

STEINA
(Steinunn Briem
Bjarnadóttir)

Born in 1940, Reykjavik,
Iceland
Lives and works in Santa Fe,
NM, US

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- 1953–1957 Studied violin and music theory in Reykjavik.
- 1959–1963 Received a scholarship from the Czechoslovak Ministry of Culture to attend the State Music Conservatory in Prague, Czechoslovakia.
- 1962 Met Woody Vasulka in Prague.
- 1964 Joined the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra. Married Woody Vasulka in Prague.
- 1965 The Vasulkas emigrate to New York City.
- 1965–1970 Worked as a freelance musician and studied music. By the end of the 1960s she decided to focus entirely on video.
- 1969 The Vasulkas began experimenting with video feedback and working with the SONY Portapak Video System.
- 1970 Became very involved in the New York cultural scene, taping theater and music, notably at the “legendary Audubon Hall in Harlem.” Their early tapes, such as Don Cherry (1970) and Participation (1971) are from this period.
- 1971 Co-founded The Electronic Kitchen (later abbreviated to The Kitchen), an experimental performance space devoted to electronic media in New York (official opening June 15th), together with Woody and Andres Mannik. In addition to the vanguard daily program at The Kitchen, established the first annual video festival and cooperated with David Binstock in the organization of A Special Videotape Show at the Whitney Museum. Participated in some of the first exhibitions of video art, such as Continuous Video Environment, at WBAI Free Music Store (New York) and Transmitted Environment at the Experimental Television Center Binghamton (New York). During this period Steina and Woody collaborated in wide-ranging investigations into the electronic nature of video and sound.
- 1973 Moved to Buffalo, New York. From 1974 and over the ensuing years, the artistic interests of Woody and Steina diverged. Steina started to experiment with the camera as an autonomous imaging instrument which evolved into her Machine Vision series, and that has since been widely exhibited e.g. at Albright-Knox Gallery Buffalo, NY (1978), The Pittsburgh Museum of Art, PA (1982) and ZKM, Karlsruhe (2006).
- 1976 Received a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. Participated in the Berlin Film Festival, 6. Forum des Jungen Films.
- 1977–1979 Taught video at the Department of Media Study, State University of New York, Buffalo (SUNY Buffalo).

- 1980 Moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. In the following years, the exploration of landscape became a recurring theme for Steina. She applied her idea of Machine Vision to diverse landscapes, e.g. in Ptolemy (1990) and Geomania (1987) and used the Digital Image Articulator in works such as Selected Treecuts (1980) and In Search of the Castle (1981).
- 1981 New Mexico Art Division Production Grant for Summer Salt.
- 1982 Received grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts to produce her installation The West (1983), which in the following years, was widely shown both within America and internationally, e.g. at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France (1984).
- 1984 Received the Laser d'Or AIVAC, International VideoArt Festival Locarno, Switzerland.
- 1986 Collaborated with singer and composer Joan La Barbara on a series of interactive technology compositions included in the works Voice Windows (1987) and Events in the Elsewhere (1989).
- 1988 While spending six months in Tokyo on a U.S./Japan Friendship Committee grant, she produced In the Land of the Elevator Girls and A So Desu Ka.
- 1989 Received the American Film Institute Grant to post-produce her video installation Tokyo Four.
- 1991 Began producing interactive performances titled Violin Power applying the Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) to a videodisk player control, enabling communication between her violin and video images.
- 1992 Together with Woody, received the Maya Deren Award for Independent Film and Video Artists, conferred by the American Film Institute, Los Angeles, California, honoring her for her contribution to developing and reinventing the film and video industry.
- Together with Peter Weibel the Vasulkas acted as curators for the exhibition Eigenwelt der Apparate-Welt (Pioneers of Electronic Art) for Ars Electronica Linz (Austria). Taught media at the Akademie für Angewandte Kunst in Vienna, Austria.
- 1993 Media Art Production Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.
- 1995 Received the Siemens Media Art Prize, conferred by the ZKM | Karlsruhe and, together with Nam June Paik, performed at the Kwangju Biennale, in South Korea.
- 1996 Served as artistic co-director at STEIM (Studio for Electronic Instrumental Music) Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Collaborated with software engineer Tom Demeyer in the development of a performance-in-real-time image processing software.
- 1997 Represented Iceland at the Biennale di Venezia, 47e Esposizione Internazionale d'arte, where she presented Orka (1997) at the Icelandic Pavilion.
- 1998 Received an honorary doctorate from the San Francisco Art Institute, and was honored with an award for her exceptional contributions to media art by The National Association of Media and Culture (NAMAC), San Francisco, CA

