

One of the most unusual exhibitions to hit Glasgow for a long time is currently showing at the Transmission Gallery in Chisholm Street, Glasgow. *Glasgow events space* is an exhibition of video art comprising film, video, installation and performance. Everything from pop videos to more avant garde work is on view, a special feature being a video wall of 24 television monitors. The whole thing is funded by the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Scottish Arts Council – amongst others – as well as using equipment donated by companies such as DER and Viewplan. When I called round at Transmission a few days before it opened, the organisers were in the process of dismantling the previous exhibition and, nattily-clad in overalls, took a break to explain *Glasgow events space* to me. The prime movers behind the exhibition are Stephen Partridge and Doug Aubrey, both of whom gravitated into video from college in Maidstone. Stephen progressed to Dundee's Duncan of Jordanstone College, where he lectures in video, via the Royal College of Art and Coventry and Doug, along with Allan Robertson and Richard Gardner, runs a production company called MFX.

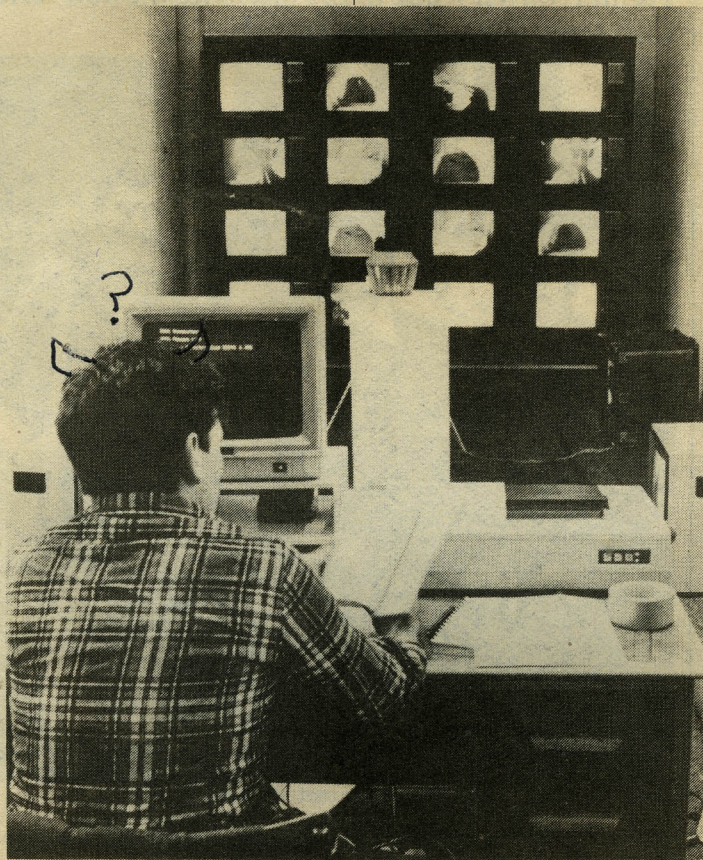
'being creative'

'The idea behind the exhibition' says Stephen, 'is to provide a showcase for some of the work which has been going on in Scotland in the last two years as well as to give a flavour of what is happening in the rest of Britain and elsewhere in the world.' Video, apparently, has taken off in the south of Britain but Scotland, he feels, has been left out. Much of the work which is going on here exists thanks to Duncan of Jordanstone College, which is the only Art school in the country which runs courses in video. 'The students use it very well', Stephen asserted. He added that he had no qualms about letting them loose with thousands of pounds worth of equipment. 'The staff are the worst because they just won't be taught, but the students are fine. There's more to it than just pressing buttons – the important thing is to be creative.' As well as the students at Dundee, Stephen has what he describes as an 'informal relationship' with artists outside the college feeling that there is a moral responsibility to help them get involved in video art. The title of the exhibition reflects the way both Doug and Stephen feel about video; they regard it as being just as valid and indeed, as much a part of the art world as sculpture, painting etc; describing it all as 'time-based' art.

