

Steina Vasulka and Allvision No. 2 at The Kitchen Center in New York

Allvision No. 2 [signifies] the awareness of an intelligent, yet not human vision. The act of seeing, the image source and the kinetic resources come from the installation itself, choreographed and programmed by the cyclical nature of its mechanical performance.
[Steina Vasulka quoted in a Kitchen press release]

Two cameras are mounted on the ends of a slowly revolving axis with a perfectly spherical mirror at the center of the axis. On the monitors, viewers see an artificially created 360 degree image. While the viewers are part of the "real" space, they can at the same time see themselves in the "imaginary" dimension created on the screens. [from a Kitchen press release description]

In 1975 Steina Vasulka (with her husband Woody one of the early pioneers of video art) started to develop her mechanical/electronic remote video machine for transforming the soft "rectangle of the video screen into circular space." Now, in 1978-79, Allvision No. 2 is an elegant and silently eloquent kinetic video sculpture, imparting to the eye of the video camera the illusion of omnipotence.

Set on a white cube placed diagonally in the middle of the 27 foot, 7 inch, by 24 foot, 6 inch gallery is the machine. The two cameras at either end of a 4 foot motor-powered boom look at and revolve around the spherical mirror. What each camera "sees" is the globe and everything reflected in it—the room, everyone in the room, including oneself, and the camera "looking" at itself, plus the real room and the "real" people in the room. What each camera sees is transmitted to each monitor, all moving in dislocated and circularly distorted in circular 360 degree space.

Therefore the sculptural aspects of Allvision are triple: the mechanical structure of the machine itself, the plasticity of the video image, which gives the illusion of space-in-depth because of its complex organization of circular form and motion, and the total configuration of the installation, which includes all the parameters of the room in its sculptural organization. It is this multi-levelness which makes Allvision such a rich piece.

Allvision simultaneously dislocates reality and resynthesizes it into a highly organized harmonious art-reality. This synthesis involves by my count eight different levels of the same reality reorganized and retransformed mechanically and electronically.

The sculpture was impeccably installed in the small gallery at the Kitchen (from December 15 to January 4) so that the piece seemed designed for the room and the room existing for the piece. Although Allvision must have this effect on many spaces, its "at homeness" at the Kitchen is particularly pertinent, as Steina was one of the founders of the Kitchen.

Hopefully, the words of this piece, meant to describe, are actually somewhat hard to decipher, mystifying. Because for all its centered simplicity, the piece is mysterious, and takes real concentrated deciphering on the part of the viewer to figure out just what is happening—what the cameras are doing there, what they are seeing, what we see on the monitors, what each monitor is seeing in relation to the cameras, how we seem to get into the picture in different ways, just how many different ways we are being seen, what happens when we move in relation to the whole thing.

Even after I had "figured it out," I still had a sense of mystery, and deciphering turned to a kind of philosophical meditation, until the piece asked the kind of philosophical questions such as "if a tree falls in a forest and no one is there, does it make a sound?" Since the space-time are the space and time of a compressed infinity organized out of immediate daily realities, we are able to relate ideas of infinity, paradox, riddle to ourselves and our surroundings, especially because ourselves and our surroundings are precisely the apparent subject of Allvision's imagery. Allvision is the land of meditative art being cultivated by artists seeking sanity and a profundity in a more-than-often hectic society which mainly cultivates the superficial. The whir of the machine, the sounds of distant footsteps, doors opening and closing, which accompany Allvision (the actual sounds of the piece and the environment), remind me of Susan Sontag's essay "The Art of Silence," its language of not-words, not-images, produced for a kind of positive endlessness.

Allvision to me relates to the history of twentieth century sculpture as much as it does to video art. The revolving machine reminds me somewhat of Tinguely's self-destroying machines, though Allvision's function is to organize and synthesize rather than disrupt and destroy. And the spherical video image is perhaps in the tradition of Arp sculpture.

