

# VANCOUVER INDEPENDENT ARCHITECTS MEET

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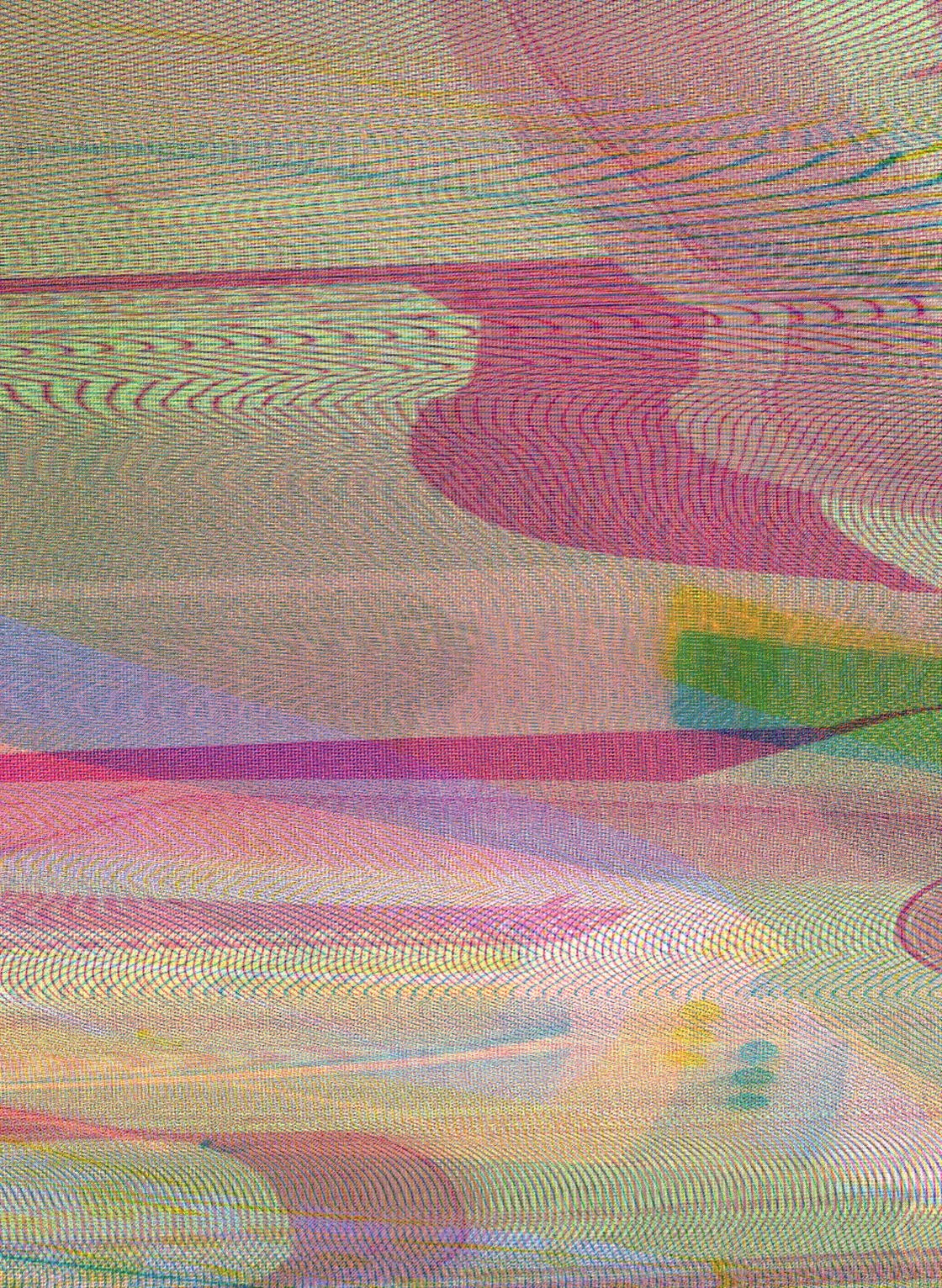
NOVEMBER

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22-28

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2015



Cover: Steve Paxton At the Matrix International Video Conference 1973 Kazumi Tanaka

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# ARCHIVES MEEK

# VANCOUVER INDEPENDENT

**BINDER 17**

LIVE AT THE  
CENTURY PAR

# ABOUT

It is well understood that an archive presents a reality not only by who and what is included, but also by who and what is left out. An oft-naked city in its way, Vancouver's many stories are collected and retold by its institutions small and large, and its populations visible and obscured. As artist-run centres, we have long travelled an alternative path, and along the way built archives of material independent of prevailing narratives and established discourse. Independent archives yes, but also forever dependent on our communities and each other.

