

# VIDEO HISTORY PROJECT

- ◆ Project Narrative: Description and Implementation
- ◆ Project Budget
- ◆ Conference packet

**Video History: Making Connections,**  
Syracuse University October 16-18, 1998

**EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER  
109 LOWER FAIRFIELD RD.**

**NEWARK VALLEY, NY 13811 PHONE/FAX (607) 687-4341**

**ETC@SERVTECH.COM**

**WWW.EXPERIMENTALTVCENTER.ORG**

## Experimental Television Center Video History Project

There are many possibilities for research, scholarship, education and public programming of these materials in the arts and humanities. Unfortunately, this tremendous historical and cultural legacy remains largely unknown, while the tapes and documentation are deteriorating on shelves across the State, at risk of being lost to future generations.

While the number and scope of media arts and communications programs have expanded dramatically in the past ten years, access to early video collections remains limited, and the work in rarely programmed outside of major arts institutions. While educators or librarians may want to include information about early video work in their art, history or media studies classes, they often don't know where to locate the resources.

Despite these problems, groups have worked together to develop a coordinated plan for study and preservation. Under the leadership of Media Alliance, a multi-faceted approach has been in place in several priority areas: systematic cataloguing of video collections; remastering or physical preservation; collection management; and conservation techniques. One recent development which was encouraged by the Video History Project is the founding in the Spring 1999 of Independent Media Arts Project. Many IMAP members attended the conference and remain active in the promotion of information about electronic media preservation.

By making video history accessible, we provide a historical context for the study of early media projects, and increase public awareness of how and where to find the tapes themselves. This will lead to more effective partnerships for preservation between the those who can use the tapes and those who hold early works.

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION: A PROGRESS REPORT

The collaborators and audience for the Video History Project have been broad-based, and include pioneering artists and practitioners as well as those new to the field; students and educators; scholars and curators; and a more general audience from other cultural, social and science institutions as well.

### CONFERENCE

The conference *Video History: Making Connections* was held October 16-18, 1998 at Syracuse University in conjunction with the Common Ground Conference, sponsored by the New York State Alliance for Arts Education. Bringing together pioneering practitioners and contemporary artists working in new media and interactive technologies, the conference celebrated our history and established new partnerships with cultural and educational institutions nationally. Over 250 individuals from around the country attended the conference, representing many of the major media institutions on the East Coast.

The event opened with a choice of two full day professional seminars. *Video Rewind: A Seminar on Early Video History*, was organized by Deirdre Boyle, Senior Faculty at the New School and author of Subject to Change: Guerilla Television Revisited. Presenters included Barbara London, curator of Video at the Museum of Modern Art; Paul Ryan formerly of Raindance and recently author of Video Mind/Earth Mind: Communications and Ecology; and Parry Teasdale, a founding member of the Videofreex and author of Videofreex: A Memoir of Lanesville TV. Nearly 100 people attended this seminar. The alternative offering *Video Preservation* was organized by Mona Jimenez in association with Media Alliance and included reports on major initiatives of the Association of Moving Image Archivists, and the Electronic Media Special Interest Group of the

## EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER VIDEO HISTORY PROJECT

---

The Experimental Television Center's *Video History Project* is an on-going research initiative which documents the early historical development of video art and community television, with particular focus on upstate New York during the period 1968-1980. The goals of the project are realized in an interrelated set of activities combining research, including the collection of oral histories, a World Wide Web site, and *Video History: Making Connections*, a conference concerning the links between the early history and contemporary practice.

The Center began work on the Video History project in 1994; it reflects the Center's commitment to and participation in the media arts field for almost 30 years, a concern with preservation of the artifacts of the history, and a recognition of the difficulty of accessing information and locating resources. The project fosters a dynamic and inclusive regional history, giving voice to the many independent media makers and organizations, small and large, that have worked to advance the media field.

