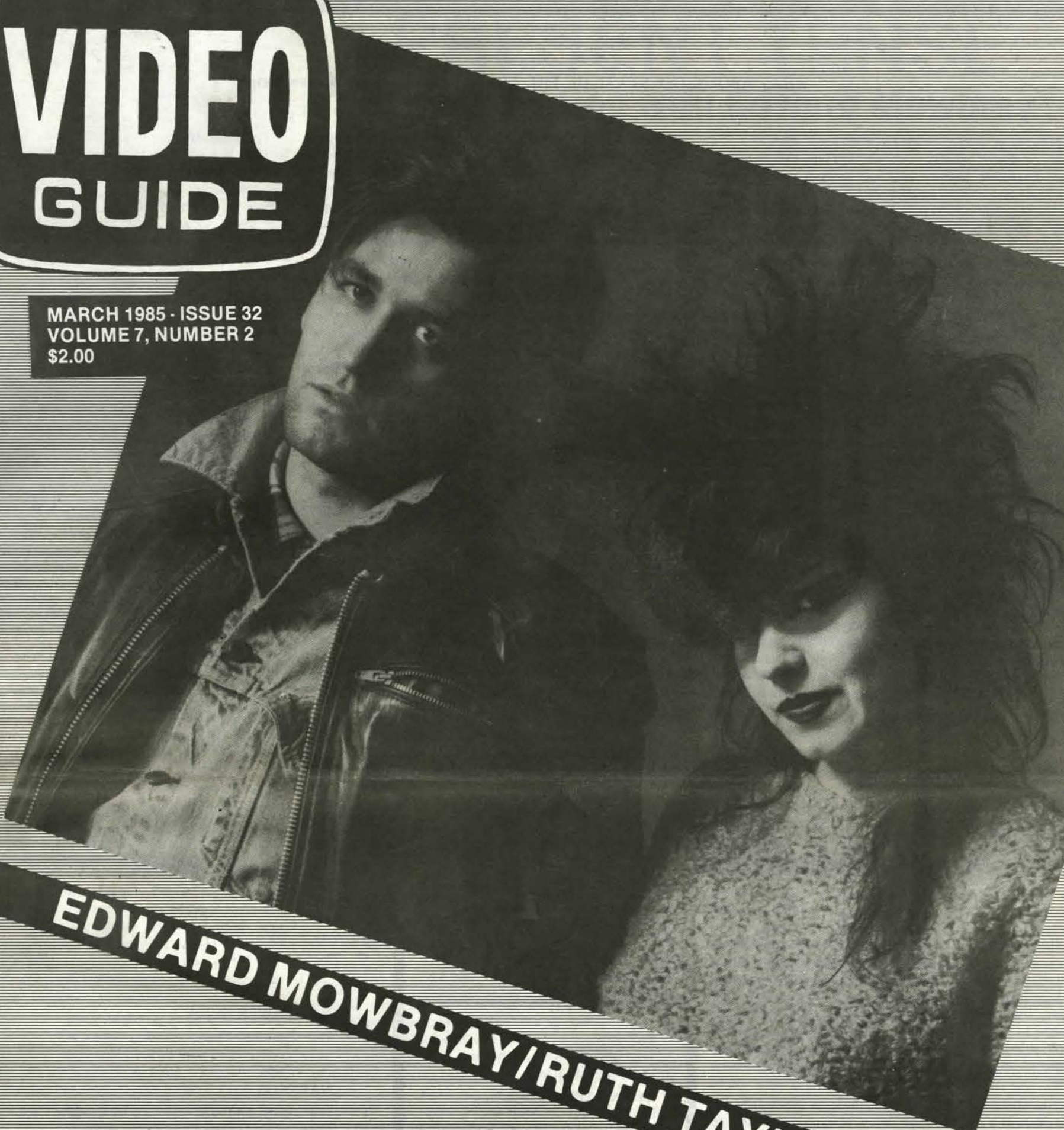


VIDEO GUIDE

MARCH 1985 - ISSUE 32
VOLUME 7, NUMBER 2
\$2.00



EDWARD MOWBRAY/RUTH TAYLOR

HELEN DOYLE - Words and Wounds of Silence
AART VAN BARNEVELD - Amsterdam
NOT DEAD YET a review
EDWARD MOWBRAY interview
IMPOSSIBLE LOVE - Candace Reckinger

HARDWARE NOTES

WHAT ABOUT THE STATE OF THE ART?

By Shawn Preus

It was over twelve years ago that I got together with other producers/artists, and we formed the Satellite Video Exchange Society. We had a small collection of videotapes and an even smaller amount of equipment. The idea of the group was to give the public access to the tapes being produced by people like ourselves. At that stage of independent production we felt people would have to be encouraged to want to watch our tapes. We set up a videotape library where people could watch tapes for free.

Technically things have changed a lot since then. I think that we still have to convince people to watch our tapes. The small format video machines have progressed so rapidly that it is now feasible for people to own their own machines. In the early days we spent hours talking about access and what it meant to let anyone access the b/w portapak. Was it important for someone to know how to use it? Did it detract from someone's creativity to insist that they first learn how to use it before making a tape? Who had the right to insist that someone use the equipment in a certain way?

Many people who are not educated in watching video see it as similar to watching people's home movies. Some people like it, some don't. One fact still remains after all these years — viewers still compare video to television. I have spent a lot of time educating people on how to watch video versus watching television. Recently, I've been involved in conversations with producers who feel that what they want to do is make technically good tapes. (Some producers, and I won't say whom, want their tapes to look as good as television.) Fine. What's wrong with that? Well, I have many problems in my mind that rise from that. First one is the cost of production.

When the cost of producing videotapes started to go up, everyone got concerned about showing the tapes for free. So then everyone started to charge to watch their tapes — like everything the costs have gone up. It is hard to watch independent production for free these days. Unless, of course, you happen to be downtown on Tuesday at 2:30 or 4:30. Then if you have two hours to spare you might see some videos at the local public art gallery (on the third floor in the corner). Even then, you'd better hope it's not busy and someone is looking after the program to check whether it's really working. Now I'm not complaining. I think it's great that videotapes are shown in public galleries (I think), but must I be satisfied with poor viewing circumstances just because the artist is being paid for the use of the tape?

In one of the Hardware Notes columns I asked for people's input to put together an article on access: how it's changed, what works, what doesn't. I didn't get much of a response, only from producers who knew what they wanted but never ran an access centre. I'm still interested. Now I'm convinced I will have to collect the information by questionnaire. Access has changed over the years, and I'm not sure it has changed for the better. In fact, I think it's gotten worse. I say this because it has gotten better only for those who know the "access game."

Today we charge for everything. Why do we? Well, it is hard surviving all these years on grants. Besides, those whom we get the grants from look favourably on "self-generated income." But what really makes us different from a commercial video rental place? Well most of us know the difference, but then we are reading VIDEO GUIDE.

I'm not really here to complain about slick productions. In fact, if I watch a tape that I really like and it's technically well produced, it usually means I like it better and will tell others to watch it. Most people I know want people to watch their tapes, and it helps to have people like them. So why do I feel the need to go back to the good old days when it was not so important to sell your work like a salesperson has to sell a product? If I could answer that, I probably wouldn't be writing this article. Any answer would be appreciated — and published, if you wish.

What are the politics of producing a technically good tape? This seems to be more important than any other type of politics. How often one rents or sells a videotape seems to be more important than the creativity that went into making it. Now this isn't true for everyone — there are still people who see the importance of both and change with given situations.

I feel it is very important for us as producers/artists to share the skills and technical things we have learned over the years, which is the intent of this column. Upcoming Hardware Notes will include an article about taking photos off monitors, packaging videotapes for distribution, preparing and presenting promotional material, as well as more technical things, such as how often to clean heads or demagnetize them, and current information about computers, etc.

Please feel free to send information or articles to be included in this column. Writers of articles will be paid. If your comments are included in Hardware Notes, you will receive a free subscription.

EDIT

This issue of VIDEO GUIDE brings you several interviews, reviews, and a look at one of the Canadian video centres, ED VIDEO. While production of this issue went on schedule, we did have a few minor hold-ups. We had hoped that by now VIDEO GUIDE could afford to expand to twenty pages, but with rising costs — but not rising subscriptions to equal those costs — it has not happened as hoped. We do plan to start with the next issue.

It is still not too late to contribute to the next issue. This issue is a special issue that will explore cultures as expressed through VIDEO. — Video as a tool of grassroots communication and aesthetic appreciation of culture, and the dilemmas and potential of cross-cultural communication. Articles, ideas, and tapes for inclusion should be sent to Karen Henry c/o Video Guide.

I would like to thank the people who responded to my call for contributing editors and look forward to a successful working relationship. I would still be interested to hear from others — especially in other parts of the world. People interested should write to The Editorial Board, VIDEO GUIDE, 261 Powell Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6A 1G3.

VIDEO GUIDE welcomes and encourages its readership to submit articles and suggestions. We depend on subscriptions and advertising to cover some of our costs; please check your subscription and renew on time. Also, encourage your friends, libraries, schools to subscribe.

Our next DEADLINES are April 15, June 15, September 15 and November 15, 1985, and January 30, 1986.

Shawn Preus
for the Satellite Video Exchange Society

VIDEO GUIDE

Vancouver's Video Magazine
Volume 7, Number 2 Issue 32

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(a non-profit society, est. 1973)

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ISSN # 0228 6726

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Subscriptions to VIDEO GUIDE are available at \$10.00 for 5 issues, \$10.00 U.S. funds in U.S., overseas \$15.00 Cdn. Send cheque or money order to VIDEO GUIDE, Satellite Video Exchange Society, 261 Powell Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6A 1G3.

VANCOUVER GUIDE

PRESENT TENSE

In Conversation with Edward Mowbray



Photo by Steve Wastney

"The (television) system seems to change but never really does; there are only modifications and changes in style. . . . Whatever their capabilities, however forceful they may be as leaders, the men in television are lashed to the system.

But the public is not lashed to it, and hope for the medium survives in that implicit freedom. The freedom of the public, in fact, is the time bomb of television."

—Les Brown, *The Business Behind The Box*

Karen Knights: At your recent lecture at Video Inn, you sounded frustrated with your experience trying to market *Not Dead Yet* and the current state of video art in general. Let's start with *Not Dead Yet*. You desired to find a different audience for your work: not to preach to the saved but to communicate with people who had never been exposed to punk culture before. That meant broadcast TV. Was that a good choice to make? You could have made a tape for the punk culture, or for gallery goers that would have been cheaper to produce.

Ed Mowbray: I don't make work to fit into a market. After I produce a work I look for places where I can best put it in order to a) reach the audience it is headed for, and b) get my money back. One thing I know is that punks are always poorer than artists. When I made *Not Dead Yet* there wasn't any idea of making something that was for the punks other than representing them in the most unbiased, objective, true light possible. When we decided to do *Not Dead Yet* we knew we were going to market it specifically for television, and I knew there were problems in trying to get this sort of work, especially documentary of any form, on television. The idea was to produce something that was a sort of hybrid: that had entertainment value, that had social and political significance, and that had the foundations of traditional documentary making. That, we thought, would be a winning combination to squeeze into a very small market that exists for punk documentary. My experience in television allowed me to construct something that would raise some eyebrows and be given consideration for broadcast. The only place you can get real money is television. The video art that is being shown on PBS in Buffalo is paying twenty dollars a minute. That's not much, but it's better than what they're paying at galleries.

KK: What has occurred is that *Not Dead Yet* is still not acceptable to the networks; the profanity being one reason. How much further do you think you would have to compromise on the tape in order for it to be seen on national television?

EM: First of all, *Not Dead Yet* is not a compromise. The only compromise was in length, because it had to be 59 minutes in order to get on television. But in terms of the content and the editing and what we wanted to say, we made no compromises whatsoever. The one thing I consider when making a tape is the audience, in terms of

their participation with the piece. I try to make something that will be interesting for them to watch without pandering to this lowest common denominator thing that goes on in television. A good idea is a good idea is a good idea. If it's presented then it can find its place on TV. There are a lot of artists who have no interest in working in that mass aesthetic; they're perfectly content with the gallery context. Myself, I'm concerned with the public space, the gallery, and the private space, the home.

KK: But are those the type of programs that people are watching — those on Public Television or Knowledge Network (an educational network)? They are tuned in to a certain style, a certain pacing that they're comfortable with. Does the video artist have to consider that when making a tape for that audience in order for it to appeal?

EM: Possibly. But I still don't think that's true. Like I said: a good idea with good production value, I think, can reach that audience. Pay TV and Knowledge Network are very specialized channels that appeal to very specialized tastes. I think you can develop a specialized audience for video art. It is just like magazines. They proliferated into anything that was specialized from snowmobiles to how-to's, and the same thing definitely is happening to television.

KK: The problem though is how can the 'average' video artist, who has been supported through the grant system, which is inadequate as it is, realistically afford the type of technology that is necessary to take that first step in producing broadcast quality work?

EM: They can't, probably. Even *Not Dead Yet* cost \$60,000 to make and that's just barely broadcast quality, shooting and editing on 3/4". Broadcast quality is shooting and editing on 1", or using an \$80,000 camera so that the resolution on 3/4" will stand up after several generations of editing and dubbing. No one has access to that kind of technology, that's true. I certainly don't have access to it.

KK: I agree that if given a chance, video art could find a market on TV just as nature programs or history programs do, but it doesn't seem it will be possible to get to that stage for the vast majority of artists because of the expense.

EM: I think the way the Canada Council has nurtured this art form has been pretty significant in terms of the support and money they've given to it. I think if there weren't cutbacks, if we weren't in a recession, they would stand back and look at what this art form has come up with in the last ten years and invest more in it. A number of things could happen, and I'm sure a lot of people would disagree with me on these points, but why isn't there something comparable to the National Film Board for video? Why isn't the CBC part of a program that allows visual artists to work with broadcast equipment like any of the PBS stations now? They're building that new CBC complex, and I can't see why there can't be room for equipment that could be accessed by video artists who have the skills to work with the technology. There are a lot of artists in various communities in Canada that are experts at audio, lighting, or scriptwriting. Crews like that could be assembled to produce pretty magnificent work for TV.

KK: Are artists approaching government on these issues to the degree that they should to see some results?

EM: I don't think they're confronting them in this way, only because the Canada Council and the Progressive Conservative government are bureaucratizing everything. Places like A Space and Trinity can't provide the essential functions they were set up for because they're always writing reports. They spend so much time justifying their existence, right to the last penny, to these government bodies, that they don't have the time or the person power to address these progressive issues. They're dealing with survival issues right now.

KK: Video art is also suffering from the inability to find a structure in which to pay the artist for her or his effort, partly because it is a duplicable product: it is not a one of a kind original.

EM: The actual concept may be original, but the physical video tape can be duplicated so many times that an artist cannot make money producing a single video tape unless they mass market it, unless you get something happening with video cassette distribution that they are making a thousand, two thousand copies. That's the only way an artist is going to make money with video art.

KK: The possibilities of numerous copies of an artwork being widely distributed to the public is one of video's most unique qualities. Unfortunately, that's not what happens, so the audience is not getting one of the advantages of the medium, and the artist does not get the advantage of an income from a medium with the potential of mass viewing. There must be a method of marketing that would do both.

EM: No one has really tried yet. The video cassette business is one that is just opening up. The first thing that business wanted to provide for the public was block buster movies. It has definitely become one of the fetishes of the eighties to sit home and watch movies one or two nights a week. I do it all the time. But it is a relatively new business. Those people who distribute to those stores have not had the opportunity to see any video work that they might be able to sell those retail outlets.

KK: A lot of business people got into the video cassette market thinking they could open up, stock their shelves, and let people come to them. It required little work or selling on their part. If they were now to stock local video artists' work, for instance, it would require effort on their part initially to sell the public on those tapes.

EM: I think that will happen; there will be a great deal of entrepreneurial spirit about that. Chris Lowry, the executive producer of *Not Dead Yet* is trying to market a number of video cassettes. He did the film *Tracks and Gestures, The Life of Jack Chambers*. He can't sell it to TV. His only other outlet is the video retail outlet. I think guys like him, who have products, who are entrepreneurs, will break that market and find a distributor who wants to supplement his inventory with new products.

KK: I would imagine that any video rented from a retail outlet would require pre-classification by the censor board.

EM: If you're in Ontario that's what it means now. Where the anti-censorship movement in Ontario at one point thought that a victory was in sight, it looks like it's been decisively crushed by the legislature to the point where, if I'm not incorrect, any place with any video equipment — like a bar, a gallery, a school — has to licence their equipment with the government and the Ontario Film and Video Review Board. In order to get a licence you have to submit. If you don't, they take your licence and your equipment away. Those spaces that are committed to showing video are now in the position where if they do civil disobedience action, they have their equipment taken away, which means your investment in that equipment is down the drain. Al Razutis and Mike Snow have both said, "The reality of the situation is that we tried to fight it and we still had to pay the fines. When the two thousand dollar fines came through, they came out of our pockets." That's the bind. I've never had any of my work submitted to the board. I decided that one of the contributions I would make to the Toronto censorship struggle was to show at the Funnel, where my work is submitted through a strategy to break down the censorship laws. There are people in Toronto who have dedicated years to this cause and it has been crushed by one bill. The government has said it can't tolerate being defeated in court time and time again, so they're just going to pass legislation that will be hard line and tough for the artist.

KK: Has it begun yet to affect the type of work artists in Toronto are doing?

EM: I don't know about other artists, but I know it has affected me, and I know it affects artists like Paul Wong with *Confused*. One thing I want to do is go out there and make a tape that defies censorship. It puts all these notions in your head where they didn't exist before. I would never have made an anti-censorship tape before, but now I feel compelled to say, "I don't like what censorship is in this country."

KK: Once artists become hesitant to approach subjects like sexuality, they are in fact victims of a much more dangerous type of censorship: that of choice of subject matter, not just of method.

EM: It doesn't matter what you produce in a video tape. Sometime, somewhere in the world, it is going to be subject to censorship. Take Randy (Gledhill) and Benicci's (Hershorne) new tape *Once Upon A Time*. In the States they don't want the cop sucking on the gun; in Japan they don't want the cockroaches in the jewels; in Rio de Janeiro they don't want the public hair. *Big World* my most recent video tape is probably not going to be

Continued on next page



Excerpts and Euphoria



Big World

shown in Japan because I have a five-second shot of pubic hair. I can either black it out or cut it out. So when I make a video tape do I think about not being able to show my work in Japan, or France, or Quebec, or in Ontario? Censorship exists everywhere and it is becoming an omnipresent, oppressive factor in producing art today, far more with film and video than with other art forms.

KK: *Censors see them as the most threatening art forms.*

EM: In terms of communication and reaching a large audience. Even photography doesn't seem to be subject to the same scrutiny, even though it is one of the most threatening mediums in terms of divulging truths. Look what photographs and film did for Vietnam and other atrocities. The sad fact is, when you're making a tape knowing it will be submitted to the censor board, you can't help but think, "Is this going to be acceptable? Am I going to be spending \$15,000 on a tape I won't be able to show in this city?" I can't show *Not Dead Yet* in Toronto without submitting it. The contradiction with censorship laws in Ontario is that TV self regulates itself: anything that goes on television the censorship board can't touch. Of course TV wants to regulate itself so that it doesn't have its licence taken away by the CRTC (Canadian Radio and Telecommunication Commission), but I think what's being shown on television is a bigger threat than what's being shown in art galleries. I don't understand that contradiction in values.

KK: *For example, the broadcasting of the Miss Teen America contest on television the other night — that is not only acceptable, it's glorified.*

EM: It is the most sugarcoated version of superficial, propagandistic, exploitive tripe I've seen. But look what they've done in Britain: no more beauty pageants broadcast. There again, who understands the kind of contradictions that bans "Frankie Goes To Hollywood" on the radio, will take beauty pageants off the air, but at the same time installs cruise missiles.

KK: *Part of the appeal of early video art was the sense of 'the people' taking some control over a medium that had been in the hands of network television since its inception. There was a sense of the networks as 'enemies.'*

EM: I think that those artists in the grass-roots days of video making, the anti-television video maker, didn't want to be a part of TV because they didn't like what they saw, and they knew it was very difficult to challenge that with 1/2" black and white portapaks. Now you have access to sophisticated technological equipment.

KK: *It seems we've reached a point where video artists are going to have to group together, figure out the issues, and direct their energies towards those goals. Do you see any evidence of that happening?*

EM: It is not happening in Toronto, that's for sure. No way. I was very active in the video community when I was with ARC and with Trinity, and there was something about the rhetoric of what ideals we should put forward in terms of video art that, I think, turned everybody off. We talked about starting video festivals: none were started. Canadian video artists didn't get behind Video Culture Canada in the second year even after Peter, Renya, and Video Culture went to great lengths to try to satisfy their concerns. So you no longer have any video festivals in Toronto, and you don't have a video publication in Toronto. You have 75% of the country's video artists working out of Toronto, you have the country's biggest access centres in Toronto, yet there is no dialogue happening between any of the artists with the exception of the board at Trinity Square Video. A few interested

artists get involved when there's a crisis, but only then. Because there weren't any pragmatic or tangible solutions being presented to both the current issues and those that existed two years ago and are facing us now — ceilings on funding and cutbacks — we're in no position to fight it now. We have no way of really lobbying effectively because we don't have a unified voice. Nothing ever came out of our meetings except a lot of complaining about what was wrong and a lot of letter writing; but no direct action, nothing that was concrete.

KK: *To be fair to the video community, what appears at times to be apathy is, in fact, a defeatist response to the fact that they may have worked for ten years in an art form, are recognized as proficient and intelligent artists, yet they can't pay their rent.*

EM: I don't work at anything else but making video tapes, and I'm not doing very well financially. There are a lot of video artists who can't even perfect their craft simply because they don't have the money or resources. What's a video artist to do if once every three or four months they get enough money or they just happen to get their annual grant, and they can go and rent some equipment for a couple of weeks or a week? Their camera technique or their editing technique hasn't been tried for six or eight months. How do you perfect your technique? How do you perfect your aesthetic? Painters would never put their first twelve paintings on a gallery wall. They are part of your learning process. But video artists are forced to say of their very first video tape: "Here is my art." A video artist has no opportunity to build a repertoire of work. That's one of the inherent problems with producing video art: you get a chance to produce maybe one tape a year, and it could have been a great concept, but you didn't have the benefit of being able to rent the equipment, work with the idea, and get your production values down before you actually started in on the project.

KK: *Unfortunately, that has been a criticism which video has often come up against: that a lot of the work is not of sufficient quality when compared with other mature art forms.*

EM: Definitely. I don't know how many times a person can cringe when they see a camera pan that jerks along, or they zoom in and it goes out of focus. I can't believe that's part of their 'aesthetic.' You have to be able to have some access and practice with the equipment to produce quality work. There is one thing that is very hopeful for video artists, and that's the advent of commercial equipment that is relatively cheap. Those should be the tools of every video artist. Not only can you produce tapes, but you can develop your aesthetic. 1/2" Beta or VHS tape is so cheap you can go out and shoot reams of it: find out what works, try new lighting techniques, use some filters. I know I have been criticized as a techno-jock simply because you don't find out-of-focus shots in my tapes and my editing style is very slick. But that's because I've come from television; it's because I've learned all the mistakes you can make. I made a million of them before I learned camera technique and before I found an editing style that was comfortable for me to use. Artists don't have the money or the access to perfect those skills in order to produce work that would have a better chance to reach more people.

KK: *It is that technical sheen to your work that initially makes it more accessible to the general viewer. They go directly to the content, rather than being caught up with the poor technical quality which is not part of their viewing experience.*

EM: I think even patrons of galleries are turned off by

bad camera work, poor editing and one of the biggest problems — poor soundtracks. There's no doubt you're turning off a lot of the viewers with products like that. That doesn't mean that artists that aren't technically proficient shouldn't make video tapes — that is their learning process. You perfect your craft over ten or twenty-five years. Look at an artist's work from ten years ago and then see the improvement in their production values today. They did it through trial and error. That's a pretty tough way to make a living. That's a pretty tough way to be an artist. I'm surprised that there is this much video activity going on in this country, but I'm so glad to see there is, because it adds strength and power to the community. It gives it two... well, one and a half... legs to stand on.

KK: *So what do you think is going to happen in the next few years? Will video artists see and act on the need to work together?*

EM: I think survival will necessitate that. But there's no doubt — even with what I've said now — when other people read it — there will be lines drawn, there will be factions in the community formed for various reasons. I wish I could be more optimistic but I'm not. I'm never going to stop making video tapes no matter what happens. That means that if I have to singularly, myself, go out into the private sector to get the money to produce video tapes, then that's what I'm going to do. We have to form a collective that isn't made up of a lot of elitist ideals as to what we are as video artists. We have to somehow, I don't know how, we have to accept each other in terms of our work. We have to accept what it is we're producing, make no judgements about what we produce as artists, and speak with the same voice. Are we politically correct artists? There's another form of censorship. If you're not producing politically correct, socially, politically relevant video work, you're just not taken seriously. That's just the way it is in Toronto. If we can put all that aside, maybe we'll be able to address the issues of getting our work to a point where we're not just barely surviving, but that we can actually produce work full time.

KK: *So you're optimistic about video artists moving towards broadcast quality work, even at the enormous expense?*

EM: What I'm getting around to is that I think anybody working in the video medium has a responsibility to try and change what they see on television. You have a responsibility as a video artist to get your material on television, because what is on television right now still remains unacceptable, and that much more dangerous, because so many more people are watching it than in the seventies. Guys like Reagan are being elected because of television. The power of those tools now are so awesome. We have to try to interface into it so there is at least an alternative for viewing — and not just the gallery — even if we can't produce it in series, or episode after episode. That is part of the criteria of being a video artist in the eighties and for the future. You have to try and subvert what is already on television. I know that sounds so idealist and so remote, but the fact of the matter is that there is a lot more access to television now than there ever was before. It isn't coming in forms that we video artists hoped: it didn't come with community television. If I ever get my work on television, or if I never do, at least I know that there was an ideal there that I had in mind for my work and the messages I put into my work. It wasn't pandering to the demographics of the lowest common denominator: it had some social, political, entertainment relevance. We can all complain about what television is doing to us, but, if you're a video artist, you should be producing work that is part of the change.

