

ARCLines Opening the Video Inn

Allison Collins



In the early 1970s, the artist Michael Goldberg arrived in Vancouver, and began working with the artists, writers, dancers and cultural producers involved in Intermedia. In 1971, influenced by the activity of the Eternal Network (an international group of artists who exchanged correspondence through the postal system) and in collaboration with Image Bank (affiliated with Intermedia, and part of the Eternal Network) Goldberg produced the first International Video Exchange Directory. The Directory was published after Goldberg and Image Bank sent 1000 postcards around the world calling for groups and individuals working with or interested in video to form a network to facilitate the free exchange of non commercial videotape.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE 101

VIDEO EXCHANGE DIRECTORY



GENEVA COOK IRONS BY FEEL WITH HER EYES
GLUED TO TV PROGRAM REFLECTED IN MIRROR



PLEASE PRINT IN CAPITAL LETTERS ONLY

Name Nom	
Address Adresse	
CITY ()	
Equipment at your disposal Équipement à votre disposition	VTR use/interest Usage/intérêt vidéo
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In 1973 a group of about a dozen artists interested in video came together at the Matrix Video Conference, held at the Vancouver Art Gallery, amid a gathering of over 160 international videomakers in Vancouver. Co-organized by Michael Goldberg and Trish Hardman, the conference admission involved depositing a videotape and filling out a Video Exchange Directory card. Shawn Preus and Paul Wong were recruited to work on Matrix, and much of their time was spent dubbing copies of tapes for individuals at the conference. The result of their efforts became the base of a new video collection of approximately 80 tapes. The Satellite Video Exchange Society was founded shortly after the conference (incorporated in 1973), and the group decided to open a new video resource space where they could make the tape collection gathered at Matrix into a publicly accessible video library. The space later became known as the Video Inn.



The name Video Inn was selected in part as a reference to the input at the rear of a VTR that connected incoming video signals. It was also influenced by the first location of the centre, at 261 Powell, below the York Rooming House. The neighbourhood of Powell Street was part of town had previously been populated mainly by Japanese immigrants who were removed and sent to internment camps during the second world war. When Video Inn opened the area was filled with inns, rooming houses, cheap hotels occupied by the poor, the elderly, Chinese bachelors, and First Nations people living in Vancouver's Downtown East Side.

Various members of the collective lived at Video Inn at times, and the space in its first inception became something of a drop-in centre, with a loft, kitchen, lounge and meeting areas. One half of the space was a library with tape shelves, a loft and several viewing spaces. It became a place where groups who came to use the space could show tapes of their own. The other half of the space held desks, communication materials, books, filing cabinets, an editing room, a dark room with a shower, two lofts, and a fully functioning kitchen with an adjacent long wooden table. Each week the collective held communal dinners at the table, taking turns cooking and discussing items that would be added to the agenda for their weekly meeting. At the end of the meal a short meeting was held, and priorities were set for the week to come.



The first funding for Video Inn was established by way of the newly formed Canada Council Explorations Program, which earmarked \$20,000 for the centre. The Video Inn began an ambitious program that included a library, workshops and networking efforts that included a cross-Canada bus tour in 1975 during which a group of 'Video Inners' travelled across the country in a 1954 GMC school bus exchanging tapes with video makers throughout the country.



The centre followed a philosophy of inclusion and a desire to open new channels of exchange and interaction for producers and consumers of video. They spent considerable amount of time working with groups and members of the public, and many videos related to politics and social change became part of the collection. They were also involved in many facets of political activism, such as efforts to stop uranium mining operations and arranging screenings of tapes related to social injustices abroad. There was a strong emphasis on public access among the group. They lobbied aggressively for a new public access cable television channel that could screen artists' tapes, making several presentations and proposals to the CRTC in an unsuccessful effort to establish artist's television in the Vancouver region.

In the 1970s, video production equipment was distributed around Canada by the Challenge for Change program at the NFB. Other equipment, such as two portapak video cameras, came to the centre after being passed along by artists who had been working with Intermedia. Video Inn built up their compliment of equipment in order to facilitate new production, and house workshops. The early focus of Video Inn included numerous workshops for artists, students, community groups, and members of the community at large, including: *Two-way video*, an exploration of live communication; *The Video Inn Visits the Vancouver Public Library*; and *KIDVID*, a children's television workshop.



