Inside Voices: Preserving the Work of Maxi Cohen
(1982-1994)

By

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Contents

Illustrations and Graphics

Figure 0.2 – Terminal home window with matching checksum.

Figure 0.3 – Cohen comments on her use of video: "It has a different look from the romantic veneer of film." New York Post, May 24, 1988.

Figure 0.4 – From the program guide to "The Independents" a TV program on The Learning Channel. October 1986.

Figure 0.5 – Intimate Interviews: *Sex in Less than Two Minutes* reviewed by Dr. Don Fidler. Hospital and Community Psychiatry, February 1987.

Figure 0.6 – *Second Grade Dreams* reviewed by Jack Hitt. The Villager, June 9, 1983.

Figures 0.7 and 0.8 – The Museum of Modern Art's press release and schedule for DREAM, a video series featuring *The Edge of Life*. Curated by Barbara London, March 1990.

Figures 0.9 - 0.12 – The Museum of Modern Art's press release and schedule for VIDEO: TWO DECADES, a video series featuring *How Much is Really True?* Curated by Barbara London, October 1992.

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Introduction

Since the 1970s, Maxi Cohen has been creating humanely stirring works of art across various mediums. Following early work on public access television and the success of her 1978 documentary *Joe and Maxi*, Cohen began to focus her work on video as her means of expression. In eight works made between 1982-1994, Cohen created projects that would screen around the world on both television and at video/film festivals. These eight works trace the artist's experimentations with confessional documentary, hybrid fiction, and reality-TV style travelogue. Prior to work on this thesis project, none of these works had been digitized at the preservation level, with some having remained unseen for nearly three decades.

In this text I will detail the preservation of these eight works completed as my thesis project for the Moving Image Archiving and Preservation M.A. program at New York University. I have chosen to facilitate the preservation of seven short video works and one feature length video work by New York City-based artist and filmmaker Maxi Cohen. Cohen's work is of indescribable value and importance. Due to these video works masters being held on magnetic media, the need for their preservation is timely and necessary. This thesis will detail the eight works that have been preserved followed by a thorough analysis and description of the preservation process. In describing the eight works and their original materials, the thesis also includes quotes from Cohen on her artistic intent in creating the works, and reflections as she looks back on them.

I first encountered Maxi Cohen's work while completing a collection assessment for her as an assignment for my Collection Management class in the Spring of 2019. In going through Cohen's on-site media holdings, I realized that there were boxes of magnetic media that if unpreserved, would eventually deteriorate beyond playability. Following the collection

assessment, I began to explore Cohen's work and not only found much of it deeply moving but also realized that it deserved to be seen and enjoyed. Thus, I met with Cohen and went over a list of her video works, noting which had yet to be preserved. Working with Cohen and a digitization vendor, we have successfully preserved these works so that they are accessible for scholarship and screening.

COVID-19 – Preserving Media During a Pandemic

As the completion of the preservation project was imminent, the world was altered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the digitization of the videos was completed prior to the outbreak, the initial plan for the migration of the files from external hard drive to the server located at Maxi Cohen's studio was complicated. With Cohen no longer taking visitors, I will be unable to migrate the files myself. While the data is secured, one must plan the completion of work during the pandemic even though no end date is currently in sight. Thus, the project is presented with two solutions. The first, is that I upload the access files to the Internet Archive as planned and wait for ease of pandemic restrictions to migrate the files to Cohen's server. The second option, and perhaps the most plausible, is to upload the access files as planned, and to send Cohen detailed instructions (See Appendix I) for migrating the data and running the MD5 checksums herself.

Part 1: Artist Biography

In a career spanning over five decades, Maxi Cohen has created influential works of film, video, photography, and art. Cohen was born and raised in Vineland, New Jersey, where she grew up in a community comprised of Jewish chicken farmers and Italian tomato farmers. Growing up, Cohen knew that she wanted to be an artist, but did not find her medium until she went to university. Cohen was impressed by an animated film she had seen on television and noted that the filmmaker had studied at New York University. This inspired Cohen to apply for and attend NYU's filmmaking program; however, she was surprised once there, to notice that there were no animation courses offered. Cohen attended NYU for her freshman and sophomore years from 1967-1969, before traveling to Israel to study at the Hebrew University. In her sophomore year, rather than make a required film on "how to get through a doorway", she raised funds and made a film about a community of Black Jews who escaped the anti-Semitism of Philadelphia living in the Pine Barrens of South Jersey.

During her junior year abroad in Israel studying at the Hebrew University, Cohen began working in television, animating the weather for the first Israeli TV station. For her senior year, Cohen returned to the United States and studied art in the department created by Sister Mary Corita Kent, at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles. As word spread that these radical, activist nuns would be excommunicated, Cohen returned to NYU in 1971 to graduate. It was there that Cohen made an animated short film, coloring film cells by hand using a makeshift animation stand. It took Cohen three months of work to create the three-minute animated film titled *Nature Morte aux Fruits* (1971), an experience she found not only deeply time consuming

but also isolating.[1] The film is currently held in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

It was during her attendance at NYU that Cohen experienced criticism that contributed to her embrace of magnetic media. Her then professor Haig Manoogian[2] told her that women have no place as filmmakers.[3] Cohen recalls, "This was in my senior year at NYU. The film department was so misogynist that my professor Haig Manoogian – whom Marty Scorsese had dedicated *Raging Bull* (1980) to – had said to me, I should probably leave school because what could I do as a woman? The best I could become was an editor, and the best grade I could get was a 'C'. The guys in the film department just pushed you around. Made you feel like nothing as a woman."[4] After spending months working on the short-animated film, Cohen was introduced to video. She recalls, "Then one day somebody introduced me to video. It was the very beginning of reel-to-reel portapacks. It was amazing because you do a half hour in a half an hour. So, there I was spending four months making a three-minute film all by myself in isolation and recognizing that I could make a half hour in a half hour. There was no hierarchy, it was the beginning. So, nobody knew more than anybody else. There was a level of equality between men and women and there was a kind of freedom about it."[5]

During her final semester at NYU, Cohen met George Stoney[6], who was constructing The Alternate Media Center, initiating the first wave of public access television producers.

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[1] Maxi Cohen (artist) in discussion with the author, February 2020.
[2] Haig Manoogian was a film professor at NYU. He taught Martin Scorsese, who's film *Who's That Knocking at My Door* (1967) Manoogian co-produced.
[3] Melinda Barlow, "Feminism 101: The New York Women's Video Festival, 1972-1980," *Duke University Press*, Camera Obscura, 18, no. 3 (2004).
[4] Maxi Cohen (artist) in discussion with the author, February 2020.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Stoney (1916-2012) was a documentary filmmaker and pioneer of public-access television.

Cohen was inspired by Stoney's work in Canada where he worked on Challenge for Change for the National Film Board. She was stirred by the idea of offering the public access to the air waves. Following her graduation in 1971, Cohen went to Cape May, New Jersey where she created their first local television series, *Are You There?* Utilizing magnetic media, Cohen gave Cape May residents access to tell their stories on local public access television, wondering if giving residents access to the airwaves would create social change. At the time, the National Cable Television Association declared the work "the first example of community television".[7] Later, as a part of The Alternate Media Center, Cohen became the director of the Video Access Center, the first public access facility in the United States.

Starting production in 1974, Cohen would make her hit film *Joe and Maxi* (co-directed by Joel Gold) on 16mm, released in 1978. The film examines Cohen's relationship with her father following the death of her mother. The concept was one that Cohen had as early as her first years at NYU. Cohen decided to shoot on film because of the difficult nature of editing video – which literally involved cutting the tape and taping pieces together. Instead, Cohen strived to bring the intimacy purported by video to her film. The film was a breakthrough in the documentary form and stirred controversy due its explicitly personal and confrontation style, its intimacy shocking even the great Direct Cinema filmmaker Jean Rouch whom she met at a festival screening of the film.[8] The film was widely lauded and is still screened to this day.

While working on the video works preserved as a part of this thesis, Cohen was commissioned by ZDF, German Television to make a segment for the omnibus feature length film *Seven Women, Seven Sins* (1986). In this film, each director was tasked with making a short

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[7] Maxi Cohen (artist) in discussion with the author, March 2020.
[8] Maxi Cohen (artist) in discussion with the author, February 2020.

film depicting one of the Catholic theologies of the seven deadly sins. For the project, Cohen directed *Anger*, while other chapters included Chantal Akerman's *Sloth* and Bette Gordon's *Greed*.

Meanwhile, Cohen helped to establish Electronic Arts Intermix, one of the first distributors of video art in the world. She later co-founded the Independent Feature Project with Sandra Schulberg[9], to represent independent filmmakers using a model focusing on various publicity methods to promote exhibition and distribution. In 1980, with Schulberg and a core group of filmmakers, they formed First Run Features, the first company to distribute American independent films to theaters.[10]

Cohen's most recent work was as a co-producer of the 2018 documentary *From Shock to Awe*. Cohen's upcoming projects include a multi-screen art installation titled *A Movement in Water* as well as the in-progress 4K restoration of *Joe and Maxi* (1978). During the COVID-19 pandemic Cohen is taking photographs and posting short digital videos on her Instagram account. Furthermore, Cohen sparked the painting of Soho after its looting on May 31, 2020, that resulted in over 200 artists of all ages, races and sexual identity painting over 450 boards throughout Soho creating an open-air museum.[11]

Some of Cohen's work is currently held at: Museum of Modern Art (New York), Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Museum of Fine Arts (Houston), Israel Museum (Jerusalem), The Paley Center for Media (New York), and the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa).

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[9] Schulberg is a film producer and the current Executive Director of IndieCollect, a non-profit offering restoration and distribution services to American independent filmmakers.
[10] "Maxi Cohen," Women Make Movies, 2014, wmm.com/filmmaker/Maxi+Cohen/.
[11] For more information, see artatatimelikethis.com/art-2soho.

Cohen's Multimedia & Video Installation Exhibitions include:

- 2020 – *Luminous Sunrise,* The Sagamore Hotel South Beach, Miami, FL
- 2019 – *God/Ego - Who's Speaking?*, Every Women Biennial, New York, NY
- 2019 – *Opalescence*, The Assemblage, New York
- 2019 – *Specimens from the Amazon*, The Assemblage, New York
- 2018 – *God/Ego - Who's Speaking?*, The Assemblage, New York
- 2015 – Experiential Immersion, Prelude, Lightbox
- 2014 – Mating Season, The Lodge, New York
- 2013 – Aurora's Ring, 13 Indigenous Grandmothers Council, Stockholm
- 2012 – Amazon Rainforest: Paradise Paradox, Westwood Gallery New York
- 2011 – Water, Council of 13 Indigenous Grandmothers, Brasilia
- 2010 – Southern New Jersey Artists Redux, Stedman Gallery, Rutgers University, Camden Amazonia, Westwood Gallery, New York
- 2002 – My Bubi, My Zada, Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 2000 – *Seven Women, Seven Sins: ANGER*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
- 2000 – Open Ends: Video Time, *Happy Birthday America*, Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 2000 – Open Ends: Video Time, *Cape May: End of Season*, Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 1991 – My Bubi, My Zada, West Virginia Art Museum, Morgantown
- 1982 – My Bubi, My Zada, The Jewish Museum, New York

Part 2: Context and History

2.1 Women Artists and the Embrace of Video

The embrace of video art began in the 1967 when Sony released the Portapack. Previously, the primary method for creating moving image art was film. With the implementation of the Portapack, artists were no longer faced with the increasingly expensive and lengthy process of shooting film. The handheld recording device allowed for the capture of both audio and video. Furthermore, making the video camera even more enticing, it could be operated by a single person. The often-painstaking process of loading a film camera and having the celluloid processed was no longer an issue. Portapack users could record on magnetic media and view it on a monitor immediately after it was recorded. In addition, the medium presented the opportunity to reuse recording tape, an option that did not exist with celluloid film. In her book *Video/Art: The First Fifty Years*, former video art curator Barbara London writes of the Portapack, "It offered an immediately accessible, instantly replayable image with sound, which made it possible to capture the elusive present as recordable 'real time,' a phrase that seemed to be on everyone's lips."[12] The ability to record in "real time" quickly attracted documentarians to the medium. Some video makers – equipped with their Portapacks – ventured into the streets to experiment with guerilla-style video production. In *Illuminating Video*, David Ross writes of video art's "radical character".[13] Though embraced by many artists, video was often initially considered to be an outsider's medium. As remarked by Sally Jo Fifer and Doug Hall, the historiography of video is difficult to trace. Since magnetic media is impermanent, scholars may

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[12] Barbara London, *Video/Art: The First Fifty Years.* (New York: Phaidon Press, 2020), 10.