### PROJECT GOALS

- ▶ to provide a dynamic vehicle for the creation and dissemination of an inclusive media history, encouraging participation by a wide range of people including early practitioners as well as those presently shaping this history
- ▶ to identify, locate, and make accessible information about the primary resource materials of the field
- ▶ to help establish bridges for intellectual access to information and to position independent media arts activities within a broader cultural context by cultivating research and public programming of these materials by those in the arts, humanities and sciences
- ▶ to increase public awareness of and appreciation for media history throughout the State and nationally and to create new audiences for the work
- ▶ to encourage alliances among collecting institutions and educational and curatorial programs for the preservation of the works

### SIGNIFICANCE OF NEW YORK'S ENDANGERED MEDIA HISTORY

New York State hosted some of the earliest media activity in the nation; over twenty media organizations existed in upstate New York during the period 1968 - 1980. The State's arts and cultural organizations house some of the most extensive collections of early video art and community television in the United States. With the first introduction of portable media technology, creative and community-minded people formed groups, with a shared mission to train and equip ordinary citizens with the means of creating and distributing independent programming. Media makers explored video as an art medium and as a tool for social and cultural change, producing documentaries, narratives, conceptual, and image-processed work presented on cable and television, in regional and community venues and in art contexts.

Thousands of tapes by these pioneers of independent media are scattered throughout the State in rural and urban centers, in small and/or mid-sized libraries, museums, media arts centers, artists' spaces, college media departments, video collectives and non-profit distributors. Along with the tapes themselves are other resources and documents which not only help us understand the works, but also the historical and social environments within which they were produced.

## Experimental Television Center Video History Project

American Institute for the Conservation of Art and Historic Works, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Bay Area Video Coalition and the National Plan developed in Canada. Presenters included Jim Lindner, Jim Hubbard, Luke Hones, V Tape and Debby Silverfine. Over 40 people registered for this seminar.

Following the seminars was a reception hosted by the Everson Museum which has played a pioneering role in the history of video, creating the first Video Program within a museum in the early 1970s, under the direction of David Ross.

The keynote address **The Success of the Failure of Video** was given by David Ross, now Director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The address was co-sponsored by the Center and the New York State Alliance for Arts Education, with corporate support provided by VidiPax.

On the second day, attendees were offered a selection of 11 two-hour sessions on a variety of topics such as Writing About Video; Distribution and Audience; Teaching Video History; Cultural Context and Audiences; Arts Practice; Activist Media; Infrastructure; and the History of Magnetic Materials. Each session had 3 presenters. In the evening two performances were scheduled. **Ausprobieren** was a live and recorded multimedia performance by Peer Bode, Tony Conrad, Andrew Deutsch, Kevin and Jennifer McCoy, Pauline Oliveros and Steina Vasulka. **ArtVideoDance** followed, a party commemorating the origins of video art, with live performance and installations.

Throughout the 3 days were several on-going events. **Extended Play** provided continuous screenings of early video provided by over 20 seminal organizations including Electronic Arts Intermix, Everson Museum, Downtown Community TV Center, Experimental Intermedia Foundation, Experimental Television Center, Film/Video Arts, Hallwalls, Harvestworks, The Kitchen, Paper Tiger, Potato Wolf, Set in Motion from the New York State Council on the Arts, Video Data Bank, Video Data Bank, Visual Studies Workshop, V Tape, and Women Make Movies. An **Open Screening** room was also available for people to share work. The **Resource Room** included a large display of early analog and digital tools, from off-the-shelf portapaks of the late 1960s to artist-created instruments as well as books, magazines and ephemera from the early days of video, and a program of student work from around the world. On continuous view was *Pioneers of Electronic Art*, a program curated by Woody Vasulka and Steina Vasulka for Ars Electronica in 1992.

All of the events were open to registrants of Common Ground, the conference of the New York State Alliance for Arts Education, in an effort to encourage active participation by public school educators from across the State.

### RESEARCH AND WEBSITE

The website is conceived as both a research collection and dissemination vehicle.

