

**ARTISTS SPACE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Programs:

Artists Space  
Exhibitions and Events

Extended Definitions: Video Experiments in Perception  
organized by Cara Mertes

Artists Grants  
Exhibition Funding

September 28 through November 4, 1989  
Opening Reception: Thursday, September 28, 6-8pm  
Evening Screening: Thursday, September 21, 8pm \$4 admission

Artists File  
N.Y.S. Slide Registry

**Video Program:**

Reservoir, by Norie Sato, 8 minutes, 1988.  
Sightlines, by Nancy Buchanan, 15 minutes, 1988.  
Viewers of Optics, by Alexander Hahn, 11 minutes, 1987.  
This and That, by Scott Rankin, 7 minutes, 1988.  
Sentence Completion, by Jonathan Giles, 14 minutes, 1988.  
Incidence of Catastrophe, by Gary Hill, 44 minutes, 1988.  
Confessions of a Chameleon, by Lynn Hershman, 15 minutes, 1985.  
Phenomenology (parts a, b, and c), by Andrew Neumann, 17 minutes,  
1988.  
Animal (Loco)Motion and (Dis)Placements, by Irit Batsry, 27  
minutes, 1988.



Artists Space is pleased to present **Extended Definitions: Video Experiments in Perception**, organized by Cara Mertes. For the first time at Artists Space, the Video Program will present selected tapes from the exhibition on a video projector in the Main Gallery for one night only: September 21, 1989.

**Extended Definitions** includes nine tapes by video artists whose work employs diverse narrative strategies and video technologies to question notions of perception and communication; they examine the structures of video representations by interrogating the practices that produce them. By foregrounding the constructed character of the televisual image and the multiplicity of its meanings, we become aware of the contradiction between video's potential plurality and television's historical homogeneity. Turning the tools of video on the form itself with the intent to undermine its assumptions paves the way for a possible restructuring of the language of video.

Reservoir, by Norie Sato, is premised in a fundamental irony of perception--that nothing is as it seems to be. Using magnification to unsettle our ordinarily immediate identification of common objects, Sato slowly brings suggestive but unidentifiable images from everyday life into focus, thus preempting our existing ideas about them.

Nancy Buchanan's Sightlines examines sight in various contexts, stemming from notions of the power of the gaze. The tape opens with a Salvadoran woman recounting her experience of being blindfolded, kidnapped, and her eventual eye-to-eye confrontation with her captors who threaten to blind her. At one point the television itself becomes an electronic eye, returning the gaze of the viewer.

In Viewers of Optics, Alexander Hahn constructs a parable for the nuclear age in this metaphorical tale of civilization's demise. A calm female voice narrates scenes of destruction and ruin, while the viewer is situated somewhere in the future when little or no life exists. Far from being shocking, Hahn employs television's ability to render even the most unimaginable catastrophe in a structured, almost reasonable manner.

This and That, by Scott Rankin, is a classic semiotic inquiry into the relationship between language and image. Various objects appear over a static landscape, as a voice speaks what might be gibberish, or might be a language; the sounds possess

the rhythm of a story being told, but convey no meaning beyond what we might imagine.

Language and text continue to be the primary focus in Jonathan Giles' Sentence Completion. In a linguistic perversion of the standard Rorschach test, the viewer is invited to participate in a 'questionnaire' comprised of a series of statements which the viewer is asked to finish with whatever word or phrase comes to mind. Before this process is completed, however, suggestive vignettes appear which direct the viewers thoughts away from any spontaneous correlation.

Incidence of Catastrophe, Gary Hill's remarkable adaptation of the 1941 Maurice Blanchot novel Thomas the Obscure, portrays the dramatic confrontation between a reader and the text. Images of nature alternate with tactile images of the book as the artist reads to himself, and actually begins to lose himself in the book. As the text overwhelms the reader, so nature (in this case, the sea), exerts its force on the body. Eventually the struggle culminates with Hill literally bringing the text to life, depicting the artist as 'the body of the text' and making manifest the power of language.

For Lynn Hershman in Confessions of a Chameleon, self-perception is the subject of a tape that involves the viewer as an intimate partner in her self-revelation. Fragmenting her image with multiple split-screen images, colorization and other techniques, she continually revises her own history, presenting a series of interpretations of life events which may or may not have actually taken place.

Phenomenology (parts a, b, and c) challenges the viewer's assumptions on several fronts. Taking its title from the philosophical study of human consciousness and perception, video artist Andrew Neumann asks the viewer to reconsider reality from its simplest levels (the suspension of natural laws like gravity), to more complex considerations: for instance, what if we perceived time and space to be the indivisible entity Einstein postulated.

In sharp contrast to Neumann's use of purely electronic sounds to invoke a mood for his piece, Irit Batsry's Animal (Loco)Motion and (Dis)Placements employs song, fragmented images and written text to produce a work that interrupts and dissects the normal flow of information. Ultimately intended as an interactive video where the viewer would program the sequences, the tape offers a myriad of possibilities for re-presenting information in different contexts.

Cara Mertes is the Coordinating Producer for WNET's **Independent Focus**.

**Artists Space** activities are made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; Institute of Museum Services; New York State Council on the Arts; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; Art Matters, Inc., Cowles Family Charitable Trust, Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, Inc., Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, Jerome Foundation, The J.M.Kaplan Fund, Leonhardt Foundation, The Joe and Emily Lowe Foundation, Inc., Menemsha Foundation, The New York Community Trust, Betty Parsons Foundation, The Reed Foundation, Inc., Mark Rothko Foundation, Robert Sterling Clark Foundation; Surdna Foundation, Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, Chase Manhattan Bank N.A., Consolidated Edison, Equitable Real Estate Group, Inc., General Atlantic Corporation, R.H.Macy & Company, Mobil Foundation, Inc., Morgan Guaranty Trust of New York and Philip Morris Companies, Inc., U.S. Trust, Warhol Foundation, Artwatch, Galleries in Support of Artists Space, as well as numerous Friends.

**Artists Space** is a member of the National Association of Artists Organizations (NAAO) and Media Alliance.