

Video Free America presents

**February 27
Sunday** **WOODY & STEINA
VASULKA**

The Vasulkas are pioneers of abstract video art. They will present in person, two Bay Area premieres, Woody Vasulka's **The Commission** and Steina Vasulka's **Southwest Landscapes**. They were founders of The Kitchen in New York, and have taught at Media Study in Buffalo, New York. Presently living in New Mexico, their work has been widely exhibited on public television and in museums.

**March 11
Friday** **STEVE MICHAELSON
Presents
ONE PASS VIDEO
ARTISTS**

One Pass Film & Tape is a commercial production facility in San Francisco. It is unique from other production houses in many respects, but most interestingly, it employs several video artists on its staff. This program will showcase staff as well as Glen Scattlebury, Steve Michaelson, Norm Levy, Max Almy, and present a context to view both their video art and commercial production works.

**May 15
Sunday**

**SPENCER NAKASAKO
JOANNE KELLY
SKIP SWEENEY**

Spencer Nakasako will present in person **Monterey's Boat People**, which focuses on current racial, economic and environmental controversies surrounding the Vietnamese refugees in Monterey. The program recently won an award at the U.S. Film and Video Festival.

Joanne Kelly and Skip Sweeney of Video Free America will premiere their long awaited documentary **Grenada** which profiles the revolution which took place on this tiny Caribbean island. The program examines the impact of the revolution on Grenadian's daily lives.

SKIP BLUMBERG

**March 13
Sunday**

Skip Blumberg will present in person the Bay Area premiere of two new tapes **Pick Up Your Feet: The Double Dutch Show** about all the big tricks, music, laughs and tears of championship jump rope. The program has been nominated for three New York Emmy awards. The second Bay Area premiere **The World Eskimo-Indian Olympics** shot in Fairbanks, Alaska features exciting and unique ancient sports such as blanket toss, knuckle hop, whale blubber eating and seal skinning contests. Eskimo Olympics will be aired on PBS nationally the summer of 1983. Blumberg has recently been honored with fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation as well as the American Film Institute.

**April 10
Sunday**

THE SISTERS

Pamela Granbery and Joya Granbery Hoyt will present their video performance piece **Refractions**. It presents glimpses into the childhood of the two sisters via a tableaux of refracted archtypal and ancestral images. Video by Roger Christiansen with music by Otis Read.

**Video Free America
442 Shotwell Street
San Francisco**

**Tickets: \$2 single program
\$10 series pass**

**Reservations:
648-9040**

8 PM

**March 27
Sunday**

**JODY GILLERMAN
JIM WHITEAKER
JAMES GILLERMAN**

Gillerman, Whiteaker and Gillerman of Viper Optics will present in person their video music tapes including **What Are You Scared Of?** as well as new works **Clone Baby** and **Silverfield Song**. This event is co-sponsored by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art which is sponsoring "Video Music" screenings from March through May.

**April 24
Sunday**

**DALE HOYT
MARSHALL WEBER
ANDREW HUESTIS
JEFF DARDOZZI**

This group program displays a fiercely individualist vision while sharing an underlying desperation and recognition of a world in an advanced state of entropy. The overall countenance of the work is undeniably antisocial, if not flirting with nihilism. It is also steeped in personal iconography and frankness. The artists will present their tapes in person.

VFA screening partially funded by the NEA

Video Free America
442 Shotwell Street
San Francisco 94110

Bulk Mail

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San Francisco, CA

Dear Mr Vasulka -

I am sorry for leaving your screening.
Inasmuch as it appears rude, I believe you can understand
that some of us have limited levels of endurance -
I do not feel incapable of grasping innovative concepts,
but I question the necessity of using effects on-the-
voices so interminably. It doesn't seem to add anything
to the points you are making, and serves to weary the
viewer... keep it up, though, and best wishes.

Flora Fournier, SF. Music Calendars.

Joanne Kelly Adds TV to Dancing VIDEO FREE AMERICA: Spearheading San Francisco Video

New York Times 1976



Skip Sweeney has been working for several years on an hour-long experimental program that needs further editing, called "My Father Sold Studebakers," which is tentatively scheduled to be shown on the PBS series "VTR - Video and Television Review" this fall. "Illuminatin' Skip Sweeney" was shown in the 1975 VTR series hosted by Russell Connor.