As we enter our fourth and fifth decades respectively, grunt gallery, VIVO Media Arts, and the Western Front are collectively looking back upon over one hundred years of emerging and evolving practice in the arts. The programs and events this week showcase only a thin slice of this whole, but we feel that they act as a critical expression of the work we do to preserve, animate, and rethink our archives. From presentations by artists and researchers who have worked with our collections to screenings of newly digitized and original material, we are looking forward to sharing some amazing content and mapping stories of yesteryear to the landscape we all share today.

Maintaining and activating our archives is not without its challenges of course. From preservation and resource issues to keeping up with ever-accelerating projects and considering the treatment of nebulous digital objects, there is no shortage of work to be done. Our goal for Vancouver Independent Archives Week 2015 is to raise awareness around artist-run centre archives and initiate a wider dialogue about their connections to the rich social history of Vancouver and their contributions to its diverse contemporary culture. Thank you for joining us.

# SCHEDULE

## Sunday November 22<sup>nd</sup>

*Archives Week kickoff screening & reception @ Vancity Theatre, 3pm. Hosted by Colin Browne. Reception to follow in Vancity lobby.*

- ▶ **grunt:** Al Neil and Carole Itter's *Blue Cabin* by Krista Lomax, Rebecca Belmore's *Victorious* and *George Sawchuk: At Home in the Woods* by Mary Alice
- ▶ **VIVO:** Punk, poetry, and politics from the Lenore Herb Archive
- ▶ **Western Front:** New Music from the Media Archive

## Monday November 23<sup>th</sup>

- ▶ Artist talk: Dr. Kristin L. Dowell's *Artist-Run Archives/Indigenous Art Histories* @ the Native Education College, 12pm.

## Tuesday November 24<sup>th</sup>

- ▶ Launch of the Western Front's newly digitized Literary Collection - screening, live reading with Amy de'Ath and archive stations @ Western Front 7pm.

## Wednesday November 25<sup>th</sup>

- ▶ Double book launch: Henri Robideau's *Eraser St.* and Ethnographic Terminalia's *Terminus: Archives, Ephemera, and Electronic Art E-zine* with Dr. Kate Hennessy and Tarah Hogue @ grunt, 6pm

## Thursday November 26<sup>th</sup>

- ▶ *Artists in the Archive* panel discussion @ Western Front, 7pm. Moderated by Caitlin Jones with Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda, Luke Fowler, and Althea Thauberger.

## Friday November 27<sup>th</sup>

- ▶ Radical Rewind @ VIVO 7pm
  - Acting Up in the 70s: Analogue Actions on the West Coast (Metro Media)
  - Acting Out in the 80s: Making Gay Tele-visible (Gayblevision)

*Funder tours of VIVO, grunt, and the Western Front archives throughout the day.*

## Saturday November 28<sup>th</sup>

- ▶ Listening Event: Launch of Stacey Ho's residency podcast episode 2 @ VIVO, 7:30pm.
- ▶ Archives Week Wrap party with screening and DJs @ VIVO, 9pm.

*Daytime public archives open houses at all three centres with tours and material on display.*

All activities free to the public

### Ongoing Exhibitions

**grunt:** *All Week:* Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda's *Remediating Mama Pina's Cookbook*

**VIVO:** *Thursday-Saturday:* *Years of Years: Artists in the Crista Dahl Media Library and Archive* (Studio & Print Archive)

**Western Front:** *Wednesday-Friday:* *Literary and New Music selections viewing station*

### Program details at:

[archivesweek.ca](http://archivesweek.ca)



Western  
Front

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**Western Front**  
303 East 8th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC  
V5T 1S1  
[front.bc.ca](http://front.bc.ca)

*Western Front Building Exterior, ca.1973*

## Introduction

Established in 1973, the Western Front is one of Canada's leading artist-run centers for contemporary art and new music. The centre produces and presents visual art, exhibitions, new music concerts and workshops, media-art residencies, performance art and other artist driven initiatives. Presently, the centre has three key programming areas, Exhibitions, Media Art and New Music, as well as an extensive archive of audio-visual and print material. The Western Front continues to be a crucial platform for interdisciplinary, experimental art practices in Canada and internationally.

