Victor Sullivan, Video Lithograph, 1974.

ELECTRON/ORGANISM

Victor Sullivan

Since the beginning of the eighteenth century the glow of an evacuated discharge tube had puzzled the investigators of electricity, but not until the late nineteenth century did this light between electrodes promise to bring about a revolution not only in physics, but also in communications.

The light—found to disappear in vacuum, color the sides of a glass tube with fluorescence, cast shadows, and even move light objects—was called "cathode rays" by Sir William Crookes in 1876. By 1894 Johnstone Stoney had suggested an alternate name—electrons. Three years later J. J. Thompson removed any doubt concerning some consequences of an electron particle theory by confirming Perrin's discovery that cathode rays carried a negative charge. By measuring the magnetic deflection of the rays in different gases, he observed that the mass-charge ratio of the particles remained the same and that their mean free path depended only upon the relative density of the transversal medium. He concluded in "Cathode Rays" (*The Philosophical Magazine*, London, 1897) that:

> ". . . we have in the cathode rays matter in a new state, a state in which the subdivision of matter is carried very much further than in the ordinary gaseous state: a state in which all matter . . . is of one and the same kind; this matter being the substance from which all the chemical elements are built up."

This was the first step toward the discovery of the inner structure of the atom.

In 1905, following both the theory of Thompson and a lead by Edison, Lee de Forest invented a device that was to provide revolutionary possibilities for the generation of electronic signals. The triode valve or vacuum tube with its two properties, amplification and feedback, was at the same time an observing instrument and a tool, the first fully flexible cybernetic device to operate on information rather than on power. Perhaps the most characteristic product of twentieth-century technology, it gave us radio, television, and ushered in the age of the computer.

Revolutionized by de Forest's vacuum tube and brought into its present solid state era by the 1948 transistor of Brattain, Bardeen, and Shockley, electronic communication by the turn of the century may be developed into a primarily laser technology. But for the immediate future we can expect inexpensive home video systems and battery-operated receivers, direct broadcasts from satellites, conference television, rapid transmission and reception of facsimiles, and Picturephones. There will be an increase of home education by video and programmed learning, and television could become three-dimensional.

This revolution in communications technology has had its aesthetic parallels. In emphasizing the consecutive relation of input-output, a definite past-future order, communications technology has placed itself in the Bergsonian irreversible duration of evolution and organism, in a world in which there is always something new, the world in which we communicate. Though some may recognize a schism between technological and aesthetic forces, electronic communications has become the backbone of an electographic art.

Making a distinction between technological instrumental values and nontechnological expressive ones is less useful, perhaps, than the recognition that different aesthetic values attach themselves to different technologies. Technological change may not lead immediately to the production of great or even good art, but once it has become pervasively part of the social structure, it sets the condition for the emergence of new aesthetic values. Not only is the thought of every age reflected in its technique, the technique of every age is reflected in its thought.

Both Dürer's and Schongauer's engravings from the early sixteenth century and the lithographs of Goya, Delacroix, Daumier, Manet, Degas, and Toulouse-Lautrec from the nineteenth were at once results of technical innovations, devices for social communication, and a means by which the monopoly of art by a small group was broken down. Now we face a parallel revolution, but one even more widespread, involving greater numbers of people and greater numbers of nations. Who will be the electographers of the late twentieth century, and what images will travel a wired earth?

Technology may effect change, but the nature, direction, and magnitude of that change is conditioned and controlled by the prevailing socio-cultural structure and its predilection to adopt new goals or to adapt existing means. Whenever new tools create possibilities for doing new things, or for doing old things in new ways, subgroups within the system must decide whether, to what extent, and in what way they want to be influenced—and restructure themselves accordingly. Electronic communication technologies provide not only a means for expressive innovation but also a challenge to the structural base of art dissemination. When the process of art, its criticism, and some of its products can be transformed into a transmittible signal, who will deliver it and to whom and at what price?

In an emergent post-industrial society, with a well developed capability for electronic communication, perhaps the social structure, guided by functional rationality, and the culture, concerned with self-justification, will create symbiotically, a sensitively attuned, widely distributed electographic art.

THE GRAMMAR OF THE VIDEO IMAGE

Eric Cameron
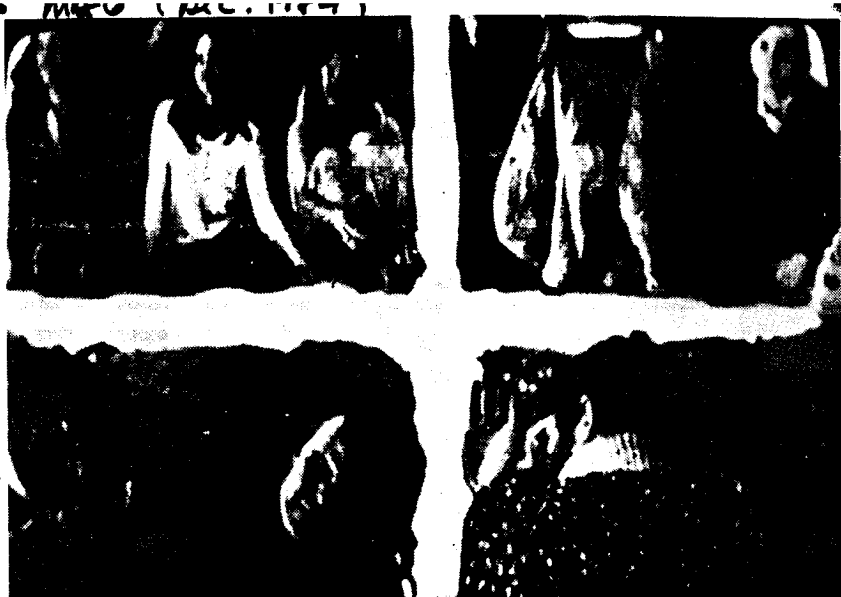
Patrick Kelly, Strip Up, 1971. 45 minutes.

The body of videotapes produced around 1971 by students and faculty of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design constitutes an exploration of the structure of video-recording that is wide-ranging in its perception of salient features, and acute in its grasp of their mode of qualifying meaning. They spell out, in effect, a grammar of the language of videotape.

The television screen (like a film, a photograph or a painted picture) presents a configuration of tonal variations over a two-dimensional surface that may communicate the sense of a world fully in the round, but it retains an independent and sometimes contradictory geometry. In a class of Patrick Kelly's, as their contribution to *13 Spatial Definitions*, John Handforth had a group of fellow students place themselves so as to present a circular outline to the camera, while Brian Tanner, in his piece, had hands coming from the side to isolate a void in the centre. In *Strip Up*, Patrick Kelly applied strips of masking tape to the monitor to help performers take up the rectangular shapes of the uncovered surface. Interpretation depends on cues that may be misleading. In another 'spatial definition,' Marion Petite appears to be viewed from above walking; it is only when she sits up that we see she was lying on the ground, moving her feet against a wall.

Like film, but unlike painting and photography, videotape has the ability to communicate action. Movement, as well as size and shape, is subject to the perspective of the camera.

Wallace Brannen walked a mile along a road towards the camera, at a steady pace throughout, but his apparent progress changes dramatically over the last two hundred yards.

Movement in this instance results from the behavior of the subject, but the camera itself may be moved. In Patrick Kelly's *Catch*, masking tape is fixed vertically and horizontally over the monitor forming a cross. The artist stands in front of the camera holding a sheet of plexiglass with similar markings on it. As the operator turns the camera from side to side, he follows quickly to regain registration.

The changes in image-scale produced by a zoom-lens may appear to move the camera closer to the subject or away from it. In another of Patrick Kelly's pieces, the cameraman manipulates the zoom-lens, while the artist comes forward or retreats into the distance, holding in his arms a mirror that he now tries to keep in a constant relationship to the frame of the monitor image.

Pieces like these last two are possible because telerecording (unlike cine- or still-photography) allows the performer to see his image on a monitor as it is being recorded. In *Video Tracing*, Brian McNevin sat in front of the monitor and traced the image of himself sitting in front of the monitor; he then held the tracing up to the camera, restoring the identical image in outline.

A videotape may take its image from another videotape or a
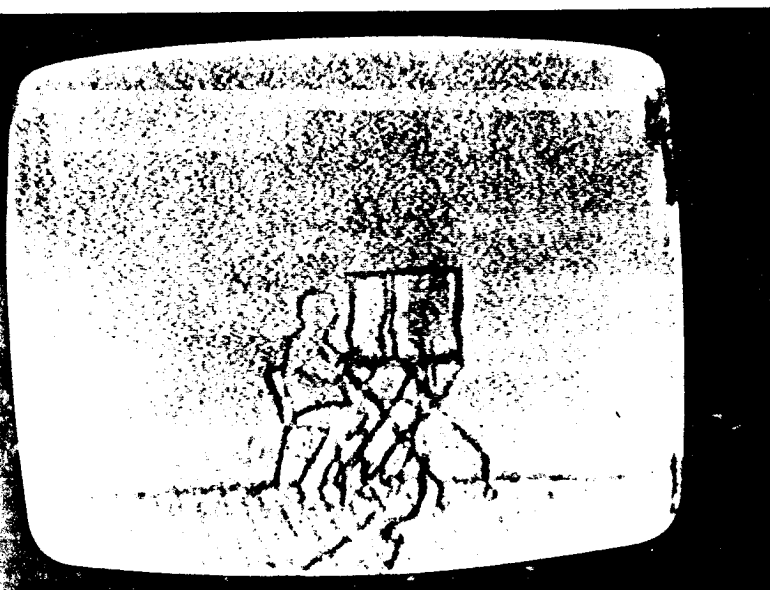
Brian McNevin, Video Tracing, 1972. 10 minutes.
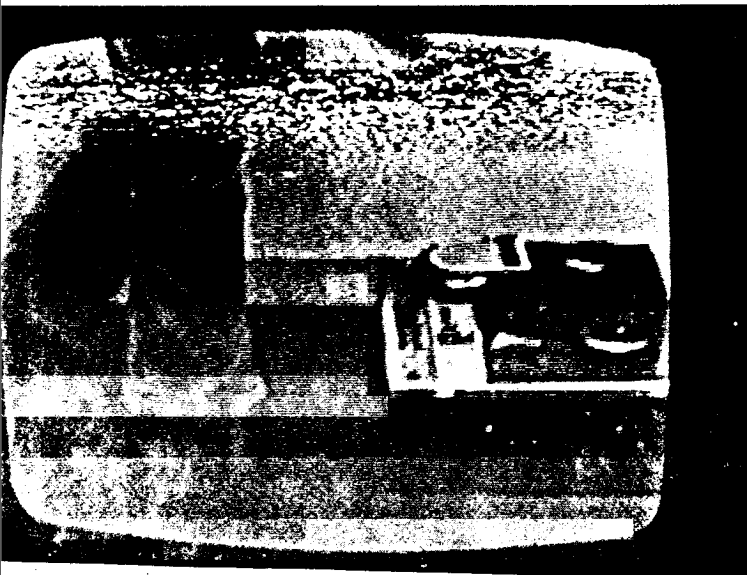

Harold Pearse, 133 Days in Halifax, 1971. 15 minutes.