The talents of Skip Sweeney and Joanne Kelly, still mostly underground, should be seen by more people in and outside San Francisco. Perhaps their combined works will help San Francisco regain a leadership in the arts, since Mayor George Mascone claims that the proposed San Francisco Performing Arts Center "is not just for the elite."

If memory serves, tiny television monitors began to make a timid appearance in dances during the early 60's, as an adjunct to movement activity. They were nothing fancy, merely showing black and white pictures on tiny 12 inch screens.

Their very presence, though, had a shock value that could also be noted for the Advent color-projection set, whose picture has to be measured in feet rather than inches, and that occupied the dance program with Joanne Kelly on Friday evening at 541 Broadway. It was one spectacular measure of the technology-rich 70's

San Francisco Chronicle
★ Mon., April 17, 1972

Video Free America

Novel Medium Opens in S.F.

By Paine Knickerbocker

San Francisco's most recent novelty, which may well be a significant pioneering demonstration of a new documentary and/or entertainment medium, opened over the weekend at the studio of Video Free America, 442 Shotwell street.

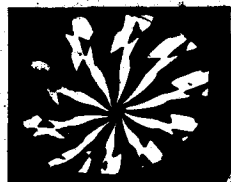
Two separate programs were shown: "All the Video You Can Eat" at 8 on Friday night and "Carol & Ferd," which will continue to be previewed at 8 p.m. on Saturdays until its theatrical

release later this spring, when it is expected to open here and in New York.

The Friday program, which will also be repeated weekly, is a collection of varied shorts: abstract, erotic, experimental and radical, illustrating the many expressions of video. Eleven monitors on one side of the room carry the images. These are controlled by a selective operator so that the monitors may carry different scenes and patterns, although at times they are identical. It is dazzling.

shows during the last two years, I consider this selection representative and informative.

In quality and achievement, I'd place the videotape artists who work in this area of "intrinsic videotape imagery" at the stage



ARTWEEK



Two programs of videotape will be presented at the Whitney Museum between December 3 and 16. I saw the press previews of the two programs, and I recommend them both. Not that they are particularly outstanding; rather, they they are very well selected, as a fair introduction to what's going on in the "abstract" use of videotape. I say abstract, meaning that these two programs avoid the straight recording of reality and concentrate on video artists who are exploring the "ability of videotape to create and generate its own intrinsic imagery." From what I have seen of video

where the avant-garde film was around approximately 1943-1950. At its best, as represented in the work of Vasulka, Siegel, Feliciano, Sweeney, C. Beck, Tambellini.

I like very much Steina Vasulka's piece "Let It Be," a close-up of the mouth of the singer singing the title song. No distortions, plain and simple, very fine. After one viewing, all 20 pieces of these two programs begin to merge into one, but Skip Sweeney's piece "Skip Sweeney Feedback," remains in my memory clearly as a unique mandalic piece, beautiful in its rough qualities of color and image. Aesthetically, this piece is my favorite of this show.

VIDEO BY VIDEO FREE AMERICA

SKIP SWEENEY

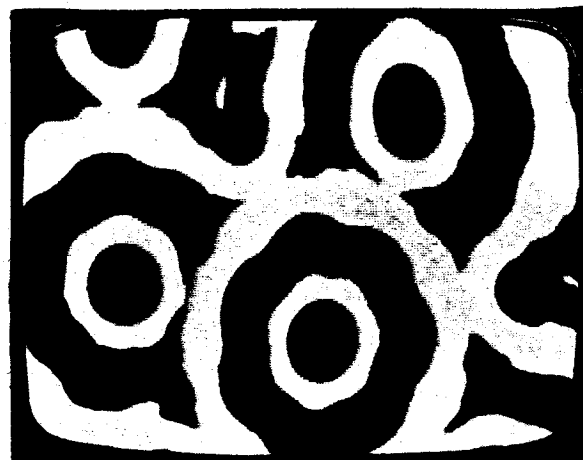
San Francisco

Currently ongoing at Video Free America is a series of six Sunday night programs; in each session a different video artist shows examples of his work, then engages the audience in related discussion. the work of Skip Sweeney, which was shown the following Sunday, was much closer to traditional film. He did offer one tape of color feedback which was purely abstract and one half-documentary/half-synthesized piece intermingling scenes of the making of a tape with synthesized elements. The main event was a long documentary dealing with recollections of his family life, particularly in an attempt to reconstruct the reality of the relationship with his father after his father's funeral. There were interviews with other members of the family as well as with people who knew and worked with Ray Sweeney (who owned a Studebaker dealership).

