

E A S T E R N W A V E

by Chris Majka

This month, I would like to take a look at the Centre for Art Tapes, a Halifax-based organization with a pioneering role in art video.

The Centre for Art Tapes has been in existence since the mid-1970s when it shared quarters with the Atlantic Filmmakers Coop at the now famous Argyle House. At that time the Centre for Art Tapes was solely an exhibition facility for "art" video tapes and performance art with a new technology slant. Through programs with visiting artists and by screening of video tapes from across Canada and around the world, the Centre for Art Tapes was the first organization in this part of Canada to create an awareness of video as an art form. In the course of doing so, it established for itself a solid reputation as an exhibition facility.

In the fall of 1982 Argyle House was sold and the occupants had to find, as they say in Britain, new digs. In the case of Centre for Art Tapes the change of locale, as well as the demise of the NFB-supported "Video Theatre" in Halifax,

brought about an important change in its goals and activities. The Centre found a new home in the Alexandra Centre, a former school in the northern part of the city, which now houses several community organizations, and there was a decision on the part of the Board of Directors to become involved in video production as well as exhibition. This has been facilitated by the much increased space that the Centre now has. In the building are a gallery-exhibition space, a screening room, the beginnings of a video and printed material library, two offices, an equipment room, one editing suite (and another one in the making), a video production studio, and a sound booth.

Through a combination of scrounging and various grants, the Centre has acquired a quite adequate and workable collection of video cameras, decks, tripods, lights and various other bits and pieces of production gear in both 3/4" and 1/2" formats. Their video production facility is the first "alternative" studio of its kind in

this area and has an excellent lighting grid, a good quality 8-track recording and 16-track mixing board, and a versatile editing suite complete with time-base corrector. It is available to producer-members of Centre for Art Tapes, community organizations, and independent sound and video producers in the region at very nominal costs and makes it possible for professional quality "art-video" productions to take place here.

At the same time that the Centre for Art Tapes changed premises, it also expanded its mandate to include not only video but also audio production and exhibition. This has led to its involvement each year in the "Audio by Artists" Festival which took place for the fourth year in a row during this past March, as well as in numerous other audio installations at their exhibition space and audio productions at their studio.

Fran Schuebrooke, who makes things happen in Halifax art and media circles, has just taken over as the new co-ordinator of the Centre and, in conversation, she told me that during the next year an important priority is to greatly expand the exhibition schedule and to bring a greater variety of visiting artists to the Centre. The intent of this is to try and stimulate the local arts community in terms of the potential of this medium and thereby to make more extensive use of the facilities which the Centre for Art Tapes has available.

The Centre has areas of overlapping interest with a number of organizations. They cooperate with the Atlantic Filmmakers Coop in the publication of *Callboard*, a newsletter on film and video in the province. It also cooperates with Eye-level Gallery, Halifax's alternative gallery space, on exhibitions and festivals, with Dalhousie's Experimental Music Studio, with the video section of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD), and with the Filmography project of the Nova Scotia Provincial archives. All of these relationships are important in that, for example, the Centre for Art Tapes is the only facility in this area where students of the ex-

perimental music program, or of the video section of NSCAD, who have completed their studies, can continue to pursue their artistic interests.

The Centre is also itself involved in education through its workshop programme. It organizes periodic workshops, both on an introductory level, for individuals and community organizations who are interested in learning to use video, and on a more advanced level for producers in the region. This has led to a number of productions being generated by groups such as MUMS

(Mothers United for Metro Shelter) which address local social, economic, or political concerns.

The Centre for Art Tapes may at times spread itself too thin or find itself all over the places in terms of its activities; however, it fills a needed space within the media community. In this era of high-tech equipment and importance of the media, it is heartening to know that this organization is bringing that technology within the reach of people who want to explore its artistic or socio-political potential.

CAMBIUM FILM & VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

MAKE THE CUT

...you want and need for your productions with CAMBIUM PRODUCTIONS. Our centrally located, fully equipped 3/4" Offline Editing Suite comes with a friendly and professional staff to assist you.

CAMBIUM also features a variety of VHS and 3/4" transfer services. Special daily and weekly rates available.

141 Gerrard Street East, M5A 2E3 (416) 964-8750, 964-9507



LOOKING TO MOVE?

UP TO 6,000 sq. ft. OF SPACE SUITED FOR

PRE & POST PRODUCTIONS (SHORT OR LONG TERM)

EDITING FACILITIES

SOUND MIXING

DUPLICATIONS

AD AGENCIES

PHOTOGRAPHERS

WE OFFER YOU

EXCELLENT RATES

IN A TOTALLY FILM ORIENTED FACILITY

FREE PARKING CLOSE TO DOWNTOWN SECURITY STAFF



PHOTOGRAPHY, FILM AND VIDEO FACILITIES

258 Wallace Ave. Toronto, Ont. M6P 3M9

(416) 537-3471 TELEX 065 24086

Art films wanted

MONTREAL — The 5th International Festival of Films in Art, scheduled for March 24-29, 1987, is calling for submissions of film or videos that deal with painting, sculpture, architecture, design, crafts, museology, photography, cinema, dance, music, theatre or literature.



Offering a comprehensive insurance package on all your feature, television, commercial, theatrical or special event production.

Our specialists, with twenty years of experience, can design an insurance program to suit your specific needs. We have world-wide facilities.

MICHAEL DEVINE, C.I.B.

or

JACQUES TAILLEFER, C.I.B., F.I.I.C.

240 St. Jacques Street, 10th Floor Montreal, Quebec H2Y 1L9

Telephone: (514) 288-2544 Telex: 055-61159