

\_RTS S\_NT\_ MÒNIC\_



TV  
ARTS  
TV

The Television Shot by Artists

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## The Television Shot by Artists

Exhibition project curated by Valentina Valentini

Barcelona, 2010



\_RTS S\_NT\_ MÒNIC\_

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The Television Shot by Artists

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CHAPTER 1

REFLEXIONS

## »» TV/ARTS/TV

»» *Vicenç Altaió*

»» *Arts Santa Mònica director*

Very much in spite of the pre-eminence of the news, informative and narrative genres on television, over and above more “artistic” options, TV has remained merely what it might have been and never was. On the other hand, one of the most overwhelming specific forms of contemporary art, video art, was born of the hybrid between TV and the cinema. But, above all else, TV represents the supposed social accessibility of culture from the home, in domestic everyday life. Like the Church with mural painting or the State Museum with paintings on canvas that can be rolled up, it is in the home that the portable window connects – live – private, public and fictional spaces: the reality show. A window for an open system that right from the start artists wanted to be utopian: new forms of behaviour, meta-technique and greater accessibility to mass culture. Television appeared not only as an instrument but also as a language: a receptive point of view more individual than symbolic, but no less ideological for that. In the end it is nothing more than bland audiences sitting watching moving stories, plus a great deal of superfluous excess material from show business and the culture industry.

We are at the threshold, now open, of another major change in the history of culture: the cross between the television set as a screen, interactivity as a subject and the net as global knowledge. Faced, then, with a recent past in question and a still puzzling future, Arts Santa Mònica presents, directed by the specialist in art, theatre and video Valentina Valentini, the project “TV/ARTS/TV”, a commitment to an affirmative tradition of television from the perspective of the most radical art. Through the work of artists we can see how they have taken television, in the double meaning of storming it and making it theirs, whether in the form of a totemic sculpture, in the expression of critical thinking, or in experimental trials with technology, communication and art. “TV/ARTS/TV” has to be the most important exhibition and, without distinction, the most complete and synthetic book of all those that have been presented up to now on this *difficult* subject matter: art and TV. Completing Valentini’s selection and in-depth study are the “fiery ideas” of Jean-Paul Fargier, providing its prologue, and, among others, the extraordinary portrait of a legend about Dan Graham, in which Barbara London contextualizes the construction of the formality and informality of the broadcast and the reception between a news programme and a home. All the works presented here are accompanied by a precise description, and at the same time a critical reading of motives. In addition, Antoni Mercader adds an insightful local historical note.

Here is the exhibition: the stage chambers of Judith Barry and Ken Saylor are reconstructed, in which the history of TV transforms the insides of houses, from their Victorian archaeology to zapping. Iván Marino, in an installation made for a website, resumes Dan Graham’s *Production/Reception* (1976) in 24 hours of real time, in which the Museum becomes the set. By the pioneering Nam June Paik we see television sets modified as if they were optical fabrics and sound instruments and the extraordinary particular programming for a day’s TV. The famous 1965 family Mercedes equipped with a video camera and 21 TV screens of Wolf Vostell, an important artist in all respects, has been made to move, and also the no less famous bicycle with a TV in the basket at the rear: movement and displacement of images in the amnesia of history. Through polyptych formats – three video screens and three sequences of slides facing one another – Muntadas broadens the space of conceptual reflection between multiple binary extremes. In *Hostage* (1994), Dara Birnbaum places us as a viewer kidnapped by the media in the midst of a clash of news items, stemming from an extreme act that made the news, between the person kidnapped and the kidnappers, and between the latter and the news, and between this and everyone. Outside itself, television and the viewer is the disturbing stage space à la Gary Hill, *In Situ* (1986), in which images, gestures and texts are interwoven in a vivid and highly unscrupulous televisual automatism. A face made up of surveillance screens and cameras is proposed by Vito Accosci in *Virtual Intelligence Mask* (1993), in which he distinguishes between being inside or outside the device, seeing on the inside or being seen on the outside, in “a public space occupied by private bodies”. In *Fran* (1988), James Turrel radicalizes the non-distinction between the real and the virtual or the programme and the void, and seduces us through the light that emanates from the devices, pure perception, technique as metaphysics. In an inscrutable and enigmatic space, forming a circle with a computer and screens, Chris Marker brings us, in *Zapping Zone (Proposal for an Imaginary Television)* (1990), multiple chains of photos-images-film processed, treated and mixed so that we may recreate and stitch together visual scriptures.

Besides the video and multi-media installations we present “TV/VIDEO/TV”, a selection of important works in the relationship between video and television (Godard, Warhol, Wegman, Pasolini, Gorilla Tapes, *et al*), together with a selection of films on the subject of television and works of art with television as the image. There will also be several discussions and Inter-University Workshops on Art and Technology. At the same time, together with the public television and radio stations of Catalonia, Arts Santa Mònica is to open its Media Kiosk, complementing the Arts and Sciences Laboratory.

This project, “TV/ARTS/TV”, derives from researcher Valentina Valentini’s vast and critical knowledge and most thorough research. Collaborating with her, and her enormous efforts to make it happen, are a large number of researchers, historians, curators and museologists, besides of course the artists, the museum technicians and directors and the collectors, without whom this reunification of works and documents would not have been possible.

»» TV (As Video):  
 »» A Creative Medium  
 »» Valentina Valentini

“The Medium is the Medium”, “Television Delivers People”, “You are the Information”: these are the titles and the slogans coined by artists at the beginning of the nineteen seventies. “VT≠TV (Videotape is not Equal to TV)”, the sentence written at the entrance to the video library, at “Documenta 6” (Kassel, 1977)<sup>[1]</sup>, points to the new awareness about the existence of a separate and autonomous artistic territory, that of video art. What difference is there between video and television? Raymond Bellour’s answer is clear: video is working on time. “[...] television tends to produce a homogenized time that admits of no (or very little) difference.” Flux is television; resistance to the flux is video. “One of the jobs of critics is, therefore, to continually assess the relationship of strength established between what the flux assimilates and what withstands it.”<sup>[2]</sup> We are used to thinking that between artistic production and the medium of television there is a profound incompatibility, and the exceptions do nothing to dispel this idea; they confirm the strange relationship more vigorously. The exploration that has been carried out in a rugged terrain – identified immediately as video art – has led us to look again at this *topos* and make varied and complex relationships between artists and television emerge. In the beginning of video art there is television, the utopia of an art at once “domestic” (because it was aimed at a generic viewer) and scientific (because it made use of new theoretical and technological frameworks). It was not until a language and a video-

[1] In that edition, by Wulf Herzogenrath, Joseph Beuys, Douglas Davis and Nam June Paik performed a broadcast via satellite, *Documenta 6 Satellite Telecast* (1977, 30', colour, sound), in which they mixed music, performance, video and television.  
 [2] Raymond Bellour, *L'Entre-Images*, Paris, La Différence, 1990, p. 62.

graphic aesthetic were formed, in the mid seventies, that this new art felt the need to move away and challenge television.

After Wolf Vostell’s happenings and his rituals of killing the television set, of Nam June Paik’s *13 Distorted TV SETS* (1963), it is possible to trace a path full of ideas, works, projects by artists that see the medium of television as the protagonist. And not all of them are “anti-television”. In the domesticating vision of Nam June Paik’s technology, the electronic device, whether in its light format (video) or as an institutional appliance (television), it is the expression of a technological advance that inevitably transforms artistic practices:

“As collage technique replaced oil-paint, the cathode-ray tube will replace the canvass. Someday artists will work with capacitors, resistors & semi-conductors as they work today with brushes, violins & junk [...]”<sup>[3]</sup>

Many are the artists who have attempted to approach television, ever since Andy Warhol’s promising slogan: “In the future everybody will be a star for fifteen minutes.”<sup>[4]</sup> The viewers and the broadcaster did not find it so promising that Chris Burden purchased thirty seconds of advertising space, *TV Hijack* (1973-77), from five different American channels, which the artist used to broadcast ads that did not advertise products, but he himself. Gerry Schum’s project to create a television gallery that would have taken the works of international artists specifically produced for television into homes and everyday life was made specific in exemplary fashion in two programmes, *Land Art* (1969) and *Identifications* (1970). On the other hand it was not possible to carry out Robert Wilson’s project, *The Civil WarS* (1982-83), for broadcasting a play via satellite to coincide with the Los Angeles Olympics. As a symbol of radical opposition to the culture industry, Jean-Luc Godard abandoned the cinema at the beginning of the seventies to devote himself fully to video and television with the creation of the Sonimage laboratory.

It is interesting to remember, in this smattering of utopian projects and exemplary attempts, the premonitory visions of Eisenstein, who in the essay *The Cinema and the Miracle of Television* (1946) had already individualized live the strong point and the specificity of the new medium; and those of Lucio Fontana, who drew up a manifesto of spatial movement for television (1952) to coincide with the experimental transmission for the TV channel in Milan.<sup>[5]</sup>

Quite a few artists have made canvas and screen interchangeable, stressing the perceptive lines of images in movement and taking to their territory aspects typical of painting: isolating a detail, decomposing the sequence, freezing the frame. The empty screens of Fabio Mauri are suspended spaces in which the absent image can become a virtual presence (like a television monitor that is warming up), while Tom Wes-

[3] Nam June Paik, “Electronic video recorder”. In: Judson Rosebush (ed.), *Video 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik 1959-1973*, Syracuse, New York, Everson Museum of Art, 1974.  
 [4] Doug Hall, Sally Jo Fifer (eds.), *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, New York, Aperture, in collaboration with Bay Area Video Coalition, 1990, p. 169.  
 [5] Cf. Marco Senaldi, *Arte e televisione*, Milano, Postmediabooks, 2009, pp. 43-49.

selman, in *Still Life # 28* (1963), inserts a real television monitor.<sup>[6]</sup> In the *Magnatron Series* by James Turrell, an artist far removed, you might say, from the television imaginary, he finds a response and a transfiguration of television, assimilated into a pure light source, but light that emanates from the projections of popular programmes, like the cartoon series *Fran & Ollie* (*Fran*, 1998) or *Flash Gordon* (*Mongo the Planet*), a dematerialized television.

The electronic device in the hands of artists, in the seventies, is a medium that interrelates with television, when it tends to replace it too, creating alternative kinds of television via cable that initiate a two-way process of reaction, to contrast the “passivity” that qualifies (as an indelible mark) the role of the television viewer (not the filmgoer).<sup>[7]</sup>

Community television, cable television, *guerrilla television*,<sup>[8]</sup> artist’s television, are definitions for different approaches and practices that exemplify varied kinds of relationships between video and television. Indeed, *guerrilla television* is produced and broadcast on a community TV station using cable for counter-information of which it is both user and producer: examples of it are the “street tapes”, social investigation video, with interviews in the street tackling political issues, like the Vietnam War, and lifestyle, like the struggle for sexual freedom and the hippie movement.

In the USA it was the artists, between the mid seventies and the early eighties, who took charge of the experimental laboratories of Television Art, like WGBH in Boston, which showed works like *The Medium is the Medium* and WNET in New York, where Peter Campus, Bill Viola, and William Wegman produced many of their video works, and Paik experimented satellite broadcasting with *Good Morning Mr Orwell* (1984) and *Bye Bye Kipling* (1986). In those years, Robert Ashley and John Sanborn made *Perfect Lives* (1976-1983); in Europe, Peter Greenaway began working with Channel Four, trying to promote experimentation and independent production. For the INA Robert Wilson produced *Video 50* (1978) and *Stations* (1982). No less important were the first experi-

ments with television via satellite, like those of Alexander Kluge, *Ten for Eleven* (1988). The essay *This Is Not A Paradox*, by Judith Barry (1990), articulates a historical-political judgement, with which I agree, of the phenomenon we are examining on the relationship between video and television. “Has the traditional television avant-garde ever existed?” the author wonders, reconstructing myths and failures of the video utopia. Videofree, TVTV, Video Free America, Ant Farm, Judith Barry maintains, have not managed to substitute the role of the dominant media with cable television; the so-called “new television” has taken only the special effects from video art and, for their part, the artists have ceased to reflect on how to change television. MTV is the apotheosis of advertising before art; entertainment and ads are mixed up. The attempt to combine Marxism with psychoanalysis through post-feminist theories has failed; the relationship between dominant and dominated cultures, where there may be a similarity with the relationship between television and video, has been inverted; the oppressed imitate the oppressors, they do not challenge them, nor do they give priority to alternative models; the television model has become a paradigm for contemporary art and not vice versa anymore!<sup>[9]</sup>

### Television/Fluxus

*TV as a Creative Medium* is the title of the first exhibition presenting “technological” works by eleven artists in the style of the Howard Wise Gallery (New York, 1969): the centre of the discourse expounded in the manifesto-presentation of the show is television. Video has not yet been born as the conscience of the *nouvelle image* and a differentiation called for in contrast to television (*Video is not TV*).<sup>[10]</sup>

For Paik, with *Participation TV* (1969) it is a case of demonstrating that it is possible for the viewer to create images different to those of TV, and thus make the one-way device become two-way (according to Bertolt Brecht’s hypothesis for radio). Mechanically, Paik manipulates the television images and invites the viewer to do the same, in the same way that the *art bruit* of those same years damaged and overcame the images produced by the mass media and the composers of concrete and electronic music created new sound objects by mixing diverse sources: “I prefer that people do it themselves. [...] I am tired of TV screen. I am tired of TV now,” says Paik. “TV is passé. Next comes the direct contact of electrodes to the brain cells, leading to electronic Zen. [...]”<sup>[11]</sup> Paik calmly carried out the passage of electronic music to images (TV and

[6] See text by Goretti and Casagrande. There are quite a few shows devoted to the intertwined relations between television and artists: Dieter Daniels takes a path characterized by different attitudes, from aggression in the confrontation of the television medium by the artists to cooperation and comparison. Cf. Dieter Daniels, “Art and Television - Adversaries or Partners? Is television an art?”. In: Rudolf Frieling, Dieter Daniels, *Medien Kunst Aktion - Die 60er und 70er Jahre in Deutschland*, pp. 69-75.

[7] Dan Graham writes: “A cable system, by contrast, presents the possibility of becoming two-way and decentralized. Individuals, families and the local, extant cultural system could be given potential self-determination and control. Local cable television could feed back the immediate environment”. Dan Graham, “Centralization/Decentralization of Information”. In: Benjamin H.D. Buchloch (ed.), *Dan Graham. Video Architecture-Television. Writings on Video and VideoWorks 1970-1978*, New York, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art&Design and New York University Press, 1979, p. 52.

[8] *Guerrilla Television* is the title of a volume written by Michael Shamberg that synthesizes the philosophy of one of the trendiest magazines in promoting video art, *Radical Software* (active from 1970 to 1974), the result of the collaboration with Frank Gillette, Paul Ryan, Ira Schneider, Beryl Korot and the other members of the group Raindance. An updating of community television could be identified with the various practices of relational art whose medium is Internet, like *Learning to Love You More*, by Miranda July and Harrell Fletcher, which through a series of tasks that participants have to carry out (using different media, from writing to video and sound recordings), gave life for a period of eight years – 2002 to 2009 – to a community, spread via the web to 7,000 participants.

[9] As proof of these observations, we cite *Democracy*, the two videos by Francesco Vezzoli (2007) presented at the Venice Biennale. Vezzoli creates a product according to the standards of television to place it, on the other hand, in art spaces, produces two electoral ads for two fictitious candidates according to the rules of production standardized by the advertising agencies that work for the major TV channels. Cf. Judith Barry, “This is Not a Paradox”. In: *Illuminating Video*. Doug Hall, Sally Jo Fifer (eds.), Aperture/BAVC, pp. 249-259.

[10] See *TV as a Creative Medium* (exhibition catalogue), New York, Howard Wise Gallery, 1969. See also Douglas Davis, *Art and the Future. A History/Prophecy of the Collaboration Between Science, Technology and Art*, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1973.

[11] In *Utopian Laser TV Station*, Paik describes a programme he would have broadcast via an independent channel, to which he would have invited from morning to night his artist friends, his New York family-community: Duchamp, Cage, Cunningham, Dick Higgins, Charlotte Moorman. See John S. Margolies, “TV-

video), which he treated as sound waves: he intervened directly on the matter – piano or black box – introducing microphones and magnets to it to produce distortions in the signal.

Paik's antiapocalyptic vision can also be understood as regards his experimental inventor's approach, not afraid of getting his hands on the electronic circuits. This trend was upheld by alternative magazines like *Afterimage*, whose slogan, in the early years of the commercialization of video cameras and video recorders was: "Build the video recorder yourself!", a championing of independence, destined to change attitudes and roles, from being a spectator to being a constructor of non-figurative images: "[...] In my video-taped electro vision, not only do you see your picture instantaneously and find out what kind of bad habits you have, but see yourself deformed in 12 ways, which only electronic ways can do."<sup>[12]</sup>

The fascination that TV held for Vostell has to be attributed to the linguistic characteristics of the medium: a generator of fades, superimpositions, distortions, "errors" that in the beginnings of television were consubstantial with the medium; so much so, that the analogy with structuralist and abstract photography came out spontaneously. Television images, transformed into horizontal interference and anamorphous distortions (perhaps obtained by manipulating the aerial) and projected on one or more monitors, became part of a complex happening that used different means, lasted many hours, demanded the participation of the spectators and ended with a death ritual.<sup>[13]</sup> "Vostell's happenings are authentic demolition rituals, the masking-burial of television, the machine-symbol of the dominant power of capitalist society, with the consequent collective catharsis. The television set, like the automobile and other modern accessories," wrote Dan Graham, "was designed to be transported."<sup>[14]</sup> Many of Vostell's works, besides those with TV, have to do with automobiles, in many variations: real period cars, turned into cement sculptures, painted, crushed, materials with which to make de-collages. Automobiles and televisions are a constant feature in his output and take on, in the years after Fluxus, a sign of ambiguity (they do not reach, however, the level of tragedy of Warhol's *Car Crash*). In *Die Winde* (1981), the automobile – the means of transport for a real journey in space – and the television – the virtual means of transport in space and time – combine in a process of (artistic) transformation of the everyday industrial object. But in *Die Winde*, the space is that which

is bounded by the gallery or the museum, once he had abandoned the open cityscapes typical of the Fluxus happenings. The action reserved to the spectators is that of looking at their own image in the monitor, in the role of the visitor: a disturbing element is the doll lying on the ground on the carpet of coal, representing a woman tied to a tube coming out of the bonnet of the car packed with TV sets: does she feed on the oxygen and/or die from the gas?"<sup>[15]</sup>

Distorting the signal, burying, burning, destroying TV monitors and pianos are frequent actions in the Fluxus happenings of the sixties: in this context, the television is a machine, not a language, a family object susceptible to becoming *unheimlich*.

### TV: "It's the New Everything"

A year before the exhibition *TV as a Creative Medium* at the Robert Wise Gallery, Andy Warhol had been given the job of making an ad to rejuvenate the image of the Schrafft restaurant chain in New York. "The result, above, made in late 1968, is *The Underground Sundae*, a 60-second color video-tape opus centering in and out of focus on a chocolate sundae. Warhol achieved a wide range of 'cosmetic' colors and thought about getting effects of a color television set tuned incorrectly. He was concerned with the range of color- and image- distortion possibilities in the video-tape medium. Says Warhol, 'My movies have been working towards TV. It's the new everything. No more books or movies, just TV.'"<sup>[16]</sup>

This happened in the late sixties, when the political and cultural revolution begun in '68 was radically transforming artistic aesthetics and practice. In John Margolies's essay, the cause of this transformation had to be ascribed to the effect of television: "Television confirms the diagnosis that the boundaries between inside and outside are blurred: the diagnosis that 'self' is an out-dated concept."<sup>[17]</sup> The examples of Andy Warhol, of Les Levine (*Contact, a Cybernetic Sculpture*), of Paik, confirmed the feeling of living in a time of great changes, that induced the artists themselves to research in the fields of sociology, psychology, anthropology. The essay by Vito Acconci, *Television, Furniture and Sculpture: the Room with the American View*, and the writings of Nam June Paik, Dan Graham, Richard Serra, Frank Gillette, form an important theoretical corpus in which the television monitor takes on a central role in the analysis.<sup>[18]</sup> Television has blurred the boundaries between artistic and extra-artistic territory, Margolies observed, because it can take art into the domestic realm.<sup>[19]</sup> It has shifted the

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THE NEXT MEDIUM 'It's the new everything,' says Andy Warhol". In: *Art in America Magazine*, 1969.

