

A black and white photograph of Nam June Paik. He is shown in profile, looking down at a piece of electronic equipment. He is holding a long, white, cylindrical object (possibly a tube or a piece of tape) in his mouth. His hands are positioned over a control panel with various knobs and switches. The background is dark and indistinct.

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Nam June Paik
**Exposition of Music
Electronic Television**

Revisited

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Electronic Television**

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About the Exposition of the music Nam June Paik

In most indeterminate music, the composer gives the possibility for the indeterminacy or the freedom to the interpreter, but not to the audience. The audience has only one freedom; that is, to hear or not to hear the music going on — a quite old freedom which they had, or were compelled to have, by listening to boring classical music such as Brahms's Symphonies or "Tristan et Mélisande". The end result of "indetermined music becomes (at least for the audience) usually nothing but a "normal strip of time — good or bad or mediocre, or very good — strip" of time — a time flow of only direction, as in traditional music, or in our life, destined later or sooner to the certain death with one-way time. (The freedom must have more than two ways, directions, vectors, possibilities, of time.)

The audience cannot distinguish the indetermined time or sounds of the interpreter, from the determined time of the interpreter. The audience cannot fully co-feel the waiting, surprising, disappointment, hesitation, stuttering, expecting, jumping, flee, deviation, jelling, belting, choosing, pushing, being pushed back, determining, deciding, plunging into, vacant space, bothered space, common space, filled space, fully vacant space and/or=/vacantly filled space — consumation, purge, ejection, stop, crashing, etc. . . . of the interpreter, which all usually constitute the main substance, (or a-substance) of the conception, (or a-conception) of so-called freedom.

The problem becomes more confused if the interpreter has a "rehearsal" ("répétition" in French), or if the interpreter plays it many times as his favorite "repertoire" — often even by heart. This is the prostitution of the freedom; although, it can be great art, as Tudor's, Welin's, or Caskel's performances. Precisely spoken, if the interpreter rehearses even only once, the degree and the character of the indeterminacy become the same as in classical, if not baroque, if not renaissance, if not medieval music. This is why I have not composed any indetermined music, or graphic music, despite my high respect for Cage and Cage-friends.

The not sonorized music-graphic is, as a new genre of art, very hopeful; it can inaugurate the new art of pure intellect, imagination, and reasoning as chess, detective stories, and puzzles.

A step to get rid of this self-deception (among many, too many, self-deceptions — *mauvaise foi* — of modern artists . . . there is no "ism" without self-deception) is Stockhausen's idea of 1960, in which he tried to give the audience the freedom to leave and return to the concert hall. (das paar)

In 1961, I have written a sketch to the "Symphony for 20 rooms", where the audience has a choice of at least 20 different sound sources, between which they can freely circulate. The free time leads the music necessarily to the space-music (room-music) because the free time requires more than two vectors (directions), and two vectors constitute necessarily the space (room). In this case, the room (space) is no longer merely the enrichment of the sound, but the indispensable "better-half" of the sound. (without pedantry, such as demanding the ears to do what they cannot do)

As the next step toward more indeterminacy, I wanted to let the audience (or congregation, in this case) act and play by itself. So I have resigned the performance of music. I expose the music. I made various kinds of musical instruments, object sonores, to expose them in a room so that the congregation may play them as they please. I am no longer a cook (composer), but only a feinkasthandler (delicatessen proprietor). This self-degradation gives me also some other unexpected joys, as every self-degradation usually does. For instance:

(1) they give me possibilities of combining many senses; touching, blowing, caressing, seeing, treading, walking, running, hearing, striking, etc;

(2) they make music more calm than any former calm music, and they make the room more mobile than any former mobile room; therefore, they can exploit a new category between music and architecture;

(3) perhaps I can sell them. "What you really possess in this world is only what you can sell." A. Miller ?!?!?!?

(4) the wise play the wise music, and the stupid play the stupid music; this curious fraternité is perhaps a necessary evil of democracy; even the wisest has no right to compell the idiot to happiness; the freedom is the good, but the compelled good is no longer the freedom, and no-freedom is no more the good. (Berdjaiev)

music for the people
by the people
of the people



Susanne Neuburger

Terrific Exhibit

“Time Art” alias Music in the Exhibition Genre

“Vostell in his shity [sic!] Decollage screwed up Paik,” George Maciunas acidly remarked about the editor of *Décollage*, who when “trying to beat all others (especially Fluxus) to deadlines prematurely [sic!] took some things of Paik’s (of least significance) & published them.”¹ The first of three programmatic texts by Paik about his Wuppertal exhibition, “About the Exposition of the Music” (see p. 24, fig. I–II), was published in the third issue of *Décollage*, which probably appeared at the end of 1962. In his article he explains his concept of music in relation to the role of the audience, while failing to mention the televisions altogether. The text was framed by illustrations of Zen instruments which were later to be found in the basement and garden during the exhibition. Maciunas obviously attached very little value to them, which is truly astonishing given that he stressed the significance of Zen for Fluxus and found it to be even more of a role model than Dada.² These *objets sonores*, as Paik generally called them, dated from 1961–62, although many of them seem to have been designed in situ as site-specific works. It has been established that Paik kept his television works secret for a long time.³ Presumably he did not want knowledge of them to become public before the exhibition, but it is also conceivable that he was still working on them. A letter to Rolf Jährling in December 1962 still refers to the main title of the exhibition as “Ausstellung der Musik.” Televisions (“synchronicity as a principle of acausal connections”), Zen instruments, and *objets sonores* were all listed as equally important subcategories. Paik emphasized in this letter “that it is neither painting nor sculpture; it is a ‘time art,’ or I don’t like categories.”⁴ Electronic television was listed as a mere subcategory on the small poster (see p. 138), and it only received equal conceptual status (although listed in the second line) on the large poster (see p. 143), when the English title *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* was finally adopted. Manfred Leve points out that even the title was something that had never been seen before.⁵

The original idea had been to hold an evening concert at the Galerie Parnass. According to Edith Decker, this was still being discussed in letters to the architect Rolf Jährling, who owned the gallery, in November 1961 and as late as March 1962.⁶ The exhibition that took place did indeed have something of the character of an evening concert or performance; the small poster accordingly listed the opening times and made

reference to ticket reservations and to the five marks charged at the door. Yet according to a description given by Tomas Schmit in 1976 (reprinted in this catalogue, see pp. 124–134) this entrance fee was seldom levied. Jon Hendricks mentions that in spring 1962 Jährling had asked Paik to give a performance at the summer school.⁷ Rolf Jährling and his wife Anneliese signed Mary Bauermeister's visitors' book on October 6, 1960, and it was here that they probably first met Paik, if they had not previously made his acquaintance through Jean-Pierre Wilhelm. Paik performed *Etude for Piano Forte* that evening. He famously subjected John Cage to a range of ordeals and cut off his necktie. The *Klavier Intégral* now in the MUMOK collection was being used at that point, "nailed and planed" by Paik (see pp. 154).⁸ The Jährlings were guests at the *Originale*⁹ and they staged the first public display of Fluxus in June 1962, *Kleines Sommerfest Après John Cage*, which also included a performance by Paik. They continued writing to each other once the exhibition had ended, and the letters illustrate the friendly nature of their relationship. Paik brought a small on-off switch to Anneliese Jährling in the hospital so that she could "switch off" her pain.¹⁰ The letters dealt mainly with organizational matters, such as rescheduling appointments, posters, and leaflets. Jährling wrote in one letter, "I think the idea of the basement is also really good."¹¹ Paik was ultimately able to spread out over three whole stories of the house. One critic mentioned that only two rooms remained for the Jährlings; given the size of the villa, this might seem somewhat disproportionate, yet it provides an indication both of Paik's tendency to take over space and of Jährling's generosity.¹² Paik comes across in the correspondence as extremely professional and fair, requesting, for example, that his assistants receive a mention.¹³ There is no question that he was not seriously committed to every aspect of the exhibition. Only the catalogue failed to materialize. Paik wanted it to be the "heaviest, largest, most difficult, smallest, longest book of the world (Preface Jean-Pierre Wilhelm)" and cited its dimension as "7 by 8 meters."¹⁴

Paik called himself a "heavy weight composer" (see. pp. 29–30, fig. X–XI).¹⁵ His greatest concern was to regenerate music and its "ontological form." His television works formed a part of this, as he commented, "My TV [...] a 'PHYSICAL MUSIC' [...] more (?) than the art Or less (?) than the art."¹⁶ As with his early actions and objects he located his TV experiments in a cross-medial area which rejected the importance of the parameters of indeterminism and variability (commonplace in music yet underdeveloped in "optical art") and considered "The Feticism [sic!] of Idea" to be one of the "main critical criteria in the contemporary art."¹⁷ If Neo-Dada style art was clearly pejoratively labeled "anti-avant-garde,"¹⁸ then Paik would not be able to answer the question satisfactorily of what music actually was. When he said that "music is a chronology,"¹⁹ a conventional definition essentially by John Cage, he admitted that it was a "compromise." Paik shifted from WHAT to WHEN in his text "Postmusic" and opposed all forms of authorial performance practice, in order, so he claimed, to avoid being the same kind of clown as Goethe

or Beethoven.²⁰ The text for *Décollage* also states explicitly: "So I have resigned the performance of music."²¹ "Postmusic" was developed in conjunction with his mail-art project "The Monthly Review of the University for Avant-garde Hinduism," which was launched by Maciunas on behalf of Fluxus. It enabled Paik to reach all the most influential followers of art and critics at once via the postal system.²² In an interview with Gottfried Michael Koenig, Paik said that a musician would primarily be interested in the question of "How can I deal with time?"²³ Banal everyday objects, recruited and detailed by Maciunas from army stores, were to be sent to the subscribers at irregular intervals.²⁴ People might receive a one-cent coin or the bloody corpse of a dog, objects that represented the WHEN with such a great geographical breadth that it was as if, as Paik himself had once suggested in 1963 "Read Music – Do it yourself – Answers to La Monte Young," a piano piece were being played by one hand in Shanghai and the other simultaneously in San Francisco.

The dog became a bull in Wuppertal, and Paik's role as a composer and performer was discarded. "I expose the music"²⁵ was also identified as a step toward more indetermination with statements such as: "As the next step toward more indeterminacy, I wanted to let the audience (or congregation in this case) act and play by itself."²⁶ Although the visitors were not subject to the usual restrictions placed on those attending an exhibition, certain parameters in Wuppertal were fixed, such as the place and opening times. Paik was comparatively inexperienced with exhibitions as a medium and must have been unfamiliar with the conventions of a typical art exhibition, although he is known to have been enthusiastic about the 1958 Düsseldorf DADA show. At best, exhibitions in Fluxus circles at the start of the 1960s were paraphrased; examples of this were Vautier's action at the London One Gallery, Spoerri's *nouveau réalisme* suitcase exhibition, or Filliou's *Galerie Légitime*. Although George Brecht's *Toward Events* (1959 in New York's Reuben Gallery) was an exhibition it was designed to be both open and participatory in nature. Even Paik, who actively involved his visitors, repeatedly fell back on the exhibition format at the intersection to performance or concert. Nevertheless, by equating "to exhibit" with "an exhibition," he was supporting the medium—although he disregarded its institutional implications—not least for commercial reasons: he hoped to sell some works.²⁷

"How can one arrive at variability without losing intensity?" Paik was already turning to larger spatial dimensions in *Symphony for 20 Rooms* (see p. 60, fig. XIV), but he did not wish to lose the intensity of his earlier *action music*. Visitors were to be confronted with various situations in separate rooms of equal size and should be able to move about freely between the rooms and participate by playing the assorted instruments, such as a large metal plate similar to Ernst Chladni's sound figures. Two prepared pianos were even planned in one room. The sketch dates back to spring 1961 and the text appeared in 1963 in *An Anthology* by La Monte Young and Jackson Mac Low.²⁸ Paik, who had become known in the USA thanks to Earle Brown,²⁹ featured prominently along with Claus Brehmer and Diter Rot as the only artist working in Europe.³⁰ An initial interpretive

description by Michael Nyman and a more extensive one by Manuela Ammer in this catalogue give an idea of how great a spectacle the *Symphony for 20 Rooms* would have been, although it would undoubtedly have been virtually impossible to finance and organize.³¹ *Symphony for 20 Rooms* was an important point of reference for the exhibition and for this reason Paik mentioned it in the *Décollage* text, yet it actually had more in common with Paik's great musical scores or theoretical texts, such as *Symphonie Nr. 5* of 1964–65.

The model of the box represents an important link between the *Symphony* and the *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*, whether as a diagram in the former or realized in the latter. The box, as an inconspicuous and flexible container, was regarded as an important format for presentation and distribution by Fluxus. It rejected contemplative observation and provided mobility and openness. Maciunas used it for his *Year Boxes*, for instance, and *Toward Events* also functioned as a large walk-in box where *The Case*, a suitcase designed for audience participation, was a small scale echo of the room as a whole. Paik too created many prototypical boxes, such as *Lebender Hahn* (entitled *Hen in Cage* in its later version) in *Symphony for 20 Rooms* and *Zen Box* to "crawl under and sit in while others knock on it" (Tomas Schmit) in *Exposition of Music*. Even *Urmusik*, a work that externally resembles *Zen Box*, is sometimes called *Box with Strings*. A suitcase from the *Exposition of Music* entitled *Box for Zen (Serenade)* has been preserved in the Sammlung Block.³² Paik himself declared that he wanted to create an installation situated between architecture and music, in which the music became quieter and the room became more mobile.³³ This shift in accent toward the room (with the room becoming the indispensable partner to sound)³⁴ was not to be seen as a "fixated" acoustical environment³⁵ as La Monte Young had defined it, but owed more to John Cage's "open multiplicitous field" where activity is generated by a number of different centers.³⁶ A comparison with Cage's *Variations* is highly instructive with regard to visitor interaction during the exposition. It certainly entails moving from center stage. Ed Kiender, who inspired Paik to create his tin foil mirrors, congratulated him in this respect on a "great solution" and in choosing an exhibition because misunderstandings crop up when looking down from the stage.³⁷

"[P]lacing on the same level, in direct interaction"³⁸ was Higgins's more or less generalized instruction on how to deal with existing rooms. He once described Allan Kaprow as a "very abstract artist," because "he does not want to use the place as what it is [...]. He only thinks of it as space ..."³⁹ Paik took the rooms in Wuppertal just as they were when they were made available to him, as a "place" (Higgins) or sometimes even as a site. The main hall and the garden room were empty gallery spaces while the rooms on the upper floor were residential. According to Manfred Montwé, work in Jährling's architectural firm carried on as normal,⁴⁰ which was also a reason for placing the opening times after office hours. Manuela Ammer presents convincing evidence in this catalogue that the opening times were in no way connected to what was being shown on TV. Paik

turned the pictures back to front in the main hall but kept the slate tablets in the garden room (works by Raoul Ubac that had greatly impressed Jährling) as they were.⁴¹ Thanks to the photos by Leve and Montwé they have now become a congruent work together with *Kuba TV*. Paik used more than ten rooms, perhaps even as many as sixteen. There are certainly sixteen units on the large poster, which interestingly corresponded to the sixteen boxes in *Symphony for 20 Rooms*. In both cases the visitor was able to move freely between the various spaces spread over the three floors, spending time with the televisions or pianos on the ground floor, with the sound installations in the basement, or in the separate rooms on the upper floor. The staircase must have been very popular as a focal point for communication, where the juxtaposition of highly diverse objects provided the greatest contradiction to the notion of a bourgeois household. One critic even compared it to a “department store after a bomb attack.”⁴² It must have also been very loud, with one press report complaining of “squeaking sounds that get on your nerves” and “whining tapes and tirelessly rotating records.”⁴³ The visitors seem to have accepted the challenge to make use of the instruments, showing a lively interest on the first day at least.

Paik and his assistants had their hands full, with Paik commenting, “Oh, I have to work, I have to work!”⁴⁴ Just as Brecht had instructed for his *Medicine Chest*⁴⁵ everything was open; there was no talk of perfection, and anything that broke was replaced, all in stark contrast to the museum-style of presentation. The poster at the entrance, probably corrected by Paik himself, announced that Peter Brötzmann, Manfred Montwé, and Tomas Schmit were Paik’s assistants in addition to the technical staff. Montwé and Schmit agree that Frank Trowbridge was not available for the *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*, although he had been present at the *Festum Fluxorum Fluxus* in Düsseldorf in February. Brötzmann, Montwé, and Manfred Leve were the *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* photographers. Other photographers such as Günter Krings were engaged by Rolf Jährling. George Maciunas was an important photographer of the *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*, and he announced that he would be bringing twenty films to Wuppertal and “will photograph EVERYTHING.”⁴⁶ He also wanted to use his pictures for a Paik BOX and wrote “I photographed [sic!] all I could (some with long exposures to show movement ... But many things cannot be pictorially documented! (like the house lights).”⁴⁷ A photographer from Wuppertal called Vogelsang also took photos, and Tomas Schmit mentioned a Gustavs Silde or Svilde.⁴⁸ Henry Maitek, who took the photos for *Décollage*, and Ute Klopheus, who had also worked with Paik, were not among the photographers in Wuppertal. More photos were taken of the pianos than anything else; Schmit and Montwé agree that they were the highlight of the *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*. Black-and-white photography was instrumental in forming an impression of the *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*, something that is important to bear in mind when considering the two prepared pianos or the mirrored foils in the library. One critic described them as being “gold, red, silver, and

other colors" and also mentions the pots containing colored liquid, on top of which letters were floating.⁴⁹

The assistants were responsible for putting the participatory concept into practice, but Paik had looked to Cage and Stockhausen for its genesis. He mentioned Stockhausen's *Paare*, where the audience was free to leave and re-enter the auditorium, and Cage's *Music Walk*.⁵⁰ His own work *Entwicklungshilfe* turned the social aspect of the music business upside down by recommending that a member of the audience at an opera should stand up from the middle of the front row and leave. He claimed that "far from disturbing the performance, it is a benevolent supplement."⁵¹ In the *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* he described his changed role from "cook (composer)" to "a feinkosthändler (delicatessen proprietor)" as a form of self-degradation that gave him much joy, such as "combining many senses, touching, blowing, caressing, seeing, treading, walking, running, hearing, striking etc."⁵² Seeing, touching, or tasting in order to hear (Alison Knowles's *Nivea Creme Piece* being one example) were haptic experiences that mutated into acoustic ones.⁵³ Brecht found it no longer possible to distinguish between them; he wrote that "a minimum condition is a lack of distinction between optical, acoustical and other such categories."⁵⁴ Maciunas also gave his opinion on the traditional division of roles in the concert business in his famous text *Neo-Dada in den Vereinigten Staaten* (Neo-Dada in the United States). In the name of concretism and art nihilism he propagated a concept of a space-time art that spanned the genres and rejected the separation of performers from director and the producer from the audience.⁵⁵

The same kind of participation was also required for the television experiments, although it involved less action. Paik described them, "as calm, as cool, as dry, as non-expressionist,"⁵⁶ and also "not always interesting, but also not always uninteresting [sic!]."⁵⁷ By contrast, in his earlier Cologne *action music*, Paik was "the composer as performer."⁵⁸ Earle Brown characterized it as "nothing lost in translation" and added: "Paik doesn't tell somebody, he up and does it."⁵⁹ In works such as *Hommage à John Cage* or *One for Violin Solo* he wanted to demonstrate that "there is the absolute and that (= the absolute) IS the absolute."⁶⁰ It is the same as Stockhausen's "moment," which Paik emphasizes and which provides a link to La Monte Young and the Cologne scene, where Carlheinz Caspari's *Labyr* influenced Stockhausen as a cross-media momentary form.⁶¹ A work such as *Random Access* might even have its roots in this background, leading to the Situationists via Caspari. The tape material hanging on the wall is accessed by an isolated audio head, enabling the visitor to experience an individual kind of music. Paik described it as "city map and abstract painting, sight and sound and action" to Dieter Daniels.⁶² As far back as 1960 he produced a stamp bearing the legend *Random Access ca. 1960*⁶³ in connection with his music and literature library, which he reputedly no longer used after *Originale* and locked in a box so that he could devote himself to technology from that point onwards. *Random Access* could thus be seen as the

indeterminate access to stored memory that can come in the form of mapping music, an archive, or a library.

In Protofluxus there were frequently deliberations about breaking away from the predetermined role of the recipient, for instance in Yoko Ono's *Audience Piece* or La Monte Young's *Composition 6*.⁶⁴ Paik described this step of "the listener as performative" as "the relative IS the absolute," in contrast to the "absolute absolute" described above.⁶⁵ He produced a wide spectrum of ideas for projects in his Cologne years that, according to Dick Higgins, are characterized by "imposing Platonic ideals on implicitly hostile (or is the word 'philistine') society."⁶⁶ There are enormous differences between his street projects such as *Moving Theater 2* or *Omnibus Music* and his "Platonic" works such as *Symphonie Nr. 5*, a piece conceived for an infinite time dimension where a single note lasts a year. In "Postmusic" he mentioned a "fixed form ... as the large ocean."⁶⁷ According to Paik, intensity could often only be achieved in the "spiritual or ideological dimension."⁶⁸ In the face of Paik's many theoretical ideas *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* could be seen as a way of reappraising theoretical concepts in reality.

In the text accompanying *Symphony for 20 Rooms* Paik asked whether he really had to demonstrate how the absolute is relative. He finally explained the two negations of Zen in *afterlude to the EXPOSITION of EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION* (which was prominently printed in the fourth issue of *fluxus cc five ThReE* in June 1964, see p. 144) as "The absolute IS the relative" and "The relative IS the absolute."⁶⁹ He had previously shed light on the "two or two and a half kinds of nothing" in the folder. The text, which additionally contained a piece of writing by Jean Pierre Wilhelm that probably also served as an introduction, demonstrates that the Zen objects were not quite as unimportant as Maciunas thought. Zen as experiencing the present moment; Zen as an experiment; Zen as not holding tight, not choosing, not acting⁷⁰—this led to an ephemeral status of the artwork for Paik, one that never let itself be reduced to a single compact object. In a letter to Jährling, Thomas Schmit spoke of an object as a musical instrument.⁷¹ Paik said "Existencia is essentia,"⁷² by which he meant the "Variety without being two"⁷³ that resisted all manner of dualistic thought and did not permit the separation of exterior and interior, subject and object, or work and observer, etc.

