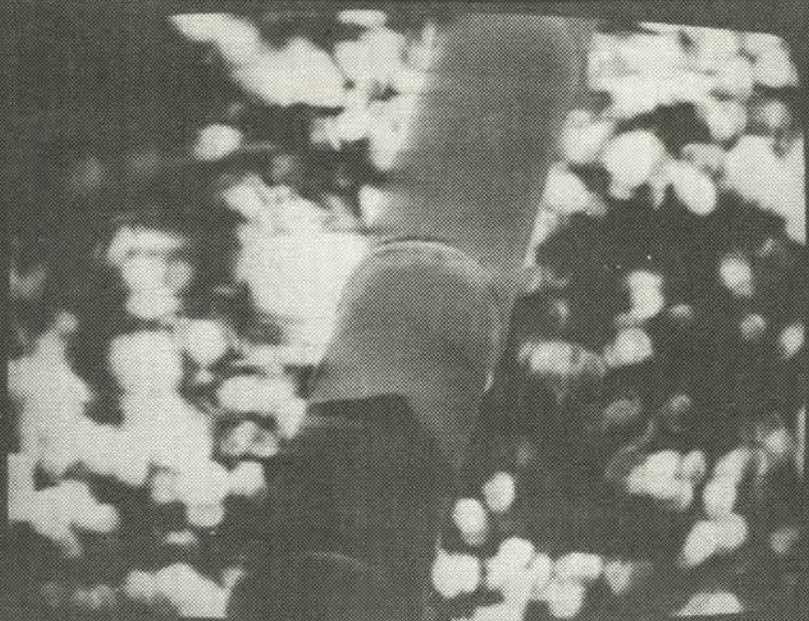
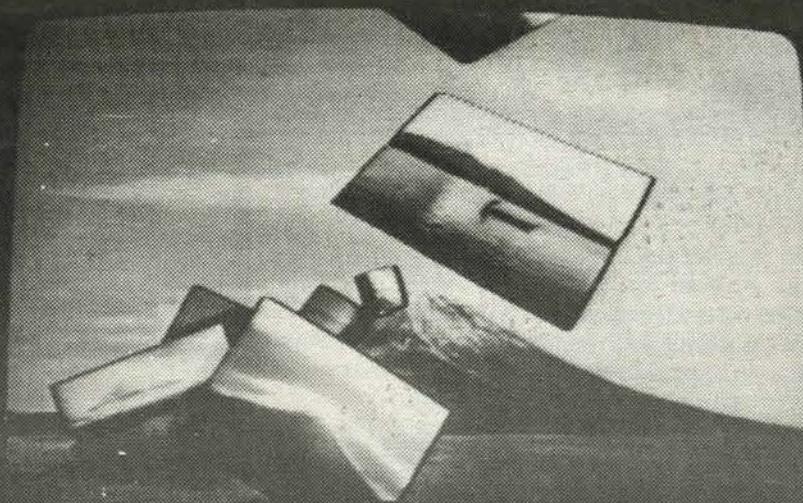
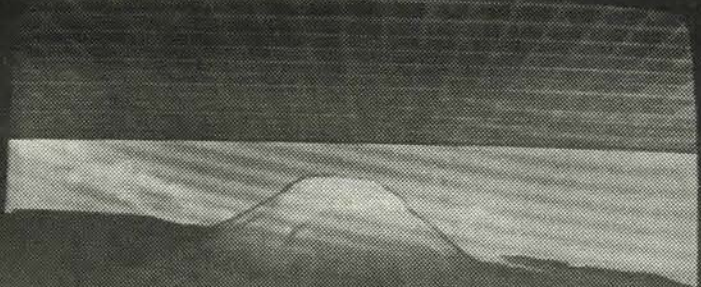
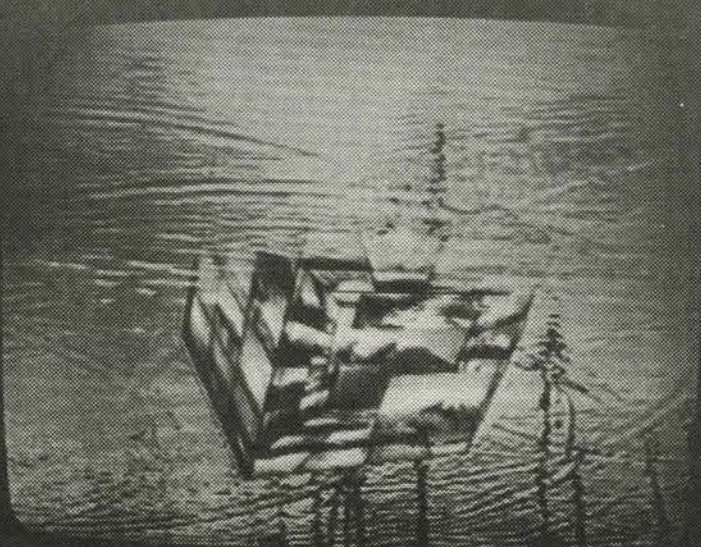
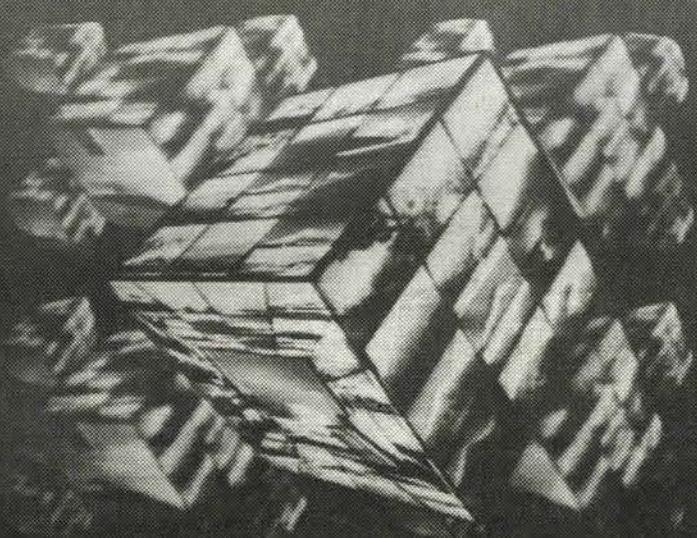
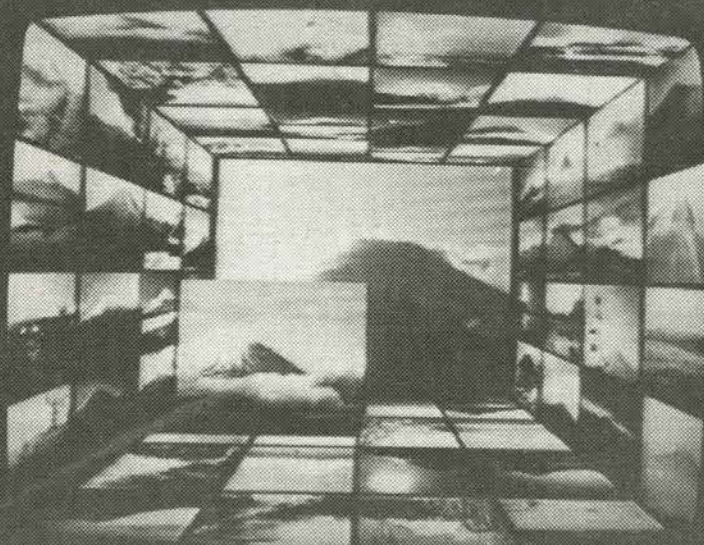


VIDEO GUIDE

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VIDEOTAPE STUDY

In past issues we have covered care of videotape, shipping, etc. We will go over the most important points again, but for details please see Vol. 6, No. 3 and Vol. 6, No. 4.

In this article we will first go into VHS 1/2" tapes. While brand names will be covered, it's important to note that these conclusions are based on North American tapes. Tape stock will often vary depending on where it is made and how it is shipped and stored.

Price of tape is a factor that everyone will consider at some time or another when buying blank tapes. Generally, the more you pay for a blank tape, the better the tape is. One of the things you pay for is the brand name of the tape. Bigger companies have more to protect. One of the downfalls of this is the recent sales promotion of different grades of tape for any one manufacturing company. Within the last year or two, a company may have put out four or more grades of tapes. These range from the normal (home use) to "pro", "Hi-Fi", and "high grade" (professional use).

But before we consider the tape, it is important to talk about equipment. Equipment is VERY important. One can only get maximum quality from a tape if you have good equipment. Most home models will not give you this quality, so I'm assuming that you're using industrial machines. A few of the other things important about getting the best quality are tape length, speed, and how clean your machines are.

Tape length is very important. The rule here is that the shorter the tape, the better off you are. It would be good to stick with tapes no longer than the 120's. Tape speed is also relevant. For quality it's important to use only the slower speed — the slower the better. Generally manufacturers' specs are done at the slowest speed. Now let's hope we don't have to remind you how impor-

tant it is for your machines to be clean.

Now getting back to tape stock. Brands which do not carry the VHS or Beta logos are not licenced to carry them. Stay away from them. Tapes which carry the logos have to pass minimum quality standards. This assures you of some quality. In the last few years, because of competition, the overall quality of tapes in general has improved. One of the main problems with this is that the choices of grades and brands have increased as well.

From most people's experiences, bad tapes come in batches, so if you have one bad tape out of a batch, go through the rest very carefully. This is another good reason to buy a brand name — if you get a bad batch, returning the tapes will be much easier.

Now for some general information on tapes. The first thing to remember is never rely on the beginning and end of tapes. The dropout rate on most tapes is higher at the beginning and end of tapes. Some manufacturers make tapes a little longer to make up for this. When a brand name company makes several grades of tapes, the standard is generally standard, and higher grades change depending on what it is they are promoting.

On the subject of brands, the following information has to do with our experience with batches in North America. Later on we'll report from a European perspective. I'll have to generalize a little because detail would take up too much space. Sony, TDK, and Scotch are most reliable. Their standard tapes are as good as most other brands' higher grades. TDK pulls ahead in the audio department; however Sony tends to be the better standard tape is you don't need the extra quality in sound. Scotch pulls ahead in their higher grade tapes. But if the sound/audio is important to you, TDK is for you. The standard tape is good, and the Hi-Fi and pro are better.

As far as other brands go, JVC grades are OK and JVC seems to care a little more about the sound than others do. Memorex standard is OK, but you're not getting the extra when you pay for top of the line tape. Panasonic has a higher dropout rate than most, but you usually can't see it with a dropout compensator. Their higher grades do improve. Polaroid, RCA, BASF, Fuji, Kodak, SKC, Maxwell, Konica, and Quasar all put out standard tapes that are OK for general use. Again, beginning and end have high dropout. Higher grades in these tapes have good and bad points — your use would determine your tape brand. In most of these tapes, the higher grade dropout rate lowers, but rarely does the audio get better.

Now to get into what tapes are like in Europe. While most of the experience we have comes from tapes sent to us, we are also using the notes of Norbert Nowotsch. Sony comes up again with the best dropout rates. Fuji and BASF standard have high dropout rates. TDK has good rating there. The higher grades of Scotch and Memorex and Fuji are better.

In the past we have had problems with higher density tape sticking together as it gets older, so we stay away from it for archival purposes. As long as a tape is played every once in awhile, this will help keep it from sticking.

One of the basic techniques we use is to fast forward and rewind the tape to line it up to the machine before playing or recording it. Care of tape when moving it around becomes important. Shipping and mailing tapes presents a problem. Damage to edges of tapes is the main problem caused by machines. This is especially serious for the Hi-Fi users, because the companies cram the two tracks on the edge of the tape. Therefore, any damage to the edge can result in a difference between the right and left channels. Hi-Fi users with problems with the right channel can suspect tape damage.

EDIT

We would like to welcome you to this issue — Volume 7, Number 5, Issue 35. 1986 brings us to many exciting issues and projects for the Satellite Video Exchange Society. One of the first points is that 1986 brings *Video Guide* into its eighth year of publishing. While we have made many changes and improvements, 1986 looks even better.

Up coming issues will include an article on the east coast touring video show "Life Like It". This tour starts in late March and with luck will make it out to the west coast by late April or early May.

This issue we have a very visual look at what is going on in Japan with computer graphics. From Japan, we return to our home country and look at the recent show "Phosphorous Diode", on computer/graphic Video Art in Canada.

There are some changes in our next deadlines to accommodate the rotating editors. The new deadlines for future issues are January 30, March 15, June 15, August 30, and October 15. Please address all correspondence to The Editorial Board, Video Guide, 261 Powell Street, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6A 1G3 or call (604) 688-4336. With the help of an international scope of contributors, we can have a broad range of views, interviews, and reviews.

We are in the process of putting our mailing lists/subscriptions on computer, so please check your issue expiry date and renew promptly. We hope this process will be easier on all of us.

The Best for the New Year.

Shawn Preus,
for the Satellite Video Exchange Society

VIDEO GUIDE

Vancouver's Video Magazine
Volume 7, Number 5 Issue 35

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VANCOUVER GUIDE

INTERVIEW: SARA DIAMOND

by Lisa Hebert

Heroics opened in Vancouver at the Convertible Showroom as part of the "Voice Over" show in late September, 1985. This follows installations in Halifax and Toronto, and a shorter version of the tape which has shown in New York, Amsterdam, and Vienna.

A few days after the bustle of the opening, the setting was subdued and reflective. Three monitors play continuously in three different environments as over thirty women tell stories about events in their lives that took courage. In three corners of the room, three faces flicker and three voices talk at the same time. In front of each monitor, one to three people sit. After their tape finishes and they quiet down the hiss of their monitor, suddenly there is a thoughtful silence. Instead of starting another tape, two people may begin to talk, sparked by the stories they've just heard. Though not everyone stays for the full three and a half hours, *Heroics* is certainly an event that received broad participation.

Producer/director Sara Diamond attempts to strengthen feminist work by documenting women's experiences through stories. In concept and context it must be classified as an art work, rather than documentary, though *Heroics* brings the two elements together.

This work continues Diamond's interest in documenting oral history. At the same time it grapples with dominant culture's representation of heroism, viewed most blatantly in the mass media.

Diamond says her motivation for this piece originated in general from the sense of struggle that B.C. women displayed during the political fightback of 1983. It is not bound in that particular event — or in the feminist community for that matter. The audience hears tales that range from childhood, to breaking up with a boyfriend, to surviving on the street. Because of the rather epic size of this project, it is not possible to characterize the stories. I didn't feel that all of the women were all that heroic, but then I suppose that is Diamond's intent. The work excels at its ability to legitimize and awaken audience as participant, in the notion of heroic experience. Other stories brought me to places where I would never want to be, and the effect is a sense of awe at the power of those women's survival.

The following are excerpts of an interview with Sara Diamond.

Lisa Hebert: What do you mean when you talk about redefining heroism?

Sara Diamond: The definition that I was working with is never directly referred to except by some of the speakers. It's the mass media idea of the heroic man who triumphs courageously in a physical, macho way, saves people's lives, never shows any emotion or feeling, and essentially does great acts, leading his people into a situation of betterment. What I was interested in is definitions of women that both correspond and conflict with that. . . . I thought it would be valuable to talk to women about experiences in their lives where essentially they had been powerful, survived, and somehow managed to make it

through. So I collected interviews that gave that kind of sense.

LH: How were the women chosen?

SD: Originally I put together a somewhat tongue and cheek ad that went out. The ad gave some standard definitions of heroism from dictionaries and mass media situations and encouraged women to approach me and arrange to tell their stories. I went to different places . . . announced what I was doing and tried to talk to people about it. People told me about their friends; I contacted them. Then I went out and very consciously found people from different groups that I knew would not be represented through . . . (my) survey. For example, I contacted the Canadian Farmworkers Union and a number of women were found by them who could talk about their experience. I didn't want it to be a white series of tapes, and didn't want it to talk about just a certain strata of society within the feminist community. I just really tried to get some kind of cross section. It's not a sociologically accurate piece of work, but in a way it uses some of those social history or scientific methods to try and ask the same kinds of questions to different people and then look at their responses in some kind of consistent way. But it doesn't pretend to be all there is to know about women and their struggles with power or whatever.

LH: Everyone who volunteered was included, right? The participants bridge fairly middle class perceptions of heroism to real social or racial struggles. Why didn't you choose certain women who would be more heroic in your mind than others?

SD: I wanted to validate a whole range of women's experiences. I think that middle class women experience battering and sexual harassment, and things they have to struggle through to survive. There are women in society who I believe are more oppressed, and some of them are in the tapes. I think the power of their stories really does speak for itself. I tried to give people fairly equal time and allow the viewer to make the judgement. But I think that just by collecting I make my own decisions. I did edit for coherency; the work is quite heavily edited. . . . Most people's stories are reduced from as much as 15 to 30 minutes to about 4 to 5 minutes.

LH: But you decided not to eliminate any of the women, right?

SD: Right. Everyone who was interested in telling a story was included. It was a rule I made for myself because if you're doing that kind of research as a sociologist or historian, you would include (all) those stories. Some people found each story representative. People spoke to me who've seen the work, and everyone has been mentioned at some point by the audience. Hopefully that connection or identification makes *Heroics* accessible.

LH: Some people have questioned the use of still photography. Why did you use stills? Were they just to cover edits?

SD: (laughs) When I was putting it together, I shot black and white stills in the studio at various points in the interview. . . . I wanted to have a way of distancing the viewer from the narrative text. I wanted people on one

hand to get engaged and drawn in; on the other hand, be pulled back and have to look at the story as a story. I used colour stills from people's lives in part because it's video, to cover edit points because I didn't want to have jump cuts, and in part because I thought it would be a way of strengthening and building the narrative.

