

## Marquee

# A market of experiences

Video art is opening up new realms despite its inability to "sell", writes **BHARATI CHATURVEDI**

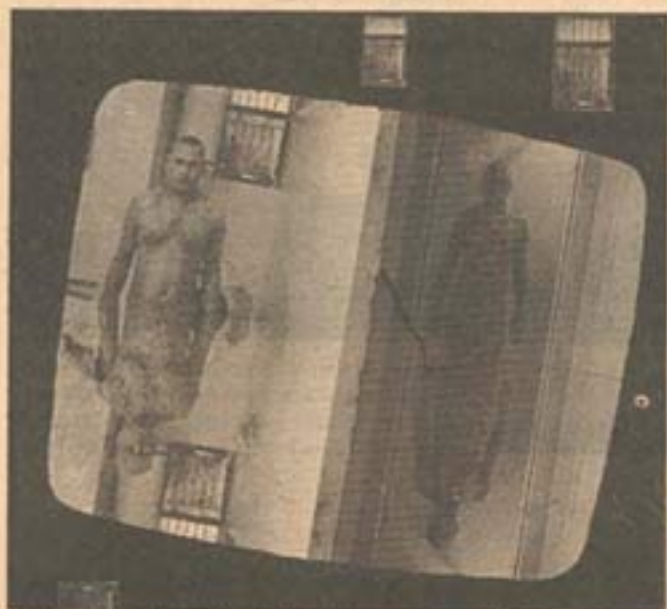
When the Apeejay Media Gallery on the Delhi-Haryana border opened to its third show, there was a lot to be said about video art and its possibilities.

Curator Pooja Sood chose 10 artists to create video works. All of them used sound in a predominant role, one by Jean Francois Cavro being a 20-minute sound installation.

At first glance, it was striking to see how similar to any other exhibition the display was—several works, all shown under one roof, bound by their uncommon medium. Many works were deliberately placed with reference to their content, and acoustics were not allowed to bleed into one another. When just-initiated practitioner Umesh M's video of a ritual shifting of spaces was placed on the stairs, his own walking down a similar stairway echoed in the 'real' stairs. Natraj Sharma's *Night Rider* found resonance in the traffic din immediately outside.

The breathlessness from Subodh's gripping work, *Pure*, where a holy/unholy and haunting physical transformation takes place, was heightened in the dark room where it was running. Sonia Khurana created an immediate polarity across the gallery as the viewer moved from her work to that of Ranbir Kaleka through a maze of dark and semi-lit spaces. Sonia's work viewed the act of a dog tugging, dragging, struggling with a piece of meat. On another, adjacent screen, a boy plucked bloody feathers at a butcher's, the two simultaneous acts made possible by video technology.

Ranbir Kaleka's work ran in sharp contrast. A man struggles to hold on to a cockerel, its wings flapping. The man is enclosed on a narrow screen and when the cockerel half escapes, he begins to move off screen. In a masterly use



Exploration of sound and imagery were a predominant feature at the video art installation show at Apeejay Media Gallery

of the medium, a shadow-like under-slice of the man stays behind, overtaken by inertia and resistance. The loop then begins again, and the story is retold. Bangalore-based Kiran Subbiah uses the idea of opposing ends with wit, in a ping-pong dialogue where differences are close to being resolved—a parody on India and her neighbours, on the idea of correct. Vivan Sundaram brilliantly uses pictures from family albums to create two films, one of his mother and the other of her mother. He juxtaposes images to create scenarios to bring out affec-

tions and rivalries, the tensions within a family and the idea of owning images and rebuilding them to tell another story.

How does video make this art possible? It could demand greater skills from the artist, but this is not essential, since technical assistance is available.

This makes it possible for the artist to become a director. It is for this reason that people ask if this is art and, since it is not possible to buy such work, how does it operate? This introduces us to what Dutch designer-writer Patrick Kruijthof calls the market of experiences. The works must be seen in terms of the experiences they offer in their most nuanced denominations. Art

markets are typically seen as the trade of paintings, photographs, sculpture and installations.

Now, as new works begin to be introduced in our realms, the market for experiences opens. We await experiences, we are the market. Sponsors arrange to bring these osmotic art works to us, just as they offer us the experience of velvety luxury, of a clean shave, and new walls. Except this time, as viewers, we too participate and negotiate to determine the experience we are about to take in, just as artists determine the outputs. ●