

Ithaca Video Festival Shows State of the Art

By MAR'LYN RIVCHIN

On view now through Sunday, May 1 at the Johnson Museum, the third annual Ithaca Video Festival is a concentrated program of stimulating video art. Selected from over 200 entries by American and Canadian videomakers, these 21 tapes provide an excellent sampling of the current range of experimentation in the medium by artists independent of the commercial TV system.

According to Philip and Gunilla Mallory Jones, directors of Ithaca Video Projects which sponsors this event, the high proportion of tapes from New York State indicates the real extent of video activity here. This, in turn, reflects the acknowledgment of the medium-as-art through financial support from state organizations such as CAPS and the New York State Council on the Arts, which funds Ithaca Video Projects.

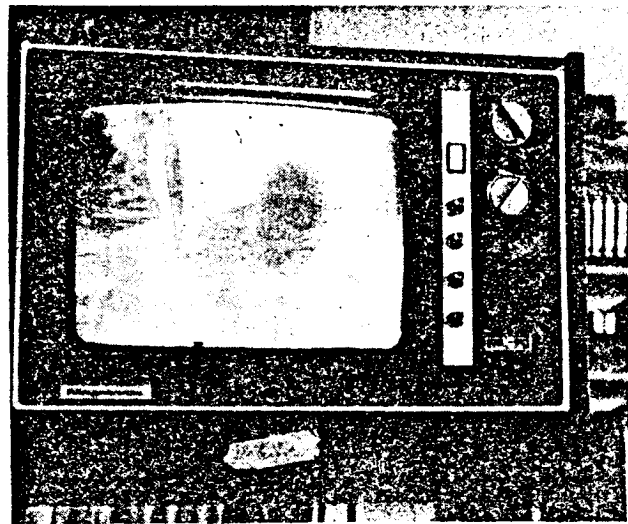
The entire program of tapes runs continuously for about four hours but viewers may also request to see specific tapes at the museum.

Often video people will refer to two sorts of "pure video." At one extreme this means long, uncited recordings of real-time events, including natural synchronization of sound and image; there is no manipulation beyond the initial selection of material and framing and the decisions to start and stop.

At the other extreme of the medium's potential is the total manipulation of real-time or generated material through a variety of technical means, including editing, superimposition, animation, electronic synthesizing of images and/or sound, colorizing, etc. The first mode lends authenticity to personal or social experience; the latter, by altering time/space relationships, emphasizes the formal and graphic characteristics of the medium to recreate sensory experience. At either extreme, or anywhere along the continuum, video can be exciting or boring; "pure" video doesn't necessarily mean "good" video, as one tape, on view at the Johnson Museum, "Curiosity Killed the Cat" proves. As pure, personal document, this videotape (like many early video attempts) pushes that hazy line between self-expression and self-indulgence to its limits. Its information is utterly forgettable.

Intense Subway Decoration

Happily, there are many excellent tapes in this festival. Direct interviews with young, New York graffiti "artists" intercut with images of their intense subway decoration form the substance of *Graffiti People*, by Elizabeth Weiner. Using the most conventional interview and editing techniques, this is a fascinating and intimate study of the dangers, processes, self-awareness and social dynamics of one group of creative outlaws.



photo/Mar'lyn Rivchin

TUNING IN: Ithaca's Video Festival is superb.

Another must-see tape is the perceptually mind-bending *From Cheektowaga to Tonawanda*, by Steina Vasulka. Through the heavy manipulation of relatively simply raw material—black-and-white video recording from a car during a drive between the two towns of the title—Vasulka metamorphoses the familiar city-town-highway-country imagery into an evolving cosmic voyage. Shifts from minimal blue colorization, to upside-down movement experience, to synthesized, multi-colored imagery, to extraordinary wave-modulated landscape and house forms (which result when the electronic impulses of the original are fed through an oscilloscope) persistently challenge one's normal perceptions. Part of the peculiar force of this tape lies in the continuity of the sound track (natural driving noise) and the unaltered, real-time automobile rhythm. These provide apparent anchors to one mundance experience of reality, while the visual experiments continually explode and enrich ordinary expectations.