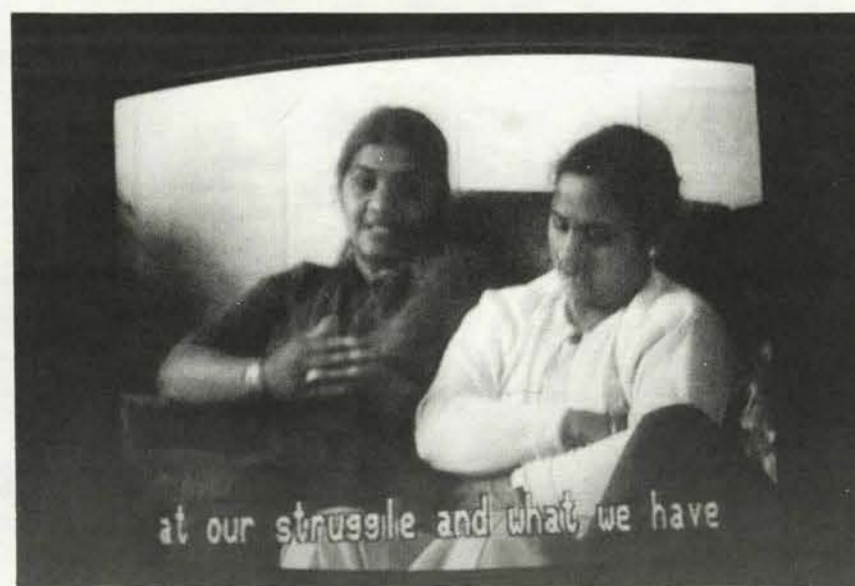
LH: Let's talk about the environment which I felt was a bit artificial or traditional. For example aren't the pink tea cups in the kitchen in conflict with the whole idea of setting new ground? How do you see that?

SD: There were three sets which people had a choice of being in: one was a living room environment, the second was a kitchen, and the third was a kind of performance or open space. I chose those environments because I thought they correspond to places where women passed on information, passed on history and told stories, or were heroic. So there's the external world which can be seen as the performance environment; the living room which is kind of formal and kind of social; and the kitchen which is very intimate and where women often teach their daughters about things. I chose the grey and pink setting because they're the new colours. And they are also colours which correspond to femininity, softness, and those ideas about women. What I wanted to do was to create a traditional setting in which the power of the stories, which are often about breaking traditional situations in women's lives, would carry forth through the environment. So it was shot in that situation, and in the installation I recreated those three environments. My idea was that those stories would rupture that sense of enclosure, and I actually think they do. I also wanted the monitors, the voices, to be in the environments in which they were shot, so that the viewer, who actually sits in that environment, in each of the settings is sitting around the kitchen table or in the living room, is being told and is interacting with the story. Finally, I wanted it to be clearly a representation. People have to see that the monitor is speaking, not the person in the story. The reason it's a pristine, perfect environment, the kind of Better Homes and Gardens kind of feeling, is that I think that is what we are sold. That's what we are taught that as women we're supposed to create. And yet our lives very seldom correspond to that reality. By creating that enclosed perfect environment, on one hand it makes people comfortable, on the other hand it makes them profoundly uncomfortable because the stories are in conflict with that.

LH: You see the audience as participant, then.

SD: Oh yeah. One of the things I like about the installation is that sometimes when it's relatively quiet, women and men who are sitting there will start to talk about their own experiences. Each tape ends with the question, "Are you a heroine?" . . . It asks men to think in the feminine sense of power, and women to look to their own strengths and experience. People actually sit around and talk in the gallery. For me as the artist, that's really exciting. The audience is in the environment, directly interacting.

Lisa worked in the production of *Heroics*, along with a number of other people, in a technical capacity.



What is a hero/heroine?

VIDEO



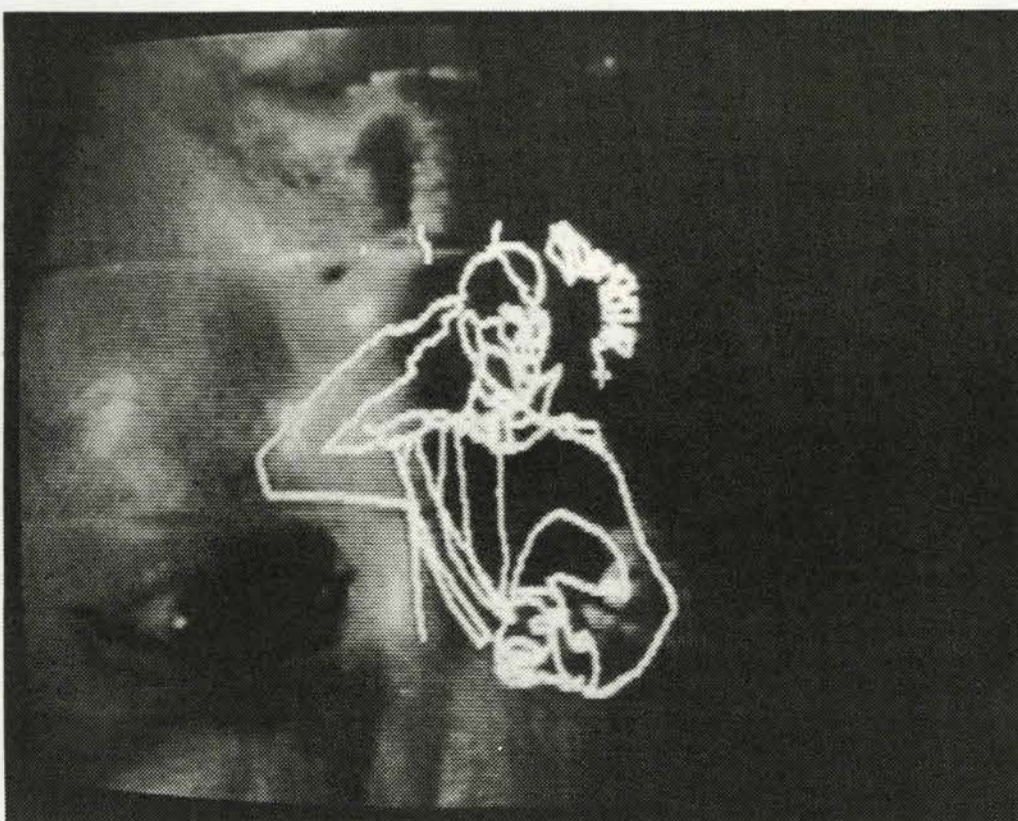
"Urbano 7" by Miguel Raymond/Bill Vorn

"Technological art always begins as a low budget romance. Awkward foreplay is filled with charm, passion, and anticipation."

As this was the opening remark of the catalogue, I read it as somewhat of a disclaimer, going into the show with an added degree of suspicion. To be fair though, the Phosphorous Diode show served us with the perfect cross-section of all that is being done with the new technology in this field, with its present application to video art. The focus of the program was on the extent to which video artists have accessed and incorporated the current technical capacity of electronic image manipulation. Given that the lure of digital/computer technology quickly gives way to seduction and, ultimately, the wholesale lapse into cliché (most notable in the commercial context), the program was diverse and interesting, and above all, made an admirable attempt at avoiding the present glut of clichéd images.

Opening the evening was Vancouver-based artist Glen Patterson's *Salmon*. Well packaged, this piece displayed a technical virtuosity the likes of which I've never seen outside of the commercial market. Quite simply, the tape documents the life cycle of salmon in gorgeous hues of red and orange with hollow, synthetically emaciated silver salmon darting through the screen. Unless I've missed the point entirely, it seems to me that *Salmon* is on equal footing with the post-corporate boardroom painting of Toni Onley. However, in the context of the show this work stood out far above the rest and easily bridged the gap that often separates the high tech proponents from the "artists".

Next we had Liz VanderZaag's *Red Notion*. Following *Salmon*, the seemingly sub-standard production techniques



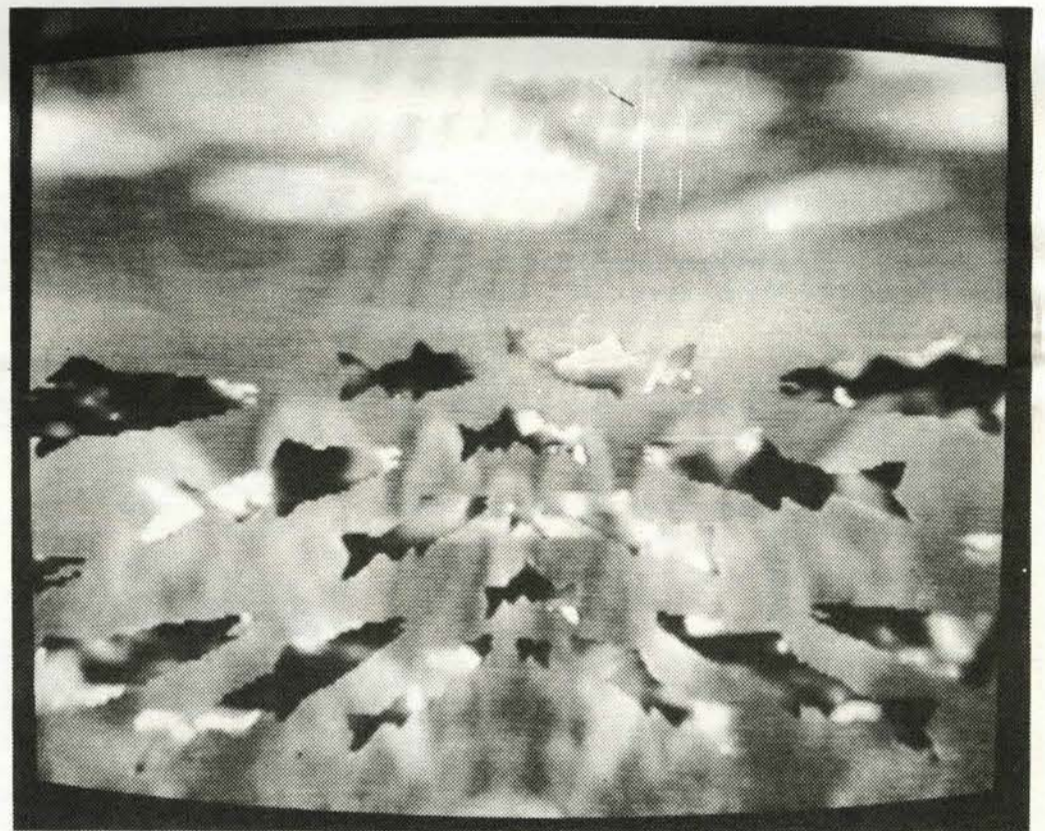
"Heart of Darkness" by John Mitchell

PHOSPHOROUS

made themselves glaringly obvious. Hand held street scenes seemed to miss their mark entirely. They appeared awkward and out of place, especially considering their inclusion alongside some comparatively sophisticated electronic effects. The piece also held the distinction of being the first tape of the evening to bombard us with those trite scenes of missiles in flight juxtaposed with images of a nice, clean, suburban existence. Here, we get said footage of missiles acting as a backdrop to the shapes of squeaky clean, brightly coloured, and, ultimately, faceless human figures. I had seen stills of this video displayed on the walls of the Montgomery Cafe some time ago. Perhaps that is where they would have the most impact.

Urbano 7, a pleasant three minute visual assault by Miguel Raymond, was highly impressive in its conveyance of the inner city as a maelstrom of technology — notably in the public transit department — meshing with the world of the awkward pedestrian. Turbulent rush hour street scenes all aglow and spinning into one another are extremely effective. Three minutes is an appropriate time length though, especially considering the steady state of visual turmoil the viewer is subjected to. Not unpleasant turmoil this; those of us living in the city's core are well acquainted with it. Tedium might ensue, however, if this piece ran over, say, five minutes. But then maneuvering about town during rush hour IS tedious.

Ardele Lister's vision of *Hell* clocked in at 17 minutes as the evening's longest piece. We were presented with a



"Salmon" by Glenn Patterson

baffled parade of "losers" and "sinners" (need I separate the two, myself being a "bad" British Columbian?) who were then subjected to imprisonment in an institution of electronic abuse. Their crime? Why, refusing to embrace and assimilate the new technology and make it a working part of their daily existence of course! The faces of the victims are stored in walls of video monitors, then twisted and churned through a series of frame treatments that distort and disfigure their features. A clever and amusing premise, and one that works well over the course of its length. There is more to it, of course, but one is given a good idea of what can be done *within* the confines of the video monitor.

By far the worst video of the show, on every level, was *Heart of Darkness* by John Mitchell. Pirated footage and dialogue from *Apocalypse Now* is given a very flakey treatment with the artist, in time (more or less, usually less) with Martin Sheen, equating life as "the-poor-downtrodden-Calgary-artist-waiting-for-his-grant" with that of Sheen's character in the movie. Obviously this is meant as a joke. It fails miserably. Now and again we are given a glimpse of the artist in this "environment" (no napalm here) and throughout the duration of this little joke, a poorly executed electronic line drawing of what appears to be a dishevelled soldier in mock salute — with bottle by his side — and XXOXX (huggs and hisses?) in the lower right hand corner. I have seen far more impressive computer drawings recently — and ones done live, at

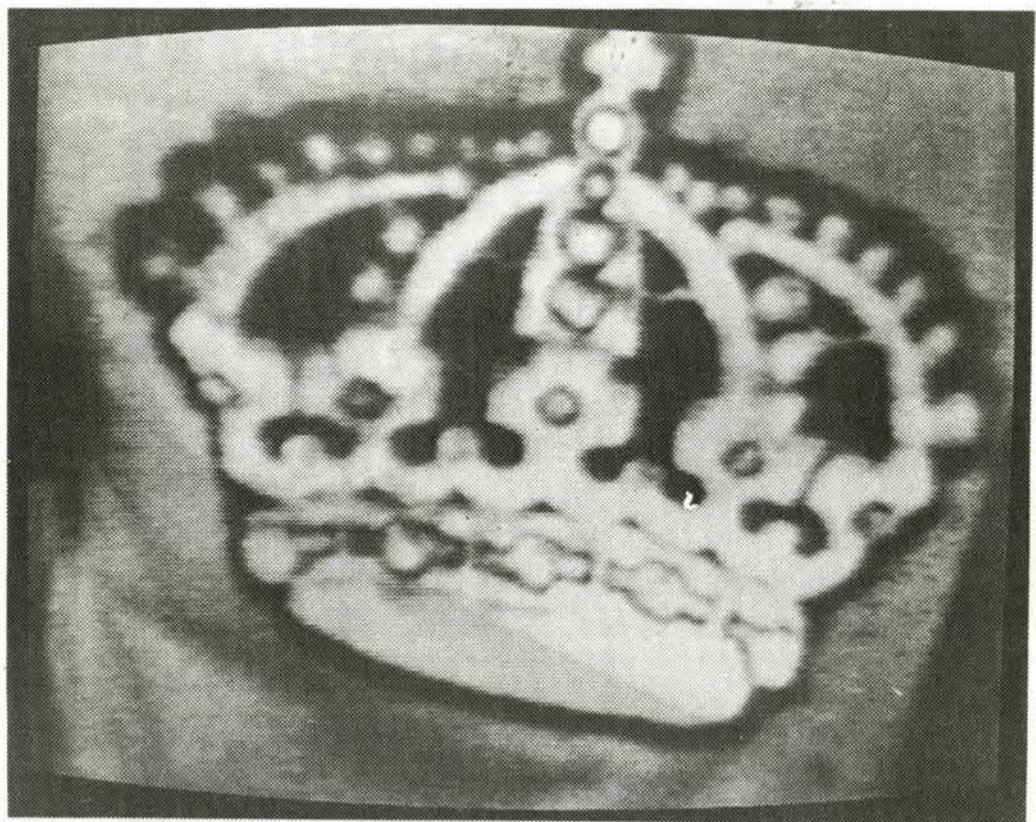
DIODE: REVIEW

by Mark Mushet

that. A much better example of this technique could easily have been found for the show.

The three works that followed struck me as being quite unremarkable. *Granpere's Greatest Hits* by Chris Mullington and Ed Eagen begins with a still shot of an older man playing fiddle, with an appropriate soundtrack. The still is then given a variety of treatments that were easily overshadowed by some of the previous tapes. Robin Len and Pierre Zouile, on the other hand, chose to flirt with the boundaries (!) between art and rock video. Both artists sought to entertain with a barrage of effects that seemed to float free of any commitment to an underlying theme or idea. Entertaining, yes, but on the whole, I'd rather watch Muchmusic. (It was here that the question of music soundtracks to art video became most pressing. I can't believe how many "art" videos are accompanied by hopelessly hackneyed electro-pop soundtracks. Chintzy rhythm machines keeping 4/4 time while some proudly untrained musician tinkles on a cheap analog synthesizer is not, and never will be, acceptable as art. Nor will the wholesale theft of other people's work be endearing to an integrity-conscious audience of art video. Before we digress a bit much though . . .)

On the atmospheric side of things, Rick Raxlen's *Divine Right* evoked the most sombre mood of the evening. Slowly paced, *Divine Right* is an entrancing



"Divine Right" by Rick Raxlen

years ago, *Racetrack* by Geoffrey Shea and Robin Len hit home. The spectacle of horseracing really does attract some pathetic characters and this video does a marvelous job of reminding me just how lonely and desperate those characters can be, especially when one has to put up with the depressing environment from day to day. Then again, that's MY slant on the subject. Some might find it charming and introspective. Whatever the case, the electronic treatments of the footage were minimal and not that impressive next to some of the more accomplished works seen earlier.

Oddly enough, the oldest piece (1982) was used to finish the program. Jane Wright's *Lake Huron Birds* proved to be rather anti-climactic. Now, I understand that video technology has hit the sky in comparison to its state three years ago — it's the same with all aspects of communications technology — but stratified colour treatments haphazardly applied to scenes of birds on tide's edge strikes me as being prime material for the ambient video category.

Despite my differences with approximately half of the evening's program, Phosphorous Diode can only be described as a complete success. The question of artist access to high technology in this field was adequately resolved with some of the more polished works, most notably *Salmon* as well as the works of those forced to innovate for lack of such access, being shown without bias. Variety and a common resolve to address the issue of image manipulation, in light of the state of the art, has this showing ranking as one of the best I've ever seen. With charm and passion? Anticipation is riding high for a tremendous climax come the next installment of Phosphorous Diode.

