

Portable Channel

January 25, 1973

Dear Steina and Woody,

Greetings from all at PC. Hope you've recuperated from the stress + strain of your visit. — We're still getting a tremendous amount of positive feedback about your show. (What else?) Needless to say, you were terrific and we're very grateful to you for all your work.

Enclosed are the clippings you asked for + our Upstate article. Read and enjoy. (The Upstate is wildly exaggerated in some respects but good publicity.)

Again, many thanks for everything.
Take care.

Love,

Judy

7 Prince St.

308 PARK AVENUE

• ROCHESTER, N.Y. 14607

244-1259



PORTABLE CHANNEL

May 3, 1974

Mr. Bill Haley
Program Manager, WXXI-TV
410 Alexander St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14607

Dear Bill:

As you know, Chuck McConnell and I met with the Vasulkas two weeks ago to flesh out the proposal for "Homemade TV: CONFIGURATION." We considered both the content of the program and the organization of its production.

In developing the integration of human and electronic space, the primary format will be that of an extended dream sequence, with a "real" figure interacting with an electronically processed landscape. The base materials for this primarily urban landscape will be preshot on a portapac, and multiple layers of keying and other processing will develop these environments and place the "dreamer," or protagonist, within them. Sequences will transform fluidly, disregarding literal notions of reality. As in a dream, the program will not have a linear plot per se, but will have the continuity of an identifiable human figure, the "dreamer," in the wanderings of his mind. Plot will exist, however, in the creation and resolution of visual and audio tensions.

To make this more concrete, here are some examples of sequences: The program begins with a "literal" black and white scene of a middle aged man in a bathrobe dozing in a easy chair in front of a television. On the television set appears a sign off, then random noise, and then, keyed onto the random noise in color, the program title, "Homemade TV: CONFIGURATION." Gradually the random noise dissolves into an image of the room identical to that seen on the full screen, and this image acquires a surreal quality through techniques such as colorization and feedback. The "literal" camera of the full room gradually zooms into the TV set with the processed image, and we have completed the transition into the dream world of the protagonist.

In another sequence, the dreamer groggily gets up and walks to a door, presumably the bedroom. Upon opening the door, he instead walks out onto a surreal seashore, and during his walk along this seashore, there occurs a sunset. As the sun fills the screen, it transforms through a variety of circular urban shapes and NASA type footage of earth as seen from space. Continuing his walk, he peels back the lake to reveal an undersea world including such activities as children playing chess.

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The camera zooms into the pupil of the dreamer's eye, and images of the dreamer interact with scenes of his daily life along with purely synthesized images, as the audio acquires the compacted stream of consciousness quality, floating among dialogue, monologue, and synthesized sound. Through the use of multiple keys and gen-lock, the dreamer in various sizes will interact with his own image, as in the example of standing on his own shoulder and whispering in his ear.

The dreamer walks into a room with a xerox machine, and various persons walk up to the machine, place their faces on it, and are xeroxed. The protagonist collects the copies, and is transported to the top of a tall building where he folds the pictures into paper airplanes and tosses them into the air. The sequence ends with the skyline of Rochester filled with paper human airpalnes.

In the closing sequence, the dreamer looks into a bathroom mirror, and sees the back of his head in the mirror. The mirror image turns to face the dreamer as it "really" should, and the dreamer begins shaving as the image loses much of its surreal quality. The camera zooms out to reveal the image inside a television monitor in subcontrol, and the credit for the dreamer appears on the screen inside the monitor. The camera then pans to an adjacent monitor of colorized feedback, and the creators of the program, through the use of keying, are sucked from the control room into the monitor and dissolved in the feedback as their credits appear on the screen.

Organizationally, I will produce the program and be responsible for its overall execution, as well as provide the necessary portapak sequences. Chuck will direct and execute the interface of the Vasulkas' system with that of the studio. The Vasulkas' primary activity will be as artists creating the artificial reality, and their conceptions will guide the show.

