Dupree, a light-skinned black woman passes for white in order to succeed as an executive at a Hollywood studio during World War II. She salvages a soon-to-be-released film with a faulty sound track by hiring a gifted, young black singer to lip synch over scenes originally sung by a white movie star. The layers of illusion are multiple. Because she is black, the singer must remain invisible; only her disembodied voice finds its way into the film-within-the-film. The singer recognizes Mignon as black, but doesn't let the secret out.

In *Two Lies*, a divorced Chinese-born mother living in southern California with two daughters has surgery on her eyelids to make herself more attractive—i.e., more Western-looking—to Caucasian men. Initially, she is scorned by her teenage daughter, who equates her mother's action with the cultural inauthenticity of a fake Pueblo tourist attraction that the family visits.

The climactic moment in both films occurs when the other female characters "see" through the women's respective efforts to conceal their ethnic identities. But unlike the male character in *Illusions*, who spurns Mignon upon learning that she is black (all the more ironic given her earlier rejection of his repeated sexual advances), the female characters are ultimately sympathetic to the necessity of disguise as a means of survival in white patriarchal culture. Both *Illusions* and *Two Lies*—in the latter, it is the eyes that are altered—are about seeing, about how women see themselves, and how they are seen by others.

Age 12: Love with a Little L (1990), Jennifer Montgomery.

Narrative film has proven to be fertile ground for women seeking ways of asserting, confirming, or challenging a multiplicity of identities. Acknowledging that the construction of identity is a continual and fluid process, not fixed, is a preoccupation of a number of filmmakers. Peggy Ahwesh's *Martina's Playhouse* (1989) opens with footage of richly colorful flowers—a symbol of femininity—while a voice-over reads from Jacques Lacan on symbolic displacement. Ahwesh intercuts this with a series of other displacements—the play-acting of the young child Martina with her mother and scenes of a very self-conscious friend—that call into question the authority of Lacan's text.

The impossibility of truly knowing the subject is articulated in Lynne Tillman and Sheila McLaughlin's *Committed* (1984) a fiction film based on the life of Frances Farmer. The actress' pro-Communist leanings and "bad" behavior—she drank and used foul language—landed her in a mental hospital where she was eventually lobotomized. Tillman and McLaughlin construct a fictional character (played by McLaughlin) whose life was shaped as much by social and political forces as by the psyche. Although ultimately destroyed by the combined weight of the law, psychiatry, Hollywood, anti-Communist hysteria, and her mother, this victim goes down swinging; she is thus rendered with a complexity missing from *Frances* (1982), the film's Hollywood counterpart.

Alile Sharon Larkin and Zeinabu Irene Davis conjure up identities rooted in African and Caribbean culture. In Larkin's *A Different Image* (1981), a young black woman struggles with sexism when she refuses to be objectified by male desire. She looks to African images and rituals as models rather than to the demeaning stereotypes of American media. More akin to experimental film than narrative, Davis' *Cycles* (1989) is a celebration of black womanhood. In the film, which is moved along as much by the musical sound track of women's voices and African and Caribbean music as by the images, a woman cleans her house and cleanses her body while awaiting the onset of her menstrual cycle. During sleep, her dreams are repeatedly punctuated by a voice which intones, almost like a mantra, "You're doing OK and you're gonna get better."

Although Trinh T. Minh-ha's feature-length *Surname Viêt: Given Name Nam* (1989) is ostensibly a documentary, it unfolds as a richly textured epic narrative poem chronicling the oppression of Vietnamese women. Its visual beauty and deliberate pacing permits the accumulation of details that slowly build as a narrative. Trinh's use of archival footage, Vietnamese poetry, song, and dance is anchored by a series of interviews reenacted by Vietnamese actresses. This device is an implicit acknowledgment of the power of storytelling as well as the limitations of documentary. Ironically, it is

The Man Who Envied Women (1985), Yvonne Rainer.

through such narrative means that Trinh powerfully conveys the sense that these women are giving voice for the first time to their oppression, which continues despite the country's changed political structure.

As in Mulvey's groundbreaking essay, feminist theories based on psychoanalysis have lodged powerful critiques of patriarchal systems of representation. However, the institutionalization of these discourses within the academy and resultant emphasis on Hollywood cinema has effectively produced a gap between feminist film theory and feminist filmmaking. In moving away from an exclusively deconstructivist critique of dominant cinema, the films in this exhibition don't all explicitly illustrate a counter-theory of visual pleasure. But they do provide a wealth of themes and narrative strategies to consider when looking at women as spectators and subjects.

Lucinda Furlong
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

Notes

1. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen*, 16, (Autumn 1975), p. 9.
2. Tania Modleski, *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory* (New York: Methuen, 1988), p. 2.
3. Christine Gledhill, "Pleasurable Negotiations," in *Female Spectators: Looking at Film and Television*," E. Deidre Pribram, ed. (New York: Verso, 1988), p. 66.
4. Mulvey, p. 8.
5. Gledhill, p. 68.
6. Teresa de Lauretis, "Aesthetic and Film Theory: Rethinking Women's Cinema," *New German Critique*, no. 34 (Winter 1985), p. 163.

Schedule

All works are 16mm films, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, January 30 at 2:00
Friday, February 1 at 2:00
Dry Kisses Only (1990), Jane Cottis and Kaucyila Brooke. ¾" videotape, 75 minutes.

Thursday, January 31 at 2:00
Saturday, February 2 at 2:00
Born in Flames (1983), Lizzie Borden. 82 minutes.

Sunday, February 3 at 2:00
Wednesday, February 6 at 2:00
The Man Who Envied Women (1985), Yvonne Rainer. 130 minutes.

Tuesday, February 5 at 2:00
Saturday, February 9 at 2:00
How to Kill Her (1989), Produced by Ela Troyano, directed by Ana Maria Simo. Black-and-white, 15 minutes.
She Must Be Seeing Things (1987), Sheila McLaughlin. 95 minutes.

Tuesday, February 5 at 6:00
Thursday, February 7 at 2:00
Age 12: Love with a Little L (1990), Jennifer Montgomery. Super-8 film, 23 minutes.
Welcome to Normal (1990), Sadie Benning. ¾" videotape (originated in regular 8mm film and Video-8), 19 minutes.
The Way of the Wicked (1989), Christine Vachon. 15 minutes.
Damned If You Don't (1987), Su Friedrich. Black-and-white, 42 minutes.

Friday, February 8 at 2:00
Sunday, February 10 at 2:00
Illusions (1982), Julie Dash. Black-and-white, 34 minutes.
Two Lies (1989), Pam Tom. Black-and-white, 25 minutes.

Tuesday, February 12 at 5:00
Saturday, February 16 at 2:00
A Different Image (1981), Alile Sharon Larkin. 51 minutes.
Cycles (1989), Zeinabu Irene Davis. Black-and-white, 17 minutes.

Tuesday, February 12 at 2:00
Friday, February 15 at 2:00
Martina's Playhouse (1989), Peggy Ahwesh. Super-8 film, 20 minutes.
Committed (1984), Lynne Tillman and Sheila McLaughlin. Black-and-white, 77 minutes.

Wednesday, February 13 at 2:00
Sunday, February 17 at 2:00
Surname Viêt: Given Name Nam (1989), Trinh T. Minh-ha. 108 minutes.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 58
New American Film and Video Series

Bill Beirne

September 24—November 10, 1991

You Connect the Dots . . ., 1991
Video installation. On view continuously.

Gallery talk, Tuesday, October 22 at 6:30.
Bill Beirne will be present.

Components
4 video monitors; 4 video playback decks; 4 ¾" videotapes, color, sound, 30 minutes each. Video surveillance system, video projector. Desk, chair, plastic carpet guard, shelving, and books.

Videotape credits
Street performances: associate producer, Ka Lai Wong. Director, Veronica L. Beirne. Casting director, Judd Silverman. Production crew: Cynthia DelRosario, Catherine Grasso, Tony Kunin, Ka Lai Wong. Production assistant, Jennifer Beirne. Special thanks to Allison Brunell and Mary Ryzuk. Performers: Jennifer Beirne, Mimi Bensinger, Richard Browner, Carol Cayton, David Comstock, John Alban Coughlan, John Daggett, Elaine Dooman, Mary Pat Dowhy, Herb DuVal, Marvin Halpern, Dan Johnson, Mary Krapf, Mort Kroos, Anne Lilly, Alice Mahler, Charles Maryan, DeLaune Michel, Annette Maxberry, Jeff Oppenheim, Mary Ryzuk, John Schucker, Diane Schultz, Judd Silverman, Barry Steely, Evelyn Tuths, Ken Williams.
Docent interviews: associate producers, Toby Martinez and Ka Lai Wong. Special thanks to Michael Sheehan, Carlos Perrone, Kevin Curran, Fleurette Vincent, and St. John's University TV Center, Flushing, New York. Docents: Vivian Bobka, Annette Elvy, Marianne Flack, Jan Hartley, Leslie Heiner, Carl Palusci, Elise Pustilnik, Amy Winter.

You Connect the Dots . . . (1991).

Bill Beirne's *You Connect the Dots . . .* (1991), together with his earlier video installation *Rumor & Innuendo* (1979), constitute an insightful epistemological reflection on the museum. Central to Beirne's installations is his concern with how we observe, understand, and interpret the world around us. His projects focus on some aspect of daily life through the manipulation of point-of-view, both through the optic of closed-circuit video surveillance and the narrative text of performance. The practices and structure of the museum become, in *Rumor & Innuendo* and *You Connect the Dots . . .*, metaphors for our ongoing negotiation of the public and private spaces of contemporary urban life.

A pioneer in the use of video surveillance, Beirne has explored the theme of negotiation in earlier works. *Cross Reference* (1976) used the camera as an observing instrument by linking it to live transmission on cable television. In *The Commuter* (1986–89) Beirne situated himself as the prototypical commuter in performances he did along a commuter railroad route, coming and going from Manhattan to the suburbs through the neighborhoods of the South Bronx. The perceptions of the people seeing the trains are juxtaposed with images of the train and of Beirne's performance.

In *Rumor & Innuendo*, a site-specific project created for the Whitney Museum exhibition "Re-Visions: Projects and Proposals in Film and Video" (1979), Beirne placed four video cameras and four microphones in six public spaces and two offices of the Museum. The audio and video components were transmitted to four monitors and four speakers on the Museum's third floor, which included installations by other artists. During the course of the exhibition, performers mimicked the movements of people on the screen and then themselves performed subtly modified variations on their actions. Thus, Beirne blurred the boundary between real and performed activity. He also made us aware of how the building not only defines and delimits the movement of people from floor to floor, establishing social spaces for people to meet, but functions as a site for consumerism.

In *You Connect the Dots . . .*, Beirne examines the museum's role as an educational institution. He scrutinizes the language employed by the Education Department's docents, who take visitors through the Permanent Collection, exploring the exhibition spaces and how they condition an understanding of the art works on view. *You Connect the Dots . . .* reveals that artists' biographies and the reading of paint-

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Reed Foundation, Inc. the Billy Rose Foundation Inc. The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Susan and Arthur Fleischer, Toby Horn and Richard Kandel, Nancy Brown Wellin, Barbara Wise, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

ings are an amalgam of fact and fiction similar to our perception of people in the street or incidents of daily life.

Upon entering the Film and Video Gallery, one confronts a bookshelf with books and documents actually used by eight docents to prepare their talks on American art. Small monitors placed in this part of the gallery display footage of two paintings from the Museum's Permanent Collection, accompanied by a soundtrack of the docents' commentary on the works. At the other end of the gallery, on monitors placed on opposite sides of the projection screen, we observe edited videotapes shot on Madison Avenue of performers reenacting conversations overheard by Beirne in the neighborhood around the Museum. These conversations were adapted by Beirne into scripts for the actors.

Seated at a desk in the gallery, the visitor can follow the action of people in the street by manipulating a device that controls the movement of an actual surveillance camera outside the museum. This live footage is projected onto the screen in front of the desk. In this mix of real-time video and enacted scenes, Beirne enfolds the spaces inside and outside the museum; in the process, he creates ambiguity as to what is live and what is prerecorded. The conflation of real and imagined actions and desires sets up a complex interactive discourse motivated by the consumption of goods, experiences, and knowledge. Here the rhetoric of Madison Avenue—its shops and restaurants, galleries and real estate—is linked to the presence of the Museum as an architectural setting and its role as a forum for the arts. The Whitney Museum of American Art, a showcase for the art of the twentieth century, becomes a stage for late twentieth-century public spaces.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Artist's Statement

You Connect the Dots . . . began in 1988 with a series of undocumented street performances in which I attempted to overhear conversations held by people on the streets surrounding the Whitney Museum of American Art. I tried to transcribe the exact content of these bits of information but in so doing had to fill in several gaps created by an unintelligible word, the trailing off of a sentence, or a lapse in my memory as to what was said. The next step in this process occurred in the summer of 1989 when I gave the transcripts to a director and twenty-seven actors who attempted to recreate the scenes I observed, making their own meaning of these brief exchanges. These scenes were recorded in the locations around the Museum where they had originally taken place.

In the winter of 1988–89, I moved inside the Museum and followed along on the Whitney's tours of the Permanent Collection, taking note of the similarities and differences in the docents' interpretations of the art. Subsequently, eight docents were invited to record their interpretations of two works from the collection, Marsden Hartley's *Painting, Number 5* (1914–15) and Arshile Gorky's *The Betrothal, II* (1947). Their comments all reflected a basic agreement in terms of the meaning of the works in a larger context, but many times they differed in their interpretations of the artists' sources, intention, and motivation. In addition to their comments, I asked the docents to select books from their own collections which might allow the viewer some insight into their thinking process and why they might attribute certain meanings to the work. I include these books in the installation.

The recordings of the street performances and the interpretations of the two works of art comprise two aspects of *You Connect the Dots . . .* . A third aspect of the work involves the participation of the gallery viewer, who is invited to control a surveillance camera, mounted on the exterior of the Museum, which covers a large part of the original performance site. I limited this aspect of the installation to visual information, to heighten the viewer's experience of activities seen in the street and reinforce the notion of attribution in human behavior. A logbook is available for viewers to record observations about what they observe.

Bill Beirne

Biography

Bill Beirne was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1941. He studied at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn (BFA, 1968) and Hunter College, New York (MA, 1974). Beirne has received a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts (1979) and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts (1980). He currently teaches television production at New York University and has taught philosophy at the Bank Street College of Education, New York (1991). Beirne is the director of Video Ink, a television production project that works with public school children in the Bronx. He lives and works in New York.

Selected One-Artist Exhibitions

3 Mercer Street Store, New York, 1975; A Space, Toronto, 1976; 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1976; The Kitchen, New York, 1976; Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1978; Lehman College Art Gallery, Bronx, 1990.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Idea Warehouse, New York, "Ideas at the Idea Warehouse," 1975; Institute of Contemporary Art, P.S. 1 Museum, New York, "Rooms," 1976; D'Arc Gallery, New York, "Video from Outside," 1977; Artists Space, New York, "Audio Works," 1978; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "Re-Visions: Projects and Proposals in Film and Video," 1979; Elise Meyer Gallery, New York, "Schemes," 1981 (traveled); The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, "Alternatives in Retrospect," 1981; Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, "Video as Attitude," 1983; Fashion Moda, Bronx, "Stefan Eins' Salon," 1986; Lehman College Art Gallery, Bronx, "Visual AIDS," 1989.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 59
New American Film and Video Series

New Directions in Holography

November 19–December 29, 1991

Gallery talk, Tuesday, December 17 at 6:30.
René Paul Barilleaux will be present.

Works in the Exhibition

Dimensions are in inches; height precedes width precedes depth.
All works are lent courtesy of the artists.

Rudie Berkhout
Born in Amsterdam, 1946
Lives in New York City and Cairo, New York

Kuan Yin, 1981
Light, glass-plate hologram with frame, 12 × 16 × ¼, on tripod

Ukiyo, 1981
Light, glass-plate hologram with frame, 12 × 16 × ¼, on tripod

The New Territories, 1984
Lights, two glass-plate holograms, 12 × 16 × ¼ each, with frame

Transfer 339, 1987
Light, glass-plate hologram with frame, 12 × 16 × ¼

Primal Mix I, 1988
Light, glass-plate hologram with frame, 12 × 16 × ¼

Breakthrough, 1990
Light, glass-plate hologram with frame, 12 × 16 × ¼

Wenyon & Gamble

Susan Gamble
Born in London, 1957
Studied at the Winchester School of Art, England (1975), and Goldsmiths' College, University of London (BA, 1979)

Michael Wenyon
Born in Dayton, Ohio, 1955
Studied at the University of Bristol, England (BSc, 1977), and Imperial College, University of London (MSc, 1978)

Wenyon & Gamble currently live in Tsukuba, Japan

Stella Maris, 1989–91
Lights, five glass-plate holograms, 20 × 24 × ¼ each, on wall with specified lighting

Breakthrough (1990), Rudie Berkhout.

The Whitney Museum of American Art's first exhibition to focus exclusively on holography brings together works by three artists—Rudie Berkhout and the collaborative team of Susan Gamble and Michael Wenyon. Each has a highly personal artistic vocabulary that can be achieved only through holography, and each extends the medium's basic principle of three-dimensional replication into altogether new directions.

Artists first made and exhibited holograms in the late 1960s, often working in tandem with holography technicians, scientists, and engineers. The late 1960s was also a period of great experimentation in other technology-based media, for example, video and audio art. During this period four artists publicly exhibited holograms and focused attention on the relatively new form—Margaret Benyon in England, Harriet Casdin-Silver and Bruce Nauman in the United States, and Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd in Sweden.[1] These pioneers established an important cornerstone on which subsequent generations of artists working in holography, including Berkhout and Wenyon & Gamble, could later build.

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Reed Foundation, Inc., the Billy Rose Foundation, Inc., The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Susan and Arthur Fleischer, Jr., Toby Horn and Richard Kandel, Nancy Brown Wellin, Barbara Wise, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

This exhibition includes two types of holograms: transmission and reflection. A transmission hologram is a glass plate (or piece of film) on which an image is recorded in a light-sensitive emulsion using laser light. The image is revealed by passing ordinary white light through the plate or film, and it appears in space both in front of and behind the surface. A reflection hologram is recorded by a similar process and reveals its three-dimensional image in space by reflecting light off the surface of the plate or film. All holograms are variations of these two basic types. In "New Directions in Holography," Rudie Berkhout presents white light transmission holograms while Wenyon & Gamble use the reflection method.

These artists approach holography from a formalist standpoint, engaged by the unique optical and perceptual aspects of the medium rather than by its ability to give the illusion of a solid object. And while Berkhout typically presents his finished holograms in a minimal, spare presentation, mounted on tripods or suspended from overhead, Wenyon & Gamble often extend the holographic image into real space through the use of site-specific architectural elements such as false walls, two-dimensional imagery created with slide projections, and/or theatrical lighting effects.

Rudie Berkhout was first introduced to holography in 1975 when he attended a now historic survey exhibition of holograms at New York City's International Center of Photography, organized by Rosemary Jackson and Jody Burns. Jackson later founded the Museum of Holography in New York to serve as a focal point for work in the field. Berkhout was immediately drawn to this new imaging process, finding in holography the "possibility of working with advanced technology outside a corporate structure and exploring it as an art medium. . . ."[2]

After initial investigations using representational subject matter, Berkhout experimented with abstract and geometric imagery. The holograms that resulted established him as one of the preeminent artists using holography. Not only has he mastered the methods for creating his own holograms, but he has also developed new holographic processes, such as a multicolor technique, which he incorporated into his work and have influenced the work of other artists.

The six works comprising this selection span the past decade, tracing Berkhout's development from early images characterized by crisp forms and vivid hues to more recent ones whose subtle palette creates ethereal compositions. *Kuan Yin* and *Ukiyo* (both 1981) are intentionally direct in their concept and intense in their color. They express Berkhout's interest in "keeping the compositions simple . . . leaving enough space to invite viewers to wander in and contemplate 'unfamiliar realms.' "[3] These artificial, synthetic realms or spaces exist only as projections of light images. Their compositional elements seem to extend out into real space and even intrude on the viewer. Both *Kuan Yin*, named for the Chinese goddess of mercy and joy, and *Ukiyo*, or "floating world," express Berkhout's ongoing interest in Eastern philosophy, aesthetics, and mysticism.

The diptych entitled *The New Territories* (1984) abandons the purely geometric and non-objective compositions of these earlier holograms and derives its subject from the landscape. The title suggests not only the vast plains opening up before the viewer, but refers as well to the medium of holography itself. (The diptych configuration also recalls an early historical attempt at three-dimensional recording—stereographs.) *Transfer 339* (1987), a transitional work, uses two scroll-like bands that push forcefully through the hologram's surface, in some way recalling a landscape. In this sense, they function as paths or roads deep into the work's core. More mysterious and brooding than *The New Territories*, *Transfer 339* leaves behind the playfulness of its predecessor to take the viewer on what appears to be an unending journey.

The two remaining works, *Primal Mix I* (1988) and *Breakthrough* (1990), illustrate Berkhout's shift back to more abstract imagery while still employing modulated color. No longer constrained by precise geometric forms or repeated

Ukiyo (1981), Rudie Berkhout.

Transfer 339 (1987), Rudie Berkhout.

Stella Maris (1989–91), Wenyon & Gamble. Installation at Centre Nationale Art et Technologie, Reims, France.

elements, the imagery in these more recent works pushes at the physical constraints created by the perimeters of the holographic plate, and offers expansive, multilevel realities.

Susan Gamble and Michael Wenyon pursued holography individually prior to their first collaboration in 1983. In their recent body of works, which includes one on exhibition here, Wenyon & Gamble explore ideas involving the history of optics and its relationship to astronomy, ideas which developed during a 1987 residency at the Royal Greenwich Observatory in England.[4] In this series, simple, direct subjects take on enigmatic qualities when they are placed in an installation that includes elements ranging from slide projections of black-and-white photographic images to dramatic atmospheric effects produced with colored lights.

Stella Maris (1989–91) is among the final results of the Observatory residency. Like other installations from the series, including *Newton's Rings* (1987), *Airy's Discs* (1988), *The Heavens* (1989), and *Radii* (1989–91), this work examines several basic principles of optical phenomena similar to those examined by Sir Isaac Newton in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and Sir George Airy during the Victorian era. To extend the concepts explored by the holographic imagery, the artists completed the installations in this series with other light-based materials, borrowing imagery and techniques from cinema and the theater; the finished installations can be read like stage sets or tableaux.

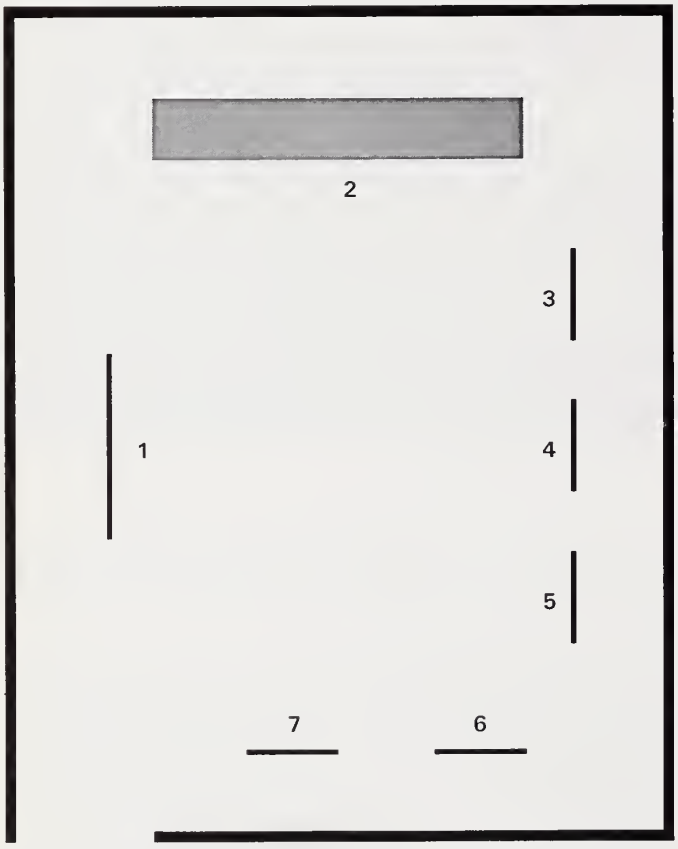
The imagery in *Stella Maris* reveals light patterns known as "caustics." Conceptually, *Stella Maris* and the related work *Radii* treat broader issues such as the subjective and relative versus the absolute, and contemporary scientific exploration versus a Victorian worldview.[5]

An important element of works from the Observatory series is their self-referential nature: they investigate ideas about the medium of holography itself, including its connections to the history of science, its physical manifestations, and its phenomenological aura. By grounding their subjects in the concepts of scientific study, Wenyon & Gamble cohesively link these ideas to the objects they create. Mounted on a freestanding wall, the holograms (in this case reflection holograms) appear as windows onto some other world. Although the wall's height, width, and depth are clearly visible and even calculable, the holograms transcend the

physical limitations of this space and reveal even larger, deeper images. Colored ambient light enhances their otherworldly qualities. Optics and its theories represent the source material used to make the holograms, but even without this knowledge the viewer gains a sense of wonder at the phenomena of our physical environment.

Artists will continue to create with new, non-traditional materials and processes. It is important to come to each work of art on its own terms rather than bring to it a preformed attitude. As the artists in "New Directions in Holography" demonstrate, the medium often requires relearning how to look at a work of art. While we are typically trained to intellectually perceive the illusion of three dimensions in two-dimensional works, holography allows the viewer to actually see three-dimensional space. We no longer need devices like foreshortening or reflected light to help us visualize depth and volume. Still, the inherent phenomenal nature of the medium often mystifies an art audience and increases the distance between the three-dimensional image and the viewer. Rudie Berkhout and Wenyon & Gamble attempt to decrease that distance by extending their holographic images into the gallery space and directly engaging the viewers.

René Paul Barilleaux
Guest Curator



New Directions in Holography *Floor Plan*

1. Rudie Berkhout, *The New Territories*

2. Wenyon & Gamble, *Stella Maris*

3. Rudie Berkhout, *Transfer 339*

4. Rudie Berkhout, *Primal Mix I*

5. Rudie Berkhout, *Breakthrough*

6. Rudie Berkhout, *Kuan Yin*

7. Rudie Berkhout, *Ukiyo*

Notes

*I would like to acknowledge the editorial assistance of Kathryn Howarth Ryan.

1. Rosemary Jackson, "In Perspective: A Thirty-Five Year Account of the Development of Holography (Part II)," *Holosphere*, 12 (Fall 1983), p. 13.
2. Rudie Berkhout, "Holography: Exploring a New Art Realm—Shaping Empty Space with Light," *Leonardo*, 22, nos. 3 and 4 (1989), p. 313.
3. Ibid., p. 315.
4. Marc Piemontese, *Les artistes et la lumière*, exhibition catalogue (Reims, France: Centre National Art et Technologie, 1991), p. 44.
5. Wenyon & Gamble, *In the Optical Realm*, exhibition catalogue (Wolverhampton, England: Wolverhampton Art Gallery, forthcoming).

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Whitney Museum of American Art 60
New American Film and Video Series

From Object to Subject: January 7–26, 1992

Documents and Documentaries from the Women's Movement

In the inaugural issue of *Women & Film* (1972), the editors staked out two related sites for feminist struggle—the representation of women in Hollywood films as sex objects and the under-representation of women behind the camera. "The struggle begins on all fronts and we are taking up the struggle with women's image in film and women's roles in the film industry—the ways in which we are exploited and the ways to transform the derogatory and immoral attitudes the ruling class and their male lackeys have towards women and other oppressed peoples."[1] That women sought the solution to these problems by empowering themselves to take creative and technical control over their own image was rooted in feminist politics as practiced from about 1967 to 1975.

Among these groups were radical feminists, who articulated the most sophisticated and sweeping critiques of sexism as a social system embedded in all areas of public and private life. As Alice Echols has pointed out: "Radical feminism rejected both the politico position that socialist revolution would bring about women's liberation and the liberal feminist solution of integrating women into the public sphere. Radical feminists argued that women constituted a sex-class, that relations between women and men needed to be recast in political terms, and that gender rather than class was the primary contradiction."[2]

Central to the development of radical feminist critiques of patriarchy was the practice of consciousness-raising, whereby women met in small groups to share their experiences of oppression. Through this process, radical feminists felt, women could see "that what they had previously believed were personal problems, were, in fact, 'social problems that must become social issues and fought together rather than with personal solutions.' "[3]

Filmmaking that could be identified as self-consciously feminist was one means of correcting mass-media stereotypes and empowering women to use a technology that had been the exclusive domain of men. Women chose documentary, a genre revitalized in the 1960s, as the most direct vehicle for revealing their oppressed condition.

While documentary may have been a familiar form, Julia Lesage has argued that the feminist political documentary constituted a distinct sub-genre whose characteristics included "biography, simplicity, trust between woman filmmaker and woman subject, a linear narrative structure, little self-consciousness about the flexibility of the cinematic medium. . . . Such an organization serves a specific social and psychological function at this juncture in history. It is the artistic analogue of the structure and function of the consciousness-raising group."[4]

Rita Ogden and Wendy Apple videotaping *Another Look*, 1972.

The films and videotapes in this exhibition span the period from 1970, when radical feminist Kate Millett produced *Three Lives*, the first widely seen feminist documentary using the conventions of the c-r group, to the end of the decade, when Michelle Citron's documentary-fiction *Daughter-Rite* (1978) challenged the realist underpinnings of the documentary form. Personal disclosure as representative of collective experience is at the heart of all these productions, even when they include other kinds of material, such as cinema-verité style footage and voice-over narration, reworked so that a female voice replaces the male, "voice of God" narrator.

The idea that one could universalize all women's experience from individual stories was, however, limiting, since it privileged similarities over differences—of economic class,

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race, and sexual preference. Many women tried to bridge these differences, but the assumption of universality is still apparent and is exemplified in **Program 1**, which juxtaposes *Three Lives* (1970) and *The Woman's Film* (1971).

The editing styles of the two films reflect divergent approaches to the problem of explicating the political and social dimensions of a life. In making *Three Lives*, the crew lived together for three weeks, each week filming with a different woman. The film's linear progression and the inclusion of shots showing the filmmakers and their subjects together reflect this process. For the makers of *Three Lives*, the political act resided in allowing their subjects to speak about what had previously been unspeakable. *Three Lives* was one of the few instances, if not the first, of a woman coming out as a lesbian on film.

The lives of the women in *The Woman's Film*, produced by the Women's Caucus of San Francisco Newsreel, also unfold biographically. But, in contrast to *Three Lives*, though typical of a Newsreel production, *The Woman's Film* focuses on Chicano, black, and working-class white women, whose stories are intercut, linking them to a larger political and social struggle—the exploitation of working-class women within capitalism. The structure of the film posits a logical progression from awareness of individual oppression through consciousness-raising to mutual assistance through collective action.

These two poles within the women's liberation movement—talk and action—are highlighted in **Program 2**. In Julie Gustafson's *Politics of Intimacy* (1972–73), the conversations of ten women are edited together under different topic headings relating to sexuality. By carefully selecting the women, who vary in age, color, sexual experience and orientation, and by using extreme close-ups and a pace resembling real time, Gustafson creates an "ideal consciouness-raising (c-r) group," in which multiple views on sex and sexuality are expressed.[5]

Women's Lib (1970) documents a parade down New York City's Fifth Avenue in 1970 as part of the Women's Strike for Equality. Thousands of women marched and held rallies in cities nationwide, demanding legalized abortion, child care, and equal access to educational and job opportunities. The tape was one of many shot by People's Video Theater, a countercultural media collective. Predictably, the female interviewer in the tape encounters hostility from the male onlookers and mixed reactions from the women.

Jane Lurie's *The Fifth Street Women's Building Film* (1971) captures an intense moment of activism and optimism, when a group of women took over an abandoned building on Manhattan's Lower East Side and began fixing it up as a multipurpose women's center. Although their plans were dashed when the police raided the building twelve days later, the film is a testament to the energy and commitment that sparked the creation of women's centers nationwide.

Another Look (1972) was produced by six women who came together, at the behest of black radical feminist Flo Kennedy, as the Women's Video News Service. Their assignment: to document the activities of the Feminist Party at the 1972 Democratic National Convention. The tape's fragmented structure, which includes such disparate material as interviews with black lesbians and with hippies outside the convention center, reflects the collective nature of the production as well as the conflicting goals and political positions within the group.

In 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion with its *Roe v. Wade* decision, which culminated an intensive period of activism on the abortion issue. **Program 3** examines reproductive rights and the politicization of women's health. *Healthcaring: From Our End of the Speculum* (1976) traces the ways that women's biological functions have been controlled by the male-dominated medical profession and women's efforts to regain control through self-help and self-examination. The film uses eighteenth- and nineteenth-century illustrations and interviews with women who give personal accounts of their experiences with male doctors. These are interspersed with a female voice-over criticizing standard gynecological practices.

Amalie R. Rothschild's *It Happens to Us* (1972) opens with a woman telling her horror story of an illegal abortion, then cuts to a pro-choice rally. In contextualizing personal testimony with activism and providing information on contraception and abortion, Rothschild links the right to abortion with the right of women to control their sexuality. The issue of reproductive self-determination is also central to Susan Kleckner's *Birth Film* (1972), which documents the delivery of a friend's baby at home. At the beginning of the film, the parents discuss home birthing as a logical outgrowth of their concern for reproductive rights and other issues. The representation of the birth itself also takes on an assertive political dimension in Kleckner's extreme close-up shot of the vagina at the moment of parturition.

Program 4 reflects attitudes about female socialization as it was understood in the early 1970s. Julia Reichert and James Klein's *Growing Up Female* (1971) opens with a tracking shot of a mother and daughter walking down the street dressed in identical outfits. Drawing heavily on sociological models of human development, the film features six "representative" girls and women and examines their attitudes toward love, marriage, and relationships as they are shaped by family, schools, the media, and business.

The California video collective Optic Nerve was commissioned by public TV station KQED to produce a documentary on the 1973 Miss California Pageant. Unlike *Growing Up Female*, *Fifty Wonderful Years* is more subtle in its critique, the position of its producers less apparent. Its cool cinema-verité stance suggests through juxtaposition that the contestants have been brainwashed by societal—i.e., male—standards of female beauty and feminine behavior.

In *Nun and Deviant* (1976), Nancy Angelo and Candace Compton stage a performance to exorcize roles and behaviors traditionally assigned to women. Assuming two stereotypes, they take turns delivering monologues that reflect expectations about how a nun and a "deviant" should behave—one overly solicitous and guilty, the other tough and invulnerable. During the performance, the two

women switch roles, and one is seen in the background breaking glass bottles. This shattering, and the process of role reversal, represent a woman's freedom to define herself rather than accept the definition of a patriarchal society.

The two films in **Program 5** use both documentary and narrative conventions to represent the traumatic issue of rape without titillation. In New York Newsreel's *Makeout* (1972), a teenage couple makes out in the front seat of a car. On the soundtrack, the woman's point of view is privileged: a female voice-over describes her fears and insecurities as the guy attempts to "get some action." *Makeout*'s use of humor and narrative and the absence of Newsreel's political analysis made it an atypical film for the collective.

While date rape is merely alluded to in *Makeout*, it is the central subject of Martha Coolidge's *Not a Pretty Picture* (1975), a feature-length film based on the filmmaker's own experience in high school in 1962. Coolidge uses both acted and improvisational scenes to move the narrative along, but then pulls back at key dramatic moments to allow the actors to discuss their feelings about the roles they are playing. This film-within-a-film technique allowed her to avoid the titillating aspects of the actual rape scene, which enables viewers to think about the real implications of date rape.

A newly awakened consciousness of the nature of oppression led many women filmmakers to excavate the lives of their mothers and grandmothers. Amalie R. Rothschild's *Nana, Mom and Me* (1974), the first film in **Program 6**, contains no shocking revelations of abusive treatment; rather, it explores the differing expectations and disappointments among mothers and daughters over three generations. In contrast, *Ama l'uomo tuo (Always Love Your Man)* (1974), Cara de Vito's portrait of her immigrant Italian grandmother Adeline, reveals the harrowing treatment Adeline endured from her authoritarian husband, including a botched abortion that nearly killed her. Most surprising was her acceptance of the abuse—hence, the tape's title. Although de Vito never attempts to universalize Adeline's story, it tacitly supported the case for women's liberation.

Unlike Rothschild and de Vito, Michelle Citron rejects the realist capacity of documentary and, in the process, lodges a critique of nuclear families. In *Daughter-Rite* (1978), Citron intercuts home movie slow-motion footage of a mother and two young daughters with footage of two sisters talking about their family. Not until the end of the film do we discover that the two sisters were acting fully scripted scenes that had been shot in documentary style. This technique calls into question the truth value of the home movie footage, as well as the "truth" of the happy family as projected by the father/cameraman.

Program 7 includes three films that look historically at the lives of women in the public sphere. *The Emerging Woman* (1974), produced by the Women's Film Project, provides an overview of women in American society from the early nineteenth-century on. *The Emerging Woman* is the filmic equivalent of the books on women's history that appeared in the early 1970s. These efforts had a political purpose—to correct the neglect inflicted on women by generations of historians and to provide a context for the most recent wave of women's activism.

The desire to find role models or celebrate the achievements of successful women is the impulse behind *Antonia: A Portrait of the Woman* (1974), a film by Judy Collins and Jill Godmilow. The film profiles Antonia Brico, who made her conducting debut in 1930 with the Berlin Philharmonic. In intercutting extensive interview material and scenes of Antonia conducting and teaching with newspaper clippings about her numerous accomplishments, Collins and Godmilow portray a passionate and complex woman who was denied the opportunities accorded male conductors.

The stories of three women who became militant union organizers in the 1930s are the focus of *Union Maids* (1975), by Julia Reichert, James Klein, and Miles Mogulescu. The film combines labor history with women's history and seeks to find lessons for the contemporary labor movement.

The films and tape in **Program 8** attest to radical feminism's assault on the traditional nuclear family as repressive and, at times, dangerous to women. In *Janie's Janie* (1970–71), Geri Ashur and Peter Barton trace the politicization of a working-class woman who'd been beaten both by her father and husband. She later becomes a community activist and feminist, and declares: "I was my father's Janie, then I was Charlie's Janie. Now I'm Janie's Janie."

In *Harriett* (1973), Nancy Cain, one of the founders of Lanesville TV, a small community station in upstate New York, videotapes her neighbor, Harriett Benjamin, doing her domestic chores. Harriett's dissatisfaction with her lot periodically erupts until she is seen driving down the road, joyously singing. Harriett's escape is pure fantasy, but Cain suggests the real possibility of resistance by using a straightforward documentary style.

The last two films look at the ways that single mothers created alternatives to the nuclear family. Deborah Shaffer and Bonnie Friedman's *Chris & Bernie* (1975) focuses on the daily life of two divorced mothers of young children who share a household, reflecting the convergence of feminism with a countercultural life-style. *In the Best Interests of the Children* (1977), produced by the Iris Film Collective, is one of the first attempts to address issues facing lesbian mothers—or to even acknowledge that they exist. In outlining the difficulties they have in retaining custody of their children after divorce, the film argues that lesbians are no less capable of mothering than straight women.

One of the central debates within feminism is the issue of essentialism, which argues that women and men possess distinct attributes—for example, that male sexuality is violent, whereas female sexuality is nurturing. **Program 9** consists of two documents of an idealized lesbian culture rooted in essentialist beliefs. Barbara Hammer's short film *Dyketactics* (1974) uses multiple printing and superimposition to proffer a vision of a lesbian sisterhood that celebrates the female body in the natural environment. *The Amazon Festival* (1974–77) is a cinema-verité video documentary of a "lesbian-produced music festival for all women," which took place in the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1974. Produced by

three members of the Santa Cruz Women's Media Collective, the tape epitomizes the beginnings of cultural feminism, a personal politics aimed at self-transformation and the creation of a cultural sphere divorced from collective action.

The collapse of the most activist phase of the women's liberation movement was accompanied by a shift in the definition of feminist filmmaking. While many producers, including Gustafson, Gray, Solberg-Ladd, Shaffer, and de Vito, continued making documentaries, others, as the films of Coolidge and Citron reveal, began to rethink the documentary form. By the end of the 1970s, the deconstructionist strategies initiated by Laura Mulvey and Yvonne Rainer created a new paradigm for feminist filmmaking.

Lucinda Furlong
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

Notes

1. *Women & Film*, no. 1 (1972), p. 5.
2. Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967–1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 3.
3. Ibid., p. 83.
4. Julia Lesage, "The Political Aesthetics of the Feminist Documentary Film," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, 3 (Fall 1978), pp. 508, 515.
5. Martha Gever, "Video Politics: Early Feminist Projects," *Afterimage*, 11 (Summer 1983), pp. 25–27.

SCHEDULE

All works are 16mm film, black-and-white, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Program 1: Public and Private
Tuesday, January 7 at 5:45
Wednesday, January 8 at 2:00
Three Lives (1970), Women's Liberation Cinema Company (Kate Millett, Louva Irvine, Susan Kleckner, and Robin Mide). 70 minutes.
The Woman's Film (1971), Women's Caucus of San Francisco Newsreel (Judy Smith, Louise Alaimo, and Ellen Sorin). 40 minutes.

Program 2: Strategies
Tuesday, January 7 at 2:00
Thursday, January 23 at 2:00
Sunday, January 26 at 2:00
Womens's Lib (1970), People's Video Theater. Videotape, 7 minutes.
Politics of Intimacy (1972–73), Julie Gustafson. Videotape, 58 minutes.
Another Look, Parts 1 and 2 (1972), Women's Video News Service (Wendy Apple, Mary Feldbauer, Susan Kleckner, Carolyn Kreski, Pat de Pew and Rita Ogden). Videotape, 55 minutes.
The Fifth Street Women's Building Film (1971), Jane Lurie. 15 minutes.

Program 3: Reproductive Rights
Friday, January 10 at 2:00
Saturday January 11 at 2:00
Thursday, January 16 at 2:00
Healthcaring: From Our End of the Speculum (1976), Denise Bostrom and Jane Warrenbrand. Color, 32 minutes.
It Happens to Us (1972), Amalie R. Rothschild. Color, 30 minutes.
Birth Film (1972), Susan Kleckner. Color, 35 minutes.

Program 4: Socialization
Tuesday, January 14 at 2:00
Wednesday, January 15 at 2:00
Growing Up Female (1971), Julia Reichert and James Klein. 50 minutes.
Fifty Wonderful Years (1973), Optic Nerve (Lynn Adler, Sherrie Rabinowitz, and Bill Bradbury). Videotape, 27 minutes.
Nun and Deviant (1976), Nancy Angelo and Candace Compton. Videotape, 20 minutes.

Program 5: Rape
Sunday, January 12 at 2:00
Tuesday, January 14 at 6:10
Makeout (1972), New York Newsreel. 12 minutes.
Not a Pretty Picture (1975), Martha Coolidge. Color, 82 minutes.

Program 6: Mother, Daughters, and Granddaughters
Friday, January 17 at 2:00
Saturday, January 18 at 2:00
Nana, Mom and Me (1974), Amalie R. Rothschild. Color, 47 minutes.
Ama l'uomo tuo (Always Love Your Man) (1974), Cara de Vito. Videotape, 24 minutes.
Daughter-Rite (1978), Michelle Citron. Color, 53 minutes.

Program 7: Women in the Public Sphere
Sunday, January 19 at 2:00
Tuesday, January 21 at 2:00
The Emerging Woman (1974), Women's Film Project (Helena Solberg-Ladd, Roberta Haber, Lorraine Gray, and Melanie Maholick). 40 minutes.
Antonia: A Portrait of the Woman (1974), Judy Collins and Jill Godmilow. Color, 58 minutes.
Union Maids (1975), Julia Reichert, James Klein, and Miles Mogulescu. 48 minutes.

Program 8: The Nuclear Family
Friday, January 24 at 2:00
Saturday, January 25 at 2:00
Janie's Janie (1970–71), Geri Ashur and Peter Barton. 24 minutes.
Harriett (1973), Nancy Cain. 14 minutes.
Chris & Bernie (1975), Deborah Shaffer and Bonnie Friedman. Color, 25 minutes.
In the Best Interests of the Children (1977), Iris Film Collective (Frances Reid, Elizabeth Stevens, and Cathy Zheutlin). Color, 52 minutes.

