

## GENERAL MOTORS - 1976

60 Minutes; 3/4" U-Matic NTSC COLOR Cassette w/Stereo Sound  
CONTACT: Phil Morton (312) 666-5628

---

This videotape presents the best of **CROSSEYE** add-ventures while exploring videographic Videospace in 1975-76. **CROSSEYE**, a very trying schzoidparaphrenic 'being', electronically visualizes the discipline of Video via the state-of-the-art computer instrumentation.

"**CROSSEYE**...a cybernetic folk-hero!" - *National Computer Conference, 1976*

Chronologically, the videotape takes off as a private communique (point-to-point) actually sent to General Motors Corporation regarding consumer-use problems in the transportation business of people-and-machines communicating. Just how a consumer-user communicates with the world's largest corporate machine, General Motors Corporation, is unclear. It is still unclear; though, **CROSSEYE** sees clearly and electronically visualizes many perceptual realities accessible through videotape, via the United States Mail service, and into corporate broadcast Television.

"There appears to be some perceptual realities outlawed by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). In order to explore some of these perceptual realities, the definitive mode of an 'outlaw' is a life style worth considering...10-4?" - *CROSSEYE, 1974*

"However, the most vital work I have seen in video lies outside any of these categories. It attempts to transcend the established social boundaries of art by engaging itself with the world in ways which entail direct, almost pragmatic communication...GENERAL MOTORS - 1976 is a complaint directed against Gen. Motors for faulty maintenance... It uses the complete vocabulary of formal devices available in video from synthesis to self-reflexiveness, it never departs from this essential purpose." - *The NEW ART EXAMINER, 1976; Christine Tamblyn, CRITIC*

The videotape time-shifts through sliding perspectives realized while traveling geographic United States of America, and inventorying videographic Videospace. Sightings and soundings received in a mobile Videospace van (toybox of video-tools on four rubber wheels) are re-presented from New Mexico, Colorado, the Inter-states, the mud-roads, and C.B. Ra-did-deo (citizens band radio) communications with the "Camper Kid", "Skunky", "Frito Band 8-0", and "...tha feller on tha'otha-side of this ole' two-way",...10-4!

C.B.S., in the final program of a series on the FUTURE OF TELEVISION, announces -

"...but in the meantime we are certain to see, more and more, electronic works created by individuals for themselves and their friends, like Phil Morton's *trip* through Colorado." ... "There's the Mona Lisa of the future; Rembrandt speaking to you right there. It's rather relaxing...and frightening. As a matter of fact, I caught my videotape editor half-way through the day, staring\*\*\*\* into the set! Rather hypnotic, yes?" - *WBEM, 1976*

The *trip*, COLORFULL COLORADA, a video synthesis performance via the Image Processor (analog computer) was recorded live on-line. The performance is included in this tape as show-cased by P.B.S., Channel-11 (WTTW) Chicago, with additional digital computer graphics punctuating the entity. The audio synthesis was received from Stuart Pettigrew and his Arp 2600 system.

An American bi-centennial tribal-toke is created as a 'sign-off' wrestling with the triadic primarys of RED-WHITE-BLUE not being the color primarys of American television; RED-GREEN-BLUE. Another video synthesis performance via the Image Processor; this time, audio synthesis received from Ginny Pettigrew (wife/husband) Stuart Pettigrew/Arp 2600 system.

"(bleep-bleep)... **HEY CROSSEYE** ... (bleep-bleep); YOU KNOW I'VE BEEN READIN' THIS TAPE HERE, AND..." - Dr. Tom DeFanti; PhD.

Another private (point-to-point) communique cuts-in from Tom DeFanti and Dan Sandin. This 'educational' videotape maps out the performance computer graphics lab, Circle Graphics Habitat, in the Chemistry Department at the University of Illinois-Chicago Circle. Tom and Dan romp around giving a cooks tour of the kitchen and a sampling of the menu. Tom drives with GRASS\* the digital computer (PDP 11-45) into the display scope (Vector General), and Dan drives his analog computer (IMAGE PROCESSOR) so that - a 'prop-powered starch molecule' flys around the Trifid Nebula M-20 (or NGC 6514) very colorfully! The play and demonstration of interactivity of performance computer graphics, the instruments and the environment is put on videotape as an adjunct to a paper for the National Computer Conference.

"LIVE, from Chik-ago Ill-I-noise, it's SATURDAY NIGHT!!!"