# WESTERN FRONT



As a focal point of experimental art practice since 1973 the Western Front has played a major role in the development of electronic and networked art forms in a national and international context. The Media Archive contains over 2,100 video and audio recordings in a variety of formats, documenting events, performances and works produced at the Front over our history. We are committed to the long-term restoration and preservation of our tapes and their digitized versions, for ongoing use by artists, curators, researchers and students.

*The Brute Saxes, The Peanuts, Corres, Sponge School of Dance, 1979*

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WEEK

## Archive Highlights

### **Literary Readings**

January 1974 was the beginning of what would become a successful series of literary events called Monday Night Readings. Curators included Gerry Gilbert, Mary Beth Knechtel, and Charles Watts and among the poets and authors who spoke were Gladys Hindmarch, Carole Itter, Roy Kiyooka, Daphne Marlatt, Jamie Reid, Fred Wah and the Four Horsemen. The literary documentation is the first collection to be digitized as the pilot for Western Front's in-house video digitization program.

### **New Music Recordings**

Music has been a major programming stream since the Western Front's founding. First curated by Martin Bartlett, many innovators and inventors have graced the stage of the Grande Luxe Hall. The Archive contains documentation of many of these incredible artists including: Jennifer Butler, Alvin Curran, Christian Fennesz, Ellen Fullman, François Houle, Steve Lacy, Jean-François Laporte, Joëlle Léandre, George Lewis, Gordon Monahan, Pauline Oliveros, John Oswald, Hildegard Westerkamp, Al Neil, David Rosenboom, Don Buchla and Ami Radunskaya, and Paul Plimley.

### **Performance Documentation**

About one quarter of the Media Archive is comprised of Performance Art documentation. A dedicated program run from 1973 until 2008, Performance Art continues to be an integral part of Western Front's activities. The Archive contains

documentation of performances by Byron Black, Elizabeth Chitty, Hank Bull, Eric Metcalfe, Kate Craig, Michael Smith, Rose English, Mona Hatoum, Rebecca Belmore, Judy Radul, Willoughby Sharp, Hermann Nitsch and many others.

### **Media Art Production**

Founded by Glenn Lewis and developed by Kate Craig, the Media Arts Program has been central to the centre's engagement with network, electronic, sound, noise and video art. As a pioneer in connecting artists to technology, the Media Arts program has been a site for interdisciplinary art production and dissemination. Over the years artists have included: Colin Campbell, Max Dean, Robert Filliou, Ant Farm, Susan Britton, Sanja Iveković, Dalibor Martinis, Gathie Falk, Lisa Steele and Shana Moulton.

### **Exhibitions Materials**

In the early years the Exhibitions program exhibited work by artists including General Idea, Allyson Clay, Joseph Beuys, Image Bank, Paul Wong, Marian Penner Bancroft, and more recently, the work of Paul Chan, Hadley+Maxwell, Elizabeth Zvonar, Neil Beloufa and many others. Photography has been the main mode of documentation for the Exhibitions Program, which maintains an ongoing negative scanning project to account for over 15,000 photographs, as well as posters, handbills and other ephemera.

## Current Archives Activity

### **Past is Prologue**

Past is Prologue is an ongoing program that invites artists, curators, writers and scholars to research and create new works or curatorial projects with works in the Media Archive. Past collaborators include Michael Turner, Project Rainbow and Alexander Muir.

### **Record Releases**

The Western Front produces limited edition LPs, restored and mastered from the original archived format that capture innovative live performances and feature new cover art and accompanying texts. In 2014 the centre released Evan Parker's *Vaincu.Va! Live at the Western Front*, from 1978. The next release will be a compilation of experimental piano works featuring archival and newly commissioned performances held in the Luxe theatre, including those by celebrated pianists Al Neil, Paul Plimley, and John Kameel Farah.