- (together with Woody Vasulka).
- 1999 Organized a workshop on Art and Science in collaboration with Woody Vasulka, the composer David Dunn and the physicist James Crutchfield at Santa Fe Arts Institute.
- 1999 Showed three installations in three countries: Nuna in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Textures in Reykjavik, Iceland and Machine Vision in Milano, Italy.
- 2000 Created two installations (Lava & Moss and Mynd) for the Art Festival 2000, in Reykjavik, Iceland.
- 2001 Invited to festivals in Norway, Russia, Estonia, Portugal, Montreal, England and Italy.
- 2006 Vasulka Lab, 1969-2005-All Vision and Theater of Hybrid Automata presented at the ICA, London and VIVID, Birmingham, UK.
- 2006–2007 Artist-in-residence at the ZKM | Karlsruhe, where she helped to organize and participate in the exhibition MindFrames: Media Study at Buffalo 1973-1990.
- 2008 Steina: 1970-2000 solo show at SITE Santa Fe; shows in Iceland and Bern, Switzerland.
- 2009–2013 Works shown in Glasgow, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Reykjavik, Long Island City, Long Beach, Denver, Boulder, Albuquerque and Santa Fe, US.
- 2014 Presentations and workshops in France, Belgium, Germany, Norway and Seattle, U.S.
Works shown at Oslo Screen Festival, Oslo.
Nomination for Prix Ars Electronica award, as Visionary Pioneers of Media Art.
October dedication and opening of the Vasulka Chamber, at the National Gallery of Art, Reykjavik, Iceland.
- 2015 Works shown in Culturehouse, Reykjavik, The Vasulka Chamber at The National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavik, Momentum 8: Tunnel Vision, Norway, Currents Festival, Santa Fe, United States, Hafnarborg, Reykjavik, Nordisk Panorama, Malmö, Sweden, Axle Contemporary, Santa Fe, United States, Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival, Czech Republic, The Paseo Taos Outdoor Art Festival, New Mexico, United States.
Received Knight's Cross of the Order of the Falcon from the President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson.
- 2016 September dedication and opening of the Vasulka Kitchen in BRNO, Czech Republic.
Works shown in Whitechapel Gallery, London, Entrance Gallery, Prague, The Vasulka Chamber at the National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavik, Raven Row, London, Le Lait Art Centre, France, Galeries Lafayette, Toulouse, France, Berlin Atonal, Berlin, Code Art Fair, Copenhagen, Atelier Nord, Oslo, Kuryokhin Center of Modern Art, St. Petersburg, Neon Digital Arts Festival, Dundee, Scotland, Untitled Art Fair, Miami Beach, United States, Vasulka Kitchen, BRNO, Czech Republic.
Received the Distinguished Artist Award For Lifetime Achievement in Digital Art

by The ACM SIGGRAPH Awards Program and an Honorarium Artist Salary from the Icelandic parliament.

2017 Works shown in the Vasulka Chamber at The National Gallery of Iceland, The Vasulka Kitchen in BRNO, Czech Republic, The Reykjavík Art Museum, Reykjavík, The National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavík, BERG Contemporary, Reykjavík, Photo London, London, LOOP Barcelona, Barcelona.

