

# VIDEO

## INSTALLATION 1983

### NOVEMBER 5-DECEMBER 2

**I**NDOOR INSTALLATIONS have been prevalent on the New York art scene since at least the early 1970s. A small number of artists—Vito Acconci and Alice Aycock are examples—have made and/or solidified their reputations with such works, but for the most part installation artists have received little critical or curatorial support. There are, of course, reasons for this neglect. Installation works are not art objects in the traditional sense, so they cannot be defined, classified, or handled in the same way as paintings and sculptures. They are costly to produce, and difficult to describe, since they defy attempts to analyze them with the critical vocabulary generally used to describe and assess simpler two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects. Indoor installations are, in short, mutations—and like all such aberrations, they only fit uneasily into the established structures of the Art Machine.

Installation artists, always on the fringe, have been especially hard hit by the cultural backlash of Reaganomics. But the fact that these people have not received the acclaim of a Cindy Sherman or the economic rewards of a Julian Schnabel should not obscure an obvious truth: that some of the most intelligent, complex, and vanguard work in recent years has been done in this format. The artists involved with installations are generally creative individualists whose sensibilities are rooted in the upheavals that swept the artworld in the late 1960s and early 1970s; many of them began their careers in the alternative spaces, like 112 Greene Street, that sprang up during those years to challenge the rigid strictures of the art establishment. These artists were convinced that traditional media—painting, sculpture, and even photography—could not express their vision of contemporary life. And in searching for a new, more relevant mode of communication, they invented (and now continually reinvent) a new aesthetic language.

In the final analysis, the installation format is a language—a complex, multi-media language which has its own laws and limitations. Like any language, this one can be—and has been—used for a multitude of purposes, and to express a multitude of points of view. There are no formal or stylistic consistencies relating all installation works produced during the two decades. No “ism” can ever be coined that will characterize all of these artists, who are grouped together in exhibitions like *Video Installation 1983* simply because they all express themselves by arranging tangible and/or intangible elements in complex configurations that define a spatial environment.

More than anything else, installation works are distinguished by their dependence on and manipulation of space. Traditional paintings, sculptures, and photographs are self-contained: the viewer responds to them as she or he experiences a set of formal relationships within the confines of the frame or object. The initial experience of installations, on the contrary, is a spatial one: the overall environment sets the tone for the work, and operates as the arena within which the internal elements—and the relationships between them—derive their meaning. Margia Kramer's exercycle, for instance, is simply a recreational gadget when seen in a gym or in someone's basement; once placed within the context of *Progress (Memory)*, however, this gadget is transformed into a functional part of an art work critical of contemporary culture. By isolating a space and declaring it an “art context” governed by its own internal laws, installation artists create an alternative reality that dictates the viewer's perception of the elements within it.

Many indoor installations are site specific: that is, they are specifically designed for the architectural space within which they are to be shown. This marriage of art and architecture is, of course, not new in the history of art; medieval cathedrals and De Stijl residential projects are only two examples of such a union. But the forms contemporary installation works have taken relate them directly to the art of the mid-1960s. It is, in fact, hard to conceive of these works existing before conceptual artists like Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, and Lawrence Weiner, acting on Marcel Duchamp's impetus, “liberated” art from its dependence on prescribed forms. Though installation artists don't dematerialize their expression, they have retained the conceptual artists' interest in incorporating “real” space and time into their work. And they feel free to mix and match their media, as long as the elements they bring together are in the service of a unifying theme or idea.

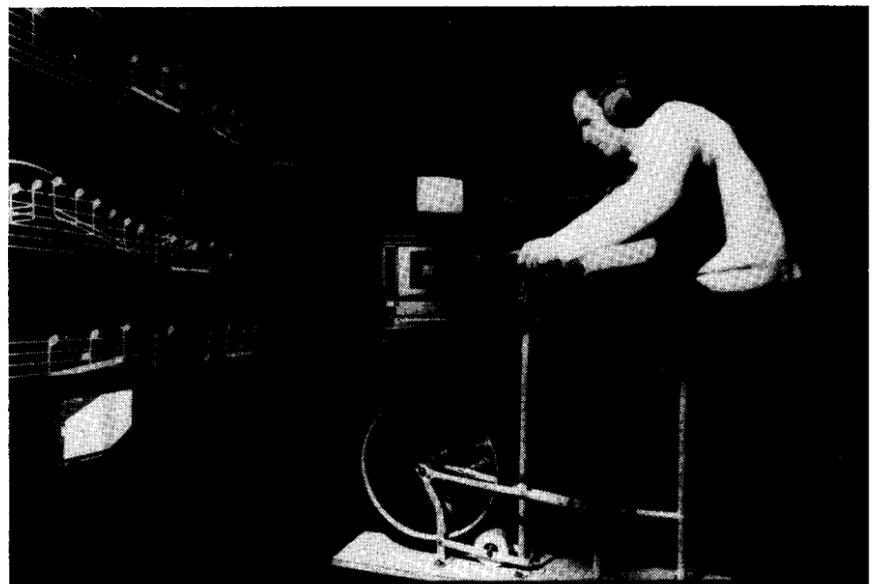
All of the artists in this catalogue have chosen to express ideas by mixing and matching video with other media. The works included here represent a particular type of installation art—a type which has, thanks to the pioneering efforts of alternative spaces like The Kitchen and the untiring support of people like John Hanhardt, curator of Film and Video at the Whitney Museum of American Art, received more institutional support than most. Video installation works can be traced back to the early 1960s, when Nam June Paik chose to incorporate a television set into his art works. (His 1963 *Zen for TV*, a piece consisting of a broken television set turned on its side and displaying a radiant white line in the center of a dark screen, is still one of the most beautiful video installations ever created.) But it wasn't until the mid-'60s, when Sony's portapak became widely available on the American market, that video became an accessible tool for artists.

From the beginning, video art had ties to other branches of the visual arts. Early practitioners—like Paik, Bruce Nauman, Nancy Holt, Richard Serra, and Vito Acconci—often came to the medium from other fields, and conceptual and performance artists had already established documentation as an important part of an art work. Given these connections, and given the fact that video itself (with its merger of visual imagery and audio soundtracks) is what Hanhardt calls an intertextual medium, it is perfectly understandable that a particularly rich tradition of video installations has developed over the past two decades.

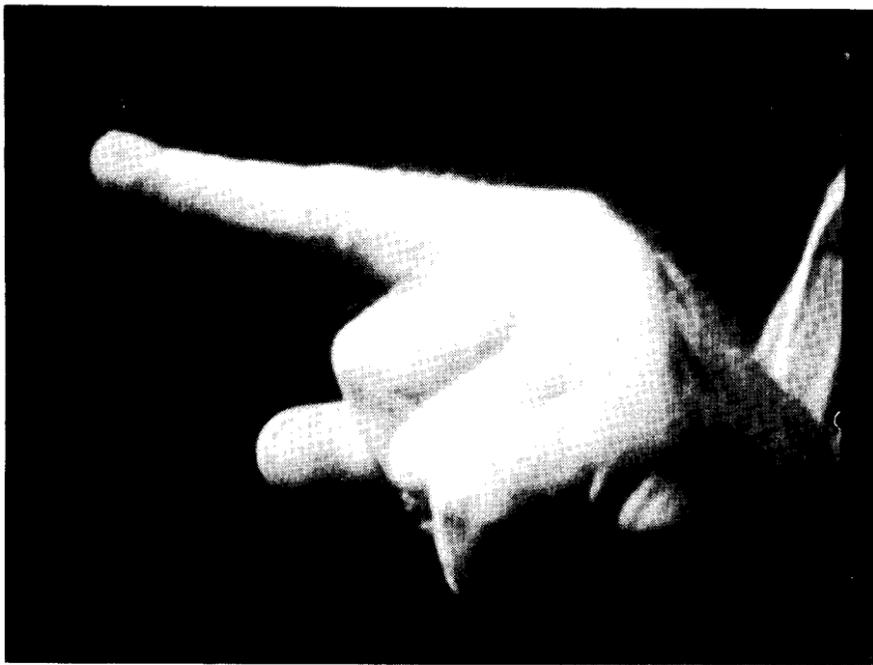
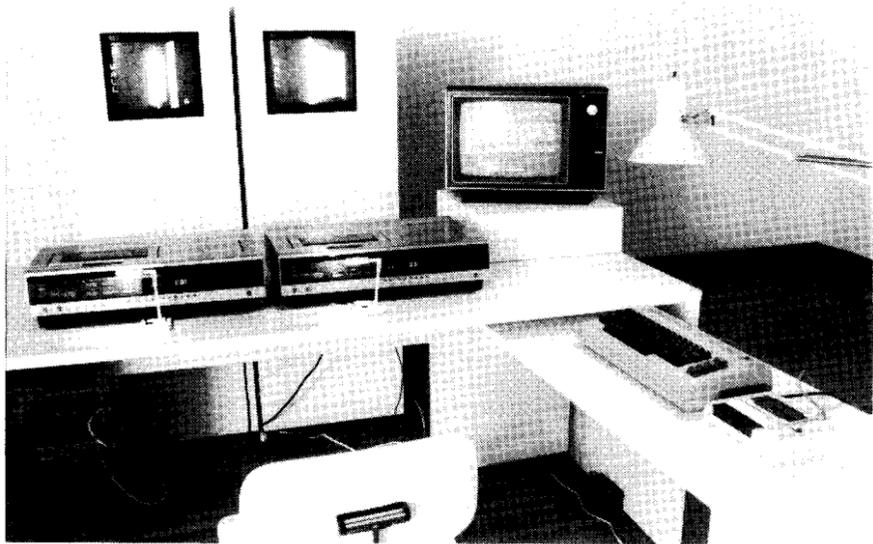
Adding to this tradition, all of the artists represented here merge a knowledge of video with an awareness of—and sometimes expertise in—the static visual arts. What distinguishes video (and also film) installations from other installations is, of course, this combination of moving and stationary media. All of these works combine physical forms (whether sculpture, common objects, or walls which shape spaces) with ephemeral, flashing bits of information. So the viewer is automatically immersed in two, contrapuntal temporal systems: the relatively unchanging experience of forms in equilibrium, and the dynamic, constantly changing imagery (visual and often audio) of the video.

