



Christine Noschese (left) and Susan Milano (right), circa 1973. Photograph by Ann Eugenia Volkes

Feminism 101: The New York Women's Video Festival, 1972–1980

Melinda Barlow

From 1972 to 1980, the New York Women's Video Festival was the primary showcase for work by American women videomakers. A landmark annual event founded by Steina Vasulka in 1972 to address the dearth of work by women in a video art show she had organized at the Kitchen Center for Video and Music in New York earlier that year, the festival was coordinated for the duration of its run by Susan Milano, who traveled with it to various national and international venues in Buffalo, San Francisco, Tampa, France, and Belgium.¹

An expression of the burgeoning feminism of the 1970s and proof of the increasing availability and popularity of low-cost video technology, the festival is uniquely situated at the intersection of two histories, video's and feminism's, and yet it has received no critical attention from either, despite the fact that, as Milano has pointed out, "portable video and the women's movement sprang up together."² This essay seeks to remedy this troubling double absence, examining the festival's genesis, orienta-

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tion, transformation, and reception in the mainstream and feminist presses during its years of existence, and thereby to assess its legacy for our present historical moment.

There could not be a better time to undertake this task, for the legacies of both video and feminism are literally at peril. Videotapes made thirty years ago are not only rapidly disintegrating but are also expensive to restore, and women born into the “postfeminist” generation, if not disturbingly complacent in their sense of privilege, may be drawn to feminist concepts but afraid to identify themselves publicly as feminists. How and why feminism became the “f-word” has therefore become a hot topic,³ one inseparable from the very jettisoning of feminism from institutional memory that troubled first-generation feminist scholars like Linda Nochlin, Eunice Lipton, Lucy Lippard, and Rozsika Parker.⁴ Whether such jettisoning has never abated or has been renewed with a vengeance is open to question, but a recent situation at Cal Arts offers an instructive example of an all-too-familiar problem. There, in 1998, according to two graduates of the Feminist Art Program, Mira Schor and Faith Wilding, the history of that program was physically purged from the school’s memory when catalogs for the collaborative environment *Womanhouse* (1972) were thrown out because there was no place to store them!⁵

It is obviously imperative that we prevent such losses by archiving key documents and artifacts and writing the histories that still remain unwritten, but it is equally important that we reconfigure feminism’s relationship to newer technologies in light of the lessons offered by its relationship to an older technology like video. In a global culture radically reconstructed by interactive telecommunications and the accompanying “consolidation of pancapitalist power,” as Faith Wilding puts it, what can the history of women and video teach us?⁶ That collective events like the New York Women’s Video Festival help put work by women on the map but that recognition suffers erasure without appropriate historicization, and that feminist incursions are now needed into the latest patriarchal province—what Wilding describes as the masculinist culture of the Internet (26). A feminism that embraces

the sense of possibility found in the utopian rhetoric of the 1970s without placing blind faith in the idea that new technology is inherently liberating will be a feminism sufficiently revitalized to imagine empowering individual and collective uses of communications technologies.

To highlight lessons like these, this essay on the New York Women’s Video Festival offers a preliminary introduction to a fascinating cultural phenomenon. It utilizes representative examples of tapes and installations exhibited throughout the festival’s eight years, a decision determined in part by practical considerations, as well as by a personal interest in the festival—when it began to explore the issue of how videotapes should be viewed, when the work it exhibited was most varied in content and form, and when its significance for video history therefore seems most urgent.⁷ After a general overview of the shape and scope of the festival, this essay focuses most closely on aspects of the 1975 and 1976 festivals when, under the auspices of the Women’s Interart Center on West Fifty-second Street, the organizers created three thematically distinct viewing environments for tapes, and the festival incorporated interactive video “toys” (1975) and included three very different video installations (1976).

Charting the history of the New York Women’s Video Festival thus affords a rare opportunity to revisit the recent past and rediscover the sheer exhilaration of the second wave of American feminism, as well as the related thrill of reclaiming a technology once solely in the hands of a commercial industry—the major aspiration of videomakers during what Martha Rosler has called video’s “utopian moment.”⁸ For those who were children or adolescents in the 1970s and therefore too young to understand the specific cultural and historical forces shaping attitudes and perceptions at that time, investigating the New York Women’s Video Festival also provides a chance to delve into the political and aesthetic climate that forged both history and psyche, and to experience, as many women did en masse thirty years ago, the shock of recognition signaling genuine self-discovery. As Linda Nochlin astutely remarked about her own daily revelations while assembling the first course in feminist art history at Vassar in 1969,

there is nothing "more interesting, more poignant, and more difficult to seize than the intersection of the self and history."⁹

For many women in the early 1970s, video served as a unique conduit to heightened self-awareness and often functioned as an extension of the consciousness-raising process. By sharing individual life experiences and analyzing them collectively, women discovered their own subjectivity in consciousness-raising groups following the procedure outlined at the First National Women's Liberation Conference in Chicago in 1968: personal testimony leads to theory and action.¹⁰ Emphasizing just how life-changing this process could be, Faith Wilding noted recently that many women "experienced [them]selves as subjects for the first time in CR [consciousness raising]."¹¹ Video likewise allowed women to explore their subjectivity, and the feminist political documentary (concerned with biography, characterized by structural simplicity, and eager to establish trust between the filmmaker and her subject) proved an especially flexible genre through which to do this. Well-represented in each New York Women's Video Festival, this genre was, in Julia Lesage's phrase, "the artistic analogue of the structure and function of the CR group."¹²

Because the critique of domestic space so central to the women's art movement developed simultaneously with the discipline of feminist art and film history pioneered by Nochlin, Lesage, and others, and because this essay ultimately considers the spatial and temporal form of video installation, Nochlin's use of a spatial metaphor to describe her sense of increasing illumination while conducting her first feminist research is especially resonant. On the threshold of a decade that would change and be changed by American women forever, Nochlin had what she has described as a "conversion experience."¹³ She felt as though she "kept opening doors onto an endless series of bright rooms, each one opening off from the next, each providing a new revelation, each moving one forward from a known space to a larger, lighter, unknown one."¹⁴

Like Nochlin, I, too, am charting the unknown; and, also

like her, I must start from scratch and do the gritty "spadework" of art history (132). Here, that history is shared by video and feminism, but the goal for both is one of recovery, and the stakes for each are equally high. As the initial frustration of finding yet another domain of female accomplishment written out of history gives way to the twin joys of excavation and restoration, dust begins to settle, key issues emerge, and the contours of the past become unusually clear. If it seems strange to invoke such "dated" language after three decades of sustained feminist research, remember that video has only recently received any historiographic attention at all.

Revisiting video's past means returning to a moment when video was solicited in many different directions by all kinds of artists, and group shows like the New York Women's Video Festival reveled in the diversity and hybridity of the works they presented (documentaries, experimental pieces, performances, and installations). In this moment, the low cost, instantaneous transmission, and sense of intimacy offered by the medium seemed to forecast a revolution in image-making; access was of paramount importance, and controlling the technology was, for women, tremendously empowering.

Revisiting feminism's past, especially as it inflected and informed an event like the New York Women's Video Festival, reveals new ways that women approached the critique of domesticity (often by targeting the place of television within the home), as well as the pressing concerns of women's health and reproductive rights, rape, lesbianism, temporary separatism, and the process of socialization. Returning to the feminism of the 1970s also reminds one of how hard it is to name what has never been named, how rewarding it is to find one's own voice, and how utterly transformative it can be to cultivate one's own subjectivity and refuse institutionalized objectification. For women working in film and video, this shift from object to subject had special significance. If you were "young, beautiful and photogenic,"¹⁵ you could always get a job in front of the camera, as Milano noted (and as we all know the film and television industries have historically relegated

women to acting roles), but with the rise of portable video and independent film women finally moved into positions of power behind the camera.

