

Gloria Deitcher

*Press Reviews and
Announcements*

ANNOUNCEMENT:
"COMING CLOSER" AT
ANDREW LOGAN
PROJECTS
2025



THERE IS NO END TO GLORIA DEITCHER
BY LEAH KOGEN ELIMELIAH
OCTOBER 27, 2022

SPOTLIGHT

There Is No End to Gloria Deitcher

BY LEAH KOGEN ELIMELIAH
OCTOBER 27, 2022



b"H

Deitcher, in Context/in Conversation

-Sarah Schmerler

I first encountered Gloria Deitcher in Red Hook, Brooklyn, in a tightly knit group of local artists who hone their figure-drawing skills by working from a live model once a week. While the other artists in the room worked fairly conventionally (in charcoal or graphite on blank drawing paper), Deitcher worked, rather unconventionally, drawing and painting on printouts of e-mail conversations, limning nude figures over what, at least from a distance, seemed like unrelated text. Later, I learned that these e-mail nudes would be blown up to three times their size, and that the texts in the e-mails were actually composed of dialogues—correspondences that Deitcher had been having with herself, and sending via e-mail. There would be a small, male figure skirting one margin here, for instance, or the luscious breast on a reclining female nude surmounting some text, there.

These internal dialectics (often about sexuality, or about fantasy, or just quotidian things in her day) would later, she explained, be blown up and exhibited—though she wasn't yet sure of what final form they would take. In the meantime, they hang in her studio, some framed, so not. It seemed to me that Deitcher was, in effect, having a conversation with herself and hanging it on the wall—all the better us to enter into it, and to help her see it afresh.

Subsequent talk revealed that this work was just the tip of the iceberg; Deitcher had long been playing with issues of image and text—first, from her days in her native Canada, where she was a printmaker/artist, and later at Rutgers University in New Jersey when it was a hotbed of radical works by the likes of FLUXUS progenitor Geoff Hendricks, painter Leon Golub, poet Michael Andre, legendary printer Bob Blackburn—all of whom had been her professors—not to mention critic and artist Jonathan Price with whom Deitcher collaborated extensively. Deitcher made feminist images with striations and angry tears through the image, which included anatomical diagrams of labia, her written fantasies about men, her newborn daughter resting on her own naked belly. Clearly, one can see a through-line from her work in the 1970s, during the foment of feminist art, and the present (as divorced from emotion as e-mails and Yahoo inboxes might, at first glance, seem to be). Deitcher likes to work efficiently, folding the real and fine-art aspects of her life, as well as her societal roles—of mother, spouse, now grandmother, and practicing artist—together into one. She tries to do it with an honesty that is unjaundiced, and she isn't afraid to look at herself.

At times, the work would be so cathartic that it would be hard to soak in during one sitting. Such is the case with "Coming Down the Home Stretch," a video the then-30-year-old Deitcher recorded with her mother, soon after her parent's divorce, and in the immediate wake of Deitcher's brother's suicide. The conversational tone is pleasant: the two swill martinis; tell jokes; they clearly enjoy each other's company. But the tone subtly shifts. Closeups on her face reveal that Deitcher is having little revelations about her past (that perhaps she'd rather not)—all the while her mom, a charming conversationalist, re-tells a few family stories with a sort of blinders-on hindsight that Deitcher finds neither honest nor clear. "I don't think that you're being honest," says Gloria, at one point. "I think you're bullshitting me; [that] you had frustrated ambitions."

"But they weren't very important to me," retorts her mother...Those were the happiest years of my life."

"People don't really change," Gloria's then 50-something mom later adds. "Circumstances change."

It's a telling, and sort-of-chilling, moment.

Today, with the "Home Page" series, Deitcher is still clearly engaged in a dialectic with herself, locked in a tough conversation—not only between her own past and present—but with the past of Feminist art and with what it truly means to be a feminist in the Electronic Age. It's going to be interesting to see where these e-mail exchanges take her as they develop. Affecting a communication that is honest, open—and vulnerable—is more important than ever in a world of (so called!) communication technologies. Deitcher is doing it without mawkishness or cynicism. Though it was decades prior, Gloria's mother alludes to as much in that video.

"Being vulnerable is kind of nice, too," she says. "You're vulnerable to the nice things; you're *feeling*."

B"H
DEITCHER, IN
CONTEXT/IN
CONVERSATION
-SARAH SCHMERLER,
2010

REVIEW EXHIBITION PASSAIC COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE BROADWAY GALLERY FROM ARTSPEAK NEW YORK, OCTOBER 1987

