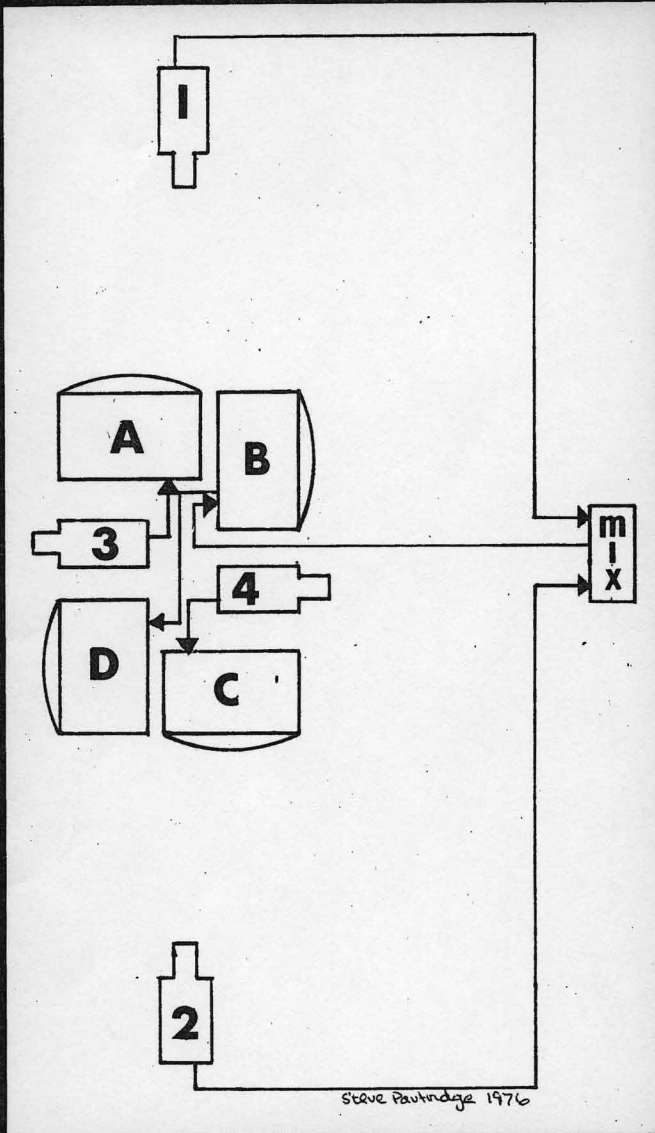


# Steve Partridge



*Installation No. 1* 1976, shown at Third Eye Gallery, Glasgow (March 1976)

Everything about the nature of  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch video seems to make it ideally suited to individuality and creativity. Artists are able to use video equipment either completely alone or in small groups. No specialized professional skills are needed to operate the equipment, and tape costs far less than film. All of this seems to make video a truly human-sized medium.

My own tape work has been largely concerned with an exploration of the video process per se. In pieces such as *Interlace* and *Snow Scale*, I have tried to manipulate and modify process-generated imagery into some understanding and reflection of the medium itself. *Monitor 1* is a careful reorganization of time scales and images of a revolving monitor producing a disorientating illusion. The tapes have all struggled in some way with the problem of the identity and the aesthetics of the medium.

There is one characteristic of video which I have found to be of increasing interest: camera switching. The importance of switching/mixing seems to have been overlooked in most analysis of video aesthetics; the dialogue mainly being concerned with the difference between the film frame and video field. It is possible using a videotronic switcher/mixer to switch from camera to camera, dissolve, wipe, fade, all in 'real time', whilst the same effects in film cannot be achieved without an interruption in time.

The video switcher, then, allows the artist to 'intervene strategically in an ongoing process'.

Closed-circuit installations can be set up manipulating this quality of the medium to produce temporal and spatial juxtapositions involving the audience as both spectator and subject.

Over the past six months I have been concentrating on this rather sculptural aspect of video rather than video tape, and have designed an Automatic Video Switcher (AVS) along with Howard Vie which we have been making since January at the Royal College of Art Environmental Media Department. This can be seen at the Tate Gallery this month (May) as part of my installation.

The AVS has eight inputs and outputs, and is programmed by control pulses which are recorded on sound tape and subsequently decoded by a multiplex encoder/decoder and fed to the switcher. More than one input (*ie* camera) can be selected and the interval between switches can be any length of time. There is a matrix between the inputs and the outputs so that any camera can be chosen to feed any monitor or number of monitors at any given time. Through the AVS time and space can be altered within a structural and programmed format. A camera's view, *ie* its space, may move around the larger space within which the installation exists by being switched from monitor to monitor, producing a spatial and perceptual displacement.

\* Robert Arn, *Artscanada*, October 1973.