1988-89

The audio section of the system is expanded to include a Mirage and mixing capacity. We begin work on MIDI and control voltage exchange boxes. Artists include Laurie Beth Clark, Peter Callas, Vanalyne Green, Jon Knecht and Sherry Millner.

1989-90

The audio system continues to be expanded. With NYSCA support Megan Roberts and Ray Ghirardo design a digital interface to allow a computer to control multiple audio and video playback sources in three dimensional arrays. Artists include Benton Bainbridge, Kevin Cook, Francis James, Bianca Miller and Eva Schicker.

1990-91

With assistance from the NYSCA, a third Amiga is to be added, along with the Toaster, to further expand the digital imaging potential of the system.

R&D Program Concepts:
1. Modification of existing equipment: to expand its capabilities; to bring out all possible controls to the artist.

2. Design and construction of image processing equipment: to expand the Center’s system; to make equipment and/or information available to individual artists.

3. Development of print information and educational strategies to teach artists and others the principles of image processing; to encourage artists to approach video as a directly mediated art practice; to encourage artists to use tools themselves in art-making; to encourage artists to build or purchase equipment for their personal studios.

Design Considerations:
Flexibility; low cost; ease of use; greatest number of possibilities for image and sound generation, manipulation and control.

Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer

1968 funding to WGBH from Ford Foundation to work with artists Paik and Abe design VS
1969 this led to "The Medium is the Medium". WGBH first Paik/Abe VS built at WGBH
1970 first synthesizer to be used for broadcast TV in Video Commune, a four hour live show using Beatles music, WGBH
1970-71 California Institute of Arts - some PAVS built by students, with Shuya Abe.
1971 ETC begins to build 1st PAVS for WNET and 2nd for ETC. Funding for ETC from New York State Council on the Arts.
1972 WNET system used by WNET at ETC for "Selling of New York". ETC builds second system for ETC. WNET system placed at TV Lab.
Pants fall; video of incident stirs debate on airing footage

By HOWARD KURTZ
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Don Imus wanted to run the footage but couldn’t get permission from his bosses at MSNBC.

Fox News Channel aired the footage as an example of life’s embarrassing moments.

CNN refused to carry the footage on grounds of taste.

C-SPAN edited out the footage — which it now says was a mistake.

On videotape that many Washington journalists were anguishing over Wednesday involved the receiving line at Tuesday night’s state dinner for South Korean President Kim Dae Jung. A renowned video artist, Nam June Paik, left his wheelchair, grabbed his walker and was shaking hands with President Clinton when his pants suddenly dropped to his ankles.

The embarrassing moment — compounded by the artist’s lack of underwear — lasted more than 10 seconds “until another Korean came to his aid. Clinton’s expression did not change.

Fox resolved the question — to air or not to air — in the affirmative.

“We digitized his face and private parts in order not to embarrass him,” said Dennis Murray, executive producer of Fox News Channel, which used the footage on its “X-Press” morning show. It was a jumping-off point for a discussion about your most embarrassing moments. We really went out of our way not to be tasteless.”

But network executives later discussed the matter with Fox News President Roger Ailes, who said he was disappointed with the decision and would not have run the footage because it provided a laugh at a disabled person’s expense.

Imus joked about the incident through much of his radio show, which is simulcast on MSNBC. “It doesn’t get any better than this,” he said. But his MSNBC producer refused to air the videotape.

Said Frank Sesno, CNN’s Washington bureau chief: “This fellow apparently is the victim of a stroke. What happened to him is unfortunate and it serves no editorial purpose, other than voyeurism, to put that on television.”

C-SPAN did not carry the state dinner live because Congress was still in session, but aired selected portions of the receiving line — not including the incident — at 3 a.m. “In retrospect, we should have aired the whole thing,” said spokesman Rich Fahle. “It’s not C-SPAN’s style to edit anything.”

A decision was made to protect this person, and that’s not what C-SPAN is around to do.”

