

M- could we get into some specific material,
how & why you got into video.

W- I just got into video because Woody got into
video, so this is a question for him.

W- I was swept away! So romantic, so
desperate to believe in what I was doing -
I was trying to believe in my writing, I was trying
to believe in film, which I was educated in.

And it suddenly there was this primitive medium,
video, and then ^{saw the book} primitive material called
feedback, and it was like the phenomenon
itself was what caught me. That some idea
about?

? what
is feedback

complementary to it, ~~but~~ ^{and} even more mysterious.

So this particular glimpse of the material turned
material around, and I was lucky to, the my
job, being around a place that had small
format video, so I could start taking it home.
That's when Steven took it over. "It's mine."
She's a woman. She threw away her video, ^{in spirit of the like} & ^{was} ^{invest}
picked up the video

St Bay was I glad to get rid of that video.
W the 1st day I came home, she had already produced
a 2 hour tape.

St It's a very rational place for work. It was

eventually

at a place where he was earning money so we could pay the rent + live and ~~buy~~ ^{buy} equipment - we were already buying a lot of tapes. And the place provided him w/ all the equip. we ~~needed~~. We could rip it off any time we needed.

W - we borrowed \$1- yes ^{consistently} we could take it in the evening run all over N.Y. do all sorts of things, & get it back in the morning. We got so involved that Woody decided very rational, that he had to quit work. So, we agreed to it. There was no way he could be bogged down w/ some stupid job when all this was going on.

W - She sent a letter to her father in Iceland who had never heard the ^{term} video, "In" involved in video now, Daddy sent me some money. "And he did." It wasn't much, but it bought us a porta-pack, or something.

ST - My parents always believed in me, totally. The only time they didn't was when I was going to marry a foreigner. My mother was alarmed at that, and a friend came in & said, "why are you so alarmed? Don't you believe in Steinar?" My mother calmed down, and realized it had to be a good man, because I wouldn't get anything

I have a secret background which is called music composition which

else. ~~That's how~~ My father saw wilds once when I was asked to give a lecture at the American Cultural Exchange in Iceland. And he was quite disgusted w/ it. He thought it was pretty self. That didn't matter. "I can't spend a minute on this. It gives me a headache." So we laughed and that was it. He died a couple of years later.

M Do you still play violin
S I have it unpacked if since moving here. But I should. I'd like to play in a quartet.

Jackie Have you been doing any of the synthesizer
music
S - No, that's a ^{natural} ~~wood~~ ^{thing} for me. I won't free. I could do nothing w/ it, I was so trained in music. He's somewhat trained, but he doesn't read music fluently. He could go straight in there & do symphonies & operas.

W. I have no ^{preconditions or hangups} preconceptions about it so I can be free. It's the only ⁱⁿ ~~way~~ area I could make ~~because~~ old-fashioned ^{condition} structures. I've been doing that ~~secretly~~ secretly for years, but now I have to come out of the ^{my} closet because now we're producing this ~~opera~~ form called Paganini

(4)

- at least that's the working title, anyway, ... what was the question?

Jorkin: all music, but just peep taking
W- One day motivation, to play around w/ video + audio instruments was I very early recognized that it's the same material - there's a division in the material sense. It's energy, in particular arrangement in time. It's out a frequency or organizational difference. The material is identical. Do you understand?

Wallys.

Wallys, because it's important that it comes across. That kind of material inspired not exchange all video events into audio, interface, and vice versa, audio all sorts of video events into control for audio synthesizers, or vice versa. We used 10 yrs ago, the smallest video synthesizers, we careful to generate images. It became a material, ~~complex~~ complementary, systemic inspiration that taught us the most dramatic lessons about the material, what it is, how you move it around, change it. That became the basis of our understanding of video. That's why we took the road of working w/ video in its primary level. We don't use it like television would. We're pointed toward the materiality of it. Controllability of it as a material. And it's very close to what

a sculptor would do with other materials. For us it's tangible. we can actually touch it through the tubes. You can, with the computer, plot certain events in time, because everything screened is equal to particular locations in particular time. So once you know how to plot certain events on the screen ^{or instead of the time} you can change it, to program it, to actual structure images. So work in time becomes part of the craft and that's what was inspired by the basic investigation of the material.

Q - You do all the programing?

A - Yes, though sometimes I get help, because I'm not naturally gifted in mathematics.

Q - So many terms from the electron sphere have gotten into the language. It makes me think that children of this generation will have a closer, more natural relationship to all the technology of the generation before.

A - An incident happened here. Brad Smith brought his son. His son wants to make a robot and he wants to tell the robot to go to the bathroom. He didn't understand that first the robot had to know where the bathroom was. He has to teach him.