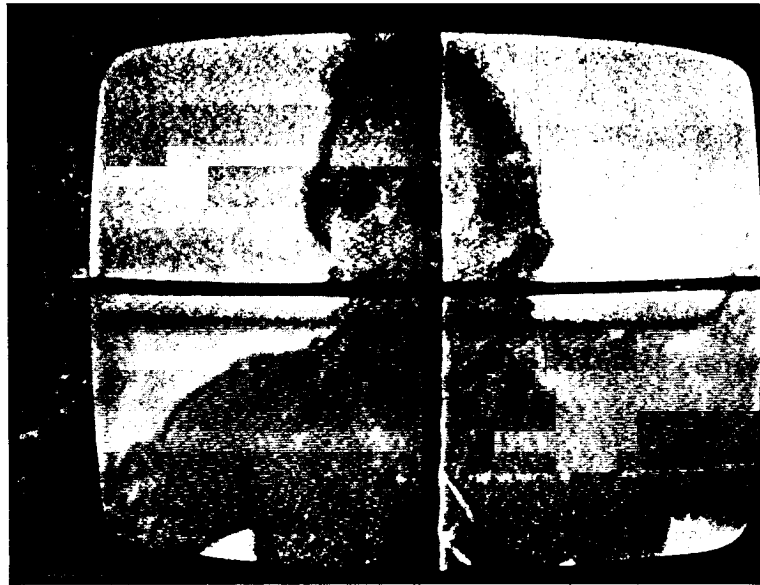(Patrick Kelly) Marion Petite. 13 Spatial Definitions, 1971. 45 minutes.

Patrick Kelly, Catch, 1971. 15 minutes.

film or photograph, but a televised photograph—or "photographic" drawing—confounds our expectation of movement. Harold Pearse's *133 Days in Halifax*, based on a series of still photographs of the same view on 133 different days, generates a revived sense of halted time as they fade into each other. Conversely, Albert McNamara's *Smile*, in arresting the movement of a transitory expression as he sits in front of the camera for half-an-hour, may momentarily call into question the reality of his own presence.

The only actual movement in videotape is that of the tape through the machine and of the resulting light impulses across the screen, and the only actual time is the time it takes these things to happen. The time of the subject, like its form, is an illusion, and likewise admits of both misinterpretation and manipulation. Student Douglas Waterman in one of the finest works to have emerged from the College had the camera trained on its own recording mechanism placed beside him on a carpet. Shuffling his feet builds up static electricity in his body. After a while he stoops and touches the tape as it comes off the recording head; the discharge erases a band that appears in replay *before* we see him bend down and touch the tape.

Television (unlike film or photography) conveys a "low resolution" image that may, for simple lack of detail, admit of ambiguities. *Front and Back* by Richards Jarden shows a figure in a dark short-sleeved shirt with arms hanging loosely by his side. The picture is cut off just below the shoulder and above the elbows.

Videotape (like film) may employ sound; it operates on twin levels of reality and illusion just like the visual aspect; and this exposes it to the same hazards. Moreover, sound and vision may be recorded independently. In *Length 4*, Gerald Ferguson sat beside a tape-recorder playing back the four-letter words from his own *Standard Corpus*, and tried to keep pace from memory. We see him hesitate, falter, and then race to catch up, but the words we hear come out with impeccable regularity—sound comes directly from the audio-recorder.

Even when sound and vision record the same situation, one may falsify the sense of the other. Douglas Waterman's *Inhale Exhale* has three performers standing round a microphone. One exhales into it, the next inhales, and so on. The sound presents a continuous pattern of breathing that is interrupted only at the visual level.

Sound relates to the perspective of the microphone as the visual image relates to that of the camera. In an extraordinarily beautiful and austere piece, another student, Percy Simmons, appears supine on the floor at some distance from the camera, but the microphone is taped to his chest; we hear his heart beat. As he raises his legs in the air, the beat quickens; then returns to normal after a short rest. In other tapes, David

Douglas Waterman, Untitled, 1971. 30 minutes.
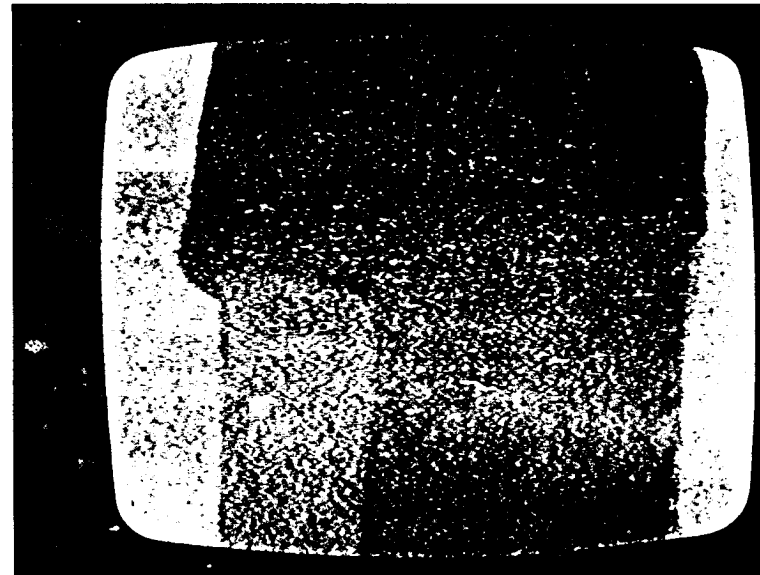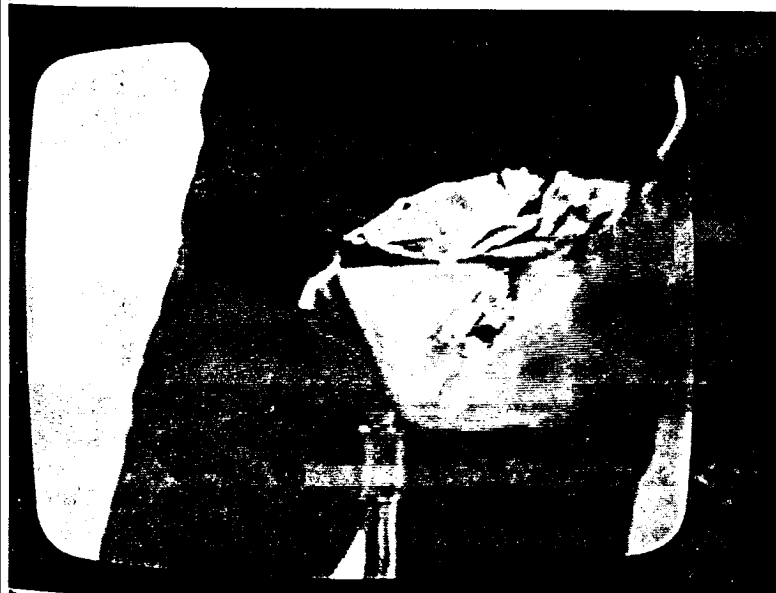

Richards Jarden, Front and Back, 1971. 15 minutes.

Gerald Ferguson, Length 4: From the Standard Corpus of Present Day English Language Usage Arranged by Word Length and Alphabetized within Word Length, 1971. 30 minutes.

Percy Simmons, Heart Beat, 1972. 12 minutes.

Askevold directs the camera at a standing microphone, then wraps aluminum foil around it till the screen is filled; Graham Dube watched a microphone being dragged over rough ground.
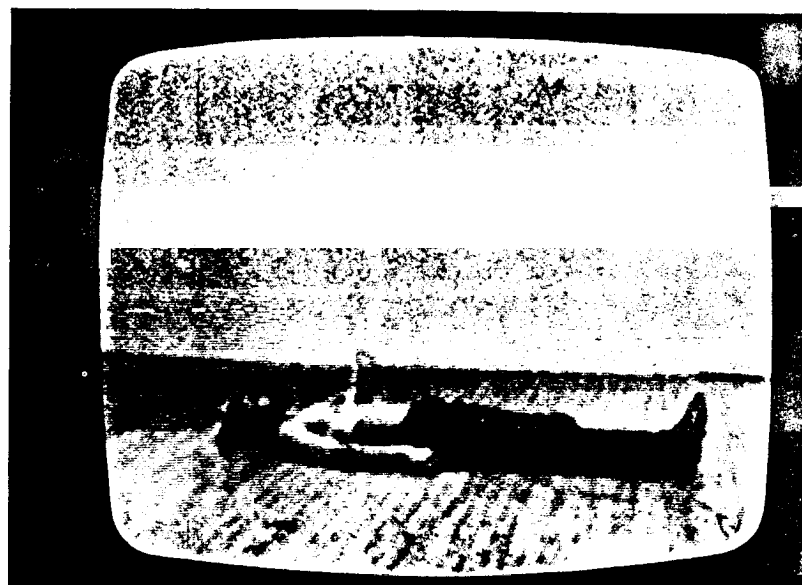
The monitor may not only convey information back to the performer, but may recycle it through the camera; feedback of sound results only in "boom." Brian McNevin set up a camera looking at its own monitor while the microphone swings in front of the loudspeaker. On screen, we see a succession of monitors, each framed by the next and in front of each a succession of parallel swinging microphones. The sound is generated out of the hum of the mechanism itself; it increases in volume with proximity of microphone and speaker.

The camera records only the surfaces of objects immediately in front of it, but locates them clearly; the microphone is more flexible but less precise. Jon Young, in an untitled piece, moves a pile of four bricks from the background to a position closer to the camera, and then the same distance again to bring them right in front of it, and then again to a position behind the camera. At this final stage, the sound indicates the continuation of an action no longer visible, but we have to be told precisely how it relates to the rest.

The possibilities of interaction and mutual reinforcement of video image and verbal language are extensive and complex.

Wallace Brannen touches on this topic in a very short tape called Step. He walks from the back of the room to the camera saying "step" at each step he takes. Word and act are complementary; they indicate at once which "step" he means and also how to conceptualize a performance that might otherwise be construed as "coming forward." What ambiguity remains is that of language and image equally: whether "step" should be interpreted verbally as process, or nominally as accomplished fact.

There is no escaping the didactic elements. These tapes are academic not only in the truistic sense of being the products of an academic institution, but also in the sense that often causes the term to be used pejoratively—that they emerge as the evident outcome of theoretical speculation. Where they differ from the sort of work that gained academic art a bad name is that speculation is not aimed at codifying the merits of past achievements, but, in 1971, was breaking new ground; also that the theoretical insight is itself the essential content of the work. Given the general succinctness and sensitivity of its embodiment, theoretical insight rises to the level of real quality as art.

The tapes I have seen are mainly a collection of 47 pieces on six one-hour tapes prepared for exhibition in Vancouver. The only piece referred to that I have not seen is Patrick Kelly's Strip-Up. For more details, see Garry Neil Kennedy, 'Video at N.S.C.A.D.', Arts Canada, October 1973.

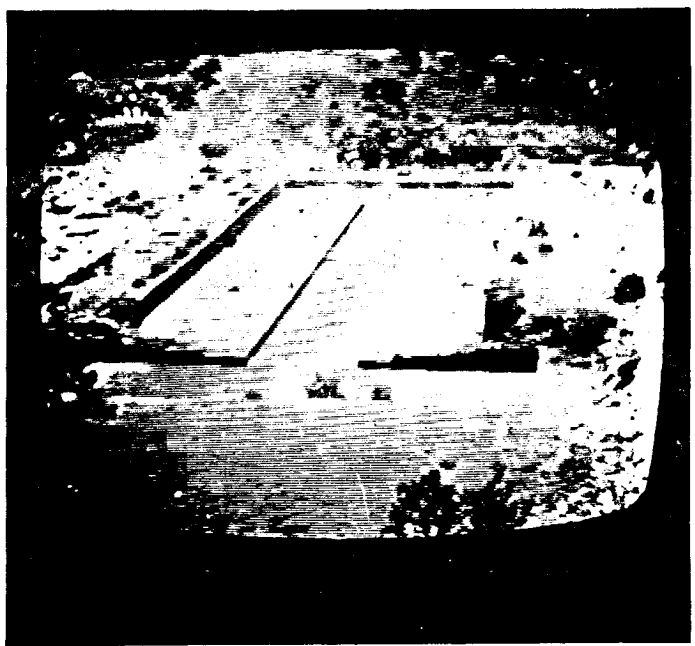David Askevold, Fill, 1971. 20 minutes.

Wallace Brannen, Step, 1971. 1 minute.

XOCHICALCO

Joel W. Grossman

Lynn Kohl

"I" shaped sunken ball court. Teams would try to bump a solid rubber ball through the rings on either side of the ramp.

