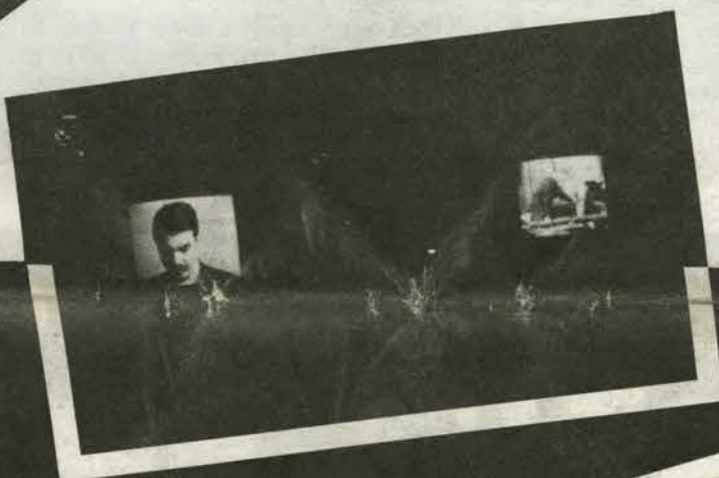


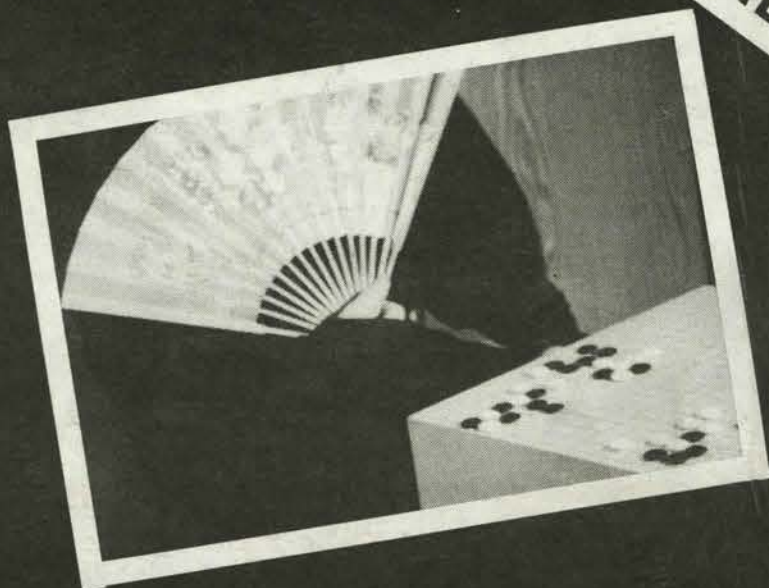
VIDEO GUIDE

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SUBTERRANEAN TELEVISION
ULISES CARRION — SMALL-FORMAT VIDEO
BYRON BLACK — GARRY HILL
URA-ARU — KARLA BERRY AND MARK RESH
CORY WYNGAARDEN'S INSTALLATION



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DISTRIBUTING THE DISTRIBUTORS

by Shawn Preus

In the early to mid 70's, a lot of time and energy was spent figuring out how to get independent video productions seen. Off the shelves and viewed. Many people were not concerned with how *many* people viewed their works, but that they were accessible to *be* viewed.

1973 was the year Video Inn opened its doors to the general public in Vancouver. Video Inn was formed as an on-the-premises viewing library. The idea behind this was that we hoped to give people the chance to do their own programming, rather than be programmed. Tapes were (and still are) available for viewing free of charge on the premises anytime Video Inn was open. And at that time, Video Inn was open seven days a week, 11 am to 5 pm. Next, we were faced with loaning the tapes out. Loaning tapes was more complicated. This required information that was not always readily available to us; it often required contacting the producer/artist. Of the several hundred tapes we had collected so far, about a third of the producer/artists requested free circulation of their work. Many credited their tapes with free circulation or copy as you wish.

Ambitiously, we thought we'd have some effect on the future image that the medium would develop. Independent video production would make its mark in the world. We were, after all, the "alternative" to television, cable, and commercial distribution. We were happy to copy tapes for free, teaching as many people how to use the equipment as we could. Workshops and consultation were also offered for free. Time and care were given to educating people in how to view video. Video was not television and should not be viewed as television.

While independent video works were still being shown for free, Video Inn's umbrella organization, the Satellite Video Exchange Society (S.V.E.S.), made a concentrated push to encourage people to share and exchange their works. We pushed for people to exchange their tapes, ideas, technical information, as well as issues they were making tapes about. To show our commitment we continued to publish the VIDEO EXCHANGE DIRECTORY and we also published a VIDEOTAPE EXCHANGE CATALOGUE. At that time that was what we considered

distribution to be. It turned out that we distributed printed information more than we did videotapes; print was cheaper. When we started out, we were very excited about our work. We had honest intentions about educating the community, our friends, granting agencies, and even passers by. We wanted people to see video as video and not television. In fact, the only way we resembled television was that we didn't charge the viewer. Later on we felt that if we charged for special screenings, people would notice this difference.

Video has many advantages in production and duplication. These outweigh the resemblance to television. But video's resemblance to television has been confusing to its viewers. Many people will sit down and watch video in libraries, galleries, colleges, and other spaces just because it is shown on a television set. This is one of the pitfalls for the distributor. The distributor's role does not include the educating of the audiences. This brings me to the point of my article. Video distributors are young due to the nature of the medium they handle. As a result, video distributors often come across as inexperienced. This inexperience is not in the technical areas or the content of the works, but in the business end. Video distributors are always offered a different (worse) deal from the one they proposed.

Over the years I have noted the reasons why a person or group of people get into distribution of videotapes. Every distributor has one reason at the beginning, but then ends up actually doing something different. And very few are successful at it. Why one does it and how it's done seem to be very confusing. (One of the most complex areas is working out who is the market.)

Now let's backtrack again to get a better picture. In the early days of distribution, groups were often asked to distribute (make copies of works) for the artist/producer, who lacked access to equipment. Later, it seemed like a good idea for everyone to pool resources and do the distribution together. In the long run this was to save time and money.

I was one of the last persons at Video Inn / S.V.E.S. to accept going into distribution as a good idea. I thought that it was important to remember that we were here to house the whole range of works. Getting into video distribution would put distinctions on tapes that we hadn't had to so far. Some tapes would be more popular, some producer/artists would be more popular. Worse, we would go back to programming people. My fears centered around the amount of time we would spend figuring all this out, and how much the rest of the organization would have to give in order for the distribution not to fail. "Failing" would be to follow a commercial marketing format, thus losing our original goals as a non-profit organization and pulling away energy from the other, viable resources.

So why go into distribution? Some may be confused by our original intent. (I am, which is why I chose "Distributing the Distributor" as the name of this article.) Our original goal was not to make money for ourselves, but to give that money to the artists/producers. We hoped that if people could get money for some of their work, they could go on producing. The cost of distributing has been high when you consider the money producers get. The fees set were only to cover some of the costs and still give the producer/artist a larger chunk on a rental or sale. We fundraised and relied on volunteer energy to make the ends meet (and still do!).

So why are there so many new groups and people getting into distribution? One reason is that the market has increased with the popularity of the home VCRs. Video does not mean the same thing anymore. To keep on top of things and remain in business, you must save money. This has resulted in a shift in the emphasis of distribution. One of the ways to save money and offer something different is to offer a "package." The distribution of packages, for the most part, turns out to be a scam. The reason for calling it a scam is that they only one who saves or makes more money is the distributor or the curator. Packages are usually pulled together by a curator who is paid to do so. They are usually paid more money than the artists are. Curators tend to pick artists/

Continued on pg. 5

EDIT

Welcome to Volume 7 Number 4. It is finally here. We have been surprised by the concern voiced by readers as to where their issue was. Well we can't blame it on the postal system, but the things we can blame it on would make a list so long it would take up the rest of my space here. So rather than bothering you with the details, we are simply presenting you with the issue.

This issue brings to you our regular features as well as a close look at small-format video by Byron Black, which I'm sure you will enjoy. We also have the good fortune of offering two Artist Pages rather than one. Once again I'd like to remind producer/artists that we have put aside this page for you, so please submit your page. The page can be camera-ready artwork, or you can send along the details of layout with your photo, graphic, and text.

You'll all be happy to hear that the next issue is in the production stage at this time and takes a look at computer graphics in Japan and Canada. Future issues include Broadcasting, Access, and Personal Documentary. Our next deadlines are November 30, 1985, and January 30, April 15, June 15, and September 15, 1986.

Remember, it is you as well as we who make Video Guide, so let's hear from you. With the help of an international scope of contributors, we can have a broad range of views, interviews, and reviews.

Last but not least — money. Now that you have gotten to ask us where your issue was, it's our turn to ask you where our money is. Please renew your subscription on time and encourage others to subscribe. A few of you who wondered where your latest issue was had let your subscription run out! We depend on subscriptions and advertising to cover costs.

Shawn Preus
for Satellite Video Exchange Society

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VANCOUVER GUIDE

ULISES CARRION AT VIDEO INN LILIA PRADO: SUPERSTAR TWIN BUTLERS

by Karen Knights

"... I pick out of my reality those elements which are important to me; people, media, processes. ... Don't you think that my gesture, my choice of Lilia Prado, is just as arbitrary as Duchamp's gesture? Lilia Prado is my readymade!"

— Ulises Carrion

(Readymades): "Manufactured objects promoted to the dignity of objects of art through the choice of the artist."

— A definition by Andre Breton, 1934

"It just came about as a pleasure, something to have in my room the way you have a fire, or a pencil sharpener, except that there was no usefulness. It was a pleasant gadget, pleasant for the movement it gave."

— Marcel Duchamp speaking of his readymade 'Bicyclewheel'

If Lilia Prado exists as anything for Carrion it is as an object. His interest as a youth in Prado arose initially from an impulse similar to Duchamp's fascination with a simple kinetic structure. As an adult he transformed that interest with the artistic gesture Breton so neatly articulated: sex object to *objet d'art*, but object all the same.

Prado is the quintessential latin sex symbol: dark, exotic features, voluptuous body. In sketch form on film posters her clothes exist only as a few lines dissecting her bosom, waist, and knees; the result as revealing as saran wrap. Her poses and posturing recall Hollywood products Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield: manufactured objects as sure as stool, wheel, or bottle rack. Unlike Monroe, however, Prado's film star status is almost entirely forgotten. It is only Carrion's gesture of recognition which gives her the dignity of which Breton speaks. Yet, like Monroe and Mansfield, Prado differs from Duchamp's criteria for readymades in her symbolic importance to her culture. It is this relationship — between mass culture and superstar, media and its product, the viewer and his fantasies — which Carrion explores in his multi-layered work *Lilia Prado: Superstar*.

Superstar is a reconstructed documentary of Carrion's efforts to secure Prado for a festival of her films held in Amsterdam in 1984. He went to Mexico to find a film star of the forties or fifties who would be willing to

participate personally in such a project. After being convinced that Lilia Prado would be ideal, he engaged in a struggle to convince her of such a trip (one she initially rejected) and to find viewable copies of her films, especially those of surrealist Luis Bunuel. Carrion reconstructs the time from his idea's conception to Prado's triumphant arrival in Amsterdam. Using photos of his actual trip to Mexico, posters and stills of Lilia as a star, and staged *cinema verite*, he produces an intriguing replica of the actual event (right down to a stroll through sunny palm trees and exotic flora and fauna, taped entirely in an Amsterdam conservatory).

As the video progresses it becomes evident that we will never learn anything substantial about Prado other than what we were told in the first few minutes. All the photos and posters are the same. Her hairstyle may be different, her dress changed, but always Lilia breathlessly awaits rescue from some implied danger. Carrion purposely declines to show us any film footage. Whether she can act or not, whether the films are good or bad, is irrelevant. Her importance lies in her role as a symbol of fifties mass culture and its fantasies, the myth of 'the movie star' being more important than the reality of the medium. Celluloid and machines are forgotten; only fame and desire remain. When we finally do see Prado as she is today, she looks well tended in a manner only stars and millionaires do — as if they existed only to be cared for. The illusion of stardom is obviously as good as the real thing.

Whether Prado was a true superstar or not was irrelevant to the audiences who attended the Lilia Prado Superstar Festival in Holland. It was the gesture of Carrion choosing Prado, labelling her 'superstar,' and finally presenting her to another culture in the manner of a superstar which validated her status. Carrion knew that no matter how poor the films might be, their kitsch value was sufficient enough to interest the Dutch community. Selling the function to the media in any manner necessary (i.e., as an art event to the art press, Prado as smouldering sex kitten to the tabloids) ensured a sufficiently large audience to maintain the illusion of stardom. What of Lilia? Carrion assures us she saw the event as a serious attempt by him to show her work to the world. Of course, they would be interested, why not?

Twin Butlers is a performance/installation piece for two monitors: one showing an edited Grade B 1934 movie, the other a live feed performance by Carrion. Carrion assumes the persona of the butler in the movie, periodically interrupting the action to explain his importance to the plot or the plot itself. The butler, who in the original movie is but a minor character, is elevated to a place of unnatural importance through Carrion's interaction. He defines the butler's primary location, the entrance hall, as an almost spiritually perfect plane mere mortals only pass through. Only the scenes containing the butler are allowed to progress uninterrupted. He quickly summarizes the others for us while the movie runs on without sound.

Both *Lilia Prado: Superstar* and *Twin Butlers* are explorations of the language and icons of cinematic tradition. Both 'the butler' and 'the sex kitten' are cinematic stereotypes whose roles are easily defined and understood. In *Twin Butlers* Carrion rewrites the traditional role of the butler, in fact reversing the roles of 'hero' and 'extra.' The viewer can no longer passively ingest the action on the screen. The butler constantly intrudes on our escapism in an aggressive, unbutler-like manner. Not only are we confronted with an antagonistic character, but the movie we are watching no longer meets our expectations; it no longer follows traditional patterns.

Lilia Prado: Superstar in tongue-in-cheek fashion pokes fun at the myth of stardom as well as the illusion of truth through *cinema verite*. Rather than contradict an accepted cinematic symbol, as he did in *Twin Butlers*, he reinforces it in *Superstar* — not only in his attitude towards Lilia, but in his pseudo-documentary style as well. The video is full of illusions: the illusion of stardom, the illusion of cinematic truth, the illusion of status, and the illusion of accuracy in interpreting visual imagery.

Both works contain strong allusions to cinematic, rather than video, tradition. *Twin Butlers*, with Carrion's ability to give immediate feedback on the other image, works well on video. *Superstar*'s contextual depth would have benefited from the use of the 16mm format. Cinema about cinema has an introspective quality which video about cinema lacks. Nevertheless, both videos are successful studies of our relation to cinema and of cinema's relation to modern culture.



SUBTERRANEAN TELEVISION

Subterranean TV was a weekly alternative television program which appeared Friday nights at the stroke of midnight. Perhaps the wildest show of its kind, it was cablecast throughout the province to approximately one million faithful viewers. The show presented interviews and performances of 'underground' musicians such as The Animal Slaves, Chris Houston, The Spores, etc., and included comedy skits and man-on-the-street interviews addressing topics of the day ranging from hostages to sexuality to Expo. After seven episodes, the producers were informed that the program must be taken off the air due to a tidal wave of right-wing extremist protest. Apparently the content of SUB TV was just a little too 'alternative' for these ultra-conservatives to stomach, particularly since it was served up in a slick, fast-paced format which parodied the society controlling formula of 'normal' broadcast television. One complainer went so far as to brand SUB TV "a group of dangerous radicals"!

The following is a transcript of an unprepared interview with SUB TV hosts, Madame Samantha and Bruce A which was conducted by Mark Mushet on CTR radio July 28, 1985.

MS: It wasn't that much of a lark, actually. We were filling what I thought was a need to familiarize people with the alternate music scene, alternate viewpoints of what was happening. Not a political move, but a familiarization move.

BA: Yeah, and to promote our friends. The first one came out when a friend of ours, Chris Houston, came from Toronto. And he had a couple videos with him, and he was in town. So we stuck them together, and said, well, why not do an interview with him, and brought it over to Soundproof, and it all went over well, and it was lots of fun. So "why not do another one with the Flunkees?" And it just sort of went on from there. Once we started doing that it was more like, well, why not do more and more stuff? Why not get wilder and Man In The Street, and have themes? I mean after all, the American hostage thing came up right at that time and we thought well this is the perfect opportunity to have lots of wild fun...

MM: And a good laugh.

BA: Yeah, exactly. Do things that no one else would dare to do; go where no TV show had gone before.

MM: And this on the tail of questions about Expo. The man in the street interview: How do you feel about Expo? When did you first discover masturbation? Isn't that a little, shall we say, a little cunning?

MS: Well, Bruce was asking the questions so he should probably answer that.

BA: A little cunning? Well, yes, I suppose, but in a sense, when you're underground, doing street level stuff, cunning is your only weapon against society when you don't have a nickel in your pocket.

MS: The other thing is that a radical sequence in questioning tends to put people off-guard, and they actually say what they really think rather than a pat answer that they think will satisfy somebody.

BA: And if you go up to somebody's mom and say, "Excuse me, when was the last time you were soaping yourself up in the bathtub and you got these tingly feelings," you know, she's liable to just run away, so you've gotta kind of ease yourself into it a little bit somehow.

MS: We were really curious about what people thought



"Television is a virus and you've just been infected."

