This is a propitious moment to establish a circulating library of independently produced videotapes. Today there exists a large and widely recognized body of work from which a meaningful video collection can be built. Moreover, we find ourselves at a point in time when the video field is rapidly expanding. Over the past fifteen years an increasing number of artists have been attracted to video because of the medium’s unique characteristics for artistic expression. A large number of independent filmmakers has also joined the ranks of video artists, since video offers a viable and sometimes less costly alternative to film production. The financial factor is but one of the reasons why filmmakers, as well as other artists, are turning to video. Rapidly developing technology presents the potential for new and wider audiences; high-definition video offers large-screen projection that may rival large-screen film projection. Such technical innovation creates excitement and an energy that revitalizes the video community.

The titles in this collection, organized chronologically, represent some of the finest work produced during the past decade. The works form a core around which a collection of significant video art will be built in the coming years. Each title in this catalog is accompanied by a descriptive annotation and a selected videography of single- and two-channel videotapes.

The Circulating Video Library is a parallel service to the Circulating Film Library, and like that collection it rents, leases, and sells work on a nationwide basis. The selection of titles was made by Michael Miller, Assistant Film Librarian in the Circulating Film Library, in collaboration with Barbara London, Assistant Curator of Video in the Department of Film. Formerly head of the Video Library and Study Center at the New York Public Library, Michael Miller has brought to this project his extensive experience in video archiving and programming. We are grateful to Barbara London for her assistance in establishing guidelines for a circulating collection and for writing the introduction to this catalog. Marita Sturken gave unstintingly of her time and effort in researching and writing the catalog entries. We also thank Howard Wise and Lori Zippay of Electronic Arts Intermix for their assistance in launching the project, Chris Holme for the production of the catalog, and Bill Thomason for its design. We are also grateful to Mary Lee Bandy, Director of the Department of Film, for her guidance in establishing the Circulating Video Library, and we extend our deep appreciation to the New York State Council on the Arts, whose funding made this project possible.

William Sloan
Librarian
Circulating Film Library
Department of Film
INTRODUCTION

The launching of the Circulating Video Library is a logical step for The Museum of Modern Art’s video program, which began in 1968. In that year video was integrated into the Museum’s exhibition program when two videotapes by Korean-born Nam June Paik were presented in “The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age.” At that time, the portable video camera had been on the market for three years, and pioneering artist Paik had already produced a group of witty videotapes and assemblage sculptures. Paik used the television set itself, as well as off-the-air footage of familiar, newsworthy figures, and he distorted these elements in challenging ways. In 1970 video works by artists from Latin America, Europe, Canada, and the United States were included in the mixed-media show “Information.” The Museum inaugurated its “Projects” exhibition series in 1971 with a closed-circuit video installation by Keith Sonnier. Then in 1974 the Museum began “Projects: Video,” a continuing video exhibition program. Since that time four hundred videotapes and ten installations by artists from eighteen countries have been shown, covering a wide range of experimental uses of the medium. In 1975 a video collection was begun, and in 1978 the “Video Viewpoints” lecture series was initiated as a forum for artists to present and discuss their work.

In the new Video Study Center researchers will not only have access to original works, but also they will be able to consult important source materials. At present, the video collection of over four-hundred works provides a historical as well as an aesthetic overview of the video field. These tapes, as well as the “Video Viewpoints” lecture series, will be presented publicly in the enlarged video exhibition spaces and the new Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2, adjacent to the René d’Harnoncourt Galleries.

In general the genres of video can be categorized into three distinct areas of concern: documentary work covering social and political developments; narrative work produced as either linear or nonlinear progressions; and experimental work intended to challenge viewers with new ideas. The term video essentially applies to the equipment—camera, recording deck, monitor or television set, and videotape. Television may be defined as the electronic delivery to homes through cable and broadcasting systems of both live and prerecorded video programs, whereas independent video art refers to work that has been produced over the last two decades largely outside the network system.

Artists have been using video as a personal, expressive form in a variety of ways since the 1960s. Keeping abreast of these developments The Museum of Modern Art has presented, in continuing programs, the two basic formats of independent video: multi-monitor or sculptural in-
stallations, which generally refer to a particular environment, and single-channel tapes, like the works in this circulating collection. Artists' use of video evolved naturally from their experience in such traditional arts as film, theater, music, still photography, painting, and sculpture. A video work often reflects the same formal or poetic concerns as its antecedents. Similar wording is used to describe its content. What characterizes and differentiates video from other media are: its presentation on the boxlike television set, its intimate scale, its image available simultaneously to recording, its light-emitting screen, and its colors, which are electronically derived. With image processing equipment, it is possible to construct complex, collage-like, or spatial configurations. Broadcast television provides the artist with a lexicon of forms that have become recognizable "types," such as the "talking heads" of news anchor-people, sports instant-replays, and the short-story format of thirty-second commercials. How many artists have questioned the use of traditional materials and formal exhibition spaces, some found alternatives in "land art" and performance and body art as well as video. Artists accustomed to painting alone in their studios at first worked independently with rudimentary video equipment. Pointing the camera at themselves, they composed scenes for the area framed by the television screen, and monitored their now-live images while they recorded them. As producer, camerman, and performer, the artist could work spontaneously and control the subject matter. Thus former poet Vito Acconci carried out autobiographical "actions" on camera, while William Wegman developed short vignettes and created humorous alter egos, often performing with his dog, Man Ray. Artists also explored the formal characteristics of the medium, focusing on the properties inherent in video. Lynda Benglis examined what "now," or the present, meant for a medium that could be used live and whose recorded images always looked live. Joan Jonas began by exploring "real time," and performed in works that were centered on such characteristics as the unstable, rolling picture frequently found on a television screen. Peter Campus used studio equipment to carry out stream-lined, psychological actions in austere settings. More recently, Bob Snyder produced a sophisticated analytical work based on the facades of suburban homes, whereas Dan Reeves and James Byrne used the camera as a sensor of their internal and external environments.

Given the intimate nature of video, whereby the audience sits face-to-face with personalities on the screen, a number of early videomakers spoke directly to viewers. Colin Campbell has developed narrative works in which he casts himself as different characters who address the camera to discuss the daily tribulations of their lives. Artists well known for their work in the performing arts have created video hybrids, responding to the shallow, in-focus area in front of the video camera. Collaborators Charles Atlas and Merce Cunningham have produced strong "videodances" in pieces for example, five Merce Cunninghams move simultaneously on the properties inherent in video. Lynda Benglis examined what "now," or the present, meant for a medium that could be used live and whose recorded images always looked live. Joan Jonas began by exploring "real time," and performed in works that were centered on such characteristics as the unstable, rolling picture frequently found on a television screen. Peter Campus used studio equipment to carry out stream-lined, psychological actions in austere settings. More recently, Bob Snyder produced a sophisticated analytical work based on the facades of suburban homes, whereas Dan Reeves and James Byrne used the camera as a sensor of their internal and external environments.

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The small screen of the video image provides an intimacy many artists have used as an aspect of performance. William Wegman's videotapes consist of short, comic skits that center on a single, simple idea. His understated humor finds its roots in the comedy of Buster Keaton and Ernie Kovacs; he works alone, always recording his pieces in short, unedited takes. This aspect of his style closely ties his working process in video to his extensive work in photography and drawing. His use of a stationary camera and a few ordinary props adds to the intimate, ironic quality of his humor, at the center of which is a naive, unsuspecting character—portrayed by his well-trained weimaraner, Man Ray. This compilation of Wegman's skits exhibits the range of his comic sense and his ingenious use of the dog as a straight man.

The tape begins with Man Ray sleeping in a bed next to an alarm clock. When the alarm goes off, the dog leaps out of bed, like any person bound for work, and runs off. Wegman shows the predictability of Man Ray's canine response by placing the dog in controlled situations designed to bring out specific reactions. As Wegman describes the globe, using a tennis ball as a point of reference, Man Ray's nose appears at the edge of the frame, in anticipation of catching the ball. Similarly, Wegman uses obedience as a comic ploy. In one scene, Wegman and a woman sit on opposite sides of the screen and alternately call the dog. Man Ray looks in turn at each one until finally, in exasperation, he stares between them at the camera. In a hilarious parody of a teacher-student relationship, Wegman corrects Man Ray's spelling test while the dog watches him with a very concerned expression. The spare, concise quality of these scenes in addition to their unmanipulated form, reinforce Wegman's humor and render these vignettes examples of exceptional satire.

