

# VIDEO GUIDE

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# AIDS

# WORLD AIDS DAY

**VIDEO AGAINST AIDS SCREEN-  
ING MAKING IT: AIDS ACTIVIST  
TELEVISION DO IT! SAFER SEX  
PORN FOR BOYS AND GIRLS  
COMES OF AGE PINNED AND  
WRIGGLING: HOW SHALL I  
PRESUME? CONSTRUCTING  
AUTHORITY: DOCUMENTARY  
FORM AND AIDS MEDIA NET-  
WORK SOME NOTES ON  
COLLECTIVE PRODUCTION IN  
CONVERSATION: PRATIBHA  
PARMAR AND ISAAC JULIEN  
REQUIEM FOR GAETAN "ARE  
WE GOING BACKWARDS?"**

# EDIT

AIDS/VIDEO and the MEDIA provides an overview of some of the "alternate" media production that has surfaced in response to the world-wide health crisis: AIDS. There's educational AIDS information tapes geared to specific communities, personal memorials to people who have died of AIDS, community-based educational tapes, video art, and documentary challenges to mainstream's representations of AIDS. My favourite development is video production within the AIDS Activist Movement that is pressuring governments, educational and health care institutions to better address the educational needs of all sectors of our society and the current health care needs of PLWA's (Persons Living With AIDS) and those seropositive for HIV.

Main points of discussion are the dominant media's representation of AIDS, its biases, and its neglect of certain groups in our society. Mainstream political agendas are exposed and criticized. There are discussions of politics, power relations, sexism, racism, classism, and homophobia, as well as issues around access to means of production and access to public cable airwaves.

The following is a brief summary of articles included in this issue:

The first six articles provide a snapshot of the political climate around AIDS in B.C. and some of the video resources available. The first article is an interview with producer David Tuff about his videotape on the B.C. Government's "Quarantine Legislation", a dangerous response to the crisis of AIDS. Local video resource libraries at both AIDS Vancouver and at the B.C. Ministry of Health are introduced, with brief reviews of some of the videos available. Terry Leitch of the P.W.A. Coalition shares some of his experiences as an AIDS educator who uses video, and his feelings about the banning of an educational AIDS video for teenagers. *Her Giveaway: A Spiritual Journey with AIDS* is an educational AIDS tape made specifically for American Indians, reviewed by Ruby-Marie Dennis. *HIV+* is another example of a community-based educational videotape about AIDS, made by and for teenagers. Producer/performer David Maclean tells us about his latest videotape, *Now Playing*, and comments on gay social culture in the age of AIDS.

John Greyson comments on the role of video and its potential effect on the AIDS crisis in his article "Requiem for Gaetan". Greyson's most recent production, *The World is Sick (Sic)*, about the Vth International Conference on AIDS, is reviewed.

Alexandra Juhasz, in "Constructing Authority: Documentary Form and AIDS", wants us to understand "the formal organization of mainstream media in order to expose, challenge, and re-construct AIDS representation." Alternate media producers can learn how to represent the AIDS crisis differently, how to provide information, rather than evaluate. Alexandra underlines the need for community specific programming addressing the specific needs of people.

In conversation, Black filmmakers from England Pratibha Parmar and Isaac Julien discuss their respective films *Reframing AIDS* and *This is Not an AIDS Advertisement*. Parmar's film challenges mainstream media's agendas and "re-contextualizes the representations of sexuality and race, to show them being 're-invented'". Julien's film "uses images and representations of sexuality to celebrate love and desire, and shows the multiplicity of identities within gay culture."

In "Mining the Oro Del Barrio", Jose Gutierrez-Gomez and Jose Vergelin illustrate the power of the video medium in minority health education and education around AIDS - referring to their educational AIDS video for Latinos, *Ojos Que No Ven*.

An overview of video at the Vth International Conference on AIDS in Montreal is provided by one of the organizers of the video section of the conference, Ken Morrison, who talks about the role of video in relation to the AIDS epidemic, and analyses the effectiveness of the videos presented.

Michael Callen, in his article "Pinned and Wriggling: How Shall I Presume?", describes experiences of being constructed as an object of inquiry during his involvement in "challenging" America's conceptualization of AIDS and people living with AIDS.

"Making It: AIDS Activist Television" addresses video and the AIDS activist movement that is fighting government inaction on AIDS. In "Some Notes on Collective Production", Sandra Elgear and Robin Hutt look at three New York based media collectives: Diva T.V., Gran Fury, and Testing the Limits, and their involvement in the AIDS Activist movement.

"Do It!" is safer sex educational video by producers at NYC's Gay Men's Health Crisis. *Spread The Word*, a video produced by Australian Tracey Moffatt and directed specifically at the Australian Aboriginal population is discussed. I've included a Safe Sex page because it is crucial that people keep informed about details around safer sex, especially video producers who are getting involved in AIDS educational video.

In the video by Testing the Limits Collective in New York - *Testing the Limits (Part 1)* - Phil Reed of the Minority Task Force on AIDS states "AIDS will either kill us or politicize us." I hope this issue is a contribution to such a politicization process.

While there are a number of articles addressing gay rights within the context of dealing with the AIDS crisis, this has occurred because gay people were the first visible group in North America to be identified with AIDS. This issue reflects the community and political commitment of P.L.W.A.'s even in the face of continued harassment and discrimination.

Jan Grover, curator of the U.S. Arts Exhibition "AIDS: The Artists' Response" has kindly offered to review this issue of Video Guide for future publication in a 1990 Video Guide - so watch for it! I would also like to encourage interested video producers to respond to this issue, especially those working in AIDS video in the many countries not mentioned in this issue. Please address correspondence to myself c/o Video In, 1102 Homer Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 2S2.

Finally, special thanks to Judy Weiser, Jan Grover, and my patient colleagues at the Video In.

Sue Jenkins  
for the Satellite Video Exchange Society

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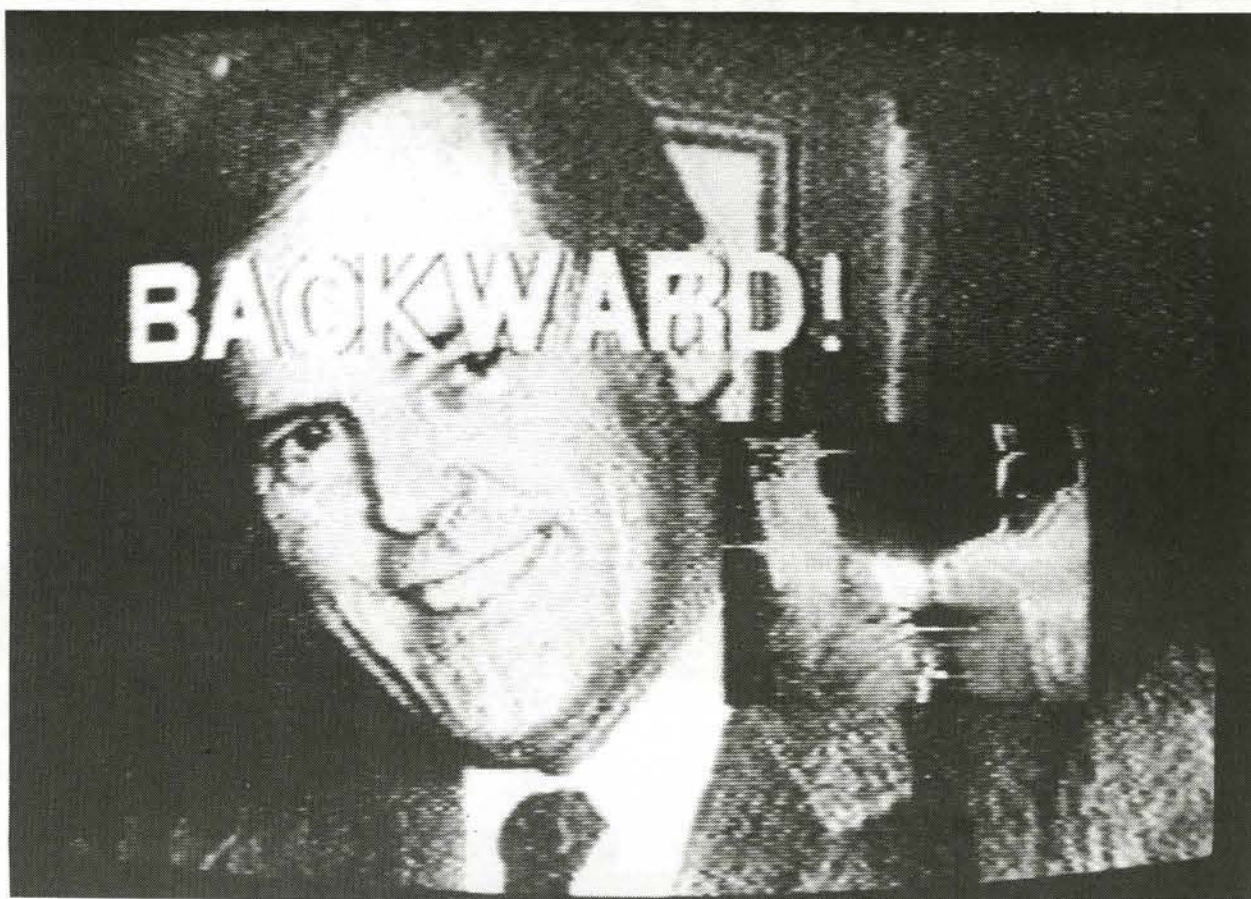
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Cover: by Joe Sarahan

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# "ARE WE GOING BACKWARDS?"



"Are We Going Backwards?" by David Tuff

## Producer David Tuff in conversation with Ken Mann

**Kenn Mann:** Tell us about producing "Are We Going Backwards?"

**David Tuff:** It's been three years since the beginning of the idea. I was watching a tape I had recorded of T.V. evangelists with their slant of AIDS being a punishment from God. There was a lot of controversy about subliminal messages, the devil talking through rock and roll, etc. I was playing the tape of the evangelists back, and they sounded very much like the devil talking. I said to my friend, "Are we going backwards? or forwards? I can't tell...". The form that you've seen it in [10:00 min. VHS] is an edited version from an installation at Emily Carr College [1987]. Originally, there were three monitors, set up on a 15 foot pink triangle — with a monitor on each point, facing inwards. Later it was synthesized down to ten minutes so it could be shown on one monitor.

*Sounds like to was really powerful to actually experience it physically - the graphic image of the triangle...*

Yes, it was great. When people came to see the installation they had the option of staying on the outside and not participating, or they could actually step onto the pink triangle and be in the midst of these three messages that became a little bit confusing to separate. I'm still really attached to the art piece as an installation. I thought it really made people deal with the issue. "Are we going to get involved or are we just going to watch this as a media piece?" Many people who came through the installation chose to walk around it and leave the room. The people that were very concerned actually stepped onto the triangle and became part of the installation, and had to decipher it for themselves. I've been talking to Video In about setting it up again. I only edited it down to the 10 minute version that you saw because it's easier — you can't fit three monitors everywhere.

*Can you describe those various images and messages?*

Well, one monitor, sitting on a 45 degree angle, dealt with the politics and policies that [Premier Bill] Vander Zalm was proposing, [specifically Health Bill 34, the so-called Quarantine Legislation]. There is a little box cut inside the face of Vander Zalm, containing images of T.V. evangelists, superimposed with hard core gay pornography. You get this mesh of the evangelists with a lot of physical bodies — both going at wrong speeds, backwards and forwards at the same time. Behind Vander Zalm is footage of the concentration camps from World War II.

The second monitor had all the footage I'd taken at the "No Quarantine" rally organised by the Coalition for Responsible Health Legislation. I recorded more than an hour of the various speakers, including Kevin Brown of the Vancouver Persons With AIDS Coalition. It's at that rally where he says "There will be a time when we have to write the history of this disease, and will we be found to be lacking?"...

The third monitor was images of the past, what happened to the Japanese Canadians in British Columbia during World War II, when the government stripped away their individual and civil rights.

The poem from Joy Kogawa is about her childhood experiences of incarceration during the war. The face of a ghost coming out of the heart of her kimono makes reference to the past talking to future generations.

*You also make references to the Quebec separatists issue in 1970, the FLQ crisis...*

This is what I felt dealing with Bill 34. We woke up one morning, and [the War Measures Act] had been passed overnight. Neither my friends in the gay community nor my friends in the straight community, had any idea that Bill 34 even existed, before it became law. There was an ignorance on the part of the community as a whole that this was actually happening in our city and in our province.

*I did an information workshop last year with prison staff, security officers and people who work inside provincial prisons — to look at homophobia and issues around the gay community. At the end of the couple of hours we showed the video tape and got quite a violent and negative reaction. I think they felt uncomfortable and angry. Was this a typical reaction of people who have seen the tape?*

Some people from AIDS Vancouver saw a screening of the tape and were appalled by the fact that I had a Japanese boy sneezing throughout the tape. They felt we had all worked so hard to get across to the general public that AIDS wasn't a contagious disease, spread by someone sneezing, or touching hands. That wasn't the point that I was trying to get across in the tape.

The image I was working with was of a young boy who is involved with other children. They're not afraid to hold his hand, and they're not excluding him because he's a different nationality or because he has a virus.

*The thing that struck me with that image was the innocence of the child, I wasn't even thinking of a contagious virus.*

Some things in the tape are very subtle. At one point I rewrote the lyrics to *Ring Around The Rosie*. On one channel you hear the children singing the poem and on the other channel you have adults talking about visible minorities and Kaposi's Sarcoma being the new target of the government.

I filmed those children singing *Ring Around the Rosie* assuming that people would know the poem comes from the days of the bubonic plague — drawing a parallel between the AIDS epidemic and that plague. At the rallies that I went to, one of the slogans was "People united will never be defeated!" I took that soundtrack and put it with the children, looping it from monitor to monitor, so the children were constantly singing it.

*The tape focuses on the power of governments over individual people.*

If we start setting laws in our province to isolate and quarantine people who have the AIDS virus or the tuberculosis virus, where is it going to stop? Are we going to go back until we give so much power to [the government] that they are going to be able to say at any time "We no longer want this in our society."

You can't start separating some people, breaking society down even further. Wouldn't it be a better approach to the whole problem, to deal with these people, still included in society, and not segregate them? We should be dealing with this problem as we have done with cancer, or any medical problem that we've had, where the country unifies not

separates.

*Making "Are We Going Backwards?" must have been a very challenging piece of work.*

It was a real growing process for me, the first political issue that I'd dealt with. When I finally completed the tape, I did it almost angrily. I didn't expect this tape to educate a lot of people, but it was something I had to say in my own way, about the situation that was happening. I was discouraged at how many people were not interested in something that concerns a lot of peoples' lives. "Oh, it's politics and we don't want to deal with that."

The tape took me two years to complete and there was a real turning point while I was making it. When I started out, I wanted everyone to get the message. But it seemed that the more information that was out there, the more complacent the people were getting to the issue. Then it opened up a lot for me on a personal level, because of what I was going through being a gay man, and dealing for the last five years with being HIV positive myself. Finally, it became my viewpoint on how I see my whole province.

*Now you're going to do a tape about living with AIDS?*

Yeah, I want to do a tape called *Positivity*. I intend to focus on three or four people who have been dealing with having AIDS or being HIV positive, and involve them in the tape. For example, if they were graphic artists, they could do the graphics for it, or if they are musicians they could work on the soundtrack — so they become an integral part of making the tape.

Maybe there should be a disclaimer at the beginning of the tape — "This is not another tape on the tragedy of AIDS, this is a tape on the positivity."

It's hard to find hope when you've been diagnosed with AIDS or HIV. We're told the odds are overwhelming, that you're going to die.

AIDS doesn't have to be a death sentence — it's not like the commercial media says, you're going to be dead in 280 days because you've been diagnosed. Rather it can be a time when you look at yourself and say "What do I want to do, now that I know that I may have only a little time?" AIDS is not the only disease that makes people deal with these kinds of issues.

A few of the people I've been interviewing have said how sad they were when they were first diagnosed. They had to wrestle through that — and now they see it as almost a blessing in their life. Maybe their life has improved since they turned off their televisions and radios or stopped drinking in bars five or six nights a week. Now they've developed an art form or are into a spiritual practice, and have found an inner positivity about themselves, a meaningful quality in their life.

I've had a few friends who, before they died, have told me that although their life was cut short, shorter than they had planned, taking responsibility for their life and their situation was the most important priority.

I think my personal involvement with the arts, and keeping a positive attitude about life and what it holds for me helps me to keep on beating the odds.

## AIDS VANCOUVER—VIDEO LIBRARY

by Rick Marchand

Can video facilitate AIDS prevention among gay men?

Gay video brings an image to mind: men at home watching porn, nights of solo sex. Considering their popularity, you might think video substitutes for communication and intimacy among gay men. How close can you get to the glass screen? There's no chance of exchanging body fluids, so it's very safe sex.

When AIDS Vancouver moved to assess the education needs of gay and bisexual men in the Vancouver area, information was collected through interviews with seventy-seven people, most with gay and bisexual men, and a short survey. Three hundred and forty-seven men, representing what might be called the "mainstream" gay community, returned the AIDS survey. Although we now talk of high risk activity instead of high risk groups, this "mainstream" gay community has been most affected by HIV infection and AIDS in Vancouver.

We also gathered information on groups within the gay community: gay Native men, gay Asian men, gay youth, disabled gay men, lesbians, to name a few. Although these groups need more specific AIDS education, it will take more than a survey to reach them.

Survey results followed patterns established in U.S. studies. Knowledge is high in the gay community. Many people practice some form of safer sex, but not consistently. A quarter of the men "disclosed" having unsafe sex. I use "disclose" because in the everyday talk among gay men, telling others about having unsafe sex has become an inappropriate subject. In interviews, people brought up a range of communication difficulties that have arisen as men experience change in their sexuality.

In the survey on AIDS issues, 44% of gay and bisexual men said they would prefer to learn about AIDS from videos more than any other medium. Video can have a significant impact on stopping the spread of AIDS.

Video can, for example, help us:

- talk about kinds of safer sex we like to have
- talk about unsafe sex we might have had
- make decisions around getting an HIV test
- decide on a level of risk tolerance that is safe and comfortable
- explode HIV transmission myths about who gets the disease and how
- negotiate safer sex
- fight fear and discrimination
- turn denial issues into positive strategies for dealing with sex and disease
- develop a more accepting attitude of death



"Safe Sex — Here We Come", Victorian AIDS Council

Video can provide the context for gay and bisexual men to work on these issues. What comes to mind is the small group experience. The natural follow-up to the AIDS Survey would be several focus groups of gay men talking specifically about the use and content of video in prevention education. We have been hearing a litany of do's and don'ts about gay sexual behaviours. But how can we feel comfortable with new sexual practices unless we can participate in the evolution of community thinking?

Video can stimulate social interaction by showing us familiar, yet challenging situations. We can watch other gay men on the screen making decisions, talking about safer sex, experiencing fear and confusion, talking about the difficulties of ensuring safer sex. Video can move us to talk, or simply reflect on the personal strategies we use to deal with AIDS.

An excellent video already used in a small group setting is *Safe Sex — Here We Come*, subtitled a series of discussion trigger videos, produced by the Victorian AIDS Council for the Australian Federation of AIDS Organizations. Ten thematic areas are represented in sometimes humorous vignettes. They focus on the communication difficulties among gay men concerning AIDS, safer sex, attitude and behaviour. We see scenarios about picking up men, trying to find out if they practice safe sex; bringing up condoms in that moment of passion; the complexity of decisions couples must consider; attributing safeness to another man based on looks. Although some of the idiomatic expressions are decidedly Australian, anyone would readily recognize the situations.

Made in 1988, the issues in this video are still very relevant; but more situations can be represented, such as dealing with a homophobic health care worker or dealing with a persuasive gay man who wants to engage in unprotected sex.

Besides vignettes for discussion, what about docudramas that can more fully address the complexities of AIDS issues? Video-taped plays? Comedy sketches that can diffuse the intensity of fear? Or a community development approach: handing over the video equipment to a group of gay men to have them address the issues through the work of making a video.

New videos need not be limited to the small group experience; bars, clubs, and baths could include safer sex messages in their video programming; video events with speakers or panels already happen; and organizations need videos for training volunteers in AIDS work.

As part of its educational services, AIDS Vancouver has a video library where safer sex and informational videos can be borrowed. But as prevention efforts continue into the 90's, we need a greater range of video resources to keep the safer sex message alive. This is a call for video makers to think expansively about the potential impact of their work.

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phone 687-5220

## A PERSONAL STATEMENT

by Terry Leitch of the PWA Society

I am a member of the Vancouver Persons with AIDS Society and chairperson of the Speaker's Bureau. During the last two years I've been dedicated to providing information on HIV/AIDS and other STD's. Almost everyone wants to hear the real story about living with AIDS from someone who has the disease.

In our presentations, video provides the visual impact (along with the presence of myself) that enables us to effectively convey many messages. For example, one of the things I do is speak to people in the workplace about AIDS. When an employee wants to inform her/his colleagues that s/he is HIV positive, or has AIDS, we are sometimes asked to be there for emotional and educational support when the disclosure is made. At this time, we also show "disclosure videos" such as *One of Our Own* to support the process. Video is definitely useful in this difficult situation.

I also work with teenagers. Earlier this year, I went out to Pitt Meadows with Dr. Michael Rekart to speak to several high school classes about HIV/AIDS and STD's. We took along a 60 second video about the use of condoms, that has since been banned by B.C.'s Premier Vander Zalm. We videotaped the presentations and the reactions of the teenagers to the

video, hoping to use both for outreach education in less accessible rural areas of the province.

The banned video, in my opinion, is well put together and sensitively presents crucial information to youth on safer sex. I know the B.C. statistics on the sexual activity of students: 47% of B.C.'s grade eleven students are sexually active. I'm not going to walk into these groups of kids and speak to them only of abstinence, nor do I teach them to have unlimited casual sex. I want to help prevent the transmission of the HIV virus (and other STD's) and to help people have compassion and understanding for those who are HIV positive or have AIDS.

Moralistic Mr. Vander Zalm is not helping us fight the AIDS epidemic when he bans a video that has such an important message for youth: use condoms if you're going to have sex. The students who saw it were obviously impressed that we were placing some responsibility on them to know about safer sex and guide their behaviour accordingly. Nothing has ever happened to the video footage from our trip to Pitt Meadows, so we haven't been able to use it in urban or rural high school settings. I can only presume that the other videos remain uncompleted because the footage

contains the controversial 60 seconds.

I can't relate to this one man in his Fantasy Castle being able to push his morals on public policy and decide what's right and wrong, for an entire province. As someone who is going into my third year of having AIDS, I am interested in his justification for this censorship. I don't believe there is any.

*Guest Editor's Note: There are two main issues concerning AIDS education for youth — 1) It's difficult to make the danger of AIDS real to youth 2) Getting the message across requires a source/method that is credible to youth. The banned video Terry speaks of was an initiative of the B.C. Health Ministry and was meant to be used as a trailer in film theatres. It was made with the following points in mind:*

- The video's content/form had to be directed specifically at youth.
- It needed to involve a youth-oriented medium: rock music/video.
- It needed to use a role model familiar to many B.C. teenagers (Colin James)
- It had to get to the audience where they hang out. It's well known that teenagers spend a tremendous amount of time and money going to theatres.

# HER GIVEAWAY : A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY WITH AIDS

**Funders:** Minnesota AIDS Task Force, The American Indian Advisory Council for the Chemical Dependency Division of Minnesota's Department of Human Services, and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community.

*Her Giveaway* is in The B.C. Ministry of Health Video Library. It's an important production presented by the Minnesota Indian AIDS Task Force. The subject of the tape is Carole Lafort, an American Indian who has AIDS. She explains what a giveaway means to her: "My understanding of 'a giveaway' is to express to other people that you care about them and that your home is open to them, and that what you have you'll share with them." One of her gifts to Native people, and others, is sharing personal insights and experience from her struggle with AIDS. This video validates for native people that native gay people are everywhere, and we are at risk of contracting AIDS.

Carole explains her perspective: "Maybe the best thing for me is not to be cured, maybe the best thing for me in this is expanding my spiritual life, maybe that's why I got the disease." Her spiritual self is more important than it's ever been before. She asks us to start caring about this crisis "that can destroy all of us". As far as why she has AIDS, I find her reasoning a bit heavy with religious overtone. As native people we were taught by outsiders that if we were bad, we will suffer, and that what we get is what we deserve. I don't believe that anyone deserves to get AIDS.

When Carole speaks about her feelings on finding out she has AIDS, it suddenly cuts to White Western Medicine professionals, who for awhile take over telling her story. I thought she was doing a fine job and found the interruption offensive.

Lori K. Beaulieu of the Native Indian AIDS Task Force explains about the dangers of AIDS. She does say that AIDS is transmitted by unprotected sex, blood, and sharing needles. Basic information is important, but AIDS isn't transmitted that way, the HIV virus is. The difference isn't made clear. Later, she says "to avoid AIDS, don't do drugs and don't share needles". Simply preaching abstinence to viewers who may be addicted to drugs, is absurd and dangerous. There needs to be information on how to clean your works with water and bleach, to prevent transmission of the HIV virus, whether needles are going to be shared or not! Also, there is no mention of safe sex for lesbians. Not all lesbians use or have use for condoms! If we are to help the fight against AIDS, then we must break down all barriers and communicate truthfully to everyone.

Sharon Day and Lee Staples of the American Indian Gays and Lesbians organization talk about chemical abuse and how it can make you not bother about safe sex, etc. Lee Staples says, "I remember I didn't have respect for myself when I was using. I remember instances when I was feeling really bad about myself."

by Ruby-Marie Dennis

Throughout the video, nature shots and a soothing Ojibwe Lullaby drift in and out, conveying the strong feeling Native people have about Mother Earth and its healing powers. Native spiritual healing ceremonies help Carole and so do her close personal relationships and positive attitude: "Day in and day out, living the lifestyle of a spiritual person is the most important thing any of us can do, whether we're experiencing severe illness or wonderful health."

Her final message to other Native people is "What I think we need to do as Native people is to return again to our Native place, the place that has never really left us in our spirits, in our souls, the place of dawns and sunsets. I think reservations need to get ready for us, those of us who have it, because we're going to want to come home to die."

At the end of *Her Giveaway*, AIDS information phone numbers are listed.

I've talked about some of what's wrong and right with this video. I believe it's a must for all Native people because it opens the door for more information and communication on the subject of AIDS. It is great to see an effort to inform others, by our Native Brothers and Sisters across the border. Hopefully, Canadian Native gay people can take up the example.

VIDEO

## HEALTH MINISTRY VIDEO

Reviewed by Tony Carter

The Provincial Ministry of Health's AIDS Video Library lists about eighty titles in the Library Catalogue. A very wide range of AIDS-related issues are covered making this a fairly comprehensive source of information. The quality of this information, however, does seem to vary somewhat.

*AIDS Wise...No Lies* is a video directed at youth, and contains the seemingly inevitable "Rap" segment. Twelve young persons from several ethnic groups talk about their reactions to testing positive to HIV antibodies. They all talk about AIDS but, whether they are HIV positive or have AIDS is unclear, and no distinction seems to be made between the two conditions.

One man in *AIDS Wise...No Lies* does have AIDS. His voice is heard over still photographs of himself in a hospital bed — followed, rather ominously, by a picture of an empty bed. Far too often persons with AIDS are presented as pathos-drenched victims, particularly to youth. It almost seems that they are used as a deterrent — a sort of bogeyman to scare the kids off sex and drugs, a rather dangerous way of stepping around the difficult issue of informing youth how to have sex safely. There is no mention of safer-sex practices in this video; and no strictures against the shared

use of needles.

The catalogue description for *AIDS Wise...No Lies* says the video is intended to "personalize AIDS"; but, personalization won't lower the seroconversion stats for youth.

