

Joan Does Dynasty

(1986)



DECEMBER 10, 1994 — JANUARY 29, 1995

JOAN BRADERMAN A VIDEO RETROSPECTIVE

Our reality is defined by the mass media. One hundred years ago, our families and schools and work were the primary molders of identity and perception. Books and newspapers, though enriching were far less significant. These days the reality generated by television and the movies seems more important, more real, than the unmediated experiences of our everyday life. Paradoxically, most of what we watch on TV and in the movies is not real. Somehow we all know that. We forget, however, that much of what we watch, we become.

Joan Braderman's video art reminds us of who we are and what parts of us comes from media. She reminds us also that the television and movies have their own agenda, different from our own. Her tools are her video camera and her sense of humor. From the beginning of her career in video art, Ms. Braderman has examined our media in its more compelling forms. *Natalie Didn't Drown - Joan 'Reads' the National Enquirer* and *Joan Does Dynasty* examine the messages encoded in the National Enquirer (and in comparison, the New York Times) and the television series *Dynasty*. What is this message we are sending out to the rest of the world? Is this the message we want to receive? Do we have any choice? Does the message perhaps, in some dark way, represent the truth about America? Have we, the audience, become the message?

No More Nice Girls and *Thirty Second Spot, Reconsidered* take a more political turn. Ms. Braderman examines feminism and censorship from a personal point of view. According to the artist, *No More Nice Girls* is "about what it's like to see your political destiny erased from 'popular memory' and dumped in revisionist history's junkpile. It's about having once felt 'in synch' with the times; about the friends you made then, and how they sustain you through these times." *Thirty Second Spot/Revisited* is a forerunner of network shows like *TV Nation*. It uses a public service announcement created by Ms. Braderman and her friends, to see "if there's really free speech here on the only place that really matters any more: TV"

In *Joan Sees Stars* movies and life are the subjects. It starts with the artist in bed with a life threatening illness (and with Liz Taylor, Judy Garland, Audrey Hepburn among others) on the phone to San Francisco with her friend actor/director Leland Moss, producer of "The AIDS Show." Together, they watch the movies they love and use them to work through life and death issues of their own. *Joan Sees Stars* goes on to embrace the distances between the stars and their myths, and all of us who watched them in the dark and longed for romance. "Joan sees stars, but she also imagines a future in which people are *imaged* in ways that are as multiple and marked by differences - as we are."

— George Fifield, Adjunct Curator, Media Arts



VideoSPACE AT DeCORDOVA
DeCORDOVA MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE PARK

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Joan Braderman, award-winning video artist (&“switcher F/X queen”) has been involved with film and video as a writer, producer and artist for over twenty years (though she doesn't look a day over 16). Braderman is Associate Professor of Film, Video, and Cultural Studies at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. A co-founder of the groundbreaking journal, *HERESIES, A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, her work in video has been shown in festivals and museums around the world, including the Whitney Biennial, The New York and Edinburgh and A.F.I. Film Festivals, the Chaos show in Paris and on cable and public TV nationally. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art in NY, the Stedelijk in Amsterdam, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the ICA in London and many others. Her honors include the Boston Globe Critic's Choice at the 1990 New England Film/Video Festival, Jurors citation, 1994 Black Maria Film Festival, Best Dramatic Criticism, 1994 Atlanta Film and Video festival and exhibition in the National Broadcast, Moscow Television.

Braderman's videotapes include: *Natalie Didn't Drown*; *Joan Braderman 'Reads' The National Enquirer* (1983); *Waiting for the Invasion — U. S. Citizens in Nicaragua* (1984); *Tell Them For Us*; *Madre In Nicaragua* (1985); *Joan Does Dynasty* (1986) *30 Second Spot Reconsidered* (1989); *No More Nice Girls* (1989); *Joan Sees Stars* (1993)

Joan Braderman: A Video Retrospective is the first one person show in the ongoing VideoSpace at DeCordova series. Created for this show, a new series of 16" by 20" Cibachrome prints, entitled *Moving Stills*, are on display.



