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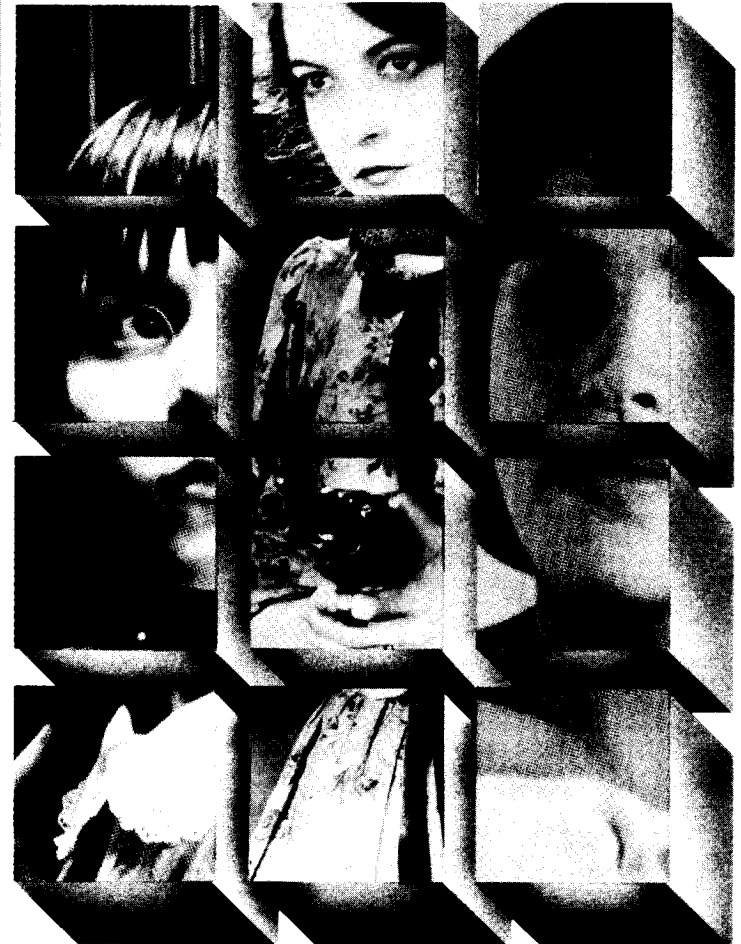
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WOMEN AND MOVIES III

AN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILMS AND VIDEO TAPES
BY WOMEN DIRECTORS, WRITERS AND PRODUCERS



MARCH 4-13, 1983

AFI THEATER

DYAN CANNON

Honorary Festival
Chairperson

LILLIAN GISH

Festival Guest
of Honor

Sponsored by the Washington, D.C., Chapter of
Women in Film and Video, Inc. and The American Film Institute

MARCH 5

1:30 P.M.

VIDEO ART WITH STEINA VASULKA

Steina Vasulka, born and raised in Reykjavik, Iceland in 1940, began a music career in her youth as a concert violinist, studying harmony and music theory. In 1959, her musical studies brought her to Czechoslovakia where she met and married Woody Vasulka, an industrial engineer as well as jazz critic, photographer, and filmmaker. With Steina's background in music (with its mathematical abstractions) and Woody's interest in technology, it's not surprising that soon their future careers would lead them toward the exploration of video technology.

In 1965 Steina moved to New York City where she made a living as a freelance musician. In 1969, she was introduced to video for the first time. She describes this early experience:

"We would come in and just sit for hours and watch feedbacks--it's a self-made process...Then we started to figure out how to interfere with it, how to control it, what to do to change it--to find out the laws, if there were any--why it happened in the first place, what was the reason for it, and why the hell I was staring at it."

In 1970, with a modest purchase of a portapac unit, sound synthesizer and monitors, the Vasulkas began creating videotapes of performances--taping small gatherings of New York artists or larger events such as the concerts of Jethro Tull and Jimi Hendrix. They formed a group in 1971 called "Perception" after receiving a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts, through Electronic Arts Intermix. The grant funded the now-famous exhibition center--The Kitchen. Steina's development as a video artist moved into a new realm in the 1970's. No longer interested in framing an object in front of the camera as in film and traditional television, Vasulka's interest began to develop in the manipulation of what she calls "machine vision" in which "all camera movements are pre-programmed mechanically and optically and executed without further intervention." Creating a form of television that is far different from what most television viewers expect, Vasulka uses computers and electronic synthesizers not as a means to an end but as part of the end product itself. Her videotapes and installations created in real time, fuse art and technology.

In 1973, the Vasulkas were invited to work at the WNET-TV Lab in New York and then followed that experience with a move to the Center for Media Study, SUNY, in Buffalo. In 1975, her work began to explore space and time. She explains:

"There are two ways to induce movement to a still image; to move the camera or to have something move in front of the camera. By mounting a camera on a motor driven device (a car, a turntable), I could make timeless cyclical programs of zooms and turns."

In 1978, she exhibited a major work MACHINE VISION at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo. MACHINE VISION is a collection of video installations grouped around a center piece "Allvision," an installation with a mirror sphere, two cameras and two monitors, "signifying the awareness of an intelligent, yet not human vision."

The development of her video exploration continues to investigate new realms. Both Vasulkas take on projects which they feel can teach them more about technology and the creative process. Their world of video art now includes computers and custom-designed equipment which serve their very specialized needs.

Steina Vasulka's work has been acclaimed internationally and she has been the recipient of numerous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and the New Mexico Arts Division. In 1976, she was a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship.