

The Television Laboratory at wnet|13 news

May, 1975 Vol. 2, No. 3

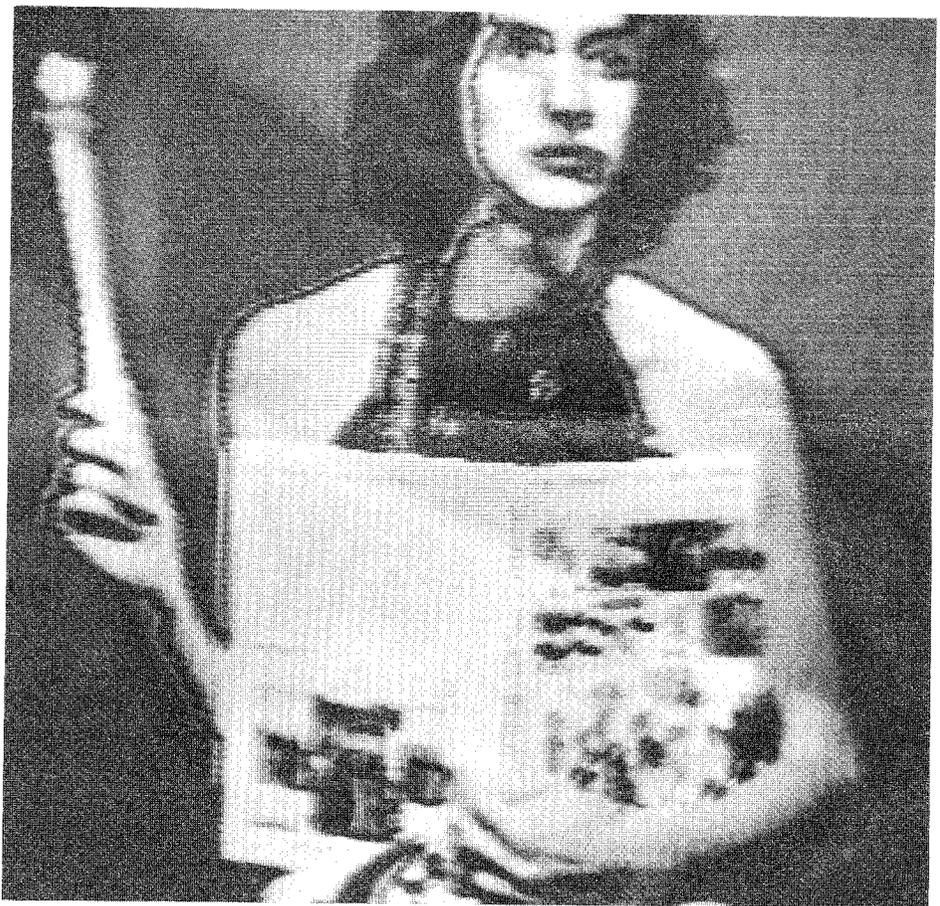
VTR-On the Air

Video and Television Review, a pioneer 26-week series began its run over WNET/13 in February. Produced by The Television Laboratory with funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, VTR is providing a regular showcase for works by video artists, documentarians, and independent video producers who are exploring the medium and its technology as a new means for artistic and journalistic expression.

Hosted by artist and critic Russell Conner, executive director of the Cable Arts Foundation, the series appears in the New York Area Fridays at 11:00 PM.

In addition to showcasing the latest in video art, programs in the series are examining the various ways in which broadcast television has attempted to present performing arts, and a look at the latest hardware and the practical and artistic uses of such electronic tools as the porta pak, synthesizers, lasers, satellites, holograms, and computers.

Beginning VTR was a half-inch video tape report on the life and working styles of TVTV, porta pak producers of *The Lord of the Universe*, *Gerald Ford's America*, and other innovative examples of the "new broadcast journalism." Following the premiers of distinguished filmmaker Ian Hugo's first videotape *Transcending* (with internationally acclaimed mime Yass Hakoshima) and Ed Emshwiller's *Crossings and Meetings*, the month of February concluded with a special hour program featuring *The Irish Tapes*. The



Hermine Freed in *Art Herstory*, May 23

46-minute documentary on Northern Ireland produced in 1972 by John Reilly and Stefan Moore, was one of the earliest porta pak documentaries, and issues a powerful statement on the inhumanity of violence.

The personal video observations of Skip Sweeney and Andy Mann as well as the perceptual explorations of Peter Campus highlighted the month of March.