Joan Sees Stars

(1993)

Joan Braderman's sassy intellect and irreverent, female mouth, throwing caution to the winds ... drive the images of her videotapes toward paroxysms of resistance, barely disguising, with scalpel-like irony and wit, the ways in which we should all be fed up to here with the cultural and political lies permeating daily life in these United States. You come away from her tapes invigorated ... with a sense of possibility: for feminism, for women together, for social change, even for men and women. Some may call them wishful or utopian. I call them profoundly historical, courageous as all get out, and great fun.

— Yvonne Rainer, Filmmaker

Pillow Talk meets theory in *Joan Sees Stars* when video diva Braderman wrestles Liz, Ava, and other screen divas into bed for some frankly star-struck girl-talk ... a catty free-ranging commentary on idolatry, mortality and proto-feminist bad girls.

— Bill Horrigan, Curator of Media Arts, Wexner Center for the Arts

Joan Does ... it again. Each new Braderman tape strips a little more flesh off the media power structure. And it does it with wit, courage, and visual vitality. There isn't anything like her around."

— Lucy Lippard, Writer and Art Critic

(Natalie Didn't Drown) is a one woman, lunatic performance, at once embodying and sharply analyzing the schizophrenia of U. S. culture.

— Martha Gever, Afterimage

No More Nice Girls, presents the "Bad Girl Position" ... through carefully chooses emblematic gestures.

Braderman courts aesthetic kitsch by using postproduction image processing techniques to embellish her footage with sickening, seductive, electric blue tones, candy-colored pinks, and garish greens.

— Christine Tamblyn, Art Journal



No More Nice Girls

(1989)

Braderman's point is that *Dynasty* is about power - as is television itself. ... The issue is how to appropriate that power, which Braderman demonstrates symbolically by speaking from within the box itself.

— Regina Cornwell, CONTEMPORANIA

Joan Braderman occupies a unique position in video culture. ... (She) is not ashamed to impersonate the most outrageous gestures of television to get us, the eternally passive audience, to pay attention to the crisis of cultural representation afflicting the little screen. ... She speaks as one possessed — by the ghosts of feminism, popular democracy, information equity, or simply the aura of a modern woman with a progressive conscience and a smart-ass mouth. Is she relentless? Less, alas, than Rush Limbaugh. Wise? More, alas, than Bill Clinton. Funny? Saturday Night Live should only sign her. Inventive? See for yourself. There's no one else like her live, less so on the box. Video culture has never been the same.

— B. Ruby Rich, Cultural Critic

The major reason that *(Thirty Second Spot)* won't be seen by the general public is that it dares to ask who owns the airwaves and to suggest that the answer should be — but is not — the very public that enthusiastically celebrated our freedom of speech and expression in the bicentennial year. This is a piece that both diagnoses the disease and is a victim of it. One can only hope that, with her future work, Braderman will be able to have her thirty seconds - and then some - on the air.

— Julie Levenson, writer and curator of Mixed Signals

JOAN BRADERMAN: A VIDEO RETROSPECTIVE

Program One December 9 – December 15; December 30 – January 5; January 20 – January 29

Joan Sees Stars (60:00) 1993

Program Two December 16 – December 22; January 6 – January 12

Thirty Second Spot Reconsidered (11:00) 1988

No More Nice Girls (44:00) 1989

Program Three December 23 – December 29; January 13 – January 19

Joan Does Dynasty (31:00) 1986

Natalie Didn't Drown – Joan 'Reads' the National Enquirer (28:00) 1983

Meet the artist, Joan Braderman, at VideoSpace at DeCordova Gallery, January 8, 1995 at 3 p.m.



Joan Sees Stars

(1993)

VideoSpace at DeCordova is a continuing media arts collaboration between the DeCordova and the Space, a nonprofit alternative arts organization. The DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park is funded in part by the Institute of Museum Services, a federal agency and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency which also receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts. VideoSpace at DeCordova is also funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.