*Your Choice for Life* is a B.B.C. Open University Production directed at 14-16 year old youth; and, wastes no time in bringing on the bogey man. This time the "victim" is John. John has AIDS and one of his infections is Kaposi's Sarcoma. He has lesions on his face, and the sarcoma has obliterated his nose. John is encouraged to say little else but that he is dying and he has no future. He says he is motivated to appear in this video out of concern for the future of others. John is poorly used here (in fact, horribly exploited), and to no avail in terms of ensuring the future of young viewers. No amount of pathos will prevent transmission of HIV infection.

Later in this video, safer-sex practices are described, including a brief mention of anal sex, but only after an emphatic prelude on abstinence. The distinction between being HIV+ and having AIDS is fairly well described. Overall though, *Your Choice for Life* is a sex-negative effort, that ultimately leaves one depressed.

The Minnesota AIDS Project funded a video presented by the Minnesota Indian AIDS Task Force called *Her Giveaway: A Spiritual Journey with AIDS*. Carole Lafort, a native woman, speaks lucidly and intelligently about her experience with having AIDS. The viewer is immediately encouraged by her strength and insight, no dripping pathos here. She describes AIDS as a "spiritual gift" which is easier to understand when she explains how she has gained strength, developed maturity, and produced positive changes in her life. At one point, she begins to describe her physical condition, and, is interrupted mid-sentence by a white female doctor who takes over the description. After this, Carole is allowed to finish her story. It was an astonishingly crass and offensive interruption, considering how competently the native woman was describing her own condition. I found this a bizarre aberration in an otherwise positive and insightful production.

Hopefully, there are more of the *Her Giveaway* type of AIDS video in the Ministry of Health Library. There are a lot of useful and fascinating videos, as well as duds.

Ministry of Health  
828 West 10th Avenue,

Vancouver, B.C.  
660-5061

VIDEO

## "HIV ±"

Produced and Directed by Theatre Street '89

reviewed by Gordon Fisher

The Quiz Show as allegory for life is an old device and even an overused device, but, in the context of disease (and particularly AIDS), it's an appropriate image to focus on. You play the game — you take your chances.

Kim U-Ming, Rob Joyce, and Stuart MacFarlane have no previous experience in video production or acting, but with assistance and guidance from Faye Yoneda and Fraser Doke they have conceived and produced *HIV±*. The video is a vehicle to feed information to their peers, a group the media generally labels as "Street Kids". Although it isn't a slick video piece, the work succeeds in touching upon the issues which probably most concern the target group.

We are watching a quiz show (Mr. Myth) and our two adult contestants have to correctly answer the question: "In what three ways can one catch the AIDS virus?". Our first contestant answers: "Sexual intercourse, deep kissing, and (with an embarrassed clearing of the throat) anal intercourse". She wins for being correct, but of course she isn't. We are informed by a mysterious stranger that kissing or casual contact does not contribute to the spread of the HIV virus. We immediately have the premise of the piece set before us: there's misinformation out there, and the myths surrounding AIDS have to be dispelled. If the adults in the Quiz Show of Life don't have the information, who can we turn to? Youth, of course! What follows is fifteen minutes of fairly concise information about how and why to use condoms, methods for the safer use of needles, and IV street drugs, and various other bits and pieces related to AIDS and survival.

The most effective moments are provided when we have the opportunity to listen to someone actually living with AIDS tell us of his experiences in hospital (good), and with friends and family (alienating). Warnings issued directly from a PLWA (Person Living With AIDS) tend to carry more weight.

If all of this sounds like fairly heavy stuff, I don't want you to be misled. There is a great deal of humour attached to this work. Every old condom visual (and a couple of new ones) is here, and the cast obviously took pleasure in their work. The direction doesn't fail even at the end when the pistol fires us into a blackout, and a warning that this isn't just a Quiz Show, it's your Life.

Now we know what HIV+ is about, but there's a lot that it isn't about as well, and that's unfortunate. This is not to criticize the effort and quality of what was created — it's just that if the target audience is to learn as much as possible about AIDS, then there's much more to cover. The group this video is aimed at is currently in the highest risk category for coming into contact with the HIV virus; and, they are also most at risk for going on to develop AIDS because of the co-factors present in their lifestyle. For instance, the healthiest of people will have their immune system compromised by persistent use of drugs (prescription and street), poor nutritional habits, and lack of proper rest and exercise. Take a hypothetical "street kid" and you will tend to find a body abused on all of the above counts. Expose that same person to any virus, and they will tend to succumb. My point is this: how about getting some vital information onto the streets about the importance of exercise and diet (you live on junk food and your body will give you a junk response), and the dangers of drug abuse (cocaine, marijuana, alcohol, poppers, and nicotine particularly suppress the immune system).

Even without the horror of AIDS, these are issues we should be dealing with. In this "disposable" society, these kids are our "styrofoam" brothers and sisters. On the surface AIDS generates a fear we associate with any epidemic or disaster, but look again and you will see that AIDS is a collecting point upon which all kinds of fears are focused. One of the main reasons for the slow response of our government and society was because it required some very honest public discussions

about sexual practices and orientation. We are now made more aware that "street kids" are at risk, but we have yet to face up to the fact that they are only out there living that lifestyle because we allow the conditions that facilitate their move to the street to perpetuate.

Society has a responsibility to continue and improve the process of educating our children about AIDS. Theatre Street and *HIV±* is a step in the right direction. The facts are there for all of us. We have named the problem, and we have some of the solutions. What's missing is more action, and all things must end in action, or they just end.



"HIV ±", by Theatre Street '89

VIDEO

# VIDEO AGAINST AIDS

## SCREENINGS AT VIDEO IN



"Mildred Pearson: When You Love A Person", by Yannick Durand

NOVEMBER 29th, DECEMBER 6th and 13th  
at VIDEO IN, 1102 Homer Street  
ADMISSION: \$3 members \$4 non-members Unemployed  
FREE

VIDEO AGAINST AIDS brings together a persuasive and involving cross-section of independently-produced works on the AIDS crisis.

The three two-hour programs that comprise the package include work by individuals in all sectors of independent media production, award winning artists as diverse as Barbara Hammer, Isaac Julien, Michael Balsar, Andy Fabo, and Tom Kalin, as well as activists associated with such groups as the Gay Men's Health Crisis, the Haitian Women's Program, and the Testing the Limits Collective. VIDEO AGAINST AIDS is a cornerstone collection for AIDS education and support groups, communicating with passion and clarity to anyone concerned or touched by the pandemic.

Provocative and inspiring, VIDEO AGAINST AIDS — (curated by John Greyson and Bill Horrigan, produced by Kate Horsfield) — is not work you'll see on mainstream television. The pieces range from highly sophisticated artist's tapes to boldly confrontational work — from lyrical and upbeat music videos to in-depth analysis on the AIDS crisis — from documentations of activist demonstrations by people with AIDS to reflective memorials of those who've died from AIDS.

### PROGRAMME 1

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 29th at 8:00 p.m.  
with ROBIN BARNETT of the Women and AIDS Project

#### PWA POWER

In *Survival of the Delirious* Canadian producers Michael Balsar and Andy Fabo invoke metaphors from Native American mythology and weave them into a narrative concerned with the often hallucinatory effect the epidemic has on persons living with AIDS. *Work Your Body*, produced by NYC's Gay Men's Health Crisis as part of its *Living With AIDS* television show, offers a variety of life-affirming testimonies from HIV antibody positive people and PWA's



"We Are NOT Republicans",

by Adam Hassuk and Robert Huff

### DISCRIMINATION

This section consists of Amber Hollibaugh and Alisa Lebow's *The Second Epidemic*, an informative documentary on discrimination cases negotiated by NYC's Human Rights Commission. Examined in detail are two stories of people living with AIDS: Margie Rivera, a young woman living in Manhattan; and a community in Massachusetts which first expressed and then overcame its prejudices by providing support to a young AIDS patient and his family.

### AIDS AND WOMEN

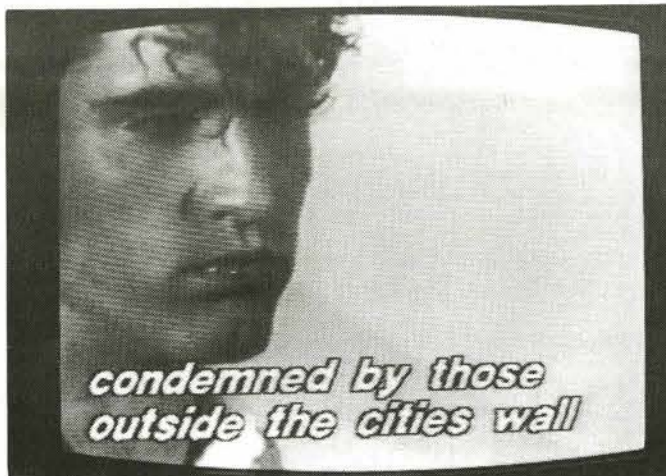
*Safe Sex Slut* is a pro-safe sex education reminder from Carol Leigh (aka Scarlet Harlot) a member of the activist prostitutes group COYOTE. *Cori: A Struggle for Life* recounts the heroic battle of one woman to care for her baby daughter who had been infected with AIDS from a blood transfusion. Jean Carlomusto and Maria Maggenti's *Doctors, Liars, and Women: AIDS Activists Say No To Cosmo* documents the angry protest made against *Cosmopolitan Magazine* by women from the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) for the publishing of dangerously misleading information concerning the risk of AIDS to women.

### PROGRAMME 2:

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 6th at 8:00p.m.  
with KEN MANN of the P.W.A. Coalition

### RESISTANCE

A variety of forms of resistance to the mainstream media's construction of AIDS is offered. John Greyson's *The ADS Epidemic* adopts a music-video format to preach against ADS — acquired dread of sex. Barbara Hammer's *Snow Job: The Media Hysteria of AIDS* critiques the representation of AIDS in the popular press. In *We Are NOT Republicans*, Adam Hussuk and Robert Huff document the disruption made by AIDS activists at the 1988 Republican presidential convention. *Stiff Sheets* by John Goss, similarly indicts public health officials and politicians for the lack of adequate and humane care for PWA's in Los Angeles, this time by documenting a mock fashion show staged by ACT UP activists.



"A Plague Has Swept My City", by Emjay Wilson

### MOURNING

Yannick Durand's *Mildred Pearson: When You Love A Person* recounts a mother's dedication to her son as she learns he is gay and gravely ill from AIDS. David Thompson's *The Inaugural Display of the Names Project Quilt* commemorates the unparalleled public memorial created when the Quilt's first 1,920 panels — each one for a person dead from AIDS, were unfolded in Washington, DC. Shashu Kybartas's *Danny* is a heartfelt and complex commemoration of a young man in various stages of his illness.

### COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Patricia Benoit's *Se Met Ko*, produced by the Haitian Women's Program, is a model fictional analysis of attitudes and misconceptions about AIDS within a Haitian-American neighbourhood. The tape uses indigenous cultural references and socially-specific occasions to demonstrate how communities, with individuals acting in enlightened cooperation, can responsibly respond to the AIDS crisis.

### PROGRAMME 3:

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 13TH at 8:00p.m.  
with BRIAN TEIXEIRA — Associate Member of the PWA Coalition

### ANALYSIS

Tom Kalin's *They Are Lost To Vision Altogether* is a poetic retaliation to right-wing homophobia and anti-AIDS hysteria which reclaims eroticism. Pratibha Parmar's *Reframing AIDS* offers a wide-ranging global analysis of the AIDS epidemic, focusing specifically on the construction of black sexuality in relation to AIDS.



"Stiff Sheets", by John Goss

### ACTIVISM

Youth Against Monsterz's *Another Man* is a short and sassy retort to all the Jerry Falwells of the world. *Testing the Limits (Part 1)* produced by the collective of the same name, addresses the politics of AIDS by documenting the range of activist responses to the chronic inadequacies in government health care, the legal system, education, and scientific research.

### LOSS

Emjay Wilson's *A Plague Has Swept My City*, is an associative evocation of the fear and confusion the pandemic has generated. Ann Akiko Loryyasu's *Gab* focuses on a friend who has died of AIDS. Andre Burke's *A* intricately weaves layers of sound and image to question the threat to sexual desire and identity posed by AIDS. British producer Isaac Julien's *This Is Not An AIDS Advertisement* offers a lyrical and meditative celebration of life and sexuality, urging viewers to "Feel no guilt in your desire."

VIDEO AGAINST AIDS: Ordering Information, write or call:

Video Data Bank  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
280 South Columbus Drive,  
Chicago, Illinois 60603  
Chicago (312) 443-3793  
New York City: (212) 233-3441  
Toll Free (800)634-8544  
FAX: (212) 608-5496

For Canadian Distribution:

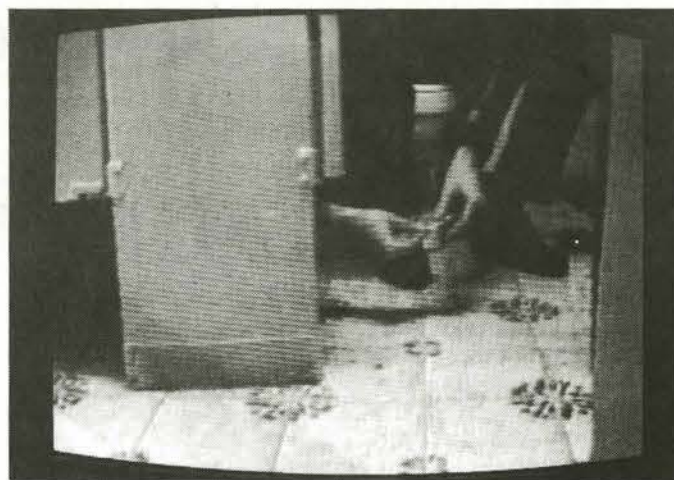
V Tape  
183 Bathurst Street, 1st Floor  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
M5T 2R7  
(416)863-9897  
FAX(416)360-0781



Cori: A Struggle For Life

# VIDEO AGAINST AIDS

# "NOW PLAYING"



Condom pass in "Now Playing", by David MacLean

## David MacLean in conversation with Sue Jenkins

"Now Playing" is the third independent video produced by David MacLean. His video work has dealt almost exclusively with themes related to gay social culture. ("Bon Voyage My Love", "It's Your Time"). Recently, David was in town (from Toronto) performing in "Quarantine of the Mind", at the Pitt Gallery.

**Sue Jenkins:** Tell me about the your most recent videotape.

**David MacLean:** Now Playing is a videotape that explores a variety of gay men's experiences within the shadow of the AIDS epidemic. I've used a thematic base of location in terms of the present and the past, and the present and the future. Now Playing addresses where we are as a "community" of gay men. The story's about this group of gay men who have come to the cinema to see a film, but the scheduled film isn't available and they have to wait for another one to arrive. This facilitates, through a suspension of disbelief, them sharing stories about where they're at now in their lives and in their sexuality, mourning the past, and people who have died, and feeling that they're in limbo...where do we go now...It looks at how gay men feel about AIDS, at how people feel. There's the element of confusion and fear, of a holding zone if you will.

**Why did you choose a cinema for the setting?**

I chose the location of a movie house because cinema has often been a way that gay men have found a language of expression and experience for themselves, funnelled through Hollywood films. There's been strong identification with female screen stars who express emotion in a way that men are traditionally not allowed. But there's also a closet that goes along with this because it's been a way that gay men don't have to address their emotional experience directly. The onus hasn't been on us to talk about what it means to be a gay man, without all that accoutrement.

**You think many gay men have fantasized around female screen stars?**

Well yes. With the Marilyn Monroe myth there's wanting to be desirable, and loved, but underneath there's the idea that the only way you can have that is to turn yourself into something else. I think it's an issue gay men have been grappling with for a long time. Oh, to be accepted I have to be more masculine, or younger, or in this style...I have to be less than I am. Even in this sophisticated period of time we're living in, I don't know any gay man that doesn't have some problem with that area, about what it means to be a man. As a gay man you're seen as giving up control and power. When you do this you're set apart, but you still have to go to work, and affect a certain look to fit into the office, or wherever you work. It's the endless, fluctuating, uncertain areas of image. Who am I? What am I supposed to be like? As an artist with a history of using drag, and identification with film stars like Marilyn Monroe and others, I feel a responsibility to move beyond that without any of the masks and the defensiveness around the movie thing. Now the onus becomes what am I feeling?...How do I funnel it directly without the safe place of "I'll be ready in a few minutes...just let me get my makeup on and I can talk to you..."

**There's a real lack of direct clues about time frames in the tape.**

Yes. Is it happening in the theatre or what? I'm representing a larger framework in terms of location, time, and relationships. Some of these are symbolic. It's illustrating levels of contact, and isn't that what defines people's sexuality? Let's face it, it's what you do when you have contact in a sexual way. We have to emphasize that sex is okay and still a good thing. The media hype with its old lessons of morality has some people struggling to not be crippled by fear and self-hatred. In the tape people group off and there's a nostalgia, a real angst because, before there was a real celebration around sexuality that certainly isn't there anymore. Now there's a real hesitancy, a reticence about sexual expression. When the two guys sit over coffee and talk, it's as significant an encounter as when one of the character's

goes off and has a quickie in the bathroom. If it's a memory, it's a good memory. We've learned and have to keep re-learning how to have safe sex.

**In the tape some gay men reveal their fantasies of romance, being cared about, being touched emotionally too...**

Well the film scenarios often portray a heightened sense of the emotional possibilities in relationships. Gay male culture has been very influenced by commercialization of experience i.e. the commercialization of sex, and for awhile sex seemed to be the only currency. While I'm not in any way opposed to sexual expression, I know for myself and friends I've talked to in private situations, that what we really want in life and relationships is something more endowed with emotional trust and love. These things can be very unpopular in the stark, black, noir, late eighties but that's really what we have to struggle for...more honesty in our communication, on all levels. In my performance and in the tape Now Playing there's gay men talking about the tradeoff. Does giving up promiscuity mean you're going to get a white picket fence, a home and lover forever? It's about balancing the extremes. What are we looking for as we move within a community that's been totally changed? AIDS has brought such upheaval, but it's an opportunity to ask some more serious questions and maybe find a maturity in our community that hasn't been there before.

**One of the characters in "Now Playing" complains: "The condom just means one more barrier, more tangible than the emotional barriers we erected before...I can't stand the sanctimonious talk about safe sex when so few of us are willing to examine how men have abused each other in the past, before we had AIDS...as if everything was perfect before. I've had safe sex but I haven't learned how to practice safe love yet."**

That's a combination of what I know about gay men. It's very unpopular to admit one's emotional needs cause we're such a cool generation. AIDS has brought with it all kinds of new problems. The immediate thing was how do we prevent transmission of the virus, so it seemed everything was focused on sexual activity. I'm sort of working this out in my show as well (Quarantine of the Mind), with the character who's leading the safe sex workshop. Gay men have a lot of emotional/psychological stuff to work through and come to terms with. Even before AIDS there were all kinds of things about how gay men and men in general relate to each other — the adequacy of how they can communicate and share emotion, affection, and all that. Now there's AIDS. We can't focus any less on the interpersonal difficulties we have as a community, if anything we have to focus even more.

**Especially when friends are dying around you..**



"Quarantine of the Mind"

Yes, it's emotional fallout that we're just beginning to feel. In the seventies there was a culture of immediacy and satisfaction, where do I get my next pair of 501 jeans? That's been turned upside down and there are going to be people who don't know how to cope or deal with it. I'm speaking of common experience, including myself. It's a new game in town.

**How did you research to find out how some gay men are feeling, and did the men involved find it difficult to speak about such personal stuff, even with a script?**

My research was direct observation. Being aware of my feelings and those of my friends and immediate support group, as well as observing responses of the gay community to AIDS. Some of the men had acting experience, some didn't. They got to address some very real concerns. There's a real impoverishment of lesbian and gay male imagery, so it was an opportunity to do something in a theaterized way, that came close to the bone of their real experience. There was excitement and a bit of fear because it's a very "feelings" tape, as non-trendy and embarrassing as that is for people sometimes, but I think that's all we really have to grapple with, our personal experience.

**Was the audience you had in mind for the tape specifically gay men?**

It's twofold. Definitely my work's aimed at other gay men but I've also got a lot of response to the tape and performance from women. Like women, gay men haven't always been allowed a voice. The work is about being very confrontative in talking about personal experience, reclaiming the experience and saying "you're the one that's got to work that experience out." It's not going to be the straight male that defines and decides your role and how you cope in the world. In terms of a general audience, my approach is humanistic. Average people trying to cope. Anyone can relate. AIDS isn't something just affecting gay men.

**It's almost like there's an unwritten law between gay and straight men—that if you're going to be a gay man, then at least make sure you are different enough in appearance and behaviour so that you're easily distinguished from those who are straight.**

Definitely. It's the endless desire. The same thing women are battling with. It's the straight, male, heterosexist target. As long as we can target you, as long as we can keep you in a place that makes us feel comfortable, and as long as we can control how you express yourself, then everything's fine. But the minute you want to define that for yourself, or play with that, then there's trouble. I think gay men and women have to keep fighting for that right to shed some of the stereotypical straitjackets. As a gay man or woman, there is this sort of endlessness of how you can express yourself and be as a person.

**Some people do feel anxious around individuals they can't easily categorize, as if another's difference is perceived as a challenge or threat...**

Yes! It sounds so utopian, but to think that one day things could get to a state where we weren't so threatened by everything that's so different, so other. That the other wasn't the enemy to be lassoed and put in its place. I'm working on that in my tape. In the community, subtle lines have been drawn about who was and who wasn't responsible in terms of the AIDS crisis. Who was trashy and slutty, as if those people could all be grouped together and disposed of. These people are part of the fabric of the community but when the heat is on it's "Well that's not me, I'm not like that." There's this horrible division of responsibilities — presenting people as either guilty or innocent victims. It all comes down to society's hatred and mistrust of human sexual expression and variety of experience. There's a heavy layering of moralism and Judeo-Christian values that supports the status quo and heterosexist crap. We're still battling this.



## REQUIEM FOR GAETAN

by John Greyson

The following "fake" video script was originally written almost two years ago as a contribution to a *Queer Media* issue of *Square Peg*, a British quarterly exploring lesbian and gay culture. The editors had requested an essay addressing the relative wealth and health of lesbian and gay video production in Canada. Certainly the subject was warranted: Canadian video art had become a predictable programming block on the circuit of queer film/video festivals in the States and Europe. Indeed, the curators of *Only Human*, a large international survey of video art addressing issues of sexuality (presented at the 1987 American Film Institute Video Festival) confessed that they were faced with three interlocking programming dilemmas that were messing up their assumptions of equitable balance: too much gay/lesbian content; too much AIDS content; and too much Canadian work! (Luckily for all, they decided to embrace inequity).

In trying to meet the editors mandate, I decided that channel-hopping as a literary device would better serve the subject, than attempting any sort of authoritative overview. The arbitrary truth of clicking through fragments of a deeply fragmented culture seemed more appropriate than trying to string together in awkward linear fashion a few of the conflicted factors that produce our culture, and culture (like yoghurt) our productions. In no particular order: "Canadian" movie stars, customs censorship, quarantine legislation, born again TV, art critics who speak for artists, AIDS politics, safer sex...

Regarding *Requiem for Gaetan* nearly two years later, I'm predictably struck by how little, and how much, has changed. Anti-gay violence, spurred on by the AIDS crisis, continues to escalate. *Family Ties* is no longer on the air. *And the Band Played On* by Randy Shilts became a best-seller, and the mini-series rights were snapped up by the producers of *Dynasty*. Jim Bakker is in jail. The Smiths broke up. The AIDS numbers (of cases, of deaths) have doubled, literally. Above all, an AIDS activist movement has emerged which is fighting for the rights of people living with AIDS, securing new treatments and protesting discrimination.

Predictably, this fake video script didn't sit still. The safer-sex-ads-by-famous-dead-artists were produced as interludes for *The Pink Pimpernel*, a tape I made this year focusing on the struggle for AIDS treatment drugs. The elusive Gaetan Dugas will be the subject of a forth-coming feature film: a murder-mystery-musical exploring (and hopefully exploding) the search for the "source" of AIDS.

It has become commonplace to note that the rich critical discourse exploring AIDS and its representations (of which this issue of *Video Guide* is a part) has in turn triggered an awakening of complex critical theory addressing lesbian and gay culture(s). Long gone are the seventies when cultural homophobia was (somewhat) out of fashion and gay critics seemed unable to get beyond the notions of "stereotypes" and "positive role models". Nearly gone are the eighties, when an ascendent right-wing and a hysterical mass media succeeded in re-pathologizing gay desire in distinctly nineteenth century terms, conflating our sex with disease, danger and death. Is it this exceedingly polarized representational agenda which has forced us to sharpen our critical tools, to subject "queer art" to the same theoretical scrutiny that feminist theory (via Lacan, Barthes, etc.) has demanded of women's art? Certainly AIDS has become, as Jan Grover noted, a call to arms for a new generation of gay men armed to the teeth with the dubious pleasures and dangers of post-modernist theory, the results of which are to be witnessed in the placards for AIDS demos, in the safer-sex performance cabarets, in the outpouring of video art addressing the epidemic. Certainly the urgency of the moment has forced people to both work faster and think harder. Certainly questions of efficacy become more pressing when the terms are literally life and death. Certainly the safety of traditional cultural forms of inquiry (like the overview essay addressing queer Canadian video art) become much more problematic than they already were. Certainly the fragmented address of channel-hopping seems more appropriate to address the very queer place this fag still finds himself in.

John Greyson is a Toronto video artist whose 19 tapes and films include "Urinal", "The World Is Sick (sic)", and "The AIDS Epidemic". He recently co-curated a 6-hour video compilation of 22 AIDS tapes entitled *Video Against AIDS*, which is available for next to nothing from: V/Tape Distribution, 416-863-9897. Special rates for AIDS groups.

An item in the TV Guide catches my eye. A documentary on the life and times of Gaetan Dugas, the French Canadian airline steward reputed to be the infamous Patient Zero, the man who brought AIDS to America. The page is torn though, so I can't read the channel listing. It started five minutes ago. I scan the channels with my clicker looking for it.

Channel 2:...Lorne Green (a Canadian), dolled up as the Marquis de Sade, turns to glare into the camera and whisper profoundly (with an atrocious French accent): "There is no better way to know death than to link it to some licentious image". CLICK

Channel 3:...camera surveys stairwell, panning over splintered wood, broken plaster, debris. TV voice-over: "Last night, a bomb ripped apart the stairwell of this well-known Vancouver lesbian and gay bookstore. Although no-one was injured, an anonymous caller has claimed responsibility and threatens to bomb the store again". Cut to TV journalist, standing in front of the cash register. "Little Sisters manager says the bomb is probably connected to the controversial AIDS quarantine legislation enacted by B.C.'s Sacred government yesterday"... CLICK

Channel 4:...head and shoulder shot of a hot young stud in a leather jacket moaning in pre-orgasmic ecstasy. Camera tilts down and dollies around to hip-level side view to reveal that he is wearing a condom while receiving a blow-job. Freeze-frame text over image: "Andy Warhol says Live Out Your Fantasies with Safer Sex"...CLICK

Channels 5 and 6 (for some reason my cable tuner is stuck between them):...David Main of 100 Huntley Street (Toronto's own PTL Club) welcomes Jim and Tammy Bakker for a "Just Say No To Drugs, Sex, AIDS, Adultery, Alcohol, Tobacco and Adultery" Special. Sound and image cuts in with concert footage of the Smiths on the other channel singing: "Boyfriend in a coma. I know. I know its serious...There were times when I could have murdered him...Do you really think he'll pull through?" (At first glance, I think this might be the Gaetan Dugas documentary because Jim holds up the National Enquirer issue with Gaetan on the cover. It turns out there was also a story about Jim and Tammy in that issue)...CLICK

Channel 7:...Alex (the yuppy star of *Family Ties* played by Michael J. Fox, a Canadian) is sitting at the kitchen table checking out the stock market. Mallory (his TV sister played by someone, not a Canadian) enters, drops a book down on the table. Alex (picking it up): "What's this...you're actually reading?" (canned laughter) Gee, Mall, I didn't know you knew how. (more laughter)

Mallory: I'm reviewing it for my English class. It's that book by Randy Shilts "And the Band Played On" — you know, the one that got such excellent reviews in both the straight and gay press. (laughter)

Alex: But Mallory, what can you say about it? There aren't any pictures! (laughter)

Mallory: Actually my angle is analyzing why it received so much acclaim at this time. I want to explore the books double messages: the simultaneous critiquing and validation of the mainstream medical establishment; the appropriation of gay liberation discourse to buttress deeply conservative positions; and finally, his dangerously reactionary views concerning sexuality and its regulation.