— Samantha

Mark Mushet: We have a couple of guests who have dropped by, Samantha and Bruce from Subterranean Television; any of you who watch the program Soundproof on Friday night — maybe in the last few weeks or maybe even the last couple of months you caught the program — it begins at midnight, or shall I say began at midnight. Good evening Samantha, good evening Bruce.

Bruce A: Hi.

Madam Samantha: Hello.

MM: Interesting occurrence in the last week.

MS: Yeah, we got cancelled. But some people don't seem that surprised about it.

BA: Well, I am. I'm surprised, but what the hell.

MM: Explain to us exactly what the purpose and intention of Subterranean Television was all about.

MS: Well, the purpose and intention to me...

BA: We had our own personal...

MS: Everyone involved in it seems to have a different reason for doing it, um, mine was that most people's reality is formed by television, and that in turn seems to form the culture. I'd like to familiarize the community with other ways of seeing the world.

BA: And my personal reason for doing it was that I like to do stuff that makes me fall down on the floor and kick my legs up in the air laughing. And have a whole lot of fun.

MS: We did it because those are the things that we think are funny, too. Or interesting.

BA: Or just tons of fun.

MS: That especially.

BA: Have a gas. It's like driving a car way too fast and the brakes fail but — what the hell — Yeeeh!

MM: Subterranean Television began, what, two months ago, just sort of as a lark after Soundproof?

MM: I've been told, I've heard from a number of people that (whispers) you were offensive.

BA: I s'pose we were, to certain sensibilities. I mean, like I say, it's like a car out of control. Forget the danger, have the fun. Anyway, I think Expo is offensive.

MS: Shut up Bruce.

BA: Okay.

MS: Okay, let's put it this way. The community's made up of a lot of different viewpoints and a lot of different aesthetics and sensibilities. We presented ours. And I'm not really surprised that it offended some people, but we just presented another sensibility.

MM: Let's take a case in point. The reason you guys are off the air is because just Friday before, a week ago, at midnight, as the last edition of Subterranean Television, soon to become quite legendary...

MS: The masturbation show.

MM: Yes, down at your 7-11 you can get that on VHS real soon, I'm sure.

MS: Pretty soon, yes. The VHS tape version is coming out, just state your format.

MM: The masturbation show did in fact raise the ire of a certain portion of the viewing audience.

BA: That's true. There's some people that I guess just can't take it. I don't know what their problem is, but...

MS: I think what we were doing was presenting something that is... well, what's wrong with masturbation after all? It's a perfectly nice thing to do, and it doesn't hurt anyone so why should it offend anyone?

MM: It's exceedingly cool as well.

BA: I think so.

MS: Well, no one's done it before.

BA: Masturbation's for the 80's, you know.

about masturbation. It's interesting to see exactly what the state of the public consciousness is.

BA: You see, I'll tell you, to me, part of the thing that made the show worthwhile doing, and I think part of the reason why a lot of people enjoyed watching it, was because, my own feeling, speaking for myself...

MM: On the subject of masturbation.

BA: Yeah, right, well all the subjects, making jokes about wild stuff...

MM: And misquoting the bible, come on...

BA: That's right, all those things...

MS: I think most views of the bible are interpretations anyway, and Christians haven't exactly been unbiased in their views on other ways of seeing.

BA: Right. We used the reformed reformed reformed version of the bible. Anyway, what I was going to say is that the air that I tried to project, speaking for myself, was the same way that I sit around at a coffee table with a bunch of friends of mine, just laughing and talking direct, and that was how I saw it being over television, as well, as having no pretense, no image, like you see on TV and you see this or that person and they're totally different than they would be at home, laughing with their friends, you know, over a barbeque or whatever, and I wanted it to be very direct, very much. You see the thing is that I assumed that the audience was as cool as we know they are, know what I mean? It's like...

MM: Grassroots television that goes for the...

BA: Right, it looks the audience in the eye. It doesn't look up to them or down to them.

MM: Or around them.

BA: Right, exactly.

MM: And now the masturbation show is going to be the first in a series of theme shows. I saw some rushes for some important material there.

BA: The first one was the hostage show. That was the first theme show. And the next one was the animal show.

MM: Yeah, but these theme shows linked to those man in the street interviews.

BA: Oh right, yeah, that was the first week that we did that.

MM: Now you guys aren't supposed to show you faces anywhere around the cable circuit anymore.

BA: That's the beautiful thing about radio — they can't see your faces.

MS: I don't know whether, I don't think we can resurrect the Subterranean format over at Shaw Cable anyway.

BA: I think it can be fairly said we did it to death. (laughter)

MS: One thing about faces, we really would like to thank the people at Soundproof for letting us do it. I think they really put themselves out on a limb doing it, and we think that it was a very, very cool thing for them to do.

BA: That's right, definitely.

MS: And we thank them, and we just want people to know that it's not the people at Soundproof that took us off the air. It's rather prudish reactionary people who know who to write to get something censored.

MM: And have a way of creating a tidal wave of mail.

BA: All right!

MM: Now art video in Vancouver. We could really rattle some feathers here.

MS: Okay, ask some questions.

MM: There is no outlet for art video on the cable network because Rogers Cable and Shaw, etc., etc., will not pay the artist fees. So the art video community in Vancouver is reluctant to let their material be seen, which of course, is the prime context, television.

MS: Okay.

MM: They're being a little bit unrealistic, but you guys have a different approach to that.

BA: That's true.

MS: Let's put it this way. Artists' fees... it's really nice to get paid for what you've done, and I'd really like to get paid for what I've done. But the thing is, why are you making video? If you want people to see it, then broadcast television is the biggest market you can get. You know, do you want your ideas round, or do you want to get a cheque for thirty bucks?

BA: Exactly. I see that as being... sure, we never made a nickel.

MS: And we spent a lot of money.

BA: To me, it's kinda like being a band and putting out an EP, sinking all your hard-earned job money from your

BA: Does religion relate to oral sex?

MS: No. The question of public access to other ideas that they don't usually see on television, because, as I was saying earlier, your vision of reality is formed by what you see on television, and it should be a very multi-dimensional view that's presented.

MM: So what happens to Subterranean TV from this point on?

MS: Well, we're putting the shows together in a package and we're going to be marketing it, actually. We really want people to see the last show.

BA: That's right. We got one finished that never got on the air.

MS: Yeah, we have two videos...

BA: (whispers) and it's the wildest ever!

MS: We have two videos that have never been seen before, of I Braineater doing two songs. And Jim was really nice and came over to the studio and did two songs and he really deserves to get the videos out. They're good videos. And we put a lot of work into it. We weren't told that the show was cancelled until just about five minutes before we were supposed to go over and drop it off, because people couldn't get a hold of us and all that sort of stuff. So all this work should be shown, and we think people can have a real laugh watching all of Sub TV together.



"I can see your house from up here!"

— Bruce

MS: Well, we haven't seen any of the mail. We want to see it — we're curious about exactly what the public does think about what we did.

BA: We don't know if this was some wild, wacky, misguided individual or some organized group or what. Just who was bugged so badly by what we did to go to such extremes?

MS: And exactly where did we go too far? I'm interested. Where are the levels of tolerance in society? It's hard to say.

BA: Was it making jokes about religion, or sex, or what? Environmentalists, or, you know.

MM: Let's get down to the nitty gritty.

crappy day job into recording time and all that, and you get it played on whatever, college radio across the states, wonderful places like CITSR, and basically maybe the guy that runs the label has a bad coke habit and steals all your money. What I'm saying is that I see doing this TV show as the same thing as putting out an EP. You're not going to make any money, you have a hell of a lot of fun, you do your stuff and you get it out there and, whatever.

MM: So on behalf of those of us artists who are happy to work for nothing and get the material out there...

BA: Well, not happy to be paid nothing, but realize the reality of it.

MS: I think it's really important to address the question of...

BA: Maybe they could have Subterranean TV parties, you know, and open some non-alcoholic beverage, and sit around and watch their television. Have some popcorn.

MM: Okay, Bruce and Samantha, thanks for coming up...

BA: Thanks for having us.

MM: Do try and get that last edition of Subterranean TV into the 7-11 because that's my local store.

MS: Actually, I think that we should. People should see this stuff everywhere, because it's not going to go away.

MM: Madam Samantha and Bruce A, thanks a lot.

BA: Thank you, Mark. See you.

VIDEO

Continued from pg. 2

DISTRIBUTING THE DISTRIBUTOR

producers who are already well known, because these packages sell better. Distributors favour these packages because they do very little work and still can make ends meet. This process rules out, for a starter, one whole section of video production which is very important: those tapes which are made for the content, not necessarily for the medium. These tapes are by artists and producers who will only ever have one or two tapes to their names. While many curators do not mind picking up one or two productions that do not have names attached, they have little chance of ever coming in contact with these works. Therefore, it becomes a must to create a name for yourself. In many cases, I've seen curators make a name for themselves off artists/producers, but rarely the other way around. I have even picked tapes for the curators so they don't have to watch them. "Give me the latest tape by so and so" or "give me the best computer stuff you have."

Now my intent is not to put down a curator or the profession, but I would like to see fairer distribution and more earnest efforts being made. It seems unfair to have the curator's fee added to a package so that the artist/producer makes less, since money to the producer/artist is the reason to do distribution. A case in point: we had someone come to us and ask us to come up with a group of tapes free of charge. This person would show the tapes in Europe; all we had to do was pay for the tapes, dubbing, shipping, and contact the producers to make sure they knew and said it was OK. Now, if you want your work to be shown, you show as often as you can for as little or as much as you can get. So most of the artists jumped at the chance to be shown in Europe. Now I truly think it is better to be showing your work for free than not at all, but I'm also not sure about the double standards. When does it become exploitation of the artist/producer? This is an area that needs a lot of discussion.

Festivals are another form of distribution which follows a funny path. Again artist/producers are showing (usually) for free, but a lot of other people make some money off of them. Show your work for free at festivals and you could make a sale or a rental. As artists/producers we should be more concerned about how works are shown rather than if we get paid or not. What are our long term goals as producers/artists?

Part Two of this topic can address some of the concerns of the distributors, new and old. Then I'd like to hear what the producer/artist has to say about these things. My main interest is how to keep the medium alive for us and not sell out to the commercial media or mainstream. How far can we go before selling out? What is selling out? Does money win out over content and aesthetics?

VIDEO

Double Lunar Dogs

a Videotape by Joan Jonas

reviewed by Jamirte Trott



Video, some art experts have a fondness for saying, does not render itself as an art medium because of its highly stigmatizing relation with mass communication and because of its sterilizing, technological nature. Joan Jonas says:

Video is a device extending the boundaries of my interior dialogue to include the audience. The perception is of a double reality: me as image and as performer. I think of the work in terms of imagist poetry, disparate elements juxtaposed . . . alchemy.

Joan Jonas on *Twilight*, 1975

Instead of reflecting the medium's endemic vulgarity or the producer's personal anxieties, Jonas, like a handful of other video artists, explores this medium's depth and flexibility, shaping it into a kind of live poetry where the only resemblance to television is the raw material — that is, electronic pulses.

Double Lunar Dogs bears witness to the above. It opens itself not only to include the viewer as Jonas intends, but to include artistic dimensions specific to the medium. That is to say, this videotape is a synchronization of sound, imagery, and conceptual depth rendered as poetic movement. Conceptually it elaborates on tragic possibilities, dreams, or nightmares encountered in the course of and/or as a result of human history. As described by the Center for New Television in Chicago, "*Double Lunar Dogs* . . . presents a post-apocalyptic vision and science fiction account of survival and the future. The characters live in an alarming new world — inside a spacecraft where they were born and where they will die, no longer remembering where they came from or where they are going." (CNT, 4/85)

Double Lunar Dogs starts by casting you off into the cosmos where space presents no boundary. Jonas' voice invites you to imagine yourself on a ship which carries you on your life's journey. This ship is simultaneously your point of arrival and departure, and it keeps on moving regardless of your existence. It follows its gravitational course, aided, as indicated, by NASA shots. The passengers spend their lives inquiring, testing memories, performing scientific and artistic experiments for possible clues to their past which in turn might point to the future. Memories of the earth come to the passengers in glimpses of rolling waves and natural monuments sculpted by sand erosion. They come in fragments of human representations of faces, hands, and feet through scanning patterns of computerized graphics already too abstract to gain tangibility. They come in the form of a female figure running on desert sand, perhaps trying to escape the pursuit of war tanks. They flicker on and off, never lasting long enough to compose a story, no matter how short.

The search continues relentlessly with the opening of a human heart; with the drawing of human faces on glass panels; with lab tests and attempts to recognize a collection of earthly objects which no one can name. Among these objects is an earth globe being spun by the hands of a male passenger. Jonas chants her recollections of the earth as she swings in space and watches its cosmic trajectory from the outside:

*Remember this from long ago
I can't recall what made me weep
But castle walls came tumbling down
And grass grew up between the cracks
The children played in plastic rooms
With tanks, and guns, and dolls . . .
Hold on, Hold on
But fall through space
There is no up
There is no down
And no more time to speculate.*

Jonas, the passenger, intercepts a cosmic entity who supervises her search and answers her questions. Apparently he is Time itself, for his arms are wrapped in coiled sleeves, and he transverses past and future. He seems to own the pieces of the puzzle Jonas is trying to assemble, but he is reluctant to help her. In fact he warns her against her inquiries and seems to think it either dangerous or impossible for her to re-enter history.



As it invites the viewer's participation in this imagined account of human history, this tape provides the viewer another standpoint from which he/she can watch the earth's own cosmic environs, and from this platform he/she may gain a sense of new temporal dimension, as cosmic reality converges with human history. Time is lost, and without it past and future dissolve. Without time there is no language, no history, thus no present. If humanity cannot exist without a sense of time, history, and language, the passengers of this spacecraft cannot exist as humans until they can re-enter their past.

Conceptual depth is one of the greatest assets of this tape, but if one could expect more from such a successful work, one might ask for tighter performances from both male characters, for their performances become a bit flat at times. Yet Jonas' alchemy does move them along, as it absorbs the large dose of high-tech effects on the tape as well.

Double Lunar Dogs exemplifies how wide a range of artistic endeavours video can accomplish, for the artist has here embraced a great deal of artistic and conceptual scope, and she has delivered them well. By constructing a hypothetical story of a planet which lost its sense of direction as a result of human violence, the tape may allude to the present condition of humanity. That is, technological production has turned humanity into a mere means of consumption, thus transforming humanity into a mechanism, a part of industry itself. Thus, Jonas' spacecraft may as well be the earth where we are indeed born and where we die and which might, as a result of human behaviour, lose its sense of time, of history, and of language — thus, of humanity itself.



KARLA BERRY AND MARK RESH

Video
Installations
at
Chicago
Filmmakers



by Jamirte Trolt

While every other independent video maker waves a fist at the consequences of our political activities, Karla Berry and Mark Resh decided to build a group of installations around the theme of love. They charged the ambience with a panoply of images and concepts about this subject — Berry more directly, with a number of photographs hanging on a string above three monitors on which video, sound, and texts pictured and recreated several instances of lovomania.

"Love is Like Dancing" appeared on one screen accompanied by sweeping movements danced by men and women together, or by themselves. Simultaneously, two other monitors recounted instances of human preoccupation with love, to include entire generations from children to young and older adults. Resh's installations hinted at love rituals, such as lust, dreams and desires sometimes too illusive, sometimes too heavy to bear. His clever choice of titles served to complete the pieces, yet leaving room for a wider range of interpretations. A photograph of a face (Resh's) kissing a video screen, for example, is teased by the title: "Don't You Like When I Kiss You?" Another monitor reflects a face over which scattered pinheads, coins, and cigarette butts reconfigure love as a game of chance. Most powerful was a sculpture consisting of a heavy block of cement held by two thin wires above the face of a monitor on the floor, circumscribed by the title: "You Can't Carry Your Dreams On Your Back". Most intriguing was Resh's consistent addressing to television as "You": a playful yet serious way of suggesting television's desire to enter human feelings, or

even to impersonate humans, as it relentlessly tries to control human behaviour.

By implication, misconceptions about love begin to construct one of the rationales behind this show. On television, love comes in packages of all shapes and sizes — on bottles of perfume, cans of hosiery, or bottles of laundry soap. In real life, love can be something one watches on movie screens, or something one looks for at single-bars. For many, love is found on pages of Penthouse magazine, and other channels of love as commodity. This powerful human emotion has been so often reduced to the level of dime store signs and symbols, thus banalized to the point of self-embarrassment. So, Berry suggests, let's take another look at this. Thus, her installation of video and photographs recalls a time when the concept of love was not yet flooded by coercive manipulations. Berry urges you to believe love does exist beneath its confused convergencies.

Resh's sculpture of a video screen reflected by several mirrors entitled, "You Can't Cry If You Don't Know How", is again suggesting that as a machine one cannot feel, or simply that a machine cannot hold emotions. It points as well to the notion of love as a major, multi-lateral force mirroring itself in all human manifestations. Although misconstrued and embarrassed, love is the centre of all human activity. It starts as a necessity for self-realization, making it safe to say that all human endeavor happens within the circularity where this necessity manifests itself. Not to reduce it to egocentrism,

but to assert the self as the centre from which human emotion emanates.

Somewhat narcissistic? Certainly. According to Freud, all love is somewhat narcissistic. Even parental love, he suggests, bears a desire to recoup that which the self failed to accomplish. Likewise, romantic love tends to search for the possibility of self-completion. Like a child simultaneously finding and losing the Other at discovering its reflection on a mirror, love is a mirror on which we reflect ourselves.