Videos by Steina

1972 Distant Activities, 1/2" Open Reel video, color, sound, 4:45 min
1975 Land of Timoteus, 1/2" Open Reel video, b/w, sound, 6:45 min
1976 Switch! Monitor! Drift!, 1/2" Open Reel video, b/w, sound, 50 min
1977 Flux, 3/4" U-matic video, b/w, sound, 8:10 min
1977 Orbital Obsessions, 3/4" U-matic video, b/w, sound, 24:10 min
1977 Nam June Paik (with Esther Harriott), 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 25:55 min
1978/2006 Funtime at the Vasulkas (with Tom Busch, Hollis Frampton, Jeffrey Schier, Paul Sharits), 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 7:30 min
1978 Violin Power, 1/2" Open Reel video, b/w, sound, 9:10 min
1979 Bad, 3/4" U-Matic video, color, sound, 2:10 min
1980 Cantaloup (with Jeffrey Schier), 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 22:50 min
1980 Selected Treecuts, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 6:40 min
1980 Urban Episodes (with Josef Krames), 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 9 min
1980 The making of Urban Episodes, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 2:20 min
1982 Summer Salt, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 17:50 min
1982 The making of Somersault, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 1:30 min
1987 Lilith (with Doris Cross), 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 9:10 min
1987 Aria, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 3:10 min
1990 In the Land of the Elevator Girls (w/ Hirofumi Mora), SVHS video, color, sound, 4:15 min
1990 Ptolequad, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 12:20 min
1990 Vocaquad (with Joan La Barbara), 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 11:35 min
1992 Eigenwelt, Video Hi 8, color, sound, 15:05 min, with Peter Weibel, Lee Harrison, Stephen Beck, Lori Zippay, Glen Southworth, Bill Etra, Ralph Hocking, Sherry Miller Hocking, Eric Siegel, David Dunn, David Muller, MaLin Wilson, Melody Sumner Carnahan and Michael Sumner
1994 Warp, digital video, color, sound, 9:30 min
1994 A So Desu Ka, SVHS video, color, sound, 9:30 min
1995 Pyroglyphs (with Tom Joyce), Video Hi 8, color, sound, 26 min
1997 Orka, Video Hi 8, color, sound, 15:10 min
1999 MidiViolin, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 10:50 min, with Michael Saup,

Tim Thompson, Saburo Teshigawara, Joan La Barbara, Michel Waisvisz, Leatitia Sonami, Cas de Marez, Trevor Wishart and Francis M. Uitti

2000 Lava & Moss, digital video, color, sound, 13 min

2000 Trevor (with Trevor Wishart), digital video, color, sound, 11 min

2002 Music in the Afternoon (with Tony Conrad), digital video, color, sound, 4:15 min

2004 Twisted Water, Video Hi 8, color, sound, 4:30 min

2004 Rome Performance, digital video, color, sound, 14:40 min

2005 Pyrospheres (with Tom Joyce), Video Hi 8, color, sound, 5:55 min

2014 Pergament I and II, digital video, color, sound, 12:31 min

Videos by Steina and Woody Vasulka

1970 Don Cherry (with Elaine Milosh), 1/2" Open Reel video, b/w, sound, 19:20 min

1971 Participation, 1/2" Open Reel video, b/w, sound, 63 min, with Paul Ambrose, Ian Anderson, Billy Andrews, Garry Bartz, Tally Brown, Lary Chaplan, Don Cherry, Kevin Coe, Jackie Curtis, Candy Darling, Miles Davis, Jack DeJohnette, Eric Emerson, Estelle!, Christmas Eve, Michael Henderson, Jimi Hendrix, Stephen Holt, Keith Jarrett, Jay Johnson, Aunt Josie, Agosto Machado, Taylor Mead, Buddy Miles, Geri Miller, Mario Montez, Airtio Moreira, Paul Morrissey, Ondine, Ritta Redd, Al Sayegh, Silva!, Ekathrina Sobechanskaya, Steve Stanwick, Steina, Archie Strips, David Susskind, Tinkerbelle, Jethro Tull, Richard Weinstock, Holly Woodlawn

