A SHORT TRIP ON SPACESHIP EARTH: INTERMEDIA SOCIETY, 1967-1972

by

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ABSTRACT

In 1967 Intermedia Society was formed, providing a workshop facility, space to perform and a pool of equipment for interested artists, architects, technologists and engineers. Inspired by the ideas of Marshall McLuhan and Buckminster Fuller concerning the impact of the new electronic age on society, Intermedia endeavoured to foster a meeting place for the cross-germination of the scientist/artist, engendering experimentations involving multi-media productions and explorations into communication processes.

Buoyed by an infectious interest from the local press, generous support from the Canada Council and what amounted to an 'open door' policy at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Intermedia quickly became synonymous with what was contemporary, significant and (best of all) intriguing in Vancouver's art scene. Interaction was established with other like-minded organizations, rocketing Intermedia into international status in the arena of 'Art & Technology'.

Apart from personal reflections written for the exhibition catalogue, *Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931 - 1983*, there has been little investigation into the meaning of Intermedia Society in relation to important cultural issues which the Society attempted to address.

It is the purpose of this thesis to examine the ideology represented by
Intermedia through a close reading of their documents, an analysis of works from three Intermedia exhibitions held at the Vancouver Art Gallery and as exemplified in the writings of McLuhan and Fuller. I will then relate that ideology to a broader discourse concerning technology in the new 'Space Age'. Described as Happy Technophiles (as opposed to 'Anxious' or 'Desperate'), Fuller and McLuhan, crusaders for Technical Humanism, adopt an excessively optimistic stance in light of the social and political realities of the times. Intermedia Society chose to carve out a niche for themselves in this new electronic Eden and, in doing so, joined the forces of technical (liberal) humanism.

It is my contention that this optimistic engagement with explorations into communication technology was in keeping with, and in fact fostered by, the reoriented cultural policy formulated by the Canadian Liberal Government. An examination of the political philosophy of Canadian Liberalism in the 1960's reveals a strong orientation toward the development of mass media and technology. Intermedia, seen as innovators in the arts for their positive response to the 'Technological Society' and their intended contribution toward communication theory, became linked with the cybernetic network enveloping Canada in its new role as 'Communications Frontier'. Ironically, in contrast to the sophisticated image Intermedia projected in their statements of purpose and intent, the content of their exhibitions became increasingly more festive in character and less technically ambitious. What becomes apparent in the latter years of the group's short history is a growing schism between two sensibilities: those who remained aligned with the original optimism of art's marriage to technology, and those who,
although primarily of an optimistic vision, adopted 'carnival' tactics to align themselves firmly within the ranks of 'the sixties' counter culture. Both envisioned an alternative society, but the nature of the alternative for each was very different. Ultimately it was the infeasability of sustaining the disparate ideologies which created the final dissolution of the Society.

Prior readings of the cause of Intermedia's disappearance have been credited to the problems encountered when sharing highly sophisticated equipment and the infeasibility of developing communications experiments and explorations when faced with a lack of industrial sponsorship and adequate funding. Obstacles certainly, but sufficient to close down the operation? Intermedia did not close down; it blew apart into satellite organizations much leaner than the unwieldy 'mothership', definitively separating the 'festive' from the 'technical'.

The utopian vision which had fuelled Intermedia's initial years was ideologically inapplicable after 1969. Continued repressive measures against the counter culture had blunted the movement's earlier idealistic zeal. The movement became increasingly subversive after 1970, resulting in a strategy based on alternative lifestyle rather than overt political protest. Intermedia Society members responded individually, either by taking refuge in the countryside, choosing to work independently, or by forming smaller groups with mandates which reflected concern for ecology, community and education.
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During the completion of this thesis I led a double life. I owe tremendous gratitude to the members of the academic community who formed one half of the equation. To John O'Brian, who offered support at a time when it was desperately needed, I am deeply grateful. His knowledge, kindness and thoughtful guidance proved invaluable. I thank Serge Guilbaut for his astute remarks and penetrating intellect, and Glenn Allison, who suggested this topic. To Debra Pincus, who provided me with a haven in which I could think and write, I am also most appreciative. My gratitude to Hugo Sutton for proofing the final document. The other half of the equation is my family. Without their complete support and encouragement, I could not have completed this thesis and returned to a fully intact family. For this I am indebted to my children, David and Alexander and especially to Gordon who patiently endured throughout the entire project. More than anyone else, I am eternally grateful to my loving and generous husband Don, for the many, many hours spent caring for the children and for never failing in his belief that I could do it.
INTRODUCTION

One major difficulty that we all face today comes from the rapidly expanding perimeters of the contemporary world. Most of the ideas and images that we use to orient ourselves in the world grew out of and belong to a smaller, now outdated scale of existence. The modern world seems to speed ahead like a racing car that our running legs can never catch up with. We are out of breath physically and emotionally. But we are beginning to recognize that our individual needs and values can catch up if we accept the knowledge and tools offered by the new scientific, technological, urbanized world. The central challenge of our time for artists, as it is for all of us, is how to domesticate the enlarged scale and amplified complexities of twentieth-century life.

Gyorgy Kepes in an interview with Douglas M. Davis, 1968. (1)

It was the culture industry, not the avant-garde, which succeeded in transforming everyday life in the twentieth century.

Andreas Huyssen, 1980. (2)

In 1967 the formation of Vancouver's Intermedia Society heralded a new era in artistic production in Western Canada. Functioning as a collaborative workshop, the facility was envisioned as a breeding ground for the cross-germination of the artist and the scientist. Funded for the most part by the Canada Council, Intermedia offered a practical solution to artists intrigued with the idea of working in an inter-disciplinary manner with space age technology in an effort to
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keep pace with an ever increasing Technological Society. Backed by a high-profile Board of Directors and an active, productive core group of artists, those who had ideas but no previous means of support in the artistic milieu, finally found some means of entry into the realm of serious artistic discourse. Primarily inspired by Buckminster Fuller's and Marshall McLuhan's prediction of a future Electronic Eden in which the role of the artist would be essential, Intermedia artists became pioneers in investigating the perimeters of the envisioned Society.

The inception of Intermedia coincided with a burst of enthusiasm for the hybrid of Art and Technology and a wave of optimism toward the beneficience of technology in the new space age, described by Michael Benamou as "the technophilic burst of 1967". (3) Like the springing up of May flowers after April showers, a profusion of other Art & Technology organizations blossomed during this fertile time. In Canada this included the establishment of Montreal's Fusion des Arts (1964) as well as the Toronto based organizations, Intersystems (1966), Electromagnetic Spectrum (1967), and the Toronto 'chapter' of E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology) (1968). In 1968 Intermedia's Administrator, Joe Kyle met with members of the New York based organization E.A.T. and declined offers to participate in any formal way with their program. The next year Werner Aellen represented the West in New Brunswick at "The Artist and The New Technologies Conference" sponsored by The Canadian Conference of The Arts. Art journals devoted entire issues in response to the burgeoning influx of the artistic merger. (4) The most pervasive
cooperative venture between artists and industry took place under the auspices of the Art & Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art between 1967 and 1971. (5) UNESCO undertook a study of “the inter-influence and points of convergence of the Arts and Sciences in the context of contemporary civilization.” Initially, an “Experts Round Table on Technology and Artistic Creation in the Contemporary World” was held in 1968, at Tblisi, U.S.S.R. One person from each of approximately 15 countries was invited to attend, including Buckminster Fuller. (6) Through Intermedia, Vancouver artists indulged in a sense of being on the forefront of contemporary issues. This included more than the artistic avant-garde; by virtue of their engagement in the 'supertechnological society' they were part of the evolution of a whole new consciousness for mankind.

From inception in 1967 to its demise in 1972, the collaborative staged hundreds of events involving well over a hundred individuals in its interdisciplinary projects. During the three major annual exhibitions which Intermedia Society staged at the Vancouver Art Gallery from 1968 to 1970 the keys to the gallery were virtually given over to the group for the duration of week-long engagements. Attendance records soared and the press flocked to cover news of the events. Critics from music, dance, film, art and theatre clambered for space in their respective papers to report on the latest bizarre happenings for that year's extravaganza. In a 1968 release to the press, Intermedia's Director, Werner Aellen stated, "There is no equal to Intermedia anywhere in the world and people in the East look
with deep envy to the activities of Intermedia. I find it extremely stimulating to be able to participate in the exciting exploration of what one could call the first chapter of the cultural space age.”

This response, supporting the predominant ideology of Technical Liberalism, where the ever progressive development in 'technics' is seen as inevitable and beneficial, is countered by those concerned and in some cases alarmed with the diminishing quality of life induced by the 'super-technological' society. Countering traditional liberalism, critics of technology attacked such Western values as capitalist enterprise and technical expertise for having failed to satisfy mankind. (7) Instead of an 'Electronic Eden', their view of post-industrial society is one of disasters of pollution, technology induced unemployment and political totalitarianism. Certainly the anti-establishment attitude of the 60's counter culture demonstrated an unwillingness to cooperate with the technologically propelled society. Heading the revolutionary call to 'turn on, tune in and drop out', youth culture in the 60's generated a mass disaffiliation with the established values of 'The System'. (8)

It is within the mega-shifts of social and political upheaval of the late Sixties that I propose to examine Intermedia Society. Initially guided by a Utopian vision of society inspired by McLuhan and Fuller, the integrity of this vision was called into question by artists whose ties with the counter culture predicated an oppositional stance. It is the incompatibility of these two influences working within the collaborative that result in the fracturing of the Society into sub-
groups leading to its' ultimate demise.

Previous attempts to shed light on the dramatic and immediate entry of Intermedia Society into acclaimed status are scant to say the least. The only publication which attempts any sort of reconstruction of the Society's existance after 1972 is the exhibition catalogue, *Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931-1983*. (9) The articles pertaining to Intermedia are essentially descriptive, relying heavily on interviews with artists recollecting their involvement with the Society. (10) The revelations are enlightening but because of their essentially nostalgic nature, are largely without critical value. There has been no comprehensive history of the Society undertaken, no complete chronicle of activities or of the individuals involved. The material that has been written reveals a reluctance to step outside the boundaries of a Sixties attitude. The perpetuation of an aura of unprecedented excitement and discovery surrounding the events of the 60's colours almost every aspect of reclaiming Intermedia's significance. A critical analysis of the period within this paradigm seems almost sacrilegious. A vague attempt at placing the inception of Intermedia within the larger context of social turmoil prevalent during those years is made, with emphasis placed on Intermedia being "the first off the mark in Canada" (11), perpetuating the myth of uniqueness. No attempt has been made to explain the demise of the Society in any credible fashion, in spite of the incredible legacy which Intermedia spawned. The final two years of the Society's existence was cloaked in an eerie silence that had all the characteristics of a mystery yet unsolved. (12) Cause of the disintegration of the Society
has been attributed to frustrations inherent in maintaining sophisticated equipment within an open collective, and a refusal on behalf of the members to allow the institution to become 'institutionalized'. (13) Considering that Intermedia fizzled out just a short two years after it's biggest boom in activity in 1969, these answers seem inadequate.

The most revealing analysis of the period has been compiled by Al Razutis in his reconstruction of Vancouver artists' involvement with avant-garde cinema in the 60's. Razutis offers the most cogent explanation for Intermedia's demise:

By 1972, after Intermedia relocated to 4th Avenue and then 1st Avenue, certain ideological splits between more socially oriented artists and more independent and anarchist artists became severe. Intermedia was disintegrating; in its wake, especially as funds ran out, the creation of more specialized and special interest institutions took place. (14)

Although Razutis acknowledged the split between certain artists over ideological issues, the vagueness of his characterization of the groups which differed in their ideologies, "socially-oriented artists" versus "more independent and anarchist artists", suggested an unwillingness to uncover old battles. Razutis was one of the driving forces behind Intermedia's involvement in, and exposure to, underground cinema. An objective analysis written by an artist who was thoroughly
emerged in the affairs of the Society has its' limitations.

Through a close reading of Intermedia Society documentation, interim reports to the Canada Council, statements of purpose and intent, newsletters, minutes to meetings, press releases, letters to other art organizations as well as numerous newspaper reviews and articles written about Intermedia during it's extant years, I have been able to reconstruct a more comprehensive history of artists involved and projects undertaken. (15) Interviews with Werner Aellen and several of the artists associated with Intermedia have also provided valuable insight into the Society's endeavors.

The recovery of this history has been secondary to the interpretation of the material revealed. The primary question that I have addressed concerns the nature of the 'vision' which was instrumental to the formation of the group, how this vision functioned to catalyze the energy of the Society and catapult the collective into the forefront of the avant-garde internationally, and why, as early as 1970, the vision collapsed.

It is my contention that Intermedia's initial optimistic engagement with explorations into communication technology, as outlined in early proposals to the Canada Council for funding, was in keeping with and, in fact, fostered by the reoriented cultural policy formulated by the Liberal Government. An examination of the political philosophy of Canadian Liberalism in the 1960's reveals a strong orientation toward the development of a new role for Canada as
'Communications Frontier'. (16) Emphasis is placed on the unifying role of Culture to offset growing threats to national unity and to offset the Liberal Government's weak political position. An analysis of the documents from The Canadian Conference of the Arts supports this theory and underlines the significance of the financial support given to Intermedia by the Canada Council. (17)

By reconstructing the vision which was so instrumental to the immediate success experienced by Intermedia and placing the raison d'être for the vision within an understandable framework of references, both politically and socially, I was then able to comprehend how and why this vision broke down. Failure to sustain the momentum that pushed the group into public attention became understandable when I investigated the complex exchange of ideas within the Intermedia community and fathomed the susceptibility of the gelling agent to internal and external influences. The most prevalent influence pertinent to the sense of community that Intermedia artists strived to nurture was their identification with the counter culture. An examination of the changes that take place within the counter culture in the 60's illustrates the tenuousness of Intermedia Society's optimistic alignment with an ideology under heavy scrutiny.

What becomes apparent in the latter years of the group's short history is a growing schism between two sensibilities: those who remained aligned with the original optimism of art's marriage to technology and those who, primarily of an anarchist vision, adopted
carnival tactics to align themselves firmly within the ranks of the counter culture. Although the two ideologies seemed to coexist, the inherent characteristics of each created the final dissolution of the society.

By examining the content of what could loosely be described as 'the body of work' presented at each of the successive annual exhibitions held at the Vancouver Art Gallery, *Intermedia Nights* (1968), *The Electrical Connection* (1969), and *The Spring Show May 1931* (1970) it became obvious that the focus instrumental to supporting Intermedia's identity as a 'community' had changed dramatically over the course of three years. Each chapter of the thesis includes an analysis of works from one of the three annual exhibitions to the image Intermedia was attempting to project of itself at the time. Comparing the proposals documenting intentions prior to the opening of the exhibitions with the actual results achieved, allows for an evaluation of Intermedia's projected ideology relative to the reality of the situation. In contrast to the sophisticated image Intermedia projected in its' statements of purpose and intent, the content of exhibitions became increasingly more festive in character and less technically ambitious. By 1970, in the staging of *The Spring Show May 1931*, the atmosphere created with the organization of 'City Feast' and an invitation to include acts from 'popular culture' in the program created a contemporary version of 'the world turned upside down', reminiscent of medieval carnival. The element of carnival which appears integral to Intermedia's work in the final exhibition, has not been explained in any analysis or description prior to this
thesis. The obvious parallels that exist between the two, merit a close reading of the meaning of carnival in the context of community. (18)

In the final chapter of my thesis I include a synopsis of Charles Reich's *The Greening of America* (1970) (19) in order to illuminate the changing strategies of the cultural revolution in the 70's. A detailed description of the goals of the new groups which are formed prior to and during the demise of Intermedia reveals parallels in ideology between the newly formed groups, and Reich's faith in the power of Consciousness II and the forces of the counter-cultural 'Great Refusal' to replace the failed experiment of urban industrialism.

Alternating a wide angle lens, in order to fathom the social and political climate of the 60's, with a close up lens revealing a wealth of information for the construction of Intermedia's chronological history, provides the scope within which to discuss the changes taking place within the structure of the collaborative. Most importantly, it provides necessary information for a clear understanding of Intermedia's struggle to remain viable within the rapidly changing social climate.
NOTES


3. Ibid. "The Technological Imagination" pg. 70.


5. Information regarding this venture, A Report on the Art and Technology Program of The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, was published by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1971, with an Introduction by the project co-ordinator, Maurice Tuchman.

6. Mezei, Leslie "science in art in science...", artscanada issue no. 118-119, (June 1968), pg. 39.

the same year by the same publisher. Following leads from these sources, I then was able to establish a bibliography for the critics of technology pertinent to my thesis. This of course included works by Lewis Mumford, Robert Heilbroner, Herbert Marcuse and Jacques Ellul.