[12] Cf. Paik, "In one piece, *Tango Electronique*, 1966, the turn of a knob makes the screen explode in patterns of shimmering lines. In another work, *Participation TVs/ 1965*, 1966, passing a magnet in front of the screen causes the transmitted image to distort and dissolve in myriad patterns. Mr. Paik estimates that by attaching distorting devices, he can create at least some 500 different abstract possibilities from a normal TV screen."

[13] Cf. *Wolf Vostell & Television Decollage & Decollage Posters & Comestible Decollage* (exhibited from 22 May to 8 June 1963 at the Smolin Gallery). In this *happening*, the spectators moved in different places, crossed some train lines, where they witnessed a Mercedes (series 170) being crushed between two locomotives, then they came to an old factory and there they found a television set which they first shot and then blew up. See Pablo Rico, Rafael Vostell (eds.), *Vostell Automobil*, in collaboration with Wasmuth Verlag, Berlin, 1999.

[14] Cf. Adachiara Zevi (ed.), *Dan Graham, Scritti e interviste*, Roma, I libri di Zerynthia, 1996, p. 123.

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[15] In the years following Vostell, Ant Farm also chose the automobile, the Cadillac, and the television set as fetishes of capitalist society and condemned them to death. See *Media Burns* (1975-2003).

[16] John S. Margolies, "TV-THE NEXT MEDIUM 'It's the new everything,' says Andy Warhol", *Art in America Magazine*, 1969, op. cit.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] In New York a discussion group had formed that studied the ideas and theories of McLuhan and Gregory Bateson, of which Nam June Paik and Frank Gillette were members. With Michael Shamberg they founded the Raindance Corporation and Radical Software was born in it, with Beryl Korot. The magazine's first editorial was inspired by Bateson and Buckminster Fuller, who theorized the power of technology as a cultural force.

[19] John Margolies writes: "One advantage for television artists is that their audience does not look upon television

perceptive process from the optic to the haptic and has contributed to reinforcing the trend towards the relativism of critical judgement: if art is an experience, this changes and cannot be formalized. The many focal points, plus the frontal nature of how the work appears and its having changed state, from object to flux (video, conceptual art, body art), show up the process of the dematerialization of art (in confirmation, Margolies provides the example of Gerry Schum's television gallery in Cologne). And he adds, "The concept of the artist's role is undergoing a transformation; the artist is emerging as a communicator. At the process level, a person who is an 'artist' is one who can experience directly through his senses. His effectiveness as an artist can be judged by how well he communicates his perception."<sup>[20]</sup>

The constructive device of the loop, its circular nature, is another characteristic of this new aesthetic mapped with the critical intelligence of John Margulies in his essay: just as inside and outside are the same surface, time also has neither beginning nor end, and space, having become flexible, is concentrated and expands together with time, a circular time that is rediscovered in video games, in infography, in the supermarket, that of the net, of the cell conduit, the mysterious electrical power supply hidden in the basements of buildings.<sup>[21]</sup>

Moebius's spiral becomes the icon of the typology that comes from television, whose change as a loop, in music, as in video art, becomes the constructive device in many works, modelled by circularity, the absence of boundaries between inside and outside, beginning and end. "The idea of a loop which repeats what you heard five seconds ago. So it was inside your short-term memory, giving you a kind of extended present time."<sup>[22]</sup> It is the electronic device that leads to the discovery of multiple times, feedback, continuous time, delayed time, the possibility of perceiving the present in movement. Unlike the modernist art that presented the present as phenomenological immediacy, pure presence deprived of memory, that of the neo-avant-garde, thanks also to the experimentation with electronic technologies (deceleration, delay, loop), has

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as 'art'. Art at the content level is something set apart from life; it is something that one goes to see at a museum or theater. That insidious little box with its super-real image, on the other hand, is accepted into the home situation. It is just there, part of a person's life. It has none of the pretension associated with the art experience". See John S. Margolies, "TV-THE NEXT MEDIUM 'It's the new everything,' says Andy Warhol", op. cit.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Dwelling on the nature of the circular surface, Peter Halley (1987) makes it derive from the course of the line that returns to coil around itself. Speaking of this I supply a testimony by Aldo Tambellini, a pioneer in the field of experimentation with technological devices: "[...] I wanted to modify a black and white television set to obtain from it a transmission shaped in a spiral. I had one of the settings altered so that all the transmissions of images arrived transformed in a constant concentric spiral that began in the centre of the tube. After many attempts we obtained the result we were hoping for. For me it was natural to see the future in forms suspended in circles or spirals. There will be no high, no low, no gravity. Floating. I called the work BLACK SPIRAL, a television culture, exhibited straight away at the Howard Wise Gallery in New York in 1969, coinciding with the exhibition 'TV as a Creative Medium', the first exhibition of television in an art gallery." (Aldo Tambellini, "A Syracuse Rebel in New York", [online] [www.lesintrigues.com/%5Cessays%5Cpatterson%20Clayton-A%20SYRACUSE%20REBEL%20IN%20NEW%20YORK.doc](http://www.lesintrigues.com/%5Cessays%5Cpatterson%20Clayton-A%20SYRACUSE%20REBEL%20IN%20NEW%20YORK.doc)).

[22] Dan Graham, in Benjamin H.D. Buchloch (ed.), *Dan Graham, Video Architecture-Television. Writings on Video and Video Works 1970-1978*, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design and New York University Press, 1979, p. 108.

insisted in the awareness of the illusion of the instant: "[...] At the same time they critique this immediacy by showing the impossibility of locating a pure present tense."<sup>[23]</sup> The emphasis falls on the role of the spectator, activated, re-educated, assaulted by the kind attention of the artist that turns him or her, through the closed circuit that creates the electronic device, into a performer, who determines the existence of the work-event, dramatised, who sees him or herself acting: "Use of video time-delay in conjunction with the mirror allows the spectator to see what is normally visually unavailable: the simultaneity of his or her self as both subject and object."<sup>[24]</sup>

The author too – and Warhol was a forerunner of this – comes on the scene in the part of a spectator, like one who observes the work in its farce.

### "TV as a distorting mirror of the home and family"

"Viewed in face-to-face, intimate, family or family-like groups within a home or in a homelike architectural containers (the friendly neighbourhood bar), TV took on the family as its main subject."<sup>[25]</sup>

The theory of distracted enjoyment falls within a context in which the television-home-family triangle determines the ways of enjoying TV in the privacy of the home, different to the attentive gaze and the transference of the enjoyment of a film in the cinema. With TV, what Benjamin had advocated in relation to architecture and the cinema is proved, leaving to one side the pole 'entertainment vs meditation' of its negative meaning. Distracted reception, according to Benjamin, is typical of the collective enjoyment dictated by custom, made up of occasional glances instead of the frontal contemplation of the work. The film is "projectile works" because, instead of allowing itself to be captured by the spectator's gaze, it goes in search of it.<sup>[26]</sup> With the coming of television, this receptive dimension – as we have already stated with regard to Margolies's essay – extends to the enjoyment of television and is reviewed with subsequent contributions, like glance theory.<sup>[27]</sup>

In Vito Acconci's essay *Television, Furniture and Sculpture: the Room with an American View* and Dan Graham's *Video in Relation to Architecture* (1979), with a social-anthropological-psychological approach, the role that television performs in the context of the family in American society is analysed in a specular relationship: the family that TV talks about is the same family that watches the television that speaks about the family and which transforms the 'American Family' into an efficient commercial tool.

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[23] Dan Graham, "Video Feedback II". In: Doug Hall, Sally Jo Fifer (eds.). *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, op. cit., p. 186.

[24] Ibid., p. 185

[25] Dan Graham, "History of Television: The Post-war Suburban Family". In: Doug Hall, Sally Jo Fifer (eds.). *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, op. cit., p. 168.

[26] "The reception in the distraction which is making itself felt more and more insistently in all areas of art and which constitutes the symptom of profound modifications of the perceptions, finds in the cinema the most authentic instrument with which to exercise itself." See Walter Benjamin, "L'oeuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction mécanisée". In: *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung I*, 1936.

[27] See John Ellis, *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television, Video*, New York, Routledge, 1982.

Dan Graham's reflection and his production of atmospheres in which the electronic device deconstructs and reshapes the conventional divisions between public and private spaces catches our attention in its possible inter-changeability, thanks to the mirroring action of the video that refers the internal to the external and vice versa (as in the cult show by Squat Theater *Andy Warhol's Last Love*, 1978).<sup>[28]</sup> The electronic device, like Moebius's spiral, offers the possibility of introducing the exterior, and seeing oneself acting and of remaking and multiplying space and time: "Video in architecture functions semiotically as a window and mirror simultaneously, but subverts the effects and functions of both. Windows in architecture mediate separated spatial units and frame a conventional perspective of one's unit relation to the other, mirrors in architecture define self reflectively spatial enclosure and ego enclosure."<sup>[29]</sup> The introduction of the television set to homes had meant the outside world bursting into homes and the reflection of the home-family in the screen: "TV might be metaphorically visualized as a mirror in which the viewing family sees an idealized ideologically distorted reflection of itself represented in the typical TV genres: the situation comedy or the soap opera."<sup>[30]</sup>

Dan Graham's work represents the deconstruction of these situations, projecting the hall onto the outside (with a television camera that captures in real time what is happening at home in relation to the television monitor), thus explaining the space of the family at home that watches the news broadcast by the television, and bringing the place in which this news is made, the TV studio, inside, like in his unrealized project *Production/Reception*, 1976. The family gathered in the living room round the TV screen is the figurative *topos* of the new condition of spectator and receiver: Valie Export, in *Facing a Family* (1971), makes a video that shows the family sitting at the table watching television and seeing itself in the role of viewers. In *Reverse Television, Portraits of a Viewer, Compilation Tape* (1983-84), Bill Viola imagines a "reverse television" and composes portraits of viewers watching the TV, portraits that produce a strange effect when, being in real time, they function doubly as interruptions of the time of the normal TV programmes among which they are inserted. In *Personal/Public* (Muntadas, 1981), the image of the TV viewer changes through the closed circuit: taken out of the domestic and family continuum, the viewer returns to the scene as the subject who watches both the world as shown on television and him or herself in the act of viewing.

The reflection and the production of Judith Barry intervene in this dual media and domestic territory, and historically research inhabited parts of the home and the television news, reconstructing, with the chronological rooms of *From Receiver to Remote Control* (1990) the history of TV and the history of domestic interiors.

[28] Dan Graham writes: "Public/Private Codes: Public versus private can be dependent upon architectural conventions..." [Window/bathroom, public-private bathroom, etc.] (Benjamin, H.D. Buchloch (ed.), *Dan Graham, Video Architecture-Television. Writings on Video and VideoWorks 1970-1978*, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

[29] Dan Graham, "Video as Architectural Mirror and Window". In: Doug Hall, Sally Jo Fifer (eds.), *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, op. cit., p. 178.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

If TV and video are two reflecting surfaces, the latter is a mirror that raises awareness of the distortions produced by TV: video art has been television's awareness of self, as Jean-Paul Fargier maintains, and in this function – resisting the flux, insists Raymond Bellour – it has found its ethical and aesthetic *raison d'être*.

The coupling of 'family and television' also remains a *topos* in the output of artists after the seventies, but the focus changes, in the sense that it goes from the exploration of an enjoyable-perceptive dimension, that of the TV viewer, of the glance theory, from the demystification of the media presence of television within individual and everyday existence, to the therapeutic proposals of participation and to the denunciation of its functions of manipulation (Muntadas), terrorists (Birnbaum), the corruption of the imaginary (Oursler), and to the blurring and dissolution of the images (Rist).

### Television/Cancer: Therapies and Parodies

In the 1981 manifesto, *Changer d'image*, Jean-Luc Godard maintained that both the cinema and television are occupied by enemies and, therefore, both ought to be interested in seeking the "formula" for changing the images: "Let's go more slowly, we have to decompose". The founding of his electronic laboratory Sonimage resumed this strategy to combat the indifferent nature of audiovisual production. In this perspective, Godard took television to be an interrogation of the role and the work of the director who, in *Six fois deux – Sur et sous la communication* (1976) and in *France, tour détour deux enfants* (1977-78), both of them shown on television, he doubles up in the role of the interviewee and the interviewer, i.e., *actor* and *spectator*.

The therapies that artists performed, through their videographic output, to transform television, are multiple. For Gary Hill, the way of combating the televisual flux is the word: with the installation *In Situ* (1986) he establishes a parallel between the TV image and the word, going back to the theme of *Incidence of Catastrophe* (and of much of his work), in which he dramatically develops the analogy between body and book, between page and landscape, between body that wounds itself and book that tears itself to pieces. Images exist only in that they share the rhythm with the words, as in *Happenstance* (1982-83), in which the world is a jumble of letters that are superimposed on one another, dissolve, form words and manage to transcend the excess of information with which they too, like the images, are loaded.

In the video works of Antoni Muntadas, the written text is a formal and thematic constant, it is the complementary pole of his media landscape, it establishes its counterpoint: in reaction to the exuberance of the images and their loss of communicative effectiveness, the verbal language is an element of strangeness. They are words joined in such a way that they create assonance, nonsense, interlocations directed at the viewer: "What are you looking at?", opening comments that explain the video's script; phrases that incite one to action: "You decide!"

In the relationship between a pre-existing image and a text to which the author entrusts his own point of view, a dialectic of contrasts is played out between nature – the media landscape – and culture – the author's critical thinking. Muntadas' semiotic-an-

alytic inclination leads him to couple, in *Confrontations* (1980), different TV broadcasts from different countries, as if they were different media: his aim is to probe the media landscape to make the spectators aware of how it works.

Taking images broadcast by TV channels and mixing them at post-production, and modifying their contexts and meanings is the constructive procedure recurring most frequently in the videographic production that observes the post-modern regime of appropriationism, which looks in the media archives, and in the aesthetic of recycling. Indeed, precisely because it is ephemeral, television has promoted the system of archiving, a repertoire from which to take images, in order to create parodic and satirical forms aimed at a neutralization of the difference between reality and falsehood, rather than between genres.<sup>[31]</sup> These practices exploit the ambivalence of fascination and repulsion that the mass media cause in many artists, from Andy Warhol to Lord Chip (Ant Farm): “[...] so we were fascinated with contemporary popular culture and media and what significance they would have in the near future”, in accordance with the post-modern trend of undermining the author and place the artistic patrimony and that of the mass media on the same level.<sup>[32]</sup>

If the sixties were the years of utopia, fed during the following decade by the experimentation of the new medium, which came determined to reflect the functioning of television, in the eighties artists, all hope of salvage actions lost, denounce the destruction carried out by television in the sphere of the imaginary. In *Casual Imagination* (1987) Judith Barry analyses some famous TV shows in the USA, with the aim of showing the intentions and the effects on viewers; in *Hostage*, Dara Birnbaum identifies terrorism in the way that the press and television create news and he sets out to contrast the flux of the images, blocking their temporal dynamic and entrusting this task to the spectators. In *Hostage* it is the spectators who, by working a laser, can stop the sequences of images that slip out of each of the five monitors that broadcast the news of the assassination of Schleyer (1977) by the Baader-Meinhof Gang. The artist deals with recent historical events, still fresh, taken from the media archive, like *Tiananmen Square* (1989), an installation in which Birnbaum showed both the official and the counter-official news.

In *System for Dramatic Feedback* (Oursler, 1994), the spectators find themselves always in the middle, but studied as a psychic subject. Oursler is interested in representing the effects that the cinema and television produce in the viewer: “The division between media and real world has dissolved on other levels as well. For example, media has a mirror effect in the creation of self-image, body types, and the manufacture of desire.

Also, psychologically one may view media as an evolutionary facilitator of the fractured self. These examples suggest a much more complicated relationship than simple cause and effect if one considers the (viewing) habits of Americans as a sort of governor of media content, individual, social interaction, and pop media.”<sup>[33]</sup>

Oursler’s imaginary is shaped by the claustrophobic domestic space, made of desolate interiors in which the only opening to the world outside (the windows and the closed-circuit monitor created by the electronic device that reflected the inside and outside of the house having disappeared) is the TV mobile (*Video Dream*, Oursler, 1989). There are many works in which the artist investigates the coupling television-psyche, body-mind, the effect of the images on the brain cells, images as chemical drugs that make it impossible to distinguish what is true from what is false.<sup>[34]</sup>

In the series *Eyes*, the viewer’s state of dependence on the television drug is shown as a scientific cabinet that shows the physical process of optical reception, the television images deposited on the retina. The TV viewer is analysed as a subject who lives in a museum of the mind in which, as a warning, the effects produced by long, repeated exposure to TV shows are shown to the public. The small theatre prepared by Tony Oursler, populated by film divas, bad guys, families addicted to soap operas, reactivates – as grotesque phantasmal figures – the imaginary of the mass media, whose effect on viewers is traumatic and cathartic.

### Television/Shopping Centre: From Viewer to Consumer

For Judith Barry, the big department stores are to television what the supermarket is to the cinema.<sup>[35]</sup> The spectator’s creativity lies in the act of consuming. The consumer-subject finds in the department stores the space in which subject and object come together:

“Television commercials are viewed on TV sets in the home. Shopping takes place in a space specifically constructed for that purpose. Just as theaters are constructed to make possible specific spectator relations with the film, stores are constructed to produce certain specific effects on the consumer.”<sup>[36]</sup> It makes one think of Hippolytus,

[31] For Hal Foster, the pastiche, the hybrid, is the expression of the schizophrenic collapse of the subject and the historical narrative. See Hal Foster, “Post-modern Polemics”. In: *Recordings*, Washington, Bay Press, 1985, p. 132.

[32] See Lord Chip in Constance M. Lewallen, Steve Said, *Ant Farm 1968-1978*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2004, p. 65. For Judith Barry it is a case of substituting the author’s signature with group work, archive research: “In many of my site-specific projects, I see myself as more a facilitator than an ‘artist’, a person whose name is attached to a work as a guarantee of authenticity”. See Judith Barry, “Casual Imagination”. In: Brian Wallis (ed.), *Blasted Allegories*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1987, pp. 336-360.

[33] Nick Kaye, “Video Presence. Tony Oursler’s Media Entities”, PAJ, no. 88, 2008, pp. 15-30.

[34] Apart from *System For Dramatic Feedback*, set in a cinema, *Blue Transmission*, *Mechanical Scanning Device*, “Nipko” and the series called *Eyes* are devoted to the television viewer. In reference to these works I reproduce some words by Oursler: “Video is to figure as spirit is to body. I think its safe to say that in this day and age, information has taken the place of spirit, which now resides within the head. And as we all know information enters the brain through the eyes. Each eye is created by first videotaping a person’s eye and then projecting it onto a sphere. This way we can inspect the organ in great detail. The video image wraps around half of the sphere as though it were a round movie screen” ([www.tonyoursler.com/tonyoursler2/words/interviews/meyerstoll.htm](http://www.tonyoursler.com/tonyoursler2/words/interviews/meyerstoll.htm), a written conversation between Tony Oursler and Christiane Meyer-Stoll).

[35] Judith Barry analyzes the differences between the cinema, which is narration, and television, similar to Hollywood fiction, is not explain. The cinema is close to photography and painting, it speaks of the past; television is close to the technology of the computer and speaks of the present, something that erases the difference between thought and action, between imagination and experience, redefining the concept of event as a form of reconstruction of reality. See Judith Barry, “Casual Imagination”. In: Brian Wallis (ed.), *Blasted Allegories*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1987, pp. 336-360.

[36] Judith Barry, “Casual Imagination”, op. cit., p. 353.

the protagonist of *Phaedra's Love*, by Sarah Kane, who spends his days looking at the TV screen, fascinated by the television and by the bad food it advertises.

In Barry, the analysis of the home space and of the behaviour of the spectator is carried by a look at the future of the mass media, in accordance with the trends in visual studies, in which the influence of Baudrillard has replaced that of McLuhan. The transformation that the essay demonstrates goes beyond the ghosts of the cinema screen, which has become a place of archaeology of the nineteenth-century imaginary, crosses the phantasmagoria of the luminous impulses of the television screen, and remains over the object-images, i.e., over the disappearance of the role of the spectator, with the baggage of symbolic, imaginative, cognitive, etc. functions that it implies.<sup>[37]</sup>

*Himalaya's Sister's Living Room* (Pipilotti Rist, 2000) is an emblematic testimony to a condition in which the image sails free of supports, may appear “anywhere”, deprived of locations of the gaze, indistinct as origin and destination.<sup>[38]</sup> The installation reproduces a domestic interior in which, among the many objects of adornment and decoration that saturate the atmosphere, luminous surfaces of different sizes and shapes are scattered about, among which we cannot see the source of pure light of a lamp that illuminates the atmosphere of the luminous image whose source is a video projector or a television. Excluded from this domestic interior are both the subject and the object, both the spectator and the image that, having lost its state as an image, glorifies its self-destruction.