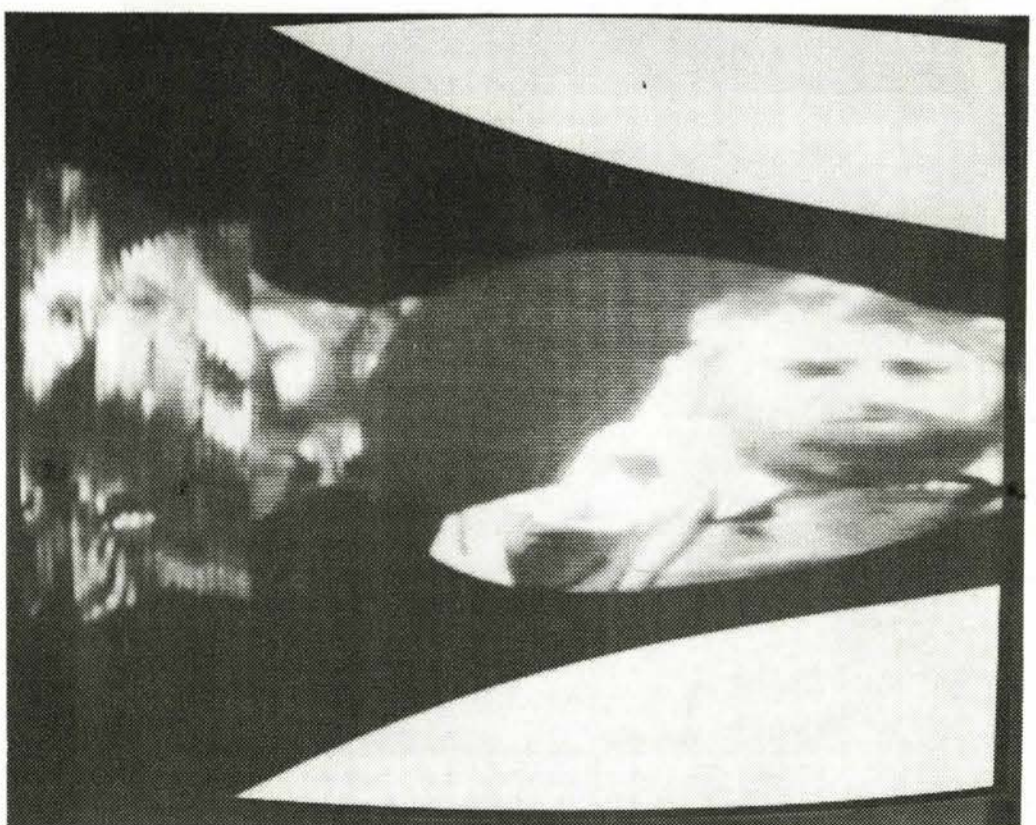


"Dr. A. Mok's Brain Waves" by Pierre Zouile

piece that pits obscured orangeish washes of what looks to be the inside of a warehouse space, against a calm narration on the divine right of kings and the manner in which an impotent old king was put out to die. An ancient theme juxtaposed with images of a claustrophobic urban existence. A beautiful and engrossing video, if not dazzling in its use of current effects.

The title *Technology Knows No Sacred Cows* holds much promise, but this piece, by Corry Wyngaarden, approaches the theme on a literal level. In all its glory, the Cow being milked. Stainless steel machines with rubber hoses draining the beast for all she's worth so that we, patient consumers, may have something to sprinkle on our Mr. T cereal each morning. The frame is moved about the screen and zeros in on the udder with a darker matte obscuring the rest of the scene. Variations on this occur to the strains of a tune by Detroit funk band, Was, Not Was. (I'd much prefer some comic narration to this beat obsession that permeates the visual arts scene.) The effects seemed a bit awkward in that the transitions from scene to scene with effects were not all that smooth, but I very much like the idea of presenting an image and needling one aspect of it with a "spotlight" inner frame while the rest of the scene is shown in a different light, as it were. I felt that this technique would have greater impact given a more inflammatory subject matter. I daren't venture a guess as to what the cow is meant to represent.

Having worked at Exhibition Park Race Track some



"Hell" by Ardele Lister

HEROICS: Video Installation by Sara



Someone who decides to do something in spite of the odds.
— Chryse Gibson



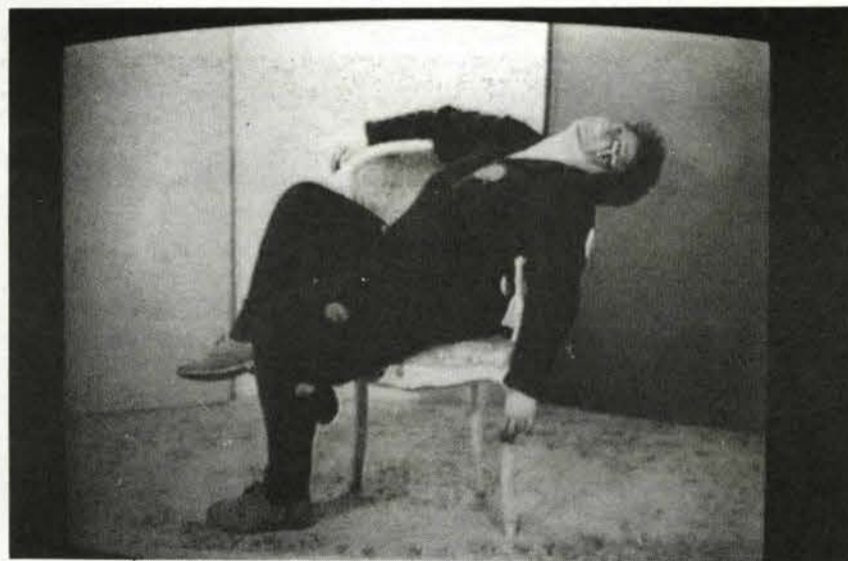
Someone who is willing to do something even though she knows that she'll face a lot of obstacles and difficulties . . . she's willing to confront these difficulties to do what she thinks is right for herself and society.
— Yvonne Diamond



For me a heroine or a hero . . . is someone who does things that are risky, that are dangerous, maybe not simply physically dangerous, but personally dangerous, things that are very frightening, knowing that they are afraid, and does those things not out of liberal altruism, but out of a clear and certain sense that there is work to be done, there is something real going on, there is a movement of people out there . . .
— Frances Wasserlein



. . . A sense of someone who goes through obstacles, often trials, in order to achieve some goal or purpose . . . which is a very literary definition. I now have an alternate definition which is more of a sense of a quest that goes throughout my whole life or a woman's life in which we struggle to find a real sense of sense and to engage with the world that we live in.
— Janet Patterson



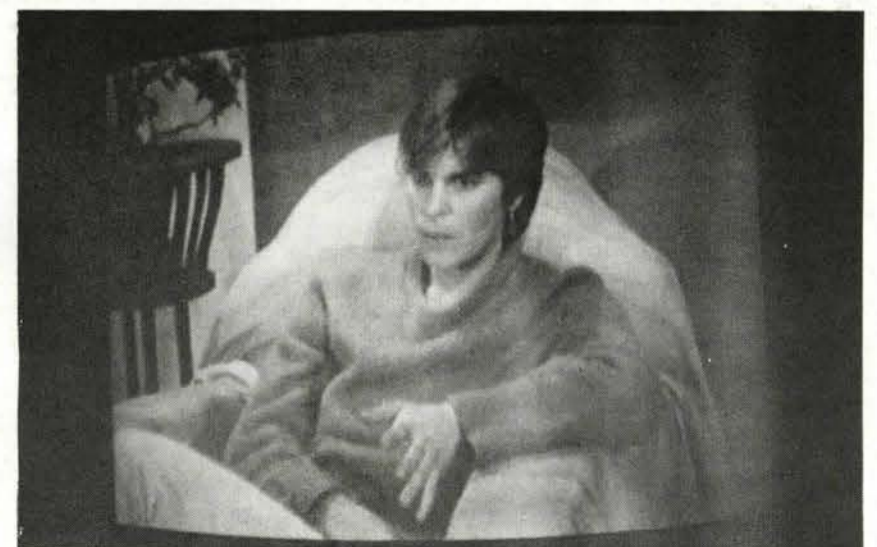
My idea of heroic is when everybody can live out the potential of their role . . . when anyone can say, "I'm the fucking queen, too."
— Lorna Boschman



I know how I feel about bravery. Bravery to me is living up to your principles in a real crunch.
— Shulah Leonard



Heros/heroines are all those people who ever put themselves on the line . . . They were on a picketline, they had no rights and faced the bosses and the police on the picket line that were colluding. They had just themselves to work with, all those people. . .
— Fruma Sloan



It's a person who gives little or no thought to their own well-being, safety, or comfort and puts out energy for someone else.
— Charlotte Paquette

Diamond WHAT IS A HERO/HEROINE?



You only know it in retrospect. . . where you look back and say, "My God, when I was fifteen I went to school and I was pregnant." That's a really heroic thing to have done. At that time I didn't have any concept of what I was doing, I was just doing it from a survival place.
— Anita Tremblay



I don't have heroes or heroines . . . I've spent most of my life doing my best to be really self-sufficient of necessity . . . when you live your life like that. . . No, I don't go much beyond myself for inspiration.
— Nicki Hockley



It must be someone who I think is important, myself, because heroes and heroines are pretty individual.
— Veronica Butler



Someone who attempts to change things and who has a fairly moral idea, not in any religious context of how human life should be and can be.
— Pogo Sage



Someone who stands up and comes out in the front. Yes. We want to be heroes. . . We feel that we are heroes but it depends on the outcome of the case. If we do get certification at some point that will be even better. . .
— Canadian Farmworkers Union, Hoss Farm



I have a bit of a problem with the concept, because it brings to mind coming through moments of great danger and I think it's more a question of enduring, especially for women, more than one act of courage.
— Sherry Hillman



An example: I was really pleased to be part of a workshop put on by the B.C. Council of Carpenters for their tradeswomen. One sister was telling us about having to climb a very high pole to do her work and this job of work was done day after day by the men on the job site, and when she did it the whole job site shut down and there was silence while all the guys watched her go up that pole. To me that's a heroine.
— Betty Merrall



It has to do with choices, making choices. One of the things that I was thinking about when you called was that you might have wanted me to talk about being in a wheelchair and how that requires a certain amount of bravery. In fact, I don't consider that to be the case at all because it doesn't involve a choice. You have two options, you go for it or you don't, so that doesn't count. I'm not sure what does. . . I'm not sure I ever have been . . .
— Joan Meister

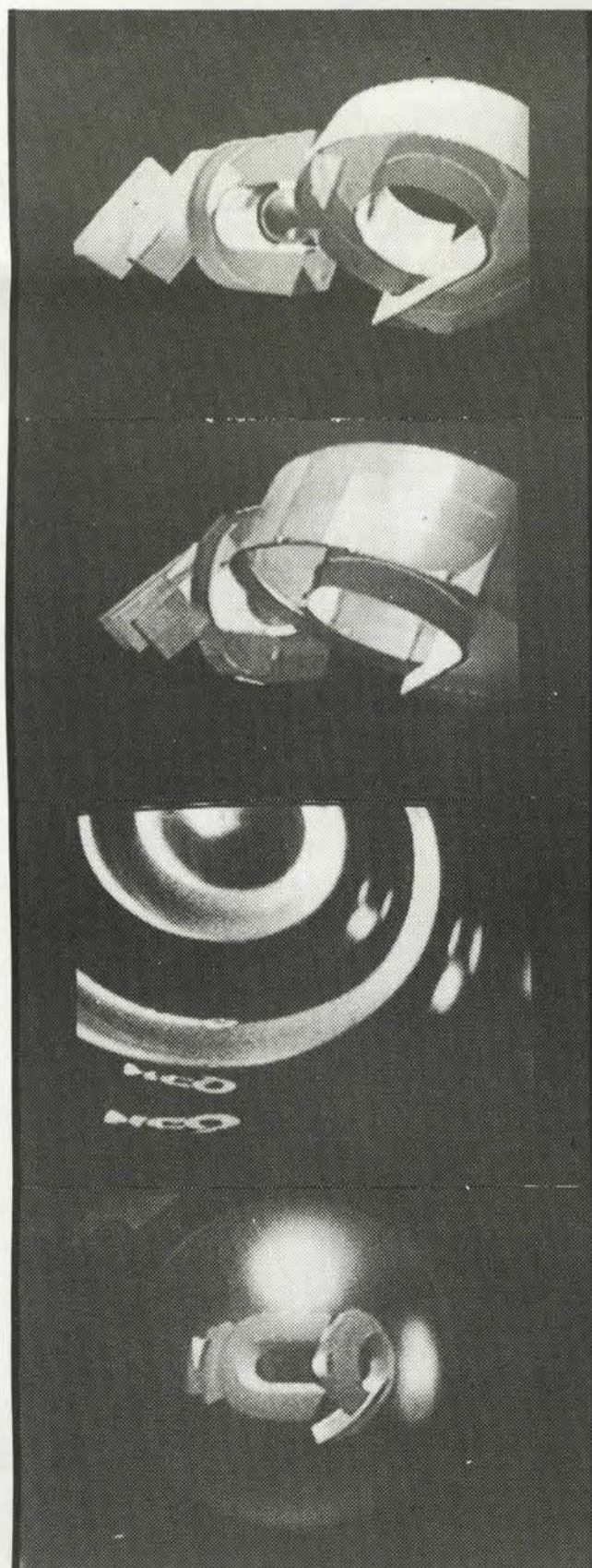
Computer Animation in Japan

by Michael Goldberg

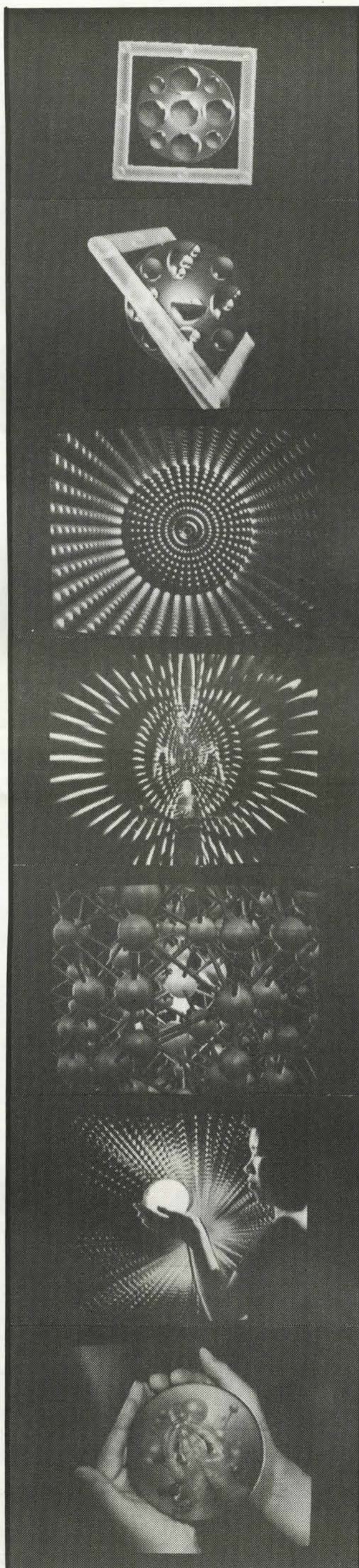
It is all too often said that the Japanese lack originality but are good at copying. Although there is truth to the latter part of this statement, the former is far from fact. This culture demands submission to the group, making individuality difficult. Those who succeed despite this barrier are on a creative par with their Western counterparts, and are masters of their craft as well. Japan promotes emulation of the very best, so there still is much imitation inherent to the learning process. Those who make it through this apprenticeship and become leaders in their field are treated with much respect.

So it is with computer animation. Though programme writing lags behind the U.S., there are computer graphics artists here with well-deserved international reputations. There are also numerous events to which foreign artists are invited, and artists from abroad working here.

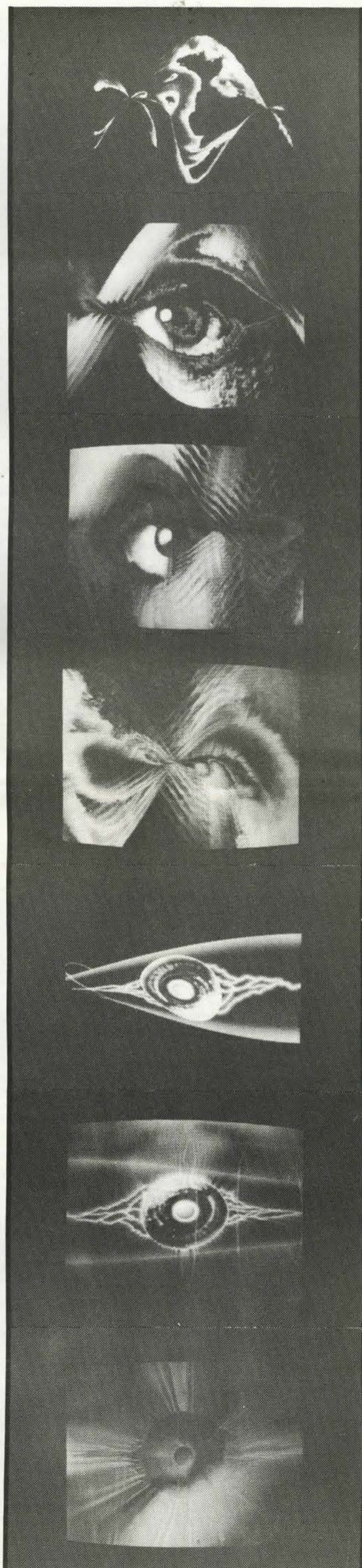
American Nelson Max did his most impressive animation to date on Japan's Toyolinks system, linking many computers together to build up programming capacity. DNA molecules grow from random molecular movement, projected on a dome in the Fujitsu pavillion at Expo '85, Tsukuba, in awe-inspiring 3-D.