A program devoted to the work

of the Downtown Community Television Center launched VTR's April line-up. The DCTV, known for their work with New York's minorities within the lower east side melting pot, discussed their efforts to use video as a tool for education and information. Segments of their work, including an excerpt from their ground-breaking porta pak trip into Cuba (*Cuba, The People* - PBS Dec. 2) were (Continued on Page 7)

Kicking the Habit

By Diane English, *Editor*

It may seem strange to Vision News readers that the editor has yet to write an editorial. For two years I've been quite content to go about my business interviewing video makers, describing projects, and reporting the latest in technological advancements while leaving the editorializing to the television professionals, video artists and critics who know a lot more about the nature of the medium than I.

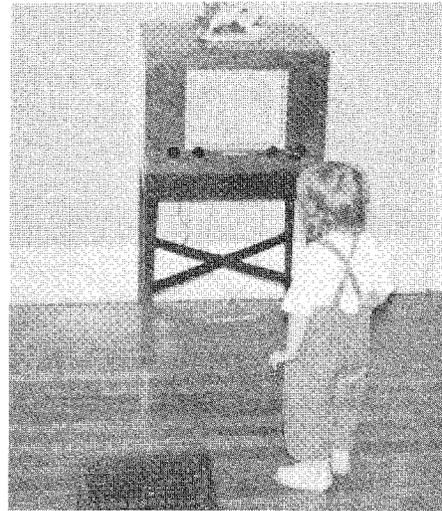
However, during my last trip home for the holidays, I happened across the picture you see of myself on this page (age two) and I was suddenly inspired to emerge from the editorial closet. The reason for this is due, only in part, to the fact that an editorial by me would form the perfect opportunity to get the photo in print. The *real* reason is that this photo is probably the only thing in Vision News my mother will relate to. And that's what worries me.

Vision News is a source of information mainly for people in the television industry and for people who are interested in expanding the medium's potential. Theoretically then, it shouldn't bother me if Mom disdards an article on portapak journalism for an interview with Chad Everett in *TV Guide*. But it does. It does because I know that my mother—in fact, my whole family, self included — are only a small representation of a nation of television junkies. We share the same passion for junk television that we have for junk food. I'll leave the reasons why we are a nation of junkies to the researchers and the psychologists. I'd rather figure out how we kick the habit.

First, I think we should all recognize that there is a little junkie lurking in all of us. Let me direct you back to the photo. This little girl is getting her first dose. You know how it starts . . . first a little radio, then right on to the hard stuff. Who among us can say it's never been a joy to plop down in front of the set with a burger and a sitcom? Is the last voice you hear at

night Johnny Carson's? Did you think that transferring your favorite news anchorman from studio set to newsroom was a major breakthrough in broadcast journalism? Do you fail to recognize that "movies-made-for-television" are films with good places to put commercials? Were you tempted to pull off the road into a motel to watch Rhoda's wedding? Do you still call public television "that educational channel"?

If you have answered "yes" to any of the above questions you



The making of a television junkie.

probably fall into the category of viewers that advertisers bank on. They insist that the success of television advertising rests partially upon the LOP factor — Least Objectionable Programming. They say that as we turn our dial from station to station, we will, if we are typical, choose the program which is not too weighty, not too political, not too long . . . least objectionable.

Now — on to territories where experimental television folk fear to tread: What good is all this experimentation with television as a more effective means of artistic and journalistic expression? Why bother with the perfection of technological tools?

I wouldn't dare ask a question like that unless I had a good answer. A while back, the Lab's director David Loxton was quoted as saying that he was convinced "audiences are demonstrating an

ever-increasing awareness in the possibilities of the television medium." A lot of people just smiled politely and nodded their heads, silently convinced that any nation which tolerated three years of "Gilligan's Island" had no hope. But because it was such a brave statement, and one worth exploring, The New York State Council on the Arts gave the Lab the money to launch "Video and Television Review" — a pioneer 26-week series showcasing the best, freshest, most encouraging television efforts from the large body of independent video producers in New York State and around the country.

After 13 weeks on the air, "VTR" is getting a very healthy share of the ratings, and I think a lot of people are pleasantly surprised. This is confusing, however, because it doesn't mesh with the statistics. Obviously, we've been underestimating ourselves, and perhaps we really are ready for a change. Perhaps it is possible to refine the tastes of a country weaned on junk. A little video consciousness-raising can go a long way.