### **Minute-by-minute Fundraising campaign**

The Western Front's *minute-by-minute* campaign raises funds needed to digitize and make accessible past works that face loss of information due to obsolescence and deterioration.

To purchase minutes, and support the preservation of the Western Front Archive, go to: [front.bc.ca/events/minute-by-minute](http://front.bc.ca/events/minute-by-minute)



*Dance Performance, Marie Chouinard, 1980 Eric Metcalfe*



*Lisa Steele in the Luxe, 1976*



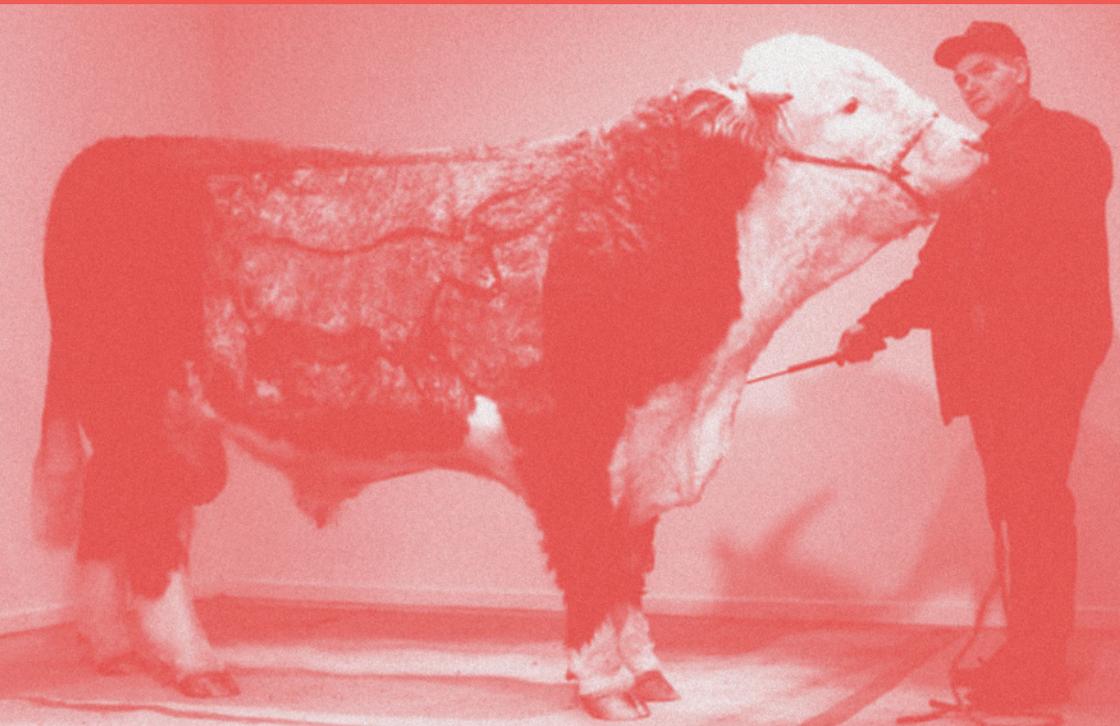
*Western Front Archaeology, 1983*

*Mondai, Ko Nakajima, 1982  
Eric Metcalfe*



*grunt*

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**Grunt**

116 – 350 East 2nd Ave

Vancouver, BC

V5T 4R8

***grunt.ca***

*Marcus Bowcott Palimpsest 1999 Merle Addison*

## Introduction

Since its inception in 1984 grunt gallery has built an extensive archive of materials documenting and related to exhibitions, performances, and projects that reflect the depth of the centre's programming and its place as a centre of cultural memory both locally in Mt. Pleasant and more generally in the Vancouver arts community.

# GRUNT



As grunt's presence and audience have grown from a small storefront on E. 6th Avenue and tight collective of founding members and peers respectively, so too has the physical and semiotic presence of its archive, a legacy of its unofficial mandate to exhibit artists and work that aren't exhibited elsewhere and to promote and encourage discussion around art activities and their relevance in a social context.

