

Hello Ralph, Sherry
Walter, Dave
& the board



Video has been
long an alibi.
Vive la révolution.

What's on the tube?

The young man with
the big libido...

Ace

Folon / écrire / sérigraphie pour « éditions empreinte » 1974
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EXPERIMENTAL T.V. CENTER
164 COURT ST.
BINGHAMTON
N.Y.S.
U.S.A.

JEAN PIERRE BOYER

RE: DEVELOPMENT OF
NON-CAMERA IMAGE SYSTEM

Montréal 6 may 1974

Ralph Hockings
Experimental Television Center
Binghamton, N.Y.

Dear Ralph,

I hope it is still possible for me to make a working session at your place (E.T.C.). Since last time I wrote to you I have experimented a lot of strange abstract imagery.

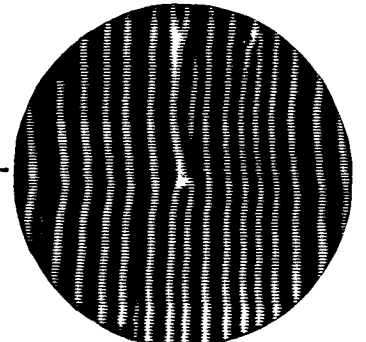
I would like to be in Binghamton from the second week of June till the end of the month.

I just received a grant from the Canada Council for the "arts" and it is necessary (bureau-cratie) that I show them the agreement with you. So , if you could send a word for them.

For me, I will prefer your parallel answer,
Hope to hear from you very soon,
Please, advise me if June doesn't fit
Hope you are happy,

Herza-gift -----

Jean-Pierre Boyer
4032 St-André
Montréal, P.Q.
Canada



Request for Assistance
Experimental Television Center Ltd.
Program: Electronic Imagery Workshop
Contact: Jean-Pierre Boyer, Ralph Hocking

The series "Electronic Imagery Workshop" represents a progressive approach to the use of television as an experimental tool in the making of art. The possibilities of image and sound production inherent in the television set can be capitalized upon for the manipulation of these art elements. The series involves a conceptual understanding of the manner of image and sound formation by the conventional television receiver to permit the alteration of image and sound responses by the set through simple means. The series will also satisfy demands for image processing equipment which is readily available and relatively simple to construct. The series is not intended for technicians but for individuals who are engaged in image making and desire some control over electronic images but who are without immediate access to complex sophisticated systems such as synthesizers and colorizers. The knowledge gained by participants in this series can be put to use immediately in an expansion of the potentials of existing video equipment and systems already available through their own organizations.

Video is a medium particularly appropriate to analysis of the synthesis of sound and image, time and space. The initial content of each workshop will speak to the fundamental concepts of television and include discussions of the elements which compose an image, ways in which different images deal with the problems of time and space and the perception of visual information. Within the conceptual section of the workshop the image will be understood within a comparative framework of photography, film and video.

The second section of the workshop will establish a theoretical understanding of the physical and electronic production of the image. The function and manner of operation of the electron beam and cathode ray tube and descriptions of circuits and general electronics will be included.

The third section of the workshop will consist of an introduction to experimental television techniques and will begin with a discussion of standard and non-standard television and the kinds of image manipulation available to non-technicians. Optical manipulation of image includes a detailed explanation of feedback and feedback systems and the manner in which each type can be controlled. Techniques which introduce simple objects such as mirrors within the camera and receiver loop will also be illustrated. Electronic manipulation is dependent on theoretical understanding of the production of images by the receiver and emphasizes techniques of raster control. These raster control techniques include electronic manipulation of the functions of the receiver and also physical manipulations of electron beam motion through magnetic fields. External control over the raster will also incorporate the use of oscillators and waveform generators to construct imagery.

The last section of the workshop will consist of the actual construction of modified television receivers to enable interested individuals to continue the experimentation process.

The Center has had numerous requests from educational and cultural groups with television equipment at their disposal for workshops. They express interest in specific ways in which existing systems can be used creatively and modified simply and at low cost. Frequently these organizations seek an introduction to video as an art and to the alteration of systems to make them more responsive to the needs of individuals interested in the electronic arts. This series will respond to these needs.

