

FIVE FROM LOUISIANA



LYNDA BENGLIS

TINA GIROUARD RICHARD LANDRY

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG KEITH SONNIER

NEW WORK

JANUARY 28 THROUGH MARCH 27 1977

NEW ORLEANS MUSEUM OF ART

CITY PARK NEW ORLEANS

INTRODUCTION

FIVE FROM LOUISIANA is the final exhibition in a series planned by the New Orleans Museum of Art to celebrate the American Revolution Bicentennial. It was decided that the museum could best serve the community and the state during the Bicentennial by honoring some of the outstanding achievements of artists from Louisiana.

The first major retrospective of Richard Clague (1821-1873), Louisiana's foremost 19th century landscape painter and founder of the Louisiana landscape school, was the initial Bicentennial presentation in November 1974. In September 1975 the first retrospective of John McCrady (1911-1968), the most important Regionalist painter working in New Orleans in the 1930s and 1940s, was presented. The work of New Orleans' preeminent American photographer, Clarence John Laughlin, was exhibited in March 1975, in a large retrospective organized by the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

FIVE FROM LOUISIANA focuses on five Louisiana artists who have gained national and international reputations, and have received honor and distinction on the contemporary art scene today. They are Lynda Benglis, born in Lake Charles; Tina Girouard, born in DeQuincy; Richard Landry, born in Cecilia; Keith Sonnier, born in Mamou; and Robert Rauschenberg, who, although born in Port Arthur, Texas, has adopted Lafayette, Louisiana, as his home.

Louisianians, particularly Cajuns, love a party, and will cook a large gumbo whenever several gather together. In a sense this exhibition is a gumbo celebration, and welcome home for these five artists who have distinguished themselves and their native state. Unlike most art exhibitions organized in museums, FIVE FROM LOUISIANA, because of the nature of the works produced by the artists, is, in part, a series of specially scheduled events. On view in the Ella West Freeman Gallery are works in more traditional media: drawings, prints, photographs, and sculpture, many of which were created for this exhibition. The artists also have created other new works which transcend a gallery format and are presented here for the first time.

On January 10, three weeks prior to the opening of the exhibition, Tina Girouard executed her major work, a performance piece, *Pinwheel*, in the Delgado Great Hall at the Museum. Performed by Ms. Girouard and three Louisianians—Mercedes Deshotel, John Geldersma, and Gerard Murrell—*Pinwheel* was videotaped, and is being shown on a large screen, video projection system in the exhibition. Lynda Benglis invited New Orleans artist Ida Kohlmeyer, her former painting professor at Sophie Newcomb Art Department, Tulane University, to collaborate on an architectural prop piece which fills the Delgado Great Hall and transforms it into an enormous environmental sculpture. Ms. Benglis created an eleven copper knot *7 Come II* series for this exhibition. Keith Sonnier has created a live, audio communication piece. Richard Landry will perform a solo quadrasonic, sound delay concert in the Stern Auditorium on Sunday evening, January 30, two days after the exhibition opening. Robert Rauschenberg created a large, mixed media collage painting, *Opal Reunion*, especially for the exhibition. The exhibition also includes a scheduled program of video tapes by Benglis, Girouard, Landry and Sonnier, as well as films by Sonnier.

This catalog is published as a rotogravure supplement inserted in the January 30, 1977, Sunday edition of the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, which, with a circulation of approximately 310,000, will reach an estimated audience of nearly one million. To our knowledge this marks the first time an art museum catalog has been published as a complete entity in a newspaper.

Each of the five artists selected to participate in this exhibition was asked to invite a person of their choice to interview them or to write an essay on their work for this publication. The Museum is delighted with each artist's choice and thanks these writers for their contributions and interest in this venture.

New Orleans author and playwright Tennessee Williams wrote the essay on Lynda Benglis. Co-founder and editor of the contemporary art journal *Avalanche* Liza Béar interviewed Tina Girouard on WBAI radio in New York for this exhibition, and the transcript of that broadcast is published here. Contemporary American composer and musician Philip Glass interviewed Richard Landry. *The New Yorker* magazine art critic Calvin Tomkins discussed the work of Robert Rauschenberg, and University of New Orleans art professor Calvin Harlan interviewed his former student Keith Sonnier.

The new Canadian contemporary art quarterly *Parachute* will devote its entire Spring issue to this exhibition, republishing the five texts and other portions of this catalog. The new works created by the five artists during their stay in New Orleans just prior to the exhibition opening, which could not be discussed or illustrated because of the early press deadline for the printing of the catalog, will be fully documented in *Parachute*. The Museum thanks *Parachute* editors Chantal Pontbriand and France Morin for their cooperation and interest.

This exhibition was funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D. C., a Federal agency. A second National Endowment for the Arts grant will enable the New Orleans Museum of Art to consider the purchase of two or more of the works in the exhibition for its permanent collection. The museum wishes to thank Mr. and Mrs. Harry J. Blumenthal, and the Parkside Foundation and its chairman, Thomas B. Lemann, all from New Orleans, for providing matching funds for the NEA purchase grant.

Enterprises of this scope require the cooperation and assistance of numerous persons to insure their success. The Museum is privileged to have had such support and assistance from many sources, and we wish to recognize them here and publicly extend our appreciation. Henry R. Kron, *Dixie Roto Advertising Manager*; Ashton Phelps, *Publisher*; and Norman Newhouse; all of the *Times-Picayune Publishing Corporation*, have been most sympathetic and helpful in the production and insertion of this catalog in the Sunday edition of the newspaper. Jerry Schuppert of *Printing Production, Inc.*, has been indispensable in the design and production of the catalog. New Orleans Public Television Station WYES videotaped Tina Girouard's *Pinwheel* performance in the Museum, and we are grateful to Station Director William Hart and Producer Sharon Litwin for their cooperation and effort on our behalf. The Museum is pleased to have had the assistance of one of this city's most talented artists, Blaine Kern, whose studios produce floats for many Mardi Gras parades. Mr. Kern has generously opened his warehouses to Lynda Benglis and Ida Kohlmeyer, and made available numerous oversize sculptured props for their collaborative piece.

We are grateful to the Museum's Board of Trustees, particularly Muriel Bultman Francis, Mrs. P. Roussel Norman, and President Moise S. Steeg, Jr., for their valuable advice in the planning of the exhibition. Thomas B. Hess, Bob Peterson, and Charles Yoder have been helpful, and their useful suggestions were greatly appreciated.

From the beginning all the artists' New York galleries and their directors Leo Castelli, Paula Cooper, Holly Solomon, and Ileana Sonnabend, have been most supportive and enthusiastic. It has been our pleasure to work with each of them. We thank also Frederika Hunter of the Texas Gallery in Houston and Stanley and Elyse Grinstein and Sidney Felson of Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles for their cooperation.

Finally we wish to express our deep appreciation to each of the "Five from Louisiana" artists who have worked unselfishly with the Museum staff to create this exhibition. We are proud of them and wish them all a hearty, Cajun "Bienvenu."

E. JOHN BULLARD
Director

WILLIAM A. FAGALY
Chief Curator

ISBN 0-8494-001-5

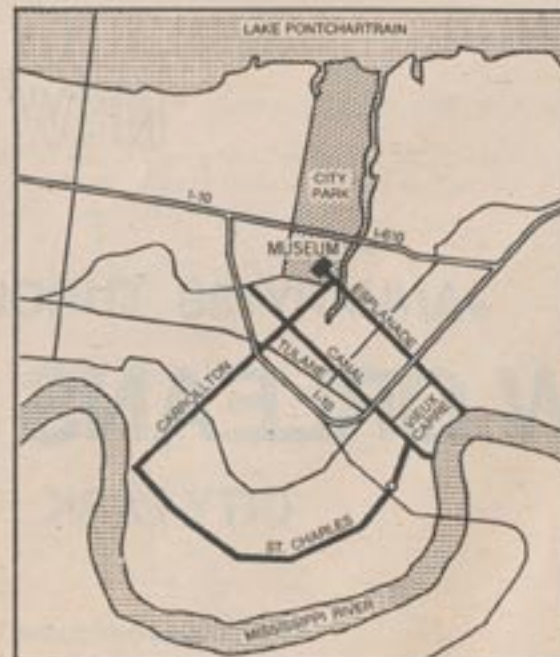
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 76-52639

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323,000 copies of the catalog were printed for the art exhibition
FIVE FROM LOUISIANA

Designed by William A. Fagaly and Jerry Schuppert
Production by Printing Production Service Inc., New Orleans
Typography by Forstall Typographers, New Orleans
Printed in the United States of America by Art Gravure Corp. of Ohio
Published in the *Times-Picayune*, January 30, 1977

All dimensions of works in the exhibition are in inches, height preceding width, followed by centimeters measurements in parenthesis.



MUSEUM LOCATION

The Museum may be reached via the Carrollton Avenue or Esplanade Avenue New Orleans Public Service bus lines.

ADMISSION:

Children (6-18), 50 cents
Adults, \$1.00
Members Free at All Times

HOURS:

Tuesday thru Sunday
10:00 am-5:00 pm
Closed Mondays and
all legal holidays

For further information:
Telephone 488-2631.

LYNDA BENGLIS

An Essay by TENNESSEE WILLIAMS
New York, September 1976

Of course I was a bit mystified when I received an invitation to write a critique or impression of a painter-sculptor, as advanced in her art as Miss Lynda Benglis. I wondered why the invitation hadn't gone to someone practising in the same field such as Tony Smith or Fritz Bultman. The only plausible explanation which occurred to me was that the persons in charge of the exhibition at the New Orleans Museum of Art preferred a simplistic approach, not a sophisticated one. Well, a simplistic approach is all that I have to offer.

(I have sometimes been virtually hypnotized by great paintings, having once stood for an hour before Bonnard's *Breakfast Table* in the art-show at the San Francisco World's Fair in 1939; and having been almost equally entranced by the water-lilies of Monet and certain paintings by Van Gogh. But these works are not avant-garde and those of Miss Benglis certainly are.)

It was agreed that Miss Benglis and I would meet at my hotel in New York. First of all let me say it was a delightful meeting. She is charmingly direct and informal. My favorite drink, Johnny Walker's Black Label, was also hers and she also preferred it straight. In the course of her talk she did not put down other painters. (It had been my unhappy experience that those who practise in the same field of art, literary or plastic, are often unable to understand each other's work, and in extreme cases, you feel that they tolerate each other's existence with reluctance.)

Although she had brought with her a lot of brochures containing colored and black-and-white photographs of her work, she was hesitant to show them, seemed more inclined just to talk. Of course I knew how she felt. Revealing your work to someone not yet acquainted with it is, to a shy artist, about as embarrassing as undressing completely on a boulevard at high noon. I almost had to snatch the brochures and reviews from her hands.

When we got around to a discussion of painting, what interested her most was that I had known Jackson Pollock as well as Tony Smith. What was Pollock like in the summer of 1940, when I met him in Provincetown? Well, I assured her that he seemed to be a healthy, happy man, then, not the tortured, almost crazed man that he became toward the end. Like his great instructor, Hans Hoffmann, his paintings were an expression of a pure and beautiful exuberance in the state of being.

I'm fairly sure that Miss Benglis has worked on canvas at some time in her young life but she had not brought along any photographs of them. What she had with her that she allowed me to see was more in the nature of 'objects' or totally abstract mounds of paint that

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS, New Orleans playwright and author, is a five-time winner of the New York Drama Critics Circle Award (1944-45, 1947-48, 1955, 1960-61) and was twice awarded the Pulitzer Prize (1948, 1955). His plays include *The Glass Menagerie* (1944), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *Summer and Smoke* (1948), *The Rose Tattoo* (1951), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), *Orpheus Descending* (1957), *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959), *Period of Adjustment* (1960), and *The Night of the Iguana* (1961). In addition to writing the film adaptations for a number of his Broadway plays, he wrote the screenplays for *Baby Doll* (1957), *Suddenly Last Summer* (1961), and *Boom* (1968). He is the author of the novel *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (1950) and his autobiography *Memoirs* (1975).



photo: Rena Small

7 Come 11: Cuatro, 1976, 44 x 24 x 7½



photo: Rena Small

7 Come 11: Cinco, 1976, 38 x 31 x 11

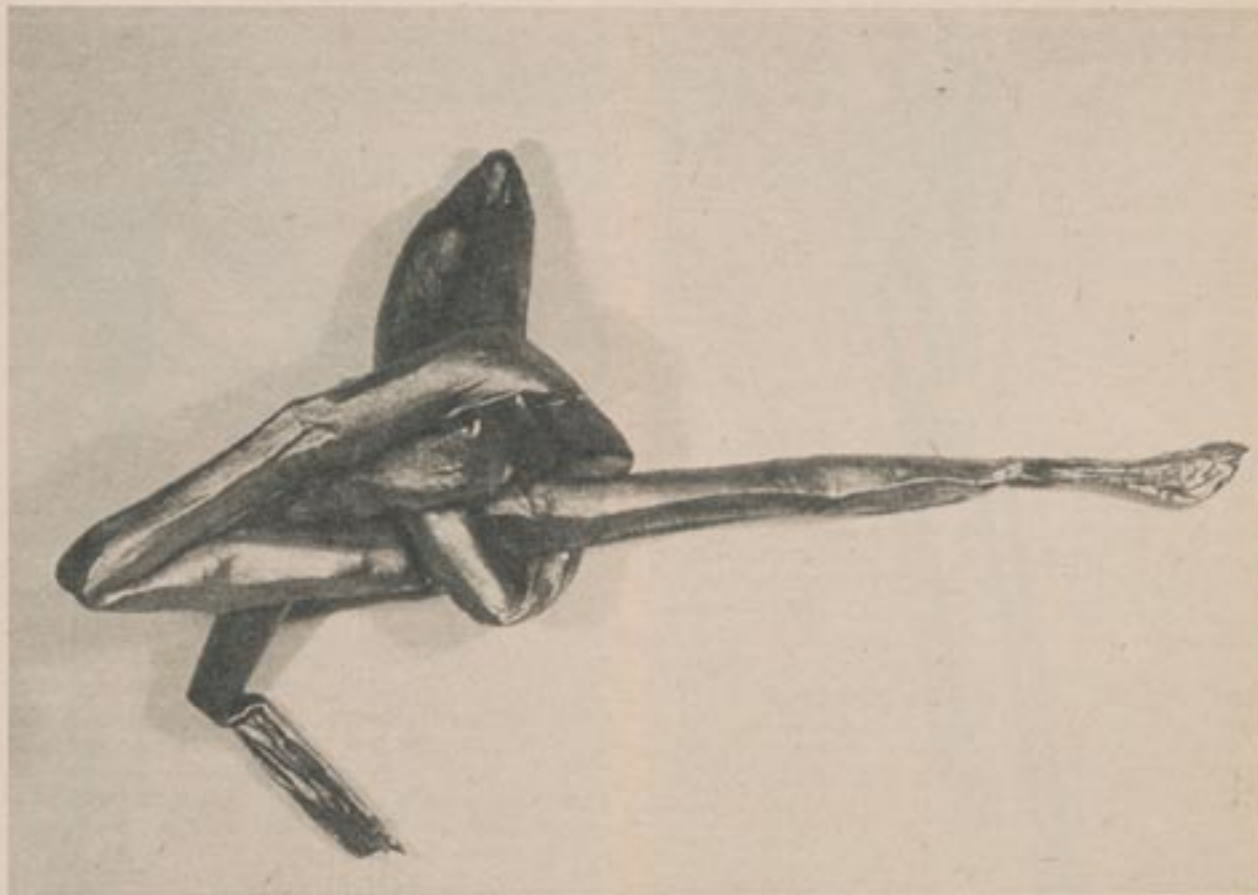


photo: Rena Small

7 Come 11: Siete, 1976, 25 x 51 x 16½

she said she allowed to 'happen', to assume their own form with a minimal interference on her part, as things occur in nature.