[13] John Van Bogart, "Magnetic Tape Storage and Handling: A Guide for Libraries and Archives" (Council on Library and Information Services, June 1995), clir.org/pubs/reports/pub54/.

have to rely largely on historiography rather than artifact when discussing early video. With millions of videotapes in circulation throughout history, only a select few have the chance to be properly cared for and preserved. In all likelihood, video tape stored outside of an institutional setting will be left to disintegrate – if it has not already – and the contained data will be permanently lost.[14]

Through the 1960s and 1970s, the film industry was carefully overseen by figurative gatekeepers – who had the privilege of deciding which films would be funded, produced, and exhibited. The creation of magnetic tape, as well as its accessibility, placed artists utilizing the medium on the same plane. Each was on an even field, creating work on a new technology that had not yet been commoditized by mainstream media – of course this would change. In the 1970s, affordable portable video equipment became available across the United States. In her article "Video Politics: Early Feminist Projects", Martha Gever suggests that affordability and the rise of the women's rights movements drew women artists to video. The medium was low-cost and produced images instantly. Thus, one could make their art without the permission or assistance of any other person or hierarchy. Soon after the release of accessible video equipment, several women's video collectives formed as well as the creation of an annual women's video festival. Thus, women artists began experimenting with the medium while creating their own support systems and means of exhibition. Nevertheless, much of this newly created art was not able to circulate outside of the created community. Gever notes that many early women video makers focused on documentary, which provided even greater issues of distribution. Gever writes, "Within the field of video art, where radical documentaries might expect to find support,

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[14] Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer, "Introduction: Complexities of an Art Form," in *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, ed. Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (New York: Aperture Foundation, Inc., 1990), 13–27.

such work is often regarded as a variety of television journalism, and therefore thrown back into the compromised embrace of public television or into the back alley of public access channels on cable TV."[15] Thus, it is unsurprising that much of Maxi Cohen's early work with video was done through means of exploring the opportunities of public access. Cohen, however, would not see it as being 'thrown back'. Instead, she utilized the medium of public access, using it to bring community change through the art of video.

Part 3: Preserving Magnetic Media

3.1 Issues in Magnetic Media

Presently, existing magnetic media from the 1970s-1990s is at risk. Legacy magnetic media faces issues of degradation and deterioration, especially in situations in which it is not stored properly. The binder on a tape can become compromised by many factors, rendering the tape unplayable or requiring mediation. Various factors such as temperature and humidity can result in softening or embrittlement of the binder. Furthermore, the binder can become sticky due to hydrolysis. If trying to run a tape suffering from sticky binder syndrome, an option to temporarily remediate the tape is to bake it. This will temporarily restore the media so that it can be digitized. The baking process requires tapes to be placed in a specially designed oven at 122° F for a period of three days. Conversely, a tape can dry out and lose its lubrication. Relubrication is an option to remediate these tapes, though this has to be careful process, as over-lubrication can disrupt the contact between the tape and playback deck heads, causing signal loss.[16] To defer

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[15] Martha Gever, "Video Politics: Early Feminist Projects." *Afterimage*, no. 2 (Summer 1988).
[16] John Van Bogart, *Magnetic Tape Storage and Handling: A Guide for Libraries and Archives* (Arlington, VA: Council on Library and Information Resources, 1995) 4-6.

the effects of degradation – it is only a deferment, as all tapes will eventually deteriorate – there are various methods one may take. Tapes must be stored standing vertically, rather than stacked horizontally. Most importantly, tapes should be kept in a climate-controlled environment of 59° F (plus or minus 3°) and at a relative humidity of 40%.[17]

3.2 Information on Master Magnetic Media Formats

3.2.1 – 1-inch open reel (Type C)

Figure 3.1 – 1-inch Master for How Much is Really True?

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[17] John Van Bogart, *Magnetic Tape Storage and Handling: A Guide for Libraries and Archives* (Arlington, VA: Concil on Library and Information Resources, 1995) 20.

1-inch Type C analogue videotape was introduced in 1978 by Ampex and Sony. The format quickly replaced the 2-inch quadruplex open-reel tape that was being used for broadcast and professional video. Not only is 1-inch physically smaller, but it also provides a slightly higher image quality. 1-inch records a composite video stream, offering a better image than U-matic, as well as component-recorded sources like Betacam. Currently, operational decks for this format are rare and many are not in working condition. The format was frequently utilized for in-studio recording in broadcast production environments. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, 1-inch was also used as the format for preservation masters. Due to its age, the greatest threat to existing 1-inch tapes is signal loss, among other common environmental threats to magnetic tape.[18]

3.2.2 – D2

D2 digital video was first introduced in 1988 by Ampex and Sony. D2 was one of the first digital tape formats to be utilized for professional production. The format was developed for the high-end market and was also used as a mastering format for artists, television programming, and advertising.[19] Currently, the biggest threat to D2 tapes is the obsolescence of playback decks. The decks are no longer produced, and even many video preservation vendors do not have access to one.

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[18] Mona Jimenez and Liss Platt, *Videotape Identification and Assessment Guide* (Austin: TX: Texas Commission on the Arts, 2004). 6.

[19] Jimenez and Platt, *Videotape Identification and Assessment Guide*. 23.

3.2.3 – ¾-inch U-matic

Figure 3.2 – Boney Master on ¾-inch U-Matic S.

First introduced in 1971, the ¾-inch U-matic tape was a widely used format for artists. The tapes were also highly used in the educational video market. Though production ceased in the 1990s, U-matic tape decks remain highly available in secondhand markets. The greatest threat to the format is deterioration. Often promoted by temperature and humidity, U-matic tapes are degrading at a much faster pace than other magnetic medias. Major issues threatening U-matic tapes include sticky-binder syndrome and mold.[20] Visual assessment cannot comprehensively determine the condition of a U-matic tape. Therefore, U-matic tapes should not be inserted into a tape deck unless a professional confirms their operability. Many digitization vendors will not insert U-matic tapes into a deck prior to baking the tapes. Baking is a process in which the tape is baked in a special oven at a low heat over an extended period. The process

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[20] Jimenez and Platt, *Videotape Identification and Assessment Guide*. 10.

temporarily reverses the effects of hydrolysis, allowing the tape to be played back and digitized.[21]

3.3 Digital Preservation Deliverables

3.3.1 Preservation Master File

The Preservation Master File is the highest-level digital reproduction of the video and audio signals from the original analogue recording. These files are quite large (approximately 100 GB per hour) and are meant as the preservation master, meaning that the master materials should be left untouched once they have been migrated to their final storage locations.[22] The customary codec for preservation master files of videos is 10-bit uncompressed YUV. This lossless codec captures the maximum resolution possible for analogue video.[23]

3.3.2 Mezzanine File

The mezzanine file is often referred to as the Production Master, as it is the file from which all further digital derivatives shall be created from. Mezzanine files are not required for preservation, though are useful when the materials belong to a production or distribution environment.[24]

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[21] "Guidelines for the Preservation of Video Recordings" (International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives, 2018). C-15.

[22] "Digitizing Video for Long-Term Preservation: An RFP Guide and Template." 6.

[23] Caroline R. Arms, Carl Fleischhauer, and Kate Murray, *Sustainability of Digital Formats: Planning for Library of Congress Collections* (Library of Congress, 2019).

[24] Melitte Buchman, Paula De Stefano, Alice Moscoso, Ben Moskowitz, and Kimberly Tarr, *Digitizing Video for Long-Term Preservation: An RFP Guide and Template* (New York, NY: Barbara Goldsmith Preservation & Conservation Department, 2013). 7.

3.3.4 Access File

The Access file is created for more frequent use and on-premises viewing. While the resolution on an access file may not be suitable for projection – unless they are created for that reason – they are ideal for sharing on small storage devices and uploading for web streaming and/or storage.[25]

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[25] Buchman, De Stefano, Moscosco, Moskowitz, and Tarr, *Digitizing Video for Long-Term Preservation: An RFP Guide and Template*.

Part 4: Preservation Project

4.1 Works Selected for Preservation

In determining the works to be preserved for this project I examined the holdings of Maxi Cohen's archive. While working on the collection assessment for Cohen's onsite media holdings in 2019, I noticed that there were many master tapes in the collection. In preparing for this project I noted which of Cohen's works had yet to be preserved and noticed that the majority of the unpreserved works were on various magnetic media formats. *Las Vegas: Last Oasis in America* (1982) and *South Central Los Angeles: Inside Voices* (1994) had been previously digitized, but not at a preservation level, and their transfers were not from Master materials. The other six videos have never been digitized. Some, such as *The Edge of Life* (1984) and *How Much is Really True?* (1990) have not been seen by Cohen since their initial release and festival runs.

***Las Vegas: Last Oasis in America* – Mastered on 1-inch video (1982)**

Figure 4.1 – Still from access copy of Las Vegas: Last Oasis in America.

Director: Maxi Cohen & Joel Gold

Producer: Maxi Cohen & Joel Gold

Director of Photography: Joel Gold

Editor: Nancy Cain, Maxi Cohen & Joel Gold

Duration: 22:00

Directed by Cohen and Joel Gold, *Las Vegas: Last Oasis in America* documents a trip to Las Vegas. The work captures the spirit and essence of Las Vegas in the early 1980s following the widespread use of handheld video recording equipment. The result is an electric portrait containing a series of eccentric characters intermingling with their equally eccentric surroundings. The video also notably features an interview with Debbie Reynolds. In a personal interview I conducted with Cohen she reflects on the film, stating:

> Joel and I got a grant to do this piece. What was interesting about this, it's interesting because all of these pieces seem to be precursors to what became the language of television. We took a bunch of our friends that were videographers to Las Vegas and just did Las Vegas. Today it might be on the Travel Channel or god knows what. We were in a way characters in a place that was filled with a bunch of bizarre characters. We interviewed Liberace and Debbie Reynolds and felt very free because we weren't making it for anybody but ourselves. We obviously were making it to communicate to others, but we didn't have the constraints of a network, a format, a form, or a timeframe. It was an opportunity to really experiment with form. Many of the things we did I see were done later on television.[26]

Selected Screenings:
- 1983 – San Francisco Video Festival, San Francisco (Premiere)
- 1984 – Louisiana World Exposition, New Orleans

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[26] Maxi Cohen (artist) in discussion with the author, February 2020.

***Boney* – ¾-inch U-matic (1982)**

Figure 4.2 – Still from access copy of Boney.

Director: Maxi Cohen

Producer: Maxi Cohen

Director of Photography: Bill Marpet

Editor: Maxi Cohen

Duration: 6:20

Shot in 1982, *Boney* stars Cohen's frequent collaborator Joel Gold (co-director of *Joe and Maxi*) in an improvisational performance on the streets of New York City as he interacts with passersby. Though he frequently worked with Cohen behind the lens, Gold's charisma on camera is irresistible. The playful film looks back at a since changed New York City, in which the appearance of a camera was something to look towards, rather than run away from. Looking back, Cohen states:

Boney, I think, is great. There's something really special about *Boney*. It first starts with people answering a question that you never hear, and the prompt was, 'give me a line of autobiography'. This was my exploring portraiture. It's like if I said to you, 'give me a line of autobiography'. It's challenging, right? So I thought that was kind of a wonderful thing to ask the person on the street. Then Joel, who is a very talented spoken word artist who seems to go into a trance, walked down West Broadway singing whatever came out of his mouth. It was one shot, walking backward. Serendipitously, people interacted with him, which was quite exciting and interesting. It was one block of SoHo, and I was very interested in his performing, but because it was so improvisational, how does that interact with people? He had done, years earlier, a musical documentary on the street during the Democratic National Convention. He got people around him singing with him and interacting with him and I thought that was just great to see him sparking other people's creativity in that way. By his being just totally, fully, self-expressive.[27]

Selected Screenings:
- 1983 – Ithaca Video Festival, Ithaca

Second Grade Dreams – 1-inch video (1985)

Figure 4.3 – Still from access copy of Second Grade Dreams.

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[27] Maxi Cohen (artist) in discussion with the author, February 2020.

Director: Maxi Cohen

Producer: Maxi Cohen

Director of Photography: Dena Crane

Editor: Maxi Cohen

Duration: 4:26

Cohen's 1985 short video was recorded at Brooklyn, New York at Public School 255.

The filmmaker utilizes her often-employed confessional method, placing subjects between

her camera and a solid backdrop. In the four-minute short, second grade students share their

dreams and nightmares with Cohen for an experience that is both humorous and insightful.