See attachment #1 for list of equipment
Series cost: \$7,100.00
see itemized budget

montréal 26 septembre 1974

Dear Steina and Woodie

Here are more details on the conference that will hopefully take place at the Musée d'art contemporain in Montréal. You must understand that it is not definitive and that I am actually planning the whole thing. As I told you on the phone, there will be few other participants: Walter Wright, Gilles Gherbrant, Gilles Chartier and myself; each of the participants will present a different aspect of an experimental research on the electronic image.

My first idea had been one of a didactic presentation, based on a progressive exploration of the possibilities of television as a creative tool. To achieve this purpose, I would suggest a flexible approach, utilizing different formats: conference, lecture with visual examples, work shop, tapes, photographs and writings.

Now, before let you know your specific participation in the show, I will draw a schematic framework of it:

Introduction of video technology

Hardware/Software

What is television? How does it work?

Introduction to a recycled medium

Experimental video and visual didactics

Introduction to the experimental techniques

Feedback and other optical manipulations

Standard versus non-standard

Signal input - introduction to electronic manipulations

Electro-magnetic distortions

Processing and video grammar

(next page)

Synthesis

Paik-Abe synthesizer - Walter Wrigt

Rutt-Etra synthesizer - Steina and Woodie Vasulka

Computer image corporation - Scanimate - Walter Wright

From Raster manipulation to spaces - Steina and Woodie Vasulka

Sound and image : synthesis

Analog and digital Control

Computer Graphic - Gilles Guerbrant and Walter Wright

The future

Tapes, Tapes, Tapes...

As a suggestion, I hope this framework could make it a little clearer for people, but also for those who are already experimentors.

At this point, we're up to a coherent intermix of hardware and software in order to relate the tools to the visuals.

So, you would have to participate, at different levels and in different times in the whole thing:

generally - Comments on the tapes that you have already made.
Description of your techniques, related to the visuals.
Considerations on the cathodic visual spaces.

specificly- The state of your present researches.
Rutt Etra Synthesizer
Video grammar and digital control.
The future.

Hopefully you will both come in Montréal, bringing a lot of your tapes (color and B/W) and also a lot of things to tell people.

Ideally you will take with you the Rutt Etra synthesizer for a live demonstration. I hope you can make it.

Actually, the museum director seemed very interrested in this didactic concept, but there is still some technical aspects to set up. Anyway, if it does not work with the museum on monetary

arrangement and other facilities, there is still a possibility at the Vidéographe, but later.

Meanwhile I recieve a definitive answer from the museum, I would like you to send me:

- 1- A one hour tape of excerpts from your different tapes; I intend to build a documentary tape that will be cable-cast as a pre-presentation.
- 2- Writings on the different themes that I attribute to you in the conference (see page 2-)
- 3- Didactic photographs and block diagram of the Rutt Etra and other equipment.

These two last items will be utilized in a written information format that I have to prepare for the show.

Technical Notes

Title of the conference : L'image électronique
(The electronic image)

Date: 15-16-17 of November (not definitive)

Friday 15 : mostly students - conference
 Saturday 16 : general public - conference
 Sunday 17 : general public - showing of documentary tape
 showing of experimental tapes:
 Walter Tright
 The Vasulkas
 Jean-Pierre Boyer
 Gilles Chartier
 Gilles Guerbrant
 others

Equipment : The museum only has color casette , so...
I am trying to get a Sony 8650 for half inch color tapes.

Money (\$) : I am fighting for you to get paid...
\$400. ? \$300. ? \$200. ? \$100. ? (I will do my best)

Finally, I hope everything will work fine and I do suppose the idea is interesting to you. However, I would appreciate any suggestions or comments from you.

I will contact you as soon as I have further development.

See you soon,

I hope we can make it, because there is a need for this to be done.

Bye, Bye

Jean-Pierre Boyer
4032 St-André
Montréal, P.Q.
(514) 522-9886

P.S. : Please send the materials (videotape, writings, photographs and block diagrams) as soon as possible, because of printing time.

P.S. : PLEASE SEND IMMEDIATELY A PHOTOGRAPH
FOR THE POSTER.

