

Time and Space in Moving Images—from the ICC Collection**First period: April 24th—May 28th, 1998****Second period: May 30th—June 25th, 1998****ICC Theater**

INTERCOMMUNICATION CENTER

ICC Report

ICC maintains a collection of foreign and Japanese video art and film (transferred to video), from which works were selected to illustrate four broad categories of technique/method: "Repeat/Multiplication," "Composition/Collage," "Editing/Assemblage" and "Construction." The presentations were organized to demonstrate how such works that go beyond ordinary "montage" in manipulating time and space have created their own audiovisual language.

Klaus VON BRUCH's «Das Duracellband» (The Duracell Tape) (1980), part of the "Repeat/Multiplication" program, sequenced short excerpts from a

Duracell battery commercial in intensive repetition, intercut with flashes of archival imagery of World War II bombers to produce a disturbing rhythm. As if the repetitiveness of the image sequences themselves (advancing only to a set timepoint) were aware of the viewer's mounting uneasiness.

In the "Construction" category, IDEMITSU Mako's «Kaé, Act Like A Girl.» (1996) used video projection and monitors to create a "video drama" addressing issues of gender discrimination in everyday Japanese life.

While video as electronic media constituted the mainstay of this program, early groundbreaking experiments in film by MATSUMOTO Toshio were also shown.

[HATANAKA Minoru]



Das Duracellband (The Duracell Tape) 1980

**Portable Sacred Grounds—Telepresence World:
Talk Sessions
May 7th, 21st, 28th and June 4th, 11th, 18th, 1998
ICC 5th Floor Lobby**

A series of six Talk Sessions were held after hours at the ICC 5th floor lobby in conjunction with the Portable Sacred Grounds—Telepresence World Exhibition. Moderated by Exhibition Supervisor ITOH Toshiharu together with participating artist and Screenings Director MINATO Chihiro, each session invited one or two guests to discuss various different topics related to "telepresence." Such diverse perspectives served to flesh out ITOH's premise that "telepresence technologies are psychic technologies," bringing into clear focus "here" and "there" by the mental technology of "imagination." A record 1,000 persons—mainly in their twenties—attended.

1) "Imagination = image + magic" (May 7th)

Guest: Joan FONTCUBERTA (Photographer)

Holding up the medium of photography for reappraisal in its essential "distant-made-here-and-now" telepresence, Catalan photographer FONTCUBERTA, known for his images of forged flora and fauna, made a comprehensive slide presentation of his entire career from the earliest works to his latest project «SPUTNIK». The overall panorama of his many works playing upon the ambiguity of photography's veracity and illusion provided singularly impressive evidence of the artist's own axiom, "imagination = image + magic."

2) "Bewitching Sound and Light" (May 21st)

Guest: IMAFUKU Ryuta (Anthropologist)

Triggered by IMAFUKU's remark that "Spiritual possession is itself the shaping of connective circuits to the external world, indicative only of relationship, not of subject-being," discussion focused on how systems of possession might link and adapt to media technologies in contemporary society. IMAFUKU cited Chicano artist Guillermo GÓMEZ-PENA's CATV wave-jacking performance brilliantly appropriating the "television-as-altar," while MINATO cited Brion GYSIN's «Dream Machine» as a precursor to today's video drug and "Pocket Monster" phenomena.

3) "Doppelgänger and Correspondence" (May 28th)

Guests: UNO Kuni'ichi (French literary scholar), TOSHIMA Shigeyuki (Clinical psychiatrist)

Topics ranged from schizophrenia and theater, to ARTAUD, the body and doppelgänger. TOSHIMA

showed a videotape performance of his own Molecular Theater, accompanying it with his own unique commentary. According to him, as the analyst (aliéniste) diagnoses the patient (aliéné)—noting the patient's perceptual reports, auditory hallucinations and leakage of self, he would gradually come to be confused, amidst the patient's terrifyingly excessive outcries, of whether he was hearing or writing. It was interesting to note that TOSHIMA's theater pieces likewise were strongly corporeal. UNO linked this to ARTAUD's body-art, quoting him that "The body without organs is a battlefield open to erosion."