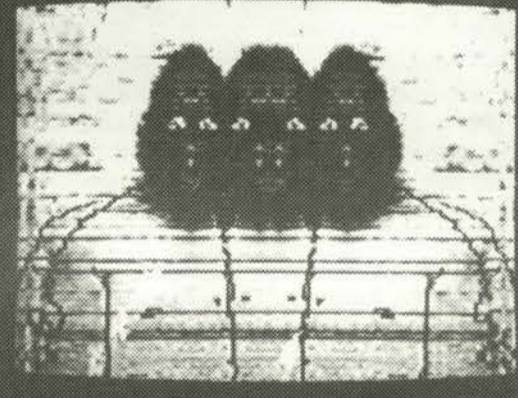
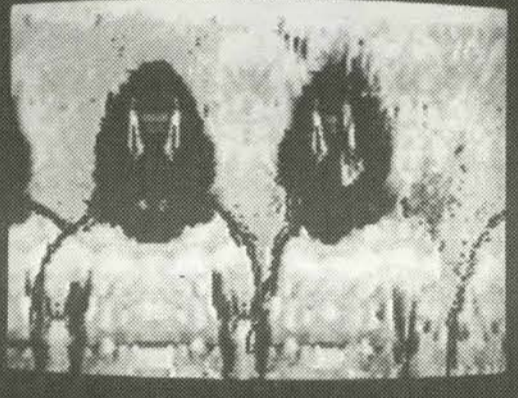
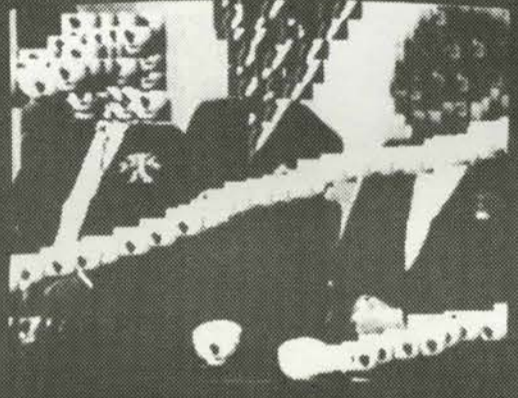
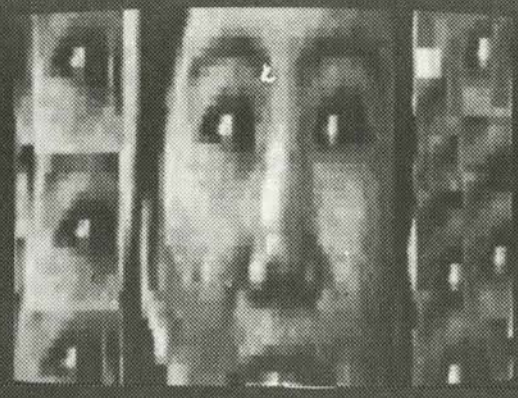
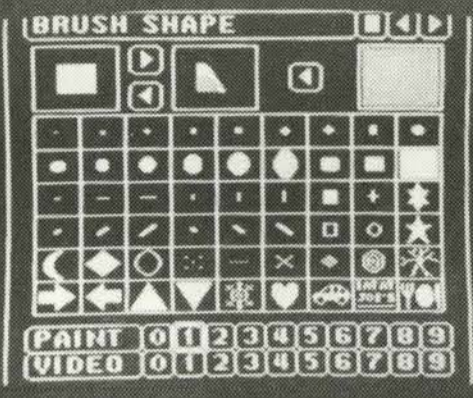
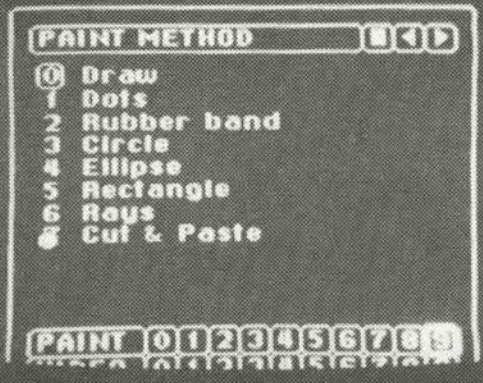
"NHK News Logo" by Masaki Fujihata



"Mandala 85" by Ko Nakajima



"Trip" by Naoko Tosa



Photos by Michael Goldberg

Peter Callas and his Fairlight C.V.I.

Best known abroad in this field is Yoichiro Kawaguchi, who does his programming at Nippon Electronics College (where the computer graphics department he began has mushroomed), then does final work at Osaka University. He became intrigued with a mathematical "growth model", which simulates the spiral development of plants, shells, etc. He has extended this into mirror-like objects in motion, amorphous, yet with a will of their own. His animation is totally original. While one gets the impression that his imaginary world is in outer space and unexplored ocean depths, there is little pretense at representing reality, wherein lies its creative roots.

Masaki Fujihata, younger than most of his peers, first gained recognition for his animation of NHK's 9pm news show logo (NC9). He subsequently directed "Mandala '83", in which a line pattern mandala transforms into perspective drawing of spheres with shading. As it rotates, they become translucent, then transparent, and then luminous, glowing on and off, colours changing. It is an exquisite use of "ray tracing", a technique in which light movement, reflections, and refractions can be replicated.

Ko Nakajima is well-known as the developer of JVC's

Aniputer. This device alters and animates freeze-frames mixed with real time video. With only a 256 pixel matrix, an updated version will smooth out the evident stairsteps in diagonals and curves. Last year, squeezed between frequent travels abroad, he zoomed to Osaka to produce "Mandala '85" on commission for a TV program. It moves through sub-atomic particles, mixing this abstract patterning with Buddhist symbolism and a pregnant woman. This year he completed a video disk on the Pioneer label using digital effects at Toyo Genzojo Video Center. Mt. Fuji is the theme of this piece, which he terms an "electronic Ukiyoe" (woodblock prints almost overworked images of this classic symbol of Japan). The tape succeeds by using rich patterning and stops short of overusing the computer effects. Ko's sense of humour takes the edge off the serious theme, images slicing through trees or falling out of the sky to seemingly stick into the mountain itself.

There are several "Mirage" systems in Japan (produced in England), and artists have just begun to explore the creative possibilities of the unusual shapes it can make out of a flat image (spheres, boxes, twists, loops, etc.). Notable is the most recent tape of Naoka Tosa, "Trip".

She also incorporates imagery using the "Aurora" paint box system, as well as effects using an NEC (a Japanese company) DVE.

Recently, four "floating viewpoint" Mirage systems were installed in this country. Using a rotating ball on the control box, you can get the shaped image to rotate or spin in any direction on its X, Y, and Z axes. In the illustration a band was created from a flat image; it was then tilted upward slightly and caused to turn round from left to right. Later this image was placed over a rotating ball with a different graphic, for a Saturn-like effect. Artists in Japan have yet to use this updated version.

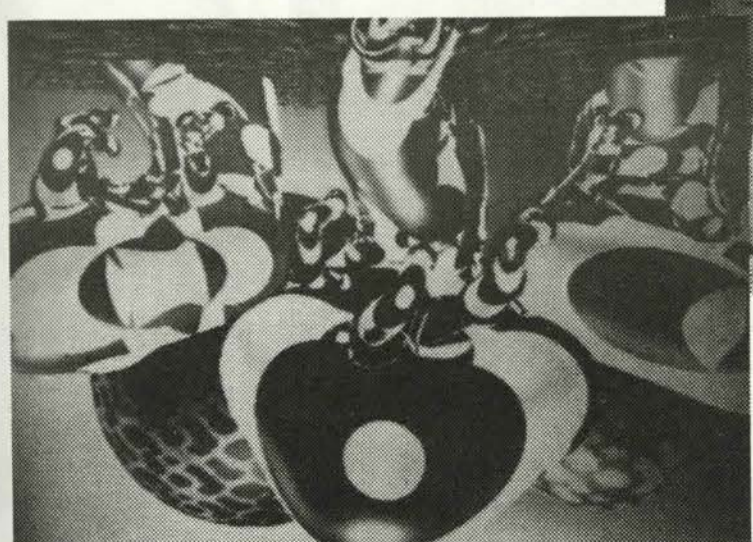
The latest piece of equipment to hit Japan is Australia's Fairlight CVI (Computer Video Instrument). It has more programmes and subprogrammes than any other such effecter, all easy to use and modify, with sliding controls and a sketchpad. First to explore its artistic possibilities is Peter Callas, who bought one just before coming to Japan on a grant.

Three young Japanese video artists have recently purchased Fairlight computers, so you can expect to see work with its "touch" surface in the near future.

Production still from "Origin" by Yoichiro Kawaguchi

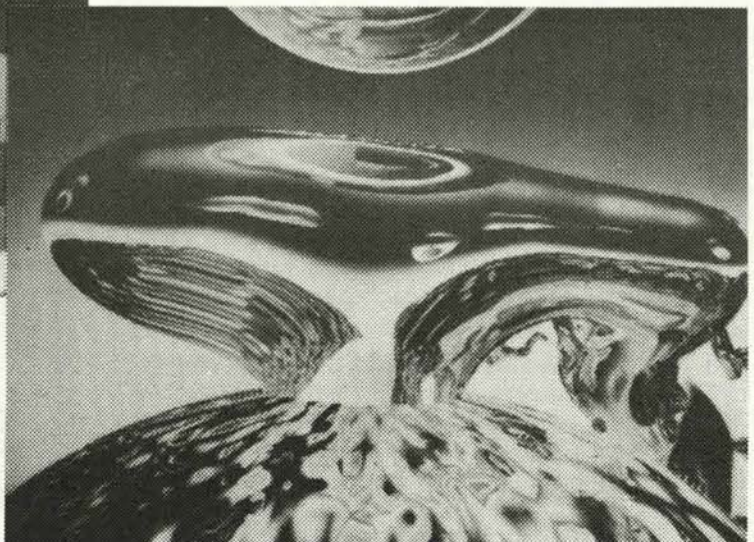


Production still from "Origin" by Yoichiro Kawaguchi



photos courtesy of the artist

Yoichiro Kawaguchi Artist's Studio at Nippon Electronics College



Continued on page 12

Appropriate/Distraktion

Where there are no answers yet

For some time now, I have been trying to find a way to successfully integrate video into an exhibition, treating it as another piece of art, yet taking into account the properties of video. I am not talking about video installations or video exhibitions, but a mixture of two- and three-dimensional work with video, either by the same artist or in a group situation.

So far the use of video in this context has been limited and, in my estimation, only partially successful. What information there is has had to be dug out, as this particular aspect has never been isolated or catalogued. Therefore, I have had to rely on my memory, that of Patrick Ready, research aided by Cheryl Segal¹, and luck. If any exhibitions that have occurred in the Lower Mainland have been left out, it is not intentional.

Perhaps it is because it is a rather esoteric subject, of interest mainly to video artists and curators, that the information is not readily accessible. But it does speak to the perceived function of and attitude towards video in an exhibition context. Video has really only come into its own in the last fifteen years, and therefore it is reasonable that exploration is still going on as to its place in a gallery setting.

There are good reasons to integrate video into an exhibition framework, and there are good reasons not to. Personally, I have only included video in two exhibitions: once as a component of the show itself and once as a series in addition to the exhibition.² This article uses my experiences as a starting point.

A rose is not a rose

First and foremost, the question of attitudes towards video must be addressed. To many, video is seen as being the same as television. Even though the usage, content, approach, and sensibility is, on the whole, very different from television, it looks, on a superficial level, like TV. There are still expectations as to what will be on the monitor that are related to TV-watching. When a video is in a gallery environment, the immediate visual impact of the screen sets up an ambiguous message — it looks like the same box that sits in almost everyone's living room, but it isn't. And rather than the passive activity of watching TV, most videos entail an active, responsive viewing process. Video, like any other form of art, is a manner of communication which, hopefully, incites the viewer to think, feel, question, respond, etc. Whereas much television is death-affirming³, most videos are life-affirming.⁴ It is a different viewing situation. A gallery, curator, or artist is then faced with the dilemma of presenting work which looks like television but is not television.

One of the ways to override these assumptions is to make a definite, visible distinction between television and video-by-artists through manipulation of the form of presentation or through the context of the presentation. There are considerations as to the determination of the form, and two emerge as the most commonly used and most widely accepted.

Remember, I am not talking about video exhibitions, but exhibitions with a video component.⁵

Tuneless whistling

The first and most common is video as an adjunct to an exhibition.⁶ Situated in the same room or in a smaller room off to one side, these tend to be of a documentary/interview format. They may discuss a particular technique, but usually it is the artist(s) in a discussion of their work. The intention of a video in this context is to provide the viewer with further information and, hopefully, incite her/him to re-look at the art — perhaps from a slightly different viewpoint. It is also a good way to bring in a more personal element. The viewer can see the artist and hear her/him talk about the work without the artist having to be physically present. It also gives the public a chance to compare their own observations with those of the artist. Further, it allows the artist to have more control over the context within which her/his work is put. While not definitive (because nothing is definitive), the artist can steer the viewer in the direction that she/he wants.

It has also proven to be more effective, especially in this TV era, to transmit information by watching and listening rather than reading. The artist could be quoted or relevant personal vignettes recounted, but it seems to be more successful to contain it within a video format.

I like this approach, but I also question aspects of it.

A discussion of the place of video in a non-video-only exhibition

by Jill Pollack

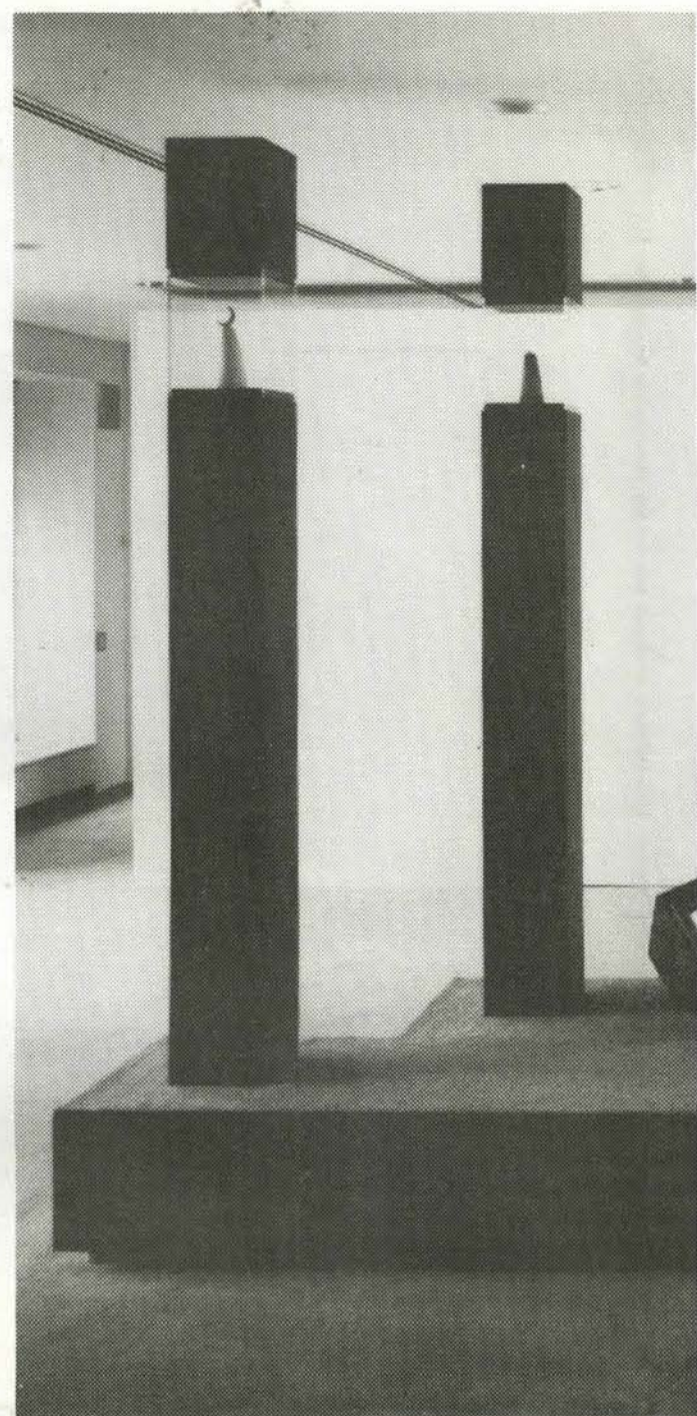
I have seen people spend more time watching the video-interview than looking at the art. Video appears to be more accessible, to many gallery visitors, than some of the imagery in the exhibition. Sometimes I feel that the video becomes the substitute for looking at the work. At the same time, it is rarely given critical assessment in the exhibition's catalogue, so it is as if it was not really part of the show. Other times, while attempting to deepen understanding of the art, it has the opposite effect. Instead of a clarification of the images, it is the artist (what they look like, etc.) that is remembered. This sets up an interesting dynamic where the maker, by her/his very presence, has a more profound effect than that which she/he made.

Knock, knock, who's there?

To me, this use of video is much like the curatorial essay. There is a fine line between explaining the work while still leaving the viewers the room to make their own observations and explaining the work away, disallowing any other viewpoint. Since everything is subjective, the tone of authority of the interview or essay should be carefully considered. No one can determine a viewer's response to any given art, but assumptions can be made. If the artist is depicting a reality that is so very different from anything we have seen before, then one approach can be taken. But if the art has a close relationship to work that has been seen before, another approach may be deemed appropriate. In any case, the images/objects themselves are dictating the way in which they should be treated. Thus, I do not think it is propitious to advocate a formula whereby every exhibition is accompanied by a video-interview with the artist (regardless of the artist's willingness, of funds and/or equipment available). I think it is also important to consider how well the artists verbally articulate their thoughts/concepts and whether or not such a video will add to the overall show.