The status of the artwork in Fluxus was generally open, and its performance practice was "to answer a composition with another composition."⁷⁴ Accordingly, Paik's *Zen for Head* (pp. 199, fig. 146, 147) was an interpretation of La Monte Young's *Draw a straight line and follow it*.⁷⁵ Paik was a seasoned performer of pieces by Brecht, La Monte Young, Maciunas, and others. However, Paik's own works were seldom performed by others because they were too complicated; an exception was *One for Violin Solo*, performed by Maciunas, for example. Moreover, the works did not have scores. Paik often varied his own works and frequently permitted variations to them.⁷⁶ The same was true of Paik's writings and compositions, which represented a perpetual paradox in the name of Zen.

They were as exuberant as they were incidental; the many irregularities in the use of language and the placing of lines gave them a graphic quality, and they generally tended toward the enigmatic and ambiguous. Textual indetermination was certainly also an important factor for Paik, and frequently the texts only became coherent in diagrammatic form, which enabled them to be read or represented. In the case of *Random Access* the form was purely pictorial.

The sixteen units in the large poster (see p. 143) also comprised a diagram that Paik used to create a link between the object and text. He posed a virtually rhetorical question: "Is TIME without content possible?" and then produced an overwhelming number of things "for no reason" or to generate a different meaning with them. Some of the texts were connected to specific rooms, such as "Prepared W. C.", and others such as "Feticism [sic!] of 'Idea'" or "Synchronisation als ein Prinzip akausaler Verbindungen" [Synchronization as a Principle of Acausal Connections] were programmatic. Further texts could be interpreted as work titles, examples of this being "objets sonores" or "Instruments for Zen-Exercise". But which one was the "sonolized room"? One critic interpreted hitting the Zen objects with a golf club⁷⁷ as "Kindergarten der Alten" [Kindergarden for the Old People]. Thomas Schmit associates "How to be satisfied with 70%" with the balloon. "Erinnerung an das 20. Jahrhundert" [Mementos of the 20th Century] reputedly refers to the newspapers reporting the death of Marilyn Monroe, and "HOMMAGE à Rudolf Augstein" is probably about magazines situated around the staircase and upper floor. "Freigegeben ab 18 Jahre" [Approved for Adults Only] might refer to the pornographic slide show. Paik wrote "A Study of German Idiotology" next to a published review on the glass wall leading to the main hall, but what was it originally supposed to be? He also mentioned "Bagatelles américaines", short sections of notation produced as a reaction to *Compositions* by La Monte Young. Paik, who famously performed his pieces without a score, essentially found them too uncomplicated, just as the Fluxus actions were too simple for Cage.⁷⁸ Thomas Schmit has contributed his ideas on "Do it your ...". All that remained was "que sais-je?" Every section of text on the small poster (see p. 138) also threw up a question mark: an open area seemed to remain that was essentially beyond definition, yet music and television were used as a pretext for providing a glimpse of the entire world thanks to the many associations surrounding the 1962 *Spiegel* magazine scandal, the death of Marilyn Monroe, the Eichmann trial, and the Cuba crisis. The instruction to "take the sex piano and the flags ..." shows that importance was attached to the smallest detail.⁷⁹ Brötzmann preferred "the little things, the small objects, and whatever was left lying around" and also mentioned "erotic objects, a toy piano with a mechanism that moved stuffed condoms."⁸⁰ (see pp. 28, fig. VIII, IX)

In addition to the works that have survived, others, such as the two "toy pianos," can be reconstructed from photos or descriptions. Unfortunately there are no photos of the large weather balloon that burst after just a short time. It must have made a striking

impression at the entrance in conjunction with the cow's head. One critic described the coat rack with "neckties hanging down that bore inscriptions issuing an unmistakable challenge to commit suicide."⁸¹ "Ropes with bells, stones, and other objects," all of which could be moved, hung from the gallery above.⁸² A stone with an iron hook cemented into it and a wooden sandal have been preserved in the Sohm Archives and could well have been part of the *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*.⁸³ Jährling mentions the semi-destroyed golf club that Paik used to smash the baby bath to pieces, much to the annoyance of the gallery owner's mother, and which probably finished up as an *objet sonore* in the basement.⁸⁴

Alison Knowles had given Paik the flags as an interpretation of his *Chronicle of a Beautiful Paintress* (see p. 28, fig. VII). It was one of a number of times that the two cooperated during that period. "Can you use Parachute? They cost \$ 3.50 each,"⁸⁵ Maciunas asked Paik, who thanked many people in the folder (see p. 139) for their help and inspiration. He began with his confidante and friend Mary Bauermeister and went on to mention Alison Knowles, Cage, Kiender, Klein, Kōpcke, Maciunas, Patterson, Vostell, Tomas Schmit, and Frank Trowbridge; Higgins was also mentioned in the main text. Maciunas did indeed bring the parachute, which was used in the garden as a projection screen.⁸⁶ Kōpcke came up with the idea for the *Shutting Event* on one of the three prepared pianos with blocked keys. The balloon could conceivably be interpreted as a reference to Maciunas's *Solo for Balloons*, although balloons and mannequins were very widespread in Neo-Dada, for example in Tinguely's work.⁸⁷ Other items such as assorted erotica, dolls' heads, light switches, and the sewing machine on the parachute fit in well with the principles of Neo-Dada. Brecht's description of Tristan Tzara understood Dada as a "return to an almost Buddhist religion of indifference."⁸⁸ This legitimizes the connection between Dada and Zen, with Paik describing Zen as "anti-avant-garde, anti-frontier spirit, anti-Kennedy."⁸⁹ He demonstrated an indifferent attitude in *Zen for Walking*, which, with violin, spoon, or the wheels of a child's toy can be seen as a silent variation of La Monte Young's *To be a single event*.⁹⁰

The most dramatic event of the exposition was unplanned: the destruction of a piano by Beuys, as described by Manfred Montwé in this catalogue. Whether regarded as an interpretation of Philip Corner's *Piano Activities* or Paik's *One for Violin Solo*,⁹¹ Beuys was reacting to *action music* from the past rather than the Paik of the *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*. There is a photo of Beuys looking at the piano at the entrance before he smashed it up a short time later. It was the only piano that had not been prepared and was supposedly due to be returned to the manufacturer Ibach. No matter how it turned out in the end, Jährling thanked Adolf Ibach by letter as if nothing had happened.⁹² Schmit tells us that Paik commented, "I liked it." Beuys called the "Paik thing" an "historic act."⁹³

And finally there was the first Fluxus exhibition, which took place in the basement kitchen. "I got one room for fluxus",⁹⁴ said Maciunas, who announced: "I will bring

to Wuppertal COMPLETED FLUXUS I"⁹⁵ and described the scene to Robert Watts as "the 3 playing cards, puzzle, and the hospital event that the visitors can perform," assorted works by Brecht such as a "light event in front of switch, Keyhole over keyhole, TABLE table on top of a table, Position exit etc," "2 things of Ben Vautier," and "various 'poems' of Tomas Schmit."

He wanted to have an "exhibit" like that for all festivals in future, with a TV set and "2 'prepared' toy pianos" contributed by Paik.⁹⁶ It is possible to determine how much Fluxus was present from the *News-Policy Letter* nr. 5, dating from February 1963, or from the brochure distributed at the summer school listing articles from the first seven *Fluxus Yearboxes*. "Your trail of hands is a very good idea, makes it possible to present the most 'insignificant' things (which interest me most) & which is otherwise difficult to do," wrote Brecht.⁹⁷ Maciunas and/or Paik gave a programmatic undertone to the first exhibition by installing Brecht's *Directions* all over the room.

Maciunas commented that it was a "terrific exhibit" and "Paik is very good." Higgins spoke of the "great Wuppertal exhibition."⁹⁸ Paik was extremely disappointed that the televisions had not attracted more attention.⁹⁹ Apart from that we have very little idea if he was satisfied with the way his ideas had been realized, and if all the pieces had fallen into place, as was the case for Brecht's *Chair Event* in the Martha Jackson Gallery when Claes Oldenburg's mother sat on one of the three chairs. Paik made a further major appearance at Galerie Parnass with his *Robot* before the location closed in 1965. Paik himself claimed that he was done with Germany after *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*.¹⁰⁰ Moltkestrasse 67 is now a private house, but the tapes of *Random Access*, somewhat faded with age, are still hanging on the wall in the basement, exactly as they were installed in 1963.

- 1 George Maciunas to Robert Watts, before March 11, 1963, in *Fluxus etc. / Addenda II*, Baxter Art Gallery, 1983, p. 149.
- 2 See Sylvia Roth, *Fluxus und Musik*, MA dissertation, Cologne 1998, p. 79.
- 3 See for example Paik to Jährling, undated, in Wulf Herzogenrath, Sabine M. Schmidt (eds.), *Nam June Paik. Fluxus/Video*, exh. cat., Bremen 1999, p. 60.
- 4 Letter from Paik to Jährling, December 22, 1962, in Edith Decker (ed.), *Niederschriften eines Kulturnomaden*, Cologne 1992, p. 54. [transl.]
- 5 In *Leve sieht Paik: Manfred Leves Fotografien von Nam June Paiks Ausstellung "Exposition of Music. Electronic Television" Wuppertal 1963*, exh. cat., Nuremberg 2005, p. 10.
- 6 In Edith Decker, *Paik: Video*, Cologne 1988, p. 31.
- 7 See *Stationen der Moderne. Die bedeutenden Kunstausstellungen des 20. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland*, exh. cat. Berlin 1988, p. 494.
- 8 See Wilfried Dörstel, chronology in Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln (ed.), *Intermedial, kontrovers, experimentell: Das Atelier Mary Bauermeister in Köln 1960–62*, Cologne 1993, pp. 48–52; for quotation: p. 50;
- 9 Decker, *Paik: Video* (note 6).

See Will Baltzer, Alfons W. Biermann (eds.), *Treffpunkt Parnass – Wuppertal 1949–1965*, Cologne 1980, p. 308. Ute Klopheus photographed this object.

Jährling to Paik, December 20, 1963, copy of a letter in the Zentralarchiv des internationalen Kunsthandels e.V. (ZADIK), Cologne. [transl.]

Siegfried Bonk, "Über dem Eingang ein blutiger Ochsenkopf," in *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, no. 64, 1963.

Herzogenrath, *Nam June Paik. Fluxus/Video* (note 3), p. 60.

See Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex: The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection*, New York 1988, pp. 429ff.

See note 3 for letter to Jährling.

Flyer *Postmusic*, see Hendricks (note 14), p. 431.

Nam June Paik, "afterlude to the EXPOSITION of EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION," in *fluxus cc five ThReE*, no. 4, June 1964. In Nam June Paik, *Global Groove 2004*, Ostfildern-Ruit 2004, pp. 64–65.

Paik, "afterlude" (note 16).

Ibid.

From an interview with Gottfried Michael Koenig, in *Nam June Paik: Werke 1946–1976: Musik-Fluxus-Video*, Cologne 1976, p. 51.

See Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex* (note 14), p. 431.

Nam June Paik, "About the Exhibition of the Music," in *Décollage 3*, Cologne 1962.

Note 15. See also Justin Hoffmann, *Destruktionskunst: Der Mythos der Zerstörung in der Kunst der frühen sechziger Jahre*, Munich 1995, p. 81.

In *Nam June Paik, Werke 1946–1976, Musik – Fluxus – Video*, exh. cat, Cologne 1976, p. 52. [transl.]

George Maciunas, in Jon Hendricks (ed.), *Fluxus etc./Addenda II*, Pasadena 1983, p. 144.

Nam June Paik, "About the Exhibition of the Music" (note 21).

Ibid.

See the folder on the *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* which later appeared in *Décollage*, 4.

The sketch is reprinted in Herzogenrath (note 3), pp. 32–33. Paik produced a later version in 1972 that differs from the first in many respects. See Manuela Ammer's article in this catalogue for details.

Quotation in La Monte Young, Jackson Mac Low, *An Anthology*, New York 1963, no page number.

In Dick Higgins, *Postface*, New York, Nice, Cologne 1964, p. 64.

See *An Anthology* (note 28).

Michael Nyman, "Nam June Paik, Composer," *Nam June Paik*, in John G. Hanhardt (ed.), exh. cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, pp. 88–89.

See *Who killed the painting? Werke aus der Sammlung Block im Neuen Museum in Nürnberg*, exh. cat., Nuremberg 2008, with illustration, p. 38.

See *Postmusic* (note 15).

Paik, "About the Exhibition of the Music," (note 21).

In Brandon W. Joseph, *Beyond the Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage*, New York 2008, p. 116.

Ibid., p. 115 (quotation), p. 86.

Ed Kiender to Nam June Paik, undated, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Archiv Sohm. [transl.]

Higgins to Tomas Schmit, June 10, 1963, in Ina Blom, *The Intermedia Dynamic: An Aspect of Fluxus*, MA dissertation, Oslo 1993, p. 159.

Ibid.

Email to the author, January 26, 2009.

From an interview with Manfred Montwè, November 20, 2008.

Wolf Schön, "In Neo-Dadas Kindergarten," in *Rheinischer Merkur*, no. 15, Easter 1963. [transl.]

Ibid. [transl.]

Bonk (note 12). [transl.]

See Gabriele Knapstein, *George Brecht Events: Über die Event-Partituren von George Brecht aus den Jahren 1959–1963*, Berlin 1999, p. 134.

Maciunas to Paik, postcard dated February 27, reprinted in exh. cat., Cologne, (note 19), p. 86. The Maciunas photos belong to the Silverman Collection and were not available for this project due to the concurrent transfer into the MoMA Collection.

Maciunas to Watts, March 12 (?), 1963, reprinted in *Fluxus etc./Addenda II* (note 1), p. 151.

Tomas Schmit to Rolf Jährling, undated, Zentralarchiv des internationalen Kunsthandels e.V. (ZADIK), Cologne.

- 49 John Anthony Thwaites, "Der Philosoph und die Katze," in *Deutsche Zeitung*, no. 84, April 9, 1963, p. 10, [transl.]
- 50 In the *Décollage* text (note 21) and in *Symphony for 20 Rooms* (note 28).
- 51 In *Décollage* 1, 1962.
- 52 Paik, "About the Exhibition of the Music" (note 21).
- 53 Roth (note 2), p. 36.
- 54 In Blom (note 38), p. 92.
- 55 In Jürgen Becker, Wolf Vostell, *Happenings: Fluxus, Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme*, Reinbek 1965, pp. 192ff.
- 56 Flyer *Postmusic* (note 15).
- 57 Paik, "afterlude" (note 16).
- 58 See Blom (note 38), pp. 104–105.
- 59 Earle Brown, "Planned Panichood," in *An Anthology* (note 28), no page number, see also Blom (note 38), pp. 104–105.
- 60 In La Monte Young, Jackson Mac Low, *An Anthology*, (note 28), no page number.
- 61 See Wilfried Dörstel, *Situation, Moment, Labyr, FLUXUS oder Das verbrannte Original: Das Musiktheater "Originale" von Karlheinz Stockhausen*, in *Intermedial, kontrovers, experimentell: Das Atelier Mary Bauermeister in Köln 1960–62* (note 8), pp. 186 ff., here p. 192. See also Susanne Neuburger, "Köln, der Nouveau Réalisme und die Sammlung Hahn: Von der Stadtrundfahrt zum 'Postal Event': der Projektentwurf *Cityrama II*," in *Nouveau Réalisme*, Vienna 2005, pp. 26–27.
- 62 Notes on conversations from Paik to Dieter Daniels, 1999. Many thanks to Dieter Daniels for his generosity in making material available.
- 63 In an undated letter to Hermann Braun and his wife Paik mentions further works with the same title and its preliminary stages with reference to *Random Access* in the Sammlung Braun. Many thanks to Dieter Daniels, who currently has the letter in his possession and gave me a copy. A *Random Access* from 1962 can be found in Sammlung Cremer.
- 64 See Joseph (note 35), p. 100 and pp. 103–104.
- 65 Blom (note 38), p. 107.
- 66 Higgins (note 29), p. 61.
- 67 Roth (note 2), pp. 68 ff. and p. 72.
- 68 *An Anthology* (note 28).
- 69 Paik, "afterlude" (note 16).
- 70 See the chapter "Zen, Haiku und das Event als 'Modus von Erfahrung'," in Knapstein (note 45), pp. 184–203, particularly pp. 186–187.
- 71 Tomas Schmit to Rolf Jährling, no date, Zentralarchiv des internationalen Kunsthandels e. V. (ZADIK), Cologne.
- 72 Paik, "afterlude" (note 16).
- 73 See Knapstein (note 45), pp. 189ff.
- 74 In Joseph (note 35), p. 96.
- 75 See also La Monte Young, "I always understood it was my piece," typescript of an interview in Archiv Sohm, Stuttgart.
- 76 See Wulf Herzogenrath, "Zur Frage der Datierungen und zum Thema 'Zeit,'" in *Nam June Paik: Fluxus, Video*, Munich 1983, p. 10.
- 77 Thwaites (note 49). [transl.]
- 78 See Roth (note 2), p. 42.
- 79 Instruction from Paik to Tomas Schmit or Peter Broetzmann. Maciunas was to bring the items along to Wuppertal. Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Archiv Sohm. [transl.]
- 80 Interview with Peter Broetzmann (note 5), p. 35. [transl.]
- 81 Schön (note 42). [transl.]
- 82 Thwaites (note 49). [transl.]
- 83 Listed in Ina Conzen-Meairs, *Nam June Paik Beuys Video Wall—Beuys Hat*, Stuttgart 1990, p. 27.
- 84 See Rolf Jährling to René Block, November 13, 1979, copy in ZADIK.
- 85 Maciunas to Paik, undated, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Archiv Sohm.
- 86 Maciunas to Paik, postcard of February 27, illustration in exh. cat. Cologne (note 19), p. 86.
- 87 See e.g. Justin Hoffmann (note 22), p. 55 and p. 61.
- 88 In Knapstein (note 45), p. 53.

89 Paik, "afterlude" (note 16).
 90 In Liz Kotz, *Words to be Looked at: Language in 1960s Art*, Cambridge Mass. 2007, p. 83.
 91 Jon Hendricks speaks of "trying to do a version of Philip Corner's *Piano Activities* that he would have seen on
 television a couple of months earlier." Email to the author, December 4, 2008. Susanne Rennert, "Nam June
 Paik, 'On sunny days, count the waves of the Rhine ...' Nam June Paiks frühe Jahre im Rheinland
 (1958–1963)," in *sediment*, no. 9, 2005, pp. 21–22, speaks of a "Hommage à Paik."
 92 Letter of August 1963, Zentralarchiv des internationalen Kunsthandels e.V. (ZADIK), Cologne.
 93 Illustration in *sediment*, no. 9, p. 72.
 94 Tomas Schmit an Rolf Jährling, no date, Zentralarchiv des internationalen Kunsthandels e. V. (ZADIK,
 Cologne.
 95 Hendricks (note 14).
 96 Flyer *Postmusic* (note 15).
 97 Brecht to Maciunas, in Blom (note 38), dated 1962 but must have been written after March 11, 1963, p. 69
 98 Maciunas to Watts (notes 1 and 15) and Higgins (note 29), p. 63.
 99 Douglas Davis, "Nam June Paik: The Cathode-Ray Canvas," in *Art and the Future. A History-Prophecy
 of the Collaboration between Art, Science, and Technology*, New York 1973, pp. 146–152, here p. 148.
 100 Ibid.

Manuela Ammer

"In engineering there is always the other—The Other."¹

**Nam June Paik's Television Environment in *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*,
Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal 1963**

One of the reasons Roland Barthes considered myth to be ideologically dangerous was that, in myth, "things lose the memory that they were once made."² Barthes wrote: "Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them [...], it gives them a clarity which is not that of explanation, but that of a statement of fact."³ On reading the innumerable texts and commentaries about Nam June Paik's first solo exhibition, *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*, which ran from March 11 to 20, 1963, at the private Galerie Parnass, it is impossible not to notice that the whole affair is a textbook case of myth-making. The texts are full of terms like "zero hour" and the "birth" of video art, and the exhibition is described as a "milestone" and a "legendary" event. It is not the purpose of this essay to simply reject the tempting offer that myth is making us here—the offer to define a zero point that allows us to organize a small segment of the world and divide it into valid categories. There is no need to "demythologize" the exhibition. If a statement of intent of any kind must be formulated, it would read as follows: Here, too, we will speak about things—but not with the intention of justifying their claim to any specific origin. Rather, the aim is to follow Foucault in tracing the ramifying paths and connections that give rise to the emergence of statements and the specific form of their being.