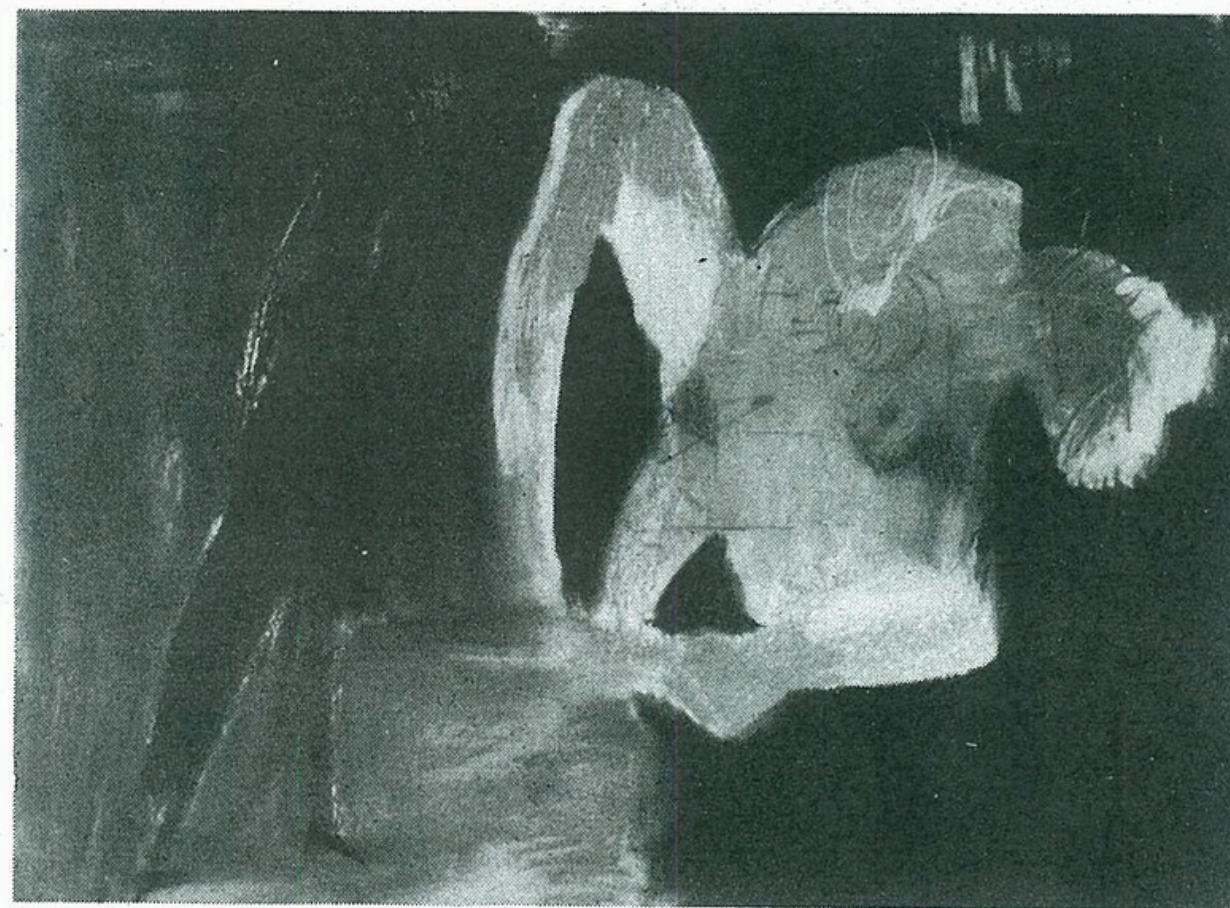
Gloria Deitcher's acute awareness

E.C. Lipton

When an artist has an acute sensitivity to many things in her environment and a special ability to communicate her awareness, she is a rare talent. Gloria Deitcher has already employed the media of painting, drawing and video, and in each she displays the ability to invent techniques that enable her to communicate what that medium is uniquely equipped to divulge. In her solo exhibition at Passaic County Community College, the Broadway Gallery, Paterson, NJ, until October 23, she proves herself able to gather these somewhat disparate elements and methods into a meaningful unity.

In 8 color videos that will be on view at special scheduled times, she explores various aspects of her own relationships—a light hearted commentary with an 'interviewer' about her native Canada in the perspective of the USA, a dialog with her mother, a session with her little daughter etc., each seemingly unorganized yet arriving at a picture of the artist's situation and herself. Deitcher has the gift of setting off in a matter of fact way and yet being able to add layer upon layer of meaning.

Her large drawings of 1985 might appear at first glance also to be simple sketches, chalk pastels where separate areas of color are scumbled over and girls' faces are



Gloria Deitcher, "Against All Odds; a Woman's Ascent," Broadway Gallery

drawn in with a few lines, only partly coming through in "Head Shop." "Hats and Facts" is an even freer composition of images, while "Before Sunset" can be viewed simply as a color abstraction or as

a landscape. The small oils of 1985 are mostly figure studies where their mass and color project an emotional state, also moving away from any sharp focus depiction. All works of 1985 partake of a spirit-

ual, ethereal sense.

Without gainsaying the ethereal, the 1987 paintings differ in character and technique: As grey tones predominate, color is handled in select fashion, rather than for a general effect. A small figure, a leafy twig, a flower appear within a scene where often brush strokes create the surface, and in others, like "Nothing of Mine Is Burning," dabs of paint create an area overlay. In the 1987 drawings, tonalities of grey sweep over the undefined surface; the mixed media reliefs experiment with new contrasts of abstract two and three dimensional form.

All Gloria Deitcher's art is inspired directly from personal experience. Three large canvases illustrate her special gift, which leads her to unique styles and expressions. "Dog in Red Hook" is so much a unit that one must look twice to isolate the outline of her own 'Minka' from the Brooklyn surroundings which she imbues with their own special quality. "Peacock on the Pier" reflects the garish purples that blast out the music of that neighborhood. In "Against all Odds, a Woman's Ascent," one reads in images the struggles of child bearing and rearing etc. on the road of a woman's career. In a modern manner, Gloria Deitcher has the viewer share her actual and emotional experience. That is her achievement—and ours.

Artspeak, New York, October 1, 1987

PROGRAM NOTES FROM VIDEO AROUND TOWN GROUP EXHIBITION, 1983

VIDEO AROUND TOWN

Program Notes

Fall 1983

ALLAN N' ALLEN'S COMPLAINT by Nam June Paik and Shigeko Kubota. color 30 mins.

ALLAN N' ALLEN'S COMPLAINT is an experimental documentary by two highly recognized video artists about Allen Ginsberg and Allan Kaprow. The tape uses footage of these two artists and others. Through a variety of digital and analog processing, and computer editing techniques Kubota and Paik create a unique statement around these contemporary artists and their personalities.

SUDDEN GARDEN by Alex Roshuk. 1982-83 color. 6 mins.

"This tape was inspired by a letter I received from Madison Smartt Bell. I can only paraphrase him now, as his letter is hidden deep within my files. He said, 'I had a dream, Alex, that you made a videotape about a video machine teaching its grandchild how to work.' This videotape is my reconstruction of another man's dream."

--statement by the artist

MISS CANADA INTERVIEW by Gloria Deitcher. color. 15 mins.

"Jonathan Price as the boorish American, interviews flaky, fresh faced Miss Canada. Miss Canada demurely answers such questions as, 'What do we get out of Canada, anyway?' by saying, 'Well there's me!'"