A lot of these types of videos tend to be "talking heads". Since the interview-video approach seems to be more and more popular, perhaps we need to look at how it has been done and how we can improve it. If a video-interview is considered as purely an information-relating device and the aesthetics are not taken into account, then what does that say about respect for quality, for the artist, and for the audience? Too often, and again because of the wider popularity/familiarity with television, people will not sit through an entire video — no matter what its length — unless the visual aspects are developed along with the audio ones.

Another problem with the incorporation of this use of video is the frequency/type of screenings. Should it be on a continuous loop? Shown at regular intervals? Once an hour?



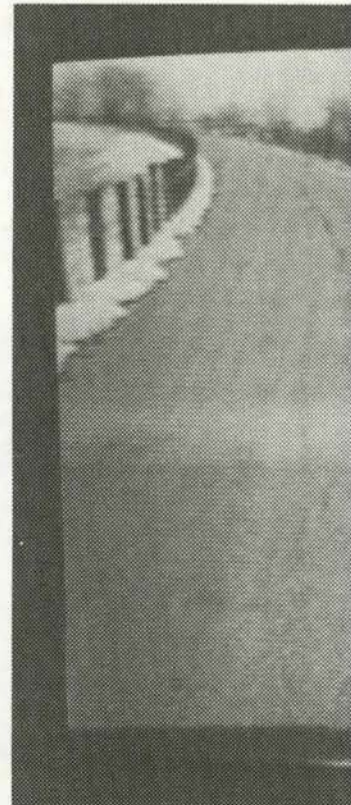
I am not sure of the average length of a gallery visit, but I suspect that it is under half an hour per room. If we want people to see the tape, how can we best arrange it? Can we expect them to come back to see it?

If I knew you were coming, I'd have baked a cake

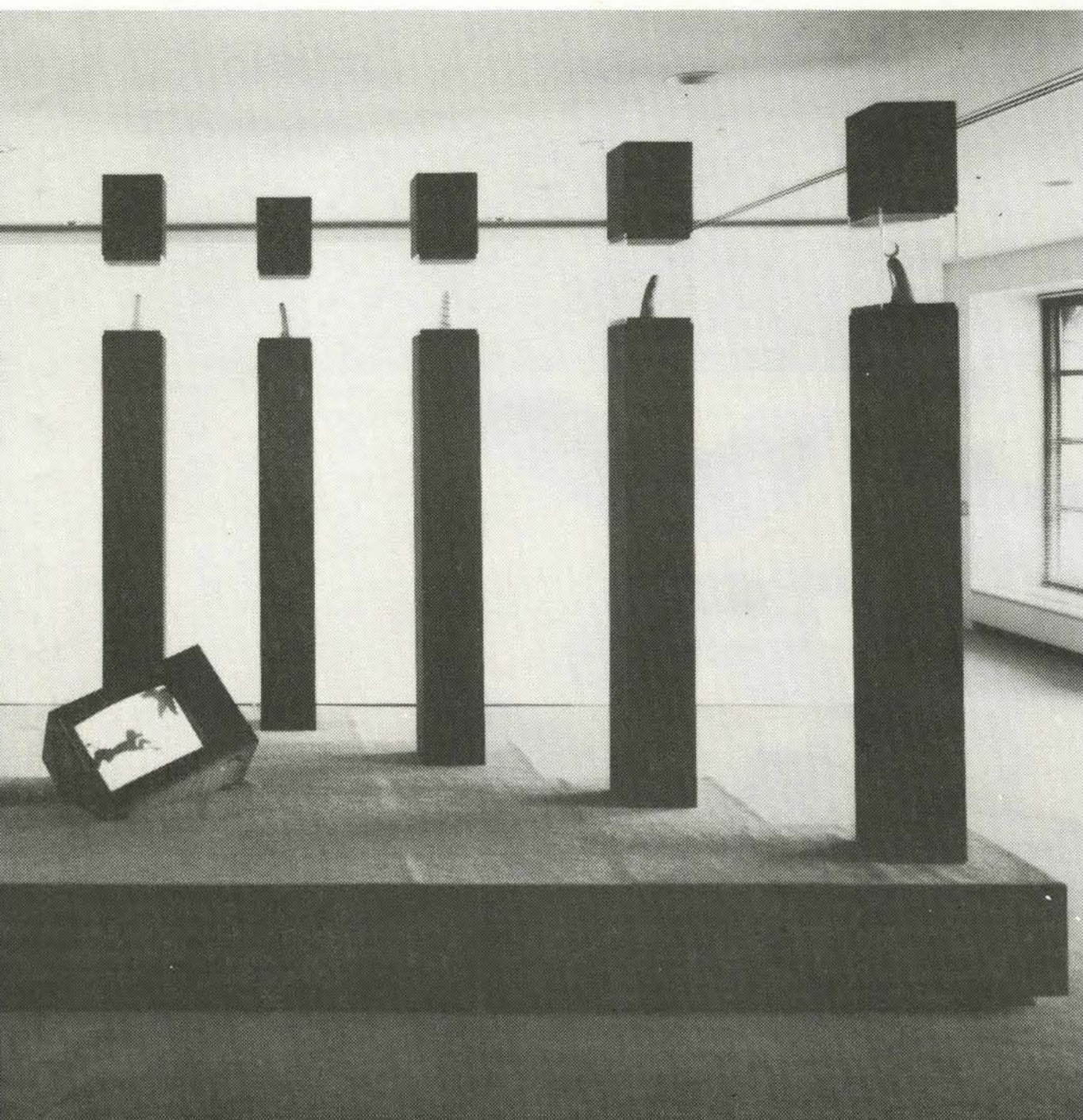
In galleries where the traffic flow does not reach epidemic proportions, one solution has been to play the tape for each visitor, regardless of frequency. This one-to-one approach involves more interaction with gallery staff than is usual. It also presupposes that the public visits a gallery not in an orderly, one-after-the-other sequence, but in a random time pattern. Although there are logistical problems with this approach, it has the potential to ensure that a larger percentage of gallery



"ADA"



Teri Chmilar 1983



"Instal Shot 84" General Idea 1984

photo by Jim Jardine

visitors will see the tape from its beginning. It also enhances the gallery's public relations through increased interaction with visitors and more emphasis on personal attention. Further, by ensuring that more people will see the video from its start, the gallery is exhibiting their respect for the maker. Unless a tape has been made in such a way that the intention is to view it from any point to any point, I think there is a responsibility to the artist to not alter the work by changing the way in which it is viewed. Of course, just as a gallery/curator cannot control the amount of time that a person spends in the gallery, so too are they unable to guarantee that each visitor will either watch the entire tape or want to see it at all.

Goldilocks and the pandering bears

The choice of interview tape can be the most crucial



"ADA"

determining factor, even more so than how/when it is shown. And perhaps within the framework of the tape itself, it is its length which will affect its potential to successfully transmit information. Studies have shown that text which takes over thirty seconds to read will not be read. In this vein, there seems to be a general feeling that video-interviews over five minutes will not be seen in their entirety. Since both time figures are generalizations according to a bell-curve "norm", should video-interviews of five minutes or less be the "rule"? Where does the line get drawn between pandering to the norm and realism; between maintaining the status quo and experimentation?

If I am going to include a taped interview with the artist in an exhibition, I want the public to see it. I want them to have access to that information. At the same time, since I am considering this format as a manifestation of creativity, I will not determine my selection as much on length as on overall quality, interest, effectiveness, and relationship to the rest of the exhibition, etc. However, I am concerned that those who make video-interviews are/are going to be encouraged more to plug into a format than they are to explore possibilities. How much does audience "tolerance" affect this usage (and its subsequent effectiveness) of video in exhibitions? Are we going to allow audience response to be a deciding factor?

Bang the drum slowly or the iron glove

Less common is the presence of video in a show which is not a solely-video exhibition.⁷ Within this 'category' there are two distinct subsections. The first is a single artist show of wall art or sculpture and a video by the same artist. The second is a group exhibition where one or more of the works in the show is a video. In both cases, the video(s) is physically in the same room as the other art. The video is treated as another piece, not segregated/isolated in a separate space.

Ultimately, there are many reasons for doing this. I can speak only of my reasons for having done so, but I think that my intentions mirror others (mainly because it is a common response to a perceived situation). Video has had to struggle to be seriously considered by funding agencies, galleries, and the public. It is only in the last five years or so that consistent critical attention has been paid to video in galleries, within a video-is-art forum.

While some artist-run galleries took the lead early on, so-called mainstream, publicly-funded galleries in Vancouver have really only begun to focus on video in the past few years. The notice that has been given has usually been through video exhibitions in a defined, video-only space. (This may be a permanent or a temporary room which is set aside.) Alternate galleries have tended to show video as an evening event, either as a series or as a single screening. Often, video has been seen in conjunction with a performance.⁸

Being interested in video and curious about its possibilities within a "more traditional" exhibition context, I wanted to find a way to include it in a non-video show. The intention was to de-segregate video just as I was interested in de-segregating fabric art – to treat it as visual art.

The problems that tend to arise have to do with selectivity, perceptual confusion, respect for both audience and maker, and viewer expectations. I believe that these hold true whether it is a solo or a group exhibition situation. The major difference between the presence of video in a single or multiple artist show lies in degrees of problems to be considered, not the nature of the problems themselves.

First is the distinction between looking at a time-based as opposed to a static medium. I think that not only do they induce different perceptual/emotional experiences, but they have disparate viewing needs. Just as I approach fabric work in one way, photography in another, etc., so too does my mind have to shift in order to watch a video. These perceptual distinctions can be further determined by the artist's approach, sensibility, technique, imagery, etc.; but the overall differences can be generally acknowledged.

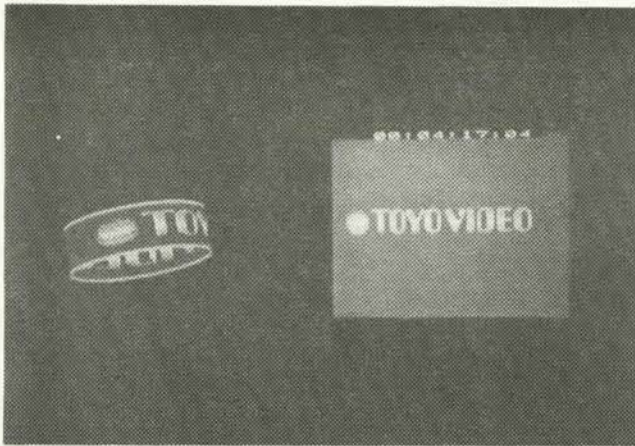
It then becomes paramount to consider all these factors and decide whether or not to heighten or subdue this aspect. I believe that there is a responsibility to eke out both a context and an environment that allows for video to be seen in the same room while not placing one work in such extreme opposition to another that understanding and enjoyment are impeded. Therefore, not every video is conducive to being seen with any other medium, and vice versa.

If it is a solo exhibition, the intention of the video in relation to other work becomes the departure point for selectivity. Too often, I feel that I base my decisions on the role of the video in this context. The underlying assumption is, then, that the video is the extraneous component. (Perhaps that is how others approach it as well.) I am not sure if this is an indication of my attitude towards video or if it speaks of the focus of that particular artist, or a combination of the two. Often, this situation occurs when an artist's primary medium is photography and she/he also makes video, but the video grew out of the photographic images. Therefore, because it is, in a sense, an "offshoot", the static images are deemed "the exhibition" and the video, "an adjunct". It could also be tied in with a fairly subconscious/invisible perception of "art". That is, work on the walls is more common and somehow more valid. I must admit that it shocks me somewhat to think that I have such a latent bias and further, that this might have been a major factor in my inability to successfully integrate video into a non-video exhibition.⁹ Because I am a gallery visitor as well as a curator, I am assuming that this bias may not be isolated to just me. If this is true, the result is that we must re-look at how video is integrated and how it is defined in art historical terms.

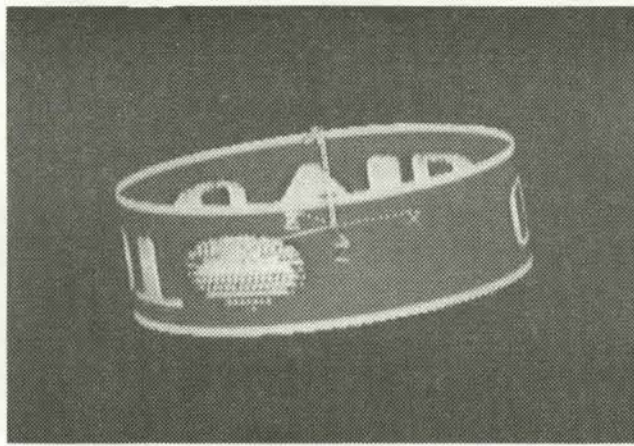
Walking into walls

In a group exhibition, particularly a mixed media one, the problems are further blurred. If the show takes a thematic approach, there are obvious distinctions from work to work, whether in the same medium or not. Because of the nature of a thematic group exhibition, it is expected that different sensibilities will be present. On the other hand, the activity of viewing and its shifts becomes more subtle, primarily because the initial perceptual expectations include those shifts. When video is included, it is like walking into walls. The gallery visitor can adjust, almost imperceptibly, when viewing, say, first a painting and then a photograph and then a sculpture, etc. But this flow is interrupted when being asked (that is what the gallery is ultimately doing) to watch a video. There is an element of immediacy in static art that does not apply to time-based art. There is a request for commitment with video that, although it might be there, is not as apparent in other mediums. If thirty seconds is the average time for reading text and a video is over thirty seconds long (most videos are), then the viewer has to be willing to spend time engaged in watching. There is perceptual confusion because the viewer was not made aware of the amount of time she/he had to spend looking at the other art in order to "fully" see it. The viewer

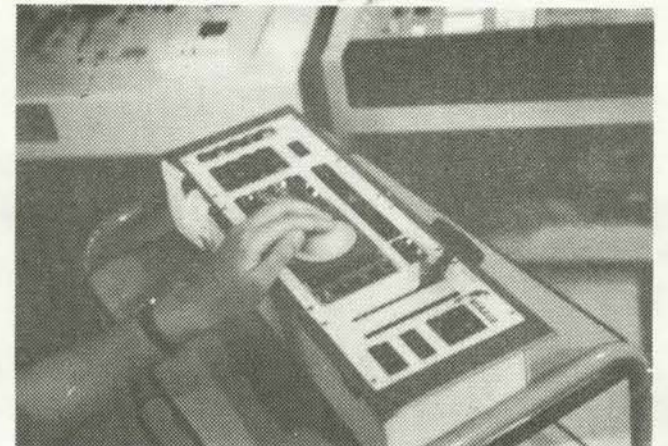
Continued on page 13



Mirage effect: flat image transformed into rotating ring.

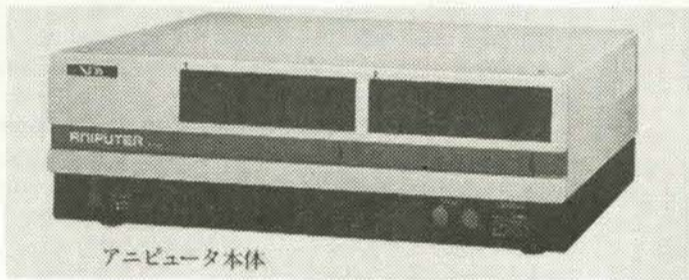


Controlling rotation, size, position, and viewpoint angle of image! Former X,Y,Z axes and new X,Y,Z axes are shown on screen.

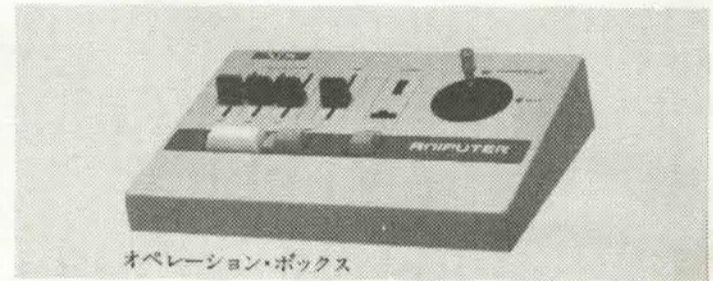
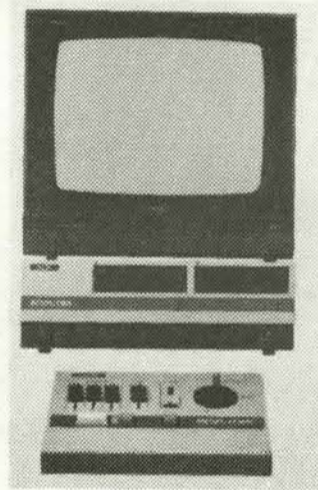


Floating viewpoint mirage: Rotating the ball causes the image to rotate on X,Y, and Z axes.

