

THE FRONTIER SERIES

Thirteen new programs will be presented in 1983 on THE FRONTIER, the weekly series featuring the work of local independent filmmakers and videomakers, broadcast on WNED-TV Channel 17, the Buffalo Public Broadcasting Service affiliate. Twenty-nine hour and half-hour programs by artists from WNED-TV's signal area of Western New York and Southern Ontario were broadcast on THE FRONTIER in 1979 through 1981.

THE FRONTIER is produced by Media Study/Buffalo in cooperation with WNED-TV, a collaboration between a regional media center and a public television station that has occurred in few other cities. Media Study/Buffalo is responsible for the selection of the individual films and videotapes and plans each of the programs, while WNED-TV provides the technical support to package the programs on videotape.

THE FRONTIER will introduce Channel 17 viewers to a variety of approaches by independent film and video makers. The use of the term "independent" may be unfamiliar to some, and the fact that it is points to an important reason for presenting the series. Independent filmmakers and videomakers do not produce their work for a client, sponsor, or television station which provides the financial support, but also determines the content of the work. The films and videotapes of independent producers freely express their own creative imagination and vision.

The 1983 FRONTIER series will present 26 titles which are the work of 23 film and video makers. The programs, chosen from more than 140 titles submitted, offer a wide variety of subjects and styles, including documentary, personal, experimental and fiction. However, an attempt to strictly categorize the styles used sometimes becomes dif-

ficult — several of the filmmakers and videomakers freely mix them. John Caldwell's *Pax-Americanus* shifts from material that resembles documentary to that which suggests a fictional or experimental approach. Peter Dudar's *DP* and Gary Katz's *Lemme Outa Here* are built in segments which allow for radical shifts in style, and *Reunion in Dunnville*. Rick Hancox's documentary contains moments that clearly depart from a conventional use of that form.

The work of Caldwell, Dudar and Katz shares with David Goorevitch's *Black Rage*, Gordon Lawson's *The Censor*, *3 Bird Limit* by Art Reinstein and Blaine Spiegel and *Television Tells Me What To Do* by Charlie Fox, the use of original experimental forms to explore social and political concerns.

A more straightforward use of the documentary form to examine social issues is seen in the work of Laura Sky, whose *Moving Mountains* looks at a redefinition of women's — and men's — work. *Radiation Workers: Reprocessing* by Tobe Carey, Pam Roberts and Ed Wierzbowski examines the controversy surrounding the handling of nuclear wastes at a Buffalo area plant through the eyes of the workers.

Biographical and autobiographical subjects are explored in Paul McGowan's *Why Do You Want to be Alive*, Nora Hutchinson's *Granny and Me*, Dominic Angerame's *A Ticket Home* and in Judith Doyle's complex reconstruction of a family's history through a collection of photographs and stories, *Private Property/Public History*.

Two half-hour dramatic films with local settings are included in the series. Robin Lee's *Travel Song* was filmed in a Toronto subway station. Area viewers will recognize a number of Buffalo locations in *Loose Change* by Joe Gutt.

The work of video pioneer Steina is featured in a program of four recent videotapes which continue her engaging investigations into the generation and manipulation of electronic images.

Opening the series is a program of four films and videotapes, each of which takes as its starting point an elegantly simple subject and develops it into a complex, textured composition. Jacques Holender contemplates the reflections on glass surfaces of Toronto's skyscrapers in *Echoes*; John Bertram begins with the lines painted on city streets in *Sonauto*; John Porter's *Firefly* presents the camera with a swinging light; and in *Moving Along the X, Y Axis*, Robert Coggeshall and Roberta Hayes begin with a single dancer isolated in the video camera's frame.

An important aspect of the presentation of the series is the use of a brief introduction to some of the films and videotapes by the artist. The introductions provide a sense of the personal concerns or experiences which led to the creation of the work. Beyond this, the films and videotapes stand on their own; the series format is straightforward and uses no host or commentator to mediate between the films and videotapes and the audience.

The current FRONTIER series is supported by grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Canada Council, which provide fees to the artists whose work is broadcast. Additional support is received from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Frontier

Independent Films and Videotapes
from Western New York and Southern Ontario

WNED-TV Channel 17
Buffalo

Saturday Evenings
at 11 PM

Beginning
February 5, 1983

For broadcast dates, please consult local program listings.

