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September 21, 2021
Hornell, New York

Ralph Hocking established the Student Experiments in Technology in 1968 in a room, in what became the famous hallway of the Department of Cinema at SUNY Binghamton. Then it became the Community Center for Television Production in downtown Binghamton in 1970. Ralph then went on to found the Experimental Television Center (ETC) in 1971 at the 164 Court Street space in downtown Binghamton, New York. Ralph Hocking's vision of a research of Art, Technology and Education set the foundation of over 40 years of extensive, historical media arts interventions, inventions and learning.

My first experience of the ETC, aka 1972, I believe coming up the stairs, 164 Court Street, to the second story former community center and seeing the studio , a collection of electronic video equipment, cameras and monitors spread out on an empty black floor, video feedback, with an additional spinning flashing emergency light one would expect to see on an ambulance, police or fire truck as well as the intermittent air flow balloon inflating and releasing. Electronic sounds paralleling the specialized kinetics. No one was in the studio. The studio played itself. This I found out later was Ralph Hocking's automatic marching band. The affect was one of surprise, great humor creating a mesmerizing engagement.

My second experience with the ETC studio was visiting the studio as part of a class of students from the Binghamton University Cinema Department. Our teacher was the filmmaker director Nicholas Ray. He excitedly showed us the studio in action, describing and clarifying what we saw in front of us as the future of cinema; electronic image and sound. We went to work learning, hands on what a keyer and sequencer were. We didn't know. Then we knew.

The ETC, imagine such a place.

As time passes and historical details are collected and contextualized, one time complex, multiple impulses and activities begin, I stress begin, to form into some clarity and relief. Aided also by the evolution of vocabularies and new conceptual narratives, the evolving history of ideas, something as remarkable new and socially culturally new and therefor significantly uncoded, becomes formed , that is video art, media art, electronic cinema and sound, to site a few names. Both in a recurrent striving for and simultaneous dismissive stance of the new, regardless, the history shows an almost unexplainable outpouring of interest, curiosity and enthusiasm of many, many artists from many different, varied disciplines to take on a hands on, artisan, blue collar, DIY, electronic art practice. The interest in the orientation together with the access to the electronic studio facility, the experiment of the ETC and Ralph Hocking produced an over 40 year long, globally significant electronic arts experiment, a multi decade place for E xperimenting, L earning and P roduction, ELP at the ETC.

Where conception as well as birth of the new involves pleasure and drama and complexity, the grounding in this case is human, technological and institutional. Of the human we know something of the drives, personalities, professional disciplines: of the technological we know of the evolution of electronic materials, tools and instrument. The institutional we know of informal artist interactions, the schools, the art establishments, the government art agencies. The resulting media art works, the schools

of practice, the schools of theory, the varied institutions of making and dissemination and collecting and archiving and together build up strata, a density, a network, a culture of repeating events, a history we now become confident become the established arrival of cinema, video, media art, electronic arts. It only took 50 years, maybe 100 years, maybe 120 years.

The ETC, one of the important ground zeros for the story ...

What happens at the ETC ?

Late 60's, 70's, 80's and more, surplus electronics, new SONY b+w and then color video tape recorders, image and sound, electronic systems, tinkered and modified and newly repurposed. Ralph Hocking, Nam June Paik, Shuya Abe, David Jones, Walter Wright, Sherry Miller Hocking, Don McArthur, Paul Davis, Richard Brewster, Matt Schlanger with wire cutters, soldering irons, telephones, pens, copying machines and computers changed the art, yes changing the future. Setting up the ETC studio, studios with in studios, creating the center of the Experiential Television Center. A most pleasant and comfortable space to spend time, time away with uncoded technology, immersive and emerging systems. A space and time to be in dialogue with oneself and electronic imaging and sound tools, languages, histories.

Hit record !

As the 1950's was a time greatly engaged and invested with the new, then, electronic media technology of the audio tape recorder , the 60's and 70's and more were opened up by the video (image and sound) tape recorder. The sheer number of number of 50's sound tape recordings and the 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's video tape (image and sound) recordings is staggering. The richness and wealth of the 50's audio tape recording works were uncovered, and then more fully understood with the 1990's CD reissues of the 1950's sound works. A new generation was able to listen to the 1950's sound works. Video tape work had a similar rediscovery with DVDs re-issues and now websites and streaming.

What was to be found at the ETC ?

The ETC experimental artist access center Ralph developed went onto have a collection of new consumer SONY portapacks lent out to the community. Then a studio of multiple B+W and color video cameras, recorders and mixers then together with surplus industrial and scientific oscillators, patch bays, many multiple monitors. Young David Jones showed up to build special enlarged battery packs for the portable video systems then moving on to experimenting to modify/expand cameras and early special effects generators, SEGs. Nam June Paik, who imagined a center for experiments in television in his early writings found his visionary dream and collaborator with the artist, educator Ralph Hocking. The experimental artist access center expanded with the building of the Paik-Abe Colorizer and Raster Deflection system, Nam June and Shuya Abe, in the ETC studio space, building the kluged camera color encoder/video mixer system. The future electronic cinema system, electronic television, video synthesis system was emerging, then functional and accessible to interested artists. David Jones's video keyers and then video switchers, and multi channel additive and diode mixer and keyer, the Jones Coloriser were designed and built by David. Richard Brewster, based on the Serge

audio synthesizer and the Ithaca based Bernier Hutchinson "Electro Notes" newsletter, built the very modular ETC audio synthesizer/analog control units. The illusive video synthesizer was multiple and functional. It was modular and voltage controllable, an open system connected to a generous matrix routing system, an elegant solution to endlessly reconfiguring the connection of the individual modular video subsystems. Don McArthur built a very early real time digital signal processor he named the S.A.I.D, Spatial and Intensity Digitizer. Walter Wright, in conjunction with conversations with Woody and Steina Vasulka, developed designs for a complete computer based video processing system. Paul Davis brought the Cromemco Z-80 computer system to the ETC. David Jones together with Peer Bode built the first of two real time digital video frame buffers together.

