

Woody Vasulka

born: 1937, Brno, Czechoslovakia

The Commission 1983 45:00 min.

stereo sound

color

screens Tues-Sat at 10:05 am in FA 171

Ardele Lister

born: 1950, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Hell 1985 17:00 min.

color

screens Tues-Sat at 11:05 am in FA 171

Sherry Millner

born: 1950, Brooklyn, New York

Scenes from the Micro-War 1985 22:00 min.

color

screens Tues-Sat at 11:05 am in FA 171



In *The Commission* Vasulka creates an electronic stage applying an intricate array of video and audio effects to live performance as narrative device. *The Commission* is a metaphor for art-making as realized in the story of two eccentric, self-indulgent, and ultimately tragic artists. Paganini, created by artist Ernest Gusella, is a tortured, sickly romantic who describes his grotesque fantastic visions via his young son. Berlioz, created by composer and performer Robert Ashley, is a cerebral, self-absorbed character who speaks in abstractions. Vasulka creates a unique and strange electronic context for these performances, reacting to their moods with his vocabulary of digital processing devices, interweaving distortion, multiplicity, ghosting, and disintegration to create his own resonating visual drama.

Woody Vasulka studied at The School of Industrial Engineering and The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, before emigrating to the U.S. in 1965. He joined the faculty of the Center for Media Study at State University of New York, Buffalo, in 1974 and there built the "Vasulka Imaging System," a computer-based, personal image-processing facility. He is a 1979 Guggenheim Fellow currently living in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he is producing a multi-art video tape, *The Art of Memory*.

In *Hell*, inspired by Dante's *Inferno*, lost souls are trapped and stored on computer disks and tortured with the icy precision of digital video effects. It is an inquiry into contemporary ethics staged within the video frame but remaining faithful to the essential structure of the *Inferno* and its movement downward from the dark wood to the 'frozen imagination'. Using contemporary metaphors and locations, Lister places her work in the television landscape of urban American life.

Ardele Lister holds a Master's degree in art from the University of British Columbia. She wrote art criticism and edited the Magazine, *Criteria*, before moving to New York in 1976. Lister has directed for film and television and is the recipient of several awards including a National Endowment for the Arts Grant (1985) and a Black Maria Film/Video Festival Award. Her works are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and the National Gallery of Canada. Lister's recent screenings include the American Film Institute, Washington; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Tokyo Biennale; and the Long Beach Museum of Art.

Scenes from the Micro-War uses the obsessive visual metaphor of camouflage to examine hidden stresses and contradictions in the everyday life of the American family. Specifically it uncovers a recent shift in the average family's social function from the consumerist unit to a military training force. The fractured narrative serio-comically follows the olive drab and khaki brown misadventures of one such family hypnotized by Reagan's "Space Wars," state terrorism and "Rambo/Commando" fashions.

Sherry Millner studied at California Institute of the Arts and holds an M.F.A. from U.C., San Diego. Her work has been shown in festivals and exhibits in the United States and Canada. She is an Associate Editor of the film magazine *JumpCut* and an Assistant Professor at Rutgers University. *Scenes from the Micro-War* was produced with an Open Channels production grant from The Long Beach Museum of Art and has been selected for the 1987 Biennial of the Whitney Museum of American Art.