A way out between de-identified image and image-object (of consumption) is the one that Chris Marker exhibited: the residual potential of the image is exemplified in the Zone, the unspecified place of the action in Tarkovsky's film *Stalker*. In *Sans Soleil* (1993) Marker presents the Japanese artist Hayao Yamaneko, who has digitalised photographs on a computer with a program called Zones. According to Marker, for Hayao the electronic device is the only one that can deal with feelings, memory and imagination. Also the CD-ROM *Immemory* (1998), in which Marker has extracted and re-composed fixed images from the disorderly flux of the video and the television, is constructed with a computer program that asks the spectator to build the route between the images, beyond a narrative development. This work points out the passing from the projected film to the digitalized membrane of the digital screen. In *Zapping Zone (Proposal For An Imaginary Television, 1990-1992)*<sup>[39]</sup>, Marker once again proposes to the spectator the way of enjoying television zapping, outside the TV, offering, scattered in a host of computers, differentiated programmes – photo-cinema-video – that he reworks using computer programs, to try to see if it is still possible to treat the images as a writer treats words, to contrast the continuous nature of the flux that, as we

have seen, does not belong just to television, but which has also invaded the territory of art. With this proposal for another kind of television, Marker makes the hypothesis of a strategy to resist the fluidity, with the treatment reserved for writing, introducing “[...] elements of interruption of the flow, of restructuring the reception of the image and of a return to the flux with a heightened reflective awareness, so that spectators may be given the possibility of discovering and composing their own repertoire of emotive images.”<sup>[40]</sup>

“From the television to the computer: a new mythology” could be the next paragraph in this story, one of the many stories possible to explain the relations between video and television, in which the end could also be a beginning.

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[37] The electronic device has encouraged a change of status of the image that, traversed by a *squeezoom* and by laser, retouched by infographic devices in three dimensions, blows up from the two-dimensional to the three-dimensional, and goes beyond the edge of the monitor.

[38] See Raymond Bellour, “D'un Autre Cinema”. In: *Trafic*, Summer 2000, pp. 5-21.

[39] Zapping is the device that makes it possible to record TV programmes without the commercial breaks interrupting. Cf. Jean-Paul Fargier, “Le zappeur camembert”. In: *Ritratti*, by Valentina Valentini, Roma, De Luca, 1987, pp. 61-63.

[40] Cf. Taken from the essay by Pietro Montani, “Duplicità dell'immagine, discontinuità, interattività”. In: *Close-Up*, year 7, no. 14, September 2003, p. 13. Cf. also Chris Marker, “Sans Soleil”, *Trafic*, no. 6, Spring 1993.

»» A Light Bulb in the Picture  
»» (Video Art as  
»» the Self-awareness  
»» of Television)

»» Jean-Paul Fargier

A light bulb appears in a comic strip. Any reader understands immediately: the character has just had an idea. An instant image of the instantaneity of thought, the light bulb in the picture, turned up or down, but always without wires, has been part of our universal language for a long time. How does television present itself, and represent itself, to the other arts? It is almost as simple as that.

No sooner had the idea of a machine showing instant reality appeared, a few creators got down to imagining, in their respective fields, the effects of this instantaneity. Anticipating what video artists would formalize in no time at all.

When Joyce, in *Ulysses*, recounts *hour by hour* the events that take place in a single day in a single city, he echoes the radical change in the perception of time – which had not changed much since the days of Homer – resulting from the emergence of the daily press, which stimulates the social fabric and even influences the flow of thought. Later, in *Finnegan's Wake*, when he crosses a score of languages, what he does is reflect on a literary level the impact of another medium: wireless telegraphy, the precursor of television, which mixes a host of voices *every minute*, a host that we can hear just by turning a simple dial.

Pollock? Pouring in a zigzag, listening to jazz, trickles of paint onto a canvas spread on the floor, to the rhythm of the syncopations heard *second by second*, what is it if not tuning into the metronome of radio immediacy? So painting is no longer reproducing, stylizing it, a fraction of reality, nor arranging/disarranging the images bequeathed by their predecessors, but it is transmitting instantaneously the impulses of a sudden energy, born from within and without and generating “colours assembled in a specific order,” as Maurice Denis had already conceptualised without drawing from it, however, all the consequences.

We could multiply the examples. I will give two more – to drive home the universal nature of the *live effect*, which will culminate in the *TV effect*. The first, borrowed from the history of the cinema; the second, included in the history of the theatre. Two examples of forms that brilliantly condense (like those light bulbs that light up in a comic) the main advantage of TV.

In his first film, *The Blood of a Poet*, Cocteau leads his hero along the corridor of a hotel in which, as he can see by looking through the keyholes, each room is the scene of a spectacle taking place simultaneously in far-off countries (Mexico, China, graves of Vincennes). A metaphor of the visionary capabilities of poetry, which mocks both time and space, this scene is unthinkable, as it is presented, in another century. To create it, it was necessary for the model of Hertzian instantaneity to exist (radio or television). Only a video installation can go further in the exhibition of the simultaneity of the acts (dramatic or not) that coexist at any given moment in the world. As in the cutting-edge works of Ira Schneider: *Manhattan Is An Island*, which is in some ways his *Ulysses*, and *24 Time Zones*, which is his *Finnegan's Wake*, allowing for the obvious differences. In the former, about 20 monitors, placed on the ground so that they reproduce a map of New York, project images taken in the different neighbourhoods of the city and they thus offer the simultaneous spectacle of the whole of this metropolis. In the second installation, it is the spectacle of the world, recorded during a long journey, which is presented time zone by time zone on 24 monitors, installed on pedestals, that describe a circle: the montage of the 24 films, which carefully show the evolution of each territory from dawn to dusk in accordance with the sun's path, gives the spectator the feeling of being immersed in the heart of sidereal time.

The instant creation of images, which is what television has been doing for barely a century, dates back to the most ancient times, as is revealed in *Teatro de sombras* by Lourdes Castro, the culmination of her work. This Portuguese plastic artist, who lived in Paris from the fifties to the seventies before returning to Madeira, the island of her birth, made her name thanks to her silhouettes, either of Plexiglas or embroidered on sheets. With Plexiglas, neutral or dyed, she engraved portraits that return an individual (Christo, Adami, Bertholo, among other friends) to the degree zero of their footprint on reality, that which the shadow of their body makes. In the same way, the hand embroidery marks the outline of a body (or a few) on the whiteness of a bed just as a silhouette produced by a bolt of lightning would. However, it was above all her *Teatro de sombras*, done with Manuel Zimbro, that enabled her to carry out her research into immediacy. Behind a screen, the recipient of the shadows projected by a single light source, Lourdes Castro made gestures and presented objects, of which the spectators saw only the mass, the outline and the movement. Whether incorporated into the early bustle of the Magic Circus as a fairground attraction or executed ceremoniously in contemporary art museums – from the Pompidou to the São Paulo Art Biennial, via cities like Berlin, Amsterdam, Venice or Lisbon – this choreographer of coloured shadows (many of the accessories used were dyed translucent industrial plastic), cre-

ated instant images full of grace and lightness, captured live: a sort of television without cameras or aerials, in short.

It does not matter too much if this gesture by Lourdes Castro, and Cocteau's, moreover, were or were not aware of their televisual origin: today its impact comes from this secret link. And they reveal it to us straight, even though we barely notice it, well informed as we are through our contact with the media, whose evolution merely reinforces, in each new technical creation, the triumph of instantaneity. An instantaneity that was created along with the invention of the telephone and the radio, and found for the first time a perfect formula (images + sounds + worldwide diffusion) with television via satellite, until the web transformed each individual in possession of a computer and an Internet connection into a potential television broadcaster.

Nam June Paik, on the other hand, both in his *Global Groove* and his *TV Cello*, brazenly accepts the reference to television in the field in which these works are produced: video art. A cello turned into a transmitting and receiving antenna: this is the strange instrument that Paik created for the exclusive use of the well-known cellist Charlotte Moorman, who gave up a promising career in concert halls to become an avant-garde "performer" by the side of the inventor of video art. Her new cello, called "TV cello" by its designer, is made up of three monitors, fixed to a handle from where strings emerge that can be scraped with a bow in order to produce rasping sounds, more like roars than arpeggios. The televisions are connected to a camera that films the instrumentalist. Another device transforms the colours of the images according to the strokes with the bow. This stream of images imitates television in its early days. *TV Cello* (1971) becomes a rival channel for ABC, NBC, CBS, RAI or ORTF. Paik/Moorman the broadcaster rivals with all these networks by proposing what the others do not offer: pure art and self-awareness. Pure art, from an act that is framed with originality in the chain of modern creations, born of the coup de théâtre that Marcel Duchamp produced with his ready-mades (from this perspective the cello is an "assisted" ready-made). Self-awareness, of television as a model capable of overdetermining any artistic invention of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (from Joyce to Cocteau, from Pollock to Castro, via all the others, without exception).

After that, the small studio works that Paik put together one day entitled *Global Groove* (1973) only had to drive the point home, or rather incrust the diamond. The core of *Global Groove*, an experimental television programme commissioned by the Boston public channel (WGBH), are the dazzling fragments of the performances of Charlotte Moorman with her *TV Cello*. Around her, different sequences reflect the diversity that television offers the viewers of the day (1973), and above all of tomorrow: a rock & roll video clip just like the future MTV – a close-up of the poet Allen Ginsberg or the musician John Cage in the style of Arte or any other cultural channel yet to come – a raid into Navaho territory as the ethnic channels do, the existence of which no one can as yet imagine – a musical and choreographic Korean fantasy that bursts in with worldwide zappings via satellites not yet working – a commercial caught by chance that sings the praises of a product famous the world over – an erotic show like we will find

everywhere twenty years later on the porno channels – a critical distortion with an electromagnet of the faces of Power (Nixon, etc.) – and even a trialling of participative TV, simulated humorous interactivity: "Half close your eyes, close your eyes a bit more". Each of these fragments (of future programmes, prophetically anticipated) exposes some of the electronic effects that video artists, led by Paik, have been exploring, like pioneers, for a decade (colouring, solarization, feedback, incrustation, outline extraction, image splitting, multiplication and other distortions/perversions of the normal electronic signals), and they thus compile a catalogue of this expanding new art that is video art. It should be said that when the face of the cellist is lit up, coloured by her, by the notes she plays, it is no longer a case of a catalogue or an inventory – we are witnessing the self-mise en abyme of television, an act of inversion that is the same as an awareness-raising. As if video art had just emerged to tell television who it is, what it can do and what it induces.

Just then, at the heart of *Global Groove*, a light bulb lights up invisibly: idea! Let's formulate it: any video installation is a *small-scale model* of the TV machine. Reduced or *enlarged*, exaggerated, amplified (we see things better when their size is increased). An idea on which we should like to base an (authentic) story of video art, for which, modestly but firmly, this text could serve as a pressing prologue.

■ Jean-Paul Fargier is a film critic and lecturer at the University of Paris VIII, and a videomaker.

## »» Dan Graham: Present Time

»» Barbara London

### Childhood in Suburbia

For more than forty years, Dan Graham has thrived as a maverick on the cutting edge. Born 1942 in Urbana, Illinois, he grew up in suburbia, in cookie-cutter style housing of Union County, New Jersey. For post-war America, affordable tract houses were considered an ideal setting for a young middle-class, intellectual family of four – Dan, his mother, a psychologist, his father, a chemist, and younger brother.

As a precocious child, Graham sharpened his wit, dodging the constraints of life in the bland suburbs. Stimulation came in different forms. Early broadcast television innovators helped fuel his anarchistic spirit and an interest in live situations, including television programs with the purportedly inebriated Dean Martin and the urbane and uninhibited comedian Ernie Kovacs.

An underachiever at school, Graham read challenging books. On his parents' shelves he discovered Margaret Mead, the cultural anthropologist who was influential in 1940s America. She had proposed teaching sex education in primary school. As many boys his age were doing to find out about sex, Graham could be found reading Mead at age fourteen. (Her reports about the attitudes towards sex in South Pacific and Southeast Asian traditional cultures informed the 1960s sexual revolution.) Graham maintains that Mead gave him both a feminist and an anthropological outlook.

It was rock n' roll that shaped Graham and his generation once 45 rpm records appeared, with hits channeled onto radio by influential disk jockey promoters. Meanwhile, Elvis Presley set teenagers on fire with his sexually explicit gyrations while

crooning “Don't Be Cruel” and “Love Me Tender” on Ed Sullivan's family-style, Sunday evening variety show on CBS-TV (September 9 and October 28, 1956, and again on January 6, 1957.)

Around the age of fifteen Graham asserts that he picked up Jean-Paul Sartre's *Nausea* and the *Evergreen Review*, which translated the French New Novelists, before turning to Walter Benjamin's *Illuminations*. After high school he eschewed university and art school and simply crossed the Hudson River, putting down roots in Manhattan, intent on becoming a writer.

### Interdisciplinarity in the 1960s

In Manhattan Graham located an informal circle that included Sol LeWitt. The two shared common interests in such authors as experimental writer Michel Butor (described by Roland Barthes as an epitome of structuralism.) In early 1964, Graham opened a small gallery, John Daniels, at 17 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street. He organized group shows with budding “proto-minimalists”, some of whom had already exhibited with Richard Bellamy at the nearby Green Gallery. Graham continued his self-education through conversations with LeWitt, Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Jo Baer, Robert Smithson, Mel Bochner, many of whom were artist-writers. They all were trying to be anti-humanist and anti-romantic, countering Abstract Expressionism, then on the wane.<sup>[1]</sup> Graham and LeWitt both discovered *Die Reihe* (the Serial Row), the German musical journal edited by Herbert Eimert and Karlheinz Stockhausen, with English translations. This fed into Graham's subsequent interest in “delay” as a concept and the meaning of now. Several years later this was fueled by Graham and LeWitt's reading of science, in particular of cybernetics and the cybernetics of feedback.

“It was possible to connect the philosophical implications of these ideas with the art that these ‘proto-minimal’ artists and more established artists such as Warhol, Johns, Stella, Lichtenstein and Oldenburg or dancers such as Yvonne Rainer or Simone Forti, were producing.”<sup>[2]</sup>

After eight months Graham closed the gallery and focused on writing, introduced to *Arts Magazine's* editorial staff by Bochner.<sup>[3]</sup> Knowing he lacked the training to make art with traditional mediums, he found a solution by composing a language-based piece purely about information. *Schema* (1966) consisted of a formal procedure for how to describe a document, or a “set of pages”, with no real reference to the content of that document. His idea was to send the text to many different kinds of magazines, so that

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- [1] Marianne Brouwer, Corinne Diserens (ed.), *Dan Graham: Works 1965-2000*, Düsseldorf, Richter Verlag, 2001, p. 73.
  - [2] Adachiara Zevi, *Dan Graham: Selected Writings and Interviews on Art Works, 1965-1995*, Roma, I Libri di Zerynthia, 1996, p. 127.
  - [3] Rhea Anastas, “Minimal Difference: The John Daniels Gallery and the First Works of Dan Graham”, Bennett Simpson, Chrissie Iles (ed.), *Dan Graham: Beyond*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 2009, p. 119.

*Schema* would then be defined by each magazine's context. Finally placing *Schema* in *Aspen Magazine*, he later said:

"I wanted to make a 'Pop' Art which was more literally disposable (an idea which was alluded to in Warhol's idea of replacing 'quality' for 'quantity' – the logic of a consumer society), I wanted to make an art-form which could not be reproduced or exhibited in a gallery/museum, and I wanted to make a further reduction of the 'Minimal' object to a not necessarily aesthetic two-dimensional form (which was not painting or drawing): printed matter which is mass reproduced and mass disposable information. Putting it in magazine pages meant that it also could be 'read' in juxtaposition to the usual second-hand art criticism, reviews, reproductions in the rest of the magazine and would form a critique of the functioning of the magazine (in relation to the gallery structure.)"<sup>[4]</sup>

### Consumer Technologies

In the early 1960s as a range of new technologies reached the consumer market, from photocopiers to audiocassettes, reproducible images and sounds became more pliable. Graham, like Ed Ruscha and Robert Smithson, picked up the inexpensive point-and-shoot Instamatic camera with an idealist's disposition. The fact that amateur, hobbyist photographers used the device appealed, as much as the immediacy; exposed film could be dropped off at the local drug store for next day pick-up of developed prints or slides.

Graham focused his attention on the facades of ordinary one-family homes in the suburbs, which masqueraded as the countryside. His snapshots examined the variations in style and color of standardized housing developments, all with the same factory-made windows, doors, steps, and railings, in neighborhoods around New York in New Jersey and on Staten Island. The Instamatic allowed him to engage with the aesthetic language of Minimalism without mastering photography's medium-specific procedures or its fine-art conventions.<sup>[5]</sup> (Eventually he abandoned the Instamatic for the better quality of 35mm.)

Graham turned his straightforward images of housing facades into a slide work. He liked that, as a medium, slides provided a certain kind of light quality, his goal being to approximate the colors and iridescent transparency of Judd's sculpture. This was a good ten years before the backlit Cibachrome appeared.<sup>[6]</sup>

His slide piece publicly premiered in the month-long "Projected Art" exhibition organized by Elayne Varian, Director of the Contemporary Study Wing at Finch College, New York, opening December 8, 1969. The show, which included films by Warhol and Robert Whitman, among others, drew attention to time-based installations by artists

using "ordinary" technologies with an objective functionalism. Their media works challenged the more conventional art forms' commodity status.

"We 'minimal artist people' wanted to have the instant and then throw it away, because it was about subverting the idea of things that are collectible, that were heavy, and could be converted into precious objects."<sup>[7]</sup>

Interested in doing a fake think piece (after Judd's *Arts Magazine* article on the plan of Kansas City), Graham wanted to publish his images as a photo essay accompanied by his own analytical text in a large-circulation magazine, such as *Esquire*. As part of a magazine layout, the photos would illustrate his text or inversely, the text would function in relation to or modifying the meaning of the photos.<sup>[8]</sup> In its December 1966/January 1967 issue, *Arts Magazine* published a truncated version with Graham's text taking precedence over his photographs, in an article tagged "Homes for America: Early 20th-Century Possessable House to the Quasi-Discrete Cell of '66". He now had a title for the work.

### Performance and Audience Involvement

During the heady times of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Graham became interested in issues around the body and through his writing reflected upon how Simone Forti and Nauman were paring down sequences of spare actions based on everyday movements. Soon he embarked on his own performances, as a way out of his earlier minimalist and structuralist assumptions based on a phenomenology of presence.

What he liked about performance was that it had to do with the artist community, in a kind of social situation.<sup>[9]</sup> The spectator became very important. Interested in what Nauman was doing with media, but lacking the tools to pursue on his own, Graham accepted his artist-friend David Askevold's invitation to Halifax to participate in his course "Projects" at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD). The school let Graham use their film and video equipment, and invited him back regularly. This allowed Graham to explore feedback loops in a learning context.

The Super-8 film camera, which appeared in 1965, had two advantages for Graham. Quite small, the camera could be held right up to the eye, becoming an extension of sight, and for Graham a simple way to make the same subject/object relationships that he had been making all along in other areas. The switch also gave him access to a much more aesthetically "beautiful" image. In addition, the lens's fixed focus meant he could capture both the periphery of his body, literally his visual field, and also the horizon line. As he moved (*Roll*, 1970), he didn't need to adjust focus. The simple device weighed a fraction of clunky, early video cameras and their separate recording decks.<sup>[10]</sup>

[4] Dan Graham, *Articles*, Eindhoven, Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven, 1978. With notes by R. H. Fuchs and an afterward by B. H. D. Buchloh, p. 75, his fn. 15.

[5] Anastas, op. cit., p.121.

[6] Robert Enright, Meeka Walsh, *Dan Graham: Mirror Complexities*, Border Crossing, Vol. 28, no. 4, issue 112, p. 25.