Perhaps most astonishing is not the stories told, but the trust and openness induced by

Cohen's camera. In our interviews, Cohen looks back at how she ended up working for the

public school that would bring the creation of this video. Cohen's reflection:

> I really love this piece and I actually think it would be great to do again. I was really interested in the unbridled dreams of second graders. They are at an age where, even in the telling of their dreams, there's this sort of, thin line between what's a dream and what's now. I heard this story that after Hurricane Sandy a tree fell on somebody's house. So this young kid was terrified of trees. I thought, 'how awful to be growing up being so scared of nature'. I think about how these messages of climate change or what does disaster or trauma do to kids, I think it would be really interesting to reprise this project. I had gotten a grant from the New York Foundation for the Arts and part of the arrangement was that I would do some level of community service. One of the ways you can do community service was to be an artist in the schools. So, I always loved trying to think about what I could do that would be fun for me and that would be fun for them.[28]

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[28] Maxi Cohen (artist) in discussion with the author, February 2020.

The Edge of Life **– 1-inch video (1984) (x2 tapes)**

Figure 4.4 – Still from access copy of The Edge of Life.

Director: Maxi Cohen

Writer: Maxi Cohen

Producer: Maxi Cohen

Director of Photography: Joel Gold

Editor: Maxi Cohen

Music: Don Christensen

Duration: 16:30 & 19:00

Cohen's first work of fiction examines a day in the life of a fictional video artist named Z, who bears a striking resemblance to Cohen. The video follows Z through New York City as she shoots video and argues with her cameraman (who is also her boyfriend). Cohen utilizes the documentary aesthetic to examine urban anxiety and loneliness. Frequent collaborator Joel Gold

served as the director of photography. For this production, Cohen used her own SoHo studio, where she continues to work today, as the home of her protagonist. Cohen looks back at the production of *The Edge of Life* as a challenging experience. She recalls:

> I don't know when that film was in conjunction to the film Altered States, but I remember being moved by that film because it so beautifully blended special effects into the fiction and into the idea of perception. That's really what I was interested in, the idea of visualizing perception. This was an element of inspiration for *The Edge of Life*. I have complicated feelings about *The Edge of Life*. This was something that I wrote, in which the lead is my alter ego and that I wanted to play. But I did not have the confidence to do it, which I'm really sorry I didn't do. In my high school yearbook it says I was the best actress. I played Anne Frank; they pulled Antigone for me to play. So I could have done it easily, but I thought, 'no, I shouldn't'. So I had a hotshot-casting agent who gave me somebody to cast and I kept calling her and saying, 'but she is exactly the opposite of what this character is'. She said, 'well she's an actress, she can play anything.' So I cast her, but it was really all wrong. I remember Mike Nichols saying afterward, 'Never start a project until you find the perfect cast, because it's all in the casting'. So I learned my lesson, unfortunately. I hate looking at that piece because I cast it so horribly. However, i did it because first of all, it's fiction, and I was very curious to see if we could create fiction with video. All the video that I had seen up until that point was documentary. Could one with video, create the feeling of reality, in the way that cinema feels real? Or was it just too glaringly unreal. The project won awards for the lighting and for the cinematography, so it really did succeed on that level. It stood out for that and I wish that I had cast it properly or just cast myself in it.[29]

Selected Screenings:
- 1984 – Night Light TV, Private Eyes, New York (TV Premiere)
- 1984 – The Kitchen, New York
- 1985 – AFI International Video Festival, Los Angeles
- 1985 – Marin County Fair and Exposition, Marin
- 1985 – WNET, New York (Television Premiere)
- 1985 – San Francisco Women's Video Art Showcase, San Francisco
- 1985 – Anthology Film Archives, New York
- 1985 – Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
- 1985 – Athens Video Festival, Athens
- 1990 – Museum of Modern Art, New York

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[29] Maxi Cohen (artist) in discussion with the author, February 2020.

Selected Awards:
- 1985 –Red Ribbon: American Film Festival
- 1985 – Monitor Awards

***Intimate Interviews: Sex in Less than Two Minutes* – U-matic (1984)**

Figure 4.5 – Still from access copy of Intimate Interviews: Sex in Less than Two Minutes.

Director: Maxi Cohen

Producer: Maxi Cohen

Director of Photography: Maxi Cohen

Editor: Maxi Cohen

Duration: 2:08

This visual poem is a composition of interviews conducted by Cohen on the subject of sex. Though brief, the video is both playful and seductive. Joel Gold delights in his brief appearance, while another subject attempts to seduce the woman behind the camera. Reflecting on the strength and pitfalls of editing in documentary, she states:

Intimate Interviews: Sex in Less than Two Minutes I made in the early 1980s when I was making many shorts, exploring portraiture. I was interested in the subject of creativity and power and sexuality. Creation comes from the womb, and in all cosmologies that is the place of creation. The energy of creation is the energy of sexuality. I was interested in the confluence of power and sexuality and creativity. So, I interviewed people about their experience. There was a lot of conversation and criticism about editing what somebody says, as you can change the meaning of what is said. This is definitely possible. I sold the exclusive interview I did with Louis Eppolito, the detective in *Anger*, to 60 Minutes, because I was the only person that had footage of him before he was arrested for allegedly, I believe, 16 murders. They took one sentence and took it totally out of context. This made him say the opposite of what he intended. I was shocked. It was 60 Minutes, which I had considered to be the most ethical! Two things were taboo in the new language of video: cutting what people say short, so as not to misrepresent them and making videos and films that were entirely talking heads (which this is). I was curious to see what the consequence would be if you could cut people as tightly as possible, making a video poem, in some sense, of their words. *Intimate Interviews: Sex in Less than Two Minutes* is just a quickie. The interviews are cut very tight, distilled to their essence. What was so interesting to see was that what each person said, cut down to so few words, fully and totally represented what they actually said over twenty minutes. So, the editing didn't misrepresent them, and that was fascinating and illuminating to me.[30]

Selected Screenings:
- 1985 – Global Village Documentary Film and Video Festival, New York City

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[30] Maxi Cohen (artist) in discussion with the author, February 2020.

How Much is Really True? **– 1-inch video – (1990)**

Figure 4.6 – Still from access copy of How Much is Really True?

Director: Maxi Cohen

Writer: Maxi Cohen with Camille Saviola, Mary Houston, and Carol Dysinger

Producer: Maxi Cohen & Nina Weber

Director of Photography: Joel Gold

Editor: Peri Muldofsky

Duration: 32:55

In this project Cohen experiments with combining elements of fiction and documentary storytelling. Cohen appears as a version of herself alongside three other women playing written roles. The four women spend a day at the beach, where Cohen's semi-fictional filmmaker interviews real people in the hopes of getting guiding advice on life and love. This video work was once intended to serve as a pilot for a television project but was eventually dropped after the

project switched between networks. A true gem among Cohen's oeuvre, *How Much is Really True?* is delightfully fun and surprisingly moving. The conversations held between the four women in the film are not only deeply humorous but are also generally groundbreaking in their discussions of beauty and sex.

Though she had not seen the video in decades, Cohen recalls:

> Until this point I had never seen anything that mixed reality and fiction. This was a synthesis of both. I took four women, who were all very different. One was a very broad Broadway star, one was a movie star, one was a radio journalist who, because she was on the radio, talked to everybody like they were in third grade, and then there was me. So I finally put myself in that role. I think the greatest compliment about the film was that people thought it was all documentary and that we were really good friends. Everybody had such a different acting style that to make it work really took work shopping. I wrote a script (with Carol Dysinger), and some of it was improvised, and some of these characters played their alter egos in some way. This time I was very deliberate in my casting. I played a documentary filmmaker who went out in pursuit of understanding herself through asking others; by doing on-camera research. I think quite a bit of it was absurd, but not absurd in the way that would render it unbelievable. Much of what is real is hard to believe, but true. This was what I wanted to do. Had I been born in a different time, like had MTV been looking for something, I think I could have had a show.

> *How Much is Really True?* premiered at the Berlin Film Festival. As a consequence we were asked to develop it into a series at the BBC. But a year later, the BBC cut out that commissioning department. Then I had a chance to develop it for CPB, but it had to be unanimously approved by committee, such is the democracy of public television. Then it had a chance at Paramount, where it was getting warped into something I did not like and I was losing control. During making the deal, the executive at the studio told me he could steal the idea, and since it was registered, that could not happen. Discouraged, I chose not to go through with the deal at Paramount. This project was what I wanted to develop the most, a new language of mixing forms and genres to appear seamless and explore the cutting edge of what we know. It's intention still seems so timely.[31]

Selected Screenings:
- 1989 – Bowdoin College, Brunswick
- 1990 – Northwest Film and Video Center, Portland
- 1990 – Suffolk County Film and Video Festival, New York

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[31] Maxi Cohen (artist) in discussion with the author, February 2020.

- 1990 – Sinking Creek Film Festival Closing Night, Nashville
- 1990 – Copenhagen Film and Video Workshop Festival
- 1990 – Berlin Film Festival, Berlin
- 1990 – Chicago Film Festival, Chicago
- 1990 – Rotterdam Film Festival Rotterdam
- 1992 – Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 1992 – Houston Film and Video Festival, Houston
- 1992 – Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond
- 1992 – Chicago Art Institute, Chicago
- 1993 – American Film Institute: National Video Festival, Los Angeles
- 1994 – Cinema Femmes, Montreal

Selected Awards:
- 1990 – First Prize: Suffolk County MP/TV Commission
- 1990 – Sinking Creek Film Celebration
- 1991 – Silver Hugo Award, Silver Bear Award for Independent Video Short, 27th Annual Chicago International Film Festival
- 1992 – Thomas Edison Media Arts Award
- 1992 – First Prize: Utah Film and Video Festival

***South Central Los Angeles: Inside Voices* – D2 – (1994)**

Figure 4.7 – Still from access copy of South Central Los Angeles: Inside Voices.

Director: Maxi Cohen

Producer: Maxi Cohen

Co-Producer: Wendy Apple

Director of Photography: Joel Gold

Editor: Wendy Apple, Susan Eisner, Melody London, Sonya Polonsky, David Schwartz, Lynne Southerland, and Meri Weingarten

Duration: 1:33:10

For Cohen's feature-length video *South Central Los Angeles: Inside Voices*, having lived in Los Angeles since 1990, Cohen brought Hi-8 video cameras to be used by a select diverse group of citizens directly affected by the 1992 riots. Shot in three languages, the video utilizes confessional methods to explore issues of race, class, and prejudice. *South Central Los Angeles* is an important historical document of the 1992 riots made by those who experienced them

firsthand. Tonally, the work is somewhat of an outlier among the other videos preserved, though its use of video to provoke confession is undeniably of Cohen's authorship. Cohen looks back on the troubled process creating *South Central Los Angeles*:

> This was the most difficult film that I ever made, and a very painful film. I had this idea for many years. I had done some small things like this, but it was really the first time I had done something on this scale. Here I gave cameras to African-Americans, Latinos, and Koreans that were living and working in the areas that were affected by the L.A. riots. Since there was such divisiveness at the time and such polarization, I created a mentorship program where there was a mentor of each ethnicity with the person who shot. It was amazing because I couldn't get an African-American mentor to go into South Central. I'd ask a middle-class filmmaker and they wouldn't go. I talked to a number of people, nobody would go. So, I ended up going. I would be hanging out with murderers and kidnappers at three in the morning in South Central. I was more scared of the smog than I was of them. We also created a workshop situation and we also asked all the video makers to keep a running diary of themselves as they went through this process. I wish that I had had the time and the energy and the resources to keep my own diary. I witnessed racism that was so complex and deep in people of all races on the project that it was startling. I began to believe that it might take one-on-one therapy to unravel unconscious behavior and prejudice needed to create real change.[32]

Selected Screenings:

- 1994 – American Psychological Association, Washington D.C.
- 1994 – ARTE, France (Television Premiere)
- 1995 – Korean Immigrant Workers Association, Los Angeles
- 1995 – Dallas Film Festival, Dallas
- 1995 – Moscow Film Festival, Moscow
- 1996 – South by Southwest Festival, Austin
- 1996 – San Francisco Film Festival, San Francisco
- 1997 – Showtime, USA (North American Television Premiere)

Selected Awards:
- 1996 – Silver Apple Award: National Education Media Network
- 1998 – Best Documentary: The New Orleans Urban Film and Video Festival
- 1998 – Golden Gate Award, Certificate of Merit: 36th Annual San Francisco International Film Festival

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[32] Maxi Cohen (artist) in discussion with the author, February 2020.

***Birty: Godmother of Watts* – D2 – (1994)**

Figure 4.8 – Still from access copy of Birty.

Director: Maxi Cohen

Producer: Maxi Cohen

Director of Photography: Maxi Cohen, Lea Edwards, and Joel Gold

Editor: Wendy Apple and Meri Weingarten

Music: Lori Eschler

Duration: 13:40

Cohen's documentary short navigates crime, poverty, and violence by following Birty

Hudson, a selfless woman in her late-fifties caring for two infants born into drug addiction.