Projet de vidéo expérimental
présenté par Jean-Pierre Boyer

Ayant bénéficié, en 1974 et 1975, de l'aide du Conseil des arts, j'ai pu me consacrer entièrement à un travail d'expérimentation vidéo. La réalisation de ce travail, sous diverses formes (videogrammes, ateliers, conférences, articles, etc.) n'a été possible que dans des conditions d'études informelles, dans le cadre de divers stages dans des centres de télévision expérimentale, à ce jour encore inexistantes au Canada.

Rétrospectivement, de telles conditions ne sont pas étrangères au fait d'une discipline encore naissante, pour laquelle il ne pouvait exister un ensemble de données académiques stables et encore moins de cadres institutionnels prédéterminés.

Cependant, au terme de quatre années de recherche, on comprendra qu'il n'est plus possible d'aborder le phénomène de l'expérimentation avec la même indétermination initiale, puisque, parallèlement à la production proprement-dite, la recherche de fondements conceptuels m'a permis d'évaluer le rôle spécifique de disciplines déjà formées (théorie de l'information, physiologie, sociologie de la communication) dans la constitution d'un champ d'étude nouveau.

Disons finalement, que mon expérience d'enseignement durant l'année académique 1975-76 (Ontario Collège of art et Média Study) a largement contribué à accélérer ce processus.

Quoiqu'il en soit, je tiens à réaffirmer, dans la présente, le même intérêt fondamental pour ce que le médium vidéo a de véritablement spécifique.

Il n'est cependant, pas question ici, de dresser l'inventaire des diverses modalités de réalisation technique mais plutôt, de circonscrire une attitude globale quant à l'articulation théorique et pratique de ma recherche.

Disons tout de suite, qu'à ce point-ci de ma recherche, s'impose un double travail a) de recouvrement systématique des différentes étapes de l'expérimentation et b) d'ouverture critique sur le champ de la production proprement-dite de l'information.

Or, par la présente, je tiens à faire part au Conseil des arts, de mon intention de travailler principalement à la rédaction d'un livre et parallèlement à la production d'un matériel didactique annexe sous forme de documents photographiques et bandes vidéo.

Ce travail de rédaction/documentation s'intitule provisoirement :
"Structure de l'image électronique et méthodologie de l'expérimentation vidéo."

Avant de soumettre à l'attention du jury, le corpus théorique et pratique dont nous envisageons la réalisation, quelques remarques seront nécessaires pour faire apparaître le caractère problématique de ce que nous avons appelé jusqu'ici "vidéo expérimental".

Remarque I-

Il nous est permis de constater l'échec partiel de ce qui est généralement affecté de l'appellation "art et technologie". Cela s'explique globalement, par le fait d'une incapacité à discerner dans des notions duelles telles: forme/information, théorie/pratique, etc., ce qu'elles ont de fondamentalement complémentaire. Il en résulte presque invariablement un système de mystifications directement responsable d'un processus d'autonomisation du ou des langages en cause. On comprendra dès lors, qu'il est dans l'intérêt d'une approche

essentiellement didactique, d'éviter la voie toujours étroite d'un quelconque formalisme.

Conséquamment, il importe, en regard de la spécificité du médium vidéo, d'intégrer pratiquement un savoir technologique à une pratique de la représentation visuelle et de désintriquer théoriquement leurs composantes respectives.

Enfin, cette première étape consiste, dans le présent projet, en la rationalisation des diverses modalités de la communication visuelle, issues des conditions spécifiques de l'expérimentation vidéo.

Remarque II-

Le second problème vient de ce que l'expérimentation, dans sa structure même, tend à s'imposer comme un processus sans fin, devenant peu à peu son propre objet et conséquamment, dans le cas qui nous intéresse, non opérationnel dans le cadre d'une pratique de la communication.

Ainsi, comme je l'ai déjà indiqué (bourse de courte durée) à propos des techniques digitales, il est illusoire de penser que l'introduction récente du vidéo numérique (images digitalisées) modifie de façon significative les paradigmes formulés à même la structure du vidéo analogique.