Program 9: A Female Culture
Thursday, January 9 at 2:00
Tuesday, January 21 at 6:10
Wednesday, January 22 at 2:00
Dyketactics (1974), Barbara Hammer. Color, 4 minutes.
The Amazon Festival (1973–77), Santa Cruz Women's Media Collective (Anne Irving, Che Sandoval, and Pam Springer). Videotape, 57 minutes.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 61
New American Film and Video Series

La Indirecta Directa:
Two Decades of Chicano and Puerto Rican Film and Video

January 28–February 16, 1992

Gallery talk, Tuesday, February 4 at 6:30.
Chon A. Noriega and Lillian Jiménez will be present.

SCHEDULE
All works are 16mm film, color, sound, and in English, unless otherwise noted.

PROGRAM I: PICK UP THE CAMERA AND SHOOT

Tuesday, January 28 at 2:00 and 6:15
Wednesday, January 29-Sunday, February 2 at 2:00

The Devil Is a Condition (1972), Carlos de Jesús. 25 minutes.
El Pueblo Se Levanta (1972), Newsreel. Black-and-white, 50 minutes.

PROGRAM II: "TO CALL BACK TO MYSELF WHAT WAS MINE . . ."

PART 1: DRAMA

Tuesday, February 4 at 2:00
Wednesday, February 5-Sunday, February 9 at noon

Cristina Pagán (1982), Pablo Figueroa. 20 minutes.
Distant Water (1990), Carlos Avila. Black-and-white, 28 minutes. Spanish with English subtitles.

PART 2: DOCUMENTARY

Tuesday, February 4 at 4:00
Wednesday, February 5-Sunday, February 9 at 2:00

Los Sures (1983), Diego Echeverria. 58 minutes. English, and Spanish with English subtitles.
La Ofrenda: The Days of the Dead (1989), Lourdes Portillo and Susana Muñoz. 50 minutes. English, and Spanish with English subtitles.

PROGRAM III: TESTIMONIO: MEDIATED SELVES

Tuesday, February 11 at 2:00 and 6:15
Wednesday, February 12-Sunday, February 16 at 2:00

Border Brujo (1990), Isaac Artenstein. Videotape, 52 minutes. English, Spanish, Caló, and Nahuatl.
El Espejo/The Mirror (1991), Frances Salomé España. Videotape, 5 minutes. English and Spanish.
Slipping Between (1991), Sandra P. Hahn. Videotape, 3 minutes.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña in *Border Brujo* (1990), directed by Isaac Artenstein.

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Reed Foundation, Inc., the Billy Rose Foundation, Inc., The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Susan and Arthur Fleischer, Jr., Toby Horn and Richard Kandel, Nancy Brown Wellin, Barbara Wise, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Lennard Camarillo in *Distant Water* (1990), directed by Carlos Avila.

This exhibition investigates the cinematic expressions of two distinct communities with shared experiences of discrimination yet different historical trajectories in the United States. Rather than posit a connection between Puerto Rican and Chicano cinemas at the level of ethnic or cultural "naming"—Latino, Hispanic, *raza*—we have chosen to place the emphasis on the common rhetorical and survival strategies of the film- and videomakers.

These strategies, however, can be attributed to historical experiences rooted in the increased control of the United States over the former Spanish colonies in the Americas. At the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848, the US government was ceded the northern half of Mexico, and in 1898 the Spanish-American War initiated colonial control over Puerto Rico, among other "strategic" territories. The first half of the "American Century" witnessed a complicated and ambiguous relationship with Puerto Ricans and Chicanos, their legal status as citizens balanced against the simultaneous dispossession of communal land holdings in the name of economic development. Since the 1930s, Chicanos, although citizens, have faced various deportation programs. For Puerto Ricans, an industrialization program on the island resulted in massive migration to the United States, an insidious female sterilization program aimed at population control,[1] and an exodus of agricultural contract labor.

For both groups, the generation that came of age in the 1960s and 1970s was the first to gain access (albeit limited) to the means of self-representation in film and television. Born in the post-World War II decade, these filmmakers grew up in the contentious ideological and political terrain of the cold war, the civil rights movement, and Third World struggles against the remnants of US and European colonialism. Cultural nationalism predicated on the salient, essential, and defining character of *lo puertorriqueño* or *lo chicano* served as a stance and political strategy against several dominating forces. Activists directed efforts at community control, especially over education, housing, and media institutions. It is within this context that Puerto Rican and Chicano filmmakers initiated self-representation, developing an expressive, strategic language to position themselves in opposition to institutionalized racism and economic obstacles.

The films in this series challenge conventional and stereotypical representations of Chicanos and Puerto Ricans as the Other. In offering both critique and alternative, these films confront and negotiate an industry that has established cinematic expectations for the entire world. How, then, to speak and be heard, particularly in the face of political and economic censorship? *La indirecta directa* translates as "the direct innuendo," but the rhyme and pun in the original Spanish points to the importance of language and discourse in Puerto Rican and Chicano expressions. The strategy of *la indirecta directa* can best be described as a coded sarcasm that has a delayed, stinging effect. As Juan Flores and George Yudice note, "Language is the necessary terrain on which Latinos negotiate value and attempt to reshape the institutions through which it is distributed."[2] Similar in nature to the African-American vernacular concept of "signifyin' " and other concepts such as "counter-discourse" and "reverse discourse," *la indirecta directa* represents strategies of speaking against the grain.

Program I, "Pick Up the Camera and Shoot," examines early attempts by Chicanos and Puerto Ricans to gain access to the mass media as well as to develop a cinematic language with which to communicate to the community and beyond. These films participated in the concurrent struggles for community control. Carlos de Jesús' *The Devil Is a Condition* (1972) utilizes jazz and poetry in order to redirect the blame for substandard housing conditions from the community itself to dominant institutions. The spontaneous protests that the film documents, while localized and without political leadership, set the stage for subsequent community-based organization. *El Pueblo Se Levanta* (1972), shot and edited in cooperation with the Young Lords, a group of Puerto-Rican activists, provides a mediated self-portrait of political organization for improved housing, education, and health care.

Program II, "To call back to myself what was mine . . . ," investigates the development of a "voice" within the American cinema. The program title is a quotation from Carmen de Monteflores' novella *Cantando Bajito* and describes Latino filmmaking since the 1980s, with its more lyrical, syncretic cinematic approach to the search for a new voice, an approach different from the strategic essentializing of the late 1960s and early 1970s. That new voice is more fluid, interrogative (of self and other), and provisional, yet never static.

The first part of the program deals with short dramas that reveal the rich and textural ways filmmakers represent

the multiple stances and political and cultural spaces created by Chicanos and Puerto Ricans. Pablo Figueroa's *Cristina Pagán* (1982) exemplifies the desire of Puerto Rican filmmakers to reclaim spirituality in Puerto Rican culture. Centered on the death (and absence) of a child within the Puerto Rican family, the film presents a complex and realistic portrayal of the religious beliefs in the Puerto Rican community. Carlos Avila's *Distant Water* (1990) depicts a ten-year-old Chicano boy's response to the racial assaults and segregated swimming pools of Los Angeles in the 1940s. The film draws upon cinematic styles concurrent with the events told, styles never used to depict Chicano subjects and narratives. So-called "Mexican" characters, after all, were limited to Westerns and other action genres, while Puerto Ricans have been stereotyped as juvenile delinquents and gang members. In both films, the use of Spanish dialogue further adapts the discourse of an American cinema of Anglo "images" to the articulation of a Latino subject, while the fact that the narratives center on children places questions of social formation within the context of ego development and home culture as well as political resistance.

The second part of this program consists of documentaries that play with the boundaries between objective and subjective, allowing viewers to occupy simultaneous and multiple positions between the two. In *Los Sures* (1983), Diego Echeverria, a Chilean raised in Puerto Rico, presents a dynamic portrait of several members of a low-income Puerto Rican community in Brooklyn, New York. The variety of personalities addresses the multiple coping and survival strategies employed within one community defined by cultural and geographic borders. Lourdes Portillo's films confront international political issues from the personal perspective of Latina resistance. *La Ofrenda: The Days of the Dead* (1989), made with Susana Muñoz, examines the relationship between cultural ritual in Mexico and its sociopolitical transformation in the United States.

In **Program III**, "Testimonio: Mediated Selves," Chicano video and performance artists experiment with the Latin-American testimonial narrative. The *testimonio* has various precursors in Latin American literature, dating from the nineteenth century on, from first-person accounts of historical events by participants and journalists to transcriptions of oral testimonies to the *novela testimonio* (a pastiche of

Los Sures (1983), directed by Diego Echeverria.

La Ofrenda: The Days of the Dead (1989), directed by Lourdes Portillo and Susana Muñoz.

sources and genres). What these various forms have in common is a personal or subjective approach to broader historical movements which challenges the notion of an objective history distinct from memory and self-conscious "making." In the three videos presented here, the socio-political subtext of the *testimonio* becomes increasingly self-reflexive and subjective, from the multiples selves of Guillermo Gómez-Peña in Isaac Artenstein's *Border Brujo* (1990), to Frances Salomé España's fragmented narrative in *El Espejo/The Mirror* (1991), to Sandra P. Hahn's elliptical, poetic "autobiography" in *Slipping Between* (1991).

The need to speak against the grain persists, although Puerto Rican and Chicano filmmakers increasingly draw upon dominant discourses as well as oppositional ones. Strategic essentialism has given way to strategic post-structuralism, so that *la indirecta directa* often cuts several ways. In *El Espejo/The Mirror*, España uses metaphor to describe the impact of internal colonialism on the *barrio*, the Latino neighborhood. In her bilingual text, España describes bees[3] who build a conceptual wall around East L.A. that the *gente* or people, cannot see, but also cannot see beyond. In the telling of her absurd dream, however, España holds up the mirror to the so-called dominant culture to offer a surreal reflection that insinuates the psychological, cultural, and economic violence inflicted upon the Mexican-American Generation (1930–60) of her parents. Like the *gente*, the audience cannot at first see *la indirecta directa*; although perhaps later, over coffee, recalling the striking visuals and music of her piece, each viewer will catch a glimpse of his or her role in building the wall. And, to paraphrase Robert Frost, how these walls make Good Neighbors.

Chon A. Noriega and Lillian Jiménez
Guest Curators

Notes

1. For further information on population control and female sterilization in Puerto Rico, see Pat Henderson, "Population Policy, Social Structure, and the Health System in Puerto Rico: The Case of Female Sterilization," Ph. D. dissertation, University of Connecticut, Storrs, 1976. See also the documentary *La Operacion* by Ana Maria Garcia, distributed by Cinema Guild, New York. Puerto Rico is the country with the highest incidence of female sterilization in the world. Over one-third of all Puerto Rican women of childbearing age have been sterilized. So common is the procedure that it is simply known as "la operacion." Using newsreels and excerpts from government propaganda films, plus interviews with Puerto Rican women, doctors, birth control specialists, and politicians, *La Operacion* explores the controversial use of sterilization as a means of population control.
2. Juan Flores and George Yudice, "Living Borders/Busdando America: Languages of Latino Self-Formation," *Social Text*, no. 24 (1990), p. 61.
3. In Spanish however, España uses the word for fly, *mosca*, which is also slang for the helicopters that search for undocumented workers.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 62
New American Film and Video Series

The Local Stigmatic

February 26–March 15, 1992

Schedule

Wednesdays at 1:00 and 3:00
Thursdays at 2:00, 4:00, and 6:30
Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 1:00 and 3:00

Credits

The Local Stigmatic, 1989. 35mm film, color, and Dolby sound; 55 minutes.

Written by Heathcote Williams.
Directed by David Wheeler.
Produced by Jim Bullett. Music: Howard Shore.
Editors: Jerry Bloedow, Elizabeth Kling.
Director of Photography: Ed Lachman.
Set Designer: Franne Lee.
Production Supervisor: Timothy Marx.

Cast: Al Pacino (Graham), Paul Guilfoyle (Ray), Joe Maher (David), Mike Higgins (Drunk), and Brian Mallon (News Vendor).

Al Pacino and Paul Guilfoyle in *The Local Stigmatic* (1989), directed by David Wheeler.

The development of the cinema in the late nineteenth century created a dynamic between the spectacle of the projected film image and live performance. The design of the motion picture theater was modeled on that of the traditional theater, that is, the proscenium arch and the curtain which unveiled the screen. Theater directors, producers, and actors crossed the boundary and entered the realm of the cinema. They began to experiment with the new technology, translating the language of the stage—which was predominantly narrative—onto the screen. But the cinema soon became a forum for a new system of narrative construction, largely because of the differences that began to emerge between the discourses of live theater and film, the latter, for instance, enabling new methods of acting. In the cinema, camera angles and the technology of editing can control and shape the spectator's point of view. Thus, despite the many contact points between the two art forms, new strategies for the performance of narrative developed in the cinema.

The artist who wishes to translate a stage script into a film must identify the essence of the play and place it within a cinematic mise-en-scène, one removed from a purely theatrical mode of address. A filmic narrative is largely fashioned through strategies of cinematic framing and carefully measured camera shots. Although the technology of editing somewhat eliminates the moment-to-moment quality of surprise that live performance offers the actor, the technology of the close-up simultaneously allows for subtleties of characterization which might go unnoticed in the theater.

The Local Stigmatic exemplifies a rare instance in which a stage play has been successfully translated onto the screen. A primary reason for this success is the script, written by Heathcote Williams, an eccentric figure in British culture of the 1960s. He has written poetry, prose, song lyrics, and plays, including *The Local Stigmatic* and AC/DC, which won an Obie. Both these plays are expressions of Williams' radical politics and desire to use his art as a means to pierce the complacent and artificial civility of bourgeois society. His major weapon is a stylized language that combines an incisive and poetic rhythm, suggesting power and dark sexuality. *The Local Stigmatic* reveals Williams' keen insight into human fear and envy,

The presentation of *The Local Stigmatic* is made possible in part by a grant from The Bohen Foundation. The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Reed Foundation, Inc., the Billy Rose Foundation, Inc., The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Susan and Arthur Fleischer, Jr., Toby Horn and Richard Kandel, Nancy Brown Wellin, Barbara Wise, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

and the pitiless rage these feelings can unleash. With disturbing sensibility and intuition, the play reflects on the characters' struggles with ethics, personal interactions, and social status. In its deliberate use of language and acute awareness of the complex emotions lurking beneath the surface, Williams' work recalls that of his contemporaries Joe Orton and Harold Pinter.

The success of the film can also largely be attributed to the performances of the cast—Al Pacino, Paul Guilfoyle, and Joe Maher. *The Local Stigmatic* is the work of a tight ensemble. Guided by Williams' language, each actor gives voice to the complexities that arise when quests for personal gain confront notions of ethical responsibility. Pacino's Graham laments his loss at the dog races; his buddy Ray (Guilfoyle) is entangled in Graham's web of sexual attraction, while David (Maher), an actor, is caught in a dangerous game of seduction and power that ends in violence. The performances articulate and embody the gritty tensions of the world of Williams' play. These characters are victims of desires that shift between dark comedy and savage violence. Graham is at the center of the drama, and Pacino's performance infuses Williams' crafted language with the conflicting tensions of tenderness and rage, love and hate. Pacino has adapted American method acting to create the perfect interpretive vehicle for the character of an Englishman trapped in economic hardship and misdirected ambition.

Al Pacino first became interested in *The Local Stigmatic* in 1968, when he performed the play in a project at the Actors Studio in New York City. A short run of the show continued off-Broadway at the Actor's Playhouse. Later, Pacino appeared in the piece when it was remounted in a workshop at the Public Theater in 1976. In 1984, while he was in London performing in David Mamet's *American Buffalo*, Pacino asked David Wheeler, who had directed the earliest American version of *The Local Stigmatic* in Boston in 1967, to come and film the play. Over the next few years, Pacino assembled a creative team that worked to craft the script into a fifty-five minute film. Wheeler's direction and Ed Lachman's cinematography elegantly construct the action while a complex, layered sound score adds a counterpoint to the cadence of the dialogue. The actors' faces fill the screen, their gestures and bodies emphasized, as they articulate the inner turmoil of each character.

In the world of *The Local Stigmatic*, Heathcote Williams reveals a deep awareness of the plight of his characters, struggling with the conflicting emotions that define the human condition. In translating the work from the stage to the screen, Pacino, Wheeler, and the rest of the cast have maintained the rhythms of Williams' language and his disturbing insights into human motivations.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Michael Hadge and Al Pacino in *The Local Stigmatic*, performed at the Actor's Playhouse, New York, 1969. Photo: ©1969 Martha Swope

Artist's Statement

Twenty-five years ago I read a play by Heathcote Williams, then a young British playwright. *The Local Stigmatic* has stayed with me ever since. I find its offbeat humor, energy, and dark vision arresting and relevant still today. Having performed it on stage, I wanted to record it on film. The question of how to present this play/film was difficult because it was never intended as a commercial venture. When the Whitney Museum invited us to exhibit the film we felt that we had found the best context for presenting this enigmatic work to new audiences.

Al Pacino

The Local Stigmatic is published in Heathcote Williams, *AC/DC & The Local Stigmatic* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973).

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Whitney Museum of American Art 63
New American Film and Video Series

The Films of Paul Strand

March 25 – April 12, 1992

Gallery talk, Thursday, March 26 at 6:30
Marsha Bryant will be present.

Any film can unsettle our assumptions about representation: the cinematic image's physical resemblance to the world outside its frame often makes "real" and "reel" life difficult to distinguish from each other. But documentary films bring further tensions to bear on representation. Because they present nonfictional subject matter, we read documentary images differently from those in narrative fictional film—especially when these images are presented with a verifying commentary. In one of the earliest studies of documentary, Paul Rotha insisted that a "first demand" of the genre is "the *creative dramatisation* of actuality" (my emphasis).[1] Yet our culture still maintains its predilection for equating the documentary image with "the real thing"—an assumption that Jennie Livingston's recent *Paris Is Burning* throws provocatively back at us with the recurring song "Got to Be Real."

The documentaries Paul Strand helped produce confronted these issues, but they were also complicated by the political crises of the 1930s, the major period of his filmmaking. Like other leftist artists of the time, Strand believed that his work should combine an aesthetic agenda with a political one—a position often criticized as reducing art to unimaginative propaganda. The majority of Strand's films are overtly political, portraying such themes as workers' rights and the struggle against fascism. For example, *The Wave (Redes)* (1936) depicts Mexican fishermen and the profiteers who exploit their labor, while *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936) examines America's Dust Bowl farmers and the forces that drive them from their land. The documentaries Strand produced with Frontier Films, *Heart of Spain* (1937) and *Native Land* (1942), join the Popular Front against fascism. Madrid's civilians are seen donating blood to wounded Republican soldiers in *Heart of Spain*, while *Native Land*, Strand's last major film, depicts American workers struggling to organize against union-busting corporations.

Despite the politically charged subject matter of these films, Strand's experiments with documentary representation thwart the critical tendency to devalue socially engaged art. Reviewing Strand's films, we can find important groundwork for an alternative documentary practice. Specifically, the films destabilize two boundaries in documentary representation: the functional boundary between commentary and image, and the generic boundary between documentary and fictional film.

Native Land (1942).

Conventionally, a documentary's commentary restricts the image's multiple significations, thus narrowing the viewer's interpretive framework. In rhetorically organized documentaries, voice-over commentary is often used to present the images as illustrative examples; its unseen source suggests "the voice of God." While the static, photographic shots in Strand's films would seem to invite a framing, controlling commentary, many of them resist such anchorage in intriguing ways.

Strand first experimented with text-image relationships in the silent film *Manhatta* (1921), a fragmented

The presentation of *The Films of Paul Strand* is made possible in part by a grant from Southwestern Bell Corporation. The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Reed Foundation, Inc., the Billy Rose Foundation, Inc. The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Susan and Arthur Fleischer, Jr., Toby Horn and Richard Kandel, Nancy Brown Wellin, Barbara Wise, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Wave (1936). Photograph courtesy The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive, New York.

portrait of New York's skyscrapers and harbor with intertitles from Walt Whitman's poetry. Like the 1930s films, *Manhatta*'s fairly low ratio of commentary to images allows several shots to gradually detach themselves from the introductory words. For example, after the sequence following the title "Where our tall-topt marble and iron beauties range on opposite sides," our expectations are confirmed with long shots of rectangular skyscrapers from several striking angles. As the sequence continues, however, the flow of images dislocates our gaze by refusing to bifurcate shots "on opposite sides" of a centering perspective as the intertitle suggests. We move from single buildings to groups of them, from buildings against the sky to buildings against the pavements, from clear atmosphere to smoke-obscured frames. Then comes a photographic moment that loosens itself from the sequence: the camera suddenly reverses angle to a close-up of a rounded balustrade on a rooftop. This shot arrests our eye for several seconds, the only motion being wisps of smoke that rise between the railings. Breaking through the intertitle's frame of reference, the image provokes what Roland Barthes called "the onset of visual uncertainty":"The text does not 'gloss' the images, which do not 'illustrate' the text."[2] The clash of the balustrade with the other shots of buildings opens possibilities for un-captioning the documentary image.

When this disruptive technique is translated to Strand's more overtly political documentaries, the effects can be even more startling. As William Alexander explains in his discussion of Strand, "the film...that sacrifices any of its dynamic to the photographic mode is likely to perplex."[3] Consider the final sequence in *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, which depicts the Dust Bowl exodus. Initially the images illustrate the commentary's words. While the voice-over informs us that "in every summer month 50,000 people left the Great Plains and articulates their need for work and food, we see

dynamically edited footage of caravans and roadside camps. Each of these shots contains movement: a line of cars and trucks rounding a curve, a group of women unloading a truck, two men whittling and conversing in a tent. But the images gradually free themselves from the commentary as we move from straight-on shots of mobile farmers to a long pan across the static, desolate plains. (The most discernible movement is a lone tumbleweed blowing toward the horizon.) Depopulated of farmers and their discarded machinery, this landscape seems initially to offer itself as a blank page awaiting the voice-over's inscription: "50,000 a month—the sun and wind wrote the most tragic chapter in American agriculture." Yet the image extends the commentary's framing words. The shot dissolves to an extended pan across the plains, stopping to frame two bare trees. Next, the camera redefines space horizontally with a dissolve to a closer, felled tree— then dissolves once more to a low-angle shot of a tree standing against the sky, an unattended nest cradled in its branches. Does this final image signify the blighted younger generation of farmers, the possibility of a new birth, or something else entirely? Refusing to participate in the closing commentary's portrayal of the farmers as victims of the plains, this final photographic moment reframes itself independently of the voice-over exposition. Visual uncertainty has blocked access to the farmers as "the real thing," disrupting the film's opening and closing commentary as well as unsettling our viewing habits.

Strand's films also reframe the documentary image by contesting the boundaries between documentary and narrative fictional film. We can sense such border skirmishes in the hybrid labels critics use in classifying these films: *The Wave* is a "semidocumentary" for Erik Barnouw, "a part-documentary, part-fictional feature" for Calvin Tomkins; Stuart Liebman calls *Native Land* a "synthetic documentary."[4] Pushing the documentary genre in new directions, these films not only redefine documentary's relation to narrative film, but also reconfigure its positioning of the viewer. For example, *The Wave* shows actual village fishermen—"the real thing"—alongside actors playing the fisherman who organizes a strike and the fish merchant who seeks greater profits. Most of the film's close-ups feature the lead fisherman (named Miro) in much the same way as a narrative fictional film marks its protagonist. Moreover, the film assigns space to Miro's non-labor roles: we see him also as father, friend, and citizen. In this way, the film both groups and individuates the working class. Its portrayal of the fishermen as a collective force defines them in terms of economic power, while the character of Miro thwarts documentary's tendency to fix "the worker" solely at the scene of his or her labor. I also see a more radical reframing here: Miro allows the worker-as-viewer a position closer to that of the middle-class observer to whom documentary is usually addressed. Unlike the Dust Bowl farmers, these Mexican villagers can watch a surrogate protagonist on the screen.

Native Land furthers this overlapping of documentary and fictional film, opening and closing with ambiguous, photographic images similar to those that end *The Plow That Broke the Plains*. Except for brief footage and stills of police violence against strikers, *Native Land* depicts American workers entirely through dramatic reenactments. A professional cast plays the roles of a union-minded farmer murdered by hit men, two activist sharecroppers hunted down by deputies, and members of a labor union infiltrated by company spies. Strand and co-director Leo Hurwitz's decision to use actors was motivated in part by necessity; the voice-over informs us that the media suppressed these stories of civil rights violations. Yet the reenactments also represent a political strategy for revising the relationship of the working class to the representation of its struggles. Leo Hurwitz explained *Native Land*'s mixture of documentary and fictional elements in terms of the viewer's response: "a sequence had not merely to describe or relate, but to create a *need* in the audience, as in a fiction film, by identification with the characters...."[5] Such identification would apply to all viewers, regardless of their socio-economic class. In other words, filming actors instead of actual workers erases documentary's class line, which marks the middle class as viewer and the working class as object-to-be-viewed.

The ultimate paradox of conventional documentary is this: the people it champions are denied the means of representing themselves. Such inequality reinforces the very social hierarchy that leftist documentaries claim to subvert. Doubly dispossessed, the people these films depict lack both economic and representational power; in

Heart of Spain (1937). Photograph courtesy The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive, New York.

John Tagg's terms, they must bear "the burden of representation."[6] But Strand's alternative documentary practice seeks to release them from scrutiny. By gradually removing actual workers from the screen, these films grant *them* the power of viewing someone else's socio-economic conditions from a distance—the viewer's position that most of us take for granted. Reframing the documentary image, these films point toward a future politics of representation that continues to unsettle our viewing.

Marsha Bryant
Guest Curator

Notes

1. Paul Rotha, *Documentary Film* (London: Faber and Faber,1936), p.115. A member of Britain's influential G.P.O. Film Unit. Rotha also advised documentary groups in New York in the 1930s.
2. Roland Barthes, epigraph to *Empire of Signs,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. xi.
3. William Alexander, *Film on the Left: American Documentary Film from 1931 to 1942* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 78.
4. Erik Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 314; Calvin Tomkins, introduction to *Paul Strand: 60 Years of Phoptographs* (Millerton, New York: Aperture, 1976), p. 26; Stuart Liebman, "Documenting the Left," *October*, no. 23 (Winter 1982), p. 77.
5. Quoted in Liebman, "Documenting the Left," p. 74.
6. John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

Schedule

All films are 16mm, black-and-white, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

March 25–29

Wednesday at 2:00 and 4:00
Thursday at 2:00 and 5:00
Friday–Sunday at 2:00 and 4:00

Manhatta (1921), silent. 9 minutes.
Directed and photographed by Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler. Titles by Walt Whitman.

The Plow That Broke the Plains (1936). 28 minutes.
Written and directed by Pare Lorentz. Photographed by Paul Strand, Ralph Steiner, and Leo Hurwitz. Music by Virgil Thomson. Narrated by Thomas Chalmers.

It's Up to You (1943). 10 minutes.
Directed by Henwar Rodakiewicz. Photographed by Paul Strand.

April 1–5

Wednesday at 2:00 and 4:00
Thursday at 2:00, 4:00, and 6:30
Friday–Sunday at 2:00 and 4:00

The Wave (Redes) (1936). 60 minutes.
Produced, supervised, and photographed by Paul Strand. Directed by Fred Zinnemann with Emilio Gomez Muriel. Scenario by Paul Strand, Velasquez Chavez, and Henwar Rodakiewicz.

Heart of Spain (1937). 30 minutes.
Documented in Spain by Herbert Kline and Geza Karpathi. Material scenarized and edited by Paul Strand and Leo Hurwitz. Commentary written by David Wolff [Ben Maddow] and Herbert Kline. Narrated by John O'Shaughnessy. Principle photography: Geza Karpathi. Music arranged by Alex North with the assistance of Jay Leyda. Sound effects by Irving Lerner.

April 8–12

Wednesday at 2:00 and 4:00
Thursday at 2:00, 4:00, and 6:15
Friday–Sunday at 2:00 and 4:00

Manhatta (1921), silent. 9 minutes.

Native Land (1942). 88 minutes.
Directed by Leo Hurwitz and Paul Strand. Photographed by Paul Strand. Edited by Leo Hurwitz. Written by David Wolff [Ben Maddow], Leo Hurwitz, and Paul Strand. Commentary by David Wolff. Narrated by Paul Robeson. Associate directors: Alfred Saxe and William Watts. Music by Marc Blitzstein.

Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Hours: Wednesday 11:00–6:00
Thursday 1:00–8:00
Friday–Sunday 11:00–6:00

Film and video information: (212) 570–0537

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Whitney Museum of American Art 64
New American Film and Video Series

Re-Mapping Culture(s): Film and the Media Arts

April 15–May 10, 1992

PROJECT STATEMENT

Re-Mapping Culture(s) offers reflections on how artists are employing innovative strategies in film and the media arts to explore international and intercultural issues. The project is designed to transform the Film and Video Gallery into a working laboratory, a space where artists can share with the public their works and the ideas and images which have informed them. This exhibition was organized by John G. Hanhardt and Janet Sternburg.

The Media Arts and the Postmodern Museum

The history of the media arts has largely been described only as a history of narrative cinema, a cinema that reached its fullest articulation in the Hollywood studio system, with its realistic narrative code fashioned through specific framing, editing, lighting, and cinematographic strategies. The result was a mise-en-scène and mode of storytelling that fit comfortably within the already established rhetorics and genres of the bourgeois novel, theater, and mass-produced serial fiction. Within the standard narrative of film history, elliptical and experimental forms of expression in early cinema are traditionally seen as stepping stones, and often precocious advances, on the road to the motion picture studio.[1]

Admittedly, this is a simplified story, but it has perpetuated the mythic quality of today's entertainment cinema, a myth of Hollywood as the embodiment of a totalized view of America that is still held in the popular imagination even though the centralized Hollywood studio system of the past has long since disappeared. This system comprises a part of the history of the modern entertainment industry—which includes both motion picture and television—a history of a dramatic, hegemonic expansion that effectively has served the economic, political, and cultural needs of consumer capitalism. In this sense, the media arts contribute to the dominance of an established mode of thought. Though ostensibly absorbing sociocultural changes, the one-dimensional view of the linear, cinematic narrative in fact stands in sharp contrast to the real mutability of our world.

As we celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the invention of the cinema, we watch this most potent and compelling form of public discourse co-opt and repress any potential challenges to its authority, relegating alternatives to the margins of its histories and institutions. The power of the Hollywood myth has become an ideological apparatus that has closed out of its discourse other views of culture and cultural production.[2] Moreover, the cinematic institution serves as a model for the economic and institutional formation of television. Witness, for instance, the monopolistic networks and, more recently, the rise of cable franchises and independent networks. As with the distribution and sales of independent motion pictures, all these institutions safely support an entertainment industry that resists all attempts to redefine or reorder its content and infrastructure.

Surname Viêt: Given Name Nam (1989), Trinh T. Minh-ha.

The presentation of *Re-Mapping Culture(s): Film and the Media Arts* is made possible in part by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Reed Foundation, Inc., the Billy Rose Foundation, Inc., The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Susan and Arthur Fleischer, Jr., Toby Horn and Richard Kandel, Nancy Brown Wellin, Barbara Wise, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Nunaqpa (1991), Zacharias Kunuk.

The role of the contemporary art museum in this polemic has become increasingly problematic in recent years: on the one hand, these museums support the so-called "consciousness industries,"[3] for example, the mainstream traditions of the feature film; on the other, they accommodate non-traditional forms and genres of the independent media arts. The contemporary museum once took an active part in the radical reexamination of the art object as aesthetic text. This groundbreaking role has now been replaced by a line of uncritical display more commonly associated with the traditional art museum. The result has been to close the museum off from the disruptive debates of critical scholarship or radical theory.

The twentieth-century art museum is rooted in a Western effort to symbolically concretize the power of the ruling class by displaying its riches. In the eighteenth century, European wealth was concentrated in the hands of royal families, while in the nineteenth, great fortunes were amassed through the spectacular growth of capitalism. Thus the early museum was a place for the exhibition of economic power; the later museum extended its role and became an educational institution that exerted a cultural influence. The great private and later public collections became repositories of scholarship and connoisseurship, dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of established cultural values.

Today the classical and contemporary art museums function as paradigms of conservative academic historiography, validating the precious and unique object as a commodity of the greatest value and cultural meaning. The epistemological operation of the museum, its organization of objects by historical period and nation state, has relegated non-Western culture to the margins or to the domain of anthropology.[4] It is this officially sanctioned marginality that has influenced not only the writing of cultural history but also the entry of film and the media arts into the modern museum. Thus, as film history became an established discipline, its course paralleled the dominant directions taken by the curators and archivists of the modern museum: cinematic history became a tale of directors, studios or national cinemas, or of genres that followed traditional literary paradigms. This organization, which emphasizes the cinema of Western and leading industrial countries, marginalizes radical forms and other cultures, never confronting the medium as an expression of a larger cultural complex.

A reexamination of the media arts is critical in order to determine their relationship to other art forms as well as to the complexity of world cultures. For this reexamination to be more than a formal exercise, the media arts must leave the exclusive confines of the art world and of specific canons or established genres. The museum that exhibits them must thus be a postmodern museum, reconcep-

tualized in the areas of exhibition, collection, and preservation. Only in this venue can the media arts play a significant and active role in bringing the debates of cultural studies and multiculturalism to museum programming and representation.[5]

The true postmodern museum has to transform its exhibition resources into a "laboratory of ideas," a conceptual space that can challenge the very framing devices that have become cognitive arguments for unreflective connoisseurship and cultural appropriation. Curatorial vision no less than library and research facilities should make the museum a place for the study of traditionally underserved cultures—e.g., Latino, Asian-American, African-American, and Native American. In exhibitions and educational programs, the development of a multidisciplinary approach to reflect this diversity would welcome contributions from the fields of anthropology, philosophy, culture studies, literature, and performance, visual, and media arts, each field informing the others in a dynamic system of intellectual inquiry and challenge. Only in this way can the museum engage the diverse forces of the past and present to create a truly contemporary institution, one that speaks to our postmodern culture.

The artist retains a central role in the postmodern museum—not, however, simply as a star or personality, but as the conduit of many different cultural and social stimuli. For this reason, the programs in *Re-Mapping Culture(s)* have been developed with the artists as an exploration and re-presentation of the texts that have influenced their thinking and their visualization of aesthetic and critical issues. By relating individual films and videos to a complex network of texts,[6] the art work undergoes a transformation. It ceases to be a hermetic, elegant, and ideal object, formally decoded and validated by its relationship to a preestablished model of cultural meaning. Rather, it challenges this model, revealing our blindnesses to the alternative traditions that have been written out of history in the Western art museum.

Eleven artists were invited to create programs centered on their most recent media production. They selected the films and/or videotapes that informed their own works, so that each program explores these works' varied cultural sources, formal and stylistic issues, and narrative and contentual concerns. In working closely with the artists, we sought to bring into the exhibition an understanding of the complex influences that often remain outside the curatorial point of view. Thus the program organized by Victor Masayesva, Jr., reveals a network of cultural empowerment through films and videos by indigenous artists from Ecuador (*Yapallag*, 1990) and the Northwest Territories (*Nunaqpa*, 1991); the contrasts between Chinese (*Breaking With Old Ideas*, 1975) and popular American cultures are explored in Christine Choy's program and her film *Monkey King Looks West* (1989); Zeinabu irene Davis brings together a film from Senegal (*Touki-Bouki*, 1973) along with an African-American film (*Water Ritual #1*, 1980) that was influenced by African cultures and aesthetics; Warren Sonbert reflects on early examples of Soviet montage (*The Man with the Movie Camera*, 1929) and collage editing (*A Movie*, 1958), which affected his own film construction, while Tony Buba's continuing analysis of a dying steeltown, Braddock, Pennsylvania, considers the theme of unity in Newsreel Collective's *Black Panther*, 1968, and the question of documentary truth in Luis Buñuel's *Land Without Bread*, 1933.

These few examples identify a means by which the visitors to the museum, over the course of *Re-Mapping Culture(s)*, can chart a path through each artist's work, listening to the artist's introduction to the program and viewing the variety of cultures and aesthetic practices that the work embodies or to which it responds. The many communities represented in the exhibition space have, in the past, remained invisible to museums, media art histories, mainstream scholars, and educators. *Re-Mapping Culture(s)* thus marks a first step in remaking the museum into a genuinely critical, thoughtful, dynamic, and more responsive institution for the future.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

NOTES

1. For examples of new research and alternative interpretations of the early cinema and its technology, see Noël Burch, *Life to Those Shadows*, transl. Ben Breuster (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990); John L. Fell, ed., *Film Before Griffith* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983); Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath, eds., *The Cinematic Apparatus* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980).
2. The Althusserian model of how the state operates through its institutions (schools, entertainment, industry) rather than by force is still pertinent. See Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)," in *Video Culture: A Critical Investigation*, John G. Hanhardt, ed. (Layton, Utah: Peregrine Smith Books, 1986), pp. 56-95.
3. Enzensberger's description of mass media—the "consciousness industry" of television, cinema, radio—as an ideological force is pertinent to this history. See Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Constituents of a Theory of the Media," in *Video Culture*, p. 99.
4. For an excellent theoretical review of the representation of other cultures in the context of the museum and ethnographic research, see James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988).
5. For an excellent survey of the cultural studies movement, see the essays in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler, eds., *Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1992); for a discussion on new thinking about the role and position of the museum in American culture see Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).
6. The concept of "text" used here in relation to film and video follows Roland Barthes' discussion of written text: ". . . a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning . . . but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture"; Barthes, "Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, transl. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p. 146.

SCHEDULE

Unless otherwise noted, all films are 16mm, color, sound, and all videotapes are ¾", color, sound.

Wednesday, April 15 at 1:00
Program presented by Victor Masayesva, Jr.
Ritual Clowns (United States, 1988), Victor Masayesva, Jr. Videotape. 18 minutes.
Yapallag (Ecuador, 1990), Alberto Muenala. Videotape. In Quichua with Spanish subtitles. 23 minutes.
Navajo Talking Picture (United States, 1988), Arlene Bowman. Film. 40 minutes.
Nunaqpa (Going Inland) (Canada, 1991), Zacharias Kunuk. Videotape. In Inuktitut, with English subtitles. 58½ minutes.

Thursday, April 16 at 2:00
Program presented by Janice Tanaka
Tomorrow (United States, 1972), Joseph Anthony. Film, black-and-white. 102 minutes.
Monty Python's The Meaning of Life (England, 1983), Terry Jones. Film. 30-minute excerpt.
Memories from the Department of Amnesia (United States, 1989), Janice Tanaka. Videotape, black-and-white and color. 13 minutes.

Thursday, April 16 at 6:30
Re-Mapping Borders: New Directions in the Media Arts, a gallery talk by John G. Hanhardt.

Friday, April 17 at 1:00
Program presented by Dee Dee Halleck
Torrid Zone (United States, 1940), William Keighley. Film, black-and-white. 88 minutes.
The Americano (United States, 1916), John Emerson. Film, black-and-white, silent. 65 minutes.
Uncle Sam's Tropical Review (United States, work in progress), Dee Dee Halleck. Videotape, black-and-white and color. 60-minute excerpt.

Saturday, April 18 at 1:00
Views from a Maya Altar, a video workshop by Peter Thompson, in collaboration with William Hanks and Jno Cook.

Friendly Witness (1989), Warren Sonbert.

Touki-Bouki (1973), Djibril Diop Mambety.

Thursday, April 23 at 1:30
Program presented by Charles Burnett
The Southerner (United States, 1945), Jean Renoir. Film, black-and-white. 91 minutes.
Rain (Regen) (Netherlands, 1929), Joris Ivens and Mannus Franken. Film, black-and-white, silent. 15 minutes.
To Sleep with Anger (United States, 1990), Charles Burnett. Film. 101 minutes.

Thursday, April 23 at 6:30
History and Memory: The Poetics of Vision, a gallery talk by Janet Sternburg.

Friday, April 24 at noon
Program presented by Louis Hock
Jaguar (France, 1967), Jean Rouch. Film. Dubbed in English. 93 minutes.
Reassemblage (United States, 1982), Trinh T. Minh-ha. Film. 40 minutes.
We Have the Force (United States, 1988), Branda Miller. Videotape. 33 minutes.
Scenes from the Micro War (United States, 1986), Sherry Millner. Videotape. 24 minutes.
The Winner's Circle & La Migra, part 3 of 4 of *The Mexican Tapes: A Chronicle of Life Outside the Law*, (United States, 1986), Louis Hock. Videotape. 54 minutes.

Saturday, April 25 at 1:00
Script Readings (works in progress)
Things I Forgot to Remember, Enrique Oliver. Script by Enrique Oliver and Martha Fowlkes. 60-minute excerpt.
Waste Land, Shu Lea Cheang. Script by Jessica Hagedorn. 60-minute excerpt.

Sunday, April 26 at 1:00
Script Readings (works in progress)
Girls Can't Kiss, Lourdes Portillo. Script by Maria Irene Fornes. 60-minute excerpt.
In My Father's House, Billy Woodberry. Script by Billy Woodberry. 60-minute excerpt.

Wednesday, April 29 at noon
Program presented by Christine Choy
Breaking with Old Ideas (China, 1975), Peking Film Studios. Film. In Mandarin, with English subtitles. 120 minutes.
Woman Demon Human (China, 1988), Huang Shuqin. Film. In Mandarin, with English subtitles. 108 minutes.
Monkey King Looks West (United States, 1989), Christine Choy. Film. 40 minutes.

Thursday, April 30 at 2:00
Program presented by Tony Buba
Land Without Bread (Las Hurdes; Terre Sans Pain) (Spain, 1933), Luis Buñuel. Film, black-and-white. With English narration. 27 minutes.
Black Panther (United States, 1968), Newsreel Collective. Film, black-and-white. 15 minutes.
The Big Shave (United States, 1968), Martin Scorsese. Film. 6 minutes.
Lightning Over Braddock: A Rustbowl Fantasy (United States, 1988), Tony Buba. Film. 80 minutes.
Below the Salt (United States, work in progress), Tony Buba. Videotape. 15-minute excerpt.
Struggles in Steel (United States, work in progress), Tony Buba. Videotape. 15-minute excerpt.

Thursday, April 30 at 6:30
Miscegenated Histories, Miscegenated Texts, a gallery talk by Clyde Taylor.

Friday, May 1 at 1:00
Program presented by Leslie Thornton
Land Without Bread (Las Hurdes; Terre Sans Pain) (Spain, 1933), Luis Buñuel. Film, black-and-white. With English narration. 27 minutes.
Zero for Conduct (Zéro de Conduite) (France, 1933), Jean Vigo. Film, black-and-white. In French, with English subtitles. 44 minutes.
Vinyl (United States, 1965), Andy Warhol. Film, black-and-white. 30-minute excerpt.
Peggy and Fred in Kansas (United States, 1987), Leslie Thornton. Videotape, black-and-white. 11 minutes.
Dress Rehearsal (General Probe) (West Germany, 1980), Werner Schroeter. Film, black-and-white. In German, with English subtitles. 60-minute excerpt.
The Great Invisible (United States, work in progress), Leslie Thornton. Videotape. 20-minute excerpt.

Saturday, May 2 at noon
A presentation by Paul Kos.

Sunday, May 3 at 1:00
Program presented by Warren Sonbert
The Man with the Movie Camera (Chelovek s Kinoapparatom) (U.S.S.R., 1929), Dziga Vertov. Film, black-and-white, silent. 89 minutes.
A Movie (United States, 1958), Bruce Conner. Film, black-and-white. 12 minutes.
Friendly Witness (United States, 1989), Warren Sonbert. Film, black-and-white and color. 32 minutes.

Wednesday, May 6 at 1:00
Program presented by Zeinabu irene Davis
The Gods and the Thief (United States, 1992), Pierre Desir. Film, black-and-white. 18 minutes.
Water Ritual #1: An Urban Rite of Purification (United States, 1980), Barbara McCullough. Film, black-and-white. 4 minutes.
Baobab (United States, 1989), Erik Knight. Film, black-and-white and color. 17 minutes.
Touki-Bouki (Senegal, 1973), Djibril Diop Mambety. Film. In French, with English subtitles. 95 minutes.
A Powerful Thang (United States, 1991), Zeinabu irene Davis. Film. 51 minutes.

Thursday, May 7 at 1:30
Program presented by Marco Williams
Emitai (Senegal, 1971), Ousmane Sembene. Film. In Diola and French, with English subtitles. 101 minutes.
Killer of Sheep (United States, 1977), Charles Burnett. Film, black-and-white. 87 minutes.
In Search of Our Fathers (United States, 1992), Marco Williams. Film. 70 minutes.


Looking for Langston (1989), Isaac Julien.

Friday, May 8 at 12:30
Program presented by Trinh T. Minh-ha
Meetin' W.A. (United States, 1987), Jean-Luc Godard. Videotape. In French and English. 26 minutes.
Surname Viêt: Given Name Nam (United States, 1989), Trinh T. Minh-ha. Film. 108 minutes.
Nostalghia (Italy, 1983), Andrei Tarkovsky. Film. In Italian and Russian, with English subtitles. 120 minutes.