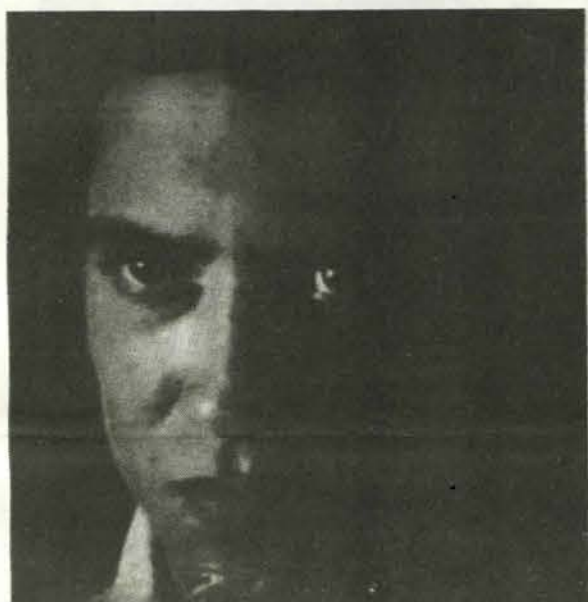
IMPOSSIBLE LOVE Videotape by Candace Reckinger

reviewed by Jamirte Trott

Impossible Love has two main protagonists: a man and a woman, but what happens between them is much larger than a heterosexual love story. The tape deals with the impossibility of this woman to reach this man; it strongly suggests that the possibility of meaningful exchange between men and women exists only in the realm of language. It is fiction.

The story is told in a fragmented narrative of video montage and texts. It opens up with a close-up shot of a woman's mouth giving out details of the story of "her whereabouts." She thus clarifies that wherever "she" is no one knows. Then the writer, rather the "reporter" — for there is an actress who writes and a woman who reports the story — says that the story is about disintegration. "Clues," both verbal and visual, tell you over and over that "woman" is non-historical, fragmented, non-existent, silenced and utterly helpless.

For example, standing in a room, perhaps a kitchen, the protagonist woman says, "It is hopeless, but it never ends . . . here is a world of harsh political facts. . . ." As soon as she says that, two men barge in and abduct her. She struggles, but they carry her off and tie up her arms. Later on she is again abducted by the same two men who this time not only tie up her hands, but also gag her mouth while her supposed "lover" stares coldly in sharp close-up.



Tied up and gagged, "woman" is left motionless and speechless. This helplessness is reinforced by the words and attitude of the "reporter" who states in a melancholic tone: "Things happen to me, and I want to tell you the story, but I can't even express it in words."

"She" wanders through the streets, remembering, reminiscing, listening to her inner voice. "She" surges out of undergrounds, faces tunnels and walls. "She" meets "Him"; they stare at each other silently, then watch the



night-lights over a bridge while her internal voice whispers to her that her mind is a wasteland such as the city they see.

"She" moves on a concept of non-identity which she acknowledges as her own, saying: "I am a hole without history, a black hole where everything collapses. . . I am a shell. . . suspended, floating nowhere. . . nothing inside. . . nothing to say."

Her attitude, her tone of voice, her walk, her words all say that there is nothing she can do. In fact she suggests there is nothing she wants to do, for she does not own herself, which is not necessarily true, for a state of helplessness is not helplessness itself. Thus the conveyance of ambiguity between illusive love and the possibility of meaningful exchange between men and women becomes, in the structure of this tape, ambiguity itself.



The woman finally confronts the man and accuses him of inventing her and of dispersing her. "Everything you do destroys me," she tells him. "I have nothing of my own. . . nothing to say, nothing to do. . . my body in pieces. . . ." She goes on to say that she cannot act because she is shattered as she declares that her life is planned by him, and that she cannot even hide because he will seek her out and re-invent her. He confirms by repeating what she had already said, and that is: "Things happen to you, and you want to tell the story. . . ."

Thus ambiguity and resignation become so keenly interwoven that one is not sure if this woman's plea to this man can actually carry the plea of "woman." One is not sure if this woman crying for the love of this man wants out of her misery or if she wants to go on living in his awful entrapment. This is further suggested in the way she tells him from a distance: "This is for you, you whom I cannot have . . . you who have resisted . . . I finally get my courage and approach you, but you always refuse me."

The man finally tells her that so it is; that there is no such thing as love. There is only language.

As much as I like this tape, which apparently takes structuralism seriously, I believe that the concept of woman as helpless victim can no longer be conceived. Even if it serves to state the condition of women, it serves more to reinforce man's power. Furthermore, both Reckinger and her protagonist know too much about women's place in society. Thus their knowledge alone precludes the suggested helplessness of the protagonist.

A CITY-WIDE VIDEO INSTALLATION EXHIBITION

Video is hot these days, and video as an art form is rapidly coming into its own. As the technology becomes more sophisticated and affordable and people are viewing more types of television programming via cable and home VCR's, as well as making their own videos, video art is no longer as inaccessible and esoteric as it once was.

Beginning in late March, 1985, and continuing through the month of April, IMAGE Film/Video Center will present TELE-VISIONS, a city-wide video installation exhibition and a new feature of the IMAGE-sponsored Ninth Atlanta Film and Video Festival (AFVF).

Tele-visions, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and curated by IMAGE Executive Director Robin Reidy, will include four video installations co-sponsored by and placed in three Atlanta art gallery spaces — the High Museum of Art, Nexus Contemporary Art Center, and the Atlanta College of Art Gallery.

Video installation is a three-dimensional video art form created to remove video (in the form of television) from its usual place in the family living room. When placed in a different setting, video enables an artist to create a unique environment or make a statement about video as a form of mass communication or treat video as a piece of sculpture.

Tele-visions is the first major video installation exhibition ever to be mounted in the entire southeast region. It can be seen at the following locations:

High Museum of Art — video artist Mary Lucier will install her award-winning "Ohio at Giverny," a seven-monitor wall of beautifully-interwoven images from her childhood home in Ohio and Claude Monet's gardens in France. This piece was presented at the 1983 Whitney Museum of American Art Biennale, and has since been shown in museums around the world. "Ohio at Giverny" will be on display at the HMA during the run of the AFVF, April 19-28.

Nexus Contemporary Art Centre — will house two video installations beginning on March 22 and continuing through April 20. Video artist Dara Birnbaum will present her "Damnation of Faust," which is a three-dimensional presentation of her recent single-tape work by the same name. Internationally-known video artist Bill Viola has created a new piece specifically designed for the Nexus space called "Elephant in a Dark Room."

Atlanta College of Art Gallery — on March 26 to April 28, Spanish video artist Antonio Muntadas will install his piece entitled "haute CULTURE," which consists of

a large motorized seesaw with a video monitor on each seat. On the monitors are images of shopping malls and art galleries, representing aspects of low and high culture that sustain an uneasy "balance" in modern society.

Tele-visions is intended to introduce the general public in Atlanta and the Southeast to the exciting non-traditional forms that video can take when an artist uses it as an art-making tool for personal expression. Tele-visions will also illustrate one of the future art forms to be discussed at the AFVF "New Technologies and the Arts" seminar to be held on April 27. In addition, Barbara London, Video Curator at the Museum of Modern Art, will present a slide show/lecture on the history and kinds of video installations at the High Museum of Art on April 11, which will be free and open to the public. All four video artists will also be in Atlanta to install and speak about their work.

For more information, contact Robin Reidy at IMAGE 874-4756.

IMAGE FILM/VIDEO CENTER
972 Peachtree Street, No. 213
Atlanta, GA 30309

THE WORDS AND WOUNDS OF



"... until the Renaissance, man's dispute with madness was a dramatic debate in which he confronted the secret powers of the world. . . . the man of madness communicates with society only through the intermediary of an equally abstract reason which is order, physical and moral constraint, the anonymous pressure of the group, the requirements of conformity. As for a common language, . . . there is no such thing any longer; the constitution of madness as a mental illness at the end of the 18th century affords the evidence of a broken dialogue. . . . The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason about madness, has been established only on the basis of such a silence."

— Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*

Helen Doyle is a veteran videomaker from Quebec. She was a founding member of Video Femmes in 1973 and has been actively producing video for over ten years. She was in Vancouver in November to attend 'A Different Face,' a festival of film and video by women sponsored by Women In Focus. At this event she screened her recent tape, *The Words and Wounds of Silence*, which is her second tape on the subject of women and madness. The first is the well-known *This Isn't Wonderland* which she produced in collaboration with Nicole Giguere. The two tapes are similar in their polished camera technique and use of technical effects and the complex editing of elaborate theatrical and artistic elements into the documentary material. The information is couched in a dramatic context using original music and performances by professional actresses. Each vignette, song, or painting expands on the personal testimonies of the women who recount their experience with 'the other side of the looking glass,' having stepped through the rational structures of society into an open void where nothing is predictable. *This Isn't Wonderland* addresses the nature of madness in women particularly in respect to the changing structures of society, the transition in social roles and ambiguity towards such cultural icons as motherhood, and the guilt and insecurity which arises from the change. As one

woman states in the tape, it is all very well to realize the objective changes, but the emotional reverberations are very deep.

"... female sacrifice in patriarchal and pre-scientific culture is concretely rooted in female biology. To the extent to which the interaction of human biology and culture produces myths that shape our personalities, just so will female sacrifice (and psychological self-sacrifice) continue to exist. . . . Such madness is essentially an intense experience of female biological, sexual, and cultural castration, and a doomed search for potency."

— Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness*

This Isn't Wonderland indicts the conservative structures which would keep women in their traditional place and the resistance of psychiatry and institutions to accommodating or understanding the female experience. In the conclusion of the tape, a positive direction is established for women to gain control through working in groups to support each others' experience and to redefine the needs for treatment. These are the practical experiences from which the feminist system has grown. The tape justifies experience and resists powerlessness and presents women who have survived as well as the means of their survival.

The Words and Wounds of Silence explores a dynamic edge of madness. It asks the questions, 'what passions do our rational structures serve to subvert?' One woman rages, "The psychiatrist's job is to kill life in the name of order and immobility." And further, 'what is the correlation between madness and creativity?' The tape presents a strong case for the idea that madness is the explosion of frustrated imagination when avenues of expression are limited, which has traditionally been the case for women.

"Silence is a rumbling volcano."

— Helen Doyle

Helen's style of enfolding art and documentation is particularly relevant in this context. She calls her work a patchwork, a reference to a timeworn women's craft.

In *Words and Wounds* the thread which ties the testimonies together is a play by Emma Santos, a woman whose experience with the precipice of madness is long and intimate. The play speaks in the voices of her delusions and suffering and reinforces her creative power by the very fact of the work's existence. The tape presents a special selection of women, chosen for their articulate analysis of their experience of madness and institutions. Their perspective is on the power of this boundless state. Here is hinted the reopening of a dialogue which Foucault states closed over 200 years ago when madness fell from a potentially awesome state to one hedged around by rational, 'patriarchal' presumptions and reduced to the state of illness, malady, and embarrassment. Helen uses all of her creative associations to both powerfully present the experience of institutionalization and treatment and, by contrast, the vitality of the women's analysis of the creative potential of this state of heightened perception. The tape does not gloss over the confusion and turmoil of the experience of madness but presents it in an artistic texture of sound and image. Real scenes, i.e., a hospital dayroom or a clip of shock therapy from the hospital records, are intercut with theatrical props and influenced by technical effects. The picture will fade to a surreal, washed-out brilliance which speaks of the intensity of the edges of emotional tolerance; the soundtrack is full of voices — strong ones, questioning ones — and the incessant mutterings of a soul in torment; parts of the patchwork are in sepia tones, flattened and unreal, creating distance as though looking through a tinted shield. Other scenes are black and white, or the brilliant real colours of a rock performance, or the intimate tones of the private ambience of those women who are speaking. The tape creates a balance between the stark institutional experience, the process of self-discovery, and the objective, creative analysis. It moves from the social-emotional causes of madness and the sterility of the treatment process into the discovered source of strength for those who have survived. Pol Pelletier points out that madness is not in itself a creative state, but a state of coming to terms with the self, a journey which, once completed, enriches and enlivens your perspective. "I don't write to free myself from madness, I write to cultivate it."

SILENCE

HELEN DOYLE

By Karen Henry



photo by Jean Fiset

The tape speaks for women whose traditional repression has forced this journey for many and legitimizes the distress and the process of self-discovery. It is only appropriate to acknowledge the specifically female tradition of nurturance and caring for the whole person from which such a redefinition could arise.

"You have to have rebelled at women's fate but not be subjugated by it — to hold it at arms length and at the same time contain the passion, the pain."

— from Words and Wounds

Helen worked on this project for three years, developing a rapport with her subjects and her associates. Her concern for women and her joy of working with them is apparent. Her intent for this work was to alleviate some of the pejorative pain of being 'crazy.' She strives for intimacy with her audience and integrity in presenting the 'gifts' of other women's work and experience. Her work is for

her a social action to re-present the experience of women.