With her 'knots' it was different. She had very definitely tied these knots herself in shapes of her designing. They had titles which alluded to what they were meant to express. About them was a luminous quality. They could hang parallel to a wall rather than protruding into the room. Their spirit was infectiously light, especially when suspended in a series around the gallery wall.

I told her that I could not even tie a shoe-lace; she confessed that she couldn't either. But these were definitely not laces for shoes, they were much more complicated knots than sea-men or boy-scouts learn to tie and she had tied them all securely, masterfully and meaningfully.

Knowing there are times when the less is the more, I think that you who are going to visit the New Orleans Museum to see these phenomena for yourselves and to meet Miss Lynda Benglis yourselves will be content that I say no more.

Miss Lynda, I love you and thank you for the roses!

CATALOG LISTING

Louisiana Prop Piece 1977

in collaboration with Ida Kohlmeyer
Mixed media

Built on location at the New Orleans Museum of Art

7 Come 11: Uno 1976

Metallized copper knot with aluminum screening, cotton bunting, plaster, Devcon liquid aluminum, sprayed aluminum, and copper

30 x 45 x 12½ (76.2 x 114.2 x 31.8)

Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Texas Gallery, Houston

7 Come 11: Dos 1976

Metallized copper knot with aluminum screening, cotton bunting, plaster, Devcon liquid aluminum, sprayed aluminum, and copper

50 x 36 x 8½ (127 x 91.4 x 21)

Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, and Texas Gallery, Houston

7 Come 11: Tres 1976

Metallized copper knot with aluminum screening, cotton bunting, plaster, Devcon liquid aluminum, sprayed aluminum, and copper

29 x 60 x 9 (73.7 x 152.3 x 22.9)

Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Texas Gallery, Houston

7 Come 11: Cuatro 1976

Metallized copper knot with aluminum screening, cotton bunting, plaster, Devcon liquid aluminum, sprayed aluminum, and copper

44 x 24 x 7½ (111.8 x 61 x 19)

Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Texas Gallery, Houston

7 Come 11: Cinco 1976

Metallized copper knot with aluminum screening, cotton bunting, plaster, Devcon liquid aluminum, sprayed aluminum, and copper

38 x 31 x 11 (96.5 x 78.8 x 28)

Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Texas Gallery, Houston

7 Come 11: Seis 1976

Metallized copper knot with aluminum screening, cotton bunting, plaster, Devcon liquid aluminum, sprayed aluminum, and copper

48 x 34 x 9¼ (121.9 x 86.4 x 23.5)

Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Texas Gallery, Houston

7 Come 11: Siete 1976

Metallized copper knot with aluminum screening, cotton bunting, plaster, Devcon liquid aluminum, sprayed aluminum, and copper

25 x 51 x 16½ (63.5 x 129.5 x 41.8)

Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Texas Gallery, Houston

7 Come 11: Ocho 1976

Metallized copper knot with aluminum screening, cotton bunting, plaster, Devcon liquid aluminum, sprayed aluminum, and copper

61 x 15 x 7 (154.9 x 38.1 x 17.8)

Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Texas Gallery, Houston

7 Come 11: Nueve 1976

Metallized copper knot with aluminum screening, cotton bunting, plaster, Devcon liquid aluminum, sprayed aluminum, and copper

61 x 45 x 7 (154.9 x 114.2 x 17.8)

Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Texas Gallery, Houston

7 Come 11: Diez 1976

Metallized copper knot with aluminum screening, cotton bunting, plaster, Devcon liquid aluminum, sprayed aluminum, and copper

55 x 45 x 15 (139.8 x 114.2 x 38.1)

Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Texas Gallery, Houston

7 Come 11: Once 1976

Metallized copper knot with aluminum screening, cotton bunting, plaster, Devcon liquid aluminum, sprayed aluminum, and copper

71 x 14 x 9½ (180.3 x 35.6 x 24.1)

Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Texas Gallery, Houston

North, South, East, West 1976

Metallized aluminum sculpture in four parts, aluminum screening, cotton bunting, plaster, Devcon liquid aluminum, sprayed aluminum, and tin

39 x 24 x 16 (99 x 61 x 40.7)

54 x 21 x 24 (137.1 x 53.4 x 61)

34 x 30 x 20 (86.4 x 76.2 x 50.8)

45 x 27 x 15 (114.2 x 68.6 x 38.1)

Lent by Texas Gallery, Houston

Wing 1975

Cast aluminum by lost-wax process

67 x 59¼ x 60 (170.2 x 150.5 x 152.3)

Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

How's Tricks 1976

in collaboration with Stanton Kaye

¾ inch cassette color videotape with mixed sound

34 minutes

Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc., New York



photo: Rena Small

7 Come 11: Once, 1976, 71 x 14 x 9½



photo: Rena Small

7 Come 11: Nueve, 1976, 61 x 45 x 7



photo: Rena Small

7 Come 11: Diez, 1976, 55 x 45 x 15



photo: Geoffrey Clements

Wing, 1975, 67 x 59 1/4 x 60

BIOGRAPHY

Born October 25, 1941, Lake Charles, Louisiana
Lives in New York and Venice, California

Education

Yale-Norfolk Scholarship, 1963
B.F.A., Sophie Newcomb College, New Orleans, 1964
Max Backman Scholarship, Brooklyn Museum, 1965
Assistant Professor of Sculpture, University of Rochester, New York, 1970-1972
Visiting Artist, Yale-Norfolk Summer School, 1972
Assistant Professor, Hunter College, New York, 1972-1973
Assistant Professor, California Institute of the Arts, 1973-1974
Visiting Instructor, Princeton University, 1974-1975

Selected Exhibitions

One-Person, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, 1969
Winters Gallery, Winters College, York University, Toronto, 1969,
Other Ideas, Detroit Institute of Arts, 1969
Bykert Gallery, New York, 1969
Three-Person, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, 1969, 1970
Prospect 69, Dusseldorf, West Germany, 1969
Group Drawing Show, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, 1969, 1970
Art and Process IV, Finch College Museum, New York, 1969
Carmen Lamanna Gallery, Toronto, 1969
One-Person, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, 1970, 1971, 1974, 1975
One-Person, Janie C. Lee Gallery, Dallas, 1970
One-Person, Galerie Hans Muller, Cologne, Germany, 1970
Two-Person, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, 1970
Highlights of the Season, The Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut, 1970
Referendum 70, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, 1970
Three-Person, Ithaca College Museum of Art, Ithaca, New York, 1970
Art for Your Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, 1970
Small Works, The New Gallery, Cleveland, 1970
One-Person, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, 1971
One-Person, Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, 1971
Two-Person, Kunst Forum of Rottwell, Germany, 1971
MOMA's Restaurant, Members' Penthouse, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1971
Mansfield Art Center, Mansfield, Ohio, 1971
Twenty-Six by Twenty-Six, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, 1971
Windham College, Putney, Vermont, 1971
Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, 1971, 1974, 1974, 1975, 1975

Works for New Spaces, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1971
Directions 3: 8 Artists, Milwaukee Art Center, 1971
University of Rochester, New York, 1971
One-Person, Hansen-Fuller Gallery, San Francisco, 1972, 1973, 1974
New York '72, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1972
New York Artists, Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago, 1972
American Women Artists, GEDOK, Kunsthaus, Hamburg, West Germany, 1972
Painting: New Options, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1972
Painting and Sculpture Today, Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1972
Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, 1972
32nd Annual, The Society for Contemporary Art, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1972
American Women: 20th Century, Lakeview Center for the Arts and Sciences, Peoria, Illinois, 1972
12 Statements Beyond the 60s, The Detroit Institute of Arts, 1972
Unmanly Art, Suffolk Museum, Stony Brook, New York, 1972
Small Series, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, 1972
Videotape Festival, De Saisset Art Gallery, Santa Clara, California and Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, 1972
One-Person, Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Oregon, 1973
One-Person, Jack Glenn Gallery, Corona Del Mar, California, 1973
One-Person, The Clocktower, New York, 1973
1973 Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1973
Options and Alternatives, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, 1973
Option 73/30: Recent Works of Art, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1973
Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, New York, 1973
Drawings and Other Works, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, 1973, 1974
3 Weekends of Video: Lynda Benglis, John Baldessari, William Wegman, Texas Gallery and Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, 1973
The Four, De Saisset Art Gallery, Santa Clara, California, 1973
One-Person, Texas Gallery, Houston, 1974, 1975
Choice Dealers/Dealers' Choice, New York Cultural Center, 1974
Galerie John Doyle, Paris, France, 1974
John Doyle Gallery, Chicago, 1974
Six from Castelli, De Saisset Art Gallery, Santa Clara, California, 1974
Project: Video I, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1974
Video, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts, 1974
Video Art, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1974
Video, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Florida, 1974
One-Person, The Kitchen, New York, 1975
The Year of the Woman, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, 1975
Texas Gallery, Houston, 1975
New Editions 74/75, New York Cultural Center, 1975
Artists' Rights Today, Rayburn Building, Washington, D.C. and West Broadway Gallery, New York, 1975
Fourteen Artists, The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1975
From the Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia and Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1975
Photography/Not Photography, Fine Arts Building, New York, 1975
Physical and Psychological Moments in Time: A Retrospective, Fine Arts Gallery, SUNY College at Oneonta, 1975
Video, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Holland, 1975
Video, University of North Carolina, Raleigh, 1975
Camel Award, Milan, Italy, 1975
Video, Alfred University, Alfred, New York, 1975
Video, SUNY at Buffalo, 1975
Video, Portland Art Museum, Oregon, 1975
Southland Video, Long Beach Museum of Art, California, 1975
Projected Video, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1975
Video, Serpentine Gallery, London, England, 1975
Video, Portland Center for the Visual Arts, 1975
Video Art, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, 1975
Video, Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1975
Video, The Kitchen, New York, 1975
Nine Sculptors, Nassau County Center for the Fine Arts, Roslyn, New York, 1976
Looking at Painting, Hall Walls, Buffalo, New York, 1976
American Artists - A Celebration, Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, San Antonio, Texas, 1976
Color Photography and its Derivatives, Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland, Australia, 1976
The Liberation: Fourteen American Artists, Aarhus Museum of Art, Denmark and travelling throughout Europe, 1976
Autogeography, Downtown Branch Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1976
One-Person, Paula Cooper Gallery, Los Angeles, 1976
Sequential imagery in Photography, The Broxton Gallery, Los Angeles, 1976
5 Contemporary Artists, Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, 1976
Selections of New York, Texas Gallery, Houston, 1976
Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, North Sydney, Australia, 1976

TINA GIROUARD

An Interview by LIZA BÉAR

At WBAI Radio Station, New York, Oct. 27, 1976

TWO TREES IN THE FOREST

PART I

I announce:

"This is Liza Béar at WBAI, New York, with Radio WAVE, an artists' program. Tonight's guest is Tina Girouard. We're doing this show live with a Cajun audience: potter Mercedes Deshotel, sculptor John Geldersma, and photographer Gerard Murrell. We've brought some things with us to Studio A: a table cloth from Louisiana, six red apples, chutney, walnuts, grape juice, Wasser brot, crisp rye bread, Danish cheese, carrots, Merce's home-made bread, Tina's juke box, and a wilting spider plant. In the background you should be hearing...you *should* be hearing... you should be *hearing* a tape of barnyard clucking sounds recorded at Indian Bayou. It's unusually hectic here at BAI; there are people in all the adjoining studios; we're going to try to cool down and take it easy."

I've just returned from Toronto, Tina from Geneva. I'm conscious of place and transition, airplanes and congestion. I have very little voice. Tina's given me some notes on her piece *Swiss Self*, a solo performance at a Geneva gallery. I read out her list of props which I translate from French and then I formulate what I want to know....

Liza Béar: When you go to other places to do works, do you feel a need to redefine yourself in terms of that place?

Tina Girouard: Well, *Swiss Self* was a current self-portrait taking place in Geneva... I'm interested in reality and in making reality stronger, and one way of doing that is to bring things from the place into the piece.

LB: How did you want to present yourself to the Swiss?

TG: Well, as myself in their place. I used Swiss money because we think of Switzerland as the bank of the world. And a cowbell, because that's very special to Switzerland. The Swiss bell their cows for the Alps, and this bell was more like a church bell. It weighed about 15 pounds. I also used a scythe... I was staying in the country, and I got the bell and the scythe from the farmer down the road. They had something to do with me too... because they were from the farm.

LB: Did you grow up in the country?

TG: I grew up on a rice farm between De Quincy and Lake Charles, in the country, a place that has no name...

LB: What did the performance consist of?

TG: The only experience similar to it is a sand painting. I made a kind of effigy with the materials—there were also a lot of wild flowers, raffia, lengths of cotton from Louisiana, bamboo rugs, a washboard, a watch, a bar of chocolate—at the places where my head, my hands, my feet, and the erogenous zone (the other brain) would be. And then I laid myself out on it and sprinkled 10 kilos of Swiss money over the whole thing, as another layer of the pattern. I just lay there for a while. There was a video camera on the ceiling facing down, so the audience was also getting an overhead shot... The scythe was really important, because the portrait is a kind of life-death portrait.

LB: Uhhuh... A lot of your work has been done with other artists. Could you say something about how



Costumed Portrait, 1974, Evelyn Jein Gi Lee Lai in the persona of Black Knight



Costumed Portrait, Terry D'Reilly as Mayan Runner

that developed? I know we both came to New York on the same day, July 28, 1968.

TG: Well, I'd come straight from undergraduate school in Lafayette, and within a couple of months of being in New York, I started working for other artists. I danced with Deborah Hay on and off for a year, and through her workshop I was introduced to Trisha Brown and Steve Paxton and the whole Judson thing. And during that first year I also got involved with the work of Keith Sonnier and Richard Serra. And of course, as I got a little more serious, I took a more active role... There's something about working with other people: you must spend some time in solitary concentration, and know who you are and what you have to do. But that can also narrow you down, and I'm always opened up by working with others.

LB: Do you ever think about what you've derived from particular collaborations? For instance, your *Bridge-Proposal* with Barbara Dilley...

TG: ... what came from that? I think my whole idea of portraiture. This is two years after the fact, and I realize that, in a way, Barbara and I were trying to make portraits of each other. I was trying to do it visually and she was trying to do it with activity.

LB: And did it work?

TG: Did it work? Well, of course it did. It worked very definitely for both of us, for a couple of years. And it was a real kind of nurturing new experience. Our first performance, incidentally, was at USL... The last piece we did, we collectively got a group of sixteen people together. About half of them were professional, and half had never performed at all.

LB: That was *Juxtaposed-Contained-Revealed* at *The Kitchen*, right?