11. Lowndes, Joan. “The Spirit Of The Sixties”, pg. 145. The complete quote is, “As part of that idealism a vision of new aesthetic forms born of the marriage of art and science floated in the air of the time. The year before the formation of Intermedia ‘Nine Evenings: Theatre and Engineering' had been staged in New York, leading to the establishment of EAT (Experiments in Art and Technology ). Later a group called 'Fusion des Arts' would operate in Montreal. But Vancouver was first off the mark in Canada with a facility designed to foster a new composite art.”
12. During my interview with Ed Varney, he discussed the last two years of Intermedia's existence more candidly than any of the other individuals I interviewed. An obvious reluctance to talk openly about this period was complicated by the fact that Barry Cramer, the Business Manager hired to direct Intermedia's affairs during this period, committed suicide in the spring of 1971. No attempt was ever made to hire a replacement. The Society's headquarters drifted over to 'The New Era Social Club' after Cramer's death leaving the facility on East 1st. to the discretion of those who occupied it. These individuals, according to Ed Varney and Gary Lee-Nova, were mostly draft-dodgers from the United States requiring a space in which to live. Funding from the Canada Council stopped in the fall of that year. Transfer of equipment to other newly founded groups is undocumented, although the equipment obviously had to be moved out of the premises before the lease expired in the spring of the next year.

13. Interviews with Dave Rimmer and Helen Goodwin in Marguerite Pinney's contribution to Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931 - 1983, "Voices", attest to these sentiments. David Rimmer states:

With Intermedia we worked together for about four years in quite an intense involvement of a group of about twenty core people, plus a lot of other people, and took a lot of risks. If we failed it didn't matter. It was a matter of trying something new. And after that, we got tired of it, we got a bit burned out and Intermedia was becoming an institution, a myth in a way. Becoming something more than it was. So we decided eventually just to let it disband, not to try to force it on, to continue it on and make it into an institution" (pg. 185).

Helen Goodwin summarizes her involvement as follows: "We eventually became more interested in developing the strands of our individual work, and Intermedia was over (pg. 185).


15. Most of the primary research material I have gathered has
been from the Intermedia Files located in Special Collections at The University of British Columbia, Boxes 1 - 17.


18. Valuable resources have been Michael Bristol's Carnival and Theatre: Plebian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England, (1985) and Peter Burke's Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe (1978). "The carnival atmosphere in the midst of social metamorphosis is the very living breath of culture" stated Jeff Nuttall in The Bomb Culture, pg. 69.

Technology emerges as a pivotal factor in the avantgarde's fight against an aestheticist modernism, in its focus on new modes of perception, and in its perhaps deluded dream of an avantgardist mass culture.


A strong feeling was in the air that the world was ripe for radical change in pursuit of a fresh vision of Utopia. Above all, there was Marshall McLuhan, whose writings about media and technology, and whose stance as a futurologist, set the questing young on fire. The artists among them began to dream of harnessing technology and, by domesticating it, coming to humanize it through art to the greater glory of the new world aborning and of our species.

Alvin Balkind "Worlds within Worlds And Hemispheres", (1983).

In the Spring of 1967 *artscanada* magazine sent the editor of *artforum*, Philip Leider, to examine the Vancouver art scene. His response, published in the June edition of *artscanada* was entitled "Vancouver: scene with no scene". Leider had concluded that:
The development of a regional art that is at the same time an ambitious art - that is, an art which acknowledges and attempts to contribute to the most important art being created - appears to be virtually an impossible task. (1)

Nurtured only by “treacherously imperfect reproductions” (2) and without the benefit of a large scale exchange between collectors, dealers, art critics, curators and artists necessary for the creation of the excitement and exchange of ideas required to elevate the level of meaningful dialogue for the production of high art, Leider lamented that Vancouver artists were in a pathetic fix. He stated “to be thus deprived, is tantamount to flying blind.” (3)

Although Leider was adamant that Vancouver artists should not mistake their present situation for a “scene”, there was he conceded, some hope. The alternatives were threefold; (i) abandoning the idea of sustaining a serious relationship with the most advanced art of the time in favour of an “idiosyncratic mode” which would run parallel to or even subvert the most contemporary work being done; (ii) cultivate a regional art; or (iii) pursue the evolution of an art which would be international in character, and which would be capable of being absorbed into the mainstream of contemporary painting and sculpture. (4)

In the same month in which the article was published, Intermedia Society opened the doors to its new facility. Going one step further in
the direction of the impossible task suggested by Leider, the mandate for this experimental facility spelled out a set of new criteria for the arts which would leave 'mainstream' painting and sculpture looking like relics from the past. Intermedia Society was in hot pursuit of the evolution of new criteria for the arts which would have relevance on an international scale. The 'new criteria' upon which Intermedia based its mandate formed the basis of the ideology which served the group in its formative years. In order to understand the success which Intermedia achieved in its formative years, (success in this case is equated with the creation of a flourishing 'art scene' directly related with the activities of Intermedia) it is imperative to understand the ideology which formed the foundation upon which the Society was built.

Intermedia Society was the brainchild of artists and academics drawn together by mutual contacts Jack Shadbolt and Victor Doray, and shared interest in Marshall McLuhan's communication theories and Buckminster Fuller's descriptions of man's newly formed environment, Spaceship Earth. Visits by McLuhan and Fuller to Vancouver had generated a great deal of excitement in the artistic and academic communities, reaching a peak in 1967 with the formation of the Society. In 1960, McLuhan had given a talk at the Arts Club of Vancouver. This prompted an invitation extended by Alvin Balkind, then Director of the UBC Fine Arts Gallery, to have McLuhan speak at UBC during the Contemporary Festival of Art in 1964. These appearances, together with his concurrent publications, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) and *Understanding Media* (1964),
popularized his insights into the new electronic society and resulted in an enthusiasm for his ideas which contributed greatly to an interest in doing mixed-media and environmental theatre pieces. In 1965, at the 5th Festival of the Contemporary Arts held at U.B.C., the first ambitious multisensory public happening, 'The Medium Is The Message' took place, co-ordinated by Abraham Rogatnick. (5) That same year, the Vancouver Art Gallery sponsored a lecture series, 'Art and the McLuhan Ideas' and the Department of University Extension at U.B.C. offered five lectures in a series entitled "Extensions of Man: An Approach to Marshall McLuhan." Two years later, again sponsored by the Extensions Department at U.B.C., 'The Canadian Centennial Celebration Series' was organized. Buckminster Fuller was the first lecturer and was introduced as "The first poet of technology" and "a visionary of the 20th Century". (6) Describing himself as a kind of technological avatar come for the liberation of mankind, (7) his lecture was appropriately entitled "How The World Can Be Made To Work".

What was the impact of such zealous enthusiasm for McLuhan's and Fuller's ideas on the formation of Intermedia Society? Because the Board of Directors and the members of Intermedia referred frequently to, and in fact, based the formation of the Society on the ideas put forth by these men, it is essential to understand exactly what it was that they were discussing and the ideology on which their ideas were based. Previous accounts describing the roots of Intermedia's beginnings chart the tangle of events and personalities that made up Vancouver's artistic community in the late 50's and
early 60's and are included in descriptions given by 'witnesses' in *Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931-1983*, an exhibition catalogue published by The Vancouver Art Gallery in 1983. Although the articles concerning this period of Vancouver's artistic heritage describe the unfolding of events which eventually led to the formation of Intermedia, no satisfactory attempt has been made to expand the scope of inquiry to explain why the Society enthusiastically embraced McLuhan and Fuller as its' mentors and subsequently ensured the Society's instant success. The vision instrumental to Intermedia's inception was primarily founded on Utopian concepts concerning the artists role in the new electronic society as defined by both McLuhan and Fuller in their writings and lectures. The first section of this chapter is devoted to clarifying the impact that this ideology had on the inaugural formation of the Society and subsequently on Vancouver artists working within Intermedia. Intermedia was effectively plugged-into the electronic environment described and nurtured by McLuhan and Fuller. It was this vision which captured the imagination of Intermedia's admirers and won the approval of its public. Following this, I expand the argument to include a description of Canada's Federal Cultural Policy, initiated after the re-election of the Liberal Party in 1965. The impact that the newly formed policies had on funding for Canadian cultural institutions is undeniable, and Intermedia benefited from this largess. Equally important, in this context, is an examination of the dovetailing of goals between Intermedia Society in 1967 and the cultural strategy adopted at that time as defined in reports submitted by The Canadian Conference of the Arts, beginning with
Seminar '65. The importance of Intermedia's intended role in the exploration of communications technology was key to the Society's link with a larger political arena; technical liberalism. At this juncture in Canada's history, the twin areas of technology and communications were vital to establishing Canada's profile as a unified nation, bound together by a vast network of communications technology. Furthermore, Canada, with its leading edge in the field of communications, was perceived as part of a vast cybernetic network described by both McLuhan and Fuller as 'The Global Village' and 'Spaceship Earth', respectively. In light of the Society's ambitious underpinnings, the inaugural exhibition of their work at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1968 is revealing of the complexity of the influences at work at that time.

In 1968 Marshall McLuhan stated:

Now that we live in an electric environment of information coded not just in visual but in other sensory modes, it's natural that we now have new perceptions that destroy the monopoly and priority of visual space, making this older space look as bizarre as a medieval coat of arms over the door of a chemistry lab. (9)

The notion of redefining man's place in the world found fertile ground in the 'Sixties'. Thanks to the Space Race, man secured a vantage point outside of earthly bounds from which he could look back and reassess his position in the universe. On May 6, 1961,
United States Commander Alan B. Shepard Jr. had made a 300 mile suborbital flight from Cape Canaveral. In a special message to the American Congress later that month, President Kennedy committed America to put a man on the moon before 1970. In August of 1962, Mariner 2 was sent outward bound to Venus, passing within 21,000 miles of that planet, radioing signals back to earth over the longest distance ever transmitted from a spacecraft. The first commercially developed communications satellite, Telstar was also put into orbit that year, making transoceanic TV possible. Man's knowledge of his world and the universe had reached a stage of massive acceleration.

Like Space Age diplomats, McLuhan and Fuller provided a vocabulary with which to describe the phenomenon of change taking place, and the resultant self-consciousness that society was experiencing in the 1960's. Both men attributed the change to the rapid evolution in communication technology. In McLuhan's words, although they could easily have been spoken by Fuller, "With satellite and electronic antennae as probes, the planet ceases in a way to be the human environment and becomes a satellite itself - a probe into space." (10) A new jargon developed with phrases like "The Global Village" and "Spaceship Earth", illustrating the smallness and intimacy of the newly transformed environment. (11) Both men envisioned the planet as an art form, having become the content of a new space created by its satellites, and its electric extensions. The artist's role in this 'new environment' would be active participant, indispensable in the 'creative' process. As the historically perceived creator of 'anti-environments' or 'counter-environments' he would
probe the technological environment within which society was enclosed and processed. (12) To gain critical perspective in the new world of technology, to avoid the fate of becoming passive victims of the new media, the artist was urged to use any 'probe': humour, paradox, analogical juxtaposition, absurdity - as a way of making visible the hypnotic effect of the technological sensorium. (13) New technologies and media presented a challenge to which man must adjust; the artist would make the adjustment first and then help society avoid sensory 'numbing' or 'collapse'. (14)

The confusing ambivalent quality inherent in McLuhan's predictions for the Electronic Era, (emancipation or domination through the technological experience?) was ultimately outweighted by his essentially optimistic commitment to the idea of the possibility of the evolution of a 'new universal community' within the culture of technology. For McLuhan, computers hold the promise of the future in their ability to translate any code or language into any other code or language. Whereas language had always been a barrier between men in the past, creating 'The Tower of Babel' and prolonging divisiveness and separation, computers promise a "Pentecostal condition of universal understanding and unity." (15) Thus, the artist would, in addition to his 'traditional role' as investigator for the new environment, perform the dual function of artist/computer scientist and aid in turning the planet into an art form.

For Fuller, satellite and computer technology combined, would provide an inventory of all earth's resources, thus creating for the
first time the possibility of making all of humanity physically successful. (16) Like McLuhan, Fuller saw the artist working in conjunction with technologists and perceived of 'Spaceship Earth' as a work of art. The artist/scientist was then dedicated to programming a total environment for total man. (17)

Primed with this vision of the 'new artist' a small group of inspired individuals met in Jack Shadbolt's home to discuss the possibility of providing a facility where theory could become reality. In order to effect this perceptual revolution, a collective vision was necessary, calling for the formation of teams interdisciplinary in nature and using as tools the products of contemporary technology. (18)

In the initial statement of purpose and intent written by Jack Shadbolt and submitted to the Canada Council he stated:

The new possibilities for intersensory experience unfolding as a result of technical developments taking place in this electronic age, have seized the imagination of the creative artist all over the world. One of the vital implications of this kind of intersensory development is its' propensity for bringing together the creative artist and the scientist-technician. The envisioned facility will be a medium for this communication. The explorations and experiments of Intermedia will also have relevance for educators, social and behavioral scientists, physical development specialists, designers and technicians. (19)
There were two pioneering groups involved with the inception of Intermedia. One could be characterized as 'academic heavies' with a vested interest in communication theories. These individuals made up the Board of Directors and included Dr. T.J. Mallinson, Chairman of the Communications Department at Simon Fraser University, Dr. Henry Elder, Head of the School of Architecture at U.B.C., Sol Kort, Extension Department at U.B.C., Dr. Archibald McKinnon, Dean of Education at S.F.U., Victor Doray, Head of Medical Illustrations at U.B.C. and Joe Kyle, an independent management consultant. The Board, chaired by artist and educator Jack Shadbolt, was to act as an effective liason between segments of the community with which the general membership had no contact, essentially the Canada Council. The other pioneering group were artists interested in breaking down traditional barriers between the arts in multi-media work. (20) Central to the evolution of this conception was David Orcutt whose early experiments in film and video led to the founding of Hut 87 on the U.B.C. campus. Concerned with development of a 'Kinegraphic language' Orcutt received a grant from U.B.C. in support of his experimentation into multi-channel environments and communication. Implicit in Orcutt's theories of communication was "a conception of cognitive awareness that required a heightened perceptual environment to interconnect the many possible channels of information." (21) An integral part of the experimentation were a series of multi-media projection events staged by Orcutt. Similar events were soon being held at the newly founded 'Sound Gallery' (which later was moved to larger premises on Seymour Street). In an interview for the *Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931 -1983* catalogue
Gary Lee-Nova described his involvement at the Sound Gallery.

Sam Perry and all these crazy people interested in media rented a storefront. We just very openly got hold of all this stuff that Sam had, magicland and slide projectors and movie projectors. We hung all these weird curtains and screens and mirrors around and Al Neil would go in there and pound the piano for three hours and we'd just project images, you know, no script, no nothing, just see what happens. Let's see what happens. That kind of mood altering, conscious altering thing, that's what's fascinating. The media was capable of altering consciousness. (22)

This quote is revealing as it combines the prevalent attitude of the early 60's counter culture - to keep things spontaneous and unstructured, with the idea that media could alter consciousness. This was the concept that the McLuhan followers had in common with the artists from the Sound Gallery. That the media could alter consciousness, and that the artist would participate in creating the environment in which it would be altered.

Participants from the Sound Gallery (which moved to a new location in 1966 and was renamed Second Stage) included David Orcutt, Al Neil, Greg Simpson, Sam Perry (23), Gary Lee-Nova and Helen Goodwin. Armed with the realization that any sophisticated experimentation with expensive media equipment would be beyond the budget of individual artists, they willingly joined in the cooperative venture. The envisioned facility would integrate
technological art with performance and visual art forms, and would allow the artist to work without individually applying for Canada Council grant funding. The mandate for this organization included support for individuals interested in exploring and experimenting with TV, Total Involvement Theatre, electronic programming of audio and visual images, projected printmaking and various applications of sound, sight, tactile, and spatial involvement. (24)

In an unprecedented gesture, the Canada Council gave the not yet extant 'Intermedia Society' a $40,000 grant to begin operation. Joe Kyle was hired to direct Intermedia's business affairs and David Orcutt became the first workshop manager. In June of 1967, four floors of warehouse space at 575 Beatty Street were converted into Intermedia's headquarters providing a workshop facility, space to perform and a pool of equipment for interested artists, architects, technologists and engineers.

With the establishment of Intermedia, backed by a high profile Board of Directors and an active, productive core group of artists, those individuals who had ideas but no previous means of support in the artistic milieu, finally found some means of entry into the realm of serious artistic discourse. There was no membership as such; in an effort to keep the artists as 'free' as possible, both psychologically and financially, the facility was open to anyone interested in creating. . . .although subsequent funding for the projects had to be approved by the Project Directors.
Connections were established with outside artistic groups partaking in similar engagements with Art & Technology. Comparisons were made with Electromagnetic Spectrum and Intersystems, based in Toronto, and Montreal's Fusion des Arts. In 1968, Joe Kyle met with members of the New York based organization E.A.T (Experiments in Art and Technology). Headed by Dr. Bill Kluver and Robert Rauschenberg, E.A.T. was dedicated to catalyzing the active involvement of industry, technology and the arts. At this time Intermedia was invited to join EAT, but Kyle declined the invitation, preferring 'warm but independent relations'. During this visit Kyle also met with Pierre Trudeau, undoubtedly drawn together by their shared enthusiasm for McLuhan's communication theories. (I will expand on this connection later in the chapter).

Interest from the outside was reciprocated. Gene Youngblood, Art Critic for The Los Angeles Times, author of Expanded Cinema and advocate and promoter for Buckminster Fuller, wrote to Intermedia for more information concerning their projects, promising the inclusion of Intermedia's endeavours in his publication. In June of 1968, artscanada published an article written by Joe Kyle, "The new alchemy", describing the 'incorporation' of Intermedia and championing the artistic possibilities inherent in 'new electronic technology'. In 1969 Intermedia's Director, Werner Aellen represented the West in New Brunswick at "The Artist and The New Technologies Conference" sponsored by The Canadian Conference of The Arts. The 60's decade was witnessing an incredible proliferation of, and subsequent discussion revolving around, the fusion of art and
technology. This was being responded to exponentially with an infectious sense of exhilaration and discovery. Through Intermedia, Vancouver artists indulged in a sense of being on the forefront of contemporary issues. This included more than just the artistic avant-garde; by virtue of their engagement in the 'supertechnological society' they were part of the evolution of 'a whole new consciousness for mankind'.