If these victories seem obvious or old hat by contemporary feminist standards, it must not be forgotten that thirty years ago they were brand new and hard won. The New York Women's Video Festival forces us to remember. It offers the latest generation of feminists nothing short of a crash course in Feminism 101 (and the rest of us an invaluable refresher), letting us each touch base with the movement's roots in what is arguably its watershed year: 1972. That this was the first year of the festival is certainly no coincidence. The festival was part of escalating feminist and artistic activity throughout the country that reached a peak in this year.

But first, a few words on method. The New York Women's Video Festival was an ephemeral event; investigating it therefore means examining an absence, an occurrence neither physically present nor open to bodily experience. Few of the tapes shown at the festival exist now in playable formats, the viewing environments are no longer extant, and the installations have been deinstalled or lost in storage. All of these things, not to mention the festival's overall gestalt as a social phenomenon, must therefore be imagined with the aid of documentation. Because many former festival participants are still alive, that documentation is for the most part in their possession, and their places of residence are "living archives" filled with photographs, flyers, posters, invitations, reviews, notebooks, correspondence, and other related materials.¹⁶ These materials help counteract the impermanence of ephemeral media, and artists working in such media (or coordinators of events like Susan Milano) often diligently save every scrap of paper associated with each work or event so as to permit the fullest possible restoration of it to history. As with most archival research on living artists, the research for this project has involved locating and interviewing festival participants like Milano and negotiating and maintaining ongoing relationships with them in order to retrieve information—a complex process whose unique

interpersonal dynamics have received increasing attention in contemporary scholarship on ephemeral media.¹⁷

I have taken a cue from this scholarship in writing about the New York Women's Video Festival, for it addresses head-on the specific problems associated with investigating the ephemeral art of the last fifty years. Often deliberately conceived as impermanent and designed to be experienced in the present rather than preserved for posterity, much of this art, from performances to happenings, environments to installations, now either no longer exists in object form or, if made from unusual, untested or aging materials (such as food, flowers, latex, or film or video technology) is disintegrating in ways its creators had not anticipated. This poses practical problems for both curators and scholars alike: should the work be restored or allowed to decay? Can it be restored in a way that somehow preserves its ephemeral intentions? How does one write a history of ephemeral objects, especially if those objects have changed or no longer exist as physical entities?

For historian of performance Paul Schimmel, this slow giving way of art to entropy transforms art and media history into something more like anthropology or forensics, because our experience of ephemeral or unrestored works is one less of intact objects than of documents, photographs, artifacts, and relics—in other words, of aging, often uncanny remains.¹⁸ What this means, adds curator Robert Storr, is that, as art objects change over time, our apprehension of them becomes more imaginative and conceptual than purely perceptual. He continues: "On the conceptual side of the equation, it is not so much what the object brings to you, the viewer, as what you bring to the object—how it is that you surround the work with information, re-create for it a context that has been lost, and by some method perform a kind of mental alchemy that, in effect, 'restores' the work to a visual state that can exist only in the mind's eye."¹⁹

If we substitute the word *event* each time Storr uses the words *object* or *work* in the above quotation, it applies not only to the tapes and installations shown at the New York Women's Video

Festival that are now inaccessible, but also to the festival as a whole as an irrecoverable cultural phenomenon. And if we extrapolate from Laura Marks's astute remark about loving disappearing images—namely, that we may embrace their fragility as a reminder of our own, and that they often engender an acute sense of longing—it seems possible that one may also long for an experience that has *already* disappeared, that one has never had, that must be reconstructed through a series of artifacts, each evoking an event that cannot be retrieved in all of its immediacy, the festival experienced in a continuous here and now.²⁰

I would love to have attended the New York Women's Video Festival. This desire drives my research. If the writing of history is indissociable from affect, or, put somewhat differently, if it is always a romance charged with desire, then writing the history of ephemeral events and lost objects is intimately linked to that ache of temporal displacement known as nostalgia, a form of desire that often lends history a melancholy tone.²¹ Here, however, this melancholy is offset by the sense of exhilaration palpable in the surviving documentation—in the reviews, interviews, photographs, flyers, programs, and posters that give us imaginary access to a phenomenon no longer physically present, which we must experience, as Storr puts it, more conceptually than perceptually. This palpable exhilaration, a sense of urgency and intensity, of real thrill at the possibility of changing the world, is invaluable in helping to reestablish the context surrounding the New York Women's Video Festival, for it conveys something elusive but essential: the mood of the time, the primary feeling fuelling the explosion of feminist activity throughout the country during the 1970s.

By 1972, feminism had trickled into the mainstream and was gathering force in conferences, caucuses, collectives, alternative spaces, protests, and publications of all kinds. In that year Helen Reddy's pop feminist anthem "I Am Woman" topped the charts and two years before that a portrait of author and filmmaker Kate Millet by veteran painter Alice Neel had graced the cover of *Time* magazine. One year after Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro

founded the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts, 1972 was the year Chicago, Schapiro, and twenty-one of their students created a collaborative art environment exploring female experience in a condemned mansion in Los Angeles and called it *Womanhouse*. Other important collective endeavors appeared the same year: following the model of the Women's Interart Center in New York (1970), galleries featuring women's work were founded in New York (A.I.R.) and Los Angeles (Womanspace); women picketed the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, DC, for excluding women artists from its 1971 biennial and also organized the first conference on Women in the Visual Arts at the Corcoran School of Art; the College Art Association established the Women's Caucus for Art; Women Make Movies was founded in New York to teach film production to neighborhood women; and *Feminist Art Journal*, *Ms.* magazine, and *Women and Film* published their first issues.

In the inaugural issue of *Women and Film*, the editors proposed two related targets for feminist struggle: the objectification of women in Hollywood cinema and their underrepresentation in all aspects of filmmaking production.²² Critic Jeanne Betancourt echoed these sentiments in another issue later in 1972 when she wrote that women must "have a voice in the media, in order to end the abusive mythologizing of us which prevails." Susan B. Anthony had said much the same thing about the medium of print almost one hundred years earlier—namely, that as long as it remained controlled by men, writing in it by women would reflect men's desires.²³ Access to the means of production, as both Anthony and everyone at *Women and Film* knew, was the key to real power.

As if in response to the magazine's call for critical demythologizing, two classics of feminist film criticism appeared within the next two years, *Popcorn Venus* by Marjorie Rosen (1973) and *From Reverence to Rape* by Molly Haskell (1974), and Laura Mulvey's seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), which shifted the focus of analysis to the psychoanalytic implications of camera and editing patterns in Hollywood films, followed close on their heels. Meanwhile, articles in both the feminist and

independent media presses—those cited here are reviews of the New York Women's Video Festival—continued to point out that “women are still very much discriminated against in the fields of art and communication—from training to hiring,”²⁴ and that as the “untouchables of professional broadcasting,”²⁵ women often feel as alienated from their representation on television as they do from that on film. Tired of being just a “control group” with little representation in programming management (only 10 percent of managerial positions in radio and TV were held by women by the mid-1970s),²⁶ and sometimes as distrustful of the new “positive” images seen on TV as the decade progressed (which, according to one critic, used and abused the “social phenomenon of changing sex roles as fodder to fire up tired prime time formats”),²⁷ women wanted to represent themselves. Portable video made this possible, as one critic remarked, “by the mere act of placing a camera in each person's hands” (19).

While making her first tape, *Transsexuals* (1971), in a workshop led by John Reilly of Global Village at the New School for Social Research in New York, Susan Milano felt the same way: “I grew up with television as my babysitter, and suddenly it was in my hands.”²⁸ A photograph of Milano and fellow videomaker Christine Noschese crouching on either side of a Sony Portapak that appeared in the 1976 New York Women's Video Festival catalog brings this remark to life and captures the spirit of the era (see opening image). In it, the histories of video and feminism coalesce in an image of genuine iconic power. With its publication here this image of Milano and Noschese reenters our historical memory—together with better-known images of Rita Ogden and Wendy Appel of the Women's Video News Service shooting *Another Look* (1972) at the Republican National Convention in Miami, and Nancy Cain of TVTV videotaping *Four More Years* (1972) at the same political event²⁹—as evidence of the way women took control of video technology in the early 1970s and began to represent their experiences themselves.³⁰

The New York Women's Video Festival offered an important outlet for their efforts. “Why should a Women's Video Festival need to exist?” asked the introduction to the 1976 catalog.

