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**ROBESON CENTER GALLERY**

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# CONTEMPORARY SYNTAX

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November 11 through December 23, 1987

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## **ROBESON CENTER GALLERY**

Robeson Campus Center  
350 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Newark, New Jersey 07102  
201/648-5970/5912

### Gallery Hours:

Monday through Friday 11:30 - 5:00 p.m.  
Tuesday and Thursday 11:30 - 6:00 p.m.  
and by appointment

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

**RUTGERS**  
Campus at Newark

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# C O N T E M P O R A R Y   S Y N T A X

## LIGHT AND DENSITY

November 11 through December 23, 1987

There is a dominant concern with the presence of light in all of the work of *Contemporary Syntax, Light and Density*. Light is seen as the content, as a visual element, and as a technological component. Both artificial and natural light are used by these artists to make visual statements that are both symbolic and abstract. Light is evident in several ways. It can be seen in the luminosity that is possible to achieve with paint, in the inherent, reflective qualities of the materials, and in the form of pure light. It can also be seen in the form of both radiant and transmitted light, in light that is ambient and natural or in light that is electronically processed. While there is a range in the mediums used from video and projected imagery to painting and sculpture a consistency in the involvement with light is evident.

The paintings of Emil Bisttram, *Moon Magic* and *Sailboats and Rope*, both from 1950, contain symbolic references to light, as a transcendental and natural force. The high contrast of the values and the discrete and specific imagery of a moon and cross give the works spiritual overtones. Light is apparent in the form of a metaphor.

For J.M.W. Turner, *Sensuous Geometry, Planar Researches* and *Meditations II, Dragonfly Series*, two paintings by Douglas Craft, have a thinly applied surface imbued with light. A predominant use of white with a restrained use of color and a repetitive linear structuring suggest a visual equivalent for rays of light.

A similar subtlety can be seen in the work, *Kerouac's Road* by Ronald Bladen, a minimal work from 1985 that incorporates aluminum and pine to make a statement about a horizon of light. Bladen's work gives us an awareness of planar shifts, and seems to reduce the elements of the work to its most essential.

The two paintings by Norman Lewis, *Ovum*, a work from 1961, and *Seachange XV*, a work from the latter part of Norman Lewis's career, contain central forms of light. In *Ovum* a central and brilliant sphere of light is surrounded by markings that suggest dissipated particles, particles of light or of matter. Ovoid white forms float on a dense blue background, in *Seachange XV*, that again suggest and refer to movement of light and energy.

Pure and radiant light is used in *Toothache*, a painting by Toshinori Kuga. The fluorescent, black light tube generates a deep ultraviolet light which gives a three dimensional quality to the painting's imagery while also functioning as a formal, horizontal element. The use of actual light in the painting gives the work an actual metaphysical aura not possible to achieve with paint.

*Light Bulb IV*, by Ted Victoria, also uses pure light. The filament of the light bulb turns on and off thus letting the viewer know that the light, movement and energy of this work is actual. Victoria uses the most simple optics, eschewing technology, to make this ethereal work, a work that does not have any physical actuality beyond the energy of the lightbulb.

The nuances of ambient light are a concern of Frank Gillette, Nan Hoover, Mary Lucier, and Bill Viola. Light is used to provoke emotional responses to a place. The investigation and recording of the shifts and changes of light over time is a fundamental concern of these works. Again light is used as a metaphor for a transcendental force. The untitled work by Robert Beck has a close relationship to the paintings of Norman Lewis. A field of moving light actively fills the screen and moves through time repetitively. Lewis's paintings are a metaphor for the light and movement that can be seen in this piece by Robert Beck.

Electronically processed light can be seen in the work, *Artifacts* by Woody Vasulka. The light and the density of the electronically manipulated imagery changes through time and juxtaposes purely abstract imagery with layers of figurative images. Vasulka presents us with slices and fragments of multiple imagery that is manipulated repetitively to make a very abstract statement about the relationship of the illusion to the actual.

The works of Bruce Fordham sculpt with apparent motion, time and light. Fordham's involvement with kinetic sculpture in the 1970's has evolved into an involvement with computer technology. This technology is used to create apparent motion rather than mechanical motion, through the sequential patterning of color, light and sound.

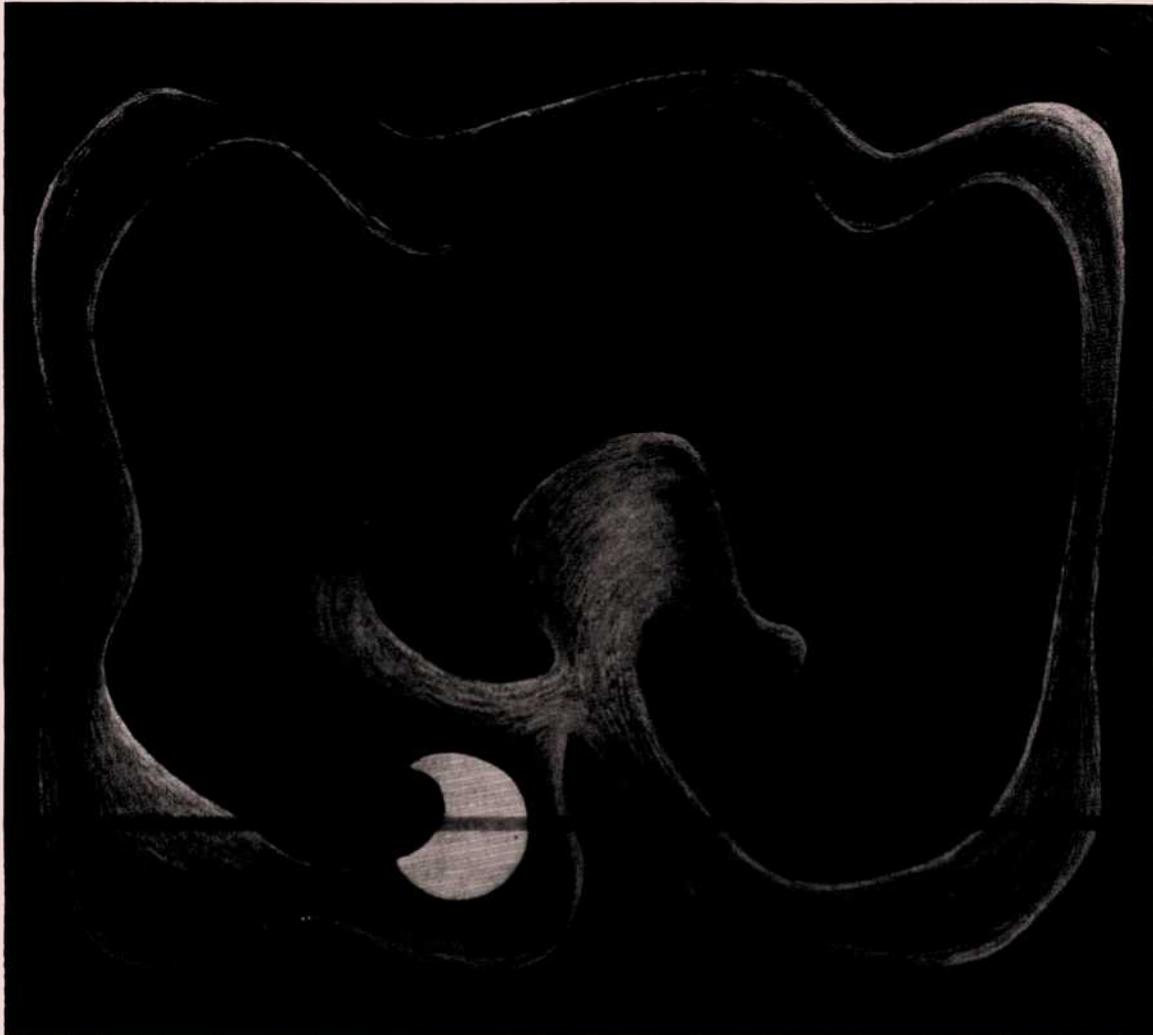
In *Pink Progression*, a 1987 work, musical notes are used to reinforce and stress the progression and movement of the light. The rapid movement of the light and shadow relate closely to the movement of light and shadow in Vasulka's *Artifacts*.

