

# EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER LTD.

164 COURT ST.

BINGHAMTON NEW YORK 13901

607-723-9509

The Experimental Television Center is a not-for-profit educational corporation with Federal Tax Exempt status. Our interest is the further exploration of video as an art.

For two years the Center, with support from the New York State Council on the Arts, operated an equipment access program for Binghamton and surrounding communities. The program and facilities were available without charge to anyone with an interest in portable television equipment. The program was conducted as simply and informally as possible to allay fears concerning the difficulties in operating 1/2" systems and to encourage people to use the equipment themselves in self-defined projects both in and out of the Center. During this period the Center was utilized by hundreds of individuals and groups from the local area and around New York State for a variety of purposes; people enthusiastically participated in and philosophically supported this community service. In June 1973, after failing to secure funding from the community for the program, the Center shifted its emphasis to more direct support of video as an art form and to structured involvements with education.

With the assistance of the New York State Council on the Arts, the Center has helped to foster the development of video art; video equipment, including a Paik-Abe Color Video Synthesizer, is available to any interested video maker from New York State. The program is purposely designed to involve people with little experience in video as well as those individuals who are already recognized in the field. Each person schedules a work period at the Center, usually between 3 and 6 days, designs his project and operates all equipment. In this way the artist has complete control over and responsibility for his own productions. The Center provides equipment most individuals cannot afford to own, instruction and technical assistance when needed, a dry, warm spot on the floor for sleeping and the key to the front door. We do not produce for the artist. We feel it is important for a production space to exist where each video maker can work directly with the equipment at his own pace at any time during his stay. The Center is not a large operation, and we feel that this is one reason for the success of the program. We can be flexible with our schedule, adapting to individual requirements. We do not wish to construct a situation which could result in exclusion of people because they are not well-known or experienced or in complex equipment systems which exceed the understanding of working artists. People who work at the Center are not charged for use of the facility or equipment.

The Center is also involved in education. We conduct workshops for groups who are interested in video as a medium for art activity. The content of each workshop is structured around the interests of the group and their knowledge of 1/2" video. Activities may include tape showings, equipment operation by workshop participants, discussions or performances, all as they relate to video art. Our fee for presentations is dependent on the organization's ability to pay; we ask that the group meet expenses for transportation and the like, but this is not always possible and not a requirement for our attendance.

In the past we have arranged with colleges and universities to offer students extended study situations at the Center. Students spend one or two semesters in concentrated involvement with our activities as well as in personal production of tapes or exploration of video systems or new equipment development. This situation requires some financial support for the Center from the sponsoring college.

For further information please contact Ralph Hocking or Sherry Miller.

Ralph Hocking, Director

Sherry Miller, Assistant

Dave Jones, Technician

DRAFT 8/22/92

Comments?

The Artist in Residence program at The Experimental Television Center Ltd. will end after twenty-two years of operation. Our monetary support has been eaten away by the condition of the economy. In the past two fiscal years our grants for general operating support, which includes the Artist in Residence program, dropped from \$59,294 in 1990-91 to \$36,168 in 1991-92. In the past several years we have received support from New York State Council on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and The Ohio Arts Council. So far this year we have only heard from NYSCA, and we lost another \$5000. We have not heard from the NEA. Pennsylvania and Ohio have stopped supporting us. At this time we can count on approximately \$28,000 income. We will close the studio the end of June 1993.

I want to point out that we have been keeping this program alive because we wanted the field to grow and develop. Hank Rudolph and Sherry Hocking clean the place, take out the garbage, wash the sheets, do the bookkeeping, teach artists and all of the stuff necessary to keep the studio going. We do not hire anyone else except for major machine repairs. I do the minor ones. Hank has been the coordinator of the program for the past six years. He is paid \$12,000 a year, with no benefits. Sherry is also paid for administration of the program, and she shares my benefits from the University. I'm not paid for the work I do for the program. The rest of the money goes to rent the studio, pay utilities, purchase and repair equipment, and for insurance and auditing.