4) "Future Sacred Grounds" (June 4th)
Guests: UESHIMA Keiji (Religio-anthropologist), SAWARAGI Noi (Art critic)

UESHIMA held forth Jerusalem and Le Puy as examples of the "non-portable sanctuary," noting that many sacred sites have remained holy even as the religion practiced thereupon changed from one tradition to another. On the other hand, ITOH expanded, churingas and mandalas as portable sanctuary exemplify the essence of the structure of image. MINATO's visuals of Ayer's Rock petroglyphs and SAWARAGI's positing rock concerts as a contemporary form of holy pilgrimage, with the physical nature of rocking and rolling closely paralleling the rituals of the Shakers, argued for new investigations into what constitutes and links sacred sites.

5) "Migration and Myth" (June 11th)
Guests: DAN Keisuke

(Novelist/translator), NISHITANI Osamu (French literary scholar) NISHITANI pointed out how Lafcadio HEARN, through his travels from Martinique to Matsué, always stayed

closely bound to "ghostly" territory. In their primal form, "ghosts" manifest the "other" world as presumed to be observed by the living—the very image of telepresence. Moreover, referring to Hindu sacrificial rituals that NISHITANI photographed in Martinique, he observed that mythical spaces emerge in visible interfaces on the continuum between "this world" and "the other world."

Apropos of such "porous" continuity between "here" and "there," DAN cited Salvador DA BAHIA and TANGIER, then furthered the analogy to the "porous mediator" William S. BURROUGHS, Jr.'s auto-dictation method as literary trance.

6) "Neo-Shamanism" (June 18th)

Guests: NAKAZAWA Shin'ichi (Religious scholar), HOSONO Haruomi (Musician)

"Sacred sites are peculiar spots in this world where the distant manifests large as life. Which is also the characteristic of telephone and radio, indeed of all telepresence technologies. The eradication of distance gives rise to sound technologies." (NAKAZAWA) The discussion moved from the shaman's journey that serves to hinge "this world" and "the other world," to memory and music, to the promise of a new "extase culture" to be opened up by today's media technologies. HOSONO approached the tangents of telepresence from a musical angle, presenting his own travels with Native Americans, sonic expression that transcends the bounds of media. Other topics included the shaman's drum, ritual vs. artistic voice, and the relationship between mural painting and acoustics in caves. (vis. pp.168-179)

[WAKABAYASHI Yayoi]

*Portable Sacred Grounds—Telepresence World:
The first Talk Session with Joan FONTCUBERTA*



Portable Sacred Grounds—Telepresence World:

Screenings

April 23rd, May 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th, and June 5th, 12th, 19th, 1998
ICC Theaterr

Viewed through the "doors of perception" of the screen, a program of 18 cinematic works (middle-length and shorts included) intended to touch upon the telepresent imagination depicted in audiovisual media (especially film) and to better highlight various dimensions of the Exhibition theme was shown in the ICC Theater. Selected by MINATO Chihiro, the works included films made over roughly 20 years in the 1910s and '20s, and again another 20 years from the latter half of the '70s to the present.

1) Stellan RYE and Paul WEGENER «Der Student von Prag» (The Student of Prague) (1913)

Portrays a man who has sold his mirror image to the Devil and so must come to face his own double. The interior shots make effective use of the mirror and minimum depth, which conversely creates a strange sense of space: the photograph and art direction are distinctive, making it seem as if we are here but looking and venturing into another space. (Screened 5 times on April 23rd)

2) Dziga VERTOV «Chelovek S Kinoapparatom» (The Man with A Movie Camera) (1929)

A major work that broke new ground for news, documentaries, and also propaganda. The cameraman shot fragments of a single day in Moscow, and was involved in all aspects of the production from developing to editing to screening. The effective use of montage and special effects conversely attempt to clarify the essential qualities of the real world and that of the film medium. An extremely good 35mm print was shown. (Screened 5 times on May 1st)

3) Robert FLAHERTY «Nanook of the North» (1922)

The world's first major documentary film, which nonetheless transcends the concept of the documentary. Shooting the life of an Eskimo in Canada at the time was as difficult

as shooting on Mars today, yet overcoming all obstacles the result is filled with moving drama. Shown in sound version. (Screened 3 times on May 8th)

