

Transcript: Interview with Peg Campbell

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*Note: Text in brackets is clarification by the Editor.
Editing is minimal and solely for clarity or removal of redundant or incomplete phrases.*

Introduction

My name is Peg Campbell and I was involved when it was Video Inn with I-N-N on Powell Street. I think I joined around 1977-78. I was asked to be on the board – I think when I first brought a video to them, but actually I can't quite remember the chronology -... but Video Out (S.V.E.S. distribution division) was begun and they took on a video of mine called "A Rule of Thumb," which was on wife assault. It was the very first Canadian production on the subject. They wanted it for distribution and somehow I got on the board as well. That kind of seems to happen.

I was very involved for about 3 or 4 years, but then I became much more involved with Cineworks and forming the film cooperative, while I was both working in video and film - and at Video Inn and Cineworks. My duties at Cineworks just seemed to take over and I went off the board at Video Inn.

Film or Video?

When I was in high school, I knew I wanted to make films. I knew I wanted to be a filmmaker since I was about 10 years old. I just got very compelled by the moving image. And film seemed to be much more the way to go. When I decided to study at Simon Fraser University, I was in the film workshop. That was filled with people probably 15-20 years older than I was at that time. But parallel to that film workshop were a group of people working in video. I had been introduced to video in high school, because I acted in a video production for a university student in Victoria at UVIC (University of Victoria). At that time we were working with 2 inch video - that was the broadcast quality, and this was probably for the local cable station - whatever Shaw was in those days. I think they had that same kind of incentive program where they had to give back to the community, so they were making these crazy videos that we were acting and improvising in. I remember very clearly, we put our heart and soul into these videos - and then the tape wrinkled, which happened in those days. Everything was lost because of a wrinkle. I thought video was a bit frustrating. Not to say things couldn't happen with film as well, but we re-did it and it never seemed quite as fresh; it wasn't as good.

There was something I liked about both when I was up at SFU, because I would work in film and there was that exacting technological force behind it that had this huge history. And then video had this incredible instant-ness.... where you just got your replay right then and it was this weird quality which was so low-tech compared to film in those days. But it also had this immediacy, kind of a rawness, that I quite liked and realized I could use for some of the work I was doing where, film could be for other kinds. So I saw them as aesthetically very, very different, but I was working in both.

That was at a time where people were in one camp or the other - it was so polarized, not like today

where everything is fluid and conjoined: you're working in video but you call it a film. In those days they were separate histories, separate communities, and very rarely did people cross over. But I felt when I was asked to make "A Rule of Thumb", that it was actually the way to go for - one reason budget, because there was hardly any budget - it couldn't be done in a film. The other was also because I was interviewing women who were in a transition house, who had gone through horrific things in their personal lives, who were really sorting things out. Video actually suited just going in with that situation: just the one tube [imagine...] one tube camera, and a tripod and being able to set it up immediately - maybe a light if you're lucky and a microphone. It was so able to be done with one or two people. It meant I could set up an intimate situation. Whereas working in film in those days usually meant working with a larger crew, much more delegation of responsibilities, and potentially a more intimidating environment for the people I was working with.

There was snobbery on both sides because, I think, artist video came from the visual arts, and visual artists thought that filmmakers weren't artists. And the filmmakers thought the video artists were just wankers because the quality of the work was so "low" in those aesthetics - in terms of quality of light and image. And also, duration; that quite often video artists just went on and on and on and there didn't seem to be any editorial rigor that had to be there in filmmaking.

I didn't come into it (video) from the visual arts side, 'cause I came into it more as a documentary filmmaker... In film I was working more experimentally, oddly enough. I wasn't in video; I was using it really for social change. I think that's what was so great about Video Inn: that they embraced social change - video activists as well as the video art side of things, and I was definitely on the activist side in those days.