All this does not mean that they feel at all elitist about their work – quite the opposite in fact. 'We want it to be accessible to the general public,' said Doug. 'The idea is to encourage people to come back every two or three days. This is because the exhibits are constantly changing and,' as Stephen puts it, 'there's bound to be something they can get into.' This attitude applies

STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Glasgow's Transmission Gallery is currently hosting a month long exhibition of Video art. Featuring both televised and live performances it is the first show of its kind in Scotland for a decade. Graham Caldwell looks at this growing form of art.



not only to the exhibition itself, but also to the staffing of it. There will be an 'informed artist' behind the desk at Transmission and the public are assured that they 'won't just get stared at'.

The staff will try to find out what everyone is interested in and help them find it – Stephen maintains that visitors may not know quite what they are interested in until they see it.

The exhibition is divided into two sections. One will have the 24 screen 'video wall', to be used for various pieces over the month and the other will include a 'video library' which is both extensive and varied. When I was there, everyone involved was trying to think of a way to project the video wall into the street outside to attract even more people. The organisers feel that it should be a crowd pulling event. The last of its kind in Scotland, *Video Towards Defining an Aesthetic* at the Third Eye in the seventies was very

successful, attracting more than 4,000 patrons.

The then Director at the Third Eye, Tom McGrath is a guest artist at the opening night, when he will be providing readings and/or music. McGrath has become more interested in TV over the years and Stephen says he is there as 'a friend of the show'. One guest particularly welcomed by the organisers is David Hall. Hall taught at Maidstone, 'the pioneering college in video' and was, perhaps, the first to see and use the possibilities of video in the late 60's. The exhibition will be showing some of his films including *Phase Time*. 'They haven't been seen for a long time', Stephen points out 'and people will be amazed at how seminal they are.' Another distinguished guest is Kevin Atherton the enfant terrible of 70s performance art. He will be presenting *Death in Glasgow – Stand Up TV*, which Stephen thinks may raise a few eyebrows. Atherton is

concerned with the way we regard what we are looking at, according to Stephen who adds ominously 'he may be there and he may not, you'll just have to guess.'

'guaranteed excitement'

Glasgow events space are deliberately vague about who and what is on when. They do not want people to come along just to see certain things, but rather dip in and out throughout the month. One of the people who will be taking part, though is Joj Goslan, a student at Duncan of Jordanstone, who will be presenting *Please Unite Us*, about which all he would say was that it 'guaranteed excitement.' Another recommended exhibit comes from film maker Jane Rigby who has an installation of four projectors showing a piece based on a landscape around Perth. 'Very different – visually stunning' is how Stephen describes it.

Stephen and Doug feel that people have got the wrong idea and impression about video and television which they think, is caused by 'too many Oxbridge people with English degrees making programmes, together with journalists and people with a background in drama.' This sort of image scares people off and they hope that this show will provide a catalyst to interest output in Scotland. 'In some senses British TV is the best in the world, but in other ways it is dragging behind,' said Stephen. 'Channel 4 is a bit hit-and-miss but it has helped.' They have been brave in the amount of video work they have commissioned from artists, despite the problems of introducing works of arbitrary length into the schedules 'which the BBC and ITV wouldn't do' as Stephen said. It is this sort of attitude that they would like to see on the increase: encouraging people to get involved and approach such people as the Video Committee of the Arts Council who, according to Stephen, do a good job. 'They spread the jam thinly, but they spread it well.'

Glasgow events space has been showing trailers on Clyde Cable Vision and hope to have some of their work shown in the area. They will also be making their own documentary record of the exhibition which will be available to interested parties. Everyone concerned with it has given their services free of charge. DER have provided the video wall, Viewplan rang out of the blue and offered the use of U-matic cameras and equipment. Companies such as Ikon (the video end of the Factory Records empire) Doublevision and the Newcastle based art-agency, Project UK have all given pieces for free and there is also a quantity of material from Australia. Everyone involved wants as many people as possible to see the exhibition, 'not just the arty ones' says Doug. They could be in for a surprise. Stephen explains, 'They'll see TV in a sculptural sense – how it relates to space. It stops being a TV and the tube becomes something else.'