**William Wegman**

Selected Works, Reel 1 (1972) 30 min. B&W
Selected Works, Reel 2 (1972) 30 min. B&W
Selected Works, Reel 3 (1972) 20 min. B&W
Selected Works, Reel 4 (1972) 20 min. B&W
Selected Works, Reel 5 (1972) 30 min. B&W
Selected Works, Reel 6 (1972) 20 min. B&W
Semi-Buffet, with two or three variations which could be very possible: A Televised Dinner (1975) 20 min. Color
Selected Works, Reel 7 (1977) 12 min. Color
Anthology (1977-78) 10 min. Color

Vito Acccondi's work as a performance and multimedia artist has centered on breaking down the barrier that exists between artist and audience by challenging the passive role of the viewer. A poet in the early 1960s, Acccondi moved into performance art as a natural step from his poetry readings. He was one of the primary exponents of "body art," in which he used himself as the subject. His intense performances often incorporated autobiographical information and an aggressive attitude toward his own body. Acccondi's videotapes demonstrate his performance as a "power-field" radiated by an individual, a gestalt encompassing all people or objects in a given space. These tapes are confrontational, directed at the viewer on a personal level and designed very often to make the viewer feel uncomfortable.

Undertone is performed by Acccondi in a single, unedited take. He sits at the end of a table before the camera, assuming the stance of a politician delivering a televised address. In monologue, he alternates between constructing a fantasy for himself, negating that fantasy, and confronting the viewer with it. He begins by addressing the viewer: "I need to look you straight in the eyes, to prove I'm not hiding anything." Then, with his hands under the table and his eyes lowered, he alternates between "I want to believe there is a girl here under the table. She's touching my leg," and "I want to believe there is no one here under the table, that I am doing it myself." As this monologue becomes more graphic in its detail, Acccondi places the viewer increasingly in the position of voyeur. He relentlessly insists that "I need you to be there," a statement that also reaffirms his need for an audience to participate in his work. The tension that is created by Acccondi's stationary presence at the end of the table is increased by the abrupt ending of Undertone. He does not, as one would expect, change roles and get up to turn off the camera as he began the tape. Rather, the piece ends when the thirty-minute tape runs out. Acccondi refuses to let us simply watch; it is his intention to make us feel that we have been forced into a personal relationship with him.

**VITO ACCONDI**

Association Area (1971) 60 min. B&W
Centers (1971) 20 min. B&W
Claim Excerpts (1971) 65 min. B&W
Contacts (1971) 30 min. B&W
Focal Point (1971) 30 min. B&W
Pyramids (1971) 20 min. B&W/Silent
Pull (1971) 30 min. B&W
Remote Control (1971) 60 min. B&W (Two-channel)
Two Track (1971) 30 min. B&W
Waterways: 4 Saliva Studies (1971) 20 min. B&W
Face Off (1972) 30 min. B&W
Recording Studio from Air Time (1972) 35 min. B&W
Undertone (1972) 30 min. B&W
Command Performance (1973) 50 min. B&W
Full Circle (1973) 30 min. B&W
Home Movies (1973) 30 min. B&W
Stages (1973) 30 min. B&W
Theme Song (1973) 30 min. B&W
Walk-Over (1973) 30 min. B&W
Face of the Earth (1974) 20 min. B&W
Open Book (1974) 10 min. B&W
Shoot (1974) 10 min. B&W
Turn-On (1974) 20 min. B&W
The Red Tapes (1975) 140 min. B&W

Undertone (1972) U.S.A. By Vito Acccondi.

30 min. B&W. Sound. Rental $50.00 / Not available for sale.
The exploration of video as a hybrid art form in combination with dance, music, and performance art has been integral to its development. Jonas, a performance artist who has used video as well as sculpture and dance to redefine space, has integrated live video in her performance pieces to add another time frame to her work and to direct the attention of the audience. Vertical Roll is a seminal work of performance video that also explores an intrinsic element of the television image: the vertical roll caused by a desynchronization of the electronic signal between the camera and the monitor. Jonas used the tape in 1973-74 in her performance piece Organic Honey’s Vertical Roll. She begins the tape by confronting the viewer with two unusual contexts: the continuously rolling image on the screen that moves down and then snaps back up, and Jonas banging a spoon loudly against a translucent surface before the camera, giving the impression that she is hitting the lens. The banging and the snap of the vertical roll are coordinated so that they establish the staccato rhythm of the tape. Jonas drapes cloth before the camera to create a continuous form. Finally, she performs a dance with a mask, her movements abstracted by the roll. Jonas underlines the notion that television is a realistic medium by taking what is considered a defect and decontextualizing it. She also subverts the gravitational space of the television screen by dancing above the camera on a translucent surface. The roll becomes a choreography of movement in which our eyes capture details just as the image jumps back up on the screen. Jonas orchestrates a series of gestures that are transformed into entirely new movements by the vertical roll; as she slaps up with one hand and down with the other, the roll creates two hands clapping together, when she dances with her body close to the camera, her torso creates a continuous form. Finally, Jonas’s face appears in front of the rolling images and confronts the viewer. This underlines the already fragile space she has constructed, and creates yet another layer of video space as she turns and moves slowly out of the frame.

JOAN JONAS

Duet (1972) 4 min. B&W
Left Side, Right Side (1972) 7 min. B&W
Vertical Roll (1973) 20 min. B&W
Organic Honey’s Vertical Telepathy (1973) 23 min. B&W
Two Women (1973) 15 min. B&W
Silent Barking (1973) 3 min. B&W
Three Returns (1973) 12 min. B&W
Merge (1974) 16 min. B&W
Good Night, Good Morning (1976) 11 min. B&W
May Windows (1976) 14 min. B&W
I Want to Live in the Country (And Other Romances) (1977) 26 min. Color
Upside-down and Backwards (1980) 28 min. Color

Global Groove (1973) U.S.A. By Nam June Paik and John Godfrey

Nam June Paik began altering television sets in the early 1960s and in 1965 became the first artist to use a portable video camera. He is the most influential video artist today. Paik, who was born in Korea and has a background in classical and avant-garde music and performance art, was involved with the Fluxus group, multimedia artists whose primary intent was to break down barriers between art and its audience. The group had its roots in the Dada movement of the 1920s. Paik’s work incorporates music, performance, and sculpture as well as the Dada strategies of humor and chance. One of his most significant collaborators is avant-garde musician Charlotte Moorman, who has performed with him since the late 1960s. A major part of Paik’s work is his video sculpture (sometimes worn by Moorman), in which he undermines conventions of television by placing TV sets in new contexts. Paik has also produced videotapes for broadcast that have had an important impact on video and television and have incorporated his interest in expanding mass communications.

Global Groove is his classic work for broadcast TV. Produced under the auspices of the Television Laboratory at WNET in New York (begun in 1971), the tape was made with the Paik-Abe synthesizer, a device designed by Paik and his collaborator Shuya Abe. The synthesizer manipulates distorted electronic signals of television images and adds color to black-and-white imagery. A highly complex collage of found footage from broadcast TV and Paik’s own idiosyncratic images, Global Groove was a milestone of state-of-the-art technology and still is an effective synthesis of the many aspects of Paik’s work. Paik combines East and West in Global Groove, his idea of multicultural programming. Highly edited images of Korean and Western go-go dancers are brought together; John Cage provides a slower tempo and anecdotal relief. Charlotte Moorman plays Paik’s “TV Cello” (an instrument made of three monitors) juxtaposed with a classical cellist; Richard Nixon’s face appears as a distorted swirl of lines.

Paik, the visionary, predicts that this is what television will be like when “TV Guide is as thick as the Manhattan telephone book.” He layers, “colorizes,” multiplies, and abstracts these images in a fast-paced broadcast style, occasionally interrupting them with Japanese Pepsi commercials to remind us the TV of tomorrow will still have sponsors. He also envisions future TV as an interactive experience, telling viewers “this is participation TV” and instructing them to close their eyes and turn off their television sets. With its dynamic burst of imagery, Global Groove is a manifesto for universal television and a pivotal work in demonstrating the potential of the video art form.

