

Lucifer's Commission, Woody Vasulka & SLIDERS_lab, experimental film installation, 2014-2015. © W. Vasulka & SLIDERS_lab

Steina et Woody Vasulka
& SLIDERS_lab
Vasulka's Variations

From 25 June to 23 October 2016
Opening on 24 June at 6.30 pm

Exhibition curated by :
Jackie-Ruth Meyer, Frédéric Curien et
Jean-Marie Dallet

Les Moulins Albigeois
41 rue Porta - 81000 Albi - FRANCE
From Wednesday to Sunday from 2-7 pm

Press contact
00 33 +9 63 03 98 84
00 33 +6 72 82 22 78
murielle.edet@centredartlelait.com
www.centredartlelait.com

CENTRE D'ART
lelait
LABORATOIRE ARTISTIQUE
INTERNATIONAL DU TARN

Presentation

Since 1968, the couple formed by Woody (born in 1937 in Czechoslovakia) and Steina Vasulka (born in 1940 in Iceland), who are nothing less than pioneers of computer-assisted video, has been developing (in parallel with Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell and Bill Viola) a visual vocabulary peculiar to the **electronic image**. In the 1970s, they made machines capable of producing abstract images, and carried out experiments which they are still involved with to this day, in collaboration, in particular, with the **SLIDERS_lab artists' collective***.

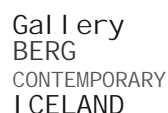
An exhibition of these pioneering artists of video art and interactive art, regarded as "national treasures" in Iceland, is an outstanding event. As artistic colossi whose works are keenly topical today, they exhibit around the world, but are, oddly enough, little known in France. Their show in Albi is a real occurrence.

The exhibition *Vasulka's Variations*, an ambitious project underwritten by the Le LAIT Art Centre, presents powerful visual works, at once poetic and sensitive, and their development in the very unusual space of the Moulins Albigeois. What is also involved is lending perspective to some of their works, especially those enlarged by the SLIDERS_lab, by making a shift from analog worlds to digital worlds. For example, *Lucifer's Commission*, a work dealing with memory, places archival images of the Vasulkas in a new 3D and mobile architectural space.

Invited for the second year running by the Galeries Lafayette in Toulouse to exhibit a work in the store's windows between 4 and 30 July, the Le LAIT Art Centre is also programming *Memory Mirror*, an interactive video work produced by Steina & SLIDERS_lab.

*SLIDERS_lab [F. Curien, J-M. Dallet and H. Jolly] is a research and creation unit of the EESI (Ecole européenne supérieure de l'image)—Angoulême and Poitiers.

In partnership with :



This exhibition has been helped by the ANR as part of the Future Investments programme (ANR-10-LABX-80-01)



Liste des œuvres présentées:

- *Memory Mirror*, Steina Vasulka & SLIDERS_lab, 2016, based on *Warp*, Steina Vasulka, 2002
- *Lucifer's Commission*, 2014, Woody Vasulka & SLIDERS_lab
- *Voice Windows*, 1986, Woody and Steina Vasulka
- *Electromagnetic Objects*, 1975, Woody Vasulka
- *Noisefields*, 1974, Steina and Woody Vasulka
- *Soundsize*, 1974, Steina and Woody Vasulka
- *Grazing ocean sounds*, 1976, Woody Vasulka
- *Explanation*, 1976, Woody Vasulka
- *Tokyo Four*, 1991, Steina Vasulka
- *Pyrospheres*, 2005, Steina Vasulka

Steina et Woody Vasulka



Vasulkas, Buffalo (NY, USA), circa 1977

Since the 1970s, Steina and Woody Vasulka have been exploring the nature of electronics, from the analog to the digital.

As video art pioneers, like Nam June Paik, they have invented a precocious artistic language and revolutionized the electronic image, based on the technology itself, bending systems and equipment to their artistic requirements.

Starting from the "video noise" notion, i.e. the electronic energy of video signals from which come all forms of acoustic and/or visual expression — works such as *Matrix 1* and *2*, *Noisefields* — at the sound/image interface — and *Vocalizations*, the Vasulkas have developed avant-garde technological solutions, from capture to editing, and from post-production to real time broadcasting arrangements, as well as acoustic and musical material.

