ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX, INC.

at the leading edge of art

"The domain to which the artist addresses himself is the inner, subjective world of the emotions . . . The domain of the scientist, in contrast, is the outer, objective world of physical phenomena . . . The transmission of information and the perception of meaning in that information constitute the central content of both the arts and the sciences."

"Prematurity and Uniqueness in Scientific Discovery,"
Gunther S. Stent, *Scientific American,* December, 1972.

ART WITHOUT FUNCTION

There was a time when art was an integral part of everyday life. The sculptures of primitive peoples were not just works of art; they possessed powers for good or evil, health or misery; they brought rain, or if offended, caused the crops to wither. Each succeeding culture had expressed its most profound beliefs through representation of sacred images until the Enlightenment undermined faith and relegated to art only the function of visually recording history. The invention of photography, which performed this task better than painting or sculpture, severed the last ties between art and contemporary life, and made art valid only for its own sake.

In effect, today's religion is science, and technology is its manifestation. We believe just as firmly in Einstein's theory of relativity, for example, as we did in any of the religious tenets that were held to be so sacred in the past. We imput to the automobile and the TV set powers as mysterious and awesome as those which the ancients ascribed to their idols and fetishes.

TECHNOLOGY: THE BRIDGE BETWEEN ART AND LIFE

Science and technology permeate our everyday life. Everyone is familiar with electric lights, automobiles, TV sets, and the myriad other products of technology which so effectively determine our fate. Artists who have been representative of their times have used the most advanced tools available to them. When used by the artist, the products of our technology could become the bridge over which the artist conveys his emotions, ideas, and concerns to the viewer, as religion was in early and Medieval times.

During the Machine Age, which is just ending, some artists attempted to use motion and energy as essential elements in their work (kinetic art). Many of these were successful as works of art, but the artist could not afford the costly and time-consuming testing procedures necessary to assure continuous operation.

THE HARMONIOUS UNION OF ART AND SCIENCE?

We are in the process of graduating from the Machine Age to the Electronic Era. Recent advances in the technology of the electronic media suggest that television may be that bridge over which today's artist may bring art to life. Science and technology have provided this pre-tested electronic medium for use by the artist as a means of his expression, and at the same time have provided the mechanics for the dissemination of his work—most homes are electronically equipped, ready to receive the artist's message: they have TV sets already installed. Thus a great step forward towards the harmonious union of art and technology is about to occur.

THE ARTIST IS DENIED ACCESS TO THE TV SYSTEM

However, in order to integrate art with contemporary life, it is necessary for the artist to gain access to the system. This has been denied to him because the extremely high costs of production and broadcasting require that broadcast TV be supported by advertising revenue or by commercial or governmental largesse. Broadcast TV must therefore seek the largest possible audience, and its programming must be non-provocative, non-controversial, and inoffensive. One of the consequences is that commercial TV has not explored the possiblities of the TV medium as a creative means in itself, but has been content to borrow from other areas such as theatre, burlesque, literature, the news reel, sports, film, and (in reproduction on the TV screen) painting, sculpture, and architecture. A further consequence has been the effective denial to the artist of access to television, for the artist must, in order to express himself, seek to provoke the viewer out of his complacency, he must attempt to stimulate the viewer's imagination, and he must seek the truth and make it visible regardless of the consequences.

THE ADVENT OF 1/2" VIDEO, CASSETTES, AND CABLE TV

The introduction in 1968 of portable television, now commonly referred to as "video," the relatively inexpensive 1/2" battery operated video-tape recorder in conjunction with the hand-held TV camera, made it physically and financially feasible for the artist to avail himself of the technology of television as a means of his artistic expression. The impending proliferation of two other means of video communication, the videotape cassette player and the cable TV system, now offer the artist the possiblity of participation in these "alternate media." The widespread use of video cassette players will permit anyone owning a TV set an almost unlimited choice of recorded programs. Cable TV companies will be able to utilize the 40 or even 80 channels at their disposal when audiences are measured in the

millions, instead of the tens of thousands, as is now the case. Far greater opportunities for program selection, both of live and recorded programs, will then be available than are now offered at any one time by commercial TV. In addition, the expansion of cable TV will permit program targeting to small audiences based on interest, location or other factors.

THE OPPORTUNITY AND THE CHALLENGE TO THE ARTIST

The status of the cassette and cable TV industries is now very much in a state of flux. It is by no means certain that, when the considerable problems facing them are resolved, the artist will be able to participate in the development of cassette and cable television to the extent that he can infuse them with the vigor and vitality of which he is capable. Successful resolution of these problems will present the artist with both the opportunity and the challenge to show that by means of his art he can create programs of sufficient power and appeal to attract a sizeable audience. His targets will be, no doubt, those thoughtful and concerned persons who are also eager to discern the truth, whether it be in art, in politics, in social and economic problems—those who eschew banality and seek meaning in their activities and their lives. In other words, the very people whom commercial TV neglects and "turns off."

THE ARTIST AS ELECTRONIC INNOVATOR

In television, "the medium is the message," that is, the mechanics of TV (the hardware) are inextricably intermixed with the content (the software). For this reason, some video artists have concerned themselves with the development of new components and the modification of existing ones in their attempt to realize the potentials of the TV system.

