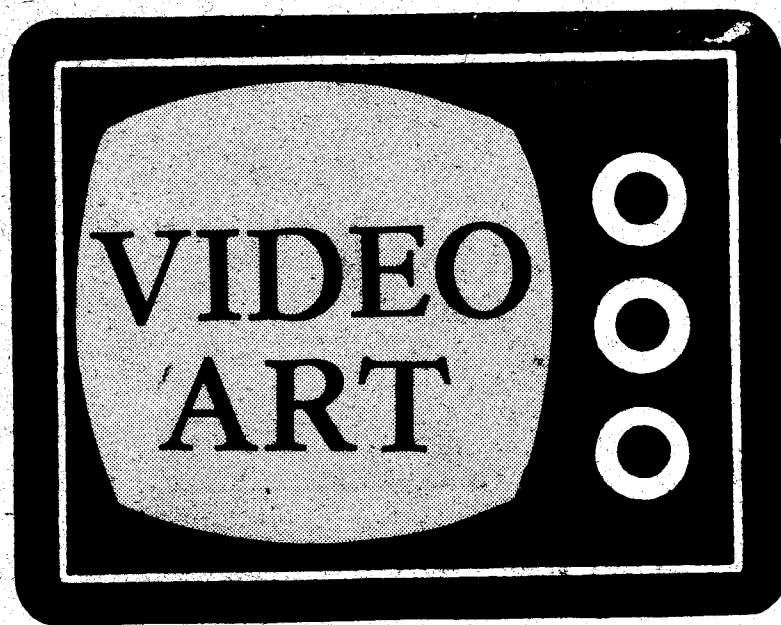


During Festival week the Sears show window TVs on Lincoln Avenue (That's right: Sears) will not be tuned in to "The Price is Right" or "General Hospital." Instead, they will serve as windows into the world of video art, as the work of seven nationally known video artists will unwind to amuse and perplex the minds of those coming to buy their socks, chainsaws and food processors.



Are you tired of waiting for the start of the strike-delayed new television season? Are you fed up with watching reruns of "Dallas?" Do you really give a tinker's damn about Luke and Laura on "General Hospital?" And what about those endless car chases on "Dukes of Hazzard," are they really your cup of 30-weight? Will one more encounter with Mr. Wipple drive you to do something rash with a corn-husk?

Well if the answer to any of these questions is "yes," then the answer to your video blues might be found in the show window of Sears & Roebuck on Lincoln Avenue. (That's right: Sears.) Starting on Oct. 8, and running through Festival week, the department store's display-model television sets will not be tuned in to the "Price Is Right," "Gilligan's Island" or "General Hospital." Instead, they will serve as windows into the world of video art, as the work of seven nationally known video artists will unwind to amuse and perplex the minds of those coming to buy their socks, chainsaws and food processors.

Presented under the auspices of the Santa Fe Council for the Arts, the Sears video-art show is part of the Council's program to put some art in public places during the Festival. (Other Council-sponsored events include appearances by the Rubber Lady, Tree Weavings by Nargis and a visit by Victoria Cross and her puppets to De Vargas Mall.)

What we want to do is to make art more accessible to the public," said Suzanne Jamison of the Council. "There are people in town who aren't stupid or uncultured, but who may not know that they're welcome to go into art galleries. We thought we'd be breaking down the art barriers if we put art in a place like

Sears—somewhere people go to buy their underwear, shoes or video games." Both the tree weavings and the video art display were made possible by a community-challenge grant from the New Mexico Arts Division, Jamison went on to explain.

If you think video art is merely watching "The Magic Of Oil Painting" on Channel 5, or screwing up the color reception of your television set so that Barbara Mandrell looks like Bessie Smith, you have a surprise in store!

of the world's newest art forms. According to Santa Fe video artists Steina Vasulka, who, along with her husband Woody, will be one of the artists whose work will be represented in the Sears show, "Video art first came into being when Japanese electronic firms first started selling decent-quality, affordable video-recording equipment in the mid 1960s."