Invariably driven by an insatiable desire to be involved in research, the Vasulkas are pursuing their exploration of digital imagery, and freeing themselves from its limits, by always producing new works, and collaborating in particular with the SLIDERS_lab collective..

BIOGRAPHY

Steina (née Steinunn Briem Bjarnadottir in 1940) and Woody Vasulka (born in 1937) live and work in Santa Fe, New Mexico (USA).

Steina and Woody Vasulka have been working together since their arrival in the United States in 1965. Steina originally trained as a musician, and Woody as an engineer and film technician. Since the late 1960s, the Vasulkas have been seeing the manipulations of electromagnetic energy as a form of language.

In 1969 they embarked on their first experiments. They carried out new visual tests and made machines making it possible to probe the process of electronic image creation, from the video synthesizer—capable of producing abstract images—to the digital system.

In 1971, with Bill Etra and Dimitri Devyatkin, they created The Kitchen in New York, an alternative venue and experimental centre, where many artists would come and explore the possibilities of sound and imagery.

From 1970 to 1974, the Vasulkas devoted their time to producing static video images. With the help of engineers, they adapted electronic tools such as inserters, colorizers, and the like, to artistic ends.

In 1976, the Vasulkas started to work on a digital system, which offered a different image production model, based on mathematical logic. This work culminated in the late 1970s with the development of the digital image articulator. This system made it possible, in real time, to combine video images in a different and predictable way. These combinations revealed the inner structure of the system, and, according to Woody, formed a "syntax". At the same time, Steina produced *Machine Vision*, a set of installations including *All Vision*, in which cameras moved around a metal sphere, filming the reflections produced in it.

In 1980, narrative became the subject about which both artists reflected. *The Commission* (1983), their first narrative work, was a metaphor of art production seen through episodes in the lives of Paganini and Berlioz.

Steina and Woody are regarded as "National Treasures" in Iceland. The National Gallery of Iceland has accordingly created the Vasulka Chamber and Centre of Electronic and Digital Art in Iceland, in Reykjavik, which today offers the largest collection of works and documents to do with the visual work and research of the Vasulkas.

In 2015, a joint production involving the Fondation Liedts-Meesen (Ghent, Belgium), and Le Fresnoy* (Tourcoing) ushered in the publication of large-format photographs produced from two historical series, *Time/Energy Objects* and *Lucifer's Commission*. (Dir. Jean-Marie Dallet, September 2015). The digitized images of *Lucifer's Commission* were also used to make three experimental films at Le Fresnoy*, bringing the Vasulka archive up to date.

*An advanced institution for artistic instruction specializing in visual arts and new technologies, which also proposes top-quality cultural programmes.

Upcoming exhibitions:

- Le Cube, Issy les Moulineaux, September 2016: *Memory Mirror*, *Digital Vocabulary* and four photos from the series *Lucifer's Commission*, jointly produced by the Fondation Liedts-Meesen and Le Fresnoy.
- Fondation Liedts-Meesen, Ghent (Belgium), 2017: an exhibition of the entire series of 25 photos jointly produced by the Fondation and Le Fresnoy.



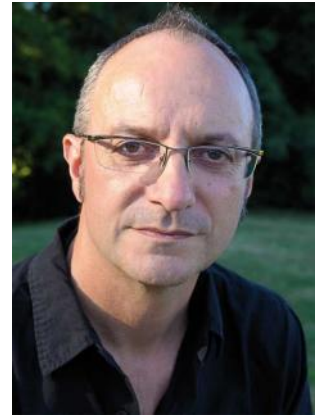
Steina and Woody Vasulka, Shooting Art of Memory, Las Vegas, New Mexico, 1985. Photo By: Tourist

Exhibition curator

Jackie-Ruth Meyer, Frédéric Curien and Jean-Marie Dallet

The exhibition has been designed on a joint curatorial basis involving Jackie-Ruth Meyer, director of the Le LAIT Art Centre and exhibition curator, and :

- Jean-Marie Dallet, who is an artist and teacher-researcher (lecturer) at the Université Paris 8. He is the joint scientific director of the art school laboratory SLIDERS_lab which, since 2007, has been the object of a framework agreement between the Ministry of Culture and Communication and the CNRS.



