

Proposal idea:

WOMEN'S VIDEO FESTIVAL 1973

In July 1972, when we began work on the Women's Video Festival, we had no idea how many women would respond to our request for tapes. As we compiled our mailing list, it was surprising to realize that in the New York area alone, we contacted over 60 women who were involved in one way or another with video. Of this 60, about 20 actually sent tapes to be shown. Many more of those contacted wanted to send material but because of our short deadline were unable to complete works in progress on time.

When the festival finally was presented and we had an opportunity to meet and talk with contributing artists we found that many women using video never worked in film or communications previously...partly because of the intimidation of mechanical and technical information and partly because of the job discrimination that relegates them to the areas of research and other passive roles.

With so many women overcoming these problems through the ½" medium, there is a definite need for an outlet where their work can be viewed. The Kitchen provided this forum by sponsoring last year's festival, and hundreds of people, attracted simply by the idea of seeing what women were doing, came and responded enthusiastically and in some cases with surprise at what they saw.

Because the medium of ½" was developed during a time when women's awareness of themselves and their role in society was reaching new heights, the traditional male hierarchy that exists in almost every other facet of expression did not grow up with it. And because the immediacy of video lends itself so well to documentary and information dissemination, women are using this relatively new form of communication to share and change their life experience. This is something that is not possible in other formats. Either expense is prohibitive or the time input required is so great that the information is old news by the time it's ready for presentation.

Up until last September, the only missing link in this chain of events was a place where this information could be seen by people other than a select video community. The festival attracted people

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from many diversities and exposed a point of view that is usually distorted in a highly condensed mass media format. Because the festival was open to all women and to all subjects, we also had much work that wasn't heavily feminist. We did not imply that women can only do work about "women's" issues.

Since the show ended we have received a steady stream of correspondence from all parts of the country requesting more information about the festival itself, about tapes that appeared in it and about women's video groups and the work they have available for exchange. It is for this reason that it seems imperative to coordinate a festival this year that would include tapes made by women from all over the country. We were unable to do this last year because of time and expense. Having gone through the experience of organizing festival number one...the mechanism for doing a sequel is already established...expansion of the original idea, to include a greater geographic area would provide a unique resource of information exchange that is unlike anything that happens in print, film or radio.