NAM JUNE PAIK

Duet Rol on Canal Street (1969) B&W (Not in distribution)
Variations on George Ball on Meet the Press (1973) B&W (Not in distribution)
Electronic Opera No. 1 (1968) 5 min. Color
In 23 Experiment with David Atwood (1969) Color (Not in distribution)
Video Communie (1970) 4 hours. Color (Not in distribution)
Electronic Opera No. 2 (1970) 8 min. Color
Park/Abe Video Synthesizer with Charlotte Moorman (1971) 30 min. Color (Not in distribution)
The Selling of New York (1972) 8 min. Color
Waiting for Commercial (1972) Color (Not in distribution)
A Tribute to John Cage (1973) 60 min. Reedited 1976, 30 min.
Global Groove (1973) 30 min. Color. In collaboration with John Godfrey
Meets by Merce by Paik. Part 2: Merce and Marcel (1975) 15 min. Color. In collaboration with Shigeko Kubota
Waiting for the Train (1976) Color
Media Shuttle: Moscow/New York (1978) B&W and Color
30 min. In collaboration with Dimitri Devyatkin
You Can’t Lock Stamps in China (1979) 30 min. Color. In collaboration with Gregory Battcock
Lake Placid ’80 (1980) 4 min. Color
Mons Konrad Durs (1980) 5 min. Color. In collaboration with Ingo Günter

*Running time is not available
Many painters, sculptors, and performance artists explored video when it first became accessible with the advent of the portapak. One such artist was Lynda Benglis, a sculptor, who worked in video in the early 1970s. Her work in video combines elements of an abrasive sensuality from her sculptural work with concerns of layering both time and space. Now begins with a profile view of Benglis standing before a static-filled screen. A prerecorded image of Benglis's profile facing in the opposite direction then appears on the screen. She performs a series of gestures in response to her recorded image—opening her mouth, sticking out her tongue, and kissing the air. These gestures become erotic in response to her recorded image. Benglis's voice becomes rhetorical. She has layered the visuals and sounds so that her voice is coming from the opposite side of the frame. As the tape begins to disintegrate into different colors and images, Benglis appears in profile. A prerecorded image of Benglis's profile facing in the opposite direction then appears on the screen. She performs a series of gestures in response to her recorded image—opening her mouth, sticking out her tongue, and kissing the air. These gestures become erotic in response to her recorded image.

Lynda Benglis Document (1972) 6 min. B&W
Home Tape Revised (1972) 28 min. B&W
Mumble (1972) 20 min. B&W
Noise (1972) 7 min. B&W
On-Screen (1972) 7 min. B&W
Collage (1973) 10 min. Color
Discrepancy (1972) 13 min. B&W
Enclosure (1973) 8 min. B&W
The Grunions Are Running (1973) 5 min. B&W
Now (1973) 13 min. Color
Female Sensibility (1974) 14 min. Color
How's Tricks (1976) 34 min. Color
In collaboration with Stanton Kaye
The Amazing Bow Wow (1977) 32 min. Color
In collaboration with Stanton Kaye

Peter Campus Program (1972-76) U.S.A. By Peter Campus. Produced by the WGBH New Television Workshop.
Dynamic Field Series (1971) 25 min. B&W
Three Transitions (1973) 5 min. Color
Set of Co-incidence (1974) 13 min. Color
East Ended Tape (1976) 6 min. Color

Total program: 24 min. Color. Sound. Rental $100.00 / Not available for sale.

Peter Campus's tapes explore perception and video space through straightforward video effects. Campus came to the medium with a background in experimental psychology and commercial film. He has since worked in Polaroid photography, whose immediate imagery is an extension of the instant replay he explored in video, and in large-format photography. Campus's work subverts the camera's illusion of objectivity; he uses the medium to portray subjective, psychological states. These three tapes, which represent the diversity of Campus's explorations, consist of several self-contained exercises that center on one intrinsic aspect of the medium.

In Three Transitions, Campus presents three introspective portraits that incorporate his dry humor. He begins with an image created by two cameras facing opposite sides of a paper wall. His back to the camera, Campus cuts through the paper so that it appears as if he is cutting through his back, a double-image that is both disconcerting and tongue-in-cheek. Campus then uses the "chroma-key" effect of superimposing one image on a blue area of another video image. He paints his face with blue paint so that it reveals yet another image of himself behind it; he then superimposes his image on a piece of blue paper, which he sets afire. As Three Transitions moves from deadpan humor to self-destruction, Campus explores the limits of perception as a barometer for measuring reality.

Set of Co-incidence investigates the layering of video imagery, and the "coincidence" of superimposing environments. In the tape's primary segment, three images of Campus walk in a line through moving imagery of New York's Holland Tunnel. Decreasing in size toward the viewer, these three figures echo the angle of the camera lens in opposition to the vanishing point of the tunnel.

East Ended Tape, which is also a formal study of video effects, explores the relationship of two people. It begins with Susan Bowling seen as a combination of two half-images of her face, each split from opposite sides to form a whole face. She turns slowly, each face at a slightly different pace, creating a split image. The scenes in which Campus appears have an inwardly aggressive quality. He wraps his face in clear cellophane, which distorts and compresses his features and begins to suffocate him, obscuring him from view. Each of these tapes confronts the viewer with the disparity between mechanical perception and human perception, with Campus using himself more as a prop than as a performer. He plays the convincing aspects of the medium against themselves, always reversing our expectation of each reality he constructs.
Many video artists have investigated the format and the corporate structure of the broadcast industry as a reaction against the associations tied to viewing their work on a television monitor. Richard Serra, who is recognized primarily as a sculptor, worked briefly in video in the 1970s. In Television Delivers People, Serra uses a didactic approach to subvert the experience of viewing images on the television screen. The tape consists of a series of statements excerpted from television conferences about the nature of television advertising, its corporate structure, and its relation to the viewer. The text begins with the statement: "The product of television, commercial television, is the audience," thereby reversing the common notion that we control the role of television in our lives. Serra goes on to state that "popular entertainment is basically propaganda for the status quo," to define the "inherent conflict between commerce, information, and entertainment," and to establish that "corporations mitigate information." The direct approach with which Serra structures these statements creates a train of thought that is analogous to turning pages, but the format by which he chooses to present this text intentionally raises some interesting paradoxes. While discussing the problem of an entertainment medium disseminating information, Serra chooses a roll print format. He contrasts these words with a Muzak soundtrack which represents the music of mass culture just as television represents the print format. He contrasts these words with a Muzak soundtrack, which is intended to be soothing, which is the most soothing color on TV. In fact, the Muzak becomes more prominent than the ambient sound it is intended to be. Serra also sets his text against a "chroma-key" blue background, which is the most soothing color on TV according to scientific studies on television. Finally, Serra underscores the aspect of corporate manipulation in the television medium: he controls the speed and spacing of the rolling text as well as the words' emphasis. The ultimate paradox created by Serra in Television Delivers People is that he, like commercial television and its sponsors, uses specific devices to manipulate his audience into accepting his message.

RICHARD SERRA

Atviliaus Automatinis (1971) 5 min. B&W
Surprise Attack (1972) 2 min. B&W
Television Delivers People (1973) 6 min. Color. Coproduced with Carlota Fay Schoolman
Boomerang (1974) 10 min. Color

What television teaches through commercialism is materialistic consumption.
The NEW MEDIA STATE is predicated on

Television Delivers People (1973) U.S.A. By Richard Serra. Coproduced with Carlota Fay Schoolman.

6 min. Color. Sound. Rental $45.00 / Not available for sale.

One of the first major video documentaries made with half-inch portable equipment, The Irish Tapes is a convincing example of the mobility made possible by this equipment, as well as of the gritty realism it produces. Made by John Reilly, cofounder of New York-based Global Village, a production group and media center for documentary video, and Stefan Moore, cofounder of TVG Documentary Arts Project (see Presumed Innocent [1979]), it was originally shown as a three-channel, twelve-monitor installation.

Reilly, Moore, and their crew shot more than one hundred hours of videotape in Ireland from 1971 to 1973, during which time they played back tapes for local residents in an effort to provide a more objective view of these events. By calling the project The Irish Tapes, these videomakers define their medium and imply that this is a selection from a larger body of work.

From its opening sequence, The Irish Tapes establishes a combat environment. Accompanied by the constant beating of drums, there are images of soldiers on patrols, children battling in the rubble of burned-out buildings, and IRA gunmen in masks. All portray the volatile atmosphere in Northern Ireland at a peak of violence in 1972. Reilly and Moore intercut this turmoil with scenes of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City, providing a glimpse both of the disparity between Irish-Americans and the Irish of Northern Ireland, and of the strong ties that still exist between the two cultures.