"I thought about the images of women and men projected by the media, the fantasies sustained by them, the artificial expectations created by them and the established order in which they maintain us."

— Helen Doyle, Second Link Catalogue

I asked her if she was aware of the romantic aura which she creates around madness through her choice of exceptional women and by placing the subject in a context of art and fiction. She has challenged a tradition of assumptions and risked this empathy with madness by blurring the lines. Her response was imbued with the excitement of taking this chance and the positive potential of it as attested to by the response of the many women who had seen the tape and felt the nurturance and acknowledgement of this redefinition of their experience. The tape premiered

in Paris at a conference of psychology and won recognition from this group. The risk of idealization pays off in positive real effects on the attitudes of the system. Her experience of working so closely with the subject was, to some extent, a trial by fire in which she was forced to come to terms with her own insecurities. At times her fear and exhaustion tempted her to give up the project, but her responsibility to the women who had contributed their life experience to her project and the support of men and women who believed in it kept her going.

Foucault, too, draws a correlation between art and madness:

"... a work of art opens a void, a moment of silence, a question without answer, provides a breach without reconciliation where the world is forced to question itself. . . . the moment when, together, the work of art and madness are born and fulfilled is the beginning of time when the world finds itself arraigned by that work of art and responsible before it for what it is."

Helen Doyle takes this potential of art seriously. Her work is not feminist didacticism, it does not preach; rather it inspires with all the hope of new prospects. These new definitions have repercussions for humanity as a whole, and she tenders that potential while placing the inspiration for change squarely in the awakened direction of women's experience. Like all inspirational ideas, there is a tendency to conclude that the causes are apparent and the changes would be simple, if only . . . if only men would acknowledge women as equals, if only women would take their power, if only we treated each other with sensitivity and integrity, if only we were open to change, if only all was a matter of rational choice. . . . The changes are long and complex and do not reach a pinnacle of perfection. But the point of *Words and Wounds* is timely and beautifully stated.

Helen will continue her work with developing new images of women with a tape about a female trapeze artist which she is currently working on. She also plans a more personal venture in the form of an image poem. 



NOT DEAD YET: Celebration or



Photo by Anita Olanick

Directors Edward Mowbray and Ruth Taylor

Ruth Taylor and Ed Mowbray's documentary *Not Dead Yet* made its west coast premiere in Vancouver on December 15, 1984. It was screened at the Convertible Showroom, a co-presentation by the Convertible Showroom and Video Inn.

Not Dead Yet opens with a tracking shot of suburban Toronto: brick homes as solid today as when they were built, manicured lawns — the costly illusion of tranquility. Cut to an overview of downtown. Cut to a pair of determined young feet confidently pounding the concrete of the urban core. This is the John Travolta of the 80's.

"What have I done that's so bad? She could have a prostitute or a fucking car thief or something for a daughter. All I fucking did was split home! . . . This whole life that she condoned for me, she nurtured it, she liked it, she taught it to me, practically, and then she decides I couldn't do it anymore. . ."

This is Maria, 14, a member of the punk scene in Toronto. Her mother may have been a part of the hippie movement of the sixties. She raps about her mother's apparent hypocrisy, the merits of being a cocktease over a slut, and the danger of an unverifiable nuclear freeze. She talks and talks and talks at a breathless pace that quickly wears on the viewer. Her contradictions, simplistic solutions, and mock maturity are all symptoms of the thing which makes her at once appealing and unbearable: her youth.

The Toronto punk scene of today has little to do with the highly politicized, counter-culture movement of five

or more years ago. The punks come from middle class suburbs, not London ghettos. Their politics, if they exist at all, are diverse and naive. It is a movement made up primarily of kids in their early teens to early twenties. Even Mowbray admits that both he and Taylor (lead singer for United State) are disappointed with this generation of punks, that something has changed and maybe not for the better.

Mowbray and Taylor's intention was to produce a video palatable to a mass audience while preserving the integrity of the movement itself. They hoped it would reach a wider audience than other punk documentaries made within that culture had, which meant network television coverage. A former television editor himself, Mowbray knew the technical and structural criteria that would have to be met. The result is a documentary without a home. Now, six months after it was released, the networks still can't decide whether their public would be interested in suburban punk culture in Canada, and some viewers who went to its west coast premiere are criticizing its slick, relatively sanitized treatment of the punk phenomenon.

The documentary was shot over a one year period in and around Larry's Hideaway and the Turning Point, Toronto's punk clubs. Neatly structured into twelve thematic units, the video documents the live performances of twelve bands: United State, Creative Zero, A.P.B., Chronic Submission, Quarantine, Jolly Tambourine Man, Blibber and the Rat Crushers, Direct Action, Wrath, Madhouse, A Bunch of Fucking Goofs, and Youth, Youth, Youth, each name a microcosm of punk aesthetic. A

movement united more by music than ideology, the bands' performances predominate: sometimes fun, sometimes tiresome. Inspired by a news broadcast or their latest fight at home, they write and perform music unique to their immediate environment.

*"Mommy's in the mafia
Mommy's going to break my legs
If I don't pay her back
She says she'll break off both of them
If I don't pay her cash
She'll put me in the blender
If I am not good
I owe her 55%
On all her stinking food
Oh yeah . . . Oh yeah"*

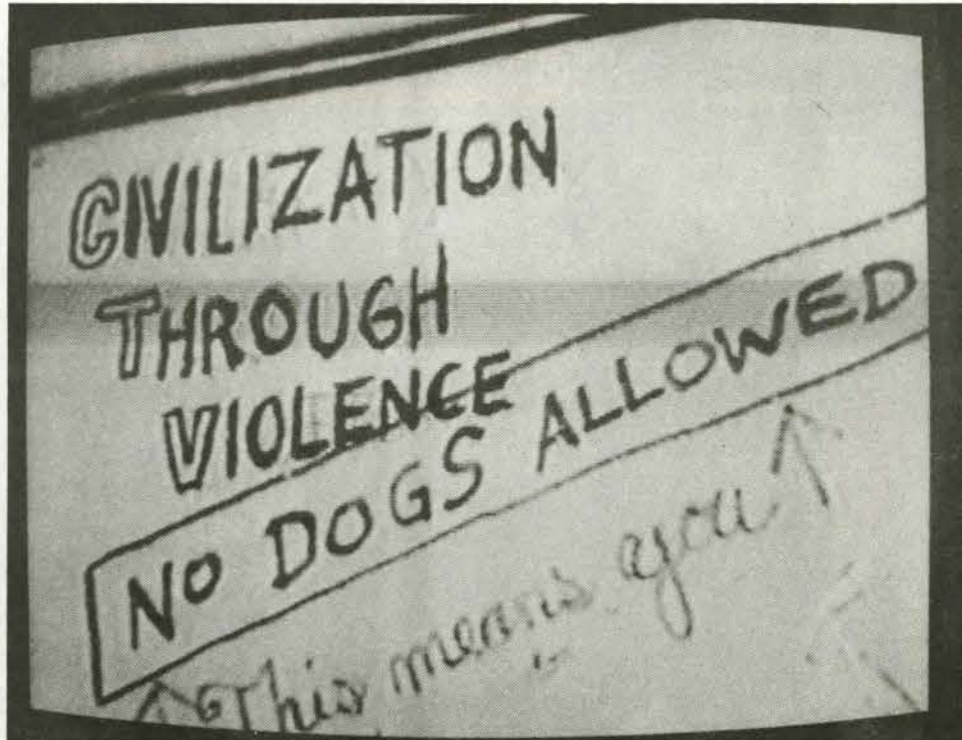
— Blibber and the Rat Crushers

Like Jolly Tambourine Man's "Dash for Cash", a wonderfully irreverent look at Terry Fox's Marathon for Hope, "Mommy's in the Mafia" betrays their age and is more playful than political. Just as the slam dancing is more reminiscent of locker room jostlings, the music, too, has lost its originally threatening posture.

At the Vancouver screening Mowbray attempted to define a context for the video by preceding it with several examples of 'traditional' representations by television of punk culture including an Iggy Pop live video, a prime time news documentary on punks, and a "Quincy" episode in which they conclude punk music can kill. What this set up for the viewer was a feeling that *Not Dead Yet* would be quite different from what he had just seen. In fact, as Mowbray himself says, *Not Dead Yet* is a hybrid of all these things, some more intentionally than others, I would suspect. The live performance footage is not unlike common rock videos, the structure compatible with prime time methodology, and even the postured rantings of the punks themselves edge dangerously towards the cliched pablum that masquerades as tragic self-delusion on shows like "Quincy."

The producers have allowed the subjects to speak for themselves with as little editorializing as possible, their desire being not to represent the movement as they wish it to be, only as it is. It can be appreciated that this has the potential of allowing the punks an important forum in explaining their culture to the rest of us. Unfortunately for this documentary, the punks lack the ability to remain interesting to the viewer for the length of the video. Devotees of the original punk movement have been moved to sarcastically observe that although they may not be dead yet, it may not be a bad idea. This may be a jaded criticism, but it is also an emotional response that deserves investigation.

We are still at a point in video art history where works like *Not Dead Yet* are viewed with some distrust. For an independent video artist to attempt to break into the television market is a desire which is still taboo to some, still a questionable premise for any production, especially one dealing with a counter-culture. Criticism I have heard regarding *Not Dead Yet* comes from a disdain for both the glossy production values that make it compatible for network broadcast and for the punk scene itself as it is manifest today. Mowbray justifies the documentary and its attempt to reach a mass audience as the first move in video art's long needed search for a new market, one that



Obituary?

reviewed by Karen Knights

will allow artists to communicate to a larger population than ever before. It is this potentially subversive act of infiltrating the air waves of public TV that Mowbray believes will give new life to video art.

For myself Mowbray and Taylor's aim is not the issue as much as their method. Unfortunately, *Not Dead Yet* fails to break any new ground except in the most superficial sense: the possibility of allowing a counter culture air time. By retaining the traditional documentary format, Mowbray makes his work accessible to a larger audience; by eliminating any obvious subjective viewpoint, something inherent in traditional documentaries, he has restricted his audience's ability to be challenged and educated. Objectivism does not necessarily lead to greater understanding when speaking of sociological information. The educator must approach the topic from a context and then, aware of the biases of his audience, translate that culture in a way which makes it new to them. *Not Dead Yet* presents the punks to its audience yet never translates the phenomenon. The result is that its audience, no matter what their background, fails to transcend their original biases. In this case, the producers' attempt to be objective becomes a barrier in the viewers' understanding of the topic. *Not Dead Yet's* potential to dissect a suburban phenomenon is undermined by the producer's unwillingness to editorialize more strongly which subsequently eliminates any contextual understanding of the work. The tepid character of the Toronto punk scene (itself of dubious interest) and the lack of subjective response to that quality by the producers, dictates that the majority of television viewers will see the punks as they have always seen youth movements: as cute, non-threatening, and of little relevance. The audience/subject relationship which should be its strength is its greatest weakness. The result is that *Not Dead Yet* lies in the wasteland between social commentary and an evening's entertainment, not quite able to bridge the two, thereby failing to involve its intended audience in any meaningful dialogue.

This is not to say that there are not moments where the tape excels. Any production Mowbray has been involved in benefits from his sentient touch. There is an obvious respect for the interviewees and their actions. Mowbray's self-acclaimed love of youth culture is evident, for example, in the camera's fascination with the brutal beauty of slam dancing. Caught in slow motion the punk's movements, at once calculating and impulsive, take on another contradictory quality: softness. Mowbray brings out the human element of these contradictions throughout the video: soft/hard, radical/conservative, beautiful/ugly. In exalting this, the confusion of a degenerating phenomenon, it is very successful.

Like it or not, *Not Dead Yet* appears to be an accurate reflection of the current punk scene in Toronto, and if viewed with some understanding of its producers' intent, the current movement's social/political implications can be deciphered. It is faultlessly edited, beautifully shot, full of mesmerizing images and intriguing ideological ambiguities. Perhaps its most important quality is its ability to recapture a parallel experience in the viewers' own youth. Perhaps they too were once that idealistic and naive, and, if so, it undoubtedly changed forever their relation to the rest of the world.

