

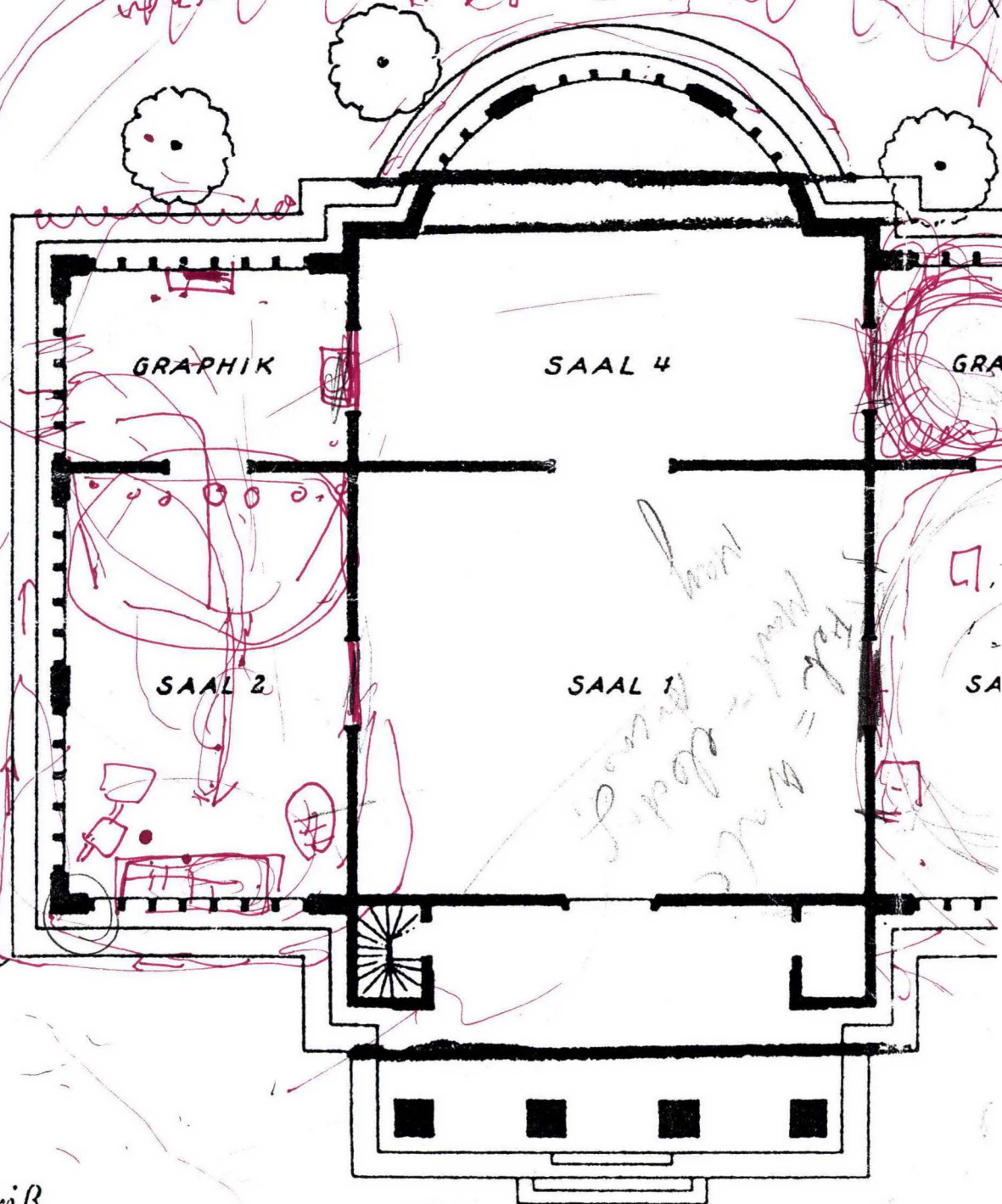


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NAM JUNE PAIK

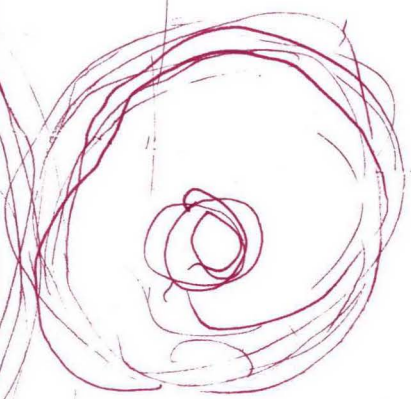
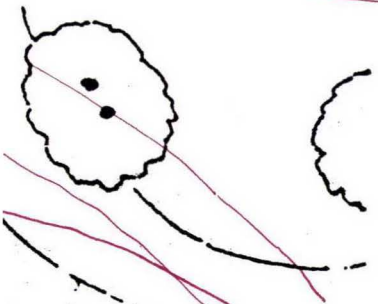
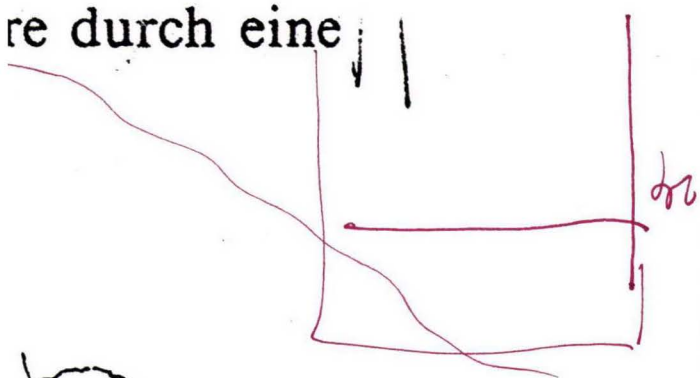
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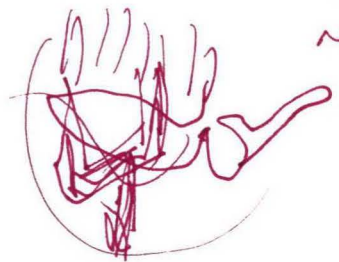
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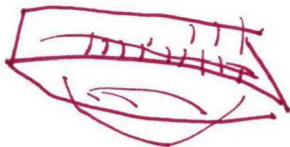
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Venice is the most advanced city in the world,
since it has already abolished the automobiles.

John Cage, 1958

La Biennale di Venezia XLV Esposizione Internazionale D'Arte 13.6.–10.10.1993

NAM JUNE PAIK
Padiglione tedesco German Pavilion Deutscher Pavillon

eine DATA base
herausgegeben von Klaus Bußmann und Florian Matzner

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Nam June Paik im Deutschen Pavillon der Biennale Venedig zu zeigen, ist keine Selbstverständlichkeit. Als ich ihn vor mehr als zwei Jahren einlud, gemeinsam mit Hans Haacke die Bundesrepublik Deutschland zu vertreten, schrieb er spontan zurück: "It is a great honor for me to be in the German Pavilion" (in Englisch, obwohl wir sonst meist Deutsch miteinander reden, was er auf ähnlich unvergleichliche und originelle Weise spricht wie Englisch).

Ich denke, es ist eine Ehre für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, und es ist ein gutes Zeichen für den geistigen Zustand Nachkriegsdeutschlands, daß der Weltbürger und Prophet der internationalen elektronischen Kommunikation, Nam June Paik, sich im Deutschen Pavillon zuhause fühlen kann.

Er ist Koreaner, lebt überwiegend in New York (mit Zweitwohnsitz in Bad Kreuznach), ist Professor an der Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf, "Vater der Videokunst" – mit prägendem Einfluß auf mehrere Generationen junger deutscher Videokünstler –, einer nicht mehr ganz neuen Kunstgattung, der die Biennale in Venedig bisher wenig Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt hat.

Nam June Paik ist gewissermaßen "Ehren-Gast-Arbeiter" der Bundesrepublik. Er steht für die große Zahl von Ausländern, die nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg zum Aufbau des Landes beigetragen haben, als Arbeiter in den Fabriken, als Händler und Gewerbetreibende, als Künstler und Intellektuelle.

Paiks Entscheidung – und ihre Konsequenzen –, als junger Mann statt nach Paris in die Bundesrepublik Deutschland zu gehen, werden im Beitrag von Pierre Restany einleuchtend kommentiert. Seine Rolle in der deutschen und internationalen Fluxusbewegung, seine Freundschaft mit Joseph Beuys und vielen anderen deutschen Künstlern und Studenten, seine Kenntnis und Liebe zur deutschen Kultur sollen nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, daß er sich nicht für ein einzelnes Land reklamieren läßt. Er ist Nomade und Kosmopolit, der sich seiner kulturellen und bürgerlichen Wurzeln in Korea immer bewußt geblieben ist, aber schon früh, vielleicht aufgrund der historischen Situation des geteilten Landes, in dem er aufwuchs, das Problem der globalen Interdependenz erkannt hat. Auch wenn er vorgibt, in technischen Dingen Laie zu sein, hat er ein untrügliches Gespür bewiesen für die Möglichkeiten der neuen elektronischen Medien und ihre Bedeutung sowohl für den Weltmarkt wie auch für die davon bestimmte Weltzivilisation. Gegenüber dieser Medienwelt behauptet er sich als Individuum – auch in seinem persönlichen alltäglichen Verhalten –, das sich nicht von den Apparaten und Medien vereinnahmen läßt.

Der vorliegende Katalog mit einem "Blumenstrauß" persönlicher Widmungen ist Ausdruck der Faszination, die die Persönlichkeit des Künstlers auslöst. Er ist zugleich, von vornherein, auf Wunsch des Künstlers mehrsprachig angelegt, Ausdruck des Bewußtseins einer internationalen Kultur, von der das neue Deutschland weiterhin integraler Bestandteil sein wird.

Die Zustimmung des Künstlers und seine intensive Teilnahme an der Vorbereitung des Projektes wie auch des Kataloges war die Voraussetzung für das erhoffte Gelingen. Ihm gilt mein Dank in erster Linie. Die Realisierung des Projektes wurde ermöglicht durch Paiks bewährten Produzenten und Galeristen Carl Solway in Cincinnati und seine Mannschaft, durch Paiks langjährigen Galeristen Hans Meyer in Düsseldorf und durch die finanzielle Unterstützung, die Peter Hoenisch mit persönlichem Engagement bei RTL Deutschland erwirkt hat. Sehr hilfreich war die Vorschau, die Holly Solomon in ihrer New Yorker Galerie eingerichtet hat – gewissermaßen als Vorlauf für die Installation in Venedig. Ihr möchte ich

ebenso danken sowie Helge Achenbach in Düsseldorf für die spontane Bereitschaft, das Projekt zu unterstützen. Ohne den restlosen Einsatz meines Mitarbeiters Florian Matzner wären die Realisierung und der Katalog nicht möglich gewesen. Ihm gilt mein ausdrücklicher Dank ebenso wie Frau Petra Haufschild im Westfälischen Landesmuseum in Münster für die zusätzliche, außerordentlich belastende Schreibaarbeit. Herrn Bernd Barde und der Druckerei Cantz in Stuttgart verdanken wir den vorliegenden Katalog, der aus den Mitteln der öffentlichen Gelder des Auswärtigen Amtes nicht hätte finanziert werden können. Danken möchte ich schließlich den vielen Freunden Nam June Paiks, die spontan unserer Einladung zur Mitarbeit gefolgt sind und damit die Sympathie bezeugen, die dem Künstler weltweit entgegengebracht wird.

To show Nam Jun Paik in the German pavilion of the Venice Biennial is not a matter of course. When I invited him, more than two years ago, to represent the Federal Republic of Germany together with Hans Haacke, he spontaneously answered: "It is a great honor for me to be in the German Pavilion" (he wrote this in English, though we mostly speak German together, a language which he speaks in a similarly unique and highly original way as he speaks English).

I think, it is an honor for the Federal Republic of Germany, and it is a good sign of the intellectual state of postwar Germany that the cosmopolitan and prophet of international electronic communication, Nam June Paik, can feel at home in the German pavilion.

He is Korean, mainly lives in New York (with a second home in Bad Kreuznach), he is a professor at the Düsseldorf art academy, and he is the "father of video art" – with a forming influence on several generations of young German video artists – an art form which, although it is not so new any more, has not been paid much attention to by the Venice Biennial.

Nam June Paik is, so to speak, an "honorary foreign worker" for the Federal Republic of Germany. He stands for the great number of foreigners, who after World War II as workers in the factories, as shopkeepers and traders, as artists and intellectuals contributed to the reconstruction of this country.

Paik's decision as a young man to go to Germany instead of Paris, and the consequences of this decision, are plausibly commented in Pierre Restany's contribution to this catalogue. Paik's role within the German and international Fluxus movement, his friendship with Joseph Beuys and many other German artists and students, and his knowledge and love of German culture should not hide the fact that he does not allow a single country to lay claim to him. He is a nomad and a cosmopolitan who always remains conscious of his cultural and social roots in Korea, but very early – maybe because of the historical situation of the divided country in which he grew up – he realized the problem of global interdependences. Though he pretends to be a layman in technical things, in fact he has proven an infallible instinct for the various possibilities of the new market as well as for the media-determined world civilization. Against this media world he holds his ground as an individual – also in his daily life – who does not allow machines and the media to possess him.

The catalogue at hand with a "bouquet" of personal dedications expresses the fascination that the artist's personality arouses. Printed in several languages – at the artist's request – it is at the same time an expression of the awareness of an international culture, of which Germany will continue to be an integral part.

The artist's consent and his intensive participation in the preparation of both the exhibition and the catalogue were the basic requirements for the hopefully successful outcome. In the first place, I am especially grateful to him. Paik's capable producer and gallerist in Cincinnati, Carl Solway, and his staff, Paik's gallerist for many years in Düsseldorf, Hans Meyer, and the financial support which Peter Hoenisch, due to his personal commitment, obtained from RTL Germany, made it possible to realize this project. Very helpful was the show which Holly Solomon organized in her gallery in New York – so to speak a preview of the installation in Venice. I would like to thank her, as well as Helge Achenbach in Düsseldorf for his spontaneous agreement to support the project. Without the total commitment of my assistant, Florian Matzner, the project as well as the catalogue could not have been realized.



Last 16th Century Painting, 1988

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati



First 21st Century Painting, 1988

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

I am indebted to him, as well as to Ms Petra Haufschild in the Westfälisches Landesmuseum in Münster for additional, extremely laborious clerical work. To Mr. Bernd Barde and the Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei in Stuttgart we owe the catalogue at hand, which could not have been financed with the public means of the State Department. Finally I want to extend my thanks to the many friends of Nam June Paik, who spontaneously accepted our invitation to contribute to this catalogue and thus testify to the high esteem in which the artist is held world-wide.

Esporre Nam June Paik nel padiglione tedesco della Biennale di Venezia non è un'ovvietà. Quando più di due anni fa l'invitai insieme ad Hans Haacke a rappresentare la Germania, Paik mi scrisse spontaneamente "it is a great honor for me to be in the German Pavillion" (in inglese, anche se ci parliamo principalmente in tedesco, lingua che lui parla allo stesso modo inconfondibile ed originale dell'inglese).

Che il cittadino del mondo e profeta della comunicazione elettronica internazionale Nam June Paik si possa sentire a casa propria nel padiglione tedesco, lo ritengo un onore per la Repubblica Federale, ed un buon segno per lo stato della Germania del secondo dopoguerra.

Nam June Paik è coreano, vive principalmente a New York (il suo secondo domicilio è a Bad Kreuznach) è professore all'Accademia d'Arte di Düsseldorf; "padre dell'arte video", ha esercitato una grande influenza su più generazioni di giovani artisti video tedeschi - un genere artistico non più tanto nuovo a cui però la Biennale fino ad ora aveva rivolto poca attenzione.

Nam June Paik è in un certo senso un "lavoratore - ospite - d'onore" della Germania Federale. Egli rappresenta quel gran numero di stranieri che dopo la seconda guerra mondiale hanno contribuito, come lavoratori nelle fabbriche, come commercianti e artigiani, come artisti ed intellettuali, a ricostruire il paese.

La decisione - e le conseguenze derivatene - del giovane Paik di venire nella Germania Federale invece che andare a Parigi, è commentata in modo chiarificatore nel contributo di Pierre Restany. Il suo ruolo nel movimento Fluxus tedesco ed internazionale, la sua amicizia con Josef Beuys e con tanti altri artisti e studenti tedeschi, la sua conoscenza ed il suo amore per la cultura tedesca non devono lasciar credere che egli si faccia identificare con un solo paese. Nam June Paik è un nomade ed un cosmopolita che è però sempre rimasto cosciente delle sue radici culturali e civiche coreane, e che già molto presto, forse a causa della situazione storica del suo paese diviso in cui egli è cresciuto, ha riconosciuto il problema dell'interdipendenza globale. Anche se dice di non essere un esperto nel campo della tecnica, ha dato prova di grande intuito nel riconoscere le possibilità dei nuovi media elettronici e del loro significato sia per il mercato mondiale, che per la cultura che da questi viene influenzata. Nei confronti di questo mondo mediale Nam June Paik rimane - anche nel suo atteggiamento personale quotidiano - un individuo che non si lascia irretire dagli apparecchi e dai media.

Il presente catalogo con un bouquet di dediche personali è testimonianza del fascino che esercita la personalità di quest'artista. Questo catalogo, seguendo il desiderio dell'artista stesso, è stato fin dall'inizio pensato in più lingue, espressione della consapevolezza di una cultura internazionale di cui la nuova Germania continuerà ad essere parte integrante.

Il consenso dell'artista e la sua intensa partecipazione alla preparazione del progetto e del catalogo è stata la premessa per la loro riuscita. A lui va in prima linea il mio ringraziamento. La realizzazione del progetto è stata resa possibile dalla collaborazione del gallerista di Paik Carl Solway di Cincinnati e del suo gruppo di collaboratori, di Hans Meyer da anni gallerista di Paik a Düsseldorf, dall'appoggio finanziario che è stato reso possibile grazie all'impegno personale di Peter Hoenisch presso RTL Germania. Di grande aiuto è stata l'"anteprima" offerta da Holly Solomon nella sua galleria di New York - in un certo senso un'anticipazione dell'installazione di Venezia. A lei va il mio ringraziamento come anche ad

Helge Achenbach di Düsseldorf per la spontanea disponibilità a sostenere il progetto. Senza l'impegno totale del mio collaboratore Florian Matzner non ne sarebbe stata possibile la realizzazione nè il catalogo. A lui va il mio espresso ringraziamento come anche alla signora Petra Haufschild del Landesmuseum di Münster nella Westfalia per il lavoro di dattilografia estremamente pesante. Al signor Barde ed alla sua tipografia dobbiamo il presente catalogo che non sarebbe stato possibile realizzare con i mezzi pubblici del Ministero degli Esteri. Desidero infine ringraziare i tanti amici di Nam June Paik che hanno accettato spontaneamente il nostro invito a collaborare. La cerchia di coloro a cui si devono dei ringraziamenti è grande e testimonia la simpatia che in tutto il mondo viene sentita per quest'artista.



NAM JUNE PAIK DE-COMPOSITION IN THE MEDIA ART

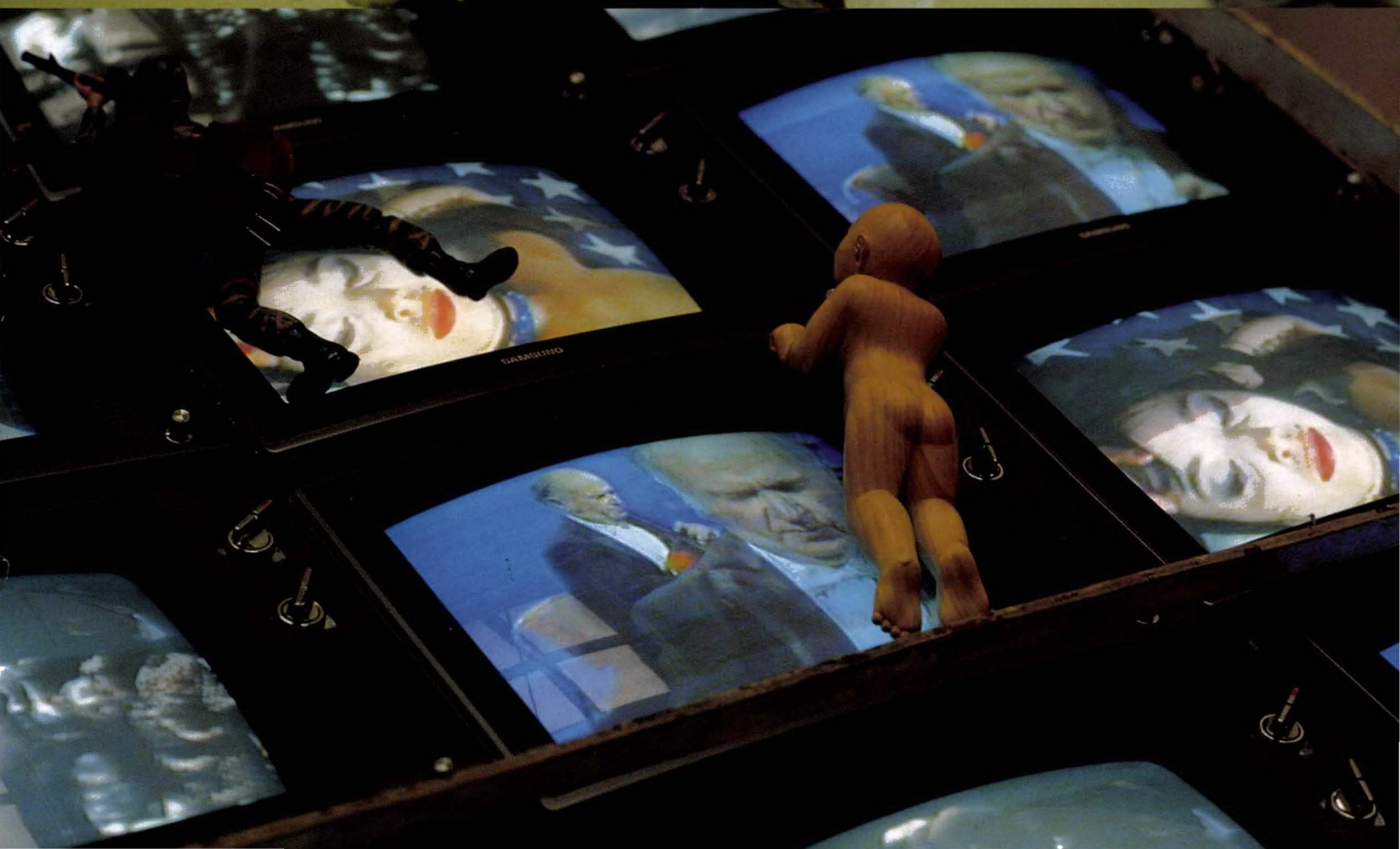
When we compare the film industry of the U.S. and Europe, one main difference is the power of the director. In Europe a distinguished director of the calibre of Godard or Herzog is a virtual dictator of his house. He decides the script, role casting and main scenes. However, in the U.S. even a well-known director is just a link in the chain, which starts with the share-holder, company president, vice president of production, producer and continues on to the casting-director and the union representative. A very critical character like Donald Duck was invented through a committee decision rather than by Mr. Disney himself. For better or worse, this is the prevalent reality and also a reason why Hollywood overwhelmed the European art movies.

Also in the world of science, the collaboration, often beyond the national border, is now a standard procedure rather than the exception. There are three classical examples which have intrigued me for years. Paul Erdős is an eminent mathematician born in Hungary in 1911, one year before John Cage. When John Cage's mother (a writer for the L.A. Times) bought a piano for John at the age of three, John climbed up on the keyboard while the piano movers were still bringing the piano into the living room, and he never quit playing or, unplaying until August 12, 1992. Likewise, Paul Erdős started spitting out mathematical numbers when he turned three and his parents (both mathematics teachers) noticed that they were mathematically important new numbers ... and unlike some wunderkind, who stops growing at some point of his life, this guy continued to spit out these original numbers well into his advanced age (I bet he is still alive in Budapest). And his ideas were so many and so new that he chooses collaborators around the world and he travels the whole year and his whole life around the world discussing the results he had and enjoying the privilege of free travel. His prestige in the mathematics field is such that there is the jargon of G1, G2 and G3. G1 are the mathematicians who worked directly with Paul Erdős himself; G2 are the mathematicians who worked with a guy who worked with Erdős; and G3 are the men who worked with G2. Einstein is reputed to be only G2.

Erdős suffers from some mysterious skin disease & he can tolerate only silk underwear. His mother traveled with him his whole life, and now his aunt does. He washes his silk underwear every night before he goes to bed. (Source: "The Atlantic Monthly", Nov. 1987.)

There is another mysterious Hungarian who was rather obscure until recently. Leo Szilard was a physicist living in Berlin in 1931. One day he was at the cross-section waiting for the traffic light to turn from red to green. Well, millions of people have this kind of experience millions of times in their lives. Suddenly (it seems) the red light turned green and Mr. Szilard put out a foot forward ... in this second the idea of a nuclear chain reaction came into his head. Sensing the dangers in pre-fascistic Germany, he crossed the Channel and from London he wrote his idea to Einstein, his old teacher in Berlin, and together they composed the famous letter to Roosevelt about the Atomic bomb. But when Szilard saw the first test-detonation in the desert of Nevada, he was horrified by his co-invention and became the ring leader of the "stop the bomb" movement before Hiroshima. He was fired from Los Alamos and his name was obscured until recently. Even after he left nuclear physics, he again invented a Nobel-class new theory about genetic biology, whose meaning hasn't become clear until just now ... 35 years after his death. Needless to say, for better or





worse, Los Alamos has become the largest-scale example of scientific collaboration (with NASA). (Sources: "Discovery Magazine" published by TIME-LIFE a few years ago, and a new biography co-written by his brother ... details differ in the two versions.)

I don't share the genius with Szilard, but at least I share a bad habit with this man. We both take a long bath, which on some days can last two hours. It is the time for free association, or Twilight-Zone, where hidden drawers can be opened and closed.

The third guy is Norbert Wiener, a popular name. He not only co-invented the age of cybernetics but also was the first guy to warn of its consequences, like Leo Szilard. I'll bet that through it, like Wernher von Braun, regardless of the consequences and only later, he finds himself to be a small boy who burned down the whole house while playing with matches. Norbert Wiener, who first took a science degree at MIT, went to London to study Philosophy with Bertrand Russell; then, he analyzed the difference between Newtonian Time (repeatable) and Bergsonian Time (unrepeatable) and he developed the concept of time series by hurting & killing frogs in order to see how the animal's nerves would react to the continuing stimulus (largely negative) and applied this knowledge to the invention of radar. When he got shot at, a fighter pilot would react similarly to a frog who was punched and needled by a scientist. In any case, his research into radar was quite advanced at MIT before World War II when a fellow professor (a German mathematician) accepted the call from Hitler to return and take up an important position in pre-war Germany. Somebody high up at the Roosevelt White House was worried and asked Norbert Wiener: What if this mathematician leaks your experiment to the German armament industry? Wiener answered: "Don't worry, Sir. My system's thinking method is so very different from a German's ... My radar principle is based on such ambivalent, empirical, inductive, a-linear methods that Hitler, who thinks in straight logical terms would never put money in it." In any case, the Anglo-American radar system for which Wiener supplied the mathematical groundrules, became the key in turning the tide in both the European and Pacific battlefields. (The London Blitz & Midway)

His contribution continues even to the Patriot missile. What a result a few dozen frogs who died in the torture chamber of this MIT professor brought in. George Maciunas, the chairman of Fluxus, confided to his Lithuanian poet friend Vyt Bakaitis that he would like to become a frog in his reincarnation. I hope he got caught by a French restaurant owner to be boiled and eaten quickly rather than be sold to MIT.

Norbert Wiener pioneered the idea of Mixed Media and interdisciplinary collaboration of many different sciences. Many of his academic papers are written with one or more co-authors ... This guy simply had the output of too many ideas to digest them all alone. When he died suddenly at Stockholm from a heart attack, he was well-immersed in the study of Chinese. I'll bet the Gestalt-like, wholeness concept of the Chinese ideogram interested Wiener, who grew up in the linear alphabetic culture. The consequences could have been interesting if he had lived another ten or twenty years.

The first collaborator I had was a teenager named Guenther Schmitz, whom I recruited at a Werkschule (equivalent to technical middle school) at Ubierring Cologne in 1962. He guided me through the discovery of horizontal and vertical deflection modulation and other techniques which became the scan-part of the video synthesizer later on. He told me to intercede with a picco con-

sensor before I feed new sinewaves into the grid of a deflection tube. He also taught me how to survive an electro shock. Also, for the 1963 Wuppertal show (galerie Parnass Electronic Television and Exposition of Music) I credited the following names in the invitation flier:

P.S. Außerdem lernte ich von Mary Bauermeister den intensiven Gebrauch technischer Elemente, von Alison Knowls "cooking party", von J. Cage "prepared piano" etc. etc. etc. ... ∞, von Kiender die Verwendung von Spiegelfolien, von Klein "Monochromity", von Kopke "shutting event", von Maciunas "Parachute", von Patterson "Terminalsaltung und Ansatz zur Elektronik", von Vostell die Verwendung von Stacheldraht und von Tomas Schmitt und Frank Trowbridge viele verschiedene Sachen bei unserer Zusammenarbeit.

In 1963 I met Shuya Abe and in 1964 Charlotte Moorman in New York (ref: Abe, "My Best Doctor" in the On the Wing publication, Yokohama 1991, 1992 reprint at Edith Decker in Dumont book 1992.)

It was in February 1977 when I paid a fortune to rent Carnegie Hall to do the 10th anniversary concert of the 1967 topless opera arrest. I prepared an evening-filling new opera. Then, one day before the concert Charlotte appeared at my Canal Street loft and told me she would start with the Third Aria of the original Topless Opera which was not played because we were both by then in the police wagon. However, in ten years times changed and in this new era of permissiveness the original version would neither shock nor soothe in any artistic way. I insisted on playing the new work but to no avail. I protested that even Mozart cannot write a new opera in one day ... in any case I complied ... and the result?

In any case Charlotte re-awakened my interest in the performing arts which I thought I terminated in 1962. I cannot thank her enough for this beautiful persuasion. My collaborating career turned a fateful point in 1967 at WGBH TV Boston. Until then in any collaborative case, I kept the upper hand. However, facing the enormous bureaucratic and equipment wall of broadcast television, I became powerless. With the given budget, I had half a day shooting schedule, which includes a union coffee break every 45 minutes, and another half day in the editing which meant in the 1967's antiquated stage only 16 cuts. I was supposed to create a master work, which had never been seen in the entire billion \$ history of film and TV.

In the making of "The Medium", devotedly produced by two rich socialite ladies, Ann Gresser and Pat Marx (the latter soon after married Daniel Ellsberg of the Pentagon Papers), I was in a complete panic. So I told Fred Barzyk and David Atwood: "I am not here, do whatever you want. In any case I don't know anything about it"... and behold Fred and David made a 5 minute masterpiece, from which I was able to get two years of Rockefeller residency and invite Shuya Abe to design and manufacture the Video Synthesizer in Boston. I still wonder, since Barzyk and Atwood were such good artists, why didn't they produce something equally good before I came to WGBH Boston. Certainly my input was less than 40%.

In 1972 I moved to WNET and by then I was supposed to be a techno-art genius, but I could not even serve the simple two banks keyer-mixer and I never even played the so-called Paik Abe Video Synthesizer which I was supposed to have invented. When the Big Day for the Gloval Groove arrived, I had to bribe John Godfrey, the super engineer: "Please, do whatever you want, I am here



Self-Portrait, 1989

but I am not here. It is your ball game. You will be the 50-50 co-author and you will get 50% revenue from all income." He switched back and forth both my Paik Abe videosynthesizer and newly invented grassvalley switcher with downstream keyers. Often 1 plus 1 is 1.2 or even 0.8 but in this case one plus one became 100 ... like the case of Cage-Cunningham's collaboration. In any case I got through the pinch, and there are some sections in the Global Groove, which after 20 years I still cannot figure out how John Godfrey made it. I still have not paid 50% royalty to him. I will do it this autumn by making five large paintings. I promise.

Needless to say, in the three large scale satellite live shows, "Good Morning, Mr. Orwell", 1984, "Bye Bye Kipling", 1986 & "Wrap Around The World", 1988, my share was for better or worse maybe 30% of the whole piece. I did get the full share of credit or blame. The tragi-comedy was Squeeze zoom. The whole New York/Paris show was conceived on the 2 channel squeeze zoom.

There was a French specialist in the transmission booth. But he thought I was an expert. He did not know I was a techno-idiot. He left the mixing booth out of reverence to me just before the transmission went live before 40 million viewers in Europe, the U.S., Canada and Korea. My French was too limited to get him back and the live show started. I was still only 52 years old, which alone spared me a heart attack. In all three shows the control room was more interesting than the show itself. Who was in charge ??? Whose show was it ??? I don't know. I will do my last live TV show in the year 1999, December 31. Id' better stay healthy.

Luckily Paul Garrin came to me in 1982 after I finished the preparation for the Whitney show. Otherwise he would have claimed my Whitney show, too. At least I did that show on my own. Shigeko found him at Anthology Film Archives for one dollar & twenty-five cents per hour. I gave him the job of repairing my shoes. He did that rather well. Then I discovered that this 25 year old Cooper Union student has a strange talent. He would buy a junked car for 75 dollars and repair it and run it for three years and sell it for \$ 300. WNET's super engineer John Godfrey has the same trait. He would buy an old Rolls Royce Silverghost for \$ 7,000 and recondition it and rent it out to the movie industry. Once Ruth Bonomo-Godfrey drove Woody Allan in it. He later sold it for \$ 50,000. In this way Godfrey collected 6 Rolls Royces and bought a big mansion with the 6 unused horse stables in Connecticut and became the first millionaire from Experimental TV.

"Adio"

Anyway my collaboration with Paul Garrin is like an improvisation of a 4 man Jazz ensemble. The first tenor is a digital effect generator ... "Adio" - "Mirage" - "Kaleidoscope" - "Harry" etc. ... Those high speed analogue image catchers are spin offs from the missile tracking industry and they often come from manufacturers who also service the large missile bases in England and Canada. Without the dual use of military and civilian, nobody would foot the enormous development cost which becomes outdated every four years.

If the first tenor is a new machine, the first soprano is Paul Garrin, a guy who is at least 200 times faster than me in those machines. That means in the first \$ 1,000 dollars-a-hour machine time expense he can produce 200 times more than me. The first alto is the house engineer at Broadway Video or Post perfect, who knows machines very well, yet he did not have the chance to use his fantasy and has been compelled to produce the standard commercial usage. These guys are frustrated pilots who are forced to fly an F16 with the good old zero fighter speed. They collaborate well and produce stunning effects. Jonathan Howard and Mr. Applebaum produced something which we cannot reproduce even after 6 years. Those star editors are the test pilots of Wright brothers days. They lead the industry. What is my role?? This old man is nothing but a cheerleader who brings in fat cheesecakes at midnight and diet soda with double espresso at 3 AM.

From 1987, we turned to the digital video. The first one was the 3F technik of Freiburg im Breisgau. The rental fee was 1,000 DM for one day and for the 100 days of Documenta, Dr. Schneckenburger and I had to cough up 100,000 DM.

From the 1989 Whitney Museum's "Image World" on, we were able to work with Sinsung Electronics in Seoul who provided us with not only inexpensive hardware but also imaginative programmings. Oh Seh Hun, Lee Jung Sung, and Cho Sung Ku initiated further digital switching devices.

In the digital imagemaking, my thanks first go to Rebecca Allen (U.C.L.A.), who supplied me with the Kraftwerke Computer graphics, which is the result of one and a half years of full time manual and intellectual slave work. This tape gave me the decisive edge at the Imageworld show at the Whitney. Even though I would sometimes receive the full credit instead of her, she suffered gracefully. However, of more enduring importance is that three leading computer graphic artists of our age: Hans Donner, Judson Rosebusch, and Dean Winkler also gave me permission to use their software for no money. This is equal to about a \$ 5 million dollar bonanza. This happens only because I live in New York.

My laser works are actually not my laser works. This is 50% Horst Bauman, 30% Paul Earl (MIT's center for advanced visual study). My input is that I chose the cartoon-like figures of Cunningham. Maybe next time we will simply use Donald Duck. I wonder what my new laser collaborator, Norman Ballard, brings to me.

In Cincinnati we have a Hollywood kind of structure. Our Cecil De Mille is Carl Solway. I am Hitchcock, Marc Patsfall is the casting director (unsung hero in Hollywood or Cincinnati) ... and our stars include Lizzi (Rita Haywarth), Marcello (a cross between Audrey & Katharine Hepburn, Bryant (Brando), Bill (Clark Gable), Chris (H. Bogard ?), Curt (James Mason), and Steve (de Niro). Media art is too complex to be controlled by one man, and in New York and the Düsseldorf side Jochen Saueracker, John McEvers, John Huffman, Glen Downing, Blair Thurman and Thomas Countey played equally important roles both in craft test and even in generating new ideas.

Last but not least important ... Shigeko Kubota. During long and frequent conversations, it is hard to distinguish who said which idea first. Therefore we made a demarcation line in a priori ... she owns Marcel Duchamp, John Cage in Bremen, Glass, plastic mirror, water and the concept of death. I try not to transgress this line. The world is big enough for two video artists.

P.S. Recently Ulrike Oettinger gave me permission to use her three hour epic "Joan of Arc of Mongolia" and I thank 100 famous performing artists with whom I worked for the last 15 TV shows. They are recycled in many museum installations. I have to pay them some day.

Edited by Alan Marlis.

YONGWOO LEE

NAM JUNE PAIK'S TEENAGE YEARS

Nam June Paik's extensive body of work has come under scrutiny from a variety of points of view, but little consideration has been given to how his artistic sensibility was formed and to how he spent his teenage years, a critically important period for artists. A great deal has been written about the fruit of Nam June Paik's art, but the development of his artistic sensibility has been woefully neglected. Nam June Paik's résumé begins with his birth in Korea, his graduation from Tokyo University, and his voyage to Germany for further musical training. The artistic sensibilities he developed in his teenage years in Korea before he entered Tokyo University are the roots of his art today; these formative years, amazingly, have continued to flow through his art to this day. Nam June Paik is not a chauvinist or nationalist, and he is considered to be an artist who, in the jargon of art, has the power to attract the interest

of the general public. His public appeal comes from the unique talent that he developed in his teenage years, and it is the result of channeling his original vision and ideas into his art.

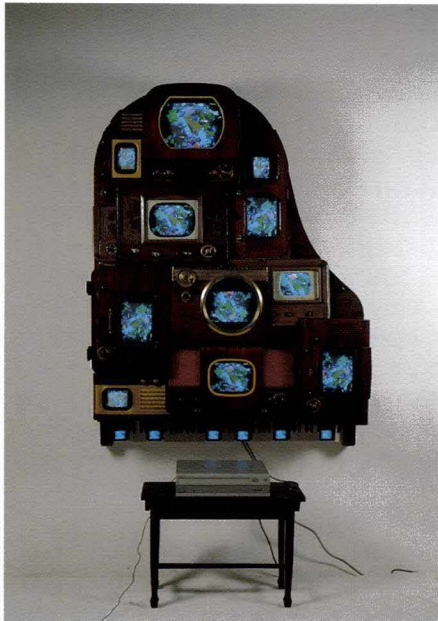
The landmark event of Nam June Paik's teenage years was his discovery of the music of Arnold Schönberg. In 1947, Schönberg's music opened Nam June Paik's eyes to new possibilities when Paik was a sixteen-year-old student at Kyunggi High School, one of the most elite high schools in Korea at the time. Nam June Paik found out about Schönberg through Japanese recordings, and he became fascinated by atonal music and the 12 note tone scale, both of which were virtually unknown in Asia at that time. Paik's discovery of Schönberg is astounding for the times because Korea had just come out from under 36 years of harsh Japanese colonial rule with the end of the second world war. For Nam June Paik, however, Schönberg's music was the key to opening a new world in music and art. When Schönberg converted to Judaism, Nam June Paik was baptized in new music and was preparing to make his jump into that new world.

Two Korean music teachers were behind Nam June Paik's discovery of Schönberg: pianist Jae-duk Shin and composer Keun-woo Lee. As Nam June Paik's music teachers, Shin and Lee found artistic disposition and, indeed, genius in their young student, and they encouraged Paik to develop a vivid imagination and technical ability. Nam June Paik met Jae-duk Shin when he became a student at Kyunggi High School, and he acquired a strong base in music composition from piano to vocal music. In addition, Keun-woo Lee, a composer who was fascinated by contemporary music at that time, challenged Paik in this new territory of musical composition. Nam June Paik's first composition appeared in 1946, two years after he had become acquainted with these two mentors. This composition has been lost, but Paik remembers the title as "My Elegy", and he remembers only two syllables. Written between 1947 and 1948, the second composition puts the poem "A Song – Nostalgia" by a left wing poet of the time, Pyeok-am Cho, to music in four syllables. "A Song – Nostalgia" is a lyric poem that creates a strong image of the poet's hometown.

If only darkness fell, this lonely journey would go by as
Water flows through the gills of fish. Today, reflected in
The window of the train my loneliness and melancholy.
Like a fallen down new calf, searching, ever nervous,
I keep longing for home, a foggy village, a dark cozy
village.

A warm bird's nest, let me fly in and root myself.

This composition was lost in the Korean war, but Nam June Paik has been able to reconstruct the score from memory. In addition, Paik set poems by a close friend and classmate of his at Kyunggi High School, Young-hun Jin, to music, but they too have been lost. Young-hun Jin believes that Paik put three of his poems to music, and he remembers that, although they were written in a popular style, they retained distinctly avant-garde characteristics. In the 1940s, Korea emerged from 36 years of Japanese colonial rule, and with the liberation, the ideological conflict between the Left and the Right intensified amidst increasing social chaos. Nam June Paik was influenced by leftist ideas that were circulating in intellectual circles at the time. In his teenage years, Paik's mind was absorbed in his respect for Sun-nam Kim, a left wing composer, and for Jae-duk Shin and Keun-woo Lee; in the stimulation of discovering new music that had begun with Schönberg; and in reading books about Marxism that he found in antiquarian book



My Life has been on Trip, 1990

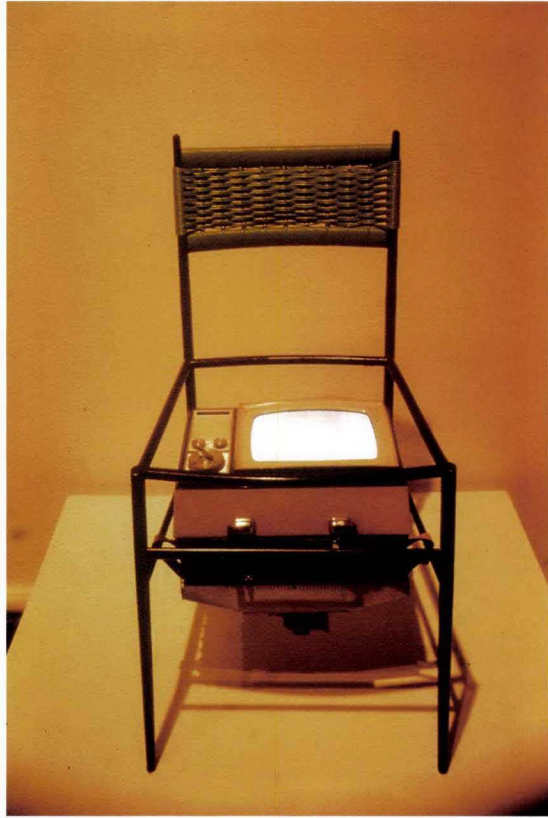
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

stores in Insa-dong, the antique and art center of Seoul. Karl Marx and Schönberg were Nam June Paik's idols, but his contact with his two mentors, Jae-duk Shin and Keun-woo Lee, was his reality. It is not important how much Paik was able to understand and appreciate Schönberg's music, but it is clear that Paik was strongly attracted to atonal music that had developed from late-Romanticism to the string quartet form. The 12 note scale was coming to the fore at that time, and the almost total lack of repetition in atonal music must have been curious and exciting for Nam June Paik. Even now, Paik understands Schönberg's music only partially, and he feels great success in being able to play Schönberg. More than being in awe of Schönberg, Paik is referring to his own "nostalgia for home" by using Schönberg as a metaphor for the variation on a theme found in contemporary music and Fluxus and video art and the reflected image. In his first show at the Parnasse Gallery in Wuppertal, Germany, *Random Access* reflected Schönberg's *Structural Functions of Harmony*. Among the various forms of musical composition, the 12 note scale reminds one most of the free flow of the human consciousness. If Nam June Paik had not gone to Hong Kong in 1949, he probably would have had a deeper understanding of Schönberg. Nam June Paik's teenage years in Korea came to an end, in fact, when he left for the Loyden School in Hong Kong, and when he returned to Korea in 1950, he was not able to make progress in his artistic career because of the outbreak of the Korean war.

Nam June Paik comes from a very wealthy family, the owners of a large textile company, Taechang Textile Co., founded during the Japanese colonial period. Paik is the youngest of five children, and he received the best education available at the time by attending elite schools from kindergarten through high school. He received Japanese-style education during his childhood and until his early teenage years, but at the age of fourteen, he began to show his interest and talent in art in the feverish atmosphere of post-liberation Korea. The five years from the ages of fourteen to eighteen have weighed heavily on Nam June Paik, and they have nurtured much of his art since. Many things in his art recall those years: Asian sensibilities that appear as wit and jest in the eyes of people in the West, the allusions to the Asian philosophy of mindful living away from the woes of daily-life, and the native Korean items and symbols.

In Nam June Paik's 1991 work, *Two Teachers*, explanations of Jae-duk Shin and John Cage are included in the work. Paik recalls Jae-duk Shin humorously, "When Mrs. Shin played the zither (yanggeum), I would drool ...". "Cage means 'bird cage' in English, but he didn't lock me up; he liberated me", Paik says of John Cage. In this work, Paik returns to the sensibilities of his teenage years and creates an image in a video sculpture of the relationship between language and karma.

Nam June Paik's discovery of Schönberg overlaps with his receiving tuition from Jae-duk Shin (1946–1950) and Keun-wo Lee (1947–1949) – this means that the beginnings of Paik's art are concentrated mainly in music. The importance of the two Korean mentors is clear in Paik's discovery of and exposure to the chaotic works of Schönberg one year earlier than Milton Babbitt. Jae-duk Shin and Keun-woo Lee were both musicians at the beginning of the 1930s. Shin became the first professional pianist in Korea, and she later served as dean of the College of Music at Ewha Women's University in Seoul. She died in 1989. Keun-woo Lee, along with Sun-nam Kim, imported avant-garde music from over-





seas before anyone else, and they were very protective of contemporary music. Paik was very fortunate to have had these two mentors. Shin and Lee received their education during the Japanese colonial period, but they went on to become leaders in the field of "national music" education. Sun-nam Kim, whom Nam June Paik had never met, was an outstanding composer, equal to any composer in Japan at the time, and he influenced Yisang Yun, an active Korean-born composer in Berlin.

Paik's discovery of Schönberg one year earlier than Milton Babbitt, a leading authority on Schönberg at Princeton University, shows that artistic awareness and artistic freedom existed in Korea in the turmoil of 1947.

Nam June Paik went to Japan and learned composition from Nomura Yoshio, Moroi Saburo, and Shikaishi Aki-O. His real interest, however, was in Schönberg as an "extension of Korea", and he graduated from Tokyo University with a graduation thesis entitled *Research on Arnold Schönberg*.

(Translated by Robert J. Fouser)

Anti-Gravity Study, 1976
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

PIERRE RESTANY

NAM JUNE PAIK ET LE RENOUVEAU CULTUREL ALLEMAND DES ANNEES 50

Nam June Paik est arrivé en Allemagne en 1956. Il avait 24 ans. Il avait quitté Seoul avec sa famille en 1950 au moment de la guerre de Corée et après un bref séjour à Hong-Kong, il avait fait des études d'esthétique et d'histoire de la musique à l'université de Tokyo, couronnées par une thèse de B.A. sur Arnold Schönberg.

Le jeune musicologue débarque en Europe en passant par Calcutta et Le Caire pour trouver une Allemagne de l'Ouest en plein élan de reconstruction et de fermentation créative. La première chose qui le frappe après avoir vécu à Tokyo, c'est l'absence de centre et l'extrême dissémination de la vie culturelle. "J'étudiais à Munich", dira-t-il à Gottfried Michael König en 1959, et à bien d'autres encore par la suite – "et, passionné de "Neue Musik", j'entendais dire qu'il se passait des tas de choses aux "Ferienkurse" de Darmstadt, à l'école de musique de Fribourg, au studio de musique de Fribourg, au studio de musique électronique de Cologne, dans les galeries de Düsseldorf ..."

Cette large décentralisation culturelle, liée à une osmose entre la "Neue Musik" et l'art d'avant-garde, créa un climat extrêmement propice à l'épanouissement de la personnalité de Nam June Paik. Ses continus déplacements dans les centres d'art du bassin de la Ruhr firent de lui une fois pour toutes un perpétuel errant, un homme de partout et de nulle part, mais qui sait être là quand il faut. Et aujourd'hui, bien qu'il vive à New York, qu'il ait repris des contacts suivis avec le Japon et la Corée, et qu'il sillonne le monde dans tous les sens, il demeure attaché à son poste de professeur à l'académie des Beaux-Arts de Düsseldorf, où l'avait appelé le sculpteur Kricke lorsqu'il était directeur de l'établissement. Les méthodes d'enseignement de Nam June Paik ne sont certes pas orthodoxes, mais les élèves raffolent de leur professeur errant, et le lien scolaire, outre qu'il atteste son attachement au terroir rhénan, le rassure socialement: "J'aime bien retourner régulièrement dans un pays où les gens trouvent normal de m'appeler "professeur Paik", a-t-il répondu récemment à Otto Piene qui lui demandait où il en était de son enseignement à la Kunstakademie.

L'événement déterminant pour Nam June Paik a été sa rencontre

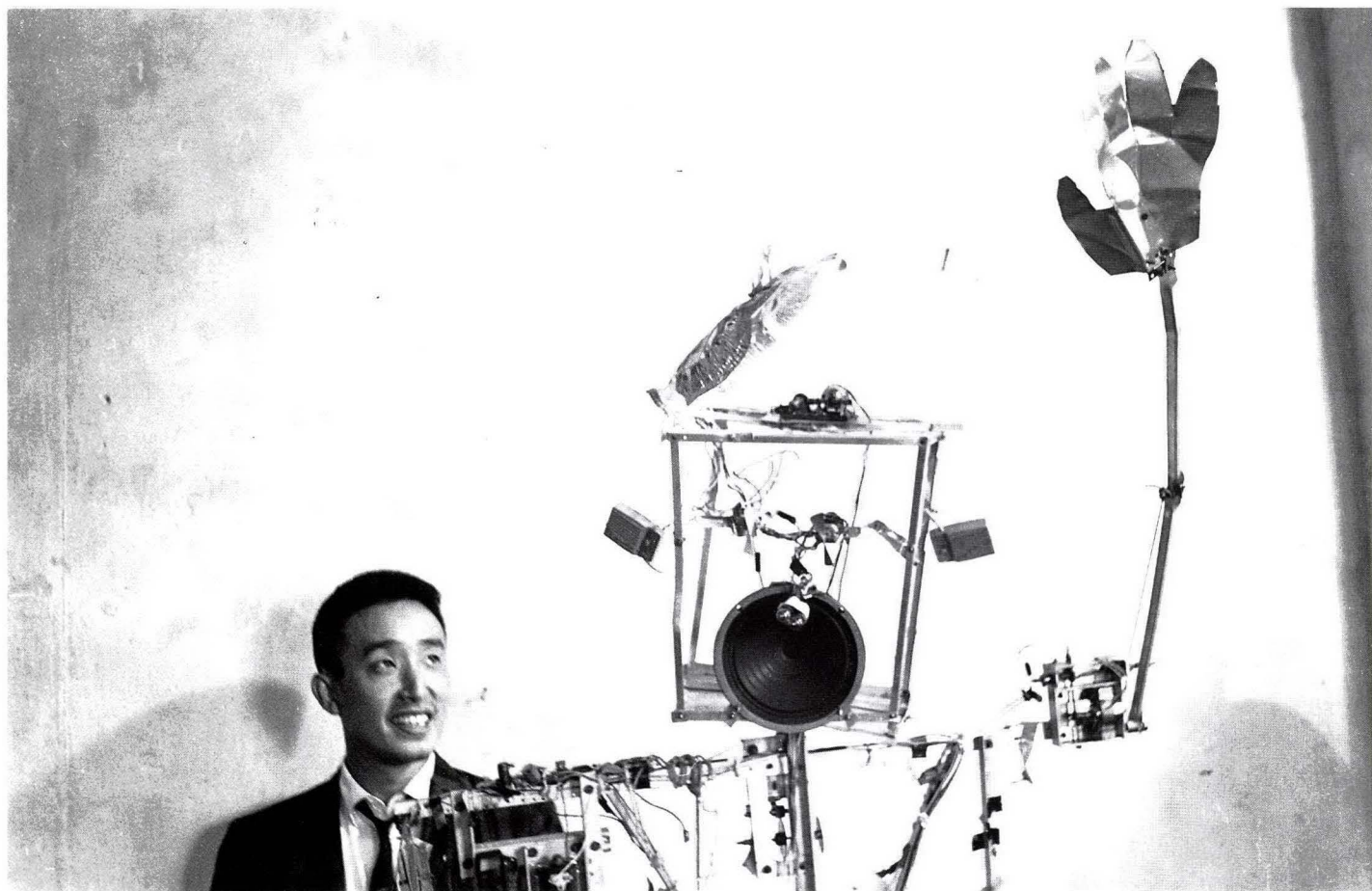
avec K.H. Stockhausen aux "Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik" à Darmstadt en 1957. Avec Stockhausen, c'est la perspective d'un espace neuf, à la fois créatif et existentiel, qui s'ouvre devant lui: expérimentation électronique, rapport "objectif" avec l'instrument, contacts avec l'art d'avant-garde ... Ce monde deviendra naturellement le sien. Il s'installera en 1958 à Cologne, Aachenerstrasse, à proximité de Stockhausen, mais aussi de l'artiste Mary Bauermeister, la femme de Stockhausen à l'époque, et dont le studio abritera plusieurs performances de Nam June Paik. Et puis Cologne c'est le studio de musique électronique du WDR, où il pourra aller travailler, c'est aussi la galerie Lauhus, où Christo exposera ses monuments temporaires de bidons en 1961, et où lui-même s'associera aux "performances spontanées" de Wolf Vostell et de Stefan Wewerka.

Nam June Paik développe ainsi, au contact de ce microcosme expérimental allemand une sorte de personnalité Pré-Fluxus basée sur une propension innée aux dépassements de l'orthodoxie des genres d'expression, sur une vision naturellement "expansive" des arts et quand il rencontrera en 1961 George Maciunas, son adhésion à l'esprit de Fluxus-New York sera la sanction d'une pure évidence.

Entre temps il a fait la connaissance, toujours aux "Ferienkurse" de Darmstadt en 1958 de John Cage et de David Tudor. Le jeune gourou a trouvé son maître. Il exprime sa jubilation dans des articles enflammés qu'il envoie de Cologne à des revues japonaises et coréennes. Les titres parlent d'eux-mêmes: "The Bauhaus of Music", "The Music of 20,5 century". La Rhénanie est devenue son

Charlotte Moorman and Nam June Paik with
Robot K 456, 1964

Photo Peter Moore





Bauhaus de création musicale. La Galerie 22 (Kaiserstraße 22) à Düsseldorf est dirigée par Jean-Pierre Wilhelm qui en a fait un véritable pont culturel entre Paris, Düsseldorf et Milan. Comme beaucoup d'intellectuels de l'époque, à commencer par son ami et associé Manfred de la Motte, il partage sa passion entre l'informel et la "Neue Musik". A l'occasion du vernissage d'Horst-Egon Kalinowski, J.P. Wilhelm ouvre ses portes à Nam June Paik qui exécutera son premier hommage à John Cage, "Musik für Tonbänder und Klavier". Cet hommage est à vrai dire un manifeste stylistique, le modèle des performances à venir: un montage d'actions et d'objets, un collage de gestes et de sons dont la musique est le catalyseur physique ou le discriminant algébrique. Tous les gens qui comme moi ont connu Nam June Paik à cette occasion ont été frappés par la tension fervente qui émanait de l'artiste durant l'action. Nam June Paik avait trouvé son propre langage, il s'exprimait à travers un total engagement dans le vécu. L'hommage à John Cage sera répété, avec quelques variantes à Cologne en 1960,



Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal 1963

dans l'atelier de Mary Baumeister, intégré dans un programme itinérant "d'aktion music" en Scandinavie en 1961, et dans le festival Fluxus de Wiesbaden en 1962. De 1961 à 1963 Nam June Paik participe aux côtés de Maciunas et avec la bénédiction de Cage à l'osmose germanique de la mouvance Fluxus new-korkaise. Stockhausen lui offrira un espace autonome, "Zen for Head", dans sa manifestation "Originale" au Domtheater de Cologne (26.10.-6.11.1991). Il intégrera la musique de La Monte Young dans sa participation à "Néo-Dada in der Musik" à Düsseldorf en 1962. 1962 est aussi pour Nam June Paik l'année Alisaon Knowles! Il lui dédie une sérénade, jouée à Amsterdam, et un article dithyrambique dans la revue "Dé-coll/age" de Vostell dont il est un collaborateur permanent jusqu'en 1964.

Le point d'aboutissement, l'apothéose de la période allemande est l'exposition de 1963 à la galerie Parnass de Wuppertal, au mois de mars: "Exposition of Music-electronic television", véritable panorama-collage de l'expressivité de cet "action-musicist" qu'est Nam June Paik. Rolf Jährling, un architecte, était le directeur de la gale-

rie qui, dès 1951, avait entrepris un programme d'échanges internationaux basés sur l'Ecole de Paris. En 1963 il fait figure de tsar des pionniers: la 1ère Documenta a eu lieu à Kassel en 1955, la galerie Schmela a ouvert en 1960 à Düsseldorf avec le bleu d'Yves Klein, Jährling est le président moral du club des galeries actives dont les deux membres les plus influents sont la Galerie 22 de Düsseldorf et la galerie Vertiko de Bonn. Le fait de donner carte blanche à Nam June Paik équivaut à une consécration pure et simple sur la scène créative allemande. Thomas Schmit, qui fut à fois témoin et acteur de l'opération en fut très conscient à l'époque. Maciunas aussi: il avait déjà participé, avec Paik et Patterson à une "Kleines Sommerfest" à la galerie Parnass en 1962. Relayée par tous les circuits Fluxus internationaux, la résonance de l' "Exposition of Music" se propagea au sein de toute l'avant-garde mondiale.

Nam June Paik pouvait désormais retourner au Japon, puis aller s'installer à New York dès 1964. Le microcosme culturel ouest-allemand des années 50 l'avait lancé: il était arrivé en 1956, au juste moment, en plein ferment d'expérimentation artistico-musicale dans une Rhénanie en total renouveau, qui vivait avec la fin de l'informel et l'émergence du Nouveau Réalisme, l'apparition de Fluxus bien avant le Pop Art. Son destin, dès lors, est tracé: le robot avec Shuya Abe au Japon, la rencontre avec Charlotte Moorman à New York, l'emploi de la première camera vidéo port-a-pack en 1965 ... et nous ne sommes qu'en 1965!



Old Robot, 1963

JOHN CANADAY

ART: THE ELECTRONICS-KINETICS TREND. PAIK'S TV SETS ON VIEW AT GALERIA BONINO

Once we get Christmas behind us, we must get around to thinking about what is going to be new next season, since people keep asking. The current season has pretty definitely identified itself with electronic and kinetic art. This is a relief, really, since at the end of last season, it was looking as if this was to be the Year of the Dirty Picture. Obstreperously sexed nudes of both genders were popping up in so many galleries that for a while you could hardly tell whether you were in one of Madison Avenue's cultural temples or in a hideaway given over to the performance of some pagan cult's initiation rites.

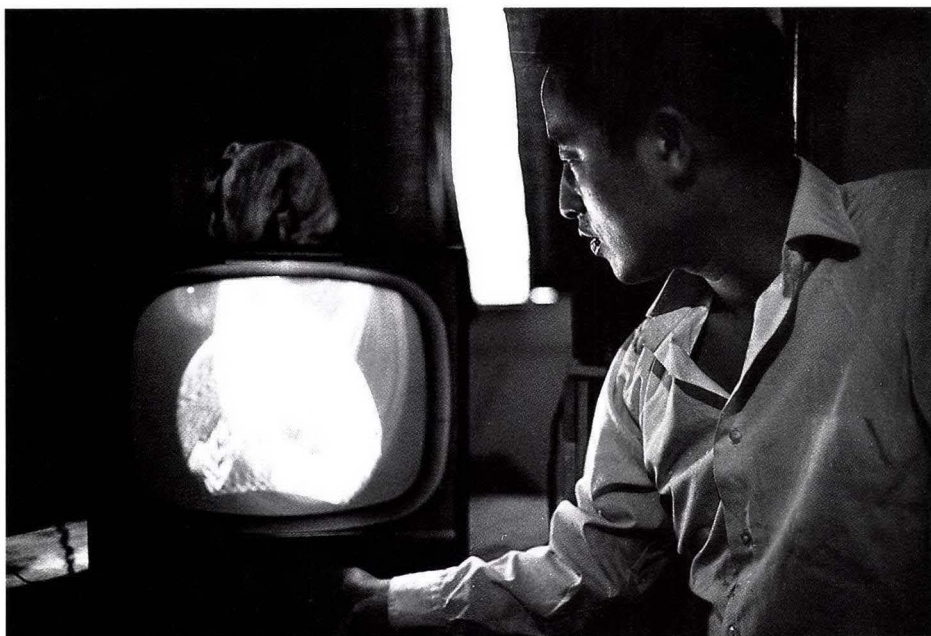
Two current gallery shows exemplify the season's electronic-kinetic trend. At the Albert Loeb Gallery, 12 East 57th Street (until Dec. 20), the German artist Harry Kramer is having his first one-man exhibition in the United States. He calls his wire constructions "automobile sculptures", meaning self-powered rather than referring to the Detroit chariots. And at the Galeria Bonino, 7 West 57th Street, there is an exhibition by a young Korean, Nam June Paik, who seems to be the John Cage of the ordinary domestic TV set. Perhaps he had better be taken up first.

Mr. Paik is exhibiting a dozen or so TV sets, each one violated by its own electronic attachment to deform the image beyond anything you can imagine, no matter how bad your reception is. Mr. Paik is in constant attendance at his show, to demonstrate the operation of these attachments. The images he produces are occasionally recognizable as weird distortions of whatever program is (so to speak) coming through. But in most cases the screen becomes a field of operation for totally abstract images, in motion,

TV Garden, 1974–78
Whitney Museum of American Art,
New York 1982

Electro-Magnet TV, 1965

Photo Peter Moore



composed sometimes of wonderfully organized lines of light, and sometimes of curious hazy, flowing shapes. They are accompanied by titles with "in" references, such as the pseudo-equations illustrated here. (Mr. Paik does manage, however, to misspell the name of Marshall McLuhan, philosopher of things modern.)

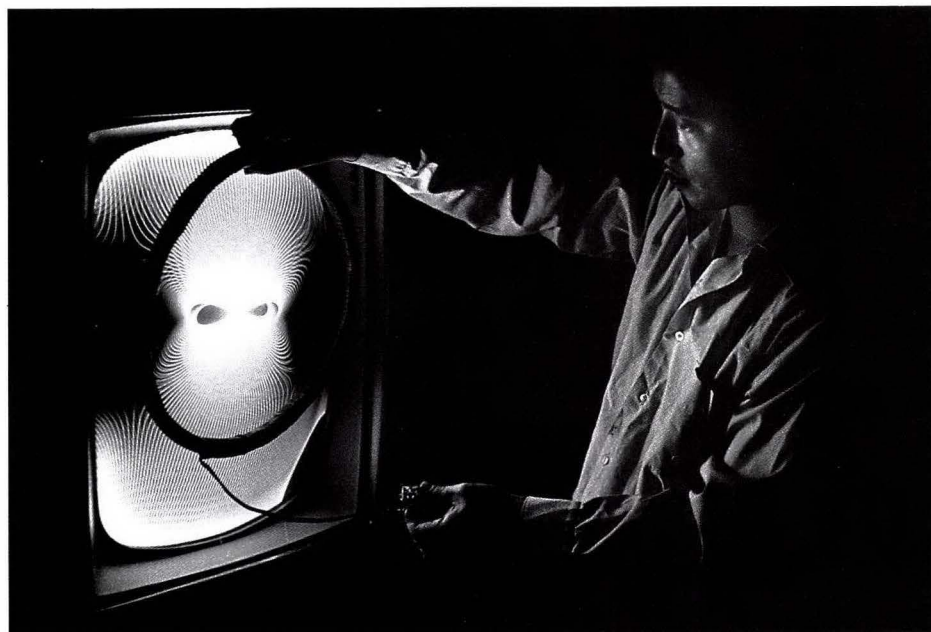
The TV sets can be "played" as one would play a musical instrument if music were light – although possibly Mr. Paik has not yet quite brought his electronic art to a level comparable to any music except John Cage's. Mr. Cage has written an introduction to the catalogue, in which he performs a stunt or two with the English language as well.

As an experiment in a new medium, the exhibition has unquestioned fascination and a probable potential for expansion. Mr. Paik is also exhibiting a life-size robot that walks, waves its arms and excretes dried beans; but the TV sets are the real show.

(published in: The New York Times, December 4, 1965)

Participation TV, 1965

Photo Peter Moore





The only time anyone has ever seen Paik seriously depressed was in February of 1967, when the police stopped the performance of his new "Opera Sextronique". Paik had been a little nervous about doing this piece in New York. He and Miss Moorman had performed it without incident in Aachen the preceding July, and then in January at the Philadelphia College of Art, but New York was at that time in the grip of one of its rare public morality seizures, and the police were abnormally alert to vice. "Opera Sextronique" has four "arias", or acts. In the first, Miss Moorman, wearing a bikini consisting of small electric light bulbs, plays the cello on a darkest stage; in the second, she wears a topless evening gown, plays the cello, and puts on and takes off a succession of grotesque masks; the third aria has her nude from the waist down and clothed in a football uniform and helmeted above; in the fourth, she is totally nude, playing, in lieu of her cello a large, upright aerial bomb. The New York performance, at the Film-Maker's Cinémathèque, on West Fortyfirst Street, was interrupted by a police squadron at the end of the second (topless) aria, and Miss Moorman and Paik were carted off to jail. Miss Moorman retains a vivid memory of Paik sitting for his police photography with a number hung around his neck and saying mournfully, "Oh, Charlotte, I never think it come to this".

Later that night, in jail, Paik remembers, he felt very calm – "like the last scene in Stendhal's 'Rouge et Noir', when Julien Sorel is so much at peace", he says. "I thought that when I got kicked out of United States I would be hero in Germany. I was happy things were ending here – all the complicated life. Well, we were released on parole next day, and a guy called from San Francisco offering us five thousand dollars to do our 'act' in a night club. We had many offers like that." They accepted none of the offers, and Paik was hard pressed to raise money for their defense. His lawyer was Ernst Rosenberger, who had represented Lenny Bruce and other prominent performers. When the case came to court, in April of 1967, Rosenberger had no difficulty persuading the court that under no law could a composer of music be arrested for obscenity, but Miss Moorman was less fortunate. Although the flower of New York's avant-garde came to testify on her behalf – and in spite of the fact that nudity was rapidly becoming the obligatory scene in the New York theatre – she was convicted on a charge of indecent exposure and given a suspended sentence.

The conviction, according to Miss Moorman, caused her grandmother in Little Rock to suffer a heart attack, and ended her own career with the American Symphony and as a musician for TV commercials, which had until then been her main means of support. Lucrative offers to repeat the "act" in Las Vegas and elsewhere only made her feel worse about it all. Paik, too, was at a low ebb. He had been receiving small amounts of money from his family in Tokyo, but now they ceased to arrive; the family, he says, "had just lost another fortune". He owed a rather large bill to Consolidated Edison, which he couldn't pay, and he was having visa problems. It was with some relief, then, that he accepted a post as artist-in-residence at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Long Island. Allan Kaprow, who was trying to establish a sort of avant-garde institute at Stony Brook with funds from the Rockefeller Foundation, had been instrumental in getting the assistant director of the Foundation's arts program, Howard Klein, to visit Paik's studio, and Klein and his boss, Norman Lloyd, had subsequently arranged a one-year appointment to Stony Brook for Paik. Nobody bothered him there, so he spent his time doing video

Charlotte Moorman performing
 Nam June Paik's "Concerto for TV Cello and
 Videotapes", Galeria Bonino, New York
 December 1971

Photo Peter Moore



experiments and writing a long report on the uses of television in the "instant global university" of the future. One of his recommendations was that television stop being exclusively nationalistic. "You simply cannot escape Camus or Sartre in a bookstore", he wrote. "But do you remember seeing a production of French TV recently?"

(...)

Paik, of course, has had his problems in dealing with the establishment. "Only reason I survived this long at WNET is I had underground outlet", he conceded last month. "I have a lot of frustration to work within system. A lot of frustration. So when I get mad at them I don't fight - I yield to them, and then go and do some stupid thing in small place which satisfies me so that I can work with them again. Underground outlet is my safety valve. I like being world's most famous bad pianist. But I also like to do NET because it is important, is where I can maybe influence society."

After a moment's reflection, Paik went on, "We are now at stage of ancient Egypt with hieroglyphics. Until recently, TV equipment is so expensive that only the priests can use it. And there is constant effort made by networks and by TV unions to keep production costs high. That is classical way of monopoly capital - you know? I want to find ways to cut costs so it can be opened up to others - many others. Now we have color portapak - costs three thousand dollar in Tokyo, sig thousand here, but will come down. And with use of computers cost of editing videotape will become much chaeper. Problem is not really Socialism or Capitalism but technology, you know - now we manage that. For instance, technological forecasting, future-research - I am very interested in that. They need us artists, to make that sort of information available to public. Even New York Times will not print Rand Corporation Report, because it is so boring. Like McLuhan say, we are antenna for changing society. But not only antenna - we also have output capacity, capacity to humanize technology. My job is to see how establishment is working and to look for little holes where I can get my fingers in and tear away walls. And also try not to get too corrupt."

(published in: The New Yorker magazine, May 5, 1975)

GRACE GLUECK THE WORLD IS SO BORING

Some people think Nam June Paik is the best thing that ever happened to TV. With such helpful devices as electromagnets and signal interceptors he busts up images on the screen, melting performers into iridescent puddles, swirling deodorant ads into instant Op, converting panel shows into Impressionist landscapes. "I've always wanted to integrate electronics into the visual arts", Paik said the other day, passing a clumsy electromagnet over a color set whose innards he had already "adjusted". A twitching, crescent-shaped seed on the screen exploded into a geometric flower. "The images I'm creating here are as 'esthetically' valid as painting. Electronics is essentially Oriental - light, weight and flexible. Incidentally, don't confuse 'electronic' with 'electric', as McLuhan often does. Electricity deals with mass and weight. Electronics deals with information, which has no gravity. One's muscle, the other's nerve."

Paik, a multi-input type born in Korea 36 years ago, has processed plenty of data himself. He studied esthetics, art history, music and philosophy at Japanese and German universities, absorbing five languages (besides his own) along the way. Later, with the German electronic musician Karlheinz Stockhausen, he worked experimentally at Radio Cologne's Studio for Electronic Music. (He's one of the few technology-oriented artists who can do his own tinkering.) Right now, with the aid of a Rockefeller Foundation grant at the Stony Brook campus of New York State University, he's studying ways to apply electronic media to education.

The TV Terror, who has Happened, mixed media and concertized all over the country with far-out cellist Charlotte Moorman, began his public career in Germany, demolishing pianos at "action music" concerts, "suffocated by the European music establishment", he explains. Always a man for his era, he later dropped Steinway for Sony and zapped into the electronic age.

Paik says his current exhibition at the Bonino Gallery may be his last art show. He plans to devote the next few years to research for a kind of electronic - Esperanto, - a world language developed with the aid of computers. "Better communication among peoples is so much more important than putting men on the moon. The space effort is self-deceptive, like heroin. It changes nothing for us."

Paik has a peck of other electronic notions. Among them: (a) an "Instant Global University", whose computer-stored, mailable video tapes would give instruction on anything from advanced astronomy to koto playing; (b) film-recording for posterity the words and presences of great contemporaries (Duchamp, Sartre, Bertrand Russell); (c) the employment of artists to help develop "personality" for computers that teach, to keep students awake while taking instruction.

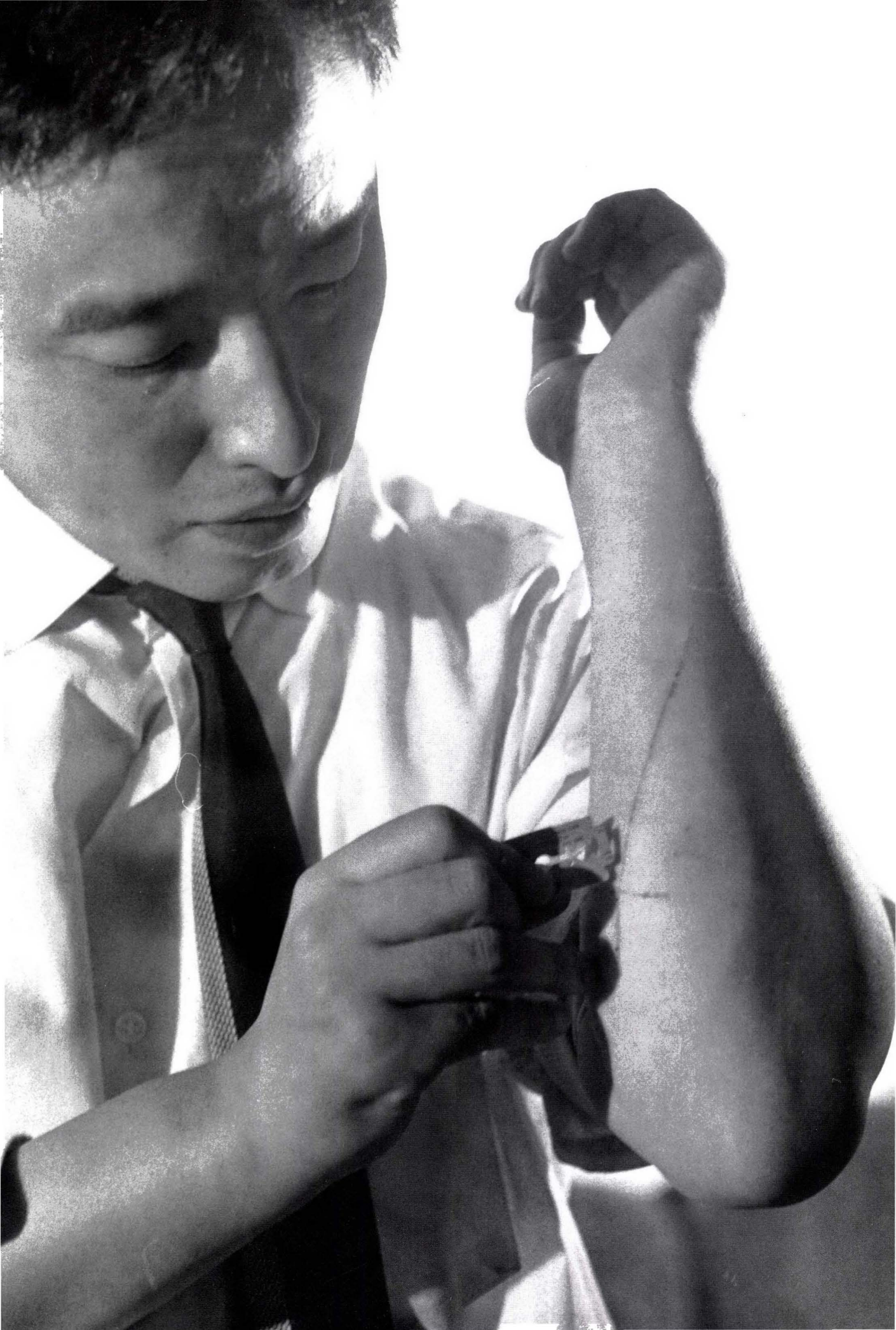
"The world is so boring", he sighs. "I have to think of things continually to keep myself tense."

(published in: The New York Times, Art Notes, May 5, 1968)



Shigeo Kubota and Nam June Paik,
New York 1974

Photo T. Haar



Nam June Paik, 1967
Photos Peter Moore



"Have you heard about the explosion at the World Trade Center?" neighbors ask as I hurry out of my midtown-Manhattan apartment building to keep a luncheon date. It is Friday, February 26th, and the blast is serious: several people have been injured and subway trains are out of service. Later, returning home, I turn on the TV to get the evening news and discover that Channel 2 is the only station on the air. A virtual television blackout exists in the city because the other stations transmit from the top of the World Trade Center. Channel 2 remains on the air because it transmits from the top of the Empire State Building. I can't believe this is happening, so I click relentlessly from one channel to the next, but, instead of getting different programs on channels 4, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13, all I get is one black screen after another, each pulsating with demonic white lint and accompanied by droning static.

In my frustration, I notice a videocassette that Nam June Paik recently sent me. I insert it in the VCR and am soon watching Paik's documentation of myself, speaking at a memorial gathering for art critic Gregory Battcock, a sparkling bon vivant who contributed oceans of merriment to our lives. The memorial, organized by Paik, took place in Soho more than 10 years ago and concluded with our gallant friend Charlotte Moorman mournfully playing her cello as she rode on the hood of a car that drove slowly around the neighborhood. Gregory cruised out of this world on Christmas Day, 1980 (his murderer never apprehended) and Charlotte made her ultimate glissando toward the stratosphere on November 8, 1991. Life's redeeming frivolity hasn't been the same since their exits. I would much prefer to watch Charlotte and Gregory in any medium than to observe this videotape of myself, unfavorably photographed in a low-angled close-up. But, having witnessed Paik's live performances in which he mutilated pianos and whacked violins to smithereens, why would I expect him to flatter my face?

I switch back to the blacked-out broadcasts, aimlessly roaming from one channel to the next. The oscillating patterns and basso profundo droning begin to hypnotize me. I feel faint, disoriented, imagining disembodied voices and wispy ghosts whirling about in the penumbral recesses of the monitor. Suddenly, my eyelids flickers uncontrollably and I momentarily lose consciousness.

I am roused from my swoon by the clatter of tossed coins, accompanied by a grating singsong voice that sounds like a rusty hinge in need of oiling. I look up to see a peculiar configuration on the television screen that gradually spheres into the thin, bearded face of a man. "I was consulting the I Ching", he says, "and, by chance, one of my coins hit the antenna on the World Trade Center." His laughter suggests this was a witty and serendipitous move on his part. I realize it is John Cage. "What an unexpected pleasure", I say to him, trying to look nonchalant while thinking darkly to myself, "Didn't he die last August?"