Reilly and Moore skillfully document the violence and rage of the Northern Irish toward the occupying British army. They interview many people, follow families on visiting days to internment camps, and chronic the barricading of Derry. What emerges is less a portrait of the actual struggle than a document of the toll this situation has taken on the community, especially the women and children. The women are seen acting as the community's witnesses; the children are accustomed to the violence and are eerily mature. Reilly and Moore end this political documentary with the image of a woman who, while in her own home, was blinded by a rubber bullet from a British soldier's gun. Ten years later, this portrait is still a powerful reminder of one of the most tumultuous times in Northern Ireland's struggle, as well as of the social commitment of early video documentaries.

John Reilly


Lifestyle—a Study of Feedback (1971) 60 min. B&W.

In collaboration with the Global Village Workshop Group

 clit-A Profile (1971) 20 min. B&W.

Africa (1972) 20 min. B&W. In collaboration with Stefan Moore.


For Stefan Moore's videography, see Presumed Innocent (1979).


In collaboration with Julie Gustafson.
Film and video artist Charles Atlas has collaborated since the mid-1970s with Merce Cunningham, a major figure in modern American dance for almost forty years. Cunningham's choreography emphasizes the figure in modern American dance for almost forty years. Cunningham's choreography emphasizes the figure in modern American dance for almost forty years. In the Blue Studio: Five Segments (1975), Cunningham's dance movements are extended video beyond its previous limits as a hybrid form, using the medium to create an entirely new dance space.

CHARLES ATLAS and MERCE CUNNINGHAM

Joists (1971) 12 min. Color. Silent. (Super 8 film)
TV Runer Movies (1972) 25 min. Color. Silent. (Silent)
Walkaround Round Time (1973) 48 min. Color. (16 mm film)
Webs 1974 32 min. B&W
Blue Studio: Five Segments (1975) 16 min. Color. Silent
Squarbage Video (1976-77) 27 min. Color
Fractions 1 & 2 (1977) 33 min. B&W and Color
Torse (1977) 55 min. Color. (16 mm film, two-screen)
Amorin (1979) 95 min. B&W and Color. (16 mm film)
Channels/Inserts (1981) 32 min. Color. (16 mm film)
Exchange (Work-in-progress) Color. (16 mm film)

CHARLES ATLAS

Silent. (Super 8 film)
(Super 8 film)
(16 mm film)
(Super 8 film)
Silent. (Super 8 film)
Veritage (1973) 10 min. Color.
Decibel Dairy (1982) 30 min. Color. (16 mm film)
(Not in distribution)

One of the first objectives of many video artists was to address the subject of television: its pervasive influence and its enforced one-way communication. Ant Farm was a multimedia collective based in San Francisco from 1968 to 1978, whose founding members—Chip Lord, Doug Michels, and Curtis Schreier—have practiced architecture. Media Burn, their best-known work, is less a record of an event staged by Ant Farm on July 4, 1975, than a commentary on media coverage of news events and the television viewing experience. The event consisted of two Ant Farm members driving the "Phantom Dream Car," a redesigned 1959 Cadillac El Dorado, through a pyramid of burning TV sets. Souvenirs were sold before the even began, bystanders were interviewed, and an "artist-President" delivered a speech on media control in an uncanny impersonation of John F. Kennedy.

Ant Farm staged its event with ingenuity and humor, creating a striking image that has become a classic symbol of cultural anarchy. This tape is framed by opening and closing montages of local newscasters reporting on Media Burn with obvious bemusement. juxtaposing their thorough and elaborate coverage with brief news snips, Ant Farm offers a glimpse of the superficiality of Media Burn's coverage. Ant Farm's objective is to satirize the news media's thirst for sensational events such as this one, which incorporates violence and splashy visuals. The tape employs every possible broadcast convention: closed-circuit television footage of the controls in the Phantom Dream Car; parodies of space-flight coverage; instant replays and slow-motion photography of the actual brief moment of impact satirize sports and action news coverage. Finally, Media Burn draws attention to the enforced passivity of the television viewing experience, a passivity against which it rebels by asking the question, "Haven't you ever wanted to put your foot through your television set?"
Richard Foreman is an experimental playwright/director who has directed his own Ontological-Hysteric Theater in New York beginning in 1968. He has produced numerous plays in the United States and abroad. Foreman's theatrical work focuses on the relationship that exists between text and visuals; visual elements and spoken texts often seem disparate, only to reconnect. He has defined his work as "about a visual tension which is resolved by saying something or a verbal tension which is resolved by showing something." He uses loud buzzers, thuds, and other heavy noises to startle the audience and to add complexity to what he considers to be the blandness of the English language. Foreman's work primarily questions how theater is made, how we perceive our environments, and how things work. He has also translated his work into video and film.

Out of the Body Travel is a theater piece in which Foreman substitutes the frame of the video camera for the proscenium arch of the stage, creating scenes that are more intimate and abstract than those that he rigidly orchestrates on stage. The loosely structured narrative, delivered by Foreman in his deep, dramatic voice, concerns "a young woman who finds herself in a library surrounded by the relics of culture, and her problems in confronting an invisible audience that waits to see her performing a presentation of her own imagining and the imagining of others." The tape is constructed as a series of tableaux in which the action remains stationary as different elements are manipulated in and out of the frame. Foreman flattens the video space, and then divides it with string to create a false perspective. He structures the action with several elements that relate to the experience of learning: books (the "relics of culture") litter each scene, their pages laid open in the frame. Foreman flattens the video space, and then divides it with string to create a false perspective. Foreman flattens the video space, and then divides it with string to create a false perspective. Foreman flattens the video space, and then divides it with string to create a false perspective. He structures the action with several elements that relate to the experience of learning: books (the "relics of culture") litter each scene, their pages laid open in the frame.

Gary Hill began working in video in 1973. Before that he was primarily a sculptor. His videotapes have made a significant progression, from explorations of synthesized imagery to more recent studies of the relationship between imagery and text.

This program of tapes displays the diversity of Hill's work and his shift from silent imagery to an emphasis on the relationship of words and objects. Windows is a visual exercise in which Hill uses the image of windows in a dark room as the primary motif, which he then "colorizes," superimposes, and transforms into a purely abstract set of geometric shapes. Sums and Differences is an examination of sound and image. Hill uses three musical instruments and their sounds to create a musical/visual composition. He begins by introducing the three elements, and then accelerates their interplay with special effects, building a crescendo of flashing images and synthesized sound. In Ring Modulation, Hill divides the screen into a triptych to further explore sound/visual correlation. One segment contains a computer-generated spinning ring; another a "colorized" view of Hill's hands bending a piece of metal wire into a circular shape; and the third, a close-up of his hands.

The last three tapes in this collection explore the interrelationship of text and imagery. In Around and About, Hill constructs an interplay of text and images that is directed to the viewer. Depending on how it is read, his monologue could be addressed either to one person or to an entire audience, creating an ambiguity that is underscored by the imagery. Hill uses a divided screen to animate objects—such as a lamp, a ruler, a cement wall, or several coats hanging from a door. In Processual Video, Hill reads a text over a very simple image—a rotating line against a black background. Hill's text becomes increasingly abstract, relating horizontal/vertical contexts to the moving line; for instance, a horizontal line is related to the ocean and a diagonal line to a story about skiing on a mountain.

The text of Primarily Speaking is composed of a series of idioms, each of which relates to the phrase before. A two-channel piece orchestrates on a single screen, Primarily Speaking articulates many of Hill's concerns. Hill uses common phrases from everyday speech, such as "of course there's an ulterior motive," and interweaves a synthesized voice with a collection of images—a suitcase moving across the screen, hands pulling on a belt, and close-ups of a mouth's expressions. The tape thus contains several dialogues, including the interaction of the images of the opposing screens, and that between the text and the objects on the screens. Hill constructs an elusive narrative that derives its strength from its ambiguous intent.

Downtown Community Television Center (DCTV) was established in 1972 by Jon Alpert and Keiko Tsuno in New York's Chinatown. Since its inception as a small community organization and video collective, it has become a significant center for the production of independent documentaries that have been broadcast on public and network television.

