

Buckner's bland *Greece to Jupiter: It's A Matter of Energy*, in which a square with a herringbone-tweed pattern permutes and pulses a bit in the center of the frame. Tapes by Frank Dietrich and Zsuzsa Molnar, *Circle Twist* and *Snake, Rattle and Roll*, and by Maureen Nappi, *Beat Plus One*, compound the two paradigms, offering digitally processed, colorized pattern imagery accompanied by heavy-beat syntho-rock. And at the other pole *Skank*, by the Lubies (Hank C. Linhart and Joshua Fried), and *The Subway*, by Mark Lindquist, could be slotted right into MTV prime time: the former shows colorized male torsos moving to a rock beat, while the latter is a computer-animation tape accompanying a song by the Clash. (Lindquist's computerized commercial for *Videodrome*, David Cronenberg's most recent movie, was also shown.) Other tapes here—notably Sarah Hornbacher's *I/O Disorders Meaning*—confuse technical density with profundity, using the vast vocabulary of effects offered by image and sound processing to produce pretentious stews of electronic mumbo jumbo.

But three works—by Neil Zusman, Steina Vasulka, and Woody Vasulka—break free of the conventional or confused notions that mark many of the pieces in the show. Zusman's *Orbit* collages newsreel footage of a chorus line, zoo animals, and confrontations between cops and strikers with simple performance activities—in one shot hands crumple and unfold a \$20 bill; in another a mouth, seen in extreme closeup, recites a litany: "Psychodrama, psychophysics, psychosomatic, psychoanalysis," and so on. All these images are edited in a rapid overlapping rhythm, while from time to time a voiceover interjects military commands: "Man your battle stations! Fire one! Fire two!" Zusman describes *Orbit* in a press release as "a dialectical meditation on the current psycho/economic climate in America"; its complex layering of historical allusions and imaginative metaphorical actions offers a timely consideration of political and economic issues.

It wasn't surprising that two of the best pieces here were made by the Vasulkas, the video veterans who founded this space in 1969. Steina Vasulka's *Chaco* features long sweeping pans around Indian ruins in New Mexico, where the couple now live; by colorizing the scenes slightly Vasulka turns the ancient stones pink and sets the shadows aglow with an eerie blue light. The electronic drone accompanying the image sug-

gests ritualistic chanting, underlining the transcendent mood of the tape—a quality Vasulka heightens further by layering slow pans across the stones of the rugged walls over shots of puffy clouds drifting across the sky.

Woody Vasulka showed a composite tape of excerpts from a work in progress, *Introduction to "The Commission"*, based on the life of violinist Niccolò Paganini. In between riveting sequences from the abstractly staged theatrics of the tape, Vasulka himself appears, explaining that he is trying to develop "an operatic genre which is true to video"—one of "electronic narrativity." Vasulka exploits the many tools at his disposal with tremendous skill and imagination—from staging of actors to camerawork to evocative use of both sound and image processing. The too-brief sampling of Vasulka's opera includes a particularly effective scene in which composer Robert Ashley, dressed in plantation whites and dark glasses, repeatedly smashes a long tree limb against a sheer rockface. In another scene video artist Ernest Gusella, as a Rasputin-like Paganini, whispers into the ear of a young boy, who then attempts to repeat the somewhat rhetorical pronouncements he has just heard; the pair are seen from the low angle of a camera that circles around them dizzily, while Vasulka further orchestrates the scene by electronically manipulating the boy's voice. *Introduction to "The Commission"* is still a work in progress, but its tantalizing fragments give promise of a masterful work to come.

The tapes by Zusman and the Vasulkas suggest the richness possible in video work where image and sound are electronically manipulated. Too many of the other artists here seem caught up either in the cargo-cultish adoration of machinery that has afflicted video since its early days, or in a dubious effort to prove that artists too can make rock tapes. The array of technology now available to video artists adds an incredible range of expressive devices to the already vast artistic resources inherent in theatrical and filmic production—all of which, of course, are also inherent in video. But as in any other medium the dazzling effects possible are in themselves simply means; the discovery and articulation of meaningful ends remains the more difficult and crucial aspect of artistic production.

—CHARLES HAGEN

"Image/Process 1 and 2"

Judging by the work by 21 artists included in this two-part anthology, much recent video that relies on electronic image processing and manipulation draws its inspiration not so much from the Fluxist undermining of the image pioneered by Nam June Paik as from the computerized slickness (and emotional shallowness) of rock video and TV commercials. In fact, many of the tapes in this series (curated by Shalom Gorewitz, himself a video artist known for his electronically processed work) seem to be built up from a single formula, varied according to the individual predilections of the artists. Characteristically the tapes include heavily processed imagery, either of computer-generated patterns or simple camera shots, accompanied by strongly rhythmic, electronically derived soundtracks.

In many cases work of this sort seems trapped between competing art-music models of the '70s and '80s: on the one hand "trance" music and the indeterminacy of John Cage; on the other, New Wave commercial succinctness and packaging. Each type of music has its own characteristic visual correlative: exemplifying the pattern-oriented Minimalist end of the spectrum was Barbara