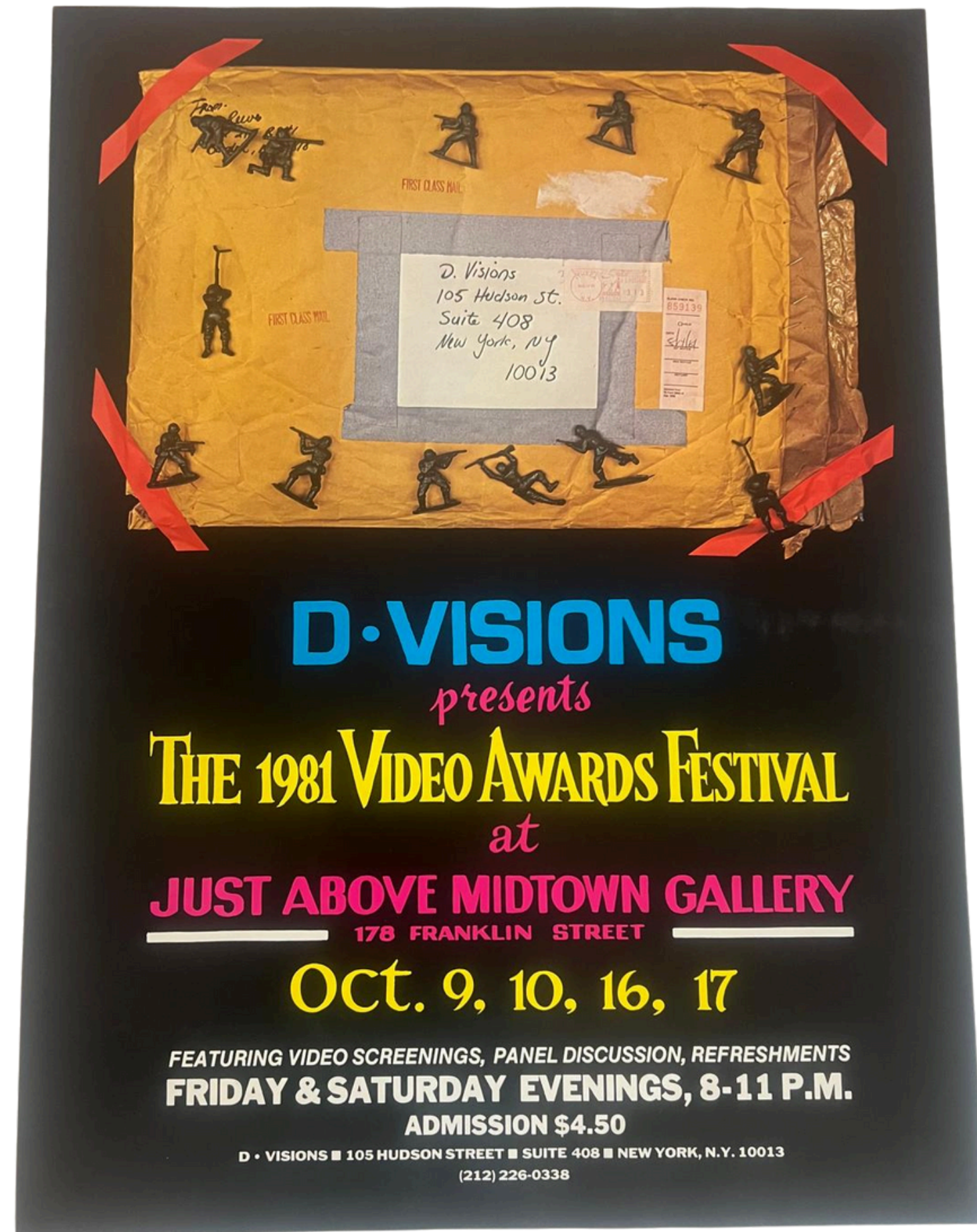
"This tape is guaranteed to offend ardent Canadians who are more than familiar with their own seemingly hopeless struggle for national identity. Miss Canada epitomizes the struggle as she, for example, gropes to name famous Canadian people in the fine arts. The interviewer, unimpressed, quickly changes the subject with a dig. It appears that culture is not a strong card in the Canadian hat."

"Further into the tape Miss Canada preoccupies herself with the French separatist issue. Being the sweet liberal she is, she brings along with her the Quebec flag, as well as the maple leaf. 'Something for them to wave', she whispers. The interview also covers Canadian history, Canadian weather, Quebec sexuality, French Canadian food and of course, the state of the arts."

"The tape is done in interview form, with the addition of a split screen. It is intended for use as supplement to a news program on cable television or as part of a performance piece."

--statement by the artist

THIS POSTER WAS
DESIGNED BY GLORIA
DEITCHER FOR THE
VIDEO FESTIVAL SHE
ORGANIZED AND
CURATED IN 1981



**PRESS RELEASE GLOBAL
VILLAGE EXHIBITION
APRIL 1981
TODAY SHOW CURATED
BY IRVING VINCENT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Irving Vincent (212) 966-7526
March 24, 1981

JOHN REILLY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**GLOBAL
VILLAGE**

JULIE GUSTAFSON
DIRECTOR

454 BROOME STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10013 · 212 966-7526



Charles Addotta

GIMME AN IDEY by Gloria Deitcher

On Saturday, April 4th, Global Village will present TODAY SHOW, a rich variety of recent works by independent producers. The selections of both video and film reflect a wide spectrum of approaches and concepts.

Program

Composer and video producer, Wendy Chambers, dressed as an intergalactic reindeer, is interviewed by Eric Hauben in THE WENDY CHAMBERS SHOW. Video clips from her musical events, PRIME TIME FOR NINE TELEVISIONS, THE KITCHEN and MUSIC FOR CHOREOGRAPHED ROWBOATS are featured in the tape, produced and directed by Bob Wiegand.

