

VIDEO

Report by David Hall

Video at The Other Cinema

London's The Other Cinema has finally realised its dream – after seven long years it has found itself a home, a new, 400-seat cinema and clubroom built on the site of the old La Scala Theatre in Charlotte Street, W1. Provided interior construction work is completed – with a grant from the British Film Institute, donations by members, and money raised by benefit screenings – the venue should be ready for operations in September this year.

In the interim years TOC's function has been mainly limited to distribution, with occasional seasons at University College's Collegiate Theatre. During that period their interest has centred on the promotion of essentially political films. However, I am assured by Nick Hart-Williams (one of the organisers and company secretary) that the policy for the new building will encompass a wider spectrum of work. This will include a much-needed public showplace and distribution centre for independent video tapes, the first ever in Britain.

The organisational procedure for the latter is still being formulated, and the problem of financing the basic hardware has yet to be resolved. However, since the committee have had such success in finding the much larger sums needed to set the whole project in motion, I am confident that this comparatively small amount will be forthcoming from those parties who have already given such enthusiastic support.

It is planned to present video showings in the clubroom adjacent to the auditorium. Mary Sheridan, an active video-maker who has been co-ordinating details of the proposal at TOC, writes: 'The video exhibition facility will hopefully expand to include a library resource centre with tapes available on request for interested individuals or groups to view on the premises. We would like to include as many playback formats as possible – initially concentrating on acquiring a dual standard (European and American) Sony 'U-matic' ¾ inch colour cassette machine; a ½ inch reel to reel player and possibly a (½ inch) cartridge machine. There will be colour-capable dual-standard receiver/monitors for viewing tapes and taping programmes off air. Certain films may be transferred to tape for individual viewing and study purposes. Eventually we would like to include a video projection system to show tapes to large audiences, or to screen work especially made for this format. A wide range of work will be represented – from independent British tapes (including community work, artist's tapes, and social and political documentaries) to important or unusual work from other countries. It will be a place where video makers can come along and show their work to a selected or chance audience.'

Anyone interested in learning more about this vital project should contact Mary or Nick Hart-Williams at The Other Cinema's present office, 12/13 Little Newport Street, London WC2, tel 01-734 8503/9.

Belgium, Holland and beyond

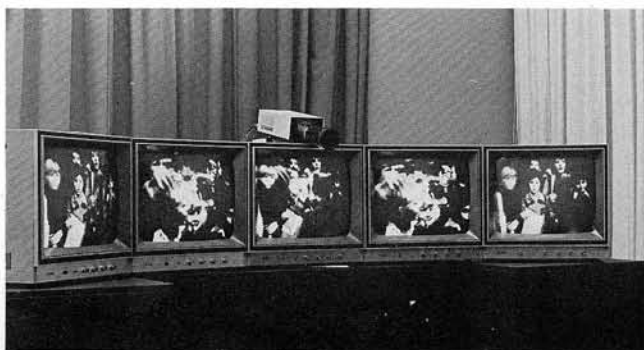
Because of the ephemeral nature of video and film, and the (minor) difficulties in showing them in traditionally object-oriented contexts; and, ultimately, because so many administrators fail to recognise that works in these media form a substantial part of the avant-garde endeavour – shows have, on the whole, been sporadic affairs in galleries and other institutions (outside of those few venues specifically designed for the purpose). The idea that there should be wider coverage, greater co-operation between galleries etc interested in putting on regular events such as these, and the establishment of an international circuit for travelling tape and film programmes, is the basis of a scheme initiated by two assistant directors at the Internationaal Cultureel Centrum in Antwerp, Jan Debbaut (video) and Jean-Paul Coenen (film).

The ICC is a progressive centre, supported by the Belgium Government, which has a regular turnover of shows by contemporary artists from all over the world. Due to the enthusiasm of both Debbaut and Coenen, and the director Florent Bex, video and film-makers have had substantial encouragement, a change from the scepticism experienced in most similar art organisations. (The last of the 'Video Encounters' organised by Bex and Jorge Glusberg of the CAYC, Buenos Aires, was held at the ICC in February, and was highly successful and well attended by video-makers from all over Europe).

At present the organisations likely to participate in this video and film circuit are the ICC; the Association for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Ghent; and the American Library in Brussels. In Holland participants may include the Lijnbaancentrum, Rotterdam; the University of Utrecht; de Appel gallery, Amsterdam; and the University of Groningen. Approaches are also being made in Germany to the Kunstverein, Cologne and the Neue Galerie, Aachen. Obviously there are many more potential participants throughout Europe including those in Britain such as the Tate and the Arts Council. There seems no reason why, for instance, a corner of the Hayward Gallery could not be considered for this purpose. Certainly the Institute of Contemporary Art should pursue the possibility.

Video Bursary

I am pleased to report that the Arts Council's 1976/7 Video Bursary (\$1,000 and the use of the colour studio at the Royal College of Art's Film and TV School) went to a young and deserving video artist, Brian Hoey. Working with colour demands a very particular empathy for the medium, and Hoey is one of the few artists working in Britain who have moved beyond its more trivial and seductive appeal. Just before hearing of the award he wrote: 'The development of my work is currently handicapped by my lack of access to colour video facilities. Throughout my work the optical, psychological and emotive effects of colour have been of prime importance along with the participatory and interactive possibilities afforded by video. The work shows my investigation of these fields, firstly through participatory kinetic pieces utilising lighting systems to explore the fields of additive mixing of colour, inducement of colour directly on to



Brian Hoey *Videvent* Tate Gallery installation, May 1976

the retina and emotional reactions to single colours and colour combinations . . . Video tapes show aspects of my work with its emphasis on interaction and creation of visual phenomena unique to the video process: images and movements which can only be created by manipulation of the electronic waveform.'

The concept of a bursary linked with the use of facilities in an educational establishment is undoubtedly a good one, and other colleges might do well to consider offering their resources with finance from the Arts Council.
