

Les Levine was one of the few nationally known artists to contact us with an unsolicited proposal. In November, 1968, he sent us the following letter indicating his interest in Art and Technology:

Donald Droll tells me that you are doing a show which involves artists and companies and he suggests I contact you directly.

I have been working in this area for some time and have been successful in obtaining some cooperation from large companies. As a matter of fact for almost five years this kind of cooperation has been kernel to my work. In the past I have worked with both American Cyanamid Co. and Eastman Kodak. I am presently working in the area of television. Perhaps you are familiar with my large plastic environmental works.

I would consider it of enormous value to my work to be able to work with a company in the area of plastics or of video equipment.

In subsequent staff meetings we discussed the possibility of Levine's participation in connection with both Ampex and the Container Corporation of America—Ampex for audio-visual equipment, and CCA for mass produced "disposable" works of art.

In February we contacted Levine and invited him to tour these two facilities. He arrived on April 14, and Gail Scott accompanied him to Container. He was enthusiastic about their four color lithography press on which they print six foot square sheets for margarine, detergent, and other consumer product packaging. He considered their printing process more "contemporary" than the leading lithography art workshops. Although Levine was certain he could easily make a "disposable" or giveaway item, he was not enthralled by the idea, asserting that with the experience he had had with more sophisticated technology, it would be a wasted opportunity for him merely to produce an object. Levine suggested that instead of a one-artist to one-company match at CCA, we should invite each artist participating in A & T to execute a large lithographic print on their four color press—a proposal to which we subsequently gave serious consideration.

The next day GS and Levine flew to Ampex with the hope that their advanced audio-visual equipment might be of greater interest to the artist. Levine was intrigued with their small-scale television studio, housing a sophisticated array of broadcasting equipment including Ampex's RA-400 machine; a random access videotape programmer, an elaborate closed-circuit television set-up; and a multi-track tape recorder with a modular expansion of eight to twenty-four channels.

Levine was certain that, given an opportunity to experi-

ment with these resources, he could create something—probably involving specially designed equipment rather than Ampex's standard products. He proposed spending some time at the company without outlining any definite project. He desired a completely open-ended situation without being restricted to a preconceived idea. We were in accord with this plan, but Ampex insisted on following their option to request from Levine and us detailed descriptions of the scope of the project before agreeing in principle to work with the artist.

Levine agreed to study Ampex product brochures, consider the information gleaned from his visit, and contact us with some sort of proposal. On April 22 he sent the following sketchy description of his intention:

Enclosed is a rough idea of what I want to do and it is not at all worked out at this point for obvious good reasons as I think it is important to keep the system open.

I would also probably want to use their television studio for the production of a T.V. special but this is something I could probably work out after their initial involvement.

I hope that this will be of some help and if there are any further questions we could talk about them when I get back from London.

Project for Ampex Corporation is to create audio-visual model of a human being. A piece that will allow the spectator to consider himself as though he were a working model.

The audio aspect would permit the viewer to hear whatever sounds can be detected from his own body as it moved through space, played back on several channels such as pulse, heart beat, blood flow, muscle manipulation, etc.

The visual aspect of the piece would allow any movement to be seen from all its possible views as somebody other than the subject would see it. To paraphrase this idea I suggest that a man driving in an automobile should be able to have inside his automobile the view of his automobile that a hitchhiker could obtain.

The system will probably require several small television cameras and monitors and some recording equipment for delay processes. It will also probably require some switching devices and information storage.

We informed Ampex of Levine's plans but they declined to accept his proposal, indicating that it exceeded their financial and technical commitment to A & T.