An elated sense of purpose was further enhanced by an awestruck press, eager to participate in what they saw as a fascinating flirt with the 'Era of Technology' and glad to finally boast of Vancouver's entry into the 'Big League'. In an article written by Norm Wilson in the *Province* he states:

The formation of Intermedia was a bold and visionary move. There is no doubt now that it has proven its worth and has begun to reveal its unbounded scope for the future. It has put this city on the vanguard of a new era of human activity and inspiration. (25)

In an article in the *Vancouver Sun* from 1967, the caption reads: "CITY VISUALIZED AS MEDIA CAPITAL "Vancouver: Communications Capital of the World." The article goes on to say "... It (Intermedia) could become national headquarters for electronic experiments such as those pioneered by Marshall McLuhan, Canada's communication philosopher at U. of T." (26)
The preliminary release to the press outlining Intermedia's statement of purpose and intent describes the possibilities for intermedial experimentation in incredibly ambitious terms. Theories put forth by McLuhan and others would be subjected to suitably controlled tests and experimentations. There would be rooms especially equipped with electronic and optical devices to extend the possibilities of communication in non-verbal techniques. Any aid that computers could make to communication would be explored and specialists in cybernetics would participate in research. (27) Similarly conflated language is used in describing project proposals submitted by artists in Intermedia's first newsletter. eg. Electromagnetic fields of energy in a perceptual environment; Projection Techniques and materials to restructure spatial relationships; Defracted laser imagery and re-oriented perception through audio and visual animation. (28) Artists who had previously been experimenting with multi-media in circumstances where altering consciousness had as much to do with psychedelics and drugs (fully explained in Chapter 2) as it had to do with the effects of intersensory probing were, by association, if not direct reference now partaking in a very different program.(29) Involvement with Intermedia predicated a direct connection with the ideas of Fuller and McLuhan. (30)

The artists involved had responded with an appropriately 'technical' language. They were passengers on 'Spaceship Earth'. Yet this interface carried with it certain connotations which extended into a philosophy far more pervasive than most of the Society members
would have acknowledged. The inherent substance of both McLuhan and Fuller's optimistic alliance with technology is rooted in the 17th century philosophy of Locke and Hobbes; liberalism as a belief in human reason and the perfectibility of man. (31) Americans have successfully joined together liberalism and technique as the basis of a national political culture. Their desire for egalitarianism and material progress made liberalism and technique highly compatible. Man attains greater power and resources by conquering nature through science and technique. This permits expanded choice about the future and a rising level of mass well-being. Faith in the liberal idea of progress resulted in a confidence in the ultimate beneficence of what was to come. (32)

Intermedia Society, in choosing to ally itself with technological liberalism, initially turns toward a philosophy which is, as Michael Benamou states, “inspired by a desire for order (planetary or even cosmic) rather than social conscience.” (33) The vision of technological transcendentalism offered by Fuller and McLuhan align the aspirations of the Society with the Futurists, a prophetic and utopian ideology preoccupied with the cultural and psychological implications in store for humanity as the year 2000 loomed ahead. (34)

Wholehearted and enthusiastic support given to Intermedia by David Silcox, Arts Officer with the Canada Council who endorsed the annual $40,000 grants, was in keeping with the restructuring and amplification of cultural policy fostered by the Liberal government
led by Lester Pearson. In April 1963, the same month Pearson took office after the collapse of the Diefenbaker government, the major government cultural agencies which had previously been scattered among different departments were centralized under the aegis of the Secretary of State; these included the National Museums, The National Gallery, the Canada Council, C.B.C., and The National Film Board. The roles of these agencies were expanded from 1963 to 1968. In 1965, the Canada Council began receiving parliamentary appropriations for the first time, which allowed it to expand its arts interventions enormously. Largely in response to recommendations made at Seminar '65, the Government announced an unconditional grant of $10,000,000 to the Canada Council which would virtually double the Council's effectiveness. (35) Fervent support by the minority Liberal Government for the stimulation of Canadian culture reveals a strategy adopted to offset growing threats to national unity and thus to revitalize their weak political position. (36) Emphasis on the development of 'the new technology of communication' was combined with increasing investment in the arts to foster a sense of unity within the nation as a whole. In recommendations made to the Centennial Commission at Seminar '65, the arts are described as the 'keystone' to the culture of the nation. The Chapter entitled, "Plans for 1967" stresses the development of artistic life as central to the focus of Centennial. Centennial resources, wisely directed through the arts, could hasten the true completion of Confederation. "It is, therefore, as timely as it is inspiring that the honourable Maurice Lamontagne, Secretary of State, proposes the development of our artistic life as "the major objective of Centennial observances". (37)
At the Canadian Conference of The Arts, Seminar '66, an attempt was made to break down the boundaries between the traditional artistic disciplines in an effort to stimulate collaboration “to build the kind of world we want to live in, and can live in”. (38) Recommendations were made for a National Research Centre for the visual arts which would allow artists, craftsmen, designers, architects and town planners to work and study together rather than in isolation and to come into contact with other academic disciplines. (39) Recommendations were also made for the immediate establishment of the Visual Arts Information Centre, a clearing house and information centre for all the visual arts, thus enhancing communication possibilities between centres. (40)

The Seminar '66 brief ends with a quote by Arthur Erikson:

The layman needs to understand the role of the artist. He needs to appreciate how the artist can contribute to his experience in as vital and necessary way as the scientist. It shouldn't worry him that a work of art, as well as a theory of physics remains ultimately mysterious to him. He should appreciate that both have their place in the design of his environment. He must appreciate as well that the design of his environment is 'fundamental' to his survival. (41)

Three aspects covered at the Seminar have particular relevance to Intermedia; the breakdown between disciplines in order to work
together to shape the environment; the need for centres for information dissemination and collaboration between various academic disciplines and the affirmation of the artist's contribution to the survival of society. Most importantly, Intermedia shared with the Government more than just a common orientation with regard to an interest in communications and interdisciplinary co-operation; both shared a faith in the reason of technological experience and the common belief in the ultimate benefit of technical evolution. Trudeau's rise to power, from his emergence on the federal political scene in 1965 to his victory in 1968, was vital in reshaping the ideology of technological liberalism in Canada. A fervent admirer of McLuhan's media theories, Trudeau implemented a program based on technological rationalism (those who command the tools of modern technology will have the power) and anti-nationalism - promoting Canada as a model participant in the Global Village. (42) In Technology and The Canadian Mind (1984), Arthur Kroker sums up the reasons for Canada's predisposition as a leading exemplar in technological liberalism:

Canada is and always has been, the most modern of the new world societies because of the character of its colonialism; of its domination of the land by technologies of communication; and of its' imposition of an abstract nation upon a divergent population by a fully technical polity; this has made of it a leading expression of technological liberalism in North America. (43)
Intermedia, seen initially as innovators in the arts for their positive response to the 'Technological Society' and their willingness to contribute to communication theory became linked with the cybernetic network enveloping Canada in its new role as 'Communications Frontier'.

Intermedia's inaugural Exhibition at The Vancouver Art Gallery in 1968, 'Intermedia Nights,' demonstrated the initial invigoration generated by an enthusiastic response to the possibilities that the hybrid of Art & Technology had in store for the artist. Primarily an exhibition geared toward displaying to the public the versatility of Intermedia's multi-faceted response to the challenge of technology, three works in particular demonstrate the prevalent thrust of the Society's ambitions at this time. With an almost literal interpretation of the Art & Technology combine, the focus was on audience involvement. The pieces encouraged the public to participate directly by either switching it 'off or on', walking through it or triggering a device which would elicit a response from the piece itself. The works were also used to provide a suitably 'electronic' environment for dance performances, demonstrating the ease with which Intermedia members interacted within the technological environment.

Proposals describing the works were sent in advance of the exhibition to the press. Although this must have seemed like excellent publicity tactics at the time, closer reading of the content of the proposals when compared with reviews written after the pieces were actually assembled for the exhibition reveals the beginnings of
the crack in Intermedia's cosmic egg. The level of technical expertise required to bring the ambitious concepts proposed by the artists to fruition were impossible under the circumstances. A description of Audrey Doray's proposal for her piece, 'The Wheel of Fortune' (fig. I) serves as an example:

Mounted on a black drum will be a black disc upon which she has made a beautiful collage. It will only be perceived though, as a colour pattern for as you spin the disc eight lights placed beneath it will begin to flash. When the wheel stops you will see a fragment of the collage and a tape will say something to you. From this unexpected picture sound combination and your spoken reaction to it, other chain reactions will follow, for your voice itself can activate the wheel. (44)

Sounds good in theory. The reviewer, however, finds the piece in a somewhat altered state during the exhibition.

Audrey Capel Doray's idea of people talking to it had to be scrapped as there was not time to solve the technical complications which it posed. Instead, the wheel is surrounded by a hoop, which when touched causes lights to flash in different patterns beneath a circular collage. A tape also comes on. However, most people seemed mesmerized purely by the play of light and the overall mystery of the concept. (45)

Because Intermedia was characterized as primarily an 'experimental'
facility, the shortcomings of the technical pieces were always understood to be unavoidable, or at the very least, tolerated with good humour. (Experimentation is the key word in scientific progress. The scientist/artist must experiment in order to produce a viable contribution.) Such consideration is also evident in a collaborative piece using John Mascuich's neon sculpture as an environment for Helen Goodwin's 'A Space with performers' in the Main Gallery:

...four dancers moving in an environment of vertical fluorescent tubes they moved to music and in the first performance to a voice repeating over and over, 'She was a visitor...' But in the second performance something went wrong, either with the sound or the concept, because it didn't work, and the audience didn't understand that what they were hearing was the amplified sound of the fluorescent tubes. . .(46)

In spite of the fact that the technical failing totally destroyed the overall concept of the piece, reducing the dance to a ridiculous episode in frustration for the audience, the press was very reluctant to criticize. Why? They saw themselves as a part of this pioneering effort...by their very presence at these happenings, they too were participants in the New Technological Era. Intermedia functioned as an experience in 'living' and within this paradigm, the quality of the experience was given wide margins.

Again, because Intermedia had projected an image of itself as an experimental facility where scientists and technologists worked side by side with artists, pretentious art works such as Joan Balzaar and
Herb Gilbert's collaborative "Light on Light" resulted. The preliminary description of Joan Balzaar and Herb Gilbert's collaborative work, "Light on Light" (fig. 2) states:

... her big stripe paintings with neon inserts from her show in mid-march at the Bau Xi Gallery, along with some new works, can be flood lit by gallery goers with red, blue or yellow spots. The paintings can thus be drastically changed and intriguing optical after effects created. (47)

A literal interpretation of the Art & Technology hybrid, Balzaar has asked Gilbert to outfit her paintings with 'neon inserts'. With a few switches and the promise of neon, the works become 'experiments' in optical effects. Yet the reviewer reporting on the results of the new dynamic finds the experiment short on intrigue.

"Light on Light" hastily conceived it brings neither a fresh revelation of Joan Balzar's paintings nor tempts much audience participation. Only two people can sit at the switch board which controls an overhead cluster of lights. During most of the time I was there a 12 year old boy flicked the switches on and off with brain fatiguing rapidity. This was Intermedia at it's worst, gadgetry. (48)

What was the determining factor separating gadgetry from Art & Technology? In this case the reviewer declined to explain. But she
had drawn the line: this experiment was a failure. Certainly, if one had based the success or failure of the works on more than just an arbitrary judgement based on the level of one's tolerance at the moment of interaction, and instead examined the original intentions of the Society, what then would have been the verdict? Did the piece change the viewers consciousness? How does one measure a change in perception? What happened to the experiments in defracted laser imagery or electro-magnetic fields of energy in a perceptual environment? Where were all the cybernetic specialists? "Light on Light" remained the reality. However, in spite of the shortcomings exhibited by these pieces the show was deemed a success. ("Gallery flashes success: Intermedia". (49) The response from the public to Intermedia Nights: awe mixed with curiosity, was appropriate considering the image Intermedia was projecting . . . innovators in the new era of technology. That some of the works failed to rise above gadgetry did not threaten the integrity of the group as a whole; their status as pioneers was firmly entrenched.
NOTES

1. Philip Leider, "Vancouver: scene with no scene," *artscanada* (June/July 1967): pp. 1-8. This article serves to underscore the change in Vancouver's artistic community after the formation of Intermedia Society. Leider refers to a handful of young Vancouver artists struggling to keep abreast of contemporary artistic trends. Among those mentioned are Gary Lee-Nova, Michael Morris and Glenn Lewis, all of whom subsequently become an integral part of Intermedia Society. Leider is concerned about the future of these talented young artists working in what he considers to be an artistic vacuum.

2. Ibid., p. 1.

3. Ibid., p. 1.

4. Ibid., p. 1.

5. Held in the Armouries at U.B.C. 'The Medium Is The Message' was organized by Helen Goodwin, lain Baxter, David Orcutt, Cortland Hultberg, Abraham Rogatnick, Takao Tanabe, Alvin Balkind, Sam Perry, Roy Kiyooka, and Helen Sonthoff. With emphasis on the integration of various media and audience participation - not in the 'sing along' sense, but as an integral part of the show, the Festival was seen as a continuation of ideas developed at earlier Festivals. Primary among the inspirations from the four previous Festivals were Ann Halprin's dance group in 1961; the program put on by musician John Cage together with the Merce Cunningham Dancers in 1962; the presentation of the San Francisco Tape Music Centre in 1963; and in 1964, the combined visit of Marshall McLuhan and Gerd Stern whose work epitomized for McLuhan followers the meaning of 'mixed media' with its emphasis on collaged combinations of poetry, painting, photography and sound. Intermedia can be seen as a part of the continuity established by the Festival of Contemporary Art, a 'permanent' facility to carry out the ideas which were evolving out of the annual Festivals. A description of one of the exhibits at the 1965 'Medium is the Message' Festival illustrates the indebtedness Intermedia had to these events.
Earlier this year, at the University of British Columbia, a group of professors set up the world's first festival of what the French are already calling 'mcluhanism'. People wandered at random - there was, naturally, no set sequence, through a maze created out of huge plastic sheets while slides were projected, at random intervals, on every available surface (floors and ceilings included). Musicians whacked away at gongs and bells and wood blocks, dancers whirled among the spectators and there was even something called a Sculptured Wall. It consisted of a piece of stretch fabric on one side of which was a squirming girl, whom you were supposed to palpate, through the screen, gaining presumably, a major lesson in an oft-ignored method of communication - the tactile.


7. This description of Fuller is paraphrased from "The Dymaxion American," Time (10 January 1964) pgs. 46-51. The article contains a quote by Fuller in which he states that in 1927 he made a bargain with himself that he would discover the principles operating in the universe and turn them over to his fellow man. Ibid, p. 46.

8. With the combined influence of Alvin Balkind at the U.B.C. Fine Arts Gallery, Richard Simmons at the Vancouver Art Gallery and Douglas Christmas at the Douglas Gallery, Vancouver artists were exposed to an influx of contemporary art and artists from New York and Los Angeles. Visits by Robert Rauschenberg, Deborah Hay, Yvonne Rainer, Frank Stella, Steve Paxton, and Alex Hay provided a vital rapport with these outside art centres. Rauschenberg had been involved in the 1966 New York production of 'Nine Evenings; Theatre and Engineering.' This piece in particular stirred the interest of Vancouver's multi-media artists as it was a major effort involving the collaboration of prominent American artists working with
engineers and technicians. Prior to the formation of Intermedia, The Festival of Contemporary Art held at U.B.C. annually from 1961 to 1970 provided a large scale forum for experiments in mixed-media work, and demonstrated the feasibility of interdisciplinary cooperation. Unfortunately, no comprehensive reconstruction of these Festivals has been attempted. The impact of the Festival of Contemporary Art on Intermedia is undeniable. The format of Intermedia's major exhibitions followed closely the format used at the U.B.C. Festival from its beginnings; mixed media poetry readings and dance, audio-kinetic environments, etc. Although acknowledgement of the influence the Festivals had on the formation of Intermedia is given in *Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931-1983* the extent of Intermedia's debt to the Festivals is only hinted at.


10. The entire quote is as follows:

> When we begin to deal with our actually existing new environment as an art form, we may be reaching that stage the planet itself seems to have reached. With satellites and electronic antennae as probes, the planet ceases in a way to be the human environment and becomes a satellite itself - a probe into space, creating new space and new environments for the planet.


McLuhan states:

> As electronically contracted, the globe is no more than a village. Electric speed in bringing all social and
political functions together in a sudden implosion has heightened human awareness of responsibility to an intense degree. It is this implosive factor that alters the position of the Negro, the teenager, and some other groups. They can no longer be contained, in the political sense of limited association. They are now involved in our lives, as we in theirs, thanks to the electric media.


