

Film: Videotape Program at Whitney

9 Items to Be Shown Through Thursday

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 minutes; LONG SOUNDS by Richard Felciano, 8 minutes; ALEPH-NUL by Shridhar Bapat and Charles Phillips, 12 minutes; FEED FIELDS BACK by Richard Lowenberg, 12 minutes; POINT OF INFLECTION by Stephen C. Beck and Richard Felciano, 8 minutes; DESCARTES by Joanne Kyger, 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 distort and then to dissolve along the airwaves (or closed-circuit cable waves, or whatever). It seems a moment of considerably more interesting risk-taking 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.

Entertainment Events

Theater

LAST NIGHT

NIGHTRIDE opened at the Vandam Theater. A review will appear in later editions and will be reprinted tomorrow in the edition for which it was not available this morning.

Film

TODAY

NUPTIAE, a film by James Broughton and THE FILMS OF GUNVAR NELSON, at the Film Forum.

Operas

TONIGHT

METROPOLITAN OPERA, Saint-Saens' "Samson et Dalila," with Bumby, Tucker, Bacquier, Macurdy and Plishka, Baudo conducting, 8.

VILLAGE LIGHT OPERA GROUP, Fashion Institute Theater, 227 West 27th Street, Gilbert and Sullivan's "Trial by Jury" and "The Sorcerer," 8.

STUYVESANT COMMUNITY OPERA, Stuyvesant Auditorium, 15th Street between First and Second Avenues, Offenbach's "Tales of Hoffman," 8.

AMATC OPERA, 319 Bowery, Mozart's "The Magic Flute," 8:15.

Concerts

TODAY

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC, Leonard Bernstein conducting, with Martina Arroyo, soprano, Philharmonic Hall, 2.

JOHN FRUSCIANTE, piano, Lincoln Center Library-Museum, 6:30.

MASTERWORK CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA, David Randolph, conducting, Carnegie Hall, 7:30.

JUILLARD STRING QUARTET, with William Masselos, piano, Hunter College Playhouse, 8.

ALEXIS WEISSENBERG, piano, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 8.

C. W. POST COLLEGE MUSIC FACULTY CONCERT, Carnegie Recital Hall, 8.

HIGH SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS CONCERTO CONCERT, 120 West 46th Street, 8.

LARENCE WATERS, organ, Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, 8.

"Listen, did you
was in Room 8