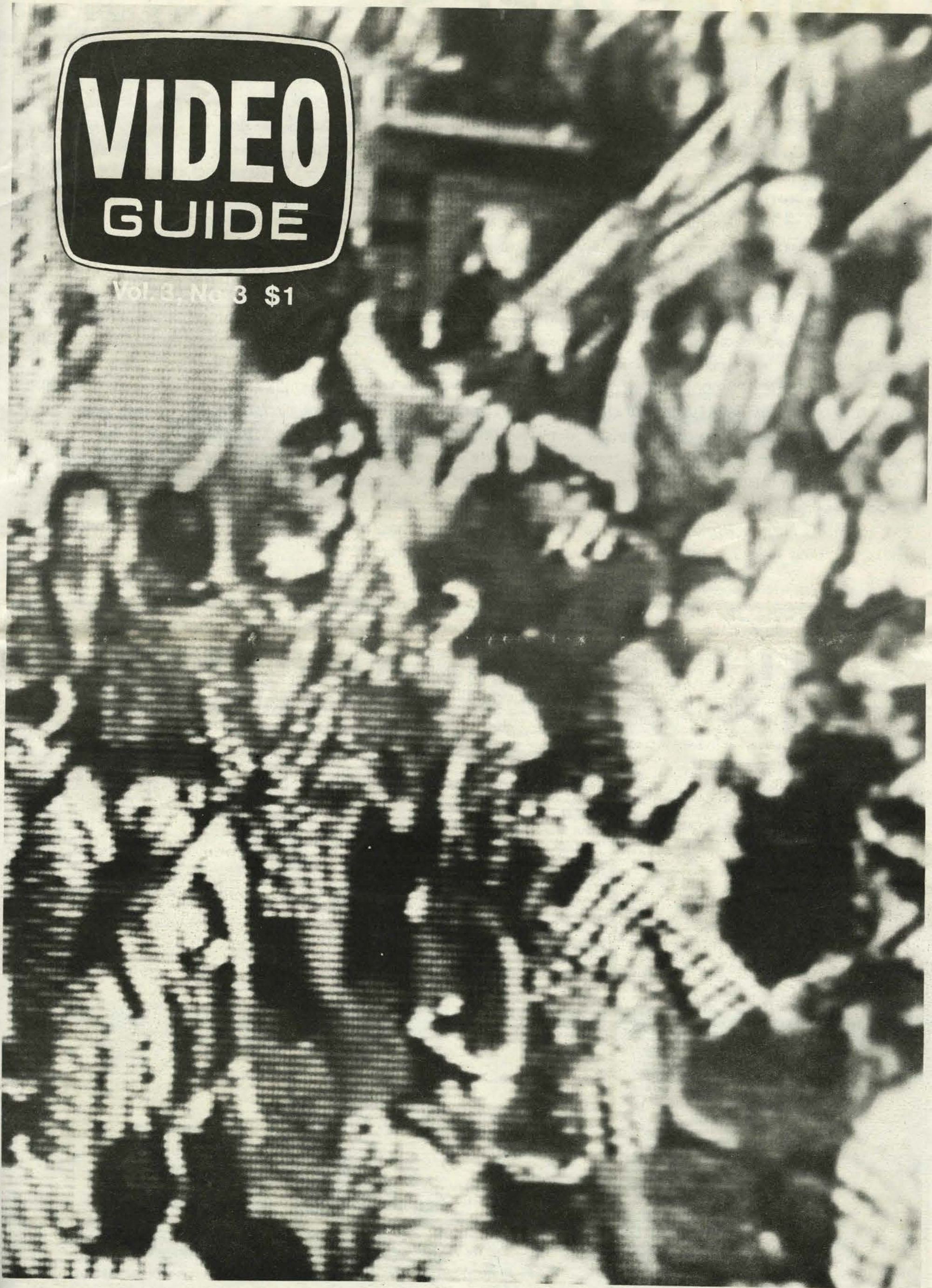


VIDEO GUIDE

Vol. 3, No. 3 \$1



TATTLETAPES

THE INCOMPARABLE BYRON BLACK MARKET IS INFINITELY PLEASED TO BE RELOCATED IN OSAKA... BILL VIOLA SOMEHOW MANAGED TO SQUEEZE HIS EDITING SYSTEM (MADE IN JAPAN, BOUGHT IN NEW YORK) INTO TAKI BLUESEINGER'S OLD "MANSION" IN ROPPONGI... TAKI AND LYN BENNETT AND EMI-CHAN ARE MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE IN VANCOUVER, WITHOUT MICHAEL GOLDBERG HOGGING HALF THE FUTON... KIRA CLICKS, BUT BILL IS MOVING IN REAL TIME, PICKING UP THE LANGUAGE... TAKA IIMURA BOPS FROM JAPAN TO CANADA, SOON TO BE ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE AT THE FUNNEL IN TORONTO, THEN A TOUR - WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH NEW YORK? ... SHIGEKO KUBOTA AND NAM JUN PAIK HAVE ALSO BEEN OCEAN HOPPING... KEIGO YAMAMOTO IS BACK IN THE FIELD, AFTER HIS EXHAUSTIVE TOUR OF THE CANADIAN CONTINENT... MAKO IDEMITSU BOPPED UP TO CANADA FOR A FEW DAYS, BETWEEN CALIFORNIA AND HOME... HANK BULL AND KATE CRAIG, ON A WORLD-WIND TOUR, STOPPED BRIEFLY IN TOKYO AND OSAKA ON THEIR WAY FROM VANCOUVER TO INDIA... SHIGEO ANZAI WOULD LIKE TO MAKE NEW YORK A HABIT... KYOKO MICHISHITA AND FUJIKO NAKAYA FLY BACK AND FORTH OFTEN ENOUGH; THEY SHOULD GET TOGETHER AND BUY A PLANE... MICHAEL GOLDBERG WANTS TO MAKE JAPAN A HABIT... EVERYONE WANTS TO HUSH UP THE ART/PORNOGRAPHY PROBLEMS WITH JAPANESE CUSTOMS, AT LEAST UNTIL THE SHOW IS OVER... FUSAO TAKAMURA, ON HIS WAY BACK TO OSAKA AFTER A MONTH IN NEW YORK, SPENT AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF TIME IN VANCOUVER... HE COINCIDED WITH THE VISIT OF JUN OKAZAKI AND EMI SEGAWA, ON THEIR WAY THROUGH TOWN, HEADING FOR, GUESS WHERE? NEW YORK... THEY WERE HOSTED THERE BY SCULPTURE/VIDEO ARTIST HIROMU SAIKI... SHOICHI SHIMOTSUGU CUT OUT TO PHILADELPHIA... KATSUHIRO YAMAGUCHI STOPS BY LONDON AND PARIS, ON HIS WAY TO ROME, TO PROMOTE A POSSIBLE TOUR OF ROMA VIDEO '80... EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OF JAPAN, KOKUSAI KORYU KIKKIN, KICKS IN A MEAGRE AMOUNT TO THE MAJOR EUROPEAN SHOW OF JAPANESE VIDEO... WILL KOU NAKAJIMA LEARN ENGLISH AND SPEND TIME AT THE WESTERN FRONT? ... FUJIKO NAKAYA TAKES TIME OUT OF THE CLOUDS TO SET UP TOKYO'S FIRST ALL-VIDEO GALLERY, SCAN... TSUKUBA UNIVERSITY'S VIDEO CLUB IS THRIVING, THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF TSUNEKAZU ISHIHARA... AKIRA MATSUMOTO HAS INITIATED AN INTERNATIONAL VIDEO EXCHANGE BETWEEN HANDICAPPED GROUPS; PERHAPS HE'LL MAKE IT ABROAD IN PERSON... WHY IS IT THAT ONLY KANSAI HAS REAL ACTIVE VIDEO GROUPS AND LOTS OF SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY VIDEO? ... AND WILL HOKKAIDO'S AINU AND NORTHERN CANADA'S INUIT FIND SUPPORT FOR THEIR WISH TO COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER VIA SATELLITE? ... FOR ALL THE SMART ANSWERS, INNUENDO, AND DOWNRIGHT SLEAZY GOSSIP, STAY TUNED...

EDIT

This issue is literally filled with articles written in and about Japan. It is a compilation of various reviews and comments prepared over the past year. It is not an attempt to cover the spectrum of Japanese video activity.

It is ironic that most of the hardware we use is manufactured there, but "video-sakka" (literally "authors", or creators) have not had much opportunity to show their work abroad. Most tapes produced in Japan are very international in flavour; certainly, all the art tapes have no problem with language barriers.

This issue of VIDEO GUIDE coincides with Video '80, the biennale in Rome, which is featuring video from Japan. We are very pleased to help foster better understanding of video activity in Japan.

Michael Goldberg

Vancouver's Video Magazine



November 1980 Vol. 3 No.3

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by Michael Goldberg
Photograph by: Stokely S.

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VIDEO INFORMATION CENTER

by Fujiko Nakaya & Michael Goldberg

The VIDEO INFORMATION CENTER is the first non-profit group we know of to open a commercial "home-video" sales outlet to finance its activities. Although still in its fledgling stages after one year, it is worth knowing about; and we wish them every success. Before sharing some of their early experiences, let's place this in the context of their history and activities.