Alex: Gee, Mallory, are you on drugs or something (laughter)

Mallory: Right now I'm working on how he constructs the Gaetan Dugas story, turning him into a dangerous, exotic Patient Zero, a latter-day Typhoid Mary. In particular, the fact that he's Quebecois is perfect — not American, exotic, Other, but still not too Other, because then Shilts would have been called racist.

Alex: Whatever gets you off, Mall! (laughter)...CLICK

Channel 8:...Grainy, black and white image of two naked men blowing smoke over each others bodies through straws. Freeze-frame. text over image: "Jean Genet says Live Out Your Fantasies.. With Safer Sex"...CLICK

Channel 9:...concert footage of Dionne Warwick and Burt Bacharach on stage singing "That's what friends are for." Cut to demonstrators picketing outside a concert hall in Vancouver, chanting "That's NOT what friends are for". Camera pulls out to reveal a TV correspondent speaking into camera (same as Channel 3 — must be same show). "This celebrity fundraiser for British Columbia's Sacred Party is being picketed by angry gay demonstrators. They feel Bacharach and Warwick, two celebrities who have helped in the fight against AIDS, are being used to cleanse the image of conservative Sacreds, who passed controversial AIDS quarantine legislation in December." Camera cuts to confrontation between protesters and indignant concert goers...CLICK

Channel 10:...long shot of smoky nightclub. Craig Russell (star of *Outrageous!* a Canadian) is onstage, doing his celebrated impersonation of Tallulah Bankhead:

Baudrillard (boom boom)

Is a Bore (boom boom)  
As in "I've seen it all  
a hundred times before" (boom boom)  
CLICK

Channel 11:... Talkshow host turns to camera: "Today we are joined by two art critics from London and New York, who have agreed to appear on the condition that their anonymity be preserved. We'll call them Mary and Peter (not their real names) for convenience sake". Cut to medium shot revealing man and woman in shadow, their faces obscured. Host turns to them "Mary you recently visited Toronto. How would you characterise video art production there right now?"

Mary: Quite healthy, I suppose. Of course, many of the artists still seem to be obsessed with sex, with sexual politics. The Toronto Sex School, if you will (to quote one of our colleagues), remains unprecedented.

Host: What's so special about Toronto? Peter?

Peter: Well, the issues of state censorship have obviously played a central role. Not only is the provincial film and video censorship continuing, and continuing to resisted, but also, Canadian customs continue to seize tapes and magazines, especially those with gay content. The famous courtcases, of course, revolve around the censoring of safer-sex ads in porn magazines. And now new federal legislation has been proposed which would virtually criminalize any image of more than one naked person, no matter what their preference. All these factors have helped video artists to band together and fight for their rights by producing tapes about sex and sexuality.

Mary: I think also the presence of string feminist, gay and lesbian movements has had an impact and the fact that the arts community, especially the alternative and media arts groups, have worked closely with these movements. For gay artists, I think the struggles of the seventies and eighties were a real inspiration — the trials of *Body Politic* which was an important gay liberation magazine, the baths raids, he wash-room and park arrests. Also, the internal struggles around pornography and racism, for instance.

Host: Who are these gay video artists?

Peter: Well, I suppose we can name them — though I wonder if they would appreciate such a narrow definition of their work. Still — David McIntosh, Colin Campbell, Rowley Mossop and Tom Balatka, Michael Balsler, Midi Onodera, Richard Fung, Marusia Bociurkiw, Magaret Moores, Almerinda Trassavos, David MacLean...

Mary: But I think it's also important to name straight feminist artists, like Lisa Steele or Tanya Mars or the Cliches, or men like Clive Robertson, Kim Tomczak, Rodney Werden, because these people all work together...

Host: What impact has AIDS had on these artists?

Mary: Less perhaps than their counterparts in New York or London — but then Toronto is still a year behind in terms of response — in all of Canada there are less than 1500 cases as of last week...CLICK

Channel 12:... "In news updates tonight, Air Canada has filed a libel suit against Randy Shilts, author of *And the Band Played On*. Air Canada claims their image has been tarnished by the book's claim that Patient Zero was Air Canada flight attendant Gaetan Dugas...CLICK

Channel 13: (seems to be the same show as Channel 11)...medium shot of Peter and Mary in shadow. Mary is talking.

Mary:...and of course, they're all very defensive about being Canadian, always pointing out second-rate movie stars who are Canadian, that sort of thing. It's a rather predictable inferiority complex, playing out neo-colonial past and present, feeling they can't possibly compete with work being done in London or New York or California.

Peter: I agree, and I think it at least partially explains their predilection for fragmented narrative strategies. You understand, their insecurities make them collage together several stories at once, and they never adequately conclude them. Closure requires confidence after all. Also, their addiction to quotation of popular and commercial sources, like Hollywood. The self-conscious use of parody, or satire — they never make emphatic or direct statements, everything is displaced and diffused.



Mary: It's as though they're terrified of committing themselves, so often they put their words into unsuitable character's mouths. Often there's this disjuncture — the character is a fool saying something quite seriously. A sort of perverse ventriloquism.

Host: Can you tell us why you have to protect your identities?

Peter: Well, it's not easy being a critic from New York or London these days. The Canadians don't seem to appreciate our interests in their work.

Mary: And we've both had death threats for writing about the bad acting that seems to characterise their tapes...CLICK

Channel 14:...Man attempts to seduce a straight-backed wooden chair. Chair refuses. (I recognize man as Claude Jutra, a French Canadian, reprising his role in *A Chairy Tale*.) Man tries again, to no avail. Man offers condoms to chair, chair is interested Man puts condoms on four legs of the chair, they roll around on the floor together. Freeze-frame. Text over image: "Norman MacLaren and Claude Jutra say Live Out Your Fantasies — With Safer Sex"...CLICK

Channel 15:...close-up of Gaetan Dugas, the black and white photo from the *National Enquirer*. a disembodied voice, a woman, bitter and clipped, a Quebecoise. "Look, I've done a lot of research on my own. I've talked with maybe two dozen specialists, here, in the U.S., in Europe. They all say there's no such thing as patient zero. It doesn't make

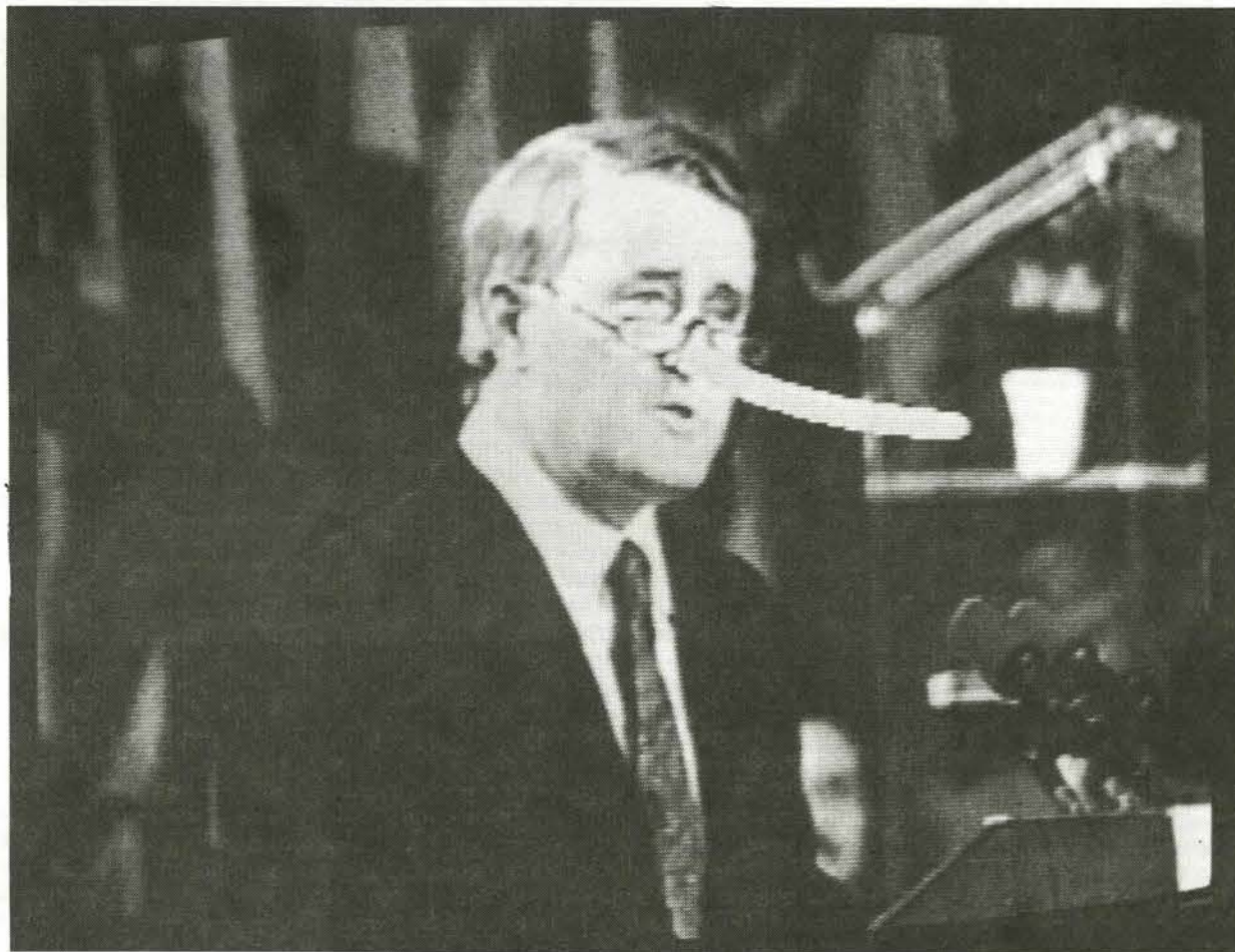
sense medically, the epidemiology is all wrong. The cluster groups around the continent, and the numbers, indicate no one person could have been responsible. Plus all the new stuff about co-factors, about syphilis. And I've told a thousand reporters — but do you think anyone printed it? Not a chance. They just want a photo of Patient Zero's mother. So forget it."

Music fades, credits begin to roll. I've missed the whole documentary. Maybe they'll repeat it later in the week. I phone the station but the line is busy. On the screen, it says: "All the facts and stories in the preceding program are true." I click my set back to Channel 2, to Lorne Green as the Marquis de Sade.



## "THE WORLD IS SICK (SIC)"

Review by Mark Turrel



"The World is Sick(sic)", by John Greyson

In the vacuum of relevant state, scientific, medical and corporate action, to meet the diverse needs of PLWA's (Persons Living With AIDS) and those frontline communities facing the AIDS crisis, there has been an unprecedented international response from grassroots organizations attempting to fill the void and transform the mechanisms of health care and education. If video can indeed serve in the mobilization, analysis, and documentation of this important development, then John Greyson's *The World Is Sick(sic)* successfully inserts itself into this process, in several ways.

The disclaimer that commences *The World is Sick(sic)* introduces the producer's position to the subject, almost intimate in setting up a conscious exchange between producer and viewer: "There are many different versions of what actually happened in Montreal; this unauthorized author-centric version should be viewed with caution." A layered dynamic takes place in which the authority of the official conference documented is refused, while the viewer is constantly challenged to deny the authority of Greyson's subjective reframing. This possibility of self-determination demands that viewers become active(ist) in formulating their understanding of the subject and echos activist Simon Watney's statement in the tape that calls on PLWA's internationally to "refuse the authority of medical researchers, refuse to accept the authority of the state."

Greyson elaborates further on his past employment<sup>1</sup> of the images, mechanisms and language of the mainstream, and frames this documentary of the 11th International Conference on AIDS with a humorous parody of news coverage by C.B.C.'s *The Journal*, synthesizing a critique both of the AIDS establishment and the representation of AIDS in the media. The role of reporter Andrea Austin Sibley (David Roche) structurally links the tape and facilitates the scathing critique of journalism's biases, language and conventions, its assignment of authority to the state's scientific and medical "experts", and its traditional distaste for "those scruffy activists" (as Ms. Sibley puts it). Though trying to maintain the placatory media calm of her reporting intact, the beleaguered journalist's descriptions of the state's and science's selfless research efforts, are constantly interrupted by the presence of the AIDS activists in attendance, thereby calling the bluff on rampant AIDS careerism and government negligence.

As documentary of the strategic intervention of AIDS activists at the 11th International Conference on AIDS, the tape lends itself to transforming the "face" of AIDS representation through interviews, statements and performances, with an international, multi-racial and mixed gender collection of AIDS activists and community representatives. A sense of the global proportions of the crisis is established, thereby challenging the usual North American narcissism that prevails in coverage of AIDS. Paradoxically, the same footage informs

us of the need for appropriate approaches to education and healthcare in the specific local community it is aimed at.

An overview of the diverse group representatives present at the conference, include AIDS activists from England, Mexico, Trinidad, Thailand, South Africa, U.S. and Canada, with representatives from specific groups — prostitutes, transsexuals, and those who use I.V. drugs — from Australia, Canada, and the U.S.. This provided a long overdue forum for the concerns and needs of affected communities ignored by the state and/or misrepresented in mainstream media.

Contrasted in an unapologetically pointed manner, is coverage of the official conference itself. Brian Mulroney is depicted mouthing words that, in the context of both the presence of the activists, and the tape itself, sound like generalized, inane platitudes. Greyson puts to use a sort of guerilla tactic in his camera work and post-production. A banner — "Mulroney, You've Left Us to Die" — occupies the lower half of the screen and a computer-generated Pinocchio nose sprouts from his face, belying his words. Introduced as part of the heroic struggle to find a cure for AIDS, are interviews with unsuspecting corporate representatives from the Conference's massive trade show for pharmaceutical and medical technology. They divulge information on multi-million dollar profits, soaring projected sales figures, and anticipated shares of the "market".

In the framing and defacement of Mulroney's image, and the manipulation of the corporate representatives, Greyson merrily enters a thought provoking realm of visual activism. Akin to propaganda; pretensions of journalistic



"The Pink Pimpernel", by John Greyson

ethics and mythical objectivity are dispensed with and made expedient to the urgency or necessity of relaying information. It differs from propaganda in that the viewer becomes consciously privy to the act of the message's construction, rather than manipulated by its finished presentation. In much of *The World is Sick(sic)*, there pervades a playful sense of representational revenge. Revenge not only against the AIDS establishment, but also against the mass media. With a track record of sensationalism, racism, and homophobia, the media has played the role of little more than an opportunistic infection, for those coping with illness.

Greyson's dramatization cleverly illustrates how both literally and metaphorically the stage in Montreal was seized, as the battalions of reporters and cameras captured the activists' media stunt, creating an unprecedented opportunity for the airing of grievances and demands.

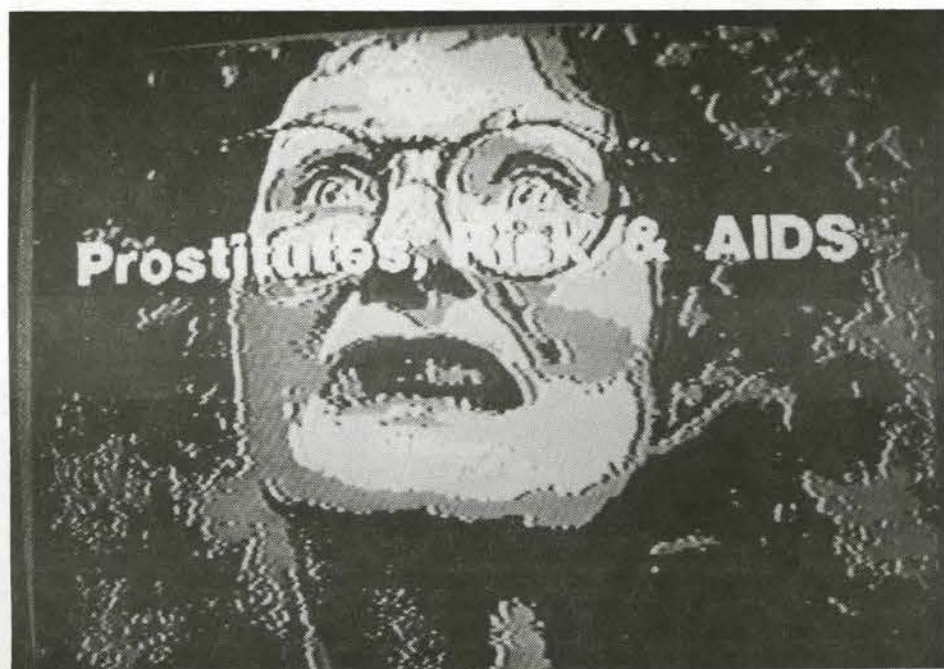
Dense with information, *The World is Sick(sic)* is initially overwhelming, but avoids boring the viewer with rhetoric. Rather, it seduces with a dynamic, colourful, visual barrage of computer manipulated backdrops to interviews, keying, and a constant shifting back and forth between documentary and humorous narrative. An original upbeat score demands "AIDS Action now", a call for activism presented with the catchy hook of a music video. It suggests, almost, an attempt to "glamorize" political activism, possibly marketing the notion to a consumer public with little patience for the traditional didacticism of left-wing dodos.

*The World is Sick(sic)* has the potential to subvert, inform, entertain, and politicize an otherwise decentralized, scattered population to whom activism is a remote phenomenon. Yet here we encounter the still unresolved conflicts inherent in the production and distribution of independent video: Will this tape reach its potential audience? Another target audience could be community groups already engaged in AIDS activism — presenting a positive picture of the range of strategies different groups have adopted so far, and demonstrating the manipulation of media that formed the basis of the Montreal intervention.

Akin to seeing the "emperor's new clothes" from a more knowing perspective, is Greyson's re-representation of the media, AIDS establishment and the pomp of the Montreal conference. Thus informed, having participated in this decoding of authority, one is invited to participate in an active response to the deadly mass deceptions induced by state and media. If silence equals death, then this work at the very least, creates a context and history for the activism of raising one's voice and affirming the possibility of life in a future with AIDS.

<sup>1</sup> *Urinal, Moscow Does Not Believe In Queers, The AIDS Epidemic, The Perils of Pedagogy, Kipling Meets the Cowboys, The Jungle Boy.*





"Prostitutes, Risk, and AIDS", by Alexandra Juhasz

The AIDS crisis is not merely a crisis in health, but one of authority. To claim authority over AIDS justifies distance: distance from contagion, from the "kinds of people" who are sick, from their differences, from their desperation, and from responsibility for a crisis of biological origin but social protraction. By analyzing an NBC Special News Report *Life, Death, and AIDS* (aired on January 21, 1986), I will discuss how the mass media has claimed authority over this crisis through a controlling and distancing discourse. The implication of the media's hold on AIDS are more far reaching than the hours pegged for news specials; for the television is an authority which constructs, interprets, and thus contains and controls, the social, political, economic, personal and medical. "It is in the world of representation that we manage our fear of disease, isolating it as surely as if we had placed it in quarantine," cautions historian Sander Gilman, in *AIDS and Syphilis: The Iconography of Disease*.\*

I wish to consider the ways in which the codes and form of television documentary work to advance the mainstream media's agenda concerning AIDS; that a cautious and distanced relationship to this crisis is permissible. Perhaps surprisingly, documentary form has only recently been discussed critically, rather, it is usually taken as given that documentary faithfully records real events for the lofty purposes of education or enlightenment. But, form that erases itself still constructs meaning; and form that is hidden is only vanished through familiarity. I would assert that the organizing principles of documentary have been so hard to see because they reflect the basic power relations of dominant culture. Thus, for example, the mainstream media's account of AIDS perpetuates already existent hierarchies of authority in its very construction, if not also in rhetorical design. Contrasting the formal and ideological constructions of *Life, Death and AIDS* with those of alternative AIDS documentary will help to illuminate the manufactured codes which the mainstream dons as "natural" to present its "truthful" renditions of a subjective and political discourse about AIDS. If alternative AIDS media wishes to contradict and re-define the all-powerful but all-irresponsible agenda of the dominant media regarding AIDS, a firm understanding of the formal organization of mainstream representation is a most primary tactic for mounting this oppositional practise.

AIDS documentaries, in general, mimic and confirm the social formations upon which they report. Film and video, mediums of mechanical reproduction, are most commonly seen in documentary production to "reflect" reality. Although the relationship between this reflection and truth and/or objectivity has been challenged within the academy, as well as within more popular productions like *The Thin Blue Line*, *The David Letterman Show* and *Broadcast News*, most news and documentary productions still bank upon the spectator's willing disbelief about the constructedness and bias of television reportage. TV says, and spectators believe, that the camera records what is out there to see. In a society where hierarchies of power define all social relations, it is not surprising then that the documentation of the AIDS crisis reflects the already operating systems of power relations which define the meanings and workings of this disease, and society in general. Because, to date, AIDS has been a disease whose course has moved largely along lines of race, class, and sexual behaviour, the media need only report "realistically" what exists in the natural world to legitimize the rankings of power found in their already working definitions of the socially "ill" and "healthy".

*Life, Death and AIDS* depicts Tom Brokaw asking questions of a wall of four video monitors, each holding the head of an expert. Only white, male experts' heads fill its monitors. In mainstream documentary's terms, this can be explained not as sexism or racism, but as the unbiased reportage of the world-out-there — a sexist, racist place where women and

people of color are under-represented in the ranks of experts. But, there are alternatives to the prime-time logic that insists that the existing, dominant structures are the only possible organizations of power. For example, the videotape *Women and AIDS*, a tape I produced for GMHC's Living With AIDS Show, with Jean Carlomusto, reflects a world where the only experts are women, many of whom are women of color. Professional women easily take the seats of their white, male peers in the tape's typical talking heads shots. Similarly in GMHC's *Work Your Body* and *PWA Power*, both made by Carlomusto and Gregg Bordowitz, the experts of the tape are PWA's, who speak their needs and issues with force, knowledge and insight.

Unfortunately, rectifying the imbalance of authority is not always a matter of merely recognizing who doesn't speak and making it possible for them to do so. For there are deeply imbedded societal constraints which strongly withhold authority of voice from many individuals. These constraints are re-confirmed in television documentary where interviews are granted to those who always speak publicly. For example, in *Life, Death and AIDS*, there is a limited line-up of individuals who are granted the privilege to speak about AIDS: scientific experts, doctors, a PWA (Person With AIDS) who was infected through a contaminated blood transfusion, three gay male PWAs, and archetypal Americans (firefighters, PTA Moms, construction workers). The many people affected by AIDS, but left unaccounted for in mainstream documentaries like *Life, Death and AIDS*, are those who are never allowed the power of speech in our society: poor people of color (especially women) who are referred to, minimally, in the show by blurred images of "ghetto" streets; mothers of infected children, who are infected themselves, but who are represented only vicariously by the doe-eyed images of sick babies; prostitutes and I.V. drug users whose status as "criminals" ensure not their invisibility, but voyeuristic, confrontational, and only sometimes "consensual" images; gay teenagers, who, like all teenagers are at a real risk for infection, but who have always been silenced. In his article *The Spectacle of AIDS*, Simon Watney discusses the implications of mainstream reportage which guarantees that the majority of PWAs are rarely seen: *This disappearance is strategic, and faithfully duplicates the positions the social groups most vulnerable to HIV found themselves in before the epidemic began.*

The project of the alternative media becomes the complicated task of being at once sensitive to, while striving to alter, the power relations which limit public articulation in our society. So, for example, as it is true that it is particularly difficult for women to speak in patriarchal culture, it is also true that under the right conditions, women can and do speak quite powerfully. There are many strategies by which the alternative media can create safe spaces from which women feel comfortable speaking. In *Women and AIDS*, for instance, the voice of a woman who is identified as "Anita: A Woman Who Is HIV Positive", is accompanied not by her face, but by images of women grocery shopping, walking on city streets, caring for their children. This tactic allows the hitherto-invisible woman into the production, while still respecting her fears of discrimination (especially against her children) if she would be identified on television. Another strategy is used in *The Second Epidemic*, produced by Amber Hollibaugh for the New York City Commission on Human Rights AIDS Discrimination Unit. Here, one sequence is devoted to the words and image of Margie Rivera, a Puerto Rican woman who speaks candidly about her experiences with AIDS. The voice of one brave woman expresses her experience, while taking on the weight of all of her silenced sisters as well. Similarly, a videomaker like Carol Leigh, a prostitutes rights and AIDS activist, makes tapes where she speaks for a large community of women who (like I.V. drug users) are silenced because speaking about their concerns and needs regarding AIDS also exposes them to prosecution for their "illegal" behaviour.

## CONSTRUCTING DOCUMENTARY

by Alexandra Juhasz

In the few cases where the mainstream media trains its cameras on the disenfranchised, it assumes that this is enough to compensate for the imbalances of public discourse. However, the "realistic" images created by turning on network cameras, perpetuate, not contradict, the real power relations they record. The talking-head interview is a case in point. This documentary staple is never, in fact, merely a head making words, an unidentified language source. Talking heads have professions and ranks which flash over their features as titles. They are filmed in rooms, houses, and offices which reflect their social standing and position. They are gendered. They have facial features which identify ethnicity. They have diverse relationships to spoken English — accents, lingo, vocabulary, age, media-savvy. In a society where authority is more often gauged by the trappings of class, race, and gender, than by the content or specificity of one's argument, hierarchies of authority are immediately assumed when a camera is turned on to record a head talking in its' reality. *Life, Death and AIDS* again perpetuates the position that the camera has only the power to record, and not to create, an individual's relationship to authority in its talking-head interviews with PWAs.

There are several PWAs pictured in their "real", but coded, talking-head-backdrops over the course of the hour long news special. The show's most lovely PWA by far, that darling of the mainstream media, the "innocent victim" of AIDS, is Amy, a suburban married woman who was a recipient of a contaminated blood transfusion; and, who is interviewed with her blue-eyeshadowed, pretty face, seated next to her husband by a roaring hearth in their suburban home. Unlike this woman, the first gay male PWA presented is not shown in his home. Rather, he is interviewed seated in a hospital room. But not for long. Quickly, a still image cuts over his continuing voice. In the image, he is dressed in a hospital gown. He stands in a sterile, grey room with steel medical equipment. A doctor stares into his eyes. Certainly, the image is "real", but why this particularly real space of discomfort and disempowerment as the natural space for the not-so-innocent gay man with AIDS? The I.V. drug-users in the tape, "honestly" depicted in their world, are interviewed in an empty, burned-out, city lot — their home is the dirty, fenced-in space where they shoot drugs.

In all three cases the camera more honestly reflects the program's assumptions and prejudices about its interviewees than it does their worlds and words. There are alternatives to the biased but "true" reflections of reality that have been created in *Life, Death and AIDS*. For instance, the crew could have sought a different place for interviewing the gay male PWA: his suburban house, as tidy, neat and lovely as any straight blood recipient's. Gay men live in houses too. Similarly, the I.V. drug users could have been interviewed feeling their most safe, comfortable and in control — not when they are sick and shooting up to feel better — but in their own apartments.