Such a combination is, of course, nothing new to anyone living in our technological society: most of us are accustomed to sitting in our favorite easy chair, surrounded by the static objects of our home environment, and watching the moving images on a TV set. In “real” life, we are all constantly caught in two temporal systems; flashing bits of electronic information have become an accepted part of our environment, a background “noise” as intrinsic to our lives as walls and chairs. What makes video installations so compelling is the fact that they faithfully recreate this common shared experience of contemporary life—an experience which most people take completely for granted, and perceive “in a state of distraction,” to quote Walter Benjamin.

By their choice of format, therefore, video installation artists are in a privileged position to explore, and foster audience awareness of the particular qualities of the contemporary visual, spatial, and audio



Top: installation view of *Belief Sandwich Relief Gauntlet*, by Bill Stephens. Bottom: installation view of *Progress (Memory)*, by Margia Kramer.



Top: installation view of *Analog*, by Barbara Buckner. Middle: frame from tape in *Machinery for the Re-education of a Delinquent Dictator*, by Doug Hall. Bottom: installation view of *Knowing with Television*, by Tony Conrad.

environment. All installation works are, by definition, experiential; they involve the viewer's physical being in the real time and real space of the art context. Some video installations heighten this participatory aspect; Barbara Buckner, Margia Kramer, and Terry Berkowitz's projects, for instance, are dependent for their effect on the activities of the spectator. But even those that aren't, demand that the viewer grapple with the convergence of these media in his or her time and space and thus become *conscious* of a situation normally taken for granted in everyday life. Such a demand leads to a subtle but fundamental alteration in perception—whatever the subject matter of the work.

The installations represented in this catalogue cover a broad range of subjects and concerns. Some of the artists choose to highlight the association between electronic media and modern perception in their work. Tony Conrad and the Vasulkas, for instance, study the effects of the media in different ways. Conrad's *Knowing with Television* sets up a viewing situation which will provide information about the psychological effects of TV, while the Vasulkas' projects (in their own words) "focus attention [on] the technological behavior of the media, creating its own self-reflecting metaphor." Terry Berkowitz, like Margia Kramer, is involved with social criticism; *A Jury of One's Peers*, a work critical of the coercive effects of the mass media, forces the viewer into the position of defendant—in a "trial" conducted by a jury and a judge whose heads are broadcast TVs. Peter D'Agostino, on the other hand, is interested in the connections between media and ideology; his *Double You (and X, Y, Z.)* sets up analogies between (among other things) the development of telecommunications and a baby's acquisition of language.

Other artists in this catalogue don't deal directly with television, but use the video installation format to examine various aspects of contemporary society. Bill Stephens's *Belief Sandwich Relief Gauntlet*, for example, uses videotapes and shaped space to explore the dichotomy between ritual and belief in modern American churchgoers and party goers, and to suggest that these states are unified in African ceremonies of religion and celebration. Michael Smith's "realistic" *Government Approved Home Fallout Shelter Snack Bar* is a spoof on our need to believe that we can survive an atomic bomb—as well as an instructive manual on how to create a rec room that, in the artist's words, "would be for keeps." And Judith Barry's *In the Shadow of the City* examines, among other things, the relationship between the human body and the urban space within which it moves.

Still other artists use the tools of our appearance-oriented, instant-gratification popular culture to explore mystical subject matter. Starting from the personal and working outward toward the cosmic, Eugenia Balcells's *From the Center* places her loft in the middle of the urban, natural, and spiritual world. Rita Myers's *To Divine the Center of a Distant Memory*, a shrine-like work which also places the viewer at the center of the universe, "treat[s] distant memories as a magical vehicle" (Myers's words) for understanding the Big Bang of creation. And *Black Holes/Heavenly Bodies* by Nora Ligorano and Marshall Reese sets up analogies between black holes in space and religious beliefs on earth.

Barbara Buckner and Richard Bloes, on the other hand, examine the nature and qualities of images in their works; Bloes's *Shifts* emphasizes different abstract color relationships, while Buckner's interactive piece *Analog* asks the viewer to find correspondences between images, texts, and sound relationships and thus uncover the roots of metaphor. Doug Hall's project uses culturally charged objects and images to set up a psychologically charged situation, while Gary Hill's *It's Time to Turn the Record Over* uses images and texts to create a stream-of-consciousness dialogue which probes the relationship between mind, body, and nature.

Just as impressive as the range of subject matter in this catalogue is the range of technical and formal means. Some of the artists work with the connotations of familiar objects and use them as sculptural elements within their pieces; others depend on shaped space to make a point; still others create sculptural forms which serve as complements of video statements. Several of the installations use only one monitor, while others use as many as 12. A few of the videotapes are black and white, but most are color; much of the imagery is "straight" documentation, though some is processed electronically or culled from broadcast TV. A number of the tapes chronicle linear narratives, while others deconstruct video information and reconstruct these fragments into configurations or sequences that create analogies, suggest simultaneity, or emulate dream states. The variations seem almost endless.

Which just goes to prove what I wrote earlier: one cannot generalize about video installation works. Even among these 15 pieces, the diversity is extraordinary—and these works can only suggest the potential range available to artists working in this format. The complexity of the video installation medium makes it eminently well-suited for exploring contemporary issues in a multi-faceted way unavailable to traditional art media. So when the dust settles on the Cindy Shermans and Julian Schnabels of the artworld, look for some of these video installation artists. They'll be around, surveying the cutting edge of their culture then as they are doing it now.

SHELLEY RICE  
© 1983 Shelley Rice

*Video Installation 1983* is an exhibition of work by Barbara Buckner, Tony Conrad, Doug Hall, Margia Kramer, and Bill Stephens at the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, N.Y. Ten other installation proposals were selected for inclusion in this catalogue, and excerpts from those follow the descriptions of the five installations in the show.

The jurors for the exhibition and catalogue were Hollis Frampton, John Hanhardt, and Antonio Muntadas.

*Video Installation 1983* was supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. Assistance was also provided by Alfred University, Alfred, N.Y.; Colortyme Television Rental, Rochester, N.Y.; Dana Davis, Towners, Rochester, N.Y.; Experimental Television Center, Owego, N.Y.; Functional Communications, Rochester, N.Y.; Portable Channel, Rochester, N.Y.; Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, N.Y.; and TV Factory, Rochester, N.Y.

*Video Installation 1983* was directed by Nathan Lyons and curated by Nancy Stalaker Norwood and Glen Knudson, assisted by Caralee Aber, Pat Byrne, David Creek, John Font, Dorinda Goggin, Barbara Hawkins, Bryan Kirkey, Rebecca Lewis, Joan Lyons, Scott McCarney, Vern Norwood, Linn Underhill, Tanya Weinberger, Mike Zirkle.

All installation photographs by Ed Reed.

# ANALOGS

## BARBARA BUCKNER

*Analog*s is an interactive investigation of analogous properties existing between things, events, and forces. The word "analog" comes from the Latin "analogia" meaning "proportion."

In this work, I am aiming to find the psychological place or root where mind apprehends difference and similarity between corresponding entities and so creates metaphor:

A quality or quantity existing in one thing may exist in different proportions in another, though not in an identical fashion. Thus, minute incremental and decremental differences may be significant in determining relationships, some of which are causal; that is, one thing appears to affect another with a "force," a force which "carries" properties.

In the two-channel set-up, a viewer references synchronous properties between two video monitors (in the form of pre-edited still and moving images, text, and, in one case, sound) which can be perceived linearly or as a gestalt. The viewer is free to cross-reference two or more sets of different but corresponding things. One might say this is a "modelling" of meaning or a "modelling" of metaphor:

Out of the simultaneous presentation of different but related particulars (consisting of movement, texture, direction, shape, color, words, and sounds) arises the phenomenon of aesthetic coding. Though art works have this coding as an inherent and usually subconscious feature, I am isolating this aspect. Because the particulars are isolated as viewed, one is "super-conscious" of differences and similarities—and projects or "reads" relationships onto the coding. At times, this act of "perceptual figuring" takes on a gaming orientation.

The viewer selects an Analog she or he wishes to see by viewing a computer display which lists all 26 Analogs as an *Analogs Menu or Index*. After entering his or her choice, the computer displays a new page of data consisting of the Analog name and its tape location numbers to be found on the two VCR's, followed by a *Query*.

The user forwards/reverses the tapes to the appropriate locations and views the two channels synchronously, commencing viewing at designated "Start" points.