Through Hudson's struggles, Cohen examines a community still in turmoil following the 1992

riots. Though the video is short in length, Hudson's energy dominates the screen at every

moment. Cohen recalls Birty Hudson fondly, stating:

ARTE was doing these thematic evenings and this one was on L.A. They asked me to contribute. They were one of the co-producers of *South Central Los Angeles: Inside Voices*. One of the pieces that did not make it into that film but was a fascinating story - I think she was sixty, Birty - she had just adopted these two cocaine-addicted babies. I thought, what an amazing example of someone who was concerned about her community and really had such a compassionate heart that really took care of people. She was known as 'The Godmother of Watts'. I thought that would be a good portrait for that show.[33]

Selected Screenings:
- 1995 - ARTE, France (TV Premiere)

4.1.1 Note on Copyright

As of the writing of this thesis, Maxi Cohen holds intellectual property rights and copyright for the eight video art pieces preserved for this project.

4.2 Workflow

4.2.1 Preservation Materials

Magnetic Media
- 1-inch open reel: 5 tapes (99 minutes)
- D2: 2 tapes (107 minutes)
- ¾-inch U-matic: 1 tape (7 minutes)
- ¾-inch U-matic S: 1 tape (2 minutes)
   - Total: 9 tapes (3:35, 215 minutes)

4.2.2 Deliverables

For each of the nine digitized magnetic media tapes we have requested a preservation master file, mezzanine file, and access file. Full technical specifications for each of these files will follow in the Request for Proposal (see page 38).

4.2.3 Project Timeline

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[33] Maxi Cohen (artist) in discussion with the author, February 2020.

The following graphic represents the timeline for this preservation project. The graphic depicts the final achievable step of quality control, as the files are currently unable to be ingested to their final storage location due to COVID-19.
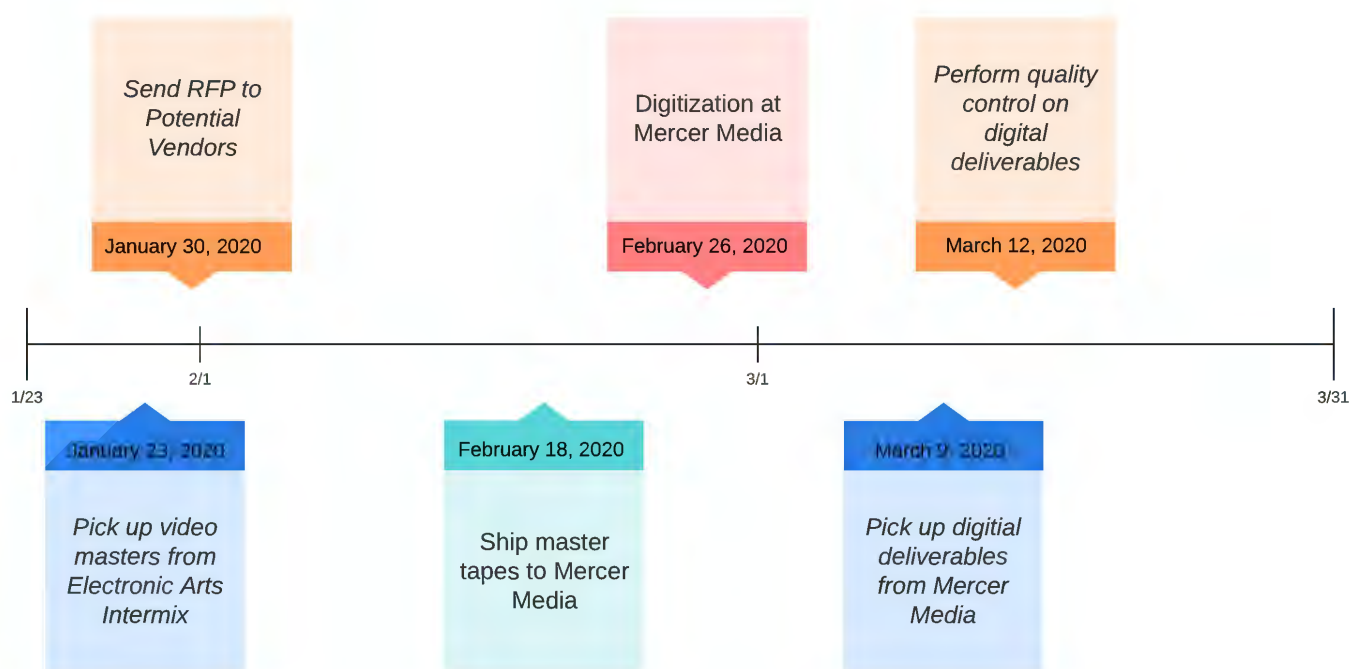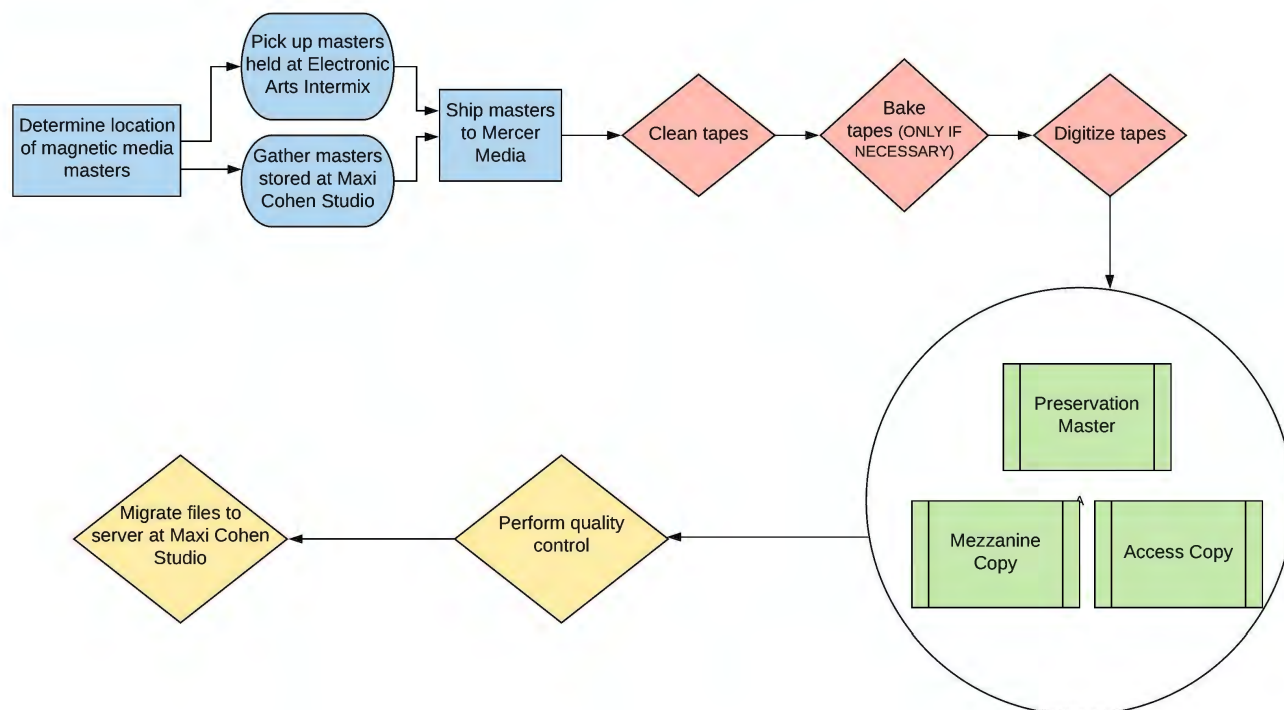

Figure 4.9 – Project timeline graphic.

4.2.4 Workflow Table

Figure 4.10 – Project workflow graphic.

4.2.5 Project Workflow

The workflow for this preservation project is defined in figure 4.10. Pre-digitization activities (indicated in blue) include locating, gathering, and shipping the materials for digitization. Digitation activities (indicated in red) included the cleaning and digitization of tapes. None of the magnetic media materials for this project required baking, so this step is skipped. Indicated in green are the three digital deliverables derived from each master tape. Finally, the post-digitization activities (indicated in yellow) include quality control and the migration of digital data to its primary storage location.

4.3 Request for Proposal

The following is the text of the request for proposal (RFP) sent to potential vendors. The RFP notes the desired specifications for the transfer process as well as the deliverables.

Furthermore, the RFP is to be referred to when performing quality control on the digital deliverables to ensure that they meet the agreed upon specifications. In creating the RFP, it is important to specify that for this project we require a transcoding that is as faithful to the original source as possible. Furthermore, the RFP gives the client the opportunity to specify how they would like the digital deliverables.

For the Preservation Master File, we have requested a 10-bit uncompressed YUV file, as this codec is cited as being completely without data loss. We have requested these master files wrapped in the .mov QuickTime wrapper, as this format is most compatible with Mac OS environments such as those at Maxi Cohen Studio. In compatibility with a Mac OS editing environment, we have requested Mezzanine files as ProRes HQ. Compressed to a bitrate of 60 MBS, to the naked eye this file will be almost indistinguishable from the preservation master. For the access files we have requested the H.264 video codec, as it is able to retain a suitable image while being heavily compressed. Furthermore, videos in H.264 codec with the requested MP4 wrapper can be easily uploaded to most streaming and storage websites. The specific technical specifications for the project have been decided upon due to industry best practices, shared knowledge, referral of cited documents, and have been slightly adjusted following some consultation with the vendor.

4.3.1 RFP

Note on project timeline: All items in this project must be digitized and all file deliverables sent to Maxi Cohen Studio before March 9, 2020. The vendor must also send its final invoice for this project before March 1, 2020. Maxi Cohen Studio commits to delivering materials to the chosen vendor within one week of the RFP closing. Please indicate in your project bid whether you would be able to meet this timeline for the entire project.

For each original video recording, the vendor shall produce:

- One preservation master file (10-bit uncompressed YUV, Quicktime)

- One mezzanine level file (ProRes HQ)

- One access copy file (H.264)

Characteristics belonging to the original materials shall be preserved, including frame rate, pixel aspect ratio, interlacing, resolution, and recording standard (NTSC).[34]

Luma, chroma, and black levels may be adjusted as required by the vendor on playback equipment or time-based corrector to best present the source material.

The transfer shall capture all content recorded on the original item, including any bars and tone, slates, or other material coming before the start of the recorded program. The recording shall run until the end of the recorded content (picture and sound). If this end point cannot be unambiguously determined, the recording shall run until the end of the original item.

Preservation Master Files

Video codec: 10-bit uncompressed YUV
Data compression: (1:1, uncompressed)
Chroma sub-sampling: 4:2:2 YUV
Bit depth: 10-bit
File wrapper: QuickTime (.mov)
Audio format: PCM
Audio bit rate: 24-bit
Audio sampling rate: 48kHz
Audio channels: Same as source

Mezzanine Files

Video codec: ProRes HQ
Video bitrate: 60 MBS
File wrapper: MOV
Frame rate: same as preservation master
Frame size: same as preservation master
Pixel aspect ratio: square
Audio bit rate: 24-bit

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[34] A National Television Standards Committee picture is comprised of 525 interlaced lines and is displayed at 29.97 frames per second.

Audio sampling rate: 48kHz
Audio codec: PCM
Audio channels: same as source

Access Copies

Video codec: H.264
Video bit rate: 3.5 Mbps
File wrapper: MP4
Frame rate: same as preservation master
Frame size: same as preservation master
Pixel aspect ratio: square
Audio bit rate: 16-bit
Audio sampling rate: 48kHz
Audio codec AAC
Audio channels: same as source

4.4 Selecting a Vendor

The Request for Proposal for this project was submitted to four reputable vendors in the United States. In selecting a vendor, it was imperative to ensure that services required could be attained. In addition to a vendor who could meet the required technical specifications for the deliverables, it was necessary that the selected vendor be able to provide the following services: tape cleaning, baking (if necessary), quality control, temperature controlled storage, as well as conducting the digitization on properly maintained equipment.

After weighing proposals from five vendors for the digitization of the nine tapes, we selected Mercer Media as the digitization vendor. Mercer Media was selected due to their reputation in the field, fair estimate, and thoughtful communication. Furthermore, owner Bill Seery frequently works with artists and is highly respected in the field as he is known for offering extra care and attention to a transfer. Mercer Media was able to meet our set date of March 9 for delivery, while also providing an affordable estimate. As Mercer Media is located in Long Island, New York, this vendor also presented the opportunity for me to come and observe the transfer.

Two other vendors offered estimates that met our budget and delivery date, though specialized in mass digitization. When considering proposals, we prioritized those from vendors who specialized in working with artists, and those who specialized in a single technician observing the entire digitization. Furthermore, two of the vendors were unable to transfer D2. Finally, another offered an affordable estimate and is also reputable for its work with artists. However, this vendor was located across the country, and could not guarantee our required delivery date, nor could they transfer D2.