A Washington Post story in Wednesday’s Style section mentioned the incident in the second paragraph: “a disabled guest accidentally dropping his pants in the receiving line” — and provided further detail on an inside page.

“Confronted with a difficult deadline decision, ‘the editors and reporters involved in this story made a choice that we regret,” said Robert G. Kaiser, the Post’s managing editor. He said the second paragraph “was utterly lacking in context or explanation,” but that the later passage, “recording that this unusual thing occurred, explaining why it occurred and how, is absolutely appropriate. It’s a freakish event... and a lot of important people saw it, and it should be noted.”

The Post received several calls of complaint. But Jim Dickson, director of community affairs for the National Organization on Disability, did not fault the newspaper’s coverage.

“Embarassments happen any time you’re in public life,” he said.

“But if anyone’s pants fall down while shaking hands with the president, I can’t imagine The Post not covering it. And I don’t think we want special treatment as a disabled group.”

The best of new reading... each Sunday in
BOOKS
A Dancer’s Debut

MIKHAIL BARYSHNIKOV did something last night that he had never done before: He danced at a political event, a fund-raiser for PETER VALDONE, the City Council Speaker and a candidate for governor. “Peter Vallone has always worked hard for arts in New York City,” Mr. Baryshnikov said, “and I’d like to see him continue this work for the state.”

JAMES BARRON with Phoebe Hoban

NAM JUNE PAIK is $351,000 richer today. The Inamori Foundation, started in 1984 by the industrialist KAZUO INAMORI, chose him for one of three Kyoto Prizes and was scheduled to call him at his loft in SoHo by 2:30 A.M.

“He probably had an inkling that the call was coming. After all, the foundation had summoned him to Kyoto, Japan, last month.

But the group, though eager for the publicity that comes with giving away big money, wanted to be the one to give him the official word. So it sent out a press kit on the condition that he not be contacted until after the all-important call.

“If he doesn’t pick up, they keep trying,” said JENNIFER FRIEDMAN, a spokeswoman.

The two other winners, who were to have been called at the same time, were Dr. KURT WUTRICH, a pioneer in molecular and structural biology, and Dr. KIYOSITI, a mathematician and professor emeritus at Kyoto University.

for HBO next week, with SPIKE LEE directing.

NAM JUNE PAIK

3 Win Kyoto Prize

Assuming that the call went through in the middle of the night, the video artist

There is a beauty to my approach to life, you might say,” Ms. Toll says. “In my art I was able to separate. It was my escape to a better world. I would turn every negative into a positive. If the peasants were hateful, in my pictures they were wonderful. I had scarlet fever; all my mother could do was put cold compresses on my head. In my paintings when a little girl is sick, a doctor comes to see her and she is visited by friends.”

Where does the trick come from that enables one to do a reverse print of reality, throwing up pretty watercolors in yellows and reds when you are living in the colors of genocide and war?

Ms. Toll painted 64 watercolors in the 13 months she and her mother were in hiding. (Six will be auctioned at Sotheby’s next Friday.) All show scenes of a happy childhood.

Ms. Toll, who favors dangling earrings and has an accent evocative of borsch, is a welcoming, exuberant sort.

“I feel like I know you a million years,” she says a little while after meeting, which actually is how people feel meeting her. An hour into lunch, understanding there is no need to ask, Ms. Toll has moved on to the war to scenes of seeming normalcy. Ms. Toll believes was the gift of her mother, Rose.

“She imbued me with a sense of confidence and well-being, nurturing me, raising me. She gave me a birthday card with little medals; she painted them.”

It has been 54 years since her mother painted the birthday card, but Ms. Toll remembers.

“A medal for being pretty,” Ms. Toll says, and as she says it, one realizes that she still is. “A medal for working hard, for being polite, for being kind. I wrote a play about all this a few years ago. Somebody said I made my mother to be too much of a saint, but that was how I knew her.”