Content on the site includes both new and existing materials, generated by the Center, by volunteer researchers and also by contributors to the site. Data exist in electronic and print form. Data is input to 5 interrelated databases in the following content areas: chronology/events; artists registry; organization registry; bibliographies; Preservation. Additional information is organized around subject areas: texts and interviews; Access and Distribution; and Internet Links and Resources which are listed topically - Tools, Chronologies and Histories, Media Education, Exhibition, Funding, Publications.

The research is an on-going process, which relies on principle work performed at the Center

## Experimental Television Center Video History Project

over the last 5 years, and on a network of volunteers and student interns. An informal advisory group, which included educators and historians Chris Hill and Deirdre Boyle, helped guide the definition of the categories of information for the project. All researchers use a standard research template for collecting data and for conducting interviews to ensure consistency of information. We began the research by identifying 25 pioneering organizations formed in the Upstate region in the early 70s, and almost 200 individuals who played key roles. Information is being collected directly from many of these sources, and from referrals.

We continue to develop text descriptions for each identified group active in the Upstate region, and the scanning of ephemera for use on the Web site, which takes place at the computer lab at Alfred University and at the Center. Research is on-going for the sections of the project concerning resource materials; this includes extensive bibliographic information, Internet resource guides, and listings of institutional resources available nationally. We are also conducting video interviews with individuals identified as having played key roles in the development of the field. To date we have about 15 interviews, and almost 150 biographies contributed largely by the artists.

The contribution area encourages people to deposit personal recollections and reflections to be incorporated into the registries, information in the other content areas, and images. People are prompted about the type of information they wish to contribute. Topic area definitions and contribution areas are interrelated.

The website planning was begun in early 1997 prior to *Video History: Making Connections*. The planning group includes: Content and Research Coordinators: Ralph Hocking and Sherry Miller Hocking. Web Planning Coordinator: Mona Jimenez. Programming and Engineering: educator Christa Erickson, designer David Jones and programmer Andy Mirkis. Server space, hosting and backup support as well as access to lab facilities for scanning large-format images have been provided by Institute for Electronic Arts at Alfred University, under the direction of Peer Bode, Joseph Scheer and Jessie Shefrin, and by Technical Specialist Mark Klingensmith.

A "beta" version of the website was launched immediately prior to the conference to test functionality of the architecture, design and navigation and basic assumptions about its construction, and interrelationship among areas of the site. The site has remained up as a work-in-progress, as we continue to gather analytical responses from the field about content and structure.

The final planning process needs to address content analysis (information design; graphical design); programming and testing of the functionality of the site (search and contribution functions and relationships of database to site); and to strategies for maintenance, growth and development of the site.

In July 1999 The Center received \$15,000 from the New York Foundation for the Arts Technology Planning Grants program to complete this comprehensive planning for the site. The planning process includes: updating of the information design, review of graphical elements; analysis and prioritizing of content; determining the functionality of the search and contribution functions; and creating a timeline and tasks for implementation. The process will result in a detailed architectural site plan and a three year plan with budgets, support sources, quarterly tasks, and a timeline. We have begun the planning process and expect to conclude this phase by late Winter.

The networks in place as a result the conference and the information and contacts we have gathered since the launch of the beta version of the website at the conference will continue to be used to publicize and engage the constituency in using and contributing to the site.

## Experimental Television Center Video History Project

### ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

The overall project is being directed by Sherry Miller Hocking of the Center. The conference was organized with independent consultant and media preservationist Mona Jimenez, and Amy Hufnagel, until recently Program Director at the New York State Alliance for Arts Education and presently Senior Program Director of Education and Information at the New York Foundation for the Arts. The programming committee consisted of about 30 individuals and representatives of organizations around the State including Hallwalls, Visual Studies Workshop, Syracuse University, and the Everson Museum of Art. Communication was facilitated through a listserv developed by David Jones of DaveJones Designs. Conference partners included the New York State Alliance for Arts Education, Media Alliance, and the Everson Museum of Art.

