

Exhibitions

The SKY ART Exhibition

The exhibition uses contemporary media in the presentation of artists' thoughts and accomplishments regarding work in the sky and space. "Centerdisc" has been made for the occasion. It is the Center's first work cast into this form, with 54,000 images carried by the disc.

The video section comprises CAVS video work of the past fifteen years.

SKY ART attempts to bridge the common communication gap between art, media and technology despite the everyday, intercontinental, international problems of system incompatibility.

Exhibitions—Brucknerhaus and ORF

"Centerdisc" by Otto Piene, Vin Grabill, Rus Gant

Videodisc work by Fellows of CAVS, 1968—1982 and the Sky Art Conference '81 and SKY ART

"Centervideo" film and video works by CAVS artists, 1968—82

Rus Gant: "Vision Machine"

Christopher Janney: "REACH!"

Tal Streeter, Tom Van Sant, Lisa Van Sant, Jose Maria Yturralde: Kites

Bernd Kracke: "DATA Network"

Stan VanDerBeek: "Steam Screens"

Nam June Paik: "Pendel Paik"

CAVS VIDEO

Program 1—The CAVS/MIT

Marc Adrian: "Center 80", 1980

Vin Grabill: "Centertape", 1981

Jon Rubin, Richard Leacock: "Centerbeam", 1978—79

Program 2—CAVS Video Review, 1968—82

Otto Piene, Aldo Tambellini: "Black Gate Cologne", 1968; "The Medium is the Medium", 1969

Peter Campus: "Four Short Tapes", 1973—74

Miralda: "Santa Army Navy" (excerpt), 1979

Juan Downey: "The Looking Glass", 1981

Shelley Lake, Pat Hearn: "Seizure", 1980

Douglas Davis: "Double Entendre", 1982

Nam June Paik: "Guadacanal Requiem", 1979
Betsy Connors: "Selected Works", 1979—82
Otto Piene, Paul Earls, Benjamin Bergery, Brain Raila: "Bremen Town Musicians", 1980
Bernd Kracke: "Media Games", 1982
Sarah Dickinson: "Portrait Scan"
Ron Hays: "Love Death", 1980

Program 3—Media Look

Aldo Tambellini: "Artists' Use of Telecommunications", 1980
Antonio Muntadas: "Media Ecology Ads", 1982
Aldo Tambellini: "Inauguration '81", 1982

Program 4—Computer Animated Film and Video of Stan VanDerBeek

An overview of media development through the computer-generated imagery of Stan VanDerBeek. Videotapes and films spanning 15 years.

Stan VanDerBeek **"Steam Screens"**

"Steam Screens" is an environmental projection system for exterior large-scale light sculptural work. This particular model demonstrates some of the three-dimensional illusions of the steam screen system. It's conceivable to imagine this being the form of large, open-sky image systems. Computer animation is particularly appropriate for producing the projected image since curious illusionistic and sculptural shapes can be animated. It is appropriate for large, physical light-projected works in space. It seems to be concurrent with Kepes' position on environmental art, which envisioned incorporating large outdoor sculptural light work within the city scape. There is a practical application, as well, of the piece being physically warming in a cold weather environment—literally a comfort sculpture.

Lowry Burgess **"Sky Arch"**

"Sky Arch" is a two-hundred foot, horizontal tension structure in which contain the technology of an elaborate video system including tape decks, recorders, cameras, lights, disc deck, monitors, speakers, closed circuit and telephone links, etc. It could be said to be an interweaving of time, space and image accomplished through video technology. Embellishing and connected to this arch are large kites above and inflatable supports clustered below. (Kites by Tal Treeter, Tom Van Sant, Jose Maria Yturralde.) Video imagery will be diverse, including the Sky Art Exhibition, CAVS artist work, "Centerbeam" documentation and film, plus numerous C.A.M.S. video artists' tapes including Betsy Connors, Rus Gant, Vin Grabill, Ron Hays, Bernd Kracke, Aldo Tambellini, Stan VanDerBeek and others. It will be a diverse array of sound and imagery.

The exhibition's informational territory expands in rings of time and space from the Brucknerhaus and the sky opera "Icarus", to the ORF and outward to Austria, Europe, the U.S. and the world, from the immediate to the past and to an implied future. The structure is meant to both informationally and environmentally illuminate the Brucknerhaus and its surrounding with flickering video light.