He was totally blown away by the fact that he has to write a program for everything. ~~He has~~ This culture totally mythologizes everything. On one level you have to go down to the ^{the code structure} primary level to learn how something works, or else it's misunderstood.

m. But it's necessary in a sense, that that be kept secret. It's like ... the Gothic masons had to keep their ability secret. If anyone else did it, it would fall down.

w. If creative people ^{instead of utilitarianists} get into the development of languages, then the lang's will carry the significance of the culture rather than the signif. of utility, which it is now. Languages are made by technologists or scientists. It's

n language ^{isn't} ~~isn't~~ made by poets?

v. should be. Unfortunately, though it's been mathematicians. That's the paradox. We have to understand that ^{these} code organization into language is the duty of the citizen, ~~the artist~~ or the creative part of the society, ^{the artist} if the goal other purpose. It should not be that linked with the utilitarian side as it is now.

This is good stuff - use it as there's room

These things should be taken from the hands of computer scientists, or they should become general property.

J. ~~But~~ if comput. science was ^{general knowledge} as common as reading or writing, a mainstay in our life, the people's ~~small~~ ^{creativity} could come out in that ~~at~~ vehicle. It's a means of expression, not just a scientific thing off in the corner.

Whole letters, into a culture
This may divide a culture, though ~~too~~. Because everybody can find his or her way of expressing certain programs. There are now phonetic analyzers which allow you to talk to computers. ~~Smart kids may~~ ^{some day} ~~the~~ ^{conquer} human language as inefficient. They may communicate w/ a vocal non-human speech pattern - very efficient, very fast but it's going to be one-to-one, machine and communicate. This distorts society as a cultural thing, as letters or conversation do. No need to despair. Some people will be talking gibberish, talking only to their ~~computers~~ ^{computers}.

St. A lot of people are ^{working on} developing a common language that they can all use to talk to their computers, and all the computers are compatible, or they can all talk to all computers. We're not interested in that.

We're interested in very special computers that can only take, maybe, 5 ms. or people who take the same pain as us to get that out of the computer. And I think that's the way it's going to go, that people are going to shape computers to their needs.

Mal: Does that kind of autonomy come from will though, or from circumstances, from the tools?!

in the tools

Mal: You didn't always use the computer in your video work?

W No. You buy one, then you learn how to use it.

St. Yes, we had to buy the tool, then learn. You read, you wonder. and for a long time you're very intimidated. you have a powerful tool in your living room, + you don't know anything about it. We would get our friends to come in + make it conversant, and they would say "do you need a bootstrap," and we would say "what's a bootstrap." Then someone else would tell us what it was, and where we could buy one. we had to learn everything the hard way.

md - You never took formal classes in computers.

W - I'm incapable of learning from classes. It's always taught as an abstract, or somehow 'useless' application. ... You learn by buying it ... That's the first act of commitment. ~~for~~

Jackie - would you give us a little history, all the patches?

st - First we had the space, & because we had the space all those things could start happening. Because if they hadn't happened, the space would have been empty. We found the place, fell in love w/ it ... a beautiful space, in a beau. building,

w - others would say otherwise - a rat hole

st - that's what it was - totally gutted. But it had this feeling. A contractor friend found it w/ us, & we talked the landlord into giving it to us for a cheap rent. Eventually he threw us out & realized it was a most beautiful room. In the meantime we couldn't fill it up. We had no money, no equip. It became a performance space. We asked gy bag around to come & do something there, & we filled up the schedule that way. That's what we need in Santa Fe, in a space like the Performance Space. A space w/ the rent paid.

The income from the sale is enough to run the rest of it.

W- It all happened on this occasion of possibilities, because video had virtually no place to show. There were a few theaters owned by special groups, dedicated groups

St But they wouldn't show your stuff, only their own.

W We decided that, since we had so many people coming to our place to show video, it's time to take it out

St So it wasn't about by design. We didn't know about alternate spaces for performances and all those things that were going on, & we didn't even know that the space would be the heart of what was later SO40 Club. In 1971, was just a burnt-out shell. It was totally innocent. We'd lived in it for 5 yrs, but mostly among ^{other} foreigners. Suddenly we had this kitchen and we found out about all this unbelievable creative energy! #

M- were you able to keep doing your own work?

St yes. We threw everybody out at midnight, & started working until 7 or 8 in the morning.