HAITI TODAY by John Expo, offers a rare look at some of the conditions of poverty, serfdom, malnutrition and exploitation that exist in the peasant life of that country. Marred by over-zealous narration, the film is nevertheless important for our time.

A NON-PROFIT VIDEO PRODUCTION GROUP AND MEDIA CENTER

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR
CROSSOVERS/VIDEO D.
VISIONS AND JUST
ABOVE
MIDTOWN/DOWNTOWN
, NYC
DECEMBER 1981



D·VISIONS and JUST ABOVE MIDTOWN / DOWNTOWN

REVIEW FOR
CROSSOVERS/VIDEO D.
VISIONS AND JUST
ABOVE
MIDTOWN/DOWNTOWN,
NYC
DECEMBER 1981

VIDEO



Linda Mussman's *Window with Claudia Bruce*, a scene from *Room/Raum* by Doris Chase

Crossovers/Video

D. Visions and Just Above Midtown/
Downtown, NYC
December 11, 1981

Gloria Deitcher, founder and curator of D. Visions Video Art Gallery, curated *Crossovers/Video*, an evening of 10 works by multi-disciplined artists. The women of this presentation were Meredith Monk, Gloria Deitcher, Doris Chase and Amy Greenfield.

Meredith Monk is a composer, choreographer, singer, dancer, actor, director and filmmaker. *Ellis Island* is an excerpt, in video form, of a film in progress, produced and co-directed by Robert Rosen. The piece opens to what appear to be stills from old photographs. But no—we become aware that these are really actors posing in a tableau against a grid. A stick takes measurement as haunting echoes of Yiddish folk songs are heard. The ensemble troupe rushes into the hollow, cavernous building. Yes. Hurry to wait in line—that endless line of waiting, waiting, waiting forever, 125,000 people long. This is a strong, lyrical and poignant work that strikes into the heart of our immigrant heritage.

The next work in the program was *What Price This Sweet Paradise?* by Gloria Deitcher. Mother and daughter are seen in slow superimpositions of extreme close-up

show a photograph-like grain, a device similar to that used in sequences in Antonioni's *Blowup*. The voice-over says, "Before marriage I had lots of time for my work and galleries." As more autobiographical material is revealed, we see the mother and her three-year-old playing games amid a palette of colorizer and SEG-manipulated imagery. As the mother-daughter interaction continues, we hear painful memories of a brother's death. This video-piece is typical of much of women artists' work, using the interior life on the self as a public creative energy force.

Room/Raum, an excerpted video piece by Doris Chase, was written by Linda Mussman and performed by Claudia Bruce. Chase, who often works with performance artists, is now creating a series of theatrical pieces. *Room/Raum* opens with an extreme close-up of a face. The eyes are in a strangely negative, green band of color; the mouth in flesh tone, forehead in blue, chin in black and white. These horizontal bands change position and work to counterpoint the lyrical poetry of the sound. "Many called out to be held on—so hold, so hold on, on..." The tempo of the changing bars of color adds a new dimension to the connections between the words. Technical assistance came from Ann Volkes and Peer Bode.

PROGRAM NOTES FOR PRINCETON UNIVERSITY EXHIBITION CURATED BY SAM HUNTER AND CRITIQUED BY STEPHEN EISENMAN, 1980

VIDEO/TELEVISION

An exhibition of videotapes organized by Stephen F. Eisenman and Prof. Sam Hunter, and made possible by the generosity of Commodities Corporation of Princeton, New Jersey.

Checklist of the Exhibition

- DARA BIRNBAUM, American, born 1946
"Kiss the Girls: Make Them Cry," 7 minutes, color, sound, 1979
"Pop-Pop-Video," 10 minutes, color, sound, 1980
- GLORIA DEITCHER, Canadian, born 1946
"Blow Me a Kiss: A Quickie on Love," 14 minutes, color, sound, 1979
- KIT FITZGERALD, American, born 1953 and JOHN SANBORN, American, born 1954
"Olympic Fragments," 7 minutes, color, sound, 1979
"Resolution of the Eye," 40 minutes, color, sound, 1980
- NAM JUNE PAIK, American, born in Korea 1932
"Lake Placid," 5 minutes, color and black and white, sound, 1980
"Guadalcanal Requiem," 29 minutes, color and black and white, sound, 1977-80
- RICHARD SERRA, American, born 1939
"Television Delivers People," 6 minutes, color, sound, 1973
- BILL VIOLA, American, born 1951
"The Reflecting Pool--A Work in Progress," 58 minutes, color, sound, 1977-80

Video/Television

In the late 1960s, the recognition that the meaning of art was contingent upon external physical and psychological factors led many artists to abandon the fabrication of exhibitable art objects. It was clear to artists such as Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, Richard Serra, and Vito Acconci that the essential character of their work changed when it left their studios; the pristine walls of the art gallery and the hallowed stolidity of the museum conferred a preciousness upon even their most iconoclastic gestures. This process of separating the art work from the life and thoughts of the artist and his environment (a process of fetishizing) was understood by Michael Heizer when he wrote: "The position of art as malleable barter exchange item falters as the cumulative economic structure gluts. The museums and collections are stuffed, the floors are sagging, but the real space still exists" ("The Art of Michael Heizer," Artforum, 8, December 1969, p. 35).

It is an irony of the last decade that the "barter exchange" system condemned by Heizer is today even more evident. By accepting and, indeed, financially supporting the challenges posed by environmental, conceptual, and performance artists, the gallery/museum system has diffused criticism of its capitalist principles. The social criticisms of avant-garde art have been muted by its representation as mere surface embellishment. This dilution of meaning has been a process of political aestheticism.

Video art, the creation by artists of videotapes independent of the television industry, has posed a challenge to the above-mentioned art support system. Infinitely reproducible, videotapes may be broadcast to millions of viewers. They confer neither a privileged status upon their owner nor serve as a "hedge against inflation." And, their social import cannot be blunted, for unlike other avant-garde art forms, the best video art constantly expresses its dialectical nature. Video art is suited to both aesthetic contemplation and mass communication; it maintains an equilibrium between "high" and "low brow" art through its mediation between social ideology (society's false consciousness), represented by television, and the actual social conditions under which viewers live. Although it resembles television, video art

to comprehend the invisibility of certain moments of human understanding and perception. Freud called this process "the work of displacement."

