

MIKE LEGGETT

Knathorn, Morchard Bishop, Crediton, Devon.

- (d) The Arts Council reserves the right to refuse to show any videotape, or to reject any catalogue material, on the grounds of obscenity or libel. In such cases, or where the condition of the submitted tape(s) prevents playback, no payment will be made.

Signed:

Date:

"EIGHTEEN MONTHS OUTSIDE THE GROUNDS OF OBSCENITY & LIBEL"

"DON'T WORRY! THERE'S A BLANK SPACE."

The Video Show, in terms of the Serpentine Gallery space and the catalogue you hold at this moment are, in my opinion, a MOST UNSATISFACTORY way of presenting the medium or even the phenomenon of Video to any but a highly specialised group of people some of whom are sometimes referred to as Artists. For such a specialised exhibition to be held in such a public space is the squandering of an opportunity to inform the public at large of the tyranny we are all nightly affected by in the shape of Broadcast Television;

"Study and observe the piece of equipment known as a television set in its most common environment the living room, the lounge, the drawing room, whatever you may call it, the room where the members of the household find themselves after working, after eating, before they go to bed.. The television set though it remains a consumer article is no longer as it used to be a consumer gadget. It could more accurately be described as just another consumer ornament. Functioning perfectly, is it not simply a 21" picture window? Another lamp standard in the corner? A constantly changing pattern of new wallpaper?"

The videotape recordings I have made over the last eighteen months have in effect been an attempt to come to terms with the deadening affect of the phenomena just described; some of the recordings examine our behavioural attitudes to the phenomena of "the telly", others explore the Medium itself without regard to traditions of content and time scale, all demand from a viewer a different attitude to viewing. In order of showing the recording consists;

- 1 - an 8 minute recording made with a portable recorder optically copied onto the recording seen with control of brightness, contrast and sound quality.
- 2 - a 6 minute extract from a longer tape which investigates the relationship between seen and unseen description.
- 3 - a 10 minute tape again originating from a recording made on a portable recorder and subsequently presented within the context of a multi-camera closed circuit installation.
- 4 - a 5 minute encounter with a heifer in the middle of a Devon pasture - a response leads to a natural conclusion.
- 5 - a 12 minute continuous unedited recording examines the interplay contained within the film and the time-based machinery of a closed-circuit studio installation.
- 6 - Duncan Morris is asked to laugh for as long as he is able.....

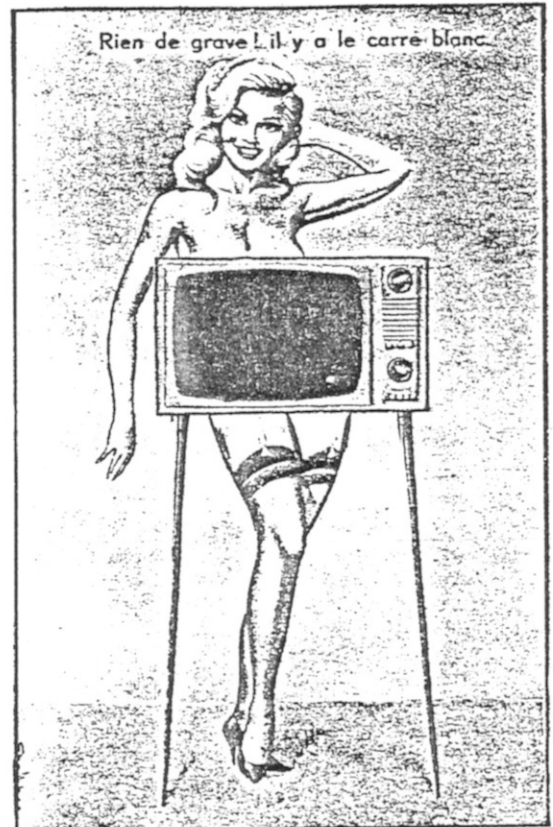
These recordings will only be available for three showings during the Show and are not available in the 'Open Access' library, for two reasons; one is that I see no value in people coming to the gallery to gaze for an indefinite period at other people work. From my experiences of working with video, the time is better spent in making recordings. The other reason is that if people come to the Show to simply consume other peoples ideas and experiences, albeit secondhand, in the way broadcast television trains us to accept, then they will in the same way have to pay for it.

Creating the conditions for people to make their own recordings, to employ video as a valid, explicit, easily assimilated tool, is not a straightforward matter; though the cost of its functioning is relatively low the accessibility of the equipment itself is problematic. I myself borrow it in the course of employment at an institute of further education but at the present time because video is largely regarded by Industry and Education as being second string to the aesthetic and technical resources of the broadcast stations the proliferation of resources to "outsiders" has been virtually nil.

The Arts Council is not the government agency to make available to people other than students and a few professionals the medium of Video and Video Experience. The backing and organisation required is much greater and more continuous such that the medium is able to become a popular means of cultural expression where the process of communication, documentation, whatever, is constantly in evidence all the time as an on-going reality.

The need for shows such as this would then be redundant.

M.L. 28.2.75.



Postcard found in a Dutch market.