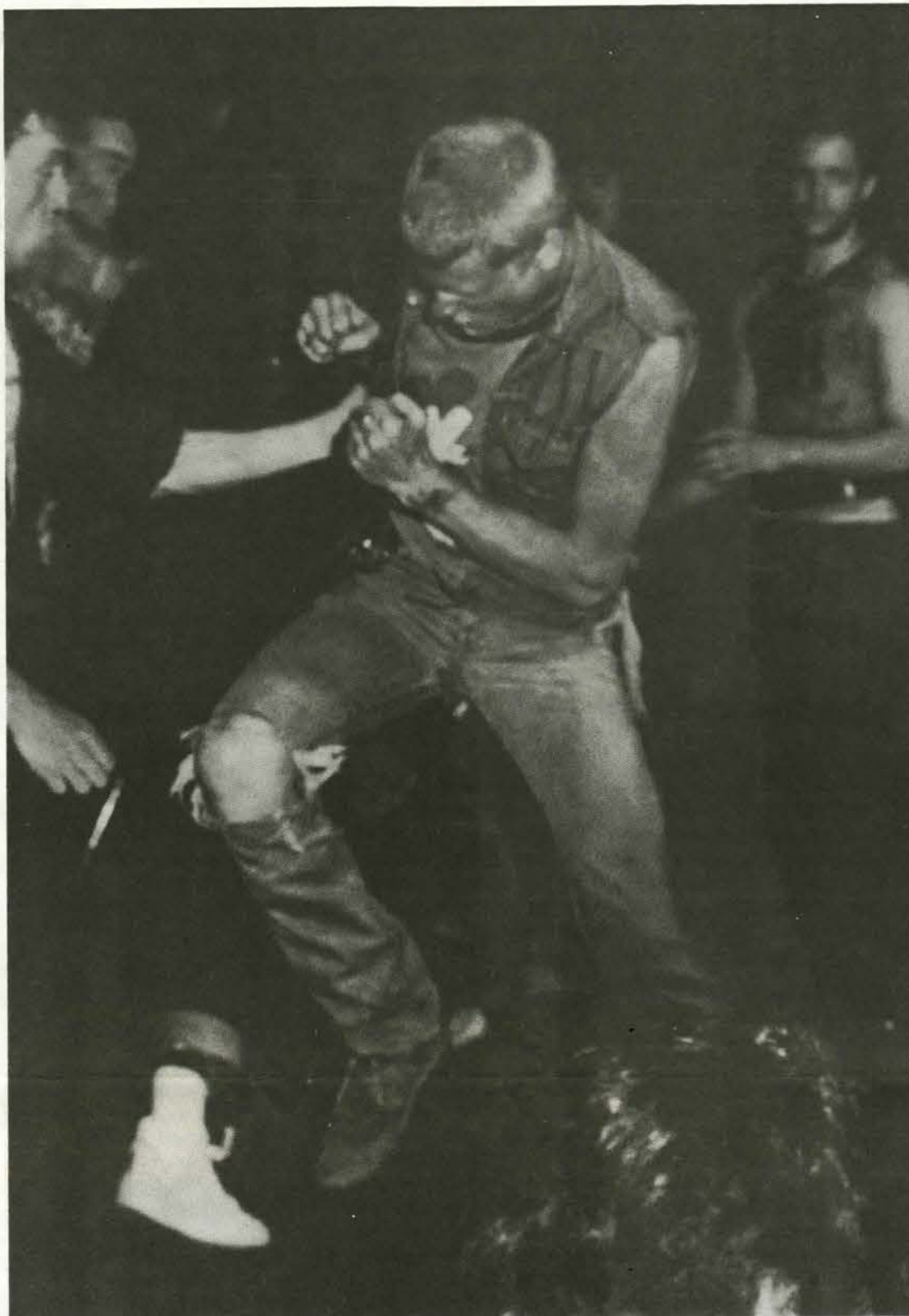


photo by Bruce Lam

Not Dead Yet: celebration or obituary? Both. A celebration of the past and an obituary for the future of the punk movement. As far as it being a successful example of video art's entry into the world of broadcast television, that's yet to be seen.

The last words of *Not Dead Yet* are spoken by a couple of punks engaged in philosophical query while having a smoke outside. The words are haunting for those who

stand watching yet another movement in the final process of decay.

"How about an obituary for the punk culture?"

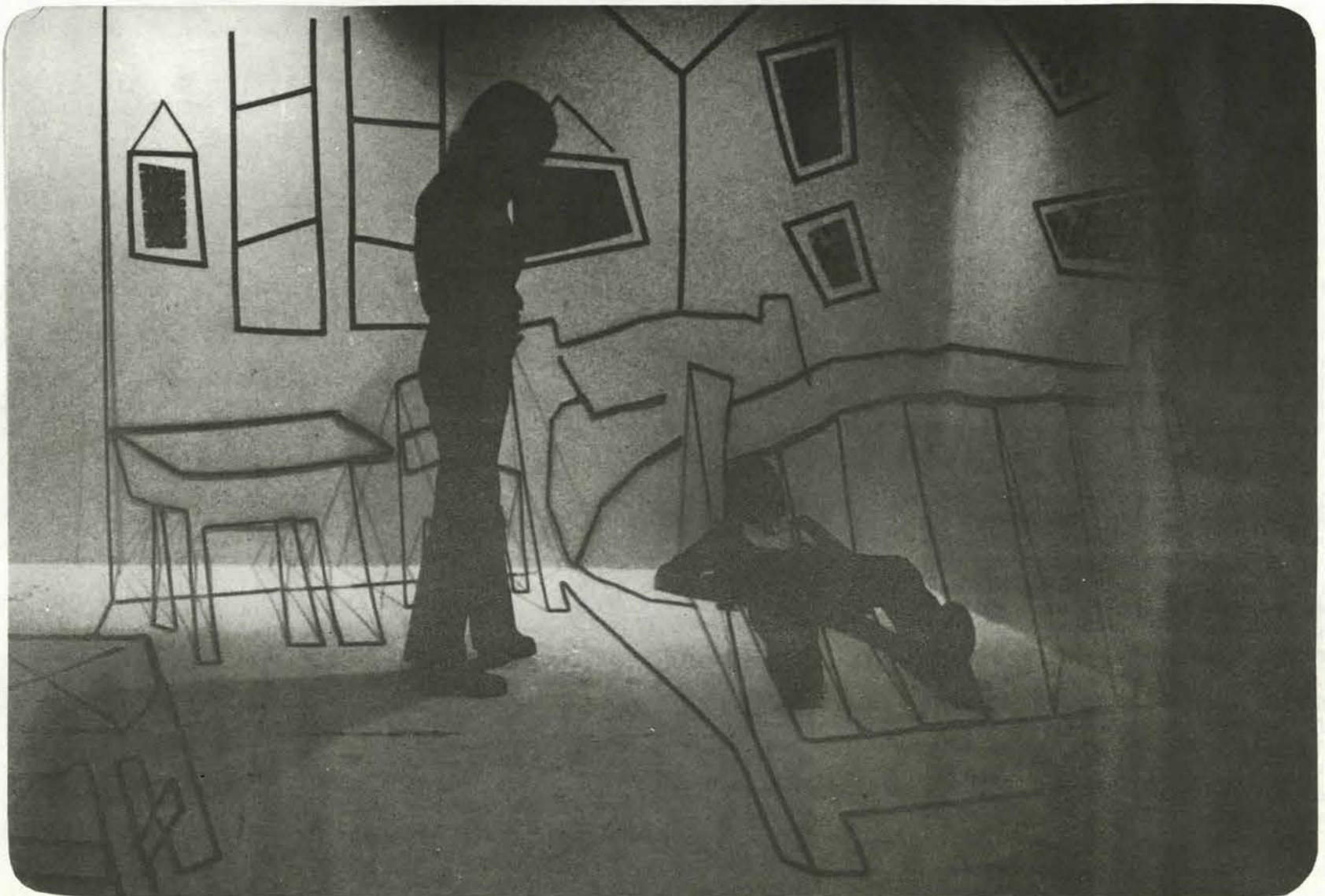
"God save us from ourselves."

Hold the shot while they reflect on what's been said, cue the music, wait for the final sigh to fade, ok. . .

. . . dodo, dodo, dodo do do. . . dodo, dodo, dodo, do . . .



OUT OF THE CLOSET AND INTO ED VIDEO, Developing an Artist-Run Co-operative



'83 Installation Randall and Bendinell

Ed Video, a successful non-profit, artist-run centre in Guelph, Ontario, has survived a difficult transformation from the small equipment pool located in the closet of a private home in 1975, into a bustling cultural centre by 1984. Today Ed Video consists of 4500 sq. ft. on the second floor of an old limestone building, a former knitting factory. It is equipped for portable $\frac{3}{4}$ inch colour video information gathering as well as for $\frac{3}{4}$ inch video editing, post production, and audio work. In the fall of 1984 Ed also bought $\frac{1}{2}$ inch information gathering equipment. Ed's theatre space consists of 70 seats donated from a local cinema, and there is a screening room where the public may view video work from the archives or works by visiting video artists. The premises are also used by the Ed Gallery which consists of a formal gallery space and includes a darkroom and artists' studios. Out of the closet and into the factory, the growth of Ed Video has been the struggle of a developing artist run centre through changes in personnel, purpose, and location. In less than ten years the precedents set by the founding members of Ed Video allowed a large artistic community to form and created a focus for a co-operative bid to promote creativity. Ed Video has stumbled, stormed, and grown into a thriving art centre.

In 1975 Ed Video Creative Community Television, with the aid of a Local Initiatives Program Grant, initiated teaching programs in the creative and artistic use of video in local schools and correctional institutions in the Guelph area. The group decided to incorporate as a non-profit organization in 1976, and in June of that year Ed Video Incorporated was set up as a video resource centre whose mandate was to provide equipment and expertise for artists, groups, and individuals in the Guelph community.

Support for the new corporation came from the University of Guelph community — initially from Eric Cameron and Noel Harding who were sessional instructors at the University of Guelph teaching Video Art. They sought the support of Ian Easterbrook, then head of the television studio at the University of Guelph, and Ron Eyre of the Wellington County Board of Education.

In the beginning, as Ian Easterbrook recalled, "The job with Ed was to get it up and running and to get money coming in. Early on we spent a fair amount of time racketing through all the by-laws and getting set up with the lawyers." The initial members were advised not to mention art in what they were doing and that is how Ed Video got its name — "Ed" for educational video. In order to sell the idea to the local constituency (Ed's initial

proposal was reviewed by local people selected by the Member of Parliament), Charlie Fox, one of the original members, noted, "We had to keep the word 'art' out of everything because that would turn everybody off." As Ed Video grew, it came "out of the closet," in that the art aspect became recognized and respected as the organization became better known and had more to offer the community in terms of a more flexible equipment base and a more comprehensive programming package.

Ed Video received its first Canada Council Grant and a Wintario Grant for the purchase of two portapaks in January, 1976. Charlie Fox noted, "After the initial money, we went back to the Video Officer at the time, because we were in the process of becoming incorporated and we wanted to get together a pool of equipment; that was the purpose of our incorporation. The grant officer was not too interested in what we were doing. He told us he had a map of the country and had pinpointed places that needed video access centres; and, of course, we were too close to Toronto." The proximity to Toronto was not a hindrance to funding after the council realized that people in other centres were not interested in applying for video funding. By 1979 Ed Video had $\frac{3}{4}$ inch colour equipment. Regarding the $\frac{3}{4}$ inch colour equipment Charlie Fox said, "We were the first organization to get $\frac{3}{4}$ inch equipment. This was something for which we fought a long time. Half-inch was 'the thing to have,' and we wanted $\frac{3}{4}$ inch because we knew the quality was better. So the grant officer didn't like our initial application on the basis that we were specifying equipment that he felt was unnecessary to our situation. Ed also had a dispute with the Canada Council in its demands for colour equipment. In 1973 or 1974, the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council bought one colour camera for Video Ring in Toronto, and the one camera was to serve the entire area. Because few people used the camera and because it was so expensive, the Ontario Arts Council was understandably leery to fund video art. A delegation from Ed Video went to Toronto to attempt to convince the Film/Photography officer at the OAC that video was a legitimate art form. As a result Ed Video was one of the first groups to get funding after the Ontario Arts Council made the decision to hold off supporting video art."

Today Ed Video receives generous funding assistance from The Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council, with additional revenues resulting from membership, equipment rental fees, rent of the Ed Video space, dona-

tions, and various fundraising events. They also receive funding from The Canada Community Development Program, Canada Summer Works, and the Ontario Career Action Program to employ people in Guelph. The growth of funding sources and resources reflect the growth of services offered to the community and the growth of memberships.

The nature of the Ed Video membership was a critical aspect of the growth of Ed Video. In the beginning Ed Video consisted of four fine art graduates from the University of Guelph. New members were former students who were in Guelph temporarily. The ranks grew as people became aware of the organization but the transient nature of the membership put Ed Video in a tenuous position. Who was going to continue to keep Ed Video alive? Ian Easterbrook stated, "I'd characterize the early days of Ed Video as falling between two extremes: one was lethargy, which we were working against all the time, and the other was one or two people doing everything."

Over the duration of Ed Video's existence the one or two people running the organization changed, but for the most part Ed has survived through the diligence and persistence of individuals who took it upon themselves to keep Ed alive. In the beginning Noel Harding played an important role in referring students from The University of Guelph to Ed Video and by providing encouragement and acting as a vital resource person. Ian Easterbrook's enthusiasm and sage advice helped Ed through many crises. In 1979 Teri Chmilar took over from Ian Easterbrook as president of Ed. She stated, "That was probably Ed Video's most critical stage. That was a point where we were losing a lot of people, moving reasons — or whatever. And there weren't necessarily new people coming in . . . and financial problems . . . and accommodation problems. I felt my function was to keep it going on a real scratch basis. And that was what it was." Teri was the administrator, landlady, and maintenance person and kept Ed together during difficult years.