14. McLuhan relates any invention or technology as an extension or self-amputation of our physical bodies. Numbness occurs as a result of extending our central nervous system outside of our bodies and subjecting it to the massive onslaught of electronic technology... "as if the central nervous system could no longer depend on the physical organs to be protective buffers against the slings and arrows of outrageous mechanism." Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media, p.43. It stands to reason that 'collapse' would occur if over-stimulation occurred in crisis proportion.


16. In an attempt to implement Fuller's vision for a successful world, a computer complex at Southern Illinois University was actually under construction in 1969. Called 'World Game', the $16 million complex, equipped with a football sized field map of the world activated by a battery of high-velocity digital computers, was to serve as the central brain with extension groups to be established at universities, colleges, and centers all around the world. With access to all information from NASA's meteorological planet analysis and earth resources satellites, World Game would compile a World Resources Inventory. Fuller predicted that for the first time in
history, World Game, armed with an arsenal of constantly updated information about the world's wealth, would by-pass traditional politics, making Spaceship Earth a successful environment for all its' inhabitants. Gene Youngblood acted as spokesperson to the general public for Buckminster Fuller in his Los Angeles Free Press column, 'Intermedia'. Detailed information regarding Bucky's plans for the future are found in the Youngblood series of articles entitled, "World Game: Scenario For World Revolution". Los Angeles Free Press, December 1969 - April 1970. The magnitude of this project was mind-boggling - both in terms of its' utopian scope and to the degree in which it was realized.


18. Both Shadbolt and Erikson attended Seminar '66. This Conference was dedicated in its' efforts to foster the dissolution of traditional barriers between disciplines, namely, the Arts, Humanities and Sciences. Erikson was present at many of the early meetings held at Shadbolt's home during the formation of Intermedia and is sited in a 1967 proposal to the Canada Council for funding as one of the individuals interested in working with Intermedia. See Intermedia Files, Special Collections Library, U.B.C. Box 1, File 5 and 6.


20. According to The 'Application For Funding To Canada Council On Behalf Of Intermedia' submitted by Jack Shadbolt, January 1967, the forming group of artists was comprised of D. Orcutt, J. Behrens, F. Fisher, I. Baxter, R. Schafer, G. Lee-Nova, A. Sens, J. Juliani, H. Goodwin, C. Toppings, A. Doray, J. Long, G. Toppings, F. Peters, W. Griba, and J. Dale. Another list from the same document sited the names of people "interested in working in Intermedia". Included among the 22 names were Bill Bisset, Judy Copithorne, Arthur Erikson, Herb Gilbert, Harry Mann, Geof. Massey, Heather McCallum,


23. Documentation of Sam Perry's influence on the early multimedia experiments conducted at The Sound Gallery is limited to the account given by Al Razutis in "Recovering Lost History: Vancouver Avant-Garde Cinema, 1960-69," Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931-1983, pp. 160-173. Like Orcutt, Perry was influenced by, and simultaneously involved with concepts being developed in 'visual consciousness' by Stan Brakhage. Perry's film experiments included multiple image overlays, texture and rapid montage cutting within the central context of 'cosmic awareness' leaning heavily toward a consciousness inspired by Oriental philosophy and acid drugs. Ibid., pp. 162-63.

24. This mandate was given in a letter dated from 1967 and included in the submission to the Canada Council for the initial funding required to set up Intermedia. See Intermedia Files, Special Collections Library, U.B.C., Box 3, File 11. Al Razutis presents a different mandate in his description of the genesis of Intermedia ... "The mandate for this organization included support for film, performance, painting, sculpture, sound, poetry, and media." Al Razutis, "Recovering Lost History: Vancouver Avant Garde Cinema, 1960-69". Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931-1983, p. 163. In light of
Shadbolt's insistence in his letters to the Canada Council that a facility was needed to accommodate the new technologies in the arts, and that such a facility was as yet unavailable, Razutis's inclusion of the more traditional artistic disciplines in Intermedia's mandate seems inappropriate. It is possible that the mandate quoted by Razutis was from a later period in Intermedia's history.


27. Titled “Intermedia: A Survey of Intended Project Areas”, this letter is undated and unsigned. The address given is 575 Beatty St. and the document was clearly introduced shortly after the actual inhabitation of the building. The tone of the communication is far too idealistic in conception to have been written any substantial length of time after the Society was actually functioning. See Intermedia Files, Special Collections, U.B.C., Box 1, Files 6 and 7.

28. Typical of a number of Intermedia documents, there is no date given for “Intermedia News Letter No. 1”. See Intermedia Files, Special Collections Library, U.B.C. Box 3, File 9.

29. As will be discussed in Chapter 2., the artists participating in the 'light shows' at The Sound/Seymour Galleries were part of Vancouver's Acid Culture - believing that the drug induced state further enhanced visual perception. Sam Perry's excursions into LSD consciousness, began in an attempt to access the unconscious in order to create works of greater complexity and density, ended in psychic break-down and suicide in 1966. Perry balanced precariously in his experiments with 'psychic reality' between conscious and unconscious states of awareness. Psychic expansion was central to both Perry and Orcutt's work - both attempting to create with film and sound an environment which would provoke a 'sensorium' effect in the mind - evolving into some sort of cosmic consciousness. In letters of Purpose and Intent sent to the Canada Council and in press
releases, McLuhan's name is mentioned again and again reinforcing the 'seriousness' of the experimentations in which Intermedia will involve its membership and the magnitude of the project undertaken. Intermedia is billed as the National Headquarters for electronic experimentation, based on the pioneering efforts of Marshall McLuhan, Canada's Communications philosopher at the University of Toronto. See "City Visualized As Media Capital," The Vancouver Sun, (15 April 1967).


33. The larger issues concerning Technocracy will be discussed in Chapter 2. Because of Intermedia's strong ideological ties with McLuhan, the Society is subject to affiliation with the broad political discourse associated with Technical Liberalism. Michael Benamou states, "Neither Kahn and Co., McLuhan, Fuller, Skinner, nor Feinberg, we might say, propose a genuinely "critical" technocriticism. Their writing seems inspired by a desire for order (planetary or even cosmic) rather than by social conscience. They represent the technological imagination of the post industrial era at its apogee: euphoric, eudemonistic, and eugenistic." Michael Benamou, "Notes on the Technological Imagination," in The Technological Imagination: Theories and Fictions, ed. Kathleen Woodward (Madison Wisconsin: Cold Press Inc., 1980) p. 71.
34. In Alvin Toffler's "Introduction: Probing Tomorrow," from The Futurists, ed. Alvin Toffler (New York: Random House, 1972) pp. 3-10, Toffler describes the recent upsurge of a 'futurist movement' as compared to a few years earlier when the "word 'futurist' was virtually unknown in American life." Great importance is placed on the value of inter-disciplinary exchange of information and hence the inclusion in the publication of essays by anthropologists, biologists, engineers, philosophers, mathematicians, physicists, economists, and a dozen other specialists. Included in the anthology are essays by both McLuhan and Fuller.


With a weak Liberal minority government in power threatened by separation with the loss of Quebec as its major power base in Canadian society, Canadian Liberals began focusing on culture as the primary instrument of their political resurgence. Ibid., p. 105.


39. Ibid, p. 17
40. Ibid, pp. 10 & 17

41. Ibid, p. 12.

42. See David Howard's M.A. Thesis “Progress In An Age Of Rigor Mortis” for an analysis of Trudeau's rise to power and the subsequent changes in Liberal political strategy to support “technological liberalism”. Trudeau states:

In the world of tomorrow, the expression 'banana republic' will not refer to independent fruit growing nations, but to countries where formal independence has been given priority over the cybernetic revolution. In such a world, the state -- if it is not outdistanced by its rivals -- will need political instruments which are sharper, stronger, and more finely controlled than anything based on mere emotionalism. Such tools will be made up of advanced technology and scientific investigation. . . .


47. Joan Lowndes, "Intermedia Nights: A massive protest by artists against the passivity engendered by TV and the atrophy of the imagination," The Province, (Vancouver), 17 May 1968.


Chapter Two

A CRACK IN THE COSMIC EGG:
ELECTRONIC REVOLUTION OR COUNTER CULTURAL REVOLUTION?
OPPOSITION TO TECHNOLOGICAL LIBERALISM

What we will be trying to do is to explore the whole new area of sensory experience . . . We have no connection with the psychedelic stuff that happens to be in vogue at the moment and we do not want to get tarred with the same brush.

Jack Shadbolt, 8 November 1968

It is imperative to learn and fast in order to get out any art strong enough to counter the mindboggling insanity we are being led to by the mindless freaks in power on this planet.

Al Neil, “Guess Work - Notes On The Revolution” (no date)

What is special about the generational transition we are in is the scale on which it is taking place and the depth of antagonism it reveals. Indeed, it would hardly seem an exaggeration to call what we see arising among the young a counter culture. Meaning: a culture so radically disaffiliated from the mainstream assumptions of our society that it scarcely looks to many as a culture at all, but takes on the alarming appearance of a barbaric intrusion.

This Chapter deals with what I will call the second phase of Intermedia's history, a period during which the Society achieved its most prodigious output, culminating in its second annual exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery, the *Electrical Connection* (1969). (1) During this phase the society retained its open door policy and subsequently was swamped with enthusiastic young people eager to exercise their creative talents (by the end of 1969, 200 individuals were using the facility). In the Fall of 1968 Werner Aellen replaced Joe Kyle as Executive Director - a position which was henceforth full-time and salaried. Aellen's experience with the National Film Board in Montreal, where he wrote, directed and produced educational films, as well as his more recent 'multi-media' work in conjunction with Donald Theall for audio-visual techniques at Expo '67 had earned him the title 'Multi-Media Man' in Vancouver. (2) Following Intermedia's original mandate, Aellen saw Intermedia's potential for greater interaction between scientists, technologists and artists. Although he described his function as Director primarily to secure exhibition space and to gain sponsorship, his zeal for the collaboration of technologists with artists continued to fuel the fires within the Society for their part in what Aellen described as 'the first chapter in the cultural space age'. (3) Certainly Marshall McLuhan and Buckminster Fuller could not have hand-picked a better candidate for the job. Upon closer examination, however, it became apparent that adherence to the original mandate set by the Society in 1967 was becoming more difficult to sustain. Aellen recognized in the Spring of 1969 that there was internal dissatisfaction with the
Society's preoccupation with technology oriented concerns, and attempted to accommodate a variety of artistic ventures outside of the Art & Technology mandate. (4) This was the turning point for the Society. The 'sturm und drang' of social upheaval during 1969 had an impact on the way in which many of the individuals working within Intermedia viewed their relationship with society and the vision they had of themselves as artists within technocratic North America. In this chapter I concentrate on demonstrating counter cultural influences at work within the Society and the resultant erosion of Intermedia's reliance on the original mandate. It is essential to define the position of what Michael Benamou described as 'the Happy Technophile' in the Electronic Eden, a position readily identifiable with the aims and aspirations of the original mandate, and subsequently of Aellen. It is imperative to understand Intermedia's ideology relative to more pessimistic views toward the escalating technocracy being discussed concurrently. Compared with harsh objections hurled at American 'technocracy' by leading social critics during the 50's and 60's, the reactionary position of the counter culture becomes clearer. Intermedia became a facility catering simultaneously to two opposing ideologies, as the influence of the counter cultural movement swelled in 1969. The result was a radically altered mandate by 1970.

In light of their alliance with the predominant ideology of technical-liberalism, the optimistic nature of McLuhan's and Fuller's predictions are overwhelmingly Utopian relative to other discourses involving 'The Technological Society' being published concurrently.
Michael Benamou's essay, "Notes on the Technological Imagination" (5) cleverly categorizes the varying historical attitudes prevalent at this time towards post-industrial society. According to Benamou the contributors to technocriticism fall into one of four classifications: happy technophiles, those like McLuhan and Fuller who believe that technology will bring about convergence and unification; anxious technophiles, those who foresee planetary problems but have faith in democratic control over technology; desperate technophiles for whom autonomous technology means only the unavoidable destruction of human values, and hopeful technophiles with their faith in the counter cultural forces of the New Sensibility, ecological anarchists who willingly replace the failure of urban industrialism with new human-scale technologies. By adopting Benamou's classifications I am able to sum up the variety of positions prevalent at this time and demonstrate the tenuousness of Intermedia's commitment to an ideology based on firm links with the ideas of Fuller and McLuhan.

As early as 1952, Lewis Mumford's *Art and Technics* (6) demonstrated the position of the 'desperate technophile', comparing technology to the walls of a prison, warning of the dehumanization wrought by technics. In *The Future As History* (1959) (7) Robert Heilbroner prophetically denounced the 'happy technophile' illusion. Concerned that 'optimism' inherently misleads mankind with its failure to confront the reality of the human condition as it exists in the here and now. . . "failure to confront truthfully and unflinchingly the condition of the human being as it now exists" (8) . . . and with its' tendency to underestimate the difficulty of historic change, he
questioned the very basis of its philosophical roots: the notion of progress.

The very assumption that the growth of technical skill, political equality, or economic well-being will automatically lead to 'progress' rather than to increased destructiveness, heightened social disorder, or vulgar opulence - already takes for granted an environment in which rationality, self-control, and dignity are paramount social attributes. (9)

Heilbroner denies the essential premise of an optimistic philosophy: that progress implies the corresponding improvement of the human condition. In its stead, Heilbroner sites technological exploitation, (10) the incredible disparity between the 'abjectly poor and the grossly rich' (11) and the erosion of individual autonomy. (12)

Similarly, Jacques Ellul insisted that progress consists of progressive dehumanization "a busy, pointless, and, in the end, suicidal submission to technique." (13) The Technological Society (1964) is a description of the way in which autonomous technology is in process of subverting and suppressing traditional values to produce a monolithic world culture in which technique becomes an end in itself, indifferent to all nontechnological difference and variety. The basic effect of state action on techniques is to co-ordinate the whole complex, as only the state is in a position to establish plans which are valid on the national level. (14) In what Ellul described as Total
Integration he observed the growing inter-connectedness of different techniques, increasing the possibilities for a discovery in one sector to have repercussions on the others creating the necessity for organisms of transmission to connect the different techniques. (15)

Amusements, friendship, art - all must be compelled toward the new integration, thanks to which there is to be no more social maladjustments or neurosis. Man is to be smoothed out, like a pair of pants under a steam iron.(16)

Whether anxious, desperate, happy or hopeful about the future, the point is, technology could no longer be seen as neutral. In place of convergence and unification, critics of technology warned of an encroaching industrial-military-political complex with it's incumbent disasters of pollution, technology induced unemployment and political totalitarianism.

Neither McLuhan nor Fuller, while preaching the emancipatory possibilities of electronic technology, acknowledged the potential for such a technocratic maelstrom. The most obvious flaw in their optimistic prophesies was their lack of acknowledgement of the terrifying potential for technocratic dictatorship. Described by Benamou as 'apolitical and determinist technophiles', McLuhan and Fuller, with Utopian visions reminiscent of Heilbroner's worst nightmare, failed to distinguish between post-industrial reality and post-industrial myth.
Riding on the coat-tails of these Utopian Greats, Intermedia Society, led by Aellen, rushed into an inevitable collision course with reality. Charmed by the vision of an alternative consciousness and linked in a heady relationship with the boom in the Art & Technology combine, it is possible the more zealous youth of Intermedia failed to understand the full implications of what these men were saying or (equally plausible), were initially oblivious to any oppositional stance to the elements of technological determinism fundamental to these visions.

What is it then, when one considers the enormous momentum gained by Intermedia in 1968-'69, that eventually culminates in the dissolution of the Society?

Intermedia artists' earlier rootedness in Vancouver's counter culture became the underlining oppositional voice which ultimately threatened the cohesiveness of the group as a whole. The majority of core group artists involved with Intermedia had, prior to the formation of the Society, engaged in multimedia experiments in 'environments' which had little to do with Marshall McLuhan's vision of the artist as lightning rod for the new electronic society. In a leap of faith typical of the eclectic counter culture, 'Mcluhanism' was grasped as an 'alternative' which had as a common denominator with the other consciousness-expanding experiments prevalent to youth at that time, the idea of a consciousness altering sensorium. However, expansion of consciousness for the youth culture included a variety
of means that extended far beyond the boundaries of multi-media experimentation envisioned by more conservative followers of McLuhan.