Recent advances in the portability of equipment have made video available for experimentation in a variety of new subjects and problem areas. One area where video has been particularly useful has been in the presentation of visual interpretative material for museum exhibitions. These presentations have, however, involved the taping of objects or subjects close at hand. Video has not been utilized to present archeological or art objects in their foreign cultural context.

With this in mind, The Brooklyn Museum in cooperation with El Instituto Nacional de Anthropologia e Historia decided to experiment with the newest one-half-inch black and white portable video equipment to determine whether it would be possible to make a high quality, low cost, bilingual documentary. We wanted to see if, in fact, this new equipment was of sufficient quality, mobility, and durability to produce a viable audio-visual product under the rigors of an actual foreign field situation.

The subject of the documentary is one of the most spectacular archeological centers in central Mexico. Located atop a high ridge in the western mountains of Guerrero, the ruins of Xochicalco consist today of a series of plazas and mounds within a ring of what appear to be defensive walls. While most of the structures consist of mounds of uncleared rubble, a few areas have been cleared and partially restored by the Mexican government. To date, these efforts have revealed stepped platform structures, apartment complexes, a sunken ball court, and a series of deeply buried underground tunnels and chambers which very likely served as solar observatories.

The temple of the Plumed Serpent is on the highest and central portion of the site. When reconstructed it revealed some of the most spectacular stone relief carvings known in central Mexico. The four facades depict a repeating theme of calendrical glyphs and human figures poised between the coils of the plumed serpent, Quetzalcoaltle.

The purpose of the visual scenes and narration was to describe the site not simply as a spectacular physical monument, but rather as a clue to the ideas and goals of the ancient urban planners who built it and the people who lived there. The documentary thus included not only views of Xochicalco, but also shots of sculptures, stelae, and artifacts (from this site and others) to illustrate stylistic and cultural parallels. The idea was to provide students with the most current evidence and diverse interpretations of the significance of this ancient urban center in terms of the general development of Pre-

Santiago Analco Ramirez, a multi-lingual Nahuatle Indian who narrated major portions of the video tape in English and Spanish.

Santiago describes details of seated nobleman.
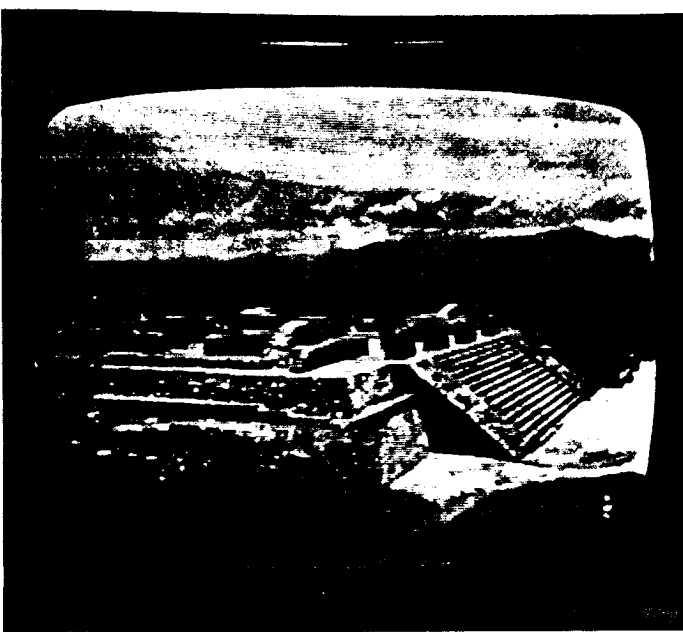
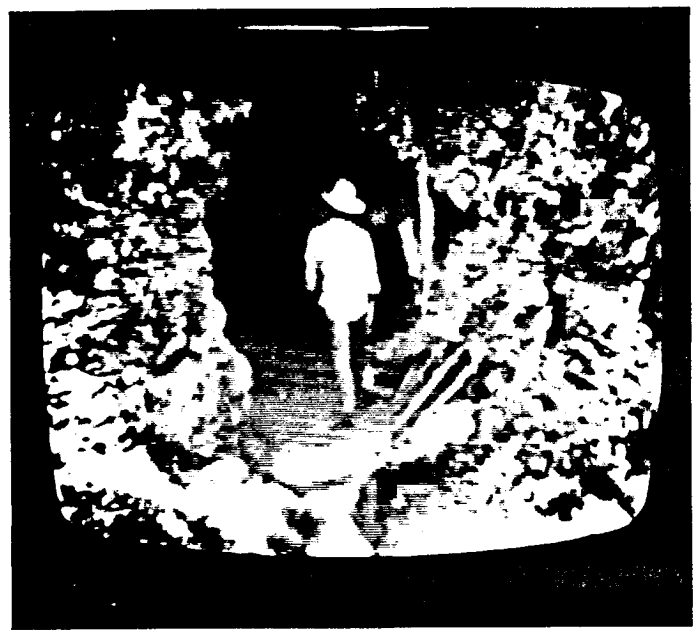A partially restored temple structure at Xochicalco.

Entrance of long subterranean tunnels leading to ceremonial chambers.

Columbian cultural history. Above all, we wanted to test the usefulness of video as a tool to disseminate research results to students two to four years earlier than is presently possible through normal avenues of publication.

The overall quality and impact of our black and white video documentary is excellent. Although it lacks the brilliant color of film, the video medium conveys a sense of immediacy which film cannot. The video tape equipment was reasonably portable under high altitude conditions. With a crew of three —archeologist Dr. Joel Grossman, Indian narrator Santiago Ramirez, and video-maker Lynn Kohl—we were a small, mobile self-contained unit.

Video tape can be recorded at lower light levels than those required for exposing film. This film eliminated the need for a heavy power source and bulky lighting equipment. The low light level capability was especially valuable in solving photographic problems often encountered at archeological sites: the presence of underground rooms and poorly lit chambers. We found it possible to tape a sequence in underground passages and caverns with only the light of a kerosene lantern.

Perhaps one of the most versatile features of video technology for this foreign field project was its "instant playback" capability. Unlike film, video tape requires no processing and can be viewed immediately after recording. In this particular project, where perspectives varied, the archeologist, narrator, and video-maker could view the shots, discuss the work, and suggest changes in the field as the production progressed.

The simplicity and speed of instant video playback provided numerous opportunities for institutional cooperation while on location. For example, while we were taping in Mexico, Dr. Jorge Angulo of El Instituto Nacional de Anthropologia e Historia had the opportunity to make suggestions and check oversights. The same sort of input was possible as the documentary was being edited later at The Brooklyn Museum. Michael Kan, the Curator of Pre-Columbian art, selected collection pieces which could be used as stills in the tape to better illustrate key arguments.

This option for cooperative input together with the technical ability to add and retract visual elements permitted us to consider new ideas and acquire more relevant imagery as the tape evolved. The flexibility of video proved easily adaptable to the fluidity of archeological interpretation which changes with each new find.

Close-up of calendrical glyph with ancient numerical symbols explained in Spanish English, and Nahuatle.
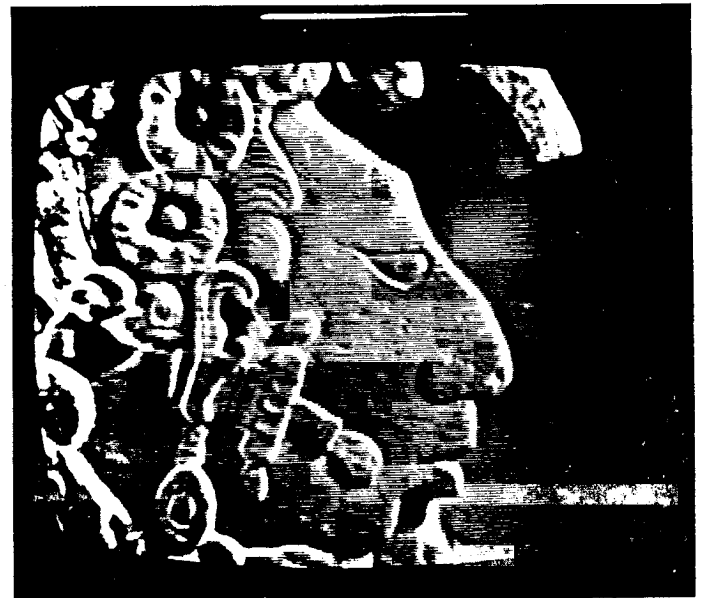
Close-up of a face from the Mayan site of Yaxchilan, illustrating similarities in style to the seated figure at Xochicalco. All photos courtesy Brooklyn Museum.

TWO CONSCIOUSNESS PROJECTION(S)

Dan Graham

A woman focuses consciousness only on a television monitor image of herself and must immediately verbalize (as accurately as possible) the content of her consciousness. The man focuses consciousness only *outside himself* on the woman, observing her objectively through the camera connected to the monitor. He also verbalizes his perceptions. The man's and the woman's self-contained conscious, unconscious, or fantasized intention—*consciousness*—is projected. The audience sees on the video screen what the man and woman 'objectively' are seeing at the same time they hear the two performers' interior views.[1] Because of each of the performer's time process of perception, verbalization, and perception response to the other's verbalization, there is an overlap of consciousness (of the projections of each upon the other). Each's verbal impression, in turn, effects the other's perception: the man's projection on the periphery of the woman's may affect her consciousness or behavior.

A field is created in which audience and performers place reciprocal controls on the other. The audience's reactions to the man's responses (his projection of the woman) may function for him as a 'superego,' inhibiting or subtly influencing the course of his behavior or consciousness of the situation. Likewise, the man's responses on the periphery of the woman consciousness interfere with her self-consciousness so that h behavioral responses, including those of self-perception, may l 'subconsciously' affected. Each of the three elements functio mutually as a feedback device governing behavior—a 'supereg or 'subconscious' to the consciousness and response of t others.

An abstractly presupposed psychological[2] (or social)[3] moc is physically observable by the audience. The specific resu of the piece vary according to the context in which it is p formed, with changing historical circumstances, locale, or u of different social classes of audience or actors.[4]

---

[1] While an audience might initially assume that the woman was being 'm into an object,' it becomes apparent that her position is more powerful tl the man's as her subject and her object are *not* separated (separable). Wher the more the man (to himself) strives to be objective, that much more d he appear unconsciously subjective to any observer from the outside (audience).
[2] The Freudian axiom that one person is always projecting himself onto observation of a second person.
[3] Imposed behavioral ('psychological') differentiations between men and wor
[4] As another *category* of variation, I have proposed (1974) to have the pi performed with each of the performers naked.

VIDEO TIME IN WALTER

Bob and Ingrid Wiegand

Time—real time, past time, time distortion, time interlace—is a central reality of video. (Artists who have worked with other, more timeless media, such as painting or photography, often do not learn this until friends, who ask to see what they are doing, fall asleep while the tape is running). Film is about time, too, but as long as the size and texture of the video image and the viewing situation (lighted rooms vs. darkened theaters) differ for video, video time will have its own characteristics and possibilities.

When we made *Walter*—a very tight, non-narrated, half-hour documentary on an individual—the time aspect came to dominate the structure entirely. Eleven hours of footage on a complex individual confronted us. We cut it down to two hours of first-class footage and began to look for the structure inherent in this material. We found that most of the footage followed one of three basic time structures: in the first, Walter was teaching a gymnastics class shot in real time, virtually without interruptions; the second was an hour of footage of Walter sailing and racing his catamaran over a two-hour period; a third and major part of the footage involved Walter remembering and telling stories about his life, a time period covering chunks of his fifty-odd years.

With these elements in mind, we made a time-line kind of chart on graph paper, tentatively arranging different time series in relation to each other. The actual time *sequence* was maintained, that is, the second part of the gym action is shown after the first; Walter's years in a Nazi slave labor camp follow an event from his college years. The net effect is of a weaving of time; each thread appears and reappears, but the sense of continuity is maintained.