The question has been raised as to whether Portable Channel should be involved in further productions of the Vasulkas and WXXI. Certainly WXXI could approach them directly and indeed, we hope you will become increasingly involved with video as an art form. What we are proposing is support from WXXI in producing a segment of Homemade TV which we believe will be quite fascinating. While Portable Channel's "specialty" is $\frac{1}{2}$ " video, we see Homemade TV as a forum for experimentation with many facets of television, and we hope to continue the direction begun in "Homemade TV: THE ELECTRONIC IMAGE" and believe we bring a sensitivity to the video movement as well as our own expertise to this task..

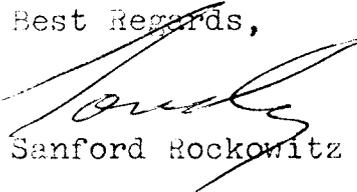
To be sure, there was some confusion on the earlier program, but as the day progressed, functions became clearer, and specifically the necessity for me to function as producer. I think all of us involved learned from the experience of that program, and the consensus of our meeting was that, based on that experience, the above production arrangement would work well.

Two last notes. The Vasulkas will be teaching a workshop at Portable Channel May 22-24 and bringing their equipment to Rochester for that purpose, and it would be most efficient if we could dovetail production with that time. Second, it may be possible to acquire the use of a Rutt-Etra synthesizer, the most sophisticated video synthesizer of its type, at a nominal rental cost. I will know more about this soon.

As I mentioned on the telephone, we are planning a relaxed summer at Portable Channel, including no production of Homemade TV for July, August, and September (unless the Vasulkas program were to be produced in June for airing in July). This would, however, present the opportunity to rerun some prior programs of especial interest.

Congratulations on your most successful auction. The organization and spirit were extremely impressive.

Best Regards,



Sanford Rockowitz

cc: the Vasulkas
Chuck McConnell



PORTABLE CHANNEL

1/24/75

Dear Steine -

Many Thanks for your help & hospitality
yesterday!

I've stored the tapes on our list
that might specially interest the Women-Center
people.

Best -
Eileen

8 Prince Street
Rochester, New York 14607

(716) 244-1259



PORTABLE CHANNEL

February 11, 1975

Steina and Woody Vasulka
257 Franklin Street
Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear Steina and Woody,

As you heard from Chuck today, we've made arrangements for your show on Channel 21. In terms of available time at 21 for post-production work, the month of May would be better than June, looking to a May 23rd date of broadcast. Chuck will be seeing you next week and will work out details.

I promised Woody over that delicious dinner in The Library that I would try to get money. Well, Channel 21 is making \$200 from their travel account available toward your expenses. That's the best I could do in two sweaty hours of negotiations, and I realize that it isn't nearly enough, but it's better than nothing, and I think it is significant that it was scrounged for in WXXI's budget--a breakthrough of sorts. As you well know, I'm new at this business. Next time I hope I can do better by you!

Also, while you're in Rochester, if it's all right with you, there's a plan for an interview with the Vasulkas to appear in Visual Studies Workshop's AfterImage. And Jim DeVinney of Channel 21 is working on a four-hour production for May 31 to be called Papyrus, and he'd love to have something from you in it. You'll get more information about this, and it's something that, again, is entirely up to you, but it's an idea I think you might like.

As I'm sure you know, I'm really looking forward to seeing you again! Best regards to everyone at Media Study.

Fondly,

Elaine

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Rochester, New York 14607

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PORTABLE CHANNEL
8 Prince Street
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

HOMEMADE TV

Portable Channel Videotape Catalog

This catalog contains brief descriptions of the first nineteen videotape programs produced as part of an experimental video series in cooperation with WXXI-TV in Rochester, New York.

The series, called HOMEMADE TV, constitutes the first example of such cooperation between a video group using portable $\frac{3}{4}$ " videotape equipment and a public television station. Thus, it serves as a model for the kind of programming that arts, cultural, and community organizations can produce on cable and broadcast television.

The programs were made by Portable Channel staff, equipment-pool users, internes, workshop members, and guest artists.