The contrast between video art and commercial television is already apparent. By refusing to render life as a schematic pattern of predictable events, video artists such as Fitzgerald and Sanborn are criticizing the delusion of harmony documented by commercial television.

Other artists in this exhibition reveal the dialectical nature of video art in different ways. They disrupt the expected flow of narrative events (an expectation conditioned by television); reject naturalism and diachrony (achieved through the use of video synthesizers and computers); juxtapose seemingly unrelated images or provide simultaneous and conflicting modes of discourse (stressing the complexity and indeterminacy of events); incorporate actual commercial television programs (as in Dara Birnbaum's satiric use of "The Hollywood Squares" and "Kojak"); use sound as counterpoint to the visuals (encouraging a self-conscious apperception); and, at times, reject the video image in favor of intertitles (taken to its logical conclusion in the work of Serra).

Finally, what is presented by these video artists is the falseness of the conventional attitudes with which we commonly approach our world. Artistic and intellectual compartmentalization, cliché, and stereotype are overturned. If there is no absolute truth to be gleaned, neither is there the presence of a pernicious lie. We are left to wonder whether it is the ephemeral flicker of the television screen, and not the world it commonly represents, that mirrors the processes of life.

Stephen F. Eisenman
Department of Art and Archaeology

Exhibitions and Broadcasts

DARA BIRNBAUM
Selected Exhibitions: Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1976; Kitchen Center, New York, 1977; P.S. 1, New York, 1979; H Hair Inc. Salon de Coiffure, New York, 1980; Musée d'Art Moderne, Grand Palais, Paris, 1980; Museum of Modern Art, Tel Aviv, 1980
Selected Broadcasts: A Space-Rogers Cable TV, Toronto, 1980; VPRO TV, Hilversum, the Netherlands, 1980

GLORIA DEITCHER
Selected Exhibitions: Stable Gallery, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1972; Rutgers University Art Gallery, 1977; Kitchen Center, New York, 1979
Selected Broadcasts: "Blow Me a Kiss," Connecticut Cable TV, 1979; "Bonnie Lucas," Connecticut Cable TV, 1980

KIT FITZGERALD and JOHN SANBORN
Selected Exhibitions: "Projects XVI," Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1978; "Resound: Video Installation," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1979; Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1980
Selected Broadcasts: "Olympic Fragments," WNET, New York, 1980; "Resolution of the Eye," WNET, New York, 1980

NAM JUNE PAIK
Selected Exhibitions: Gallery 22, Düsseldorf, 1959; "Cine-Probe," Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1972; "Open-Circuits: The Future of Television," Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1974
Selected Broadcasts: "The Medium is the Medium," WGBH, Boston, 1969; "Tribute to John Cage," WNET, New York, 1974; "Guadalcanal Requiem," WNET, New York, 1980

RICHARD SERRA
Selected Exhibitions: Galleria La Salita, Rome, 1966; Leo Castelli, New York, 1970; Ace Gallery, Los Angeles, 1976, Kunsthalle, Tübingen, 1977
[Richard Serra's sculptures and graphic art are in most major collections of modern art. Environmental installations may be seen in King City, Canada;

**PRESS RELEASE GLOBAL
VILLAGE GROUP
EXHIBITION
FILM & VIDEO SERIES,
1980**

Friday 24 October 7:30 pm

In an apparent narrative, video effects reveal the multiple psychological dimensions of a woman's thoughts as she dresses. Real dancers, sculptures, paintings and video are combined to create the surreal. A montage of visual memories with the filmmaker's narrative reflections create a deeply moving drama out of this eulogy and farewell to his mother. And it's curious in this diverse grouping to see the influence and cross fertilization that has occurred between video and film, experimental and narrative, narrative and documentary, documentary and experimental.

ART SPHERES by Dennis Darmek
BLOW ME A KISS by Gloria Deitcher
REMEMBERANCE AND GOODBYE
by Bob Cowan
PORTRAITS FROM THE 2'CLOCK
by Fred Simon
FILLER ITEM: AN EVENT FROM THE
NEWSPAPER by Stephan Marc Klein

Admission \$2.50, free to members of
Global Village.

global
village

**video
& film**
series



454 Broome Street

**ANNOUNCEMENT
VIDEO
FESTIVAL AT
A.I.R., 1980**

VIDEO FESTIVAL

**6 EVENINGS IN NOVEMBER AT A.I.R.
AT 8:00 PM 63 CROSBY ST. NYC. 90**

**NOVEMBER 8
THURSDAY**

**LAURIE ANDERSON
CECELIA CONDIT
LAURA FOREMAN
ANN SARGENT-WOOSTER
ANN VOLKES**

**NOVEMBER 17
SATURDAY**

**BARBARA BUCKNER
GLORIA DEITCHER
JULIE GUSTAFSON
JOHN REILLY
JUDITH HENRY**

PRESS RELEASE FOR THE KITCHEN CENTER CURATED BY JONATHAN PRICE, 1978

The Kitchen Center for Video and Music
press release

VIDEO VIEWING ROOM

Feb 1-10 Meet the Portrait

Feb 13-24 Video Laughing

Feb 27-
Mar 3 A New Visual Language

Each show Tues-Sat, 1-6pm
Free

The Kitchen Center
484 Broome Street

The Kitchen Center's new Video Viewing Room features three excellent exhibitions in February: MEET THE PORTRAIT, VIDEO LAUGHING and A NEW VISUAL LANGUAGE. The room is open Tues-Sat from 1-6pm; there is no charge for admission.