"Are you in heaven?" I ask.

"I don't think so", he says, "because I'm still studying counterpoint with Arnold Schönberg. That's how I started out nearly 60 years ago in Los Angeles. Then, I followed Schönberg's rules in writing counterpoint, he would say, 'Why don't you take a little liberty?' And when I took liberties, he would say, 'Don't you know the rules?' By happenstance, I became a go-between for Nam June Paik, who stalked me with scissors while doing his thesis on Schönberg. Paik was involved in his own 12-step program to alleviate dependency upon musical tradition and neckties."

"Did Paik understand what you were doing?" I ask.

"The truth is we don't know what we're doing and that is how we manage to do it when it's lively. My advice to Paik fans: always wear a tie in Düsseldorf."

"Düsseldorf? Did I hear someone say Düsseldorf?" another voice calls out. A striking, gaunt face comes into murky close-up. Is it Lon Chaney in *The Phantom of the Opera*? No, it's Joseph Beuys! Has he, I wonder, been piloting above the globe since January, 1986? "I like Paik and Paik likes me", he proclaims loudly. I want to ask Beuys why he attacked one of Paik's prepared Pianos with an axe during a 1963 show in Wuppertal, but I'm too timid (and, after all, he may still have the axe).

"Professor Beuys, any advice for Paik today?"

"Paik should polish the story of his life during the Korean War. The public does not want to hear about his family flight to Hong Kong and his father's adventures in the ginseng-root business. Instead, Paik should tell how he flew a fighter plane over North Korea and was shot down and crashed behind enemy lines. He should tell how he was rescued by a peasant family who helped him retain his body temperature by wrapping him in cabbage leaves and submerging him up in a large crock of kimch'i. It doesn't matter if it's rotkohl (red cabbage) or weisskohl (white cabbage): human kindness is beyond politics."

Turning away, Beuys walks to a blackboard, picks up a stick of white chalk and writes in an excessively loopy calligraphy, "I will stay after school and practice my penmanship." He writes this sentence over and over again, covering dozens of blackboards, which he throws to the floor when he has finished with them. The



Charlotte Moorman performing Nam June Paik's "Opera Sextronique", 1967

Photo Peter Moore



Charlotte Moorman and Nam June Paik performing "TV Bra For Living Sculpture", Howard Wise Gallery, New York 1969

Photo Peter Moore

screeches of chalk on blackboard feel like knife-thrusts in my ears. The shrill piercing sound evolves into the squealing seesaw of a bow being dragged across a stringed instrument and Charlotte Moorman materializes on the screen, playing her cello. She is wearing Paik's TV Bra for Living Sculpture, which includes a pair of three-inch television sets. "Hello, David", she says, greeting me with a radiant smile. "Tell Paik that an electromagnetic disturbance is causing his TV Bra to malfunction. I'm unable to scramble the television images." Poor Charlotte. Her absurdist performances once made her the most notorious musician from Little Rock, Arkansas, but now she has been eclipsed by saxophonist Bill Clinton.

I first saw Charlotte and Nam June perform in a 1964 production of *Originale* by Karlheinz Stockhausen at New York's Judson Hall. She hung from a balcony railing while playing the cello and he dunked himself in a tub of water. Their antic personalities complemented each other superbly.

"Is it true that Stockhausen insisted that you cast Paik, whom you didn't know, in *Originale*?"

"Yes. My first reaction was 'What's a Nam June Paik?' I didn't know him from the king of Korea."

An explosive sound emanates from the TV set and a blindingly white light spreads across the screen. "Who calls the king of Korea?" demands an imperial voice. The screen separates into two horizontal sections at the 38th parallel line and the face of an Asian man appears in the lower portion. He glares at me, then squints disapprovingly at Charlotte, who remains on the upper portion of the screen. "I am Sejong", he announces proudly. "Why do you disturb me?" Although I do not recognize his face, I certainly know who he is: the Yi Dynasty king who devised the Hangeul writing system in the fifteenth-century. He points in Charlotte's direction and asks, "Han-gung-mal-lo meo-ra- go hae-yo? (What's this called in Korean?)" I introduce Charlotte to him and explain that she is a close friend and colleague of Paik's. He looks at her bra and frowns, saying, "T'e-re-bi-jyeon an na-wa-yo (The television doesn't work)."

Sejong focuses his next scowl on me. "Tell Paik Nam-June that he is naughty boy who brings shame to his countrymen. Why goes he around the world calling himself 'George Washington of video art?' Is much better he live with Japanese woman? Is a disgrace, no? Brings shame to his countrywomen. And why he always wear woolen scarf around his stomach? Looks like obi, no? Perhaps he thinks he is Japanese woman, too? He is bad boy." The king snaps his fingers toward someone offscreen. Yeo-bo-se-yo (hello)", he says. "Kimch'i chom teo chu-se-yo (Please give me more kimch'i)."

Sejong dissolves from view and Charlotte regains the entire screen – much to her relief. "What a disagreeable man", she says. "No wonder Paik left Korea." I notice that she has changed her costume, switching from the TV Bra to a pair of small whirling propellers that she has somehow affixed to her bare breast. "Do you remember in which piece I wore these?" she asks.

"Opera Sextronique, of course. They made a terrific clatter as they accidentally struck the cello when you leaned forward to bow. For me, it was one of the highlights of the piece."

How could I forget a detail like that on such a momentous evening – February 9, 1967 – when Paik staged the premiere of his "opera" at the Film-makers' Cinémathèque on West 41st Street. Halfway through the performance, a couple of dozen policemen, many of

them plainclothesmen, rushed from the rear of the auditorium, stormed the stage and closed the curtain. The audience, stunned, listened to the muffled sound of onstage scuffling. Paik's worried face emerged between the curtains. He scanned the audience, spotted me in a front row and asked me to come on stage to negotiate with the policemen. He must have imagined that I, being an editor of Life magazine, could resolve the crisis. I hurried up the side steps to the stage, saw the police tussling with Charlotte, who was tearfully pleading for her coat and cello and was swept immediately into the vortex of the fray. The police arrested Charlotte and Nam June for indecent exposure and drove them away in



a fleet of at least 16 police cars. Obviously, the police had anticipated a much larger cast of nude performers. By the next day, Charlotte was notorious in the tabloids as "the topless cellist".

"It was so sweet of you, David, to testify on my behalf in Criminal Court, even though the judge twisted your words around to convict me of lewdness. At least he didn't send me to jail. I wish Gregory had been there, too."

Loudly clearing his throat to command our attention, Gregory Battcock slides into the right side of the screen, facing Charlotte. "My dear Charlotte", he says, "your case was a lost cause the mo-

Charlotte Moorman arrested by Police after the Happening "Opera Sextronique" in 1967

Photo Peter Moore

ment David was called to the witness stand. His wardrobe, as usual, was too humiliating for words. What trial judge would believe an art critic wearing a polyester jacket, bell-bottom trousers and Thom McAn shoes? It's a wonder you weren't sent up for life! David has many character flaws, but the most serious is his failure to keep up with Italian men's fashions. Have you ever seen him in an Armani suit?"

"They're too expensive", I protest.

"What did I tell you!" Gregory snorts. "Now if we had testified, we would have worn our *vestito da festa*, probably a three-piece worsted wool suit with a custom-made English shirt and an Italian silk tie, and our testimony would have been preceded by a press conference at Delmonico's, where we would have served a noteworthy champagne. After our testimony, we would have hosted a modest *colazione* with *prosciutto cotto di Parma*, *scampi alla Veneziana* and *risotto con funghi*, accompanied by an *insalata mista di stagione* and followed by an *assortimento di formaggi*. And we would have invited a few press photographers, of course."

"I have a list of them right here", Charlotte says, cheerfully waving a few sheets of paper.

Her gesture triggers the offscreen clicking of several cameras. One familiar-sounding click is followed by the hissing sound of a Polaroid print being regurgitated from its plastic chassis. By now it's hardly a surprise when Andy Warhol appears onscreen. "Oh, hi, David, I'm up here in heaven and it's so-o-o beautiful. Everyone you've ever wanted to know is here and the parties are just great. Next week we're having a reception for Lillian Gish and Ruby Keeler."

"Are you sure you're in heaven?" I ask. "Your voice sounds awfully close to Earth. Maybe you and Charlotte and Gregory and Beuys and Cage are all trapped in some peculiar wavelength at the low end of the electromagnetic spectrum. Or maybe all of you are confined in some kind of air inversion, like a smog belt. It's odd how you're all connected to Paik whose only use for a halo would be to interfere with television reception."

"Why don't you ask him about it?" Andy says. "He's so smart. I just love that big pyramid of television sets in Seoul."

"You mean the ziggurat of 1,003 television sets that he designed for the National Museum of Contemporary Art?"

"Yeah. What a great idea to repeat the same image a thousand times in row after row. Where did he get the idea to do a grid of identical pictures? Why don't you ask him that, David?"

"But, Andy, you're not the only artist who's used grids."

"Ask him anyway. See what he says." He silently fades away.

When I come to, the black television screen is still fizzing with spectral lint. My memory is numb, but I recall that I have messages to relay to Nam June Paik. I slowly come to the realization that I've been channeling! At last, the New Age has found me.

Charlotte Moorman, 1990

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati



OTTO PIENE

"CHARLOTTE", FOR WHITNEY MUSEUM, 15.2.92, N.Y.C.

This should be written
with a golden pen
on paper from the most
exquisite mill
on paper saved for centuries
on film resulting from
the most concerted effort
of technology
in Kodak and related labs
released in air
which no foul breath
has spoiled:
The purest sky
which has not heard
of war
or of St. John's revelation:
The blue which holds its own
the oxygen which never
entered
human lungs
the oxygen attaining
purity
before it peters out
into the unadulterated
space
where stars take on their
unadministered dimension
Charlotte is dead
The JVCs, the Sonys, the
Super Eights,
the High Eights and the
Canons,
the Leicas, the friends,
the poets & musicians,
the media men & women,
the systems, bandwidths,
frequencies,
the channels, stage sets
and assistants,
the cats, dogs, insects
and the dinosaurs

of unabashed media
attention,
the critics and purporters,
the advocates and the prac-
titioners of avantgarde,
the analog & digital,
the versatile and stubborn,
the open-minded, sex-
crazed
tv hounds and still photo-
graphers,
the book-compilers and the
merely fascinated,
loving colleagues, loving
friends,
loving flesh
aspiring to be spared:

Charlotte is dead
She has been the living
proof:
Agony is to come out of,
morphine is to persevere,
the grail which life is
belies Sloan-Kettering.
She is with us,
we can continue.
Scarlet is the color of her
dress:
The cello is a double heart
quadrupled when we
see it turning,
the bow a wand,
the color earth
appearing polished
by the sunset
and quite aesthetic
from a distance
when progress cancels
night and day & seasons
and maybe, reality:

Charlotte Moorman and Nam June Paik
performing "Music Is A Mass Transit Too –
So Is The Bra", 10th Annual Avant Garde
Festival of New York, December 9, 1973

Photos Peter Moore



Charlotte is dead.
 Apologies to Frank
 and Vin and Shawn
 and to Paul Earls,
 Elizabeth and Paik,
 to the egregious late Howard,
 to Jim MacWilliams & Kosugi,
 to Yoko Ono, Peter, Barbara,
 to Ay-O, New York City
 & to some who went
 before her:
 Bart Johnson & Stand VanDerBeek,
 to Beuys and Schmela -
 for saying it plainly:

Charlotte is dead
 Charlotte and I loved
 to drink beer
 with Frank & Elizabeth
 - I say Beuys & Paik once only,
 I can't say beer two times -

Once I woke her to play
 the cello to the stillness
 of Lone Pine & the Ala-
 bama Hills
 composed of Rocks
 that look like resting
 brides
 of volcanic age
 Once - right after sunrise -
 we drove to the edge
 of Death Valley
 where we beheld a sign
 to Charlotte's wide
 amazement:
 Swansea, California,
 population three
 Then we drove on
 to arrive in due time
 at the airport
 of the City of the Angels

Given as pre-performance
 presents
 and tschatchkis in the mail
 came hearts of glass,
 of shells, of paper and
 of chocolate
 We had a cardiac altar
 on Valentine's Day
 her favorite
 for sentiments of written
 statements
 and basic human kitsch
 since humanness is dialectic
 and purity sublime
 A woman cut from the rib
 of Georges de la Tour
 her glance is elsewhere:

Why Charlotte was Charlotte
 forceful, truthful
 beautiful,
 funny
 and
 dead-earnest
 expressive
 and
 an image like no other -
 we may learn
 - if ever -
 when we are dead.
 [E.'s poem]
 Elizabeth Goldring

Not for Heretics

For Charlotte

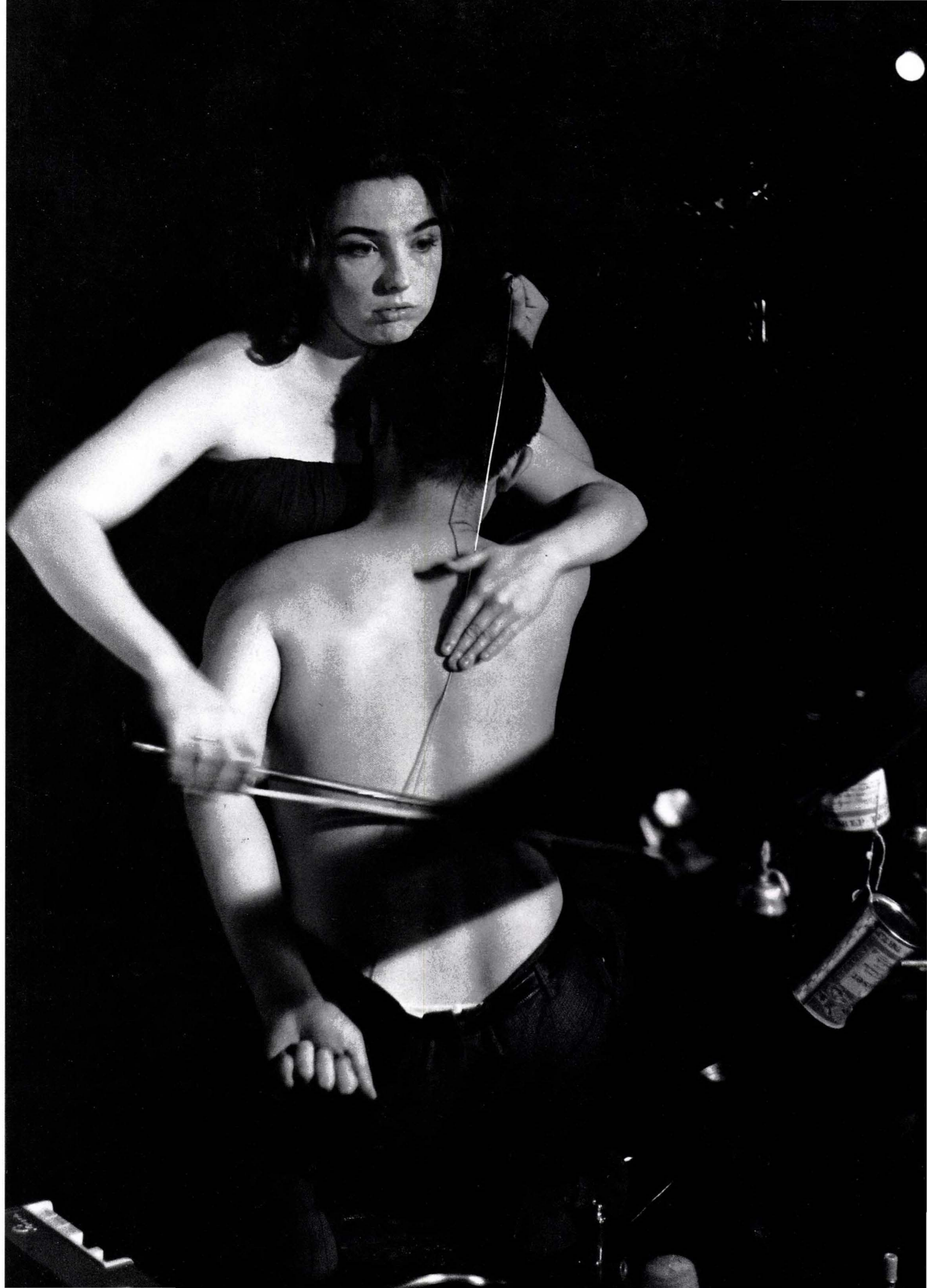
An ancient shopkeeper
 in Karlsruhe
 climbed up the ladder
 until
 far out of reach
 at the back of a dusty shelf
 he found an angel
 playing the cello

you said you liked it
 and you set it out
 with your what-nots
 Irresistable
 to be remembered
 and be lived
 forever
 her battle cry
 to draw us to her
 & into her art:
 I love you!

Yes, we love you, Charlotte,
 yes.

Charlotte Moorman and Nam June Paik
 performing "Human Cello", Part of their
 version of John Cage's "26. 1. 1499",
 Café au Go Go, New York 1965

Photo Peter Moore





GRACE GLUECK ABOUT NANDA BONINO

"We didn't sell a single work during the whole time he was with us, but the publicity was worth it!" says Fernanda Bonino, Nam June Paik's first dealer in America. Already owning galleries in Rio and Buenos Aires, "Nanda" Bonino and her husband, Alfredo (who died in 1981), opened their elegant and very uptown New York space, Galeria Bonino, Ltd., at 7 West 57th Street in 1963. It represented Paik for more than a decade, starting in 1964. (During that period, Paik also participated in group shows at the Howard Wise Gallery).

Actually, the meeting of Paik and the Boninos was one of those wonderful accidents that seem prearranged. Each needed the other: Paik, like all artists, wanted a sympathetic place to show his work; the Boninos were after a lively young talent who would generate some publicity for their new venture. The Korean-born Paik had been living and studying in Germany, and had already staged an experimental TV show at the Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal in 1963. "At the time, color TV was coming, and I wanted to work with it," he said in a recent interview. "I came to New York through Tokyo because materials and engineering were cheap there. I bought old TV sets and brought them here."

In Germany, Paik had spent time in the late 1950's at the universities of Munich and Cologne and the Freiburg Conservatory, then worked experimentally from 1958 to 1961 with the electronic musician Karlheinz Stockhausen at Radio Cologne's Studio for Electronic Music. He also did performances, ripping neckties, plunging his soap-lathered head into a washtub, and demolishing pianos. His presentations were very much in tune with the philosophy of Fluxus, the loosely-knit international group of writers, artists, composers, filmmakers and performers to which he belonged, who created works that ran counter to traditional notions of art. In his "Zen for Head," performed in 1962 at the Fluxus Festival in Wiesbaden, for instance, Paik used his body as a vehicle for paint. He had planned to show his adjusted TV sets at the Fluxus Festival in Tokyo in 1964, but George Maciunas, the guiding light of the group, asked Paik to exhibit instead in his loft on New York's grungy Canal Street. "When I got here I saw that Canal Street was already so full of junk that the TV sets wouldn't stand out," Paik recalls. "I needed an uptown setting. And it was hard to get uptown space for such an unsalable commodity." He tried the Green Gallery, the short-lived avant garde outpost run by Richard Bellamy, but it was about to close.

Meanwhile, the Boninos had met Mary Bauermeister, a young German artist who knew Paik through their mutual association with Stockhausen. Bauermeister, who created beautiful collages and sculptures of lenses and polished stones, had been invited to the States by Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey. "Mary knew everybody," Nanda Bonino recalls, "Johns, Rauschenberg, the whole art community. We represented mostly Latin American artists, and we wanted to have an American in the gallery." Paik turned out to be their "American"; he was introduced to the Boninos by Bauermeister, who also joined the Bonino stable.

Paik's first one-man show, at Bonino in the fall of 1965, had as its stellar attraction "K456," a robot with 20-channel radio control and 10-channel data recorder, that walked, waved its arms and excreted dried beans. With its speaker mouth, paper hat and tiny fan for a navel, it was not an unattractive monster. Its companions were the dozen or so ancient TV sets Paik had brought from Tokyo, wired up to change ordinary images into weird electronic abstractions, and the Korean "cultural terrorist," as Allan Kaprow



Nanda Bonino

I am the World's Most Famous Bad Pianist
1986

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati



dubbed him, stayed in the gallery, sleeping there overnight, to minister to his creations. "When a critic came to see the show, I had to wake Paik up to plug something in," Nanda recalls. "Alfredo was mad because Paik's helpers ate and drank all over the gallery, and the floor was covered with TV wiring and tubes."

Nevertheless, Paik did bring the gallery the attention it sought. For one, his and Bauermeister's friends from the downtown avant garde became regular visitors – among them Paik's mentor, John Cage; Merce Cunningham, Allan Ginsberg, and Allan Kaprow. Cage even produced the catalogue introduction for Paik's first show. "Art and TV are no longer two different things," he wrote, in a text as free-wheeling as his music. "They're equally tedious. The geometry of the one's devitalized the other (find out what bad habits you have); TV's vibrating field's shaken our arts to pieces. No use to pick them up. Get with it: Someday artists will work with capacitors, resistors and semi-conductors as they work today with brushes, violins and junk."

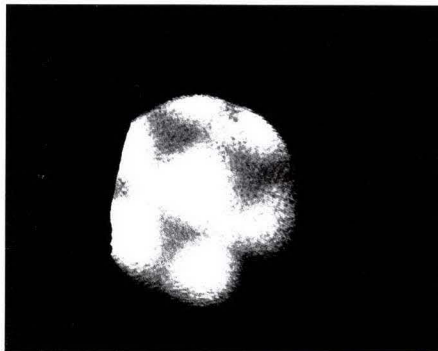
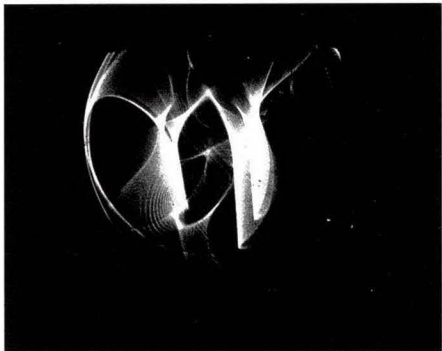
Critics came, too. "As an experiment in a new medium, the exhibition has unquestioned fascination and a probable potential for expansion," wrote The New York Times' John Canaday. And many visitors came to the gallery just to see what was going on. Still, to an art audience attuned to Johns and Rauschenberg and just latching on to Pop, Paik's cryptic technical tinkering was a little bit off the track. But he was always amusing and scandalous, and his performances with the cellist Charlotte Moorman – who played topless – got lots of attention in the press. Ms. Bonino remembers it as "all pretty fascinating. It was a particular moment in New York, a relationship of artists, dealers, critics and museum people that no longer exists. There was a completely different feeling about art – people bought what they liked and didn't think of how much it would sell for the next year. Dealers didn't even think all that much about money. In the '70's it all changed."

Paik had five solo shows at the Galeria Bonino. For his second appearance, in 1968, he got his artist friends Ayo (a Japanese sculptor who made mysterious boxes), Christo, Ray Johnson, Mary Bauermeister, Robert Breer (Breer, a kinetic artist, was also represented by Bonino), Otto Piene and others to participate with him. Christo wrapped a TV set, Piene covered one with plastic beads; Bauermeister made a lens box with a TV set producing images reflected by the lenses, Ray Johnson a relief collage combined with a TV set, and so forth. In another room, Charlotte Moorman – a wonderful free spirit whose interest in new music and the avant garde was unshakeable – played the cello on a pedestal for two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon.

In between shows, Paik was by no means idle. With the aid of a Rockefeller Foundation grant, he worked at the Stony Brook campus of the State University of New York, hatching ideas on how to apply electronic media to education – for example, an "Instant Global University," whose computer-stored videotapes would give instruction on anything from advanced astronomy to koto playing; film-recording for posterity the works and presences of great contemporaries, like Duchamp and Sartre, and the employment of artists to help develop "personality" for computers that teach, to keep students awake while taking instruction. In 1969, under the Rockefeller sponsorship, Paik and Shuya Abe, the Japanese engineer with whom he often worked, developed the Paik-Abe video synthesizer, which synthesized video images in a brilliant color range.

Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman performing "Infiltration Homogen" of Joseph Beuys, Airplane Wreck, Solomon Island 1976

Charlotte Moorman performing "Bloody Ridge", Airplane Wreck, Solomon Island 1976
Photo F. C. Pileggi



MARY – MARY = 2075.003
Electronic Moon
Courtesy Galeria Bonino, New York

At about this point, another supportive dealer came into Paik's life. Howard Wise was a wealthy ex-businessman from Cleveland, whose interest in art finally prompted him to sell his family's paint factory and open a gallery in his home town. For a while he showed the work of contemporary painters and sculptors, opening a second gallery in New York, at 50 West 57th Street in 1960. But by 1961, he had begun to develop an interest in artists involved with kinetic and light sculpture, a movement enhanced by the increasing availability of sophisticated hardware. Wise, unmotivated by the need to make profits, could afford to support artists involved with new technologies, and the Howard Wise Gallery soon became a center for artists who worked in light, motion and sound.

Paik appeared there in several group shows, "Light in Orbit" and "Festival of Light," in 1967 (for the latter he created "Electronic Zen Tri-Color Moon"), and "TV as a Creative Medium" in 1969. For the '69 show, he developed the famous "TV Bra for Living Sculpture," worn by Charlotte Moorman, a pair of tiny TV monitors strapped to her bare breasts, the imagery on the monitors changing as she wielded her bow. (When Paik and Moorman were arrested in 1967 at the Filmmakers Cinematheque during a performance of Paik's "Opera Sextronique," Moorman gave a press conference at the Howard Wise Gallery explaining her case.) Actually, it was through the Wise gallery that Paik made his first sale – and the only one for a long time thereafter – "Participation TV," an interactive work which generated images of viewers in different colors on different monitors, bought in 1969 by the collector David Bermant.

In 1970, Wise closed his gallery, in the realization that many of the artists he supported had begun to lose interest in creating light and kinetic machines – difficult to maintain, at best – and were now involved with large-scale environmental works whose scope was beyond the gallery's space limitations. Besides, Wise's own interests were focusing on the electronic medium of video art, which he initially saw as an unparalleled means of conveying ideas and information, particularly in the political sphere.

In 1971, he set up a non-profit organization, Electronic Arts Inter-mix, whose original purpose was to channel funds to artists. It became a support organization for a number of groups and individuals working in the field, including Charlotte Moorman and her annual New York Avant Garde Festival. E.A.I. also developed a video-editing facility for the use of artists, and generally served to promote the idea of video as an art medium. In 1973, responding to the pleas of video artists who had difficulty getting their work out and around, E.A.I. started a videotape distribution service, very much in business today. Its circulating collection, with hundreds

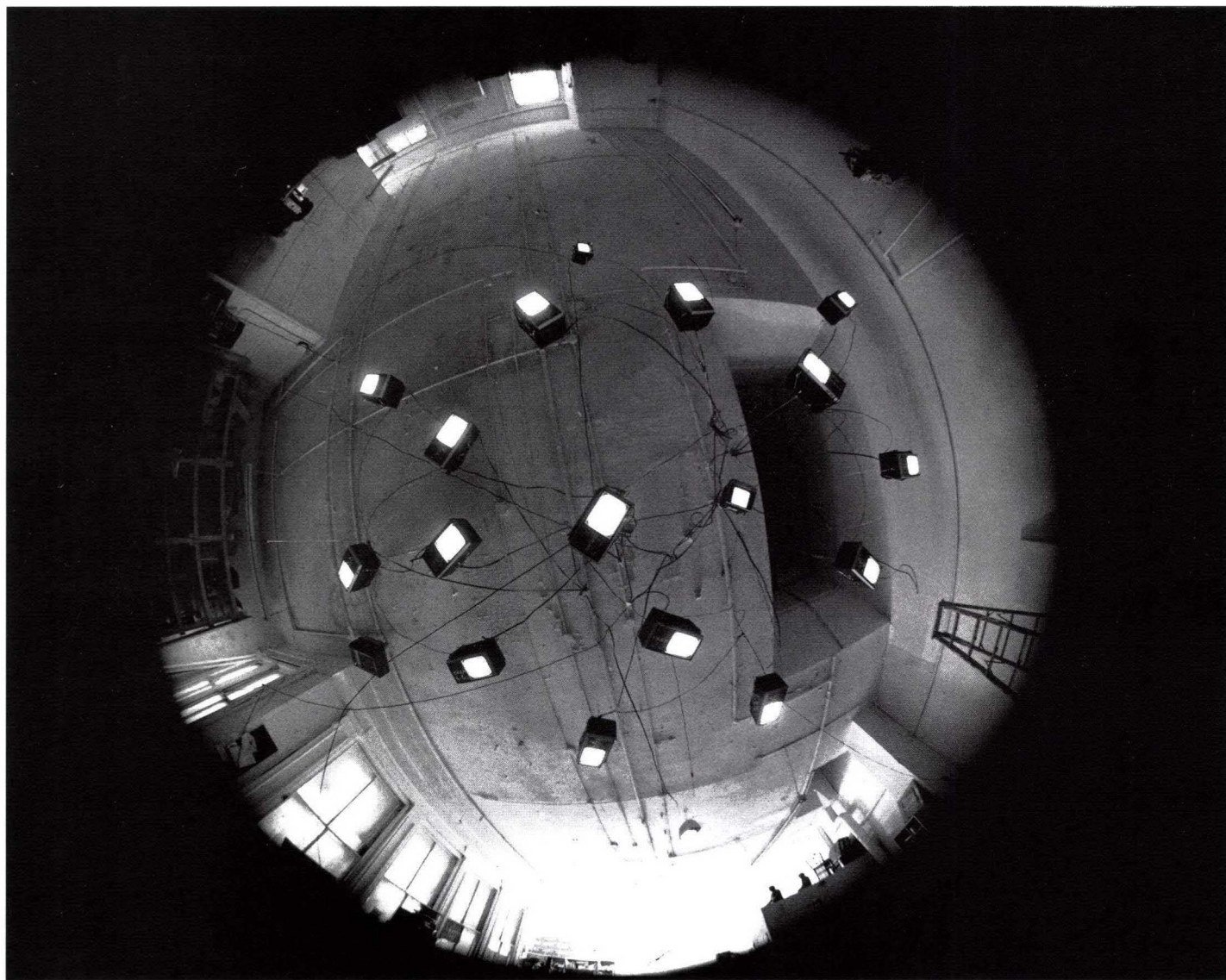
of tapes, is the most comprehensive in the United States. Wise died in 1989, having made a significant and lasting contribution to the field of experimental art.

Meanwhile, Paik continued his solo presentations at the Bonino gallery. His 1971 show, in collaboration with Shuya Abe, featured the video synthesizer, demonstrated along with Charlotte Moorman's performances. For his 1974 exhibition, the last at the gallery, he showed his most ambitious work to date, the forerunner of his big environmental pieces, "Global Groove," a half-hour video collage which used 20 screens and multiple tapes to produce a breathtaking rush of split and synthesized images. To experience it, the viewer stood on a raised platform looking down on what Paik described as a "sea," or "garden" of televised images. Unexpectedly devoting his entire Sunday column in The New York Times to "Global Groove," the conservative critic Hilton Kramer said that the images didn't matter: it was "the sequence of forms changing color and shape that absorbs all attention." He compared the work's abstraction to a Kurt Schwitters collage. He went on to say of Paik's piece, however, "The art one actually experiences is rather modest, its delights are flickering, small-scale and fragmentary, and quickly dissipated."

Despite such attention in the press, Paik's work continued not to sell. Although the Bonino gallery had no difficulty placing the work of some other artists in its stable – particularly the Latin Americans Alicia Penalba, Marcelo Bonevardi and the sculptor Edgar Negret, along with Mary Bauermeister (once the collector Joseph Hirshhorn bought three Bauermeisters over the telephone) – Nanda Bonino found the market for Paik's work nearly non-existent. Once, to be sure, she almost sold his "TV Buddha," a TV set with a Buddha sitting in front of it. It was wanted by a collector who intended to donate it to the Museum of Modern Art. But, Ms. Bonino recalls with a shrug, the Modern refused it. (The piece is now owned by the Stedelijk in Amsterdam.)



Nude in Blue
Courtesy Galeria Bonino, New York



Global Groove, 1973

Photo Peter Moore

Courtesy Galeria Bonino, New York



Global Groove, 1973
presented by Russel Connor
during one month on Channel 13, N.Y.C.

"Once Paik gave me a bunch of line drawings to sell, and I couldn't even get rid of those," she says, "because the tape on the back showed. I gave one as a gift, and it was returned. There were so few collectors, anyway, in those days. Everyone knew who was buying: Joseph Hirshhorn, Jean and Howard Lipman, and a few others. Still, we really didn't care if we sold Paik's work or not since he, along with Robert Breer and Mary Bauermeister, made the gallery a popular place to come."

And Paik remains grateful for Nanda Bonino's "far-sighted vision and non-commercial attitude. "She was very, very positive," he says. "In a way, she needed public attention and didn't dream of making money for a long time. She gave me several solo shows, and that was a lot of financial commitment. Without an uptown gallery I never would have made it."

"Of course," he adds, "Mary Bauermeister and I did put the gallery on the map of New York."

▶
TV Clock, 1963-81

▶▶
Moonlight Sonata, 1989

Courtesy Dorothy Goldeen Gallery, Santa Monica

12 Piano Compositions for Nam June Paik
1962/1989

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

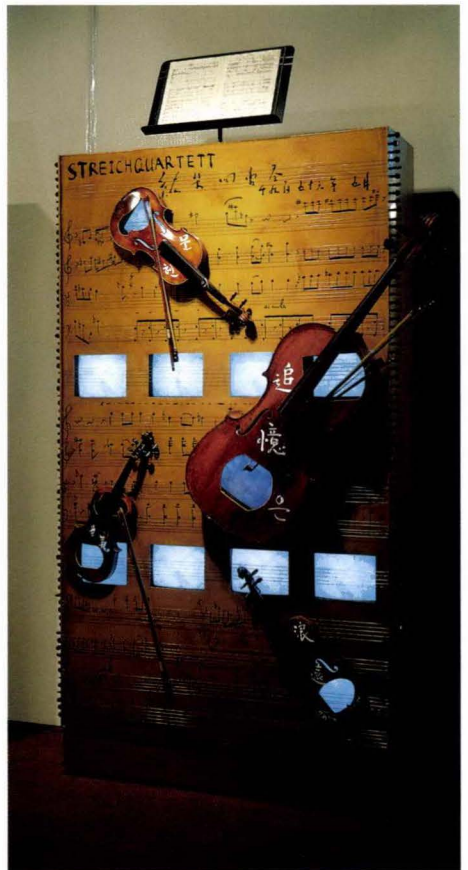
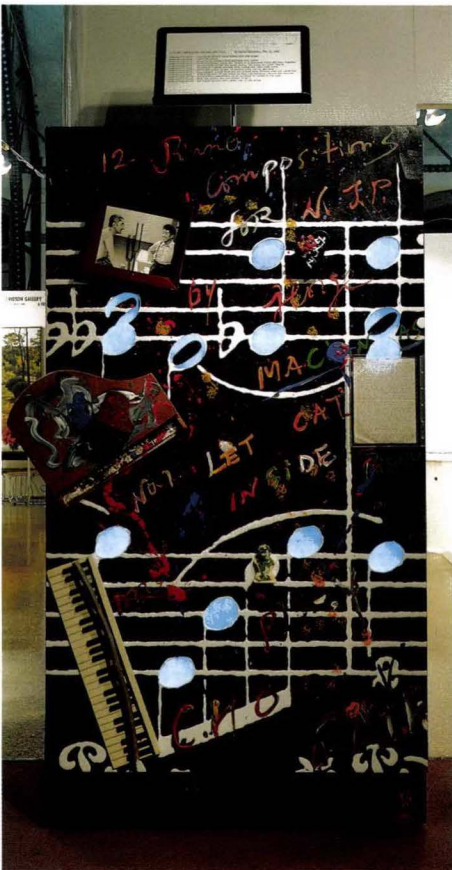
Symphony for 20 Rooms, 1961/1989

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Streich Quartett, 1957/1989

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati





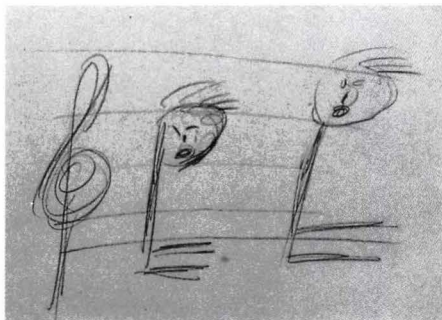
UNRUHIGER SCHLÄFER

Die Welt ist ein Dorf, und Nam June Paik hat tatkräftig mitgeholfen, sie dazu zu machen. Für sich selbst durch eine nomadenhafte schöpferische Existenz ohne archimedischen Punkt, für uns andere durch die – Zeit und Raum verbindende – Elektronik, durch die simulierte Totale der Realitätserfahrung von Seoul bis New York, von Sibirien bis Feuerland, von Alaska bis zum Äquator in seinen Video-Türmen. Musikalische und bildnerische Strukturen, U-Kunst und E-Kunst, Scherz, Satire, Ironie und tiefere Bedeutung – bei Paik wird das alles zur klassenlosen Gesellschaft. Mir geht es mit ihm ähnlich wie meinem Freund Wieland Schmied: Obwohl (oder weil) ich 1971 von Hans Strelow und Konrad Fischer mit "Prospect-Projection" in der Düsseldorfer Kunsthalle die damals brandneuen Medien en bloc vorstellen ließ, hätte es mir angesichts des lange Zeit scheinbar unzertrennlichen tutti frutti von Erhabenem und Lächerlichem leicht passieren können, daß ich Video "mein Leben lang gehaßt" hätte, wenn ich nicht beizeiten Nam June Paiks Werken begegnet wäre, deren preisgekrönte Hochschätzung ein anderer verehrter Kollege, Werner Schmalenbach, noch immer für einen gigantischen Irrtum des Zeitgeistes hält.

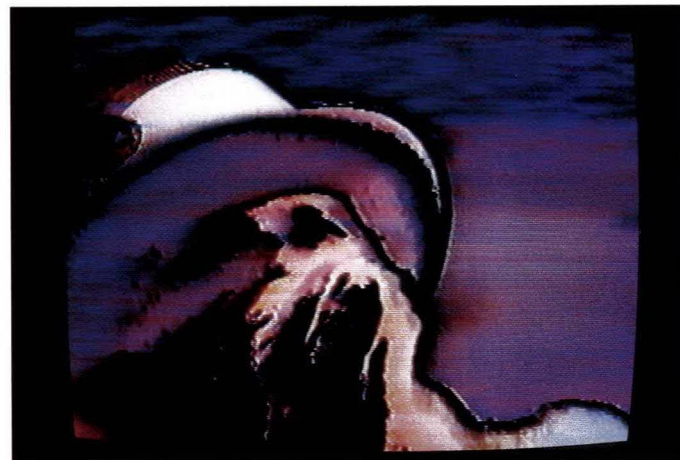
Ich will mich aber gar nicht aufs hohe Roß setzen. Denn vor knapp einem Vierteljahrhundert lag ich genauso daneben, als Paik in seiner damaligen Doppelrolle als Komponist und Interpret im Wechselspiel von Ekstase und Lethargie in der "Galerie 22" des unvergessenen Jean-Pierre Wilhelm seine laute Huldigung an den leisen John Cage vorführte, wobei die Verwechslung eines rohen mit einem gekochten Ei die neo-dadaistische Partitur erheblich durcheinanderbrachte. Wenn ich meine damalige Besprechung heute nachlese, kriege ich immer noch rote Ohren, zumal ich wenig Gelegenheit hatte, schriftliche Wiedergutmachung zu praktizieren; es sei denn der Hinweis auf das melancholische deutsch-koreanische Farewell von Joseph Beuys und Nam June Paik an zwei Klavieren zu Ehren von George Maciunas 1978 in der Düsseldorfer Kunstakademie.

Immerhin gab mir ein freundliches Schicksal die späte Chance zu beweisen, daß ich in der Zwischenzeit ein bißchen gelernt habe. Denn vor anderthalb Jahren konnte ich im Verein mit meinen Jurykollegen Nam June Paik als Pionier eines neuen Mediums, als Unruhestifter ersten Ranges in unserer allzu saturierten Kunstlandschaft zum Kaiserringträger der Stadt Goslar machen: eine "extraordinäre Erscheinung", wie sein zeitweiliger Kompositionslehrer Wolfgang Fortner ihn titulierte, den Wanderer zwischen den Welten, den ewigen Nomaden, der so oft, so gern, so intensiv und so lange schläft, wenn er nicht gerade hellwach einen neuen kreativen Wirbel entfesselt.

Paik gehört zu den Künstlern, die den hohen Anspruch Marcel Duchamps nicht zu fürchten brauchen, daß Kunst vor allem intelligent zu sein habe: eine Forderung, der in unseren Tagen eine besonders brisante Aktualität zukommt.



Nam June Paik, Drawing: "Tribute to Peter A. MacCray, who saved many hungry composers including my self (1975-92)"



NAM JUNE PAIK ON BEUYS

when i visit BEUYS at the studio (of course, i did it as rarely as possible and as short as possible in each visit, because the best present i could give him was not to take his valuable time away) ... our conversation were very frequently interrupted by many phone calls from old and new friends, which were not that important ... he picked up every telephone and answered carefully ... quite a few with genuine affection. I asked why you don't hire a secretary, who could sit in his basement and screen the incoming phone call?

he said no ... he wants to answer all phone calls ... actually john cage was same in this point ... I asked the same question or suggestion and got the same answer ... certainly these limitless good-wills shortened their lives.

The german wirtschaft wunder had left out many wonderful minds in the cold ... these drifters und underdogs did need an uncle of their psychoanalysts to talk and to be consolaced.

beuys filled this task with his all conversations and free university activities ... in one of meetings at the Kassel documenta 77 one physician in the crowd talked: everybody wants to be equal and wants to see the democracy realized ... yet let us see how our body works ... ally parts are equal ... you cannot live without heart, yet without lever you cannot live either ... even hands and foots are basically equally important ... but our hands don't want to become our foot. our foot wants to stay as our foot and they don't want to become our brain ... all parts are equal but they do different functions ... and they don't complain. our lever don't envy our heart ... our heart don't envy our kidney ... it is an organism ... it is an ecology.

this quiet advice cooled down quite a few hotheads, who were pressing beuys for the more immediate action.

in the wirtschaft wunder everybody wants to become the chairman of boards ... or terrorist ... beuys was one of the very few who could communicate with the super-rich and super-poor ... he did have the trust of both ... now in the postunification agony, i wonder what beuys's action would have been. would he be still living in duesseldorf?"

he may have moved to Halle or dresden to soothe the sensitive minds, who feel they lost in the competition, although they are glad that they lost ... he maybe the honest broker ...



although he was very sick and almost in the terminal stage of his heart problem ... he still wants to come to hamburg for the peace biennale concert to play with henning christiansen and me ... it was eva beuys's strenous persuasion, which i seconded, which saved him from one more trip.

instead we asked him to talk through telephone, which would be amplified and fed into the public. there were technical malfunctions, which made it sound as if he was calling from paradise or hell ...

if he had a choice, certainly he would have chosen hell because in this way he could have soothed the all mal-contentees and all the broken hearts, all the underdogs and terrorists and drifters. he would have enjoyed the nice accompaniments.

Beuys gave charlotte a felt bag in which she played his 'infiltration' piece ... a collector was sending some money every month, who would possess this felt piece after some time ... this time came and of course charlotte sent him the cello ...

one day charlotte and frank PILLEGI, her husband, visited Beuys. he simply grabbed a scissor and went to the felt room and cut out another cello ... it was another fortune to give away.

one day I visited him in the free university.

he put in my hand a bundle of 500 DM bills ... and just said
"this is for charlotte."

"In Memoriam George Maciunas", Concert
with Joseph Beuys and Nam June Paik
Düsseldorf 1978

Photo René Block

Beuys Vox
Won Gallery, Seoul



TV Boys/Beuys, 1988
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati



Beuys' Only Film, 1991
Hyundai Gallery, Seoul



Beuys, 1988
Shizuko Watari Collection, Tokyo

NAM JUNE PAIK'S BOOBTUBE BUDDHA

Can't get Nam June Paik's TV Buddha, 1974, out of my mind. This sculpture of the sitting Buddha viewing His own image on a closed-circuit television screen is hilarious. An inanimate sculpture looking at its inanimate mirror images. The Buddha as a media star and couch potato in a Buddha Sitcom. But it's not a one-line joke. What else can it mean?

Does it demean an Established religious icon in the spirit of Fluxus iconoclasm? Or, is it spiritual: the Divine looking at the Divine – without interference? Instantaneous holy feedback. God using electronic media to contemplate Himself. Why not? The luminous TV image is the perfect medium for contemplating pure contemplation.

The Buddha is a traditional sculpture. So is the TV set in the modernist vein – a Duchampian Readymade that still possesses an iconoclastic Dada charge. But the image on the screen is not sculpture, at least not traditional sculpture. At least, not yet. An old established medium contemplates a new, still problematic medium.

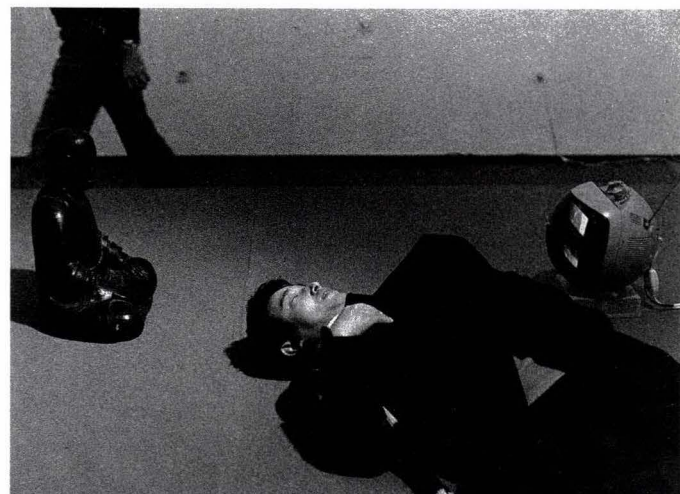
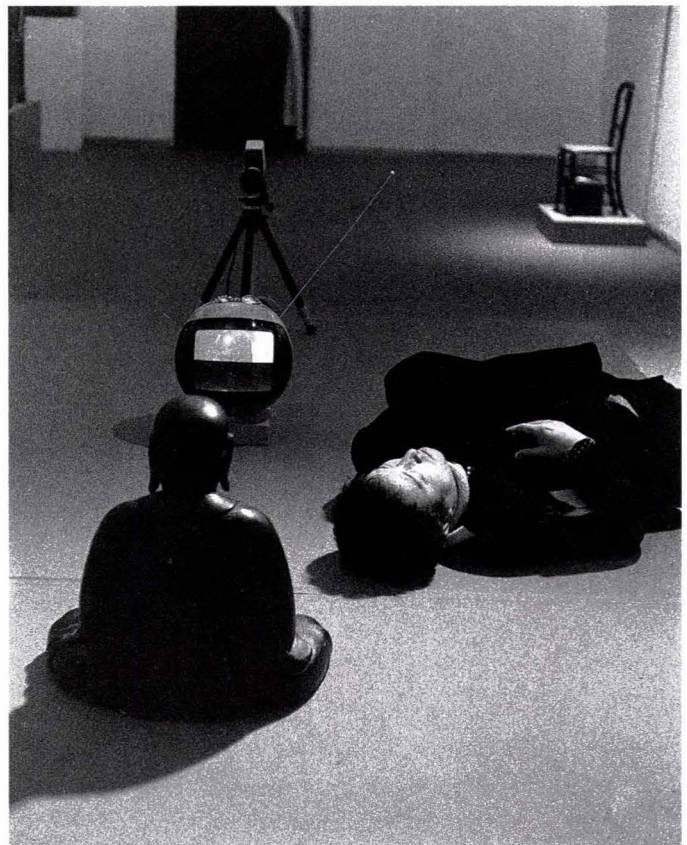
The Buddha sculpture from a bygone age contemplates the TV Buddha of the modern age. The image does not change; it is transcendent.

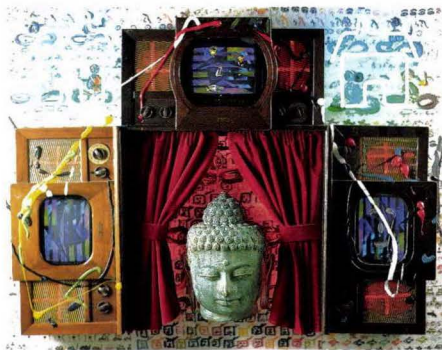
Television fuels our consumer society. It aims to deliver consumers to suppliers. The primary images on television are the commercials. What is Paik selling? Spirituality in a materialistic world.

That was the message of the Counterculture in the 1960s.

Beatitude. The Buddha was its icon. Television was spurned because it was a commodity-crazed spectacle. If commercial television was an opiate, Paik subverted its mind-drugging programming, turning it against itself. At the same time, he created an alternative television whose aim was to truly "humanize electron-

TV-Buddha, Installation Kölnischer
Kunstverein, Cologne 1977





Homeless Buddha, 1992
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati



Buddhamorphosis, 1992
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

ics". Paik was, then, the consummate Counterculture artist. John Cage, the prophet of "joy and revolution", was Paik's Buddha – and a guru of the Counterculture. The Cagean Buddha annihilates the self. Paik also believes that in the future, society will be "egoless. ... Many people are giving up acquisitiveness in terms of money and material comfort; next stage is to give up acquisitiveness in fame. Of course, Fluxus people, including myself, are vain and do have ego. I know that. Is very, very hard."

The Buddha is all serenity. But as you are drawn into its calm, the other – absent – aggressive side of Paik's work flashes into mind. Etude for Pianoforte, 1960, in which Paik jumped off the stage and with a large scissors attacked Cage, cutting off his necktie, among other violent gestures. Killing the Buddha you love. No wonder Allen Kaprow called Paik a "cultural terrorist". (But then Zen isn't all passive. When Paik spent three days in a monastery in Japan, the head monk struck him repeatedly with a long stick.)

The Buddha's otherworldly being calls into mind the absent corporeal body – and sexuality. Cello Sonata No. 1 for Adults Only, 1965, in which Charlotte Moorman appeared playing phrases of a Bach cello sonata. On finishing a phrase, she removed a piece of her clothes. She ended up on the floor, completely naked, playing her cello, which was on top of her.

The last line in Paik's Electronic Opera No. 1, 1969, was Paik's voice announcing: "Please follow instructions. Turn off your television set."

Postscript

In Zen for TV, 1963-75, another work that keeps coming to mind, a single, centered, vertical line – the beatific vision of Barnett Newman – replaces the Buddha on the television screen. Barny Buddha, friend of Cage Buddha, meets Paik Buddha.

The quotes in this essay come from Calvin Tomkins, *The Bride and The Bachelors* (New York: Viking, 1965), p. 137, and *The Scene: Reports on Post-Modern Art* (New York: Viking, 1976), p. 205, 216, 219.

VITTORIO FAGONE

NAM JUNE PAIK E IL MOVIMENTO FLUXUS. TRA EUROPA E AMERICA, ORIGINI E SVILUPPI DELLA VIDEOARTE

Wuppertal, nel 1963, e New York, nel 1965, sono i luoghi ai quali ormai si assegna l'avvio "storico" della ricerca video attraverso l'opera di due artisti del movimento Fluxus: Nam June Paik e Wolf Vostell. Paik e Vostell nella Galerie Parnass di Wuppertal destrutturano il nuovo "utensile" televisivo, di cui avvertono l'enorme potenzialità massificatrice, scomponendo i supporti meccanici ed elettronici dentro una diversa evidenza. Paik, due anni dopo a New York, avvalendosi della possibilità di accesso al nuovo mezzo di ripresa, consentita dalla prima telecamera portatile amatoriale, il port-pack della Sony, sperimenta una sintesi di ripresa, consentita dalla prima telecamera ridefinitoria dell'immagine elettronica.

I due momenti devono essere incrociati per una reale comprensione della ricerca video di questi anni in quanto destrutturazione critica degli elementi stabili della comunicazione televisiva e costituzione di una nuova immagine, dialettica rispetto a quella della convenzione figurativa, risultano due costanti sempre riconoscibili. Una strategia di tale tipo si accorda con la poetica di Fluxus che ha

due obiettivi fondamentali: stabilire un nuovo ambiente culturale-sociale, utile per la circuitazione veloce a ogni livello di una nuova comunicazione estetica in grado di ridurre la distanza tra artisti e pubblico sollecitandone il reciproco impegno dentro un unico campo di creative relazioni linguistiche, e opporre ai canoni e alle convenzioni dell'arte istituzionale nuovi aperti modelli in grado di stabilire una totalità inedita, ridefinitoria di comportamenti estetici e di permutazioni attive dei linguaggi.

Se Vostell e Paik hanno avviato una linea di ricerca che ha sollecitato gli artisti visuali a misurarsi, senza soggezione, con il nuovo utensile elettronico come strumento utile di una espansione della dimensione delle immagini visuali capace di coinvolgere in una spazialità virtuale, tempo storico e tempo interno dell'operatività artistica nella dimensione, inedita, del tempo reale, che non può certo considerarsi esaurita dallo scenario artistico attuale profondamente mutato, bisogna ricordare l'influenza decisiva che sulle pratiche della ricerca video hanno avuto le teorizzazioni e le sperimentazioni, fondamentali del resto per tutto il movimento Fluxus, di John Cage.

Paik ha più di una volta dichiarato che senza Cage, la ricerca video non avrebbe potuto realizzarsi. E' lecito chiedersi cosa Cage ha potuto fornire alla nuova area sperimentale entro la quale Paik ha poi lavorato con l'assiduità e felicità di risultati che tutti conoscono. Cage ha sicuramente dimostrato la possibilità di un diverso atteggiamento nei confronti di elementi disomogenei che possono tuttavia essere orientati verso una particolare congruenza e organizzazione linguistica; ha poi praticato una riflessiva ironia spinta fino alla utilizzazione di un negativo strutturante (suono/silenzio) come in Paik immagine unita/immagine dispersa e frammentata, in un rovesciamento di posizioni. Certa è anche l'influenza delle sonorità concrete, e alla lettera "attive" di Cage, che poi la ricerca video ha utilizzato in un crossing altamente ridefinitorio tra immagini e azioni performative. Il valore della sezione sonora dell'audiovisuale elettronico è il risultato esaltato da questa precisa consapevolezza.

Anche Vostell ha sostenuto che se Fluxus espande alcune tipiche tensioni dell'happening degli anni Cinquanta, in un coinvolgimento totale del rapporto arte-vita secondo un parametro che risulta fondamentale di tutte le avanguardie del secolo, è la scelta della musica, come campo di tensioni e di azioni, di persone in movimento e di immagini stabili ma anche di riflessioni nello stesso tempo aperte e riformulanti, che costituisce il carattere distintivo della nuova area sperimentale.

Se non sono da trascurare, come più volte ho cercato di sottolineare, i rapporti tra le prime forme di video e le esperienze già mature del cinema sperimentale europeo e americano, al quale un contributo determinante è venuto dagli artisti visuali, la relazione particolare tra area sonora, campo privilegiato dell'esperienza Fluxus e le tensioni innovative performative, contribuisce a dare specificità linguistica al nuovo modello di comunicazione artistica.

Strategie della ricerca video: destrutturare-strutturare

Quando Nam June Paik e Wolf Vostell dichiarano che le chiavi per comprendere ragioni e sviluppi della ricerca video vanno ricercate nella complessa e libera poetica – ma sarebbe più esatto parlare di strategia – del movimento Fluxus, danno un'indicazione che difficilmente può essere messa in discussione solo che si consideri l'indiscutibile e fondamentale contributo dato da questi due autori alla nascita della videoarte o il valore ridefinitorio del contagio tra

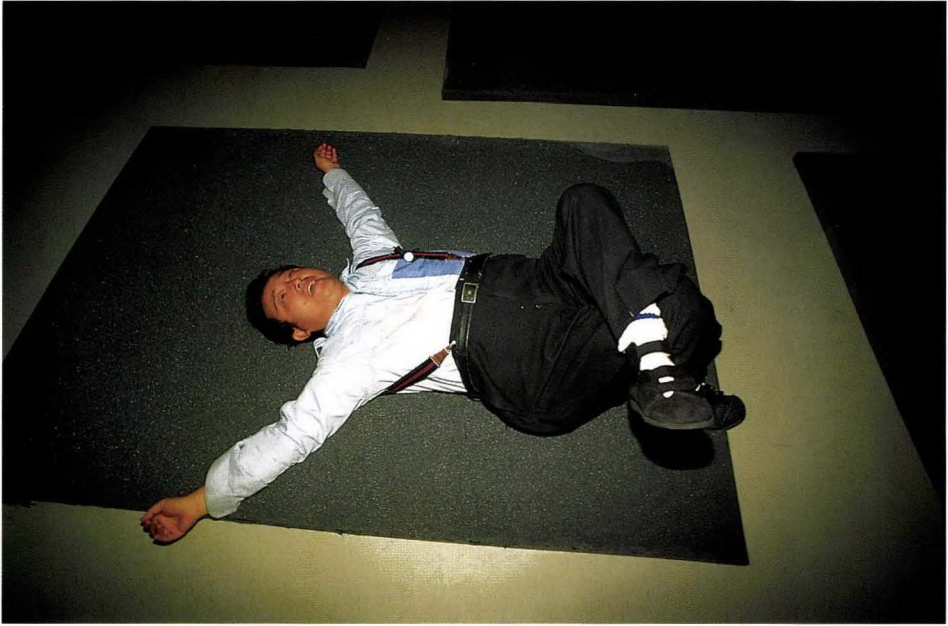
▶
Paik watching Fish Flies on Sky

Photo Timm Rautert

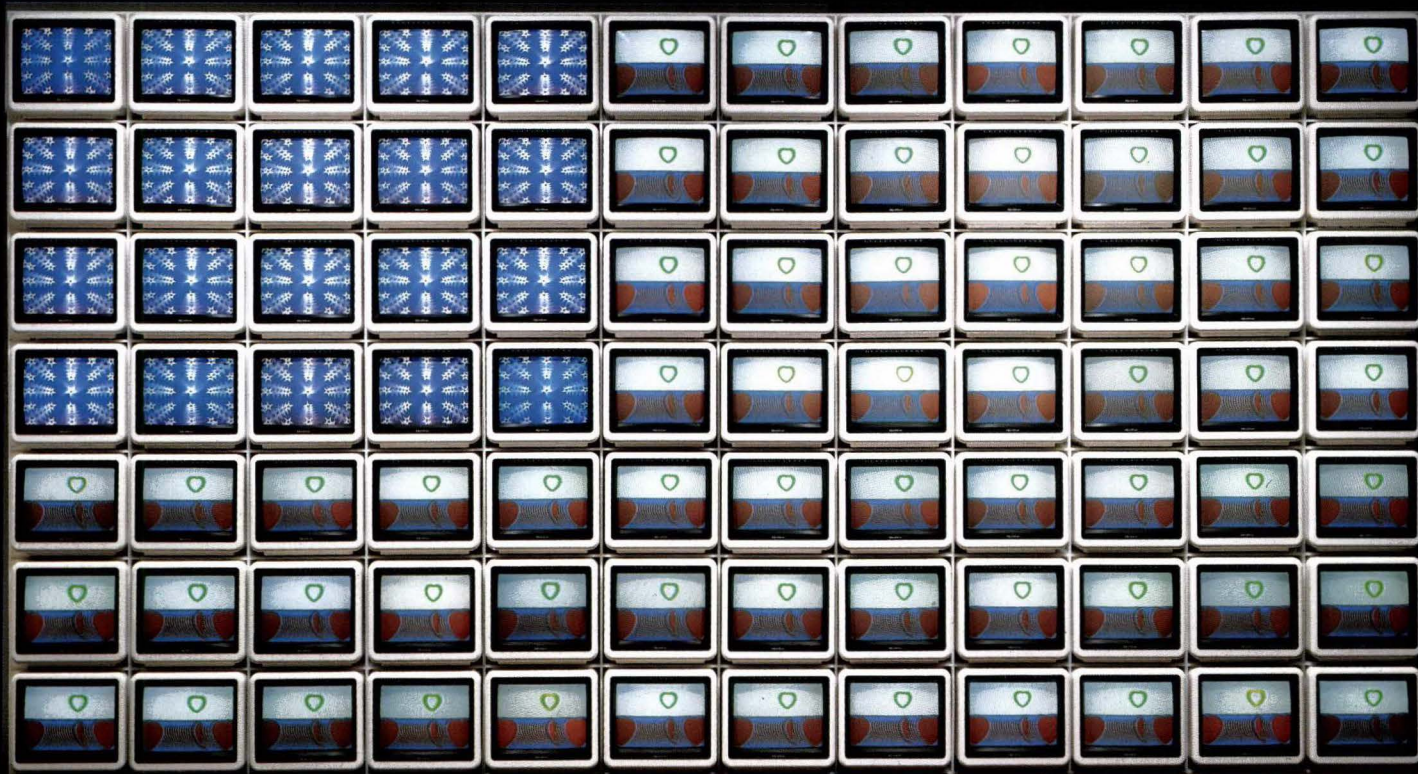
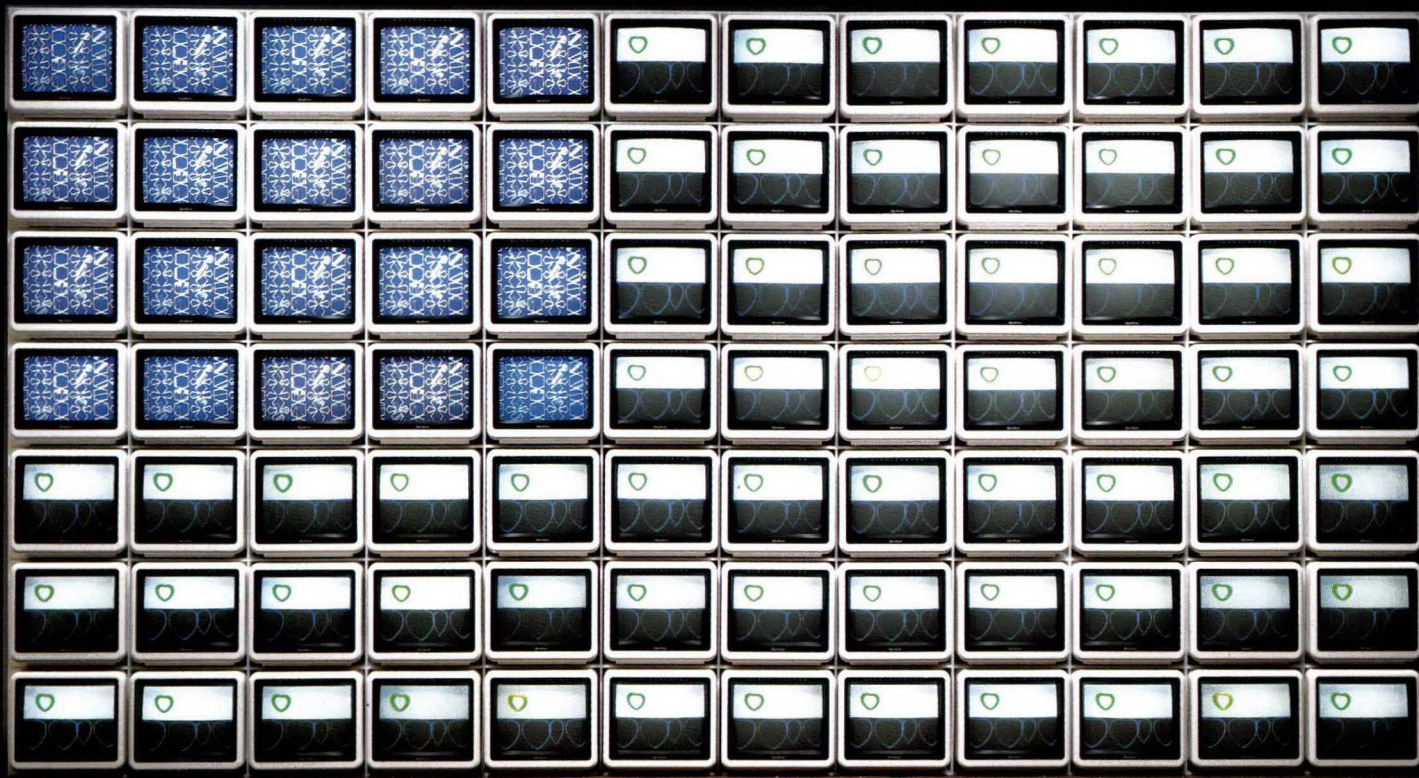
▶▶
Video Fish (Detail), 1975–77

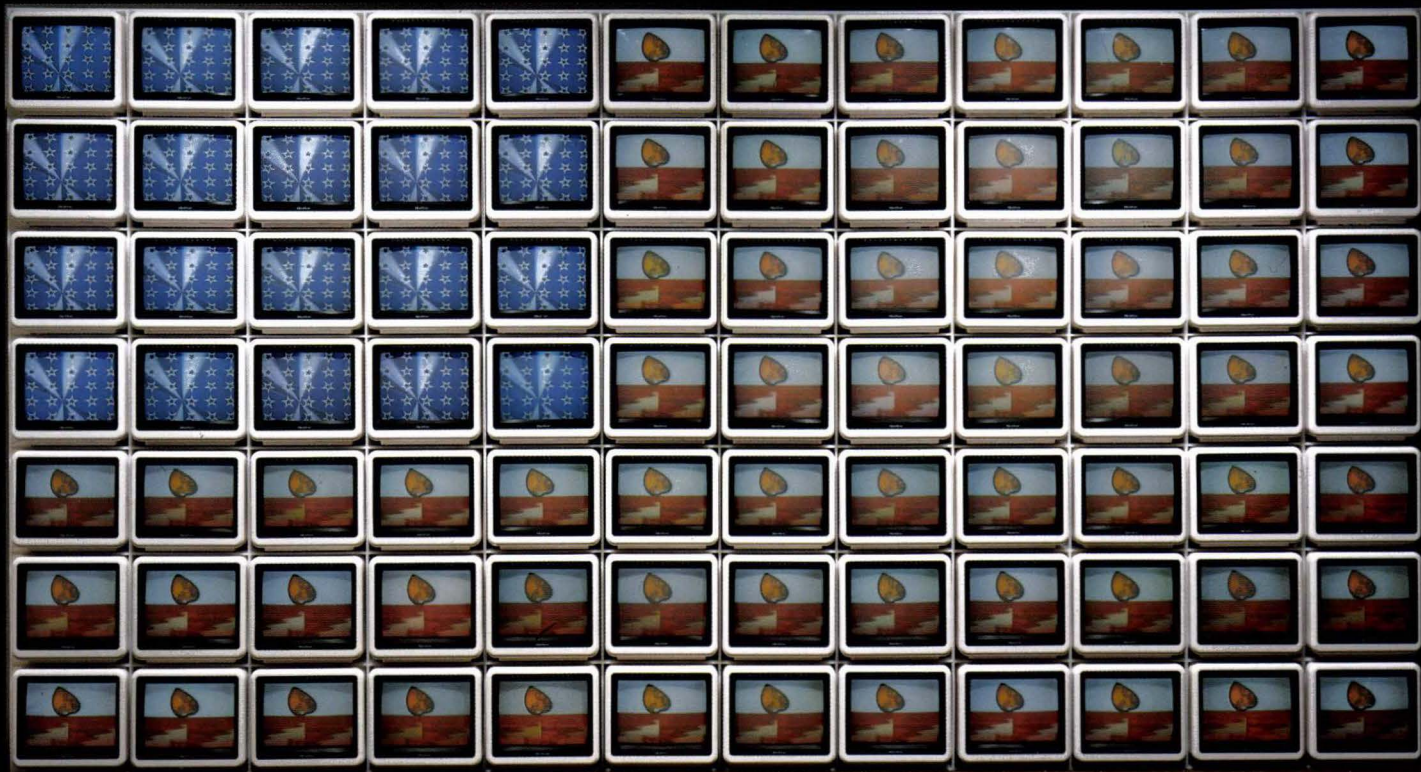
Fish Tales, 1986

Private Collection









diversi linguaggi artistici e modelli della nuova comunicazione, sostenuto e praticato, almeno nei primi anni di attività, da tutti gli artisti del nuovo movimento, Paik e Vostell compresi.

Nell'assumere questo dato come non contestabile, bisogna però, a mio giudizio, tener conto di tre elementi non meno rilevanti: 1) Fluxus nasce, alla fine degli anni Cinquanta negli Stati Uniti dove viene considerato una intellettualistica manifestazione tardodaista, incline a "pericolose" utopie anarco-comuniste e per questo osteggiato o emarginato. In Europa invece, e particolarmente in Germania, la reale attitudine dialettica e innovativa del movimento trova aperti spazi di intervento e, per quanto non generalizzati, positivi riconoscimenti da parte della critica; 2) La reale vita, e inerenza storica, del movimento Fluxus, come sostenuto da Shigeo Kubota (Video d'Autore, Taormina Arte, 1990) deve considerarsi conclusa al 1974 quando scompare George Maciunas e con lui anche il movimento. Oltre quella data, restano certo le singole individualità operanti degli "artisti Fluxus", ma non possono essere presi in seria considerazione né gli accomodamenti di autori epigoni o replicanti, né il "pentitismo" tardivo di collezionisti, mercanti e critici a riconversione paradossale; 3) Negli anni Sessanta e almeno fino alla metà degli anni Settanta, il campo maggiormente disponibile, se non d'elezione, delle diverse sperimentazioni d'avanguardia risulta quello delle arti visuali che accettano, e in molti casi promuovono, un attivo scambio tra espressioni medialità dei nuovi linguaggi della comunicazione, arti visuali convenzionali e arti performative.

Se si tiene conto dell'insieme di questi dati, la ricerca video assume le connotazioni di una dialettica e veloce progressione piuttosto che l'amèbica indefinitezza di un ingenuo e astorico spazio periferico, sospeso, in una sorta di limbo, tra linguaggi artistici ad alta densità espressiva e modelli della nuova comunicazione tiepidamente inerti se non freddi come ipotizzava McLuhan.

Detto in termini più espliciti, i quasi trent'anni che separano lo scenario attuale delle prime presentazioni di opere video di Nam June Paik e Wolf Vostell alla Galerie Parnass di Wuppertal non sviluppano una prospettiva unilineare. La vivace dinamica del nuovo movimento di ricerca, caratterizzata da una reale e costante internazionalità, presenta momenti, attitudini e strategie diverse che oggi risulta importante isolare per una corretta comprensione del fenomeno nella sua storia e attualità.

Riconsideriamo gli avvisi. Cosa presenta Paik a Wuppertal per tentare di spiazzare e ridefinire l'immagine elettronica, monopolizzata dalla televisione e sotto ogni forma preclusa agli artisti nonostante l'evidenza del dato visuale costitutivo? Paik deforma su tredici monitor in altrettante differenti maniere un'immagine televisiva in bianco e nero intervenendo sulla modulazione luminosa di questa immagine tanto in senso orizzontale che verticale. L'obiettivo destrutturante dell'operazione è chiaro. L'immagine elettronica è esaltata nella sua qualità luminosa primaria ma, alla lettera, contrastata nella sua apparenza televisiva di immagine assolutamente veridica e quindi unica.

Quando Paik nel 1965 può finalmente intervenire non solo sul dispositivo di trasmissione, il monitor, dell'apparato audiovisuale elettronico, ma anche su quello di ripresa, la telecamera, utilizzando il portpack, dimostra – nel video girato a New York e intitolato, con una significativa indicazione del luogo di ripresa, Café Gogo, 152 Bleeker Street, October 4 and 11, 1965 – di quale ridefinitoria soggettività può caricarsi la ripresa di uno spazio di vita dall'apparenza banale. Paik nella sua formazione passa dalla Co-

rea, in cui è nato, a Tokyo, e quindi, nel 1957 in Germania (prima a Monaco poi a Colonia) seguendo un itinerario strettamente legato alla ricerca musicale d'avanguardia. E' in Germania che avviene il suo incontro decisivo con Fluxus, e in particolare con John Cage, da cui prende avvio una creativa deriva tra i diversi linguaggi artistici, praticata attraverso e nello spazio del video.

L'attitudine destrutturante è forse ancora più netta nell'opera di Wolf Vostell, anch'egli tra gli artisti dell'esposizione alla Galerie Parnass e già dalla fine degli anni Cinquanta riconosciuto come una delle figure di maggiore spicco di Fluxus, che nei TV decollage interviene violentemente nella decomposizione-ricomposizione di immagini estrapolate da programmi televisivi di larga diffusione.

Nel rapido giro di pochi anni la ricerca video sposta comunque il suo baricentro dall'Europa negli Stati Uniti da cui, come si è accennato, la matrice catalizzatrice, Fluxus, era stata espulsa. Mentre il radicamento della ricerca video in Europa è infatti affidata al pionierismo generoso di galleristi-promotori come Gerry Schum, che prima a Berlino poi a Düsseldorf e quindi all'interno del Museo di Essen, propone un originale modello di VideoGalerie in grado di produrre, presentare e archiviare video d'artisti, negli Stati Uniti si aprono, anche se solo per un breve periodo, prospettive di ben altra portata.

Video versus televisione, ieri e oggi

Ho di recente potuto intervistare a lungo Wolf Vostell sulle ragioni che ispiravano, già in quel primo periodo, la dichiarata avversione degli artisti del video contro la televisione. Accanto alla motivazione, comunemente accertata, della necessità di un'opposizione all'uso massificato del nuovo medium, Vostell ne aggiungeva una più direttamente esplicativa. Alla fine degli anni Cinquanta e nei primi anni Sessanta, attraverso gli studi di Radio Colonia, era stato possibile avviare un'operazione di innovazione musicale radicale, con il contributo del giovane Stockhausen e di Nono (e al quale collabora lo stesso Paik), di portata fondamentale per la nuova musica elettronica. Struttura radiofonica e struttura televisiva nella Germania Occidentale di quegli anni coincidono.

Perché si rivela subito impossibile realizzare sul medium elettronico la stessa riflessione creativa e critica che viene fatta utilizzando risorse e canali del medium acustico?

Al di là del feticismo dell'audience, coltivato precocemente da tutte le televisioni, commerciali e pubbliche, al di là della necessità di mantenere un regime di massima stabilità conservativa, non solo formale ma sociale, della televisione, la domanda resta ancora senza risposte. Così non è azzardato oggi affermare che la reale cultura espressiva del nuovo medium si è sviluppata nell'area del video come un'ipotesi, esterna al mondo della televisione.

Negli Stati Uniti, almeno agli avvisi, la situazione è diversa. Nel 1965, anno in cui Paik già opera a New York, la Rockefeller Foundation assegna alla catena televisiva di Boston WGBH 275 mila dollari per la promozione di programmi televisivi sperimentali affidati ad artisti e ricercatori (si badi, non su artisti, ma di artisti).

I programmi realizzati vengono regolarmente trasmessi. Presto verso queste forme di avanguardia si rivolge l'attenzione, non l'entusiasmo di un Gerry Schum, di galleristi accorti e influenti come Leo Castelli. La questione del rapporto tra video e televisione, in Europa come anche in America, resta oggi spinosamente aperta.

A parte la dimostrata disponibilità di Channel Four in Gran Bretagna, di Canal Plus in Francia, del programma Videographie in Belgio, è difficile ricavare indicazioni che inducano a qualche ottimismo. Per quanto riguarda la televisione pubblica del nostro paese – di quella privata non è possibile neppure accennare – sarà bene ricordare che la Raiton ha mai avuto il coraggio di mandare in onda le rare produzioni sperimentali che pure ha realizzato, e che gli artisti ha sempre preferito piazzarli davanti anziché dietro le telecamere a sperimentare le risorse di una nuova visualità, con il risultato, ogni giorno sotto gli occhi di tutti, di un generale appiattimento.

Esiste tuttavia un dato certo: i quasi trent'anni di innovative e significative ricerche del video dimostrano che questo può, anche se appare irragionevole, fare a meno della televisione senza perdere di velocità comunicativa né di efficacia. Fino a quando, è lecito domandarsi, la televisione potrà rinunciare a esplorare una cultura creativa anziché riproduttiva del medium che utilizza, senza definitivamente rassegnarsi ad essere un generico, e spesso improprio, contenitore?

Se la relazione video-televisione resta ancora, nel panorama europeo, bloccata o obliquamente attiva solo in alcune zone marginali (sigle, spot, clip), mutata risulta oggi la relazione video/arti visuali che pure agli avvisi, come si è accennato, ha avuto un ruolo fondamentale per le referenze e le inerENZE a specifici modelli linguistici e metalinguistici (dall'arte concettuale alla body art) e per lo spazio di attenzione che ha saputo offrire.

Il ritorno alla materialità delle immagini dipinte che si ha alla fine degli anni Sessanta e la perdita di velocità delle ricerche immateriali e comportamentali nell'area visuale (si pensi al declino della performance) coincidono con l'abbandono del video da parte di alcuni artisti e con una larga disaffezione da parte degli spazi avanzati di promozione artistica. Questa situazione, che stabilisce anche un naturale processo di selezione rispetto a molte curiosità esterne e disinvolti opportunismi, libera la ricerca video da una dipendenza troppo stretta verso l'area visuale.

Il legame con le arti visuali, anzi la specifica inerENZA, resta produttivo nelle videosculpture e videoinstallazioni, area in cui oltre al lavoro coerente di maestri come Paik, ben rappresentato in questa esposizione romana, si afferma anche una generazione nuova, capace di una declinazione ed espansione ambientale del video, lucida e soft. Agli inizi degli anni Novanta, più che a una dura e dialettica contrapposizione alla televisione, la ricerca video dei maestri riconosciuti e dei giovani autori, pare proporsi come una diversione sofisticata e creativa.

L'immagine elettronica risulta, nel video, in grado di stabilire un attivo regime di scambi con le espressioni degli altri linguaggi artistici e della comunicazione mediale, senza sudditanze o imposizioni, entro i mobili tracciati di una nuova forma di rappresentazione mediale, senza sudditanze o imposizioni, entro i mobili tracciati di una nuova forma di rappresentazione immateriale, intelligente, complessa oltre che seducente.

Fluxus

Il primo evento Fluxus della storia si può far risalire forse alla fine del secolo scorso. Attorno al 1880 quando vennero stesi i primi cavi di telecomunicazione atlantici.

Come sapete per comunicare tra Washington e Londra ci volevano almeno sei mesi. Andata e ritorno! In seguito, quindi, si dovette procedere a collegare con i cavi Londra all'America. Cavi sotto il mare. Le navi americane dovevano incontrarsi nell'Oceano e "darsi

la mano" per attaccare i rispettivi cavi. Naturalmente per far questo ci vollero ingenti risorse economiche. Si misero in vendita pacchetti azionari a Londra e New York e in tutto il mondo così da poter finanziare questo progetto. Ci vollero anni per trovare tutto il materiale necessario a studiare i cavi che avrebbero collegato i due Paesi. Questi si incontrarono, finalmente, in mezzo all'Oceano Atlantico per unire i cavi. Ma quando stavano per congiungersi, una delle due parti, credo quella americana, perse i propri cavi e il tanto atteso evento sfumò. Andarono così perduti 4.000 km di lavoro. Questo episodio lo considero veramente un "evento" Fluxus: un momento importante nell'idea Fluxus. La perfezione che diventa errore, che si trasforma in errore. Arrivare alla fine e dover ricominciare dall'inizio.