TG: Right. We presented psychological portraits or persona projections. I worked closely with each person to develop an image of them using costume that released or revealed an aspect of their persona that they hadn't been able to... that hadn't come out in their life yet. We used geographic associations, characters from movies, that sort of thing. I wanted them to be perfectly comfortable. I didn't want them to be coat-hangers. And Barbara gave them something to do, a role to play... In that work, everything that had to do with space, what the performers and the performance area looked like, those were all my decisions. What happened during the performance was Barbara's.

LB: Have you ever gotten into a more active kind of dramatization?

TG: Of course. Last year I did a piece called *Scenes* with four simultaneous scenes: *Work, Rest, War, Sport*. Certain elements like the timing were abstracted—we had a timing rehearsal—we called it a race. But each person had to develop his scene alone, for the scene to be really theirs. I can only give the simple reduced idea, and all the details, the camouflage has to come from them. If you try to choreograph someone's every move, it becomes a rehearsed piece, a theatrical piece, rather than an experience in its own right. And I want my performances to be experiences.

LB: You don't think of them as improvisations though, do you.

LIZA BEAR is President of the Center for New Art Activities, Inc., and is editor and producer of its contemporary art journal *Avalanche*, founded in 1970. Born in Casablanca, Morocco, Ms. Béar studied Honours Philosophy at Bedford College, University of London (1961-1965) and was co-editor of the London publication *Circuit Magazine* before moving to New York in 1968. She has interviewed numerous artists for *Avalanche*, including Carl Andre, Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, Dennis Oppenheim, Barry Le Va, Philip Glass, Jackie Winsor, William Wegman, Chris Burden, Richard Serra, Vito Acconci, and Keith Sonnier. Ms. Béar, who has delivered numerous lectures and presentations throughout the U.S., is currently working on her own videotape *Fallacies* and a series of five programs for Public Television.

TG: No. Not as free improvisation or improvisation on a theme. It's more that we develop a vocabulary of possibilities during the preparation, but the order in which it's used, or which particular elements get called back, that's up to the individual performer. So the detail is what's improvised, the camouflage. And the detail's very rich and very important to me because that's what brings life to whatever you're doing. That's true in the stencils also . . . Basically I'm interested in more than one thing happening at the same time.

LB: *In a performance or in your life?*

TG: In a performance, in my life, whatever. In terms of my art activity, I'm into simultaneously working with video, performing, making static pieces—drawings, stencils—and all that's my work . . .

LB: *You don't have any preferences.*

TG: I don't have any preferences.

LB: *You're very egalitarian about your art activity.*

TG: Exactly. An idea or a concept comes to mind and the way it reaches fruition is not really controlled. Video may be the most direct way, or if something has to be stated very statically, coldly, cleanly, then I use painting . . .

LB: *By "painting" you're referring to fabric, not canvas and oil paint . . .*

TG: Yes. I have *Solomon's Lot* here. It's eight pieces of silk given to me by my mother-in-law. It was left in her attic by Solomon Matlock, an Arab relative of hers and drygoods salesman in the early Forties. I do special pieces with *Solomon's Lot*, and it has inspired a whole visual interest in pattern and the juxtaposition of pattern.

LB: *You've made at least six or seven videotapes: the Maintenance tapes, Mardi Gras Suite, Four Quartets.*

TG: The *Maintenance* tapes were made over the last six years. They're concerned with role change and in each one of them I'm giving myself a haircut. The hair is the one part of the body that's alterable, and I'm also interested in the idea of maintenance. Even portraiture becomes maintenance to me.

LB: *In what way? Keeping up appearances?*

TG: Keeping up with your own—yes—images of yourself, or helping someone else keep up with theirs. The first few tapes are quite austere. There's no one in the room and I'm manipulating all the video equipment. It's rather intimate, like putting the viewer on the other side of the bathroom mirror. Whoops, I forgot, Suzie Harris and I collaborated on *Role Change III*. We discussed what kind of haircut I should get. It was midnight, also a night with no moon . . .

LB: *How does a haircut . . .*

TG: . . . relate to the moon? I know the answer to that one.

LB: *No, change your identity: Does it really change you?*

TG: The haircut is after the fact. The haircut is necessary after a change has gone down.

LB: *How drastic were the haircuts? The first was from long, '60s-type hair to . . .*

TG: That one was absolutely essential. Down, ready to go, get to work, no longer drooping . . . video camera, indulging in whatever . . .

LB: *In what?*

TG: Indulging in Keith's fantasy, I guess. I wanted to get into my own fantasy, my own work, so I just said, Okay, let's shed the skin, shake off all this. I could make a similar statement probably behind each one.

LB: *So they marked a break in your life activity.*

TG: Yes, it's something like catching up with yourself. First you change and then comes the physical broadcast . . . Using video for the *Maintenance* tapes was using it as a tool, making a mirror out of it. What I was trying to communicate to the witnesses is something . . .



Costumed Portrait, Tita Frye in the persona of Matilda Penelope Skunk



Costumed Portrait, Nancy Lewis in the persona of Waltzing Wanda Willow

LB: *The witnesses?*

TG: The people who would see the tape.

LB: *That's an interesting choice of words for the audience.*

TG: I've always thought of the audience as witnesses. They see my self-image, and at the same time they're having the mystery and myth of video taken away. I think the tapes reveal a lot about my attitude to the performer and the experience of performing. I don't think it should be a scary experience. I don't think you need all that adrenalin. I tease and say it's non-adrenal performance.

LB: *Uhhuh.*

TG: And the way I direct my performers is to keep them really cool, so that when we're performing we're really doing this act that's . . . we're integrated to each other. The preparation is purely psychological. It's whatever you need to be there then—to be totally in the present.

LB: *Mmhuh . . . Would you like to play something?*

TG: On my juke box? Let's see if there's anything appropriate.

LB: *If not, we could ask Bill Kortum the engineer to play the next cut from . . . would you like to do that? (I signal to engineer)*

TG: Yes. This is *Black Snake Blues* by Clifton Chenier . . .

PART II

At 93 Grand Street, a week later.

TG: The restaurant, *Food*, represents a real break in my scheme of things.

LB: *How?*

TG: Because for that year, 1971-72, that was my work.

LB: *The whole year, Food was the work?*

TG: Yeah, I'd have to say so. I did other things then, but maintaining the restaurant was really the primary activity. At the time I was also beginning to feel . . . I don't know . . . that the work was just too complicated.

LB: *Whose work?*

TG: My own.

LB: *What were you doing at the time?*

TG: All my time was spent thinking and planning and arranging, and in the case of a performance, rehearsing. I wanted to really have a spot where I was alone and in total control; I wanted the power. I have that power when I'm making objects.

LB: *Yeah, I understand that . . . Let's get back to Food a second. What did Food do for you at that point?*

TG: It cleared the table.

LB: *It satisfied all your needs for organizing and being with people, a project . . .*

TG: Yeah, big project. All of my friends, all of the energy, was poured in there.

(PAUSE. The phone rings.)

When you went to the phone I realized that . . .

LB: . . . we left out Chatham Square.

TG: Chatham Square was happening at the same time, reaching a zenith. Chatham Square is a space in Chinatown where about thirty different people lived over a period of about six years.

LB: *Including me . . . I'll say what it meant to me. I think it represented the best and also the most elusive kind of social energy for a certain period, because it was based on some shared values that were largely unspoken. There would never be any down talk.*

TG: That may have been the influence of the place. Chinatown is just thousands of people stacked right on top of each other but with an oriental sense of privacy. It's amazing.

LB: *Isn't that a Cajun characteristic too?*

TG: Well, it is. Even in Cecilia, this tiny town with 800 residents, we don't know ten people. Town sui-

cide, town murder are never spoken about really either. It's always, "Comment ca va? Ca va bien." Well, Chatham Square was a launching pad for a lot of us.

LB: *You did a lot of collaborative work there. At that time, the social and the performing energy were very closely connected.*

TG: Well, I like people, and I like working with large groups of people. I don't like seasoned performers; I much prefer to work with people who are naive about performance, and who look on what I'm doing as a celebration of themselves or their ego or whatever . . . I try to make the experience really good for them, and meaningful to them individually. With *Food* and Chatham Square I had about 15 primary relationships going: I was living with seven and working with seven more. There wasn't much time for anything else.

LB: *To be alone.*

TG: To be alone, to have a stretch of time where I could develop independently of the group.

LB: *Or to draw something out from the relationship.*

TG: Right, to conclude.

LB: *Instead of always acting it out.*

TG: Or always being caught up in the maelstrom of an energy like that, a big ball of energy. In my mind, there are two ways of working with people: with a lot of people, someone must take command. And then there's collaboration on a much more concentrated level. They're completely different kinds of work. With a large group of people, I may pick up on certain individuals and what they're adding to my original plan, or on the general mood—the place always has something to do with that. In a collaboration, you *set out* looking for those things: you start outside yourself. That's the difference.

LB: *Did you have a close relationship with your six brothers and sisters? Did you do things with them?*

TG: Yes, I guess I really did have very private, one

to one relationships with almost all of them. There was one sister who did the acrobatics from when I was very little. She would tie me in knots, which is why I'm so loose now. And another brother who's an engineer taught me perspective drawing. When I was 13 or 14, he brought back a Leica camera from Germany, and taught me how it worked, made me do an experiment. Another brother was a car freak, and at one point I had a lot of information on how to fix an automobile. I gave over my swing set which was an A-frame to him at a very early age to lift motors out of cars . . . I think the most interesting thing that my father did was when he was working for the government.

LB: *What did he do then?*

TG: He took Cung-Dinhquy, the minister of agriculture from Vietnam, all around the United States to look at agricultural achievements like the Tennessee Valley Authority; Louisiana for the rice. He knew Sukarno and taught Indonesians agricultural methods and . . . this is great . . . instead of sending a whole bunch of tractors to Indonesia, he sent just one John Deere tractor, a very simple machine. When it got there, instead of contacting the farmers, they contacted the blacksmiths and machinists. They took it apart, they all took a part home, made one identical to it and brought it back, and started making their

own tractors . . . Then he went to start a school of agriculture in La Paz, Bolivia, near Lake Titicaca, and instead of living at the Embassy house, he moved out with the farmers. I've really gotten back to knowing my family in the last few years, and they've been listening to me. I talk about attitudes, social, political etc. that are broadcasting some aspect of the art community, and they're very receptive to those ideas.

LB: *Has your relationship to Louisiana changed in the last few years?*

TG: I think it's grown stronger rather than weaker. I do have this different cultural background, and going back there—I realize that now—is more about getting in touch with that. Maintaining my own root, my own base.

LB: *Do you feel closer to that than to the art activity around you in New York? . . . Or is it hard to say?*

TG: When I'm there, I'm there, and when I'm here, I'm here. I'm trying to be there more often. I go there to gather myself as well as gather materials, and right now I'm trying to make a working situation, to have a studio so that I can work there.

LB: *Well, that's a pretty strong commitment.*

(PAUSE.)

TG: I know what it is I'm trying to communicate on an abstract level.

LB: *A certain peace, or a certain stillness?*

Pinwheel is a combination performance, sculpture and videotaping event. The title refers to the sculpture which was realized during the performance. This image was the cog at the center of the performance arena: it was made from Solomon's Lot, a collection of 8 lengths of silk. For the exhibition *Pinwheel* is installed in the Ella West Freeman Gallery of the New Orleans Museum of Art.

The performance consisted of four square areas, joined together to make one square with *Pinwheel* at the center. Each of the four areas represent a world, i.e. animal, vegetable, mineral and other. The activity was the making of the world images, similar to the American Indian ritual of sand painting. Each part or prop was added ceremoniously by the actors. The objects were introduced from a staircase located at the top of the performance arena. An example of some of the four images is as follows: a deus machina (a Greek god machine) to allow the performer to "fly" into place; and a fog-producing device to end the performance by obliterating all the images.

The video was used to give an overview of the emerging image, as though seen from the sky. Two cameras were used: one remaining completely stationary above the performance arena; the second recording close-up details to allow the viewer a more intimate experience. (One bird's eye view, one x-ray vision). The finished tape consists of edited material from each of the two tapes, with appropriate sound added.

I have been inspired by the religious paintings of Tibet, and by the rituals of the American Indian. It is an attempt to place myself and the actors in a context symbolic of the universe, and for a moment broadcast an image out, reflect the universe back to itself like a mirror. My own world view will be reflected in the choice of elements and participants. The participants will reflect their "self" view in that the accoutrements they desire for their representation were included. This is somehow connected to Mardi Gras, where people masquerade. Here we are masquerading not a thing, but all things.



Bowl and Belly, 1976, performed with Mercedes Deshotel at Sarah Lawrence College, New York

photo: Gwen Thomas

TG: In most of the pieces that I've been working on recently, I've been wanting to get a world view, one that has a past, a future.

LB: *That's very ambitious!*

TG: Of course it is, and it's going to take me a long time to work out all the details.

LB: *It sounds like an encyclopedia . . . but that's not a feeling. What is the feeling that you're trying to communicate? That you're aware of being part of something more than just yourself?*

TG: Exactly.

LB: *It's a realization that you're part of history, part of geography, part of a nation, part of a region . . .*

TG: Part of being on the earth . . .

LB: *As well as being an artist.*

TG: Right, and hopefully that extends then to the people who are performing in the work . . .

LB: *So that they can relate?*

TG: Or so that they can start to look at their life in a different way. The mood that you're talking about, that's being in the place at that time, and dealing with it as though it were a knife and fork and spoon.

LB: *Functionally.*

TG: Yes. I'm being very tough on myself with these still pieces where I just make a picture and lay it down there and it doesn't move at all.

LB: *You used to be very restless.*

TG: The audience now moves around like mad. They talk, they become very animated in a still piece. They hang right in there to the very end. The stillness becomes very powerful. I don't know if that's what I intended to do, but that's what's happening. Now that I've done maybe thirty portraits, the people I've worked with are beginning to see themselves in lots of different ways. So that the experience of having had one portrait made opens up the whole Pandora's box of portraits, a flashing on the self.