Sunday, May 10 at 1:00
Program presented by Marlon Riggs
First Person Plural (United States, 1988), Lynn Hershman. Videotape. 26 minutes.
Looking for Langston (England, 1989), Isaac Julien. Film, black-and-white. 47 minutes.
Color Adjustment (United States, 1991), Marlon Riggs. Videotape, black-and-white and color. 87 minutes.
Tongues Untied (United States, 1989), Marlon Riggs. Videotape, black-and-white and color. 55 minutes.

Views from an Unstable Landscape

I promised to show you a map you say but this is a mural
then yes let it be these are small distinctions
where do we see it from is the question

—Adrienne Rich
An Atlas of the Difficult World, 1991

A map is supposed to be a reliable guide for helping us locate some *place*, to arrive at some *where*. Coordinates that pinpoint an exact location, axes of direction . . . we believe this system to be an adequate representation of the world in which we find ourselves. Our belief in fixed points gives us assurance: first through the mind's eye, as we scan the map's surface to plot our path; then through our journey on streets and roads, as we scan right and left for corresponding and thereby *re*assuring markers.

Given our enormous dependence on maps, what would happen if this familiar system of representation broke loose from its moorings? If longitude and latitude were cast adrift, swaying into new configurations? If our careful boundaries and binaries became more fluid?

At the very least, such questions become germane speculations in the light of recent global events that have redrawn old maps. Beyond literal geography, though, we find ourselves at ever more complex intersections, moving through shifting relationships among groups and aspects of ourselves, among social needs, cultural theories, and artistic genres. We have come to understand that our guides are limited, our own viewpoints partial, and so only provisionally trustworthy. In this unstable landscape, we encounter hybrid realities that create thicker and more richly complicated junctions, even as we live with disjunctions: social inequities that fissure our common ground into widening gaps. Where, among these sliding realities, can we locate an adequate vantage point, a generous and generative place to stand?

Memories from The Department of Amnesia (1989), Janice Tanaka.

The moving image offers us a possibility of a new mapping that consciously takes into account these shifting and multidimensional aspects of contemporary culture; it also offers new conjunctions. In *Re-Mapping Culture(s)*, we invite viewers to engage with us in this plotting. It would be foolish to propose that this exhibition provides a new map; any such codifying is contrary to the spirit of this project, in which "mapping" is understood to be a continuous activity. Instead, we have selected works and works in progress by artists who are creating signal points and directions on the landscape. By placing them in relation to one another, we in turn are creating a context in which the trajectories of these works can cross and re-cross.

That we can even imagine such an exhibition is due to the body of new and vital work that has come into being during the past decade, when film and video artists (as well as writers and other visual and performing artists) have turned their inquiring eyes and individual sensibilities to the dynamic relationships among cultures. Some of this work looks at specific aspects of an artist's own ethnicity or tradition, often with a focus on how cultural practices survive and transform themselves over time. Other works explore relationships among groups as well as mass culture's representations of those groups. In these strands of work, the pressure of new investigation into previously uncharted territory has brought forth new voices and new perspectives.

Recognizing this strong and pervasive impulse, the Rockefeller Foundation, with the help of the media arts field, instituted its Intercultural Film/Video Fellowships in 1986. All the artists whose works are represented in *Re-Mapping Culture(s)* have received these fellowships, whose purpose is to enable film and video artists of unique vision to undertake projects that interpret diverse cultures. Under the Foundation's sponsorship, national nominating committees and selection panels made up of experts throughout the United States annually choose a group of artists whose projects move beyond conventional formats to extend our understanding and representations of cultures. In response to the variety of ways in which artists are depicting these issues, the program awards fellowships in three areas of media activity: documentaries that examine previously unseen ways of life; dramatic works that bring new stories to the screen; and multimedia installations that combine sculpture, performance, and text with the moving image. However, because the fellowship program is especially re-

The Great Invisible (work in progress), Leslie Thornton.

sponsive to artists who are pushing beyond standard forms of image making, the works often escape from these categories, creating interesting blurs at the edges of genres.

Considered broadly, these works and artists are part of a larger field of intellectual, artistic, and political discourse now taking place in this country. In the first year of the fellowship program, Native American video artist Victor Masayesva, Jr., received an award; he commented that the request for proposals "brings with it a challenge to disassemble our ideas of multiculturalisin and a responsibility to explore its roots, through creative disassembly and reconstruction." For many artists, these works are interventions against entrenched and reductive ideas. In his fellowship proposal, African-American video-maker Marlon Riggs positioned his work as a response to the notion that there is a single, patently true, version of history: "in fact, there are many histories, shaped by a multiplicity of points of view as well as by the specific identities of those who write the histories, identities formed by *intersections* [emphasis mine] of class, gender, race, sexuality and social background." This discourse arises as well from felt experience. "My life and career tell stories of being caught in between," wrote Latina filmmaker Lourdes Portillo, in a project statement that evokes both the complexity of immigrant experience and the role of the artist as cultural listener, heeding and shaping the truths of her situation. For that matter, what sort of coincidence is revealed when I note that feature filmmaker Enrique Oliver has entitled his new work about Cuban-American assimilation *Things I Forgot to Remember*, while video artist Janice Tanaka calls her poetic tape about her Japanese-American mother *Memories from the Department of Amnesia*? As artists of their time, Oliver and Tanaka are responding to America's hyphenated identities, intersecting with each other to reveal the mapping of multiple allegiances, erasures, and reclamations.

Seen in closer focus, the artists in *Re-Mapping Culture(s)* are drawing connections between their cultural project and the particular challenges and properties of the moving image. Masayesva proposed an experimental video based on the Hopi Ritual Clown. "I have chosen the clown because this protean character embodies the rare combination by which we can explore form and content; particularly with

In Search of Our Fathers (1992), Marco Williams.

the application of computer video animation. . . . The great latitude of world environments and cultural diversity offer limitless interactions between the clown and his video world." The artist had to create a new means to render his vision of a universe made up of elements—clown antics, symbols, stories—from around the world. The result was a layering of imagery of natural phenomena with "paintbox" (computer-generated) design. In a related search, filmmaker Peter Thompson, at work on his documentary about a Yucatec Mayan shaman, found that he needed to use still photographs and yet "contextualize them within the Mayan world of constant interaction, physicality, movement." His solution was to commission a specially designed camera that can create a single image 100 feet long without frame lines and also can rotate 360 degrees to include the world around a given image. Trinh T. Minh-ha's experimental documentary on Vietnamese women, *Surname Viêt: Given Name Nam*, also necessitated new formal strategies. For Trinh, the instability and inaccuracy of any one cultural map is analogous to film itself, or at least to the way we conventionally and unthinkingly accord truth status to documentary images. She chooses instead to unsettle us by giving us interviews which seem to be "fact" but which may also be "fiction," thereby acknowledging their *mediated* reality.

In all the works in *Re-Mapping Culture(s)*, we find ourselves situated in a world of *inter*: a set of relationships between past and present, between film and video, between gender and national or ethnic identities, between one's subject and its representations, between the infinite complexity of all that makes up selfhood and the inevitable simplifications of labeled and even hyphenated identities. To convey the richness of these artistic negotiations, we have designed an exhibition that is itself interactive. We have, for example, asked artists to curate themselves, in effect; to present not only their own productions but also a broad and diverse selection of works that have influenced their thinking and practices. In some programs, works in progress are accommodated by a series of script readings by the filmmakers and writers, who also discuss the evolution of the work with the audience. Another session features a demonstration of new techniques and knowledge gained by a filmmaker-anthropologist team working "in the field," while connections among the works are explored in a series of talks by artists and critics.

Throughout, the aim is to create a month-long laboratory in which artists and audiences can experiment with ideas and images. In this setting, viewers are likely to discover new conjunctions where, for example, Christine Choy's documentary *Monkey King Looks West* speaks with Masayesva's *Ritual Clowns*. While the former is about the Chinese opera in America and the latter about Hopi tradition, the figure of the resilient Monkey King and his counterpart, the Native American trickster, can here bow to each other and cavort together, truly *inter*playing between cultures.

> I remember we talked of how hard it would be to film—what it might *look* like. I don't remember exactly *when* we found ourselves in the middle of it.
>
> —Peter Thompson
> from his script for *The Shaman of Oxkintok*

In the middle of it is not a vantage point from which one can take an omniscient point of view. As stances go, it is virtually of no use at all if one is attempting to draw a supposedly definitive map. But it is an honorable answer to the question *where do we see it from*.

All the artists in *Re-Mapping Culture(s)* are passing through complex landscapes with multiple coordinates. From these artists and their work, we are given new markers that indicate how we ourselves might make our way through this terrain, in the middle, necessarily, of new understandings.

Janet Sternburg
Guest Curator

Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Hours: Wednesday 11:00–6:00
Thursday 1:00–8:00
Friday–Sunday 11:00–6:00

Film and video information: (212) 570-0537

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Whitney Museum of American Art 65
New American Film and Video Series

Terry Berkowitz

May 27–July 5, 1992

A Rock and a Hard Place (1992).
Video installation. On view continuously.

Gallery talk, Thursday, May 28 at 6:30.
John G. Hanhardt and Terry Berkowitz will be present.

COMPONENTS: 9 video monitors; 1 video projector; 5 video playback decks; 5 ¾" videotapes, color: 2 sound, 3 silent; 2 audiotape cassette decks; 2 two-track audiotape cassettes. Oil barrels, sod, stones; 25 wooden houses and 1 plexiglass house with pedestals.

Since the 1960s, artists have sought to break down the barriers separating the various art forms by turning to the signs and materials of daily life. Improvised Happenings, Fluxus performances, and Conceptual Art projects, all these practices explored the fashioning and functioning of objects in society and culture. Likewise, Pop Art's appropriation of the icons and surfaces of mass culture was an effort to transform the traditional referent of the aesthetic work. These earlier radical articulations are the source of the contemporary multimedia installation: artists have created work for specific sites by employing media and materials such as found and fashioned objects, sound tracks, video, film, and photographic slides. Since the 1970s, multimedia installation art has emerged as an ambitious effort to express our awareness of the world by joining a phenomenology of perception with the politics of representation in order to reconceive the places we historically inhabit.

It is this history of cross-fertilization within the arts and of innovative art practices that provides the context for Terry Berkowitz's remarkable transformation of the Film and Video Gallery in her multimedia project *A Rock and a Hard Place*. Berkowitz's work, like that of Adrian Piper, Bill Stephens, Hans Haacke, Francesc Torres, and the media collective Paper Tiger Television, uses diverse strategies of multimedia installation art to examine issues of power, politics, racism, and sexuality. For more than fifteen years, Berkowitz has been developing a sociopolitical art practice, creating projects that identify new ways to reflect the politics of everyday existence.

Her current project evolved from an installation form conceived for museums as well as for alternative and public spaces. What has characterized each of Berkowitz's installations is its direct confrontation with the politics of daily life and its ability to synthesize images and objects to give immediacy and poetic expression to the problematic nature of contemporary existence.

The issues at the core of Berkowitz's art have taken specific form in a series of installation projects, such as *Too Much Fast Food* (1982), which represented the politics and materials of America's consumer culture. In this installation, Berkowitz recreated a fast food shop in the gallery, placing real as well as papier-mâché and plastic food on the "restaurant" counter, to make a physical and vivid critique of the manner in which we are fed information in our culture.

More recently, in an elaborate installation entitled *Inside Out* (1991), for a gallery in Spain, Berkowitz created an environment that juxtaposed images from American television and popular magazines to reveal a culture made up of objects of desire. The song *Money*, slowed down and synthesized with a Spanish pop song, provided the soundtrack. These images of consumerism were projected onto a wall opposite a mirrored wall. In a second room, there were two installations: one of a middle-class living room with a television turned on, showing a tape of credit card commercials, game shows, and shots of people going to work. Taken together, these elements made the viewer aware of the promulgation of the myth of "easy" money. Adjacent to the living room was a tableau of a New York City street scene featuring the cart of a homeless person; the cart contained personal possessions and a video monitor playing a documentary about homeless people making a life on the streets, talking about their plight. The word "home" in different languages was undercut into the images. This project was a specific inquiry into post-Franco Spain, reflecting on the myth of American consumer culture as an international way of life, yet simultaneously exposing the contradictions that exist within capitalist society. In a rapidly changing Europe, Berkowitz says, this society still looks uncritically at the ideology and culture of the American life-style.

Berkowitz's work ranges from the politics of everyday life—what lies underneath the surface of the slick images that we consume and that consume us—to the history of

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Reed Foundation, Inc., the Billy Rose Foundation, Inc., The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Susan and Arthur Fleischer, Jr., Toby Horn and Richard Kendall, Nancy Brown Wellin, Barbara Wise, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

pain and loss contained in our past. In Berkowitz's site-specific project *No More Yesterdays* (1990; Lodz, Poland) she created, in the basement of a building under renovation, memorials to the Jews who died in the destruction of the Lodz ghetto by the Nazis and to those who survived. Her poetic homage evokes the horror of the ghetto as well as a sense of the permanence of memory. At the center of the room is a collection of ten thousand stones, representing the survivors. The walls are covered with marks—one for each of the 1550 days that the ghetto was sealed off from the rest of the city. The space—its enclosure, its metaphors, its signs, and its physical presence—conveys the idea that Jews everywhere carry inside themselves the pain, memory, and loss of those killed in the Holocaust.

A Rock and a Hard Place is one of a series of projects that grew out of Berkowitz's visits to the West Bank and Gaza. Once again, she seeks to reveal and examine the meaning of images and what is visible and invisible in our histories and daily lives. *A Rock and a Hard Place* is, then, a personal and aesthetic reflection on a place and its people.

Upon entering the Film and Video Gallery, we encounter Berkowitz's environment of objects, sounds, video images, sights, and smells that conjure up a site "between a rock and a hard place"—Gaza and the West Bank, where Palestinians live. Berkowitz has created a real and imaginary space that comments on and gives substance to the existence of the Palestinians and their physical and material life. The space becomes a vivid, multitextual environment: we are confronted with images of the oil barrels used to barricade the streets, the grassy paths of cultivated land, the gaze of the Israeli soldiers on sentinel duty—all of which combine to evoke and creatively interpret, rather than document or represent, an artist's response to a condition and way of life. In the center of the space, we see a stone circle that, like every element in the installation, suggests a sense of place—the terraces built by the Palestinians to maintain arable land and the boundaries of sanctuary and family that demarcate their living space. As in her other installations, Berkowitz is asking us not to forget: who we are, the images we consume, and the world we share with others.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Artist's Statement

A Rock and a Hard Place addresses the Middle East, specifically the West Bank, and Gaza, and its ongoing political and social strife.

My first trip to Israel was in the late sixties, soon after the Six-Day War. I worked on a kibbutz and traveled around the country. The beautiful landscape continually changed, sometimes stretching in vast expanses of desert, sometimes breaking open to the striking blue of the Mediterranean. Along the way, olive trees rose on terraced platforms; an occasional irrigated sea of green would suddenly and exuberantly shout its existence in an otherwise desert landscape.

Returning to the region twenty years later, I traveled among the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. I saw similarities between our cultures and struggled with the differences. A different kind of landscape was visible in the faces of the people I met in the refugee camps and Arab towns, a human one, touched by intolerance.

A Rock and a Hard Place began as a rumination on my experiences, how my understanding had shifted when I was able to confront this place with open eyes.

My perspective of this region and its problems has been drastically altered through personal experience. *A Rock and a Hard Place* has been set specifically within the parameters of that direct exposure. This work is an interpretation of a particular reality existing at a particular time; it does not intend to cover Middle Eastern history but rather to use real images to interpret and understand the situation there. Through a meshing of interviews, texts, and interpretive pieces, the work presents the viewer with another way of looking at the region. I have been touched by the people I have met and what I have seen—the motivation of this work is to express what I have experienced.

Terry Berkowitz

Biography

Terry Berkowitz was born in Brooklyn. She studied at the School of Visual Arts, New York (certificate, 1971) and the School of The Art Institute of Chicago (MFA, 1973). She has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1974) and the Jerome Foundation (1990). She was a ZBS Foundation artist-in-residence (1978) and a MacDowell Colony Fellow (1989). Berkowitz is currently associate professor of art, Baruch College, City University of New York, and has taught at Montclair State College, New Jersey (1974-88). Additionally, she has lectured at the Akademie der Künste, Berlin (1987), and the Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Spain (1991). Berkowitz lives and works in New York.

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Whitney Museum of American Art

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Whitney Museum of American Art 66
New American Film and Video Series

Trans-Voices

September 23—October 18, 1992

Nation (1992), Tom Kalin.

The history of the relationship of art to society has been affected by the placement of the art in either public or private spheres. The notion of the art work (a visual piece, a performance, etc.) as a unique object, removed from the flow of daily life, was reinforced with the development of institutions such as the museum or the concert hall, discrete places to codify and valorize the aesthetics and unique value of the work. Photography, film, and the record player, however, which came into prominence in the early twentieth century, upset this system. With these new technologies, artists could fashion mechanically reproducible art works, and in this way resisted the idea of the autonomous art work that existed in its own space and time.

The utopian project of modernism—to extend the principles of the enlightenment into the construction of a new society—was dramatically visualized and embodied with the dissemination of the photograph, film, and record, i.e., the mass-produced art object. Modern architecture sought to reconstruct public space and to fill it with this mass-produced, democratically distributed art. These twin goals were perhaps best exemplified by the stated aims of the Bauhaus and the cinema of Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein, who radically reimagined the world and society around them.

Today, at the close of the twentieth century, the modernist project is confronted by the sterile environment of an architecture that neglects the human, and a Soviet Union that no longer exists, brought down after utopian hope collapsed into bureaucratic state communism. The current postmodern debates are a transitional phase in an effort to redefine the principles of modernism into a genuinely new paradigm, one which brings art into active contact with society. Film and the rise of the metropolis were central to early modernism, and we are now at a juncture in which these elements—the public space of the city and television/radio, the media of distribution—become linked. In *Trans-Voices*, a transatlantic dialogue is forged between late twentieth-century artists and issues.

The exhibition of the *Trans-Voices* project in the Film and Video Gallery offers the opportunity to see, in one place, work that was created to be dispersed throughout New York and Paris television, radio, and subway systems. As one perceives the mix of audio and video pieces and billboard-sized prints on the gallery walls, the viewer can begin to make connections and explore the concerns of distinctly different artists from France and the United States. The selections include works by established and emerging artists, each of whom was offered the opportunity to address post-cold war global issues, including the rise of nationalism, immigration, changing economies, the deteriorating environment, the spread of AIDS, censorship, and urban violence. Rather than removing art and the artist from society, the works in *Trans-Voices* affirm the relationship of art to the world around us by questioning, challenging, and intervening into the flow of daily life. The works are broadcast or displayed so as to interrupt our routinized lives and become actively engaged. Each work asks us, the public, to stop and reflect on ourselves and our environment. As post-

Trans-Voices has been organized by the American Center, Paris, as part of the Frederick R. Weisman Exhibition series of the American Center, in collaboration with the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and the Public Art Fund, Inc., New York. Major support for *Trans-Voices* was provided by The Bohen Foundation, Conseil Supérieur du Mécénat Culturel, Paris, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., New York, and Caesar Video Graphics, Inc., New York, with additional funding provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C., Quebec Government House, New York, and Société Générale, USA.

modern works, they offer no utopian answers or solutions. They present a new credo: that we can question our world views. That these images and sounds are placed in the public eye is a reaffirmation of media as a means to distribute and spread sounds and images to spaces outside the museum and gallery.

Each audio and video work was designed to have a running time of sixty seconds or less, thus structuring each almost as a commercial or media "spot," the type that fills television and radio programming. This format allows each piece to be a direct intervention into tele/broadcast time. Together with the billboards, these works are encountered amidst the flow of images and sounds that surround us on a daily basis and sell us idealized images, products, and ideas. Such "spots" and "ads" normally constitute a homogeneous transformation of the public sphere into the marketplace that has robbed it of its individuality and critical role. Yet in the *Trans-Voices* project, artists were asked to interrupt this flow, to disrupt its continuity and awaken us from complacency. These works cause us to reflect on ourselves, the positions we occupy in the world, and the unconscious assumptions that guide us through our lives.

The mix of the audio and video work allows us to explore some of the relationships and differences between the works produced in France and the United States. Both articulate a variety of stylistic approaches, differing cultural backgrounds, and a range of diverse subjects. The selection of artists addresses not only the East-West axis but the North-South as well. "American" artists include those of Canadian and Central and South American origins, and the "French" artists include those of Northern European, Mediterranean, and North African origin. The artists were asked to produce works that were bilingual or non-verbal, comprehensible to audiences in both countries. This universalism, of course, harks back to a modernist ideal, but the place of the art works represents a changed view of the role of art.

The cycle of video and audio pieces begins with Nam June Paik and Paul Garrin's *A Tale of Two Cities*. In the videotape's kaleidoscopic mix of images from New York and Paris, these two cities are joined in a pop and cultural dialogue mediated by the processed collage images of Paik, the artist identified with the founding of video as art, and Garrin, who represents a new generation of media artists. The audio *Haiti Taxi*, produced by Sir Ali, is a poignant meditation on being uprooted from one's homeland. Singer James Germain appears as a Haitian taxi driver who is traveling from Haiti to Paris. Through the song we hear a poetic evocation of the difficulty of moving one's life to a new culture. Chris Burke's *Who We Are* is a cacophony of off-air voices, a powerful indictment of the rise of fascism in America and Europe. The French media artist Nil Yalter reflects on the multicultural experience of Europe through video images of female immigrant workers protesting in the streets of Algiers. The mix of multicultural French and American voices and the textures of daily life fill Berkeley-based audio artist Charles Amirkhanian's complex *Chu Lu Lu*. The fear of immigrants and rise of xenophobia in contemporary Europe is historicized in Beth B's powerful reading of racist texts seen over images of Nazi soldiers. Algerian-born Jimmy Oihid sings—in English, Arabic, and French—a mix of blues, chaabi, reggae, and rock protests against all forms of dictatorship, from Muslim fundamentalism to the politics of manipulation. Angela Melitopoulos' videotape *Blown Up* concerns the near-mythic power of media, evoked through images from American popular culture seen on a child's bubble of chewing gum. The range of dialogue between cultures continues through the spoken word in Ambrosia Shepherd's *This I Saw*, an audio text expressing a poetic and personal dream of rapprochement among differing cultures. Zap Mama continues this dialogue in their polyphonic *Citizens*, an *a capella* expression of tolerance and respect for the dignity of others. In *Paradigm Shift*, a richly visualized collage of sounds and images derived from African cosmology, African-American video and installation artist Philip Mallory-Jones offers a poetic rumination on the plight of the African diaspora. B Love's *Women*, a rap piece performed by two women—one black, one white—denounces sexism and racism, a theme also taken on by KRS-ONE (Kris Parker), one of America's leading rap artists.

The global geopolitics of issues such as national boundaries, acid rain, and nuclear arms are charted in Dara Birnbaum's visual work *Transgressions*. A new world order is seen as a new definition of American imperialism in the video collective Canal Dechaîné's *Happy New Order!*, which employs images from television to critique their meaning. The power of words and the potential to use them to mask or transform meaning is explored in Gregory Whitehead's *How to Pronounce the New World Order*. A revisionary view of the relationship of America's colonial past to our present day life is explored in Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco's performative audio work *Fin de Siècle Prayer*. The French video artist Pierre Lobstein, in *Fire! The Memory*, looks at America's past through images from Native American dance and the conquest of the West, suggesting a poetic exchange of myth and hope between Native American and European peoples. Native American audio artist Peggy Berryhill offers a sound collage inspired by her Muskogee Native American heritage. Entitled *All Life Is Sacred*, this work celebrates Muskogee culture's innate union with nature. Victor Masayesva, Jr.'s *Two Faces of One Room* poses questions of historical and cultural difference between Native American and European culture. The piece juxtaposes the sacred architectural spaces of the American Indian kiva and the Western European cathedral.

Massilia Sound System has created an imaginary encounter between a Jamaican and a French Provençal in an international airport. The musical style of "rub-a-dub" mixes references to Jamaican and African-Caribbean culture through the Mediterranean Occitan tongue. The hypocrisy

of capitalist society is confronted in Christian Marclay's *Love*, a witty piece which equates love and money. Michel Chion's video *Wanderer's Night Song* uses a poem by Goethe as the basis for a reflection on universality and the individual, which Chion sees as interdependent. Bernard Heidsieck's *France-U.S.A.: Breaths at the Summit* creates an audio recording of an imaginary social gathering where leading French and American writers and poets from the past are reunited. Ghédalia Tazartès, by using his voice and a kazoo in *Untitled*, evokes the spirituality behind the cultures of Europe's nomadic peoples.

The body becomes a metaphor for the nation and for changes taking place in Europe and America today in Tom Kalin's videotape *Nation*, which addresses the notion that bodies, as lands, can be charted through language, politics, and medicine. The piece becomes an interrogation of the politics behind the "international research community." Patrick de Geetere and Cathy Wagner's *Europe Feedback Daydream* takes on censorship and also explores how issues are represented in images often devoid of concrete meaning. Gran Fury's *Rubber Lover* employs the pop lyrics of Deee-Lite to remind listeners to use condoms in the battle to control the spread of AIDS. Benoît Carré's *Never One Without the Other* offers a meditation on the viewer's relationship to television as we watch a man stare into the camera while his face appears to break apart into the television screen.

In *With Oneself and with Others*, Michel Musseau electronically processes human voices to create a personal reflection on the state of the modern world. Europe's enchantment with American consumer culture is evoked in Bruce Yonemoto and Norman Yonemoto's *A history*, which shows key cultural monuments of Europe, such as the Eiffel Tower and the Acropolis, reflected in the seductive and glossy surface of a 1960s Cadillac, a gleaming symbol of excess. The goal to create a new musical language and global harmony through a sound collage is explored in Nicolas Frize's audio work *Precipitations*. In *From the Other Side*, Luc Ferrari engages in a musical conversation about cultural differences and the need to communicate. The final work in the schedule is an upbeat song of optimism and hope, with words and music by Yoko Ono. *I Love You, Earth!* is a song whose message will be understood around the world.

The billboards created for the subways and exhibited on the walls of the Film and Video Gallery use a variety of stylistic, imagistic, and formal strategies to engage the subway rider and to bring the artists' current concerns to the public sphere. As with the video and audio pieces, the eleven billboards are thematically and stylistically diverse. The artists variously address issues ranging from AIDS in Masami Teraoka's *AIDS World Story*, a playful cross-cultural evocation of historical and cultural change in attitudes toward sex brought on by the AIDS crisis. The loss of life through illness or war is lamented in Lorna Simpson's demarcation of where "She Was," "He Was," and "They Were," text which is on her billboard.

U.S. Nickel, Discontinued in 1938 (1992), Dominique Blain.

The state of modern religion as it attempts to cope with moral and ethical issues is delineated through the use of language and image that confront the viewers' vantage point in Jochen Gerz's *How Can You Live?*. The repression of one culture by another is treated in Alfredo Jaar's *1992*, which shows a detention camp in Hong Kong used to contain Vietnamese refugees. This represents a worldwide condition of the treatment of immigrants and the people caught between changing regimes and borders. And, similarly, the treatment of native peoples by colonizing forces is ironically represented in North American artist Dominique Blain's *U.S. Nickel, Discontinued in 1938*, which shows the silver U.S. Indian-head nickel with the word "liberty" emphasized. The American dream, from the point of view of an immigrant or foreigner, is questioned in Christian Boltanski's *Notice*, an autobiographical reflection on a relative's journey to America, still looked at as a "New World."

The use of the large-scale billboard makes us aware of the strategies of advertising and is here used to address issues of importance to American and French society. This includes playing with the seductive images of luxury goods in Philippe Cazal's *Empire*, which reflects on imperialism in the late twentieth century. The issue of racism, so potent in contemporary Western society, is confronted in two poetic and expressive works: Touhami Ennadre's *Hands of the World*, in which hands are expressive of humanity and creativity, and Marie-Jo Lafontaine's *We Are All Shadows*, in which the fires of hate that destroy communities are depicted by an intense wall of red flames. Today, an increase in censorship has threatened essential freedoms of democracy. Annette Messager's *Prude America-France Impertinente* deals directly with the censorship of images of the body. Messager sees this as an institutionalized attempt to limit all free expression. Laurie Simmons' *Lying Objects*

explores the representation and the objectification of the female body in our culture, as we see naked female mannequins placed among everyday objects, revealing banal conditions in new ways.

All of the works in *Trans-Voices* force us to critically rethink how we see and relate to the daily conditions of our lives. The structure of *Trans-Voices*, wherein each art work bears a similarity to television, radio, or subway advertisements, serves as a jolt; it shocks us out of our usual passive acceptance of these images and into a direct confrontation with issues and ideas. The "ads" in *Trans-Voices* make us stop for a moment and, one would hope, question the "products" being sold to us.

John G. Hanhardt
Adam D. Weinberg
James Clark

SCHEDULE

All video works are 1992, color, sound, and 1 minute or less; all audio works are 1992, stereo, and 1 minute or less. All video and audio works are being presented on laserdisc.

Works will run continuously in the following 34-minute cycle:

Nam June Paik and Paul Garrin, *A Tale of Two Cities/Si deux villes m'étaient contées*, videotape.
Sir Ali (Ali Alizadeh), *Haiti Taxi*, audiotape.
Chris Burke, *Who We Are/Qui Nous Sommes*, audiotape.
Nil Yalter, *Les rites circulaires/Circular Rituals*, videotape.
Charles Amirkhanian, *Chu Lu Lu*, audiotape.
Beth B, *Amnesia*, videotape.
Jimmy Oihid (Abderrahmane Belkous), *Je suis de ceux qui protestent/I Am Among Those Who Protest*, audiotape.
Angela Melitopoulos, *Blown Up/Implosion*, videotape.
Ambrosia Shepherd, *This I Saw/Ce que j'ai vu*, audiotape.
Zap Mama, *Citoyens/Citizens*, audiotape.
Philip Mallory-Jones, *Paradigm Shift/Changement de modèle*, videotape.
B Love (Sandrine Brival), *Femmes/Women*, audiotape.
KRS-ONE (Kris Parker), *Untitled/Sans titre*, audiotape.
KRS-ONE appears courtesy of Jive Records.
Dara Birnbaum, *Transgressions*, videotape.
Canal Dechaîné, *Happy New Order!/Bon et heureux nouvel ordre!*, videotape.
Gregory Whitehead, *How to Pronounce the New World Order/Comment prononcer le New World Order*, audiotape.
Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco, *Fin de Siècle Prayer/Prière de fin de siècle*, audiotape.
Pierre Lobstein, *Au Feu! La mémoire/Fire! The Memory*, videotape.
Peggy Berryhill, *All Life Is Sacred/Toute vie est sacrée*, audiotape.
Victor Masayesva, Jr., *Two Faces of One Room/Chambre à deux visages*, videotape.
Massilia Sound System, *Wicked Corteta*, audiotape.
Christian Marclay, *Love*, audiotape.
Michel Chion, *Chant de nuit du voyageur/Wanderer's Night Song*, videotape.
Bernard Heidsieck, *France-USA: Souffles au sommet/France-USA: Breaths at the Summit*, audiotape.
Ghédalia Tazartès, *Sans titre/Untitled*, audiotape.
Tom Kalin, *Nation*, videotape.
Patrick de Geetere and Cathy Wagner, *Europe Feedback Daydream/Par d'autres mains manipulé*, videotape.
Gran Fury, *Rubber Lover/Mon amour de latex*, audiotape.
Benoît Carré, *Jamais l'un sans l'autre/Never One Without the Other*, videotape.
Michel Musseau, *Avec soi-même et avec les autres/With Oneself and with Others*, audiotape.
Bruce Yonemoto and Norman Yonemoto, *Ahistory/Une Non-histoire*, videotape.
Nicolas Frize, *Précipitations/Precipitations*, audiotape.
Luc Ferrari, *De l'autre côté/From the Other Side*, audiotape.
Yoko Ono, *I Love You, Earth!/Je t'aime, terre!*, audiotape.

BILLBOARDS

All billboards are 1992, offset lithographs, 45½" high × 59½" wide.

Dominique Blain, *U.S. Nickel, Discontinued in 1938/U.S. Nickel, Discontinué en 1938*.
Christian Boltanski, *Avis de recherche/Notice*.
Philippe Cazal, *Empire*.
Touhami Ennadre, *Mains du monde/Hands of the World*.
Jochen Gerz, *Comment vivre?/How Can You Live?*.
Alfredo Jaar, *1992*.
Marie-Jo Lafontaine, *Nous sommes tous des ombres/We Are All Shadows*.
Annette Messager, *Prude America-France Impertinente*.
Laurie Simmons, *Lying Objects/Objets Couchés*.
Lorna Simpson, *Untitled/Sans titre*.
Masami Teraoka, *AIDS World Story/Histoire mondiale du SIDA*.

Trans-Voices is a commissioned, multimedia exhibition designed to transcend geographic and language barriers with urgent messages about the fundamental social, political, economic, and ecological shifts affecting Europe and the United States at the close of the twentieth century. *Trans-Voices* is a collaborative project, co-curated by John G. Hanhardt, curator, film and video, Whitney Museum of American Art; Adam D. Weinberg, artistic and program director, American Center, Paris; and James Clark, executive director, Public Art Fund, Inc., New York.

Trans-Voices was produced by Robert Beck, video, U.S., Ray Gallon, audio, U.S., and Michelle Syn Guérin, audio and video, France. The French videotapes were co-produced by the Centre International de Création Vidéo, Montbeliard-Belfort. Post-production support was provided by MTV, New York; Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio; Pacific Ocean Post, Santa Monica, California; Mikros Image, Paris; Délégation aux Arts Plastiques, Ministère de la Culture de France, Paris; and Tele-Edit, Minneapolis.

Trans-Voices is presented in the United States in cooperation with MTV; THIRTEEN/WNET, New York; A.P.R. (American Public Radio); and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority; and in France by Canal +, R.T.L. (Radio-Télévision Luxembeourg) and the R.A.T.P. (Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens).

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945 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Hours: Wednesday 11:00–6:00
Thursday 1:00–8:00
Friday–Sunday 11:00–6:00

Film and video information: (212) 570-0537

Trans-Voices is presented at the Whitney Museum of American Art as part of the New American Film and Video Series, which is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Susan and Arthur Fleischer, Jr., Yoko Ono, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Whitney Museum of American Art 67
New American Film and Video Series

Robert Gardner: The Impulse to Preserve

October 28–November 8, 1992

Gallery talk, Thursday, October 29 at 6:15, preceding the 6:45 program. John G. Hanhardt and Robert Gardner will be present.

The Nuer (1971), Hilary Harris, with George Breidenbach and Robert Gardner. Photograph by Robert Gardner.

Introduction

"Robert Gardner: The Impulse to Preserve" is one of a series of exhibitions in which America's foremost independent filmmakers have been invited to reflect on films that have influenced and shaped their own work. Robert Gardner, a leading documentary filmmaker for more than thirty years, has had a major influence on the ethnographic film genre. Gardner's visual and narrative interpretation of world cultures and ways of life is expressed through lyrical cinematography and editing that highlights the filmmaker's personal and insightful relationship to his subjects. The results have been landmark films such as *Dead Birds* (1964), *Rivers of Sand* (1975), and *Forest of Bliss* (1986), powerful and evocative records of human interaction across many diverse lands and environments.

This exhibition also presents Gardner's selection of films that have inspired and influenced his distinctive style of filmmaking. In his essay, Gardner shares his concerns for humanism and his belief in the art of film, which are central motivations behind his work. This elegant, personal commentary on his learning of and relationship to the camera provides clear insight into Gardner's vision and view of the world.

Today, with the ongoing debates of postmodernism and critiques of the codes of cultural representation and identity, it is essential that we recognize the terms and influences of modernism and the goals and meanings of artists and art works that have informed our traditions and innovative ways of image making. The challenge of Gardner's art to contemporary critical and theoretical debates needs to be confronted in order to better understand and value the diversity and complexity of our culture and the world around us.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from Manufacturers Hanover Corporation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc., The Bohen Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Susan and Arthur Fleischer, Jr., Yoko Ono, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Impulse to Preserve

I do not know at what point in time it can be said that I began my life as a filmmaker. Could it have been the day I could at last reach the shelf where my father kept his 16mm movie projector? It was a Bell and Howell; the kind that had a heavy, round metal base and was made to bend in the middle so that it could be slid, miraculously, in and out of a velvet-lined box that smelled mysteriously of celluloid and electricity. It was then also that I became the projectionist at our passionate family screenings of Laurel and Hardy, Our Gang, and Charlie Chaplin. I knew that Chaplin was funniest but Our Gang touched me deeply with its almost true accounts of children trying to outwit a problematic world.

My father also had a 16mm camera, which he used to document the antics of his offspring. I have inherited what has survived of this troubling chronicle. Nowadays I can hardly bear to watch it, so heartbreaking are those conjurations of vanished childhoods. He seems never to have registered anything except joy, and yet I remember the business of growing up to have had its painful moments. Perhaps my memory is no less faulty than my father's camera, but I think it is a greater certainty that his camera, like all cameras, could be no more telling than the hand that held it.

The English poet Philip Larkin wrote that "the impulse to preserve is at the bottom of all art." It must have been some such urge to which my father succumbed when he lifted his camera to capture our somersaults and pony rides. He may not have been thinking of art but only of a way to arrest time and, I would guess, to preserve happiness. As I got older, I would sometimes open the long wooden box that held the tightly wound and silvered screen, slide the projector from its snug little house, thread up a reel that was getting pungent with neglect and allow myself a furtive look at the enchantments of a long forgotten summer.

At a certain point, I came into possession of my own camera and have, ever since, wondered how it should be used. Forty years ago there were no schools in which to learn filmmaking like the ones that are now in London, Paris, Rome, or even in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where I myself sometimes teach. We all learned by doing things and watching others do things who we had reason to think or to hope knew more than we did. We also learned by going to films, if lucky enough to be near a good supply, whenever the opportunity arose.

After college, I moved west to Seattle, Washington, where there was not yet a community of filmmakers. The University of Washington did however, have a small art gallery that booked a generous selection of great works of cinematic history. This was the era of Amos Vogel's inspiration, Cinema 16, which had already established film as an art form in New York City, and the idea had begun to travel west to flourish in places like San Francisco and even Seattle. I absorbed more and more examples of every available kind of film and grew to prefer nonfiction. This was unexpected, as my first inclination had been toward narrative, especially as practiced by such innovators as Vittorio De Sica and Roberto Rossellini, who could create so much life from thin but touching stories. I was also dazzled and sometimes perplexed by what was known then as experimental cinema. Here Alexander Hammid and Maya Deren are my chief delights. Of their films, I am still fondest of *Private Life of a Cat* (Hammid, 1947), and *Study in Choreography for Camera* (Deren, 1945). These two were and still are more engaging of the heart and more visually commanding than other denser, more surrealist works. I have always thought it important that Deren's final, unfinished venture was a commitment to actuality and not to fantasy.

Of all the films that entered my consciousness in those days, Basil Wright's *Song of Ceylon* (1934) appealed in some essential way both to my sensibilities and to any budding ambitions I might have had as a filmmaker. I do not think I was particularly aware of the film's importance to me at the time. It is a film whose subtle genius is easily obscured by the obvious charms of *Nanook of the North* (Robert Flaherty, 1922) or by the technical mastery of *Der Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*, Leni Riefenstahl, 1936). I am not certain how often I have seen Wright's film over the years, but each time I do, I discover new evidence of its amazing ability to make images that convey feeling and mood while at the same time represent—even preserve—the world of reality.

When I noticed a similar effect happening in other films like *Le sang des bêtes* (*The Blood of the Beasts*, Georges Franju, 1949), *Banditti de Orgosolo* (*Bandits of Orgosolo*, Vittorio de Seta, 1964) and in some of Dziga Vertov's less mannered efforts, I began thinking that perhaps it was possible to give utterance to inner feelings about the world by adroitly seizing it with a camera. For a young man with appropriately intense feelings but no demonstrated talent for expressing them, this discovery was an enormously engaging prospect. And, of course, I would continue attending films because doing that had already had such a good effect on me. Curiously, I seldom go to films these days unless they are ones I want to see again, or if they are the most recent work of a few new and old masters, friends or students. It seems there is so much less time than there was when I thought I had no choices but to see everything.

Soon there was no doubt in my mind that I should set about finding an answer to the question of where and how to point my camera at the world. Perhaps this was when my life in filmmaking really began. There was no feeling in all of this that if I didn't do it the world would be any poorer. It was more that if I *did* do it I might, just possibly, have a reason for continuing to live in it. My Protestant New England background instructed me not only to work hard but toward some purpose, preferably of the kind that improves both one's soul and one's surroundings. Idealism was in the air those days. World War II was over and the Cold War had not quite begun. In fact, we were told, there would be no wars if people were fed, housed, and educated. Telling us this was the great Scottish reformer/producer John Grierson, who had the curious notion that nonfiction film was the only

Dead Birds (1964), Robert Gardner.

possible teacher for a world just waiting to be taught. This was the idea that lent an air of evangelism to what came to be called the "documentary." For me, the possibility of doing something which might lift up humanity and also belong to Art was certainly exciting. However, on looking back I realize that, except for some of the earlier films of Humphrey Jennings, Lindsay Anderson, and especially Wright, I am not particularly attracted to much of what came from the Grierson movement. I now find most of that work a trifle bleak and earnest. The movement's goal to instruct was certainly admirable, but the work often seemed to lapse into preaching, and anyhow more Larkin-like impulses to preserve soon began to agitate my mind.

Though they can no doubt be detected in much earlier efforts, these longings to capture human reality in ways that might reveal its essence or significance seem to me to have fully asserted themselves by the time I began making *Dead Birds* (1964). That was in 1961, by which time I had already absorbed what I most liked in my brief formal study of anthropology and had abandoned any thought of a life in social science. There was no question now that my commitment to filmmaking would be influenced more by one of anthropology's intellectual sources, moral philosophy, than any of its mainstream doctrines. I remember my bewilderment those days with such dismal notions as functionalism and structuralism. For me these systems had in some miraculous way overlooked people entirely. The only appealing concept then current was something called "culture and personality." In this I found the first sensible way of organizing my thoughts about human realities. In fact, its basic premise—the existence of two fundamental engines of experience whose interaction shapes our lives—is related to an underlying theme I detect in many of my films: the tension between individual will and cultural constraint.

I sometimes wonder, while thinking about the cinematic inspiration upon which I drew such a long time ago, whether Grierson may not have had more of an influence than I had previously supposed. I do not remember in his voluminous and skillful writing that he ever made the observation that film could serve as an agent of moral inspection or even contemplation, but his sometimes high-mindedness about our ethical obligation to improve the human lot coincided with some of my own preoccupations both then and later. The important difference that I see between his view and my own is that I would prefer any moral to be drawn rather than pointed to and I am more concerned with contemplating than improving our ethical natures. This means, I suppose, that I was destined to follow a different aesthetic

Rivers of Sand (1975), Robert Gardner. Photograph by Joan Mitchell.

path in my search for imagery and for ways of transforming it into film. It has also meant that I would belong to a quite different philosophical congregation. I have never had the slightest wish to make instructional films. On the other hand, I would have been happy to follow Wright to the ends of the earth.

In 1961, Western New Guinea, where I went to make *Dead Birds*, was administered by The Netherlands. It was a place largely unknown even to travelers or anthropologists, the two callings specializing in distant and obscure geographies. When I accepted an invitation from the Netherlands New Guinea Office of Native Affairs to make a film in the Central Highlands, I looked without success for a source of reliable background information. Except for missionary newsletters carrying fantastic and self-serving tales of heathen treachery home to the parishioners, no one was writing anything sensible about the place to which I was going because no one had as yet gone there to do that. I felt a heavy responsibility to gather as many useful facts as possible. This feeling, which I now think to have been somewhat exaggerated, influenced the way I put together the group that would join me in the undertaking. I gave consideration to many different fields and interests, including humanistic anthropology, botany, natural history, and even sociology, an intellectual pursuit which I have yet to embrace with any warmth. All of what I speak here is part of the published record. What concerns me now is the question of what I wanted of my camera at that time, apart from its well-demonstrated faculty for documentation, and also the more practical matter of how I intended to satisfy those wishes. Up to that point, I had made a number of efforts and experiments in cinematography but nothing on the scale of what was to become *Dead Birds*.