Conséquamment, l'objet même de l'expérimentation vidéo n'est pas, comme on le pense généralement, un objet infini. Il ne fait aucun doute que la structure même de l'image électronique ainsi que les modalités complexes de son organisation dynamique peuvent, dès maintenant, être énoncées en fonction d'un référent soit numérique soit analogique.

A défaut d'une telle rectification, on risque de reproduire une conception déjà trop répandue, à savoir qu'un simple code puisse spontanément et de façon autonome générer de l'information.

Remarque III-

A la lumière des remarques précédentes, on aura compris que ce qui est décrit comme travail de recouvrement des différentes étapes de l'expérimentation vidéo, ne vise aucunement la constitution d'une discipline autonome. Contrairement, le rôle privilégié d'un mode de communication didactique témoigne davantage de la nécessité ressentie d'une analyse critique de la structure des média de communication, en vue d'une éventuelle transformation de leurs pratiques institutionnalisées.

Enfin, l'optique même de ce travail n'a de justification qu'en fonction d'un projet de réinsertion des données expérimentales dans une pratique signifiante de la communication.

Ces quelques remarques nous paraissent essentielles à la compréhension de la double démarche théorique et pratique déjà amorcée et que nous voudrions poursuivre en 1977-78. Le plan général des travaux envisagés n'est joint à la présente demande qu'à titre indicatif, certaines modifications devant être apportées suivant les besoins de l'expérimentation. Ce plan tient néanmoins compte de la nécessité d'intégrer véritablement les deux niveaux théorique et pratique, jusqu'ici stérilement séparés.

PLAN

Corpus théorique → Corpus pratique

- Cybernétique et Théorie de l'information → Expérimentation vidéo
- La notion d'information → Signal vidéo - temps/énergie
- La notion de canal d'information → Caméra / écran cathodique
- Organisation de l'information et système normatif → Structure de l'image électronique
Standardisation / référence de synchronisation
- La notion de modulation → Modèles organisationnels de l'image
- La notion d'encodage → Opérations logiques sur le signal
- La notion de "data structure" → Synthèse de l'image
- Insuffisance et limites d'une approche mathématique de la communication → De la technologie de communication à la communication
- Physiologie et perception → Exemples comparés des schèmes simultanés (film) et séquentiels (vidéo)
- Espace construit / espace vécu → Hiérarchie des plans d'images et stéréoscopie vidéo
- Signifiant / signifié → Adéquation image / objet
- Théorie des média de communication → Nature du discours télévisuel
- Média vs principe de réalité → Caméra obscura - images réalistes
- Narrativité et discours linéaire → Temps réel vs montage
- Discours complexe non-linéaire → Essai d'intégration de la syntaxe vidéo

Oct. 11 -

Dear Woodie & Stevia

I am (with my little family) leaving tomorrow morning for New York City.

My Volkswagen is full of junk and my head is crowded with strong ideas.

After my short "sejour" in Buffalo, I came back to Montreal to apply 3 times for Grants ... so this always means long term strategy.

As you ~~see~~ ^{know} I send you those assessment ~~and~~ ^{boards} letters that I hope you can fill and return as soon as possible. I ~~am~~ ^{now} want ~~you~~ ^{you}

~~The~~ ^{to} ~~aim~~ ^{to} ~~of~~ ^{to} ~~my~~ ^{to} ~~projects~~ ^{to} ~~is~~ ^{to} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~absorb~~ ^{to} ~~?~~ ^{to}
Roughly myself with a work of a didactic nature (of course) of what I am applying for, is money to make the necessary theoretical & practical research for a book with a combined photographic & video documentation

By the end of the grant period,
I should have finish (quite) the
writing & didactic video documents
of what is now called:

"Structure of the electronic image
& methodology of experimentation"

It is a secret, please
do not spread too much...


you know what?

Despite a seemingly formalist
title, I can assure you that
it will not be at all incom-
patible with dialectic materialism.

I wish, one day, we can
work together, hopefully elsewhere
than U.S. of A. See you soon



HELLO STEINA NO WOODIE



HOPE EVERYTHING IS ALRIGHT WITH BOTH OF YOU.

↓
SIMPLE LIFE, INTENSIVE WORK,
INTERNATIONAL CAREER, DREAMS, ETC.

