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VIDEO THEATRE

We have had many requests from readers asking us for information on the structure of the video theatre we ran at our New York Raindance loft in the winter of 1970. The following is a description of the theatre, a diagram, and a financial statement.

Starting December 19, 1970 Raindance Corporation opened its loft at 24 east 22nd Street, NYC, for 10 consecutive Saturday evenings of cooperative videotape presentations with Videofreex, Peoples' Video Theatre, and others. A single channel of video (and audio) was selected from one of 3 Sony EIAJ decks or one of 2 Sony CV vtrs by means of a passive switcher. This number of vtrs allowed for rewinding and cuing up (through several preview monitors in the control area) of tapes for more integrated programming. Seven monitors were arranged in a space of approximately 55' x 22'. Seating was on comfortable cloth covered cushions on multilevel platforming creating many sub-environments. The space was laid out according to the diagram on the next page.

The major focus for most of the audience was a spire containing 23" monitors in the bottom and second rung, and 18" monitors on the third and top rung. People were able to look beyond the monitors and see other members of the audience. The ambience and decor seemed to dispell the traditional New York paranoia. People who had never met would rap with each other. This was contributed to by the programming which was made up of many short tapes (sequences)—many humorous, some ecological, informational, artistic. Melodrama and hardline entertainment with blasting sound was avoided. This again allowed the audience to rap and comment on the material they were viewing.

On the opening night 3 shows were presented 8, 10 and 12pm. Thereafter we had two shows at 8 and 10pm. Each week an ad was placed in the *Village Voice*. The cost of the ad and additional expenses such as nuts and raisins, cleaning supplies, etc. was subtracted from the gate and then the remainder was split 3 ways. Below we have listed the gate, cost of ad, total expenses and split to each of the contributing groups. (No fee was charged for rental of the space, electricity, etc. This must be figured in for anyone who wants to open and run a video theatre.)