“Why should women, who constitute more than half of the U. S. population, need a special showcase for their work?”³¹ While one reviewer of the first traveling show to Buffalo in 1975 thought that the festival was an example of “temporary counter-chauvinism that ought to close down before long,” the primary function of the festival for Steina Vasulka when she founded it in 1972 was to highlight work underrepresented in more broad-based video art shows occurring at that time.³² One-third of the New York video community in the early 1970s was comprised of women, yet by no means did the number of submissions by women to a call for tapes for a show at the Kitchen earlier that year come close to that figure. Drawing attention to work by women in a specialized forum would bring it more directly into the public eye.

Steina asked Susan Milano to coordinate this new forum. A native of New Jersey who moved to Manhattan in 1970 to work for an ad agency, Milano became involved with video when she went on several shoots with her acquaintance John Reilly of Global Village and then audited his workshop in half-inch documentary video production at the New School for Social Research.³³ After becoming Reilly's course assistant, codirecting *Transsexuals*, and teaching a video workshop at the New School herself, Milano bought her own Portapak and made *Tattoo* (1972), a documentary about a formerly bearded, tattooed woman named Jean Carroll. It was while working at Global Village in 1971–72 that Milano met Steina and Woody Vasulka.³⁴

In the early 1970s Milano says she was a shy person interested in social issues but not yet involved in the women's movement.³⁵ Her awareness of feminism emerged as she organized the first New York Women's Video Festival, and by 1978 she considered herself a feminist. Coordinating the festival and teaching women-only video workshops at the Women's Interart Center (where she became workshop director in 1973) spawned her commitment to helping women overcome the social training encouraging us to fear anything technical—a process she knew well from personal experience.³⁶ Mastering an electronic medium had given her self-confidence, and teaching both coed and women-only workshops had made her realize the value of the lat-

ter. As she told the *Tampa Times* in 1978, in workshops for both sexes, men were more likely to approach the equipment immediately even when they knew nothing about it, while "women would hang back and let men do it."³⁷ Clearing a space for women to learn about video technology in each other's company allowed them to more readily relinquish acculturated fears.

The New York Women's Video Festival likewise cleared a space for women by showcasing their work. To put together the first festival, Milano, Shridhar Bapat (then director of programming at the Kitchen), and Laura Kassos sent sixty-five letters to women in New York and California and assembled six evenings of work from the twenty-five tapes they received.³⁸ In keeping with the Kitchen's open-house policy, the festival organizers emphasized their interest in tapes produced and directed by women but accepted all entries, including those made by men and women in collaboration. Funded in part by a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts, the first New York Women's Video Festival ran from 14–30 September at the Kitchen on Mercer Street, and was well received in feminist and alternative publications such as *Women and Film*, *Off Our Backs*, and *The Village Voice*.

By the next year, the festival coordinators sent out 250 letters of solicitation to individuals and organizations across the US and in Canada and used the same open-house policy to assemble a seventeen day festival (28 September–14 October 1973) comprised of fifty-seven tapes. Now cosponsored by the Women's Interart Center, the festival was still housed at the Kitchen, temporarily relocated at the Logiudice Gallery on Wooster Street after a fire at the Mercer Street building. This year the festival added two women-only screenings featuring tapes like *Gay Pride March* (L.O.V.E. Group), and *National Lesbian Conference April '73* (Vulva Video), and the work shown throughout the festival revealed a greater regional and international diversity (along with New York and California, tapes came from Rhode Island, Michigan, Maryland, New Jersey, and Hamilton, Ontario, for example). After a hiatus in 1974, in 1975 and 1976 the festival moved to the Women's Interart Center in midtown Manhattan. A juried system was utilized to ensure quality control among the vol-

ume of submissions received. A panel of jurors selected 33 of 110 tapes on the basis of three major criteria: technical quality; meaningfulness of content; and sensitivity to the process of redefining the roles of videomaker, subject, and viewer.³⁹

A fascinating cross-section of work from the 1970s, the tapes shown in each festival are remarkable for the range of subjects they explore and variety of forms they assume, but what is perhaps most interesting about them as a whole is revealed by taking the original festival in 1972 as a case in point. In it, the number of tapes made by individuals (fifteen) was almost equaled by those made collaboratively (eleven), and most of the tapes were created by artists and collectives whose names are now unknown (Darcy Umstadter, Queer Blue Light Video, West Side Video) rather than those whose places are secure in the canon of video history (Steina and Woody Vasulka, Shigeko Kubota, Maxi Cohen). While personal documentaries dominate by a hair (there were sixteen in 1972), experimental pieces or "video poems" are well represented each year (fifteen in 1972),⁴⁰ and every festival also included intermedia work of some kind (in 1972, a live dance/video event called *Cycles* by Elsa Tambellini and Judith Scott; in 1973, three performances by cellist Charlotte Moorman; in 1975, interactive video "toys" by Wendy Clarke, Susan Milano, and others; and in 1976, video installations by Maxi Cohen, Shigeko Kubota, and Mary Lucier).

Until the addition of video toys and viewing environments in 1975 and video installations the next year, the documentaries shown in the festival seem to have provided the most widely acknowledged redefinition of the relationship between videomaker, subject, and viewer by encouraging and sometimes even incorporating feedback from audience members into their finished forms (a technique much commented upon in the press and whose significance I will return to shortly). The documentaries also expressed the evolving feminist consciousness of the 1970s by exploring issues of increasing concern to women throughout the decade: sexuality (*Women on Sex: A Conversation*, Women's Video Collective, 1972); rape (*The Rape Tape*, Under One Roof Video/Jenny Goldberg, 1972); abortion (*The Worst Is*

Over, Darcy Umstadter, 1972) and *Women Who've Lived through Illegal Abortions* (Rochelle Shulman, 1973); experiences of motherhood (*Single Women Raising Families*, West Side Video; *Lesbian Mothers*, Queer Blue Light Video; both 1972); sexual minorities and alternative lifestyles (*Transsexuals*, Susan Milano, 1971; and *The Priest and The Pilot*, Video Workshop/Women's Interart Center, 1973); self-defense (*Self-Defense*, Janice Carrick, 1972); cultural standards of beauty (*Fifty Wonderful Years [Miss California Pageant, 1973]*, Optic Nerve, 1973; and *Forest of Canes* [on Chinese foot binding], Spectra Feminist Media, 1975); wife abuse (*Ama l'uomo tuo* [Always love your man], Cara Devito, 1975); and local, national, and international political struggles of all kinds (*Women of Northside Fight Back*, Christine Noschese, Marisa Gioffre, and Valerie Bouvier, 1974; *Another Look*, Women's Video News Service, 1972; and *Streets of Ulster*, Louise Denver and David Redom, 1973).

What is perhaps most surprising about not only the documentaries but also all of the tapes included in the festival throughout its eight years is that while some feminist classics like *Fifty Wonderful Years* and *Dressing Up* (1973) (featuring a reverse striptease from naked to clothed), by Feminist Art Program graduate Susan Mogul, were shown in more than one year, others that one might expect to find in a women's video festival like Julie Gustafson's *The Politics of Intimacy* (1972) (which included a consciousness-raising session about orgasm), or Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975) (a feminist primer desublimating the significance of kitchen implements through dry commentary and well-chosen gestures), were not shown at all. Were they ever submitted for consideration? If not, why not? Were they submitted but rejected by the jurors? This is hard to imagine, but if so, why? The answers to such questions must await future research.