[7] Brouwer, op. cit., p. 76.

[8] Buchloh, op. cit., p. 73.

[9] Dan Graham, "The Early Show", Simpson and Iles, op. cit, p. 63.

[10] Simon Field, "Dan Graham: an interview with Simon Field", *Art and Artists*, January 1973, p. 19.

Whereas Graham sees the films he made as an open, spectator/audience relationship, he was also thinking about time. With his *Past/Future* (1972) work, “You only get the future by your memories of the past... which you’re constructing in present time. So they (the participants) both have the locus of present but they’re really involved with almost... with a kind of continuity between the two.”<sup>[11]</sup>

He started to realize that things were not static in the minimal art sense, that there is a sense of process that comes from Nauman and others’ work. Graham was interested in almost a quantum mechanics time, more an Einstein complex time that involves actual experiential time in a way, too, with the past, present, and future all existing simultaneously.<sup>[12]</sup>

One of his first works at NSCAD was the performance *Lax/Relax* in 1969. He sat in front of an audience with a tape recorder and a microphone. For thirty minutes a pre-recorded female voice repeated the word “lax” very slowly. He responded saying “relax” over and over into a microphone. He was attuned to the social space where the action took place. The auditory experience referred to both the echo-like time delay in a marijuana high, and to the recursive phrases used in hypnosis.

Graham re-performed *Lax/Relax* at Paula Cooper’s Gallery (established in SoHo just a year prior) on June 13, 1969, as part of an evening he organized entitled “Coulisse”. He included a performance by Acconci, along with films by Nauman, Yvonne Rainer, and Richard Serra, and a sound work by Dennis Oppenheim.<sup>[13]</sup> (It is worth noting that the Woodstock festival took place several months later, August 15-18, 1969.)

*Body Press* (1970-72) belongs to a series of works that revolves around one task. In the project a male and a female performer are naked, as they stand in a mirrored cylinder with their backs to one another. Each holds a camera, the back of which is pressed to their body, and slowly guides the camera around the cylinder. In so doing, their entire upper body is probed and scanned up and down in the form of a helix. The camera records the action in the mirroring in the cylinder and at the same time is itself part of this action. The two cameras are switched between the performers after each circling. The camera and the resultant film produce a continuous link between the bodily sensation and movements of the two performers. Afterwards the two films are projected in an endless loop on opposite walls in a white gallery. Graham’s intention was to inseparably link film, a medium based in visual perception, to the inter-subjective and intra-subjective experience of the bodies of the performers. The mirrored cylinder becomes an optical skin in the experience of the film viewer and is united with the skin of the performer. Due to the pressing of the cameras on the bodies and the mirrored cylinder, which stretches the appearance of the body horizontally, the body’s sensory-motor interior is turned inside out and made visible in a continuous process.<sup>[14]</sup>

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[11] Idem.

[12] Idem.

[13] Chrissie Isles, “You Are the Information”, Simpson and Iles, op. cit., p. 55.

[14] Gregor Stemmerich, “Dan Graham’s ‘Cinema’ and Film Theory”, [www.medienkunstnetz.de/themes/art\\_and\\_cinematography/graham/](http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/themes/art_and_cinematography/graham/) (Accessed March 2010).

Around the same time, many of the original counter-culture artists stopped considering television the enemy. Graham and others questioned the close relationship between political power and the corporate use of media, and looked favorably upon cable television’s public access programming slots that were now made available to artists. They understood the value in first-hand experience, as they investigated what communications systems meant, and how they could have access to a much larger audience than a traditional gallery or alternative space.

Graham liked the fact that the suburban middle class might be watching their own likeness on such popular television shows as *Charlie’s Angels*, and as they channel-changed they conceivably could come across his work. Graham wanted to focus on the process of receivership, the social contact and engagement within a family-at-home receiving a specific program, in addition to the deconstructive aspect of the broadcast studio, the place of issuance of the program.<sup>[15]</sup> For Graham, “connotative social meanings” in recent art had assumed central importance. NSCAD was willing to reflect this shift as well.<sup>[16]</sup>

Graham began *Project for a local cable TV* (1971) at NSCAD with the intention of providing feedback on divisive local issues for the local community in Halifax. The work revolved around a live exchange between two people with opposing political views, each holding a camera. Home viewers would see a split-screen with the two speakers, each portrayed by the other. The work evolved into *Local Television News Program Analysis for Public Alternative Cable* that Graham and Dara Birnbaum initiated in 1976. Unfortunately the project could not be realized in Halifax, because the artists were unable to procure two simultaneous open-access cable channels that they needed.

Both Graham and Birnbaum wanted to recognize the double-root of video – of art and television. They believed it was time to get away from the utopian technological view of McLuhan and others of the 1960s, and look at the content and structure of work shown on media from a more analytical point of view, and come to terms with its language.<sup>[17]</sup>

Interested in television systems, Graham conceived of a three-tiered project involving a commercial news program, home viewers, and cable TV. With *Production/ Reception* (1976) he sought to expose the formality of commercial broadcast television production, with its set where action takes place and which is what the public sees, and the control room, which is invisible. Graham proposed putting a wide-angle lens camera in the control room of a broadcast news program, with multiple microphones picking up voices of the production crew. This view could be seen and heard on cable channel A. Cable channel B would portray the live image of a family’s living room, with its ambient household sounds as its TV would be tuned to the broadcast news program. By turning their dials to the three live shows (broadcast news program, ca-

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[15] Brouwer, op. cit., p. 22.

[16] Peggy Gale (ed.), *Artists Talk: 1969-1977*, Halifax, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design, 2004, p. xvi.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 308.

ble channels A and B,) viewers could deconstruct broadcast TV's formality and cable TV's informality with its community style of programming. (Although most of Graham's work is spiced with a razor sharp wit and acerbic humor, its formal rigor and dry seriousness may have been too much for some cable-casters.)

The video time-delay installations and performance designs that Graham made in the early 1970s are a "modernist" notion of phenomenological immediacy, foregrounding an awareness of the presence of the viewer's own perceptual process, while at the same moment critiquing it by showing the impossibility of locating a pure present tense. (A premise of the 1960s "modernist art" was to present the present as immediacy – as pure phenomenological consciousness without the contamination of historical or other *a priori* meaning. The world could be experienced as pure presence, self-sufficient and without memory.)<sup>[18]</sup>

### Installation, etc.

Perhaps due to being uncomfortable with his own body, Graham took the position of observer and gave viewers the role of active receiver in his work. He became interested in the physicality of space and the physicality of experiencing time in relation to different aspects of the present. He combined his dry, analytical approach of *Lax/Relax* with an interest in architecture and public space, and created a series of coolly detached, sleekly designed installations with video (cameras and monitors), and mirrors and glass. In his *Viewing Room* series, Graham engages spectators within an illusory space akin to an infinity chamber with four walls clad with mirrors (a stratagem in corporate elevators.) His wall-sized mirrors have certain Renaissance characteristics, which video lacks. When you look at a mirror, you see an image that is rotated 180 degrees from you. When you stand very close to the mirror, you see a much vaster area behind yourself. Far away the whole perspective narrows down. In his viewing rooms Graham set a fixed camera, sometimes behind a two-way mirror, and presented the video image of the space on a monitor, an image that is both a mirror (but reversed) and a receiver. Whereas an image in a mirror is seen as a static instant, and place (time and place) becomes illusorily external, the world seen in video is in temporal flux and is connected subjectively to (because it can be identified with) experienced duration.<sup>[19]</sup>

An inimitable observer and cultural commentator, Dan Graham has continued to develop structures that provide insights into the evolving connections between social and personal spaces. From his earliest performances and installations involving live video, to his projects designed for cable television and to his more recent pavilions, his pioneering work has paved the way for the latest boundary-breaking practices identified as "social networks" developed by artists using the Internet. Graham

has had a strong impact on that loosely defined field of media art, which crosses borders of every kind. Today artists use the latest gear as readily as they sip water. Hackers, programmers, and tinkerer-revisionists draw on local culture and international sources, as they forge new ways of working in settings that combine art, social causes, and technology. Graham's inclusion in the exhibition "TV/ARTS/TV", signals his role in shaping media art's development over the last forty years.

Curator **Barbara London** founded The Museum of Modern Art's video exhibition programme and has guided it over a long pioneering career.

[18] Adachiara Zevi, *Dan Graham: Selected Writings and Interviews on Art Works, 1965-1995*, Roma, I Libri di Zerynthia, 1996, pp. 149-150.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 110.



CHAPTER 2

VIDEO

AND

MULTIMEDIA

INSTALLATIONS

This recent form of expression, emerging as the transformation of modern sculpture, at the crossroads of performance art, environmental art, video art, in the cultural and artistic context of the movements of the nineteen sixties and seventies, has become the place where the spectator, freed from the frontal view of the cinema screen and from projective transfer, has access contemporarily to action and vision. On show are fourteen works by artists of different generations who have imagined another kind of television, assimilated its language and imaginary, investigating "its specific properties".

# Dan Graham

## *Production/Reception*

### [Proposal]

(1976)

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FEATURE 1: PIECE FOR TWO CABLE TV CHANNELS.  
SOUND, DIRECTION CABINET, TV CAMERAS, TV MONITOR,  
MICROPHONES, LIGHTS AND VARIOUS TV EQUIPMENT.

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#### Proposal<sup>[1]</sup>

The piece utilizes two cable channels in a local environment in addition to a normal commercial broadcast. Two cable programs are to be broadcast live and at the same time as a commercial program, originating on a local station. Any locally produced commercial program can be used, for instance a local evening news broadcast.

Cable channel A broadcasts a live view originating from a single camera placed inside the control room of the studio producing the local commercial program. A wide-angle lens is used, and the camera, aimed through the glass panel at the stage, shows the entire stage set, surrounding cameras, cameramen, director, assistants, and the technicians and technical operations necessary to produce the program. Microphones placed in many locations within the stage set, behind the stage, and in the control booth are mixed together and accompany the visual image. They give a complete sense of all relationships

occurring within the enclosed space of the commercial TV studio.

Cable Channel B broadcasts a live view from a single camera from within a typical family house in the community. It shows viewers present observing the local commercial broadcast on their TV set (the views show both the television image as well as the viewers at home). The camera view is fixed. Occupants of the household may or may not be present in the room watching the TV at a given time. Sounds from all the rooms in the house, documenting all of the activities taking place there during the duration of the broadcast, are mixed together and accompany the camera view. Anyone in the local community with cable television in addition to the commercial channels may, by switching from channel to channel, see channel A's view framing the local program in the context of its process of production, or channel B's view showing the program's reception within the frame of a typical family's household, or turn to the commercial channel and be themselves receiving the particular local program in their house.<sup>[2]</sup>

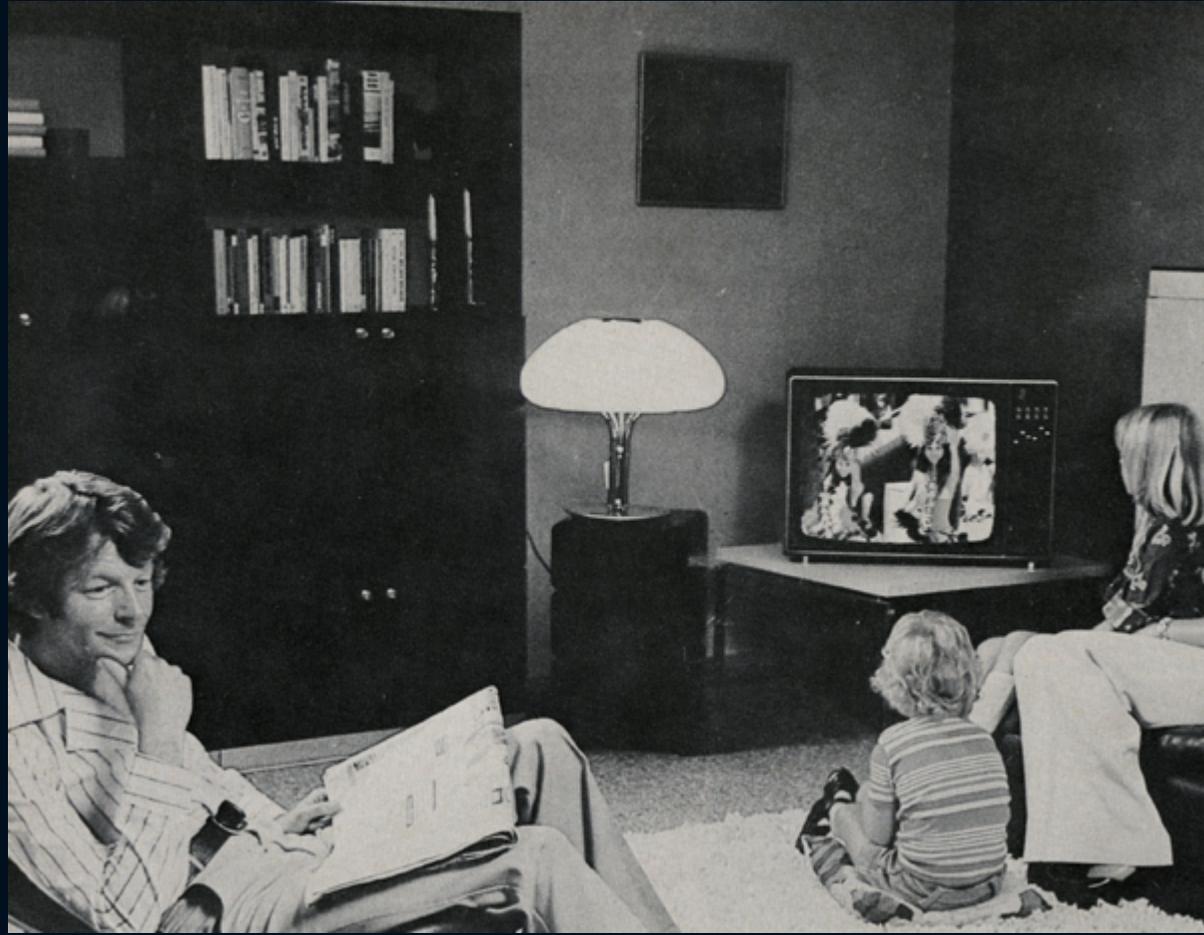
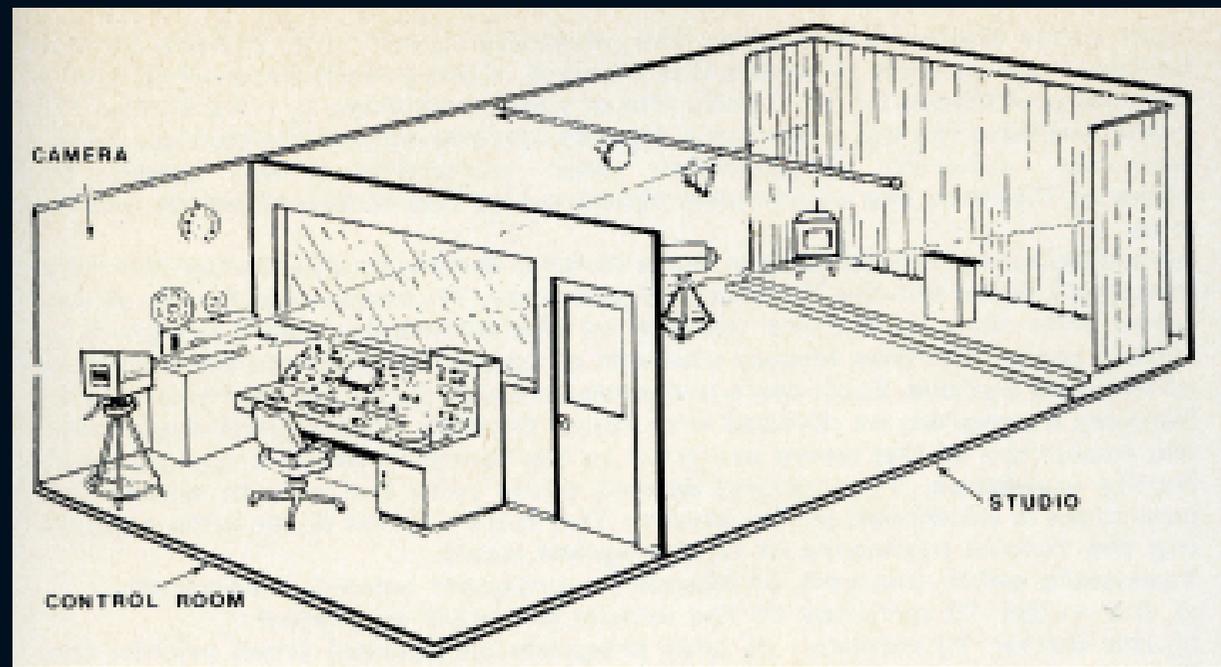
#### Video as definer of urban codes/deconstructor of urban codes

"[...] A 1976 work of mine referred to (then) open possibilities of video as a present-time, architecturally deconstructive media. It involved the use of two channels as described in Feature 1. In staging the typical local 'happy news' program, the space of the stage set is meant to represent fictionally both the interior psychological space experience of the viewer and the projection of the exterior living-room space in which typical viewers are presumed to be enclosed.

TV sells the notion of the idealized happy family. As simulated on the 'happy news'

program, it consists of the news anchor – the parent – his sons and daughters, uncles and aunts. [...] Although the news may not be good, the overall feeling projected is one of reassurance; news stories (no matter how risky) are presented tongue-in-cheek, or may be subject to wry comments or even giggles by various members of the inner circle of the news 'family' [...]. [...] A contrast is apparent between the 'representation' of this on screen – into which members of the real families are transported – and the actual reality taking place (around-outside of the space framed by the screen) in the real studio space and in the specific viewer's real home life. The TV news program is a distorting mirror of the reality of the family group watching it. Actual local news is found, not in its 'reflection' on TV, but in the home of its viewer [...]."<sup>[3]</sup>

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- [1] *Production/Reception* is a project Dan Graham never realized to this day. In agreement with Dan Graham, in "TV/ARTS/TV" we have involved two artists (Iván Marino and canecapovolto) in designing and realizing a video-installation work on the premises of Dan Graham 1976 project for *Production/Reception*.
- [2] Benjamin H. D. Buchloch (ed.), *Dan Graham, Video-Architecture-Television, Writings on Video and Video Works 1970-1978*, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design-New York University Press, New York, 1979, p. 55.
- [3] Dan Graham, *Video in relation to Architecture*, in Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer, eds., *Illuminating Video: an Essential Guide to Video Art*, Aperture, New York, 1990, pp. 170-173.



DAN GRAHAM. Production/Reception (Proposal)

## TRIBUTE TO PRODUCTION/RECEPTION (1976) BY DAN GRAHAM

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Iván Marino

*24hrs Real Time Museum Program (2010)*

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Computerized installation/Web-TV.

The work comprises the following elements: *a)* a continuous broadcast television programme (live streaming 24hrs), generated automatically by ten video cameras set up in an arts centre and in two given homes participating; *b)* an installation designed to broadcast the programme in the exhibition space where it is being produced; *c)* a website through which the programme can be broadcast and users (TV viewers) can participate from the Internet.

In the 1970s, the consolidation of cable television (CATV, Community Antenna Television) aroused the interest of certain American artists in using the new locally produced media in order to confront the dominant structure of the mass media system. In that context, Dan Graham came up with a project that he never carried through: the broadcasting of a regional newscast in an extended format that would show, at the same time and on three consecutive channels, the streaming of the edited news, the artifice of its production (the studio) and the subjective background of reception (the sphere of the familiar/uncanny [*heimlich/umheimlich*]).

Three decades later, in an age that is beginning to feel the decline of its own utopias, such as the Internet's dwindling qualities as emancipator and the users' newly developed models of obsessive neuroses, this piece/essay stages Graham's project in the context of an art show, producing a continuous broadcast television programme in which the set is the exhibition space

itself and the 'actors' are the people visiting the exhibition, the staff of the cultural institution and the very exhibits.

A set of cameras, placed in different spots of the Santa Monica Arts Centre, scan different parts the old convent, sending flows of images to an Internet server. The different stages of space representation (the inner and outermost parts, the auditorium and the toilets) are dynamically interpreted by a piece of software that organises the material according to certain categories which recur in Graham's work: the deconstruction and the redefinition of the social hierarchies as reflected in the building space, the decentralization of the information circuit (even in the museum space) and the questioning of the centripetal role of the artist in the production of his work. The video signals, first generated in the Arts Centre, then edited and distributed on the Internet by a remote server, come back to the starting point – now endowed with ubiquity – to be exhibited as an installation. The piece thus poses an exhibition loop: a space that contains a work, which in turn contains the space that embraces it.