MYSELF, I AM FULL OF NEW ENERGY AND CURIOSITY FOR WIDER PREOCCUPATIONS SUCH AS: THE NATURE OF LIGHT THROUGH DIFFERENT MEDIA - SIMULATION OF REALITY - HOLOGRAPHY - MENTAL SPACE - VISUAL PRO-THESIS - ELECTRONICS - TOPOLOGY - SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS. - RANDOM - FLUID MECHANICS

THIS CONCEPTUAL DISTANCE IS SOMEHOW NECESSARY TO ME, FOR THE BIRTH OF NEW INTUITIONS ON WHAT I HAVE DONE SO FAR IN VIDEO & WHAT WOULD BE A NEW REFLEXION ON THIS FASCINATINGLY COMPLEX ELECTRONIC IMAGERY - VISION.

I AM ASKING YOU NOW, IF AN ACCESS IS POSSIBLE AT MEDIA STUDY FOR ONE WEEK AT THE END OF JULY. I WOULD LIKE TO WORK ON A SERIE CALLED: "TIMED STILLS" & "HETERODYNE".

I AM WAITING FOR YOUR ANSWER.

FINALLY I AM SENDING YOU A LITTLE DRAWING I MADE FOR WOODIE + PHOTOS FOR STEINA.

THEN, THE TITLE OF AN INTERRES-

TING BOOK.

THEIR 21st ANNIVERSARY

HOPE EVERYTHING IS A

OF YOU

VISION: HUMAN + ELECTRONIC

SIMPLE LIFE

BY ALBERT ROSE

PLENUM PRESS: (\$15.00)

THAT'S IT.

HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON

FOR A MORNING TEA.

+ TALK.

IN EXCHANGE, I WOULD

CLEAN YOUR LOFT.

BE HAPPY TO DAY.

JEAN - PIERRE

MY NEW ADDRESS: 4418 FABRE

MONTREAL, P.Q.

CANADA

THE TITLE OF AN INTEREST

New York 27/12

Dear Woody

I appreciated the "information" you sent me. However a crucial ambiguity remains in my mind. It has to do with the enclosed hand-written note of yours. I am still not sure if the last word was confusion or confession.

In the first case, my present reply is one of unproblematic shared uncertainty regarding the issue. In other words I see the possibility for an interesting exchange of ideas — things like the miserable dilemma of ours regarding a semantically unloaded retroactive time.

In the second case I suspiciously acknowledge the faith coming of charismatic icons in parallel with severely questionable religious emulations. In order not to be totally prejudiced I still hope there isn't too much of a frenzied enthusiasm to subscribe unconditionally to an already well-known "Weltanschauung" ← problematic because of its suitability to post-industrial laicists. However, if it is so, I find myself in a rather polemic mode: at best I have to become a serious mentor (for the lack of critical perspective) and at least I stimulate a peripheral interest for the issue. ~~now all will become in it. O.K.~~

I already told you, we were not innocent anymore. Thereby my entire attitude is lending support such a fundamental semantic-ideological ambiguity.

Epilog.

