

Film School



Dave Fraser

Sue Ellen Fast

Thinking of entering a program in the IC awards competition? If you imagine the view of a hand-held camera following program

participants through a crowded exhibit hall, or down the trail as they all bend over to pick up a spruce cone, you may just put that camera back in the drawer and walk away. But wait!

Video is a very flexible medium, and now it's available for anyone to use. With the computers and software available today at a reasonable price, you can film, edit and enter your program so that the judges can see its real strengths.

Here are some tips I picked up while writing and hosting 52 half hour episodes of *Nature Walk*. You will need to film your program several times, taking different types of shots, and then edit them together later to create a shorter mini-documentary of the real thing.

Turn off the Sound and Watch the Tube

The best tip I can offer. With
...continued on p. 14.

the sound track removed, your eye will pick up the cuts where one piece of video has been joined to another during editing. Watch for the ways the various views help to tell the story.

Wide Shots

This view establishes the scene and places the action in context. You want to see the environment and the people in it. ⇒⇒⇒



Will Husby

Close Up

Like a portrait, this is the classic talking head shot that projects your expressions, your feelings, your warmth and enthusiasm. Film your participants' faces too. ⇒⇒⇒



Sue Ellen Fast

Walking Shots

Film some connecting bits and views that will link the experience together for the viewer in a relevant way.

Ambient Sound

Depending on what your equipment can do, consider collecting a nice long chunk of general background sound of the environment you are in to lay in later where needed. Remember how the TV soundtrack transformed the jumpy images into an experience the eye accepts? Your video will be sound as well as images.

So make a deal with a fellow interpreter, use a tripod (see the sidebar below) and have fun learning about a new medium as you prepare your entry. Who knows? You may even win!

Extreme Close Up

This is a look at the artifact or creature in the hand or on their own, so that the viewer can participate in the program and appreciate their special qualities. ⇒⇒⇒



Sue Ellen Fast

Use a Tripod



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Give your presentation that solid professional touch. When the pros film they make every effort to keep camera movements slow and controlled. A tripod helps them do this. They want their footage to be stable so that the viewer can concentrate on the content and not be distracted by swaying images. Even leaning against a tree, post or wall will help keep the shot stable. You might investigate using a tripod from

a spotting scope.

The extra weight may make your equipment a bear to carry, but a you'll get smoother images in return.

Sue Ellen Fast's television series *Nature Walk* was filmed outdoors on trails, seashores and mountains. The

series won over twenty film and video awards. Sue Ellen is the editor of *Interpscan*.

