

Tokyo Four 1991
(Video & Audio by Steina)

Theme:

"No form of moving-image art comes as close to musical composition as multiscreen video, where the different channels of image and sound are equivalent to musical polyphony, each functioning like a voice in a musical ensemble. And no multiscreen work is as spectacularly musical as Steina's. She works as a composer would, playing on the visual equivalents of timbre, texture, and tone. *Tokyo Four* is the audio-visual equivalent of a string quartet. In one compositional strategy, Steina begins by assembling a long single channel segment which represents the 'melody,' or what she calls the 'ground track.' Sometimes one screen is the melody and the others are accompaniment, then another screen takes the lead. A musical syntax emerges from this visual point/counterpoint organized around duration, interval, rhythm, repetition, and series. *Tokyo Four* is organized around categories of imagery: Shinto priests meticulously grooming their Zen garden on New Year's Eve; train conductors monitoring rush hour crowds; elevator girls bringing a superfluous, but charming High Touch to the high tech world of the shopping malls, reminding shoppers to watch their umbrellas and to not forget their children; a segment about food, beginning with the vertiginous fisheye lens in a supermarket; and an emotionally charged meta-choreography of a dance troupe's performance and curtain call.... Her compositional devices include flipping or reversing an image and playing it at imperceptibly different speeds on different screens, which gradually all synchronize at the same speed. These strategies are especially effective in the final movement when the female dancer is bowing. The Lehar's waltz the dancers use would be banal without the manipulations of Steina's spectacular visual matrix, which transforms it into something at once exotic and poignant."

Gene Youngblood

Operation:

Tokyo Four is a four video/four audio channel installation on a 22 minute repeated loop. Each of the four laser disk players provides one video and one audio source to a bank of 20 (4 x 5) video monitors and four speakers.

A disk synchronizer aligns the four channels of video for a synchronous playback. At the end of each cycle the program automatically returns and re-synchronizes for a repeat performance.

Note: Each synchronizer is custom built for a specific hardware (Sony or Pioneer) and not interchangeable. Using other media or manufacturer requires a different synchronizing device.

The Vasulka disk synchronizer works with Pioneer industrial disk players (LD-V2200 to LD-V8000 series). There is a possibility to reprogram the dedicated synchronizer software to protocol used by other manufacturers such as Sony, but this is not certain.

Space requirement:

Active Space (see drawing/floor plan Room #005-C)
2,95M x 6,87M (9' 8" x 22' 6")

Video:

20 (4 x 5) stackable matching color video monitors
[provided by Roma]
4 video laser disk players [provided by Roma]
1 Four Channel Disk Synchronizer [provided by Vasulkas]
Video cables [provided by Roma]

Installation notes:

Monitors must be stackable to four high. Monitors which are selected should have minimal area of control panel around the face. Images should area as close as possible to one another.

Audio:

2 Stereo Audio Amplifiers (4 audio channels). [provided by Roma]
4 Speakers [provided by Roma]
4 Speakers stands [provided by Roma]
Audio cables [provided by Roma]

Platforms:

A low Platform..(Table like - see drawing) [provided by Roma]

Maintenance:

The monitor screens need dusting once a week

Daily Operations:**Start up:**

Power up monitors, Disk players and synchronizer
After a short wait the program self-starts

Verify that the installation is starting synchronously.

Shut down:

Video Laser Disks:
Power down monitors, Disk players and synchronizer

Trouble shooting:

- 1) repeat above procedure
- 2) check appropriate cable connection

Media:

TOKYO FOUR

Provided by Rome:

20 (4 x 5) stackable matching video monitors
2 Stereo Audio Amplifiers (4 audio channels)
4 Speakers
4 Speakers stands
1 110 to 220 VAC Power transformer

Video cables, Audio cables

Provided by Vasulkas if NTSC is accepted

4 Pioneer video laser disk players
4 programs on laserdisks
1 Synchronizer

NB:

For BOREALIS and TOKYO FOUR the Vasulkas can provide the diskplayers and the disks in which case Rome must provide NTSC monitors/projectors. Otherwise Rome provides the four laser disk players in PAL, and the Vasulkas will have to have PAL disks made at \$600 each.

PYROGLYPHS

Provided by Rome:

There are two possible versions:

Version one:

16 matching video monitors
3 Pioneer video laser disk players

Version two:

3 projectors
3 Pioneer video laser disk players

For either version:

3 Stereo Audio Amplifiers (6 audio channels)
6 Speakers
6 Speakers stands

Video cables, Audio cables

Platforms (16 monitor version):

If the monitors do not have the right shape to tilt up, wedges must be placed under the monitors to tilt them upward approximately 30 degrees from the floor. They must be custom made (16 x 2) to the size and shape of the monitors. (see drawing)