Among the best shorter tapes are two eccentric and delightful two-minute animations by Dennis Hylasky, *Old Sister Cow* and *A New Tape*.

Quiet Humor

Milk is a kind of self-interview in which Diane Sporadek sits on a couch in front of her fixed-position video camera and manually expresses her breast milk into a glass. The quiet humor of this tape rides on the edge between factual demonstration and personal insights and associations on pregnancy, breast-feeding, sex-role behavior and milk. The simple presentation and straight-faced humor of her performance/life draw the viewer into the commonness of her intimate experience and help to provide an alternative to the

accumulated images of women-as-sex-object in the media by suggesting reality, not glamorization.

December 10, 1976 by Tomiyo Sasaki plunges right in to repetitions of fragments of casual conversation, creating new sound/image patterns from the subtlest inflections of voice, fleeting facial expressions, the briefest hand and body gestures. It is a wonderful analysis, through rhythmic replays, or the poetry, music and dance inherent in ordinary human interaction and an exceptionally sensitive use of simple video techniques to explore a process.

Besides its relatively inexpensive costs and ease of operation, many independent artists choose the medium of video, rather than film, to document or interplay with the dance medium. Portable equipment, particularly, allows fluidity of movement; more sophisticated hardware makes possible striking abstractions related to the abstractions in dance. Both permit the flowing development of music to be thoroughly integrated with the moving image in that neutral, shallow "space" that is oddly shared by video and dance.

Electronic Enhancement

So it is no surprise that there is such a high incidence of dance tapes in general and in this festival's program. Among the tapes that interrelate these media, I most admired *Merian* by Edin Velez for the beauty of its electronic enhancement and *The Crystal Palace Tape* by Eva Maier for the beauty of its restraint. Although less successful individually, the ambitious electronic manipulations of *Dance Nine*, by Doris Chase and the comic relief of *Dying Swan*, by Laurie McDonald suggest the range of experiments possible in this media marriage.

Comedy in video is well-represented in several tapes, especially in a documentary-spoof called *Initial Survey of*

Lindalil Use by Occupations for TV Ads, by Jack Frost. *Words*, by Ernest Gusella will undoubtedly be popular but I found it excessively long for a short tape. Among the more serious conceptual tapes, *Artistructure*, by James Edwards, and *Migration* by Bill Viola are both tightly constructed, beautifully intriguing video statements.

One of the strongest personal documentaries in the program is *Road Kills* by Robe J. Carey, but many viewers may find it difficult to stay with the sensitively-photographed dead animals by the highway. Less powerful, but psychologically interesting, is *First Memories*, a tape by Fred Simon including interviews with three people. Each relates a first memory, then a painful experience. The style is simple, the memories highly visual in nature, though described in words. It is the self-reflection of the story-tellers that is most interesting and which the medium of video so subtly conveys.

See the whole program if you can, as it gives an excellent introduction or update to the current state-of-the-art. This balanced selection of videotapes was made by a panel including Ed Emshwiller (independent film and video producer), Jason Wong (Assistant Director, Johnson Museum) and the co-directors of Ithaca Video Projects. □

Stema: Thanks for your patience!

*ITHACA VIDEO PROJECTS, 328 East State Street, Ithaca, New York 14850
(607/272-1596)*

8th FESTIVAL TOURING SCHEDULE (as of 12/20/82)