The structure of the final piece and some of the final changes are shown in the video time chart. The gym sequences form the basic topological, or surface, structure of the piece. They appear to continue even when they are not on. They are the present not only because they are shown in real time, but also because, more than anything else, they represent Walter's present in terms of content. But in this real-time structure there are "holes" or "windows" from which other time elements emerge. Each section of sailing and racing footage is viewed in real time, but the intervals in which it is *not* seen are shorter than the "real time" that elapses.

The largest spaces are occupied by Walter's talking about his past life. The shortest of these is four minutes, and only one has an edit in it. (In fact, only two sections are broken by edits in the final tape.) Some of them cover years. The slave labor camp section runs from Walter's arrest to his liberation; the memories of his childhood cover an unspecified period before he started school at the age of eight. These sections do not only cover large spaces of time; the effective real times between them are long, as if big loops of time are compressed or speeded in front of us, and behind the other sections shown.

The piece does not always follow this scheme to orthodoxy. Parallel-time operations are also used. For example, parts of the racing footage are made more dense by carrying a second layer: Walter's voice-over narration of his involvement with sailing, racing, and the sea over various time periods.

Finally, however, all these "time loops" swing into the present. The gym class ends; the sailing section closes with "trophies won this year"; the memories finish as Walter says: "That's what helped me and that's how I come to success."
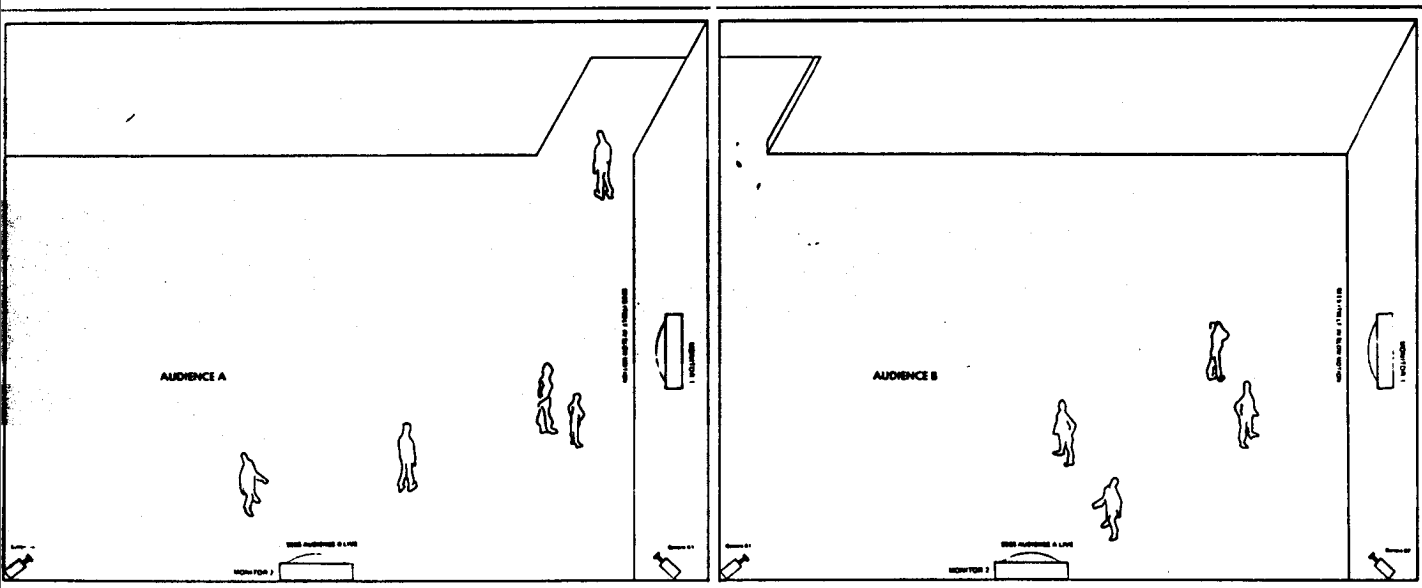
AUDIENCE

MONITOR 2

MONITOR 1

PERFORMER

ience sees itself live on Monitor 1. Simultaneously, it could be seeing a replay on Monitor 2 havior from 8 seconds earlier. The performers' verbalization is heard by the audience to co- ith its delayed monitor view.

Performer verbally projects the audience's future he is actually predicting a line of develop- ginning from a point 8 seconds before the present (while the audience is experiencing the n of this predicted future which can be seen on the live monitor) and may project a parallel ture by 8 seconds ahead of the Performer's predicted future perspective by connecting its seen on the live monitor, to its near past on the delay monitor.

The Performer (seeing the audience on an 8 second delayed monitor gives a be- havioristic description of what he sees. Observing their behavior, he then pro- jects their next line of behavior.

AUDIENCE A

AUDIENCE B

TWO ROOMS/RELATIVE SLOW-MOTION (1974)

A performance is organized beginning at a specific time with two audiences in two separate rooms.

A recording (from camera A1 and camera B1 respectively) of the responses of each audience is played back to them in slow motion on Monitor 1 thirty seconds after the be- ginning of the performance. Simultaneously, Monitor 2 in the room displays as a live image *the other audience* observing itself delayed and in slow motion. Because the tape seen on Monitor 1 in each room is replayed in slow motion, the delayed time between its recording and its playback increases continuously and progressively the views seen by the audiences from a time period progres- sively further back in their pasts.

An audience objectively observes the effect of the delayed slow-motion playback on a second audience at the same time as it (subjectively) observes itself. One effect of an audience's watching itself in slow motion may be to slow down its present time movement. This effect might be observed in watching the other audience.

As an audience compares the image of itself replayed in slow motion with the (live) view of a second audience seeing itself in slow motion, it has no absolute way of judging the synchrony of the two audiences' relative time positions in the past seen in the images playing back at present time, or whether or not the speeds of the slow motions are the same, relative to each other.

camera tapes the reflection of the entire opposite wall and the contents of the room.

The image seen by the camera appears eight seconds later on the video monitor (via a tape delay loop placed between one video deck which is recording and a second video deck which is playing back.)

A viewer having entered the space is free to move within it, orienting to the present time or the present and past times. On the monitor image the flow of the body's movements are seen from the outside, continuously eight seconds past; On the mirror at right angles, his body is seen from the outside *but* in present time.

If the viewer's body does not obscure the lens' view of the facing mirror, the camera is taping the reflection of the room and the image of the monitor (reflected in the mirror—always the time recorded eight seconds previously reflected from the mirror). Usually the spectator's body will not block the view so that the image recorded is a reflection of the monitor's view

and the back or front of the viewer's body (depending on which way he is facing) reflected in the mirror. If this continues, the monitor shows him the image of himself eight seconds prior because the camera has taped his reflection of sixteen seconds prior (as the camera view of eight seconds prior was playing back on the monitor and this was reflected on the mirror along with the present reflection of the viewer.) An infinite regress of time *continuums* (eight seconds, sixteen seconds, twenty-four seconds, thirty-two seconds, etc.) within time continuum durations is created at *separate intervals* until the viewer's movement blocks the view the camera has of the opposite mirror.

Mirror Convention: Normally a mirror appears to show only a static, instantaneous image in present time *without duration* (or time flow). What might happen is that the mirror opposite the camera and monitor (where present time is superimposed on the reflection of the monitor's flow of past images) and the right-angle mirror may be experienced perceptually as *flowing* present time.
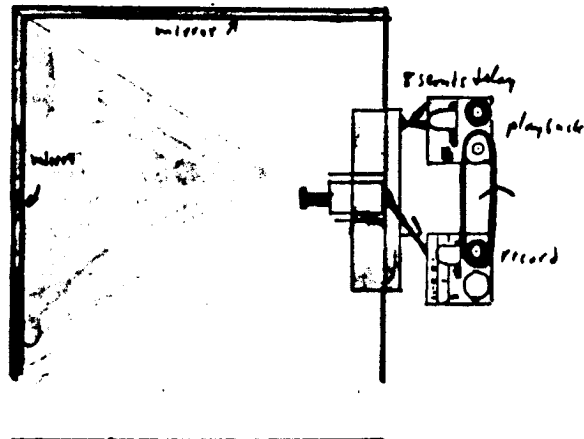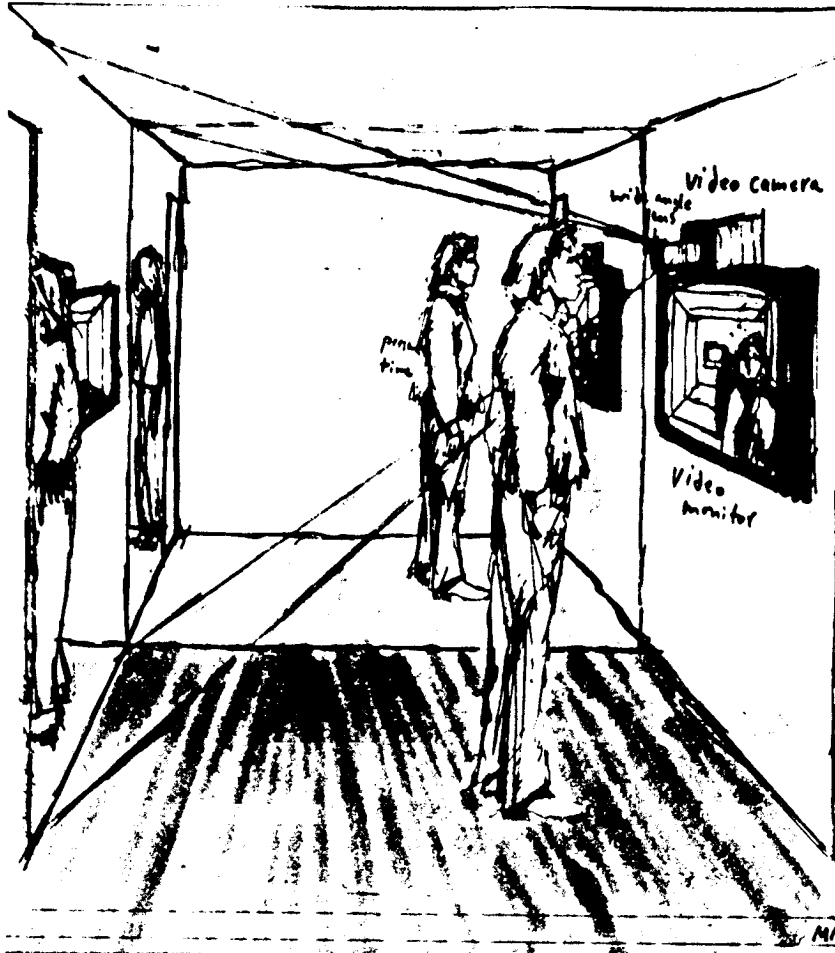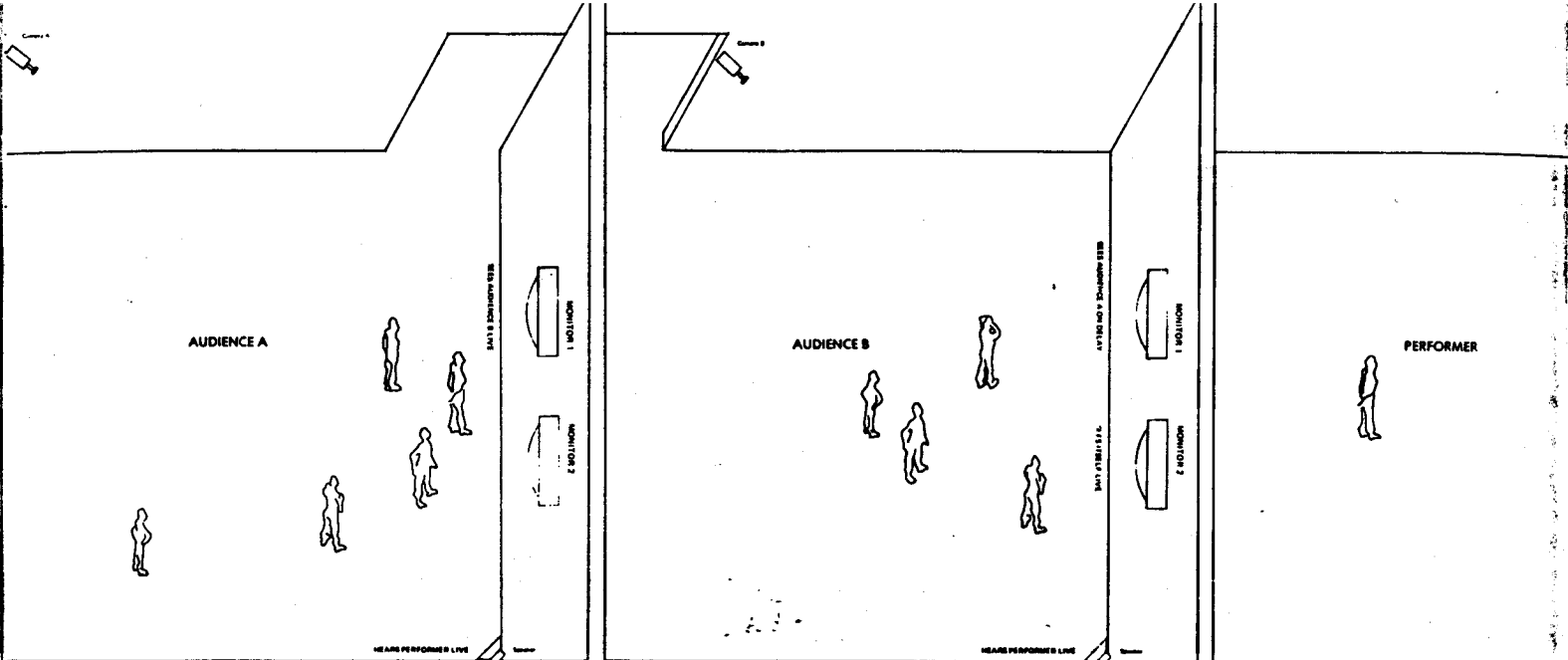
#5 (1974)

