



Videotape by Mary Lucier

## Broken/Unbroken

Joan La Barbara

Liz Phillips has always been interested in working with space, beginning her artistic efforts in sculpture and moving to lasers, working at the Riverside Research Institute with multicolor half-watt lasers to create fields of light and moving beams in spaces.

After a while she decided to include the element of time, working with space that was sensitive to movement so that something changed over a

period of time. She began to work with capacitance fields, areas which store electrical charges so that anyone entering the field would ground it and change the size of the field. By choosing a set of tones supplied by oscillators and carried on sine and square waves, she set up a soundscape with tones rocking back and forth between speakers and rising and falling in dynamics (loudness) according to the presence of persons in

or around the designated field.

For her sound installation at the Kitchen which opened Feb. 11 and runs through Feb. 15 (1-6pm, 59 Wooster St.), Phillips chose to use two fields, a copper-coated aluminum sheet suspended about 5 ft. above and perpendicular to the floor and a doughnut-shaped circle of mylar placed directly on the floor. The materials were chosen for very specific reasons: the thinness of copper coating on the aluminum sheet and the sprayed-on-then-set aluminum molecules of the mylar cannot double up on themselves to

contain the electrical charge of the field, which would interfere with the desired effects.

Upon entering the Kitchen the audience/participant hears a pre-set arrangement of tones coming from four speakers placed in a square that surrounds the two metal fields. As you enter the square formed by the speakers you experience the rocking tones mentioned earlier, as well as certain long tones and rhythmic patterns. The tones balance as you move on the peripheral edge and into the center of the mylar "circle." Long tones "follow" you into or

out of the space, getting gradually louder or softer and then fading on their own time. Additional harmonics (multiple tones) are also brought in when the participant moves in the field areas.

Ms. Phillips has really created a performance instrument with her fields, but an "instrument" with which the audience actually performs. Participating in such a physical way with electronics is a fascinating sensation and should be experienced by everyone interested in sound and sound manipulation.