Understandably, as the technology of the hardware improved, the possibilities of the art expanded radically. From its simple beginning as a tool to record avant-garde "happenings," video art now includes multitrack mixing, computer-manipulated images and the use of video synthesizers—pieces of complicated machinery that do for electronically emitted light what a Moog synthesizer does for amplified sound.

This is what the casual customer of Sears will see during Festival week: a display window filled with three color television sets, all plugged into the same video-art program—a one-hour videotape containing seven different short pieces. In addition, there will be one monitor set up in the store itself, so that children whose moms are off in the lingerie department will have

something to keep them occupied. According to a spokesman for Sears, the show will be constantly repeated throughout the working day—and perhaps even after hours, but the technical details have not yet been worked out on this part of the project.

In style, technique and subject matter, the seven video-art pieces to be shown in Sears will provide the viewer with a fairly representative cross-section of the work being done by video artists in America. Of the seven artists whose works are being shown, three are from New Mexico and four are from New York.

Tomiyo Sasaki's piece "Bubbling" turns the video-recorder on a group of amazing bubble-gum bubble blowers, who perform some astounding tricks—definitely an inspirational show for the young set. Ernest Gusella's "Exquisite Corpse" shows what kind of tricks the mind can play when it is confronted with two rapidly alternating images. Gary Hill's "Window" is a lyrical piece—almost psychedelic in technique—based on the simple image of sunlight streaming through a window.

Steina Vasulka's "Urban Episodes," which she originally made for the Minneapolis Arts Council, relies on a complex mechanical device that not only pans the camera through a Minneapolis urban scene, but simultaneously zooms the image in and out, pans vertically and diagonally, so that there are four images, each moving in a different direction. Woody Vasulka is represented by "C-Trend," a work that transforms the images of cars passing by a window into sinuous, moving lumps. His work probably represents the highest degree of computer abstraction

to be shown in the program.

Other pieces that will be shown include "Order" by John Sanborn and Kit Fitzgerald; and "Untitled" by Patrick Clancy. (Clancy—who is from Albuquerque—and the Vasulkas are the three New Mexico artists.)

Most of us, at one time or another, have complained about the inanity of commercial television. Video artists, however, take their gripes one step further and grasp the TV by the rabbit ears—so to speak. They are trying to develop, through their experiments, a different kind of art for the boob tube—one that's not based on plot, characterization, literary themes or commercials.

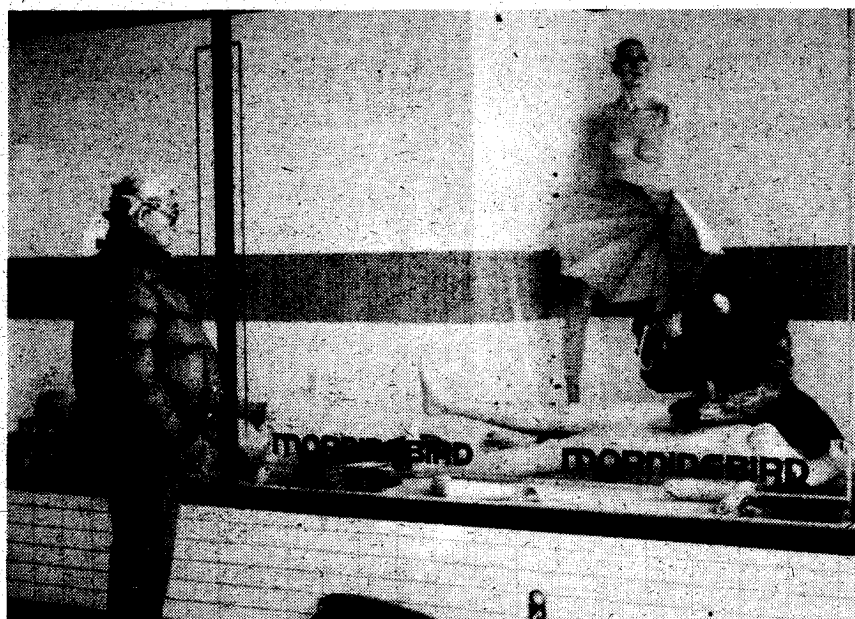
"We went to see 'Star Wars' a few times," said Vasulka of herself and her husband. "But we only go to see the special effects, because we know the people who did them. They story of the movie—something about a Skywalker, love and good and evil—that's all so boring. I've seen that stuff so much it bores me sick."