In 1974 Alpert and Tsuno were the first American journalists to be invited to Cuba since the 1959 revolution. There they made Cuba: The People. DCTV went on to make Chinatown: Immigrants in America, a powerful depiction of the neighborhood where they live and work; Vietnam: Picking up the Pieces, which they made as a consequence of their trip to Vietnam as the first American journalists allowed in the country since the fall of Saigon; and Third Avenue: Only the Strong Survive (1981), a portrait of people who live along New York City's Third Avenue.

Health Care: Your Money or Your Life is a disturbing investigation of the disastrous state of health care in this country. Alpert and Tsuno spent six months shooting in two Brooklyn hospitals: Kings County Hospital, a city-run, overcrowded, and understaffed institution; and Downstate Medical Center, a well-financed private hospital. Health Care documents the priority of medical research over proper health care for the individual; the irony of financial-aid cuts to preventative medicine programs in order to keep overcrowded hospitals open; the role of Blue Cross and Medicare in worsening these conditions; and the paradox of a multimillion-dollar pharmaceutical industry in a country where many cannot afford adequate health care. At Kings County, which has "the busiest emergency room in the world," DCTV captures harrowing scenes of staff members trying to save lives with equipment that is outdated and malfunctioning, and of an outpatient clinic with a five-month waiting period for an appointment. They deftly juxtapose these scenes with Downstate, where an impressive new research division is under construction and where one has to be recommended by a staff doctor in order to be admitted.

In Health Care information is presented in a direct, fast-paced style that takes its cue from broadcast television: the narration summarizes the action, and visuals support the commentary. DCTV's interview technique is unabashedly straightforward, eliciting very candid responses. The overall impact of the tape is both informative and riveting. As one patient puts it: "Health care? For whom? For the rich it is; for the poor it's not."

BARBARA BUCKNER
"Collected Works" (1973-76) 115 min. B&W and Color. Silent
"Collected Works" (1977) 36 min. Color. Silent
Muse 2 min.
Waters 2 min.
The Blue, 3 min.
Gathering In 3 min.
Mast 2 min.
Grace 5 min.
Body 3 min.
Night 2 min.
Lamp 2 min.
Landscapes 2 min.
A Table 5 min.
Aris 3 min.
Hours. 3 min.
The Men. 3 min.
Image of the Kingdom 1 min.
Pictures of the Lost (1978-80) 23 min. Color. Silent
"Collected Works" (1978) 11 min. Color. Silent
Hearts (1979) 52 min. Color. Silent
Heal (1980) 6 min. Color. Silent
Analogs (1983) 30 min. Color. (Two-channel)

Total program 35 min. Color. Silent. Rental $50.00 / Sale $250.00.

Barbara Buckner's videotapes convey a personal iconography of enigmatic, abstract images. Although Buckner employs electronic tools to manipulate her images, her work is based on a romantic vision and spiritual thought. This sets it apart from the work of those artists who use the electronic signal as an end in itself.

She structures Pictures of the Lost in twenty-two movements. These are identified by titles that are suggestive, yet not definitive: "To The Gates," "Stranger in the Beloved," "Curtain and Hemisphere." Each picture, which ranges from a few seconds to several minutes, is an intense visual exercise, described by Buckner as "light/energy transmissions which depict contagious states of spiritual enfolding." Buckner structures these movements with intuitive movements. She takes each image, saturated it so that it expands with intense color, pauses, and then returns it to its original state. While many of the images are purely abstract, others serve as glimpses of identifiable images thereby creating a tension between abstraction and reality.

Hearts is a dynamic work that goes beyond Pictures of the Lost in terms of its more sophisticated technology. The central image is a heart-shaped fruit that serves as both a window on other imagery and a separate shape that pulsates on the screen. While the piece operates on the level of pure abstraction, Buckner's use of this heart shape and of kinetic bursts of synthesized imagery make it a powerful romantic metaphor.

The sensuality of the images within an ambiguous space reveals a lyrical style that relates closely to the film work of Stan Brakhage. Like Brakhage, Buckner does not use sound in her work, thereby giving it an inward, contemplative quality that underscores the authority of the imagery. These are personal works; they are seductive, drawing viewers into the silent, exquisite visuals and putting them into a meditative state of mind.

War in Nicaragua (1979) 30 min. Color.
Chinatown: Immigrants in America (1976) 60 min. Color.
Health Care: Your Money or Your Life (1978) 60 min. Color.
Kings County Hospital: New York City (1979) 35 min. Color.
The Invisible People (1979) 57 min. Color.

Total program 118 min. Color. Silent. Rental $75.00 / Sale $275.00.
Bill Viola has created multilayered videotapes and installations since the early 1970s. Viola’s work, which progresses from tightly structured, perceptual exercises to rich tableaux of light, color, and movement, explores intrinsic aspects of the video medium: the way it reacts to light, heat, water, and movement.

According to Viola, “My goal is to produce audio-visual compositions in time using the language of experience, the sounds and images of the real world as collected on videotapes. In the visual sense, my video works are more related to music than the printed word. They are visual poems, allegories in the language of subjective perception, open to diverse individual interpretation, yet printed word . They are visual poems, allegories in the language of subjective perception, open to diverse individual interpretation, yet.

**BILL VIOLA**


*Passage Series* (1973) 15 min. B&W. (Not in distribution)

*Level* (1973) 8 min. B&W. (Not in distribution)


*“August 74”* (1974) 18 min. Color. (Not in distribution)

*Instant Breakfast* 7 min. Color

*Distortion* 6 min. Color

*Red Tape* (1975) 30 min. Color

*“Red Tape”* (1975) 30 min. Color

*Playing Soul Music to My Freckles* 4 min.

*A Non-Dairy Creamer* 6 min.

*The Semi-Circular Canals* 8 min.

*A Million Other Things* 2 min.

*Return* 7 min.

*Migration* (1976) 7 min. Color

*Four Songs* (1976) 35 min. Color

*Junkyard Lullation* 5 min.

*Songs of Innocence* 11 min.

*The Space Between the Teeth* 9 min.

*Tosh Through Mass Individuation* 10 min.

*Mind Surfaces and Mental Prayers* (1977)

*25 min. Color

*The Wheel of Becoming* 7 min.

*The Morning After the Night of Power* 10 min.

*Sweet Light* 10 min.


*Finn Tress on the Moon* (1978) 22 min. Color

*Chott el-Djerid (A Portrait in Light and Heat)* (1979) 28 min. Color

*“The Reflecting Pool (Collected Work ’77-‘80)”* (1977-80)

*61 min. Color

*The Reflecting Pool* (1977-79) 7 min.


*Silent Life* (1979) 14 min.

*Ancient of Days* (1979-80) 12 min.

*Vegetable Memory* (1979-80) 15 min.

*Hatsu-Yume (First Dream)* (1981) 56 min. Color

*Reasons for Knocking at an Empty House* (1983)

15 min. B&W

James Byrne’s early videotapes and installations are reflexive perceptual exercises, influenced by the psychological explorations of Peter Campus. In these works, Byrne used himself as a prop to confront the viewer, emphasizing a strong physicality and an aggressive attitude. For his installation *Number Five* (1976), the viewers were asked to lie down on the floor under a monitor that featured Byrne throwing a tennis ball at the camera (and the viewer), sometimes hitting the lens. In *Works for Broadcast*, Byrne produced a series of commercial spots for local television in Minneapolis designed to confront unsuspecting viewers; one featured him jumping up and hanging from the camera.

*One Way* is an extension of these early works. It is also a precursor of his more recent projects, in which he explores his environment with the camera, combining fluid handheld camerawork with music and impressionistic imagery. In *One Way*, Byrne examines the preciousness of the video camera. The tape begins with the camera scraping along a fence, making a harsh, metal-on-metal sound. Byrne bumps his camera into trees, uses it to push rocks along the ground, scrapes peeling paint off a metal surface with the lens, and runs it along a wire fence. Under his direction, it careens comically into a “One Way” sign.

By treating his camera like a worthless object, Byrne challenges our preconceptions of how one handles a piece of expensive equipment. He uses his camera as an instrument to create sound and as an extension of his arm to sense his surroundings. Thus, the built-in microphone, which often unintentionally amplifies the videomaker’s movement, creates a camera equivalent of the video camera’s movement. In *One Way*, Byrne reorients the viewer’s sense of gravity. He sensuously explores his environment by literally feeling it with his camera.
The tape begins with a gray, rocklike surface on which a round sun face emerges. It opens very realistic eyes, and smiles. The sun’s facade cracks, and brilliant colors radiate from its head with extraordinary intensity. In a surrealistically stunning display of high technology, this face then appears on one side of a rotating cube whose other surfaces feature moving or still video images. Zooming in on one of the stills, Emshwiller presents an electronic landscape in which a walking figure becomes a rainbow-colored series of outlines.

