

# The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel: 212-708-9400 Cable: MODERNART Telex: 62370 MODART ENTRANCE at 18 W. 54

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## PERFORMANCE VIDEO RETURNS TO MoMA WITH SIX NEW PROGRAMS

Dance, music, poetry, and ritual provide the style and substance of the works in PERFORMANCE VIDEO, a series of six programs that will be on display in The Museum of Modern Art's Video Gallery from July 1 through August 16.

A development of the cultural innovations of the late 1960s, performance video is a truly hybrid art form. Rather than simply documenting a performance, the artists who work in this medium design performances especially for the architectural space of video, creating an interaction among the artist, the camera, and the viewer. Last year's highly popular exhibition of performance video at the Museum gave a survey of the short history of this art form, from the early artist-with-dog performances of William Wegman and the simple but elegant works of Joan Jonas through the rock video of David Byrne, Laurie Anderson, and Captain Beefheart. This year's PERFORMANCE VIDEO will be devoted to a diverse and innovative group of recent works.

The outstanding modern-dance choreographer Twyla Tharp will be represented by Bad Smells, a videotape produced by Tharp with John Sanborn and Kit Fitzgerald and directed by Tharp for the camera rather than for the stage. Working to a score by Glenn Branca, Tharp has in fact brought the camera--or cameras--directly into the dance through the use of portable video recorders and superimpositions done later in editing. In a much different approach to dance, director Kenneth Robins has transported Tchaikovsky to the rural Midwest with Swan Lake, Minnesota, choreographed by Loyce Houlton. As the enchanted swan, prima ballerina Naomi Sorkin appears with her entourage in traditional ballet costume--but her adoring prince is a farmer in a checked shirt and overalls, her nemesis is a carnival worker at the State Fair, and the setting is not the stage but the Minnesota fields and woods. Although all this may sound like parody, the work

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is, as Anna Kisselgoff noted in The New York Times, delightful, moving, and faithful to the spirit of the original.

Charles Atlas and Douglas Dunn present what they describe as a "tilted" reality in Secret of the Waterfall, an elegant and humorous work produced by WGBH in Boston. Shot on indoor and outdoor locations on Martha's Vineyard, the work combines narrative images with poetry by Anne Waldman and Reed Bye. The connections between the words and images are sometimes literal, sometimes tantalizingly oblique. A selection of tapes by John Sanborn also plays with ways of combining images and sounds--in this case, with the music of Philip Glass. The rhythmic complexity and tonal brilliance of Glass's scores give Sanborn the opportunity for a fast-paced, virtuoso display of video artistry.

In Unbashed Heroics, a piece that comes closest of all the works in this series to the genre of performance art, the team of Randy and Berenicci records a performance of highly stylized gestures set against a simple background. Through its formal investigation of social ritual and control, the work explores themes that have run through the artists' previous, narrative videotapes. John Sturgeon, too, demonstrates a concern with ritual, though of a more mysterious kind, in Spine/Time. Influenced greatly by alchemical theory, Sturgeon presents an evocation of the four elements through his performances in varied indoor and outdoor locations.

Each program in PERFORMANCE VIDEO will run continuously on its scheduled day of the week. The Video Gallery is located on the second floor of the Museum's West Wing.

The Museum of Modern Art's Video Program is directed by Barbara London, Assistant Curator in the Department of Film. Video programs are made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts.

A complete schedule is attached. For further information, the public may call (212) 708-9500.

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For further PRESS information, please contact Stuart Klawans, Film Press Representative, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019 (212) 708-9752.

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PERFORMANCE VIDEO

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July 1 - August 16, 1983

Randy and Berenicci, Unbashed Heroics. 1982. 20 minutes. Mondays.

John Sanborn, Phil Glass: Act III, and A Gentleman's Honor. 1983. 15 minutes. Tuesdays.

Kenneth Robins, Swan Lake, Minnesota. 1983. 30 minutes. Produced by ABC Video Entertainment. Thursdays.

John Sturgeon, Spine/Time. 1982. 20 minutes. Fridays.

Charles Atlas and Douglas Dunn, Secret of the Waterfall. 1983. 29 minutes. A WGBH Production. Saturdays.

Twyla Tharp, Bad Smells. 1982. 17 minutes. Produced by Twyla Tharp, Kit Fitzgerald, and John Sanborn. Sundays.

Video Gallery/Second Floor, West Wing  
The Museum of Modern Art  
18 West 54 Street  
New York, New York 10019

the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, and Cora Rosevear, Assistant Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, the gallery will remain open through September 13, 1983.

The Museum of Modern Art opened the North Wing galleries at this time so that a greater number of masterpieces from the Museum's collection could be on view during the busy summer months. In September, these galleries will be closed to the public pending the opening of the new, expanded Museum of Modern Art in mid-1984.

MIRO AND PICASSO offers an overview of the creative talents of these two Spanish-born artists. Presenting works from the 1920s to the 1960s, the exhibition includes such well-known works as Picasso's 1932 painting

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