It is this writer's opinion that video sculpture such as Allvision is one of the most vital and relevant forms of sculpture in the 1970s, and should be regarded as such by established museums. Video sculpture (all the artists I have written on for Field of Vision—Shigeo Kubota in the last issue, and Robbins, Clarke, and Vasulka here, make video sculptures) distill the positive electronic energy-field and the feedback properties of our twentieth century electronic technology into concentrated, highly charged art of processes, structures, and imagery.

By Amy Greenfield

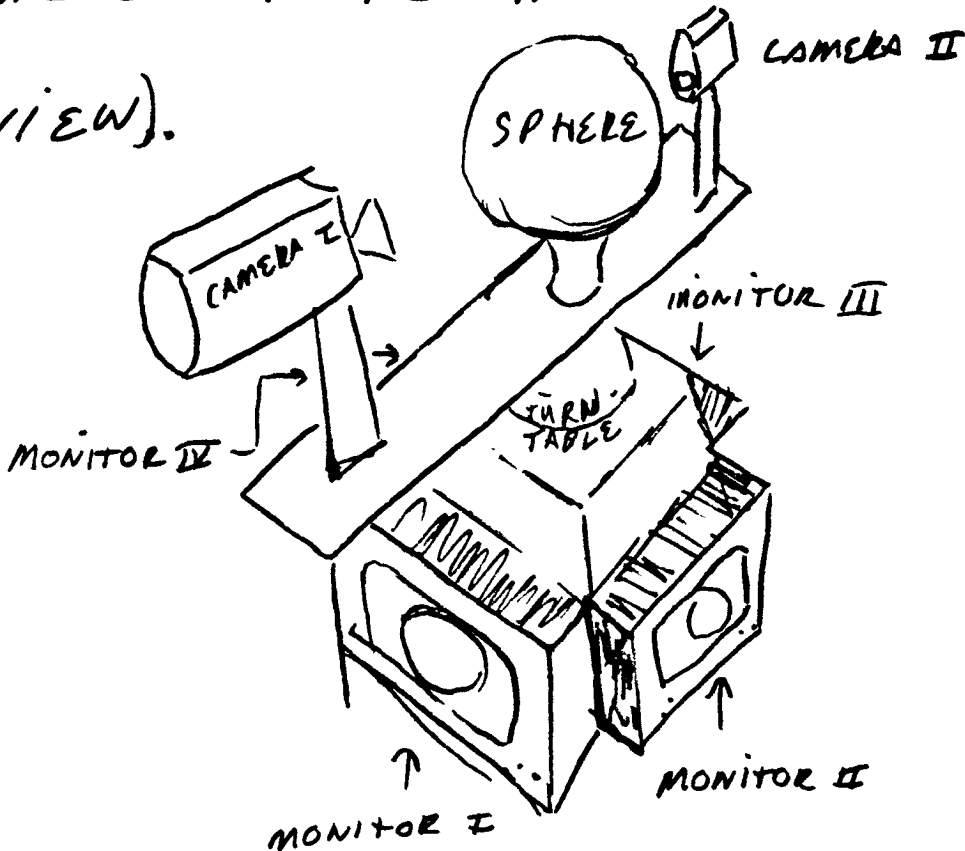
I AM SUBMITTING
A PROPOSAL FOR ALLVISION, A
VARIATION OF THE BUFFALO (CATALOG)
AND PITTSBURGH (FLYER) ONES. IN THIS
ONE I WOULD PLACE THE MONITORS (4)
UNDER THE TURNTABLE, EACH HEADING
IN ONE DIRECTION S-W-N-E.

FOR A B/W VERSION I HAVE ALL EQUIP-
MENT (TURNTABLE, SPHERE, TWO CAMERAS
TWO LENSES), EXCEPT FOUR B/W MONITORS.

FOR A COLOR VERSION I WOULD NEED
2 COLOR CAMERAS, 2 WIDE ANGEL

LENSES AND 4 COLOR MONITORS (ONE PROVIDING THE TURNTABLE & SPHERE).

THE SAMPLE TAPE HAS ASSORTED IN- AND OUTDOORS FOOTAGE, NEEDLESS TO SAY THAT IN A GALLERY SITUATION THE IMAGES WOULD REFLECT THE GALLERY AND VIEWERS (AND WHATEVER PAINTINGS OR SCULPTURES MIGHT BE IN THE CAMERA VIEW).