Video is an ideal medium for documentary work because of its ease of handling and the fact that the recorder can be turned on for a long period and left to gather accurately whatever is happening in front of it. Sweeney uses it well and revealingly. The only difficulty that I perceived was the intensely personal nature of the tape getting in the way of its audience effectiveness. The nuances of his family's intrapersonal relationships and the opinions people expressed of him, his father, etc., are only interesting up to a

point, unless of course you are the artist himself. I have not seen other documentary work by Sweeney, but perhaps those tapes which do not hit so close to home are more objectively edited.

Actually, however, Sweeney's tape brought up an issue which is important to video artists — that is, that the medium is seductively easy to use to record anything, and as a result, an additional amount of self-control is necessary, perhaps even more self-criticism than you would need in film, because in film the precedents are set and the sheer physicality and expense of dealing with film tends to promote a natural impulse to be careful



SKIP SWEENEY: Stills from Illumination Sweeney, video, shown recently at Video Free America, San Francisco.

16—Friday, July 23, 1971 Berkeley DAILY GAZETTE

Daily TV Logs

By FRED GARDNER

Television freaks, the hour of your epiphany has come.

Those of you who have heard the call and stood entranced in the appliance sections of department stores as dozens of television sets beamed the same picture can now openly revel in the glory of multi-set viewing at the University of California Art Museum's Tapes of All Tribes series, for the next month.

About 25 sets, (how can one count them in the ecstasy of the moment?) line the walls of the Poster Gallery, three or four in color, beaming lines of programming that may put the sets into a per-

manent state of electronic shock. These instruments will probably never again be fit for the staid fare of mere commercial viewing.

Presented by Video Free America in conjunction with the Pacific Film Archive, the series offers video tape features from the electronic underground.

WHAT DOES it all mean?

Here we are in the age of affluence as our grown up children play with \$1000 toys, capturing their own images in acts, naughty, defiling, and self assertive.

Is Narcissis secretly sitting in the cathode tube, uproariously laughing?

Newsweek

THEATER

1972

Working from a script by Ginsberg, Robert Kalfin, the Chelsea's artistic director, has done a brilliant and important job of staging. With Arthur Ginsberg (no relative of Allen) and the group called Video Free America, Kalfin has integrated videotape and live performance with a power and subtlety that makes it by far the most successful "mixed media" theater I have ever seen. Projecting the videotape on a large screen that serves as the back wall for the stage, Kalfin creates consonances and dissonances between the live actors and the images that become the dramatic and poetic tissue of the play. The interplay between real flesh and image-flesh acts as the memory-space of Allen Ginsberg.

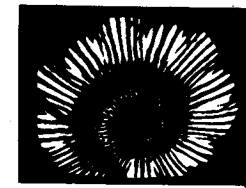
The Salt Lake Tribune

1973

"I suppose you would describe us as videotape makers who want to change the present concept of television," said Skip, a young, bearded gentleman. "Broadcasting does not use the medium correctly. Our very optimistic hope is to make television honest, to present good artistic programs. Of course our biggest problem is funding. The cable stations would gladly take our programs and use them but they wouldn't give us a dime."

Skip explains that many hospitals, schools and large businesses use the form extensively.

"I think videotape is the coming thing. I would venture to say that within five years many people will have their own equipment to use as frequently and with as much freedom as they now use cameras. There is a presence about videotape that excites people. You are able to reflect back on a situation immediately and feel as if you are really there."



SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 1972

THE NEW YORK TIMES,

Television:

VFA's interest in video focuses on the craft of the medium. The group explains that it is exploring the medium as, primarily, a method of communication, a method that has yet to be reduced to the scale of the spectator. For the uninitiated, some of the operating terms—feedback, pure feedback, bio-feedback—may present a psychic barrier, but the group is adept in providing clear demonstrations of its theories.