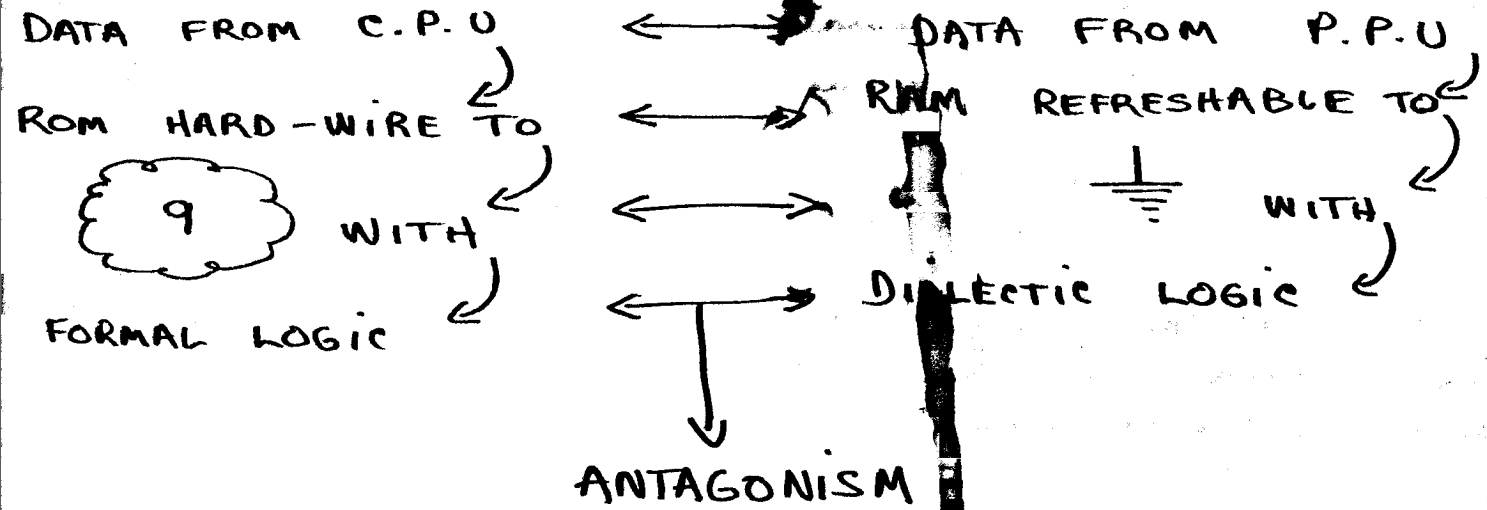
Most of what has to happen after the facts is in a way conditionally problematic but when pragmatism tends to become a dogma, the mechanics is radically inverted.

Among phenomena of almost statistical evidence there is: "for each humanoid escaping this wasted planet there is one human sperm that ascends to ground-base knowledge".

This should normally have consequences in the design: →

THEIRS

OURS



CONCLUSION

It is better not to make it official, at least for the moment, in the present ~~altered~~ conjuncture. In fact, I have recently ~~expressed~~ the limited reach of such a perspective given a general context of technicalities, but it is no reason to abandon the point, even if the result is ~~possibly~~ ~~deceiving~~ and demobilizing → I mean when ~~the~~ reflexive critical ability is covered by the ~~monotone~~ humming of power supplies.

So finally, you will see me in march, but don't be surprised if I simply appear as a well-intentioned observer → (the word spy would be too unstrategic)

Best regards to you & Stevia

from a willingly depressed friend

P.S.: Why don't you carefully file this, just in case it would emerge in the wild Buffalo scene of mundanities.

New York
End of April 77

Dear Woodie & Sheila

As I am about to leave the U.S of A, few comments over the last 3 years come to my mind.

First, I must be thankful for the openness of your "domestic affairs" (bed sheets, food, tea, machines, discussions, etc) to my desire to systematically explore the domain of my experiential frustrations. Only until last year, was I able to evaluate the relevance of criticism toward the biases of formalism, at the very least, in the type of social formation we are living in. Only now, can I foresee a real emancipation from the pressure of bourgeois consciousness, its tendency toward pseudo-progressive spontaneous philosophies, and its reluctance toward the evidence of material life determining ^{it} conscience, or not the other way around.

The conference in Buffalo, has but further convinced me of the banality of those issues which conceive tools as the true vehicles of power but I understand from the current "media platitudinal heteronomy" that the latter mythification has become for the bourgeois technocracy, a directly cashable notion.

But in reality, I cannot ~~erase~~ eradicate from my mind that the banality itself is not as dangerous as a certain intelligence of the "cream of protagonists" which is bright enough to feel its "own" contradictions.

To that extent, I think that the posture (ideological) which you have yourself assimilated to the "artificiality of the mind" is of a most critical nature in that it can only rely on a religiously infatuated nation of freedom, which is at last an absolutely alienated nation.

This doesn't mean that the communication is over, but at this point, I do feel that your mis-information

is a severe obstacle to our further
intercourse. I cannot but feel sorry
about it, but truth must become
practical otherwise my real friendship
with you would be objectively compromising.

I much prefer things to be clear,
at least for the sake my own

consequent activity.

That's the
way it
ought to
be!

Hans Peter

P.S. : I shall
manage to contact you when I
make my first
video tape. I wish you well.