

VIDEO BALLOON

by Pedro Lujan

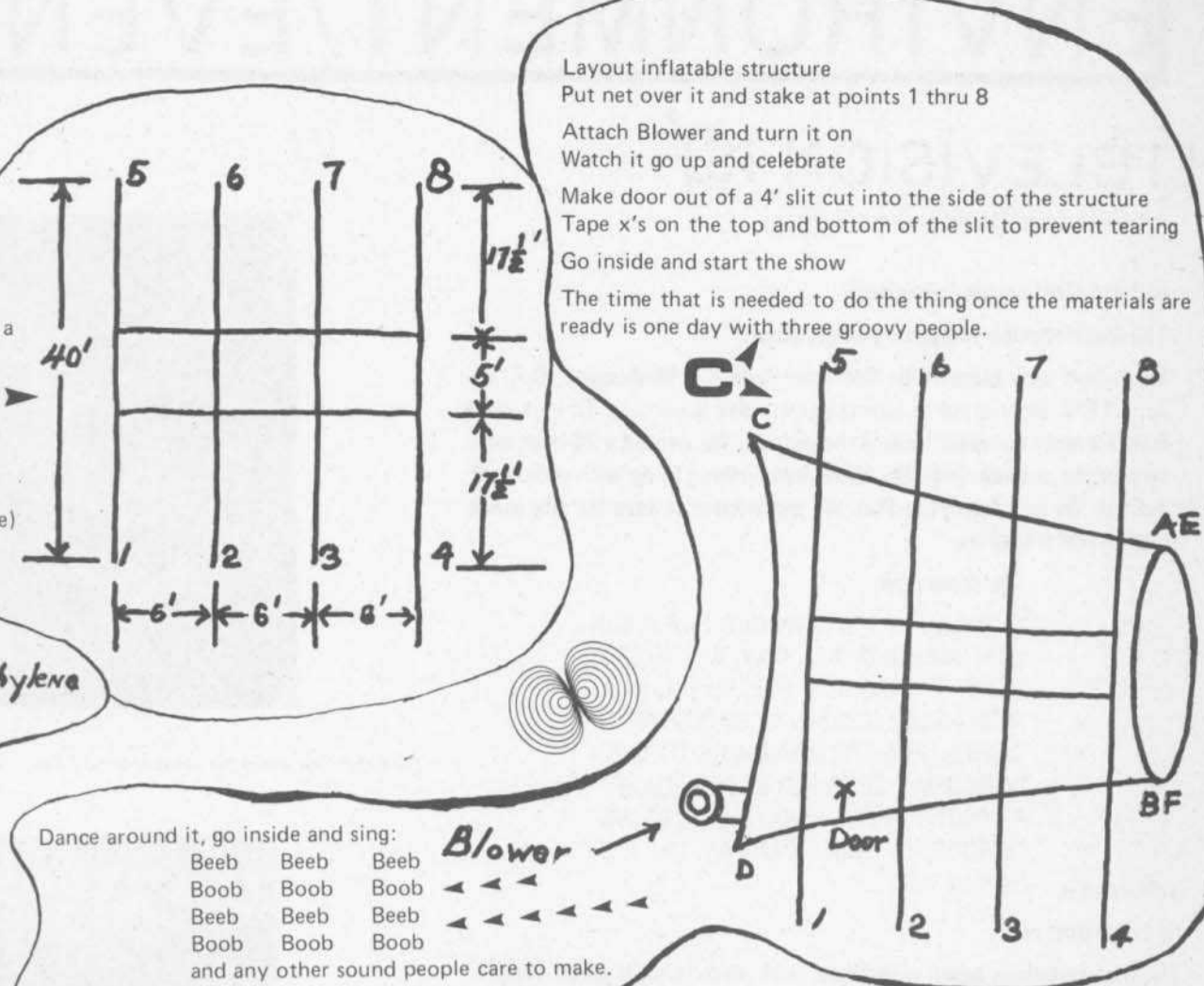
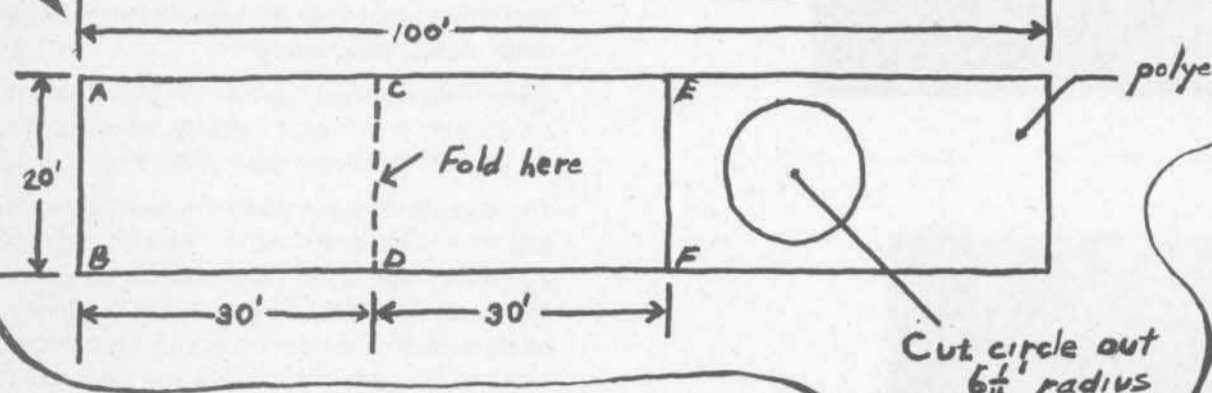
This is a description of a process for making a video-projection theatre which can comfortably seat 30 people inside or be used as a protected video projection screen.