Unless otherwise indicated, the videotapes run about thirty minutes. They are available to non-profit organizations for uses other than broadcast or cablecast in EIAJ $\frac{1}{2}$ " standard format for rental at \$25/2 weeks or for purchase at \$75. Portable Channel can also provide the programs in $\frac{3}{4}$ " U-Matic, 2" quadraplex, and other formats by special request at an additional charge. Rental of programs for broadcast, cablecast, or commercial purposes is negotiated on an individual basis.

Portable Channel, Inc. is a not-for-profit community video facility partially funded by the New York State Council on the Arts.

- 1) PORTABLE CHANNEL MEETS SENIOR CITIZENS
November 19, 1972

The pilot program of the HOMEMADE TV series. Glimpses of old people as individuals rather than as social statistics. The programs includes a 76-year-old woman baking strudel in her apartment, a birthday party for two 98-year-olds, a conversation with elderly residents of a nursing home, and senior citizens putting together a variety show at a neighborhood center.

- 2) ADIRONDACK PARK: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE
March 19, 1973

Produced by the Adirondack Action Coalition to alert people to the human implications on both sides of the Adirondack Park Development Plan, then pending before the New York State Legislature.

- 3) COMMUNITY OF WITNESS
April 19, 1973

An insight into the process of religiously-oriented civil disobedience which has been rebroadcast on WNYC/New York's program, "All About TV." During Holy Week of 1972, theology students strung a chain around the Federal Building where the trial of the Harrisburg 7 was taking place, symbolically arresting the building to protest the trial and the Vietnam War. Portable Channel was there, having travelled to Harrisburg with participants from Colgate Rochester Divinity School and St. Bernard's Seminary.

- 4) WOMEN ON WOMEN
May 24, 1973

* The first program of Portable Channel's Women's Television Project, whose members came together to make videotapes expressing positive, alternative images of women. This program includes a talk with a woman newspaper publisher in Rochester and a conversation with actress Viveca Lindfors along with excerpts from her one-woman show, "I Am A Woman."

- 5) HYPE FOR HOPPER (20 min.)
June 21, 1973

This show is a personal view of a "multimedia symposium" held at RIT with actor Dennis Hopper. It coincided with the release of his movie KID BLUE. The program is fascinating not only in its content, but in its juxtaposition of varying viewpoints of the same event.

6) GERARDO
August 2, 1973

Produced by the Media Department at St. John Fisher College. The story of Gerardo, a young filmmaker, his work with animation, and his parents. Raises important questions about the impact of the visual media and demonstrates how the technology can be humanized.

7) CABLE REPORT
September 6, 1973

If community television is to be meaningful, involvement by viewers must extend beyond passively watching a program. Cable Report is part of a cable education process. Using $\frac{1}{2}$ " videotapes from the annual National Cable Television Association convention as a springboard, Portable Channel held a town meeting on cable in WXXI-TV's studio. Public officials, cable experts, and interested citizens discussed cable television. In addition to taking telephone questions and comments, people watching the program were invited to participate in the discussion in the studio, a discussion which continued long after the program left the air. Color. One hour.

8) GENESEE VALLEY
August 16, 1973

The Genesee Region Video Journal, centered in the rural area south of Rochester, is a project interested in documenting the history, beauty, and problems of the Genesee Region. Portable Channel has supported the project through the extended loan of equipment and with expertise. In this program, the Journal looked at the beauty of the region and raised questions of planning to preserve that beauty.

9) SPORT AND SEX: What About Women?
September 20, 1973

*

Produced by the Women's Television Project. A look at women and girls participating in various sports, coupled with a lively discussion among school administrators, teachers, parents, and students around the inequitable allocation of athletic funds and the question of "separate but equal" versus integrated athletic programs.

- 10) SUMMER FUN
October 4, 1973

A talk with artist Morton Sobotnick and a television recreation of his work of "chamber art" titled "2: A Game for Two Players"; also, a video verite look at the Watkins Glen Rock Festival.