Nam June Paik's interest in television as an instrument of artistic expression can be traced to a time about five years before *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*, when he settled in Cologne to work in the electronic music studio of the WDR broadcasting corporation. Mary Bauermeister remembers an episode from the spring of 1958, when she and Nam June Paik attended a rehearsal of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Gruppen*, a work for three orchestral groups with three conductors. Stockhausen suddenly stopped the rehearsal and said, "at the back, it's a G sharp, not G."⁴ Paik responded by saying, "I'll never be such a good musician, I am going to change medium. I am going to enter art, now, TV art, I can do that, I am better at that."⁵ The artist himself describes how the day-to-day work in the WDR studio, which was frequented by television people as well, and his interactions with all kinds of electronic devices for producing sound inspired him to apply the

same procedures to television.⁶ Finally, a letter written in 1959 to the composer John Cage, whom Nam June Paik had met at the summer school on New Music, *Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik*, in Darmstadt the year before, contains the earliest documentary evidence of his intention to use a television set in a composition:

"My new composition is now 1 minutes. (For Prof. Fortner). The Title will be either 'Rondo Allegro,' or 'Allegro Moderato,' or only 'Allegretto.' Which is more beautiful? I use here: Colour Projector. Film 2-3 screens. Strip tease. boxer. hen (alive). 6 years girl. light-piano. mortorcycle and of course sounds. one TV // 'whole art' in the meaning of Mr. R. Wagner..."⁷

In her essay on the beginnings of abstract television art in Europe, art historian Christine Mehring states that Paik also visited the *informel* painter Karl Otto Götz around this time. Götz, who assumed a professorship at the Academy in Düsseldorf in 1959, is described in the exhibition notes on *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* as the main source of inspiration for Paik's television works.⁸ What is certain is that Paik was familiar with the essay "Abstract Film and Electron Painting," which Götz published in 1959 and in which he discussed theories and concepts of computer-assisted painting and electronic image generation.⁹ Among Paik's oeuvre, the most important precursor of the Wuppertal exhibition is probably the *Symphony for 20 Rooms*, which was conceived in spring of 1961 but never realized.¹⁰ The score shows sixteen imaginary rooms in which a variety of acoustic, visual, tactile, and olfactory events await the audience. The rooms can be entered in any order (see p. 60, fig. XIV).¹¹ In one of the rooms Paik intended to place a live hen. Another, which is completely blacked out, is reserved for parallel readings from detective stories, texts by Charles Montaigne, the Book of Revelations, etc., while the walls of a third are covered in national flags and erotic underwear. A fourth room, according to the sketch, contains two prepared pianos. According to Paik's plan, half the rooms would have contained tape recorders playing various sound collages, from train noises through a slowed-down version of Johann Sebastian Bach's chorale *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* to sine waves at unpleasant pitches. While the score does not call for TV sets, television is nevertheless an indirect component of the symphony. According to Paik's list, Tape 1 contains the clips "Commercial of Quick Cough Drop," "German TV News Announcer's Voice," and "Laughter from Quiz Show." Tape 10 features the clip "TV News" between "Lonesome Restaurant" and "Radio Call Signs." Equally important for *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* are the five rooms which the artist explicitly marked "Audience Participation" on the sketch, or which implicitly call for audience participation without being so marked. In one of the rooms, for instance, the audience was to push various objects around (stones and pieces of wood or metal) to enjoy their acoustic and tactile differences. For another of the rooms, Paik designed a metal floor plate fitted with contact microphones. Visitors would be able to move freely and "jump around or fight" on this plate. The inventory of props to encourage audience participation also featured prepared

pianos, instruments, whistles, toys, and a gramophone with records. To sum up, *Symphony for 20 Rooms* anticipated three aspects that were of prime importance for the Wuppertal exhibition: The principle of assigning specific acoustic and material characteristics to different rooms; the use of television as a source of sound or images; and the active involvement of visitors in the performances and the exhibition in general.

"I still did not consider myself a visual artist," Nam June Paik says about himself in these years, "but I knew there was something to be done in television and nobody else was doing it, so I said why not make it my job?"¹² Even before this project became a reality, Paik participated in Stockhausen's *Originale*. This event ran in Cologne from October 26 to November 6, 1961. At one of the evening performances he again met Rolf Jährling, whom he had first met with his wife, Anneliese, no later than October 1960. Jährling promptly invited him to do a presentation at Galerie Parnass.¹³ The correspondence between Paik and Jährling shows that the initial plans were confined to a single evening concert. It would seem that it took several months for the project to develop into a complex exhibition.¹⁴ Nonetheless, Paik says that a creative reorientation began to take place immediately after *Originale*:

"After twelve Performances of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Originale*, I started a new life from November 1961. By starting a new life I mean that I stocked my whole library except those on TV technique into storage and locked it up. I read and practiced only electronics. In other words, I went back to the spartan life of pre-college days ... only physics and electronics."¹⁵

In 1962, Paik rented a loft in addition to his "official" studio in Bensberg-Refrath near Cologne. In this loft he tried out the things he learned from his study of electronics textbooks and circuit diagrams and he experimented with TV sets. A decade after the reintroduction of television in Germany, used television sets were now beginning to become available at affordable prices. Paik initially collected ten sets in his second studio in order to explore their inner workings, sometimes with help from television engineers.¹⁶ While Paik usually maintained close communications on artistic issues with the members of the nascent Fluxus group and participated in all their joint activities, he kept a low profile about his television experiments. It was not until February 1963, just under a month before the opening of the exhibition, that he invited a few close friends into his loft. They included Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Arthur Köpcke, and Wolf Vostell.¹⁷ Paik mentioned this visit in a letter to Rolf Jährling in which he also gave an overview of the technical appliances that would be involved (see pp. 136–137): "The work is coming on fine. I just showed some friends my 'secret studio' with 10 televisions. They were really surprised. I have bought three more."¹⁸

The architect Rolf Jährling and his wife, Anneliese, had been using the late-nineteenth century villa in Wuppertal as the home of the Galerie Parnass since 1961, hosting exhibitions that did not serve commercial purposes, but were designed to publicize

contemporary art.¹⁹ Nam June Paik was the first artist who was not limited to one or two rooms, but was permitted to fill almost the whole house and even the garden with his objects. With one exception, all the television sets were located in the "garden room" on the ground floor, which was accessible from the entrance hall where the prepared pianos were on display.²⁰ Although the majority of the works in the exhibition are lost today and no official catalogue exists, large parts of *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* can be fairly well reconstructed from descriptions and photographs.²¹ Several people took photographs before and during the exhibition. They included confidants of the gallery owner Jährling, photographer Manfred Leve, Fluxus impresario George Maciunas, and Manfred Montwé and Peter Brötzmann. Montwé and Brötzmann also helped Paik set up the exhibition (except for the television sets, which only Paik himself touched). Another assistant, Tomas Schmit, is the author of what is probably the most comprehensive written reconstruction of the exhibition (see reprint on pp. 124–134). Schmit's account was written on the occasion of Paik's solo exhibition at the Kunstverein in Cologne in 1976.²² Together with the surviving photographs, this essay helps us to reconstruct the television room as follows: Paik arranged eleven or twelve television sets in seemingly random order around the room. Most of them were on the floor, one on a chest, and two were stacked one on the other. Despite the existence of the photographs, the exact number of television sets in the room remains unclear. All of Paik's own letters and texts about the exhibition mention thirteen sets,²³ but George Maciunas speaks of only twelve sets in a letter to Robert Watts which was written immediately after Maciunas's visit to the exhibition:

"Paik's exhibit was VERY GOOD! [...] Then he had 12 TV sets also 'prepared'—rewired, with signals from generators, radios, tape recorders fed-in, so some show distorted images, some just abstractions, like a single line, the thickness of which you can control by TV dials. VERY NICE distortions. Some images more like on a cylinder [sic!]
—so one sees them move up (right side up) and then down—upside down. Paik apparently studied electronics for whole year or 2 to have those TV sets prepared (and all done secretly without anyone knowing). He is full of 'secrets,' very strange person this Paik."²⁴

Like Schmit, Decker speaks of twelve television sets and points out that the artist himself, when attempting to reconstruct the television room in a sketch for his retrospective exhibition in Cologne in 1976, could remember only twelve sets (see p. 59, fig. XIII).²⁵ This question does not strike me as crucial for the understanding of this work—what is much more important is the fact that, although all the sets were turned on, none of them displayed a conventional television image. Instead, visitors were confronted with a variety of interventions in the regular evening television program—the result of months of test runs in the "secret studio."

Two sets had been damaged during transport, but this did not stop Paik from integrating them into the arrangement. He placed one of the broken sets on the floor with the screen downward. The other, which was displaying nothing but a horizontal line

because of a defect in its cathode ray tube, was turned 90 degrees to stand on its side.²⁶ Of the television sets that were working in manipulated form, one displayed a negative image that continuously rolled across the screen. Two others showed a horizontal and a vertical modulation—in other words, the images were wrapped around a horizontal and a vertical center line respectively. The image shown by another of the sets was distorted by three sine waves. Decker regards these sets as a conceptually coherent group whose common characteristic is the “dissolution of broadcast images in favor of largely abstract forms.”²⁷ Six other television sets were also influenced by acoustic impulses. The *Kuba TV* on the chest was connected to a tape recorder that caused the image to grow or shrink depending on the amplitude of the sound. The only set that was located on the upper floor rather than in the garden room was hooked up to a radio and showed a single bright dot whose circumference grew larger and smaller in proportion to the volume of the radio program.²⁸ The group of two sets, the lower of which displayed horizontal stripes and the upper vertical ones (having been rotated by 90 degrees) was also “distorted” by radio receivers. While some of these sets allowed visitors to modify the images by twisting various knobs, two further sets had been more specifically constructed for audience participation and featured a foot switch and microphone to allow visitors to generate impulses that were fed through an amplifier and caused a fireworks display of dots to appear on the television screen.²⁹ Edith Decker stresses that the image distortions on all the sets differed from “normal” distortion in so far as “the nature of the technical intervention caused the distortion to display a specific structure.”³⁰

Some of the photos, such as the twelve stills by Peter Brötzmann and the pictures taken by Manfred Montwé, give an impression of the new images that were generated by the manipulated sets (see p. 174–175, fig. 82–89). One can see a news anchor, something that might be the face of a politician, and a tube of toothpaste—all distorted and deformed, stretched or foreshortened, inverted and/or crisscrossed with wavy lines.³¹ Apart from a few recognizable fragments, however, the dominant images seem to have been black and white patterns. “Odd, distorted shapes floated unfixed through fields of electronic static,” Calvin Tomkins said poetically about these images.³² Paik undoubtedly welcomed the implications of his disrespectful treatment of the images of the political and social authorities that were broadcast on television. The distorted images can be read as metaphors of the distortion of facts and the falsification of reality by government-run television networks. At the same time, however, Paik formulated an explicitly formal and aesthetic interest in the manipulation of images. This places him into the category of structural filmmakers like Paul Sharits and Ken Jacobs, who focused on the material and technical basis of film.

“I utilised intensely the live-transmission of normal program, which is the most variable optical and semantical event in Nineteensixties. The beauty of distorted Kennedy is different from the beauty of football hero, or not always pretty but always stupid female announcer.”³³

It is possible to say, with Mehring, that Paik converted television into a self-referential form when he turned figurative images into abstractions, visualized the cathode ray tube as it scanned the screen a line at a time, and reduced the television image to luminous dots and nuances of pure light—in other words, when he produced moving pictures that were truly “live.”³⁴ The way in which almost all the TV sets were arranged—in one single room, on the floor, definitely not at eye level—was designed to make the sets display their images to one another more than to the visitors. This underscores the inherent self-referential nature of the work.³⁵

The difference between the two posters created for the exhibition indicate that Paik decided at fairly short notice to upgrade the significance of the television experiments he had kept secret for so long. In the letter to Jährling which he wrote in February 1963, the artist gives instructions for printing the program in red print onto Korean newspapers which he had sent to the gallery's owner (see p. 138).³⁶ This poster differs in several important ways from a second, larger one that was printed at a later time (see p. 143). The title of the exhibition is given as *Exposition of Music*, while the phrase “Electronic Television” appears beneath the title in very much smaller print and on the same level with the other elements of the exhibition, such as “objets sonores” and “Erinnerung an das 20. Jahrhundert.” It was not until the second poster that Paik separated the reference to the TV sets from the list of works to create the now-familiar title *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*. Additionally, the earlier folding poster states the opening hours (7.30 to 9.30 p.m.), the ticket price (DM 5) and the request to order tickets in advance because of limited space. None of this information appears on the other poster. As Susanne Neuburger stresses in her catalogue essay here, these details have more to do with the conventions of a musical performance or a concert than with an art exhibition (see p. 32). Against this background, it seems only logical that Paik added the television reference to the title on the later poster and omitted the ticket price, opening hours, and request to reserve tickets. Manfred Montwé points out that the regular operations of Jährling's architecture firm, which resided in the villa, continued during the run of *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*, which was why the exhibition could not open until after office hours.³⁷ Nevertheless, the literature is dominated by the theory—articulated, for example, by Dieter Daniels—that the opening hours were dictated by the broadcast times of the only German television channel at the time, as it was only at those times that “an image, albeit modified, could be seen on the TV sets. This shows how important these experiments, scarcely acknowledged by visitors and the press, were for Paik himself.”³⁸

It is true that, at the time of the exhibition, ARD was the only national television broadcasting corporation in what was then West Germany. A look at the program records from March 11 to 20, 1963, however, shows that ARD was broadcasting nationwide from Monday to Saturday, starting in the afternoon and ending at approximately 11 p.m. Between 6.30 p.m. and the evening news at 8 p.m., the programming was supplied by

various regional broadcasting companies (see p. 62, fig. XX–XXI)³⁹ It was only on Sundays that ARD broadcast a nationwide program that ran without interruption from 11 a.m. until close of broadcasting. Equally revealing is the fact that there were two ARD channels, not one. The second channel broadcast every day from June 1, 1961 to March 31, 1963 between 8 p.m. and 10.40 p.m. as a test run on the frequency occupied by ZDF from April 1, 1963 (see p. 62, fig. XXII). It is impossible to reconstruct from the photographs whether Nam June Paik really did set all his television sets to receive the first channel, as John Anthony Thwaites has claimed, or whether he used both channels, as a review in the newspaper NRZ suggests (“including a feature film”; “beside it the evening news”⁴⁰). What is certain is that it would have been possible—given suitable TV sets—to use both channels, and that (to return to the matter of the exhibition’s opening hours) it was, in fact, the second ARD channel which only aired in the evenings. As for the programs that aired during the official opening hours, the opening night may serve as a representative example. On March 11, 1963, the first ARD channel featured the evening news program, *Tagesschau*, at 8 p.m. Just before the news, while the program was being switched over from the regional networks, the screens may have shown the test pattern. The other shows were *Panorama*, the music and dance show *Besuch aus Paris* [Visit from Paris], *Diesseits und jenseits der Zonengrenze* [On This and the Other Side of the German-German Boarder], the *Tagesschau* again, and finally a game from the ice hockey world championships at 11.05 p.m. The second ARD channel aired the regional programs and the test pattern until 8 p.m. Next came the *Tagesschau*, *Forschung nach Feierabend* [Research after Work], and *Plautereien* [Conversations] (with Joseph Plaut), followed by the feature film *Drunken Angel* by Akira Kurosawa. It is quite conceivable that Paik would have considered the evening news, with its almost life-sized talking head of the news anchor and studio guests, as television material that would lend itself particularly well to manipulation.

The only review that mentions the programs was written by Wolf Schön and published in the newspaper *Rheinischer Merkur* on March 16. The review suggests that—regardless of whether one or two programs were used—the visitors had the impression that there was a different show running on every television set:

“The little man [Nam June Paik] settled down delightedly in the half-circle in front of half a dozen television sets, appearing utterly unconcerned by the nerve-racking squeaks and noises that emanated from several tape recorders and filled the darkened room. I was thinking that the plans had not included even the third program, much less the sixth and seventh, but then I realized that most of the sets had been placed upside down or standing on their sides and that their screens showed the kind of chaotic flickering lights that normally indicate poor reception.”⁴¹

Returning from the images on the screens to an examination of the installation as a whole, we find several indications in Schön’s text of how the atmosphere of the television room must have appeared to visitors. Although the volume of the sets themselves

was muted, the air was still filled with sounds ("nerve-racking squeaks and noises") that emanated from the tape recorders and radios that were hooked up to the TV sets.⁴² Additionally, Schön says that the television room was darkened on the occasion of his visit. Two photographs from the Jährling archive provide additional evidence for this (see p. 61, fig. XVII and p. 172, fig. 74). However, the fact that the lighting is mentioned nowhere else and that all the other photos show the room with normal lighting suggests that the light could be turned on and off at will. The same was true, incidentally, of the entrance hall, where a key on one of the prepared pianos was connected to the light switch. Further photographs presumably made by Brötzmann show that there were papers, cables, and bottles scattered on top of and between the television sets that were arranged on the floor (see p. 61, fig. XVIII and p. 174–175, fig. 81, 90). Two rectangular mirrors can also be seen on the floor in front of two of the TV sets. Both Hanhardt and Mehring regard these additional objects as fixed components of the "final" installation.⁴³ But as the television sets are turned off in these photos and the pictures were presumably taken by Brötzmann, who, as one of the artistic collaborators of Paik, had access to the exhibition before it opened, this assumption strikes me as unconvincing. The mirrors could have served some purpose for setting up the sets—for example, to allow Paik to see the screen while making various adjustments at the back of the set. As Manfred Montwé reports, Paik spent hours adjusting the television sets to his satisfaction even after they had been brought to the villa.

That Paik assigned a special status to the television room is shown not only by the secrecy in which he shrouded the preparations and the meticulous care he took over setting up, but also by the notes which he wrote for the exhibition, the entire first half of which is devoted exclusively to the TV works (see p. 139). He begins by thanking the *informel* painter K. O. Götz, whose radar experiments during World War II provided crucial sources of inspiration. Paik was especially intrigued by Götz's statement that in the experiments "one could unfortunately neither control nor fix," Brownian tubes.⁴⁴

"FIX! ... that word hit me like lightning," Paik remarks with typical enthusiasm in his Galerie Parnass text. "Yes—then it must be the most fitting means to deal with indeterminism (today the central problem in ethics and aesthetics, perhaps also in physics and the economy [...]). Therein lies the foundational concept of my television experiments."⁴⁵

Thus what Götz perceived as a problem—the impossibility of control—became the ultimate incentive for Paik's art and the foundation for divorcing electronic television from electronic music. In his view, electronic music exhibited a "fixed, determined tendency both in its serial compositional method and in its ontological form (that of tape recordings destined for repetition)."⁴⁶

In the essay "About the Exposition of the music" published in 1962 in Wolf Vostell's magazine *Décollage*, Paik wrote about the lack of audience freedom in classical but also indeterminist music such as the compositions of John Cage: "In most indeterminate

music, the composer gives the possibility for the indeterminacy or the freedom to the interpreter, but not to the audience. The audience has only one freedom; that is, to hear or not to hear the music going on.”⁴⁷ While the performers, therefore, have some scope for freedom, Paik believes that the audience remains a captive one. This one-way nature of musical performances had a direct counterpart in contemporary television. As we have seen, the German television audience was free only to turn their TV sets on or off, or, if the set was a fairly new one, to switch between the first and second channel.

Paik defined “freedom” in terms of time. In the text quoted above, he criticized the end result of “indeterminate music,” which from the perspective of the audience represented nothing but a “normal strip of time—good or bad or mediocre or very good [...]—a time flow of only direction, as in traditional music, or in our life, destined later or sooner to the certain death with one-way time.”⁴⁸ It is surely legitimate to say that, for Paik, the one-way flow of time ends in death not only in the literal sense, but also when transferred to the “liveliness” of the audience. He continues: “The freedom must have more than two ways, directions, vectors, possibilities, of time.”⁴⁹

The study of temporality as a fundamental category of human experience permeates Paik’s entire oeuvre, and in many ways also lies at the heart of *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*, which focuses like no other exhibition of this period on the presence of the visitor and the moment of perception. In a letter to Rolf Jährling dated December 1962, in which Paik also discusses the title of the upcoming exhibition at Galerie Parnass, he says: “At any rate, one must stress that it is neither painting nor sculpture, but a ‘temporal art.’—or I don’t love any genre.”⁵⁰ The purpose of this “temporal art” was to restore to the audience that freedom which it could not have in conventional performance situations, whether musical or otherwise. In the passage about death through “one-way time,” Paik assigns a spatial connotation to the escape from temporal direction when he speaks of “ways,” “directions,” and “vectors.” In the same text, while discussing the sketch for *Symphony for 20 Rooms*, in which the audience was able to choose between various sources of sound and which, as we have seen, prefigured the exhibition in the Galerie Parnass in several ways, he adds: “The free time leads the music necessarily to the space-music (room-music), because the free time requires more than two vectors (directions), and two vectors constitute necessarily the space (room).”⁵¹ In the case of the television room, Paik came up with a very specific solution for the liberating “spatialization” of time. By multiplying the medium of television as an *object* in the form of the television set and varying it as an *image* in the form of the program being broadcast, visitors became capable of deciding their own physical position and thereby influencing the chronology of the events they perceived.

In a résumé of his first exhibition of manipulated television sets, published in June 1964 in the magazine *fLuxus cc fiVe ThReE*, Paik takes a philosophical and spiritual approach to the question of time and space: To comprehend eternity, he says, “Many

mystics are interested to spring out from ONE-ROW-TIME, ONE-WAY-TIME."⁵² This can be achieved, he says, by simultaneously perceiving the parallel flows of many independent movements.⁵³ Paik points out that the only medium available to, for instance, James Joyce for telling stories that develop in parallel (he is referring to Joyce's most important work, *Ulysses*, which serves as an example for the treatment of time in the modern novel) was that of the book, which is limited to one (reading) direction. In contrast, the "simultaneous perception of the parallel flows of 13 independent TV movements can perhaps realize this old dream of mystics, although the problem is left unresolved, whether this is possible with our normal physiognomy."⁵⁴ In the book *Feedback*, which examines the complex relationship of television and democracy, the art historian David Joselit gives a more prosaic explanation for the simultaneous multiplicity of television sets in the Wuppertal exhibition. He reads the ensemble of devices as a kind of alternative television network that aimed to reeducate perception:

"In contrast to the standard structure of the network as a centralized source of information that is uniformly broadcast to a multitude of individual receivers, Paik customized a microcosmic network in which each TV receiver would decode the signal it its own way."⁵⁵

In this way, Joselit says, the materially intangible mobility of the television network was solidified into an object of domestic contemplation.⁵⁶ While the extent to which the idea of the network was present in Germany in the 1960s is debatable, given that ARD was the only existing broadcaster at the time and aired a predominantly educational program, Joselit does address an important point. The TV environment that Paik designed in Jährling's villa gave the impression that the items of a day's broadcasting stood in a spatial relationship with one another rather than remaining isolated and confined to their separate air time slots.⁵⁷ Thus the normally closed and self-referential television cycle was opened up, as it were, to different movements and in different directions. The resulting multiplicity of information flows anticipated Raymond Williams's influential 1974 definition of "flow" as the fundamental category of television experience.⁵⁸ Flow refers to the replacement of linear programming in the form of coordinated, successive units by a sequence that transcends individual program units. The ways in which television viewers experience flow include finding it difficult to turn off their sets and "gliding" from one show to the next.