After viewing the two-channel Analog, she or he answers the *Query* by making a choice from a set of terms and phrases which relate the two channels of video just seen. As a result of the user's choice, the computer displays a new text analog which relates *both* the user's choice and the two channels of video seen.

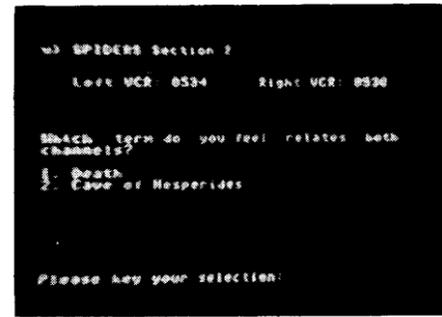
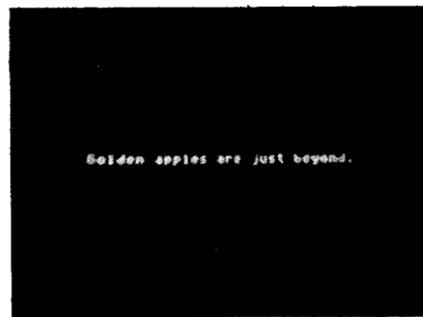
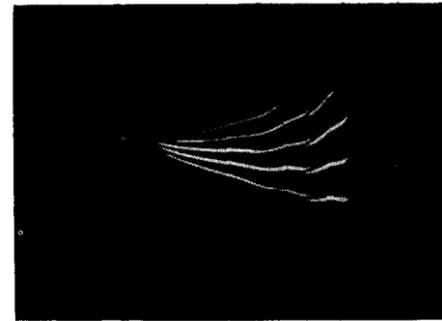
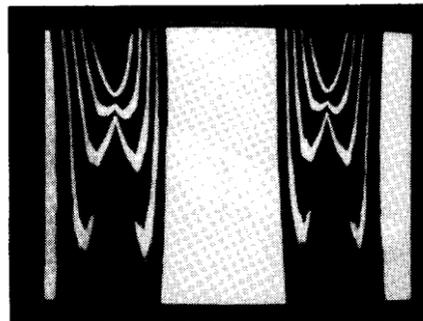
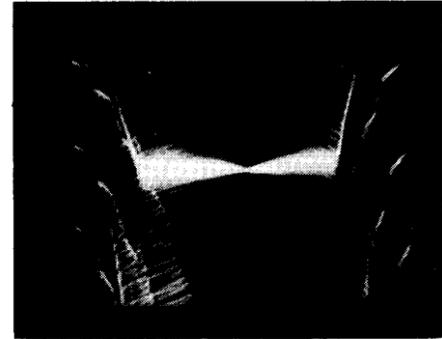
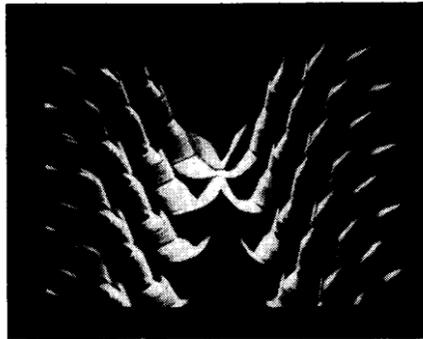
The art work is a "branch of meaning" consisting of physical data, the user's perception, and the user's response which actually completes the work. The act of perception has as much value as the physical data, as it creates a set of parallel references through the act of choice. A cycle of reflexive cause and effect relationships constitutes a cybernetic system of meaning—initially represented in the causal relationships between the two monitors, extended by the user's choice of a relating term for those segments, and in turn initiates a new text analog.

The edited videotapes incorporate three modes of analogy. In the first, black and white images are used, generated from a Rutt/Etra video synthesizer which manipulates height, width, depth, and luminance parameters, shaping the video raster much like sculptural material. In this section, images are related through volume, scale, luminance, and text.

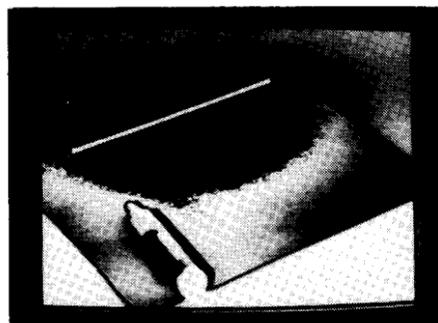
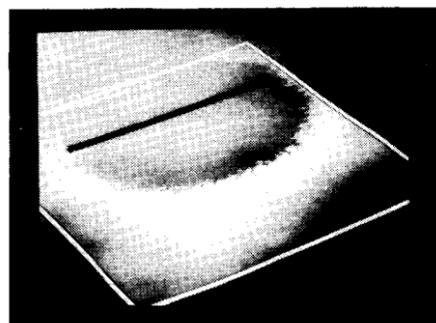
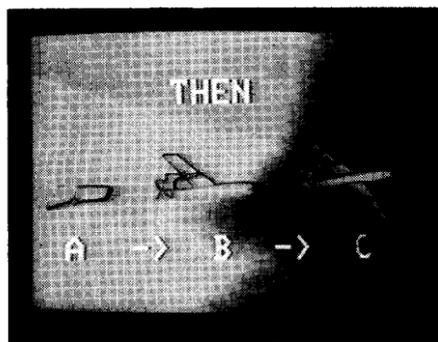
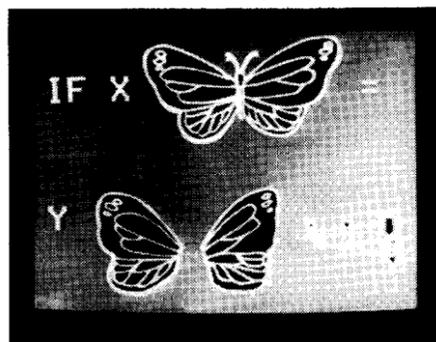
In the second, analogies are created using colored and otherwise electronically processed images which relate hierarchically to one another through color changes, keying, mixing, luminance, and text.

In the third, different kinds of codes are used in conjunction with images to make analogous relationships such as if/then statements, simple arithmetic functions and ratios.

This work is supported in part with grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Media Bureau of the Kitchen Center for Video and Music, New York, N.Y.



Two pairs of simultaneous frames from the "Spider" analog. Bottom: instructional data describing viewer's directions and choices.



Pairs of simultaneous frames from two-channel display in *Analogs*. Top: frames from the "Butterflies/Wings" analog. Bottom: frames from the "Papers" analog.

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# KNOWING WITH TELEVISION

## TONY CONRAD

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For five years, the artist has been investigating the relationships which circulate among viewer, artist, and image, and how these relationships reflect functions of authority and cultural expectation. Especially relevant to the matter of cultural expectation is the flow of authority through the critical function, and the reflection of the critical authority in images themselves. Using the image itself as a mechanism for the manipulation of expectations



and attitudes is a device aimed at the short-circuiting of the chain of authority which ordinarily by-passes the image, by implicating critical authority. In the last two years, the artist's attention has turned to areas of language usage, where opinion and attitude is directly molded in the course of discourse; one such area is clearly the use of suggestion.

Video, and the possible extensions of the medium as an expressive or affective tool, have been a part of the artist's "palette" since 1977. Most recently, in authority-structure pieces such as *Hail the Fallen* (1981) and other shorter works, video images are used to build role-structures which define general organizational frameworks for reassigning the functions of formal, narrative, and psychological devices in constructing images. The current proposal is for a semi-experimental work; it will function to generate actual response data from viewers, to offer direct insight into extended functions of authority and language usage in the context of the video image, and to suggest extensions of the limits which we ordinarily assume for the affective power of the programmed moving image.

Language is almost always assumed to be a vehicle for exchanging information (data, facts, logical implications), stories true or false, or codified cultural information (greetings, warnings, etc.). As a vehicle for the implementation of learning experience through direct action, without logical or factual support, language functions much differently from the assumed ways. In directly shaping the subjective (or suggestive) receptivity of the listener, the speaker approaches both syntax and semantics in non-traditional ways.

In the script for the installation, there are lapses of grammar, logic, and meaning. To the casual reader, these may appear as illiteracies; yet it must somehow be clarified that the author/artist has generated this script on the basis of six months' careful study and deliberation.

The Viewer sits in a comfortable chair in front of two monitors. One monitor (left) is connected directly to a low-light video camera, so that it displays an image of the Viewer. This camera is also connected to a recording VCR in an adjoining room, so that it provides documentation of the Viewer. The other monitor is connected to a playback VCR. The Viewer enters the room, sits in the chair, and the playback VCR is activated. The *Program* appears on the right-hand monitor. The Viewer remains alone with the installation throughout the run of the *Program*.

The *Program* has been prepared in the same installation space, from the script. It is shot with three cameras, one of which is the same camera used in the installation (and this camera is set up exactly as in the installation itself). The second camera is used to frame a head shot of the Operator. During the shooting of the *Program*, this head shot is displayed on the right-hand monitor. With the Operator (and his camera) off-frame, the third camera is used to record the *Program*, which is an over-the-shoulder shot from the point of view of the Client, who sits in the comfortable chair. Thus the *Program* includes a rescanned image of the head shot and the installation camera's view of the Client.

The cast of the *Program* tape includes two characters:

*Operator*: an affable, convincing, and somewhat mature male, preferably with some experience in the slow and pointed delivery characteristic of Milton Erickson's psychotherapeutic style.