Pure light is used in these works. Light is seen as a clean, technological element rather than an evocative and sensual form.

I would like to thank the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, Alan Brown and Phillip Jones of the Robeson Campus Center and the Office of the Provost, Rutgers-Newark, for their ongoing support of the gallery. I wish to thank my student gallery assistants, Marissa Liberti and Janice Ferrari, and Olga Valle, curatorial assistant, for their continuing hard work and dedication to the gallery.

I would also like to thank the following for their assistance and generosity in the loan of works for this exhibition: Electronic Arts Intermix, Newark Museum, Ouida Lewis, and Luise Ross Gallery.

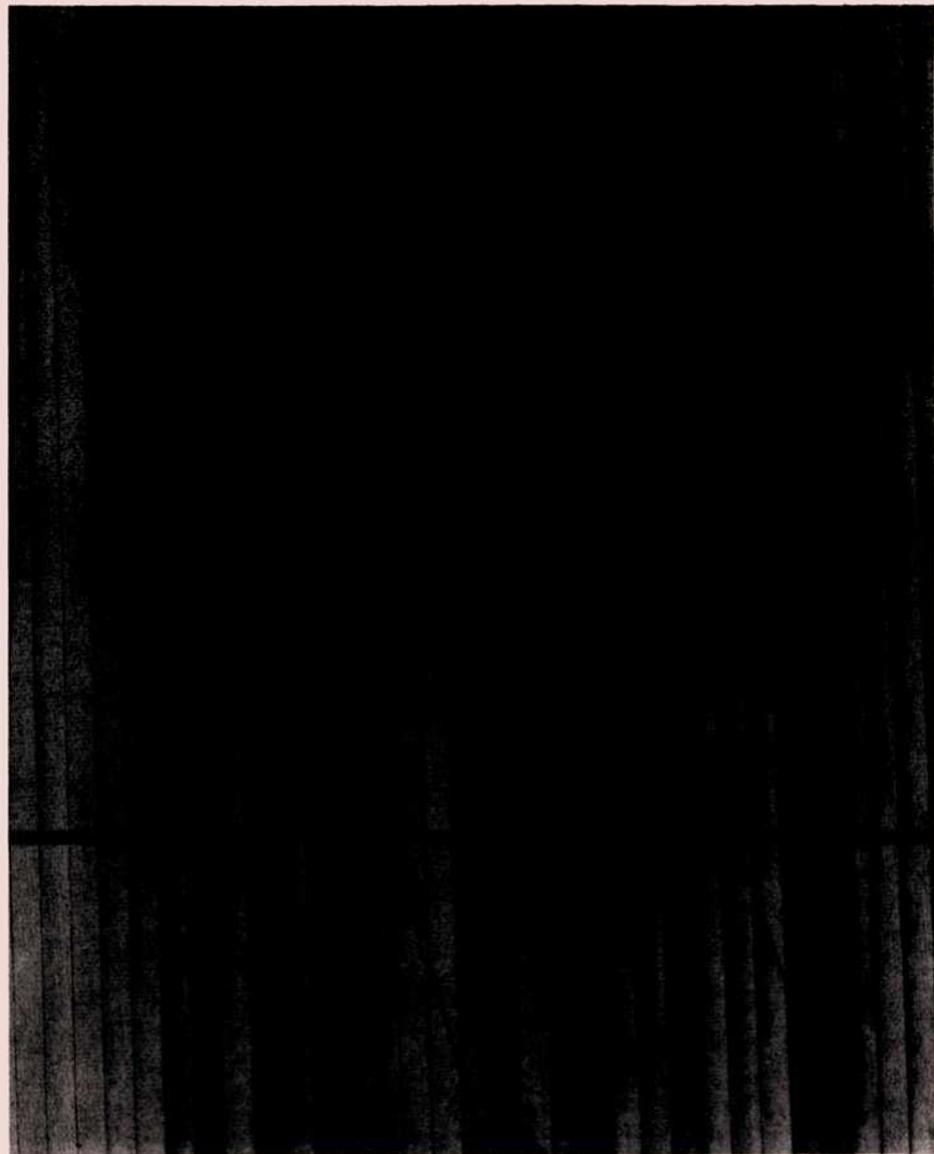
**Alison Weld**  
Gallery Curator



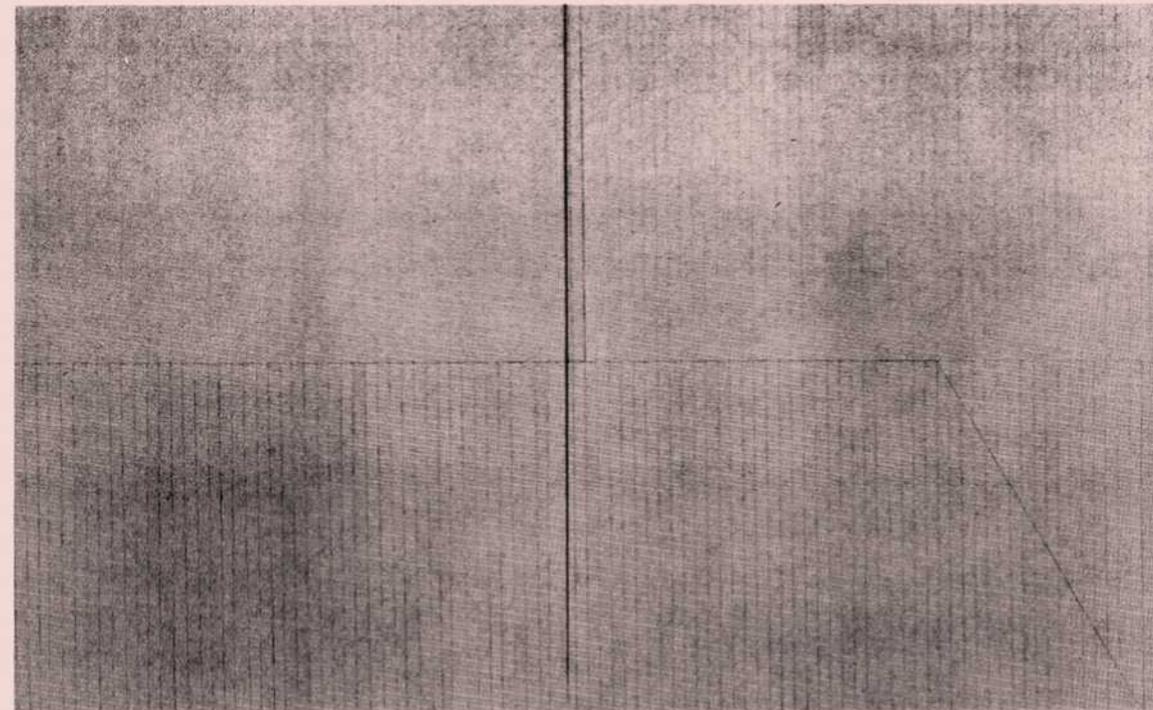
**Emil Bisttram**  
"Moon Magic"  
1950  
Oil on Canvas  
32 x 36 inches  
Courtesy of Luise Ross Gallery



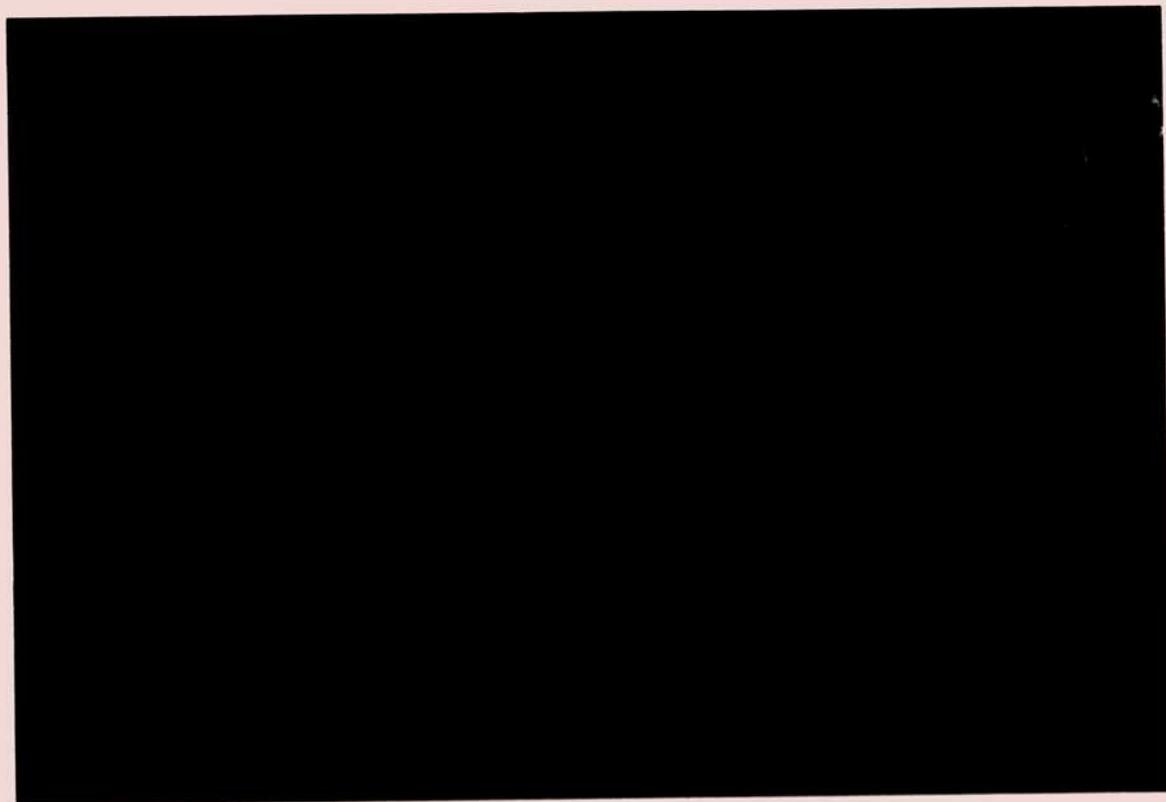
**Emil Bisttram**  
"Sailboats and Rope"  
1950  
Oil on Canvas  
45 x 40 inches  
Courtesy of Luise Ross Gallery



**Douglas Craft**  
"Meditations II, Dragonfly Series"  
1976  
Acrylic on Canvas  
60 x 48 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



**Douglas Craft**  
"For J.M.W. Turner, Sensuous  
Geometry, Planar Researches"  
1978  
Acrylic on Canvas  
60 x 96 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