To go just one step further, it seems to me that those who are interested in the betterment of the medium shift focus for a while. I think we all know that the impossible can be done. We know we can make cameras the size of credit cards, televisions the size of walls, just about anything else we can dream up. If we put our minds to it, we know we can use all this information to present the arts in a more effective manner, or to provide a more efficient picture of world events. This is all within our grasp, given time and money. What we have yet to explore is our audience. That is where the real experimentation now lies.

Going back to that picture of myself, I remember later that day removing all the set's knobs and smearing the screen with peanut butter and jelly. Although my parents grossly misinterpreted this act, I knew I was making a very deep statement. ♣♣

Emshwiler on Fourth Work

Ed Emshwiler, poised before the control panel at Studio 46, seemed like a cross between a concert pianist and Merlin the Magician. His fingers moved from button to lever, switch to knob, as he synthesized a tape of himself . . . teaching his youngest daughter to drive. The tape is part of Ed's fourth video undertaking as an artist-in-residence at the Lab — and the work is a collaboration between the artist and the members of his family.

The present full-length project which Ed is now working on at the Lab under a grant from The National Endowment for the Arts, began in the Emshwillers' Long Island home during the summer. The original idea was to create a video portrait of the Emshwiler family — something like *An American Family* — except that the Emshwillers would tape themselves and each other with a porta pak which would sit charged and accessible, in the middle of their living room. Ed's wife Carol, a writer, and his three children Eve, Sue and Peter, would each have input into the project.

Ed envisioned his family both in front of and behind the camera eye, able to be candid or highly manipulative of reality. "All of us will have access to the porta pak," he explained last July, "and we'll be able

to tape one another in the coming half year. Those tapes, plus old movies of us, photos, art work and other pictures created specifically for the project, will constitute an image bank to which we will respond as part of the process."

Last summer, as taping began, Ed imagined that the camera's intrusion into their lives would transform them at times, into "characters," or other times would record them as actual people slipping in and out of the medium's reality. However, as the project developed, Ed found that certain members of the family did not warm to the strange new electronic member of the family. But as the camera documented the Emshwiler family living its collective and individual lives, a unique tape of self-exploration and self-reflection emerged despite certain changes in the original concept of mutual participation. Ed views those changes as a challenge and as an important part of the project's growth and development. He sees the tape as "a work which will be its own creature, living its own life."

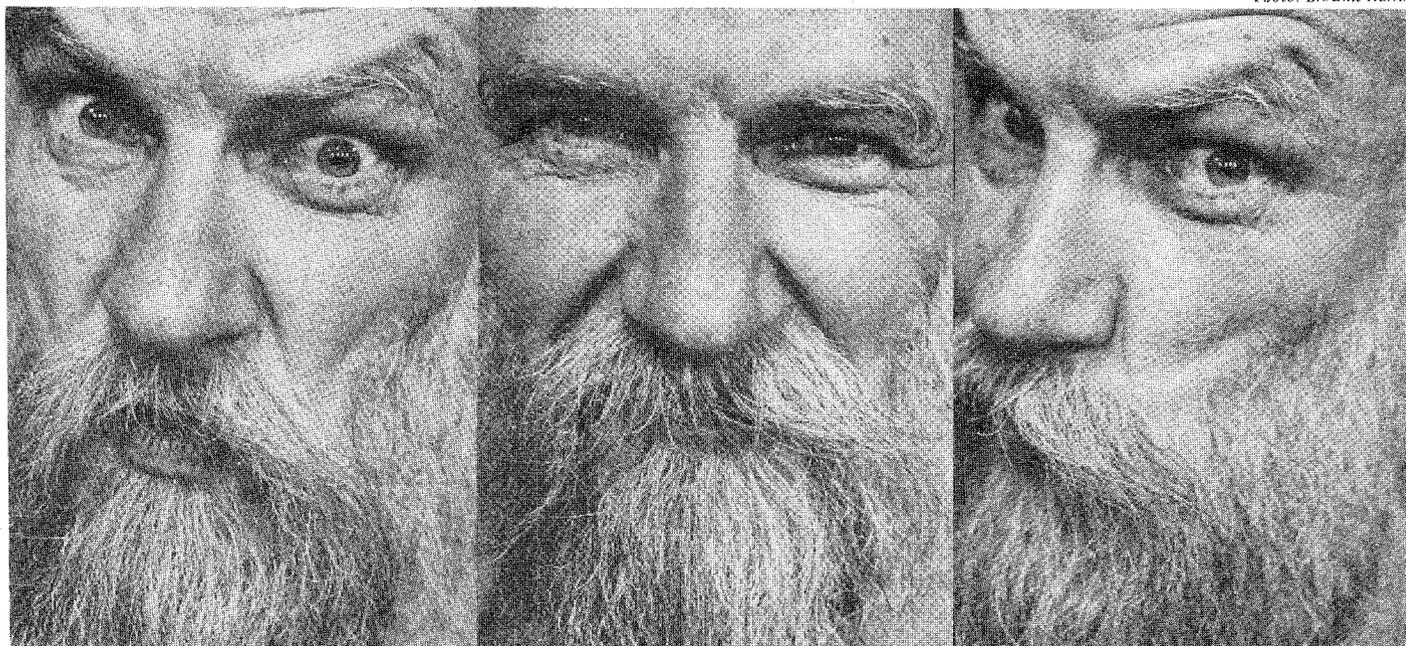
Carol Emshwiler, has written a narration for the new project which, to date, remains untitled. All the members of the family will participate in the editing process which Ed feels will be of primary