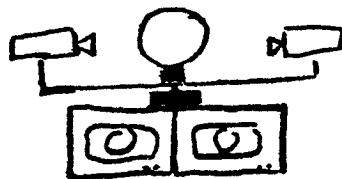


SINCERELY,
STEINA

THE VIDEOTAPE: (Less than 5 min., no sound)

1. A COLOR CAMERA SAMPLE IN MY STUDIO
BECAUSE OF LESS WIDE ANGLE LENS, THE BACKGROUND
IS OUT OF FOCUS
2. A BLACK/WHITE CAMERA SAMPLE WITH ULTRA
WIDE ANGLE LENS, EXAGGERATING SPACE/MOVEMENT
3. A FEW EXAMPLES OF OUTDOOR WORK.

P.S. IF THE PIECE STANDS UP AGAINST A
WALL OR IN A CORNER, WHERE PEOPLE
CAN NOT WALK AROUND IT, 2 MONITORS
WILL DO WELL.



SINCERELY, STEINA

The Kitchen Center for Video and Music

press release

SPECIAL HOLIDAY VIDEO INSTALLATION

STEINA

ALLVISION NO. 2

December 15th through January 4th
(closed 12/25, 12/26, 1/1)
The Kitchen Gallery
484 Broome Street Free

The Kitchen Center is pleased to present a special holiday video installation by Steina Vasulka. Entitled "Allvision No. 2," the installation was the centerpiece of a highly-praised exhibition held at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo.

"Allvision No. 2" is remarkable for its elegant use of complex technology: two cameras are mounted on the ends of a slowly revolving axis with a perfectly spherical mirror at the center of the axis. On the monitors, viewers see an artificially created 360° image. While the viewers are part of the "real" space, they can at the same time see themselves in the "imaginary" dimension created on the screens.

In writing on this installation, Steina notes that "Allvision No. 2" signifies "the awareness of an intelligent, yet not human vision. The act of seeing, the image source and the kinetic resources come from the installation itself, choreographed and programmed by the cyclical nature of its mechanical performance."

Steina has long been recognized as a pioneer in the field of video. Icelandic by birth, she traveled and studied extensively in Europe before coming to America in 1965. With Woody Vasulka, she presented work in some of the first video exhibitions ever organized. Their collaborative works made artistic use of innovative techniques such as audio-generated imagery, feedback, image decay, keying and scan processing. Steina's own tapes include "From Cheektowaga to Tonawanda" (1975) and "Flux" (1977). Her work has been exhibited at the Whitney Museum, Global Village, Max's Kansas City, the Everson Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, among others. Steina is a co-founder of The Kitchen, and we welcome her back for the presentation of this special video installation.