The following table shows the services requested, and the estimates for these services offered by the vendors responding to the Request for Proposal:

		Vendors				
		Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Vendor 3	Vendor 4	Vendor 5
Services	1" Type C Transfer	$375	$240	$750	$316.70	$1,000
	3/4" U-matic Transfer	$100	$75	$250		$450
	D2 Transfer	$250	$35	Can Not Transfer	Can Not Transfer	$200
	Shipping	TBD	$100	$60	TBD	TBD
	Metadata	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
	Cleaning	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
	Encoding Fees	$90				$1,050
	Administrative Fees	$85	N/A	N/A	$350	N/A
	TOTAL	**$900**	**$450**	**$1,060**	**$666.70**	**$2,700**

Figure 4.11 – Table depicting vendor services and proposal costs.

4.5 The Digitization Process

The nine videos were digitized over two days at Mercer Media. On February 25, I travelled to Mercer Media in Glen Head, Long Island to observe and assist in the digitization process. Upon examination, Bill Seery observed that none of the tapes had suffered deterioration that would require treatment via baking (see page 15). Prior to digitization, each tape was run

through a cleaner. While observing the digitization process, there was no evidence of lost data. All nine tapes were digitized without issue.

As we had two 1-inch open reel tapes labelled "master" for *The Edge of Life* (1984), we were keen to see if there were any differences between the two. Surprisingly, each version of the video had a different opening sequence. Both versions open with documentary street footage from New York City parks, but the footage that makes up these sequences on the two tapes was each very different. Furthermore, upon examining the digitized version of *Las Vegas: Last Oasis in America* (1982), it was surprising to see a much shorter video than expected. The screened version of *Las Vegas: Last Oasis in America* (1982) is nineteen-minutes long, yet the digitized version is only seven-and-a-half minutes long. Nevertheless, this tape was labeled as the "master", and included opening and closing credits. Upon this realization, I contacted Electronic Arts Intermix which had held the master in their collection and inquired as to whether or not they had any other elements from this video work. While they did not have other elements listed in their database, the Electronic Arts Intermix office and off-site storage facility are as of this date currently closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All digital materials were hand delivered to me on a 2 TB Lacie external hard drive. Mercer Media will retain copies of all digital deliverables until they have been successfully migrated to the server at Maxi Cohen's studio.

4.5.1 Metadata

While Maxi Cohen has been archiving her materials and recording their physical metadata in documents, her studio does not have a Data Management System set up, nor has the studio adhered to a specific metadata schema. Therefore, for the digitization of this project I have requested general fields for the description of digital video and audio, which can be easily cross

walked to a metadata standard at a later. Metadata recorded is displayed in the following table, using the preservation master of *Second Grade Dreams* (1985) as an example:

	Metadata Fields	Second Grade Dreams (Preservation Master)
Administrative	File Name	Cohen_SGD.mov
Technical	Date Created	2/26/2020
	Tape Format	1" C
	Duration (feet)	385
	Duration (running time)	0:06:25
	Size	10.9 GB
	Format	Quicktime Movie
	Audio Sample Rate	48K
	Audio Channels	2
	Video dimensions	720 x 486
	Codecs	Component Y'CbCr 10-bit 4:2:2, Timecode, Linear PCM

Figure 4.12 – Table displaying metadata fields for digitization.

4.6 Quality Control

In order to perform quality control on all digital deliverables, I examined the technical specifications of each file and confirmed the MD5 Checksums. Furthermore, each video file was inspected using the quality control software QCTools. To see the technical specifications for the files, I placed each in the software MediaInfo. Once I had the technical specifications for the files, I compared those to the Request for Proposal which was originally sent to Mercer Media. As expected, Mercer Media conformed and delivered the files as agreed upon. Below are screen captures of the MediaInfo interface, displaying the technical specifications of a file:
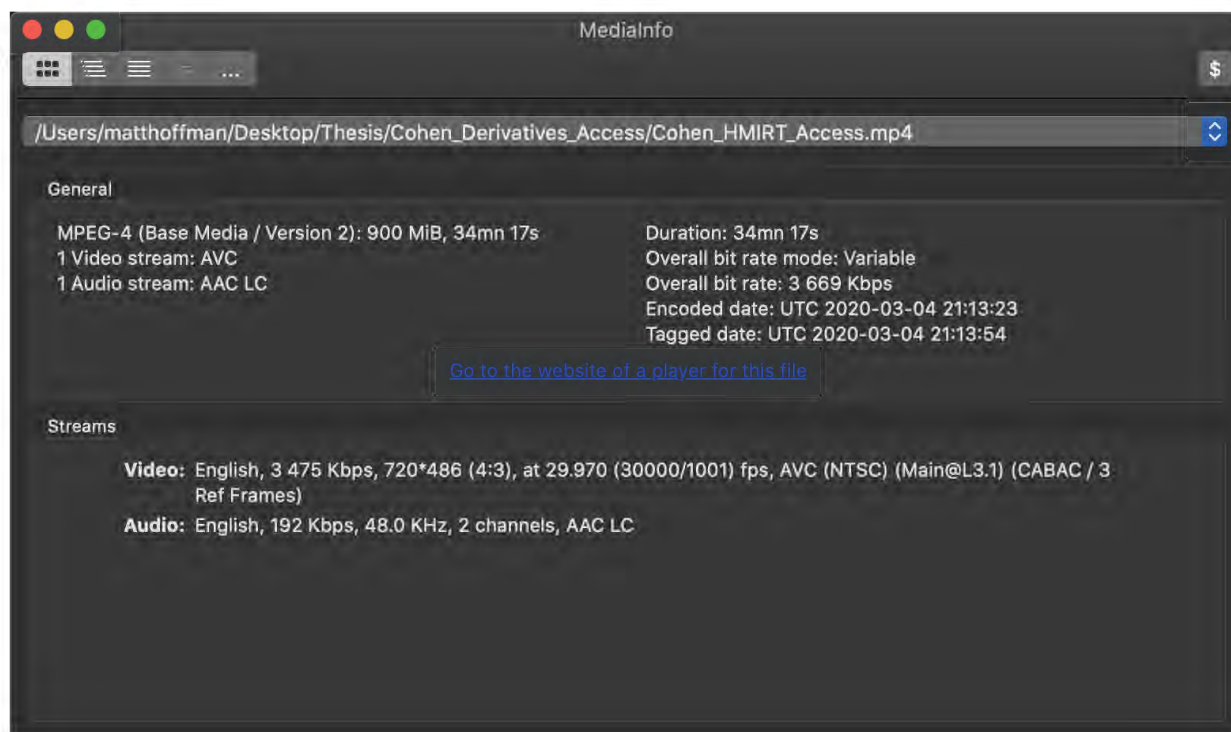
Figure 4.13 – MediaInfo displaying technical specifications for the How Much is Really True access file.
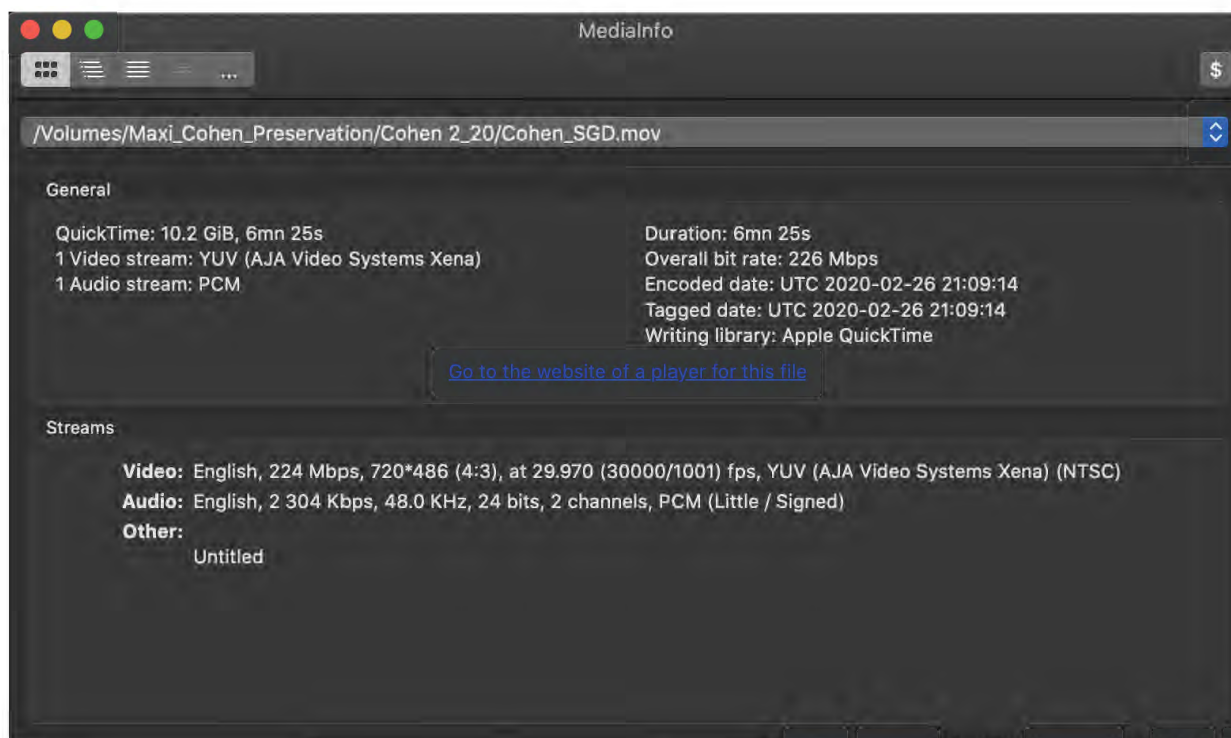

Figure 4.14 – MediaInfo displaying technical specifications for Second Grade Dreams preservation master file.
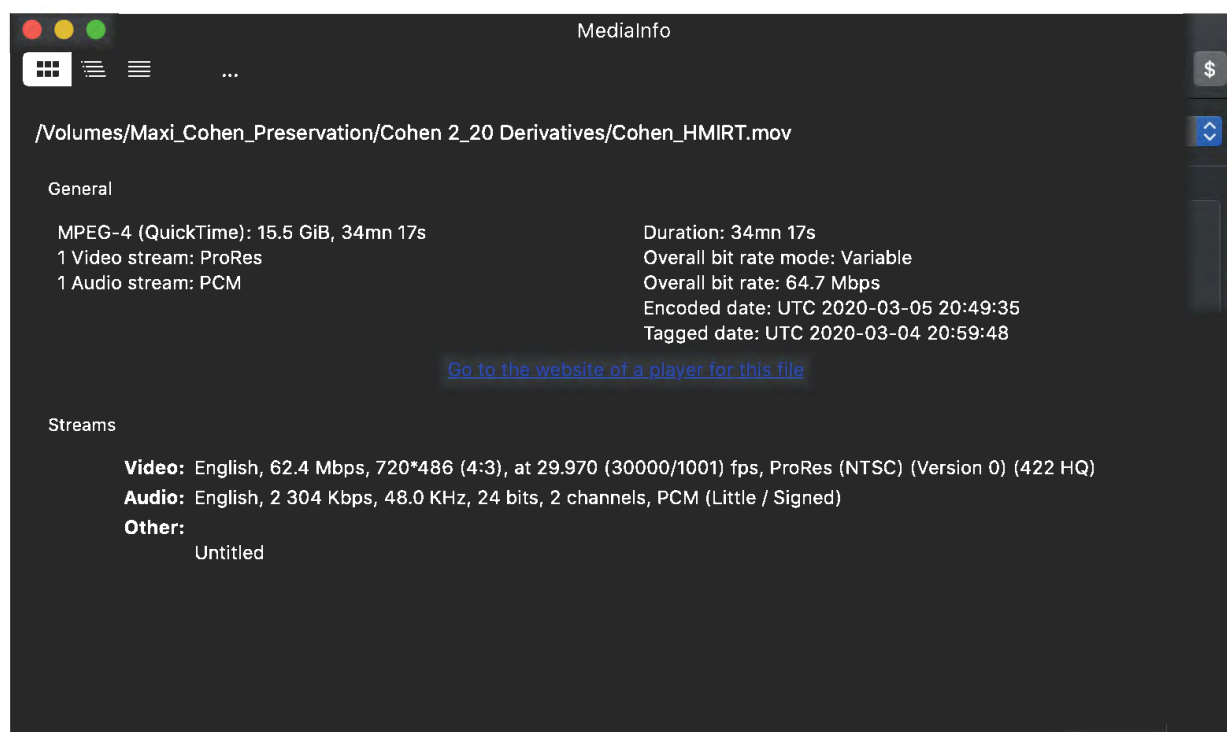
Figure 4.15 – MediaInfo displaying technical specifications for How Much is Really True mezzanine file.