He has shown his works and his research projects in France (Artifices Biennale, Villette Numérique, Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, Le Fresnoy, at the Library of the Université Paris 8, Le confort moderne, Bandits-Mages, etc.), Belgium (Update biennale), Canada (ISEA), Japan (ICC Biennale), the Czech Republic, Brazil, Finland, Poland, Tunisia, etc.

His theoretical and visual work questions the fundamental issues of interactivity and its figures, which organize its interactions. To do this, he questions the various forms taken by the movement-image, the new models of representation represented by the visibility of large sets of information, and the design of interactive objects, as well as their ergonomics. He recently edited the publication *Cinéma interactivité et société*.

www.dallet.net /// www.sliderslab.com /// www.figuresinteractives.com



- Frédéric Curien is a composer and acoustic visual artist, at the crossroads between music and visual arts. He is carrying out a research project involving the aesthetics of interactive sound and musical spaces in contemporary art (Université Paris 8).

As an author and composer, he is interested in environments of composition and sound synthesis, and produces music for concerts and theatre. He has worked in the field of relations between music and imagery, composing for shows, theatre, exhibitions and film, and he is conducting research into relations between sound imagery and sound professions. As a professor of music, he has taught electro-acoustic music and musical computer technology. As an artist in the SLIDERS_lab collective, he is developing the acoustic section of SLIDERS, an experiment in interactive film in collective situations.

SLIDERS_lab is an artists' collective which encompasses an aesthetic territory emerging around animated images, archiving and digital technology. This is an approach which is currently extending to contemporary forms of representation and navigation in audio-visual collections. The threesome formed by Frédéric Curien, Jean-Marie Dallet and Hervé Jolly brings together the worlds of music, imagery, and computer codes.

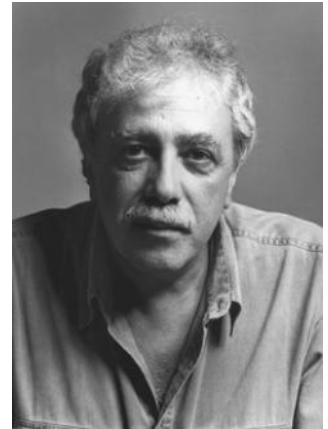
SLIDERS_lab, is a research and creation unit of the EESI (Ecole européenne supérieure de l'image) – Angoulême and Poitiers.
www.sliderslab.com

Performance and multicast Video conference

Friday, June 23 at 21:30 pm

Connection via the MARCEL network,
Coordinated by Don Foresta

In partnership with:



Don Foresta

<http://www.donforesta.net>

Don Foresta (born in 1938 - Buffalo (USA), lives and works in Paris) is a research artist and theoretician in art using new technologies as creative tools. He is a specialist in art and science whose principal work in the field, "Mondes Multiples" was published in French in 1991. A second edition in English is currently being prepared. He is now a Visiting Research Associate at the London School of Economics and professor at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts - Paris/Cergy.

He has been working for over 25 years developing the network as an artistic tool and is presently coordinating a permanent high band-width network, MARCEL, for artistic, educational and cultural experimentation. He began the network while invited artist/professor at the National Studio of Contemporary Art, Le Fresnoy, Lille, France and completed it under a UK Arts & Humanities Research Council fellowship at the Wimbledon School of Art in London. MARCEL now has 120 confirmed members in 22 countries, 30 of whom are connected permanently over a multicasting platform.

His first on-line exchange in 1981 was between the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT where he was a fellow and the American Center in Paris where he was director of the Media Art program. He was a commissioner to the 42nd Venice Biennial in 1986 where he built one of the first computer networks between artists, an effort he has expanded as the technology has grown.