While at Tokyo's ICU (International Christian University) in 1972, Ichiro Tezuka and Takashi Noyama got together with 5 other students, to form a club called the Video Information Center (sometimes called "VIC"). Their original intention was to use the ICU cable system; but the university never put wires in the conduit linking the buildings. Nevertheless, they went out and recorded off-campus lectures, and played them back at ICU. The Phys. Ed. Dept. refused them access to its equipment - all there was. So they pooled their earnings from part-time jobs and bought a portapack.

There was student strife all over Japan (and the rest of the world) at the time. The ICU student paper adopted a determined position; teachers and staff took another, equally hard line in the university bulletin. In the opinion of the video group, both gave mass-media type credibility to the things they published. It took the stance that an alternative was required, which would treat information in a more flexible manner, not according to one predetermined line.

In its recordings, the group attempts to divest itself of the superficial aspects of information, to capture the essence of an event. In their mind, editorialism, authority, propaganda, bureaucracy, even personal ego are to be discarded. There is no single truth; all moments are meaningful. Their documentation of artists' events have a simple, unpretentious quality, one that seems almost impartial, devoid of interpretation by the cameraperson.

VIDEO INFORMATION CENTER tries to avoid manipulation or indulgence on the part of the producer. In order to remain faithful to the viewer, they uphold a credo of "amateurism". They feel it is possible to become entrapped by the hierarchy of specialisation, in an attempt at becoming "professional". If you become a media pro, Tezuka-san says, you are at best replacing the content of existing media with what you think is better. He is hesitant to edit any of their tapes, however lengthy they may be, out of respect for the artists involved. VIC does not have a system as yet for distribution of the recordings, but can negotiate them case by case (which takes at least a month).

The group wished to act as a cultural witness. This grew out of an interest in Walter Benjamin, who suggested in his writing that something not covered by mass-media today may have no real existence. VIC does not specifically criticise the NHK (government network). They deliberately chose activity not covered by the educational channel; but would indeed have been pleased to relinquish the task to others. Still, while there was occasional "coverage" of contemporary art events, little documentation was in fact being done. With no record, only a myth would remain, through the filter of critics and their media. VIC feels that people should be able to evaluate such events for themselves.

Now they have an invaluable archive of about 600 tapes. The vitality of Japan's art scene died down toward the end of the last decade, at least so far as performance art events were concerned. Tezuka now wonders in which direction they will take their cameras. Meanwhile, commercial production houses have moved into the market of documenting contemporary-dance performances, undercutting the prices VIC has to maintain. Most of their energy has consequently been channeled into their sales of VHS and Betamax (1/2" cassette) video hardware, basically to performing arts groups and established fine-artists.

The group opened a small shop in Kichijoji, not very close to the centre of Tokyo, and a bit of a walk from the train station. Without financial backing or a bank loan, they could do no better. As a result, new and previous clients aren't exactly knocking down their door... though the arts community is sympathetic. Still, they sell decks and raw tapes at a discount, and also offer audio and other equipment. In order to get a dealership, they had to put down ¥300,000 (about \$1,500 Can.), and must purchase any hardware they display. In actual fact, they are more of a catalogue order house. When a client expresses serious interest, and requires a demonstration, the manufacturers do lend them pieces "on spec". But then they are under compulsion to get it sold, or purchase it.

Competition is stiff! VIC surveys the going prices every once in a while, by dropping in on their chief commercial rivals. If they discover other dealers undercutting them, selling below the manufacturers' minimum retail list price, they complain. An unknown broker once bought out a bankrupt outlet, and the equipment appeared at another dealership, at cut-rate prices. Sony bought back the lot, threatening to cancel the dealer's contract. Now one large-volume

marketplace lists no prices. Instead, a sign invites shoppers to ask a salesperson about the price.

VIC sells tape at 80% of list price. It gets a rebate from the distributors at year's end, the percentage of which increases with volume. (note- Vancouver's Tape Co-op negotiated a curved scale, instead of a staircase rebate system. Previously, if the sales fell just below the next level, say jumping from 2% to 3% at \$15,000, it would stay at 2%. With the curve it might get 2.8%.) The manufacturers give a free, one-year warranty, but the purchasers drop into VIC if they have any problems. When the year is up, the video companies continue to do repairs, and charge the retail client directly.

VIC has built up a relationship of trust both with its clientele and the manufacturers. They will have put out a sign at the new place they have rented by the time you read this. Let's hope it helps them sell home-video systems to people off the street. It's difficult to count on selling to artist-friends. Once they become established, they develop their own rapport with video-company head-offices and PR departments; then they can buy direct. Sometimes relations can get a bit strained; it almost seems as if your friends are competing with you, if they pass on their discounts to students and other artists. VIC has decided that it is best to establish a business-like rapport with people for whom they record and to whom they sell. It prevents that kind of conflict. Their prices are getting competitive, and video art pros are sending more students their way.

VIDEO INFORMATION CENTER wants to cross the line and function within society, without losing the freedom to express themselves as they wish. Tezuka-san says the sixties was a time of experimentation in the arts, the seventies, one of popularization, and the eighties... well, they're working on it. Will their time and energy be diverted away from recording what they wish, to concentrate on earning money to survive? Let's hope not.

**ビデオ
ガイ
JAPAN**

Photos: M. Goldberg
left - Ichiro Tezuka
right - Fujiko Nakaya





KUNITACHI VIDEO SEMINAR

Reviewed by
MICHAEL GOLDBERG

While in Japan, I attended a showing of new work by members of the KUNITACHI VIDEO SEMINAR. Kunitachi is on the western extremity of Tokyo. Site of a university, residential area for younger established artists, it has an active community association with a fine recreational centre. Hakudo Kobayashi founded a video group there, one of the few in Japan interested in both artistic and social uses of the medium.

Your roving reporter was on the go that night, from this event to a reception for New York's Tomiyo Sasaki, hosted by Fujiko Nakaya. I did stay for 90 minutes, and review here 4 tapes for your "Tape Shelf".

VIDEO PRACTICE No.1 by Kazuki Ichiyama

The subtitle which Mr. Uchiyama frivolously gave to this, his first tape, was: "How to make video... a bad example". In fact, this is quite modest. The camerawork was indeed unsteady, the view, not sustained, and the recording, unstable at times. However, it ingeniously resolves the dilemma faced at one time by every video creator - what to do with the camera the first time you try it out on your own.

He began by asking each member of the video group to present themselves to the viewers. Most enjoyable is the fellow who flubs it, and must wait for the next take, kidding around, relaxed. Little did he suspect that this might be incorporated into the tape. It's the best part; surely there's a lesson to be learned from that.

After some footage of Hakudo-san giving a workshop, the cameraman walks out of the building, and takes us on a long car ride. During this sequence, the artist explains why he finally decided to give up producing the tape... Yet here we are, watching it! His voice-over ends just as the car arrives at the Cultural Centre. We are brought downstairs, to the room in which we are now viewing the tape. In the centre of the room is a valise. With the VTR still rolling, a hand opens the lid (it is the camera-case), and the camera is placed into its foam casing. The end - darkness and silence, a most unexpected finish to an enjoyable first work.

THE BIG FESTIVAL AT TAKEGAWA by Komoko Toriyama

Compared with Vancouver, there are very few women using video in Japan. Rarer still does one find a community-oriented approach in their work. Ms. Toriyama chose as her subject the annual festival in her hometown. Marred somewhat by audio problems and some unsteady camerawork, the tape does succeed in relating the participation of one individual in the day-long event.

I particularly enjoyed sequences of street folkdancing, and wonderful images of a huge, billowing dragon, floating ethereally down the road, held aloft by many, strong arms. Toriyama-san interviews several vendors, and spends time with a student, roasting corn in his small cart, who goes from one local festival to the next. Another pro explains how he raked in a lot of yen, going from shop to shop, requesting handouts. A mix emerges like X-mas in the West - true festivity if you seek it, but pervasive commercialism also abounds.

The tape does not resolve itself; it left me waiting for more, or for a clear ending... but then, life isn't quite like that.

A DOG ON SUNDAY by Kenji Hoshino

This is another first work, and it starts out with lots of promise. Pieces of string spell out the title, in English, and the G in DOG wags its tail, until it is hit with a hammer and gives out a yelp. After this bit of video animation, haunting flute music sets a good mood, and we find ourselves bounding along the sidewalk, camera at a dog's height.

Unfortunately, there just isn't much happening for a dog today (or for the viewer). Another dog barks at us, but that's about it. I wished Hoshino-san had been able to get people to relate to the camera as if it were a dog. We go up to a fence and watch some kids playing. The bars were wide enough for a dog to slip through, or a camera. With a simple edit it could have appeared as if we (the pup) had jumped into the yard. The theme really lent itself to numerous fun antics, but only the opening explored such potential. The end, classical music and sunset by water is pretty, yet it seemed to bear little relation to the rest of the tape.

99⁴⁹ K₁ K₁ K₁ by Masao Kawaguchi

This is the secret formula for space travel, revealed to us by the video artist's friend, whose real nickname is "Genius". He might seem like a crackpot at first, with his theories and tales, and looking at the amorphous sculptures around his house. But when he talks of travel to other planets, Kawaguchi-san asks if he can go too. "But, of course..." After some waiting, Genius raps on a table with his fingertips, and they go out to a shed. The camera looks up at a patch of sky, goes out of focus, the lens aperture is opened a bit too much... and we're off. The sky has an eerie lustre; it looks like a blob floating on the TV screen.