I think it made Video Inn/SVES quite unique and also more responsive to the community because the communities were varied that were being reached by Video Inn/Video Out... The more intervention videos were being seen by people that wouldn't have been able to see videos before - probably couldn't have seen films - that reflected their own experiences or gave them voice... so that was hugely important. And I think it also got the artists shifting from always looking at themselves. I think that was an important part of the work too - the examination of the body and the very personal - but because the activist videos were happening at the same time it also took that world outside in a broader view

How Video Inn was used by the community

I don't have distinct memories of how the community used it because I wasn't as involved in the distribution that way. But I do know it seemed to be a hub for people to easily get access. The door always seemed to be open, and there was also a lot of social gatherings. It was a really great place for parties and when other people would come to town - like the Talking Heads came. So Paul Wong and I went to the Commodore to see them, went backstage and invited them over for a party at Video Inn and they came! It was that kind of place. It was easy to entice them. People had heard about the Western Front, and sometimes Video Inn, so it seemed to have an international connection to artists in the States.

It was a hub for artist and musicians from around the world. That's not really dealing with the education side of things - but I think it's indicative of how connected things were. Video Inn was also very involved with showing the work of Reel Feelings - it was a women's media collective, one of the first. A lot of the women that were involved with that were really breaking ground in terms of feminist media. The work

was being seen by women's groups and discussed, and basically a revolution was happening in terms of the work. I remember one of them it was actually shot on film but they were working on video as well. It was called "So Where's My Prince Already" and one of the pivotal points in it was when the protagonist spray paints on her wall "fuck housework"... which seems so tame now but at the time it was these middle class and upper middle class women that were saying no to that fifties style restrictiveness and patriarchy, and finding their voice as video artists and filmmakers and finding an outlet for that through Video Inn.

Women in video vs. film

It is a really good point about how accessible video is to people - well of both genders - whereas in film there's a real hierarchy in terms of who gets to operate the camera. And that's probably why I became a sound recordist in film as well as a director, because it wasn't as popular or as difficult to get into as a female. Whereas in video, I was operating all the time and there was no barrier to being able to do that... and you still had to think about the same things: you still had to get an image, you still had to figure out the composition, which are the key points. What does your framing look like? And how are you lighting it so it can be seen? But for some reason, video just seemed to not have any of those hierarchies or barriers in the same way. So it was really embraced by women. And this was a time, too, where people were getting more concerned about not having films made so much about them, but being able to have the control over making the images. Have your story told in your way rather than having someone from outside coming in to tell it for you. And also it was a time when women's stories weren't of interest to broadcasters or anyone else so they were- women were making videos about issues particularly important to them and sometimes very personal, very political and giving voice to what hadn't been said before.

Could a work about domestic and social be made in film at the time "A Rule of Thumb" was made?

Well it ("A Rule of Thumb") may have got more distribution. The "Rule of Thumb" was actually requested by the American army because they wanted to show it to all of their soldiers, because of the domestic violence issue - the wife assault issue within the army itself. So I don't think it mattered whether it was film or video for that kind of purpose. But I think that the women in those videos ("A Rule of Thumb"/"Sign of Affection") certainly they would have welcomed film as well, but I think it would have changed the kind of intimacy we had, and also it would have changed my level of control as the filmmaker or video artist of that work. It did come down to budget in those days. It's more in hindsight when I think about the impact of one medium over another. But "A Sign of Affection" was made in Burns Lake, B.C. (British Columbia), so it was going up north and it was easy to travel with a lot of - a bag full of videotapes. It would have been harder with cases of film that we would have had to send down to the lab in Vancouver - when there was still a lab. It could have been done, but it would have changed the dynamic because when we were making that production we were reviewing the rushes everyday as you would if you were using a film lab locally. But with that kind of delay it would have changed the way we were constantly working with it. The other thing that was different with "Sign Of Affection", we were showing the interviews that we were recording to the community right after or a day after we were shooting so that there was a real momentum to "okay, this is what we found out from this person, what's your reaction to that". Video's immediacy and being able to play it back right away allowed that instant action which I think was a strength for it. The other thing about it was a third production I did on wife assault called "A Common Assault," I ended up doing it in slide tape and then transferring it to video. At that time, it was 1978, I was asked to do it in slide tape because northern

communities didn't have any access to 16mm projectors or video players, but they did have crazily slide projectors and this weird sound system that could play an audio cassette back and change the slides. So I actually shot it in that format because of the audience, to make sure that people who access to the most primitive of playback equipment could get hold of the production and be affected by the material.

