

TV

Global gadflies

One world, one MTV

Forget *Dallas* reruns in Kuala Lumpur. If Mark Pellington and Jon Klein have their way, TV's global community will revolve around *BUZZ*, a weekly magazine collage to debut on MTV, Sunday, April 22. So far, the young producer/directors have bureaus in Africa, Brazil, Japan and Mexico for collecting footage of youth trends and pop culture; their world syndication has progressed as far as Britain's Channel 4. (They're also negotiating with Japan, Brazil, China and Latin America.) *BUZZ* is about Jetson time, the space age future as *now*, with a focus on technology, style and communication. They're like hackers telegraphing the international underground via images—no voice-over, just a cataclysmic image barrage with perfectly synced music, message-words and non sequiturs.

Klein and Pellington have cyberpunk eyes and utopian hearts. They may take the 20th-century collage impulse to the limit (the pilot, aired last March, had 5,000 to 7,000 edits in 30 minutes), but they reject the idea that the modern world has reduced us to idiotic, neurotic peons. They say the heart is still happening. "It's about current affairs of the heart and mind, a new era, a positive futuristic feel," says Pellington. "There's no difference between the stars and real people. We ask everyone from Yugoslavia to Denmark to Togo the same questions: What are you afraid of? What's your philosophy of life? What's your ultimate freakout? Every person has a heart and a brain. It's about looking at yourself, and saying, fuck the past. From now on, I'll be a better person.

"It's part news-entertainment-

visual; part propaganda," says Pellington, who started by producing MTV promos and videos (partner Klein is director of MTV Europe). "It's emotional propaganda, manipulative in the best way. It's manipulating for the cause of truth. We're not cynical yet, maybe just sarcastic. We're very concerned with the future of mankind. The future is now."

You may say they're dreamers, but they're not the only ones. Benetton had its finger on the pulse with its one-world style ad campaign—part of the trend toward '90s global humanism. The danger is that *BUZZ* will trade too much of its edge for audience and become *National Geographic* on crystal meth. So far, it's fascinating TV, hitting you between the eyes: its deadpan humor is astoundingly funny. The flickering of bizarro-mundane found footage—from ads, game shows, videos and outtakes from Joe Blow in Tupelo—gives *BUZZ* a late-night TV quality; that surrealism of ordinary global life. Every show has underlying themes: Mind, Home, Future, Lust, Sex, Time, Speed, Love, Style, Media. They are doing pieces on future millennia, appropriation through the ages, computer hackers, the relation between African voodoo and muzak, and the porno industry in Tokyo. Jenny Holzer, who reportedly loves what Pellington and Klein are doing, is a contributing writer; so is their inspiration, William Burroughs.

As Pellington sees it, "The barriers are blurring every day. We're asking the questions we ask ourselves. It's a personal investigation. We're the ones investigating the State, not vice-versa." ★ **Jill Pearlman**