We've arrived. They go out for a walk on the planet Seshimetto, which looks deceptively like Tokyo. But is it just an opened lens that makes everything appear somewhat unreal? This is only an image of the town that they are exploring, he says. Genius has been there before. They can't be seen by the people around them, or so it seems. Flying saucers abound.

Although the tape could have been a bit tighter, it is a wondrous essay in sharing someone's imagination and perceiving the world around us in a different way.





SOCIAL COMMENT

by Michael Goldberg

The Osaka video group, TV Moi, is working on a tape about working-class poor, massed in the Kamagasaki part of town. Emi Segawa, the young woman spearheading this project, estimates that about 20,000 casual labourers, all men, spend most of their lives in flophouses there. Most will never marry; women are afraid to venture in. But she insists that they are not at all aggressive toward her. Indeed, they are gentlemen. Some off-season farmers also crash there, away from their families, trying to find occasional employment around the big city. Jobs are scarce, frustration, high; and as a result, drinking and gambling are part of their way of life.

There are daily clashes with the police, who have placed video surveillance cameras on telephone poles around the neighbourhood. As soon as a crowd gathers, cops appear. A photographer friend of the video group, living there to share the life of these men, was walking down an alley with his expensive camera, when he was accosted by three burly, plainclothed policemen. They roughed him up, refusing to believe he was not one of the locals with a stolen camera. The video group, young and hip looking, was also spotted. They were stopped, their identities verified, and were grilled at length on their activities and the purpose of this recording. Usually it is the other way around - the police protect mass-audience TV people, who are afraid to look the locals straight in the eye with their camera.

In fact, Japan's social problems are rarely covered by the mass-media, unless the event is sensational. They ignore neighbourhoods like Kamagasaki, Sanya, and Kotobukicho, problems of discrimination toward Koreans, the indigenous Ainu, and the formerly untouchable Buraku, industrial diseases and pollution, nuclear hazards, etc.

Ten years ago, the first social action tape I saw was by Fujiko Nakaya. She documented the struggles of mercury poisoning victims from Minamata to be recognized and to gain retribution. Despite public ignorance and Chisso employees' intimidation, this scandal was brought out in the open. Yet only recently has pressure by Minamata victims led to publication of Eugene Smith's poignant photo documentation in Japanese. Somewhat frightened by the public exposure and subsequent payoffs to the victims, manufacturers have been locating new plants in other Asian countries (mostly totalitarian), also a good source of cheap labour. At great risk, Korean and Phillipino artists are trying to show this reality to the Japanese, sometimes on video.

Feminism is hardly outspoken here, although there are a number of discussion groups, mostly of Japanese women who have been abroad, it would seem (although these are the women I was most likely to meet). The role of Josei (the "fairer sex") is steadfastly, if slowly, changing nevertheless. Women video-sakka are rare; feminist video is rarer still.

For the opening of the revitalized women's gallery AURA, in Tokyo's old red-light district, a video show was chosen. Selected from Processart's American collection were Tomiyo Sasaki's "Bubbling", and "Ladybug, Burlesque Artist" by Lyn Tiefenbacher and Dave Pentecost. A first-time video by Setsu Miura followed a hotshot, male rock-star-photographer. Mako Idemitsu showed one of her "Day of the Housewife" tapes. In it a group of four married women friends move pawns around the floorplan of a typical house and, briefly, a neighbourhood map, to show how they spend their day. I couldn't understand the chatting, but laughed along; like me, they spend most of the time in the kitchen. Kyoko Michishita, well-known as a feminist writer and video artist, showed her intimate "Dinner with a Friend", a relaxed, rambling, tender conversation, quite high-level thought, I believe.

Only recently have handicapped people come out in the open. It used to be a stigma, which the family took care of in the privacy of the home. A number of video-sakka have done tapes showing the difficulties these people face, intensified by a society that prefers not to see or show individual plight. The country has made great strides in treatment and care of the handicapped, although some parents still prefer to take this burden on themselves. Integration of deaf and retarded children into the normal school system is a subject of tapes by Keiji Ito.

In a documentary tape by Akira Matsumoto, a Cerebral Palsy victim pushes his way backwards in a wheelchair, then waits at the stairs for someone to offer to carry him up. A drunk starts hanging around, pushing away a would-be Samaritan, saying again and again: "You'd be better off dead". "My parents think so too", he says, "but I am alive, like you!" Akira apologizes to him for continuing to record, and not helping him out. "Oh no, I'm glad you got that on tape. It happens almost every day."

A tape by Video Earth, Tokyo, follows one paraplegic's determined effort to ascend Mount Fuji, a pilgrimage that is a normal part of most Japanese lives. While he practices and builds up his muscles by racing up and down ramps in his wheelchair, a group of volunteers designs and constructs a special hand-powered chair on tractor-treads. It ends with a heroic effort, painstakingly progressing up the cold mountain.

In another tape by the same group, the camera takes us underneath a bridge, where there is a bed, made, and someone's personal effects. But the proprietor isn't to be found. Then, just as the young video-sakka are about to leave, the gruff owner returns, incensed to find them there. "Are you the people that have been stealing my stuff? A man can't have any privacy any more!" They insist that they just want to talk to him, out of curiosity, but when he continues ranting, they too start to get insulting. Judging from viewers reactions, it becomes extremely humorous. The camera-person shoots the whole thing from the hip. In time, the guy relaxes, talks about his life as a vagabond, and his experiences in the War.

A number of shows by established video artists and groups were held last year. I took the opportunity to catch Kou Nakajima's "Life Story", at his one-man show. A favorite of Barbara London in the MOMA show, it moved me deeply. It is a two-channel piece, one monitor documents his daughter's birth and first few years of growth, the other, his mother's funeral. The baby's healthy crying is paralleled by sobs of grief. Each member of the family hammers a nail into the coffin, while the artist's hand appears from behind the camera on the other screen, to tickle his little girl. The document, played again and again in the name of art, is an expression of love that Kou shares with us.

I hope I don't give a negative impression of Japan, a culture full of worthy values that I respect and try to emulate. It is rare that its negative aspects are shown, which may make a critique stand out more than it should. It is a country and a people that I care for, and I wish to keep a balanced perspective.

HANDICAPPED

Art House Video Library is in the process of organizing an international network of video for disabled people. The project was conceived at the suggestion of an Osaka civic group actively involved in a self-help drive for disabled persons. The group now calls itself "The International Year of the Disabled '81 Executive Committee".

At the 31st General Assembly of the United Nations, a unanimous resolution was passed proclaiming 1981 as International Year of the Disabled. Its theme is to facilitate the participation of disabled people in any aspect of society - social, economic, or political. However, the Osaka committee feels that, praiseworthy as these objectives are, there is not likely to be much concrete results unless an active role is given to the disabled in planning and implementation.

"The UN says in an article of the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons of 1975: 'We shall abolish all forms of discrimination...', in the preamble it also states: 'We shall, as international community members, endeavour to safeguard all the rights of disabled persons, prevent any form of physical and mental disturbances occurring to them, and approximate their way of life to that of a normal and full one, as far as we can.'"

Having closely studied these statements and their results, the group came out with a statement: "The mental framework in which the disabled are considered something to be safeguarded hardly could breed an intellectual climate in which the disabled could, as independent equals to other human beings, play a positive role while fully participating in their society".

There is an underlying current of Paternalism in the UN declaration. Under the guise of benevolent action, an unwanted byproduct surfaced, namely the banishment of disabled persons by other members of the society. The Osaka group suggests that one basic right is the ability to communicate amongst ourselves, for self-reliance to be possible.

This right to "interchange" is fundamental for all people. A feeling of alienation is not limited to the handicapped in contemporary society. We can cite Japanese politics as an example, as well as the problems of men and women. Our knowledge of these comes to us via the existing mass-media, not through direct contact with the people we are talking about. At the extreme, when we try to talk about real people in a concrete situation, conversation bogs down, or comes close to the brink of ugly cliches. The topics we usually discuss can be narrowed down to gossip about the very few people who happen to contact us through the limited channel of our everyday life. At best, we deal with stories about some movie actors and actresses, or dreadful "news" about white-collar crime and the like. We don't know what is the real picture is, or what people are thinking in Okinawa, New York, Israel, or any other place in the world. A persistent question stands out: What do we really know?

At Art House, we are determined to know what different people around the world are thinking, feeling, and doing in various circumstances - social, economic, political, cultural, historic, etc. We will seek to put into practice, not a mere abstract theory of communications, but a concrete, blood-and-flesh act of communication between people. This necessity has been reinforced through our interacting with disabled persons, who are much more alienated than we.

Thus, the ultimate objectives to be attained by the international video network are: (1) To break down the isolation of disabled persons from our everyday setting, and involve them as active members of the human community;

(2) Convey their message to healthy persons, specifically that what disabled people want is understanding and interaction, not protection or sympathy.

We ask you please to send us copies of tapes produced with disabled people, which we shall present in Japan, the United States, Canada, and South Korea.

Areas of interest include:

- * City traffic and transportation problems, and their relevance to the disabled;
- * The Social Security System for the disabled;
- * Interaction of the disabled with normal people;
- * Integration into the school system;
- * ETC.