1972 Spaces II, 1/2" Open Reel video, b/w, sound, 7:45 min

1973 Home, 1/2" Open Reel video, color, sound, 16:45 min

1973 Golden Voyage, 1/2" Open Reel video, color, sound, 14 min

1973 Telc, 1/2" Open Reel video, color, sound, 5:10 min

1974 1-2-3-4, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 4:10 min

1974 Solo for Three, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 7:10 min

1974 Heraldic View, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 5:15 min

1974 Soundgated Images, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 9:15 min

1974 Soundsize, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 4:40 min

1974 Noisefields, 3/4" U-matic video, color, sound, 7:05 min

1981 Progeny (with Brad Smith), 1/2" Open Reel video, color, sound, 18 min

1981 In Search of the Castle, 1/2" Open Reel video, color, sound, 9:40 min

1984 Pariah (with Tim Thompson), 1/2" Open Reel video, color, sound, 26:05 min

1987 Voice Windows (with Joan La Barbara), 1/2" Open Reel video, color, sound, 8:05 min

1989 Events in the Elsewhere (with Joan La Barbara), 1/2" Open Reel video, color, sound, 15:40 min

1992 Doris, 1/2" Open Reel video, color, sound, 16:35 min

1999 Techne and Eros, digital video, color, sound, 14:35 min, with Mort Subotnick,

- Jim Crutchfield, Steina, Woody Vasulka, Diane Armitage, Oliver Scott, David Dunn, Joan La Barbara, Simone Aaberg, Tom Demeyer, Bruce Hamilton, Russ Gritz
- 1970 Sketches, 1/2" Open Reel video, b/w, sound, approx. 27 min
- Alfons, performer: Alfons Schilling
 - Charles's Story, performer: Charles Hayworth
 - Gundance, performer: Daniel Nagrin
 - Let it be, performer: The Beatles
 - Red Roses, performer: Jackie Curtis
 - The Kiss, performer: Helen Wong
 - Thierry, performer: Thierry Benison
- 1970 Studies, 1/2" Open Reel video, b/w and color, approx. 45 min
- Calligrams
 - Decay I
 - Decay II
 - Descends
 - Discs
 - Tissues
 - Interface, performer: Charles Hayworth, audio: Gino Piserchio

Installations by Steina

- 1976 Allvision, electro/opto/mechanical environment, with instrumentation by Woody Vasulka.
- 1978 Machine Vision, electro/opto/mechanical environment, with instrumentation by Josef Krames, Woody Vasulka, and Bruce Hamilton.
- 1983 The West, two video/four audio channel video matrix, 30 min cycle.
- 1987 Geomania, two video/four audio channel video matrix, 15 min cycle.
- 1998 Nuna, three video/audio channels, 10 min cycle.
- 1990 Ptolemy, four video/eight audio channel video matrix, 10 min cycle.
- 1990 Vocalizations (with Joan La Barbara), four video/eight audio channel projected video environment, 15 min cycle.
- 1991 Tokyo Four, four video/four audio channel installation, 23 min cycle.
- 1991 to present Violin Power The Performance, interactive performance.
- 1993 Borealis, two video/four audio channel projected video environment, 10 min cycle.
- 1995 Pyroglyphs (with Tom Joyce), three video/audio channels, 20 min cycle.
- 1997 Orka, three video/audio channel projected video environment, 15 min cycle.
- 2000 Cascades (with Sissu Palsdottir), six video/audio channels, 16 min cycle.
- 2000 Mynd, six video/audio channel projected video environment, 18 min cycle.
- 2000 Lava & Moss, three video/audio channel projected video environment,

- 2001 14 min cycle.
Of The North, three video/audio channel projected video environment,
variable length.
- 2002 Bent Scans, life interactive environment.
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Installations by Steina and Woody Vasulka

(Produced various multi-channel installations and matrixes at
The Kitchen 1971-1973)

- 1970-1972 Matrix I, video installation, 12 monitors, b/w, sound, 24:20 min,
dimensions Variable.
- 1972 The West # 1, video environment, two channels, b/w, sound, 15 min cycle.
- 1974 Matrix II, video installation, 12 monitors, color, sound, 8:30 min,
dimensions variable.
- 1983 The West # 2, video environment, two channels, color, sound, 30 min cycle.
- 1992 [1972] Soundprints, two channels video/audio, b/w, variable cycle.
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Collections (selected)

Centre Georges Pompidou
LUX, London
Moravian Gallery
The Daniel Langlois Foundation Collection
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The National Gallery of Iceland
The Reykjavík Art Museum
The Roswell Museum and Art Center
The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
The Smithsonian American Art Museum
The Thoma Foundation
Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, Karlsruhe

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