4) Friedrich Wilhelm MURNAU «Nosferatu» (1922)

The first real vampire movie ever, a classic of German expressionist cinema. The otherworldly phenomenon of the vampire who assails from beyond time and space is depicted using special techniques such as frame-lapse and backwards photography and views through a microscope. A window to another world full of fear and uncertainty. (Screened 2 times on May 15th)

5) Chris MARKER «Sans Soleil» (1982)

Shown with Japanese narration. A cameraman travels camera-in-hand, thinking all the while about memory. He visits "two poles of living perpetuity," Africa and Japan, as well as Iceland. As the journey and film progress, geographical and temporal distance disappear until the meaning that emerges is one of film as memory and as forgetting. (Screened 4 times on May 22nd)

6) Danièle HUILLET and Jean-Marie STRAUB «Cézanne» (1989)

A landmark work of symbolic imagery. The words that the filmmakers speak offscreen are imaginary conversation with CÉZANNE quoted from a critique by Joachim GASQUET. An exchange of memories spanning over 250 years interweaves everything from the philosophy of EMPEDOCLES, to excerpts from the film «Madame Bovary», to extant paintings by CÉZANNE, to the buildings of the artists' village at Mont Sainte-Victoire. (Screened 2 times on May 29th)

7) Victor MASAYESVA, Jr. «Imaging Indians» (1992)

A Native American filmmaker seeks to thrash out all the contradictions in the image of "Indians" as invented by cinematic history. The attempt becomes a "film critique" that questions the limits of depicting "another's culture," as well as how

we are to transcend the loss of the "sacred" through being filmed.

(Screened 3 times on June 5th)

8) Bill VIOLA «Déserts» (1994) and «Memories of Ancestral Power (The Moro Movement in the Solomon Islands)» (1977); Charles and Ray EAMES «Powers of Ten» (1978)

«Déserts»—How can the memory of diving under water be kept alive in the desert? How can the expanse of the world outside be embraced in the confines of a room? Such are the interiorized visions of otherness made manifest through powers of imagination in this work.

«Memories of Ancestral Power (The Moro Movement in the Solomon Islands)»—An attempt to document the efforts of Solomon Islanders to preserve and pass on the traditions and memories of their ancestors, while at the same time trying to make the video images co-produced together with the subjects themselves function as a mnemonic system.

«Powers of Ten»—From infinitesimal to cosmic, seamless transitions of scale take us on a multidimensional visual journey in this masterpiece science short. (Screened 5 times on June 12th)

9) ITO Takashi «SPACY» «BOX»

«THUNDER» «DRILL» «GHOST»

«GRIM» «THE MOON» «ZONE» (1981-95)

After the screening of eight short experimental films, an impromptu talk session was held between the artist, ITO Takashi and the program curator MINATO Chihiro. Among the topics discussed were ITO's motivation for filmmaking, and the techniques and technical problems of time-lapse and open-shutter (bulb) shooting. The audience could hear the artist make many memorable statements such as, "The explosion of my own self-compression gives «SPACY» its speed." Talk then traced the gradual shift in his creative style from "skewing the everyday look of things = sensibility" to "examining the unseen consciousness of self = memory," a topic which inadvertently shed light on an important aspect of MINATO's collaboration with MORIWAKI Hiroyuki «Garden of Memory» featured in the exhibition. (Screened 5 times on June 19th)

[WAKABAYASHI Yayoi]

Anna DAVIS and OGATA Atsushi «Should I Go or Should I Stay?»

