

TEAR SHEET NOT AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME.
BELOW IS TEXT of all mention of Rosenthal:

D. Maria Benfield and Beth Berolzheimer, N.A.M.E. Gallery Publication

N.A.M.E. GALLERY

September 1988

"Black and White Video"

by D. Maria Benfield and Beth Berolzheimer

Program notes for show "Black and White Video" at N.A.M.E Gallery, Chicago

Featured tapes by Barbara Rosenthal: COLORS AND AURAS, BODY FOUND IN SUITCASES, KANDACE'S GRANDMOTHER, WOMEN IN THE CAMPS

In the early days of video art, black and white videotapes were generally produced out of necessity. Black and white video equipment was smaller, lighter, and cheaper than its color equivalent. It was possible to add color to the black and white signal because of the invention of various video synthesizers. However, many video artists were content with the black and white image and most interested in the possibilities which the portability of the equipment allowed. Black and white video equipment could be taken into intimate situations, or simply small spaces, where the presence of larger equipment would have been intrusive or impossible.

Much early video work indicates the results of this early equipment being portable and black and white. It often uses a documentary style, aligning it with previous black and white photo and film documentary, whose influence is apparent in both form and content. An important component of the documentary tradition is the concern with representing the unrepresented. This involves using photography in opposition to the dominant aesthetic of the media, which generally favors fictional work shot in studios, or in the case of news, sensationalist coverage of penny-press spectacle.

Video artists such as Barbara Rosenthal and Scott Jacobs continue this tradition and revitalize it with innovations. Their subject matter is people whose faces are rarely seen on television: individuals far from the mainstream of mass media representation. Not only who they are but also the way they are represented are in contrast to dominant representations. Barbara Rosenthal's interviews take place in the space of the subject, placing the viewer in an often uncomfortable position, on the line between voyeur and voyeur's object. Rosenthal's composition and subjects often reminds one of Diane Arbus' images, the black and white making them appear hyper-real, and at the same time more distanced and "framed" than color images.