

TO: Katharina Gstöllpointner, Peter Weibel
Ars Electronica

Dear Katharina & Peter:

We just returned yesterday from a ten day trip to the California Redwood country, and I was pleased to find your FAX of April 7. As I am buried in correspondence to catch up, so I will try to reply to your offer formally in the next few days.

However I did want to acknowledge your letter, and say that I think we are close to some form of workable participation. Thank you for being willing to invest the funds in my involvement. I also today spent many hours with Woody Vasulka photorecording many portions of my archives for the catalog.

I am getting airfare price quotes and analyzing the budget. I find the main missing items to be the airfare coverage for my companion, shipping expenses and insurance. Due to the delays in formal plans I cannot make the deadline for Vasulka to ship my synthesizers. In fact, can Ars not reconsider having MONDO 2000 present in an official reporting capacity so that a future issue of the magazine may contain a comprehensive report on the 1992 ars electronica? This might be a very good investment on your part. In all we may need as much as \$12,500 to accomplish everything. Is this possible?

To Peter, thank you for the specific offer regarding myself and Alison coming to Frankfurt to present a lecture/symposium. We think it will be acceptable, but we still must solve the problem of airfare for Alison. It will be an honor for us to appear at your institute. Can you please have your secretary or assistant mail to me all catalogs and information about the Institute, so that we can educate ourselves about its mission? Also, perhaps we can arrange to have a poster prepared about our appearance? Use the Mondo Logo and pictures of Alison and myself. We can design it on Macintosh and send you disk file with color master if your Institute can print it in color???

Hope you are well and that spring is as beautiful there as it is here.
Will be in touch soon...

Best regards,

Stephen Beck

P.S. At what date will Prix Ars winners be notified? Since I have entered some works there, if it should be my good fortune to be selected as a prize winner, that could relieve some of the financial crunch.

*woody - don't tell Steve I sent you this - Peter says
he gets 2-3 like this a day!! Lot of news, call
when you get up - - -*

- 1 -

ARS electronica

Stephen BECK
Lapis Technologies, Inc.
1100 Marina Village Parkway, Suite 100
Alameda, CA 94501
USA

Linz, 7/4/92

Dear Stephen Beck,

Thank you very much for keeping us informed about all your moves. We apologize that we on our side did not keep you informed about the problems we had to solve in the meanwhile. But we hope to finalize our cooperation with this letter.

We confirm that

- we think you should absolutely be featured in the exhibition
- you should set up your own machines here in Linz
- you should perform and give a lecture during the festival.

For this we can offer you the flight (economy) from San Francisco to Linz and back, accomodation during your 14 days stay in Linz and a fee (like the others) of US\$ 700,-.

Also we offer you 3000,- US\$ from the budget of the Vasulkas to restore your machines. They also pay the transportation of your machines, if they can pick them up April 14 (together with Bill Hearn's Vidium) to transport them to Iowa City.

You see, your participation in the exhibition will cost us approximately 8 to 9000,- \$. We mention this only to let you know how attached we are to the idea that you come to Linz.

Additionally Peter Weibel offers you a lecture at his Institut für Neue Medien in Frankfurt and also for your compagnon Alison Kennedy as the editor of Mondo 2000. Each of you would get 1000,- DM, accomodation and train trip from Linz to Frankfurt and back.

Dear Stephen Beck, we hope you share our feeling that we are really interested to have you and your machines as our guest at our festival. We hope we could give you the conditions to participate.

Best wishes

P. Weibel
Peter Weibel

Katharina
Katharina Gsöllpointner

FAXED
4/1/92

THE VASULKAS, INC.
99 ROUTE 6
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501

TELEPHONE: 505/471-7181

FAX: 505/473-0614

RECEIVER:

Attention Stephen Beck
Company Name Lapis Technologies
Fax Number 510/748-1645

SENDER:

Individual's Name Manni Wilson
Number of Pages (including this sheet) 1

Dear Stephen,

4/1/92

The ARS ELECTRONICA deadline for picking up the instruments is May 4th from Iowa City! Our technician, David Muller of the Music and Physics Departments, University of Iowa, is restoring equipment and building interfaces for some.