Also worth noting is the number of tapes and installations not necessarily or explicitly feminist in orientation but created by women who have made important contributions to video history, and whose unknown, less well-known, lost, or only recently restored works were presented in one of the festivals. Shigeko Kubota, for example, is represented in virtually every festival by

some of her best known and most significant early video diaries and installations: *Video Girls Sing Video Songs for Navajo Sky* (1973), *My Father* (1975) and *Marcel Duchamp's Grave* (1975) (the latter two works were both shown in 1976). What, however, was *Joa: Impasse of the Infidelity* (1972), described in a review in *Off Our Backs* as a work utilizing split-screen effects of "an extraordinary sex-dance-theater troupe which included transvestites"?⁴¹ This tape is not listed in Kubota's standard videography nor is it found in the catalog of her distributor, Electronic Arts Intermix. Does it still exist? Has it been restored? Or did it contain material that was ultimately incorporated into something else? And what about former Raindance member Beryl Korot's *By the People* (1973)? An editor of *Radical Software* known for her pioneering multichannel installation *Dachau* (1974), Korot made several tapes in the early 1970s with Ira Schneider, also of Raindance (*The Fourth of July in Saugerties* and *Yucatan Previews*, both 1973), but *By the People* is a new title for the annals of community video. So are Videofreex member Carol Vontobel's *Portapak Conversation* (1973), Vontobel and Nancy Cain's *Lanesville TV/Off-air Sept. 18 '73* (1973) and Maxi Cohen's *Cape May Composite* (1972). All of these works require research, and the results would unquestionably expand our understanding of the contributions made by women to early video history.

Although extensive publicity material was sent to both the mainstream and the alternative media presses, the festival was largely ignored by the mainstream, with the exception of a brief announcement in its second year that appeared in the "Going Out Guide" of the *New York Times*.⁴² It read as follows: "Even those women chained to household chores with no other company than soap operas or Watergate hearings on the small screen will find this television different."⁴³ Valuable as a reminder of the larger cultural context in which the festival took place (the era of Watergate and *The Stepford Wives*),⁴⁴ the announcement's strange mixture of interest in the festival as novelty and mockery of it through its tone (not to mention the patronizing characterization of housewives and soap operas) makes me wonder if being ignored by the mainstream was not such a bad thing after all.

The feminist and independent media presses, however, gave the festival considerable, and primarily positive, coverage. Reviews often focused on the way individual tapes, especially documentaries, inspired trust in their participant-subjects, created a palpable feeling of intimacy for viewers, and encouraged audience involvement and feedback (that the festival as a whole did this was noted in more than one review praising its “revival of communal viewing”).⁴⁵ Over the course of eight years, the press singled out Susan Milano’s *Tattoo* for the sensitivity of its portrayal of Jean Carroll;⁴⁶ commented on the difference between Darcy Umstadter’s “undramatic” presentation of abortion and the “blow-ups of fetuses” that “Right-to-Lifers use in their propaganda”;⁴⁷ was impressed by the insights derived from personal experience bravely relayed in *The Rape Tape* (which “seemed like a first meeting both between the camera and the subject as well as between the women and their memories”);⁴⁸ described *The Streets of Ulster’s* treatment of the Protestant-Catholic conflict in Northern Ireland as “not so much a viewing experience as participation in the rage and despair of the people of Kashmir Road”;⁴⁹ and took inspiration from the “understanding of collective power and individual capabilities”⁵⁰ expressed in *Women of Northside Fight Back* (about a Brooklyn neighborhood’s struggle against an encroaching paper box factory).

One of the most interesting reviews was written by 1973 festival participant Rochelle Shulman (*Women Who’ve Survived Illegal Abortions*), who consistently noted or wondered about the extent to which various tapes had actively involved their subjects in their construction and/or included the responses of their participants in their finished forms. Regarding *13* (Ann Arbor Women’s Video Workshop, 1973), about adolescent girls, Shulman wanted to know “what part the girls had (if any) in conceiving the piece, if they saw it afterward, if they discussed it or learned from it. How were they affected by it?”⁵¹ *Fifty Wonderful Years (Miss California Pageant, 1973)* (Optic Nerve, 1973), in contrast, she found unsatisfying because it did not include the responses of the contestants to their participation in the pageant in the finished tape. She was, however, moved by *Mary Oehler* (Ann McIntosh and

Joe Spielen, 1973), a documentary about a blind woman whose vision was restored after the end of shooting and who saw the tape made about her for the first time at a festival screening. Her response was recorded so it could be added to a revised version—an example, for Shulman, of an ideal use of feedback both during exhibition and ultimately in the tape itself.

According to *Women and Film*, the festival as a whole provided an opportunity for the “vital feedback necessary to artistic growth,” and both direct feedback and other forms of audience participation and interaction were encouraged throughout the festival in different ways.⁵² During the traveling show in San Francisco, a video “graffiti booth” invited viewers to record their thoughts, criticism, and suggestions, a process made unthreatening by the assurance that at their request their comments would be erased.⁵³ In 1975 and 1976, when the festival was housed at the Women’s Interart Center, it featured screenings of *Videoletters*, half-hour documentary tapes made and exchanged by women in thirteen American cities (and later, throughout the world) that allowed women to see what issues and events were motivating feminist struggles elsewhere. Once a month at various venues (in New York, at the Women’s Interart Center), tapes from other cities would be screened along with a home tape, and reactions to the screening would be recorded and included on the home tape of the next video letter, thus fostering a kind of dialogue and exchange similar to that incorporated in *Mary Oehler*.⁵⁴

Also in 1975, and following a workshop by Wendy Clarke at the Women’s Interart Center, several video “toys” or games involved participants in another kind of interaction. Like her mother, filmmaker Shirley Clarke, who, at workshops held in her penthouse at the Chelsea Hotel in the early 1970s and in the TeePee Video Space Troupe that evolved from them,⁵⁵ used video “in a way that intentionally scaled down the technology, diminishing its importance to the point where you could approach it naturally, playfully,”⁵⁶ Wendy Clarke was interested in video’s capacity for play. The show resulting from her workshop at the Women’s Interart Center in 1974, “What’s on Tonight?” featured seven works by participants, several of which were included in the New

York Women's Video Festival the next year.⁵⁷ Among these were *Grandma by the Fireplace* (by the Workshop, featuring a video image of a woman sitting in a rocking chair next to a video image of a fire), Susan Milano's *Video Swing* (which invited festivalgoers to ride a swing and see their own continuous motion displayed via live feed on three contiguous, masked video monitors), and Wendy Clarke's *The Elephant* (which let participants draw their own profiles while looking into two monitors, one showing their profiles, the other revealing their efforts at drawing). It is easy to see why Milano described the atmosphere created by these works as similar to that in a funhouse.⁵⁸ It is also worth noting that *Majority Report* saw the show as part of a continuum of activity that also included work by the Feminist Art Program in California. The review described the show as part of an "embryonic trend, seen in *Womanhouse* and elsewhere, of women exploring intimate space."⁵⁹

That same playful atmosphere imbued the three unique environments designed for viewing tapes that year. Inspired by the desire to give video viewing an identity distinct from that of watching film (which involved sitting in chairs in front of a large screen—a model uncomfortably adopted by galleries showing videotapes when they placed monitors on pedestals in front of benches or chairs), the environments consisted of a "Then and Now" room, a "Pillow" room, and a "Glitter" room. All three environments were hooked up by live feed to a central control room so that viewers could see the coordinators running the machines and vice versa, and so that viewers in all three rooms could see each other. The "Then and Now" room was the least popular, probably because it was the least physically comfortable. Containing straight-backed chairs in a semicircle surrounding three video monitors on pedestals, the room (despite pictures of Dale Evans and Lucille Ball on the walls intended to evoke the history of women in media) repeated the conventions of traditional film and gallery-style video viewing and therefore seemed less than ideal, as Milano put it, for watching work that was "anything but straight-backed" (10). In the "Pillow" room the monitors were placed along the walls, again on pedestals, but viewers were invited

to lie down to watch tapes on an enormous mound of pillows. In the "Glitter" room, the favorite of the three, viewers were also encouraged to lie down to watch tapes, this time on a foam floor covered with leopard-print fabric in a room bathed in red light, where the TVs were suspended from the ceiling and a sculpture featuring dozens of spiked-heel shoes hung on one wall. The fabric and stilettos indirectly and humorously alluded to the restrictive clothing worn by women in the 1950s (like Lana Turner in *Imitation of Life*, 1959, for example), the decade when the television console was a new piece of furniture whose central placement in the living room embodied its primary role in sustaining family life.⁶⁰