VFA has worked on everything from the recording of a July 4th rock concert at Berkeley to special material for a group of disk jockeys. Sweeney's interest in abstract graphics, often directly keyed to the sound of a Moog synthesizer, has produced several short films, some of which have been shown at the Whitney Museum in New York.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1977

Dance: Joanne Kelley With Tape

By ANNA KISSELGOFF

Joanne Kelly, who lives and works in San Francisco, presented a dance concert that used videotape projects and live performance Friday night at the Trisha Brown loft, 541 Broadway.

On first acquaintance then, it would seem proper to describe Miss Kelly as both a dancer-choreographer and a film maker. The point of her performance, however, was that there was no separation between these activities, and in this respect she was quite successful.

"Tahmar," as she called her concert, turned out to be an experiment in the use of abstract form to create an autobiographical statement. Contrary to what one might expect, most of the abstraction was present in the very human image of Miss Kelly performing disassociated gestures in front of a screen. The "realism" was contained in the videotaped landscapes projected on the screen.

More than once, it seemed that the shapes of Miss Kelly's live gestures were abstractions of the geometric forms inherent in the landscapes. Thus a whirling surf was related to Miss Kelly rotating her head; a serene bay

to a leg in developpé, a rock to a curved back, a shoreline-beach to ballet's deep fourth position.

These movements were performed and repeated in different areas of the room until a new series of images was related to new movements. At the time the filmed images grew more abstract—the headlights of cars in a bluish road became spots of color. Miss Kelly began to turn in a spin.

Meanwhile a monologue on tape, occasionally echoed by Miss Kelly, spoke of the heroine, Tahmar, who came to the seaside "to figure things out" about her life. The key words "car accident" and other phrases, some written in an endless sentence on video, made clear that the concert contained a traumatic recollection. "Tahmar" was a story pieced together in mixed-media fragments. When the heroine on tape finally walked through an archway that she had previously only approached, it was clear she was going to make it.

Was Tahmar related to Thamar, the medieval Queen of Georgia who lived by the seaside and threw her lovers off a cliff?

VIDEO FREE AMERICA

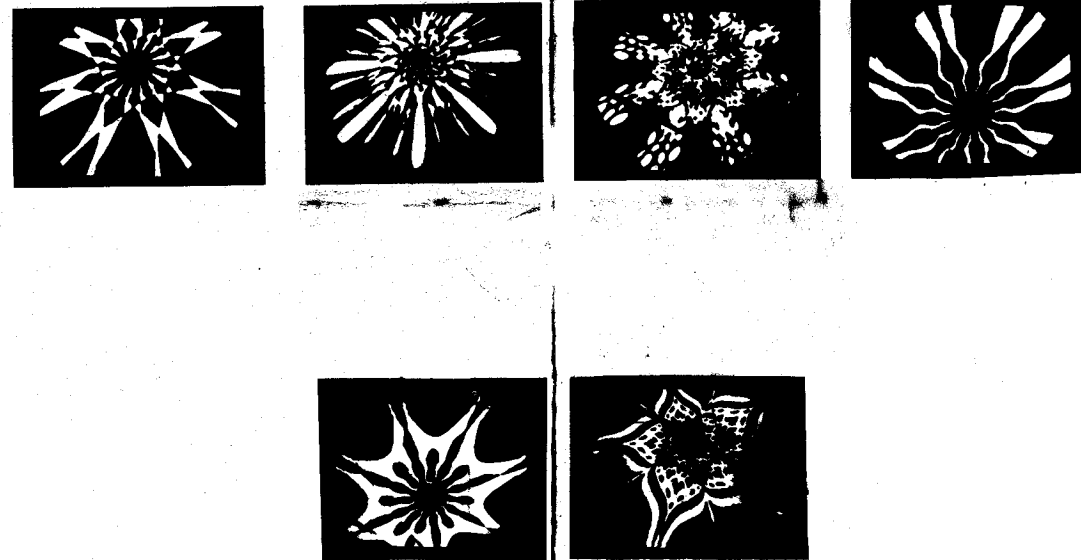
442 Shotwell St San Francisco 94110

Video Showings & Performance

VFA sponsors videotape showings every Sunday night with the participating videomaker present to discuss his/her work with the audience. The showings are the only weekly offering of video in San Francisco. Because of this, the showings have become a meeting ground for working artist/producers and their public to meet and discuss developments and the state of the art. Work by Bill and Louise Etra, Stephen Beck, Doris Chase, Mobile Image, Charlemagne Palestine, Max Almy, Paul Kos and others has been shown. Works are screened on a seven foot Advent video projector or a multi-monitor set up, as the individual artist/producer chooses. The showing space is also large enough to accommodate video performance works as well as more traditional single channel presentations. In addition to the weekly showings, VFA sponsors a number of special event performances on Friday and Saturday nights which vary from dance to theater to music. Often these special events also integrate video as part of the performance.

