



PORT WASHINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

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March 5, 1996

Steve Leggett  
Library of Congress  
Motion Picture Broadcasting & Recorded Sound Division  
Washington, D.C. 20540-4800

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

MAR 11 1996

MOTION PICTURE, BROADCASTING  
AND RECORDED SOUND DIVISION

Dear Mr. Leggett:

The staff of the Port Washington Public Library's Media Services applauds your efforts on behalf of film and video preservation. Because we have recently donated the bulk of our video archives to the New York Public Library, most of the questions on your survey no longer apply to us. Instead, we send you a brief history of our involvement with video.

In 1970, a New York State Council on the Arts grant enabled us to originate a video project in which we trained volunteers to produce ½" reel-to-reel, black and white videotapes of community events. In ten years, we produced over one thousand ½" tapes. Although a handful of these tapes were cleaned and copied onto VHS, they are currently in storage at the library, in less than archival conditions, and are not playable.

Between 1980 and 1987, NYSCA funding supported the continuation of the video project in ¾" color video. Most of the five hundred videos produced during this period were documentation of photographers' gallery talks and discussions with filmmakers and videomakers. All of these tapes have been donated to the New York Public Library. We also donated approximately 125 video

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documentaries and artworks which we purchased in 3/4" during this period. We hope that our donations will prove helpful to photography, film and video scholars doing research at NYPL. Remaining at the Port Washington Public Library are some 100 oral history and local interest productions, some playable and others not.

In 1984, Media Services began building a circulating VHS collection. Twelve years later, the collection has grown to 8,000 titles. We offer feature films (including classics, world cinema, independents, and current titles), arts tapes, documentaries, instructional videos, and children's programs. Much to our surprise and delight, many of our original purchases are still playing after 100 loans!

We have enclosed several items which will provide further information about our video productions and collections. They include a history of our department, a listing of materials sent to the New York Public Library, a letter from Julia Van Haaften of the NYPL, a letter to the National Endowment for the Arts summarizing our video project, a flier promoting a program, *Video at the Library 1970-1992: A Celebration*, curated by Deirdre Boyle, and a *Camera 35* article about our photography program.

Please let us know if we can be of further assistance in your project.

Cordially:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lillian R. Katz". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Lillian R. Katz  
Director of Media Services

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Attachment: Port Washington Public Library, Media Services: A Brief History

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## Port Washington Public Library

# MEDIA SERVICES

February 1996

### A BRIEF HISTORY

The Port Washington Public Library first developed a media department in the early 1970s. When Lillian R. Katz authored the Library's first New York State Council on the Arts grant in 1970, the award of \$31,000 enabled us to originate a pioneering video production project. For a period of fifteen years, we trained residents to make tapes about their community. NYSCA funding supported photography exhibitions in a new media gallery, and brought filmmakers and videomakers to screen and discuss their work. Whenever artists visited, we videotaped their presentations and recorded interviews with them. Our other activities included a film screening program and photography classes; we also circulated 8mm films, filmstrips, slides, audiotapes, talking books, a/v equipment, and 16mm films from the Nassau Library System. Media Services began its circulating VHS collection in 1984. The initial 200 tapes proved so popular that the collection has now grown to more than 7,000 titles. In 1987, when the Library's top floor was redesigned to accommodate the expanding video, compact disc and books-on-tape collections, the video production center was closed to provide office space for several other departments. The Media Services staff continues to present notable photography exhibitions, motion picture screenings, circulating videocassettes, and media books and journals.

### MEET THE STAFF

LILLIAN R. KATZ began working at the Library in 1970 as Cultural Programs Coordinator, and became Director of Media Services in 1976. Her appointments to major panels and boards in the field indicate the national recognition of the library's photography, film and video series.

VIVIENNE LIPSITZ came to the Library in 1976 as a volunteer organizing film seminars and other projects. She was employed in 1978, and became Assistant Director of Media Services in 1989.

JONATHAN GUILDROY taught the Library's super-8mm animation workshops for children in 1976. He was a part-time projectionist in 1977 and a full-time Audio-Visual Specialist in 1981, and was appointed Librarian I in April 1994.

STELLA MITSOS first worked at the Library's Bayview Avenue building in the 1960s. In

1989, she rejoined the staff as a secretary for several departments. Stella currently is a full-time secretary and video cataloger for Media Services.

At the present time, Media Services is fortunate to have three highly trained part-time technicians to run our programs: MARIAN GIRARDIN is a retired social worker who also works as a fire medic. BILLY GRAVERT comes to the Library with extensive experience in stage lighting and sound. Retired engineer JIM LEE is a regular fixture at the Friday Sandwiched In programs and other daytime events.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Since 1976, financial support from the New York State Council on the Arts has enabled Media Services to present 175 photography exhibitions. The Library provides one of the few opportunities to view fine art photography on Long Island. The selection of photographers is based on artistic merit and cultural diversity. We have exhibited the work of masters like Berenice Abbott, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Walker Evans, and Paul Strand, as well as group exhibitions on themes like dance photography and contemporary black and Latin American photographers; we have also provided exposure for many emerging talents. Slide talks give the public an opportunity to meet photographers and learn about their processes and philosophies. Over the past twenty years, many local photographers have displayed their work in our annual Photography Club of Long Island show. Media Services develops the photography book collection, which includes monographs, thematic studies and instructional titles; we also purchase and review photography journals.