The website is organized by Ralph and Sherry Hocking, Mona Jimenez and independent design consultant David Jones, in collaboration with the Institute for Electronic Arts at Alfred University, under the direction of Peer Bode, Joseph Scheer and Jessie Shefrin.

The Video History Project is made possible with support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, with public funds from the Statewide Challenge Grant Program, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Media Action Grant Program. Corporate support was provided by VidiPax and by Dave Jones Design. In-kind contributions were provided by the Everson Museum of Art, the Experimental Television Center, Alfred University, Video DataBank and the New York State Alliance for Arts Education.

This project has relied heavily on working relationships among project partners and among the many media groups involved. The partners, Syracuse University, the Institute for Electronic Arts, the Everson Museum of Art, Media Alliance and the New York State Alliance for Arts Education, along with the Center are providing significant in-kind contributions of materials and services which total almost \$50,000.

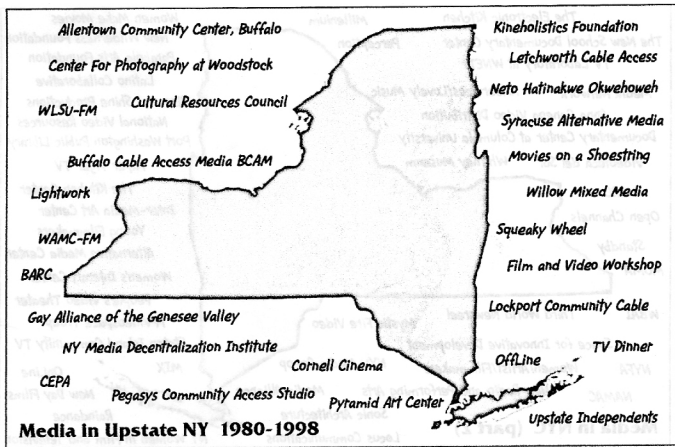
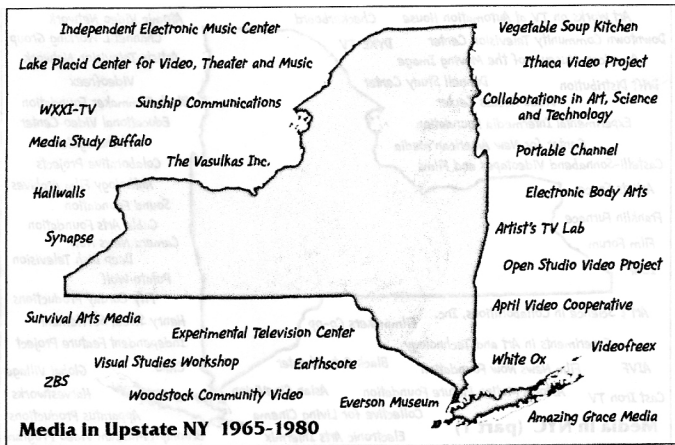
### PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