Independent Production

VFA is available to produce independent productions, both closed circuit and broadcast oriented projects. Some ex-



Broadcast TV

In 1974, VFA became interested in reaching a broader audience with its work, and naturally turned to broadcast television. In 1975, WNET-TV aired "Illuminatin' Sweeney", a half hour video art program by Skip Sweeney, a co-founder of VFA. In 1976, VFA produced a documentary "Town Meetings" funded by the California Council on the Humanities, Public Policy, and was aired

Video Workshops

Several times a year, VFA teaches "Techniques & Technology", a "hands on equipment" six week workshop. Students learn shooting, mixing, editing for both black & white and color productions. Students also view tapes by video-artist/producers as well as read the existing literature on the state of the art. The emphasis is on "hands on equipment" though, with student video productions being aired on cable TV at the conclusion of the workshop.

Special Summer Dance-Video Workshop:

Since the summer of 1973, when Utah Repertory Dance Theatre invited VFA to teach video and dance for six weeks at the University of Utah, VFA has been offering a summer dance & video workshop. From 1974, to the present, the workshop has been held in San Francisco. This workshop offers a unique opportunity for artists from both media to work together creating synthesized dance works, documentary dance tapes, and performance works choreographed to include video projections. The summer 78 workshop will be taught by VFA staff, Joanne Kelly, as well as prominent guest teachers.

Work-Exchange

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Independent Production

VFA is available to produce independent productions, both closed circuit and broadcast oriented projects. Some examples of productions we have done in the past are from the simple (a black and white portapak document of therapy sessions), to the complex (TK-76 color ENG cameras on location, providing sound, lighting, etc. for production and editing, video graphics, etc. for post production).

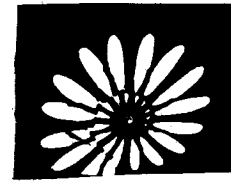
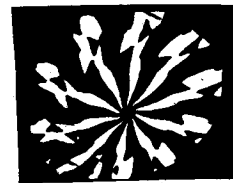
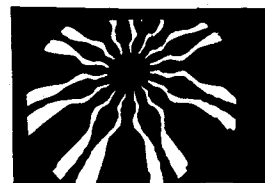
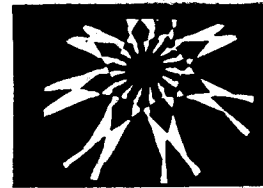
VFA has experience taping events from design conferences to theater dress rehearsals to public service announcements for television. Independent production fees, timetables, etc. are determined by consultation with VFA staff.

Tape Archive

The archive includes tapes on many different formats ($\frac{1}{2}$ ", $\frac{3}{4}$ ", 1") and displays many different styles of videowork. Included are health care tapes on parenting, VD, etc.; humor tapes by Willie Boy Walker; a tape of the theater work "History of China" by Bob Carroll; a documentary of the artist Sol Lewitt; videoart works by the Vasulkas; as well as some 200 odd other videotape programs. The archive also includes periodicals and books. Archive videotapes are screened by arrangement.

Broadcast TV

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Partially Funded By The NEA

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Work-Exchange

VFA has several work-exchange positions. These jobs are office work, ticket taking for video showings, research for productions, etc. In exchange for hours logged at the above jobs, VFA offers "time" as negotiated with each individual, on VFA video equipment for work-exchange productions.

Equipment Rental

Video Free America rents:
black & white portapaks
 $\frac{1}{2}$ " editing
 $\frac{3}{4}$ " cassette editing
studio cameras
SEG (special effects generator)
Advent video projector (7 ft.)
Hearn colorizer/multi-level keyer
black & white/color monitors
microphones (ECM-50, shotgun, etc.)
lights, tripods, other miscellaneous

Equipment rents on a sliding scale for artists and non-profit groups. For ENG color camera production, refer to "Independent Production".