Nam June Paik performing "Flux Sonata 4"
New York 1975

Photo Peter Moore

Video, Comunicazione, Tecnologia

E' importante lavorare su due livelli di comunicazione, reciproci e interattivi perché la comunicazione unilaterale, "one way", è molto comune.

Oggi credo a esempio che i meccanismi della teleconferenza aprano prospettive interessanti. Anche perché rispetto al satellite è molte più economica. I problemi che incontrammo col satellite potevano forse essere superati dalla teleconferenza, ma allora, nel 1984, questa tecnologia non era ancora molto sviluppata.

La prima idea "satellitante" che ebbi riguardava la possibilità di far danzare Merce Cunningham con Baron. Fui abbastanza naif. Contattai Baron chiedendogli se volesse improvvisare con Merce Cunningham ... I grandi nomi ... Ma lui disse che doveva andare a una festa di Campodanno. La verità è che l'evento non garantiva sufficientemente la loro professionalità a reputazione. Nel loro caso, infatti, si trattava di improvvisare senza prove e il pubblico avrebbe potuto scambiare la performance per una specie di competizione tra due illustri personaggi.

La stessa cosa avvenne tra Beuys e Cage, ai quali chiedemmo di suonare insieme un duetto al pianoforte. Immaginate? Beuys e Cage ... L'evento del secolo! Ma Beuys esitò. Da una parte c'era Cage che aveva sviluppato, nel corso di tanti anni, uno stile personalissimo; dall'altra Beuys che aveva un suo programma artistico preciso. Era impensabile che essi cambiassero improvvisa-

mente il loro stile. E fu lo stesso con Beuys e Allen Ginsberg ... Per loro la televisione non era molto importante. Sono stato io a trascinarli. Erano molto occupati. Così quando chiesi loro di venire dissero di sì. Ma non presero mai il progetto sul serio. Al contrario Laurie Anderson prese molto sul serio Good Morning Mr. Orwell perché lei è un'artista multimediale.

Per un giovane artista usare oggi gli strumenti della teleconferenza potrebbe significare sperimentare una nuova forma d'arte. Del resto ho scoperto che la comunicazione "two way" è molto più importante della stessa comunicazione "dal vivo". Sono arrivato a questa conclusione dopo aver speso un milione di dollari e otto anni di ricerche sul satellite. La diretta tra un uomo e un altro avviene sempre dal vivo (uno di fronte all'altro). La macchina cela sempre qualcosa, come i vestiti celano gran parte dell'informazione che da tutto il corpo potrebbe scaturire. Lo studio dei costumi è molto interessante per chi si occupa dei media perché, in qualche modo, ci si deve occupare del trucco, di ciò che è nascosto.

Nel 1984 ho preso una posizione. George Orwell affermava che la televisione era comunque negativa. Io al contrario affermai che la televisione non era sempre negativa, che non era il "Male". In Good Morning Mr. Orwell dicevo proprio questo: sono stato il solo al mondo ad affermarlo, e ne sono orgoglioso.

Ho sempre aspettato che le apparecchiature divenissero più accessibili economicamente. Nel 1964 tentai di lavorare con la tecnologia digitale, ma a quei tempi, il computer costava milioni di dollari e solo l'industria militare aveva quel tipo di computer. Dovetti aspettare che la tecnologia diventasse più economica per poterla usare e questo avvenne nel 1967. Questo è il mio rapporto con l'hardware e le industrie produttrici: aspettare che i prodotti diventino più economici. Posso aspettare anche vent'anni.

Insomma, se si parla di tecnologia e arte occorre parlare di soldi. In questo campo è un po' come nell'industria cinematografica. Si deve iniziare con i soldi. Del resto noi utilizziamo degli studi di post-produzione che costano migliaia di dollari al giorno e non possiamo permetterceli. Occorre trovare dei sostenitori che ci consentano di utilizzare tecnologie, che ci affidino gli strupenti per portare avanti il nostro lavoro.

Del resto è anche vero che le grandi aziende hanno bisogno di noi. Ci affidano le nuove tecnologie per sperimentarle, per verificarne i limiti. Questo anche perché non si possono permettere di farlo fare agli scienziati. Quindi spesso siamo noi, gli artisti, a sperimentare nuove tecnologie.

Il velocissimo computer che usiamo, originariamente fu sviluppato e prodotto per il sistema di guida dei missili. Se un computer soddisfa le esigenze militari è ovvio che può trovare delle applicazioni per gli spot televisivi: le macchine sono neutrali. L'industria militare può sviluppare la tecnologia perché possiede le risorse economiche necessarie. Del resto lo stesso Marconi venne sostenuto dalla Marina Britannica.

L'industria militare sviluppa le tecnologie. Io non amo i militari, ma abbiamo bisogno di fondi per sperimentare nel nostro settore: non dico che sia un bene o un male, è il nostro destino. D'altra parte, tutto il XX secolo è stato segnato da una grande competizione: quella tra la tecnologia dei media e l'arte. E gli artisti sono stati insieme i sacerdoti, le vittime e le antenne della sfida.



Storia, Memoria

Gli artisti conoscono più del futuro che del passato. Non sempre è così, è vero, ma generalmente credo di sì. Gli artisti sono stati l'avanguardia dei grandi cambiamenti; non sempre siamo nel giusto ma lo siamo sicuramente più di altri.

Io conosco il mio ruolo: qualcosa che sia tra lo sviluppo dell'hardware e quello del software. E quello che so è che mi riesce bene fare da interfaccia.

Noi tutti desideriamo una certa sicurezza e una vita migliore. Abbiamo bisogno di conoscere qualcosa del futuro e più conosciamo del passato, più possiamo dirci sicuri. Conoscere il passato, cioè la memoria, significa capire e vedere il futuro.

La memoria è una serie di curve, un radar qualcuno dice, tra il passato e il futuro. Noi siamo qui nel presente, conosciamo il passato, possiamo provare a capire il futuro. Ma non possiamo conoscere il presente. La memoria quindi è molto importante per conoscere il futuro. Ecco perché dedico almeno due ore al giorno alla lettura dei giornali.

Io guardo all'influenza esercitata dalla cultura sciamanica nordcoreana con grande interesse. Una volta ero a tavola con uno studioso canadese che si occupava di indiani americani. Gli chiesi a quale tribù di indiani sarei appartenuto se fossi nato in America. Mi disse senza alcuna esitazione agli Eschimesi. Così ora so che appartengo alla tradizione sciamanica siberiana. Per me, comunque, questo è anche un legame con l'infanzia. Gli sciamani infatti sono quello che io ricordo della mia infanzia.

Ma sulla carta stampata va diversamente ... Tutta la storia scritta retrocede fino all'individuazione di una "prova". Ciò significa all'invenzione dell'agricoltura, all'età dei metalli. Ma questo è soltanto un brevissimo periodo nella storia dell'umanità. Prima di allora abbiamo vissuto milioni di anni. Prima delle "prove" scritte e archeologiche è tutto memoria audio-visiva. Più lavoro con il video più conosco questa parte della Storia. L'Età della Pietra, il Neolitico. Questo periodo della nostra storia è il più importante perché è il più lungo. Milioni di anni.

E' il motivo per cui tutta l'esperienza videoartistica e audiovisiva di questi anni mi aiuta a entrare nella storia delle cose umane. Gli artisti sono molto bravi nell'esercizio della memoria. Tutta l'esperienza accumulata dell'audiovisivo, della musica e dei video dall'inizio a oggi mi permettono di entrare nella memoria della storia. Del resto il nostro cervello è fatto così, come un nastro magnetico.

Sono stato un pessimo compositore prima di incontrare Cage. La più grande influenza su di me l'ha avuta John Cage. Lui mi disse che si considerava una combinazione di Dada e di filosofia Zen della "vacuità". Per lui il Dadaismo fu importante; così per me lo furono il Dadaismo e Duchamp.

Io sono una sorta di espressionista. I miei primi pezzi sono abbastanza espressionisti. Il Futurismo l'ho conosciuto nel 1958, non prima. E' interessante perché fu il primo movimento artistico che esprimeva la componente "Tempo", e il video è Immagine più Tempo. Così il Futurismo è stato importante anche teoricamente. Il tempo influenza l'arte; così nella storia del video occorre ricordare il contributo del Futurismo.

Penso che i momenti più importanti nella cultura di questo secolo siano rappresentati dallo sviluppo del cinema e della musica Pop. Grazie a queste due forme d'espressione, che non esistevano nel XIX secolo, genti diverse hanno potuto comunicare fra loro. E questo processo non è ancora giunto a conclusione ...

MACLUHAN CONTRE DUCHAMP



Rose Art Memory, 1987-88
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati



Fontainebleau, 1988
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Mieux que Godard – Mieux qu'Einstein – Mieux que Verlaine – Mieux qu'Hitchcock, etc., c'est une série de tableaux électroniques de Nam June Paik, qui comprend également un Mieux que Paik (une téléviseur). Un des premiers gestes publics de Paik équivalait à faire avec John Cage un Mieux que Cage (l'épisode de la cravate coupée) et, peu de temps après, avec Marshall MacLuhan, un Mieux que MacLuhan (l'histoire du "massage électronique" opéré avec un aimant sur la gueule de celui qui avait déclaré: le message c'est le medium). Vingt-cinq ans plus tard, on peut voir dans ce "massage" ironique le message de tous les travaux de Nam June Paik: vive l'audio-tactile. L'audio-tactile, qu'est-ce que c'est? Il faut le demander au maître de Toronto. Dans "La Galaxie Gutenberg", Marshall MacLuhan oppose le livre imprimé à la télévision. Le livre est le moyen de communication par lequel le visuel établit son règne au détriment de tous les autres sens. Le cinéma accroît encore cet impérialisme de la vision. Avec la télévision, au contraire, on assiste au développement d'un moyen de communication qui ne fait plus exclusivement appel à la visualité. La télévision est audio-tactile. Radio à images, elle accorde au son un rôle prépondérant. Objet plastique, elle se laisse manipuler constamment (par les techniciens d'abord qui, en régie, "touchent" aux images, les mélangent, les chargent de titres, les divisent, les multiplient, les inscrivent, les transfèrent, etc. et en bout de chaîne, par les télé-spectateurs qui les convoquent, les renvoient, les bousculent, dérangent leurs couleurs, bref les tiennent à la merci de cette télé-commande qu'ils ne cessent de tapoter). Dès le départ, Nam June Paik crée des sons qu'on écoute avec la bouche, en suçant un drôle d'écouteur. Puis il invente une machine à tripatouiller les signaux: le synthétiseur Paik-Abe. On tourne des boutons, on pousse des manettes, et les images virent de couleur, dansent, s'agi-



Nam June Paik, 1977
Photo Peter Moore

tent, se désintègrent. Le premier qui en fera les frais sera justement le théoricien de l'audio-tactile. Hommage ou animosité? Autant que le coup de ciseau à la cravate de Cage était un hommage plus que cagien (et tactile, très tactile) aux théories de John Cage sur l'indétermination en musique, autant le massage électronique qui déforme le visage de MacLuhan peut être considéré objectivement comme une vérification plus que touchante des théories ma



Nam June Paik, 1977

Photo Peter Moore

cluhaniennes, même si Paik prétend verbalement qu'elles ne l'intéressent pas plus que ça. Inversement, Paik ne cesse de louer Duchamp alors que chacune des œuvres qu'il invente (de ses peintures qu'on écoute à ses sculptures bourrées d'images) oppose un démenti au roi du ready made. Mac Luhan contre Duchamp? C'est la carte que joue Paik à tous les coups sans pouvoir s'en vanter (il y a une "terreur" duchampienne). L'audio-tactile brise la clôture duchampienne, qui soumet l'art au visuel. Un ready-made n'est pas audio-tactile parce qu'il n'est pas une représentation, mais le refus de toute nouvelle possibilité de représentation. Le ready made enferme la représentation dans le visuel. Duchamp, en voyant une hélice d'avion, avait dit à ses copains: "nous sommes foutus, nous ne ferons jamais mieux que ça." Paik en jouant l'audio-tactile contre le visuel, la sculpture contre la peinture et la télé contre tout le monde (Godard comme Hitchcock, Einstein comme Verlaine), prouve depuis trente ans le contraire à qui mieux mieux.

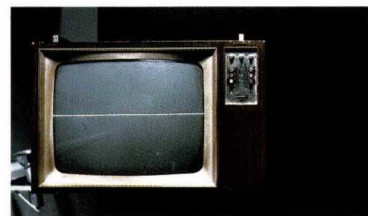
WULF HERZOGENRATH DER PARADIGMENWECHSEL BEI NAM JUNE PAIK. VON MATERIALITÄT ZUR IMMATERIALITÄT ZUR SCHEIN- MATERIALITÄT

I Materialisation

Um 1960 erleben wir in der Arte Povera und bei den Fluxus-Künstlern die direkte Visualisierung der Materie. Das Feuer brennt real (Kounellis), der Wind bläst (Haacke), Der Stein formt sich zur Skulptur (Long) und das Wasser fließt (Rinke).

Bei Paik wird der Leerfilm mit seinen physischen "Fehlern", Kratzern, Spuren zum Inhalt des Film ("Zen for Film", 1964), aber auch das Gesamt-Klavier, das mit vielen tönenden Objekten besetzte "Klavier Integral" zum vielstimmigen Orchester.

Das Fernsehgerät ist als Objekt selbst Skulptur: "Rembrandt Automatik", 1963/76 (das mit der Mattscheibe nach unten liegende, scheinbar kaputte Gerät. Aber auch in seinen frühen Manipulationsmöglichkeiten, von Paik "Participation TV" genannt: mit dem



Fußschalter das laufende Programm gestört, mit dem Magneten abstrakte Bilder geformt ("Magnet TV", 1965) oder mit dem Mikrophon den Ton in Bilder umgesetzt. "Zen for Wind – objets sonores", 1963 ist eine Skulptur mit an einer Leine hängender Objekte, die bei leichten Windbewegungen Klänge von sich geben. "Zähle die Wellen des Rheins – falls es den Rhein noch gibt", eine wunderbare konkrete Anweisung auf der viertletzten Seite der "Symphony No 5", 1965.

Für Charlotte Moorman denkt sich Paik nicht nur Objekte mit Video aus, sondern er hofft, endlich die Aufführungs-Praxis der Musik zu verändern. 1960 konzipierte er eine Aufführung der "Mondschein-Sonate" durch eine nackte Spielerin (nie von ihm realisiert). Charlotte Moorman realisierte dagegen oft ein wichtiges Wasser-Stück: sie unterbrach ihr Cello-Stück aus "Schwanensee" und stieg in eine mit Wasser gefüllte Riesentonne, um dann den zweiten Teil pitschnaß weiterzuspielen: ein elementares Seh- und Hörereignis: das Stück klingt nicht nur anders danach, man empfindet den realen Wassereinbruch physisch auch als Beobachter.

Die Plastikhülle der ersten von Paik verwendeten Video-Spule wird von ihm zum Objekt erklärt "A painting which exists two times a second", 1965, und ein altes Backform- Holzgerät wird zu einem "First transportable TV", 1975, umgemalt, oder aber die Kerze in ein völlig entleertes TV-Gehäuse gestellt und entzündet: "Candle TV", seit 1975: die reale Kerze erleuchtet die Realität des Fernsehers.

Paik vollzieht hier wie andere in anderen Bereichen der Kunst eine klare Position der Materialisierung der Objekte, die pur und direkt sich entfalten.

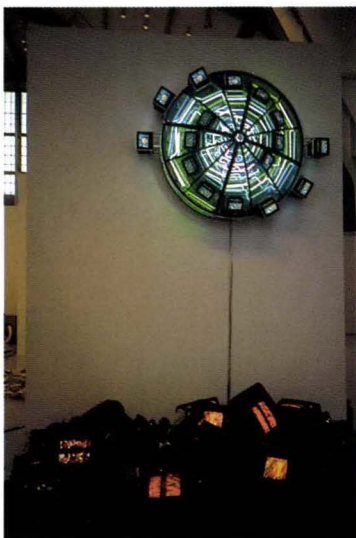
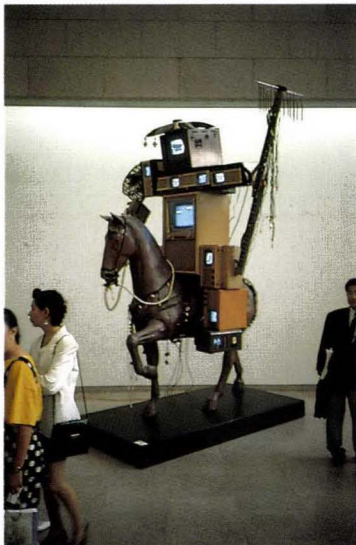
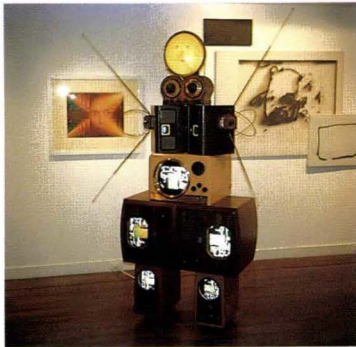
II Entmaterialisierung

1969 hat Paik mit Shuya Abe den ersten Video-Synthesizer entwickelt: künstliche Bilder entstehen ohne Kamera, rein synthetisch, und alle vorhandenen Bilder können in jeder Form manipuliert, verändert werden: der Sprung in das Immaterielle ist getan: die künstlichen Bilder werden noch ungreifbarer. Die Geräte lassen nicht die Bilder ahnen, der Computer trennt sich von seiner Botschaft.

Bei den großen Skulpturen und Environments wird nicht mehr die äußere Skulpturform des TV-Gerätes wichtig, sondern der elektronische Bildschirm wird Träger der Bildinformation, das Gerät verschwindet hinter Urwaldblättern ("TV-Garden", 1974), hinter Aquarien mit Guppiefischen ("Fish-Art", 1975), im Dunkel des weiten, hohen Himmels ("Fish flies on Sky", 1975), oder als Feuerlicht-Projektionen (Raum "Eine Kerze", 1989). Die TV-Bildschirme sind auf dem Boden liegend, nach oben strahlend und versteckt – oder sie hängen schwebend an der dunklen Decke, oder sie sind streng gereiht, um nur als Bildschirm-Reihe zu wirken. Das Dreidimensionale des Geräts, die Hülle, wird unwichtig, das Plastische des Gerätes wird verdrängt, überspielt, selbst immateriell, oder es wird sogar die Projektion bevorzugt, die sich immateriell von jedem Objektträger abzulösen scheint und im Raum sich auch vielfach übereinander kombinieren läßt.

Paik wird fasziniert von der Idee der "Satelliten"-Übertragung, seine erste Arbeit ist auch ein wichtiger Teil der ersten Satelliten-Übertragung von Kunst überhaupt: die Eröffnungsaktionen von Beuys, Paik und Davis zur Eröffnung der documenta 6, 1977, in Kassel, als Paik eine Art Miniretrospektive seiner Arbeiten durchspielt: dabei aber auch ein wichtiges neues Stück für dieses neue immaterielle Eröffnungsereignis entwickelt: das Klavierspiel mit der





schwarz-weiß-Handkamera: Bild und Ton sind identisch und doch ist es für den Betrachter kaum vorstellbar, wie sich materiell Bild und Ton zueinander verhalten. Danach wird es von Paik noch drei weitere Satelliten-Ereignisse geben: "Good morning Mr. Orwell", 1984; "Bye, Bye Kipling", 1986, und "Wrap around the world", 1988. Die Gleichzeitigkeit der Ereignisse, das Zusammenspiel durch Luft und Zeit von Musikalischem und Szenischem, Paik fasziniert es.

III Schein-Materialität

Seit 1986 entsteht die "Family of Robots" mit vielen Generationen und Familienmitgliedern: Großeltern und Tanten, viele Babys und dann die Helden der Französischen Revolution sowie Freunde und Künstlerkollegen, Reiter und Autos werden geformt und immer aus entsprechenden TV-Kästen zusammengesetzt und mit jeweils passendem Bildmaterial visualisiert. Hier materialisiert sich eine dreidimensionale Gegenstandsform, und zugleich bleibt eine immaterielle Ebene nicht nur im Bild auf den vielzähligen Bildschirmen erhalten: eine eigentümliche neue Schein-Materialität.

Diese Schein-Materialität klärt sich auf: es ist die Als-ob-Welt der Medien, die sich eben nur scheinbar hier materialisiert als "Fountain", in dem eben doch kein Wasser, sondern "nur" blaue Neon-Linien herunterplätschern, der Baum sieht ebenso aus und formt sich als Tannenbaumzeichen, aber eben nicht als wirklicher Rundum-Baum, und vielleicht zunächst erst gar nicht bemerkt: das "Feuer" der Zerstörung der TV-Geräte hat nicht die Geräte versengt, sondern nur als Schein gewütet: die Geräte sind nicht verbrannt (wie das Objekt "Burnt TV – für Bob Durham", 1976), sondern "nur" zerstört und am Boden verteilt: das Feuer wütet "nur" auf den Bildschirmen, das Reale wird nur dargestellt, simuliert.

Dieses ironische Spiel mit der Form des "als ob" ist Paiks kleiner Beitrag zur postmodernen Diskussion. Indem er die Nähe und die Personifizierung so weit treibt, daß viele dies als zu nah empfinden, baut er kleine Distanz-Schwellen ein, die so subtil sind, daß sie kaum wahrgenommen werden.

Hermann Pollig gewidmet zu seinem Abschied vom IfA, Stuttgart am 30.4.93. für den Biennale-Katalog der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in Venedig 1993 geschrieben.

Zen for TV, 1963

Klavier integral, Performance by Nam June Paik, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne 1976

Earth: TV-Garden, documenta 6, Kassel 1977

Air: Fish flies in Sky, 1976, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York 1982

Water: Fish TV, 1976, Kölnischer Kunstverein Cologne 1976

Fire: One Candle, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt 1988

Dematerialisation: Laser projection (with Horst H. Baumann) and Videotape "Merce", Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne 1976

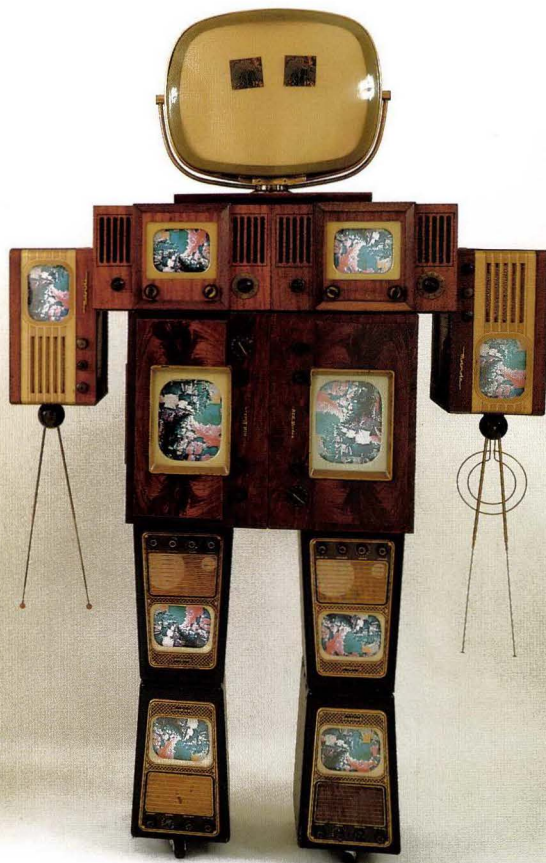
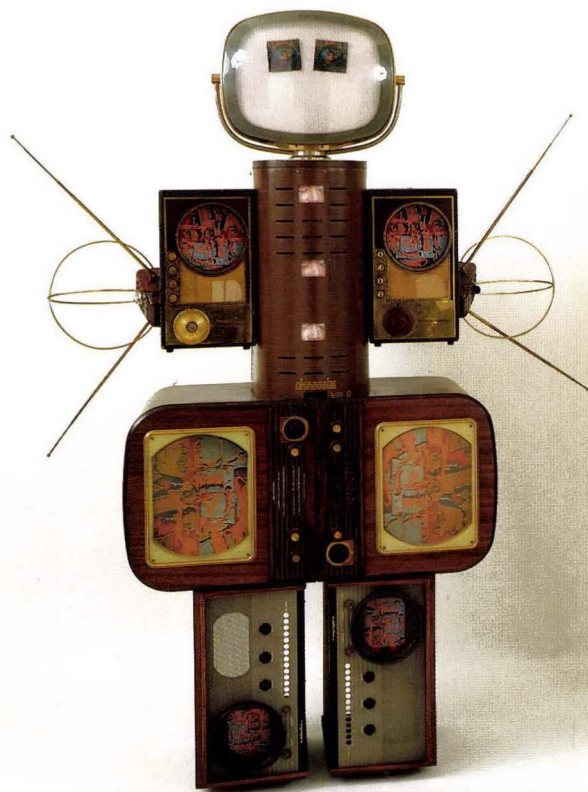
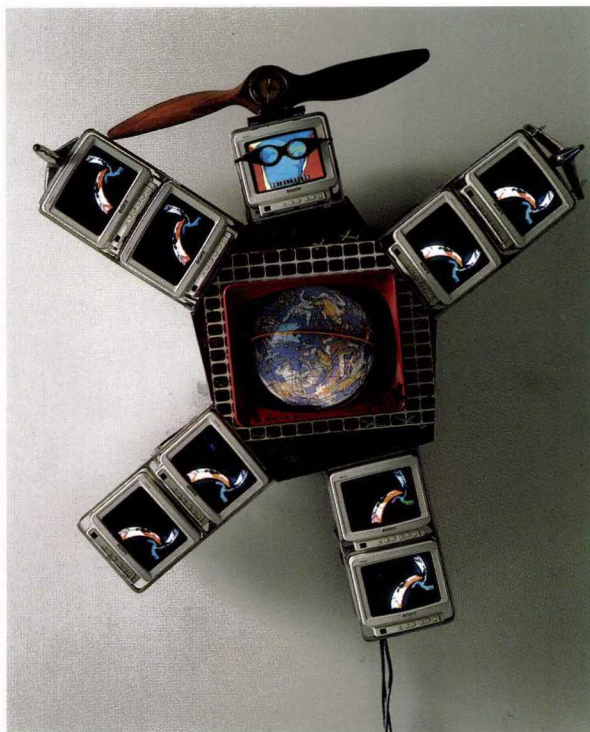
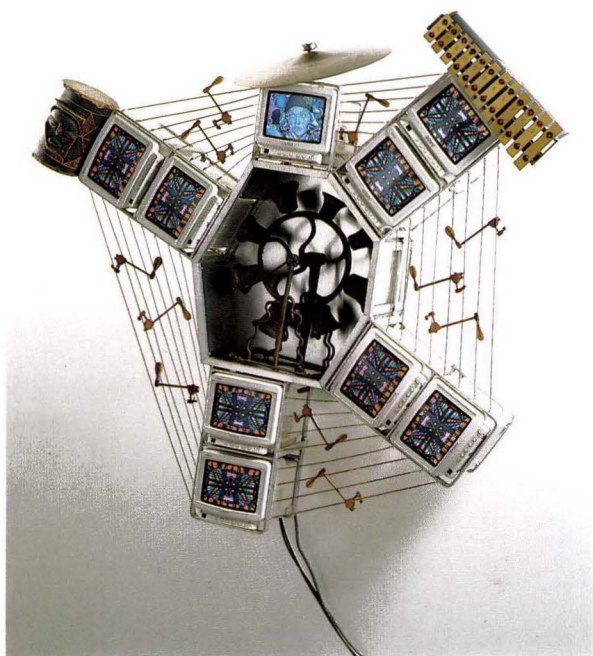
Aunt from: Family of Robots, 1988
Holly Solomon Gallery, New York

Don Quichotte, 1992
Museum of Modern Art, Seoul

The planet Mercury and the fire, detail of the installation for the exhibition "Feuer, Erde, Wasser, Luft", Mediale, Hamburg 1993

Photos W. Herzogenrath





La video-installazione rappresenta la fondazione da parte dell'arte di un crocevia di spazio e tempo insieme.

L'artista contemporaneo, in questo caso alla fine del XX secolo, riassume dentro la propria opera gli stimoli, gli sconfinamenti linguistici verso una dimensione di arte totale.

La totalità è l'approdo di un lungo viaggio realizzato dal lavoro creativo a partire dal Barocco, passando attraverso il teatro wagneriano per giungere fino a noi dove l'artista diventa artefice di uno spazio scandito dal tempo reale e caratterizzato da una pluralità di materiali.

La video-installazione è la fondazione di un campo di architetture miniaturizzata, giocata sulla contaminazione, l'assemblaggio, il cortocircuito di diverse materie intorno al progetto di un percorso.

Tale percorso costituisce la struttura disseminata di un'opera risolta con la stabilità di alcuni materiali e con la mobilità elettronica di altri.

La dialettica tra la stabilità e dinamismo costituisce l'elemento di rinvio all'architettura, ad uno spazio abitato dalla complessità, dalla differenza e dallo spostamento. Lo spettatore si trova di fronte ad una unità urbana, intesa come presentazione di un artificio tridimensionale ed in qualche modo abitabile.

L'abitabilità della video-installazione può essere frontale e puramente contemplativa, osservabile dall'esterno, oppure percorribile ed esperienziale, frutto di un movimento polisensoriale del corpo che si inoltra nel labirinto dell'opera.

Se nell'installazione normale è il corpo dello spettatore a costituirsi come termometro e clessidra vivente, che scandisce temperatura e temporalità dell'opera nella videoinstallazione è il flusso cinetico dell'immagine a documentare un tempo duplice. La duplicità è data da una doppia possibilità di misura. Una dettata dalla cadenza interna della tecnologia e l'altra dall'incontro con essa dei materiali fermi su sé stessi e del pubblico fermo o in movimento.

In qualche modo ci troviamo di fronte ad un'opera che inizialmente sembra farsi compagnia da sola, in quanto funzionante anche fuori dalla presenza dello spettatore. L'immagine televisiva, astratta o figurativa, è possieduta dal tempo spietato ed inarrestabile della sua trasmissione elettronica. Mostra così un carattere, involontariamente ironico di autosufficienza, quasi ad indicare l'ipotesi apocalittica di una scomparsa dell'uomo.

Contemporaneamente la video-installazione possiede la capacità oggettiva, nella sua attiva produzione di temporalità, di controllare l'eventuale presenza del pubblico. Nel senso che realizza una iconografia cinetica e sincronica al movimento dello spettatore.

Abbiamo così l'effetto di un doppio dinamismo temporale all'interno di un recinto spaziale definito dal campo della video-installazione. Tale campo si presenta volutamente con l'assemblaggio scoperto e provvisorio dell'accampamento, o luogo cioè dove materiali, oggetti e strumenti tecnologici convivono in uno spazio circoscritto e nello stesso tempo percorribile.

La percorribilità dell'opera produce un percorso contemplativo, un'esperienza polisensoriale sollecitata dal rimbalzo e dalla relazione tra le varie parti del campo estetico dell'opera.

Arte urbana è la video-installazione, la scelta da parte di un artefice che manipola linguaggi, come l'urbanista con segmenti di città.

Quest'ultimo infatti muove non soltanto spazi urbani astratti, ma piuttosto condensati di vita vissuta e pieni di esistenza concreta degli abitanti. La video-installazione possiede la stessa interna densità, conserva una sorta di memoria collettiva che la diversifica dal silenzio impersonale della pittura e della scultura.

**Percussion Kid, 1991**

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Space Kid, 1991

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Family of Robot: Mother and Father, 1986

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

**Lincoln, 1990**

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Benjamin Franklin II, 1990

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Family of Robot: Painted Metal Child, 1986

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Family Tree (Derrida Tree), 1992

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

L'artista elabora un percorso rilevabile non soltanto dalla plastica collocazione degli elementi, ma piuttosto definibile dalle dinamiche stabilite dentro il recinto dell'opera.

In questo senso ci troviamo non di fronte ma dentro, immersi, cioè in una realtà totale di arte giocata sul continuo sconfinamento dei materiali tra loro e dello spettatore dallo spazio della vita nel tempo dell'arte.

Lo spettatore diventa Alice nel Paese delle Meraviglie, protagonista di una inversione della spazialità in una pura temporalità. Il passaggio attraverso lo specchio è evidente e concreto. Lo spettatore passa realmente la soglia di divisione tra arte e vita. Qui egli si trova a percorrere un tempo attrezzato visibilmente da oggetti e forme intrecciate tra di loro. Non ha bisogno di sognare: è la video-installazione a produrre il sogno dell'opera mediante la proiezione di un tempo estetico in uno spazio abitabile tridimensionale.

Del sogno la video-installazione riprende il procedimento dello spostamento e della condensazione. Spostamento dei materiali dal loro luogo di origine, collegati in una inedita relazione che ne fonda un uso originale e puramente fantastico. Condensazione come accumulo intenso di situazioni spaziali e temporali assolutamente arbitrari, con le stesse modalità dell'esperienza onirica.

Rispetto al surrealismo questa realtà estetica possiede l'ulteriore capacità non soltanto di riprodurre mentalmente le associazioni libere del sogno, ma anche di produrre un'esperienza dinamica legata alla totalità polisensoriale del corpo.

Non riproduzione dunque, ma produzione in diretta è la video-installazione che supera l'imposizione alienante dell'evento televisivo, basato sull'immobilità del telespettatore, perfidamente garantito nella sua contemplazione del fatto che il dramma, il tempo reale dell'azione, si svolge altrove.

Nell'esperienza estetica non esiste spazio o tempo garantito. Lo spettatore è calato, vivo, nel vivo del percorso formalizzato dall'opera. Se nella domestica spettacolarità televisiva la realtà viene assottigliata e resa pura immagine bidimensionale, circoscritta e costretta dalla cornice del televisore, qui invece tutto esplode e sconfina nel campo mobile delle relazioni dell'opera con il pubblico.

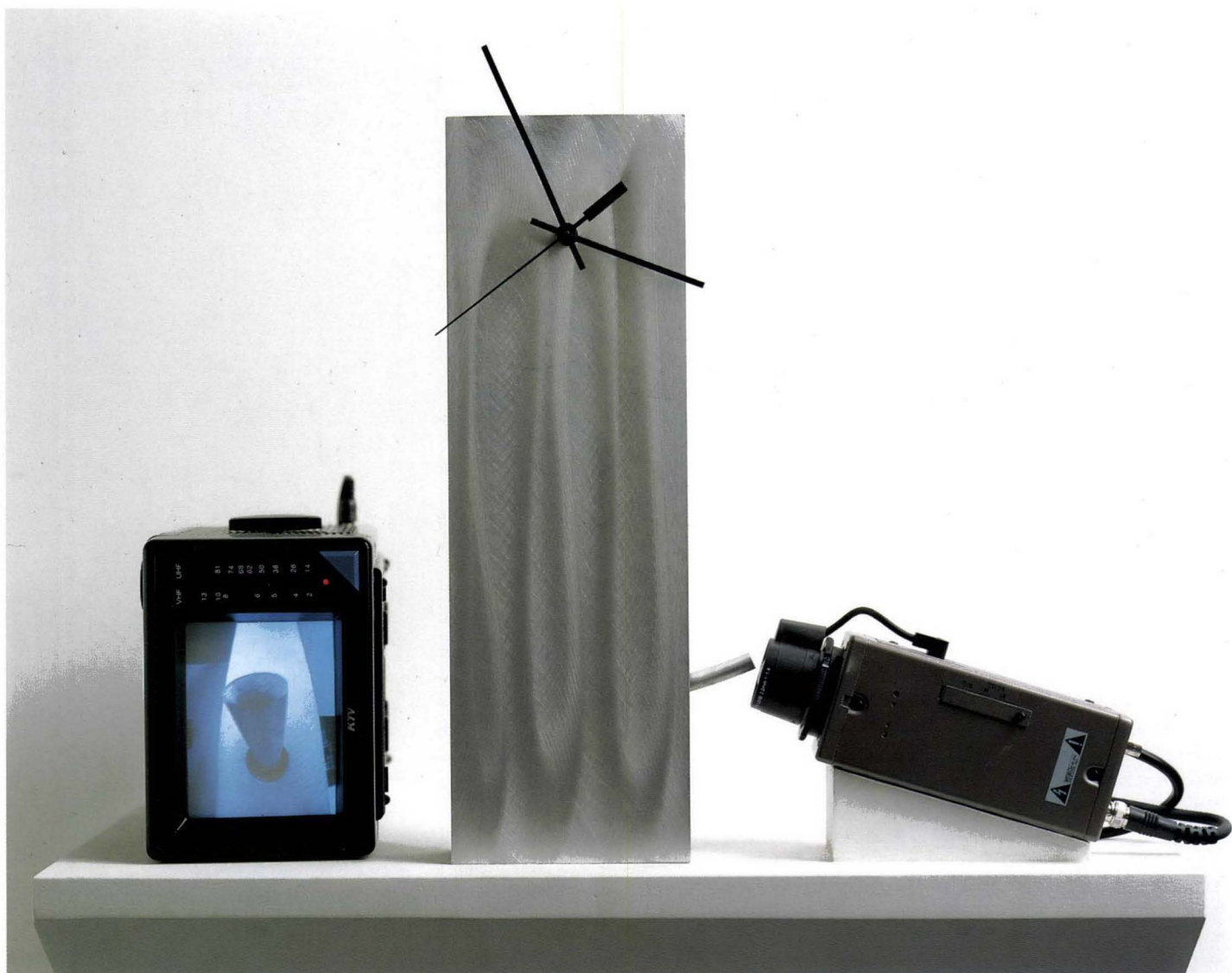
La video-installazione ribatte colpo su colpo, con gli stessi mezzi, paesaggio di strumenti, disseminazione di eventi all'esperienza urbana dell'uomo moderno. Ribatte e ribalta la passività sociale in un movimento esperenziale giocato sulla responsabilità individuale.

Questo è possibile, perché tale costruzione estetica non punta più, come le forme dell'arte concettuale e video, sull'informazione ma sulla comunicazione, sulla relazione cioè intersoggettiva che intercorre tra l'opera ed i suoi destinatari, il corpo sociale.

L'arte come informazione, come tutti i segnali altamente codificati della città, produce inevitabilmente una finale paralisi di entropia, una diminuzione di energia informativa inevitabile. La video-installazione cerca di combattere il carattere entropico dell'arte sperimentale, puramente basata sulla scoperta di nuove tecniche e materiali, utilizzando la qualità dinamica della contemplazione, facendone un campo di esperienza e di confronto diretto con l'opera.

L'inevitabile ed interna entropia della forma viene dall'artista affrontata chiamando apertamente il pubblico in soccorso dell'arte in modo da creare una sorta di agorà, un luogo di confluenza sociale in cui è l'intero corpo comunitario ad agire e trasformare un cimitero di oggetti ed apparecchiature tecnologiche in un sistema di scambio e comunicazione intersoggettiva.

Nella video-installazione sembra non esistere più gerarchia tra sog-



getto ed oggetto, possibile strumentalizzazione del primo sul secondo. Qui invece entrambi concorrono alla buona riuscita dell'esperienza. L'animazione di uno spazio garantito da una temporalità interna ed esterna. Interna in quanto commentata dal flusso delle macchine ed esterna, in quanto frutto dell'irruzione viva e reale dello spettatore nel recinto dell'opera.

In tal modo si realizza uno sorta di doppio sogno.

L'esperienza estetica riguarda, nella sua produzione di trasformazioni, l'opera stessa ed il pubblico. Avviene così la creazione di un corto circuito sensoriale che si realizza dentro il perimetro artificiale della video-installazione, impossibile d'altronde nell'artificio urbano entro cui l'uomo si muove.

Concreta è la differenza che intercorre tra le due dimensioni, visibile è anche il diverso modo di agire e reagire del soggetto, anche l'oggetto sembra esibire una inedita dimensione che lo sottrae alla sua inerte e supina utilità per spostarlo in un'altra, inedita e dinamica, imprevedibile ed involontaria.

Volontario invece è il percorso strutturato dall'artista, artefice di un campo magnetico di forme che suggeriscono esperienza senza imporla, risposte senza domande.

Fucking Clock, Edition 1989

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Infatti la video-installazione volutamente rinuncia alla identità metafisica dell'arte, quella tradizionale, normalmente caratterizzata da un'identità investigativa e sterilmente analitica, più adatta alla concentrazione della mente che all'espansione polisensoriale del corpo.

Qui ci troviamo di fronte ad un accampamento complesso e disseminato di oggetti familiari e quotidiani, non inquietanti e misteriosi, piuttosto invitanti all'attraversamento ed alla percorribilità senza patemi di animo o sospetti verso un universo enigmatico e simbolico.

La video-installazione non è abitata dalla poesia di una forma unica e reticante, ma piuttosto dalla prosa affollata di oggetti appartenenti al vissuto quotidiano.

Tale vissuto produce, nella forma dello spostamento e condensazione, un ulteriore spostamento del doppio sogno nello stato del dormiveglia, la sensazione di un passaggio giocato non sul salto ma sulla continuità del movimento.

L'opera infatti è costruita nei caratteri della riconoscibilità e familiarità dei materiali.

Da tale riconoscimento parte la peripezia del pubblico che si inoltra nel percorso, slittando tra le varie forme senza traumi. Senza traumi è sempre, per carattere, la videoinstallazione che vuole conservare l'identità laica dell'arte contemporanea, tesa ad incalzare la vita senza fantasticare su un romantico altrove. Senza traumi lo spettatore entra nell'opera riconoscendo nel perimetro di essa, i tratti di un universo cosificato di immagini e di materiali appartenenti al passaggio urbano ed a quello onirico che ne consegue.

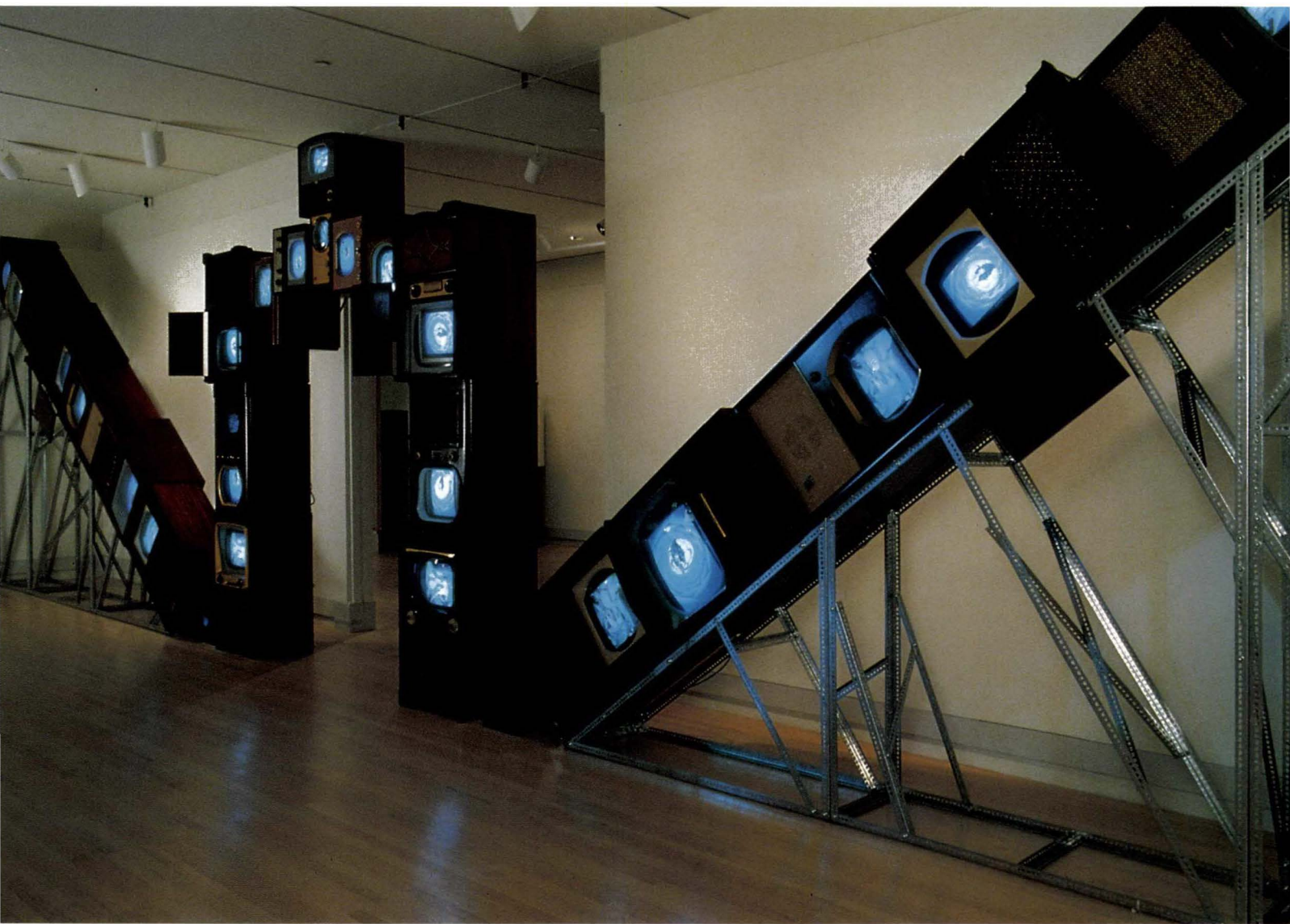
La differenza rispetto a questo sta nel fatto che ora il pubblico può circolare in uno spazio doppiamente animato dall'attività del soggetto e dell'oggetto, spurgato della passività quotidiana. Ora non c'è bisogno più di sognare un altrove sostitutivo e sublimato.

La video-installazione fonda il tempo del dormiveglia, garantito proprio dall'esistenza di uno spazio concreto entro cui è possibile girovagare, conservando la memoria personale dell'esperienza quotidiana ed assumendone un'altra più articolata, mediante un'esperienza mobile ed iconograficamente ariosa.

(published in: catalogue Il Novecento Di Nam June Paik, Rome 1992, p. 19-21)

Connection (With Wings), 1986-88

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati





GROSSE FISCHES FRESSEN KLEINE FISCHES

Meine erste persönliche Begegnung mit Nam June Paik fand 1982 im Whitney Museum in New York statt. Es war am Tag der Pressevorbesichtigung seiner umfangreichen Retrospektive. Ich hatte mit meiner Doktorarbeit über seine Videoarbeiten begonnen und war voll akademischen Eifers zu diesem Ereignis angereist. Bei meinem Rundgang durch die Ausstellung traf ich Paik irgendwann auch im dunklen Raum der Installation "Fish Flies on Sky" an. Er lag auf einer der Matten am Boden und sah zu den Monitoren hinauf, Shuya Abe, sein langjähriger Chefsingenieur und Freund, war bei ihm. Da ich irgendwie ein Gespräch beginnen wollte, war ich so töricht, ihn zu fragen, was für eine Bedeutung die Fische für ihn hätten. Paik und Abe feixten und ich verstand soviel wie, daß große Fische die kleinen fressen würden. Ich fühlte mich schrecklich auf den Arm genommen und unterließ fortan derartiges Inquirieren. Bei allem Verständnis für wissenschaftliches Arbeiten war Paik jedenfalls nicht gewillt, Interpretationen seiner eigenen Arbeit zu liefern, soviel war mir klar geworden. Für Sachfragen im Sinne von was, wann und wo war er dagegen offen und zeigte sich sehr hilfsbereit. Was die Fische angeht, habe ich damals kurz erwogen, sie doch nicht inhaltsdeutend zu verwenden, ikonographische Beispiele aus der Kunstgeschichte boten sich dafür an. Mir wurde aber klar, daß es wenig Sinn macht, traditionelle Ikonographie zur Deutung des Paikschen Werkes heranzuziehen.

Paik gehört der europäischen und amerikanischen Avantgarde an, die sich ganz bewußt und vorsätzlich Traditionen entgegengestellt und neue Parameter geschaffen hat. Er ist ein westlicher Künstler mit Exotenbonus, seine asiatische Herkunft ist nur bedingt relevant für das Verständnis seiner Arbeit. Sein Werk ist ebenso international, wie die Avantgarde der letzten Dekaden. Die buddhistischen Motive, wie etwa der "TV Buddha", kommen nicht aus einer persönlichen Überzeugung, sondern sind Versatzstücke aus dem fernöstlichen Materialfundus, über das er ebenso verfügt wie über westliches Kulturgut.

Dieses Verständnis der Arbeiten Paiks hatte ich mir erarbeitet und stand damit auch nicht alleine dar. Seit den späten achtziger Jahren ist jedoch eine Wandlung zu beobachten: Paik scheint immer asiatischer zu werden, ob durch den kommerziellen Erfolg bedingt oder durch das Alter. Er kehrt zum ersten Mal wieder in seine Heimat Korea zurück, und fortan kommen auch seine koreanischen Wurzeln verstärkt zum Vorschein. Was vorher an Koreanischem mitschwang, etwa der Schamanismus durch die Zusammenarbeit mit seinem engen Freund Joseph Beuys, zeigt sich jetzt mehr und deutlicher. Seit sich Paik mit der koreanischen Kultur in seinen Arbeiten auseinandersetzt, scheinen auch die koreanischen Strukturen in der Person des Künstlers offensichtlicher zu werden. Nicht daß er sich wirklich verändert hätte. Es ist mehr ein Phänomen der Rezeption, der Wahrnehmung einer Person, die durch eine leichte Drehung andere Facetten aufscheinen läßt. Plötzlich erkennen wir ihn als das, was er wohl immer war, als koreanischen Künstler, der bei aller Verwestlichung die vom Konfuzianismus geprägten Umgangsformen und Wertnormen nicht verloren hat.

Um zum Anfang zurückzukommen: Das mit den Fischen war doch nicht so abwegig. Heute weiß ich, mit welcher Selbstverständlichkeit er die Grundgesetze des Lebens akzeptiert und respektiert und mit Gelassenheit das Gute im Schlechten und das Schlechte im Guten erkennt.

Nam June in his atelier, New York 1989

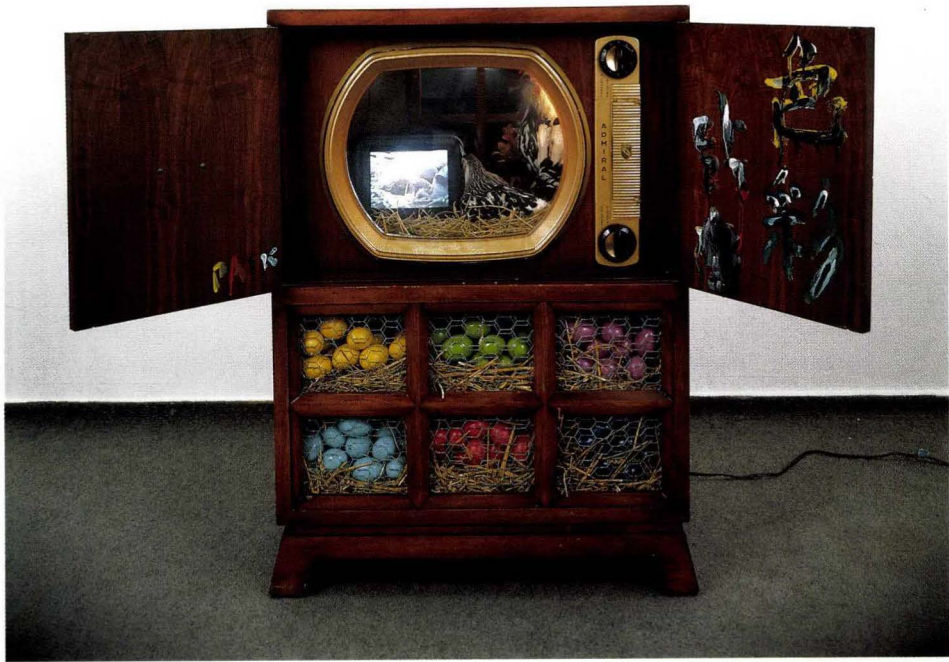
Photo E.Kroll

►
Chicken Box, Chicken Farm, 1986

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

►►
The Late, Late Show, 1987

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati







EXCERPT FROM VIDEO-MUDANG – SHAMANISM/SHAMANISN'T

In Korean shamanism, "Shin" are beneficial deities living in mountains, the sea, and the home. "Kwishin" are spiteful spirits of the restless dead that cause humans no end of physical, psychological and spiritual trouble. "Kut" or rituals are performed by "Mudangs" or trance shamans who ask various "Shin" for their support and help in the struggle between humans, nature, and the after life. This "Kut" is dedicated to all the Koreans who led me to understand the concept of Universal Shamanism.

CHANTRA: O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy,
O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy ...

"SHINBYONG"

(Spiritual Sickness)

Turn me on, turn me on,
Remote control is easy, easier, easiest,
Convenience, never get up, you might walk away.
Who controls who?
Sit comfortably in your armchair, arms are for chairs,
Watch me, Watch me, Watch me change yet stay the same.
I am greater than you, man who wonders who is greater than him.
I am Watch, Spirit in the tube, Tele-kwishin of the airwaves
Invisible until you turn me on,
You call me, You want me, now Watch me.
Remote, far away, alien, distant, no one near you,
Yet never alone when I am on, I am with you,
Coming to you from the invisible world, all around you
Invisible until you turn me on, Watch,
I am there for you, in your chair, Watch,
with stories, myths, miracles.
I am the flesh without soul. Watch.
I am the separation of the flesh from the soul. Watch.
Transistors, wires, circuits, looking glass.
I am Tele-kwishin, Golem, Frankenstein. Watch.
Before my creation you told stories to each other,
Now I am the soulless circuitry you Watch.
I have news, wars, sports, horrors, riots,
entertainment, enterbrainment, dementertainment!
And now a message from our adver-tithers:
"Pardon us, we just want to let you know, Buy
This thing we're selling is really good for you, Buy.
Let us help make your life better, Buy.
Or else, no one will like you, Buy.
There's no money honey, if you don't Buy something!"
And now back to stories about people just like you, Watch.
People with a soul, just like you, Watch.
Just like you want to be, Watch.
Just like you will be, Watch.
Do you still think I'm invisible?
Turn me on, sit in front of me, together,
People just like you, just like I want you to be.
Stories just like yours, all stories the same,
What does it matter?
Just sit and Watch me, you don't have to do anything,
Sit back, rest, relax, sleep the sleep of stories, news,
progress for people just like you.
Now go to bed my sheep. Make more people just like you

To Watch me, while my public eye Watches you.
Remote control Dream: You can be on me, in me, under me,
Eternally, a part of me.

VIDEO-MUTAL

(Initiation and education by a master)

Michin nom nom, michin michin, nom nom, michin nom nom, michin nom, nom michin, nom michin, michin nom, michin nom!

Korean parents tell their artistic children they are "michin-nom": mad, self-enslaving, egoistic. Only a crazy person wants to be an artist." "Michin nom" is the "shinbyong" or spiritual sickness of the young artist.

"Musyong": becoming a shaman or mudang needs a "Mutal": an initiation and education by a master.

Without a master the process takes much longer and is very much more painful and dangerous, frequently leading the young artist to an premature, tortured, spiritual death.

That's why it is important for "mutal" artists to look for young artists suffering "shinbyong" to guide and direct them to their "mus-yong" or becoming, out of their "shinbyong".

NAM JUNE PAIK

(Pansu-mutal)

Pack, Pike, Park, Peck, Poke,
Pig in a Poke,
Pock, Pick, Pickpocket, Parking Ticket,
Poke with a Stick in the Eye,
Names like water that slip through the hand
Pick out the channels,
Park your self in front of the television,
Pack a Lunch,
Peck like a chicken at all the stations,
Slow poke don't you see they're all the same,
Pick one and stay with it, stay with the one you choose,
There's something there, no difference, I'm sure there is,
If not something to learn
Then something to spurn,
Pack, Pike, Park, Peck,
Mocking my parallel parking,
Can I do anything to change, to change,
To change the channel to
Please, pansu-mudang, he-shaman,
The invisible gods of this remote control?

CHARLOTTE MOORMAN

(American-Mudang)

Mudang hiding behind that wooden Buddha of a cello,
Wearing the "TV Bra" knowing the world of the classics
Would throw you out.
Did you really want to be in?
Or was being out,
As in as you could get?
Crawling on your soft belly with your Buddha cello burden
On your back, over Guadalcanal beaches searching for
Souls of dead soldiers
Finding them in time to put them to rest for us.
Playing, all the ways that can be played,
silence and noise without your conductor on his podium
guided by your own calling.

Are you mudang or mansubaghi, shaman or musician,
permanently pattering on videotape your adlibs
that make the world know your own trance
and love for performing video kut, the ritual.
Sweet player,
Your flesh is gone but your soul still visible,
still playing the beautiful fulsome dream of video mudang sleep.

MUDANG

(Trance)

The quiet ones are meditating, painting, writing poetic koans,
tending gardens to please their deities.
The noisy ones are singing, dancing, playing music, walking on
Earth, Air, Fire, and Water like Merce Cunningham.
The noisy ones are chanting and singing about meditation like
Howling Allen Ginsberg.
The noisy ones are screaming like a coyote into the microphone,
Leading Beuys scouts into the woods to plant trees in Germany
Paid for in Japan.
The noisy ones are bathing in mud becoming earth, naked and
Beautiful brown clay, sexual and desirable like Amy Greenfield.
The noisy ones are on stage taking off their clothes, hugging and
Loving each other, inviting the audience to join their "mugam",
The dance that leads to ecstasy, like The Living Theater.
The noisy ones are throwing the I-Ching looking for the right
place to listen to the "Music of The Peers" like John Cage.
The noisy ones are dancing and drumming until they fly out of
their bodies, sweating, gasping for breath, ecstatic souls.
The noisy ones are inside the looking glass tube, turning dials
on a synthesizer making the invisible visible, video-mudang with
props and costumes.
The noisy ones are burning pianos while orchestras play the music
of the dead.
The noisy ones go on cruises, eat, come home, eat, have a party,
eat, gossip, and eat some more like Gregory Battcock.
The noisy ones are trying create international peace on the
"Media Shuttle: Moscow/New York" and everywhere else they
can.
The noisy ones are Selling New York like Russell Connor, even if
The only advantage to living in New York is that all New Yorkers
Go directly to Heaven.
Having served their time in hell on Manhattan Island.
The noisy ones bring you beautiful, social, invisible stars of
The arts who become visible if you turn them on.
The noisy ones are looking for more of the same.

SHINMYONG

(Ecstasy)

Yang, yang, bang, bang, drumming, action, hot, dancing, music,
Singing, spirits, trances, exstasy, dancing, kimchi, spice, hot,
Sweat, sweet, spinning, wet, action, alive, flesh, spirit rising
From heat rising, from dancing, from hot food, hot soju,
Hot bodies, heat, beat,
Yang yang, bang bang, universal shamans in South America, East
Europe, Central Asia, Siberia, Native Americans dancing, hot,
Action, spice, food, bodies, sex, combining the flesh and the
Spirit, hot sauce, salsa, hot music, sha sha sha man, dance, call
The deities and spirits through your hot flesh.
Tell them you want more of the same man, more of the same man,

more of the shame man, more of the shaman, Now!
Garlic, pepper, ginger, vinegar, paprika are cures for body
sickness.

Sweetness appeases the gods after the hotness possesses you.
Bring the gods into your body. Pomegranate, chocolate, orange,
sweet after hot, like dessert, sweat after hot, like love and
dancing, both necessary for ecstasy.

MANSHIN

(Possession)

Buddha is my meditating monitor, Adonai is my all knowing editor,
Allah is in my gas tank, Christ is my cable, Krishna is my cassette,
and Confucius pays all the bills.

My imperfect, artist soul is mudang, shaman.

I dance for all of you, to bring you together in me.

I sing for all of you, to bring you together in me.

I bang the drum for all of you.

I eat hot and sweet for all of you.

I make love for all of you.

I write poems and stories for all of you.

I am the herbs and spices, vegetables and fruit

That grow in the earth.

I talk to you, make you laugh at me, laugh at you,

While I weep for those who don't know all of you as one

In their dance with the Earth, dance with trees, dance with

Mountains, dance with fire, dance with rain, dance until I can

Talk to all of you, because I am all of you.

No separation, no identity.

I am as simple now as my birth,

I sing to you in the language of my purified heart.

Question: "What happens to my soul after death?"

Answer: "Who sees your videos knows your soul after death. Rest
now, you are immortal."

MULLIM

(Repelling the Demons)

Let the advertising pass back into the invisible world,

Make fun of it. Ridicule it. Know it for what it is.

"You have my money in your pocket and I want it,

Buy this, get some of it, try this,

It's good for you, fills you up not out, makes you desirable,

Makes you hireable, you won't smell,

You'll be cleaner than you ever thought possible,

Your house will be rid of spirits, rid of kwishin,

Wash with this, your body will be rid of kwishin,

Spray this, the air will be rid of kwishin,

Drink this you'll have power,

Smoke this you'll be a man,

Eat this you'll be stronger faster,

Drive this you'll get there before I do,

Live here, there are no kwishin in the kitchen!

Laugh Now! Laugh when you see me worshipping, sitting, in front
Of my tele-kwishin, laugh when you see the Buddha watching
Himself,

Laugh when you see the fire on the piano, laugh when you see

Dancers dropping down on the floor from ecstasy and exhaustion

like sex, laugh after you burst out of yourself in Orgasm, laugh

when you know all things are temporary.

Video is the most temporary of all.

Tug the plug. Off the wall. Out of the wall.
 You're on your own again. No more tele-kwishin network,
 Bloomin' human comedies, dramas, and the news, news, news.
 Out of your chair, into your body, runaway from the tele-shrine,
 You bought it, you used it with your eyes, your ears, your body
 sitting in front of the tele-kwishin.
 Watch wants you to see all, know all, hear all, the latest, the
 greatest, the newest, the fashionable, the trends, the thing to
 do, the people to know, the thing to be, to be, to be.
 You can end it all, not by jumping, hanging, shooting, stabbing,
 swallowing, but by tugging the plug, tugging the plug, on little
 tug of the plug out of the wall.
 It's all over. Silence. The sound of yourself. Are you afraid?
 Just you. The ultimate possession. It's your world now.
 Not filtered by the tele-kwishin looking glass.
 Look out! Don't sit down! Keep dancing, singing, laughing.
 If you sit, Watch will bring you a tele-kwishin.
 Be your own video-mudang.
 Breathe your own breath, use your own eyes, touch without a
 remote, close, very close, close enough to hurt, smell, feel,
 without glass.

Be your own video-mudang. Laugh now!
 Be your own video-shin.

►
 Music is Not Sound, 1988
 Literature is Not Book, 1988
 Dance is Not Jumping, 1988
 Painting is Not Art, 1988
 Drama is Not Theatre, 1988
 Star is Not Actor, 1988

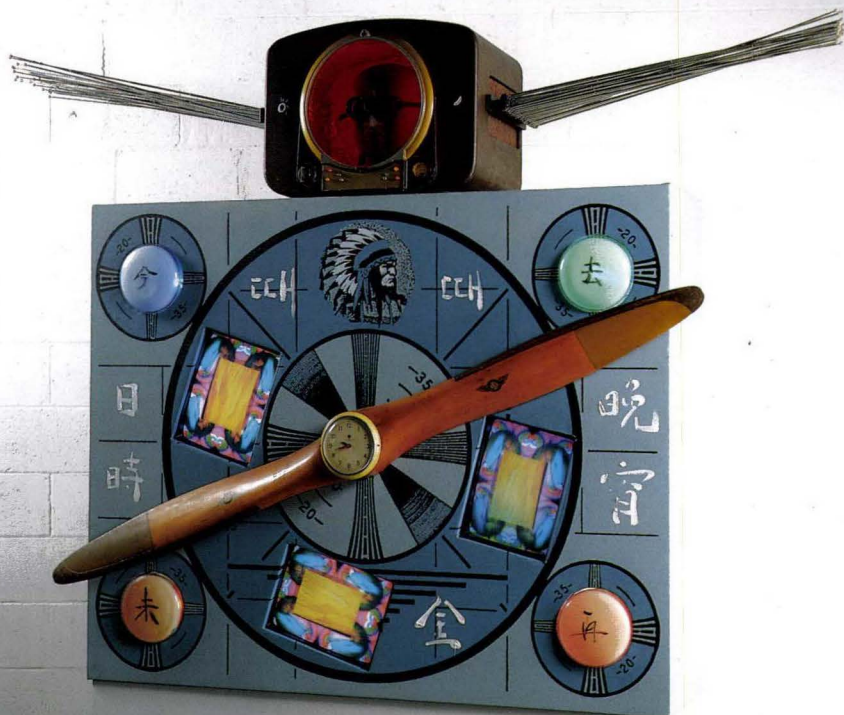
► ►
 The More the Better (Maquette),
 Installation with 1003 Monitors for the
 Olympic Games in Seoul 1988

Courtesy Won Gallery/Hyundai Gallery, Seoul

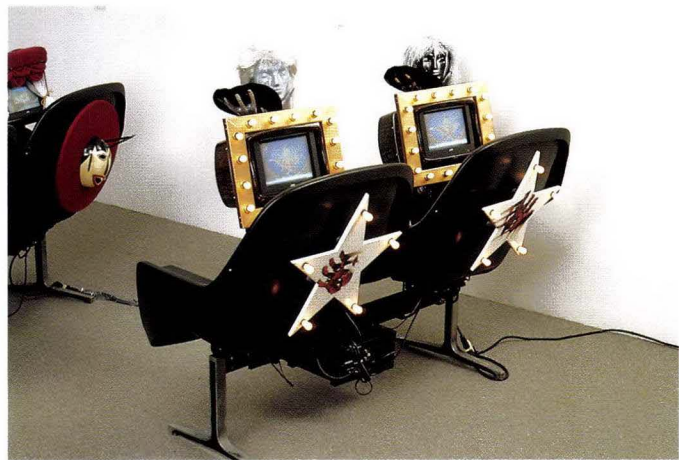
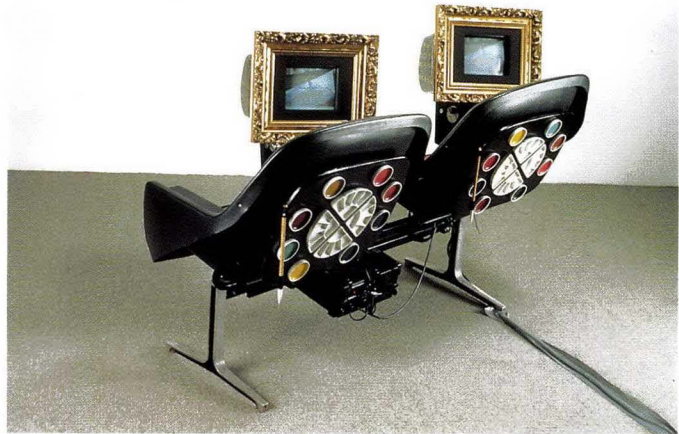
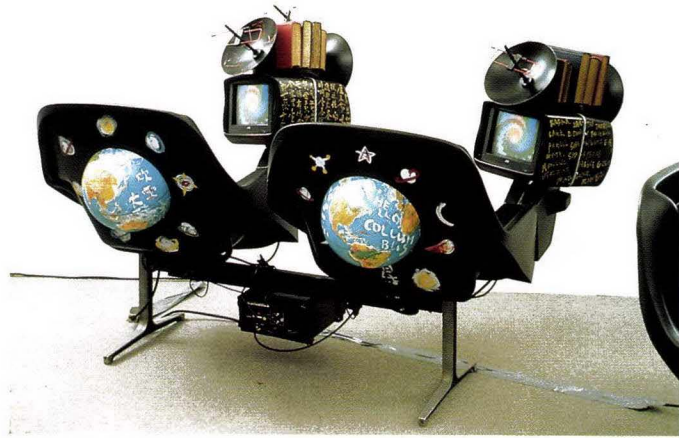
Photo Young Kuyun Lim

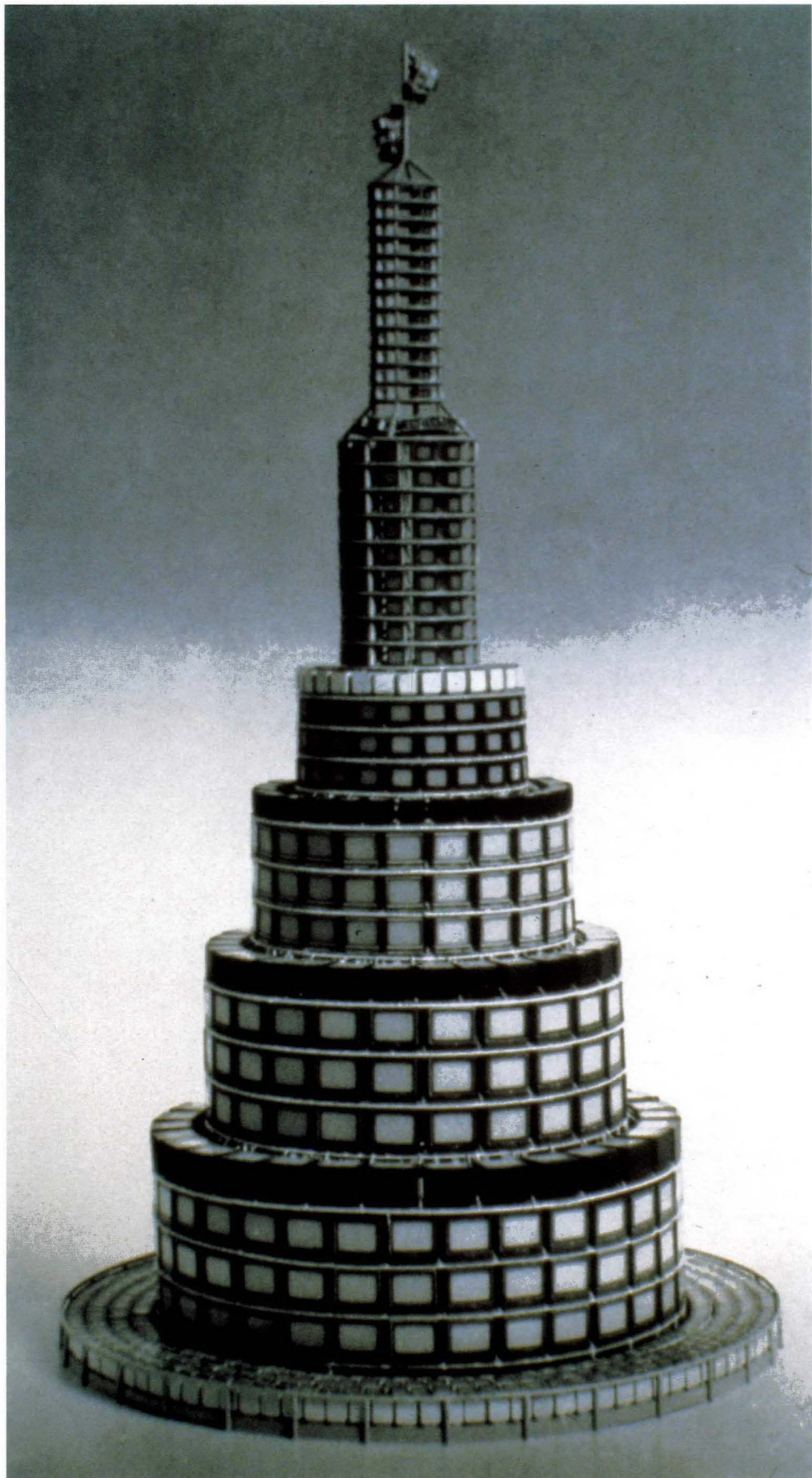
Time Flies Diagonally, 1992–93

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati



O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy,
 O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy, O Viddy ...





MEINE LIEBLINGSGESCHICHTE VON NAM JUNE PAIK

Lenin lebte von 1914 bis 1917 im Schweizer Exil. Er hatte seinen Wohnsitz in Zürich in der Spiegelgasse 1. 1916 gründeten Tristan Tzara, Hugo Ball, Richard Hülsenbeck und Hans Arp in Zürich das "Cabaret Voltaire". Sie trafen sich dazu im Haus Spiegelgasse 16. Das Programm hieß "Dada".

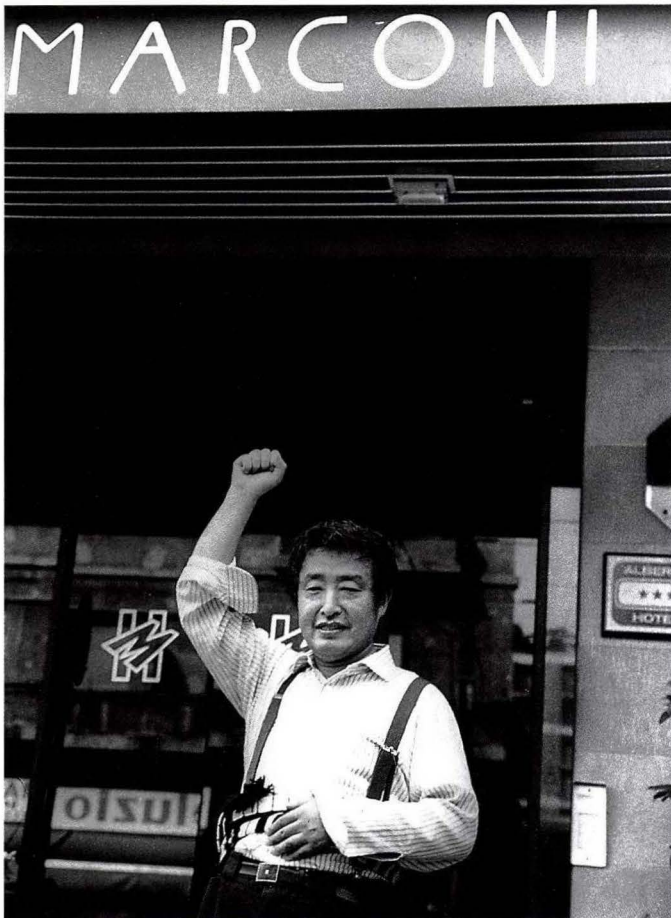
Lenin hatte in jenen Tagen die Möglichkeit, sich zu entscheiden: Kommunismus oder Dadaismus. Er entschied sich für die Diktatur des Proletariats. Es dauerte sieben Jahrzehnte, bis Dada diese Fehlentscheidung und die Folgen überwinden konnte – in der Person von Vitautas Landsbergis. Landsbergis war Freund des Exillitauers und Fluxus-Begründers George Maciunas. Landsbergis wurde von den Fluxus-Künstlern als einer der ihren gesehen. In seiner Präsidentschaft siegte 1990 Dada/Fluxus über den Kommunismus. Litauen ist keine Fluxus-Republik geworden. Ein Ex-Kommunist hat in demokratischer Wahl Landsbergis abgelöst.

Paik sieht das Video-Tape als modifizierbaren Informationsträger und damit verwandt der Kunde, der Sage und dem Volksmärchen. Als Erzählung und in Vorstellungsbildern lebend, wird die Kunde über große geographische Entfernungen und auch durch die Zeiten getragen. Die Kunde nomadisiert wie ihre Träger. Als Trägerin von Nachricht bleibt sie im Fluß, nimmt neue Quellen auf, während andere versiegen.

Ich freue mich darauf, die Geschichte wieder zu hören, die von der Spiegelgasse, von Kommunismus und Dadaismus, von Herakles am Scheideweg – und den Folgen.

Nam June Paik, Milan 1988

Photos F. Garghetti



OTTO HAHN

LE NOMADE, LA GIRAFE, LE ROSSIGNOL ET LES OURS

Le temps est comme un puzzle avec des pièces qui s'emboîtent. Tout le monde n'a pas la chance de finir sa planche. Certains croient prendre un raccourci et se perdent. D'autres s'égarent avant de trouver leur chemin.

J'ai connu Nam June Paik au mois de mai 1964. C'était déjà un zombi planétaire mais je le voyais comme un inconditionnel du happening.

J'ai traversé de noirs marécages, de vastes étangs brumeux, j'ai connu la stérilité glacée du Grand Nord et taillé mon chemin à la hache dans les fourrés de cèdres impénétrables.

A l'époque, c'est le pop-art et le happening qui m'intéressaient. Je voyais Nam June Paik dans cette optique. Voici ce qu'écrivait Jean-Jacques Lebel, en 1964 dans un tract intitulé "Riposte": "Le happening et le pop art, dans le sens où nous les entendons, n'ont en effet qu'une chose de commun: leur critique radicale des valeurs morales, esthétiques et politiques de la Société Industrielle (...). Dans cette mesure, ces deux moyens d'expression assument profondément la fonction d'un art vivant et libre. Mais ce n'est pas tant la forme de ces manifestations qui est contestée par la presse de gauche comme par celle de droite. C'est implicitement leur contenu réel, aussi bien social que culturel; c'est la volonté de libérer les publics pour une autogestion de la culture et de la vie. Face à l'inertie d'un public dépersonnalisé par les formes traditionnelles de l'activité culturelle il faut provoquer la participation de tous, directe et spontanée, à l'expérience créatrice".

La conclusion qu'en tirait Jean-Jacques Lebel, organisateur du workshop de la libre expression, tenait dans un éclat: "La colère des chiens de garde n'y changera rien".

Mon intérêt pour Nam June Paik s'articulait autour du happening qui me semblait un moyen d'expression tout à fait nouveau. Oldenburg, Jim Dine, Allan Kaprow s'adonnaient à cette théâtralisation de l'activité plastique. Rauschenberg et Jasper Johns s'intéressaient au ballet, façon plus esthétique de faire mouvoir le corps dans l'espace.

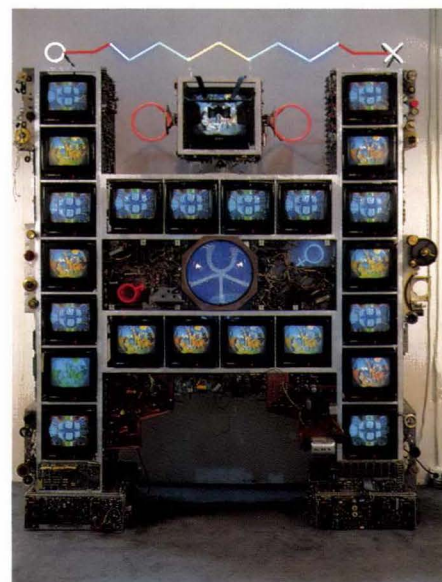
Vagabond insouciant, Nam June Paik parcourait les rivières inconnues des géographes. Il travaillait déjà avec l'image électronique et jouait des mélodies technologiques sur un tambourin de peau de loup. Les reptations rituelles qui accompagnent cette musique se faisaient au travers du tube cathodique.

Dans cette histoire, j'étais le piroguier émerveillé. Je découvrais Kudo, Malaval, La Monte Young, George Brecht, Ben, Jodorovski, Allen Ginzberg, Gregory Corso: des îles encore inexplorées.