### NOTES ON THE PIECE

#### 1. Generation/source of images and sounds

##### 1.1. Generation of video in the Arts Santa Mònica

###### 1.1. Indoors

Several cameras (daytime/night-time vision) connected to the Internet/Intranet network, arranged in the different parts of the Arts Santa Mònica:

- Surveillance area
- Offices area
- Toilets area
- Exhibitions area

###### Outdoors

- La Rambla with tourists and passers-by
- Glass entrance door to the arts centre (the border)

##### 1.2 Generation of images in the private sphere [user participation]

There are two possibilities as to the generation of images in the private sphere:

- A webcam broadcasting 24hrs a day from two specific houses
- Anonymous Internet users who can connect from their

house or computer through the installation's website (the number of connections will be programmed automatically)

#### 1. Web & Media Server/Distribution

##### 1.1. Media Server

The cameras in the arts centre and in the private spaces send their A/V signals to a Multimedia Server (Media Server protocol RTMP) that will be working online 24hrs a day on the Internet.

##### 2.2. Web Server

The information interfaces that interact with the multimedia server are placed on a web server (HTML protocol). The interfaces, designed and programmed in Object-Oriented Programming language, are there to control, edit and automatically organise the A/V content into five channels. The images are structured according to certain behaviour patterns pre-defined and programmed by the author [see Graham's criteria highlighted in the introduction].

#### 3. Installation in the arts centre/Broadcasting-Reception

Five flat screens (42") show the programmes on each of the channels coming from the Internet. Meanwhile, a main screen, suspended in space like a plane of light (such as a Fresnel-type acrylic screen, with back-projection of data) shows a palimpsest of all the images captured.

#### 4. Internet version of the piece

The programme generated in the Arts Santa Mònica can be viewed online uninterruptedly (24hrs), through the website where the different channels/interfaces are displayed. Through the website, the users can also take part of the piece via webcam.

## canecapovolto

*Inside Dan Graham's Sleep Chamber (2010)*

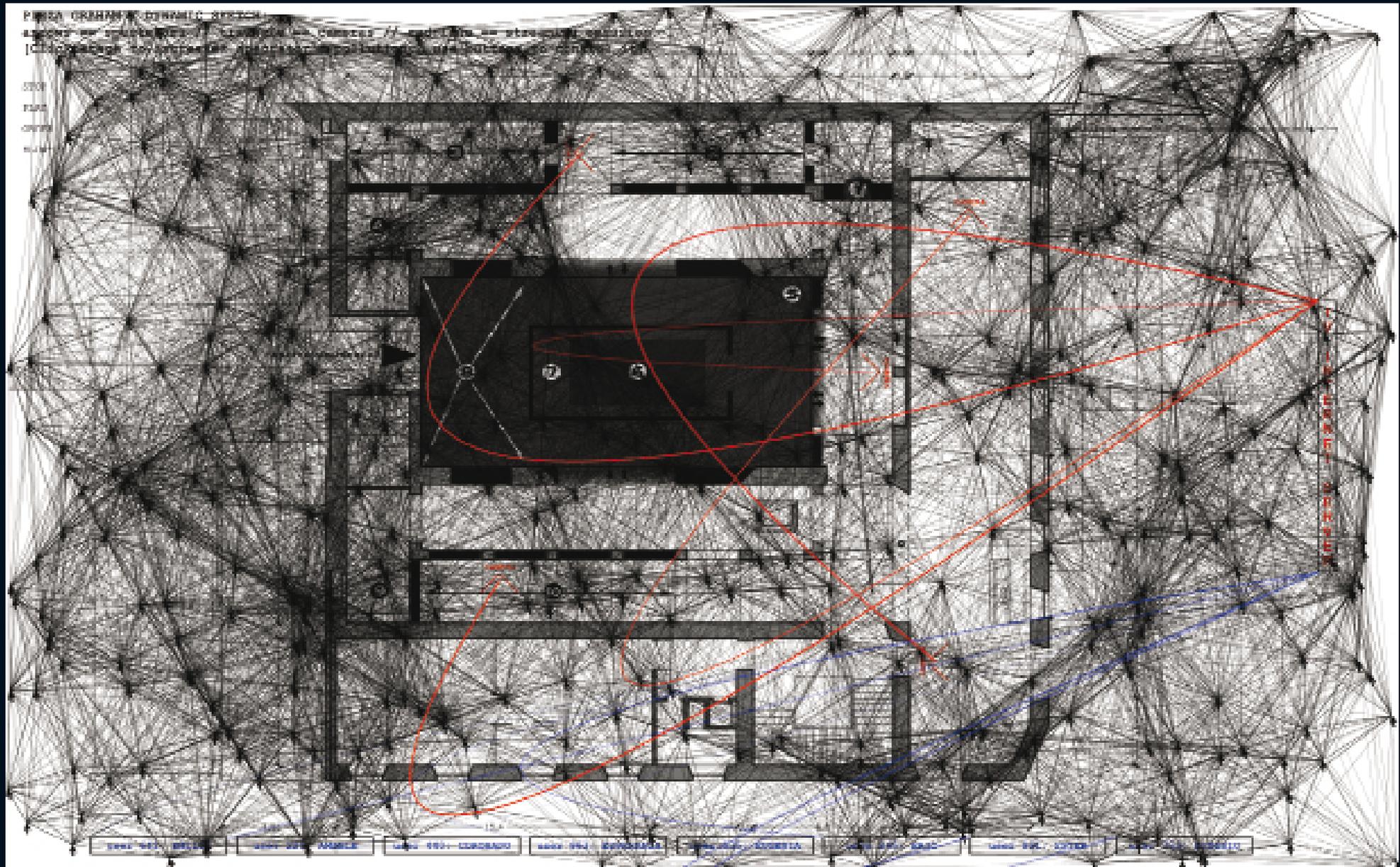
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Two monitors are installed in two positions (A and B) far enough apart so that they cannot be seen at the same time.

- Position A (master): a monitor receives the signal from a decoder and three DVD lectors; spectators can select the source using the remote control.

- Position B (slave): a monitor receives the signal of the selection made by the spectators in position A.

Dan Graham has made himself visible due to the supposed disappearance of the author. A sleep chamber: architecture of mirrors that in a constant "reflection" makes all synthesis impossible, understood as the sum of the possibilities. An experiment in accidental montage and an extreme test of the painful game of role swapping.





**Nam June Paik**  
*Magnet TV (1965-1995)*

A MODIFIED TELEVISION SET. A MAGNET BENEATH THE CATHODE-RAY TUBE MODIFIES THE IMAGE ON THE SCREEN. VISITORS ARE INVITED TO MOVE THE MAGNET AND THUS ACT OVER THE IMAGE. THE REFLECTION OF THIS APPEARS IN A MIRROR PLACED IN FRONT.

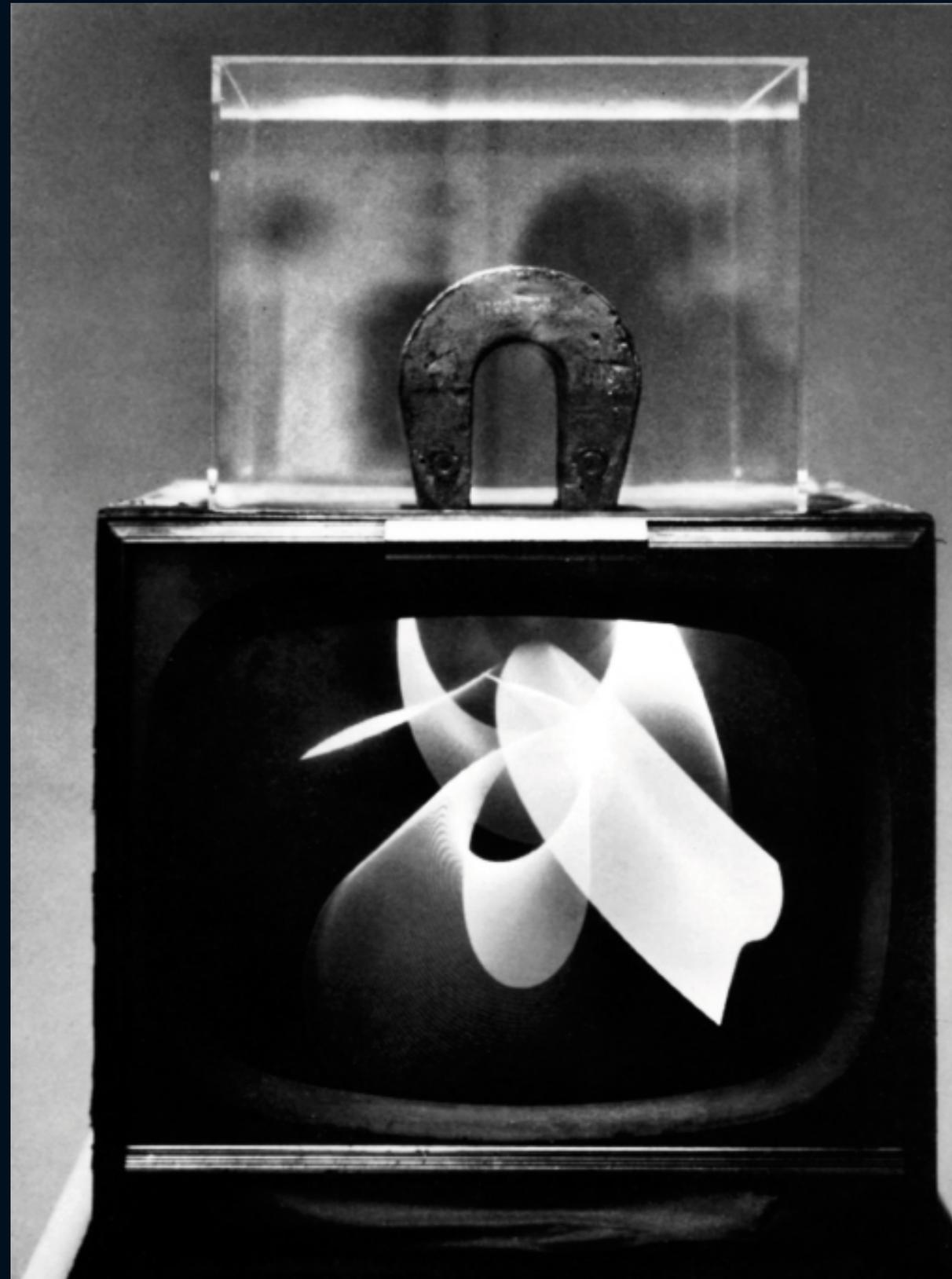
SAMSUNG 20" MONITOR, MAGNET, TEMPERATURE CONTROL DEVICE, MIRROR.

165 X 60 X 120 CM.

COURTESY: MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE LYON, LYON, N° 996.11.1.



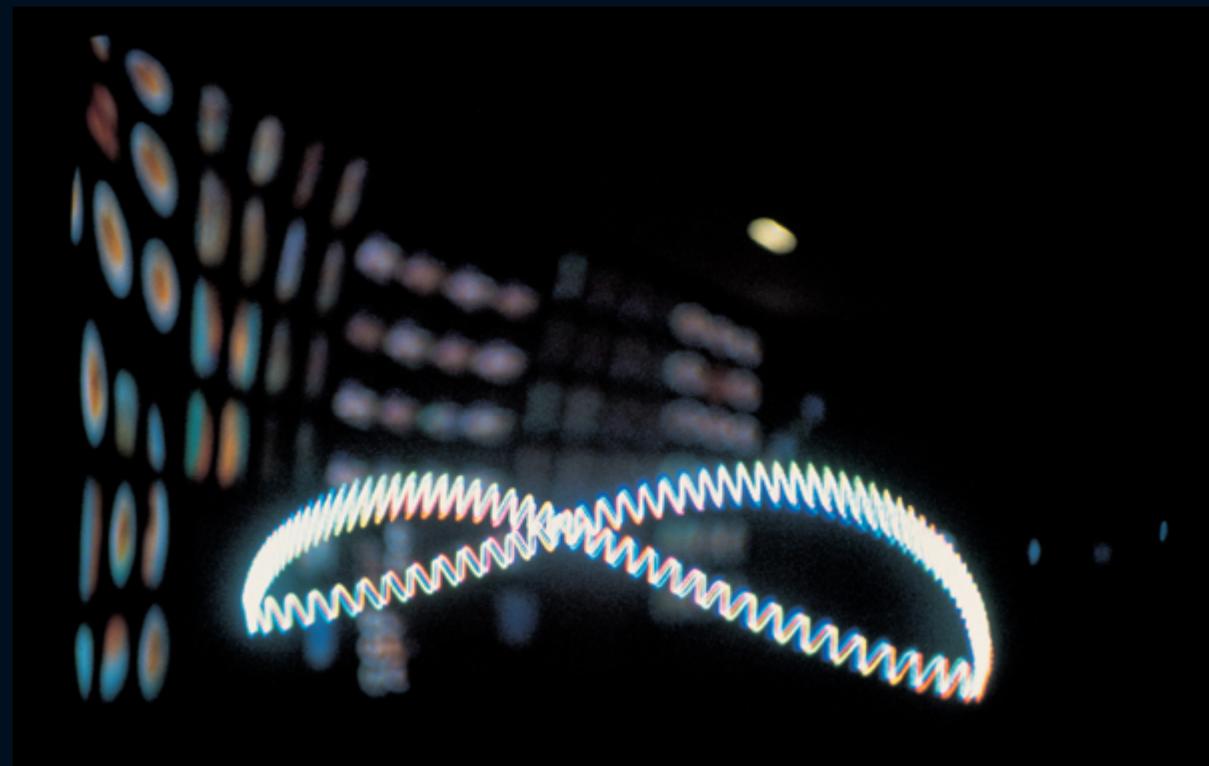
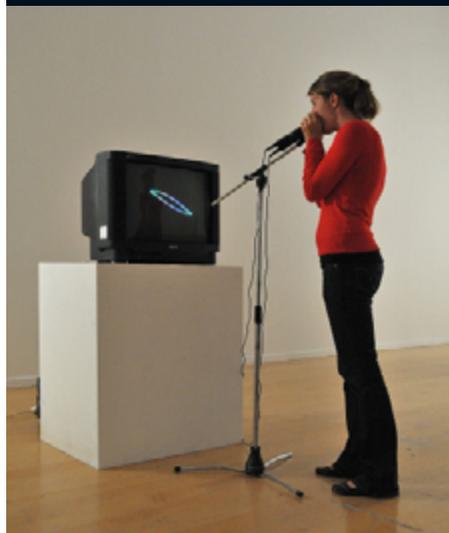
NAMJUNEPAIK. *Magnet TV*, 1995



*Magnet TV*, 1982

**Nam June Paik**  
*TV Experiment*  
*[mixed Microphones]*  
(1969-1995)

—  
A MODIFIED TELEVISION SET CONNECTED TO VARIOUS ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TO TWO MICROPHONES THAT THE SPECTATOR CAN USE TO GENERATE IMAGES ON THE SCREEN. MODIFIED TELEVISION SET: ONE SAMSUNG 25" MONITOR, TWO DELTA AMPLIFIERS, TWO SENNHEISER MICROPHONES, TWO AUDIO SIGNAL GAG808G SOUND GENERATORS, ANTONICS T3S TEMPERATURE CONTROL DEVICE, KH JETEEI MIXING DESK, TWO VENTILATORS.  
185 X 50 X 55 CM.  
COURTESY: MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE LYON, LYON, N° 996.11.2.  
—



### Electronic Video Recorder

"[...] Cafe Au Go Go – 152 Bleecker – October 4 & 11 1965 – World Theater – 9 p.m. (a trial preview to main November show at Gallery Bonino)

Through the grant of JDR 3rd fund (1965 spring term), 5 years old dream of me, the combination of Electronic Television & Video Tape Recorder is realized. It was the long long way, since I got this idea in Cologne Radio Station in 1961, when its price was as high as a half million dollars. I look back with a bitter grin of having paid 25 dollars for a fraud instruction 'Build the Video Recorder Yourself' and of the desperate struggle to make it with Shuya Abe last year in Japan. In my video-taped electro vision, not only you see your picture instantaneously and find out what kind of bad habits you have, but see yourself deformed in 12 ways, which only electronic ways can do.

\* It is the historical necessity, if there is a historical necessity in history, that a new decade of electronic television should follow the past decade of electronic music.

\*\* Variability & Indeterminism is underdeveloped in optical art as parameter Sex is underdeveloped in music.

\*\*\* As collage technique replaced oil paint, the cathode-ray tube will replace the canvass.

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

### Laser idea No. 3

Because of VVHF of LASER, we will have enough radio stations to afford Mozart-only stations, Cage-only stations, Bogart-only TV stations, underground Movie-only TV Stations etc. etc. etc. [...]."<sup>[1]</sup>

### Utopian Laser TV Station

"McLuhan is surely great, but his biggest inconsistency is that he still writes books. He became well known mainly through books, he doesn't care about the situation, and is excluded from the media for which he evangelizes.

Very very very high-frequency oscillation of laser will enable us to afford thousands of large and small TV stations. This will free us from the monopoly of a few commercial TV channels. I am video-taping the following TV programs to be telecasted March 1, 1996 A.D.

7 a.m. Chess lesson with Marcel Duchamp.

8 a.m. Meet the press. Guest: John Cage.

9 a.m. Morning gymnastic: Merce Cunningham, Caroly Brown.

10 a.m. Something Else University: collection of unnecessary and unimportant knowledge (Indian incense, Chinese cockroaches, etc.) by David Tudor.

11 a.m. The more meaningful boredom. Jackson Mac Low's 1961 film in which a standing camera focuses on a tree for many hours.

12 a.m. Noon news by Charlotte Moorman. The 1996 Nobel prizes: peace, John Cage; chemistry: inventor of the paper plate; physics: Charles De Gaulle; medicine prize, inventor of the painless abortion pill; literature, Dick Higgins or Tomas Schmit.

1 p.m. Commercials from the Fluxus Department Store. Alison Brand Atom Shoes for the carless society (this shoe is equipped with small wheels, fed by tiny atomic engines, and can travel from Harlem to Wall Street in 15 minutes, eliminating parking problems).

2 p.m. How to use my 'stereo eyes' and Buddha head, by Emmett Williams.

3 p.m. Guided tour of Kurdistan, Turkistan and Kazakhstan, by Dick Higgins.

4 p.m. Confessions of a topless cellist, by Charlotte Moorman.

5 p.m. Cantata 'Image Sacrée de Mary Bauermeister', by Nam June Paik.

6 p.m. Stock Market report: 'How to lose your money quickly' by George Maciunas.

7 p.m. Avant-garde cooking recipes for endless sex, temporary death, controllable dreams, endless unsex, endless youth, by Alison Knowles.

8 p.m. Symposium on modern Platonism: George Brecht, Robert Fillieu, Al Hansen, Jo Jones and Ray Johnson.

10 p.m. Baby care, by Diter Rot.

11 p.m. Ars Nova Quartet: Philip Corner, Malcolm Goldstein, Alvin Lucier and James Tenney.

12 p.m. Midnight editorial: Art and Politics, by Wolf Vostell, followed by movies of the 60's (Stan Brakhage, Robert Breer, Adolfas Mekas, Stan Vanderbeek).

1 a.m. Suggestion for tonight: 'Bed techniques of the Ancients', readings in Greek by Christian Wolff.

2 a.m. Goodnight poem: rude chants by Carol Bergé.

3 a.m. Good music by La Monte Young and Mahjong tournament between Ay-o, Takehisa Kosugi, Toshi Ichiyonagi and Yoko Ono.

6 a.m. Alcohol contest: all-star cast.

1965. This essay was written in 1965 and published by the Something Else Press in spring 1966.

1966. I tried to videotape the chess game of Duchamp and Cage. After a long wait the permission was obtained from Mr Cage and Duchamp. When I was ready it was too late [...]."<sup>[2]</sup>

[1] Nam June Paik, "Electronic Video Recorder", in Judson Rosebush (ed.), *Video 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik 1959-1973*, Syracuse, New York, Everson Museum of Art, 1974.