Limitations of early video equipment

Well, video portapak at first were single tube cameras that just gave this grainy image- black and white. And you carried around the portapak which was half inch open reels that played like audio tapes in those days you loaded it up and threaded it through the mechanism and press play and record and it would record the signal onto it. And the camera had to be connected with a cable to this portapak, so it was cumbersome. It was fine in a sit-down interview situation, because you'd just be resting the recorder and have the camera on a tripod, but it also allowed you to go into the field carrying it, but you had to have a certain strength to carry the portapak and a camera. So sometimes two of us would work together - one carrying and one shooting and then you were bonded by the cable and you had to keep up with each other. You had to be in synch so to speak. And that lead to a certain excitement but a bit of craziness. And then there was the issue of being able to hear the sound. You'd have a microphone in the cable too because there wasn't a mic in the camera and nor did you want to use that if you had one. So then there's a lot of jockeying around, so often the person with the mic was often the person carrying the portapak and another with the camera. So if you wanted to do it as one person show it was a little tricky. Not very portable compared to now. And then three tube cameras came out: very exciting because the image was improved. But it had its own challenges too because everything was heavier. That became 3/4" tapes so we were no longer working with the 1/2" open reels. We were using cassettes that were 3/4" wide tapes and everything became substantially heavier because of that... but it was worth it for the quality. Actually, I don't even know if it was heavier, just different... but again you were carrying a separate machine to record the issue from you camera. So it was portable but cumbersome, and very obvious too. You know you couldn't hide... that kind of visibility changed people responses.

It was definitely a "cumberpack" - good way to put it. And it wasn't a ubiquitous: you didn't see them everywhere like you see video cameras today. They weren't a tourist item... They were definitely low tech but still production equipment, so only the people that were seriously working in that area were carrying them.

In those days I did take the portapak just about wherever I went it seemed. It was the time of the punk clubs like Smiling Buddha and the like. I could take the gear into some places and I would record the concerts and other people were doing that as well. Lenore Coutts (Herb) was a great documenter of all those events. And that kind of crowd just accepted it or performed for it. But it was usually only one camera in the room, maybe two, but certainly not everyone with a cell phone or some other device. It also wasn't so instant that we were posting it onto YouTube because YouTube didn't exist or Facebook. So the way most people got to see it was to come to an event, so you had to plan how you were going to show the work. We were cut off completely from broadcast - they didn't care about us whatsoever. Until community TV, which I think at that time was Rogers. That's when a group of people started doing community television so that work was getting seen. There was "The Gina Show" show which came more out of people at Video Inn. And then out of Cineworks, there was a documentary series on experimental filmmakers at that time, that Pete Lipsky put together and I worked with him on that. So there was some access through community TV, of course it wasn't paid, it was all volunteer, but it was great to be able to tell people you could tune in and see this at that time...The modes of distribution

were more limited but the audiences were huge –relatively- when events were happening. Like in 1979, Paul Wong and a group of people with Western Front, Video Inn and Pumps Gallery put on the Living Arts Performance Festival, and we took over the Commodore and also all the artists run centres those days for events and screenings. Paul and I programmed a series of experimental film and I think there were video screenings and also performance art that we were all in at the Commodore. So those things were all possible and we were working seamlessly through those different venues of the Western Front, pumps and the Video Inn were inseparable in a way. They all had their own Board, they all had their own mandates, but we crossed over and went to every event at each place -which I think also made it really exciting - and supported each other's events and put on things together and it seemed we were always at the same parties and clubs and things. So it was very collegial, and the audience grew through word of mouth - a lot of it - certainly through publications like.... Video Guide... and I edited a few issues of that. That was a way to get the word out