*Client*: a complicitous subject, chosen to be a point-of-view role-model for the characteristic installation Viewer.

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# MACHINERY FOR THE RE-EDUCATION OF A DELINQUENT DICTATOR

## DOUG HALL

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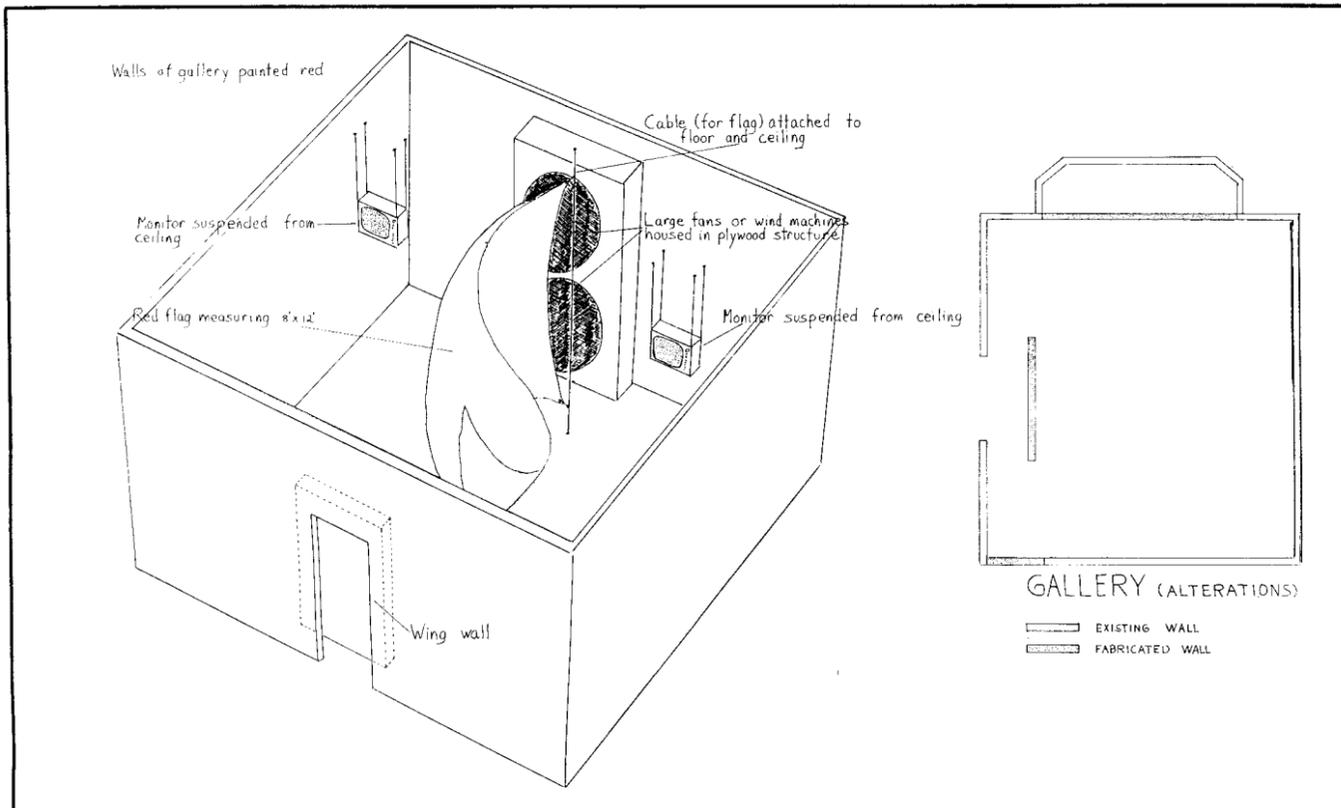
The installation, *Machinery for the Re-education of a Delinquent Dictator*, is a work which uses political imagery (the red flag, for example), but which is not "political art" in the sense that we usually use it, since there is no pedagogy intended. To interpret this piece as pro- or anti-Soviet, as being for or against nuclear disarmament, etc., would be to miss the point entirely.

I am, essentially, an imagist and this work is concerned with the images of power. There are, as the title implies, allegorical references as well. These are self-explanatory, and, if they aren't, I would still be reluctant to interpret them for fear of diluting the piece.

This work is a machine—the soul of the tyrant. As such, it should be menacing. The wind, which is fabricated for illusion (the tyrant, himself, is illusory) should make the flag snap and crack like a bull whip. On the monitors are the tyrant's voice and image. His voice is slowed and distorted,

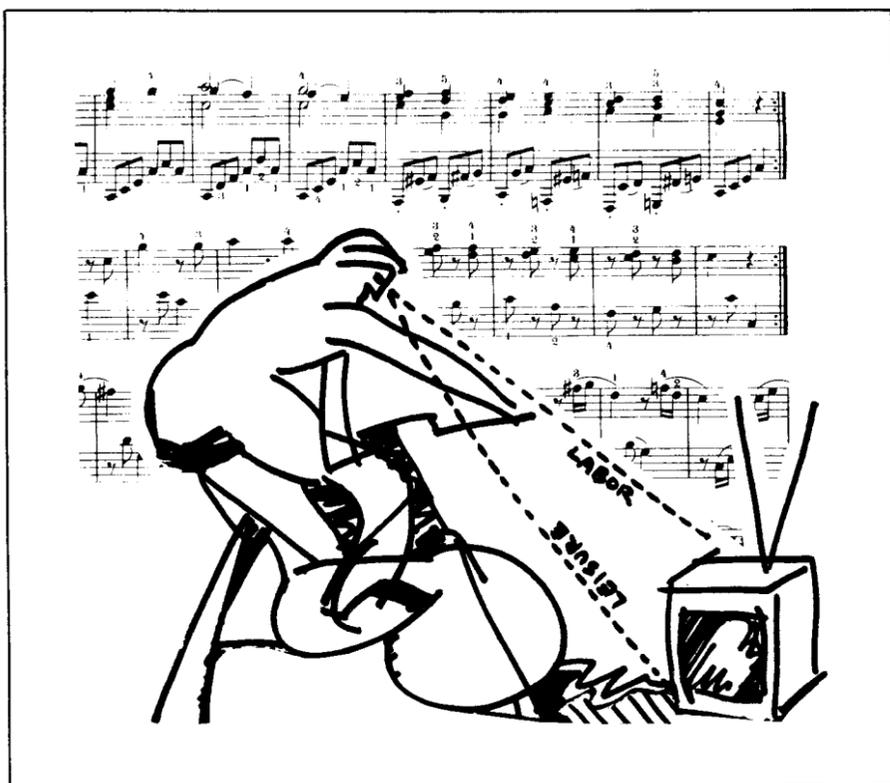
the message undecipherable. The walls are high gloss red, and they sparkle in the dim light illuminating the flag. The room is the tyrant's lair. The room is . . . but I've said too much, interpreting when I said I wouldn't.

This piece is a continuation of past work, which investigates what I call "the theory of the Spectacle." This idea carries with it the following ideas: First, it presupposes that culture has a pervasive power and that this power is the sum of the attitudes of the people manifested through their common will via the institutions that culture (the people) has created to express this will. Second, the idea of the Spectacle suggests that a society must affirm and reaffirm its values through all the means available to it (through architecture, pomp and ceremony, athletics, the mass media, etc.). For me, these ideas are interesting and currently central to my strategies for making art. Flags are an expression of the Spectacle—they are the chauvinist's talisman.



# PROGRESS (MEMORY)

## MARGIA KRAMER



The manufacture of desire and its gratification is a recognized aspect of capitalist culture.

In *Progress (Memory)* the computer/communications industry is presented in relation to the fashion/beauty industry and the military/industrial complex. Because this is an arena for domination by the establishment and degradation of the subject, it promotes repressive narcissism based on fear.

The installation explores how we derive pleasure from desiring and acquiring rewards which are actually dependent states of powerlessness, rooted in a profoundly alienating estrangement from our objectified selves.

The repressive trends and liberating potential of the culture of communications—the information industry—are examined and juxtaposed in compilation/vérité style. *Progress (Memory)* presents the industrialization of communication for fun and profit, raising the question of what constitutes



communicative meaning, by contrasting analog with digital systems, using examples from music, growth, and learning during childhood and adulthood.

The intention of *Progress (Memory)* is to raise these issues to a level of critical consciousness in everyday life, by unmasking contradictions within repressive trends and identifying transformational possibilities in our "information age."

Entrance to the room is through a black-draped doorway, into a room painted black. Light is provided by two color video monitors which intermittently play depending upon activation by a viewer, and by two dim spotlights suspended from the ceiling which illuminate an old piano and piano bench and a white exercycle, each occupying the center of one half of the room. One video monitor sits atop the upright piano; the other monitor sits on the floor opposite the handlebars of the exercycle and facing it.

Eight in. high sets of music bars are drawn horizontally in white paint all around the walls of the room. The musical notes written on them compose a tune that will appear on one video monitor when it is activated by the viewer seating herself or himself at the piano. This tune will appear on the monitor in two forms: as a computer software program in which each note appears as it is sounded, and as played by familiar musical instruments.

The exercycle, when pedalled by a viewer, will generate the power to run the other video monitor. The videotape shown on this monitor will include scenes of potential enslavement or liberation in consumer culture. These sound/sync and voiceover segments, a combination of vérité and compilation, will be cut with scenes of children communicating with parents and peers.

