

STEINA VASULKA

Philadelphia Museum of Art

January 12 – April 3, 1999

This program surveys the work of Steina Vasulka, a key figure in the early history of video art. Vasulka's aesthetic has evolved in tandem with the technological advances in the medium, and she has acted as a catalyst for new uses of the camera and of imaging technologies for expressive ends. Like much art of the 1970s, her work does not hide the apparatus that she works with, but rather allows the camera and machine to be vivid actors and active transformers of space and perception. Vasulka's ongoing concern with electronically manipulated landscapes and with music are constants in this program of three solo and two collaborative works.

Born in Iceland in 1940, she trained as a violinist, studying in Prague in the early 1960s where she met her husband and future collaborator, Czech-born filmmaker and video artist Woody Vasulka. The two emigrated to the United States in 1965. In 1971 they co-founded the celebrated media arts theater, The Kitchen, in New York City. Since 1980 the couple has lived in Sante Fe, New Mexico, where they continue to work collaboratively and individually.

Program organized by Kathleen Forde, Twentieth-Century Art. Special thanks to Stephen Vitiello, Electronic Arts Intermix. All videos courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix, New York

PROGRAM NOTES →

STEINA VASULKA

Born 1940, Reykjavík, Iceland. Lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico

Violin Power, 1970–78, 10 minutes, 4 seconds

This early work, referred to by the artist as “a demo tape on how to play violin,” is a layered study of sound and image in which the classically trained Vasulka performs. By connecting her violin to the video technology, the artist’s moving bow becomes a generator of images.

Somersault, 1982, 5 minutes, 14 seconds

In this playful video, Vasulka uses a camera with a mirrored lens. The effect is a body that looks wrapped around the camera itself. In a merging of artist and machine, each spin and “somersault” of the camera produces a dizzying mutation of the panoramic image.

Lilith, 1987, 9 minutes, 12 seconds [in collaboration with Doris Cross]

The electronically altered face and voice of a woman—painter Doris Cross—are transposed onto a natural landscape scene in this densely layered and hauntingly rich evocation of the biblical figure Lilith, the first woman and Adam’s first wife.

In the Land of the Elevator Girls, 1990, 4 minutes, 18 seconds

[in collaboration with Woody Vasulka]

The title of this video refers to the elevator operators of large Japanese department stores who greet passengers and introduce them to each floor of the store. Vasulka altered footage of this everyday occurrence, taken from a variety of stores, mixing it with a montage of images of traditional and modern Japanese rituals and activities. The glimpses viewed from the electronic doors merge cultural, geographical, and temporal contexts.

Pyroglyphs, 1995, 27 minutes

In *Pyroglyphs*, a non-narrative progression of elemental images, including fire and water, are coupled with a mix of enhanced and distorted sound. This confluence creates a meditative audio and visual journey.

COLLABORATIONS '99

"Collaborations" Concert Series and Nonsequitur, Inc. present
The Third Annual Santa Fe International Festival of

Electro-Acoustic Music

The College of Santa Fe

A three-day festival of some of the most
cutting-edge work in the contemporary music world

Live performances begin each evening at 8 p.m. in T-39 West
\$25/ all weekend or \$10/event. Call 473-6511.

On-going
outdoor
audio
installations
in the CMP
Courtyard

April 23 - 25

*Live performances
include:*

CSF Electro-acoustic
Ensemble

Joan La Barbara

Steina Vasulka

David Dunn

Aaron Davidson
& Shawn Onsgard

David Behrman,
Peter Gordon,
J.A. Deane
& Steven Miller

Lynn Raley

Sung Ho Hwang

Karl MacMillan

Willow Williamson
& Lynn C. Welch

Andrew Bucksberg


THE COLLEGE OF SANTA FE

For a full schedule of events, visit our web page at
www.csf.edu/perfart/cmp/SFIFEM/SFIFEMindex.html

Funding from Meet the Composer, Inc. is provided with support from
ASCAP and the National Endowment for the Arts.