



Woody Vasulka, *Didactic Video* (1975). Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

## *Didactic Video (1975)*

**Woody Vasulka**

These time segments belong to a larger work titled *Time/Energy Structure of the Electronic Image*, dating from 1974 through 1975. The images are produced on a scan processor (Rutt/Etra Model-4, Rutt Electrophysics Inc.), a tool providing various means of reprogramming electromagnetic conditions around its display (cathode ray tube or CT).

Compared to my previous work on videotape, the work with the scan processor indicates a whole different trend in my understanding of the electronic image. The rigidity and total confinement of time sequences have imprinted a didactic style on the product. Improvisational modes have become less important than an exact mental script and a strong notion of the frame structure of the electronic image. Emphasis has shifted towards a recognition of a time/energy object and its programmable building element—the waveform.

The majority of images, still or moving, are based on their capture from the visible world with the help of the camera obscura principle through a process involving the interaction of light with a photo-emulsion surface. The conversion of light into a code occurs simultaneously at each part of the emulsion in exposure time. Contrary to this, the conversion of light into energy potentials during electronic image forming is achieved sequentially, giving particular significance to the construction of the referential time frame. (The single value on the pick-up tube has to possess exact time coordinates in order to be reproduced in the identical position on the display.) The organization of energy components even in a television camera is of course provided by the camera obscura present in front of the image pick-up tube.

The possibility of disregarding this organizational principle and realizing instead a total absence of such a process in certain modes of electronic image forming has interested me the most. The result has been an inevitable descent into the analysis of smaller and smaller time-sequences, a process necessary to understanding wave formations, their components, and the process of their synthesis and programmability. To me this indicates a point of departure from light/space image models closely linked to and dependent upon visual-perceptual references and maintained through media based on the camera obscura principle. It now becomes possible to move precisely and directly between a conceptual model and a constructed image. This opens a new self-generating cycle of design within consciousness and the eventual construction of new realities without the necessity of external referents as a means of control.