After the war, Ms. Toll’s mother remarried and had another daughter. The family came to the United States in 1951. Today, Ms. Toll seems to inhabit the world she painted as a child: leaf-green, happy domesticity. Married, with two children and five grandchildren, Ms. Toll lives in a suburb of generous green lawns. She is an adjunct professor of creative writing. She also lectures on Holocaust art.

During her time in hiding, did she

...
DEAR NAM

IGNORE PREVIOUS FAX (YOU ALREADY DID) - I ONLY NEED YOUR CONSENT FOR PRINTING THE LETTER TO "RADICAL SOFTWARE". I WILL HOWEVER INTERPRET YOUR SILENCE AS A CONSENT. - YOUR ONLY WAY OUT NOW IS A BIG NO TO FAX # 505-473-0614

MUCH LOVE,

STEIMA

5-4-92
Yes, you may print anything printed already.

I did not know why you sent these old tests.

Thanks.
Dear Nam,

We have a show (curating) at "Ars Electronica" this June. It is on video tool building in the 60's and early seventies. We need verification of nomenclature and dates - please read the following pages.

Love, Steinå

TEL: 505-471-7181 (has message)
FAX: 505-473-0614
To Ralph Hocking.

Director
Experimental Television.
SUNY, Binghampton.

Dear Ralph:

This is a written confirmation of our conversation on PAIK+ABE Video Synthesizer.

We will build it for you on following condition. This machine will be at least as powerful as you have seen at Boston's WGBH TV station.

For parts: 1200 dollars should be sent as soon as possible. There are rare items, which have long delivery time.

Labor: 2000 dollars. It includes 2 weeks training time of SUNY engineer by Shuya Abe at Binghampton.

Travel expenses for Shya Abe. Binghampton-Los Angeles two way tickets.

We hope to build the synthesizer before June 5th.

Please, rush the payment.

P.S. this price should be kept confidential, because this is the minimum raw cost price, which cannot be repeated in the next case.
To Sherri and Woody

I had borrowed

a Battery + DC-Ac

Converter (Zerbachy)

from a canal street

electronic shop

for that occasion.

It worked

P McK to Steina
Binghamton Letter

Dear friends at Radical Software:

Westerners pretend to be younger than their age...we Asians often pretend to look older...my mother used to say, "I cannot wear such thing...it would look too young". People compliment to Bucky Fuller...he is only 70 years young...Koreans express "I have eaten 40 years, or so..." John Cage, who has out-asianized himself, more than any Asians...certainly more than power-conscious Indian politicians, prestige-conscious Chinese cadres, GNP conscious Japanese businessman and super-chauvinistic Koreans...(is it not about the time for Hippies to quit their Pseudo-Hindu cult?)...has managed to pretend to be older than his age.

Commercial Break, No. 1

Nam June Paik is making a tribute to John Cage (a non-documentary) for WGBH (with David Atwood) for John Cage's 60th birthday.

Now, video makes our time consciousness radically different. Between the 20's and the 30's there is a gulf, a huge demarcation line more striking than the turn of century line. It is more like A.D. and B.C. in the Christian calendar. The 1930's is alive everyday in our home screen as late late shows, and it will be so for centuries to come, where as 1920's is gone and gone...with wind but without video. While watching many mediocre paintings of the 17th century at Reijis Museum at Amsterdam, I suddenly realized that minor master's still-life and landscape were not an artwork but merely a visual environment of that day...and so is our daytime shows and latenight talk shows...We don't watch them...they are just there...
Some cable or public TV should air "TV to sleep with"....

What comes after waterbed ??? Video-bed.

Ralph Hocking and I are making a video-bed to sleep on.

The word "history" came into being, because our events were told and written down thereafter. Now history is being recorded in image or video. Therefore from now on there is no more "History", but only "Imagery" or "Videory".

Eg : University should change their course name from "Contemporary American History" to "Contemporary American Videory".

