

A PROPOSAL

for a

VIDEO INSTALLATION

and SHOW

at

WATTERS GALLERY

Darlinghurst, Sydney

FEBRUARY 1st - 12th

1977

from

STEPHEN JONES

with help from the

Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council

Paddington Video Resources Center

PROPOSAL

To provide an environment at Watters Gallery in the last two weeks of January, for experimenting with the space and installation, and then, from FEBRUARY 1st - 12th, as a space for working, in public ways, with games, performance, playback, videotaping, real-time audio/video synthesis activities, theater, dance, music, hardware installations (video Sculpture)...

A process environment containing a supply of video hardware, set up in particular configurations. Each element of the system is capable of being coupled to a variety of other elements of the system following the syntactical rules of video, and the configurations generated by ourselves/minds and our interactions.

You are invited to contribute; by tape, by instruction, by presence, or by involvement, to a video show at WATTERS GALLERY, in Darlinghurst, Sydney, February 1st - 12th, 1977.

Organisational and development activities are underway. You are welcome to come and be part of them.

B&W and Colour production facilities will be available before the show.

The gallery will be open to us during the end of January to install the show.

In the effort to bring mass communication and dialogue to the people – to demystify the media – so that people can gain more power over their environment, their feedback; a great deal of access to small scale video hardware has been provided. Video Access Centres in all states have portapak and small scale studio systems for production purposes.

A lot of experimentation is being carried out at all levels of production – structural and formal experiments in the use of the medium and its social relations (i.e. the context of communication), in opening up the process , in form and presentation of product ; have been going on in various contexts . But few people have been able to gain access to the processes of a video system complex enough to provide a surround / environment adequate to exploring their own being and activities and social relations being processed through the system and enveloping them within it for a real understanding of video space and the meta-reality of information and media.

We hope to be able to provide people (as individuals and groups, dissolving the barrier between audience and participant) with this experience and understanding directly, through setting up an enveloping environment with all functions exposed and demonstrated so that people within the space may process themselves through it and experience that processing.



The material contained herein exists as a proposal to people working in video (especially in the more formal / structural aspects) to gather with others working in music and dance, the electronic arts and other similar areas ... to watch tapes, meet and work with others on activities and projects, working within a highly flexible video/performance space on many levels; from planned to improvised , scored to spontaneous events. Generating a new visual/video/audio/tactile environment in exploring people's interaction with perception, with people, with video and communications. Experimenting in the electronic arts and the new forms that are developing around them. Using video as an integrator in the process, and recorder of the process.

Video has developed well into an alternative medium for communication of information through society, in documentary and comment , in submissions and statements .

The boundaries of the medium are being pushed into exploration of new aesthetic and communicational forms with strong emphasis on the use of real-time feedback in personal and social relations with images and events. Video is developing into visual music , often accompanied by music and dance; using video and audio synthesisers , biofeedback, electronic image processing , computer generated video and sound. Into conceptual performance and process art, minimal work where video is used both in the structure of the activity and in documentation . And in (semi-passive) interactive installation pieces relating the observer into an active environment where mere presence generates a response in the video system which can then be modified by the observer – observer and installation interact and modify each other's behaviour – the visual/sound information system can be played , and the system can be used as an instrument, like a musical instrument.

A space for exploration of the video experience

A multi-camera demystified video system with all processes exposed.

To provide a milieu for / to absorb people into, the electronic media meta-reality . . . people processing themselves for their own feedback . . .

fully open programmed /programmable multi-channel video and sound mixing/ switching . . . explicit, public, material/instructions on operating the system.

Set up: to provide a milieu for video people in Australia to show tapes , meet and discuss activity, develop and realise ideas . . .

to provide a space for development of various electronic arts and performance arts in synthesis with video as real-time image feedback (an active/interactive agent in the process) and documentation.

to absorb audience into processing themselves through the video system (thus ceasing to be themselves an audience and becoming active agents in real-time process, experiencing themselves processing themselves).

We can provide complete instructions in a carefully planned manner so that all aspects of the video/audio processing are fully and easily understandable.



All aspects of the show are open to involvement .

Parameters: Formal; the situation at the gallery will determine largely what is appropriate by what it is set up for. Obviously this depends upon input.

Social: people working in areas appropriate (to video, performance, etc.) are invited to become involved and contribute as they will.

The structure of the event is not predetermined but grows with involvement, with the configuration of the moment (an experiment in open ended social structuring). The process and structure, therefore, are open to all input during the development of the event and the event itself.

Video is a particularly collective medium, witness the video access centers, and any studio requires a number of people to operate it.

Art and media have spent too long denying the function of the actual processes of their production. Post object is beginning to expose its processes, as are some aspects of the media.

Video entails technical and social processes. Crew to operate the studio and technical to maintain it. Also processes of interactions between people (which can be abstracted and models proposed and explored) at the level of the event and production during the event.