The simultaneous management and manipulation of a multiplicity of image and information flows, which was made possible at Galerie Parnass only by manually adjusting the television sets ahead of the exhibition, found its ultimate technical form in the *Video-Synthesizer*. This was a long-held dream of Paik's which he finally realized in 1969 together with the Japanese television technician Shuya Abe (see p. 61, fig. XV).⁵⁹ Paik's vision was to build a device that would allow him to translate a variety of sources (finished videotapes, live camera images, etc.) into an infinite number of patterns and

configurations whose colors, contrasts, and brightness could be controlled by means of a mixing board. The ability to edit the images in real time was of crucial importance because it would allow the video synthesizer to be used in live broadcasts (which was done for the first time in 1970 in a program aired on the public WGBH television network in Boston). Douglas Davis called the device a “one-man TV control room.”⁶⁰ Paik himself predicted in 1973 that the device would find its way into private living rooms: “In size, it will get smaller and smaller, until it can be part of the home and used there like we use watercolor sets today.”⁶¹

Paik’s incessant preoccupation with the reception of television in private homes began at Galerie Parnass, where he was acutely aware of the domestic context of his exhibition. One could almost say that he incorporated this context into *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* as a kind of subtext. This is illustrated by the entirely contrary presentation of the manipulated television sets in the New School of Social Research in New York in January 1965 (see p. 61, fig. XVI). Here the sets were neatly arranged side by side on low tables like museum exhibits, and nothing looked random or suggested a living room. In contrast, the Wuppertal exhibition can be read as the subversion of the bourgeois home, whose rituals and conventions are mocked and whose status symbols are used in absurd ways. Echoing the theme of the “topsy-turvy world” in seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting—a household out of joint in which activities can be seen in every corner that mock the ideals of order and decency—Paik turned Jährling’s villa into a topsy-turvy place. The bathroom, toilet, and furnace room, the least “public” or representative places in the house, in other words, were incorporated into the concept and given new or altered functions. Record players, pianos, television sets—the entire entertainment infrastructure of the bourgeois home—were put to alternative uses. Paik obviously wanted to utilize the atmosphere of the late-nineteenth century villa, which spoke of material security and bourgeois values, for his exhibition. He even left the many pictures on Jährling’s walls where they were, and merely turned their faces to the wall. The iconoclastic gesture of making these panel paintings “illegible” represented yet another invitation to visitors to discard all their expectations about the production and presentation of art. Only the slate reliefs by the Belgian artist Raoul Ubac, which were located in the television room and which could not have been turned to the wall without damaging them, were left untouched (see pp. 170–171). However, unlike the allegory of the “topsy-turvy world,” the exhibition at Villa Parnass did not claim to appeal to morality. Rather, it aimed to create an environment in which transgression and the breaking of taboos were a source of pleasure.

Paik believed that television had a special role to play in this endeavor. He saw its potential as a counter-cultural leading medium that could be exempt from the obligation to observe conventional narrative and traditional artistic authorship. “Don’t expect from my TV: Shock, Expressionism, Romanticism, Climax, Surprise, etc . . . for which

my previous compositions had the honour to be praised," Nam June Paik wrote in his "afterlude to the EXPOSITION of EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION."⁶² What the visitor could expect, however, was a fundamental redefinition of the relationship between broadcaster and receiver, which Paik describes in a later text as the "de-educationalizing" of educational television.⁶³ For Paik, the possibility of manipulating electronic images by means of the receiver and the impossibility of determining the ultimate results of these interventions represented not at last a productive shift in the role of the artist—an experience that would influence his entire subsequent career in art:

"My TVs are more the artist than I am. I can compose something through technology that is higher than my personality or lower than my personality. In painting, you can compose as much as you like, but de Kooning cannot make anything that is deeper or more profound than what he has, inside himself. But in engineering, there is always the other—The Other, it is not you."⁶⁴

- 1 Nam June Paik, see Douglas Davis, "Nam June Paik: The Cathode-Ray Canvas," in *Art and the Future. A History-Prophecy of the Collaboration between Art, Science, and Technology*, New York 1973, pp. 146–152, here p. 152.
- 2 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers, New York 2001, p. 142.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Mary Bauermeister, "Cage – Stockhausen oder Stockhausen – Cage. Endsieg ist sicher. Erinnerung an Nam June Paik," in *Nam June Paik. There is no rewind button for life*, Cologne 2007, pp. 36–47, here p. 41.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Davis, "The Cathode-Ray Canvas" (note 1), pp. 147–148.
- 7 Cage quotes from this letter in an essay on Paik: John Cage, "Nam June Paik: A Diary, in *John Cage – A Year from Monday*, Middletown 1967, pp. 89–90.
- 8 K.O. Götz, "On Paik's Visits," in *Erinnerungen und Werk*, vol. 1b, Düsseldorf 1983, p. 960, cited in Christine Mehring, "Television Art's Abstract Starts: Europe circa 1944–1969," in *October*, no. 125, summer 2008, pp. 29–64, here pp. 45–49.
- 9 K. O. Götz, "Abstrakter Film und Elektronenmalerei," in *blätter und bilder* 5, Würzburg/Vienna 1959, reprinted in Rudolf Frieling/Dieter Daniels, *Medien Kunst Aktion. Die 60er und 70er Jahre in Deutschland*, Vienna and New York 1997, pp. 51–52.
- 10 Michael Nyman was the first to stress the role of *Symphony for 20 Rooms* as a precursor of the later Wuppertal exhibition. See Michael Nyman, "Nam June Paik, Composer," in *Nam June Paik*, exh. cat., New York 1982, pp. 79–89, here p. 87.
- 11 My statements refer to the English version of the score, which was first published in 1972 as part of Paik's text "My Symphonies," in *Source – Music of the Avant-Garde* 11, vol. 6/1, January 1972, pp. 75–82, here p. 75. The original German version of 1961, which today resides in the Kunsthalle Bremen and is very poorly legible in the reprint, differs in that the term "audience participation" does not exist as a spatial category. However, all the sound fragments from the television shows are mentioned.
- 12 Calvin Tomkins, "Video Visionary," in *The New Yorker*, May 5, 1975, pp. 44–79, here p. 51.
- 13 An entry in the guest book shows that Jährling and his wife were present on October 6, 1960, at Paik's performance of *Étude for Piano Forte* at Mary Bauermeister's studio. Wilfried Dörstel, "Chronologie," in Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln (ed.), *Das Atelier Mary Bauermeister in Köln 1969–62. Intermedial, kontrovers, experimentell*, Cologne 1993, pp. 48–52, here p. 52.
- 14 Edith Decker draws this conclusion from a letter, which I was not able to view, which Paik wrote to Jährling on November 13, 1961. In the letter he announces the pieces he intends to play. Decker had access to a photocopy of this letter which was in Jährling's possession at the time of her research. A concert is

- also mentioned in another letter, which is dated March 1963 and of which Decker states that Jährling also owned a photocopy at the time. See Edith Decker, *Paik. Video*, Cologne 1988, p. 31. Originally the concert was to have taken place at an earlier date. Paik's article for the magazine *Décollage* announces that *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* will be held in January 1963. See Wolf Vostell (ed.), *Décollage*, no. 3, Cologne, December 1962, no page number.
- 15 Nam June Paik, *Beuys Vox 1961–1986*, Seoul 1989, p. 21.
- 16 Christine Mehring states that Paik's employment of television engineers is remembered only by K. O. Götz, "Abstract Starts" (note 8), p. 47. Paik himself, however, says in the interview with Douglas Davis that he "hired an engineer and some of his friends." See Davis, "The Cathode-Ray Canvas" (note 1), p. 148.
- 17 Decker, *Paik. Video* (note 14), p. 49.
- 18 A reproduction of the letter can be found in Wulf Herzogenrath (ed.), *Nam June Paik. Fluxus/Video*, exh. cat. Bremen, 1999/2000, pp. 60–61.
- 19 The artistic activities of Jährling and his wife are comprehensively documented in Will Baltzer/Alfons W. Biermann (eds.), *Treffpunkt Parnass – Wuppertal 1949–1965*, Cologne 1980.
- 20 The poster for the happening *24 Stunden*, which took place on June 5, 1965, with Paik participating, used the ground plan of the Jährling villa as a background image. The plan, which bears the stamp of Jährling's architecture firm, labels the "garden room" as a "conference room," which seems appropriate given the way the television sets seem to be "conferring" with one another.
- 21 Only one of the original television sets has been preserved, *Kuba TV*, which now forms part of the Rosenkranz collection.
- 22 Tomas Schmit, "exposition of music," in *Nam June Paik, Werke: Musik-Fluxus-Video*, exh. cat., Cologne 1976, pp. 676–671.
- 23 Nam June Paik, "afterlude to the EXPOSITION of EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION," in *fluxus cc five ThReE*, June 1964. See Nam June Paik, *Global Groove 2004*, Ostfildern-Ruit 2004, pp. 64–65.
- 24 Letter from George Maciunas, 1963, in *Fluxus etc. / Addenda II*, p. 151 (original punctuation retained).
- 25 Decker, *Paik. Video* (note 14), p. 35 and especially note 117, p. 56.
- 26 In 1976, Paik created a replica of the first television set which is titled *Rembrandt Automatik* after the brand name of the set that was used. This replica is now in a private collection in Germany. The second set was lost in Wuppertal in 1967 and was reconstructed by Paik in 1975 for the collector Wolfgang Hahn as *Zen for TV*. Based on this reconstruction, which today is in the MUMOK Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig in Vienna and which, in Paik's words, "carries the label of the original," he created three more replicas. See notes by Nam June Paik, 1983, in *Fluxus etc. / Addenda II*, pp. 285–288, here p. 285.
- 27 Decker, *Paik. Video* (note 14), p. 35. [transl.]
- 28 Decker describes this device as *Point of Light*, in *Paik. Video* (note 14), p. 37. Tomas Schmit speaks of the *One Point TV*, in "exposition of music" (note 22), p. 70.
- 29 Paik remembers that Joseph Beuys played for a whole night with the device, which was hooked up to a microphone. See Davis, "The Cathode-Ray Canvas" (note 1), p. 148.
- 30 Decker, *Paik. Video* (note 13), p. 37. [transl.]
- 31 The newsreader was taken from the *Tagesschau*, while the tube of toothpaste must have come from a commercial that had been aired in the early evening. The first television commercial was aired in Germany on November 3, 1956, to advertise Persil washing powder.
- 32 Tomkins, "Video Visionary" (note 12), p. 51.
- 33 Nam June Paik, "afterlude to the EXPOSITION of EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION," (note 23), pp. 64–65.
- 34 Mehring, "Abstract Starts" (note 8), p. 47.
- 35 John Alan Farmer writes that the placement of most of the television sets on the floor forced visitors to bend over to have a closer look or to touch the sets, thereby making what amounted to a gesture of reverence. In contrast to conventional television viewing practices, this gesture added an active physical component to the perceptual process. John Alan Farmer, "Pop People," in *The New Frontier: Art and Television. 1960–65*, exh. cat., Austin, Texas, 2000, pp. 17–67, here p. 47.
- 36 See the reproduction of the letter in Herzogenrath (ed.), *Fluxus/Video* (note 18).
- 37 Manfred Montwé in an email to Susanne Neuburger on January 26, 2008.
- 38 Dieter Daniels, "Television-Art or anti-art? Conflict and cooperation between the avant-garde and the mass media in the 1960s and 1970s," at http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/themes/overview_of_media_art/massmedia (January 2009).
- 39 From 1961 onwards, a morning program was available from approximately 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

- This program, however, was not accessible throughout West Germany as it was broadcast only by the stations near the border to East Germany and was targeted at East German residents. I should like to extend warm thanks to Barbara von Lüpke of the archives of the Erstes Deutsches Fernsehen network for her timely support and her competent assistance.
- 40 John Anthony Thwaites, "Der Philosoph und die Katze," in *Deutsche Zeitung*, no. 84, April 9, 1963, p. 10; and "Viel Klamauk – wenig Einfälle," in *NRZ*, Wuppertal, March 15, 1963. The specific example mentioned by the NRZ reviewer (simultaneous feature film and *Tagesschau*) was technically impossible as the first *Tagesschau* ran on both channels at 8 p.m. and the second channel had already shut down by the time the second *Tagesschau* aired at approximately 10.40 p.m.
- 41 Wolf Schön, "In Neo-Dadas Kindergarten: Erste Begegnung mit der Kunst aus der Mülltonne," in *Rheinischer Merkur*, March 16, 1963, p. 21. [transl.]
- 42 In an email written to Susanne Neuburger on December 22, 2008, Manfred Montwé too remembers that the television sets were muted. Thwaites says in his review: "Here Mr. Paik sits, a friendly, gently smiling man, tending the appliances. The room is filled with their sounds, humming, popping, crackling." See Thwaites, "Der Philosoph" (note 40). [transl.]
- 43 John G. Hanhardt, "Paik's Video Sculpture," in *Nam June Paik*, ed. John G. Hanhardt, exh. cat. New York 1982, pp. 91–100, here p. 92, and Mehring, "Abstract Starts" (note 8), p. 46 and p. 48.
- 44 Text by Nam June Paik on the flyer for *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*, cited from Mehring "Abstract Starts" (note 8), p. 45. [transl.]
- 45 Ibid. [transl.]
- 46 Ibid. [transl.]
- 47 Nam June Paik, "About the Exposition of the music" (note 33).
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Letter from Nam June Paik to Rolf Jährling on December 22, 1962, cited from Decker, *Nam June Paik. Niederschriften eines Kulturnomaden. Aphorismen – Briefe – Texte*, Cologne 1992, p. 54. [transl.]
- 51 Paik, "About the Exposition of the music" (note 33).
- 52 Paik, "fluxus cc five ThReE, 4, 1964; see Nam June Paik, *Global Groove 2004* (note 23).
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 David Joselit, *Feedback Television against Democracy*, Cambridge/MA, and London 2007, pp. 11–12.
- 56 Ibid., p. 13.
- 57 Ibid., p. 13.
- 58 Raymond Williams, *Television. Technology and Cultural Form*, London 1974.
- 59 Paik was already speaking in spring of 1965 about, "the development of an adapter with dozens of possibilities which anyone could use in his own home, using his increased leisure to transform his TV set from a passive pastime to active creation," see Nam June Paik and Bill Wilson, "Projects for Electronic Television," in *Nam June Paik. Video 'n' Videology 1959–1973*, exh. cat. Syracuse, New York, 1973, no page number.
- 60 Davis, "The Cathode-Ray Canvas" (note 1), p. 152.
- 61 Ibid., p. 151.
- 62 "afterlude to the EXPOSITION of EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION," in *fluxus cc five ThReE*, June 1964.
- 63 Nam June Paik, "Tokyo Video Letter," in Decker, *Niederschriften* (note 50), pp. 86–87, here p. 87. The English original, dated December 1969, is in the Archiv Sohm in the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.
- 64 Davis, "The Cathode-Ray Canvas" (note 1), p. 152.

Interview in a Station Restaurant

Nam June Paik in conversation with Justin Hoffmann

Wiesbaden, May 22, 1989

My text is based on a conversation with Nam June Paik in the restaurant of the Wiesbaden train station, where I interviewed the artist in the course of my research for my dissertation on the *Myth of Destruction in the Art of the Early 1960s*.¹ It was Paik who suggested that we meet there, because—if I remember correctly—he had a home in Wiesbaden at the time. I regarded Wiesbaden as the birthplace of the Fluxus movement because the first Fluxus Festival was held there, and thus it seemed an appropriate place for an interview with the most prominent Fluxus representative. During our conversation, Paik spoke in a crosscultural mix of English and German. I recorded the conversation on a Walkman and edited his words only where they would have been unintelligible for readers. Although my interview focused on Nam June Paik's use of destructive strategies, we repeatedly found ourselves discussing his legendary exhibition, *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*.

The cow's head

Among the items on display at the Wuppertal exhibition—all of which were unusual for that time—the most startling was the head of a freshly slaughtered cow that occupied pride of place at the entrance to the exhibition in Rolf Jährling's house. It was a genuinely provocative item, an exhibit that was more reminiscent of the Viennese Actionists than the Korean musician and artist, Paik. I was interested to learn the purpose of this gory work of art.

Justin Hoffmann The cow's head in *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*, what was the significance of that? And how did it relate to the rest of the exhibition?

Nam June Paik That was a clear reference to the shamanism I encountered in Korea. Korean shamans wear that big head. All day they drink and eat. They put it on their heads. Little women wear tall heads. They become very excited, they dance, they get high, you know. There was that strange experience I had. Every October my mother organized a

shaman festival. That was very good. That was pretty grotesque and interesting. And I thought that when people come to my concert, to see my objects, they must have a different state of mind. You understand. They must be high, you know. To get high legally, you need a little shock, so I used a visual shock. Then they came to my exhibition, they saw the head, and they got high.

It happened that way—that they were shocked?

Yes, it had some impact. After a while the police department came and took it away, after three days. It stood there for three days, actually. That's a long time for an exclusive neighborhood in Wuppertal. But a neighbor reported it to the police. Apparently it's against the law; there's a law that a cadaver, a head, must be buried three meters underground.

The head had to be removed?

Yes, we buried it deep in the earth, deep down. There is a law, and we obeyed the law.

Zen and Hinduism

One of the most famous works in the exhibition *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* was *Zen for TV*. A television set on which a single white line runs vertically across the screen, which is rotated by 90 degrees. I asked Nam June Paik about his relationship with the Eastern religions.

Justin Hoffmann What role do Eastern philosophy and religion play in your life? In 1961, you named a mail art project *University of Avant-Garde Hinduism* and called two other works *Zen for TV* and *Zen for Head*.

Nam June Paik Nothing was straightforward. I chose *Avant-Garde Hinduism*, because it sounds very good, you understand. I kind of like Hinduism, because it's more open, open for sex, open for ... Other religions are founded more narrowly. Hinduism is a free religion. But that has nothing to do with why I chose the title. The title is an artistic coincidence, you know. It's a beautiful title. *Zen for TV* is the ... the television broke during transport. So I put a title on it, you know, so I made a title to justify the broken TV set. Then *Zen for Head*, I was actually really reading some book on concentration. About overcoming dualism. That was a motif for me and many other people, for Sartre, for existentialism. Ecstasy.

Paik's relationship with George Maciunas

Nam June Paik is one of the most important representatives of the Fluxus movement, which was founded by the Lithuanian artist and designer George Maciunas. His close ties to Fluxus are illustrated by the fact that the first joint Fluxus exhibition formed part of Nam June Paik's exhibition *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* (March 11–20, 1963) at the Galerie Parnass, the private home of the architect Rolf Jährling, in Wuppertal. Paik and Maciunas had agreed that the works of various Fluxus artists would be shown in the kitchen of the house during the Wuppertal exhibition. Paik's choice of the kitchen—an unusual venue for exhibiting art—had no derogatory implications, because he was using places like the bathroom and even the toilet as display space for his exhibition. The overall exhibition aimed at contradicting the conventional art exhibitions of the time and suggesting new ways of presenting art. One of the rare documents of this “kitchen exhibition” is a famous photograph by Manfred Leve that shows four full canning jars (*Poems* by Tomas Schmit); various papers and cards, which are probably musical scores and event cards; and a series of black prints arranged in rhythmic sequence on the wall (George Brecht's *Directions*). (p. 196, fig. 139) The Fluxus group did not remain together for long. It split into two camps over the evaluation of the performance of Stockhausen's composition *Originale* at the *2nd Annual New York Avant-Garde Festival* at Judson Hall in late August 1964. I asked Paik about the reasons for the disagreement and about Maciunas's concept of Fluxus.

Nam June Paik It was like this. Maciunas was against Stockhausen, you know. Many reasons. He thought he was too much like Wagner. Maciunas liked smaller, simpler actions. Maciunas's models were La Monte Young and George Brecht. They were in line with his aesthetics. Stockhausen didn't really like my performances. He couldn't let himself, you know. But Stockhausen needed me, because I knew Wolf Vostell. But he didn't like my artistic ideas. His program with Vostell wasn't so forced. It was in a different aesthetic class than Maciunas: The suffering artist, a bit like German Expressionism, in a way. Charlotte Moorman organized things for Stockhausen. Charlotte Moorman hired Allan Kaprow as director. Allan Kaprow had mainly Fluxus friends, so that was how many Fluxus artists came in, like Dick Higgins, Jackson Mac Low, Ay-O.

Justin Hoffmann Did Allan Kaprow have a direct relationship to Fluxus?

No, but he was a friend to all of them. George Maciunas didn't like Kaprow, because Kaprow was too baroque. He didn't like baroque, he was a fan of classicism. He couldn't say no to Stockhausen's *Originale*, because *Originale* had been written for me. But he could say that no Fluxus artist could take part in Charlotte Moorman's festival. He never

agreed. Somehow he was in doubt for two days. It took two days, when Kaprow and Jackson Mac Low, Dick Higgins were there, and so was I ... we were all actors. On the third day Ay-O came in. He [Maciunas] felt hurt by that. He quite liked Kaprow and Higgins, but Ay-O was a very good friend of his. He was really mad because of Ay-O. And he said that Ay-O had gone there with me.