White snow at Binghamton made me nostalgic about cold cold night snow at Rose Art Museum (1970), when Phyllis Gershuny, very tall and pregnant, first talked about "videonewsletter", which she started with you...few people took it seriously...many even didn't bother to answer your questionaries...but, Lo, behold...it is now a world-famous-Radical-Software...Last June Phyllis Gershuny, with her baby, crawling and crying, came up to Cal Arts (L.A.) to give a lecture with full of authority. Students admired her as a revolutionary, who MADE it. It was a unforgettable beautiful scene...sorry, we could pay her only 30 $ from Disney Emporioum...I felt like a pig...a small one.

It is about time that somebody writes a decent review on "Vision and Television" (organized by Russel Connor at Rose Art)...the most important fact...it is the first art show, which attracted many dogs. Everyday quite a few dogs were waiting at the door to get into the museum...and it was not a meat-Happening à la 1960's Happening era,...but a cold, cool video show in 1970 January....The reason was clear later...About 100 TV sets were humming and summing their 15,000 cycles horizontal Oscillation frequencies...and it is, though hardly audible to human ears
the most attractive frequency range for dog's ear. Therefore 100 TV sets at Rose
art Museum must have sounded like Beatles at Shea Stadium and Mohammed Ali at
Madison Square Garden combined... to all unsophisticated country-dogs of Waltham, Mass.
There must be a channel for dog on Cable... to soothe down the irritated dog's
nerve living in a small Manhattan apartment... I will compose many "ultrasonic
lullabies" for dogs... and we will see many commercials for video cassettes
for dogs, as we see of cat-food commercials.

When communication satellite enables global TV in full swing, will CBS
carry cat-food commercials to hungry Bengali people?

Commercial Break No. 3

John Cage comes up on the screen. and says
"This is the newest Pill from FLUXUS Chemical Company...
you swallow it.
it tastes nothing... smells nothing...
and does nothing".

John refused to do it on his program.

We are hearing so much about "Broadcast standard" in video.
But the more important the content, the technical standard tends to be
less perfect... Eg, CBS report on the dissenters in Soviet...
and many satellite relays, which tends to loose color sync often...

and finally... "MOON LANDING."
Moon landing's picture was way way below the F C C broadcast standard.
Why did F C C not forbid the broadcasting of Moon landing?... it was a
double standard. Moon landing killed so-said F C C standard in
video-technology... "f o o d "... this fact is as important as
a very competent chief engineer at Cal Arts video studio.

Commercial Break No.4.

skip

Difference of the 50's liberal and the 60's radical is that the former was serious and pessimistic, the latter was optimistic and loved fun. Who changed the society more?? I think, the latter. John Cage's refusal to accept "Serious" continental aesthetics and the rise of Happening, popart, Fluxus movement signaled the beginning of the Sixties... What will signal the Seventies???

needless to say... "video".

Video-Videa-Vidot-Videology.

Currently there is a danger that video becomes like "poetry", one guy writes, and only his immediate friends appreciate... I don't know, how many un-edited dull tapes I had to sit through politely... We should be more conscious of the situation that we are in the era of information overload and it means information-retrieval is more tricky than information recording... Therefore one of Binghamton experiment Ralph Hocking, Ken Dominick, Bob Diamond, Shierry Miller is how to compete with Walter Conkite with half inch tape?? Here I think, my endeavour with video synthesizer becomes also important in seemingly pure information exchange.

Geisha's is the oldest Time-sharing device of male chauvinism.

Marriage is an instant Sex-access system.

Telephone is point to point communication system.

Radio-TV is a point to space communication system... like fish egg.
Ultimate goal of video revolution is the establishment of
space to space, or plain to plain communication
without confusion and interference each other.

How to achieve this goal?  it will need decades of experiments.
Douglas Davis' Hokkaidim event at Corcoran Gallery (last June) was so
far the most ambitious endeavour to touch this home base at one shot.
Nobody expected a hole-in-one, but it showed vividly that our direction
was right, workable... and many more experiments
should be done toward this very end.

What is art?
is it the moon?
or
the finger-tip, which points to this moon?

Avantgarde art is the finger-tip and Hokkadim was a sharp
finger-tip.