I remember hoping, above all else, that whatever I did with a camera should engage the eye. Even in 1961, it was the formal qualities of the image (was I still in thrall to Vertov?) which interested me at least as much as the information toward which I have already confessed a feeling of responsibility. To some extent these two requirements, of shape and of content, were destined to compete. It would be nice not to quarrel with Margaret Mead, who said of *Dead Birds* that "art neither has been subordinated to, nor has it been allowed to overrule science." Yet, I have come to think she was proposing a most unlikely achievement, at least under the circumstances which prevailed in making that film. In any case, even if I was unable at the time to reach an entirely satisfactory solution to this vexing issue, I worked diligently to provide myself with the technical means I thought most suited to the task.

The year I was making these preparations, 1960, was the precise moment in the history of cinema when workable and lightweight synchronous sound and film equipment was being developed and tested. I had made some trials of my own as early as 1957, when I accompanied John Marshall to the Kalahari and brought with me a small, soundproofed camera that ran at a constant speed but seemed an

impossibly awkward and ponderous way to make films. So I chose to use a camera designed for straightforward image making, the standard Arriflex. At the time it was without peer, and even today it is the camera I would choose if noise was not a consideration or if I was looking for an instrument with the greatest reliability and ease of use. I was equipped to shoot film using either 100- or 400-foot lengths. Translated into time this would, if I wished, enable me to make a single scene lasting as long as eleven minutes. Of course, I never wanted to do so, but I know of occasions (especially in ethnographic filmmaking) when even greater lengths of stock are used to make even longer shots, often on the assumption that doing so will somehow guarantee accuracy or thoroughness. From at least 1960 to the present day, I have thought that the sophistication of the technology employed to make a film, compared to the kind of thinking that instructs its use, is a matter of relatively little consequence. Beautiful films can be made with minimal means, and an abundance of means seems frequently to result in just the opposite. In New Guinea, many years ago, I think it can be said that I was adequately but modestly equipped. At least nothing technical was going to submerge the ideas informing the image making.

One of my priorities was to make a film about certain particular individuals through whose lives and situations the film's themes and narrative threads could be developed. This was a decision of the most basic kind. Among other things, it meant that the camera would not be used for passive observation but as an active agent, disclosing the identities and recounting the experiences of some individuals but not others. I still wanted to see all I possibly could of the context within which these individuals existed, but I wanted to do this by deliberately, though not exclusively, limiting my gaze to an exploration of the space which they occupied. I was interested in entering the lives of some very real people. I was not at all interested in making a film about abstractions like society, culture, and personality, or about items on some ethnographic laundry list. Once, a long time ago, I was told by a professor of anthropology who had just seen *Dead Birds*: "You sure have some beautiful data." I think he thought I was in the enviable position of being able to put the film through some kind of methodological processor. What he didn't realize was that filmmaking is itself transformative and that what he was calling "data" had already lost their existential virginity.

What went into the choices of the two main figures in

Dead Birds (1964), Robert Gardner.

Forest of Bliss (1986), Robert Gardner.

Dead Birds is a story I will tell some other time. My intent here is to try and remember the way my mind worked with such questions as how pictorial style in filmmaking is formulated and how, once it is, both the shape and content of a film begin to be established. This was not the way I phrased these questions thirty years ago. In those days, I was too preoccupied with the problems that confront anyone who is setting out to make a film largely on his own: what camera or cameras to take, how to protect them from heat and humidity, will there be a way to charge the batteries, and so on, through the endless litany of film's technical worries. I knew only that there was one thing I definitely wanted and that was for the camera in *Dead Birds* to be active and not passive, to interrogate and not simply observe. To achieve this meant giving some thought to camera technique and then making decisions about how actually to use the camera, where to point it or how to hold it. What I decided, among other things and in no particular order of importance, was that there would be minimal use of a tripod, the camera would be primarily fluid or moving, and short lenses would be used in close proximity (as opposed to long lenses used at a distance).

When I turn my thoughts to more recent work, it is interesting to me to note that I have retained many of the prejudices I had when starting *Dead Birds*. Of course, some things have changed for me, such as my recent interest in extremely long lenses, as used in *Forest of Bliss* (1986), but the underlying intention of *telling* the story by relying primarily on visual strategies has only grown stronger over time. It is true that *Dead Birds* is in a certain sense extremely literary. I wrote it with as much effort as went into the photography and its enormous text of words is essential to its comprehension as a tale. However, I can also see that its words were intended as an acknowledgment of a legacy of such glorious commentaries as, say, Robert Knox's in *Song of Ceylon*, or Auden's in *Night Mail* (Basil Wright and Harry Watt, 1936). In addition, I feel the film was a point not only of arrival but of departure toward more exclusively visual concerns.

There is another bit of visual strategy that should be mentioned in discussing the intentions lying behind the making of *Dead Birds*, that is, the way the camera is used to follow the action. I am referring to what is called the "point of view": the position elected for the camera to "see" events as they unfold. I think a good example of what I mean are the shots of Weyak, the principal adult male in the film, shot the morning after the funeral of the little boy killed in ambush by enemy warriors. The camera is traveling (I would like to think it is floating) in a path parallel to the direction in which Weyak is walking. It is at Weyak's side as he moves toward the watchtower, his own watchtower, the one near which the little boy was killed. What is important in this scene for the point I'm trying to make is that the camera never gets in front of Weyak to register an oncoming point of view. To have done this would have meant asking Weyak to wait while I got ahead of him and then telling him to start walking again when I was ready to make the next shot. There is the possibility, of course, that I could have stayed in front of him the whole time he was striding along by somehow walking backwards at the same speed over the uneven terrain he himself was traversing. However, even in 1961, I was neither nimble nor experienced enough to perform such a stunt. The importance of this matter for me is that the scene as shot has an inherent integrity that a more contrived, head-on point of view would have seriously compromised.

Using a camera in such a way that it is following action has certain consequences apart from simply bolstering a scene's credibility. For one thing, it becomes more than likely that filmmakers who forgo directing the behavior of those they are filming will find they are almost always behind whatever they are trying to photograph. They tend to spend a great deal of time and effort trying to catch up with what is going on. Only with considerable effort, as in the example from *Dead Birds*, does one have the opportunity to do any better than stay abreast of things. This kind of camera is not what I would call "privileged." It can be part of the action but it is not permitted to interrupt or intervene in the action. Flaherty's camera was frequently put where it could see more than Nanook himself could. It—and also everyone in the audience—was thereby privileged in the way they experienced what was represented as reality. Denying the camera these kinds of privileges puts an enormous premium on the ability to anticipate what is going to happen. Nonfiction filmmakers with the kinds of interests and scruples that require them to follow rather than lead the action need an almost sixth sense of what is going to happen just to fall upon something visually interesting. Lacking what I suspect is this largely intuitive faculty, it's probably inevitable that what's most important will escape even the best-intentioned filmmaker. I have always told students that the life of a nonfiction filmmaker is really a search for ways to be there before something happens.

Forest of Bliss (1986), Robert Gardner. Photograph by Jane Tuckerman

Two things which determine much of what happens in all our lives are circumstance and chance. It is no surprise then that they play equally important roles in the art of telling nonfictional stories about our lives. It is, in a sense, the chance nature of reality which draws our attention to one thing instead of another, that sets in motion the combination of eye and hand movements which points a camera in this direction and not in that, and which compels us through some urgency to follow and to preserve what we see. I will offer an example of what I mean.

When I started the filming for *Forest of Bliss*, I knew that my freedom to move about the city of Benares would be limited by a variety of rules and conventions as well as my own hesitation. I would, in short, be limited by circumstances. For example, due to my Westernness, there would be places where I would not be immediately welcome. One of those places was of great importance to me, the burning ghat called Manikarnika. It was my inadvertent stumbling into that extraordinary space ten years earlier which had filled me with a panic that kept me coming back to Benares in an attempt to relieve. Another circumstance at this moment in time was that on the shore of the Ganges, very close to Manikarnika, a man was repairing a battered old boat. I saw in this wreck a chance to mentally and pictorially reenter the space from which I felt excluded. Everyday, I visited the carpenter who was repairing the boat and filmed its gradual restoration while, at the same time, I got physically and emotionally more ready to enter the larger space that included, a few hundred feet away, Manikarnika. Finally, the boat was finished and I moved onto the Burning Ground.

As chance plays its decisive part in what finds its way into nonfiction films, it sometimes seems almost to overwhelm all other considerations. By this I mean that occasionally, certain coincidences in time and space result in such a powerful rendering of reality that transposing them to the screen runs the risk of their being seen as artifice. This is the phenomenon where actuality outperforms the imagination, outfables the fabulous. I will relate an incident that explains what I mean.

While working on *Forest of Bliss*, I went to nearly absurd lengths of time and effort to obtain an image of a kite falling from a great height into the Ganges near its far shore. It was the time of year when kites were being flown by hundreds of children everyday. In spite of the innumerable opportunities they provided, I was never happy with what I saw in the camera's viewfinder. I was driven by the idea that if I could make this image I would be able to convey a sense of

finality or loss. My thinking was that when its string broke, a kite was simply departing forever. One late afternoon while coming home up the river, I saw a boat leaving the city shore with what I could see was the wrapped-up body of a child. I knew this bundle was being rowed out to be dropped into the middle of the river. As I filmed the scene, I could see a number of kites sailing above the river toward the opposite shore. In what might have been the third or fourth shot, the one in which the child's body was actually slipped into the river, I could see in the background a bright red kite simultaneously entering the water. I do not think that this coincidence of burials means to anyone else exactly what it means to me, but I am quite sure that chance, which had brought these two events together, made it possible to make an image of heightened and extended meaning. But the story does not end here. I learned a short time after shooting these scenes that the child who was put into the Ganges had fallen to its death while flying a kite from the parapet of a building close to the river's edge. Chance was beginning to weave an improbable web of circumstance. Were there ever to have been a voiced commentary in *Forest of Bliss* and if I had spoken on the sound track the words of how this child had died, while at the same time the screen pictured it being put into the river at the very moment a kite was falling into the water a short distance away—audiences might understandably object to such apparent contrivance.

The lesson here may be that it is easy enough to leave out something which threatens to strain credulity, but much harder to grasp what is in the midst of happening before one's eyes and to do so in such a way as to be pointing the camera in the right direction at the right time. In any case, it is precisely these kite-falling kinds of stories for which life is the unique source and that, if watched carefully enough, give people like me the opportunity to tell them on film. What one must do, it appears, is maintain the kind of vigilance that will lead to capturing the moments that only chance and circumstance provide, and what that seems to require, at the very least, is a state of heightened readiness in which one's eyes are open to all the relationships possible between visible entities. This relatively uncommon state of mind, resembling a sort of trance, seems to me essential in order to see the connectedness of events not only as elements in the physical space they occupy but in their significance as phenomena linked by meaning. What I am suggesting is that there is a way to make films which owe their existence primarily to the act of seeing: that it is quite possible for films to issue forth from a vision instead of a concept or an act of the imagination. Of my own work I feel this to have happened most recently with *Forest of Bliss*. Both its shape and its content emerged from a quite personal inspection of the world through a camera. For me, that world is still as mysterious as ever but the camera has helped me to find a way through it.

Robert Gardner

SCHEDULE

All films are 16mm, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesdays at 3:00

Private Life of a Cat (United States, 1947), Alexander Hammid. Black-and-white, 20 minutes.

Blunden Harbour (United States, 1951), Robert Gardner. 22 minutes.

The Nuer (United States, 1971), Hilary Harris with George Breidenbach and Robert Gardner. 73 minutes.

Thursdays at 2:00

Las Hurdes (Land Without Bread; Terre sans pain) (Spain, 1932), Luis Buñuel. Black-and-white, with English narration. 27 minutes.

Dead Birds (United States, 1964) Robert Gardner. 85 minutes.

Thursdays at 6:45

Mark Tobey (United States, 1952), Robert Gardner. 19 minutes.

Dancing with Miklos—While He Makes the Blue Danube Waltz (United States, 1992), Robert Gardner. 35mm film transfer to ¾" video, 28 minutes.

Fridays at 2:00

À propos de Nice (France, 1930), Jean Vigo. Black-and- white, silent with English intertitles, 28 minutes.

Mark Tobey Abroad (United States, 1973), Robert Gardner. 28 minutes.

Ika Hands (United States, 1988), Robert Gardner. 60 minutes.

Saturdays at noon

Unsere Afrikareise (Our Trip to Africa) (Austria, 1966), Peter Kubelka. 12½ minutes.

Study in Choreography for Camera (United States, 1945), Maya Deren. Black-and-white, 3 minutes.

Rivers of Sand (United States, 1975), Robert Gardner. 83 minutes.

Saturdays at 3:00

Le sang des bêtes (The Blood of the Beasts) (France, 1949), Georges Franju, with English narration, 22 minutes.

Sons of Shiva (United States, 1985), Robert Gardner with Akos Ostor. 29 minutes.

Deep Hearts (United States, 1981), Robert Gardner. 58 minutes.

Sundays at 2:00

Song of Ceylon (Great Britain, 1934), Basil Wright. Black-and-white, 39 minutes.

Forest of Bliss (United States, 1986), Robert Gardner. 90 minutes.

All photographs courtesy Film Study Center, Harvard University.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 68
New American Film and Video Series

Jonas Mekas

November 18—December 6, 1992

Gallery talk, Thursday, November 19 at 6:30.
David James and Jonas Mekas will be present.

The ironies of this long-overdue retrospective for a filmmaker whose whole oeuvre has been a meditation on retrospection are only multiplied by the fact that it takes place in a museum. Jonas Mekas is himself no stranger to museums; indeed one of his most notable achievements is to have co-founded one—Anthology Film Archives, the "first film museum exclusively devoted to the *film as an art*." Yet integral to the significance of his films is their questioning of the propriety of museum screenings or of any public exhibition. With what expectations shall we approach films whose author admits that he "won't mind [he is almost encouraging it] if the Viewer will choose to watch only certain parts of the work?" What decorum will be appropriate to contemplating the films of a man, a good part of whose life has been spent in filming his own life? In that life, the tensions between, on the one hand, the invention of a cinema of domestic introspection and, on the other, a vision of public cinema of global effectivity reflect Mekas' engagement in a cultural project which is at once utopian and distinctively American in its belief that a radically decentralized, truly populist, and intensely personal film practice might occasion a general political renewal.

Jonas Mekas in *Paradise Not Yet Lost (a/k/a Oona's Third Year)* (1979). Production photograph by Hollis Melton.

Born on Christmas Eve in 1922 in the Lithuanian village of Seminiškiai, and displaced from his homeland by the Soviet and Nazi invasions, Mekas arrived in New York with his brother, Adolfas, in 1949. Almost immediately they began planning anti-war films, with Jonas using his meager earnings from factory work to document the refugee communities. But for many years it seemed that his own filmmaking projects were overshadowed by his other activities on behalf of the emerging independent cinemas of the fifties and sixties; in his interwoven careers as a journalist, an exhibitor and distributor, an archivist, a tireless publicist, polemicist, and fundraiser, he was a self-styled "raving maniac of the cinema."

Mekas' first major project was a journalistic one, the founding of *Film Culture* in 1955. Initially oriented toward reforming the feature film, within a few years the journal had become the advocate of what was known first as experimental and soon as underground film. Augmented by the weekly column Mekas began writing for *The Village Voice* in 1958, *Film Culture* heralded the unprecedented formal vocabularies and expressive functions of an anti-industrial practice of film that had captured the imagination of a generation of cinéastes. At the same time, he was assisting in the construction of alternative institutions which could bring this movement to public light and life; many of these institutions have since been imitated all over the world and provide the model for the independent film and video communities of today.

Building on the tradition of independent screenings started by Maya Deren and extended by Amos and Marcia Vogel's Cinema 16, Mekas promoted a series of itinerant showcases, which eventually stabilized when Anthology Film Archives found a permanent home in New York. Inevitably, these efforts to secure exhibition venues were complemented by innovations in production and distribution. Again building on precedents set by Maya Deren, in 1961 Mekas joined with others who believed that "the official cinema all over the world is running out of breath. It is morally corrupt, aesthetically obsolete, thematically superficial, temperamentally boring"; together they formed the

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New American Cinema Group, an organization dedicated to creating American equivalents of the European New Wave art cinemas of the time. Of the projects created in the vortex of the New American Cinema, the most important was the Film-Makers' Cooperative, a non-exclusive, non-discriminatory distribution center run for and by filmmakers themselves. Artists who before had worked in isolation from and often in ignorance of one another suddenly found themselves to be the cultural and political eyes and ears of their times. The Coop became the means of their communication with one another and also with an equally ambitious audience, all, like Mekas himself, dedicated to the "complete derangement of the official cinematic senses." By the early sixties, Mekas' participation in this culture included his own filmmaking.

Having failed in their early attempts both to edit the documentary footage of the émigré Lithuanian communities and to sell scripts to Hollywood, the Mekas brothers decided on independent feature. Their first production, *Guns of the Trees* (1962), written and directed by Jonas, won first prize at the Second International Free Cinema Festival at Porretta Terme, Italy, in 1962. Adolfas made *Hallelujah the Hills* in that same year. In 1964, the Mekas brothers' film version of Kenneth Brown's play *The Brig* won the grand prize at the 1964 Venice Documentary Festival. Throughout this period, however, another even more innovative project had slowly been developing in Jonas' mind.

Obliged to postpone feature film production by his other activities in the mid-sixties, Mekas still kept in touch with his art by continuing to photograph fragments of his daily life. A reflection of both his own inveterate drive to diary making and a privileging of attention to the practices of everyday life common in that era, this filming was to transform his role in cinema. Prompted by the need to look at these accumulated fragments again and again—and concerned for their safety after a fire almost destroyed them—he edited a selection of them and added a soundtrack. Labeling it *Diaries, Notes, and Sketches, Also Known As Walden* (1968–69), he showed the work-in-progress to the public in 1968. The first masterpiece of what was in fact a new film genre and a new use for the medium, *Walden* was followed by *Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania* (1971–72), the magisterial *Lost, Lost, Lost* (1976), and the other diary films which came to represent his entire engagement with the art. These films—categorically different from those made by the movie industry and challenging to individual viewers and institutions alike—turned out to be not provisional or merely preparatory to some other, more authentic films, but rather Mekas' own real work, his uniquely original—but also deeply traditional—way of living in America.

David E. James
Guest Curator

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SCHEDULE

All films are 16mm, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesdays at 1:00

Guns of the Trees (1962). Black-and-white, 75 min.
Film Magazine of the Arts (1963). Color and black-and-white, 20 min.
The Brig (1964). Black-and-white, 68 min.
Award Presentation to Andy Warhol (1964). Black-and-white, 12 min.
Report from Millbrook (1965–66). 12 min.

Thursdays at 2:00

Hare Krishna (1966). 4 min.
Notes on the Circus (1966). 12 min.
Cassis (1966). 4½ min.
The Italian Notebook (1967). Silent, 15 min.
Time & Fortune Vietnam Newsreel (1968). 4 min.
Diaries, Notes, and Sketches, Also Known As Walden (1968–69). 180 min.

Fridays at 1:00

Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania (1971–72). 82 min.
Lost, Lost, Lost (1976). Color and black-and-white, 178 min.

Saturdays at 1:00

In Between: 1964–8 (1978). 52 min.
Notes for Jerome (1978). 45 min.
Paradise Not Yet Lost (a/k/a/ Oona's Third Year) (1979). 96½ min.
Street Songs (1966–83). Black-and-white, 10½ min
cup/saucer/two dancers/radio (1965–83). 23 min.

Sundays at 1:00

Erick Hawkins: Excerpts from "Here and Now With Watchers"/Lucia Dlugoszewski Performs (1983). Black-and-white, 6 min.
He Stands in a Desert Counting the Seconds of His Life (1969–85). 150 min.
Scenes from the Life of Andy Warhol (1990). 38 min.
Quartet #1 (1992). 10 min.
Zefiro Torna or Scenes from the Life of George Maciunas (1992). 34 min.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 69
New American Film and Video Series

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Other Things Seen, Other Things Heard
December 23, 1992–January 31, 1993

Panel discussion, *Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Then and Now*, Tuesday, January 19 at 6:30 p.m.

Larry Rinder, moderator; Judith Barry, bell hooks, Yong Soon Min, panelists. Information: (212) 570-3652.

In the 1970s, the formative years of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's career, the San Francisco Bay Area was an important center for conceptual art, body art, performance, and video. The artist Tom Marioni's Museum of Conceptual Art provided a nexus for many artists working in these media, while the University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive of the University of California at Berkeley also served as an important venue for new performance, video, and avant-garde film. In contrast to the more objective and analytical styles of conceptual artists such as Joseph Kosuth and Lawrence Weiner, Bay Area artists—among them Marioni, Linda Montano, Terry Fox, and Howard Fried—tended to invest conceptual forms with personal and physical qualities. Another important Bay Area conceptualist group, known as Photography and Language, which included artists such as Lew Thomas, Hal Fischer, Peter d'Agostino, Donna-Lee Phillips, Sam Samore, and Lutz Bacher, adopted a more semiotic approach that incorporated elements of social critique. The art of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, like that of her Bay Area contemporaries Judith Barry and Yong Soon Min, reflects this historical context yet introduces an entirely individual approach to language and cultural complexity.

Cha was born on March 4, 1951 in Pusan, South Korea, where her family had arrived just ahead of the advancing North Korean and Chinese armies. A refugee even before birth, Cha was displaced again when, to escape the repressive conditions of the military rule imposed following the anti-government demonstrations of 1961, the Cha family left Korea for America. They lived briefly in Hawaii before settling permanently in San Francisco. This experience of displacement—explored in physical, cultural, linguistic, and spiritual terms—was to become the central theme of Cha's art.

While she occasionally addressed the personal and historical circumstances of her exile directly, Cha typically treated this theme symbolically, representing displacement through

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha performing *Other Things Seen, Other Things Heard (Ailleurs)* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1978.

shifts and ruptures in the visual and linguistic forms of her works. She developed an approach to displacement based largely on cinematic forms and the psychoanalytic aspects of French film theory. Cha integrated elements of these theories into her own exploration of the process of memory, communication, and psychic transformation.

It was characteristic of Cha to take thematic and formal approaches developed in one medium and reinterpret them in another; elements of film and video, for example, found their way into works on paper and vice versa. To provide access to these rich interrelationships, this exhibition juxtaposes film, video, a sound piece, performance documents, works on paper, artist's books, and sculpture as well as a selection of journal entries and unpublished poems.

During the decade Cha spent as a student at the University of California at Berkeley (1968–78), she was exposed to conceptual art and performance by Professor James

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Melchert. Another professor, Bertrand Augst, introduced her to the study of film and film theory. At the Pacific Film Archive, where Cha worked for many years as an usher and cashier, she saw and was strongly influenced by the films of Yasujiro Ozu, Kenzo Mizoguchi, Alain Resnais, Michael Snow, Carl Dreyer, Chris Marker, Maya Deren, Jean-Luc Godard, and Jean-Marie Straub and Danielle Huillet. During her years at UC Berkeley, she was also drawn to the writings of the Korean Symbolist poet Kim Sowol, as well as to the work of Stéphane Mallarmé, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Nathalie Sarraute, Marguerite Duras, Roland Barthes, and Monique Wittig.

Cha herself marked 1974 as the year in which she began her career as "producer, director, performer, writer in video and film productions, installations, performances, and published texts."[1] Her characteristic merging of the highly reductive and language-oriented aesthetic of conceptual art with the austere yet poetically rich cultural forms of her native Korea emerged at this time in works such as the video *Mouth to Mouth* (1975) and the performance *Aveugle Voix* (1975). In these early works, Cha was expressing viscerally what she later described as a "consciously imposed detachment" from language.[2] Moving freely among English, Korean, and French—not only in her art work, but also in her private journals—Cha came to approach language itself, that is, the very structure of communication, with increasing objectivity. Around 1977 she wrote:

> The main body of my work is with language, "looking for the roots of language before it is born on the tip of the tongue."
>
> Since having been forced to learn foreign languages more "consciously" at a later age, there has existed a different perception and orientation toward language. Certain areas that continue to hold interest for me are: grammatical structures of language, syntax. How words and meaning are *constructed* in the language system itself, by function or usage, and how transformation is brought about through manipulation, processes as changing the syntax, isolation, removing from context, repetition, and reduction to minimal units.[3]

In 1976, Cha spent a semester in Paris studying at the Centre d'Études Américaine du Cinéma with leading film theorists such as Christian Metz, Thierry Kuntzel, and Raymond Bellour. French film theory of that period expanded upon the structural linguistic approach to film images common in the 1960s to include analysis of the entire "apparatus" of the film experience. These theorists sought to develop a model that would account for the various relationships that existed between all the elements of the cinematic experience: filmmaker, camera, screen, screen image, and spectator. Cha was particularly drawn to the psychoanalytic approach, which related the cinema experience to the dream state or to an infantile state prior to the formation of the ego. Interested in nurturing a receptive consciousness in her audience, Cha utilized such theories to create variations on her own aesthetic forms.

The European sojourn marked the beginning of an especially fruitful period in Cha's career. In addition to her work in Paris, Cha spent some time in Amsterdam, where she became friends with the leading Icelandic conceptual artist and founder of the Fluxus-like sψm movement, Hreinn Fridfinnsson, whose whimsically concise approach dovetailed with her own. She began to explore media such as mail and stamp art, while stretching the formal boundaries of the so-called artist's book. Her art reached new extremes of formal reductivity, as in the artist's book *Untitled (Après tu es parti)* (1976), in which one large page of graph paper is marked with a single period. Other works, such as the rubber stamp piece *Markings* (1976), suggest a willingness to express highly personal and emotionally charged subject matter.

In 1978, after receiving a BA in Comparative Literature from UC Berkeley (her fourth degree: she already held a BA, an MA, and an MFA in art), Cha traveled to Japan and to Korea for the first time since her childhood. As expressed in her three-channel video work *Passages/Paysages* (1978) and her film-video installation *EXIL E E* (1980), it would seem that Cha's ability to return physically to her homeland did not lessen her fundamental feeling of existential alienation. "My work, until now," she wrote in 1978, "in one sense has been a series of metaphors for the return, going back to a lost time and space, *always in the imaginary* [my emphasis]. The content of my work has been the realization of the imprint, the inscription etched from the experience of leaving."[4]

For Cha, a return to origins—the mythic reversal of her original displacement—involved more than a plane trip; it called for a kind of spiritual transformation, undertaken by the artist in collaboration with her audience and her chosen medium (i.e., film, video, text, etc.). "The artist's path is close to that of an alchemist in that his/her path is that of a medium. His/her vision belongs to an altering, of material, and of perception. Through this attempt, the perception of the audience has the possibility of being altered, of being presented a constant change, Revolution."[5]

After moving to New York City in 1980, Cha completed two books, *Apparatus—Cinematographic Apparatus: Selected Writings* (1980) and *Dictee* (1982), published by her former Berkeley classmate Reese Williams' Tanam Press. Both books confound categorization, *Apparatus* being simultaneously an artist's book and an anthology of film theory by writers such as Metz, Barthes, Baudry, Kuntzel, and Augst, and *Dictee* mixing together poetry, prose, photography, and found texts to create an astonishingly dense and poetic hybrid form.

Formally related to *Passages/Paysages* and *EXIL E E*, *Dictee* is a complex work encompassing many of the themes and formal strategies that occupied Cha throughout her career. This work, however, more overtly than others, centers on the role of women in history, weaving together disparate figures into a kind of ideal emotional-familial web. Unified by their search for identity, freedom, and the power of speech, the women of *Dictee* include Cha's mother, St. Theresa of Lisieux, Joan of Arc, and the Korean resistance

leader Yu Guan Soon. In addition, the book is divided into nine chapters, each of which is named for one of the muses of Greek mythology.

In 1981, Cha returned to Korea again, this time with her brother James, to shoot footage for the film *White Dust from Mongolia*. This project, which was never completed, was to have concerned a young aphasic Korean woman living in exile in Manchuria sometime during the period of the Japanese occupation of Korea (1909–45). During these brutal decades in Korean history, the occupying Japanese forces attempted to annihilate Korean culture and identity by forbidding Koreans to speak their own language, use Korean names, or wear traditional dress. The film, which Cha also considered producing in novel form, would have utilized two converging narratives, one concerning the woman's actions in the "present" and the other moving from the "past" into the "present," as the woman slowly recovered her memory.

On November 4, 1982, Theresa Cha was murdered. In the weeks before, she had been preparing work for her first New York exhibition, a series of photographs of hands from throughout the history of art. As with *White Dust from Mongolia*, all that is left from this project are a few photographs and notes that can only hint at her ultimate intention.

Until now Cha's legacy has been limited and her importance in art history difficult to measure, primarily because, since her death, Cha's work has been virtually inaccessible to the public. Only two small one-artist exhibitions have been held on the West Coast and she has been included in a handful of group shows. Recently, however, there has been a growing interest in her work, based largely on the commercially available artist's book *Dictee*, which has developed a passionate following and is being used in curricula on an increasing number of campuses throughout the country. As students of this book are already aware and as the other works in this exhibition prove, although her art is difficult and its rewards often melancholy, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha has left us with a compelling sense of the beauty and fragility of the paths of communication that join the human family.

Larry Rinder
Guest Curator

NOTES

1. Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, curriculum vitae, 1982, p. 1, University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California at Berkeley.
2. Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, "Personal Statement and Outline of Postdoctoral Project," c. 1978, p. 1, University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California at Berkeley.
3. Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, statement, after 1976, p. 1, University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California at Berkeley.
4. Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, "Personal Statement and Outline of Postdoctoral Project," p. 2.
5. Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, "Paths," 1978, p. 1, University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California at Berkeley.

Larry Rinder is Curator for Twentieth-Century Art, University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California at Berkeley.

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha rehearsing *Aveugle Voix* at the Greek Theater, Berkeley, California, 1975.

One-Artist Exhibitions

Union Gallery, San Jose, 1978; Athol McBean Gallery, San Francisco Art Institute, 1979; The Queens Museum, New York, 1981; Mills College Art Gallery, Oakland, 1989; University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley, "MATRIX/BERKELEY 137: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha," 1990.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Other Books and So, Amsterdam, 1977; Stempelplaats, Amsterdam, "International Rubber Stamp Design Exhibition," 1977; University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley, "M.F.A. Show," 1978; Ewing and George Paton Galleries, Melbourne University, "Videotapes by Women from the Los Angeles Women's Video Centre," 1979 (traveled); Living Art Museum, Reykjavík, Iceland, "Bookshow," 1980 (traveled); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, "Performance in the Rotunda," 1981; Artists Space, New York, "Group Exhibition: Victor Alzamora, Jennifer Bolande, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, and Steve Pollack," 1982; Collective for Living Cinema, New York, "The First Annual Asian American International Video Festival," 1982; The Kitchen, New York, "Women's Work," 1982; Anthology Film Archive and Millennium, New York, "3 Channel Group Show," 1983; The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, "Difference: On Representation and Sexuality," 1984; INTAR Latin American Art Gallery, New York, "Autobiography: In Her Own Image," 1989 (traveled); University Art Museum, University of California at Santa Barbara, "Mistaken Identities," 1992 (traveled).

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Trinh T. Minh-ha. "Grandma's Story." In *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989, pp. 119–51.

Wolf, Susan. "Theresa Cha: Recalling Telling ReTelling." *Afterimage*, 14 (Summer 1986), pp. 11–13.

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Dimensions are in inches; height precedes width precedes depth. Unless otherwise noted, all works are in the collection of the University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California at Berkeley; Gift of the Theresa Hak Kyung Cha Memorial Foundation.

Mixed Media

Untitled (Aveugle Voix), 1975 Text stenciled in ink on cloth, 76 × 36

Untitled (Repetitive/Pattern), 1975
Text and symbols stenciled in ink on cloth, with thread, 46 × 46

Untitled (Hand Hearing), c. 1976
Stenciled ink letters on burlap with thread and plastic, 14½ × 14

Mot Caché, 1978 Rubber stamp, 4 × 5 × 4

Mot Caché, 1978 Stamped text on postcard, 3½ × 5½

Surplus Novel, 1980
Porcelain jar, thread, typewritten text on paper, 1¾ × 2½
Collection of Bernadette Silveus

Untitled, 1980
Glass jar, thread, typewritten text on paper, 3 × 2 × 2

La chambre de Mao à 4 heures, 1981
Carved plywood, rice paper, stenciled text, and paint, 35 × 22½

Artist's Books

Untitled (Après tu es parti), 1976
Press-type text on four sheets of folded graph paper (double-sided), 12 × 8¼

JOUR NÉE, 1977
Press-type text on seven sheets of paper, 10 × 10 each

Works on Paper

Faire Part, 1975
Press-type text and ink on fifteen envelopes, 5⅝ × 7 each

L'image concrete feuille L'objet abstrait, 1976
Press-type text on eleven sheets of paper, 8¼ × 11 each

Markings, 1976
Stamped text on five sheets of paper, 11¾ × 8½ each

Untitled, 1976 Three mixed-media collages, 4¾ × 4¾ each

Audience—Distant Relative, 1978
Stamped text on six envelopes, 6½ × 9½ each

Untitled (Étang), 1978
Envelope containing six paper cards with printed text; envelope, 5 × 7½; cards 4¼ × 6 each

Untitled, n.d.
Magazine clippings stapled to paper, 12 × 9

Publications

Apparatus—Cinematographic Apparatus: Selected Writings. Edited by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. New York: Tanam Press, 1980.

Dictee. New York: Tanam Press, 1982.

Journals

Journal entry, June 1976 (Amsterdam)
Typewritten text on one sheet of paper, 11 11/16 × 8¼

Journal entries, August 16-September 21, 1976 (Oakland and San Francisco)
Typewritten text on ten sheets of paper, 11 × 8½ each

Journal entry, 1980
Handwritten text on two pages, 10 × 14 opened

Poems

Untitled ("flipping through pages . . . "), c. 1976
Handwritten text on one sheet of paper, 11 11/16 × 8¼

Untitled ("the missing page"), c. 1976
Typewritten text on one sheet of paper, 11 11/16 × 8¼

Untitled ("no not no . . . "), c. 1976
Ink text on one sheet of folded paper (double-sided), 8¾ × 12

Untitled ("ah ah ah ah ah ah . . . "), n.d.
Typewritten text on two sheets of paper, 11 × 8½ each

Untitled ("Vide . . . "), n.d.
Typewritten text on one sheet of paper, 11 × 8½

Untitled ("wash wash exhale . . . "), n.d.
Typewritten text on one sheet of paper, 11 × 8½

Preparatory Materials

It Is Almost That, 1977
Maquette for slide projection, press-type text and pastel on nineteen sheets of paper, 9½ × 12½ each

Passages/Paysages, 1978
Notes for three-channel video, typewritten text on one sheet of paper, 11 × 8½

White Dust from Mongolia, 1980–82
Score for unfinished film, handwritten text on four sheets of folded graph paper (double-sided), 11¾ × 16½ each

White Dust from Mongolia, 1980–82
Notes for unfinished film, typewritten text on six sheets of paper, 11 × 8½ each

White Dust from Mongolia, 1980–82
Notes for unfinished film, typewritten text on two sheets of paper, 11 × 8½ each

White Dust from Mongolia, 1980–82
Enlargement of 35mm negatives shot in conjunction with unfinished film; intended use of images unknown

Performance Documentation

Barren Cave Mute, 1974, Wurster Hall, University of California at Berkeley. Photograph; artist's text.

A Ble Wail, 1975, Worth Ryder Gallery, University of California at Berkeley. Photograph; artist's text.

Aveugle Voix, 1975, 63 Bluxome Street, San Francisco. Photograph.

Perte Loss, 1976, unrealized. Artist's text.

Reveille dans la brume, 1977, Fort Mason, San Francisco (traveled to La Mamelle, San Francisco). Photograph; artist's text.

Other Things Seen, Other Things Heard (Ailleurs), 1978, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (traveled to Western Front, Vancouver, British Columbia). Photographs.

Pause Still, 1979, 80 Langton Street, San Francisco. Artist's text.

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's work will continue to be explored by the Film and Video Department of the Whitney Museum, which will present her installation *EXIL E E* (1980) during the 1993–94 exhibition season.

SCHEDULE

All films are black-and-white and silent; all videotapes are ¾", black-and-white and sound.

Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays at noon and 3:00
Thursdays at 1:00, 4:00, and 6:30

Passages/Paysages, 1978. Three videotapes; 10 minutes each. Shown simultaneously, on three monitors.

Mouth to Mouth, 1975. Single-channel videotape; 8 minutes.

Vidé o ème, 1976. Single-channel videotape; 4½ minutes.

Re Dis Appearing, 1977. Single-channel videotape; 3 minutes.

Permutations, 1976. 16mm film; 11 minutes.

Translations from a Willow Tree, 1976. Super-8 film, 5 minutes.

Monologue, 1977. Audiotape; 37 seconds.

Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Hours: Wednesday 11:00–6:00
Thursday 1:00–8:00
Friday–Sunday 11:00–6:00

Film and video information: (212) 570-0537

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Whitney Museum of American Art 70
New American Film and Video Series

The Cave

October 14–November 28, 1993

Video Installation by Beryl Korot
Music by Steve Reich

Gallery Talk, Thursday, November 18 at 6:30 pm
Beryl Korot and Steve Reich will be present.

Screening Schedule
The Cave (1993)
Act 1, 65 minutes; Act 2, 40 minutes; Act 3, 35 minutes.

Complete screening cycles begin at the following times:
Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 11:30 and 3:00
Thursdays at 1:30 and 5:00

Components
6 video monitors; 5 videotape playback decks; 15 videotapes, color, stereo sound; amplifier, audio mixer, 2 speakers. Computer, synchronization system. Fabric covered walls, benches, and specified lighting.

Credits
Multichannel video/screen design: Beryl Korot. Music: Steve Reich. Conceived and developed by Beryl Korot and Steve Reich.

Produced by Renée Levine and The Reich Music Foundation, Inc. With major support from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Meet the Composer Reader's Digest Commissioning Program, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., The Nathan Cumming Foundation, Mrs. Betty Freeman, The Sydney and Frances Lewis Foundation, The Mary Cary Flagler Trust, and the AT & T Foundation.

Singers: Cheryl Bensman Rowe, lyric soprano; Marion Beckenstein, lyric soprano; James Bassi, tenor; Hugo Munday, baritone. Installation lighting: Richard Nelson.

Video Production: computer-generated stills/composites/pans, Beryl Korot; off- and on-line video editor, Beryl Korot; video mastering engineer and installation technical consultant, Ben Rubin; prerecorded sound mastering, Judith Sherman, John Kilgore, Steve Reich; computer typing instrument software, Ben Rubin.

Field Trips: director of photography and camera, Beryl Korot; interview lighting and camera, Maryse Alberti (Act 1), Peter Trilling (Acts 2 and 3); interviewer and soundman, Steve Reich; interview coordinators, Rebecca Rass (Act 1, assisted by Hannah Kay), Avital Mozinson and Rebecca Rass (Act 2), Roger Oliver and Ursula Parks (Act 3).

Steve Reich and Beryl Korot, Hebron, 1989. Photograph: Maryse Alberti.

I see only from one point, but in my experience I am looked at from all sides. –Jacques Lacan

I open my comments on Beryl Korot's remarkable new video installation *The Cave* with the words of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. The quote, drawn from *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychology*, reflects Lacan's examination of the shift in human development from looking to being looked at, a position central to the formation of the self and self-consciousness. This quotation serves well as a point of entry into the history of multimedia installation art and Beryl Korot's significant contribution to that discourse. How artists employ video as a means to reflect on the self and how history and human agency–the environments we inhabit and the things we create–are tied to the innate human processes of self-awareness and identity are issues that have

This presentation is sponsored by AT&T The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from The Bohen Foundation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Heathcote Art Foundation, George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, Inc , the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., the Theodore and Renee Weiler Foundation, Tracy A White, and Barbara Wise.

informed the history of video as an art form. How we have come to see and fashion our place in the world has been a preoccupation of art and certainly of installation art since its emergence in the late 1960s.

Video as an aural and visual means of image making and recording has evolved into a pervasive and multipurpose medium. It is through the electronic image that we see interpreted the worlds of politics and history as presented on television—like its precursor, film, a powerful tool in determining how we receive and register the surrounding world. Video offers a compelling attraction to artists who, by turning an exploratory camera on themselves, seek to recuperate the integrity and idea of the individual working against the grain of mass media and popular entertainment. In the process, the traditional boundaries between the arts are broken down and art itself and the means of creating it are defined. As one of these redefining art forms, video is located in a critical place in the process of fundamental technological change that is currently transforming all the arts.

Beryl Korot and a select group of artists have played a significant role in the development of the video medium into a three-dimensional art form: they have carried the treatments of movement and time as well as the recorded and processed image into the discourse of sculpture and installation. Through the Conceptual and Minimal art movements of the 1960s and 1970s, one can trace a series of artists' projects that explored self-reflective strategies for using the closed-circuit video camera as a means to see in real time what the camera is recording. Here was a radical new way to view the recorded image in its immediacy rather than in its processed and developed form (as in film). It is the interactive phenomenon of the electronic image that is at the basis of the phenomenology of video.

Korot's work may be juxtaposed with series of projects by other artists that together form the context and highlight the significance of her achievement. In 1969, Bruce Nauman created a work entitled *Live/Taped Video Corridor*, which consisted of two facing walls forming a narrow passage, accessible from one end. At the other end were two video monitors, one atop the other. One played a prerecorded videotape of the corridor devoid of people from the perspective of a camera positioned above the entryway, the other screened the same view in real time from a camera identically positioned. As viewers traversed the space, one monitor thus invoked a rear-view encounter with themselves, while the other played an image of the same, yet eerily empty, space. One was left with the sensation of approaching oneself while at the same time leaving oneself behind. This two-channel installation engaged the viewer in the very process of experiencing the work; the art work as one's own self-reflective experience became the frame and condition of the transaction between the viewer and the work itself.

A central issue in Nauman's installation is the perception of time and place through this use of the space experienced in real time and confirmed on the monitor and the perception of the "other" time acknowledged and differentiated not through temporal markers but rather through the space itself. The tracing of the movement and positioning of time was explored as well in Mary Lucier's installation *Dawn Burn* (1975-76), which utilized seven monitors built into a sculptured structure. Lucier shot each of the seven channels from the same position, recording the dawning of different days over the East River, so that visible upon each of the monitors was the movement of the earth and the subtle changes in the sun's path. The passage of time was articulated through the physical residue of light, which altered the camera optics and transformed the very image-recording capacity of the camera. In addition, the repeated videotaping of the bright sun burned a scar into the camera's vidicon tube, which became an indelible and visible part of the recorded image.

The third installation, *Nostos II* (1984), was created by French artist Thierry Kuntzel. In it, nine monitors are set in three rows of three, with the wall surface masking each monitor in such a way that one is looking simply at the nine picture screens, severed from the context of traditional television. This installation captures the flow of time in the form of memory and the revelatory physical traces that actions and events leave in their wake. The work is informed by Max Ophuls' film *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948): scenes of letters being read, written, and burned are abstracted through Kuntzel's paluche camera, a miniature instrument which functions as an extension of the body and captures in a haunting style the movement of light and gesture.

These three different projects drawn from the three preceding decades define a trajectory of work that strives to arrive at an understanding of time and place, memory and the present. These are issues that Korot explored in her 1975 installation *Dachau 1974*. The work's visual and aural sequences were recorded at this site of Germany's former concentration camp and focus on the architectural symmetry and present-day touristic ambience of the place to such an extent that the viewer is deeply disturbed upon realizing what the place actually is. Each of the four channels is conceived as representative of a thread of image sequences: Channels 1 and 3 and 2 and 4 form the

interlocking combinations that bind the work as it proceeds in time. Specific time values were assigned to each channel for the twenty-four minutes of the video's duration, and specific image sequences are repeated in time to create image blocks on the corresponding sets of channels. The key to the work is its highly organized non-narrative structure, which is visually based on the geography of the camp and created by the interlocking pairs of channels. The violence of the camp is evoked through these pairs of short visual and aural sequences as the viewer is taken from outside the camp through the barracks, over a bridge and, finally, to the gas chambers. Time and how we record its passing is the interwoven subtext of Korot's exploration of history and the landscapes that shape and are shaped by memory.

Dachau 1974 was the first of two works by Korot conceptually organized according to the structure of woven cloth, which represents an exploration of the relationship between the technology of the loom as an ancient programming tool and the programming of video works for multiple channels. In the second of these works, *Text and Commentary* (1977), the weaving metaphor is made literal. The installation consists of five video channels with close-ups of thread being woven, a panel of weavers' notations that function like a visual score for the programmed pattern of each weave, and pictographic notations of the video portion of the work. All these provide perspectives of virtually the same information seen in a variety of scales, media, and contexts, and translated into different notational systems. The five channels of videos were each programmed with slight changes in pattern when read from left to right, or by a predetermined division of the space when read up and down. The video commentary was recorded by a camera hanging from the ceiling at varying distances as the artist simultaneously wove and recorded. The manner in which pattern builds up line by line to become the surface of the video screen is analogous to the manner in which the video image itself is imperceptibly constructed. This complex elaboration of process, the weaving of the cloth as it was recorded on videotape, juxtaposed with the actual weaving hanging in the space, is vividly representative of the actual time taken to construct the material and work.