June 26th—July 12th, 1998

ICC 5th Floor Lobby

The video installation «Should I Go or Should I Stay?» is a collaborative effort by two Amsterdam-based artists, Anna DAVIS, an upcoming new Australian videomaker, and OGATA Atsushi, a Japanese middle-generation videomaker active mainly in Europe. They began to work together last year, the present work-in-progress displayed in the ICC 5th floor lobby, on the occasion of their visit to Japan, was a prototype towards a finished work planned for Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum in the autumn. Basically a videotape work in four parts, the work shows figures of a man and woman reflected on the rainswept ground, foxes walking in the snow, close-ups of flames, and a mother-like woman playing with a

small child. All four elements are culled from old film footage, each screen treated with an effect and cycling in a one-minute loop. Over the various respective visuals, the artists have dubbed short narrations in English and Japanese. The tapes were shown on plasma monitors affixed to stands of different heights situated about the perimeter of the lobby. It is difficult to perceive any given "message" per se from the images; all are merely repeating fragments. Though perhaps the impression given is of unclear memories of "time" as seen in those subjects. Even the overdubbed narrations are but fragments of conversation between a man and a woman. Differences toward each other's actions is noted as the man in one tape moves to act and the woman

stops him, or conversely the woman is about to act when the man stops her in another tape. The somewhat melodramatic tone of the narratives bear only the foggiest relationship to any of the visuals. Moreover, the voices are played at fairly high volume, echoing across the lobby in what seems a cacophony of a randomly repeating dialogue. Viewers took interest in one monitor and its dialogue, only to be drawn to the conversation coming from the next—thus they found themselves wandering around and back between monitors, left wondering about the relationship between the unclear subjects and time and space of each of the tapes. This unsettled "tale" left to the imagination seemed to be the artists' main theme. While barely sculptural as an installation, scheme in which the four videotapes were presented did make for an appreciation of the physical space. That is, the piece stood entirely on the space of the "taped works" themselves. Not that this was necessarily a minus; as one of the few "orthodox" pieces of video art to be shown at the ICC, I should stress that it seemed refreshingly different. Lastly, both artists held a Gallery Talk on July 3rd, and introduced other of their recent works.

[GOGOTA Hisanori]



Anna DAVIS and OGATA Atsushi giving a Gallery Talk on their «Should I Go or Should I Stay?»

Symposium: Post-Sampling Music Theory

June 27th, 1998

ICC Gallery D

Since the advent of the digital sampling machine, sampling's penetration of popular music—indeed of all types of music—has been nothing short of phenomenal. And yet this has tended to reduce all sound and music, whatever the original derivation, to the common level of "sources." We all have seen how the times have launched trends in sound quality and utilization as well as new genres of music—hip hop, house, techno—each with its own distinct "sound." It is hardly unusual that the appearance of a new instrument should lead to a new musical style, or that such music ultimately refine the special characteristics of the instrument itself. Such evolution amidst the "spin" of impinging social circumstances is surely only natural; hence all the changes in the desktop music-making environment, advancements in personal computer features, and networking technologies. Within this course of events, there are beginning to be signs of works and collaborations that go beyond the existing framework of what we know as "sampling." That is to say, sampling—or more broadly, all such digital trends—are entering what might be called the "post-sampling" phase.

The Symposium was chaired by music critic SASAKI Atsushi, who touched base with various creators: Christophe CHARLES, who produces works using MAX programming software to manipulate field recordings; HANNO Yoshihiro, who samples live (not pre-recorded) performances in order to restructure and "re-create" them; and the GNUsic project

(KUBOTA Akihiro, YASAKA Kenji, SETOH Koji, who maintain an audio exchange site on the Web for accessing not only sound source files, but even the production process itself. A clear digression was seen between HANNO, who regards sampling as a means of forging ahead into the unpredetermined process of realizing one's imagination, and CHARLES, who publishes his program data on CD, so that the creative process does not end with his "finished" work, but reaches out to others at large. Opinions were exchanged on GNUsic project's site instructions: whether they endangered "artist originality," or conversely whether they might contribute to the manifestation of potential differences. Underlying all this, of course, were the big issues of copyright and quality in the wake of the leveling of all "source" hierarchies, yet just where GNUsic's experiments will lead is still an unknown quantum, while on the other hand just how much working within their system will augment creativity also remains to be seen.

In a mini-concert during the latter half of the Symposium, CHARLES and HANNO performed a duet, each re-composing the other's "sounds = sources" that had been exchanged in advance. Sadly, unforeseen accidents plagued HANNO's sequencing software and prevented CHARLES's MAX computer screens from being projected. But the real "mystery guest" was the frequently mentioned name Oval = Markus POPP, whose latest work «dok» was one of the original inspiration of the event. Totally rejecting what has become the textbook standard of "sampling," «dok» was created using CHARLES's works as "sources," thus exploring a way of real "post-sampling music."