While Sunstone is a remarkable example of the three-dimensional animation that can be accomplished by using computers, it goes beyond technology as an end in itself. Emshwiller’s imagery evokes Marshall McLuhan’s theory of “cool” (the cool gray rock surface) and “hot” media (the bright, pulsing orb). By using the universal image of the sun, initially etched in stone and then a cubelike satellite revolving in space, he recapitulates a variety of artistic mediums. Emshwiller’s walking figure, frozen in a series of stills, is subtly reminiscent of Eadweard Muybridge’s photographic motion studies, and, by extension, Marcel Duchamp’s painting Nude Descending a Staircase. Sunstone’s multidimensional palette fondly refers to earlier art and celebrates the future of electronic art.

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**Claude Beller and Stefan Moore**

March Against Racism—Boston 1974 (1975) 30 min. Color
* Turning Points (1978) 30 min. Color. (16 mm film)
* A Man’s Place (1978) 25 min. Color. (16 mm film)
* Presumed Innocent (1978) 60 min. B&W
* A Complicating Factor (1981) 45 min. Color (16 mm film)
* Trouble on Fashion Avenue (1982) 60 min. Color (16 mm film)

*Available in both film and videotape

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**Sunstone**

U.S.A. By Ed Emshwiller. Computer animation by Alvy Ray Smith, Lance Williams, and Garland Stern at the New York Institute of Technology.

3 min. Color. Sound. Rental $50.00 / Sale $150.00.

Ed Emshwiller began his artistic career as a painter and science fiction illustrator. After a decade of experimental filmmaking, he began working in video in the early 1970s, his first videotapes being explorations of synthesized imagery combining dance and fantasy. Computer animation, in which he “paints with a digital palette,” is the culmination of his experience as a painter and filmmaker, and is the ideal medium for his fantastic and surreal imagery. The most recent and technically advanced of his animated tapes is Sunstone, which was made over a period of eight months at the New York Institute of Technology (NYIT), where one of the world’s most advanced computer-animation systems is housed. Sunstone is a pivotal work in computer-generated video and a highly sophisticated exploration of the three-dimensionality possible on the video screen.

The tape begins with a gray, rocklike surface on which a round sun face emerges. It opens very realistic eyes, and smiles. The sun’s facade cracks, and brilliant colors radiate from its head with extraordinary intensity. In a surrealistically stunning display of high technology, this face then appears on one side of a rotating cube whose other surfaces feature moving or still video images. Zooming in on one of the stills, Emshwiller presents an electronic landscape in which a walking figure becomes a rainbow-colored series of outlines.

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SHALOM GOREWITZ

Seven Events (1977) 10 min. Color
Molly (1978) 10 min. Color
Paradise (1978) 9 min. Color
Measures of Volatility (1979) 6 min. Color
El Corandero (1979) 5 min. Color
Excavations (1979) 5 min. Color
Autumn Floods (1979) 6 min. Color
Delta Visions (1980) 5 min. Color
U.S. Sweat (1982) 16 min. Color
Process Studies (1982) 7 min. Color
Solvatonic Babies (1983) 7 min. Color

Shalom Gorewitz creates textured, expressionistic videotapes that relate visually to abstract painting. He has a distinct handheld camera style that exemplifies his response to the environments he is taping. Gorewitz then "colorizes" and layers this material, using an image processor like a musical instrument. The Abstract Expressionist's emphasis on gestural brushstrokes and the role of the artist as an individual is related to the central concerns of Gorewitz's work. His videotapes have the energy of action paintings.

"Travels" explores five different environments, and Gorewitz creates a sensual impression of each location as well as an overall feeling of search and movement. Each tape is a collage of colorful imagery, and provides a distinct mood. In Measures of Volatility, Gorewitz constructs an image of mobility that reflects on American scenes. Turnpikes, trucks, urban street scenes, and distant city skylines are combined to create a frenetic view of American life. El Corandero, which was taped in Spain, begins with frozen, brushstroke images of water, heightened by a rush of water sounds. It moves from an elusive nocturnal landscape to scenes of villages evocative of a remote past. In Excavations, Gorewitz uses a more direct narrative approach to portray the modern-day construction, and use of the Digital Image Articulator. The tape was made when the Vasulkas and Schier were eighteen months into the design of this device. Like the image processor designed by Dan Sandin (see Spiral PTL [1981]), the Digital Image Articulator (or Image) was designed specifically for the purpose of studying "real-time" video image performance. Steina's casual explanations of the machine are heard as we see the digital effects that she creates using the spherical shape of a cantaloup as an image source. She describes the varying sizes of pixels (picture elements), the possibilities of multiplying the images, the layers (or slices) of color and tone that can be derived from one image, and the advantages of storing images in the computer memory.

"Artifacts," by Woody, continues defining the potential of the image. "Artifacts" refers to those images produced specifically by Woody, and those arrived at by chance through experimentation, establishing a collaboration between man and machine. He manipulates an image of a sphere into myriad colors, pixels, and grids, and transforms the image of his own hand until it takes on a magical, surreal quality.

When the Vasulkas take their technical innovations out of the studio, they add a startling dimension to their imagery. In Search of the Castle is an essay on exploration that combines Steina's abstraction of real images and Woody's digital effects. The imagery was taped from a car window, the digitaleffectsthata she creates using the spherical shape of a cantaloup provide a fascinating essay on exploration that combines Steina's abstraction of real images and Woody's digital effects. The imagery was taped from a car window.

Steina and Woody Vasulka are pioneers of computer-generated video art. Steina, who is from Iceland, trained to be a violinist; Czechoslovakian-born Woody studied engineering and worked in film. In 1971 the Vasulkas founded The Kitchen, a small electronic-media theater in New York that has since become a major avant-garde center for video, performance, music, and dance. Several years later, in collaboration with Jeffery Schier, they developed the Digital Image Articulator, a complex computer that is central to the production of their work.

The primary aspect of the Vasulkas' work is its technical innovation. Many of their tapes serve as explanations of their pioneering techniques. While they have created many works together, they also work on their own separate productions. (Steina produces individual works under her own name.) Cantaloup is Steina's document/essay about the design, construction, and use of the Digital Image Articulator. The tape was made when the Vasulkas and Schier were eighteen months into the design of this device. Like the image processor designed by Dan Sandin (see Spiral PTL [1981]), the Digital Image Articulator (or Image) was designed specifically for the purpose of studying "real-time" video image performance. Steina's casual explanations of the machine are heard as we see the digital effects that she creates using the spherical shape of a cantaloup as an image source. She describes the varying sizes of pixels (picture elements), the possibilities of multiplying the images, the layers (or slices) of color and tone that can be derived from one image, and the advantages of storing images in the computer memory.

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Tony Oursler's work combines makeshift, rough sets with macabre humor and social satire. Using an array of unusual materials and subjects—clay, cardboard figures, eggs, hands, and feet—Oursler creates quirky environments in which the illusion of sets and our perceptions of scale are undermined by his extraordinary imagination.

The Weak Bullet is a "new wave" soap opera of the most bizarre kind. It begins with a mock fight between two siblings, who are represented by two plastic figures attached to the tips of Oursler's fingers. Tired of play guns, they find their father's gun and fire off "the weak bullet." The bullet sets off on an adventure, leaving behind it a trail of disrupted scenes of suburban life, always remaining close to each character, magnifying expression and nuance. The narrative emphasizes role playing—not only does each character, and our perceptions of scale are undermined by his extraordinary imagination.

The narrative structures. Its intent is not so much to construct a story as it is to question the essence of narrative.
Edin Vélez’s videotapes are beautifully orchestrated works that focus on aesthetic, ethnographic, and political themes. In 1975 Vélez and his wife, Ethel, videotaped the Cuna Indians who live on an island off the Panama coast. The result was TULE, an evocation of the Cuna’s traditional culture and a tape that established Vélez’s unique style of impressionist documentary.