importance. "The tapes will be a source of feedback for the family who will mold the final product according to their own responses."

The major technical difference between this work and the others is that this one was shot on half-inch while the others used two-inch as their primary recording mode. Ed feels that half-inch allows him the flexibility he was looking for in producing this type of work. "I tried to find a form more open-ended than before . . . looser in terms of specific conceptions. I don't have the same degree of control this time because so much depends on the input of the others, and that's the challenge."

The black-and-white half-inch tape will be intermixed with 16mm film, slides, photographs, and computer animated art work. This material will be filtered through the Lab's equipment and further explored through the technology. Through his process of application and manipulation, images real and created should add a unique texture to the finished work. "Technically," explains Ed, "this work is less complex than *Scape-Mates* or *Pilobolus*, but structurally, stylistically, and aesthetically, I think the possibilities of image manipulation will make it the most complex tape I've ever done." ◀▲

Photo: Brownie Harris



Artist Residency Program Continued

As a continuation of the previous years' short-term artist residency programs, The Television Laboratory has been able to offer nine artists opportunities to work at studio 46. With funds made available from The New York State Council on the Arts, the artists will be allotted budgets for their individual projects, plus stipends for themselves. The nine artists were selected on the basis of potential contributions to the medium and proposals submitted to the Lab and its advisory panel.

Merce Cunningham, Tom DeWitt, Charles Dodge and Bill Wegman were invited to participate in the program along with artists Mark Brownstone, Phil Edelstein, Phil Perlman, Marcia Rock, and Ken Schneider.

The artist program has changed shape over the three years since its inception. In 1972-73, the program began as an artist-access program for which over 80 days of studio time were offered to the New York State video community on a first-come-first-serve basis. Artists from all walks, including poets, graphic artists and musicians, were able to utilize the image-making facility at Studio 46. However, although that program allowed a maximum number of artists to work with the Lab throughout the year, there were drawbacks as well. Most artists were allowed only 2-3 days to familiarize themselves with the complex system and to explore its potential. Because of this, 1973's artist program became more specific. Artists submitted proposals describing intended projects, and funds for the program were distributed equally among six of them. This program allotted the artists extended periods of studio time plus realistic budgets. The video artists selected that year were Tom DeWitt, Peter Campus, Hermine Freed, The VideoFreeex, plus filmmaker Ian Hugo, writer Jonathan Price, and choreographer Twyla Tharp.

This year, even further refinements in the residency program have been made. The Council has permitted a more flexible distribution of funds among the artists

which thus enables a greater variety of projects selected. This flexibility no longer restricts selection to projects of equal funding requirements. This year's program now can include projects at both ends of the budget requirement scale, increasing the variety and effectiveness of the residency program as a whole.

The work of choreographer Merce Cunningham is well known to those looking toward the next step in dance, music and art. His residency at Studio 46 will combine these elements with video tape. Tom DeWitt, artist, filmmaker and technician was one of the six artists chosen to participate in the 1973-74 residency program, and several of his works completed during that period were collected to form the May 2nd edition of *VTR*. As a continuing resident, Tom will take a satirical look at the future of television through the eyes of the artist. Charles Dodge is a well-known composer of computer music. His residency will focus on his recent album of poetry, computer electronics and the human voice and the creation of corresponding visuals. Bill Wegman, whose humor was featured on *VTR* April 18, explores the effectiveness of our communicative systems and its ironies with the black-and-white porta pak. His upcoming residency will allow him to expand those observations within the Lab's own communicative system.