The motivating factor behind both the "Pillow" and the "Glitter" rooms was a desire to recreate the comfort and ease of the living room in an exhibition space.⁶¹ People usually watch television in a relaxed, cozy environment, either stretched out at home or at a friend's house and often with other people with whom they casually discuss what they are watching. Wanting to encourage dialogue and feedback from visitors, the festival coordinators came up with environments that would allow for relaxation, stimulate discussion, and embrace rather than reject the traditional viewing context of television.⁶² This gesture seems especially significant given that many organizers and participants were children of the 1950s, a decade when, as Lynn Spigel has pointed out, women's magazines routinely put forth the idea that reclining was an appropriate posture for male television viewers (presumably relaxing after a hard day's work), while female viewers, assumed to be housewives, might want to position their sets so they could see them while they cleaned house (although this could result in inefficient housework).⁶³ Twenty years later in the "Pillow" and "Glitter" rooms, the New York Women's Video Festival symbolically reclaimed leisurely television viewing for a generation of women whose mothers had been encouraged to watch while they worked.

A number of early video installations used living room tableaux as a way to comment on and critique television's traditional place within the home, throwing that traditional place

into relief by recreating it in a gallery or museum (for example Telethon's *The Television Environment*, 1972). Other artists, however, insisted that by merely placing a television set in a gallery or museum one inevitably invoked the experience of watching television in a living room and as a recreational activity—an association which, according to Vito Acconci (who has been an especially harsh critic of video installation as a form for precisely this reason), invariably returns one to “home” and to “the customs of living room furniture,” and home in this context means “‘resting-place,’ ‘the final resting place,’ the land of the numb/the still/the dead.’”⁶⁴

For the coordinators of the 1975 New York Women's Video Festival and at least one of the video installation artists whose work was included in the 1976 festival, evoking television's conventional place in the living room had the advantage of reviving communal viewing and initiating dialogue—and both of these things were seen to possess profoundly social and heuristic value, if not provide an informal opportunity for CR. *My Bubi, My Zada: A Visit with the Folks . . . a Living Room Experience* (Maxi Cohen, 1975) was a personal living room tableau that served a social purpose. A graduate of New York University's film school interested in animation and portraiture who met George Stoney six months prior to graduation and received training in the use of video for social change at his Alternate Media Center at NYU (founded 1970), Cohen used her own living room as a salon for exhibiting and discussing video work in the early 1970s.⁶⁵ Her first film, *Joe and Maxi* (1973), examined her relationship with her father. In *My Bubi, My Zada* she returned once again to portraiture, this time motivated by a desire to capture a generation (that of her grandparents) on tape before it disappeared. Assembled in the freight elevator on the way up to the loft space where the Women's Interart Center was located on West Fifty-second Street, her installation recreated the warmth of her grandparents' living room, complete with chairs, a table, a lamp, a rug, and, of course, a television set covered with photographs, and thus acted as a fitting introduction and conclusion (and thus a frame) to a festival seeking to recast our relationship to television. The

tape playing on the set was an intimate documentary portrait of Cohen's grandparents, and by extension of Cohen herself, who, although not visible, was audible offscreen asking them questions about their marriage and their lives as immigrants in America; about the right way to make chicken soup; and warning them that she probably would not marry.

Mary Lucier's *Antique with Video Ants and Generations of Dinosaurs* (1973), originally installed in a train in Grand Central Station as part of the tenth annual New York Avant-Garde Festival organized by Charlotte Moorman, also used furniture to create an intimate space—not a living room but rather a whimsical environment inhabitable through imagination, a protective enclosure or fantasy home.⁶⁶ A student of English and American literature at Brandeis in the 1960s, Lucier was a sculptor and photographer who toured with the electronic music ensemble the Sonic Arts Union (cofounded by composer Alvin Lucier) in the late 1960s.⁶⁷ *Antique* was her first video installation. Made from a found object since lost in storage, a hybrid piece of furniture at home in a parlor, *Antique* was inspired in part by Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1958) (an investigation, according to Bachelard, of the “phenomenology of the verb ‘to inhabit’”).⁶⁸ It consisted of a secretary/armoire housing a videotape of an ant farm, a cactus garden, a triptych mirror, a magnifying glass, and a series of videotaped dinosaur postcards. In front of the armoire beneath a low-hanging lamp lay two black-and-white photographs embedded in glass, both close-ups of landscape, stamped near the center with the word *INHABIT*. With its cabinet closed, its writing desk open, and postcards suggesting travel adorning its “mantel,” *Antique* was an eclectic, appealing environment where ants were enlarged, dinosaurs miniaturized, and human beings were invited to envision themselves as Lilliputian. It seems hospitable even in photographs and makes one long for a chance to respond and correspond. In this longing must have been stronger: perhaps it was the explicit invitation to *INHABIT*, perhaps the sight of oneself in a mirror, somehow already living inside, or perhaps the area for reading and writing that felt so familiar, so much like home. Visitors to *Antique* obviously felt welcome: they wrote Lucier notes and

left them inside the desk—a response, Lucier has suggested, to the sensation of something “intensely personal” in the work, and which seemed especially fitting in the context of the New York Women’s Video Festival, where feedback was emphasized in every way and at every level.⁶⁹

The third installation included in the 1976 New York Women’s Video Festival was *Marcel Duchamp’s Grave* by Shigeko Kubota. Born in Japan, Kubota left for New York in 1964 to escape from its traditional social confinement of women and an art scene that was inhospitable to women.⁷⁰ One year after her arrival, she made her infamous *Vagina Painting* at the Perpetual Fluxfest (1965), an important profeminist work that made a direct connection between femininity and creativity. In this work, Kubota painted abstractly in bold red strokes with a brush attached to her underpants. Like her later well-known statements describing the video *Portapak* as a baby—“I travel alone with my portapak on my back, as Vietnamese women do with their babies” (74)—and the process of menstruation with the act of shooting videotape—“Recently I bleed in half-inch . . . 3M or SONY . . . ten thousand feet long every month” (74)—Kubota’s early work in Fluxus was also concerned with female bodily experience.

Marcel Duchamp’s Grave was a more conceptually oriented work that, like *Antique*, used the technique of masking video monitors to limit their association with commercial television and transform them into glowing sculptural elements. Consisting of a wooden vertical tower concealing the dials of eleven color monitors reflected in a long mirror on the floor perpendicular to the tower, the installation featured a diaristic tape made at Duchamp’s grave in Paris. Obsessed with Duchamp for years, Kubota had collected artifacts and photographs of his collaborative work with John Cage since 1958, and she brought a personal memento of a book she had published on Duchamp and Cage to his grave when she shot her tape. Reflecting the Buddhist belief in the interconnectedness of life and death, the installation she designed to display that tape took the form of a metaphoric coffin housing multiple monitors whose ever-changing imagery was reflected into infinity.