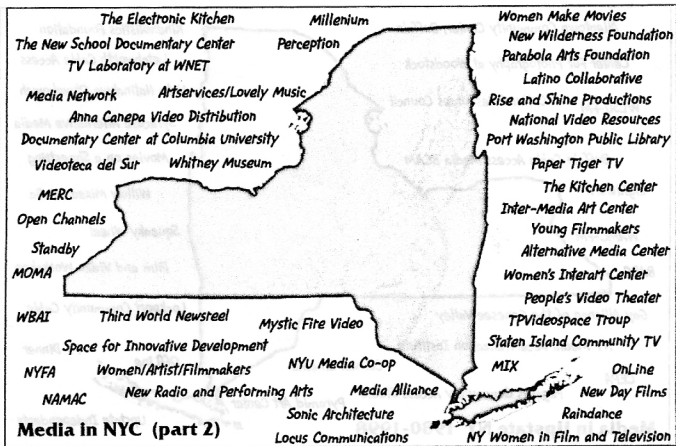
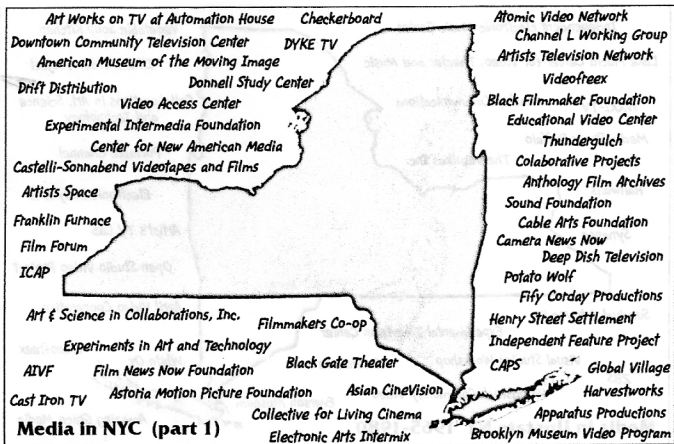
Promotion and outreach were shared by the Center, Media Alliance and the New York State Alliance for Arts Education. The Center's database contains over 2000 individual names and about 1500 organizations. This was supplemented by contact information from Media Alliance and AIVF. Universities and schools were contact directly in a separate mailing through Alfred University. Two major direct mailings of conference registration information were sponsored by Media Alliance in conjunction with WNET, and by Video DataBank, Chicago.

We used electronic communications extensively. The strategy involves the use of our listserv, as well as other electronic mailing lists. The conference was promoted heavily on the website; we used the site as well to communicate programming, travel, transportation and lodging information to participants.

Articles and announcements about the project have appeared in *Media Matters* published by Media Alliance, *Main* published by NAMAC, the *Central New York Programmers Group Newsletter*, *Afterimage* published by Visual Studies Workshop and *FYI*, a publication of the New York Foundation for the Arts, and on numerous websites.

The web planning process will consider ways in which the website can be promoted to encourage repeat visits.







# VIDEO HISTORY: MAKING CONNECTIONS

OCTOBER-16-18, 1998 SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SYRACUSE, NY

## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY OCTOBER 16  
all day 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

### VIDEO REWIND: A SEMINAR ON EARLY VIDEO HISTORY

Organized by media critic, curator and historian DEIRDRE BOYLE, author of *Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited*, with BARBARA LONDON, PAUL RYAN and PARRY TEASDALE.  
\*\* REGISTER EARLY - ONLY 50 SPACES! \*\*

**VIDEO PRESERVATION MEETING** - A gathering to share information and strategies about next steps for collaborative efforts to preserve early electronic arts collections. Organized by MEDIA ALLIANCE as part of the Video Preservation Initiative.

Noon

**EXTENDED PLAY** begins

evening

**RECEPTION** at the **EVERSON MUSEUM OF ART** Exhibitions by JANET BIGGS and CARRIE MAE WEEMS, and recently restored video works from the collection.

**AN OPENING PLENARY WITH DAVID A. ROSS**, Director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 17  
all day

**EXTENDED PLAY • TOOL WORKSHOP**  
**CONSTRUCTING VIDEO HISTORIES**  
**RESOURCE ROOM**

### SESSIONS

led by artists and other practitioners working with new and old media

ARTS PRACTICE THEN AND NOW • TOOL DEVELOPMENT/PEOPLE & MACHINES  
TEACHING VIDEO HISTORY • ACTIVIST MEDIA  
MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS THEN AND NOW  
CULTURAL CONTEXTS • NEGOTIATING  
DISTRIBUTION & AUDIENCE • HISTORY OF  
MAGNETIC MATERIALS • PIONEERS OF  
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

evening

### PERFORMANCE

STEINA VASULKA, PEER BODE, ANDREW DEUTSCH, KEVIN MCCOY, TONY CONRAD, WALTER WRIGHT & CAROL GOSS

SUNDAY OCTOBER 18  
10:00 am - 1:00 pm

**EXTENDED PLAY • TOOL WORKSHOP**  
**CONSTRUCTING VIDEO HISTORIES • RESOURCE ROOM**

Designed as an introduction to the early history of independent video in America (1965 to 1980), this seminar will be an intensive day of screenings, discussions, and presentations by and about video pioneers. Explore how this new medium for art, activism, and information was developed by key players such as artist-innovators, video collectives, new technology manufacturers, funders, museum curators, and public television producers.