4/27-5/9 Johnson Museum, Ithaca, N.Y.
5/1-5/14 Intermedia Arts Center, Bayville, N.Y.
5/1-5/14 Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, N.Y.
5/3-5/22 Image Coop, Montpelier, Vt.
5/9-5/30 Video Free America, San Francisco, Ca.
5/10-5/14 Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, N.Y.
5/16 Denver Film Festival, Co.
5/17-5/21 E. Aurora H.S., E. Aurora, N.Y.
5/31-6/6 UCSD, San Diego, Ca.
6/11-6/12 Global Village, New York, N.Y.
9/1-9/8 South West Alternate Media Project, Houston, Tx.
9/12-9/19 Tacoma Art Museum, Tacoma, Wa.
9/15-9/29 Honolulu Academy of Art, Honolulu, Hi.
9/17-9/23 Media Bus, Woodstock, N.Y.
9/20-9/25 Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library Systems, Jamestown, N.Y.
9/20-9/24 North Texas State Univ., Denton, Tx.
10/4-10/8 Univ. of Oklahoma, Norman, Ok.
10/4-10/11 Bowling Green State Univ., Bowling Green, Oh.
10/4-10/11 William & Mary College, Williamsburg, Va.
10/8-10/15 Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y.
10/18-10/25 Bradford College, Bradford, Ma.
10/19-10/20 Univ. of Texas @ Dallas, Richardson, Tx.
10/25-10/31 Alfred Univ. College of Ceramics, Alfred, N.Y.
11/1-11/5 UCSB, Santa Barbara, Ca.
11/7-11/14 Albany Public Library, Albany, N.Y.
11/11-11/13 Tyler School of Art, Elkins Park, Pa.
11/13-11/19 Broward Community College, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
11/15-11/22 Seattle Public Library, Seattle, Wa.
11/15-11/29 McKissicks Museums, Columbia, S.C.
11/22-11/29 Kitsap Library, Bremerton, Wa.
11/24-1/2 Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, Ca.
11/29-12/3 Rutgers University, Camden, N.J.
12/1-12/14 N.W. Film Study Center, Portland, Or.
12/6-12/17 Center for New Television, Chicago, Ill.
12/6-12/13 City College, New York, N.Y.
12/7-12/9 Media Study, Buffalo, N.Y.
1/3-1/10 Port Washington Library, Port Washington, N.Y.
1/24-1/30 American Center, Paris, France
2/11-2/13 Belgium
1/31-2/4 Georgia State Univ. CCTV, Atlanta, Ga.
2/2 Rising Sun, Santa Fe, N.M.
2/1-2/7 Ontario College of Art, Media Study, Toronto, Ont. CA
2/7-2/14 York University, Downsview, Ontario, CA
2/7-2/14 Temple University RTF Dept., Philadelphia, Pa.
2/14-2/20 Loft Space/Marcia Plevin Prod., Winston-Salem, N.C.
2/20-2/26 Weatherspoon Art Gallery, Greensboro, N.C.
2/27-3/5 Saw Gallery, Ottawa, Ontario, CA
3/7-3/11 Castleton State College, Castleton, Vt.
8/1-8/6 Crandall Library, Glens Falls, N.Y.

August 29, 1996

Cinema and Photography Department
School of Communications

Stina -

It was so wonderful to meet you at the Flaherty. I will never forget your incredible installation in the woods or the interactive violin performance. I loved your energy and insight - and your woman-centered viewpoint.

My only regret is that the George Kukhar episode took time away from talking about your work: which is transcendent.

The experimental film computer listserves are exploding w/ debate about the new infamous "Kukhar attack". It all leaves out women, i.e. that you were there as well. Shooty! Kukhar wrote a response - I'll copy it and send it to you.

Please do stay in touch. Your work is my strongest memory of the seminar.

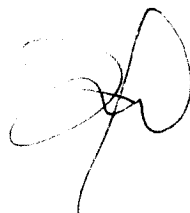
Patty Zimmermann

TO: Participant in the 3rd Annual Ithaca Video Festival
FROM: Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art
RE: Non-duplication of Video Tapes

Thankyou for participating in the 3rd Annual Ithaca Video Festival, and allowing us the opportunity to screen your work.

This notice is to confirm that this facility will in no way duplicate your work, or use it for any purpose other than free public screenings on the dates announced heretofore.