"This last entity is RYRAL; digital stuffies by Tom DeFanti, analog by Dan Sandin, audio synthesis by Bob Snyder and myself up in the kitchen keepin' track...gentlemen, begin." - **CROSSEYE**

From the SECOND ELECTRONIC VISUALIZATION EVENT (Chicago, 1976) the performance of RYRAL infolds, live on-line. And then, that wonderful event of electronic visualization is over; so too, is this videotape.

---

\* GRASS (GRAphics SYMBiosis SYstem) is the name of the language written by Tom DeFanti for visual artists performing digital computer graphics.  
IMAGE PROCESSOR is the name of the analog computer designed and developed by Dan Sandin for visual artists performing analog computer graphics.

A feature article in VIDEOGRAPHY - December, 1976, p.22..., entitled - "A Computer-Animation Dream Machine" presents the reader a moderately accurate and understandable print description (with color pictures) of DeFanti's GRASS with Sandin's IMAGE PROCESSOR, working together as a whole system.

# ARTFORUM

FEBRUARY, 1977

## REVIEWS

The emphasis in Chicago on "videotech," or the formal complexities of technology, means that individuals often work together to use sophisticated equipment, which is far too expensive, space-consuming, and hard-to-construct for private ownership. Not only might a number of people be nearby when a tape is being made, but their bodies might be borrowed for the imagery, bringing input from the "co-operees," and reflected in a final tape bearing names of two to five people.

Much of the work in this particular exhibition's 50 tapes, with their many conceivable relationships to art, performance, and documentary, were produced with a Sandin Image Processor, whose conception has a kind of "social consciousness" built right into it. As the former nuclear physicist DAN SANDIN explained last year at the Museum of Contemporary Art, he has published instructions on how to build his IP because he prefers to deal more with its function of linking things together than with patent-sheets detailing how one product differs from everything else in the universe. But nonetheless, making videotapes still involves a nonegalitarian "good and bad"—i.e. "Did this person show sensitivity to the machine's capabilities?", and, "Is what she/he does creative or a cliché?"

Coaxing viewers to stay and ponder was a major intention of this exhibition's format, designed by ANNETTE BARBIER, CATHERINE DE JONG, and DENISE KUNKEL. Five video systems ensconced in three rooms and a closet had a built-in, viewing camaraderie comfort. And, parenthetically, it is fascinating that eons of technical knowledge do

not bar retreat into the homey sorts of situations one might have anticipated decades ago.

The Ladies Home Video viewing spaces seriously resemble Art-schwager's and Oldenburg's 1960s fake rooms that mimicked security-minded, passive, commerce-dominated, middleclass America. Incongruously, one is supplied with foam rubber and carpeted couch-wedges, coral Naughahyde chairs, leatherette pillows, flowerdraped windows, and bottles of Coke, as one watches the tapes. In BOB SNYDER's *Geomelan IX*, oscillator images are manipulated at predetermined change-points; in CATHERINE DE JONG's *Contortionists*, two women's triple sets of movements are performed with time-lapse variation on two monitors from varying angles. MATT QUINLAN's *Rotating Blades* shows a narrator's fanning-out image which gives the semblance of person-into-machine while a psychodialogue concerns loss of ideas and fears of enclosure, and BARBARA SYKES's *Center Focus: A Movement Within*, contrasts split-screen-mirror, oscillator images with a separate "key" for matte lines pulling across the screen and joining up-and-down thrusts.

Indeed, video art is often misinterpreted as a social, savage, group reaction against civilized rationality, with any trace of community effort apparently taken for accident or stupidity. But the "Chicago Style" seems to be madly turning 1,400 different dials and switches, intending that the final edited or unedited work be flawless and yet avoid the manipulative format which makes Nam June Paik as slick as package TV. At least, Chicago videotech is using its processes to further, not obviate, communication.

The exhibition's prime example, PHIL MORTON's *General Motors*, is a compendium of videotechnology, using regular black-and-white Portapak footage, oscillator-generated images, patterns created within or fed to and altered by the Sandin IP, audio dubs of CB radio spots, two-channel stereo, and much more. A "bicentennial" videotape, it concerns the dire predicament of men living with machines, and especially as they are oppressed by what is supposed to serve them. Passages from the books *Future Shock*, *Energy and Equity*, and *Tools for Conviviality* set the scene for Morton trying to get his truck fixed by the maintenance facility of Farrell Hicks Chevrolet. Seventeen different, GM-caused prob-

lems, from faulty U-joints (whose clanking is used to generate a purple and green image pattern), to useless contracts for insurance (signed and burned before your eyes), constitute the negative situation Morton wishes to change to positive. His wild-haired, cowboy-hatted, chanting image, like a photographic negative, reaches up from the innermost point of the Cathode Ray Tube to bring into question the Chevy Dealer's world image, with an announcement that this videotape will be part of the United States entry in the International Olympics for Video Art.

