

Mary says, "Although *Radical Software* specifically refers to video, I believe it can be aptly applied to any software, whatever the medium, which is truly avant garde. I hope that video practitioners everywhere will see these films, many of which are by videocinematic filmmakers. Video relies as much upon the visual to bring emotions to life in viewers as film does, though they are quite different media . . . as different, in fact, as still photography is from film. When you view something that has come out of the spirit of an artist whose vision is as focused and refined as Jordan Belson then you have experienced something new and exciting, something you can take with you into your vision of your own work."

Besides her work as a collector of film and videotape, lecturer and art dealer, Mary has found time to star in a recent film by Connie Beeson entitled *The Letter* . . . described by Connie as a surrealist work which explores the inner emotions and psychological barriers of a woman struggling to liberate herself. In addition to her film activities, she has arranged showings of videotape at the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, at the Exploratorium and American Zoetrope in San Francisco and in her own gallery on many occasions.

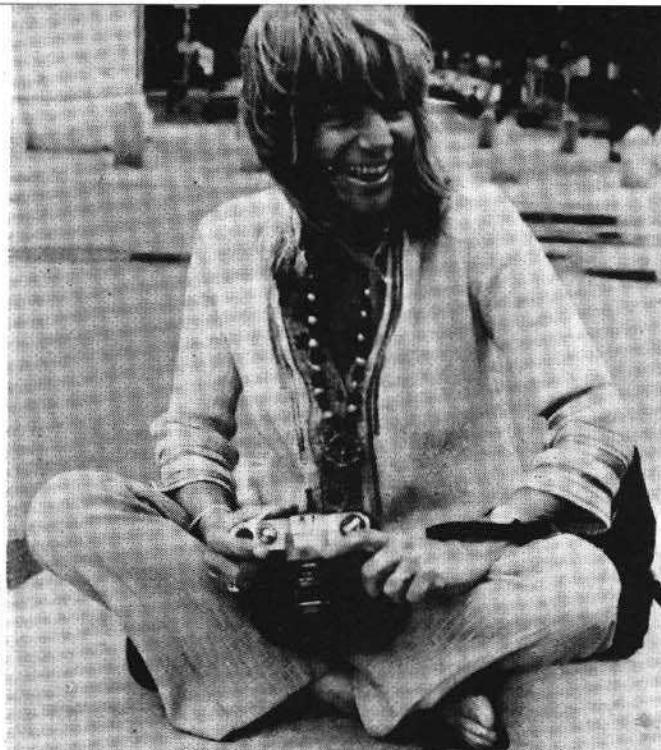


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KAY HARRIS

connie shooting stills THE VIDEO ARTIST

by Connie Beeson

"The photographed image, still photography, films, video tape, the catching of momentary time and its playback, excites, absorbs, consumes my energy," says woman photographer Connie Beeson.

She also says she's a liberated human being with deliberate ties. The liberation is inside. The home, husband, children reflect my communal spirit of love, and nourishes the artistic spirit, so it is all one; the place to be includes running to the sea; running to the mountains; making love; working in the studio; working in the field. And like Reich, I think sex is great; I'm heavy on erotic imagery; the body is a poem; the smile is a miracle; movements shift in light, and behind the lens the mind-photographer selects, is disarmed, wonders, exults, recreates, feels like a painter; it is a total involvement. The mere triggering of shutters, the presumptive stilling of time, the focussed energy in seeing, is that part of the creative process that is an end in itself. I have decided that what feels right about taking photographs, moving and still, is the masculine part of my nature. But it is never enough. It is what I do with this material that is counterpart feminine in me. Editing is always a necessity. Of course I try to pre-edit, and video taping is the easiest way to turn out a creative project that is finished. Even so I am always wanting to make my tapes into a different kind of artistic whole than their original. Recently I made a video tape of lovely Anais Nin at the Women on the Move innovative program of Redwood High School (the best female image scrutiny program in the country). Along with several high school groups with their studio video cameras and set ups, I ported my Porta-Pac, hooked



into one of the teen-agers' systems. They were all excited about the portability of my actions, as none of the high schools had this more creative instrument. Like the others I produced a documentary tape. But I couldn't leave it alone. The 'finished tape' shows Ms. Nin in repose; I selected all of those frames where she is silent and thoughtful, listening or smiling, then re-dubbed her voice over these. That's the other part of the creative process. Video stills from tapes of Connie Beeson were shot by Dan Moriarity. The studio was darkened to cut down reflections. A scan line shows up in some of the stills.

DANCERS' WORKSHOP TAPES

Dancer Ann Halprin explores group rhythm participation. Leadership is shared as members change from passive roles to take command of group direction. The dancers sense when it is their time to take control, and movements flow into movements in endless variation. The dancers are nude to utilize the element of design, the flow and coordination of bodies moving in unison.