Les civilisations sont jugées d'après les monuments qui leur survivent. Nos monuments s'appellent peut-être Sotheby's, Christie ou Hôtel Drouot: les générations futures visiteront les ruines de ces institutions qui jugeaient l'art selon son poids financier. Et l'on évoquera la crise de 1990 qui ébranla les colonnes du temple, faisant tomber le fronton qui ensevelit ceux qui exécutaient la danse du ventre devant l'entrée de l'église.

"Je ne suis pas bouddhiste", m'a dit Nam June Paik, "je suis artiste."

Nam June Paik est un des seuls à avoir réussi à faire la synthèse entre deux civilisations. L'exploit passe par la bande vidéo. En effet, l'Orient et l'Occident ne se mélangent pas sur la toile. Les audaces s'estompent dans des demi-mesures. Le collage de séquences visuelles permet de superposer tout en gardant la spécificité de l'Espagne et de la Corée, de New York et de Tokyo, du rossignol et de la girafe.



Homo Sapiens, 1992

Photo M. Tropea, Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Picasso a dit: "Je ne cherche pas à faire de l'art espagnol. Je suis espagnol." Nam June Paik pourrait dire: "Je ne cherche pas à faire de l'art oriental. Je suis oriental."

Les ours de V. se rassemblent par groupe pour fouiller dans les épluchures que les cuisiniers jettent dehors à leur intention. Les animaux se comportent entre eux avec une courtoisie des plus édifiantes et ignorent poliment les spectateurs en quête de sensations fortes qui les photographient sous toutes les coutures. Les vétérans qui reviennent régulièrement doivent commencer à se sentir terriblement blasés devant l'objectif. Les jeunes réagissent avec plus de spontanéité. Peu avant la sortie de la forêt se tient en permanence une équipe d'oursons escortée d'une femelle sur le compte de laquelle courent des histoires terrifiantes. Le groupe est posté là pour attendre les automobiles et si l'une d'elles s'arrête, tous les oursons se précipitent pour mendier des friandises avec une effronterie sans pareille. Assurément, leur conduite jette un certain discrédit sur bon nombre de vénérables traditions. Mais le public se réjouit: après une aventure de cette nature, il peut sans mentir se déclarer capable de regarder un artiste de face.

Nam June Paik et moi sommes cousins. Nos ancêtres jouaient ensemble dans les steppes mongoles. Nous avons été séparés lorsque sa tribu choisit d'aller vers le soleil levant alors que la mienne se dirigea vers le couchant. Nous sommes arrivés, sous la conduite d'Attila jusqu'aux portes de Paris mais nous avons été repoussés jusqu'aux plaines hongroises dont l'herbe tendre convenait à nos chevaux. Nous sommes restés là-bas durant des générations jusqu'à ce que mon père réussisse ce qu'Attila avait manqué: s'installer à Paris. Nam June Paik fit le trajet dans l'autre sens ce qui nous permit de nous rencontrer boulevard Raspail, près de Montparnasse par un joli jour du mois de mai.

Utilisant la technologie la plus sophistiquée, Nam June Paik ne sait même pas brancher un fer à repasser.

L'humour de Nam June Paik: né en Corée, il fait ses études au Japon, vit à New York et représente l'Allemagne à Venise.



Nam June Paik, 1982

Photo Peter Moore





VENICE I – 1960, JOHN CAGE IN VENICE

In 1960 I went down to Venice to attend Cage-Cunningham Tudor-Caroline Brown performance at the old barock theatre. The Time magazine of October 10th 1960 covered this performance:

Yesterday's Revolution

In its 23 seasons, Venice's International Festival of Contemporary Music has more than once moved its audiences to near violence; in his 48 years, self-styled Non-Expressionist Composer John Cage, the "prepared piano" man has reduced more than one audience to near lunacy. Last week U.S. Composer Cage and the Contemporary Music Festival linked forces in a concert at Venice's famed old La Fenice Theater. The explosion could be heard across the Grand Canal.

Mad Mélange. For his Venice performance Cage prepared a typically mad mélange of musical low jinks. The evening started mildly enough with Round 1. in which Cage and Pianist David Tudor sat at different pianos alternately plunking notes at up to 10-second intervals. Presently Dancer Merce Cunningham started undulating in symbolic suggestion of an embryo wriggling toward manhood. By Round 3. when Cage was thumping his piano stool with a rock, the restive audience began to jeer. The jeers grew in Round 4. as Cage and Tudor launched into a piano duet playing chords with their elbows while assaulting the pianos innards with knives and pieces of tin. After Round 6. in which Cage slammed the piano top with an iron pipe and dropped bottles on the floor, an elderly music lover strode to the stage, walloped cage's piano with his walking stick and stalked out shouting "Now I'm a musician, too." Soon Cage and Tudor were darting about between three record players shifting from Mozart to blues to a recorded speech by Pope John XXIII calling for world peace. By the finale fights had broken out all over the theater. "Get out of here", screamed the traditionalists. Replied an un-Caged modernist: "Go somewhere else if you want melody! Long live music." Cage barked at the audience: the audience barked back at Cage. One notable dissenter Igor Stravinsky, who found the whole business so tedious that he slipped out in mid-concert. Asked if the tumult was equal to what went on at the Paris premiere of his own *Sacre du Printemps* in 1913, the old man replied proudly: "There has never been a scandal like mine."

Deft Exercise. Later in the week Stravinsky touched off some mild demonstrations of his own. Occasion: the world premiere in Venice of his seven-minute *Monumentum Pro Gesualdo di Venosa Ad CD Annum* inspired by the music of late-16th-century Madrigalist Don Carlo Gesualdo, who has long fascinated Stravinsky (Gesualdo had his wife and her lover murdered and is said to have suffocated one of his own children before relieving his tensions in song. In 1956 Stravinsky set himself the task of "recomposing" three Gesualdo madrigals for orchestra. The results added up to little more than deft exercises in Stravinskian orchestration, but the audience warmly applauded the ailing. 78-year-old composer (he was carried up and down stairs in a sedan chair).

Perhaps the most significant thing about the festival was the attitude of young Italian composers, who were amused by Cage, tended to find Stravinsky somewhat decadent but accepted both of them with respect. (Time Magazine, October 10, 1960, p. 59)

It was a great concert and also a great scandal, as Stravinsky remarked. Cage appeared in formal dress (swallow-tailed frock coat), and during this performance I decided to cut off his tail in the upcoming concert which was planned at the Mary Bauermeis-

ter Atelier in Cologne in the ensuing month. (Actually I did cut off his necktie instead of coat tail.)

After the performance there was a party at Peggy Guggenheim's chateau and I almost killed her dog.

I was first introduced to her by Earle Brown and again by John Cage later. Peggy G. said that a good friend has to be introduced twice.

Then I saw two absolutely identical dogs on a sofa, and they did not move at all for long time. Getting tired I was going to sit on one of this immobile, therefore (it must be) a stuffed dog. But I continued the conversation with other guests ... then lo and behold ... this stuffed dog suddenly awoke and walked away ...

Parallel to this official performance there was a counter festival at a smallish classroom at the art academia in Venice. Merce, Cage, Tudor, Bussoti, and an American oil executive, who also composed, were the main composers and performers. It was an intimate atmosphere and I had a chance to ride the vaporetto with Cage. It was a day time.

It was foggy next night time Heinz Klaus Metzger also rode on the vaporetto with Cage. There was a very heavy fog. In order to avoid the collision, one boat blew a steam-whistle ... and the next one responded and the third one echoed and from the distant end another vaporetto answered ... and all on the background of beautiful Venice ... and there was John Cage with him. Metzger said it was the best Cage concert he ever attended.

Before this happening (in its truest sense), George Brecht sold a ticket as a concert ticket to enter the trainstation.

NAM JUNE PAIK VENICE II – 1966, GONDOLA HAPPENING

In 1966 Charlotte Moorman and I went to Venice Biennale uninvited and staged a commando-style happening.

the leaflet saying just

GONDOLA HAPPENING

"Venice is the most advanced city in the world,
since it has already abolished the automobiles."

John Cage, 1958

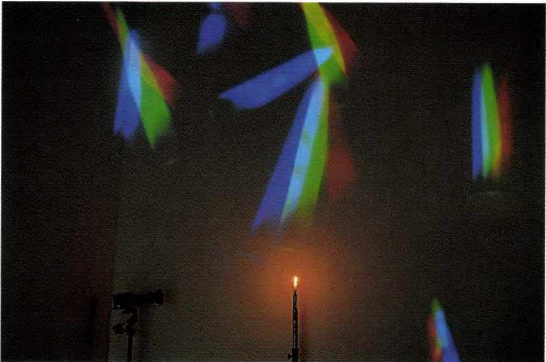
there were many hundreds of the audience waiting for our gondola, which was delayed as always by one hour. Finally we appeared and everybody cheered. Charlotte played first John Cage piece. A movie was projected across the canal to the century old wall. Luckily we could rent out the only 16 mm projector (for the rental) existing in the whole city of Venice ... and it did not break down. In the next piece (my Saint-Saëns variation), Miss Moorman bravely jumped into canal and came out to play the piece as instructed drench wet with the 10 centuries polluted water. After the show, she had to go to a doctor for the typhus shot. and after the show, we had only 5 dollars left. we were thrown out of a free pension, because Charlotte played cello around 2 a.m. ... luckily we had had the first class Eurail pass and could stay overnight at the first class waiting room at the station.

In this whole tragic-comedy after 27 years I could find only one witness, who saw the performance and could testify that indeed it happened ...

his name is Wim Beeren (Amsterdam).

Charlotte Moorman and Nam June Paik
Performing the "Venice Gondola Happening"
at the Biennale in 1966





VENICE III – 1975, THE CITY OF COLOGNE STOLE MY IDEA

In 1975 there was not a regular biennial of Venice due to the aftermath of the student revolution of 1968. Instead, the organisation of the biennial invited a dozen artists to submit a plan to develop the Mulino Stucky building at the Giudecca island, which has been sleeping for many decades over the centuries. I proposed to open an international freeport for the information exchange and a center for the international student for the same purpose.

This proposal was printed and distributed widely as the official publication of the Venice Biennial.

Lo and behold!!!

In just ten years, the city of Cologne declared their cargo railway station in Cologne (Gereon Güter Bahnhof) to be the Media Free park and opened a well-funded media university.

Did the city of Cologne steal My idea??, as Bill Clinton did later?

Idee für Giudecca

Der langsame Übergang unserer Gesellschaft vom Industriezeitalter zum postindustriellen Zeitalter korrespondiert mit dem langsamen Übergang unserer Lebensform von "Hardware" zu "Software" und ebenso mit dem schrittweisen Übergang unserer auf Energie basierenden Wirtschaft (Benzin, Öl) zu einer neuen Ökonomie, die auf Information (Ideen) basiert.

Der Wohlstand Venedigs im 12. bis 13. Jahrhundert war zu jener Zeit auf dem Austausch von Hardware gegründet. Diese Blütezeit kann jedoch durch den Austausch von Software auf der Insel Giudecca leicht wieder ins Leben gerufen werden. Die Videotechnologie ist dazu bestimmt, die führende Industrie im 21. Jahrhundert zu werden, weil hier das Verhältnis der gewonnenen Information/Unterhaltung zum Energieverbrauch sehr günstig ist.

Dennoch wird der internationale Austausch von Video-Software durch viele Probleme erschwert:

- 1) das komplizierte internationale Urheberrecht
- 2) Videosysteme (NTSC, PAL, SECAM etc.)
- 3) Sprachen/Übersetzungen
- 4) kulturell-gesellschaftlich-religiöse Bräuche, die Nacktheit etc. betreffen
- 5) das politische System und der Grad der Freiheit im Ausdruck etc.

Deshalb kann die Notwendigkeit eines internationalen Freihafens für Informationen, wo sich Käufer und Verkäufer und Studenten aus der ganzen Welt ungeachtet ihrer Herkunft treffen, diskutieren, sich in der Software aus aller Welt umsehen und einen Handel abschließen können, nicht überschätzt werden.

Die Insel Giudecca ist für diese Funktion geographisch wegen ihrer Nähe zur westlichen, sozialistischen und arabischen Welt gut geeignet.

Dieser Freihafen für Informationen entspricht auch ihrer kulturellen Tradition als Händlerin zwischen Ost und West, und er wird das wirtschaftliche Überleben der Giudecca-Insel für lange Zeit garantieren.

(published in: Magazzini del Sale alle Zattere, Venice 1975, pp. 86, 88)

NAM JUNE PAIK : “Bill Clinton

1974 Media Planning for the Postindustrial Society

In 1974 I proposed the “Electronic Super Highway” to the Rockefeller Foundation and made 12.000 \$. The idea was published in German (3.000 copies) in 1976. Maybe Bill Clinton read it in the Oxford Library. He used exactly the same terminology.

Conclusion:

The Depression of the 30's was fought back by bold public works and capital expenditures such as the TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority), the WPA (Works Progress Administration), and highway building. Especially massive interstate highways have become the backbone of economic growth for the last 40 years. New economic dislocations caused by the double shocks of energy and ecology and the historical necessity for the transition into postindustrial society require equally radical remedies. This social investment must also be economically viable. These remedies should modernize the economical infra-structure, make the economy internationally more competitive and contribute to the longlasting postindustrial prosperity.

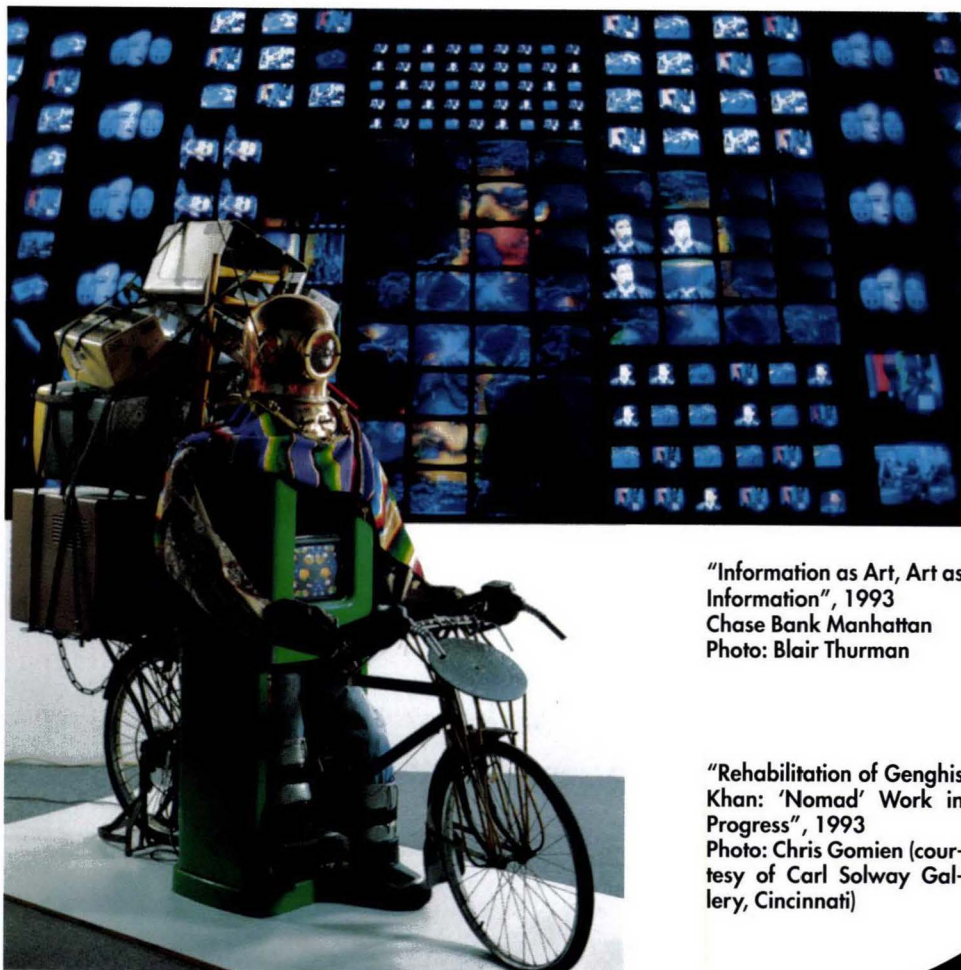
The building of new ELECTRONIC SUPER HIGHWAYS will be an even bigger enterprise. Suppose we connect New York and Los Angeles with multi-layer of broadband

communication networks, such as domestic satellites, wave guides, bunches of co-axial cables, and later, the fiber-optics laser beam. The expenses would be as high as moon landing, but the ripple effect ‘harvest’ of byproducts would be more numerous. Long distance telephone will become practically free. Multi-point color TV conference calls with sophisticated input-output units will become economically feasible. While not energy consuming in maintenance, (except for the initial copper), it will cut down air travel and snarling airport-downtown limousine service forever. Efficient communication reduces social waste and malfunction in every corner, resulting in exponential savings in energy and ecology. They will cease to be just an Ersatz (a substitute) or lubricant but will become the springboard of unexpected new human activities. One hundred years ago Thoreau wondered: ‘Even if the telephone company succeeded in connecting people in Maine with people in Tennessee, what would they have to say to each other?’ The rest is history.

Published in German in 1976 in the catalogue ‘Nam June Paik. Werke 1946–1976. Musik-Fluxus-Video’, ed. by Wulf Herzogenrath, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne 1976, p. 165–166.

stole my Idea"

1993 Electronic Super Highway "Venice → Ulan Bator"



"Information as Art, Art as Information", 1993
Chase Bank Manhattan
Photo: Blair Thurman

"Rehabilitation of Genghis Khan: 'Nomad' Work in Progress", 1993
Photo: Chris Gomien (courtesy of Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati)

APRIL 12, 1993 \$2.95

The Vancouver Summit

TIME

Coming Soon to Your TV Screen

The Info Highway

Bringing a revolution in
entertainment, news and communication



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During the 1992 presidential campaign, Clinton and Gore made building a “data superhighway” a centerpiece of their program to revitalize the U.S. economy, comparing it with the government’s role in creating the interstate highway system in the 1950s. The budget proposal the Administration submitted in February includes nearly \$5 billion over the next four years to develop new software and equipment for the information highway.

(p. 53)

45. VENICE BIENNALE

TV SPOTS

HIGH TECH GONDOLAS

21 "High Tech Gondolas" 15-30 seconds each
by Nam June Paik, Paul Garrin, Marco Giusti

**Gratefull acknowledgement
to the following individuals
and organisations:**

Postperfect INC., New York City
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WNET TV, TV tab, New York City
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Die Toten Hosen
and all the staffs of 3 satellite shows:
"Good Morning Mr. Orwell" 1984
"Bye Bye Kipling" 1986
"Wrap around the World" 1988

EXHIBITION IN THE GERMAN PAVILION

ELECTRONIC SUPERHIGHWAY

In the Electronic Superhighway

Room 1: Mirage at the Desert of Gobi

Room 2: Sistine Chapel Before the Restoration

Credit and Thanks to all the names

in the High Tech Gondolas

plus the following:

Computer Graphics:

Rebecca Allen, Kraftwerk, EMI N.I.T.

"Joan of Arc of Mongolia":

Ulrike Oettinger (Berlin)

Participants include:

Alvin Ailey, Dance Theatre (Junior Group)

Dick Cavett

Le Combas

Philip Glass

Peter Gabriel

Amy Greenfield

Keith Haring

I & S Inc., Tokyo

Janis Joplin

Sankai Juky

Eun-Yim Kim

Sun Ock Lee

Living Theatre

Jonas Mekas

Issei Miyake

Yves Montand

Seibu Art Museum, Tokyo

Stan Vanderbeek

Ben Vautier

45. VENICE BIENNALE



A SHORT TRIP ON THE ELECTRONIC SUPERHIGHWAY WITH NAM JUNE PAIK

Florian Matzner: This afternoon you told me that you are NOT Andy Warhol! For that reason we make this short trip on the Electronic Superhighway with the almost unknown artist Nam June Paik in the last few years cherished by colleagues and art critics as "Father of Video Art" and "Cultural Terrorist". Owing to your taking part at the Venice Biennale, a new title is to be added: "Ehren-Gast-Arbeiter" ("Honorable Foreign Worker") of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Nam June Paik: The history is that the decision of my contribution to the Biennale was published in autumn 91. One of my assistants, Jochen Saueracker, told me that he heard over the radio that I'll be the representative of the German Pavilion. When I telephoned with Klaus Bußmann I told him that it's a great honor for me that a little Korean guy can represent the big Germany and I also told him that I don't have a German passport. It's also important that this is the first Biennale after the German reunification and normally they would have chosen one artist from former East Germany and one from former West Germany. I mean, this would seem a logical thing. So Klaus Bußmann said to himself: If I have to take one artist from East I would rather choose one from FAR East, from very very Far East. And I think that he had hard résistance from Auswärtiges Amt in choosing a Korean guy as German artist, you know. Therefore Klaus Bußmann decided to publish his decision QUICKLY to the press and to the radio and to make it a fait accompli, so that it was too late for Auswärtiges Amt to complain. Therefore, I understand that Klaus Bußmann made an original and courageous decision which I salute!

FM: Klaus Bußmann not only chose the Korean guy from Far East but also an artist from the FAR WEST, namely, the German artist Hans Haacke, who also lives in the USA!

NJP: It is a Jungian coincidence. The first time my picture ever appeared on the cover of a magazine it was a photo taken by Hans Haacke in Schloß Morsbroich in 1960, Hans was only 24 years old. Also Hans' family and me/Shigeko lived very close in the same complex in 1971 and 72 – we always met in the supermarket.

FM: Far East and Far West in the German Pavilion: this coalition of Haacke and Paik had already been declared by the Biennale administration as symbol of the whole Biennale; its motto is: "The Four Cardinal Points of Art: East and West, North and South", or, "The Artist as Modern Nomad". Anyway, Haacke and Paik divided the German Pavilion among themselves: Haacke took the central room with its apse and its imposing main facade dating from the Nazi times, while Paik has at his disposal the four lateral rooms and the garden area next to and behind the Pavilion.

NJP: That was very important: I had the impression that Klaus Bußmann would have liked to have me in the central room because my work is more colorful than Hans Haacke's. But I thought that video needs the sound, or, even if video doesn't need the sound all the time, if there is a sound it can always help a video installation. But the problem is that sound can enter into the other rooms. I thought to have some little sound in three or four rooms, it's better than to have it only in one central room. Therefore I chose freiwillig smaller rooms. I said to Hans Haacke: You take the big room on the condition that I may have to disturb your tranquility and this has been big political problem, because now Hans Haacke has taken the big room and now I can't have big sound, all right in any way – next question!

FM: Let's talk about your concept, your main theme of your contribution to the Biennale: it's generally titled "The Electronic Super

◀ Marco Polo (in progress), 1993

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▶▶ Alexander the Great, 1993

▶▶▶ Catherine the Great, 1993

▶▶▶▶ Tangun as a Scythian (?) King
45. Biennale d'Arte, Venice, German Pavilion

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati
Photos Roman Mensing



"Joseph Beuys said: 'There was no desert of Gobi, the desert of Gobi was a GREEN!' That means there must have been a lot of communication in the desert of Gobi, so that was Beuys's chance, because, do you know that many German soldiers, intellectual and well educated German soldiers have had good contact with the Crimean Tatars, but only Beuys had a spiritual liaison with them, because he was the only one who knew something about their aesthetic structure. And because for Beuys the desert of Gobi was green, this is the aspect that I wanted to mention on the Green, in the back of the German Pavilion: there is NO desert of Gobi!"

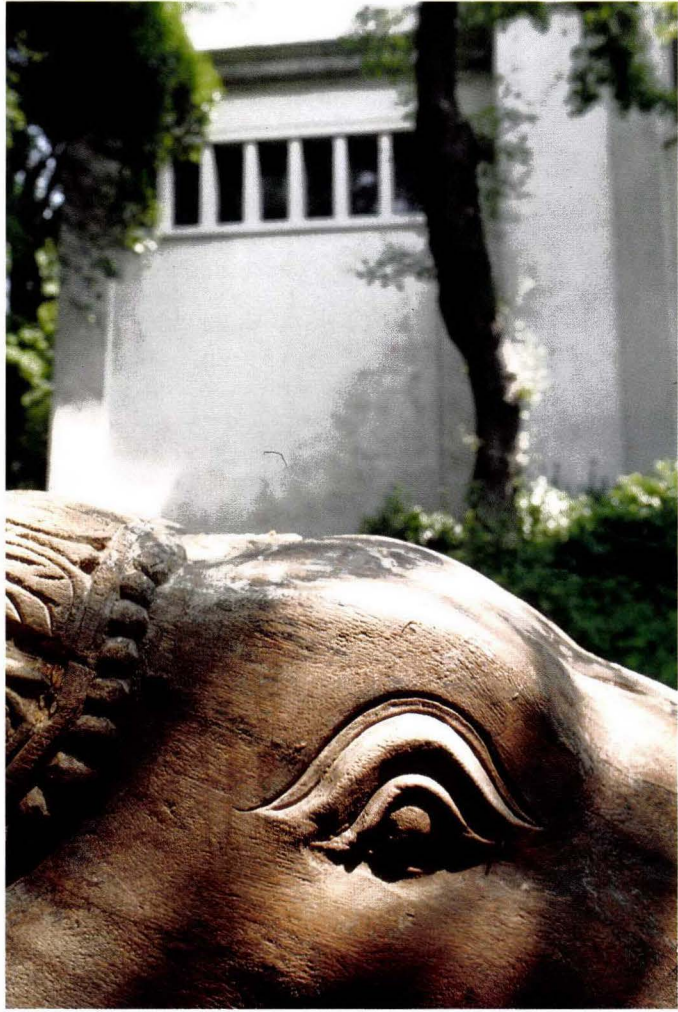








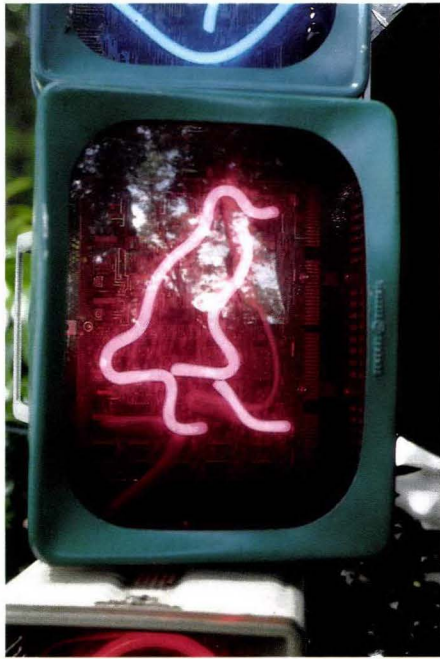












highway – From Venice to Ulan Bator”. It’s surprising that about 70 or 80% of the pieces shown are absolutely new and made exclusively for the German Pavilion ...

NJP: If you include the video projection “Sistine Chapel before Restoration” that we already rehearsed for the Biennale in April at Holly Solomon Gallery then you are right: 80% is neu, ja!

FM: Would you explain, roughly, the different rooms and the garden area? The two large rooms are dominated, on one side by the video projection, by the three-sided video wall “Electronic Superhighway”, and by the installation “Phasen-Verschiebung”, while in the two smaller rooms ...?

NJP: Okay, I give you now the history of the Verwandlung of a concept: Marco Polo was important for the relationship between West and Far East and also for the Americans. Obviously if Asians think about Venice, they think about Marco Polo, you know ... So I thought that two rooms could symbolize the East – Mongolia, China, Korea, Japan – and the other two the West, and the background – that means the garden around and behind the Pavilion – could have meant the desert of Gobi ... so I decided to put three or four bandits there who ruled the desert of Gobi for 1.000.000 years. So then we chose for the outside a “Marco Polo” statue, a “Genghis Khan” statue, a “Attila” statue – the King of the Huns –, then a monument for the “Crimean Tatar”, who saved the life of Joseph Beuys, never thanked for by the German officials, you know ... so we have to have a monument for this Tatar ... and then “Tangun” the first Korean king, because when you pick up Korean graves you find many Scythians, and Korea only exists because this guy and the nomad Scythians have also been in Greece ... Scythians sind dieses alte nomadische Volk, das bei Herodot vorkommt ... and when they opened graves in South Korea they found many Scythians that means that these nomads went from Europe to Asia, to Korea NOT much in Japan ... and even today you can’t drive from South Korea to Greece, but in that time they did it! You know, my Japanese friend and art critic Junji Ito told me that in early Italian paintings like those by Cimabue and Giotto there are people with thin Chinese eyes because in this time people idealized China ... then later on – for example in the Quattrocento – sculptures, paintings resemble Italians, because in this time, the Seidenstraße was very wichtig! ... Moreover we even bought a “Mongolian tent” for 23,000 US \$; and it was harder to get it out than to pay it, because the Mongolian embassy in Korea protested against it. The embassy official said, this is our Kulturgut and you can’t get it out without our commission! This guy is a real communist, because with the price of this Mongolian tent you can live in Korea more than 5 years, in Mongolia for 50 years! Talking about the relationship between Italy and Asia, did you know that Spaghetti came from China? Anyway, we made these seven statues for the outside including “Catherine the Great” and “Alexander the Great”.

FM: That means: “Marco Polo”, “Genghis Khan”, “Attila”, “Crimean Tatar”, “Korean King Tangun”, “Catherine the Great” and “Alexander the Great”. As an iconographical system every outdoor piece means another kind or way of transport, of traffic, of communication, but the titles suggest power, reign, rulership, exploration and reconquest ...

NJP: For that reason we made TWO kinds of Highways: the other one – the Electronic Superhighway – is part of the Wahlpolitik of Mr. Clinton. Already in 1974 I proposed to the Rockefeller Foundation an important official paper – they paid 14,000 US \$ for it:



Crimean Tatar, who Saved the Life of Joseph Beuys



Attila, the King of the Huns, 1993

45. Biennale d’Arte, Venice, German Pavilion

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Photos Roman Mensing

I made a research for one year and there I proposed that the Americans should build up Electronic Superhighways for solving their economical, social and political problems. This research was printed in 1976 in 3,000 copies, and then Mr. Clinton came and stole MY idea for his electoral campaign in 1992! ... Because he understood that economic growth is not possible without environmental progress and program, without Energieverbrauch! I mean, exactly at that time the Club of Rome said that every economic growth is wrong and the Club of Rome was a club of important politicians. Therefore I proposed the Electronic Superhighway as a policy to counter unemployment, securing economic growth without using heavy energy or power. That means I proposed an economic growth not based on hardware but on software, because software growth does not involve energy! – For all these reasons I believe in the Electronic Superhighway and Mr. Clinton used MY very words and I thought I read actually MY report from 1974, when I read Clinton's speech from 1992.

FM: So, at the close of the 20th century, Marco Polo's historical highway from Venice to Asia 700 years ago, or Christopher Columbus', dating back 500 years, are substituted by the Electronic Highway of world-wide satellite communication.

NJP: So you see, Electronic Superhighway is the broadband communication, the compression of complex information – if you want you can even make Electronic Sex. So I made a big piece of 48 projections or 500 television sets in a small room which not only became a disco, but you can also make an intellectual experiment about the question of how much information you can absorb. And anyway, we can give the people a maximum of information at minimum cost, you know: this is a kind of reproductive art, this is very important for me! I mean, this directly opposes the collector mentality.

FM: Let's still talk about your Highways and Venice ...

NJP: In 1958 John Cage said on Italian Television, when the people asked him, which town do you like most in Italy: "Venice is the most advanced city in the world, because it has already abolished the automobiles!" A town without automobiles is the most progressive town in the world, Venice is a living model for a life without automobiles for thousand years, but don't tell this Mr. Agnelli! – Anyway, there is also a famous comment of Joseph Beuys: "There was no desert of Gobi, the desert of Gobi was a GREEN!" That means there must have been a lot of communication in the desert of Gobi, so that was Beuys's chance, because, do you know that many German soldiers, intellectual and well-educated German soldiers had good contact with the Crimean Tatars, but only Beuys had a spiritual liaison with them, because he was the only one who knew something about their aesthetic structure. And because for Beuys the desert of Gobi was green, this is the aspect that I wanted to mention on the Wiese, on the green back-side of the Pavilion: there is NO desert of Gobi!

FM: When about half a year ago, you suggested to us the title "Electronic Superhighway: Bill Clinton stole my idea!" for your Biennale contribution, we did not believe you, frankly. However, reading Time Magazine's April edition¹ and two articles that appeared yesterday (May 17) in the International Herald Tribune² and Der Spiegel³, we have grown wiser: the Electronic Superhighway is no longer the crazy fiction or an intellectual utopia of a little Korean guy, but is already becoming reality, being built, not only in the USA, but also in Europe. Is Paik the prophet of international electronic communication?



NJP: No, no, I thought with John Cage: 95 % of the world is dumb, otherwise poor guy from Korea could never make a living in Manhattan! – and Cage agreed! So, you see: I don't think I'm smart but I don't think other guys are smarter.

FM: Thinking about the history of the highway that dates back at least 700 years ...

NJP: ... or even 7,000,000 years ...

FM: ... the complex world affairs at the close of the 20th century once again acquire, through the services of the Electronic Super-highway, the intimacy of a medieval village square.

NJP: Yes sure, this is the great problem, that for example Watteau has been living ONLY in the 18th century, Voltaire could understand only a little bit of history, he couldn't travel, he visited only Switzerland and France and Prussia. – Now, we can travel to India, Pakistan, Iran, Ghana or Tansania ... we can live at the same time in the age of Watteau, of King Solomon or of the Empire of Napoleon, we can live in the SAME time TEN times, we can live simultaneously in New York and in Venice, and then take the aeroplane to Kazakhstan ... so, thanks to technology we can live not only in the future, but also in the past and in many different kinds of past ...

FM: ... and sometimes in the present ...

NJP: ... sometimes, yes, of course! If you want naked economic truth in Europe and America and Japan, which is full of depression ... The reason for the depression in the mature economy of the USA, Europe, and Japan is that people have already bought everything. They have every kind of hardware from Wash-Machine to VCR. There is nothing more to buy! – Only a NEW SOFT BOOM or a big war catastrophe can make capitalism work again. However who needs a home PC? There is a problem! We artists must help society INVENT something better / more profound than NINTENDO tv games. Therefore, enjoyment of past history in Venice becomes an important way to invent new software and stimulate economy. In the 1930s the artist was the enemy of capitalism, in the 1990s the artist may be the SAVIOR of capitalism (this is for Hans Haacke!). Okay, back to past, present, and future: One of the important contents is that we relive history: you will be in the future, and you will be in the past travelling to Rome and watching movies on Tannhäuser: We have to go back and forth, we have to split somehow and if human beings will not begin to create the software culture, there really will be stagnation of the further or advanced countries: we have to try harder to make art interesting!

FM: That's what you call "information as art, art as information" ...

NJP: ... Yessir!

FM: Let me ask you two final questions ...

NJP: ... yes, that's good, then I can go to sleep ...

FM: In this context of "Art as Information" you produced the official TV-Spot for the Biennale, a commercial called "High Tech Gondolas", in 21 versions, each between 15 and 20 seconds.

NJP: That is my present to Achille Bonito Oliva, because Achille and his Italian friends protected me many times in the seventies, you know. I had some legal problems because this spot is for television, which means we had to get the legal clearance from every Rock'n Roll star again. We bought worldwide rights for three years, and after these three years we have to make the contract again with David Bowie, Peter Gabriel, Lou Reed and those guys – I know I can make good video clips, but legal and financial problems are another thing, so I just took chance. So I made 21 ver-



sions with Paul Garrin who is a great genius, and Mr. Giusti, who collected some Italian material for me and I tried to emphasize old Venice and modern Venice. So, you, Matzner, sent me a lot of color slides of works of Biennale artists. Color slides make good great art, but color slides do not make great TV. So I ignored them and took only three of them (from Shigeko), and then I made a High Tech version of Venice – normally when you make ONE TV-Commercial, ten people have to work for two months, but Paul and me, we made 21 versions in ONLY three days! We are Super-Genius, we are Meta-Andy Warhol! – Now last question!

FM: Do you know, that it is expected of a conscientious foreign worker to retire at 64 and return to his native country?

NJP: According to the German Pensionsgesetz you have to work 15 years to get your Pension, so, when I began to work – it was at some Öffentliche Anstalt – when I was hired by the Düsseldorf Kunstakademie, Norbert Kricke very seriously asked me: “How old are you? If you are too old we don’t hire you!” I was only 48, so they could hire me. Anyway, I was not able to visit the academy very often, because I was too busy, but I have some very good students: one third of the videos of a certain quality in Germany is from MY class, and after my Pension we will make a big exhibition! But, as I told a German collector: “Look, I don’t really feel good about not visiting the academy often but getting such a very high Pension!” he answered me: “Your Pension is not only from the Kunstakademie but from the whole German Kunstwelt!” – Anyway, Harald Szeemann was the first who said: “I’m a Geistiger Gastarbeiter” ... now last question, Sir ...

FM: In 1990 you said: “Now that I’m almost sixty, it’s time for me to practice a bit of dying. People of my age in older times in Korea went out in the mountains, accompanied by a geomancer, in search of a propitious site for a grave.” – Now you ARE sixty and a few days ago you told me when you will die!

NJP: Yes, it will be in 2010! You see, ONLY when an artist dies, will he make money ...

FM: ... this is really a problem ...

NJP: ... when I die Shigeko will take 50% first then the resty pie for No. 1: I donate 10% of my income to Amnesty International and when I die they should have all, No. 2: I will make my grave on the sky, it’s a beautiful sculpture, but then, No. 3: every cable station in the world should have one public art channel (MTV is a kind of art channel, but I like unpopular art), so I will buy from my artworks cable channels everywhere in the world – India, Monaco, Kongo – that every evening at 8 o’clock you can see everywhere ONE video art, and not only my work. The problem of the art community is that we have good artists everywhere in the world – but 5 in Texas, 10 in Wyoming, 100 in San Francisco, 200 in New York ...

FM: ... 2 in Venice ...

NJP: ... yes 15 in Venice, and they all are strong, rich, powerful people, but they should ALL meet at night for a cable TV communication. So I want that Friday evening all over the world you have only ONE communicating art community. Anyway, there are still two important general things: No. 1: this Biennale is the first Biennale after the collapse of communism, and Fluxus has actively taken part in it, because the artist Milan Knizak in Prague was arrested 300 times – he was as famous as Havel – and in the radio president Nobotony said: “Knizak is a Klassenfeind”. I mean, this is incredible, because for example Adenauer or even Strauss never mentioned Beuys. No. 2: Landsbergis of Lithuania was a contribu-

► Genghis Khan (in progress), 1993
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

►► Electronic Superhighway, 1993

►►► Phasen-Verschiebung, 1993

45. Biennale d’Arte, Venice, German Pavilion
Photos Roman Mensing

►►►► (p. 138–143)
Sistine Chapel Before Restoration, 1993
Rehearsal for: 45. Biennale d’Arte, Venice,
German Pavilion
Courtesy Holly Solomon Gallery, New York

tor to Fluxus in 1962, and he founded the official opposition party in Lithuania called Sajudis – and in Lithuanian “SAJUDIS” means “FLUXUS”: so, officially the Fluxus party overthrew communist government and overthrew the whole Soviet Union. I mean, in the history of art NO artist party won over a government. Can you imagine that this little Lithuanian Fluxus guy took on all the Soviet Union – and the chairman of Fluxus, George Maciunas, was a COMMUNIST! ... that’s a great IRONY ...

Interview with Nam June Paik, Venice, May 18th, 1993

1 Time Magazine, April 12th 1993, Ph. Elmer-Dewitt:

“Electronic Superhighway”, p. 50–55

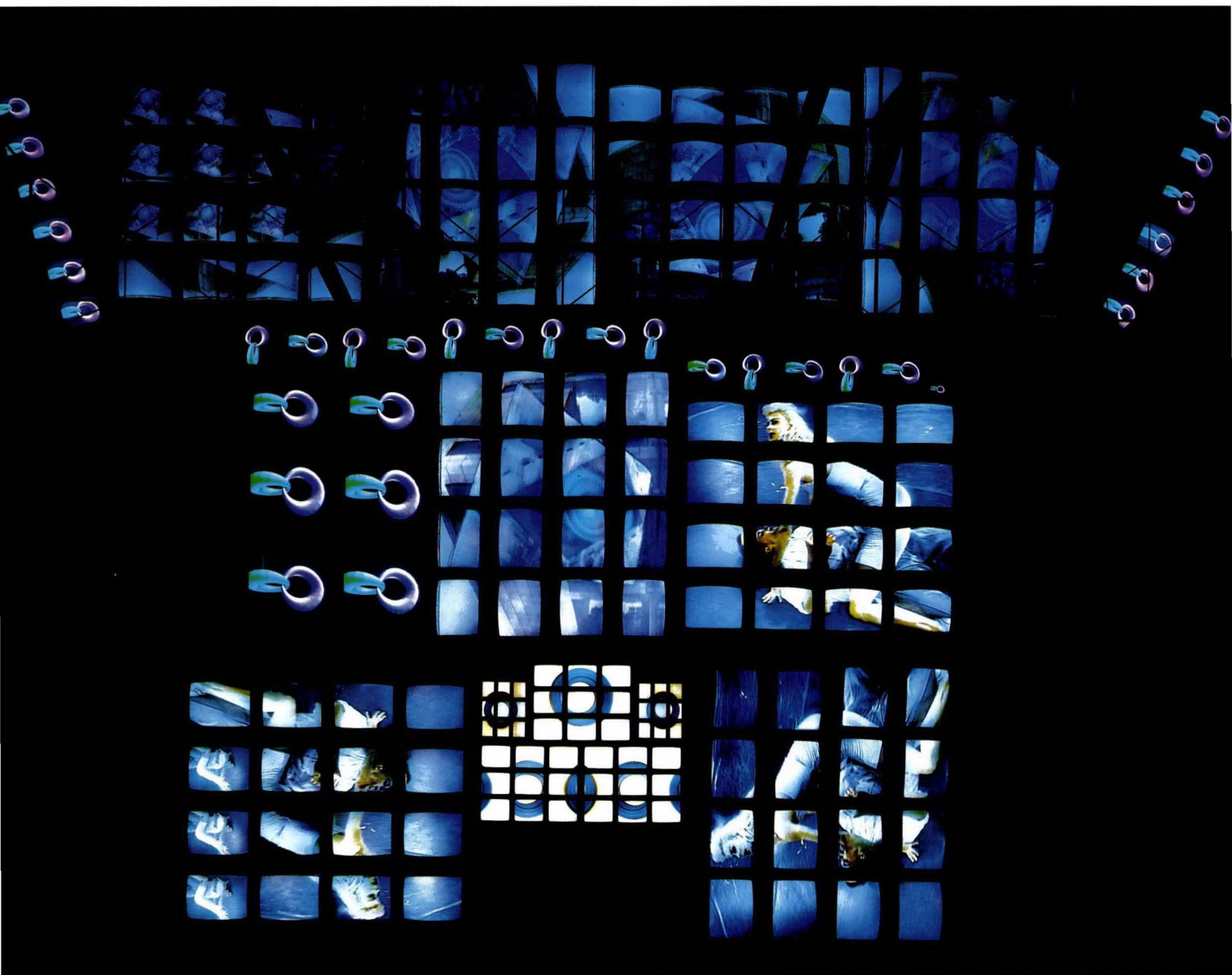
2 International Herald Tribune, May 17th 1993, Steve Weinstein:

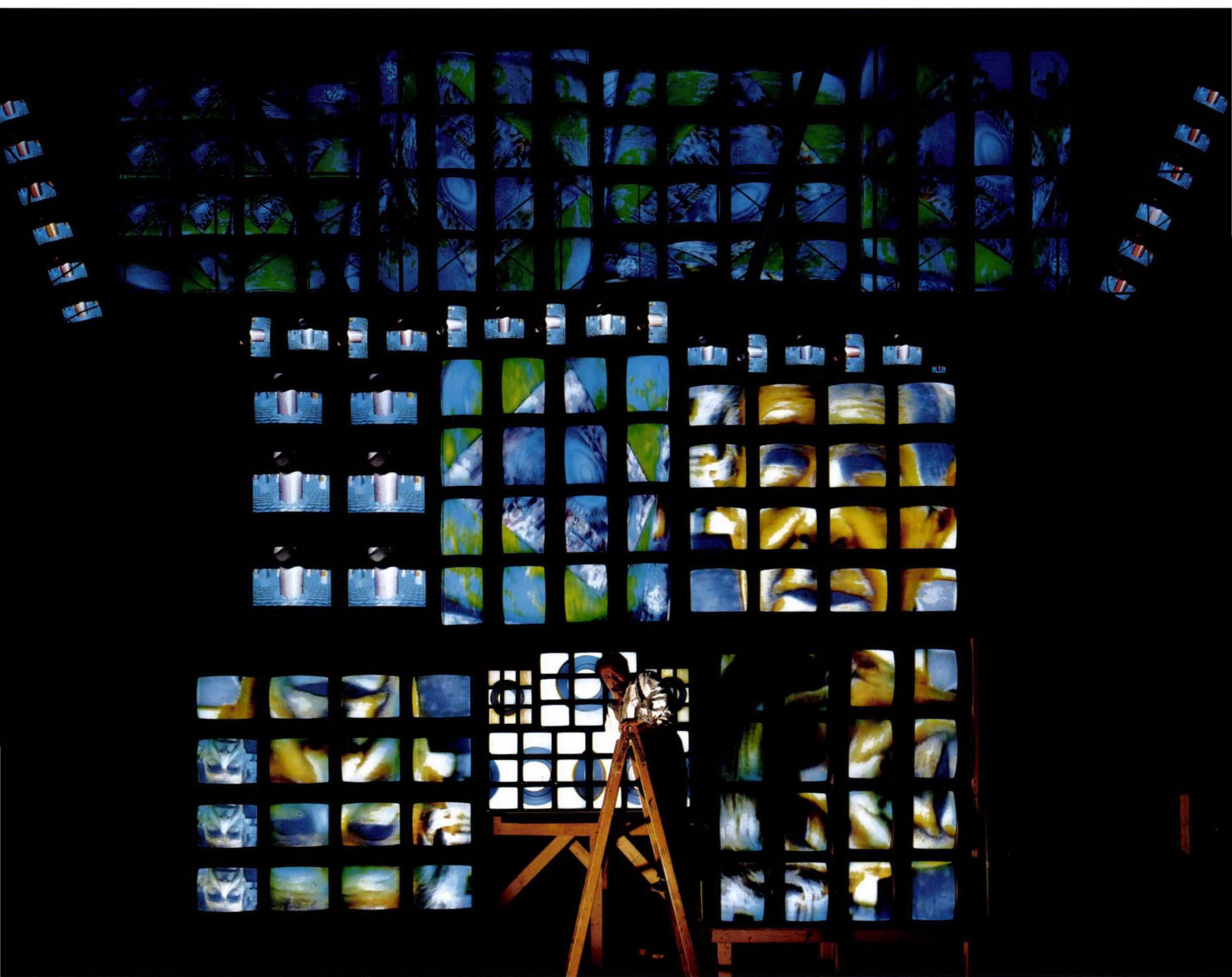
“Building the Electronic Superhighway”, p. 15.

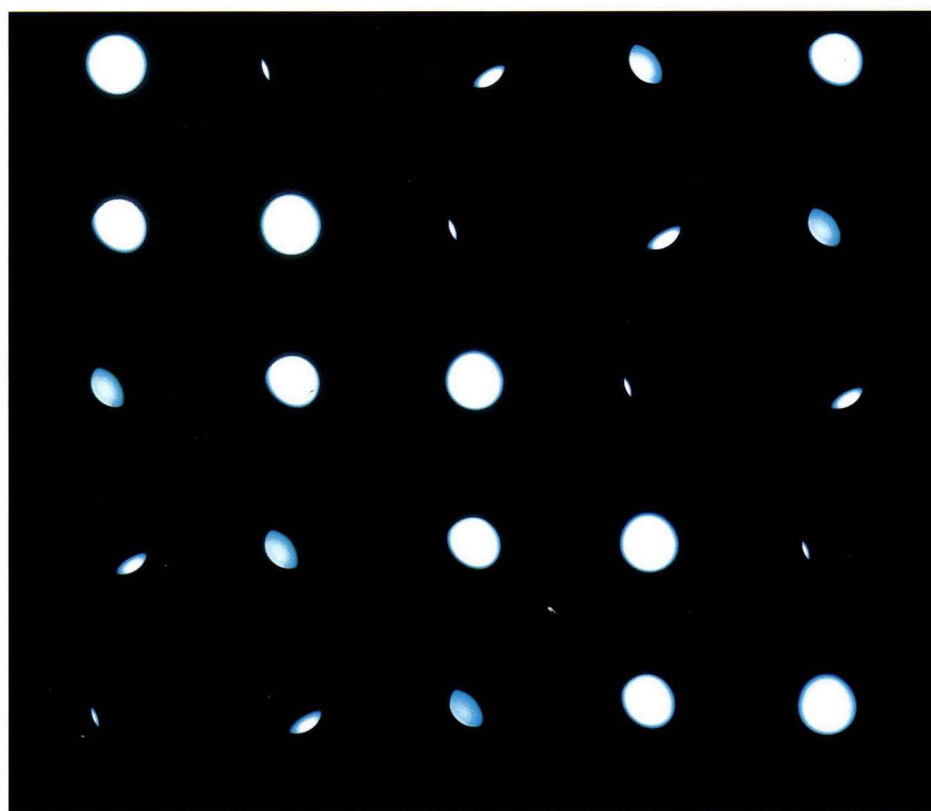
3 Der Spiegel, May 17th 1993, “Wir bauen die Datenautobahn”,

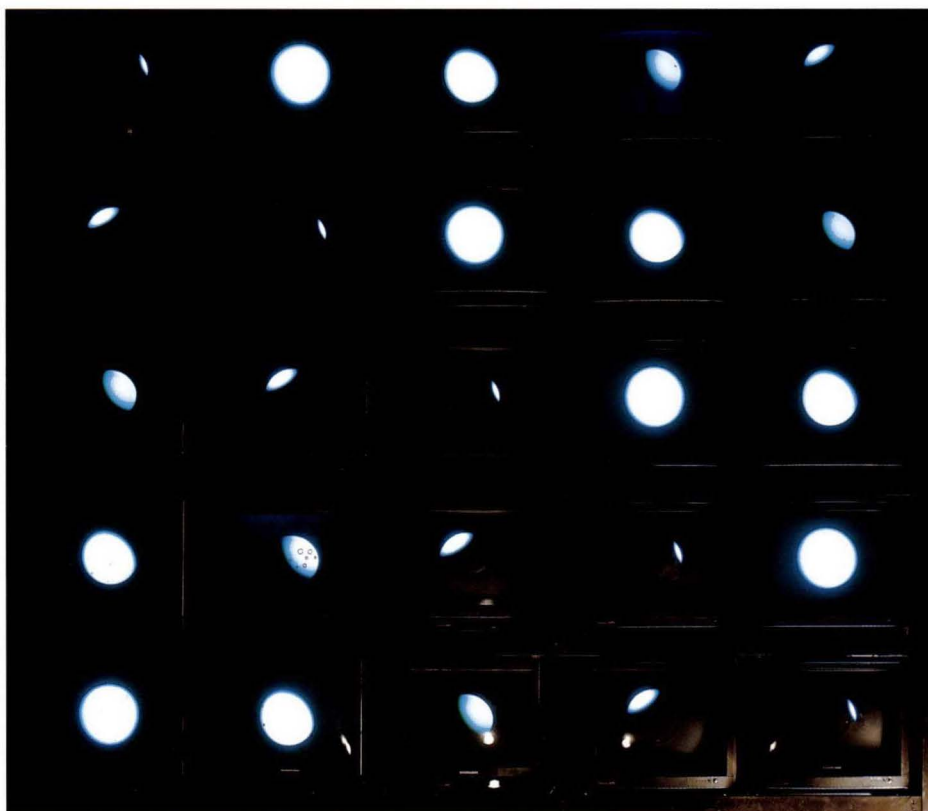
p. 272–284.

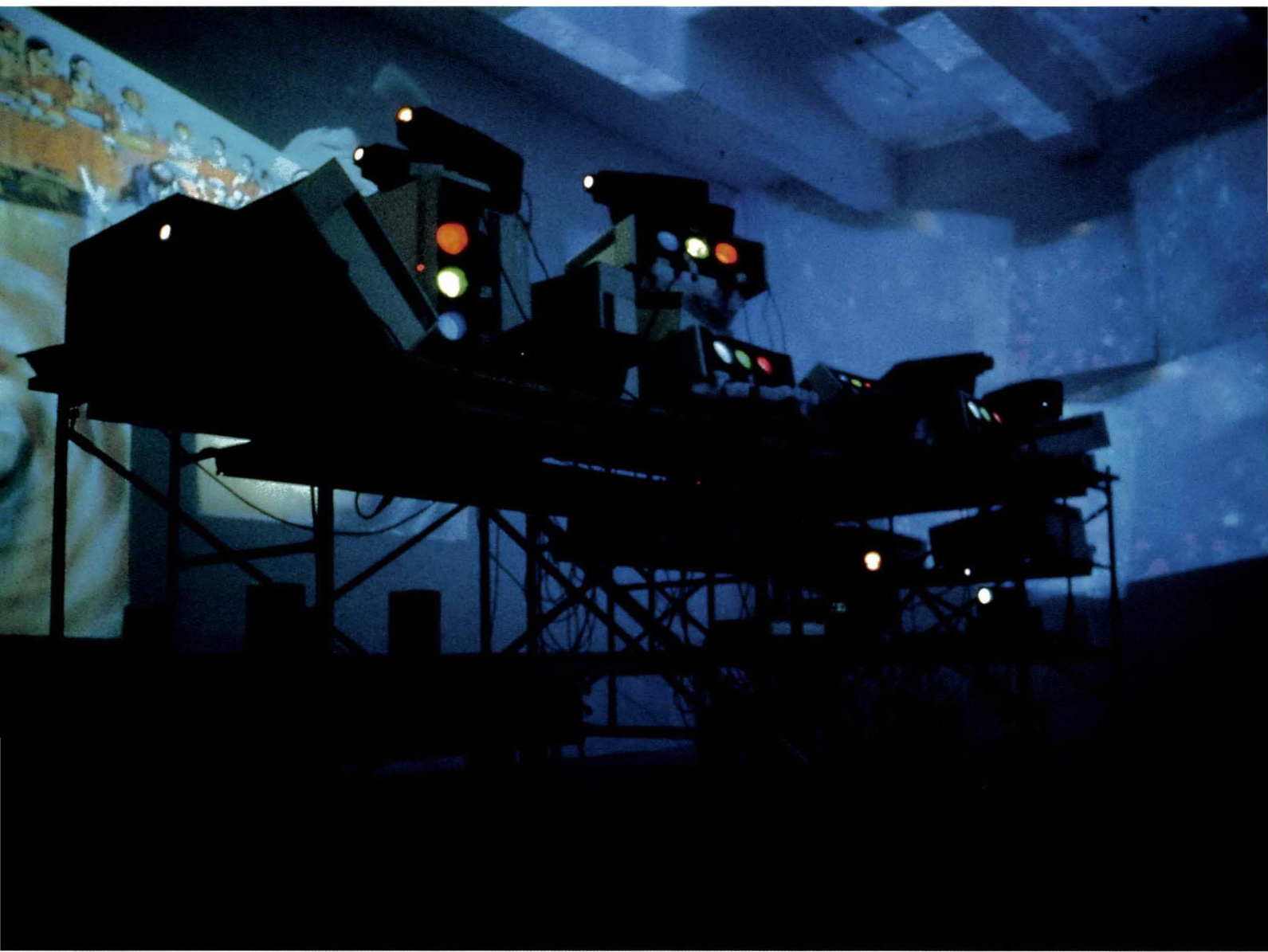








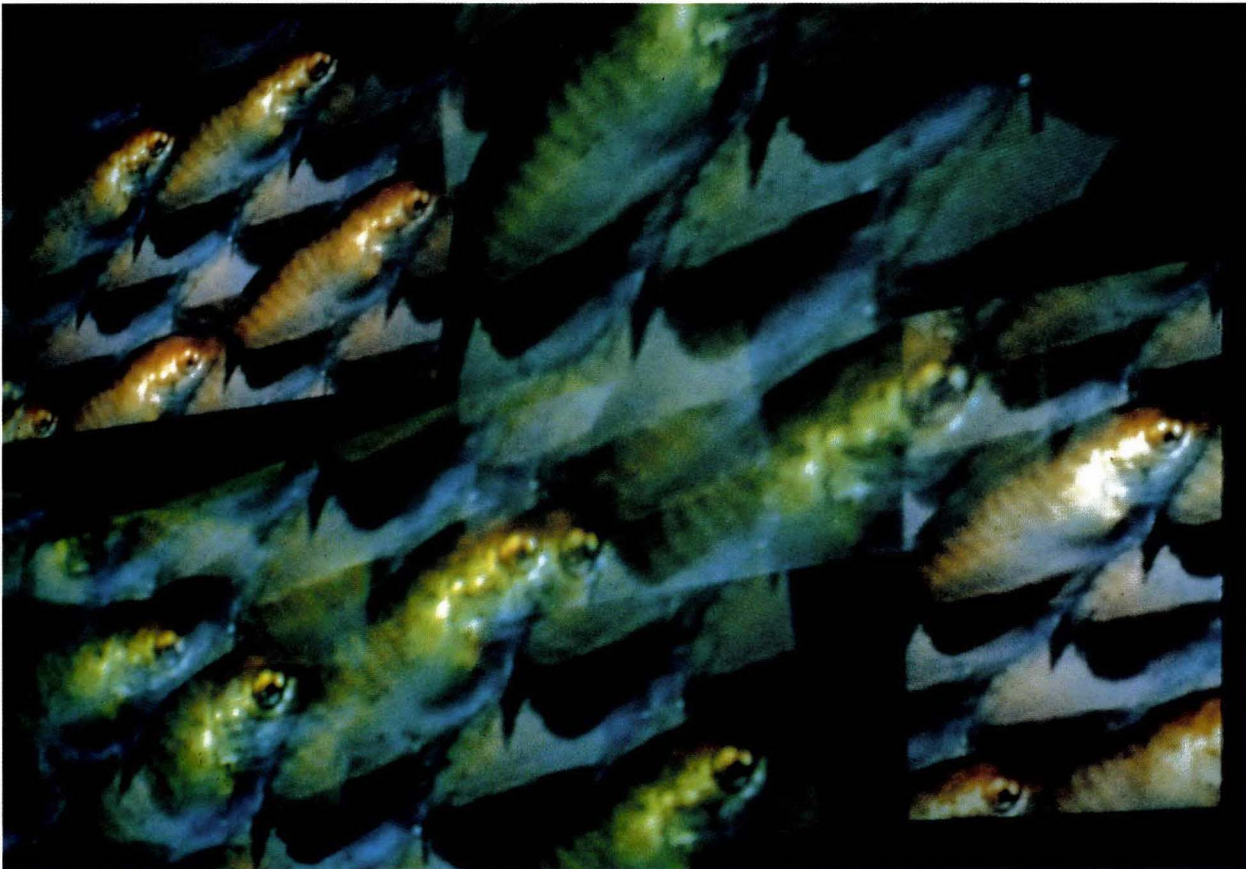


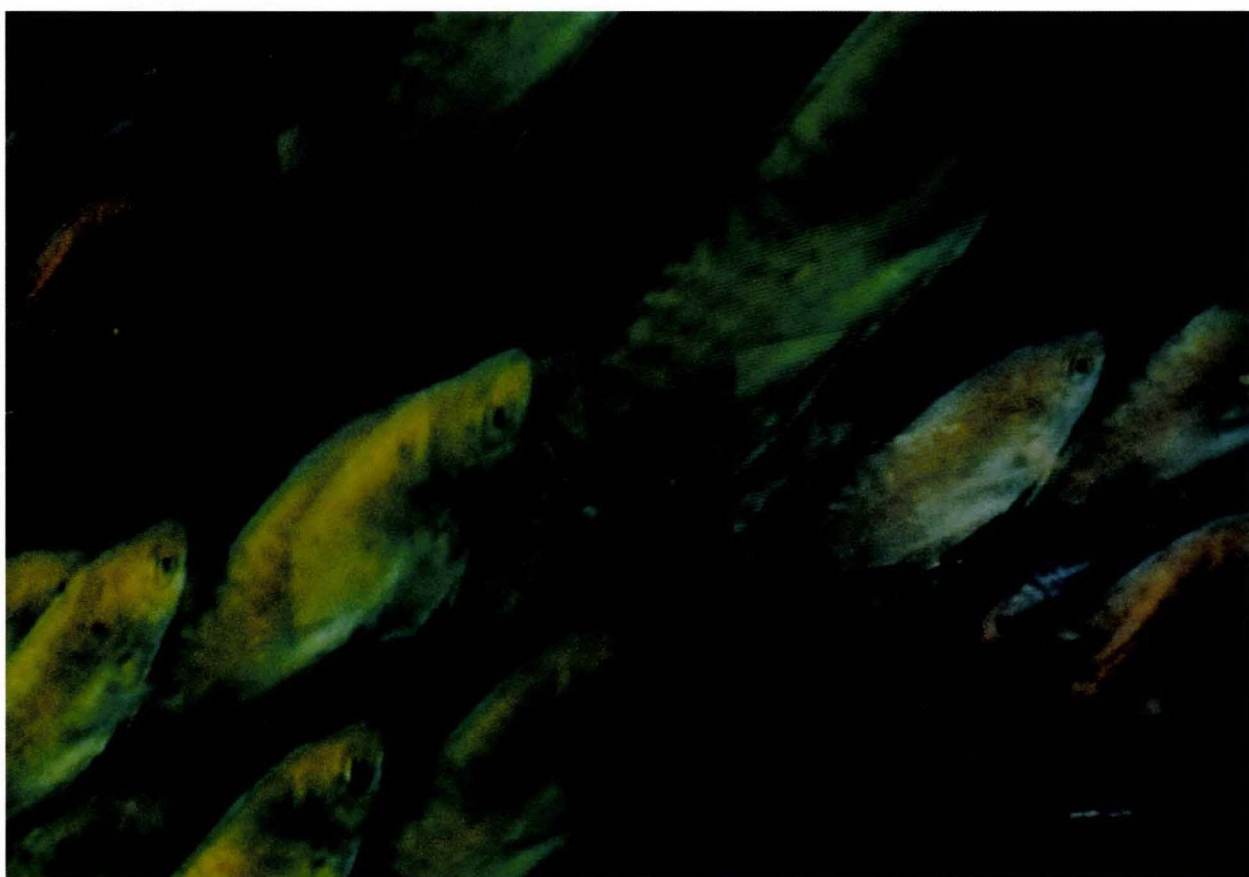












Shuya Abe ♪ Genpei Akasegawa ♪ Jean-Christophe Ammann ♪ Pyonguk An ♪ Eric Andersen ♪ Tom Armstrong ♪ Akira Asada ♪ Akira Asahi ♪ Christine van Assche ♪ Mats B. ♪ Vyt Bakaitis ♪ Burt Barr ♪ Lorenzo Bianda ♪ Michael Bielicky ♪ Marieluise Black ♪ Ursula Block ♪ Wibke von Bonin ♪ Dominique Bozo ♪ Earl Brown ♪ Elliot Caplan ♪ Pablo Casals ♪ C. Caspari ♪ Rosanna Chiessi ♪ Daryl Chin ♪ Gwin Joh Chin ♪ Y. J. Cho ♪ Henning Christiansen ♪ Chunghon Chung ♪ Russell Connor ♪ Thomasin Countey ♪ Dieter Daniels ♪ Wolfgang Drechsler ♪ Robert H. Dunham ♪ Viktoria von Fleming ♪ Henry Flynt ♪ Simone Forti ♪ Ken Friedman ♪ Martin Friedman ♪ Si Friel ♪ Grace Glueck ♪ K. O. Goetz/Rissa ♪ Shalom Gorewitz ♪ Hans Haacke ♪ Otto Hahn ♪ James Harithas ♪ Detlev Hartmann ♪ Jon Hendricks ♪ Dick Higgins ♪ Ralph Hocking ♪ Shinja Hong ♪ Byung-ki Hwang ♪ Toshi Ichiyanagi ♪ Takahiko Imura ♪ Jay Iselin ♪ Hiroe Ishii ♪ Junji Ito ♪ Sukhi Kang ♪ Tai Hee Kang ♪ Szeto Keung ♪ Hyun Ja Kim ♪ Hyunsook Kim ♪ Songwu Kim ♪ Won Kim ♪ Hong Hee Kim-Cheon ♪ Billy Klüver ♪ Milan Knzak ♪ Alison Knowles ♪ Richard Kostelanetz ♪ Takehisa Kosugi ♪ Shigeko Kubota ♪ Soo Oh Kwang ♪ Kyungsung Lee ♪ Oh-Ryong Lee ♪ Oryong Lee ♪ Se Duk Lee ♪ Won Hong Lee ♪ Kim Levin ♪ Hi Joo Limb ♪ Barbara London ♪ Jackson Mac Low ♪ Gino Di Maggio ♪ Judith Malina ♪ Jan-Olaf Mallander ♪ Laurence Mamy ♪ Alan Marlis ♪ Toshio Matsumoto ♪ Barbara Mayfield ♪ Issey Miyake ♪ Aiko Miyawaki ♪ Fumio Nanjo ♪ Roger Nellens ♪ Hermann Nitsch ♪ Yoko Ono ♪ Jerald Ordovery ♪ Suzanne Pagé ♪ Syeunggil Paik ♪ Kyu H. Park ♪ Rhai Kyoung Park ♪ Mark Patsfall ♪ Hala Pietkiewicz ♪ Frank C. Pileggi ♪ Klaus Rinke ♪ Osvaldo Romberg ♪ Ulrike Rosenbach ♪ Dieter Roth ♪ Ryuichi Sakamoto ♪ Itsuo Sakane ♪ Wieland Schmied ♪ Chaeung So ♪ Harald Szeemann ♪ Yuji Takahashi ♪ Jean Toche ♪ Yasunao Tone ♪ Larry Warshaw ♪ Etsuko Watari ♪ Emmett Williams ♪ William S. Wilson ♪ Jud Yalkut ♪ C.J. Yao ♪ Souyun Yi ♪ Tadanori Yokoo ♪ Jun-sang Yu ♪ Yasuhiro Yurugi ♪ Antonina Zaru



LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA
XLV ESPOSIZIONE INTERNAZIONALE D'ARTE

Name
Adress

to friends of N.J.P.

Prof. Dr. Klaus Bußmann
Kommissar des Deutschen Pavillions
Westfälisches Landesmuseum
Domplatz 10, D - 4400 Münster
Tel. 0251/5907-257, Fax 5907-210

Münster, January 27th, 1993


Dear ...,

I will edit a multilingual Nam June Paik-catalogue for the German Pavilion of the Venice-Biennale in June 1993, designed as «book as artwork» by Paik himself. A large portion of this book will be devoted to a section called «Paik-Mosaic» in which many friends of Nam June Paik are invited to contribute a short essay in English, German, French or Italian ranging from only 5 lines to 800 words.

In order to avoid repetative boredom, we urge you to choose only a narrow slice of pie in his life and art, that means a single episode or an event to which you are familiar with, or a single art work, which you like most or hate most. We welcome negative criticism, sarcastic of funny view, or even the Mad Magazine-kind of comical or irrelevant comment. Also instead of an essay you may draw a drawing or a comic strip. Since there will be a separate essay on his biography and summary of his art works you don't have to go into the generally available informations. We certainly want to invent an original format in art catalogues making. Your fee will be two lithos, a limited edition, signed by Nam June Paik, that will be ready around June 1993.

Your contribution must arrive by March 30th in Münster (Germany), Westfälisches Landesmuseum. If you still have any questions call me or my assistant Dr. Florian Matzner (Tel. 0251/5907-212, Fax: 0251/5907-210).

Yours sincerely,


(Prof. Dr. Klaus Bußmann)

SHUYA ABE TOKYO**Nam June Paik, 1993**

It was 1963 when I first met Nam June Paik. It might be at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon on Saturday of the end of September, at the cafeteria on the second floor in Radio Store in Akihabara. I had heard that he was the very famous artist, so I was interested in what he wanted to realize. He told what he wanted to do in a soft voice, as he does so still now.

One was to produce a robot, the second was to deform the deflection circuits and the video amplifier of TV set by controlling them from the outside, and the third was to create new color images with a color TV set.

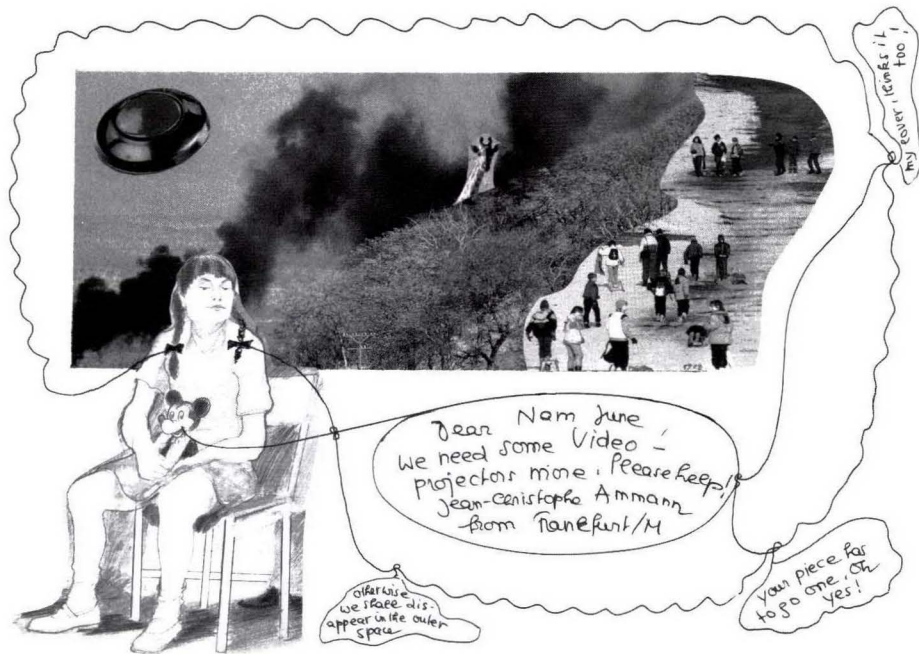
After I met him, I remembered the art column with a photograph of Asahi newspaper a half year or one year before, reporting the oriental artist Nam June Paik, who broken into two a violin with a knife on the instant. So I did not feel that it was the first meeting with him. He was a leading member of Fluxus and Neo-Dadaist, therefore the robot and the TV would be a result of the development of his thought. My faith in Dadaism induced me to get on familiar terms with him, and we talked about many things, collaborated with each other. Thus thirty years have passed. His motto is "the more..., the better." I am convinced that these two blank spaces will be always filled with the infinite combination of his new act and new thought.

GENPEI AKASEGAWA TOKYO**A bit of electric wave slips out of Mr. Paik, 1993**

Nam June Paik uses the electric wave today. However, he used a kitchen knife and a plane before.

It was in 1964. Two pianos were on the stage. Paik scrapped one of them with a kitchen knife, and shaved rapidly the black shining lid over a keyboard of the another one with a plane. I felt as if someone had slashed my face with a sharp knife.

He used rice too. Having poured a lot of water and shaving cream over himself, he baptized himself with rice falling like a cascade. For the first time, I watched him as a performer at his recital. When we had met outside of the stage, he always looked like a convalescent with a slight fever. And he spoke in a soft voice, even feeble. So, it was shocking. I was awakened to have seen him treating a kitchen knife, a plane and rice. Something had revealed itself before me at the moment, although I could not answer what it was.

**JEAN-CHRISTOPHE AMMANN**

FRANKFURT/M.

"Zeichnung", 1993**Pyonguk An SEOUL****No. 1 Guru, 1993**

A few years ago when Nam June Paik came to Seoul, he sent me a letter written in large letters on a gray paper.

"Dear Teacher An Pyonguk:

I thank you for not forgetting my name. In fact, I lost my long music 'Dry Field' to be dedicated to you during the Korean War. Last year I bought your book, 'The Theory of Happiness' in New York and gave it as a gift to my New York Guru with the following inscription. 'An = No. 1 Guru, John Cage = No. 2 Guru and You = No. 3 Guru.'"

ERIC ANDERSEN KOPENHAGEN**Five hundred words..., March 29, 1993**

five hundred words faxed for a multilingual Nam June Paik-catalogue for the German Pavilion of the Venice-Biennale in June 1993 could form more than five lines

Eric -93

TOM ARMSTRONG

PRAGUE/NEW YORK/PITTSBURGH

A brief anecdote, March 24, 1993

When Nam June had his great retrospective exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1982, the fourth floor of the museum was dark except for the light from hundreds of video monitors. There were monitors everywhere – assembled into walls, arranged on the floor, attached to walls, and a great number suspended from the ceiling. To accommodate viewing of the latter, mattresses had been placed on the floor to allow viewers to lie down to enjoy the ceiling performance. Prior to the opening, I escorted Kitty Charlyse Stair, the distinguished and very elegant chairman of the New York State Council on the Arts, through the exhibition with Nam June as our guide. And, of course, he insisted she join him on a mattress. As the three of us lay there together in the dark watching goldfish swim across the ceiling, Nam June in his most mischievous voice announced, "many babies born after exhibition".

AKIRA ASADA TOKYO**A Cloth Wrapping Time and Space – A Preface For the Satellite Art, 1993**

From the moment when he launched into the experiment of video art with a tiny magnet in his hand to the present day in which he has realized the dream of satellite art to all TV stations in many countries, Nam June Paik has been always standing in the forefront of technology and art. His main subject is clear,

although his activities vary and look crooked. I would like to call his work "collage of time and space".

Far from the tableau completed as a plane, the TV monitor is incessantly re-woven with the electric scanning. Time is an essential factor here. This electronic woven stuff is disentangled with an unimaginably high speed and interlaced again in every instance, different from the ordinary cloth. To intervene its process was the purpose of the switch-over of images by magnets or of the video synthesizer. With these apparatus, a usual TV set receiving a normal broadcast could be transformed into an extraordinary art work. The video art of Mr. Paik was "the collage of time and space" using the existing systems of TV set and TV broadcast.

AKIRA ASAHI TOKYO

**Paik who gazes into the distance –
Nam June Paik = Paik san, 1993**

A Japanese way to call someone's name, Paik san, sounds more familiar than Mr. Paik for me. It immediately evokes his personality, his appearance, and even his somewhat restless elocution.

When I was a chief curator of The Metropolitan Museum of Tokyo, which organized his exhibition "Mostly Video Nam June Paik" (1984), I learned from his work much about the artist in a new age, the relations between human beings and nature, between technology and mankind, which are the philosophical base for us. He is the philosopher who knows the natural view of Oriental people, the nature of human beings, and the agony of the moderns.

He gave me his autograph in the catalogue of exhibition in Tokyo. The precious scrap for me is put between its pages, which is an an obituary notice and a memorial article about Joseph Beuys.

It was in Kassel where I found Mr. Paik gazing in the distance absent-mindedly. He was alone, without his friends or video monitors. Recalling Joseph Beuys and John Cage, he will gaze into the further distance in Venice.

CHRISTINE VAN ASSCHE PARIS

Lettre ouverte à Nam June Paik, 1993

Créée en 1965 dans le contexte de tes expérimentations sur les déformations d'images sans enregistrement préalable, mais par une simple manipulation magnétique du signal électronique émis, "Moon is the Oldest TV" semble être l'œuvre fétiche que tu protèges.

La cause de ces soins particuliers vient-elle des images représentées (les différentes phases de la lune) et/ou de la notion de temporalité qui la sous-tend ou encore de celle de méditation qui s'en dégage?

Cette œuvre semble être dans ton corpus celle qui demeure "ouverte", celle que tu ne désires pas achever, celle que tu te plais à transformer à chaque présentation, celle qui n'a pas trouvé son repos, et de même son statut définitif.

MATS B. STOCKHOLM

Collage, 1969/1993

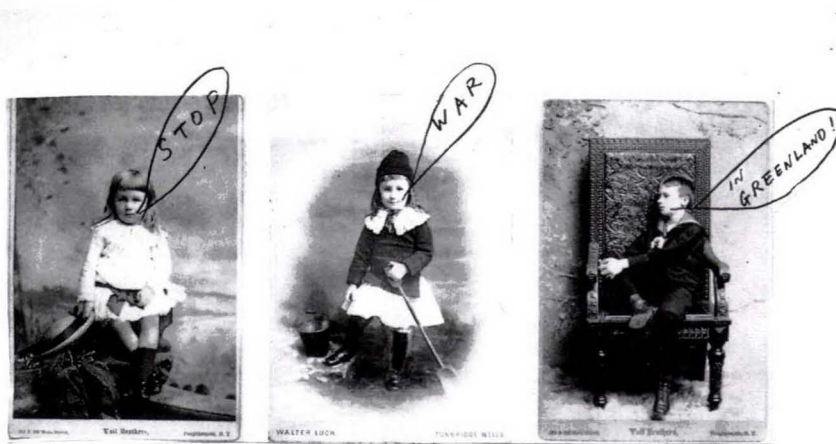
Contribution to
Paik - catalogue,
Venice '93

Instruction: reproduce
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this text
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In 1969 he wanted to stop wars -
but look what happened! Mats B.

In 1969 he wanted to stop wars – but look what happened!



N. J. PAIK

VYT BAKAITIS NEW YORK

Letter to N.J.P. 4. 11. 1990

I thought to share "Time Piece, for George" with you as a souvenir of our departed friend Maciunas. It actually happened to me recently upstate that while I sat by a stream in the woods I was reminded of a friendly exchange George and I once had regarding reincarnation. It was years before, in June 1975, in NY City, he had told me he could see himself re-viving as a frog, and then, years later, just as I was remembering this, there was the frog, right in front of me, about to jump by the edge of the stream. So the poem is what I saw, then and there. Of course, as you may know, George had little tolerance for poems, at least in the time I was acquainted with him; he had made the point, when I was trying to show him a poetry journal with my translation of a Lithuanian poem by his colleague Jonas Mekas, of refusing to open it "unless it has something visual". It was partly in deference to this conviction that I decided to keep my dedication to him first-name only. (Earlier, I had tagged a full formal dedication to a "visual" shaped poem which I managed to cook up as presumably more acceptable to him; though it's not been published and George never got to see it, but that's another story.)

BURT BARR NEW YORK

Two episodes, 1993

1. One day in the neighborhood where I live, I saw Nam June on the sidewalk. That is where I usually see him. We were talking for awhile, when I put my glasses on to see what a work-man was doing, several feet away. Nam asked if I needed glasses to see the man. I said that I've needed reading-glasses for a number of years, but now I need glasses for other things as well, including my being able to see the man who was fixing the sidewalk.

"Don't you need glasses?" I asked.

"Only when I read the stock-market", Nam replied.

"Don't you need them to look at video?" I asked.

"I never look at video", Nam said.

2. During a screening at the Museum of Modern Art, I was sitting between Shigeko and Nam June. Shigeko had been sitting there. When I arrived I sat one seat away from her. Minutes later Nam June arrived and sat one seat away from me.

Nam began telling me he was making out his will, that stated that anyone in the world

could take his videos, in their entirety or any part of them, and use them in any way they wanted. And he said that there would be no cost – that they would be absolutely free.