So he thought it was your fault?

Yes. He said we were both Asians and that I had influenced him. Although Maciunas was against it. The show must go on. And it was very successful. [...] New York is a hard place. At that time Stockhausen was hot and Fluxus was not. New York is an opportunist city. People were joining against Maciunas's wishes. George [Maciunas] gave all his life to Fluxus, and so he expected this devotion to Fluxus from all Fluxus artists. But when these Fluxus artists joined *Originale*, he decided ... he gave up Fluxus. [...]

For three or four years he gave up Fluxus, even his own activities?

Yes, yes. After three or four years he came back again. I think that Fluxus was ended by many external motives. The others went on to do their own thing, and so on. Disappointment set in, and increased. He did not speak to me for three or four years, until 1968. I said, "George," he looked around, like ... Then he concentrated on building the Soho Project, in renewing buildings. During those three or four years, Yoko Ono came back with John Lennon. So Maciunas had a little more money and he went on with Fluxus projects for John and Yoko.

The significance of Freud and psychoanalysis

One important factor for understanding the work of Nam June Paik is his interest in Sigmund Freud and psychoanalysis. Paik created a unique synthesis between this and Asian thought.

Nam June Paik I am happy to be called a destruction artist, you know. It's fine, fine. The thing is that my approach is this. [...] Freud's last work, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, was written in London. Freud wrote two books about the entire field of psychoanalysis, this one and an earlier work, *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*—that one was written in Vienna. Pretty big—two volumes, and all that. Near the end of his life he wrote yet another treatise about psychoanalysis in general. The second book. He called it *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. He wrote about two things. Ultimately, there

are only two things in the world. One is Eros, that's construction, you know; the other is destruction, death. Eros and the death wish have the same magnitude. In [Freud's] first book, the death wish is not as big. There is something similar in Asian thought. In China, it's called yin and yang.

Justin Hoffmann Isn't there a difference?

They are closely related.

In your early works, you more or less introduced sexuality and aggression into the history of music.

Yes, yes. The thing is that we were in permanent competition: how can you do something new. [...]

Going back to what you said about Freud, about the sex drive and the death wish—both aspects were expressed in the exhibition *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*. The sexual aspect, for example, appeared in the prepared piano with the bra and the eggs.

Yes, yes, but there were also a lot of other things, like electronics. There was always a certain amount of balance.

The right offer at the wrong time

Nam June Paik's most frequently performed piece is *One for Violin*, which was premièred at the Kammerspiele in Düsseldorf on June 16, 1962, in the course of *Neo-Dada in der Musik*. According to Nam June Paik, it was written at a time when he was already working on the pieces that were subsequently to be presented at the exhibition in Wuppertal—at a time, in other words, when his preferred means of artistic expression was no longer musical and performative, but sculptural. But this ambivalent situation saw the birth of his most famous piece, *One for Violin*.

Nam June Paik I really stopped doing action music in 1961, after Stockhausen's *Originale*. I wanted to concentrate on object making—televisions and so on. And then he [Jean-Pierre Wilhelm] talked to [Hansjörg] Utzerath, a famous director at the Kammerspiele ... Utzerath asked him whether he had any new ideas. That's what he told me. But I didn't have any repertoire or anything like that. He asked me to do a one-man show. I didn't

have time to compose a one-man show. So I only wrote one piece. I invited all my friends, and that's how it became a group show. In the beginning it was an offer from Jean-Pierre, from Utzerath to me via Jean-Pierre. [...] I think that the influence of La Monte Young and George Brecht is very strong in this piece, stronger than John Cage. La Monte Young sent me a composition for piano that impressed me very much. His butterfly action and other pieces he wrote had a very fresh quality. La Monte Young influenced a lot of people, like George Maciunas, Andy Warhol, and others. Yves Klein was important too, but La Monte Young was more important because he was a musician, a student of Cage's. John Cage inspired him to write his music.

1 The dissertation was published by Silke Schreiber publishers: Justin Hoffmann, *Destruktionskunst. Der Mythos der Zerstörung in der Kunst der frühen sechziger Jahre*, Munich 1995.

Recollections on the *Exposition of Music*

Manfred Montwé in conversation with Susanne Neuburger
Stählisbronn, November 20, 2008

Manfred Montwé was born in 1940 and studied graphic design and photography at the Werkkunstschule Wuppertal from 1958–1963, where his teachers included Wolf Vostell. He participated in happenings and Fluxus events and from 1963–1967 he was a photographer at *Décollage*, a magazine published by Vostell. Montwé was active as an art director for international advertising agencies before becoming a freelance graphic designer. He lives in Upper Swabia.

Susanne Neuburger According to the poster four people collaborated on *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*—Tomas Schmit, Frank Trowbridge, Günther Schmitz, and M. Zenzen. It seems that there were some changes during the course of the preparations. It's possible to see amendments to the poster that confirm these changes on one of your photos. What really happened?

Manfred Montwé It took two weeks to set up the exhibition, and the poster was printed in advance. Tomas Schmit, Peter Brötzmann, and I set it all up. Brötzmann and I were named in handwriting as “artistic collaborators” on one version of the poster, which also appeared in the 1980 catalogue, *Treffpunkt Parnass*.¹ (see p. 143, fig. 3) I suspect that was initiated by Paik, who made extremely positive remarks about our collaboration in a number of letters to Jährling and myself. He even used this version of the poster in later publications about *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*.

When I met Rolf Jährling in September 1962 following my return from Italy, he was full of enthusiasm about the Fluxus concert with Maciunas, Benjamin Patterson, and others that had taken place during the summer festival in June. He also told me about meeting Paik and his intention of organizing an exhibition in early 1963 which would place rooms throughout Villa Jährling at the artist's disposal. The exhibition had to be postponed for several weeks because Rolf and Anneliese Jährling, Gudrun Edel, and I were injured in a car accident. I imagine that Trowbridge, Günther Schmitz, and Zenzen, all of whom had possibly been recommended by Vostell, couldn't participate because the dates had been altered.

I had known Jährling for some years; I had carried out some architectural photography for him, and I was occasionally invited over to his place. He asked me in early 1963 if I could help set up the exhibition. There were two weeks to prepare and set up pianos, tape recorders, and radios according to Paik's specifications, and to construct and install many other items.

I recommended Peter Brötzmann as a further assistant; he was a friend from college who later became a jazz musician. I was there virtually every day, sorting out organizational matters with the others, sourcing materials, and getting hold of the pianos. I also assisted with the considerable amount of work involved in setting up the exhibition, and with assembling the pianos. That's why I was so interested in your piano in Vienna ...

But our piano is only one of the four pianos; two of them are in the Sammlung Block, and one was destroyed by Beuys, but it hadn't been prepared ...

Jährling had bought three pianos very cheaply from the Ibach manufacturers in Wuppertal-Barmen. It was certainly no problem to adapt and refit these pianos in the manner Paik had imagined. But Paik wanted four pianos. So Jährling renegotiated with Ibach and managed to get a fourth piano on loan. It was an antique piano, for display purposes only. Paik said that if we were not permitted to use the instrument, we should place it at the entrance. The visitors who entered the exhibition space through the front doors were forced to clamber past the piano on either side. That made it really easy for Beuys. As I said before, the piano was a completely intact exhibit. I do know that Jährling negotiated with Ibach afterwards. He didn't talk about it in any detail, but he did go there and pay compensation. He was pretty discreet about it.

That brings us to Beuys's spectacular act, which was documented in photographs ...

Nobody actually photographed the original Beuys action, because it was so spontaneous and quick that no one was able to react in time. Besides, everything was in turmoil there, and the room was packed full of people. Beuys followed up his action by attacking the piano with a clapper and pieces of wood—as a demonstration. The photographers asked him to repeat the action, so he recreated it and demonstrated it again.

I remember that Beuys turned up about an hour after the opening, because I immediately noticed that he was carrying a kind of sledgehammer. I didn't know Joseph Beuys at that point. Peter Brötzmann, Tomas Schmit, and I were looking after the exhibition space and the exhibits on that first evening, because the visitors were allowed to use everything, and occasional repairs were necessary if all the objects were to remain playable. We were there to ensure that everything went off more or less without a hitch.

Beuys had a big hammer in his hand; it was a chopper, with one sharp edge and the other blunt. He came into the hall, stood right in front of the piano, swung the axe, and struck it really hard. He had this incredible commitment and intensity, just as I witnessed him during the twenty-four-hour happening in 1965. He attacked it with all his might! It was like an explosion, and the whole room suddenly fell silent. Completely silent. It was so quick; in a few minutes it was all over.

Anneliese Jährling came over to me during the action and said, "We have to do something." So someone brought me a pail of water, and I emptied it out onto Beuys's head from the upper floor gallery. That really did bring it all to an end. It was as if the spell had been broken. Beuys didn't really find the water annoying; it was all part of the whole action for him.

Incidentally, I had the impression that Rolf Jährling didn't know Joseph Beuys well at that point, and apparently Paik hadn't known him long either. When the action started I thought, "Why didn't Paik announce it beforehand?" It was obviously a spontaneous action by Beuys. The piano was totally destroyed. It was just left lying there. My photo of the room showing the destroyed piano along with the other pianos was taken a day later (p. 163, fig. 36). The photographs showing Beuys setting about the piano with those pieces of wood can't be from the original action, because wood couldn't cause the deep grooves that can be clearly seen on the photos. Beuys recreated the scene at the photographers' request.

Later, when I read Tomas Schmit's account of *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* at the Paik exhibition in the Kölnischer Kunstverein, I was extremely surprised that he mentioned the action so casually. I remember that Beuys concentrated on the pianos pretty intensively during a subsequent visit to the exhibition.

Can you describe the pianos?

The surprise was that the traditional function of the pianos had been broadened, transforming them into comprehensive sound objects. Perception was expanded beyond sounds and noises by using lighting effects, objects to touch, barbed wire, sirens, heaters, ventilators, tape recorders, and much more besides. Visitors were able to play all these devices, which were connected to a keyboard via electrical contacts. One key switched off the lighting in the room and another switched it back on. A further key randomly activated the siren, ventilator, and so on. The visitors to the exhibition were able to discover astounding new ways of using these objects. There was so much confusion! That's why I was so disappointed by your piano in the museum. It doesn't have the vitality that the pianos in the exhibition had when people explored them with their fingers.

When you said that the piano could possibly be played again, I found the idea to be incredibly appealing. That's the only possible way to imagine how it was in the exhibition.

The pianos really were very special, really unique. They embodied so much of Paik's personality and the way he worked and evolved. Let's put it this way, it would have been possible to set them up much more professionally, technically speaking, but for Paik it was very important not to do that. He wanted the set-up to be crude and simple. I saw him work like that many times, for instance in *Roboter*, which he exhibited in Galerie Parnass in 1965.

I remember that he went around in oversized slippers while the exhibition was being set up. He sometimes tied a scarf around his waist, walked around the room, ate some bread, and directed the proceedings in a very refined, polite manner. He achieved precisely what he had been looking for, often by taking a somewhat roundabout route. He didn't know the meaning of compromise.

He didn't do the pianos all alone, though. Paik had all the material, and then Peter Brötzmann, Tomas Schmit, and I screwed and fitted it all together.

Once the exhibition was over we took the pianos apart with Paik and gave away many of the objects that were attached to them in all those different ways.

The three pianos then stood in the courtyard of the gallery for a long time, exposed to the elements, because nobody wanted them. I looked for somewhere to put them myself, but unfortunately pianos take up so much space. Of course, the situation is completely different now. Then, most people with an interest in art had never heard of Nam June Paik or Joseph Beuys.

Maybe you could say something about the televisions and the photos of screens that you and Peter Brötzmann took ...

Paik frequently spent hours at a time on the TV sets; he had already worked on some of them before he brought them along, while he continued to develop others in the TV room until they were in a state that he wanted to exhibit. He always worked alone on the TV sets and he never let anybody else touch them. I often watched him, fascinated by the pictures that resulted—constantly changing impressions as the TV programs were manipulated, causing swiftly shifting pictures that had never been seen before, abstract structures, and combinations of processes. Paik tried many things out and also rejected a lot of them.

Photographing a CRT monitor was a technical challenge in those days. I experimented with assorted shutter speeds and apertures, because the right moment had to be captured but the images were changing constantly. Often they weren't even in very stable condition, or Paik tried out something different, and then there was no progress for hours on end. It was only possible to assess the results once the negatives had been developed. Peter Brötzmann and I took the photographs over a number of sessions and I developed the negatives. Unfortunately there was very little we could use. Nevertheless, the few photographs that did result were sufficient to give an impression of the manipulated TV sets.

We managed to discover *Urmusik* on one of your pictures ...

Yes, you can recognize the crate. It was on the upper floor during the exhibition. My photographs date from the setting up phase and while the exhibition (p. 172, fig. 77) was running. I didn't take any photos at the opening. I digitalized the negatives in 2004, a process that made underexposed shots accessible for the first time—shots of Paik working on the TV sets, for instance (p. 172, fig. 75–77).

There was a staircase leading up from the entrance hall where the pianos were situated. It gave visitors access to a circular gallery from which they could observe what was going on in the foyer. On the upper floor to the left was the library with its mirrored foils and the bathroom with the doll. This crate, *Urmusik*, was on the gallery as well, just to the left of the steps. It sticks out in my memory because it really surprised me—that crate was just so different from what Paik usually did.

The room with the mirrors was called “To Be Naked and Look at Yourself” ...

Paik wanted people to stand naked in front of the sections of the mirrored foils, and then the room would be closed off. Of course people didn't do that. During a meditative moment I took photos there of Paik, Tomas Schmit, and several visitors.

Paik posed for several photos, for instance with the record player ...

Yes, he posed very deliberately. I was extremely interested in creating a photographic record of what was so special about Paik's work. For instance, I took lots of photos of the pianos both during and following the setting up phase, and as a consequence it's possible to trace the different stages of development. There were portraits such as *Zen for Head* (p. 204, fig. 165, 167), demonstrations of *Random Access* and *Record Shashlik*, or *Zen for Walking*, where Paik pulls a violin, a spoon, or the spool or axle of a child's toy behind him. These photos were all posed. Demonstrations such as *Random Access* and *Record Shashlik* were staged by myself, Schmit, and Brötzmann.

On one occasion Paik took me aside and explained that he wanted a few photos on a certain theme; we arranged to meet early the next morning, because he didn't want to have an audience. That's how the gramophone photos came about. I took a series of shots from various angles of *Listening to Music through the Mouth* (p. 182–184). When Paik saw the contact prints he told me to put the photos away for a later date. I sent Paik prints in New York, and Jährling also received a series. The negatives landed in my photographic archive, where they remained until 1976, when Wulf Herzogenrath put the photos on show at the Paik exhibition at the Kölner Kunstverein.

Perhaps a quick question about the balloon—it doesn't appear on any photos ...

We blew the balloon up with a pump. It burst very quickly. It was a weather balloon that virtually filled the foyer. The visitors could hardly get in because the balloon almost completely blocked the entrance into the exhibition space. The first visitors really had to crawl past the balloon to get into the gallery. We were really very disappointed when a visitor burst it. It happened within the first half hour. The line of people waiting to get in stretched as far as the street. They weren't just typical gallery visitors; they were a very mixed group, including students. The atmosphere was great! Some people might have had the cow's head at the back of their minds.

The cow's head had gone by then ...

I have no memory of the cow's head still hanging there by the evening. It was delivered at midday and mounted at the front entrance, and there are photos to prove it. Soon after that there were a few problems with the local public order office. For that reason I'm pretty sure that the head had been removed by the start of the opening.

Do you know where the kitchen was, incidentally? I can't identify where it might have been. In the basement?

There was a laundry room in the basement that was incorporated into the exhibition. But people got together in the kitchen on the upper floor; it was an eat-in kitchen with a table and chairs, and the fridge was restocked every day. The few visitors who were there in the evenings met up there and talked. The exhibition was only open in the evening a few days a week. That's where I first got to know Beuys, Maciunas, and Koppke, and others. It's where I apologized to Beuys for tipping water over him. I visited Beuys at the Akademie in 1964 and discussed photographs for the Fluxus exhibition at RWTH Aachen University. Beuys asked me if I could create a photographic record of his actions. But I had already signed a contract with an advertising agency.

The bookseller and gallery owner Willem de Ridder was also present at one of the kitchen discussions. He wanted to show a prepared piano in Amsterdam, and he organized the Fluxus event at the Hypokriterion Theater. Paik discussed a plan with Tomas Schmit, Peter Brötzmann, and myself, for a piano that would be largely silent, but adorned with movie projectors. Paik gave me an 8 mm movie camera, which I used for shooting scenes in a variety of techniques, some of them hand colored. They were to be shown as endless loops, controlled by the piano. Paik also contributed an erotic movie. Cement was to be poured into the piano. We actually carried out part of this idea in Amsterdam's Galerie 47 in June 1963. At that point Paik was in Japan, and he later traveled on to the USA.

You mentioned *Random Access*. What music was recorded on the tapes?

While we were setting up the exhibition we stuck sections of audio tape to the wall in the corridor of the basement. They were cut fairly randomly at different lengths. The visitors were able to move the isolated pick-up over the tape and hear real little tunes, although depending on the speed and direction they were played at there was a high level of distortion. Any visitor was free to move the pick-up around, which produced a sound structure reminiscent of the electronic music I had first heard in the Studio for New Music at the WDR broadcasting corporation in Cologne.

I can't remember what the music on the audio tapes was, but they were definitely normal, narrow tapes rather than studio recordings. Paik had brought along a suitcase containing the audio tapes.

And Paik hung all the pictures back to front ...

Yes, that was the first thing Paik did. Rolf Jährling told him that we could do anything he wanted, even take the pictures down. Paik insisted that everything was left as he had found it. Then he turned most, but not all, of the pictures around. Paik left the slate reliefs by Raoul Ubac hanging the right way round. Jährling adored those works and had used one of them for the logo for his gallery. Paik just left them hanging there. I think it's significant that Paik didn't want to change the atmosphere from how it was when he had discovered it. Besides, the reverse sides of some of those pictures were pretty interesting.

Was the exhibition explicitly seen as part of the Fluxus movement?

No, not as far as I'm concerned, in retrospect. It was something completely independent. I saw Fluxus as the concert in the Akademie in Düsseldorf in 1962, for instance, or in Amsterdam in 1963, or the performance in Aachen in 1964. I can only see it from the perspective of a layperson interested in art, or of someone who witnessed it all.

Paik was very independent; his show brought together many different movements in contemporary fine arts and music and he also anticipated a great deal. Paik's connection to Buddhism and Zen was also something that had interested me from very early on. I was fascinated both by the way he integrated it into his art and by his lifestyle. In that respect he had a completely different background from what I had experienced of Beuys.

Several participants in the exhibition thought, "What's Beuys doing here?" I can imagine that Paik's approach must have been extremely important for Beuys. Paik didn't talk to us about Fluxus back then in Wuppertal—I found out about it from Maciunas.

I remember a lively discussion in the kitchen between Beuys and Maciunas during those evening meetings—they had a great chat together.

- 1 Will Baltzer, Alfons W. Biermann, eds., *Treffpunkt Parnass Wuppertal 1949–1965*, exh. cat., Wuppertal, Cologne, Bonn 1980, p. 209.

“It Was More Than Nonsense, of Course.”

Tomas Schmit in conversation with Susanne Rennert
Berlin, March 15, 2005

Nam June Paik's *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* represents the culmination of a crucial development in his oeuvre—from music through action and Fluxus to the media. During the months in which Paik was intensely involved in the preparations for his first exhibition, he was also working on group activities involving pre-Fluxus and Fluxus actions. As a result, when I interviewed Tomas Schmit in Berlin in March 2005, our conversation was not confined to *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*, but also covered the action context. And who would be a better judge of this context than Schmit, who approached Paik in Düsseldorf at the age of eighteen? Their chance encounter gave rise to a lifelong friendship and to a concrete collaboration on *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*.

Susanne Rennert How did you meet Nam June Paik? Wasn't it at the important exhibition *Dada—Dokumente einer Bewegung* that took place in the Kunstverein and the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in 1958?

Tomas Schmit No, not at all. I didn't see that exhibition. I met him in 1961, at the *Jackson Pollock* exhibition in Düsseldorf.¹ I was slightly—only slightly—involved in new art. The Zero things, the French things, Tinguely, and so forth, were well known. I went to Darmstadt twice to attend the vacation courses for New Music, which were immensely important at the time. That was when I heard my first live performance of a piece by John Cage, and also something by La Monte Young, George Brecht, David Tudor ... so that was my background. And then, believe it or not, I saw a photo of Paik in the *Kölnische Rundschau*—a rag, a lousy clericalist rag.² It was a photo of Paik's action in Copenhagen, which had taken place a little earlier, in September 1961.³ And the Pollock exhibition in Düsseldorf was on at the same time, in September and October. So I knew what Paik looked like, and I met him at that exhibition, [which] he was visiting [...] as well, and I spoke to him. In retrospect, I'm surprised I did that. I was eighteen then, and at that time we were so shy and dignified and restrained—or at least I was, at eighteen. Even ten-year-olds are bolder today. But I suppose I said to myself, “You've got to do this,” and I went up and talked to him. And what happened next was typical for that time. Today, when somebody who doesn't have a clear idea of what he wants to do with his life meets an artist he thinks

is famous—which, at the time, Paik wasn't—they go for coffee, or the artist gives him an autograph or a little catalogue or something like that. Back then, he said: "Nice to meet you. Come and visit me. And then you can be a performer in *Neo-Dada in der Musik*." That took place the following June, in 1962. Could he have already been planning that in September 1961? It's possible, isn't it?⁴ [...] So, anyway, he said, "You're joining in as a performer." And I thought to myself, "Oh my God, what on earth am I going to do?" – "And bring a few friends." Because he needed people to do the show, and Paik's real friends—like Karlheinz Stockhausen or Hans G. Helms or Mary Bauermeister—wouldn't have agreed to act as performers for Paik. I mean, Paik did participate in Stockhausen's *Originale*, but he did so as Paik, not as a performer of Stockhausen.⁵ No, he needed young people who were willing to go along with that nonsense—if I can be flippant for a second; it was more than nonsense, of course.⁶ And then suddenly you found you were together, and soon you were friends. And so our first joint action was *Neo-Dada in der Musik*. No, wait, sorry, before that there was ...