Nick Hall, who was an Ed Video Board member from 1979 until 1984 commented: "The first couple of years I was involved with Ed Video, it could have folded anytime. It was totally vulnerable to individuals and individual personalities. In the five or six years that I have been involved, it has become so much healthier as its base of appeal broadens. The University set-up was unique in that there were a lot of people who went through the system, had chosen video as a medium and were on some course beyond Guelph and in a sense had a limited commitment

THE FACTORY

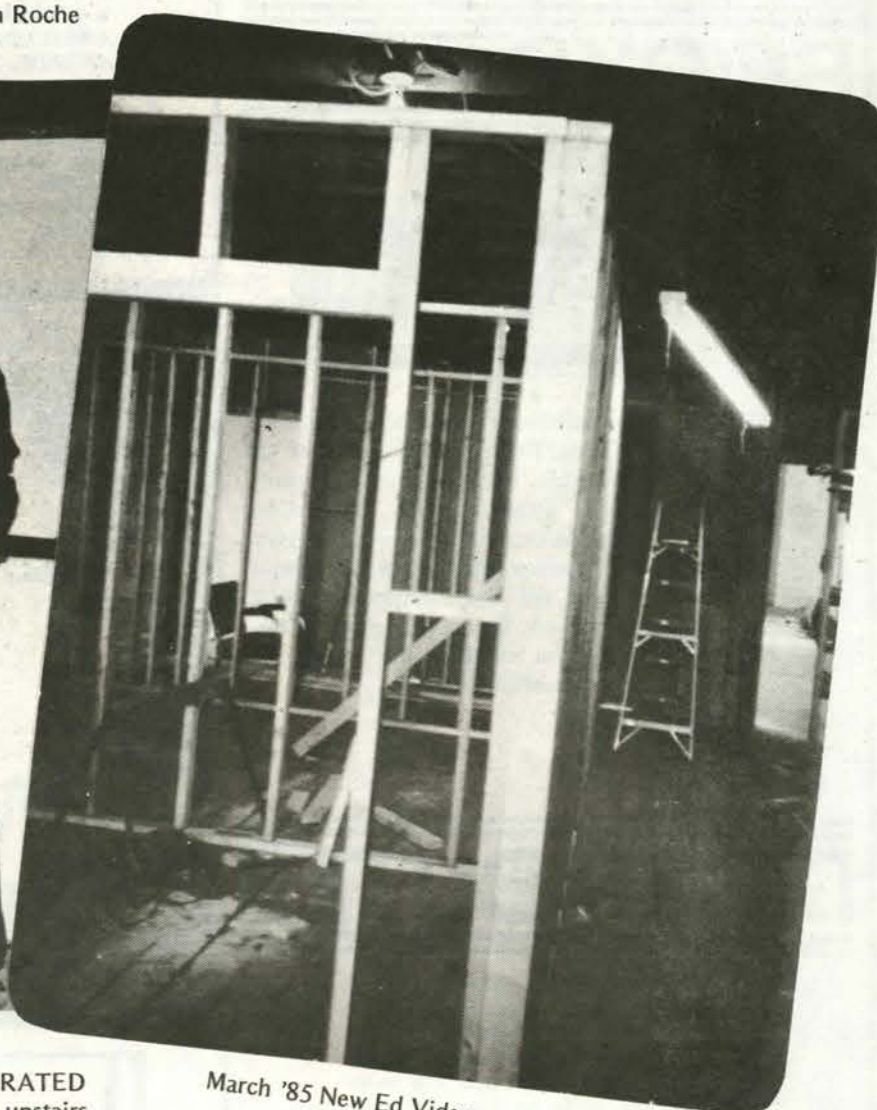
by Myrna Hanna

'84 Performance by Brian Roche
and Susan Smith



'83 Preparation for Noel Harding's
A Silent Place for a Chair to Fall Over

ED VIDEO INCORPORATED
16 Commercial Street, upstairs
Guelph, Ontario
Canada N1H 2T7
519-836-9811



March '85 New Ed Video space

to the local alternative situation. Vulnerability was a characteristic of Ed Video in the seventies, and I think that continues. I've seen Ed Video existing in someone's closet. I've seen it exist for a period of probably two or three months without equipment. There were only two or three people who actually brought Ed Video through that period. It's been repopulated with people from all different areas of interest, and there is now equipment that can be used; therefore its foundation is more solid. It is a healthier place. It was really scary in terms of longevity. The main group that formed Ed Video in 1976 were dropping away by 1979-80. They were moving on: especially when the equipment was not available. You were left with a small group of people who weren't at the founding of Ed Video. It was almost as if it was refounded. It's been founded about four times."

It is difficult for any young artistic community to coalesce for a sustained common purpose. Young artists traditionally have been a mobile group of people. Ed Video's membership reflects this tradition in that many members stayed in Guelph for awhile and then moved on. It is interesting to note that many active members who left have found their way back to Guelph to settle or have come back to Ed Video as visiting artists. . . . In 1983-84 Nora Hutchinson and Charlie Fox, both Ed Video old timers and well known in Canadian video art circles, returned to Guelph to live and are active at Ed. In the fall of 1983, Noel Harding was artist-in-residence at Ed Video for three months and mounted "A Silent Place For a Chair to Fall Over," his sculpture for theatre, at the University of Guelph.

As Ed Video's active membership slowly began to grow, the organization struggled to find suitable lodgings. After being housed in a group of private residences, one small dusty factory room, and a small apartment, Ed Video finally set up in its present location on the second floor of 16 Commercial Street, the old limestone building that was once a knitting factory. The facilities here provide Ed with the amount and type of space to enable it to expand its base of services and allow a wider scope of cultural activity. When Ed moved into 16 Commercial St., there were more members active than ever before, and the total number of people who use the facility has increased as the centre has more to offer.

In 1981, 70 seats donated from a local cinema were installed to create a viewing area. A darkroom was built, the premises were painted, and a large portion of the floor was sanded and varathaned. An environmentally-controlled

editing room was built and an office facility set up. The programming has expanded to include a visiting artist program that has included presentations by Richard Layzell, Stuart Sherman, Rodney Werden, Peggy Gale, Elizabeth Chitty, Derek Graham, Dennis Tourbin, Stephen Long, Andy Patton, Paul Wong, Tom Sherman, Lisa Steele, Randall and Bendenelli, and many others. The artist in residence program brought in Noel Harding in the fall of 1983 and Steven Seaburg in the summer of 1984. For 1985 negotiations with Chris Burden and Laurie Anderson are underway. The contemporary Canadian music program has included performances by Randy Raine-Reusch, the Bill Smith Ensemble, John Tank, Peter Hannon, and has Fast Wurms, John Mars, and Stu Broomer lined up for the fall 1984 schedule. An audio collective called Available Sound meets regularly to explore sound possibilities. There are also regular workshops on the use of video technology as well as regular screenings of works by local producers. The facilities have also been used by local groups such as The Sand Box Dance Troupe, The Guelph Women's Centre, Carousel (a new literary/arts journal published in Guelph) OPIRG (a provincial public interest research group), and groups of students from the Ontario College of Art and from Conestoga College under the direction of Nora Hutchinson. Other events at Ed Video have included a free film series, exhibitions by independent film makers, intermedia, and performance events.

Over the past few months many of Ed Video's members have been busy with new productions, tapes in progress, exhibitions, and workshops. Charlie Fox exhibited his installation "Glory Days" at the Video/Culture Canada's *The New Media 1984*. There is a members show titled, "Ed Video Video" at The Art Gallery of Brant scheduled for November 29, 1984. Other group shows in the last year have included exchanges with Video Pool in Winnipeg and Articule in Montreal.

Ed's move from the closet to the factory is indicative of its expanded functions. With this expansion Ed has seen the need to hire employees to handle the increasing load of responsibilities. Ray Cinovskis, who has been the employee responsible for the technical health of Ed, commented, "Ed Video has always prided itself on down-playing bureaucracy, but I can see strain on the way Ed Video is run." One of the new board's objectives is to evolve an effective management system. As with other Parallel organizations, Ed Video runs on many volunteer hours, and structure and organization are needed to channel the energy to fulfill all the various individual and

group programs. The staff now consists of two part-time employees who can keep the factory running, but it is the donated hours that keep production high. At present there are approximately 12 people working on making tapes and many others working on commercial ventures involving Ed Video or its equipment, as well as others who use the premises. The inclusion of The Ed Gallery in the same space has heightened the profile of Ed Video. The art base has been expanded to include more conventional art on view, as part of the Ed Gallery's program. Co-operative ventures involving both Ed Video and Ed Gallery, such as The Artist Writer's Project, have been successfully presented and well attended.

The vulnerability of Ed Video Incorporated continues. There is now a good volunteer pool and a strong membership, as well as adequate funding and varied programming. The struggles facing Ed at present centre around creating an effective management and looking for a more permanent home for Ed. In the last year with a change of ownership, the Commercial Street location has been the centre of controversy concerning the fate of the old building. Rumours range from the building being razed to make way for a supermarket, to transition of the existing building into luxury apartments. It now appears that Ed Video will look for a new home by March 1985.

During 1984 the Ed membership put together a complicated proposal for the application of a grant under the Special Cultural Initiatives Program of the federal Department of Communications. Preparation of this report was an example of the co-operative nature of Ed Video ventures. Hundreds of volunteer hours were committed to producing the proposal. Letters were written, local governments lobbied and local community and business organizations were contacted to support the application. Ed applied for funds to create a highly flexible, mobile production facility which would be fully winterized and would provide services for the southwestern portion of Ontario. The system would include a multi-format post-production facility and digital audio technology developed in conjunction with the manufacturers of the various components. The grant included plans to extensively renovate a space under a long-term lease, which has been a long standing goal for Ed Video.

The future of Ed Video depends on the same energies and ideas that were inherent at its inception. The spirit and hard work that has held the organization together over the years continues. Out of the Closet. . . into the Factory. . . and beyond.

BOOKS



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

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

DISTRIBUTE

Night Flight seeks short tapes and films by students and young artists for "New Filmmakers" segment on USA Cable. Renumeration of \$10 per minute will be paid upon use. For more information, write to Carrie Franklin, AT1 Video Enterprises, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10106, (212) 977-2300.

ACCESS VIDEO

Since 1983, Video Women have produced as a group a community cable access series focusing on women. We want to showcase films and videotapes about and/or by other women. Work used would be promoted in a "preview" segment of our magazine format program, and by press releases and flyers.

Please send us a description of your work, running time, and publicity materials if available. Indicate the minimum compensation you would require for cablecasting of the work four to ten times in a two week period. Pittsburgh cable community access Channel 21 is available to all subscribers, approximately 75,000 homes.

VIDEO WOMEN
c/o Access Video
1150 Greenfield Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15217



EVENTS

Hometown USA Video Festival

906 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E.
Washington D.C., 20003
(202) 544-7272

CONTACT: Paul D'Ari
FORMATS ACCEPTED: ¾" VHS
FEES: \$15 to \$20

CATEGORIES: Documentary; Local News Magazine; Instructional/Training; Compilation Community Programming; Narrowcast; PSA; Sports; Live Production; Entertainment; Arts and Cultural Expression; Video Art; Programming by Children; Interactive; Experimental Uses; Uses of Institutional Network

FESTIVAL DATE: Mid-July, 1985

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: March 31, 1985

Sponsored by the National Federation of Local Programmers (NFLCP), Hometown USA celebrates community cablecast programming. Awards are given at the annual NFLCP national convention. A selection of the award-winning programs is distributed as a part of the annual Bicycle Tour which includes private screenings and cable airdates.

● ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES 12th ANNUAL STUDENT FILM AWARDS, Los Angeles, June 16. Films completed after April 1984 within the context of an accredited U.S. college, university, film or art school in 16 or 35mm under 60 min. are eligible for awards in animation, documentary, dramatic & experimental. Deadline: April. Contact: Elaine Richard, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211; tel. (213) 278-8990.

AUDIO
BY
ARTISTS
FESTIVALCALL FOR SUBMISSIONS
VIDEO / AUDIO

VIDEOTAPES WITH A STRONG EMPHASIS
PLACED ON THE AUDIO COMPONENT

a SCREENING of curated tapes will
be held DURING the AUDIO BY ARTISTS
FESTIVAL APRIL 2-22 1985.

an artists' FEE of \$50 will be paid
for selected tapes

DEADLINE for submissions is
5 MARCH 1985

ADDRESS: AUDIO BY ARTISTS FESTIVAL
c/o CENTRE FOR ART TAPES
2156 BRUNSWICK ST
HALIFAX NS B3K 2Y8

San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Video Festival
182B Castro Street
San Francisco, CA 94114
(415) 861-0843

CONTACT: John Canalli
FORMATS ACCEPTED: ¾" VHS

FEES: Return postage required

CATEGORIES: Social Documentary, Art, Magazine Format, Erotic, Dance, Theatrical

FESTIVAL DATE: June

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Late May

San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Video Festival organizes club date screenings in the Bay Area, New York and Los Angeles, distributes a traveling exhibition and broadcasts nationwide on public access channels.