Audience A may view itself on an 8 second delay on Monitor 2 or may view Audience B on Monitor 1, which also shows Audience B's (Monitor 1) image of Audience A's own behavior of 8 seconds ago. Simultaneously, Audience A hears a continuous description by the Performer of their behavior 8 seconds ago, of their present behavior, or their behavior as a casual influence on or being influenced by or being a temporal fore-runner of Audience B's behavior. When the Performer ascribes the development of Audience A's present behavior to the influence of Audience B's earlier behavior, this may have the effect of imposing the casual interpretation in the Performer's mind onto the relationship between Audience A and Audience B.

Alternatively, when Audience A hears the Performer's description of their behavior, this will anticipate by 8 seconds its own view, corresponding to this description, but not seen until 8 seconds after the description. As the description by the Performer will in part refer to Audience A's hearing and responding to the Performer's own depictions made before Audience A is able to view for itself this behavior, a feedback interference or tautology is created.

While the Performer describes their behavior of 8 seconds ago, Audience B may see their present responses on Monitor 2, or correlated to the Performer's description, they may see on the 8 second delayed image of Audience A's room that room's monitor image of Audience B (as they are being observed by Audience A 8 seconds ago). An alternate possibility is that the Performer is describing his live image of Audience A's behavior which, however, will not be seen by Audience B for 8 seconds. Or the Performer may be ascribing a casual connection between Audience A's present behavior (not yet seen by Audience B) and Audience B's behavior of 8 seconds past (which is being seen by Audience A), which provides an outside commentary on the image Audience B sees on Monitor 1. When the Performer projects a relation between Audience A's present behavior and Audience B's earlier behavior before Audience B can make these connections for itself, the Performer ('s behavior) may impose a casual reading pattern onto Audience B's (and Audience A's) behavior where none or a dissimilar one may have formed. This is reinforced as they see the delayed view on Monitor 1 of Audience A hearing and responding to the connection drawn by the Performer 8 seconds in the

The Performer sees Audience A li and Audience B 8 seconds delaye He alternates initially between obse ing and describing phenomenolica one of the other audience's behavio He then observes both to connect t image of Audience A's present b havior to that of Audience B's earli behavior, constructing a cause-an effect chain of mutual influence that he may predict the future dire tion of either Audience A's or Auc ence B's behavioral moves.

past where also Audience A is seei responding to the responses of A B's responses.

VIDEO AND ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

Hermine Freed

If the content of formalist art is form, then the forms in a video art work are a function of its content. Just as formal similarities can be found in minimalist sculptures or abstract expressionist paintings, videotapes tend to be stylistically unique, although there are likely to be conceptual similarities amongst them. These similarities often arise out of inherent qualities in the medium which impress different artists simultaneously. If minimalist sculptors have explored the nature of the sculptural object, then video artists tend to explore the nature of the video image. As the range of possibilities is broad, so are the sources, ideas, images, techniques, and intentions. Nevertheless, similarities can be found in tapes of artists as seemingly dissimilar as Campus, Nauman, and Holt, and some of those similarities can be related to their (unintentional) resemblance to abstract expressionist paintings. I refer not to electronic video which mimics the visual qualities of abstract expressionism, but to certain fundamental conceptual attitudes visible in abstract expressionist painting and much of the best video art.

Just as minimalism eschews the personal, video and abstract expressionism are rooted in it. Just as minimalism denies the importance of process, abstract expressionism and video rely on it. Just as minimalism avoids psychological incidents, abstract expressionism and video embrace them. Just as space is concrete in minimalist sculpture, it is elusive in both abstract expressionism and video.

This comparison may seem surprising since the choice of video as a medium grows more out of conceptual art considerations than painterly ones. Although the major concern here is the conceptual concerns common both to video and abstract expressionism, it must be noted that on the simplest level, the pictorial, video is closer to painting than to sculpture or conceptual art. It may be argued that video is viewed in a sculptural box (a TV monitor) and that image-making is of secondary importance, yet it is viewed frontally with a flat, pictorial image that has the same limited framing edge as a painting. (Yes, the tube projects a deep space, but the screen is flat. Yes, the edge is variable, but limited nonetheless.) In most video art tapes, all activity takes place within a still frame. The incidents may change, the image may change, but there is rarely evidence of camera activity. Although one may ascribe this to the simple avoidance of technique, the relationship between the video image and painting is much more significant. Indeed, if we examine the works of those artists for whom the manipulation of the camera is of major importance, we find that the goal and focus of their work is technology and technique rather than content.

Underlying abstract expressionist painting is a concern for Freudian and Jungian psychology. Gesture is related to free association and its unconscious processes, form to the collective unconscious and the primitive myth. The power of the unknown is manifest in its abstraction. Video shares this conscious involvement with psychological processes, but its models are more likely to be found in contemporary psychology: R.D. Laing, Gestalt therapy, and phenomenological psychotherapy. Video artists are more likely to be interested in making the unconscious conscious and to concretize rather than mythologize experience.

One might imagine that Laing has worked with video through his descriptions of interpersonal perception. He clarifies that our understanding of ourselves is normally based on inner processes—thoughts, feelings, perceptions, experiences—

whereas others view us through our behavior. Through video, we can view our behavior and personal interactions removed from immediate feelings and experiences. Laing speaks of the ego boundary as the extension between man and society. The works of Acconci, Benglis, Campus, Holt, Jonas, Morris, Nauman, Serra and myself operate on that boundary line.

Peter Campus and Bruce Nauman have both made live video installations which involve the viewer directly. In Campus' *Shadow Projection* the viewer sees himself projected on a screen from behind with a shadow of his image superimposed over the enlarged color image. He stands between the screen and the camera (the interface between seer and seen), turns to see himself, and is frustrated because he is confronted with the camera and can never see his image from the front. (This is the reversal of a "normal" situation. As the viewer turns toward the camera, others outside camera range can see his image from the front, but he cannot. Normally, others can see us from behind, although we cannot).

Nauman's *TV Corridor* (1969) also turns the viewer into a real-time subject. A TV camera is behind the viewer who walks along a corridor towards a monitor. As he approaches the monitor he perceives himself walking away from it, from behind, as if dislocated from himself. He must keep in line with the camera to keep his image in the monitor, concentrat-

Hermine Freed, Two Faces, 1972. Courtesy Leo Castelli Gallery.

ing on his image of himself and his placement in space at the same time. It is a work involved as much with spatial disorientation as it is with self-perception.

Richard Serra, Lynda Benglis, and I have made tapes which illustrate the psycho-feedback aspects of video. Serra's *Boomerang* and *Match-Match Their Courage* are recordings of the subjects' responses to themselves when faced with a video monitor with their image and headphones of their own voices in real time. My tape, *Two Faces*, is involved with the objectification of the self on a personal level as it is a product resulting from a video encounter with myself. The video image is the left and right sides of my face looking at and interacting with each other nonverbally. Action and response are, necessarily, the opposite sides of the same coin, yet the perception of the situation is that of the self outside itself.

If many artists have become involved with real-time response to self and/or others, others have dealt with the elusiveness of

his footsteps. Extensions beyond the edge and the fact that the work has no particular beginning or end, just a constant rhythm, parallel the all over quality of Pollock's paintings with their disavowal of central focus.

Perhaps one of the closest links between video and abstract expressionism is their mutual involvement with process. Rarely is a videotape totally scripted and rehearsed before it is taped. One quality of the medium which differentiates it from film is the greater possibility of spontaneity. Often in the process of recording a videotape, ideas suggest themselves which had not been a part of the original plan. Video is organic; it can be replayed immediately and reworked. It is possible to erase or tape over unwanted segments and to redo edits until they work. In this sense, it is closer to the process of painting an abstract expressionist work.

zoom back and forth, switching from one camera to the other. Both are focused on Jonas who is moving her arms over her head. The result is a literal space jump and an apparent time warp. The gestural quality does, in a superficial way, resemble abstract expressionism, both in movement and in the accidents which take place in switching the cameras.

It ought not be inferred that all video art relates to abstract expressionism. Only a few years ago there were no rules for the use of video as art; each person who chose the medium did so for his own reasons and invented his own rules. What is remarkable is that so many people, working on their own, came up with such similar ideas. In most cases, these similarities can be related to inherent qualities of the medium which impressed several artists simultaneously. It is only now that these works can be compared to abstract expressionism.

Bruce Nauman, Pacing Upside Down, 1969. Courtesy Leo Castelli Gallery.

Keith Sonnier is more interested in the process than he is in the product and considers his tapes artifacts of the activity of working with the medium. A great deal of his work actually ends up looking very painterly. *Animation 2*, in its collage technique (using multiple video tracks fed by a computer from television), resembles Rauschenberg's work in content as well as form, with layers of cultural and personal experience laid on top of one another.

Finally, video is the culmination of the frustrations of artists—from the futurists and Duchamp through the abstract expressionists—in their limitations of time. The futurists dealt with the time problem (to oversimplify) through repetition of the image. The abstract expressionists incorporated the time involved in production into the work through gesture; the involved in production into the work through gesture; the product is a record of their physical activity. Time is a given in video which has been approached with many different attitudes. There are many artists who insist on real-time recording with no editing whereas others feel that the medium is ideal for working with non-sequential time.