At least 20 people appear in this tape, people who keep their experimental videotech together and exhort the whole world likewise to service and maintain its thing. With such an ability to create, coordinate, and communicate, Phil Morton is one citizen of the world who can really store his experiences in a personal "data bank." But what may be overlooked in this romance is that his technical wizardry, which equips him to make this effective challenge, makes him, in turn, just another one of the "authorities."

—C. L. MORRISON

# VIDEO ~ ~ ~ ART

MAR. 22 · THURSDAY · 8 PM · 2750 KNAUSS HALL · 1979

This electronic visualization event will present several video tapes by students and faculty at W.M.U., University of Illinois - Chicago Circle Campus & The School of Art - Chicago Institute of Arts.

Person/people involved/responsible announced before each videotape.

## Featuring:

"CROSSEYE\*..a cybernetic folk-hero! - *National Computer Conference, 1976*

*\*A videotape by Phil Morton - Chicago Art Institute*

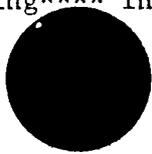
"There appears to be some perceptual realities outlawed by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). In order to explore some of these perceptual realities, the definitive mode of an 'outlaw' is a live style worth considering. 10-4?" **CROSSEYE, 1974**

"However, the most vital work I have seen in video lies outside any of these categories. It attempts to transcend the established social boundaries of art by engaging itself with the world in ways which entail direct, almost pragmatic communication...GENERAL MOTORS - 1976 is a complaint directed against Gen. Motors for faulty maintenance... it uses the complete vocabulary of formal devices available in video from synthesis to self-reflexiveness, it never departs from this essential purpose."

The NEW ART EXAMINER, 1976; Christine Tamblyn  
CRITIC

C.B.S., In the final program of a series on the FUTURE OF TELEVISION, announces

"...but in the meantime we are certain to see, more and more, electronic works created by individuals for themselves and their friends, like Phil Morton's trip through Colorado." ..."There's the Mona Lisa of the Future; Rembrandt speaking to you right there. It's rather relaxing...and frightening. As a matter of fact, I caught my videotape editor half-way through the day, staring\*\*\*\* into the set! Rather hypnotic, yes?" **WBBM, 1976**



## SPONSORED BY:

students enrolled in  
ART & TECHNOLOGY (GHU:1  
408) & in DIRECT ENCOUNTER WITH THE ARTS (GHU:1 102) College of Gen. Studies in cooperation with TELEVISION SERVICES-WMU-KALAMAZOO

ED EMSWILLER (USA)  
Scape-Mates, 1972  
col, 29 mn, 1972

A coreographic piece using computer animation and video synthesizers to transform the dancers, his own art work and the electronic music score into a new electronic synthesis of the arts.

Un brano coreografico che utilizza un'animazione ottenuta con il computer e i video sintetizzatori trasformano i danzatori, il prodotto artistico dello stesso autore e la musica in una nuova sintesi elettronica delle arti.

ED EMSWILLER (USA)  
Pilobolus And Joan  
col, 58 mn, 1973

A satiric story reversing Kafka's "Metamorphosis". A cockroach becomes a man who falls in love with Joan. An intriguing mixture of narrative, dance, song and abstraction, using the image transforming capabilities of video technology to the utmost.

Un racconto satirico che rovescia la "Metamorfosi" kafkiana. Un insetto diventa uomo e si innamora di Joan. Il nastro è una sconcertante combinazione di narrativa, danza, canzoni e astrazioni, che sfrutta al massimo le capacità metamorfiche della tecnologia video.

PHIL MORTON (USA)  
General Motors  
col, 60 mn, 1976

This videotape presents the best of CROSSEYE add-ventures while exploring videographic Videospaces in 1975-76. CROSSEYE, a very trying schizoidparaphrenic "being", electronically visualizes the discipline of Video via the state-of-the-art computer instrumentation. It is a journey across the United States of America. It is a private communiqué actually sent to General Motors regarding consumer-use problems in the transportation business of people-and-machines communicating. How does a consumer-use communicate with the world's largest corporate machine, General Motors for faulty maintenance? It uses the complete vocabulary of formal devices available in video from synthesis to self reflexiveness... CROSSEYE, a cybernetic folk-hero!

Questo nastro presenta il meglio delle "add-ventures" (avventure nel mondo della pubblicità) di CROSSEYE mentre esplora il Videospazio videografico nel 1975-76. CROSSEYE, un essere schizoideparafrenico assai volenteroso, visualizza elettronicamen-



Phil Morton