Contact us at the address below.

ART HOUSE VIDEO LIBRARY
Koshienguchi 1-1-10
Nishinomiya - City
Hyogo Prefecture
JAPAN 〒663

〈VIDEO LIBRARY 参加申込書〉

TITLE						CRAFT
PRODUCER	NAME	LEADER			GROUP	
	DATE		TITLE			
ADDRESS		TEL				
TAPE	DURATION		FORMAT	3/4" BETA VHS 1/2"	B/W COL	
DESCRIPTION						

the KOBE SHINBUN June 7, 1980

芸術、記録など収集

15日シン 市民にも開放
ポジウム

An Invitation to Exchange of Video Tapes

You are cordially invited to contact us for the exchange of video tapes in order to add stock to our VIDEO LIBRARY which is scheduled to open in the middle of this July. We are calling on foreign individual and organized video artists as well as those here in Japan.

Your nationalities, tape sizes, playtimes, genres are NEVER to be questioned. The canvassed tapes shall be kept away in the Video Library to be displayed to many library visitors in town. To further stimulate the public interest, we are planning to create video feature programs at our own initiative.

As a backgrounder, let us say a few words. At the Art House in Nishinomiya, northwest of Osaka on June 15, a symposium was held in preparation for the foundation of the present Video Library. The people gathered on the day were Mr. Michael Goldberg from Canada's Video Inn, (See Bottom Photo) Mr. Norio Imai, a creative Japanese video artist, and also graphic designers, school teachers and students, office workers and many others (or more than 30 people in all).

The basic goal of this library is to be an organ to use the video as a medium of sending out and getting back an international level of information and knowledge across the world, entirely operated by and at the initiative of, the private citizens of any nationality.

These nongovernmental services are pooled and coordinated by the Art House (See Top Photo) where the Video Library is set up. (The Art House is a multipurpose art space which has been through a multitude of projects promoting the popular understanding of contemporary art before and since Mr. Shozo Shimamoto, a progenitor of the GUTAI (Embodiment) School Avant-Garde Art Movement remodelled his studio into the present form.)

On this day all the participants could enjoy an over 6-hour talkathon whose eyes and ears were concentrated on the Video Library's prospects, particularly on tape security techniques while unsealing to enjoy watching their "giftpacked" video works now and then willingly listening to Mr. Goldberg explaining what's going on at his Video Inn back in Canada.

He commented: "It seems pleasantly surprising to see an independent community cultural movement started at the call of a small single video group (Videocraft Institute) who voiced their struggle out of the prevailing climate of obeying the louder voice of the video makers here in Japan. Indeed, the Video Library's birth is worth three cheers today."

Back to our talk. As a way of exchanging tapes on a broad basis, as soon as we receive your tapes we will in return provide you with the same number (preferably) of tapes out of our latest stock. If interested, you are suggested to mail your tapes or to ask for our video library catalogue.

Looking forward to your interest and support.

Ed. note- That's not quite what I said. Something got lost in the translation of a translation. But I do support this effort to build up a non-commercial video library, the first in Japan, through worldwide exchange of videotapes.

ビデオ
ライブラリ



HI-OVIS INTERACTIVE CABLE TV

HIGASHI-IKOMA

In the town of Higashi-Ikoma, just south of Kyoto, there is a system of viewer-response television that is technologically sophisticated, yet designed expressly for practical use by the average citizen. The Higashi-Ikoma Optical Visual Information System (Hi-OVIS) is the world's first community cable system employing fiber optics. Financed by government and private enterprise, Hi-OVIS provides a variety of community service programs, a computer-controlled still-picture service, a tape request library, excellent retransmissions of TV programs, a microfiche library, as well as its own fully equipped television studio and mobile units.

COMMUNITY-SERVICE PROGRAMS:

This includes a plethora of data geared to inform the Hi-OVIS participants about local news, weather, governmental decisions, police & fire information, traffic situations, shopping information, concerts, movies, cultural events, and medical and hygienic information, which is aired daily. Along with these short programs, longer educational telecasts are available (produced by staff and community members) on subjects such as English language, carpentry, "Go" playing, art, cooking, child rearing, gardening, and technical education. Community birth, deaths, marriage and engagement information is also given daily.

STILL-PICTURE SERVICE:

Computer-generated, continually updated still-pictures can be requested (using the home keyboard) to obtain information about local news, weather, doctors on-duty, water or power outages, hospital addresses, traffic information, train time-tables, and many other daily events. These still pictures quickly display the data in a well-organized and easily understandable fashion.

VIDEO REQUEST LIBRARY:

Each viewer receives a monthly schedule of popular shows that can be rebroadcast. In approx. 45 seconds, a robot selects a chosen tape from the library and begins to replay it to the viewer's home. Any tape can be cancelled at any time by the viewer, with the press of a button. The tapes available include programs produced locally, nationally, as well as some from abroad.

TELEVISION RE-TRANSMISSION

The town is at the base of Mount Ikoma, and has many tall buildings. Both of these obstacles result in typically poor TV reception, ordinarily; but Hi-OVIS maintains its own master antenna at the peak of the mountain. It is thus able to deliver superior, instantaneous distribution of the TV networks to its viewers.

MICROFICHE LIBRARY:

Viewers can request one of many series of microfiches, designed to inform and educate. For example, there is one set that teaches Kanji, the Chinese characters used in Japanese writing.

STUDIO & MOBILE UNITS:

Using these, spontaneous programming ideas become reality. Local events are taped or presented live, and viewers can produce their own shows, in their own homes, on location, or in the studio. The local children even have their own show.

As luck would have it, I was able to stay with a family in Higashi-Ikoma for four days, and to actually become involved in this fantastic operation for a while.

For the family I stayed with, the TV set had taken on new meaning; it was no longer a box used only for entertainment purposes, but a vital link with their surroundings. Every day, they would request weather information, news, and train schedules. After dinner, at 7 p.m. on weekdays, their college-age son studied English using a broadcast from the Hi-OVIS studio and his response box. Later in the evening, we'd watch standard television, or if nothing interesting was being aired, request a particular favorite from the tape library.

Since foreigners are somewhat rare in the small town of Higashi-Ikoma, especially university students from abroad, my group was asked to appear on the local news show, broadcast from several points. Of course, we all leaped at the chance to expose the actor that lies hidden within us all... so at 8 p.m., three women from our group were interviewed in the studio, while I interacted and was interviewed from my host family's home. We used the television camera and microphone, located in each CATV subscriber's house. We were nervous, but happy, as we stumbled along in halting Japanese, answering questions about our experiences in Japan and favorite foods.

After the broadcast, the women in the studio could observe a computer display indicating how many homes were tuned into the telecast, including exactly which families were on line. Out of 158 members (more will be added as new centers are built, since each hub can handle only 168 terminals, and high costs now preclude widespread usage), only 16 families were watching at that point. Ah well, maybe they'll tell their friends and everyone else will watch us on the video request rebroadcasts.

Because it is necessary to use the response box to control all the functions of the TV screen, the Hi-OVIS computers instantly have critical statistical information about the popularity of certain programs. Truly, serious objections can be raised that such information is potentially dangerous, if made available to unscrupulous advertisers, media managers, and the like. Hi-OVIS uses this data to make decisions about future programming, and eliminate unpopular programs. But anyone having access to the Hi-OVIS computers can follow the viewing habits of any particular subscribing family. Obviously, this is an invasion of privacy, on a minor scale. This problem is currently being discussed by the staff. If the experiment is to be enlarged, serious efforts will be made to deal with this problem.

Along with the above-mentioned ethical considerations, there are some serious hardware and software problems to be faced. This type of information system requires a keyboard, microphone, video camera, and computer terminal in each home, along with a standard color TV. Two computer control systems are necessary for each subcenter, one on reserve, to replace the other in the event of a malfunction. Also, robotized tape libraries, microfiches, and millions of dollars worth of accessory hardware are needed for each such hub.

Some concerns that the station manager expressed for the future, aside from possible expansion worries, regarded abuse of this type of two-way communication network. For example - a local politician could easily dominate the airwaves, with the help of a few friends, by having them continually support him with their "feedback". By the same token, a community member could easily be slandered, for political or personal reasons. Rules and appropriate penalties will have to be enacted, to prevent such miscarriages from occurring.

Although immature and costly, Hi-OVIS has had a tremendous impact upon the community of Higashi-Ikoma. Due to the effects of this experiment (as it is called), the subscribers act as a tightly knit group of friends, willing to share their particular talents and ideas with other community members, while mutually benefiting from the existence of this unusual service.

A report by

Edward Moss

State University of New York
Exchange Student in Japan



photo by FUSAO TAKAMURA



今井祝雄ビデオパフォーマンス
VIDEO PERFORMANCE BY NORIO IMAI

BOXgallery

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The following titles are deposited in the VIDEO INN library: 261 Powell St.; Vancouver, B.C.; Canada, V6A 1G3. Some of them are available directly from the INN, on an exchange basis; soon, VIDEO OUT distribution will be representing a number of these artists' work. We can also provide you with contact addresses for all the producers.

ART OF THE 60s IN JAPAN

by Gann Matsushita
1976, B&W, 30min.