Like the numerous single-channel tapes shown in each New York Women’s Video Festival, the three video installations included in 1976 reclaimed video technology from the hands of a commercial industry and personalized it in different but equally important ways. Ranging from autobiographical (Cohen and Kubota) to whimsical to domestically intimate (Lucier versus Cohen), these three works at once reveal video’s hybrid roots and embody the different strategies used by artists to explore video technology within a sculptural framework in the context of a forum designed specifically for women. While Maxi Cohen was originally interested in film and came from a tradition using video as a tool for social change, Mary Lucier and Shigeko Kubota were affiliated with the new musical avant-garde and pooled their talents in a short-lived women’s multicultural video and performance collective called Red, White, Yellow, and Black (1972–73). Reflected in the backgrounds of the three installation artists who contributed to the 1976 festival, then, is the mix of documentary and experimental orientations that characterized the festival as a whole—a point that brings us full circle by reminding us what “feminist” really and most broadly meant when it came to using video in the early 1970s. As Ilene Segalove once astutely remarked, whatever the orientation of the videomaker, and although “not all artists made overtly political or feminist work, most early ’70s work by women *was* feminist simply by virtue of being made by women at that time . . . a time when just to put your hands on the camera was a feminist act.”⁷¹

I would like to end this essay with several pointed observations and a call to action. The observations are drawn from personal anecdotes of the videomakers interviewed for this project, as well as from my own experience as a teacher of film and video studies. Indebted to the theoretical premise behind the feminist strategy of consciousness-raising, which insists that personal disclosure is representative of collective experience, or, as Alice Echols puts it, that what we once believed were personal problems are in fact “social problems that must become social issues and fought together rather than with personal solutions,”⁷² these anecdotes

are revealing for what they tell us about the past and present relationship of women to film and video, and because hopefully they offer insights into our current relationship with telecommunications technologies. The information they convey is not idiosyncratic, but rather representative of a collective experience stretching across time, linking and alternately frustrating and inspiring different generations of feminists. That this information also jibes with recent statistics on the employment of women in the film and television industries is unfortunate but unsurprising.

When Maxi Cohen was at NYU in the late 1960s, her teacher Haig Manoogian (also the teacher of Martin Scorsese and Oliver Stone) told her to quit because the best women could hope to achieve was the grade of C, and in terms of professional success their options were severely limited (if they were lucky, they might become editors).⁷³ Christine Noschese told me that while the attitude toward women was a bit better than that described by Cohen when she was at the American Film Institute in the mid-1980s, the number of women in her graduating class of directing fellows was revealing: out of thirty-eight fellows in 1986, only three were women.⁷⁴ At present in the Film Studies Program at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where I teach, there are 553 majors. In the senior class in filmmaking production, of which there are three sections, each capped at fifteen students, there are usually only one to two female students per class. This number is lower than it was when I arrived in 1996, when there were on average four or five women per advanced class in film production (hardly a majority, but higher than the current figures). When I informally surveyed my female students as well as male and female colleagues who teach filmmaking at CU as to why this might be the case, they cited several all-too-familiar reasons: filmmaking seems to be an exclusively male domain; the male students are proprietary if not on occasion "superior" about their knowledge about and ease with the equipment; and women therefore often feel self-conscious and fearful about learning how to operate it in their presence.

Perhaps these feelings still exist because, in Faith Wilding's words, "American culture is still dogged by seemingly in-

tractable formations of patriarchy and inculcated gender roles," and because the celluloid ceiling has by no means disappeared.⁷⁵ As the Guerrilla Girls, Alice Locas (a new anonymous group of women filmmakers), and scholar Martha Lauzen have recently reminded us, no woman has ever won an Oscar for best director, cinematography, or sound design; by 1987, 2.4 percent of major films made in this country were directed by women, and by 1999, that percentage had risen only to 4 percent; and a mere 19 percent of all executive producers, directors, writers, cinematographers, and editors working on the top 250 domestically grossing films of 2001 were women.⁷⁶ "It is impossible to look at these numbers," Lauzen writes, "and claim that discrimination is a thing of the past."⁷⁷

I recite these anecdotes and statistics here not to end on a sour note but as an important reminder that the issues that concerned women working in film and video in the 1970s, uncomplicated though they may be, have by no means gone away and in fact are still very much alive for and pertinent to the experience of the present generation of aspiring women film- and videomakers. In other words, the first lesson of *Feminism 101* from thirty years ago, as Susan Milano, Ilene Segalove, and countless other women knew—that putting your hands on the camera is for women an empowering and implicitly feminist act—still has real meaning in the new millennium. Although the New York Women's Video Festival ended in 1980, a casualty of the non-profit "burnout" of its organizers,⁷⁸ its very existence attested to that lesson learned in spades—and it is a lesson whose legacy lives on in the proliferation of contemporary national and international women's film and video festivals now in existence, from the longstanding Women in the Director's Chair in Chicago (founded 1981) and Films de Femmes in Creteil, France (founded 1978), to newer festivals like MadCat in San Francisco, Moondance in Boulder, Colorado, and the Female Eye Film Festival in Toronto, Canada.⁷⁹ As in the 1970s, women still occasionally need a separate forum for the exhibition of their work to bring it more directly into the public eye.

Which brings me to the second lesson of *Feminism 101*,

articulated by Linda Nochlin in 1969, a lesson that again may sound “too basic” for our current historical moment but in fact still rings true for the feminist scholarship of today: namely, there is still much gritty spadework to be done. Like virtually all forays into video history, and as I noted several years ago when investigating Red, White, Yellow, and Black,⁸⁰ an event like the New York Women’s Video Festival brings to light just how much of that history must still be written, artist by artist, collective by collective, festival by festival, tape by tape, and year by year. A veritable treasure trove of unexplored work by women, the New York Women’s Video Festival offers many possibilities for future research, from the phenomenon of video letters to the histories of all of those now-unknown individuals and collectives who produced tapes we have never heard of, to the contributions of key figures like Shirley and Wendy Clarke and Maxi Cohen, to the new things we learn about the early work of pioneering artists like Shigeko Kubota and Beryl Korot, to the history of the Women’s Interart Center, to the connection with other women’s media organizations with their own fascinating histories. Each of these subjects requires careful examination, and each will expand our understanding of the diverse contributions made by women to the history of video.

Researching this history is both challenging and invigorating. It involves finding and interviewing living artists, examining their personal archives, imaginatively restoring tapes that no longer play by following their trails of documentation, and, perhaps most importantly, remembering that history is always a romance, and that the search for lost objects is driven by desire. An event I did not experience and can only imagine, from a decade that left its imprint on me as a child, the New York Women’s Video Festival provides an invaluable conduit to an exhilarating feminism that women of my generation came to know later—a feminism whose lessons are nonetheless still fresh, and that each generation wrestles with on its own terms, in its own way. To learn these lessons young women need a legacy, and what could be better than a rich and complex history? To write the history of women and video is to bequeath to the future the gift of the past.

Notes

I would like to thank Patty White for her helpful suggestions in editing this essay.

1. The festival took a break in 1974 as organizers pursued other things, and in 1975 Ann Eugenia Volkes, who took the photograph of Christine Noschese and Susan Milano published with this essay, served as co-coordinator. A student at Parsons School of Design in the early 1970s, Volkes volunteered in an abortion clinic in 1973, where she saw an ad for a video event at the Kitchen Center for Video and Music presented by the Women’s Interart Center and run by Susan Milano. Volkes was so intrigued by video work that she saw at the Kitchen that she signed up for two video workshops that week, one at the Women’s Interart Center, and one taught by Rochelle Shulman of the Women’s Video Project at the Video Access Center (1972–74), formerly located on LaGuardia Place in New York City. Volkes has worked at CBS since 1980, editing such programs as the news, *60 Minutes*, *48 Hours*, and *The Early Show*. E-mail to the author, 2 April 2003.
2. Susan Milano, introduction to *The 1976 New York Women’s Video Festival* (catalog) (New York: Women’s Interart Center, 1976, n.p.).
3. See Amy Ingrid Schlegel, “Codex Spero: Rethinking the Monograph As a Feminist,” in *Singular Women: Writing the Artist*, ed. Kristen Frederickson and Sarah E. Webb (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 200–213, and Mira Schor, “The *Ism* That Dare Not Speak Its Name,” *Documents* 15 (spring/summer 1999): 28–39. I am grateful to Frazer Ward of Smith College for alerting me to the articles by Schor and her fellow Feminist Art Program graduate Faith Wilding in this invaluable issue of *Documents*.
4. Key texts by this group of pioneer feminist scholars include: Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” *ARTnews* (January 1971): 22–39 and 67–71, and “*Women, Art, and Power*” and *Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); Eunice Lipton, *Alias Olympia: A Woman’s Search for Manet’s Notorious Model and Her Own Desire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); Lucy R. Lippard, *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Feminist Essays on Art* (New York: New Press, 1995), and Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art, and Ideology* (New York: Pantheon, 1981).

