

SLOW SCAN VIDEO

Video Guide, Vancouver, Spring, 1978



photos by Sharon Lovett

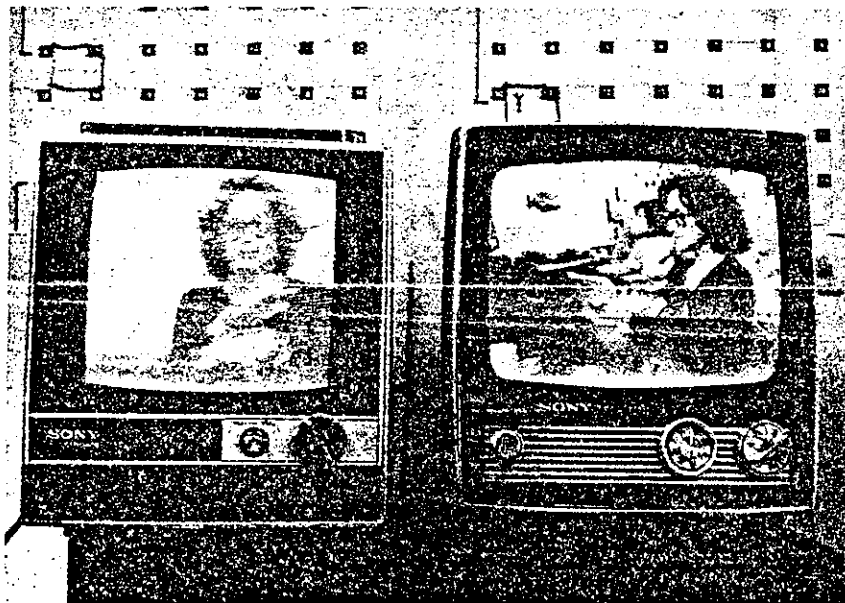
Open Space Gallery in Victoria took part in two experiments with slow scan television (SSTV) at the end of May, transmitting to the Centre for New Art Activities in New York and the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland.

A prerequisite for SSTV is a Robot digital scan converter which grabs single frames from a video source and converts them into eight second sequences of audio tones that can then be sent along a telephone line to another converter. Estron Industries, which retails the converters in Western Canada, provided Open Space with the use of one.

With it Open Space became another link in the network of artists' centres experimenting with communication technology.

The Open Space participants- Bill Bartlett, Jim Starck, Gail Johnston, Mary Arnold, Jim Lindsay and Susan Corman - explored different ways of using the inherent qualities of slow scan. A message was sent to New York using sign language for the deaf. Notes were written on a pane of glass giving the effect of comic strip balloons. Bill Bartlett improvised on the 8 second delay between frame grabs by progressively applying masking tape over his face - a slow scan-animated mummification.

The images that came back via the telephone and converter were, without a given frame of reference, difficult to decipher. "Was that someone holding a gun?" The feeling of immediacy - that it was live from New York offset the fact that not everything could be figured out.



Oakland sent along some computer-generated graphics and a poem to a "slo scan lover". There are a number of barriers to real communication using slow scan, one being the lack of immediate feedback. Transmissions were in the form of fifteen minute pieces rather than being two-way. It will be interesting to see how different people develop ways of dealing with that problem.

The experiments at Open Space are a preliminary for the Sat-Tel-Comp Collaboratory which will be happening there in the Fall.

To find out more about the transmissions contact:

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Documentation is available on 1/2" videotape.