Video artists working in this area have already developed important devices including video synthesizers of several types which by electronic means permit the creation of images directly on the TV screen or the modification of images seen by the camera.

Other video artists are attempting to generate a language for television utilizing those aspects of TV technology which are unique to the medium, and are not derived from film or any other informational medium. Television registers a continuous flow of imagery as sensed by the camera and transmitted on to the TV screen in a manner akin to that in which the human eye registers reality, the image of which is conveyed by the nervous system to the brain and thus to our consciousness. Because of this similarity, TV is especially suitable for use by the artist as a means of creative expression.

TV IS A MEDIUM SUITABLE FOR THE ARTIST

Among TV's properties which appeal to the artist are the following:

Video registers instantaneously what the camera sees, and may be played back immediately without the necessity of processing;

Video establishes an intense, private, one-to-one relationship between the work and the viewer, which makes it particularly appropriate for artistic communication;

The sound and the picture, both being simultaneously recorded on the same tape, are automatically in sync, without need of extra audio equipment;

Both the image on the tape and the color may be altered electronically by means of synthesizers, giving the artist wide parameters within which to exercise his creative powers;

Video, by means of electronic synthesizers, permits the artist to generate electronically colors of a lucidity impossible to achieve by other means;

Black and white videotape may be readily colorized, with complete control on the part of the artist;

Video may be tied into a computer, thus permitting creation of shapes in time and space otherwise impossible to achieve;

Because the TV tube is itself a source of light, video may be used to create an environment independent of other light sources which is not possible with film;

Video has its own kind of space. It permits layering, and thus enables the artist to create the effect of seeing the surface and beneath the surface simultaneously;

Video has its own time; for example, the artist may present the viewer on the TV screen simultaneously as he is and as he was;

Video operates silently. Its subject soon forgets that the camera's eye is upon him, and drops the mask he wears to present himself to the world, revealing himself as he really is. Thus video permits the artist to achieve what painters of many cultures have sought to accomplish—to capture inner reality, not merely surface appearance. This feature also accounts for the politician's reluctance to appear impromptu on TV.

THE VIDEO SUBCULTURE

When portable television became available in 1968, a whole new video subculture came into being, consisting of both individual artists and groups clustered in various centers in the United States and Canada. A number of universities and art schools have established video departments. Some artists have been enabled to use and sometimes help develop sophisticated video technology through programs at three educational television stations. These are KQED in San Francisco, through its affiliate, the National Center for Experiments in Television; WGBH in Boston; and WNET in New York, through its Experimental Television Laboratory. Among the

funding organizations supporting these efforts are the National Endowment for the Arts, The New York State Council on the Arts, The Rockefeller Foundation, and The Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Recently there has been increased interest in establishing video groups and centers in Europe. The video movement has its own publications, of which "Radical Software" was the first, and now has a circulation of over 7000.

THE AIM OF ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX

It is the purpose of Electronic Arts Intermix to assist the video artist in making an increasingly significant contribution to the development of non-broadcast television during these formative years. To this end, it is sponsoring a number of projects, a brief description of which follows. It is our intent to orient these programs more and more toward utilizing the cassette and cable television systems. We expect gradually to develop our present facilities to permit videotape production. We plan to ask museums, public service organizations, universities, and selected community groups to work with us to produce programming of educational as well as esthetic merit. The video artist will be the directing force in the creation of these programs; his originality and insights will inform the work, making his voice heard in an effective and forceful manner. The present programs form the core from which the production center may grow.

PROGRAMS

PERCEPTION is a group which conducts research into methods and equipment through which to make more effective the presentation and communication of information by video. New forms of video programming are being expanded and developed. Languages employing the unique qualities of television are being developed to enhance the educational and artistic potential of the TV medium and to integrate it into the overall ecology of information exchange.

Perception presents its work for public viewing over cable TV. It is also developing a video curriculum for performance presentation to universities, museums, and libraries.

Members of the group share editing and technical facilities. Present members of Perception are Juan Downey, Frank Gillette, Beryl Korot, Andy Mann, Ira Schneider, and Eric Siegel.

VASULKA VIDEO conducts research aimed at the development of special "video-tools" to increase the scope and effectiveness of video as an art medium. Among these already developed are the Video Sequence Switcher, designed by George Brown; the Dual Colorizer, designed by Eric Siegel; the Level Input Keyer, designed by George Brown; and the Video Outliner, designed by Stephen Beck. Woody and Steina Vasulka direct the program.

THE KITCHEN is a video and audio equipped space where some 250 experimental video, electronic and "new" music and intermedia programs are creatively mounted during the course of the season. Here artists, composers and performers are provided a forum for the presentation of their work free from the pressures of attracting large audiences or of striving for critical acclaim.

The Kitchen staff are proficient in video and audio technology and assist in mounting all productions and in the creation of the desired electronic environment. In this way many composers, dramatists, performers and artists in other fields are exposed to the potential use of the electronic media in their own disciplines.

On Wednesday evenings open videotape showings are held, at which tapes brought by any artist or group are shown on a first come, first served basis.