This off-the-cuff remark by Vasulka indicates the attitude of most video artists. They aren't the least bit interested in improving television by making better dramas, slicker variety shows, or more high-brow documentaries. They are interested in nothing less than a complete revolution in how we view the television. They are exploring—through electronic and mechanical means—the very limits of what can be done with an electronically stimulated light beam.

As a consequence, video artists don't see eye to eye with network executives. "They're always telling us our work is too slow," Vasulka commented. "But what about those car chases that go on for 20 minutes? What's in them? Crushed fenders? That's boring."

[Continued on next page]

By Robert Graybill



She appears in the strangest places . . .

The Rubber Lady

By Jeanie Puleston Fleming

Watch for the Rubber Lady this week and next. And you may not have to look far. As part of the Festival of the Arts this year, Santa Fe's own "living sculpture" is rumored to be planning several appearances about town.

Rubber Lady, whose bizarre appearances have become commonplace around Santa Fe since 1978, was recently seen at the State Fair, in a high school sociology class and during Fiesta. Many Zozobra fans saw her standing outside the exit on Old Las Vegas Highway after the symbol of gloom met his fiery end last month. She stood as usual, passive and mute, holding a City of Santa Fe black garbage bag and watching the crowd file past. She presented yet another other-worldly tableau in an already out-of-the-ordinary evening. A father took his young daughter up for a closer look. Perched on his shoulders, the toddler peered cautiously from behind his head. The Rubber Lady, seeming not to notice them or the other curious viewers stood quietly like some giant bug from outer space, white latex face and rubber rings around her neck shifting gently.

According to Suzanne Jamison of the Santa Fe Council for the Arts, the Rubber Lady will attend most Festival events.

However the only scheduled appearance, and that tentatively, is for the window of the Morning-bird store on West San Francisco Street on Oct. 14. In a piece called "The Santa Fe River N.F.S. (Not For Sale)" the black neoprene-clad figure will trudge up the river and then deposit findings at the Heydt-Bair Gallery. She may also be involved in bowling, bicycling or busing tables at local eateries, and two announced pieces remain unexplained: "Rubber Lady on Night Shift" and "Art as Waitress." Students at the New Mexico School for the Deaf, Santa Fe High and a junior high will have an opportunity to form their own opinions during encounters with the Rubber Lady at school. Photographer Nancy Sutor will document the appearances.

Reactions to the Rubber Lady differ. Small children are often delighted, while adolescents tend to scoff. Most people are taken aback, some are repulsed and turn away or laugh, but most are, at least, amazed. Guiding ideas behind her "artistic pieces," whether social comments, game playing or a spontaneous response to a situation, may be obscure to viewers. But the black neoprene reality is not. And Rubber Lady aficionados are soon in for a viewing feast.

VIDEO ART

[Continued from previous page]

It bores the shit out of me. But if you go to a network executive with a program about people blowing bubbles, they say it's slow, and they aren't interested."

It is for reasons like this, Vasulka continued, why prime-time television—or almost any commercially supported television for that matter—won't have anything to do with video artists. So if you would like to see some of the things you're missing by

watching the local channels, or if you would like to see some mind-bending things that can be done with video images, or you would just like to placate your "television jones" by watching something besides "Mork and Mindy" reruns, then Lincoln Avenue, just outside of Sears, is the place for you to hang out. And in allowing this avant-garde work to be put in its window, the local Sears store is sure living up the vast chain's motto: "We're your everything store."