QCTools analyses video files frame-by-frame, allowing the user to examine various qualities (such as saturation, hue, and YUV signals) in chart form. The user can then look for outliers and examine those frames for technical issues and determine if those are caused by the digital scan or are baked into the master. Below is the QCTools interface run on the access file for *How Much is Really True*?

Figure 4.16 – QCTools interface displaying signals for How Much is Really True access file.
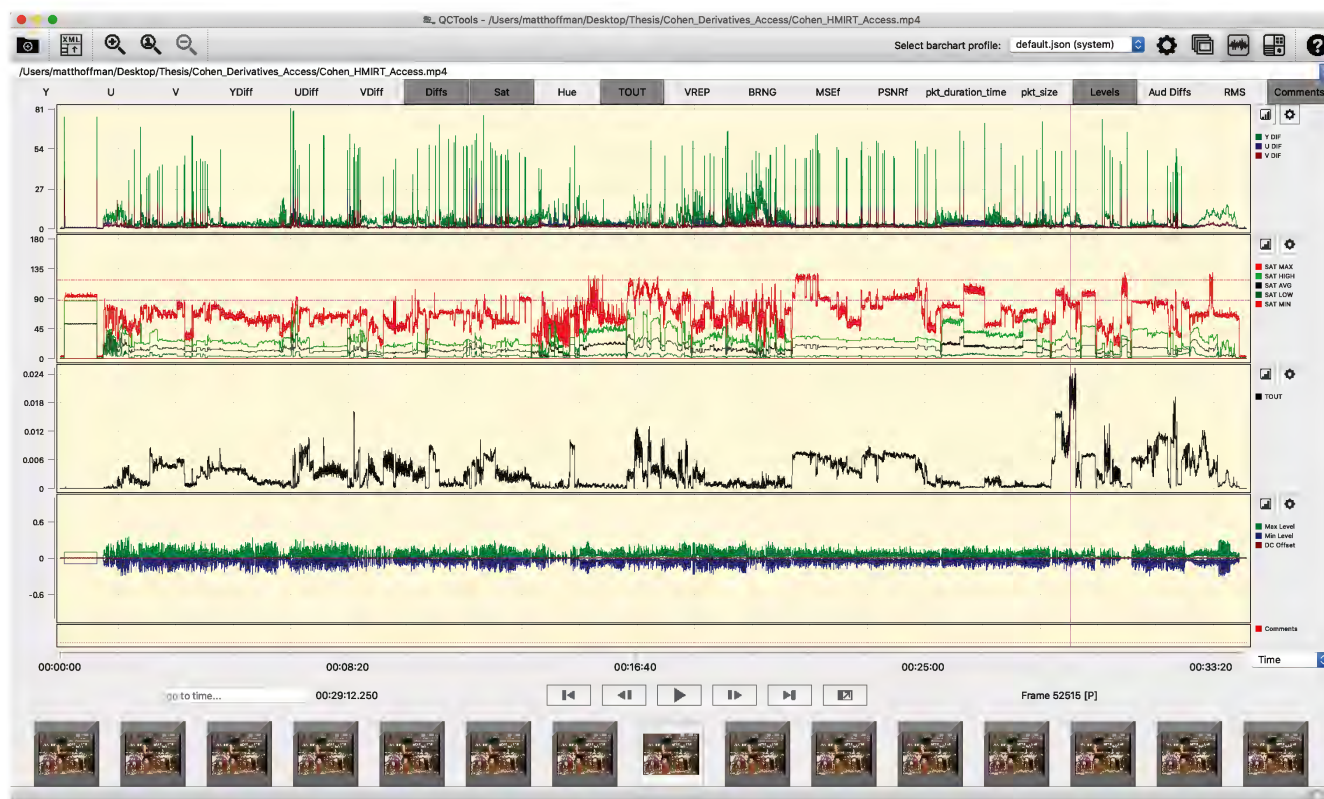
Finally, I ran MD5 checksums[35] created by Mercer Media on the digital files to ensure

their integrity. The MD5 hash algorithm is used to validate data integrity and is particularly

useful when migrating preservation files to alternate storage. The algorithm is applied against the

file, which generates a unique 128-bit hash value in the form of a series of numbers and letters.

After the files have been moved from their original source (in this case, Mercer Media) a

checksum can be run again, and the operator will ensure that the new checksum matches the

checksum on file. Checksums for all digital deliverables matched the original MD5 checksums

when they were run on my personal computer. Once the files have been moved to their

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[35] "Term: MD5 (Checksum)." *Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative*.

permanent home on the server at Maxi Cohen's studio, the MD5 checksums will be validated
again (see page 50).

4.7 Storage

The physical magnetic media masters for this project are currently being stored in a
climate-controlled environment at Mercer Media in Long Island, NY. Following the successful
migration of the digital deliverables, the magnetic media masters will be returned to Maxi Cohen
Studio. The masters will then eventually be returned to Electronic Arts Intermix, but only after
they have reopened following the COVID-19 shutdown. All digital deliverables will be uploaded
to the RAID storage system at Maxi Cohen Studio. The files will also be kept on an external hard
drive located in a separate geographic location. Access files will be stored physically at Maxi
Cohen Studio and will also be uploaded to the Internet Archive. Storage on the Internet Archive
will allow for easy sharing on files, but also for security as the archive backs up multiple copies
of all uploaded files.

4.8 Access

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, Maxi Cohen Studio hopes to premiere these newly
preserved works in art galleries and cinemas. Theatrical screenings of the soon to be restored *Joe
and Maxi* (1978) present the opportunity to screen these works in accompanying retrospectives.
Concurrently, Maxi Cohen is considering various distribution methods for these works. It is
important for Cohen that these works are soon available for access online across the world.
While access files will be stored on Cohen's Vimeo page and on the Internet Archive, these files

will be available for institutional use only. Those interested in acquiring links to view these

works for research purposes may contact Maxi Cohen Studio.

Glossary

Access File – Highly compressed derivative of the preservation mater, best used for computer or online viewing.

Baking – A common practice to be performed only by specialists. Tapes suffering from sticky-shed syndrome can be temporarily revived for digitization by baking them in a special oven at a low temperature for an extended period of time. Baking is often a last resort for degraded magnetic materials.

Checksum – A sequence of letters and/or numbers used to check a data file for errors.

Chroma – The channels of a video signal containing color information, two characteristics of chroma include hue and saturation.

Codec – Encoding tool utilized in the compression or decompression of digital video.

Metadata – Data used to describe other pieces of data.

Mezzanine File – High-quality file from which further derivatives are to be created from.

Preservation Master – The highest-level digital derivate. This file is to remain untouched after storage migration.

Sticky-shed – A condition of deterioration caused by the absorption of moisture. This affects the binder layer of the tape causing it to moist, or "sticky". Sitcky-shed syndrome is often identifiable by a waxy (some say crayon-like) smell emitting from the tape. Attempted playback of a tape suffering from sticky-shed may further damage the tape, as well as the playback deck.

Appendix

Appendix I – Migrating Files and Running MD5 Checksums

In the event that social distancing continues for the foreseeable future, the following are instructions for Maxi Cohen Studio, so that they may migrate and validate the digital deliverables without my assistance.

The simplest way to migrate these files is simply to drag them from their location on the external hard drive to the desired folders on the server. After doing so, do not delete the files from the external hard drive. Instead, retain the information on the hard drive, and if possible, store the hard drive in a separate location. Running the MD5 checksums is a less generally intuitive experience.

After migrating the files to their final storage location, the files can be used to generate MD5 checksums using the Terminal. This process can be repeated for each preservation level file as described below.

Step 1: Open MD5 checksum file. This file will read "[FileName].mov.md5". To open these files, right click and select "open with". Select "TextEdit" to open the file. The checksum file should appear like so:

Figure 0.1 – MD5 Checksum for Preservation Master File of Second Grade Dreams.

Step 2: Open the program Terminal. Once the Terminal is open, type "MD5" followed by a

space. Then, drag the file you would like to generate the checksum for into Terminal. Press the

enter/return key. The Terminal will then generate an MD5 checksum. As the preservation level

files are large, it may take a minute or so for the Terminal to generate the checksum. The

Terminal will not tell you that it is creating the checksum, so give it time. Below is a capture of

the Terminal window on my computer when I ran the checksum:

Figure 0.2 – Terminal home window with matching checksum.

Step 3: Compare the checksum in terminal to the one open in TextEdit and ensure that they

match. As you can see from the captures above, the checksum for *Second Grade Dreams*

matches the original created at Mercer Media.

Appendix II – Interviews with Maxi Cohen

In preparing this thesis project, I conducted extended interviews with Maxi Cohen. The following interviews contain discussions of Cohen's education, the history of her work, and her exposure to magnetic media. Below are the complete transcripts of these interviews.

February 5, 2020 – Maxi Cohen Studio in New York City

Matt Hoffman: How were you first introduced to video?

Maxi Cohen:

I was introduced to video in my last semester at NYU (New York University). I actually went to NYU to do animation because I had seen a film on television made by an NYU graduate that was a great animated film, but when I got to NYU it turned out there was no animation. In my last semester at NYU I animated a film by cell animation, doing cells on a crate. It took me a whole semester to make a three-minute film. That's in the collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Then one day, somebody introduced me to video.

It was the very beginning of reel-to-reel portapacks. It was amazing because you could do a half-hour in a half an hour. So, there I was spending four months making a three-minute film all by myself in isolation and recognizing that I could make a half hour in a half hour. There was no hierarchy, it was the beginning. So, nobody knew more than anybody else. There was a level of equality between men and women and there was a kind of freedom about it. About that time, I was introduced to the Alternate Media Center. Which was George Stoney and Red Burns, and this was the very beginning of alternative television basically. It was the beginning of cable and it was the very beginning of public access. So, they were using this portable equipment to really do a revolutionary kind of television that was really television for social change. Where the basic

concept was, how can we use television to engage people in a participatory kind of way, rather than in this kind of deadening way of just watching television. Before I even became a part of the Alternate Media Center, I did a project in Cape May in New Jersey. I was very inspired by George Stoney and the work he had done with Media for Social Change. I did a local TV series in Cape May where there was no local television.

I had a workshop once a week that anybody in town could come to and learn how to make television. I had a show once a week and I invited people to respond to what was on the air. At that point in Cape May, the black community was living on the other side of the tracks. I would go into that community and teach people how to make video and all of a sudden there were spokespeople who convinced people in that community not to sell their vote at the bar. As a result, a democratic mayor got elected for the first time in one hundred years and this town that was being destroyed by the city fathers who were Republican. What matters is that they were in the construction business and they were downing the [Victorian buildings] to build new buildings. As a result of this new mayor the town became a landmark, one of four landmark towns in the country. This changed the social economic and cultural nature of that town forever.

So, when it came time to make *Joe and Maxi*, video really was not a good option. At that point the way we edited was cutting. We'd cut the half-inch tape and use tape to cut things together. It was just not a viable option to make a feature length documentary. What I did, which was very different, was to bring the principals of the intimacy of making video to film. That's why it was really considered the breakthrough in its form. I remember seeing *Chronicle of a Summer* (1961) and thinking, had I seen it before I made *Joe and Maxi*, maybe it would have

influenced it. I met Jean Rouch and was shocked that both Jean Rouch and George Stoney were

so taken aback by *Joe and Maxi,* it was way too intimate for them. I was surprised, I thought they

would really applaud it. People asked what my influence was, and I had to say it was really

video. Even though at that time Cassavetes made *Faces* (1968) and I thought, if I'd seen *Faces*

before *Joe and Maxi* it may have had an influence, but basically it was just the work we were

doing on video.

Hoffman: Do you think video allows for a different kind of intimacy with your subjects?

Cohen: First of all, it certainly did at that time. The sensibility that came out of video was

very different. Also, it was at a time when documentaries were essentially more like news. What

was prized was objectivity. People would make documentaries, there would be this kind of

authoritative voice over. There was no sense of subjectivity. Really, not thinking about

documentary in the same way that one tells a story in a narrative film, even though that was

never the impotence. I thought I was making a ten-minute film, I didn't expect a story to evolve.

Hoffman: Where do you think video fit into the media landscape when you first started

using it and how has that changed?