The Trips Festival typifies the approach adopted by Vancouver's counter culture to delve into the possibilities inherent in mixing medias. A light-show/dance/multi-media event staged in 1966 at The Gardens Auditorium in Vancouver, it was organized by the artists from the Sound Gallery, the same artists who subsequently formed the core group of Intermedia. Featuring 52 projectors, 25,000 square feet of screen, it was heralded as "Vancouver's first festival of sound and light" in an "ecstatic new space involving total sense perception", (17) including among the performers; Acid Test, The Grateful Dead and Big Brother and The Holding Company. The Trips Festival is credited with generating the spark that launched Intermedia (as is discussed in Chapter 3, this spark is not fanned by the members of the Society like Jack Shadbolt attempting to further the interests of the Society on a more credible basis). Forty-eight hour events such as The Trips Festival (this is, in fact, a generic name used at the time to describe a number of rock festivals which took place both in England and in North America) are described by Jeff Nuttall as 'freak-outs' where all the techniques of sense distortion were used lights and sound - pushed to the point of pain. (18) The revelations arising from such an experience are described by Nuttall:

The battery of curdling colours projected round the
room, the brutal stroboscopes, the aggressive gobbling of the lead guitars, the belligerent animal wails of the singers, the threat and howling hunger always present in the lyrics- 'Why can't we reach the sun' - the throbbing danger of the abused amplifiers, the stunned trance of the crowd and total bleak despair of the registered junkies always hovering around the door like predatory crows, all contribute to a ritual that can be nothing if not profoundly disruptive of most things that life has been about up till now.(19)

Drugs were as much apart of the experience as any other element and, according to some voices of authority (20) speaking for the interest of the 'freaks,' were central to counter cultural politics. Psychedelics (acid drugs) were, they believed, a strong influence in breaking youth out of the middle class. With psychedelics the idea of 'free consciousness' was intense, a direct challenge to the power structure's ideological control of consciousness which the counter culture saw as central to all forms of control. 'Activist hippies' believed that this control would never be relinquished without a break in the corporate capitalist state. The use of psychedelics predicated an intolerance of the status quo and subsequently, one became receptive to a revolutionary worldview. (21)

In an article from Vancouver's Georgia Straight entitled “Turn On, Tune In, Take Over”, (22) the paper encouraged its young readers to take their lives into their own hands and leave their 'elders' behind. Typical of literature published by free presses at this time - the editors of Georgia Straight adhered to the prevalent philosophy of
the counter culture, calling upon young people to develop an alternative culture within their own 'sick' society.

Nuttall convincingly marked the beginnings of the cultural revolution with the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At this point the generations become divided in a very crucial way. On one side of the great divide were those who had passed puberty at time of the bomb and continued to play 'the game', incapable of changing the pattern of their lives, of conceiving life without a future. The other group were the people who had not yet reached puberty at the time of the bomb. They were incapable of conceiving of life with a future.

Dad was a liar. He lied about the war and he lied about sex. He lied about the bomb and he lied about the future. He lived his life on an elaborate system of pretence that had been going on for hundreds of years. The so-called generation gap started then and has been increasing ever since. (23)

Described as a "moral revolt generated by alienation from dominant values" (24) the revolutionary movement reached its peak between 1967 and 1969. (25) The early period of the 60's is described as a time dominated by a dream of collective salvation and confidence that institutions could be transformed, cities remade, and new projects begun. In the 'early years' it was mostly an urban phenomenon, rooted in the campus, in youth ghettos such as the
Lower East Side, and in communities such as those in Berkeley and Haight-Ashbury. (26)

Vancouver's 'hippy community' in the 60's seemed to have a direct affiliation, spiritually and also physically (a great number of draft dodgers gravitated north of the border to Vancouver) with the original hippy community of Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco. Sharing a common philosophy which spurned the conventional work-oriented society and concentrating on a 'love thy neighbor' doctrine, the Vancouver hippy culture was every solid citizen's idea of an invasion by the Great Unwashed. Maclean's magazine gave the following report:

They shuffle around on a constant run of projects. They're tuned into the Haight-Ashbury scene and they ransack it for all the now familiar hippie rituals - love-ins, the Diggers movement, the rock, movie and light shows that are known as trips festivals. But the activists aren't always successful in importing them into the hostile Vancouver environment.(27)

Centered in the Kitsilano area of Vancouver, the 1,200 hippies of Vancouver had, reportedly, thrown Vancouver into "an anxious and puzzled fit". (28) By 1967 they had become Vancouver's "prime civic menace". (29) Considering the arbitrary nature of the hippy head count (Maclean's asked one of 4th Avenue's shop owners for an estimation) and the extent of the influence of counter cultural
philosophy as historians of the movement now indicate, the impact of the counter culture in Vancouver in the 60's was far more pervasive than this number would suggest. The threat imposed on the upright citizens of Vancouver by the growing hippy population was indicative of their own vulnerability to the lure of the values adopted by the hippy community. Not their own vulnerability of course, but the vulnerability of their children.

So by way of a dialectic Marx could never have imagined, technocratic America produces a potentially revolutionary element among its own youth. The bourgeoisie, instead of discovering the class enemy in its factories, finds it across the breakfast table in the person of its own pampered children. (30)

In response to a Vancouver City Council committee set up to investigate the hippies of Vancouver, Alderman Harry Rankin approached a group of representatives (a delegation) from the hippy-community to define themselves. Their response, as reported by Rankin, was typical of the general philosophy characterizing the North American counter culture at that time.

They're rebelling against widespread violence and wars in our society. They're disillusioned with false middle class values and standards, with status seekers, with people living beyond their means, with the vulgar materialism and the bitter competition so prevalent today. They're suspicious that automation will make man into a work horse, a cog in an immense
machine. (31)

They were (to paraphrase the classic account of the counter culture by Roszak) engaged in the paramount struggle of their day, a struggle against the forces of 'technocracy'.(32) Because the counter culture drew upon a profoundly personal sense of community, rather than upon technical and industrial values, Roszak claimed they came closer to being a radical critique of the technocracy than any of the traditional ideologies. (33)

Intermedia's position within this larger discourse appears to be similar to the dog biting its own tail. Although the primary motive for the group's involvement with materials and equipment developed by specialists in the space age was to effect a change in consciousness that would be beneficial for mankind, the alignment of the group within the context of the counter culture calls this motive into question. To put it another way, Intermedia brings together two disparate philosophies toward altering consciousness. Psychedelic restructuring of the mind stimulated by drugs and heading the war cry to 'Turn on, tune in and drop out' on one hand, and some sort of cosmic venture into an unknown consciousness stimulated by heightened technological awareness on the other. The struggle to maintain McLuhan's vision of the artist as pioneer in the field of intersensory investigation becomes swamped in the undercurrent of counter cultural conflict.
In addition to a rise in conflicting internal ideological struggles, the second year of Intermedia's operation bears witness to strained financial considerations. It becomes apparent that the marriage between Art & Technology was more difficult to put into practice and sustain than had been originally perceived during the honeymoon phase of Intermedia's history. Although Intermedia continued to receive $40,000 annually from the Canada Council, this sum was contingent on funding from private industries for the donation of equipment and technical expertise. Although some contributions were made by Sony in the form of video recording equipment, donations from industries never reached the anticipated level of expectation. (34) In a letter to Duncan Cameron, National Director of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, Werner Aellen expressed his concern about the lack of cooperation from industry. "We have found that industry is getting very uptight about helping artists with materials and equipment." (35) Setting up and operating sophisticated darkrooms, editing rooms, sound rooms and providing facilities sufficiently functional to accommodate a variety of users was a never ending battle. Budget proposals for equipment purchases always exceeded by far the monies received, and the cost of maintaining even a bare minimum of operational equipment posed a continual frustration for artists wanting to work on more technically ambitious projects. Because administrative and operational costs absorbed a large part of the Canada Council funding, project proposals were pared down to accommodate the lack of funds.

Nevertheless, Intermedia's activity level in 1969 increased
dramatically. Aellen had succeeded in organizing and catalyzing the energy of the group to the point where it seemed to function as an organic whole. Intermedia Film Co-op was established and two collaborative exhibitions by Intermedia were staged at the Victoria Art Gallery, one in the Spring and one in the Fall. New performance groups were formed, The Intermedia Mime Troop and The Vancouver Living Theatre, and were rehearsing regularly at Intermedia. In the Spring of 1969 Werner Aellen wrote in an enthusiastic Report to the Canada Council (36) that over seventy-five of their members were preparing for a week long Electrical Connection exhibition interlaced with performances, concerts and happenings at the Vancouver Art Gallery. The exhibition was to represent a culmination of that year's activities. For this reason it is perfect for the purpose of this paper to stand as an indicator of Intermedia Society's expanding ideology at this time.

Once again the preliminary press release outlining the intended events and providing descriptions of particular pieces promised the public a spectacular adventure in Intermedial activity. With publicity tactics no less blatant than those used by the Shriners circus, Intermedia members planned to wow the general public with their presence, eliminating past associations with gallery-going of a more staid nature and luring this new generation of intrigued viewers with the forces of spectacle. Capitalizing on the gallery's central position in the downtown core of Vancouver, publicists for Electrical Connection saw the opportunity to entice the public with a variety of techniques. These publicity techniques merged with the Society's artistic
intentions in ways only an organization with as versatile a mandate as Intermedia's could manage. An enthusiastic report written by Norm Wilson provided the public with a description of what they could expect. (37) To announce the commencement of the exhibition Ron Wattier planned to fly his concrete poetry sculpture, consisting of 39 fluorescent helium filled balloons, from the lampposts on the Granville and Burrard bridges. A series of three were intended to rise from the art gallery roof 'for the benefit of air travellers and cloistered office personnel in surrounding skyscrapers'. During Easter Monday the members of the Vancouver Living Theatre would don brightly coloured costumes and ride around the city on gaily decorated bicycles meeting people in the parks and streets, passing out invitations for the gallery opening that same evening. The exhibits and performances, described as being 'in the final stages of planning' by Wilson, promised a mixture of audience participation and technological wizardry. Visitors could ride in a wheel-chair through a semi-disposable tunnel constructed by Robert Arnold. The experience was to simulate travel through a light and sound environment. Michael De Courcy and Dennis Vance were constructing an environment of photographic robots which, the public was informed, would 'talk, sing, laugh glow and even dance.... depending on the viewers perception'. Glenn Lewis was devising a piece appropriately named 'Ribbon Run', consisting of 300' of ribbon running through the gallery, leading visitors to 'the magic room'. (No further reference is made to suggest why this room might be 'magic'). In the only understatement made regarding the pieces about to be displayed at the gallery, Wilson calls 'The Mass Media
Wall', (a collaborative piece by Tom Shandel, Bill Fix and Dave Rimmer) 'an arrangement of some 60 T.V. sets'. Within this piece several closed circuit systems would constantly record occurrences, performances, reactions and spontaneous happenings in the gallery. Video footage made especially for the occasion would also be included. The grand finale was to be an elaborate "Dance and Living Environment" by Helen Goodwin and Theco. Billed as "an audience participation performance" it promised to encompass such electronic media as a computer, closed circuit T.V. and telephones enclosed in plastic shells. The latter were to provide the audience with the vital participatory link to the piece, encouraging "instantaneous anonymous response to the performance".

Bolder in it's projection than Intermedia Nights, Electrical Connection promised an extravaganza where the public could partake in a celebration of Intermedia's latest technical and creative discoveries. The boldness in execution confirmed Intermedia's confidence at this juncture in its history.

Once again, however, Intermedia's reach exceeded it's grasp. It was soon discovered that inflated fluorescent vinyl, although filled with helium, didn't fly. (fig. 3) Instead the letters were strung across the entrance to the gallery. Any hint of technical expertise or scientific procedure could have prevented this blatant short-sightedness. What was to have been a public announcement of Intermedia's presence at the gallery on a grand scale, even to the point of 'giving visual relief to cloistered office personnel' is reduced to a mere decorative gesture
on the facade of the building. No mention is made by the press as to how this may have drastically altered the concept. Experimentation is given wide margins and the reviewers resign themselves to the accommodation of errors. The response to this piece was... 'at least the experiment has been made'. (38)

Bob Arnold's tunnel was an example of Intermedia's pathetically modified results in their collaboration with industry. With childlike simplicity, the 'environment' was a construct of cardboard boxes stacked one on top of the other to form the tunnel (a design not without parallels to a child's method of building a fort from the cushions of a couch). The tunnel was then lit with strobes and a participant was pushed through this assemblage in a wheelchair along a 'track'. (fig. 4) The boxes were donated by Crown Zellerbach. This piece, by virtue of a gesture as simplistic as the donation of some cardboard boxes, became representative of artists working with industry. The superficiality of the piece as a constructed environment experimenting with the effects of light and sound was overwhelmingly pretentious in theory and became ridiculous in execution.

The review of Mike DeCourcy's photographic robots reports that they "stand around and respond sonically". (39) Located in a room lined with photographic murals, the robots were constructed of a plywood cut-out shaped to follow the outline of a photograph, a blown-up image of a person. (fig. 5) The robots were larger than life in size and two dimensional (viewers were restricted to a frontal image, as the
'robots' were composed of a photographic image pasted only to one side of the plywood cut-out). Affixed to a mobile base, the element of 'robotedness' came through a control devise which activated the base. The concept of an animated robot was drastically reduced to a figure who certainly didn't dance even if it did sing (a conclusion which, contrary to Wilson's report, would not vary much from one viewer's perception to another's.) De Courcy said: "The switches didn't work as they should have done. The budget was cut down from $150 to $75. You can't perform miracles with nothing." (40) Without prior associations to 'robots' which would perform in a variety of life-like ways, this piece had the potential to generate a variety of 'readings'. But within the confines of ambitious 'technical' expectations, the work fell short. Both the audience and the artist were frustrated in the context of Intermedia's mandate to impress upon the viewer a sophisticated level of technical enterprise.

Indicative of strained finances and lack of technical expertise, these pieces typify the more disastrous outcome of Intermedia's joint venture with technology. Two works, however, managed to succeed in spite of these limitations.

'The Mixed Media Wall' by Shandell, Fix and Rimmer, located in the main gallery, demonstrates what appears to be the beginning of a dialectical discourse within Intermedia's vision of its involvement with the media. A major installation, 'The Wall', described later by Shandel as 'an assemblage', consisted of three parts and ran approximately 100 feet in length. (41) (fig. 6) At one end of the
gallery were stacked about 100 television sets, (all working, according to Shandel) welded together and leaning precariously to one side. Beside this was a pile of 'television entrails', discarded T.V. parts of every description, and finally, “under a cloud of hanging television screen frames made of plastic, was a kind of burlesque of television sets”. (42) Composed of a mixture of empty television boxes and closed circuit T.V.'s, this part of the installation in particular provided the quintessential irony found within the piece as a whole. Sticking out of one empty T.V. box jeeringly was a huge stuffed tongue, and in another the television screen was replaced with a gaping whole framed by curtains and window panes. (fig. 7) Among this collage of curiosities, the public sat entranced by the images projected on the video and closed circuit T.V.s. The obvious irony inherent in the piece is apparent not just with the placement of incongruous elements within the 'dead' T.V. sets, but with the reaction to the piece by the audience. 'The Wall' sets up an inverted self-criticism. The juxtaposition of fixated viewers among the derelict remains of what continues to be the object of their fixation, set up multiple interactions between the work and its audience. There were those participating directly in viewing the 'live' screens, and those who, one step removed, looked on, 'viewing the viewers'. (fig. 8) The ominous quality of the installation shouted its warning. The T.V. as technological object was reduced to ridicule; the medium of infatuation was, by association, highly questionable. With this piece the idea of technological advancement in society came under heavy scrutiny.
Under very different circumstances, a similar dialectic was achieved in the final evening of Intermedia's week long staging of *Electrical Connection*. A review written by Joan Lowndes (43) describing the events leading to Goodwin and Theco's revision of their performance, 'Dance and Living Environment' provides insight into the nature of that dialectic. By comparing 'what was to have been' (noted previously) with what actually transpired, the essence of the underlying dialectic is made manifest. Goodwin's performance company had initially planned a dance piece involving audience participation: the audience was to respond to the piece by telephone. Obviously, the technical complexity of the performance (originally billed to include computers, closed circuit T.V.s and telephones enclosed in plastic shells) called for far more expertise or funds (or both) than were available. Goodwin confided to Lowndes that she was "...pulling out of the Electrical Connection. I'm tired of all the pseudo-sophistication of plugs and switches. I'm trying to work with something real - the human connection". (44) Finances and frustration aside, Goodwin was swinging away from technology inspired work toward performances where the bottom line rested on interaction between people. Lowndes described the event that did transpire. At 9 p.m. on Saturday a crowd, mostly of young people gathered in a circle in the main gallery. They were asked to:

...take off their shoes and jump into the sea of rhythm created by San Francisco drummer Casey Soonabend

The atmosphere was comparable to that at a revival meeting, as various people felt the call and walked from the outer edge of the circle into its writhing
core.... The dancers fostered the movement by weaving through the crowd... Then the lights were turned out to cover any lingering self consciousness . . . while the musicians quickened the beat. By 10:30 this whole vast audience had become a chanting, gyrating African tribe... The human energy ebbed and flowed, hitting peaks then settling down as people danced in small groups or rejoined the mass. At midnight when the gallery signalled closing time, everyone was loathe to stop. They had gone beyond tiredness to tap unknown energy reserves. The discovery had been so overwhelming that at the end they sat down quietly on the floor and hummed for a few minutes, as at the end of a ritual. (45)

What Lowndes had witnessed was a ritual of sorts. The young participants in the dance demonstrated the larger feeling of communal awareness, the intimacy of a group, which was characteristic of the counter culture in 1969 in Vancouver. The skepticism underlying Goodwin's rejection of the technical connection and the ironic twist to the collaborative 'Mass Media Wall' are understandable considering the pressure from within and without to take a more critical stance toward their technologically propelled society. The ritual performed during the last hours of Intermedia's Electrical Connection was a form of protest against that very thing. With this gesture Goodwin affirmed her ties with a revolution of a very different nature than the previous version constructed on McLuhan's ideas based on the potential of technological progression. Intermedia is showing signs of internal rebellion. Unwittingly prophetic, Lowndes entitled her article “Tribal happening unplugs gallery.”
NOTES

1. In the Summer of 1968 Intermedia members participated in a Simon Fraser University sponsored 'light show', "Medieval Times", an extremely bizarre happening which was deemed a failure by Intermedia Press (Aug. -Sept. 1968, vol. 1, no. 1, pg. 3) because the audience failed to engage as participants in the medieval revelry which surrounded them. Concurrent events which took place at Intermedia were "Paul Spong's Light Show", (Aug. 20, 1968) and "The Underground Film Festival" (Aug. 2 - Sept. 29, 1968). Helen Goodwin coordinated an evening at the Vancouver Art Gallery (Oct. 25, 1968) which involved Intermedia members Dennis Vance, Glenn Lewis, Gathie Falk, Evelyn Roth, Gerry Gilbert and Ivan Sayer. In December of 1968, Al Razutis collaborated with local filmmakers to form the Intermedia Film Co-op. Shortly after the founding of the co-op, the members staged a film marathon at the Vancouver Art Gallery (Jan. 8, 1969). Organizers of this event included Tom Shandel, Dave Rimmer, and Al Razutis. Modelled after existing co-ops in New York and San Francisco, the mandate included rental and presentation of films of an experimental nature and underground films of high calibre made in North America. (Vancouver Art Gallery Press Release, January 6, 1969). In February of that same year the Vancouver Art Gallery invited Lucy Lippard to speak on "Art and Technology". The lecture focused on contemporary art and technological development.


