

John McCracken

Born Berkeley, California, 1934
Resident Venice, California

Los Angeles sculptor John McCracken toured Litton Industries and Philco-Ford in March, 1969. After studying company brochures and reflecting on his two tours, he indicated to us that although both facilities interested him, he had no specific project involving electronics in mind. But he explained, in a letter to us,

The only possibility I consequently see at this point is to go into it with pretty much that attitude—not knowing at all what might happen, and maybe even accepting the possibility that nothing might happen beyond the occurrence of an educational experience for me and hopefully for the engineers as well. This would be a meeting of minds interested in doing something together, with very few preconceptions on either side, and as I think about it it seems like a pretty exciting idea.

Since he was in New York for several months, McCracken asked that we not reserve either company for him, but said that on his return he would like to visit Kaiser Steel Corporation. Kaiser, however, was already working with Richard Serra. Instead we took McCracken to Norris Industries' bathroom fixture manufacturing plant, but the facility did not inspire him to propose working there.

Glenn McKay

Born Kansas City, Kansas, 1936
Resident San Rafael, California

A&T

Glenn McKay leads a light show group called Head Lights based in San Francisco. On the recommendation of Hal Glicksman, we invited McKay to propose a work for A & T. He wanted to build a multi-media environment including an array of closed-circuit televisions, movie screens and a programmed sound system. HG took him to RCA, and McKay returned several times on his own in the process of refining his proposal.

In April, 1969, he presented to us plans outlining the environment, which was to be a U-shaped room, each wall containing a movie screen surrounded by sixteen televisions. Each of the forty-eight closed circuit television cameras would focus differently on the spectators; one would locate on a face; another would be a wide-angle view of the crowd, etc. These live images were to be superimposed over a sequence of previously taped abstract images. Simultaneously on the central screen of each wall McKay's special type of light show would be projected. Programmed into the visual display would be a sound sequence comprising music by Eric Satie, electronic noise, the Jefferson Airplane and Marshall McLuhan reading.

McKay came to Los Angeles to make a special presentation of this ambitious display at RCA. They studied the proposal, projected a cost estimate and submitted both to the New York office for consideration. Several weeks later we received word that RCA turned it down on the basis of prohibitive expense.