1

Moving Along the X, Y Axis

by Robert Coggeshall and Roberta Hayes

Echoes

by Jacques Holender

Firefly

by John Porter

Sonauto

by John Bertram

2

The Censor

by Gordon Lawson

Reunion in Dunnville

by Rick Hancox

Lemme Outa Here

by Gary Katz

3

Moving Mountains

by Laura Sky

4

Somersault, Urban Episodes,

Photographic Memory, and Sky High

by Steina

5

Black Rage

by David Goorevitch

DP

by Peter Dudar

6

A Ticket Home

by Dominic Angerame

Private Property/

Public History

by Judith Doyle

7

Loose Change

by Joe Gutt

8

Pax-Americanus

by John Caldwell

THE PROGRAMS

3 Laura Sky MOVING MOUNTAINS (1980)

16mm film, color, sound, 25 minutes

"A celebration of our own capacity as women" is Laura Sky's characterization of her film, *Moving Mountains*. Her subjects are the women who work in the coal fields near the British Columbia-Alberta border.

Sky shows us women confidently doing work that is traditionally done by men — they operate massive earth moving machines, work outside in the dark and bitter cold on blasting crews, and train new workers (including men) on the job. But the women we see are not merely "doing men's work." Their presence and their actions in jobs previously held exclusively by men are changing the way both women and men think about



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work and about each other. *Moving Mountains* shows women and men talking together about the changes they each are going through as they begin to accept these new definitions.

The use of an observational documentary style with no narration allows the actions and the words of the women to speak directly to the audience. The strong, upbeat original musical score by Donna Green contributes to the film's mood of "celebration."

From 1973 to 1979, Laura Sky served as Regional Director in Ontario for the National Film Board's documentary program, "Challenge for Change." In 1980 she established the Toronto independent documentary film and video production company, Sky Works, for which she is producer/director and writer. Sky Works' films have been broadcast on television and used extensively by government agencies, labor organizations, and a wide range of community and women's groups. *Moving Mountains* was included in the 1981 Montreal International Film Festival and the 1982 American Film Festival.

4 Steina SOMERSAULT (1981) 6 minutes URBAN EPISODES (1980) 9 minutes

3/4-inch videotapes, color, sound

Steina is a pioneer and continuing explorer of the possibilities for the generation and manipulation of the electronic image through a broad range of technological tools and aesthetic concerns.

Somersault uses a simple visual device in order to create a perception of space that "confuses one's sense of visual logic." Steina attached a glass tube with a hemispherical mirror to the lens of her video camera. Images of Steina herself are reflected in the curved mirror and recorded by the camera which is often moving, sometimes violently, creating a bewildering loss of spacial orientation.

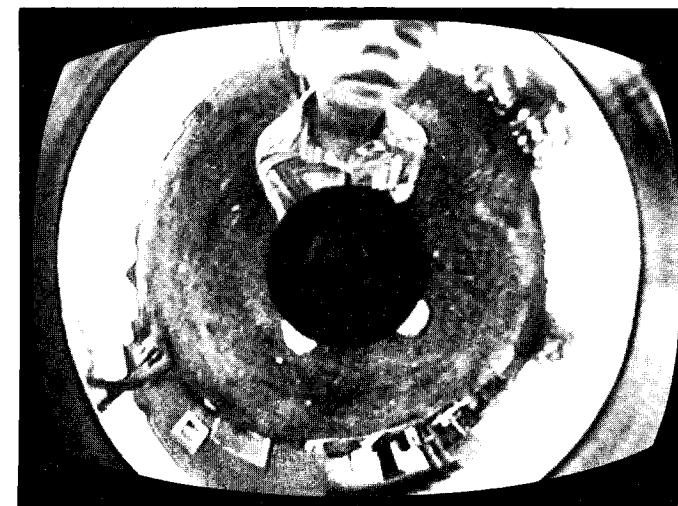
In 1975 Steina began to work on a series of installations and tapes entitled *Machine Vision*, involving mechanical modes of camera control. Mounted on a rotating turntable, the camera in *Urban Episodes* con-

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY (1981) 5 minutes SKY HIGH (1981) 2 minutes

tinuously pans a city intersection, while other mechanized features of the turntable device allow the camera to perform tilts and zooms in conjunction with a dichroic mirror, a prism, and the hemispherical mirror used in *Somersault*. Steina comments, "In this series the camera conforms to a mechanized decision-making of instruments, with the movements and attention directed towards their own machine viewpoints."

Somersault and *Urban Episodes* are shown with comments by the videomaker. Also on this program are *Photographic Memory* and *Sky High*, which also explore the manipulation of the video image.

Steina, along with her husband Woody Vasulka, has continued to be a seminal force in the development of the electronic arts since 1970, both as a video artist and as co-founder of The Kitchen, a major video ex-



hibition center in New York City. Her tapes have been exhibited and broadcast widely in the United States and Europe. She was a Guggenheim Fellow in Video (1976) and has received grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Over the past several years she has taught at the Center for Media Study at the State University of New York at Buffalo and at Media Study/Buffalo.

Distribution Information: Media Study/Buffalo
(refer to key)