Interviews (in English) at a show of the Artists' Union, with Mr. Y. Tono, art critic, and other visitors.



CLOTHING

by Norio Imai
colour, 16min.

A seated nude is slowly dressed in his own image, shot with a Polaroid camera.



CONFIRMATION BY DOING

The Complete Series
by Keigo Yamamoto
1971-73, B&W

Trying out a series of well-known scientific principles, for artistic effect.

FOOT No. 6

by Keigo Yamamoto
1978, colour, 8min.

Dancing silhouettes of a foot in a turquoise frame, creating visual patterns from humorous to abstract.

DRAWING-LINE-

by Kurashige Mitsunori
colour, 20min.

The video camera is fixed on a bathroom sink. After a moment, the artist's hand appears, and draws the outline of the objects in frame, right on the screen. An exercise in perception.



EATING

by Kyoko Michishita
1975, B&W, 30min.

Ms. Michishita documented what she ate, before and after the meals, for a month. It shows what kind of music she preferred at the time, and statistical information on cooking and cleanup time.



THE FACE OF KAMAGASAKI

by TV Moi
1980, colour,

An inside view of the slums of Osaka, documented by Jun Okazaki, interviews by Emi Segawa. English sub-titled version available.

TWENTY YEARS

by Sakumi Hagiwara
1974, B&W, 6min.

A group of people tries to faithfully reproduce posing for a photograph taken twenty years previously.

HOMAGE

by Ken Kuramoto
1979, colour, 23min.

Personal reminiscence of an elderly Japanese couple who had emigrated to Canada in the '20s and returned to Japan after many years away. (In Japanese)



IWAMIKAGURA (M)

by TV Moi
1979, colour, approx. 55min.

Edit of an all-night allegorical play presented by local citizens, in the temple. Without understanding the words, it is a most enjoyable tape.



KICK THE WORLD

by Nobuhiro Kawanaka
B&W, 17min.

A journey through a "miniature world", following the video artist's feet, kicking a can of "Coke" from famous site to site.

LOVE HOTEL

by Taki Bluesinger
1974, B&W, 10min.

No people appear in this documentation of a Japanese Love Hotel (they rent by the hour).



MAKE UP

by Mako Idemitsu
1977, colour, 12min.

With her back to the viewer, a woman applies facial makeup, using a B&W monitor as a "virtual image mirror".



MONA LISA

by Toshio Matsumoto
1975, colour, 3min.

The ultimate synthesized, colourized tape... it's Mona electronica!

NOISY WHITE FOREVER

by Michitaka Nakahara
B&W, 23min.

Video snow (white noise), real time clock, feedback, snatches from Japanese TV, all lead viewers to understand the plea in the title.

SCANNING SCANNING

ビデオ
ガイド



ON THEIR FEET
by Akira Matsumoto
1978, colour, 30min.

A small printing company run by handicapped people has difficulties, as do its employees, in their day-to-day life. Available in English subtitled version.



OOI AND ENVIRONS
by Katsuhiko Yamaguchi
1977, colour, silent, 10min.

A colourized tape of constantly moving city scapes - highways, people on the street, graveyard, etc. It achieves the quality of a silkscreen print - very pleasing to watch.

RAPE-BLOSSOMS/DEVIL-FISH/IRONY
by Hitoshi Momura
1975, B&W, 20min.

A video performance piece, visual puns - sensuously eating petals, holding an iron, etc., accompanied by random phonetic sounds.



SCANIMATE A / LAPSE COMMUNICATION
by Hakudo Kobayashi
1973, colour/B&W, 27min.

A- A "Pong" ball dances to music as colours change.

B- Video "broken telephone". One person does a set of movements for video, then, one by one, others come in and try to learn it from one viewing of the previous person's tape.

SCULPTURE EXHIBITION IN SEATTLE
Shoichi Shimotsugu
1979, B&W, 10min.

Overview of Sho's exhibition of paper sculptures, at And/Or Gallery.

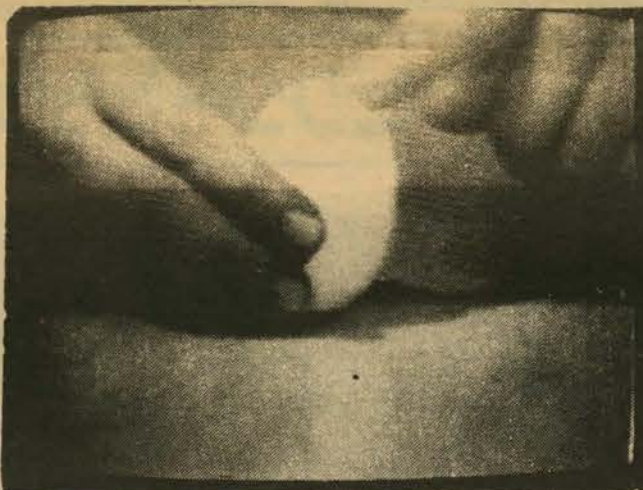
SHADOWS
by Mako Idemitsu
1980, colour, 27min.

The line between action and thought, life and aspirations, old patterns and new roles... one of the few feminist tapes produced in Japan. Available in English-subtitled version.



SHOICHI YOKOI
by Keiji Ito & Shigeki Tomita
(Video Earth, Tokyo)
B&W, 25min.

The story of a World War II soldier who had been hiding in the jungles of Guam for 30 years, until coaxed out in 1972, when he returned to Japan and to modern life.



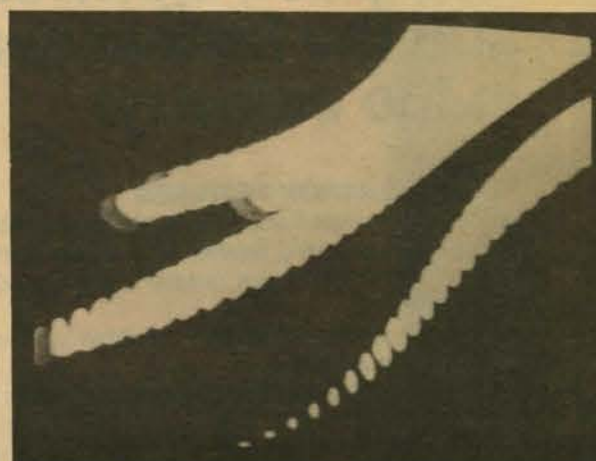
STATICS OF AN EGG
by Fujiko Nakaya
1973, B&W, 11min.

An egg is like a geodesic dome, comprised of tiny triangles. Fujiko demonstrates that, on a flat surface, and with a lot of patience, you can get it to stand on end. A timeless performance.



TOKYO KID BROTHERS IN REHEARSAL
by Michael Goldberg
1972, B&W, 25min.

At a rehearsal of a well-known, underground theatre group in Tokyo, a man becomes a monkey, and a child meets life's tribulations. An audience-participation game is tried out.



HAKKOKI (PROJECTOR)
by Katsumi Miyazaki
colour, music, 10min.

Electronic patterns in green and pink.

VANISHING LINE / VIDEO SELF-PORTRAIT
by Katsuhiko Yamaguchi
B&W/colour, 20min.

A- Street scenes made into abstract patterns with the use of mirrors.
B- Colourization of self-portrait, with Japanese Koto music.



VIDEO FIELD #1 and #2
by Taka Iimura
1975, B&W, 10min.

#1: Exploring the field of movement between camera and monitor;
#2: Field of exploration of a moving camera within a room.



VIDEOTAPE FILE
by the Video Information Center
1972-76, B&W/colour, 12min.

This is a composite of sequences lasting about 6 seconds each, from documentary recordings of contemporary dance, plays, and artists' events, from over 100 tapes.

WHAT IS PHOTOGRAPH?
by Kou Nakajima
1976, B&W, 30min.

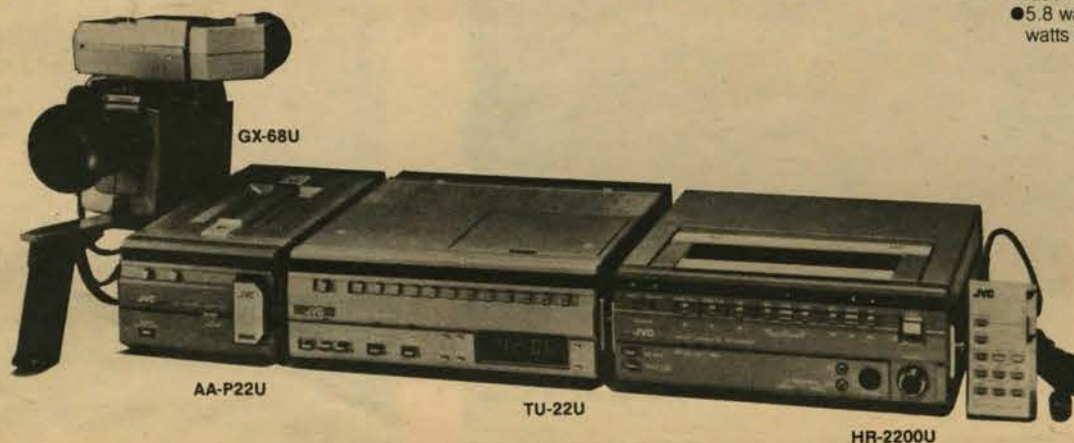
A group of young, male photographers take pictures of a female model, clothed at first, then shyly naked. The photographers, whose mouths are taped over, also disrobe, and at last become themselves models for the video camera.