CATALOG LISTING

Pinwheel 1977

Performance, sculpture, and videotaping event at the New Orleans Museum of Art, January 10, 1977

60 minutes

Performers Tina Girouard, Mercedes Deshotel, John Geldersma, and Gerard Murrell
Engineer Kurt Munkasci
Videotaping WYES Public Television, Sharon Litwin,
Producer

Pinwheel 1976

Installation with 8 pieces of silk
diam. 144 (365.7)
Lent by the artist

Stencil Set D 1976

Set of 4 paper paintings
Spray, oil stick, acrylic, and grease pencil on paper
72 x 72 each (182.9 x 182.9 each)
Lent by Horace and Holly Solomon, New York

Selections from Stencil Set 1976

Set of 4 paper paintings
Spray, oil stick, acrylic, and grease pencil on paper
72 x 72 each (182.9 x 182.9 each)
Lent by Holly Solomon Gallery, New York

Pinwheel 1977

3/4 inch cassette color videotape with sound
60 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York and WYES Public Television, New Orleans

Quartets 1974

3/4 inch cassette color videotape with sound
20 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc., New York

Mardi Gras Suite 1974

Three 3/4 inch cassette color videotapes with sound
17 minutes total
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc., New York

BIOGRAPHY

Born May 26, 1946, DeQuincy, Louisiana
Lives in New York

Education

- B.F.A., University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, 1968
- Visiting Artist, University of California, La Jolla, 1970
- Visiting Artist, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, 1973
- Visiting Artist, Saint Cloud State College, Saint Cloud, Minnesota, 1974
- Visiting Artist, Memphis Academy of Arts, 1975
- Visiting Artist, Alfred University, Alfred, New York, 1975

Selected Exhibitions

- One-Person, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, 1968
- Special Effects, Loveladies*, New Jersey, 1969
- Swept House*, Brooklyn Bridge Event, New York, 1970
- Hung House*, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1971
- Oleo*, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1972
- One-Person, *Air Space Stage, Wall Space Stage, Floor Space Stage, Sound Stage Space*, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1972
- Dissolve*, New York Cultural Center, New York, 1973
- Lie - No*, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1973
- One-Person, *Lay on Lie No*, University of Southwestern Louisiana Art Gallery, Lafayette, 1973
- One-Person, *Patterns*, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1973
- One-Person, *Sky Above Earth Below*, Saint Cloud, Minnesota, 1974
- Anarchitecture*, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1974
- Works Words*, The Clocktower, New York, 1974
- Video Works*, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1974
- One-Person, *Drawings, Scores, Histories*, Vehicle Art Inc., Montreal, 1975
- One-Person, *Flags*, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1975
- Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, 1975
- One-Person, *Memphis Breeze*, Memphis Academy of Arts, 1975
- One-Person, *Color Photos and Video*, Media Gallery, Alfred, New York, 1975
- Two-Person, *Drawings For Video*, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1975
- Selfportraits*, Fine Arts Building, New York, 1976
- Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, 1976
- Style & Process*, Fine Arts Building, New York, 1976
- Rooms*, P.S. 1, Flushing, New York, 1976
- Performances/Objects*, Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, 1976
- Non-Collectible Art from the Collection of Horace and Holly Solomon*, Sarah Lawrence College Art Gallery, Bronxville, New York, 1976
- New Work/New York*, California State University, Los Angeles, 1976
- One-Person, *Salle Simon I Patino*, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland, 1976
- One-Person, *Video Installation*, Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1976
- One-Person, Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, 1976



Stencil Set D-1, 1976

photo: Gerard Murrell

Performances

- Time and Distance, Video Loop, Sound Loop, Body Beat Loop*, Studio Performances, New York, 1969-70
- Collaborative Performances with Richard Landry and Keith Sonnier, University of California at La Jolla, 1970
- A Maintained Environmental Structure, Hung House*, Studio Installation, New York, 1970-71
- Live House*, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1971
- Food*, 127 Prince Street, New York, 1971-72
- Tape-Video-Live*, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1972
- Prosenium*, Buhea der Stadt Koln Kammerspiele Ubeirring, Cologne, West Germany, 1972
- Prosenium II*, in collaboration with Richard Landry, Keith Sonnier, Suzanne Harris, and Kurt Munkasci, Documenta V, Kassel, West Germany, 1972
- Autumnal Equinox*, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1972
- Air, Space, Stage; Wall, Space Stage; Sound Space Stage; Floor Space Stage*; Daily Performances for Two Weeks, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1972
- Body Beat Loop, 20 Quadràphonic Pipe*, Bleeker Street Project, New York, 1972
- Allegory: Cloth River Road*, Dance Gallery, New York, 1973, 1973
- The Bridge, Cross, Invocation*, in collaboration with Barbara Dilley, 1973
- Saint Cloud Air Space Stage*, State University, Saint Cloud, Minnesota, 1974
- Juxtaposed Contained Revealed from The Bridge, The Kitchen*, New York, 1974
- Videotapes, The Kitchen*, New York, 1974
- Stage, A Functioning Sculpture for the Mabou Mines Production B Beaver*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Theatre for the New City, New York, etc., 1973-present
- Mississippi Memphis Moon*, Overton Park Amphitheatre, Memphis, 1975
- Persona Projections for a Prosenium*, Harder Auditorium, Alfred, New York, 1975
- Solomon's Lot*, Sarah Lawrence College Art Gallery, Bronxville, New York, 1976
- Salle Simon I Patino*, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland, 1976
- Race*, Fordham University, New York, 1976

RICHARD LANDRY

An Interview by PHILIP GLASS

At the Big Apple Recording Studio, New York, November 11, 1976.

Philip Glass: *What is your first memory of playing music?*

Richard Landry: Pots and pans in my mother's kitchen.

PG: *Really, how old were you?*

RL: Four or five. I would take the covers out of the oven and hit them like gongs, or place them in the rain for random sounds.

PG: *Your brother was a musician, wasn't he?*

RL: Yeah, he was eight years older than I was. He was playing saxophone in the high school band.

PG: *Was he your first teacher?*

RL: Well, he put the instrument in my hand and said, "This is the way it's supposed to sound." He more or less gave me my start.

PG: *Would you say that there was music in the house you lived in?*

RL: Sure. He practised all the time and I later found out my mother was a harmonica player.

PG: *I'm trying to get a picture of where music fit into your daily life as you were growing up.*

RL: I joined the high school band system which starts you off in the fifth grade, but I already had a head start by just picking up the instrument at home and playing, and watching my brother. Then in the sixth grade, he left and went off to the Air Force for four years during the Korean War. He sent back a couple of records: Duke Ellington was one.

PG: *Was that the first jazz you heard?*

RL: That was the first jazz I heard and I just fell in love with it.

PG: *What was the music you were playing before that?*

RL: I was singing in the church, the Catholic Liturgy, the Gregorian Chant. I started that at an early age too, about six or seven. I sang the Requiem Mass for about four years, every morning at six o'clock mass.

PG: *Every morning? You had to go to the church and sing every morning?*

RL: Uh-huh. Sometimes I would be the only one, or the organist and myself.

PG: *Did you ever play the organ too?*

RL: On times off, but I was always more interested in woodwinds.

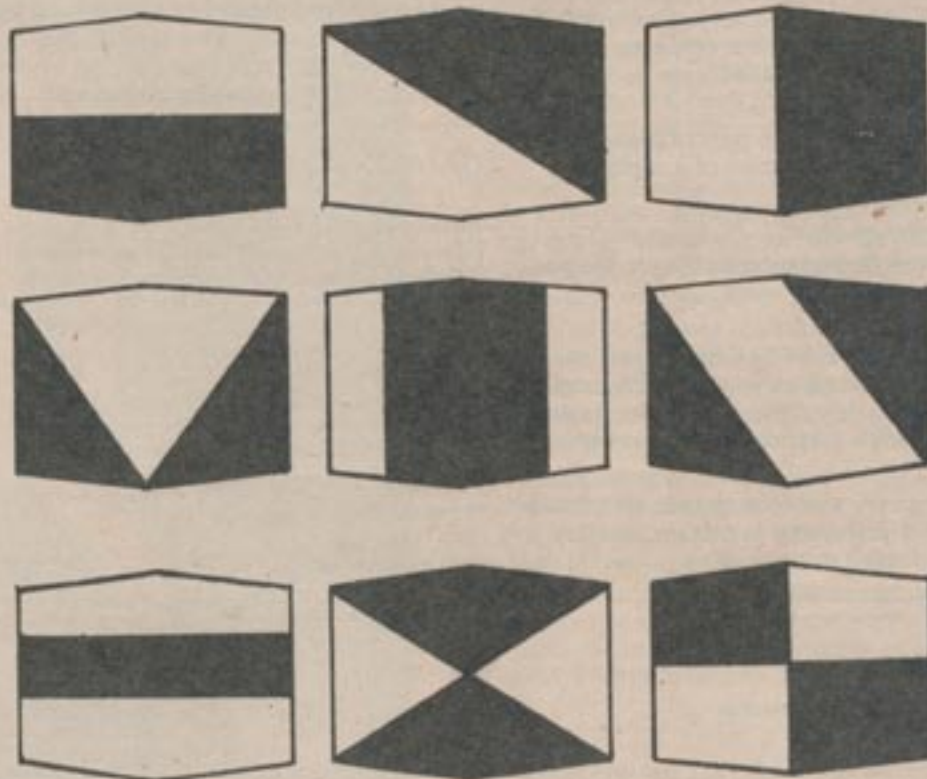
PG: *So up until you started getting those jazz records, the first music really was church music and band music. What about country music, the kind of bands you ended up playing with later on?*

RL: Well, there are night clubs all around Cecilia where I lived. About a quarter of a mile down the road, there's a black night club and I used to hear their music from my house, just the bass line. You couldn't hear anything else.

PG: *How old were you when you started playing in night clubs?*

RL: I was in tenth grade. My brother and I played with this band, Harry Gregg orchestra. They worked steadily two or three nights a week and would sneak me into the clubs. We played all the hit tunes of the

PHILIP GLASS, composer and musician, is the director of the Philip Glass Ensemble, and founder of Chatham Square Productions, organized to record his own music and that of the Ensemble. Distinguished by a repetitive-structure, modular-form style, his compositions are designed for the resources of the ensemble, electronic keyboards, flute, saxophones and voice, and are frequently of extended duration. Studies with Ravi Shankar and a continuing interest in non-Western music are acknowledged as an important influence in his work. He has recently completed music for an opera, *Einstein on the Beach*, performed twice at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York in November 1976.



Video Facets, 1975, 16 x 20

photo: C. F. Weber

day, yesteryear, waltzes, or whatever. My recollection of the first night is that I played about four or five notes because I couldn't read the music.

PG: *Was that before your brother went away?*

RL: This was right after he came back. I began to meet all the musicians in the area. They were very advanced players, very articulate players and I learned a lot from them.

PG: *What was the music you were playing then? Was it mostly hit tunes in those clubs?*

RL: Hit tunes . . . songs from the 30's and 40's.

PG: *There wasn't any country blues playing there? Someone like Clifton . . . ?*

RL: I didn't meet Clifton Chenier until a few years ago. That was all happening then but it was a tradition that was not looked upon as music to be listened to by people I was playing with. Their idea of music was much more advanced. In jazz they listened to Count Basie and Duke Ellington, and Stan Kenton; in classical music Beethoven, Bach and all that. But country music was taboo for them . . . "Don't listen to it, it's no good."

PG: *Just to get a picture of it, that wasn't what we call Rhythm 'n' Blues in the North? Or, perhaps Pop?*

RL: It was not even Pop. People in the band did their own arrangements of songs, wrote their own tunes.

PG: *What tradition was it really out of?*

RL: The Big Band thing, Stan Kenton, the big swing bands. After my early experience with Harry Gregg, I made a friend, Bud Brashier, who influenced me greatly. His ability to play and write music was just incredible. Anything he touched turned into music. I began hanging around with him while he was playing with a quartet, and that group of people led to another group of people: Rusty Gilder, Robert Prado and myself. There were two groups of fours: one group about ten years older than we were. We all began to interact and eventually formed a band.

PG: *About a eight-piece band?*

RL: Right. Then we'd have these marathon sessions at Lloyd Hebert's house in New Iberia where we'd

play for 72 hours, we couldn't stop. It was all improvisation on standard tunes, and things we wrote ourselves. I didn't like arranging other people's music.

PG: *That was up until you went off to college?*

RL: I actually started college in '56 but met John Gilfrey in '54 and took clarinet lessons; because at the nearest university I couldn't major in saxophone. I met John while he was a band director at a nearby high school. While there he would say: "I'll be teaching at the university in a couple of years and you're going to be the first chair clarinet because I'm teaching you the right way." He really knew his music and instruments. I studied with him for two and a half years. Then I enrolled in the University of Southwestern Louisiana in '56 and a year later I was sitting in the first chair clarinet.

PG: *Was that the university orchestra?*

RL: No, the university band.

PG: *So you played with the band?*

RL: Yes, there were more people and it sounded better.

PG: *At this point now you've talked about several different kinds of music. What was the first piece of contemporary music that you can remember hearing? What was your reaction to it?*

RL: Modern music? The first thing I really fell in love with was the Samuel Barber piece, *Adagio for Strings*. From that I went backwards to Bartok, Schoenberg, Webern and Ives. Then I began to give concerts of their music.

PG: *What pieces did you play of theirs?*

RL: I played the Ives *Central Park, In the Dark* . . . those small chamber pieces.

PG: *Did you get a group together?*

RL: Sure, I got the best teachers and we performed together.

PG: *Was there any other contemporary music going on there at that time?*

RL: Of course not.

PG: *You got involved in contemporary music as well as jazz.*

RL: Yes, but jazz was more accessible than contemporary music.

PG: *By this time you must have been very aware of the tendencies in modern jazz . . . If we could go back to that a little bit . . . you talked about the first record you heard of Duke Ellington . . . When did you first become aware of people like Monk and Coltrane.*

RL: Well, Coltrane is a later date, but I saw Charlie Parker once in New Orleans. He got up on stage and did his number. It was just incredible.

PG: *So you were aware of that.*

RL: Yes . . . I began taking the radio away from the family on Saturday nights to listen to jazz, live from New York.

PG: *Were you encouraged to play that kind of modern music, that kind of progressive jazz?*

RL: Yes, I met Robert Prado and Rusty Gilder at the university in '56 and we found out we had the same attitude, the same desire to play jazz, so we formed the quartet I mentioned before.

PG: *That's the most interesting for me in a way; it's most unusual for someone who came from the kind of background that I did. There were different kinds of music, but you didn't say that one was more important than the other.*

RL: I learned a long time ago that music is music; if it's done right, it's good.

PG: *You were able to accept all different kinds?*

RL: Sure . . . except rock 'n' roll when it first came out. I just couldn't take it. I couldn't believe it.

PG: *Did it seem so crude or so . . .*

RL: It was too crude . . . well, listen to those first recordings; out of tune. For a musician who's been playing and trying to develop some kind of perfection in tuning, these people come along and kind of destroy it in a way.

PG: *I think this is important because you were really outside of an urban environment which is so rigid in a way, that there was something much more open about the way music was treated in terms of the kinds of music and in terms of what people did.*

RL: Yea. We did it ourselves.

PG: *You did contemporary music and jazz yourself, and if you wanted that music you had to do it yourself.* (PAUSE)

PG: *When was the first time you left Louisiana?*

RL: I came to New York in '57 because my brother was in Columbia Graduate School in Education. I came up with a drummer from Louisiana at which time I heard Bud Powell, Miles Davis and Monk at Birdland, which was open at the time.

PG: *Now, you went up there in '57 and you said you went up every year after that.*

RL: Just about every year for two weeks or a month. There was music all over, but in those days I was just getting used to seeing and living in a big city. My God, I came from a town of three hundred!

PG: *Did it ever occur to you when you came to New York to study flute that some day you might be living in New York?*

RL: Sure. It would have been five years earlier if the circumstances would have allowed it. My interest in flute playing began in high school after acquiring my first flute. It wasn't until the university opera director asked me to play in Puccini's *Tosca*, that I gave up all other instruments for a period of two and one-half years. I got further involved with flute, through lessons, with Arthur Lora in New York. He was a student of Barriere who perfected the transverse flute mechanism. He was also, at one time, Toscanini's principal flute player. He just stripped me of everything and said, "This is the way the flute sounds and this is what you have to do to make it sound like this." I went back

to Louisiana and went to work, 12 or 14 hour days practicing.

PG: *You were in school at the time?*

RL: Right. I was finishing up. That was a bad period, because of some trouble I couldn't leave the state for five years.