Since we still had not heard from you Woody called Peter Weibel yesterday. Peter assured Woody that your travel and expenses to Linz and Frankfurt would be covered but would say nothing further. Woody is planning a visit to San Francisco on April 13 & 14th. His nephew will drive a truck from Santa Fe and meet Woody so that he can pick up Hearn's VIDUUM and drive it to Iowa City. Woody needs to talk to you further about how far the \$3,000 from our budget can go towards including your inventions in the exhibition.

If it's any consolation - our urgent questions are continually ignored by the organizers in Linz. We continue to work on the project despite this because we think its so important.

Regards,

Manni

Beck 1/22/92,

I went to school at the University of Illinois and was very fortunate to find the experimental music studio in Champagne/Urbana. They were looking for somebody to wire things together and I got the job. The University of Illinois was a very happening place in the late sixties because of Lejaren Hiller, Herbert Brün and a technical guy named James Beauchamp who was actually an electrical engineer. That was in 1968. We had one of the first Moog synthesizers and we had built something called the Harmonic Tone Generator. Sal Martirano was one of the most progressive and daring of the music faculty and was very kind to all of the students who showed any interest at all. He'd invite them into his home and we'd sit around and have discussions and play music. I admired him immensely because he took it upon himself in his middle age to learn electronics, circuit theory, and digital logic in order to progress his art.

At the time there was a lot of experimentation with consciousness altering substances such as cannabis, LSD-25, mescaline and shamanic rituals. We'd get together to chant and induce visions and hallucinations. This all fascinated me because for as long as I could remember I'd always seen lots of images when I closed my eyes which I later learned were called phosphenes and hypnogogic, hypnopompic, eidetic imagery.

The concept of a synthesizer was very exciting. It was patchable, controllable and real-time. I was also making light sculptures and doing light show performances for musicians in various bands and events. So I was moving into the visual arena. It may sound corny but one night I was walking into the studio and there was a moon out and the moonlight was coming down and it reflected off this lamppost. It shined in my eyes and I got the flash of these visual elements: color, form, texture and motion. It just crystallized out of a lot of things I'd been reading and studying. I realized it would not be too difficult to make a visual synthesizer. Why just restrict it to music?

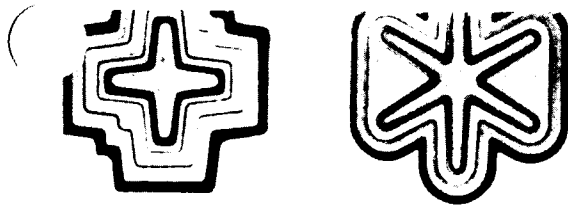
I started to design conceptual circuits that would go beyond the oscilloscope and vector display. My perception at that time was that here was this incredible technology of color television, which I understood thoroughly at the technical level, which just cried out to be used for some higher purpose. There was also at that time a tremendous amount of resistance against the war in Vietnam. All of us were in danger of being drafted and we were protesting. There was this incredible opposition to what I saw as

Beck 1/22/92,

technological genocide. Here was this technology and people hated it because it was so destructive and at the same time that technology was being used to go to space. That was the positive manifestation of that technology.

I was studying electrical engineering and I was kind of an apologist or promoter of that positive aspect of technology. I always wanted to make something beautiful out of television as my premise. I was making oscilloscope movies in the electronic music studio and Ron Namath filmed some of them. Sal Martirano saw what I was doing and he was really enthusiastic and he asked me to start performing with him. I would go to his house with other students and we'd design gates and digital circuits and try to wire them up. It was this huge construction with thousands of patchwires. We'd pack all this stuff in a series of cars and we'd drive from one place to the next and set it all up and do an evening's performance of really wild stuff. That was when I first built what I called DVI-0: Direct Video Instrument, number zero. It's a little box with three color channels and one voltage to position converter. I could feed audio signals into this box which were sourced from the SAL/MAR Construction.

