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## VIDEO, SCULPTURE AND COLLABORATIVE IMAGE PROCESSING

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Accepted for publication by Roger F. Malina.

*The role of science, like that of art, is to blend exact imagery with more distant meaning, the parts we already understand with those given as new, into larger patterns that are coherent enough to be acceptable as truth [1].*

### Mary Ross

Since the early 1970s, I have been using nontraditional photographic techniques and a variety of analog and digital image-processing devices to make art. I exhibit work in various media and contexts. I often project, mix and blend video and computer-processed slides in live performance pieces or make Cibachrome color prints from the slides. Throughout my career I have collaborated extensively with my husband, composer Eric Ross. My processed videotapes are edited to his music, exhibited as single- and multiple-channel installations, or projected with slides in collaborative multimedia performances of our work that often include guest artists, musicians and dancers. The human form, energy and edge, movement, gesture and dance are my principal themes.

### Yvonne Robare Hobbs

Using nature as my source of inspiration, I blend plant, geological, animal and human forms into visual statements that are often poised for motion. My bird/land forms bring to the viewer images of birds combined with images of land in multiple states of shifting, eroding or settling. To achieve multi-layered simultaneous views of inner and outer forms in one sculpture, I place a strong emphasis on the structure of negative space and the play of positive shapes within the shape of negative spaces. A prime example of this is *Exxon Valdez*, a cut, melted and welded steel and metal mesh sculpture that personifies the strength, poise and integrity of predatory birds.

### The Collaborative Process

Our collaboration began when we were asked as experienced artists/educators to design an in-service workshop for teachers. Animating Yvonne's sculpture in preparation for the workshop led us to numerous technical and aesthetic discoveries and provided a framework for advancing individual and collaborative art.

The simplest level of image processing occurs when translating a work of art from one medium to another. For example, photography and video often reveal inherent qualities in a work by enhancing certain details and suppressing others. As we watched the television monitor while videotaping and rotating Yvonne's smaller sculptures by hand on a potter's wheel and with simple studio lighting, we discovered how useful video is for representing multiple views of three-dimensional objects. Despite some loss of detail, the speed and direction of movement possible with video enhanced subtle meanings in the work. The aesthetic and technical discoveries recorded while videotaping became the basis of a collaborative article [2].

Our first idea for working together was to provide multiple views of Yvonne's sculpture while permitting new relationships to unfold between a particular view of her sculpture and one or more of Mary's images. In prepara-

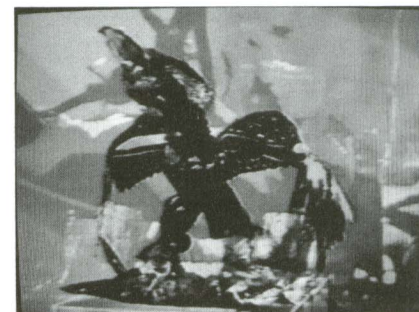
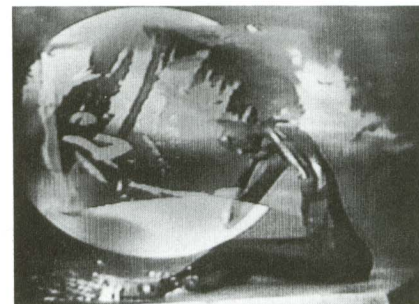
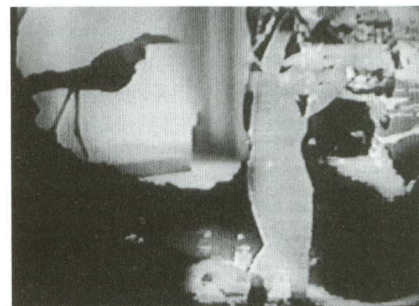


Fig. 1. Yvonne Robare Hobbs and Mary Ross, *Trilogy*, three-channel videotape installation, 1995. (Photo: Mary Ross) These videotapes were edited to a soundtrack, the *Overture* from composer Eric Ross's *Electronic Opera* (Op. 47).

tion for a semiannual residency at the Experimental Television Center (ETC) in Owego, New York, and influenced by the experience of videotaping Yvonne's sculpture, we began making triptychs for further processing.

A random mix of Mary's video and computer-processed slides and videotapes with Yvonne's sculpture through the image processing system at ETC provided source material for *Trilogy* (Fig. 1), a three-channel collaborative