Materials Needed:

- 1 roll of white polyethylene 20' x 100'
- 200' polyethylene tape 3" wide
- 1 pen
- 13' string
- 1 blower over 1500 cubic feet/minute capacity
- 250' 1/2" manila rope
- 8 stakes about 2' long
- 1 pr of scissors
- 1 40' measuring tape
- & entertainment

Process:

- Layout the polyethylene on the floor
- Cutting: Cut along E-F
- Mark circle out using a pen and a 6 1/4" string as a compass
- Cut circle out
- Bring A-B over to E-F
- Fold along C-D
- Tape circle to E-F and A-B
- Tape C-AE and D-FB
- Net: Make a net of 1/2" manila rope (needed for outdoor use)



Layout inflatable structure
Put net over it and stake at points 1 thru 8
Attach Blower and turn it on
Watch it go up and celebrate
Make door out of a 4' slit cut into the side of the structure
Tape x's on the top and bottom of the slit to prevent tearing
Go inside and start the show
The time that is needed to do the thing once the materials are ready is one day with three groovy people.

Dance around it, go inside and sing:
Beeb Beeb Beeb
Boob Boob Boob
Beeb Beeb Beeb
Boob Boob Boob
and any other sound people care to make.
Have a banquet at the end

SELF-PROCESSING

by Paul Ryan

Everyman's Moebius Strip

Your inside is out and your outside is in
Your outside is in and your inside is out
So come on come on
Come on is such a joy
Come on is such a joy
Come on make it easy
Come on make it easy
Everybody's got something to hide
except for me and my monkey.

—Lennon and McCartney

A moebius strip is a one sided surface that is made by taking a long rectangle of paper, giving it a half twist and then joining its ends. Any two points on the strip can be connected by starting at one point and tracing a line to the other without crossing over a boundary or lifting a pencil.

The moebius strip provides a model for dealing with the power videotape gives us to take in our own outside. With film, we are taking in the edited experience of others. With videotape we can pre-edit our own experience. What follows is a composition for video to be edited, directed, acted and viewed by you in privacy. Feel free to bend fold and mutilate as you wish. It is not designed to peel your own skins off until you find some fiction called the true you. Rather it is designed so that you might get a taste of processing yourself through tape, so that you might begin to play and replay with yourself. Hopefully it will suggest ideas for your own compositions.

Your strip.

Your trip.

Technically, this is the way it works.

Using an audio tape recorder, record the following series of cues, pausing after each instruction for as long as you would want to follow it out.

Set yourself up in front of the videocamera for a head and shoulders shot.

Have the monitor off.

Roll the tape.

Follow/don't follow the cues.

Relax and breath deeply, just relax and breath deeply

Loosen up your face by yawning
stretching your neck
working your jaw

Now, explore your face with your fingertips

Touch the favorite part of your face

Close your eyes and think of someone you love

Remember a happy moment with them

With eyes open give facial responses to the following people

- Joe Nameth
- Don Rickels
- Spiro Agnew
- Your Mother
- Huey Newton
- You



For the next twenty seconds do what you want

Now let your face be sad

Turn your back to the camera

Now face the camera

take a bow.

replay

As long as we adopt the Narcissus attitude of regarding the extensions of our own bodies as really out there, really independent of us, we will meet all technological challenge with the same sort of banana skin pirouette and collapse.

McLuhan *Understanding Media*

McLuhan understands all extensions of man as inducing a corresponding numbness and closure. Narcissus' image in the pool is a kind of self amputation brought on by irritating pressures. To counter the irritant of amputation, his image in the pool produces a numbness in Narcissus which makes it impossible for him to recognize his extended self.

This mechanism is at work with people seeing themselves on tape. The most telling instance I know of is a replay I did for a three year old girl in a family setting. She felt compelled to imitate what she saw herself doing on the screen: if her taped self was singing, she sang; if dancing, she danced. In one section of the tape she was walking down stairs—upon seeing this section of the tape she ran up the stairs and walked down again. This three year old seemed to be using real time mirror groundrules to deal with her videotape experience. It seemed she was playing a mirror part for her video image—the part the mirror would ordinarily play for her. In doing so she became a numb servomechanism of her extended image. The next time I brought the camera around she ran. She refused to become spellbound by her tape extended self. By contrast I hear a children's sensitivity leader once brag that he had seen so much of himself on tape that he was desensitized to it.