So these installations reconstruct for us several dimensions of human feelings. Not just hugs and kisses. Not just lust, chance, and games of joy and sorrow. They rebuild the flight of Eros transporting the fluxus of life. And, by implication, Thanatos trying to dominate the scene. Berry wants to rescue that flow of libido through which we are born. We embody its strength from the first moment of life, and we live by it, no matter how distorted and how displaced it may become.

Perhaps that is why these artists would rather talk about love than about war. Yet, when we face a roomful of images, words, and sounds about love, we are somewhat surprised. After a while, we get silly and we laugh. At least the viewers at the opening did so. The show did something to them. It brought them together to reconcile the circularity of human emotions within which, according to Resh, one can get overburdened with one's own desires; and, according to Berry, one can be overwhelmed by realizing that one's dream can also be one's nightmare.



THE MEDIUM REVEALS ITSELF "Developing

THE MEDIUM REVEALS ITSELF

"Developing a Curriculum for the Teaching of Small-Format Video"

by Byron Black, Video Consultant, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University

Outline

- I. The appreciation of small-format video as a medium in itself, a new medium with its own inherent aesthetic . . . a kind of instant-print or "colour-copy device."
- II. The powerful "brainwashing" effect of television indoctrination on young people today, and the consequent influence of TV on personal expression in video production.
- III. The technical evolution of hardware, and its outstripping of the understanding of the video medium . . . and the consequent need for a new approach to curriculum formation.
- IV. "Appropriate Technology" and the special relevance of high-quality, small-format production.
- V. Hardware advances facilitate the developing dynamic of software expression:
 - a. More stable mechanisms for recording/editing/dubbing.
 - b. Remarkable advances in tape manufacture (with implications similar to what has happened with audio cassettes).
 - c. Built-in backspace editing and electronic editing sets simple enough for anyone to operate.
 - d. High assurance Time-Base Correction devices for broadcast of any format,
 - e. . . including 1/2-inch "home" standard tape.
 - f. High-sensitivity, automated, high-quality "home-video" colour cameras.
 - g. The implications of a "world standard" by the manufacture of 15 million videorecorders a year.
 - h. The rise of "industrial" 1/2-inch, frame servo and time code-equipped, as an economical alternative to U-Matic. Fusion of "home" and "industrial" standards.
- VI. Hi-Fi Video and an audio-aware generation.
- VII. Parameters for a fresh approach to the teaching of video production in a lecture/workshop setting.
- VIII. Location vs. studio production. The role of the instructor in Lecture/Demo/Follow-up critiques.
- IX. Shooting to edit and appreciation of the camera operator's intention during the editing process. Individual expression and teamwork in the production workshop.
- X. Job placement projections and pedagogical responsibility.
- XI. Afterword from a video artist: Freedom of Expression, the Glamour of Priest-Caste Professionalism, and Hardware Nightmares.

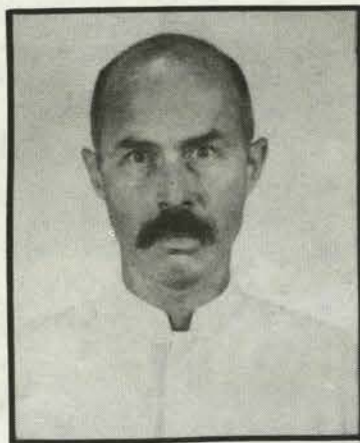
. . . by way of auto-introduction: The author was born in 1940 and thus did not join the "television generation" until the age of ten. He has worked in still photography since 1960, 16mm independent film production since 1965, and small-format video since 1972. He produced Canada's first arts-variety show on cable television in 1974-1975: "Images from Infinity" was put together at Cable 10 Studio, Vancouver, as a pioneering multi-media "package" approach to low-budget production.

The author produced and exhibited nearly a hundred film/video/performance events in Canada and the U.S. between 1971-1980. From 1980-1984 he taught Video Production and Modern Art at Osaka Photographic College, Japan. It was during this time that much of the theoretical strategy contained in this paper was evolved, working in a hardware-intensive situation. He won prizes at the Tokyo Video Festival in 1981 and 1983, the Yomiuri Video Festival in 1983, and the Osaka Video Contest '83 in 1984.

Since April of 1984 he has been working as a Video Consultant with the Office of Educational Technology at Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Bangkok. He will be involved with the development of production techniques at the new Educational Broadcasting Production Centre on the Parkred, Nontaburi campus.

The author has also worked extensively in the advertising business and wrote a sales manual for Panasonic Video in 1982.

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I. New developments in technology are rarely accompanied by a fresh appraisal of their applications and potential. The classic example is photography, which for a long time was enchain to a "painterly" point of view, and considered a kind of poor relation of oil painting.

Television evolved out of radio more than anything else, at least in terms of actual procedure, and this too has been something of a curse, as even today much TV comes across like "illustrated radio," especially animation and that zombie-like creation known as "soap opera" or "television drama." Producers seem to get uneasy when viewers cannot sew, cook, iron or read at the same time they are "watching" a show — and still follow the plot. A lot of this is economic, of course, as sound is considerably cheaper and quicker to produce than picture. (The Japanese are, by the way, bringing out portable FM radios with a complete TV audio spectrum built in — a tacit admission that the audio portion of the signal is sufficient for comprehension or at least enjoyment.)

It took a long time to make videotape a feasible production medium, even in its primitive and hugely expensive quadruplex format. But after the Japanese came out with 1-inch colour equipment in the 1960s, and followed it up with the first real world standard for helical-scan, U-Matic, the medium suddenly assumed an importance heretofore beyond imagination. Anyone who has watched b/w 16mm film footage from pre-ENG era broadcasts, or an actual news broadcast from that era (again, rather like talking-head illustrated radio or having the newspaper read to you over the air), will appreciate the profound magnification of viewer interest and involvement since ENG- and EFP-era production became widespread.

The issue of program piracy alone stands as a good illustration of how this new medium has gone completely beyond the conceptual parameters set for it by developers and manufacturers. One wonders what differences in design Sony and other pioneering engineering groups would have made in U-Matic, Beta and VHS had they foreseen the grave consequences of world program piracy.

N.V. Phillips is said to have initially developed the audiocassette as a convenient new dictation-transcription device. Indeed, who could have foreseen that 25 years later the world would be aswim in audiocassettes, many with a sound quality all but equal to studio equipment of an earlier era? The videocassette appears to have followed this same "wildfire" pattern of spread through the societies of the world, though indeed much more quickly than audio. But who really understands video as video?

This would be a question of little importance, purely academic, if it were not for the many urgent roles video must play in less developed countries (LDCs) as well as First World countries. There are aspects of the so-called "information explosion" which make demands on educational and training systems which cannot be met with traditional media. In LDCs everywhere there is an intense aspiration for computer era knowledge . . . and the openness to accept the new medium without the preconceptions evident in television-swamped cultures. Teaching video in Japan was a very curious experience for the author; new first-year students were able to shoot and edit almost instinctively, as a duck takes to water, once they learned to operate hardware. What they produced, however, was identical in style, structure and aesthetic intention to television. Getting them to appreciate or produce anything outside of that narrow frame of reference was a tortuous task.

That the understanding of video as a medium in itself lags even in Japan should be no surprise; this is definitely a hardware age we live in . . . and software often seems to be "after the fact". I would venture to state that what

video is, in brief, is a simultaneous-monitoring, instant-playback, high-quality audio/visual recording system with a large time frame and situational adaptability, which projects minimal disturbance into the situational dynamic of interpersonal relationships. What I am saying is that small-format video production gets in the way very little, at least compared to other, more traditional, recording techniques. It is relatively cheap, and manufacturers have taken great pains to make it quite easy to operate. And the awareness of and interest in video is potent and widespread, in any LDC. It is, perhaps, more similar to a high-speed "instant-print" or "colour-copy" machine in its conceptual locus. Its potential roles have barely begun to be defined, in education, home, and industry; and its beneficial effect on cultural archiving and transmission are being revealed as the latest-generation hardware makes its way into new places around the world.

II. In First-World countries children watch, or at least are exposed to, an average of three to five hours of television each day. TV is a cheap babysitter, free entertainment for easily bored kids, and, as an "electronic hearth," often the central focus for home activities.

In LDCs children are much less exposed to the powerful influence of television, for a number of technical and economic reasons (in addition to having more responsibilities and group activities on a day-to-day basis, in general). And recently governments in countries like Thailand have begun to put sharp curbs on the license of television hucksters to intrude upon and dominate the homes of the public, at least for certain hours each day.

The swamping of local traditions and values with the flood of cheap and exploitative Western programming has already received considerable attention in newly-alarmed Asian countries; but home videorecorder ownership may yet thwart the best intentions of governments to encourage more worthwhile programming of electronic media.

As stated above, young people given video equipment tend to unconsciously imitate TV production styles in their first attempts; the elitist, "professional" aura of expensive network production is often emulated (though rarely successfully) by fledgling producers. News is hot, and urgent ENG- or EFP-style production strives to capture the "look" of commercial TV. When students are exposed to educational programming, they tend to flee (often for good reason, considering the zombie consciousness of much of it). It is easy to place the blame on a flighty attitude, easily distracted, which TV brainwashing encourages in young people; nevertheless, the increase in speed and complexity of imagery in contemporary life cannot be ignored. (Years ago, Charlie Chaplin undertook research into the number of shots per motion picture in the twenties, the thirties, and the forties. Not surprisingly he found a drastic increase in each era, as viewers both appreciated the sense and information of a shot more quickly and came to expect more and shorter — and the TV era has seen this trend magnified hugely, with jumpy flash-frames of commercials cutting into narrative or information sequences with ever-increasing frequency . . . and as non sequiturs.)

Video art has been compromised by the TV brainwashing of viewers, young and old, and has thus reacted with an opposing extreme of Art-Boredom . . . long fixed shots of a rock in the shun, as shadows gradually lengthen (intimations of Zen gardens evidently intended) . . . talking-head confessionals straining the patience of long-suffering viewers . . . a powerful literary takeover of the new medium. This stuff is hard enough to watch even for those who are dedicated to appreciating it. Average people stampede for the exits. This is unfortunate, but the fact remains that no matter how much we as educators or producers with artistic intentions attempt to redefine production values for the medium, we are still faced with an essentially brainwashed audience . . . except for the rural citizens who are pretty much happy to be given the opportunity to sit down and be engaged by anything on a screen. It is to people such as this, and to those professionals with a high degree of motivation, that distance learning via video can speak most directly. There is no need to ape frenetic, cluttered TV production styles with this new medium, especially once it is in the hands of people themselves, for them to use as they please. The breakaway from a fixed idea of production into specific, appropriate and individual styles will take time, but here again the hardware itself and its access may be the greatest hope for new freedom of expression.

In terms of the training programmes for video producers in LDCs, they have only been able to draw upon

a Curriculum for the Teaching of Small-Format Video"

by Byron Black

the broadcast tradition, at hardware-intensive institutions in Asia, North America, and Europe. Broadcast-studio attitudes and the above mentioned "priest caste" of engineers and technicians lack communication with those who have taken degrees in fields of Educational Technology; nevertheless, there must be a rapprochement in order to deal with the optimal application of a new medium to a new situation. Part of the problem is convincing the professionals that small-format "home" video is a serious medium that can play an important role in distance-learning and other roles in LDCs. But this is exactly what is needed. And any training program in video production should be able to draw upon the experience of broadcast personnel without being limited by their technical preconceptions.

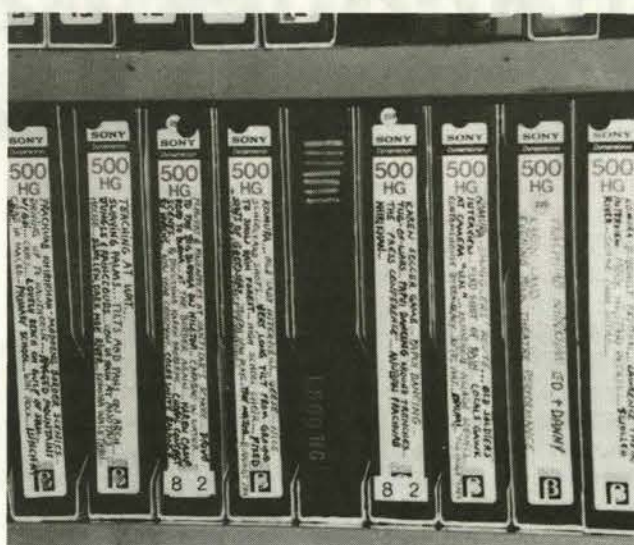
III. What has happened is the quantum acceleration of hardware development and access that is perhaps only equalled by the small or "personal" computer revolution. The broadcaster's understanding of video production strikes me as similar to that of the large-format portrait photographer of the last century. Skylight studios with fixed sets and backdrops, head braces and formal poses for subjects who had to freeze while the photographer ran back and forth from the darkroom to his camera, where under the sacred cover of the black cloth he would somehow "get the picture". This may seem like something of an exaggeration, but when you consider how intimidated people can become in the overlit arena of a television studio, with men hiding in the darkness behind every manner of technical device, and all human activities governed by arcane procedures for time, picture, and sound . . . given these limitations it is not surprising that studios produce dead, flat, unimaginative performances. The fact is, to teach people to be able to produce smoothly in a three-camera studio, especially when the pressure of broadcasting or a heavy schedule is upon them, calls for 100% of their dedication and energy — apart from any creative commitment or sense of experimentation.

Curriculum formation should take into account that, as I shall argue below, the evolution of small-format hardware has progressed to such an extent that, at least in the formative stages of students' work with the medium, a maximum amount of attention can be paid to interpersonal dynamics, developing potential powers of expression, and capturing exciting realities without dampening them. It requires instructors with a powerful sense of "ad-hocery" and sensitivity to the nuances of human behaviour, who are also generalists able to appreciate the production process of video from every stage: concept to distribution. More than likely these will be people who have come out of a non-broadcast background.

Video is a new medium. A new curriculum should, for a number of years at least, be sensitive to continuous critiques, and be ready to experience drastic revisions, as needs change and as the hardware environment continues to explode.

IV. What are the demands of what is called "Appropriate Technology"? It is practically impossible to say, as conditions in LDCs are so different, and change from year to year. As the level of nursing training or legal expertise rises, for instance, there might be a greater need for work in other fields, such as agricultural extension or rural economics. Any new curriculum will bear the responsibility of putting together experts in the field, who may know what they want to say, but not have any experience in video production, with programmers who want to help them use the medium in the most direct and efficient manner possible (and one continuing trend, I would suggest, is that more of the pre-production duties, such as graphics, scripting, location-hunting, and so on, can be left up to field experts, as they gain more experience in the powers and limits of production. This obviously makes sense for programmers who in all probability are already overloaded with commitments.)

Half-inch equipment on the market today is compact, lightweight, rugged, easy to use, relatively cheap, and delivers high-stability images with reasonable colour and sensitivity. Obviously the imagery cannot compare with Plumbicon-quality Hi-band U-Matic or 1-inch. A program sponsor might be able to spot the difference (depending on the content) but for the farmer or village police official who is the target audience, there really is no advantage to fancy high-grade production. As with film, much of the energy in high-quality video production is essentially an effort by media professionals to impress other media professionals. In terms of media goals, this is often an unaffordable luxury. And video students don't have to be



encouraged to aim for such a goal of technical perfection. In any case (as will be discussed below) opportunities for employment in traditional broadcast-studio roles are but a small part of the expanding horizon for video.

V. So what are the dramatic advances in mass-produced industrial and home-market video that promise so much for producers and educators in LDCs? The first, and most important, advances have to do with the elimination of the technical failures which plagued small-format video production during its "Stone-Age" phase — fundamental signal instability (and the absence of any device for correcting such errors), fragile equipment prone to breakdowns, videotape of dubious quality, often producing dropout or other problems, and generally unwieldy and expensive equipment. A few years ago a \$5000 colour camera, with separate CCU and a sensitivity of 100 lux, was considered revolutionary. Now an entire camera/VTR outfit can be bought for just over half that price, and it incorporates IC logic microcircuitry previously unavailable even on broadcast-level equipment.

Cameras are small, lightweight, reliable — and today some can shoot down to 10 lux, making "verite" shooting a matter of course. The newest CCD cameras have bodies that are actually smaller than lenses, and recent products such as the JVC "VHS Video-Movie" incorporate a camera/recorder in one compact, lightweight piece that records, plays back, and has search and editing functions built in.

Recorders deliver consistent performance, and tape manufacture has vaulted forward in a manner reminiscent of what happened to audio cassettes a few years ago. I have personally shot footage through the same JVC KY-1900, a good industrial-grade camera, and played it back on identical Sony Trinitron monitors, the only difference being that one shot was recorded on U-Matic and the other on Industrial Beta-I. The originals, played back side by side, were practically identical in terms of colour saturation, sharpness, and noise. Obviously editing from Beta to Beta, and then dubbing again to Beta, would increase noise and amplify other problems more than with U-Matic, but I have also done this, at times going as far as 4th or 5th generation in productions which did not necessitate the expense or trouble of editing to U-Matic (although my usual procedure at Osaka Photographic College was to edit on Dub Mode to U-Matic from Beta I, and then make ¾-inch dubs — which no one could have told were not originally shot on U-Matic).