W- the only policy we had... we presented electronic arts, ~~but~~ also performance of electronic music, video, but that was only a general policy. People eventually found everything experimental there. Even theater would sometimes

would fit better there than elsewhere. So it wasn't
 limited just to electronic arts. Someday I would
 like to participate in something devoted just to that,
 electronic arts. That's something we have passion for.
 When we started at the kitchen, we had jobs to pay the
 rent. When we left it was a \$40,000 operation. Now
 it's \$250,000, an institution. But there ~~was~~ ^{is} a difference
 between the old kitchen which symbolically
 collapsed - the building collapsed, killing 2 people,
 but just before that, it had transplanted into
 another location, changed hands, & became
 more established.

St. We'd turned it over to someone else. To
 Bob Sterns, who's now at the Cincinnati Museum.
 It's a good platform for curators, the kitchen.

M. It's a myth!
 W. Yes, but that was due to the ^{particular} vacuum. There was
 nothing else. So it became... it took life on its
 own. We gave it an openness, that it doesn't have
 anymore.

St. We had the luxury of never turning anyone down.
 We just asked people what date they wanted, never
 what they were going to do. I still think that's the way
 to run this kind of place. Let anybody who wants to, take
 it over, and just let people continuously keep taking

it over. ~~The~~ People know what to do w/ a space
also that, when they get one
w/ It was a little bit disappointing to us that a tradition
of visits was never established & carried on there,
because there was no other space.

M - So after you left the kitchen, you went to Buffalo?
St. Yes, and there we had our own lab in our own
home, our creative space was also our living space.
We ~~supp~~ helped the university get their lab together,
but it was separate

Handwritten flourish
of the mouse

W - Now we have to think about ~~to~~ how to directly live
off what we do. But I must confess, that the most free
support I ever got for was from the government. Teach
was a pay off, it was less honest, and the direct
work, was the least honest. I worked for
the American Can Corp. to make a living and I
found it extremely problematic, so, ~~at a time~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~funding~~
system

St. The N.Y. State Council was ^{actually} quite radical in the
beginning. It made us just jump ahead of the rest
of the county. They used to come down to some grant
the lefts, look at the work talk to the people, and then
tell them "you ought to apply, and then tell them
how to do it."

when they found
work they
thought
should
be funded
told them

St It's interesting to think how art flourishes where the money is. I saw it there, the money came there, & the creation of episodes. It's probably the same thing that happened of the Medicis, wherever people gave support ... that lasts to be there.

W We're basically interested in our supported art. We are not interested in art that ^{partially} makes it commercial. That's different. Non-salable art is our interest. It ~~stays~~ ^{is} in its own domain. I'm interested in imperfections, ambiguous products, the dign, the weak, the strong, established things for me, eventually become oppressive and boring.

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↓ 306-546-7735

St My idea of art is that art-making is a lifestyle. It is a certain recklessness. Most artists are those people who don't fit in society. They don't become wage earners. The artist & the product can't be separated.

Al I didn't follow what you said abt art being fragile
W I think of art as fragile, unstable. ~~The~~ If art form ^{as} has no place to be performed it might not ^{be} seen. Jeff Hendricks, a brilliant performer, he did ^{an} ~~progr~~ frame theater. he would move over a period of maybe 3 hours, about the ~~stage~~ ^{stage} & you had to be there to track all the movements. ~~That goes into profound performing concepts, but what~~ ^{That goes into} ~~who~~ ^{emerged}

←
(ent side)

from that movement, but Bob Weisen, who does opera, the most bombastic, frontal, ~~band~~ band, band. The most fragile, unperformable unspurious was so endangered.

But that's the level of creativity, to me the most interesting ~~yet~~ the least defined, that's what's most useful to me. The homosexual theater ^{which was} ~~in NY~~, for example, was unbelievable to me, coming from New York, I found so radical. It took me totally by surprise. They brought all the garbage of the 20's up there, on stage with these aberrant cultural things - they made a theater. You think they survived? No, they didn't survive. They didn't survive culturally, or physically. It was too fragile.

Magazines can create a very strong illusion of art, then certain individuals, critics can formulate things, but underneath you find they're very fragile. And verbal is there like a giant, but underneath there are intricate webs of useless pieces, ^{new} experiments, of pulp + programmatic, very intellectual strands. Maybe one day it will come out, maybe such things are gone forever.

of something the magazine overdo it, though and overblow so the artist becomes so famous

he can't work anymore because they've become too famous + that's equal to god. Once too much is expected of you what do you do.

w change your name + start again.

Mahn - Do you feel any of that ~~pressure~~ ^{burden} yourself.

w - we were famous for 20 minutes, an article in the NY Times. But we were known in a small group of viles people, we weren't in the mainstream. We do ^{desire} what we've done sometimes it's synchronous to the art stream, sometimes it's anachronistic. We have + gotten ^{some} serious critics who ~~are~~ ^{do} analyze our work.