Foresta is a graduate of the University of Buffalo, the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and holds a doctorate degree from the Sorbonne in Information Science. He has both US and French nationalities and was named "Chevalier" of the Order of Arts and Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture

Participants :

- Don Foresta (coordinator, MaP Marcel)
- Halldór Björn Runólfsson (Museum director of the National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavik, Islande)
- Kristin Sheving, Curator of Vasulkas Chamber, Center of Media Art, National Gallery of Iceland
- Laura McCough, Student at the Media Study of Buffalo
- Jackie-Ruth Meyer, Jean-Marie Dallet and Frédéric Curien

The exhibition

From 25 June to 23 October 2016
Opening on 24 June at 6.30 pm

The exhibition devised for the Moulins Albigeois will be presenting different kinds of works: one of the Vasulkas' works will be shown in the Box (*Bent Scans*, 2002), another in the windows of the Galeries Lafayette in Toulouse from 4 to 30 July 2016 (*Memory Mirror*, 2016). The lower rooms will display works representing the diverse range of experiments carried out by the Vasulkas, as well as works with a powerful perceptible dimension, putting the visitor in the midst of strong acoustic and light effects *Pyroglyphs* (1994).

The works selected fill the Moulins Albigeois venue, and unfurl their original technical arrangements in projections which are either intimist or monumental.

They are essentially unknown to the general public. Behind the complexity of the technical systems required for their production (taking the advances of a particular period into account), the Vasulkas' artistic production resonates through its timelessness; today, the continuation of their research, in collaboration with SLIDERS_lab, puts their praxis at the crossroads of scientific, artistic and digital fields.



Steina VASULKA & SLIDERS_lab, *Memory Mirror*, 2016, based on *WARP* from Steina Vasulka, interactive video installation © Steina Vasulka & SLIDERS_lab

On view at the Galeries Lafayette-Toulouse

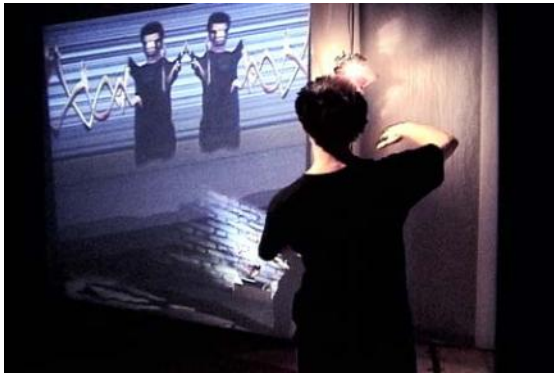
From 4 to 30 July 2016

Opening on Monday 4 July at 6 pm

The interactive installation *Memory Mirror* (based on Steina's *Warp*) is made up of video segments twisted around themselves, "time warps" and multiplications generated by the "slit scan" technique (a sampling in real time of a predetermined number of frames of images in a sequence captured by the camera and the scrolling of these frames based on display parameters, such as the warp or repetition effect, which is pre-programmed.) (Yvonne Spielmann).

[Http://www.cinematheque.qc.ca/fr/programmation/projections/film/warp?pid=19497](http://www.cinematheque.qc.ca/fr/programmation/projections/film/warp?pid=19497) (2016)

An interactive arrangement specifically produced with SLIDERS_lab updates this slit scan procedure for the Galeries Lafayette.



Steina Vasulka, *Bent Scans*, 2002, Life interactive environment

Presented in the Box at the Art Centre:

Bent Scans uses four computers giving four different projections. Although they are all connected to the same camera, a different programme on each one of them makes it possible to create a different video image for each projection. When visitors enter the camera's field of vision, they will be able to discover a distorted vision of themselves in an immediate past.

In the lower rooms of the Moulins:

The outcome of a collaboration between Steina and Woody Vasulka and the SLIDERS_Lab embarked on at Le Fresnoy, National Studio of Contemporary Arts, during two residencies in 2014, *Lucifer's Commission* here re-invents a way of travelling in our memory of images, which links the video art produced by these pioneers to the art produced by the members of SLIDERS.