Korot's two projects are related in structure to the formal ones of Lucier and Kuntzel; in fact, via the use of paneling to mask the monitors, Korot pioneered the method of removing the screen from its context within the television set, and so of removing video from the context of traditional usage. And it is in the viewer's acknowledgment of the horrors of a past that we cannot and should not forget that Korot so effectively bridges the space between formal invention and content. This issue is central to Korot's new work, *The Cave*, created with music by contemporary Minimalist composer Steve Reich. The theatrical version of *The Cave* expands the space of the theater through the addition of large-screen video projections of people speaking. The installation version carries the elements of *The Cave* into the gallery space to create a structure that houses the multiple audio and video channels which frame the variety of languages and perspectives, weaving them into a compelling expression of history and culture. *The Cave* demonstrates Korot's continuing engagement with new technology, in this case a sophisticated computer system that allows her to manipulate the recorded conversation. This system raises to a new level of control the construction of the languages and movements of discourse within the work. In addition, Korot has selected monitors that enhance the brightness of the image, thus lending greater clarity to the nuanced movements of speech and thought.

In *The Cave*, Korot builds on the formal and aesthetic issues of her earlier work: how our perception of ourselves and our present is woven from the strands of history and tradition and how we remember things. The Cave of Patriarchs, upon which *The Cave* is based, is a highly significant historical site for both Muslims and Jews (and is, in fact, the only place in the world where both worship). It is also the source of the work's spoken texts, which explore how we construct ourselves from what we see and how we are viewed by ourselves and others. An eye-opening and new sense of who we are is created through the strength of the word and the synthesis of word and musical composition within the installation. The affective impact of *The Cave* lies in Korot's unflinching and creative use of image-recording power and of the voice as a means to construct a sense of our shared paths and myths, realities and mysteries. Human consciousness in all its complex beauty is evoked within the forceful rhythms of language and image, voice and music. Korot here brings the formal concerns of the 1970s into a new context and reveals the viability of video as a means to record and represent the power of the self within the complex of human history–its contradictions, tragic failure, and glorious hope.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Exhibition Design: Matthew Yokobosky,
Exhibition Coordinator, Film and Video

Artists' Statement

In the Bible, Abraham buys a cave from Ephron the Hittite as a burial place for his wife, Sarah. The Cave of the Patriarchs, as it has come to be known, became the final resting place not only for Sarah, but for Abraham and their descendants as well. In Jewish mystical sources, the cave is also a passageway back to the Garden of Eden. It is said that Adam and Eve are also buried there.

The cave is of great religious significance for Muslims as well. While the Jews are descendants of Abraham and Sarah through their son, Isaac, the Muslims trace their lineage to Abraham through his son, Ishmael, born to Hagar, Sarah's handmaid.

Today the cave, located in the largely Arab town of Hebron, on the West Bank, is completely built over and inaccessible. The ancient structures built above it reveal a long history of conflicting claims. One discovers not only the wall Herod erected around the cave, but also the remains of a Byzantine church and finally the mosque built in the twelfth century, which has dominated the site ever since. Until 1967 Jews making pilgrimages to this spot were permitted to approach only the entrance of the site up to a seventh step. Since 1967 the mosque built above the cave remains under Muslim jurisdiction, although the Israeli army maintains a presence at the site. Tensions run particularly high, but the site remains unique as the only place on earth where both Jews and Muslims worship.

The Cave is in three acts. In each act we asked the same questions to different groups of people. The basic five questions were: Who for you is Abraham? Who for you is Sarah? Who for you is Hagar? Who for you is Ishmael? Who for you is Isaac? In the first act we asked Israelis, in the second we asked Palestinians, and in the third we asked Americans.

Act 1: West Jerusalem/Hebron, May-June 1989
Act 2: East Jerusalem/Hebron, June 1989 and June 1991
Act 3: New York City/Austin, April-May 1992

Beryl Korot and Steve Reich

Biographies

Beryl Korot was born in New York in 1945. She was the co-founder and co-editor of *Radical Software* (1970) and co-edited the book *Video Art* (1976). Korot has received grants from Creative Artists Public Service Fund (1972-75), the National Endowment for the Arts (1975, 1977, 1979, 1991), the New York State Council on the Arts (1973-74), and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. (1991). Her works, which include paintings and the video installations *Dachau 1974* (1975) and *Text and Commentary* (1977), have been featured in one-artist exhibitions at the Leo Castelli Gallery (1977), Whitney Museum of American Art (1980), and John Weber Gallery (1986), and in group exhibitions, including "Documenta 6" (Kassel, Germany, 1977), "Video-Skulptur: Retrospektiv und Aktuell, 1963-1989 (Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 1989) and "Points of Departure: Origins in Video" (The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, 1990). Korot lives in New York.

Steve Reich was born in New York in 1936. He studied at Cornell University (BA, 1957), Julliard School of Music (1958-61), Mills College (MA, 1963), the University of Ghana, Accra (1970), and the American Society for Eastern Arts, Seattle and Berkeley (1973, 1974). He has received grants and fellowships from the Institute for International Education (1970), the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD, 1974), the New York State Council on the Arts (1974), the National Endowment for the Arts (1974, 1976), the Rockefeller Foundation (1975, 1978, 1981, 1990), the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (1978), and the Koussevitzy Foundation (1981). Reich's recordings include *Come Out* (1967), *Drumming* (1971), *Music for Eighteen Musicians* (1978), *Tehillim* (1982), *The Desert Music* (1984), and *Different Trains* (1990, Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Composition). His works have been performed by the Kronos Quartet, the London Symphony Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic, among others, and were the subject of a ten-day retrospective at the South Bank Center, London (1988). Reich has an exclusive recording contract with Nonesuch Records. He lives in New York.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 71
New American Film and Video Series

Dan Graham

December 17 1993–March 20, 1994

Three Linked Cubes/
Interior Design for Space Showing Videos, 1986
Video Installation

Components: Clear and two-way mirrored-glass panels; wood. Video monitors; videotape playback decks; videotape programs; audio amplifiers; headphones; speakers; bases; seating.

The exhibition "Walker Evans & Dan Graham" offers an opportunity to reflect on the condition of viewing videotape in the museum. *Three Linked Cubes/Interior Design for Space Showing Videos* and its three viewing areas confront this issue by making the presentation of the videotapes simple and direct. The floor cushions add to the comfortable and informal setting, in which the viewer can relax and watch videotape programs on monitors positioned near the floor. The viewing areas are demarcated by glass walls that work to create a structurally defined area while at the same time eradicating those boundaries through the use of two-way mirrored and transparent walls; the result is that we can, while watching a videotape, simultaneously observe clusters of people in the act of viewing the other video programs.

The monitors of the viewing areas each play different programs. The first screens videotapes by artists curatorially selected because of how their art relates to Graham's interests, particularly his concern with the media's role in the construction of cultural and social forms. The second area is made up of Graham's own videotapes, and the third is devoted to videotapes on Graham, such as interviews and discussions with the artist on his work and the issues involved in it.

We, the viewers, come to the art museum seeking a representation and interpretation of and by artists whose work has informed cultural history and, in the case of contemporary art, is shaping it as well. Video as an aesthetic discourse has, over its thirty-year development, played a role in a variety of art movements that have defined the period, including Fluxus, Happenings, Conceptual, Body and Performance art.

Rock My Religion (1982–84), Dan Graham. Photograph: Marita Sturken.

In addition, the video medium has expanded beyond the single-channel discourse (those works created for viewing on a single monitor or television, or projected onto a large-scale screen or specially prepared wall surface) to add a new dimension to sculpture and multimedia installation. The history of videotape is composed of a variety of genres and styles, among them documentary, narrative, image processing, dance and performance tapes, as well as a wide variety of running times, subjects, and formal concerns, from the straight recording of what is before the camera to the development of abstract imagery.

In presenting this complex history in a museum, one can trace out the interrelationships between different art forms and media, artists and art move-

ments, and thus explore how new developments in media can allow artists a more creative expression and treatment of issues relative to the historically defined limits of traditional art practices. In order to make these interrelationships visible, the installations and single-channel videotapes have to be presented not only so that the viewer may see them as the artist intended, but also so that the nature of the media and form may be explored. For example, in the 1993 Whitney Biennial the videotapes were presented in gallery spaces designed to accommodate large-screen projection, which encouraged the visitor to view this work alongside the paintings, installations, drawings, and photographs presented on other parts of the gallery floor.

In Dan Graham's *Three Linked Cubes/Interior Design for Space Showing Videos*, we view the videotapes in settings designed to establish comfortable and intimate viewing conditions. Yet the transparency of the glass walls makes the private viewing experience simultaneously public. This breaks down the once familiar practice of viewing artist videotapes on monitors atop tall pedestals. While this condition was part of the familiar museum practice of placing art work "on a pedestal," it also allowed for the control and isolation of the video image, something often desired by the curator in order to provide an uninterrupted and unimpeded viewing experience. These spartan conditions, while ideally emphasizing proper control of the image in terms of color and sound, had very little to do with how one watched TV at home. And this was the point: to create a viewing condition that differentiated how we view artistic video from how we experience commercial television.

Graham bridges the gap between private and public space, the conditions for private viewing and public presentation, in these viewing spaces. The spaces also refer directly to his various indoor and outdoor projects that have invited us to consider architecture in its relationship to urban and natural environments. For example, his proposed *Video View of Suburbia in an Urban Atrium* (1979-80) consists of video monitors, placed in the atrium of New York's Citicorp building, that screen scenes of suburbanized nature outside the metropolis. In *Three Linked Cubes/ Interior Design for Space Showing Videos*, we find a hybrid space for both looking and being looked at, for watching videotapes and moving between spaces to view different selections. Graham's recent installation at the Dia Center for the Arts, New York, invited the viewer to explore a glass-enclosed structure on the rooftop; as one moved about, the structure became in turn visible and invisible, inspiring a consideration of the urban landscape as a man-made environment.

All these spaces share with Graham's own videotapes an exploration of the medium, of the live video camera as a means to negotiate the process of performance and representation of the performance space. Graham's video *Performer/Audience Sequence* (1974-76) challenges the conditions of performance and reception, while *Local Television News Program Analysis for Public Access Cable Television* (1980; in collaboration with Dara Birnbaum) examines his interest in public access television and the construction of information. Another important element in Graham's videotapes—and one which plays a large role in his *Rock My Religion* (1982-84)—is his exploration of pop culture, of rock music and its rebellious denial of the traditional lifestyles, economics, and states of mind produced and supported by and within corporate capitalism.

These are the issues explored in two of the three screening areas of *Three Linked Cubes/Interior Design for Space Showing Videos*. In the other is a selection of works by artists who deal with the standardized construction and exploitation of group and individual mentalities through education and the workplace. This is the subject of Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville's two extraordinary series for television, *Six fois deux/Sur et sous la communication* (1976) and *France/tour/détour/deux/enfants* (1978). Jason Simon's *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought* (1987) exposes the methods of advertisers in the development of the narratives that shape and sell products. Urban spaces as commercial environments are explored in Judith Barry's *Casual Shopper* (1981) and MICA-TV's *CASCADE (Vertical Landscapes)* (1988; in collaboration with Dike Blair); rock-and-roll provides the background to Dara Birnbaum's vertiginous treatment of consumerism in *PM Magazine/Acid Rock* (1982), where she shows how television news and popular programs sell a sexist and static way of life; Antonio Muntadas' *Video Is Television?* (1989) radically reconceptualizes the images of television and media as technology in his rapidly edited collage of found footage and images of television technology; Tony Cokes and Donald Trammel in *Fade to Black* (1990) examine racism in the city through media and personal experience.

The three viewing areas play off each other as spaces, as places to watch videotapes, while the programs offer different approaches to Graham's work as well as to the concerns he shares with other artists. Taken together, the videotapes of Dan Graham in their creative exploration of issues and structure itself reinvent the very way we look at video in the museum.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Exhibition design: Matthew Yokobosky
Exhibition Coordinator, Film and Video

Interior Design for Space Showing Videotapes (1986), Dan Graham. Installation at The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh. Photograph: Hans Sonneveld.

Biography

Dan Graham was born in Urbana, Illinois, in 1942 and studied philosophy at Columbia University, New York. He has published numerous essays and art projects. His work has been featured in one-artist exhibitions at the Galerie Rudolf Zwirner, Cologne (1973); The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1980); the Dia Center for the Arts, New York (1992); and in many group exhibitions, including Documenta 5, Kassel, Germany (1972); the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York (1978); and The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (1985). Graham's work is represented in the collections of numerous museums, among them the Moderna Museet, Stockholm; the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; and The Tate Gallery, London. In 1992, Graham was awarded the Skowhegan Medal for Mixed Media. He lives in New York.

Selected Video Installations

Mirror Window Corner Piece, 1974. 2 video monitors; 2 video cameras; videotape delay system; 2 mirrored walls

Opposing Mirrors and Video Monitors on Time Delay, 1974. 2 video monitors; 2 pedestals; 2 video cameras; videotape delay system; 2 mirrored walls

Present Continuous Past(s), 1974. Video monitor; video camera; videotape delay system; 2 videotape recording decks; 2 mirrored walls

Two Viewing Rooms, 1975. Video monitor; pedestal; video camera; tripod; one-way mirrored wall; 2 mirrored walls; canvas ceiling; 2 fluorescent lights

Yesterday/Today, 1975. Video monitor; video camera; audiotape recording deck; audiotape; microphone

Video Project for Two Shops Selling the Same Type of Goods, 1978-80. Video monitor; videotape playback deck; videotape, color, silent, continuous loop

Edge of the City, 1981. 3 video monitors; videotape playback deck; videotape, color, sound, 1-minute loop; 3 rectangular wood bases

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Three Linked Cubes/Interior Design for Space Showing Videos is part of the exhibition "Walker Evans & Dan Graham," which was organized by Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, in collaboration with Musées de Marseille, Musée Cantini; Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Münster; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Screening Schedule
All videotapes are 3/4", color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

In *Three Linked Cubes/Interior Design for Space Showing Videos*, three different programs of videotapes run simultaneously. Each of these program groupings is shown in a separate viewing area. Programs run continuously during regular gallery hours.

December 17–January 2, January 26–30, February 23–27

Viewing Area 1
France/tour/détour/deux/enfants(France/Tour/Detour/Two/Children) (1978), Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville. Movements 3 and 4, 26 minutes each. In French with English subtitles.

Viewing Area 2
Performer/Audience Sequence (1974–76), Dan Graham. Black-and-white; 30 minutes.
Minor Threat (1983), Dan Graham. 38 minutes.

Viewing Area 3
Dan Graham interviewed by Chris Dercon; topic: The 60s, the 70s, the 80s (1991). 47 minutes.

January 5–9, February 2–6, March 2–6

Viewing Area 1
Six fois deux/Sur et sous la communication/Part 3A: Photos et cie (Six Times Two/On and Beneath Communication/Part 3A: Photos and Company) (1976), Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville. 46 minutes. In French with English voiceover.
Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought (1987), Jason Simon. 28 minutes.

Viewing Area 2
Past Future Split Attention (1972), Dan Graham. Black-and-white; 17 minutes.
Local Television News Program Analysis for Public Access Cable Television (1980), Dan Graham, in collaboration with Dara Birnbaum. 20 minutes (edited; original, 60 minutes).
Westkunst (Modern Period): Dan Graham Segment; topic: "Homes for America" (1980), Ernst Mitzka and Dan Graham. 7 minutes.

Viewing Area 3
Dan Graham interviewed by Chris Dercon; topic: *Interior Design for Space Showing Videotapes*; "Design as Art, Art as Design" (1986). 45 minutes.
Two-Way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube and a Video Salon (1992), Michael Shamberg, Ernst Mitzka, and Dan Graham. 19 minutes.

January 12–16, February 9–13, March 9–13

Viewing Area 1
Six fois deux/Sur et Sous la communication/Part 3B: Marcel (Six Times Two/On and Beneath Communication/Part 3B: Marcel) (1976), Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville. 55 minutes. In French with English voiceover.

Viewing Area 2
Performer/Audience/Mirror (1975), Dan Graham. Black-and-white; 23 minutes.
Performance and Stage-Set Utilizing Two-Way Mirror and Video Time Delay (1983), Dan Graham, in collaboration with Glenn Branca. Black-and-white; 46 minutes.

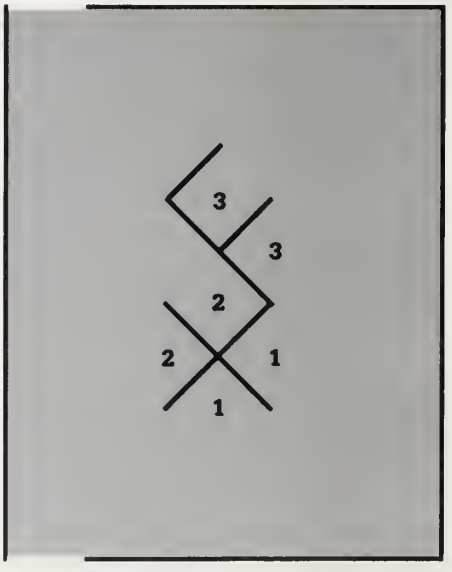
Viewing Area 3
Jeff Wall interviewed by Chris Dercon; topic: Dan Graham's *Kammerspiel* (1987). 60 minutes.

January 19–23, February 16–20, March 16–20

Viewing Area 1
CASCADE (Vertical Landscapes) (1988) MICA-TV (Carole Ann Klonarides and Michael Owen), in collaboration with Dike Blair. 6 1/2 minutes.
Casual Shopper (1981), Judith Barry. 28 minutes.
PM Magazine/Acid Rock (1982), Dara Birnbaum. 4 minutes.
Video Is Television? (1989), Antonio Muntadas. 5 1/2 minutes.
Fade to Black (1990), Tony Cokes and Donald Trammel. Black-and-white and color; 33 minutes.

Viewing Area 2
Rock My Religion (1982–84), Dan Graham. Black-and-white and color; 55 minutes.

Viewing Area 3
Dan Graham interviewed by Chris Dercon; topic: *Rock My Religion* (1984). 30 minutes.



Viewing Areas

Whitney Museum of American Art
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Hours [illegible]

Film and Video Information [illegible]

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Whitney Museum of American Art 72
New American Film and Video Series

Willie Varela

April 29–May 29, 1994

Gallery Talk, Thursday, May 12 at 7:30 pm.
Chon Noriega and Willie Varela will be present.

Always remember yourself, even if you remember nothing. —*James Broughton* (1984)

Willie Varela is a personal filmmaker; in fact, he remembers himself to abstraction. But to call him a personal filmmaker requires that we redefine "personal" because of the word's inscription in overlapping social and cultural contexts. In fact, there are three Varelas, each with a different first name, a different location, if you will, in the national culture. In even the most casual encounter with Varela's large body of work, one encounters two names: "Willie" (1974–81) and "Guillermo" (1982–91). These names periodize Varela's work, bringing the cultural contexts of the personal into counterpoint with his more formal concerns. In the 1970s, the Anglo-American nickname "Willie" contrasted with the "resistance and affirmation" of Chicano cultural politics; in the 1980s, the Mexican-American given name "Guillermo" confronted the Reaganesque "Decade of the Hispanic" that defined diverse Latino groups as a homogeneous consumer market and voting bloc. Throughout, there is also the professional Varela, the "William" who occupies the English-only public sphere that Richard Rodriguez idealizes in *Hunger of Memory*.[1] These three names define public, private, and oppositional spaces, as well as Varela's shifting relationship to these levels of social engagement as they crisscross the cultural divide within the Southwest and the nation as a whole.

Born in 1950, Varela grew up as a bona fide member of the television generation, albeit from the hybrid "border culture" of El Paso-Juarez, where his childhood influences also included the strictures of Jesuit High School and the Catholic Church, Mexican *telenovelas*, and the cultural and economic conditions that gave rise to the Chicano student movement and

Juntos en la Vida, Unidos en la Muerte (1985), Willie Varela.

La Raza Unida Party. In the late 1960s, Varela drifted in and out of college, eventually working on the 1970 census, the first to recognize Hispanics as an ethnic group. It was at this point that he stumbled across two publications that introduced him to film art: an interview with John Lennon in *Rolling Stone*, in which Lennon discussed his 8mm home movies; and a profile of "visionary" filmmaker and polemicist Stan Brakhage in Sheldon Renan's *An Introduction to the American Underground Film* (1967). These two self-taught film artists—one a rich pop icon from the working class, the other a rugged individualist poised against popular culture—came to exemplify the "urgency of personal vision" as well as the inherent contradiction in the broader Do-It-Yourself Movement. Did that movement represent an alternative space for public discourse or just another route to the mainstream? Positioned between Lennon and Brakhage, the personal in Varela's work emerged as a site of aspiration, struggle, and contradiction: "I wasn't looking for a filmic 'Spanglish,' but a visual language that

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from The Bohen Foundation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Heathcote Art Foundation, George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Theodore and Renee Weiler Foundation, Tracy A. White, and Barbara Wise.

would acknowledge the reality that a Chicano must always have one eye pointing north and the other pointing south, with the occasional luxury of both eyes actually gazing inward, to the *personhood* that minorities are usually denied, and that we often deny ourselves."[2]

Using the income from his census job, Varela purchased a Super-8 camera in 1971. While the written word provided the *idea* of a practice, Varela was self-taught as a filmmaker; only in 1974—with his return to college—did he begin to see the films that inspired his own light studies, diaries, media appropriations, and straight documentation. Since 1974, he has directed nearly one hundred Super-8 films and more than ten Hi-8 videos, and has played a significant role as an advocate, writer, and programmer. In El Paso, for example, he founded two showcases for film and video exhibition: Southwestern Alternative Media Project (1978–82); and Frontera Media Arts (1986–).

While Varela's use of different first names allows one to periodize his work within American cultural politics, his visual aesthetic is more closely related to changes in his geographical location. In El Paso from 1974 to 1981, Varela explored light, color, and rhythm, alternating between the "photographic" effect of in-camera editing and a "painterly" one in his rapid, gestural use of the camera. In 1980, this period came to an abrupt end following a bitter censorship battle over his weekly independent film series at the public library. In response to an alleged "erotic" film program that included George Kuchar's *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966) and James Broughton's *Erogeny* (1976), El Paso's mayor declared an all-out war on "pornography pollution."[3] The experience led to a three-and-a-half-year "exile" in San Francisco and marked a decisive change in the nature of his work. Nevertheless, there are signs that Varela had already begun a self-critique of "visionary" cinema for its willful inattention to the social environment. In *Stan and Jane Brakhage*, for example, he documents a day trip to Juarez with the Brakhages. What emerges, however, is a telling contrast between Stan Brakhage, in the foreground, and the Mexican urban poor, in the background. In these shots, Brakhage stands amid the crowded markets and streets with a far-off gaze, as if looking inward, as if absented from the scene.

More than anything, San Francisco itself seemed to shift the focus of Varela's personal aesthetic from domestic spaces to public ones. As Varela explained, in contrast to El Paso, "San Francisco is a very public city—people's lives and dramas and problems and joys are really lived out in a very public fashion."[4] Between 1982 and 1984, his films became much more thematic and event-oriented, dealing with the representation of sex and sexuality (*Fetish Footage*, *In the Flesh*), death (*Recuerdos de Flores Muertas*, *Forest Lawn*), and ironic social commentary (*Struggle in Futility*, *5th & Market*). While there is less emphasis on light, color, and editing, Varela started to incorporate sound on a number of levels: self-reflexive, documentarian, and didactic.

From 1985 to 1990, Varela's work became increasingly political and concerned with popular culture, including such films as *Fearless Leader* and *In Progress* (both 1985), which appropriate television images of President Ronald Reagan. Although Varela returned to El Paso in late 1985 to raise a family, he maintains a "bemused detachment" about the region's poverty, conservatism, and military-dependent economy, noting that, "I am from El Paso, but not *of* it."[5] His return presaged a renewed interest in domestic space, but this space no longer served as the site of an abstracted personal vision. Instead, the public, private, and mass media began to intrude upon one another, as Varela explored aspects of a postmodern time (*January 8, 1988*), space (*Border Crossing*, *Version One*), and image (especially rapid cuts, as in *Detritus*). For the personal filmmaker, Varela seems to argue, you can never go home again.

This is the standard history of a personal filmmaker. But Varela is a paradox for those who want a certain history confirmed as natural, inevitable or, at the least, influential. Though he emerges amid the social upheaval of the sixties—with its various movements and countercultures—Varela never *seems* to partake in its concerns or causes. In short, he became a personal filmmaker at a time when that aesthetic had been superseded, with its impulses divided between radical cinema and structural film, such that the personal was either political, or irrelevant.[6] And yet, even in Varela's earliest light studies and diaries, one can detect elements that would later become more predominant: political critique, self-reflexivity, and ethnicity and gender. Thus, rather than impose hard-and-fast periods, it makes more sense to see Varela's work according to shifting emphases among a set of socio-aesthetic concerns, techniques, and thematics.

Perhaps, however, looking at Varela's work from the perspective of Chicano cinema provides a clue, not about the work itself, but about its multiple contexts. Since Luis Valdez's *I Am Joaquin* (1969)—widely identified as the "first" Chicano film—the notion of a Chicano cinema has been framed within the political discourse of the Chicano civil rights movement. As such, filmmakers and collectives worked within a binarism of reform and revolution, on the one hand advocating access to US television stations and film studios, on the other hand theorizing their work as the "northernmost expression" of New Latin American Cinema.

But can a personal (and anti-commercial) filmmaker also partake in the political agenda of an "ethnic" or

"minority" cinema? In two recent major works, Varela addresses this issue head on, redefining his career as a personal filmmaker in self-consciously gendered and cultural terms: *Making Is Choosing: A Fragmented Life: A Broken Line: A Series of Observations* and *A Lost Man*. The first, a Super-8 non-narrative feature, provides a summation of Varela's extensive work in narrow gauge, as well as an autobiographical "fiction" of a six-year period in his life. Its feature length signals an interest in both duration and the commercial cinema, while the first part of the title suggests an aesthetic (and very male) response to the birth of his daughter. But, in contrast to facile, romantic comparisons between male art and female reproduction, Varela links his gesture to a politics of choice, while the three subtitles decenter his authorial presence. Throughout the film, Varela juxtaposes domestic scenes with his own abstracted personal vision. These different aspects of the "personal"—Varela as father and as filmmaker—are themselves intruded upon by television images, which collapse the distinction between public and private spaces.[7] It is, after all, this distinction that made the oppositional space of an "underground" cinema possible.

If *Making Is Choosing* suggests the limits of Super-8 by the late 1980s, *A Lost Man* represents Varela's belated and qualified acceptance of video (and narrative) as a viable alternative to television. In *A Lost Man*, an LA private investigator returns to El Paso in search of his lost father, only to confront his ex-wife instead. The narrative draws upon two commercial genres: Hollywood *film noir* and Mexican *telenovela*. Varela's use of the *telenovela* for the middle section of the narrative—rather than Hollywood melodrama—re-maps the genres (and their gender dichotomies) across two boundaries: medium (film and television) and geopolitical borders (Mexico and the United States). In these overlapping dichotomies, Varela weaves together an analysis of gender roles, post-colonialism, mass media, and cultural identity, all at the level of genre codes. But he complicates matters even more in quoting "formalist" shots from his earlier films as transitional segments between scenes. Given the video's rigid narrative structure, these segments insert experimental film as the essential backdrop behind the visual narrative—and the social issues it addresses. In this and other instances, Varela offers a revisionist argument for New American Cinema and the "film artist." But, in sharp and calculated contrast to Brakhage, the gestural camera in search of transcendent visual experiences is revealed in *A Lost Man* as always an extension of a gendered and racial body within geopolitical boundaries.

Where Varela's video work will lead to remains unclear, although it bears the technical and aesthetic curiosity of his earliest films. Varela's political and cultural concerns may now be more "explicit," but his *argument* is not, if indeed there is a single argument. Instead, Varela's editing privileges rhythm over direct associations, and repetition over linear analysis. His emphasis continues to be on "looking" rather than on persuasion within the partisan categories of contemporary public (and policy) debate. To be sure, these positions or categories can be found in his texts, but process takes precedence over product. Thus, if Willie Varela is a personal filmmaker, it is because the personal, like his native El Paso, functions as a crossroads for domestic, local, and national discourses.

I want to thank Ira Jaffe and Richard Herskowitz for their generous support in the preparation of this program.

Chon Noriega,
Guest Curator

Notes

1. Richard Rodriguez, *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982).
2. Willie Varela, artist statement, forthcoming in *Jump Cut*, no. 39 (1994).
3. See Terry Cannon, "Willie Varela: Deep in the Heart of Texas," *The Cinemanews*, no. 81 (1982), p. 75.
4. "Willie Varela," interview by Terry Cannon, *Spiral*, 6 (January 1986), p. 52.
5. Willie Varela, "Art in Spite of El Paso," *MAIN: Media Arts Information Network* (June 1993), pp. 4, 13.
6. See David James' argument in *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).
7. Kurt Easterwood provides an excellent analysis of the film in a two-page program note for the San Francisco Cinematheque, dated March 31, 1990.

Chon Noriega is a visiting professor at the Hispanic American Studies Program, Cornell University, and an assistant professor in the Department of Film and Television, University of California, Los Angeles.

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———. "For a Cinema of Possibility." *Foreign Correspondence: The International Super 8 Phenomenon* (1986), pp. 8–13.

———. "Art in Spite of El Paso." *MAIN: Media Arts Information Network* (June 1993), pp. 4, 13.

Exhibition Design: Matthew Yokobosky,
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

Screening Schedule
Unless otherwise noted, all works are Super-8 film, color, and silent (18 frames per second).

Program 1
Friday, April 29 at 3:00
Thursday, May 5 at 3:00
Wednesday, May 11 at 3:00
Sunday, May 15 at noon
Saturday, May 21 at noon
Thursday, May 26 at 5:30

Colored Rain (1974), 2 min. *Emerging Figure* (1974), 1 min. *TV Playland* (1974), 3 min. *Ghost Town* (1974), 3 min. *A Neon Crescent* (1974), 3 min. *Clear Strobe* (1974), 3 1/2 min. *Bent Light* (1975), 3 1/2 min. *Moondance I* (1974), color and black-and-white, 3 min. *Moondance II* (1974), color and black-and-white, 3 min. *Reaching for the Moon* (1979), color and black-and-white, 3 1/2 min. *Green Light* (1974), 3 min. *Becky's Eye* (1975), 3 min. *Leaves of Glass* (1979), 7 min. *April 1977* (1977), 3 min. *November 1978* (1979), 3 1/2 min. *March 1979* (1979), 3 1/2 min. *May Diary 1979: Emulsion Up* (1979), 5 1/2 min. *Kurt Kren* (1979), 3 1/2 min. *Stan and Jane Brakhage* (1980), 3 1/2 min. *Portrait of Becky* (1980), 5 min. *Light Journals 1–10* (1981), 16mm, 35 min.

Program 2
Saturday, April 30 at 1:15
Friday, May 6 at 3:00
Thursday, May 12 at 2:00
Sunday, May 15 at 3:30
Saturday, May 21 at 3:30
Friday, May 27 at 3:00

Fetish Footage (1981), black-and-white, 12 min. *Father's Day* (1982), 3 1/2 min. *Romance Novel* (1982), 3 min. *Untitled* (1982), 3 1/2 min. *The Cube* (1982), 3 1/2 min. *No Left Turn* (1983), 25 min. *Push Pull* (1983), 4 min. *Super 8 Notebook 6* (1984), 14 min. *In the Flesh* (1982), sound, 3 min. *Recuerdos de Flores Muertas* (1982), sound, 7 min. *Forest Lawn* (1982), sound, black-and-white, 3 min. *5th & Market* (1983), sound, 3 1/2 min. *Loss of Nerve* (1983), sound, 3 min. *Struggle in Futility* (1983), sound, 3 min. *James Broughton* (1984), sound, 7 min. *George Kuchar* (1984), sound, 7 min.

Program 3
Saturday, April 30 at 3:45
Saturday, May 7 at noon
Thursday, May 12 at 5:30
Wednesday, May 18 at 3:00
Sunday, May 22 at noon
Saturday, May 28 at noon

Fearless Leader (1985), video, sound, 3 1/2 min. *Sound Decisions* (1985), video, sound, 10 min. *In Progress* (1985), sound, 10 min. *Juntos en la Vida, Unidos en la Muerte* (1985), 10 min. *Passing Through* (1985), 7 min. *A House of Cards* (1988), color and black-and-white, 12 min. *At Rest* (1988), black-and-white, 3 1/2 min. *Border Crossing, Version One* (1988), color and black-and-white, 8 min. *Border Crossing, Version Two* (1988), black-and-white, 9 min. *House Beautiful* (1988), black-and-white, 10 min. *January 8, 1988* (1988), 3 1/2 min. *Thoughts of a Dry Brain* (1988), color and black-and-white, 10 min. *Detritus* (1989), color and black-and-white, 5 min. *Other Nature* (1990), black-and-white, 3 min. *Reaffirmation* (1990), 10 min.


Willie Varela, 1992. Photograph: Richard Baron.

Program 4
Sunday, May 1 at noon
Saturday, May 7 at 3:30
Friday, May 13 at 3:00
Thursday, May 19 at 3:00
Sunday, May 22 at 3:30
Saturday, May 28 at 3:30

Making Is Choosing: A Fragmented Life: A Broken Line: A Series of Observations (1989), sound, 104 min.

Program 5
Sunday, May 1 at 3:30
Sunday, May 8 at noon
Saturday, May 14 at noon
Thursday, May 19 at 6:00
Wednesday, May 25 at 3:00
Sunday, May 29 at noon

A Lost Man (1992), video, sound, 58 min. *Thanksgiving Day* (1993), video, sound, 36 min.

Program 6
Wednesday, May 4 at 3:00
Sunday, May 8 at 3:30
Saturday, May 14 at 3:30
Friday, May 20 at 3:00
Thursday, May 26 at 3:00
Sunday, May 29 at 3:30

Juarez Diary (1993), video, sound, 32 1/2 min. *Rose Phone Rain* (1993), video, sound, 16 min. *Video Light: In My Backyard* (1993), video, sound, 18 min. *Arid Musings* (1994), video, sound, 24 min.

Varela's films and videos are available from Canyon Cinema, 2325 Third Street, Suite 338, San Francisco, CA 94107. (415) 626-2255.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 73
New American Film and Video Series

The Howard Wise Gallery: TV as a Creative Medium, 1969

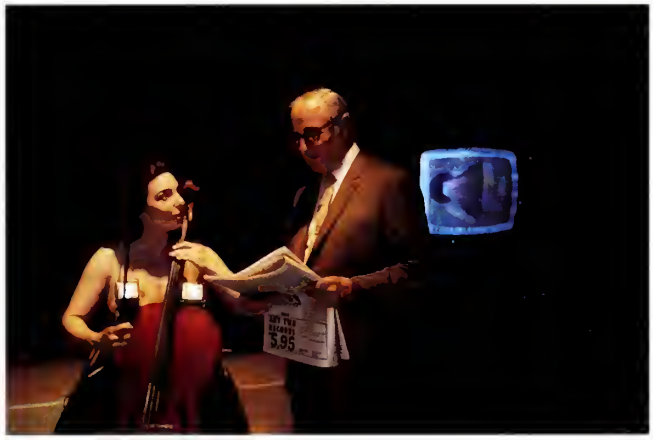
June 8–August 7, 1994

Gallery Talk, Thursday, June 9, at 6:30 pm.
John G. Hanhardt will be present.

The 1960s witnessed the emergence of the first generation of artists who recognized video as a potentially new artist's medium, as a means to extend the visual and auditory language of art making through the electronic moving image. This movement had a significant impact in redefining the categories of sculpture, installation, narrative, and documentary art, as well as representational strategies and the language of abstraction. Video introduced a new dynamic, and a new set of intertextual possibilities for art making, at the very time when distinctions between media and materials were being erased, and the nature of the art object was being rewritten. While many developments were made possible by advances in technology, it was this generation of artists that first began to create new image-making tools. Over the past thirty years, the landscape of our visual culture has been fundamentally altered through the vision of artists utilizing the medium of video.

The early 1960s through the end of the 1970s was an extraordinary period in the history of independent video production. Artists were employing video as a means to engage the debates concerning aesthetics and the art object, as expressed in the work of Richard Serra and Bruce Nauman, the new image-processing and interactive projects of Nam June Paik and Eric Siegel, the collaborative and community-based cable initiatives of groups such as Raindance, and the new initiatives of public television. Within this range of practices and concerns, there were a few crucial consolidating projects. Individuals with vision created landmark events, transmitting to the public a new awareness of the present and sense of the future. The exhibition "TV as a Creative Medium" was one such seminal event.

Twenty-five years ago in New York City, Howard Wise organized an exhibition for his 57th Street gallery



Howard Wise reads next to Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman's *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* (1969). Background: Earl Reiback's *Thrust* from *Three Experiments Within the TV Tube* (1969). Photograph: Tom McCarthy.

that was to give expression, and definition, to video as a creative medium. "TV as a Creative Medium" was the first gallery exhibition devoted exclusively to video as an art form, and it was a defining moment that attracted interest and attention, deeply influencing many individuals who would devote their future energies as artists, curators, critics, and writers to the form called "video art." The exhibition presented transformed video technology which transcended the vocabulary and logic of broadcast television: the use of multiple monitors to reconfigure the sequencing of images (Serge Boutourline's *Telediscretion*); interactive pieces that offered the viewer the opportunity to create new images and experience a new sense of time and image transmission (Nam June Paik's *Participation TV*; Paul Ryan's *Everyman's Moebius Strip*); multimonitor displays that used live action and time delay with closed-circuit and broadcast television

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from The Bohen Foundation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Heathcote Art Foundation, George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Theodore and Renee Weiler Foundation, Tracy A. White, and Barbara Wise.

images (Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider's *Wipe Cycle*); a range of image-processing techniques that created an electronic field of movement, abstraction, and image transformation (Earl Reiback's *Three Experiments Within the TV Tube*; Eric Siegel's *Psychedelevision in Color*; Thomas Tadlock's *The Archetron*; Aldo Tambellini's *Black Spiral*; and Joe Weintraub's *AC/TV (Audio-Controlled Television)*; as well as technical experiments with the medium as process (John Seery's *TV Time Capsule*); and the innovative metaphorical sculptures of Nam June Paik (Paik and Charlotte Moorman's *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*).

In recognizing the importance of "TV as a Creative Medium," we have selected works from the original exhibition by Earl Reiback, Eric Siegel, Aldo Tambellini, Nam June Paik, and Charlotte Moorman. In addition, the Film and Video Gallery has been configured to accommodate photodocumentation of the exhibition by Peter Moore, as well as video documentaries by Ira Schneider and Jud Yalkut. As a tribute to Howard Wise, Nam June Paik has created a new piece, *Virtually Wise*.

Howard Wise (1903–1989) was an innovative gallery owner who became a founding figure in the history of video art through this ground-breaking exhibition, and also through his establishment, in 1970, of Electronic Arts Intermix, now the largest distributor of artists' videotapes. Howard Wise's projects defined and embraced a vision of video as a new art form.

With "The Howard Wise Gallery: TV as a Creative Medium, 1969," the Whitney Museum of American Art's Film and Video Department not only recognizes a key event in contemporary art history, but also honors the accomplishments of Howard Wise through his insightful and profound understanding of the possibilities of video. This exhibition also inaugurates a series of historical projects in which the Film and Video Department will be presenting the work of artists drawn from the past thirty years of video art's history. Thus in future one-artist and group exhibitions, we hope to feature artists presented in the original "TV as a Creative Medium" whom we could not include in the current exhibition. We will also invite outside curators and scholars to work with us so as to offer new insights into the history of video art.

We could think of no better place to begin looking back to video art's origins and history than Howard Wise's seminal and singular effort on behalf of video artists in "TV as a Creative Medium."

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Matthew Yokobosky
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

Nam June Paik, *Virtually Wise*, 1994

Biography of Howard Wise

Howard Wise was born in November 1903 in Cleveland. He studied at the University School, Cleveland, and Le Rosey, Switzerland, and later graduated with honors in history and constitutional law from Cambridge University, England (BA, 1926). Upon his return to Cleveland, he joined his family's Arco Company—a manufacturer of industrial paints and finishes. After twenty-five successful years, during which time he became president, Wise sold Arco Company.

In 1957, he opened the Howard Wise Gallery of Present Day Painting and Sculpture in Cleveland. Exhibitions included "8 Painters of the Galerie Arnaud, Paris," "Selections from the 1958–59 Whitney Annual," and "Movement in Art." By 1960, he expanded operations to New York, and opened the Howard Wise Gallery at 50 West 57th Street. Over its ten-year history, the Howard Wise Gallery exhibited the Abstract Expressionists Milton Resnick and George McNeil, and presented the groundbreaking exhibitions "On the Move" (1964), "Lights in Orbit" (1967), "TV as a Creative Medium" (1969), and his final exhibition "Three Sounds" (1970).

In 1971, Wise founded Intermix, soon renamed Electronic Arts Intermix, to financially assist artists and organizations working within the emerging video art movement. Support was extended to, among others, the Electronic Kitchen at Mercer Arts Center (later renamed The Kitchen), Charlotte Moorman's "Avant-Garde Festivals," The Museum of Modern Art's conference "Open Circuits," and the early video artists' group, Perception (founding members included Eric Siegel, Frank Gillette, and Steina and Woody Vasulka). By 1973, Electronic Arts Intermix expanded its support to provide much-needed videotape distribution services, and affordable editing facilities for artists. Today, Electronic Arts Intermix is the oldest existing and still leading distributor of videotapes by artists and independent videomakers. Howard Wise died in Wellfleet, Massachusetts in 1989.

Checklist

Dimensions are in inches; height precedes width precedes depth.

PETER MOORE
Untitled photograph of Nam June Paik testing *TV Bra* for his collaboration with Charlotte Moorman, *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*, 1969
Black-and-white photograph, 11 x 14
Collection of Barbara Moore

Untitled photograph of Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman's *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* (detail), 1969
Black-and-white photograph, 11 x 14
Collection of Barbara Moore

Untitled promotional photograph of Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman's *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*, 1969
Black-and-white photograph, 11 x 11
Collection of Barbara Moore

NAM JUNE PAIK
Participation TV (No. 2), 1969; reconstruction, 1994
Modified television, tape recorder, 2 amplifiers, 2 microphones, dimensions variable
Collection of Nam June Paik

Virtually Wise, 1994
24 video monitors; 2 antique radios; 6 antique television cabinets; antique brass telephone; speaker horn; 3 telephones; Howard Wise's personal items: Polaroid camera, Polaroid prints, rolodex, briefcase, wallet, papers, buttons, etc.; chair and desk: sintra, plexiglass, aluminum, and plywood; 4 laserdisc players; 4 laserdiscs; 82 x 66 x 66
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

TV Bra for Living Sculpture (Replica), 1992
2 video monitors, plastic, laserdisc player, laserdisc, dimensions variable
Collection of Nam June Paik

NAM JUNE PAIK and CHARLOTTE MOORMAN
TV Bra for Living Sculpture, 1969
2 televisions, microphone, amplifier, plastic
Collection of Nam June Paik

EARL REIBACK
Suspension from *Three Experiments Within the TV Tube*, 1969
Modified color television, 20 x 28 x 21
Collection of Earl Reibeck

Thrust from *Three Experiments Within the TV Tube*, 1969
Modified color television, 20 x 28 x 21
Collection of Earl Reibeck

IRA SCHNEIDER
TV as a Creative Medium, 1968; edited 1984
Videotape, black-and-white, sound. 12 minutes
Videotape distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York

ERIC SIEGEL
Psychedelevision in Color, 1969
Video monitor; videotape player. 3-part videotape: *Einstine* (1969) color, sound, 6 minutes; *Symphony of the Planets* (1969), color, sound, 10 minutes; *Tomorrow Never Knows* (1968), color, sound, 3 minutes
Videotape distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York

ALDO TAMBELLINI
Black Spiral, 1969
In collaboration with Tracy Kinsel and Hank Reinbold
Modified black-and-white television, 30 1/4 x 26 x 18
Collection of Aldo Tambellini and Sarah Dickinson

JUD YALKUT
TV as a Creative Medium from *Meta-media*, 1970
16mm film-to-video transfer; color, silent, 6 minute excerpt
Courtesy of Jud Yalkut

Selected photographic documents of the original exhibition "TV as a Creative Medium" were provided by The Estate of Howard Wise.