Lobbying for change

Well, we certainly were lobbying a lot. I was going to a lot of CRTC (Canadian Radio-Television Commission) - anytime there was an opportunity we made sure our voice was heard at CRTC – meetings. I remember Paul Wong talking at it a couple times and I did... both in Ottawa and Vancouver. So whenever broadcast licenses were coming up, we made sure that our voices got heard; to say pay attention to the video artists, make sure that programming is open to the independent filmmakers and people who are not right now getting access. And were we listened to? Well, we certainly always got to get a place at the table, and we would show up at all the trade forums at TIFF (Toronto International Film Festival) and VIFF (Vancouver International Film Festival) and make our pitch. I remember in the early 80s, it was the very first time that TIFF started to pay attention to the video artists and they did a parallel event which allowed people to see video art for the first time under the kind of umbrella of this rarified film festival and that was huge so we all went out for that. And we had great relationships with the Toronto video art community as well - we would all go there they would come here... it was seamless...people were moving back and forth to live and work and just hang out. I think that was a pivotal moment in terms of respect - even though the video artists were always going "Film, I don't want to do that" - I think that started the time when video artists like John Greyson started to realize the power of cinema as well as the kind of video artwork he was doing, and there became more crossover. Which I would say the contemporary person for that is Steve McQueen out of London - he was known as a video artist, installation artist, and now he's making multi-million dollar features like "Hunger" and "Shame" and getting great response for it, and it's fantastic that he came out of the art world and is putting that talent into celluloid... not to say that's the only trajectory to go in, but he's reaching an audience that is larger. But he doesn't forget where his roots were, so to speak.

Fluidity between contemporary video & film

I teach a course called "Video Studio" at Emily Carr (Emily Carr University of Art + Design) and I start the first day off: "What is video art?" and "What is its relationship to film?" and "What's the difference between video and film?". I always love the way the students respond in terms of that because when you're making videos you're calling it films just like you (the interviewer) are saying, but I think that's where it's distilling down right now, is that when you call something a film - even though you're working in video – you're calling upon the traditional crew relationships, hierarchies, and scope on what was a traditional film production. When you're talking about something that's a video, you're talking about something that's more personal and done by one or two people at the most - usually one- and it's either

of a very personal nature or a social activist nature. And there's blurry lines around everything I just said, but that's how the majority of the students seem to be giving the distinction now. Actually, they don't even use the word video that much - even though they're doing personal and activist work. But they seem to be able to give that distinction. I would say that we had to finally give up our separate biases back in the '80s when we realized we had to lobby and work together much more.

We went out to CRTC and to the trade forums, etc., to get the recognition of low budget production - be it video or be it film - and we were a stronger voice when we actually spoke together. So the barriers between those and distinctions started blurring with the need to have greater numbers; to come together to make the same case. And I remember really clearly at TIFF trade forum when Telefilm - this was in the early or mid-eighties - and Telefilm was talking about low budget filmmaking and their low budget idea was half a million dollars. And we were going, "Excuse me? What about budgets of \$5000 - we want recognition for that!" and it caused this huge, huge ruckus in the place because we were seen as these naive and young girls. But they realized we had a valid point because we backed it up. We brought in a lot of names of people that were making productions and the need for those to get seen and the need for those to be funded. What's crazy now is that what's low budget has been so rolled back because of the current economy, anyone to get half a million out of Telefilm is doing well.

