Ohio at Giverny is a video voyage from rural Ohio, the artist Mary Lucier's birthplace, to the village of Giverny, where the Impressionist Claude Monet lived from 1883 to his death in 1926.

In this panorama of landscape imagery displayed on seven video screens, Lucier, like Monet before her, explores the fascinating interplay of reflection and reality. Opening views into the interior of a Victorian mid-Western house show empty rooms and early morning light through the lace curtains, then a grassy plain leading to a river bordered by willow trees. A train whistle suggests the journey to France, recognizable immediately by the sansard roofs and church bells. A storm, thunder, sounds of nature blended with a haunting electronic score, blurred figures, and finally Monet's house and arbored paths through lush gardens, the pond with the water lilies and Japanese bridge that Monet so lovingly recorded over and over again.

The images from this two-channeled study in light and color on landscape move in carefully orchestrated patterns over the wall-mounted monitors, aligned in the shape of a bower. At time the camera is still; at others, it pans quickly over the landscape, creating the effect of Impressionist paint strokes.

In Lucier's own words, the work is both "personal and mythic." It is also, like Frank Gillette's video installation, Aransas (in the collection of the University Art Museum and shown here in 1978), an extension of the long tradition of landscape painting into the relatively new medium of video. Landscape, or, rather, light in landscape, has been Lucier's primary concern since 1975, and is what drew her to Monet.

Lucier's work has been widely exhibited in museums, festivals and public spaces throughout the United States and abroad. Ohio at Giverny premiered at the Whitney Museum of American Art's 1983 Biennial. It has also been presented at the Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the American Film Institute, L.A., the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the High Museum, Atlanta, the Norton Museum of Art, W. Palm Beach, and the Galerie Joliet, Montreal.

Lucier was born in 1944 in Bucyrus, Ohio, and received a B.A. from Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, in 1965. She has taught at the San Francisco Art Institute (summer 1985), the School of Visual Arts in New York and the Cleveland Institute of Art. A 1985 Guggenheim fellow, Lucier is the recipient of a grant from the American Film Institute's Independent Filmmaker Series and an NEA Visual Arts Fellowship. A new installation, "Wilderness," commissioned by the New Works Program of the Massachusetts Council of the Arts and Humanities, is touring U.S. Museums through 1988.

Lucier's work has been supported over the years by grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts, CAPS, the Jerome Foundation, and the Gallery Association of New York State. The presentation of Ohio at Giverny in the MATRIX program of the University Art Museum is co-sponsored by the Pacific Film Archive. Generous donations by The Mortimer Fleishhacker Foundation, San Francisco, and The Gardener, Berkeley, in addition to contributions from Denny Abrams, Maggie Baylis, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas B. Bassett, Patricia Bordonaro, Aida M. Davis, J. Carlos Davis, Louisa Davis, Lynne Feintech, Fourth Street Grill, Osmond & Neumann Landscape Design, and Ortha Zebroski have made the exhibition possible. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Capp Street Project have lent a portion of the video equipment.

Constance Lewallen

Work in MATRIX:
Selected one-person exhibitions:

The Kitchen, NY, Air Writing, '75; Anthology Film Archives, NY, Dawn Burn, '76; The Kitchen, NY, Paris Dawn Burn, Lasering, '78; Media Study, Buffalo, NY, Laser Burning Video, '79; Whitney Museum of American Art, NY, Denman's Col (Geometry), '81; Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA; Wilderness, '86 (tour to Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT, and several other museums in the U.S.; catalogue).

Selected bibliography about the artist (see also catalogues under exhibitions):


Becker, interview, Interview, Sept. '84.

Selected group exhibitions:

Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 10e Biennale de Paris, '77 (catalogue); Whitney Museum of American Art, NY, Biennial, '83 (catalogue); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Luminous Image, '84 (catalogue).

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