5. See Faith Wilding, "Don't Tell Anyone We Did It!" *Documents* 15 (spring/summer 1999): 16–27, and Schor, "The *Ism* That Dare Not Speak Its Name," in the same issue, 28–39.
6. Wilding, "Don't Tell Anyone We Did It!" 24.
7. Practical considerations include what artists I have managed to locate, and what tapes I have been able to see because they exist in playable formats or have paper trails permitting their imaginative restoration to history. As of this writing, I have interviewed Susan Milano, Mary Lucier, Shigeko Kubota, Ann Eugenia Volkes, Christine Noschese, and Steina Vasulka. The following tapes shown at the New York Women's Video Festival may be viewed: *Fifty Wonderful Years (Miss California Pageant, 1973)*, by Optic Nerve, and *Ama l'uomo tuo* [Always love your man] (1975), by Cara DeVito, which are both included on Video Data Bank's *Surveying the Decade; Video Girls Sing Video Songs for Navajo Sky* (1973) and *My Father* (1975), by Shigeko Kubota, both available through Electronic Arts Intermix in New York City; *Glass Puzzle* (1973), by Joan Jonas, distributed by EAI; *Golden Voyage* (1973) by Steina and Woody Vasulka, also distributed through EAI. The tape for *My Bubi, My Zada* by Maxi Cohen (1975) was recently restored by EAI and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.
8. Martha Rosler, "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment," in *Illuminating Video*, ed. Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (New York: Aperture and BAVC, 1991), 31–50. While Rosler wants to shed video's utopian moment, I am using her phrase in an essay that explores what we have to gain by momentarily returning to and knowingly embracing that moment's utopian spirit. Faith Wilding uses the same phrase to describe feminism in the early 1970s. She writes, "It was a short-lived utopian moment when every aspect of female experience, whether negative or positive, seemed an important object of exploration and experiment, as it contributed to the knowledge of that which had been unspoken for so long." See Wilding, "Don't Tell Anyone We Did It!" 17.
9. Linda Nochlin, "Starting from Scratch: The Beginnings of Feminist Art History," in *The Power of Feminist Art*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), 137.
10. See Kathie Sarachild, "A Program for Feminist Consciousness-Raising," presented at the First National Women's Liberation Conference Chicago, 27 November 1968, reproduced in *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation. Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Redstockings, 1970).
11. Wilding, "Don't Tell Anyone We Did It!" 17.
12. Julia Lesage, "The Political Aesthetics of the Feminist Documentary Film," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* (fall 1978): 508, 515.
13. Again, Wilding uses the same phrase in "Don't Tell Anyone We Did It!" 27.
14. Nochlin, "Starting from Scratch," 130.
15. Milano, introduction, *The 1976 New York Women's Video Festival*.
16. For more on the idea of the living archive, see my "Introduction: Getting There/Going Home," in *Mary Lucier: Art and Performance*, ed. Melinda Barlow (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1–20. The previously unpublished artist's statements, drawings, invitations, and photographs included in this volume are the result of nine years of searching through Lucier's personal archive.
17. See Schlegel, "Codex Spero," and Kristine Stiles, "At Last! A Great Woman Artist: Writing about Carolee Schneemann's Epistolary Practice," also in Frederickson and Webb, *Singular Women*. A panel called "Working on Living Artists" scheduled for the 2004 meeting of the College Art Association in Seattle will presumably deal with these issues as well.
18. Paul Schimmel, "Intentionality and Performance-Based Art," in *Mortality/Immortality? The Legacy of Twentieth Century Art*, ed. Miguel Angel Corzo (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 1999), 138.
19. Robert Storr, "Immortalité Provisoire," in *Mortality/Immortality?*, 37.
20. See Laura U. Marks, "Loving a Disappearing Image," in *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 91–112.

21. Nostalgia has recently received new and interesting theorization insisting that the concept means much more than unsophisticated sentimentality, and in fact signifies a complex experience of loss that may be explored from a position of self-awareness that addresses the issue of temporal disjunction (the gap between past and present that often gives rise to nostalgic desire). Svetlana Boym calls this strategy one of "nostalgic dissidence." See Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001). I am indebted to Boym for her conceptualization of nostalgia in *Lost Objects of Desire: Video Installation, Mary Lucier, and the Romance of History*, a current book project exploring the history and phenomenology of video installation using the work of Mary Lucier as a case in point.
22. *Women and Film* 1.1 (1972): 5.
23. Jeanne Betancourt, "Women's Video Festival at the Kitchen," *Women and Film* 1.3-4 (1972): n.p.
24. Rochelle Shulman, *Filmmaker's Newsletter* 7.3 (January 1974): n.p.
25. Pat Sullivan, "The Second Annual Women's Video Festival," *Women and Film* 1.5-6 (1973): n.p.
26. Milano, introduction to *The 1976 New York Women's Video Festival*.
27. Victoria Costello, "The Context of Video," *Televisions* (1975): 18.
28. Susan Milano, interview with the author, 8 November 2000, New York City.
29. These images were reproduced in the brochure for "From Object to Subject: Documents and Documentaries from the Women's Movement," Whitney Museum of American Art, 7-26 January 1992, New York City, and Deirdre Boyle, *Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), respectively. There is another, similar image captioned "Robin Citrin at the Controls" that accompanies an untitled review by Toni Chestnut of the traveling show to San Francisco in 1976 in *Plexus* (1977): n.p.
30. The image of Milano and Noschese was also reproduced in *Videography* (September 1976): 14.
31. Milano, introduction to *The 1976 New York Women's Video Festival*.
32. John Dwyer, "Women's Fight for Neighborhood Is Thrilling Highlight of Festival," *Buffalo Evening News*, 22 July 1975, n.p.
33. Global Village, one of the premier media arts centers for video documentary in the country, was cofounded in New York City in 1969 by John Reilly and Rudi Stern.
34. Susan Milano, interview with the author, 8 November 2000, New York City.
35. Susan Milano has had a widely varied career over the last thirty years. In the early 1970s she spent six months at the Henry Street Settlement in New York teaching adolescents and senior citizens how to use video to make documentaries and also served as a consultant to the Academic Program of the national Congress for Neighborhood Women. By the time the last presentation of the Women's Video Festival took place at the American Cultural Center in Paris (1980), Milano was working in the private sector with one of New York's first location video companies, and since that time she has "cultivated an international clientele of documentary makers who do projects in the US." Susan Milano, e-mail to the author, 5 May 2003.
36. The range of workshops offered by the Women's Interart Center in the 1970s was truly astonishing. "The workshop program," read one of their flyers from the period, "is germane to the interart concept." Through it, "a poet can learn to be a video artist, a painter or photographer can explore film, a filmmaker can learn to see with the eye of a painter." Membership at the center cost thirty-six dollars a year plus twenty-four hours of volunteer service, and each workshop had its own additional charge. Workshops were offered in topics ranging from beginning photography to painting/life drawing, sculpture, jewelry, ceramics, 16mm film production, animation, documentary video, writing and publishing fiction, diaries: written and taped, and theater.
37. Susan Milano, quoted in Robert Martin, "Women Keep an Eye on the New Video Art," *Tampa Times*, 21 April 1978.
38. The names apparently came from a listing in a magazine called *Dumping Place*, which was created after a video conference at Livingston College in April 1972, and was an attempt at centralizing video information. Susan Milano, cited in Betancourt, "Women's Video Festival at the Kitchen," n.p.