Video as a medium is so fast and flexible that it allows artists to make quick sketches of friends and instant studies of themselves, their children and their acquaintances. MEET THE PORTRAIT offers a variety of approaches to the video portrait. A simple and straightforward approach is taken by Alan Hertzberg, a photographer who took up video to make an extensive portrait of a black welfare mother who goes to college. The Kitchen show features selected chapters from the resulting three-hour anthropological investigation, THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MISS JANE DUBOIS. These chapters raise questions about Hertzberg's relationship to the material and to his subject. Jonathan Price's interviews with two New York artists take a more complicated view of video portraiture: Joellen Bard discusses her childhood, her current work, and the artists' movement; Ken Glickfield displays and pokes around his see-through sculpture, inventing video tricks, while reminiscing about his days in the theater. Richard Kostelanetz's self-portrait, RECYCLINGS, recycles his own work in Cagean style and then goes further to discuss the relationship between his video and music. Gloria Deitcher, a Canadian artist who has recently moved to New York, explores her own past and her child's presence in a multi-layered tape, WHAT PRICE SUCH PARADISE. The artist shows herself reflecting on her pregnancy, then playing with her child in the studio, moving back and forth between the anxious expectation and the warm reality. Finally, Phil Jones (director of the Ithaca Video Project) and Gunilla Mallory Jones give us a portrait of Jan Rhodes Norman, a performer from age three, who quit her Broadway career at seventeen because she fell in love. Now Jan manages a baby clothes store; she looks back on her break with a stage Mom and the star's life in JAN TAKE TWO.


In addition to the daily round-robin of tapes, MEET THE PORTRAIT offers viewers a chance to compare the videotape with the subject. On February 5 and 10, artists will appear with the people they portrayed. See the video portrait, then meet the subject portrayed. February 5th

REVIEW OF FAMILY ALBUM EXHIBITION AT LE CENTRE DE CONCEPTION GRAPHIQUE FROM LA PRESS MONTREAL, 1973

album" de Gloria Deitcher. Un monde de réminiscences, de recherche du passé dans un esprit nouveau émane de tout cela. Ses personnages sont parfois dessinés ou directement représentés par des photographies qu'elle intègre à la gravure. Ils sont cernés, à l'occasion, par des tirets ou des zones de couleur qui accentuent davantage le principe d'élaboration de l'oeuvre. Ainsi, lorsqu'elle inscrit à côté des personnages en noir et blanc le nom ou la fonction sociale de ces personnages, lorsqu'elle précise la couleur des vêtements, elle accentue la vie de sa création et laisse libre cours à notre imagination comme le ferait, par exemple, Arakawa. C'est un ouvrage assez exceptionnel que nous donne cette jeune artiste.



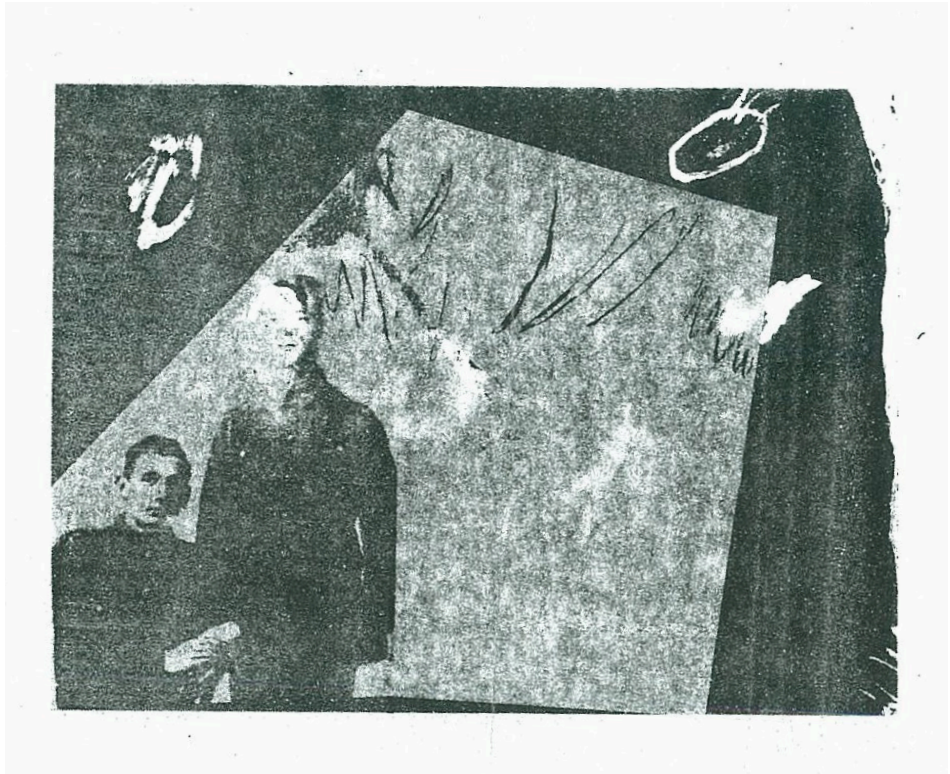
CATALOGUE LISTING 24 ARTISTES DU QUEBEC, 1973



articles par / by *Heyer, Levine, Pontbriand & Vallières*

24 ARTISTES du QUEBEC

MICHAEL HASLAM	
CHRISTIAN KNUDSEN	
STEPHEN LACK	
MICHEL LECLAIR	
SUZY LAKE	
KELLY MORGAN	
NANCY NICOL	
JEAN NOEL	
GUNTER NOLTE	
FRANCOISE SULLIVAN	
SERGE TOUSIGNANT	
ROBERT WALKER	
IRENE WHITTOME	
WILLIAM VAZAN	
JAN ANDRIESSE	
ALLAN BEALY	
PIERRE BOOGAERTS	
EVA BRANDL	
TOM DEAN	
JEAN-MARIE DELAVALLE	
FRANCOIS DERY	
JENNIFER DICKSON	
GLORIA DEITCHER	
CHARLES GAGNON	