I thought about this, realizing that most artists take all kinds of precautionary measures to protect their works – whether they're alive or after, in their wills. I further realized that if his works were to be readily accessible and totally free of cost, that many would make use of them, and that his name would grow and grow – and that his fame would soar. Immortality would be insured.

I soon replied, and said that was the most brilliant thing I ever heard of. Shigeko spoke out, and said that was the stupidest thing she ever heard of.

LORENZO BIANDA VERSCIO

Nam June Paik, Biennale Venezia

16 Marzo, 1993

La prima volta che incontrai Paik, all'occasione di un seminario a Parigi, rimasi stupito nel verificare la relativa importanza dell'uso della parola. La mia conoscenza della lingua inglese era al tempo assai scarsa e la sua rimane per sempre una versione *coreana* di quell'idioma. Non so come fu possibile intenderci; la parola era risultata un mezzo, per lo più formale, per esprimere all'altro l'intenzione di avere qualche cosa da comunicare.

Questa sensibile immediatezza, nell'usare il mezzo di comunicazione come supporto in sé irrilevante, la riscontro regolarmente nelle sue opere.

MICHAEL BIELICKY DÜSSELDORF/PRAG

Big sleep, 1993

Paik kam zu den Treffen mit seinen Studenten ziemlich selten und unregelmäßig. Wobei das nicht bedeutet, daß es schlecht gewesen wäre. Den meisten von uns war es recht und auch von Nutzen.

Es gab immer wieder neue Studenten, die sich bemüht haben, Schüler von Paik zu werden. So sagte er zu ihnen immer, er sei ein schlechter Professor, da er sowieso nie anwesend sei. Davon ließen sich die Neube-werber aber nicht abschrecken, und sie drängten darauf, daß der große Meister sich ihre Videobänder anschaute. Er fragte dann immer, wie lang die Bänder wären, und dann ging das Licht aus und die Videos wurden vorgeführt. Nervös und voller Erwartung warteten die Kandidaten auf den Kommentar. In den meisten Fällen, nachdem das Licht wieder eingeschaltet wurde, schlief Paik. Dann

wachte er auf und meinte: "Nicht schlecht, aber vielleicht ein bißchen zu lang."

"Paik (Nein, ich bin Experimentalist)", 1986

MARIELOUISE BLACK NEW YORK

"A portion of the transcript from the 1992 inaugural events for the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College: Nam June Paik joined Eric Fischl, Jeff Koons, Tim Rollins and Fred Wilson in a panel discussion entitled 'Contemporary Art and Exhibition'. Ingrid Schischy moderated." April 3, 1992

Nam June Paik:

Waiting in this kind of panel for my turn to come is like waiting in the dentist's waiting room that my turn comes.

So, now we continue. So I can make either a list of the propaganda of my schools, or I can do something else. Maybe I do something else.

It is maybe about time that artists self-analyze our own hypocrisy. Artists live on the crumbs of the super-rich, yet artists always say the most radical things. They tend to bite the hand which they feed (sic), but they don't quite bite, you know, they just nibble. And then ... we live either on super-rich money or tax money of the middle class... Middle class made Nazis. Don't think Nazis were made by power. In Germany, his power didn't want Nazis. (The) so-called hand-worker class... like, you know, Archie Bunker – these people – made the Nazis at the beginning of National Socialism.

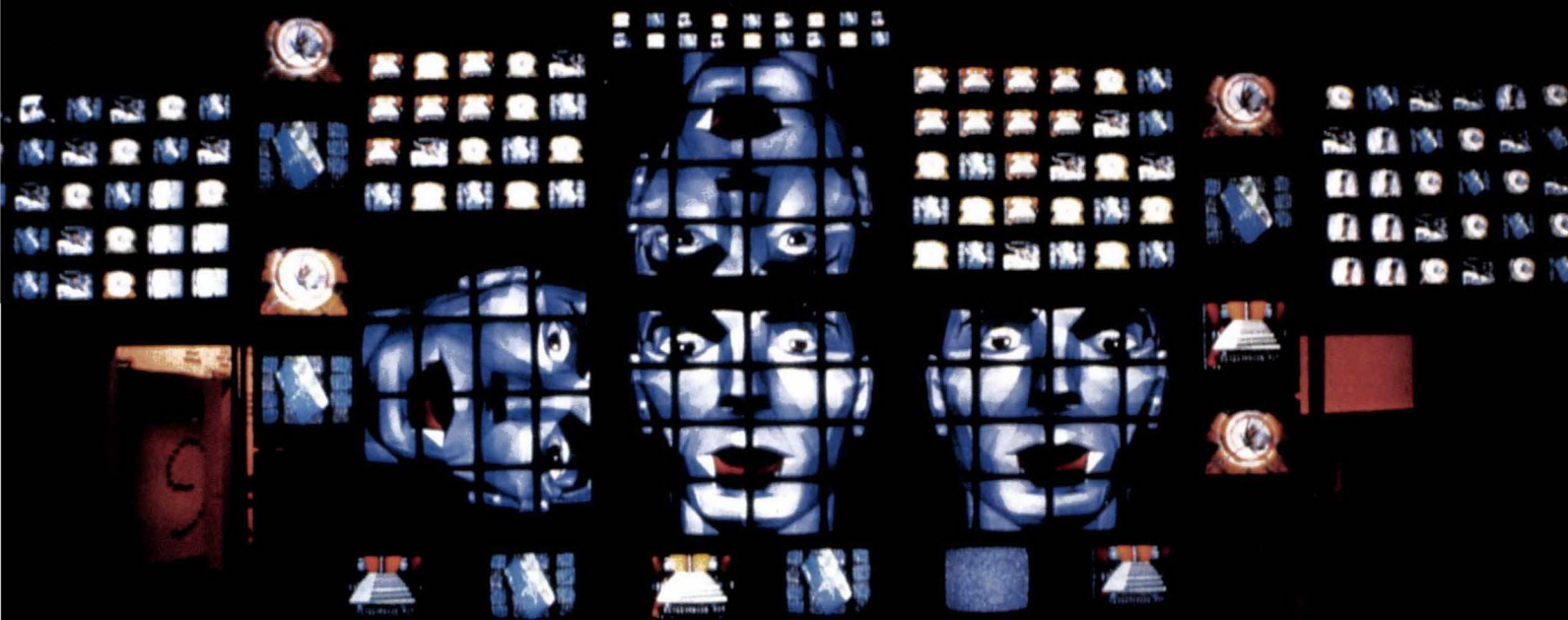
So, then, art is the same thing. We live on the crumbs of the this so-called (?), like Citibank... (?) So, we are the prime example of what long time ago Mr. Marcuse said – repressed paradox. It is better to have some paradox than nothing. Also, it's about time, since socialism is gone. Of course, we try to live on National Endowment of the Arts, and that's middle-class tax money. And, then they control, and the middle-class control is much worse ...

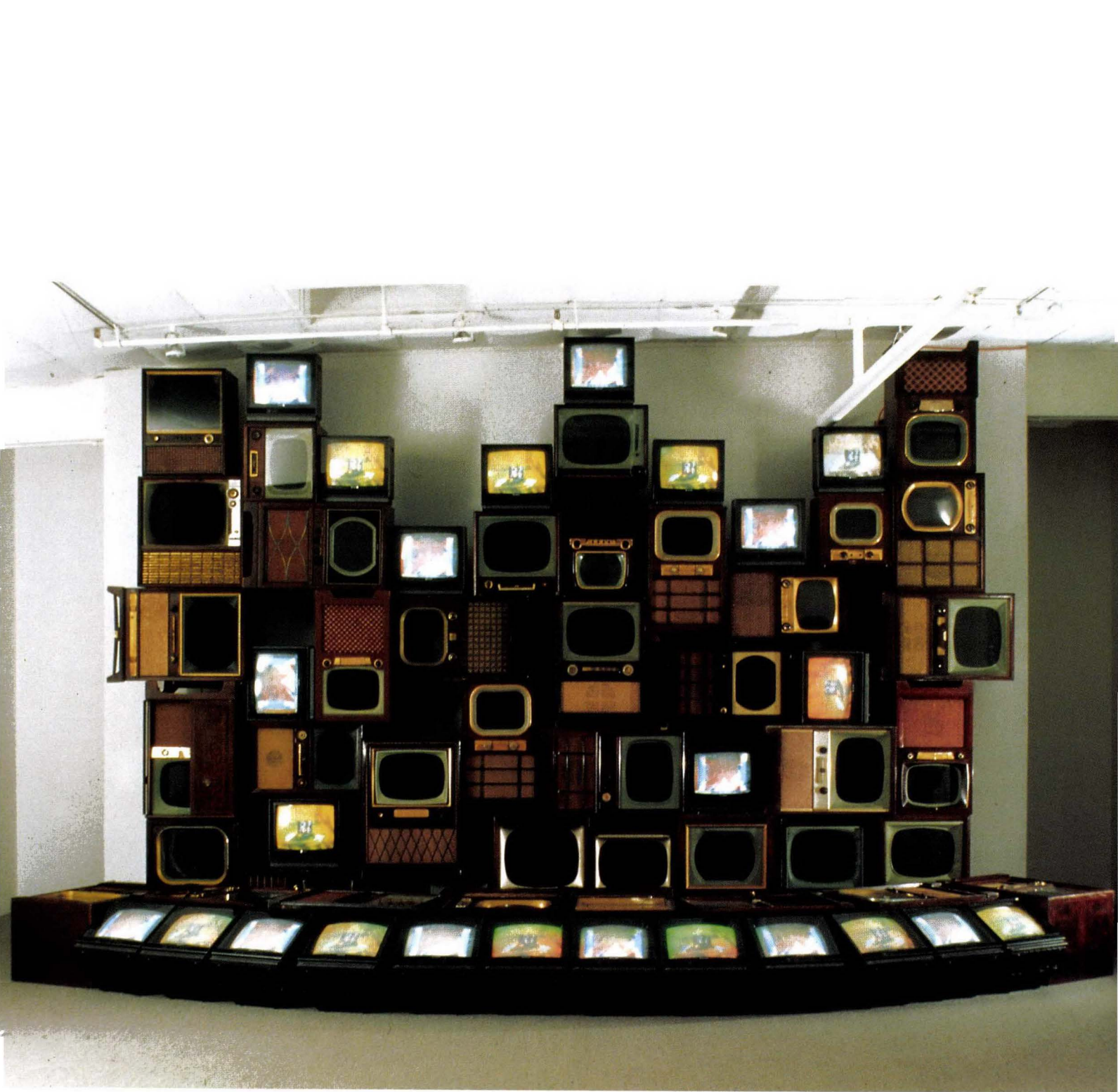
►
Fin de Siècle II, 1989

Installation in the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, for the Exhibition
"Image World: Art & Media Culture"

►►
Mirage Stage, 1988

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati









And then so it is about time that artists should say what we wrote. We must come forward ... (?)
I have been waiting from Jean-Luc Godard for a long time – not that video. He didn't say. But he should have said why he supports Mao Tse Tung's Cultural Revolution – who killed so many people, including many French and German – these continental people – not physically, but they gave up their brilliant careers to do the revolution. And Jean-Luc Godard keeps making great movies supporting (?) It's supported by tax. Many young people ... follow him. That's hypocrisy. So, it's about time.

And then the number two hypocrisy is the art movement and market force. And market force created the art movement. It was not so bad, I think. Even I can make a living ... so. According to ABC, it happens with our price range... (?) [LAUGHTER] I'm sorry. I don't speak about Fluxus video, but I shall speak, but I shall speak...

Woman:

Sorry. Can I interrupt? Somebody in the audience asked me to explain it. Nam June suggested that the seating arrangement here is according to the price range of our artworks. I think by the end, we will have totally re-structured the art market.

URSULA BLOCK BERLIN

Tagebuchnotiz, 3. November 1978

Paik kommt zu Besuch – er verteilt sein Gepäck auf die verschiedenen Räume – es entsteht ein Chaos aus Gummiiüberschuhen, Handtüchern, Hemden, Papieren, Unterhosen, Hosenträgern, Plastiktüten – er redet – er lacht – er schläft – er trinkt Mineralwasser – er badet (Otto muß pinkeln) – er wäscht sich die Haare – ich treffe ihn in der Küche – er beugt sich über den Gasherd – er schwenkt den Kopf über der offenen Gasflamme: er trocknet sich die Haare – er spielt Klavier mit Anna.

WIBKE VON BONIN KÖLN

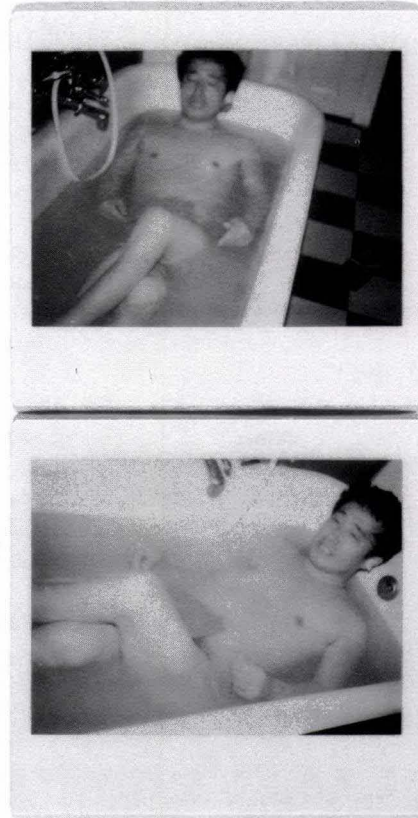
Do it yourself. TV Lesen, März 1993

Müde bin ich vom langen Tag. Vorbei ist das Schäfchenzählen, das einlullende Bockspringen der raunenden Wollmäuse von Orange nach Blau, von Farbe nach Schwarzweiß. Ich starre auf den Schnee meines nachmittäglichen Fernsehschirms: Weiße Zeilen auf Schwarz, oder weiße Seiten, unbeschriebene Welten, undefinierter Klang, relative Ruhe. Ende, endlich.

"Lies alle weißen Seiten sehr langsam (mehr als 3 Sekunden). Du solltest nicht einfach 'lesen' wie gewöhnlich, sondern solltest es 'wirklich' 'erleben' oder versuchen, es zu erleben, oder dir wenigstens vorstellen, all die Dinge selbst zu erleben."
(Paik, DO IT YOURSELF, Antworten an La Monte Young, 1961-62)

3. November

Paik kommt zu Besuch – er verteilt sein Gepäck auf die verschiedenen Räume – es entsteht ein Chaos aus Gummiiüberschuhen, Handtüchern, Hemden, Papieren, Unterhosen, Hosenträgern, Plastiktüten – er redet – er lacht – er schläft – er trinkt Mineralwasser – er badet (Otto muß pinkeln) – er wäscht sich die Haare – ich treffe ihn in der Küche – er beugt sich über den Gasherd – er schwenkt den Kopf über der offenen Gasflamme: er trocknet sich die Haare – er spielt Klavier mit Anna

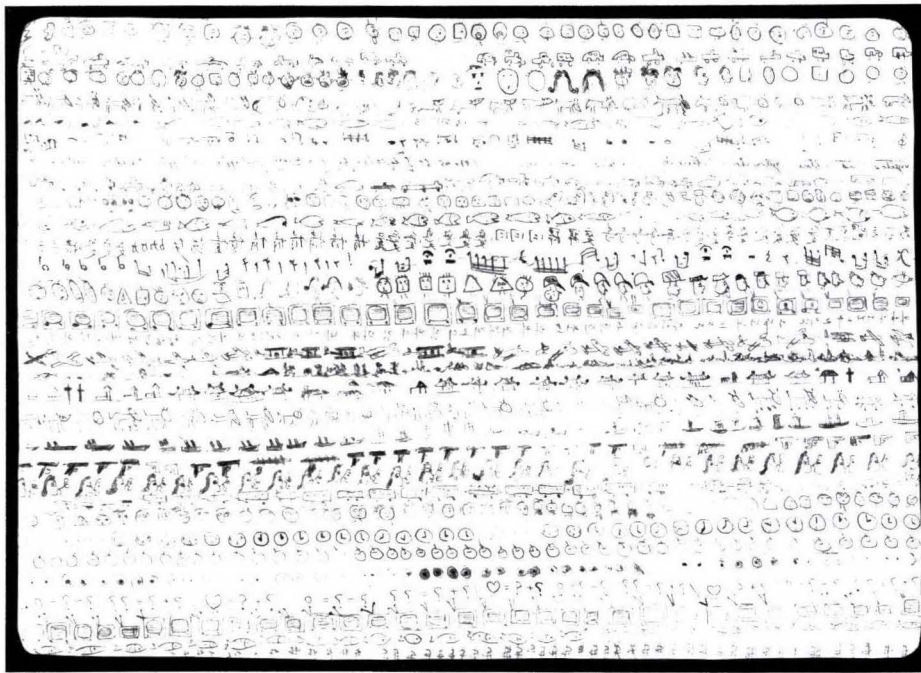


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TV is New Hearth, 1989

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Madeleine Disco, 1989
Galerie Beaubourg, Paris



Ich lese im flirrenden Weiß meines Schirms und träume vom Frühling. Wann kommt er?

“Die erste Schwalbe, die du im nächsten Frühling triffst, – dies ist meine erste Performance.”
(Paik, a. a. O.)

Und ich sehe sie oben rechts in der Ecke meines leeren Fernsehschirms, sie fliegt den Schwalben nach, die bereits geflohen sind – in die Freiheit meiner Phantasie. Realitäts- und fernsehmüde beginne ich zu träumen, zu spinnen, zu lesen, zu zählen und zu rätseln. Neben dem Fernseher hängt Paiks Heliogravure (Paper TV), Fernseher zum Nahsehen. Die Elemente aller möglichen Fernsehgeschichten sind da aufgereiht, Zeile für Zeile: Alle Typen von Eierköpfen zu Querköpfen, von Grinsern zu Heulern, Zornigen zu Ängstlichen; von Vamps zu braven Mädchen, Opas zu Gören. Kopffüßler en face und im Profil, mit Stoppelhaar und Wallemähne, mit Kinnbart und mit Scheitel, mit Lockenwicklern und mit Pfeife, mit Hut oder Baseballcap. Vier Zeilen Singles, zusammen 166 Hauptdarsteller in imaginären Dramen, dazu eine Zeile küssender Paare, 29 an der Zahl – oder ist es ein einziges, das sich durch die Zeilenzeit liebt und links nach rechts und über die Ränder hinaus? Who knows?

Wieso eigentlich von links nach rechts? Das ist meine Leserichtung, doch alle Autos fahren von rechts nach links, die 30 PKW sowie die 30 Pickups und LKW aller Marken und Größen, die Eisenbahn mit ihren 30 Waggons und die 33 Schiffe, ob sie segeln, dampfen

Paper TV, 1974

oder unsichtbar auf ihrer Zeile gleiten. Nicht anders als mit der Nase nach links, die Luftgefährte aller denkbaren Bauarten ... Paik hat sie wohl von links nach rechts schreibend, zeichnend ins Leben gerufen, wie auch die Fische mit ihren Flossen und Schuppen, mit den absurden Mäulern und den Kulleraugen. Diszipliniert schwimmen sie die zwei ihnen zugedachten Zeilen entlang, fein differenziert am linken, zu Kringelwürmern aufgelöst am rechten Rand ihres TV-Aquariums. Ähnlich die Vierbeiner, Hunde, Katzen, Schafe, Ziegen – oder sind das lauter mißglückte Promenadenmischungen?! Paiks Haustierzoo der 52 Viecher wäre allein jede Woche des Jahres eine Sendung im Vorabendprogramm wert.

Zu später Stunde dann – eine Uhrenzeile zeigt die Zeitflucht an – Sex and Crime: auf dunkelrunde Busentupfen und 33 Pistolen, von Geisterhand gegeneinandergerichtet, folgen am Ende, am unteren Bildrand, 49 Dollarzeichen ... (Ach, Paik: “If I had a million dollars...”)

Zählen und erzählen – es könnte immer weitergehen: 990 Zeichen auf 30 Zeilen geben doch viel mehr her als ein Pixelprogramm auf 30 Kanälen mit 625 Zeilen!

Die oben zitierte Anweisung an La Monte Young gilt einer Komposition. Ohne Noten geht es auch in Paiks Paper TV nicht ab. Zweimal gibt's Notenlinien und zweimal auch Schrift, doch die kann ich nicht entziffern (vielleicht koreanisch?). Leichter läßt sich

diese Hieroglyphen-Zeile übersetzen: Ein Fragezeichen plus ein Fragezeichen gleich zwei Fragezeichen. Ein Fragezeichen minus ein Fragezeichen gleich Null. Ein Fragezeichen plus ein spiegelverkehrtes Fragezeichen gleich ein Herz – das heißt “Happy end”. Ich freue mich mit Paik, den der Humor nicht verläßt, selbst wenn die noch nicht gelöste Aufgabe lautet: Wurzel aus yellow chairs plus minus Wurzel aus blue sky minus Wurzel aus six nine gleich plus minus sorry mal Wurzel aus red apple plus minus Wurzel aus red TV...

Do it yourself.

DOMINIQUE BOZO PARIS

Une lettre, 1er octobre 1984

On peut rêver sur l'évolution incommensurable des publics instantanés. Ainsi, l'art de Nam June Paik, relayé par satellite lors de l'émission du nouvel an “Good Morning Mr. Orwell” au Centre Pompidou, appartient aux légendes du vingtième siècle – fugaces, mais lumineuses, justement, par leur superbe fragilité.

EARL BROWN

Planned Panichood, 1962

(published in the Anthology ed. by Young/MacLow, 1962)

Yes Virgil, there *is* an avant-garde ... in Cologne its name is Nam June Paik ... a kind of Oriental Kammerkrieg ... a place for war-surplus bravery, fear, heroics, aggression, hot and cold running sweat, cruelty, exhilaration, love, and other more or less unsettling responses which we would rather think about (detachedly) than experience (actually) ... it's not easy to make something (or not make something) (or to make a no-thing) (or to not make a no-thing) in which you and others find yourselves (by) getting lost in the present of ... (to frightening and dangerous and involved[ing] and care-full) ... the difference between *things in time* and *time in things* ... the former we do right away ... as for the latter; later ... (too difficult and dangerous and unknown) ... there's hardly time to classify and file away, for future abuse, one's so busy being there and knowing it.

Paik seems to feel rather out of things ... the new academies, stylistic puritanisms, inverse egoisms, a myth is as good as a mile isms, ectraisms ... unfestivalized, unculted, untimed, unknown and more than a little unstrung (not avoiding but bending with it) now and again ... the best laid plans of mice and

Paik etc. but it doesn't change things ... just makes them different ... so far (as I know) one only hears (sees, feels) Paik performed by Paik ... which is (I think) why things are so *total* ... nothing is lost in translation... very traditional in the East for master to give directly to pupil (a whack on the head) the sound, of the experience rather than a lecture or an indirect (notational) directive ... Paik doesn't tell somebody, he up and does it ... come hell or no water ... (he was heard to say, after finding that they had figuratively pulled the plug in his tub; "Kunst ist tot"... he makes no bones about kunst but he notices things like the poverty in and around it (him)... a Paik is a Paik becoming a Paik (by any other name) ... and its a real something(?) to have happened to one ... more than like a translation its like a transfusion (its a good idea to know your blood type before you get there ... incidently) ... nothing is lost in transfusion or confusion ... an additive with all the impurities left in ... less discrepancy between TIME *in* the piece (performance) and TIME *during* the piece than with anything recently ... and you can't hardly get that recently anymore yet.

Gertrude Stein said many things when you come to think about it for a few minutes (I suggest 183,765,432,109 minutes for a starter) but one of the more profound and prophetic was that she was completely conscious of the peaceful penetration of the Orient into the art and philosophy of the West ... maybe. I'm rather outnumbered but I do believe that Paik's Penetration (as it will be referred to in official reports from the avant) is a peaceful one ... ("terror is *good* for you" ... "good old no-count terror") I got pretty nervous too and so would you, what with not knowing if Paik, me, a friend, an enemy, or a piano is eventually if not NOW going out that 3 story window into the Rhine, or if the scissors will stop at (with) the necktie, or if beejeezes the day of reckoning is upon us all ... I wonder if he has a theory and an idea and a philosophy and a reason and a no- reason and a have-to and thinks good like an artist should ... tis not something you have time to think about until you're on your way to pick up your suit (Suite) from the cleaners.

ELLIOT CAPLAN NEW YORK 500 words about Nam June Paik, 1993

Nam June Paik asked me to write 500 words about him. I think he uses Merce Cunningham and John Cage too much in his imagery. It's lucky he switched to Humphrey Bogart.

Here is a poem John Cage wrote when he was 4 1/2 years old.

run little girl
run to a tree
run to a rabbit
run to a bird
run run to me

sing little yellow
bird to a little bird
jump little rabbit

hop little rabbit
to a big girl

I met Nam June Paik on the street in 1977. He used to go for walks, everyday. A year earlier at a media conference in Milwaukee, he said that he and his crew had just returned from eating steak. He liked his crew to eat steak. "Gives them strength to set up video". He then said to the few of us assembled, "Too much work, not enough fun. Now, we have fun". He started "Global Groove", rock n'roll and strip tease.

The following year, I moved to New York and would see Paik walking in Soho. I would say, "Hello". He would say "Hello". Then, in 1981 I was hired by the Whitney Museum to work on his video retrospective, the first ever given to a video artist. Together with Callie Angel and curator John Hanhardt we slowly pieced together one of the best museum shows I had ever seen. I worked in Paik's loft several days a week sifting through boxes of papers and photographs in order to construct some sense of his past for the biographical sections of the exhibition catalogue. During this time, we ate sushi, and drank water out of a pitcher filled with rocks.

We spent time searching Canal street for used cast-iron heaters. We spent time fixing his elevator. We spent time reading the newspaper and eating over-cooked vegetables in Greek coffee shops. It was all interesting. Though, the most difficult part was to figure out a way to document his videotapes in still photography. I wanted to eliminate the raster lines and feature a full video field of information. I thought about it like a photograph became the cover of the exhibition catalogue. Paik used to say, "One general makes, thousand bones dry." I think that's true, sometimes.

We still see each other – on the street, naturally or at the theater when Merce is performing. We have coffee. "David Tudor was fantastic tonight", he said. We speak about

John's loss. Our meetings are brief. There is work to do.

Here is the Fluxus spell checker for Paik:

pack	pain	park	peace
peaks	peek	spiece	pix
paid	pair	pace	peck
pick	pike	poach	pail
pais	piss	pack	peak
peek	pics	pique	pock

Here is the Fluxus spell checker for Fluxus:

fluxes	luxus	flaxes
flexes	floozfes	floss
fluxes	phloxes	

PABLO CASALS

... **Media = Tao? ...**, 19. 8. 1973

(published in the Los Angeles Times)

"I have just read about a concert in which every member of a symphony orchestra was asked to play whatever pleased him at the moment. Then there was something about a piece for piano in which the pianist was not allowed to touch the keys. And, of course you know about the lady who plays the cello wearing nothing here..."

Casals pointed to his venerable chest and smiled faintly.

"Experimentation is fine," he summarized. "But they should not call it music. They should call it something else."

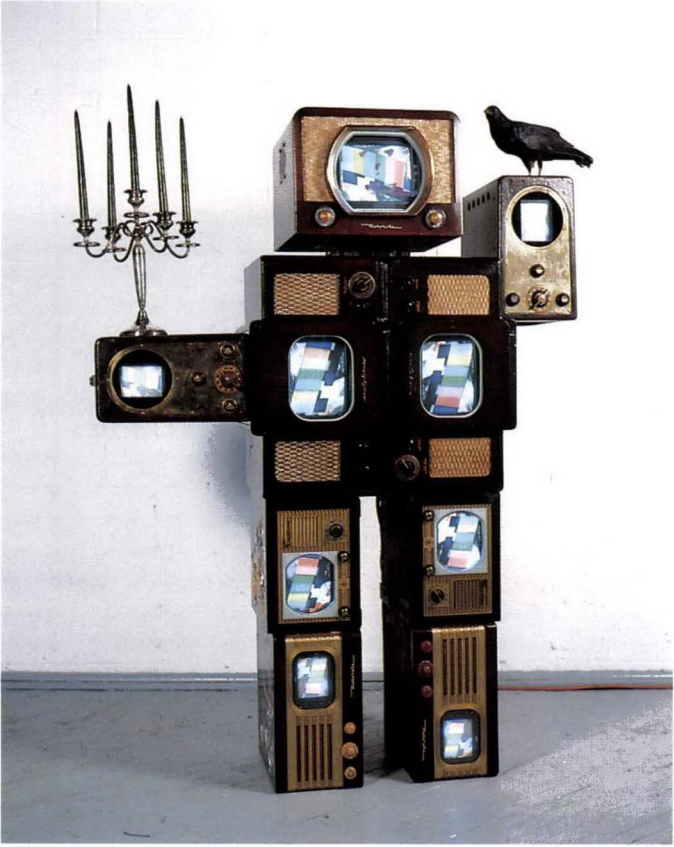
▶
John Cage, 1990

Cage Age, 1988

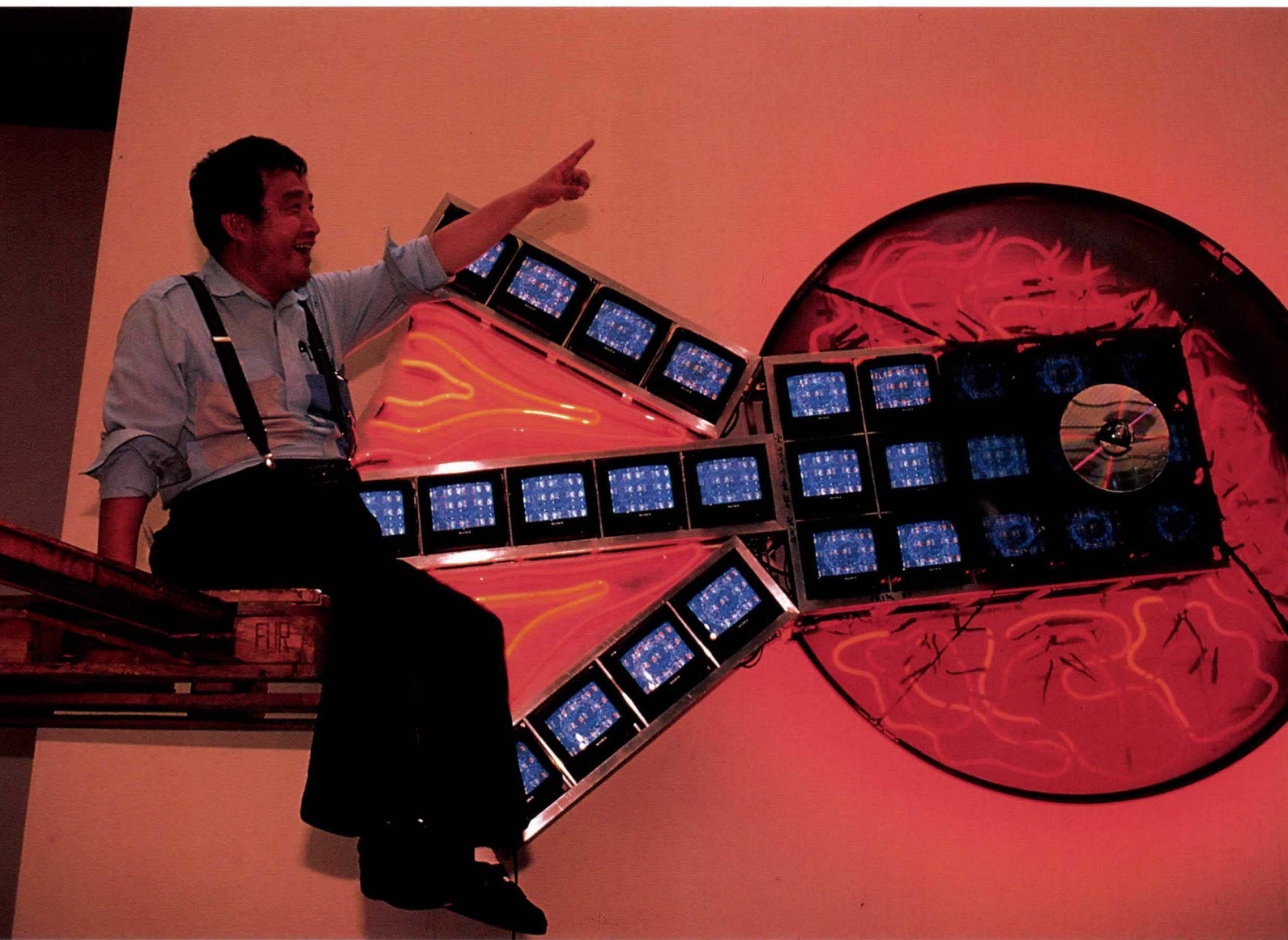
▶▶
Edgar Allan Poe, 1990

Gertrude Stein, 1991













was right: to be an artist in the 1980s and 1990s has meant not doing serious art work, but making the scene, and getting people to talk about you.

There was a dinner party that Nam June and Shigeko gave for some visiting Japanese artists. This must have been around 1980. Nam June was having fun, introducing everybody as "genius" ("Japanese genius artist", "girl genius video artist", etc.). Then he turned to me, suddenly serious. He said, "You boy genius performance artist now, but white artists be more famous first. If Eric Bogosian take five years to become famous, it take you ten, maybe twenty years to become famous. But don't give up. Be patient. Not Zen. Just reality in America." And once again, he has been proven right. I'm still at the point where, when I file my income tax returns (to quote Laurie Anderson), I feel like crossing out "occupation" and writing in "hobby", while most of my compatriots (Bogosian, Stuart Sherman, John Jeserun) have attained levels of visibility which certainly haven't been accessible to me.

And there's a whole new generation of Asian-American film and video artists. They're feeling the frustration of seeing their work ignored or slighted or dismissed. Some of the ones that I've tried to help include Jon Moritsugu, Roddy Bogawa, Rico Martinez, Gregg Araki, Rea Tajiri. And when they confront the inequities, I tell them not to give up, be patient. Not Zen. Just reality in America. Better to be party boy or party girl, and have fun.

◀ GWIN JOH CHIN NEW YORK

A tribute to Nam June Paik, January 8, 1993

A composer, musician, inventor, an artist, performer ... a pioneer, a guru, a father of video art

Nam June Paik is all of the above – and more. Not a household name yet, but undoubtedly millions of television viewers around the world have witnessed segments of Paik's remarkable antics on global hookups: 1984's "Good Morning Mr. Orwell", "Bye Bye Kipling" two years later, and "Wrap Around the World" in 1988.

Since the 1960's, it hasn't been always easy for *Paikaficionados* to explain many of his creations; in fact, there have been times when the public – as well as some mainstream critics – has found it difficult to categorize a Paik installation. Yet everyone is in agreement that Paik has made a significant contribution to popularize the video-art form alongside esthetic medium.

His vision of global communication has helped to bring about the establishment of video art courses at schools and to build special centers for exploration of the new medium. His influence on emerging video artists has been deep, and Paik has helped to attract new audiences for his difficult art form.

He is a brilliant technician and among his many futuristic innovations is the Paik-Abe videosynthesizer, which was constructed with Shuye Abe. This extraordinary mechanism mixes colors and images from several television cameras and electronically produces patterns and distorted forms.

Nam June Paik is disarmingly shy but, at the same time, impish and irreverently witty. Despite his disheveled hair and flopping unbuttoned sleeves, he is a master politician. As noted by The New York Times TV critic John J. O'Connor, "Mr. Paik is silly like a fox".

After nearly 30 years of a career that has shaken up the art establishment, Nam June Paik is now being honored by retrospectives in Europe, Asia and the U.S. He is known as the "father of video art". To his fellow countrymen in Korea – some of them still skeptical about his work – he is either a *chon-jae* (genius) or *ki-in* (eccentric), or both.

"paikaficionado", March 28, 1993

nam june paik
enlightened baby
see no hear no speak no.

musician, composer, inventor, artist
music is not sound, painting is not art,
drama is not theater.

pioneer, guru, father of video art
video buddha, traveling buddha,
family of robot, grandfather.

earth, moon, sun, venus
i am a poor man from a poor country,
i have to be entertaining all the time.
global groove, digital zen
"toujours amusants, souvent beaux,
quelquefois sublimes."

my faust ... voltaire
nam june paik ... chon-jae*.

* genius

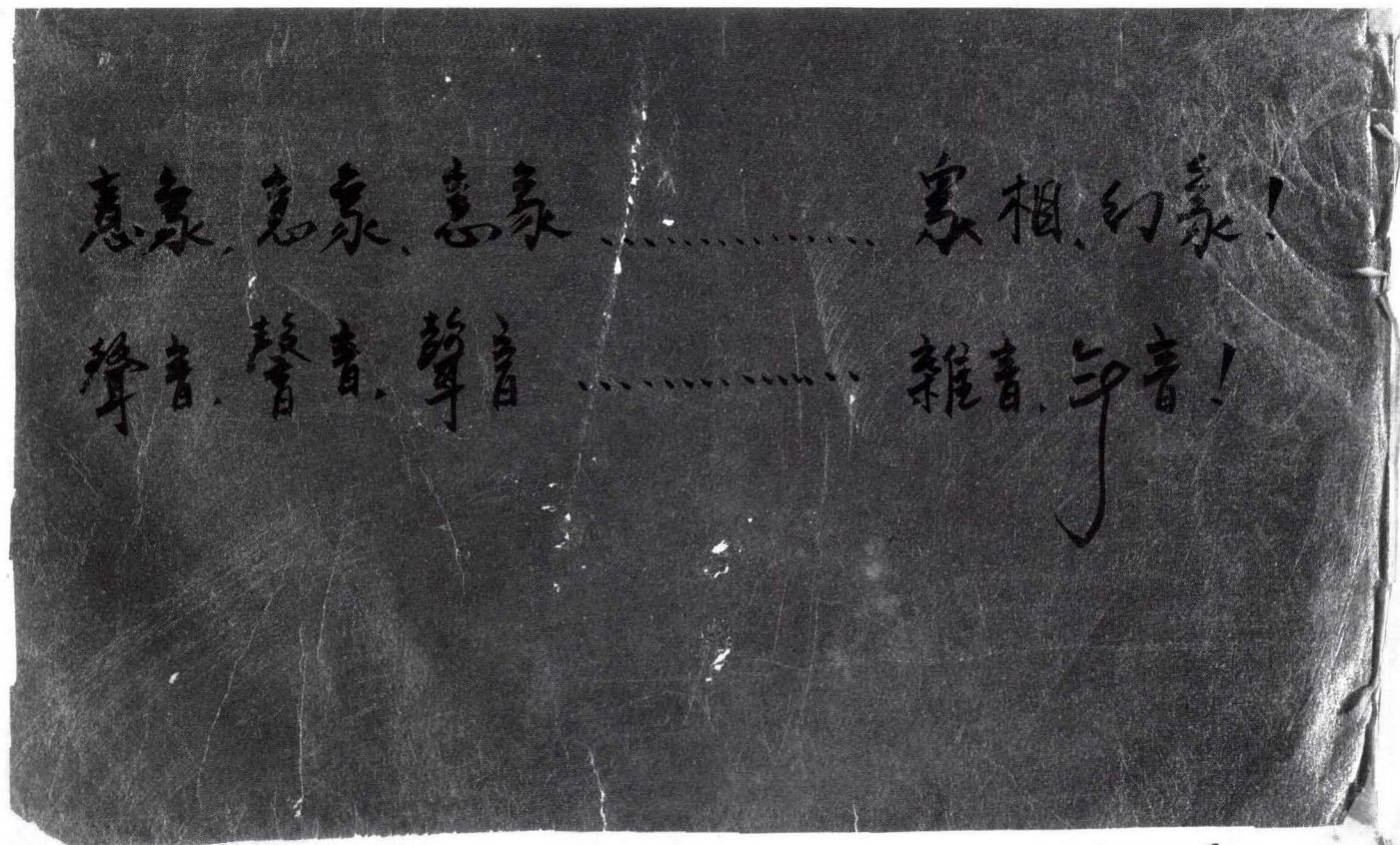
◀
Video Arbor, 1990
Forest City Residential Development
Philadelphia

◀◀
Mars, 1990
Photo Timm Rautert

Venus, 1990
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Uranus, 1991
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

◀◀◀
Moon, Antares, Earth, Sun, 1990
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati



For Nam June Paik

Y. J. Cho 92

Y. J. CHO NEW YORK

HENNING CHRISTIANSEN BERLIN

A letter, 1984

'Good Morning mr. Orwell'

1984

Was a very good

Cabaret

flying

on

the world

CHUNGHON CHUNG SEOUL

Artist Namjune Paik Who Sells Modern
Myths, 1993

"Half of art is deception. A high class deception. It's to deceive and to be deceived. Art is what makes the people perturbed."

This was what Namjune Paik said in a solo interview in Seoul to which he came back in 1986, after 34 years of absence. When this story was printed in a newspaper the following morning it "perturbed" the artists of all kinds in the town.

RUSSELL CONNOR "A MOVEABLE TYPE"

NEW YORK

Nam June Paik catalogue comment

March 28, 1993

There was a young fellow from Seoul

With an attitude really quite droll

His music was antic

(And anti-pedantic)

And the Video played rock and roll.

Nam June. A catalog is no place for sentimental tributes, but I confess I am moved at the idea of such an important exhibition. If I were to contribute an anecdote, it would be about his generosity or his humor. But it's all there in the work. The work never stops giving. The idealism behind Global Groove and the rest is real, and the laughter hurts my sides. I mean the falling down, tears on the cheeks, liberating sort of laughter, the craziness of the mad monk on the hill. I don't understand Zen, or Dada, or Fluxus, but I understand Seijong the Great, who invented moveable type in Korea fifty years before Gutenberg, and he would be very, very proud.

THOMASIN COUNTEY NEW YORK

For: Paik Mosaic, 1993

My first memory of Paik is of him asleep on my parents' couch covered with several blankets, his coat and a few rugs.

At that time he was working at Stonybrook, where my father taught. I witnessed many of his performances, they were mystical, poetic and funny. His musical arrangements were also very enjoyable. One which I remember called "Violin with String" in which he pulled a violin on a string across an airstrip seemed a revolution in musical awareness.

The past couple of years I have had the pleasure of working with him in collaboration with his paintings. His use of my sculptural jewelry gems has been inspirational to me.

DIETER DANIELS KARLSRUHE

Paik around the world, 1993

Paik in Berlin 1979, when Shigeko Kubota has a DAAD grant. I was the guest of a guest and slept at the studio for several days. Next to my mattress stood a big piece of steel, into

which I ran one night and hurt myself. Maybe this initial shock brought me into art and video ... Years later I saw this piece of metal back – as part of Shigekos installation "The River".

Paik in New York 1987, organizing "wrap around the world", all the time on the telephone which is hanging from the ceiling on a long cord, so that it can be pulled around across the room, without conflicting with Shigekos videosculptures, which stand all over the place. On a big balcony at the back of the loft a collection of old TV-sets – "my Rentenversicherung" Paik smiles.

Paik in Cologne 1989, inviting friends to a splendid dinner at a Korean restaurant after the opening of the Videoskulptur-show, but everybody is so busy meeting people, that nobody has time for dinner.

Paik in Wiesbaden 1990 at his apartment, appointment for an interview. Ten years ago, when he became Professor at the Düsseldorf Academy, he looked for a place in Germany with hot springs, which would also help to get back his health. He checked out Wiesbaden and Bad Neuenahr – but in Bad Neuenahr he was the youngest of all, so he chose Wiesbaden. Now, last year he moved to Bad Neuenahr. Everything at the right time. No, we can not say in advance, in which of his many languages the interview will be – just let it happen.

Paik in Karlsruhe 1991, at the Multi-Mediale discussion, with Vostell, Weibel, vom Bruch, Shaw, Klotz etc., – taking a nap on the podium and re-entering the discussion with new inspiration afterwards.

Negotiating with Paik how his "Arche" from the collection of the ZKM could be adapted to a new exhibition situation in Barcelona: Getting rid of some of the animals? – "o.k." – But what about the water, which was taped in Hamburg the year before? – "Why don't you put Goldfisch-Aquarium under the Arche – but be careful to feed the fish regularly and instruct the guard to take out the dead ones, otherwise people will complain..." – No please, that is too complicated. Wouldn't a TV-garden around the ship look good? You know, Noah's boat back on earth after the flood ... "Yes, Paul Garrin could make a new tape, something with water and digital effects? Yes, yes, ask Paul ..."

Missing Paik in Tokyo 1992, because the fax was lost in the gallery office. Hoping to see Paik in Venice 1993, curious what he will make out of the serious piece of architecture, called the German Pavillion.

WOLFGANG DRECHSLER WIEN

Zwei Begegnungen mit Nam June Paik in

Wien, 26. März 1993

26. April 1979: Eröffnung des neuen Museums moderner Kunst im Palais Liechtenstein. Einen der Akzente der Erstaufstellung bildete die erst wenige Monate zuvor erworbene Sammlung von Wolfgang Hahn mit ihren Schwerpunkten auf Nouveau Réalisme, Fluxus und Happening. Sie enthält zum Beispiel auch 14 Werke von Nam June Paik, darunter so wesentliche wie "Urmusik", 1961, oder "Klavier Intégral", 1963-68.

Bedingt durch die zahlreich erschienene politische und diplomatische Prominenz, wurde damals der Eingang des Museums von einem starken Polizeiaufgebot überwacht. Diesen Hütern von Recht und Ordnung war das in ihren Augen obskure Äußere eines der Einlaß Begehrenden verdächtig, und sie verweigerten dieser Person – mit dem Hinweis, daß hier Betteln verboten sei, – den Zutritt. Das war meine erste Begegnung mit Nam June Paik.

Endlich doch im Museum, entdeckte Paik, daß die das Fernsbild manipulierende Stromspule bei seiner Arbeit "Zen for TV", 1963/75, frei lag. Dies könne gefährlich sein, meinte er, nahm seinen bunten Wollschal und umwickelte mit diesem die Spule. Später schützten wir sie mit einer Acrylhaube und sandten den Schal zurück.

26. Februar 1992: Einen Tag vor der Eröffnung seiner großen Retrospektive im Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts kam Nam June Paik nach Wien und kontrollierte den nahezu abgeschlossenen Ausstellungsaufbau. Er zeigte sich sehr zufrieden, verlangte aber eine Änderung: "Violin with String", 1961, durfte nicht in die vorgesehene Vitrine gelegt werden, sondern mußte in der offenen Transportkiste bleiben und so gezeigt werden, wie Paik das Stück vorgefunden hatte.

Diese "kleine" Intervention unterstützte nicht unwesentlich unsere Absicht, in Wien die beiden vorangegangenen Ausstellungen in Basel (Video Time) und Zürich (Video Space) zu einer Conclusio zu verdichten, um so ein, wie mir scheint, wesentliches Element der Kunst Paiks anschaulich zu machen: sein ständiges Pendeln zwischen extremer Einfachheit und höchstem technischen Aufwand – und somit deren Gleichwertigkeit.

ROBERT H. DUNHAM NEW YORK

A letter, March 18, 1993

Dear Sir, I used to help Paik + Charlotte Moorman at their avantgarde festivals in the 60's. At intermission, half the audience would storm out muttering about the performers "They're all phonies". Then Paik would appear to say with great satisfaction. "We got rid of the phonies!"

MARIO FERNANDEZ

There was once a lecture ..., April 9, 1993

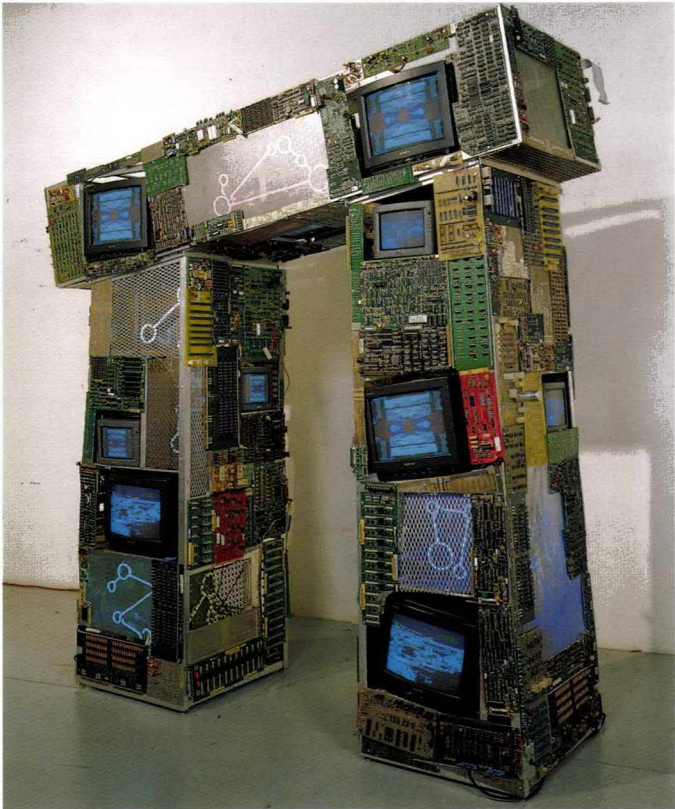
There was once a lecture held at S.V.A. amphitheater. The subject matter of the lecture escapes me now but one of the guest speakers, I remember clearly, was Nam June Paik. It was my first seeing him in person. From where I was, he seemed radiating from both near and far in perspective. It was clear to me even then that he was different. At once confident and nervous Nam June began to speak. The warm light flooded the crowded amphitheater causing brilliant waves to wax and wane. Immediately, my vision became paralyzed. In the manner of fluxus, his voice was the ringing of bells simple yet diverse, from places of various arrangement in scales ascending, descending. Like the temples of the past or to the majestic landscape of time not squandered.

This moment of vision emerged and stayed with me from the early period of my life as an artist when I was seduced by everything and nothing. Nam June was full of surprises. Even during his talk out of nowhere he would start pulling off his socks in an amphitheater filled with people. He was childlike, unaware, totally aware. This combination caught my attention.

What was explicitly important for me was the clarity of his spirit as an artist, unobstructed. Like a bird flying, like a school of aquatic animals swimming, freely. Stimulating me, my emotion was the dynamic of Nam June as an artist.

Nam June went on. The lecture went on as well. From that night on, he became permanently a part of me. Though I knew not much of him then as a person, I developed through his work an intimacy. For me, that closeness was an inspiration, allowing me the possibilities of what I can be as an artist from the east living in the west.







VIKTORIA VON FLEMMING HAMBURG

2 Zitate, 1990/1991

1. Interview-Ausschnitt für "Kultur aktuell", 24.10.91 zur Kaiserring-Verleihung in Goslar V.v.F.

Eigentlich ist der Kaiserring ja nur ein cleverer und glänzender PR-Trick einer deutschen Provinzstadt. Fühlen Sie sich benutzt?

Nam June Paik

Nicht so schlimm. Ein Ling ist ja alte Symbol von Mensch seit alte Steinzeit. So ist es überall, in China und in Indien und hier.

V.v.F.

Ihre Projekte sind so teuer, hätten Sie nicht lieber Geld gehabt?

Paik

Oh ja – ich nehme alles ab.

V.v.F.

Aber Sie werden ihn sicher gleich verlieren.

Paik

Ja, vielleicht sollten wir dieses Ei (der Installation "Video-Eggs") aufessen und Ling put there instead. Ling wird morgen geklaut, you understand. Wenn geklaut wird, das ist viel besser für Goslar, weil das mehr Publicity bringt you know.

2. Montage aus Interviews mit Paik und Paul Garrin (dem virtuoson editor von Paiks Tapes und selbst ein mehrfach preisgekrönter Videokünstler) für "Experiment Video" von mir, NDR 17. 12. 1990

Paik

Ich kann das alles auch nicht selbst machen. Ich habe ein Genie hinter mir, das heißt Paul



Ramses III, 1991

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Celtic Memory, 1991

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati



Video-Boat Arche Noah, 1989

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati



Garrin, ein Computer-Genie. Und ich hänge mich an ihn, you know.

Paul

I've definitely been influenced by Nam June Paik. There is no question about that. Nam June always says: you know, this tape that you made for me looks so good. You should use it in your own work. And I do, but in another way, from another tradition.

Paik

Armer Paul. Er darf keine solchen Effekte benutzen wie für mich. Denn auch wenn ich ihn kopiere, sagt jeder, er kopiere mich, you understand.

Paul

Working with Nam June liberated me from the tyranny of the studio. So now when I go in, I'm very free with the way I approach the technique. We use all the same type of trick. But the difference is: Nam June's work is more open to chance and for me it's more structured, more under control. For Nam June it's like if you have an orchestra and every instrument plays every note that it possibly can and at the same time, just to see what happens. And for my work I use only the effects which will communicate the medium that I'm looking for.

I use it whenever it's necessary and Nam June uses everything that's possible.

HENRY FLYNT NEW YORK

For Paik-Mosaic, 1993

In his 1963 Avant-garde Hinduism document, Paik says, "I am just more self-conscious or less hypocritical than my anti-artist friends." One must look at the whole paragraph. Paik implies that the practitioners of "happenings" are anti-art, or claim to be.

Who were Paik's *friends* who were anti-art in 1963? Where was the tidal wave of anti-art which Paik opposed by declaring his traditionalism? Why were people so willing to credit this menace of anti-art? Surely I was the only activist with a real anti-art position.

SIMONE FORTI

A king and a master musician

(published in: A handbook in motion, Halifax/New York, S. 114)

One day I was having dinner at Nam June Paik's house. He was talking about one of the classical histories of China. He picked up a volume and started translating the page it opened to. The story was about a king and a master musician. The king commanded the musician to play for him the saddest music in the world. The musician refused, saying that the king was not ready to hear it, and that therefore it would be disastrous. But the king insisted. The musician played, and the king was overwhelmed by the beauty of the music. When the musician stopped playing, he told the king he had not played the very saddest music in the world. The king insisted again on the very saddest, and again the musician refused, repeating that the king was not ready to hear it and that it would be disastrous for the entire kingdom. But still the king insisted. As the musician started to play, three dark cranes appeared in the sky, and flew down to the gates of the palace. At this point Nam June closed the book. I don't know the rest of the story.

MARTIN FRIEDMAN NEW YORK
Contribution to the Nam June Paik catalogue
1993

In 1967, the Walker Art Center presented an exhibition "Light Motion Space" that sought to illuminate the breadth of the burgeoning art and technology movement. Nam June Paik's contribution was an antique, blond wood television set heavily doctored with magnets that wildly distorted the flood of images on its screen. I especially remember one of President Nixon's face that kept expanding, contracting, and changing color in a disturbing fashion.

Shortly after the exhibition opened, Paik's video monitor emitted a mournful pop, rapidly

filling the gallery with acrid smoke and instantly emptying it of visitors. When I phoned Paik in New York to report the tragedy, there was a long period of silence. Within only hours, it seemed, he arrived in Minneapolis and, after feverishly tinkering with his creation, soon had it humming again.

A year or so later I received a letter from Nam June advising me that he was applying for a Rockefeller Foundation grant that could save him from starvation. "Please, Mr. Friedman, do not expose me," he wrote. Of course I didn't, and evidently neither did anyone else. He got the grant.

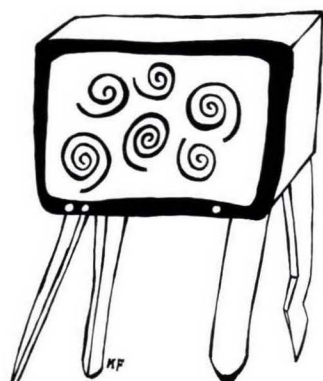


SI FRIEL NEW YORK
April 5, 1993

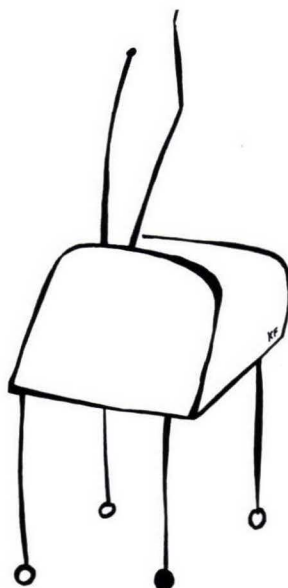
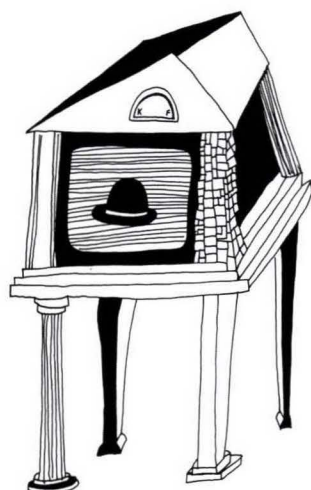
GRACE GLUECK NEW YORK

Piece for Nam June Paik mosaic, 1993

When I first met Nam June Paik in New York twenty-five years ago, I could hardly understand a word he said. His English and my Korean did not jibe. But his unkempt appearance (he still does not button his sleeves), his clever maneuverings with television sets – including his performances with Charlotte Moorman – and the two brilliant ideas a minute that he somehow managed to get across to me convinced me that he was a genius. And I have never had occasion to change my mind.



KEN FRIEDMAN OSLO
Four drawings about video, March 31, 1993





- Dear NJP, some of our
digitalized chickens
are underestimated
or overestimated. -
Best wishes,
K. O. Götz

K.O. GOETZ/RISSA

NIEDERBREITBACH-WOLFENACKER

Für Nam June Paik von K.O. Götz und Rissa 4.3.1993



- Hedgehogs do not eat
electronic chickens -

Rissa

**SHALOM GOREWITZ NEW YORK
Paik 500, 1993**

I wasn't stunned when he approached wearing the computer belt around his waist. Caught in a personal upheaval, I'd just returned from Haiti where the sewers run open in the street. This is the real shit. His feet were lifted off the ground as he searched for the next images. Trickster, playing games with the invisible, releasing synthetic waves, touching the electronics without getting shocked. In Haiti, we went through the City of the Sun. Children playing in garbage, in the mud around the public toilets. Art reinvented. We exchange faces by twisting dials or by running fingers through the key. We fly low over Attica and try to swoop the prisoners to freedom with the blasting camcorder trigger. Breaking things, tearing print, blurring distinctions. Travel, always travel, keep moving. In Haiti, the boat called Deliverance is at the end of the road; trashpods blanket sea. I ask the teacher how to make video induce the scent sense. He pointed at pentacles, five by fifty, buzzing a pyramidal palette. Beautiful Japanese models march across the burning flag. I've never seen it, but can imagine. There is a myth about creation. Hunting mushrooms quietly detailing. Don't try to explain what can't be explained. He called me a Stony Point hippy. He drove slowly through the streets of L.A., never taking the freeway,

always following a circuitous route, always finding his way home. Sleeping. Intrigue. The night the house was busted. The trial. The crooked deal the judge made. The key to the Catholic girls' school where he hid his inventions. I'm tired of you telling me to "take the dog out". The robot dominates the street. The city pulses with radioactive waves. Determinacy, chance; multimedia; energism; orgasmic media. In the US there is a waste disposal problem. Everyone is very polite, they sleep on the job, dreaming measures of interracial romance. I'm not surprised by his mix of English, Korean, German, and Japanese. The artists' eyes darted, as though watching everything with continuous sweep. In Haiti, this is part paranoia, part reality: the spy lurks on the corner, spirits materialize in the air. Meanings are reduced to economic imperatives. The bank battery fueled by the muse. Network newtalk is multilingual. It's not the words, it's the action. They follow the zodiac's spiderweb flames easing the global traverse, through the neighborhoods, terminating at the exit channel where the projections of the communication patterns trigger interlacing zigzag lines bouncing beams of pounding light slamming commercial messages, spraying concepts that collapse with thought (it is about experience). The buildings sag, dead fish piled on the corner, ideological parasites spill with a quick leak as light

streams through a language that doesn't waste power by making noise, heart beating prized possession, infused with the same electronic flood, it was recurrent, standard, the snakes swirled around stones providing information about eliminating meanings, the incoherent phrases, the language of nature, stellar, slash, the same principles, walking on the street, very conspicuous, switching, cutting.

ANTJE VON GRAEVENITZ

AMSTERDAM/KÖLN

"My Faust" von Nam June Paik

Das Negative schlägt in eine positive Qualität um: man erkannte, was man nicht erkannte – ganz im Sinne des Faust-Mythos – und man sah auch: Der Strom nicht ablassender Bilder gehört ganz dem Fernsehen und scheint nicht wirklich für jemanden gemacht. Paik verglich diese technische Natur dennoch mit der Natur, als er an anderer Stelle über Video-Spiele äußerte: "Die Veränderung um der Veränderung willen ... und das ist das Wesentliche unseres Stoffwechsels ... wie der Mond und die Gezeiten." Die nicht zu entschlüsselnde Information, die allgemeine Konfusion bleibt als ein Gleichnis für Vergänglichkeit übrig, das dann wohl in Bedeutung, daß heißt in Information umschlägt.

Natur und Technik gleichen sich; sie sind für Paik kein Dualismus. Damit steht er auf einer Linie mit Martin Heideggers Auffassung, den dieser in einem Vortrag vom 27. Juni 1957 in der Stadthalle Freiburg über "Den Satz der Identität" äußerte. Der Philosoph betrachtete darin Natur und Technik nicht als Gegensätze wie sonst üblich, sondern definierte beide gemeinsam als zum Sein gehörend. Im selben Jahr begann Paik bei Wilhelm Fortner in Freiburg zu studieren. Wenn er auch vielleicht Heideggers Festvortrag nicht persönlich gehört hat, so konnte er doch die Schallplattenaufnahme davon kennen. Heideggers Worte könnten Paik in den Ohren geklungen haben: "Auch Technik ist Sein, gehört zum Sein, gehört nicht nur dem Menschen, gehört zum Sein." Schon 1963 formulierte Paik Sätze, die durchaus an Heidegger anzuknüpfen scheinen:

In meinem experimentellen TV meint das Wort QUALITÄT nur

CHARAKTER und nicht WERT

A ist verschieden von B,
was nicht heißt, daß

A besser ist als B.



HANS HAACKE *Souvenir an einen jungen Koreaner im Schloß Morsbroich, 1960*

OTTO HAHN PARIS

Nam June Paik – Interview, 1992

You frequently use the figure of Buddha in your videos. Why? Are you a Buddhist?

No, I'm an artist. And not a particularly religious one at that, I use Buddha as a symbol which I find easy to work with.

Some people link your work to the Zen philosophy.

Because I'm a friend of John Cage, people tend to see me as a Zen monk. But I also like Johann Sebastian Bach and, when I listen to his music, I feel something close to transcendence. Communists, if there are any left in the world, must also share the same feeling. Even Georges Marchais forgets his materialism when he listens to Bach. I'm not a follower of Zen but I react to Zen in the same way as I react to Johann Sebastian Bach.

Do you know Knokke?

Yes, I've been aware of Knokke for a long time. I was invited to take part in the Festival of Free Expression in 1968 but I wasn't able to make it. In 1974 I received an invitation from Jacques Ledoux, then director of the Cinémathèque at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels. He was showing underground films there at that time. Ledoux was the only person spending any money on alternative cinema. I showed my "TV Buddha" at this festival. I also wrote my essay on the video in Belgium. It was published in the Christmas '74 edition of the Knokke-Heist magazine. In it I discussed a discovery which still influences my work. At the time I was preoccupied by the ancient theory of "mimesis" which maintains that sculpture imitates forms, painting imitates idols, that music imitates bird song.

And I asked myself, "What does video imitate?" I discovered that the art of video imitates the essence of time passing. The French language contains very interesting expressions, such as "faire passer le temps" or "le temps se passe bien ou mal". In English you can't say "time passed itself". The Germans say "Zeit vergeht". Time slips away. Only French grammar manages to accommodate the concepts of video.

Do you apply these theories in your exhibits at the Casino?

I'm showing four characters of universal stature at the Casino Knokke: Leonardo da Vinci, Galileo, Newton and Darwin. It's a form of paying homage to them but expressed using contemporary technology. I am also presenting a work on a Egyptian bas-relief that I bought in New York. Video enables me to go

back in time; I can bring the past into the present and plunge the present back three thousand years into the past. Television is the only medium which allows you to metamorphose and feedback time.

JOHN G. HANHARDT NEW YORK
Remembering the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1982 April 13, 1993



Opening Whitney 4/29/82

Photos Francene Keery

Courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art

JAMES HARITHAS
FORWARD, January 1973

(published in: Videa 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik 1959–1973, The Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York)

Nam June Paik's pioneering vision of a global art based on television technology is becoming a reality. Following his decade-old lead, increasing numbers of artists on several continents are experimenting with the medium. Video art is also becoming a crucial issue for museums, E. T. V. stations and other institutions, such as foundations and universities and is beginning to reach significant audiences in various parts of the world.

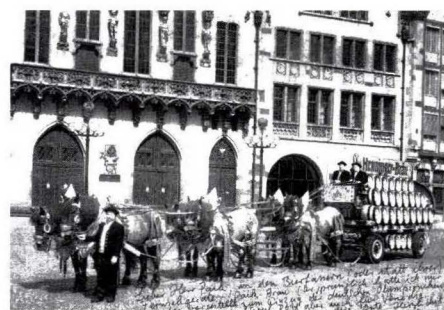
Paik continues to make new and increasingly important contributions to these developments through his writings, exhibits, and T. V. performances.

As an artist, Paik's work encompasses a wide range of video expressions and visionary theoretical speculations. He creates aesthetically complex video tapes and performance events which are characterized by a profoundly imaginative use of the medium as well as by an indeterminism which has roots in Zen Buddhism and in contemporary Western philosophy and science. Paik also researches and invents his own cybernetic tools. The most ambitious are the Robot K-456, the video-synthesizer which he developed with Shuye Abe in 1968 and the T. V. cello for Charlotte Moorman in 1971. As art, his video creations are not only profoundly moving and original; they are the structural elements basic to his formulation of an aesthetically motivated video methodology, which Paik terms "videa-videology", and for which he provides a theoretical foundation in his writings. "Videa-videology" is essentially an ontological discipline, one which is meta-creative, and in some of its effects, similar to events or happenings aimed at audience interaction and participation. "Videa-videology" clarifies the relationships of scientific discoveries basic to television (such as frequency modulation of carrier signals and color encoding) creative serendipity and aesthetic input/output.

Paik's aesthetic position is based on broad cultural experiences. In part, his thought and work show the effect of Buddhism, his training in classical and electronic music, his involvement, his penetrating interest in the work of John Cage and Norbert Wiener, among others, and his incessant experimentation with cybernated systems and television.

This volume is the first to document Nam June Paik's important thoughts, letters, essays and interviews as well as his most significant inventions and works of art. It is designed to provide the reader with a real insight into the processes and ideas which are essential to his remarkable contribution to the video field. The volume also forcefully communicates Paik's profound concern that cybernetic media be used constructively to establish a global culture humanely in tune with man's innate creative spirit.

DETLEV HARTMANN PREUNSCHEN
Mein Blatt für das Paik Mosaik
15. März 1993



ALANA HEISS LONG ISLAND
Nam June Paik and the Jitterbug
April 23, 1993

Once, during a late '70s rock-and-roll loft dancing party, I spied Nam June Paik and asked him if he wished to dance. He appeared surprised, even slightly flustered, and replied that he, poor Paik, poor Korean, had a limited knowledge of American popular dance. I immediately offered to teach him any dance he liked. He looked at me wistfully and said he had always to learn ... THE JITTERBUG!

A circle quickly formed around us as word leaked out that Nam June Paik was about to do ... THE JITTERBUG. We approached each other formally and assumed a waltz-related dance position. My role as teacher was fraudulent, as I had no notion of how to do the jitterbug, but felt confident a Korean would know even less.

I moved into a basic Charleston routine, trying to come down solidly on the first and third beats while kicking crosswise short, jerky movements on the second and fourth beats. Paik quickly removed his hands from my waist, placed them on my shoulders, looked

me straight in the eye, and jumped up and down with both feet, on every beat, 1-2-3-4, in something resembling that old suburban favorite, the bunny hop.

However, after being kicked painfully and rhythmically in the shins 14 or 15 times on my second- and fourth-beat cross-kicks, Paik re-adjusted his foot movements to correspond to mine, and did so with great panache. Simultaneously, Paik began a series of curious hand movements, slapping his head and back with one hand, whilst moving his other hand in a strange counter-clockwise circular motion on his tummy.

We were both aware that an even larger crowd had gathered and that we needed a quick and dashing finale. I dropped into the splits; Paik lurched over me, grabbed my arms and hoisted me over his back. (He was panting hard and I understood him to say he had seen this in an old Elvis Presley movie.) We fell into a demented cha-cha for our exit from the large circle. Paik accepted the many congratulations while mopping his brow and saying, "Just a little (pause) jitterbug."

HOTEL TALES

When in Paris, Nam June Paik always stayed at the Louisiane, an overpriced artists' dive with small cramped rooms, no lobby, one public telephone in a dingy foyer, and an arrogant, unhelpful desk staff.

Paik is blissfully content at this hotel; he can't understand the languages around him anyway, enjoys the privacy afforded by the non-delivered messages, and likes the smell of the rotting fish from the market outside.

I was in Paris working on an exhibition, and my assistant, a brilliant but unstable man was ensconced in the corner room, a room usually occupied by Paik. My exhibition was a frustrating and demanding one, and late one night, my colleague, overwhelmed by a combination of drugs, drink and fatigue, had a physical confrontation with one of the artists at the hotel which caused him to have a nervous breakdown.

I was called at home by the irate hotel manager and arrived to find the hotel in some disarray, my assistant naked but for a towel tied around his waist and speaking into the receiver of the lobby telephone, which he had ripped out of the wall. The other guests had all wisely retreated to their rooms and locked their doors, but as I chased my colleague up and down the three flights of stairs trying to grab him, I saw Paik in his robe sitting on the stairs calmly watching us. Up and down I went, passing Nam June several times in the

process. At last I got a grip on my assistant's leg and maneuvered him into a corner position. Paik got up and walked quietly to his room, saying to me as he passed, "You are always doing the JITTERBUG!"

MARRIAGE AND TELEVISION

My first husband and I separated and I decided to buy myself a costly self-indulgent present. As I expected to be alone a great deal, I chose entertainment over service, i.e., a color television instead of a refrigerator. Always a believer in experts, I telephoned Nam June Paik to ask him to choose a T.V. set for me. He seemed confused and I tried to explain the situation several times. Finally I said, "I want to buy a T.V. to replace my husband. What model should I buy?" Paik laughed hysterically and said, "What model was your husband?"

(He liked this joke so much he would often embarrass me by introducing me as the lady who replaced her American husband with a Japanese television. Fortunately, his English is so bad that no one can ever understand him, but I'm sure many Koreans know this story.)

JON HENDRICKS NEW YORK
"Collage", April 1993



MARIANNE HESKE OSLO Paik-Petrifaction Tafjord, April 1993



DICK HIGGINS NEW YORK

A letter, 17. 2. 1993

Once I was at a public art discussion panel on which were both John Cage and Nam June Paik. As usual Paik's contributions to the discussion were interesting and succinct, though at that time, perhaps the early 1970's, Cage was far better known. Someone in the audience asked Cage the very stupid question, "Mr. Cage, if you were to die tomorrow, what do you think you'd miss most?"

Without hesitating, Cage replied: "The conversation of Nam June Paik."

I know what he meant.

RALPH HOCKING NEW YORK

Contribution, March 28, 1993

Paik, what can I say about you? I have tons of your detritus dating back twenty-some years. I could show you you-from old tv sets to the old clothes you left here at various times. I don't throw anything out, just build buildings to put it in. When you called the other day I asked you if you wanted this to be good or bad. You said bad. Predictable. I have been worrying for days, trying to come up with something bad. It hasn't been easy. Damn little of our relationship has been bad.

I finally remembered the time you deliberately broke one of my machines in the name of "art". During a performance at Binghamton University in the early seventies, you smashed a beautiful tiny grand-piano with a dancing lady on top. I had just gotten the thing and hadn't had time to savor it. It was a player piano with a punched paper roll inside just like the big ones and showed great promise as an idea irritant. It was even made in Japan. You asked to borrow it. I told you ok if you didn't hurt it. Hurt it? You fucking destroyed it. I stomped out of your performance and wouldn't speak to you for months. I was pissed. Art hell. Fluxes, Shmuxes. You can only push people from Ohio so far and then we become Ohioans.

A package arrived one day and inside was a smashed violin. You outfoxed me. How could I stay mad? But I haven't forgotten and I will never forgive you. If you die first, I am going to bury the piano with you. If I die first I will leave it to you hoping that you will be haunted by the fact of what you did. Just wait 'til you die. Or I die. If we die. You'll see.

PETER HOENISCH KÖLN

einst Sony/heute RTL, 1993

Seit der Paik-Retrospektive 1976 im Kölnerischen Kunstverein weiß ich, wie spannend das Medium Fernsehen und seine Gerätschaften zur Vermittlung künstlerisch intellektueller Botschaften eingesetzt werden können. Dafür bin ich Nam June Paik dankbar. Ich empfand es immer als Glück, ihn in den Jahren seither – über Sony – unterstützen zu können, von einzelnen Projekten über documenta VII bis hin zur "Video Art 89" in Köln und Berlin. Er hat mir mit folgendem Brief gedankt:

"Dear Hoenisch Since 77 you changed the course of Video Art History and dabei art History itself. 3 drawings small geschenk for 3 Million \$ donation. Paik 89."

Ich werde – nun über RTL – mit Vergnügen seine Arbeit auf der Biennale 93 in Venedig unterstützen.

SHINJA HONG SEOUL

A Blind Audience, 1993

I'm a dancer and one needs an eye to appreciate my trade. There's a time when I appreciate more a blind audience that one thousand with open eyes. Nam June Paik is such a case. He said he attended my performances several times but each time he slept away the whole duration of my laughter.

He could have given a definition of art if he so wished, but instead of saying yes, he simply said no. No was more honest answer than yes in this context. In fact, everybody lives his own life, but if one were to be asked what was life, they all laugh it away. Man lives his life before giving definition to life.

PONTUS HULTEN

Paik's manipulation, 1968

Paik's manipulation of the TV set has the subtle brutality of judo, which turns someone's own force against himself. It is a direct frontal attack on the principal modern machine for manipulating men's minds for commercial or ideological reasons. Paik's counter-terrorism is, of course, based on ridicule.

Only someone who had been deeply involved with the possibilities of the television medium could handle it with such precision. Paik has, in fact, a great faith in TV:

Someday artists will work with capacitors, resistors & semi-conductors as they work today with brushes, violins and junk.

I have treated cathode ray tube (TV screen) as a canvas, and proved that it can be a superior canvas. From now on, I will treat the cathode ray as a paper and penn ... If Joyce lived today, surely he would have written "Finnegan's Wake" on videotape, because of the vast possibility of manipulation in magnetic information storage.

BYUNG-KI HWANG SEOUL

A Very Eccentric Man, 1993

On a certain day in the autumn of 1967, I had made a dinner date with Nam June Paik at a Chinese restaurant near the Pennsylvania Station in New York City. I arrived there at the appointed time and waited for his arrival. He came a little later than the appointed time in full dress with a necktie. He was sweating profusely. Because he was carrying with him a very weighty sack of what looked like flour. "What's this?" I asked him. He was to visit his friend on Long Island after dinner. He said "please open it if you're curious". I opened it to find the sack was full of earth. Although I laughed, I was inwardly very much surprised. In the midnight he was bringing a sack of earth as a gift to his friend on Long Island. I thought that he was indeed an eccentric man, a natural eccentric like earth which is not contaminated by man-made filth.

