

Gill, Johanna Vidio: State of the Art (The Rockefeller Foundation
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This reaction against broadcast television is usually discernible in much early video. Some experimenters took their new light cameras out into the streets and to the countryside, recording people and social situations broadcast TV never would have bothered with. This group of people was concerned with exploring as rich an array of subjects as possible. They felt broadcast TV had developed bland programming in an effort to offend as few people as possible, attract high ratings, and thus command higher prices for advertising time. The alternative television people were not supported by advertising; they didn't care about ratings. They were free to focus their cameras on anything, even things that would interest only the people living in a single neighborhood.

Others were concerned with electronics research and development. These people considered it ridiculous that the perfect television image was thought to be the smooth, glowing pink face of Walter Cronkite. Some of these experimenters come from a strong twentieth-century graphic tradition of exploration with light imagery going back at least as far as the Futurists and the Bauhaus. Those who had been looking for a medium of moving, colored light were overjoyed to find that television could produce abstract images as easily as it could transmit a newscaster's face. Some members of this group built new electronic circuitry to produce different imagery. These people are among the real pioneers of the medium; they are fascinated with the role technology plays in our society and are constantly searching for new ways to make this role visually manifest. They feel that the structure of electronic tools reflects as well as informs our thinking, and by using tools that produce visual patterns, they hope to reveal to us our social and technological directions.

Still another group was reacting against the one-directional flow of broadcast TV, which streams day after day into the homes of millions of people without providing the means for them to speak back equally directly. They pointed out that we have only receivers