I am a Korean... I tend to pretend to look old... I am almost 39 and half
years old, still I am sloppy like hell...I hate perfectionist. Yukio
Mishima was a "perfectionist"... his death was a "perfect" mistake.

(Commercial Break No. 5)
I am selling my loft at Canal Street.
2000 $ fixture. 145 $ rent.

21st June 1987
[Signature]

[Address]
[City, State, Zip Code]
Paul Valery wrote in the thirties that a upper middle French young man can enjoy more pleasure than Louis the fourteenth.

On the same logic, our brother in disadvantaged neighbourhood can enjoy more visual pleasure than a middle class young man in the thirties... Nowadays anybody can see 20 movies a week, which nobody did in the thirties... The poorer people are, the richer is their visual life....

Is it progress?

Am I a pig?

Dear Radical Software:

It is only two and a half year, since we all met at Howard Wise Gallery... and in video calendar, it looks like a last century. It means that we covered a huge terrain... Not any other art discipline did so as we did.... it is a time for congratulation... For myself, I re-lived the excitement of early Sixties, when we made various Fluxus events and publication. I am deeply grateful for that... and I am lucky to have had my youth twice. and it is just a begging... when we get wall to wall TV, video cassettes, cable TV, 3-D color TV all lined up... where will we be?

Let's us live long....

as Marcel Duchamp did.
Playing Video Cello

Wearing TV glasses with tiny TV sets, Charlotte Moorman plucks abstract sounds from a cello composed of three TV sets set to a video-tape player. She and her partner, Nam June Paik, who composes music for her and has an exhibit of his Video Synthesizer, are at the Everson Museum through Sunday.

She’s Wired For Sound

By NEVART APIKIAN

Playing the “one and only Video Cello in the whole world,” Charlotte Moorman is literally wired for sound.

The internationally known performer with her partner, Nam June Paik, on the Paik-Abe Video Synthesizer, are performing this week through Sunday, at the Everson Museum.

Miss Moorman flew in yesterday from Mexico City where she had been concertizing with her own cello, plus the unique “TV Bra for Living Sculpture” — Paik’s newest work.

Explaining the Video Cello while plucking the instrument’s two strings in abstract sounds over a video tape of the late Janis Joplin (on the TV sets), she said that in music you “either improve on existing sounds or create something new.”

“Then there’s ‘Opera Sextrone’ with partial nudity. We didn’t know it was against the law. It became a test case. Now — considering what’s being shown in New York City — it’s legal. I play the cello in various masks. The work is supposed to show the beauty of womanhood.”

Miss Moorman has also played “Cut Piece” by Yoko Ono, in which the audience is invited to cut her gown.

“Also, Miss Moorman has also played ‘Cut Piece’ by Yoko Ono, in which the audience is invited to cut her gown. When I wear the TV Bra, I look down on the two sets playing the cello (her ‘real’ cello is a Lockey Hill made in 1795 and is a copy of a Stradivarius). When the set is tuned in on baseball, soap operas or commercials, I know what sounds to create to make the video do some interesting things.

Both artists have traditional backgrounds in music. Paik is a graduate of the University of Tokyo and studied musicology at the University of Munich. He did experimental work in electronic music in Cologne, Germany, and has taught at the California Institute of Arts and also in nearby Binghamton, where he works with Hocking at the Experimental TV Center.

Miss Moorman began playing the cello at the age of 10 and then played with the Arkansas Symphony, because they needed cellists. She received a master of music degree from the University of Texas and did special studies at Juilliard. For three years she played with the American Symphony Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski.
same screen. I also made a spiral generator with Shuya Abe, the Japanese engineer, where you see a spiral on the screen. Since 1963, Mr. Abe has been my major collaborator in TV art. I cannot thank him enough.

**Why did you want to build a robot?**

I had read about robots in electronics magazines. I also discovered the equipment used in radio-controlled airplanes in Cologne, and I thought how to use it. I was dying to use every phase of electronics—audio, visual, tactile, and then radio controlled, a radio-controlled robot to walk the streets. So in Tokyo, I worked on the unit and made the robot. I had a thirty-channel control unit.