PG: *So that was the end of the trips to New York.*

RL: That was the end of everything. I started a whole new lifestyle. I joined a rock 'n' roll band, the Swing Kings, through which I met a lot of now famous people; Otis Redding, BB King, Wilson Pickett.

PG: *Those are the people who you played with then?*

RL: Yes, I played with some of them. It was great.

PG: *So that wasn't all so bad then?*

RL: No. It just pushed me off in another direction.

PG: *So contemporary music was more or less out?*

RL: No. I kept up with it. I kept ordering flute pieces from Italy, like Berio. Eventually, I met Calvin Harlan, a former art teacher at the university who knew I was interested in contemporary music, and we began playing together. I liked the man so much, I respected what he was doing and saying. I began wondering what the hell art was about?

PG: *How long did you study with him?*

RL: Oh, a couple of years.

PG: *Were you actually drawing?*

RL: Yes.

PG: *Who were some of his other students?*

RL: Keith Sonnier and later Tina Girouard, to name a couple. He just had his head full of information. He wasn't like everybody else in the music department where music died in the late 1800's. He was interested in all music.

PG: *Isn't that true about a lot of the art people, and that's something that attracted us to them . . .*

RL: They're interested in everything. That's why, when I did finally come to New York, I approached it through the art world. I didn't like the music world.

PG: *That was personally my experience too. In a way that's kind of how we met really. Two musicians that met through the artists. I think that is something very peculiar to our time.*

At the Big Apple Recording Studio, New York, November 12, 1976.

RL: Good Morning.

PG: *OK, here we go. We were talking about coming to New York. What was the date of that?*

RL: That was August, '68.

PG: *What did you think you were going to do when you got to New York?*

RL: I thought I was going to teach in the public school system because I had a degree in teaching or do studio recording work.

PG: *You didn't do either of those things.*

RL: Well, I began rehearsing with you and recording music with William Fischer, a friend and composer. I was copying music for him and doing a lot of sessions at Atlantic Records. I did sessions for about seven or eight months and found out I didn't like it at all. I was not creating anything; it was real commercial you know.

PG: *You're still in touch with Bill now, aren't you?*

RL: Sure. I still do sessions with him. I did one last December with David "Fathead" Newman.

PG: *So you were working with Bill Fischer, and you were working with me, and you were working with Keith Sonnier . . .*

RL: Yea, mainly working with you and Keith . . . he was living just a few blocks from me and since I had just gotten this camera he asked me to photograph some of his pieces, some of his finished work. So I began shooting photographs of his work, and started helping him set up his neon pieces. From that kind of static situation, we got interested in video, which was new at the time. We worked six, seven hours, just doing something in front of the cameras. Seeing the



photo: Eric Pollitzer

1, 2, 3, 4, 1969, 96 x 120

possibilities. We never knew exactly what we wanted to do until it was being done.

PG: *At that point were you thinking about doing work of your own in the area of video?*

RL: At that time Leo Castelli bought video equipment to be used by his artists, so when it wasn't being used by Keith, I had access to it. I began making tapes for myself, maybe three or four remain from that period.

PG: *Since you came from both disciplines in a way, you were kind of suited to do that work.*

RL: In the early tapes the image was always based on the idea of looking at one's hands, or the source of where the information comes from, the sound. When I was studying the flute, or clarinet, or saxophone, the teachers would say, "Stand in front of the mirror, and look at your hands, or look at your lips, because that's how you correct yourself. If there are mistakes, you can see them."

PG: *So that imagery is really part of your personal history. What you saw when you were playing.*

RL: Yeah, I always look at my hands or my lips. That's true in *Six of Hearts, Divided Alto, Sax I, Sax II* and 1, 2, 3, 4, but the guitar tape, *Six Strings for Agnes Martin*, is focused on the strings, that's still the source of the sound.

PG: *It's unusual because your personal relationship to it has to do with autobiographical imagery, but to the viewer, the image becomes very abstract. One thing that interests me particularly is when you combine two disciplines . . . like photography with video. That is something that intrigues me and I wonder how that came about, when your work in that area became independent, and how that led to the kind of drawings that you're working on now. It seems to me that that's a line of development that clearly came out of video.*

RL: The photographs are a natural by-product of the video because I needed photographs of the tapes for publications.

PG: *Did you always think of the images as a fact in themselves.*

RL: Yes. In fact, with the first two tapes, I immediately began photographing them to see what would come out, using different cameras, lighting and speeds. I had done this hand clapping piece, 1, 2, 3, 4, and I always saw it in my mind as a photographic piece, almost like a flip book.

PG: *The drawings came out of the video, didn't they?*

RL: The basic format is of a video screen. The possibilities of dividing the TV screen are infinite. The drawings represent some idea of my knowledge of the studio and what the equipment can do. What I am doing now are sketches for a video project that I have in mind. The tape will start off with the full-screen and then go into the screen divisions with action happening in the background.

(PAUSE)

PG: *By '72 you had another group together, the first group that you had in New York.*

RL: They were all friends of mine from Louisiana who filtered up here because I was here. It included Prado and Gilder from the original quartet in '57.

PG: *Was it the concert at Castelli's downtown gallery that first exposed your own music?*

RL: Yes. We had been playing at my place on Chatham Square every night because the musicians were all living there. We played all the time.

PG: *That was made into a recording, that concert?*

RL: Yes. It is available on a two record album called *Sofos*. It's part of a five-hour concert and was released by Chatham Square Productions, our independent label. It's at this point that I met Kurt Munkasci who was this young engineer who had access to a 16-track mobile studio. We hired him to do the Castelli concert and later he moved in with us at Chatham Square. We had a resident engineer who was interested in the music and the work. The group continued with concerts at 112 Greene Street, and



photo: Gianfranco Gorgoni

Quadraphonic Delay Solo in concert at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1974

shortly after that Robert Prado died. The group idea was abandoned. I came back from Louisiana in January '73, after the funeral, and did a solo concert at Bleecker St. I liked doing solos, I just kept doing it. Then Kurt and I developed a quadraphonic delay system.

PG: *You described that once as a support system for solo work.*

RL: Yes. It allowed me to have an ensemble situation without an ensemble. It consists of four 15-inch speakers and two Revox tape recorders, which cause four delays; so you have my original sound, with four repeats, fed thru the four speakers sequentially. The speakers are placed in the four corners of the room so that the sound circles the room thru the four channels causing a vortex of sound. I can then play around the columns of sound. In the past year or so, I have made several studio recordings using this system. Currently, using the capabilities of a 16-track recording studio I'm experimenting with even more sound repeats. I have made one saxophone piece where I am playing with 15 of my "selves".

PG: *Do you have concerts lined up for this year?*

RL: I have a concert at The Kitchen in New York on December 16th and 17th and at the New Orleans Museum of Art on January 30th. I'm also trying to line some things up in California in March, and, of course, there's always a European tour.

PG: *And then you have a video project coming.*

RL: I'm trying to get some work done. I haven't done a tape in two years. I've been so busy doing other things like the concerts with you, and concerts of my own. Things have been really boiling and coming full circle to where I'm back into music now . . . and photographs and video are something that I do under special situations.

PG: *What about collaborations which have been a part of your work? How do you feel about that now. Are you talking to anybody about that, or do you feel that that's a period of your life that you've exploited and are not interested in?*

RL: It's a period of my life that I exploited and the outcome was not as I expected, and I think it will be a long time before I would collaborate again. If certain things are made clear, then it's not difficult. If things are not clear, then it's very difficult.

PG: *I guess that's always true of collaborations. They're tricky things to pull off.*

RL: I'd like to do music for different things. I'd work with film, plays, whatever . . .

PG: *One of the things that strikes me, in talking to you about your work, is the ease with which you've been able to collaborate with other people, and at the same time to maintain an independent artistic identity.*

RL: Well, with the music thing . . . see, I've been playing so long that I don't think anything would get in the way now of my idea of music or my idea of what sound is supposed to be.

PG: *In my view you were contributing to other people's work to a certain extent, and then at another point you were doing independent work. The ability to do all of those things and to maintain a personal integrity is something very difficult for a person to do.*

RL: Well, it's not easy. I'm in the middle of a tornado sometimes. But then I sit down and look back and it all becomes very clear that I'm doing my work and doing other people's work, too.

PG: *What are some of the things that you want to do?*

RL: I have this show in January, which is the reason we're having this interview, of drawings, photographs, video and a solo concert. It's the first time that all of my work has been brought together.

PG: *Does that seem like a natural format to you?*

RL: It's something that I've been thinking about . . . "where can I give a total impression of my work." So I am very pleased with the New Orleans show, it's even in the right place, my home state.

PG: *It seems that part of a description of you as an artist would include all of that. That for you to have a show, it should be all at once. That's interesting and, I think, completely unique. You're able to work in unrelated media and not in any second hand way. If you are a video artist, then you doing video; if you're a musician, you're really doing music. There are artists who go into other medias and never really become part of that media. You're able to identify with the media, to work in it.*

DL: I couldn't just sit down and just play music. I learned that a long time ago. I can't do music every day. I used to do it. I did it from age 7 to the age of 28, four or five hours a day. I get to the point where I said, "I'm just beating my head against the wall." I got far enough technically. So, looking back at that, I can't do music all the time. I enjoy doing photographs. It's another reality. I can't see sitting down in one place anymore . . . I mean, the twentieth century is not geared for that. Sure, I'm able to keep them separate, but now they've become so close that I'm beginning to wonder how to keep it all going.

PG: *One thing that is very clear from this interview is that you keep going by keeping going.*

CATALOG LISTING

Quadrasonic Delay Suite 1977

Solo concert performed at the New Orleans Museum of Art, January 30, 1977
Engineer Kurt Munkasci
90 minutes

Divided Alto 1974

3/4 inch cassette color videotape with sound ©
15 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York

Six of Hearts 1974

in collaboration with Tina Girouard
3/4 inch cassette color videotape with sound ©
15 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York

1, 2, 3, 4 1972

3/4 inch cassette black and white videotape with sound ©
8 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York

Sax I 1970

3/4 inch cassette black and white videotape with sound
6 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York

Quadrasonic Delay Suite 1972-73

(*Six Vibrations for Agnes Martin, Hebes Grande Bois, and Fourth Register*)
3 part 3/4 inch cassette black and white videotape with sound ©
35 minutes
Audio engineer Kurt Munkasci
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York

Video Facets 1976

18 drawings with color paper stock ©
16 x 20 each (40.7 x 50.7 each)
Lent by the artist

1, 2, 3, 4 1969-75

25 black and white photographs
overall 96 x 120 (243.8 x 304.7)
Lent by the artist

C-C 1976

10 black and white photographs ©
16 x 20 each (40.7 x 50.7 each)
Lent by the artist

Video Facets 1975

3 drawings with design marker on drafting cloth ©
overall 70 x 56 (177.8 x 142.2)
Lent by the artist

BIOGRAPHY

Born November 16, 1938, Cecilia, Louisiana
Lives in New York

Education

B.M.E., University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, 1962

Selected Exhibitions

1972 Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1972
Video, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1972, 1973
XII Sao Paulo Biennial, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1973
Public Access Television, New York, 1973
Art in Evolution, Xerox Corporation, Rochester, New York, 1973
Video, School of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1973
One-Person, Photographs, Texas Gallery, Houston, 1974
One-Person, Photographs, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1974
Photographs, Galleria Forma, Genoa, Italy, 1974
Video, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, 1974
Video, Henri Gallery, Seattle, Washington, 1974
Video, Festival of Contemporary Arts, Oberlin, Ohio, 1974
Video, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1974
Video, Eastern Michigan University, Detroit, 1974
Video, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, 1974
XIII Sao Paulo Biennial, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1975
Photographs, Castelli Graphics, New York, 1975
Video, Galleries, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, 1975
Video, Institute for the Arts, Rice University, Houston, 1975
Video, Basel Art Fair, Basel, Switzerland, 1975
Video, Kunstmarkt, Cologne, West Germany, 1975
Video, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, 1975
Video, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, 1975
Camel Award, Milan, Italy, 1975
Video, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Holland, 1975
Video Art, U.S.A., Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1975
Video, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, 1975
Photographs, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1975
Photographs, Sylan-Lawrence Building, New York, 1976
U.S.A. Zeichnungen 3, Städtisches Museum, Leverkusen, West Germany, 1975
Two-Person, Drawings, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1976
Drawings, Sarah Lawrence College Art Gallery, Bronxville, New York, 1976

Performances

Concert with Philip Glass Ensemble, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1970
Solo concert, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1971, 1972, 1974
Solo concert, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1971
Concert tour with Philip Glass Ensemble, Europe, 1971
Concert with Philip Glass Ensemble, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1971
A First Quarter, a film by Lawrence Weiner, 1972
Concert tour with Philip Glass Ensemble, Germany and Italy, 1972, 1973
5 solo concerts, 112 Greene Street Gallery, New York, 1972
Solo concert, Buhea der Stadt Köln Kammerspiele Ubeirring, West Germany, 1972
Solo concert, Documenta V, Kassel, West Germany, 1972
3 solo concerts, 10 Bleeker Street Studio, New York, 1973
Solo concert, The Kitchen, New York, 1973, 1976
2 solo concerts, Dance Gallery, New York, 1973

Solo concert, Max's Kansas City, New York, 1973
Solo concert, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, 1973
Solo concert, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, 1973
Concert tour with Philip Glass Ensemble, Germany, Italy, Canada and United States, 1974
4 solo concerts, The Kitchen, New York, 1974
Solo concert, Art Tapes, Florence, Italy, 1974
Solo concert, Galleria Forma, Genoa, Italy, 1974
2 solo concerts, Project '74, Cologne, West Germany, 1974
Solo concert, Frederika Hunter home, Houston, 1974
Solo concert, Salvatori Ala Gallery, Milan, Italy, 1974
Solo concert, Westbury Public Library, Westbury, New York, 1974
Solo concert, Rice University, Houston, 1974
A Second Quarter, a film by Lawrence Weiner, 1975
Concert tour with Philip Glass Ensemble, Holland and England, 1975
Solo concert, Vehicule Gallery, Montreal, Canada, 1975
Solo concert, Washington Square Church, New York, 1975
Solo concert, New Music Circle, St. Louis, Missouri, 1975
Concert tour with Robert Wilson and Philip Glass opera *Einstein on the Beach*, Avignon Festival, France, Venice, Belgrade, Paris, Brussels, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and New York, 1976
Solo concert, Synod House, St. John the Devine, New York, 1976
Solo concert, SoHo Festival, Berlin, West Germany, 1976
Solo concert, Salle Simon Patino, Geneva, Switzerland, 1976
Solo concert, Kirchenalle Deutsches, Hamburg, West Germany, 1976
Solo concert, Town Hall, New York, 1976



C-C, 1976, 16 x 20 (detail)

photo: Richard Landry

Back in the fifties, when Rauschenberg's work was just starting to be seen and discussed, the easy way out was to call it "neo-Dada." Soon enough we found it to be just the opposite. Dada was a furious judgement on the past, a denial, a process of exclusion. With Rauschenberg, everything gets included — real dirt and growing grass, the funnies, scrap lumber left by Con Edison, busted parasols, flashing lights, bed-clothes, pinups, dead birds, live turtles (with flashlights), clocks, Velasquez nudes, the Sistine ceiling, mosquitoes, J.F.K., a glass of water, Dante, photographs, video, past-present-future and not just painting and sculpture, either, but dance, theater, music, and (in a pinch) literature as well. It was not even a Dada gesture when he threw his leftover constructions into the Arno, after his 1953 show at the Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea in Florence; he was about to go home, he had packing problems, and besides, it seemed irresistible to write and tell the irate Florentine critic, "I took your advice."