## BELIEF SANDWICH RELIEF GAUNTLET BILL STEPHENS



A Black American example is used as an approach to the dichotomy of American emotional relief systems' rituals, beliefs, and ceremonies. Or to say, "Religious Born Again Christians" and "Disco Singles Club" people do not mix socially but are all engaged in emotional reliefs from the questions and tensions of a highly industrialized society. In contrast, in the traditional or primeval emotional relief systems of Africa and Europe ritual and belief were unified in cultural ceremonies.

Utilizing the length and narrowness of a corridor, viewers are sandwiched between eight monitors on the left and right walls, which lead them to a video projection scrim on the narrow end of the gallery.

The eight monitors on the left wall show four video essays of church rituals and ceremonies at different stages. The eight monitors on the right wall show four video essays of social clubs, party rituals, and ceremonies at different stages. The monitors on the opposite wall directly face each other, causing a conflict of viewing interests between the same ritual stage in the opposing church and party-goer belief relief system. The viewer moves through the multi-monitor gauntlet created out of opposing beliefs yet similar rituals to the single video essay on the projection scrim which unifies ritual and belief in one ceremony of religion and celebration.

The four video essays ABCD on the eight monitors are displayed A B A B C D C D in series, which creates a stereo flashback effect. The projector for the video projection scrim is mounted at a level such that, when viewers reach a certain point, their silhouettes are projected on the scrim. The viewer can then choose to interact or not interact with the unified ceremony of ritual and belief, which is the end of the Belief Sandwich Relief Gauntlet. All nine video essays contain elements of instrumental music, song, dance, individuals engaged in "call and response" with the social gathering, etc.

# FROM THE CENTER

## EUGENIA BALCELLS

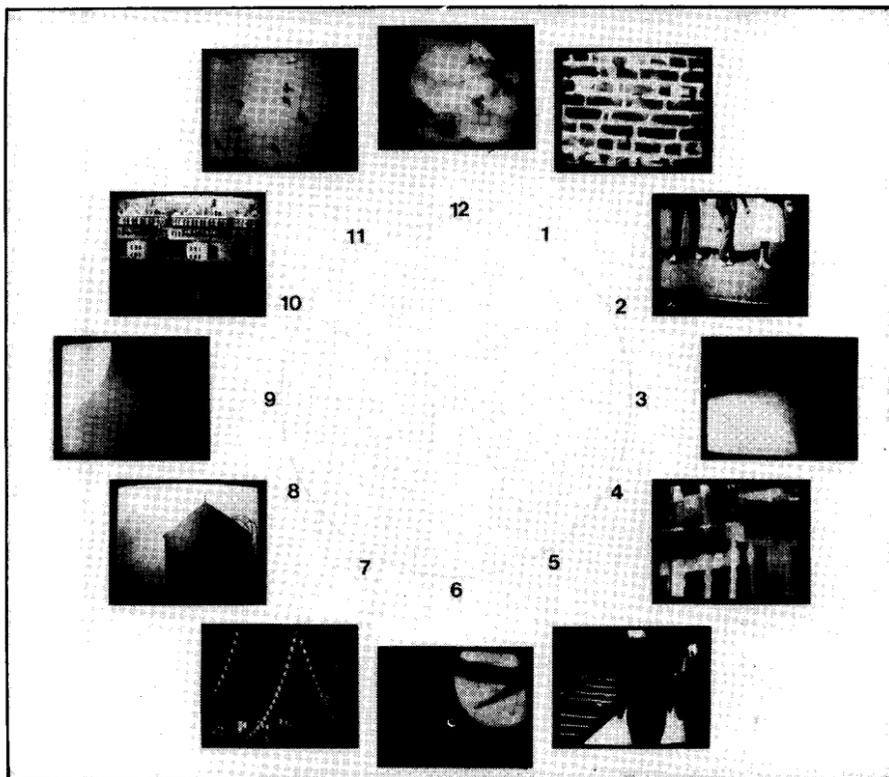
*From the Center* is an exploration of multiple ways of seeing, looking around in all directions while standing in one place. It is a personal view, an interplay of 12 complementary visions relating to the space around me. The 12 tapes that constitute this work were shot from the roof of my loft on the corner of Bowery and Grand St. in New York City.

In the installation of *From the Center*, the 12 tapes play simultaneously on monitors placed on pedestals in a big circle. The central point of the 12 directions of space is marked by a stone to express the concept of a central unity.

*From the Center* is a 12 piece circular installation:

1. High and low
2. A corner
3. Circles of time (East)
4. Into one another
5. Between
6. Moons
7. Night
8. The tower
9. Circles of time (West)
10. Layers
11. Flight
12. Windows to the sky

Thanks to Kay Hines and Dieter Froese of Dekart Video. Music and sound by/or in collaboration with Peter Van Riper.



# IN THE SHADOW OF THE CITY

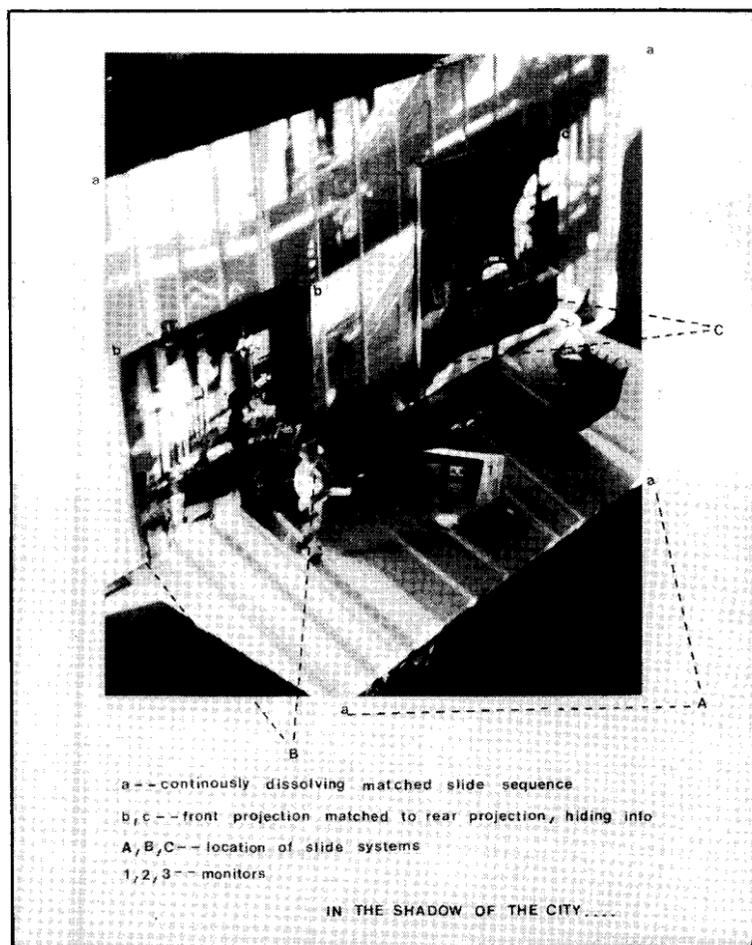
## JUDITH BARRY

*In the Shadow of the City* continues ideas developed in an earlier video installation, *Space Invaders*, installed at the ICC, Antwerpe, Belgium, in June 1982; particularly the idea of mediated space traversed in the imaginary through the submission of the body. Briefly, *Space Invaders* poses the question of the body (as in what happens to the body) across three mediated spaces of imaginary access: at home in front of the TV, at the disco in front of the video projection screen, and in the video arcade. In the '60s Andy Warhol said, "Everyone will be a star in the '80s for 15 minutes." He didn't say how.

The space of the installation was set up to reflect a series of point-of-view shots shown on two monitors (and decks) which were simultaneously crossed by another series of slide-projected images dissolving across the entire exhibition area. As the spectator moved through the installation, her or his body is marked and incorporated in several ways (see illustration). As the slides hit the body, washing it with the light pattern of the slides, the spectator visually experienced the sensation of literally dematerializing right before his or her own eyes. What was recognizable was the shadow cast by the body over the exhibition space. This shadow was literally an effect of the light becoming visible. The effect of a spectatorship which leaves as its mark, a void: the blackness which is full yet unrepresentable, a reminder of the illusion without affect, the haunting spectre unable to find a place except as absence.

*In the Shadow of the City* picks up where *Space Invaders* ended. It locates the spectator firmly in the city through a series of dissolving slide sequences matched through point-of-view shots to a narrative occurring across several video monitors. The narrative "V a m p i r e" has, as the title implies, something to do with vampirism. The spectator is more completely the shadow figure unable to mark his or her presence except as a negation, an other who unwillingly must resist identification, hence representation. To heighten the effect of the negation of the spectator, I have designed the slide sequences so that there is, within the double sets of matching front and rear projected slides, a series of clues, which the spectator can literally uncover with her or his body, to the identity of and what happens to the people in the narrative. If the spectator looks closely at the slides she or he will notice that different elements are visible as the body interrupts the front projected slide, revealing the rear projected slide, which is the same image position matched to the front, yet containing information not visible in the front slide.