3. Ibid.

4. In a letter to Duncan Cameron, National Director of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, Aellen expressed his concern for the "many artists who in the face of technological onslaught are trying to get to a more natural or humanistic form." Further elaboration on this theme will be discussed later in this chapter, as this is the bases for the unravelling of Intermedia. This letter is undated but considering a reference to the Mount Allison Conference, I assume it
was written in the Spring of 1969. See Intermedia Files, Special Collections, U.B.C., Box 1, File 8.


8. Ibid., p. 197.

9. Ibid., p. 198.

10. Ibid., p.159.

11. Ibid., p.162.

12. Ibid., p.7.


15. Ibid., p. 308.

16. Ibid., p. 411.
17. A discussion of the impact of the Trips Festival on the members of the forming group of Intermedia from The Sound Gallery is found in two articles from the Vancouver Art and Artists: 1931 - 1983 catalogue: Marguerite Pinney's "Voices", p.182, and Al Razutis's "Recovering Lost History", p. 163.


19. Ibid., p. 9.

20. John Wesley Harding (pen name!), "Violence, Psychedelics And Cultural Revolution -Now," The Georgia Straight (Vancouver) 25 Oct.-1 Nov. 1968, pg 12. (Right beneath this column is an announcement for Intermedia's 'Festival of Shorts' - 15 to 20 shorts by leading underground film-makers.)

21. Ibid.

22. "Tune In, Turn On and Drop Out", Georgia Straight (Vancouver) 8 Sept. 1967, p. 3.

23. Nuttall, The Bomb Culture, p. 22. Bomb Culture is one of the primary source books detailing, from a cultural standpoint, the influences and origins of the protest movement in Britain and the development of the counter culture in America.


25. Ibid.

27. Jack Batten, “How The Town's Fighting The Dread Hippie Menace” Maclean's August 1967, pp. 18-19, 50-52. The word 'hippie' comes from the Hopi Indian teachings which told of the birth of the hippie (or hipi), a derivative of the Hopi word 'Hopitu' meaning peaceful people or righteous people.

28. Ibid., p. 19.

29. Ibid.


32. The full quote is:

Ironically, it is the American young, with their underdeveloped radical background, who seemed to have grasped most clearly the fact that, while such immediate emergencies as the Vietnam War, racial injustice, and hard-core poverty demand a deal of old style politicking, the paramount struggle of our day is against a far more formidable, because far less obvious opponent, to which I will give the name “the technocracy” - a social form more highly developed in America than in any other society

33. Ibid. p. 206. Hippies drew on a 'profoundly personal' sense of community by virtue of the intimacy that was paramount in their relations to one another. An openness and honesty was required between individuals that was meant to cut through superficiality and the 'bullshit' that they felt permeated 'straight' society. Personal contact was maximized, resulting in the notorious 'love-ins' where individuals literally felt the personal freedom to demonstrate their affection for one another publicly. 'Personal' became, in fact, quite the opposite, as anything personal was more than likely to be disclosed in an effort to establish intimacy, to reach out and become part of the community.

34. In an article by Charlotte Townsend, “Putting It Across In A New Way - That's It....That's What Intermedia Is All About.” The Vancouver Sun 8 April 1968, p. 10, Werner Aellen is interviewed and credits Intermedia with donations from several firms. “Co-operation and materials come from various downtown stores, Canadian Industries and big firms (B.C. Tel, Sony Corporation, Neon Products of Canada Ltd., Crown Zellerbach etc.)” Sony Canada Inc. donated Intermedia's first portapack video which was of tremendous value to the Society, but industrial donations were limited relative to the ambitions of the more mature artists and the number of individuals in need of equipment. Aellen stresses the need for involvement with engineers, scientists and industry so that artists might benefit from their expertise in such areas as plastics, neon and technology. Although the pursuit of industrial know-how sounded good in theory, Intermedia was always top heavy with artists and lacking in interested members with advanced technical training. Evidence of this is affirmed in my critique of the Electrical Connection exhibition in 1969.

35. The letter to Duncan Cameron from Werner Aellen is undated but reference is made to the upcoming Electrical Connection exhibition which took place in the Spring of '69, which I presume, dates the letter just previous to this event.

36. The Interim Report to the Canada Council, submitted by Werner Aellen is dated April 4th, 1969. In this report, Aellen makes reference to a number of proposed projects which included a multi-
media Spring Performance with The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra featuring a solo demonstration of sound collages by Dennis Vance; a multi-chambered 'sensorium' at the P.N.E.; invitations to work on media studies with the Vancouver School Board, for exhibitions at The Victoria Art Gallery and The Burnaby Art Gallery and participation in the new Community Broadcasting System. In addition, he expressed interest in expanding Intermedia's technical workshops in sound, printing film, and photography which, he stated, had proven very popular. Aellen also hoped to involve the city in a grass roots festival organized by Intermedia, to take place in the streets, parks, beaches and waters of Vancouver. Records indicate that Intermedia did exhibit at the Victoria Art Gallery, at the Burnaby Gallery, and did increase workshops in the areas outlined. Because of the Society's highly developed expertise in experimental film, it eventually established a working relationship with community broadcasting. However, the 'sensorium' never transpired, nor did the multi-media performance with the Vancouver Symphony. Although many applications were sent to the City Council to initiate a grass roots festival, they were turned down. While the Society had record numbers of individuals wanting to participate, the building on Beatty Street was sold and they were asked to look for new premises. In the meantime, their working space was reduced from four floors to two. Aellen was still hopeful that industry would co-operate, but Sony remained the most generous contributor. ('Outdated' stock film stock was donated by C.B.C.) This resulted in a precarious budgetary balance between equipment purchases and operating costs. See Intermedia Files, Special Collections, in B.C., Box 1, Files 6 & 7.


38. Charlotte Townsend, “Putting It Across In A New Way - That's It...” The Vancouver Sun, 8 April 1969.


40. This quote is written on the back of a photograph taken of De
Courcy at the time of the exhibition. The photograph is located in the Intermedia Files, Special Collections, U.B.C.; B.C. Historical Photographs no. BC 1518/279.

41. Tom Shandel was interviewed by Marguerite Pinney for her article "Voices.", Vancouver Art and Artists: 1931 -1983. p. 183.

42. Ibid.


44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.
Chapter Three

ABANDONING THE SHIP: CULTURAL SUBVERSION
AND THE SPRING SHOW MAY 1931

In the Spring of 1970, Intermedia staged its last gala exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Reviews providing descriptions of the events of the Intermedia Spring Show May 1931 (the show ran from the 19th -31st of May) reveal that the ambitions of the Society had changed dramatically since the previous annual exhibition, Electrical Connection, in 1969. Gone were the pretentious overtures associated with earlier experimental Art & Technology combines. The participants in this exhibition maximized the festive quality of the occasion and reduced technology to an innocuous backdrop comprised of domes, structures which in this context were overwhelmingly affiliated with the lifestyle of the counter culture rather than modern technology. Rather than fostering the bond between Technology & Art, this exhibition appeared to foster the ties between people, and more importantly, people in the context of an alternative lifestyle with all the trappings of 'counter culture' displayed with great enthusiasm. Irony was replaced with sincerity in the form of love and communal solidarity. Georgia Straight called the event an “Intermediate Revolution”. (l) Yet a short two years following this massive show of solidarity, the Society was defunct. The ship was abandoned. Survivors had escaped in lifeboats.
Previous accounts of Intermedia's history have largely ignored the years between 1970 and 1972, concentrating instead on the notorious earlier years. Lack of available information published, coupled with an uneasiness demonstrated by members of the Society when discussing the final years, shrouded Intermedia's demise in an aura of mystery. The disintegration of the Society has previously been rationalized in a variety of ways: under-equipped facilities with an overabundance of users (2); frustrations inherent in maintaining sophisticated equipment within an open collective (3); a 'natural' degeneration of the Society typical of all artists' workshops (4); a refusal on behalf of the members to allow the institution to become institutionalized (5); and lastly, a split in ideologies between more socially oriented artists and more independent and anarchist artists, a highly plausible observation suggested by Al Razutis, but never explained. (6)

With the exception of the latter, these reasons seem inadequate considering Intermedia's biggest boom in activity in 1969 came only a year prior to the massive unravelling of the Society. Officially, 1972 marked the end of Intermedia Society with the expiration of the lease on their third and final facility. In fact, the Society had started to unravel as early as 1969. In 1970 Werner Aellen had succeeded in soliciting funds from the Donner Canadian Foundation and it was this gesture that proved pivotal in the disintegration of the Society as a whole. The solidarity of the membership presented to the public at the May 1931 Show masked undercurrents of ideological confusion directly identifiable within the social and political context at the end
of the Sixties. In this chapter I rely on a close reading of the documentation available outlining the intentions of the Society from 1969 to 1972 as well as an analysis of the events of the May 1931 Show to substantiate the contention that political and social changes taking place at the end of the 60's decade radically affected the outcome of Intermedia Society. In light of the discouraging results experienced by 'The New Radical Opposition' during 1969 and 1970, and the subsequent changes in the aspirations of the youth culture, the disintegration of Intermedia Society makes sense.

Herbert Marcuse's Essay on Liberation (1969) (7) is an ironic milestone for the changed perception toward the youth culture in America. Published in the year following what David Caute describes as The Year of the Barricades, (8) it applauds the 'New Radical Opposition' as the authentic agency of change and acclaims the revolutionary potential of not just its politics, but of its lifestyle. The Great Refusal is seen by Marcuse as a viable force against Establishment values. Rejecting the utopian possibility of emancipation through "rational utilization of technological forces of advanced capitalism and socialism" (9), he believed that although this would bring about the termination of poverty and scarcity, it would result in a bureaucratic welfare state, equally repressive in its determination of each individual's 'needs'. He stated that the pertinent question should change from "how can the individual satisfy his own needs without hurting others" to "how can he satisfy his needs without hurting himself, without reproducing, through his aspirations and satisfactions, his dependence on an exploitive
apparatus which, in satisfying his needs, perpetuates his servitude?” (10) The answer would lie in the “methodological disengagement from and refusal of the Establishment, aiming at a radical transvaluation of values”. (11) (In other words, 'The Great Refusal'). The new values would be the result of 'biological' solidarity in work and purpose, demonstrating a “true harmony between social and individual needs and goals, between recognized necessity and free development”. (12) Witnessing these values in the actions of the youth culture (actions not initiated by the struggle between classes, but cutting across the class boundaries: thus, biological solidarity) Marcuse applauds the strong element of spontaneity, even anarchism in this rebellion and acknowledges that the joy of freedom and the need to be free must precede liberation. (13) Of critical importance to the focus of this thesis is Marcuse's recognition that the 'new sensibility' in its aversion against 'pre-established' leaders, apparitors and politicians (no matter how leftist) must shift their initiative to “small groups, widely diffused, with a high degree of autonomy, mobility, flexibility.” (14) In March of 1969 Marcuse spoke at Simon Fraser University, essentially reiterating the ideas inherent in his newly published book. A full transcription of Marcuse's lecture was published later that month in Vancouver's Georgia Straight. (15)

During this same year, the New Left was to experience defeats that would demoralize the movement permanently and lay the ground for the total disintegration in 1970 of the momentum gained by the massive student protests in 1968. After 1969, the zealous youth of
America became jaded in their hopes for a changed world. Politics was finished. Lifestyle became the only viable avenue for meaningful change.

Nixon's Presidential election in November of 1968 spelled to some the beginning of a strategy to end the war, although during his campaign no specific details were given as to how this might have been accomplished. (16) Although the fighting was 'scaled down', hope for an end to the war soon withered. Instead of withdrawing totally from Vietnam, Nixon chose 'Vietnamization'. The infantry was withdrawn, but the Air Force and other specialized units would remain. "Instead of ending the war, President Nixon meant to wage it on the cheap". (17) In the fall of 1969 the organization of giant peace rallies culminated in the "greatest organized expression of pacifist sentiment in American history". (18) Responding to the New Mobilization Committee's call for a Vietnam Moratorium, events reached a peak when, in November, from a quarter to a half million people gathered in Washington, D.C. for a 'March Against Death'. Nixon didn't bat an eye.

None of this had the slightest effect. While the March Against Death moved past the White House, President Nixon watched football on T.V. Vice-President Agnew went around the country denouncing anti-war supporters as "effete snobs", "supercilious sophisticates", and worse. In Agnew the silent majority found its voice. The more he abused blacks, intellectuals, and the young, the more popular he became. (19)
Heartened by this display of support, Nixon stepped up his program to follow through on his campaign promises to restore law and order to a nation 'demoralized' by previous years of war, protest, and youthful contempt for the bourgeois life. Nixon's 'silent majority' were in full support of a heavy hand against transgressors. "The more demands for repression, the better off Nixon was. Like anti-communism in the 50's, law and order was (Wallace excepted) a Republican monopoly."(20) Early in 1970 the Senate passed a crime control bill that eroded more constitutional rights than any measure since the Espionage and Sedition Acts of World War I. It then passed a drug control law which gave police the right to enter homes without warning. Meanwhile, in Vietnam more than 130,000 tons of bombs were being dropped a month - the greatest airial bombardment in history. On April 30, 1970, Nixon announced he had ordered a military incursion into Cambodia. During an unprecedented wave of protest by students at American Universities and Colleges, the National Guard shocked the Nation by killing 4 students at Kent State University and 2 at Jackson State College during demonstrations. Students at 350 colleges went on strike, the National Guard was called out in 16 states. But, by the Fall of 1970 the rioting was over with, and with it died the momentum of student protest. The war continued. (21)

As early as 1969, in an address to his "brothers and sisters in the movement", published by Vancouver's Georgia Straight, Jerry Rubin
It is 1969 already, and 1965 seems almost like a childhood memory. Then we were conquerors of the world. No one could stop us. We were going to end the war. We were going to wipe out racism. We were going to mobilize the poor. We were going to take over the Universities. Go back and read some of the anti-war literature. Check out the original hippie-digger poetry and manifestoes: euphoria, overflowing optimism, and expectations of immediate success. Wow, I can still get high on it. A lot has gone down since then. The war roars on, the San Francisco scene is gone, pot and acid are being challenged by speed and smack, Nixon has replaced Johnson, and white racism is stronger than ever. America proved deaf, and our dreams proved innocent. Scores of our brothers have become inactive and cynical. (22)

Rubin then goes on to recount the enormous gains made by the youth movement since 1965. In his list of victories he includes the defeat of the Democratic Party, the great battles at Berkeley, the Pentagon, Columbia and Chicago. The biggest plum of all for Rubin was the knowledge that the youth of America were staging insurrection right under the noses of their parents and that new recruits were hatching in the elementary schools of the nation. This claim was followed with a burst of renewed enthusiasm when he stated: “We are the most exciting energy force in the nation.” (23)

Rubin's Emergency Address succinctly summed up the position of the
movement. With almost prophetic clarity, he saw the growing power of Nixon's 'silent majority' and was embittered with the seeming futility of past efforts. However, the plea was made early in 1969, and Rubin was heartened by the damage inflicted and the promise of new recruits. Yet, after a year of unmitigating legislated repression, by the end of 1970 the new radical opposition had become depoliticized. The distinctive challenge to the state, corporate capitalism and the political system of 1968 had been replaced by the reassuring contours of normality. David Caute states:

By the end of 1970, the high tide of campus rebellion had receded, the Western democracies were back to business-as-usual, and the New Left generation had either come to terms with the ways of the world or confined its residual idealism to local projects: ecology, people's lawyers, communalism."(24)

What effect did all this have on Intermedia Society? Activities at Intermedia following the Electrical Connection exhibition in the Spring of 1969 give evidence of a dramatic change in the focus of the Society, in its organization and its ideology. The culmination of these changes are identifiable in the May 1931 Show staged in the Spring of 1970. Events following the Spring Show confirm the contention that Intermedia's original raison d'être changed significantly in response to the social and political turmoil associated with the years 1968 - 1970 as outlined previously. During July of 1969 (the same summer during which the world witnessed Woodstock Festival)
Intermedia moved from the warehouse space on Beatty Street to smaller quarters on 4th Avenue, centering the Society in the midst of Vancouver's thriving hippie community. The previous warehouse space had certainly witnessed the absorption of Vancouver's counter culture into its ranks. Conversely, the space on 4th Ave. was absorbed into the ranks of the counter culture. Fourth Avenue was where it was happening in Vancouver and Intermedia Society was happening along with it. That same month it was announced at the Society's Annual General Meeting that resignations had been received by three members of the Board of Directors. The letter from Dr. Ellis is as follows:

I hereby tender my resignation from the Board of Directors of Intermedia effective immediately. My reason for lending support to Intermedia was to encourage the mixing of arts and technologies - of large numbers of "artists" and "technologists". I feel that I can now resign secure in the knowledge that a useful experiment has been concluded. (25)

Of course, the 'useful' experiment hadn't been concluded at all. His involvement with the 'experiment' had been concluded. The "whole new area of sensory experience" championed by Shadbolt in his statements to the press the previous November had indeed become swamped by "the psychedelic stuff that happened to be in vogue at that moment" and Dr. Ellis was not going to be "tarred with the same brush." (26) At the same meeting the members of the Society
questioned the 'value' of having Big Names on the Board and concluded that it would be more advantageous to include individuals having a more sympathetic attitude toward Intermedia. It was also suggested that the Board members have more interchange with the membership. The newly elected members of the Board came from Vancouver's artistic community almost to a person. (27)

Earlier that Spring, after attending the 'Artists and New Technologies Conference' in Sackville New Brunswick, Werner Aellen wrote to Duncan Cameron, National Director of The Canadian Conference of the Arts, expressing concern for the disparate pressures facing the artists working within Intermedia:

Finally a comment of caution: I feel stronger than ever before that we should concentrate not solely on technological aspects but include the behavioral arts and sciences, even such far out things as gestalt art. I am saying this because I have encountered many artists who in the face of technological onslaught are trying to get to a more natural or humanistic form. Primarily, I am concerned with avoiding too much of a decompartmentalization. (28)

Yet, in spite of Aellen's fears of decompartmentalization, that Spring he had requested information from the Donner Canadian Foundation regarding funding. In the fall of 1969, a proposal was sent by Aellen outlining the prospects for a central co-ordinating and exploratory agency in the fields of media, communication and information. The
aim was to establish a Community Media Centre. (29) Conceived originally as an expansion of the concept and facilities of Intermedia, the outcome of this proposal was to have a very different impact on the Society. In April of 1970, Werner Aellen wrote to David Silcox of his intended resignation from the position of Executive Director of Intermedia. In this letter he stated that it was impossible under 'the present circumstances' to continue the exploratory work necessary for the project intended with the Donner Funds, and that as an initiator of that project he was obligated to that program beyond his role as a participant in it. (30) Aellen met with members of the Funding Committee from Donner Foundation on April 30th. The captain had secured the first of a series of lifeboats ensuring the survival of the crew, but spelling disaster for the abandoned ship.

In May of 1970, Intermedia staged their final annual exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery: the Intermedia Spring Show May 1931. Glenn Lewis co-ordinated the activities and, following the standard format of earlier exhibitions, submitted a proposal to the art gallery outlining Intermedia's plans. (31) Describing Intermedia as having been involved in the past with "sensory involvement with technology, environment, process, movement, photography, structures and information", Lewis felt that Intermedia Society would be, at the time of writing, better expressed as "an involvement with speaking, writing, sewing, filming, dancing, brushing, playing, eating, listening, etc." (32) It was not something that he felt could be easily categorized. The emphasis, he explained, would be on portraying Intermedia as an "overall entity" focusing on "process"
and transmitting the energy of Intermedia into the larger world outside itself. "It is hoped that other spaces in the city such as the planetarium, the parks, the streets, plazas, and the Colonial Theatre will be used." (33) The proposal mentioned domes in an off handed way, but the primary intent of the exhibition, physically, was to create an environment of light and sound, a space in which activities could take place ("performance, movies, readings, etc." (34)). What Intermedia was really proposing (but didn't admit in so many words) was a carnival.

What actually transpired inside the art gallery wasn't an environment of lights and sounds, but of domes. Al Hewitt's aluminium rod dome (fig. 9); Doug Robinson's plywood tinker toy and mechano domes (one inside the other) consisting of plywood laths curved into central medallions (fig. 10); foam domes (fig. 11); a plywood sheet dome containing Audrey Capel Doray's phosphorescent shadow-print taker (fig. 12). Domes ranging in size from 15 feet to 35 feet in diameter. (35)

With emphasis on 'community environment' and described as a "condensed art-living experience" (36), opening night included a celebration of 100 flutes (fig. 13), karate and judo displays, and an Intermedia 'Boxing Match'. On Wednesday afternoon and evening, a jumbo sale and bazaar were held. Thursday and Friday included Video Tape Hours and "Seven Acts - A Media Theatre Performance". (37) On closing night a 'City Feast' organized by Helen Goodwin took place and was described by James Barber, a journalist with
Fifteen to eighteen hundred people turned out Saturday night at the gallery. [fig. 14] And the gallery turned them on. All over the city from 6 o'clock on, in Southwest Marine Drive fancy houses, and in the central mission, in Stanley Park and at the Planetarium, these people had, by phoning Intermedia, become part of a city wide feast. And then, in the Gallery from nine to midnight an extravaganza of Entertainment gathered from the city's night spots. Greek Belly Dancers, [figs. 15, 16] Mime Artists, impromptu spontaneous percussion bands, bingo, Reveen, Mark Derricks complete Copenhagen Club, The Tillicum Rock Western Group, and a girl named Lorna doing her topless thing. . .The Art Gallery will never be the same.(38)

With what has to be a priceless understatement, Joan Lowndes summed up the philosophy of the Dome Show: “Intermedia wants to bring people into the gallery not just to look, but to engage in group activity: the aim is to effect a closer integration between art and daily living.” (39)

In The Dialectical Imagination (1981) (40) Mikhail Bakhtin describes carnival as a 'second life' or 'a second culture' sustained by the common people. During the Renaissance, this culture engaged with and directly opposed the 'official culture', both in literature and in the public life of the marketplace and the city square. The general features of carnival were quite similar in a variety of cultural
settings. Along with lavish consumption of food, carnival led to merry-making proper and various forms of symbolic and not so symbolic misrule. (41) The social group is all inclusive and supportive, the festivities animate the strongest possible feelings of solidarity and community affiliation. (42) It is characterized by Peter Burke in *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* as 'The world turned upside down.' (43)

That Intermedia staged a carnival to 'turn the world upside down' makes sense in light of their alignment with the revolutionary aspirations of the counter culture. In their engagement at the art gallery, Intermedia not only invited the community at large to partake in their revelry, but also invited the public to share in their alternative vision to the Establishment. *Georgia Straight* recognized the change in Intermedia's focus and for the first time gave editorial space to what the newspaper called "The Intermediate Revolution". (44) Intermedia had crossed the ideological barrier to join a revolution of a very different nature than that originally proposed in 1967. By 1970, Rubin's earlier call for solidarity had resulted in a 'Swan Song' for Intermedia's counter cultural community. The domes displayed in the *May 1931 Show* became symbolic of a lifestyle outside the perimeters of 'everyday life' and the activities within and outside of the gallery were a protest against that everyday life. Ironically, the technical know-how for the assembly of the geodesic structures came not from an involvement with industrial specialists but from a set of instructions found in the *Whole Earth Catalogue*, an operating manual for alternative lifestyles. (45)
It is evident from the descriptions available of the exhibition that the focus of the Society had undergone a shift away from the earlier need to explore "the magnitude and intricacy of the social and technological changes that were converging upon society in the sixties", to the creation of a 'community' which essentially opposed the values of the technocracy which had spawned Intermedia Society originally. Inside and outside of the domes, children of members played and danced (figs. 17, 18, 19) Women weaved and men gathered to play bingo. (figs. 18, 20 & 21) Clothes were strewn among the domes with the casualness of 'just another day' at home in the domes. The presence of a 'jumbo sale' on one occasion further ingrained the appropriate dress code and modest needs that were popular with the counter culture. Second hand was second nature. People wandering into the gallery were likely to be enticed to join a chain of dancers circling in and around the domes while others less inclined to dance were given the option to add to the festivities by piping on a flute. (fig. 22) But this gentle exhibition of anti-establishment values wasn't an overt political demonstration. It was an attempt to demonstrate lifestyle. It was, in Marcuse's words, a cultural subversion.

The [Great] refusal with which the opposition confronts the existing society is affirmative in that it envisages a new culture which fulfills the humanistic promises betrayed by the old culture. Political radicalism thus implies moral radicalism: the emergence of a morality which might precondition man for freedom.(46)
The May 1931 Show demonstrated the new morality which Marcuse had, in 1969, hoped would become the basis of liberation. Yet the exhibition, with its strong associations with carnival, was vulnerable to the plight outlined in Marcuse's 1964 publication One Dimensional Man (47): the threat of absorption of the "spiritual, metaphysical, and bohemian occupations" into the system as a form of entertainment, functioning as a necessary steam valve for the larger pressures at work in Society.

But such modes of protest and transcendence are no longer contradictory to their status quo and no longer negative. They are rather the ceremonial part of practical behaviourism, the harmless negation, and are quickly digested by the status quo.(48)

The Society was caught, in its revolutionary aspirations, in a dynamic that at once constructed an alternative morality based on the values of the new sensibility, and yet, because of its strong affiliation with the avant-garde, further strengthened by its ties to the Vancouver Art Gallery (49), was easily absorbed into the mainstream.

Directly following the May 1931 Show an 'Intermedia Questionnaire' was circulated among the members. (50) The questionnaire opened with a statement acknowledging the acute problem associated with the future direction of Intermedia. The introduction also implied that
there were a variety of ideas among the members concerning Intermedia's organizational structure. With the knowledge of Aellen's resignation in mind, this seemed an opportune time to revamp the entire Society. The results of the questionnaire were as varied as the needs of the members. Larger issues concerning the purpose of the Society were not addressed. Primarily the questions were focused on the administrative aspects of Intermedia. Director or Business Manager? Should Intermedia provide facilities and equipment only? What kind of physical space is required? Equipment? Although the answers to some of the questions were laughable (under 'Suggestions?' someone wrote that they should include a bathtub and cooking facilities (51)) all felt that the organizational structure of Intermedia needed overhauling. Most people preferred a Business Manager rather than a Director, feeling that the Director had too much control and was paid the lion's share of the funding. The majority of members felt the Project Committee should control most of the decision-making for allocation of funds and policy making with regard to the use of facilities and the nature of the projects. The Project Committee would pilot Intermedia's course in the future. This move was intended to reduce the threat of bureaucracy and contribute to democratic decision-making.

At the Intermedia General Annual Meeting on June 23, 1970, it was recommended that the Board hire Barry Cramer as the Business Manager for the duration of one year. (52) Cramer had been the Business Manager for the Georgia Straight. The Society moved to yet another facility, 2023 East 1st Avenue, in October of that year,
feeling that the West 4th premise was too cramped. The new buildings consisted of a church, the church hall and a three storey house. Under Cramer's management the Society took on the profile of an Umbrella organization rather than functioning as a cohesive whole. By February of 1971 Intermedia Press, Image Bank, Stop The City We Want To Get On, Tri Solar Pool, Active Learning Project, and E.A.R. (Experiments In Acoustic Research) had been established (53) and were receiving grants from Local Initiatives Programmes, Opportunities for Youth Grants, as well as funding from Intermedia and other sources. In January 1971, Metro Media (Werner Aellen & Bill Nemtin) was formed as an independent Society with $23,000 from the Donner Canadian Foundation Grant. The explanation for the separation from Intermedia was that the needs of community groups to use video tape and other media were too large to be handled by Intermedia "essentially an artist's experimental workshop" and a new organization was needed. (54) It was labelled a 'community access video resource'. (55) In December of 1971, in a similar vein of abandoning the ship, an application was sent by artists from Intermedia to the Local Initiatives Program to fund 'Intermedia Project For The Greening Of The Community.'(56)

The title of this project is a give-away for the direction in which the society was headed. Mimicking the title of Charles Reich's book The Greening of America (1970), (57) 'The Greening of the Community' project contained in its proposal, all of the ideals which Reich had outlined in his sourcebook of inspiration for the flagging counter culture. Reich outlined a history of changes in consciousness that had
evolved in Society: the Historic Pioneering phase (Consciousness I), the Corporate stage (Consciousness II) culminating in The New Generation, (Consciousness III). With the advent of the new culture that had come into being as a result of the combined efforts of the counter culture, Reich, like Marcuse, saw hope for the future of Society in America's youth. He described the values upheld by the counter culture as the beginnings of Consciousness III. Recognizing that the power of the Corporate State had grown harsher at the end of the decade, Reich advocated the subversion of culture through a process of what he described as noncareer: the individual would define his own career in his own terms. The values he would safeguard were those of the counter culture...a respect for ecology, deinstitutionalization, and finally, education of the community at large in the control of technology - to put technology to work for the individual and not the reverse.

*The Greening of America* read like a survival manual for the 70's. 'The Greening of the Community' project instituted the ideas kindled by Reich in the form of individual artist's groups soliciting funds to create 'community projects' with aspirations defined by the individuals themselves. This was an example of anti-careerism in its purest form. With emphasis on community service, 'The Greening of the Community' project was intended to "create new jobs intended to service and better the community on important artistic, cultural and social levels." (58) Intending to provide "a working contract for community participation of the artist surpassing the existing gallery system", (59) the organization (headed by Executive Projects co-
ordinator Ian Wallace) planned projects for Recycling Design Research, Community Environmental Sculpture, Information Research Exchange, Acoustical Ecology Research and Urban Design Exhibition and Monitoring. The format initiated in structuring these groups was to provide "new models for cultural animation in the community." (60) Funding was requested from the Local Initiatives Program, (Manpower and Immigration). One project from this proposal to receive LIP Funding was the Pacific Rim Consciousness Project, whose objectives included the establishment of a communications system which would provide a network for the "duplication and display of artistically defined examples of the life force ["the essences of poetic and visual perception"] as it manifests itself on the Pacific Rim". (61) Accomplishments included the compilation and distribution of 5 unique and extensive mail outs including the work of over 40 Canadian artists, the completion of an extensive list of artists, galleries, museums and individuals interested in a Pacific Rim communications network, direct communication with 7 countries, the collection of over 200 slides documenting life on the Pacific Rim for distribution, etc. (62)

The effect the formation of these sub-groups had on Intermedia was similar to the abandonment of the ship's crew into lifeboats. With no crew left to man the decks, the ship inevitably goes under. Although the formation of the sub-groups was intended as a strategy to de-institutionalize Intermedia, the outcome was a lack of co-ordination between groups and the dissolution of not just Intermedia, but ultimately, of the projects themselves. Additional confusion was
caused by Barry Cramer's suicide in the Summer of 1971. Although Glenn Lewis assumed co-ordination responsibilities for the groups, evidence of co-ordinating efforts appear to be swamped in the drive for self-determination by the groups themselves.

By 1972, all that was left of Intermedia was a small group of individuals, "The Little Hot Stove League", led by Glenn Lewis, meeting periodically at The New Era Social Club (Gary Lee Nova's studio) trying to decide what to do with the last of Intermedia's dwindling Canada Council funds. The last request for funding from the Canada Council put forth a proposal to collect and record a history of Intermedia's activities, a project which the remaining members of the Society, meeting at the New Era Social Club, decided would consume the entire year's budget. (63) 'Project Intermedia' was never finished. The whereabouts of the project is uncertain.

The lease expired on Intermedia's Hall in May of 1972. A meeting at The New Era Social Club on May 31st determined that no further application for funding be made to the Canada Council on behalf of Intermedia Society and that individual groups would be applying separately. Intermedia disbanded. (64)
NOTES


2. This was a suggestion made by Ed Varney in my interview with him, Nov. 8, 1987.

3. Werner Aellen expressed these frustrations during our interview on Dec. 2, 1990.


5. Dave Rimmer gives this explanation in an interview with Marguerite Pinney which she includes in her article "Voices" *Vancouver Art And Artists: 1931 - 1983* pg. 185.


8. See David Caute, *The Year Of The Barricades: A Journey Through 1968* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988). Caute's central theme is the relationship of the New Left to the Sixties counter culture, focusing on 1968, the year which he describes as "the most turbulent since the end of World War 11." (Introduction, p.i) In his book Caute describes the anti -war movements and the resulting insurrections in America, Europe and Japan. In Chapter Two I described the similarity in values and politics between the counter culture in Vancouver and as documented elsewhere. Political and social events which impacted on the morale of the counter culture
outside of Vancouver found a sympathetic audience in Vancouver as well. Evidence of this is found in articles published in *The Georgia Straight* written by both local writers and those with an international reputation (eg. Marcuse & Rubin).


