

SHIGEKO KUBOTA VIDEO SCULPTURE

Museum of the Moving Image

New York (Astoria), NY, 1991

Soon after completing the successful design and management of the official U.S. exhibition of works by Martin Puryear at the Sao Paulo Bienal, Wendell Walker was in the news. Museum of the Moving Image had recently opened to the public with an outstanding core exhibition, and was now hosting its first temporary exhibition: the work of video artist Shigeko Kubota. The Museum contacted Walker, and after a round of negotiations, a very long relationship was launched.

I was immediately intrigued when I got a call from Sharon Bloom, who was then Deputy Director of Museum of the Moving Image, inviting me to submit a proposal to design the new museum's first temporary exhibition—sculptures by Shigeko Kubota. I had not been to the Museum, but had heard about it and was intrigued by their core exhibition, Behind the Screen, that had recently opened. After reviewing the proposal I submitted, I was invited to visit the Museum. I went, met Rochelle Slovin, the Director, and got a full tour of the Museum. At the end of the visit, she hired me. Little did I know it was one of those landmark moments—the start of a life long relationship.

Aside from Behind the Screen, the Museum's galleries were basic black boxes at that time. In fact, the 3rd floor galleries did not even have lighting! I worked with a lighting designer who used theatrical fixtures in that area. I figured out extension cord options, and he did the rest. His approach was stark and beautiful, and probably had a big impact on my approach to lighting later on! The first floor gallery served as the start of the exhibition. The challenge there was the proportions of the space, combined with the wall of windows. I worked with Shigeko to determine which sculptures would work best with those lighting conditions, and we found a solution. The 3rd floor was the more spectacular part of the exhibition, with more space to roam.

I think I've always done well with raw spaces and I love using lighting to highlight where you want visitors to go and where to look and focus. What we did with theatrical lighting was definitely unique, and Shigeko was very particular about where the light struck. In the end, it all came together beautifully, and it launched a very long relationship with the museum, but also with that gallery space—and that ceiling! (WW)

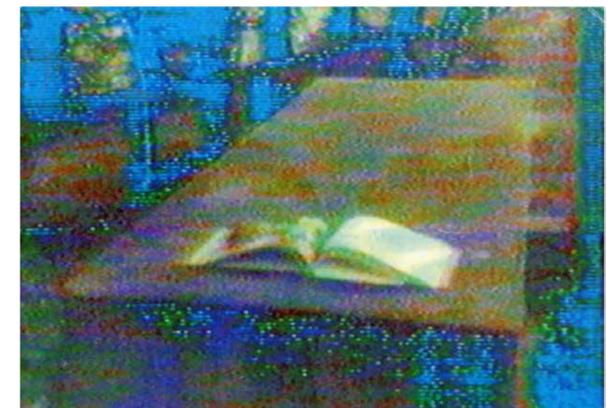


Above and right: 1st floor Fox Gallery at Museum of the Moving Image.

The Fox Gallery at Museum of the Moving Image always presented challenges. It is a very narrow and very long space, and one wall is all windows! It also starts with stairs, and wheelchair access is from the opposite end of the gallery. Nevertheless, I had many adventures in this space. (WW)



Below and below right: Invitation to the opening of Shigeko Kubota Video Sculpture on April 25, 1991.



Far Left, left, and above: Views of the 3rd floor gallery at Museum of the Moving Image. The lighting in the 3rd floor gallery was done solely with theatrical fixtures, creating dramatic shadows and emphasizing the shapes, and allowing the screen content to glow.