This architecture of memory illustrates the shift from one generation (the Vasulkas) to another (SLIDERS_Lab), by developing the idea of extending the image into space and involving the spectator in the image in real time. So this installation is a prolongation of the Vasulkas' work, designed to show a form of archive to the public.



Woody Vasulka & SLIDERS_Lab, *Lucifer's commission*, 2014, 3 films, color, sound, 5'

Vidéo : <https://vimeo.com/110911124>

Room 2



Steina, *Voice Windows*, 1986; 1 film, color, sound, 8' - Music : Joan La Barbara, Collection SFMOMA, Camille W. and William S. Broadbent Fund purchase; © Steina and Woody Vasulka

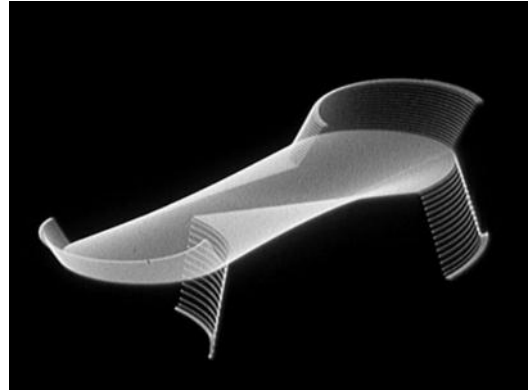
With *Voice Windows* (1986), Steina Vasulka revives her attempt to generate a complex sound/image interface. She plays on the insertion of video tracks which visually translate the modulations of the human voice. To do this, the American singer and composer Joan La Barbara has provided her with a repertory of samples exploring all the registers of her voice.

In the following frame, a forward tracking shot of a street replaces the monochrome background, and the track modulated by the voice reveals another landscape. A back-and-forth interplay between these two layers makes it impossible to grasp the depth of the viewpoint. *Voice Windows* is part of a cycle of videograms and installations inspired by the desert of New Mexico, where the landscape acts as an underlay for experiments involving features peculiar to the electronic image.

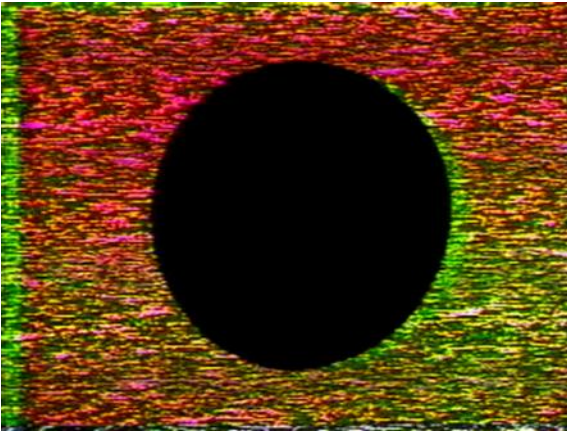
Room 3

Electromagnetic Objects is a series devised by Woody Vasulka and Brian O'Reilly. The basic materials were created by Woody, using a Rutt-Etra Scan Processor in 1975, and in 2006 Brian O'Reilly worked with him to design the acoustic space.

The image is the result of electromagnetic signals transformed by software. The sound is generated by the NETHER GENERATOR software, developed by Chandrasekhar Ramakrishnan and Brian O'Reilly.



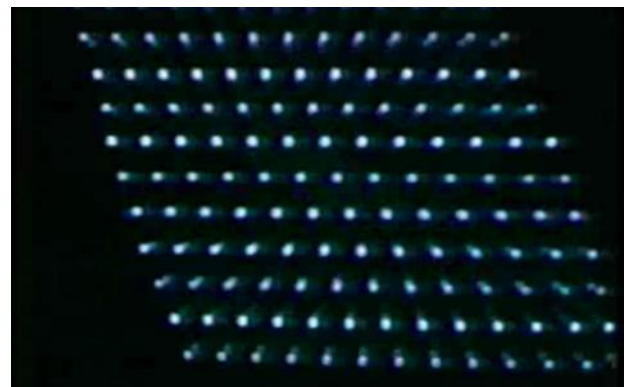
Woody Vasulka et Brian O'Reilly,
Electromagnetic Objects, 1975-2006, film
B&W, sound, 33'58