[2] Nam June Paik, "Utopian Laser TV Station", in Judson Rosebush (ed.), *Video 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik 1959-1973*, Syracuse, New York, Everson Museum of Art, 1974.

# Wolf Vostell

## *Die Winde* (1981)

MERCEDES 600 CAR FROM THE 1960S INCLUDING 21 TVS. THE CAR MEASURES CA. 220 X 600 X 110 CM. THE CARBON FIELD DIMENSIONS: 8000 X 4000 CM. THE WORK FEATURES 21 BLACK AND WHITE TV SETS INSIDE A MERCEDES 600 FROM THE SIXTIES. INSIDE THE MERCEDES IS A CAMERA WHICH FILMS THE VISITORS: THE VISITOR CAN SEE HIMSELF IN THE FRONT TV SET. THE OTHER TVS PRESENT THE REGULAR TV PROGRAM OF THE COUNTRY WHERE IT IS EXHIBITED. ONE TV IS CONNECTED WITH A TUBE TO A WOMAN DOLL WHICH IS ON THE FLOOR. DOLL AND CAR ARE SET UP ON A CARBON FIELD. THE VISITORS SHOULD WALK AROUND THE INSTALLATION AND LOOK AT THEMSELVES IN THE FRONT TV. COURTESY: MERCEDES GUARDADO OLIVENZA VOSTELL, MALPARTIDA, CÁCERES.

### Defamiliarizing a familiar object

“[...] I point out a second reality, a third reality and a fourth reality. I point out that various realities exist ... I take a TV set, the same TV set that my spectators have at home, and then I defamiliarize it, which may produce a shock ... The actual disturbance is the use of their familiar object, their spoon, their lipsticks, their status symbols, their cars, and that’s the content... The disturbance of reflection and consciousness is produced by working with familiar objects [...]”<sup>[1]</sup>

“[...] Vostell prefers impure art to any generic purity; he creates a hybrid ‘mixed-media’ art in which ‘existing objects’ coexist with painting, sculpture, and graphic art proper. He responds to the complexity

of the modern world and its objects (in works that offer the real forms of planes, trains, buses, cars, TV sets, radios, neon lights, concrete, etc.) by using a score of artistic means in open spaces and countless public presentations. [...] Everything acquires its own life, body and form, and grows in accordance with the breaths of a higher power – the creator. In *Die Winde* (1981), part of a large Fluxus Train Project, 21 TV sets are crammed into a luxurious, gray-toned, 1965 Mercedes Benz 600, with one of the screens broadcasting a picture of a viewer filmed with a video camera. On one side, a blindfolded female figure lies on a pile of coal as though in a coma, her body surrounded by transparent pipes that touch her nose and mouth, and force her to breathe in either oxygen or gas, directly from the television and the car. Though real, the vision can’t be any more terrifying. There is no need to ‘jump’ or distort the picture, or to mishandle the set in a thousand ways, to feel that we are on the edge of an abyss and that the slightest breeze can send us spiraling down into the depths of hell and absolute madness [...]”<sup>[2]</sup>

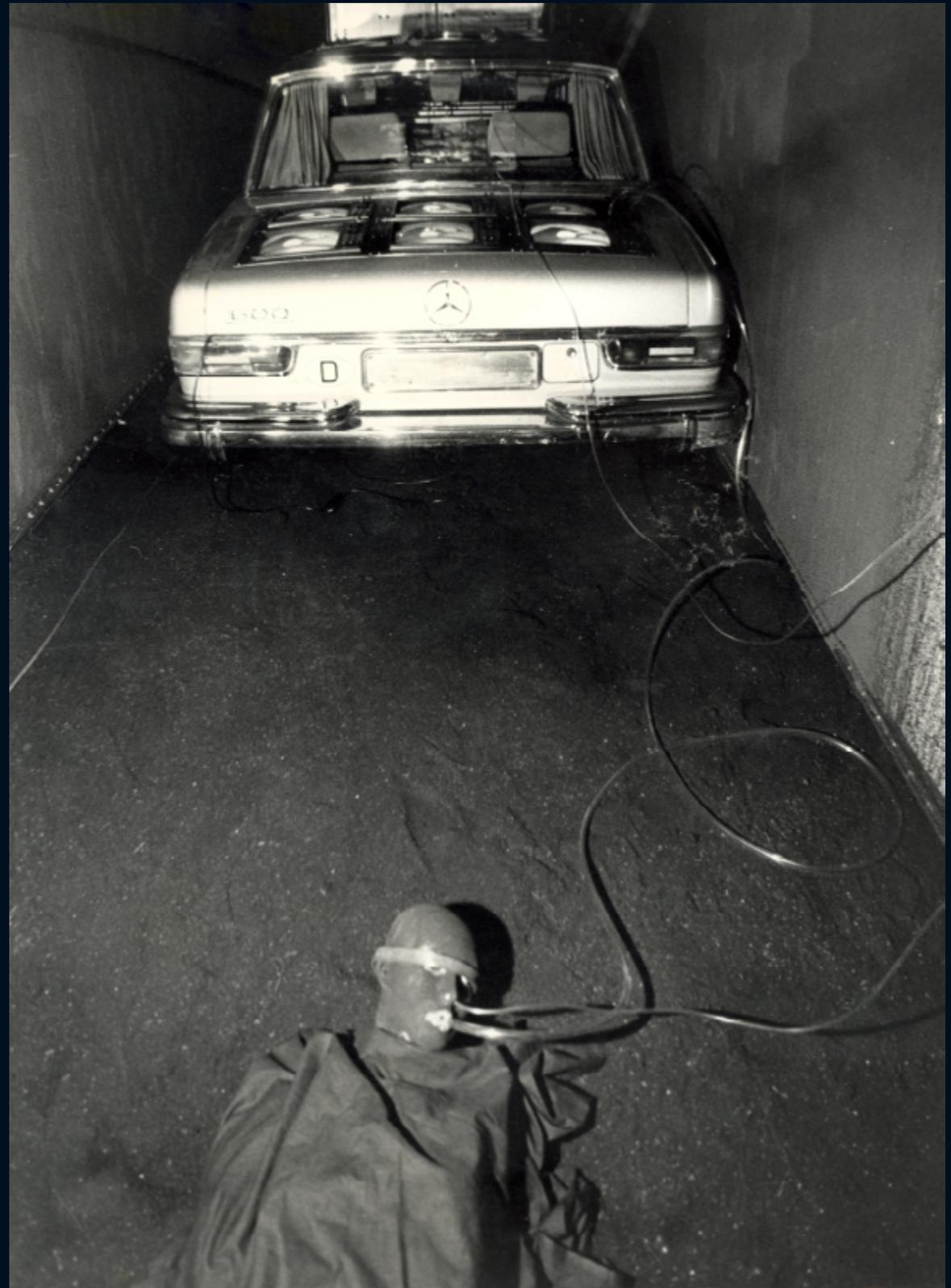
### The ambivalent potential of televisual communications

“[...] For most West German artists working with or addressing the role of television in the 1960s, the machine’s window itself embodied power and aggression, whose tyrannical aspects had to be challenged by aesthetic practice. Informed by intellectual traditions that favored the immediacy of communal dialogue over the disseminative functions of mass communication, this early work about television by and large demonized the apparatus as a tool of deception, manipulation, alienation, and social fragmentation. Unlike

Paik, whose aim in 1963 was to explore alternative models of televisual pleasure, the early installations of Vostell, *Uecker* and *Kahlen*, were intended as anti-television. For them, no good could be discovered in disseminative tools of communications or electronic windows opening views onto the alterity of self and other. It was only toward the end of the decade and then in the 1970s that Paik’s attempt at reorganizing rather than rebuffing television found resonance among West German artists. In particular, the work of Vostell, whose installations of the early 1960s are often falsely comparable to Paik’s own initiatives, now embraced television as a medium to address the role of corporeal experience and social mobility in post-war society and to envision new kinds of mediated pleasures and perceptions. Vostell’s 1970 *Entwurf für ein Drive-in Museum* [Design for a Drive-In Museum] showed a freeway intersection with two enormous television sets placed at its center with numerous arrows pointing toward their screens. It anticipated his 1981 *Die Winde* (The Wind), a 1965 Mercedes station wagon equipped with a video camera and twenty-one embedded television monitors to display

images while the car was being driven around West Germany. In these and other drawings television was no longer seen and physically attacked as a demonic eye homogenizing consumers, watching over minds, and disciplining senses. Instead, like Paik’s prophetic ambitions in Wuppertal in 1963, television was now explored as *the a priori* of both visual perception and artistic practice in a world obsessed with movement, progress, amnesia and travel. Recalling Paik’s earlier explorations, Vostell’s work of the late 1960s and 1970s suggested that television was symptomatic of the unsettled state of post-war German society while acknowledging the ambivalent potential of televisual communications [...]”<sup>[3]</sup>

- [1] Wolf Vostell, “Art is Life Life is Art”, in Pablo J. Rico, Rafael Vostell (eds.), *Automobile*, Fine Art Rafael Vostell, 2000, p. 339.
- [2] José Antonio Agúndez García, *Vostell television*, Poznan, Galeria Miejska Arsenal, 2002, p. 10 and 22.
- [3] Lutz Koepnick, *Framing Attention: Windows on Modern German Culture*, John Hopkins University Press, 2007, p. 227.



WOLF VOSTELL *Die Winde*

# Wolf Vostell

## Radar Alarm (1969)

ONE BICYCLE, ONE TV, ONE SET OF ALARMS AND ONE PEDESTAL.  
DIMENSIONS OF PEDESTAL (100 X 150 CM).  
THIS ART-WORK IS SET UP ON THE PEDESTAL ON THE FLOOR.  
COURTESY: MERCEDES GUARDADO OLIVENZA VOSTELL, MALPARTIDA, CÁCERES.

*Radar Alarm* consists of a bicycle, a television and a bag of sirens. The television set is mounted on a carrier. It is just a noise to see / hear. The sirens in the net bag are hanging on the steering wheel and are connected to a footswitch. The visitor can turn the foot switch on and off by activating the footswitch to sound the sirens.

“Marcel Duchamp has declared readymade objects as art, & the futurists declared noises as art – it is an important characteristic of my efforts & those of my colleagues to declare as art the total event, comprising noise/object/movement/color/& psychology – a merging of elements, so that life (man) can be art.”<sup>[1]</sup>

“[...] From *dé-coll/age* comes the idea of watching TV programs as an infinite superimposition of pictures. Interfering with a working TV set causing the picture to flash and flutter, or distorting the emission,

makes us realize that underneath the electronic picture lies another reality and yet another and so on – into infinity. Vostell’s concept of *dé-coll/age*, when applied to the picture, shows us that this cannot be done any better, and that multiplied movement is characteristic of electronic pictures.”<sup>[2]</sup>

“[...] The roots of Dadaism, focused on rediscovering simple objects, strongly marked Fluxus thought, and were extremely apparent in many of Vostell’s works. From the start, he treated noise as a work of art in itself, and since it was also a vehicle of information, as an expression of beauty as well. The mixing of picture and sound was the key means of expression in his environments, such as in *E.d.H.R (Elektronischer dé-coll/age Happening Raum)*, which he prepared for the Nuremberg Museum [...]. This work presented a space in which Vostell, dissatisfied with picture disturbance on six TV screens, created a large object by placing monitors on the floor, covered with sheets of glass which reflected and weakened the picture on the screens. The new forms, which appeared in place of the TV picture, were more pliable and yielding to ‘configuration’ by the artist or, for that matter, to any other person. Alongside each TV set, various objects were also attached, thus creating a kind of overall sculptural form. [...] Vostell was pleased with these aggressive sound effects; they aroused viewers from their despondent lethargy in front of the monitor. The same effects were used in *Radar Alarm*, a sculptural work in which a bicycle served as the base for a TV set, and 40 alarm-devices, hidden in a sack, were set off whenever a viewer neared the sculpture. Wailing sirens distorted the picture on the monitor and drew attention to the alarmed public in pictures streaming from the monitor [...]”<sup>[3]</sup>

- [1] Wolf Vostell, quoted in John Hanhardt, *Dé-collage/ Collage*, in Doug Hall, Sally Jo Fifer (eds.), *Illuminating Video: an Essential Guide to Video Art*, Aperture/ BAVC, 1990, p 74.
- [2] Jean-Paul Fargier, in José Antonio Agúndez García (ed.), *Vostell and Television*, Poznan, Galeria Miejska Arsenal, 2002, p. 19.
- [3] José Antonio Agúndez García (ed.), *Vostell and Television*, Poznan, Galeria Miejska Arsenal, 2002, pp. 16-17.



WOLF VOSTELL *Radar Alarm*

# Antoni Muntadas

## Confrontations TV

(1973-1974)

3 VIDEOTAPES, SOUND.  
COURTESY: FUNDAÇÃO DE SERRALVES, MUSEU DE ARTE  
CONTEMPORÂNEA, PORTO.

A series of works based on the collection and confrontation of different kinds of information: from television, the streets, the newspapers. The use of video and photography in many-faceted formats of simultaneous comparison.<sup>[1]</sup>

- The observation and comparison of everyday life in different streets of New York.  
- The confrontation of different television broadcasts on the same day at the same time: news and entertainment programmes, and the programmes of different countries on the same day at the same time.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Dichotomies

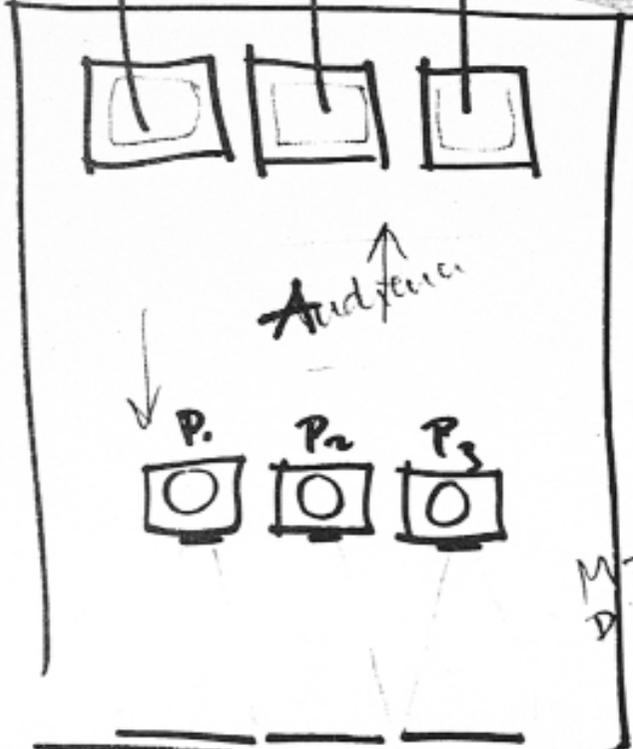
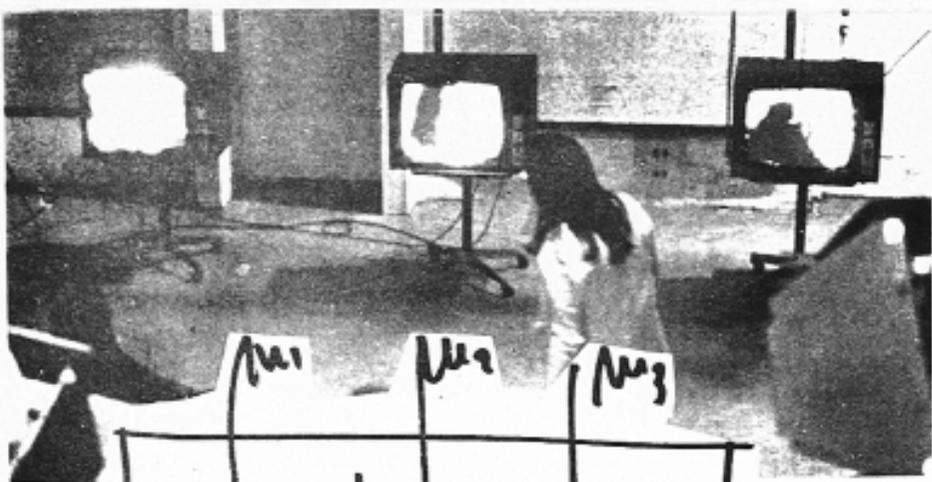
"[...] Recently, Muntadas restored and again presented a work crucial to the definitive direction his work was to take from 1974. In March of that year he presented *Confrontations* (at Automation House, New York), actually a series of different works based chiefly on the compilation and confrontation of different sorts of information: from television, the newspapers and

the street as an urban social space. What Muntadas has kept and taken from this project is comparison using many-faceted formats – three video screens and three slide sequences facing them – of segments of simultaneous television programmes on different channels (and their coincidences with regard to news content or generic formats), contrasting, in turn, with photographic views taken in different streets (and their diverse atmosphere and human hustle and bustle). By the way, the fact that the retrieval of such a remote (and in some ways embryonic) piece should still hold any interest beyond the archaeological, says a great deal about the tenacious activity of Muntadas.

This principle of *confrontation*, stated by the title of the work and which results in the sum and the simultaneous contrasting of different sources of image/information, is found again and again in successive works. Indeed, all his activity may be summed up through a repertoire of terms in confrontation, which are related and opposed to one another, making up the dualities, the dichotomies, the apparently binary language found at the heart of so many of his works and commentaries: art/life, mental/physical, private/public, visible/invisible, emission/reception, subjectivity/objectivity, criticism/alternatives ... Although such dualities should be understood not so much as opposing and antonymous extremes but insofar as they formulate dialectics, intersections, hiatuses, counterpoints, polarities of viewpoints and relationships that change or overlap.<sup>[3]</sup> 'I'm interested in the distance between two extremes. I want the audience to see the whole spectrum and to place themselves in relation to it. I certainly think that everything has different perspectives. This can be seen in my tapes, where I use sev-

eral split screens and, therefore, different points of view' [...]."<sup>[4]</sup>

- [1] History exhibition: 1974, *Confrontations*. Installation, video and slides. Automation House, New York, 1999: *Circa 68*. Fundação de Serralves, Porto [cat.].
- [2] Eugeni Bonet, *Muntadas*, Fundación La Caixa-Mediateca: [www.mediatecaonline.net/mediatecaonline/SfichaRecursos](http://www.mediatecaonline.net/mediatecaonline/SfichaRecursos)
- [3] Eugeni Bonet, "Muntadas: seguimiento del proyecto", in *Muntadas, Con/Textos, Una antología crítica*, Buenos Aires, Sirmug/Cátedra La Ferla (UBA), 2002, p. 82.
- [4] Antoni Muntadas, cit. in Eugeni Bonet, op. cit., p. 82.



# Antoni Muntadas

## *Personal/Public* (1981)

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VIDEO INSTALLATION.  
SURFACE AREA OF THE ROOM A MINIMUM OF 5 M LONG.  
WHITE WALLS 2.5 M HIGH X 3 M WIDE WITH 2 TV MONITORS EMBEDDED.  
2 IDENTICAL TV MONITORS MEASURING APPROXIMATELY 60 CM DIAGONALLY.  
1 WOODEN CHAIR, BROWN OR INDUSTRIAL GREEN IN COLOR, FIXED TO THE GROUND.  
1 WALL CLOCK, ROUND AND METALLIC.  
1 PAGE-A-DAY 2002 CALENDAR.  
LETTERING IN LETRASET (3-4 CM HIGH) WITH THE WORDS BROADCASTED/RECEPTION OVER EACH PROJECTION.  
1 CONNECTION TO CABLE TV AND ANOTHER CLOSED CIRCUIT.  
THE SOUND OF THE TVS.  
SPOTLIGHT FOCUSING ON THE CHAIR.  
VARIABLE DIMENSIONS.  
COURTESY: ARTIST COLLECTION.  
EDITION COPY 2/3.