Thus far, I have tried to discuss how the social divisions which rule our society can be either reflected or challenged by a documentary recording of these "real" relations. However, most of the media's operations of ideology are worked through the much more subtle, and therefore dangerous, manipulations of form. The formal organization of a work communicates as much, if not more, than the words being spoken. A close analysis of the introductory segment of *Life, Death, and AIDS* displays the way that the authoritative voice of the piece is established formally. Ultimately, the voice of this program will subtly enforce for its intended "general public" audience that they, in opposition to an undefined but understood other, need not be overly concerned about AIDS.

At the time of the program's production in January 1986, the media was finding itself in a difficult predicament. The earlier, easily understandable, I'm-not-at-risk-and-you-are structure of AIDS-risk definition was no longer quite so

## AUTHORITY:

## FORM AND AIDS



"The Second Epidemic", by Amber Hollibaugh and Alisa Lebow

clear cut, now that irrefutable scientific evidence was being released which proved that heterosexuals were at risk for AIDS. How could the media inform its audience that all were at risk while assuring each individual television viewer (the potential customer who can never be worried or angered enough to turn off the TV and stop being primed to buy) not to worry? In *Life, Death, and AIDS* we watch NBC take on the difficult task of discussing the relative risk for "normal Americans", while at the same time convincing them of their relative safety, and their concurrent non-response.

How is this worked formally? The show begins with the image of a thin tall woman, dressed to party, with high brown hair. Her male friend is touching her protectively from behind. "Remington Steele will not be seen tonight so that we can bring you the following report." What has already been introduced in these "insignificant" five seconds? First, we are being forced to miss a night of high hetero-romance-and-mystery so that NBC's "we" can bring the audience "you" something more serious, less enjoyable, and luckily only a special report. Next week, and for many following, we'll have Remington Steele again. The thwarted crimes and deals of wealthy blonds is ultimately much more important to NBC's "we" and to us too. NBC the network, the force that rules the programming flow, tells us its attitude towards the "Special": begrudged, sighing tolerance: for this one special night we'll all be serious: enter a computer-generated screen of grey with small black shapes forming jail-bar-like lines.

Then, Tom Brokaw's voice sounds as a photograph of Rock Hudson lifts into the upper left corner of the grey grid screen. Neither are identified, but both are to be recognized and accorded their respective authority. "They were actors, teachers, scientists, bartenders. And then, there were those who never had a chance to be anything," opens Brokaw. Hudson is joined on the grey field with the images of three more unidentified adults, constructing a square of photos. A photo of a little baby flips onto the square's centre. The voice and images are telling us two things: all these individuals represented in photographs are dead — "they were"; and these who died were doing totally normal and blameless things until they died, one of them merely being a baby.

"In the end," continues Brokaw, "they were all victims of AIDS." The five faces fade into an image of a crowd of people walking on a city street: TV's representation of the mainstream. "In a way, we are all victims of fear and private anxiety." These words are accompanied by portrait-shots of individual Americans: a cowboy with a hat, a woman in a car with babies. We now know much about the show's agenda: 1) it wishes to let us know that normal, blameless people have died of AIDS, so that 2) we know that, as members of the mainstream universal crowd referred to in the street image, we should have some fear and anxiety, but that 3) as individual, unique, normal people, the identifiable faces of American, each of us is different from the "victims" of AIDS because we have to worry only about worry and not about death.

The show then does the unpardonable. For a good five minutes Tom Brokaw speaks the fears and anxieties of "normal" Americans without dispelling them: "Worry about AIDS is part of being a parent now", "Police, firemen, hospital workers, deal with their own fears", "Even some of the faithful are frightened about receiving communion through a common cup." These words are accompanied by predictable images: mothers at a PTA meeting, police learning how to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation through a protective mask, a priest holding up the communion chalice. Brokaw speaks "our" irrational fear about AIDS; the images illustrate and confirm our wrong-headedness. Nothing interrupts this flow of idiocy to allay these uninformed and needless fears: children are not at risk of infection at school, you cannot get AIDS through mouth-to-mouth or sharing a common cup

because there is only an infinitesimal amounts of the virus in saliva. Martha Gever confirms this in her analysis of alternative media on AIDS, *Picture of Sickness: Stuart Marshall's Bright Eyes*:

"Each news story, investigative report, panel discussion, talk show, or 'realistic' drama about AIDS circulated by the mass media contributes to the shape of the narrative by which the epidemic is made comprehensible to 'the public'... And what the mass media has produced reveals its complicity in constructing the very fears it presumes judiciously to mediate."

*Life, Death and AIDS* feeds our fears and says we're right to be wrong.

Brokaw then tells us what we Americans said in polls about AIDS fears. We're worried. Boom, boom, boom, boom, goes the sound track. An image of the Statue of Liberty comes up. (Worry, but don't worry, this is the land of the free.) Then, the words: NBC News Special Report. (Worry, but don't worry, this is the land of NBC News) Finally, at last, the title: LIFE. New word: DEATH. And then covering these biggies over slightly: AND AIDS. (Think about AIDS just as you do about life and death: worry but don't worry.) Once again, the ever unidentified voice of TV-land: "Here again is Tom Brokaw." The magic hand of TV raises the lights, and there, in fact, is Tom Brokaw, again, just as promised, this time seated on a circular, carpeted platform in a high-tech chair: "Good Evening," he says, safe and alone in a sound-studio. "Our hope is to de-mystify this disease. We will consult leading experts to answer your questions about AIDS." Tom's going to answer our questions about life, he'll tell us all about death, then he'll de-mystify us on AIDS.

Finally, ten minutes after the Remington-Steele-pardon the field is set; the show tells us how its going to tell to us. At the top is NBC: controlling our vision, turning up the lights, paying Tom Brokaw. Trust the TV. Coming a close second is Tom and us. Sure, sometimes we're wrong-headed, but it's best to be cautious. Tom's advice for us, stick with the Americans: cowboys, PTA Moms, firefighters. Then come the experts. We'll listen to 'em, but we'll always trust good old American distrust more than any fancy-dancy professor or doctor. You gotta be sceptical, take care of yourself and your own.

Why all this time and trouble to create a space of scepticism? The program let us know that, really, Brokaw can't demystify us about life, death or AIDS — what is he, God, after all? And so, therefore, *Life, Death and AIDS* argues that AIDS, like life's other big and great mysteries, has no answers, only questions. NBC handles this issue as it does all other major political crises: positions the issue into a place of mystery and cosmic solutions, therefore maintaining a de-politicized audience who believes that only God can intervene (or at least multi-national superpowers) and tells the audience that the right way to handle an issue with no answers (life, nuclear war, poverty, death, racism, AIDS) is to rely on your instincts, your gut. NBC has pre-arranged an hour where the audience, and Tom Brokaw, have been granted permission to evaluate this issue from the gut — the sexist, racist, homophobic, frightened way that they always do. The form legitimizes its prejudice.

Now enter PWAs. Unlike Brokaw, who exists on the carpeted platform, unlike the experts, who exist in TV monitors in Brokaw's module, even unlike the normal Americans asking the uninformed questions who are shot live on-the-street - the gay male PWAs, (who live with one of the doctor's in a monitor and are introduced only as "Dr. Volberding's patients") are given their own, special format: the pre-recorded mini-report by NBC's Science Correspondent. This totally controlled, pre-packaged form is the documentary code's version of the sterilized, segregated

space of quarantine: no worry of live mishaps, embarrassing spills or smells, unsightly scars or blemishes, it's not live, it's controlled and edited. Here we meet the married blood recipient in her cosy home, the "junkies" of the surveillance camera, the brief images of prostitutes observed from afar, and the strange and mysterious Africans.

Need it be mentioned that the camera and microphone treat each of these symbolic AIDS "victims" differently in NBC AIDS reportage? The lady gets to introduce herself: "Hi, I'm Amy. I have AIDS." She is also allowed a steady tripod two-shot with her husband. The I.V. drug users are never allowed a name, they are condemned by the words of the judgemental voice-over the science correspondent, and when they are allowed to talk, it is in response to one of the crew members who shout questions at them from a safe distance. The camera is either too-close, or too high, watching them as distinct body parts, and not human beings. The prostitutes and Africans imaged in the program are not even granted the privilege of an interview, let alone a steady, centred shot. They are caught unawares by a camera as far way from them as possible while still able to vaguely catch an image. The words we hear with these images, are of course, the frightened and punitive voice of the science correspondent.

The program concludes with Brokaw's words: "If you are heterosexual and don't live a freewheeling lifestyle... your chances are 1/1,000,000... All of us, of course, hope there will be a vaccine... I'm Tom Brokaw, for all of us at NBC News. Good night." The message: all of us (us who are not infected, us at NBC News) need not worry, but we do hope that those who do need to worry get a vaccine soon. We don't like them, but we are Christians. But, how do alot of "us" feel when we hear NBC's message? According to Suki Pots in her article *Needed (For Women and Children)*:

"While black and Hispanic women are disproportionately and increasingly affected by AIDS, the media insensitively and incorrectly tells us that the heterosexual spread of AIDS is not really a threat. How does a black or Hispanic woman feel when she hears this?"

The black and Hispanic women who are actively confronting AIDS in their communities, and perhaps in their homes, are not the people for whom TV is made. Therefore, for such women to see a PWA on TV, even if it is someone who looks like them, is to see someone to be disliked and mistrusted. Besides being incorrect and misinformed, this is, more dangerously, not at all an effective strategy for the dissemination of risk-reduction education to the populations most at risk. But clearly, saving people's lives is not the mainstream's agenda.

Alternative media makers must learn from the dominant media — learning what not to do, learn how to show the same crisis differently, learn how to help people by providing information not evaluation. Alternative media makers must call into question the social divisions and prejudices inscribed into mainstream documentary. We must talk to each distinct "us" of TV-land, making community specific programming addressing the specific needs of the many people affected by AIDS. The trajectory of control over AIDS is governed by access to speech and control over images: the powers of defining, naming, showing. We can speak and we can make images. We can re-cast the hierarchy of authority over AIDS with new images that re-figure the meaning and trajectory of this disease.

\* The citations in this article are all from the collection of essays *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism*, ed. Douglas Crimp (Boston: MIT Press, 1988).

VIDEO

## IN CONVERSATION with Isaac Julien and Pratibha Parmar

## IN CONVERSATION with Isaac Julien and Pratibha Parmar

Black filmmakers, Isaac Julien and Pratibha Parmar, discuss the making of their respective films: *This Is Not An Aids Advertisement* and *Reframing Aids*.

Originally printed in *Square Peg*, London, 1988.

*Isaac: Could you tell us a little bit about your introduction to filmmaking and the context that you see yourself in.*

*Pratibha:* I became interested in filmmaking quite a long time ago, but I never felt that, as a Black woman, I had access to the process or production of filmmaking. It was very much as a consumer that I took part in film. My background was in written and academic work around race, gender and sexuality. I initially became involved in filmmaking as a researcher for documentaries around different aspects of the Black struggle in Britain. They were both broadcast and non-broadcast productions; some for Channel 4, and some independent productions. The whole mystique around how programmes come together, how films are made was blown, in a sense, and I became hooked - I felt I wanted to become a producer of images. I wanted to make my images of Asian women because I was fed up with the stereotyped images I saw in film and photography.

*Before film though, you'd written seminal pieces in "The Empire Strikes Back" and were one of the initiators of Sheba Feminist Press as a racially-mixed publisher, so in various ways you've combatted the media and created your own spaces, where you could do these - so film is a continuation of that work.*

Very much so. I'm not in the process of becoming a filmmaker in a vacuum, I've come from a background in writing and publishing, which sought to make Black women's writing much more available. I've always been involved with images, whether through the written word or visual images, creating spaces which have been denied to us, and challenging the marginalisation and tokenism that goes on.

*Your debut film "Emergence" marries those two activities together.*

*Emergence* came out of my personal need to say something visually about what I'd termed the Diaspora experiences of the different Black communities. I tried to show through their creative work, the interventions which different Black women have made in their various artistic fields. There's Audre Lorde, an Afro-American feminist poet, a Guyanese Chinese poet named Meiling Jin, Sutapa Biswas, an Asian artist and Mona Hatoum, a Palestinian performance artist. I saw links between their work. I wanted to bring them together through the film. It was very much about challenging the notion of Black women as objects; we're there as subjects of our own making. The form in which the film was made and the language it's trying to create is a move away from the traditional mainstream types of documentary. It doesn't have a voice-over, there's a prose poem that links it, something I wrote which describes my vision of the connections between these women. The video was self-funded and couldn't have been made without the support of the Black Audio Film Collective.

*Your film "Reframing Aids" becomes a set of parallel questions around race, gender and identity. Why did you make the film?*

There are going to be a lot of people who are very surprised that as an Asian woman, I've made a film which is looking at Aids and has not just Black women's voices but white gay men and white women talking as well. I want to challenge the whole notion of what we as Black lesbian filmmakers are supposed to make just by definition of who we are, our identities. People have expectation boundaries of your identity. But we've got other things to say, we live in a much broader scenario. Our territory should be as broad as possible.

I was originally approached by Converse Pictures to direct and research a video called *Out In Lambeth*, to be "Young, gay and proud" "Policing the classrooms" and "Sex education taught in schools" and so forth - a whole hidden agenda specifically around race and sex. It was important then to make "Reframing Aids" to re-contextualize the representations of sexuality and race, to show them being re-invented. I tried to combat it through "This Is Not An Aids Advertisement" which is an ad for gay desires. I'm being a

about the experiences of lesbians and gay men in the borough, to show the kinds of initiatives the council was making in meeting the needs of lesbians and gay men. I felt although that was important, the political moment for me was defined much more by what has been happening as a result of Aids, especially the backlash. Last summer, to do anything around our community, the politics had to be about Aids, how Aids has fuelled the backlash against us. I wanted to create a space where different lesbians and gays could talk about the content of that backlash, showing how Black lesbians and Black gay men have been affected, say, specifically around immigration, where Aids has been used to further restrict the entry of Black people into the country. I use the images the media has created of the disease, but show that we're not just taking that on passively, that there are photographers and filmmakers creating our own representations. These are not necessarily to do with Aids but are a response against that media image. I also tried to point out the historical links between ideas about racial difference, social difference and sexuality. In British colonial history, homosexuality was seen as a disease, and colour too, where racial types other than white are seen as outside the norm. OK Aids has created the backlash; but, it is used in existing historical context, using prejudices, notions of racial types, sexual types and sexuality. It's not new; there's a strong history to these ideas.

We've also worked together on a piece for *The Media Show* called "Media Representations of Haringey". That tape started to explore some of the contexts for the backlash we envisaged, with the pre-election campaign centred around sexuality, race, and specifically around education, using those references to describe how undesirable voting for Labour would be. It was the early representations of Aids and the "Don't do it" type posters, coupled with the Tory posters: propagandist, using images and representations of sexuality to celebrate love and desire.

*This Is Not An Aids Advertisement* is important as a tape because it shows the multiplicity of identities within the gay culture, you show Black and white gay men, different groups of gay men etc.

In constructing desirable representations of gay men at a time when others equate gay men with notions of illness and disease, which we can't deny is happening to our communities, we are seeing a response to those dominant messages, which say you should feel guilty about your desires. The basic hidden message of safe sex in many cases is no sex - an anti-sex message in a post-sex climate which we seem to be inhabiting. Our filmmaking is a reply to all those adverts and billboards. The first part of "This Is Not An Aids Ad" contains images of death, sensuality and loss - it occupies the same space as other pieces. There's an American tape called "Testing the Limits" which has a very politically-activist agenda, but asks: how can you describe loss of friends or the total redirection we are taking in our identity, which we all have to negotiate now. Our tapes take a stance; there's an edge to them. I felt a responsibility to respond as a gay Black filmmaker. There are analytical or theoretical responses to the representation of Aids, which people like you, Stuart Marshall and Simon Watney are doing, then there are pieces which are more ambivalent and emotional like the work of Connie Giannaris or John Greyson. This work is more celebratory and is in a sense not responding directly to that dominant image, but is setting its own brackets. I'm quite interested in the emotional, which is



Grace Bailey in "Reframing AIDS" by Pratibha Parmar

where work like "Passion of Remembrance" comes in where you enter the dialogue with the Black community on topics around sexual and gender identity.

It's caused a lot of raised emotions and discussion putting Black gay sexuality on the Black political agenda. It doesn't attempt to speak to the white gay community; you start to speak to the Black community. It's a break away from other films which are always a response to demands from the white community.

*It would be a different move to try to talk about relationships between, say, the Black gay communities and the white gay community, or the Black communities and Black lesbian communities. All these are slightly fictionalised in the sense that they're all cultural terms, there are lots of crossover areas and dialogues taking place constantly, but it's on whose terms...*

We see our own references, we don't want to use the white lesbian or gay communities as our reference. Both of us come from different political traditions - I've been involved with the Black movement - we both feel to a degree that the white lesbian and gay community has been our main reference point, but we've not sought to prioritise our energies into challenging the quite prevalent racism we've found there.

That's why I work at Sankofa, the Black film collective. My reference point compared with other gay filmmakers is totally different. "Reframing Aids" for example will be different from a Channel 4 programme precisely due to different experiences, how they manifest themselves in subjectivities, Black subjectivities. I know a lot of white gay filmmakers - we are not talking about a separatist world - it's to state that these multiplicities of identity do exist within the gay movement, and we're bringing those things together on our own terms. The white gay film community has to take those things on. Divisions are sometimes there, although I'm a part of both the white gay and the Black gay film communities, I've had to make a choice.

I feel more a part of a Black film network with virtually no contact with other lesbian filmmakers. That's been my area of support - people like Isaac and the Black Audio Film Collective.

*Why is that? It's not imperative, but you get support from where you can. Other white gay filmmakers have helped me, but it's been difficult at times. I've had problems with absence of Black representation in "gay movies", or even if that representation is there, it's within a silence which is problematic. You have support from white gay filmmakers but it sometimes diminishes - you start challenging too much or occupying a position they don't feel you should occupy, where they can't feel sorry for you! A lot of support comes from Black theoreticians, not all gay, but sometimes your most vicious attacks come from sections of the black community. Different scenarios will develop around areas where a certain amount of tokenism can exist when you don't need that tokenism any more.*

Funding has been so difficult for me because Sankofa is funded by Channel 4 through a commissioning editor, so unlike most other lesbian and gay filmmakers it has not been so hard. The last scenario represents some of these anxieties where we are competing for funding and battling against censorship.

I'm in quite a different situation as an independent, individual filmmaker. It's only in the last year or so that it's been easier, but I took the challenge to become a freelance filmmaker. I've been lucky so far because some people know me and my work and I've been approached to either research or make these films. To try to get bits of funding is not that difficult, but getting full funding for proper productions is very hard - and it's very time-consuming making applications! There's such a tight boundary as to who gets funding and who doesn't. As an individual it's much harder than as part of, say, a Black film workshop. Within that there's all the who-knows-who, and having to struggle against, for example, men who are anti-Black, anti-feminist and within mainstream funding agencies. It creates very volatile situations, especially for lesbian and gay filmmakers. With the advent of the Clause\* it will only be more difficult to make films. Films like *Reframing Aids* couldn't be made in the future if this becomes law.

*Guest Editor's Note:* Pratibha is referring to Clause 28, a Local Government Bill in England, that has since been passed into law. The law bans the "promotion" of homosexuality. The wording leaves interpretation of "promoting homosexuality" completely open. The law also stops local governments from funding any gay person or group thought to promote homosexuality.

# "MINING THE ORO DEL BARRIO"

## A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO AIDS EDUCATION

Using film or video for education is nothing new. We all remember fondly the moment when the teacher would walk in the classroom pushing a cart from the AV department and announce that instead of class, a film or video would be shown. It always seemed to make the hour go faster and the learning process an enjoyable one.

The power of the medium is particularly well suited to minority health education and even more so to AIDS education. This is because effective AIDS education directed at minorities requires a show and tell medium that can also role model positive behaviour change while reflecting the language, culture, values, and lifestyle of the target audience.

This is especially important for minority communities because they are usually left out of the traditional media channels. Government agencies will often translate materials in order to save money and the result is, almost inevitably, a useless one. People simply cannot relate what they are being taught (to their lives), and the educational message falls on deaf ears. A documentary full of facts and data may be of interest to a white person whose educational and social level match the expectations of the documentary's producer; however, the same documentary will probably put a Central American refugee to sleep, even if it is well translated.

At the core of the community learning process lies the principles of empowerment or the validating of a people's ability to develop understanding relevant to their needs. This may sound simple, but it is an essential concept for minority communities whose life experience has been the opposite. Breaking the barrier of powerlessness, which is created by a dominant culture that continually states "you cannot", is basic to developing healthy communities.

This is where community based videos come in. Most media presents images of the dominant culture, and the general feeling within a minority is that of worthlessness. The opposite occurs when they see their lives represented on the screen. This not only validates their cultural experience, but becomes a mirror of their reality where they can see themselves, their family and their friends reflected. A minority group that rarely sees itself on the screen will feel extremely empowered by the images alone. It says "you, and your culture are worthwhile".

Within the Latino community, social and moral values have been traditionally taught through stories which are repeated from generation to generation. That tradition is founded in the Amerindian cultures which, contrary to European history, maintained traditions and values through oral history. We like to hear stories, and we like to learn when there is a story involved.

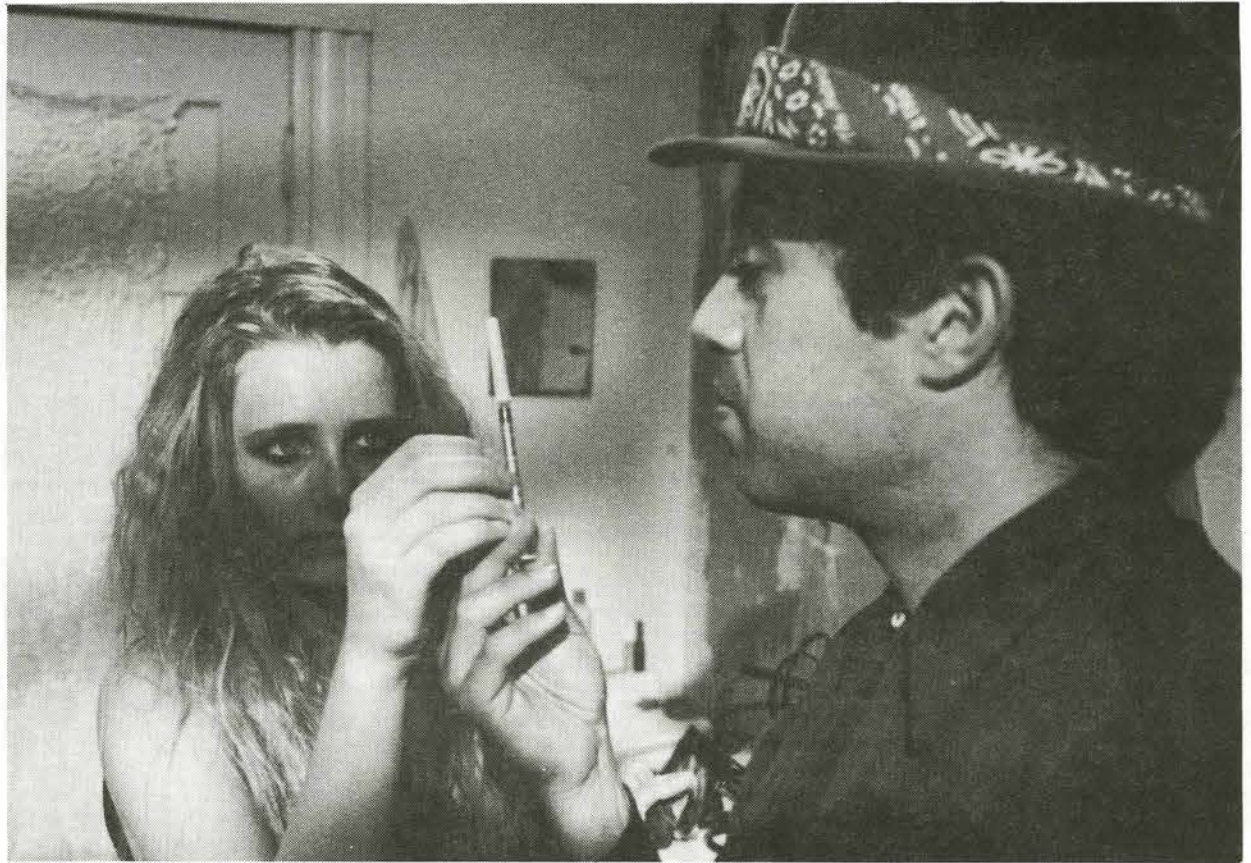
Because of this important value, we believe that the use of a dramatic framework can be the most effective format in Latino AIDS education. It is also the best framework, because it can create positive role models or characters whose positive actions result in a better outcome.

But using a dramatic structure does not guarantee a culturally appropriate video. Creating such films or videos requires a marriage between a community based agency, who provides direct access to the community; and, a producer who is sensitive to the issues and who has the cultural background to ensure that the piece to be produced will have the necessary cultural relevance.

Community involvement is perhaps the key element that guarantees creating a sensitive video. As a case history, one concrete example is our AIDS educational video entitled *Ojos Que No Ven* or *Eyes That Fail To See*. This video was produced by Adinfinitem Films Bilingual Film & Video for Instituto Familiar de la Raza, and was the first AIDS video made in Spanish by and for the Latino population. The video utilizes the popular telenovela format and follows the lives of several neighbours in a Latino barrio who, in one way or another, are at risk of becoming infected with the AIDS virus. In an entertaining and often humorous way, the audience learns the facts about AIDS. However, the story is not solely about AIDS; but, also about family and community relations, about destroying myths and replacing them with facts, and above all, about a people becoming empowered to improve their lives in the face of a crisis.

Although the plot of *Ojos* was a fictitious one, most of the stories came from real life, and all the characters are archetypes of real people. It was a process in which filmmakers went out to the community, camera in hand, collecting testimonies that later were included in the treatment or story line. For instance, we had decided that the main protagonist would be Dona Rosa, the mother of a young gay man and an adolescent girl. Consequently, we interviewed many Latino women with these characteristics and created a composite character. We also used some of their experiences as a basis for dramatic development. This was a perfect example of what our executive producer, Yolanda Ronquillo, calls "mining el oro del barrio", or "mining the neighbourhood's gold"; the harvesting of a people's

by Jean Carlomusto  
and Gregg Bordowitz



"Ojos Que No Ven", by Jose Gutierrez and Jose Vergelin

knowledge and experience. This knowledge is then applied to the creative process. This process has three benefits: first it enriches and ensures the cultural accuracy of your characters and story, second it becomes a tool for community empowerment, and third, it gives concrete dramatic elements with which to build the story. Many of the lines used in *Ojos* are taken almost literally from the testimonies.

Once the story and the characters were conceived and a first draft screenplay written by scriptwriter Rodrigo Reyes, the script was submitted to a series of focus groups or community review panels, that included both health educators and a representative sample of the target audience. This is a key element of the process because you can test your material and your creative ideas against reality. There is no one better than the people who will be watching the video to tell you whether it is appropriate for them.

The end product of this process, is a video that is sensitive to the needs of the health educator and to the needs of the community. The video has been extremely successful with Latino audiences because the video reflects their reality. This identification process would have been unlikely had the community not participated in its creation.

In order for AIDS education film and video to make an impact on minorities, they must combine cultural sensitivity with a format that will draw in and involve their target audience. Community based development and production, with ongoing community involvement, are essential to the process. The resulting material is an educational video that serves as a tool for empowering the individual and the community.