As in the previous installation, there is also the phantasmagoria of being inside what appears to be a motion picture "special effect"—where you are constantly at the center, changing, transforming, and dematerializing, but here there is something else happening as well. For as you are more completely bound to the *mis-en-scène* (by literally being inside it) and to the narrative (as you resolve it by uncovering clues) and are called through the space by the monitors playing the pre-recorded tape, you realize that there is only the illusion of mastery, and that you have no control. Every action is pre-determined. You can not, as in a film, identify with the look of the camera and through this with the characters on the screen. The comforts of multiplicity are not available to you, you have become, in real terms, less than these effects. Metaphorically you are returned as a body offered to the spectacle—in other words, a zombie—and not even a vampire.



Left: installation view of *Space Invaders*, by Judith Barry.

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# A JURY OF ONE'S PEERS

TERRY BERKOWITZ

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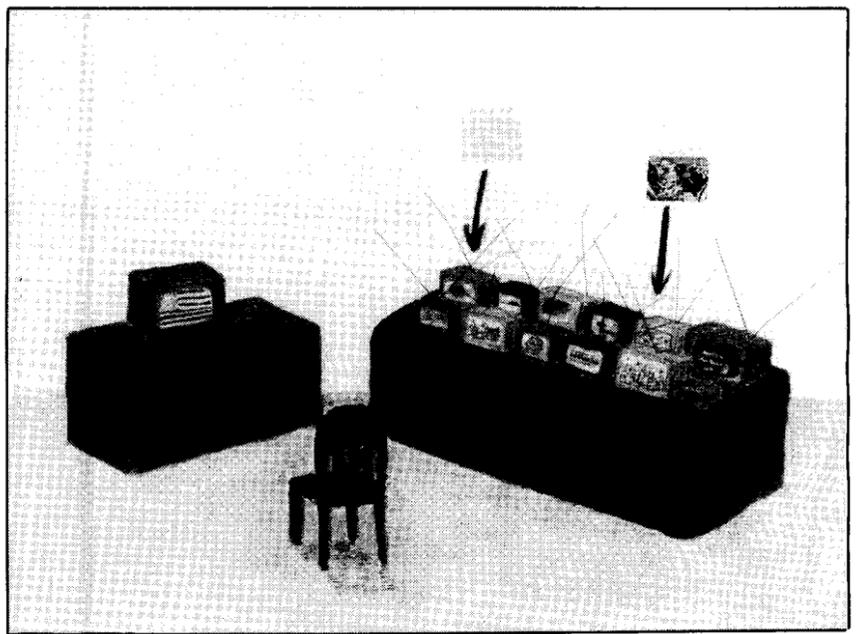
One of the ways in which the society maintains the status quo is through the development of a certain aesthetic in the individual. This aesthetic promotes consumerism, the backbone of our system. We buy our taste as it is dictated to us. This piece deals with the making of that aesthetic. The manner in which we are coddled and cajoled into fulfilling our function is explored through the use of an interrogation chamber and a courtroom.

In the interrogation chamber a hot white light bakes the space. A one-channel videotape interrogates the viewer, who must position himself or herself in a solitary chair in order to view the monitor correctly.

In the second room sits a jury box. Inside the box 12 black and white televisions, of varying sizes and qualities, are placed at head height for a seated person (these vary slightly as they do when people of varying heights are seated). The TVs are turned to different local broadcast stations with some of them displaying non-functioning channels, as though each juror was thinking something different. A four-channel audiotape supplies an interactive soundtrack. Each of the four channels hook up to three of the televisions. Different types of information are intoned in a chant-like manner—sometimes discrete, sometimes in unison. The sound level of each TV is set extremely low, thus creating a constant background babble.

A presiding judge, represented by a single-channel videotape, watches over the proceedings from a monitor mounted on top of a judge's platform. The judge directs the jury through the use of a video collage culled from broadcast TV.

One chair is placed in the center of this room for the defendant-viewer.



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## SHIFTS

RICHARD BLOES

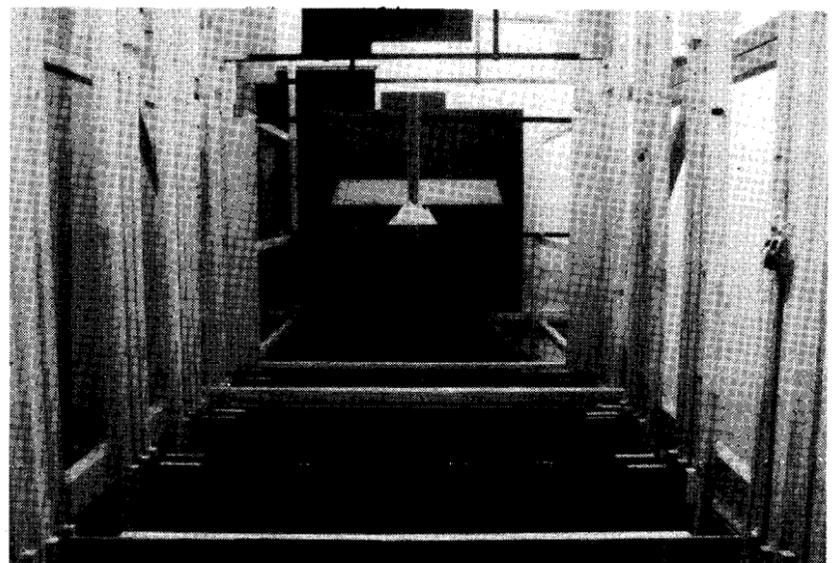
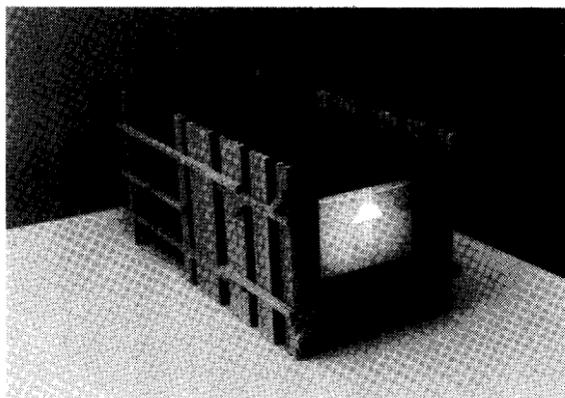
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The majority of my video works have been concerned with handmade props that deal with layered images, cut-out shapes, and color. While earlier works dealt with these issues in individual shots, which were then edited together, *Shifts* is designed to be shot in one continuous take. This is accomplished by building a large wooden structure with panels that move in and out of camera view while a multi-colored background cube "scans" them, emphasizing different color relationships.

The structure can be seen both as a three-dimensional symbol of certain two-

dimensional video techniques and as a type of color assembly line, run by five "workers," where images are deconstructed and then re-assembled into a different form. As *Shifts* is shot in one continuous take, the different layers in the structure unfold through the viewing of the tape.

In addition, the tape is shown on a four in. monitor surrounded by a modified model of the structure. The tape runs continuously on a 30 min. cassette. The structure is 10 ft. long, 4 ft. wide, and 7 ft. high. A 4 ft. wide, 7 ft. high area on the wall behind the structure is painted blue.

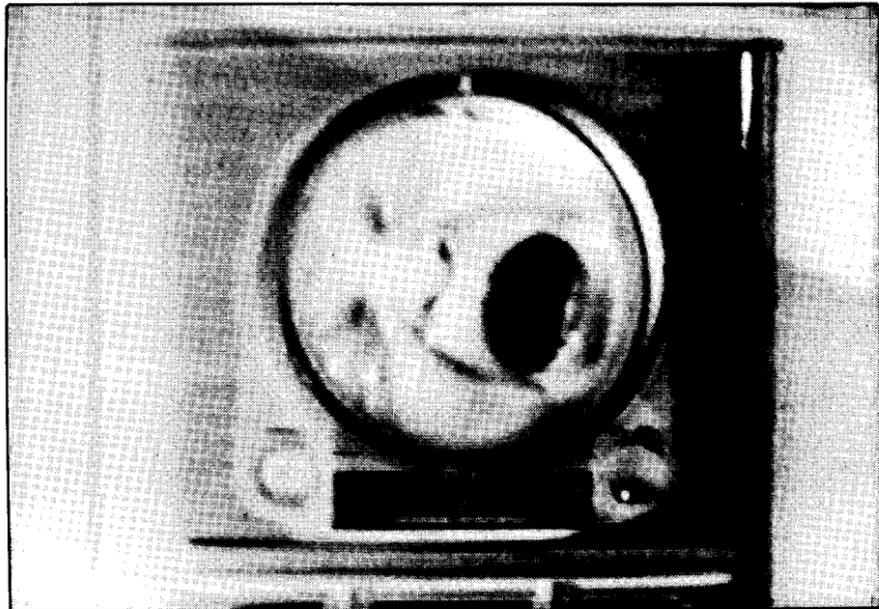


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# DOUBLE YOU (AND X, Y, Z.)

PETER D'AGOSTINO

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A four-channel video installation (the first stage of a work-in-progress to eventually include an interactive videodisc for broadcast).

This work began with a series of audiotapes I initiated during my wife's pregnancy and the birth of our daughter. The tapes document the baby's first cries, babbling, word fragments, sentences, and continues with the songs she sings at age two. Claude Lèvi-Strauss's commentaries discussing differences between an infant's noises and words forms a basis for some of this work:

Even at the babbling stage the phoneme group /pa/ can be heard. But the difference between /pa/ and /papa/ does not reside simply in reduplication: /pa/ is a noise /papa/ is a word.

The subject of this work is the acquisition of language, but the underlying structure of the piece is derived from another source: physics.