If, as a result of showing your work, we receive inquiries regarding its availability, they will be referred to you directly.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long, thin tail extending downwards.



media

productions/323 E. State St., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850 (607/272-1596)

Steina Vasulka

257 Franklin St.

Buffalo, N.Y. 14202

RE: "From Cheektowaga to Tonawanda"

The undersigned certify that the above named video tape will be exhibited in the 3RD ANNUAL ITHACA VIDEO FESTIVAL at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, April 26-May 1, at the Arnot Art Museum, May 7 - May 14, at the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Libraries, May 17 - May 27, and at the Everson Museum of Art, June 7 - June 26. No copies will be made for any other purpose without the prior written permission of the artist. If as a result of screening your work we receive inquiries regarding its availability, they will be referred to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Mallory Jones', is written over a horizontal line.

Philip Mallory Jones
Director,
Ithaca Video Project

ITHACA VIDEO PROJECTS, 328 East State Street, Ithaca, New York 14850
(607/272-1596)

TO: 8th Annual Ithaca Video Festival Entrant
FROM: Philip Mallory Jones, Director

Thankyou for giving us the opportunity to consider your work for inclusion in the 8th Annual Ithaca Video Festival. This year over 350 tapes were submitted. The panel of Kathy Huffman, Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, Ca.; Gary Hill, artist, Barrytown, N.Y.; John Minkowsky, Media Study, Buffalo, N.Y.; and Philip Mallory Jones, Ithaca Video Projects selected 16 works for exhibition.

The selection process took four full days of screening and discussion. Although your entry was not selected for exhibition, the panel wishes to stress the fact that many difficult decisions had to be made in putting together the Festival package. Yours may well have been among the many excellent works we were trully sorry we could not include this year.

The following tapes were selected for exhibition:

- "Leaving the 20th Century" and "Deadline", Max Almy, New York, NY.
- "American Male", John Arvanites, Los Angeles, Ca.
- "Indian Circle", Eugenia Balcells, New York, NY.
- "Slowly Sounding", Wenden A. Brown, Atlanta, Ga.
- "Millennia", Barbara Buckner, Owego, NY.
- "Split", Ardele Lister, New York, NY.
- "California Freeze-Out", Jan Peacock, London, Ontario, Canada
- "The Vineyard Tape", Karen Petersen/Peter Trivelas, Lexington, Mass.
- "Simultaneous", Scott Rankin, Santa Monica, Ca.
- "Smothering Dreams", Dan Reeves/Jon Hilton, Ithaca, NY.
- "After Image: TTLS", Norie Sato, Seattle, Washington
- "Somersault", Steina, Santa Fe, New Mexico
- "Ancient of Days", Bill Viola, Long Beach, Ca.
- "Meta Mayan II", Edin Velez, New York, NY.
- "Emergence Delirium", Jim Whiteaker, Crockett, Ca.

We greatly appreciate your effort in submitting your work to the Festival, and hope that you will extend the priviledge to view your work to us again next year.

Thankyou and Good Luck.

TO: Participant in the 3rd Annual Ithaca Video Festival
FROM: Arnot Art Museum
RE: Non-duplication of Video Tapes

Thank you for participating in the 3rd Annual Ithaca Video Festival, and allowing us the opportunity to screen your work.

This notice is to confirm that this facility will in no way duplicate your work, or use it for any purpose other than free public screenings on the dates announced heretofore.

If, as a result of showing your work, we receive inquiries regarding its availability, they will be referred to you directly.

Kenneth H. Sengquist

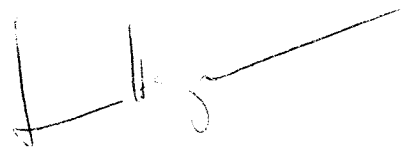
ARNOT ART MUSEUM
25 LAKE STREET
ELMIRA, NEW YORK 14901

TO: Participant in the 3rd Annual Ithaca Video Festival
FROM: Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Libraries
RE: Non-duplication of Video Tapes

Thank you for participating in the 3rd Annual Ithaca Video Festival, and allowing us the opportunity to screen your work.