Exhibition Design: Matthew Yokobosky
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

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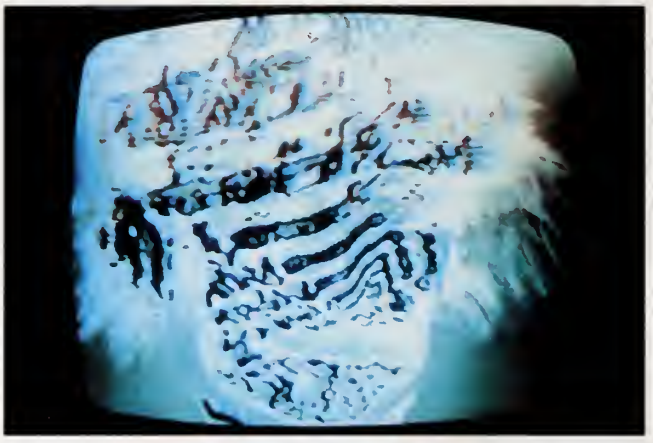
TV AS A CREATIVE MEDIUM

Howard Wise Gallery 50 W. 57 St. NYC 10019

Opening Saturday, May 17
and continuing through June 14,1969

Exhibition hours:
11–5 Tuesday through Saturday

Miss Moorman will perform at the opening from 12 to 5 P.M. Thereafter periodically during the exhibition she will perform from 2 until 4 P.M.



Still from the *Einstine* section of Eric Siegel's *Psychedelevision in Color* (1969).

THE EXHIBITION

SERGE BOUTOURLINE
Telediscretion

FRANK GILLETTE and **IRA SCHNEIDER**
Wipe Cycle

NAM JUNE PAIK
Participation TV

NAM JUNE PAIK and **CHARLOTTE MOORMAN**
TV Bra for Living Sculpture

EARL REIBACK
Three Experiments Within the TV Tube

PAUL RYAN
Everyman's Moebius Strip

JOHN SEERY
TV Time Capsule

ERIC SIEGEL
Psychedelevision in Color

THOMAS TADLOCK
The Archetron

ALDO TAMBELLINI
Black Spiral

JOE WEINTRAUB
AC/TV (Audio-Controlled Television)

TV as a Creative Medium

Ever since Marshall McLuhan has become a household name, people have become aware of the tremendous force, both actual and potential, that TV is having and will have on their lives.

The machine is obsolescent. Magazines, books, newspapers and other publications making use of the written word as we have known it are threatened. The relationships of nations, classes, generations and individuals are deeply affected. Education will be revolutionized, schools transformed if not eliminated (why interrupt your child's education by sending him to school?). TV is at the cause, or at least at the root of the cause, of all these changes that are transforming our civilization.

Why has not art been affected by this all pervading influence? Perhaps quite simply, because, up until now the time was not right. Perhaps it had to await the maturing of the generation who were in their sub-teens in the 1950's, those who were "brought up" on TV. They read "do it yourself" books on how to make radio and TVs. They earned pocket money repairing the neighbor's broken sets. Or they were trained in the technology while they were in the armed forces. As in every generation, some were artists. These have been at work for two, three, five and even more years, scrounging around second hand shops for parts, working with TV because they were fascinated with the results they were able to achieve, and because they sensed the potential of TV as the medium for their expression.

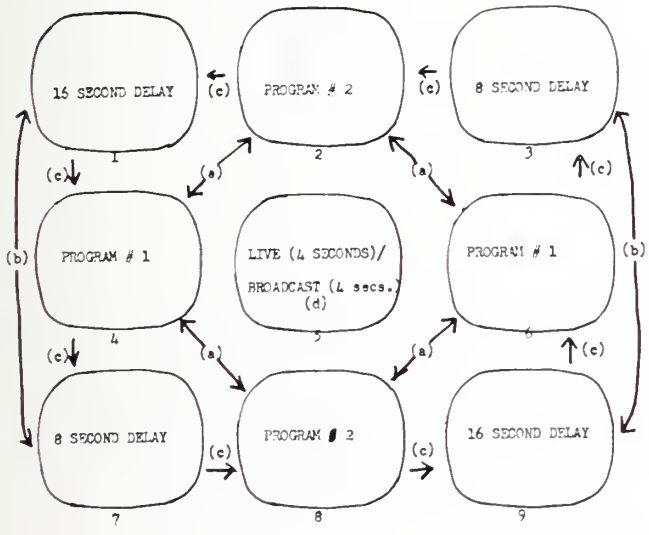
Howard Wise

TELEDISCRETION
by Serge Boutourline

Four mini-TVs with a device for fingertip selection of sound channels. Presentation will include three broadcast channels and one channel playing "A Commercial for Life," a video tape conceived and executed by Wynn Chamberlain and Serge Boutourline.

Serge Boutourline, b. Santa Fe, N. M., 1932.
B.A., Harvard, M.B.A. Harvard School of Business Administration. Developed a signal-oriented approach to the description of human environment. Currently engaged in communication research. Co-produced "Televanilla" with Susan Buirge

WIPE CYCLE
by Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider



Drawing for Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider's *Wipe Cycle* (1969), as it appeared in the original brochure for "TV as a Creative Medium."

CYCLE (a) Monitors 2, 4, 6 and 8: Programmed change cycle, Program No. 1 alternating every eight seconds with Program No. 2.

CYCLE (b) Monitors 1, 3, 7 and 9: Delay change cycle, Nos. 1 and 7 and 3 and 9 alternating (exchanging) every four seconds.

CYCLE (c) Monitors 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9: Wipe cycle, grey "light" pulse, moving counterclockwise every two seconds.

CYCLE (d) Monitor 5: Live cycle, four seconds of live feedback alternating with four seconds of broadcast television.

"*Wipe Cycle* is a television mural designed to engage and integrate the viewer's television 'image' at three separate points in time and five exchanging points in space. Synchronized cycle patterns consisting of live and delayed feedback, broadcast television, and taped programming are developed through four (a, b, c, d) programmed pulse-signals every two, four, eight and sixteen seconds. Separately, each of the cycles acts as a layer of video information, while the four levels of information in concert determine the overall composition of the work at any given moment. The intent of this overloading (something like a play within a play within a play) is to escape the automatic 'information' experience of commercial television without totally divesting it of its usual content. Thus, the information on the programmed tapes juggles and re-combines elements within the Gallery and its immediate environment with portraits, landscapes, montages and video distortions. The soundtrack accompanying the composition serves to amplify the video imagery. It is structured so as to enhance further the sense of 'information overload' and to provide sequential unity to the work."

Frank Gillette

Frank Gillette, b. 1941, Jersey City, N. J.
Studied painting at Pratt Institute. Since 1965, experiments in communication, video-tape programming; co-founder and director, Media Research Group, N.Y.C. and San Francisco.

Ira Schneider, b. 1939, N.Y.C.
B.A. (Psychology) Brown U., M.A. U. of Wisconsin; studied art history, Ludwig Maximillian U., Munich. Research in psychology, 1964–66; filmmaker, 1963 to present.

Gillette and Schneider recently conducted teaching and experiments in video-tape at Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

PARTICIPATION TV
by Nam June Paik

Which comprises 3 or 4 color TV sets which show multicolor echoes, or fog, or clouds which are electronically produced. Sometimes you can see yourself floating in air, dissolving in deep water.

TV BRA FOR LIVING SCULPTURE
Nam June Paik—Charlotte Moorman

In this case, the sound of the cello she plays will change, modulate, regenerate the picture on her TV-BRA.

"The real issue implied in 'Art and Technology' is not to make another scientific toy, but how to *humanize* the technology and the electronic medium, which is progressing rapidly—too rapidly. Progress has already out-

stripped ability to program. I would suggest 'Silent TV Station.' This is TV station for highbrows, which transmits most of time only beautiful 'mood art' in the sense of 'mood music.' What I am aiming at is TV version of Vivaldi . . . or electronic 'Compoz,' to soothe every hysteric woman through air, and to calm down the nervous tension of every businessman through air. In that way 'Light Art' will become a permanent asset or even collection of Million people. SILENT TV Station will simply be 'there,' not intruding on other activities . . . and being looked at exactly like a landscape . . . or beautiful bathing nude of Renoir, and in that case, everybody enjoys the 'original' . . . and not a reproduction . . .

"TV Brassiere for Living Sculpture (Charlotte Moorman) is also one sharp example to humanize electronics . . . and technology. By using TV as bra . . . the most intimate belonging of human being, we will demonstrate the human use of technology, and also stimulate viewers NOT for something mean but stimulate their phantasy to look for the new, imaginative and humanistic ways of using our technology."

Nam June Paik

Nam June Paik, b. Seoul, Korea, 1932.
Took degree in Aesthetics, University of Tokyo, 1956, then studied music, art history and philosophy at several German Universities. He has had numerous one man shows and performances in many countries throughout Europe, America and Japan. Some in conjunction with Charlotte Moorman.

Recently, he was represented in MOMA's "Machine at the End of the Mechanical Age" exhibition and was one of six artists participating in PBL's program "The Medium is the Medium" broadcast over the NET network March 23, 1969

Charlotte Moorman, Cellist, b. Little Rock, Arkansas.
Master of Music, U. of Texas. Member of American Symphony Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski. Noted for her unusual performances of Happenings, Concerts, Mixed Media, mostly in conjunction with Nam June Paik Founded and produced the Annual New York Avant Garde Festivals.

THREE EXPERIMENTS WITHIN THE TV TUBE

by Earl Reiback

Normally the inside of a TV tube is a vacuum. Earl Reiback, with the cooperation of R.C.A. tube laboratories, has worked within the depth of the TV tube, painting the walls of the tube with color phosphors.

"In 'Electron Beam' the flow of electrons that normally scans the TV tube face can be seen. This is achieved by leaving the phosphor off the front face of the tube, and adding neon gas to the partial vacuum. With an external magnet, the viewer can bend the beam of electrons.

"In 'Suspension,' a phosphor coated grid is suspended within the tube. This grid receives the broadcast image, while the back of the tube provides a colored phosphor background excited by the back scattered electrons.

"In 'Thrust,' a phosphor coated screen is mounted perpendicularly to the face of the tube. As the electron beam scan sweeps across the inner screen, shooting images in color are produced in response to the broadcast program."

Earl Reiback

Earl Reiback, b. 1948, N.Y.C.
B.S., Lehigh U.; M.S. in Nuclear Engineering, M.I.T. Has numerous patents in the fields of sound, light and nuclear radiation. At the age of 12, he applied for his first patent. It was for a Color Television system. Since 1965 he has devoted his career to the creation of luminal art works.

EVERYMAN'S MOEBIUS STRIP

by Paul Ryan

A Moebius strip is a one-sided surface made by taking a long rectangle of paper, giving it a half-twist, and joining its ends. Any two points on the strip can be connected by starting at one point and tracing a line to the other without crossing over a boundary or lifting the pencil. The outside is the inside. The inside is the outside. Here the power of Video Tape Recorder (VTR) is used to take in our own outside. When you see yourself on tape, you see the image you are presenting to the world. When you see yourself watching yourself on tape, you are seeing your real self, your "inside."

"The query of the person viewing himself 'Are we live or on tape?' can be answered by saying we are both live and on tape. What is on tape is your intended image, your monkey. VTR enables you to get your monkey off your back where you can't see him, and onto tape, where you can see him. Even though you think 'I can't believe that's me!' the monkey business going on in front of you on tape is yours and nobody else's. That is the precise way you have been making a monkey of yourself. Your monkey has been able to get away with his business because he operates on the other side of your inside/outside barrier. The Moebius tape strip snips the barrier between inside and outside. It offers you one continuous (sur)face with nothing to hide. You have the option of taking in your monkey and teaching him your business or letting him go on with his."

Paul Ryan

Paul Ryan was born in N.Y.C. in 1943.
B.A. (English), N.Y.U., 1967 Sept 1967–June 1968, Research Assistant to Marshall McLuhan, Fordham U., June 1968 to present.

Experimenting
Writing
Speaking
Collaborating *in videotape*
Producing
Consulting

TV TIME CAPSULE
by John Seery

"The embedment of a TV in clear plastic so that it is totally viewable, seals it from all human contact except for plugging and unplugging it. It is a *relic of this civilization.* When the TV stops functioning the work is complete.

"TV TIME CAPSULE
the piece is not finished until the light goes out
the instantaneous change from light to dark is
the creative finish
the object is similar to a living organism but on
a lower level
it was conceived in a factory, modified by the artist,
until its programmed death
its death is its great creative act—the change
of state"

John Seery

John Seery, b. Maspeth, N Y , 1941.
Graduated from Ohio State University, major in Zoology and minor in Chemistry. Cincinnati Art Academy. Travel, Mexico and Canada Teaches at Cooper Union.

PSYCHEDELEVISION IN COLOR
by Eric Siegel

"Art is sometimes called the 'transmission ecstasy.' Because TV is transmission with ecstatic potentials, I have chosen this as my means of expression.

"However, commercial broadcasting instead of exploring the medium's infinite possibilities, uses it to no other purpose than to insult the viewer's intelligence and sensitivities.

"With the knowledge I have of the Electronics of television, I have tried to show some other directions broadcasting can take.

"Why can't the viewer, after a trying day, sit down at his TV set and listen to music while watching the screen burst with beautiful colorful displays? These visual phantasies would relax you better than any tranquilizer and at the same time give your spirit a wonderful lift.

"TV is sometimes accused of causing some of our ills. But it could be a mass healing device if it were in the hands of artists and other sensitive persons. These exist, but the industry pays no attention to them.

"Television has the ability to enter your subconscious mind—note the power of TV advertising—and to influence your feelings as well as your thoughts. It works through your audio-visual senses into your mind and soul. Someday it will be worthy of you."

Eric Siegel

Eric Siegel, b. 1944, N Y C
At the age of 15, while a student at Samuel Gompers Vocational and Technical High School, Siegel won Second Prize of the 1960 N Y.C. Science Fair for his home-made closed circuit TV which he built from second-hand tubes, a microscope lens and all sorts of scrounged miscellaneous parts. The next year he won an Honorable Award in the same competition for "Color through Black and White TV." After graduation from high school, he was employed by several concerns engaged in the field of Closed Circuit TV, mostly rebuilding and designing equipment. In 1966 he was employed in the Educational TV Department of the University of London, Goldsmith College.

Returning to the States, he resumed his work with closed circuit TV companies. One of his assignments, in 1968, was to repair some television equipment in Guam. In May, 1968, he produced "Psychedelevision" a videotape program at New York's closed circuit TV theatre, Channel One. In May, 1968, he designed and built the special effects TV components of Serge Boutourline's production, "Televanilla," at the Martinique Theatre, "an improvisational theatre dance piece choreographed and performed by Susan Buirge in which various TV devices were used to change the scope and scale of the event."

THE ARCHETRON
by Thomas Tadlock

Thomas Tadlock with his work *The Archetron* (1969)

By means of a console with innumerable knobs, switches, dials and other mysterious looking controls, three small TV monitors and a system of mirrors and color filters, Tadlock is able to compose on a TV screen constantly moving and changing colorful kaleidoscopic images. In accomplishing this, Tadlock uses all or part of three separate live broadcasts. It is now possible for this artist (or any other using the Archetron) in effect to create simultaneously works of art on TV screens in countless homes, thus making Nam June Paik's "Silent TV Station" possible. All that is needed is for a broadcasting organization, a closed circuit TV company or a cable TV company to avail itself of this remarkable development.

"In these years I developed devices with patterns, sequences, motion, color, programmed to make the viewer get involved in the unfolding composition, to relax and want more, to develop a new way of seeing. As the requirements of this new art revealed themselves, a need

for an instantaneous, flowing, comprehensive device for expressing these images arose. This vacuum was filled by the use of the color television tube as the readout device for the program apparatus."

The ARCHETRON shown in the exhibition was commissioned by Dorothea Weitzner.

Thomas Carter Tadlock, III, was born in Washington, D. C. in 1941 Studied Rhode Island School of Design. In the years 1963–66 worked with kinetic and luminal art, 1967–69 with telekinetic art (TV).

Tadlock has been represented in most of the important "light" exhibitions, including "Kunst Licht Kunst" Stedilijk van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven, 1966. One of six artists participating in the PBL "The Medium is the Medium," broadcast over the NET network, March 23, 1969.

BLACK SPIRAL
by Aldo Tambellini

In collaboration with Tracy Kinsel and Hank Reinbold of Bell Labs. Nature, as we will see it in the future, in circular or spiral form. No up—No down—No gravity. Floating. From live broadcasts.

"And what are we going to do through the media? Let's say we are going to keep it open and whatever I think is possible I would like to do. Whatever one might dream of which somebody would not want if I had the possibility to do it. Let's break all the rules possible. Let's open up the possibility which everyone else has told you this is not right and this is not feasible. And I would like to start it from there, from a reality. So what one wants to do is more like an attitude rather than the specific of what one wants to do.

"To show that light is a constant moving force, an ever changing form. That light is energy and energy is going through us, the same energy which is going through the universe today. And when creative people begin tc get involved, with this idea of energy rather than the idea of making pictures, then we will come to some creative aspect not belonging to one particular class but toward a new exploration which is for all . . ."

Aldo Tambellini

Aldo Tambellini, b. 1930, Syracuse, N. Y.
B F A Painting, Syracuse U., M.F.A. Sculpture, Notre Dame U. Founder of the "Black Gate" Electromedia Theater of environmental performances encompassing all areas of light, sound and motion. Involved in film, TV programming, communications and their impact on education. Won 1969 International Grand Prix, Oberhausen (Germany) Film Festival. One of six artists participating in PBL's "Medium is the Medium" broadcast March 23, 1969 over the N E.T network

AC/TV (AUDIO-CONTROLLED TELEVISION)
by Joe Weintraub

Translates music into a complex kinetic image on the screen of any color TV. The brightness is controlled by the volume of the music. The colors are controlled by the pitch. The patterns are dependent on both. Installation is simple, as the AC/TV clips onto the antenna terminals of any color TV. Patents pending.

"As a child I would often close my eyes and 'see' music as colored patterns. One day two years ago, I woke up in the middle of a dream with the intense desire to recreate this experience electronically. This developed into an obsession, and I created dozens of Audio Controlled lighting effects, culminating in a work in which the speed of a motor was controlled by music.

"As soon as I became aware of the Color Cathode Ray Tube, I realized that the red, blue and green guns in the CRT were ideally suited for audio control by the low, middle and high frequencies of music.

"I view the Color Television receiver as one of the highest technological achievements of mankind, and the fact that it is generally used to transmit sub-human material points out in dramatic fashion the imbalance between man's technological and social progress. The AC/TV is radical art because it allows the viewer to turn off the endless stream of garbage and use his Color TV in a personal aesthetically satisfying way."

Joe Weintraub

Joe Weintraub, b. 1943, N.Y C.
B.A. in Psychology, C.C.N.Y Edits The Electronic Art Review.

Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street
New York, New York 10021

Hours: Wednesday 11:00–6:00
Thursday 1:00–8:00
Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 11:00–6:00

Film and Video Information: (212) 570-0537

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Whitney Museum of American Art 74
New American Film and Video Series

From India to America:
New Directions in Indian-American Film and Video

September 21–October 16, 1994

"From India To America: New Directions in Indian-American Film and Video" is the first exhibition of independent films and videos made by Indian-Americans as a body of work expressive of contemporary American culture.[1] Many of the films and videos have been included in exhibitions and festivals of Asian-American film and video, where they also rightfully belong, as well as in larger film festivals. Some, like Mira Nair's *Salaam Bombay* (1988) and *Mississippi Masala* (1992) and Ismail Merchant's *In Custody* (1993), have been shown internationally and in theaters across the country. With "From India to America" we take a new perspective on Asian-American media, independent film and video in the US, and on issues of immigration, bi-culturalism, intergenerational conflicts, assimilation/acculturation, and identity. An additional perspective highlights intersections with current issues facing the entire country, such as feminism, labor, gender, and relations between the dominant culture and minority groups.

"From India to America" can be seen as a cross-section of independent American film and video. Where do these works fit in the sociopolitical and cultural landscape? For one thing, they employ the structural, formalistic, and technological devices and strategies characteristic of independent film and video in the US. For another, they are expressive of the issues and themes of minority film and video, particularly Asian-American media. In doing so, they are part of the expanding definition of independent as well as Asian-American film and video.

It is generally agreed that Asian-American media emerged with the civil rights and ethnic studies movements of the late 1960s. Until the early 1980s, there were only a few Asian-American filmmakers who had produced a definitive body of work and most were college-educated Japanese or Chinese, predominantly male. Names that come to mind are Art Nomura, Taka

Michelle Taghioff, *Home*, 1992.

Iimura, Christine Choy, Arnie Wong, and Loni Ding. Within the broad framework posited by Renee Tajima, Asian-American cinema shares some major characteristics. It is a socially committed cinema produced by a group defined by race and sharing interlocking cultural and historical relations, an experience of Western domination, and is characterized by diversity stemming from national origin and continuing waves of immigration.[2]

Indian-American media shared most of these characteristics but with some important differences. Although Indian immigration to the US began around the mid-nineteenth century, with the arrival of Indian farmers from the Punjab to the California coast, the population remained small, roughly at about 15,000 at the end of World War II.[3] It was only after the 1965 Immigration Act that increasing numbers of white-collar immigrants from the Indian Subcontinent began to arrive in the US. But even as late as 1990, there were only about 800,000 Asian Indians in the US, as compared to 1.6 Chinese-Americans (the largest Asian-

The exhibition is co-sponsored by the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Indo-U.S. Subcommission on Education and Culture. The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from The Bohen Foundation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Heathcote Art Foundation, George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Theodore and Renee Weiler Foundation, Tracy A. White, and Barbara Wise.

American group), out of a total Asian-American population of about 7.2 million.[4] A distinct Asian-American culture such as that emerging in the Chinatowns in major American cities did not evolve for the Indian-American community. Given the demographics, then, it is not surprising that within the Asian-American community, there was a marginalization of the small and incipient Indian-American media during the 1960s and the 1970s.

The definition of Asia is to a great extent a historical and geographic convention arising out of a European worldview that in turn arose out of industrial and mercantile expansion. The resulting incongruities were further complicated by the racial organization of American society, and its perception of different racial and ethnic groups. For Indian-Americans from South Asia (and other groups especially from West Asia), Asian-American demographics combined with the racial structure of American society meant that most Americans did not see Indian-Americans as Asians. Ironically, there was an "invisible minority" within the Asian-American "visible minority."

Demographics and "invisibility" together may account for the lack of political and social commitment in early Indian-American film and video. There were virtually no Indian-Americans working in the exciting new Asian-American media centers like Visual Communications in Los Angeles and Asian CineVision in New York in the 1970s. The young leaders of the emerging Asian-American media were usually second- or third-generation Asian-Americans, who were responding with alternative strategies and means, using film to change the representation of Asians in American media and to document the history of Asian-Americans in this country. Having grown up in this country, they were also responding to racism in American society, countering an acute sense of disenfranchisement by using media as a tool for social change.

The input of Indian-Americans in Asian-American media was virtually nonexistent at this stage. Early Indian-American works tended to be about Indian culture or about non-Indian or non-Asian subjects altogether. It was not until the mid- and late 1980s that a body of Indian-American films expressing the agenda of social and cultural change began to emerge.

In 1963, Amin Chaudhri, a student at NYU's film school, directed and produced his first film, *The Scandal That Rocked Britain*, a black-and-white feature film in 35mm based on the life of Christine Keeler, and starring Joanne McCarthy and Brooks Clift (the brother of Montgomery). The film was released theatrically and had a modest success. Between 1965 and 1968, Chaudhri went on to direct and produce three documentaries on Indian sculpture. Earlier, in 1960, Ismail Merchant, a recent management graduate from New York University, had produced a short dance film based on Indian mythology, directed by Charles Schweep. The film was nominated for an Oscar and Merchant went on to the now well-known partnership that became Merchant Ivory Productions. There were few Indian-American films besides the ones produced by Merchant, who directed his first film, *Mahatma and the Mad Boy*, in 1972, a short made in India, and the films by Chaudhri, which included a *Living Camera* episode with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (1969) for the television series produced by Richard Leacock and D.A. Pennebaker. In the post-Vietnam period, a new generation started making films, but the subject matter still did not deal with Indian-American life: Nair's student film looked at the old city of Delhi in India and *First Look* (1982) by Kavery Dutta (now Kavery Kaul), documented the first visit by Cuban painters to the US, the first cultural exchange since Castro had come to power.

It was only with Nair's *So Far from India* (1982) that Indian-Americans were first depicted on the screen. A film about an Indian newspaper vendor in New York's 116th Street and Broadway subway station, who works to send money back to his wife and family in India, it effectively portrayed the dual existence of an Indian-American immigrant. Its very depiction of a world in America that had not been seen before on the screen was a political and social statement; otherwise the film remained apolitical in its approach. It is important to note that these first Indian-American filmmakers—Nair with *Salaam Bombay* and *Mississippi Masala*, Merchant with films directed by James Ivory and his own directorial efforts, *Mahatma and the Mad Boy*, *Courtesans of Bombay* (1983) and *In Custody* (1993), Chaudhri with several feature films, including *An Unremarkable Life* (1989), and Kaul with her film on calypso music, *One Hand Don't Clap* (1988)—went on to make films that received mainstream acclaim and exhibition.

These films had limited visibility as Asian-American or Indian-American work. For one thing, there were no other Indian-American filmmakers at the time, so their successes did not emerge in the wake of a larger, established body of independent works by Indian-Americans. For another, their "non-Indian" or "non-Asian" subject matter, as in the case of Chaudhri and Kaul, or perhaps, ironically, mainstream success and acceptance in the case of Merchant, had a salutary effect: their works were judged in terms of artistic and formal expression and not as a cinema of primarily documentary, sociological, or historical interest, as often happens to minority artists. On the other hand, a general unawareness of the existence of Indian-American filmmakers persisted.

From India to America:
New Directions in Indian-American Film and Video

September 21–October 16, 1994

Screening Schedule
All works are color and sound.

Wednesday, September 21
Noon *What Are Our Women Like in America?* (1994), Balvinder Dhenjan. Video, 12 minutes. *Jareena: Portrait of a Hijda* (1990), Prem Kalliat. Video, 25 minutes. *None of the Above* (1993), Erica Surat Andersen. 16mm film, 30 minutes. *So Far from India* (1982), Mira Nair. 16mm film, 28 minutes. *Home* (1992), Michelle Taghioff. 16mm film, 38 minutes.
3:30 *In Custody* (1993), Ismail Merchant. 35mm film, 124 minutes.

Thursday, September 22
1:15 *Kalari Clan* (1993), Prem Kalliat and Prakash Chandroth. Video, 23 minutes. *Fiji Shehnai* (1990), Nidhi Singh. Video, 4 minutes. *Leaving Bakul Bagan* (1993), Sandeep Bhusan Ray. Video, 44 minutes. *Voices of the Morning* (1992), Meena Nanji. Video, 15 minutes. *Ablutions* (1992), Ashraf Meer. Video, 4 minutes. *Stages of Integrations* (1990), Ashraf Meer and Maria T. Rodriguez. 16mm film, 15 minutes. *First Look* (1982), Kavery Kaul. 16mm film, 60 minutes.
5:30 *Mississippi Masala* (1992), Mira Nair. 35mm film, 118 minutes.

Friday, September 23
Noon *Knowing Her Place* (1990), Indu Krishnan. Video, 40 minutes. *Children of Desired Sex: Boy or Girl?* (1988), Mira Nair. 16mm film, 28 minutes. *Mahatma and the Mad Boy* (1972), Ismail Merchant. 16mm film, 27 minutes. *India Cabaret* (1986), Mira Nair. 16mm film, 58 minutes.
4:00 *West Is West* (1988), David Rathod. 35mm film, 80 minutes.

Saturday, September 24
Noon *Salaam Bombay* (1988), Mira Nair. 35mm film, 113 minutes.
2:15 *A Crack in the Mannequin: South Asian Working Women in America* (1993), Keshini Kashyap and Dharini Rasiah. Video, 15 minutes. *Straight for the Money: Interviews with Queer Sex Workers* (1994), Hima B. Video, 58 minutes.
4:30 *Courtesans of Bombay* (1983), Ismail Merchant. 16mm film, 73 minutes.

Sunday, September 25
Noon *(un)named* (1992), Madhavi Rangachar and Maria T. Rodriguez. Video, 6 minutes. *The New Puritans: The Sikhs of Yuba City* (1986), Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam. Video, 27 minutes. *Taxi-vala/Auto-biography* (1994), Vivek Renjen Bald. Video, approximately 45 minutes.
2:00 *One Hand Don't Clap* (1988), Kavery Kaul. 35mm film, 92 minutes.
4:00 *An Unremarkable Life* (1989), Amin Chaudhri. 35mm film, 92 minutes.

Wednesday, September 28: see September 25

Thursday, September 29
1:15 *What Are Our Women Like in America?* (1994), Balvinder Dhenjan. Video, 12 minutes. *Jareena: Portrait of a Hijda* (1990), Prem Kalliat. Video, 25 minutes. *None of the Above* (1993), Erica Surat Andersen. 16mm film, 30 minutes. *So Far from India* (1982), Mira Nair. 16mm, 28 minutes. *Home* (1992), Michelle Taghioff. 16mm film, 38 minutes.
5:30 *In Custody* (1993), Ismail Merchant. 35mm film, 124 minutes.

Friday, September 30
11:30 *Kalari Clan* (1993), Prem Kalliat and Prakash Chandroth. Video, 23 minutes. *Fiji Shehnai* (1990), Nidhi Singh. Video, 4 minutes. *Leaving Bakul Bagan* (1993), Sandeep Bhusan Ray. Video, 44 minutes. *Voices of the Morning* (1992), Meena Nanji. Video, 15 minutes. *Ablutions* (1992), Ashraf Meer. Video, 4 minutes. *Stages of Integrations* (1990), Ashraf Meer and Maria T. Rodriguez. 16mm film, 15 minutes. *First Look* (1982), Kavery Kaul. 16mm film, 60 minutes.
3:30 *Mississippi Masala* (1992), Mira Nair. 35mm film, 118 minutes.

Saturday, October 1: see September 23
Sunday, October 2: see September 24
Wednesday, October 5: see September 24

Thursday, October 6
1:15 *(un)named* (1992), Madhavi Rangachar and Maria T. Rodriguez. Video, 6 minutes. *The New Puritans: The Sikhs of Yuba City* (1986), Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam. Video, 27 minutes. *Taxi-vala/Auto-biography* (1994), Vivek Renjen Bald. Video, approximately 45 minutes.
3:30 *One Hand Don't Clap* (1988), Kavery Kaul. 35mm film, 92 minutes.
6:15 *An Unremarkable Life* (1989), Amin Chaudhri. 35mm film, 92 minutes.

Friday, October 7: see September 21
Saturday, October 8: see September 30
Sunday, October 9: see September 23
Wednesday, October 12: see September 23

Thursday, October 13
1:15 *Salaam Bombay* (1988), Mira Nair. 35mm film, 113 minutes.
3:30 *A Crack in the Mannequin: South Asian Working Women in America* (1993), Keshini Kashyap and Dharini Rasiah. Video, 15 minutes. *Straight for the Money: Interviews with Queer Sex Workers* (1994), Hima B. Video, 58 minutes.
6:15 *Courtesans of Bombay* (1983), Ismail Merchant. 16mm film, 73 minutes.

Friday, October 14: see September 25
Saturday, October 15: see September 21
Sunday, October 16: see September 30

Since the mid-1980s there has been an increase in the number of works by Indian-Americans, with a rise in immigrants from Asia following the relaxation of immigration restrictions in 1965, and the coming of age of first-generation Indian-Americans who either grew up or were born in the US. Attesting to the constant flux of people arriving in the US from Asia, many works in this exhibition are by immigrants or first-generation Indian-Americans. Starting in the mid-1980s, the independent sector produced Behroze Shroff's *Sweet Jail* (1985), and Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam's *The New Puritans: The Sikhs of Yuba City* (1986), both looking at the Indian farming community in California. What these early works did do was give face to an identity, and approach the issue of national origins and dual cultures. And that contributed to the ongoing and changing depiction and expression of Asian-American history and culture.

The world of the South Asian immigrant is approached in different ways. Sandeep Bhusan Ray's *Leaving Bakul Bagan* (1993) follows in *cinema verité* style the last few days in the life of a young girl in Calcutta as she prepares to leave for college in the US. *West Is West* (1988), David Rathod's independent feature comedy, is about a young man who arrives in San Francisco and finds himself on the run from the US immigration authorities. The supporting characters in *West Is West* are reflective of the immigrant experience: the Indian woman who runs the seedy hotel in the Tenderloin district, who alternately exploits and supports the young man, his immigrant buddy, and eventually the young American girl he falls in love with. Michelle Taghioff's *Home* (1992) also follows, in docudrama form, another young girl, this time from Bombay, as she plans to leave for the US. But *Home* adds a further element, that of the filmmaker returning to Bombay, after years in the US, seeking to recapture a sense of belonging that she has never been able to find in her new home, and dealing with a powerful sense of loss and displacement.

Home, along with other works, such as Nair's *So Far from India*, present one sense of being and living in the US today. It is of people belonging to and living in two cultures and still inhabiting two worlds. From these two films, along with *Taxi-vala/Auto-biography* (1994), in which Vivek Renjen Bald, a young first-generation Indian-American, turns the camera to the world of the Indian taxi driver in New York and questions his relationship with one of the most visible groups of Indian-Americans, one gets a nuance of the great class differences of Indian immigrants in this country. It is a difference that perpetuates the alienation of the Indian-American working class from the white-collar, college-educated, professional Indian-American, and it is a contradiction that cuts across other modes of immigrant identity in the US, based on culture, race, and language.

The need to find a place in the American social and racial organization and hierarchy emerges as another strong theme, as it does in many Asian-American films and videos. Uprooted from a particular class and region in the home country, the immigrant must redefine himself in American terms. It is a long process, similar to but complicated by more pronounced ethnic differences and greater cultural distances from the earlier experiences of European immigrants. The works produced in the Reagan-Bush decade, when Indian-American media really began to emerge, reflect the sense of siege that many minorities felt. These works also show many different alliances around other issues, such as women's rights, gender politics, race, and labor.

Mira Nair, *Salaam Bombay*, 1988. Photograph: Mitch Epstein.

An overlapping of Indian-American media with gender issues is seen in Hima B.'s *Straight for the Money: Interviews with Queer Sex Workers* (1994)—an expression of different modes of acculturation that come out even more strongly in films and videos relating to ethnicity and race and women's issues. Prem Kalliat's *Jareena: Portrait of a Hijda* (1990), about a young Indian transvestite, provides an interesting flip side to gender issues in India.

Sarin and Sonam's *The New Puritans: The Sikhs of Yuba City* looks at the various stages of acculturation through work and marriage, especially within the Mexican-American migrant labor group of a North Indian farming community in California. Even with advanced degrees of acculturation through education and socialization, it becomes clear that the construct of identity lies in constant negotiation. This process is apparent in Madhavi Rangachar and Maria T. Rodriguez's *(un)named* (1992) and Erica Surat Andersen's first-person account of her encounter with racial categorization in *None of the Above* (1993). Andersen takes her camera and interviews children of mixed marriages, pointing to conflicts and differing expectations not only between the European-

American majority culture but between other minority groups such as African-Americans and Asian-Americans. The experiences are startlingly illustrative of the ways in which innocent but racially based perceptions continue to deny persons of color their personhood.

The theme of displacement of the Indian immigrant takes on additional perspectives in Indu Krishnan's *Knowing Her Place* (1990). The camera turns a sympathetic lens on a first-generation Indian-American woman married to an Indian immigrant and being confronted by the demands of a teaching career and her role as a traditional Indian housewife. Her relations with her teenage sons bring into sharp focus the additional strains within an intergenerational Asian family. This intersection of Asian, and in this instance Indian, immigration with other overarching issues of American society such as feminism, presents new avenues for thought. In *Knowing Her Place*, a fairly straightforward documentary, and in *Voices of the Morning* (1992), Meena Nanji's experimental video, the urgency of women to seize control in defining their identity takes on an even more complex course as a patriarchal Asian-Indian tradition joins forces with a male-dominated American society. The objective discourse in Krishnan's video, a *verité* reportage tempered with the artist's intervention, finds an obverse in the subjective voice in Nanji's videotape. Even Nair's *India Cabaret* (1986) and *Children of Desired Sex: Boy or Girl?* (1988), though shot and structured around an Indian frame of reference, derives from larger issues of feminism in contemporary American society.

Several works share the aesthetic of independent film and video in the US: the experimental video art of Ashraf Meer in *Stages of Integrations* (1990) and *Ablutions* (1992) and Nidhi Singh's *Fiji Shehnai* (1990) incorporate the experiences of the Indian-American artist, while in Hima B.'s *Straight for the Money: Interviews with Queer Sex Workers*, Indian-American identity takes a back seat to activist interventionist video.

Many of these artists, however, working in the mainstream or in alternative media, appropriate the cinematic form that is most distinctly Indian, that of the commercial Bombay film with its musical numbers. These range from direct clips, as in the song sequence from *Mr. India* in Nair's *Mississippi Masala*, to the singing of Hindi film songs at a wedding (featuring, in a nice twist, the Bombay film star Sharmila Tagore), to an interpretation of the use of music in film in Merchant's *In Custody*, the party sequence in Rathod's *West Is West*, or the use of a house music version of a popular Hindi film song in Taghioff's *Home*. The irony is that the commercial Bombay cinema largely seen by the non-Westernized, vernacular Indian becomes the most effective and visible mode of cinematic expression among Indians living in the West. The use of the commercial Indian film and film songs to provide a common social ground at diasporic gatherings of Indian-Americans itself becomes a subject for the Indian-American filmmaker, as Sumita Chakravarty observes about Nair's *Mississippi Masala*.[5]

"From India to America" represents a look at independent media, with roots in both the mainstream and alternative film, and the ways in which they have worked together to present America through Indian eyes and India refracted through the American experience.

L. Somi Roy
Guest Curator

Notes

1. Indian-Americans belong to the larger group identified in the US as South Asians, which includes people of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Sri Lankan descent.

2. Renee Tajima, "Moving the Image: Asian American Independent Filmmaking 1970–1990," in Russell Leong, ed., *Moving the Image: Independent Asian Pacific American Media Art* (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center and Visual Communications, Southern California Asian American Studies Central, Inc., 1991).

3. Figures are from the 1990 US Census, which now refers to Asian-Americans under the category of Asian Pacific American. See Susan B. Gall and Timothy L. Gall, eds., Statistical Record of Asian Americans (Detroit: Gale Research, 1993).

4. Roger Daniels, "History of Indian Immigration to the United States: An Interpretive Essay," in Jagat K. Motwani and Jyoti Barot-Motwani, eds., *Global Migration of Indians: Saga of Adventure, Enterprise, Identity and Integration* (New York: National Federation of Indian-American Associations, 1989).

5. Sumita S. Chakravarty, *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema 1947–1987* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

"From India to America" is guest curated by L. Somi Roy, with the assistance of Zette Emmons. The exhibition will travel to the Sirī Fort Complex, New Delhi, India, November 30–December 4, 1994, and to the National Centre for the Performing Arts, Bombay, India, December 7–11, 1994, under the auspices of the Indo-U.S. Subcommission on Education and Culture and the Smita Patil Foundation as a presentation of the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Subcommission. The Indo-U.S. Subcommssion on Education and Culture organizes cultural and educational programs between India and the United States.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 75
New American Film and Video Series

Edward Hopper and the American Cinema

June 22–August 13, 1995

The Mystery of Edward Hopper

Anyone writing about Edward Hopper's relationship to the cinema faces an obvious difficulty: while the evidence of Hopper's interest in the movies is certain, the facts about what he actually saw and liked are few—a stray remark, for example, praising an obscure American film, The Savage Eye; *a line stating his eagerness to see Jean-Luc Godard's* Breathless.[1] *Working from the paintings themselves, one can, of course, infer certain connections: the diners in Hemingway's* The Killers *and Warner Brothers'* Little Caesar *become* Nighthawks, *which itself appears, as an explicit citation, in* Pennies from Heaven. *Similarly, Hopper's eerie chiaroscuro, abandoned urban settings, and odd perspectives (often of an anonymous passerby) all appear in the thirties crime movies which evolved into film noir. While this approach might prove interesting, it would ultimately depend on intuitive speculation and biographical research. The following essay takes a different path.*

In one of art history's founding myths, photography freed painting to become nonfigurative: hence the century-long rush from Impressionism to Abstract Expressionism, with its stops along the way at the stations whose names now evoke memories of realism's apparently unchecked dissolution—Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism, Dada. In this explanatory system, Edward Hopper, always an idiosyncratic artist, starts to seem even more strange. When Hopper was born, photography, after all, was over fifty years old, Joseph Nicéphore Niepce having managed in 1827 to have taken the first photograph, a view of his own courtyard, from an upper window of his chateau. And yet, after an early brush with a very belated Impressionism, Hopper remained that puzzling anomaly of pre-Pop twentieth-century art: an important figurative painter.

You Only Live Once (1937), Fritz Lang Photograph courtesy The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive, New York

Transforming art history into a different kind of story, we could imagine this case as *The Mystery of Edward Hopper*, a tale which would concern not so much a murder as an apparent *disappearance*—the vanishing of photography and its presumably dispositive influence on painting. For if art history's account is true, how could Hopper, a resident of one of the world's great centers of photography, have escaped that medium's supposedly irresistible prompting to *paint in a different way*? This question suggests an alternate route of investigation only beginning to be

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explored: the profound impact of photography on painting, and indeed on cognition as a whole, may not be limited to the abandonment of realism. It may involve *something else*. Locating that *something else* will require me to follow specific clues.

First clue: Almost one hundred and seventy years after its invention, photography has finally become recognized as the first development in a communications revolution whose later stages—the cinema, videotape, and the computer—have made visible photography's decisive break with alphabetic culture. In *Orality and Literacy*, Walter Ong has summarized the implications of such a break, describing the research tradition (named "grammatology" by philosopher Jacques Derrida) which posits that different technologies of communication occasion different ways of thinking.[2] An oral culture, for example, relying entirely on human memory to store and retrieve its information, develops particular conceptual habits that appear strange to us, the inhabitants of a fully alphabetic society.[3] Grammatology further suggests that history has seen only two major revolutions in communications technology: the first involved precisely this shift from oral to alphabetic cultures; the second, the transition from alphabetic to "electronic," we are living through now. In fact, the much-debated word "postmodernism" is best understood as simply the term for that moment when awareness of this second transition becomes widespread. What are the consequences, characteristics, and modes of an age of film, television, magnetic tape, and computers? How will what we call "thinking" change with this technology? In fact, Hopper's paintings suggest answers to these questions.