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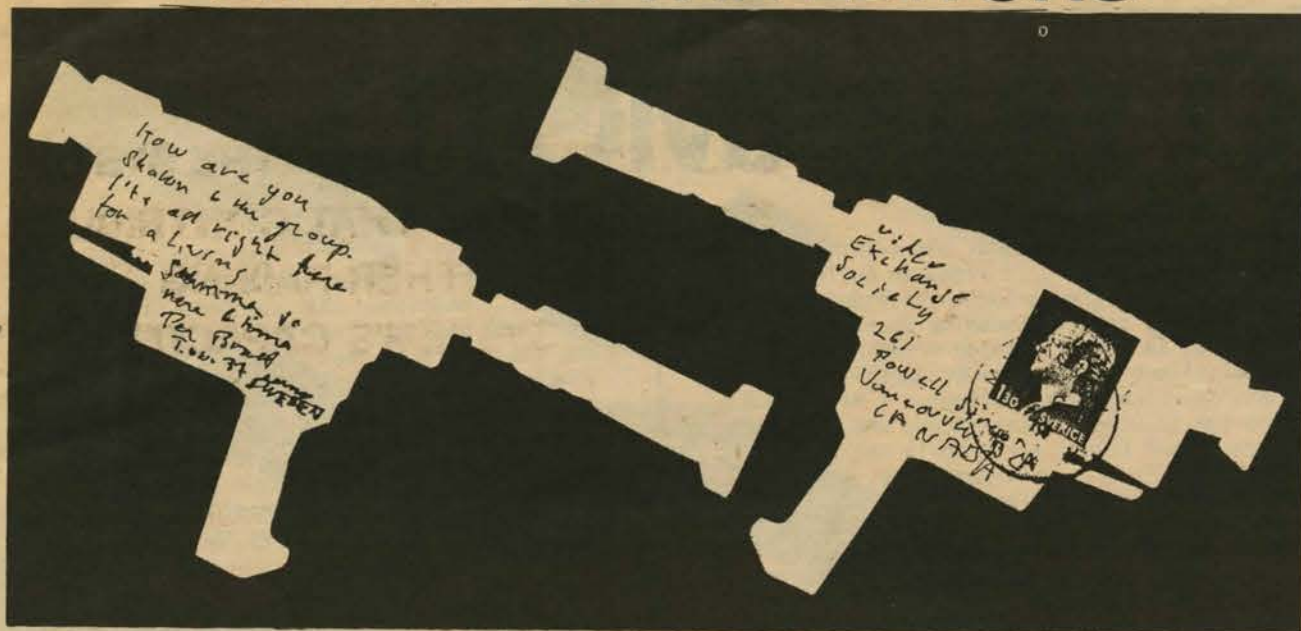
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BOOKS BY ARTISTS

An exhibition of over 60 artists' books from the collection of ART METROPOLE, curated by Tim Guest, will preview at the gallery of the Metropolitan Toronto Library, November 20 to December 24, 1980.

ABRAMOVIC, Marina/ULAY
ACCONCI, Vito
ANDERSON, Laurie
APPLE, Jack
APPLEBROOG, Ida
ART-LANGUAGE
BALDESSARI, John
BARTOLINI, Luciano
BEUYS, Joseph
BOETTI, Alighiero
BROODTHAERS, Marcel
BROWN, Stanley
BURDEN, Chris
BURGIN, Victor
BYARS, James Lee
CAGE, John
CARRION, Ulysses
CLEMENTE, Francesco
DARBOVEN, Hanne
DE JONG, Constance
DUCHAMP, Marcel
EL LISSITSKY
ENGLISH, Rose/Jacky LANSLEY/Sally POTTER
FULTON, Hamish
GENERAL IDEA
GILBERT & GEORGE
GREYSON, John
HILLER, Susan
KNOWLES, Christopher
LE WITT, Sol
MACUNIAS, George
MERZ, Mario
MURRAY, Ian
NANNUCCI, Maurizio
NAUMANN, Bruce
ONTANI, Luigi
OPPENHEIM, Dennis
ROSLER, Martha
ROT, Dieter
RUSCHA, Ed
SCHNEEMANN, Carolee
SCHWARZKOGLER, Rudolf
SNOW, Michael
SWIDINSKI, Jan
TOT, Endre
ULAY / Marina ABRAMOVIC
VOSTELL, Wolf/Dick HIGGINS
WARHOL, Andy

CATALOGUE AVAILABLE

A catalogue, including critical essays and a guide to the exhibition, will be available from mid-November. Germano Celant's important 'Book as Artwork 1960/72' text, long out of print, will be reprinted here in French and English.

For information on the exhibition or the catalogue contact Tim Guest, Art Metropole, 217 Richmond Street West, Toronto, Canada M5V 1W2. (416) 977-1685

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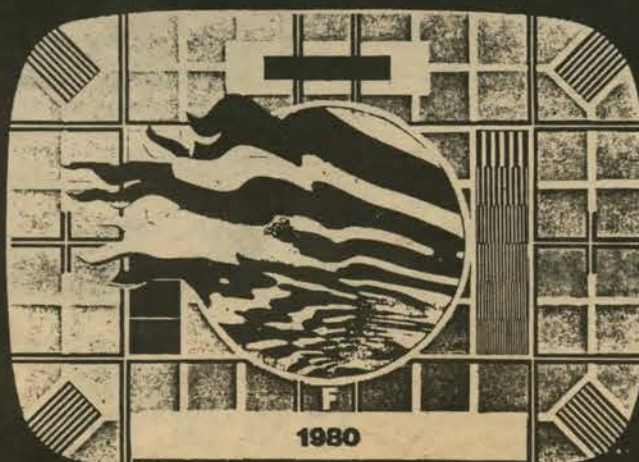
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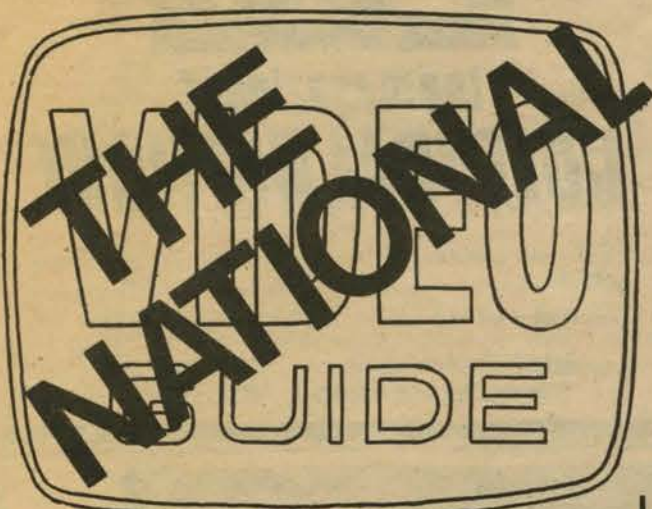
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KEIGO YAMAMOTO



by Michael Goldberg

Keigo Yamamoto returned to Canada this July, after 11 months' absence, to complete the tour interrupted by teaching duties at Fukui Technical High School. This is the same town honoured in the title of the exhibition selected by Barbara London for the Museum of Modern Art, "From Tokyo to Fukui and Kyoto". (See censorship article in this issue.) Again this year, Keigo had to zip back to Japan right after the school's summer vacation. It's just as well; the rice harvest is late this year, so he must help the family work the paddies.

Strange that someone from such an isolated environment should produce video art of international repute. A black sheep tethered, perhaps. It is also interesting that Keigo Yamamoto bases his work in traditional Japanese concepts (see the VIDEO GUIDE interview of him in vol.II/4). Most of the video artists well known in Japan have a lot of contact with the outside world, and have had more opportunity to be influenced by the international art scene and concepts (read "American"), subsequently interpreting this for Japan.

"Copy" culture, some Japanese modestly label their rich tradition, since from time recorded, outside forces helped shape the society. Japan preserved these imported arts, as the original countries did not, strengthened and refined them. For 300 years Japan closed itself off from the world outside, its own reality ending at the borders, its only neighbour, the seas. European links first opened the culture to the occident. Since the second Great War, it is an understatement that Japan has abundantly taken in American styles.

Keigo teaches the art prescribed in the curriculum: Western painting, drawing and sculpture, not woodblock printmaking, and certainly not video! His wife teaches, not Koto or Shamisen, but piano. Despite all this, his own art is an island unto itself. Keigo-San can navigate his way alone around any city in Europe, Canada, the States, or Brazil, yet he speaks nothing but Japanese.

After public showings of his tapes, at SAW Gallery in Ottawa, Ed Video in Guelph, ArtSpace in Peterborough, the Video Inn, Vancouver, and the Sunshine Coast Cultural Centre, in Sechelt, Keigo bridged language and culture gaps to answer questions about his approach and techniques. (Many thanks to the volunteer interpreters who made this possible - Koichi Abe, Lennie Natividad, and Riko Sano.) He viewed other people's tapes in those centres, as well as at Vidéo Femmes in Québec City, with Marshalore and at le Vidéographe in Montréal, Vera Frenkel and Noel Harding in Toronto, at Off-Centre Centre in Calgary, and down at And/Or, in Seattle. Our thanks to them all for receiving us so well.