Visions of U.S. Half-Inch Video
Competition

Video Contest
P. O. Box 200
Hollywood, CA 90078
(213) 856-7745

CONTACT: Cathy Jung
FORMATS ACCEPTED: VHS, Beta
FEES: None

CATEGORIES: Fiction, Nonfiction,
Music Video, Experimental

FESTIVAL DATE: September

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Late June

Sponsored by Sony and administered by the American Film Institute, Visions of the U.S. is devoted solely to tapes created on half-inch systems. Prizes include a variety of half-inch equipment.

San Francisco Arts Festival

45 Hyde St., Suite 319
San Francisco, CA 94102

(415) 558-4888

CONTACT: Hael Kobayashi

FORMATS ACCEPTED: ¾" single chan. only

FEES: \$5

CATEGORIES: Open to all subject matter except corporate or industrial; must be 15 minutes or less

FESTIVAL DATE: Early August

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Early July

San Francisco Arts Festival encourages emerging resident video artists in the Bay Area Counties to apply. Entries of the 1984 festival were juried by a video committee chaired by Constance Lewallen, Associate Curator at the University Art Museum in Berkeley. A \$25 screening honorarium is awarded.



Banff Television Festival

P. O. Box 1020
Banff, Alberta
Canada, T0L 0C0

(403) 762-3060

CONTACT: Jerry Ezekiel

FORMATS ACCEPTED: ¾" NTSC or film

FEES: \$100 per entry

CATEGORIES: Television Features; Limited Series; Continuing Series; Social and Political Documentaries; Outdoors and Wildlife Documentaries; Fine Art Programs; Television Comedies; Light Entertainment

FESTIVAL DATE: Mid-August, 1985

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: July 1, 1985

BANFF is an annual international competitive event "dedicated to the recognition and celebration of excellence in television films and programs." Producers of films and programs judged best in each category will receive a bronze statue. A grand prize including \$5000 cash will be awarded to the program judged Best of the Festival. Screenings in North America and Europe are being planned. A large number of past winners at BANFF have been independent productions.



The American Film Institute

Applications for the 1986 cycle of the Independent Filmmaker Program will be available after July 15, 1985 for a September 13, 1985 deadline. For information about the program, call (213) 856-7696 or write to: The Independent Filmmaker Program, c/o The American Film Institute, 2021 North Western Avenue, P.O. Box 27999, Los Angeles, CA 90027.

The American Film Institute (AFI) is an independent, non-profit organization founded in 1967 to advance the moving image as an art form, to assure preservation of that art form, and to develop and encourage new talent.

Native American Film and Video Festival

Museum of the American Indian
Broadway at 155th Street
New York, New York 10032

(212) 283-2420

CONTACT: Elizabeth Weatherford
FORMATS ACCEPTED: ¾" or ½"

FEES: None

CATEGORIES: Documentary and Fiction

FESTIVAL DATE: November

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: August

The Native American Film and Video Festival is open to works on all aspects of Native American culture. Native American and independent producers dominate the selected tapes. In 1984, 23 films and tapes were selected out of a total of 200 submissions. Most works were 20 minutes or more in length. The 1984 Festival was held at three different locations in New York City. The Festival awards no prizes but does pay travel expenses, accommodations, and speaking fees for presenters of work.

San Francisco International Video Festival

1250 17th Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 863-8434
CONTACT: Steve Ageststein and Wendy Garfield
FORMATS ACCEPTED: ¾"
FEES: \$15 - \$18
CATEGORIES: Open to all genres
FESTIVAL DATE: October
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: August 1

All works selected for the Festival exhibition receive an honorarium of \$100. Exhibition is held in a variety of sites throughout the Bay Area during the 10-day festival. Television, theatre or gallery venues are selected to best fit the work and stimulate the widest possible audience. SFIVF also curates a traveling show, exhibiting in institutions worldwide.

Tucson Women's Video Festival

902 E. Hampton
Tucson, AZ 85719
(602) 624-6441
CONTACT: Linn Lane
FORMATS ACCEPTED: ¾", VHS
FEES: Return postage required
CATEGORIES: Dramatic/Fictional; Journalism/Nonfiction; Art/Experimental
FESTIVAL DATE: Early October
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Early August

Tucson Women's Video Festival winners receive cash prizes and are shown on Cox cable community access. Winners are chosen for "a variety of perspectives, cultural group representation, and knowledge in the field."

GUIDE FOR PARTICIPATING ARTISTS SIGGRAPH '85 ART SHOW OVERVIEW

The SIGGRAPH '85 Art Show will feature the latest achievements of artists and designers working with computer graphics and interactive techniques in all media.

This year we are fortunate that the SIGGRAPH '85 Art Show will be on-site at the conference. The Moscone Center provides ample gallery space for the display of drawings, lithographs, murals, constructions, photographs, sculpture, ceramics, textile and fiber art, and environments for viewing videotapes and framebuffer imagery. Recent creative efforts involving computer graphics in the areas of architecture, product design, and communication arts will also be incorporated into this year's exhibition. Proposals for large-scale sculpture, interactive computer graphics installations and environments will also be considered. Technical and financial feasibility, as well as space requirements, will determine the number and location of these projects.

In addition to the Art Show at the Moscone Center and other conference events relating to art issues, special art events in celebration of SIGGRAPH '85 are being planned at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Exploratorium, and other cultural institutions. A student poster exhibition will be held at The Academy of Art College, San Francisco. Information about the competition will be provided upon request.

The SIGGRAPH '85 Art Show will be a juried exhibition. The jury will consist of artists, curators, aestheticians and art educators familiar with the technology, developments and issues relating to computer graphics and art.

We are certain that this year's SIGGRAPH Art Show will be an impressive exhibition of the creative achievements of artists and designers utilizing computer graphics technology. We hope it will also serve to visually document the dynamic taking place when artists and designers choose to use these tools. Visual documentation of the creative process, such as storyboards, embellished plotter drawings, photographs of work environments, videotaped interviews and artist's statements, will all be used to graphically explain these phenomena. By exploring the dynamics taking place between artists and machines, we hope to develop a greater understanding of computer graphics and the impact it has on artists and designers, and to attain a greater appreciation of the ensuing art.

Louise R. Etra, chair
Rachel Carpenter, administrative assistant
SIGGRAPH '85
5801 Christie Avenue, Suite 490
Emeryville, CA 94608
(415) 653-8444

DIGICON

Explore the latest and best of the digital arts, the blending of high technology with the visual and performing arts.

Graphics, Music, Sculpture, Animation, Fabric Arts, Seminars, Performances, Exhibits, and more!

DIGICON 85

2nd International Conference on the Digital Arts
August 15-17, 1985
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

GLOBAL

VIDEOCONGRESS

Dear video artist!

We would like to invite you to produce a video for the next international edition of the videomagazine VIDEOCONGRESS. The topic of the magazine will be Meta Language.

Your contribution should be between three and eight minutes long and produced on u-matic. Apart from the topic 'Meta Language' it could also be a feature of any cultural event. A portrait of an artist, a video clip, or an event of a concert would also be accepted.

The deadline is May 15, 1985.

The VIDEOCONGRESS offices in Cologne and Los Angeles have contacts to TV and cable TV. There are a lot of places like clubs, galleries, museums and pubs where VIDEOCONGRESS editions are shown. Access centers distribute VIDEOCONGRESS in the following countries: Germany, USA, Netherlands, Denmark, France, and Italy.

The magazine will be represented at the Frankfurt Bookfair 1985. VIDEOCONGRESS editions will also be sent to all important international video festivals.

If your production is accepted by VIDEOCONGRESS a minimum fee will be guaranteed.

For further information concerning the concept, earlier editions, artists who cooperate, videographie, and other activities of VIDEOCONGRESS, write to
235 Tony Allard
Spichernstr. 61 583½ Venice Blvd.
D - 5000 Köln 1 Venice, CA
Tel. 221-523828 90291
West Germany USA

NETWORK

MCA

To All Television Drama Enthusiasts:

I want to personally extend an invitation to you to join us for the Fourth International Conference on Television Drama May 18-22 at Michigan State University.

The Conference and the Samuel G. Engel International Television Drama Awards Competition welcome your active participation.

Plan to attend and to submit your entries in the Awards Competition.

I look forward to seeing you there. . . .

Charles F. Engel
Universal Pay Television Programming, Inc.
100 Universal City Plaza
Universal City, CA 91608

VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

The Vancouver Art Gallery is in the process of formulating an acquisitions policy for its Permanent Collection, which will be presented to the Board of Trustees in June. Members of the community are invited to submit written comments concerning the future direction of the Gallery's acquisition program. These submissions should address matters of general policy rather than specific proposals for acquisition.

The Vancouver Art Gallery considers its Permanent Collection a public trust, belonging to all members of the community. On this basis, comments from the community will be considered for the final draft of the acquisitions policy.

Submissions should be directed to the Gallery's Director, Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, before May 15, 1985.

Vancouver Art Gallery
750 Hornby Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 2H7

Avant Garde Art and Literature: Toward a Reappraisal of the Heritage of Modernism. Conference to be held in November 1985. Deadline for submission of papers: April 1, 1985. Write: Avant Garde Art and Literature Conference, Hofstra University Cultural Center, Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y. 11550. (516) 560-5974/5669.

PERIODICALS

LAST ISSUE

815 - 1st Street S.W. #604
Calgary, Alberta T2P 1N3

RESOURCE

VIDEO RESEARCH FALL 1985

Sabbatical Replacement: one semester (16 weeks)

Teach three courses in Video Research to introductory through M.F.A. students in an integrated Art Technology Program comprised of Film, Computer Graphics, Photography, and Video. Candidates must show technical and conceptual expertise in all aspects of production, post-production of video technology with background in the history of the medium. Candidates should have extensive exhibition record, M.F.A. or equivalent, some university teaching, and an interest in experimental narrative, synthetic imaging with good audio skills. Salary commensurate with experience. Send letter of interest, three current references and no more than two hours of video originated work to:

John Orentlicher, Chair
Art Media Studies
222 Smith Hall
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York 13210

Application Deadline: April 1, 1985

Syracuse University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

AART VAN BARNEVELD

TIME BASED ARTS AMSTERDAM

Aart Van Barneveld was in Vancouver showing works by Dutch Artists. The showing was at the Western Front. Corry Wyngaarden from the Video Inn had a chance to interview him, the following is part of their conversation.

Corry Wyngaarden: *Lets begin by explaining what your visit to Canada is all about.*

Aart Van Barneveld: There are two reasons for my visit here. First, the Holland Festival this year will present as a theme Canadian Art. I thought it would be nice, along with the official presentation, for some alternative spaces to get together and sponsor some different works. With this idea in mind, I got some travel money from the Dutch government and from the Canada Council to come here and investigate Canadian video production. The second reason is that I have selected a program of Dutch video art that I wanted to present here. I co-ordinate an artist-run space in Amsterdam called Time Based Arts, and we distribute video tapes.

CW: *Could you tell us something about the history of Time Based Arts and how it originated?*

AVB: The history of TBA relates to De Appel. De Appel is a gallery in Amsterdam which started in the seventies. They had a weekly program which presented video works, performances, and sound works. At a certain point they wanted to change their focus, and instead of the presentation of art works, they wanted to involve themselves in the process of making it. They stopped their weekly presentations, but in order that the group of artists who lost this venue wouldn't be totally left on their own, De Appel included in their budget the initiation of another space. This space is TBA, and it is organized on two levels. One consists of an umbrella group, a collective of artists, whose name loosely translated is The Association of Video, Film, and Audio Artists of Holland. The artist must pay a subscription to become a member. This level is the more or less political level. It has about eighty members and forty of those are quite active. They form themselves into committees dealing with such concerns as distribution, distribution contracts, copyrights and so on. They research the problems in each specific area and meet with government officials and lawyers to express their concerns and make the policies affecting such things as copyright. Formulating such things as distribution contracts is all done in committee with expert advice. The committee which investigates the possibility of broadcasting goes to the various institutions and talks with the people there about the present and future of video art broadcasting. The other level of organization involves the actual running of a space which exhibits work of local and foreign artists. TBA is also an information centre. People can drop in and find out about the works of artists. There are books, records, and cassettes, all by or about artists, and of course the distribution aspect is very important.

CW: *It functions like a data centre for networking?*

AVB: Yes, it is an open communication centre for the artists in Holland, visiting foreign artists, and the public. We put a high value on keeping on hand the catalogues and programs of other spaces in Holland and in the world, to provide an easy reference on other artists and their ideology.

CW: *How is De Appel related to this new organization which they created?*

AVB: The moment TBA was initiated on January 28, 1983, De Appel ended the relationship.

CW: *Do some of the members of De Appel belong to the umbrella association?*

AVB: The association is different. In order to be able to become a member you must have completed at least one work, one which was your concept and your realization. There is another level of membership and that is for all those individuals and institutions which are interested in the field but are not producing work. They support the organization in order to keep themselves informed.

CW: *What is the difference in the responsibility of the membership?*

AVB: The board is selected from those members of the association who have a producer's membership; others cannot be elected to the board. We like to think of the other membership as sponsors. For instance, we have a broadcast station as a member. Every so often we can contact them in order to work with them when we need a very high quality production. So they have a different level of membership, but they still have some responsibility in the way of exchange. They get information, and we occasionally tap their resources.