Mark Brownstone has been a consultant to many of the independent video organizations. He draws upon his experience in video and his degree in Psychology to produce a piece tentatively titled "Video Meditations." The project is designed to explore the medium's potential for consciousness expansion, drawing heavily on Oriental art, philosophy, Gestalt, and "a construct of images and sounds designed to produce a meditative state in the viewer."

Phil Edelstein is a Technical Specialist at the Performing Arts Center and Music Department at SUNY Albany. He is also Media Director and co-founder of EBA Inc., a non-profit dance/music/media performance, production and

education group. His project is divided into three parts: "The first deals with software development for the PDP-8 computer recently installed at the Lab; the second is an experimentation with the hardware and newly developed software; the third, a videotape production of interchanges among bodies and synthetic images and mixtures of the two."

Phil Perlman, video artist and writer, teaches at the School of Visual Arts. *Mad Man's Drum* is the title of his 22 minute video tape recorded five years ago, which is the basis of his new work at the Lab. The tape, based on the woodcut narratives of Lynd Ward, is a wordless image-processed animation and will be further expanded by use of the image-making system at studio 46. The tape will also include a porta pak interview with Lynd Ward.

Marcia Rock has worked with half-inch video for over three years is presently working with Rutt Electrophysics building the Rutt/Etra synthesizer. She will use the Lab's facility to "give human dance-like movement to still images... correlating the elements of dance to the elements of the synthesizer." She will be using a series of Rodin sketches of Isadora Duncan, transferring the drawings and animating the stills.

Ken Schneider is a video tape instructor at Western Connecticut College. As a filmmaker and video artist, he has won many awards including the Oskar Kokoschka Prize in Salzburg Austria, and the Award of Merit at the Chicago International Film Festival. His works have appeared in festivals and public collections around the world. "I Cover the Waterfront" is the title of his proposed tape as a NYSCA resident at the Lab. The title is taken from a song by James Moody which will be not only the soundtrack of the tape, but part of the visual as well. Ken will key himself onto the spinning record, while singing in mime and following the grooves. As the record progresses, he will become smaller and smaller until finally, when another record drops, his image disappears. ◀▶

TVTV Focuses on Mardi Gras



TVTV focuses on Cajun music and culture.

While their four-part PBS series *Gerald Ford's America* was just winding down, TVTV, whose name is becoming a household word among television folk, was accepting a duPont-Columbia broadcast journalism award for last year's collaboration with the Lab, *The Lord of the Universe*. Simultaneously, they were regrouping forces in New Orleans for their next venture — a 60-minute show about Cajun music and culture called *These Good Times Are Killing Me*.

Why Cajun music? Why Gerry Ford and a 15-year old guru? TVTV is interested in the exploration of lifestyles — and they found the rural areas of Louisiana around Marti Gras time a particularly intriguing place to point their porta paks. Yet, as with each of their previous efforts, the Cajun show will explore a new area of porta pak journalism. Said TVTV's Michael Shamberg, "This time we won't be examining a political process or a cultural group, nor will this show be particularly event-related. This time we're dealing with an American form . . ."

TVTV's brand of journalism has been called many things. *The New York Times* cited *The Lord of the Universe* one of 1974's best efforts

in news and documentaries. *The Washington Post* called *Gerald Ford's America* ". . . fascinating, but slightly suspicious as journalism." TVTV believes that the alternate point of view is extremely necessary. "We do have strong objections to the way news is covered by TV. There's always a professional news man to stand between us and the news. We don't pose ourselves as objective mediators."

True to form, TVTV intends to let their newest program speak for itself. *These Good Times Are Killing Me* is the second project in a string of five collaborations between TVTV and the Television Laboratory for which major funding has been provided by WNET/13. The intent is to develop and refine uses for the porta pak style of broadcast journalism.

In the past, TVTV assembled its porta pak producers from around the country, usually on a project by project basis. Now however, since WNET's underwriting of the experiment, TVTV is able to obtain ongoing commitments from those people whose talents have been integral to their work, allowing them to work together for a sustained period. TVTV feels that this will

help set a standard of professionalism for the thousands of porta pak users across the country who are all potential sources of broadcast information.

