

Video Journal

The Soho Weekly
News
Dec. 26, 1974

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Steina and Woody Vasulka showed a group of videotapes, including some works in progress at Anthology Film Archives on December 7 and 8. The first, one of their sound-gated image pieces, in which a stone-wall image was keyed into an image of a widening diagonal crack. The "crack" image opened and closed in response to variations in the amplitude of the audio, while the entire raster slid slowly from left to right. "We have our own device to adjust horizontal raster stability, and it enables us to control this aspect very well," Woody Vasulka said. "We have a whole new set of tools and are learning how to use them. We are engaged in an exploration of the tools in terms of image control, especially in the area of the application of sound for image-forming purposes."

In *Solo for 3*, the image of the number three was superimposed and keyed into and out of the image field in response to a simple sound pattern. The piece involved four cameras focused on the number three at different angles and distances. In another piece, a sponge was the image for a four-camera work based on related technological ideas, although the structure of the work was entirely different. "What we're trying to do," Woody Vasulka continued, "is

to keep the input minimal in order to process it. We live under the illusion—at least we often feel it's an illusion—that we will discover a visual language. Of course we have not succeeded, but we keep on trying anyway."

In another series of works, the Vasulkas used a Rutt/Etra scan processor and a vertical-position averaging device. The latter made all the images appear to "flow" under the raster as if the entire scene took place under a large sheet of fluid silk. The first piece of this type involved a view to the road outside the Vasulkas' window, with accompanying audio. As the work proceeded, the Vasulkas used the scan processor to shift and translate the raster in various ways. When the raster was shifted to the right or left, for instance, the flyback period appeared like a time/space gap between the end and beginning of the raster on the screen, because the left side of the raster came in on the right. As a result, the moving images (of cars, for instance) went off-screen to the right before they appeared on the left. In another mode, the raster was gradually twisted so that the viewer had the sensation of seeing its underside, as if the whole world outside their window was a single, flexible, bounded rectangular surface, as passing cars and people "flowed" underneath.

In a related piece, the Vasulkas treated footage shot from the window of a moving car during a trip through Rumania in the same way. While the *flow* of images (from the car) was familiar, the technique radically changed the experiential quality of the images. In another virtuoso demonstration of the scan processor, the Vasulkas used what appeared to be a small terminal board for an image to undulate the raster by square, sine and triangular-wave inputs. "All our works are concerned with alternating between the reality we know and the electronic space we create," Woody Vasulka said. "It is this alternation that is the most fascinating."