

Nina Sobell pioneered the use of video, computers, and interactivity in art, as well as performance on the Web since 1969, when she first used video to document participants' undirected interactions with her sculptures at Cornell. She investigates the extent to which video enables her to manipulate the relation between time and space, and to create a vortex for human experience, in which the mediated event coincides with public experience, memory and relationships.

As a digital artist focusing on experimental forms of interaction and performance, Sobell uses tools such as wireless EEG headbands, MIDI sound, webcasts, and closed-circuit video surveillance. She was part of the feminist video performance movement of the 1970s with works such as *Chicken on Foot* (1974) and *Hey! Baby, Chicky!!* (1978), but she is also known for her work with Emily Hartzell on *ParkBench* and *ArTisTheater* (1993). Her many other collaborators have included Billy Kluver, [Anne Bean](#), [Norman White](#), Sonya Allin, David Bacon, Per Biorn, John Dubberstein, RJ Fleck, Jesse Gilbert, Anders Mansson, Aaron Michaelson, Stacy Pershall, Brian Routh, Chris Shearer, Anatole Shaw, Jeremy Slater, Dr. Barry Sterman and Yuqing Sun.

Since the early 1970s, Sobell worked with closed-circuit video to explore the relationship between artist and audience. With the series *Brain Wave Drawing* in collaboration with Mike Trivich 1973, Sobell set up a system *Interactive Electroencephalographic Video Drawings*, in which two participants could see their brainwaves changing in real time as they simultaneously watched their own images on closed-circuit video, creating an improvisational feedback loop as they silently communicated with each other. It was installed at the Sepulveda VA Neuropsychology Lab, CAM, Houston, LBMA, Ca., BRAG, Bronx, ICA, London and the Getty Museum. In 1991, at ITP NYU she produced the first five borough cable call-in show *Window On Aids*.

In 1993, Nina Sobell and Emily Hartzell collaborated on the *ParkBench Kiosk* as artists-in-residence at [New York University](#) Center for Advanced Technology. The piece was a network of kiosks that used the internet to bring different communities and neighborhoods together, through methods such as videoconferencing and a collaborative drawing space. With the introduction in 1993 of [Mosaic](#), the first graphical browser, Sobell and Hartzell created a "ParkBench" interface for the web and named this version of the project *ArTisTheater*. They turned their studio into a realtime public web installation by linking it to the web with a 24-hour webcam feed. Their goal was to explore the nature of video, performance, and surveillance on the internet, and they invited artists to use their setup on a weekly basis to create live webcast performances of various kinds, before color or sound Sobell and Hartzell's first performance for ArTisTheater has been called "the first live performance in the history of the World Wide Web." Some 80 performances are now archived in the ArTisTheater Performance Archive, and the roster of those who participated includes David Medalla, [Martha Wilson](#), [Margot Lovejoy](#), Diane Ludin, Prema Murthy, Adrienne Wortzel, and Tom Murrin aka Alien Comic.

VirtuAlice (1995) was an early mobile data collection and surveillance project. Its key component was a telerobotic camera mounted on a wireless rolling chair with attached cameras. Users could control its movement either by riding around in it or remotely, through a web interface. The video images captured were made available to web viewers in real time. There was also a rear-view mirror that reflected the face of anyone riding the chair to web viewers. Sobell and Hartzell described the piece as "a passage between physical and cyber space. We converge from web-side and street-side, explore parallel spaces separated by glass, and peer through the membrane at each other's representations."

Her work has been shown throughout the US, Europe, and Japan. Sobell presented *Brainwave Drawings* and *Videophone Voyeur* (1977) at Joseph Beuys' Free International University at Documenta 6. Her work was included in *Videoworks* at the Whitney and *Sunshine and Noir* at the Hammer in LA curated by Paul McCarthy; *A Feast for the Eyes*, Kunst Forum, Vienna and *Port*, MIT. She received awards from the NEA and NYSCA. Her work is in the collections of MOMA; Getty Museum; de Saisset Museum; Banff Centre for the Arts; Manchester Gallery, England; Acme Gallery Archives, London; The Blanton Museum, Austin; CAM, Houston; the Zentrum fur Kunst und Medien Technologie, Karlsruhe; Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporane, La Biennale di Venezia, ICA London; DIA Foundation; Cornell University and many other institutions; the Kramlich, Reynolds, RJKleck, Broder, Leo Kuelbs and other private collections. Video Data Bank and MLC Gallery represent her work. www.ninasobell.com