CW: *What made you choose the name Time Based Arts?*

AVB: Well, most people think it is related to the time base corrector, but that is not the case. We chose that name because of a statement made by an American artist, I forget whom, who said it was very important to categorize those artists who involve the element of time *within* their work — besides the time involved in the process of making the work. The element of time is involved in the perception of that work, so one must have a totally different attitude when viewing these works. It is not enough to arrive at it any time of the night or day and experience the work for two minutes and come away with some kind of understanding.

CW: *You can't just glance at them.*

AVB: No, they have a beginning and an end which exists in time, and in order for you to experience the concept, you must pay attention during that time.

CW: *Besides gathering documentation of artists' work at Time Based Arts, do you present programs?*

AVB: We do weekly presentations. The whole program is divided into four categories. Once a month we have a video premiere: the first showing of one or more productions. Then we have an evening when an invited artist presents his or her work and puts it into a certain context. Sometimes we ask the artists to put their works into the context of other works, and sometimes, when artists are involved in directions other than video, we ask them to place their video works in the context of their other work. One evening per month we present a concert or at least a program in which sound is the main item — it could be a sound installation. Then we have a week of an installation in which video, or video and film, or video film are the main parts of the piece.

CW: *You were involved in other spaces before Time Based Arts. Can you tell us something about those?*

AVB: Ok, I'll start at the beginning. After my general education I went to a department of the university called Theatre Science, and I proposed to them a special area of study. I wanted to do a study of the links between the development of modern theatre and modern art. I wanted to focus especially on the movement in modern art which entailed happenings, performances, etc., which had elements of theatre in them, but used time and the known techniques of theatre in a totally different way. Anyone from theatre background found it very difficult to view those art pieces. However, there is a link between the two disciplines, and they were at that time growing towards each other or at least growing in the same direction but at a different pace. I never finished this project because in the department of Theatre Science they require a lot of historical reading, and I ran out of time. Somehow my interest had been established, and I found myself involved in a space. This was called Other Books and So, in Amsterdam. The founder of this space is Ulises Carrion. The focus of this space was artists' books, especially in the beginning. After a while, however, it started to grow in several directions. Besides books, there was a record section, a cassette section, and eventually a whole section dealing with the mail art movement. At first we just had a storefront, but later we moved into a bigger space which then developed into an exhibition space. Eventually we began to present performance pieces — so you can see how our focus changed directions. We stopped running this space because it became too time consuming and eventually financially impossible, because we did not receive any support from the Dutch government. During this last period there was an article in the newspaper about Other Books and So. A director of a factory read this article and invited me to open a space with the main focus being printed material.

This was called Stempl Plaats, and it dealt with hand printing, mail art projects, graphics, and we even had video screenings in which sign elements played an important part. We also did some performances called Print Actions. I enjoyed organizing that space very much and did it for three years, but because that focus was so limited, it felt like it was becoming repetitive. I needed to stop because I felt I had shown what was possible within that framework. So I quit and took a year off. I left Holland for a trip and contemplated what I would like to do. When I returned I had this idea for a space which had light and sound in art as the main focus. This would include photography, film, video, and sound. I talked about this a great deal, and then this situation at De Appel arose. They invited me to attend a meeting and, finally, to co-ordinate this new space. I worked at De Appel during the transition period to gain a little more knowledge in those fields.

CW: *Who runs Time Based Arts now?*

AVB: This is a good question. At the moment I'm the only one with a contract — because there is only one salary available. However, this would be a good time to mention my colleagues. Julie Smit has the responsibility for the sound section. She buys and sells records and cassettes and researches those which are published by artists. She also has her own radio program on a local station called Radio Got Airwaves. She does an hour every week, inviting artists to the studio, talking with them, and presenting parts of their works.

CW: *Is this on a government controlled network?*

AVB: No, this is on a pirate station. Her program is very well known in Holland because it is the only program entirely devoted to artists working with sound, experimental music, and so on. It is the most important pirate station in Amsterdam because they have very informative programs — not only about works by artists, but also by/for minority groups.

CW: *Is this a common phenomenon, pirate radio stations? How many are there?*

AVB: Lots. There are about twenty-five in Amsterdam. Some more and some less popular due to the fact that there is so much diversity in the population of Amsterdam. Practically each minority group has their own radio station, the Turkish people, the Moroccan people, the Spanish people, all different nationalities.

CW: *How do they get away with it if it is illegal?*

AVB: There is a main tower in Amsterdam and just by beaming your signal into it, it gets broadcast immediately. The only thing necessary is to change the location of your equipment every so often so that the authorities don't come and confiscate it.

CW: *How do these pirate stations get funded?*

AVB: Every now and then they have a fundraiser. Radio Got Airwaves presents a music performance once a month in a big space and charges at the door.

To get back to the rest of my colleagues, there is Stefan Hogenelst, who organises the monthly sound programs and Juan Agius who is responsible for the print material such as books and catalogues. We also, like the Video Inn, have a Video Library. It is not as large as the Video Inn's, but we have about 400 titles. People can drop in and select their own programs. There is an audio library as well, with about 200 titles.

CW: *What is the equipment situation at TBA?*

AVB: We have six monitors, four players, one recorder, two cameras, two cassette players, one record player, and a 16mm and an 8mm film projector. This is usually enough for any of the installations. Some we bought and some we inherited from the Stedelijk Museum after they did this huge presentation of 22 video installations, "The Luminous Image." The government bought the equipment and after the exhibition dispersed it among smaller centres. Some came to us, some to Montevideo, and some to the Kijkhuis in The Hague.

CW: *Is there quite a bit of co-operation between spaces in Holland?*



Hank Bull, Eric Metcalf, Aart Van Barneveld

AVB: Yes. One of the projects initiated by Montevideo and Time Based Arts involves twelve spaces around Holland. This project is called the Dutch Video Circuit. It is more or less an imitation of the Dutch Film Circuit. Once every four months we meet and establish the program for the next four months.

CW: Are all these twelve spaces mainly involved in video?

AVB: No, they are all different. In Eindhoven there is this big umbrella group called De Fabriek whose focus is alternative presentations. Their video space is called Cyclops. In Groningen there is a group called Mediamatic, the one in Arnhem is called Geele Rijder (Yellow Rider), which is a more general gallery, and then there is the Kunsttuin where one can rent works of art to hang in the home. So you can see all spaces have a different focus, but most of them are artist initiated.

CW: How is Video Art accepted by the general public in Holland?

AVB: In terms of government grants, it has much more support than it used to. It was not possible a short time ago to qualify for the artist subsidy system as a video artist, but now they will buy video art. Before, sculpture, painting, and graphics were the only categories which they would accept. This is very important because this kind of support gives a kind of development in art which concerns the quality of production. The quality goes up because there are more possibilities. On the official art level this show at the Stedelijk Museum was politically very important. However, they chose the most acceptable form of presentation, in the gallery sense, that of video installation. Video installations become an object that fits into a space and relates a lot to sculpture. While this reference to sculpture is an important movement in video, it is not the only means of presentation. It ignores the reference to television, film, and other. Somehow when you show it to people in a closed circuit situation — tape to monitor — people still view it as some form of primitive TV, not art.

CW: You made a reference earlier to how the Dutch government funds the artist. Can you give some details on how this operates?

AVB: There is a national system, which is divided into committees for each big city and some smaller cities. Each committee is comprised of artists, critics, and organizers. This is the BKR, the Beeldense Kunst Regeling (Visual Arts Regulators). An artist submits his or her work to these committees, and when it is accepted the government buys the work. Once you are accepted by this system there is an 80% chance that you will stay in it for quite some time. The problem seems to be that the government now owns so many art works that they have no idea what to do with them anymore. This system is undergoing some re-evaluation because it is rapidly becoming an impossible system.

CW: So when the artists sell their work this way, they can earn a living wage?

AVB: Yes, because they have standard fees for paintings, sculpture, etc. Sometimes the idea of standardization can become very strange. For example, one artist made artists' books out of old paintings he bought at the market. This still fell into the category of painting, and so he was paid as a painter.

CW: Of course, it would depend on which category your work fit into, to determine its worth.

AVB: Yes, that's the main thing. Video is not a category, so it's difficult to establish a price.

CW: So what do video artists in Holland do?

AVB: Well, the artists have several solutions. Video is still considered an exception, so an artist has to apply to the central committee. One artist makes photographs of his video tapes, another makes silkscreens from photographs, some artists put the cassette in a box along with the script and storyboard and sell it like that.

CW: Normally how much would a videotape be worth?

AVB: The standard price is 2,000 guilders (\$500 Cdn.).

CW: In order to make a living wage one would have to produce a tremendous amount of video work.

AVB: No, it's not possible to produce that much videotape, so artists are forced to make photographs, silkscreens and boxes.

CW: When an artist does this, how much can he or she make?

AVB: Up to 40,000 guilders a year (over \$10,000 Cdn.). It depends on your age and your tax bracket. If you make other money on the free market, it is calculated into the system. An average photograph sells for about 2,000 guilders, so you can see that a series of 20 photographs would be enough. This is about one week's work to some. That is about how long any artist likes to work for the system. Then with their earned stipend they are free to work on more creative ideas. It is a common complaint by artists in Holland that they spend a tremendous amount of time filling out forms. Fitting into the system is not as difficult as dealing with the whole bureaucracy behind it.

CW: So an artist can spend more time filling out forms than making art?

AVB: Yes, there are other types of grants: project grants, travel grants, yearly grants, and grants for people who just came out of art school. These grants for graduating students are intended to prevent them falling into a hole and to give them the opportunity to do some art.

CW: In Canada there is a very high attrition rate among artists who graduate from art school, especially among women artists. I heard a rumour that in Holland, video artists are dubbing their work on VHS and selling it successfully in bookstores.

AVB: No, this is not true yet. There has been a lot of talk about it, but it hasn't been ironed out yet. The main stumbling block is how to protect the artists' copyright.

CW: Do you see this as possible?

AVB: If the distributor could buy out the producer's copyright, then the artist is guaranteed a certain lump sum. Illegal copies then are no longer any concern of the artist. Sort of how books get distributed. Technically it is impossible to protect a tape.

CW: Do you think this will ever become a money making venture for the artist?

AVB: Certainly, if it is possible with artists' books, why not video? About 50% of the families in Holland own video decks. A certain percentage of those will be interested in making a collection of artists' tapes.

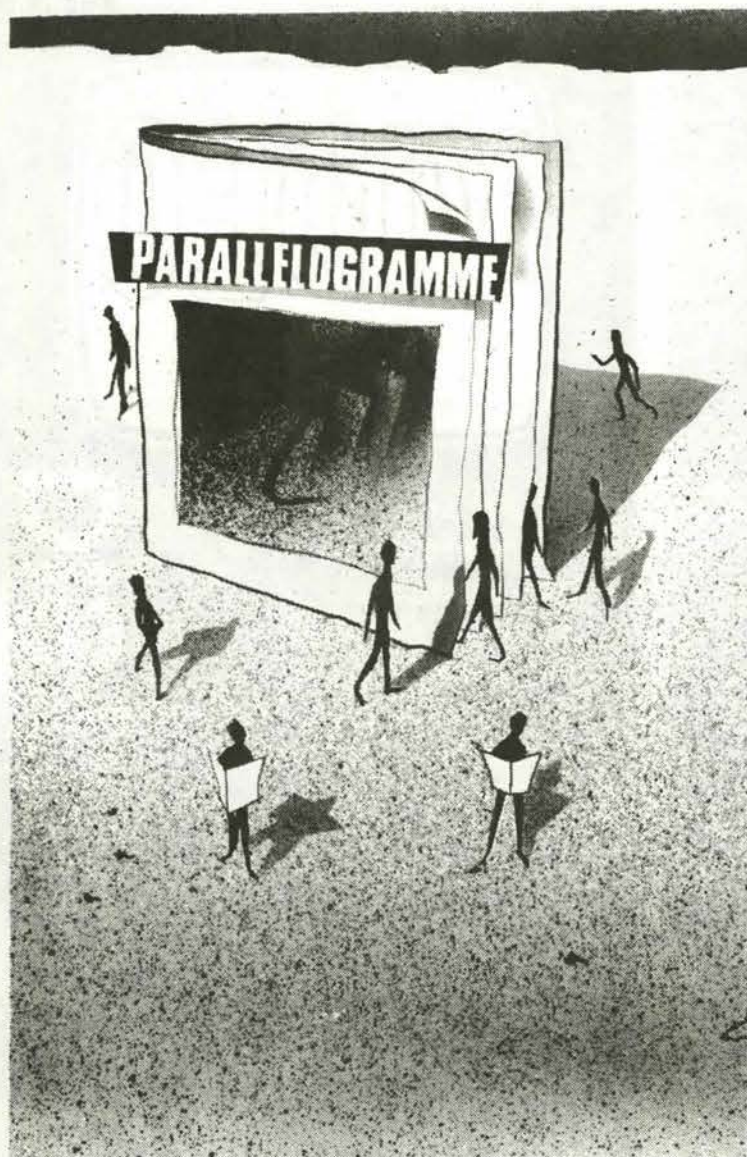


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