Impact of cost of living on community and production

Times were different then in the way that certainly was all unequal and all crazy - but at the same time we all had affordable living spaces, we all were able somehow - I always knew for 3 or 6 months that I had some income from somewhere and I never worried past that - and we were all eating well, healthily. And part of being on the Video Inn board, we would cook together, we would make meals together, we would always go to these local cafes that were just so inexpensive in Japantown, down on Powell Street. I think that there's a real difference in the economy today for young people and any age actually - to be able to just volunteer and make the work they have the passion for, even though the tools are really accessible, even though everyone can get some kind of image on their phone or low tech camera or get editing software - so a whole lot more is getting made. But people have to make a living now at a rate - because of the rents, costs of living, food - there's a different pressure that we just didn't have at that time. So we were always volunteering on each others' work and not thinking about it - not think about it twice. An event would come up and we would just create a group that would just take that on. There was poetry in our time - I think it was called - when all the poets around the world were coming to Vancouver - Allan Ginsberg came - you just name it they were here. It was so exciting. So we just got out our portapaks and came and just recorded them, and they just said sure - nobody ever said "no, you can't record this." And I hope those tapes still exist here, I don't know if they do. It was exciting and huge... that was in the late 70s. There was also a time when Judy Chicago came and March Percy and all these feminist writers and painters and installation artists. And so, again, we just went "Oh! They're all coming. We gotta talk to them," So we set up interviews and made sure it was all recorded. I guess that goes back to your question about the future: there was a huge desire to record for posterity these events that were happening, both because this was our tool - video was our tool - so we wanted to make sure we were using it, but also that people could see it later since it was recording a certain time and place that would never happen again. And I think video, more than film, was hugely important at that time in order to have those archives. So they may still be there somewhere, with all the changing formats.

Archiving videotape

Well, with the changing technologies, and the lack of gear to be able to play back those tapes that existed, and the fact that all those magnetic particles flake off and information goes missing, I think its hugely important that we pay attention to finding a way to archive that work - to preserve it. I can't predict what method we'll have in the future, but it scares me how video just can be lost because of not having the ability to play it back. We've tried so many weird ways. Everybody was going "oh, do we need to invest in those... huge laser discs?" That didn't last, and I don't know what ever happened to the work that was actually preserved on it. But there was artist work that was coming out of the Banff Centre, certainly, that was put on to that because at that time I was doing residencies there and I was thinking of seriously having that as my storage mechanism.

You know I tried for a long time to make sure when it went from ½" to ¾" and I paid attention... always every year, rewind your tapes and play them forward so they will stay - but life gets busy and I haven't done that that much. And I recently moved and was downsizing and came across my huge archive of tapes, and what do you do with it? Kept some and I've been trying to digitize it - but then I started thinking, yes I'm digitizing it but to what? So it's a huge issue, and I would say that if we lose that kind of archive we've lost a huge part of our cultural history and that loss will mean that future generations won't really know what that work looked like and what was done. Without that, then it won't inform their practice in as a profound a way as being able to see that early work.

Artists as researchers and innovators for technological change

When I think back about how experiments at the Western Front and at the Video Inn of early transmission of image across continents - what was that called.... that roll bar ...it would scan and we'd be able to see someone in Europe and then their face would come in and then you'd get all of them and then it'd roll again and have moved of course, because it took 8 minutes to get one scan. I think was huge for me to be a part of it when it was those early days, even when it was so primitive and so crude.

Back to your question - we got the glimpse of when that would speed up, which it is today. I mean look at Skype and it was the artist pushing a lot of that technology and using it that, I think, causes further developments in technology. I think artists in video have been the researchers and innovators for a lot of technological change and uses that were beyond the imaginations say of those doing the inventing of it. And I've always seen that video artist have been kind of the forerunners and pioneers of so much that we take for granted now. and without that kind of research and putting in that time and the hours of going what if - and pushing it... we wouldn't have what we've got.

Video as mediated listening

I just want to go back: I was in the early 80s making a film for the NFB, so it was proper budget and it was on film. It was actually done on stills animated onto film - but it was on juvenile prostitution in Vancouver. It was called "Street Kids". I was making a film but I was using the portapak as a tool for the young people. I was working with them in order to research the film and give it authenticity. I worked as a child care worker in a group home - at Davie and Granville back in the early 80s, so I was part of Video Inn - still working in film still working in video. And I took the portapaks into the group home, and I found that the young people responded so much to what that tool could do for them because, for

instance, one woman - who'd been living on the street for a long time, and wanted to get off - had a social worker, and felt that the social worker couldn't hear her. So she came to me and said, "Would you interview me?" So I took the portapak, interviewed her, and said all the things she wanted to say, and then she had me play it back for the social worker while she sat there and listened (the young woman) - and the social worker was able to hear what this person had to say because of the video being the conduit, being the intermediary and this young person felt she couldn't say it directly but she embraced the idea of the camera and playback as a way for her to have voice, even though she's right beside the person. It gave her another agency that she just felt they would believe what was on the TV screen when they wouldn't believe just her voice. And that just taught me so much that this is powerful - this is a tool that should be in the hands of these young people, so that they can feel that they can be

I found it so fascinating that she could say - part of it was that she could say it when the other person wasn't in the room - and there was some intimidation and fear or whatever - but the other was that she knew that medium would give her more authority.