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"Ojos Que No Ven", by Jose Gutierrez and Jose Vergelin



# VIDEO AND THE VTH INTERNATIONAL

## ACCESSIBILITY OR ABSTRACTION?

The role that video plays within a contemporary context of AIDS, and as a socio-cultural/socio-political communication tool, has become a predominant theme in the discourse on the representation of AIDS. As a training mode, a means of mediation, a tool for analysis, and as an instrument of intervention, video was primordial. The so-called video revolution and AIDS activism, especially in North America, have gone hand in hand. Issues of the ease of production, the role of television in cultural diffusion and, more importantly, accessibility, have been cited to explain this phenomenon. But does video fulfil this role? If so, how might that process best be facilitated? What conclusions might be drawn from the use of video at the Vth International Conference on AIDS? Was there a serious exchange made between scientists and artists, or between the aesthetic activists and the communities represented at the conference, or between the Conference and Montrealers?

The Vth International Conference on AIDS held in Montreal in June 1989, sought to expand the horizons of scientific exchange and AIDS. In an attempt to rectify the Americo-centrism and narrowly defined bio-medical sciences that have characterized the previous four conferences, the Canadian conference organizers endeavoured to facilitate cross-fertilization. To make the conference much more interdisciplinary, the programming consisted of nine modules, one of which was defined as audio-visual presentations. In each of the modules a greater international representation was undertaken to help delegates to see AIDS in terms of a global epidemic.

By presenting an audio-visual module in the official programming, and by including an arts and AIDS component (SIDART), video presentations were an integral part of this attempt to increase accessibility and fecund exchange. This article, an introspection made by one of the organizers of the audio-visual presentations, briefly describes this process as well as addressing the potentials and limitations of such an attempt.

The AV module was established late in the process of the organization of the Conference. The response to international solicitation through letters sent through various AIDS networks was at first very slow, and the working committee turned to actively search out videos to fill perceived or real programming categories. As the conference approached, more and more videos poured in. The selection for programming became a larger and larger collective headache. General selection criteria served as general guidelines.

The AV committee sought to vary production origins so that independent as well as mainstream works were represented; that community-based productions were seen alongside institutional productions. Because of the international considerations, a wide representation of national and linguistic origins seemed essential. This included an obvious

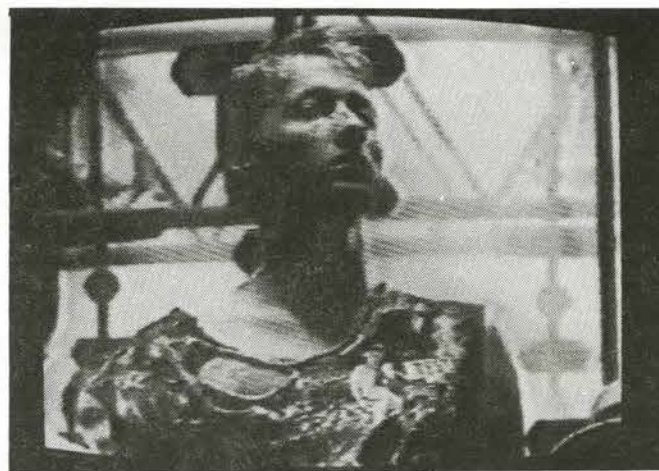


"Doctors, Liars and Women: AIDS Activist Say No to Cosmo", -Video Against AIDS

local preoccupation to favour French material and the wish to include various pan-Canadian material. General considerations had to be made for image and sound quality, but we wished to address a sense of relevance and target audience possibilities by providing wide-ranging options throughout a spectrum of aesthetics-activism-information.

The committee was interested in providing a programme that was not parallel, but complementary to, the programming of the other eight modules to ensure minimal thematic conflict. Individual slots of maximum ninety minutes were constructed on various themes. The selections were made so as to encourage comparisons and critical functioning and yet "fit" within time restrictions.

The Monday programme, for example, began with a session on *Counselling* which included a twenty minute video from Britain and an hour video from Ruanda. The second session, *Sex, Politics and History*, as well as the third, *Women and AIDS*, were a pastiche of some of *Video Against AIDS* with a Canadian Public Health Association and Westcoast Canadian tape. The other sessions programmed through the week included *PWA Power* (Persons With AIDS), *Discrimination, Loss and Mourning, Activism and Cultural Resistance, Video Clips* (spots), *Care givers, and Prevention*.

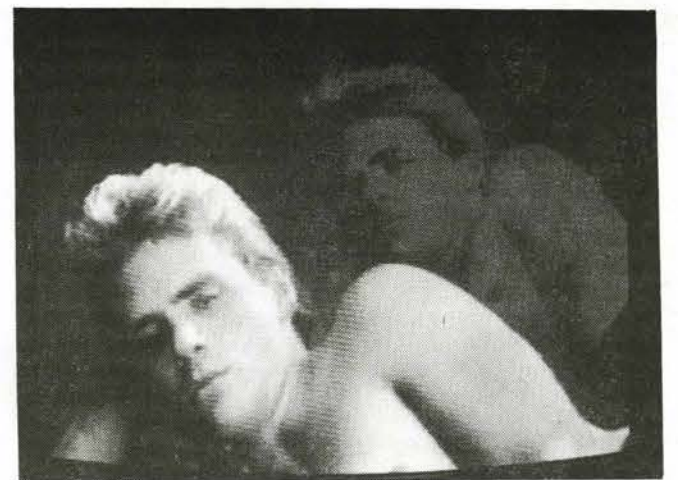


"Reframing AIDS", By Pratibha Parmar

During any single time slot at the conference, there were at least fifteen options for delegates. The programming had to be constructed to avoid thematic overlap and permit a daily flow of ideas and exchange. On the final day of the conference, for instance, a conference delegate could have gone to the morning oral session on *Innovations in AIDS education and prevention*, an early afternoon oral session on *HIV testing and counselling in AIDS prevention*, before finishing the afternoon with a video session on prevention which included videos from three countries: a video for IV drug users, one for sex trade workers, one for gay men, one for health care workers, and one for youth.

French and Spanish sessions were included in the week. Intertwined with evening films were a Creole video session, a session on women and AIDS, a session on cultural activism and community development, and a session juxtaposing a New Zealand Film, *Death In the Family*, with a video on long time PWA activist and former Vancouver PWA Coalition president, Kevin Brown.

The interaction of video and the Vth International Conference also included noon hour sessions on various themes. Three, in particular, *Erotica, Safer Sex and Behaviour*



"A", by Andre Burke - Video Against AIDS

*Change, HIV and Ideas: Theatre as a Transmission Mode, and Music, Performance, and Social Change*, used videos to juxtapose theory with practice. The theatre session included a video from South Africa which reenacted the use of oversize puppets in AIDS education. In the third session, a video with Californian sex trade activist, Carol Leigh-Scarlot Harlot, and a video by Helarion Ngeuma, popular Gabon singer, were programmed with an audio tape by New York's Michael Callen, a slide show from Zambia and a performance by a mime troop from Trinidad.

The reaction to the sessions, both video and noon hour, was enthusiastic and extremely positive. Most overflowed with avid spectators. These official sessions, moreover, were paralleled with evening round-table discussions by a wide range of artists and aesthetic activists including videastes, filmmakers, authors, producers, and critics.

The quantity and variety of work and ideas presented make it impossible to summarize each session. Much of the discussion that followed the talks, although insightful, consisted of berating and badgering. People were too often more concerned with getting their own preoccupations and frustrations out, than discussing with the ideas and products of presenters. Homophobia constituted the most consistent point of discussion. These question periods did serve, however, as a ventilation period and a time for periphery analysis of particular aspects of the main Conference (such as the video show in the opening ceremonies showing six teenagers - verging on angels - from around the world).

Some of the highlights might be discussed in terms of three aspects of video: cultural practice, educational practice and aesthetic practice.

Given the overwhelming surfeit of American videos, the fact that the majority of delegates were American, and a predominant ethnocentrism amongst Americans present (as typified in Larry Kramer's post-conference article in the *Village Voice*, *We came to teach, not to learn*) it is extremely difficult to discuss video as a cultural practice that is somehow distinguishable from American cultural practice. One of the dominant recurring themes of the week, however, was the necessity of cultural or community specificity in AIDS aesthetic activism. Californian Jan Zita Grover most eloquently dealt with this idea, concluding her talk, "until individual artists ally themselves more consistently with groups already knowledgeable of and committed to fighting highly specific local battles for treatment and against discrimination, most of their efforts will remain little more than a decorative commodity."

# VIDEO AND THE 5TH INTERNATIONAL

# CONFERENCE ON AIDS:

by Ken Morrison

The noon hour session on eroticism provided insightful reflections on a specific example of cultural practice: porn video. Bernard Arcand (Quebec city anthropologist) forcefully argued that "a society which generates pornography is probably best suited to face an epidemic such as AIDS". Cindy Patton (author and Boston community education manager), citing examples of specific programmes on which she works, observed that the slowly proliferating virus and the remarkable forms of rapid communication, the microscopic and the global, are mutual metaphors. The former, she noted, risks the production of pan-cultural homogeneity. She contended that "sexually explicit materials must circulate within the borders of a microculture", but the "use of traditional routes of sexual language can be used as a highly effective discourse for social change". Simon Watney (British author and AIDS aesthetic activist) talked about the "crisis of management of sexuality in western culture". He asserts that educational materials must be developed in the context of "diversity, choice and what Michel Foucault calls the 'practices of freedom'" in order to deal effectively with all consensual erotic needs. Gregg Bordowitz (Gay Men's Health Crisis) introduced examples of his recent educational porn saying "getting the message out is a cultural project which necessitates forms of direct action". Wieland Speck, German filmmaker, showed recent works: some for preceding regular porn features and one, done in conjunction with the National AIDS Community Organization, with well-known artists "visibly" involved in the production to facilitate its acceptance for use in group discussions.

The evening session on television provided numerous insights on the use of video as an educational tool. Moderator Simon Watney set the tone in his opening remarks by maligning the pervasive practices which, for motives of



"Se Met Ko", by Patricia Benoit — Video Against AIDS

moralism and bigotry, attempt to scare people into patterns of sexual behaviour, and finish by putting people at risk by refusing to recognize diversity or by presenting HIV as part of ordinary life. Shane Lunny, independent Vancouver producer, evoked the power of drama and presented segments of a recent video for youth. Jon Baggaley, followed quickly, contending that "drama can be useful but unequivocally not in the case of health campaigns". Neither the terrorism or seduction of the slick advertising agencies gives positive results to a resistant audience whereas slight humour or simple, affectation-less, plain speaking messages have been shown over and over again to be most effective.

Henning Jorgenson presented several clips from a Danish National Campaign *Think Twice* about condom usage. These clips were full of humour and were extremely well received by those present. Jurg Shaub presented examples from a Swiss national campaign.



"The Second Epidemic", by Alisa Lebow and Amber Hollibaugh

Paula Treickler outlined the "seven deadly sins" of network television coverage of AIDS. These included oversimplification, fear and power mongering, a primitive approach to representation, primitive notions of identity, narcissism, cultural imperialism, and what she called the Uriah Heap Syndrome (obsequious humility and massive arrogance). Pratibha Parmar concluded the session talking about the social context of sexuality, racism, and sexism in Britain when making her video *Reframing AIDS*. She raised concerns about the racism that is produced in gay and lesbian activism and discussed the parochialism inherent in North American and European AIDS representation and activism. There is, she enunciated, a definite absence of internationalism in the discussion around AIDS.

Although video as an aesthetic practice related to AIDS was not specifically discussed during the conference or SIDART; video, as mentioned, has been primordial in the cultural visualisation and verbalisation of AIDS. Within the videos presented at the conference, moreover, we saw several options for video forms. Western videos presented were often characterized either by traditional documentary forms or by the use of superimposition. Using images from dominant mediums (especially television), results in the juxtaposition of images and ideas which attempt to present AIDS within a larger context. Often these videos functioned in terms of breaking up the narrative in an aesthetic form of deconstruction. Many of the videos from the Third World, on the other hand, did not reflect dominant Western aesthetic standards and were therefore often less popular.

The video presentations at the Vth International Conference on AIDS seem, on first regard, to have been a success. But upon closer examination, is this necessarily the case? Between dull didactic documentary and indigestible disjointed deconstruction, where is the accessibility?

Given the majority of the videos made available to the Conference, there is a definite need for imaginative and digestible alternatives to most of the AIDS videos of the past few years. That being said, one must mention some of the numerous exceptions to this rule, such as many of those presented in *Video Against AIDS* — John Greyson's *The Ads Epidemic* or the videos shown from Denmark, for example.

Diffusion mechanisms are indeed a major problem when discussing video. Television is not necessarily open to alternative visions. The Conference, moreover, did little to question or to suggest alternative means of diffusion. Granted, there was a large attempt to open dissemination: videos were shown to delegates on overflow screens throughout lunch hour and, for Montrealers in general, video clips were shown throughout the week in the bars around Montreal. Wieland Speck, moreover, talked at length of prefixing porn videos with short clips. But a larger social space for videos needs to be found. In the long run it serves no one that videastes show/tell simply to each other.

Measuring incestuous activity and artistic integrity will be a continual dilemma, but given the potential power of video and the devastation caused by AIDS, the time seems ripe for more self scrutiny and social conscientiousness. Lastly, there is an enormous need for alternatives to American standards and practices. Some of the ways that this might be achieved is through hooking into international networks and exchanges, through encouraging and programming more local Canadian and Third World productions, and through concentrating on notions of community specificity.

Accessibility as a measuring stick, the Vth International Conference on AIDS serves to show the shortcomings in much of the available AIDS video material and in most of the diffusion mechanisms at present.



"The ADS Epidemic", by John Greyson

I FOUND A PACK OF CONDOMS UNDER THE VERANDA..

WHAT'S A VERANDA?



# CONFERENCE ON AIDS:

# PINNED AND WRIGGLING: HOW SHALL I PRESUME?

I have learned the hard way how powerful is the person wielding a video camera.

I became the cynical adult that I am today in the Fall of 1982 and video was the straw that broke this particular camel's back. I was diagnosed with AIDS in the Summer of '82 and by Fall had joined the first support group for people with AIDS ever formed in New York City. At the time, the American public could not have been less interested in the fact that a mysterious, deadly disease was making "queers" drop like flies. A group of us decided that we needed to put a human face on the disease in order to make the American public force the government to respond to the crisis.

There was a bitter debate which almost split the fragile support group. Many people with AIDS argued that television would only sensationalize AIDS, presenting us as pathetic victims devoid of humanity. Those of us who eventually went public argued that while it was true that the media was sensationalistic, we might be able to harness its tremendous power to manipulate feeling and public opinion in a positive way. We thought we understood the risks of taking on the media machine. Little did we know.

My trial by fire took place in the Fall of 1982. I agreed to do an interview for CBS National News. A crew of four showed up at the building where the support group met. Despite the fact that we had made it clear that they couldn't photograph the actual group (since most of its members were adamantly opposed to being publicly identified), they pleaded and cajoled to be permitted to photograph the group in progress. They said they'd be willing to put bars over the eyes so that people wouldn't be recognizable. We were smart enough not to fall for that one. The three of us who were willing to go public took the crew into the back room and did interviews separately.

I remember being secretly thrilled. This was the big time! I vaguely recognized the woman who was going to interview me. She must be "famous"! I was impressed to be the focus of all the frenzy.

The crew set up the lights and took meter readings. A microphone was tastefully concealed beneath my tie. They checked sound levels. The famous interviewer touched up her own make up, but didn't offer to put make up on me.

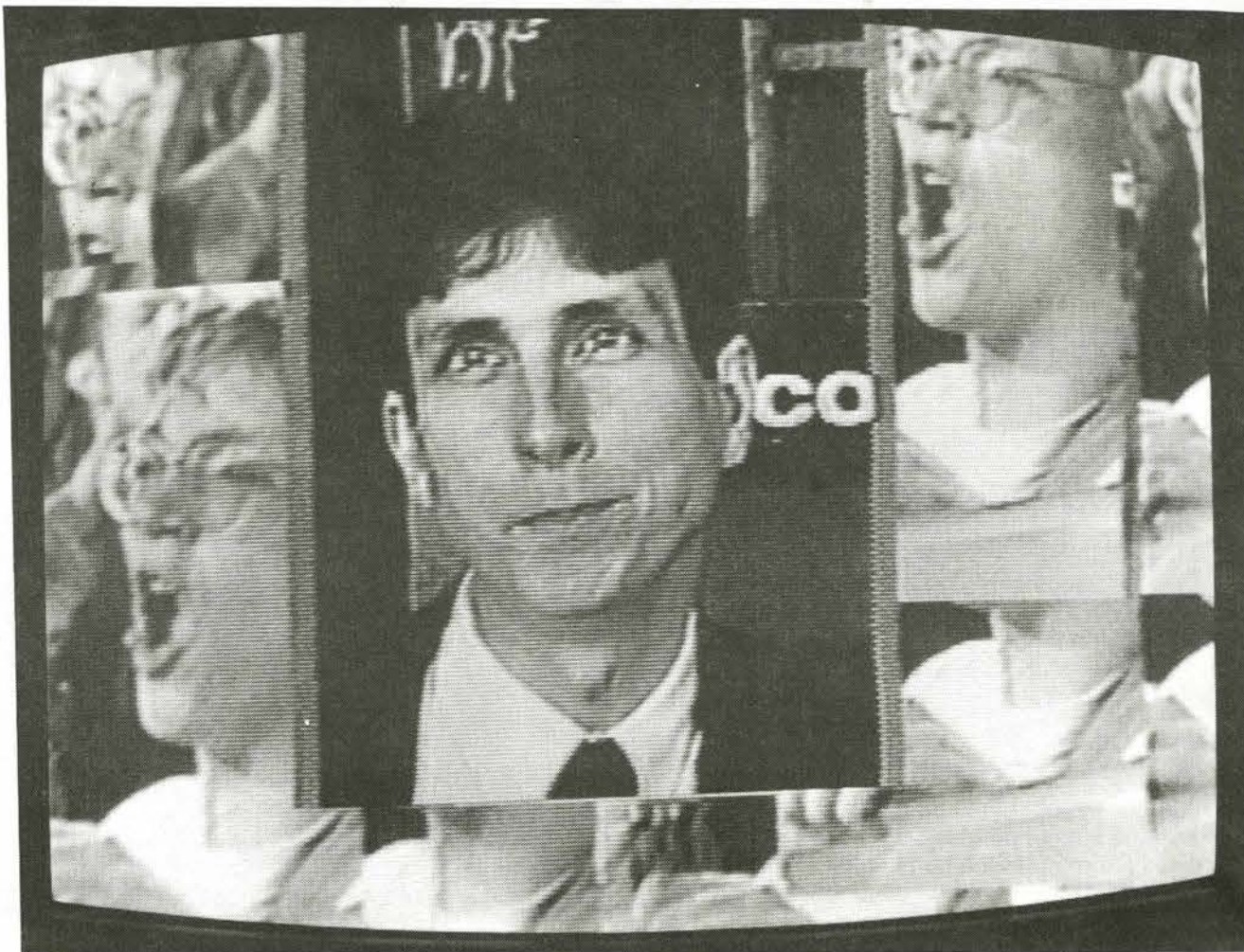
Looking back, there may have been two reasons why I wasn't made up: (1) they might have been afraid of catching AIDS from touching me; (2) as I was to learn, the harsh lights necessary for video can make a person look very sick and washed out. Given the topic of the segment, this may have been the desired effect.

The interview began and I was asked for the first time the "how does it feel to know you're going to die" question which would be repeated hundreds of times by different interviewers over the years. I was vaguely aware that someone was writing down the questions she was asking, but I was more acutely aware of the cameraman aiming this huge camera at me.

When she asked her last question, I was ecstatic. I thought: this is a piece of cake; I really got a chance to say what was on my mind. I started to unpin my microphone and she shouted that I shouldn't move because they had to finish the shoot. I said, I thought we were finished. And she explained that they now had to film her asking the questions and get some reaction shots and B-roll.

I was stunned. The realization hit me like a ton of bricks that there was only one camera in the room and that it had been focused on me the whole time. Incredulous, I watched for the first time the way news is usually generated. I saw the interviewer get several cracks at asking the questions which her assistant had written down for her. But the questions were slightly different than the one's I'd answered. I realized with horror that these modified questions were going to be edited into the piece and that most Americans wouldn't realize that the question I would be shown answering was not the question I had been asked.

As I sat there being mauled by the process, I mentally reviewed every news broadcast I'd ever seen in the 27 years I'd been alive. Until that moment, it had never occurred to me when I was watching an interview or a documentary that there weren't always two cameras — one recording the questioner and one recording the person being questioned. It was my first hint of how news and images and people are



Michael Callen in "The World is Sick(sic)", by John Greyson

manipulated by video.

When the story aired that night, the first shock was how short the segment was: 90 seconds! My portion of the interview had taken a half hour, and all that was presented was a 20 second sound byte consisting of two different thoughts edited together, as if one flowed from the other.

I should have known better. Certainly the release I signed should have tipped me off that the power imbalance between the camera and the person being videotaped is about as great as that which exists between a landlord and a person desperate to find a habitable apartment in Manhattan at a reasonable rent. I am regularly asked to sign away all my rights, in perpetuity, and to specifically acknowledge that the interviewer has the right to do anything s/he sees fit with my words and image.

Actually, I can be quite mischievous. I know how to speak in such a way that it is extremely difficult for an editor to twist my remarks. I sprinkle qualifying phrases throughout my remarks in an attempt to imbed the context in the footage. If I'm mid-sentence and I realize that what I've just said could easily be taken out of context, I'll sneeze or pick my nose or wave at the camera and say "I'd like to start over, please."

I have learned to do my homework before I go before the camera. Whenever I'm interviewed, I always decide on one or two points I want to make. I then translate these points into quotable sound bytes, and no matter what question(s) I'm asked, I find a way to get my own points across. I've become quite smooth at it. For example, whenever the inevitable "How does it feel?" question comes, I now use it as an opportunity to introduce whatever I want to talk about. I just pause dramatically and say, "You know, that reminds me of..." and then proceed to drop in my sound byte.

The whole concept of a sound byte amuses me. Interviewers live for sound bytes and I've become adept at

knowing when I've said something that will end up in the final cut. Most interviewers are completely disinterested in me and what I have to say. For them, this is just another story — another job to do. They've usually preconceived of the segment and simply need me to keep talking until I say something which can be twisted to fit the preconceived story. I can usually tell when I've given them what they want because they often smile slightly.

One sound byte anecdote is particularly amusing. I was being interviewed by someone who had previously worked in radio. I was her first interview on camera. While the lights were being set up, we chatted about the story and I said a number of things that got her very excited. But when we actually started filming, she didn't feel that the answers I gave were as good as the ones I'd given during our informal chat. So she kept asking the same question over and over and finally began mouthing the words she wanted me to say while I was speaking. This was very disorienting, since I don't read lips. I turned to the cameraman and said, "Maybe you should just interview her, since she seems to know more about what it's like to live with AIDS than I apparently do."

My favourite part of the video process is getting B-roll. I find it hilarious and love nothing more than walking in my neighbourhood or doing the dishes with a camera following me around while I try to look inconspicuous and ignore the camera. Actually, I am annoyed that no mainstream television station has been willing to include any clips of me being physical or affectionate with my (male) lover. During the filming of B-roll, they always tell me to be natural — to just do what I usually do and ignore the camera. Well, what I usually do around my home is soak up the healing presence of my lover. I'm like a heat-seeking missile in his presence. But the moment I touch him in any way which implies that we're sexual or that we love each other, the producer always says "Well, I think we've got enough B-roll now.". Apparently, gayness is still not fit for prime time. We wouldn't want to scare the horses, now, would we?



## by Michael Callen

I love the fact that European TV crews understand that people who sell their souls on camera should be recompensed like the prostitutes we often are. If I'm going to put up with a video crew rearranging my furniture, shutting off my telephone and air conditioner and blowing my fuses, I should at least get something for my trouble. But American television crews never pay. It is presumed that in America, one does it for the glory. What is amusing is that the explanation given by American crews for not paying for an interview is that doing so would imply that people were simply saying what they were being paid to say. This implies that American journalism is somehow more honest and truthful because subjects are not paid for their interviews. The real joke is that the European system of paying is actually more honest because it emphasizes that most media is simply a business, and that business is primarily entertainment, not the pursuit of truth.

Theory amuses me. I love to read it. My idea of a good time is to sit on the john with the latest volume of post-Freudian, neo-Foucaultian French Feminist anti-essentialist film theory and laugh my head off. What are these people talking about?

So I am aware that there is a common language of deconstruction popular among the video avant guard, but I don't really understand it. So if in my ignorance I have tread on or naively restate cherished principles, forgive me. My knowledge about the "corrosive power" of video is first hand, the result of being regularly constructed as an "AIDS victim" for the amusement of various video crews and the 6 o'clock news. I have had to learn the hard way that with video, seeing should not necessarily be believing.

One has to put up with video because we live in a moving picture age and images have the power to shape how people think about, and respond to AIDS. As editor of the People with AIDS *Newsline*, I worked closely with lesbian photographer Jane Rosett. We were very conscious of how the images of people with AIDS published in the newsletter subtly shaped readers' perceptions about the lived experience of having AIDS. We made a conscious choice to use the power of propaganda inherent in photographs to challenge the prevailing image that AIDS is only about dying. We published pictures about people who were living with AIDS. And we made a commitment to illustrating the diversity of AIDS by publishing photos of women, people of colour and children.

In an introductory essay to *Surviving and Thriving With AIDS: Collected Wisdom (Volume 2)*, Jane articulated the philosophy which guided our choice of images. Although the following was written about still photographs, the observations apply with even greater force to video, which in a sense, is simply a series of still pictures strung together:

"For some reason, we believe what we see in a way that we do not believe what we read... When we read someone's words we know them to be an opinion; but when we see...photos, we accept them as fact. [P]hotos are...over-credited as somehow portraying 'the' truth as opposed to merely 'one' truth. Because we do not question them enough, photos carry an inordinate and corrosive power which can be dangerous, especially when used to tell stories about AIDS. Dangerous and destructive to the dignity and diversity of all people with AIDS, none of whom can actually be pigeonholed into a single image. [We need] to have our critical guard up and question when we 'read' [images]."

Most people who view video are not aware of the video editor's tremendous power to manipulate context and content — of, as you would no doubt say, constructing reality. When I began my bizarre career as a publicly identified person with AIDS, I was a typical, trusting child of the late 50's. Raised on a steady diet of TV. As a midwesterner of simple faith, I was shielded from the way the world really works. Like most Americans, I actually believed what I saw on television because, well, seeing was believing, right? I was precocious and clever enough to be instinctively suspicious of anything I read, but for some reason, this natural scepticism did not extend to television.

I knew that words on a page were edited and censored; and the main problem with reading was that you couldn't judge the sincerity of the writer because you couldn't see her/his face. This is what is so deceptive about video. Because you can see the face of the person speaking, you think you can have greater confidence in your judgement about the sincerity of what you heard and saw. But what is missing, and so misleading, is the silent but deadly presence of the video editor. Rarely does one stop to think that the all-important context of what the talking head is saying is lying somewhere on the cutting room floor.

\* \* \*

My problems with video aren't limited to what ends up on the screen; I've had my share of discrimination and abuse from the crew itself. The most recent instance occurred when I went to NBC Studios to do an interview about long term survival. I was asked to wait in one of the guest lounges — by myself. I was quite aware that the guests for other segments were all together in another room. I was aware that assistants were taking the other guests to have make-up put on; I wasn't offered the option of make-up. Several newscasters (some of them famous) poked their heads in to say hello and were very friendly, but I was aware that I was being isolated. But because I felt it was very important to get the message out that not everyone with AIDS dies, I decided not to make a stink.