ANIPUTER

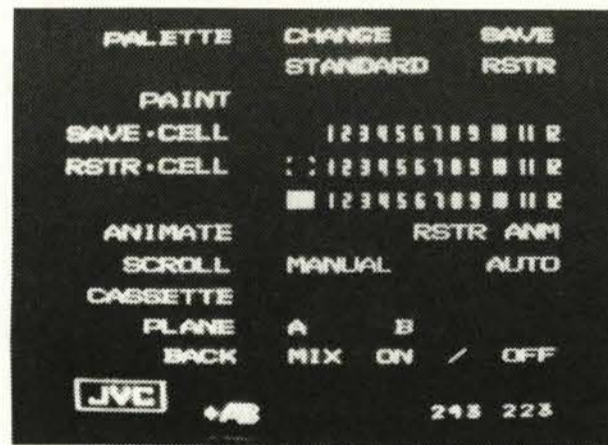


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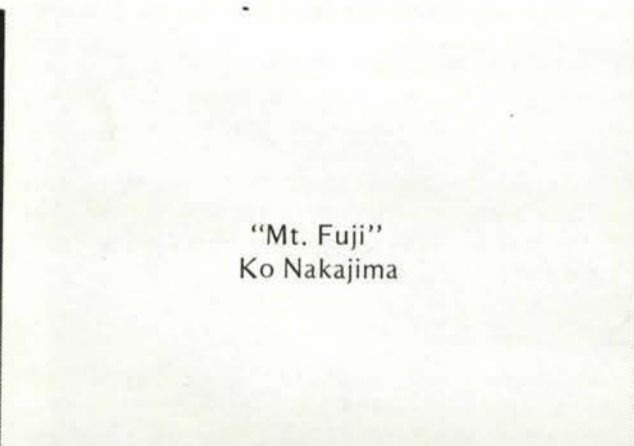
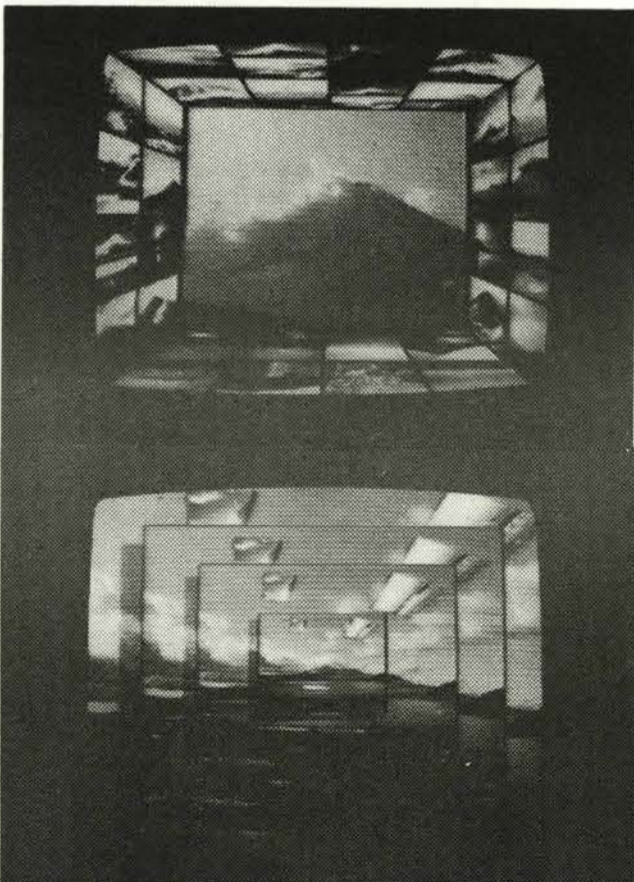


オペレーション・ボックス

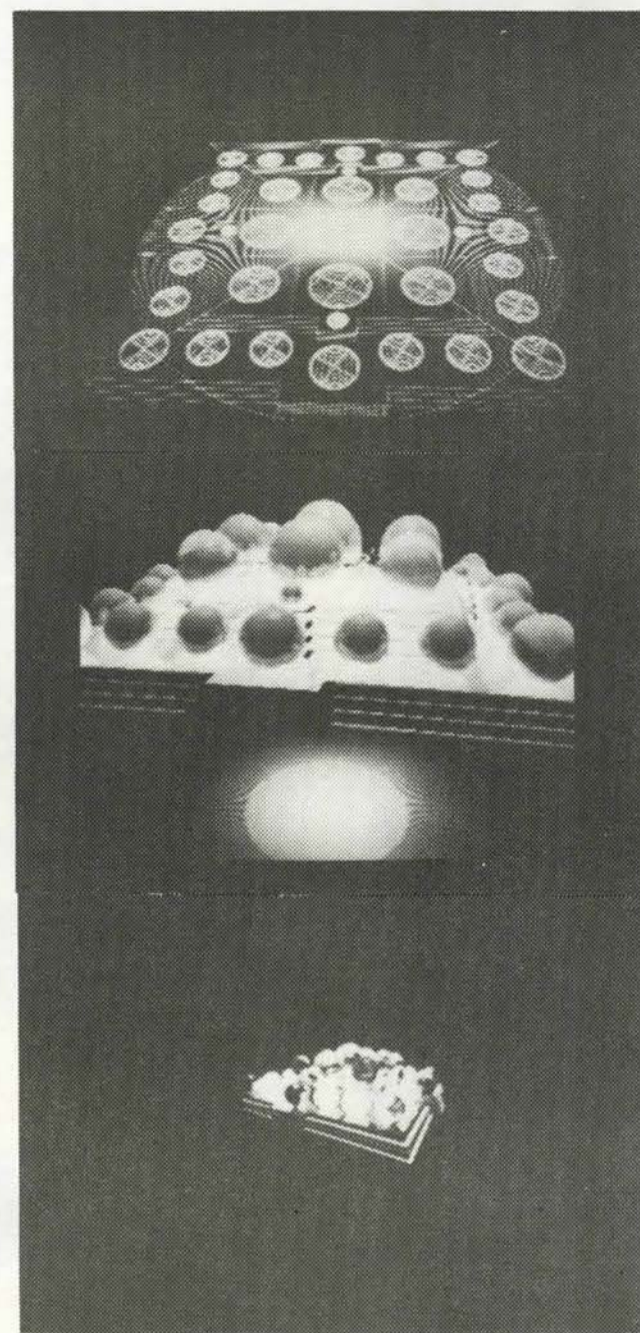
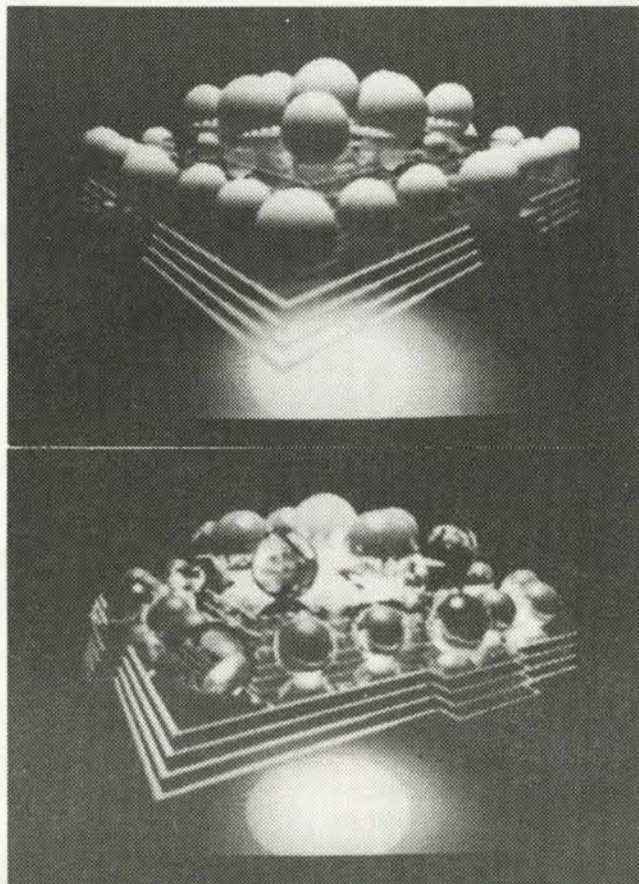
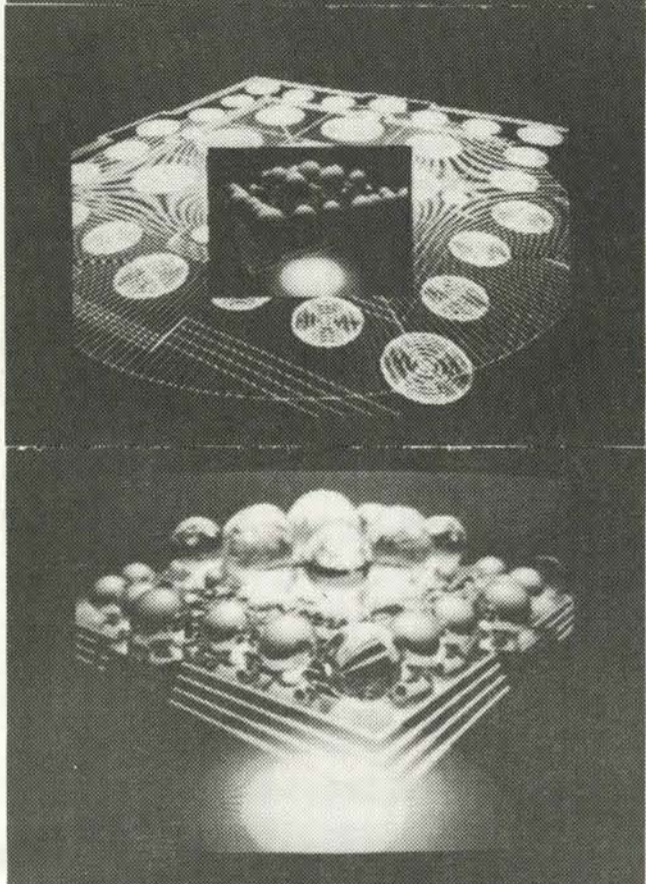
JVC's Aniputer
Developed with artist
Ko Nakajima



Aniputer Menu Page



Mandala 1983

"Mandala 1983"
Directed by
Masaki Fujihata

APPROPRIATE/DISTRACTION by Jill Pollack continued from page 11

decides when to move on to the next piece. But a video has a built-in time factor. Once the choice has been made to go to an exhibition, the only choices (in terms of activity, not judgement) are whether to watch the video or not, and whether to watch the whole tape. Because very few people watch the whole tape¹⁰, I wonder if this is due to the individual videos or video generally in a gallery situation.

While non-video visual art is certainly seen by some people as being outside of their ability to understand, most gallery visitors (by that very label), *expect* to see someone else's vision of something. There is a commonly-understood and familiar code of behaviour. Something will be either on the walls or in the space which the visitors will look at. They will walk around, stopping at intervals, possibly sitting at times. But the expectations are shattered when a video is introduced because they have to act differently.

Hear but not

Even before taking the time to watch the video, its presence is felt. If the monitor is off, it is still physically in the space. If it is on, the light from the screen and the sound from the audio track can "invade" the rest of the room. While it can be argued that static work is, also imposing, video is imposing in a different way. Unlike a static piece, video continually changes. It is, in a sense, fleeting. What is on the screen at one instant may not be on the screen in the next. Initially, it can pull in the viewer not for its evocativeness or visual impact, but for its transitory nature — there is a sense of missing something if the visitor walks past.

Conversely, if the viewer does not stop for long and sees only a snippet, she/he will be basing her/his decision on a fragment of the whole. It is difficult, if not impossible, to realize the tape without a knowledge/understanding of the context. Video is not meant to be considered by one frame but by the entire tape.

There's always a final analysis

It may seem as if I am against the inclusion of video in an exhibition which contains other media, especially since

I have focussed on problems. In fact, it is the opposite. I believe that only by looking at those aspects which are problematic can I find a way to successfully integrate video into exhibitions.

Footnotes:

¹Patrick Ready and Cheryl Segal are both staff at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

²In *PALINDROMES: On Women Aging*, there was a video tape, *ADA*, by Teri Chmilar. A video series, which took place in the same gallery room, was included in *WOMANSIZE: Large Renderings of Women's Imagery*. The videos were screened during regular gallery hours only.

³By death-affirming, I mean that television is designed not to reflect or question, but to emulate; and to dull the senses into acquiescence (i.e., buy this product, strive for/compare yourself with this lifestyle and be "entertained" in such a way that you take information in without feeling any responsibility to either question it or respond to it). Most, not all, mainstream television acts as an unconscious placebo in a not-so-unconscious way. Television encourages the injection and subsequent regurgitation of formula-ized, mass-oriented information, not active thinking. This, to me, is death-affirming.

⁴By life-affirming, I mean that video-by-artists is a form of *self-expression* and creativity. It is designed to communicate something to someone, with the presumption of thought and intelligence. The maker, the artist, wants to elicit a response. Because of the nature of video-by-artists (that is, it is an expression of creativity), it is life-affirming. The viewer can participate emotionally and intellectually.

⁵Video exhibitions are an entirely different situation. Although subject to similar problems, they will not be dealt with. Rather, they will be discussed in Part Two, in the next issue.

⁶Exhibitions with a video adjunct include: *In The Beginning Was The Word* curated by Tom Graff at the Burnaby Art Gallery, 1983; *Eye Scream/N.E. Thing Co.* curated by Alvin Balkind at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1978; *Christopher Pratt* curated by Joyce Ziemans at the

Vancouver Art Gallery, 1985; *WOMANSIZE: Large Renderings of Women's Imagery* co-curated by Marion Barling and Jill Pollack at Women In Focus, 1981.

⁷Exhibitions with a video component include: *Suzy Lake/Chris Knudsen/Robert Walker* at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1978; *Confrontations* at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1979; *General Idea* curated by Joanne Birnie-Danzker at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1984; *Bewilderness* at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1978; *From This Point of View* co-curated by Alvin Balkind, Gary Michael Dault, and Paul Wong at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1977; *Celebration* curated by Brent Beattie at the Burnaby Art Gallery, 1981; *Photographic Memory* at the Coburg Gallery, 1985; *Me II Portrait Show* at the Pitt International Galleries, 1984; *We Want Mosiach Now!* curated by Karen Love at Presentation House Gallery, 1985; *Vancouver Art and Artists* co-curated by Joanne Birnie-Danzker, Lorna Farrell-Ward and Scott Watson at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1983; *PALINDROMES: On Women Aging* curated by Jill Pollack at the Burnaby Art Gallery, 1983; *Vera Frenkel* at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1978.

⁸Again, this is a different situation and will be dealt with in Part Two.

⁹I do not feel that my one attempt at "integration", *PALINDROMES: On Women Aging* (1983) successfully showed Chmilar's tape, despite its excellence, in such a way that induced people to watch the entire tape. (It is a 24 minute video.) Considering that this particular exhibition broke all previous traffic records at the Burnaby Art Gallery and only a small percentage watched the entire tape, I think this exhibition is a good example of the problems with the type of integration that I employed. The Burnaby Art Gallery has many alcoves in the larger space, and the video was situated in one, on a plinth with rows of chairs in front of it. It was turned on by request.

¹⁰This appears to be true in almost every video exhibition except nighttime screenings. The perceptions around nighttime screenings are a particularly interesting phenomenon which will be dealt with, again, in Part Two.

The Video Data Bank in Chicago:

by Jamirte Trott



photo by Ernest Scott

"Video Drive-In, Grant Park, Chicago, Sept. 1984

It is early September, 1984. Under a pale blue sky and glowing moon-light, some ten thousand people gather around the Petrillo Music Shell at Grant Park in Chicago to watch video art projected on a 18'x24' screen for two consecutive nights. That sensational event exemplifies the Video Data Bank's commitment to expand accessibility of video, not only as art, but especially as a vehicle of social, political, and cultural assessment.

The Video Data Bank is a kind of electronic library within the library of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Therein, it occupies separate quarters: a screening room, an editing room, and an office. Founded in the mid-seventies in the thrust of independent video-making, the Data Bank today owns an impressive collection of videotapes, open to the public at its screening room, thus providing a wide scope of artistic and historical significance to the video maker and to the artistic community in general.

One of the major services the Data Bank offers to the student, educator, and the art follower in general is its program of interviews produced by Kate Horsfield and Lyn Blumenthal — co-directors as well as co-founders of the Video Data Bank. This program of interviews entitled "On Art and Artists", creates an opportunity for the artist, the historian, or the student to have a kind of live encounter with renown artists and critics, including such thinkers as the late Michel Foucault. Yet, fashioned for educational purposes, this program does not promote celebrities, nor does it promote art as such. Instead, it stages a dialogue where people (about two hundred so far) with extensive and rich backgrounds and experiences share their knowledge, thus facilitating dissemination of artistic concepts and issues relevant to contemporary art. By rekindling interest in art history with the presence of the artist or art historian, "On Art and Artists" represents a major boost to the field of art education.

Albeit initiated with the interviewing program, today the Data Bank's major collection is comprised of video art. With more than two thousand videotapes, this collection traces the historical, technical, and ideological development of video art from its inception to today's examples of electronic sophistication and conceptual changes. To this end, the Data Bank's collection of videotapes contains the most significant examples of independent video from the early Bruce Nauman's and Vito Acconci's to today's works of Dan Reeves, Woody and Steina Vasulka, John Sturgeon, and on, and on.

To facilitate research, the Data Bank has reproduced many tapes from its major source into a number of series available, for rental or purchase, to schools, museums, galleries, and others. Each one of these series consists of a number of videotapes executed by different artists with similar and/or contrasting ideas and ideologies on a particular theme. In the series "Inventing the Everyday", for example, Max Almy's *Perfect Leader*, Isaac Cronin and Terry Seltzer's *Call It Sleep*, and five other pieces create a contextual fabric of interpretations where one can witness how political and cultural structures manipulate and shape

consciousness, or perhaps instill false-consciousness. In the series "Minding Media" we find Michel Foucault and Martha Rosler, among others, expounding on the ways television molds culture. Likewise, other series provide a diversified discourse on matters of narrative, feminism, and other social/political ideologies, as well as on formalistic concerns of early video art. There are as many as fifteen series, and each one runs from one and a half to three hours in length.