The moebius video strip is a tactic for avoiding both servomechanistic closure and desensitizing in using videotape. Tape can be a tender way of getting in touch with oneself. In privacy, with full control over the process, one can learn to accept the extension out there on tape as part of self. There is the possibility of taking the extending back in and reprocessing over and again on one's personal time warp.

There will be tape, there will be time,
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet.

It may be wise to invite a good friend to watch some of the replay with you. Yet avoid inhibiting word labels on what you're doing. The moebius tape strip is a tactic for infolding information unto a fullness. "Exuberance is Beauty . . . the cistern contains, the fountain overflows." To overflow one need be infolding. The process of infolding cannot be frozen in words. Let go the formulations and take another trip round the moebius strip.

Videotape is the "some power" that is answer to the prayer of Burns people which they instinctively quote when talking about tape.

Oh wha some power the Giftie gie us
To see ourselves as ithers see us
It would from many a blunder free us
And foolish notion.
What airs in dress and gait would lee us
And e'vn devotion.
"It would from many a blunder free us."
It would enlarge our ability to self correct.
It would extend us in a cybernetic way.

With video we can know the difference between how we intend to come across and how we actually do come across. What we put out, what is taken by the tape, is an imitation of our intended image, it is our monkey. A video system enables us to get the monkey off our backs where we can't see him, out onto the tape where we can see him. That is the precise way in which we've been making a monkey of ourself. The monkey has been able to get away with his business because he operates on the other side of the inside/outside barrier. The moebius tape strip snips the barrier between inside/outside. It offers us one continuous (sur) face with nothing to hide. We have the option of taking in our monkey and teaching him our business or letting him go on with his.

Taking in your own outside with video means more than just tripping around the moebius strip in private. One can pass through the barrier of the skin—pass through the pseudo self to explore the entirety of one's cybernet—i.e., the nexus of informational processes one is a part of. You can listen to the Beatles too much. You can turn a moebius strip composition into a merry go round of ego tripping on a single loop. In fact, we live in multiple loops. Moebius composition can touch on these loops; Agnew—mother—Huey Newton. But to confine ourselves to this use of video is to confine a cybertool to closet drama.

Cybernetics . . . "recognizes that the "self" as ordinarily understood is only a small part of a much larger trial- and-error system which does the thinking, acting and deciding. This system includes all the informational pathways which are relevant at any given moment to any given decision. The "self" is a false reification of an improperly delimited part of this much larger field of interlocking processes . . ."

The cybernetic extension of ourselves possible with videotape does not mean a reinforcement of the ordinarily understood "self". Total touch with one's cybernet precludes the capitalism of identity at the expense of understanding process that the west has habitually engaged in. One's resume is not one's reality. Master Charge does not make you master of anything but involves you in an expensive economy of credit information processed by computer, your checking account, TV ads, long lines in banks and busy telephones. The Master Charge Card exploits the illusion of unilateral control over life the west has suffered with. "I am the Captain of My Soul; I am the Master of My Fate." We have yet to understand there is no master self. They are now putting photos on charge cards when they should be mapping the credit system the card involves you in. Video users are prone to the same illusion. It is easy to be zooming in on "self" to the exclusion of environmental or social systems. Doing feedback for others one comes to realize the necessity of taping and replaying context. I had the opportunity to do a kind of video meditation on the house of two friends while they were away. The replay served to deepen their sensitivity to their everyday surroundings.

*Bateson, Gregory "Toward a theory of Alcoholism: the Cybernetics of "Self". This section is an adaptation of notions developed in Bateson's paper. It is the most lucid discussion of the kind of cybernetic identity implicit in video systems that I know of.

Remarks on First Seeing Self on Tape

"I always thought of myself as peculiar, but I can see I'm put together like anybody else, like someone you'd see on a subway."

"Wow, its like making it with yourself."

"Ooh, so that's me huh, and I'm not ugly."

"I just meet a beautiful person."

Other Tactics

Take the video to your private therapy sessions. Set it up on a tripod and record. Take the session home with you.

Hang the video camera from a rope. With some favorite music playing, dance a naked solo in the videospace.

With the monitor on, compose an advertisement for yourself designed for the monitor space.

Leave the camera set up near the phone. Flip it on when you get a call. Replay it to get a better idea of how you relate to the party at the other end. Tap your body, not the wire.

Buddhist Mirror Meditation
word for mirror "dakpana" means "causing vanity"

He gazes at this reflected image in the mirror in front. The constructed colored features of his face are void of entity. The face of the reflected image looks hither; his own face looks thither. Because there is no disagreement of mindfulness, the genuine face is also void of entity. According as he manages not to be attached, the appearance of the reflected image is in his own mind. He contemplates the color of his mind, for example the manifestation of lust, thinking it to be void. He contemplates his mind to be a reflected image and the appearance of body to be his own mind. Body and mind are like the reflected images. Deny a person that way, he has become free from attachment by gazing at the reflected image in a mirror."

Maitripadas Mahamudrasiddhantopadesa

Inscription on a fifteenth century Italian mirror
"Don't complain, I only give back what you give to me."



photo: Jra Cohen