



Chicago performance poet Jean Howard (above) presents her poem "Harley and the Hill." The audience (right photo) reacts to a performance at the Poetry Video Festival.

Poetry in motion

Verse meets video in a festival that celebrates a new art form

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The spoken word and the visual image came together in Chicago recently in an appealing new art form known as the poetry video.

During the Fourth National Poetry Video Festival, a three-day event presented at The Hot House, 1565 N. Milwaukee, and Chicago Filmmakers, 1543 W. Division, audiences were treated to the noncompetitive screening of more than 50 poetry videos submitted from the United States and Canada, as well as live segments by local and visiting performance poets.

Sponsored by the Guild Complex, Center for New Television, Community TV Network, Young Chicago Authors, Chicago Filmmakers and Chicago Cable Access, the National Video Poetry Festival offers a new alternative for poets and videomakers to express their creativity.

Highlights from this recent celebration of the mating of performance poetry with the filmed or electronically recorded image will be shown Saturday on WPTW's "Image Union" at 10 p.m. on Channel 11. Selections include Jill Batson's "Counting," featuring Chicago Poetry Slam Champion Lisa Buscani, "Longing" by Glenview poet Annette Barber, Bob Holman's "The Great Rollercoaster Poem" filmed at Coney Island,



and "Harley and the Hill" by Chicago performance poet Jean Howard.

"This is a quite a moment for poetry videos," said Holman, a New York-based poet and three-time Emmy award-winning poetry video producer, while participating in the festival.

Holman delighted audiences with a sneak preview of his phenomenal five-part series "The United States of Poetry," which is scheduled to run on PBS later this year. Shot in 70 days in 37 states, a crew of 15 traveled by bus and van over 13,000 miles to plumb the depths and record the diversity of the current state of American poetry. The result is a remarkable achievement that reaffirms the words of the great poet William Carlos Williams, who once said "if it ain't a pleasure, it ain't a poem."