Cohen: I remember first seeing video in the late 60s beginning of the 70s. I would say

there were two kinds of, I hate to use the word trends, but two kinds of interests in video. There

were artists who did basically video art in the same way that people were doing minimal art or

conceptual art. That's where you get Bruce Nauman. On the other hand, there were people who

were interested in using video for social change. So, it was the beginning of public access. I as

actually the director of the first public access facility in the country, here in New York. The idea

of making guerilla television, what the news wouldn't cover or where the news didn't go, with the same level of objectivity. At the time, not only was there this formality about television news, but the video equipment that the broadcasters were using was rather large. To some extent, there was less of speaking to the everyday person on the street and much more of interviewing the experts. Video was really used for studio shoots and new gathering. So, the video then was doing guerilla television. It's funny because in 1976 we covered the Democratic National Convention here in New York. There were about sixty of us from around the country. We went out on a cable every night and did all kinds of crazy things. Joel Gold did musical documentaries on the street, inside Madison Square Garden we'd get really intimate interviews with people. That really changed the face of newsgathering. That video movement really changed what news began to look like.

I remember going to the first show that I went to that had video in it. It was at The Leo Castelli Gallery. There'd be a pedestal in the middle of a gallery with a monitor on it. I thought, gee, who's going to stand in front of a monitor like that? The way you would look at a painting, just stand there and see the whole video. I just thought, this does not work. So, one of the things I was very concerned about is, how do you exhibit video?

For example, one of the early pieces I did on reel-to-reel was this piece about my grandparents, *My Bubi, My Zada*. I really got to experiment a lot with my family because they allowed me to do that. To see that video, which I felt was kind of important because I felt they were the last of a generation or they were a very specific generation. I recreated my grandparents' living room, so you could actually sit in it and relax and watch the video on TV.

The issue of exhibition has always been at the forefront of my mind. If you make something and you want people to look at it, then to me you have to really consider what is the demand that you're making on the viewer.

So today, I would say that video gets exhibited in museums and galleries. First of all, it's taken on a different scale. If you're going to look at a video, usually you're in a darkened room where the piece is projected large on a wall and there's a place for you to sit down. Right there that's a huge difference. Of course, video art now has produced a number of ways of being made and being screened, from installation work - the last piece I did I think about as being an immersive installation - to virtual reality if you think about it. So, there is a greater consideration also on the part of exhibition venues. I'm always really interested in how they'll present video. From pods or cubicles to the way seating is set up. So, one can really watch video and not have to be standing. They've made it more accessible.

March 25, 2020 – Via phone call

Hoffman: Where did you grow up?

Cohen: I grew up in Vineland, NJ. It was a town made up of Jewish chicken farmers and Italian tomato farmers. So, I grew up on a chicken farm. My father was in the trucking business, so I grew up on a junk yard.

Hoffman: Can you describe your experience at NYU and your work at that time?

Cohen: I wanted to be an artist but my mother insisted that I learn something you could make money from. I had seen a film on television, an animated film, and it said it was made by

someone who went to NYU. So, I thought, I'll just paint and animate the paintings. I applied to NYU, I got into NYU, and there was no animation. I thought, the only film that I was interested in making was this film about my relationship with my father. In my junior year I went to Hebrew University in Israel. It was the second year that they had Television. I got to animate. I animated the weather. I worked in the animation department. This was after they asked me to find gun smoke which I did and then to work on the news but the Arabic news was different from the Israeli news so I refused to do it. So, I got to animate which was very interesting because… It was very interesting in Israel because nobody had ever done television before, so it was whoever was in the country from around the world. The head of animation was a Korean guy who came from Hannah Barbara. I came back to New York my senior year and the first semester my friends convinced me to go out to California and go to Immaculate Heart College, where I made a film for the school about the school. I learned more there, even though they didn't have a film department, the second semester I graduated from NYU because at Immaculate College where I was the nuns were being excommunicated and nobody would ever hear of the school again. So, I came back to NYU for my last semester and I made an animated film on a produce crate, my version of Oxberry animation stand and made a film. It took me three months to make a three-minute film. At the same time as I was doing that, a friend introduced me to video. Which was then reel-to-reel portapack. I realized that doing this animation was very solitary, took three months while working every day. With video I could make a half an hour in a half an hour, and there was absolutely no precedent so there was no hierarchy. When I made a film at NYU as a sophomore, a guy in the equipment department convinced me that he should come and shoot it, and he had me dragging the tripod taking over my film, which was a really groundbreaking film about a community of Jews that had escaped

anti-Semitism, black Jews who escaped anti-Semitism in Philadelphia. There were living in the Pine Barrens of south New Jersey. Most of them were converting Baptist choir singers. The music, which I always wanted to make an album of, was traditional Jewish music but like amazing gospel singers. I was uncomfortable being Jewish shooting in the synagogue on Saturdays, but they had no issue because the bible doesn't say anything about driving cars or electricity. But on Passover they put blood on their doorposts. So, they just followed the Bible, they were culturally black and were Orthodox Jews. Anyway, it was such a horrible experience making this film. I was so relived to be able to shoot a half an hour in a half an hour. That year when I graduated, I met George Stoney. George at NYU with Red Burns who ran the interactive department there eventually, they started something called The Alternate Media Center, which was creating programming for cable television here in New York, it was the beginning of public access. George had come out of Canada doing Media for Social Change. We were all interested in this idea that if people had access to the airwaves, would it create social change? After I graduated I went to Cape May, New Jersey where there was no local television, and did a local TV series to see if people in town had access to the airwaves, would it create social change. That's how I started in video.

Appendix III – Press Materials

With the exception of the MoMA program documents, the following press clippings were

collected in a folder marked "press clippings" at Maxi Cohen Studio. I have gathered as much

information about the sources of these clippings as possible. Each clipping pertaining to the work

on this project was scanned for inclusion in this thesis before being returned to their original

location.

Figure 0.3 – Cohen comments on her use of video: "It has a different look from the romantic veneer of film." New York Post, May 24, 1988.

Indie producers go for audience

INDEPENDENT video has suffered for its art. Often seen as too obscure for the masses, too lacking in history for the museums, independent videos have had to scratch for every inch of recognition.

That fight in recent years has grown tougher, too, with government funding sources drying up.

Nevertheless, as video cameras have gotten more compact and playback equipment more accessible, the universe of independent videomaking is expanding. What was once the province of museums and international festivals can now be rented at the local video store.

HOME VIDEO

JAMI BERNARD

Maxi Cohen is an independent film and video maker whose video "Anger" is included in the film compilation "Seven Women, Seven Sins," opening theatrically next month (and going to home video after that). Cohen foresees a future in which America's landscape will be dotted with video theaters.

In anticipation of that day, she has compiled the first "New Video Theater," a sort of magazine-on-video featuring short works by various artists.

Some segments are humorous, like the documentary about a guy who makes "turkey calls," or the one where Father Guido Sarducci explains why it's great to be an artist (you can get up "at a quarter to noon"). Some explore the technological possibilities of the medium itself by fragmenting images.

Other video artists work in all genres and subjects that are explored in film and books, making "personal, political and social statements using the documentary and narrative form," according to Cohen. Comedy, drama and performance are all represented by the independent video.

Cohen says she loves the personal feel of video. "It has a different look from the romantic veneer of film."

New York Post: Dan Brinzac
MAXI COHEN
Personal feel.

And yet film and TV have borrowed from the video lexicon. Not surprisingly, many people were introduced to the real-life look of video by watching soap operas.

"Video ideas enter the mainstream and years later appear on TV," says Larry Sapadin of the Assn. of Independent Video and Filmmakers, whose monthly newsletter keeps about 4500 video makers apprised of trends, funding, festivals.

"Even on 'Hill Street Blues' and 'St. Elsewhere,' the style is a direct descendent of cinema verite."

And video is showing up in "strange outlets" like late-night TV music clips, according to James Hindman, deputy director of the American Film Institute.

The field of independent video artists has Nam June Paik to thank for his trailblazing efforts. In 1965, Paik stacked a bunch of TVs together, tuned them all to distorted images, put them in the Whitney Museum and called it art.

Today, indie video makers are reshaping the way we look at images. New Video, a Manhattan chain store and a trailblazer in its own right, bravely carries a selection of 50 independent films and videos on cassette, including the avant-garde work of the likes of Max Almy and Dara Birnbaum, who are video artists, and the joint ventures of Ellin Stein and Betsy Newman, who make political satires.

"It was a way for us to pay back the film community here and to find a way for their work to be available to the public at large," says Michael Pollack, co-owner of the chain.

There are other places around town to catch independent videos. The Whitney showcases American video artists in their Biennial Exhibition and in their branch museums.

The Museum of Modern Art has a circulating video library of 450 tapes, plus a study center, lecture series, and "video installation" exhibitions.

The lure of video is its "intimate scale, its sense of immediacy," says Barbara London, assistant curator of MoMA's video collection.

Two years ago MoMA held a retrospective — the first of its kind — of the video work of Bill Viola, who was honored recently by the American Film Institute's annual Maya Deren Awards. The work of Viola and others can be screened by appointment at Electronic Arts Intermix on Mercer Street.

The Kitchen, a downtown performance-arts space on West 19th Street, has a library of about 100 videos and showcases them for free.

The Donnell Library on W. 53d Street has a media center that screens videos by appointment.

Global Village, on Broome Street, is "first and foremost a video group," according to John Riley, the executive director. The work made at this non-profit production house generally finds its way to public TV, and there is an annual video documentary festival. "There's a spontaneity to video, a feedback that you don't get with film," says Riley.

Figure 0.4 – From the program guide to "The Independents" a TV program on The Learning Channel. October, 1986.

Program 5

Second Grade Dreams *by Maxi Cohen*
Frank: A Vietnam Vet *by Frederick Simon and Vincent Canzoneri*

Everybody dreams, even second graders. Maxi Cohen captures some of the best of those dreamers in **Second Grade Dreams** with youngsters who tell all about their nighttime adventures and the fears that sometimes lurk behind them. Frank Barber's dream is of another kind, however—a living, enduring nightmare. In Frederick Simon and Vincent Canzoneri's riveting **Frank: A Vietnam Vet**, Frank shares with disquieting calmness his vivid recollections of war and its aftermath, to create images that linger long after the TV has gone silent.

Figure 0.5 – *Intimate Interviews: Sex in less than Two Minutes* reviewed by Dr. Don Fidler. Hospital and Community Psychiatry, February 1987.

and can be used safely. This production can have a place in education for staff, patients, and the lay public. While it does not concentrate on administration of ECT, as might be more appreciated by a treatment staff, actual treatments are presented, and more attention is given to research related to memory than in other ECT presentations.

Ozone Stories—produced by Maxi Cohen. Videocassette, all formats, about 20 minutes, color, 1982. Purchase price $225, rental $50, from Maxi Cohen/Film and Video Productions, 31 Greene Street, New York, New York 10013.

Intimate Interviews: Sex in Less Than Two Minutes—produced by Maxi Cohen. Videocassette, all formats, about two minutes, color, 1984. Purchase price $75, from Maxi Cohen/Film and Video Productions at the above address.

Reviewed by Don Fidler, M.D.
Maxi Cohen has produced two videotapes that are gems for teaching psychiatry or human behavior to health professionals or general audiences.

What happens when you videotape 70 eighth-graders and ask them questions about growing-up dreams, heros, hate, love, money, and eating? What happens when you ask them to write poems, tell their fantasies, and play complete-the-sentence games? What happens when you ask them to play, or even merely face the camera and tell their names?

What happens is that we can stand in Piaget's early shoes and be curious about why children think and feel as they do. We do not have to take anyone's word for it because the body of evidence is before us. We can observe and then conclude which themes are common and which vary. We can become curious like Freud, Erikson, and Adler about whether parents, family, environment, and biology shape our thinking and behavior.

Ozone Stories does not attempt to give us answers but rather presents the evidence, allowing us to draw conclusions either alone or, one hopes, through group discussion. A trained leader should be present to facilitate discussion since the trained eye will see much more.

It is this type of production that begins to raise psychiatry and the study of human behavior from art and theories to a solid science. The radiologists have x-rays and the pathologists have microscopes. Now psychiatrists have film and videotape to capture and preserve their evidence, far surpassing the written word, which required judgments by the author before it ever was recorded.

With this technology comes a responsibility. We trust that Piaget was quite methodical in interviewing children and recording their responses. Can we similarly trust the producers of *Ozone Stories?*

It is unclear how spontaneous some of the children's answers are. Some children seem spontaneous, whereas some read their responses from something they presumably wrote. Some children seem to be alone with the camera, whereas others react to the camera like a bacterium drying up from too bright a microscope light. What is truth, and what is artifact?

More care could be taken to assure fewer artifacts, but even with artifacts the evidence is overwhelming as these eighth-graders talk about dating, nuclear war, travel, physical abuse, vampires, and material that demonstrates their worries about sexual identity, castration, violence, and love. Some are shy, some confident. Differences between girls and boys are revealed. But you will be richer for watching the evidence yourself.