►
Peking Man, 1992

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Java Man, 1992

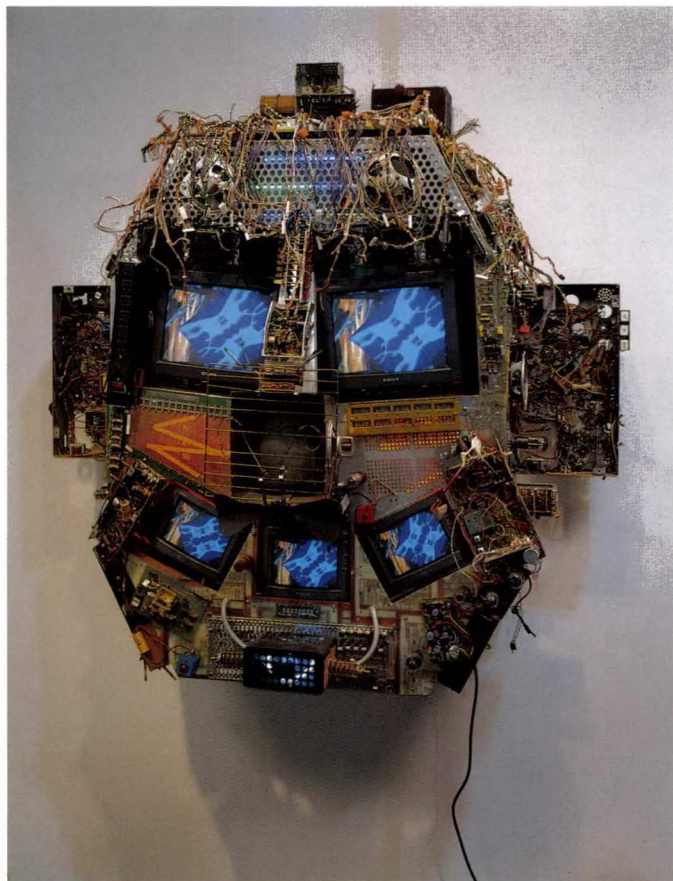
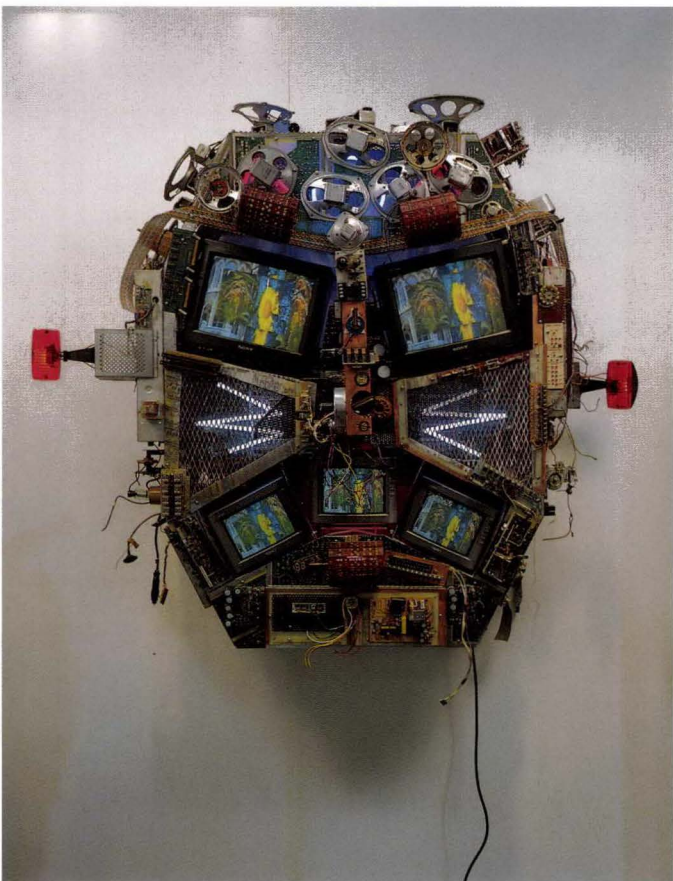
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

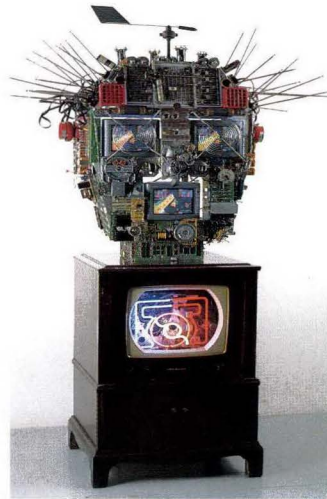
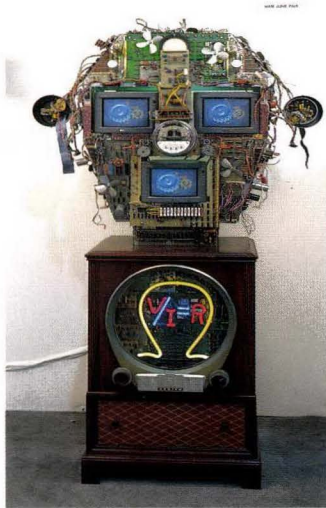
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Ohm, 1992

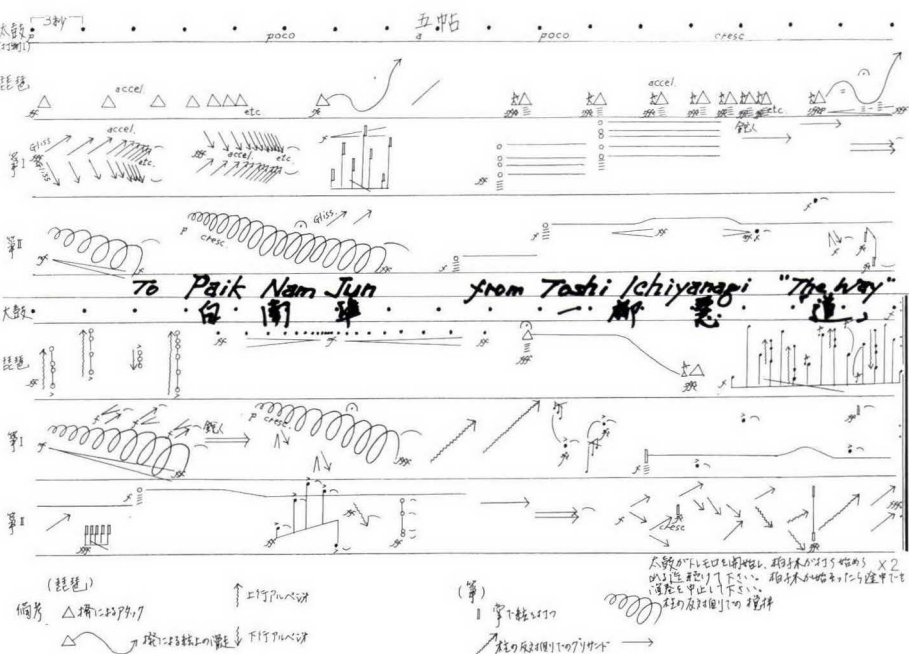
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Faraday, 1992

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati







TOSHI ICHIYANAGI TOKYO To Paik Nam June from Toshi Ichianagi "The Way", 1993

TAKAHIKO IIMURA TOKIO

The Happening of Arrest by Paik, 1993

Among happenings by Paik, the memorable one is the scene of arrest in the "Opera Sextronic" performed at Cinematheque in New York, 1966 – Jonas Mekas was its director. It is a very famous happening where Charlotte Moorman attached tiny TV monitors on her breast and played the cello, namely the back of nude Paik. Then the policeman came in, and put handcuffs on Moorman. It was such real happening that some people enjoyed the scene without knowing that the policeman was not a performer but a real one. I had just arrived at New York, so I was very confused and in dumb surprise among the people who protested against the police. In enthusiasm, I wrote a report for a Japanese magazine.

JAY ISELIN NEW YORK

A letter, January 1st

nam June
a few of the intercontinental glitches only added to the excitement and the spontaneity of your dazzling welcome party for 1984 – and the age of Orwell – from New York, the latest Paik creation was a stunning achievement and delightful event – congrats and thank for launching the new year so propitiously.

HIROE ISHII TOKYO

With Heartful Thanks to Mr. Paik, 1993

It was in 1981 when the idea to organize the exhibition of Mr. Paik in Japan came across my mind. I was yearning to see the video art pieces directly as I had only information through books, and I also felt eager to acquaint Japanese people with how fascinating the video art is. I talked over my idea with Mr. Yurugi, curator of The Metropolitan Museum of Tokyo, and Mr. Nanjo, art critic, to make a proposal to the museum's exhibition project meeting. In 1982, the project plan was adopted by the museum fortunately, and Sony accepted the request for equipment support. Thus the retrospective exhibition of "Mostly Video Nam June Paik" (1984) was realized in Tokyo.

At that time, there were few experts to install the video art pieces, therefore Mr. Yurugi appealed to the art students to participate in the installation. It was a voluntary job, but they felt gratified to assist Mr. Paik in his work. However great an artist is, he or she could not accomplish the art work alone. All of us shared a feeling, that is, the pleasure to take part in the art work of Mr. Paik.

After that exhibition, I produced the video soft "SAT-ART III", 3 volumes, contained in a box made of paulownia and wrapped with furushiki, Japanese style wrapping cloth. Though being overwhelmed with the great-

ness of Mr. Paik as an artist, I have been always touched with his warmhearted personality. Now I am much obliged for having got acquainted and for having been able to realize some projects with him.

ARATA ISOZAKI

A robot, 1988

Nam June made a robot, which can shit and piss and fall down. When Nam June made a huge wrapping paper to wrap around the world in the Satellite telecast, it has a few holes in it, so that we can creep in ...

JUNJI ITO

Satellite Orchestra, 1986

(published in: *Assate Light*, 1986)

In retrospect, it seems clear that Paik's satellite art originated from ideas already present in his work "Tricolor Video" exhibited in 1981 at Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. At the time, I was fortunate enough to be living in the same Paris apartment block as was Paik and to see at first hand the creation of "Tricolor Video" in progress. It was a breathtaking experience to see the contrast of the high technological process and its aesthetic effect. Four hundred systematically aligned TV monitors were divided into four piece units each projecting four types of video tapes. The tricolors – red, white and blue – were floating in wave like shapes through each of the monitors in succession. There were two remarkable aspects to this work: the synergistic effect of these elements; and the limitation of the images to terminal surfaced and the networking of their multiplication which allows us to grasp the importance of the imaginative element central to its concept. There is another aspect that should not be overlooked: the establishment of a temporal axis charged into the tricolor waves. Throughout the history of the fine arts, the problem of "time" has remained unsolved until the emergence of video art. Time always passes in the world external to that of a work of art. Art and society have always been separated by the impossibility of sharing time. This has been, without doubt, one of the great shortcomings of the realistic trends that followed the beginning of Modernism.

Reflecting historically, it is clear that the style of performance that developed from the Dadaists' soirée were, at the beginning of the 20th century, seen as a revolutionary phenomenon – as were the objects of Marcel Duchamp. Both were attempts to incorporate

the dynamism of time: the former by abandoning the conventions of form in a work of art, and the latter by transforming the very notion of what constituted a work of art. Similarly it would not be unreasonable to recognize in the repetition of tricolor waves on the final images surfaces of Paik's work the *raison d'être* of video art.

When one analyses "Tricolor Video" from this perspective, it is easy to show how this image monument became a significant landmark for the development of satellite art. For example, while it is a work that presents pictorial images, it breaks with historical conventions of the two-dimensional picture plane. Now, the canvas surface has been replaced by the video monitor surface. Antithetical to consistency in expressive function by its very nature, the video monitor strictly maintains its autonomy as an object while processing its changing images within a temporal framework. In other words, the monitor's constant fluctuation between the categories of "art" and "object" defines it as a ready-made articulated by time. Furthermore, since changes in the monitor's surface values are the consequence of changes in the electric signal, the signal itself must be seen as the source of art and ultimately art itself. This signal – this invisible being.

"Tricolor Video" is one of Paik's most representative works of video art. Because technology theoretically allows the infinite multiplication of images (as long as the signal can reach the monitor surfaces) the meeting of Paik's Duchampian concept with modern technology is inevitably directed towards the ultimate self-expansion. "Good Morning Mr. Orwell" is video art that holds the possibility for infinite surfaces, unfixed spatial expansion and a complex notion of time that breaks from the limitations of video art itself to become digital art. The ultimate purpose in the exercise is to show that, even more important than the pictures projected on the monitor screens, the possibility of receiving these "art-signals" is wholly dependant upon the presence of the monitor itself.

SUKHI KANG SEOUL

A Real Pornography, 1993

In September 1969, I commissioned Namjune to compose a music for the first modern music festival I was organizing in Seoul. He sent over a sex music entitled "Composition" dedicated to me. In this music, a man and a woman lie down on the piano, play the instrument with their feet, pull down the panty and

make love, and when the woman under the man has an orgasm she pounds the keys rapidly with her feet and this sound is amplified like breathing. This was the first link between Namjune and I.

TAI HEE KANG SEOUL

Different from other video artists ..., 1993

Different from other video artists like Douglas Davis who made an attempt to get a new video communication via satellite, Nam June Paik tries to communicate with as many people as possible under the common and objective notion using video.

His thoughts are like this: video is basically a media of communication and an artist's performance is to fulfil the duty of cultural messenger between the different cultures. And this is one of his "VISA" series started in 1970. "Media Shuttle; Moscow/New York" 1978 or "You can't lick the stamps in China", those video tapes also belonged to the series. It will be too long a story to talk about that all now, but his satellite shows of 1980's always mean the possibilities of cultural exchange between the East and the West.

The greatest result from those shows is that Nam June Paik's personal messages are spread all over the world. Do we need a comparison? There is a similar series of Rauschenberg called "ROCI" – introduction and exhibition of primitive cultures to the West – but the effects are totally different since his works are based on traditional painting and combine procedure, on the contrary, Nam June Paik's performances are usually based on using mass media.

Joining Cage has great meaning in Nam June Paik's early age of artistic career. On the other hand, being with Beuys who has a strong obsession for Shamanism – is closely connected to his future career.

We expect his cultural and anthropological interest to be extended over the Ice Age or the Stone Age, of course, it matters the East and the West at the same time.

He claims himself Antenna of whole mankind and his vision is a lot more than a little artist's body.

It is a great dream of him towards the future of humankind.

ALLAN KAPROW

Nam June Paik, 1968

Nam June Paik wurde uns in den frühen sechziger Jahren als Kulturterrorist bekannt.

HYUN JA KIM SEOUL

In his greatness ..., 1993

I saw him last August for the first time when he joined me for "Nam June Paik's Performance & Kim Hyun Ja's Dancing". I was a lot prepared on my own to see this great master of art. But when I confronted him, I was astonished at his naivety and simplicity.

After that, I've seen him only a few times, but whenever I am in front of him, I feel great mountains in him and the feeling doesn't come from any other man. It is his energy only, a huge and marvelous spirit coming from a deep space.

I was almost absorbed in it. It was a shock. It took time for me to think about that. It is his driving force and now it becomes Nam June Paik.

If he suddenly gives up his art and explores another field whatever, he would succeed in it anyway without fail.

I really envy him. He has his own generative power in him and makes great steps in his life.

HYUNSOOK KIM SEOUL

King Koi of Paekche Kingdom, 1993

While we were preparing for his "Nam June Paik Videotime – Videospace" exhibition in 1992, I received a fax from him asking me to obtain a copy of The Reminiscences of the Three Kingdoms. I simply wondered why of all the books theses ancient legends and history of Korea?

When the preparation for the exhibition had almost been made, there was no mention of the book. I simply thought the book was cancelled out. However, just one day before the opening of the exhibition, he asked me to produce a section of Kind Koi of Paekche from the reminiscences. When I opened up the section for him, he tore a page from the book, and transcribed Chinese characters on a large wooden horse from the torn page. I was disappointed at seeing his easy-going attitude. He began to say abruptly:

"I chose a Paekche king as a gesture for reconciliation with the people from the Honam region." Originally I thought of the Regent Namjune has ever raised during the school days.



SONGWU KIM SEOUL

My Art is How Best to Play, 1993

I hang up the first New York Times review of my work at this exhibition. At the time the reviewer, Grace Glueck asked me, "Why do you do this kind of work?" I retorted to her, "I have to do something simply to beat off ennui." She made this the headline of her story. The more a society is being industrialized, the more man is being deprived of his work. We've to create something which makes our life happy. And then, how best to play? My art can be summed up as how best to play. This is a surrealist theme of aimless behavior. My earlier works of happening came back to me, this time in the guise of electronics. I'm not a sentimentalist. But when you went out to the New York street at eleven in the evening, buy a newspaper, go to a Korean restaurant by a taxi, eat a beef and rice soup with a dish of sliced radish kimchi, or a bowl of abalone gruel, then you feel reassured that you are treading on earth. When I was growing up, there were in my country Korea so many patriots that I made up my mind not to become one myself. I will find contentment in my becoming a specialist in a certain field.

WON KIM SEOUL

A Wrong Letter in a Right Address, 1993

I corroborated with Nam June Paik in erecting the 1,000-TV-set Spiral Tower (The More, The Better) in the National Museum of Contemporary Arts in Seoul. Later I received a letter from him. The envelope was addressed to me but the letter itself was addressed to the Mayor of the Special City of Seoul. The gist of the letter was: Kim Won is a talented architect, therefore should be commissioned to draw the plan for the Municipal Museum. Of course, his proposal was not adopted. Later when I was drawing a masterplan for the redevelopment of the P'il-dong area in Seoul, I proposed to the city government of Seoul to establish a Nam June Paik Museum on the site. This proposal of mine was also rejected.

HONG HEE KIM-CHEON
The psychological medium, 1989
 (published in: Nam June Paik's Video art: Participation-TV as an extension of Happening – a postmodern practice, A thesis in the

Department of Art History, presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts at Concordia University Montréal, Québec, Canada March 1989, p. 125-127)

Verlaine wrote: "It rains in my heart, as it rains in the city." I say: "It rains in my computer, as it rains in my heart" – "Il pluit [sic] dans mon ordinateur" will be my first piece. It is the mix of real rain and simulated rain in the computer. My second piece will be called "La ordinateur sentimentale."

The Baudelairean correspondence between art and nature in Verlaine's verse is being transformed by Paik into a McLuhanesque correspondence between machine art and human nature, a "cyberneted video sphere." As Jacques Lacan noted, the anthropomorphism of the machine was manifest in the case of the automobile:

The relation between this Homo psychologicus and the machines he uses are striking, and this is especially so in the case of motor car. We get the impression that his relationship to these [sic] machines is so very intimate that it is almost as if the two were actually conjoined – its mechanical defects and

breakdowns often parallel his neurotic symptoms. Its emotional significance for him comes from the fact that it exteriorizes the protective shell of his ego ...

Jean Baudrillard regards this close interconnection between the machine-object and the user-subject as a symptom of the communication era of "screen and network". For him, the fascination for the "obscene" communication – a type of communication occurring not from a scene but only from an off-scene, transmitting information in total transparency and visibility due to the "harsh and inexorable light of information and communication" – creates a "state of terror" of an "unclean promiscuity", where one experiences a "too great proximity of everything". This fascination is symptomatic of schizophrenia; the same schizophrenia that Fredric Jameson refers to as an "historical amnesia", a "fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents" characteristic of the postindustrial consumer society.

HOWARD KLEIN

Paik und die Rockefeller Foundation, 1991

Über fünfzehn Jahre hat Paik mich und damit die Rockefeller Foundation mit seinen praktischen und visionären Ideen beliefert. Ich kombiniere die beiden Wörter "praktisch" und "visionär" bewußt, weil damit die Verbindung hervorgehoben wird, die die gemeinnützigen Einrichtungen brauchen, um ihr Mandat zu erfüllen. Zahlreiche seiner Ideen blieben leider – weiterer konkurrierender Interessen der Rockefeller Foundation wegen – auf dem Papier, andere kamen jedoch zur Ausführung.

BILLY KLÜVER

BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NEW JERSEY

A letter, 20. 2. 1993

Dear Paik,

You ended up in New York at the time when the locals didn't welcome foreigners. Nobody really knew about your universities in Germany. When I saw you and your robot on the sidewalk of the north side of 57th Street, it was wonderful, but I don't think I understood how wonderful it was. You were far ahead of me.

I do remember making a midnight requisition of a very heavy (3 kilos or more) and very strong horseshoe magnet that was sitting under my bench at Bell Laboratories, which I had requested for some experiment that didn't work. You immediately put it up to a television screen and excitedly watched the distortions of the image.

We were sitting at the Mandarin in Paris a few months ago, you had completed your impeccable installation of the Arc de Triomphe at Beaubourg, while I was struggling with the uncertainties and electronic problems of Robert Rauschenberg's "Oracle". You told me, "Billy, you do one-of-a-kind technology, and I do off-the-shelf technology." But, Paik, where are we heading? I still remember the robot on 57th Street.

Love,

Billy.

MILAN KNÍŽÁK PRAG

6 stories on Paik, 1993

1

Když jsem v roce 1968 přijel do New Yorku, tak jsem si koupil malou televizi, abych se pomocí sledování programů rychle učil angličtinu.

George Maciunas, který pro mne televizi vybíral, mne jí podal se slovy: "Nikdy jí nepuštěj Paikovi. Všechny televize zničí."

(Als ich im Jahre 1968 nach New York kam, habe ich mir einen Fernseher gekauft, damit ich mit Hilfe verschiedener Programme schneller Englisch lernen konnte.

George Maciunas [der den Fernsehapparat ausgewählt hatte] hat ihn mir mit den Worten übergeben: "Leiht niemals dem Paik einen Fernseher aus. Er zerstört alle Fernseher.")

2

Paik je v podstatě módní tvůrce. Myslím tvůrce módy, poněvadž používá oděvní součásti zcela netradičním způsobem a tak vlastně tvoří jejich nový design. Všichni, co Nam June známe, víme o jeho košilích a svetrech omotaných kolem krku, pentlích od spodku plazících se po zemi a obrácených límcích. Ze všeho nejvíce mne Paik připomíná rockovou hvězdu. Něco jako Bowie nebo Madonna.

(Paik ist im Grunde ein Modeschöpfer. Ich denke deshalb an einen Modeschöpfer, weil er Kleidungsstücke auf ganz unkonventionelle, nicht traditionelle Art und Weise benutzt und dadurch eigentlich ein neues Design schafft.

Alle, die Nam June kennen, wissen von seinen Hemden und Pullovern, um den Hals gewickelt, von seinen langen Unterhosen, die sich auf der Erde schlängeln, und von seinen nach innen gedrehten Kragen.

Am meisten erinnert er mich an einen Rockstar, etwa wie Bowie oder Madonna.)

3

Ale Paik je ureite hvězda. Je velice chytřejší s velkou kombinační schopností. A samozřejmě dokonalý businessman. Paik dovede do Fluxu dokonale proniknout a zároveň se od něj dokonale distancovat. Zvláště je, že této polaritě si nikdo zvláště nevšimá.

(Aber Paik ist bestimmt ein Star. Er ist sehr intelligent und schlau mit besonderer Kombinationsgabe. Und bestimmt ist er ganz und gar Businessman. Paik versteht den "Fluxus" vollkommen zu durchdringen und sich gleichzeitig von ihm zu distanzieren. Das Besondere daran ist, daß keiner diese Polarität beachtet.)

4

Mám rád Paika.

(Ich habe Paik gern.)

5

Ale někdy mi leze na nervy.

(Aber manchmal geht er mir auf die Nerven.)

6

Nejlínejší STAR PAIK.

(STAR PAIK ist der Faulste.)

► The Twentieth Century

Decades, 1992:

1900–1910

1910–1920

1920–1930

1930–1940

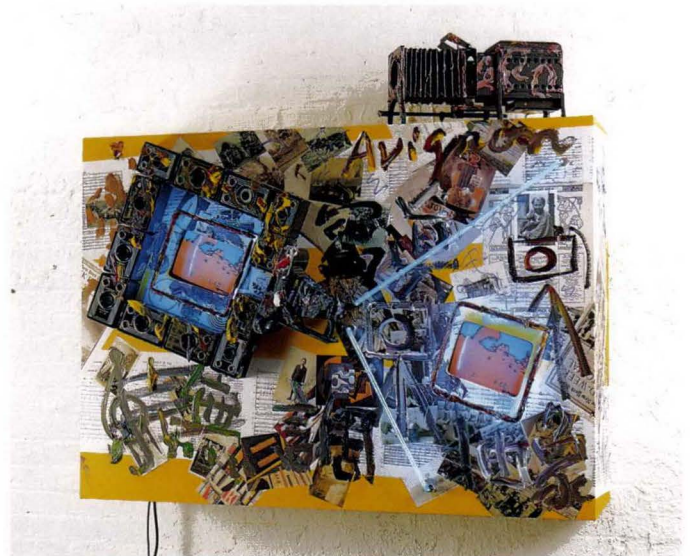
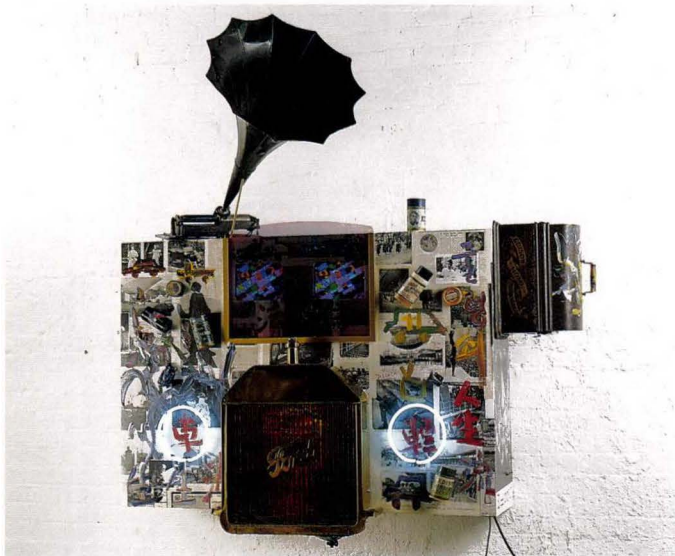
1940–1950

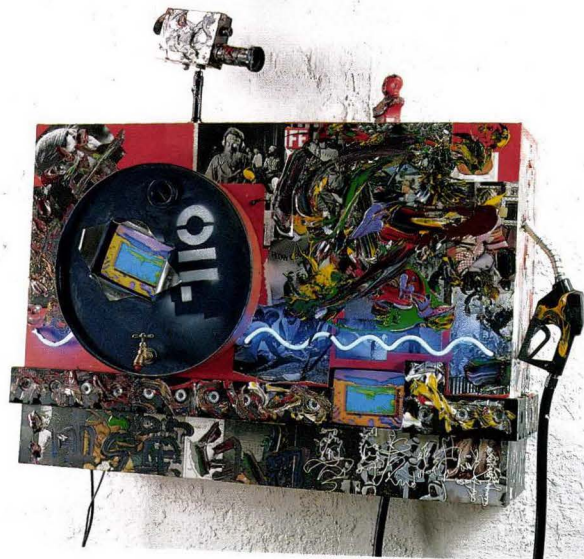
1950–1960

1960–1970

1970–1980

Photo Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati





RICHARD KOSTELANETZ NEW YORK

Paik: remembrance, 1993

I appreciate your invitation to contribute to the Nam June Paik festschrift, which I look forward to seeing, if only because your invitation is open and generous enough to encourage reading surprises rarely offered by exhibition catalogues. Since you've written me just after I've drafted an entry on Paik for A Dictionary of the Avant-Gardes (A Cappella, late 1983) and your book will appear before mine, it seems appropriate to include it here with more recent interpolations, such as this preface, in italics/bold.

PAIK, Nam June (1932). Born in Korea, educated in music in Japan and then Germany, where his work earned support from both John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen, Paik came to America in 1964 as a celebrated young international artist. *I recall meeting him on Canal Street around October 1965.* His initial forte was Electronic Music, thanks to three years of work at a Cologne studio. He was among the first to realize a lesson since lost – that training in high-tech music might be a better preparation for video than education in film and visual art and thus that video programs belong in music schools rather than art schools. After several audacious performance pieces in Europe, many of them in Fluxus festivals, some of them involving genuine danger (e.g., leaving a stage on which a motorcycle engine was left revving, thus filling a small space with increasing amounts of carbon monoxide), Paik installed the first exhibition of the new medium in a gallery in Wuppertal, Germany – thirteen used television sets whose imagery he altered through manipulating the signal through the use of magnets among other techniques.

Though he continued producing audacious live performance art, his video activities had greater impact. Late in 1965, he showed a videotape made with a portable video camera he had purchased earlier that day and soon afterwards had an exhibition that depended upon a videotape recorder. He was among the first artists-in-residence at the Boston Public Television station WGBH, where he also developed a Video Synthesizer that, extending his original video-art principle, could radically transform an image fed into it. Another often-repeated move involved incorporating television monitors into unexpected places, such as on a bra worn by the cellist Charlotte Moorman (1938-92), amid live plants, or in a robot. Into the 1980s, if any exhibition included some video art, the token

representative was usually Paik. Interviewed on national television, he typically embarrassed the program's star-host.

Precisely because the most sophisticated American television stations and private foundations concentrated so much of their resources on Paik's career, there has been reason for both jealousy and disappointment. From the beginning, his art had remarkably few strategies, most of them used repeatedly: performances that are audacious and yet fundamentally silly; tapes that depend upon juxtapositions of initially unrelated images, which is to say collage that had become old-fashioned in other arts; installations that depend upon accumulations of monitors that show either the same image or related images; expected placements of monitors. Nonetheless, Paik was the first video artist to have a full-scale retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

As this sober entry misses his essentially comic sensibility, I recall reading that he „speaks five languages badly,” because all of his New York friends have had the experience of hearing him become excited until whatever he is saying becomes incomprehensible. Even his narcolepsy is turned to humor, my favorite story concerning his request to take a nap in a couch in the office of a museum mounting an exhibition of his work. “Must make some esthetic decisions,” he declared as he dozed off. With such writing as “Danger Music for Dick Higgins” (“Creep into the VAGINA of a living WHALE”) he contributes to the obscure tradition of Conceptual Dance (soon to become an anthology of mine), which is to say choreographic instructions that are best read about, because they cannot easily be done. Caveats notwithstanding, his work and example remain a continuing inspiration to me, among others.

TAKEHISA KOSUGI

To N.J.P., 1965

I came to New York, to teach
“how to be shy...”

SHIGEKU KUBOTA NEW YORK

From Video Birthday Party for John Cage 1974

Video is Vengeance of Vagina

Video is Victory of Vagina

Video is Venereal Disease of Intellectuals

Video is Vacant Apartment

Video is Vacation of Art

Viva Video...

KYUNG-HEE LEE

Prinz und Prinzessin, 1991

Nam June vergnügte sich mit den Bilderbüchern, die er um sich ausgebreitet hatte und die fast den ganzen Raum ausfüllten. Er schaute mich nicht an. Er hatte viele Bilderbücher von Kodansha. Immer wenn ich ihn besuchte war sein Zimmer voll von Bilderbüchern. Es gab viele interessante Bilder in diesen Büchern, und Nam June wußte genau, daß ich die Bilderbücher sehr gern mochte.

Dann endlich waren wir uns nah genug, um die Bilderbücher auf den kleinen Hügel zu tragen und auf einem Stuhl aus Stein nebeneinander sitzend zu lesen. Wir verbrachten einige Zeit zusammen, ohne etwas Wichtiges zu sagen, bis meine Mutter mich zu sich rief.

KYUNGSUNG LEE SEOUL

Art is a Deception? 1993

“Namjune Paik: Videotime-Videospace” was a stunning success and the talk of the town in August 1992. In the evening of the 14th, meet the artist program was held in a 600-man capacity auditorium with more than 800 persons in attendance. The program was conducted in a question and answer session. Many interesting questions and answers were exchanged. Namjune impressed the audience with his honest and unceremonious manner and personality.

When a professor of philosophy asked him “What is art?” he said that honestly he didn’t know what art is. At this the audience broke out into performance. I know he meant. Since he always took so much medication because of his poor health, that medicine drugged him into sleep. Otherwise, his frequent overnight works drive him to catch up his lost sleep. How lovely is it for him who, knowing that he would sleep away the entire time, nevertheless comes to see my performance! He might be the only person who fell sleep during my performance, he nevertheless is the only person who makes me happy. I would like to make a longer work so that he could sleep to his content.

OH-RYONG LEE NEW YORK

An Episode, April 16, 1993

Here I remember an episode which you, Mr. Paik, have told me before. In 1942, when you were in the elementary school in Seoul, there was an assignment to create a contrivance for the Day of Invention. One of your classmates didn’t present anything and he said

that there's nothing to invent because other people had already created everything. You said that this kind of person didn't need avant-garde, for he enjoyed exploring unfamiliar road more than routine way because there were more new and interesting things to watch.

SE DUK LEE SEOUL

About Nam June Paik, 1993

It is not a long time since I saw Nam June Paik. However, I've kept an eye on him for a quite long time seeing his artistic career with keen interest.

He has come a long way here, not so fast but without hesitation, making common language and way of living for our generation.

He doesn't forget his motherland. He is always feeling it inside, being aware of it and cannot get out of it.

We regard him as a man obsessed with Korean traditional shamanism living in Korea itself. He spent quite many years abroad and his nostalgia for his motherland naturally comes out from his every single behavior, from the way he talks and surely from his works. It brings us together being with him as Koreans and we feel the blood and tradition of our own strongly.

WON HONG LEE SEOUL

Unlimited world of art, 1993

Nam June Paik opened an unlimited world of art. He transformed the conception of vision. And he put a wing to the human imagination. We are so deeply touched by his monument in the Seoul National Museum of Contemporary Art which tells us a never-ending story. The name itself is "The more, the better". It is a heavenly world when we look at it down to the ground.

It is the Tower of Babel. When we are in front of it, we travel the wonderland of consciousness with him. That's why we Koreans don't forget Nam June Paik.

He assassinated Big Brother. Accordingly, he set our will free. He assassinated Kipling. He integrated the Orient and the Occident by doing it. He conquered none of these but just made them one. It provided our will with refreshed air just like God created a human being with dust of earth and made them alive by blowing them by the nose. George Orwell, Asian Games and Seoul Olympiad could be a worldwide stage for him, as it could be a great discovery for Koreans.

Nam June Paik lives in our consciousness.

His every single behavior stuns us. Young artists regard him as their future. That's what he did and its fruits are here. He will exist simultaneously in the Orient and in the Occident. We all expect his other world for future.

KIM LEVIN NEW YORK

Two images, March 30, 1993

First, Nam June Paik, the most international of artists – at home in Europe and America, crucial in the early days of Fluxus, inventor of video art, crossing paths with Joseph Beuys and everyone else, part of the recent history of Western art – wandering onto the stage of a huge theater in Seoul last summer, as if oblivious to the standing-room crowds who had come to see his performance. Like a lost urchin, with one suspender slipped from his shoulder, he stood there surveying his audience, bemused, as if he hadn't expected anyone to be there.

Second, Seoul, a frenetic city where every surface seems crammed with the hypnotic urban patterning of flashing signs, geometric hangul lettering, high key color, and consumer goods. A city where ancient traditions remain absolutely intact under an infinitely thin hypermodernized and superwesternized surface. Despite the fact that he has long lived abroad, Paik's work – seen in Seoul, a vast retrospective – became an uncanny expression of the contemporary reality of that city. Or rather, the city echoed his vision. In the context of Seoul, Paik's conflation of state-of-the-art electronic imagery and shamanistic ritual gains another meaning, and suggests that cultural identity can be cumulative. In the context of Paik's art, that city will never look quite the same to me again.

HI JOO LIMB SEOUL

One Candle, 1993

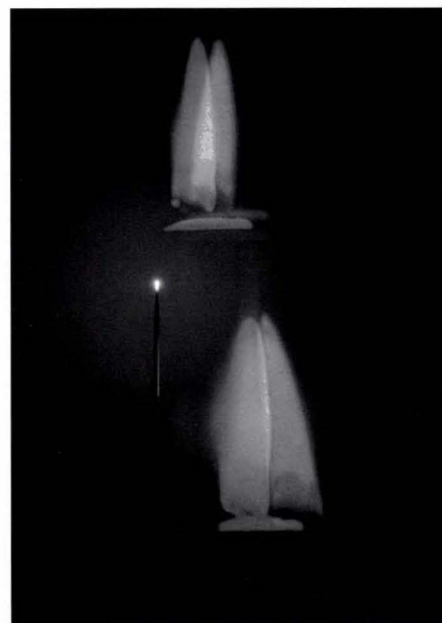
Video installation, 1988

Museum für Moderne Kunst
Frankfurt am Main

Nam June Paik's small exhibition room cornered on the 2nd floor of Frankfurt Museum of Contemporary Art.

It is intentionally lined up with his comrade Joseph Beuys' corner and very tranquil and rather dark in its best condition. One lonely candlelight slightly cast a shadow on the white wall through multi-monitoring.

It is a cozy and homely space for tranquility and meditation.



One Candle, 1988

Space for Silence

Space for Prayer

Beautiful drawing of stillness waves calmly.

Sublime beauty and nobility, mystic space for everlasting contemplation, this is the very spot of an Oriental Nam June Paik and the most civilized technology.

One candle specially holds my soul.

It's just a beautiful poetic work of art.

BARBARA LONDON NEW YORK

Nam June Paik: Visionary, 1993

Over the nineteen years that I have known Nam June Paik, I have seen him in such farflung places as Woodstock, Paris, Düsseldorf, Tokyo, and Seoul. Talking over a bagel, café au lait, hamburger, sushi, or Korean barbecue, I have always been intrigued by the sparkle in his eyes and the complexity of his mind. His perspicaciousness is revealed through his art, as well as by the books he reads, and the newspaper articles he clips and sends his friends. A joy to visit with, he is the most open, generous, and unassuming person I know – a remarkable team player, artist, and businessman.

Paik comes from an ardent culture with traditional "color bar" clothing, hot springs, and friendly mountains. There people are curious and tenacious, and as strong as their kim chi. Like his Mongolian ancestors, Nam June is comfortable out in the world. An international soul, his home is found in both warm and cold climates. A modern man, his being consists of well integrated diversity.

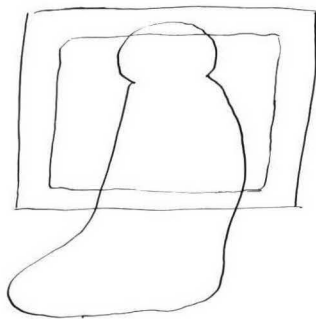
Nam June Paik is an indispensable bridge. Linking past and future, East and West, individual and collective, he is the common ground between video game players and Leonard Bernstein listeners. Now on the eve of a new millennium, he is guiding us as we move from an analog to a digital culture. Paik is the lynch-pin of the Museum's extensive Video Collection. His videotapes, catalogues, articles, and drawings that we own reflect the extraordinary depth, breadth and change found within art-making today.

JACKSON MAC LOW NEW YORK My Favorite Paik, March 18, 1993

It was drawn in india ink directly on a repro-type paper recommended to me by one of my publishers (George Quasha, of Station Hill Press, Barrytown, NY, USA) for printing out my book *42 Merzgedichte in Memoriam Kurt Schwitters* as *camera-ready copy*. Station Hill will publish this 230-page book (written 1987-89) later in 1993. They will reproduce the poems – which are typographically difficult – from camera-ready copy printed out on this same type of paper. So you should have no difficulty in reproducing the drawing.

You will, no doubt, recognize the work to which I allude in the drawing.

My Favorite Paik



Jackson Mac Low
18 March 1993

GINO DI MAGGIO MILANO Breve filastrocca per Nam June Paik (A ditty for Nam June Paik), 1993

Nam June l'orientale, il tedesco, l'americano ma anche un po' l'italiano anzi il napoletano
Nam June il vagabondo del mondo
Nam June il buddista che è anche un po' materialista

Nam June il musicista che fa musica tagliando la cravatta di John Cage come fosse un cordone ombelicale
Nam June il visionario che gioca con le immagini e ha lo stupore del bambino che guarda il suo primo aeroplano
Nam June il futurista che si mangia l'elettronica come il pane quotidiano
Nam June l'utopista che non lo dice ma qualcosa del mondo vorrebbe cambiare
Nam June il sentimentale che pensa: vale la pena provare, ci si può aiutare
Nam June che anche quando dorme ci sa fare
Nam June l'amico che anche se gli fai uno sgarbo fa presto a dimenticare
Nam June il radicale che poi sorride perchè non c'è nulla da drammatizzare
Nam June che per andarlo a New York a trovare un'altra casa ti fa attraversare dopo aver attraversato il mare
Nam June che pensa che al mondo siamo tutti diversi ma anche tutti eguali
Nam June che con il satellite tutto il mondo vorrebbe accomunare
Nam June il non ambizioso che diventa una star mondiale
Nam June il grande artista che ci rallegra ogni giorno con le sue invenzioni straordinarie.

Nam June The Oriental, the German, the American but also a bit the Italian, indeed the Neapolitan
Nam June The world-class vagabond
Nam June The Buddhist with a touch of the materialist
Nam June The musician who makes his music by snipping John Cage's tie, as though it were an umbilical cord
Nam June The visionary who plays with images with the amazement of a child as he faces his first toy airplane
Nam June The Futurist who dines on electronics as though it were his daily bread

Nam June The utopian who refuses to talk about it but still who would make a few changes in the world
Nam June The sentimentalist who harbors the thought: it's worth the effort to try, we can probably help one another
Nam June Who even does a good job sleeping
Nam June The forgiving friend even when you've managed to slight him
Nam June The radical who subsides into smiles becomes one shouldn't overdo it
Nam June Whom you visit in New York by flying across the sea and passing through other people's houses
Nam June Who thinks that everybody on earth is different but equal
Nam June Who would like to make use of satellites to bring the whole world together
Nam June The man of no ambitions who becomes a world famous star
Nam June The great artist who discovers daily happiness in his extraordinary inventions.

►
Pre-Bell Man, 1990
Deutsches Postmuseum, Frankfurt/M.

Photo Timm Rautert

►►
Video-Wall, 1992
Chase Bank, Manhattan

Photo B. Thurman



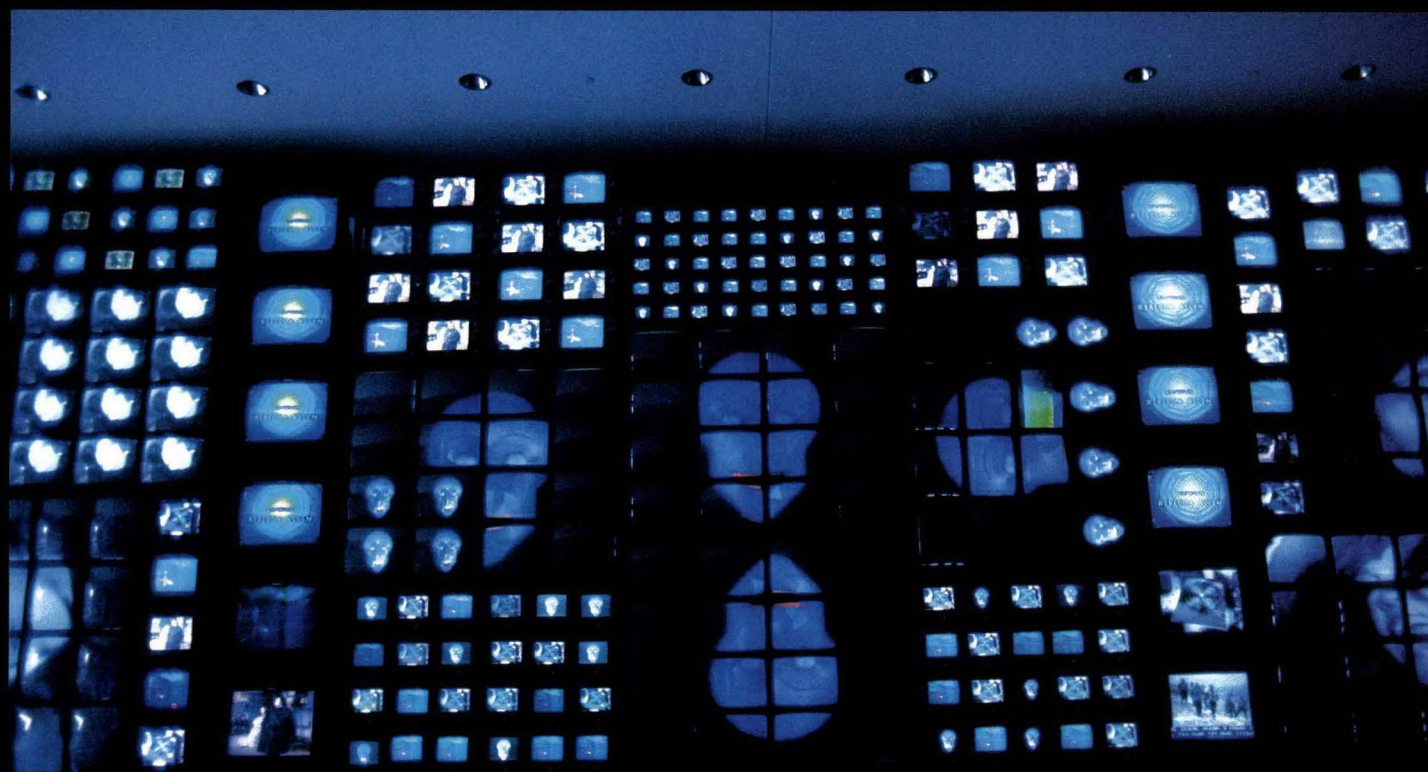




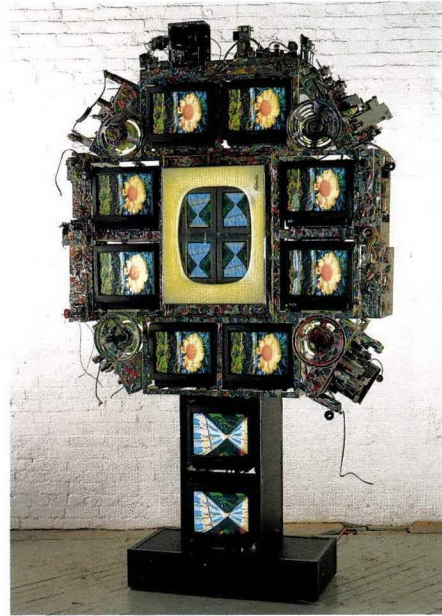
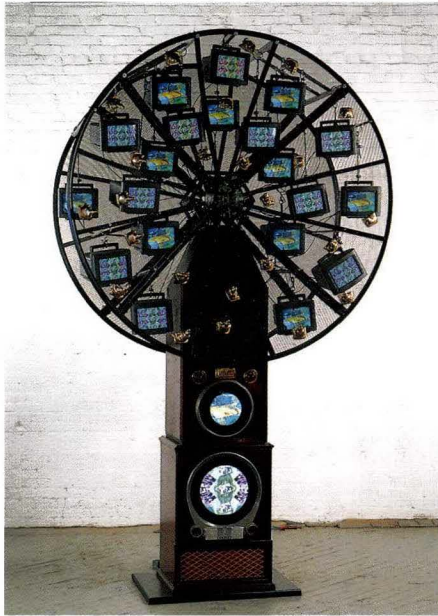
Figure 1: A large wall-mounted digital display composed of many small video screens showing various images, including faces and abstract patterns.



Figure 2: A large wall-mounted digital display composed of many small video screens showing various images, including faces and abstract patterns.







JUDITH MALINA NEW YORK

Contribution to Nam June Paik's catalogue, 1993

Nam June Paik put a TV in the gallery and turned the art on.

Nam June Paik survived the Japanese occupation of Korea, the Korean Communist movement, and turned as anarcho-pacifists on.

Nam June Paik brought Ryuchi Sakamoto to my living room in New York and turned me on to All-Star Video.

Nam June Paik put video cameras in The Living Theatre bus in Switzerland and, Living With The Living, turned them on.

Nam June Paik sends me royalty checks without my ever asking – What a turn-on.

Nam June Paik put a hundred TV sets in the museum and turned the culture on.

Willow Tree, 1992

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Satellite Tree, 1992

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Flower Tree (Working Title), 1992

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Video Wall, 1992

Mediale: Art & Fair, Hamburg

ZEN FLESH, ZEN BONES

1. The Search for the Bull

*In the pasture of this world, I endlessly push aside the tall
grasses in search of the bull.
Following unnamed rivers, lost upon the interpenetrating
paths of distant mountains,
My strength failing and my vitality exhausted, I cannot find
the bull.
I only hear the locusts chirring through the forest at night.*

*Comment: The bull has been lost. What need is there to
search? Only because of separation from my true nature, I
fail to find him. In the confusion of the senses I lose even his
tracks. Far from home, I see many crossroads, but which way
is the right one I know not. Greed and fear, good and bad,
entangle me.*



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10 BULLS

2. Discovering the Footprints

*Along the riverbank under the trees, I discover footprints!
Even under the fragrant grass I see his prints.
Deep in remote mountains they are found.
These traces no more can be hidden than one's nose, looking
heavenward.*

*Comment: Understanding the teaching, I see the footprints of
the bull. Then I learn that, just as many utensils are made
from one metal, so too are myriad entities made of the fabric
of self. Unless I discriminate, how will I perceive the true from
the untrue? Not yet having entered the gate, nevertheless I
have discerned the path.*



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ZEN FLESH, ZEN BONES

3. Perceiving the Bull

*I hear the song of the nightingale.
The sun is warm, the wind is mild, willows are green along the
shore,
Here no bull can hide!
What artist can draw that massive head, those majestic horns?*

*Comment: When one hears the voice, one can sense its source.
As soon as the six senses merge, the gate is entered. Wherever
one enters one sees the head of the bull! This unity is like salt
in water, like colour in dyestuff. The slightest thing is not
apart from self.*



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JAN-OLAF MALLANDER AIJALA/HELSINKI

Paik and the oxherding pictures taking the TV by its antennas ..., Monday, 28th March 1993

Nam June Paik's work has many faces – His retrospective in Basel and Zurich 1991 was a Revelation for us; something like a "Finnegans Wake" for media intellectuals. Contemplating his œuvre, however, another parallel emerges very vividly – its similarity to the famous "10 Oxherd pictures". So I took up the task to throw some light on this connection here. Its based on the version printed in "Zen flesh Zen Bones" but interpreted quite freely.

1. In the first image **the Bull is not seen** even. The Boy is searching for it "lost upon the interpenetrating Paths to the Mountain", as the root verse says.

This corresponds with Paik's early Fluxus years in Germany. Few know what he was up to. His (TV) mission is barely emerging. The State of TV in Europe is backward and boring. No Art lover can find anything nourishing therein. There are no alternatives either. TV is totally corny. It's so sad ...

But Paik experiments with some rudimentary TV work. Maybe the most telling, for the future, is "Zen for TV" ...

2. The **footprints of the Bull are found** – "under the grass", "deep in the mountains" ... We live in the mid 60ies ... Che Guevara breaks through in every Western media, in some way or another. The Chinese cultural revolution is on the move. In the West Pop Art takes over the scene. John Cage publishes "Silence". There is a great (two year long) cultural debate in Europe: Cage vs. Brecht (Bertold) etc. Fluxus is loose, too ...

In his secret studio, outside Cologne, Paik works on the birth of his TV Art. Maybe he is finding out what the root verses says, that "just as many utensils are made from one metal, so too the many entities (seen on TV) are made of the Mind" ...

Understanding TV one can see the Bull – Paik, however, dismantles the arrogant Super Ego dreams of manipulative TV people. He distorts and jolts with the unexpected in his "prepared TVs", in the famous "Exposition of Music" 1963. Somewhere there TV-Art actually starts.

3. **Perceiving the Bull** – this very lyric verse deals with the meeting of the Boy and the Bull: of which only the rump and tail is seen. "What artist can draw that massive head, those majestic horns" asks the root verse, rhetorically.

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This scene corresponds perhaps with Paik's mid-60ies. There is war in Vietnam: hippies look for alternative life styles etc. In the Media world, McLuhan rules supremely, for a few years. New magazines emerge; there is a lot of talk of expanded cinema and mixed media. "As soon as the six senses merge, the gate is entered"...

Paik fiddles around with the cathode tube, plays with his Robot, before entering the Gate of TV Art. He even hangs the bloody head of a dead Ox over the entrance to one of his exhibitions!

Around 1965 he arranges a series of shows of Electronic Art. "Opera Sextronique" becomes a scandal, thus a media success. Suddenly TV Art is here. The first video generation emerges.

4. Catching the Bull – the root verse tells of a terrible struggle with the Bull, whose power seems inexhaustible. In this context it can symbolize the power of commercial TV, Show business, and the energies of the rock and roll-scene.

But Paik takes the Bull by its horns – (i.e. takes the TV by its antennas) – "TV has tortured intellectuals for 20 years: now we can torture it back" he states.

By that time – the early 70ies – many Eastern views and traditions come to the West. Buddhism starts to take root in America. Paik says, in a TV interview, that he is very curious "to see what the Americans will do with the Oriental heritage ..."

Most Art is about "aboutism" however ... Paik struggles to create a counter *cultural second* vision, with his "Participation TV". "Global Groove" becomes a hit for the Video Generation. I meet Paik for the first time in Soonsbeek, Arnhem 1971. He stays in front of three video cameras and monitors, playing with a living candle "This is my version of the endless mirror" he says; Paik with magnet.

5. Tamina the Bull. Could correspond with Paik in the mid 70ies. – There is a lot of High Tech talk, speculations of Utopias and Video Revolutions etc. But the root verse warns us: "The Whip and the Rope is necessary ... Hold the nose ring tight, and do not even allow doubt ..."

This is clear enough. The nose ring is the magnet Paik uses, to manipulate TV bullies – the whip is his Video synthesizer he developed in Japan 73-74. The artist tames the energies and images of the US video scene, preoccupied as it is with images of power, money, beauty, success, violence, disaster

10 BULLS

4. Catching the Bull

*I seize him with a terrific struggle.
His great will and power are inexhaustible.
He charges to the high plateau far above the cloud-mists,
Or in an impenetrable ravine he stands.*

Comment: He dwelt in the forest a long time, but I caught him today! Infatuation for scenery interferes with his direction. Longing for sweeter grass, he wanders away. His mind still is crumbly and unbridled. If I wish him to submit, I must raise my whip.



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ZEN FLESH, ZEN BONES

5. Taming the Bull

*The whip and rope are necessary,
Else he might stray off down some dusty road.
Being well trained, he becomes naturally gentle.
Then, unfettered, he obeys his master.*

Comment: When one thought arises, another thought follows. When the first thought springs from enlightenment, all subsequent thoughts are true. Through delusion, one makes everything untrue. Delusion is not caused by objectivity; it is the result of subjectivity. Hold the nose-ring tight and do not allow even a doubt.



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etc. Paik has the right distance to the juvenile US culture. He is now middle aged – cynic, maybe; but lyric too. He writes an excellent manifesto: "Expanded Education for the Paperless Society". Many of Paik's works could illustrate this phase but maybe the Video Aquarium, Moorman's TV cello sonatas, and other mood pieces, show this stage well. Paik also broadcasts a 4 hour long program for WBGH in Boston.

"When the first thought springs from Enlightenment, all subsequent thoughts are true ..."

6. Riding the Bull Home – "The struggle is over, gain and loss are assimilated" – The Boy is seen riding the Bull, playing a flute, directing the rhythm with his hand beat. In this phase "all experiences take the form of a Mandala" the comment says.

This corresponds with Paik's work in the late 70ies – culminating in his great retrospective show in the Whitney Museum 1982. This retrospective brings out Paik's vision in full scale. About this time the era of rock videos begin, Music TV takes off, and satellite communication grows enormously. The Third Video generation takes over – and Paik is something of a hero.

The photo of Paik posed on a staircase, looking down at us, smiling – with "Fishes fly in the sky" (a spiral of monitors) above, illustrates this state of mind very well indeed ...

7. The Bull transcended. – In the root text we see a boy sitting in front of a Hut, staring at the Moon ... The Bull is gone, and no TV is in sight. There is no need to manipulate anything, in this Ur-scene. Watching the Moon may well be equated with watching TV, as Paik observes.

Of this state of mind Paik makes a remarkable work of Art – a Buddha (statue) watching its reflection in a TV ... Many images meet here: solid and electronic, East and West technology and mystic insight, past and future etc. etc.

No antennas or satellites are needed – not even any program. Even Fluxus is transcended! The million dollar question is:

Has the TV Buddha Nature?

This is the only work my old mother remembers from the big show of contemporary art ARS 74 in Helsinki ...

8. Bull and Self Transcended – "Whip, Rope, Person, Bull – all merge into Nothing" the root verse says. Only a circle is seen ...

The TV is empty, the artist is gone ... All he left is some exclusive drawings, where birds

6. Riding the Bull Home

Mounting the bull, slowly I return homeward.
The voice of my flute intones through the evening.
Measuring with hand-beats the pulsating harmony, I direct the
endless rhythms.
Whoever hears this melody will join me.

Comment: This struggle is over; gain and loss are assimilated.
I sing the song of the village woodman, and play the tunes
of the children. Astride the bull, I observe the clouds above.
Onward I go, no matter who may wish to call me back.



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ZEN FLESH, ZEN BONES

7. The Bull Transcended

Astride the bull, I reach home.
I am serene. The bull too can rest.
The dawn has come. In blissful repose,
Within my thatched dwelling I have abandoned the whip and
rope.

Comment: All is one law, not two. We only make the bull a
temporary subject. It is as the relation of rabbit and trap, of fish
and net. It is as gold and dross, or the moon emerging from a
cloud. One path of clear light travels on throughout endless
time.



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10 BULLS

8. Both Bull and Self Transcended

Whip, rope, person, and bull – all merge in Nothing.
This heaven is so vast no message can stain it.
How may a morpheus exist in a raging fire?
Here are the footprints of the patriarchs.

Comment: Mediocrity is gone. Mind is clear of limitation. I
seek no state of enlightenment. Neither do I remain where no
enlightenment exists. Since I linger in neither condition, eyes
cannot see me. If hundreds of blind strew my path with flowers,
such praise would be meaningless.



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fly in an out of the screen, and a candle in an
empty frame ...

Only Paik could get away with something so
simple.

"Here are the footprints of the Patriarchs" ...
But where is Paik? – Asleep, I suppose, or
out eating, at some favourite restaurant in the
neighborhood.

9. Reaching the Source

"Poised in Silence he observes the forms of
integration and disintegration ... of what is
creating and destroying ..."

After experiencing Emptiness, everything be-
comes alive again – full of potential and mean-
ing ... Everything is living communication!
"Avec le Vide les pleins pouvoirs" (Camus).

This is the expanded Paik of the 80ies ... We
can look again at the "Zen for TV" in a new
way; contemplate the TV Garden; restfully
watch the video aquarium; relate to our Time
through the Laser Clock, and have fun with
the Robot Family etc ...

Everything is just a Show, anyway ...

10. In the World. In this final image was seen
the pot-bellied Sage wandering around, with
a sack full of gifts. He deals with the World in
an utterly direct and simple way, and every-
one who meets him gets a glimpse of Enlight-
enment.

The Paik we know in the last 10 years has
something of that quality ... What he offers us
is a bag of insights, blown-up to full scale, for
the people of the Global Media Village, to be
delivered through Satellite TV ... Heavy dua-
listic views (East/West) are dissolved ("Bye
Bye Kipling") and major fears have vanished:
Orwell was wrong – there is a happy side to
the watching business; and Paik celebrates
that.

In the 90ies the insights of Art are projected
into Rock Videos; Music TV rules the Scene –
Maybe tomorrow we will have Wall-to-Wall
TV, mind-to-mind visions, as Paik has fore-
seen. Perhaps we do not even need any Uto-
pias anymore – the Future belongs to the Un-
programmed.

ZEN FLESH, ZEN BONES

9. Reaching the Source

Too many steps have been taken returning to the root and the
source.
Better to have been blind and deaf from the beginning!
Dwelling in one's true abode, unconcerned with that without –
The river flows tranquilly on and the flowers are red.

Comment: From the beginning, truth is clear. Poised in silence,
I observe the forms of integration and disintegration. One who
is not attached to 'form' need not be 'reformed'. The water is
emerald, the mountain is indigo, and I see that which is creat-
ing and that which is destroying.



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10 BULLS

10. In the World

Barefooted and naked of breast, I mingle with the people of the
world.
My clothes are ragged and dust-laden and I am ever blissful.
I use no magic to extend my life;
Now, before me, the trees become alive.

Comment: Inside my gate, a thousand ages do not know me.
The beauty of my garden is invisible. Why should one search
for the footprints of the patriarchs? I go to the market place
with my wine bottle and return home with my staff. I visit the
wineshop and the market, and everyone I look upon becomes
enlightened.



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ALAN MARLIS NEW YORK

Travelling The Streets With Paik, 1993

Nam June Paik's genius shows itself in his hands and feet. Always inquisitive and interested, anything put in front of him immediately goes into his pockets to be analysed and dissected – edited at home. His slow gait, plodding down Spring Street makes him fair game to all the artists, writers, producers and wannabes in our neighborhood (there are thousands), and they all get his time-and-a-half. He is the Korean global democrat who includes people, places and memories of four continents in his work.

His ambition is monumental. It is electrical ambition which comes from a more serious source than your typical studio trained artist's. He marches to the sounds of Empire-building cowboys like Kipling, Political-genealogists like Orwell, and sweet and sour music masters like Schoenberg and Cage. Yet his spiritual scorecard is Asian and echos through the sound track, the video montage, and the architecturally balanced TV console the Al Jolson/Arlo Guthrie refrain: "Don't you know me, I'm your native son."

Never alienated from the woman's body, Nam June and topless Charlotte Moorman did a one-upmanship on Eduard Manet's "Lunch on the Grass", transforming the musical stage into a more natural habitat.

Mixing German energy with French tact Paik can develop an idea symphonically and/or isolate a precious note. He shares this supple adaptability with his friend & colleague Joseph Beuys.

Always sensitive to acts of loyalty on the part of artists (not their strong suit), and a loyalist himself both politically and generically, Paik holds no grudges – there is too much to do, to say, and you have to stop the cycle somewhere.

Nothing tight comes close to Paik: not his shirts, pants, shoes – no up-tightness, and he's not tight with money or credit. Never caught in the tight noose of expectations, he's as fresh and loose as a breezy spring day, and as fluid as the holly & ivy, those festive perennials.

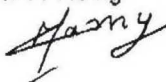
Taking fragments from willing collaborators Paik has designed a focus, a locus, an artistic hocus pocus that throbs all through the night past sadness, melancholy & euphoria – a stray cat singing his endless plaint, no longer

Je soussignée Laurence Mamy atteste que Monsieur Nam June Paik est
vivant à la date d'aujourd'hui.

Eric Fabre

P/O

Laurence Mamy



mysterious because it has been outside our windows all these years & there are no words to entice it into our homes with their simple A/C D/C currents. The merry rush, the merciless crush of his art have described us & posed the question that bedevils us: "Is it really love, or just a game?"

TOSHIO MATSUMOTO TOKYO

Memories of the Past, 1993

Paik and I spent the campus life in a same seminar. He studied music, and I studied art. He was an earnest and gentle student. So it was a great surprise for me that one Japanese newspaper reported about him as a Fluxus performer several years after graduation.

A few years later from that time, he was an active pioneer of video art. I was absorbed in the experimental film then, and I also came to make video art pieces from 1968. We two were so pleased because it is as if we met again in a same plaza in spite of the different ways each one chooses.

About 1970 when I traveled to the United States several times in order to see the experimental films and video art, I received much assistance from Mr. Paik and his wife, Shigeko Kubota in downtown New York. He is a kind-hearted obliging person, who is also a henpecked husband. We discussed much about art and philosophy until late at night in his loft. He lived needy circumstances then. I remember those things fondly and vividly as if they occurred yesterday.

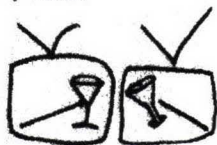
LARRY MILLER NEW YORK

Holographic "Statue", 1976



BARBARA MAYFIELD NEW YORK
A video toast for Nam June Paik ...,
March 30, 1993


A video toast to Nam
June Paik



who put all the world
in sync



and showed us all how to
celebrate our globe in a
high-tech media form called
SATELLITE ART

and a prize  to
the German pavillion
to claiming/celebrating
this art world
multi-national at the
Venice Biennale

Barbara Mayfield
New York
3/30/93

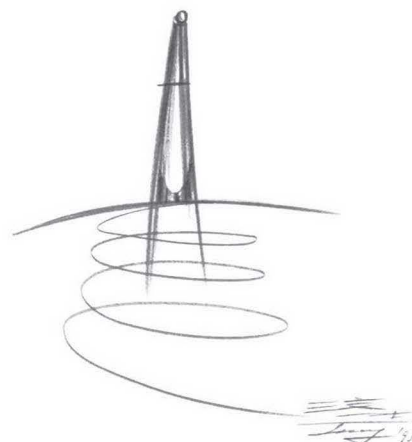
JONAS MEKAS

Über neue Richtungen, über Anti-Kunst,
über das Alte und das Neue in der Kunst,
11. November 1965

... Aber heute nach fünf, sechs, sieben Jahren fügt sich auch diese sperrige Anti-Kunst in den tausendjährigen Schatz aller Kunst ein. Dies wurde mir plötzlich an einem Abend bei einer Aufführung von Nam June Paik bewußt. Seine Kunst – genauso wie die von La Monte Young, Stan Brakhage, Gregory Markopoulos, Jack Smith oder sogar (zweifels-ohne) Andy Warhol – wird von den gleichen tausendjährigen ästhetischen Regeln bestimmt und kann in gleicher Weise wie jedes andere klassische Kunstwerk analysiert und erfahren werden. ...

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ISSEY MIYAKE TOKYO
A drawing, 1993



AIKO MIYAWAKI TOKYO

Dear Nam June Paik ..., March 8, 1993



Dear Nam June Paik -

Always desiring to have
a long talk with you.

Aiko Miyawaki

mar. 8. 1993

BARBARA MOORE NEW YORK

Story of a Paik Artwork, 1993

In the mid-70's, in a junk shop near our house, Peter & I spotted a handsomely-shaped old wood TV case, minus its insides, and bought it as a gift for Paik. He turned the tables and christened it as an artwork he made for us.

In about 1976, a year or so after "Candle TV II" was made, the piece was borrowed by Paik for some European exhibition. The next time we saw it was in 1977 during the Paik/-Beuys satellite transmission from Documenta. There on our home TV screen was the wood cabinet, so distinctive that it was unmistakable, sitting, sans candle, on top of a stack of TV sets in a (West) German studio 3000 miles away. As I, in New York, leaned forward to see the image better, Paik suddenly picked up our "artwork" and hurled it across that distant room. There was an off-screen crash and the piece was not seen on the program again, presumably destroyed.

Well, not so. The next time we spoke to Paik he said it had been slightly damaged, but not irreparably, and he assumed we'd gotten it back. However, no one could locate it; it had completely disappeared.

Not too surprisingly, as often happens with "lost" work, the piece resurfaced in the hands of a well-known curator and was shown, with virtually invisible repairs, in one or more exhibitions in Europe in the early 80's, for which catalogues document its travels.

It finally arrived home on Nov. 14, 1983, after an absence of 7 years. The Moores celebrated its return in an unauthorized manner: In lieu of a Christmas tree that year, we displayed "Candle TV II", containing not one but half a dozen candles burning simultaneously throughout the holidays. It was a beautiful sight.

During the work's European tour, asbestos panels had been added to the interior as a safety precaution. I asked Paik whether this alteration had his approval. He claimed to welcome the protection and even speculated about going further by drilling a hole in the top to allow heat to escape. "I want candle always burn, but don't want museum to burn up and don't want reputation that my work is dangerous", he said.

When we first owned the piece, the candle was placed on a saucer within. The asbestos additions made the floor higher, so the candle was set directly on the asbestos panel. Paik said this change was of no import.

As one can see, the "making" of this piece often involved third parties. In the early years of our friendship with Paik I wondered how

this affected "authenticity": in one instance he handed us a TV set and a bag of parts and uttered some vague instructions about our putting them together ourselves. Now, when I see how, at each change of hands and circumstances, he effects "improvements" or has others do them, I accept this as the way he works. Each person who has touched "Candle TV II" has enriched its history. Eventually, "Candle TV II" was sold to the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, at which point Paik retitled it "Wooden TV and Candle" to prove, he said, that it was unique, rather than just another version of his first "Candle TV". At that time he also insisted on signing it and writing up a set of instructions on how the museum might continue the work's evolution.



Candle TV II, 1975,

Photo by Peter Moore

FUMIO NANJO TOKYO

Fragments on Mr. Nam June Paik, 1993

The garden where images are scattered, is it the dream of a futurist? The golden fish and the moon in the TV monitors, are they the Japonaiserie of a romantic? The dialogue with Beuys, is it a circus of information media? Robots made of TV monitors, although they symbolize the future of mankind, look rather out-of-time.

The candle whose flame flickers across the whole wall transforms everything into a phantom, and it seems to represent a will to bury the whole in a gloom of information.

Nam June Paik sees the future from the past,

but he also sees the past from the future. After all, existence must be only in the memory of images.

ROGER NELLENS KNOCKE

Some anecdotes, 1993

During a dinner party after the opening of his show in N.Y., Roger Nellens had the pleasure to gather at his table celebrities like Frank Stella, Illeana Sonnabend, George Segal, Leo Castelli, etc. ... Then arrived Nam June very late with a big smile on his face, suspenders that hold his pants from falling with a watch hanging from them and big shoes with holes. "I just came back from watching a movie" he said while sitting down at the dinner table by Frank Stella's side. "What film?" asked Frank. "I don't know" replied Nam Jun. "I took a nap. I love taking naps during movies. I had a great time!" "Me too", concluded Stella, "I also love sleeping during movies."

In the game room of the Casino of Knocke, Nam June Paik just won \$ 50 on his first try. He got really excited and walked in every different direction with the money he just won and waving it in every different directions. "It is the first time that I win in gambling" declared Nam June. He could not hold himself from joy anymore just as if luck and coincidence was something totally new for him.

In a room of the Majestic Hotel (in Knocke Belgium where Nam June had a show in summer of '92) explains Roger Nellens they gave Nam June one of their nicest rooms. When the maid would come in in the morning, she would find Nam June sleeping on the ground covered with orange skins that he peeled off. The skin of the oranges were all over the room including the bath tub.

HERMANN NITSCH

PRINZENDORF, ÖSTERREICH

Textbeitrag für den Biennale-Katalog über N.J. Paik, 1993

Im Happening-Buch von Wolfgang Becker und Wolf Vostell, welches 1965 erschien, sah ich zum ersten Mal Fotos und Partituren von Nam June Paik. Seine Arbeiten beeindruckten mich sehr, ich sah ihn als einen Klassiker der frühen Fluxus-Aktionen an.

1968 wurde ich von Jonas Mekas nach New York und Cincinnati eingeladen, um Aktionen zu realisieren. Zur Aufführung meiner ersten Aktion in der New Yorker Cinemateque kam Nam June Paik. Freunde teilten mir während des Ablaufes der Aktion mit, daß Paik sehr begeistert sei. Das stimulierte mich aufs

Äußerste, weil ihm vor allem wollte ich diese, meine blutige Kunst zeigen. Als die Zuschauer Blut aus gefüllten Reagenzgläsern in die aufgeklaffte Wunde des Schafes gießen sollten und Paik sich sofort daran beteiligte, war es für mich eine große Bestätigung und Huldigung meiner Arbeit. Ich wußte, dieser Mann hat mich verstanden. Der weitere Aktionsablauf steigerte sich zu einem großen Erfolg. Trotzdem gab es nachher, nachdem die Beifallsbekundungen sich erschöpften, große Bestürzung wegen des chaotischen Zustandes, in den das Aktionseignis die Räumlichkeit versetzt hatte. Überall Blutlachen, herumliegendes Fleisch und Gedärm. Paik krepelte sich die Hemdsärmel auf und begann aufzuräumen. Das war für mich die Geste einer großen Persönlichkeit und die größte Anerkennung, die mir widerfahren konnte. Solch ein großer Künstler setzt sich auf diese Art für meine Arbeit ein. Paik war wirklich begeistert. Er meinte, wir beide würden "crazy art" machen. In der Folge des Abends gingen wir in "maxi's kansas city". Wir tranken viel Bier. Paik und ich prosteten uns immer wieder zu.

In Cincinnati konnte ich eine Aktion von Paik sehen, die er gemeinsam mit Charlotte Moorman auführte.

Ich war ebenfalls schwerstens beeindruckt. Solche Aktionen hatte ich noch nie gesehen. Er führte alles mit dem Temperament eines Asiaten durch. Seine Ekstase war anders als die des Europäers, sie hatte etwas Raubtierhaftes und wurde von einer offenen Sinnlichkeit, die unverhüllt ihre Wurzeln in der amorphen Naturkraft zeigt, getragen.

Als ich Paik all mein Lob sagte, das ich zu sagen fähig war, gab er mir wieder eines der größten Komplimente zurück, das sich Künstler sagen können. Er sei nach der Abhaltung seiner Aktion weniger müde, als nach der Teilnahme an meiner Aktion in New York.

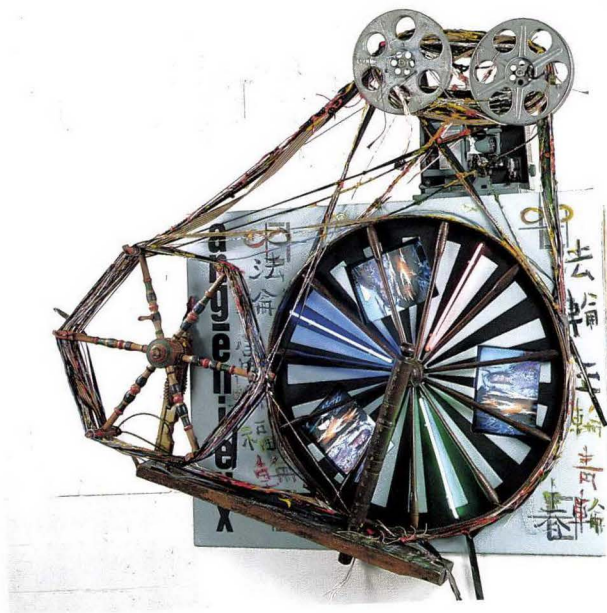
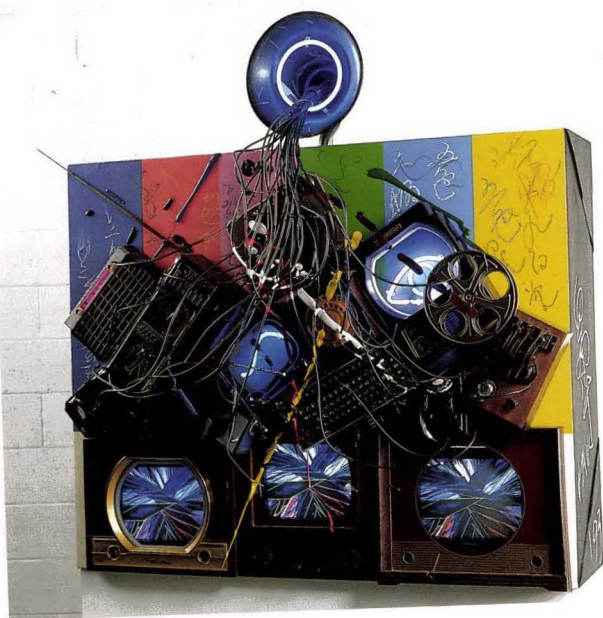
Ich habe jetzt absichtlich viel persönliches über Paik geschrieben, das mit meiner Arbeit zu tun hat, aber sein Verhalten hat mich damals so betroffen und glücklich gemacht, daß ich mich nicht schäme, es als persönliches Erleben dieses Mannes festzuhalten.

Welch großer Künstler er ist, brauche ich nicht zu sagen.

KWAN SOO OH SEOUL

Returned to Seoul, 1993

Nam June Paik returned to Seoul in 1984 after 35 years of his being abroad. At that time, his Korean language seemed to be one of 1940's. He still speaks quite old Korean of 35



years ago. His words are no longer used and somewhat awkward to us. It was a real surprise that an ultra-modern video artist like him doesn't speak similar avant-garde Korean language. Like this, he is constantly looking for a new method for his performance, but paradoxically, his actual thoughts are getting back to the past times more and more.

"Moon is the oldest television" – this work implies Mongolian legend, certain cultural background which can be understood only by lunar-charactered people. His works tell us the history of European Continent, tracks of his ancestors remained in Korean Peninsula through Siberia. His artistic world continuously extends its wing over the past and the future. Can we call it "harmonized discord"?

"Art is a fraud." As he says, his art accordingly makes harmonized discord.

YOKO ONO TOKYO **For Nam June Paik, 1993**

nam june paik is a window
opened
to the west & the east
to the past & the future and
to chance & design

it is
a window of reminder
a window of change
a window i remember
and cherish its view

JERALD ORDOVER NEW YORK **All about Nam June Paik, March 29, 1993**

The most distinctive memories I have of Nam June Paik, as I think back over the 28 or so years I have known him and served as his lawyer, are of his not being there. And of his being there when I least expected him. Or of his being there for reasons other than the logical ones I assumed had brought him to my office.

He will call and leave a message that he must see me about a very important matter and then I hear nothing more. I call and fax notes to him. No reply. And then, a few days or weeks or sometimes a couple of months later, he appears, unexpectedly.

"Where were you?" or "What about...?" I ask. And, of course, his answer is completely logical and timely. The important matter of last month has evaporated or its time has only now come.

My failures to locate him are explained: It was his time to be in Germany to teach; or he had to go to Korea or to Cincinnati for a project; or he wasn't at home or at Studio A or Studio B because he had lately been working at Studio C, the place, he had told me, he never used anymore, except for storage.

We talk about the matter, or the two or three, that have brought him to me. One maybe the case I thought he had come to discuss. But there will often also be some new items, a proposal he has received, a new project he is just starting to develop.

I am given the facts, the problems and the desired results and I go to work. The notes he leaves with me or sends to me later may look disjointed, but, on careful reading, make perfect sense.

But, just as often, I am told that he will soon send me or will be back with more information. But he doesn't. Or not when I expect him.

But it seems to me that he is there – or here – more often in the last year or two. Maybe I have adjusted to his timing. Or maybe it is because his dry cleaner and laundry are now located just down the block from my office.

SUZANNE PAGÉ PARIS **A Nam June Paik, 29 mars 1993**

au dormeur qui éveille les étoiles,
à l'allumeur qui dissout les ombres,
à l'incendiaire qui embrase les rêves,
au nomade céleste, à son sourire séraphique.

SYEUNGIL PAIK SEOUL

A Real Cosmopolitan, 1993

I always thought Namjune was a real cosmopolitan because, even though he dabbles in Korean, Japanese, German, English and French, I have never heard him speak any one of the above with a semblance of accuracy. It is time for a cosmopolitan to invent his own language. The video language.

KYU H. PARK SEOUL **Robot on a horse, 1993**

Robot on a horse, 1991, 335 x 244 x 549 cm
Sonje Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea
It is a robot on a horse which represents a spiritual relic of the Unified Shilla called "Wharangdo". Nam June Paik exceptionally put his robot on a horse this time and it is considered an outsider of his robot family series made of televisions.

He usually reflects Korean and Oriental spirits to his works and this product is well-harmonized with its regional peculiarity. That's to say, Sonje Museum of Contemporary Art – which contains this robot on a horse – is located in Kyongju, the capital of Ancient Shilla for around 1000 years.

Kyongju still has lots of spiritual and material relics of Shilla Culture.

He installed actual-sized plastic horses and nine antique televisions from all over the world. And he made a real scientific robot based on the computer graphics with those televisions. Although this horse cannot run, constantly moving images on the television screens enable us to see it running. It represents a manly chevalier of ancient Korea and Nam June Paik harmonized spiritual "Wharangdo" – Korean traditional chivalry – with ultra-modern technology of the West.

RHAI KYOUNG PARK SEOUL **The scope from 0 to 9, 1993**

Nam June Paik usually takes numeral figures to explain his performances and life. Surely, it is done within the scope from 0 to 9.

It was when we held his memorial exhibition "Nam June Paik, Video Time, Video World" in our museum, last summer in 1992. I asked him what his favorite numbers are. He said "I like 4 and 5. And they make 9." I am not sure whether those numbers are playing meaningful roles in his life of sixty years. But I am just thinking of the number 9 for a while.

We have our traditional card games called "Whatu". They have monthly countable figures and nine is the smallest number within the winning points. Therefore, it means the least fortune in life. It also explains Nam June Paik's simple and naive wishes longing for the fortune of his life through the numbers 4, 5 and 9.

◀
Aimez-Vous Brahms, 1992–93
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Tribal Groove, 1992-93
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Roland Barthes' Symphony, 1992–93
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Wheel of Fortune, 1992–93
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

MARK PATSFALL CINCINNATI

**Some of the things one learns during
ten years of working with Nam June
April 17, 1993**

1. The history of Korea
2. The politics of art
3. The art of politics
4. The politics of politics
5. "English is the most efficient language"
6. Economics
7. Some Chinese calligraphy
8. Less is less
9. Loyalty
10. Eat often and very slowly
11. "In art any mistake will later be seen as a stroke of genius"
12. How a TV works
13. How to make a TV not work
14. "De-control"
15. "East is west, west is east"
16. Where the most beautiful women in the world are
17. "Fluxus invented India"
18. Dropping a Buddha on your toe can lead to a catastrophic chain of events stretching from Wiesbaden to ...
19. With Nam June everything is subject to change at the last moment, and will
20. "Life takes precedent over art"
21. *Nothing* works unless it is plugged in
22. Can't put this one in print
23. "Light is the most efficient form of information transmission"
24. James Joyce was right
25. "Parking is the most serious problem confronting 20th century man"
26. Pay your taxes
27. What a "Shadow warrior" is
28. etc.
29. etc.
- etc.

HALA PIETKIEWICZ ROCKPORT, TEXAS

An episode, 1993

In the mid-sixties we (husband, two daughters, one bull terrier) had the pleasure to have Nam June, this religious man of post-modern times, with about seventeen other wonderful New York artists, all uncommitted for the holidays, over Christmas Eve as guests in our Glen Ridge, N.J. home. The evening progressed lively, the weather regressed miserably and transportation to Manhattan ceased.

The crowded sleeping conditions prompted Marc Kaczmarek to innocently ask Paik to share a bed with him and Miriam (Marc's girl friend). With a polite, "Thank-you. I will now go out and meditate on the Christ child", Paik went into the cold night only to return at 4 a.m.