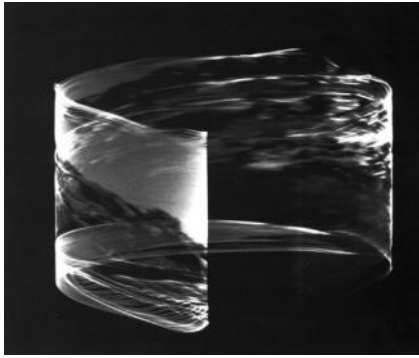
Steina et Woody Vasulka, *Noisefields*, 1974,
Son, couleur, 5'30

In *Noisefields*, a circle in the middle of the screen, with contrasting colours and different materials varying with the sound, produces a simple and rhythmic abstract image, an audiovisual modulation of the "video noise". For this video, the artists have used a Video Sequencer, in order to alternate two video tracks and create flicker-like effects.

As with the work *Explanation*, the motif is also modulated by sounds generated by an audio synthesizer, used here to affect the visual manifestation of an electronic sound. *Sound Size* thus invites us to hear repetitive electronic sounds which, through a scan processor, create geometries in space.



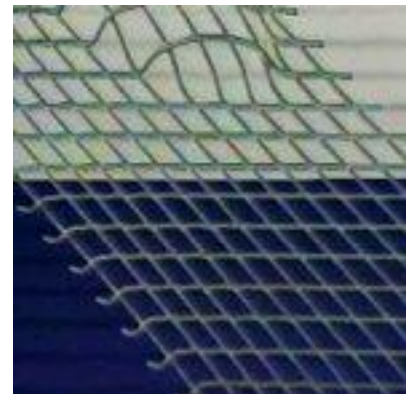
Steina et Woody Vasulka, *Sound size*, 1974, Color,
stereo sound, 4'38



Woody Vasulka, *Grazing ocean sounds*, 1976

Dans *Grazing ocean sounds*, Woody Vasulka transforme les images filmées (paysages) en rendus topographiques. Le film s'appuie sur un référent réel, rendant plus visible le processus de déflexion magnétique qu'avec une imagerie spécifique.

In *Explanation*, Woody Vasulka has used the motifs coming from the test card of a generator of broadcasting signals (a mathematical instrument or timing unit which used to produce the NTSC signal in the early days of television), which then appear on the Scan Processor's screen, and whose scale and form are offset in accordance with the processing of the audio/video signal. Inserted in an artificial "landscape" by the Multikeyer, the "image" passes through the Scan Processor which creates wave forms and at the same time modulates the visual motif and the electronic audio plan of this "image" signal. So there is one and the same source which simultaneously moves both sound and image.