In the past the A.I.R. program was a complement to our research program which supported inventors of machines. The artist/users and inventors were able to interact and learn from each other. Now, the video and computer industries have caught up with us and useful, cheap, machinery is available off the shelf. In the past five years we have only added this type of equipment to our studio. The last invention supported by the Center was David Jones' Buffer in 1986-87. Since then David's labor has been directed toward inventions for installations. The dialogue between inventor and studio-based artmaking seems no longer vital. The culture's direction toward desk-top living is resulting in better and cheaper, equipment available to all.

In essence the A.I.R. program's past role of invention and education is now only about education. As such it has become a service program for the arts rather than a creative program in the arts. Most Universities and arts schools are engaged in developing the means to teach the emerging electronic based desk-top life. I would include Binghamton University where I chair the Cinema Department. Logically we should place the A.I.R. program within the University setting, but in the past year the Cinema Department has lost one line and has been denied adjunct support. Cinema is not a high priority on our campus and we are a New York State supported school. There is no way, short of someone endowing the program, that a merger could happen.

The question for us now is whether to engage in a yearly struggle to find new money sources to continue the A.I.R. program or to use our energy in other ways. None of us wants to hustle grants.

It would take too much of our time each year to try to come up with enough money to keep the A.I.R. program going. We all have other passions to pursue. This should not be read as a letter of complaint. In fact I feel that we have been treated very fairly by the agencies who have given us money. NYSCA has been our main benefactor for years and has been most generous with their support. I thank them for those years and sympathize with their current plight.

No, I will not hire a "consultant" to study the situation, nor a "fund raiser", and I will not raise our usage fee to artists. I will also not do something else to make money in order to "do what I really want to do". For twenty some years, we have been supported by taxpayers dollars to be infiltrators in the culture. An interesting and vital alliance. Most of what seems to be currently happening to the public money available to the arts of media, translate as TELEVISION, VIDEO, & audio, is that it is mostly being used to try to cure societal problems and less to explore other possibilities. Tax money given to art makers should not only be about guilt and curing social ills, in fact it should not be primarily about those issues. We have other tax supported agencies, unfortunately not willing to take a chance, which should be most supportive of cultural change as change relates to the betterment of peoples' lives. Instead, what seems to have happened over the last 20 years is that first some and now most of what little tax money that is available to explore possibilities for the use of electronic signals in the arts, has gone to support the stuff that the Humanities and Science public money givers ignore. They have usually taken the stance of funding within the academic community only. Their viewpoint and sense of mission needs to be changed. In the long run it doesn't help to give in to them by using arts money to realize some progress toward societal cures. The tradeoff is loss of support for the arts. Both issues are important. Societal inequalities are not to be tolerated. Art helps us be human. If I had to chose between supporting one or the other I would not choose art. I don't think we are at the point where that choice must be made.

I see other visual arts problems to be faced. I will chase that stuff. I'm still interested in changing the culture, not in joining it for convenience of funding. I urge you to think about the whole situation, not just your condition.

We cannot continue the A.I.R. program at our current level of income, so a decision had to be made. Other, similar, ways of serving the arts community might be possible. I have no concrete plans at the present but some form of renting out some of our equipment seems possible. Helping people develop an approach to using electronic stuff is interesting to us, perhaps acting as a resource for setting up personal studios, helping to understand concepts that we are currently dealing with in our studio. Publication is a form that we will no doubt pursue. It will take a bit of time to regroup our efforts but we do intend to do that.

Be clear that the Experimental Television Center will not cease to exist. The change will be that the studio will close and Hank will find other employment. We will continue the Electronic Arts Grants program as long as NYSCA continues to fund it, and we will be active with other involvements in the field. The Center's business will be conducted from our house as it has been for the past ten years.

Ralph Hocking

Chronology of the activities at the Experimental Television Center, Binghamton, New York, 1971-78, founder Ralph Hocking, currently under the Direction of Ralph & Sherry Miller Hocking.

1978 to present

Due to the historical nature of the exhibition are listing only covers the early years. However, since 1978 the Center has continued their active programming based upon the mission as described below:

Chronology of the activities at the Experimental Television Center, Binghamton, New York, 1971-78, founded by Ralph Hocking and currently under the direction of Ralph & Sherry Miller Hocking.