In their own words, TVTV describes the Cajun show:

"Cajun is a name given to French descendants and southern Blacks whose unassimilated culture thrives in rural areas of Louisiana. Despite an exuberant image, it is not a happy culture.

The creative release for Cajun frustration is music and Mardi Gras. Cajun music — played in variation by blacks and whites — is rich and unique as a distinct American form.

These Good Times Are Killing Me will be a 60-minute videotape of Cajun music in performance counterpointed by the lives of the musicians themselves. The culmination of the tape will be Mardi Gras day in Mamou, Louisiana, where bands travel on trucks and play to costumed celebrants."

As a change from their past shows, the Cajun show has been shot mainly on color tape, except for some behind the scenes material. Performances at local taverns and community halls were shot with multi-camera set ups, while sound mixing was done through a Nagra stereo tape recorder for optimum sound quality.

Recently, the Lab, commercial news broadcasters, public television officials, and independent video journalists were invited to attend an informal conference sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation. The purpose of the conference was to examine the prospects in broadcast television for independent video makers. At the conference, TVTV proclaimed that "technological inevitability is on our side. We are just beginning. It has taken us five years of experimentation to develop the craftsmanship to a point where we can be an ongoing news service . . . Now with color field equipment and the development of the time base corrector, we have technological compatibility with broadcasting. We're convinced different material, well done, will create its own acceptance." 📺

Lab Notes:

Vision News was recently awarded a silver medal by the *National Association of Educational Broadcasters* at their convention in Las Vegas. A second silver medal was awarded for the design of the Lab's annual report. Credit for both goes to VISION NEWS designer *Joel Shukovsky*.

The Lord of the Universe, co-produced by TVTV and the Lab, was among the eleven programs selected as winners of the coveted *Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award* for excellence in broadcast journalism. Selections were made by seven jurors who screened 650 individual examples of news and documentary works. The award was received by TVTV's *Michael Shamberg* and WNET/13's programming VP *Robert Kotlowitz* at the Columbia School of Journalism March 21st.

The Lord of the Universe and the *Downtown Community Television Center's Cuba, The People* were cited by Times critic *John O'Connor* as two of the eight most "outstanding efforts" in news and documentary fare for 1974. Both 60-minute programs were produced with the Lab on half-inch videotape and were broadcast nationally by PBS.

Nam June Paik's, Suite 212 began airing locally over WNET/13 April 1st. *Suite 212* is a collection of brief and unique portraits of New York City which are broadcast nightly just before station sign-off. Samplings include a synthesized visit to Greenwich Village and an eye-popping tour of Little Italy, done only as "the father of video art" can do.

Funds from *The Corporation for Public Broadcasting* and *The National Endowment for the Arts* will make possible the residency of a major American choreographer who will work with the Lab and its facility in the development of new approaches to dance and television.

Further grants from CPB and the NEA will make possible the residency of noted animator and documentary filmmaker *Eliot Noyes, Jr.* Mr. Noyes, whose work in animation has won him wide critical acclaim and an Academy Award nomination, will spend four to five months at the Lab combining fantasy, animation, and videotape.

Lab Director *David Loxton*, former resident *Bill Etra*, and resident *Dr. Peter Crown* participated in the *Baltimore Museum's* lecture and demonstration program *Explorations in Video*. The eight-part program which began in February was funded by *The National Endowment for the Arts* and was coordinated by the Media Program at *Antioch College*.

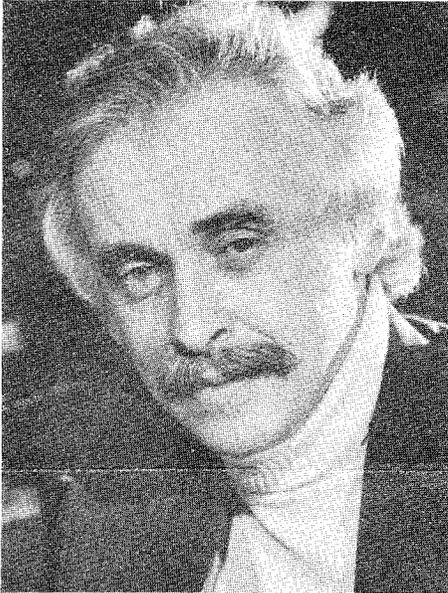
Lisa Goldberg and *Debra Schnabel* have joined the Lab as volunteer production assistants. The two young women assist in all phases of videotape production and are part of the Lab's effort to make its resources available for training purposes as well as production.