Richard Serra and Joan Jonas' *Anxious Automation* is an early tape involved with time-space confusion. Two cameras


Joan Jonas and Richard Serra, Anxious Automation, 1971. Courtesy Leo Castelli Gallery.

objectivity which is intensified in the video experience. Nancy Holt's *Locating* tapes record the views of two people about an apparently objective situation. She isolates a fragment (in a circle) from a scene while the two people attempt to "read" that fragment. That image is hidden and another revealed. The reporters try to reconstruct the images they saw previously to create a total picture. Their points of view are frequently so

the verbal information about it. The images are the residue of events. A third person narrator describes subjective emotions and events in an unemotional tone, constantly editorializing on the text. We are involved in the line between what is seen and what is known, what is experienced and what is felt, what is present and what is an accumulation from the past.

Nauman's *Pacing Upside Down* seems, in this frame of mind,
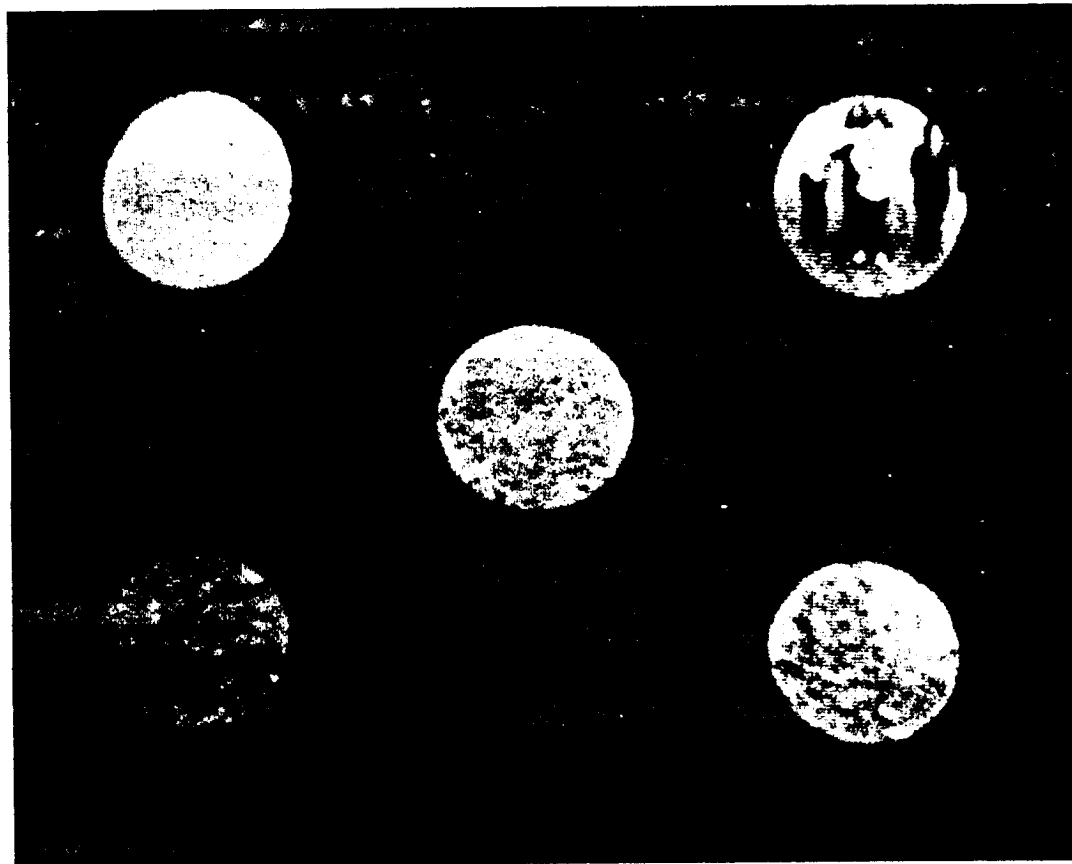
Nancy Holt, Locating, 1971.
Courtesy Leo Castelli
Gallery.

widely divergent as to question the possibility of arriving at objective perception.

Holt's tapes allude with several others to the impossibility of isolating experience that is also found in a great deal of abstract expressionist painting. In most abstract expressionist paintings, form and gesture extend beyond the framing edge of the canvas, suggesting boundlessness. In video works, the camera records a scene which is literally only a fraction of the total vision of the person behind it, and which may record little or nothing of his experience. Just as emotions and experiences are implied in the abstract expressionist gesture, there is frequently no visual reference to inner experience through a camera image; that reference is often made through the sound track. When the total image is revealed at the end of Holt's tapes, it is still a mere fragment of a larger view from which it was taken.

In *Mumble*, Lynda Benglis reports events which are taking place during the taping process which seem to have nothing to do with the images on the monitor ("the cat just jumped on my lap," "The phone is ringing in the other room"). Ideas are apparently discussed but we never really hear them. We must take Benglis at her word. Characters, briefly described, are just mere presences. These descriptions are Benglis' real experience during the taping process, the gesture, so to speak, of her work, all but removed from the visual content which is frequently counter to the verbal information. Events as well as images extend beyond the framing edge.

In *Exchange*, Bob Morris contrasts visual perception, experience, emotion, and events. The tape is ostensibly about the making of the tape, yet little of the visual information supports

to be a performance metaphor for Pollock's painting. In this work, Nauman paces in an undefined space, with his hands touching straight over his head, for 55 minutes. The camera is upside down, and a small slice of the wall, slightly askew, is visible at the bottom of the frame. In contrast, a small rectangle is drawn on the floor with its sides paralleling the edges of the monitor. The fact that the real space is askew and the depicted shape is straight functions to dislocate the space, especially as Nauman walks toward the wall. Nauman walks in and out of the frame, although his presence is always felt by the sound of
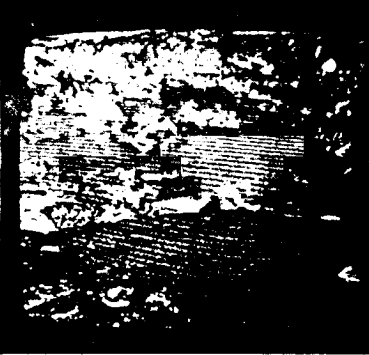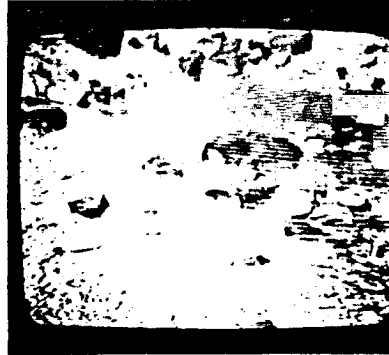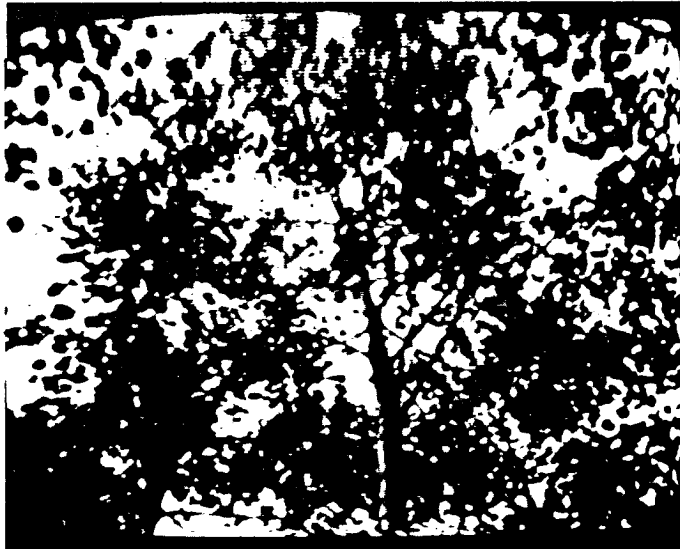

Lynda Benglis, Now, 1972. Courtesy Leo Castelli Gallery.
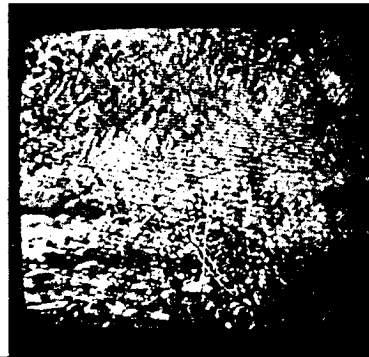
THE VIDEO WINDOW OF DAVIDSON GIGLIOTTI

Russel Connor

Davidson Gigliotti, Structure of Dry Fly Fishing, 1974. Courtesy Intermedia.

Davidson Gigliotti, Quaking Aspens, 1973. Courtesy Media-Bus.

Davidson Gigliotti, Hunter Mountain, 1973. Courtesy Media-Bus.

"Video" to my mind conjures up a hubbub of activity, daring feats, moments of beauty, and happy absurdity. But soon "adult experience" usurps the field to present a rather mysterious, untidy, and occasionally brutal competition called "video art." There are still moments of brilliant individual play, but the pitch of action becomes more frantic. The one mood which neither "video" nor "video art" suggests to me is serenity—until I encountered the work of Davidson Gigliotti.

The measured eloquence of Gigliotti's art owes as much to a family tradition in carpentry as it does to formal art training. In 1962 he abandoned a brief foray into journalism and part-time sculpture to become a professional carpenter. It is a craft which he still studies and practices. Carpentry, he has said, has given him an appreciation of elegant systems.

By 1969 he felt the need to return to art, which, by this time, had drifted away from the familiar constraints of object-making. Attracted by the work of Hans Haacke and other conceptual artists, he reserved his appreciation for art "practiced on a conceptual level" rather than for a particular style of art production. In that year Gigliotti purchased a video portapak as "an ideal vehicle" (though technically flawed) because it came closest to dealing with pure information.

Since then he has been making video tapes as a member of the Videofreex. Videofreex was a name that suited the times and style of the group, which then aspired to produce the sort of alternate television documentaries now being made by TVTV (Lord of the Universe). The group's current name, Media Bus, more accurately reflects their present central activity of spreading video literally around the state in a series of training workshops supported by the New York State Council on the Arts, and serving as consultants in video applications to libraries, colleges, museums, and historical associations. They retained their original name as authors of an extremely valuable, no-nonsense handbook, The Spaghetti City Video Manual (Praeger, 1973) whose principal author was Parry Teasdale.

Some of the workshops are held at Maple Tree Farm in the Catskills where they have lived and worked since leaving Manhattan in 1971. Thanks to the warm encouragement of his colleagues, Gigliotti has been able to devote most of his time to independent pursuit of personal artistic goals. The path is not always video or identifiable as art; he has made hundreds

of drawings in search of a perfect free-hand circle, taken to the woods for a project involving labeling varieties of trees with their names in Latin and English, and drawn deep satisfaction from a period of planting white oak trees.

The profound peace in Gigliotti's multiple channel video works embraces a perpetually active universe. In *Quaking Aspens* (1973), the leaves of shifting branches ebb and flow in densely textured counterpoint to the movement of the clouds. It was taped in minute-and-a-half segments several times a day for a month with a fixed camera and edited down to twenty minutes. "Ideally, the video image should be like looking out an open window; the sound should be like sound coming in from an open window." As impatient as he is with the primitive resolution of the picture, Gigliotti admits to a paradoxical, romantic attachment to scan lines; his perfectly exposed, precisely focused close-up photographs taken off the tube are fine graphic prints in themselves.

Outside his window at Maple Tree Farm extends a flat section of roof; the surrounding hills present a wide panorama. Gigliotti assembled three video tape recorders and three cameras with long lenses attached to a moveable bar on the roof, and three monitors inside his room with which to check the alignment of the adjoining pictures. The cameras were underscanned so that he could see the edges of each image in the viewfinder. The public result was a half-hour piece called *Hunter Mountain*, shown at the 1973 Avant-Garde Festival in a baggage car at Grand Central Station.

In Gigliotti's most ambitious work to date, the intelligent window again looks out on nature, but this time the inquiring presence of humanity is strongly implied. It is as if all the lengthy observations of trees, mountains, and clouds, of the habits, whims, and strategies of nature, were a preparation for an examination of the ingenuity of man. *The Structure of Dry-Fly Fishing* (to be shown at the Kitchen in early 1975) considers his central interest—using video as a tool for the study of recurring human conventions, "in art and related areas."