Seeing Rauschenberg's all-white paintings at the Stable Gallery that fall, Barnett Newman turned to Willem de Kooning and said, "What's the matter with him? Does he think it's easy?" (At that point, of course, de Kooning probably thought the same thing about Newman). To Rauschenberg, the difficulty lay in another direction. "I don't want a painting to be just an expression of my personality," he said once. "I feel it ought to be much better than that."

Everything he does is in some sense a collaboration. Sets and lighting for Merce Cunningham in the early sixties; his own theater and dance pieces at the Judson Church and elsewhere; printing with Tatyana Grosman and Ken Tyler; and always, his own private collaboration with materials. Studying with Albers at Black Mountain made him rebel against careful manipulation and control. The important thing, he decided, was to let the colors retain their own dignity and excitement, not to subordinate them to his own ideas and tastes: "I want to do something with color that will be just as exciting as the color all by itself in the jar."

And then there is collaboration with the viewer. "I would like to make a picture that creates a situation in which there is as much room for the viewer as for the artist," he told a French critic in 1965. Like Duchamp, he believes that the viewer's active participation completes the creative process.

The first time Merce Cunningham asked him to make a set for a dance, in the fifties, Rauschenberg was characteristically enthusiastic. A few days later he called and asked Merce to come down to the studio. "I did, and found that Bob had made a marvelous object that hung from the ceiling, with ribbons trailing from it," Cunningham recalls. "But I knew right away that it wouldn't do, that it would be too difficult to install in the kind of places where we were performing then—college auditoriums, mostly, with no fly space to hang anything. Bob understood completely. Without a moment's hesitation he said he'd do something else. What he did the second time was a construction with a lot of color and cloth and mirrors on it, which

stood up by itself on the floor. It was in two parts, and the dancers could go between them, and it was open at the bottom so our feet showed. I used it for a piece called *Minutiae*, with music by John Cage, and it was perfect. I loved it because you couldn't tell just what it was. One critic complained about it for that reason — she said she didn't know whether it was a bath house at the beach or a fortune teller's booth or what. That was just what I liked about it." The *Minutiae* set, which has since been described as one of the most important sculptures of the fifties, is now in the Rauschenberg retrospective mounted by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. And for the first time in a decade, Rauschenberg is working on a new Cunningham set, for a dance that will have its premiere in New York on January 18th, and that, as *The New Yorker's* Harold Ross used to say, encourages us to go on.

When asked, some years ago, how he thought his work differed from that of the Pop artists, Rauschenberg thought a bit and then said, "I feel that when I use an image, it has more room to move around in. If I use George Washington in a picture, for example, I may start out thinking about George Washington,

but sooner or later it just becomes 'that green shape.'"

Some artists start with an idea and go on from there. Rauschenberg never does that. He starts with simple curiosity (not so simple really). "I don't think of myself as making art," he has said. "I do what I do because painting is the best way I've found to get along with myself. And it's always the moment of doing it that counts. When a painting is finished it's already something I've done, no longer something I'm doing, and it's not so interesting any more. The point is, I just paint in order to learn something new about painting, and everything I learn always resolves itself into two or three pictures."

It is amazing how much like the real world his work is. "Over and over I've found it impossible to memorize Rauschenberg's paintings," John Cage has written. "I keep asking, 'Have you changed it?' And then noticing that while I'm looking it changes."

To say that he is the most influential artist now working is to miss half the point. His work is not so much an influence as a resource — a mother lode that is never mined out because he constantly replenishes it. Rauschenberg is the American possibility in art.



Rudder (Hoarfrost), 1974, 69 x 46

photo: Roy Trahan



Spinnaker (Hoarfrost), 1974, 82½ x 49

photo: Roy Trahan

CATALOG LISTING

Opal Reunion 1976

Wall-mounted panel with collage, watercolor, bird wings, boat oar, ink direct transfer, doorskin silk, polished stainless Formica, fabric, and pencil
overall 84 x 194 x 36 (213.3 x 492.7 x 91.3)
5 panels 84 x 36 x 2 (213.3 x 91.3 x 5.1); 1 panel 84 x 12 x 2 (213.3 x 30.5 x 5.1)
Lent by the artist

Gear (Jammer) 1975

Wall hanging of voile fabric with attached panels of same material
82 x 172 (208.3 x 436.9)
Lent by the artist

Onyx (Hoarfrost) 1974

Wall hanging with collage and ink direct transfer on satin
76½ x 51 (194.3 x 129.5)
Lent by the artist

Spinnaker (Hoarfrost) 1974

Wall hanging with collage and ink direct transfer on satin
82½ x 49 (209.6 x 124.5)
Lent by the artist

Rudder (Hoarfrost) 1974

Wall hanging with collage and ink direct transfer on satin and silk chiffon overlay
69 x 46 (175.2 x 116.9)
Lent by the artist

CALVIN TOMKINS is a regular contributor to *The New Yorker* magazine and the author of many bestselling books including *Living Well is the Best Revenge*, a monograph of 1920's artist Gerald Murphy; *The Bride and the Bachelors*, a collection of pieces on the art world; *Merchants and Masterpieces*, a history of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; and *The Other Hampton*, a collaboration with his wife Judy, a well-known photographer. Mr. Tomkins' current book, *The Scene*, published by Viking Press in 1976, is a series of essays on the art of the 1960's and 70's including a chapter on E.A.T. or Experiments in Art and Technology, a nonprofit foundation started by Rauschenberg in 1966 in collaboration with Billy Klüver, a scientist from Bell Telephone Laboratories.

BIOGRAPHY

Born October 22, 1925, Port Arthur, Texas
Lives in New York and Captiva, Florida

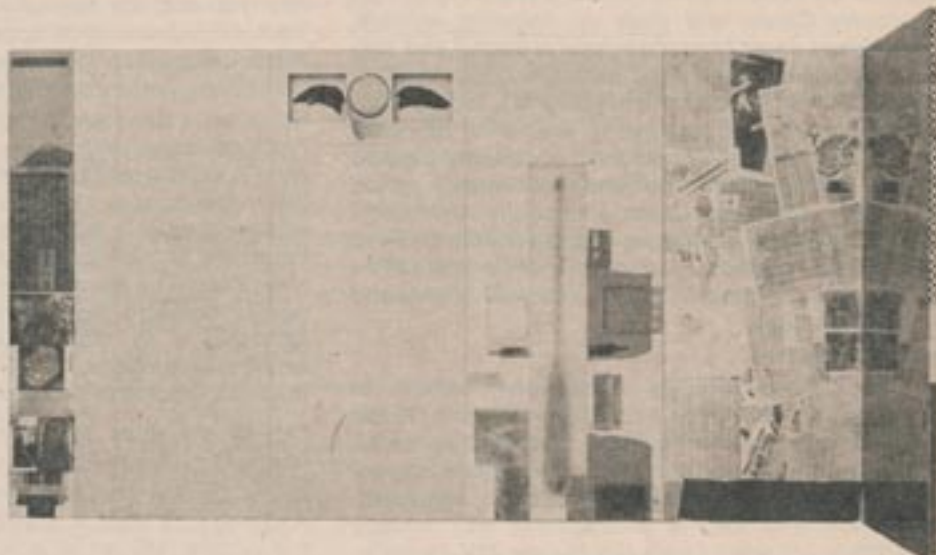
Education

Kansas City Art Institute
Academie Julien, Paris
Black Mountain College, North Carolina
The Art Students League, New York

Selected Exhibitions

One-Person, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, 1951
One-Person, Stable Gallery, New York, 1953
One-Person, Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea, Florence, Italy, 1953
One-Person, Galleria del'Obelisco, Rome, Italy, 1953
One-Person, Egan Gallery, New York, 1955
One-Person, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1963, 1965, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1971, 1973, 1974, 1975
One-Person, Galleria La Tartaruga, Rome, Italy, 1959
One-Person, Galerie 22, Dusseldorf, West Germany, 1959
Documenta II, Kassel, West Germany, 1959
V Sao Paulo Biennial, Sao Paulo Museum of Modern Art, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1959
Premiere Biennale a Paris, Musee d'Arte Moderne, Paris, France, 1959
Sixteen Americans, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1959
The Art of Assemblage, The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Dallas; San Francisco Museum of Art, 1960
One-Person, Galerie Cordier, Paris, France, 1961
One-Person, Galleria dell'Ariete, Milan, Italy, 1961
American Abstract Expressionists and Imagists, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1961
Bewogen Beweging, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Holland, 1961
Rorelse i Konsten, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, 1961
One-Person, Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles, 1962
Four Americans, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Holland; Kunsthalle, Bern, Switzerland, 1962
Three Young Artists, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio, 1962
One-Person, Galerie Ileana Sonnabend, Paris, France, 1963, 1964, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975
One-Person, The Jewish Museum, New York, 1963
28th Biennial, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1963
Six Painters and the Object, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1963
5th International of Prints, Gallery of Modern Art, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, 1963
One-Person, Whitechapel Gallery, London, England, 1964
One-Person, Arte Moderna, Turin, Italy, 1964
Venice Biennale, First Prize, Venice, Italy, 1964
One-Person, Amerika House, Berlin, West Germany, 1965
One-Person, Contemporary Arts Society, Houston, 1965
One-Person, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1965
One-Person, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, 1965
One-Person, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1965, 1966, 1968
29th Biennial, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1965
Recent American Painting, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1966
One-Person, Douglas Gallery, Vancouver, Canada, 1967, 1969
Art and Technology Program, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1967-1971
Ten Years, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1967
IX Sao Paulo Biennial, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1967
One-Person, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Holland, 1968
One-Person, Peale House, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 1968
One-Person, Kolnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, West Germany, 1968
One-Person, Musee d'Arte Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France, 1968
Documenta, Kassel, West Germany, 1968
Pop Art, Hayward Gallery, London, England, 1968
One-Person, Fort Worth Art Center, Fort Worth, 1969, 1970
One-Person, Newport Harbor Art Museum, Balboa, California, 1969
One-Person, Castelli Graphics, New York, 1969, 1970, 1974, 1974
One-Person, Phoenix Art Museum, 1970
One-Person, Seattle Art Museum, 1970
One-Person, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, 1970
One-Person, Dayton's Gallery 12, Minneapolis, 1970, 1975
One-Person, Automation House, New York, 1970
One-Person, New York Cultural Center, 1970
One-Person, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1970
One-Person, Kunstverein Hannover, Hannover, West Germany, 1970
One-Person, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1970

One-Person, School of Visual Arts Gallery, New York, 1970, 1975
New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1970
Expo 70, Osaka, Japan, 1970
One-Person, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1971
One-Person, Galerie Buren, Stockholm, Sweden, 1972
One-Person, Mayor Gallery, London, England, 1973
One-Person, Ace Gallery, Venice, California, 1973, 1974
One-Person, Ace Canada, Vancouver, 1973
1973 Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1973
One-Person, Jack Glenn Gallery, San Diego, California, 1973
Contemporanea, Rome, Italy, 1973
One-Person, Galerie Mikro, Berlin, West Germany, 1974
Two-Person, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1974
One-Person, The Isreal Museum, Jerusalem, 1974
One-Person, Lucio Amelio Modern Art Agency, Naples, Italy, 1974
One-Person, Galerie Sonnabend, Geneva, Switzerland, 1974
One-Person, Jared Sabie Gallery, Toronto, Canada, 1974



Opal Reunion, 1976, overall 84 x 194 x 36

photo: Roy Trahan

One-Person, Sonnabend Gallery, New York, 1974
One-Person, John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco, 1974
One-Person, Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, West Germany, 1974
Idea and Image in Recent Art, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1974
Works from Change, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1974
Works from the Untitled Press, New York Cultural Center, 1974
American Pop Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, 1974
One-Person, Galerie de Gestlo, Hamburg, West Germany, 1975, 1975
One-Person, The Art Association, Newport, Rhode Island, 1975
One-Person, Ace Gallery, Vancouver, Canada, 1975
One-Person, Gallery Tanit, Munich, West Germany, 1975
One-Person, Museum of Modern Art, Venice, Italy, 1975
The Great American Rodeo, Fort Worth Art Museum, 1975
Artists Rights Today, West Broadway Gallery, New York, 1975
One-Person, The Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis, 1976
One-Person, Galerie HM, Brussels, Belgium, 1976
One-Person *Retrospective*, National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; The Art Institute of Chicago, 1976-1978
Drawing Now, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1976
72nd American Exhibition, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1976
200 Years of American Sculpture, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1976

Performances

Merce Cunningham Dance Company, stage set designer, costume designer, technical director, performer, 1955-1963
Matisse to the Scene, including *Linoneum*, a performance, WNDT Television, 1966
Eye on New York: The Walls Come Tumbling Down, including *Revolvers*, CBS Television, 1967
A Television Exhibition: Rauschenberg, Tudor, Farber, and Lucier, Fort Worth Art Museum and KERA Television, Dallas, 1976
Merce Cunningham, John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, on Broadway, New York, 1977

KEITH SONNIER

An Interview by CALVIN HARLAN

New Orleans, November 3, 1976.

Calvin Harlan: *In the very first class I taught at U.S.L., there you were—just arrived from Grand Mamou. There were a total of 19 in the freshman art class, as I recall, and most of you were country kids and bilingual. Most of you were talented, respectful of the teacher, but sly observers of all adults. Your group and the groups of the next 2 or 3 years were, on the whole, the most interesting students I have ever taught; and I believe it was because you were almost all country Cajun, and grew up knowing animals, where things came from, how food is raised and prepared, and so on. You had a traditional Southern upbringing, but with a difference: yours is a region within a region. You all had humor and a lot of confidence that must have come from a strongly defined regional background. You and your family could make jokes about the Cajun community and that, I suspect, gave you something extra. Looking back to 1959, my job seemed to amount to little more than letting you know that I thought you had talent, and saying "Go ahead."*

Keith Sonnier: Yes.

CH: *The Cajuns have an unbelievable amount of sensitivity and skill in the kitchen, on the farm, in the dance halls, but very little visual culture to speak of. However, once that artistic latency is tapped, the results are amazing. Amazing in quickness of eye, hand, imagination and critical intelligence. But equally astonishing for what I call the "Louis XIV touch"—you know what I mean: the "Grand Manner." From the very beginning, you seem to have had this ability to take almost anything lying around and transform it effortlessly into something worth looking at.*

KS: I think that early investigation of any kind of material as source was probably quite important; to realize that anything could be considered art, as long as you could somehow control its manipulation or its content, or the suggestion of content.

CH: Yes. *But you had that ability, and it remains part of your ability. Other kids of that area—and I speak from having taught in other parts of the country—had a similar gift. You had it almost in excess: an ability to seize upon anything at hand, and almost inevitably and immediately make some kind of magic with it.*

KS: I have an intense interest in primitive cultures, anthropologically, sociologically, politically; but when it comes to actually making work, I feel that I have to contain my information in a real 20th-century machine-age context. Because I think that artists make work for the culture that they live in . . . I think of my life as a continuum. I spent 21 years in a rural area; I'll probably spend 21 years in an urban area; and maybe, after 21 more years, I'll go back to the country.