St How would they do it

w We're known as a strange couple a sociological phenomenon, but there's no critic who would ask us for work ... ~~that we~~ ^{what we} do ~~work~~ may be absolutely useless. How do you know how do we know. Others have very

Peter Campbell?

identifiably works, describable. We've always gone beyond the technological, the easy interpretation. Because we go to the basis of the operation of the material. We had to struggle to

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decode it, and even the next person would have to try to describe it, and it would be misleading, so nobody does, and that suits ~~us fine~~, ~~as long~~ as long as we can operate and do it, it's all right, so we ^{always} act as promoters of the media, as ~~ambassadors~~ ambassadors, or judges

St We sit on a lot of panels I've done that a lot lately, and the best work I've seen in the country, actually was in the SW, in Houston ~~1/2 of the work was from Texas~~ It was very individualistic, & very well done.

(Stuff about grants, kids, a target).

Jackie - why did you come to Santa Fe?

W - we expected it was going to be much warmer here (laughter). This is the desert! We ~~first came there~~ ⁱⁿ

St When we first came there, in '72, we had liked it. when we decided to leave Buffalo, we just said Santa Fe. ~~So~~ From the time we arrived in alb, rented a car, drove up here the people we met, ~~it all~~ ^{they} said "Yes, Yes, Yes."

So we never stopped anywhere, ^{like} you're supposed to when you make a drastic move in your life.

Mali - You were taken abt lifestyle. ~~It~~ wasn't moving here a big change w was. I could be anywhere. The goal of my struggle is that machine, and the structures that come out, I have to examine them very carefully. The rest, the trees & the hills, are very beautiful, as I if I can go out for 2 or 3 minutes, I get refreshed. But the work is unrelated.

St ~~But you were the one who insisted on staying here~~ But we need a larger space which perhaps we could get in 700s, but Woody, you want to be here! Not you say the outside is just a decoration.

Mali - all the contradictions are true at Woody! w. It's beautiful, but the uninterrupted volume of time we get here is what's important. In NY, it was a rush, a madness, though it worked for us. But here, it's the first time I've achieved nothingness, that you can face only yourself. Elsewhere, you get involved, inspired. Here, there's the privilege of unprogrammed time.

Jackie. what about the TV station being talked about? How will that affect the ~~time~~ unprogrammed time? Is it soon to happen?

St I want to do whatever ~~needs~~ I can to make it happen, but ~~the~~ I don't have time to actually do it. It's an incredible challenge to ~~do~~ ^{set up} low power station for Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Poos. Make it a total cultural station.
 Mohi - a response station?

St - ~~It's~~ A station is a one-way street, but if you run it like The Kitchen, where anyone can schedule a time, and isn't obligated ~~anyone~~ he or she is going to present. Let it go out, let it fail when it must. In that sense, it's 2-way. ~~The buying of low power~~
 Jackie How do you see its structure? How many hrs of programming?

St - I see it growing organically. We would be lucky to do this a day a day a week to begin. I think there's an FCC minimum we'd have to meet. But there's a lot of backup programming we could use. At first we'd be lucky just to be on the air. But as people saw it, they would hopefully begin using it.

W. would the community have full control of the station? programming?
 St No, that's not possible. The Kitchen wasn't a democratic system, because the person who performed

would have

had to be a performing artist! ~~The~~ creation isn't Democratic. It's a skill. People who are not creating, will not ask for time. ~~So~~

III The town isn't going to have a studio for the station. People will just provide tapes
st. ~~not~~ ^{yes} ~~to begin~~ w/ it. Hopefull, it will make individual video & film artists studio's more active. ~~So~~

Jackie It's non profit - what has been done
st. The engineering stuff, the application has been put in, and we've put out feelers for funding. If we're on the air in a year from now I would consider that a miracle, though it could happen.

~~(stuff on video ~~stuff~~ available - rare things for programming)~~

st we could do lectures, live, and the rare, ^{very sophisticated} but available programming that's already available.

W. w/ total dedication of someone, the economic thing has to be figured out. That's a huge obstacle.

st The funding will determine the programming, too. If the funding is local, not the programming will be local

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Wright is totally enthusiastic about the station because I'm not that interested in transmitted signals. It's a limited choice. Multiple channels you can get music from a lot of other sources.

St. Experimental, it's very early. When people go shopping on television, to see what's on, they're going to ~~see~~ ^{see them} this station. People will start watching it, maybe just while there are commercials on the others. After a year, you can start to measure its impact.

John - I think PBS probably started the same way. People turned to it just because they didn't like what was on commercial TV.

M - But so many people in Santa Fe have cable now.