The four-part structure of *Double You (and X, Y, Z.)* is based on the four forces now believed to cause all physical interactions in the universe: light, gravity, strong, and weak forces. Through the use of analogy and metaphor, these concepts will serve to parallel four periods of early language development. They are:

*Part 1, Light (the birth):* The sounds of Lamaze breathing and the birth are juxtaposed with scenes of "passages," images of a pulsating TV set, and a train.

*Part 2, Gravity (word fragments):* Shot from a helicopter circling the San Francisco Bay, images dissolve into a continuum of sound and are punctuated by first spoken words. (Jon Gibson composed the music score.)

*Part 3, (sentences):* Uses the concept of "strong force" (how things bind together) as an analogy to the process in which words form sentences. A computer program will be developed to decipher word-sentence structures into recognizable written formats. A videodisc will be used in an interactive mode to create text-image juxtapositions to coincide with developing sentence structures.

*Part 4, (songs):* Uses the "weak force" (how things disperse, or are disseminated) as a metaphor for the history of telecommunications. This segment will trace a variety of first messages sent by telegraph, wireless radio, telephone, television, video/phone, etc. This last part—the songs—also reveals the source of the title: *Double You (and X, Y, Z.)* is a children's song that concludes with "now I know my ABC's, next time won't you sing with me."

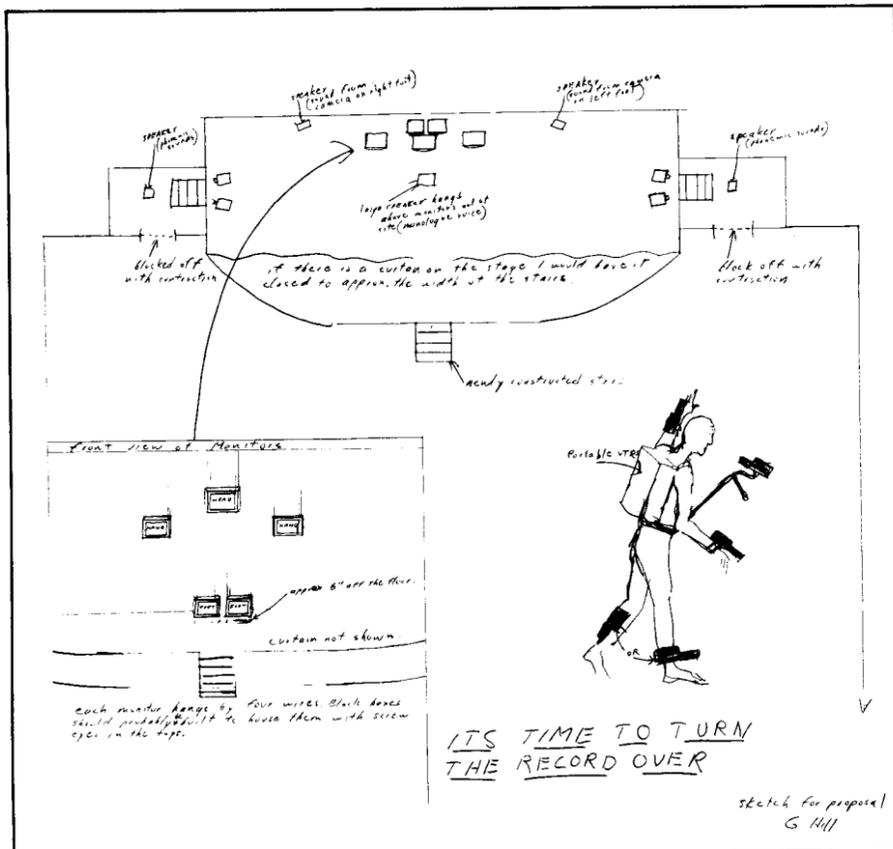
A key to the work is television as a means of re-presenting sound and image and the transmission of cultural codes and ideology. In essence, *Double You (and X, Y, Z.)* is a document of an individual's birth and acquisition of language. This development provides a universal "denouement"—unraveling this complex series of events into a basic and elemental message of perception and language.

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## IT'S TIME TO TURN THE RECORD OVER GARY HILL

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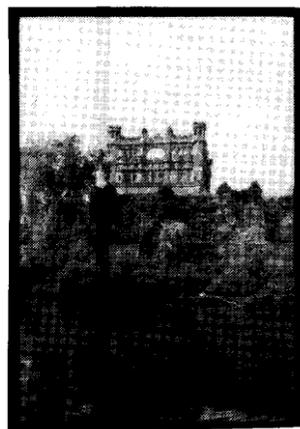
*It's Time To Turn The Record Over* is an installation for multichannel video, audio, and slide projection. The performance nature of the work and its dialectical structure make a stage with two adjoining rooms an optimum site. The work evolves from a text (see excerpt from text—rough draft), and a spoken monologue that moves from the brain out through the body on a metaphorical journey through "age old questions." An internal dialogue presented as a mind/body catastrophe—the tongue as character walking through the brain labyrinth searching for a way out/in to the great out-(of)-doors.



Images for the five monitors which hang from the ceiling on the stage (see drawing) will be recorded at Bannermans Island on the Hudson River. The island consists of a castle, partially in ruins, surrounded by a wooded forest. The images will be recorded as a real time performance. Four cameras (JVC GZ-S3, 2.7 lb.) are fastened to my ankles and wrists. One camera is attached and extended out from my waist using a modified tripod-like contraption and be in a fixed position out in front of my body at approximately eye level facing my head. My face is framed in a talking head fashion. As I move around the fixed distance between my head and the camera creates the sense of my head being separate from my body as the landscape moves away behind my head. The cameras on my limbs are fixed at wide-angle. I may modify the two wrist cameras so I can zoom in/out with an external switch in each hand.

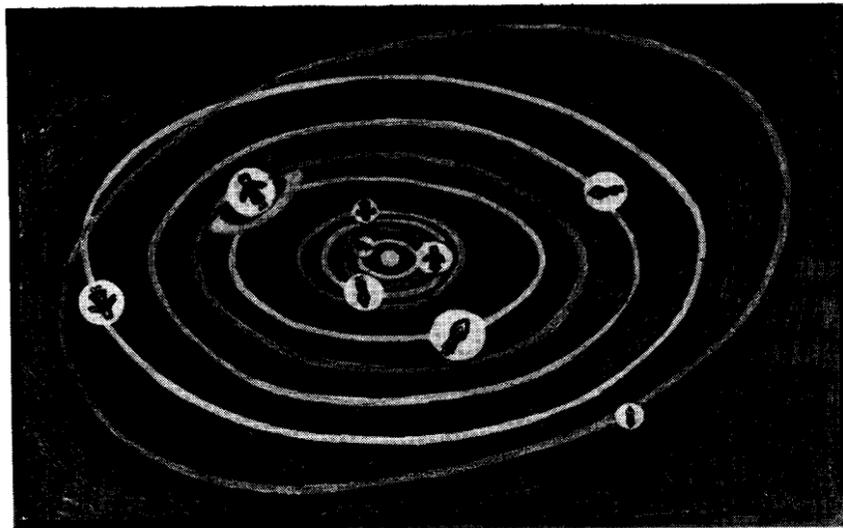
The text is delivered by me on camera allowing me to really perform the work in relation to my movement and the body/camera extensions. For example: I am standing still in a foyer in the castle. I slowly raise my arms extended giving distant views down two opposing hallways and then turn my head left and right as if to look at the two points of view. Seeing this from a viewer's vantage point standing in front of the stage, the top monitor displays my head looking back and forth at the two adjoining rooms while the two wrist/hand monitors display the views of the hallways but from a camera position which approximates the viewer's.

*Excerpt from text:* This is it, a little island among many islands to be connected together in some form or fashion to make the whole picture. Yes, this is it. No one can tell me otherwise, on or off the beaten track. It's time to kick up some mud—forget the finishing touches. The longer I wait the more these little deaths pile up. Bodily sustenance is no longer an excuse. Too much time goes by to take it by surprise. I must become a warrior of self-consciousness and move my body to move my mind to move my words to move my mouth to spin the spur of the moment.



# BLACK HOLES/ HEAVENLY BODIES

## NORA LIGORANO AND MARSHALL REESE



*Black Holes/Heavenly Bodies* deals with oppositions between belief systems. Though we locate this theme in the early 1600s, when observations by astronomers such as Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo challenged the terracentric theory of the universe held by the Church, we find aspects of these issues still at large today, particularly in the controversy surrounding free speech, Creationism and Darwinism, and legislation on women's right to free choice.

Nine video monitors are set in a mural of the solar system, painted in the naturalistic style of Walt Disney or *World Book*-type illustrations. These monitors are aligned with the positions of the nine planets of the solar system.

Images of nuns and priests holding services are on the monitors. Still photos of these segments are spun so that the image becomes, in effect, a black hole (the transformation of the heavenly body into the black hole). This action is also recorded and shown on the monitors. This sequence cuts to another photo that fades up from black, to reveal the portrait of one of the early astronomers associated with the discovery of the heliocentric solar system.

The soundtrack is a stereo mix of recordings of radio frequencies from the universe, and a voiceover of the following text. This text is read four times during the 20-minute videotape, by four different people, at five-minute intervals.

