

**Alice Anderson Live from Lisseville**  
by Didier Semin

It is a curious fact that the technologies of mass communication –radio and television– have, over the last half-century, failed to spawn any specific art form. We have no radio art or tele-art, and nobody has ever thought of dubbing either of these technologies the “Eighth” or “Ninth” art, following on from the Seventh on the list: cinema. Video may have borrowed its equipment from TV, but it has not taken its codes and has developed autonomously, in a world close to painting and sculpture on one side, and to cinema on the other. So does this mean that television is by its very nature doomed to churning out kilometres of mediocre images?

From a quick glance at the day’s programmes, it is easy to be pessimistic. But one could also argue that these reflect only the conditions of production: the television that produced *Loft Story* is only a set of minor circumstances away from the one that came up with Christophe Averty’s *Les raisins verts* and Jacques Rouxel’s *Shadocks*.

Alice Anderson is one of those artists who could change television, if given the chance. Her project for TLT twists the codes of the TV world, but not with the mocking cheeriness that characterises TV people when they poke fun at themselves. Disorientation, rather than smug laughter, is the result of her outlandish cookery programme (and is it a coincidence that the featured recipe uses “green grapes” –raisins verts), of her *L’Idiot de Lisseville* (a kind of Un-Magic Roundabout) and of her *Souffler n’est pas jouer*, a drama that fails to offer the statutory happy end.

Most of the time TV is a kind of sedative: it both soothes and paralyses. Behind the innocent surface, Anderson injects an antidote made up of irreducible uncanniness and muted violence. Excess is not the appropriate regimen for anxiety and, like Hitchcock, Anderson knows that this must be distilled drop by drop. There is such lightness to each detail of her images that viewers never think to raise the psychological barriers that in most cases keep them, quite literally, from seeing the extreme violence of what is shown on television. Instead, they let themselves be carried along, and when they realise that they are about to be done in with an adroit stab of a nail file, it is too late.