Dr. Peter Crown recently directed a seminar at *Hampshire College*, Amherst, Mass., in experimental television and the psychology of TV, as well as a week-long workshop at *The Visual Studies Workshop* in Rochester, N.Y.

The third *Annual International Computer Art Festival*, featuring films, tapes, graphics, and seminars, is scheduled for June 12-21. The festival occurs at the Graduate School and University Center of the *City University of New York*, 33 W. 42nd Street. For information, 212-794-5685. ◀▶

(Continued from Page 1)

featured. A repeat of Nam June Paik's wry international video collage *Global Groove* plus the hilarious work of independent video maker Bill Wegman, proved that the video movement doesn't lack a sense of humor. *The Continuing Story of Carel and Ferd* concluded April's fare. Produced by Arthur Ginsberg of Video Free America in 1972, *The Continuing Story of Carel and Ferd* was, in its



VTR host, Russell Connor.

original state, "a closed-circuit multiple-image video novel about pornography, sexual identities, the institution of marriage, and the effect of living too close to an electronic medium." For *VTR*, the program was edited to 40 minutes and also included an interview with Carel and Ferd who discuss their after-the-fact impressions of video tape's one-year intrusion into their private lives.

On May 2nd, viewers tuned into the work of video maker Tom DeWitt who merges the latest in technology with mime, music, and theatrical device.

May 16th featured a documentary by and about children, hosted by David Silver. Tapes made by children in Brooklyn's Junior High School #51 and Public School #39 gave a look at the next generation's use of the medium.

Coming up on the second half of

VTR will be the work of Hermine Freed, scheduled for May 23rd. Ms. Freed's 18 minute tape, *Art Herstory* completed at the Lab last summer as part of the NYSCA artist residency program, focuses on the role of women as seen through the art of the Middle Ages to the present. "In some way," she says, "this is to be seen as the cultural schizophrenia of contemporary woman." Also as part of that program will be a report by David Silver on the phenomenon of the new wall-size Advent television screen. Silver visits the manufacturer of the screen, and three owners.

May 30th features a moving portrait of an Italian-American woman, who after 50 years of marriage, has recently lost her husband. *Always Love Your Man* was produced on half-inch black-and-white tape by Cara DeVito, and the subject is her own grandmother. The poignant tape carries many messages about the universal identities of women.

In the works for June and July are: a show produced by scientist-in-residence Peter Crown demonstrating the physical properties of the medium, as well as its effects on human physiology and psychology; a program focusing on the computer and its growing role in the medium; works by Frank Gillette and VideoFreex; a report on the various therapeutic uses of video such as in marriage counseling and speech therapy; plus future segments by David Silver on video books and . . . a video tombstone.

According to David Loxton, Director of The Television Laboratory, "The main purpose of the series is twofold: to create a regular forum and means of presentation for the increasing number of important new works being created, and to establish in the viewing audience's consciousness, a clearer identity for the whole spectrum of independent and experimental work on TV".

The producer for *VTR* is Candida Harper; segment producer, David Silver; executive producer, David Loxton. ◀▶

vision news

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Editor/Writer
Diane English

Design
Joel Shukovsky

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Director
David Loxton

Administrative Assistant
Carol Brandenburg

Secretary
Stephanie Wein

Production Manager
Darlene Mastro

Supervising Engineer
John Godfrey

Residents
Peter Crown
Ed Emshwiller
Nam June Paik
David Silver
TDTV

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Send comments and information to: Editor, The Television Laboratory News, 304 West 58th Street, New York, New York 10019.

Rewire Yourself for the Next TV Era

By Richard Robinson

Richard Robinson, media enthusiast and author of "Creem" magazine's consumer electronics column, offers a look into the monitor of the future.

In a recent newspaper article I was criticized because I said I like TV. My critic, a proponent of the video movement, thought I meant ABC, CBS, and NBC. I should have said I like TV sets.