Planning cooperation: SASAKI Atsushi (HEADZ)
GNUsic URL: <http://www.gnusic.net>
Reference discography: Christophe CHARLES «undirected 86-96», Mille Plateaux
HANNO Yoshihiro «Portrait of A Poet», Flavour of Sound
Oval «dok», Mille Plateaux/Thrill Jockey

[HATANAKA Minoru]



Post-Sampling Music Theory—Christophe CHARLES and HANNO Yoshihiro in their collaborative creation/performance.

Steina VASULKA Solo Performance

July 17th, 1998

ICC Gallery D

Steina VASULKA was born in Iceland in 1940. Having studied music in Czechoslovakia, she married Woody VASULKA in 1964 and emigrated to New York the following year. Since producing her first work on videotape in 1969, she has been active over a wide range of genres including videotape works, video installations and sound performances—truly a groundbreaking multimedia artist. In addition to her prolific career as a solo artist, she has of course collaborated with Woody, and in 1997 presented the installation «Orka» at the Iceland Pavilion in the Venice Biennale.

Most recently, in conjunction with July 17th opening of Woody's solo exhibition «The Brotherhood» at the ICC, on her first visit to Japan in a decade, she re-staged the solo sound-and-video performance «Violin Power» from the early '70s, as well as collaborating with Woody's latest installation «The Maiden». Playing a MIDI violin, Steina used MIDI signals to control laserdisc images real-time. Each string of the MIDI violin was given different tasks, from switching between audiovisual sources to fast-forward, rewind and replay speed, all tempered to the pitch of her playing.

Her visual images for the solo performance included dance performance footage and outtakes from her videotape «In the Land of the Elevator Girls». Playing her violin, she switched instantaneously between sources, sending images ahead or freezing them altogether—less altering the visuals by means of her playing than modifying her playing so as to maintain visual control, a visually based act processed through sound.

Next came the main performance, a "duet" with «The Maiden». First, a brief introduction to Woody's «The Maiden»: it's the latest addition—also known as «Table 6»—to his six-part

series «The Brotherhood». Various expanding and contracting parts added onto a gynecological examination table base and operated by means of pneumatic compressor control. Flanked left and right by upright fan-shaped objects that opened and closed, also pneumatically. Projected on these fans as well as on a large screen in the background is a man reciting a poem by Melody Carnahan depicting this piece of art. All the pressurized energy to mobilize the apparatus was controlled by valves connected to a MIDI-driven computer, allowing real-time motion of all moveable elements. As made clear by the name «The Maiden», here was a mechanized "Venus" loosely modeled head, arms, waist and feet on the physical articulations and proportions of the human frame. The various different parts respond according to MIDI pitch, which as an installation worked by having viewers make sounds into a microphone that were then translated into MIDI code. In Steina's performance, however, the violin was substituted for the microphone as input device. As Steina played, «The Maiden» delivered a dynamically animated performance, body writhing, head bobbing, all accompanied by pneumatic hissing. According to

Steina, *he*—the male poetry-reader screened in the background—and *she*—«The Maiden»—were carrying a love dialogue = duet. The real-time counterpoint of pneumatics and poem-reciting voice seemed charged with a certain eroticism, playing out the classic drama of man and machine. Nonetheless, «The Maiden» in this performance hardly invoked a humanlike, that is to say robotlike image. Because for all *her* movements, *she* was still immobile. Glued in place on the dais, however freely *she* might contort her body, she was cursed to remain in situ as a "fixture."

Courting calls between the rigidly mounted «The Maiden» and a virtual man projected on a screen. The undismissible barren futility of it all resonated with the main subject matter of the male principle implicit in «The Brotherhood», inviting visions of the specter of Eros so adulated in today's media.

[GOGOTA Hisanori]

Steina VASULKA's «Violin Power» playing a "duet" with Woody VASULKA's «The Maiden»