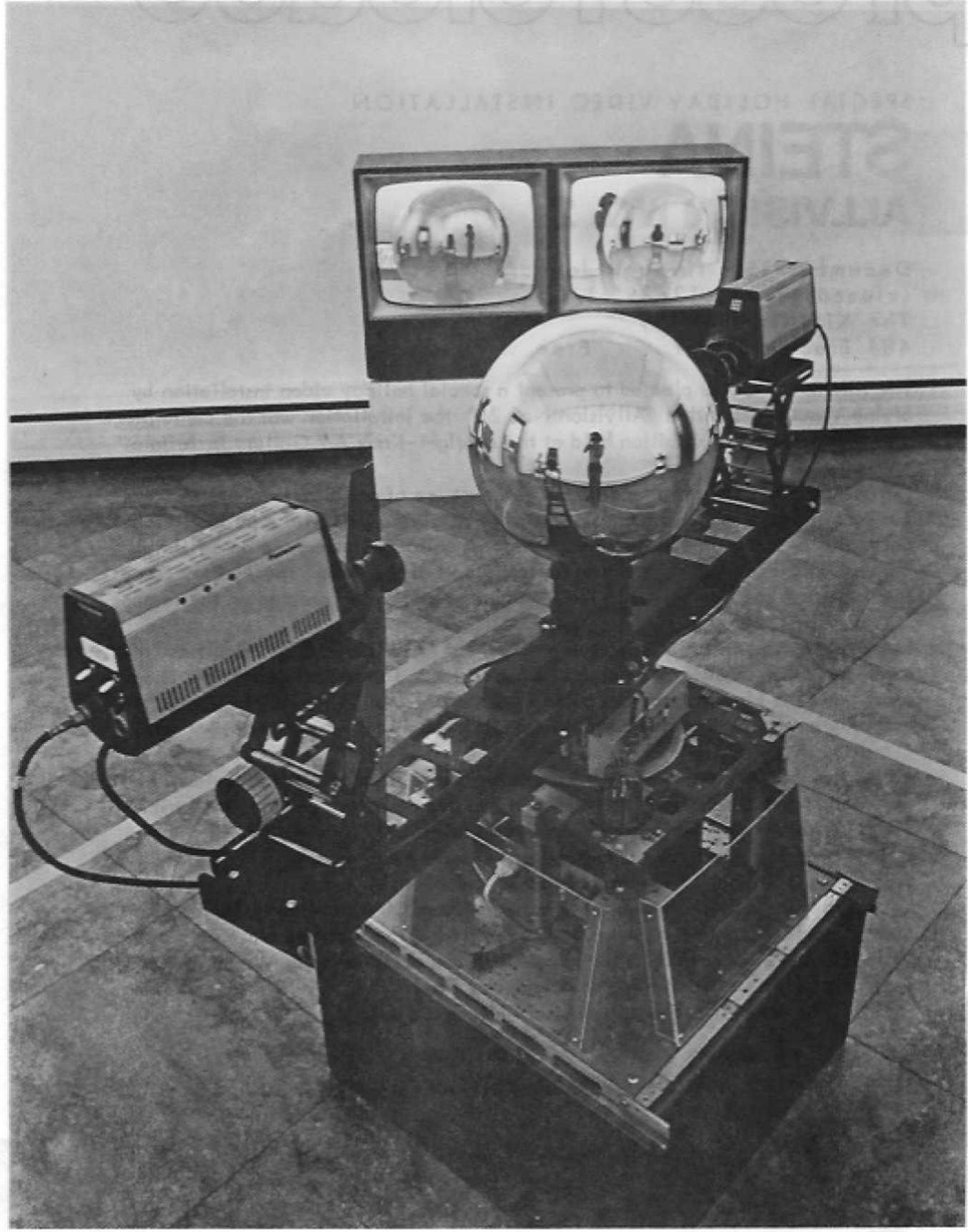
For further information, please call The Kitchen Center, 925-3615.

484 Broome Street between West Broadway and Wooster, New York City

press release

The Kitchen Center for Video and Music

SPECIAL HOLIDAY VIDEO INSTALLATION



484 Broome Street between West Broadway and Wooster, New York City

The Kitchen Center for Video and Music

press release

STEINA & WOODY VASULKA - "Made for Broadcast" (6 30-minute shows, Tues, Wed., Thurs.). This is a series of shows made for both informational and aesthetic purposes. Commissioned in 1978 by the N.E.A. and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, The Vasulkas' edited six half-hours of broadcast-oriented programs from ten years of exploring and experimenting in video. Each program centers on the single video theme indicated in the titles:

"Matrix" (1969-72)	Tues
"Vocabulary" (1973-74)	Tues
"Transformations" (1974-75)	Wed
"Objects" (1975-77)	Wed
"Steina" (1975-77)	Thurs
"Digital Images" (1977-78)	Thurs

The "Made for Broadcast" tapes represent a chronological history of The Vasulkas' ten years of video investigation.

"Digital Processing Works" (Friday & Saturday)

These pieces were realized on the "Digital Image Articulator", a machine designed and constructed by Schier/Vasulka. The purpose of the "Imager" is to study "real time" video image performances. It is a low resolution/high speed field-by-field video operating tool. The tapes are about the struggle to define the basis for computer control of a digital image device for a descriptive language and necessary programming languages. The Vasulkas will continue this exploration in the evening screening "Mostly Digital" on October 18 at 8:30pm.