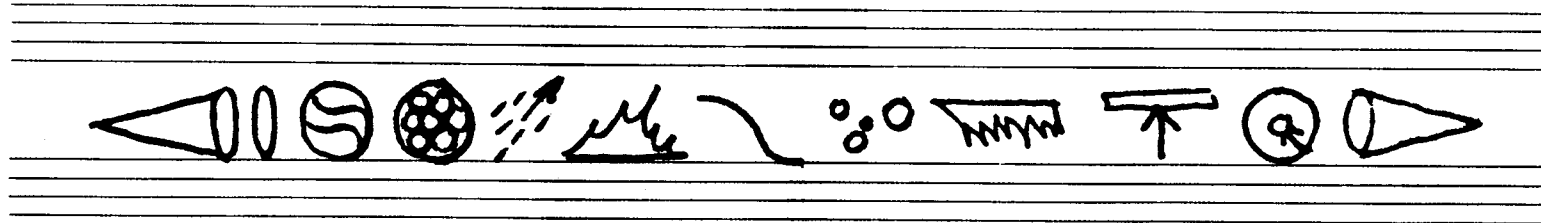
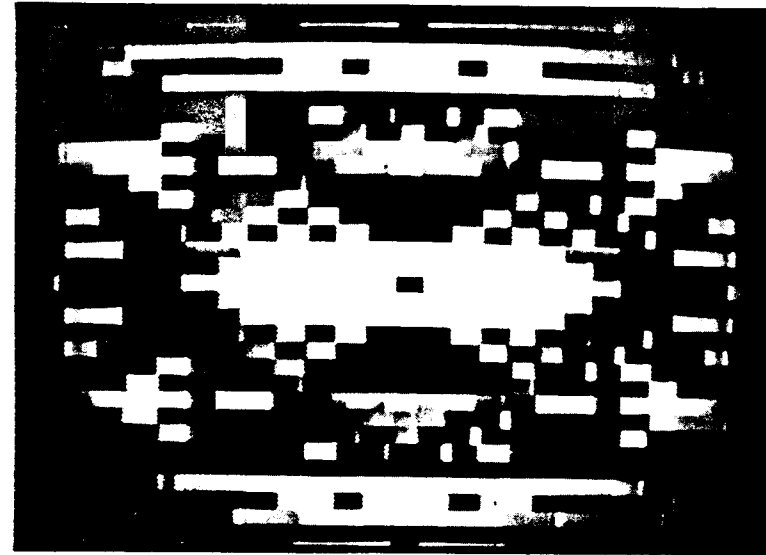
I arrived at KQED in August of 1970 and immediately started ordering equipment to build a synthesizer. I met Richard Felciano and we started collaborating on some studies using the Buchla Synthesizer and my machine. I had designed my voltage range inputs to be compatible with the Buchla Synthesizer thinking I'll go look Buchla up and maybe we can team up and make something. I started to produce imagery and also it was my first opportunity to work with videotape.



by electric fields in the surrounding region and is then collected at the periphery. Thus the basic electronic sculpting process is effected.

Center left: Still frame from *Cycles*, a videofilm by Stephen Beck and Jordan Belson, 1974

Center right: Image from Beck Video Weaver—an electronic loom for television using digital circuit techniques, 1975

