

BOTTIN

VIDEO EXCHANGE DIRECTORY

INTERNATIONAL

We have used a variety of methods of showing videotapes to large groups of people, and I have done several environments as a sculptor which have incorporated VTR. I will describe and analyze them as briefly as possible.

Video Projection - Simply showed tapes in a university lecture hall with a mammoth projector. When picture contrast varied, the projector tended to lose synch. Although it was free of charge, few students showed up - but this was two years ago.

Used it in a theatre piece, where we videotaped the sessions ("rehearsals") and the principals of the play (dancer, opera singer, electronic musician, actress) at home and at work. Real activity on the screen alternated with the appearance of each person on stage, who "rehearsed" their roles. All the while a heavy-set woman sat with her back to the audience watching T.V. At the end of a ritual, another actor gets hung, and the T.V. woman cries out: "Stop it! He's really hanging!"

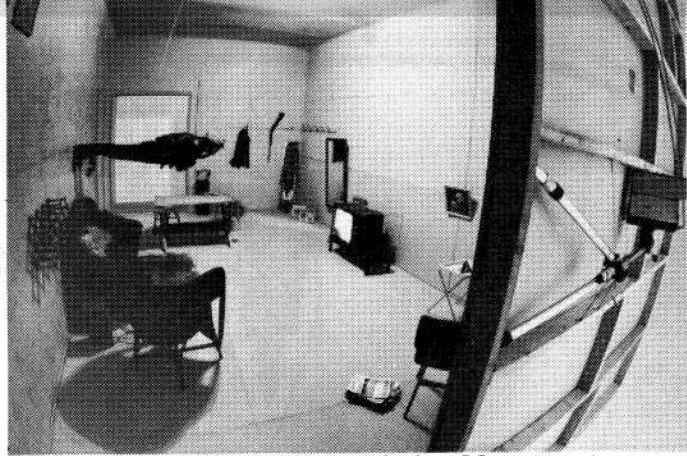
Rented a B & W Eidophor (\$1,500 a day) for a conference where I videotaped speakers and interviews all across Canada, rather than invite one guest speaker. Projected excerpts from the tapes, plus part of the conference documented the day before (a panel discussion). Discussion groups had access to CCTV, and could request programs or telecine at any time; this demand system was manually-operated changing the ends of a mile of co-ax cables coming in to the video room from each of each T.V.'s (the first request came from T.V. Number 19). A report of this experimental "Communications Environment" is available by writing me.

Got a good look at the Sony color video projector in Tokyo, where four of them continually replayed highlights from the winter Olympics. Fifty to eighty people can comfortably watch the highly-reflective screen (which has a smaller viewing angle than cine-screens). Color is electrifying, scan lines almost invisible, but so is trinitron. In general, watch out for reds on any cheap color projection system; but Sony's looked good.

Multi-Screen - is in evidence all over Tokyo, in subway stations, department stores, nightclubs. We used it in "Do It Yourself" show in Sony Building, Ginza. This multi-levelled display hi-rise gets thousands of people flowing through per day. Had nine monitors B & W, nine in color, three hours of tape repeating eight hours a day for two weeks, plus "Video Hiroba" members special events. Multi-screen is o.k. for flowing crowds; but having seen lots of it, Japanese are tired of it. I found that it was better when the volume was low--people moved in closer (which I wanted to get them involved with a CCTV and a video-replay trip).

We used 4-26" colour T.V. consoles when the Vasulkas visited the Vancouver Art Gallery. We distributed R.F. by running 75 ohm to 300 ohm to the first T.V. (standard RF adapter), then attaching a second transformer to the antenna screws and running it 300 ohm - 75 ohm to the second TV, with another 75 ohm - 300 ohm on the terminal, and so on. All because we didn't have a 'Y' connector. Looked good.

Single T.V. - Fifty people can comfortably watch a 26" T.V., more if the chairs are tiered. For a month long, all-day show of tapes from Europe and Japan (on cassette) we used a couple of T.V.'s, a couple of chesterfields and lots of cushions, in a small room. Lots of people lounged in it for a couple of hours. Comments varied, but interest and amount of visitors was high.



A small store in the Japantown area of Vancouver shows tapes recorded off T.V. in Japan for \$1.25. They started with CV, and now use cassettes and a 26" color T.V.. It is pure entertainment (culture?) - gets good crowds of middle-aged Japanese and Nisei.

The best way for me remains to show the tapes myself in a living-room to a small group of people, passing the camera around after. And to show the tape right after recording, to the people involved.

"Room On Its Side" - Although it was not a video showing per se, this remains my favorite video project. I constructed a very ordinary room, sideways, with furniture, pictures, rug, cat-food, etc. that friends brought in response to my request for "something in your house that belongs in a room". I suspended a color T.V. with cablevision (Vancouver has 80% cable penetration, highest percapita in the world) from the ceiling, put a connected wall-phone on the floor. As a personal sub-project, I lay in the chesterfield watching T.V., and friends replaced me, as did many visitors to the show (January 1971, at the Vancouver Art Gallery).

At the exit was a closed-circuit monitor, with a long loop video delay. As the hidden camera was on its side too, on the monitor the room seemed normal, with visitors walking on the walls. It took a little while to realize that one of those people is you, reacting to the environment 30 second before. Even those who didn't get into it the first time invariably returned to the room, then came out again to watch it.

As much as possible, I prefer not to charge for video showings, making bread to live off from other activity.

This winter we are initiating a European (optical) video transfer centre, free of charge for non-commercial, parallel-information users. We will keep a copy of tapes transferred, and make them available in local action groups through a community video cassette library. We will show recent tapes passing through the centre of a couple of nights a week, and possibly on cablevision. Some of the tapes we produce are going on broadcast news, shot off a monitor.

Videotheatres are one outlet for information on video, but a necessary one, for it sets its own context. In times of information restriction, voluntary or otherwise, of the mass-media, self-determining sources of info will be of dire importance.

So far, all the situation (which I described above) were aimed at a special audience, minimum costs in the smaller settings, with a variety of content. Sure would like to learn more about videotheatres catering to a wide-audience, and find out whether it is necessary to cater to it (I hope not).

Mike Goldberg
Video Exchange Directory
Satellite
358, 0
358, Powell Street
Vancouver 4, B.C.
Canada