TECHNICAL:

The 13th screen is a multi-camera self generated dynamic editing system. Named for its ability to create a whole greater than the sum of its parts, a miraculous 13th vision out of an alternate number of camera inputs. The 13th screen consists of using a square number of cameras as inputs (this could be 4, 9 or 16 – for this project I have chosen 9). These cameras, or footage from them/ DVD's, are played into a multiplexer. Originally created as a surveillance apparatus the multiplexor would use live feeds from several of corners of, for example; a mall. Each of these signals would be seen in a grid (see the left monitor grid of the 13th screen). At night when all should be still in the mall, the multiplexor is programmed to recognize a visual trip (someone moving through a shot, ie: breaking and entering) and send that video to the police or other power. The 13th screen in part re-uses this technology. In designing the system I wanted the camera people to be able to select for themselves to be edited into a main shot. This now happens based on a camera person's signal, or blackening of their lens. The blackening, signal call is done by placing a hand over the lens for 1 – 2 seconds PRIOR to a compelling shot, like pressing the button on a camera – it says " show this!". However the multiplexer does not have the capability to read this black shot in the same way it is programmed to read movement. Instead the multiplexer is used to combine the images into one single video screen (grid). This single video grid is sent to a computer with specialized software that reads when a portion of the grid (representing one camera) goes Black. In the edited video we see, not a random cut, but cuts that are read in the order at which hands are placed in front of the lens during the synchronized presentation, showing us a new video made by the combination of efforts of the participants. The multiplexer is useful because you would otherwise need a very high-powered computer with 9 video cards to read all the signals, now we need only an up to date Macintosh computer. When the program sees one of the parts of the grid go black, it returns the number (of that camera/ video signal) back to the multiplexer, which takes the appropriate number video signal and sends it out to a main monitor (respectively what would have been the police in the mall version). What comes out is a single channel edited video, based on signal calls. It is important for this that the videos shot are synchronized in some sense, as the edits are based on time. Whether it is tape, live or DVD's playing into the system, it reads them in the order of hands covering the lens acting as editors. Due to the live editing and use of consumer grade DVD players on loop, we can expect a drift in the playback. This will cause the single channel video coming out to dynamically change, meaning that if a viewer enjoys the video one day, when they return it will most likely be a different cut.