- 11) SELF HELP PRODUCTIONS
October 18, 1973

Produced by a black media group with assistance from Portable Channel, this program illustrates the use of video as cultural exchange. In its look at two local black organizations, it presents a casual and revealing perspective which would be difficult, if not impossible, for a non-black to perceive and document. "Monroe County Community Organizers" features scenes from the People's Club, People's Liquor Store, and Youth Federation run by the non-profit corporation to provide economic stability for its service programs in the poor community; "Haiti Afro-American Cultural Center" features art and music.

- 12) HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HOMEMADE TV
November 15, 1973

A retrospective of the first year's programming on HOMEMADE TV, with an informal discussion of its relation to our television environment and a look at how it is created.

- 13) OUTSIDE AGITATORS
December 21, 1973

The San Francisco Mime Troupe in rehearsal and conversation, focussing on the relationship between art and politics, and a conversation with Congressman Pete McCloskey.

- 14) TATTOO
January 3, 1974

Video as anthropology; tattoo as an artform. Larry Gale, the video artist, explores the subculture of tattoos and uses the electronic effects of the television studio to convey the aesthetic character of tattoos as pop art.

- 15) THE ELECTRONIC IMAGE
January 17, 1974

Distinguished video artists Steina and Woody Vasulka demonstrate techniques of video image generation and participate in an electronic jam session. Color.

*Not available
at the
time*

- 16) GENESEE COOP
February 7, 1974

* An in-depth study of the people, processes, and activities of a Rochester "alternative institution". This program, documenting the efforts of young people to live co-operatively, constructively, and creatively was repeated at the request of WXXI, Channel 21, in Rochester, New York in response to audience enthusiasm.

- 17) LORD MR. FORD
March 7, 1974

Created by Portable Channel interns and staff in conjunction with visiting artist Elon Soltes, this program explores the human, cultural, and environmental context of the energy crisis.

- 18) RAPE: BREAKING THE SILENCE
April 4, 1974

* Interns at Portable Channel created this tape in response to a television program, "Cry Rape", which they regarded as insensitive to women. The program considers what happens to women after a rape, its social context, how rape can be prevented, and how women can avoid allowing rape to scar their lives.

- 19) ~~THE MODERNE GARBAGE CORPORATION~~
May 16, 1974

~~HOMEMADE TV is a forum, not only for the work of Rochester area artists, but for those around the state working in video as well. This program shows some work by Videofreex David Cort and Nancy Cain and includes a talk with Nancy about video. Color.~~



PORTABLE CHANNEL

January 20, 1977

Ms. Steina Vasulka
257 Franklin Street
Buffalo, N.Y. 14202

Dear Steina:

We have recently received some information concerning the International Federation for Information Processing Congress to be held in Toronto this August. The "highlight" of this congress is to be the new Film and Video Theater which will "feature the latest advances in computer animation in art and science, computer design, as well as films and videotapes depicting information processing applications.

We have been asked to nominate a videotape and would very much like to suggest the tape which we call "Vasulkas Tape" which was broadcast in the HOMEMADE TV series in June, 1975.

We need to send the nomination in by February 1, 1977, so I would be grateful if you could contact us early next week.

Thank you very much.

Yours,

M. Anne H. Stonehocker



Wednesday

Dear Steina & Woody

Up & down & 'round she goes
where she stops

But Howard Wise knows

The USIS rental fee on
"The Electronic Image" graduated
widely, with Howard Wise finally
setting the going rate of
\$175 for rental, \$600 additional
for purchase. Accordingly, here's $\frac{2}{3}$
of \$175 - \$117. As you requested,
I included a ~~an~~ "disclaimer" in the
written material that went with
the tapes, described the conditions
under which it was made.

Would you be interested in teaching a workshop here next fall. Given this ~~weeks~~ spring's experience, two possibilities suggest themselves 1) a weekend workshop Sat & Sun all day 2) a weeklong evening workshop.

Please let me know your reaction and how much money you would want so we could determine a realistic price for the workshop.

Hope to get in my car a couple weeks from now & wander for a month - East Coast, West Coast. Would like to come by & visit between now & then, so I'll be in touch in the near future.

Hope all goes well
Sandy