After establishing the Data Bank as a major source of video distribution in this country, Lyn Blumenthal and Kate Horsfield, today assisted by Chris Straayer and Kenneth Kirby, continue to implement the Data Bank's service and distribution. Thus expanding the visibility of video art, these people have compiled an extended curatorial effort into a three hour touring program — "The Science of Fiction/The Fiction of Science" — seeking to open the range of video audience to include the public at large, as well as artists of all persuasions. With hundreds of video examples, "The Science of Fiction/The Fiction of Science" assembles pieces of video, including very early ones, to build a means of deconstruction of our cultural myths by addressing dichotomies inherent in human concepts of science, political and social practices, and art itself. In this direction, examples of video art, such as Edward Rankus, John Manning and Barbara Latham's *AlienNATION*, and Max Almy's *Leaving The 20th Century*, poke fun at Americans' fascination with

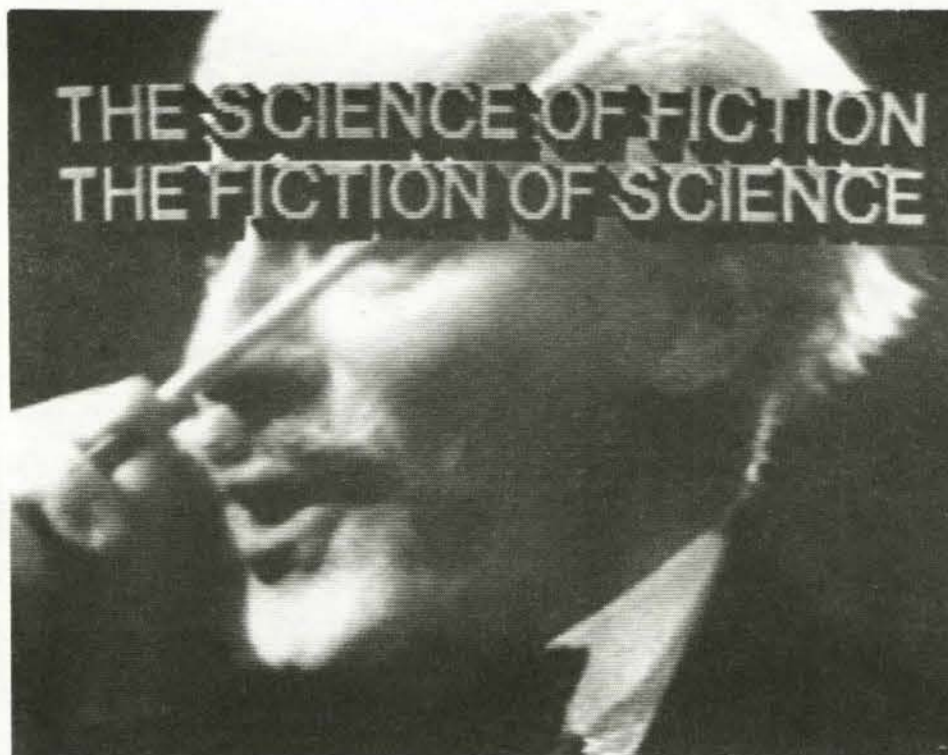
science. Other pieces, such as Bill Viola's *Anthem*, Michael Smith's *Go For It, Mike*, and many others, try to expose the fictional character of our ideologies.

Stepping ahead of a general distributional tendency to concentrate on the circulation of videotapes produced by individuals, the Data Bank recognizes the merit of organizational works by offering access to video produced by Paper Tiger Television, The Artists Television Network, Out There Productions, Inc., The C.A.T. Fund, and several others. Of particular significance among these is the collection of tapes produced by the Castelli-Sonnabend, remastered from their original 1/2" reel-to-reel format. Dating from 1965 to 1973, the Castelli-Sonnabend tapes include works of John Baldessari, Linda Benglis, Frank Gillette, Richard Serra, William Wegman, Vito Acconci, and other video art pioneers. Because of this they highly enhance the artistic value and historical significance of the Video Data Bank's program, while setting a precedent in the conservation of video art.

As a guide to the viewer, the Data Bank publishes a yearly catalogue titled "Video Tape Review" with photographic illustrations, biographic notes on the artists, and synopses of their work. The "Video Tape Review" catalogue gives special attention to the series of video produced by the Data Bank, as it contextualizes each thematic direction with concepts and ideologies found in writings of Roland Barthes, John Berger, and Luce Irigaray, to mention a few. The Data Bank also publishes a quarterly magazine called "Profile". Each "Profile" transcribes the content of a particular interview from "On Art and Artists" program, with several illustrations of the selected artist's works.



Partially supported by the School of the Art Institute and other funding sources, the Data Bank's services implement not only educational and artistic endeavours, but also the value of the traditional library. Rather than replacing written language (as rumour has it), this electronic medium augments and facilitates communication with the kind of service that only the medium itself can provide, such as the possible transposition of the hub of the art world to the screening room of the Video Data Bank in Chicago.



"The Science of Fiction/The Fiction of Science"
Video Data Bank 1984

NICARAGUAN MEDIA

A REVOLUTION IN INFORMATION AND ACCESS

by Patty Somlo

Since the first shots were fired by the Reagan administration in its war of words against the Sandinistas, "lack of press freedom" has frequently been used as a weapon. Attacking the Sandinistas for censoring the opposition daily, *La Prensa*, Reagan has characterized Nicaragua as a "totalitarian jungle" in which the media simply serves as a public relations tool for the FSLN.

Nothing, in fact, could be further from the truth. In the five years since the triumph of the Sandinista-led revolution, the Nicaraguan media has undergone a complete transformation, expanding, improving quality, and dramatically increasing access to the country's predominantly poor population. With severe limitations in resources and technical know-how, Nicaragua is, nevertheless, producing high-quality media and reaching a largely peasant and worker population previously denied access to newspapers, magazines, television, and film.

During the 43-year dictatorship that ended in July 1979, nearly all media was owned and controlled by the ruling Somoza family. Eighty-five percent of television programming was imported from the United States. The remainder consisted of Mexican and Venezuelan soap operas and one news program. The only locally produced electronic media other than commercials were documentaries and news programs extolling the virtues of the Somoza regime. From time to time, the dictator relaxed censorship of the opposition daily, *La Prensa*. However, like Somoza's own daily, *Novedades*, the opposition paper was predominantly filled with gossip and sensationalism.

In 1975 when the peasant theatre group Frente Sur began performing in the fields surrounding the village of Cantimplora, Nicaragua, 25 miles from the capital city of Managua, the predominantly poor farmworker audience called the simple performances "movies."

"None of them had ever seen television or films," explains Felix Pena, a member of Frente Sur and one of the founders of MECATE, the peasant cultural organization. "So, they didn't know the difference."

With the exception of radio, the media was out of reach for most Nicaraguans. Television broadcasts were restricted to the country's Pacific region. On the Atlantic Coast, those who could afford sets were only able to receive broadcasts from Honduras and Costa Rica. Since the average income for 80% of the population was \$805 per year (two-thirds of these earned a mere \$286), few Nicaraguans could afford to buy a newspaper, let alone own a television set. For the 52% that were unable to read, print media was totally inaccessible.

Less than ten years later, all media consumption has increased dramatically among Nicaragua's predominantly poor population. Television, film, and print media reach peasants even in the country's most remote regions.

The shortages are not, however, standing in the way of some new projects. With funding from a score of non-governmental Canadian and European development agencies, Wolf Tirado, a Chilean film and video producer who has been working in Nicaragua since 1980, this year founded Videonic to train peasants and industrial workers to produce high-quality programs about Nicaragua for broadcast abroad.

"It's wonderful to see the reaction of other peasants and workers when they learn that their union is producing TV programs," notes Tirado. "They see that this is being done by people like them. It reaffirms to them that peasants and workers have the ability to do everything."

On taking power, the Sandinistas began putting into place an "historic program" aimed at creating a new society. Providing opportunities for all Nicaraguans to reach their full potential and to knowledgeably participate in shaping the decisions that affect their lives, the Sandinistas hoped at the same time to create a society of "New

Men," who would put the interests of the majority before individual advancement. The media was to play an important role in these developments.

The Sandinistas immediately moved into the offices of Somoza's daily, *Novedades*, to publish their own paper, *Barricada*, and took control of the Somoza-owned television stations to begin broadcasting Sandinista Television. In addition, the government currently owns a major radio station, Voz de Nicaragua, and the FSLN has its own station, Radio Sandino.

A complete overhaul of the country's media with the goal of making it relevant and accessible to the poor majority was among the Sandinistas' early programs. This included changing content to reflect the daily reality of most Nicaraguans, as well as overcoming problems, such as illiteracy, that had kept many locked out of the media.

In 1980, a massive campaign reduced the 52% illiteracy rate to 12%. This was followed by ongoing adult education in factories, unions, marketplaces, and state and private farms. *Barricada* responded to this newly-literate population by shortening articles and keeping language relatively simple. Three times a week, one page of the paper is devoted to brand new readers, using large print and even simpler language.

Efforts have been made to ensure distribution of *Barricada* to even the most remote parts of the country. Circulation has reached an all-time high of 120,000. Similarly, the television broadcasting range has been extended, with a current audience of 800,000 out of a total population of 2.5 million. Mobile video and film units visit factories, farms, and villages throughout the country, providing free screenings of work that may even have been shot in that particular locale.

To increase access, *Barricada* and the state radio stations have instituted regular means by which citizens can "talk back" to the media. Radio Sandino and Voz de Nicaragua have direct call-in shows in which people can voice their concerns to government leaders. Sandinista Defense Committees (CDSs) frequently make use of a special section in *Barricada*, the Popular Mailbox, to draw attention to problems in particular neighborhoods, such as the need for road repair. Not only will *Barricada* print the CDS article, but a photographer will be sent out to get a picture of the problem road.

Like its counterparts throughout the third world, Nicaragua has had its news dominated by four large Western agencies: Reuters, Agence France-Presse, Associated Press, and United Press International. Thus, even stories about the country itself have carried a Western bias, focusing primarily on events of interest to upper middle class North American and European editors. Since media was primarily consumed by Nicaragua's small middle and upper classes prior to 1979, news coverage also included the gossip and goings-on of the society's elite, as well as fashion and trivia aimed at the better-off.

While *La Prensa* is still characterized by such coverage, Nicaragua's two other dailies, *Barricada* and the independent, pro-Sandinista *El Nuevo Diario*, and the state-owned radio and television stations carry news by the country's new international news agency, Agencia Nueva Nicaragua (ANN), other third world wire services, and Nicaraguan reporters, which focuses on events of importance to the country's poor majority. Coverage is no longer dominated by well-known personalities, government officials, and the rich. The achievements of a peasant in an outlying rural cooperative or a worker in a Managua factory now command considerable media attention.

"The media plays a social function in forming public opinion and as a tool for people to express themselves and reach others," explains Bill Robinson, a Mangua-based reporter for ANN. "Under Somoza, the media had a social role, but only catered to a small group of people.

"We're a revolutionary press, and that means we're socially conscious. Our concept of free press is that it criticizes the government when it is in the social interest. The revolution is in the interest of all Nicaraguans and needs to be defended. Within this context, we criticize the government if it's damaging the revolution."

In addition to making articles readable and relevant, the media acts as an educator by helping the country's peasant and worker population understand complex economic and political issues. Often, this is done through a series of in-depth pieces about an issue of particular concern to the country at the time. For instance, the Sandinista government recently began a campaign to stop price gouging and hoarding of basic commodities and to ensure minimum equal food distribution to all Nicaraguans. *Barricada* and *El Nuevo Diario* responded with a series of articles explaining the history of the country's economic difficulties and the reasons for current shortages in certain products.

Sandinista Television and INCINE, the new Nicaraguan film institute, are producing musical, dramatic, and documentary programs to replace the previous dependence on North American fare. INCINE released its first feature film, *Alsino and the Condor*, last year, which subsequently netted an Academy Award nomination for best foreign film. Currently, 40% of the programming broadcast on Sandinista TV is produced within the country.

To the Sandinistas, accessibility means the opportunity to produce media, as well as to consume it. Most of the country's mass organizations publish their own monthly magazines and newsletters. Many of them also have regularly scheduled radio and television time. The CDS, for example, has a news and variety show, "In This Corner," which, among other things, features amateur poets from poor Managua barrios reading their works.

The Popular Video Workshop, started in 1980, has trained members of the farmworkers and industrial workers unions to produce quality video programs. Some are made specifically to educate members and are screened in workplaces. Others, dealing with everything from the effects of the U.S.-backed contra war on the country's peasants to the achievements of an agricultural cooperative, are shown daily following the news on Sandinista Television.

Members of the Nicaraguan journalists' union have also been training peasants to be rural reporters for *Barricada* and for the farmworkers union (ATC) monthly magazine, *El Machete*. According to Mario Pravia, a representative of the ATC who coordinates the program in the mountainous coffee-growing region of Matagalpa and Jinotega, "*Barricada* doesn't have the capacity, due to lack of transportation, to go out to the mountains. It's very important to fill the gap between the city and the country, to inform people of the significant advances of the revolution, and the severe difficulties and limitations we have."

Those difficulties, a result of a legacy of poverty and underdevelopment compounded by the U.S. war and economic blockade, are beginning to stand in the way of further advances. Peasants are being trained in all aspects of photography, yet even basic materials, such as film and batteries, are not available to them. *El Machete* was recently given a new press by the West German government, but had to temporarily suspend publication due to a lack of paper and ink. Magazines, such as the women's organization monthly, *Somos*, have switched from good quality paper to newsprint. While trying to expand local news coverage and production, Sandinista Television is severely handicapped because it owns only three video cameras.

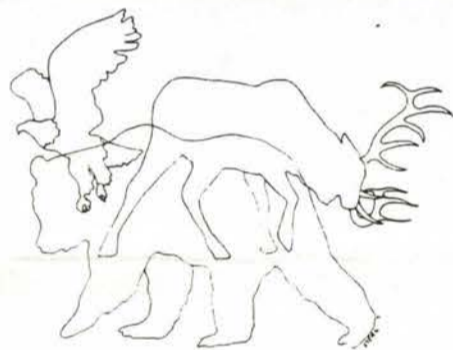
EVENTS

**9th PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL**
February 20 to March 9, 1986

The Northwest Film & Video Center of the Oregon Art Institute (formerly the Northwest Film Study Center of the Portland Art Association), is proud to present the 9th Annual Portland International Film Festival, February 20 through March 9, 1986. This year's festival selections include more than 35 films from more than 27 different countries, all making their Portland premieres. A special focus of the festival will highlight Pacific Rim productions, including five films from mainland China and five from New Zealand. All programs will be screened in the Berg-Swann Auditorium of the Portland Art Museum, 1219 SW Park Avenue. A special opening night premiere and reception will take place on February 20th, with details to be released at a later time.

Co-sponsors of this year's festival are *The Oregonian*, in its third year, and KINK Radio FM102, in its fourth year.

A complete festival schedule will be available in February from the Northwest Film & Video Center, (503) 221-1156. For further information, please contact Kathy Clark, 221-1156.



**NINTH INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE
FILM FESTIVAL**
April 7-13, 1986

The University of Montana Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society will sponsor the Ninth International Wildlife Film Festival April 7-13, 1986 on the Missoula campus. The primary purpose of the Festival (IWFF) is to encourage excellence in all aspects of making wildlife films. Today, the IWFF continues towards its original goal by providing film and video competition, awards, workshops, educational events, and showings which constitute the Festival. It has become the premier annual event in the world of wildlife films. The 9th IWFF plans include a live wildlife program transmitted from the Lee Metcalf Wildlife Refuge, a wildlife writers conference, and a symposium on the interrelationships and influences between wildlife or wildlife science and the humanities. Especially featured will be the arts, film, human cultures and religions, and writers and how they influence (are influenced by) the Natural World and our perceptions of it.

The deadline for submission of applications and films is MARCH 17, 1986. All entries must have a predominately wildlife theme and have been produced or released during the calendar year 1985 (exceptions to be put in writing or approved by the IWFF). Categories include amateur, professional, commercial, scientific, TV series, and experimental. Judging is held prior to the Festival. Winning entries will receive certificates and the results will be internationally published. All entries receive a critical review based on the judges' comments. The Judging Panels include a variety of specialists selected worldwide.

Information, rules of eligibility, applications forms, and the Festival agenda can be obtained by writing or calling:

Wildlife Film Festival	Rocky Mountain Film Inst.
Wildlife Biology Program	c/o Institute of the Rockies
University of Montana	10300 O'Brien Creek Road
Missoula, Montana 59812	Missoula, Montana 59801
(406) 243-4493	(406) 728-5352

**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.

CALL FOR ENTRIES: TWO FESTIVALS
French Women's Festival and Oberhausen Short Film Fest to screen works at FIVF for 1986 Events.

After last year's successful New York screenings, a representative of the Women's International Film Festival in Creteil, France, will once again be at FIVF to select films for the 8th annual competition. In 1985 an international program of 15 features and 25 shorts were exhibited to audiences of 20,000 over a ten day period which included retrospectives, filmmaker discussions, and a concurrent film market which boasted a roster of over 40 distributors and producers. The dates for the 1986 festival are March 14-23. Screenings at FIVF in New York will occur in November. Filmmakers are invited to submit work immediately until November 15. 16 and 35mm narratives, documentaries and shorts directed or co-directed by women. Films cannot have been theatrically released in France, broadcast on French TV, or shown at other French film festivals. Work must have been completed since June 1, 1984. 3/4" transfers preferred for pre-selection. No forms necessary. Fest pays round trip shipping for selected films and pays filmmaker accommodations. Fees for entries: one tape up to 30 min. \$5; 30-60 min. \$10; two tapes \$20; 16mm films up to 30 min. \$10; 30-60 min. \$15; over 60 min. \$20. Send work to: Creteil c/o R. Aaronson, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. Include cash or a check payable to FIVF. No student films.

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM
Birmingham International Educational Film Festival
1986 Competition

ENTRY FEE: (after January 20, 1986) Commercial and non-commercial—a handling fee of \$30 (0-30 min) or \$50 (31-60 min) per title. Students—\$20 (regardless of length). \$10 fee is required for each additional category. Make check payable to: Birmingham International Educational Film Festival c/o Birmingham Public Library 2100 Park Place Birmingham, Alabama 35203

Entry forms, fees, films, and tapes must be received no later than February 1, 1986. However, each may be mailed separately. NOTE: Please do not place check or entry form in film or tape containers. Please mark containers with title, producer, running time, and category.