#### 1971-72

NYSCA funding to the Center for construction of Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer. One system was designed and built at the Center by Shuya Abe and Nam June Paik for eventual placement at the TV Lab at WNET-TV in 1972. This system was used while still at the Center to produce a portion of Paik's "The Selling of New York", included in the PBS series "Carousel", broadcast 1972 by WNET. A second system was built for the Artist in Residency program at the Center and used in 72 by artists such as Ernie Gehr, Hollis Frampton, Jackson MacLow and Nick Ray, and also included in an exhibition at the Everson Museum. A raster scan manipulation device was also constructed, the principles of which were defined by Paik's early tv experiments such as Dancing Patterns.

#### 1972-73

The Residency Program continued; the system was used by artists such as Tom DeWitt and Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zane, John Reilly and Rudi Stern and Peer Bode. Walter Wright was an Artist in Residence, attached to the Center through funding from the NYSCA. Workshops in image processing were conducted for the New York State Art Teachers Annual Conference, and at the Everson Museum and The Kitchen. Community produced tapes as well as artists' tapes were cablecast weekly in the series "Access", produced by the Center.

#### 1973-74

David Jones became technician at the Center. Artists participating in the Residency program included Taka Iimura, Doris Chase, and Michael Butler. Workshops in imaging were held regularly at the Center, and also at Global Village and at York University in Toronto. Oscillators were designed for use as signal inputs to the Synthesizer. Initial research into the Jones gray level keyer and production of a black and white keyer. Modification of an existing SEG for direct sync interface with the Paik/Abe, with provision for external wipe signal input.

#### 1974-75

Workshops and performances based on image processing were conducted at The Kitchen, Anthology Film Archives and the Contemporary Art Museum in Montreal. NYSCA supported a series of travelling performances by Walter Wright on the video synthesizer. Over ten organizations throughout New York State and Canada took part. The workshop program at the Center continued. NYSCA provided funding for the development of the Jones Colorizer, a four channel voltage controllable colorizer with gray level keyers. The oscillator bank was completed and installed. The SAID (Spatial and Intensity Digitizer) was developed by Dr. Don McArthur (by April 75), as an outgrowth of research on b/w time base correction. Work was begun by David Jones, Don McArthur and Walter Wright on a project to explore computer-based imaging, and the interface of a computer with a video processing system. Artists in Residence included Neil Zusman and Gary Hill.

#### 1975-76

The Residency Program included artists Nam June Paik, Phil Jones of Ithaca Video Projects, Ken Marsh and Ken Jacobs. The NEA in 1975 provided support for initial research into the computer-video processing project, which was expanded by Jones, McArthur, Wright and Brewster to incorporate parallel research efforts by Woody and Steina Vasulka and Jeffrey Schier. The LSI-11 computer was chosen as the standard. Jones developed hard and

1981-82

Artists include Frank Dietrich, Thierry Kuntzel, Alex Roshuk and Matt Schlanger.

1982-83

NYSCA provides funding for a General Purpose Interface Board, which interfaces analog imaging equipment with an 8 bit computer, allowing manually-changed knob settings to be "remembered". Jones and Peer Bode collaborated on the initial research for a real-time frame buffer, which digitizes in real time analog video images, with a resolution of 256x256, 16 shades of gray. The Pattern Program, a software project, is designed as an internship project by Master's candidates at SUNY. Patterns or textures can be drawn and then stored and used as movable mats or windows. Artists include Nancy Buchanan, Amy Greenfield, George Stoney, Barbara Sykes and Ann Wooster.

1983-84

Along with Matt Schlanger, Jones continues work on the Four Board Project, a four channel colorizer, keyers, multi-channel programmable sequencer, and oscillators. One intention of the project, in addition to providing equipment for the Residency Program, is to define a comprehensive, low-cost imaging system and to then help artists to acquire or to build the tools. We begin to study the newly available Amiga computer. Artists include Shigeko Kubota and Paul Garrin, and Arthur Tsuchiya.

1984-85

The Four Board Project is completed and the devices are installed at the Center. Jones and Schlanger begin work on the documentation, later assisted by Coleman and Powell. The equipment manual is revised to include the new tools, and to explicate such processes as keying, colorization, switching. Artists include Merrill Aldighieri and Joe Tripician, David Blair, Peter Rose and Kathy High.

