Jane Veeder:
4KTAPE

visuals: Jane Veeder
sound: Clark Salisbury, Jane Veeder

– 3/4" U-Matic NTSC Color Video, Monaural Sound
– 3:00 mins–Technology:
Hardware: UV–1/Zgrass Graphics Computer
Sony 5850 Videotape Editor
Arp 2600 and Prophet 10 Audio Synthesizers
Software: Custom animation sequences programmed in Zgrass, rom-resident language interpreter.

DESCRIPTION:

This is the first time I have accepted a commission, the first time I have agreed to look outside myself, outside any collaborator, to create a "personal" work. I need to make connections and I do so with a loop: ideas and money in, creative work back. There are parallels between this cycle and that of working with computers as my primary collaborator. I brainstorm, I dream, I make diagrams, and then I beat against my medium, then re-brainstorm, re-dream, re-diagram, then loop. The computer sucks electricity, my devotion and returns fan-noise, LEDs, and shoots electrons at phosphors near my face. We sit here together, in time, looping, each waiting for the other's next move.

Ars Electronica and Capra are Austrian, so was my great-great grandfather. When I spoke at Ars Electronica in 1984, I visited his hometown, Antholz, now in Italy. Another Austrian, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, father of General Systems Theory, is of inspiration to me as I and other computer artists attempt to perceive the essential nature of the medium and its life in our culture, while sidestepping the distracting mediocrities of applications economics, marketing dogma, and the conservatism of the art world. Another connection between Bertalanffy and the priorities in my work is that I make all the forms quite simple so as to concentrate on their visual relationships and life in time.

With 4KTAPE, I am using the medium of simulation, computer, the Big Brain, to simulate the Big Body. Visual patterns pulse out the energy economies of the universe, of the planet, of the organism.

I make presumptuous connections between the cycling of my 16 screens (256K display memory partitioned into 16 2-bit/pixel buffers), the loops in my programs, the hertz-brains of digital technology, the cycles of organic life and energy life. This is a Z-80, custom videogame hardware, 10-rez attempt to get an image-over-time handle on infinite-resolution energy systems. I attempt to make my programmatic loops ever more generalized and illuminated, emulating the universality of digital media.

Capra prays for a 'peaceful and harmonic' adjustment to this new age. Not likely. Subversive organic priorities must viciously erode the imposed structures from within to bring peace and health again. Ancient values are resurfacing and integrating with contemporary culture, like star quilt patterns glowing through your electric blanket. How clever of us to rediscover our former intelligence. How many times have we been through this? I am impatient and immature, it's all so stupid with bad design everywhere, so I yearn to invoke Great Mother-muscle, call the horsewomen of apocalyptic feminism to bring it all down, like ordering a pizza. Accept this techno-chant for a Large Special with everything on it.

Imagine " … sea to shining sea … " as spanning time rather than geography and we're nearing

the other shore. We live at the center, the continuous torus-center of time and matter, and the position is reclaimed now.

This is the New Age again. I hope world culture is looping.

VIZGAME
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GENERAL DESCRIPTION:
VIZGAME is an interactive computer animation and sound synthesis installation. The player interacts with graphic menus to draw figures and other graphic processes on the system's 16 screens to build up a cyclical real-time animation. The player is in control of composing the visual/temporal relationships within the animation as it evolves.

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE:
Datamax UV-1 Graphics Computer Zgrass Language Interpreter
Custom VIZGAME software environment

BACKGROUND:
The medium of computer is a particularly complex one incorporating many levels of invested intelligence. Likewise, creative development in a digital medium is notably process oriented, with many generations of software tool development, and perception and design goal evolution behind the finalized work. How then is an average "viewer" to apprehend a digital work of art? My current strategy is to turn the "viewer" into a "player" who, by interacting with control structures and visual devices, has a means to explore and perceive the actual character of the work.

VIZGAME is based on the final sequence from FLOATER (1983), my videotape work which involved both simultaneous program control of sound and visuals, and real-time graphic processes merged with cycling of the system's 16 screens. Through interactivity, I have extended a range of FLOATER's creative development phase to viewer control.

VIZGAME DOCUMENTATION (cont'd)
VIZGAME, as well as my 1982 installation, WARPITOUT, runs on the Datamax UV-1/Zgrass Graphics System. First marketed in late 1980, the UV-1's resident programming interface is Zgrass, a language interpreter designed specifically for interactive graphics, real-time animation, user evolution, and optimized for custom videogame hardware. This affordable, Z–80 based sports car of a system spawned a subculture of creative users who developed their own software toward a diverse range of goals, including custom language commands. Even though current hardware has eclipsed it in spacial resolution and bit-depth, and it is not commercially supported, the subculture continues to evolve through this system because of its software generality and real-time graphics capabilities.

I would rather have programmed VIZGAME in C on a machine that could support distribution of this and future interactive installations for visual exploration. Unfortunately, I know of no C-programmable machine with the real-time animation and interactive capabilities needed to support an artist-integrated work like VIZGAME. Do you? Jane Veeder