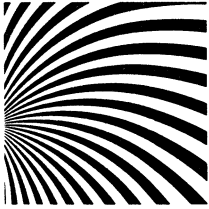


7-1-1979

Amy Greenfield's "Dance for the Camera"

Curtis Carter

Marquette University, curtis.carter@marquette.edu



AMY GREENFIELD'S "DANCE FOR THE CAMERA"

By Curtis L. Carter

Amy Greenfield is not a dancer in the conventional sense of the word. She would never have been picked for a ballet company, and possibly not for a modern dance group either. Determined to become a dancer in some notable sense, however, Greenfield has made the camera an extension of her body. She uses video, film and holography to explore the dimensions of dance that are ordinarily treated by body movement on stage.

In a lecture and workshop at Marquette University on February 28, 1979 entitled "Dance for the Camera," Ms. Greenfield showed video tapes, films, and holograms which centered on the theme of movement and the nude female form. She "performed" in all three media in the sense that her own body was the subject of her presentations.

"The video screen is an electronic field, capturing space-time events in the field," says Greenfield. In video, "You can use the human body as an object, as does Doris Chase or you can take it as a very intimate dialogue between the camera and our sensibility coming through the body."

To illustrate these concepts, Ms. Greenfield presented three video tapes. The first showed her running, rolling, and frolicking through an open field; the second emphasized the sculptural qualities of a male and female exploring each other's bodies. While the shapes of the bodies are sculptural abstractions, the features are highly expressive. The interplay of the bodies is intimate but not sexual in character.

Finally, the third tape presented Ms. Greenfield spinning for 20 minutes with a sheet. Throughout the piece she spins faster and faster, eventually collapsing on the floor and panting. In the closing moments of the tape, the body form disintegrates into an abstraction which continues to convey the energy generated by her whirling body.

Four films, "Transport," "Element," "Dirt" and "Encounter" offer a variation on the theme of "Dance for the Camera." "Transport" portrays the restraints of gravity and other spatial forces on movement, centering on the struggle to carry a body over steep terrain. "Dirt" continues the theme of struggle as the dancer wallows in mud. Although the films achieve a greater sense of texture than the video tapes, they lack the closeness and personal element more successfully rendered in video.

Holograms, or rather integrations, condense many images into a single image. Ms. Greenfield explained that the images in her integrations, which are a varia-

tion of the classical hologram, are first shot at the rate of 500 frames per second. A single integram may contain a reduction of several hundred frames, enabling the viewer to see

(Continued on page 13)

Amy Greenfield
(Cont. from pg. 2)

many images simultaneously in the integram image. The three-dimensional images of the integram provided still another contrast to the video and film images.

While not everyone would call what Ms. Greenfield does dance, it is clear she is expanding the concept of human movement as an art form. In addition her work shows that the interpretive capabilities of the media offer as yet unexplored possibilities to both modern and conventional dance.