Second clue: One of the first writers to point to photography's grammatological significance was Walter Benjamin. In his most famous essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1935), Benjamin designated photography as the crucial first step toward something other than alphabetic literacy.[4] Photography, he argued, changed everything, forcing us to rethink art and writing and even thinking itself. At times in another essay, "A Small History of Photography," Benjamin seemed merely to be contributing to the art history party line about the relationship between photography and painting: the calling-card daguerreotype, Benjamin observed, had quickly put nineteenth-century portrait painters out of business.[5] But elsewhere he insisted on photography's more radical consequences, and he was willing to act on his argument. The *Arcades Project*, his proposed study of nineteenth-century Paris, remains the great unbuilt prototype of a new, explicitly "electronic" history, relying less on traditional exposition than on the forms basic to photography and film: collage and montage. And in aphoristic notes, Benjamin left hints about the *Arcades Project*'s intended focus:

> To someone looking through piles of old letters, a stamp that has long been out of circulation on a torn envelope often says more than a reading of dozens of pages.[6]
>
> The eternal would be the ruffles on a dress rather than an idea.[7]

Third clue: Benjamin had derived his idea for the *Arcades Project* from Louis Aragon's 1926 Surrealist narrative *Le Paysan de Paris*.[8] "At night in bed," Benjamin later wrote, "I could never read more than two or three pages at a time, for my heartbeat became so strong that I was forced to lay the book down."[9] The encounter with Aragon's book clinched Benjamin's interest in Surrealism. Its preoccupation with dislocation, its attention to fragments, and its concentration on *le quotidien* all ensured that Surrealism as a movement would be drawn to photography. Its founder, André Breton, defined his invention of automatic writing as "the true photography of thought," and, as Rosalind Krauss has pointed out, all three of Surrealism's examples of beauty (mimicry, "the expiration of movement," and the found object) were explicitly photographic.[10]

The Surrealists, however, did not stop with photography. They quickly embraced its implementation in the cinema, anticipating Jean-Luc Godard's dictum that "Photography is the truth, and the cinema is the truth twenty-four times a second."[11] Above all, the movies offered Breton and his colleagues examples of the event they most valued: the eruption of "the marvelous" into everyday life. In Aragon's words,

> All our emotion exists for those dear old American adventure films that speak of daily life and manage to raise to a dramatic level a banknote on which our attention is riveted, a table with a revolver on it, a bottle that on occasion becomes a weapon, a handkerchief that reveals a crime....[12]

For the Surrealists, the ability to notice such things depended upon tactics of fragmentation, which they redefined as a means to knowledge. Thus, such maneuvers as Breton's moviegoing habits (which depended on ignorance of both the films' titles and their showing times) and Man Ray's trick of isolating details by watching the screen through barely parted fingers were intended to release individual images from the narratives which constrained them. Under normal conditions, for example, you would never notice a wrinkled map, spread casually across a writing table, when the story was telling you to look at the gun in the heroine's pocket. But, the Surrealists had asked, what if *the map* contained the potential for rev-

Rear Window (1954), Alfred Hitchcock. Photograph courtesy The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive, New York

Notes

1. See Gail Levin, *Edward Hopper: The Art and the Artist*, exh. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1980), p. 58.
2. Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World* (New York: Routledge Chapman & Hall, 1982). See also the work of Gregory L. Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-Pedagogy from Jacques Derrida to Joseph Beuys* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984) and *Teletheory: Grammatology in the Age of Video* (New York: Routledge, 1989).
3. As an example of oral logic, Ong (*Orality and Literacy*, p. 51) describes a scene from R. Luria's famous study *Cognitive Development: Its Cultural and Social Foundation:* asked to identify the one dissimilar object in a group consisting of *hammer*, *saw*, *log*, and *hatchet*, illiterate subjects, accustomed more to concrete, situational thinking than to abstractions like "tool," insist upon the relatedness of all four. "They're all alike," one responded. "The saw will saw the log and the hatchet will chop it into small pieces. If one of these has to go, I'd throw out the hatchet. It doesn't do as good a job as a saw." When presented with the "correct" notion involving the concept of "tool," the same man stuck to his guns: "YES, but even if we have tools, we still need wood—otherwise we can't build anything." While this answer would get you nowhere on an SAT test (an exam based almost entirely on the methods of literate culture), it does amount to a kind of thinking. Although we take for granted our own notions of "thinking" and assume their permanence, we forget how much human consciousness was restructured by the invention of writing.
4. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Hannah Arendt, ed., *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), pp. 217–51.
5. Walter Benjamin, "A Small History of Photography," in *One-Way Street and Other Writings* (London: NLB, 1979), pp. 240–57.
6. *One-Way Street*, p. 91.
7. Quoted in Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 130.
8. Aragon's book has recently reappeared in English as *Paris Peasant* (Boston: Exact Change, 1993).
9. Quoted in Wolin, *Walter Benjamin*, p. 128.
10. Rosalind E. Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde & Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1985), pp. 103, 112–13.
11. Godard's famous line occurs in his second feature, *Le Petit Soldat* (1960).
12. Louis Aragon, "On Décor," in Paul Hammond, ed., *The Shadow and Its Shadow: Surrealist Writings on Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1978), p. 29. Compare Aragon's descriptions of the cinema's effect with Benjamin's famous remark that "Not for nothing have Atget's photographs been likened to those of the scene of a crime" (Benjamin, "A Small History of Photography," p. 256). Several of Hopper's most famous paintings share this sinister quality. *Drug Store* (1927) and *Seven A.M.* (1948), for example, make their small shops seem vulnerable, as if a robbery, timed for these deserted times of day, were imminent. *Drug Store*, in fact, resembles the site of the surprise attack on *The Godfather*'s Don Corleone. Similarly, *Cape Cod Evening* (1939), seems to portray a rural hideout, reached by the highway visible in *Gas* (1940). Meanwhile, the other gang members wait in a *Hotel by a Railroad* (1952), or in the *Hotel Lobby* (1943); or they meet surreptitiously with their accountant in a *Conference at Night* (1949). Indeed, in Hopper's world, even the smallest detail—ordinary curtains, blown by the wind (*Night Windows*, 1928)—becomes ominous.
13. Benjamin, "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia," in *One-Way Street*, p. 229.
14. "On Décor," in Hammond, *The Shadow and Its Shadow*, p. 29.
15. For a discussion of conventional cinema's narrative linearization, see Noël Burch, "Film's Institutional Mode of Representation and the Soviet Response," *October*, no. 11 (Winter 1979), pp. 77–96.
16. André Breton, "As in Wood," in Hammond, *The Shadow and Its Shadow*, pp. 42–44.
17. "Surrealism," in Benjamin, *One-Way Street*, p. 229.
18. Quoted in Robert Hobbs, *Edward Hopper* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987), pp. 10–11.
19. See *Roland Barthes* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp. 54–55: "*Le plein du cinéma*—Saturation of the cinema. Resistance to the cinema: The signifier itself is always, by nature, continuous here, whatever the rhetoric of frames and shots; without remission, a continuum of images; the film...*follows*, like a garrulous ribbon: statutory impossibility of the fragment, of the haiku."
20. Roland Barthes, "The Third Meaning," in *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp. 52–68.
21. Ibid., pp. 61–62.
22. Ibid., pp. 64–65.
23. For a longer discussion of fetishism as a research strategy, see my *The Avant-Garde Finds Andy Hardy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, forthcoming).
24. Roland Barthes, *"Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure...,"* in *The Rustle of Language* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), pp. 278-79.
25. *Godard on Godard* (New York: Viking Press, 1972), p. 181: "Cinema, Truffaut said, is spectacle—Méliès—and research—Lumière. If I analyze myself today, I see that I have always wanted, basically, to do research in the form of a spectacle. The documentary side is: a man in a particular situation. The spectacle comes when one makes this man a gangster or a secret agent."

For further reading on Edward Hopper and film, see Gail Levin, "Edward Hopper: The Influence of Theater and Film," *Arts Magazine*, 55 (October 1980), pp. 123-27; Erika Doss, "Edward Hopper, Nighthawks, and Film Noir," *Postscript: Essays in Film and the Humanities*, 2 (Winter 1983), pp. 14–36; and Mark Holthof, "Die Hopper-Methode: Vom 'narrativen' zum 'abstrakten' Realismus," ["The Hopper Method: From 'Narrative' to 'Abstract' Realism"] in *Edward Hopper, 1882–1967*, exh. cat. (Frankfurt: Schirn Kunsthalle, 1992), pp. 28–32.

Robert B. Ray, guest curator of "Edward Hopper and the American Cinema," is director of film and media studies at the University of Florida, Gainesville, and is the author of *A Certain Tendency of the American Cinema*, 1930–1980 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Unviersity Press, 1985).

explored: the profound impact of photography on painting, and indeed on cognition as a whole, may not be limited to the abandonment of realism. It may involve *something else*. Locating that *something else* will require me to follow specific clues.

First clue: Almost one hundred and seventy years after its invention, photography has finally become recognized as the first development in a communications revolution whose later stages—the cinema, videotape, and the computer—have made visible photography's decisive break with alphabetic culture. In *Orality and Literacy*, Walter Ong has summarized the implications of such a break, describing the research tradition (named "grammatology" by philosopher Jacques Derrida) which posits that different technologies of communication occasion different ways of thinking.[2] An oral culture, for example, relying entirely on human memory to store and retrieve its information, develops particular conceptual habits that appear strange to us, the inhabitants of a fully alphabetic society.[3] Grammatology further suggests that history has seen only two major revolutions in communications technology: the first involved precisely this shift from oral to alphabetic cultures; the second, the transition from alphabetic to "electronic," we are living through now. In fact, the much-debated word "postmodernism" is best understood as simply the term for that moment when awareness of this second transition becomes widespread. What are the consequences, characteristics, and modes of an age of film, television, magnetic tape, and computers? How will what we call "thinking" change with this technology? In fact, Hopper's paintings suggest answers to these questions.

Second clue: One of the first writers to point to photography's grammatological significance was Walter Benjamin. In his most famous essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1935), Benjamin designated photography as the crucial first step toward something other than alphabetic literacy.[4] Photography, he argued, changed everything, forcing us to rethink art and writing and even thinking itself. At times in another essay, "A Small History of Photography," Benjamin seemed merely to be contributing to the art history party line about the relationship between photography and painting: the calling-card daguerreotype, Benjamin observed, had quickly put nineteenth-century portrait painters out of business.[5] But elsewhere he insisted on photography's more radical consequences, and he was willing to act on his argument. The *Arcades Project*, his proposed study of nineteenth-century Paris, remains the great unbuilt prototype of a new, explicitly "electronic" history, relying less on traditional exposition than on the forms basic to photography and film: collage and montage. And in aphoristic notes, Benjamin left hints about the *Arcades Project*'s intended focus:

> To someone looking through piles of old letters, a stamp that has long been out of circulation on a torn envelope often says more than a reading of dozens of pages.[6]
>
> The eternal would be the ruffles on a dress rather than an idea.[7]

Third clue: Benjamin had derived his idea for the *Arcades Project* from Louis Aragon's 1926 Surrealist narrative *Le Paysan de Paris*.[8] "At night in bed," Benjamin later wrote, "I could never read more than two or three pages at a time, for my heartbeat became so strong that I was forced to lay the book down."[9] The encounter with Aragon's book clinched Benjamin's interest in Surrealism. Its preoccupation with dislocation, its attention to fragments, and its concentration on *le quotidien* all ensured that Surrealism as a movement would be drawn to photography. Its founder, André Breton, defined his invention of automatic writing as "the true photography of thought," and, as Rosalind Krauss has pointed out, all three of Surrealism's examples of beauty (mimicry, "the expiration of movement," and the found object) were explicitly photographic.[10]

The Surrealists, however, did not stop with photography. They quickly embraced its implementation in the cinema, anticipating Jean-Luc Godard's dictum that "Photography is the truth, and the cinema is the truth twenty-four times a second."[11] Above all, the movies offered Breton and his colleagues examples of the event they most valued: the eruption of "the marvelous" into everyday life. In Aragon's words,

> All our emotion exists for those dear old American adventure films that speak of daily life and manage to raise to a dramatic level a banknote on which our attention is riveted, a table with a revolver on it, a bottle that on occasion becomes a weapon, a handkerchief that reveals a crime....[12]

For the Surrealists, the ability to notice such things depended upon tactics of fragmentation, which they redefined as a means to knowledge. Thus, such maneuvers as Breton's moviegoing habits (which depended on ignorance of both the films' titles and their showing times) and Man Ray's trick of isolating details by watching the screen through barely parted fingers were intended to release individual images from the narratives which constrained them. Under normal conditions, for example, you would never notice a wrinkled map, spread casually across a writing table, when the story was telling you to look at the gun in the heroine's pocket. But, the Surrealists had asked, what if *the map* contained the potential for rev-

elation, and the movie made you miss it? Or, as Benjamin speculated, "What form do you suppose a life would take that was determined at a decisive moment precisely by the street song last on everyone's lips?"[13]

The movies, the Surrealists recognized, had revealed "photographic thinking's" reliance on the relationship between sequence and fragment. For training in how to notice something like Benjamin's out-of-circulation stamp, the cinema became a crucial site, for with the movies' power both to illuminate everyday details and to make them disappear, film was at once the miracle cure and the old problem. On the one hand, by extracting its people and objects from the world at large, the cinema made them more visible than ever before. Aragon described the mechanism and its effect:

> To endow with a poetic value that which does not yet possess it, to wilfully restrict the field of vision so as to intensify expression: these are two properties that help make cinematic décor the adequate setting of modern beauty.[14]

On the other hand, by subjecting every detail to what Noël Burch has called "linearization"—in other words, by making every aspect of the image subservient to the narrative—the movies radically discouraged the kind of attention that notices a forgotten stamp instead of an obvious letter.[15]

For the Surrealists, the solution involved tactics of dislocation which would pry images loose from the stories constraining them. Hence the strange urgency of Breton's description of his early moviegoing:

> When I was "at the cinema age"... I never began by consulting the amusement pages to find out what film might chance to be the best, nor did I find out the time the film was to begin. I agreed wholeheartedly with Jacques Vaché in appreciating nothing so much as dropping into the cinema when whatever was playing was playing, at any point in the show, and leaving at the first hint of boredom—of surfeit—to rush off to another cinema where we behaved in the same way....I have never known anything more *magnetizing:* it goes without saying that more often than not we left our seats without even knowing the title of the film, which was of no importance to us anyway. On a Sunday several hours sufficed to exhaust all that Nantes could offer us: the important thing is that one came out "charged" for a few days....[16]

This description corresponds in important ways to the experience of seeing a series of Hopper's paintings, many of which encourage us to imagine the larger narrative from which a single incident might have been drawn. What will happen next to the woman barely glimpsed through *Night Windows*? What stranger will appear as night falls and the lights come

Edward Hopper, *Night Windows*, 1928. Oil on canvas, 29 x 34 inches. The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Gift of John Hay Whitney Photograph ©1995 The Museum of Modern Art, New York

on at the lonely filling station, somewhere in the countryside in *Gas*? The preoccupation with the fragment, and, in particular, with the capacity of the film still (real or imaginary) to enter into or evoke different sequences, provides the *raison d'être* of such works as Joseph Cornell's Surrealist movie *Rose Hobart* (derived from the pulp melodrama *East of Borneo*), Cindy Sherman's *Film Stills*, and a collage film like Chick Strand's *Loose Ends*.

For Breton and his colleagues, the tactic of fragmentation applied to the cinema merely imitated the moments when everyday structures collapse and ordinary details, entering into unusual juxtapositions, take on, if only temporarily, attributes of "the marvelous." Moving, coincidences, getting lost, or even love could provoke the desired vision. As Benjamin described the sensation,

> Breton and Nadja are the lovers who convert everything that we have experienced on mournful railway journeys (railways are beginning to age), on godforsaken Sunday afternoons in the proletarian quarters of the great cities, in the first glance through the rain-blurred window of a new apartment, into revolutionary experience, if not action. They bring the immense forces of "atmosphere" concealed in these things to the point of explosion.[17]

The extent to which Hopper shared this sensibility shows itself in a remarkably similar passage he wrote in praise of fellow artist Charles Burchfield:

> From what is to the mediocre artist and unseeing layman the boredom of everyday existence in a provincial community, he has extracted that quality we may call poetic, romantic, lyric, or what you will. By sympathy with the particular he has made it epic and universal. No mood has been so mean as to seem unworthy of interpretation; the look of an asphalt road as it lies in the broiling sun at noon, cars and locomotives lying in God-forsaken railway yards, the streaming summer rain that can fill us with such hopeless boredom, the blank concrete walls and steel constructions of modern industry, mid-summer streets with the acid green of close-cut lawns, the dusty Fords and gilded movies—all the sweltering, tawdry life of the American small town, and behind all, the sad desolation of our suburban landscape. He derives daily stimulus from these, that others flee from or pass with indifference.[18]

Fourth clue: Of the writers who created what we have come to call "contemporary theory" (otherwise known as "cultural studies"), Roland Barthes is the most obvious heir to the Surrealist concern with the sequence-fragment opposition. Admitting his own "resistance to the cinema," Barthes proposed that if the movies' relentless unrolling prevents your noticing anything except narratively underlined details, the only response is to stop the film.[19] In his essay "The Third Meaning," Barthes did just that, working not with Eisenstein's films, but with individual frames taken from them. In suppressing the movies' continuity, he had, in effect, managed to simulate the experience of traveling in a foreign country without knowing the language. More exactly, he was reinventing Breton's experiment of entering an unidentified film *in medias res* and leaving when its point became too clear.[20]

Perusing images liberated from their plots, Barthes discovered his attention drawn to details (a woman's scarf, an eyebrow's curve) whose significance he could attribute to neither information nor symbolism. This "third meaning" (or "obtuse meaning"), Barthes wrote, "is a signifier without a signified," "is outside (articulated) language," "is discontinuous, indifferent to the story and to the obvious meaning." Indeed, "it outplays meaning—subverts not the content but the whole practice of meaning."[21]

What Barthes had located was the point where, to use Walter Ong's formulation, alphabetic culture gives way to the photographic. Barthes made that proposition explicit:

> It is at the level of the third meaning, and at that level alone, that the "filmic" finally emerges. The filmic is that in the film which cannot be described, the representation which cannot be represented. The filmic begins only where language and metalanguage end. Everything that can be *said* about *Ivan [the Terrible]* or *Potemkin* can be said of a written text...except this, the obtuse meaning.[22]

Barthes' insight involved recognizing these "third meanings" as a means to a knowledge whose starting point was the "interrogative reading" they compelled. In effect, Barthes was converting *fetishism*, with its overvaluation of apparently trivial details, into a research strategy, one which would enable its practitioner to enter a problem at other than the designated points.[23] The representation of this strategy appears in two movies where photographers, their attention drawn to mysterious details, struggle to locate the narratives which would accommodate them. In *Rear Window*, the *donnée* resembles many of Hopper's paintings: a glimpse through an open apartment window which reveals the fragment of a story (see, for example, Hopper's *Night Windows*, 1928). In *Blow-Up*, an allegory of "electronic thinking," the solution is withheld, as the hero is left to try out different explanations for the events which have intrigued him.

In his essay "*Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure*...," Barthes suggested that Proust, at the beginning of his career, hesitated "between two 'ways' he does not yet know could converge...the way of the Essay (of Criticism) and the way of the novel":

> Proust's hesitation...corresponds to a structural alternation....Metaphor sustains any discourse which asks: "What is it? What does it mean?"—the real question of the Essay. Metonymy, on the contrary, asks another question: "What can follow what I say? What can be engendered by the episode I am telling?"; this is the novel's question....Proust is a divided subject... he knows that each incident in life can give rise either to a commentary (an interpretation) or to an affabulation which produces or imagines the narrative *before* and *after*; to interpret is to take the Critical path, to argue theory...to think incidents and impressions, to describe their developments, is on the contrary, to weave a Narrative.[24]

Barthes proposed in this, one of his last writings, that contemporary thinking was moving toward Proust's hybrid, a combination of the Essay's "What does it mean?" and the Novel's "What might come before or after this incident?" Godard once called this hybrid "research in the form of a spectacle," and it seems increasingly to have become the form of thinking enabled by electronic technology.[25] Despite his initial interest in Ashcan realism, Hopper seems to have grown aware that by structuring his images to imply narratives, he could intensify his depictions of everyday life. In fact, he had intuited the role that spectacle would occupy in electronic thinking, posited by Ong as a "secondary orality," again dependent on the oral historian's fundamental resources: images and stories. Hopper's paintings, with their invitations to both the question of the Essay and the question of the Novel, anticipate this development, and in doing so, they suggest that photography (and the movies) can prompt art in more ways than are dreamt of in abstraction's philosophy.

Robert B. Ray
Guest Curator

Rear Window (1954), Alfred Hitchcock. Photograph courtesy The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive, New York

Notes

1. See Gail Levin, *Edward Hopper: The Art and the Artist*, exh. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1980), p. 58.
2. Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World* (New York: Routledge Chapman & Hall, 1982). See also the work of Gregory L. Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-Pedagogy from Jacques Derrida to Joseph Beuys* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984) and *Teletheory: Grammatology in the Age of Video* (New York: Routledge, 1989).
3. As an example of oral logic, Ong (*Orality and Literacy*, p. 51) describes a scene from R. Luria's famous study *Cognitive Development: Its Cultural and Social Foundation*: asked to identify the one dissimilar object in a group consisting of *hammer, saw, log,* and *hatchet*, illiterate subjects, accustomed more to concrete, situational thinking than to abstractions like "tool," insist upon the relatedness of all four: "They're all alike," one responded. "The saw will saw the log and the hatchet will chop it into small pieces. If one of these has to go, I'd throw out the hatchet. It doesn't do as good a job as a saw." When presented with the "correct" notion involving the concept of "tool," the same man stuck to his guns: "YES, but even if we have tools, we still need wood—otherwise we can't build anything." While this answer would get you nowhere on an SAT test (an exam based almost entirely on the methods of literate culture), it does amount to a kind of thinking. Although we take for granted our own notions of "thinking" and assume their permanence, we forget how much human consciousness was restructured by the invention of writing.
4. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Hannah Arendt, ed., *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), pp. 217–51.
5. Walter Benjamin, "A Small History of Photography," in *One-Way Street and Other Writings* (London: NLB, 1979), pp. 240–57.
6. *One-Way Street*, p. 91.
7. Quoted in Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 130.
8. Aragon's book has recently reappeared in English as *Paris Peasant* (Boston: Exact Change, 1993).
9. Quoted in Wolin, *Walter Benjamin*, p. 128.
10. Rosalind E. Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde & Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1985), pp. 103, 112–13.
11. Godard's famous line occurs in his second feature, *Le Petit Soldat* (1960).
12. Louis Aragon, "On Décor," in Paul Hammond, ed., *The Shadow and Its Shadow: Surrealist Writings on Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1978), p. 29. Compare Aragon's descriptions of the cinema's effect with Benjamin's famous remark that "Not for nothing have Atget's photographs been likened to those of the scene of a crime" (Benjamin, "A Small History of Photography," p. 256). Several of Hopper's most famous paintings share this sinister quality. *Drug Store* (1927) and *Seven A.M.* (1948), for example, make their small shops seem vulnerable, as if a robbery, timed for these deserted times of day, were imminent. *Drug Store*, in fact, resembles the site of the surprise attack on *The Godfather*'s Don Corleone. Similarly, *Cape Cod Evening* (1939), seems to portray a rural hideout, reached by the highway visible in *Gas* (1940). Meanwhile, the other gang members wait in a *Hotel by a Railroad* (1952), or in the *Hotel Lobby* (1943); or they meet surreptitiously with their accountant in a *Conference at Night* (1949). Indeed, in Hopper's world, even the smallest detail—ordinary curtains, blown by the wind (*Night Windows*, 1928)—becomes ominous.
13. Benjamin, "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia," in *One-Way Street*, p. 229.
14. "On Décor," in Hammond, *The Shadow and Its Shadow*, p. 29.
15. For a discussion of conventional cinema's narrative linearization, see Noël Burch, "Film's Institutional Mode of Representation and the Soviet Response," *October*, no. 11 (Winter 1979), pp. 77–96.
16. André Breton, "As in Wood," in Hammond, *The Shadow and Its Shadow*, pp. 42–44.
17. "Surrealism," in Benjamin, *One-Way Street*, p. 229.
18. Quoted in Robert Hobbs, *Edward Hopper* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987), pp. 10–11.
19. See Roland Barthes (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp. 54–55: "*Le plein du cinéma*—Saturation of the cinema. Resistance to the cinema: The signifier itself is always, by nature, continuous here, whatever the rhetoric of frames and shots; without remission, a continuum of images; the film *follows*, like a garrulous ribbon: statutory impossibility of the fragment, of the haiku."
20. Roland Barthes, "The Third Meaning," in *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp. 52–68.
21. Ibid., pp. 61–62.
22. Ibid., pp. 64–65.
23. For a longer discussion of fetishism as a research strategy, see my *The Avant-Garde Finds Andy Hardy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, forthcoming).
24. Roland Barthes, "*Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure...*," in *The Rustle of Language* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), pp. 278-79.
25. *Godard on Godard* (New York: Viking Press, 1972), p. 181: "Cinema, Truffaut said, is spectacle—Méliès—and research—Lumière. If I analyze myself today, I see that I have always wanted, basically, to do research in the form of a spectacle. The documentary side is: a man in a particular situation. The spectacle comes when one makes this man a gangster or a secret agent."

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Edward Hopper and the American Cinema

Screening Schedule

All works are film, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

June 22 at 2:30 and 6:15; June 23–24 at 1:30 and 4:00
East of Borneo (1931), George Melford; black-and-white, 77 minutes.
Rose Hobart (1939), Joseph Cornell; tinted, 19 1/2 minutes.

June 25 and 28 at 1:30; June 29 at 6:15; June 30 at 1:30
Loose Ends (1979), Chick Strand; black-and-white, 25 minutes.
Eureka (1974), Ernie Gehr; black-and-white, silent, 30 minutes.

June 25 and 28 at 4:00; June 29 at 2:30; June 30 at 4:00
Laura (1944), Otto Preminger; black-and-white, 88 minutes.

July 1–2 at 1:30; July 5 at 1:30; July 6 at 6:15
The Naked City, (1948), Jules Dassin; black-and-white, 96 minutes.

July 1–2 at 4:00; July 5 at 4:00; July 6 at 2:30
Masculin Féminin (1966), Jean-Luc Godard; black-and-white, 103 minutes.

July 7–9 at 12:30; July 12 at 12:30
Rear Window (1954), Alfred Hitchcock; 112 minutes.

July 7–9 at 3:30, July 12 at 3:30
Blow-Up (1966), Michelangelo Antonioni; 110 minutes.

July 13 at 5:30, July 14–16 at 12:30
The Killers (1946), Robert Siodmak; black-and-white, 105 minutes.

July 13 at 2:30; July 14–16 at 3:30
Vertigo (1958), Alfred Hitchcock; 128 minutes.

July 19 at 1:30; July 20 at 6:15; July 21–22 at 1:30
You Only Live Once (1937), Fritz Lang; black-and-white, 89 minutes.

July 19 at 4:00; July 20 at 2:30; July 21–22 at 4:00
High Sierra (1941), Raoul Walsh; black-and-white, 100 minutes.

July 23 at 1:30; July 26 at 1:30; July 27 at 6:15; July 28 at 1:30
Little Caesar (1930), Mervyn LeRoy; black-and-white, 80 minutes.

July 23 at 4:00; July 26 at 4:00; July 27 at 2:30; July 28 at 4:00
Dodsworth (1936), William Wyler; black-and-white, 101 minutes.

The Killers (1946), Robert Siodmak. Photograph courtesy The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive, New York

July 29-30 at 1:30; August 2 at 1:30; August 3 at 5:30
Written on the Wind (1956), Douglas Sirk; 99 minutes.

July 29-30 at 4:00; August 2 at 4:00; August 3 at 2:30
The Savage Eye (1959), Ben Maddow, Sidney Meyers, and Joseph Strick; black-and-white, 67 minutes.

August 4–5 at 11:30; August 6 at 2:30; August 9 at 2:30
The Godfather (1972), Francis Ford Coppola; 176 minutes.

August 4–5 at 4:00; August 6 at noon; August 9 at noon
Days of Heaven (1978), Terrence Malick; 94 minutes.

August 10 at 5:30; August 11–13 at 1:30
The Crowd (1928), King Vidor; black-and-white, silent, 104 minutes.

August 10 at 2:30; August 11–13 at 4:00
The Big Gamble (1931), Fred Niblo; black-and-white, 63 minutes.

Whitney Museum of American Art
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Thursday 1:00–8:00
Friday–Sunday 11:00–6:00

Film and Video Information: (212) 570-[illegible]

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Whitney Museum of American Art 76
New American Film and Video Series

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

September 13–October 1, 1995

Exilée (1980).
Film and video installation.

Gallery talk, Thursday, September 14 at 6:15.
John G. Hanhardt will be present.

Exilée will be shown on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays at noon, 2, and 4 pm, and on Thursdays at 2, 4, and 6:30 pm.

Installation Components:
10' x 12' white wall, constructed according to the artist's specifications. 2 Super-8mm films, black-and-white, silent (18 frames per second); 23 minutes each; 1 Super-8mm film projector. One 3/4" videotape, black-and-white, sound, 50 minutes; one 25" video monitor, one 3/4" videotape player, 1 audio amplifier, 2 audio speakers. Seating.

Through her art, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha went beyond the idea and created, within the transaction that is viewing a work, a poetic experience. In *Exilée*, which draws from film history and theory as well as Cha's own experience, we see an investigation of exile, of language and image relationships, and of the functions of the cinematic and video apparatus. Here Cha returns us to our psychological and historical selves by exploring the construction of the image and the memory of it. The sense of time as history is transmitted in *Exilée* through the time of memory.

Cha's life as an artist was a complex itinerary across fields of dislocation, as she moved with her family from Korea, where she was born, to the United States. At the University of California, Berkeley, she studied film, Conceptual and performance art, and the theoretical texts informing the discourse of film studies and filmmaking in the 1970s. A selection of Theresa Cha's art work in a variety of media and materials was shown at the Whitney Museum in 1992 in an exhibition guest-curated by Larry Rinder of the University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley. Rinder's essay located Cha's work within the complex of Conceptual art making in the Bay Area and charted the unique path which Cha forged through that place and history.[1]

I want to identify within *Exilée*, and within Cha's other media work, a conscious sense of film history and inquiry into film and video as epistemological devices for image making. Expressed in Cha's work is a powerful sense of how ideas (theory) compose, challenge, and lie at the basis of the aesthetic text. Her writings—especially the collection of texts entitled *Apparatus—Cinematographic Apparatus: Selected Writings* (1980), an assemblage of film theorists' texts as well as her own poetic interventions—are deep reflections on the cognitive machinery of the cinematic apparatus. Cha's other seminal book, *Dictee* (1982), employs poetry, prose, found texts, and photography to create an artist's book that extends beyond that genre. Both texts highlight a profound sense of ideas and self-inquiry as a means to create a speculative deconstruction of identity and the systems that construct the self.

Cha's concern with language and form is demonstrated in *Exilée*, in which the conflation of the cinematic projection and video monitor system within the work establishes a rich dialectic in terms of image and language strategies. The first feature of the installation is the white, freestanding wall at the far end of the Film and Video Gallery. Cut into the wall is a rectangle; a television monitor sits directly behind this opening. A Super-8mm film made up of two reels is projected onto the wall, which shows through time-lapse photography subtle changes in the definition and articulation of the composition. As the first reel of film unfolds, we barely make out a plant and its shadow as they gradually emerge into visibility; a window with the wind blowing a curtain; a tabletop with light gradually traveling over it. This first reel is then replaced by a second. There is no soundtrack on the film, which is being projected at 18 frames per second; the slow projection speed focuses attention on the image as well as further retards the movement of the action.

The videotape seen on the monitor is, like the film, shot in black and white. It opens with an extended

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from the [illegible] of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the [illegible] Art Foundation, George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria [illegible], the National Endowment for the Arts, the [illegible] State Council on the Arts, the Theodore and Renee Weiler Foundation, Tracy A. Whitney and [illegible].

title sequence that plays with the word *exilée*. As one watches on the monitor, still images dissolve into each other. The construction of these images is a subtle articulation of actions and possible meanings: an envelope, for example, is gradually sprinkled with flour until it is completely covered; when it is removed from the surface, it leaves its own shape. This gesture plays on the notion of language and the trace of memory and history. Cha's distinctive voice-over, with its delicate, deliberate phrases in French and English, evokes a further poetic relationship between the meanings of different languages and images. There is in *Exilée*, on one level, a tension between the film image projected *onto* the screen and the video image which emanates *from* the cathode ray tube. Cha describes *Exilée* as:

> "an attempt to disinherit the existing Time construct, its repetition, to make Entry into the Absence of established continuity and chronology in Time. Within memory is the Time that is explored."[2]

In this ambitious project, Cha both acknowledges exemplary art works and, through the power of her own art, places herself within their history—American independent film and video works that have challenged and sought to extend and transform the image-making capacities of the medium. *Exilée* bears a powerful relationship to the history of film and video as installations as well as to the theatrical forms of presentation.

Certain paradigmatic art works describe a similar transformation of traditional genre strategies and the creation of other aesthetic ideas. A recent example would be Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied* (1989), which employs a variety of formal strategies as well as performative, story telling, poetic, autobiographic, and historical reflections to reground the definition of self within a gay epistemology of personal discovery and expression. Another exemplar is Leslie Thornton's epic film and video series *Peggy and Fred in Hell: The 1st Cycle* (1984–94), which destabilizes the authority of the recorded image with strategies employed by the artist to disrupt the economy of the linear narrative. It is a work which creates out of a shifting catalogue of stylistic categories—documentary, cinema verité, acted narrative, and found footage—to evoke a hybrid discourse of the histories of the media arts.

Other exemplary texts taken from the early history of film and video include Stan Brakhage's *Anticipation of the Night* (1958), which radically removed the camera from the stabilizing authority of its point of view and created a visionary search through the optics of the camera—a quest that erased the coordinates of representation with an abstract image field. Further, in Peter Campus' videotape *Three Transitions* (1973), an exploration of the unique image manipulation and recording capacities of the video camera and technology, the artist constructed three self-portraits to explore the construction of the recorded image through its simulation of reality. In Michael Snow's film *Wavelength* (1966-67), the camera traverses the space of a loft and gradually closes in on a photograph on the opposite wall. This 45-minute film records the actions of its own relentless process, which becomes an inquiry into the transcription of the filmic space and a treatment of the ambiguities of the recorded film text.

Each artist struggles to remake the medium into a personal form of expression tied to the signs of language and the creation of new meanings. To recall Riggs, Campus, Brakhage, Snow, and Cha is to meet Cha's challenge to recall time and history, ourselves and our ideologies, as expressions in constant need of remembering.

We must recover the full history of film and the media arts and reexamine the contribution of artists such as Cha, moving in her short career between art forms and media, only to be marginalized in the traditional historical narrative of the avant-garde. *Exilée* and Cha's other works belong not on the edges of historical and regional art movements but more centrally within a reexamination of the role and importance of film and video to artists in the 1970s and 1980s working in the Conceptual Art and structural film movements. Cha's work belongs at the critical juncture where film and video both separate and align. This exhibition of *Exilée* is another step in the reexamination of Cha and of the history of American film and video.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

NOTES

1. See "Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Other Things Seen, Other Things Heard" (Program Note 69), Whitney Museum of American Art, New American Film and Video Series, 1993, which contains Rinder's essay on Cha as well as biographical and bibliographical information on Cha and her work.

2. Film program note, University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive Calendar, University of California, Berkeley.

Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street
New York, New York 10021

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Whitney Museum of American Art 77
New American Film and Video Series

Seduction and Subversion:
Images That Contest and Interrogate

October 11–29, 1995

Gallery talk, Thursday, October 18 at 6:30.
bell hooks will be present.

Everyone in this culture agrees that the images we see in films and videos are not just there to entertain us. Everyone knows that these images can function in myriad ways; they inform, teach, inspire, and often shape our understanding of the world around us. As small children, many of us watched movies and pretended to be the characters we watched on the screen. We imagined our lives could be like these images. The secret inner parts of our psyche that we had never shown to anyone were sometimes revealed on the screen. And those moments when what had never been mirrored in our real life was staring out at us felt like miracles, like magic. The recognition we had longed for was finally present, given to us by these images. We loved watching films. This "we" could be any child anywhere in the world.

To be changed by the images we watch is a fate all movie audiences share. Yet what we see and how it changes us differs. Race, gender, class, nationality are just a few locations that inform our ways of seeing, how we look, what we see, how we interpret that looking. Despite the common understanding that images change us, act upon us in ways that may not be obvious or clear, most people who watch films in the United States refuse to believe that the fictive representations that shape and inform their reality also play a significant role in maintaining the politics of domination in this society. When individuals watch films that perpetuate racist or sexist stereotypes, that show working-class people as dumb and stupid, that show foreigners as enemies, many viewers do not acknowledge that the ideas these images convey are carefully constructed by image makers and producers behind the scene. The images are seen as simply conveying aspects of reality that are common knowledge. Imagine you are watching a detective film, set in a large urban city. When the film begins all the actors are white. Halfway through the film a scene takes place in a red-light district. Suddenly two black female characters portraying prostitutes appear. Why? Who made this choice and for what reason?

When I describe this scenario in lectures and ask audiences to reflect on the choice the image maker made—to bring racial diversity into the picture at this moment—no matter their race and/or ethnicity, they defend this choice as "natural." They evoke stereotypes to insist that most or many prostitutes are black women, that those involved in creating this scene are "just being realistic." Of course rarely does anyone have any facts or data to support this assertion. In most discussions where audiences are asked to think about the ways in which images perpetuate and maintain structures of domination, there is a general reluctance to acknowledge the power of images to act as pedagogies of power that affirm the status quo. There is also an unwillingness to see that images can also subvert, disrupt, challenge, and change the status quo, intervening on prevailing systems of domination. Acknowledgment of both these standpoints means that we are all accountable—audiences, image makers.

Critiques of popular culture which focus on the political implication of films tend to call attention to the multiple ways cinematic images condone, affirm, and perpetuate structures of domination, racism, class elitism, sexism. This type of deconstructive critique is useful, yet it is also limited. Calling attention to the ways images are used to maintain cultures of domination is essential to any process of decolonization where individuals are attempting to break the hold that received and imposed images have on our minds and imaginations. However, an equally important part of any decolonizing process is the creation of different representations, counterhegemonic images that resist and challenge.

All the films and videos chosen for the series "Seduction and Subversion: Images That Contest and Interrogate" make use of images that disrupt conventional ways of thinking about race, gender, and class.

The New American Film and Video Series is made possible in part by grants from the Film and Video Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Heathcote Art Foundation, George S. Kaufman and the Kaufman Astoria Studios, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Theodore and Renee Weiler Foundation, Tracy A. White, and Barbara Wise.

Many of them are independent works that are rarely shown. Robert Gardner's *King James Version* offers an insightful portrait of inner-city black family life, where husband and young daughter must grapple with the wife/mother's rejection of traditional roles as she assumes the role of spiritual prophet. This film links the experience of Southern black folk traditions to the mass migration of black folks to the urban north. That it focuses on the issue of toxic waste dumping in black rural communities is just one example of the way Gardner explores his unconventional subject. In many ways this film is traditional in style and format. There is nothing experimental about the way the story is told. In content the film makes a radical departure from conventional coming-of-age stories in both Hollywood and independent cinema. Like Julie Dash's *Praise House*, which is more experimental in style and content, *King James Version* centralizes an unconventional mother/daughter relationship. Both films explore intergenerational tensions, as does Dash's *Relatives*, which offers an insightful documentation of the relationship between a black male dancer and his mother, wherein we are invited to look critically at him through her eyes while we simultaneously see their relationship for ourselves.

Many of the works in this series use the metaphor of journeying to problematize the question of identity and cultural appropriation. In unconventional works like Jim Jarmusch's fictional landscape *Mystery Train* and Marlon Riggs' documentary *Black Is...Black Ain't*, identity is always subject to change. As Iain Chambers asserts in *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*: "So identity is formed on the move...Such a journey is open and incomplete, it involves a continual fabulation, an invention, a construction, in which there is no fixed identity or final destination." The willingness to interrogate identity is evident in both the mainstream Hollywood film *Corrina, Corrina*, which challenges perceptions of both interracial romantic bondings, blended families, and our cultural approaches to death and dying, and the more radical avant-garde mode of contesting fixed subjectivity that is present in John Akomfrah's *Seven Songs for Malcolm X*. Like Leslie Thornton's experimental work *Adynata*, which explores the issue of appropriating an image, in her case an idealized representation of an anonymous Asian female, Akomfrah's work challenges audiences to interrogate iconic celebrations of Malcolm X to see the way myth and marketing inform our rememberings. In *Oh China Oh*, Leslie Thornton returns to critically examine *Adynata*, responding to critiques of the earlier film and exploring her own intentionality.

Strategic combining of critique and self-exploration is present in both of Isaac Julien's carefully crafted works, *This Is Not an AIDS Advertisement* and *The Attendant*, as well as Thomas Allen Harris' *Heaven, Earth, & Hell*, all of which explore representations of sexuality where race and gender collide and converge. Issues of race, gender, and representations of the body are central in all these works. Whether it is the sexuality of the young Japanese couple in *Mystery Train* or the long-time married heterosexuals in *King James Version*, these works enable audiences to rethink certain set ways of seeing. Watching them, we are able to see a politics of seduction and subversion emerge, one that disrupts and recasts conventional modes of representation, even as we are offered the pleasure of images that disturb, delight, and dare us to see things differently.

—bell hooks
Guest Curator

Screening Schedule

All films are 16mm, color and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, October 11 at 3:00, and Thursday, October 12 at 3:00 and 6:00
King James Version (1988), Robert Gardner; 91 min.

Friday, October 13 at 3:00, and Saturday, October 14 at 1:00 and 4:00
Relatives (1989), Julie Dash; videotape, 30 min.
Praise House (1991), Julie Dash; videotape, 30 min.

Sunday, October 15 at 1:00 and 4:00, and Wednesday, October 18 at 3:00
Seven Songs for Malcolm X (1993), John Akomfrah; black-and-white and color, 90 min.

Thursday, October 19 at 2:00 and 6:00, and Friday, October 20 at 3:00
Corrina, Corrina (1994), Jessie Nelson; 115 min.

Saturday, October 21 at 1:00 and 4:00, Sunday, October 22 at 1:00 and 3:30, and Wednesday, October 25 at 3:00
Mystery Train (1989), Jim Jarmusch; 110 min.

Thursday, October 26 at 3:00 and 6:00, and Saturday, October 28 at 1:00 and 4:00
Black Is...Black Ain't (1995), Marlon Riggs; 87 min.

Friday, October 27 at 3:00, and Sunday, October 29 at 1:00 and 4:00
This Is Not an AIDS Advertisement (1988), Isaac Julien; videotape, 10 min.
The Attendant (1993), Isaac Julien; videotape, 8 min.
Heaven, Earth, & Hell (1993), Thomas Allen Harris; videotape, 19 min.
Adynata (1983), Leslie Thornton; 30 min.
Oh China Oh (1983), Leslie Thornton; black-and-white, 3 min.

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Whitney Museum of American Art 78
New American Film and Video Series

Lesbian Genders

April 17–May 26, 1996

Panel Discussion, Wednesday, May 1 at 6:30 pm

Dream Girls (1993), Kim Longinotto and Jano Williams. Courtesy Women Make Movies

What does it mean to title a show "Lesbian Genders," that is, to situate "lesbian" as an adjective and to pluralize "gender?" First, it pries lesbian gender apart from lesbian identity, implying that a nonlesbian might inadvertently or purposefully present a gender that connotes lesbianism to detractors and fans, phobes and philes. It also asserts that lesbians embody genders in excess of femininity and, therefore, that gender is not anchored to sex. The most obvious expression of this, of course, is the butch/femme couple, which imbues a heterosexual configuration with lesbian gender play. Certainly in these programs viewers will find anything but straightforward femininity in femmes and anything but unified masculinity in motorcycle butches, tomboys, cowboys, passing women, and transsexuals. Beyond these redeployments of femininity and masculinity, however, "Lesbian Genders" intends a re-territorialization of gender itself.

We often say that a person has no style, but never that it has no gender. "It" doesn't sound right. But is gender not the fabric of style? Whereas many contemporary gender theorists would argue that gender forms us, that we are the determined products of an engendered psychosocial status quo, "Lesbian Genders" examines how gay, lesbian, feminist, and queer discourses intervene in this state of affairs through a proliferation of genders that upsets a heterosocial ranking of styles, occupations, body types, sexualities, family values, and jokes.

Since the cultural construction of homosexuality more than a century ago, professional and lay "audiences" alike have situated gender as its primary marker —as both what marks it and what it marks. From Weimar Germany's "third sex" to second-wave feminism's "lesbian-woman," gay men and lesbians have been measured (inversely) in terms of their femininity and masculinity. Although gender displaces sexual orientation in this crude scheme, it also provides the primary visual semiotics through which queers complexly communicate their sexualities. "Lesbian Genders" focuses on the utility of gender as reverse discourse. Binary gender becomes the material and means for its own demolition.

Although it is essential not to collapse lesbianism with transgenderism or transsexualism, the appropriation of masculinity by many lesbians for purposes of

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visibility, empowerment, identity, and erotics eventuates an overlap of visual vocabulary. Masculine gender codes serve a variety of meanings, especially within such protean groups. Are things ever simply what they appear? For example, was musician Billy Tipton's male pose equally convincing to his professional colleagues and to his wife? Such remains the intrigue behind *Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man*. But in *Dream Girls*, audiences of the popular Japanese Takarazuka theater know that the handsome male characters are played by women. Adoring groupies that they are, this doesn't stop them—teenage girls and married women alike—from swooning. How do sex, gender, and sexual orientation collaborate to enamor these viewers? Does their desire merely accommodate knowledge of a male character's female sex or blatantly incorporate it? Is there a relationship between Takarazuka's heterosexual theatrics and butch/femme role-playing? If the actors aren't lesbian, are the fans? Is the fantasy?