On Kites

"... About five years ago I got the idea that we could fly one of these segmented kites, which is basically a Chinese design that doesn't fly very well. One needs only to put a drill in each of the segments to give it a little pitch to each side so that it is more stable in the wind and put up enough segments so that you've created enough lift to run three lines through three pulleys. Then add on segments to make a kite of infinite length. The idea was out of the Old Testament Jacob's Ladder. Jacob put his head upon a stone and dreamed of a ladder going into the sky with angels ascending. Leonardo liked the idea. People who fantasize about sky hooks or Jack-In-The-Beanstalk or the Indian rope trick believe these to be only variations on this age-old dream. With the advent of powered flight, everybody kind of went past the idea ..."

Excerpt from "An Artist's Landsat Project", lecture by Tom Van Sant, "Sky Art Conference '81 ", September 26, 1981

Bernd Kracke "DATA Network"

The fast development of electronic tools with which we can generate and record, access and distribute information, characterize our time as post-mobile. Physical movement of matter becomes increasingly costly and inefficient for the post-mobile society, as there are faster and cheaper electronic short cuts across time and space. The invisible railways and the immaterial bridges of a global network of telecommunication allow us to span gaps of every size and duration.

Past, present and potential futures as well as the "here and there" are randomly accessible through the electronic window of the TV set, which characterizes the post-mobile architecture of the "electronic cage".

There we find simultaneously shelter as private individuals and a point of view as "world citizens", interconnected by the collective electronic unconsciousness.

As "primitives" of the age of electronic information exchange we explore the possibilities of our new tools and we experiment with our ability to express our transformed view of the world.

"DATA Network" combines video technology, computer graphics and telecommunication devices in an experimental interactive set up that enables its users to gather, transform, record and disseminate information instantaneously. The processed information is constantly distributed as printed hard copy and as electronic soft copy via broadcast, Richtfunk and closed circuit TV.

"DATA Network" is a flexible model for the decentralized use of resources in an electronic publishing loop which exemplifies the constant flow of information in the post-mobile society.

Christopher Janney "REACH!"

An Environmental /Participatory Sound Installation

Similar to SOUNDSTAIR and STEAMSHUFFLE, "REACH!" explores the interface between sound and architecture. For the 1982 Sky Art Conference, this installation will be in the entrance to the ORF in Linz. It will be composed of a series of electronic sensing devices placed along the edges of the entrance six feet off the ground. As participants walking in this space reach up, they will trigger the sensors which are wired to a synthesizer and speech processor, creating electronically-composed voice and sound while generating a spontaneous "dance" of overhead gestures. REACH! is conceived to activate and create an awareness of that space just above our heads which is the beginning of sky.

Todd Slier, Vin Grabill
Planning Notes for Centerdisc

The unique property of the optical playback videodisc is its ability to access unit bits of information on call. Unlike any other system, its potential for presenting images both serially and non-serially most clearly reflects the way the human mental process manipulates thoughts. In this sense, the videodisc is a medium of the mind.

In mastering a disc, the user must store information unit by unit, or frame by frame, as the medium requires. We refer to this process as "local assemblage"; one image can be compared to another, forming a pair of contrasts. In "global assemblage", multiple pairs of contrasts merge to form a general perspective, the details of which are fully documented and retrievable in their unit form.

In this capacity, the videodisc may be used as an educational tool to demonstrate how the mind works in perceiving and expressing something, intuitively (globally) and analytically (locally).

Rue Gant
Video Discs: the Quiet Revolution

Combining the best of computers, television, records, movies, and books, laser optical video discs can handle words, numbers and pictures both analog and digital with equal ease. This simple piece of plastic spinning above a fine beam of laser light is slowly drawing together the vested interests of the information industries.

The disc is both economical and reliable while at the same time sophisticated and expansive. It comes as the logical result of compressing the technological interests of television and computers to find a better memory system. It also comes as the result of combined search by publishing and recording industries for a new distribution system. Economic pressures for more information packaged in less space for less money are real and pervasive among the information processors. The excellence of the disc as a solution is a tribute to the enormity of those pressures.