STEINA VASULKA was born in Iceland and was a member of the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra until 1964. She came to the United States in 1965; since 1968 she has been an important force in the development of electronic arts. Besides being the co-founder of The Kitchen, she has constantly explored the possibilities for the generation and manipulation of the electronic image through a broad range of technological tools and aesthetic concerns.

WOODY VASULKA was born in Czechoslovakia where he produced and directed short films. He too came to New York in 1965, and, with Steina, founded The Kitchen. He was one of the early experimentors with electronic sounds, stroboscopic lights and video, and invented the "Vasulka Imaging System"; he continues to work with electronics, computers and video.

"What is important is the absence and presence of things, and not the contrast of one thing with another." (Steina Vasulka)

"It's the notion of the organization of energy in time that for me is the key to all sorts of changes within life." (Woody Vasulka)

The Kitchen Center for Video and Music

press release

VIDEO VIEWING ROOM

October 1-31, 1981
Tues-Sat, 1-6pm
The Kitchen, 484 Broome St.
Tel: 925-3615

During the month of October, The Kitchen Video Viewing Room will feature:

(1-2pm)

GALLOWAY/RABINOWITZ - "The Satellite Arts Project" (July 26; November 21, 22, 23, 1977). The Satellite Arts Project took place between NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland and the Educational TV Center in Menlo Park, California. Live video cameras were looking at two members of the Mobilus Dance Troupe positioned at each location. The live images from both locations were relayed by NASA satellite facilities to a central control studio where the images of the geographically-separated performers were mixed, combining them in one composite image. The live composite image was then returned by a satellite and displayed in front of the performers at both locations simultaneously; the dancers were then able to view themselves apparently standing next to their distant partner. The project objective was to use dance as a mode of investigation, to feel out this new relationship between body and image which the technology makes possible, and, to determine the possibilities and limitations of visual interaction, synchronization of movement and improvisation under the conditions of satellite signal delay.

KIT GALLOWAY and SHERRIE RABINOWITZ are California-based artists working with satellite technology. They founded Mobile Image in order to do large-scale projects which explore unique configurations of two-way satellite video and remote image gathering. Their work employs the services of many disciplines, artists, and technicians who make up a network of problem-solvers, investigators and performers. Of their own work they say, "Our work is model-building. We have identified what we consider to be the main aesthetic parameters of this technology and within these parameters are interested in seeing how far we can push technology to accommodate and support a cooperative and creative environment."

(2-3pm)

THIRD WORLD NEWSREEL WORKSHOP - "The Rehearsal" (30 minutes, color)

press release

THE KITCHEN

video • music • dance • performance

NOTE NEW ENTRANCE

59 WOOSTER STREET

CONTACT:

MaryAnne McGowan

925-3615

STEINA & WOODY VASULKA

-GALLERY OPENING: THE WEST

November 12 - 30, 1983

Opening: 3:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Gallery Hours: 1-6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday

Video by Steina Audio by Woody

"Any action of man on land stays recorded for long in the South-West. In no other region of the country does the presence of the sun play such significant role in the ecology of land, arid and eroded, with an exceptional clarity of the night skies, forming notions of extra terrestrial importance in the minds of its inhabitants. The landscape, by its dimension and by its geometric and textural variety, inspires man to create harmonious structures, dwellings, and other earth works. The Very Large Array (VLA) radio telescope system utilizes these conditions and has also inspired creations of profoundly meditative pieces of land art based upon geo-observations and other events related to the position of stars.

'THE WEST' is a video environment, involving situations where human expression results in the marking of earth by building dwellings and ceremonial structures, creating works of art and developing scientific instruments of landscape proportions."

The Vasulkas

VIDEO VIEWING ROOM: THE COMMISSION BY WOODY VASULKA

November 1 - 30, 1983

Screenings: 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday

Camera by Steina Vasulka

Text and character of Paganini by Ernest Gusella

Text and character of Berlioz by Robert Ashley

Video tape editing by Peter Kirby

A video opera in which two nineteenth century composers, Berlioz and Paganini, meet in a video and audio synthesized environment. Completed version.