These discussions were fascinating for me, as I had the opportunity to be at all of them. I'll try to wax down some of the thoughts that flew about, as I remember them, exhausted as I was.

Often people with some knowledge of Japanese performing and Fine Arts or crafts would see influences of these in Keigo's video. If you have never seen his work, I should preface this with a brief description - simple, fine-lined silhouettes, shadows, or real images of hands, feet, a torso, or parts thereof, inter-act with a second image of themselves. Movements of dance, rhythm of music, slowness of theatre, strokes of calligraphy, abstract patterning, animation... these were seen by viewers, and indeed they were there. To this comment, in each city, Keigo repeats with patience: "That's interesting; I was concerned only with the relationship between the two (similar) lines on screen, with the timing of their touching or being apart". Still, he has a passion about traditional theatre, and has seen a lot of it around Japan.

Vera pointed out to him that, in using a delay of the image catching up with itself, a fist hitting or a hand caressing the image prerecorded on a monitor, he had built in a "leader" and "follower" relationship. This had not been his intention; but on thinking about this, he acquiesced this was true... and that started him thinking about his work in a new way.



In a discussion after he had viewed many social-activist tapes, which Keigo questioned as art, I mentioned that Japanese video is by and large abstract, whereas Canadians tend to use the camera to show their social and personal reality. He insisted that his work is not abstract: "I document the way people move in my society; it is the basis of my art". Keigo is gently critical of the documentary video maker who jumps from one reality to another, without developing a depth of understanding, yet covers sweeping realms of thought.

And where does the art step in? A woman in Peterborough, whose name I missed, asked about the process. Keigo records one image, then copies this onto another tape. He sets cameras in front of the two monitors, so that they overlap quite exactly, using a simple mixer. He starts one VTR just after the other, so that the second image catches up with the first... but cannot see the result of the delay when doing the original recording. Only trial and error, and careful attention to his "breathing", or timing, gives it a magic glue that creates the intensity of the work, transcending its apparent simplicity.



photos by MICHAEL GOLDBERG

Taki Bluesinger said at the showing at the Inn that in Japanese theatre, action moves so slowly, it takes about half an hour for you to get into it. I thought about the amount of time it takes me, when I go to the country, to lose city speed and find my natural rhythm. Stephen Hackett said he'd drift off every once in a while, finding the transitions slow, then finding each time that Keigo had taken the piece in a new direction, a seeming jump from where he'd left it.

I commented that, in spite of the Japanese well from which Keigo's work sprung, I felt it could be appreciated by anyone who could touch the child in themselves (remembering shadows I played with on the wall, before falling into sleep). But Gerry Gilbert insisted, finger on the truth, that the work is very mature, highly sophisticated. "There's something special happening every moment; it leads you deeper and deeper. When the fingers touch, there's suspense every time."

IN CANADA



JAPANESE CANADIAN NEWS

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TOURING SHOW FROM CANADA

Last year, when Keigo Yamamoto came to Vancouver, he spent a lot of time browsing through the VIDEO INN library. He decided to arrange showings of some Canadian tapes in small galleries and showplaces around Japan. With the help of Katsuhiro Yamaguchi, and under the auspices of the Canadian Embassy (crucial for public and critical success in Japan, I am told), exhibitions were set up at Gallery Komai in Tokyo, Gallery U in Nagoya, Gallery Han in Fukui, and Photo Studio "Create" in Miyazaki. Later, Taki Bluesinger joined us with tapes from the Western

Front, Vancouver, and Kou Nakajima added tapes from the VIDEO EARTH group. We took the whole package to Zebra House in Sapporo and Sony Building in Osaka.

Keigo-san decided that, for this, the first touring video exhibition to hit Japan, a wide variety of styles and subject matter would be most suitable: theatre, dance, conceptual, electronic, and political tapes. Unfortunately, one of the tapes originally recommended, a Guimond/Dion production, had to be rejected because of crotch shots, which are illegal in

Japan. I had hoped we could leave it up to each gallery to decide whether or not to show it. They sometimes show more explicit art than New Wave with bits of bodies - Stellarc regularly hangs around (literally) in the buff. But the Embassy had been involved in a show of erotic art which was closed down by the police, and it could not therefore endorse the Punk Art tape. It had no qualms, however, about including "Pea Soup", a Separatist and Socialist analysis of Quebec's culture and economy, by Pierre Falardeau and Julien Poulin.

photos by MICHAEL GOLDBERG



Other tapes from the VIDEO INN were: "The Agony and the Ecstasy", by John Mitchell; "C'était un jeu de memoire", by Nora Hutchison; Me\$\$age to China", by Susan Britton; "5 Minutes & Under", by members of the Video Inn; "Al Neil - Piano and Antics", by June Boe; "Bal Anat Dancers", by Trish Hardman; "Le temps d'une priere", by Jacques Benoit and Jean-Claude Germain; "Anna and the Boys", by "Bozo" Moyle; and "Four

Works", by Al Razutis. It was necessary to try and avoid the spoken word, which certainly limited the inclusion of social-documentary work. The Western Front sent tapes by Sanja Ivekovic and Dalibor Martinis (Yugoslavia), Fabio Mauri (Italy), Robert Filiou (France), Kate Craig, Glenn Lewis, Taki Bluesinger, Randy & Berenici, all from Canada.

It was not possible to offer artists' fees;

Japanese museums and galleries are just now opening to video in a serious way. I have been militating for fees, as is Fujiko Nakaya (PROCESSART distribution, 1 - 21 - 1, Jingu-Mae; Shibuya-ku; Tokyo; Japan). There is a spate of new contemporary-art galleries, with little programming to fill them, much like the plethora of "Confederation" buildings opened around 1967 in Canada. However, the



Hara Bijutsukan (museum), with its Arc-en-Ciel Foundation, selected four of the tapes for possible inclusion in its collection. After considering prices quoted by the artists (plus handling), it chose two (\$725.00 plus shipping) ... not bad, for a start.

Keigo-san arranged a series of panel discussions, with Katsuhiro Yamaguchi, Nobuo Yamagishi, Hideki Nakamura, Yoshiharu Igarashi, Taki Bluesinger, Kazutoyo Shibata, Takeshi Yoshizumi, Keigo, and myself, at the various openings or closings. Kou Nakajima appeared in Osaka and Hokkaido.

Travels were covered by the Embassy, the University of Tsukuba, where I was Visiting Foreign Lecturer, our own pockets, and, as I later discovered, Keigo-san chipping in more than his share. These forums really generated interest in and better understanding of the tapes. They would not have been possible without the professional interpreters arranged by each centre. There are many people to thank for the success of the exhibition, particularly John Sloan, Cultural Attache of the Canadian Embassy, Katsuhiro Yamaguchi, Tetsu Yuzaki (of Zebra

House, Sapporo), and of course, the initiator and co-ordinator Keigo Yamamoto.

If you are thinking of making contact with Japanese video artists, or are planning to visit Japan in the future, an invaluable aid would be the next International Video Exchange Directory. You will find an ad in this issue.

Michael Goldberg

「マスコミ・テレビは世界中を同質にしているけれども、果してわれわれ人間相互の理解に役立っているのでしょうか？
ビデオ作家の大変パーソナルな表現こそ、多分お互いの文化ギャップをこえたものを伝え合うであろう。」

ビデオ
カバン



photo by STOKELY SIPE



photo by KEIGO YAMAMOTO

MAKO IDEMITSU & NORA HUTCHINSON

私のビデオ・ノート 高村房男

出光真子：「SHADOWS」

Nora Hutchinson：「思い出のゲーム」

a review of their recent work
by Fusao Takamura

現在新しく開発される表現媒体の中でもビデオは様々な可能性を持っている。近年の技術面における急速な進歩に伴い、表現方法として増々完成されたものに近づいてゆくに違いない。他の表現媒体と比べ、特にコミュニケーションにおける効果に主だった特徴があるようだ。映画に似た映像でありながら電気信号で作られ出される画面は不思議なほどリアリティーを持っている。映画の場合、スクリーンに大きく映写された人の表情のアップなどはどこかしらフィクションめいていて別のイメージを喚起させるが、モニターで見る表情は生な感触すらあり親近感を感じさせる。

また、特性のひとつである機動性とでも言おうか、作品対個人、つまりプライベートなコミュニケーションから多くの人々とのコミュニケーションまで容易に対応してゆけるという事だ。

当初、V.T.R.は放映されるテレビ番組を録画するためのものだったが、技術革新が進むにつれてビデオカメラも比較的安価で手に入れることができるようになった。そして個人でも作品を作れるようになった。一方的に情報を送り出すテレビとは違った存在をもち始めた。それまで一方通行で終わっていたものが、様々なコミュニケーションを計ることができるようになったのだ。この変換は技術的な発達のみならず、ビデオの表現手段としての精神形成的なものに大きく影響を与えているように思う。単に完成された作品としてだけでなく、作る側がどうビデオに関わろうとしているのか、どう関わってきているのかという事がビデオを考える上で重要な意味をもっている。