This takes us up to 1980.

With the ETC then having moved to Owego New York, the Tuesday afternoon building club took place down the road in Bartonville, under David Jones's guidance, with Mimi Martin, Neil Zusman, Matt Schlanger, Barbara Buckner and Peer Bode building various video tool prototypes. By the mid 80's Matt Schlanger was assisting David Jones on laying out printed circuit boards of the first generation of ETC tools. With those printed boards the next generation of the ETC tools were then built. This takes us up to the mid to late 1980's. There are some twenty years more to this ETC studio story.

More to come. Ask Hank Rudolph.

What ideas accompanied, guided these systems and development ? Ask Ralph Hocking.

I remember the ideas: Art, Education and Technology in dialogue... experiment, learn, construct, perform. This had a connection to a science/ physics/making approach. It was not a consumer/service thinking. This was a making video as well as making personal studios, making spaces for further new developments. Ralph encouraged us. This next step, set up your own studio, which came from the visual and sound arts, was at the time a daunting task for many of us in video. It then became progressively more and more possible, until today, personal electronic arts studios and personal computers being common. This independent media art paradigm, even if still under represented, under reported, thrives. It is the heart and soul of the current media art practice and theory.

The media art institutional story is a story, one could simplify, to use Peter Wollen's description/ terms one of the commercial avant-garde and the co-op avant-garde. Commercial we are inundated with and understand only too well. The Co-op, not to be confused with Co-opt, we know, we live and breathe with but overall know less confidently as a/our own cultural story. Co-op not as formal co-op but a more informal, accidental, personal, casual interaction that results in a real and functional form... an informal community of friendships and communications and support. What is this process but the larger global culture of human thinking and being. Add to this media art thinking and tools and systems and we see emerging an approach, a process of human//technology interface dialoguing possibilities that is profound. The ETC studio program was that.

Media art is infinity. Its sources, internalized codes, are infinite: music and poetry, painting and sculpture, philosophy and literature, sociology and psychology, mathematics and physics, climatology and computer science, astronomy and cosmology. The sources and influences are infinite.

Meanwhile the electronic tools, parameters, transformations, vibratory animations, qualities, the information nature of signals, of sound and light, the interaction of sounds, the interaction of images,

the interaction of sounds and images, these all are informing, moments, fundamental, expansive and infinite. These are the concrete elements, the physical body of the electronic media arts. As long as art and electronic media have and are for bodies, materiality, the phenomenological body, the ears and eyes and mind, will be challenged and nourished. This is another infinity.

Others have suggested that, as if to spare us of hope and expenditures that art has likely come to an end. John Cage responded to this thinking with the observation that we go to sleep at night, waking up, rested and recharged ready to make something of the day, engaging and making art, new, making art to take on, reflect, change the lives and world in which we are living for the better.

Nam June Paik spoke of video as the new paint brush. Video, new media arts is the new art, is also the new new media. Years ago I wrote of the Post Media, reaching beyond Post Modern, and after the commercial driven media project, reclaiming that driven by the history and the future of ideas and thinking.

Jean Epstein, filmmaker and writer, in the early and mid 20th Century pointed out that the cinema to be an invention, whose impact on the world was equivalent to that of the invention of the microscope and the telescope., which opened the doors for contemporary contemporary biology and astronomy.

Cinema, the moving image, in its evolution was first, silent cinema. Then came what was to be called the talkies. We can now add the stage of the electronic cinema, video, the electronic media time and space we live in. Electronic new media now opens the doors for new philosophy and the digital humanities. My faith, and it only increases over time, Post Modernism has for years now been superseded by a post media, after the commercial driven project and after the time of the self satisfied cynicism establishment.

As Shegiko Kubota said of video and we might now replace the term with Media Arts, “ Video is ..., video is the vengeance of the vagina, video is the vacation of Art. Let us make media art that is significant, exciting and meaningful, a true educational television, a true educational new media arts.

In many institutional forms we are still in a stage of the early Talkies. The vocabularies are general, predictable, endlessly repeated,, recognizable terms, the same old tales, check the boxes, The vocabularies missing are the sensitivities, sensibilities (the ability to sense) the genres and forms selected, the dynamics and transformations, and change. The experimental television, the video, the new electronic cinema, electronic new media arts, are busting with energy and information dynamic and interactions. For example as Jean Epstein already described in the last century, ... “sound close ups in slow motion...seeing and hearing thought”. Where cultural establishment institutions continue the past, young artists and scholars are already living in the present of the new dynamic systems and thinking; exhibitions in the back box and the white box, sit down and walking, duration, the kinetic state, movement, phenomena. This brings us back to the meaningful, humanly productive, generative guide posts of education, technology and art.

Thank you, the Experimental Television Center, thank you Ralph Hocking and Sherry Miller Hocking.

Open systems work.

Life is good.