In selecting works for this exhibition, it was decided to include instances of the use of the photograph in collage, assemblage and print-making. (The quite separate issue of the photograph as a source of painting has been avoided.) Over the last decade, print-making has witnessed a vast proliferation of photo-based imagery of the kind exemplified by the work of Pierre Ayot and Gloria Deitcher-Kropsky. In *Family Album*, Deitcher-Kropsky uses as her starting point the kind of photograph characterized by Walter Benjamin as a cult object — one made with no conscious artistic intent and usually to record some social event or ritual. The popularity of such images may be attributable to something more than nostalgia: frequently they show a capacity to maintain their original magic through all manner of visual manipulations.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF GALLERY B EXHIBITION FROM ARTS CANADA, 1972

ARTS CANADA / 12

GALERIE B Gravures et multiples 2175 Crescent, Montréal, Qué., Canada, (514) 844-6950



FALL EXHIBITIONS
ELLSWORTH KELLY
GLORIA DEITCHER
JOSEF BEUYS

BURNABY ART GALLERY
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7TH BURNABY BIENNIAL

CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES - SEPTEMBER 21

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Hans Bellmer
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ARTICLE FROM VIDEOGRAPHY MAGAZINE BY VICTOR ANCONA



VIDEO ART VICTOR ANCONA

Gloria Deitcher: Exposing Human Frailties

The month before last, I presented an overview of Gloria Deitcher's entrepreneurial goals in establishing D.Visions, a profit-oriented video and graphic arts gallery in New York City. The Canadian-born artist has a relatively small collection of her own videotapes, several of which I viewed in her intimate gallery. I did not then have the time or space to discuss her work beyond commenting that "they are tapes you never forget."

I was fascinated by a dichotomy in her autobiographical tapes. They offer an objective, logical, intellectual inquiry set against past emotions that distort and diffuse present feelings. Her personal tapes sear reality by presenting raw life tempered with the saving graces of humor, naiveté, candor and intelligent search.

Deitcher uses video's unique capacity for layering images and sounds to offer us tapes involving her present and past experiences simultaneously. Unfortunately, the montaging sometimes drowns both time perspectives in a cacophony of indiscernible images and words. Happily, some people are better than others at untangling sense density. The inventory of Deitcher tapes includes works that give the artist ample room to display her talents as graphic artist, performer, humorist, feminist and political observer. All should be seen. Here are my comments on two representative works.

A Portrait of Bonnie Lucas

Fortunately, the audio in this tape is not layered, permitting the intermittent autobiographical comments the subject

makes in her dulcet voice to be easily comprehensible. Bonnie Lucas talks about the two parts of her life: as artist, as waitress. The best parts of the tape are the collages of materials which embody values of femininity—delicacy, sweetness, softness.

To earn a living she must resort to waiting on tables. She casually recites her hopes and fantasies, frustrations and disappointments about being an artist in New York City; then, as eloquently, she talks about earning a living as a waitress. Gloria Deitcher, with exquisite artistry, successfully blends Lucas' two worlds by layering images of Bonnie Lucas with the accoutrements of her two disparate lives.

This delicately human, revealing, video portrait of a woman as artist could not have been made by a man. The fact that the maker was an empathetic woman allowed Lucas to be herself without risking ridicule. The casual, sometimes hesitant Lucas voice, plus the layering of natural images of the artist over her work, combine to make this a totally harmonious tape. I hope that Gloria Deitcher's plan to do another interview with Bonnie Lucas, documenting her two-year progress as an artist, will come to fruition.

Coming Down the Home Stretch

It is unusual for me to quote, in full,

comments written by an artist regarding his or her work, but because this is a highly personal work, I am compelled to do so.

"*Coming Down the Home Stretch* is a straight interview between the artist and her mother. Strains of *The Drinking Song* from *La Traviata* open the interview and we see a blonde, well-dressed woman in her early fifties seated next to a younger woman wearing jeans. Both of them are imbibing gin. The interview begins with the mother telling the daughter a Hungarian joke about how to keep one's lover. The tape continues in a light vein and gradually becomes more personal, more intense as the mother discusses the breakup of her marriage, her son's suicide, aging parents and other grim realities of her life. The content of the interview intensifies as does the overt struggle for power between mother and daughter.

"The tape is 45 minutes long and there is rarely a pause in the flow of conversation. Special effects are sparingly used toward the end of the tape. Here, intimacy between mother and daughter is visually demonstrated by the merging of both their heads. If one is to fully appreciate this tape it is necessary to see it from beginning to end."

Without using pretentious, obscure words and convoluted phrases, Gloria

has simply and accurately described her tape. However, she only referred to the tip of the iceberg. What lay beneath the "interview," and it takes time and some patience to perceive it, was a horrendous, beyond-words battle between mother and daughter.

At first I was relaxed, not knowing what to expect, but as the tape rolled on, I became increasingly embarrassed, and I felt guilty and uncomfortable at being made a witness to such a private, lurid affair. I soon felt better, realizing that I had been asked to watch this intramural warfare by one of the protagonists. This gave me the needed distance to properly judge the tape as a video composition created by an artist.

Gloria Deitcher created the tape while she was an artist-in-residence at the A-V department of the University of Bridgeport. "My mother and I stayed at a hotel the night before the taping. I played an audiocassette for her, a tape I had made recalling my childhood years in order to trace where my influences came from. This gave my mother some inkling as to my perceptions."

Since she was on camera the next day, Gloria gave the production crew free rein. They instinctively placed her mother in a more dominant position within the frame—underlining, in a sense, her ascendent role during the

entire taping. The blending of their heads toward the end of the tape, supposedly connoting intimacy, proved absurd because their unresolved confrontation, with its absence of trust, could not have produced rapport except on a superficial level.

The tape is supposed to present the two women as pals, although one is the mother, the other the daughter. But, as Gloria said, "You cannot truly be both." She seemed scarred by the real-life attempt. Ironically, although the mother appears to dominate the "interview," the daughter ultimately becomes the aggressor by producing the tape and making it public.

The work raises ethical questions that learned individuals might hotly debate: Did the maker exploit a family situation? Is the tape an invasion of privacy? Was the tape made at the expense of other members of the family? What is the value of having it all hang out?