... *Kleines Sommerfest* at Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal ...

... *Sommerfest*, that's right, that was just before it. Both of them happened in June 1962.⁷

There was only a week between the two events.

In Galerie Parnass, I also played a small role in a piece by Maciunas. But I didn't manage to talk to George Maciunas at the time.

At the *Kleines Sommerfest*, one of the readers was Carlheinz Caspari, the director of the Theater am Dom in Cologne. He read this important text by Maciunas in German, *Neo-Dada in den Vereinigten Staaten*, which is considered a kind of preliminary manifesto of the Fluxus movement.

The Theater am Dom is an interesting topic. That was where the performances of *Originale* took place, for example.

We have a tape recording from *Kleines Sommerfest* that is very instructive. In particular, the reactions of the audience at the exhibition opening—most of them found the artistic performances amusing, but much of the time they also seem to have been quite mystified. [...]

Setting aside that Paik was really the one who brought me into the sphere of art, so to speak, what was important for me, the really important time was the exhibition in

Wuppertal, *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*. We were cooperating more closely there, too.

Did Paik ask you whether you wanted to be involved in the preparations, or how did that go?

I was a sort of p.a. or technical assistant for Paik. It started back in Bensberg, where he had this garage at Poppelreuter's on Steinbrecher Weg. The place was stuffed full of odd machines that ran those tapes—and all the record shashliks. It was all somehow pre-produced already, and we were already tinkering with it in that garage. And then we carted it all to Wuppertal somehow—I can't remember exactly how. And that's where we added the pianos etc., the televisions and all that stuff. Pretty much the entire villa—from the basement through the ground floor all the way to the top—was full of Paik. There were all sorts of things in there, and they were literally all over the place.

Did he prepare the pianos beforehand, or did he do some of it while setting up the exhibition?

I don't think we had the pianos in Bensberg—except perhaps one. But I wouldn't want to swear to that. I think what he said was something like this: "OK, Jährling, get me so-and-so-many pianos, they can be old, they can be broken ..." and then Jährling went and did it. In retrospect, that's what I would think. It can't have been very different. But we didn't have more than one piano in Bensberg.

When René Block and I interviewed Paik in Vienna in 1992, he said that one of the prepared pianos—the *Klavier K*—was inspired by Arthur Kōpcke's prepared and altered books. Kōpcke glued the pages of the books shut to make them unreadable. Paik is quoted as saying "I learned from my sister how to open a piano, and I learned from Kōpcke how to close a piano." A little homage à Kōpcke, if you like.

Yes, that was about one of the pianos, which was blocked, so to speak.

The keys had been made unplayable by putting a board underneath them.
Tomas, you wrote a beautiful text about *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*.

That was in the Paik catalogue for Cologne in 1976. I like that text. I always say it was the first good piece I wrote. I was supposed to write about Wuppertal for Wulf Herzogenrath, and that was a sensible project because I was part of it from the beginning. And some-

thing interesting happened while I was writing it. At some point, Paik was in Cologne, and I thought to myself: "I remember a lot of things, and there's the photos and all that, but it would be important to talk to Paik as well." So I made a list of questions and then talked to Paik on the phone. And he said: "Listen, I have to take a taxi to the airport tomorrow at one. Let's meet at the hotel at twelve." I said: "Paik, you can't be serious—you think we can go through all this stuff in just one hour?" And then we managed it in half an hour flat. It's such a funny mixture—sometimes you get the impression that Paik's half asleep, and then the next moment he's wide awake ... [Tomas Schmit looks at photographs.] This was the [room with the pianos {originally Schmit seems to have made a mistake here, because on the tape he says: "This was the TV room, and then somewhere ..."}], and then somewhere behind that, between the atrium and the garden, was the TV room. This was the atrium here. All the TV stuff, that was the only thing he built virtually all by himself. And nobody else could have done it. But he would take a screwdriver to the back of a TV set while it was running—which everybody knows you just don't do. Anyone with the most elementary knowledge says that that's potentially lethal. And I guess it was. And this is why my memory is very patchy at this point. But he was a big help there. And then, in the text I wrote, I tried to describe everything I could remember.

How long did it take to set up the exhibition?

At this point I can only take a guess. I think it probably took a week, if not more. Even in the bathroom there was some rubbish hanging on the wall, or some kind of Zen object ... even in the bathtub. And of course there were the pianos, which I always thought were the nicest part.

I'm interested in the relationship between Paik and Rolf Jährling. What do you think? Did Jährling know at the time what it was he was presenting? How did he understand it?

That's a pretty good question. I would say: What do you mean, "understand"? They did know what they were doing there.

Did they realize the ramifications of the whole thing? After all, *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* was a milestone in the development of a new art form—an epoch-making event, if I may say so.

It certainly was for me, and not because I'm particularly smart or perceptive. I think that milestones are not necessarily perceived for what they are at the time when they happen.

I was always particularly interested in *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* against the background of the heterogeneous exhibition program of Galerie Parnass. Unlike Paik's "discoverer," Jean-Pierre Wilhelm, who was quick to detect tendencies and who drew up a very stringent program—the list of artists at Galerie 22 in Düsseldorf reads like a Who's Who of the international art history of the time.⁸ Rolf Jährling ...

... had a broader mix.

It included moderately interesting artistic positions. So how did Jährling see Paik? Incidentally, Wilhelm and Jährling knew each other very well. Their collaboration goes back to the exhibition *Poème Objet* in 1956. Wilhelm, who hosted the first public performance of Paik's action music *Hommage à John Cage* in November 1959, was also responsible for introducing Paik to Jährling.

Rolf Jährling was more the jovial type. Yes, that's easy to misunderstand now, but his attitude was a bit like a grandfather to his grandchildren. Generous, you know? "Let them do their thing. It's interesting to watch what the kids are up to there." I'd say that was his attitude. And it was very nice—because he didn't interfere, he just let Paik do his thing. And that was a good way to go.

In an article about George Maciunas, the initiator of the Fluxus movement, Ina Conzen wrote that Rolf Jährling gave Maciunas the opportunity to put on a small Fluxus exhibition in the kitchen of the house while *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* was running.⁹ Can you comment on that? What exhibits were on display there?

It was the kind of big kitchen that no longer exists today, with a big, old-fashioned stove in the center of the room. It was a kind of enclave where Maciunas could present Fluxus. That was a bit difficult, because Fluxus had no objects, or at least it didn't want to have objects—and in fact it didn't have any. So this was more about notes and documents. I'd made these dumb jars. Horrible!

I always thought that they would have displayed small multiples there. That was the original, democratic idea of Fluxus, wasn't it—producing inexpensive, anti-individual product series?

Those didn't even exist at the time. They didn't come out until later, in the summer of 1963. Hang on, where are we now? I was in Wiesbaden from spring to summer of 1963.

I remember that I went to Wiesbaden on Ash Wednesday of 1963 to be Maciunas's assistant until the summer—I think until July. That was another idea of Paik's. Of all the Fluxus people, except perhaps for Eric Andersen, I was the only one who hadn't had a career before. That was because of my age. Emmett Williams was a writer and poet, Addi Kōpcke was a painter and gallery owner, etc. etc. I wasn't anything. I'd just graduated from high school in February 1962. And I think it was Paik who said one day during a conversation: "Why shouldn't Tomas come to Wiesbaden and help you with the printed matter?" All this printed matter, all the typewritten stuff from that period—I typed it all up on an IBM typewriter. Cool gadgets like that were almost unknown in Europe back then. That's definite. That's when all these things were made. I typed the *Fluxus-roll* myself. I also typed the little book by La Monte Young, *Draw a straight line and follow it*. Some of the George Brecht cards had already been printed, others hadn't. At any rate, we collected them then. But Paik's exhibition in Wuppertal was in March. So I must have gone briefly to Wiesbaden, then returned to Wuppertal to help Paik, and then gone back to Wiesbaden ... that must be how I did it.

Let's go back to *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*. Did that attract many visitors?

Well, you can tell from the photos that there was quite a crowd at the opening. But I don't know how it continued.

For such an elaborate exhibition, it had a very short run, didn't it?

Yes, but these things were all so rickety that you couldn't just leave them standing there by themselves. One of us—either Paik, Peter Brötzmann, or myself—had to go in almost every day to fix something or other, even during the opening. We always seemed to have a screwdriver or a pair of pliers within easy reach.

How did Peter Brötzmann, a jazz musician, end up becoming Paik's assistant?

That's an easy one. Brötzmann quickly became one of my best friends. His wife was an assistant in the gallery. And then someone said: "Yes, but we need more people, Paik can't do that on his own." It was a foregone conclusion that I would come along from Cologne. Brötzmann studied commercial art, but he was really a jazz musician. He started out as a saxophone player, and today he has an awesome reputation as a musician.

The exhibition poster mentions you and Frank Trowbridge as "artistic collaborators." Trowbridge also appeared at the *Festum Fluxorum Fluxus* in [the Kunstakademie] Düsseldorf in February 1963.

Frank Trowbridge? I remember him very well, but not in connection with *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television*. No, Frank Trowbridge wasn't in Wuppertal. I don't think so. He was supposed to be, but it didn't work out that way. [Schmit looks at photographs showing Joseph Beuys smashing one of the pianos on the opening night.] That's Joseph Beuys—but not with an ax. That's a legend.

People seem to think he arrived with an ax under his coat and ...

No, not at all. Those were rods or something from the piano itself, or some kind of planks. It definitely wasn't an ax.

Was that a conspicuous action? Were there a lot of people around?

For starters, Beuys wasn't the legend then that he is today ...

Why did he do that?¹⁰

He just thought it was in keeping with the cause. We didn't agree with that.

Did the action attract a lot of attention?

We just rolled our eyes, that's all. We were like: "Who's that guy, and what's that shit he's pulling? Oh yeah, that's that Beuys guy." Because he wasn't that well known yet. By the way, at the Fluxus festival in Düsseldorf [i.e. *Festum Fluxorum Fluxus*], which was earlier, in February 1963, he was sitting around at the front and playing ...

... with a flashlight, wasn't it?

It was more than a flashlight, it was almost a kind of handheld searchlight or something. Anyway, he was playing around with it, doing something silly, and we said: "What's that guy doing there? Who is he, anyway?" And then someone said: "That's Beuys, he organized this whole thing, just let him do his thing."

Exposition of Music. Electronic Television only ran for a few days. By the way, two years later you appeared in *24 Stunden* at the same venue together with Paik, Charlotte Moorman, Joseph Beuys, Wolf Vostell and others. In that performance you were billed as an "independent" artist. Let me summarize: In *Neo-Dada in der Musik* you were a performer in works by other artists. In *Exposition of Music. Electronic Television* you were Paik's assistant. At what

point did you start appearing in Fluxus actions as the author of your own pieces?

I can tell you that exactly. I had pieces like that ready. In his generosity, Paik said at some point—this was before the Wiesbaden festival, or at least before Fluxus Copenhagen: “Why don’t you send a few of your pieces to Maciunas—that’s so-and-so.”¹¹ And, like a good boy, I did it. I wouldn’t really want to comment on whether Paik really thought those pieces were good or whether he only did it as a friendly gesture toward his nice young assistant Tomas. Not that it makes a difference. So, anyway, I did it, and I got no answer. Then I was in the audience at the Wiesbaden festival. The festival ran for four weekends, which was far too long. On one of those weekends—I can’t remember which—I was in the audience to watch. And I saw Maciunas, who I’d seen before at *Kleines Sommerfest*, so that I knew what he looked like. Maciunas was sitting in the ticket booth with a pair of scissors and snipping off the tickets, which he himself had designed. I didn’t talk to him then—I was too shy. I thought to myself, “Well, if he didn’t answer, your stuff didn’t make the grade. You can live with that, can’t you?” But then everything seemed to happen all at once. After the Fluxus Festival in Copenhagen I got a first letter from Maciunas: “Dear Tomas Schmit, thank you very much for your pieces. Incidentally, we performed your *zyklus*¹² in Copenhagen.” I was walking on air. I thought I was the new Shakespeare. How naive I was! And then he said: “Come to Paris and join in.” And from that moment onwards I was part of the team. In Wiesbaden I was in the audience, in Copenhagen I was one of the authors, and then I went to Paris. And then there were the festivals in Paris, Düsseldorf, Amsterdam, Den Haag, and finally London, where I was on my own. That’s where Maciunas’s car died ... and that was only half a Fluxus festival in Goldsmiths College. One concert was New Music—Cage and things like that—and the second was Fluxus.

I never knew until now that Paik was so important for your development.

There’s no doubt about it. For one thing, he was the first of the crowd I got to know personally because I was cheeky enough to walk up to them and start talking, and for another, he was the one who said: “Why don’t you send a few of your pieces?” That remark was my entrée into that crowd called Fluxus. And then I was one of them.

What about the relationship between Paik and George Maciunas—what was that like? Paik was always very autonomous.

I wrote somewhere that “the more important the people were, the less closely they were involved with Fluxus.” Yes, Paik was involved, but he was a special case, really. For instance,

nobody would have dared to perform a piece by Paik. Except for Ben Vautier, because there's nothing he wouldn't dare to do. But Paik was Paik.

- 1 The *Jackson Pollock* exhibition took place from September 5 to October 8, 1961, in the Kunsthalle and the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen in Düsseldorf.
- 2 On Schmit's memories of his first meeting with Paik, see Tomas Schmit, Wilma Lukatsch, *Dreizehn Montagsgespräche*, Berlin 2008, p. 266.
- 3 Paik performed his action music, including *Hommage à John Cage*, in September 1961 in Scandinavia: specifically, in Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Oslo. "My Copenhagen concert was less good than the one in Norway. Norway was the best, Copenhagen was second best, but very successful in terms of public awareness. But that is not a real criterion" (Nam June Paik in conversation with René Block and Susanne Rennert, Vienna, February 28, 1992).
- 4 Here Schmit's memories are inexact. Among the papers of Jean-Pierre Wilhelm—who brought the action *Neo-Dada in der Musik* to the Kammerspiele in Düsseldorf—there are two letters from Wilhelm to Hansjörg Utzerath, the director of the Kammerspiele. These letters indicate that Paik and Utzerath did not make contact with each other until afterwards. For instance, Wilhelm wrote on March 10, 1962: "I had a visit from the Korean composer Nam June Paik, who also lives in Cologne. [...] His suggestion to you is an evening performance that could be called 'Neo-Dada in der Musik'." Jean-Pierre Wilhelm to Hansjörg Utzerath, first published in: Zentralarchiv des Internationalen Kunsthandels e. V. (ZADIK) in cooperation with SK Stiftung Kultur der Sparkasse KölnBonn, (ed.), "On sunny days, count the waves of the Rhine ..." *Nam June Paiks frühe Jahre im Rheinland*, Nuremberg 2005, p. 63 (= *sediment. Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Kunsthandels*, no. 9 [2005]).
- 5 *Originale* was performed in the Theater am Dom in Cologne in October and November 1961.
- 6 Tomas Schmit told me that he recruited Jürgen Flimm and Heine von Alemann as actors for *Neo-Dada in der Musik*. Like Schmit, both men were working as extras at the Cologne Opera House at the time.
- 7 *Kleines Sommerfest*, George Maciunas's first public appearance in Europe, took place at Galerie Parnass on June 9, 1962. The action evening *Neo-Dada in der Musik* was held on June 16, 1962, at the Kammerspiele in Düsseldorf. See Susanne Rennert, in *sediment*, 9 (2005), pp. 16 ff. and p. 34.
- 8 Galerie 22 on Kaiserstrasse in Düsseldorf, which was run by Jean-Pierre Wilhelm and Manfred de la Motte, was in existence from 1957 to 1960. In 1962/1963, Wilhelm became the key figure for publicizing Fluxus in Germany. The papers in his estate, which I am editing together with Sylvia Martin, show that the early actions—including, for example, the Fluxus Festival in Wiesbaden—could not have taken place without his contacts. Paik remained in touch with him throughout his life.
- 9 See Ina Conzen, "Vom Manager der Avantgarde zum Fluxusdirigenten. George Maciunas in Deutschland," in *Eine lange Geschichte mit vielen Knoten. Fluxus in Deutschland 1962–1994*, exh. cat., Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart 1995, p. 29.
- 10 From today's perspective, there seem to be two plausible explanations for Beuys's action. On the one hand he might have been referring to Paik's piece *One for Violin (Violin Solo)*, which Paik presented at *Neo-Dada in der Musik* (where Beuys was in the audience). Here Paik violently smashed a violin on a table. Was Beuys's action, then, a kind of *Hommage à Paik*? Alternatively, as Jon Hendricks suggested in a conversation with me, Beuys may have been referring to Philip Corner's *Piano Activities*, a well-known piece from the Fluxus repertoire in which the actors destroy a piano.
- 11 The *Fluxus Festspiele Neuer Musik* took place in Wiesbaden on four weekends in September 1962.
- 12 The Copenhagen Fluxus festival followed shortly afterwards in November 1962.
- 13 This is a reference to Tomas Schmit's *zyklus für wassereimer (oder flaschen)* (1962), a piece that was frequently performed at Fluxus events.

TOMAS SCHMIT "EXPOSITION OF MUSIC"

wuppertal, moltkestr. 67; a *gründerzeit* villa—like everything in wuppertal except for the wupper:—on the hill where rolf jährling has his apartment, architect's offices, and "galerie parnass"; from march 11 to 20, 1963, most of the rooms on the ground floor, the upper floor, and in the basement were devoted to paik's *exposition of music*. right in the middle of the entrance, with its nose sticking out, hangs the head of a cow (not made of papier mâché, not stuffed, but straight from the slaughterhouse); everyone who comes into the building walks right past it, close enough to see the difference between its natural front and natural back sides; a door-piece: on the outside the unfazed, the known, on the inside the fazed, the unknown.

behind this the lobby, a large white balloon doing its best to fill it out; really touching the ceiling, the floor, and the side walls of the room, but on the left and the right allowing passage: (*how to be satisfied with 70%*: after a short time the balloon bursts; and when, just a short time later, the cow's head starts to stink, then the health police are at hand).

after both the cow's head in its own way and the balloon in another way have forced the visitor to back up against the wall, he enters the exhibition, which is more of a performance, a potential performance (open for ten days every evening from half past seven through half past nine; it costs five marks to get in, but no one bothers to pay; on the first evening the guests are mainly friends of the participants, and on subsequent evenings hardly anyone at all comes by).

first an overview of the locations for these events:

in the hall four prepared pianos;

in the garden room eleven of twelve prepared television sets;

the stairs to the upper story;

upstairs the bathroom, and other rooms, the *zen-box*, *mementos of the 20th century*, *to be naked and look at yourself*;

in the basement, among other things, two double record shashliks, two recording tapes and the tape wall, the boiler room;

more *objets sonores* and other objects in various places and shifting places;

and the garden.

what is happening to the first piano (for addi köpcke and based on his *shut books*), is not visible, but tangible: the keyboard is shut tight by a board underneath it; none of the keys can be depressed, still less the strings made to resonate.

the second is on its back, and its internal organs (the strings both above and below the manual) are open for

all to see: it can be played with the feet, as you walk over it; (the fallen and prostrate provoke reflexes of attack: during the opening a professor of art from düsseldorf, in those days with no hat and no global fame, had a good go at this piano and fragmented what could be fragmented; we were pretty confounded; paik today: "i liked it.").

for all senses the two other pianos; our old piece of cultural furniture the piano as a vehicle for a pretty total spectacle;

the starting material: two simple pianos (on one of them the lower part of the front casing has been removed, on the other the upper part too); principle: *everything possible*:

the parts of the piano that normally just shine black have been covered/draped/stuck/nailed/pinned/decorated with all manner of things/devices/items (optical, acoustic, and other).

the same for the keyboard; where all sorts of tactile matter awaits the fingertips: a grease bowl, pins, soft matter, rough matter, etc.

the moody mechanics of the piano can be used in three ways:

– i press a key, the key moves the hammer, and that strikes the string/s; some of the hammers have been prepared by matter placed on them and many of the strings have been prepared by objects placed on, under, or between them, others are in their original state, some are missing.

– i press a key, the key moves the hammer, and the hammer moves the object that is stuck or hung onto it; for example: it causes an old shoe hanging above the lid to swing up and down.

– i press a key, and it in turn presses a bellows installed underneath it for example; or an electric switch: the switches in turn are of three kinds, pushbutton, rocker, or double switches; examples:

– if i press the C#5, a transistor radio is heard; it is silent again as soon as i take my finger off the C sharp key.

– if i press F2, then an electric motor (!..) screwed to the soundboard starts to vibrate; it stops again when i press the same F a second time.

– if i press C3, a hot-air fan starts up, blowing hot air onto my legs; the switch that turns it off is hidden beneath the A4.

other effects include several transistor radios, one or several film projectors, a siren (and more?) that are activated in this way.

one key switches off the lighting for the entire room (and back on again, if you can find the key again in the dark). yet more objects can be seen, moved, used on these two pianos: a doll's head, a hand siren, a cow horn, a bunch of feathers, barbed wire, spoons, a little tower of pfennig coins stuck together, all sorts of toys, photos, a bra, an

accordion, a tin with an aphrodisiac, a record player arm, a padlock, loose levers, etc. etc.

these pianos were placed in the first room of the exhibition and were available for use by visitors; and they were eagerly used, not least because it was all so exciting.

by the way, the accessories on the pianos were neither predefined nor categorized later; we fiddled about with all the objects even while the exhibition was in progress; and some of the many additions were—if not deliberately then at least knowingly—pretty fragile: if something broke then it was repaired; or replaced by something else; or simply abandoned.

and doubtless it was with a similar straightforward randomness and free matter-of-factness that pianos came to be in the first place.

in the space between the hall and the garden eleven television sets; arrangement—like for the pianos—at random; one is on a windowsill, another on top of a third, the others are on the floor.

the starting material is the regular television program, but this is no longer recognizable on most of the televisions.