They have discovered signs that prove what they had told you is wrong/Distance is light/You are looking at yourself, but a million miles away/"The majestic roof fretted with golden fire" is a net, and it collects thoughts/Now you don't see these, but only a web of ideas, and these ideas aren't yours/We tend to think of it in familiar images: an immovable frame of reference, in which the "true" is defined, which reveals an order and harmony that governs/This great collection of thoughts rotates/You can't see these ideas, or even what they are based on, but you are told they exist/(The difficulty in envisaging this, is that it is seen from inside).

*Astronomers:* Claudius Ptolemy's major work *Almagest* was the standard of astronomical thought for 1400 years. It placed the Earth at the center of the universe. It wasn't until Copernicus began his study of the solar system

(1512) that the Ptolemaic system was held in doubt. This work persuaded Copernicus that the Earth was a "wanderer" (the Greek meaning for the word "planet"), and traveled in a circular orbit around the sun.

Galileo, convinced of the Copernican theory, proved it to be true by his observation with the telescope of the movement of spots across the face of the sun. His support for the Copernican theory was denounced by the Church: "Man cannot presume to know how the world is really made, because God could have brought about the same effects unimagined by man." The publishing of his book on the Copernican system caused the Church to place him under house arrest until his death.

Kepler, a contemporary of Galileo, later discovered that the planets have elliptical orbits.

## TO DIVINE THE CENTER OF A DISTANT MEMORY

RITA MYERS

It has been demonstrated that when subatomic particles are accelerated to extremely high energies, forces merge. As particle accelerators attain higher levels of energy, the ability to recreate the conditions of the Big Bang comes within reach. Having unified three of the four fundamental forces of the universe through quantum theories, physicists have reconstructed events back to a point a hundredth of a second after the Big Bang. When the force of gravity can be accounted for in a grand unified theory, they will also have captured the first hundredth of a second.

To be on the brink of the cosmic explosion is to enter a mythic realm. To conquer the first hundredth of a second is to reduce all discrete phenomena to a potentially divine unity. To theorize back to the origin of time is to extend the boundaries of awareness onto the plane of magic. This is the paradigm of ecstasy. Consider the experiential dimension of such theories. Imagine oneself as an entity with the ability to conquer time, to hurl oneself back into the ultimate collapse of forces, to approach the singularity of ecstasy.

*To Divine the Center of a Distant Memory* explores the impulse toward ultimate desire. It is a place.

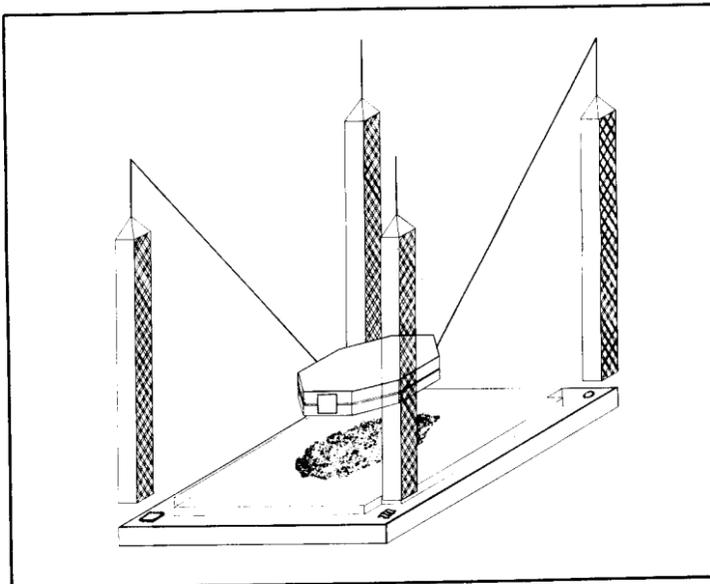
A metal construction, 7 ft. square and 6 in. high, holds a 6 in. wide channel of water. The center contains a bed of pebbles in the shape of a Roman cross. Suspended above each corner of this construction is a tower, 6 in. square and 7 ft. high. These are made of expanded sheet metal. A light source in the base of each tower reflects a code for the four elements of fire, earth, water, and air onto the surface of the channel of water. The work should be placed in the center of a square room. An audio speaker is to be placed in each corner of the room.

*To Divine the Center of a Distant Memory* explores the dream of ultimate return. It is also a device.

Suspended at a height of 4 ft. above the bed of pebbles is a small structure in the shape of an octagon. It resembles a satellite. It is made of metal and

spray-painted black. Its diameter is 3 ft.; each face is 15 in. wide; and its height is 9 in. A 6 in. color monitor is built into two faces. The satellite is suspended literally in space within the confines of the physical structure. It is also suspended figuratively in time, within the center formed by the configuration of sound.

The merging of parallel temporalities through video images and sound activates a process whereby distant memories are captured and congealed into a source of power.



## GOVERNMENT APPROVED HOME FALLOUT SHELTER SNACK BAR

MICHAEL SMITH

in collaboration with Alan Herman

Mike had been reading about spills, thrills, and increased military spending for some time. He thought perhaps he should prepare for when the "Big One" drops. After some research, he decided to build a government approved shelter in the basement. "Plan D. Basement Location: Home Fallout Shelter Snack Bar" perfectly suits his needs. For as long as he could remember, he wanted to redo the rec room, so why not pay pound for pound attention to the new addition? 720 blocks are a lot of blocks to carry downstairs, but Mike quickly dismissed any hesitation when figuring this snack bar would be for keeps.

Mike's task: To recreate a Home Fallout Shelter Snack Bar according to government specification.

This particular shelter is stocked with all the necessities Mike considers essential for that unpredictable future week. An integral part of the installation is a new videotape (which plays on the bar TV) with Mike demonstrating how to use this special rec room bunker. He even goes through a series of simple civil defense exercises that one can do in one's own home in preparation for "what not to expect." In addition to the snack bar shelter and videotape, copies of *Plan D* and *How to Prepare a Home Shelter Survey* are displayed. Also, a series of framed drawings depicting Mike planning and building his shelter adorn the walls.



Photo: Pelka/Noble

# DRIFT!

## THE VASULKAS

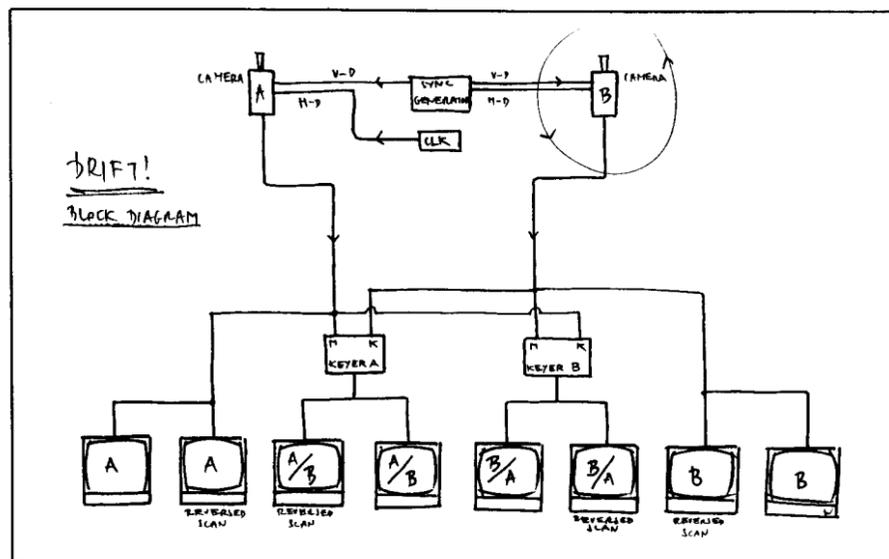
Two cameras are driven by an identical vertical drive, which places all images in locked vertical position on the monitors. The horizontal drive frequencies originate from different timing sources, setting the images adrift horizontally (on the monitors). The keyers, by prioritizing (main/key) layers of both camera images, drift them opposite to the reference (main). Both images appear in "the normal" on the preview monitors (mode I and III). In mode V and VII we see a left to right drift, inversely right to left. The raster-reversion custom switches provide left/right flip (mode II, IV, VI and VIII). The horizontal blanking expander assures a wider transparent "bar," squaring the format of the video images.

Eight variations are seen including parallel as well as reverse horizontal drift:

- Mode I: direct preview of Camera A
- Mode II: reverse scan of Camera A
- Mode III: direct preview of Camera B
- Mode IV: reverse scan of Camera B
- Mode V: Camera A over B drifting left to right
- Mode VI: Camera A over B drifting left to right (reversed scan)
- Mode VII: Camera B over A drifting right to left
- Mode VIII: Camera B over A drifting right to left (reversed scan)

Camera A on a tripod is pointed at camera B which is mounted on a turntable. Every turn once, camera B also "sees" camera A. Anybody entering this environment becomes the third observer/observed. Although

the viewer should walk around freely, his/her most ideal position is on a line when both cameras' views coincide, where passing blanking "bar" reveals the viewer on both image planes.



The Visual Studies Workshop, a non-profit center for the study of visual images founded in 1969, conducts a wide range of service projects in photography, video, film, and independent publishing. These include the journal/newspaper *Afterimage*, the Workshop Gallery, a traveling exhibitions program, a media arts center, the Workshop Press and publishing program, artists' residencies, a research center, and a distribution service for visual books. In addition, the Workshop offers both full-time and part-time educational programs, internships in project areas, as well as a Summer Institute.

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