Another example: a young person, male this time, came to me and said let me just borrow the camera, and went into a room by himself and all he wanted to do was really look at himself. This was at the time when Kate Craig was making "Delicate Issue" and Lisa Steele was making "Birthday Suit" - but he didn't know about those works; he wanted to examine himself. This was a fellow who had been sexually abused in his home, run away, found the street, felt that it was a step up to be on the streets because he felt he had some modicum of control, however limited and painful. He just examined every square inch of his body and played it back over and over to be able to look at who he was and give him some ownership back to his own flesh - and that was not a work to ever be seen by anybody. It wasn't for distribution. It wasn't for exposure. It was just a very personal feedback loop for himself. And then we erased it. He would never say he was an artist, and again, it wasn't for that, but i just found - now that's a real difference between film and video: you wouldn't do that with celluloid - take it to the lab get it processed, play it.

Building national networks and mechanisms

I think there was hope that it (video art) would be in perpetuity but we didn't have any inkling as to what would happen technically. Our barriers we were facing were more about how to get the work seen and seen by larger audiences and that started to grow as Video Inn realized they needed to create Video Out and as the artist run centres grew there was also a whole network across the country in Canada so the work just went from artist run centre to artist run centre... and as we got to know each other, then the work started to feed each other, and you knew whatever city you went to you would have some friends and community through those artist run centres. And I think that's a huge movement that facilitated a lot of growth around this work.

But the first meeting (of film and video centres) was in Mount St. Marie in 1979, and I was the Video Inn representative along with Ross Gentleman; and Francois Picard at the Canada Council brought representatives from the centres funded by the Canada Council to attend a conference and really figure out what was our future. She had an agenda because she wanted more hegemony for these organizations to just find her putting her money into it - she wanted us to 'quit fooling around and get serious' but of course we were all rebellious and wouldn't be dictated to by the authorities. But at the same time, her bringing us all together meant us meeting each other, and out of that we created the

Independent Film Alliance which was working with Quebec, and this was the time of the two solitudes - Quebec and English Canada had its own organizations - and we chose to recognize each other...I think we were functioning better than the Canadian government in dealing with this Separatist movement in that we just said okay – yes, we recognize you and want you to recognize us, and lets just work together on what matters here, keeping in mind this political difference; and that succeeded beautifully. We put everything out bilingually, we had the English documents and the Francophone documents that came out side by side that said this is what we believed in - and stepped up our lobbying efforts in order for recognition and access: access to broadcast and recognition at a funding level. At that point Cineworks, which I was in the process of forming, we attended - while I was attending for Video Inn. But Gordon Kidd represented Cineworks and at that point we were the Vancouver *UN*cooperative because we didn't want to be dictated to. But after that meeting, recognizing the value of actually having that structure and being able to receive funding from Canada Council, and Cineworks was formed after that event... and I became president of that organization...The point is that the kind of communication across the country in every single province with other artists run centres gave us an audience for the work and also furthered the work that was being done here because we were being exposed to the work being done in Newfoundland and Halifax and Regina as well as, of course, Toronto and Montreal. And Winnipeg (Winnipeg Film Group), which was the very first very first film co-op, and also had a video co-op, Video Pool, that was parallel in the same way as Cineworks and Video Inn.