If producing an excellent one- or two-hour program is difficult, producing an excellent two-minute program can be even more difficult. As in a commercial instead of a feature, a poem instead of a novel, the message must be more concise, better edited, and more focused and must have stronger impact.

Intimate Interviews: Sex in Less Than Two Minutes accomplishes all of the above. Several people talk about sex. Through rapid editing we are exposed to casual sex, intimate sex, heterosexuality, homosexuality, comfortable sex, uncomfortable sex, fears, and attractions. The result is pure poetry.

Again, this is an excellent tape to trigger discussion for audiences of health professionals and general adult audiences. It may be expensive if you measure cost per minute, but great poems are not measured by cost per word. They are crafted to prompt us to think about ourselves and our universe. *Intimate Interviews* is crafted to make us examine ourselves sexually and to somehow feel transformed and enlightened.

Maxi Cohen has given us two slices of life that are delicious and linger on the palate, especially if served to a group for discussion.

Special Note to Authors

Hospital and Community Psychiatry has begun using an electronic scanner to enter manuscripts into our computer system for editing by staff editors. To avoid possible delays in publication of an accepted manuscript, authors are advised to submit all material, including tables, in one of the following scannable typefaces: Courier 10, Prestige Elite, Letter Gothic, Courier 12, Pica, Prestige Pica, Elite, OCR-B, Roman/Madeleine, Cubic/Triad, Bold/Boldface, or Title. The scanner cannot read type from dot matrix printers.

Papers submitted in an unscannable format will be reviewed as usual, but an author of an accepted paper will be asked to revise the paper in a scannable format before publication. Alternatively, the author may submit a floppy disk if the paper was prepared on an IBM-compatible system. For more information, call the *H&CP* editorial office at 202-682-6070.

Figure 0.6 – *Second Grade Dreams* reviewed by Jack Hitt. The Villager, June 9, 1983.

VIDEO/FILM:

BY JACK HITT

One of the chief efforts of video, the artists will tell you, is to "Challenge" traditional television. They want to subvert the viewer's typical reaction to the small screen. Some artists see this as a revolutionary call to arms and create tapes of high solemnity. Others find this an invitation to irony and parody.

A fine collection of both the hilarious and the solemn will be on view at Global Village June 11.

RECOUNTING NIGHTMARES

Some of the humor is straight forward. Maxi Cohen's brilliant "Second Grade Dreams" (1981, color, 4 minutes) is simple shots of second-grade children recounting nightmares. One sweet little girl tells of a dream at her friend's house. A dinosaur emerges from the bathtub drain and salvages the town before she brings it down with a gun. But her cute tale of a tub evolves into textbook Freud when she candidly admits that the dianosaur turned out to be her best friend in disguise. Not to be missed is another little creepy boy enjoying his version

of a nightmare in which blood oozes from the bathtub tap, or the chubby boy relishes his dream in which everyone around him suddenly converts into six-foot chocolate bars.

Figures 0.7 and 0.8 – The Museum of Modern Art's press release and schedule for DREAM, a video series featuring *The Edge of Life*. Curated by Barbara London, March 1990.

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
March 1990

DREAM

March 2 - May 6, 1990

An exhibition of videotapes reflecting different approaches to dream exploration opens at The Museum of Modern Art on March 2, 1990. Including nineteen works produced over the past nine years, DREAM investigates the intangible, private world of the unconscious. The works featured in this program attempt to approximate the sensations experienced in dreams.

Bill Viola's Hatsu-Yume (First Dream) is based on the Japanese notion that the first dream you have in the New Year foretells the year to come. Ed Rankus's Naked Doom is a nightmarish murder story as described in the criminal's journal written in prison. Robert Cahen's Juste le temps creates an impressionistic journey on a train through a painterly and lushly colored French landscape. Ken Feingold's 5dim/Mind, an abstract series of images, relates directly to visual associations the artist has made while dreaming. (Program list attached.)

DREAM was organized by Barbara London, assistant curator, Video, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art. The Museum's video programs are made possible by grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts and the Sony Corporation of America.

*   *   *

No. 27

For further information or film stills, contact Sarah Eaton, film press representative, Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019-5498 Tel: 212-708-9400 Cable: MODERNART Telex: 62370 MODART

DREAM
Program Schedule
Monday, March 2 - Sunday, May 6, 1990

PROGRAM I
Monday, noon; Thursday, 2:00 p.m.; Sunday, noon   (begins March 13)

Spitting Glass (1990). Ed Bowes. 60 min.

PROGRAM II
Monday, 2:00 p.m.; Thursday, 4:00 p.m.; Saturday, 3:00 p.m.; Sunday, 1:00 p.m.

The Edge of Life (1984). Maxi Cohen. 19 min.
Dreamtime (1988). Alaine Ball and Laurie McDonald. 6 min.
Smothering Dreams (1981). Daniel Reeves. 22 min.

PROGRAM III
Monday, 4:00 p.m.; Thursday, 6:00 p.m.; Saturday, 4:00 p.m.

Flaubert Dreams of Travel (1986). Ken Kobland and The Wooster Group. 19 min.
Juste le temps (1983). Robert Cahen. 13 min.
Deafman Glance (1981). Robert Wilson. 27 min.

PROGRAM IV
Tuesday, noon; Friday, noon; Sunday, 4:00 p.m.

Against A Single Match, The Darkness Flinches (1988). Jeanne Finley. 18 min.
Luck Smith (1987). Gusztav Hamos. 5 min.
This Is A History of New York (1988). Jem Cohen. 23 min.
Dung Smoke Enters the Palace (1989). Leslie Thornton. 16 min.

PROGRAM V
Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, 2:00 p.m.

Naked Doom (1983). Ed Rankus. 17 min.
The Andersons (1986). Jim Shaw. 3 min.
Secret Horror (1980). Michael Smith. 14 min.
I Dreamed Another Man Dreamed Me (1986-87). Robert Beck. 6 min.
No Europe (1990). Tony Conrad and Chris Hill. 10 min.

PROGRAM VI
Tuesday, 4:00 p.m.; Friday, 4:00 p.m.; Saturday, 1:00 p.m.; Sunday, 3:00 p.m.

Volcano Saga (1989). Joan Jonas. 32 min.
5dim/Mind (1983). Ken Feingold. 29 min.

PROGRAM VII
Thursday, Saturday, 12:00 p.m.

Hatsu-Yume (First Dream) (1981). Bill Viola. 56 min.

Figure 0.8

Figures 0.9 - 0.12 – The Museum of Modern Art's press release and schedule for VIDEO: TWO

DECADES, a video series featuring *How Much is Really True?*. Curated by Barbara London,

October 1992.

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
October 1992

VIDEO: TWO DECADES
October 15, 1992 - January 3, 1993

An exhibition highlighting the advances made in independent video in the 1970s and 1980s opens at The Museum of Modern Art on October 15, 1992. Comprising thirty-four videotapes, the exhibition reflects some of the political, social, and technological concerns in alternative media of the last twenty years. **VIDEO: TWO DECADES** is on view through January 3, 1993.

Arranged loosely by genres, the works in the exhibition illustrate how video artists' approach to their subject matter and tools have evolved. While television has irrevocably altered the way we envision the world, video has helped redefine the role of art and artists in society. The exhibition is divided into four categories: Gender and Conventions (Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, 1975, and Dara Birnbaum's *Kiss the Girls: Make Them Cry*, 1979), Individual Voices (Kieko Tsuno's *Story of Vinh*, 1990, and Marlon Riggs's *Tongues Untied*, 1989), Media and Process (Laurie Anderson's *O Superman*, 1981, and Peter Callas's *Neo-Geo*, 1989), and Performance and the Body (Merce Cunningham and Charles Atlas's *Blue Studio: Five Segments*, 1975, and Paul Dougherty, Walter Robinson, and Edit Deak's *Frankie Teardrop*, 1978).

The 1970s and 1980s saw the personal computer enter the work place as well as the home, and videocassette players and portable color video cameras were made available to the consumer market. At the same time, enormous advances were made in video technology; what had been an awkward medium

- more -

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2

quickly became pliant and precise. For instance, video editing became frame-accurate and image manipulation became quite effortless due to new types of equipment. This has allowed video artists to make inexpensive and technically sophisticated tapes.

VIDEO: TWO DECADES was organized by Barbara London, assistant curator, Video, Department of Film.

*   *   *

No. 56

For further information or film stills, contact Barbara Marshall, film press representative, Department of Public Information, 212/708-9752.

Figure 0.10

The Museum of Modern Art

VIDEO: TWO DECADES
October 15, 1992 - January 3, 1993

<u>Exhibition Schedule</u>

PROGRAM 1
Mondays, 12:00 p.m.; Thursdays, 3:00 p.m.; Sundays, 4:30 p.m.

Semiotics of the Kitchen. 1975. Martha Rosler. 6 min.
Trick or Drink. 1984. Vanalyne Green. 20 min.
The Bus Stops Here. 1989. Julie Zando. 27 min.

PROGRAM 2
Mondays, 1:00 p.m.; Sundays, 3:30 p.m.

Turn Here Sweet Corn. 1990. Helen DeMichiel. 57 min.

PROGRAM 3
Mondays, 3:00 p.m.; Sundays, 1:00 p.m.

Story of Vinh. 1990. Keiko Tsuno. 56 min.

PROGRAM 4
Mondays, 2:00 p.m.; Sundays, 2:00 p.m.

Home. 1973. Woody and Steina Vasulka. 17 min.
Reminiscence. 1974. Woody Vasulka. 5 min.
Selected Works. 1979. Ralph Hocking and Sherry Miller. 30 min.

PROGRAM 5
Mondays, 4:00 p.m.; Sundays, 12:00 p.m.; Thursdays, 6:00 p.m.

The General Motors Tape. 1976. Phil Morton. 60 min.

PROGRAM 6
Tuesdays, 12:00 p.m.; Saturdays, 4:30 p.m.

Rock My Religion. 1984. Dan Graham. 60 min.

PROGRAM 7
Tuesdays, 1:00 p.m.; Fridays, 12:00 p.m.; Saturdays, 3:30 p.m.

Sugar Daddy. 1980. Ardele Lister. 26 min.
Kiss the Girls: Make Them Cry. 1979. Dara Birnbaum. 7 min.
Perfect Leader. 1983. Max Almy. 4 min.
The Andersons. 1986. Jim Shaw. 3 min.
Sensible Shoes. 1983. John Adams. 11 min.

PROGRAM 8
Tuesdays, 2:00 p.m.; Fridays, 1:00 p.m.; Saturdays, 2:00 p.m.

Tongues Untied. 1989. Marlon Riggs. 55 min.

- more -

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Figure 0.11

PROGRAM 9
Tuesdays, 3:00 p.m.; Thursdays, 4:00 p.m.

Mitchell's Death. 1978. Linda Montano. 22 min.
Children's Tapes. 1974. Terry Fox. 30 min.

PROGRAM 10
Tuesdays, 4:00 p.m.; Saturdays, 12:00 p.m.

How Much is Really True? 1991. Maxi Cohen. 33 min.
I Need Your Full Cooperation. 1989. Kathy High. 28 min.

PROGRAM 11
Thursdays, 12:00; Fridays, 4:00 p.m.

City of Angels. 1983. Marina Abramovic and Ulay. 20 min.
Underscan. 1974. Nancy Holt. 8 min.
Pull Your Head to the Moon: Stories of Creole Women. 1992. Ayoka Chinzera and
   David Rousseve. 12 min.

PROGRAM 12
Thursdays, 1:00 p.m.; Fridays, 3:00 p.m.

Lindsay Tape. 1965--1974. Nam June Paik. 4 min.
O Superman. 1981. Laurie Anderson. 8 min.
Neo-Geo. 1989. Peter Callas. 9 min.
Sunstone. 1979. Ed Emshwiller. 3 min.
Alienation. 1980. Barbara Latham, John Manning, and Ed Rankus. 27 min.

PROGRAM 13
Thursdays, 2:00 p.m.; Fridays, 2:00 p.m.; Saturdays, 1:00 p.m.

Lick My Decals Off, Baby. 1970. Dan Van Vliet. 1 min.
Frankie Teardrop. 1978. Paul Dougherty, Walter Robinson, and Edit Deak.
   10 min.
JGLNG. 1976. Skip Blumberg. 5 min.
Blue Studio: Five Segments. 1975. Merce Cunningham and Charles Atlas. 15 min.
Songs of the 80s. 1983. Doug Hall. 16 min.
Berlin (West)/Andere Richtungen (Other Direction). 1986. Stuart Sherman.
   6 min.

*   *   *

Figure 0.12

Appendix IV – Toolbox

A folder has been created on Google Drive containing documents that may guide the further preservation of the works in this thesis. Link:

drive.google.com/drive/folders/1s8cvba8oYrAGcAMJdip97XrkM8wtOD62?usp=sharing

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