つまり、作る側がどうビデオするかという過程までも表現としてのビデオに内包されるということである。これはビデオのアクティブな一面であり、際立った特性と言えよう。

その様な事を感じるなか、日本のビデオ作家、出光真子の「SHADOWS」と、カナダのビデオ作家、ノラ・ハッチンソンの「思い出のゲーム」は強く印

象に残った。前者「SHADOWS」はビデオする上でそのアクティブな特性を旨く活した作品である。女性が花びらを一枚一枚ちぎってゆく。

かしこまった様子で対話する男女に対して、モニターの中ではくだけた感じで男女が話をしている。女性の日常生活に対して社会生活、という具合に常にモニターが登場し、その対極の状況を写し出す。また、あるシーンでは男性が改まった様子で女性に語りかけているのだが、カメラが、緩やかにパンするとモニターの中の少し憂うつそうな自分と対話しているという風に、時にはコミカルに、奇妙な時間体験と現実の光と影を感じさせる。作品を観るリアルタイムの中で、画面内のモニターが同時に対極を写し出すことが重要なキー（KEY）になっている。登場する人々のやりとりはたわいもないものであるが、そこには彼女自身の一定の距離を保った視点がある。実は現実に対してのシリアスなアプローチであり、これは作者のみならず観ている者に対しても鋭い問いかけとなって返ってくる。テレビ等から大量に送り出される情報は、既に答が含まれていて私たちが改めて思考する必要がないものが多い。画面内に登場するモニター同様、この作品を写し出している観客の前のモニターこそが、現在の状況に対するSHADOWSを暗示している。常日ごろ私たちが当たり前だと思っている事が確実なものではなく、現実の微妙な多面性を改めて考えなければならない事を促す作品であるように思う。その中に、日々生活する上で自分なりのビデオを常に考えていかなければならないとする、彼女自身のビデオする姿勢があらわれている。モニターの中でパントマイムをしている女性が、しきりに外に飛び出そうと試みるシーンは、その象徴とも思える。観客が単に作品を見るという受動的な行為だけでなく、さらに能動的に自分たちの情況を考え、見つめていかなければならないというアクティブなメッセージを投げかけられた気がする。

「SHADOWS」が論理的な構成をもつのにに対して、ノラ・ハッチンソンの「思い出のゲーム」は彼女の

幼いころの思い出が内的な感情の流れに沿ったドラマとして仕上がっている。冒頭、手で影を作るシーンから始まる。

彼女はオルガン奏者である。窓の向うには石ころの道が広がる。オルガンの音には不思議な魅力がある。いつかどこかで見たような、感じたような幻にも似た一種独特のふんいきがよみがえってくる。奏き終わると彼女のくちびるのアップ、特にカメラは素晴らしく、フォーカスの使い方など感情のひだを縫うように微妙に動く。彼女の詩的な独白とB&Wの粗い質感の映像とが糸を紡ぐようにつながり、彼女の内的世界を形成する。神経質なまでの繊細な感性が全体に充ちている。ここで彼女は、まず最初に人に何かを伝えようとするのではなく、自己の混とんとした内部を手繰り寄せることが彼女自身のビデオすることなのだろうと思う。思い出は美しく楽しいものばかりではない。彼女は幼いころの思い出を厳しくみつめていく上で何故ビデオなのか、何故ビデオの映像でなければならないのか、という思考をつきつめ、ビデオでなければ表現できないという地点で作り始めようとしたに違いない。由にビデオの現実的な質感の映像で織りなすことで、反対にぼやけた記憶のイメージを鮮明に浮び上らせている。より私的なものを深めていくことにより人間の底辺に横たわるベーシックな感覚と共鳴し始める。彼女の映像は言葉や環境の違いを乗り越え、多くの人々が感じとれる説得力をもった作品であるように思う。

個々の世界を持つ日本とカナダの二人の作家の作品を観て、ビデオの多様な可能性を深く感じる。そしてその可能性を、作家が作品を作る上でどのようにとらえ、よりビデオ的なものとして発展させていくかが、大きな課題であるように思う。

編集室より

カナダ・パンクパー・サテライト・ビデオ・エクスチェンジ・ソサエティ (ビデオ・イン) は、今月号の全ページを使って、日本ビデオ作家の活動を紹介できることを大変うれしく思います。これは、一部分、会員の一人であるマイケル・ゴールドバーグの昨年の日本滞在により可能になったものです。

日本ビデオ・アーティストとドキュメンタリー製作者の作品は、比較的外国では知られていません。

このビデオ・ガイドは、日本からのテープが呼びものとなるローマ・ビデオ80年にも持っていかれます。そして、日本ビデオテープ公演がヨーロッパ中を巡遊されることを期待しております。

日本ビデオテープは、世界中の最も優秀な製作物と同等に良質であり、もっと認識されるに値します。

今月号のビデオ・ガイドは、ビデオ作家の全作品についてではなく、過去何年間に書かれた記事のまとめでしかないということを言っておかねばなりません。

今回載せることができなかった作家の方々にここに謝罪し、現在進行している功績ある重要な作品があることを知っているの、出来る限りの情報を送って下さい。将来の発行版で償うつもりです。

シアトル・ビデオ・エクスチェンジ・ソサエティは、世界中のビデオ作家間のコミュニケーションを昇進させ、促進させることを目的に始められて9年になります。

言葉の問題を超えて他の国の同じ興味を持つ人々とテープの交換をすることに関心のある人は、下記の「国際ビデオ交換帳」用紙に書き込んで下さい。

写真 山本圭吾
1979年
パンクパー・アート・ギャラリー
「ミス・ミイ」

マイケル・ゴールドバーグ
「夢と思い出」

このごろ思うこと

CENSORSHIP - not a concept that many people support, in principle, in the "free" world. This is the third in a series of articles on the subject in VIDEO GUIDE (see vol.II, 4 & 5; and June '79).

PORNOGRAPHY - This is a notion about which individuals and societies hold differing opinions. There are certainly many who advocate the suppression of porn. Most countries have policies about the public presentation of graphically sexual acts, especially with regards to young people. Japan adopted a law that is quite peculiar: you can show just about any type of sexual activity, but no public hair. This is scratched or edited out of movies and photo mags. Kids must wonder what's so special about that fuzzy spot. It is possible for them to buy sex magazines from vending machines in the street. After some protests, many vendors covered the bottom row of magazines with mirror mylar, so that the images only show at night.

ART & PORNOGRAPHY - Oh, oh, here we go again... Where do you draw the line? If porno movie houses had the escape clause of being able to call their work "art", government could not control them, assuming, of course, that art is not censored. In Japan, one simple rule covers everything: cover the crotch, and it's not pornography. But life/art-and-sex/porn cannot be separated so neatly. Surely a nude painting or sculpture is not automatically erotic or salacious. Is video that much different because the picture moves?

JAPAN/U.S. EXCHANGE SHOW - Last year, the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MOMA) sent a set of American video artists' work to tour Japan. A zealous Customs' official viewed the tapes at random, and lo and behold, he saw HAIR! That led to a series of events which resulted in the exhibition being seized at the border. All the works were compiled onto several cassettes, and 3 of the pieces had visible pubes; so all the other artists' pieces on those cassettes were also held. As a result, only about 1/4 of the show made it to the opening, at Seibu Museum, in Tokyo.

As it happens, this gallery is a miniscule part of a huge department-store system. Its business is business, not art, and it regularly imports material from abroad. It did not want to press the issue, fearing possible reprisal by Customs. MOMA sent the videotapes via its art broker, rather than through the film department. Had they been "films", MOMA would merely have had to sign a film-classification "waiver". But on principle, the New York Museum wanted the tapes to enter Japan as legitimate art.

Had the show opened in one of the other galleries - Hyogo, Hokkaido, or Hara, the gallery would immediately have challenged the seizure, nipping it in the bud. Once it had the time to gain endorsement from the upper echelons of Japanese Customs, a potentially ugly confrontation started to develop with the Culture Ministry, which did not wish to offend MOMA, a prestigious institution that regularly sends shows to Japan. At this point, the press picked up on the standoff, and sensationalized it.

MOMA was asked to send another set of tapes, possibly with the "offensive" parts edited out, or with new works by the 3 artists (who were difficult to locate). It refused. The Japanese artists involved in setting up the tour, Fujiko Nakaya and Katsuhiro Yamaguchi, decided not to carry the issue to the mass-media. Art does not have to defend itself, the press would distort their stance, and the public would likely further associate video with porn (a separate question).

What finally happened was that the same tapes were sent from New York To Osaka, where the curator casually went to pick them up at Customs, and they were cleared without incident. My guess is that both sides pretended the previous seizure was unknown to them, thereby saving face. The show is now on tour. Keeping it quiet was a wise strategy after all.

I saw one of the censored tapes in Seattle. It contained a dreamlike sequence of a woman turning, standing in a bathtub... nothing to get horny about. I'm told that another has a man masturbating. An erection is more difficult to contend with vis-a-vis the law, in any country. Still, there's a lesson to be learned from this incident, at least in practical terms. It is possible, with patience and quiet, to get around regulations on pornography. One cannot officially show crotch shots in Japan, yet artists often show nude works these days, in small galleries, at least (Stellararc regularly hangs around in the buff, literally). There are clearly times to make censorship into a real issue, and others when it is wiser to avoid confrontation.

MICHAEL GOLDBERG

TOKYO FUKUI KYOTO
日米ビデオアート展
NEW YORK SEATTLE LOS ANGELES

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