

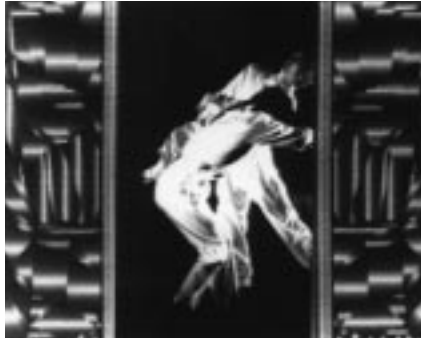
TOKYO FOUR 1991

A VIDEO MATRIX INSTALLATION BY STEINA

No form of moving-image art comes as close to musical composition as multiscreen video, where the different channels of image and sound are equivalent to musical polyphony, each functioning like a voice in a musical ensemble. And no multiscreen work is as spectacularly musical as Steina's. She works as a composer would, playing on the visual equivalents of timbre, texture, and tone. Tokyo Four is the audio-visual equivalent of a string quartet. In one compositional strategy, Steina begins by assembling a long single-channel segment which represents the "melody," or what she calls the "ground track." Sometimes one screen is the melody and the others are accompaniment, then another screen takes the lead. A musical syntax emerges from this visual point/counterpoint. . . .

Tokyo Four is organized around categories of imagery: Shinto priests meticulously grooming their Zen garden on New Year's Eve; train conductors monitoring rush hour crowds; elevator girls bringing a superfluous, but charming High Touch to the high tech world of the shopping malls, reminding shoppers to watch their umbrellas and to not forget their children; a segment about food, beginning with the vertiginous fisheye lens in a supermarket; and an emotionally charged metachoreography of a dance troupe's performance and curtain call. Her compositional devices include flipping or reversing an image and playing it at imperceptibly different speeds on different screens, which gradually all synchronize at the same speed. These strategies are especially effective in the final movement when the female dancer is bowing. The Lehar's waltz the dancers use would be banal without the manipulations of Steina's spectacular visual matrix, which transforms it into something at once exotic and poignant.

—GENE YOUNGBLOOD,
MEDIA THEORIST



DESCRIPTION

TOKYO FOUR is a four video, four audio channel installation with twenty-three minute repeating program. Each of the four laser disk players provide one video and two audio sources to 12 video monitors and four speakers. A video synchronizer aligns the four channels of video for synchronous playback. At the end of each cycle, the program automatically returns and re-synchronizes for a repeat performance.

THE SPACE

The minimum active space required is 10 meters by 7.5 meters by 3.5 meters high, or 35 feet by 25 feet by 12 feet high. The major consideration in terms of space is the total avoidance of ambient light. The space should be painted a non-reflective black and no light source should exist, other than the one that emanates from monitors themselves. Also include a low bench seating four or five people. The entrance must be well insulated from light and sound. Most ideal is a double trap door with sound insulating material. (See entrance diagrams.)

EQUIPMENT

The Vasulkas can provide all the equipment listed below, or share resources with the exhibitor. This will be reflected in both shipping and equipment budgets.

- 12 stackable matching video monitors (could be as few as 4)
- 1 monitor support table (custom)
- 4 Pioneer Video Laser Disk Players, LD-V Series
- 4 program video laser disks, NTSC, color
- 1 four channel synchronizer
- 2 stereo audio amplifiers (4 audio channels)
- 4 speakers (internal speakers of superior quality may be used)
- 4 speakers stands or wall mounts
- 10 video cables approx. 3 feet (1 meter) long each
- 2 pairs of stereo cables
- 4 speaker cables
- 21 power outlets

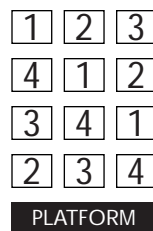
NOTE: The laser disk synchronizer used by the Vasulkas is custom built and interfaces only with Pioneer Industrial Laser Disk Players (2200 to 8000 Series). It is not interchangeable with laser disk players from other manufacturers, such as Sony and Phillips, which require a commercially available synchronizing device.

VIDEO MONITORS AND MONITOR PLATFORMS

The 12 monitors must be matching in size and manufacture. They should be stacked three by four on a single low bench or square platform one foot (30 cm) high. The platform must be custom-made to the size and shape of the monitors. The equipment except the monitors and speakers could be located inside the platform or in an adjacent tech area.

MONITOR MATRIX WIRING

The matrix is wired in the following manner.



AUDIO WIRING

If the monitor speakers are of superior quality, the audio can be chained the same way as the video (4 discreet audio channels), the volume tuned so the sound emanates from each monitor in equal intensity. Alternate audio wiring: Connect the two stereo cables from each player to the two amplifiers, and the four speaker cables to the speakers. The speakers should be hung on the walls at equal distances.

SOUND AND IMAGE ADJUSTMENT

Treble should be normal and bass at maximum. All 75 ohm terminators located on the back of the monitors must be switched to open, except for the last monitor on each chain. Contrast should be high and brightness below middle. The basic rule here is to set up the proper deep color black as a reference to the maximum contrast and brightness. With that, the other components (hue, color saturation) can be assigned. The persons installing the environment must use their esthetic judgment as to the proper monitor settings for maximum visual impact.

DAILY OPERATIONS

TO START: Power up the monitors, disk players and synchronizer. Verify that the installation is starting synchronously. If not, turn power off and on again. If problem persists, notify Steina by phone, fax, or e-mail.

TO SHUT DOWN: Turn power off the Monitors, Disk players and Synchronizer.

MAINTENANCE: The monitor screens need to be cleaned with a soft cloth at least once a week.

POWER REQUIREMENTS

(depending on equipment used)

Video monitors:	Sony PVM 1910	120 watts
Stereo amplifiers:		150 watts
Video disk players:	Pioneer 2200	70 watts
	Pioneer 8000	100 watts
Synchronizer:	Jericho Data Systems	40 watts
Outside USA, use a Power Transformer 220 to 110, 1000w.		

SHIPPING INFORMATION

Installation is shipped in 2 crates. Weight and dimensions available upon request.

Shipped to and from:

Steina and Woody Vasulka
Route 6, Box 100
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
ph: 505-424-8786
fx: 505-473-0614
email: woodyv@santafe.edu