Eventually they came to get me for my live segment and took me into the studio. I sat and chatted amiably with the interviewer, with whom I had worked in the past. Out of the shadows appeared a soundman who tossed a microphone at me and told me to pin it on myself. I noticed that he was wearing rubber gloves. I have never met a sound person who didn't prefer to pin the microphone on a guest him or herself. I asked him to please do it for me. He refused. The producer was waving frantically that our segment was supposed to start in one minute. I looked around the studio and all the people who had been so friendly to me moments before were looking down at the ground, pretending that what was happening wasn't really happening. The woman who was about to interview me pretended to fix her hair.

I was faced with a terrible choice. I could storm off the set, I could get angry on camera, or I could swallow my anger, pin the microphone on and use my minute of airtime to spread a little hope. Shaking with anger, I chose the latter course. But I left the studio and immediately called the ACLU. As a result, NBC was forced to agree to educate its employees about AIDS.

I should also mention some good experiences, mostly with non-commercial video. Groups such as the Testing the Limits Video Collective in New York City and video artists like John Greyson, Jean Carlomusto and Greg Bordowitz are acutely aware of how the power of video has been turned against people with AIDS. These and other politically sensitive video artists have worked tirelessly to harness the power of video for the good of people with AIDS.

One example illustrates the point that there is nothing inherently evil about video; it can be used as a powerful tool for positive change. I recall how sensitively I was treated by my friend Stuart Marshall when he did his AIDS video, *Bright Eyes*. He actually included me in the process of creating the video and we had many discussions, theoretical and practical. He discussed the concept with me beforehand and told me how my segment would fit in the finished project.

He also pointed out something that had never occurred to me. Originally, he wanted me to simply recreate a speech I had given in Congress. He wanted to film me in some ornate, impressive court room he had identified as the ideal location. But when the government who had given permission to film in the courtroom found out that it was an AIDS documentary, they decided Stuart couldn't film there. So he hit upon a brilliant, radical idea. He filmed me giving my speech while walking in a beautiful rose garden. When he told me that the location had been switched to a garden, I was initially disoriented. What was the purpose of giving a

serious speech while walking outdoors?

He explained that most people with AIDS were filmed in settings that pathologize them — usually in a hospital or being examined by their doctor. Neither of us could think of a single example where a person with AIDS who looked healthy was shown outdoors, much less in a beautiful setting which didn't suggest disease and death. Stuart said he wanted to startle the viewer with a new context; he wanted to emphasize visually as well as aurally that I was living with AIDS, not dying from it.

Most commercial television and video explicitly and implicitly reinforce the message that people with AIDS are victims, and that AIDS is invariably fatal. The founding statement of the PWA self-empowerment movement (known as the *Denver Principles*) is quite eloquent on the need to constantly challenge the image of people with AIDS as victims:

"We condemn attempts to label us as 'victims', which implies defeat; and we are only occasionally 'patients' which implies passivity, helplessness and dependence upon the care of others. We are 'people with AIDS'."

I was at the founding of the people with AIDS self-empowerment movement in Denver, Colorado, in 1983. When the California contingent insisted that we make part of our manifesto the demand that we be referred to as "people with AIDS" instead of "AIDS victims", I must confess that I rolled my eyes heavenward. How California, I thought.

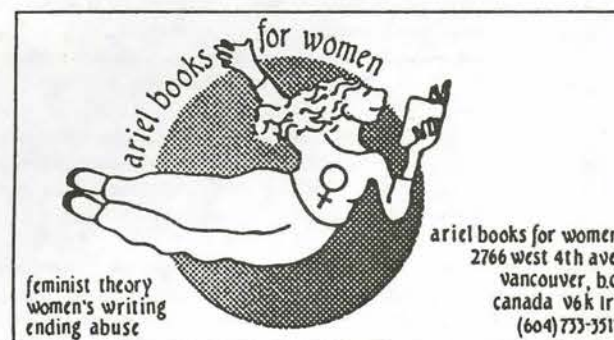
But time has proven them right. Americans, whose ability to think has been desiccated by decades of television and its ten-second-sound-byte mentality, think in one-word descriptors. Someone on the TV screen must be labelled: a feminist, a communist, a homosexual, an AIDS victim. The difference between the descriptors *person with AIDS* and *AIDS victim* seems subtle until one watches oneself on TV. To see oneself on screen and have the words *AIDS victim* flash magically underneath has a very different feel about it than when the description *person with AIDS* appears. Its very cumbersome-ness is startling and makes the viewer ask: "Person? Why person? Of course he's a person...". In that moment, we achieve a small but important victory. Viewers are forced to be conscious, if only for a moment, that we are people first.

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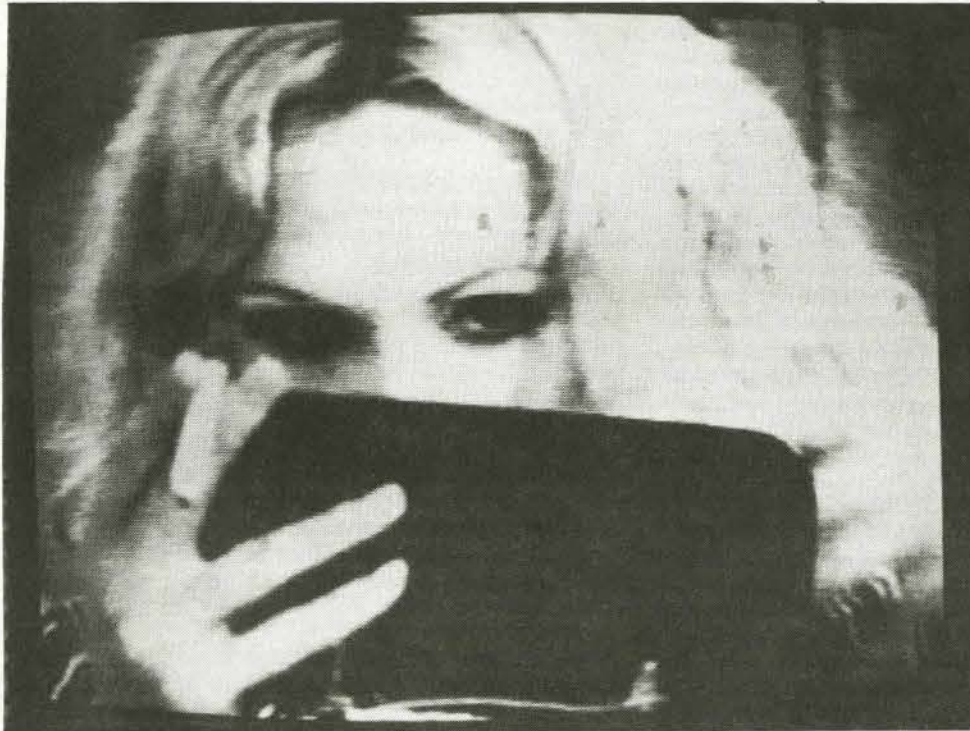
I don't like being constructed by video, but I'm unwilling to allow my personal displeasure to keep me from constantly challenging America's conceptualization of AIDS and people living with AIDS. I do what I can to control how I am presented on video and trust that anyone with half a brain understands that most of what they see on TV is prepacked pap.

I loathe being pinned and wriggling, formulated in a fixed image by some video editor. I hate to see the context and complexity of my views distorted. AIDS is an incredibly complex issue. It is the nature of television and video to shave off complexity, and so most video presentations of AIDS suffers from this tension. Ya plays, ya take your chances, I suppose. But how shall I presume?

VIDEO



## MAKING IT: AIDS ACTIVIST TELEVISION



"They Are Lost To Vision Altogether", by Tom Kalin



"Danny", by Stashu Kybartas — Video Against AIDS

by Jean Carlomusto

Washington D.C., October 1987. The National March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights.

I convinced my employer, Gay Men's Health Crisis, to send a crew down to Washington to document the events of the weekend for the *Living With AIDS* Show. We had a demoralizing experience at the Names Project Memorial Quilt. As we waited for two hours to get a place on the cherry picker, (the crane that lifts camera people high enough to get a wide shot of the quilt), we were constantly "bumped" from each successive passenger load in order to let the network media up. Finally, it was our turn, but the National March representatives who were operating the cherry picker radically reduced our time so that more network media could get up there. We barely got our shot.

We then headed over to the rally to get a space on the media bleachers; but, we were stopped as we went onto the bleachers by another representative of the National March on Washington. He said: "You can't go up there until all of the major media crews have a place. Then if there's room we'll let others up." I lost it. "Look", I said, "I've been doing a show for people with AIDS for the past two years. Where have they been? Now, they're up on the bleachers and I'm on the ground!". The representative shrugged his shoulders and said "I'm just doing my job."

Being treated as a second class citizen, not by the dominant media; but, by the organizers of the National Gay and Lesbian March on Washington was truly disheartening. Although people are starting to take notice of AIDS Activism and alternative media, there are pervasive attitudes that the network media, or the gallery art world, are still the sacred cows in terms of being accepted or "making it".

The past several years have witnessed a steady escalation of attacks on the rights of gays and lesbians. The Hardwick decision on sodomy has been handed down. Street violence is up. The AIDS crisis has shown us what it is like to be treated as a disposable population, or an invisible one. Now the U.S. Senate is actively suppressing art work that depicts the gay and lesbian experience. The assumption is that by legalizing our oppression they will silence us and drive us underground. Not so. As AIDS activists become more informed and effective, individuals and groups are adopting more pro-active strategies. We will continue to protest the censorship of the Helms initiatives.

We shouldn't forget that Robert Mapplethorpe's images of homoeroticism and S/M weren't the first ones that Helms went after. Two days after the National March on Washington in 1987, Senator Jesse Helms launched an attack on the Gay Men's Health Crisis for printing the Safer Sex Comix. Censorship is wrong whether its aimed at the Corcoran Gallery or at an AIDS Service provider. The fight against censorship in the arts should include supporting alternative forms of cultural production. As marginalized populations we need to think of alternative forums for presenting information. Public access cable is one of the ways we can take direct action to end the AIDS crisis.

As of August 1989, over 90,000 people have been diagnosed with AIDS in the United States alone. City, State and Federal government have done little to effectively meet the needs of those who lives are threatened by AIDS. In the face of this growing crisis, a political AIDS activist movement has sprung up all over the country to fight government inaction on AIDS. All over the country we have seen how AIDS exacerbates already existing problems. AIDS will probably be one of the catalysts that brings a national health care policy to the United States. The AIDS crisis also forces us to think more about democratizing the media. Too few corporations have control of the information in this country and they are getting larger and fewer. How can we expect the dominant media to break through the racist, sexist and homophobic government in which it mutually invests?

In contrast to network television, AIDS activist television explores the possibility of production within the context of an activist movement. Grass root media production is part of the process of constantly defining and presenting our movement. The *Living With AIDS* Show is an example of a growing number of AIDS Activist media production. *Living With AIDS* is devoted entirely to ending the AIDS crisis. The show is co-produced by Gregg Bordowitz and myself. Our strategy is to present life saving information about treatments, safer sex, IV drug use; to document the efforts of AIDS activists and to provide an analysis of the political, social and economic conditions that have allowed AIDS to reach pandemic proportions. We have people speaking for themselves about their experiences. They are addressing others like themselves who could benefit from a sharing of knowledge and survival strategies. The programs central philosophy is that we are all living with AIDS.

Activist television such as *Living With AIDS* doesn't speak to a "general public" that is presumed to be white, heterosexual, middle-class male. Activist television doesn't homogenize material; it speaks to specifically affected populations. It is geared to do this because it is created by these very communities. *Living With AIDS* not only produces work; also we curate the works from other community based organizations such as the Brooklyn AIDS Task Force or LUCES (a coalition of latino community activists). We've shown collectively produced works such as *Testing the Limits* and *Damned Interfering Video Activist's (DIVA TV) Target City Hall*. We've also curated work done in a more personal framework like Tom Kalin's *They are Lost To Vision Altogether*, Stashu Kabatus' *Danny* and Issac Julien's *This Is Not An AIDS Advertisement*.

Recently Ted Koeppel did a show on *Nightline* called *A Revolution In A Box* in which he hailed the potential of small format video camcorders. Of course, throughout an hour of sensationalizing the prospect of the camcorder, there was something too threatening to examine — public access television. The idea that a group can exist and generate its own cultural production outside of the dominant culture is too hot for even the most liberal producer to handle.

*Nightline* showed people in Poland's Solidarity movement using small format video as an organizing tool, but it would not recognize the potential of public access cable. Over 54% of homes in the U.S. are wired for cable. Many cable systems have at least one public access channel. These are open to anyone living or working in that community, thus, there is the opportunity for people to present the concerns of their own communities. *Nightline* also chose to ignore the struggle of cable access advocates all over the country who are trying to get the cable franchises to honour their mandates to provide public access television facilities. The subtext of *Nightline's Revolution in a Box* was clear - revolution is fine as long as it is somewhere else.

As AIDS activists become more informed and effective, we are exploring the social, economic and ideological implications of making media. These strategies not only include taking our activism to the streets. We also need to bring it back into the homes. Cable access television provides this link. Freed from the chains of the network media that constantly suppress and distort our identities, we can explore the ways we can use television to present our experiences.

# MEDIA NETWORK

## An Educational Guide on AIDS Video/Film

by Maria Maggenti, Robyn Hutt, and Sandra Elgar

Ask any independent media producer if they are satisfied with the distribution of their work and their answer will almost always be a resounding "NO".

Ask any community organizer or educator if they are satisfied with the resources available to access information on "alternative" media and their answers will be equally negative.

One organization that is attempting to overcome some of the disparities between the producers and the consumers of independent media is Media Network. Located in New York City, Media Network was "founded on the belief that media profoundly influences the way we see ourselves and the world around us." One of their mandates has been to produce user-friendly guides to issue-oriented, cultural and political media. They have produced guides addressing a wide range of topics, from reproductive rights to nuclear disarmament. Their most recent project, which will be completed before the end of the year, is an educational guide to responsible and culturally sensitive AIDS film and videotapes.

In January of this year, Media Network distributed nationally a questionnaire which listed over two hundred AIDS related films and videos. The community groups who received this questionnaire listed the films and videos which they are familiar with and could recommend for use in other communities. It was evident from the responses that the majority of independently produced projects were not reaching these organizations and subsequently their constituents.

The material in this guide is unique in that it is a compilation of work that is often hard to find, not well known, or not widely distributed. It is also unique because every tape in this guide was assessed by a series of community screenings. Hundreds of hours of film and video were reviewed in New York City. Participants included People With AIDS, ARC and HIV sero-positivity, AIDS educators, healthcare professionals, AIDS activists, community organizers, and independent producers. The screenings were loosely divided into such categories as Women, Adolescents, IV Drug Use, Coping and Activism. Reviewers evaluated approximately ten tapes, stating whether or not the tape should be included in

the guide; in what context it should be used; pointing out strengths and weaknesses; and suggesting possible audiences. They are the "reviewers" referred to in many of the entries of the guide and their vision, knowledge, and front-line experience created the standards by which work was included or rejected.



"Testing the Limits (Pt.1)", Testing the Limits Collective

The material in this guide is a wide ranging and urgent response to the failures of mainstream media to deal with the AIDS crisis. The community of video and filmmakers who have come out of the AIDS crisis have created work that, by and large, self-consciously attempts to contradict and challenge mainstream assumptions about sex in the age of AIDS, political fortitude in the age of AIDS, and PWA self-empowerment in the age of AIDS. This takes the form of short, explicit safer sex tapes for gay men, straight couples and lesbians as well as longer, more ambitious documentaries that chronicle the burgeoning AIDS activist movement and the politics of the epidemic. In addition, as the crisis itself expands and intensifies, affecting especially communities of colour and women, there are more and more tapes designed by, for, and about the particular experiences of Black people, Latin people, and women affected by AIDS.

Like the People With AIDS self-empowerment movement, alternative AIDS media has often taken as its premise the necessity of self-representation and self-determination. Thus, many of the best tapes and films in this guide come from the *inside*, as opposed to the curious and often frightened *outside*, that informs mainstream media approaches to AIDS. Yet there are gaps — work that deals with gay white men still predominates and work that examines that particular experience of lesbians in the AIDS crisis is still far from complete. Material designed for communities of colour is not always empowering or accurate and sometimes falls prey to stereotype and prejudice. And though women are the fastest growing group of people with HIV infection and AIDS, there are still far too few tapes that address women and women's needs. However, the great strength of alternative media is that it often springs directly from the communities affected by AIDS; and thus, often presents information that is not only genuine and accurate, but often on the cutting edge of what is happening in the many communities that are the AIDS community.

This guide is designed as a resource for those individuals and groups who wish to develop programs about AIDS that serve not only to inform but to provoke, enlighten, enrage, and engage audiences. Entries are organized in a simple, alphabetical format. The index is divided by both subject and intended audience. Written entries often close with "viewing suggestions" that offer a possible combination of material facilitating a dialogue on the diversity and complexity of an issue.

By including material which is provocative, empowering, educational and inspiring, Media Network has attempted to create a guide that is useful for as many community-based organizations as possible. Hopefully, this guide will prove to be a valuable resources for both the communities affected by AIDS and the independent producers whose work is a response to that crisis.

VIDEO

## AIDSFILMS LIBRARY

## AIDS Prevention Education Programs

by the AIDSFILMS Collective

Few effective prevention education programs are being targeted to people of colour living in urban areas — the populations hardest hit by AIDS. In the absence of a vaccine, behaviour change is our only hope of stopping the spread of HIV. Yet there are very few programs to teach these behaviour changes and fewer that are targeted specifically at those who need them most.

*Vida* is a twenty minute AIDS prevention education film for adult Latinos, produced by AIDSFILMS, a non-profit education company. *Vida* pictures the process of empowerment in the life of Elsie, a young single mother, who is forced to consider her own risk of HIV infection when a former close friend becomes sick with AIDS. Inspired by the importance of family in her life, and prompted to take care of herself by a close friend, Elsie gives her new boyfriend "the hardest choice" — no sex without condoms. *Vida* vividly portrays Latino women within their own communities — at work, in their homes, at the beauty parlour — reflecting cultural traditions and relationships which play a vital role in personal choice and the process of empowerment.

*Are You With Me?* portrays the relationship between a mother and her 19 year old daughter and the relationship both women have with the men in their lives. While effectively naming the importance of family in African American communities, *Are You With Me?* also takes on the questions of condom negotiation, changing sexual habits, and the differences and similarities between two generations of women. *Are You With Me?* positively portrays women taking control

of their sexual health within the traditions and conventions of their own communities.

By portraying believable urban teenagers within their own community settings, *Seriously Fresh* provides culturally tailored skills training and scenarios of personal empowerment intended to help teenagers make life saving changes in behaviour. Recognizing the complex inter-relationship of issues such as substance abuse, sexuality or peer pressure, *Seriously Fresh* adopts a fast-paced range of styles to depict a range of issues and individuals in a series of related vignettes.

*Vida*, *Are You With Me?*, and *Seriously Fresh* are part of The AIDSFILMS Library, a collection of short prevention films targeted specifically at urban African American, and Latino, gay, bisexual, and straight adolescents and adults. The films are designed to "trigger" emotional and problem-solving responses in the viewer, and model effective behavioural solutions to those dilemmas. Thus each film helps the viewer develop a repertory of social and emotional skills for initiating and maintaining safer sexual and drug use practices, which they can use when similar situations occur in real life.

To be most effective, AIDSFILMS' prevention programs are framed in imagery and language that demonstrate behaviour, are emotionally compelling, and consistent with the popular television and movies, cultural traditions, celebrations and interpersonal dynamics these groups choose to view and live out. These films are written, directed

and produced by members of communities of colour. Finally, the AIDSFILMS Library is performance based — actively demanding that participants rehearse and improve the social, psychological and practical skills through which behaviour changes.

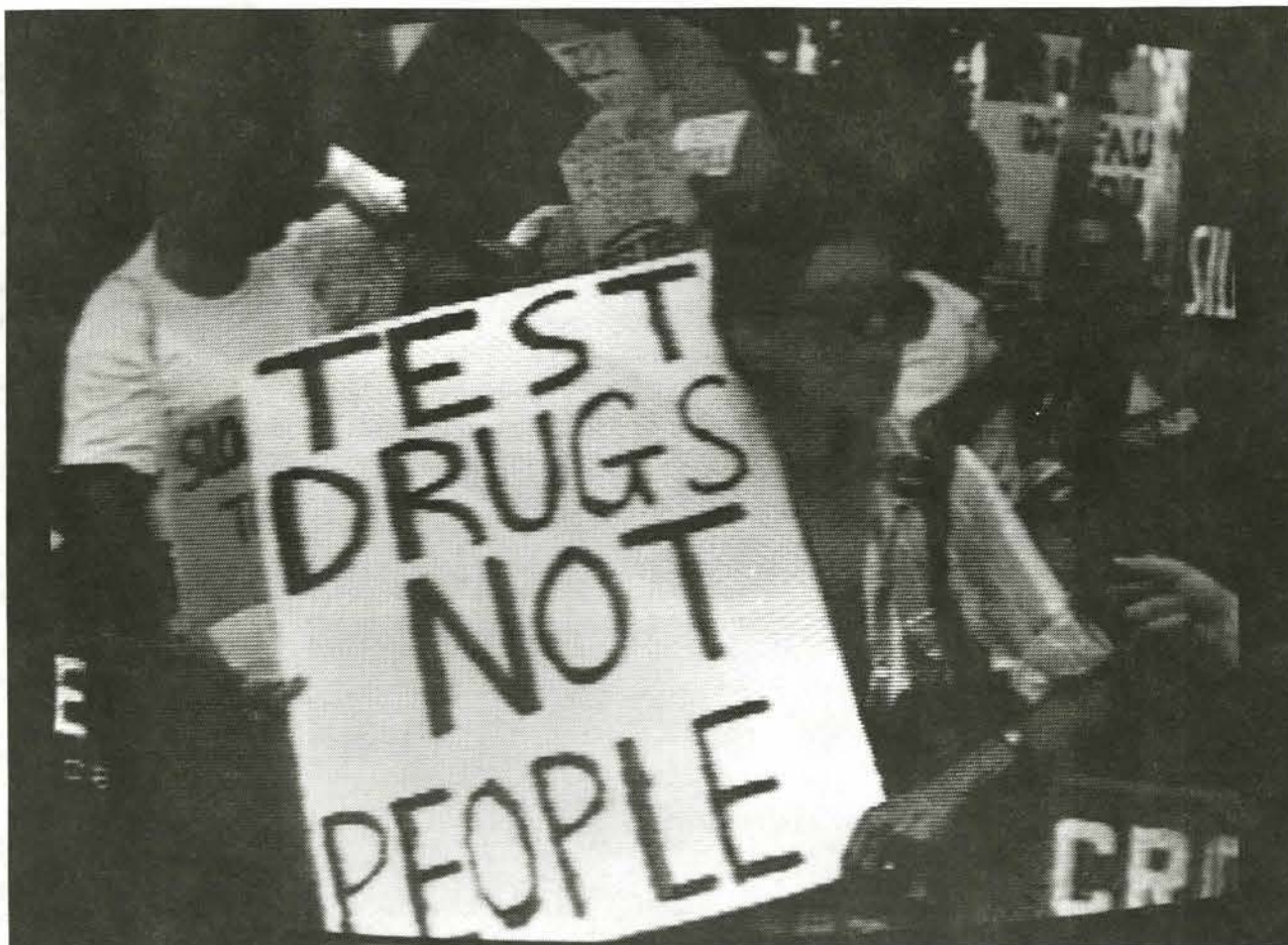
The AIDSFILMS Library is being produced by AIDSFILMS, the not-for-profit education corporation responsible for producing the critically acclaimed nationally televised films, *AIDS: Changing the Rules*, hosted by Ron Reagan, Beverly Johnson, and Ruben Blades and *El Sida: Cambiando Las Reglas*, hosted by Esai Morales, Maria Conchita Alonso, and Ruben Blades. AIDSFILMS works directly with both an extensive network of community based agencies and individuals; and, outstanding African American and Latino talent to research, develop, write and direct each targeted film.

AIDSFILMS will distribute these films and their accompanying collateral materials and discussion guides through a wide network of affiliations with city and state health departments, social services agencies, and family planning clinics.

For more information contact:

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VIDEO



"Testing the Limits (Pt.1)", Testing the Limits Collective

In a recent protest at the New York Stock Exchange, Thursday, September 14th, ACT UP\* New York demanded that Burroughs-Wellcome drop the price of AZT. The day before the protest a producer from a weekly news program, anxious to have access to this "hot news item", contacted us, Testing the Limits, to purchase our footage from this event. Underlining the fact that this protest did not come out of a void, we suggested that she preview footage from events which place the Stock Exchange protest within a larger political context.

On Monday, September 18th, Burroughs-Wellcome announced that it would lower the price of the drug by 20% (still only a token amount). Later this month the same news program will open with a segment which discusses profiteering by pharmaceutical companies in relation to potentially life saving drugs and feature PWAs and other AIDS activists on its panel of "experts". Ten years into the AIDS pandemic the influence of marginal communities is being felt at the centre.

When we refer to centrality/marginality we are basing this on the suspicion that what is at the centre often hides a repression. In order to ensure that the status quo remain intact, those groups who are considered marginal are excluded from the "public discourse". It is true that inhabitants of the margins are occasionally invited into the centre (as the previous anecdote illustrates). Indeed, the mainstream relies on counter culture for innovation. The strongest brand of centralization, however, allows in only terms which could be accommodated within an argument based on consistency. As AIDS activists our objective is not to achieve token inclusion — a ten second slot on the 6 o'clock news — but to radically affect change.

It would be naive to assume that we are revolutionizing the system. We still live in a market economy, pharmaceutical companies continue to make decisions based on profit margins, politicians continue to endorse racist, sexist, and homophobic legislation which reflects a New Right agenda, and mainstream media continue to run stories which reiterate government press releases rather than critiquing their inaction. But we must acknowledge the inroads which are being made and recognize that the distinction between the centre and the margins is not as absolute as those in power would have us believe. Although we do not have the vast resources or economic stability required to reach a mass audience in a short period of time, marginal groups, directly and indirectly, can affect change.

Historically, successful challenges to the status quo emerge from a collective grassroots response, rather than an individual effort. In addition to direct action groups, community-based clinics and researchers, and advocacy groups, independent producers have responded collectively to the AIDS epidemic. To illustrate this response we will focus on three New York based media collectives, DIVA TV, Gran Fury and Testing the Limits Collective. (We should note that collective production is not limited to these groups nor to New York City. We have chosen to write about those groups with whom we are most familiar).

Recently there has been a marked interest in cultural empowerment and the AIDS crisis. We have spoken, alongside other media activists, on panels with such titles as

*AIDS Art Activism: Cultural Empowerment, and AIDS Media: Counter-Representations.* In every instance we are referred to, and represent ourselves, as producers of alternative media. This raises the question of what is alternative media; what are we alternative to and where are we situated.

Setting ourselves up as an alternative, presupposes that we are the other — we are producing from the margins (as women we have always functioned from the margins, so this position is only too familiar). And in this instance, dominant media or mass communications are at the centre. This seemingly negative assumption situates us in a reactive, never pro-active, position. However, by employing deconstructivist strategies — appropriating popular conventions from the mainstream — we recontextualize familiar paradigms. Within this structure we create our own voices and images. As conscious producers of agit-prop, our work does not simply function as a critique — it is used as a tool for community organizing. Challenging the notion that the centre offers the official explanation, members within communities affected by AIDS become their own voices of authority. We are no longer content to sit back and comment on the failure of the press to understand the impact of AIDS in our communities.

Testing the Limits is a collective of independent media producers which formed to document emerging forms of activism arising out of people's responses to massive discrimination, lack of education, pharmaceutical profiteering, unavailability of healthcare and treatments, and government inaction in the global AIDS epidemic. Over the last three years we have amassed over three hundred hours of material comprised of forums, protests, community outreach, testimony and interviews which constitutes a history of the AIDS movement which would have otherwise gone undocumented. In addition to producing documentaries, educational videos, and commissioned tapes, we make our material available to other producers (independent, cable, and network) and community groups.