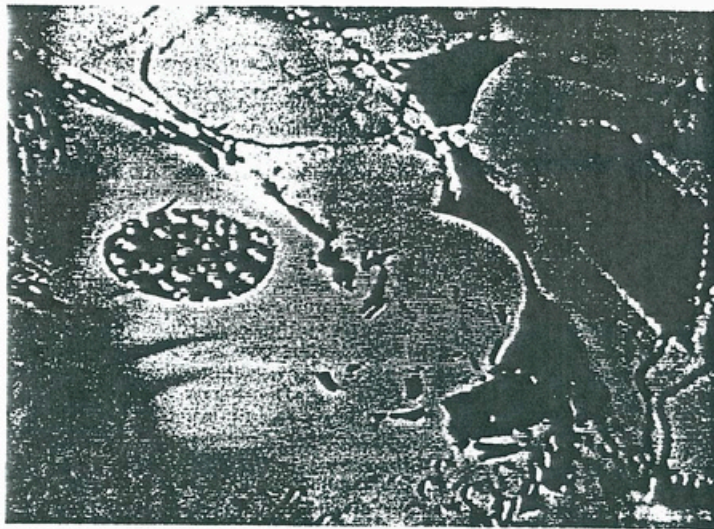
Simple production values helped to focus on the nuances and subtle changes and reactions taking place between the two subjects. Even the pauses in the extremely fluid conversation were silently explosive and pregnant with meaning. While Deitcher acknowledges a certain amount of artifice about the project, both mother and daughter were as natural as one would expect. Nothing

they said to one another could be faulted. They were highly civilized and occasionally displayed sensitivity for one another, but the sum total of their interaction proved a dreadful experience to watch. They were two intelligent, articulate women jousting in jest on the surface, but being self-protective and fiendish underneath. No need here for special effects! The 45-minute session was not edited; the extended real time helped to intensify the encounter.

Video, unlike film, added to the immediacy, the reality of the struggle. The undeclared war snares us; yet we remain frustrated and immobile, not knowing what to do with the knowledge spilling out before us. Can we apply it to our own lives? According to Gloria Deitcher, the tape may have certain universal qualities that people can relate to, but she doesn't think others have the same kind of openness with their mothers.

"We did not have the same boundaries that most mothers and daughters have in terms of what to say or not to say to one another. It was an unhealthy relationship that I consciously exploited on camera," said Gloria. Several segments of the conversation revealed the empty pretense of their so-called openness and intimacy.

"In the tape, my mother was very much the woman, the all-knowing woman, while I was the skinny little girl in her



A still from "A Portrait of Bonnie Lucas."

eyes. Part of the interview was a process for me going in the direction of being a woman in my own right. It was very important for me to get to that point, otherwise whatever art I produce would not be mine."

Deitcher has yet to be freed of her mother, a woman who appears, at least

on tape, to be a charming manipulator and hidden aggressor. The mother seems so hung up on upholding "family tradition" that, in the process, she loses the very family she attempts to hold together.

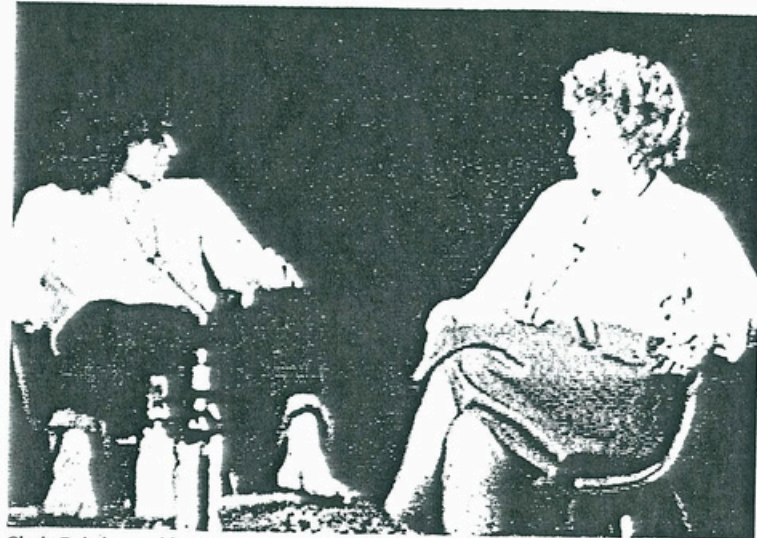
I believe it was an unconscionable act to have the tape shown on cable TV without the father having seen it first. "My

mother asked me not to show the tape to my father," said Gloria. If, according to the artist, *Coming Down the Home Stretch* was an eye-opener, why not make a similar tape with the father? The father-daughter tape would probably be as revealing. It might even give the maker and viewers another perspective on the Deitcher family saga.

At this stage of their interrelated lives, the mother appears to have pulled herself together more than the daughter has. Other viewers may arrive at other conclusions. That's what makes this tape so strong. It is deep enough to demand more than a quick, simplistic, surface interpretation. But it is also elusive because we are not privy to the full lives in question. We simply watch a 45-minute video segment, frozen in time, about very complicated, unresolved human dynamics.

This tape is more than a mere exercise in confrontation. Going beyond the boundaries of art, it touches on family relations, women's studies and psychology. The tape's subtlety distances it from the more egotistical, self-proclaiming, angry tapes made by some artists. Even if it's frustrating to watch, it engages us because it does not overtly and boringly proclaim: "Look at me, I'm unhappy."

Gloria Deitcher offers us an unadulterated, concentrated essence of life from



Gloria Deitcher and her mother in "Coming Down the Home Stretch."

one generation to the next without pontificating on what our conclusions should be. The tape's structure deftly weaves the past with the present. What lessons there are to be learned for the future are left for the viewer to divine.

There is tension evident in all of Gloria Deitcher's autobiographical tapes—the

tension of life in process. Her work waivers between sentiment and sentimentality, strength and weakness, taking and giving, naiveté and sophistication, resentment and self-discovery. Her work is self-referential, dealing with various levels of her consciousness. Video is her medium for self-actualization.