## FILM & VIDEO

Media Services aspires to present outstanding and challenging feature films, documentaries and video artworks to our audiences. Most of these films and videos are not shown anywhere else on Long Island. Since 1976, financial support from the New York State Council on the Arts has enabled us to bring over 500 filmmakers and over 100 videomakers to the Library to discuss their work with our audiences. We have also screened hundreds of Hollywood classics, foreign films, documentaries, experimental works and thematic series. Viewers can learn more about film and video through the book collection that Media Services has built. We also purchase and review media journals. Since 1971, Media Services has written grant requests to the New York State Council on the Arts to help support our programs. In that time, we have earned more than \$900,000 in NYSCA funds to bring the art of photography and the work of independent filmmakers and videomakers to local viewers. In addition, we have received nearly \$15,000 in grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Young Filmmakers/Video Arts, and the New York Council on the Humanities. Media Services is also grateful for the ongoing support of the Friends of the Library for foreign film screenings and photography slide talks.

## CIRCULATING VHS COLLECTION

Although the circulation of videotapes is overseen by Collection Management, the selection, purchase, cataloging and promotion of videos is the function of Media Services. We are proud to offer Port Washington borrowers approximately 8000 of the very best in Hollywood classics, foreign films, current releases, documentaries, arts programs and instructional tapes. Since 1985, some \$45,000 from NYSCA has enabled us to collect the work of independent film and videomakers.

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Every day, the Library presents one or more events (films, lectures, performances). Seventy-five to one hundred hours of programs every month require technical assistance. Media Services generates some of these events, others are organized by the Library's other programmers, and more still are sponsored by outside organizations. Technicians must be familiar with 16mm film projection, 35mm slide projection with single and double projectors, synchronized slide programs, VHS and 3/4" video playback with single and double monitors, video projection, overhead projection, opaque projection, computer projection, microphone amplification, wireless microphones, graphic equalizer, digital effects, portable sound system, compact disc playback, audiotape recording and playback, Com-Tek system for the hearing impaired, stage lighting, audio and video dubbing, and much more.

## SELECTED COMMENTS FROM THE FIELD

Rodney Lee, Director of the Roosevelt Public Library: "I wish to take this opportunity to commend the Port Washington Public Library for the splendid services which you continue to offer the greater Nassau County community in the selection of your programming, particularly its diversification. It's just wonderful! Your exhibitions are rated one of the best models in New York State in terms of public libraries."

Photographer Arthur Leipzig: "The media gallery has been ahead of its time, playing a singular role in helping to develop and establish the Port Washington Library as an outstanding institution in the arts. More than any other library or institution on Long Island, the P.W. Library is recognized for its far-sighted view in producing photo exhibits of such high quality. PWPL should be applauded for its role in contributing to a higher level of understanding and appreciation of the importance of photography in the arts. The P.W. community is really very fortunate to have [the media gallery] available to them. The gallery has not only paid homage to some of our country's leading photographers, but has also served to recognize and launch many young new photographers on their careers. Without the PW gallery, our community would be a lesser place. Bravo!"

Photographer Walter Rosenblum: "Your department has always been in the forefront of everything wise and thoughtful and it gives me great pleasure to be part of your remarkable achievement."

Lydia M. Acosta of the University of Tampa: "I was most impressed with the programs and services of the media department... You have given me some excellent ideas..."

Filmmaker Alan Berliner: "Once again thanks for inviting me to show *Intimate Stranger* at the library. I am still in a state of shock (the good kind) at the most surprising turnout: 220 people."

Filmmaker Reggie Life: "The Port Washington Library has become one of the most important exhibition spaces in America and I am very eager to be a part of your upcoming programming."

Filmmaker Andrea Simon: "Thanks for a most enjoyable visit yesterday. The Library has such an interesting film & video program - I wish it were down the block."

Videomaker Shalom Gorewitz: "Thanks for inviting me to screen work at the Library. It was a meaningful experience for me. The technical quality of the audio and video playback systems was excellent. The audience, seemed sincerely interested in what I was trying to say with video. Some of their questions and reactions forced me to reconsider and verbalize personal reasons for artmaking... I hope that NYSCA and others continue supporting the Port Washington Public Library's video art archives and circulating collection, as well as this screening series, so that more artists and audiences can benefit from dialogue and exchange."

Christina Markunas of Interama, a film distribution company: "I just wanted to tell you how much I personally love and respect your library. In [1977] I schlepped out to the LIRR to see the Stan Brakhage films you were then screening ... I was in film school then, and would travel anywhere from Columbia U. to catch good, stimulating films. I thought, 'How progressive this suburban library is!' And you certainly still are!"

B. Ruby Rich, former director of NYSCA's film program: "Your film exhibition and film-on-tape circulation remain models for the rest of the state."

Dai-Sil Kim-Gibson, former director of NYSCA's media program: "I wish to tell you how much we appreciate the excellent video program Port Washington has presented over the years. Simultaneously, you should know that the Port Washington media program is identified with Lillian Katz. You are deeply appreciated by funders, administrators and artists."