Butchiness abounds in "Lesbian Genders" from the seductive bulldaggers of *B.D. Women* to the boxing female-to-male transsexual in *Max*; from suave passing in *Outlaw* to explicitly sexual gunslinging in *Hours of the Idolate*; from girls who sport short haircuts in *Tomboy* to a heterosexual grandmother in *Tomboychik* who has passed on a queerly-crossed gender to her grandson. Interestingly, much of this masculine display is accompanied by feminist discourse. For example, in *Trans.*, female-to-male Henry Rubin holds onto his lesbian-feminist politics; and in *Male Identified*, a girl develops a masculine persona in order to escape sexist abuse from her brothers.

The explicitly feminist *Snatch* takes place in a (pretend) brothel where a group of obviously costumed women is visited by four male clients, also played by women, obviously costumed as men. The brothel girls, partially nude and entirely exhibitionistic, wear a variety of fetish outfits, including dominatrix leather, baby doll pajamas, and a "Virgin Mary" cape. They hang around laughing and nonchalantly kissing one another while clients come and go. The "male" clients, blatant caricatures, are both staged vehicles of phallocentric discourse (psychoanalysis, religion, appropriated feminism) and targets for the girls' revenge. For example, despite an ostentatiously proclaimed understanding of women, a Freud look-a-like client is so appalled when he rests his hand on some mislaid panties—still wet with menstrual blood—that he has to shower. The girls revenge his gynophobia with a parodic replay of the bloody shower scene from *Psycho*. During the tape's ending credits, one character's direct address to the camera demands an end to scapegoating sex workers.

Whereas many see a schism between feminist and queer discourses, insisting that the first concerns gender while the second pursues sexuality, the films and videos in "Lesbian Genders" demonstrate a bridge between these positions. Feminism's dismantling of standardized femininity in fact supplies significant groundwork for contemporary bad-girl sex imagery. *Near the Big Chakra*, a classic feminist film which boldly presents a sequence of (widely varying) women's genitals in close-up, reflects a movement across the (feminist) arts during the 1970s to liberate female genitals from tabooed status and de-censor active female sexuality. This gender negotiation echoes in recent works such as *Grade AA Butt* and *Fat Chance*, not to mention the female ejaculation film *Nice Girls Don't Do It*. "I really believe in a physical world and I guess I could blame it on that," says Cecilia Dougherty in *My Failure to Assimilate*.

If we re-view Barbara Hammer's 1976 film *Women I Love* from a 1996 perspective, we are struck not only by the renowned nature imagery but by an explicit sexuality that embraces multiple lovers who, although perhaps experienced in sequence, do not displace one another. Today's lesbian sex radicalism derives as much from dyke domesticity as it borrows from gay male promiscuity. It is no mere coincidence that, in *Looking for LaBelle*, group sex starts in the kitchen.

Female bonding comes full circle in femme to femme coupling. In fact, the femme/femme couple could be read as a rewriting of the lesbian continuum—a lesbian-feminist concept that downplayed the sexual differences between feminists and lesbians in favor of an idealized sisterhood. *Covert Action* does just the opposite. As we watch an extended collage of (out)dated heterosexual fondlings with occasional invasions by female interactions, we begin to wonder if wives were making it together back then too. In *The Sluts and Goddesses Video Workshop*, queering female friendship means usurping make-overs for sex play.

It is true that some feminists are deeply bothered by lesbian S/M and would judge harshly the use of fire in *A Lot of Fun for the Evil One* and *The Kindling Point*. Along with sex work, S/M is an area of sexuality that benefits greatly from a queer sensibility that would have gender serve sexuality as well as vice versa—lesbians both reflect gender and produce genders. Hence the lipstick lesbian, the fishnetted punkster, the nouveau doll, the vampire, the dominatrix—femme hyperbole. Only a proliferation of genders will dethrone a reigning gender.

In *Frenzy*, a visual proclamation of promiscuity, a "queer grrrl" thrash band plays with wild abandon while audience members first tear off their own clothes and then start grabbing the grrrls in the band, kissing them, and trying to pull them away from their instruments. Several grrrls fight for position in "the cunnilingus line," while their object of desire sits nonchalantly teasing her hair. The tape is all artifice. It

screams licentiousness. During the end credits, the grrrls chain up a male mannequin and saw off its penis. Where did that come from?

Following and foretelling a queer sensibility, the lesbian classic *A Comedy in Six Unnatural Acts* parodies a stereotype about homo-recruitment when a lesbian puts on a Girl Scout uniform in an attempt to seduce two school girls. In the more recent *Pedagogue,* heterosexuals' fear of gay teachers goes haywire when queer gender proves truly contagious.

"Lesbian Genders" is meant to rebut all those serious concerns about how one (het) knows one (homo) when one sees one. During the 1984 congressional debates on National Endowment for the Arts appropriations, the experimental video *Possibly in Michigan* was attacked. In the tape, a woman shoots and kills a man who is battering her friend. In her typically humorous and macabre style, videomaker Cecelia Condit ends the tape with the friends sitting side by side, nude, sipping a broth that they boiled from the bully's bones. Now the Congressional Record officially identifies *Possibly in Michigan* as lesbian—much to the videomaker's surprise. Two explanations for this interpretation come to mind: first, a certain defensiveness might make congressmen confuse lesbians and man-haters; second, the tape's ending scene of female bonding might (unconsciously) remind them of some girl-girl porn they've watched. So much for identity.

We do it too. Most enthusiastically we claim as our own the big band musicians and rugged bronco riders of earlier days whom I describe as vintage gender. Regardless of whether or not these women were/are lesbians, we feel our oats when we see them ride rodeo and blow trombone—for a living. We visualize them as lesbians. Likewise, when Dolly Parton is spotted with Fran Lebowitz at a Reno performance in *L Is for the Way You Look*, her status as dyke idol is secured. This revives rumors that Lily Tomlin was going to leave Jane Wagner for Dolly. Parton's rumored trip to the Lower East Side has made its mark in the playful practice of subcultural gossip ("Dolly could be a dyke").

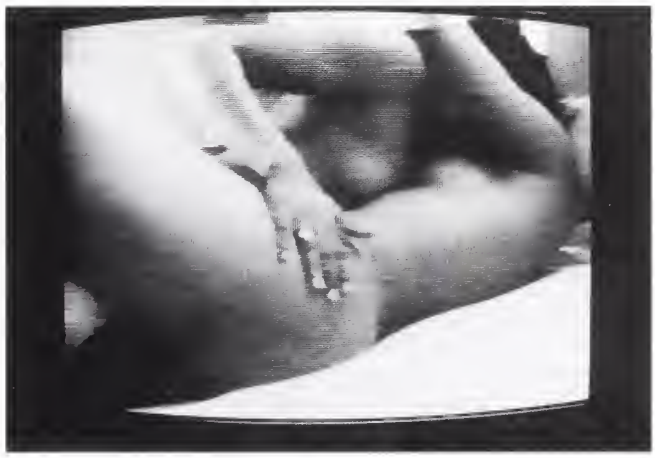
But what do we see in *Lady*: a (lesbian?) woman playing a (gay?) man impersonating a (straight?) woman all in understated camp? Or what if we view ourselves through the eyes of *Boy Frankenstein*, who sees body parts as detachable and interchangeable? Gender is up for grabs.

"Lesbian Genders" tracks a queering of gender in contemporary independent film and video. From butch glamour to femme visibility, parody promo to pro-ugly chic, self-conscious lesbians are constituting an aesthetics of post-heterosexual cross-fertilization.

Chris Straayer
Guest Curator

Thanks to Terry Lawler, M.M. Serra, Ken Kirby, and Robin Vachal for assistance and to the following distributors for supporting independent film and video: Canyon Cinema (San Francisco), Chicago Filmmakers, Drift Distribution (New York), Electronic Arts Intermix (New York), Fatale Video (San Francisco), Film-Makers' Cooperative (New York), First Run Features (New York), Frameline (San Francisco), Third World Newsreel (New York), Video Data Bank (Chicago), Video Out (Vancouver), V-Tape (Toronto), and Women Make Movies (New York).

Chris Straayer is an associate professor in the Department of Cinema Studies at New York University and author of *Deviant Eyes, Deviant Bodies: Sexual Re-Orientations in Film and Video* (Columbia University Press, 1996).



She Don't Fade (1991), Cheryl Dunye. Courtesy Video Data Bank.

Suggested Reading

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Fuss, Diana. *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference*. New York: Routledge, 1989.

Hart, Lynda. *Fatal Women: Lesbian Sexuality and the Mark of Aggression*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Kennedy, Elizabeth Lapovsky, and Madeline D. Davis. *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of Lesbian Community*. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.

Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Freedom, California: Crossing Press, 1984.

Nestle, Joan. *A Restricted Country*. Ithaca: Firebrand Books, 1987.

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Screening Schedule

All works are video, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted.

Program I: Prepare to Identify
April 17 and 19–21 at noon, April 18 at 5:30
Pedagogue (1988), Stuart Marshall; film, 10 min. *Male Identified* (1995), Venae M. Rodriguez; 8 min. *A Comedy in Six Unnatural Acts* (1975), Jan Oxenberg; film, 26 min. *You Thrive on Mistaken Identity* (1989), Melissa Chang; 18 min. *Parolé* (1993), Diane Bonder; 9 min. "Pine and Stew," from *k.d. lang: Harvest of Seven Years* (1991); 3 min. *My Failure to Assimilate* (1995), Cecilia Dougherty; 20 min. *Khush* (1991), Pratibha Parmar; film, 24 min.

Program II: Vintage
April 17 and 19–21 at 3:30, April 18 at 2:00
International Sweethearts of Rhythm (1987), Greta Schiller and Andrea Weiss; film, 30 min. *"I'll Ride That Horse"* (1994), Doris Loeser; 27 min. *Beyond Imagining: Margaret Anderson and the Little Review* (1991), Wendy Weinberg; film, 30 min. *Chickula! Teenage Vampire* (1995), Angela Robinson; 5 min.

Program III: Philia
April 24 and 26–28 at noon, April 25 at 5:30
It Wasn't Love (1992), Sadie Benning; black-and-white, 20 min. *Damned If You Don't* (1987), Su Friedrich; film, black-and-white, 42 min. *Coming Home* (1995), Shu Lea Cheang; 9 min. *She Don't Fade* (1991), Cheryl Dunye; 23 min. *A Ride Out (Una Vuelta)* (1994), Ivonne Patricia Montoya; 10 min. *Tango Tango* (1991), Agent Orange; 4 min.

Program IV: Relative Values
April 24 and 26–28 at 3:30, April 25 at 2:00
Father Knows Best (1990), Jocelyn Taylor; 19 min. *Tomboychik* (1993), Sandi DuBowski; 15 min. *Vintage: Families of Value* (1995), Thomas Allen Harris; film, 72 min. *Daughters of Dykes* (1994), Amilca Palmer; 15 min.

Program V: Femme Hyperbole
May 1 and 3–5 at noon; May 2 at 6:00
Clit-o-matic: The Adventures of White Trash Girl; "The Devil Inside" (1995), Jennifer Reeder; 8 min. *Carmelita Tropicana: Your Kunst Is Your Waffen* (1994), Ela Troyano; film, 28 min. *Frenzy* (1993), Jill Reiter; 10 min. *The Great Dykes of Holland* (1993), Jennifer Taylor; 6 min. *Taking Back the Dolls* (1994), Leslie Singer; 43 min. *Is That All There Is to the Greenhouse Effect?*, Esther Koohan Paik; 6 min.

Program VI: Boy Realness
May 1 and 3–5 at 3:30; May 2 at 2:00
Tomboy (1994), Dawn Logsdon; 17 min. *Not Like That: Diary of a Butch-a-phobe* (1994), Maureen Bradley; 14 min. *B.D. Women* (1994), Inge Blackman; 20 min. *Outlaw* (1994), Alisa Lebow; 26 min. *Hours of the Idolate* (1995), Anie Stanley; film, 16 min. *Butch Wax* (1994), Kathryn Korniloff and Jennifer Lane (1994); 6 min. *Max* (1992), Monika Treut; film, 27 min.

Program VII: Explicit
May 8 and 10–12 at noon; May 9 at 6:00
Sex Bowl (1994), Baby Maniac (Jane Castle and Shu Lea Cheang); 7 min. *Looking for LaBelle* (1991), Jocelyn Taylor; 5 min. *Snatch* (1990), Lauri Light; 40 min. *Women I Love* (1976), Barbara Hammer; film, 27 min. *Lesbian Bed Death* (1995), Stacey Foiles; 14 min. *Nice Girls Don't Do It* (1990), Kathy Daymond; film, 13 min.

Program VIII: Counterbinary
May 8 and 10–12 at 3:30, May 9 at 2:00
Juggling Gender (1992), Tami Gold; 27 min. *Trans.* (1994), Sophia E. Constantinou with Henry S. Rubin; film, 10 min. *Lady* (1993), Ira Sachs; film, 28 min. *Brains on Toast* (1992), Liss Platt and Joyan Saunders; 26 min. *Storme: The Lady of the Jewel Box* (1987), Michelle Parkerson; film, 21 min. *Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man* (1995), Alix Umen and Lisa Prisco, 8 min.

Program IX: Flesh Form
May 15 and 17–19 at noon, May 16 at 6:15
Boy Frankenstein (1994), Susana Donovan; 9 min. *Grade AA Butt* (1996), Karisa Durr; 6 min. *Near the Big Chakra* (1972), Anne Severson; film, 17 min. *What's the Difference Between a Yam and a Sweet Potato?* (1992), Adriene Jenik and J. Evan Dunlap; 4 min. *Fat Chance* (1994), Anne Golden; 6 min. *Women of Gold* (1990), Eileen Lee and Marilyn Abbink; 30 min. *Stigmata: The Transfigured Body* (1991), Leslie Asako Gladsjo; 27 min.

Program X: Hot and Bothered
May 15 and 17–19 at 3:30, May 16 at 2:00
A Lot of Fun for the Evil One (1994), M.M. Serra and Maria Beatty; 18 min. *Uh-Oh!* (1994), Julie Zando; 38 min. *Nancy's Nightmare* (1988), Azian Nurudin; 7 min. *Kindling Point* (excerpt) (1992–93), Teri Rice; 20 min.

Program XI: Modeling
May 22 and 24–26 at noon, May 23 at 5:30
Freebird (1993), Suzie Silver; 11 min. *L Is for the Way You Look* (1991), Jean Carlomusto; 24 min. *Meeting of Two Queens* (1991), Cecilia Barriga; 14 min. *Dream Girls* (1993), Kim Longinotto and Jano Williams; film, 50 min.

Program XII: Femme to Femme
May 22 and 24–26 at 3:30, May 23 at 2:00
Female Sensibility (1974), Lynda Benglis; video, 14 min. *Covert Action* (1984), Abigail Child; film, black-and-white, 8 min. *Chicks in White Satin* (1993), Elaine Holliman; film, 25 min. *Possibly in Michigan* (1983), Cecelia Condit; 12 min. *Bi and Beyond III: The Hermaphrodites* (excerpt) (1989), Paul Norman; 13 min. *The Sluts and Goddesses Video Workshop, or How to Be a Sex Goddess in 101 Easy Steps* (1992), Maria Beatty and Annie Sprinkle; 52 min.

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No Wave Cinema, 1978–87

October 3, 1996–January 5, 1997

Not a Part of Any Wave: No Wave

No Wave Cinema emerged in the late 1970s out of New York City's East Village, in the aftermath of the Punk movement's angst and alienation. Against settings of New York's buildings and bleak interiors, performances were photographed in the harsh black-and-whites and acid colors of the newly introduced Super-8mm sound film.[1] The soundtracks combined sharp dialogue, often reminiscent of Bette Davis' carefully clipped phrases, and No Wave music—a strident form of music that synthesized scraping guitars, jazz-like improvisation, and accelerated vocals. Thematically, No Wave films were equally cutting edge, incorporating aspects of the performance scenes and social issues prominent in the East Village's underground terrain: the idea of role-playing and the themes of law enforcement/investigation and pro-sexuality feminism. By embracing these nontraditional film aesthetics and subjects, often with frank and graphic portrayals, No Wave Cinema became a vanguard movement which altered the course of film history.

No Wave film and, later, video productions incorporated aspects of the documentary, B-movies, and

Left: Advance poster for Anders Grafstrom, *The Long Island Four*, 1979 (film completed 1980). Courtesy of Majka Lamprecht. **Right**: John Lurie and Eric Mitchell in still from Lurie, *Men in Orbit*, 1978

Gordon Stevenson performing as a member of Teenage Jesus and the Jerks at CBGB's, in still from Michael McClard, *Alien Portrait*, 1979

earlier avant-garde film aesthetics. The documentary approach was used to make records of people in theatrical/club performances and to create establishing shots, typically of New York City itself—42nd Street, The Mudd Club, the East Village. The use of existing or minimally constructed settings and costumes was a common trait of the low-budget B-movie, one also employed by No Wave filmmakers. For example, in John Lurie's film about space travel, *Men in Orbit* (1978), silver spray-painted television sets and bucket seats represent Mission Control. The inventiveness of the No Wave movement extended also to the photography and editing of the film itself, in ways that recall two earlier avant-garde movements: Cinéma Descrépant, developed in France in the 1950s, whose characteristics included rephotography from magazines and television and sound-image discoordination; and Baudelarian Cinema, an American movement of the early 1960s, which cultivated casual

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Left: Andrew McCormack in still from Richard Klemann, *A Suicide*, 1985. **Right:** Still from Kathryn Bigelow, *Set-Up*, 1978

filmmaking through improvised acting and lack of editing, resulting in extended film sequences that often exceeded their expected duration.[2]

Though the production aesthetics gave No Wave Cinema its distinct visual appearance and sound, it was the movement's turn toward narrative that redirected the history of avant-garde filmmaking. By the mid-1970s, avant-garde film- and videomaking were focused on the primarily nonfigurative movements of Conceptual Art, Minimalism, and Structural Film, as centered around the activities of Anthology Film Archives—an organization which charted the evolution of film primarily in terms of abstraction and the crafts of cinematography and editing, as distinct from commercial filmmaking.[3] Conversely, the No Wave filmmakers, who were children of the 1950s and the first generation of artists to grow up with television, viewed film as the perfect medium to tell the stories that were not told in mainstream cinema—stories perhaps too personal, too real, too honest for the general public. These filmmakers separated themselves from their contemporaries by medium (Super-8mm sound film) and subject, but also through new means of exhibition. Instead of screening their films in theaters, these works were primarily shown between band performances or as part of film programs in nightclubs, lofts, or in alternative spaces—usually a place rented by artists solely for the purpose of exhibiting their work outside the traditional gallery or theater systems.[4] Because they could exhibit their films in an uncensored, supportive environment, these filmmakers were free to produce works that did not follow the usual censorship of language, sexuality, and violence normally enforced by exhibitors.

Left: Bill Rice in still from Beth B and Scott B, *G-Man*, 1978. **Right**: Jack Smith in still from Ela Troyano, *The Bubble People*, 1982

The participants in the No Wave Cinema movement themselves were mostly Americans and transplanted Europeans who arrived in New York with backgrounds in music, art history, film, and performance. In the later 1970s, the East Village, with its low-rent apartments and thriving downtown club scene (Club 57, The Mudd Club, Max's Kansas City), provided the perfect environment for these newly arrived, emerging artists. At that moment, the most vital form of art making in the East Village was No Wave music, a highly theatrical, performance-based approach to music, characterized by rough and often dissonant sounds.[5] Musicians experimented with the way instruments could be played, while making sounds which expanded the range of sounds traditionally associated with instruments. It was within this experimental musical environment and club culture that the collaborative structure of the East Village filmmaking scene developed.

The initial collaborative projects were simple—musicians provided soundtracks for sculptures and photographs, filmmakers created works to be projected during concerts. The projects then expanded to the creation of films involving people from all disciplines

Left: Still from Tommy Turner and David Wojnarowicz, *Where Evil Dwells*, 1985. Courtesy of Tommy Turner. **Right**: Ron Vawter in still from Michael Oblowitz, *King Blank*, 1983. Courtesy of Rosemary Hochschild

of art making. Big City Bohemia qua production studio. Artists began to experiment with new media. Musicians directed (Gordon Stevenson, John Lurie). Directors created music: Vivienne Dick played in the band Beirut Slump; James Nares and Jim Jarmusch played in the Del-Byzanteens; Beth B and Scott B composed the soundtack music for their own films. Musicians acted (Lydia Lunch, Lurie, Stevenson), sculptors, painters, actors, and writers directed (Tom Otterness, James Nares, Eric Mitchell, Manuel De Landa). And except for a few who had studied filmmaking (Kathryn Bigelow, Jim Jarmusch), it was a new venture for almost everyone. They taught each other how to use the equipment or simply learned by trial and error. It was through this learning process that film, with its capability to record performance, multiple locations, text, and music all within one medium, emerged as a dominant medium of the East Village art scene in the 1970s and 1980s.

One of the first showcases for the emerging No Wave Cinema was an alternative space aptly named New Cinema. The New Cinema began in 1978, when a group of artists and arts professionals formed Colab (Collaborative Projects, Inc.) as a means to exhibit art in an uncurated, though thematic, form.[6] New Cinema, one of Colab's first projects, was organized by three of its members: Becky Johnston, Eric Mitchell, and James Nares. Housed in a former Polish social club on St. Marks Place (East 8th Street), New Cinema featured some of the first works produced by the No Wave Cinema movement: Mitchell's own *Kidnapped* (1978), John Lurie's *Men in Orbit* (1978), and Vivienne Dick's *She Had Her Gun All Ready* (1978). But in addition to its specialized programming, New Cinema was also unique in its presentation of works, for the films were transferred to videotape before being projected. Because Super-8mm sound film was marketed as a positive film, like 35mm slide film, duplicate film prints were required for repeated screenings. This normally entailed making a direct positive (which often resulted in a soft image) or an internegative and a print (which was expensive). On the other hand, transferring the film to videotape preserved the original from scratches and wear, the cost was nominal, and since Super-8mm film and video have the same proportions (the horizontal borders of the frames were both 1:33 times larger than the vertical sides of the image), no borders of the image were trimmed. The screenings at New Cinema were a success, not only for their form and content, but equally for their bold repudiation of the accepted distinction between film and video—the latter medium long viewed by film advocates as inferior.

Promotional postcard for Gordon Stevenson, *Ecstatic Stigmatic*, 1978, featuring Mary Kathryn Cervenka. Photograph: Edo. Graphic Design: Gordon Stevenson. Courtesy of Johanna Heer

Also in 1978, Colab sponsored a cable television series titled *All Color News* (1978), which featured videotapes produced by its members. Cable television companies in New York offered channels designated as public access—channels that could be leased for specific time slots by the public in order to televise self-made television productions. *All Color News* included social issue documentaries by artists such as Charlie Ahearn, Beth B and Scott B, and Tom Otterness, covering such diverse subjects as subway overcrowding and the sanitary conditions of restaurants in Chinatown.[7] The B's *NYPD Arson and Explosions Squad vs. FALN* contribution to *All Color News* juxtaposes an interview about terrorism with Inspector Robert J. Howe, commanding officer of the Arson and Explosion Squad of the NYPD, with a collective statement by the Puerto Rican nationalist movement, which had set off bombs in New York in retaliation for the C.I.A.'s involvement in Puerto Rican affairs. The combination of the documentary interview in conjunction with narrative footage would become a trademark of the B's oeuvre, as would the continued interest in the themes of law enforcement and investigation. In their film *G-Man* (1978), G-man Max Karl, as

Left. Patti Astor with Crazy Legs from the Rock Steady Crew in Charlie Ahearn, *Wild Style*, 1982. Production photograph: Martha Cooper. **Right**: Element from Tessa Hughes-Freeland and Ela Troyano, *Playboy Voodoo*, 1984–91. Photograph: Hughes-Freeland

portrayed by painter Bill Rice, leads a double life, that of an FBI-style agent and of a sexual submissive with an affinity for transvestitism and worshiping a dominatrix. The antithesis of his work ethic, his submissive behavior is perhaps what balances his work life—unless one serves, one cannot understand domination. This fictional footage was then combined with documentary footage. In an early scene, footage of an airplane explosion was rephotographed from a television image and followed by images of undetonated homemade bombs—bombs that could be produced with materials available in any home: bottles, wire, clocks, etc. This scene is accompanied by a squealing guitar and synthesizer soundtrack that accentuates the insidious nature of the devices. The prolonged static meditation on bombs allows viewers to question how the bombs are made and conclude that they too could perhaps build such things. Sound-image discoordination, a frequent device in works of Cinéma Descrépant, often heightens filmic language and thus its results.

Louise Smith in Lizzie Borden, *Working Girls*, 1986. Production photograph: Nan Goldin

G-Man, one of the primary works of No Wave Cinema, encapsulates many of the primary characteristics of the movement—acid color, No Wave music, and documentary footage—while simultaneously negotiating the three, parallel No Wave themes of role-playing, law enforcement, and pro-sexuality feminism. And like the B's later film *The Offenders*, it was screened between band performances at Max's Kansas City.

Many of the early film/tapes[8] balanced all aspects of the No Wave aesthetic. Some, however, emphasized just one theme, choosing subjects concerned either with documentary, law enforcement/investigation, role-playing, or pro-sexuality feminism. As these themes developed between the years 1978 and 1987, the filmmakers' voices became more articulate, while retaining the audio and visual textures of the movement.

The documentaries produced during this time provide us with a record of brief moments in the lives of the East Village habitués. In Nan Goldin's 35mm color slide and audio performances, Michael McClard's

Left: Eszter Balint and John Lurie in still from Jim Jarmusch, *Stranger Than Paradise*, 1984. **Right**: Benjamin Liu, anonymous, Rene Ricard, Terry Toye, and Eric Mitchell during the production of Mitchell, *Underground U.S.A.*, 1980

Super-8mm sound films, and Paul Tschinkel's videotapes, the original spirit and vitality of the East Village is preserved. Goldin's relationships both with her lovers and friends (*The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, 1980-present) as accompanied by a score of period and contemporary music (including the Del-Byzanteens' remake of Holland-Dozier's "My World is Empty,") become a testament to the vitality of living and life's equally devastating tragedies. The words of each song guided the categorization of the slides and propelled the narrative by interrelating slides as they were projected during a given song.

The actors and actresses who were the subjects of No Wave documentary and narrative films were frequently friends or acquaintances of the filmmakers—musicians, artists, or performers whose personalities or physical appearances conveyed qualities one often associates with great actors and actresses: charisma, dynamism, character, attractiveness, invention. Patti Astor, Karen Finley, Rosemary Hochschild, Lydia Lunch, John Lurie, Ann Magnuson, Eric Mitchell, Cookie Mueller, David McDermott, Bill Rice, Ron Vawter, and Jack Smith were the predominant "stars" during these years. The performers' strengths as personalities, along with the natural talents and creativity they brought to performing, produced a genuineness that increased the realism of the film/tape collaborations, producing a form of neo-realism or role-playing. Bill Rice's mature and defined appearance in *G-Man*, for example, mirrored that of an FBI-type investigator, adding realism to Rice's feature role.

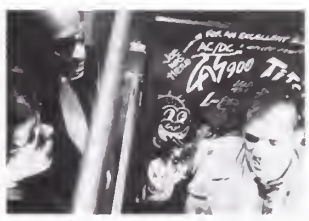
Employing stars of the East Village, the filmmakers often developed films that harmonized with or evolved from the performers' personalities and interests. In Tom Rubnitz and Ann Magnuson's *Made for TV* (1985), Magnuson, who portrayed many characters at performance events she organized at Club 57, transforms herself into dozens of characters, as if a modern Lon Chaney. Edited to resemble channel

surfing on cable television, every channel features Magnuson in a different program, ranging from a horror movie ("Bill, is that you?") to a music video parody featuring Lina Hâgandâzovich—a conflation of post-Punk singers Lene Lovich and Nina Hagen. In Eric Mitchell's *Underground U.S.A.* (1980), Patti Astor, who starred in countless No Wave films, portrays Vicky, an aging actress whose career has ended, but who still perceives herself as a young star; as such, she befriends a young hustler whom she misleadingly perceives as a romantic involvement. With cinematography by Tom DiCillo and sound by Jim Jarmusch, *Underground U.S.A.* is reminiscent of *Sunset Boulevard* (Billy Wilder, 1950) and *Heat* (Paul Morrissey, director; Andy Warhol, producer; 1972)—both of which focused on the blur between acting in life and acting on the screen. In homage to these earlier films, *Underground U.S.A.* acknowledges both the momentary success one can achieve as an actress through physical appearance and personality in movies and the adjustments an actress must make to be a part of the real world. Set against the backdrop of The Mudd Club and the East Village Gallery scene (Astor was the proprietor of The Fun Gallery, the first gallery to exhibit Basquiat, Haring, and Scharf), the film depicts a sentiment perhaps too near the reality of the momentary success many performers experienced as a result of the No Wave movement itself.

A large number of women became centrally and successfully involved in No Wave Cinema. Through their embrace of pro-sexuality feminism, they positioned sexuality as a positive characteristic of women, as opposed to the doctrinaire stance of earlier feminists. In Lizzie Borden's *Working Girls* (1986), filmed in the saturated colors of Times Square, working women (prostitutes) are painted as women who have chosen sex work as a viable career option. These were not the working women of yesterday's Hollywood, who had hearts of gold but were typically killed, abused, or in the employ of a pimp. Similarly, in Richard Kern's *Fingered* (1986), filmed in Super-8mm and transferred to and edited on videotape, Lydia Lunch, former lead singer of Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, is featured as a telephone sex operator. Lunch, who co-wrote the script with Kern, based the dialogue on her own sexual fantasies ("I can only put mommy on after you've given me your credit card number and expiration date. You know it takes money to talk to mommy"). Kern and Lunch use explicit language and graphic representation as a means to illustrate a woman's sexual command while she openly engages in unexpected sexual roles.

Due to the dominant position of women, men in these films often become subordinate characters. The man as an impotent victim of the city, its laws, government, and businesses conversely became a central character during the last years of No Wave Cinema. In *King Blank* (1983), written by Michael Oblowitz and Rosemary Hochschild with Barbara Kruger, Ron Vawter of The Wooster Group portrays Blank. He ekes out an existence at the Howard Johnson motel near Kennedy Airport from the money his wife, Rose (Hochschild), earns as a go-go dancer. While she's at work, he spends his time pursuing other women and acting out fantasies with blow-up dolls while watching Super-8mm porn films. By the film's black-and-white end, Rose chooses revenge and shoots Blank dead. Although this violence appears justified, routine and unexpected violence is common in the city, though uncommon as a theme for an avant-garde film at the time. Nick Zedd's *Police State* (1987) takes violence to an extreme, as Zedd is arrested in the afternoon by a policeman (Willoughby Sharpe) without having committed a crime. At the police station, he is abused by the officers in a maddening game of twisted language and lies, an analogy to the bureaucratic torment government can inflict on the individual.

Left: Dominique Davalos and Stephen McHattie in still from Beth B, *Salvation!*, 1987. **Right**: David Wojnarowicz and Karen Finley in Richard Kern, *You Killed Me First*, 1985. Production photograph: Richard Kern



Left: Still from Manuel De Landa, *Raw Nerves: A Lacanian Thriller*, 1979. **Right**: Willoughby Sharpe and Nick Zedd in Zedd, *Police State*, 1987

Left: Lance Loud and Patti Astor in still from Anders Grafstrom, *The Long Island Four*, 1980. Courtesy of Patti Astor. **Right**: Cookie Mueller in still from Amos Poe, *Subway Riders*, 1980

Left: Ann Magnuson in still from Tom Rubnitz and Magnuson, *Made for TV*, 1984. Courtesy of The Kitchen, New York. **Right**: Lydia Lunch in still from Richard Kern, *Fingered*, 1986. Production photograph: Richard Kern

The eventual decline of the No Wave movement was rooted in the economics of East Village properties and Super-8mm filmmaking. The $300 rents rose as the East Village became an important arts center during the mid-1980s, and the $6.50 rolls of Super-8mm sound film simply became scarce as film companies began to reduce the product's availability and processing. As East Villagers began to move out of the city, the community grew apart. Signs of its collapse started to show as early as 1982, when many of the No Wave bands broke up, though their members continued to pursue musical careers. This splintering echoed the transition that took place in No Wave filmmaking during the early 1980s: films at the beginning of the movement united many themes and modes of production design, but the later films followed narrower thematic paths.

No Wave Cinema's blend of documentary realism (the result of location shooting) and fictional narrative enabled filmmakers to readdress traditional genres of cinema during the movement's ten-year history: the period film, the detective drama, the woman's film, and the documentary. This approach also enhanced the significance of sexuality and violence. No Wave Cinema's successful harmony of performances, music, and scripts, along with its aesthetic, treatment of genres, and merging of film and video into one interrelated form, resulted in a distinct and ground-breaking movement in the history of film and video. It was, morever, a movement nourished by the unrestricted culture of the East Village during those years. It was this environment that both inspired the works and allowed the filmmakers to develop new voices within the cinematic arts. Their investigations and articulations now stand as precursors of today's highly publicized "independent" film movement.

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In this first exhibition to fully explore the No Wave Cinema movement, I am indebted to the filmmakers and videomakers who answered many questions and shared their well-preserved knowledge of the period. I would also like to thank those individuals and organizations who provided invaluable and detailed information: Alan Moore, Patti Astor, Kirsten Bates, Jim C., Michael Carter, Diego Cortez, Johanna Heer, Rosemary Hochschild, Majka Lamprecht, London Filmmakers Coop, Lydia Lunch, Glenn O'Brien, Rafik, Rene Ricard, Bill Rice, Jack Sargeant, Louise Smith, Betsey Sussler, Toni Treadway, Jack Waters, and Christopher Wool.

Endnotes

1. Super-8mm sound film was introduced in 1973. Its magnetic soundstrip allowed audio to be recorded either simultaneously during filming or following the film's development, from an audiotape or record for example.

2. For an in-depth dicussion of Cinéma Descrépant, see Thomas Y. Levin, "Dismantling the Spectacle: The Cinema of Guy DeBord," in Elisabeth Sussman, ed., *On the Passage of a Few People Through a Rather Brief Moment in Time: The Situationist International, 1957–1972*, exh. cat. (Boston: The Institute of Contemporary Art, 1989), pp. 72–123. For Baudelarian Cinema, see Carole Rowe, *The Baudelarian Cinema* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1982).

3. For Anthology Film Archives and the establishment of its repertory film library, The Essential Cinema, see P. Adams Sitney, ed., *The Essential Cinema: Essays on the Films in the Collection of Anthology Film Archives*, vol. 1 (New York: Anthology Film Archives and New York University Press, 1975).

4 An important alternative space was the OP Screening Room. It began as a film collective named the UP Screening Room in 1967. Between 1979 and 1984, it operated as the OP Screening Room, under the direction of Rafik (Rafic Azzouny). During that five-year period, screenings were held by members of Colab (Beth B and Scott B, Vivienne Dick), as well as Nan Goldin, Amos Poe, and Nick Zedd. Rafik charged $15 to use the space, and the filmmaker kept that evening's receipts and paid for the advertising. Screenings were held on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Conversation with Rafik, New York, July 7, 1995.

5. The principal bands of the No Wave music movement included the Contortions (Adele Bertei, James Chance, Don Christensen, Jody Harris, Pat Place, and George Scott III), D.N.A. (Robin Crutchfield, Ikue Ile, and Arto Lindsay), Mars (Nancy Arlen, China Burg, Sumner Crane, and Mark Cunningham), and Teenage Jesus and the Jerks (Bradley Field, Lydia Lunch, Gordon Stevenson). These bands were all featured on the album *No New York*, produced by the influential British producer Brian Eno. Of equal importance was John Lurie and the Lounge Lizards.

6. Colab became most noted for its group exhibitions held in alternative spaces. Among the exhibitions were "Real Estate Show," shown in an abandoned Lower East Side Building, and "Times Square Show," housed in a four-story former bus depot and massage parlor at the corner of 7th Avenue and 41st Street. "Times Square Show" featured a film, video, and slide exhibition organized by Beth B and Scott B, which included works by Charlie Ahearn, The B's, Nan Goldin, Jim Jarmusch,

James Nares, Michael Oblowitz, and Gordon Stevenson, and is the subject of Matthew Geller's videotape of the same title (1980; self-distributed). For information on Colab, see *Landslides and A. More Store*, exh. brochure (Philadelphia: Moore College of Art, 1985).

7. It should be noted that while Colab produced *All Color News* for cable broadcast, most artists did not have access to cable television during the late 1970s. Many people would visit bars or clubs to watch the programs.

8. The term film/tape has been coined by Beth B to denote the interrelationship between film and videotape production.

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Screening Schedule

All works are listed in original completion format.

October 3 at 3:00; October 4–6 at 3:30

Ecstatic Stigmatic (1978), Gordon Stevenson; 16mm film, color, sound; 65 min.

October 3 at 6:30; October 4–6 at Noon

All Color News (1978), produced by Colab (Collaborative Projects, Inc.); videotape, color, sound; 30 min. *All Color News* is composed of Charlie Ahearn's *Bums Under the Brooklyn Bridge*; Scott B and Beth B's *NYPD Arson and Explosions Squad vs. FALN*; and Tom Otterness' *Subways, Golden Gloves Boxing*, and *Rats in Chinatown*. *G-Man* (1978), Beth B and Scott B; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 32 min.

October 9 and 11–13 at Noon; October 10 at 5:30

Kidnapped (1978), Eric Mitchell; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 63 min. *Men in Orbit* (1978), John Lurie; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 45 min.

October 9 and 11–13 at 3:30; October 10 at 2:00

Set-Up (1978), Kathryn Bigelow; 16mm film, sound; 17 min. *She Had Her Gun All Ready* (1978), Vivienne Dick; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 28 min. *Raw Nerves: A Lacanian Thriller* (1979), Manuel De Landa; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 30 min.

October 16 and 18–20 at Noon; October 17 at 6:15

The Foreigner (1978), Amos Poe; 16mm film, black-and-white, sound; 90 min.

October 16 and 18–20 at 3:30; October 17 at 3:00

Rome '78 (1978), James Nares; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 90 min.

October 23 and 25–27 at Noon; October 24 at 6:30

Guerillere Talks (1978), Vivienne Dick; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 30 min. *Beauty Becomes the Beast* (1979), Vivienne Dick; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 45 min.

October 23 and 25–27 at 3:30; October 24 at 3:00

Alien Portrait (1979), Michael McClard; Super-8mm film (6 frames-per-second), black-and-white, sound-on-cassette; 12 min. *Contortions* (1979), Michael McClard; Super-8mm film (6 frames-per-second), color, sound-on-cassette; 20 min. *DNA at Irving Plaza* (1981), Paul Tschinkel; videotape, color, sound; 20 min. *Eight-Eyed Spy at Hurrah* (1980), Paul Tschinkel; videotape, black-and-white, sound; 20 min.

Bradley Eros in Erotic Psyche (Eros and Aline Mare), *ElectraMorphic*, 1987

October 30 and November 1–3 at Noon; October 31 at 6:15
The Long Island Four (1980), Anders Grafstrom; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 80 min.

October 30 and November 1–3 at 3:30; October 31 at 3:00
The Offenders (1979), Scott B and Beth B; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 85 min.

November 6 and 8–10 at Noon; November 7 at 6:30
Underground U.S.A. (1980), Eric Mitchell; 16mm film, color, sound; 73 min.

November 6 and 8–10 at 3:30; November 7 at 3:00
Subway Riders (1979 and 1981), written and directed by Amos Poe; director of photography, Johanna Heer; 16mm film, color, sound; 120 min.

November 13 and 15–17 at Noon; November 14 at 6:15
Ms. 45 (1980), Abel Ferrara; 35mm film, color, sound; 84 min.

November 13 and 15–17 at 3:30; November 14 at 3:30
Times Square Show (1980), Matthew Geller; videotape, color, sound; 8 1/2 min. *The Trap Door* (1981), Beth B and Scott B; Super-8mm film, color, sound, 70 min.

November 20 and 22–24 at Noon; November 21 at 2:30
Empty Suitcases (1980), Bette Gordon; 16mm film, color, sound; 49 min. *Liberty's Booty* (1980), Vivienne Dick; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 49 min.

November 20 and 22–24 at 3:30
Special presentation, in conjunction with the retrospective "Nan Goldin: I'll Be Your Mirror," *I'll Be Your Mirror* (1995), Nan Goldin and Edmund Coulthard; 16mm film, color, sound; 49 min.

****November 21 at 6:30**
Recent slide and audio works by Nan Goldin, including "All by Myself," "Dragshow," "Manila Tripping," "Tokyo Spring Fever," and "Trio to the End of Time"; approx. 1 hour.

November 27, 29, 30, and December 1 at 1:00
Blue Pleasure (1981), Franco Marinai; 16mm film, black-and-white and color, sound; 15 min. *Goodbye 42nd Street* (1983), Richard Kern; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 6 min. *Too Sensitive to Touch* (1981), Michael Oblowitz and Sylvere Lotringer; videotape, black-and-white and color, sound; 30 min.

November 27, 29, 30, and December 1 at 3:30
You Are Not I (1981), Sara Driver; 16mm film, black-and-white, sound; 50 min.

December 4 and 6–8 at Noon
Space Party (1985), Wolfgang Staehle and Steve Pollack; videotape, color, sound; 4 min. *Made for TV* (1984), Tom Rubnitz and Ann Magnuson; videotape, color, sound; 15 min. *The Bubble People* (1982), Ela Troyano; double-projection Super-8mm film, color, sound; 35 min.

December 4 and 6–8 at 3:30; December 5 at 2:30
New York Hip Hop Convention (1980), Charlie Ahearn and Fred Brathwaite; videotape, black-and-white, sound; 14 min. *Wild Style* (1982), Charlie Ahearn; 16mm film, color, sound; 82 min.

****December 5 at 6:30**
An Expanded Cinema performance by Tessa Hughes-Freeland and Ela Troyano. Projections from 1985 to the present, including *Playboy Voodoo* (1984–91) and *Elegy* (1993–96); approx. 1 hour.

December 11 and 13–15 at Noon; December 12 at 6:15
The Bogus Man (1980), Nick Zedd; 16mm film, color, sound; 11 min. *Born in Flames* (1983), Lizzie Borden; 16mm film, color, sound; 82 min.

December 11 and 13–15 at 3:30; December 12 at 2:30
The Wild World of Lydia Lunch (1983), Nick Zedd; Super-8mm film, color, sound-on-cassette; 28 min. *Like Dawn to Dusk* (1983), Vivienne Dick; Super-8 film, color, sound; 6 min. *King Blank* (1983), Michael Oblowitz; 16mm film, black-and-white, sound; 73 min.

December 18 and 20–22 at Noon; December 19 at 4:30
Mutable Fire! (1984), produced by *Erotic Psyche* (Bradley Eros and Aline Mare); directed by Bradley Eros; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 7 1/2 min. *Cornella: The Story of a Burning Bush* (1985), Kembra Pfahler; Super-8mm film, color, sound-on-cassette; 8 min. *ElectraMorphic* (1987), produced by Erotic Psyche; directed by Bradley Eros and Aline Mare; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 14 min. *Where Evil Dwells* (1985), Tommy Turner and David Wojnarowicz; Super-8mm film, black-and-white, sound; 30 min. trailer.

December 18 and 20–22 at 3:30; December 19 at 2:30
Stranger Than Paradise (1984), Jim Jarmusch; 35mm film, black-and-white, sound; 90 min.

****December 19 at 6:30**
Previously unseen Super-8mm film rushes from *Where Evil Dwells* by Tommy Turner and David Wojnarowicz; approx. 1 hour.

December 26 at 2:30; December 27–29 at 3:30
Working Girls (1986), Lizzie Borden; 35mm film, color, sound; 90 min.

December 26 at 5:45; December 27–29 at Noon
Variety (1984), Bette Gordon; 16mm film, color, sound; 101 min.

January 2 at 3:00; January 3–5 at 3:30
A Suicide (1985), Richard Klemann; Super-8mm film, black-and-white, sound-on-cassette; 10 min. *The Specialist* (1984), Scott B; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 10 min. *Fingered* (1986), Richard Kern; videotape, black-and-white, sound; 25 min. *Police State* (1987), Nick Zedd; 16mm film, black-and-white, sound; 18 min.

January 2 at 6:15; January 3–5 at Noon
You Killed Me First (1985), Richard Kern; Super-8mm film, color, sound; 12 min. *Salvation!* (1987), Beth B; 35mm film, color, sound; 80 min.

Nan Goldin's *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (1980–present), is on view as a slide/audio installation in her concurrent exhibition, "Nan Goldin: I'll Be Your Mirror"

**Admission to special appearances and screenings is free. Seating is limited. Tickets will be distributed at the Museum Admissions Desk two hours before each event.

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