**Norman Lewis**  
"Ovum"  
1961  
Oil on Canvas  
50 x 71 inches  
Courtesy of Mrs. Ouida Lewis



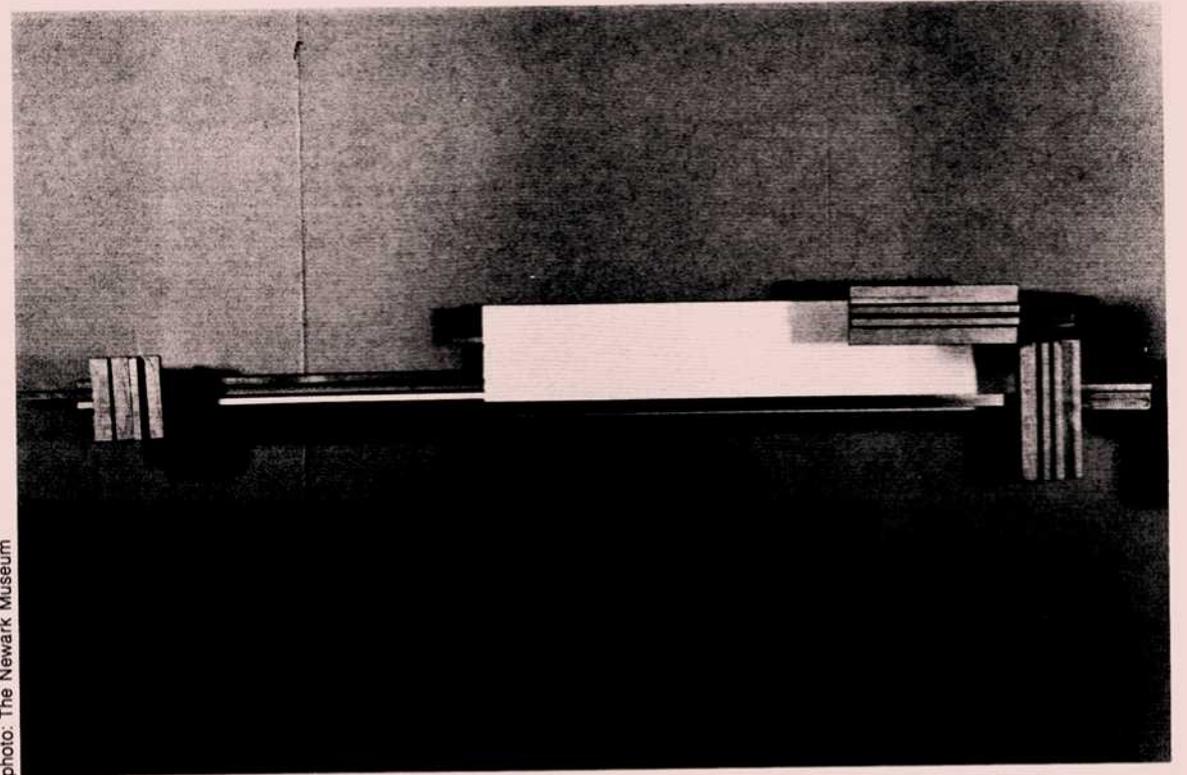
**Norman Lewis**  
"Seachange XV"  
1977  
Oil on Canvas  
50 x 72 inches  
Courtesy of Mrs. Ouida Lewis

photo: Janice Young



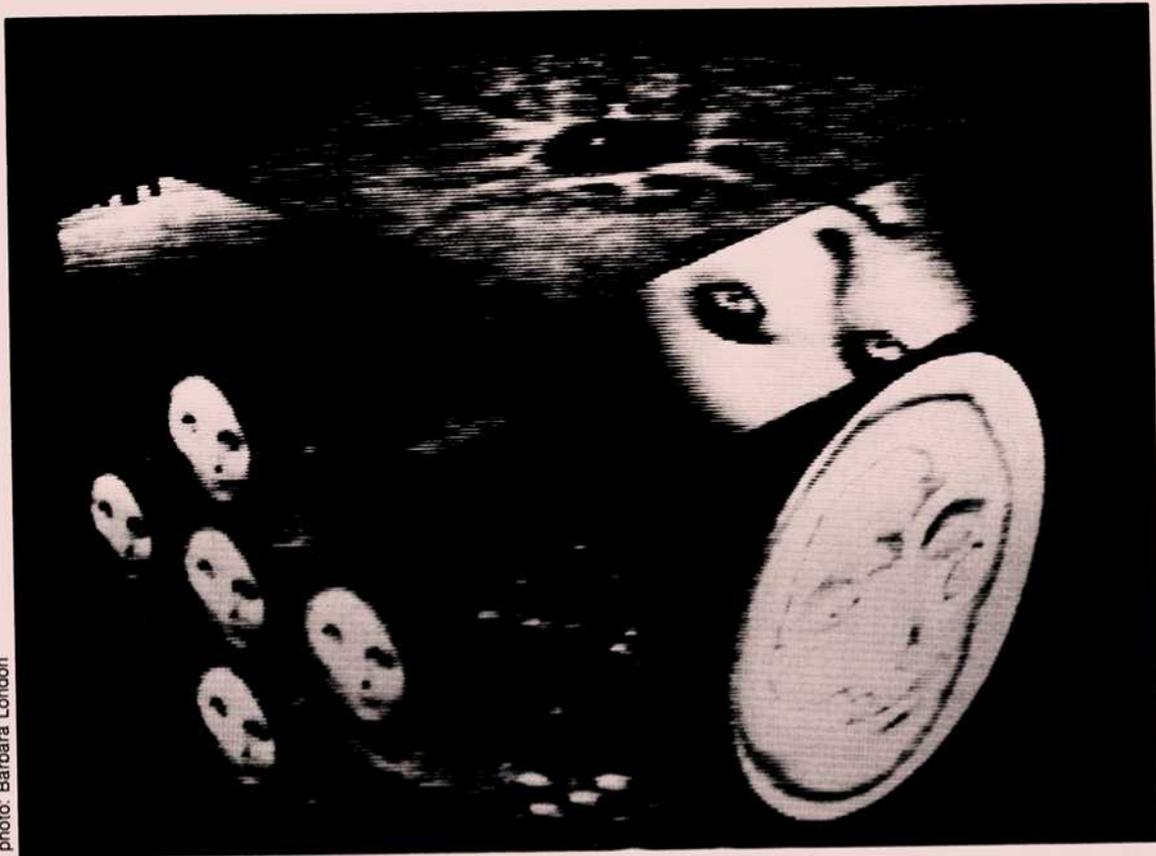
**Robert Beck**  
"Untitled"  
1985  
Video  
10:00 minutes  
Courtesy of the artist

photo: The Newark Museum



**Ronald Bladen**  
"Kerouac's Road"  
1985  
Painted and Natural Wood, Aluminum  
17 x 10 1/4 x 10 inches  
Courtesy of the Newark Museum,  
The Members Fund, 1986