Jan Wade, Krista Lomax *Altered* 2010 Henri Robideau

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## grunt archives: between then and there

Though artist-run centre archives have not always been acknowledged or addressed to the extent they are today, through fortune and foresight grunt has made a concerted effort to manage, share, and preserve its archival holdings since the early 1990s. The donated labours of community members such as Brice Canyon, Venge Dixon, and Hillary Wood among others during this period represents the fundamental arrangement of a functional physical archive and the early beginnings of the archive's animation in grunt's consciousness and programming output. With the passing of grunt's 30th anniversary last year, we reflect upon the archive as both a record of grunt's values and their past products and also as a rich resource from which to move forward, activating material and stories from the archive as a part of core gallery programming as expressed in our Archives Plan, a part of grunt's 2012 Strategic Plan.

## Collections and initiatives

grunt's archival holdings consist of some 90 binders of photographic and print based material, including an estimated 200,000 slides, negatives, and digital images, along with some 500 video tapes (primarily VHS, Hi-8, and Mini-DV) documenting hundreds of exhibitions, performances, conferences, and other projects. grunt also maintains an archive of nearly 100 gallery publications. grunt's digital archive contains approximately 7 terabytes of digitized material, with new material being

added and uploaded to The Activation Map by staff and volunteers every week.

The Archives Plan grew as a response to the success of grunt's 2010-11 Activating the Archive (ATA) project, a sprawling aeration of the archive funded by Heritage Canada that represents grunt's largest digital archive initiative to date. Nearly 30 individuals researched, curated, digitized, wrote on, designed, and presented material toward the goal of six curated websites thematically highlighting grunt's holdings as well as the beginnings of The Activation Map, an online database of digitized objects representing a research resource, finding aid, and web portal to grunt's physical collection. The impact of bringing fresh eyes to bear on the gallery's past, interpreting and imagining the archive in new ways and uncovering overlooked work, was one of the most striking takeaways from ATA and has since been a central focus of grunt's archival projects, exemplified by such exhibitions as *Ghostkeeper* (2012), presentations and performances by contemporary artists responding to the work of Ahasiw Maskegon-Iskew; Emilio Rojas, Guadalupe Martinez, and Igor Santizo's *ThisPlace Vancouver* (2012); and Julia Feyrer's *Kitchen* (2014).

## Today/morrow

In 2015, grunt coproduced Allison Collins and Michael Turner's *Mainstreeters: Taking Advantage, 1972-1982*, the zine workshop *Terminus: Archives, Ephemera, and Electronic Art* with the Ethnographic Terminalia Collective in conjunction

with Geronimo Inutiq's ARCTICNOISE, and exhibited Henri Robideau's Eraser Street. All of these projects have showcased the intergenerational appeal of the archives and successfully brought together older and younger artists in meaningful ways with unique outcomes. Adapting the archive to information age channels has elicited a positive response from grunt audience members of all ages and remains a central priority as grunt enters its fourth decade.

There is much to be excited about on the horizon. grunt is proud to spearhead the inaugural Vancouver Independent Archives Week with the hope of expanding the event to include other independent archives and organizations in years to come. Another project in the works is Settler Sites, a website that will feature site-specific installations and works by BC artists in remote and rural areas, including George dePape, Ken Gerberick, George Sawchuk, and others. In the meantime we continue to work with students, researchers, volunteers, and community members to further our goals of opening our archive to an online audience and producing and disseminating innovative output from original material.



David Pan *Activating the Archive* 2010 **Henri Robideau**



Dana Claxton *Tree of Consumption* 1992  
**Merle Addison**



Rebecca Belmore *Reservoir* 2001 **Merle Addison**



Natalie Ball *Circa Indian* 2009 **Henri Robideau**

Sonny Assu *Beat Nation* 2009 **Henri Robideau**



# VIVO

MEDIA ARTS CENTRE

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**VIVO Media Arts Centre**

2625 Kaslo Street

Vancouver, BC

V5M 3G9

**[vivomediaarts.com](http://vivomediaarts.com)**

*Matrix International Video Conference 1973 Kazumi Tanaka*

## Introduction

In 1973, 160 video producers attended the Matrix International Video Festival & Conference in Vancouver. The idea of a free video exchange library was conceived there and made a reality a few months later with the incorporation of the Satellite Video Exchange Society and the opening of its public venue, Video Inn.