(the various complex interventions that paik carried out on the internal organs of the tvs transcend the comprehension of the lay electrician and mine too; i try to describe the results):

one of the televisions shows a negative and moving picture. on one of them the picture has been rolled up like a barrel around the central vertical axis of the screen. on one of them the horizontal has been modulated. in what paik sees as the most complex case, three independent sine oscillations have aggravated the parameters of the image.

for the pair: the lower one is striped horizontally, the upper one is striped vertically (the upper shows the same picture as the lower, but is lying on its side instead of on its feet).

on the *zen tv* a single vertical white line runs down the center of the screen.

one of them is standing on its face and is showing its program to the parquet floor (paik today: "that one was broken").

on the eight upper tvs the shape of the picture (for television you say picture even for a picture moving through time!) is determined by the more or less controlled manipulation of the set electronics, and on the four lower tvs the manipulation leads to the picture being determined or influenced by material fed in from the outside:

one of them is connected to a foot switch lying in front of it; if you press it then the short-circuits created lead to a firework display of sudden, instantly extinguished flashes

of light on the screen.

one of them is hooked up to a microphone; if someone speaks into it, he sees a similar but now continuous firework display of flashing lights.

the *kuba tv* goes the farthest; it is connected to a tape recorder that feeds in music (to it and to us): the parameters of the music determine the parameters of the picture.

finally (in the upper story) the *one point tv*, which is linked to radio, shows a bright dot in the middle of the screen,

the size of which varies with the volume of the radio program; when it becomes louder, the dot gets bigger, when it becomes quieter, it gets smaller.

all sorts of makeshift instruments on the stairs leading up to the upper story; if you use them then you hear your footsteps differently, insofar as you hear them at all. in the bathtub, head under water, foot hanging over the edge, a shop-window mannequin.

the *zen box*: a large heavy wooden box, standing on its open lid: one person can crawl under and sit in it while others knock on it from above.

to be naked and look at yourself: all sorts of mirror foils are hanging from the ceiling of the room right down to the floor; in the middle a hot-air fan, turned up: you can stand over it and feel the warm air between your legs.

mementos of the 20th century: spread over the floor all the reports and photos that appeared in the international press when marilyn monroe died.

paik's piece *in january, stain the american flag with your own monthly blood. in february, stain the burmese flag with your own monthly blood. in march, stain the chinese flag ... etc.* realized by alison; the results are hanging on the wall.

in the basement five pieces on the subject of the record player and tape recorder; points of departure:

the pick-ups (on the record player the pick-up arm, on the tape recorder the generously pea-sized and almost bean-sized metal knob or tape head, which reads the sound onto and off the tape in the center of the machine) have been taken out of the two devices and are now connected to them only via extension leads; the user can take them in his hands and move them around freely as far as the leads permit; and the more than 30 records that he can listen to are not placed on turntables, and the many meters of tape on offer are not running on reels. the two record machines look like this: a record player (or at least the motor and the turntable of one) is mounted on a radio, which serves as pedestal, amplifier, and loud-speaker; the axis of the turntable has been extended upwards to become a pole a meter high; on this rotating pole there are around ten records (arbitrarily chosen and placed at arbitrary intervals on the pole); next to it another record shashlik of the same kind, connected

to the first with a rubber band and rotating at a similar speed: the user takes the pick-up arm and goes for a stroll with his sapphire on the records. the principle of the two tape recorders is similar: positioned on a frame at knee height is a 60-cm-wide horizontal cardboard roll, which turns by means of a motor; parallel to it, a good meter away, is a second cardboard roll; running across both is a 50-cm-wide length of cloth, rather like a conveyor belt, with assorted pieces of recording tape stuck to it, parallel to the direction of movement; the user can listen to these tape fragments by placing his tape head on them. for the two double shashliks and the two recording tapes it is as if both supply and demand are in motion; in the case of the third tape recorder piece the supply is static and if he wants to hear something the user has to move: a mess of pieces of tape is stuck to the wall of the basement, like a map of a city, say: from wagner street to stockhausen crescent; and back, or the like.

in the boiler room all sorts of objects made of lead are hanging from the ceiling; tubs, buckets, canisters, etc.; a golf club is at hand to set them in motion and in sound. in the same room: a wooden box; a chair on it; and if you sit on the chair an empty cardboard suitcase swings over your head; a sedentary piece, and a musical piece, too, as the sitter can reach the suitcase with his hands and the box with his feet.

three more sedentary pieces: a chair; above it two small transistor radios on a coat hanger; they rotate at moderate speed around the head of the person sitting on the chair; if one of them emits sound from the front left, then the other from the back right, etc. if you sit on the toilet of the building, you have a mirror in front of you and above you a plaster head that is hung upside down and hangs down as far as your own head; four eyes look into the mirror, hair touches hair. beneath one of the piano seats there is a small board, on which a metal spring clinks as it rocks back and forth.

more *objets sonores* and/or *instruments for zen-exercise*: *zen for hand* is a plastic sieve with all sorts of objects worked into it.

zen for face: a tactile wall relief, to be felt with the face.

four zen for walking: a team of two times four condensed milk tins, skewered onto a small stick, which in turn is attached to a string; you can pull it along after you. also on a string for pulling along, a violin. and a spoon.

and the tiny front axle of a doll's pram.

a battery of six flat batteries, held together by scotch tape; if you pluck the twelve metal contacts sticking out of the top of the batteries, they will make twelve idiosyncratic sounds.

the small sex-piano: a small toy grand; instead of strings, the keys activate two stuffed special-effects condoms (one readily available in shops, the other homemade and larded with thumb tacks), a tin clip, a bamboo stick, a tea strainer.

the record player you can listen to with your mouth: an ancient, purely mechanical machine, the loose audio head is at the back, attached to an artificial penis: you can take this in your mouth and place the needle on the record; (note: our ossicles evolved out of the temperomandibular joint).

old zen: a clothes hanger piece ("zinbad"), on each end an ancient audio head: you can hold this up against a record so that one needle plays one part of the record and the other a completely different part (eg directly opposite); and another sound hanger; and two record players; and the user has two arms.

finally: in a bush in the front garden *zen for wind*: rattles, clappers, a tin, a key, a wooden doll, a metal bolt, a sandal, and other objects hang on strings and whisper to one another.

and a parachute (white silk) is spread out on the grass in the garden and on the parachute there is an old sewing machine. end.

i helped paik to set up the exhibition at the time; and now i have written here what memory, the photos available, and a short conversation reminiscing with paik have produced. *how to be satisfied with 70%*.

a few more views:

indeterminism, freedom, *random access*: six wuppertal citizens visit the paik exhibition; the first does one thing, the second another, the third does all sorts of things together with the fourth, the fifth does hardly anything at all, the sixth mucks in, does something: each as he desires; so far, so good.

one level back things unfortunately look different: six wuppertal citizens leave their homes; the first goes to the zoo, the second goes to work to earn his living, the third goes to a bar with the fourth, the fifth goes to the paik exhibition, the sixth just takes a walk around the block: each as he desires....

man that would be...: a free play among the thousand and one ways of satisfying the consciousness...; that would be: trees and snakes and apples and no sword of flame anywhere to be seen, that's what it would be. but please: you can show on one level what the other level should be getting used to doing.

do it yourself: in our world most sensual activity is more or less academically patterned (horizontally: into subjects, vertically: into value systems).

the exceptions are the best and they show up the absurdity of the rule; what would happen if, for example, we said that everyone could do their own screwing, what nonsense! let's leave it to the experts, who can do it better than *you*! (the aesthetic products of artistically valuable screwing are then presented to the public: if the screwing artists screw each other, then films of the act are shown in state video libraries; if the screwing artist screws the wife of the collector of screwing art then he can buy the film of the act; etc).
the *exposition of music* was one of the first and certainly one of the most effective attempts—at least internally—at replacing this miserable pattern with another one.

there are two dangers inherent in all do-it-yourself art: for one, that the so-called audience is used like a living substitute for a table of random numbers and thus is abused by the artist in the name of his art-ideological aims; then the feeding of the sea-lions: the experts stand around on the stairs talking shop and get off on the fact that the naive public beneath them seems to be enjoying the stuff presented to it.
in the wuppertal exhibition paik brilliantly avoided both of these pitfalls; this is a question of seriousness.

"if the rooster crows on a pedestal, then it must be a dung heap."
for—let's say around 100 years (or of course: since forever)—the two things that interest us the most are, or should be:
– the concrete, the real, the relationship between art and reality and statements about this.
– the direct, the straightforward, the relationship between art and consumer and statements about this.
both in many ways are a question of the pedestal.
so let's do away with the pedestal for art. but that cannot be done.
no pedestal would mean: no art (would that be possible? should it be possible?).

in any case it would be too much to say paik abolished the pedestal in wuppertal; but that he did at least break down the great pedestal (*which no one sees any more*) into *several, small, different* ones that you can see pretty easily, was quite an achievement.

sensuality is contact-to-the-world without a pedestal (?).
worldsensuality (: zen (?)):
not just lying about, sitting about, standing about, walking about, running about, but seeing yourself walking about (you don't need a mirror or film camera for this), hearing yourself walking about, smelling yourself lying about, tasting yourself standing about, feeling yourself sitting about.
clever stuff, lion!; but that is just pedestal again.
so do just lie about, sit about, stand about, walk about, run about.
and probably: *and so on!*

"no, the big ones at the bottom and the little ones at the top!" (a basic rule of christmas tree decorating).
there are a lot of basic rules like this for decorating the art scene with artworks. there isn't one I can think of that paik did not boldly ignore in wuppertal. without banging his fist on the table, but at least along those lines.
hence the simple matter-of-fact approach; and freedom; and straightforwardness.
circular straightforwardness.

an end to gushing.
but it was simply tremendous, this exposition of music.
and thanks for reading.

tomas schmit, august 76
(written for and published in NAM JUNE PAIK,
kölnischer kunstverein 1976)

Nam June Paik

"De la musique avant toute chose ..." didn't Verlaine say that? In other words: Only music, and nothing but music. Of course, the rebellious symbolist and friend of Rimbaud did not mean it that way. He wanted to use that sentence in his lyric poetry—to make the verses "sing" and to deemphasize the semantic level. Verlaine was shyly attempting the revolutionary act that was finally and definitively achieved a little later by Mallarmé: the elimination of the borders and the negation of the differences between poetry, music, and dance. Mallarmé's theoretical writings and his works *Un Coup de Dés* and the fragmentary *Le Livre* clearly indicate that his aim was to achieve a kind of total work of art. One could translate *Le Livre* as "the book as such," "the book in general," or "the absolute book." It should be borne in mind that Mallarmé, like Baudelaire, was an ardent Wagnerian. For sure, when they applauded the *Tannhäuser* scandal in Paris, they could not help viewing the opera as children of their own time, but they did intuitively detect something in the Teutonic genius that strove towards a "synthesis of the arts" and that aimed at eliminating the many little genre pigeonholes in art. The Korean Nam June Paik succeeded in achieving what Wagner attempted in his clumsy, German-genius style. While he did not create a synthesis of the arts, he suffused the entire universe with music. After scouring the entire canon of East Asian and European music all the way to its remotest corners (he was even a student of Fortner's once for two minutes, and smashed an egg in a hallway of the Freiburg Music School), and after picking apart both Zen and twelve-tone music, i.e. the entire corpus of Schönberg's and Webern's legacy, he inevitably found his way to electronic music, which he explored and then rejected. Possibly he felt the same way about it as Pierre Boulez, who always said that he simply did not have the time to come to grips with the complicated technology. Boulez was put off by the amount of time he would lose by dealing with purely technical issues. But Paik threw himself into the technical fray and filled his studio with generators and every imaginable electronic device. Then he encountered John Cage and Dada (which, however, had a different impact on his East Asian brain than on us) and used these two factors to bring about a new liberation. Paik compared Cage with Montaigne and quoted the latter as follows: "Is the philosopher playing with the cat or is the cat playing with the philosopher?" It is irrelevant here that both Baudelaire and Mallarmé were great cat lovers. The great French poets bequeathed descendants of the famous cat to one another throughout the nineteenth century, and I have no doubt that descendants of Baudelaire's cat can still be found in Paris today. To begin with, Paik introduced aggressiveness into music. He went further than Cage's "prepared piano"

by publicly sawing apart or smashing pianos and violins. And what else could one say about the piano, after Chopin and Liszt, than what Cage recently said in the Berlin *Kongresshalle* ("Music in the Technological Age") on being asked by Stuckenschmidt what he thought about the piano. He answered: "I think it is extremely useful." And that said it all.

Paik immersed himself in the modern sciences. He studied relativism and indeterminism and even the aleatoric principle that Cage pioneered in music. He also studied the theories of K. O. Götz on kinetic painting and electronic television. Paik owes a great deal to the systematology which Götz developed over a period of seventeen years. But the conclusions he drew from this and from the music of John Cage were completely unexpected. The result was that he produced something radically new, and it was this: Our universe, the place where we exist, is transformed through and through into music, sound, noise. This can be done without using complicated devices, although it is possible to incorporate such things as well. Because here nothing is excluded or eliminated. Thanks to Paik, we discover that our entire world can become sound—or rather, that it *is* sound. He frees us from the terrible limitations of conventional musical instruments and from the unforeseeable potentials of electronic music. He does away with all structure once and for all. We experience the dialectical dissolution of all ostensibly indissoluble contradictions: polyphony, homophony, tonality, dodecaphony, electronic music. At a single stroke, everything comes together in concord in a way we would not have imagined in our wildest dreams. Pythagoras lived in vain with his introduction of the concept of numbers and number mysticism in music. And Asian pentatonic music, too, disintegrates into nothingness here. Messiaen, with his attempts to revive modalism and his desperate striving to bring Indian music and birdsong to the concert halls of Europe, cannot hold his own against Paik. Schönberg was, and continues to be, a grandiose patriarch in the style of the Old Testament. He committed a kind of Freudian patricide by disposing of tonality, for which we will be eternally grateful to him. But Paik frees us from atonality and any kind of systematology. What he gives us is pure sound, sound which we never heard before. Now we know that the rattling of a few tin cans on an asphalt pavement is worth more than Beethoven's Ninth. (Jean-Pierre Wilhelm)

As many people know, K. O. Götz has been publishing for years about kinetic painting and about the programming of electronic television. It was he who was largely responsible for awakening my interest in television, for which I thank him most respectfully. Vostell's idea (*décollage* television) and the efforts of Knud Wiggen (my "competitor" of the "music machine") to develop the

electronic television studio in Stockholm also deserve to be mentioned here.

K. O. Götz once said: I performed many experiments with Brownian tubes in Norway (seventeen years ago). Some great pictures resulted. But one can unfortunately neither control nor fix them. *FIX!* ... that word hit me like lightning. Yes—then it must be the most fitting means to deal with indeterminism (today the central problem in ethics and aesthetics, perhaps also in physics and the economy [see the recent altercation between Erhard and Hallstein]). Therein lies the foundational concept of my television experiments. Similarly, K. O. Götz concluded as early as 1959 that an electronic image that is to be generated productively (rather than reproductively) must be defined in an indeterminist way. Although Götz thought inductively and I follow Vostell by thinking deductively, one could say that electronic television is not merely the application and extension of electronic music (at least the first stage of electronic music), which exhibits a fixed, determined tendency both in its serial method of composition and in its ontological form (that of tape recordings destined for repetition). Of course this kind of stylistic property has nothing to do with the positive or negative evaluation of individual pieces (if any such thing even exists outside of art auctions), nor does it apply to the still youthful future of electronic music (which was demonstrated in the most recent concert, “Musik der Zeit,” in Cologne).

I not only extended the range of material under consideration from 20kHz to 4mHz; I also tended to use the physical properties of the electron (indeterminism, dual character and particle/wave nature). The smallest unit that the human intellect can currently imagine and detect represents a beautiful slap in the face of classical dualism in philosophy since the time of Plato ... essence AND appearance, *essentia* AND *existentia*. In the case of the electron, however, *EXISTENTIA IS ESSENTIA*.

(Interesting parallel with Sartre-like speculations on human freedom)

Determining the motion of electrons is a contradiction in terms. For instance, you can build a sine wave generator for 10 marks—but if you want to scale it reasonably accurately, in other words to determine its frequencies (absolute “accuracy” does not exist at all in technology and barely exists in physics), you need to lay out over 10,000 marks. Today, in addition to this natural instability, we know of still another dimension of the electron’s indeterminism—namely live broadcasts on television, radio, police radio, amateur radio, coffee makers, electrical drills, pirate radio, propaganda radio, radio cabs, SOS radio, espionage radio etc., all the way down to satellite broadcasts. The electron is everywhere. When a car drives by, it creates new movement and a new constellation.

Roughly speaking, there are two or two and a half kinds of NOTHING:

1.a) The absurdity of human existence thrust into this world (factuality).

“Why are you killing me?”

“Because you live on the other side of the river.”
(Pascal on law and justice.)

All justice under international law and
Every border dispute refers to this “fragility.”

b) “Nothing” as the dialectic element of the leap toward freedom, toward believing in God, toward the act of revolution and/or toward rape and execution ... a favorite theme of Sartre and Camus etc.

The Nothing of a) and b) is humanistic, dynamic, appassionato, often cruel. (My work to date [action music etc.] belongs [perhaps] into this category.)

2. Other kinds of Nothing are static, cosmological, transhumanist, ontological ... etc.

Nothing as perfection = pre-cosmic chaos (Lao Tse, Chen Chu)—transhumanist mystery (Kant’s “thing-in-itself”)—NOTHING as the primary subject of metaphysics as an ontological question (Heidegger)—

Beyond the perspective of the Palomar telescope—
Montaigne’s optimistic nature cult—Cage (it’s strange that nobody has written yet about the astonishing similarity of Cage and Montaigne)

e.g.

“A philosopher plays with a cat.
Is the philosopher playing with the cat?
or
Is the cat playing with the philosopher?”
(Montaigne)

“I dreamed that I turned into a butterfly. Am I the dreaming butterfly that thinks it is human?”

or

Am I the dreaming human who thinks he is a butterfly?” (Cage—Chen Chu)

Cosmic boredom—

Harmony as quasi-chaos—

Chaos as quasi-harmony—

My new work (Exhibition of Music. Electronic Television) is closer to the latter kind of NOTHING:

Perhaps this can help us to plumb the dimension of depth which, although it can be perceived, it is very difficult to demonstrate.

try it

At first you will (probably) find it interesting—later it becomes boring—

Persevere!

it will (probably) become interesting again—

then it will turn boring again—

persevere!

... ..

... ..

... ..

When this wave (one of the most widespread phenomena in the physical, biological, human world) accumulates, you might reach a realm beyond the beautiful and the unbeautiful. Whether or not I can convince you— Whether or not it is even legitimate to convince other people about these matters (because there is no frontier between persuasion and force) is another question. At any rate, I like to say what Dick Higgins said to the music critic, or rather to the music reporter (in analogy to the sports reporter): You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.

Nam June Paik
(German by C. Caspari)

P. S. Also, I learned the intensive use of technical elements from Mary Bauermeister, "cooking party" from Alison Knowles, "prepared piano" from John Cage, etc. etc. etc.—∞; I learned the use of mirror foil from Kiender, "monochromity" from Klein, "shutting events" from Kopke [sic], "Parachute" from Maciunas, teremin [sic] wiring and the basics of electronics" from Patterson, the use of barbed wire from Vostell, and many different things from Tomas Schmitt [sic] and Frank Trowbridge in the course of our cooperation.

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That's Fit to Print"

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It's a better news paper than the others.
It's a better news paper than the others.
It's a better news paper than the others.
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Fluxus cc five ThReE

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Afterlude to the EXPOSITION of EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION 1963, March, Galerie Parnass, New York, PAIX.

(11)
My experimental TV is
not always interesting
but
not always uninteresting
Like nature, which is beautiful,
not because it changes beautifully,
but simply because it changes.

The core of the beauty of nature is, that, the limitless
QUANTITY of nature dissolves the category of QUALITY,
which is used unconsciously mixed and confused with
double meanings.

1) character
2) value.
In my experimental TV, the words "QUALITY"
means only the CHARACTER, but not the VALUE.

A is different from B,
but not that
A is better than B.

Sometimes I need red lips.
Sometimes I need red lips.

(20)

2 My experimental TV is the first ART (?) in which
the "perfect crime" is possible. I had put
just a diode once composite direction, and got a "waving"
negative Television. If my experiment do the same trick,
the result will be completely the same (unlike Western and
Westerners). That is.....
My TV is NOT the expression of my personality,
but merely

a "PHYSICAL MUSIC"

like my "FLUXUS championcones",
in which the "longest-running-time-recorder" is hon-
ored with his national hymn, (the first champion:
F. Troubridge, U.S.A. 59.7 seconds)

My TV is more (?) than the art.

or less (?) than the art.