With a quiet history, discs have sporadically come to the public surface to meet a mixture of optimism and skepticism. They are both heralded as the new book, with the capability of giving unlimited knowledge and condemned as another television product, devoid of content and soon to pass. Speak of discs to some people and you are grasping at the future. Talk to others and you are being blinded by the flash of the present—soon to be the past. These colorful pieces of plastic generate not only dollars for some, but also emotions and challenges for others. They are clearly what you make of them and many are trying to make a great deal of them.

The drive to know and understand is great, and the constant search for tools to facilitate that learning process has given us many solutions: book, film, record, tape and now disc. As the successor, encompassing them all, the disc is to be used not only with utility, but with art and creativity. The potential of the medium allows for and demands the attention of our most creative and inventive talent. It will be through the creative process that we will come to more clearly understand this medium. It will take art and artists to lift the ceiling on the way we think, to open the limits on processes imposed by our machines, to lift even the sky as a limit on our thinking.

RUS GANT **"Vision Machine"**

Rus Gant's Vision Machine represents the use of a new generation of computer with visual memory for the presentation and performance of linked sound and picture art. The vision machine utilizes optical video disks and state of art image processing to produce sound and picture displays in an fundamentally new way. These images can exist within a raster scan television type display or can be deployed as large scale light projections. The power of the system comes from the ability to combine high quality picture and sound from the optical disks with the computer's ability to organize, write, draw and paint in to a single sound/visual display.

Fact sheet concerning video and media development at CAVS, 1968—82

Art has provided important incentives for the development of public electronic media since the advent of public radio and TV. Television has entered a new stage with the availability of handier equipment. Video became a commodity, and video art developed since roughly 1965, when artists started filming TV and subsequently discovered the portable video camera and instant playback. The resulting artist's feedback to the media industry can be summed up in a few sentences:

The media used to address a passive audience.

The means of production did not take imaginative advantage of electronic processing techniques.

The media were confined to box containers, such as radio and TV sets.

The media were unpoetic and artistically shallow.

The media were highly regulated, monitored and edited according to national, political views.

The variety of programs was narrow; there were no storing tools for easy access.

TV was widely uneducational.

Lively institutes in the U.S.A. embarking on artistic adventures to explore artistic and educational media possibilities were, in the U.S., NET/WGBH in Boston, NET channel 13 in New York City, NET/IKOED in San Francisco—and CAVS at MIT, an artist's institute dedicated in 1968 and committed to collaboration in art, science and technology.

CAVS media work has emphasized subjective, personal, and artistic approaches in the production of programs ("tapes" and films), media environments/ installations and telecommunication. Interest in equipment is expressed in the fact that the first artistic "video synthesizer", the Paik-Abe synthesizer, is located at CAVS

CAVS artist's were involved in the first artist's TV programs both in Europe and in the U.S.: Otto Piene and Aldo Tambellini produced, together with Wibke von Bonin and WDR staff, "Black Gate Cologne", a 55—minute program for WDR III of the primary German network

for airing in 1968. They also participated, with Nam June Paik, Alan Kaprow, James Seawright and Thomas Tadlock, in the first U.S. artist's program, the WGBH (Fred Barzyk)-produced "The Medium is the Medium" aired in 1969 and universally considered a standard-setting "classic".

CAVS hosted or else is currently hosting a total of 30 film, video, TV and telecommunication artists, plus several graduate students of "Media" in the S.M.Vis.S. program. Since the institution of that program, several media and environmental media students have graduated in the CAVS section, Environmental Art.

Most prominent among former and present media CAVS fellows are some of the father figures of the "movement", such as Stan VanDerBeek and Aldo Tambellini, and some of its current champions e.g., Peter Campus, Douglas Davis, Ron Hays, Juan Downey, and some prolific younger activists, e.g., Antonio Muntadas, Betsy Connors, Bernd Kracke, Vin Grabill.

Our current most vivid interests: music visualization (Paul Earls), videodisc development (Mike Naimark, Vin Grabill and Rus Gant), telecommunication via satellites and slow scan (Aldo Tambellini, Antonio Muntadas, Bernd Kracke).

Besides MIT, WGBH, The Rockefeller Foundation, government agencies such as the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) and several smaller foundations have supported our 13—year efforts.

The CAVS Program 1982, held at the Brucknerhaus, Linz, includes the following four programs:

1. The CAVS/MIT
2. CAVS Video Review, 1968—82
3. Media Look
4. Computer Animated Film and Video of Stan VanDerBeek