The early International Video Exchange Directories, which had begun with Goldberg, evolved to become the periodical Video Guide, developed by Daryl Lacey. Video Guide focused on matters of concern to video production at the local, national and global levels through a 16-page tabloid that was published 4-5 times per year from 1978 to 1992, with a rotating editorship. The editorial role was taken up by Shawn Preus on a virtually full-time basis as of 1981. The exchange of video (and knowledge about video) internationally continued to play an important role of the organization, and in 1980, Video Inn began a distribution wing (founded by Jeanette Reinhardt), which would later become Video Out.

The First Generation of Video Inn Artists

Renee Baert
Peg Campbell
Andrew Cummins
Crista Dahl
Pat Feindel
Ross Gentleman
Michael Goldberg
Patricia Hardman – involved with Matrix only
Andy Harvey
Nomi Kaplan
Charlie Keast
Daryl Lacey
Sharon Lovett
Claudia MacDonald
Annastacia McDonald
Janet Miller
Shawn Preus
Mary Ready
Jeanette Reinhardt
John Sawyer
Barbara Steinman
Kazumi Tanaka
Richard Ward
Paul Wong
Craig Woodland
Karen Zajac

The First Board of Directors (on paper)

Renee Baert
Michael Goldberg
Patricia Hardman – involved with Matrix only
Charlie Keast
Annastacia McDonald
Janet Miller
Shawn Preus
Paula Wainberg – involved with Matrix only
Rick Ward
Paul Wong

The date that VIVO incorporated as Satellite Video Exchange Society

July 23, 1973

The date Video Inn opened

Sept 14, 1973

VIVO (Video In Video Out) locations and name

Video Inn 261 Powell Street (1973 – 1986)

Video In 1160 Hamilton Street (1987 – 1988)

Video In 1102 Homer Street (1989 – 1993)

Video In 1965 Main Street (1993 – present)

Video In changed its name to VIVO Media Arts Centre in 2007



The original mission/mandate of the Satellite Video Exchange Society

The objectives of the society are:

To educate individuals and organizations in the uses of non-commercial video software as an information and communications medium;

To be actively involved in the educational process as [it] relates to both groups and individuals through the provision of alternate sources of videotape information and through workshops conducted with the Society's facilities;

To educate individuals and organizations in the community and elsewhere in the means of obtaining access to non-commercial video productions and information;

To promote international exchange of non-commercial videotape material and information.