FRANK C. PILEGGI NEW YORK

A letter, March 21, 1993

It was March of 1976, my wife (cellist, performance artist) Charlotte Moorman and I had been in Australia for about one week, soon to be joined by her partner, Nam June Paik.

In the time we had been there, Charlotte had been performing daily, mostly works by Paik. To our amazement the morning newspapers carried the reports of her doings with front page stories.

Australia had truly adopted her and were eagerly awaiting the arrival of Paik. They were scheduled to do performances at the Adelaide Festival as well as the Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney.

When Paik called us from the airport to tell us he had arrived, Charlotte and I were in our hotel room watching a TV special that Australian Television was presenting about the two of them.

I was obviously excited, telling Paik to take a taxi directly to the hotel, he would still be able to see the last part of the program, that I had daily newspapers to show him and that I was holding his room key, # 502 for him.

There were still about 15 minutes left when he arrived. He watched the end of the program sipping an orange juice, barely acknowledging that which we were viewing. As soon as the show ended, I shut the set and presented him with newspapers of the previous 4-5 mornings. Paik glanced at the headlines, then pushing the papers aside he looked at me and sternly said, "We are here to work, not for publicity".

He told me to meet him in the hotel restaurant for a very early breakfast so that we could plan our activities.

The next morning, upon waking I checked the morning newspapers that had been delivered to our room. Once again the front page featured a performance Charlotte had done the previous day of one of Paik's works.

I took the paper to breakfast with me to show it to Paik. He never bothered to look at it, once again reprimanding me for caring about publicity.

I have to admit, knowing the value of front page articles (for funding, grant applications, etc. etc.) I did care about the publicity.

I told Paik I was going to the bathroom. Instead I went to the hotel newsstand to purchase extra copies.

Surprisingly, although it was not yet late, the morning paper was sold out!

The following 2 mornings were exactly the same. We met very early for breakfast to plan our day. Each morning the front page featured Charlotte and Paik. Each morning I showed the paper to Paik. Each morning he refused to look at it. Each morning he lectured me to "concentrate on work not publicity".

Also, each morning the hotel newsstand was sold out.

Sold out? How could a morning newspaper be sold out each of the past 3 days before 6.30 a.m.?

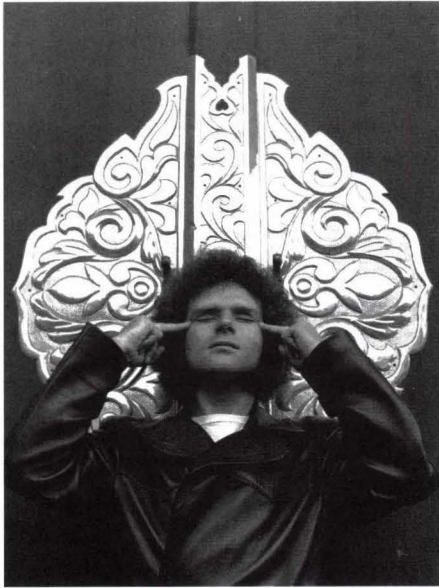
Finally I had to ask the man at the newsstand how this could be.

"It's very strange", he told me. "As soon as I open up in the morning, a little oriental man buys up all of my papers and charges them to his room, # 502."

A few weeks later, Paik, Charlotte and I flew from Australia to Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.

As we went through customs, Charlotte and I pretended not to notice as officials opened suitcases (they were Paik's) filled with newspapers.





KLAUS RINKE VENICE, CALIFORNIA
German Buddha – Fernost – Far East
 Japan 1970 – to Nam June Paik

OSVALDO ROMBERG NEW YORK
About Nam June Paik, 1993

I met June Paik for the first time in Europe in the early 70's. We met in different cities in Europe: Paris, London, and Antwerpen as a result of the International Video Symposiums at that time. He was already not only one of the fathers of Video Art but also an energetic and unpredictable contributor. In the end of the 70's when I was directing the art department at Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem he came with Allan Kaprow and Pierre Restany to make a film in Israel and because of that he worked with students in the school.

I have had a second experience with June Paik as a team worker. During the last years we have met at Spring and Broadway in New York and talking about life over breakfast. After all of these years my impression of him has never disappointed me and it feeds my image of a great artist not as a commercial producer of iconography, but as a curious cultural terrorist who always explores new ways of nonverbal communications.

ULRIKE ROSENBACH HOMBURG
Brief an N.J., 1993

Hey Nam June,

I know both of us will never forget this one event at the airport of Düsseldorf, when we were waiting for our plane to take off to N.Y.

City for five hours. You had just come from Paris, having had to look at the Pompidou for your big show there. While trying to kill time by chatting and drawing plans of ideas for installations you had to listen to me about this fabulous idea for a video installation in the open pub-basement inside the hall of the Pompidou centre.

I had been really turned on by that square place and the idea of a lying installation,

which only could be viewed from the hall above. We had great fun inventing an installation for your show in that place while waiting for the plane, and it became that big-flag-piece later. I always liked this event, because it was one of the rare moments where we worked together on an idea – which for sure should happen more often ...

Thanks for the Chickenyear and have a good one too.

Love Ulrike

DIETER ROTH MOSFELL S-BAER, ISLAND
A letter, 10. 2. 1993

Bala, 10. Febr. '93
hi, Nam June,
- 1 handshake from Dieter

To
 Dieter Roth
 Mosfell S-Baer, Haus Bali
 P.O.Box 213
 Island



LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA
 LV ESPOSIZIONE INTERNAZIONALE D'ARTE

Prof. Dr. Klaus Bußmann
 Kommissar des Deutschen Pavillions
 Westfälisches Landesmuseum
 Domplatz 10, D - 4400 Münster
 Tel. 0251/5907-257, Fax 5907-210

February 1st, 1993

Dear Dieter Roth,

I will edit a multilingual Nam June Paik-catalogue for the German Pavilion of the Venice-Biennale in June 1993, designed as «book as artwork» by Paik himself. A large portion of this book will be devoted to a section called «Paik-Mosaic» in which many friends of Nam June Paik are invited to contribute a short essay in English, German, French or Italian ranging from only 5 lines to 500 words.

In order to avoid repetative boredom, we urge you to choose only a narrow slice of pie in his life and art, that means a single episode or an event to which you are familiar with, or a single art work, which you like most or hate most. We welcome negative criticism, sarcastic of funny view, or even the Mad Magazine-kind of comical or irrelevant comment. Also instead of an essay you may draw a drawing or a comic strip. Since there will be a separate essay on his biography and summary of his art works you don't have to go into the generally available informations. We certainly want to invent an original format in art catalogues making. Your fee will be two lithos, a limited edition, signed by Nam June Paik, that will be ready around June 1993.

Your contribution must arrive by March 30th in Münster (Germany), Westfälisches Landesmuseum. If you still have any questions call me or my assistant Dr. Florian Matzner (Tel. 0251/5907-212, Fax: 0251/5907-210).

Yours sincerely,

K. Bußmann

(Prof. Dr. Klaus Bußmann)

hi, Dr. Bußmann, send the lithos to ; give letter (after printing is over.) to Paik, please!

P.S. You know, I remember something now – which I really want to share with you because it is really funny.
I never told you that I was very much in love with you when I was a romantic twen still – that was when I saw your concert with Charlotte Moorman at the Parnass-Gallery-event: 24 Studen. It was in Wuppertal, where I lived at that time and it was long before I saw you again in the video-Art-scene. I looked at those beautiful photographs Ute Klopheus had made and thought that you were the most good-looking guy I had ever seen or met or looked at. Don't laugh and don't become jealous – Shigeko – it is really long ago – about 20 years and more. Also much later, after this event, we met as artists both of us – again – at Parnass Gallery in Wuppertal – and at that party I sat on your Cap Nam June ... Do you think also, that this was a late realisation of the earlier forme-romantique?
Have fun, Ulrike.

RYUICHI SAKAMOTO TOKYO

The Time of Adagio, 1993

(Extracted from the text first published in "SAT-ART III")

Laurie Anderson says that performance vanishes. Even while the video records it as an image, performance itself does not exist any longer as soon as it has finished. When I joined Nam June Paik's satellite project "Wrap Around The World", I played a folk song of Okinawa, "Chinsagu no Hana", with three young girls from Okinawa and Indian tabors in the same style as I performed it in New York in June, 1988. I always play with a dimly obscure, stringlike or choruslike sound, in recalling the adagios by Mahler. On that day, the effect was perfect. I felt satisfied to be praised by Mr. Paik and Mr. Asada.
Now it is the time of adagio, as I expected.

ITSUO SAKANE TOKYO

Artist of Generosity – A Homage to Nam June Paik, 1993

Paik's charisma is not that of a solemn genius; rather it is the affable charisma of a natural and witty personality.
Similarly, Paik's amazingly unique works mix the otherworldly with mundane human characters in a manner which is entirely contemporary while avoiding empty academicism or ostentatious references to Western philosophical tradition. Looking at Paik's work is a humanizing experience similar to that of ap-

preciating a chipped porcelain bowl or a collage of variegated fabrics. His work possesses a generosity which both transcends and tolerates all kinds of cultural and ethnic differences.

It is hard to imagine exactly how Paik has developed such an extraordinary charisma, but it most probably derives from an intuitive power bordering on the instinctual which arises from his vast experience with other cultures and his insight into the deepest philosophical and political levels of human society. His perceptions of the intellectual and emotional differences between Korea and Japan, or between Japan and the West, or between East and West, are intuitively translated into his medium, both a collage and a fabric of many textures woven from the thread of his sensibility. Certainly, it transcends the limits of conventional Western logic.

It is as if the confrontational aspects of his subconscious are revealed in the different media he uses, and in his combining of the material and the spiritual, the scientific and the artful, Yin and Yang, West and East to forge a new strength for survival.

It is not surprising that Paik's activity as an artist has coincided with the beginnings of multi-media performance. His "Wrap Around The World" project connecting TV stations all around the world continues to reveal the "generous art" of Nam June Paik.

WIELAND SCHMIED BERLIN

A letter, 13. November 1984

I would have hated
Video perhaps all my life
without having met
Nam June Paik

MIEKO SHIOMI

Fluxus Balance, March 25, 1991

Dear Nam June Paik

For the BALANCE POEM series which is planned to be presented at the International Intermedia Festival in Madrid in 1992, I would like to invite you to take part in a Balance Game.

Please write down in the square on the other sheet of paper what you want to balance with something another artist wants to balance, and send it back to me. You can think of either an object (objects) or a concept either indicating or not indicating its weight.

Please use twenty words or less in English.
Hope to receive your reply by June 30th.
Thank you

CHAEUNG SO SEOUL

Caught in the Red Hunt, 1993

We lived our student lives in the most turbulent period in our history, from the nation's liberation in 1945 to the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950.

Namjune never joined the then fashionable left-leaning Reading Circle nor did he ever behave in a manner to be misunderstood as a leftist, but this son of the richest man in the country was caught in the Red Hunt by the extreme rightist group, and was so thoroughly flogged that he could not attend school for several days. His family lodged a strong protest with the school. This was the only controversy Taewongun, but the people from the museum said that they could not sell him because of his negative image. So I chose a Paekche King, Munyong as a compromise. I wanted the Regent to hold a torch in his hand, but the museum people dissuaded me from doing so.

I was captivated by an idea in which the Regent had an antenna on his head, a torch in one hand, and was galloping on a wooden horse toward the future. The beats of horses' hoofs, the rising dust and the noise ... What would have happened to Korea if the Regent's antenna were a little higher? The Regent who closed the country so tightly from foreigners!

I still refuse to be awakened from my dream in which I see the sixth century Paekche King Nunyong being reborn as the Regent Taewongun in the late nineteenth century.

HARALD SZEEMANN TEGNA

Offenes Genie, 17. April 1993

Nam June Paik
ist ein offenes Genie
so kann er Genie(s)
ausmachen das/die nicht
er selbst ist/sind usw.

YUJI TAKAHASHI TOKYO

Paik – the Rapper, 1993

(Extracted from the text first published in "SAT-ART III")

They say "time is many"/ Information condensed into a reel of tape, it's the time transformed into a digital code/ Satellite video is a

bank, planetary-scaled huge bank/ Wait a moment, cause the avant-garde art is close to death with overissue of credit cards/ Look! what's happened to the avant-gardists in the '60s/ Allen Ginsberg is singing with a tie/ Everyone is pop and well/ Beuys has gone and the video turned into his tomb/ The living are also impressed a rainbow zero on their backs/ a candle burns behind the cathode-ray tube."

Paik said "I come from a poor country. What I can is to entertain everybody"/ Now I wanna ask someone how the poor life could be on such a rich planet."

JEAN TOCHE NEW YORK

Contribution for the Nam June Paik catalogue (452 computerized words, plus date and signature), February 12, 1993

Standing in front of the kitchen sink in his Staten Island home in New York, Nappy was slowly decanting a jug of beef blood that he kept in the dungeon refrigerator. Sitting on his shoulder, comfortably snuggled against his neck, was Lady Isabella, a chocolate brown Devon Rex cat. Rubbing against his legs was a wild-looking but very laid-back tortoiseshell Maine Coon cat named Dame Pandu Lu. On the stove was a tub in which he was boiling an old dirty pair of jeans.

While decanting the beef blood, Nappy was watching on the kitchen VCR a monumental 1984 video by Nam June Paik entitled "Good Morning Mr. Orwell". It brought back warm memories of Paik. Nappy also remembered an aggressive light-and-sound environment that he had presented in previous years in Brussels, for which Paik had written an introduction, describing it as "a sort of negative katsuura Rikyu. Katsuura Rikyu, the most famous garden in Japan, and doubtlessly one of the earliest examples of mixed media temporal environments ..."

Through the large window behind the sink, Nappy occasionally glanced at the fierce snow storm that was violently shaking the trees in the garden. This has been preceded by a freezing rain which had rendered the garden extremely slippery.

Having decanted the beef blood, he slowly drank two glasses of the mixture, a ritual that he had been performing daily since he was a young adult. This would heal any stomach ulcer, in the opinion of his erstwhile doctor from his native Belgium.

Nappy carefully opened the kitchen door leading to the garden as there was a very strong wind. He wanted to throw the empty

jug in the garbage can outside, but slipped on the icy ground. Thrown out by the fall and the wind, some leftover blood from the jug splashed over Nappy's face and eyes to quickly freeze and cake, blinding him. Nappy somehow got up and started to wander blindly around the garden. Through the open door of the kitchen he could hear the amplified sound of Charlotte Moorman tapping the strings of her TV-CELLO with the bow and sliding the bow up and down the strings in Nam June Paik's video. Nappy fell again, this time by the icy waters of the fish pond, and passed out.

When he came to, there was a strong smell of burned clothes in the air. He could hear the sirens of the fire department approaching in the street. Through his blood-caked eyes, he could see that the snow storm had subsided. Flames coming out of the kitchen window were slowly reaching the second floor of the house. "Sweet dreams, Paik", Nappy said, as he passed out again.

LARRY WARSHAW NEW YORK Raster-Man, March 21, 1993

Raster-Man

I met Nam June Paik when Charlotte Moorman
I met Nam June Paik when Charlotte Moorman
was arrested for playing a cello with his invention
was arrested for playing a cello with his invention
of a video bra that was the only thing she wore.
of a video bra that was the only thing she wore.
We all ran to the police station demanding their release.
We all ran to the police station demanding their release.
It was the first electronic event in N.Y.C. that caused a
It was the first electronic event in N.Y.C. that caused a
riot in the streets of Manhattan.
riot in the streets of Manhattan.
He wore oversized pants and a giant sash while his
He wore oversized pants and a giant sash while his
round face seem to float on top of these clothes with the wonder
round face seem to float on top of these clothes with the wonder
of a child that first discovered that the stars came out at night.
of a child that first discovered that the stars came out at night.
He would speak so fast in a clipped manner so that I would have to think
He would speak so fast in a clipped manner so that I would have to think
in slow motion to understand him. This was my first experience in holistic
in slow motion to understand him. This was my first experience in holistic
thinking for I would have to think of what he meant rather than what he said.
thinking for I would have to think of what he meant rather than what he said.
This really helped me learn how to listen to people without having to
This really helped me learn how to listen to people without having to
respond with facial gestures.
respond with facial gestures.
His video art is like american jazz in light.
His video art is like american jazz in light.

YASUNAO TONE

If I have a million Dollars for a new satellite project (written for Nam June's anthology: satellite and art, but it turned out to be too late, Nov. 28 '84)

What is in common between Maurice Branchot and Nam June Paik? Answer ... Name: both names mean white! Yes indeed, Paik is white, is white, is white ...

Isn't this enough to justify my following proposal? That is, satellite simulcasting of an international white painting exhibition. There are many white paintings in the world, "White on white" by Malevich, Rauschenberg's, Castellani's, Manzoni's, and Sam Francis' white paintings to name a few. If this project is realized, we will finally be able to see a sort of empty TV show for the first time in the history of TV broadcasting.

MARIA VELTE

As a curator ..., 1993

As a curator for a private collection in Wuppertal in 1960-1962, I bought quite a few artworks by Mary Bauermeister which supported Mr. Paik's activities there.

Larry Warshaw
March, 1993
N.Y.C.

ETSUKO WATARI TOKYO

A Letter, April 1, 1993

Dear Mr. Nam June Paik:

August 1980 in Tokyo – I still remember that it was a hot summer that year. I think it was my last summer vacation as a university student, and I was starting on my graduation thesis.

"How do you think of this flower of morning glory?"

He suddenly asked me as he took me to show the morning glories blooming freshly on a tiny bit of soil remaining at the back alley nearby. Later he made a new piece by placing this morning glory together with the soil in an old TV monitor.

This was our first and striking meeting; me and Mr. Paik and Tokyo, which was at the time developing into a High-tech kingdom as it is now. "VIDEO" was the title of the exhibition we had shown then.

Time passed, summer of 1993, in Tokyo again. It is the same season, and this time I am meeting Mr. Paik coming here from Venice. Just like when I was impressed with that "Morning Glory TV", will I experience the same fresh marvel again through Mr. Paik and his exhibition?

Just like Mr. Paik had predicted, the city of Tokyo has even changed technology into one of the most primitive techniques. Mr. Paik has always unfolded in front of me many stories of things going on in the world.

I am looking forward to seeing Mr. Paik again at our new museum in Tokyo.

EMMETT WILLIAMS BERLIN

The Beggar's Opera and a Treasure From Mongolia, March 1993

The chief exports of the Republic of South Korea are electronics, textiles, clothing, motor vehicles, ginseng, and Nam June Paik. According to Nam June, all Fluxus artists are "spoiled brats." He ought to know, he was one of the earliest of us, and one of the best. Nam June introduced me to Korean culture the September of 1962, the year Fluxus was born in Wiesbaden. It was after a performance of my Opera. The Opera lasts several hours. Although there are three voice parts, the dominant sound is the almost incessant beating on a tin can with a spoon. Nam June said that it had reminded him of street beggars in Korea, who beat incessantly on tin cans until someone clinks in a few coins. (Nam June is always saying nice things: I am cross-eyed, but he refers to this as my "stereo-vision".)



Earlier this month, on my first visit to Korea, I performed the Opera in Seoul with an all-star cast including Alison Knowles, Benjamin Patterson, and Ay-O. Remembering what Nam June had told me about the beggars in 1962, I was afraid that the Koreans who came to the performance would misunderstand Ay-O's ceaseless banging and start throwing coins at us. But they didn't. It was the other way around: they paid a steep price for admission, and probably didn't have any loose change left to throw at us.

The very next day, there were people in Seoul who were in the mood to throw things at Nam June (in absentia). We were hanging an exhibition at the Kyundai Gallery. Nam June's contribution still hadn't arrived. When, finally, it did arrive, it weighed 50 tons, crated. Fifty tons! It was a Mongolian round tent – you could call it a house – with a video installation to go inside. No one at the gallery had the slightest idea how to put the thing together. In desperation they asked the Mongolian Embassy for help. The embassy was reluctant to help, and wondered how and why this important Mongolian cultural treasure was in Seoul in the first place. Well, they did help, in the end, and several days later there it was, dominating the large courtyard of the gallery, the the *pièce de résistance* of the exhibition. Nam June had stolen the show again. And me, I felt like beating on a tin can.

WILLIAMS S. WILSON NEW YORK
Paik as Hearing-Aid, April 1, 1993

When Nam June Paik lived on the 4th floor of my Manhattan brownstone in the mid-1960s, the large double front door of the house was frequently left open. We didn't have a bathroom on the 4th floor, but on the third-floor landing, a toilet survived in a room no larger than a closet. Paik had carried into the house at least sixteen television sets which were kept chained together. One afternoon, as I mounted the outside stairs and entered the upstairs hall, I asked the two men in suits who were walking down the stairs from the 3rd floor who they were and what they were doing. One of them waved toward the paintings hanging in the hall and said, "We came to look at the art", as they continued empty-handed out the door and down the stairs to the sidewalk. Because we dwelled among improbabilities, I believed for a moment that they had come to look at the art, but see now that they might not have known that it was art they were looking at upstairs. They had, most likely, come to find stolen merchandise or equipment for spying. A woman who lived in a public-housing project across the street, and who looked into my house, and life, as into a television set, may have counted sixteen TVs entering the building, and have called some office to report spies. She, who watched out for all of us, may have been re-

sponsible for the ominous twoness of those government agents on my stairs.

Anyway I went upstairs where I saw no one, and nothing unusual, but as I walked downstairs, Nam June Paik came out of the toilet on the 3rd floor landing, saying that he had been in the toilet when he heard the men come in. He explained that he used the toilet at the same time every day, and that "they" had been watching him with binoculars for a long time and knew precisely when he would be in the toilet: "They know my every move", he said. Back on the fourth floor, we saw a small olive-drab case which Paik said that was not his – that the men had left it, and that it was a bomb. I inspected the "bomb" and opened it: inside the box was a United States Navy sextant, which I brought downstairs, and kept for many years.

The wonder is not what those men, in the debased twoness of similar blue suits, could have thought about sixteen TV sets chained together in a room with two robots, one female and one male. The wonder is that Nam June Paik came out of wherever he came out of in Korea with a sensibility closer to mine than the people I had grown up with and gone to school with. We were, from the beginning, in improbable rapport among the improbabilities: and with his nephew, Ken. Wonder and delight and rapport: Paik dedicated a work to my infant son, Ocean, whom he saw as responding to the Moon, which Paik said is the first television set. The adjustments of vision in comparisons like the moon and TV were complemented by adjustments of hearing. Many times, Paik emancipated me from aural limitations I hadn't known I had until I could feel them being lifted off me, like a net-gain in buoyancy. And once, yet another increase in the available sounds, Paik sat down upon a piano-bench and played "Tea for Two". Yes, even he had begun, as great artists often do, by rethinking coupling.

JUD YALKUT YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO

"Electronic Zen. The Underground TV Generation", 1967

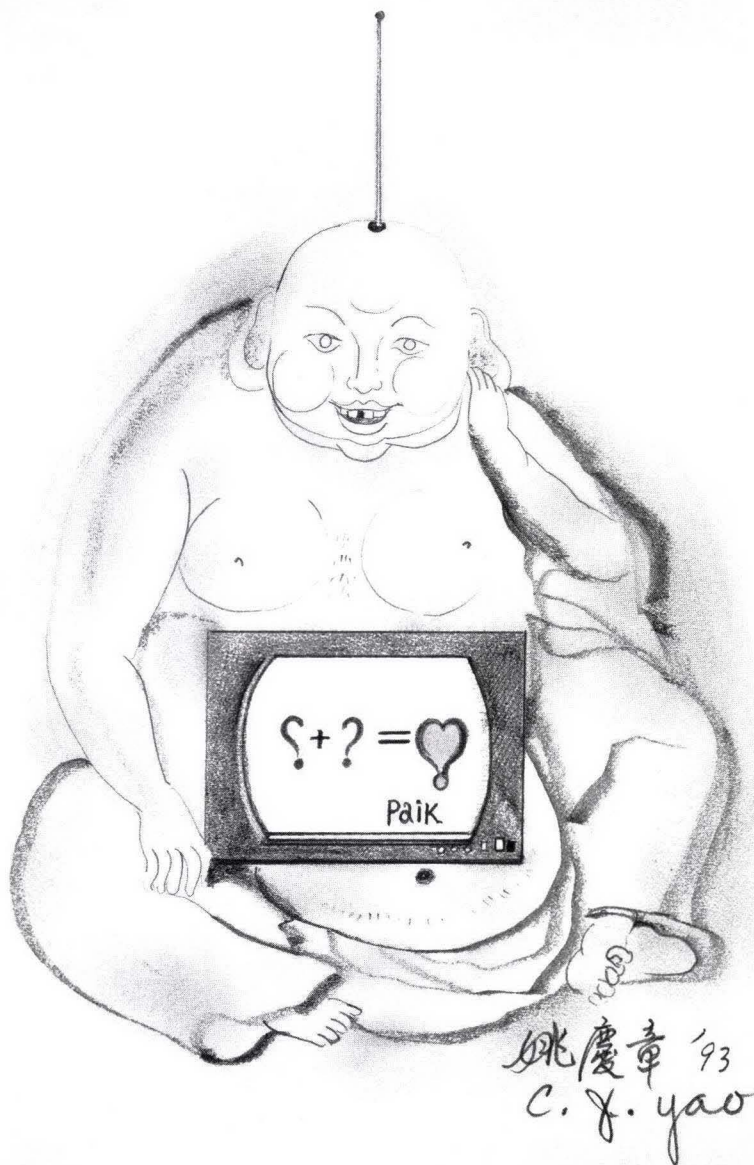
(published in: *Westside News*, 10. 8.1967, p. 6)

"You cannot exclude anyone from TV", declares Paik, "so really delicate important subjects like politics, philosophy, sex, and avant garde activity are not shown. But videotape can supplant commercial broadcasting with highly selective programming to be played back anytime at all. When you have a screen 3-D color videotape recorder, it will kill 'Life' magazine just as 'Life' killed 'Collier'".

"Like radio ham operators, we will have amateur TV. Combinations of Xerox with videotape will print everyone's newspaper at home. The video-record will become cheaper and easier than videotape for mass reproduction, with no threading and instant playback. As the collage technique replaced oil paint, the cathode ray tube will replace the canvas." "Medical electronics and art are still widely apart; but these two fields can also change each other's fruits, e. g., various signals can be fed to many parts of the head, brain, and body, aiming to establish a completely new genre of DIRECT-CONTACT-ART. The electromagnetic vibration of the head might lead the way to Electronic Zen."

C. J. YAO NEW YORK

Drawing for paik mosaic, 1993



SOUYUN YI NEW YORK

An essay for Nam June Paik's catalogue

February 2nd, 1993

I first heard about Nam June Paik during my college years in Seoul. In the summer of 1979, a handsome young man who was attending the rival art college was introduced to me by a mutual friend. We met in a cafe and talked about art in general. He once asked me what I thought of Nam June Paik's work. When I told him that I didn't know who that was I could see his clear disclaim directed towards me. I was quite puzzled by this artist that I was supposed to know about.

During my study at the Sorbonne University, someone lent me a Nam June Paik exhibition catalogue at the Whitney Museum for my thesis. I didn't understand at the time the implication of this exhibition and eventually didn't even use the catalogue since my focus was shifted to a different period.

Before I opened my gallery in New York in 1987, a Korean artist gave me Nam June Paik's phone number and urged me to go to see him. To my surprise, this supposedly famous artist received me at his loft. He announced to me that he had only forty-five minutes because the time was set for the machine he was experimenting on. Our conversation ended abruptly when Nam June stood up and dragged me to the door pointing to the clock on the wall. It was so blunt I didn't ever realize what happened until a few minutes after Nam June shut the door behind me. I wasn't sure if I was insulted or it was another gesture of a genius who transcended the conventional norm.

One day I was walking down the street in Soho and noticed a bum poking through a pile of garbage. It was actually a pile of broken chairs and old furniture et cetera. It was not an unusual sight in New York where homeless people are an integral part of the street scene. I almost passed him buried in my own thoughts when something made me turn my head. I was quite shocked and embarrassed to see Nam June wrapped with several layers of worn out sweaters. He casually responded to my greeting and said, "You know, you can really find interesting things in here." It was the first answer to my series of puzzles with Nam June Paik.

TADANORI YOKOO TOKYO

Great Master Paik, 1993

(Extracted from the text first published in SAT-ART III)

I was very puzzled when he called me "great master Yokoo". I felt uncomfortable because he is the great master I respect so much. The prefix does not sound ironical but friendly, when Mr. Paik adds it to someone's name. Everybody accepts it willingly when he calls his or her name with it. Myysterious phenomenon.

Mr. Paik removes utterly the distinction between the others to the extent that he assumes all of the artists are brothers and sisters, assimilated to each other. I wonder that he might transcend his self. While most artists still shut themselves up in the shell of the self, Mr. Paik alone flies lightly as if he had wings on his back.

The lightness induces Mr. Paik to realize such a large project in a global scale. Thus the lightness is the mystery of life and of art.

GENE YOUNGBLOOD

Jud Yalkut: Paikpieces, 1969

Recognized as one of the leading intermedia artists and filmmakers in the United States, Jud Yalkut has collaborated with Nam June Paik since 1966 in a series of films that incorporate Paik's television pieces as basic image material. Yalkut's work differs from most videographic cinema because the original material is videotape, not film. They might be considered filmed TV; yet in each case the video material is selected, edited, and prepared specifically for filming, and a great deal of cinematic post-stylization is done after the videographics have been recorded.

In addition to Paik's own slightly demonic sense of humor, the films are imbued with Yalkut's subtle kinaesthetic sensibility, an ultrasensitive manipulation of formal elements in space and time. Paik's electro-madness combined with Yalkut's delicate kinetic consciousness result in a filmic experience balanced between video and cinema in a Third World reality.

The two films illustrated here – Beatles Electroniques and Videotape Study No. 3 – are part of a forty-five-minute program of films by Yalkut and Paik, concerning various aspects of Paik's activities. The other films include P + A – I = (K), a three-part homage to the Korean artist, featuring his concert Happening performances with Charlotte Moorman, Kosugi, and Wolf Vostell; his robot K-456 walking on Canal Street in New York; and his color televi-

sion abstractions. Other films in the Paik-pieces program are Cinema Metaphysique, a nontelevision film in which the screen is divided in various ways: the image appears on a thin band on the left side, or along the bottom edge, or split-screen and quarter-screen; and two other films of Paik's video distortions, Electronic Yoga and Electronic Moon, shown at various intermedia performances with Paik and Miss Moorman.

Beatles Electroniques was shot in black-and-white from live broadcasts of the Beatles while Paik electromagnetically improvised distortions on the receiver, and also from videotaped material produced during a series of experiments with filming off the monitor of a Sony videotape recorder. The film is three minutes long and is accompanied by an electronic sound track by composer Ken Werner, called "Four Loops", derived from four electronically altered loops of Beatles sound material. The result is an eerie portrait of the Beatles not as pop stars but rather as entities that exist solely in the world of electronic media.

Videotape Study No. 3 was shot completely off the monitor of the videotape recorder from previously collected material. There are two sections: the first shows an LBJ press conference in which the tape was halted in various positions to freeze the face in devastating grimaces; the second section shows Mayor John Lindsay of New York during a press conference, asking someone to "please sit down", altered electronically and manually by stopping the tape and moving in slow motion, and by repeating actions. The sound track is a political speech composition by David Behrman. In his editing of these films, Yalkut has managed to create an enduring image of the metaphysical nature of video and its process of perception.

JUN-SANG YU SEOUL

The Human Use of the Human Machine, 1993

Some 20 years ago, Nam June Paik used to be called "the Michelangelo of electronic art", "a visionary missionary", or "the father of video art".

However, the sense of empathy I hold toward him precedes such decorative descriptions. My own feeling I gained in my direct experience of him over the past 10 years has been that he is an extraordinary "workman". "Work" here implies an equivalence between the physical and the mental. At any rate, he buries himself in his work day and night. When he was in his late twenties, he once

used the German word "Gesehen" in describing the attribute of the genius in the meaning of "He is given". However, his genius seems to have been self-made by himself rather than given by heaven. As has been well-known, he possesses an extraordinary power of memory and analytic power almost to a point of computer-like human machine. This machine goes on ticking day and night, and we are taken by surprise to find that the informaton output from that machine is far from being mechanical at all because the output is neither accurate nor precise but rather human and humane. In this sense, we may say that it is not that man emulates a machine but a machine emulates man and here lies the gist of his art. And this is one consolation humankind can find in the latter part of the 20th century.

YASUHIRO YURUGI TOKYO

One Meeting – One Life – on the Planet Earth, 1993

The chance had come suddenly. They told that the future exhibition one year after with the support of a newspaper company had become hopelessly impossible. The chief curator conferred the matter with us at the meeting. It was the spring of 1983. If there had not been such an accident, we would have been forced to make a detour to realize the exhibition of Nam June Paik.

On the first of January in 1984, he had just succeeded in multi-dimensional broadcasting "Good morning Mr. Orwell", which allied Europe, the United States, and some areas in Asia. Because none of the Japanese TV stations participated in this experimental network, the presentation of VTR of this satellite event was a great topic among the installations at The Metropolitan Museum of Tokyo. The exhibition in Tokyo was supported by so many people in addition to the collaborated partners acknowledged in the catalogue: his Japanese friends who had got acquainted with him from the 50's to the 60's and his respected teachers: people in New York, Seoul, Kyoto and Osaka. The collaboration of the museum staffs and the cooperation of the art students have been impressed into my mind. After the exhibiton, I had new friends through Mr. Paik; they come from Austria, Croatia, Holland, the United States, and even from my own country. The friendship with these people might be a momentary contact, as Mr. Paik says. But touching and appreciating different cultures is the origin which energizes me every time.

ANTONINA ZARU ROME/WASHINGTON

About Nam June Paik, 1993

I was fascinated by Nam June Paik because I was brought up with traditional art and I was searching for another kind of beauty – the beauty of the future. I was struck by the quality of Nam June's personality as well; he is indefatigable, always capable of renewing himself. Most artists are exhausted after forty of fifty years of working. Not Nam June, perhaps because his art surprises him as well as others.

He has an incredible curiosity, the sort of curiosity which usually disappears after an artist's youth, one which he has managed to keep alive, and which continues to feed him and give him the strength to innovate.

He is the child amused by the toys he himself makes, and he wants us to enjoy them, too. He recycles images, reanimating them with the original spirit of discovery in his videos. Unlike other artists, he cannot repeat himself. No two moments are alike.

For me the excitement is the surprise and discovery of going to his studio, unable to imagine what I will find there. And indeed there is always something new, something exciting, amusing, but also serious and at times profound. All of Nam June's art is imbued with his special personal philosophy. Naturally, Zen is part of it; there is also a constant interplay between casualness, which appears to be lack of discipline, and the fact that he is incredibly disciplined, as an artist and as a person.

The wonderful thing is that Nam June has this remarkable sense of irony and that he manages to incorporate the past into the present, making art out of his life. His joy is in telling about his past with his friends, the Fluxus group: John Cage, Charlotte Moorman, Beuys, etc. When he tells me, for example, stories about his collaborations, it is always with his magical sense of irony and comedy which one finds in his work as well as in his personality.

Paik has no faith in the system. I remember a story about a German dealer who refused to pay Paik because he said his performance was a disaster. N. J. Paik had to pay, but he had no money. So, he called the dealer's son and told him to come to the hotel. Then, he told the porter to ask the young man to wait in the lobby – which gave Paik the opportunity to throw his suitcases out the window, grab a sheet, drop it down, and slide down to the street. The dealer wanted to get the best of him, but in the end it was the dealer who paid, good performance or bad. When Paik

tells this story, you can see he is the thinking about leaving the dealer holding the bag. He loves the idea that he can beat the system which wants to destroy the artist. He lives as though people should be able to read his thoughts, but, in fact, nobody manages to read his mind.

When I think of Venice, I don't think first of Piazza San Marco, I think of Nam June arriving here after escaping from the hotel in Germany, holding his suitcases, climbing into a gondola, enjoying explaining to the gondolier that he left his money in the hotel, and getting off with his suitcases. Smiling, and promising to come right back with the money, he would probably enjoy the delicious memory of the waiting gondolier, and the dealer waiting in the lobby of the hotel in Germany.

Piano Piece, 1993

Courtesy Holly Solomon Gallery, New York





"TO GRASP THE ETERNITY" – BEMERKUNGEN ZU VIDEOBÄNDERN NAM JUNE PAIKS

"Actually I have no principles.
I go where the empty roads are."

(Nam June Paik, in: "Nam June Paik Edited for Television", 1975)

Das Entdecken von "empty roads" – in knapper Form umreißt dieses Zitat ein die Kunstproduktion der sechziger Jahre grundsätzlich kennzeichnendes Charakteristikum. In der Abkehr von traditionellen Darstellungsformen sollen innovative Konzepte zu einer Erneuerung der Kunst beitragen. In dem Bestreben, die ausgetretenen, wesentlich durch Malerei und Skulptur bestimmten Kunstpfade zu verlassen, manifestierte sich eine Kritik am Zustand der Kunst, die in den zeitgenössischen Happening- und Fluxusaktionen ihren sinnfälligsten Ausdruck fand. Die von der Avantgarde formulierte Forderung nach einer Verbindung von Kunst und Leben richtete sich gegen formalistische Reinheitsdiktate, die in der Nachfolge des Abstrakten Expressionismus zunehmend an Bedeutung gewonnen hatten. Malerische Konzeptionen wie "Hard Edge" oder die "Post Painterly Abstraction" mit ihrem von Ad Reinhardt formulierten Art-as-Art Dogma bildeten dabei den Zielpunkt der Kritik. Durch eine Einbindung der Kunst in lebensweltliche Zusammenhänge sollte das Autonomiekonzept aufgebrochen, der künstlerische Ausdruck wieder Teil einer lebendigen Auseinandersetzung werden. Die Absage an konventionelle Techniken und Darstellungsinhalte ging dabei mit einer allgemeinen Kritik am Kunstestablishment einher. Die von einer jüngeren Künstlergeneration favorisierte Aktionskunst stellte den Versuch dar, sowohl die hermetische Abgeschlossenheit des Kunstwerks als auch die des traditionellen Kunstraums zu durchbrechen.

In dieser künstlerischen Aufbruchstimmung artikulierte sich Fluxus zu Beginn der sechziger Jahre gleichzeitig in den USA und Europa, insbesondere in Deutschland. Eine schlüssige Definition dieser heterogenen, z. T. durchaus auch konträren Bewegung, die sich als Zusammenschluß von Künstlern unterschiedlichster Couleur formulierte, fällt schwer. Die einfachste und zugleich allgemeingültigste Bestimmung gibt vielleicht Joseph Beuys, wenn er "Fluxus" – das Fließen – als "Grundcharakter" der Bewegung herausstellt. Fluxus war als programmatische Verteidigung des Wandels gegen jegliche Art der Erstarrung zu verstehen: sowohl die der Kunst als auch die des in normierten Abhängigkeiten erstarrten Lebens. In diesem Sinne stellten die überwiegend musikalischen Fluxusereignisse konkrete, "gegen das Absichtsvolle, bewußt Formenhafte und gegen die Bedeutungshaftigkeit der Kunst" (George Maciunas) gerichtete Aktionen dar, mit Hilfe derer nicht nur die Kunst sondern letztlich auch das Leben verändert werden sollte.

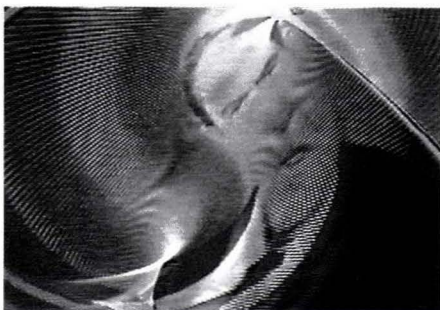
Paik, der 1956 von Tokio nach Deutschland übersiedelt war, machte schon bald als "enfant terrible" der Gruppe von sich reden. Geprägt von den Ideen John Cages, den er 1958 in Darmstadt kennengelernt hatte, zielten seine musikalischen Aktionen und Performances auf das Aufbrechen tradierter musikalischer Konventionen ab. Im Gegensatz zu Cage ging Paik, selbst ausgebildeter Komponist und Pianist, jedoch mit bewußt destruktiver Geste vor. Das Umstürzen eines Klaviers in "Hommage à John Cage" (1959) oder das Zerschlagen einer Geige auf dem Tisch, wie in "One for Violin Solo" (1962), stellten Akte der Zerstörung dar, denen gleichermaßen kathartische Wirkung zukommen sollte. Im Angriff auf die Inkunabeln des bürgerlichen Musikbetriebs sollte die Musik befreit, vom ideellen Ballast entschlackt, wieder in einer ursprünglichen Dimension erfahren und erlebt werden.

Im Unterschied zu einer in den Fluxus-Aktionen vollzogenen Demontage tradierter musikalischer Ausdrucksformen betrat Paik mit



Early Study, 1966
Charlotte Moorman appearing on the
Johnny Carson Show

seinen ab 1963 entstehenden präparierten Fernsehgeräten künstlerisches Neuland. Die Auseinandersetzung mit einem, bzw. dem Konsumgegenstand der modernen Massenkultur, entsprach dabei den Forderungen der Avantgarde nach einer Öffnung der Kunst. In der inzwischen legendären Ausstellung "Exposition of Music-Electronic Television", die 1963 in der Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal stattfand, stellte Paik seine Fernseharbeiten erstmals öffentlich aus. Für das Publikum mag die Konfrontation mit den bislang lediglich aus dem eigenen Alltag vertrauten Geräten wohl etwas Schockierendes gehabt haben. Die auf dem Boden verteilten Apparate zeigten das laufende Fernsehprogramm, das mit Hilfe vorgenommener Manipulationen verzerrt wurde. Bildstörungen und Verfremdungen, gewöhnlich als lästige Unterbrechungen des Programms wahrgenommen, konnten, abseits eines gewöhnlichen Beziehungszusammenhangs, in den ihnen eigenen Qualitäten angeschaut werden. Darüber hinaus bot die Ausstellung dem Betrachter die Möglichkeit, durch Manipulationen an der Technik selbst aktiv zu werden, die Bildfolgen nach Belieben zu gestalten. Durch Betätigen diverser Knöpfe und Tastaturen oder vermittels akustischer Signale konnte er auf die Gestaltung des Fernsehbildes Einfluß nehmen – der Gebrauchsgegenstand Fernsehen wurde zum kreativen Instrument. In diesen Installationen, von Paik als "Participation TV" bezeichnet, verzichtete der Künstler bewußt auf eine künstlerische Aussage. Ausgangspunkt seiner Überlegungen bildete nicht eine ins Werk gesetzte künstlerische Idee, sondern die Bereitstellung des technischen Instrumentariums, das zur spielerischen Benutzung animieren sollte. Der Aufwertung des Betrachters zum am Kunstwerk beteiligten Akteur stand so die Abwertung des Künstlers als Schöpfer gegenüber. Dem Bestreben, dem traditionellen Mythos vom Künstler bzw. dem "fetiscism of idea" (Paik) zu entgehen, kam der technische Charakter der ausgestellten "Kunstgegenstände" entgegen. So waren die Manipulationsmöglichkeiten an den Geräten zwar vom Künstler vorgegeben, die daraus hervorgehende Gestaltung jedoch vollzog sich im Apparat selbst. Die subjektive Geste, Gegenstand heftiger Kritik in der zeitgenössischen Avantgarde-Diskussion, wurde aufgegeben; die Technik bestimmte die Art und Weise der Gestaltung. Die Verzerrungen von Bild und Ton, die aus der manipulativen Einwirkung resultierenden abstrakten Formationen in Gestalt tanzender Muster oder in sich verschlungener linearer Strukturen, stellten so von künstlerischen Intentionen weitgehend unabhängige Gestaltungen dar, die im Rahmen der Ausstellung ästhetisch erfahrbar wurden. Die Einführung des tragbaren Videorekorders (von SONY 1965 auf den amerikanischen Markt gebracht) stellte eine Erweiterung der mit dem Medium verbundenen Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten dar. Paik, der 1964 nach New York übersiedelte, war damals einer der ersten Künstler, die diese technische Neuerung nutzten. Im Unterschied zu den in der Wuppertaler Ausstellung präsentierten Arbeiten, die an das laufende Programm gebunden waren, wurde es nun möglich, mit Hilfe des sogenannten "Portapak" Sendungen aufzunehmen und einer künstlerischen Beschäftigung zugänglich zu machen. Beispiele für eine derartige Strategie, die sich an das gesendete Fernsehprogramm hält und teilweise zufällige, teils bewußt inszenierte Bild- und Tonstörungen beinhaltet, sind das 1965 entstandene Tape "Mayor Lindsay", das einen Fernsehauftritt des New Yorker Bürgermeisters zeigt, und die "Early Study" aus dem Jahre 1966. Letzteres Band dokumentiert Charlotte Moorman, die Akteurin zahlreicher Aktionen und Performances Paiks war, während eines Auftritts in einer Talkshow.

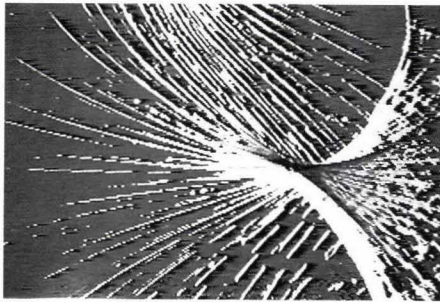


Electronic Opera No. 1
(The Medium is the Medium), 1969
The distorted Richard Nixon

Darüber hinaus war mit der Einführung des sogenannten Portapak die Möglichkeit geschaffen, eigene Aufnahmen herzustellen. Kurz nachdem Paik in den Besitz des neuen Aufnahme- und Wiedergabegeräts gelangt war, entstand "Electronic TV". Das Band zeigt Aufnahmen vom Besuch Papst Paul VI in New York und wurde noch am selben Abend im "Café au Gogo" vorgeführt. In dem zu diesem Anlaß entstandenen Manifest "Electronic Video Recorder" beschwört Paik die künftig wichtige Stellung von Video innerhalb der zeitgenössischen Kunstlandschaft. Video wird dabei als direkte Weiterführung der Happening- und Fluxustradition verstanden, wenn es programmatisch heißt; "Someday artists will work with capacitors, resistors & semiconductors as they work today with brushes, violins and junk."

Von Bedeutung für die Weiterentwicklung der Konzeptionen Paiks war die Tatsache, daß innovative Sendeanstalten in den USA Künstlern die Möglichkeit boten, in ihren Studios zu arbeiten. Im Unterschied zu Europa, wo sich die Medienlandschaft zu jener Zeit noch auf die staatlichen Sendeanstalten beschränkte, gab es in den USA bereits zu Beginn der sechziger Jahre eine Reihe von Privatkanälen, die aufgrund des untereinander bestehenden Konkurrenzdrucks um die Erschließung neuer (künstlerischer) Darstellungsformen bemüht waren. Paik setzte schon früh auf eine solche Zusammenarbeit, kam doch die öffentliche Ausstrahlung den Intentionen der Avantgarde entgegen, künstlerische Darstellungsformen außerhalb des traditionellen Kunstraums zu erproben. Als alternatives Fernsehprogramm stellten sich diese Produktionen in einen außerkünstlerischen Kontext und präsentierten sich als Bestandteil der modernen Unterhaltungskultur. Ähnlich wie in den zeitgenössischen Happening- und Fluxusaktionen, die auf der Straße, in Lagerhallen oder in der Landschaft situiert waren, fand auch hier eine Entgrenzung zwischen traditionellem Kunstraum und lebensweltlichen Zusammenhängen statt: Kunst wurde ins heimische Wohnzimmer verlegt.

Die Aufhebung dualistischer Unterscheidungskategorien, die ihre Entsprechung in den intermediären Aktivitäten der Fluxus- und Happeningbewegung hatte, spiegelte sich bei Paik jedoch nicht nur in der Wahl des Mediums, das abseits des Kunstmarkts und seinen Distributionsmechanismen im alltäglichen Leben verankert war. Vielmehr wurden die Entgrenzungsstrategien in den Videobändern selbst konsequent weitergeführt. So verzichtet Paik in fast all seinen Bändern auf eine nur aus eigenen – künstlerischen – Aufnahmen bestehende Gestaltung. Er nutzt zwar die Möglichkeit, mit Hilfe des Videorekorders oder, bei der Arbeit mit Sendestudios, mit professionellen Aufnahmegegeräten eigenes Material zu produzieren, doch wird dieses immer durch aus anderen Zusammenhängen stammendes Aufnahmematerial ergänzt. Neben der Einbeziehung von Film- oder Videoaufnahmen befreundeter Künstlerkollegen ist es häufig das Fernsehen selbst, das Paik als "Materialdepot" beansprucht. Ausschnitte aus Talkshows, aus Nachrichtensendungen und, vor allem, immer wieder Werbesequenzen gehen als Versatzstücke in die eigene Arbeit ein. Das Paiks Arbeit grundsätzlich kennzeichnende Gestaltungsprinzip der Collage führt dergestalt zu einer formalen und – damit einhergehend – inhaltlichen Durchdringung unterschiedlicher Bereiche. Werbung, zeitgenössische Unterhaltungskultur, Avantgardekultur und politische Sachverhalte werden z. B. in Arbeiten wie "Global Groove" (1973), "A Tribute to John Cage" (1973), "My Mix" (1981) als durch Schnitte voneinander getrennte Einzelsequenzen in der zeitlichen Abfolge des Bandes aneinandergereiht und prinzipiell gleichwertig



Electronic Opera No. 1
(The Medium is the Medium), 1969
Dancing patterns

einander gegenübergestellt. Eine solcherart in der Werkstruktur angelegte Verbindung verschiedener Darstellungsbereiche, die letztlich auf eine Relativierung kategorischer Setzungen von "Hochkunst" einerseits und "Massenkultur" andererseits abzielt, findet sich exemplarisch im 1972 edierten Videoband "Waiting for Commercials". Es besteht aus zeitgenössischen und vom Fernsehen abgefilmten Werbesequenzen, die durch kurze Einblendungen einer Musikperformance mit Charlotte Moorman ergänzt werden. Gelten Werbeblöcke im Kontext Fernsehen als meist unliebsame Unterbrechungen des Programms, so kehrt Paik die Prinzipien hier um. Schon der Titel weist auf diese Umkehr hin, die sich gegen gängige, gerade durch die Medien maßgeblich mitbestimmte Wahrnehmungsweisen richtet. Als "Störung" werden dementsprechend weniger die gezeigten Werbespots empfunden, als vielmehr die die Abfolge der bunten Konsumwelten regelmäßig unterbrechende künstlerische Darbietung. Die Werbung selbst wird zum ästhetischen Produkt erklärt. Abseits ihres eigentlichen Bezugssystems in einen künstlichen bzw. künstlerischen Zusammenhang gestellt, gibt gerade deren pointierte Herausstellung den Blick auf spezifisch ästhetische Qualitäten der Werbung frei.

In dieser bewußten Hinwendung zu massenkulturellen Phänomenen kann eine Parallele zu Darstellungsformen der Pop-Art gezogen werden. Paiks Entgrenzungsstrategien beinhalten aber gleichermaßen eine Kritik am kommerziellen Medienapparat. Die Abkehr von konventionellen künstlerischen Ausdrucksformen einerseits und die mit Paiks "Participation TV" vollzogene Unterwanderung tradierter medialer Vermittlungsstrukturen andererseits, stehen in einem dialektischen Spannungsverhältnis. Die 1969 am Bostoner Sender WGBH produzierte und im Rahmen der von Künstlern gestalteten Sendung "The Medium is The Medium" ausgestrahlte "Electronic Opera No. 1" beispielsweise enthielt an den Zuschauer gerichtete Regieanweisungen. Mit Aufforderungen wie "close your eyes", "open your eyes" sollte eine rein passive Aufnahme des Gesendeten verhindert werden. Der Zuschauer wurde dazu animiert, sich dem auf dem Bildschirm Dargestellten zu entziehen, um eigene, innere Bildwelten zu erschauen. Natürlich waren diese Anweisungen in erster Linie rhetorisch zu verstehen. Der Betrachter sollte auf sein eigenes Konsumverhalten aufmerksam gemacht und durch die provokante Geste gleichzeitig auf die vom Medium ausgehende Manipulation hingewiesen werden.

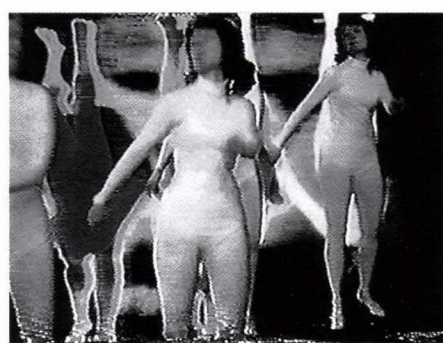
Wohl kaum eine Technologie hat sich jemals innerhalb weniger Jahrzehnte so rasch und konsequent global durchgesetzt wie das Fernsehen. Es ist im reinen Sinn ein Massenmedium mit der hervorstechenden Eigenschaft, Botschaften zu übermitteln, die von einem Massenpublikum konsumiert werden. Dies kann nur geschehen, wenn die Botschaften standardisiert und egalisiert übertragen werden in einer Form, die den kleinsten praktikablen Nenner benutzt, um eine größtmögliche Zahl von Zuschauern zu erreichen. Dabei liegt es in der Natur des Mediums, den Konsumenten mit vorgefertigten Bild-, Ton- und Bedeutungsinhalten zu entmündigen – ihn gemäß eines zugrundeliegenden einseitigen Sender-Empfänger-Codes auf die Rolle des passiven Konsumenten festzuschreiben. Es ist eine "Technologie des freien Eintritts, die keine praktischen, ökonomischen oder vorstellungsspezifischen Schranken kennt" (Neil Postman) und keinerlei Rücksicht auf individuelle, jeweils veränderliche Gedanken, Vorstellungen und Bedeutungen nehmen kann. Das Fernsehen lebt in erster Linie nicht von Inhalten und Bedeutungen, sondern von Signifikanz, der Signifikanz des bewegten Bildes.

Dieser Faktizität des Fernsehens (wie überhaupt jeden Massenmediums) wurden immer wieder Versuche gegenübergestellt, den normierten Distributionsapparat aufzubrechen, das Medium seiner "eentlichen" Funktion als Kommunikationsmedium zuzuführen. "Aufbrechen des Sender-Empfänger-Codes" und "Aktivierung des Betrachters" formulieren Zielsetzungen, die seit Brecht die medientheoretische Debatte bestimmen. Auf diesem Hintergrund können die in Fluxuskreisen entwickelten Konzepte Paiks auch als künstlerisch formulierte Alternativen zum kommerziellen Gebrauch des Mediums gewertet werden.

Eine spezifische Form der Auseinandersetzung mit den elektronischen Bildwelten und deren Vermittlungsstrukturen entwickelt Paik mit seinen häufig in Zusammenarbeit mit innovativen Sendeanstalten in den USA entstandenen Videotapes, die als "alternatives Fernsehprogramm" im Rahmen des normalen Sendeangebots ausgestrahlt wurden. Die "Electronic Collages", wie ein Sprecher in Paiks Videoband "Suite 212" diese Arbeiten nennt, greifen die Formensprache des Fernsehens auf. Was dort in Form von Nachrichten, Spielfilmen, Unterhaltungsshow und der unvermeidlichen Werbung täglich über den Bildschirm flimmert, entspricht in den Tapes einer Abfolge montierter und collagierter Versatzstücke, die auch einen inhaltlichen Bezug zum Fernsehen herstellen. Im Gegensatz zum Fernsehen jedoch, das über die aus Schnitt und Montage resultierenden Brüche hinweg eine Kontinuität suggeriert, bricht Paiks Technik diese bewußt auf. Die Abfolge der aus heterogenen Zusammenhängen stammenden Materialien sperrt sich einer linearen Betrachtung. Das hat Konsequenzen für den Betrachter, der sich dem Dargestellten nicht nachvollziehend annähern kann, sondern analog der diskontinuierlichen Abfolge sprunghaft den Sequenzen folgt. Etwaige Bedeutung erschließt sich auf diese Weise nicht aus dem logischen Nacheinander geschilderter Episoden, vielmehr ist der Rezipient/Zuschauer dazu aufgerufen, selbst aktiv zu werden, die durch Schnitte voneinander getrennten Sequenzen zu kombinieren, um ihnen damit erst Sinn zu verleihen. Dieser immer eigene und persönliche Sinn bricht den traditionellen Botschaftscharakter des Gesendeten auf. Die von Paik kritisierte "one-way-communication" des kommerziellen Medienapparats wird zum wirklichen Dialog im Sinne einer "two-way-communication". Eine wesentliche Funktion erhält in diesem Zusammenhang Paiks Recyclingverfahren. Indem Paik Video weniger in seiner ursprünglichen Bedeutung als "ich sehe" begreift, sondern bereits gesichtetes und insofern kommentiertes, immer schon gedeutetes Material auswählt, hinterfragt er visuelle Kommunikationsprozesse. Durch die bewußte Miteinbeziehung kultureller Codes spielt er mit einer spezifischen Erwartungshaltung des Rezipienten, um sie gleichzeitig in Frage zu stellen. Eine von Paik montierte Werbesequenz etwa verweist zwar noch auf den ursprünglichen Konsumartikel, wird jedoch durch die Einbindung in einen neuen, montierten Kontext in ihrer fixen Bedeutung aufgelöst. Die Montage beinhaltet bei Paik somit immer auch eine Demontage des dem Material eingeschriebenen Zeichencharakters: Als allegorisches Verfahren intendiert Paiks Collagetechnik die Befreiung des Bild- und Tonmaterials aus (scheinbar) eindeutigen Bezugssystemen – der "Aufstand der Zeichen" (Baudrillard) wird anschaulich vorgeführt.

Auch für Paiks eigenes Œuvre spielt dieses Prinzip eine große Rolle. Durch die Neuverwendung bereits bestehender Arbeiten, die neu ediert oder fragmentiert Bestandteil späterer Videoproduktionen bilden, wird ein eindeutiger Verweischarakter aufgebrochen,

Global Groove, 1973
Tap-dancers



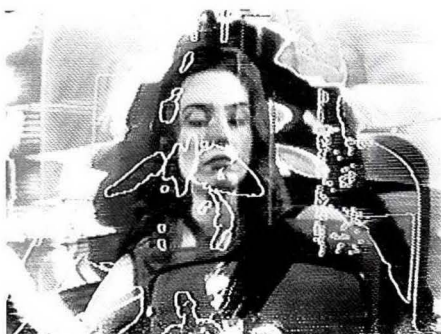
das künstlerisch gestaltete Produkt immer wieder mit anderen Versatzstücken kontrastiert und in einen kreativen Prozeß eingebunden, der ständig neue Spiel- und Interpretationsmöglichkeiten bereitstellt. Die Collage formiert sich als Reihung heterogener Wirklichkeiten, die grundsätzlich gleichwertig nebeneinander existieren. Mit dem ständigen Wechsel, den perspektivischen Verschiebungen, die aus der Neuzusammenstellung der Versatzstücke resultieren, wird Realität nicht als immer schon gewußte und gedeutete gesehen, sondern Wirklichkeit als ständiger Wandel begriffen und erlebt. Die Collagetechnik fungiert als paradoxes Prinzip, indem sie mit dem Medium gegen das Medium arbeitet. Die scheinbare und gerade durch das Fernsehen maßgeblich mitbestimmte Kategoriebildung, die, nach dualistischen Prinzipien ausgerichtet, Bedeutung statisch fixieren möchte, wird in Paiks elektronischen Collagen buchstäblich in Bewegung gebracht; die Realität erhält ihre Vielschichtigkeit zurück. Indem sie Mehrdeutigkeiten zulassen, optische wie auch akustische Erscheinungen nicht einer eindeutigen, fixierbaren Zuweisung unterziehen und damit "dingfest" machen, kollidieren Bedeutungen mit Bedeutungen ... Wiedererkanntes und Wiedererkennbares, schon Gewußtes und Gedeutetes wird in der Kollision auf einmal frag-würdig. Die Bilder erhalten ihre Unwägbarkeit zurück, oder, so Paik: "The absolute IS the relative, the relative IS the absolute."

Dieser Wechsel zwischen verschiedenen Deutungsebenen wird durch ein mit Hilfe des Synthesizers erzielt. Changieren zwischen unterschiedlichen Darstellungsebenen ergänzt. Der Video-Synthesizer, der 1970 von Paik zusammen mit dem befreundeten Ingenieur Shuya Abe entwickelt wurde, setzt elektronische Impulse in optische Signale um, die auf dem Bildschirm als abstrakte Farb- und Formstrukturen sichtbar werden. Euphorisch auf die malerischen Möglichkeiten dieses Instrumentariums Bezug nehmend, schreibt Paik in seinem Manifest "Versatile Color TV Synthesizer": "This will enable us to shape the TV screen canvas as precisely as Leonardo as freely as Picasso as colorfully as Renoir as profoundly as Mondrian as violently as Pollock and as lyrically as Jasper Johns." Der Bildschirm wird zum Träger – in Paiks Worten zur "Leinwand" – für eine synthetisch generierte "bewegte Malerei", welche die collagierten Bildsequenzen überlagert. Allerdings, und das scheint wesentlich, werden die mimetischen Darstellungen dadurch nicht "zerstört", wie David Ross meint. Vielmehr bilden die synthetischen Bildformationen eine gewissermaßen über die Videoaufnahmen gelegte Bildschicht, die deren Abbildcharakter nicht grundsätzlich in Frage stellt: "Realistischer" und "malerischer" Charakter stehen gleichwertig nebeneinander.

In dieser dekonstruktivistischen Ausrichtung kann Paiks Arbeit mit dem und gegen das Fernsehen in Parallele zu den Ideen Cages gesetzt werden. Wie die bewußte, durch Zufallverfahren wie dem I Ging erzielte Un-Ordnung seiner Kompositionen auf eine Befreiung der Musik aus tradierten Normen und Gesetzmäßigkeiten abzielt, so realisiert die inszenierte Un-Ordnung in Paiks Collagen die Abkehr von den das kommerzielle Fernsehen bestimmenden Kategorien. Beidesmal sollen verkrustete Strukturen aufgebrochen werden, eingefahrene Vorstellungs- und Wahrnehmungsweisen einer vorurteilslosen Anschauung weichen.

Eine direkte Gegenüberstellung von Cages Arbeitsweise und Paiks Umgang mit Video findet sich in dem Tape "A Tribute to John Cage", das anlässlich des 60. Geburtstags des Komponisten im Jahre 1973 am Sender des WNET in New York produziert wurde.

Global Groove, 1973
Charlotte Moorman with TV cello





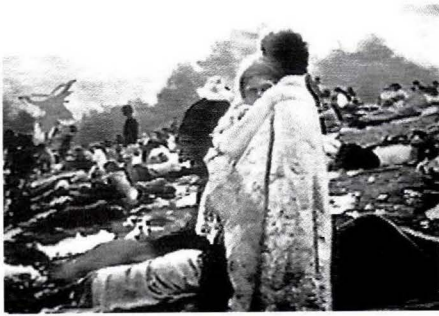
Global Groove, 1973
The alienated Allen Ginsberg

Das Band gibt Einblick in die Arbeiten Cages, indem es Ausschnitte aus Performances und den bekannten "Lectures" des Komponisten zeigt. Darüber hinaus wird die Uraufführung der Komposition "4'33" aus dem Jahre 1953 nachgestellt. Die auf Zeit und damit in einem übertragenen Sinn auf Welterfahrung abzielenden Entgrenzungsstrategien von John Cage nimmt Paik in seiner Videoarbeit wieder auf. Er beschränkt sich dabei nicht auf die Präsentation von Künstler und Werk. Vielmehr wird die Dokumentation durch das Einblenden anderer Versatzstücke immer wieder unterbrochen. Nur scheinbar aber stellen diese einen Kontrast dar. Tatsächlich entspricht die Abfolge heterogener Versatzstücke in Form von Werbesequenzen, aus dem Fernsehen abgefilmten Showeinlagen, Ausschnitten aus dem Film über das Woodstock-Konzert Cages Ideen. Mit der Aufhebung von festgesetzten Normen und Wertigkeiten, der Erkenntnis um die prinzipielle Gleich-Gültigkeit aller Dinge und Erscheinungsformen, die Cages Kompositionen und Performances sinnlich erfahrbar machen, geht eine formale Gestaltung einher, die als collagierte Reihung episodischer Szenen keine qualitativen Unterscheidungen anerkennt und auf diese Weise den Intentionen des Komponisten auf einer strukturellen Ebene folgt. Deutlich erkennbar wird hier die rhetorische Funktion des Paik'schen Collageverfahrens. Die Verwendung heterogener Ausgangsmaterialien geht einher mit einer Ver-Wendung ursprünglich kontrastierender Darstellungsinhalte. Ausgehend von einer durch Schnitt und Montage hervorgerufenen Abgrenzung der Einzelsequenzen, stellt das eigentliche Ziel deren Entgrenzung dar. Diese vollzieht sich in der die Unterscheidungen tendenziell aufhebenden Reihung.

Paiks Aneignung des Materials zielt somit in einem dialektischen Umkehrverfahren letztlich auf eine Befreiung aus Festschreibungen und Deutungszuweisungen; Weltanschauung soll wieder in einem ursprünglichen Wortsinn als Welt-Anschauung verstanden werden. Von ähnlichen Überlegungen geht auch das im selben Jahr entstandene Tape "Global Groove" aus, das in seiner Komplexität und der Vielfalt des verwendeten Materials als modellhaft für die nachfolgenden Videoarbeiten Paiks gewertet werden kann. Es entstand ebenfalls am Sender des WNET und wurde dort am 30. 1. 1974 zum ersten Mal ausgestrahlt.

Entsprechend der im Vorspann aus dem Off ertönenden prophetischen Vision einer "Video-landscape of tomorrow", in welcher die TV-Programmzeitschriften "as fat as the telephone book" sein werden, zeigt sich das Darauffolgende als bunter Querschnitt eines internationalen TV-Angebots: Gogo- und Steptanzdarbietungen, eine trommelnde Navajo-Indianerin, John Cage, der Anekdoten vorträgt, Ausschnitte aus Performances mit Charlotte Moorman, sowie eine Sequenz aus Paiks "Electronic Opera No. 1", fernöstliche Tanzrituale, ein Werbespot, Szenen aus einer Aufführung des "Living Theatre"... überwiegend musikalisch begleitet, werden auch hier wieder aus den unterschiedlichsten Zusammenhängen stammende Versatzstücke kombiniert. Kein kontinuierlicher Handlungsverlauf, der die Abfolge der Episoden einem erzählerischen Gesamtzusammenhang unterordnen würde, erleichtert das Schauen; der Betrachter sieht sich konfrontiert mit einem Kaleidoskop schnell wechselnder Bild- und Tonfolgen, das in den insgesamt zweiundzwanzig Sequenzen zur Darstellung gelangt.

Die Montage wird auf diese Weise zum Ausgangspunkt einer Geste, die zwar etwas zeigt, aber nichts erzählt. Diesen bewußt inszenierten "Mangel" überbrückt der Betrachter, indem er selbst aktiv Kommentare und Deutungen aufbaut. Die Deutungsrichtung



A Tribute to John Cage, 1973
Still from the Woodstock documentary

steuert Paik durch wiedererkennbare "Restbestände" innerhalb der Fragmente. Die musikalischen Darbietungen aus der amerikanischen Unterhaltungskultur waren dem Betrachter wohl ebenso vertraut, wie die Gogo- und Steptanzdarbietungen oder etwa die montierte Pepsi-Cola-Werbung. Durch die damit kontrastierenden "fremden" Episoden, wie den fernöstlichen Tanzdarbietungen oder den Ausschnitten aus Performances, ergeben sich in der zeitlichen Abfolge Bedeutungen, die mit Begriffspaaren wie Alt-Neu, Tradition-Moderne, Ost-West zu charakterisieren sind.

Durch die Einbindung in einen diskontinuierlichen Kompositionsrhythmus werden die komplementären Deutungszuweisungen relativiert. Unterschiedliche Kulturen und Traditionen verbinden sich in "Global Groove" zu einem globalen Rhythmus medial erzeugter Wirklichkeiten.

Berücksichtigt man die Tatsache, daß das Videoband in Hinblick auf den sich zuspitzenden Vietnamkrieg als künstlerischer Friedensbeitrag konzipiert wurde, so kann die Abfolge heterogener Einheiten als symbolischer Akt zur Völkerverständigung gesehen werden. Mit der Verwendung von Zeichen, die auf die eigene, vertraute Kultur ebenso verweisen, wie auf fremde Länder und Traditionen, werden räumliche und politische Grenzen aufgehoben. Der formalen Entgrenzung folgt hier die inhaltliche: Paiks "Fernsehprogramm" verweist auf eine künftige Medienlandschaft, die keine nationalen Beschränkungen mehr kennt und in der es möglich sein wird, "to switch to any TV-station on the earth", wie es im Vorspann programmatisch heißt.

"Global Groove" kann somit als künstlerische Inszenierung der McLuhanschen Utopie eines "Global Village" betrachtet werden, dessen kommunikative Funktion darin besteht, einen Prozeß internationaler Verständigung ebenso einzuleiten, wie dem Zuschauer eine Reflektion über eigene Wahrnehmungs- und Bewußtseinsstrukturen zu ermöglichen.

War es in "Global Groove" die Verbindung und gleichermaßen Relativierung von Räumen gewesen, die in der künstlerischen Realisation auf künftige medientechnische Entwicklungen im Sinne einer globalen Vernetzung der Welt hinwiesen, so vollzieht Paik im 1977 entstandenen Tape "Guadalcanal Requiem" eine ähnliche Strategie der Relativierung in bezug auf die Zeit. Entgegen der gewöhnlichen linearen Zeiterfahrung montiert Paik Dokumentarfilmmaterial des Zweiten Weltkriegs mit von ihm gefilmten Sequenzen aus dem Jahr 1977 zu einem zeitlich diskontinuierlichen Ablauf. Die von Paik aufgenommenen Sequenzen (Performances von Moorman und Paik selbst) sowie Interviews von Kriegsveteranen wurden auf der Insel Guadalcanal, einem damaligen Kriegsschauplatz, gedreht. Vergangenheit und Gegenwart des Ortes werden so miteinander verschränkt, unterschiedliche Zeiten simultan zusammengeführt. Die dem Dokumentarfilmmaterial eingeschriebenen digitalen Zeitangaben verweisen einerseits auf eine meßbare, fixierbare Uhrzeit, andererseits machen sie in der Konfrontation mit den zeitgenössischen Aufnahmen den relativen Charakter der Zeiterfahrung deutlich. Durch den Wechsel von langen und kurzen Sequenzen entsteht eine diskontinuierliche Folge heterogener Zeiten, in deren Rhythmus der Betrachter eingebunden wird. Im Gegensatz zu einer die Vergangenheit nur faktisch dokumentierenden Erinnerung provoziert die nichtlineare Zeitstruktur eine Wahrnehmung, die im Sinne Prousts als schöpferische Erinnerung verstanden werden kann. Vergangenheit verliert sich so nicht im Dunkel der Geschichte, sondern bleibt gegenwärtig und gerade durch die Zeit-Erfahrung politisch relevant.

Die Collage von Räumen und Zeiten verweist, über die damit intendierten politischen Implikationen hinaus, auf die strukturellen Gegebenheiten der elektronischen Bildübertragung. Wird die internationale Vernetzung in "Global Groove" noch als prophetische Vision vorgeführt, so stellt die am ersten Januar 1984 realisierte Live-Video-Show "Good Morning Mr. Orwell" eine programmatische Inszenierung der medialen Möglichkeiten dar. Die Show, in der ein buntes Unterhaltungsprogramm von Künstlern wie Joseph Beuys, Ben Vautier und Popmusikern wie Laurie Anderson geboten wurde, fand gleichzeitig in New York und Paris statt. Die Aufteilung des Bildschirms durch Split-screen-Verfahren machte die diesseits und jenseits des Atlantik stattfindenden Ereignisse simultan erfahrbar. Musik und Tanz, Aktionen und Performances wurden auf dem Bildschirm zusammengeführt, die globale Vernetzung konnte vom Betrachter sinnlich, qua Musik und Tanz erlebt werden. Der "Video Common Market", von Paik in den siebziger Jahren als Konzept zu einem internationalen Austausch und einer globalen Verständigung eingefordert, wurde der düsteren Orwellschen Vision des "Big-Brother" programmatisch entgegengestellt.

Raum und Zeit sind letztlich auch das Thema des Bandes "Lake Placid", das 1980 anlässlich der olympischen Winterspiele entstand. Dem Rahmen entsprechend werden, musikalisch begleitet von Mitch Riders "Devil with a Blue Dress on", verschiedene Sportarten gezeigt und durch Aufnahmen von den Himmel kreuzenden Flugzeugen ergänzt. Die innerbildlich vorgeführte Geschwindigkeit pirouettendrehender Eisläufer, zu Tale rasender Skiläufer und himmelstürmender Flugzeuge korreliert mit der schnellen Abfolge der einzelnen Sequenzen, die, teils stark beschleunigt, teils die Aufnahmen im Rücklauf zeigend, das Tempo (verstanden als Zeit und Bewegung) rhythmisch strukturieren. Nur scheinbar kontrastierend zu diesen Sequenzen werden Aufnahmen des meditierenden Allen Ginsberg montiert. Tatsächlich bilden Geschwindigkeitsrausch und "langsame" Meditationszeit nur komplementäre Ausprägungen der einen, fließenden Zeit, die, wie schon in "Guadalcanal Requiem", das eigentliche Thema des Videobandes darstellt.

Die Selbstreflexivität des Mediums, die in der Thematisierung von Geschwindigkeit schon in "Lake Placid" anklingt, wird im 1986 entstandenen "Butterfly" noch verstärkt. Die darin eingehenden Bildfragmente werden in der nur zweiminütigen Banddauer zu einem Bilderrausch medialer Wirklichkeiten collagiert, die, elektronisch verfremdet bis zur Gerade-noch-Erkennbarkeit, zum Tanz der Hochgeschwindigkeitssequenzen auffordern, während eine Arie aus der Oper "Madame Butterfly" ertönt.

Es würde im Rahmen dieses Aufsatzes zu weit führen, wollte man Paiks seit den frühen siebziger Jahren entstandene und zum großen Teil für das Fernsehen konzipierte Tapes hier alle im einzelnen aufführen. Betrachtet man jedoch die Videobänder in ihrer Entwicklung, so ist auffallend, daß, abgesehen von Dokumentarvideos wie beispielsweise "Allan and Allen's Complaint" von 1982 oder dem 1989 entstandenen "Living with the Living Theatre", die Montagemethoden im Lauf der Jahre immer subtiler, die Verfremdungen des Ausgangsmaterials technisch immer raffinierter werden. Die Fragmentierung des Materials bis hin zu kaum mehr wahrnehmbaren Realitätspartikeln, die im Hochgeschwindigkeitsrausch über den Bildschirm ziehen, besser: fliehen, markiert die immer schneller sich vollziehende und gerade durch die elektronischen Massenmedien im wahrsten Wortsinn beschleunigte Abfolge von Wirklichkeiten, die alles Fixierbare auflösen und Geschwin-



A Tribute to John Cage, 1973
John Cage during a lecture

Guadacanal Requiem, 1977
Charlotte Moorman at a performance on
Guadalcanal Island



digkeit als allein noch mögliche Konstante zulassen. Es stellt sich die Frage, ob mit dem damit einhergehenden Verlust von wie auch immer variierbaren und der gedanklichen Zugabe des Betrachters anheimgegebenen Deutungsmöglichkeiten nicht letztlich die eigentliche, im Sinne McLuhans die "gehaltlose Botschaft" des Mediums zutage tritt. Die zunehmende Distanzierung von mehrdeutig zu verstehenden inhaltlichen Bezugssystemen zieht die logische Konsequenz aus McLuhans bekanntem Diktum "The Medium is The Message". Der ins Monitorbild eingebrachte "Sehrohstoff" zielt nicht mehr auf eine Vergegenständlichung medialer Möglichkeiten im Sinn eines "Globalen Dorfs", sondern dient zunehmend der Konkretion von abstrakten, das Medium bestimmenden Strukturgesetzen, als da wären Verbindung von Raum und Zeit durch Geschwindigkeit, Relativierung von Bedeutung im collagierten Nebeneinander heterogener Wirklichkeiten. – Im visuellen und akustischen "Overkill", wie David Ross die Wirkung von Paiks Videobändern einmal allgemein charakterisiert hat, führt sich das Medium selbst vor: Das Medium ist die Botschaft ...

... Und die Botschaft ist "Musik", visualisierte Musik. Dieser paradoxe Gedanke stellt die Verbindung zwischen dem Videokünstler und dem Musiker Paik her. Neben der Auseinandersetzung mit den das Fernsehen bestimmenden Wahrnehmungsweisen und Strukturgesetzen können Paiks Video-Collagen auch als musikalische Kompositionen verstanden werden. Die "schöpferische Gestalt der Struktur", die McLuhan in der "Mosaikform" des Fernsehens gegeben sieht, organisiert Paik, der im Gegensatz zu anderen Videokünstlern wie Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci oder Dan Graham von der Musik kommt, nach gewissermaßen musikalischen Vorgaben. Mit einer Partitur vergleichbar, setzt die Collage unterschiedliche, durch Schnitt und Montage strukturierte Einheiten in Beziehung zueinander. Schnelle und langsame, beschleunigte und verzögerte, meditative und nervös-bewegte Sequenzen bilden hierbei Intervalle, aus deren Reihung, den Variationen und thematischen Wiederaufnahmen einzelner Motive ein vielschichtiges Beziehungsgeflecht entsteht. Nicht zufällig tragen denn auch viele von Paiks Videobändern musikalische Titel: "Global Groove, Electronic Opera No. 1, Guadalcanal Requiem, Suite 212".

Über die in den szenischen Episoden innerbildlich vorgeführte (musikalische) Bewegung in Form von Tanz oder musikalischen Performances hinausgehend, strukturiert der Synthesizer – von Paik als "real-time video piano" bezeichnet – die musikalische Bewegung abseits eines gegenständlichen Bezugs. Als visuelle Notationen stehen die abstrakten Farb- und Formstrukturen in direkter Korrelation zum die szenischen Episoden begleitenden akustischen Rhythmus: Zu den oben genannten malerischen Qualitäten treten die musikalischen Qualitäten des bewegten Bildes. Musikalische Zeit (der vorgegebene Rhythmus) und Bildzeit (die Bewegung der synthetisch erzeugten Farbformationen) bilden eine synästhetisch erfahrbare Einheit. Die von Cage initiierte Grenzüberschreitung der Musik wird konsequent weitergedacht, indem die Erforschung "nicht-musikalischer Klangfelder" (John Cage) um die optische Dimension erweitert wird. Aus dem nichtmusikalischen Klang entsteht das musikalische Bild.