photo: Barbara London



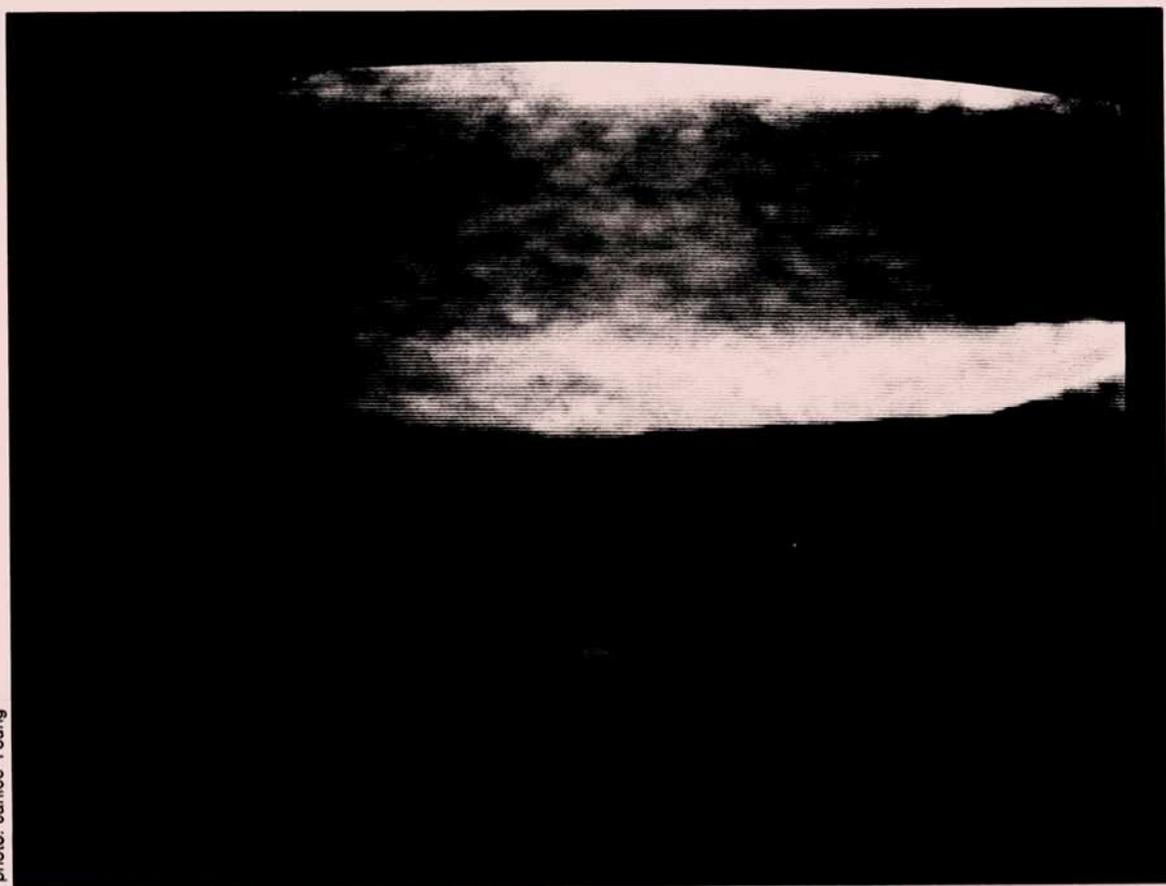
**Ed Emshwiller**  
"Sunstone"  
1980  
Video  
3:00 minutes  
Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix

photo: Marita Sturken/Courtesy EAI

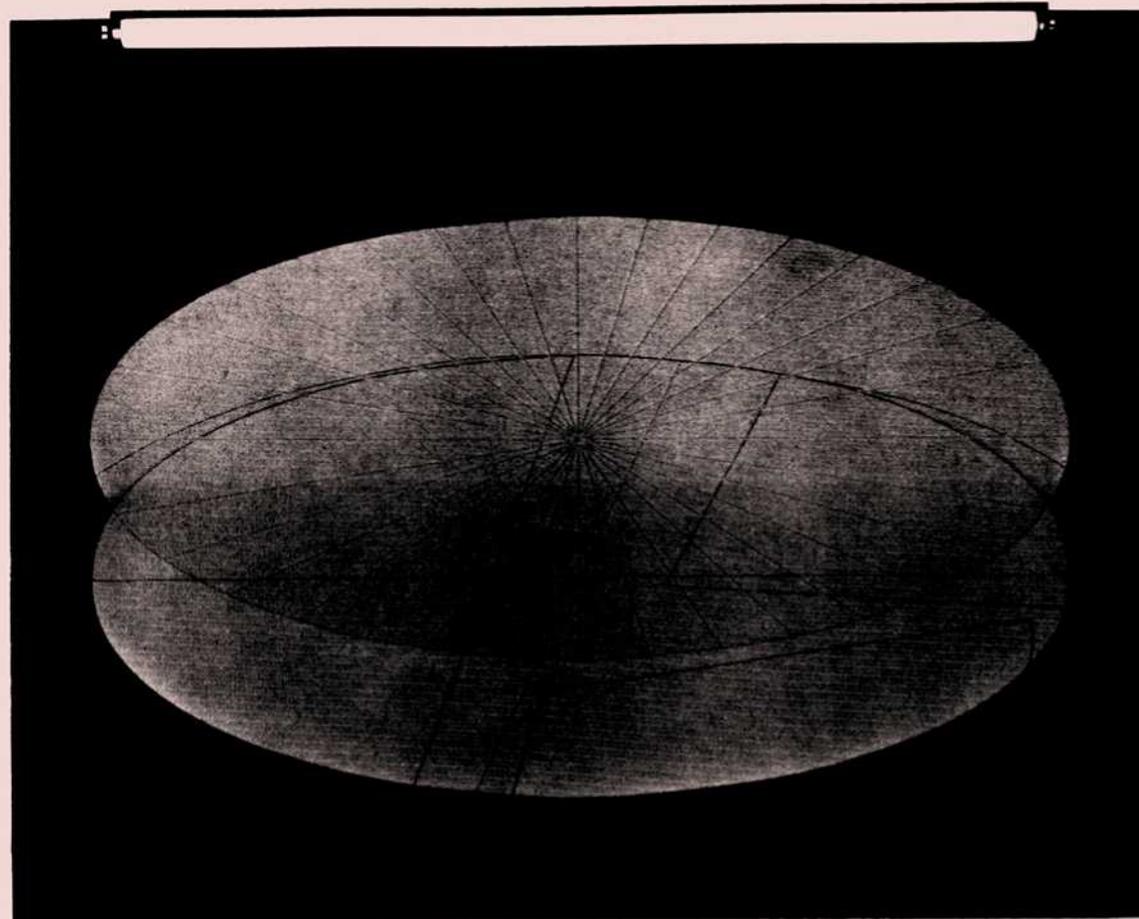


**Frank Gillette**  
"In the Creeks"  
1984  
Video  
59:27 minutes  
Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix

photo: Janice Young

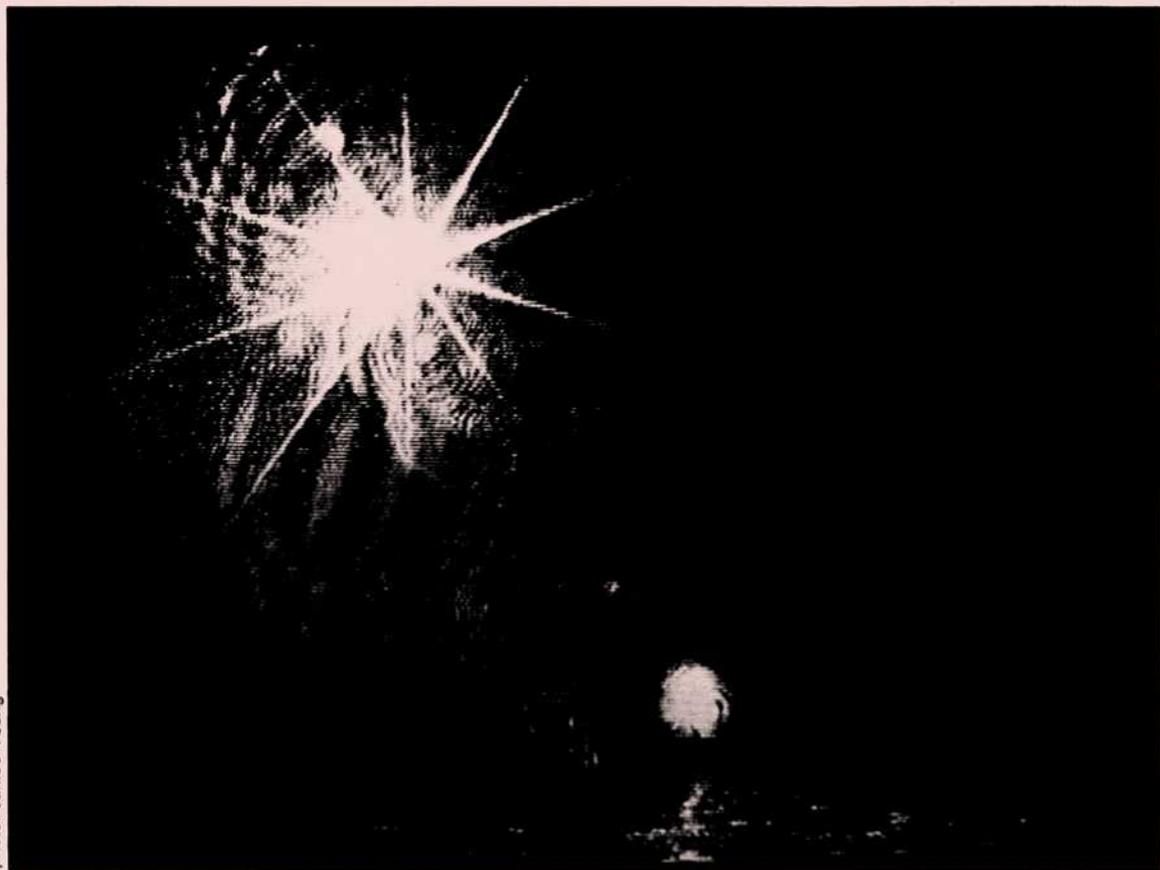


**Nan Hoover**  
"Light and Object"  
1982  
Video  
20:00 minutes  
Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix



**Toshinori Kuga**  
"Toothache"  
1987  
Mixed Materials on Canvas  
with Blacklight  
48 x 60 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

photo: Janice Young



**Mary Lucier**  
"Birds Eye"  
1978  
Video  
23:00 minutes

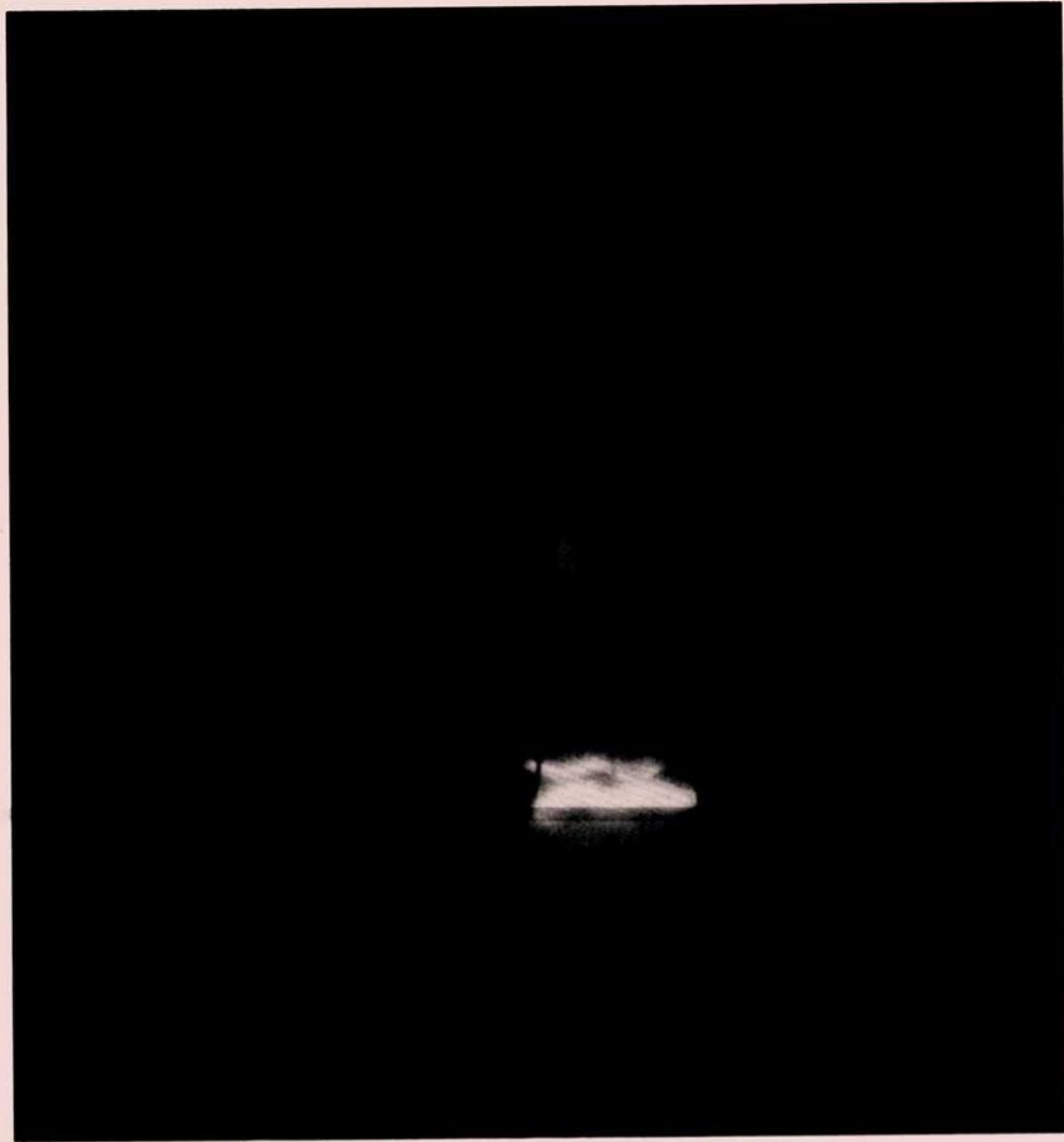
Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix

photo: Electronic Arts Intermix



**Woody Vasulka**  
"Artifacts"  
1980  
Video  
22:00 minutes

Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix



**Ted Victoria**  
"Light Bulb IV"  
1973  
projected image  
Courtesy of the artist

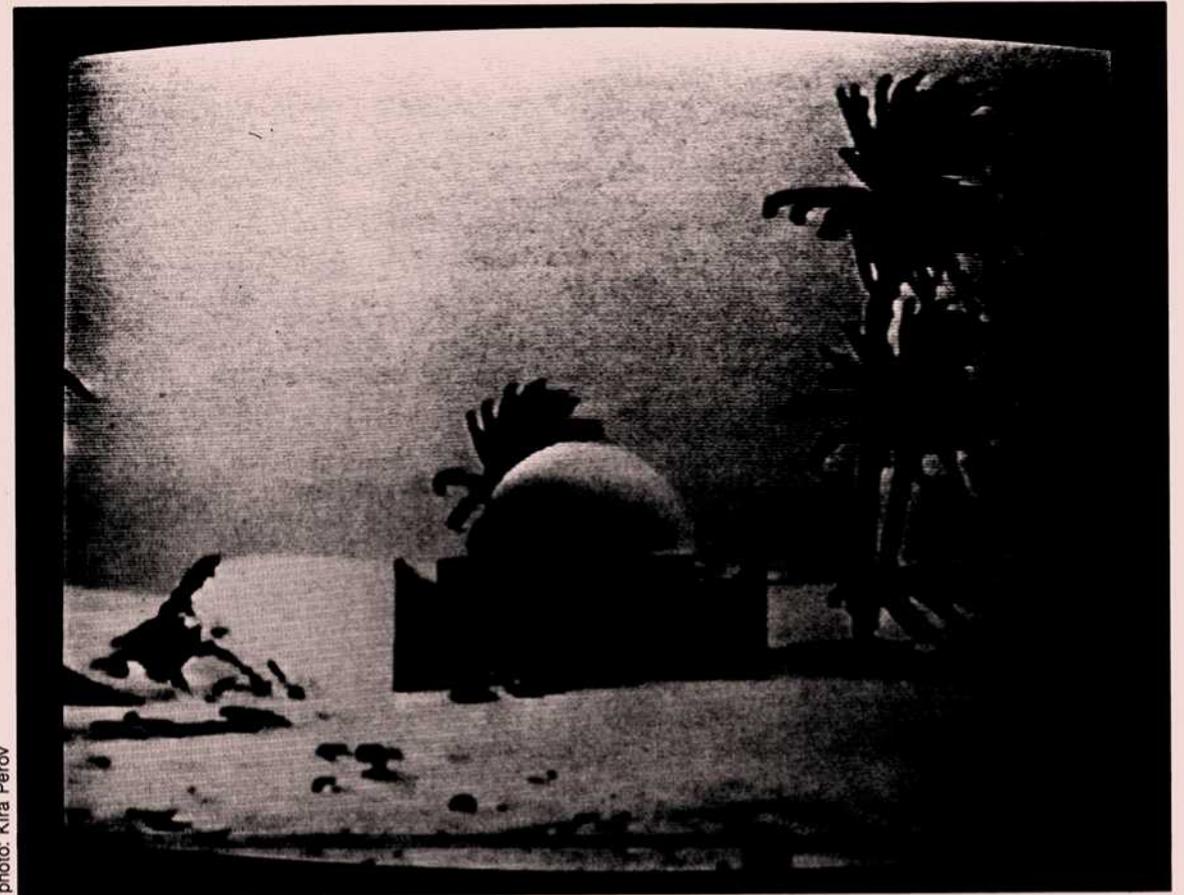


photo: Kira Perov

**Bill Viola**  
"Chott el-Djerid"  
1979  
Video  
28:00 minutes  
Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix

## CONTEMPORARY SYNTAX, LIGHT AND DENSITY

## Checklist

### Robert Beck

"Untitled" 1985 Video Excerpt 10:00 minutes  
This work on loan to the Gallery courtesy of the artist.

### Emil Bisttram

"Moon Magic" 1950 Oil on Canvas 32 x 36 inches  
"Sailboats and Rope" 1950 Oil on Canvas 45 x 40 inches  
These works on loan to the Gallery courtesy of Luise Ross Gallery.

### Ronald Bladen

"Kerouac's Road" 1985 Painted and Natural Wood, Aluminum 17 x 101 7/8 x 10 inches  
This work on loan to the Gallery courtesy of the Newark Museum, The Members Fund, 1986.

### Douglas Craft

"For J.M. Turner, Sensuous Geometry, Planar Researches" 1978 Acrylic on Canvas 60 x 96 inches  
"Meditations II, Dragonfly Series" 1976 Acrylic on Canvas 60 x 48 inches  
These works on loan to the Gallery courtesy of the artist.

### Ed Emshwiller

"Sunstone" 1980 Video 3:00 minutes  
This work on loan to the Gallery courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.

### Frank Gillette

"In the Creeks" 1984 Video 59:27 minutes  
This work on loan to the Gallery courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.

### Nan Hoover

"Desert" 1985 Video 10:30 minutes  
"Light and Object" 1982 Video 20:00 minutes  
"Return to Fuji" 1984 Video 7:30 minutes  
These works on loan to the Gallery courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.

### Toshinori Kuga

"Toothache" 1987 Mixed Materials on Canvas with Blacklight 48 x 60 inches  
This work on loan to the Gallery courtesy of the artist.

### Norman Lewis

"Ovum" 1961 Oil on Canvas 50 x 71 inches  
"Seachange XV" 1977 Oil on Canvas 50 x 72 inches  
These works on loan to the Gallery courtesy of Mrs. Ouida Lewis

### Mary Lucier

"Birds Eye" 1978 Video 23:00 minutes  
"Ohio to Giverny: Memory of Light" 1983 Video 18:25 minutes  
These works on loan to the Gallery courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.

### Woody Vasulka

"Artifacts" 1980 Video 22:00 minutes  
This work on loan to the Gallery courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.

### Ted Victoria "Light Bulb IV" 1973 projected image

This work on loan to the Gallery courtesy of the artist.