Structure of Dry-Fly Fishing is a complex video artwork on the order of a piece of sculpture. At its most apparent level it is a sixteen channel video landscape piece, composed of several three, four, and six channel elements. The program is twenty-five minutes long. Presented on the screens in information related to trout, the trout environment, the propensity of trout to eat mayflies as they hatch, and other material from which the structure of dry-fly fishing is derived.

Unlike most other fish, trout live close to man. They pay attention to the surface of the water and beyond because a large proportion of their food comes from there. They see the sky, the branches of overhanging trees, bugs that drop into the water, and mayfly duns hatching on the surface. They see humans going up and down the banks. As we developed a body of knowledge about them over the centuries, they too developed a limited body of knowledge about us. It became so that, in clear water, a baited hook was often too clumsy a ruse to override their natural caution. The present day sport of dry-fly fishing arose in response to this situation.

The essence of dry-fly fishing is mayfly imitation. The angler must present to the trout a tiny lure of the appropriate size, made of fur and feathers of the correct color, tied in imitation of a mayfly, usually in flight. It must land on the surface of the water like a newly hatched mayfly, without a splash. It should float with the current naturally, imparting no evidence of being attached to a line.

These and other parameters which add up to the rules of the dry-fly fishing system are the results of the observations and conclusions of thousands of anglers over several centuries. The literature of dry-fly fishing is immense.

It is the position of the artist that this elegant system, the

Davidson Gigliotti, Structure of Dry Fly Fishing, 1974. Courtesy Intermedia.

product of so many minds, contains within it many important elements relative to the way humans solve certain kinds of problems, and in fact provides important clues to the nature of human mentality. The artist hopes to provide, within the context of the piece, some of the information necessary to carry the viewer through the steps of observation and discovery, and to grant some insight into the dynamics of human structuring.
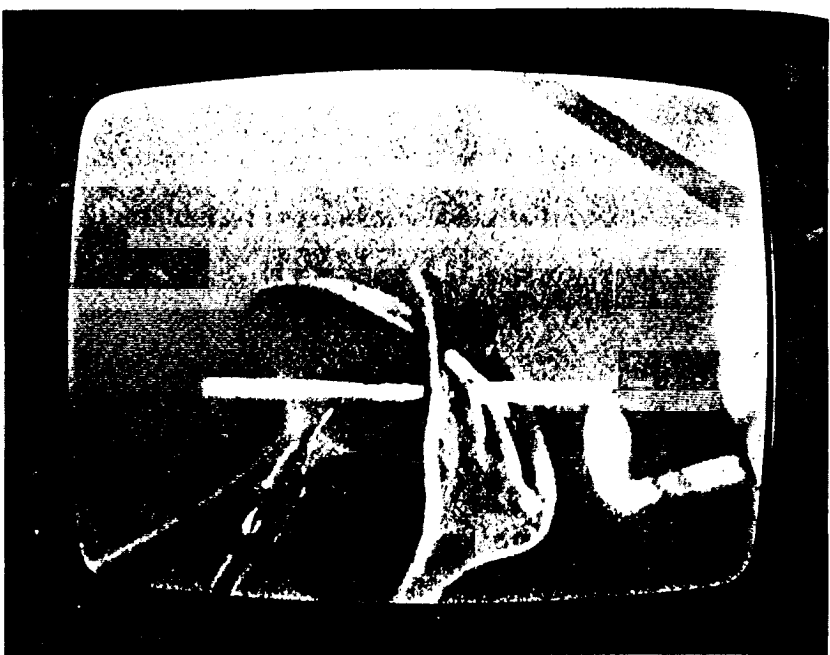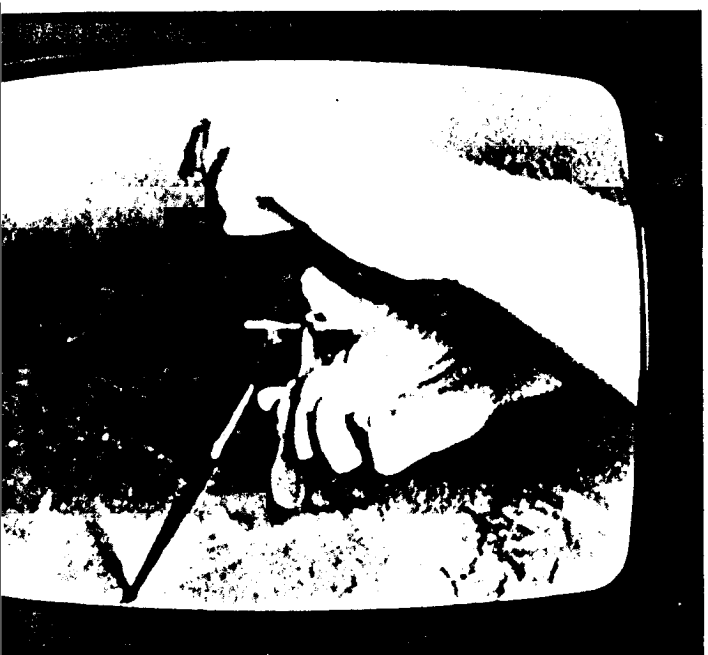
CHILDREN'S TAPES