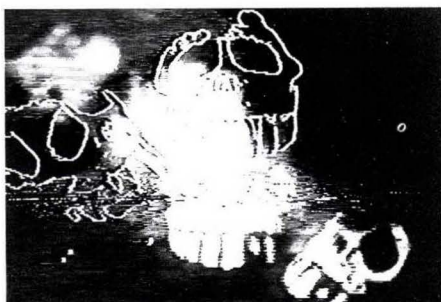
Die Frage "Was ist Musik?" beantwortet Paik letztlich ähnlich wie Cage, wenn er sagt: "Musik ist eine Zeitabfolge". Durch den diskontinuierlichen, in der Collagestruktur vorgegebenen Rhythmus "befreit" Paik die Zeit von einer auf Meßbarkeit angelegten Linearität. In der Reihung unterschiedlicher Zeitgestalten führen Paiks Video-Collagen die Zeit als relative Größe vor Augen und Ohren.

An der Nahtstelle zwischen Fernsehen, Musik (und einer "bewegten Malerei") situiert, dient Video als Meta-Medium zu einer Sichtbarmachung von Zeit: einer rhythmisierten, verlangsamten, beschleunigten Zeit, die auf eine paravisuelle Wahrnehmung der wirklichen Welt, verstanden als steter Wandel und Veränderung, abzielt. Wenn Paik sich Ende der achtziger Jahre von der Single-Channel-Produktion im wesentlichen verabschiedet und sich verstärkt der Konzeption großformatiger Multi-Monitor-Installationen zuwendet, so stellt dies letztlich eine nur logische Konsequenz aus der vorangegangenen Entwicklung dar. "The More The Better", so der Titel eines 1988 für die Olympiade in Seoul konzipierten Projekts, das 1003 Monitore vorsah, gibt in diesem Zusammenhang programmatisch die Stoßrichtung an. Als Bausteine der Collage fungieren nicht mehr nur Ton- und Bildfragmente, vielmehr wird die collagierte Software durch die Hardware der Monitore ergänzt. Diese bilden, miteinander verschaltet und jeweils mit einer collagierten Software gespeist, eine raumfüllende und rhythmisch organisierte All-Over-Struktur. Die die Single-Band-Produktion bestimmende und durch den Monitor vorgegebene Begrenzung wird aufgehoben. Damit entfällt die Möglichkeit einer Distanzierung; der Betrachter wird eingebunden in die Bilderflut einer rhythmisch den Raum strukturierenden Monitor-"Tapete", wie Paik diese Installationen nennt.

In den kataraktartig sich über den Rezipienten ergießenden montierten, fragmentierten und synthetisch verfremdeten Bilderfolgen läßt sich das Verschwinden der Dinge aus den Bildern festmachen, wobei das kurzzeitige Aufblitzen erkennbarer Versatzstücke den Eindruck ihres Verschwindens nur noch unterstützt. Übrig bleibt die Zeit: Sichtbar, im rhythmischen Fluß der Bilder vergegenständlicht vorgeführt als sich verflüchtigende Zeit, welche die zunehmende Relativierung der Wahrnehmung im Geschwindigkeitsrausch unseres "Fin de Siècle" (so der Titel eine 1989 entstandenen raumfüllenden Videoinstallation Paiks) anschaulich macht.

Die Umkehrung liegt nahe: Wo zu viel ist, wird nichts mehr gesehen. Der "Overkill" führt zurück ins Nichts, ins Nirwana des eigenen Bewußtseins. Im Zusammenhang mit der aktuellen Medientheorie gehört es zu Paiks spezifischen Qualitäten, daß er im Ausloten medientechnischer Eigenschaften und deren Wahrnehmungsweisen das Medium Fernsehen auf den Punkt bringt und in einem Akt der Überdehnung einen paradoxen Umkehrschluß vollzieht: Der Zustand des Information Overload kehrt zurück – oder wird nach vorn geworfen – in einen Zustand der Null-Information. Kaum verwunderlich erscheint es deshalb auch, daß von den frühen präparierten Fernsehgeräten Paiks eine ähnliche Wirkung ausgeht wie von den späten Videowänden in teils gigantischen Ausmaßen. "Minimal" – so nennt Paik seine frühen Fernseharbeiten – und "Maximal" – die Multi-Monitor-Installationen – sind in diesem Zusammenhang nur als zwei Seiten einer Medaille zu sehen. "Zen for TV", so der Titel einer 1963 entstandenen "Zufallskomposition" von Paik, könnte demnach für die Arbeiten der 80er Jahre übernommen werden. Auf beide Richtungen scheint das buddhistische Paradoxon anwendbar: "Wir können die Leere nur durch die Form begreifen." Der waagrechte weiße Streifen auf dem sonst schwarzen Bildschirm, der in "Zen for TV" durch einen technischen Defekt des Fernsehgeräts zufällig entstand, gibt der Leere ebenso eine Form wie der technisch perfektionierte Bilderrauch. "To grasp the eternity", mit dieser pathetischen Formel aus Paiks Fluxustagen können auch die späten Arbeiten des Künstlers einen Bogen zurück in die Zeit schlagen, als Paik in Wuppertal seine manipulierten Fernsehgeräte zum ersten Mal ausstellte ...

Guadacanal Requiem, 1977
"Dancing skulls"



DAVID ROSS

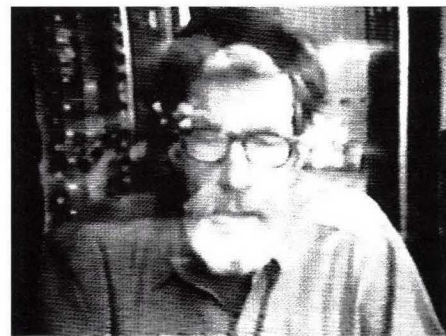
NAM JUNE PAIK. VIDEOTAPES 1966-1973

Nam June Paik is recognized as one of the seminal forces in the development of video art. The Korean born artist, composer and inventor has been referred to as the "George Washington of Video".

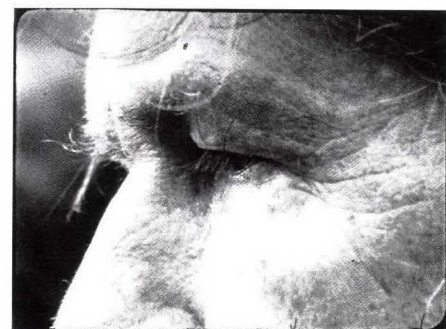
Paik was and still is a member of the group of conceptual artists, poets and performers known as Fluxus. Since the early 60's, Paik and his Fluxus colleagues such as George Brecht, Ray Johnson, Yoko Ono, Allison Knowles, et al have been a major influence on what has developed into the field referred to as "Conceptual Art". Nam June Paik exposes the ridiculous and the sublime, while providing the viewer with a playful experience (both visually and intellectually). In 1968, Paik invented the Video Synthesizer (with the aid of engineer Shuya Abe). It is a device he uses in many of his videotapes, and as you will see, it is the device that produces the swirling color explosions that seem to take television images and transform them into wonderful distortions of the reality we have come to expect as the television image/reality. Paik uses these images to shock the viewer into the realization that things are never the same from one moment to the next. He also attacks the banal worship of technological salvation as well as the cultures that support such thinking. Although his attack may itself be absurd, with random juxtapositions of images and ideas, the works press the point that there can be not art at all if there is a prevailing belief that everything is obvious.

The tapes in this show all show Paik's debt to the American genius John Cage, whose early compositions affected Paik while he was still a composer living and working in Cologne, Germany. Paik's other influences, though less obvious, are the composer Schönberg, the cyberneticist Norbert Weiner, and of course the dada master Marcel Duchamp. This exhibition is the first review of tapes made by Paik during the past eight years, but in no way does it represent a retrospective of his wide ranging works. Paik, an activist for the expansion of what we have come to accept as video art, feels quite strongly that videotapes are not all of video art, and he is usually quite reluctant to have either his work or the form itself judged by tapes alone.

Nevertheless, the tapes in the exhibition range from early black and white experiments (one Dieter Rot in German made on Canal Street in 1966) to highly sophisticated works like Global Groove, a tape employing video synthesis and computer animation recently completed at WNET's Television Laboratory.



From the Tape "Tribute to John Cage", 1973



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HILTON KRAMER

A FAST SEQUENCE OF FORMS CHANGING COLOR AND SHAPE

The pace deliberately subverts any empathetic response we may bring to a specific image.

There is nothing like the acquisition of a new technology for inducing the illusion that art has some radical new function to perform. Novelty of means leads, naturally enough, to great expectations about new ends. Yet art – not our ideas about it, but the experience itself – is not easily dislodged from its traditional functions. Radical change in the way art addresses itself to our emotions is not as easily accomplished as the propaganda emanating from new art movements always assumes. The instrument may

indeed be as up-to-date as the Pentagon's new missiles, but the experience – what actually impinges on the mind of the observer – often remains hostage to familiar associations. The new technology may be little more than a machine for the mass production of clichés.

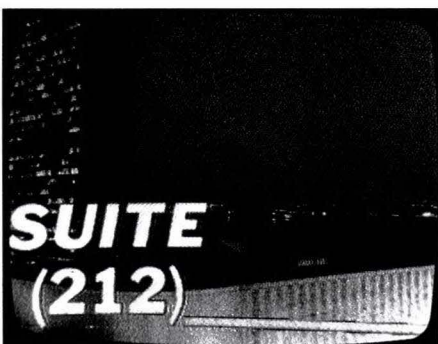
This is not quite the case, I think, with Nam June Paik's new video composition called "Global Groove", which is currently on view at the Galeria Bonino, 7 West 57th Street, but it is closer to being the case than the artist's various statements (and those of his friends and supporters) would ever lead one to guess. In his latest pronouncement, Mr. Paik claims to be offering us a form of "group psychotherapy on a global scale; preparing for the coming of post-industrial age", and, going further, holds out the promise of an "answer to today's energy crisis". As a copywriter promoting his own wares, Mr. Paik has a gift for hyperbole that would bring a blush to the cheek of even the most hardened Madison Avenue practitioner.

As an artist, however, he is a good deal more innocent and a good deal more serious than these nonsensical claims suggest. He is, fundamentally, an orchestrator of images who employs videotape and multiple screens as a means of achieving a certain acceleration and simultaneity in the projection of those images. "Global Groove", in any case, is a form of video collage in which the given images – some "found", some created – are splintered, synthesized, and spliced to conform to a rhythmic velocity that effectively consumes all its myriad particulars in a headlong rush of perception. It is the accelerated speed and dissonance of the visual rhythm, together with the simultaneous projection of variations of the same tapes on many separate screens, that is the principal focus of interest, not the particular images that have been "consumed" in the process.

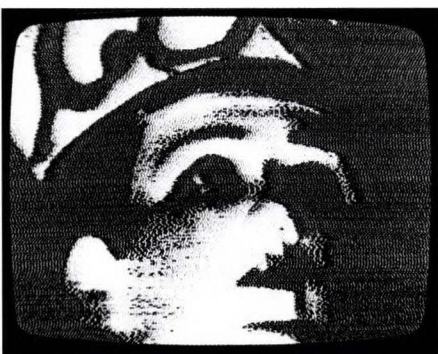
Indeed, the exact content of the images Mr. Paik employs is of no importance to the artistic substance of his work – though it is of great importance to its public relations aspect. In "Global Groove", there are sequences devoted to John Cage, Charlotte Moorman and Allen Ginsberg, and there are also brief excerpts from Karlheinz Stockhausen's "Kontakte" and Robert Breer's "First Fight". Such sequences and excerpts are certainly sufficient to guarantee Mr. Paik a share of the so-called "avantgarde" audience, but they contribute neither more nor less than the excerpts from a Japanese Pepsi-Cola commercial, say, or the sequence devoted to a Korean dancer. Mr. Paik has simply adopted the old Hollywood technique of using celebrities in "cameo" roles.

What is important, above all, in this medium is the pace at which the screen projects and devours its images. It is a pace that deliberately subverts any empathetic response we may bring to a specific image, for no matter how compelling – or boring – a particular moment may be, it is "cut" to a rhythm that negates our interest in it in order to fasten all attention on the rhythm itself. This is, in other words, a medium in which representational images are used for the purposes of kinetic abstraction.

"Global Groove" is a work lasting 30 minutes, and is projected on 20 television screens simultaneously. At the Galeria Bonino, the spectator stands on a raised platform looking down on what Mr. Paik describes (accurately, for once) as a "sea" or "garden" of televised images. The screens vary in size and angle of vision; some carry black and white images; but most of them are in color and each of the color screens is encoded to provide a different mix. There is a great deal of deliberate distortion, transparent overlays



From the Tape "Suite 212" 1976/77



From The Tape "Suite 212": "Little Italy"
with Jud Yalkut

of color, silhouetting and quick-color change. Some images are absolutely straight, whereas others are given a kind of grotesque science-fiction exaggeration. There is one especially beautiful split-screen sequence of dancing legs – Mr. Paik is much drawn to dancers in motion – and some frenzied scenes of the Living Theater doing its thing. But on a second viewing, the images matter even less than they do the first time. It is the sequence of forms changing color and shape that absorbs all attention.

"Global Groove" is abstract, then, in exactly the same way that a Kurt Schwitters collage is abstract. On our first encounter with the latter, we may be amused or simply interested in noticing that the constituent parts are drawn from discarded cigarette packs, old tram tickets and other bits of rubbish, but the power of the work derives from the rigorous form – usually a cubist form – governing the composition of the parts. In the same way, our initial curiosity in the case of "Global Groove", fastens on John Cage, say, telling one of his innocuous little tales, or on a sexy dancer dissolving into a colored silhouette. But the form quickly overtakes our curiosity about the bits of televised rubbish Mr. Paik has used in the making of his video collage, and it is our experience of the form that is finally what counts.

Once the form itself is apprehended, the work tends, I think, to diminish a little in interest. So much of the history of modern art has prepared us, after all, for this splintering and synthesizing of images, and for multiple projection and repetition. The technology may be new, but the conception has an ancestry, and our awareness of that ancestry is a factor in our experience.

Another factor for the audience that responds to this art is, undoubtedly, the historical scenario Mr. Paik takes such pains to promote. All the claptrap about the "perception of space motion" leading "to a complex flow of multi-lateral aesthetical information", etc., belongs to what Renato Poggioli, in his "Theory of the Avant-Garde", calls "the futurist moment" in every movement claiming an avant-garde status. With its promises of impossible accomplishments not yet realized, it represents, according to Professor Poggioli, "a prophetic and utopian phase, the arena of agitation and preparation for the announced revolution".

Spokesmen for "the futurist moment" are indeed, as Professor Poggioli says, "conscious of being the precursors of the art of the future", and Mr. Paik's pronouncements abound in exaggerated promises his art shows no evidence of keeping. The art one actually experiences is rather modest, its delights are flickering, small-scale and fragmentary, and quickly dissipated. They leave little residue in the memory. They need a certain ideological scaffolding, and it is no doubt for this reason that Mr. Paik is tireless in surrounding his work with so many elephantine claims.

(published in: The New York Times, Art, February 3, 1974)

GRACE GLUECK

A VIDEO ARTIST DISPUTES ORWELL'S '1984' VISION OF TV

In his cautionary novel "1984", Georges Orwell wasn't kind to television. He saw it basically as "Big Brother", a tool of the totalitarian state. But today the very first day of that prophetic year – his view will be rousing challenged, by the Korean-born video artist and impresario, Nam June Paik. "Good Morning, Mr. Orwell", a live satellite-relayed program to appear on public-television stations, including WNET/Channel 13, at 12 noon, is Mr. Paik's pitch for television as an instrument for international understanding, rather than an ominous means of thought control.

Mr. Paik's claim that his work is "the first global interactive use of the satellite among international artists" needs a little explaining. Other video artists, such as Doug Davis, have employed satellite transmission, but the Paik venture is larger and more complex. And while commercial television has linked different parts of the world for informational purposes, Mr. Paik is using works designed specifically for the technology of the satellite itself to relate interactive performances, linking different stages in different parts of the world, so to speak.

"Good Morning, Mr. Orwell" is essentially a global variety show, originating in the United States, France and Germany, but its line-up of performing talent will be more familiar to Mr. Paik's "avant-garde" followers than to fans of network television. And while the program does not directly address Orwell's philosophy, Mr. Paik believes that in presenting established and new young talent from both sides of the Atlantic, it will "celebrate the positive side of the medium".

Among those who will appear, live or on tape, are the rock singers Laurie Anderson and Peter Gabriel belting out the title song (composed and recorded by them especially for the broadcast); on a split screen, the choreographer Merce Cunningham and the composer John Cage in New York improvising to Salvador Dali reciting a poem (on tape), beamed from Germany; the artist Joseph Beuys playing the piano, live from the Pompidou Center in Paris; the poets Allen Ginsberg and Peter Orlovsky singing one of their own compositions; a group of 80 French saxophone players and vocalists known as Urban Sax, and the irrepressible Charlotte Moorman, a cellist famed for playing Paik compositions dressed in almost nothing. (She'll be fully clad for her satellite debut.) Laughs – it is hoped – will be provided by interludes with the comedians Mitchell Kriegman and Leslie Fuller, both formerly of "Saturday Night Live". And viewers will also witness a world television premiere: "Act III", a film stretching the boundaries of electronic graphic display by Dean Winkler and John Sanborn with music by Philip Glass.

Now 51, Mr. Paik still looks, with rumpled clothes and tousled hair, very much the whiz kid who first came to the attention of the art world as a video innovator in the 1960's. "I never read Orwell's book – it's boring", he said recently during an interview at WNET. "But he was the first media communications prophet. Orwell portrayed television as a negative medium, useful to dictators for one-way communication. Of course, he was half-right. Television is still a repressive medium. It controls you in many ways.

(published in: The New York Times, January 1, 1984, S. 21)

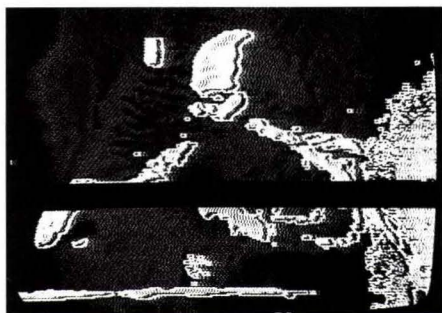


Nam June Paik with Calvin Tomkins and Russel Connor, 1975, from the Tape "Nam June Paik – edited for TV"

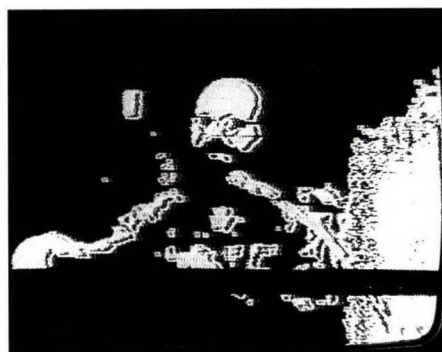
'BYE BYE KIPLING' ON 13, A VIDEO ADVENTURE



From the Tape "Allan 'n' Allen's Complaint",
1982 (with Shigeko Kubota)



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Nam June Paik, perhaps the least threatening of avant-garde artists, is fond of salutations. On the first day of 1984, he presided over a Paris-New York satellite transmission entitled "Good Morning, Mr. Orwell". On Saturday evening, from 9 o'clock to nearly 10:30 on Channel 13, he conceived and coordinated a kind of space-opera variety show that was called "Bye Bye Kipling". This time, with financing from American, Japanese and Korean sources – the title alludes to Kipling's famed conclusion that "never the twain shall meet" – he offered still another splashy and witty demonstration of his favorite subject: two-way, interactive television-communications.

With the New York portions of the broadcast emanating from a new club named 4D, appropriately enough, the program was able to jump by satellite to Tokyo and to Seoul, South Korea, where the 1986 Asian Games are taking place and where cameras were able to pick up a marathon race in progress. The resulting "mix" included live performances and interviews, assorted taped materials and periodic dollops of computerized videos. Some of the material, such as the rock songs of Lou Reed ("This Is the Age of Video Violence"), was great. Some, most notably several visual "jokes" involving the passing of an object from one space frame to another, were rather silly.

Perhaps the most surprising realization about the bombardment of electronic techniques was that so many of them have already become almost old-fashioned. In a world where the visually new is gobbled up voraciously by everything from MTV to product commercials, from Max Headroom to Pee-wee Herman, novelty and surprise are decidedly ephemeral things. For all of its avant-garde ambitions, "Bye Bye Kipling" opened with the Beatles singing "Come Together" and ended with clips from the "be-in" days of the old Living Theater.

Despite his up-to-the-minute cast of characters – the composer Philip Glass, the artist Keith Haring, the fashion designer Issey Miyake – Mr. Paik is not really concerned with being trendy or fashionable. He worries about how people perceive each other in a world that television is constantly reducing to the long-promised (or threatened) "global village". His ultimate goal is to set up a gigantic television screen in Times Square and one in Moscow's Red Square that would allow the citizens at either point to talk to each other 365 days a year. "It will cost one-millionth of Star Wars", he argues, "and be a lot more effective".

His "Bye Bye Kipling" extravaganza – the executive producer was Carol Brandenburg – was dotted with technical glitches, none of which were terribly consequential. Mr. Paik has said he sees a lot of his audience as young media-oriented people who "play 20 channels of New York TV stations like piano keys". The switching is the content, he says. The flow of "Bye Bye Kipling" was not helped, however, by the confusion of Dick Cavett, the New York host. Although he spoke several Japanese phrases with seeming fluency, Mr. Cavett kept complaining that he didn't know what was going on. After a gimmick striptease number, he announced: "I have a tiny surprise. One of the strippers – and this is the truest thing I will tell you tonight ..." At which point the picture switched to the marathon race in Seoul and Mr. Cavett could be heard grumbling, "Oh, the hell with it".

The coverage of the marathon, incidentally, was superb, the live completion of the race accompanied by a Philip Glass crescendo for a kind of "Chariots of Fire" effect. Bursting with stunning images, popping with provocative ideas, "Bye Bye Kipling" was an

unusual venture for public television, a refreshing break from the talking heads and British imports. Mr. Paik deserves his own salutation: Welcome back, and come again.

(published in: New York Times, Oct. 6 1986)



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From the Tape "Merce by Merce", 1977



When Nam June Paik began talking a few years ago about producing a live international broadcast that would interconnect as many as twenty countries, I must admit – I was skeptical. We had already done GOOD MORNING MR. ORWELL and BYE – BYE KIP-LING, to be sure ... but this would be so much more complex. Where to even begin??

But Nam June – who never doubted that the show could and would happen – exercised his considerable powers of persuasion to convince the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) that his program would help to promote the 1988 Summer Olympic Games, beginning one week later. KBS committed \$ 200,000, provided that at least eight other countries (in addition to South Korea and the U.S.) agreed to participate no later than July 10, 1988. Perhaps even more important, KBS supplied an additional \$ 50,000 to cover development costs during the six-month period January-June. That was the crucial first step, which made it possible for me to do the traveling necessary to negotiate co-production agreements around the world.

We began immediately, Nam June and I, making West Germany our first stop last January. We had meetings at WDR/Cologne and then traveled separately to Hamburg (where my former co-production partners at NDR said “yes” the same day) and Munich. I went on to Paris as well for an exploratory visit.

Early in March, I returned to Europe for nearly six weeks, on an odyssey that took me from Stockholm to southern Spain – ten countries in all. By the end of May, we had agreements in principle with NDR/WDR, ORF/Austria, RAI/Italy, TV Asahi/Japan – which Nam June has arranged – and, of course, KBS. Discussions were proceeding with Globo/Brazil, where Nam June’s old friend, video-computer artist Hans Donner, was eager to collaborate with us. Seven down, three to go ...

We wanted an interesting and varied international “mix” in the show, so in June I was off to Moscow, Leningrad, Sarajevo and Dublin. My final trip took me to Beijing and August to conclude the co-production deal with China Central Television. And when the broadcast finally took place as scheduled on September 10, the performances from around the world miraculously (it seemed) happened just as planned – or almost.

WNET’s engineers provided superb technical coordination in both London and New York. The big question was the programming itself – Would each of the broadcasters do what we had mutually agreed? Would it all work?

To our delight, it did. Oh, there were some mistakes and rough transitions along the way, of course. But mostly it went more smoothly than I had dared to hope.

For me, that was the true and lasting significance of WRAP AROUND THE WORLD: using complex technology to create human interactions that would have been unthinkable just a few short years ago. There was the professional challenge of developing relationships – and mutual trust – with other broadcasters, to make those collaborations possible. And there was the enormous amount of time, energy, creative thought and enthusiasm from each participant, to make its segment the best it could be.

The production and technical staff I assembled in New York – from WNET, other companies and freelancers – did a magnificent job. Some had worked on one or both of the previous live shows; some were new; but everyone worked hard, with great persistence and imagination, to realize Nam June’s vision.



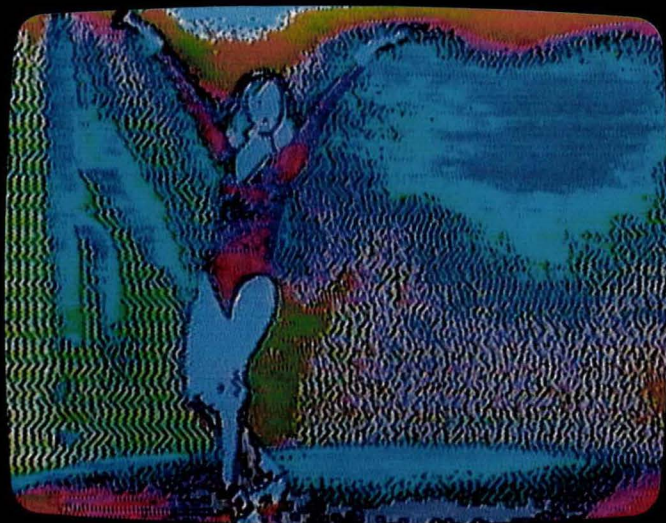
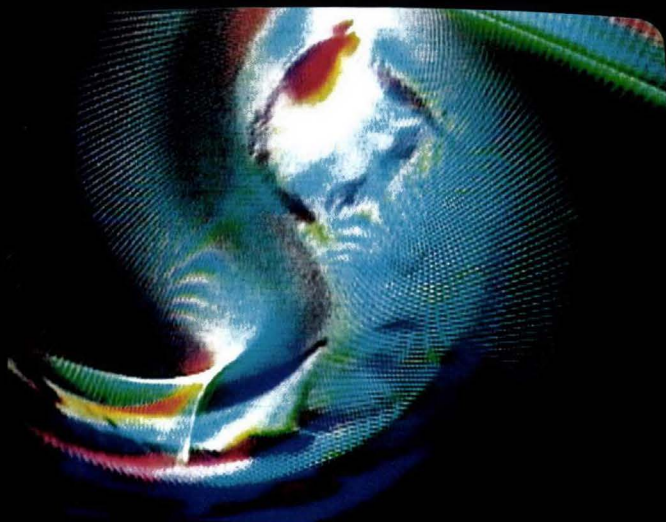
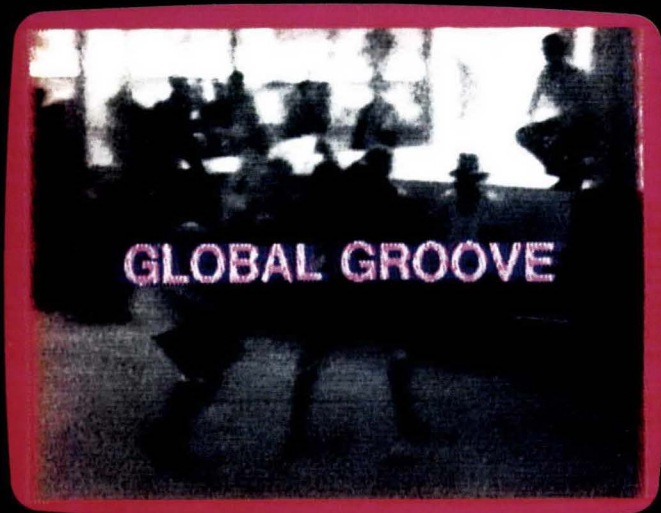
Wrap Around the World Man, 1990

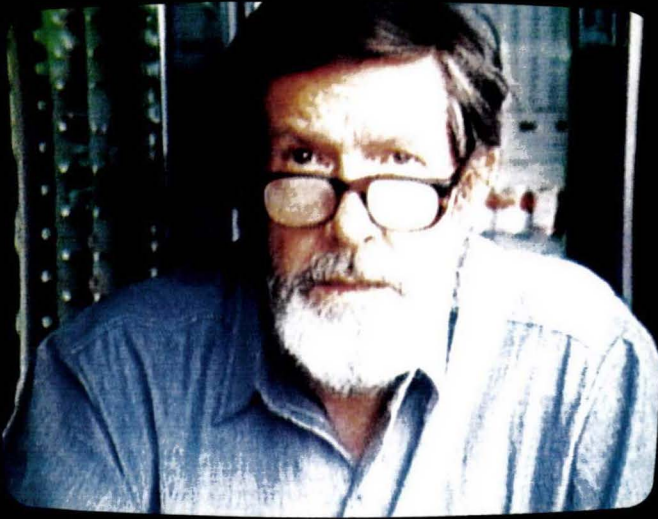
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

For all of those experiences – most of all, the experience of meeting and working with so many wonderful people all over the globe – I will always be indebted to Nam June Paik. He gave me a unique opportunity ... and an incredible adventure ... which I shall never forget.

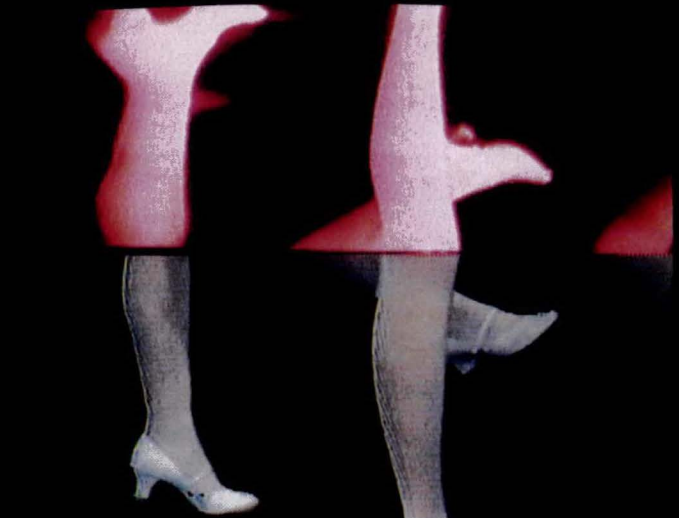
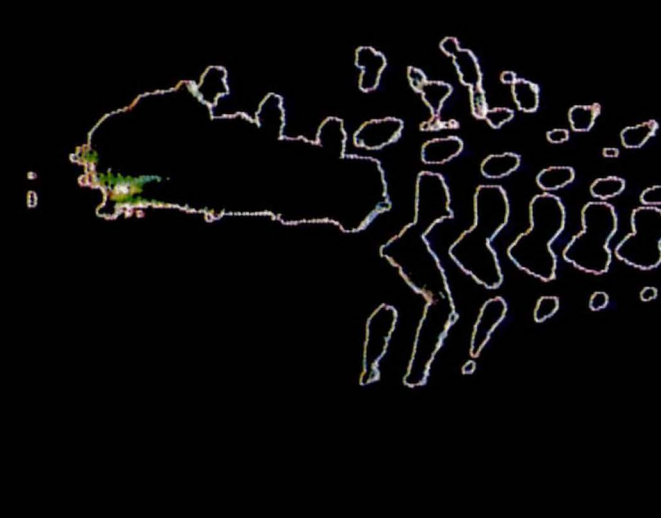
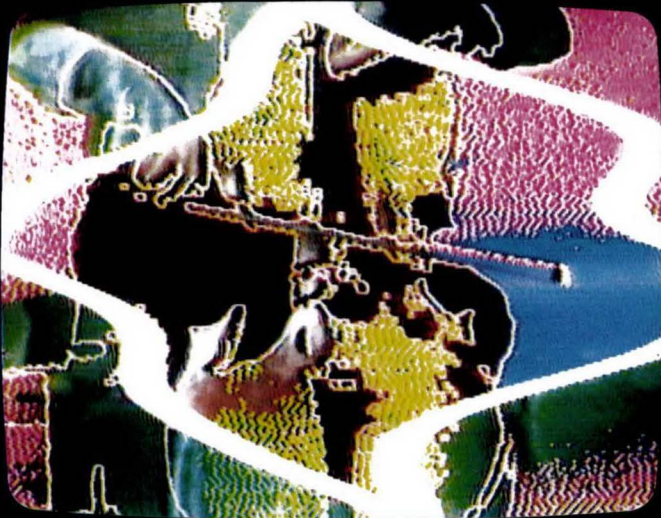
(published in: Sony HD-Software, 1988, p. 24–25)

NAM JUNE PAIK | FLORIAN MATZNER SELECTED VIDEOTAPES

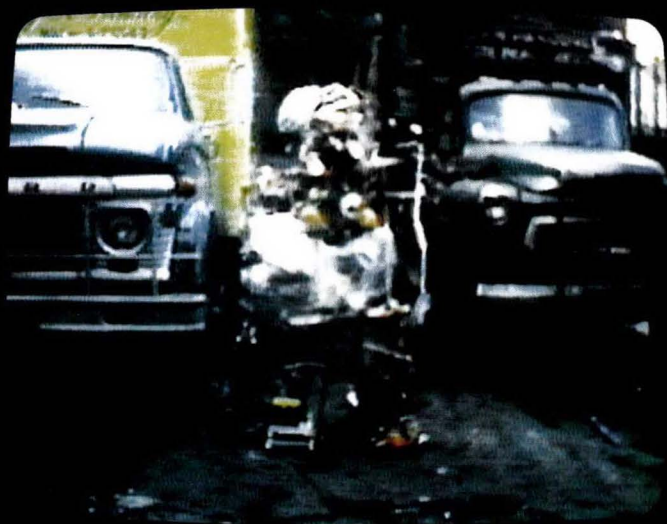
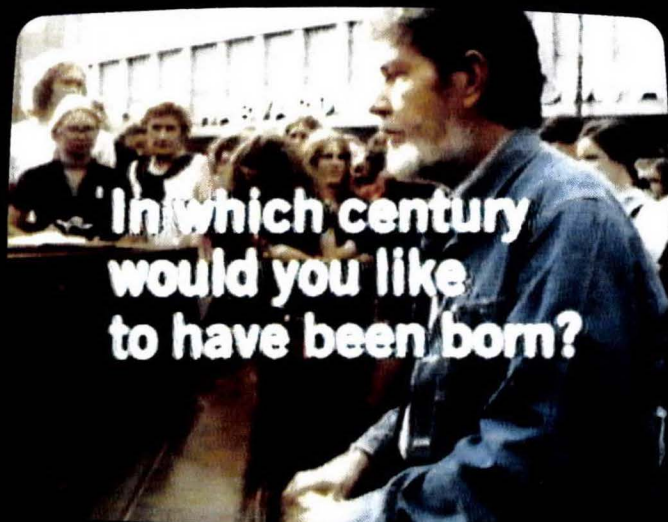








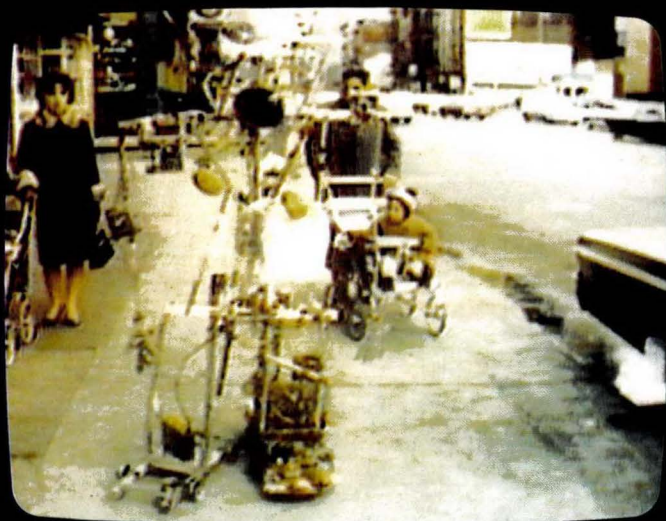
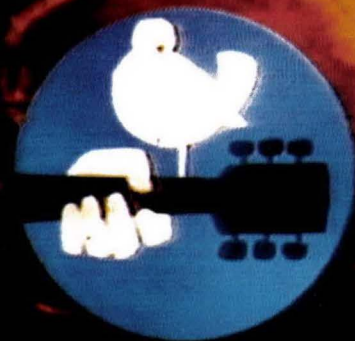
A Tribute to John Cage, 1973





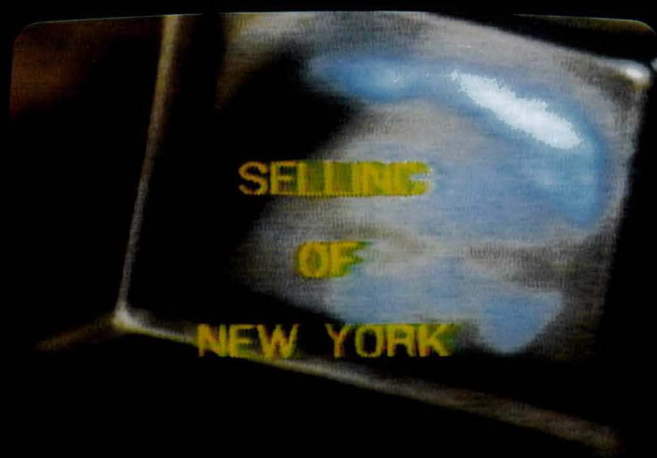
THIRD MOVEMENT

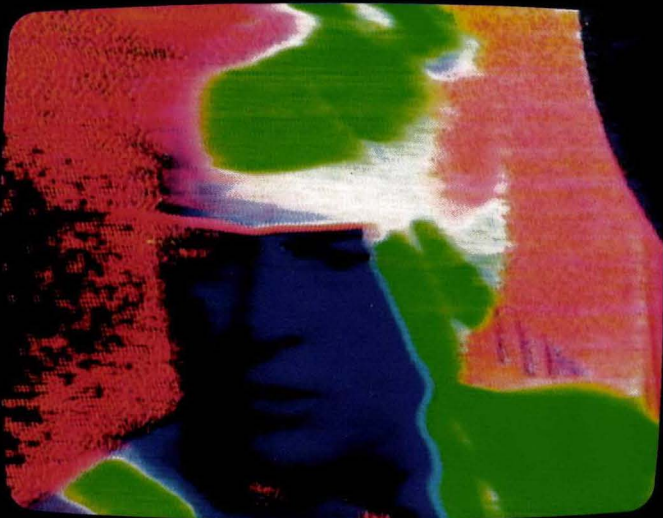
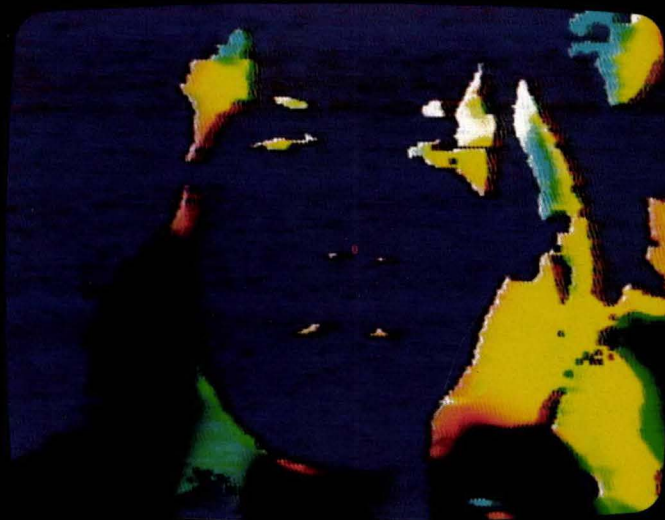
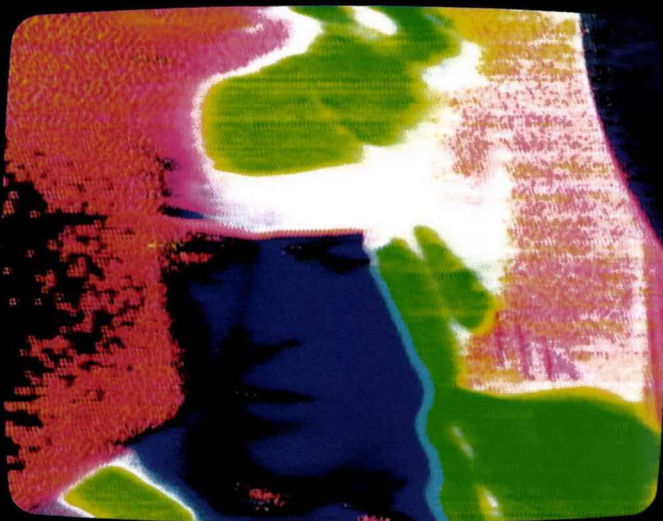
A Tribute to John Cage, 1973

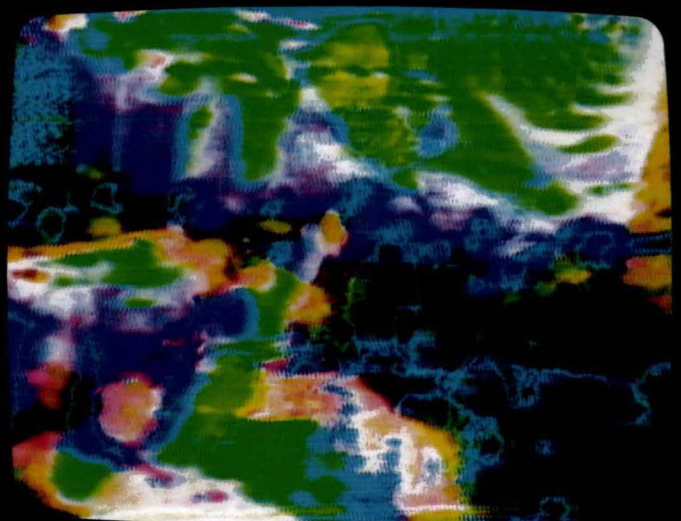
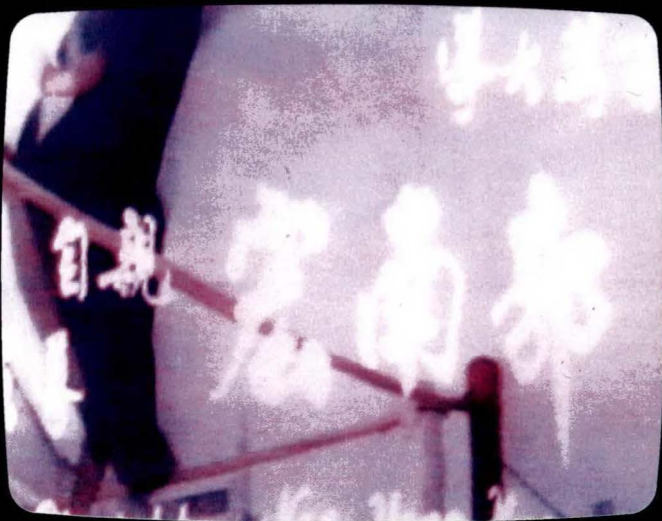
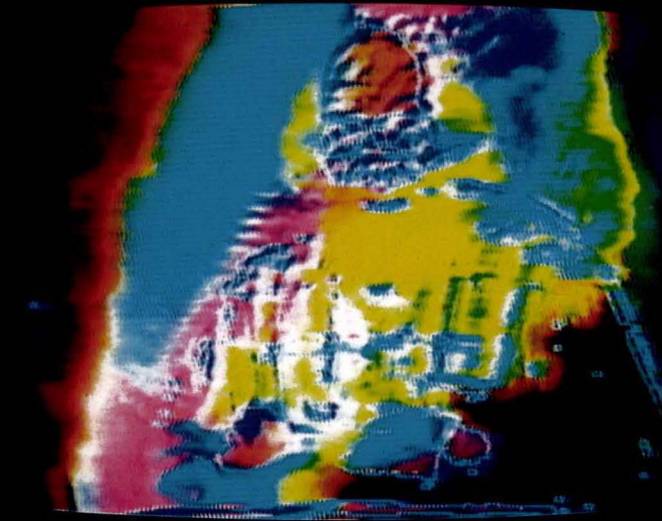


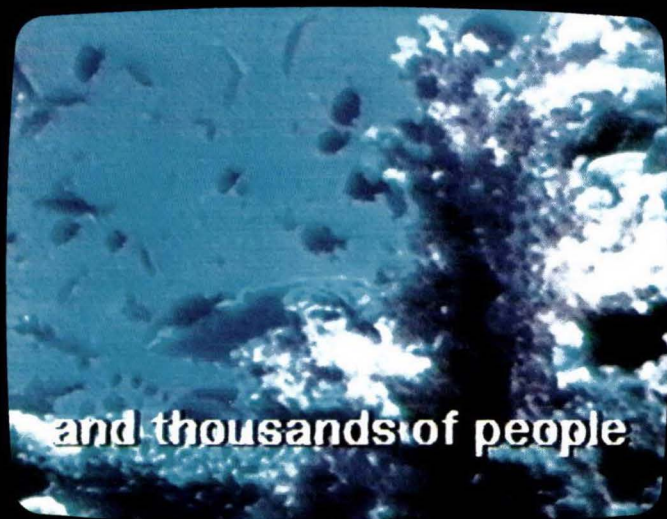












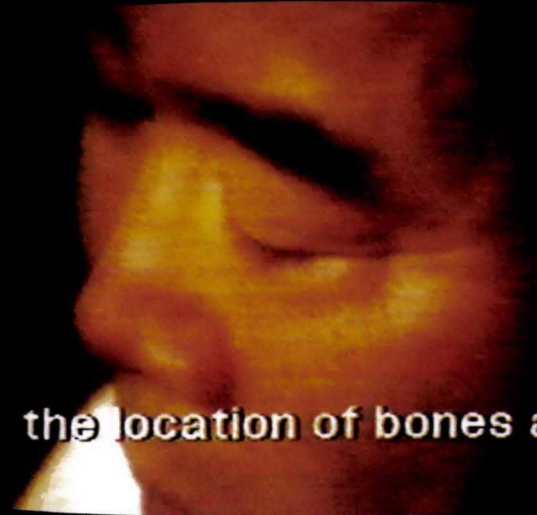
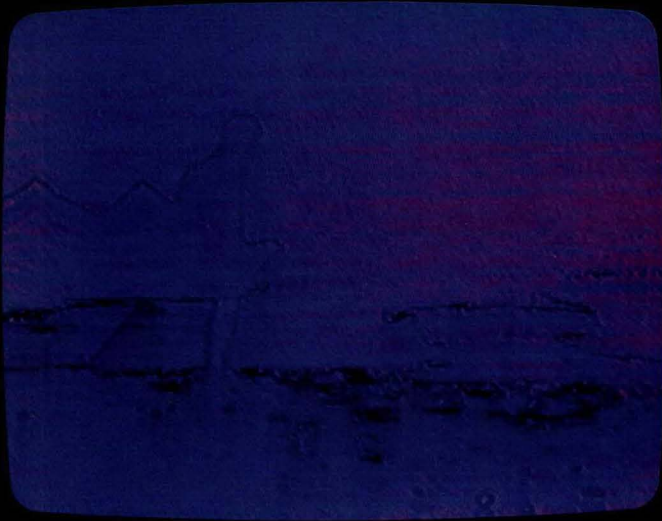
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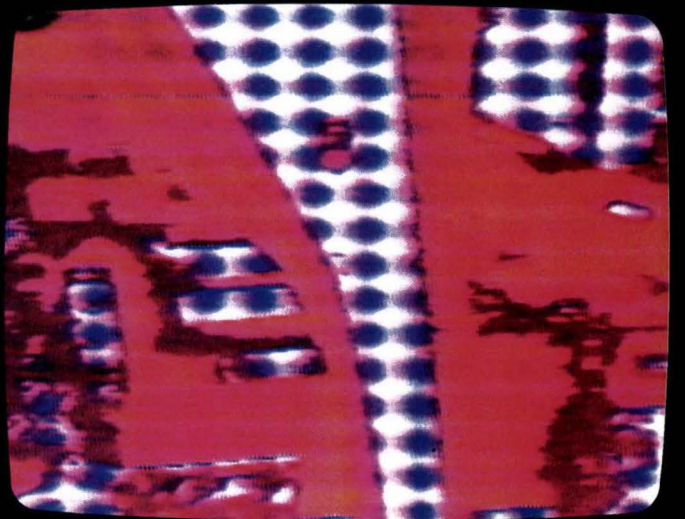
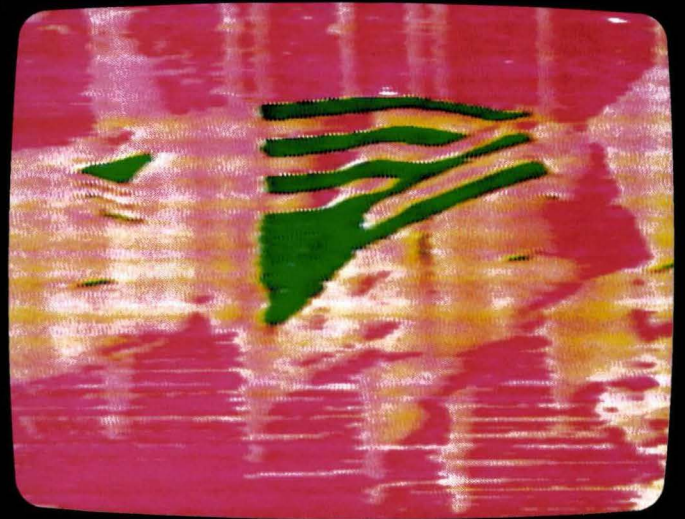
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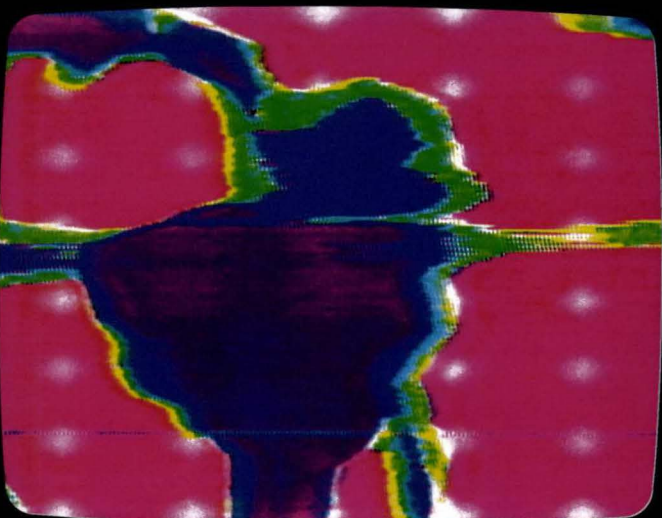
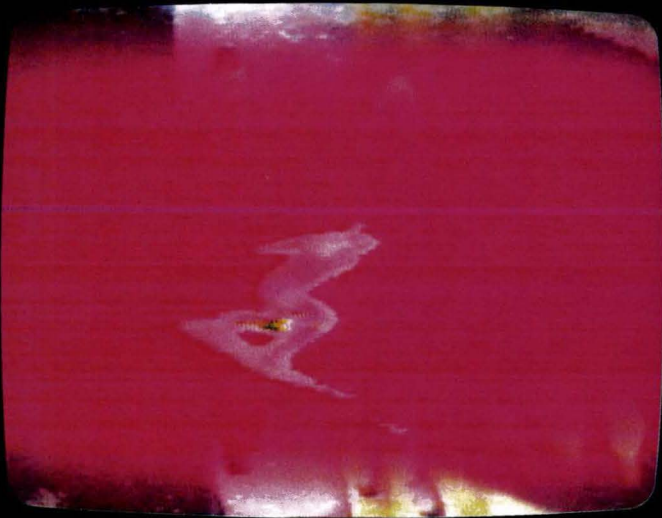


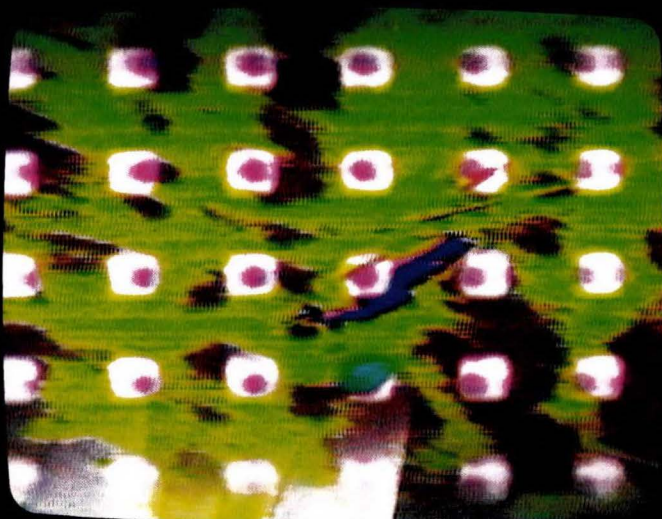
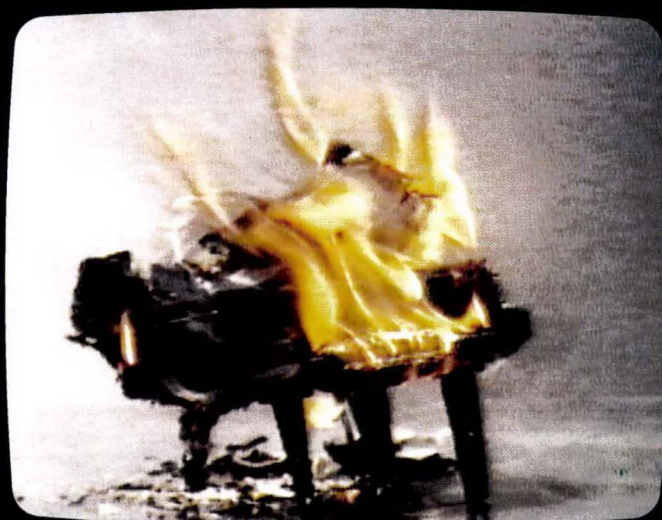


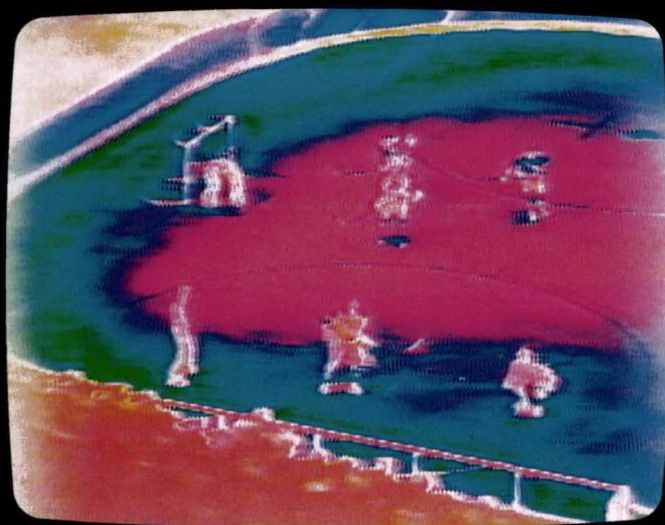
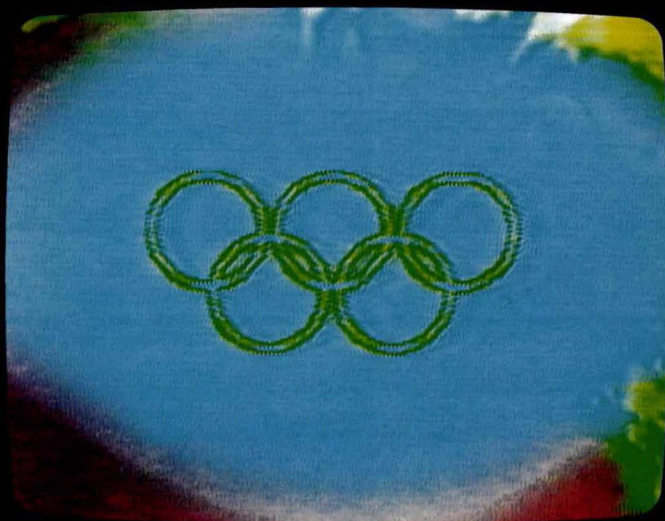
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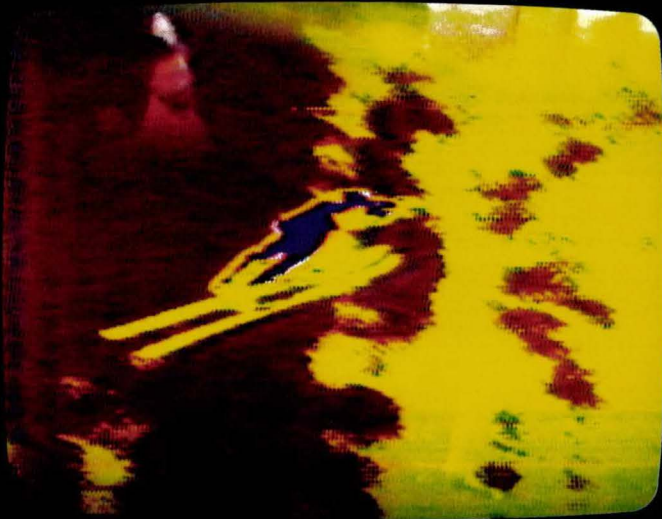


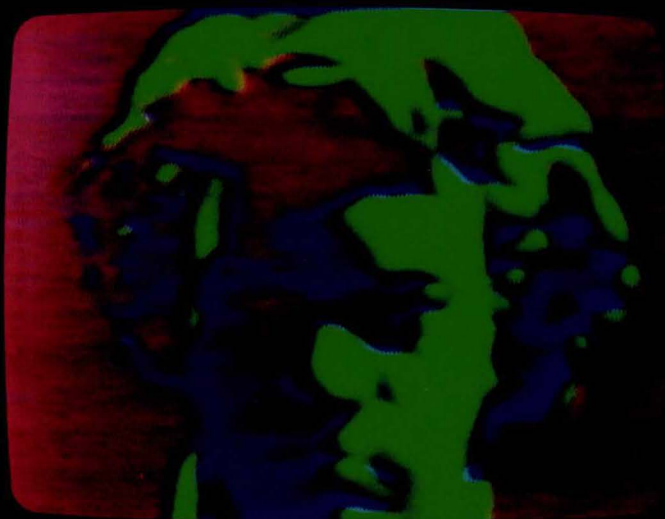


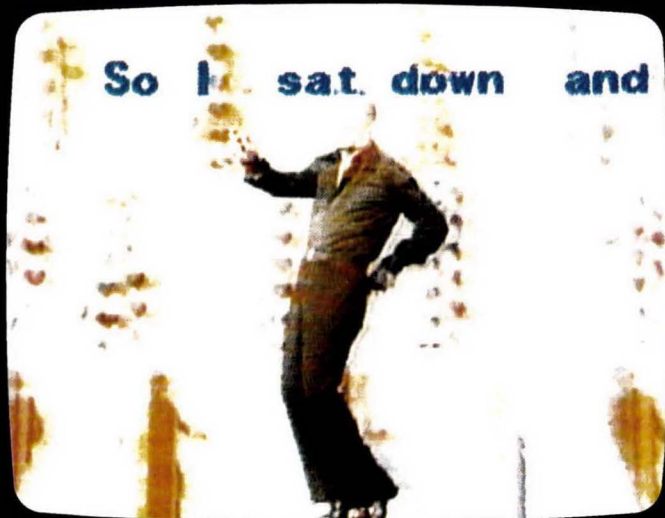




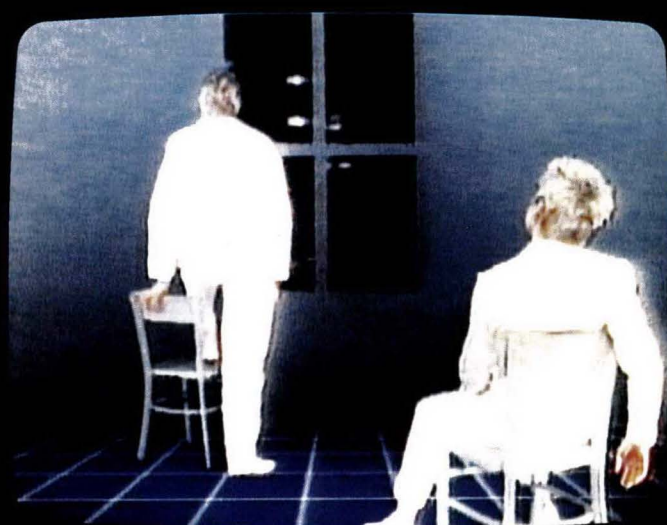


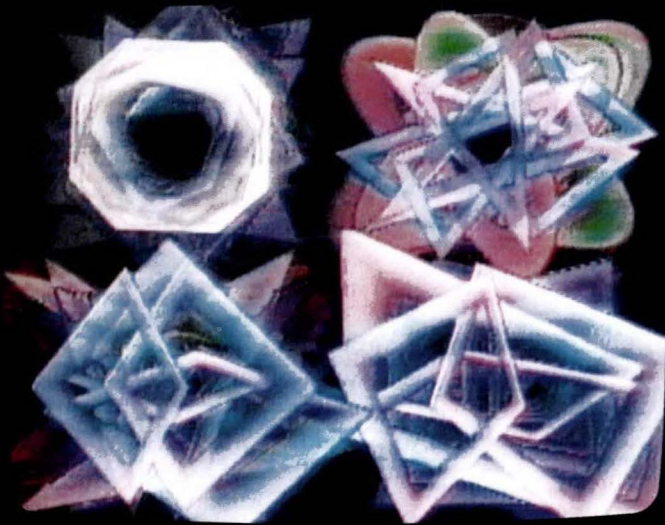


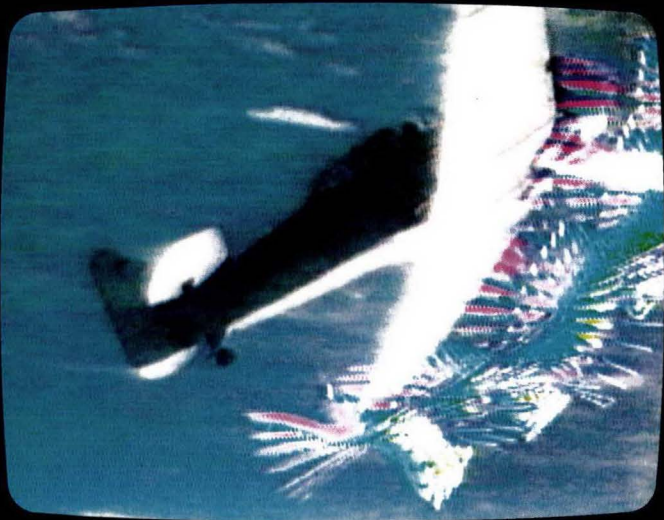
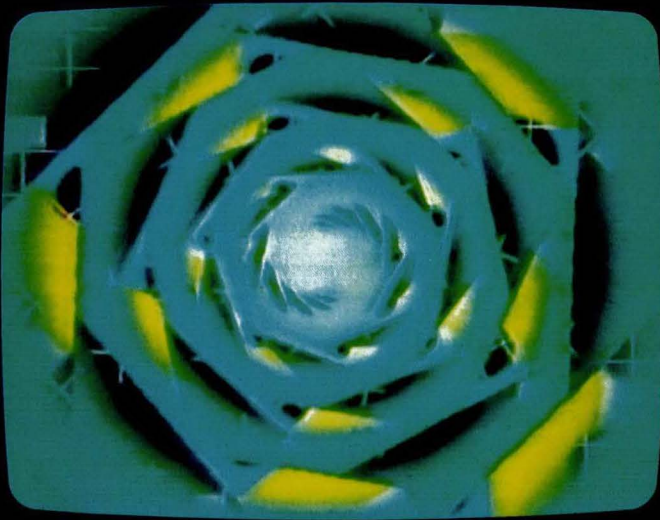
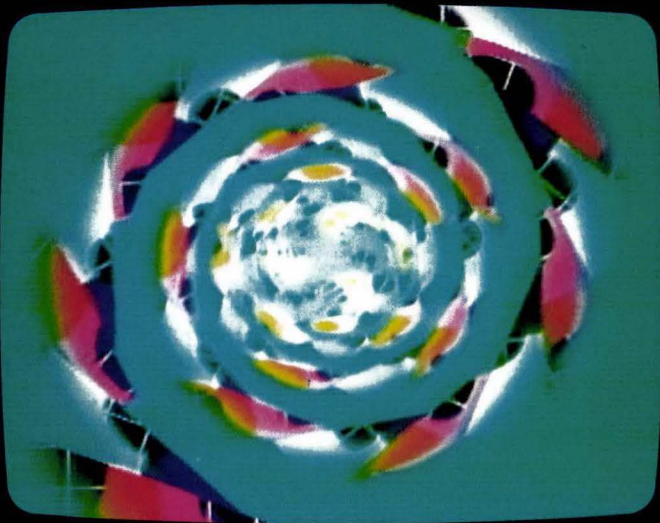




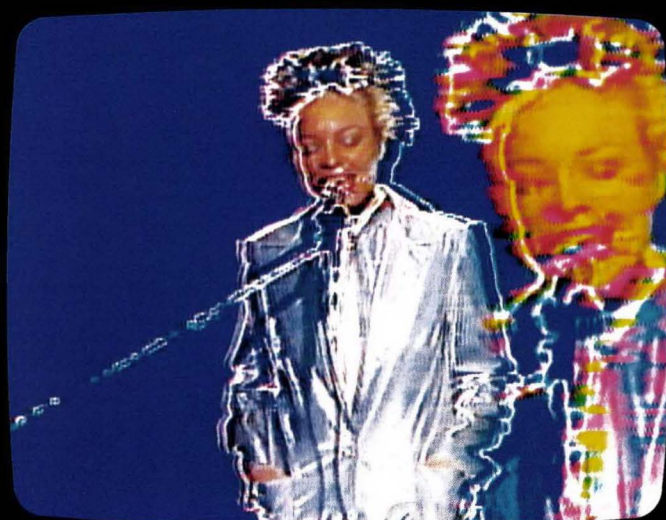


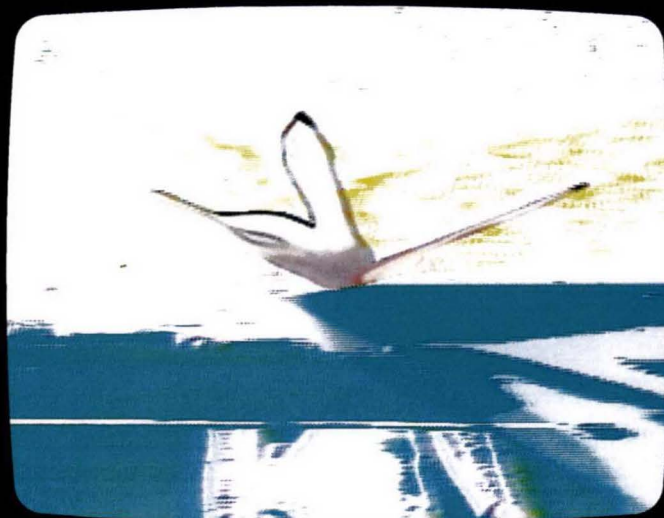
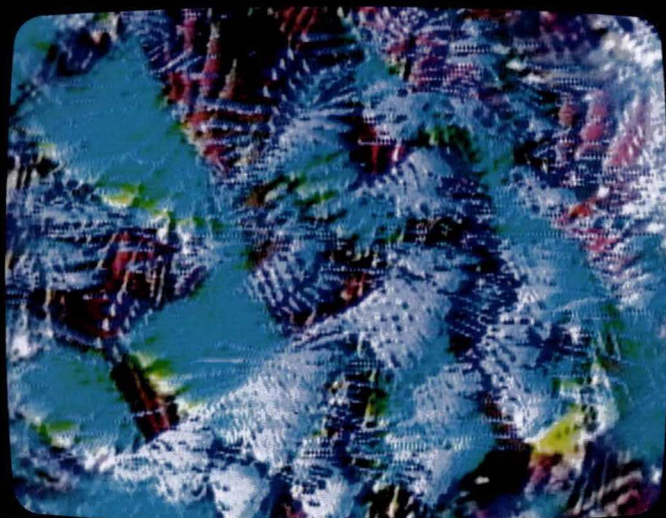










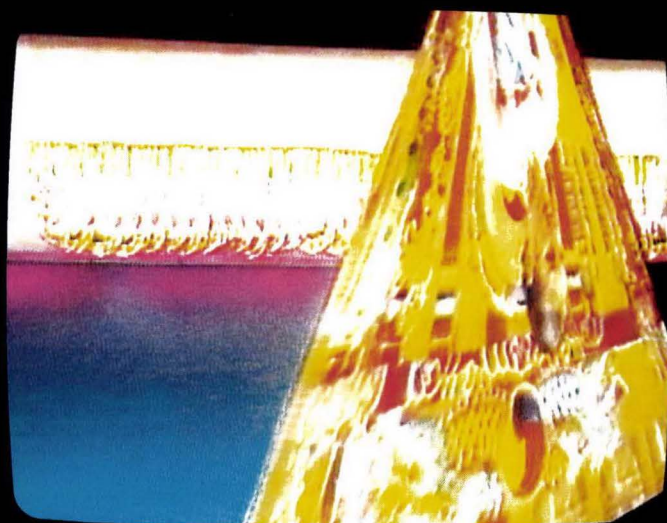
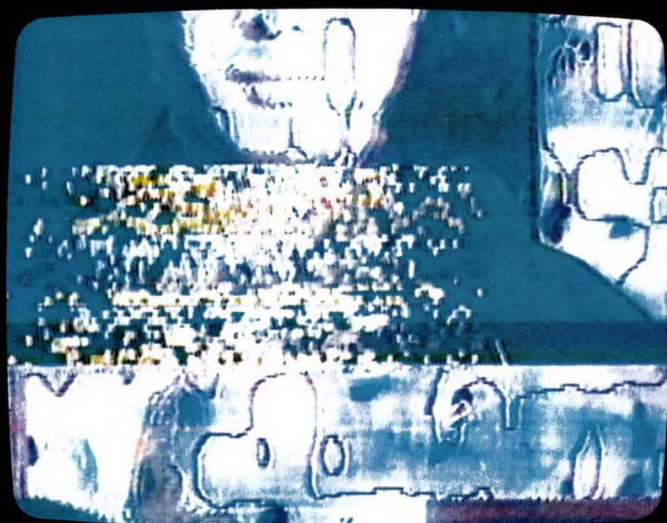




*East is East
West is West
and never
the twain
shall meet*







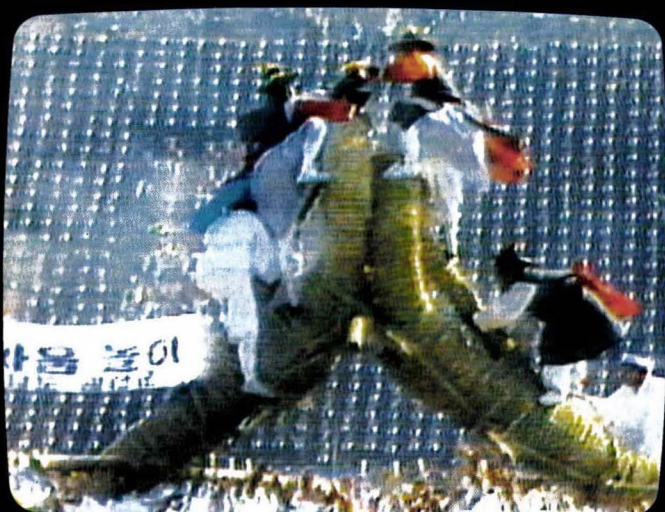
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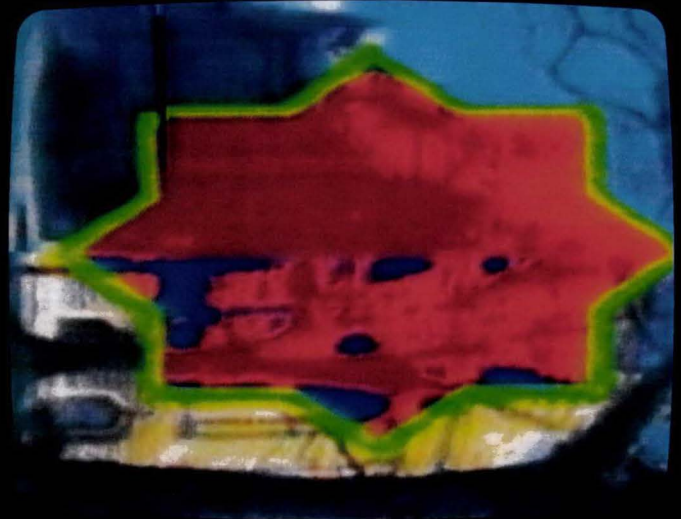
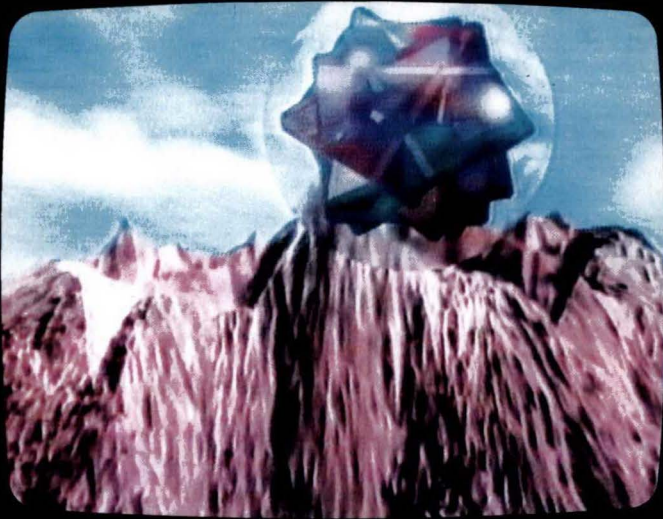




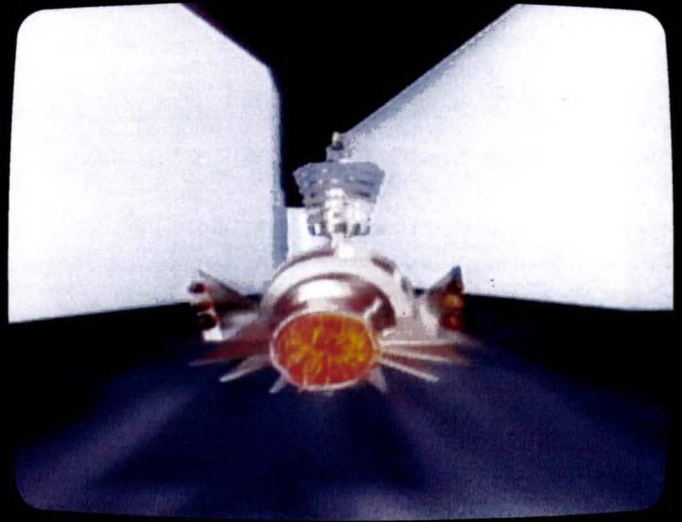
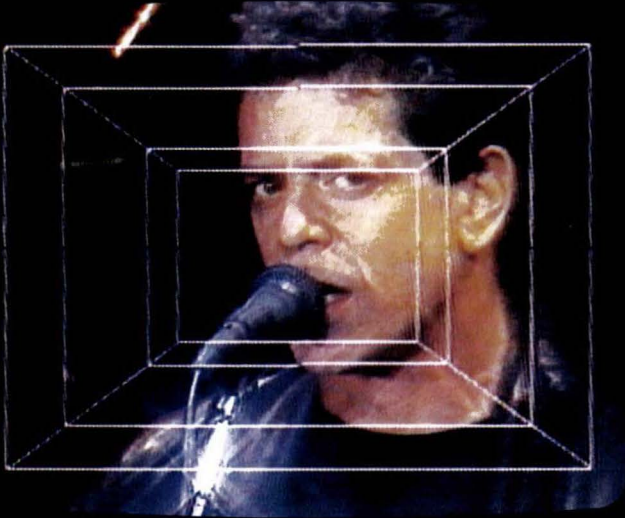
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NAM JUNE PAIK

June 20th, 1932

Born in Seoul (Korea), the fifth son of a textile manufacturer

1950

The Paik family flees from the Korean War, first to Hongkong, and later to Japan

1956

Paik graduates from the University of Tokyo, concluding his studies of the History of Art and the History of Music with a thesis on Arnold Schönberg

1956–58

Studies the History of Music at Munich University; meets Karlheinz Stockhausen; studies Composition at Freiburg Conservatory

1958–63

Meets John Cage; works in the Studio für elektronische Musik at WDR, Cologne

1959–62

Has appearances with pieces of his action music; Stockhausen's "Originale" is performed in Cologne

1963

Participates in "Fluxus. Internationale Festspiele neuester Musik", Wiesbaden; "Exposition of Musik / Electronic Television", the first exhibition including TV monitors, is shown at Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal

1963–64

Travels to Japan; meets Shuya Abe; experiments with electromagnets and color television; visits New York, collaborates with Charlotte Moorman

1965

First solo exhibition "Electronic Art" in the USA at Galeria Bonino, New York; buys the first portable video recorder

1966–69

First multi-monitor installations; works with magnetically distorted TV recordings; "Electronic Opera No. 1" is performed at the live program "The Medium is the Medium", GBH-TV, Boston

1969–70

With Shuya Abe, constructs the video synthesizer

1971

Works at WNET's TV lab, New York

1976

Retrospective at Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne

Since 1979

Chair at Staatliche Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf

1982

Retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

January 1st, 1984

Satellite broadcast of "Good Morning Mr. Orwell" from the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and a WNET-TV studio, New York

1987

Elected a member of the Akademie der Künste, Berlin

1988

Erects a media tower, "The more the better", from 1003 monitors for the Olympic Games at Seoul

1990

"Video Arbor" is put up in Philadelphia as a sculpture for the public sector

1991–92

Double exhibition "Video Time – Video Space" at Kunsthalle Basel and Kunsthalle Zürich, subsequently shown in Düsseldorf and Vienna

Numerous grants and awards from, inter alia, the Guggenheim Museum, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the American Film Institute; Will Grohmann Award, Goslar Emperor's Ring, UNESCO's Picasso Medal

Paik lives and works in New York, teaches at Staatliche Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf, and has a second home in Bad Kreuznach

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1988

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1990

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1991

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1992

Nam June Paik, Niederschriften eines Kulturnomaden.

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Yongwoo Lee, Nam June Paik, Seoul 1992

1993

Nam June Paik. Du Cheval à Christo et autres écrits,

ed. E. Decker / I. Lebeer, Bruxelles / Hamburg / Paris 1992



NAM JUNE PAIK ENCOURAGED MY DRAWING IN THE 1990s & MUSIC IN THE 1970s
Allen Ginsberg 2 pm 9/1/90 Soraksan S. Korea

Family Photo Declassified, 1984



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au dormeur qui éveille les étoiles,
à l'allumeur qui dissout les ombres,
à l'incendiaire qui embrase les rêves,
au nomade céleste, à son sourire séraphique.

Suzanne Pagé, 29 mars 1993