

## resolution

Dear Audience People,  
A couple of months ago I read your notice on a bulletin board in Berkeley, just arriving there from Guatemala.

My old lady and I left Chicago and writing a year ago, sold every thing, got a bus and an AV 3100 and went to Central America. We are now editing 20 hrs with the Guatemalan students and trying to get together a framework under which we can live and do alternate, if revolutionary video here in San Francisco. The pace is two steps forward & one back (note our first stationary mispelled)

We are, having had a little experience in film, very interested in the possibilities of alternate

The film (615) 431 4317, 218 Hayes, San Francisco

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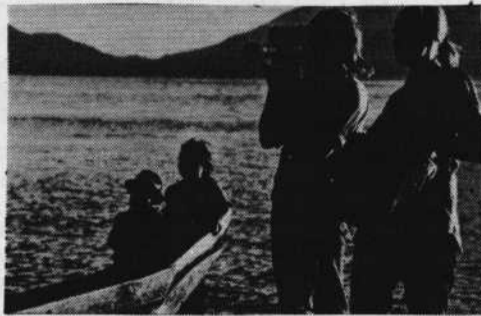
distribution in the community, colleges, cable etc. and working with people like you who seem to be doing video with a similar interest, for the people whatever it means.

Beard is running out at a rate proportional to the new ideas that seem to be forthcoming and we would be very interested in hearing of your experiences in the last year, how you are getting on and what real ideas you see for the future. We read an article about you in *Newsweek* international some time ago in Nicaragua, applaud your efforts, and would really dig to hear from you.

Sincerely

Jay & Tina Odell

The film (615) 431 4317, 218 Hayes, San Francisco



GHOST DANCE

## ON THE PLAINS OF INFORMATION

It is the Moon of Making Fat, a time for consolidating gains. The season of vision-quests beckons. I will speak of the lessons learned in our first winter and spring of hunting.

Ghost Dance was incorporated in January, but began videotaping last October. Using Sony AV equipment, we recorded a concert by the Byrds, a video collage of Harvard, a series of musical and liberated-culture manifestations at the Stowe Playhouse and a thing called *The Electric Bible*, in our first weeks of taping. It quickly became clear that portable v.t. was beautiful for transporting environments or for short-term experiential transcriptions, but did not engage the full potential of the medium.

The work of Ghost Dance Inc. was defined as attempting to discover the indigenous (i.e., natural and appropriate) content of television. Videotape as packager of event and sculptor of reality, as well as invitation for feedback, was a grand step toward the Revelation—but surely only the first. We wanted to transcend the incubus of electric film.

T.V. has something to do with instantaneous ("live") presence. Its further meaning has to be read from the parameters of the machinery. Software is the laughing child of hardware. But to see/feel that isn't enough. Video experimenters to date have been satisfied with demonstrating the rich possibilities of t.v. yet none has made the dance of the electron meaningful.

15,750 horizontal oscillations per second . . . 3-4,000,000 dots per second . . . Solve the above simultaneous equations and plot the result on every t.v. screen on the planet . . .

Ghost Dance Inc. is engaged in producing videotapes of high information density and impact. Our work is an effort to order the static of television—to design evocative configurations of light and sound that transfigure the Word and the literal image as vehicles of meaning. Our ultimate aim is to generate an "alphabet" of patterns—electronic iconograms—that will vastly speed communication, as well as improve both its subtlety and its precision.

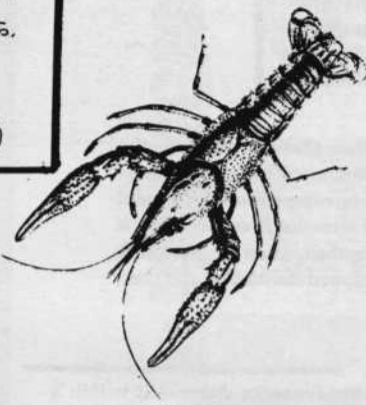
Television is an extension of the brain, nothing less. In its stimulation of the many senses, t.v. is so much more than antecedent media. Yet we have little understanding of how it really works. To grok that we would have to understand more than we do of the functioning of eye and brain. A later article will deal with our researches on that subject. For now it is enough to say that we are striving for a more profound understanding of both t.v. and receptor consciousnesses.

Much of our work may be described as Information Theory.—Not the information theory of classical cybernetics which only describes the processes of information movement, but a prescriptive study of Meaning (defined as ever more parsimonious, encompassing and memorable configurations of energy and data).