Backspace editing has made it possible to create original productions "in-recorder", without recourse to videotape editing facilities. Built-in character generators make it possible to add titles or commentary, on location, and this type of technical advance too has implications which are simply beyond the scope of the traditional media teacher to predict. A healthy sense of play is required, and the ability and access to try things over and over, a number of ways, without production deadline pressures.

Home-video electronic editors are about to come onto the market, and the newest Industrial VHS editing equipment from National Panasonic and JVC incorporates time-code and Dub Mode features, among other truly amazing technical advances. These editors are, as stated above, simple and straightforward enough to learn to operate within a couple of days by anyone who is competent enough, for instance, to learn to use an electronic typewriter or personal computer. The idea of children competently editing video is accepted matter-of-factly in numerous institutions where this equipment is now accessed to them; edited tapes can be distributed and played on any machine of reasonable quality without fear of image loss.

As for broadcast, low-cost Time-Base Correctors now make it possible to broadcast material unthinkable even a few years ago. My winning entry in the *Osaka Video Contest '83* was shot on VHS-C format, dubbed to Beta-I for editing, and then edited (very intensively, with scores of inserts) via Dub Mode to U-Matic. I was naturally curious to see what it would look like from off the air when NHK Kansai decided to broadcast it, and in fact there were absolutely no rolls, flagging, tears, tracking problems or gain difficulties. (NHK would naturally have been loathe to broadcast it otherwise, I dare say.) It looked fine. My editing technique, incidentally, is to lay down a sync track with colour bars on a fresh U-Matic tape, and then do all editing operations on Insert Mode. Engineers may argue otherwise, but I feel that this marginally enhances stability, especially when originating with ½-inch material.

The revolutionary developments in video hardware would not have such a profound social impact if it weren't for the fact that, as everyone knows, video has spread like wildfire throughout many countries where a VTR alone represents the income of two citizens. Japanese manufacturers report that 1983 production of VTRs was around 15 million, and while many of these units ended up on the domestic market or were exported to North America and Western Europe, the Third-World market continued to gain in importance as traditional markets became saturated. Few LDCs are ready for the effects of the onslaught of VTR ownership, although there have been rumblings as governments see the effects of piracy/cultural subversion/deflection from national goals. No one has yet proposed to make illegal the ownership or sale of VTRs although this would have been a feasible step when the units began to filter in to various countries. The closest step seems to be prohibiting public exhibition of tapes in places like restaurants, coffee-houses, or hotels.

Actual production has naturally lagged behind the passive viewing of pre-recorded tapes, in part because of the prohibitive cost of video cameras until recently. The absence of any training program in schools has also inhibited the idea of shooting footage. A time will come, however, when videography will be taught alongside still photography, and not only at the secondary level. There is no reason why primary-school students cannot learn to handle video production equipment at the same time they learn to play musical instruments or personal computers.

And the absolute fact of VTRs diffused throughout every country of the Free World indicates that the regional and international exchange of programs will continue to grow in importance as the technology asserts itself in novel learning strategies.

Latest-generation "home" type equipment, featuring IC-equipped cameras incorporating as a matter of course White Balance, Character Generators, Autofocus, Saticon performance down to around 10 lux minimum illumination and other features, is at a technical level equal to or above educational/industrial video equipment of only a few years ago. At the same time, manufacturers have unveiled Time Code-equipped VHS equipment featuring Dub Mode, with picture quality equal to or superior to conventional Lo-Band U-Matic — and considerably more cost-effective. (Over a period of years, the budget for hardware can quite easily be exceeded by the cost of tape and postage costs for distribution of dubs.)

The developments in VHS are logical in view of the fact that U-Matic technology is already rather "long in the tooth", at least compared to current VTR and videotape design/manufacturing standards. Japanese manufacturers deserve the highest praise for their stupendous efforts to drive up the technical quality, convenience, and accessibility of small-format video, while actually suppressing the cost of equipment to levels considerably lower than in previous years (a situation comparable to what has happened with small-format computers).

VI One contemporary development in technology that promises much is Hi-Fi Video, a logical outgrowth of the "Rock Video" market. Audio quality on videotape has ranged from poor to good (never as abysmal as, say, 16mm optical sound tracks), but the power of picture has tended to relegate attention to sound to a distant second place. In small-format production, the availability of two sound tracks of reasonably high quality has rarely been exploited, either in shooting or post-production. During my teaching tenure at Osaka Photographic College, I noticed how students' attention was so captured by the appeal and challenge of visual production and juxtapo-

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URA-ARU

THE ACOUSTIC PALINDROME

by Gary Hill

The distinctive nature of *URA-ARU* lies in its use of the Japanese language in a unique way. The spoken text of the work is entirely made up of "acoustic palindromes." Palindromes are written words or phrases which, when reversed, spell another word or phrase. It follows that acoustic versions are spoken words which, when reversed, become another word. For example, if one speaks into a microphone the word "amai" (sweet) and records it on tape, then plays the tape backwards, one will hear "yama" (mountain). As the tape is played back and forth one hears "amai - yama" or sweet mountain. Another example is the title itself, *URA-ARU*: "ura" (the back or reverse side) and "aru" (there is), or there is a back/reverse side. "Ura" can also mean a hidden meaning. To eliminate confusion, written palindromes, or *kaibun*, and acoustic palindromes are different and are not interchangeable. Though the same word might function as both types of palindrome, its reversal will be different in each case. For instance, "ima" (now, or living room) as an acoustic palindrome becomes "ami" (net) and as a written palindrome becomes "mai" (dance).

Currently I have a growing list of seventy-five acoustic palindromes. Since there are hundreds of possibilities, a selection process becomes necessary. I chose the following albeit somewhat subjective criteria: can the forward/backward words combine in what seems to be a natural way, and, more importantly, can the acoustic palindrome be coupled to an image in a similarly unforced and meaningful way — a way which is perhaps deeply suggestive, subtle, even profound. Or, appropriating a Japanese concept, can each realization in some way embody *yugen*?

The acoustic palindrome can only exist as a form of media, where the processes of recording and playback are inherent. In fact, it really only becomes operational as a cybernetic process, and only in this way can its specific qualities be fully appreciated. A description of the process is as follows: a single word and image, called the "source," is recorded onto videotape. When two or more words are heard in any given sequence of the completed videotape, they are recognized, via the bi-directional playback (or "rocking") of the videotaped sound and image, as being derived from one initial source — one spoken word and one real time image.

Stressing the importance of the sense of physicality that the acoustic palindrome conveys, we might compare the experience to viewing sculpture "in the round." The first word is heard (first view); the tape reverses and the first word is heard backwards making the second word (second view); the tape continues on past the starting point revealing a third word which, when coupled with the second word, becomes a phrase (third word); the tape reverses again, reversing the third word and transforming it into the fourth word (fourth view).

The majority of these words are chanted by an off-screen chorus, to obtain a resonant texture of sound that envelopes the videospace which might otherwise be dominated by the image symbology. The "big" sound further emphasizes the physical nature of the process so far discussed. When the recording of a larger sound is reversed, the moment of directional change is magnified almost as if there were weight to the sound; somewhat like shifting gears of a large vehicle compared to a small one. On a subtler note is the change in awareness of reverberation. Even the lowest levels become noticeable when recorded on tape and reversed, since the reverberation is heard first, without interference from the fundamental sound which then immediately follows. This aspect of the sound is somewhat controllable and, if effectively used, can be hauntingly beautiful.

Each acoustic palindrome, which may be a single word caused by symmetrical phonetics, or two words, or in some instances a short phrase, combined with an image forms a sound/image construct or "scene" — not to be confused with the "shot by shot" continuity that can only move towards establishing, developing, and concluding. These are processes of make believe. In *URA-ARU* any sense of a "story" (line) is only the by-product of a kind of accumulation process which plays with our perceptions of time. On a more radical and fundamental level, within each scene, time is continually being contradicted.

The viewing experience greatly simplified might be described like this: a word is heard in context with an image on the screen, the tape reverses and the viewer is caught expecting nonsense and instead received another word which works together with the initial word and "changes" the perception of the image. (See attached detailed treatments.) There is no attempt through some sort of trickery or special effects to make the viewer think that everything is forwards, which would of course negate the process and the tension of the work. This very tension together with the notion of *yugen* is in fact the central theme of the work.

And if not the concept of continuity, then what? The "scene" as view (the veranda of extremes — entertainment and contemplation)? And if not that, then perhaps, with no sense of finality, traces — brief moments of inscription, of time upon time — a series of "strokes" that are really but one where the brush tip never leaves the surface. *URA-ARU* then, is a collection of media etchings, an array of suspended meanings — dare I say it — haiku, or "uki-ah" . . . word for word, "a float, ah!" A play on words, a play on time; the acoustic palindrome thus creates a kind of nodal tension between the two, seen not so much as a manipulation of time (applied more appropriately to the brute force edit) but a folding of time — origami time — where a single piece of paper (time/space

segment of videotape) enfolds upon itself. A mirror relationship occurs wherein the soul of the language is not lost to the process of feedback transpiring to infinity, rather, it embraces its reflection and steps through the looking glass. Here is where the very nature of the word, quite literally its branches, twigs, leaves, and embedded stones, overgrows the notion that a word is worth .001 pictures.

Details of three Sound/Image Constructs

AME

Source word: ame

ame — ema

Length: 15 seconds

Here I will describe two possible takes of the same scene, each with a slightly different connotation. In fact, the emotional impact resulting from different interpretive visualizations may well be an integral part of the project, especially in terms of the videodisc. In the first version, the scene is shot in late afternoon during a pouring rain. An ema (votive picture tablet) is lying on the ground, perhaps along a muddy dirt path. The shot is a medium close-up, using a tripod to provide an image which is rock steady except for the falling rain hitting the wooden tablet. After 3 to 5 seconds of just the sound of the rain, the chant "ame" (rain) is heard, lasting 3 to 5 seconds, followed again by silence except for the sound of the rain. The tape reverses, causing the rain to "fall" back up into the clouds. Then the chant "ema" is heard, followed again by only the rain.

The second version is shot at night when there is also a pouring rain. Artificial light is used to highlight the rain. Instead of one ema being the central image, a typical shrine picture votive offering pavilion is used as the location, and the camera frames all the ema into a grid pattern. As in version one, a tripod is used to provide a steady image except for the rain. The scene will then be realized in the same way as in version one. In comparison, version one might be experienced in a more personal light, suggestive of one's own fate, whereas version two, presenting a formal image, creates a more meditative spiritual feeling.

OTAFUKU

Source word: otafuku

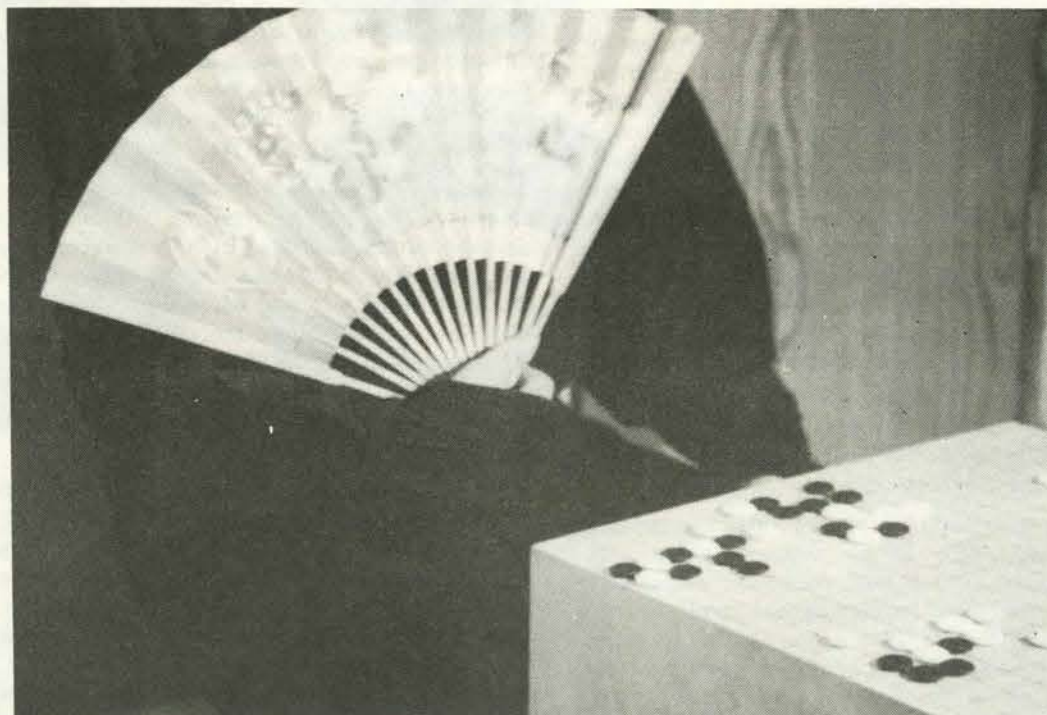
ato — otafuku — uku — f

Length: 20 - 30 seconds

A white painted otafuku is seen floating near the surface of a pond. It is a night time scene and the otafuku is artificially lit, suggestive of moonlight. The camera pans across the water revealing the otafuku (moon-faced woman). The movement is quick enough to cause a smear or delay of the image due to video lag. The word "otafuku" is chanted and dubbed onto the tape with the recorded



ikimono • on:omiki •



• ogi •• igo •

URA-ARU

THE ACOUSTIC PALINDROME

by Gary Hill



photos by Kathy Hill

image. Considering this as the source material, the image seen starts as a still of water. The tape then plays backwards; the otafuku comes into view screen left and smears across the screen; At the same time "ato" (trace, trail) is heard. (The taped segment begins playback in the middle of the word "otafuku".) The otafuku disappears screen right and the tape continues for a few seconds during which only water is seen. The tape reverses, backtracking over what has already been seen: the otafuku comes back into view from screen right, passes across the screen, absorbing the smear — unsmearing — and "otafuku" is heard. Since the tape playback began in the middle of the word "otafuku", the image that accompanies the sound "fuku" is new material. The camera is seen to catch up with the otafuku image and sees it sink a little below the surface. The tape reverses one more time and the otafuku rises to the surface; simultaneously is heard "uku" (to float, to rise to the surface), after which the tape pauses. Another possibility at this point is that after "uku" is heard the tape goes into extreme slow motion and the sound of the "f" — drawn out and with a much lower pitch — becomes white noise suggestive of the sound of water. The tape then pauses (still shot) after the "f" sound, and is back again at the starting point of the segment. This construct might be viewed as an omen of the woman's suicide.

IKIMONO

Source word: ikimono

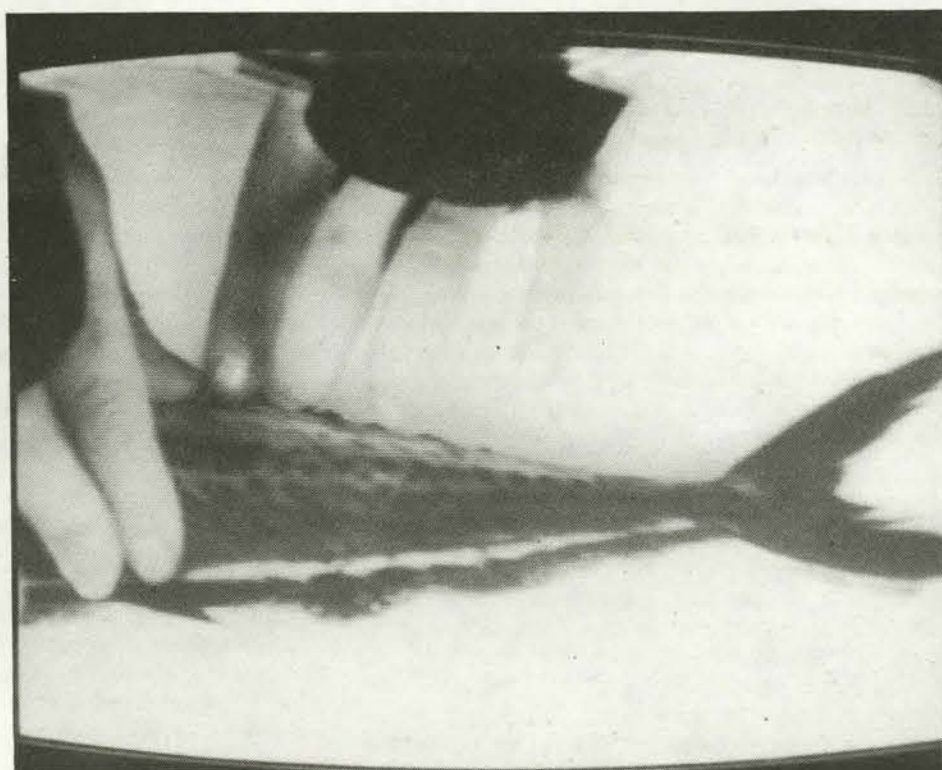
ikimono — on — omiki

Length: 20 - 30 seconds

A priest and a man are seated at a low table. The man has come to the priest for help in dealing with his inner turmoil. The scene is framed by a camera that points directly down from the ceiling. All that is seen is the topology of the table and the two men's hands on it. Also on the table are a sake bottle and cups, an uchinashi (bowl-shaped bell) and mallet, and a small live snake. The image appears as a kind of still life with a snake winding through it. The priest's hands are moving in an almost choreographed way — the hands are "living creatures." He picks up the mallet and strikes the uchinashi, then pours the sacred sake. The action lasts as long as the word "ikimono" (living creature) is chanted. The uchinashi is struck exactly as the "n" sound of ikimono is heard. The sound of the bell is allowed to die out and the tape reverses. One hears this sound now get increasingly louder as the priest appears to pick up the mallet and (un) ring the bell, while the chanted word "on" (sound) is heard. The tape pauses the moment after the bell sound abruptly ends. A moment later the tape continues in reverse and one hears "omiki" (sacred sake) as the priest (un) pours the sake.