**Meta Mayan II** was made by Vélez on a two-month trip to Guatemala. It is an evocative work that creates a delicate balance between images of the Guatemalans, their landscape, and the underlying social implications of Guatemala’s political upheaval. Vélez opens and closes the tape with a striking slow motion image of a group of women clad in the bright colors of Guatemalan textiles, walking past his camera. While most of the women gaze at the camera and then look away, one woman stares in confrontation, both curious and proud. Vélez uses her gaze to establish the strength and individuality of the people he is portraying. He juxtaposes imagery of the marketplace with audio of an American newscast reporting the leftist guerilla takeover of the Spanish embassy in Guatemala City. This insert of political turmoil underscores the exquisite imagery of Velez’s visual collage. He abstracts the action in the embassy into a blend of crashing sound and visual texture for each of the one-minute segments. In the segments corresponding to Episode One (“The Park”), a “low horizon” is created by subdividing the screen. In the segments for Episodes Three (“The Bank”), a grid structure multiplies the image until it looks like a never-ending mosaics of TV sets. In “The Supermarket,” Sanborn stacks up a row of images like a deck of cards, reflecting the dominant shape of Buddy’s keyboard.

Music Ward Fire and I Would Do It Again: The Lessons is a powerful impression of a place and a culture in political upheaval, and the political turmoil underscores the four principals characters and recapitulates the visual themes of the seven episodes of the opera. The Lessons is an extremely complex melange of innovative music, surreal imagery, and printed and spoken texts. The narrative is sung in Episode Three (“The Bank”) by Kroesen, Van Tieghem, and Ashley, the principal vocalists of the opera. Perfect Lives is conceived in television language, whereby each of the seven episodes is assigned a specific kind of framing, camera movement, and image content. The Lessons combines imagery of Midwestern farmland with space-age costumes in surreal juxtapositions. The most current video technology provides Sanborn with an array of special effects, which in turn allow him to create a unique visual texture for each of the one-minute segments. In the segments corresponding to Episode One (“The Park”), a “low horizon” is created by subdividing the screen. In the segments for Episodes Three (“The Bank”), a grid structure multiplies the image until it looks like a never-ending mosaic of TV sets. In “The Supermarket,” Sanborn stacks up a row of images like a deck of cards, reflecting the dominant shape of Buddy’s keyboard.

The printed text, which weaves in and out of this fluid imagery, provides humorous commentary on the tape’s structure. Identifying the video theme for each segment, the text questions these illusions by referring to them as a “recreation,” “a remembrance,” or “a facsimile.” Similarly, the text mocks the characters in asides as they are introduced; for instance, Isolda is described as “nearing 30 and not yet spoken for.” With Perfect Lives Ashley is creating a new style in both opera and video that is visually appealing and underscored by diverse levels of meaning.
Skip Blumberg began working in video in 1969 and was cofounder of several pioneer production groups, including Top Value Television (TVTV), Videofreex, and Lanesville TV. His candid, intimate style is a reflection of early community video projects. Blumberg chooses upbeat, energetic characters and gets to know them well. He combines fast-paced editing, close camerawork, and a direct interview technique that allows his subjects to speak for themselves. In *For a Moment You Fly: The Big Apple Circus*, he documents an unusual one-ring circus in Manhattan. Earle Murphy’s Winter Olympics is a portrait of an Olympic super-fan who is the oldest ski-jumper in America and the official ski-jump hill weatherman at the Lake Placid Games. In Eskimo-Indian Olympics, Blumberg highlights unique ancient Arctic sports in Alaska. Pick Up Your Feet is a virtuoso documentary about the inner-city sport of Double Dutch jump rope, in which a team of four uses two ropes to perform jump-rope tricks. Blumberg centers the tape on the Eighth Annual World Invitational Double Dutch Jump Rope Championship held at Lincoln Center in June 1981. The competition consists of a compulsory routine, speed jumping (with champions jumping five steps a second during a two-minute sprint), and a spectacular freestyle acrobatic routine. Blumberg interplays the excitement of the competition with scenes of the girls in practice, focusing on four teams and their coaches: the Fantastic Four, the DD Tigers, the Jumping Joints, and the Dynamos. The effect of this structure is to establish a familiarity with these young performers as we see them compete. The seriousness of their participation is obvious in the expressions on their faces as they jump and in their grueling practice sessions, always accompanied by the constant refrain of “Pick up your feet!” We’re never going to stop jumping. We’re going to be four little old ladies with our canes and still jumping rope!”

**SKIP BLUMBERG**


Dan Reeves has produced several videotapes that examine war, violence, and nuclear suicide by way of innovative collages of imagery and sound. Reeves himself was one of several survivors of a platoon attacked in Vietnam in January 1969, and the experience was the focus of his first videotapes. His examinations of social conditioning to violence and his attempts to translate these experiences into video culminated in Smothering Dreams. The tape is a powerful collage of war footage, reenacted scenes of combat, and childhood memories; it is both a personal, cathartic statement and a critical examination of how our society condones and promotes violence.

In *Smothering Dreams*, Reeves traces the mythology of violence and heroism in his upbringing that led him to Vietnam. We see him in reenacted scenes as a small child playing war games, firing a gun, and watching old war movies on television. These scenes are intercut with fragments of war footage and reenacted scenes of the actual battle, which are effectively shot to evoke the confusion of combat. Reeves juxtaposes the media image of soldiers with the reality of this violence, explaining in an embittered voice: “I was a winner in any gunfight... silent, strong, loyal, and shedding not a tear... We played it by the book, repeating hand-me-down war stories told by blind men.” Reeves successfully combines realistic and surreal elements, such as an image of a child walking through a battlefield of dead soldiers. He uses special effects to extend the psychological implications of both memory and violence. *Smothering Dreams*, as autobiographical essay, arrives at a personal truth that transcends pure fiction or documentary. It is a compelling statement on both social violence and the Vietnam war.
Dan Sandin and Tom DeFanti have been central to the development of image processing and computer graphics in Chicago ever since the early 1970s. Sandin, who came to video and computers from nuclear physics in 1972, built his own image processor (for which he distributes free plans). DeFanti designed a computer graphics language, the Graphics Symbiosis System (GRASS), which he combined with Sandin's image processor. He then created ZGRASS (see Montana [1982]), a computer language designed to allow artists direct access to complex computer graphics. Both Sandin and DeFanti teach at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and designed these systems as teaching tools. Sandin's image processor was designed to teach students about color; ZGRASS was designed to teach computer graphics to engineers and artists. Their collaboration emphasizes an alliance between art and technology, and the importance of direct access to complex technology for artists and of "real-time" systems (which encourage spontaneity by an instantaneous feedback of imagery and information). Their goal is to design systems that artists can duplicate and own themselves.

Spiral PTL is the fifth of a series of "real-time" performances in which video synthesis was produced "on the spot" by Sandin and DeFanti along with other artists. (The "PTL" of the title refers to "probably the last" of the series.) The spiral image is one they have worked on for many years, structuring some performances with music added after the imagery was made and others in which the sound dictated the images. Spiral PTL is tightly structured with Mimi Shavit's audio, and the strong collaboration between audio and video.


Peter D'Agostino's videotapes are examinations of symbols, signs, and the interplay of words and images. His series "coming and going" on the subway systems in Paris, San Francisco, and Washington D.C. explored not only the varying modes of transportation but also the signals and information systems that permit these environments to function.

In 1980 D'Agostino made LA (Century City) and Dayton (MALLing), about the architectural and consumer environments of malls. His studies of the information systems that permeate daily life led him to make TeleTapes, a critical, exploratory collage about the way in which we interpret and therefore understand television and everyday life.

D'Agostino constructs TeleTapes in three sections: TeleTricks, TeleGames, and TelePuzzles. He combines imagery that evokes the passage of time, numerous games, interviews with children, audio about television, and printed text to structure his argument. In fact, he shows us television while presenting very little of television's imagery. We hear it discussed, but the subject remains, at times, effectively invisible. In TeleTricks, D'Agostino examines the advertising that saturates broadcast television, establishing that the average consumer receives 1,200 advertising impressions a day. In TeleGames, he equates television news with a checkers game, an analogy that he derives not only from the entertainment aspect of TV news, but also from Richard Nixon's famous "Checkers" speech. D'Agostino examines the recent demise of many newspapers, the "seeing is believing" aspect of visual journalism, and the brevity of news reports. In TelePuzzles, he investigates the world of TV movies. As he presents a glimpse of a movie trailer about "paranoia and violence," he asks: "What is this doing to people?"