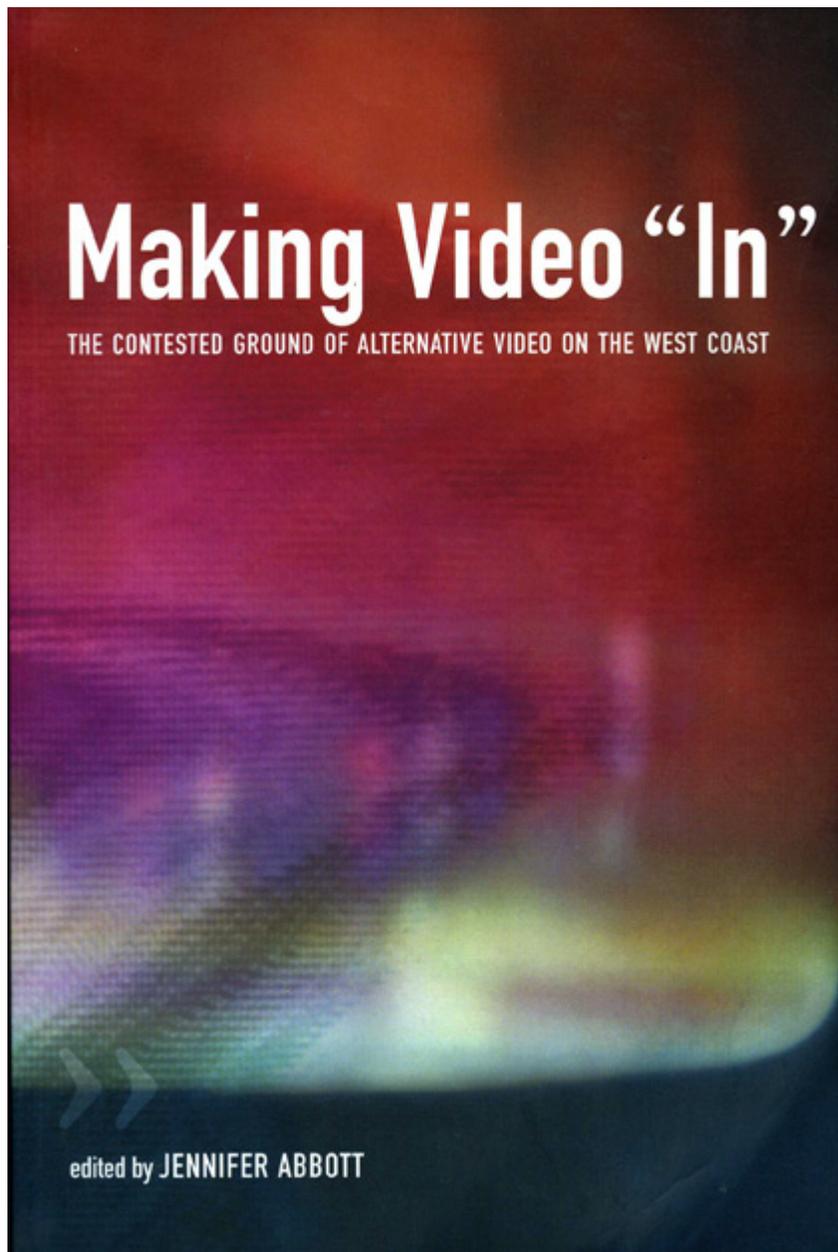
The following is unalterable:

In the conviction that a free and wide choice of information is necessary for responsible decision-making; an a belief in educational processes which encourage children and adults alike to consider alternatives to forms of mass-information which are all too easily available; we shall:

Continue to access non-commercial videotape productions from around the world which might not readily be used for television dissemination, through the selective system of a video library;

Actively encourage groups within our community to make full use of these facilities.

It is our view that video must inevitably become an integral tool in the education process, for its immediate impact, visual orientation and enhancement of the non-verbal perspective. We would like to see the concept of education expanded from a disciplinary process in a restricted space to a broader base involving development through personal initiative in the context of a total living process. This clause is unalterable.



The Making of Video In

v Acknowledgements

vii Preface

9 Jennifer Abbott, Contested Relations: Playing Back Video In

33 Michael Goldberg, Before the Generation Loss: The Early Years of Video

45 Karen Knights, Sculpting the Deficient Flesh: Mainstreet, Body Culture and the Video Scalpel

63 Sara Diamond, Turn That Camera Inside Out: Some Thoughts on Synaesthesia

89 Paul Wong, Guerrilla Television, Pirate TV

109 Nancy Shaw, Time Codes: Recent Takes in Feminist Video

121 Working Chronology : 1971-1994

190 Index

Archives

VIVO is home to a library of over 5,000 tapes including works by individual artists and several deposits of special collections, including the tapes of Women In Focus, PUMPS, Metro Media, Gablevision, Canadian Dance, Women's Labour History Project, Operation Solidarity, Vancouver Status of Wome and the First Nation Video Collective. It also houses a research archive, which is in an ongoing process of cataloging, which contains periodicals, Media Artist and Activist Documentation (MAAD), ephemera, photographs, and publications related to video and artist-run centre culture from the 1960s to present for British Columbia, Canada, USA as well as international. The public may access the tape archive for viewing by coming to the centre. Appointments to view all material in the Video Out collection can be made through the [Video Out](#) website.

Contact

[VIVO Media Arts Centre](#)

About the Author

Allison Collins is a Contributing Editor for ArcPost. She is an independent curator and writer based in Vancouver.