Film: Videotape Program at Whitney

## 9 Items to Be Shown Through Thursday

C

52

## By ROGER GREENSPUN

The second of the Whitney Museum's videotape programs is much like the first. but with the difference, for me, that the medium begins to seem more familiar and freer, less a collection of special effects and more a continuity of gestures and responses. Thus, I found the parti-colored facial mugging in this week's segment from Nam June Paik's "Video Commune" a considerably more relaxed and pleasant experience than last week's. And the new work by Woody and Steina Vasulka, a gorgeous flux of macrocosmic and microcosmic images called "Elements," suggested a compacted power that may have been missing or that I may simply have missed in a previous tape of the Vasulkas.

Like "Elements," most of the Whitney tapes are purely abstract, their images in one way or another programmed into the tape rather than photographed or pasted up

The Program VIDEO PROGRAM II: NAM JUNE PAIK, VIDEO COMMUNE, 6 minutes; ERIC SIEGEL PLAYS THE SIEGEL VIDEO SYNTHESIZER, 15 minutes; VIDEO TUNNEL by Dimitri Devyatkin, 7 min-utes; LONG SOUNDS by Richard Felci-ano, 8 minutes; ALEPH-NULL by Shrid-har Basat and Charles "Politiks, 12 and, 8 minutes; ALEPH-ROLL by Sand-har Bapat and Charles "Philips, 12 minutes; FEED FIELDS BACK by Richard Lowenborg, 12 minutes; POINT OF INFLECTION by Stephen C. Beck and Richard Foliciano, 8 minutes; DESCARTES by Joanne Kyser, 11 minutes; ELEMENTS by Woody and Steina Vasulka, 12 minutes. At the Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Avenue and 75th Street. Film showings every day at noon (except Thursday) 2 and 4 P.M., Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at 6 and 8. The program runs through Dec. 16.

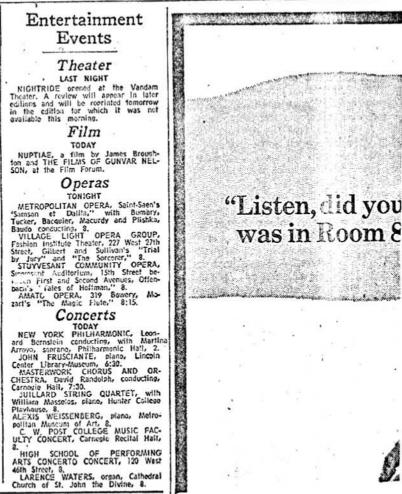
or even drawn. Some of these tapes, for example "Aleph-Nul" by Shridhar Bapat and Charles Phillips and "Point of Inflection" by Stephen Beck and Richard Felciano, are visually stunning. But none of them escape the tendency toward trivia that characteristically haunts attempts to confer actual movement upon forms that, if still, would suggest nothing so much as the potential for movement. The result is not realization but limitation. And for all their vigorous ingenuity, the tapes seem to channel rather than to free ways of seeing.

I am somewhat more interested by what happens to ways of seeing in Richard

Gestures and Responses Provide a Focus

Lowenberg's "Feed Fields Back", a movie reminiscence, in which a W. C. Fields comment about a wonderful experience he once had with a rattlesnake so upsets the lady he is speaking to that her face begins to idstort and then to dissolve along the airwayes (or closed-circuit cable waves, or whatever). It seems a moment of considerably more interesting risktaking than the wildest of abstract patternings, however they may be made to pulsate against your brain.

Out of the brain comes "Descartes" by Joanne Kyger and Robert Zagone, not only because it is brainy but also because it means to visualize thoughts-Cartesian thoughts, naturally, such as "I think: hence I am. Get the picture?" or "To doubt is a drag." This is the kind of game-playing in the midst of the general gloom that closed circuit television could use more of, and I liked it even when I didn't know what was going on.



THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1971