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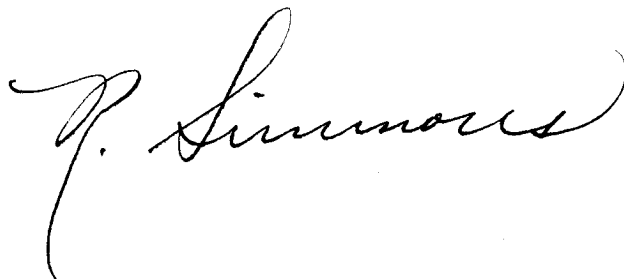
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "L. H. S.", is located in the lower right quadrant of the page. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

TO: Participant in the 3rd Annual Ithaca Video Festival
FROM: Everson Museum of Art
RE: Non-duplication of Video Tapes

Thank you for participating in the 3rd Annual Ithaca Video Festival, and for allowing us the opportunity to screen your work.

This notice is to confirm that this facility will in no way duplicate your work, or use it for any purpose other than free public screenings on the dates announced heretofore.

If, as a result of showing your work, we receive inquiries regarding its availability, they will be referred to you directly.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P. Simmons". The signature is written in dark ink and is centered on the page.



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productions/328 East State St., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850 (607) 272-1596

January 30, 1975

Ms. Steina Vasulka
257 Franklin Street
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Ms. Vasulka:

Ithaca Video Project will sponsor the Ithaca Video Festival, May 8-10, 1975. The Festival will be a national competition, open to anyone who has produced non-commercial video tapes. Entries will be judged in the following categories; Documentary, Conceptual, Experimental, Education, and Personal.

Our hope is to make this an annual event of national repute in the rapidly expanding field of non-broadcast video production. For this reason, we are approaching you, as a person of recognized accomplishment in media, to be a member of the judging panel and award certificates and cash prizes which are meaningful to the participants.

Our schedule has an entry deadline of April 15. During the remainder of the month, the Festival Committee will pre-screen all the entries in their entirety, and select the best and/or most representative twenty-five. These will be screened by the judges May 1 & 2. On May 8, an opening will be held for approximately 100 invited guests. The following two days will be public screenings of the Festival, held in a very accessible space at Cornell University. We are also making arrangements for airing the Festival winners on the local cable, and taking the program to other cities as part of the Visual Massage multi-media show.

For your participation in this event we are offering an honorarium of \$100, plus travel and living expenses for two days. We would be most gratified if you would serve on our panel.

Perhaps I should explain who we are. Ithaca Video Project is a non-profit educational corporation dedicated to the credo "Toward Greater Communication". Our purpose is to provide the tools and expertise to people who want to use the medium of non-broadcast video to create, to state, to ask, to influence or to cry out in any form they desire. To that end we maintain a pool of portable video equipment available for rental at nominal fees. We teach workshops in basic and advanced video production, and maintain an electronic editing facility at our studio. Our staff of six has experience ranging from broadcast to guerilla television, photojournalism to graphic design, and animation to administration. We also produce in-house programming, act as technical advisers to people using our facility, and constantly work to match people with something to say with the tools and techniques for saying it.

As might be expected, our resources are limited. We presently function with partial funding from the New York State Council on the Arts, income from rentals and workshop



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fees, and grants for specific projects. We are proud of what we have accomplished in the past three years. A lot of which has been by biting off what might appear to be a lot to chew.

If serving on our panel is something you are willing and able to do, please contact us as soon as possible. Should you not be able to join us, we would appreciate any suggestions you might have as to someone who might be interested and available.

Toward Greater Communication,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Novack'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

James Novack
Festival Director

Dec. 20, 1981

Dear Steina and Woody,

Here are some Afterimages with my article on the Ithaca Festival. I never got to tell you in person (I missed the last class) how much I enjoyed your class in Buffalo this semester. I really learned a lot, and all I can say is I hope I accurately described your tapes!

I won't be registering for any classes in Buffalo next semester, but hope to come over for some of the evening presentations at Media Study or sit in on a class or two.

Right now, it's 11° and snowing, and there's already a fair amount on the ground, so I'm sure you are glad to be in Santa Fe.

Have a nice holiday. I certainly plan to, as I have 2 weeks off!

All my best,

Cindy Furlong

P.S. Here's also a catalogue from the video show that was here and will travel