No charge is made to participating artists for the use of the Kitchen's facilities or for the services of its staff.

In the two years of its operations, the Kitchen has developed a specialized and growing audience, and has gained widespread recognition on the part of the public and the press for its adventuresome role in the presentation of innovative programs.

Kitchen Manager is Robert Stearns; Video Program Director, Shridhar Bapat; Music Program Director, James Burton.

OPEN CIRCUITS/THE FUTURE OF TELEVISION is the first international conference devoted entirely to exploring the esthetic potential of television. It will take place at The Museum of Modern Art in New York on January 23-25, 1974. The organizers of the conference are Fred Barzyk, Douglas Davis, and Gerald O'Grady. A book will follow; it will be the first collection of serious writings on video as an art form. The possibility of mounting a major international exhibition in museums, and on cable and public broadcast TV in 1975 is under consideration.

THE ANNUAL AVANT GARDE FESTIVALS OF NEW YORK, organized by Charlotte Moorman, have in recent years featured video art and video artists among the more than 150 participating artists from all over the world. The Festivals have commanded international attention, and have importantly contributed to New York's standing as the art center of the world. The Eighth Festival was held in the famous 69th Regiment Armory on November 19, 1971, and attracted more than 12,000 persons. The Ninth was held aboard the rivership Alexander Hamilton on October 28, 1972, moored at the South Street Seaport Museum. Despite space limitations and inclement weather, attendance was over 6,000. Plans have not yet been finalized for the Tenth Festival, which will be held in the fall of 1973. As has been the policy in the past, admission is free to the public, and many of the services, equipment, and all of the space donated.

THE MIDNIGHT OPERA COMPANY, under the direction of Michael Tschudin and Cia Lozell, utilizes sophisticated electronic devices to create a video environment which complements and modifies the images of the musicians, singers, and players who make up the company.

Electronic Arts Intermix encourages a number of additional programs involving video and/or electronic music. Among these are the COMPUTER ARTS FESTIVAL, directed by Dimitri Devyatkin, and the WOMEN'S VIDEO FESTIVAL, directed by Susan Milano.

THE FUNCTION OF ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX, INC.

Electronic Arts Intermix, Inc., was organized in 1971 to assist projects undertaken by artists working to explore the potentials of the electronic media as a means of expression and non-commercial communication. Projects are selected on the basis of the expertise, imagination, integrity and dedication, and organizational ability of the leadership of each project.

The assistance offered is primarily managerial and takes the form of administrative services, the objective being to assure that the projects are run insofar as possible in a business-like manner. Assistance is given in such matters as contracts, accounting procedures, disbursement of funds, assistance in raising funds, and in general to assure that funds are expended efficiently and effectively for the purposes intended. Electronic Arts Intermix is performing an important function by providing these services without charge to any of the individual programs.

The projects which Electronic Arts Intermix sponsors have been made possible with financial assistance from the New York State Council on the Arts and from private sources. A membership program is presently planned.

NEEDED: IMAGINATIVE FUNDING

Funds are currently being sought to augment present programs and to achieve the purposes described under the caption "Aim of Electronic Arts Intermix" (See page 8). This is no easy assignment. Because the creative artist develops new forms and uses new techniques as the vehicle for his expression, we find it difficult to relate his work to our previous knowledge. He is "too far ahead of his time" to be appreciated.

It is this factor which makes difficult the task of funding the programs sponsored by Electronic Arts Intermix, for while the artist senses the implications of the developments in TV technology, most people do not have the imagination necessary to grasp their significance. The skills required to exploit these developments exist, as well as the will to do so. Imagination and foresight in funding are needed now to see beyond the present—toward a time when these ideas and programs will be fully realized. Just as the museums and performing arts centers of today depend on the art that was created in the more or less distant past, so the similar institutions of the future will depend on the art which is created today. All art was contemporary when it was created. We have faith that the potential of television as an artistic medium will be achieved. We hope you will share with us this conviction.

HOWARD WISE, President of Electronic Arts Intermix since its inception in 1971, was formerly director of the Howard Wise Gallery, New York, from 1960 until operations were discontinued in 1971.

During this period the Gallery presented a number of landmark exhibitions, including:

Jan. 1964 — ON THE MOVE the first U.S. survey exhibition of contemporary kinetic art, consisting of the works of seventeen American and European artists working with movement (organized by Douglas MacAgy).

Feb. 1967 — LIGHTS IN ORBIT the first comprehensive U.S. survey of kinetic light art consisting of the works of 39 American and European artists using moving light as their medium.

May 1969 — TV AS A CREATIVE MEDIUM the first organized surfacing of the then underground video movement including the works of twelve video artists.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, he attended University School, Cleveland; Le Rosey, Switzerland; spent a year free-lancing in Paris; then earned his B.A. in History and International Law at Cambridge University, England.

After a successful business career culminating in the presidency of the Arco Company, Cleveland, manufacturers of industrial coatings, in 1952 he took up painting and resumed the study of art begun earlier in Paris.

In 1957 he founded the Howard Wise Gallery of Present Day Painting and Sculpture in Cleveland, which was subsequently merged with the New York Gallery.

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