**Did you think of the robot in any sense as a work of art?**

I thought of it mostly as a Happening tool. I thought it should meet people in the street and give one second of surprise. Like a quick shower. I wanted it to kick you and then go on. It was a street-music piece. I took the robot with me to the United States in 1965, where it opened the Second Avant-Garde Festival that fall, in Judson Hall. Later I brought it to the streets of New York, to 57th Street, and then Park Avenue, and one sunny Sunday in Washington Square. All the people screamed when they saw the robot coming. One half-crazy black man screamed over and over: "God made this robot." The happiest moment in my life was when I brought the robot to Washington Square: it was really a big sensation.

**When did you have your first one-man exhibition in the United States?**

Galeria Bonino, in 1966. But before then I showed the TV sets at the New School, also in New York. It was jammed. I showed the robot and the ten TV sets. The New York Herald-Tribune wrote about one of my sets that the picture looked like the upset stomach in the TV commercials. I asked Billy Klüver to bring the heaviest magnet that Bell Labs owned for the show. But I never thought of putting the magnet on the TV screen. I just held it in front. During the exhibition, while the people were playing with the sets, someone put the magnet on top of the screen, and it made a marvelous picture. So my most famous work was not done by myself; somebody in that crowd did it. That's very funny. The Bonino show came shortly after that, in the winter.

**What was in it?**

Well, the best thing I learned in America is overkill. Like all of John Cage's pieces, putting in everything, that's the real American spirit, thirty amplifiers, thirty contact microphones, and so forth. I generally include many things. I put the ten TV sets into the Bonino show, including the RCA color TV I had bought and worked on in Tokyo, plus my first videotape, plus the robot.

**When did you make the videotape?**

On October 4, 1965. I already had a camera then. I bought a Sony videotape recorder and monitor with some tape at the Liberty Music Shop, on Madison Avenue, for $1,000 that day. I made the tape, and showed it that night. It wasn't easy to get. There was a waiting list for Sony recorders at the time, but the Institute of International Education helped me: they were handling my grant, which came from the John D. Rockefeller III Fund. They pushed the Liberty Shop. They said: go to WGBH-TV in Boston as resident artist? Did you experiment with the process when you first bought the camera, or did you make "straight" videotapes?

The first thing I discovered was the stop-frame technique, the freezing that makes strange images. Also, repetition of the same thing, with a videotape loop. I made a tape of Lindsay's election eve, too, the next month, which was a very moving thing, when he got elected Mayor of New York. But I made a very funny tape out of Lindsay, and with Jud Yalkut we turned it into a film.

**Did you make any other important videotape "programs" before late 1969, when you went to WGBH-TV in Boston as resident artist?**

There was an important program about Marshall McLuhan, made by NBC in 1967 or early 1968. Charlotte Moorman and I were on that program. By that time, I had developed various colorizing techniques, with the magnet inside the set. So I thought I might make...
Dear Nam,

Since we last met on the happy occasion of Kwangju, you have been to hell and back (back I hear). I LOVED Korea, and the tall outfit for me was Darmstadt and Sao Paulo. Darmstadt was good for the Deutche Mark. Sao Paulo as a magic place. After you had the stroke but before I heard of it I saw an old delapidated TV set in a surplus store. I bought it for you, but never sent it. Anyhow, the reason for this scribble is that I got this desperate phone call from a poor man from a poor country. The man is a video artist, nominated from his poor country Slovakia to represent his nation at the biennale in Venice. He set out to create a six channel video projection, but now his country informs him they have no money for equipment. At some other time I could have helped him, but my formerly poor country nominated me to represent it at the same biennale on a very tight budget, tying up all my equipment. It never occurs to these art folks that equipment costs money. Do you think that your formerly poor country, Samsung etc could help? The artists' name is Ondrej Rudavsky and he lives in New York. Kiss + hug to Shigeko and best get-well wishes to you.

Steina