• uomokage •• egako:omou



• usawara •• arawasu •

Continued from pg. 9

sition, that they virtually ignored sound, except to reinforce the mood of a scene (obvious uses of romantic pop songs over otherwise rather torpid boy-meets-girl scenes). Even simple techniques like overlapping two sequential location sound tracks to bridge and soften the harsh effect of a straight edit — inasmuch as picture dissolves are still beyond the realm of small-format video — were noticeably absent.

Hardware manufacturers bear much of the blame for the lack of attention to sound, in part; consider the \$1000 colour monitor with the tiny 10cm speaker. Or the marginal audio gain and mix controls on any ½-inch or U-Matic deck. Unless a teaching institution uses a separate professional mixer/amplifier/speaker setup for editing, the role of audio will continue to be neglected.

Hi-Fi Video (and parallel developments in home audio-playback equipment) shows the way to quality sound production for video. And since the 1960s people (especially the younger generation) has been sensitized to sound (that's putting it mildly) more than any time in the past. Motion picture houses have been forced to make heavy capital investments in better audio playback equipment, as films used audio for ever more powerful effect. (THE EXORCIST, JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR, EARTHQUAKE, and STAR WARS all come to mind.)

As mentioned in the opening section of this paper, television has long been produced as a kind of "illustrated radio", often with sound used very cleverly to disguise shortcuts or flaws in cheapskate productions. As manufacturers begin to market receiver/monitors with reasonably high-quality amplifiers and speakers built in, and we see the rise of Multiplex broadcasting for stereo or dual-language transmissions, broadcast television — and, hopefully, educational broadcasters — will follow through with more attention to levels of audio, mixes of mood, subtle expressions never before attempted with video production. But any curriculum should have a distinct audio portion to awaken this sensitivity in students. At Osaka Photographic College there is a two-year-old Audio Production Division; students in film and video, however, are not permitted to take courses in audio (nor are Audio Production students allowed in video or film courses), which I personally found an unfortunate limitation from the pedagogical point of view. From one point of view, tape is tape, and audio/video instruction should be closely interrelated. Courses in location audio-recording, mixing and equalizing, and laying up of tracks should be required for video students.

VII. The first of my revolutionary suggestions is that every student in a video production course should have his own portable ½-inch camera/VTR unit, which he keeps at home, brings to school, and takes on travels. Students should be encouraged to use this unit for "video memos", location hunting, test shooting and application of classroom theory, production of home video for family and friends (marriages, ceremonies), in addition to actual short complete feature pieces, either documentary or dramatic in style. I say "short" because excruciatingly long, diffuse, sluggish pieces seem to be the curse of student productions. At Osaka Photographic College no limits are placed on the length of student works; the 1984 Graduate Works were about 40 minutes in length, on the average. Except for one 7-minute piece, all were at least 30 minutes long; several were an hour. They universally tended to lack the pacing and tension necessary to sustain interest (especially in a drama), and could have been produced more effectively in a 10-15 minute format.

Students may be encouraged to buy a portable VTR as a long-term home equipment investment (useful for recording home events long after academic functions are mastered), or institutions can lend or (more wisely) lease equipment to students for the duration of courses. One very important part of learning video is taking proper care of equipment and tapes, and bitter experience shows that if the student has an economic stake in keeping gear in proper shape (and nothing gets misplaced) he/she will be more conscientious.

The precedent for this suggestion is the instruction of 35mm and medium-format still photography. Students have their cameras with them at all times as a matter of course. (And the investment for a Nikon or Canon outfit, complete with lenses, flash, and other accessories, is not much different from the price of a home video outfit.) The idea of students having their own equipment was impractical until recently, because of the price of equipment and the size and complication. New gear on the market now is compact enough for small girls to manage without being weighted down — and it has the flexibility of operation to be used in available light practically anywhere. The importance of getting such "verite" material cannot be overemphasized. It can be archived or

it can be used in creative editing experiments; and it provides a continuing opportunity for the student to improve camerawork (the most difficult single skill in videography).

It might be argued that many students are not interested in becoming camerapersons. I would say that for someone to thoroughly understand video, he must have gone through the whole cycle of pre-production, shooting, sound recording, editing, titling, and exhibition. This is also true in film study but is considerably more difficult technically and expensive. Its very ease in the video medium makes it *de rigueur*.

Certain procedures increase the intuitive understanding. Shooting-to-edit and editing with a sense of the cameraperson's intention require a thorough understanding of both processes — which can, I maintain, only come when the student has performed these two procedures a number of times.

Lecture tends to go from specific technical instruction to enhancing aesthetic sensitivities in students. At Osaka Photographic College, I observed how students would quickly master fundamental shooting and editing operations and produce competent television-style features practically instinctively. It was an eerie experience, like watching baby snakes beginning to hunt food. But beyond the obvious talking-head style of interview/documentary, there was no easy appreciation of the visual and conceptual potentials of video (and not much interest, to be frank about it). Thus I found that although the TV-indoctrination was useful in terms of unconsciously teaching people the fundamentals of framing/shooting/editing, it was necessary to break that pattern forcefully through exposure to other forms of video, in terms of artworks, documents, etc. Students exposed to such would naturally have a hard time appreciating it, given the fixed idea of television viewing; but once they were directed to produce their own non-TV kind of pieces, some began to get the idea.

One thing I posited for students was that a clever fixed-camera surveillance of practically any action over an extended period would yield at least a few seconds of interesting or usable material. For example, shooting a full-shot across a busy intersection, on telephoto, for thirty minutes, showing pedestrians waiting to cross. There would certainly be an unusual-looking combination of people, or a car-accident, or something comical. And a high-speed search, followed by editing, would yield such nuggets from the "overburden" of the rest of the footage. We would go up on the roof of Osaka Photographic College and shoot surveillance-style through the picture-windows of office buildings facing us. Students would then study the tape of secretaries coming and going, and distressed-looking office workers smoking, telephoning, moving papers around, and they would make up an original audio track, of dialogue, stream-of-consciousness, objective commentary, whatever. This kind of exercise served to open the eyes of some students to the creative potential sleeping within a new medium. And the ease of gathering and arranging material provided by the high-quality Sony Beta-I format was one key in the success of this process.

The ease of a non-elitist approach to video yielded positive results. One of my students, a certain Mr. Takada, loaned his JVC VHS-C portable unit to a bunch of eight- and nine-year-olds, telling them to shoot a tape with whatever plot or ideas came into their minds. The subsequent tape showed such rough freshness and vitality that it won a prize at the 1983 Tokyo Video Festival.

And this, to me, is really the key to the need to search and develop ever-newer pedagogical techniques: as the hardware becomes smaller/cheaper/better/easier to use, the conceptual framework of software must race to keep up.

VIII. Location production is encouraged wherever possible. This is really a negative approach — studios tend to be very dead places, in which the concern for proper hardware setup inhibits or may actually preclude a creative dynamic between staff members. I am not talking about heavily-scripted and rehearsed scenes, but rather events which need some degree of ambience and spontaneity to come off well. Techniques to get around this include having food and drink in the studio, with a "warm-up" party beforehand (though after the equipment has all been set up for the shoot), taping all rehearsals with the option of using at least pieces of them, and using the studio space for the screening of tapes or films, lectures, or other activities, in order that it have a more natural feeling. Live music works best, but is rarely possible, unless it is an absolutely integral part of a production.

Location shooting has the prodigious handicap of the practical impossibility of sound recording (at least Osaka did, with its ambient 70db roar of background noise), and, in many cases, the difficulty of getting permission

to shoot in interesting places. Japan was a real nightmare — apart from sidewalks and parks it was a real job to get permission to shoot anywhere; even the private railways employ military, uniformed guards to bully anyone who tries to shoot inside the stations. Department stores and shopping malls are similarly off-limits, and large companies rarely saw any reason to let students inside to shoot. Outside the city it was considerably easier, of course, and I encouraged location shooting in the country; but equipment transport and time restrictions often made that impractical. Familiar locations often provided the best setups — autobiographical docudramas by students, shooting in their homes, family cemeteries, elementary school buildings, etc. were often the most interesting photographically and dramatically strong, too.

Ideally the function of the instructor in the studio or location shoot, and editing process afterwards, would be that of a coach: ever-present and ready to advise or comment, but not involved in actual production or edit decisionmaking. In one sense, using the instructor's ideas and suggested location/cast is the best guarantee of success; the experience (of previous successes and failures!) would tend to ensure some usable results.

The other side of the coin is that motivation is often less, and the urge to awaken the latent creative impulse (undoubtedly one of the major goals of the teaching process) is also liable to suffer if students shoot under the direct inspiration or supervision of the instructor. I personally tend to use the teaching technique of instructor-as-amateur, but only after students have failed to come up with anything worthwhile to produce themselves (a frequent occurrence in Japan, in my 3½ years of experience there).

In conclusion, I would state that limited creative ideals, defined within a short piece, is an absolute must in student productions. Thirty seconds. Seven minutes. This kind of length is also obviously closer to what those who find employment in video or television will be producing after they graduate.

IX. The understanding of process will, as stated above, come when students take an active role in all stages of production: concept, discussion, shooting, editing, screening.

Shooting to edit is something which any professional ENG cameraperson can tell you about. Such a person is often shooting events at 2 pm which must be seen on the news at six — and so an editor and reporter must be able to fit together a cohesive edited video story practically effortlessly (and the rigid ritual format of news/feature stories makes this a simple and predictable process). Shooting to edit doesn't just mean getting enough cutaways or master shots; the discipline of shooting in the same order that footage is to be edited, and with the same approximate length of shots as will appear in the final version, is a healthy learning experience. Back-space editing-equipped VTRs used to "edit" in-machine will also provide this useful experience. (It will also teach students to shoot carefully — the cheapness of videotape and ease of shooting really encourages a careless and sloppy attitude among some students... I've seen people choose to shoot on wide angle instead of telephoto just because they were too lazy to adjust focus: "On wide angle you can't see if it's out of focus anyway," they say.)

Editing footage shot by someone else, without notes or personal consultation, also requires a certain sensitivity to the footage. Teamwork between shooting and editing personnel (the rule more often than not in classroom work) produces one kind of result. Intentionally insulating editors from camera operators will produce something quite different, and often more original.

Making several dubs of the same original material and having different groups of students do their own independent edits of this material is also a valuable process, showing the power and decision-potential of the editor. Having student editing teams produce two versions of the same material (say, a five-minute edit and a thirty-minute one) will also awaken the understanding of the process. As for the material itself, I found in Japan that having students re-edit material taped off television was often the most powerful way of showing the options and power of juxtaposing material together that was not part of the same piece (pieces of commercials intercut with soap operas and news shows, sound and picture switched around, lost context exercises).

Video today is simple enough for individuals to conceive, shoot, and edit a piece all by themselves; teamwork makes things easier, but it also makes them slower and more intrusive. Team decisions also tend away from the radical and original toward a "consensus" of predictability. Really creative individuals tend to be inhibited by the need to coordinate closely with others (even on the technical level of sound, lighting, continuity), and documentary shooting can be especially grievously affected

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by too many technicians and staff members standing around. . . subjects can feel "ganged-up" upon.

X. Video is, at the moment, the only photographic discipline offering any degree of optimism in job placement. There are more than enough filmmakers, photographers, and other such personnel in the world, and the schools keep churning them out. Video is expanding rapidly into predictable areas (many of my students at Osaka Photographic College went into the Siberia of wedding-video work) as well as new fields offering interesting and meaningful work (biomedical/distance learning/industrial training). A few years ago the purchase of video equipment would have raised eyebrows in many companies; now video teleconferences and such are making a small studio *de rigueur* in many organizations.

The instructor should work to instill a powerful sense of the *appropriate technology* of video into students. Very few will find jobs in the commercial broadcasting industry, and those who do will probably find themselves working as serfs for a number of years. The unionized, highly specialized, elaborate broadcast studio is not what

instructors should be training students for — rather, the holistic understanding of video and a glimpse of its potentials will prepare students to face a future that none of us can more than guess at right now. People should know how to operate shooting and editing equipment, obviously; they should definitely be able to appreciate the goals and problems of potential producers and communicate those efficiently with the equipment at hand. And they should do so with an ever-renewing sense of freshness and inspiration.

XI. I came into this business from many years of experience in personal still photography and 16mm independent film. My basic unit of film production was the 100 ft. roll of Kodachrome and the Beaulieu camera, allowing maximum creative flexibility.

I started producing video in the Stone Age of small-format, working with Sony (but mostly AKAI 1/4-inch) in 1973/74. In 1975 I hosted Canada's first arts show on cable TV, producing half an hour a week on Cable 10 Vancouver's primitive IVC 1-inch colour machines.

An acquaintance built a tiny two-camera switcher for

my own AKAI unit, and I shot with this for a number of years. I virtually refused to edit video before the advent of U-Matic electronic editing, as the process was too clumsy and unreliable.

All through my career I have attempted to avoid the problems incurred with too much hardware, or unfamiliar equipment, or too elaborate schemes for production. My own understanding of free and fresh expression in this new medium has been to have the hardware interfere with the dynamic of gathering and processing imagery, as little as possible.

I have never enjoyed being subservient to a priest-caste of engineers and technicians, with their "hurry-up-and-wait" attitudes. They naturally want to get it right, technically, but they do so in a manner that results in their getting it dead. I've tried to avoid working with people who did not enjoy what I was doing and make a creative contribution to it, in addition to whatever technical role they might have. And I have accepted the low-grade quality of audio and picture imagery which has often resulted, believing that the novelty and vitality of the images themselves were more important than the glamour of the hardware nightmare.

SOFTVIDEO



SOFTVIDEO is made of ten societies which have their seats all over Italy (Videoplay in Rome, Videostaff in Florence, Videotown in Naples, etc.). In Rome there is also the seat of the holding company — via Bettolo 54, 00195.

SOFTVIDEO offers a videoservice everywhere (rental, shooting, broadcast, theatrical and home video distribution, and — last but not least — video festival organizations). The role of SOFTVIDEO, being a national organization, is organizing national performances, acquiring and distributing programs from abroad, and making video productions. Because of the success of its activities, SOFTVIDEO is now — after three years' work — represented all over Italy.

SOFTVIDEO Main Objects:

- Festivals organization and international meeting on video;
- Performances and video exhibitions;
- Distribution of programs for domestic, theatrical use, or for television;
- Videoprogramming for bars, clubs, and discotheques;
- Productions and co-productions;
- Videoservice in all Italy;
- Participation to videocongresses.

Festivals Organization and International Meetings

Made in collaboration with the Council of Rome, RAI and other cultural institutions, "Video On" (now at third edition) is the first international video festival in Italy, entirely organized by SOFTVIDEO. In 1983 an audience of 25,000 people have seen in it the works of Julien Temple, Don Letts, Ed Steinberg (Rockamerica), Joe Rees (Target video), Frigo, Image Video, and many others.

In 1984, with an audience of 40,000 people, has been shown works of Jean Paul Goude, Cucumber studios, Wonder Product, Les maitres du monde, John Sanborn, La Mamelles, the section "Nouvelles images" of the INA, the Pompidou centre, etc.

SOFTVIDEO has also organized other international performances, such as the exhibition of Bob Wilson's plays in video, in occasion of the world premiere of "Civil wars"; the international videoclips contest in Cervia, and so on.

Performances and Video Exhibitions

In 36 months SOFTVIDEO has organized more than 3,000 video performances: from small town parties to the giant screens of political parties festival, from sport events to cultural expos, from movie festivals to multimedia festivals like Salsomaggiore, "Altrocinema," "Electra I," "Contaminazioni" and the Mostra internazionale del Cinema of Venice, organized by the Biennale of Venice. SOFTVIDEO has also organized tours in Italy for Target Video, New video music, the "Crystals" video installation made by Brian Eno, and so on.

Distribution

SOFTVIDEO is the exclusive Italian distributors of many interesting items in video productions (there are current exchange agreements with Frigo in France, UVS in Berlin, Dan Video in Spain, etc.); but is also exclusive world distributor of the best of the Italian video productions (computer graphics, music, videoart, fiction) and of other interesting titles produced in Italy by SOFTVIDEO network of by other production companies. Among the other titles (see the list) "Crystal's conversation" with Brian Eno; "Metallo Italia" (an anthology of all the Italian hard rock bands in a feature film), "Japan Japan" (five hours of concerts and interviews of Japanese rock groups in tour in Italy).

SOFTVIDEO has the rights for Italy of homevideo distribution of movies as "Wild style," "Dr. Detroit," "Ghost sonata," etc. and runs the selection of titles for Domovideo, the most important homevideo Italian company.

As theatrical rights, SOFTVIDEO is the world exclusive distributor of the catalogue of videotheatre (about 25 titles for 15 hours), including Linea Maginot (selected at Tokyo video festival), Gaia Scienza (representing Italy at Expo 85 in Tsukuba) and many others.

SOFTVIDEO



Videoprogramming for Bars, Clubs, and Discotheques

In Italy, at this time, there are 800 videobars, video-clubs, and videodiscos. SOFTVIDEO works with 200 of them as far as videoprogramming, hardware installation, and video exhibition are concerned.