VIDEO SHORTS FIVE WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Video Shorts Five, the fifth national video shorts festival, is pleased to announce the selection of ten winners for its 1985 video collection. The winners were chosen from 105 entries and represent artists from all corners of the U.S. and Canada. Entries were judged by a Seattle-based panel of video makers and commercial producers.

The winners are: *Black/White Jokes* by Dave Kerr, Seattle; *Army Arrangement* by Dan Dinello, Chicago; *Heaven Is What I've Done (For My Fellow Beings)* by Pier Marton, Chicago; *Mr. President* by Jill Kroesen, New York City; *Grass, or When The Rain Falls Do The Fish Get Any Wetter* by Janice Tanaka, Boulder, CO; *Take A Break?* and *Notebook* by David Lyons, Yonkers, NY; *Point of Departure* by Terry Simpson and Mark Anderson, Seattle; *Pie Y Cafe* by Jan Peacock, Halifax, Nova Scotia; and *Pop Up* by Maggie Annerino, Ada, MI.

The winning works have been compiled onto a master program which is available for rental and purchase from The Video Shorts Festival, 932 12th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122. For more information, contact the festival at (206) 322-9010.

The Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres Presents:
ARTISTS TALK ABOUT TECHNOLOGY
Edited by Elizabeth Chitty

The articles, by practicing Canadian artists, provide a context for discussion of issues concerning and surrounding the creative use of technology by artists:

- David Hlynsky - "Technology vs. the Timeless Agenda"
- Hubert Hohn, Gary Kibbins, Nell Tenhaaf - "Defining the Issues"
- Doug Back - "Technology and Audience"
- Alayn Ouellet - "Art, Technology, and Regionalism"
- Sara Diamond - "Whose Vision Will Rule the Future? Women, Technology, and Art"
- Chris Creighton-Kelly - "Artists, Technology, and Cultural Production: How is Social Meaning Made?"
- Elizabeth Vander Zaag - "New Technology/ Old Mythology"

1 to 10 copies \$2.00 each; 10 to 20 copies \$1.50 each; more than 20 copies \$1.00 each.

Send cheque or money order to:
ANNPAC/RACA
489 College Street, 5th fl.
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M6G 1A5

Oberhausen Short Films Festival Director To Select Films at FIVF in January

Karola Gramann, the new director of the Oberhausen Short Film Festival, succeeding departing director Wolfgang Ruf, will visit FIVF offices in January to select films for the April 21-27 32nd annual competition. This international event has a reputation for premiering the best of the short film and introducing new directors to the film world. Six cash prizes are awarded. 16 & 35mm maximum running time: 35 min. Work must have been completed after January 1984. German festival, theatrical, and TV premiers only. Deadline for entries to FIVF in New York: December 15. 3/4" transfers welcome for selection. Fees for entry: 3/4" cassette \$10; 16mm films \$10. Send cash or check payable to FIVF with work to Oberhausen, c/o R. Aaronson, FIVF.

NATIONAL FILM WEEK '86

If you were part of the standing-room-only crowds thrilled by National Film Day over the past four years, get ready for NATIONAL FILM WEEK '86! This year, in honour of the Vancouver Centennial, the official opening of the Pacific Cine Centre will be National Film Week '86 — a nine-day event bringing together the best in Canadian film production past and present. In addition to guest artists and world premieres, this year will feature a special retrospective of the history of filmmaking in British Columbia, commemorated by the launching of CAMERA WEST, a major publication of the B.C. Provincial Archives.

The earliest extant film footage of the city of Vancouver; new and old film treasures from St. John's, Newfoundland to Sooke, B.C.; the latest in avant-garde, experimental cinema; witty and inventive animation; hard-hitting social documentary; and remarkable, path-breaking feature films will make every minute of NATIONAL FILM WEEK '86 a memorable experience. Special tributes will be mounted to veteran B.C. filmmakers Zale Dalen, Jack Darcus, Larry Kent, Phil Keatley, Al Razutis, Kirk Tougas, and Sandy Wilson, while representatives from the Canadian film industry, the major independent film cooperatives, and from our major cultural organizations will join in a series of public forums on the future of filmmaking in Canada.

If you've wondered about recent headlines on national cultural sovereignty, NATIONAL FILM WEEK '86 will demonstrate the scope and diversity of that endangered species, the Canadian film artist.

NATIONAL FILM WEEK '86 is the inaugural project of the Pacific Cine Centre, which is comprised of three non-profit film organizations: Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution West, Cineworks Independent Filmmakers' Society, and the Pacific Cinematheque Pacifique.

For further information, please contact Margaret Aasen, NFW '86 Coordinator, 689-5346. Suite 4, 525 West Pender Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1V5. (604) 689-5346.

DISTRIBUTE

Video Data Bank

Video Art Distribution: Video Tape Review 86, an annotated catalogue presenting over 500 videotapes by 105 independent producers and 15 curated series with critical introductions, is now available for \$5.00 from the VIDEO DATA BANK, School of the Art Institute, Columbus Dr. & Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60603.

MEDIA DISTRIBUTION CO-OP

A new group called the Media Distribution Co-op is offering inexpensive do-it-yourself publicity resources for musicians, filmmakers, and writers. These include specialized mailing lists, bibliographies, and a variety of other related publications. A syndicated features co-op will begin operating soon.

Some of the specialized mailing lists cover such things as entertainment columnists, film and video distribution networks, alternative movie houses, college radio stations, public access programs, specialized magazines and newspapers, various festivals, computer networks, etc.

The Media Distribution Co-op offers several publications, including Alternative Video Distribution, Developing the Press Packett, Cable TV Distribution, New Sources for Writers, Obtaining College Radio Airplay, etc.

Some of the bibliographies include graphic arts sources, 3d filmmaking, networking resources, etc.

The syndicated features co-op will help undiscovered writers and cartoonists to join together and promote their work.

For more information, write Rick Sheridan, 2912 Daubenbiss, Soquel, CA. 95073; telephone (408) 462-6245, ext. 199.

RESOURCE

FILMCLIPS

The Aims of Filmclips

- To help promote the growth of individual filmmakers
- To provide necessary services & information not readily accessible to the individual filmmakers
- To provide a means of communication between the individual filmmaker and the film industry
- To help the individual filmmaker to utilize methods of distribution that will contribute to his or her portfolio.

Guidelines

- Open to all levels of filmmakers with an interest in further developing their talents through the services of Filmclips
- Open to filmmakers interested in sharing their knowledge and expertise to help other filmmakers
- Open to individuals with an interest in the film-making process and who would like to give their support to that medium.

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Your annual membership fee (\$45 Cdn; \$70 US for foreign members) entitles you to:

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

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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.



Open to anybody interested in making contact with local artists working in the field of electronic and tape music. Original music works can be commissioned or existing work used in a soundtrack context.

For more information, call 731-6704.

the "other" music

BOOKS

ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUBLICATION

Film Canadiana 1983-1984, Canada's national filmography, has been published by the National Library of Canada, the National Film, Television and Sound Archives, the National Film Board of Canada and the Cinematheque quebecoise. This authoritative catalogue includes bibliographic data on over 2500 Canadian films produced in 1983 and 1984, a variety of useful indexes (subject, director, producer, production company, feature films, co-productions), and an indispensable directory of Canadian producers and distributors with up-to-date addresses and phone numbers for over 1500 film organizations.

Film Canadiana is an essential reference source for all organizations and individuals concerned with Canadian film. Direct orders and payment (\$20 per catalogue, plus provincial sales tax, if applicable, payable to the Receiver General for Canada) to: Customer Services, National Film Board of Canada, P.O. Box 6100, Station A, Montreal, Quebec, H3C 3H5.



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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:

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1111 17th Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

HARDWARE NOTES

PHOTOS FROM VIDEO PART III

by Michael Goldberg

This is the third in a series of four installments in the series. Previous items covered include cameras, lenses, exposure value, B&W photos, colour temperature, Mireds, filters, daylight and tungsten film, etc. You can order back issues from *Video Guide*. This series has been copy-righted; for permission to reproduce it in whole or in part, please write c/o Satellite Video Exchange Society, 261 Powell Street, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6A 1G3.

COLOUR FILMS

Colour films fall into two basic categories: (A) Daylight or Tungsten lighting; and (B) negative film (for prints) or reversal film (for slides). The colour temperature rating of daylight film being closer to that of the TV monitor, it is usually recommended over Tungsten film. For the latter, colour-correction filters are a darker amber; but if you use a film speed of ISO 160 or more, colour balance of the picture shot off a TV monitor is fine.

Publishers prefer transparencies (slides) to prints for colour reproductions.* It is possible to copy photos for printing purposes, though the results may be grainy. You can tell the quality and colours of a slide with your naked eye; a magnifying glass helps. Larger transparencies (e.g., 6x7) are preferable to 35mm for enlargements. For publishing purposes, it is suggested you specify that the slide film not be mounted, when you bring it in for processing. Usually the lab will put paper mounts in the envelope; plastic mounts last longer if you intend to project the slides. For home use, it is possible to have prints made from slides (having an "interneg" made is better than "direct positive prints" but more costly). Better still, shoot slides for promo purposes and shoot again with print (negative) film for souvenirs and friends.

Professional film labs give consistently good results, and slides are generally ready within hours, a day at most. Cheap prints, processed through your local outlet, may vary from time to time, so it is wise to bring all your films in at the same time. If you shot on Kodak film, be sure to specify that it be developed by Kodak, especially when you are travelling.

It is best to store undeveloped films in a refrigerator, especially Ektachrome Pro (but never put videotapes in the fridge). Before use, let them stand at room temperature for several hours; otherwise colours may be affected.

Types of Colour Film

As with colour compensation filters, the colour rendition of different films is a matter of personal taste. If you consistently use the same filter to correct the bluish tinge of the TV monitor, you will find that films respond differently. I find the yellow of Ektachrome to be warm and Fujichrome's greens and orange to be strong. Sakurachrome gives bright reds (Agfa, too) and soft yellow. If you have no filter(s), it seems to be the best for TV pictures. 3M looked best with an F-DL filter. Kodachrome is more reddish than Ektachrome, but colours are less saturated. Polaroid instant slide film (Polachrome) has the least contrast, milky white, blacks not opaque, and the emulsion scratches far too easily. However, it remains

the only film to date that gives you slides in a minute, on the spot. Printing them (in a magazine) requires a special technique.

Do remember that all comments on colour are my own observations. I've settled on Ektachrome 200ASA and an 85C filter, but you might prefer Agfachrome, or 64ASA, and an 81EF filter. Professional photographers used to recommend Ekta Pro film and 85B filter; I don't. Make a few tests yourself before an important shoot.

Photo Lab Correction

You have surely noticed that, if you take the same negative in to have duplicates made of a photo you like, the colours and contrast of the copies often differ from the original print. If you bring in the original as well and ask a pro lab to match it in the duplicates, you will get better results. Otherwise, developing time and chemical balance is guesstimated by the lab technician.

If you made a mistake or had minor problems shooting photos off the TV monitor, you can have a duplicate done to your specifications by a professional lab. It can end up being costly if you have a lot of slides, but it may be the only way to salvage important images. I go for skin tones. It helps if you shoot colour bars from the screen at the start of your film roll; then you can bring in a good shot of colour bars for comparison.

PICTURE TUBES

Manufacturers have patented unique features in the design of their TV picture tubes. All TV screens are comprised of tiny red, green, and blue dots, but they may be rectangular, rounded, in straight or zig-zag rows, depending on the brand or model. This dot pattern results in a distinct "feel" to each type of screen. Also, colour balance, colour temperature, luminescence, decay rate, and other factors vary, so the same tape, shot on the same film with the same filter will result in dissimilar photos. Almost all TV screens nowadays appear quite beautiful to the naked eye. If for some reason you must take stills of one particular model, I advise you to do tests first with various filters. It helps if you know the colour temperature of the screen, as you can refer to the Mired chart in the second installment of this series. I usually use my 26" ProFeel, and sometimes the Shibasoku in my College editing room (rounded corners, so underscan is best). If I could afford it, I'd get a Sony Super Fine Pitch monitor (e.g., PVM-1371QM, PAL/SECAM/NTSC model). You may find a 12" or 14" picture tube to be brighter than larger screens, but be sure your lens is not distorting the image edges.

Underscan

The cabinet of a TV monitor masks the edge of the screen, much as a frame does a painting. Moreover, a further amount of the sides, top, and bottom of the recorded image doesn't show, especially on older TVs. Some TVs shift the image to one side, so this extra amount prevents the edge of the video frame from showing. It is possible to adjust the size (vertical and horizontal) and position of the image on some TV monitors, using a long, slender "minus" screwdriver to fit into recesses at the back of the cabinet.



"Chanoyo" by Dalibor Martinis
RICOH XR-P (line in picture)

Professional video cameras often show much more of the image on their viewfinder than will be seen on a home TV. Editing-room monitors usually have a switch to reduce the image about 10% into the centre of the monitor, so you can see the entire frame. This "underscan" function is useful for taking photos. Magazine and catalogue layout sometimes calls for squared-off images. Sometimes the designer crops the rounded edges of the TV frame, spoiling the framing of the video cameraperson. (You might specify that your photos not be cropped without permission, if this bothers you.) An underscanned image shows slightly more than a normal monitor image. Of course you can crop it a bit. In fact, the bottom of the underscanned image may show some head-switching noise, and the top of the picture of older tapes may flag (wiggle) a bit (if you have no Time Base Corrector). So it may be wise to take photos in underscan mode, then trim the edges all around.

TV Monitor Controls

With proper colour-correction filters, you should be able to adjust the image on the TV monitor to your taste and get the same results in your photos. It is best to turn the "brightness" control as high as you can without washing out colours and contrast.

If you have no CC filters, use daylight film not Tungsten (unless you purposely want a very blue tint). Following is a hint I call "The Pauper's Filter". Adjust the monitor's "hue" control a bit to increase the reddish tones. This will not rid you of a bluish tint to whites in the photographs, but it will enhance skin tones. You may also find it desirable to turn up the "colour" (saturation) a touch. The monitor image should look just a bit pinkish to your eye. Don't push the colour balance too far off, or you'll lose yellows and greens in the resulting photos.

Don't forget to readjust the controls for normal video or TV viewing at the end of your photo session. Very convenient for this are TV monitors with electronic controls which automatically return to factory preset levels when you shut off the main power switch.

Fourth and last installment next issue: *Video Playback*.

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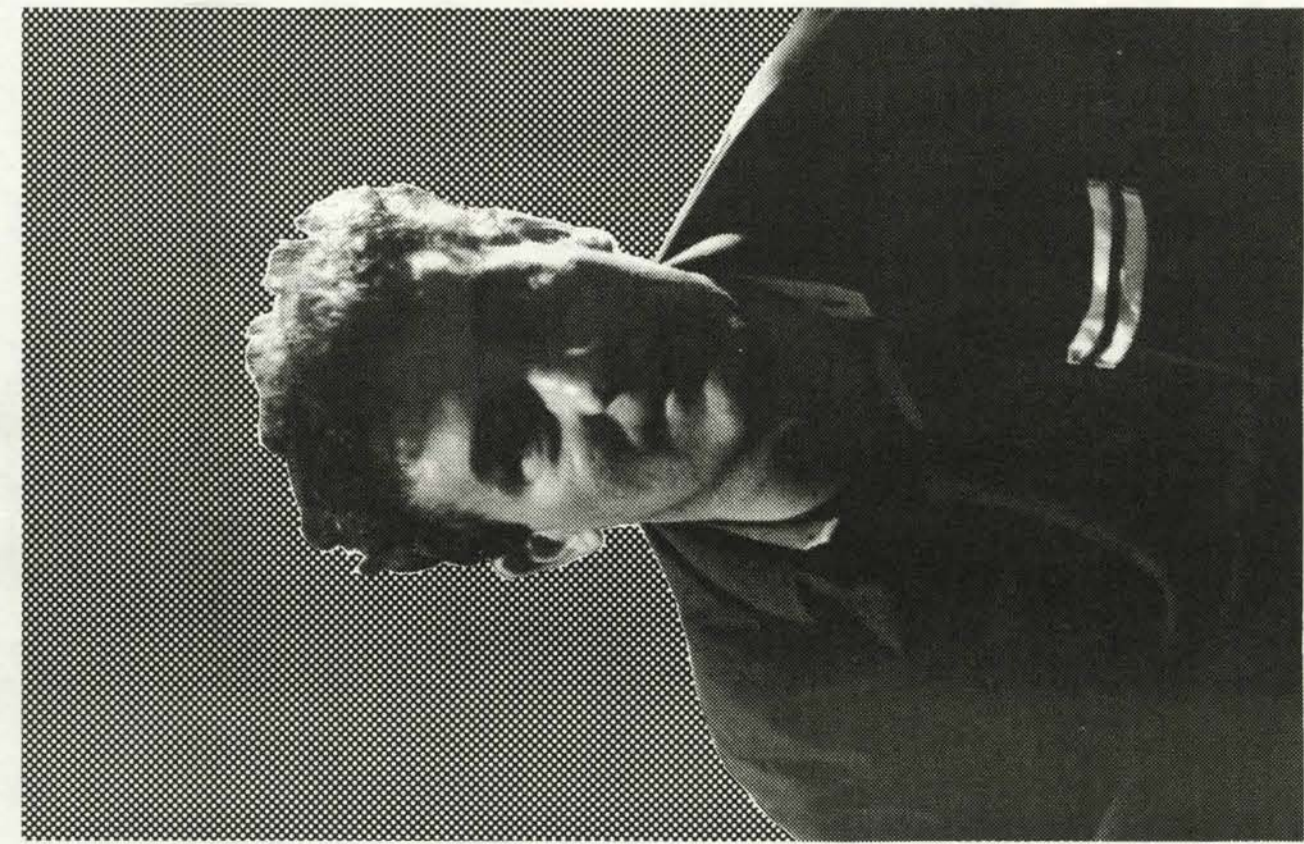
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