39. Milano, interview. Also described in Victoria Costello, "The Context of Video," 18.
40. These figures are approximate and were computed with the aid of Susan Milano, who helped distinguish some titles as experimental or documentary. Others were more mysterious, and Milano could not remember their exact genres, for example: Jackie Cassen, *Portrait of Charlotte Moorman* (counted in my totals as a documentary), Tia Castner, *Personality*, and Jennifer Sloan, *Central Park* (both counted here as experimental, based on Milano's best guess). Milano, interview.
41. Maryse Holder, "Women's Video Festival," *Off Our Backs* 3.2 (October 1972): 18.
42. When the festival traveled out of state it received more mainstream press attention, as indicated in the reviews in the *Buffalo Evening News* and *Tampa Times* quoted in notes 32 and 36 above.
43. "Going Out Guide," *New York Times*, 5 October 1973.
44. Although the filmed version of *The Stepford Wives* by Bryan Forbes was not released until 1975, the original novel by Ira Levin was published in 1972.
45. Sullivan, "The Second Annual Women's Video Festival," n.p.
46. Betancourt, "Women's Video Festival at the Kitchen," n.p.
47. Ibid.
48. Holder, "Women's Video Festival," 18.
49. Sullivan, "The Second Annual Women's Video Festival," n.p.
50. Janice Cohen, "Women's Media," *Televisions* (1975): 18.
51. Rochelle Shulman, *Filmmaker's Newsletter* 7.3 (January 1974): n.p.
52. Sullivan, "The Second Annual Women's Video Festival," n.p.
53. "The SFSU Women's Communication Coalition and the Women's Center Present Tapes from the New York Women's Video Festival," San Francisco, 1976. Flyer in the possession of Susan Milano, New York City.
54. The video letters became an international project in 1976. They were described in the New York Women's Video Festival catalog for that year as involving a "loose collective of over 75 women using video as a tool for communication and change." *Videography* in September of 1976 provided the following description of the content of the video letters: they contained footage of such events as "a demonstration by radical feminists protesting a local TV station in CA that had run programs on dieting; a witch who fought against the Supreme Court in order to practice her religion; and Yvonne Wanrow, a Washington state woman on trial for killing a man accused of being a child molester."
55. The TeePee Video Space Troupe was a group that met regularly at Shirley Clarke's penthouse at the Chelsea hotel in the 1970s to experiment with video's potential for play, its capacity for live feed, and unique ways of facilitating interaction between people. Members of the troupe were Andy Gurian, Dee Dee Halleck, Wendy Clarke, Bruce Ferguson, David Cort, Bob Harris, Parry Teasdale, Shalom Gorewitz, Susan Milano, and Shridhar Bapat.
56. Parry D. Teasdale, *Videofreex* (Hensonville, NY: Blackdome Press Corp., 1999), 120. Very little has been written about Shirley Clarke and the TeePee Video Space Troupe. A short memoir by Dee Dee Halleck titled "Remembering Shirley: Live from the Chelsea Hotel," appears in *Hand-Held Visions: The Impossible Possibilities of Community Media* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 25–29.
57. The Women's Interart Center Workshop participants were Elaine Brown, Wendy Clarke, Tracy Fitz, Barbara Jabaily, Susan Milano, Christine Noschese, and Anne Eugenia Volkes. Joining them were TeePee Workshop members Bruce Ferguson, Andy Gurian, and Lech Kowalski.
58. Milano, interview.
59. Janet Meyers, "The Celluloid Woman," *Majority Report*, 13 June 1974, 10.
60. The women at San Francisco State University who hosted the traveling show in 1976 also designed two viewing environments for tapes, "Woman's Place is in the Home," and "Woman's Place is in the Media." There are no photographs of the former in Susan

- Milano's collection in New York City, but photographs of the latter show a mannequin's torso with a television for a head and surrounded by an arrangement of video monitors on pedestals topped by plants. An article in a magazine called *Zenger's*, dated 10 November 1976, describes the former environment as a depiction of "the mother-housewife image, complete with pots, pans, and even a stove" (18).
61. As Milano said of herself, "I was a child of television; I never saw it outside the living room." Milano, interview.
 62. Ibid.
 63. Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 86–89.
 64. Vito Acconci, "Television, Furniture, and Sculpture: The Room with the American View," in *Illuminating Video*, ed. Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer, 133.
 65. Maxi Cohen, telephone interview with the author, 2 May 2002.
 66. *Antique* is the first of Lucier's works exploring the idea of inhabiting and the concept of home. Others include *Asylum* (1986–91), *Last Rites Positano* (1995), *House by the Water* (1997), *Floodsongs* (1998–99). For more on Lucier's works concerned with inhabiting, see my articles "The Architecture of Image and Sound: Dwelling in the Work of Mary Lucier," in *Mary Lucier: Art and Performance*, ed. Melinda Barlow (Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), and "No Place Like Home," *Art in America* 88.9 (January 2000): 102–7.
 67. Mary Lucier was married to Alvin Lucier from 1964 through the mid-1970s. She toured with the Sonic Arts Union (Robert Ashley, David Behrman, Alvin Lucier, and Gordon Mumma) when they went to Europe in 1967 and 1969. Shigeko Kubota, married to David Behrman at the time, also participated in Sonic Arts Union performances on these tours.
 68. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon, 1969), xxxiv.
 69. Mary Lucier, interview with the author, 22 June 1992, New York City.
 70. Moira Roth, "The Voice of Shigeko Kubota: 'A Fusion of Art and Life, Asia and America . . .'" in *Shigeko Kubota: Video Sculpture*, ed. Mary Jane Jacob (New York: American Museum of the Moving Image, 1991), 77.
 71. Ilene Segalove, quoted in JoAnn Hanley, introduction to *The First Generation: Women and Video, 1970–1975* (catalog) (New York: Independent Curators Incorporated, 1993), 15.
 72. Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism, 1967–1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 83.
 73. Cohen, interview.
 74. Christine Noschese, telephone interview with the author, 25 April 2003.
 75. Wilding, "Don't Tell Anyone We Did It!" 27.
 76. See the Guerrilla Girls Web site, www.guerillagirls.com.
 77. See Martha M. Lauzen, "The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women in the Top 250 Films of 2001," at www.5050summit.com/stats.html.
 78. In 1973 Susan Milano attended a video screening organized by John Reilly, who was involved at the time with a foreign outreach program about US culture. Reilly showed *Transsexuals* at the screening and invited Milano to introduce a screening of *Tattoo*, which she had brought with her. Dan Forresta, whom she met at the screening, asked her in 1980 to bring a traveling version of the New York Women's Video Festival to the American Cultural Center in Paris. A Belgian producer Milano met while she was there asked her to bring the show to Belgium before she returned to America. This was the final exhibition of any tapes from the New York Women's Video Festival. Susan Milano says her commitment to the festival over its eight years indeed produced burnout, and to remedy that situation she began work at one of the first independent video production houses in New York, Rebo Associates. Susan Milano, interview with the author, 8 November 2000, New York City.
 79. See the Women in the Director's Chair Web site (www.widc.org) for excellent links listing many national and international women's film and video festivals.

80. See Melinda Barlow, "Red, White, Yellow, and Black: Women, Multiculturalism, and Video History," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 17.4 (2000): 297-316.

Melinda Barlow is associate professor of film studies at the University of Colorado, where she received the Boulder Faculty Assembly Excellence in Teaching Award and the Dorothy Martin Woman Faculty Award in 2002. She is the editor of *Mary Lucier: Art and Performance* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), and the author of *Lost Objects of Desire: Video Installation, Mary Lucier, and the Romance of History* (forthcoming from the University of Minnesota Press).

My Bubi, My Zada (dir. Maxi Cohen, 1975), detail. Installed in the exhibition "Jewish Themes/Contemporary American Artists" at the Jewish Museum in New York, 1982. Courtesy Maxi Cohen