Just recently we conducted an interview with volunteers from the People With AIDS Coalition hotline for our forthcoming documentary. This hotline is unique in that it consists entirely of people with AIDS. It is their philosophy that the ultimate authorities on AIDS are those who are directly affected by the disease. Several days after the shoot, members of Testing the Limits and PWA Coalition volunteers viewed the dailies and collectively decided the way in which they would be represented in our documentary. Subsequently, the coordinator of the hotline is now assembling, from this material, a short training tape which will be used to educate new volunteers. This illustrates some of the possible levels of activism which can occur within one shoot. People with AIDS can directly affect the construction of their own images and educate their own communities. Thus, a voice is facilitated for communities who have been historically denied access to or representation by dominant media. To be oppressed is to live without a voice: the potential for disenfranchised communities to organize through the introduction of media should not be underestimated.

We should note that Testing the Limits has been working within the AIDS activist movement for over three years. We are not suggesting that acknowledgement from the affected communities happens without responsible representation of and/or direct involvement with those communities.

Our primary goal for *Testing the Limits: NYC (Part One)* was to create an organizing tape by activists, for activists. Our decision to produce a broadcast quality tape did not so much reflect our mandate, as it demonstrated our naive enthusiasm. We were committed to making every effort possible to get the information "out there". The response to the documentary (and to such documentaries coming out of the AIDS activist community as *Women and AIDS* [Carlomusto/Juhasz], *Doctors, Liars, and Women* [Carlomusto/Magenti]) far surpassed our greatest expectations.

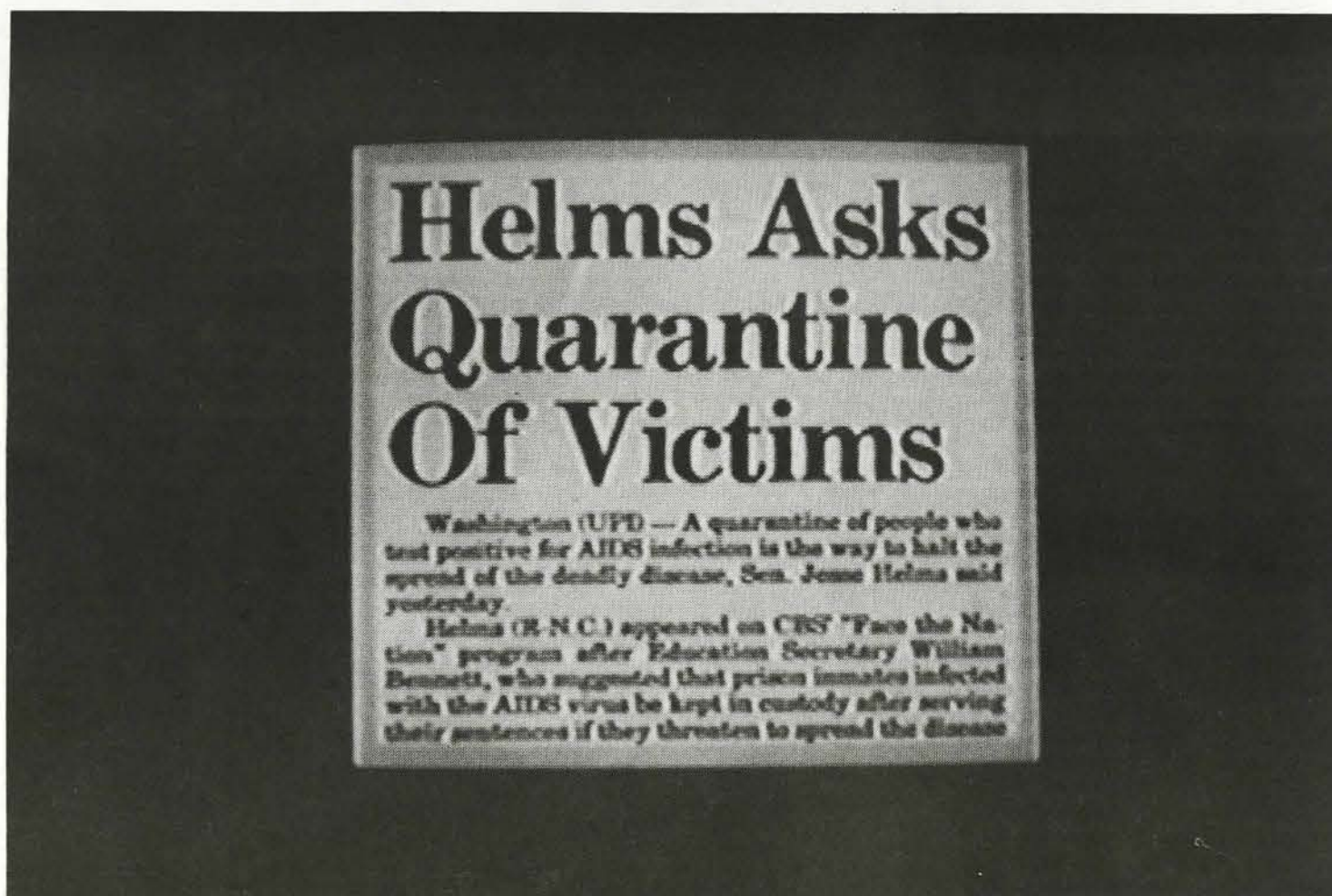
As our strategy for production is documentation through participation, so too is our distribution strategy — the majority of our distribution is handled by the collective itself. Although the art community was the first to respond to *Testing the Limits: NYC (Part One)*, our initial distribution effort targeted groups working within the diverse communities affected by AIDS (many of whom were documented in the tape). Since the tape's completion, it has been screened in such varying settings as; community centres, healthcare clinics, colleges, universities, galleries, museums, lesbian and gay bars, film festivals, cable and broadcast television. It continues to be used for community outreach, and in many instances has been screened when new direct action groups are forming. Through such widespread distribution, many communities are introduced to grassroots efforts which traditionally go unnoticed.

One of our goals for community-based distribution is to disseminate information to as many forums as possible outside the circuit of commercial cinema. The viewing of our tapes is just one part of the experience of a screening. Equally as important as the information contained in our tape, is that screenings can facilitate a context for diverse groups of people to come together who might ordinarily never meet. It is at this point that a screening can provoke participation by providing a context for discussion.

Growing out of the AIDS activist movement is a new wave of activist generated media. Most of the members of Testing the Limits are participating members of ACT UP. Similarly, Gran Fury and DIVA TV have emerged from its general membership. DIVA TV is, in fact, an affinity group within ACT UP, which formed specifically to provide counter-surveillance and documentation of the March 28th, 1989, *Target City Hall* protest. And this group has continued to produce work as a loose association of individuals committed to media activism.

Over the past two decades there has been increased access to the tools of mass communication — in part, a result of the creation and dissemination of less expensive, more portable film and video equipment. This new technology has heightened production of independent media at the community level. DIVA TV use their media production as a tool for direct action. Most members of DIVA TV own or have access to small format equipment (VHS Camcorders, video-8 and super 8 cameras). Unlike Testing the Limits, they require almost no budget for production. This enables them to quickly produce a variety of short tapes which are then circulated within the AIDS activist community. However, their tapes are not limited to this community, they have been screened in galleries and on a weekly Manhattan cable show *Living With AIDS*, produced by Gay Men's Health Crisis. Although this group does not necessarily produce each tape collectively, they meet regularly to view rushes and tapes in progress in

## COLLECTIVE PRODUCTION



"Testing the Limits (Pt.1)", Testing the Limits Collective

by Sandra Elgear and Robyn Hutt

order to share ideas and footage. Their tapes reflect the multiplicity of images and view points obtainable only when many cameras are shooting the same event. For instance, the tape they produced from the *Target City Hall* demonstration was ordered into three distinct sections. Some women in the group chose to document women's involvement in civil disobedience. As they interviewed women being released from jail, the story emerged of how their civil rights had been violated by verbal harassment and illegal strip searches (this abuse was limited exclusively to the women arrested). This material was edited into one portion of the tape focusing on women. Another section was shot in a cinema verite style as the camera person followed one particular affinity group throughout the entire action. The final section is a broader analysis of the entire event. Although this protest received coverage on almost every network new program in New York City, DIVA TV's footage was not a reflection on, but rather, part of the protest itself.

While DIVA TV and Testing the Limits documented/participated in the City Hall action, members of Gran Fury distributed, to office bound pedestrians, free copies of *The New York Crimes*; not to be confused with *The New York Times*. Earlier that morning this same paper was placed in Times vending boxes in the surrounding area. Gran Fury meticulously reproduced the papers front and back cover. But with articles written under such headlines as: "N.Y. HOSPITALS IN RUINS; CITY HALL TO BLAME", "WOMEN AND AIDS: OUR GOVERNMENT'S WILFUL NEGLECT", "WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR? RACE EFFECTS SURVIVAL", "AIDS AND MONEY: HEALTHCARE OR WEALTHCARE?" for the first time, readers of *The New York Times* actually received accurate AIDS information. This is only one example of the way in which Gran Fury appropriates mainstream conventions for an activist message.

Gran Fury consciously works outside a conventional art gallery context. This philosophy is powerfully articulated in the centerfold of a catalogue from the show *AIDS: The Artists' Response*. "WITH 47,524 DEAD, ART IS NOT ENOUGH. Our culture gives artists permission to name oppression, a permission denied those oppressed. Outside the pages of this catalogue, permission is being seized by many communities to save their own lives. WE URGE YOU TO TAKE COLLECTIVE DIRECT ACTION TO END THE AIDS CRISIS."

It is impossible to walk more than two blocks in the city without coming across some remnant of their work. Placed over a sexist advertisement for Johnny Walker Scotch is a florescent yellow sticker, "MEN USE CONDOMS OR BEAT IT", covering the coin slot of a pay telephone is a bright red handprint with the message; "THE GOVERNMENT HAS BLOOD ON ITS HANDS ONE AIDS DEATH EVERY HALF HOUR". Cleverly using advertising strategies much of their

work falls within the parameters of consumptive art. Their messages can be read on billboards, bus advertisements, posters, t-shirts, buttons and stickers. (It is important to acknowledge that most of the profits from sales [many items, such as stickers and posters, are given away] go directly to ACT UP). Recently buses in the San Francisco area and in the boroughs of the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan have been sporting a Gran Fury ad which is a direct appropriation of the United Colors of Benetton ad campaign. Using signifiers which are immediately understood within the paradigms of advertising, they insert a sign conceived to inform a broad public and provoke action. Pictured are three couples kissing; a man and a woman, two men, and two women. Above these couples are the words, "KISSING DOESN'T KILL: GREED AND INDIFFERENCE DO". In addition is a rejoinder which reads, "CORPORATE GREED, GOVERNMENT INACTION, AND PUBLIC INDIFFERENCE MAKE AIDS A POLITICAL CRISIS".<sup>2</sup> Much interest has been stirred by Gran Fury's "Benetton" ad. It has been reported that Benetton has received phone calls requesting their Gran Fury Department. To say the least, they were surprised to discover that they have been associated with an ad campaign which they perceive to be promoting homosexuality. People are taking notice.

In a city which assaults us relentlessly with sexist, heterosexist, classist, racist, homophobic images, it is empowering to realize that thousands of people are confronted daily with messages of popular resistance.

In the preceding discussion we have attempted to demonstrate how marginal communities are affecting change. But we must note that the premise upon which this article is based does assume a certain white middle-class bias. This is unavoidable as that is our experience and it would be false to assume that we can speak from any other context, consequently certain presumptions must be recognized. If a community or a group from a community did indeed have a desire to produce their own images they would not necessarily have the means to do so. Video has radically altered the face of community-based media production. Substantial inroads have been made by communities with regard to media activism. But we must not delude ourselves, thinking that what is affordable or accessible to one group is similarly affordable or accessible to all groups. However, creative, often collective, strategies are being tried all the time: victories may be hard won but change is imminent.

Speaking at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force town meeting in Washington, D.C., Maxine Wolfe, a member of ACT UP, articulated a growing sentiment among AIDS activists; "For the first time, rather than feeling that I am reacting from exclusion and responding from the margins, I feel that I am acting from my center but not from the

mainstream. I feel that I am helping to build a movement that is mine rather than fit into somebody else's."

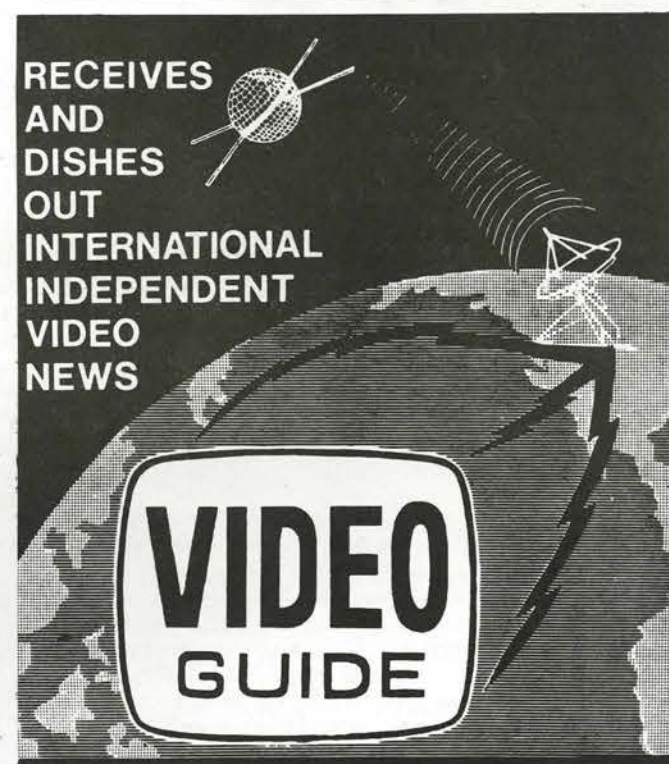
\*ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), a diverse, non-partisan group united in anger and committed to direct action to end the global AIDS epidemic.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Gayatri Spivak, "Explanation and Culture: Marginalia," *In Other Worlds Essays in Cultural Politics*, Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., N.Y., N.Y. 1988, pg. 114.

<sup>2</sup>It was shocking for us to discover that the ad provoked outrage, not for its message, but for depicting a black man kissing a white woman.

We would like to thank David Meieran for his continued support.



## DO IT!

by Jean Carlomusto  
and Gregg Bordowitz



"Midnight Snack", by Jean Carlomusto and Gregg Bordowitz, GMHC.

## Safer Sex Porn For Girls and Boys Comes of Age

Reprinted from Out Week, August 28, 1989

The scene is a kitchen. Middle of the night. A guy gets up to get a snack. As he probes the refrigerator, he is joined by his lover who gives him a rim job through a dental dam. One of the guys then licks whipped cream off the other's balls. Finally, one rolls a condom onto the other's cock, squirts honey all over it and sucks the hard, candied cock.

In a living room, a woman is lying on the couch watching television and masturbating with a vibrator. She looks up to see another woman standing over her holding a towel which she unfolds to reveal dental dams, gloves, sex lube and a dildo. One girl goes down on the other, using a dental dam. The other dons a glove and proceeds to finger-fuck her partner.

This is our job. As the audio/visual department of the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), we're charged with the task of producing safer sex video educational materials for the purpose of getting the message out that you can have hot sex without placing yourself at risk for AIDS. These videos are to be instructional. They have to demonstrate how specific acts, such as anal, vaginal and oral sex, can be made safer. The material has to be culturally relevant — rendered in ways meaningful to specific audiences. Lastly, the material has to exist in a form that makes it easy to distribute as widely as possible. And, with all this to consider, we still have to make the girls wet and the guys hard. Not the easiest task. But we're driven. To start, we had to come to a clear "safer sex" definition.

Safer sex of course is a means of disease prevention. But too often discussions of safer sex are reduced to debates solely about various modes of HIV transmission — debates which overlook the fact that there are many other sexually-transmitted diseases and viruses that may compromise one's immune system. Safer sex then is a set of individual decisions one makes about one's sexual life in view of one's health concerns. And since pleasure — the ultimate goal — also contributes to one's well-being, the message has to make clear that any sexual act can be made safer; that we can safely get laid, get it on, get off and do it!

The safer sex videos we produce are a series of "shorts", approximately five minutes each. The shorts are like music videos — extremely slick images rapidly edited in a variety of ways, on different formats, to resemble some of the most current trends in video production. The shorts are non-narrative in structure, and dialogue is kept to a minimum, as every explicit scene is guaranteed hot and explosive.

Each video is designed by a task group which chooses the scene, the situation and the acts to be performed. Each group produces a short with specific community or audience in mind. There is a Black men's task group, a Latino task group and a lesbian task group. In addition, there are scenarios developed to represent the many ways we all get turned on: anonymous sexual encounters (two boys meet and fuck safely in a public bathroom); bisexuality (two girls and two guys get it on safely sharing sex toys as they work out an infinite number of possibilities); sadomasochism (heavy bondage and discipline between two BIG MEN); and drag (a drag queen fucks her hairdresser before the show. Safely, of course.)

A guy in cop drag is showing his nightstick to a construction worker-type. The construction worker rolls a condom down the shaft of his night stick, squirts lube on it and bends over. The cop sticks it up the worker's ass. Then the roles switch. The worker uses leather straps to put the cop in bondage. He puts a condom on his erect cock and ass fucks the cop. When finished, he puts on a glove and fist fucks the cop. End.

Although we will all admit to having fantasies, few of us ever disclose what it is exactly that is running through our heads as we make love or masturbate. We are very protective of our fantasies for obvious reasons. Our partner may feel threatened if the fantasies don't involve him or her, or we fear that bringing these dark fantasies into the open will somehow lessen their clandestine allure. We internalize our own brand of homophobia that shies away from images of sex because they seem inappropriate. Instead, these images are locked in our minds where they stay suppressed, except during moments when we want to fan the coals. As safer sex educational video makers, we must employ fantasy to teach about sex.

The recognition of lesbian sexuality, as well as the Centre for Disease Control's persistent refusal to include data on woman-to-woman transmission of HIV, were the primary motivations in creating the lesbian safer sex video *Current Flow*. Lesbian identified sex positive imagery is scarce. While there are hundreds of porn tapes for gay men, there are few created for lesbians. Although many videotapes depicting lesbian sex created for straight men are available on the shelves of even the most mundane video rental stores, only a few tapes trickle in from the West Coast made for, by and about women. And even fewer of these deal with safer sex for lesbians.

This is both oppressive and dangerous because in order to educate lesbians about safer sex we have to establish what it is. Saying "use a dental dam" is not the same as saying "use a condom" since many women don't even know what a dental dam is. And how could they possibly know? It is a latex square manufactured for dentists performing oral surgery! (People such as Denise Ribble and the women of ACT UP's Women's Caucus are getting the word out that this little square of latex can prevent transmission of HIV and other sexually-transmitted diseases and viruses in vaginal/cervical fluids, or in menstrual blood. This task is enormous.) Our goal was to show some ways lesbians could have safer sex acts.

In a short for black men who have sex with other men, directed by Charles Brack, a businessman gets into a cab. The driver flirts with him. He reciprocates. When they arrive at the destination, the man in the suit can't find his wallet. Searching his pockets for money he finds some condoms. The driver accepts this currency and fucks his fare on the back seat. Taxi!

Undoubtedly, the AIDS crisis necessitated revolutionary action by the lesbian and gay community. Countering the repressive forces behind the state-sponsored "just say no" campaigns, the community produced its own discourse about sexuality. Now, with this experience in mind, safer sex education must be developed to address ever-widening circles of people among the communities hardest hit by AIDS. Resources must be made available for communities to develop their own forms of education.

The purpose of the shorts is to function as advertisements for safer sex. They can be used in bars. They can be distributed to supplement other porn tapes as trailers. They can be compiled onto one tape and edited with supplemental information in a video safer sex workshop. Lastly, they can be presented at safer sex teach-ins as the instructors find appropriate.

Safer sex educational video is a form of direct action. We recognize that sexuality cuts across socially-constructed boundaries between races, classes and genders. We make representations that legitimate specific acts — anal, vaginal, oral sex — and we create an atmosphere conducive to sexual experimentation. In the face of increasing censorship amidst a morally conservative climate, we militantly advocate sex-in beds, kitchens, bars, restrooms, taxis, anywhere you want. If it's safer sex, do it! That's the message.

VIDEO

## AIDS VANCOUVER

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AIDS VANCOUVER

**WORLD  
AIDS  
DAY**

DECEMBER ONE, 1989

# "SPREAD THE WORD"

## Interview with Australian producer Tracey Moffatt

by Sue Jenkins

Tracey Moffatt of Australia, was recently in Vancouver for the In Visible Colours International Film and Video Festival — organized by Women In Focus and The National Film Board — where several of her videos were screened. ("A Change of Face", "Nice Coloured Girls", "Watch Out", "Solid Women", "Spread the Word")

Sue Jenkins: Could you tell me about how you first got involved in visual media?

Tracey Moffatt: I studied filmmaking at the Queensland College of the Arts in Brisbane, Australia. In 1983, I moved to live in Sydney and worked as an independent photographer and filmmaker, producing my own projects and photographic exhibitions, as well as projects for Aboriginal organizations. In my own work, in the three mediums of photography, film, and video, I'm trying to depart from a realist representation of Black Australia. For example, I'm not wanting to produce conventional documentaries or dramas about Aboriginal people. I'm continually trying to explore film form. When I talk about or present my work, as I have at this Festival I like to include my health videos because I consider them as important as my art video and film.

You produced "Spread the Word" three years ago?

Yes, it was partly a response to the Australian government's Grim Reaper commercials. People needed something informative, that didn't scare them. I was approached by the Aboriginal Medical Services who asked me to produce a video that would educate Aboriginal people about AIDS. The title comes from an AMS poster that reads "Spread the Word, Not the Disease". The messages in the tape are very clear, and misconceptions are thoroughly discussed. I was told to assume that they knew nothing about AIDS, so that's how I approached the it.

You are well established as an independent producer working in Australian television, so it follows that they would ask you to do it. How did you go about your research?

Pat Swan, an Aboriginal psychiatric nurse with the Aboriginal Medical Services, and a doctor, gave me the facts on AIDS, and I wrote the script, and produced it. Although, the information in the tape could probably be updated somewhat, it's still effective in getting basic messages across. The tape has been well received. It's been sent to all the Aboriginal organizations in Australia, including community groups and art centres, and medical services screen it in their waiting rooms. For some it's purely educational, for others it's entertainment. People can get together and watch it on their home VCR's.

It's a very colourful video! You used a blue screen studio...

Yes, I like being in the studio, and using chroma-key. In

the studio situation there's a lot of control, and I like it that way. It took us two days to shoot *Spread the Word*. All the people involved were non-actors who I casted because White casting agents aren't connected to Aboriginal people.

Did you have a lot of control over how and what you shot, and the editing of the video?

Yes and no. I had to have the script approved by the entire staff of the Aboriginal Medical Services. Although I originally had the gay boy appearing as the first character in the video, I eventually re-arranged the order because there was concern that this character might offend the Christian black community. It was actually a very collective process. Everyone at the AMS was involved, but after awhile, I just had to say "Okay, that's it — no more changes, I've got to finish this video!"

What was the budget for this production?

We had \$30,000 to work with. The video (9 min) cost \$17,000 to make, and we used the rest of the money to make posters, and dubs for distribution. The World Health Organization has bought 1000 copies of *Spread the Word* to distribute in English-speaking African countries that can not afford to make their own videos. The video is meant for Australian Aboriginals, but at least African people are able to have black people talking to them about AIDS.

We had a huge opening and a good press conference when the video was finished. The white press gave us very positive coverage, as did the Aboriginal press.

So, you might be asked to do another video on AIDS, an update...

Yes, well I do act as a consultant for all kinds of projects, and I'd certainly be interested in helping out, though I haven't been approached yet. I have just completed a video about Hepatitis B and immunization called *It's Up To You*. It educates people about the dangers of Hepatitis B and the importance of immunization. This virus is running rampant in the Australian Aboriginal community, probably due to living conditions, lack of hygiene, and then unprotected sex with an infected partner.

Can you tell me a little about Sydney, Australia and some of the current attitudes around the AIDS crisis?

Well, Sydney is the 2nd largest gay city in the world, after San Francisco. In February, we have a huge Gay Mardi Gras Festival that goes all the way up Oxford Street. For awhile back there, it got a little quiet, but there's since been a resurgence of gay pride. Lots of people come to the Festival, families...everyone. In Australia, we have freely available condoms, and free disposable needles in some pharmacies. There's even condom earrings!

# Angles

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## ULISES CARRION

1941 — 1989



"I don't understand why people still have problems about what is art and what isn't...All of it already existed...what artists have done is to give intention to those existing forms and placed them in a historical context...I pick out of my reality those elements which are important to me...people, media, processes...I don't work with material or objects anymore, but with cultural phenomena...Don't you think that my gesture, my choice of Lilia Prado, is just as arbitrary as Duchamp's gesture?"

...Lilia Prado is my readymade!"

— excerpt from Video In Schedule of Events, April/85

Lilia Prado was a Mexican film star during Carrion's youth. The tape *Lilia Prado - Superstar* is a mix of documentary and acted accounts of the Lilia Prado Superstar Festival which Carrion organized in Holland in 1984. It concentrates on the complexity of events around the "star" syndrome.



# SAFER SEX

**SAFER SEX is anything you do that does not involve the exchange of sexual fluids between partners.**

**Protected intercourse** means fucking with a condom on, before any penetration — vaginal and/or anal. The latex condom creates a barrier and helps prevent the transmission of the Human Immuno deficient virus (HIV) and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD's).

**Masturbation**, or jerking off alone or with another person (or persons!) is perfectly safe because no sexual fluid gets inside the other partner(s).

**Kissing**, as deep as you want to go is not a risk for HIV transmission. It is possible to pick up other germs (mono, herpes) from mouth to mouth contact.

**Oral sex** is safest when you create a latex barrier with condoms or dental dams. As long as there are no sores, ulcers or bleeding in your mouth, going down on someone without a latex barrier is a low risk for HIV infection. Wait an hour after flossing before giving a blow job.

**Massage**, body rubbing and other skin-to-skin stuff is perfectly safe. Before there could be a risk of HIV transmission, the sexual fluids of one partner would have to get into the other person's open bloodstream, inside their anus, penis or vagina. Try using warm oils and lotions between you — just be sure to clean up any oil before using condoms later...oil and rubber don't mix.

**Skin** is the largest organ of the body and covers a wide frame. Check out some of the other hidden spots: ears, necks, armpits, breasts, nipples, ankles, feet — the list goes on and on...

**Acting out fantasies** is a dream come true! Pick a time when you will be uninterrupted (depending on the fantasy) and set the stage. Make sure all sex toys (dildoes etc.) are cleaned with hot water and soap (or a wash of 1/10 bleach) before sharing and inserting inside the other partner. Better still, use individual condoms or get enough toys so everyone gets their own!

## It's all in how you say it:

\* Safer, safe: means the things you do have little or no risk of spreading HIV.

\* HIV, Human Immuno deficiency Virus: The virus thought to cause AIDS.

\* STD's Sexually Transmitted Disease: There are more than 30 dangerous diseases that can be spread when having unprotected intercourse. HIV may top the list, but there are epidemics of syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhoea, hepatitis and others.

\* Oral sex means any kind of mouth contact with your partner's sexual organs (penis, vagina).

\* Sexual intercourse or fucking means penetration of the vagina or anus (rectum).

\* Cum is the sexual fluids of a man or woman, before orgasm for lubrication or after orgasm when semen is ejaculated from the man. The actual moment of orgasm is sometimes called "cumming".