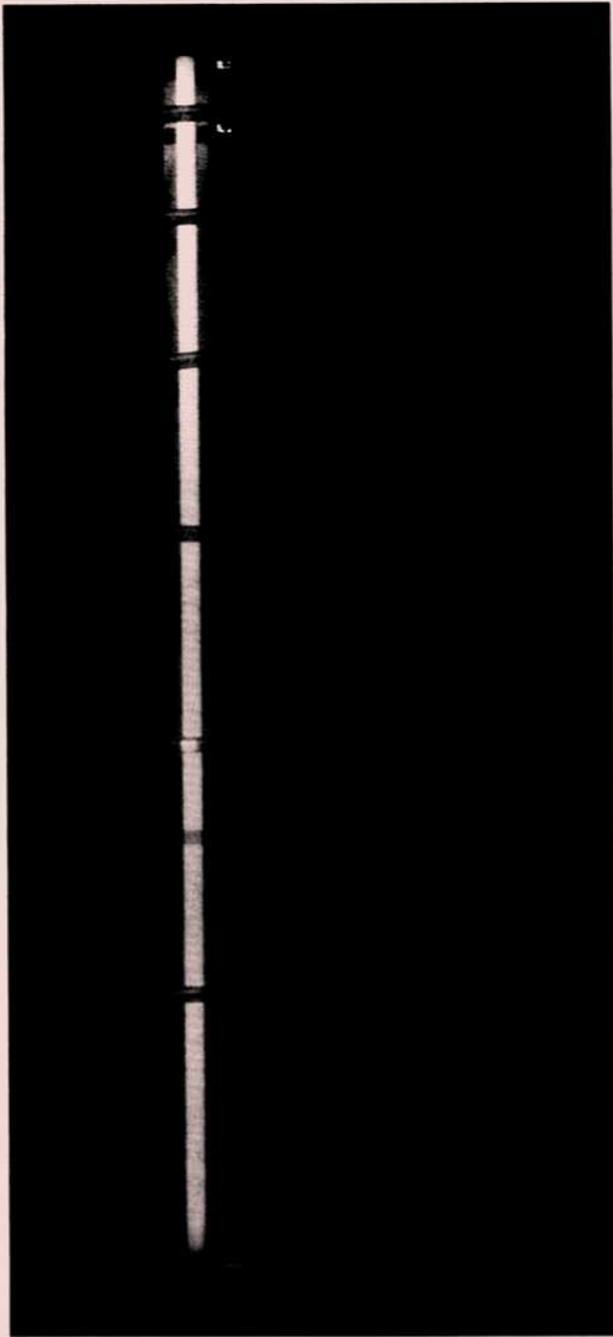
### Bill Viola

"Chott el-Djerid" 1979 Video 28:00 minutes  
"Sweet Light" 1977 Video  
These works on loan to the Gallery courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.

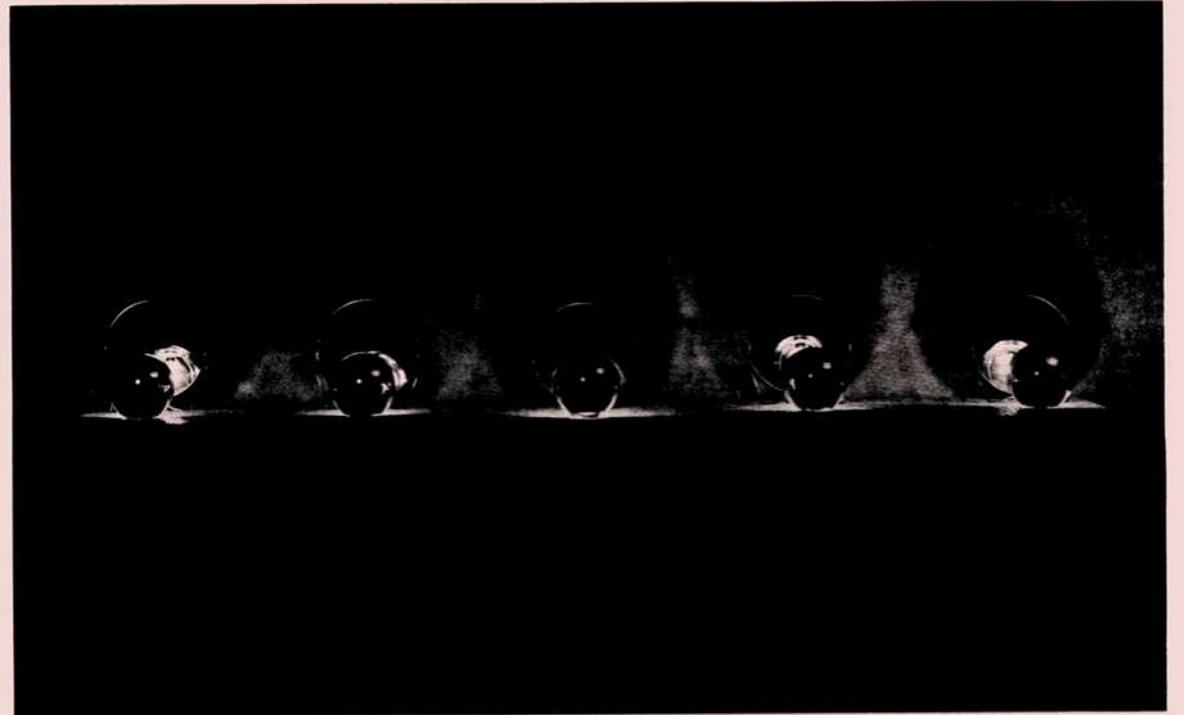
GALLERY II

**BRUCE FORDHAM**

New Jersey Artist Series



**Bruce Fordham**  
"Pink Progression"  
1987  
Computer with Light Tube, Plexiglass and Sound  
.48 minutes  
96 x 20 x 7 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



**Bruce Fordham**  
"Mirror, Mirror"  
1987  
Computer with Light Bulbs, Mirrors, Wood, and Sound  
.48 minutes  
14 x 48 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

## BRUCE FORDHAM

November 11 through December 23, 1987

### Checklist

- "Experiments in Light Bulbs, Color and Apparent Motion" 1987  
Computer with Light Bulbs and Plexiglass 1.25 minutes 60 x 12 x 9 inches
- "Pink Progression" 1987  
Computer with Light Tube, Plexiglass and Sound .48 minutes 96 x 20 x 7 inches
- "Mirror, Mirror" 1987  
Computer with Light Bulbs, Mirrors, Wood, and Sound .48 minutes 14 x 48 inches
- "Computer Starts In Five Seconds" 1986  
Computer with Plexiglass .50 minutes 20 x 15 x 5 1/4 inches
- "Frozen Memory" 1986  
Computer with Plexiglass and Speech 2.19 minutes 20 1/2 x 15 1/2 x 5 inches
- "Red System" 1986  
Computer with Plexiglass and Speech .42 minutes 20 x 15 x 5 1/4 inches
- "Watts Governor" 1985  
Computer with Plexiglass and Sound .39 minutes 20 x 15 x 5 1/4 inches
- "System 21 33 19" 1986  
Computer with Plexiglass and Speech 1.50 minutes 20 1/2 x 15 1/2 x 5 inches

These works on loan to the Gallery courtesy of the artist.

### NEW GALLERY MEMBERS

William C. Asman	Winifred McNeill
Petah E. Coyne	Janet Ellen Morgan
Nadine DeLawrence-Maine	Helen M. Stummer
Gene Fellner	Linda Swanson/Ed Visser
Joan Fine	Mary J. Sweeney
Bryan Fisher	Jane Simon Teller
Jane Freeman	Isabelle Tokumaru
Dan Geist	Stella Waitzkin
Marion Held	Sandra West
Miriam Beerman Jaffe	