Productions

Starting with "Ghost Sonata" — co-produced in association with Image Video (Brussels) and Tuxedomoon — SOFTVIDEO never stopped producing programs as "Crystal's conversation" with Brian Eno, but developed also co-productions contracts with the national broadcast, RAI. In September '85 "Perfidi incanti," an experimental work co-produced by SOFTVIDEO and RAI, will be shown in world premiere at Venice film festival.

And also in 1985, SOFTVIDEO produced two monthly magazines: one called "I love cinema" is a selection of movie clips, realised in association with the Board of the cinema producers in Italy (ANICA). The other one is "Mr. Fantasy videohit" and takes its name from the famous Italian telecast of video music, and in fact shows in the subscribing clubs the new music clips on the market.

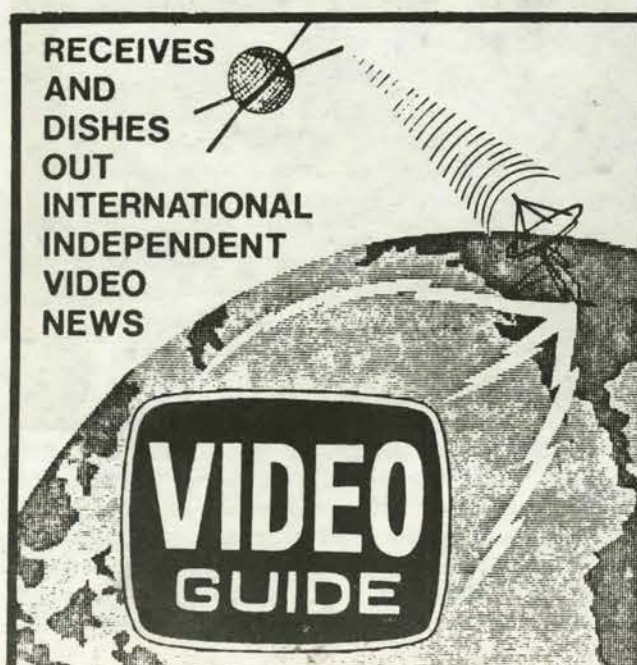
Videoservice in All Italy

SOFTVIDEO societies make a rent service of giant video projector, monitor, videocreeds. They also install and sell the necessary instruments.

For Further Information:

Contact SOFTVIDEO, P.R. Office, Mr. Elio Andalo Vimercati, via Bettolo 54, 00195, Roma.
Tel. 39-6-384908/354501

VIDEO



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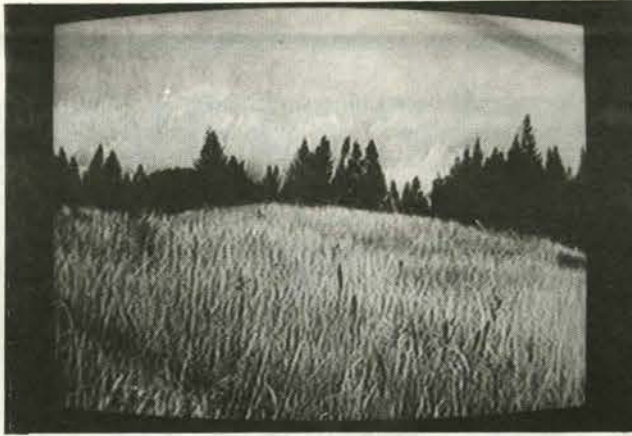
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You identify sounds with the seasons you like, and then you know it's going to be Spring, so that even a housefly seems welcoming, at one point you say, Oh the flies are waking up it must be Spring, there's a stack of them!

Wasn't it Einstein who said that one hair on a man's head is not very much, but one hair in a man's soup is too much?



AS A WIFE HAS A COW
45 min. Video Installation
by Cornelia Wyngaarden



It was the worst part of the accident: he sliced off half of his finger with his pocket knife. I always think the actual danger I can deal with. It's the anxiety of waiting for the danger occurring I find hard to deal with, but once the danger has occurred, you can deal with it quite easily. That's what Gertrude said: considering how frightening everything in the world is, nothing is really very dangerous. I feel that's a fairly accurate statement.



He was an amazingly rugged individual, really rugged. It's funny when I think of him, I didn't know his family, but he did have a wife at one time, and they had about eighteen children, and he was so rugged that none of those children would have anything to do with him. Every one of those children left home and the wife left too, and here is this old man . . . and all those children left, and I would wonder why none of them wanted to stay; because you would have thought that they could've maybe had a nice



productive life there, at least somebody could have stayed, you have all these children and they're strangers when they grow up and go away. I guess he was just a little bit miserable and harsh with his family. He was harsh with himself so I guess he was harsh with everything else too.

Well, always having been a Gertrude Stein fan, I can only say nice things about her, and all I have to do to say nice things about Gertrude is to quote Gertrude, that's



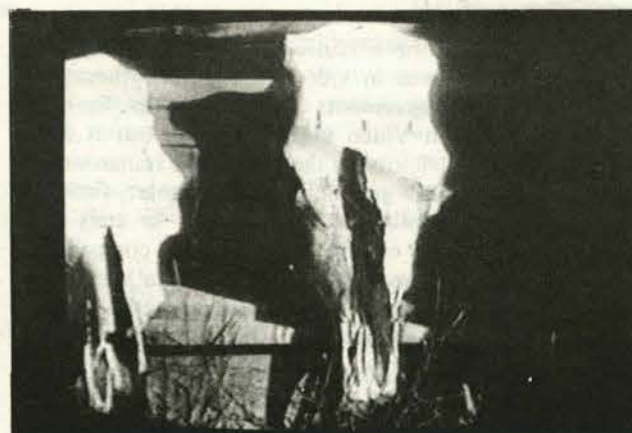
what I think: anything she said about herself was always nice. I love that about her, so if I quote her I can't say anything not nice about her; she's great.

Those kinds of people when they come to a new country where they're not being arrested and harassed and repressed visibly all the time, they can produce an amazing amount of stuff . . . He used to go along the side of the road with his scythe and cut the hay and put it up in little mounds and he would carry it home in huge



bundles just like he was still in Europe, on his back. I'm sure he carried home tons of hay that way. That was extra hay for him . . . it was really a humble attitude about that and he was really successful in his own way at farming because he did everything that way — didn't spare himself, his animals always looked good.

When someone asks me how I feel about men, I always say some of my best friends are men; I get along just great with them, I love them, I say, I don't fuck them, but



I love them. Some women fuck them and hate them.

It's a crime to own a nuclear reactor even — you don't even have to have a bomb. That's just my opinion, I just think it's bad for you, any sort of nuclear energy because it is not disposable so you can't really have it. We haven't really evolved to the point where we can use it properly, or we should just bypass it all together. I think we've sort of made a mess of it already, there is going to be quite a bit of clean-up for somebody one of these days.



After you don't have children around you become more self-centered maybe, because there isn't anybody making demands on you except maybe another adult, and you can always tell that other adult that you are not going to supply the demand. But with children you can't do that, and I think that when you take children into your life, you have to be completely devoted to them, completely, or it is no good for you and it is no good for them, because if you don't have that complete devotion



and love for them, then that big piece is missing and it becomes a burden to each of you, and it is very unsatisfying; but if you have that feeling then when you're with them it is just a pleasure to be with them. It's just a joy.

. . . she had had the foresight to get birth control pills, but the tragic part was that the doctor wasn't very favourable to her getting them and didn't give her proper



instructions. . . when Jim left she didn't have any idea that she was pregnant because she was on the pill. It was kind of an interruption in her life, she was only sixteen . . . this is not something you're going to pretend didn't happen . . . so she was going to give it up for adoption. . . a different doctor was there and he wasn't very warm. I guess he didn't like sixteen year olds that were pregnant, he refused to do the Caesarian . . . he was saying she

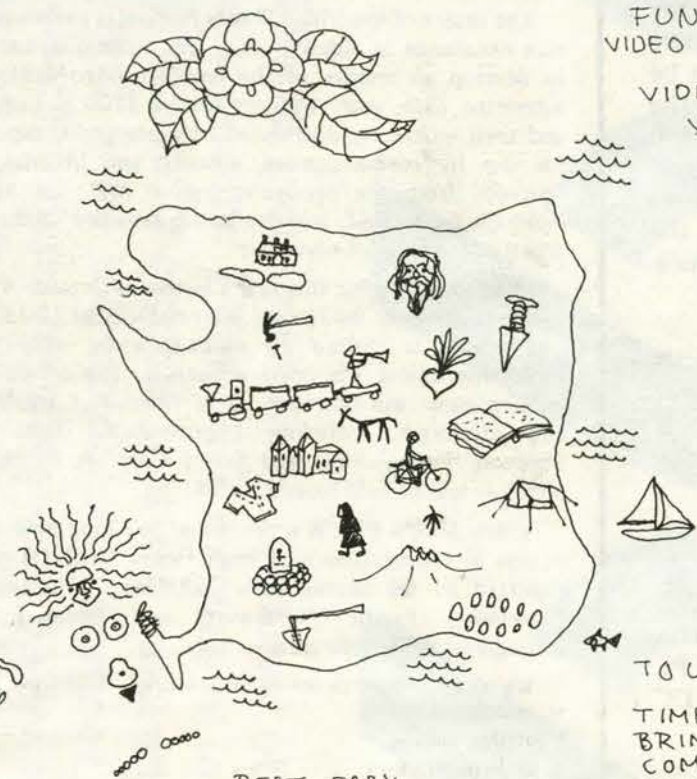


wasn't trying hard enough, he felt it was her holding back . . . finally he decided after sixteen hours that he would have to do the Caesarian now because the baby's heart beat was starting to get irregular . . . she said to me, I want to see him. . . the next day when I came back she said, I want to keep him. . . she said, you know if I don't keep him, all my life I will worry that he thinks that I didn't love him.



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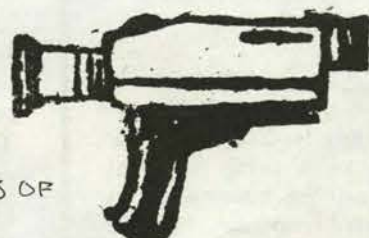
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THEORY ON VIDEO

VIDEO IS A NEW PHENOMENON. VIDEO HAS NOT BEEN ANALYZED AND THEORIZED TO THE POINT WHERE ALL ROADS SEEM TO BE ALREADY TRIED. THE VIDEO PORTAPAK INVITES TO A PRACTICE OF RECORDING AND PLAYING BACK, WHERE DIFFERENT TIMES, PLACES AND PEOPLE COME TOGETHER. DISTANCES IN TIME AND SPACE ARE BRIDGED IN INTELLECTUAL AND EMOTIONAL SYNTHESIS.

THE PRACTICE CAN FOLLOW NEW AND OTHER NEW ROADS. THEORY CAN GIVE A GENERAL GUIDANCE ONLY. TO GAIN KNOWLEDGE ON THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE VIDEO MEDIA, PRACTICE IS REQUIRED.

THE EVER MORE LIGHT-WEIGHT AND EASILY OPERATED EQUIPMENT OPENS UP THE POSSIBILITY FOR THE IN THE INDUSTRIAL WORLD POOR TOGETHER TO WORK INDEPENDENT OF (AND AGAINST) NATIONAL AND MULTINATIONAL SOFTWARE SYNDICATES. THERE IS A NETWORK FOR "INDEPENDENT" VIDEO PRODUCERS. STILL AN ISOLATED WORK WITH VIDEO A WORK ALMOST FREE OF THEORY CONSTITUTES A WELL NEEDED COUNTER-WEIGHT TO MASS MEDIA AND PSEUDO EVENTS.

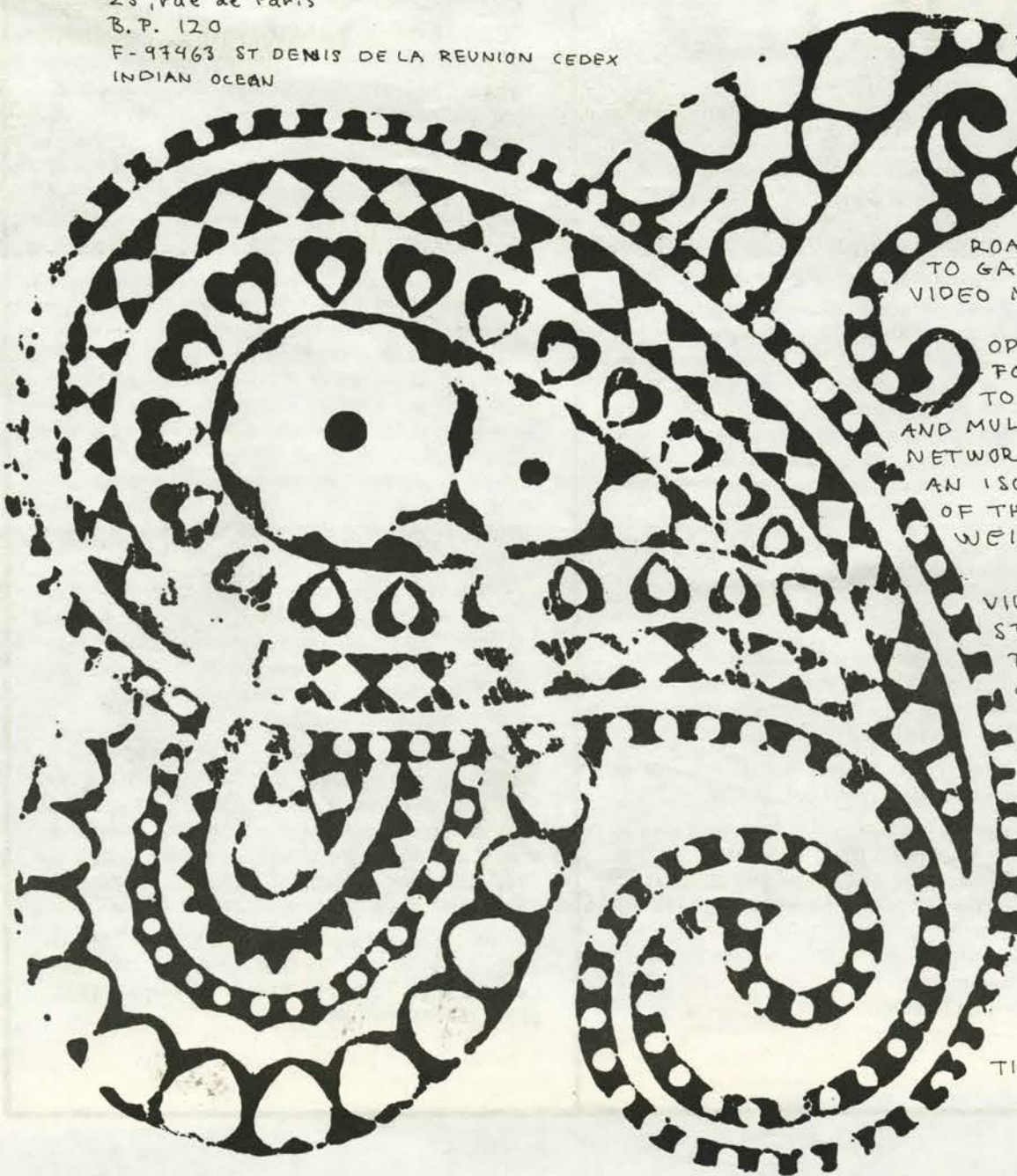
SIMULTANEOUSLY AS THE LIGHT-WEIGHT VIDEO EQUIPMENT FAVORS DEMOCRATIC MEDIA STRUGGLE, SIMULTANEOUSLY VIDEO IS HIGH TECHNOLOGY, WITH ALL THE VULNERABILITY OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY, AND DEPENDENT ON ORDER IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM.

THE VIDEO CONSUMER HAS THE CHOICE BETWEEN AN EQUIPMENT FOR HIS OWN PRODUCTION OF VIDEO FOR THE FEW, AND A VIDEO EQUIPMENT WHICH WORKS ONLY FOR PLAYING BACK INTERNATIONAL MILLION VIEWER'S SHOWS.

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TIME PASSES TIME BY INTERRUPTIONS





SCANNING VIDEO SCANNING VIDEO

EVENTS



Let the Earth live.

A CALL FOR VIDEO PRODUCTIONS ON "PREVENTING NUCLEAR WAR"

Cambridge Forum seeks video material suitable for inclusion in our second series of public affairs television programs on "Preventing Nuclear War." Our first TV series on this theme is being broadcast nationally this fall via PBS satellite transmission. It includes the Academy Award nominees "In the Nuclear Shadow" and "Gods of Metal." The types of programming included in these series have varied from public forums to documentaries to an animated nine-minute film, "Fable Safe."

Material already under consideration for "Preventing Nuclear War", series two, includes a 47 minute long documentary entitled "Video from Russia" and a short new Robert Osborn animated piece produced by his son Nic Osborn.

All material submitted will be screened at the Cambridge Forum Video Festival, "Images of Peace: Preventing Nuclear War," in February 1986. The event will bring videomakers and peacemakers together to share their ideas, their skills and their work. "Images of Peace: Preventing Nuclear War" will be a day-long event featuring video materials submitted for the event, with special presentations of those video programs chosen for inclusion in our new national public TV series. The day will also include a live evening concert as well as a special reception for videomakers and guests.