CH: *Maybe.*

KS: Maybe. So, I'm not concerned so much about what I'm going to do next year, but what I'm going to do maybe 10 years from now.

CALVIN HARLAN is presently professor of painting and sculpture at the University of New Orleans. He is the author of *Vision and Invention: A Course in Art Fundamentals*, an art textbook published by Prentice-Hall, Inc. which is currently being published in Spanish in Spain. His former pupils at University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette include Tina Girouard, Richard Landry, and Keith Sonnier.

CH: *Do you project that far ahead?*

KS: Sure! But not with a view of my work historically.

CH: *You seem to be rather casual about that sort of thing.*

KS: Right. I think more about myself as *this* person, as a person who has picked up as much as he could with the least amount of effort.

CH: *Absorbing things.*

KS: Absorbing things and not having to be self-conscious about the absorption. Then, when it comes to making work, I try to carry that state over into how I go about making the work. When I was making work in various places—I've been to Japan, to India, to Europe several times to work on location—I had to learn how to do, make-do. And I really used that Louisiana background for that, for being adept at using what was there. That's been helpful: not so much for the forms or the images I use, but more for how one manipulates the day, gets through it.

CH: *Well, apropos of that, I'm always surprised at how you and the rest of you have "managed" New York City, because it appears that you do so with more casualness than people who were born into that milieu. I often wonder what you bring to that.*

KS: Well, I think you bring a vitality the city needs. For one thing, without the sense of community in New York, it would be the most awful place to live in. Who else is going to be stimulated by the city but someone who is not from it? Although, of course, there are some local artists, born or brought up in New York. The percentage is smaller, I'd say. Most people come to New York because they need the atmosphere to make work. I always knew—this sounds pretentious, I realize—, but I always knew my work would be received, because it's good.

CH: *Where does that brand of confidence come from? Out of your personality and background?*

KS: It comes from just knowing what you're doing. Knowing your craft. Knowing what you're telling about the culture. My art is appreciated by my peers, by people who actually experience a work. And if you don't experience a work . . . you can pick up a lot of documentary information, of course, but still you haven't "got" it.

CH: *You can play your own games with it, but . . .*

KS: When I make something it is not so much: "Now I'm going to make this." In fact, I don't know "what" I'm going to make until it's made. In the larger installation pieces, I have a pretty clear idea of the field that

I want to be involved in. Right now, I'm working on this satellite project. This is going into my second year of just collecting information—not trying to make a work, because it's not really time for the work. The time of its actual happening is very important to me. I have to feel right. I want it placed in the correct time. I'm very taken up with how the audience experiences it. I like to control how people move through the work. I don't like to herd people through my work like cattle, because my work would be "missed." If there's not some kind of ambience control of the experience, the work is pretty hard to do, especially in a typical museum. Museums are mausoleums. They're not where one goes to experience art. They're places where one goes to view beautiful cadavers!

CH: *True too often. You have to be able to bring a hell of a lot with you to resurrect the dead . . . Again, what I want to go back to is this past experience of Louisiana, which I gather has served you well in what, for me, would be the most daunting situation in which to live and work: New York City. Maybe there are no clear answers.*

KS: Well, I can tell you my reaction to being back in south Louisiana these past few days: I feel I really don't have much business being here, other than to see friends and family, and eat some good food. I've made the bulk of my work out of Louisiana. Although I owe a lot to Louisiana as far as . . . well, it gave me a real comfortable environment to kind of . . .

CH: *That's what I want to know. What was it here?*

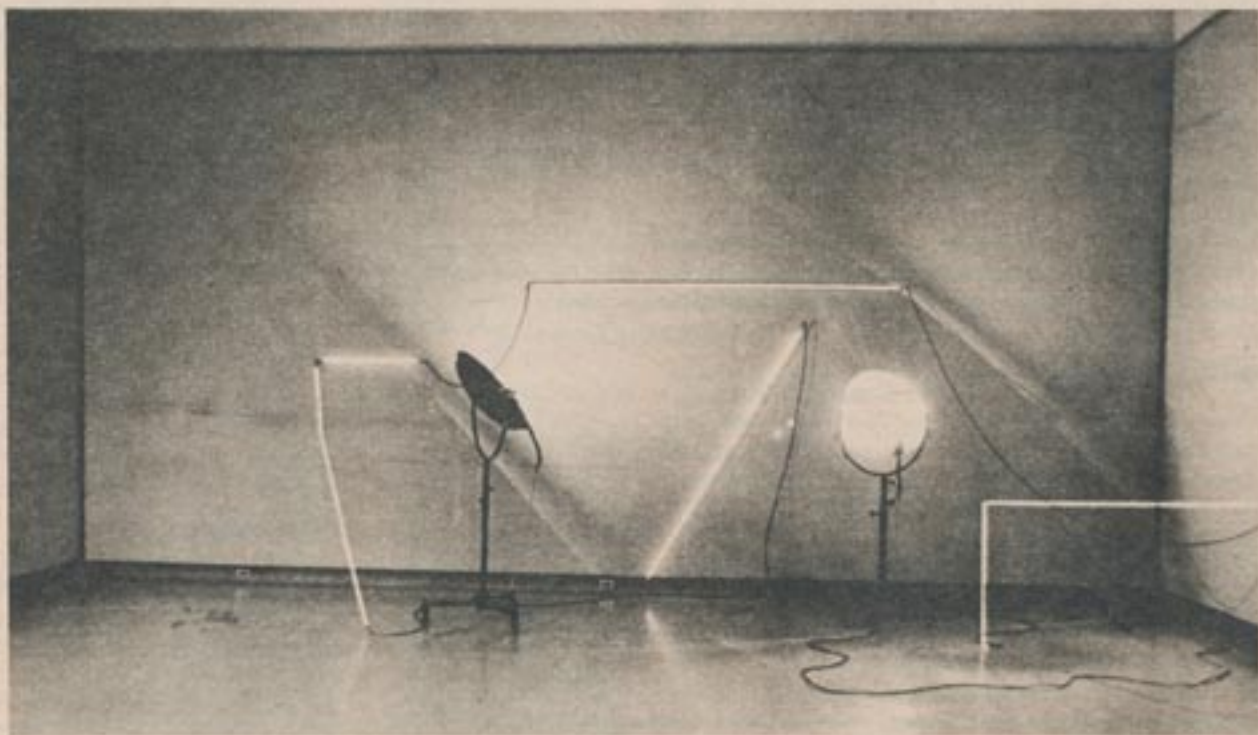
KS: I stayed in the nest a long time!

CH: *Was it, in fact, rural Louisiana that gave you confidence and flexibility?*

KS: Yes. Well, I didn't have any choice. I mean: what would I have done if I hadn't done what I did? I would have stayed in Mamou and probably run the movie house, or worked in Joe's store or committed suicide at 30! I didn't have any options, and I was just lucky enough to have beautiful parents who would allow it to happen!

CH: *Somehow or other you were allowed to achieve a critical attitude early—with a lot of humor, and humor is critical in essence.*

KS: And something that is kind of allowed in the culture. That's what's so great about down-home Cajun culture: it allows people to be comedians. It allows people to live with insane people; it acknowledges everybody as a person. It acknowledges every aspect of life, because it's all around you, unconcealed. I have very few friends. I really manage to live in a



Neon and Theatrical Scoop Lights, 1973, built on location at the Seattle Art Museum for American Art—Third Quarter exhibition

little village in New York City. I see or talk by phone to them every day or so. They are people who put something into my life culturally, physically, in any way. I couldn't come back to a rural area, rural Louisiana, to work, I could go to a more ethnic area, say, Haiti, or South America. I love South America. The thing about the Spanish, even the Spanish in New York, is that they let you know pretty much "where they're at". They don't conceal their physicality; they don't conceal their emotions. And that's one of the most horrible things that has affected western culture: we're tied up from the mouth to the ass, till we just can't get it on.

CH: *Have you read Octavio Paz on that subject—the face and the ass?*

KS: I haven't.

(PAUSE)

CH: *You lived in Paris. Did you sense while there— aspects of the old Paris, perhaps—anything like New York City: the ability of artists to exist there, to function enthusiastically there?*

KS: The only kind of experience I had was of the Paris of that moment, and it was interesting for me to live in my first large city. I went straight from Mamou to Paris! First of all, I dealt with being alone; I dealt with how to observe what was going on around me; how to amuse myself; how to live on little. More than actually making work, I made attempts at making work; but I really didn't accomplish much until I came back to America.

CH: *How much did you absorb of what someone has referred to recently as the "old modern"?*

KS: Enough to know that I didn't want to have anything to do with it; it was spent; it was somehow over. Well, actually, it was important in one respect: I saw good oil paintings in Paris. I hadn't seen an oil painting till I went to college. But, to see good painting in abundance was pretty interesting—to actually experience a real work and not a reproduction. And the understanding of the work was enough to sustain me. I have never really stopped being a student. Now that I am working on the satellite project, I know I have to study the information for a couple of years before I can begin to realize a work. And being an artist has been good for me as a person; because I am constantly taking in things that alter my life. I'm interested in things that are pretty ethereal and move pretty fast and have a lot to do with mental reflection. I'm a real hedonist too: when there's something to do, and I like it, I'll do it all—every last bit! So that I'll know what it's like when it's over. And that pays off in making work. It hasn't paid off in the way I run my life; but, in my work, yes. By the time I've conceived a work, I'm pretty sure of it.

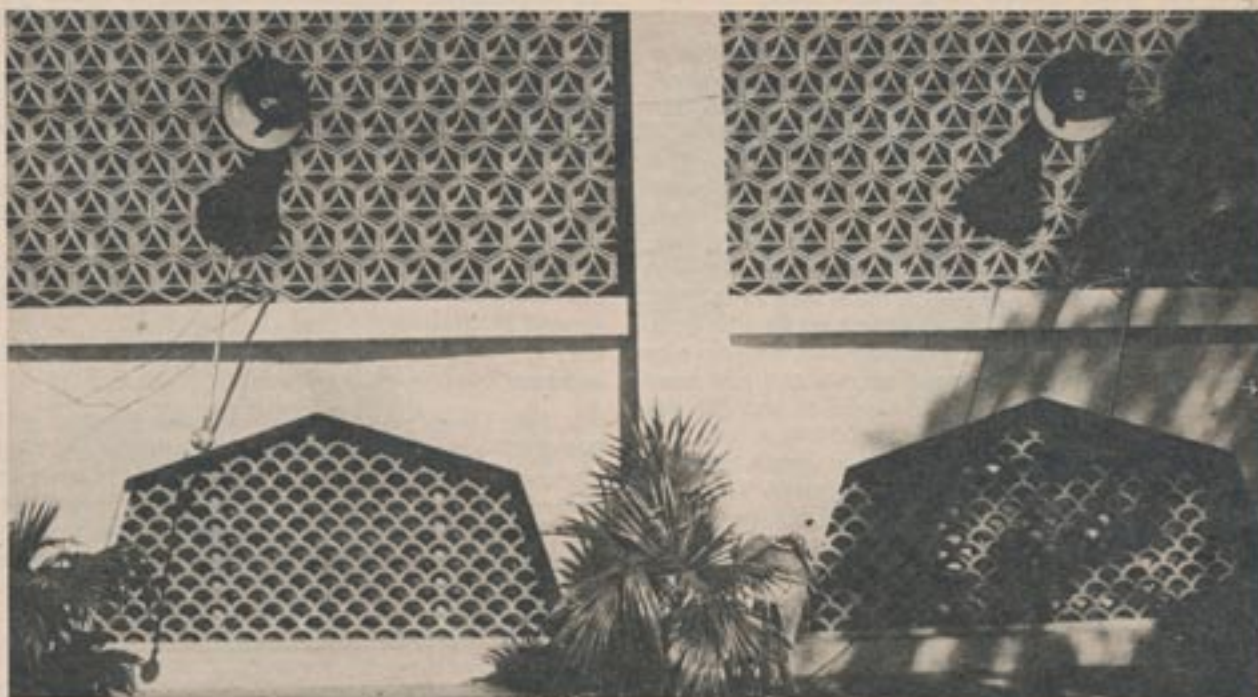
CH: *You describe yourself as a hedonist. I've often thought there's actually a certain French quality in your hedonism. I sometimes see a touch of Satie, a bit of Matisse in you.*

KS: Sure.

CH: *Those two artists, composer and painter, while being very French, are not the same, either. There's a Matissean sensibility in your work, where color is concerned, and being able to make art from ephemeral materials. And the Satie element is a refusing to take things—art itself—too seriously, and almost always injecting in the work a great deal of critical humor: "Play this melody like a nightingale with a toothache".*

KS: But, coming back from Paris to New York, to actually see American work being made at the time—the mid-60's—was 20 times more exciting to me than the French school. I had really learned how to look at work in Paris, so I had no trouble appreciating this new American art. I was thrilled to be back and be a part of it—to be back, not in Louisiana, but in another urban situation, getting a different kind of "charge" from that of Europe.

CH: *Quite early in your work you seemed to have found a way to exercise a native sensory acuteness*



Live Sound Installation, 1971, built on location in New Delhi, India for Second Indian Triennale

and, at the same time, to frustrate its uses. I'm thinking of your way with color in the video piece called Mat Key and Radio Track. There, again, I see you handling color and shape and continuity in the most spontaneous, seductive way, and, at the same time, subverting what is happening with them. That's what I mean by the "Eric Satie touch." Cage has it in his Fontana Mix.

KS: I understand what you're saying and I think you're correct. Both kinds of responses are built into the work, because I think that that's how people really experience things.

CH: *Especially now, in the environment of this quarter of the 20th century.*

KS: Unless video tape has the kind of casualness that television has in the home, the work will never be really understood or even looked at. The big problem with the way people view video is that they try to make it like a painting and show it in a museum, when it really should be viewed in the home with a drink or a cigarette or whatever.

CH: *Would you agree with Allan Kaprow when he says that, until someone can handle video with as much ease as one handles the telephone, nothing very interesting will happen?*

KS: I tend to think that will only happen when we have the facility to send and receive video images; so until TV gets back to some localized state, it will not benefit citizens' use of it. Right now we're being fed the news in serial format. I mean, CBS "Movie of the Week" comes right out of the news; only it's about six months later.

CH: *Then, in connection with ease of handling of video, including color, there is—isn't there:—your working against the medium, working against commercial TV, incorporating it by wringing its neck a bit?*

KS: In a way, sure. Actually kind of showing it up for what it is.

CH: *In other words, you are using TV as it comes to us daily and are "frustrating" it, too?*

KS: Sure. I went to a (CTS satellite) blast-off at Cape Kennedy—I don't know if I told you this story. An Indian chief from northern Canada was there as well. It was a French-Canadian satellite aimed at linking all the small settlements in northern Canada. He was an incredible guy: a big, fat, tall Indian. He looked very much like the Indians of the Northwest Pacific coast area.