# VIVO MEDIA ARTS CENTRE



Through this library and its International Video Exchange Directory, Video Inn facilitated the free international exchange of “alternative” video; video produced as counter narrative to mainstream media or exploring the aesthetic potential of the medium. Nearly five decades of formative experimentation and actions driving aesthetic, social justice, and political movements - often underrepresented in traditional archives - can be found at the CDMLA, making it an important research destination for academics, curators and artists.

## The Archive at VIVO Media Arts Centre

VIVO Media Arts Centre is one of Canada's leading artist-run centres dedicated to the exploration, creation, and dissemination of media arts. It also houses the Crista Dahl Media Library & Archive (CDMLA), Western Canada's largest collection of videotapes by artists and independent producers. Spanning 47 years of production, its 6000+ video titles reflect the rich history of Video Art and documentary practice, and are supported by related publications, documents, photographs, audio tape, film, and ephemera. The collection also includes an extensive video technology archive, artist and activist files, and Special Collections. While the archive's primary focus is Canadian, international producers and organizations are well represented. The CDMLA is committed to building a legacy for BC artists and securing their seminal role in Canadian media art history.

### Special Collections

In addition to its general collection, CDMLA conserves the history of West Coast alternative media organizations and individual artists through our Special Collections, such as:

#### ***Metro Media Society (1971-1985)***

Metro Media's founding services included video production training and equipment access for underrepresented communities, a cable TV series, and media democracy advocacy. By 1979, it was a multidisciplinary art space. For a time it was the only permanent

experimental film theatre in Western Canada and held North America's only monthly Mail Art show.

#### ***Woman in Focus Society (1974-1993)***

Vancouver's first centre devoted to feminist media and visual arts, WIF productions featured leading feminist activists and artists, and explored women's historical contributions to art and politics. In addition to their broadcast activities, WIF provided equipment access, distributed women's media productions, and ran a visual art gallery.

#### ***Gayblevision (1980-1986)***

Canada's first TV series made "for gay people by gay people," Gayblevision featured the issues, people, events, businesses and organizations that defined the 1980s LGBT community in Vancouver. The series includes rare interviews with community leaders and cultural icons, and documents Vancouver's Pride movement and the impact of AIDS.

#### ***The Lenore Herb Archive***

Herb (1947-2010) was an artist, activist and provocateur in Vancouver's media art, punk, poetry and environmentalist communities. A videographer, photographer, writer, curator, archivist, and arts administrator, her fond of over 500 videos and other materials documents her art practice and work with *blewointmentpress*, *The Push*, *Metro Media*, and the *Society Promoting Environmental Conservation*, among others.

## Initiatives

The Crista Dahl Media Library & Archive remains integral to VIVO's public programming, notably as a source of inspiration and content for artists and curators. The CDMLA's intimate and interactive EATa: Evening at the Archive series brings together materials unique to the archive around a specific theme, and provides a rare opportunity for people to engage in a collegial conversation with the artists, activists, and cultural workers who were critical players in that historical moment. Through its rigorous acquisitions program and ongoing digitization, distribution, curatorial, and research initiatives, the CDMLA ensures preservation of, and ongoing critical engagement with, this growing collection of seminal media art.



Leo Stefánsson *Spectrograms from a Video Archive* 2015 Alisha Weng



Paul Wong *Curator Videographics* 2013 Sophia Hsin

*Metro Media Society* c1970



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# vancouver foundation

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With over 1,600 funds and total assets of \$985 million, Vancouver Foundation is Canada's largest community foundation. In 2014, Vancouver Foundation and its donors made more than 4,900 grants, and distributions totaling approximately \$57 million, to registered charities across Canada. Since it was founded in 1943, Vancouver Foundation, in partnership with its donors, has distributed more than \$1 billion to thousands of community projects and programs. Grant recipients range from social services to medical research groups, to organizations devoted to arts and culture, the environment, education, children and families, youth, and animal welfare.

Program details at:

[archivesweek.ca](http://archivesweek.ca)

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Special thanks:

**VIFF** 



Western  
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**VIVO**  
MEDIA ARTS CENTRE