STEINA and WOODY VASULKA are pioneers in the development of electronic

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mail: 59 Wooster Street, New York, New York 10012 (212) 925-3615

(OVER)

arts. Steina was born in Iceland and was a member of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. Woody was born in Czechoslovakia where he studied at the School of Industrial Engineering. They came to the U.S. in 1964 and founded The Kitchen in 1971. In 1974 Woody joined the faculty of the Center for Media Study at SUNY, Buffalo, and there developed "The Vasulka Imaging System," a personal imaging computer facility. Steina became a Guggenheim Fellow in 1976, and Woody became a Guggenheim Fellow in 1979. In 1980 they moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico where both THE WEST and THE COMMISSION were produced.

VIDEO, MUSIC, DANCE, PERFORMANCE & FILM

THE KITCHEN

NEW ENTRANCE AT 59 WOOSTER

THE WEST

Camera by Steina; Audio by Woody.

"Steina and Woody Vasulka's THE WEST used video (Steina's) and sound (Woody's) to address and replicate the vast, arid, clear Southwestern landscape as a site for the making of signs: ceremonial Indian dwellings, the arrays of scientific instruments New Mexico hosts, even artworks. Though more conventionally reliant on imagery than Primarily Speaking, THE WEST is just as demanding in the precision of the Vasulkas' use of video and sound to generate a phenomenological experience of space.

Austerely minimal in conception, the piece used a circle of six monitors suspended at eye level in a darkened room, thus mitigating all aspects of the standard carpeted museum room but size and emptiness. The eerie tones of the audiotrack, low-frequency sound reproduced at a high amplification, heightened the emptiness by surrounding the viewer sitting in the center of the circle of monitors, watching the imagery from below. On the screens - generally used as three pairs in this two-channel work - the structure invoked circles (the Vasulkas' mirrored, rotating globe), as well as mirror imagery. Using highly saturated reds, pinks, and blues (the color manipulation hardly seemed to intrude on the 'natural' appearance of the landscape), the imagery was in constant, stately motion; from the spinning mirrored sphere reflecting a blue sky against the red New Mexico land to the Anasazi's Casa Rinconada in Chaco Canyon, where the camera probed, in parallel but off-sync images, the passages of the ruin; from superimposed reverse pans over mesas to the mirrored sphere reflecting, and framed by, the giant silver disks of New Mexico's VLA (Very Large Array) radio-telescope system, which itself, of course, turns slowly to scan the sky.

In its representation not just of 'landscape', but of efforts to mark that landscape, to plot points in that landscape against the system of moving space - a process in which the individual is necessarily the focal point - THE WEST served as an uncanny embodiment of Clancy's thesis. It elegantly demonstrated how imagery and sound, pared down to the barest possible elements, could constitute a complex mapping of space and time."

Carol Lord
Afterimage, October 1983

THE KITCHEN video • music • dance • performance • film
512 West 19th Street (Between 10th & 11th Avenues) • New York, NY 10011 • 212/255-5793

Steina Vasulka

Monday, May 12, 1986
7:30 & 9:30pm
\$5/members free/TDF
Contact: Susan Swider
or Amy Taubin
212/255-5793

On Monday May 12th video pioneer Steina Vasulka returns to The Kitchen with her latest single and double channel works in progress. Vasulka's exploration of the possibilities of video reaches back to the late 60's when she and her husband Woody began to experiment with electronic tools of all kinds. They produced anything from feedback to media environments, computer-generated image to documentaries. In 1971 they founded an informal electronic laboratory, open to the public, in the old Broadway Central Hotel on Mercer Street. This space became The Kitchen.

Steina Vasulka will be present to give an introduction when she shows her most recent experiments in video on May 12th. It is work produced since the Vasulka's move to Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1980, and is clearly influenced by that environment. Natural imagery dominates the tapes, originating from the United States Southwest and Iceland (Steina's birthplace). The work is in various stages of progress and completion.

P R E S S R E L E A S E