This implies a collective structure that is completely open to change, where the network of interactions is loose enough to allow the structure to flow through change as change flows through the structure. The dialogue (dialectic) of elements within the structure: people-people, people-hardware, and people-hardware-other people; create an ebb and flow of energies within the system (the collectivity). Processes of activity, information, feedback, and response are channels of interaction which take place in any social system and are functionally continuously open to modulation by active elements within the system.

Participation by people interested is important and is welcomed at all levels of the process of organising and putting on the show, both as formalised and in informal dialogue.

This is an invitation to you to come and respond Perhaps something more formal in the way of a collective may develop. The show certainly will. Perhaps you could contribute an installation, or performance, or tapes for playback. Perhaps you would be interested in helping it to occur.

A note regarding performance.

There need not be regular stated performance times (excepting perhaps at the beginning) but people should be invited to enter and operate with the environment as found at any time they wish.

This is not to say that arrangements can't be made – they should be by all means, if it is appropriate – but such arrangements are on the basis of convenience, (mutual – the space being as openly/generally convenient as possible). Such arrangements can then be scored in.

I see no point in setting aside particular regularised hours/periods for events. There may only be a certain probability of a particular event on a particular day, and there will be many events that occur only because of a particular chance arrangement of people and day and context.

The timing of events will be a flow allowing change via participation, feedback, and communications.

Consequently, physical spaces should not be divided into separate and distinct performance, installation and playback spaces, but any context derived boundaries (determined by the gallery building) should be minimised, blurred at the level of activities.

A continuous sound-scape will exist within the exhibition space – sound being thought of in the way Cage might use it – casual and formal sounds as generated, silence and noise and music being all on a basically equal footing.



My own major area of interest in performance work is along the lines of dance and music with electronic transduction of movements and sounds into signal and control voltages for synthesisers and image generators, leading to instrumental electronic improvisations in music, dance and video. This feedback loop can then be explored as an instrument in itself.

The dance has always followed on music or sound, now sound can follow on the dance using biofeedback, body capacitance detection (the theremin), doppler shift detection (microwave radar), etc. The dancer will be able to generate music simply by controlled movement, with the synthesiser system as a musical instrument which the dancer can learn to play.

Scored and improvised music will be open to much transformation through various devices - e.g. electronic treatment of acoustic instrumental sounds. Also new sources of sounds and control signals such as from biofeedback devices will be available for interaction.

All aspects of performances will be videotaped with the concept of visual music in mind. Visual music is the use of images on the screen in much the same way as sound music on the ear, a flow of images working towards some sort of coherence for the viewer.

The power to make this video show work can only come from a collective effort. To do this show as a one man show would be absurd. To do this show at all, since video is such a high cost medium, it demands a wide ranging access – a lot of people to use it. For the kind of work we can do within the installation many video people, dancers musicians, electronics and computer experimenters, will be involved. The more people who can take an active interest in realising the show, the more we will be able to generate in the way of facilities, the the more people we will be able to reach, the more potential will be opened up; and most importantly, the more solid will become the social-structural basis of video as a medium for information operating through two-way processes.

It is simply impossible, as individuals, to generate and hold the power to handle video technology, and it seems essential now that we all start to recognise that in fact all media are the product of collective activity, and that the concepts of individual ownership and individual production are really not very appropriate to the operations of media.

It is only through the formation of some kind of collective structure that the power necessary to operate any media system arrives. This is the case whether the media is used for or against the people. Most media when they arrived were placed outside the reach of most people to create an artificial market situation. This results in a principally one way, broadcast information flow, and the static mythic structures controlled by a particular ideological framework that lead to oppression of a people.

Therefore everybody interested in working within the realm of this show should, please, come and get involved. All responses are important and some sort of meetings and an information network will evolve.



In any event/space it is not the terms or elements of the system which are truly elementary, but the relationships between them. As these relations change over time, the nature and definition of the terms so changes. This dynamic is process and in any process it is the flow of relationships which defines the process at any instant. The framework of relations exposed is the structure of the system, through which its energy and meaning flow. Of course, it is only an artefact of the analysis that a structure appears static in itself. The phenomenon is a system of references beyond itself to the ultimate plane of human reality. The goal of any structural analysis 'is to allow the fullest self-revelation of the phenomenon in its significance as an image of the world and the human situation in that world' (S. Nodelman in Structuralism p. 85). The structure which inheres is transformed from within by the conscious and unconscious activity of the person in the world.

In the way of hardware in the installation, we hope to be able to provide something like this:

- a multi-camera video mixing, electronic image processing and recording system (colour and b&w)
- an array of monitors (colour and b&w) available for various purposes -
- VTR's and monitors for playback of tapes ($\frac{3}{4}$ in. cassette and $\frac{1}{2}$ in. reel-to-reel)
- sound mixing facilities, an audio synthesiser and some sort of P.A.
- plenty of space in Watters Gallery for performances and installations of all kinds

The above really amounts to a minimum of necessary facilities. The resources of the people involved will be the basis for gathering together all the things that will make this show really effective.

If you are interested by this proposal, then please contact me through the

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