

The Kitchen Center for Video and Music

PARIS DAWN BURN (1977)

For seven channels of black & white video, with single color slide projection.

This work was recorded on location for the 10th Paris Biennale from the fifth floor balcony of the Cite des Arts, 18 rue de l'Hotel de Ville, Paris 4, between August 31 and September 10, 1977. It consists of seven 30-minute videotape recordings of sunrise displayed on seven monitors of ascending sizes arranged in an arc. Each tape (each day) begins with a shot of the Centre Pompidou in the distance to the Northwest, followed by a slow pan to the East, where the sun is seen rising over the dome of St. Paul's (le Marais). In making the tapes, the camera was placed in the same position each day; there is a gradual day-by-day telephoto lens zoom, prior to taping on days 2 through 7, from the original scene--a corner of the city--to the final closeup shot of the dome of the church. As the sun rises it burns a black mark on the surface of the camera's vidicon tube, so that by the last day there are seven burn tracks on the tube representing the cumulative positions of the sun during all of the days' tapings. (Burn paths from days 2 and 3 virtually overlap). The spaces between the burn paths are a combination of the gradual telephoto increment and the natural motion of the earth in relation to the sun. A color slide, taken at the same hour from the same location, is projected in a "keystone" fashion against the rear wall and somewhat above the curving line of monitors.

LASERING (1977-78)

A Helium Neon laser and a video camera are suspended from the ceiling, free-swinging and facing each other. When at rest the laser is aimed directly into the camera's lens striking the vidicon tube inside the camera. As the suspended objects move, due to natural vibration and air currents, the laser beam sweeps back and forth across the surface of the tube creating constantly changing optical diffraction and interference patterns; at the same time the intensity of the laser light causes burn tracks to accumulate which describe the path of the laser's motion throughout the duration of the exhibition. These phenomena are visible on the closed circuit monitor.

Burn

To produce a video image, light is focused through a lens onto a photo sensitive target, i.e., the surface of the camera's vidicon tube. That target surface consists of many tiny dots which change their resistance with the amount of light falling on them. When an intense light such as that from the sun or a laser is focused directly onto the tube, the surface of the vidicon is "shorted out" and the photo sensitive material permanently altered. The burn markings become a kind of calligraphy describing movement of a source of light, or of the camera in relation to the light, in time and space.

Mary Lucier
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