Terry Fox

These stills are taken from an ongoing series of video tapes made for children. The tapes, numbering 25 so far, were all made between midnight and dawn at my studio with a Sony Portapac. The tapes, ranging from 50 seconds to 17 minutes of unedited time, involve the subject of consubstantiation. Each silent tape involves the same elements (spoon, fork, bowl, cloth, candle, fire, and water) in new situations of ac-
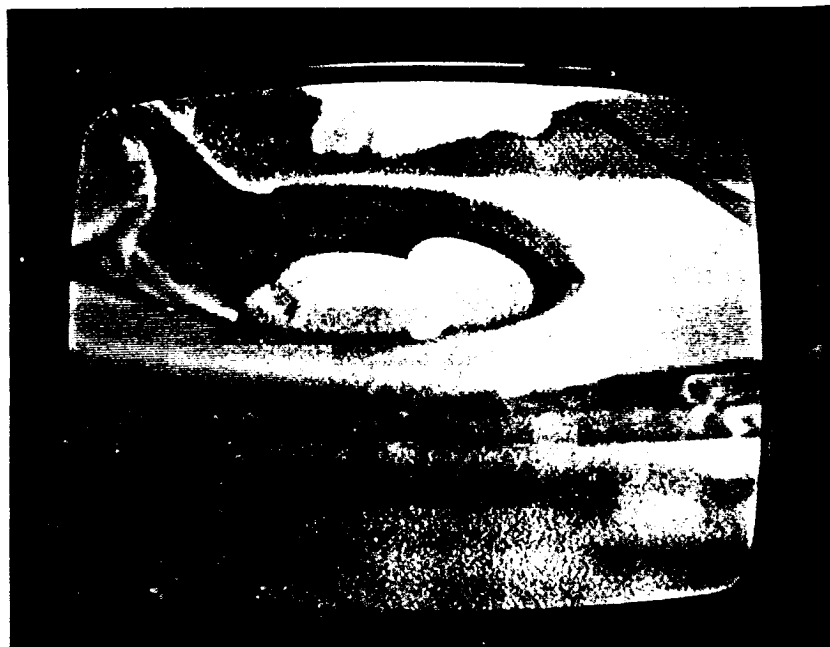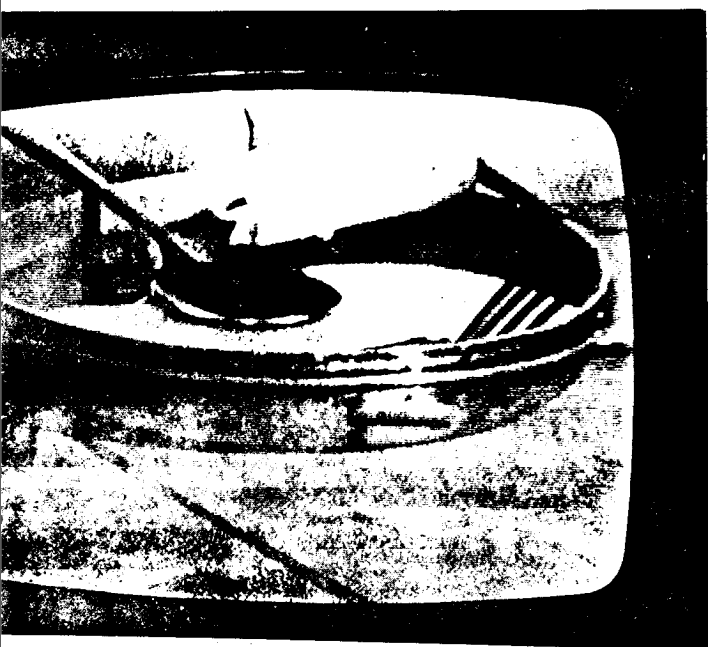
Water rests on the surface, doubleback fork, ice cradle on the cloth, the spoon balances on the fork, ice slides, water unites with the cloth, edges blur, the cloth drags the spoon down, the spoon moves, ice warms, the skin rises, water sways above the surface, water rests above the surface, the spoon sways in equipoise, ice warms, the skin rises, the spoon rises, water drops, the spoon rises, water falls, the spoon falls, the fork rests on the spoon, water rests on the surface. (17 minutes)
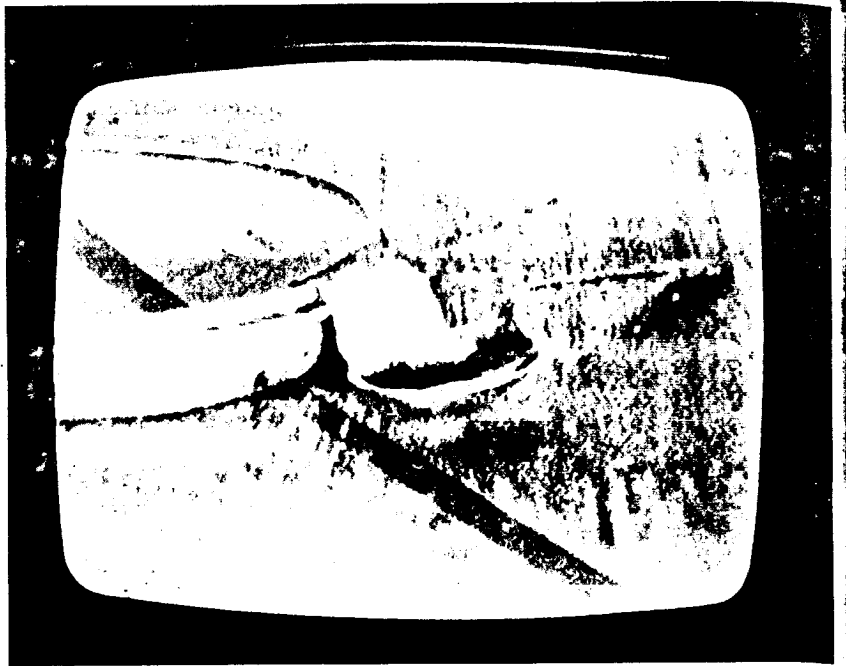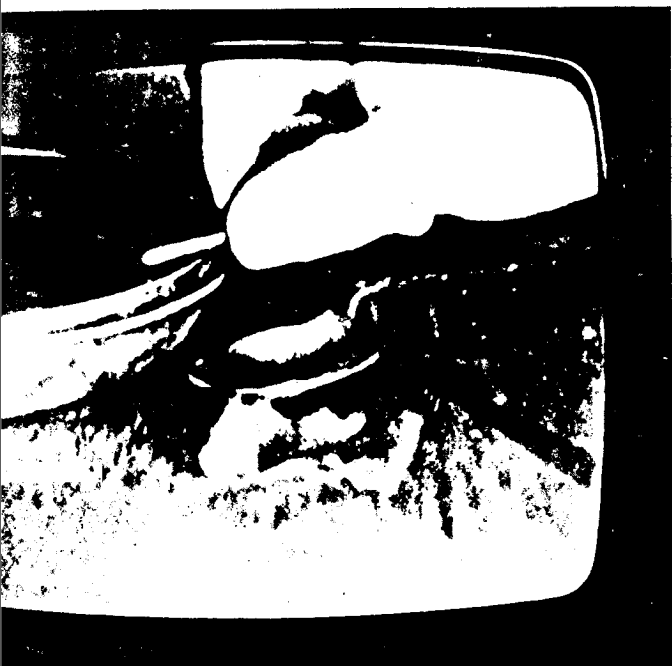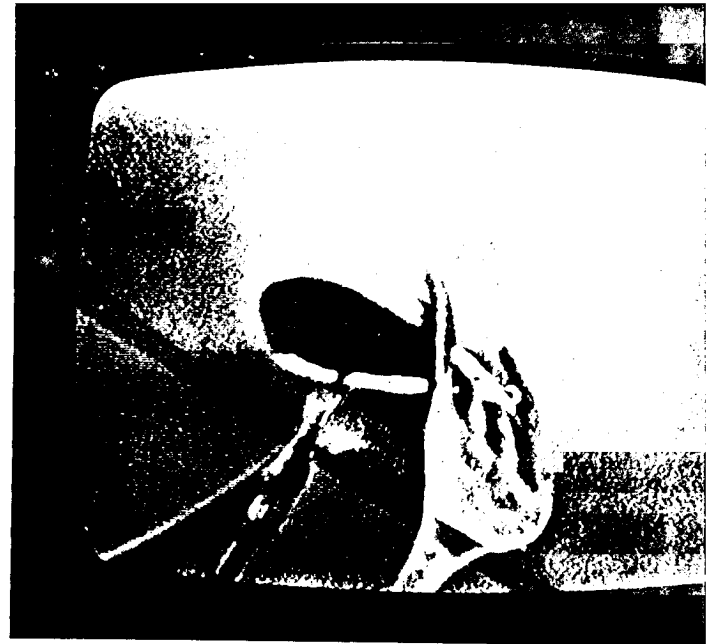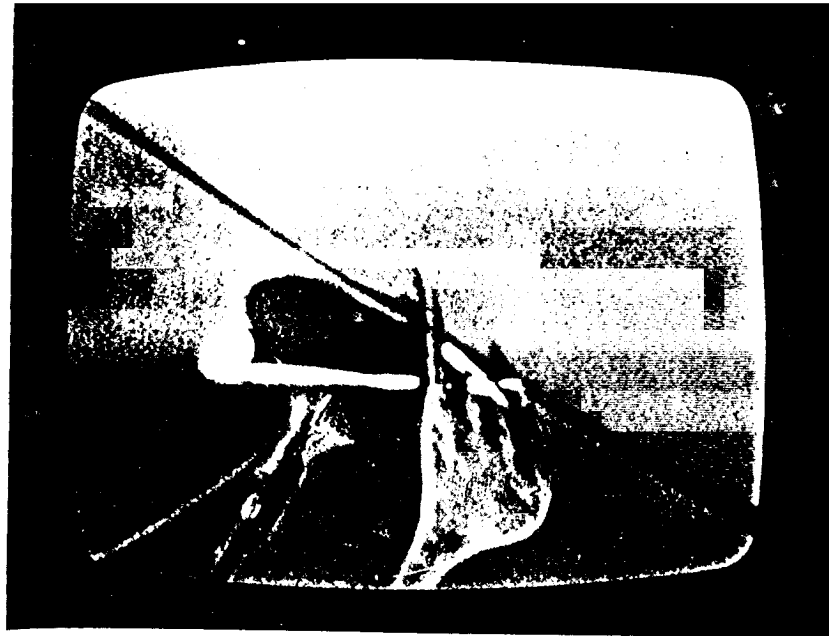
Water bounces, flies and falls, recipient reflected, needle punctures the skin, needle lifts the skin, needle rests on the cloth, liquid saturates the dry cloth, the cloth sinks and the needle floats, the needle sinks, the cloth draws water to the spoon, spoon bowl extends the skin, water falls, skin rises, falls, rises, falls. (3½ minutes)
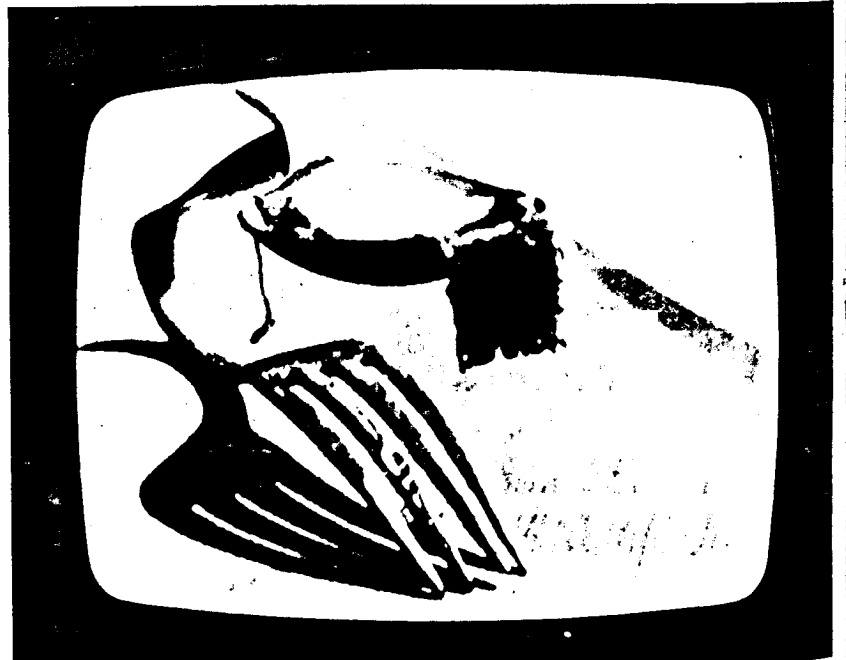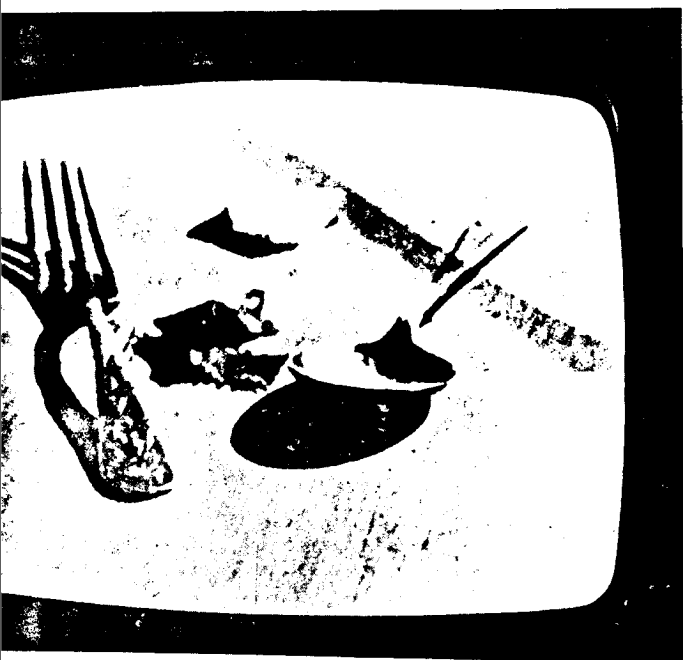
cord with each other as well as in transformed physical states.' The tapes were made on a table using a single light source and I both operated the equipment and performed the actions. Each of these tapes is an attempt at communication by me and I could only do them harm by trying to "explain them away" so I have provided a sort of scenario of three of them in the form of captions. (2 minutes, 25 seconds)

Pressure on the skin, combustion, silver rests on the skin, soft radius, forked, the skin pulsates, the spoon is warmed, hot wax falls on the skin, fire tunnels to the fork, solid to liquid to solid to form the bridge, the spoon falls and the skin rises, wall of water rises around the spoon, skin mirror reflects the falling flame, skin surrounds the fallen wax. (11 minutes)
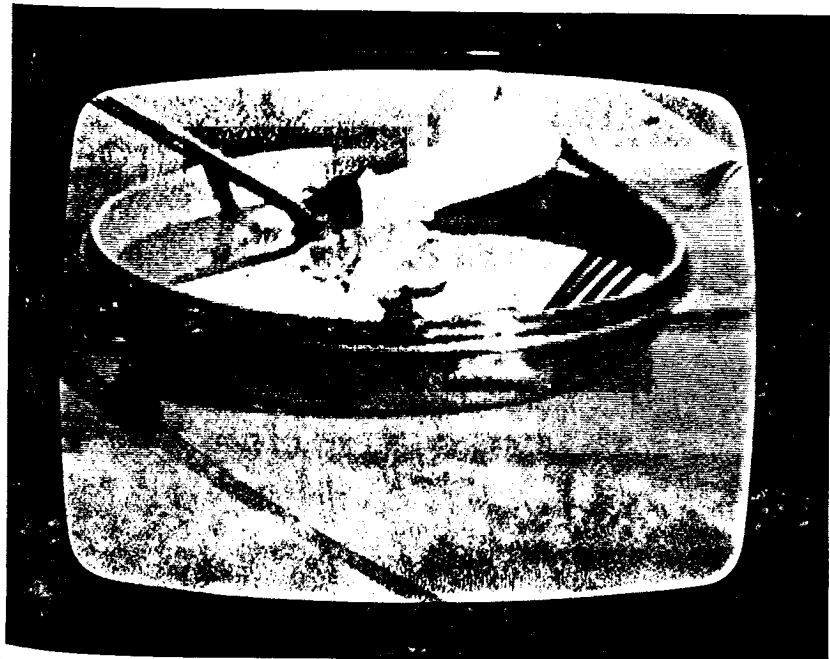
DOUGLAS DAVIS:

VIDEO

AGAINST

VIDEO

David Ross

The time has come to stop viewing video art as merely something new, and to start seeing the work of those who perform with the medium for what it is. "Video art" simply describes a set of activities involving a specific technology directed primarily towards the manipulation of ideas. There are as many distinct kinds of video art as there are kinds of graphic art, and an understanding of these distinctions must be based in issues beyond video as a specific medium, relating to a wide range of contemporary aesthetic concerns. While it is easy to see and sense this in video work created by artists who have established their positions in other media (e.g., Robert Morris and Bruce Nauman), it is difficult to see beyond the medium in the work of artists who emerged first in video and related media—among them, Juan Downey, Peter Campus, Frank Gillette, Keith Sonnier, and, particularly, Douglas Davis.

Davis' work in video has been catholic. He has tested the medium in many ways, from the making of tapes to live broadcasting to constructions, prints, drawings, and manifestoes. But his devotion to the medium is not a devotion to video as an end in itself, but as a means to ends beyond video in the dialectic of contemporary art and life.

Douglas Davis and others have taken a problematic stance within the context of contemporary art by working in video. They have avoided the relative sanctuary open to those who are content to expand the nature of art through the mastery of one particular medium. To paraphrase Joseph Kosuth, "If you paint, you are already accepting and not questioning the nature of art . . . the acceptance of the premise of a given medium . . . forbids a more general questioning not only of the premise but of the very nature and function of art.[1] Does Kosuth's thesis hold true for artists working in video as well? The answer is yes, it can be found in the work of Davis, Campus, Sonnier, Gillette, and Downey now, and Paik and Nauman before them, both in video and in other areas of art activity.

Douglas Davis, 24: 59, A Point in Video Time, 1973. Silkscreen, 22½ x 28½". Courtesy Galerie et Editions Gilles Gheerbrant.