A potential laboratory for the study of information fluxes and innovative uses of video is the Harvard Information Transfer System. It was Ghost Dance that revealed the existence of this telecommunications grid (which was never used in six years of existence!) to the university's population. We hope to pioneer in its large-scale operation next fall. Anyone interested in the possibilities of Electric Universities—with telephone, computer, microfilm retrieval and t.v. interconnected—might call us. We have some rather elaborate ideas on the subject.

We have been hunting outlets for our video-tapes. Cable television first attracted our notice. Of course, it would be optimal to have unfettered access to our own channel, and we recognize the incalculable importance of free information flows. So we have applied, on behalf of a yet-to-be-chartered public interest corporation, for the cable franchise for Cambridge, Mass. At present, the state is holding hearings on public regulation. No decision will be made about local franchises until more general policy is set (not before early '72). Twenty-five other individuals or firms have put in their bids, but none other on behalf of a non-profit community-based company. We shall report further developments in this domain.

Ghost Dance has prepared both 1-inch and half-inch pilot tapes that give some notion of our direction. We are happy to arrange information trades.



## VIDEO EXCHANGE

As a mobile unit and with independent financing Video Exchange has recorded the entire Alvin Ailey repertory, and choreographic works by Pearl Lang, Twyla Tharp, as well as the third part of Meredith Monk's Theatre/ *Cantata Juice*, to name a few.

Recently, under a six month grant from the New York State Council on the Arts, Video Exchange was able to set up a permanent facility at the Merce Cunningham Studio at Westbeth, New York City's federally subsidized artists' colony. Video Exchange provides one of the very few remunerative performance situations for small dance companies and individual artists, as each performing group can expect to receive up to fifty per cent of the nightly individual contributions, plus a second fifty per cent of all income which may be derived from video tapes of the live concerts when they are distributed to colleges and universities by Video Exchange.

Our overall objective is to attempt to make Dance self-supporting through the rental of videotaped performances to high schools, colleges and universities and other community outlets, as well as eventually marketing videotapes to broadcast and cable television stations and video cassette developers. We intend to distribute the income from these tapes to working artists, so that their time can be spent creating new works rather than in holding a job outside their art as the means of earning a living. If our expectations are correct, we will develop a market from which 50% of all income will be returned to the creative artists themselves, rather than to various middlemen. It is our intention eventually to provide a steady income for performers in all the various performing arts fields.

COPIES OF VIDEO EXCHANGE VIDEO TAPES WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR RENTAL IN SEPTEMBER, 1971, IN ALL COMMON FORMATS (1/2", 1", and helical scan 2")

Video Exchange, Inc., is a non-profit corporation and contributions are tax deductible.

*This summer they will be sponsoring a video festival at the Westbeth complex on West Street, NYC.*

At present, our operations center in Cambridge, Mass., with distribution plugs in New York, a studio (the teleportant Stowe Playhouse) in Vermont, and a patents division in Philadelphia. We are thinking about opening a video environment/theatre in Cambridge sometime next year, while maintaining and deepening our connection with the Playhouse in Stowe. We'd like to get together a catalogue of information sources—a directory on how to wire the galaxy and a compendium of plugs for access to software. If you can dig any of these things, get in touch. 617-661-1012. We have you in mind.

I close by offering for your consideration or use a typology of information categories that Ghost Dance has incorporated into its vocabulary.

We call *Delta* information that deals with simple changes, with realities (scarcities) of time and space. A linear videotape (i.e., one without mixing or special effects) of any random thing is termed *Delta* order information.

*Gamma* order data is secondary processing of primary information (*Delta*). *Gamma* is concerned with energy distributions. A videotape of someone watching themselves on tape is *Gamma*. This is the domain of feedback.

*Beta* information would be the random juxtaposition of distinct realities. Live two-way t.v. is a continuous source of *Beta* order data. (Within a wired university, for example, live monitors linking faculty and student lounges . . .)

*Alpha* order information is conscious juxtaposition of supposedly discrete reality continua. To be *Alpha* implies striving toward new orders of information, new dimensions of vision. This is the domain of synergy. Two or more meaning grids suddenly marry; form and content fuse, and become meaningless. 2 plus 2 suddenly equals 7, and new energy is made possible.

"We know the meaning of 1," Godard said.

"We think we know the meaning of 2, since 1 plus 1 equals 2; but we have forgotten to understand the meaning of plus."

Synergy is the "plus."

Ghost Dance passionately explores the realm of plus.

parkingmeter  
(marty perlmutter),  
the shirt-wearer of ghost dance