10. Ibid., p. 4.

11. Ibid., p. 6.

12. Ibid., p. 88.

13. Ibid., p. 88.

14. Ibid., p. 89.


17. Ibid., p. 404.

18. Ibid., p. 405. On August 8, 1969, the Vancouver police stood off a mob of Vietnam war protesters at the Seaforth Armoury while Prime Minister Trudeau was attending a Liberal Party fund raising dinner inside. Trudeau had promised to meet with representatives of the Vancouver Committee to End the War in Vietnam before going into the dinner. This plan was aborted when the crowd of protesters became agitated and began throwing objects at the Prime Minister.
The Committee levelled accusations against Trudeau over alleged Canadian complicity in the war, including supplying the U.S. with "hundreds of millions of dollars worth of arms" and carrying out research on chemical and biological warfare. The Committee asked Trudeau if the Canadian government would cease supporting the Saigon government through the International Control Commission. See "Rowdy scenes at Seaforth Armory: Trudeau Hits Back at Painted Hippies" The Vancouver Sun (8 August 1969): pgs. 1-2. Ironically, Intermedia had been invited to decorate the Armory, providing the guests with a multi-media presentation consisting of projected shots of Trudeau, Vancouver and B.C. This serves as an example of Intermedia's precarious position at this time. Most certainly the Society was firmly aligned by this point with the counter culture movement and anti-war sympathizers. However, their reputation as media specialists had opened the door to a cooperative venture with the Liberal fund-raising organizers.

19. Ibid., p. 405.

20. Ibid., p. 388.


25. Letter from John F. Ellis, Professor and Head, Professional Foundations, Simon Fraser University to Werner Aellen, Director,
Intermedia, Vancouver, B.C., June 26th, 1969, Intermedia Files, Special Collections, U.B.C., Box 3, File 1. Although the names of the Board members who also resigned that spring are not documented, by the summer of 1969, Henry Elder (Head of School of Architecture U.B.C.), Edward Bakony (Head of BCIT Audio Visual Department), Dr. McKinnon (Dean of Education at SFU) and Dr. Mallison (Chairman of Communications Centre, SFU) were no longer serving. The only remaining members from the original Board were Victor Doray and Jack Shadbolt.

26. “Non-existent group wins $40,000 grant”, The Vancouver Sun, 15 April 1967. The full quote is given in the preliminary quotes prefacing Chapter 2. of this thesis.

27. See notes from the Annual General Meeting held at 1972 West 4th Ave., Vancouver on July 10, 1969. Intermedia Files, Special Collections, U.B.C., Box 2, File 20. The new Board members were Geoffrey Massey, Glenn Lewis, Warren Tallman, Tony Emory, Alvin Balkin, Helen Goodwin, Stan Fox, and Dr. Ken Morton.

28. Letter to Mr. Duncan Cameron, National Director, Canadian Conference of the Arts, Toronto, Ontario, n.d. from Werner Aellen. See Intermedia Files, Special Collections, U.B.C. Box 1, File 8.

29. See “Proposal: To Establish Media Centre”, (used as part of proposal to Donner Canadian Foundation) Intermedia Files, Special Collections, U.B.C., Box 12, File 5.

30. Letter to David Silcox, Senior Arts Officer, the Canada Council, April 8, 1970. Intermedia Files, Special Collections, U.B.C., Box 1, File 7.


32. Ibid., p. 1.
33. Ibid., p. 2.

34. Ibid., p. 4.

35. The domes were described by Charlotte Townsend in two separate articles, both published by the *Vancouver Sun*. "Walk into world of domes at gallery", *Vancouver Sun*, 21 May 1970 and an article which Townsend wrote in response to a release to the Press by Intermedia, "Domes: Intermedia displays new forms in art..." *Vancouver Sun*, 15 May 1970.


37. Ibid.

38. James Barber, "After the Intermedia party: The Art Gallery will never be the same...", *The Province* (Vancouver), 2 June 1970.


42. Ibid., p. 30.

44. Andre Genous, “Intermediate Revolution” *Georgia Straight* (Vancouver), 3-10 June 1970, p. 5. Genous describes the activities taking place that evening as "ritual" and describes the individuals participating as the members of a "community". He states: "Time and space become meaningless - there is only ecstasy and revery as the community shakes itself into this highest occasion of life - pure life, unpersonalized and undifferentiated. The image of fusion."

45. In an interview with Ed Varney, he suggested that the directions for the assembly of the geodesic structures had come from *The Whole Earth Catalogue*. The catalogue was a last ditch effort to reorganize the counter cultural Diaspora into a movement - a social force with a single direction, by providing its readers with the tools for survival in a hostile world. ...enlightenment, socket wrenches, natural foods, survival tools, the I Ching, Alan Watts, methane digesters, an almanac, The Complete Encyclopedia of Needlework and the Cannula abortion. It was the survival manual for the New Sensibility.


49. This thesis does not address the relationship Intermedia established with the Vancouver Art Gallery. The research required to compile the material to address this matter is beyond the scope of this paper. An analysis of the Vancouver Art Gallery's policy-making in the late 60's and 70's was the focus of Steve Harris's M.A. Thesis “Of Rauschenberg, Policy And Representation At The Vancouver Art Gallery: A Partial History 1966 - 1983”, The University of British
Columbia, 1985. Werner Aellen worked closely with Tony Emery, Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery from '67 to '74, and was able to maximize on Emery's policy to remain loyal to local artists and to open the gallery to a broad spectrum of the public. The Vancouver Art Gallery and Intermedia maintained a tightly knit relationship throughout Intermedia's more prolific years culminating in their joint project, The Racetrack Gallery, a facility operated with the intention of taking 'art' to the community (part of the 'satellite' programming employed by the V.A. G. at that time). After 1971, the nature of the relationship is not well documented. Tony Emery served on Intermedia's Board of Directors from 1969 until 1970. Conversely, Werner Aellen was elected to the Vancouver Art Gallery Council (on Tony Emery's advice) in 1971. Certainly the Art Gallery and Intermedia serviced each other's needs. The Vancouver Art Gallery was motivated to respond to the local community of artists and to 'legitimize' avant-garde art (especially those which were considered 'progressive' and 'technologically based' under the Cultural Policy established by the Liberal Government). Intermedia benefited initially from the Art Gallery by legitimizing the artist's work and providing an established audience and media resources.


51. In fact the 'new' space on East 1st did include a three storey house where various members of Intermedia were lodged. In an interview with Gary Lee-Nova, it was suggested that the inhabitants were mostly draft-dodgers from the U.S.

52. See Letter to Mr. David Silcox, the Canada Council, Ottawa Ont., July 4th, 1970 from Werner Aellen, Intermedia Files, Special Collections, U.B.C., Box 1, File 7.

53. Notes from Barry Cramer's Interim Report to the Canada Council, dated Oct. 15, 1970 - Feb. 15, 1971 describe the activities of these newly formed groups. Although Intermedia Press was actively printing as early as 1968, the group acknowledged a new phase in 1970 when several members of Intermedia purchased a large photo-offset press. The first publication of Junk Mail in January of 1971
marked the beginnings of a project which established Intermedia Press as a separate entity. According to Cramer's notes, Image Bank was conceived by Michael Morris, Vincent Trasov, and Gary Lee-Nova for the storage, retrieval and recycling of visual information. Tri Solar Pool was a union of artists, poets, musicians and dancers staging theatrical performances around magical themes. Jointly sponsored by Simon Fraser University, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver School Board, U.B.C. and the Vancouver Foundation, Stop The City We Want To Get On was a project involving 300 high school students for one week interacting with artists and architects in environmental construction, theatre, video, music, etc. The Active Learning Project was created by Crista Preus with classes held at the Vancouver Art Gallery, public schools and community centres which concentrated on learning (mainly of history) through active participation. E.A.R. (the Intermedia Society Acoustic Ecology / Free Sound Exchange Project) was a united effort with the Community Music Project concerned with the process of audience perception of musical events and with the philosophy of aural experience. The founding members were Don Druick, Howard Broomfield and Martin Bartlett.


55. This label was used in a “Application to: The Local Initiatives Program, Department of Manpower and Immigration from Intermedia Society”, December, 1971, p.3.


November 1970, p. 19. which described the contents of Reich's book. With catchy subtitles like 'Outlive your enemy with a lifestyle' and 'The Corporate State must go', Stowe described the New Culture's aspirations and goals with the appropriate enthusiasm of the newly initiated.


59. Ibid., p. 10.

60. Ibid., Intro. p. 2.


62. Ibid., See 'Accomplishments Of The Original Project'. The list is extensive and impressive.


64. “Minutes of the Little Hot Stove League Meeting, held Wed. May 31st, 1972, at the New Era Social Club.” Intermedia Files, Special Collections, U.B.C., Box 8, File 20. Gary Lee-Nova (Art Rat) had determined that there were insufficient “C.C.” funds to complete the 'Intermedia' project. They would need another $25,000 to $30,000. Obviously there was not enough momentum gained by the remaining members to see this project through, a conclusion supported by comments during the meeting made by 'Flakey Rosehips' (Glenn Lewis) when he suggested that a letter be sent to the Canada Council explaining that various groups would be applying separately, and providing an explanation for Intermedia's present state of affairs.
CONCLUSION

With the establishment of Intermedia Society in June of 1967, Vancouver artists had accomplished a feat which Philip Leider had claimed, in a critique of the Vancouver art scene published that very month, was next to impossible. Members of the Society had entered into an international artistic discourse, from a regional base, which they felt both acknowledged and contributed to what was perceived by the Society as the most important art being created. 'The Sixties' were witnessing enormous gains both in the Space program and with communication technologies which manifested simultaneously a sense of alarm and exhilaration. Flying on the coattails of McLuhan and Fuller concerning the artist's place in the new electronic era, Intermedia artists collaborated in a program which intended to form a joint venture with technologists in the exploration of new possibilities for sensory experience in the development and use of new media. The concepts proposed by the initiating group of individuals enticed cooperation from leading faculty members from The University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University, who perceived the venture to be a valuable step forward in communications experiments. The press fanned the flames of intrigue. Galleries opened their doors,(1) articles appeared. Intermedia had generated the necessary climate of exchange and excitement to establish a viable artistic milieu in what had previously been "a scene with no scene".(2)
How had this Society achieved such instantaneous success? To Philip Leider, the appearance of Intermedia and the subsequent instantaneous creation of a 'scene' would have seemed like the result of spontaneous combustion. In fact, the appearance of Intermedia was a timely response to the urgency facing artists and educators in Vancouver and elsewhere in America to accommodate, or at least address, the influential pressures of the driving forces of technological liberalism, the political ideology which formed the basis for both Canadian and American political agendas at that time. Because of the commonality between Fuller and McLuhan's visions and the expansive political ideology of technological liberalism, the linkage between Art & Technology received tremendous support within the system itself. In Canada in particular, McLuhan's communication theories had sparked the imagination of a growing political force led by the Liberal Party with the full realization of the power which new media technologies could contribute in reuniting a nation struggling under a minority Liberal government. Interest in communications theory was coupled with reforms to the Cultural Policy after 1965, supporting the decision that the arts could make a most valuable contribution to Centennial '67 and the 'true completion of Confederation'. With a budget which effectively doubled overnight, the Canada Council was never in a better position to foster the arts in Canada. Decisions made at The Canadian Conference of the Arts, as stated in the Reports from Seminar '66, placed emphasis on the need for centres for information and dissemination and for the break down between disciplines. Intermedia Society with its original mandate to accommodate experiments in communication theories
and to foster the collaboration of interdisciplinary cooperation simply plugged into the system.

It was, however, a short sighted collaboration. The hype associated with explorations in communications and multi-media experimentations was a thin disguise for the less obvious inability of the members of the Society to carry the ideas inherent in the original mandate to fruition. Intermedia artists had entered into the venture with a variety of expectations and preconceived ideas regarding experiments in multi-media. Although it is obvious they fully intended to participate in the exploration of communication technologies outlined in the original mandate, most of the artists involved had participated in much more radical experimentation than that envisioned by Shadbolt or the other McLuhan enthusiasts. All of the earlier techniques used in trips festivals and multi-media events were absorbed into Intermedia's mandate. Because Intermedia was an open organization, the facility was inundated with young people who were interested in the potential of the experimental facility and drawn in, not only by the lure of engaging with the latest in media technology, but also because the Society had such strong ties with the radical ideas of the counter culture. Initially Intermedia members attempted to cater to the original mandate, as this was the direction agreed upon and supported by the Board and the funding institutions. But, by 1969 the alternative vision of the counter culture had gained sufficient support among young people to be considered a viable opposing force against the onslaught of technological liberalism. The New Sensibility became a leading source
of opposition to the forces of technology. By 1970, the Utopian vision nurtured by the Happy Technophiles had become untenable. Nirvana was not around the corner.

In practical terms Intermedia had never gained enough support from the technological or scientific communities to support the original agenda and by late 1969, the moral support for the original mandate had become completely subverted by the morality of the New Sensibility. The ambitious undertakings envisioned by Jack Shadbolt for large scale co-operation with scientists and technicians in experiments and explorations which would have relevance for "educators, social and behaviour scientists, physical development specialists", etc. never came close to becoming a reality. The organization had failed to rise to the level of sophistication required to become a centre for communication experimentation and research as had been originally intended. Recognizing the change in ideology, original supporters from the Board of Directors for communication experimentation checked out. The Spring Show May 1931 demonstrated the complete subversion of the original mandate and its replacement by the morality of the counter culture, which had gained enough momentum by this point to actually be considered by social theorists as a New Consciousness. Because of the severity of oppression against the political protests of the counter culture after 1968, the movement had resorted to 'alternative lifestyle' as a means of survival in what they considered a hostile world. Werner Aellen, realizing that the Society could not support both ideologies, cut ties with Intermedia in an effort to create what he and others felt would
be a tenable alternative to an unwieldy experimental media facility. In a mode similar to that which Reich had described as 'anti-career', Aellen and other Intermedia members sought support for their own individual agendas. Primarily the mandate for these smaller groups supported the values described by Marcuse and Reich after 1969; to provide new models for community service (anti-careerism); a respect for ecology and the establishment of the artist outside of the art gallery system. Intermedia Society hadn't failed because of lack of sophisticated equipment, or from over-use of facilities. These problems could have been easily rectified by soliciting the appropriate support, if support for the vision of the Society itself had been tenable. But by 1971 there was no longer adequate support for the original mandate from the membership itself. Salvation of the world had been replaced by a preoccupation for survival. The lifestyle demonstrated at the *Spring Show May 1931* was eventually forced out of the urban environment and into the countryside. By December of 1970, according to a survey conducted by *Time* magazine, there were at least 3,000 communes across America. (3) Many Intermedia artists left the city for communes on the Sunshine Coast or in the Gulf Islands. For those who remained, the idea of small groups of individuals piloting their own projects within established communities appeared to have viability. A change of consciousness (The New Sensibility) would spread with the infiltration of these groups into the communities at large. Education about the use and potential of media would assist in redefining the community's awareness of itself. Networking through mailouts and information exchange programs would assist in spreading the word.
Artists would lead the way to Consciousness III.

The following statement was written in 1972 by an Intermedia member just prior to the Society's expiry:

Intermedia Society now lives less visibly to the general public. The initial performance or product orientation shifted after 1971 to a multi-workshop approach emphasizing processes. Intermedia groups now have grown to embody ongoing artistic activity as day to day lifestyle rather than as preparation for a special event. Each satellite studio has struggled to find a financially viable method of survival. Artist members work toward becoming self sufficient without selling their time to non-art oriented labour. (4)

As though taking their cue from Marcuse's Essay on Liberation (1969) (5) the Society had shifted its initiative to small groups, widely diffused, with a high degree of autonomy, mobility, flexibility. Spaceship Earth had become uninhabitable. Satellites became the vehicle of preference.
NOTES

1. Apart from the Vancouver Art Gallery, Intermedia had exhibitions at The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, The Burnaby Art Gallery, The Edmonton Art Gallery, The Rothman Art Gallery (Stratford, Ontario), and Mills College Art Gallery, Oakland, California. Events also took place at The University of Alberta, The University of British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University.

2. Reference is made to Philip Leider's article, "Vancouver: scene with no scene," artscanada (June/July 1967) in the first Chapter of this thesis. Leider defines an artistic milieu as:

   that climate of exchange and excitement that arises when a substantial group of artists, dealers, collectors, publications, museums and critics intermingle, exalt one another, quarrel, bite each other's backs, gossip and, above all, constantly elevate the level on which the meaningful dialogues take place, constantly press the level of quality in the production of art higher.

3. "The American Family: Future Uncertain." Time (28 December 1970) pg. 42. In August and September of 1970 Georgia Straight devoted an entire issues to 'Communes' which had recently taken root in places like 'Wild Inlet' and Roberts Creek. Judith Copithorne, a core member of Intermedia pre-1970, wrote an article entitled "Wild Inlet - a community," Georgia Straight (9-16 Sept. 1970) pg. 5, describing daily activities and the general ambience of this community. Lifestyle is described in reverent terms, strikingly similar to those used by Joan Lowndes depicting Helen Goodwin's tribal dance at the 1969 Electrical Connection exhibition as illustrated by the following quote: "Darkness and the tone becomes softer. The music hits together into one tune. The camp fires glitter through the bushes. People smile and touch on the paths as they pass."

4. Fragment of notes from the proposed 'Intermedia history' begun in 1972 and left unfinished. The notes are undated.
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“Intermedia Nights: Show that gets its' audience involved.” The Province, (Vancouver), 23 May 1968.

"Intermedia's 'gentle people' fill VAG with geodesic space." The Province, (Vancouver), 22 May 1970, 29.


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Wheel of Fortune 1968
Wheel stationary with transmitted illumination

Wheel of Fortune 1968
Wheel in environment for light and sound

Wheel of Fortune 1968
Wheel in operation. When stopped, single section is illuminated and portion of sound track activated.

Figure 1
Figure 9