As the first video curator at the Everson Museum of Art, David Ross curated exhibitions of such groups as RAINDANCE, the VIDEOFREEX and the EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER, and such artists as FRANK GILLETTE and NAM JUNE PAIK. As the Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, he recently curated with Peter Sellars a major retrospective of the work of BILL VIOLA. Ross will address a joint audience of Video History & Common Ground participants.

In addition to those listed elsewhere, invited speakers include KATE HORSFIELD, CHRIS HILL, KEIKO TSUNO, RALPH HOCKING, TOM SHERMAN, KATHY HIGH, LINDA GIBSON, MARIA TROY, PHILIP MALLORY JONES, RICHARD FUNG, IGOR VAMOS, MARY ROSS and many others.

organized by the  
**Experimental Television Center (ETC)**

in partnership with the Institute for Electronic Arts at Alfred University, the Everson Museum of Art, the New York State Alliance for Arts Education and the Office of Student Affairs of Syracuse University

in association with the Syracuse University Art Media Studies Department, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, Media Alliance and Visual Studies Workshop.

## ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Friday afternoon, Saturday all day, and Sunday morning

### EXTENDED PLAY - SCREENINGS

of historic works from the collections of distributors/exhibitors such as ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX, PAPER TIGER TELEVISION, DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TELEVISION CENTER, and VIDEO DATA BANK. ALSO BRING YOUR NEW & OLD VIDEOS and sign up for a viewing time.

### TOOL WORKSHOP

Browse a collection of analog and digital tools created by such artists/inventors as DAN SANDIN, DAVID JONES, and CARL GEIGER and used by early media artists. View *Pioneers of Electronic Art*, a program curated by WOODY VASULKA and STEINA VASULKA for Ars Electronica in 1992. Join a team from Alfred University led by PEER BODE to document the tools. Contribute your stories about their development and use for uploading to the Video History web site.

### CONSTRUCTING VIDEO HISTORIES

Computers will be available for you to contribute stories, writings, photos, or other creations to the Video History web site for all to see.

### RESOURCE ROOM

Drop in to peruse exhibition, distribution and university catalogs, books, magazines, and ephemera from the early days of video, as well as artist time-based works, interviews, and examples of student work from around the world. Organized by PAMELA SUSAN HAWKINS

## WHY SYRACUSE?

Significant early video activity occurred in Syracuse at such places as Synapse, a media arts center affiliated with Syracuse University, and the Everson Museum of Art, which was the first major museum in the country to have a video department. Syracuse University provides a fully accessible professional setting in an area rich with arts activity. Syracuse is located between Rochester and Albany in scenic central NY, which is famous for its Fall foliage.

## HOW TO-GET-THERE

Syracuse is serviced by major airlines, Amtrak, Greyhound and regional buslines. For detailed information on travel options, visit the web site at <http://videohistory.alfred.edu> or contact ETC.

## WHERE TO STAY

The following hotels are offering rooms at discount rates if you make reservations by October 1 and ask for the "Common Ground rate".

Genesee Inn (315) 476-4212 - singles \$69; doubles \$89  
Syracuse Marriot (315) 437-2761 - singles/doubles \$99  
Ramada (315) 463-0202 - singles \$49; suites \$71/ \$89  
Econolodge (315) 451-6000 - singles \$49  
Hotel Syracuse (315) 422-5121 - singles/doubles \$74  
Holiday Inn (315) 437-2761 - singles/doubles \$65

For additional information about hotel rates and locations see <http://videohistory.alfred.edu> or contact ETC.

