

portable video: the natural medium



photo: Dudley

Life Processes, a process revolution

Just what is it anyway about the nature of portable video which makes process its most important product?

(A blessing in disguise). Somehow at a crucial point in time in a highly commercialized, industrialized, mechanized nation, we have become enamoured with a technology for which there is no marketable product. Oh yes, there will be the cassette revolution, and of course cable tv is a possibility, and really, the range of possibilities for its use is infinite—but still—who's buying ½ inch video tapes these days?

With no market in sight, we are at last being forced into using a high tech communications tool as a real aid in extending our capabilities of relating to our fellow man and even in better understanding our own complex selves. Except for a few industry types who use ½ inch video as a "notebook" of ideas for making more realistic automobile commercials, most of the people who become involved with the medium are sincerely interested in developing humanistic uses of the technology. Could be also that most of these people share a feeling that there is a certain beauty in life which is a lot more interesting and honest as information than the inane, if not complete life-negating entertainment and "news" which the networks see fit to sell to their audiences.

Because we are concerned with life as a process, it is

only natural that in the act of taping, the foreplay (as well as the afterplay, instant replay) becomes as important as the orgasm itself. Otherwise, the subject becomes an object, and the cameraman (or woman) becomes a video chauvanist or rip off artist which is most often the case when a big tv or film crew comes into a scene and takes the information and runs.

Portable video, because of its nature, has a built-in safeguard against such tendencies. Even if you're not into passing the camera around and letting your subject/object become a participant in the production and seeing how easy and fun the whole media trip really is, you can at least let him (them) (her) have the experience of seeing himself replayed on a monitor after the fact, since no one should be denied the realization that he is equal to any superstar the establishment decides to hype up. Anyone who has ever taken his portapak and a portable monitor into the street and just let the tape roll, knows the power this little machine has in making things happen—i.e., people actually begin talking to you! (which doesn't always occur so easily if you happen to look a little wierd to them). They also start talking to each other and in their amusement with seeing themselves and their friends on tv, they begin to develop a consciousness that what they have to say does mean something to someone besides themselves and that maybe, if it isn't too much to hope, *they can begin to regain something long ago lost to them in a world of giant corporate power structures, and that is the feeling of having control over their own destiny.*