Woody Vasulka, *Explanation*, 1974, Color, stereo sound, 4'30

Room 4

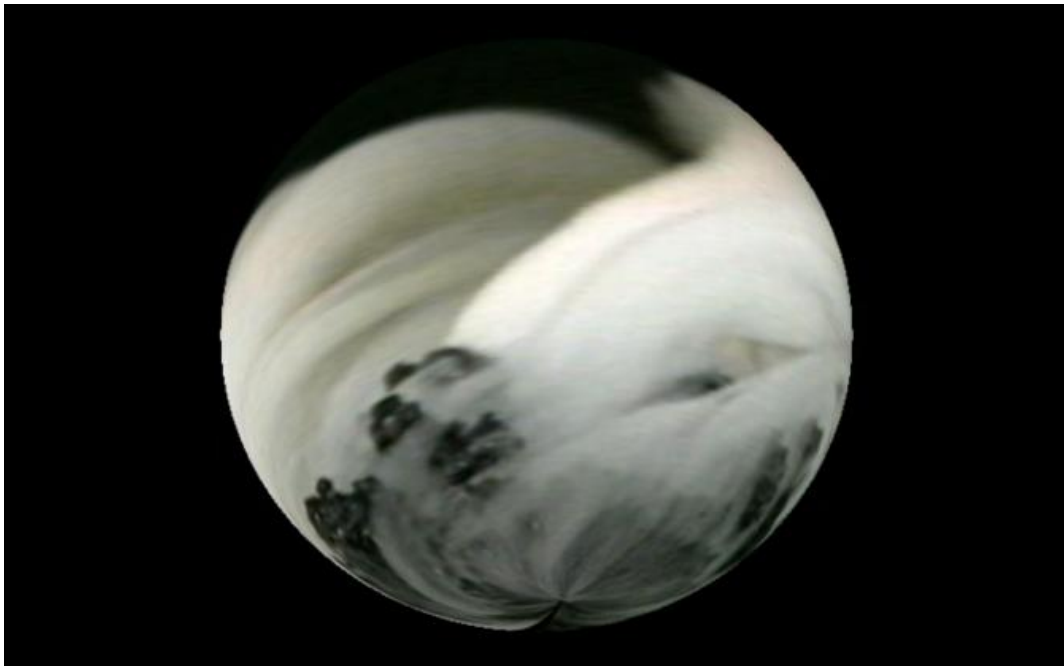
In this multi-screen work, the different image and sound channels are equivalent to the musical polyphony, with each one functioning like a voice in a musical ensemble. Steina worked like a composer, playing with the visual equivalents of timbre, texture and tone. *Tokyo Four* is the audiovisual equivalent of a string quartet. *Tokyo Four* is organized around several categories of images: Shinto priests painstakingly preparing their zen garden on the eve of the new year, train conductors managing the throng at rush hour, and do on.



Steina Vasulka, *Tokyo Four*, 1991

Compositional arrangements make it possible to reverse and turn images inside out, and play them at imperceptibly different speeds on different screens, which all become gradually synthesized at the same speed. *Tokyo Four* is an installation made up of four video and audio channels, with a 33-minute programme which is repeated.

Room 5



Steina, *Pyrospheres*, 2005 (excerpt). colour, stereo sound, 5 min. 47 sec.

In this video installation with multiple channels, Steina continues to explore the linking of video signals with software that processes electronic images. Steina has long been fascinated with a sphere's potential for producing complex optical environments (see the series *Machine Vision*). Here, she begins a new phase by abandoning rectangular projection in favour of circular images and screens.

The video installation is part of a body of work (*The West* (1983), *Voice Windows* (1986), *Orka* (1997)) in which Steina probes the analogies between a landscape's abstract features and the formal characteristics of electronic images.

Vincent Bonin © 2004 FDL

Steina et Woody Vasulka & SLIDERS_lab

Vasulka's Variations

From 25 June to 23 October 2016
Opening on 24 June at 6.30 pm

Les Moulins Albigeois
41 rue Porta - 81000 Albi - FRANCE

From Wednesday to Sunday from 2-7 pm
Information : 00 33 +5 63 38 35 91

Contacts

Centre d'art Le LAIT
6 rue Jules Rolland - 81000 Albi

00 33 +9 63 03 98 84
centredart@centredartlelait.com
www.centredartlelait.com
<https://www.facebook.com/centredartlelait>

Murielle Edet
Communication
murielle.edet@centredartlelait.com
00 33 +6 72 82 22 78

In partnership with :



Galerie
BERG
CONTEMPORARY
ICELAND



This exhibition has been helped by the ANR as part of the Future Investments programme (ANR-10-LABX-80-01)



The institutional partners of the Centre d'art le LAIT

Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles / Ministère de la Culture et de la communication,
Région Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées, Département du Tarn et Ville d'Albi.



The Art Centre is part of the DCA networks (French Association for the Development of Art Centres), the IKT network (International Association of Contemporary Art Curators), the ETAC (Cross-border Contemporary Art Space), the LMAC (Midi-Pyrénées Laboratory of Contemporary Art Mediations) and the Air du midi network (Regional Associations of Midi Pyrénées Art Centres).

d.c.a



air de Midi



E-T-AC
ESPAI
TRANSFRONTIERER
D'ART CONTEMPORAIN