The Upstate Video History Project is made possible with support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, with public funds from the Statewide Challenge Grant Program and the Electronic Media and Film Program of the New York State Council on the Arts, and from the Media Action Grant of Media Alliance, with corporate support from DesignLab and VidiPax and through individual contributions.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER phone/fax (607) 687-4341 etc@servtech.com <http://videohistory.alfred.edu>

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER  
 109 Lower Fairfield Road  
 Newark Valley, NY 13811  
 phone/fax (607) 687-4341  
 etc@servtech.com  
 www.experimentalstvcenter.org

join artists, educators, students, curators,  
 librarians, activists, critics and scholars  
 for a ground-breaking  
 media conference

# VIDEO HISTORY: MAKING CONNECTIONS

OCTOBER-16-18, 1998 SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SYRACUSE, NY

delve into the origins of **video art** and **community television** in New York State  
 & explore relationships to contemporary media arts practice

screenings • performance • dialogue • tools • resources

Video History: Making Connections is a component of the Upstate Video History Project of the Experimental Television Center (ETC), and is being held concurrently with Common Ground, a conference of the NYS Alliance for Arts Education, which includes a track on media literacy.

## SUBSIDIES FOR NYS ARTISTS/ARTS GROUPS

With support from the NYS Council on the Arts Technical Assistance Program, we are able to provide a small number of subsidies for NYS artists and arts organization staff intended to support professional development, provide contributions to the field and encourage organizational development for greater public service. Subsidies will cover part or all of the conference fees.

To be considered for a subsidy, send your registration with payment before September 25, 1998 (see check-off on form). YOU MUST SEND PAYMENT WITH YOUR FORM. We will return you check for a reimbursement check if you are selected to receive a subsidy.

## WORK EXCHANGES

We are also offering work exchanges for artists and students who will volunteer 6 hours in exchange for free admission to the conference. Work exchanges are available on a first-come first-served basis.

To apply for a work exchange, send your registration with payment by September 25, 1998 (see check off on form). YOU MUST ENCLOSE PAYMENT WITH YOUR REGISTRATION FORM. We will refund your check if you do a work exchange.

## CONFIRMATIONS/CANCELLATIONS

If we receive your registration with payment before Fri., Oct. 2, 1998, you will receive a postcard confirming your space; for registrations sent after that date, we urge you to call to confirm your space.

Registrations cannot be processed without a completed registration form and full payment; therefore we are not able to accept phone, fax or e-mail registration. Cancellations received in writing or by fax on or before Friday October 2, 1998 will receive a full refund. AFTER OCT. 2, NO REFUNDS WILL BE MADE UNLESS YOUR PLACE CAN BE FILLED. Please make check or money order payable to the Experimental Television Center.

IF YOU ARE REGISTERING FOR THE VIDEO REWIND SEMINAR, PLEASE SEND A SEPARATE CHECK FOR THE \$50 FEE. There are only 50 places available. If the seminar is filled, your check will be returned to you.

QUESTIONS? (607) 687-4341 or etc@servtech.com

## REGISTRATION FORM

Fee! free to copy this form. Fill out 1 per registrant.

first name \_\_\_\_\_ last name \_\_\_\_\_

title/position (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

organization (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

city \_\_\_\_\_

state \_\_\_\_\_ zip \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_

fax \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

website \_\_\_\_\_

Full Conference ..... \$75  
 includes all sessions and events except Video Rewind Seminar; also access to Common Ground sessions.

Video Rewind: A Seminar on Early Video History ..... \$50  
 (LIMITED TO 50 PEOPLE).

Saturday Day Pass ..... \$40  
 access to all sessions/events; also access to Common Ground sessions

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am a NYS artist or arts organization staff member & request a subsidy through the NYS/CA Technical Assistance Program.

I wish to be considered for a Work Exchange.

I have special needs (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

I plan to attend the Video Preservation meeting.

SEND THIS FORM WITH PAYMENT TO: ETC, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811.