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Two monitors, a calendar and a wall clock between them, and a single chair are the elements in this sober installation. A device that exhibits “the crossroads where personal information becomes public through the intervention of the media (in this case, the TV) and where public information becomes personal through the interpretation of the individual. One of the screens was tuned to a random television channel; the other showed the viewer his/her own image by means of a hidden closed-circuit camera.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### Media Landscape

I take “media landscape” to mean the one

that stems from the press and the television, from the communications system. We saw it clearly enough with the Gulf War; it was like two wars: the war really taking place on the ground was a “landscape”, while the one we were seeing on television was another war, fought by the media. This forms part of the “media landscape”. It is a mechanism of the communications system, based on information and disinformation, capable in turn of establishing other kinds of systems. [...] The media that appear as the neutral bearers of pure discourse are manipulated by invisible systems. The possession of power depends on the “seduction of the masses”. Multiple media strategies, subliminal techniques, etc., are the “perfumes and flowers” of this seduction. Power imposes itself through media campaigns, posters, radio and television, not so much with the gun as with sound and images. [...] Between the two landscapes there is a breakdown of reality into “natural” and “artificial” landscape. These days, in a certain sense, both are real. That which is controlled and simulated by the media is a landscape that for many is reality itself.<sup>[2]</sup>

### What lies in between the two extremes

“[...] *Muntadas*: I started to work from what I call dichotomies of relationships, for example objective/subjective, public/private, indoor/outdoor. These extremes provide me with a structure. They are like sets of stereotypes, but I am interested in what lies in between the two extremes. I am interested in between, in behind, in what is hidden. What is private or public is defined by a context or specific situation. I dealt with this in several works: the *Personal/Public Information* show in 1979 at the Vancouver Art Gallery, *Personal/Public* show in 1980 at the Kitchen in New York

and more recently works like *The Board Room* (1987), *Stadium* (1989) and *Home, Where is Home?* (1990). All these pieces have a kind of paradox in them, even a contradiction in terms of use. For example a boardroom is (supposed to be a public place) where people get together to make decisions, but at the same time it is very private, even mysterious. The same is true for a stadium – it is a very public place, but because every individual experiences it differently it is also private. The idea is that it assembles great crowds of people for mass events but it is important that every individual in a stadium lives his own personal experiences. When I talk about a paradox, it is because the subject has two sides: a stadium is a place where the audience is a consumer but it also a product. The same goes for home, it is a place to live, to be protected, to rest: it is a shelter, but in another way. Through mass-media processing, it becomes a place to house consumer devices: TV set, fridge ... Now, instead of a stadium we can talk about a super-stadium. The audience at the stadium is only part of the set for the camera, because the event is almost always broadcasted to a larger audience viewing in their homes. Before, there was a maximum of 100,000 people watching a game or a concert, or hearing a politician speak. Now, all that is a set for the satellites and TV monitors, because you have hundreds of thousands, millions, of viewers watching at home. The idea of public and private is linked to context, to how it is perceived, how the media portrays it, how they diffuse the information [...]”<sup>[3]</sup>

- 
- [1] Places where it was exhibited: Kitchen, New York 1981; And/Or, Seattle, 1981; Centro José Guerrero, Granada, 2008. Related works: This work should be related to *Broadcasted-Reception*, *Two Landscapes* and *Action-Situation-Today*.
  - [2] Gianfranco Mantegna, “Il neo-flâneur. Intervista a Antoni Muntadas”, in Valentina Valentini (ed.), *Dissensi, fra film video televisione*, Palermo, Sellerio, 1991, p. 86-88.
  - [3] Nena Dimitrijevic, “Muntadas. Journey through the stations of power” in *Muntadas, Intervenções: a propósito do público e do privado*, Fundação de Serralves, 1992, pp. 46-48.

The Kitchen Center for Video and Music  
**press release**

**Muntadas**

Personal / Public  
 Video Installation  
 The Gallery, April  
 Tuesday 1-6pm

Three Videotapes  
 Video Viewing Room  
 April 1-6, 1-6pm

In April, The Kitchen presents the work of Spanish artist Antoni Muntadas. April is a video installation entitled *Personal/Public*, which will be featured in The Gallery. April 1-26, the Video Viewing Room will include three recent videotapes: *Utopia* (12, 9, 27) and *Between the Lines* (shows on odd-numbered days) and *Civ. Religion/TV: About TV* (shows on even-numbered days).

Muntadas works with communication systems and their social implications, the general area that he calls "media landscape." The media landscape is an invisible and complex composed of media-produced images and the mechanisms and effects of media, both visible and invisible. Muntadas notes that his efforts are aimed at the development of a "critical subjectivity." He sees the alternatives of subjective/objective, personal/public and visible/invisible as functions of this development.

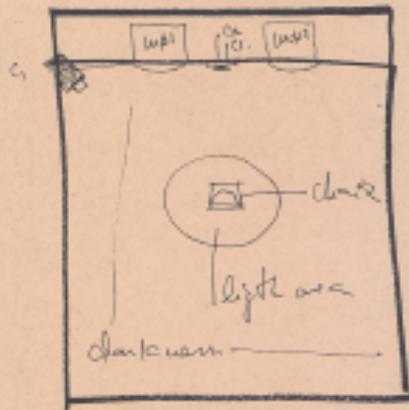
**GALLERY—April** *Personal/Public* focuses on the intersection where personal information is rendered public by the media and paid to take media images produced by individual interpretation. The installation of TV monitors, the camera and simulated viewing situation is designed to make this intersection visible.

**VIDEO VIEWING ROOM—April 1-26** Three videotapes. *Utopia* (12, 9, 27) is an 18-minute video tape produced for Belgian TV. It is a consideration of the media's handling of information in a multi-lingual country (French, English, Flemish and German). *TV vs. VS: Between the Lines* (1979), a 22-minute video tape, deals with the mental and physical information of television (programs, selection decisions, time schedules, editing, etc.) and specifically how facts (in this case the "news") are reported. *Civ. Religion/About TV* (1979), a 58-minute color/black and white tape, questions TV's structure of information: how people read, screen and interpret images, how TV's mechanism function and its broader information. Examples from everyday television programs and episodes of TV watches are combined with reflections on the relation of a medium.

Muntadas' work invites us to look into the potential of television and consideration of the internal/external, visible/invisible influence of television in our daily lives.

484 Broome Street between West Broadway and Wooster, New York City

*PERSONAL*



*equipment*  
 }  $\theta_1$  = camera ←  
 }  $u_1$  = closed circuit  
  
 $u_2$  = broadcast T.V.  
 cl = office clock  
 ca = calendar



# Dara Birnbaum

## Hostage (1994)

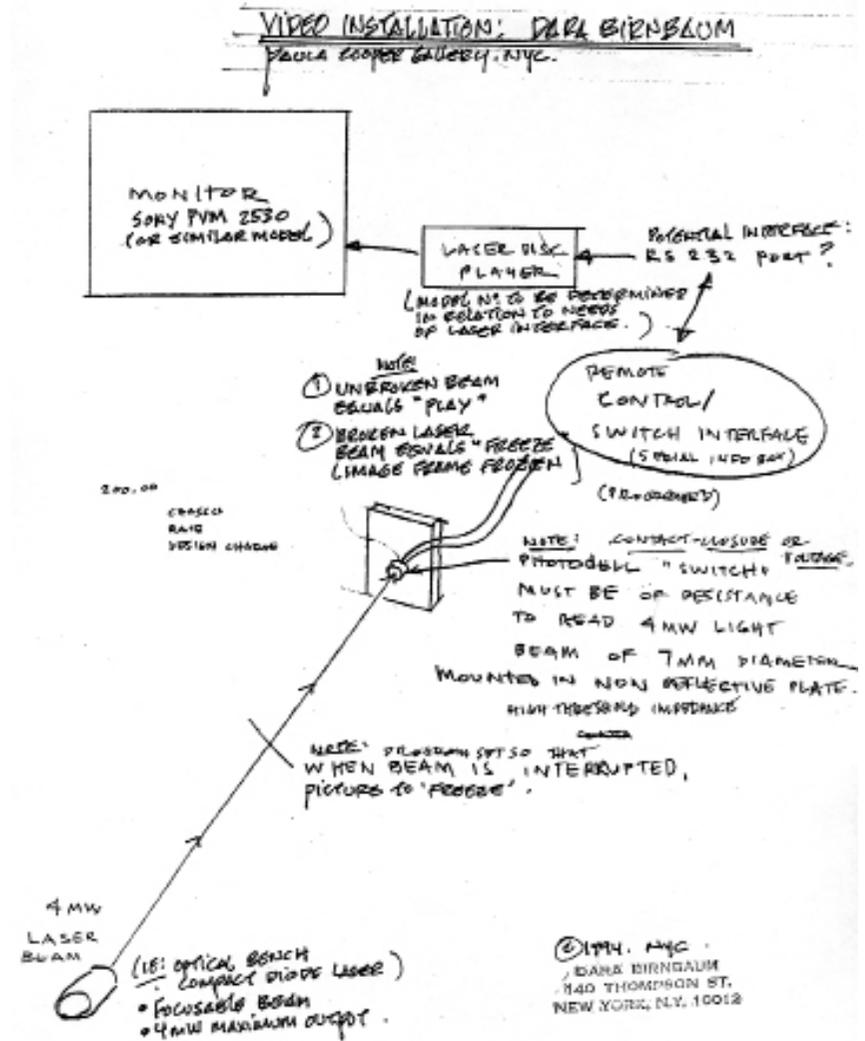
SIX-CHANNEL COLOR VIDEO WITH FIVE STEREO-CHANNELS, AUDIO, INTERACTIVE LASER, CUSTOM-DESIGNED MOUNTS, PLEXIGLAS SHIELDS.<sup>101</sup>  
COURTESY: MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK.

*Hostage* is a six-channel video and laser installation. Five of the channels are press coverage of the events surrounding the 1977 Red Army Faction kidnapping of German industrialist Hanns Martin Schleyer, and the resultant “suicides” of three jailed Baader-Meinhof members. Each monitor is paired with a “target shield”. The sixth channel focuses on the response of the mass media in the United States to these events. The flow of images on this channel can be affected by the viewer’s interaction with a targeted laser beam, which, when interrupted, freezes the image on the screen. Birnbaum considers the influence of mass-media communications as a potential form of terrorism, with society and media each being held hostage by the other. For Birnbaum, Baudrillard’s *Fatale Strategies* holds true – the hostage is beyond the state of alienation and in a state of radical emergency and virtual extermination.

### The viewer as hostage

“On the four monitors suspended from

the ceiling, images of archive television footage of events from the period of the kidnapping are simultaneously transmitted: images montaged and repeated by Birnbaum to construct a perceptible chaos from the invisible order of the ubiquitousness of a contemporary field of vision. At the far end of the gallery, the video screen mounted on the wall featured an interview with Schleyer videotaped through the eye of the clandestine camera of the kidnappers, and rebroadcast on German television at the time of the kidnapping to prove Schleyer was still alive. Directly opposite this video, the sixth monitor bombarded the viewer with fast cutting clips in which text from various American newspaper reports on the hostage-taking crisis and the Red Army Faction is superimposed upon a visual background of archival footage from the other monitors. When the viewer passed in front of the laser beam that connected the two monitors, the image and text on the news-gathering monitor was frozen in time and space for as long as the viewer remained in the line of the laser’s light. Fragmented, disjointed, the video installation positioned the viewer in a place where all images were collapsed into simultaneous time. The viewer, as much as the Germans at the time of the kidnapping, is held hostage to an image machine: as if the interface of a global feedback system had gone awry, no longer assuring control but producing chaos. Here, interactivity was not the allure of integration, but the shock of finding oneself a target of the nervous system. For it is only when caught in the ‘light’ of the laser beam that historical time was momentarily frozen. In turn, the role of the viewer as a media target was mirrored by the plexiglas silhouettes of a firing-range target that were



Sketch

suspended in front of each ceiling monitor. Resembling the shell of a body, these targets became metaphorical interfaces between body and screen, explicitly linking the omnipotence of technology to state control. [...] While only the most determined viewer could have pieced together the disparate data of the six monitors into a coherent narrative, a viewing of Birnbaum’s installation channel by channel makes explicit

the many guises in which the State deploys the ubiquitousness of a contemporary field of vision. For the German state, the screen not only functions to transmit information, but to withhold it. It becomes a mask to black out information, a tool of negotiating with the kidnappers, a broadcast site for the video sent by the kidnappers of Schleyer. [...] On the other hand, for the members of the Baader Meinhof group, the interface

of the screen becomes a site of absence, a space in which only the guards at Stammheim prison are witness to a continual video surveillance. As a result, the subsequent 'suicides' of the Baader Meinhof members while in prison become a discursive site of media theatre, in which the reports on the hostage-taking crisis circulating in the printed medium construct a narrative that fills in the image gaps of television.

In Birnbaum's archival reworking of this narrative, she uncovers the use of gender identity by the mass media as a division between monstrosity and violence. Interspersed throughout the more factual reports on the hostage taking, news clips from American sources on the sixth monitor construct a psychology of West German 'terrorism' based upon women's participation in the Red Army Faction. [...] Birnbaum points in *Hostage* to the coercive mechanisms of image control that underlie an image proliferation. And as a sorcerer, Birnbaum also uses *Hostage* to re-invest the images of history with meaning. Reordering images through the simulation of an historical moment, Birnbaum mimics the constant movement of the nervous system to fracture the ubiquitousness of a contemporary field of vision into a 'profane illumination' of discordance. In so doing, Birnbaum points to the potential of re-enchanting history through the image phantasms that lurk beneath the smooth surface of the simulacrum: embracing the strategy of a roving reporter who sifts through image banks to discover the ghosts of ideology that haunt the interfaces of a global feedback system. [...] [...] As such, Birnbaum's artistic interventions upon the smooth space of the simulacrum become highly political in intent. [...] For, to paraphrase Mark Weisner's claim

that the 'most profound technologies are those that disappear', the most profound ideologies are also those that disappear through technology's invisible economies of domination. To challenge these invisible economies of domination as Birnbaum does in her work is to locate within the simulacrum not only a site of contestation but resistance: excavating from the ubiquitousness of a contemporary field of vision the power copies have to interrogate an ordered hierarchy of representation, to undermine the ideological underpinnings of a global nervous system [...].<sup>[2]</sup>

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- [1] This was the original description from the work as it first appeared in 1994 at the Paula Cooper Gallery, NYC. Paula Cooper helped commission this version of the work (complete with 6 channels and the inter-active laser beam.) An earlier version, with only five-channels and not inter-active was commissioned by the Offenes Kulturhaus, Linz, Austria.
- [2] Dot Tuer, "Mirrors and Mimesis: An Examination of the Strategies of Image Appropriation and Repetition in the Work of Dara Birnbaum", *Paradoxa*, no 3, online version, May 1997.





## Gary Hill *In Situ* (1986)

MIXED MEDIA INSTALLATION.  
MODIFIED EASY CHAIR, MODIFIED 13" COLOR MONITOR  
(CATHODE-RAY TUBE REMOVED FROM CHASSIS) WITHIN  
20-INCH MONITOR FRAME/ENCLOSURE, FIVE PAINTED  
MDF BOARD CONSTRUCTIONS WITH SIX ELECTRIC FANS,  
MOTORIZED PAPER FEEDER, PHOTOCOPIED PAPER, TWO  
SPEAKERS, WOOD PLATFORM, GRAY RIDGED CARPET,  
CONTROLLING ELECTRONICS, ONE DVD PLAYER AND ONE  
DVD (COLOR, MONO SOUND).  
DIMENSIONS: RELATIVE TO PLATFORM: 12 X 16 FT. (3.66 X  
4.88 M).  
EDITION OF TWO AND ONE ARTIST'S PROOF. COURTESY:  
ARTIST COLLECTION AND DONALD YOUNG GALLERY,  
SEATTLE.

The primary components of this installation are positioned on a plywood platform routed for cabling and covered with a ridged medium-gray carpet. A "shrunken" television sits inside the frame of a larger television's frame/enclosure. A modified easy chair with a cushion slightly smaller than it should be mirrors the condition of the television it faces. Four electric fans, positioned in the corners of the raised floor and angled towards the center of the space, intermittently turn on and off, providing a mix of air currents directed at a motorized paper-feeder mounted on the ceiling. The paper-feeder ejects a family of images related to what is being seen on the television. The images consist of off-air footage centered on "Irangate" (1986) and

how that information seems to recede and lose significance over time. These images are intercut with others of the artist eating, reading, and swimming that refer to Maurice Blanchot's novel *Thomas the Obscure*. Two additional fans are mounted opposite one another in a triangular base which is placed between the chair and the television. The television itself is also controlled to turn on and off at designated times. All the automation is programmed in relation to what is taking place on the television.

### 'He knew the ocean well'

"[...] What does the implied spectator, to whom Gary Hill offers a comfortable chair, see in the tape that appears and disappears, in short sequences, on the single monitor of *In Situ*? First, the ocean. Then the eyes of the man we'll call the hero: the left eye and the right eye, in turn, in extreme close-up, wide open, yet twice closing violently, too violently, as if to nullify an intolerable sight that must nonetheless be tolerated. A zoom-in pictures a fragment of a page from *Thomas the Obscure*, the words 'staring into the...' can be made out. Then again, the ocean, the sky. And close-ups of the hero's forehead and his feverish hands, which are suddenly interrupted by an inaudible voice on the soundtrack playing backward.

This sound introduces the tape's second series of images: television images, on the Irangate crisis, the sale of arms to the Contras, we see Reagan, and so on. Twice these images intertwine with those of the first series: first in a long series of double exposures and dissolves; then in parallel editing (or the two great implication principles of any narrative told in images). In between these two interventions of television, the hero, seated at a table, eats while reading

*Thomas the Obscure*. And twice he collapses in his chair and falls back. The first time he begins reading again while lying on the floor. But the second time he shoots back up as if surfacing from an underwater dive and then swims with difficulty for a long, long time (this is when the parallel editing is used).

It's obviously very simple, too simple, to see in this editing a criticism of information, of televised disinformation, skilfully set up by the elements of the general apparatus. In this room that reproduces the proportion of the monitor; the carpet (a stylish gray) is lined with stripes that bring to mind the lines of the video frame, and the armchair (covered in gray velour) is so comfortable that its occupant slides naturally toward the TV set, lets himself glide into the image. To underline this, Hill thought of modifying the monitor and the armchair in the same way, by reducing the size of the cushion in the armchair and by placing the monitor in a frame that exceeds it in exact proportion. From this comes the reinforced effect of the TV images themselves, most often reduced to a partial frame in the center of the image. What's more, they move backward in this frame, with the same movement that makes Blanchot's reader fall back. It is done so thoroughly that when the hero swims, and seems about to drown, he swims in information: it is information that lures and then smothers him. But it is also (this is where the criticism is really interesting, that is, intelligent) Blanchot's text that crosses, in which he swims and floats.<sup>[1]</sup>

### *My first encounter with Blanchot's Thomas the Obscure*

"[...] The relationship to performance, at least in the way we are speaking about it

now, shifts in an interesting way with a work like *In Situ* (1986). Rather than setting up a frame/context in which I or someone else goes through a process, each viewer walks into a system performance: a single monitor turns on and off revealing the collapse of the raster; electric fans in all four corners of the room also go on and off stirring up the air, into which printed copies of images from the screen are ejected down from the ceiling on and around a chair. This chair obviously occupies the viewing position. It has a shrunken cushion doubling the 'shrunken' cathode-ray tube that looks to be falling from its larger frame. The work physically presents ruptures between public media and private space – my first encounter with Blanchot's *Thomas the Obscure*. This was the precursor to *Incidence of Catastrophe* [1987-88] [...]"<sup>[2]</sup>

### *How did Blanchot influence Incidence of Catastrophe*

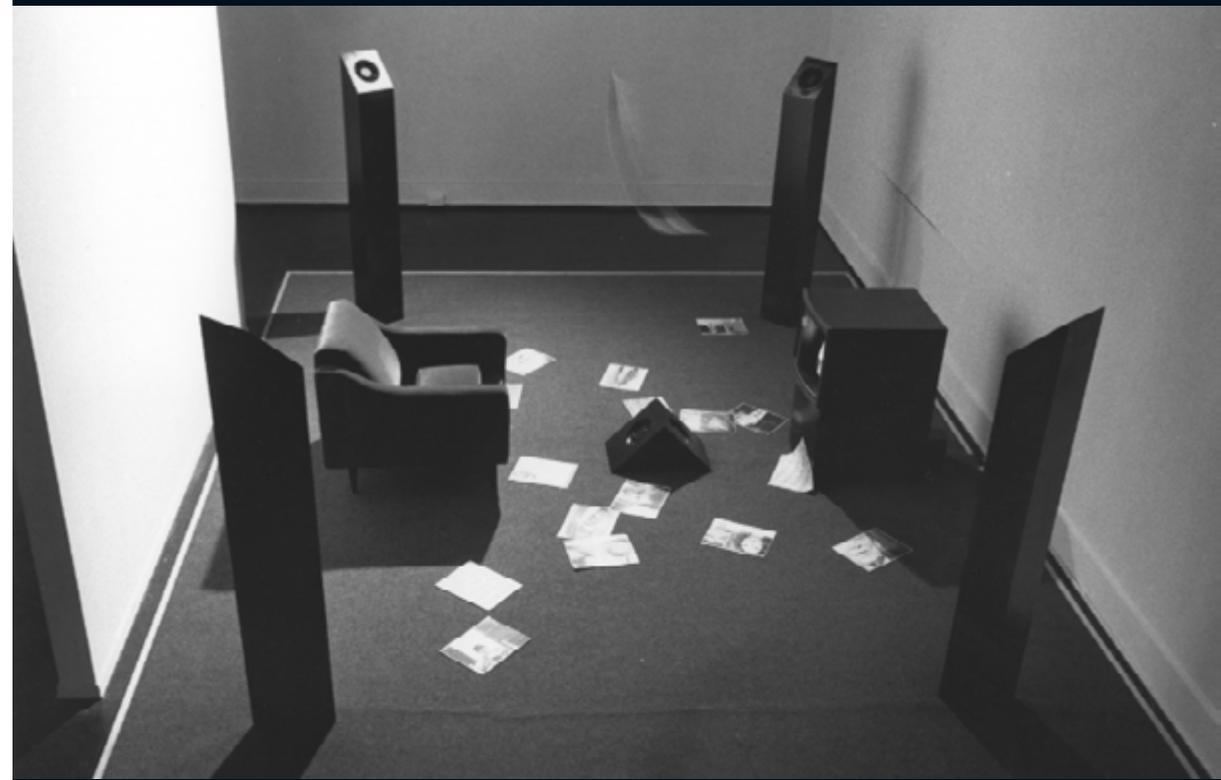
In fact, *Incidence* came after an installation called *In Situ*, where there are scenes inspired by Blanchot's *Thomas the Obscure*. In particular there's one where I am sitting alone at a dinner table, reading, and you see me falling backward, pulling the tablecloth and all the food and plates along with me. Anyway, while reading the book I had the rather strange experience of the book reading me – we were reading each other somehow. And the experience was quite physical. It reminds me of a scene in *Incidence*: at first you see two totem-like forms outlined by light. Suddenly they move and you realize it's a person from the back leaning over a book supporting their head with their forearms. It's like being outside yourself seeing yourself read and the narrator is in the same room. Originally I considered this as the opening shot of the piece.

