

June 3. At the Kitchen. Videotape. Skip Sweeney and Video Free America. Mostly video-graphics, abstractions, feed-backs, oscilloscope forms, prismic, and concentric forms and movements. But they are all doomed because of their attempts to imitate musical rhythms, their pop and classical music soundtracks. I have a feeling that I might enjoy these tapes, if they'd only cut off the sound. A face, somebody speaking, a political speech. The face abstracted, the voice doesn't fuse with the image; nor does it clash with it in any interesting way. Some straight tv documentary footage, Frisbee contest, more abstractions, electronic sound. Imagery: second rate McLaren. It's all on eight black and white and two color monitors. Whenever I catch myself liking some parts, I find I like them not because of the image values but for the repetition aspect on the different monitors.

At the end of the evening, a piece by William Walker with no title. It's about Captain Video who comes into the room straight out of the tv set, speaks from the set to a woman in the room, and proceeds to make love to her as she crawls on top of the set—by far the most original video piece I've seen yet at the Kitchen.

June 6. At the Kitchen. Videotape. Benedict Tatti and Dimitri Devyatkin. Tatti shows two tapes. He introduces them. "I use the medium for the sake of the medium," he says. Image is an electronic abstraction, very minimal and controlled. I count that to Tatti's credit. Sound: distorted voices, music, which have nothing to do with "medium for the sake of the medium." Further complication: Images are shown on nine monitors, four vertical and five horizontal, same image on all. The monitors are arranged in the shape of the capital letter "L." This arrangement brings in such enormous visual complications that soon the whole show ends in disaster.

Video abstractions and film abstractions face the same problems as those in painting or sculpture. It's not enough to draw a line or to make one or other electronic movement. They must work aesthetically. And that's another story.

Tatti's second tape shows a hand, a palm. Themes and variations on the image of hand. I liked the tape, I thought it was very fine. But again, it was very difficult to watch it, because one had to eliminate from the eye's view

the other eight monitors which were detracting and destroying the simple forms of the tape. I think Tatti destroyed the real beauty of his tape by presenting it in the pretentious multiple arrangement of the nine monitors. More than that: I think that the whole idea of presenting tapes in multiple arrangements instead on one single monitor is a fad, a hang-up which video artists will have to overcome.

Tapes of Dimitri Devyatkin. Finally, an interesting and intelligent sensibility in video. I really liked Devyatkin's tapes. They are very short and very basic. Mostly, they are one-idea tapes. Of course, again, they were much damaged by the way they were presented — on nine monitors in the "L" shape arrangement. Still, Devyatkin's tapes came through. Even the music that Devyatkin uses doesn't destroy his tapes. Wisely, or intuitively, he never tries to edit his tapes to the rhythms of his sounds. The music becomes just a silence-killing background, it doesn't destroy his images a bit.

The tapes themselves are very basic and classic. A man playing violin, medium shot, video color variations on the image as the violinist plays. It's done subtly and effectively. Another piece — I think it's called "Factorial!" — shows a man, again medium shot, sitting in front of the monitor. We see him in another monitor within the monitor. Another classical early video form. The man moves his hand, his fist, moves his head back, forward. "The Monstrous Eye" and "Funeral" go into more dangerous video abstractions. But even here Devyatkin shows his subtle taste for color and movement. There is an intelligence and sensitivity reflected in everything he does. The first video artist whose work I want to see again.