We welcome submissions of video or film productions on video tape on the theme "Images of Peace: Preventing Nuclear War." Submissions will fall into two categories: up to 30 minutes and 30 to 60 minutes. Videos should be no more than 60 minutes long and standard 3/4" NTSC format is required. Entry is free of charge. All entries must be received by December 15, 1985.

All entries will be listed and described in an official event catalogue available to all who attend the event itself and through Cambridge Forum subsequent to the event.

For more information about the video festival or for application forms, please write:

"Images of Peace"

Cambridge Forum

3 Church Street

Cambridge, MA 02138

or call Lisa Rudy or John Clarke at (617) 495-2727.



CATALOGUE OF DANISH VIDEO ART

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Index/Directory of Women's Media

With today's communications system in the hands of a few individuals and corporations, permitting a minority to control the flow of information, it is more and more critical that new sources of information be opened up and that thought be given to the restructuring of the communications system. The *Index/Directory of Women's Media* provides both the network of existing women's media as well as ideas women have on the overall issues of restructuring the communications system.

The *Directory*, with nearly 500 periodicals and over 1,000 total entries in all the various categories, is an aid to networking and is published to increase communication among women, nationally and internationally.

The *INDEX / DIRECTORY OF WOMEN'S MEDIA* is available for \$12 from the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press (WIFP), 3306 Ross Place, N.W., Washington, DC 20008 (202) 966-7783.



Madrid, 30 June, 1985

Dear Friends:

Hope you excuse this massproduced letter which is sent out to everybody concerning video art. The reasons for this is to get more information for our SECOND VIDEO FESTIVAL that we are preparing and which will take place in Madrid next June, 1986.

We don't know if you received information about our FIRST VIDEO FESTIVAL that we organized in June, 1984. In case you are not informed, we published a catalogue in which there is documentation about the different sections of the Festival: video installations, cycles on various theoretical themes, portraits of historical video artists through tapes, speeches, video-performances, a video electronic circus and the selection of video tapes.

We will be very interested if you can send us documentation about your video work (on tapes, video-performances, etc.), especially your most recent ones.

We are creating a Documentation Centre in which all documentation can be consulted, not only for the Video Festival, but also for theorists, artists, and people interested in knowing about video art.

Please, let us know if you have a distributor or if you manage your tapes directly.

Next November we will make the formal presentation of the SECOND VIDEO FESTIVAL. At that time we will contact you to inform you about all of it and dates for the international convocatory for tapes.

Yours sincerely,

Paloma Navares

Video Festival Director



Thanks for inquiring about "Video Shorts Five." Now in its fifth year, Video Shorts is the only national media festival devoted solely to short, non-commercial video artworks.

The intent of the Video Shorts Festival is to recognize excellence in video artistry and technique, and to develop an archive of the ten best video works submitted each year. Winners receive \$100 in cash and their works are distributed on a composite tape for use by media centres, schools, and libraries. Proceeds from the nonprofit festival are used to maintain the festival: any profits are returned to the artists in the form of royalties.

Entry deadline for this year's festival is October 5, 1985. Judging for the festival will run October 12-13. The public is invited to participate by writing comments during the open screenings. The official judging panel will be made up of Northwest artists and producers, including Lynda Barry, Buster Simpson, Gary Hill, and David Culp. A public premiere will be held November 14.

Video Shorts Five is a project of Sea-King Media Access in cooperation with High Hopes Media. It is supported by the Seattle Arts Commission, Viacom Cablevision Pacific Northwest, and businesses throughout the Seattle area.

We look forward to seeing your work.

Video Shorts

932 12th Avenue

Seattle, WA 98122

(206) 322-9010



International Television Association

The 18th Annual ITVA Video Festival is underway! By now, ITVA members should have received the promotion poster (with the rules and entry form) in the mail. Deadline for entering is November 27. The deadline is noticeably earlier because the 1986 International Conference in Dallas is April 16-19, a full six weeks earlier than the 1985 Conference held last May in New Orleans.

"This year we're continuing in the effort for more consistency in the judging panels across the country. We've made some changes in hopes of making this the fairest ITVA competition yet," said Bob Menter, 1986 Festival Chairman. "We hope to take the work done last year in standardizing panel judging another step." Suggestions from last year's chairman Nan Hospodar and her committee, as well as suggestions from last year's judging panels have been incorporated in the mechanics of the preliminary judging process.

Other changes include the title itself: The ITVA Video Festival. The word "videotape" was replaced by "video" to reflect the expansion and use of interactive video by our organization. Also, rules and procedures have been modified in this year's judging of the interactive entries.

The entry deadline is November 27, 1985 and the Awards Ceremony is April 19, 1986 in Dallas, TX. Last year there was a record number of entries into the competition and this year is shaping up to be the biggest yet. So when they call out the winners for the Gold and Silver Awards of Excellence, it could be you!

For more information contact: Bob Menter, 1986 ITVA Video Festival Chairman, Whirlpool Corp., 200 US 33 North, Benton Harbor, MI 49022, phone (616) 926-5084.

COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO



600 South Michigan Avenue

• Chicago, Illinois 60605 • 312 663-1600

POSITION AVAILABLE: Visiting Video Artist

Position available for Spring semester 1986. Full-time teaching load in intermediate and advanced level video courses which would include an experimental class. Proficiency on the following equipment required: Sony 6800, BVU 110, Sony 3M camera, and the 5000 series and the 2000 series VTR's with the 440 controller. Deadline October 1, 1985. Send resume, sample of work on 3/4" tape, list three references with addresses and numbers and a cover letter specifying teaching experience and working philosophy to Barbara Sykes-Dietze, Video Coordinator, Columbia College, 600 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL. 60605.



SIX WINNERS IN CANADIAN INDEPENDENT SHORT FILM SHOWCASE COMPETITION

Ottawa, March 19, 1985 — Speaking on behalf of Maureen Forrester, Chairman of the Canada Council, Quebec filmmaker Jean-Claude Labrecque announced today the names of the winners of the 1985 Canadian Independent Short Film Showcase competition.

The winners of the 1985 competition are as follows:

The World is Flat by Tom Gravestock

Waterworx by Rick Hancox

The Listener by Kirk Johns

Sacre Tango by Franck Le Flaguais

Las Aradas by Janis Lundman

Common Problems by Nik Ranieri, Ric Sluiter, and Cal Leduc.

The winning short films will be released in commercial movie houses across the country, in collaboration with the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors' Association.

The Canada Council
255 Albert Street
P.O. Box 1047
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5V8

DISTRIBUTE

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LATITUDE 53 SOCIETY OF ARTISTS



Telephone (403) 439-1985

CALLING YOU FOR VIDEO SUBMISSIONS

LATITUDE 53 is pleased to announce our newly formed Video Committee. We would like to inform you that the screening of video tapes is now on the exhibition agenda and that we are dedicated to the principle of paying artist fees.

Please send us

- Resume
- Description of tapes and their rental cost
- Time availability
- Preview cost (if any).

Send To

Liz Stobbe / Roger Steele
Video Committee
Latitude 53 Gallery
10920 - 88 Avenue
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T6G 0Z1

RESOURCE

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The Aims of Filmclips

- To help promote the growth of individual filmmakers
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- To help the individual filmmaker to utilize methods of distribution that will contribute to his or her portfolio.

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- Open to all levels of filmmakers with an interest in further developing their talents through the services of Filmclips
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- Fill in the application form
- Mail with membership fee
- Sign application.

Should you wish more information or application forms, write FILMCLIPS or phone (416) 486-6059, 485-3910.

Filmclips reserves the right to accept or refuse membership into network.

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BOOKS



BAY AREA VIDEO COALITION

Bay Area Video Coalition is happy to announce a 1985 VIDEO FESTIVAL DIRECTORY published by Video Networks available for sale. The Directory contains 50 national festivals with information targeted just for the videomaker. The vital statistics for each festival are provided with a short paragraph description which may tell the videomaker about some of last year's winners, the judging process, the viewing audience and the compensation. Send \$2 plus \$1 for postage and handling to:

Bay Area Video Coalition
1111 17th Street
San Francisco, CA 94107



Third World Resources

464 19th Street Oakland, CA 94612

THIRD WORLD RESOURCES, an affiliate of the Data Center, gathers, annotates, and publicizes education and action resources from and about the Third World. The project publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Third World Resources*, and is compiling a 12-volume set of paperback resource directories that will be published by Orbis Books on a schedule of four books per year from 1986 through 1988. Each volume in the set will contain resources gathered from all over the world on one Third World region or issue. All resources are catalogued and integrated into the library collection of the Data Center where they are accessible to Center library users and Search Service clients. Bibliographical information is stored in a computerized data base to facilitate identification and retrieval of cross-referenced resources.

GLOBAL

ZONA/VIA SAN NICOLA 119R/BOX 1486/FIRENZE/ITALIA

Zona Informations
small press scene archive

Dear Friends:

After the first international exhibition of small press scene presented to Zona in 1975 with about 300 editors, Zona, a non-profit art organization in Florence, plans to organize in its archive a complete list for a second exhibition programmed jointly with biennale of Venice archives.

We know your magazine and you are invited to participate in this project by sending one/two copies of each issue to our mail address: Zona, Box 1486, Firenze, Italy. (As soon as possible!)

We will send you a copy of the catalogue, hoping for your participation.

Please send us also this information:
title, address, date of first issue, publisher, editor, tendencies, contributors.

VANCOUVER ARTISTS LEAGUE

The committee serving as the ad hoc board of directors of the Vancouver Artists' League is pleased to inform you that application for society status is now under way.

The society is an umbrella organization formed by a coalition of various institutions (CAG, Unit/Pitt, Video Inn, Western Front) and independents to promote and activate artistic activity.

The VAL will encourage a livelier interchange of ideas and energy than is now the case in Vancouver. For example, a shared mailing list will provide for wider dissemination of information than is currently available.

You are invited to join this organization as a charter member, which entitles you to a year's worth of quarterly mailings. If you care to become a part of the VAL, please send three dollars to the Contemporary Art Gallery, 555 Hamilton, Vancouver V6B 2R1.

HARDWARE NOTES

PHOTOS FROM VIDEO Part II by Michael Goldberg

B&W Photographs

(This section written together with Shawn Preus)

Black-and-white photos (written as above or B/W) of video are the ones we see most often in magazines, newspapers, catalogues, etc. Video production has progressed from open-reel B&W days to 3/4" colour, but our publicity all too often cannot afford colour. There is nevertheless room for improvement of the quality of B&W video reproductions. Most of the hints given up to this point in this report apply to either colour or black-and-white photos of video.

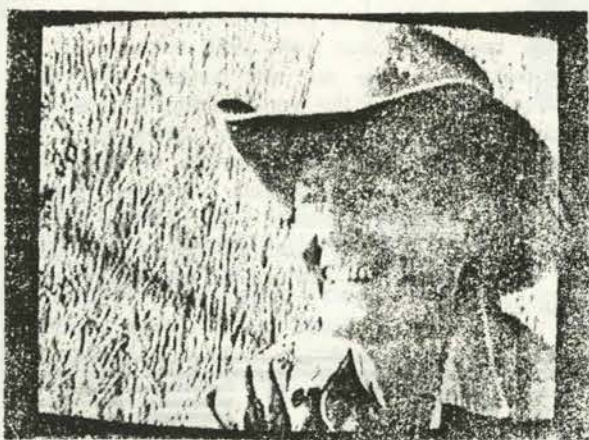
Most B&W negative films will give good results with video, such as Fuji or Kodak (125 ASA Plus-X or 400 ASA Tri-X). Even Polaroid's instant B&W prints (3000 ASA give surprisingly good results.

For black & white reproductions, it is not necessary to provide negatives to the printer. A print on glossy paper (preferable to matte finish), if not too tiny, is perfect. Slightly high contrast will have better printed results than a greyish photo.

P.M.T.

The printing of photos in most publications is done in a regular pattern of ink dots. The finer the printing process, ink, and paper, the smaller these dots can be. Newspaper photos have noticeably large dots.

It is possible to have "dot screen" copies of your B&W photos made, ready to be used for printing on short notice. These are called PMT's for photo-mechanical transfer. It is difficult to reduce or enlarge PMT's, and they are more costly than having prints made from your negative. They are indispensable for publicising a tape showing through "instant printing" (paper plate offset) and come out infinitely better than a photo in photocopying. If you have several photos of the same contrast, you can have them screened together on one PMT sheet, to save money.



Photocopy of PMT

B&W ↔ Colour

It is possible to make B&W prints from colour originals. If you used colour print film, Kodak Panalure II RC (resin-coated) paper is made for colour negatives. You can develop B&W prints from colour slides using Direct Positive Paper. Both papers use regular darkroom procedures and B&W developers.

You may have noticed images of video in the colour pages of magazines which appear completely blue. If there's a hint of some other colours, it was likely shot off a colour TV monitor using Tungsten film and no correction filter. If it is all blue, it was shot off a B&W monitor using colour film.

In the upcoming parts of this series we'll get into colour in detail. For now let me just suggest to you an excellent test for the best colour compensation filter to match your TV monitor: adjust the colour control as far down as it will go (hopefully right to B&W) and shoot with colour film and the various filters you judge to be best. The resulting photo which is closest to true black & white (not black 'n' blue) is the one with the best filter for your picture tube.

You can shoot a colour TV monitor screen using B&W film and obtain excellent prints. Whenever possible, I nevertheless recommend you adjust the monitor's "colour" (intensity) control as far down as it can go, to obtain a black & white TV image. You can then see with your eye what the print will look like. You may then find that the screen's B&W image is somewhat contrasty. Adjust the "brightness" control quite high, then set the "contrast" control to your taste.



PMT of colour Polaroid

COLOUR

Introduction to the Sections Dealing with Colour

Since *Video Guide* cannot afford colour, my working premise in the original series in *Video Salon* (Japan) falls to the wayside. I took the same photos of colour bars — one indoor shot and one outdoor shot — using different films, filters, TV screens, etc. I then suggested the reader compare them and select the colour rendition they preferred. Admittedly there was a margin of error in the printing process, but most of the photos reproduced the colour balance of the slides . . . at least to my eye. Colour perception and appreciation are, after all, subjective as well as scientific. You'll have to rely here on my personal observations.

If you know about the colour-temperature of picture tubes, mireds, field and frame stop-action, underscanning, etc., you've got a head start on taking excellent photos of video. I do hope you will glean some useful information from this series. If you haven't read part I (lens shutter, exposure values, etc.), you can back order it from *Video Guide*.

All rights to this series are reserved. (It cost me a lot of time and pocket money to do the research.) For permission to reproduce it, in whole or in part, please write me c/o *Video Guide*.

COLOUR TEMPERATURE

Kelvin Scale

Physicist William Thomas Kelvin noted that as iron is heated, its colour changes. At first it glows a dull red, then orange, yellow, etc. As heat is increased, the metal becomes blue, then brighter and brighter white. He also postulated that Absolute Zero (no heat at all) would be approximately -273°C., which is termed 0°K (zero degrees Kelvin).

Colour Temperature

Kelvin used his scale to assign scientifically measurable values to light. Based on this, the "colour temperature" of daylight is rated for photographic and video purposes at around 5500°K. In actual fact, sunlight changes colour at different times of the day and weather conditions (which is why you should do a "white balance" on your video camera from time to time as the day progresses).

The video camera's pickup tube is set for 3200°K, the colour temperature of Tungsten lamps, which are used in professional lighting. For this reason, you must change to the "colour correction filter" built into the video camera, to shoot in daylight. (By the way, this cuts down the light coming in by more than half a "stop". If you are using a video camera with a wide latitude in its "white balance" range, and it's getting dim outside, try white balancing without the daylight filter, that is, in "Tungsten" or "indoor" setting.)

Tungsten film (type B) is also made to respond to 3200°K. (Tungsten type A film is set at 3400°K.) Type B is the one to use if ever you shoot photos in a TV studio (though Japan's NHK uses its lights at 3050°K, to extend their life).

Fluorescent lights, which contain a variety of gases, do not emit one coherent "colour" of white. For practical purposes, some video cameras have a filter setting for them, rated around 4500°K.

TV-Monitor

As you likely know, all the hues we perceive on a TV screen are comprised of varying intensities of tiny points of red, green, and blue light. The white of a colour picture tube is also formed by a combination of the three (R-G-B). There are many picture tube designs, and the three primary colours may well differ from one brand or model to another. Their colour temperatures also may be quite different, ranging anywhere from 6500°K up to 12,000°K. For example, the Sony Trinitron tubes are 11,000°K. The newer Pro-Feels and Trinitron-Black are 9300°K. Most of the newer TV monitors are closer to the latter, as are broadcast standard NTSC monitors. This is quite bluish compared to some of the older designs.