D'Agostino's use of visual metaphor and fast-paced collage makes TeleTapes an intriguing critique that, in the end, centers on broadcast television's inaccurate representation of reality. One way in which he makes his point is to present the ill effects of television on children: a baby and its pacifier are equated with the television viewer, and a little girl explains that commercials "tell you to buy things that we don't buy." As for adults, D'Agostino ends TeleTapes on a questioning note about where new technology is taking us: "Telecommunications, is it a right or a privilege? It is a privilege, then the marketplace prevails and those who can pay for access to the privilege buy what they can get. If telecommunications were considered a right, the technology would be forced to put itself to the service of the people."
Bob Snyder is a musician who has collaborated with Dan Sandin, Tom DeFanti, and Phil Morton (see Spiral PTL [1981]) on "real-time" performances of video/audio synthesis. *Trim Subdivisions* is a study of space employing special effects, delicate timing, and a formal approach. Snyder takes the imagery of a suburban housing tract as his vehicle. He uses the video "wipe" (in which one image is passed over another) as a symbol for the passage of time and as a correlation to the conjoiners of architectural units in prefabricated housing. By dividing, subdividing, and layering imagery of these houses, Snyder explores grid structures and subtly abstracts the buildings. The camera glides with precision over the grid triangle of a suburban ranch house roof and foreshortens its ornate facade into a patterned surface. It transforms the horizontal lines of aluminum siding into a series of geometric designs, creates new corners as it "wipes" one building over another, and exchanges windows between houses. Snyder establishes visual equivalents between the video effects of layered planes and "wipes" and the layered architecture of suburban housing. He investigates the illusion of three-dimensionality by using imagery that emphasizes a line of perspective, then flattening it to a two-dimensional plane. Snyder constructs deliberate rhythms in *Trim Subdivisions*. Structured as variations on a theme, the imagery moves silently and precisely. These visuals, created out of seemingly banal material, become subtly orchestrated color planes and patterns. Beyond this formal level, the tape comments on the fragile quality of this architecture. By manipulating and rearranging these buildings, Snyder emphasizes their ephemeral and nondescript character.

Jane Veeder is cofounder and cocoordinator, with Phil Morton, of the Electronic Visualization Center in Chicago. Her work has progressed from image processing to computer graphics. *Montana* is a state-of-the-art computer graphics achievement using ZGRASS, the computer graphics language designed by Tom DeFanti in 1977 (see Spiral PTL [1981]). The work touches on issues of nature and technology. Veeder employs the aesthetics of video games and the informational strategies of the spoken word, representational symbols, and printed text. The tape is constructed as a series of tableaux, of birds, buffalo, mountains, globes, wheat, and video cameras, ultimately producing the slogan "Good Luck Electronically Visualizing Your Future." Veeder makes mountains move across the screen in geological processes, manipulates the demarcations of a compass to establish a feeling of vast space, dissolves a checkerboard with a snowy white mountain range into an expansive night sky, and finally lines up animals, mountains, and urban buildings to offer a visual range of Montana life. The soundtrack is a collage of bird chirps, a recitation of bird names, and the familiar electronic buzzes, grunts, and beeps of videogame arcades. Veeder’s use of computer graphics and the sentiments expressed in her closing message make this tape a clever parody of video-game software. She explains her approach: "I travel with a relief map, geological highway maps, bird books, etc. I love the physical world out there and its attendant information aura. I use computer graphics to get at the views and processes not accessible to my video camera, but moreover as a medium in which to interact with all of the elements... images, geo-processes, infoassociations, and future fantasies."
Today, twenty years after video was first introduced as an art form, the history of the medium is beginning to be assembled. This chronology is a selection of events and works that have been influential in the development of video. The compilation of a comprehensive overview of the medium is a major aspect of this Museum's video program; we welcome additional information from readers.

### SELECTED U.S. CHRONOLOGY

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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Television/Productions</td>
<td>Boston, Jazz Images, WGBH-TV</td>
<td>Producer, Fred Barzyk. Five short visualizations of music for broadcast: one of the first attempts at experimental television.</td>
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<td>1969</td>
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<td>New York, Black Gate Theater</td>
<td>For experimental events, and Gate Theater, for experimental independent cinema. Founded by Aldo Tambellini.</td>
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### Organizations

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Television/Productions

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Television/Productions

Boston. Nam June Paik and Shula Abo develop Parkway/Ashefere while in residence at WGBH-TV.

Subject to Change. SON Productions. Seawright, Thomas Tadlock, Aldo Tambellini. Independent video artists aired on television.

Bart Friedman, Davidson Gigliotti, Chuck Scherr. Videotapes and installations from U.S., Europe, Japan, and Asia.

Robert Rauschenberg, Steve Reich, Eric Siegel. These artists interested in alternative uses of video, explore video programs beyond the medium of television.

Nauman, Claes Oldenburg, Nam June Paik, with Robert Rauschenberg, Steve Reich, Eric Siegel. Group of artists interested in alternative uses of video, explore video programs beyond the medium of television.

Women's Interart Center. Organization to create interdisciplinary collaboration involving writers, artists, performance artists, video artists.

video projects by over fifteen artists. Includes special exhibitions.


San Francisco. Stephen Beck builds Direct Video Synthesizer, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.


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Publications

Televisions/Productions

Television/Productions

San Francisco, Optic nerve. Documentary production collective producing political and social documentaries. Original members include Lydia Alister and Richard Tsuchiya.

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Organizations

Boston, Boston Film/Video Foundation. Offers screenings, educational programs, and resources. Founded by Jan Rubin and Susan Wolfe. Directors include Michele Schofield and Tom Wolfe.

Chicago, Video Data Bank. School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Distribution and resource center for videotapes on artists and video art. Director, Lynn Blumenthal.


New York, Museum of Modern Art. Media center with screenings, workshops, and equipment access. Begins installation of the Independent Film and Video Festival (now the Whitney International Film and Video Festival), an annual event. An international showcase of work, including performances. Directs include Gayla Jamison, Anna Marie Piersimoni, and Karen Donnelley.

Museum of Southwestern Art Media Project (SWAMP). Original project associated with the Rice Media Center at Rice University. Media center for artists working on video programming, production, and post-production technical assistance. Conducts Southwestern Film/Video Biennial, a two-week-long event, and the permanent Art Museum, Houston, University of Houston.


Video/Productions


include video. Media organization for distribution of independent work includes workshops and state-wide directory of media service and acts as a liaison to cable. Director, Karen Wickery.

Television/Productions

Los Angeles, The Artist and Television: A Dialogue Between the Fine Arts and the Mass Media. Sponsored by ASCN Cable Network, Los Angeles, and University of Iowa, Iowa City, interactive satellite telecasting of artists, critics, curators, and educators in Los Angeles, Iowa City, and New York.

New York, Sternstern Video Survey. Organized by Skip Blumberg, Wendy Clarke, Dee Hallock, Karen Ramacci. Sandy Toian, Cynthia Rogoff, David Shulman, Alan Steinheimer. Series on public access television that examines communications via the print media, and serves as model for low-budget, public-access programming.

1982 Exhibitions/Events


Organizations

Boston. Institute of Contemporary Art begins video programming. Director, David Ross.

Portland, Ore. The Media Project. Expands to include video. Media organization for distribution of independent work includes workshops and state-wide directory of media service and acts as a liaison to cable. Director, Karen Wickery.

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Portland, Ore. The Media Project. Expands to include video. Media organization for distribution of independent work includes workshops and state-wide directory of media service and acts as a liaison to cable. Director, Karen Wickery.

Television/Productions

Los Angeles, The Artist and Television: A Dialogue Between the Fine Arts and the Mass Media. Sponsored by ASCN Cable Network, Los Angeles, and University of Iowa, Iowa City, interactive satellite telecasting of artists, critics, curators, and educators in Los Angeles, Iowa City, and New York.

New York, Sternstern Video Survey. Organized by Skip Blumberg, Wendy Clarke, Dee Hallock, Karen Ramacci. Sandy Toian, Cynthia Rogoff, David Shulman, Alan Steinheimer. Series on public access television that examines communications via the print media, and serves as model for low-budget, public-access programming.

1982 Exhibitions/Events


Organizations

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