For the past twenty-five years the networks have been identified as TV. ABC, CBS, and NBC's use of the medium established TV as an effective method of mass communication and their refinement of display techniques has spread a glossy varnish on the electric fantasy. Then, last August, this kind of TV that took us to Peking and Moscow and the Moon and Dallas asked too much. People tuned in to watch the President of the United States walk out of the White House in living color, cross a red carpet unrolled on the lawn, get into a helicopter, and fly away. Many citizens were disenchanted with the message coming through the looking glass, and the result has been a disruption and re-examination of our dependency on the networks as TV. In my opinion, fewer people are now using network TV than ever before. They're not throwing out their TV sets, but many of them find there's nothing on.

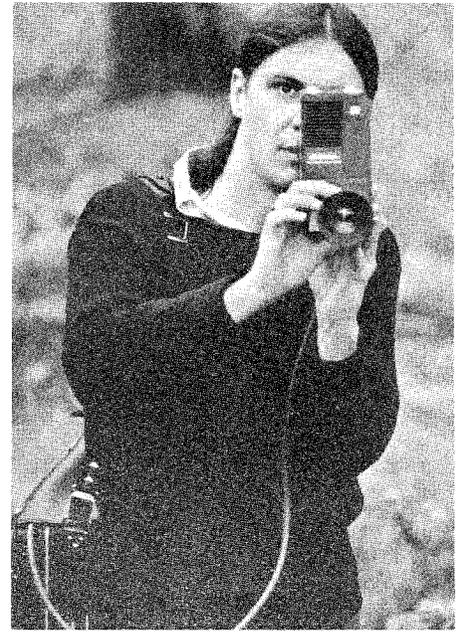
This slackened interest in TV as a broadcast medium isn't the end of the TV set. Since the late sixties TV has expanded in what it can display. It now remains for all of us to expand our concept of what TV is. I like to make the comparison with radio. Radio was once the central medium of mass communication. Today, sound reproduction isn't solely broadcast radio. Many of us have hi-fi systems that let us select the audio input and output. We listen to the radio, but we know the speakers can give us AM, FM stereo, records, and tapes. We must start thinking of the TV screen like we do the hi-fi speakers: to use it we don't have to tune in a broadcast.

The first steps in the expanding use of the TV set were public television, cable-casting, and inexpensive video tape recording. Public television proved there could be an alternative within the broadcast spectrum and cable-casting provided the initial technology for the full potential use of the spectrum: 1992 hours of TV every day. The first generation to grow up with TV in their homes combined their familiarity of the medium with cheap TV equipment and demonstrated that anyone could make their own TV shows. The broadcast-end of TV has grown so the viewer has more program choices and so more individuals can participate in the production of those programs.

In the early seventies, TV set manufacturers were selling the same 25" color TVs in the same contemporary Mediterranean cabinets. This year they've found a new inducement for consumers to buy a new TV: they're selling TV sets as digital clocks. Sets are available that display time and channel information on the screen at the push of a button. This expansion of the TV set is the first point of public readjustment to what the set is and does. Magnavox's Odyssey game and its professional counterpart, penny arcade 'pong' games, are another sign of expanded screen display. The TV screen makes an excellent game board, and when you're finished you don't have to collect up the pieces and put them away, you just turn off the TV.

The idea is simple: the TV set can be on, and in use, and yet not be tuned to a broadcast signal. Video tape recorders and video record players that let the consumer program his TV as he wants, when he wants, with what he wants, are the most liberating of the new TV display devices. Cassette and open-reel video recorders are available in the U.S., and the first video record players were put on sale in West Germany in February.

The next area of TV expansion will not be in the program options but in TV set technology. Not only do we have to stop thinking that



Richard Robinson

TV is ABC, CBS, and NBC, we have to stop thinking that the TV is a twenty-odd inch screen with a five inch speaker. Experiments are underway with FM stereo simulcasts and it's hoped TV sound will improve by the union of the hi-fi system and the TV screen as one homogeneous unit. The size of the display screen is also undergoing modification with Sony's Video Projection System (three by four foot screen) and Advent's Video Beam (five by six foot screen) changing the concept of the TV set by turning it into a home movie theater.

The next TV era begins at this point: a TV screen several feet in size placed between stereo speakers and connected to a tuner for broadcast, cable for additional programming such as pay channels and public access, a video player for home software, and a character generator for TV games.

Freedom of communication and the continued development of TV as a medium depend on how we light up the TV display as much as it does on what's available to display. The time has come to stop asking "What's on TV?" and start thinking "What shall I put on my TV screen?" ◀▶

Richard Robinson is author of *The Video Primer* (Links Books), and the forthcoming *Electric Sex* (Warner Paperback Library).