Teaching Video Art

There's a real commitment at Emily Carr...to digitize all the half inch tapes that are in the library, as well as the 16mm films, in order to make them accessible to the students. Because nobody has a VHS player anymore or a 16mm projector, so I think that's great...They have permission to digitize these works if a DVD doesn't already exist. Now, of course, DVDs are on their way out, and I expect we'll just be downloading work in the future in order to be able to see. But having this half inch and 3/4 inch as well as DV and 16mm and DVD library for the students I think gives them a visual artifact - something tangible. They can hold on and see historically how things changed. SO it's been very important for me to bring the students here to VIVO and have Crista (Dahl) show the portapak and tell the history of the development of video to the students so that they recognize that things weren't like they are now and what that means.

I make a huge point of showing early video work to the video studio class in order to show what something like Sadies Bennings work when it was made on a Fischer price camera, so that the lowest tech camera possible made this incredibly powerful work when she was 15 years old. And just looking at what was in her bedroom and working with hand written messages to give the text of the piece. And really gave a sense of the time and what were concerns were of someone her age living in New York.... and it dealt with rape and racism and revenge - all within a few minutes in this tape. I show early work of Paula Levine when she was just shooting randomly on Venice Beach with a camera, and then recognized, playing it back, what the power was when she slowed down a little moment for a piece called "Mirror, Mirror". I talk about how she didn't know when she was shooting what the piece would be, but how she discovered it afterwards. So showing how different artist worked - again it was a camera, pre-HD but it's still a beautiful image. It was more about the content and being able to perceive meaning and the value of that.

I also show early Paul Wong work – “60 second Bruise” - and talk about that in terms of his relationship with Kenneth (Fletcher) and the low tech-ness of just sitting down, and the camera - having this

exchange of fluids, and what that means. Again, just the “hey, I've got a concept. Let's just do it” kind of mentality, and how that still has power today. So I think these early works where people were just so brave and non-censoring of themselves, and just having a commitment to thinking about what it is they wanted to say and how best to say it and getting it out there. It counteracts some of that “cute kitten” as the most popular video on Youtube and Facebook mentality.

Information overload

You know...I...feel that sometimes you're weeding through all that to get to the gems... but if one person's gem is another ones horror story and vice versa. I think it's great that it's so accessible, and I think that the onus is on the people that are working in media to push things further. I guess the downside on so much proliferation is that I don't think there's enough thinking going on... but at the same time at least it's accessible and people aren't afraid of the technology. But the proliferation of all that stuff is almost like noise - where do you find all that work? But it does rise; you just have to seek it out. At least there are more venues for it now.

There is (information overload) but ... we're hungry for more and hungry for the new. And, at the time when we were all making it, I don't remember thinking we were breaking new ground - even though I was told I was the only person in Canada to be doing something at that point...That felt good, but it was still, like, just get the work done: this is what we're doing now and let's go do it.

I think things find their own audience... and – yeah, I don't know - I think we'll twenty years, thirty, forty years from now, go “what were they thinking? How primitive?”

Community and longevity

I think what it still comes down to, regardless of what the technology is, regardless of all the innovations, I think the staying power of Video Inn, and the reason it has survived forty years, is because of community and it's the connections of the people that come here. And I think as long as there is that - as long as there - whether there's a physical place or not - although I think that's been huge - I think it's because of the relationships of the people that have connected to this place, that has meant it's survived and will continue to survive. Because it offers access to technologies that people don't have, even when they all have their phone, and some way to record things or edit them. The fact is that VIVO, and Video Inn before that, offered what someone couldn't have in their home. That's sometimes just the chance to work with other people- sometimes it's the chance to show your work to other people. But often it's equipment that you can't access with your own budget. As long as that keeps being maintained, I think it could go for forty odd more years or whatever. Because the hub of it is that its people coming together over something they believe in and working together for a greater purpose. If I could be so....I guess what I'm trying to say, it sounds like a little feel good message, but I think about that. I've been a part of a lot of organizations, but the fact that both Cineworks and VIVO have sustained over this time means a lot to me in terms of all that early effort and all that work. And that's why I keep coming back to it: it has to be the people because with all the changes different people coming in and going, there's been a huge relevancy still. There've been ebbs and flows of it, but I think it's meeting a really profound need. And I just come back to community with that. And I think video is a great catalyst for giving voice and also creating community. It is extraordinary, actually, that it's stayed, and stayed relevant.