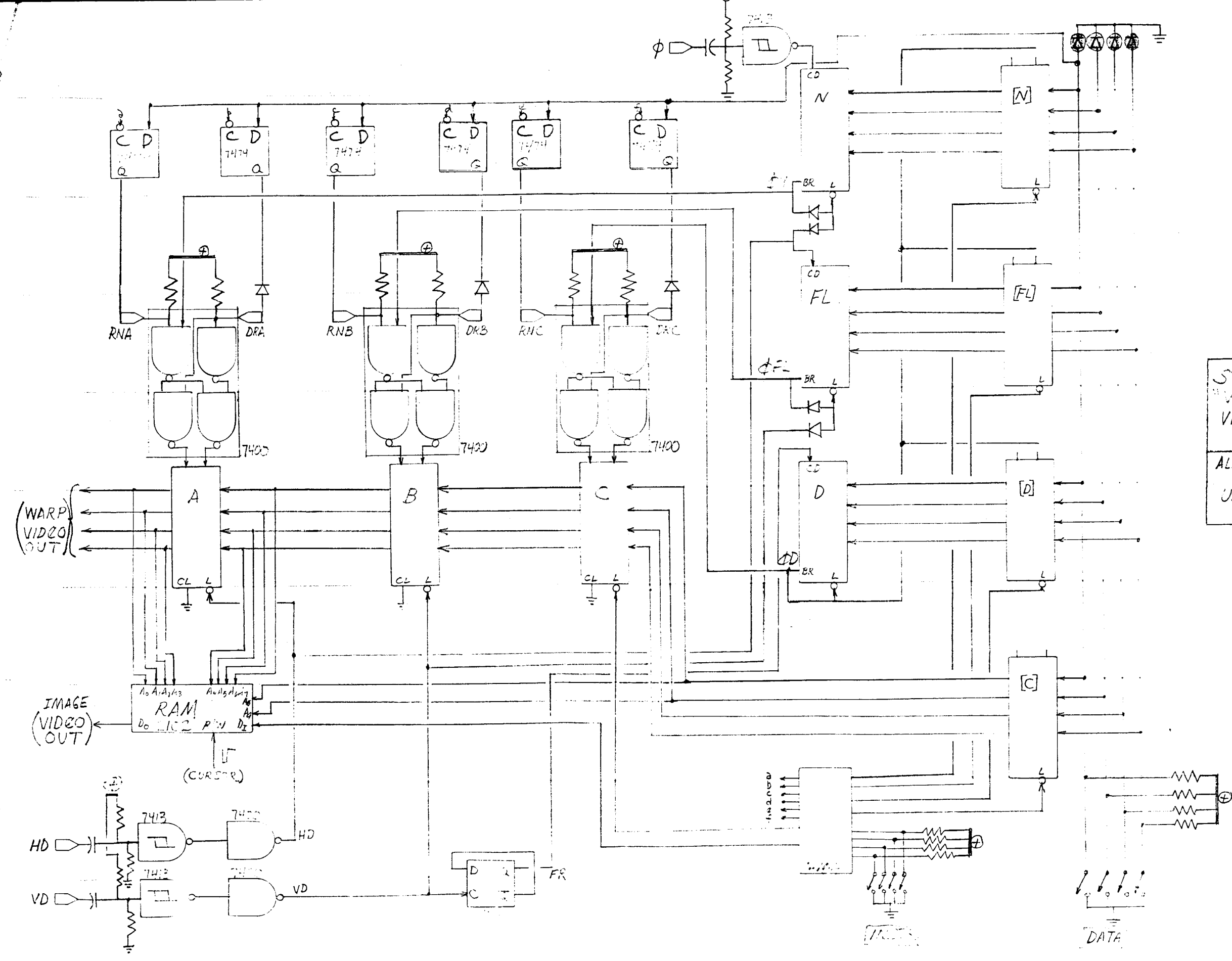


Visual score from *Cycles*

For me the direct video synthesizer functions not as something artificial, as the term "synthetic" has come to connote, but as a compositional device which "sculpts" electronic current in the hands of an artisan. One aspect of electronic synthesizers is that they can churn out hours and hours of oblivious images proceeding from their own electronic structure. The composition in this case lies in the circuit design and programming of the instrument. Another aspect of synthesizers is that they can be used by an image composer to achieve specific images that exist internally in his mind's eye, where no camera can probe; that is, to cull images from a subjective reality or nonobjective plane.

"It is we ourselves who make a picture/
Either we see it or we don't/
It is as simple as that or this/
The way lies not in the equipment."

from *ZEN in the Art of Photography*
by Robert Leverant, Images Press (Book People),
California, 1969.



STEPHEN BECK
 VIDEO WAVES
 VISUAL PROCESSOR
 APRIL 1975
 ALL CIRCUITS =
 74193
 UNLESS OTHERWISE
 NOTED!