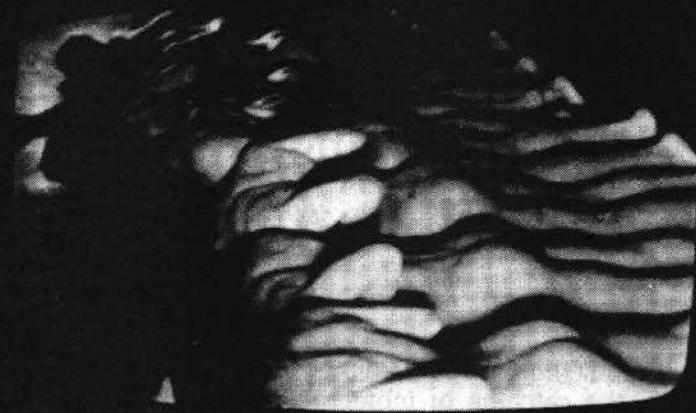
In the neighborhood, Dancers' Workshop utilizes the material around them. The police, as resource material, direct the dancers' mimicry.

A basic set of exercises that stretches every part of the body devised by Ann Halprin is standard warm-up for improvisational dances.

Live video taping of current neighborhood happenings includes the long wait outside San Quentin walls when authorities refused to allow doctors into the disrupted prison.

A capacity crowd peered over the Guggenheim-like balconies of the new Berkeley Museum during a pre-opening performance by Dancers' Workshop. What they saw were male and female dancers moving in vast ribbons of newsprint paper stock in a paper dance ritual, a sculptural dance in which paper and dancer become one sea of movement.

A workshop performance at Soledad Prison, *Que Passe? (Ragtime Shuffle)*, was the first time prisoners were able to select their own entertainment. It was also the first time prisoners were not racially segregated. And it was the first time video tape or a woman was allowed to mingle with prisoners during the performance. Connie was given a prisoner to help her with video equipment; she handed him her Rollei and he also took 4 rolls of still photographs for her. There had been some prison riots and some people asked me later if I was scared. "It never occurred to me to be scared. The men were hungry for the kind of performance Dancers' Workshop could give them."



Lawrence Halprin, during his Take Part workshop presented the process involved in the participation of people in planning their own environments. During two weeks of concentrated work, Connie video taped workshop discussions, environmental walks, and workshop projects, along with taking hundreds of still photographs. "Using the Porta-Pac, I often plugged in an external microphone and did a lot of hand holding of the camera, using the tripod for straight documentation of talks." City planner and landscape architect, Halprin is author of *Cities; Notebooks (1959-1971)*; and *The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment*.

Video tapes by Connie Beeson include participation in the Video Free America Program, University Art Museum, Berkeley, 1971; two Dancers' Workshop tapes, one colorized by VFA; the PhD presentation and Humanistic Psychology Institute tapes on Core Therapy, Sonoma and San Francisco, 1972 (17 tapes edited to one half hour); Stanford Research Institute Video Workshop, 1971; *Take Part*, the Lawrence Halprin Workshop, 1970; Glide Foundation, New Ways Workshop, 1971; University of California Demonstration, 1971; Dancers' Workshop Tapes — *Soledad: Que Pasa? Paper Dance at the Museum, Ragtime Shuffle, Bush Soul, Improvisations, Rhythms; Allen Ginsberg, Song for Grape Workers; Interviews (a series); Planetary Map Silk Screening; Photographer Thomas Weir; Anais Nin Herself*. Works in progress include interviews of performers, artists and musicians; Glide Workshops; and Dancers' Workshop Neighborhood Series.

Connie Beeson is working on a number of short 16mm films, *The Letter, The Doll, Sir, and Women*. Her films have been sponsored by Multi Media Resource Center and the American Film Institute.

The Letter is an experimental film in which the creative process involves an intuitive, sensitive working relationship between the filmmaker and friend Mary Myers. Ms. Myers, former Curator of the Kansas City Museum and distributor of artistic films, is the focal point of a film that begins with her reading a letter. Through visual effects, environmental placing, and contemplative flashbacks, both real and imagined, the filmmaker weaves a dream-quality journey through the spaces of a mind.

"Why I think the film will work," Connie says, "is because I am dealing with feelings everyone feels at some crucial time in their life. *The Letter* is about the inner trauma one has when his constructed world crumbles and he must find inner resources and strength from within to sort out his life and start over. Gestalt oriented people would say, 'to make change, to grow out of defeat.' The film deals with that area of the trauma, with imagined fears as well as real ones, with fantasies, with memories, with the night-time of our sorrows."