I can compose something, which lies

higher (?) than my personality,

or lower (?) than my personality.

~~~~~ 3 ~~~~~

Therefore (?) perhaps therefore, the working  
process and the final result has little to do....  
and therefore..... by my previous work I was happy  
working as in these TV laboratories.

In usual compositions, we have first the approx-  
imate vision of the completed work, (the pre-imagined  
idea, or "IDEA" in the sense of Plato). Then, the  
working process means the torturing endeavor to ap-  
proach to this ideal "IDEA". But in the experimental  
TV, the thing is completely revised. Usually I don't,  
or cannot have any pre-imagined VISION before working.  
First I take the "WAY". If which I cannot for-  
see where it leads to. The "WAY"..... that means,  
to cut some pieces and feed the different waves there,  
to change the phase of waves etc..... where technical  
details, I will publish in the next essay..... Anyway,  
what I need is approximately the same kind of "IDEA"  
which American Ad Agency used to use..... just a  
way or a key to something. N.B. This "medium" (?)  
usage of "IDEA" has not much to do with "TRUTH",  
"ETERNITY", "CONSUMMATION", "ideal IDEA",  
which Plato-Mepel ascribed to this celebrated clas-  
sical terminology. (IDEA)  
E.L.

\*KUNST IST DIE ERSCHEINUNG DER IDEE:  
"Art is the appearance of the idea"  
(Hegel---Schiller)

This difference should be underlined, because the  
"Fetters of Ideas" seems to me the main critical cri-  
terion in the contemporary art, like "Modernity and Sim-  
plicity" in the Greek art (Wittkowitz), or famous free  
pairs of categories of Wittkowitz in Renaissance and  
Baroque art.

~~~~~ 4 ~~~~~

INDETERMINISM and VARIABILITY is the very
UNDERDEVELOPED parameter in the optical art,
although this has been the central problem in music
for the last 10 years, (just as parameter SEX is very
underdeveloped in music, as opposed to literature and
optical art).

a) I utilized intensely the live-transmission of
normal program, which is the most variable

optical and semantical event, in Kinetos-
copes. The beauty of distorted Kennedy is
different from the beauty of football here, or not
always pretty but always stupid female announcer.

b) Second dimension of variability.
13 sets suffered 13 sorts of variations in their
VIDEO-HORIZONTAL-VERTICAL units. I am
proud to be able to say that all 13 sets actually
changed their inner circuits. No two sets had
the same kind of technical operation. Not one of
the simple blur, which occurs, when you turn
the vertical and horizontal control-button at home.
I enjoyed very much the study of electronics,
which I began in 1961, and some time later, I
met while working with I.S. Kline-Valls. I had the
luck to meet nice collaborators: HIDEO UCHIDA
(president of UCHIDA Radio Research Institute), a
general avant-garde electronics, who discovered
the principle of Transistor 2 years earlier than
the Americans, and SHUYA ABE, almighty poli-
technician, who knows that the science is more a
beauty than the logic. UCHIDA is now trying to
prove the telepathy and prophesy electromagnetic-
ally.

c) As the third dimension of variability, the waves
from various generators, tape-recorders and
radios are fed to various points to give different
rhythms to each other. This rather old-typed
beauty, which is not essentially combined with
High Frequency Technique, was easier to under-
stand to the normal audience, maybe because it
had some humorous aspects.

d) There are as many sorts of TV circuits, as
French chess-sets. F.I. some old models of
1952 do certain kind of variation, which new
models with automatic frequency control cannot
do.

e) Many mystics are interested to spring out from
ONE-ROW-TIME, ONE-WAY-TIME, in order to
GRASP the Eternity.

a2) To stop at the consummated or sterile Zero-point
is a classical method to grasp the eternity.

b2) To perceive SIMULTANEOUSLY the parallel
flows of many independent movements is another
classical way for it.

But poor Joyce was compelled to write the parallel
advancing stories in one book with one-way direction,
because of the alibi of the book. The simultaneous
perception of the parallel flows of 13 independent TV
movements can perhaps realize this old dream of mys-
tics, although the problem is left unresolved, whether
this is possible with our normal physiology (we
have only one heart, one breath, one focus of eye.)
without some mystical training. BUT IF WELL
TRAINED..... he needs neither 13 TVs, nor TV,
nor electronics, nor music, nor art..... the happiest
savior of art..... the most difficult art-art, the true
artist..... I don't know who could have achieved
this peaceful and sterile consummation of art.

because if he REALLY did,

I should not know his name.

I must not know his name.

~~~~~ 5 ~~~~~

This reflection reminds me of two usages of the word  
"ECSTASY", which originally means in Greek

ekstasis (ek= out of - histanai to set, stand).

a2) Normal use of this word is the frenzy of poetic in-  
spiration, or mental transport or rapture from the  
contemplation of divine things. (A.C.D.)

In other words,...

== completely filled time == the presence of eter-  
nal present

== a kind of abnormal situation of the conscious-  
ness

== unconscious or superconsciousness ==

extreme concentration

== some mystics forget themselves

== I unify with myself == The world stops for 3  
minutes !!! the eternal 3 minutes !!!

(Dostoyevsky, before having the spasm of  
Lauterbach etc. etc.)

== There is distinction of "HIGH" OR "DEEP",  
which Germans are very fond of .....

a2) Above uses are somehow related with the abnormal  
state of consciousness, but J.P. SARTRE applied this  
word (ECSTASY) in analyzing our consciousness in  
NORMAL STATE.

(S. L'Éve et Le Néant)

According to Sartre, our consciousness (cogito) is  
always "face pour soi" (face for self), a kind of  
being, which cannot unify with itself. We are con-  
demned to think and that means we are condemned to  
not.

That means in his word

I AM ALWAYS, WHAT I AM NOT  
I AM ALWAYS NOT I, WHAT I AM.

This universal EX-TASIS (to go out of oneself)  
is the "NORMAL" character in the normal situation  
of our consciousness. The word "Ecstasy" (ekstasis)  
is used here, almost as an antonym to the first case  
(ex). In ex) our consciousness is UNIFIED with it-  
self. It has synthesized the dualism of our conscious-  
ness. But in a2), this dualism, or the dialectic evolu-  
tion of our spirit is kept precious as the proof of  
our freedom....

3) & 11

The nail (to stop at the consummated or sterile zero-point to  
grasp the eternity....) and the nail, (the ecstasy, in the  
sense of "mental transport or rapture from the contempla-  
tion of divine things") is the same thing.  
But the b2) (the perception of parallel flows of many inde-  
pendent movements simultaneously) and the a2) (the  
ecstasy in the sense of Sartre....) that is, the perpetual  
proceeding of our consciousness in the normal state....  
seems to be completely different. But there are important  
common things between these two (b2) and a2).  
Both b2) and a2) don't know the terminal station, conclu-  
sion, second absolute moment, consummation, extinction.  
In other words, they are relative, relative, suspending,  
plain and common, movable, variable, hanging in mid-air....

NOT VERY SATISFIED,  
BUT NOT VERY UNSATISFIED.....

like my experimental TV, which is  
NOT ALWAYS INTERESTING,  
BUT NOT ALWAYS UNINTERESTING.....

~~~~~ 7 ~~~~~

Now let me talk about Zen, although I avoid it usually,
not to become the salesman of "OUR" culture like Daisetsu
Suzuki, because the cultural patriotism is more harmful
than the political patriotism, because the former is the
disputed one, and especially the self-consumption of Zen
(the doctrine of the self-sterilization) must be the stupid
savior of Zen.

Anyway, Zen consists of two negations.

The first negation is:

The absolute IS the relative.

The second negation is:

The relative IS the absolute.

The first negation is a simple fact, which every mortal
meets every day, everything passes away.... nothing
lasts, here, now, youth, fame.... etc.

The second negation is the KEY-point of Zen.

That means.....

The NOW is utopia, what it may be.

The NOW in 10 minutes is also utopia, what it may be.

The NOW in 20 hours is also utopia, what it may be.

The NOW in 30 months is also utopia, what it may be.

The NOW in 40 million years is also utopia, what it
may be.

Therefore

We should learn,

how to be satisfied with 75%.

how to be satisfied with 50%.

how to be satisfied with 25%.

how to be satisfied with 0%.

how to be satisfied with +100%.....

Zen is anti-avant-garde, anti-thunder spirit, anti-Kennedy..

Zen is responsible of Asian poverty.

How can I justify ZEN, without justifying Asian poverty ??

It is another problem, to which I will refer again in the next
essay.

Anyway, if you see my TV, please see it more than 30 minutes.

The perpetual evolution is the perpetual dissatisfaction.

It is the only merit of Hegelian dialectic.

(R. KUTAGAWA)

The perpetual dissatisfaction is the perpetual evolution.

It is the main merit of my experimental TV.

(N.J.P.)

The frustration remains as the frustration.

There is NO ecstasy.

(E)

Don't expect from my TV: Shock, Expressionism, Remanti-
sm, Cézanne, Surrealism, etc..... for which my previous
conceptions had the honour to be praised. In Galerie Parnass,
one bull's head made more sensation than 13 TV sets. May be
one needs 10 years to be able to perceive because difference
of 13 different "dissections" (??), as it was so in perceiving
the delicate difference of many kinds of "musées" (??) in the
field of electronic music.

(Please, refer to introduction of J.P. Sartre
and my own to the Exposition of 1963 March in
Galerie Parnass, New York, Unpublished, Unpublished, also
published in Decalage no. 4.)

Halle mit den Klavieren | Hall with Pianos



12

Von den vier Klavieren waren drei präpariert. Paik hat das *Klavier Intégral* und vermutlich auch die beiden anderen aus Köln mitgebracht, während das von Beuys zerstörte von der Wuppertaler Klavierfabrik Ibach zur Verfügung gestellt wurde. Paik nennt es ein Geschenk von Ibach, Montwé spricht von einem geborgten Ausstellungsstück. Auf jeden Fall war es nicht präpariert und nach der Aktion von Beuys zerstört. Die drei anderen Klaviere sind in der Sammlung Block beziehungsweise im MUMOK erhalten. Das *Klavier K* war eine Art von Hommage an Arthur Kopcke und hatte die Tasten so blockiert, wie Kopcke etwa Bücher zu Objekten verleimte. Die beiden anderen nannte Tomas Schmit „Pianos for all senses“. In seiner originalen Präparierung ist nur das *Klavier Intégral* erhalten, dessen „Biografie“ Paik selbst niedergeschrieben hat. Er erwarb es 1958. Auf jenen Fotos, die Manfred Leve 1959 in Paiks Atelier gemacht hat, könnte es zu sehen sein. 1960 war es im Atelier von Mary Bauermeister im Einsatz, 1961 borgte es Paik Benjamin Patterson für eine Aufführung bei Haro Lauhus. Weil es sich noch in der Galerie befand, als Christo im Juli 1961 hier seine erste Einzelausstellung vorbereitete, wurde es wie andere Dinge im Galerieraum verpackt. Hahn kaufte es 1967, 1978 kam es mit der Sammlung Hahn nach Wien.

There were four pianos, three of which were prepared pianos. Paik brought *Klavier Intégral* and probably two more pianos from Cologne, while the piano which Beuys destroyed had been provided by Wuppertal's leading piano manufacturer, Ibach. According to Paik, Ibach gave it as a present, but Montwé says it was a loan. At all events it was not a prepared piano and Beuys's activities totally destroyed it. The other three pianos have been preserved in the Sammlung Block and at MUMOK. The *Klavier K* piano was a sort of homage to Arthur Kopcke. Its keyboard was blocked, similar to the way Kopcke glued books together to make art objects. For the other two pianos Tomas Schmit found the name "pianos for all senses." *Klavier Intégral* is the only one to survive in its original prepared state. Paik himself wrote a "biography" for it. He bought it in 1958. Possibly it appears in the photos that Manfred Leve made in Paik's studio in 1959. In 1960 it was used in Mary Bauermeister's studio and in 1961 Paik loaned it to Benjamin Patterson for a performance at Haro Lauhus's art gallery. Since it was still at the gallery when Christo had his first solo exhibition there in July 1961 it was wrapped along with the gallery's other furnishings. Wolfgang Hahn bought it in 1967 and in 1978 it was moved to Vienna as part of the Hahn collection.

Nam June Paik, Brief an Wolfgang Hahn mit Biografie von *Klavier Intégral*
Letter to Wolfgang Hahn with an biography for *Klavier Intégral*, 1967
2 Seiten, Schreibmaschine auf Papier | 2 pages, typewriter on paper
28 x 21,5 cm
Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, seit | since 1978
Ehemals Sammlung Hahn, Köln | former Collection Hahn, Cologne
© Nam June Paik Estate, Foto | photo: MUMOK, Lisa Rastl/Lena Deinhardstein

Nam June Paik
359 Canal St
NYC New York 13

Dear Mister Wolfgang Hahn:

I recently heard, that you bought my "Piano Intégral" or in more popular style "prepared piano." It is a great pleasure for me, that this work, on which I worked the longest, and that I love the most, will find in worthy hands a reputable resting place ... But I am also a little sad, as it was always the most romantic moment for me to play this piano once a year in Bensberg, when I am in Germany ... I have always found my lost time in this way ... During my next trip to Cologne I will repair this piano, or maybe enhance it, that it will have an everlasting live in his new and maybe also mine artistic "home."

I am working on my second one-man Show in Bonino gallery, that will happen circa in one one years time. I send you a few newspaper-clippings form Bonino and Howard Wise's Show.

At last a small request:

I do not know, how the payment agreement with Gallery Tobies & Silex was done ... but I would be very happy, if you could pay my part of sum of the sales price, that is U.S. \$ 300 directly to my bank account in New York via your bank by air, this would be \$ 150 before June 10, 1967 and \$ 150 before July 10, 1967 ...

Nam June Paik

Savings account 0110983888

First National City Bank

Canal St Branch

Broadway & Canal St., N.Y.C., N.Y. 13

Biography of *Klavier Intégral*

I have bought it somewhere in a Cologne suburb in autumn 1958. It was one of the 4 pianos, that I had then. I began the preparation circa in Winter 1958 or Spring 1959. I found out, that this piano was built during the Prussian-French war by Ibach. For the time span of four and a half years, the two prepared pianos were my permanent companions ... I never worked only on them, but was never totally away from them ... it is, why I feel a sense of nostalgia for them.

In 1961 or 62, Benjamin Petterson used this piano for his first concert at Galerie Haro Lauhus, and afterwards, Christo wrapped it up ... white lacquer, which is still visible, are the remains of Christo's Opus ... it would have been much more expensive, when I would not have taken off Christo's wrapping ... but then I never looked at art and money together ... certainly I regret it now ...

In 1963, this piano was ... with his sister piano the main piece in my Music-Exhibition at Parnass. Mister Jährling told me, that Ibach is a Wuppertal manufacturer, and we telephoned the Ibach-factory, and he gave me another Ibach for the exhibition, which Beuys destroyed grandiosely in the evening of the exhibition opening ... it was wonderful ...

You will find some planed space in the lid. That is a reminder of the famous concert in the studio of Mary Bauermeister in 1960, where I planed and nailed this same piano, and where I cut up John Cage's tie ... Now you will understand, how much love and Karma I have for this piano ...

During my next visit in Cologne, I will teach you, how to play this piano the best ...

Yours sincerely



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Der zweigeteilte Gartenraum zeigte in seinem zur Halle gelegenen Teil, mit dieser durch eine Tür verbunden, elf oder zwölf Fernsehgeräte (ein weiteres befand sich im Obergeschoß), von denen nur *Kuba TV* erhalten ist. Von den anderen hat Paik autorisierte Repliken hergestellt. Das im MUMOK befindliche *Zen for TV* trägt, wie Paik schriftlich niedergelegt hat, das Label „ZEN FOR TV 63 (MARCH) – 75 PAIK“ des 1967 verloren gegangenen Gerätes und ist laut Paik als das Original anzusehen.¹

Fotos der Bildstörungen haben Montwé und Brötzmann gemacht, von Brötzmann existieren zusätzlich zwölf Fotos im Archiv Sohm.²

- 1 Handschriftliche Aufzeichnung Paiks, in: Jon Hendricks (Hg.), *Fluxus etc/Addenda II*, Pasadena 1983, S. 285.
- 2 Leider war es nicht möglich, für diese Publikation Aufnahmen zu erhalten.

The garden room was divided into two parts. Eleven or twelve television sets were on display in the part adjoining the piano room and linked to it by a door. Another set was displayed on the upper floor. *Kuba TV* is the only set to have been preserved. Of the other sets Paik produced authorized replicas. At MUMOK, the label of the original *Zen for TV* has been affixed to this replica, which according to a written statement by Paik is now to be considered the original work lost in 1967.¹ The label reads "ZEN FOR TV 63 (MARCH) – 75 PAIK."

Montwé and Brötzmann took photos of the television screens. The Sohm Archives hold twelve further photos by Brötzmann.²

- 1 Handwritten note by Paik in the Silvermann collection, *Fluxus etc/Addenda II*, p. 285.
- 2 We regret that it was impossible to obtain any of these photographs for the present publication.



Aus dem Gartenraum wieder zurück in die Halle, war die Treppe ein wichtiger Sammelpunkt. Kritiker betonten die Ansammlung von Gegenständen sowie die Unordnung. Unter dem Titel *Erinnerung an das 20. Jahrhundert* hat Paik 62 Zeitschriften, Magazine und Zeitungen zum Tod von Marilyn Monroe (5. August 1962) zusammengestellt. Diese waren mit anderen Zeitschriften am Boden verteilt. Möglicherweise handelt es sich bei einem Teil dieser am Boden liegenden Zeitungen und Zeitschriften um die *Hommage an Rudolf Augstein*. Im Obergeschoß befand sich auch die *Urmusik*, laut Wolfgang Hahn eine der Lieblingsarbeiten von Paik und ein Kontraststück zu seinen elektronischen Arbeiten.¹ Vielleicht befand sich im Obergeschoß – denn nur für das Foto von Montwé wurde er in die Halle gebracht – auch der Plattenspieler *Listening to the Music through the Mouth*, zu dem 31 zum Teil präparierte Schallplatten zählen, die auch in einer Tonbandaufnahme vorliegen. Auf jeden Fall waren die *Zen Box* sowie die Flaggen von Alison Knowles im Obergeschoß untergebracht. Sie sind Teil von Paiks *Chronicle of a Beautiful Paintress*: „In January stain the American flag with your own monthly blood, in February stain the Burmese flag...“ Die *Bild*-Zeitung vom 18. April 1961 hat vermutlich Paik ergänzend dazwischengehängt. Es ist unklar, wie viele Räume Paik außer der Bibliothek und dem Bad im Obergeschoß noch bespielte.

1 Bildakten MUMOK, handschriftliche Notiz von Wolfgang Hahn.

Returning from the garden room to the piano room the staircase was an important focal point. Reviewers highlighted the wealth of objects and the chaos reigning here. Under the title *Erinnerung an das 20. Jahrhundert* [Mementos of the 20th Century] Paik assembled sixty-two journals, magazines, and newspapers reporting on the death of Marilyn Monroe (August 5, 1962). These were spread out on the floor along with other magazines. Possibly some of the newspapers and magazines belonged to *Hommage à Rudolf Augstein*. On the upper floor *Urmusik* was on display. According to Wolfgang Hahn this was one of Paik's favorite pieces and a stark contrast to his electronic works.¹ It is possible that the record player *Listening to the Music through the Mouth* was also displayed on the upper floor, since it is known that it was only brought into the piano room for Montwé to take pictures. This piece includes 31 records, some of them prepared, of which a tape recording also exists. At all events the *Zen Box* and the flags by Alison Knowles were housed in the upper floor. The flags formed part of Paik's *Chronicle of a Beautiful Paintress*: "In January stain the American flag with your own monthly blood, in February stain the Burmese flag ..." It was probably Paik himself who added the April 18, 1961, edition of the German tabloid newspaper *Bild* to the piece. It is not clear how many rooms apart from the library and the bathroom Paik used on the upper floor.

1 Image archive MUMOK, handwritten note by Wolfgang Hahn.



Die Bibliothek mit den Spiegelfolien hatte das Motto: „To be Naked and Look at Yourself“. In der Mitte befand sich, wie Tomas Schmit berichtet, ein Heißlüfter, der von unten – noch eine Hommage an Marilyn Monroe? – Luft zwischen die Beine blies. Die Folien muss man sich in verschiedenen Farben vorstellen.

The library was decked out with mirrored foils under the motto “To be Naked and Look at Yourself.” At the center of the piece was a hot-air fan which, as Tomas Schmit reports, was placed on its back to blow hot air between visitors’ legs and may have been another homage to Marilyn Monroe. The mirror foils appear to have been in different colors.



Vor der Toilette führt eine Stiege in den Keller, in dem sich einige Räumlichkeiten, zum Teil heute nicht mehr im Zustand von 1963, befinden, die Paik nutzen konnte. Unmittelbar am Ende der Stiege standen im Gang die beiden Versionen von *Schallplatten-Schashlik*, das sich in der Sammlung Feelisch (heute Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund) erhalten hat. Paik fertigte davon für die Ausstellung *Für Augen und Ohren* einen Nachbau an (Sammlung Block). Ebenfalls im Gang befand sich *Random Access*, aus drei Teilen bestehend. Die Wandarbeit ist auch heute noch in situ zu finden. Im Heizkeller und vermutlich in anderen Räumlichkeiten im Keller befanden sich verschiedene, von den Zen-Objekten oft kaum zu unterscheidende „objets sonores“. Die Küche, in der Maciunas und Paik die erste Fluxus-Ausstellung inszenierten, ist heute nicht mehr erhalten.

The stairs by the lavatory lead down to the basement, part of which Paik also used in his exposition. Not all basement rooms have remained unaltered since 1963. In the passage at the foot of the stairs stood the two versions of the *Record Shashlik* which has been preserved in the Feelisch collection (today in the Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund). Paik produced another version (now in the Sammlung Block) for the *Für Augen und Ohren* [For Eyes and Ears] exhibition. The next exhibit in this passage was the tripartite *Random Access*. This mural work is still in place today. The boiler room and probably further rooms in the basement housed various "objets sonores" which are often difficult to distinguish from the Zen objects. The kitchen where Maciunas and Paik staged the first ever Fluxus exhibition no longer exists.