Condoms when used properly are the only effective protection against both disease and pregnancy. They come in different textures, colours and even flavours. Try out different brands and find the ones you like best. Because they are made of rubber, condoms stretch — one size fits all. There are brands that have a snug fit, and there are extra thick quality, ideal for anal sex.

Every condom in North America is electronically tested before its sold — most breaks and failures are due to human error. A safe is only as good as the user.

Most boxes of condoms have a clearly marked "expiry date" on the outside. If they are stored in a cool, dry, place they will last 2 or 3 more years.

Don't keep condoms in your wallet, car, or pocket too long. Changes in temperature and handling can cause them to break down later, when you want them to work.

Open the package carefully, first pushing the ring of the condom away from the corner you're tearing. Watch out for sharp rings and fingernails!

A condom can only be unrolled and used once. If you stop to take a break or take it off — start fresh with a new one.

Every few minutes check and feel for the bottom ring of the condom, or if the sensations change while you are screwing, stop and check that the condom hasn't broken or slipped off...If it has, start fresh and use more water-based lube, or try something else...

It's safer to ejaculate or cum outside of your partner, even if you do wear a condom during penetration and intercourse. Sexual fluids outside or on a body pose no risk.

Nonoxynol-9 is a spermicide chemical that also hurts or kills HIV and some other viruses. There hasn't been much research about long term use and side effects.

Because the anal tissues are highly absorbative, it may be dangerous, over time, to use this kind of chemical. If you use condoms well, and cum outside your partner's body there isn't much chance of exposure to the tissues where transmission occurs.

*This information is reprinted from a pamphlet from AIDS Vancouver, a non-profit community organization that provides support services to people with HIV and AIDS, and education and prevention to the public. For more information about Safer Sex or AIDS call AIDS Vancouver Helpline 687-AIDS.*

Squeeze any air out of the top of the condom, leaving space for the cum to go.

Gently unroll the condom down the penis, smoothing any air out the bottom.

Some condoms come prelubed with gel or a fine dry powder. You'll need to use lots more water soluble lubricants (KY Gel, K Gel, Probe) to prevent friction and increase pleasure. Never use any oil based lubricants (vaseline, baby oil, hand lotion) since oil damages the condom and causes it to break.

After sex, hold the base of the condom. Withdraw gently and throw the used condom in the garbage.

You have to have an erection before you try to put on the condom. If the penis isn't hard, it's too early.

Avoid any penetration before you have the condom on. Disease can be transmitted without orgasm or ejaculation.

If the man is not circumcised, pull the foreskin back. A small dab of water-based lube on the head of any penis will add sensation and pleasure.

Condoms only unroll one way, so check which side is up, and which way goes down.

# UNSAFE SEX

**UNSAFE SEX** is having penetration and intercourse (anal and vaginal) without a latex condom. This puts both partners at risk for any STD'S the other person may have.

**EXPOSURE TO SEXUAL FLUIDS** during oral sex from a man or woman (even swallowing) is a low risk for HIV, but it could put you at risk for other diseases: herpes simplex, syphilis, and gonorrhoea.

**ORAL ANAL CONTACT**, or rimming, is when the mouth or tongue make contact with the anus, and can put someone at risk for hepatitis, parasites and other germs.

**DIRECT CONTACT WITH BLOOD** from another person should always be avoided, and treated carefully. Fresh flowing blood has to get directly into someone else's bloodstream before there is a chance of HIV transmission. Blood can carry lots of other risks — hepatitis is 100 times easier to get.

## SAFE SEX GUIDELINES FOR LESBIANS

Most lesbians do not have a high risk of contracting or transmitting the HIV virus at this time. For lesbians, learning and practising safe sex is the healthiest way to stay sexually active and prevent AIDS from growing in our community.

### Lesbians at Risk for AIDS

1. Lesbians who share needles or any other paraphernalia (spoons, works, syringe) when using IV drugs. This is the single most important risk category for lesbians.

2. Lesbians who have had unprotected sexual contact with :  
— men who have been actively gay or bisexual since 1979,  
— people of either sex whose sexual histories are unknown,  
— people who use IV drugs,  
— people who are hemophilic, or who have received blood transfusions between 1979 and 1985.

3. Lesbians who have received blood transfusions or blood products between 1979 and 1985.

1. No possibility of HIV transmission

Theoretical risk..... none  
Evidence of transmission..... none

## 2. Minimal possibility of HIV transmission

Theoretical risk..... yes  
Evidence of transmission ..... none

## Low possibility of HIV transmission

Theoretical risk ..... yes  
Evidence of transmission .....small

## 3. Very high possibility of HIV transmission

Theoretical risk ..... high  
Evidence of transmission ..... high

### Safer Sex Guidelines for Lesbians

**No possibility of transmission of HIV:** Massage, hugging, social (dry) kissing, voyeurism, masturbation, frottage or tribadism (body-to-body rubbing), exhibitionism, body licking and kissing (except mucosal linings), erotic bathing or showering, unshared sex toys, nipple stimulation (without drawing blood), external urination, external defecation, receiving cunnilingus with a barrier\*, receiving anilingus with a barrier, S/M or virtually any other activity that does not involve the exchange of body fluids.

**Minimal possibility of transmission of HIV:** Wet kissing, performing cunnilingus without a barrier outside menstruation, receiving cunnilingus without a barrier, performing cunnilingus with a barrier, performing or receiving anilingus without a barrier\*, finger-fucking (giving or receiving) with or without latex glove, fisting\* (inserting or receiving) with glove, ingestion of feces.

**Low possibility of Transmission of HIV:** performing cunnilingus without a barrier during menstruation, sadomasochistic activity where blood is drawn and proper blood precautions are followed\*\*.

**Very high possibility of transmission of HIV:** Sharing sex toys without proper cleaning or without protection (i.e. use a condom and remove and replace ,if sharing), sharing drug injecting equipment (or works) or skin piercing needles without proper cleaning\*\*\*, finger-fucking (both giving and receiving) without gloves, when hands have cuts and abrasions.

Breast milk is a proven vehicle of HIV transmission from mother to baby, although it's thought to occur rarely.

\* barrier — It's easy to make a latex barrier from a condom. Using scissors, cut off the reservoir tip, and cut along the condom. Now you have a square piece of transparent latex. Otherwise, dental dams are available from your dentist! Finger cots are available at most major pharmacies and the wholesale price is \$3.25 for 144 finger cots.

\* anilingus without a barrier : can put someone at risk for other diseases:herpes simplex, syphilis, and gonorrhoea.

\*\* blood precautions: prevention of the exchange of blood, and avoidance of blood on the partner's body.

\*\*\* cleaning with hot water and soap or a wash of 1/10 bleach

**Additional note — Fisting:** "The practice of inserting the hand or fist into the rectum or vagina, is not by itself an efficient means of HIV transmission. However, studies indicate a high level of correlation between receptive manual intercourse and HIV infection. This is due to the extensive trauma which fisting causes the anal or vaginal canal...if followed by the use of shared sex toys, fisting results in a very favourable environment for HIV transmission. This is so even after a single episode. The trauma to the mucous lining may last for several weeks after the event". (Canadian AIDS Society)

If you have sex with men, learn about, and always use a condom.

If you have a new sexual partner, learn about her history, and share your own. Do either of you fit a high risk description? Your responsibility is as vital as your new lover's to reveal important information about exposure.

**AIDS antibody test :** Certain specific AIDS antibodies tests can help you find out whether the AIDS antibodies are present in your system. You can call your health department and ask where you can get an anonymous AIDS antibody test that will be as specific as possible to your concerns.

This information comes from three sources: the Women's AIDS Network/San Francisco AIDS Foundation, a pamphlet by Mr. and Ms. Leather of Vancouver, and predominantly from the Canadian AIDS Society's Safer Sex Guidelines: A Resource Document for Educators and Counsellors/1989 (a 43 page document with numerous appendices). If you are confused (and in B.C.) call AIDS Vancouver's helpline at 687-2437, or the B.C. Centre of Disease Control at 660-6170 (828 West 10th Avenue).

SAFE SEX ENVELOPES supplied by AIDS VANCOUVER and the P.W.A. Society.

Condoms courtesy of the B.C. Centre for disease control.



# MR. JOE SAYS

**"ALL PLAYERS  
SHOULD  
BE USERS"**

MIND ALTERED MEDIA

©

# VIDEO SCANNING SCANNING SCANNING

## VAN EVENTS

### THIRD ANNUAL AIDS CONFERENCE

An Interprofessional Continuing Education Program  
For Health Professionals, Educators and Counsellors  
November 26, 27, 28, 1989



Hyatt Regency Hotel  
655 Burrard Street  
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Division of Continuing Education in the Health Sciences  
The University of British Columbia

## NAT EVENTS

SEE THE QUILT AND UNDERSTAND

Support The NAMES Project -  
AIDS Memorial Quilt



Donations to:

AIDS Vancouver -  
The NAMES Project  
#509- 1033 Davie Street  
Vancouver, BC V6E-1M7  
(604) 687-2437

The Canada Quilt was the brain-child of Halifaxian Paul McNair, who had seen The Quilt on television and decided to volunteer his help at its Boston stop. Paul came back resolved to organize a tour north of the border, an arbitrary line of demarcation in the face of a disease that knows no boundaries. The Canada Quilt tour began in early June in Halifax and has stopped in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and Calgary before arriving in Vancouver. Canadian panels will have been added along the way, and upon the tour's completion will form a new Quilt comprised solely of Canadian panels, as many as three hundred in all, sadly representing only approximately 25% of all those Canadians who have died of AIDS.

## GLOBAL EVENTS

**The 4th International Contemporary Art Fair**  
December 7-11, 1989  
Los Angeles  
Convention Center



Over 2,500 guests will attend a spectacular \$150-ticket Gala Preview on December 6th of ART/LA89 The 4th International Contemporary Art Fair. Los Angeles Pediatric AIDS Consortium, supporting children and mothers with AIDS will benefit.

# ACT UP

[The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power]

**FIGHT BACK. FIGHT AIDS! ACTIVIST WORK** "I first became aware of ACT UP wrote curator Bill Olander of The New Museum (New York), like many other New Yorkers, when I saw a poster appear on lower Broadway with the equation: **SILENCE= DEATH.** Accompanying these words, sited on a black background, was a pink triangle—the symbol of homosexual persecution during the Nazi period and, since the 1960s, the emblem of gay liberation. For anyone conversant with this iconography, there was no question that this was a poster designed to provoke and heighten awareness of the AIDS crisis. To me, it was more than that: it was among the most significant works of art that had yet been done which was inspired and produced within the arms of the crisis."



William Olander

New York—Bill Olander, Senior Curator at The New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York died on March 18 from complications of AIDS. His deep concern for artists and their work, his unorthodox and incisive approach to curating, and his commitment to the Museum have made a lasting impact. In recognition of his provocative curatorial vision, The New Museum has established the William Olander Memorial Fund for the purchase and support of works and projects in the fields of photography, video, performance and cultural activism. As its

inaugural endeavor, the Fund has made a contribution in Bill's name to ACT UP—the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power—while its affiliate organization, Gran Fury, is contributing to the Museum a neon rendering of their now famous "Silence=Death" symbol. Originally a part of ACT UP's *Let the Record Show...* curated by Bill for the Museum's Window on Broadway in 1987, the neon sign will be a semi-permanent installation in the Museum's lobby, visible through the lobby window from the street.

—from a letter by Marcia Tucker,  
New Museum Director

## ACT UP IS WATCHING



World Health Organization  
Global Programme on AIDS  
Health Promotion Unit

### What is World AIDS Day?

World AIDS Day is a day on which to expand and strengthen the worldwide effort to stop AIDS. It means talking about HIV infection and AIDS, caring for people with HIV infection and AIDS, and learning about AIDS to sustain and reinforce the global effort to stop its spread.



Please put me on the World AIDS Day mailing list.  
 I am already on the mailing list.  
Please send me a World AIDS Day Action Kit in:  English  French

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

I am planning the following event(s) for World AIDS Day:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

World Health Organization  
20, Avenue Appia  
CH-1211 Geneva 27  
Switzerland

Telephone: 791-2111  
Telex: 415 416  
Telefax: 791-0746

World Health Organization  
Regional Office for Africa  
PO Box No. 6  
Brazzaville  
Congo

Telephone: 83-38-60  
Telex: 5217 or 5364

World Health Organization  
Regional Office for the Americas/  
Pan American Sanitary Bureau  
525, 23rd Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20037  
United States of America

Telephone: (202) 861-3200  
Telefax: (202) 223-5971  
Telex: 248 338 or 440 057

World Health Organization  
Regional Office for the Eastern  
PO Box 1517  
Alexandria 21511  
Egypt

Telephone: 48-202 23, 48-202 24  
Telefax: (203) 48-38 916  
Telex: 54028, 54684

World Health Organization  
Regional Office for South-East Asia  
World Health House  
Indraprastha Estate  
Manama Gandhi Road  
New Delhi 110002  
India

Telephone: 331-7804  
Telefax: (91) 331-8607  
Telex: 31-65-295

World Health Organization  
Regional Office for the Western Pacific  
PO Box 2932  
1099 Manila  
Philippines

Telephone: 521-8421  
Telefax: (632) 521-1036  
Telex: 27652

### AIDS

A worldwide effort will stop it



## VENUES

**CORPORATE GREED,  
GOVERNMENT INACTION,  
AND PUBLIC INDIFFERENCE  
MAKE AIDS A POLITICAL CRISIS**

**KISSING DOESN'T KILL: GREED AND INDIFFERENCE DO**



PUBLIC INFORMATION by GRAN FURY is conceived to inform a broad public and provoke direct action to end the AIDS crisis.

CREATIVE TIME CITYWIDE is made possible with public funds from the National Endowment of the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and with private support from the Chase Manhattan Bank, Chemical Bank, Citibank, Con Edison, The Cowles Charitable Trust, LEF Foundation, Mobil Foundation, Philip Morris Companies, Inc., The Plumsock Fund, and Creative Time's Members and Friends.

Gran Fury **CREATIVE TIME**  
For further information: (212) 619-1955

# JUST FOR THE RECORD

*Just for the Record* is a television show that was first broadcast in May of 1987. Its conception was fuelled by a defeat of a city ordinance which would have banned discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. This defeat — by a vote of 5-2 — served as a compelling reminder of the overwhelming amount of fear, hatred and ignorance in the public attitude towards homosexuality.

*Just for the Record* is intended to be educational, informative and entertaining. It is aimed directly at the gay community, but strives to be of value to the community as a whole.

Since its inception, 37 programs, each 30 minutes long, have been aired on the New Orleans Public Access Channel. We have covered a broad spectrum of topics, concentrating mainly on local issues. We have also covered various issues concerning AIDS.

For more information write: JFTR, P.O. Box 3768, New Orleans, LA 70177, USA.

# SCANNING SCANNING SCANNING GUIDE

## DISTRIBUTE

### STD Street Smarts



INNER CITY  
151 Gerrard Street East,  
Toronto, Ontario M5A 2E4  
(416) 922-3335.

STD Street Smarts is a 30-minute educational video produced by, for and with "street youth" by the STD Prevention Project of Youthlink-Inner City. With frank language and explicit imagery this video addresses difficult issues such as sex and injection drug use in the age of AIDS. It is non-judgemental in its portrayal of young people acquiring, using, and sharing knowledge about safe sex and needle use.

STD Street Smarts is accompanied by a comprehensive facilitators' manual.

It is available for \$20/copy (including manual) from Youthlink-Inner City (cheques or money orders should be made payable to Youthlink-Inner City).

Our goal at Dawn House Society is therefore to establish a free-standing hospice in order to provide compassionate and dignified care to those persons in the final stages of AIDS. Dawn House Society will provide a viable option for AIDS patients where none currently exists west of Toronto, realizing that when one's disease is no longer responsive to the traditional aims of cure and prolongation of life, providing care and comfort can be just as significant.

To obtain further information, please write or call:



Dawn House Society  
1130 Jervis Street  
Vancouver, B.C.  
V6E 2C7

(604) 688-3955

## BOOKS

CANADIAN AIDS SOCIETY

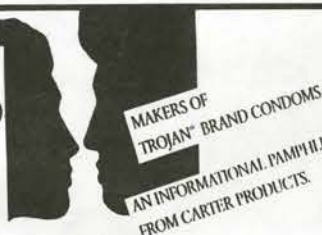
Safer Sex Guidelines:  
A Resource Document for Educators and Counsellors



SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DU SIDA

Please enclose payment with order (price includes postage and handling). Make cheque/money order payable to: Canadian AIDS Society. Send to: CAS Distribution, Box 55, Stn F, Toronto, ON M4Y 2L4, Canada.

SEXUALLY-TRANSMITTED DISEASES AND THE USE OF CONDOMS



Carter Products, 6600 Kitimat Road, Mississauga, Ontario L5N 1L9



The International Development Research Centre is a public corporation created by the Parliament of Canada in 1970 to support research designed to adapt science and technology to the needs of developing countries. The Centre's activity is concentrated in six sectors: agriculture, food and nutritional sciences; health sciences; information sciences; social sciences; earth and engineering sciences; and communications. IDRC is financed solely by the Parliament of Canada; its policies, however, are set by an international Board of Governors. The Centre's headquarters are in Ottawa, Canada. Regional offices are located in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Please direct requests for information about IDRC and its activities to the IDRC office in your region.

Head Office  
IDRC, P.O. Box 8500, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1G 3H9

Regional Office for Southeast and East Asia  
IDRC, Tanglin P.O. Box 101, Singapore 9124, Republic of Singapore

Regional Office for South Asia  
IDRC, 11 Jor Bagh, New Delhi 110003, India

Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa  
IDRC, P.O. Box 62084, Nairobi, Kenya

Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa  
IDRC/CRDI, P.O. Box 14 Orman, Giza, Cairo, Egypt

Regional Office for West and Central Africa  
CRDI, B.P. 11007, CD Annexe, Dakar, Senegal

Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean  
CIID, Apartado Aéreo 53016, Bogotá, D.E., Colombia

## Learning AIDS

The long-awaited and completely up-to-date edition of the only reference source of its kind—listing over 1,700 AIDS educational and reference tools

Published by  
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Borough Green, Kent TN15 8PH,  
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## NETWORK

# ACT UP

[The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power]

### SUPPORT US

- I have enclosed a check for  
\$20 \$50 \$100 other
- Please add my name to your mailing list

ACT UP, 496-A Hudson Street, Suite G4, NYC 10014

## V/TAPE + The Video Data Bank

We are very proud to announce a new VHS video compilation entitled VIDEO AGAINST AIDS — a three tape six hour collection of some of the most inciteful, informative and moving works on AIDS by independent producers. VIDEO AGAINST AIDS comes complete with a full set of program notes written by Bill Horrigan and John Greyson with cassette jackets designed by Gran Fury. Request your free brochure.

This three program set is for purchase only in VHS.

V TAPE  
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Toronto, Ontario M5T 2R7  
(416) 863-9897

VIDEO DATA BANK  
280 South Columbus Drive  
Chicago, Illinois  
USA 60603

or call toll free: 1-800-634-8544



TESTING THE LIMITS, a collective of lesbians, gays, and straights, formed to document AIDS activism—people's responses to government inaction on AIDS. The collective is committed to alternative media production which supports the efforts of all people affected by AIDS.

For purchase or rental of tapes, donations, or more information, send to:

TESTING THE LIMITS  
31 W. 26th St., 4th Floor  
New York, NY, 10010  
(212) 545-7120



## AIDS HEALTH PROMOTION Exchange

From 1986 to 1988 the World Health Organization helped establish a foundation for concerted action. At the national level, AIDS committees have been formed in virtually all countries and active collaboration with WHO has been realized in support of national programme development in over 150 countries. AIDS information and education are of major significance in all of these programmes.

A worldwide effort will stop it.



Artist Milton Glaser designed this AIDS symbol and poster for WHO. Printer's slicks and camera-ready copy of the poster and information brochure AIDS: A worldwide effort will stop it are available in French, English and Spanish (brochure and poster) and in Russian, Arabic and Chinese (poster only) for reproduction by AIDS health promotion programmes. Other art work to symbolize the phrase "a worldwide effort will stop it" is in preparation.

If you wish to be added to the mailing list for AIDS Health Promotion Exchange please fill this form and return to WHO/SPA, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
JOB TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
INSTITUTION \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET \_\_\_\_\_  
TOWN \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_  
LANGUAGE \_\_\_\_\_



## National Hospice Organization

The National Hospice Organization updates its audiovisual catalogue on programs that deal with many aspects of care for the terminally ill.

We are searching for programs that include, but are not exclusive to, the following categories: counselling, social services, bereavement, AIDS, nursing and clinical issues, financial planning, management and volunteer development.

Would you please send us either a catalogue of your productions or fill out that attached form for programs that would be appropriate for inclusion in the publication.

Mail to: National Hospice Organization  
1901 North Fort Myer Dr., Suite 307  
Arlington, VA 22209  
Attn: Audiovisual Catalogue

## RESOURCE



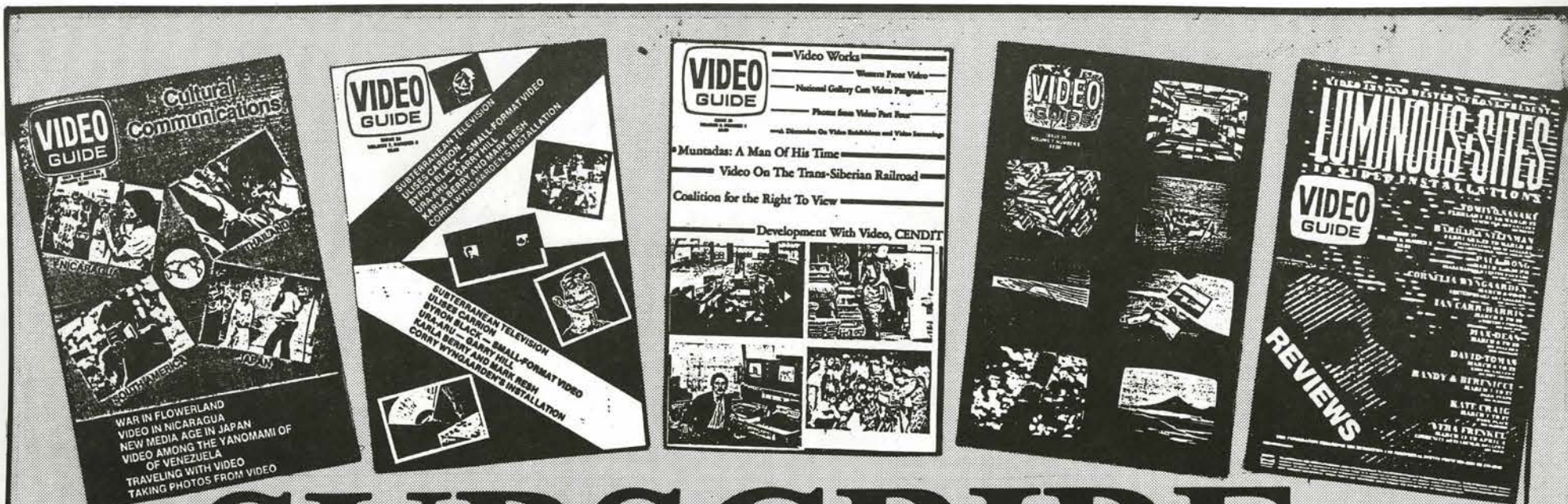
VANCOUVER  
PWA  
COALITION

P.O. Box 136,  
1215 Davie Street,  
Vancouver, B.C. V6E 1N4

On behalf of the Board and Members of the Vancouver Persons With AIDS Society and the Advocacy Committee, we would like to thank you for your support of the "Fantasy AIDS Rally".

This rally and the support it generated was very encouraging to everyone involved. A better tonic than a month of A.Z.T. Thanks again for your participation and commitment.

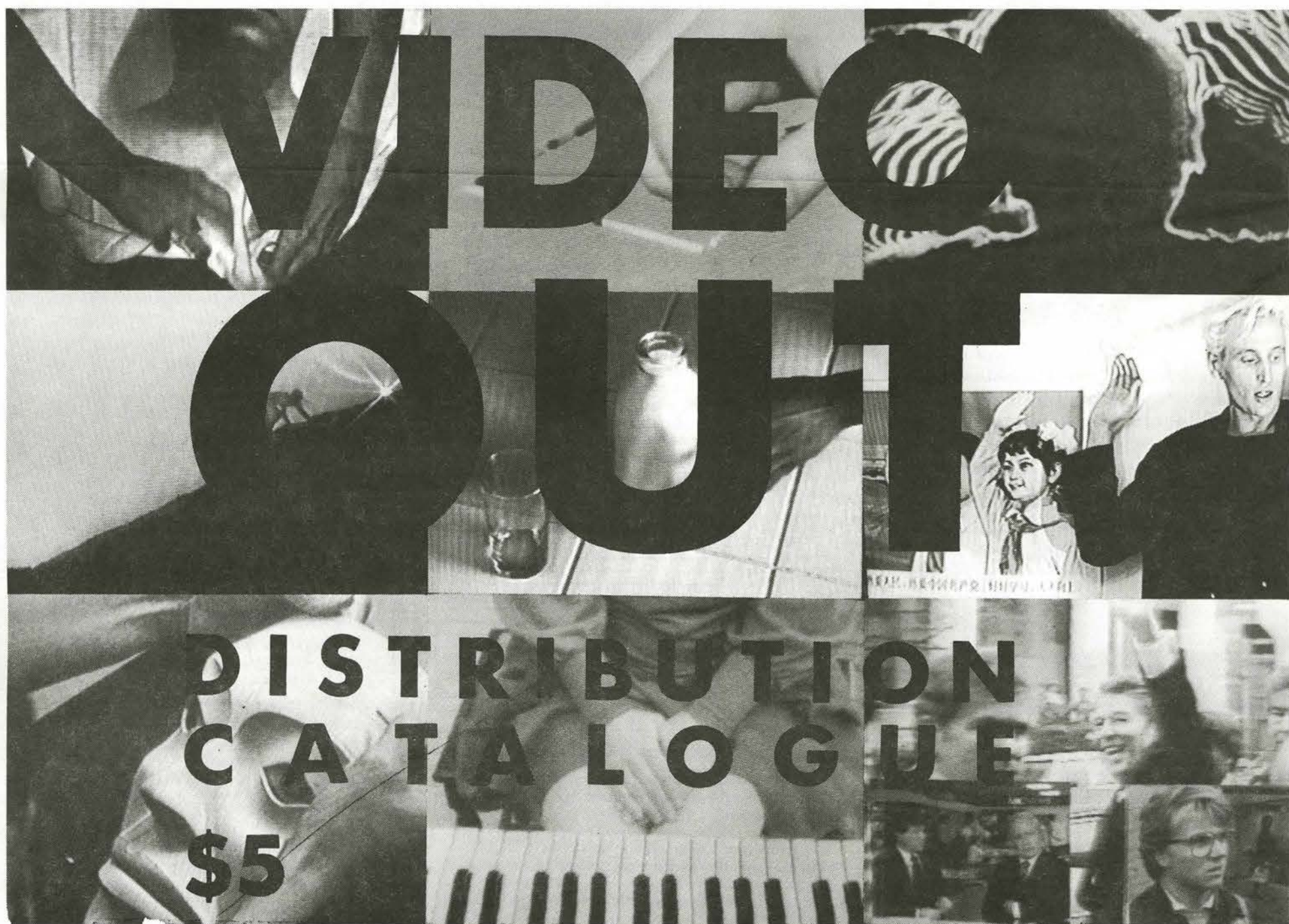
A tax receipt can be issued for any donation over \$20 to the Vancouver PWA Society.



# SUBSCRIBE FIVE ISSUES

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**Video Guide 1102 Homer Street Vancouver, B.C. V6B 2X6**



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