1985-86

The Four Board Project is premiered at the Media Alliance Annual Conference at The Kitchen. NYSCA funds the development of a black and white frame buffer by Jones and Peer Bode to be interfaced to the Amiga computer. Artists include Linda Gibson, Lee Eiferman, Richard Kostelanetz and Roberts and Ghirardo.

1986-87

The Print Program is revised for the Amiga. Customized software is devised to allow the computer to control the frame buffer. With support from the NYSCA, the Amiga is expanded with gen-lock and additional memory. Artists include Irit Batsry, Jon Burris, Phil Edelstein, Alex Hahn, Michael Schell, Mary Ann Toman and Charlie Woodman.

1987-88

We work on devising educational strategies to help artists to become fluent on the computer and digital devices as quickly as possible. A second Amiga is added to the system, one dedicated to buffer control, and one for videographics and audio software and control. Artists include Shu Lea Cheang, Bob Doyle, Ernie Gusella and Barbara Hammer.

**EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER LTD.**

**180 FRONT ST.**

**OWEGO, NEW YORK 13827**

**607-687-1423**

**OFFICE & FAX**

**607-687-4341**

September 21, 1992

The Artist in Residence program at The Experimental Television Center Ltd. must end after twenty-two years. In the past we have received money from the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and the Ohio Arts Council. Our support from those agencies in 1990-91 was \$55,294. This year we will receive \$22,000 from NYSCA. The NEA, Pennsylvania and Ohio have notified us that we will get nothing.

This is not a letter of complaint nor is it a request for money. Please do not send donations.

The New York State Council on the Arts has been our generous champion since we began. I thank them.

The question for us now is whether to engage in a yearly struggle to find new money sources to continue the A.I.R. program or to use our energy in other ways. We all have other passions to pursue.

Be clear that the Experimental Television Center Ltd. will not cease to exist. We will continue the Electronic Arts Grants program and we will be active with other involvements in the field. The Center's business will be conducted from our house as it has been for the past ten years. The studio will close January 31, 1993. After this date the Center's address will be:

Box 235 RD 2  
Newark Valley, NY 13811  
607-687-4341



Ralph Hocking  
for  
Sherry M. Hocking  
Hank Rudolph  
David Jones

September 15, 1998

Steina Vasulka  
Rt 6 Box 100  
Sante Fe, NM 87501

Dear Steina,

The Experimental Television Center is pleased to announce the conference **VIDEO HISTORY: MAKING CONNECTIONS**, to be held at Syracuse University on October 16-18, 1998. It will be held in partnership with the New York State Alliance for Arts Education annual Common Ground conference which this year features a track on media literacy.

The conference offers folks the opportunity to delve into the origins of video art and community television and to explore the relationships to contemporary arts practice. A schedule of activities, and registration information can be found at our website <http://videohistory.alfred.edu>.

There are two full-day sessions on Friday. *Video Rewind: A Seminar on Early Video History*, is conducted by Deirdre Boyle, Barbara London, Paul Ryan, and Parry Teasdale. A *Video Preservation Meeting*, organized by Media Alliance, will focus on issues of concern to those engaged in the preservation of magnetic media.

Friday evening features a reception at the Everson Museum, showcasing some of the historic works from their collection, and an opening plenary with David A. Ross, Director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Saturday offers on-going activities including *Extended Play*, screenings of historic works from the collections of Electronic Arts Intermix, Paper Tiger, Downtown Community TV Center, Video Data Bank and V Tape. There is also an open screening area for conference-goers to share works, both old and new. The *Tool Workshop* offers a display of early equipment, as well as examples of early works. The *Resource Room* offers a look at ephemera from the early days, as well as current information about exhibition, distribution and study opportunities.

Presenters at the Saturday sessions include Melinda Barlow, Pamela Hawkins, Kathy High Chris Hill, Kate Horsfield, Kathy Rae Huffman, Mary Lucier, Mary Ross, Tom Sherman, Keiko Tsuno, Steina Vasulka, Igor Vamos and many others. Saturday evening performances include works by Steina Vasulka, Peer Bode, Andrew Deutsch, Kevin McCoy, Tony Conrad, Walter Wright and Carol Goss.