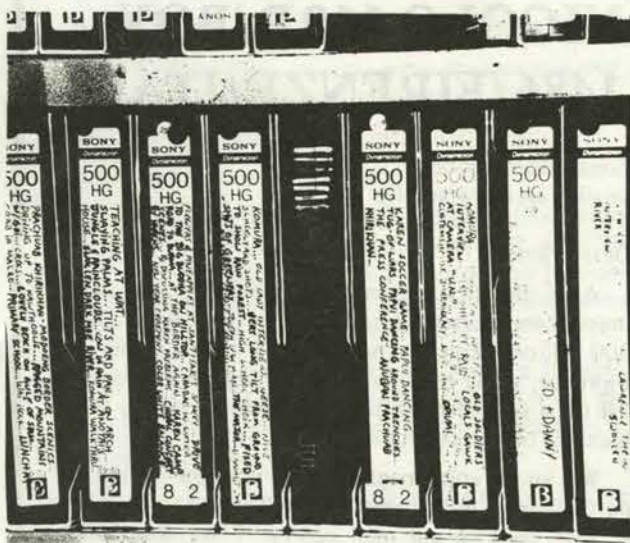
Mireds, or Reciprocal Megakelvins

By selecting the proper colour of filter to place in front of your photo camera lens, you can balance out the blue tint of the TV monitor. "Colour-correction filters" (also called "colour-compensation filters") which tone down the blue in your light source are tinted amber (the yellowish-brown of traffic lights). The "shift value" is measured in "Mireds", which stands for Micro-Reciprocal Degrees, written μR . In recent years this has also been termed Reciprocal Megakelvins, which is a mouthful, but a better description of the conversion process. This is written MK^{-1} .

To calculate the Mired value of the filter you require, divide the colour temperature of the screen into one million (10^6) and do the same for your film; then compare the two. For example, a 9300°K Pro-Feel monitor ($1,000,000/9,300 = 107.5 MK^{-1}$) shot on daylight film ($1,000,000/5,500 = 181.8$) would look best using a colour conversion filter rated at +74.3 MK^{-1} ($181.8 - 107.5$). A glance at the chart will show the closest available filters to be a Kodak 85C, Fuji LBA-8, or Kenko W8. If you have to use Tungsten (B) film for some reason, you could use a dark amber filter around +200 MK^{-1} .

COLOUR CORRECTION FILTERS

A variety of filters are available for taking photos of video. Glass filter rings, which screw onto the front of your lens, come in various sizes. They are measured by their diameter, which may well be different from the number written on the lens. For example, a 52mm filter (sometimes written O52) fits the 50mm (focal length) lens of most 35mm (film) cameras. For my old Pentax Spotmatic's 50mm lens, a 49mm diameter filter fits; except they're now hard to find, so a 52.0s set-up ring is required. If you are not sure of your lens' diameter, bring it to the shop when you buy your filters.



Printed directly from a photo

Thin, flexible, coloured gelatin or acetate filters fit in a special holder. They are mostly for larger cameras and come in several sizes. Treat these filters with special care. Always put them back in their layers of protective envelopes when finished, as they easily scratch, bend, fade, or get dirty from handling.

Consult the colour correction chart (below) to conveniently determine which is the best filter to use. The manufacturer should be able to tell you the colour-temperature of the TV monitor. It is difficult to measure the white of a picture tube with most colour-temperature meters. Moreover, my experiments have shown that even monitors with the same colour-temperature can result in photos with quite different hues and contrast (though I adjusted the colour bars by eye, at different times and places, and not with a scope). So even the scientifically correct filter does not guarantee perfect results. Some people prefer a "cool" white (bluish); others, warm tones overall. I go for skin tone, and don't mind if the jeans are not perfectly blue.

CC Filters – Daylight Film

As explained above (see "Mireds"), the most common filter for newer TV monitors is rated around +74 MK⁻¹. Higher ratings give the photo an amber tint; below that, colours and white are tinged with blue. The closest are Kodak 85C, Fuji LBA-8, Kenko W8, or other brands' filters rated at +80 MK⁻¹. If you prefer a slightly cooler filter, try a Kodak 81EF, if it's in stock. Professional photographers often recommend the 85B; but this is from the Trinitron days. At +130 MK⁻¹, it gives a warm photo with new monitors, which is acceptable. A bit closer would be the Kenko W10.

For 35mm cameras, Kenko sells a TV-CC filter made especially for shooting pictures off the TV with daylight film. Reds are a bit softer than with an amber colour-correction filter, so skin tones are less saturated. Colour balance is fine. Marumi recommends its CC F-DL, designed for using daylight film in fluorescent lighting. It gives a blue tint, but it's not bad.

CC Filters – Tungsten Film

There is no filter available for taking TV photos on Tungsten film. The closest is a Kodak 86, which gives an amber tint and is quite a dark filter. The 85B, LBA-12, or W12 all impart a noticeable blue tint.

The solution is to sandwich two amber filters together, as their effect is additive. If you combine an 85B (+131 MK⁻¹) and an +80 MK⁻¹ filter (LBA-8 or W8), the result is +212 MK⁻¹. For my Pro-Feel monitor I used a Kodak 85B (+81 MK⁻¹) with a Fuji LB 85B (+81 MK⁻¹) with a Fuji LBA-12 (+120 MK⁻¹), and the total of +201 MK⁻¹ gave fine results. One surprisingly good combination is Marumi's CCF-TB (fluorescent to Tungsten B correction filter) plus an 85B.

It is best to use daylight film to shoot pictures off a TV monitor, as the filters for doing so with Tungsten

film are quite dark (see the list below). In cases where you must use Tungsten film (such as a TV studio), use one with a high ISO (ASA) rating.

CC Filters – EV

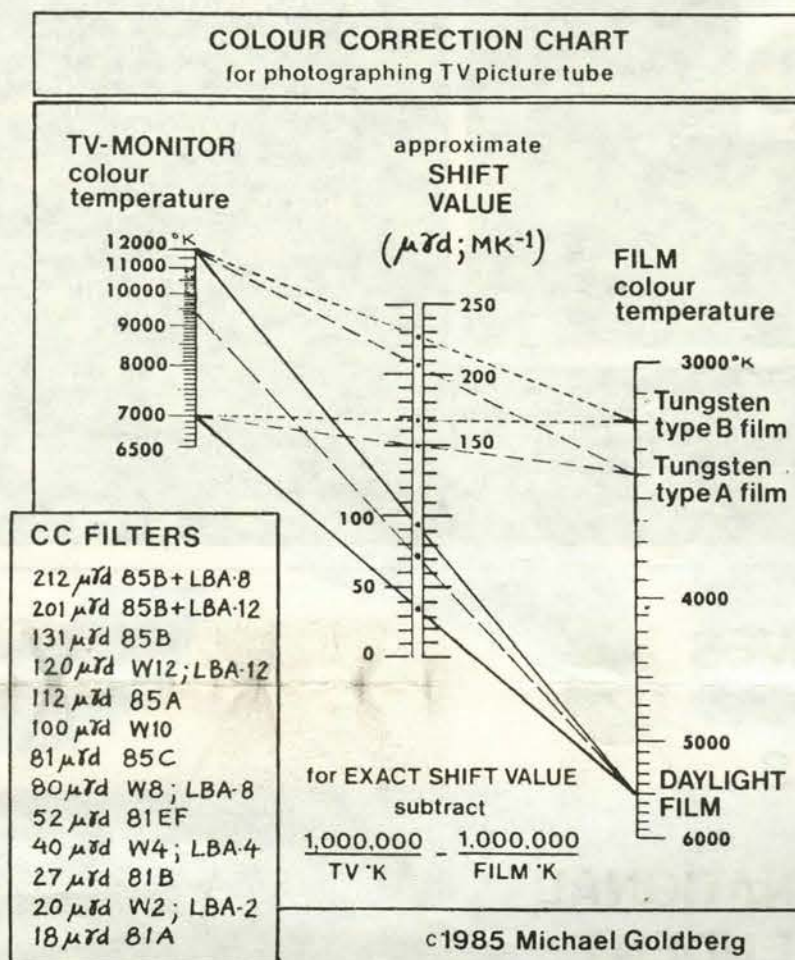
Colour Correction Filters diminish the amount of light entering the camera. Depending on which filter(s) you are using, you will have to compensate by increasing the exposure value (EV), by opening up the lens somewhat and/or slowing the shutter speed. For photos off the monitor, the former is most common. You can also use a higher speed film. (See also the EV chart in the EXPOSURE section in an upcoming installment in this series.) A list of some common filters (in Japan, where I live) follows; for others ask your dealer or the maker.

Kenko CC Filters: TVCC (1 stop); W2 (¼ stop); W4 (½ stop); W8 (¾ stop); W10 (1 stop); W12 (1½ stops).

Marumi CC Filters: 81A (1/3 stop); 81B (1/3 stop); 85A (1.2 stops); 85B (1.2 stops); F-DL (1.2 stops); F-TB (1.2 stops).

Kodak CC Filters: 81A (1/3 stop); 81B (1/3 stop); 85 (2/3 stop); 85A (2/3 stop); 85C (1/3 stop).

Fuji CC Filters: LBA-2 (1/3 stop); LBA-4 (1/3 stop); LBA-8 (2/3 stop); LBA-12 (2/3 stop).



VIDEO ART



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Kulturhuset – the cultural centre of the City of Stockholm – is initiating a large international festival of video art. The purpose is to present to the Swedish and Scandinavian public the developments in video art since the Korean Nam June Paik realised his first video installation in the early sixties. Kulturhuset will demonstrate through glimpses of its history that video art is an independent art form which has established an undebatable cultural platform throughout the world.

In Kulturhuset the audience and the Swedish video artists will be given the opportunity to meet those pioneers of video art that have been its central figures since the beginning – live, by tape, and in programmes and performances.

The Art Department will present an exhibition, VIDEO-ART-VIDEO, during two months from October 25th in which some of the world's most prominent artists will create video installations on the spot – Nam June Paik, Shigeo Kubota, Wolf Vostell, Ulrike Rosenback, Rebecca

Horn, Brian Eno, Yann Nguyen Minh. In cooperation with the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris plans are being made to present a workshop/exhibition dealing with children and video.

The Program Department will arrange the Stockholm International Art Festival during the first week in November. During the festival there will be presentations of a selection of Scandinavian and international video art films, portraits of video artists, and other diverse video art programmes.

Preliminary plans include the following programmes:
THE HISTORY OF VIDEO ART – A retrospective from the beginnings of video art. Jean Paul Trefois from the RTBF in Liege is a producer for a television show in Belgium that deals exclusively with video art. He will be responsible for selecting historical examples of video art.

THEATRE, DANCE AND PERFORMANCE ON VIDEO – Michael Laub from Belgium, video artist, artistic director of Remote Control Productions and one of the artistic advisers of the festival will present a representative selection.

CC Filters – Sheets

In some situations where you need to photograph a TV set as well as the room around it, a lens filter may not be appropriate. Fuji sells colour correction filter sheets 25cm x 30cm (approx. 10" x 12"), which adequately fit over the faceplate of up to a 15" diagonal monitor (12" is more common). Available are their LBA-8 (+80 MK⁻¹) and LBA-16 (+160 MK⁻¹); unfortunately they are not always in stock. Larger sizes can be specially ordered, but this is costly. Ryudensha makes rolls of amber filter, 1M 37cm x 6M 78cm (4'6" wide and 22'3" long). A6 is rated at 112 MK⁻¹, high for daylight film; A7 is 131 MK⁻¹. Kodak makes only small sheets of 85B (125mm x 125mm); larger surfaces can be ordered, but are expensive and take time. You could try light amber filter rolls of the kind used for theatre lighting (e.g., ReFilter, made in England), but colour balance will not be perfect.

For reshooting off the monitor in the TV studio, using the Tungsten (indoor) setting of their TV cameras, NHK (Japan's national TV system) uses slightly modified Pro-Feel monitors with A5 filter sheeting on the faceplate. This is a good hint both for shooting off the screen in a room with studio (Tungsten) lighting using a video camera or a film camera (using Tungsten B film).

KULTURHUSET

SCANDINAVIAN VIDEO ART – A presentation of the best Scandinavian video productions formulated by Nordiskt Konstcentrum in Helsinki.

A SELECTION OF INTERNATIONAL AND SCANDINAVIAN VIDEO ART FILMS – Video artists will be invited to send in video tapes for presentation during the festival. Two juries, one for Scandinavian and one for international material will be responsible for selections, coordinated by Peter Meyer.

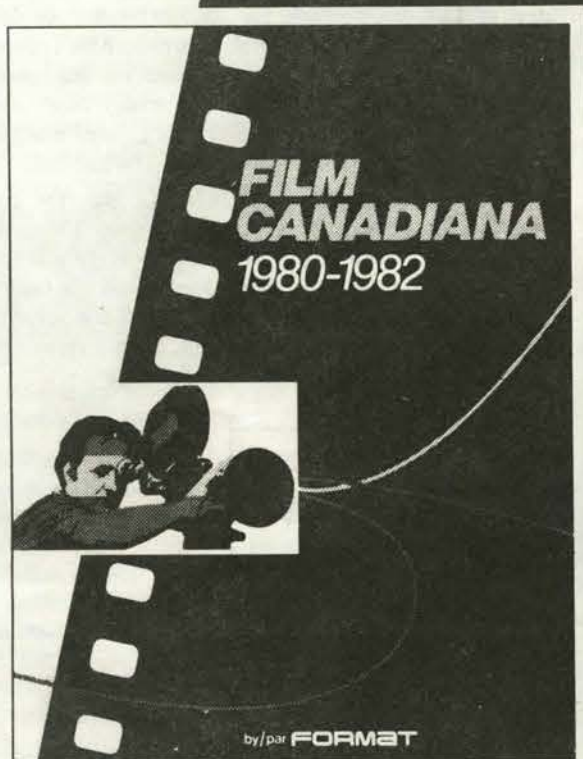
PORTRAITS OF VIDEO ARTISTS – Invited video artists, for example Marina Abramovic-Ulay, will present their own work through showings, lectures, and discussions.

The video manifestation will be produced in cooperation with the Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm, Fylkingen, Remote Control Productions Stockholm, RTBF in Liege (Belgium's french language television channel), Nordiskt Konstcentrum in Helsinki, Finland, Video Nu and the Dramatiska Institutet, Stockholm, as well as the Swedish Television – Channel II.



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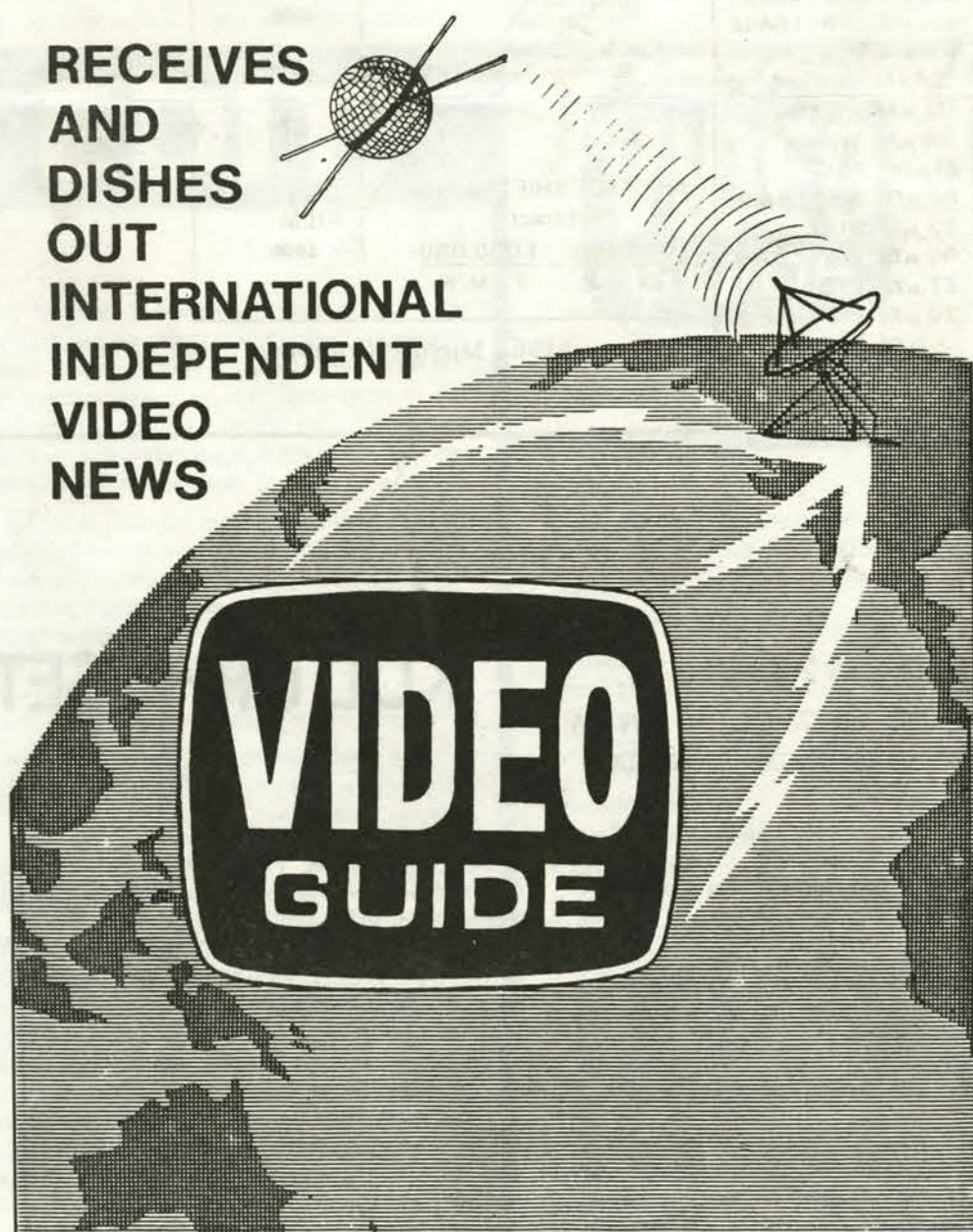
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