CH: *Who the hell invited him there?*

KS: I asked him; I said "How did you know about this?" He said that, in the small village he lived in they

had set up a surveillance tower. He was coming to Cape Kennedy to plug them all in to make it work like local TV! He was there three days. He was much more cooled-out than anybody else. And a lot more interesting to talk to about satellites. The people there are so specialized. I tried to start a conversation, say, about the fuel that was used, or the angles of deflection of the rays they send back—and they would say, "Well, I only design this one screw," "I don't know anything about fuel or about what this satellite is going to do." I mean, that's how scary it is! That's how these networks, like ITT, Western Union, the COMSAT Corporation—who use satellites to spy on us, to psychologically rape us—deprive us of having any thought, of being able to relay our thoughts in this fantastic medium. And the remarkable thing is that \$80 billion of our money is being paid to the industries to do research for the government through NASA. NASA has become like Kennedy Airport. All they do is send satellites up. It's German one day; Indian the next day. More and more, they're slicing up the atmosphere. And they're in cahoots, of course, with the FCC, which controls our space bands. They tell us what we're going to hear. And the interesting thing is that most of the people who work for FCC at one point work either for NASA, ITT, Western Union: it's all one big grab bag, and we have access to none of it.

CH: *What's all this meant to achieve, in your opinion?*

KS: From their point of view? Well, for one thing, they can keep us in the dark forever.

CH: *Control?*

KS: Control. They can talk to Moscow by pressing a button; but we can't. We can't see what the Ruskies are doing. The most intelligent use of satellites has been in India, where they're used for educational purposes in rural areas. Also, of course, it can be turned over instantly to the government. But little villages are plugged in. They learn which color pills to take to avoid having more bambinos. They make their antennas out of chicken wire, the way Mexicans do, and can pick up from certain satellites. They hang the TV set in a tree in the village and the people sit around the tree and watch the programs.

CH: *You found out about this while in India?*

KS: I actually found out about it through research and through an Indian friend from Ahmadabad, whose parents had been involved with the Indian educational system. I didn't see a sign of satellites while I was in India, because I was doing a sound piece in New Delhi, which reminds me a lot of being here. And then I went to Madras, an incredible place, to hear Indian music and see the temples.

CH: You have always responded happily to non-European cultures.

KS: It's amazing: I've been to Europe many times in the late 60's to work in German factories, for instance, to build that whole BA-O-BA light series in the iron works but I did all the drawings for them either in Merida or in New Mexico or South America. The Germans could turn them out. I'd got to the point where, if the forms were not too "baroque" . . . especially the ones toward the end, the ones with glass units . . . I could just send the drawings to Germany and they would build them exactly to plan. I knew the "palette": they had the best kind of light, they lasted the longest; and they had various size tubes. Whereas, here in America, we still just have this 16 or 18 mil. standard. In Germany you can get 25 mil.—as big in diameter as a 50¢ piece, which is like a fluorescent fixture, but you can span a lot more space and there's a greater color variety. You have two basic colors, neon gas and argon gas: one is red and one is blue, and these are pumped in with the mercury alloy that activates the fluorescent powder coating inside the tube, and that makes a different color. The red will make the yellow, orange and pink; the blue gas makes green and an incredible purple. Then the tubes can also be made of tinted glass, and that, of course, results in another color or colors. One of my pieces in sculpture shows at the New Orleans Museum of Art organized by Walter Hopps had a tinted tube at the top and a fluorescent coated tube at the bottom.

CH: I saw it, and there was something very strange about the color as it played against the wall.

KS: There are two tubes: one at the top and another along the side and at the bottom of a piece of cut glass that's coated lightly with latex—my one romantic allusion to Spanish moss! It was so hard to

do it, because I didn't want anybody to really get that! I didn't want it to be that evident, yet I wanted it to somehow . . . Those fluorescent light and glass pieces remind me a lot of driving in Louisiana. Coming back late at night, and in the distance seeing a club somewhere through the fog. About the most "religious" experience I've ever had in Louisiana: coming back from a dance late at night and driving over this flat land and, all of a sudden, seeing these waves of lights going up and down in this thick fog. Just incredible! Much better than any kind of Immaculate Conception or Ascension scene I have ever viewed in church!

CH: You also get that beautiful light late afternoons in winter through Spanish moss.

KS: Now I think since I've been in other climates and latitudes—especially since I've moved into my new place in New York, where I don't any longer have an enclosed box to live in but look straight out across the lower end of the Hudson River—, I'm really looking at nature, how the sun works and how light comes into a room. I've kind of opened up my life a bit more, too. I've become a lot more open. I'm out of the box. I think I'm finally out of *Malone Dies* room, I hope so, at least.

(PAUSE)

CH: Something rather unique has happened in this country, perhaps secretly over the years but not so secretly—more openly—since the early 60's, and that something is this: Americans have learned how to be critical of all the superegos that reside in the culture.

KS: The American myths. Well, we're allowed to look at them.

CH: Yes, we can look at them and say, "Well, who are you?" "What are you?" "Do I need you?" "Can't I do as well without you?"

KS: Right. Well, European art is still plagued by the existentialist pitfall, which is close to what, in America, I call the fascist void: where you're up against the wall dealing with your own little narcissistic self. And the interesting thing is that really came up for me when I first did work in video; because the initial appeal in video is seeing what the hell you look like! And, as soon as I had digested that narcissistic feedback, I became intensely interested in what video actually does, rather than what it can reproduce. The fact of its *doing* became more important than the fact that it stores information. And the remarkable thing about video and audio, when you're not just recording for recording's sake, it's like a dreamland; it sets up a magic state or a state where, once you get over the fact that everything you do is recorded, all of a sudden you open to *how* you're recorded, what you actually say, what in fact you are, how you use the time. It's sort of why I became less interested in painting. Making a work in time has nothing to do with making a static image. So I use little "keys" to things you're familiar with when you watch it, in order that they may set up clues to what to look for when you watch it.

CH: The familiar, daily TV inserts, against which you play . . .

KS: All those works using recorded time *AM-FM, N.Y., Quad-Scan, NY-LA Hook-up*, which are two-way radio and telephone pieces, come out of the work *Channel Mix*, which was actually mixing four channels of local TV in New York—each on opposite screens (20 ft. projections). All four images were amplified. So you were "reading" information in quadruplicate, which is analogous to how one uses TV: you do other things along with it. Movies set up that experience where you're in the black void of the theatre and you're socked with the screen.

BIOGRAPHY

Born July 31, 1941, Mamou, Louisiana
Lives in New York

Education

B.A., University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, 1963
M.F.A., Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1966

Selected Exhibitions

Amel Gallery, New York, 1965
One-Person, Douglass College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1966
Kinetic Art, Douglass College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1966
Eccentric Abstraction, Fischbach Gallery, New York, 1968
Arp to Artschwager, Noah Goldowsky Gallery, New York, 1967
One-Person, Galerie Ricke, Cologne, West Germany, 1968, 1971, 1972
Three-Person, Noah Goldowsky Gallery, New York, 1968
Programm I, Galerie Ricke, Cologne, West Germany, 1968
Soft Sculpture, American Federation of Arts Travelling Exhibition, 1968
Galerie Ricke, Kassel, West Germany, 1968
Nine at Leo Castelli, Leo Castelli Warehouse, New York, 1968
Anti-Form, John Gibson Gallery, New York, 1968
American Abstract Artists, Riverside Museum, New York, 1968
Kunstmarkt, Cologne, West Germany, 1968
Soft Art, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey, 1969
New Methods: New Media, The Museum of Modern Art Circulating Exhibition, 1969
6 Kunstler, Galerie Ricke, Cologne, West Germany, 1969
Here and Now, Washington University Gallery of Art, St. Louis, 1969
When Attitude Becomes Form, Kunsthalle Bern, Bern, Switzerland, 1969
Square Pegs in Round Holes, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Holland, 1969
7 Objects/69, Galerie Ricke, Cologne, West Germany, 1969
Anti-Illusion: Procedures and Materials, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1969
One-Person, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1975
One-Person, Ace Gallery, Los Angeles, 1970, 1975
One-Person, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Holland, 1970
One-Person, *Projects*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1970
69th American Exhibition, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1970
Hanging/Leaning, Emily Lowe Gallery, Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York, 1970
Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld, West Germany, 1970
10th International Art Exhibition of Japan, Tokyo, 1970

Drawings of American Artist, Galerie Ricke, Cologne, West Germany, 1970
Against Order: Chance and Art, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, 1970
1970 Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1970
Works on Film, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1971
Prospect '71, Städtischen Kunsthalle, Dusseldorf, West Germany, 1971
2nd Indian Triennale, New Delhi, India, 1971
American Art 1950-70, Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark, 1971
Querschnitt, Galerie Ricke, Cologne, West Germany, 1971
Projection, Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark, 1971
Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, 1972
Galerie Ricke, Cologne, West Germany, 1972, 1973
Ace Gallery, Vancouver, Canada, 1972
Videogalerie Schum, Kassel, Germany, 1972
Drawings, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1972
Spoleto Festival, Spoleto, Italy, 1972
Video, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1972, 1973, 1974
Options and Alternatives — Some Directions in Recent Art, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, 1973
3D into 2D: Drawing for Sculpture, New York Cultural Center, 1973
Video, Festival of Contemporary Arts, Oberlin, Ohio, 1973
Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France, 1973
Amerika Haus, Berlin, West Germany, 1973
Art in Evolution, Xerox Corporation, Rochester, New York, 1973
Drawings: Seventies, Joseloff Gallery, Art School, University of Hartford, Hartford, Connecticut, 1973
Contemporaneos, Rome, Italy, 1973
1973 Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1973
American Art — Third Quarter Century, The Seattle Art Museum, 1973
One-Person, Seder/Creigh Gallery, Coronado, California, 1974
Videotapes — Six from Castelli, De Saisset Art Gallery, Santa Clara, California, 1974
University of Santa Clara, Santa Clara, California, 1974
The Gallery, London, England, 1974
Some Recent American Art, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Circulating Exhibition, 1974
Art/Voir, Centre Beaubourg, Paris, France, 1974
Projected Video, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1975
World, Image, Number, Sarah Lawrence College Gallery, Bronxville, New York, 1975
Sculpture, American Directions 1945-1975, National Collection of Fine Arts, The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Dallas Museum of Fine Arts; New Orleans Museum of Art, 1975
American Artists: A New Decade, Fort Worth Art Museum, 1976

CH: You're totally in the dream.

KS: You're in the dream. But in video, the only way you're in the dream is if you are in it: my earliest tapes, from '69 to '71, like *Painted Foot*, or *Negative*, dealt with the narcissistic and erotic suggestiveness of the medium. Now I'm much more concerned with the broadcast capabilities of the material, what's actually being fed to people . . . and having access to that broadcasting.

CH: Well, until your visit this time, I had never seen those video pieces, and I hadn't realized to what an extent there is a real edge, another kind of critical edge to your work.

KS: I'm pretty astute as to . . . say, if I'm working with a certain material, I know how it's made, what it is being used for, who makes it, and who is getting paid for making it. I think to be an artist who is actually making a statement about the culture . . . not a rural culture, but about the cultural fix . . . that the world is in . . . is the last free place to be in.

CATALOG LISTING

Live Sound Installation 1977

Built on location at the New Orleans Museum of Art

BA-O-BA for New Orleans 1977

Neon and glass
Built on location at the New Orleans Museum of Art

Abaca Code, Circle Code C-1 1976

Hand cast paper of cotton rag and manila fiber
diam. 72 (182.9)
Lent by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles

Abaca Code, Square Code S-1 1976

Hand cast paper of cotton rag and manila fiber
72 x 72 (182.9 x 182.9)
Lent by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles

Abaca Code, Rectangle Code R-1 1976

Hand cast paper of cotton rag and manila fiber
72 x 96 (182.9 x 243.8)
Lent by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles

Animation I 1973

3/4 inch cassette color videotape with sound
14 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York

Animation II 1974

3/4 inch cassette color videotape with sound
25 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York

Color Wipe 1973

3/4 inch cassette color videotape with sound
30 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York

TV In and TV Out 1972

3/4 inch cassette color videotape with sound
10 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
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Mat Key and Radio Track 1972

3/4 inch cassette color videotape with sound
10 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York

Channel Mix 1973

16mm. color/black and white film with sound
21 minutes
Technical assistance Richard Landry and Kurt Munkasci
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York

Lightbulb and Fire 1971

16 mm. black and white Kinescope with sound
21 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
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Negative 1971

16 mm. black and white Kinescope with sound
11 minutes
Camera Richard Landry
Performer Tina Girouard
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York

Painted Foot: Black Light 1970

16 mm. black and white Kinescope with sound
16 minutes
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
New York

Rubdown 1970

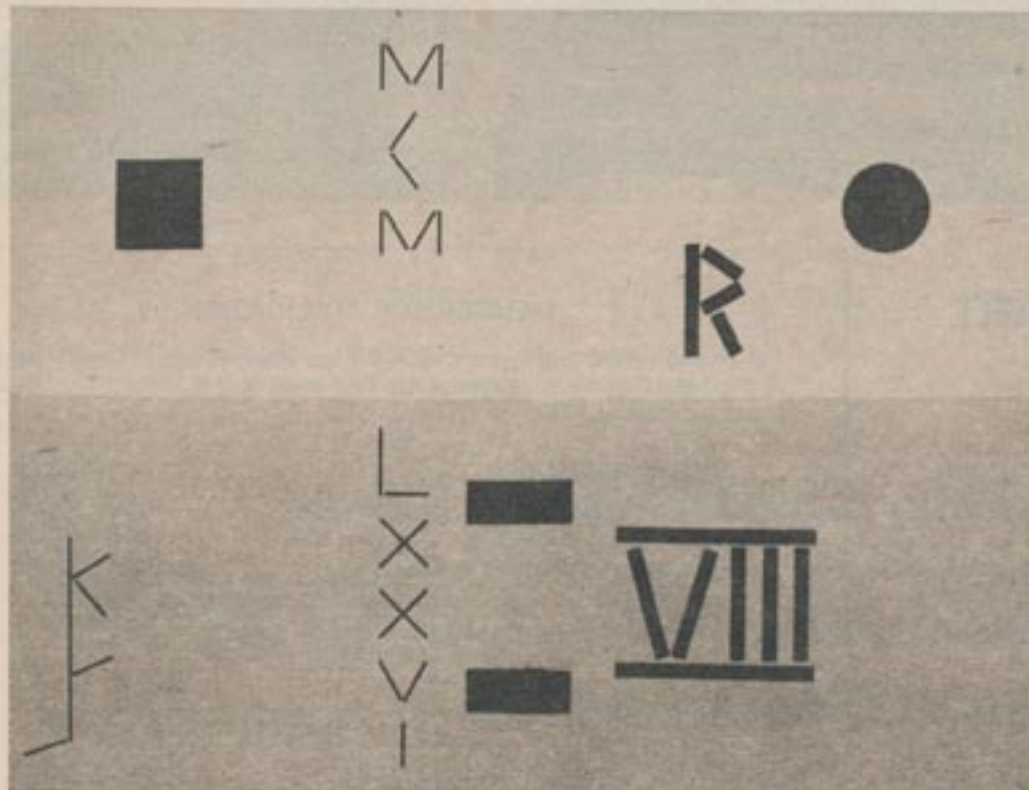
16 mm. black and white Kinescope with sound
11 minutes
Performer Michael Kern
Lent by Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc.,
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Abaca Code, 1976, 72 x 96

photo: Eric Pollitzer

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