Video History: Making Connections is organized in partnership with and support from the Institute for Electronic Arts at Alfred University, the New York State Alliance for Arts Education and Syracuse University, and with the Everson Museum of Art, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center and Visual Studies Workshop. The project is made possible with support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, with public funds from the Statewide Challenge Grant Program and the New York State Council on the Arts, and from the Everson Museum of Art and Media Alliance, with corporate support from Dave Jones Design and VidiPax as well as individual contributors.

All of us at the Center hope you can join us.

Sincerely,



Sherry Miller Hocking  
Assistant Director

**EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER LTD. 607-687-4341 VOICE & FAX  
109 LOWER FAIRFIELD ROAD NEWARK VALLEY, NEW YORK 13811**



EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER LTD.  
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OWEGO, NEW YORK 13827  
607-687-1423

August 15, 1980

Dear Doris -

It was good talking to you the other day. As we discussed, the following is a summary of the two distribution projects the Center is considering for the Fall/Winter. We've submitted both projects to the Council for funding, but neither has been acted on yet.

1. Tape Catalog: As was noted in the survey letter sent to artists, the catalog consists of about 20 artists who are working in video as a visual art medium; the majority of artists contacted expressed an interest in the project. All of the tapes to be listed in the catalog are currently available for distribution; content, including catalog text and photos, are up to each individual. All fees are set by the individual. Each individual can decide to distribute from his/her own space and can then elect to sell or rent and set the length of the rental period, or he/she can elect to distribute through the Center. If the Center distributes, there will be a set method, probably rental for the life of the tape, and the artist is responsible for maintaining two copies of each work at the Center at all times; the Center will take a percentage, probably about 20%, of each rental fee to cover handling, phone calls, letters etc. The format of the catalog will probably be one page per artist, in a loose-leaf form so that additions are easy. Color photos have proved to be too expensive to reproduce. Maureen Turim has agreed to write an introductory essay for the catalog. This is a summary of the proposal we submitted to NYSCA. I would like to gather all of the information in the Fall so that if the project is funded we can publish the catalog immediately.

2. Post-Production: This project involves the editing of 2 or 3 one hour anthologies of works produced at the Center. Each tape will include about 5 individuals and a very brief introduction, probably consisting mostly of text. Originally this was to be done on 2", but the loss of some distribution rights and fees made this procedure not attractive to many of the artists whose work is to be included. The alternative is to do the post-production from masters on 3/4" and retain all the rights. The anthologies will include about 10 individuals all of whom have produced at the Center. Each anthology will have a very general thematic structure. The anthologies would then be included in the tape catalog and could probably serve as sampler tapes; those individuals and/or organizations interested in acquiring more works by certain artists could then find in the catalog other works that artists has available for distribution. We haven't

yet fully resolved the issue of ownership of these anthologies; there are basically two alternatives. 1. The Center takes all rental fees until the cost of post-production is reimbursed, at which point the Center takes a percentage to offset the costs of doing the distributing and the remaining money is divided equally among all the artists whose work is on the tape. This is one way by which we could accomplish the project even if it isn't funded. However, because we are very interested in keeping the rental fees for these tapes low to encourage distribution, the money to be divided would probably be small. If the project is fully funded, then we would omit the reimbursement of post-production cost. 2. The Center receives all fees for the rental of the anthologies and uses the money to support the Residency program. Again, we are planning to do the project in the Fall, before we knew about the funding. Before we do the edits we will have to resolve the ownership question.

As you can see, the two projects together help to support each other. There is definitely room in the catalog for the anthology that you and Steina were discussing. Let me know what you think -

Hi Steina -

Denis Chase suggested that I send a copy of this to you - I can give you the names of people on the anthology tapes within a month. Ralph & I were both disappointed that we didn't see you - w'd like to come out sometime... Things are going fairly well here - we've been working on the house this summer - plan to call a halt in September & return to video/computers/book etc. The buffer is up & proving to be an interesting device - we are going to do some edits soon & will send a copy... The Center was funded by the Council, so that program starts the beginning of next month. Hope you are both well - write if you get a chance

Sherry