*In Situ* (1986) was the first work in which I pulled the television tube from its enclosure. The frame, as it were, was still there, so it gave an impression of the tube being an eye shrinking from its skull. This relationship was mirrored in an easy chair facing the set; its seat cushion was about two-thirds normal size. So these elements of catastrophe and entropy have been ongoing, as in *Why Do Things Get in a Muddle?* (*Come on Petunia*) and *CRUX [...]*.”<sup>[3]</sup>

[1] Raymond Bellour, "Video Writing", Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (eds.), *Illuminating Video: an Essential Guide to Video Art*, New York, Aperture, 1990, pp. 425-426.

[2] Gary Hill, *Liminal Performance: Gary Hill in Conversation with George Quasha and Charles Stein*, PAJ (Performing Arts Journal), No. 58, Vol. XX, No. 1 (January 1998), p. 11, and reprinted in: Quasha, George and Charles Stein, *An Art of Liminal: Gary Hill's Works and Writings*, Barcelona, Ediciones Polígrafa, 2009, p. 468.

[3] Louis-José Lestocart, "Gary Hill: Surfer sur le médium/Surfing the Medium", *Art press*, No. 210, February, 1996, pp. 20-21.



GARY HILL. *In Situ*

# Vito Acconci

## Virtual Intelligence Mask (1993)<sup>[1]</sup>

FENCING MASK, TELEVISIONS, RADIO, SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS/TECHNICAL COMPONENTS: SWIVEL, VIDEO CAMERA/EYE MONITORS (FACING IN), RADIO/AUDIO, MOUTH MONITOR (FACING OUT). PARTICIPANTS: LUIS VERA (DESIGN, ENGINEERING); WON CHANG. DIMENSIONS: 3' X 11' X 1 1/2'. COURTESY: ACCONCI STUDIO, NEW YORK.

A conventional fencing mask is used as a support-structure for electronics; the electronics are used as contact with the world outside.

On the front of the mask are three televisions: one larger television facing out, and two miniature televisions facing in. The miniature televisions, facing in, cover the eyes of the person wearing the mask; from an outsider's point of view, the person inside the mask is blindfolded by the two televisions. At one side of the mask is a small portable radio, positioned at the ear of the person wearing the mask; the radio's speaker is directed out.

On top of the mask are two surveillance cameras, one on top of the other, one directed toward the front and one directed toward the rear. The cameras mechanically rotate, side to side.

The person wearing the mask sees his/her environment on the two television screens

in front of his/her eyes: one screen shows what's going on in front of the person, the other shows what's going on behind. In the meantime, the larger television, and the radio, is available for use by passers-by: a passer-by can switch TV channels; a passer-by can change from one radio station to another. A passer-by can, literally, "dial" the person wearing the mask; a passer-by can, literally, "turn the person on."

*Virtual Intelligence Mask* is part of a series of three works realized in 1993, including also:

### *Virtual Pleasure Mask (1993)*

Fencing mask, miniature televisions, sex toys, pacifier  
3' x 1' x 1 1/2'

A conventional fencing mask is used as a support-structure for electronics and sex toys; the electronics and sex toys are used as contact with the world outside.

The nose of the mask is a pink penis, the mouth is a pink vagina, the eyes are two miniature televisions, facing in.

The person who wears the mask can be fucked by a person outside the mask; in the meantime, the person inside is protected from the fucking inside the mask, the person sees nothing but the TV screens – the person feels nothing, since the dildo and "pocket beaver" are attached on the outside – on the other side of the vagina, inside the mask, is a baby's pacifier (the wearer of the mask can suck in private, inside a world of his/her own).

### *Virtual Relations Mask (1993)*

Fencing mask, small television, sex toys, whistle  
3' x 1' x 1 1/2'

A conventional fencing mask is used as a support-structure for electronics and sex

toys; the electronics and sex toys are used as contact with the world outside.

The nose of the mask is a pink penis; the mouth is a pink vagina; a small television, facing in, covers the space where the eyes would be. On top of the mask – like the propeller on a child's beanie – is a surveillance camera that rotates, mechanically, up and down.

The person wearing the mask can be fucked by a person outside the mask. The person inside is kept apart from physical contact (the person inside feels nothing, since the dildo and "pocket beaver" are attached on the outside); at the same time, the person inside can look the situation over – the person who's fucking is caught, watched on the television right in front of the eyes.

Inside the mask, on the backside of the vagina, is a pink whistle; if the fucking is found to be objectionable, for whatever reasons, the person wearing the mask can blow the whistle on the person fucking.

### **Masks as Clothing you Might Wear in the City**

"[...] A public space is occupied by private bodies. These private bodies have hidden feelings, and private lives, and secret dreams. The terrain of the public space is a plane, a platform, that supports bodies; the terrain might have walls, either physical or metaphorical – it functions as a container of bodies. But the platform quakes, the container trembles at boiling point. The wonder of the city is: with all these bodies crowded next to each other, one on top of the other – why aren't they all tearing each other's clothes off, why aren't they all fucking each other, left and right (and up and down, and in and out, and back and forth...)? The wonder of the city is: with all these bodies blocking each other, standing

in each other's way, why aren't they all tearing each other apart limb from limb, and wolfing each other down? Public space is the last gasp of the civilized world; public space is the Great White Hope; public space is belief and religion; public space is wishful thinking [...]."<sup>[2]</sup>

### **Watching television is like staring into a fireplace**

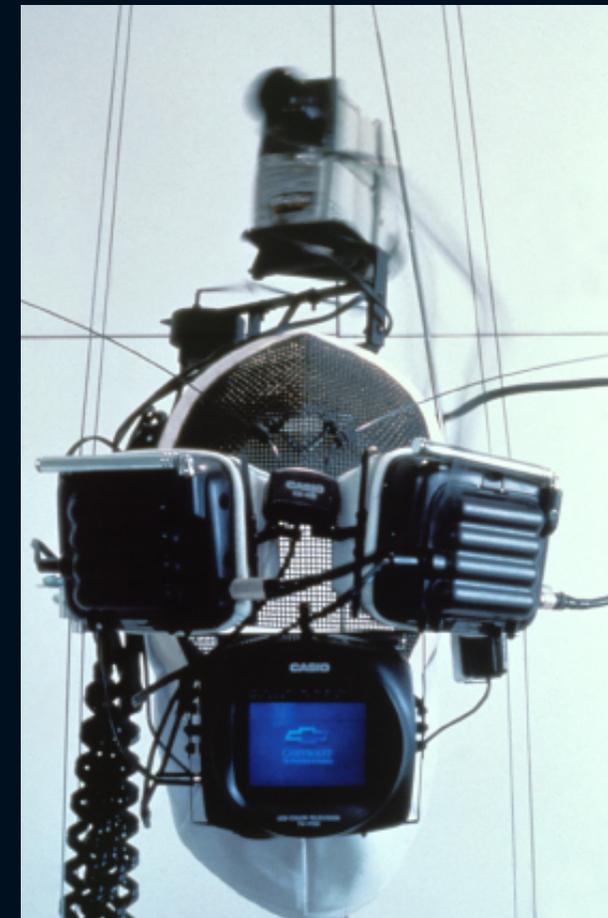
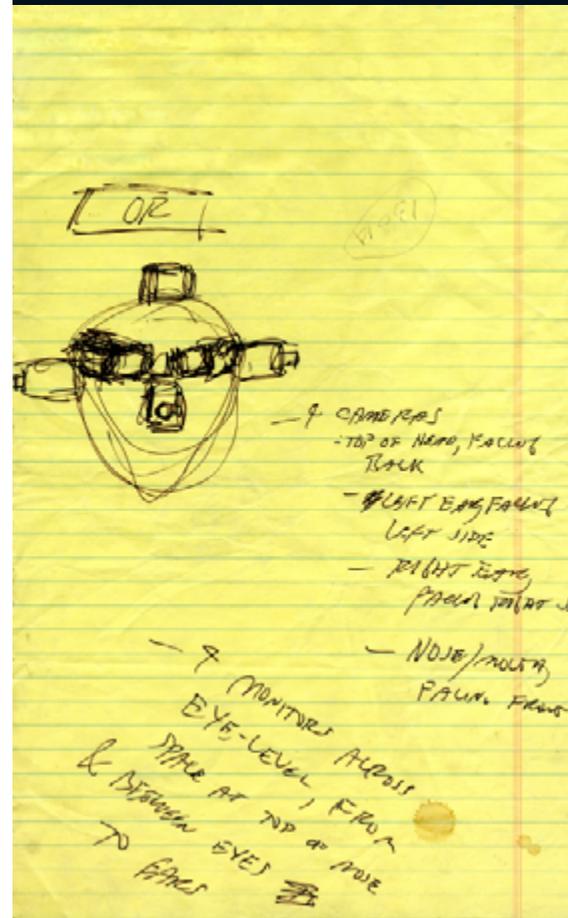
"Television space is fishbowl space. There's a world going on in there: that exclamation might be made by a child-person looking, from out of the large world he/she is in, into the small world behind either the aquarium glass or the TV screen. In the case of the TV, the world is *on* something, on-screen, not (as in the case of the aquarium) *in* something, in the bowl; but, unlike movies, the TV screen isn't all, there's something behind it, something underneath it all – the TV tube lies behind the screen. We know that the screen is only the facade of the box; even now that the screen can be drastically reduced in size – as in the two-inch "watchman" – there still has to be room for the TV tube. The TV box still has to have depth, which remains the largest dimension of the box. The TV screen might be thought of as the window into the box – except that we probably can't, in the 1990s, be innocent enough to believe we're really looking through a window, really peering inside the box. Rather, the screen might be seen as some kind of distorting, inside-out mirror, which the power inside the box holds up to the world at large. Inside the box, the world – or the power-to-be-a-world – is condensed: it's the size of a conventional package, a gift, it's power made handleable. The viewer might be led to believe, then, that the world is in his or her hands. [...]  
[...] Watching television is like staring into

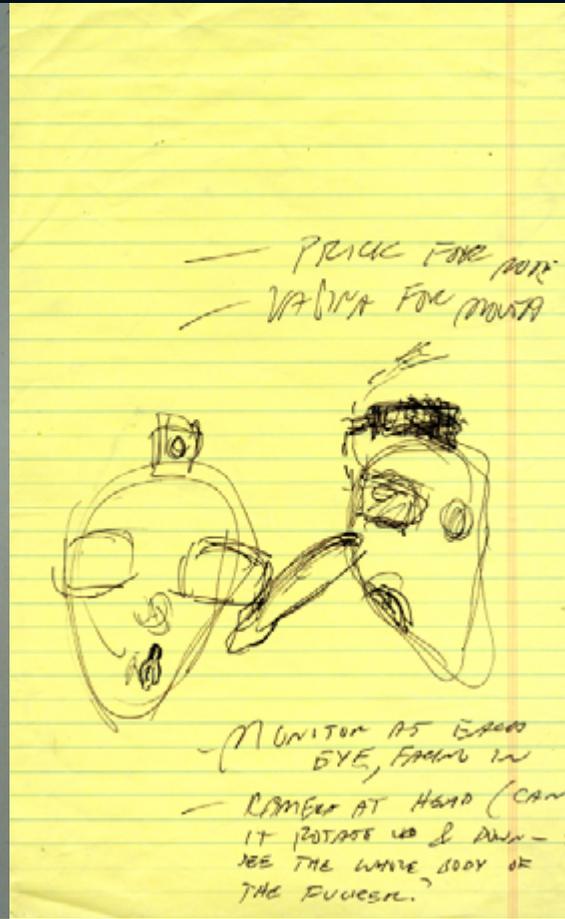
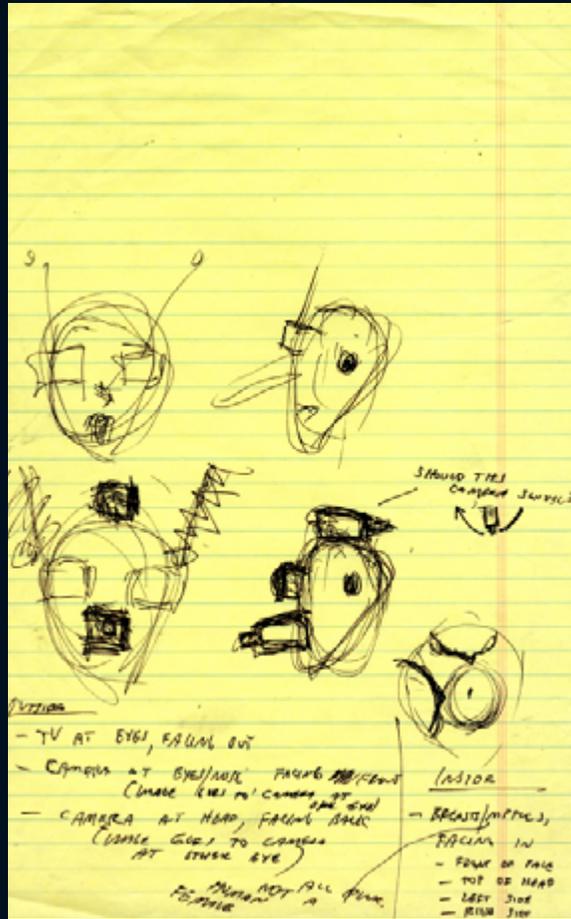
a fireplace, or looking at a light bulb. The viewer is 'heated', information has been passed. 'I'm not myself,' the viewer might justifiably say. Well, who are you then? You are what you see. There's no time to think; information has already been implanted in the brain. The viewer has television inside the self, like a cancer (the disease that has become the dominant disease of the time, the time in which television has become the dominant medium); the person is 'replaced', 'displaced' (as in the film *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*). Television is rehearsal for the time when human beings no longer need to have bodies. The way a movie projector shoots images onto a movie screen, the television set 'shoots' images into the viewer: the viewer functions as the screen. With television, a person finally is enabled to become a 'model person' – but what the person is a model of is non-self. The person functions as a 'screen', a simulation, of self. Television confirms the diagnosis that the boundaries between inside and outside are blurred: the diagnosis that 'self' is an outdated concept. (Saying the word *myself* has been reassuring: it announces possession, claims something to grab onto; writing the word I, in English, is similar to writing the numeral 1 – it gives the illusion of placement in a hierarchy of importance). [...] [...] Assume that there are two kinds of power: economic power and sexual power. What new TV equipment does, now, is camouflage economic power: it gives the buyer the illusion that economic power is in his/her hands – after all, the buyer can prove it, the buyer can hold the state-of-the-art in a box (as if looking at himself/herself in a photograph, like other people, in other photographs, holding the state-of-the-art in a box). And holding it, and looking at it later in the privacy of his/her

home, and making that home a show-place where equipment can be shown off to friends – all this is a way of draining sexual power. Because television is the absence of the body; television signifies the body-become-electronics, the body-without-sex. This sexlessness, then, is placed in the home, in exactly those spots where the body runs rampant: the woman watches the TV set in the kitchen, as she prepares food; the couple watches the TV set at the foot of their bed, right before sexual intercourse.

The sexlessness of the television set functions as a sign, a reminder; it induces a nostalgia not so much for the past as for a fiction of the future: 'If only we didn't need to eat', 'If only we didn't desire to fuck...'[...]."<sup>[3]</sup>

- [1] "TV/ARTS/TV" exhibit only *Virtual Intelligence Mask*. Exhibition history (for the three masks): *Virtual Pleasure Mask*: 303 Gallery, NY, 1993; Dakis Joannou Collection, Athens 1993. *Virtual Relations Mask*: 303 Gallery, NY, 1993. *Virtual Intelligence Mask*: 303 Gallery, NY, 1993; Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, 2004; Vito Acconci Studio, curated by Corinne Disserens (travelling show, organized by MACBA): MACBA, Barcelona, 2004; Grand Canary Islands, Spain, 2005; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 2006.
- [2] Vito Acconci, paper presented at the international conference "La generazione delle immagini-Public Art", Milan, 1996-1997, on [www.undo.net/cgi-bin/openframe.pl?xO/Pinto/Eng/faconci.htm](http://www.undo.net/cgi-bin/openframe.pl?xO/Pinto/Eng/faconci.htm)
- [3] Vito Acconci, "Television, Furniture, Sculpture: The Room with the American View", in Doug Hall, Sally Jo Fifer (eds.), *Illuminating Video: an Essential Guide to Video Art*, Aperture /BAVC, 1990, p. 125-129.





# James Turrell

## *Fran* (1998)

DIMENSIONS: 2.40 X 3.20. EYE LEVEL 28.50.  
TV SET AND TAPE OF KUKLA, FRAN AND OLLIE, TV  
PROGRAM.  
1950S-STYLE CHAIR.  
COURTESY: STUDIO D'ARTE CONTEMPORANEA PINO  
CASAGRANDE, ROMA.

The title *Fran* comes from the very famous TV program called *Kukla, Fran and Ollie* broadcasted on NBC and ABC between 1947-1957.

*Fran* and *Mongo the Planet* are two different works with the same format that belong to new Magnatron Series. They each have a different TV program; *Fran* from the TV program called *Kukla, Fran and Ollie* from the 1950's and *Mongo the Planet* from *Flash Gordon* from the 1960's. In both these works the style of the chair corresponds to the style of the period of the TV program.

*Hi-test* is part of the new *Magnatron Series* that take the aperture concept in a different direction. In these works the light source is a television set with varying programming. *Hi-Test*, the first Magnatron work is permanently installed at the Mondrian, a hotel in West Hollywood, California. On each floor of the Mondrian in the elevator lobby is a small aperture work. The openings are the size and shape

of a standard television screen, and the light in the small sensing spaces beyond is created by a television placed on the floor inside the space, just below the aperture. On each floor the television is tuned to a different channel and, the viewer soon discovers that each network broadcasts its own unique range of colors."<sup>[1]</sup>

"My works are about light in the sense that light is present and there; the work is made of light. It's not about light or a record of it, but it is light. Light is not so much something that reveals as it is itself revelation."<sup>[2]</sup>

"The Magnatron Television piece contains a wall with two television sinks and two armchairs. After sitting in one of the armchairs, in front of one of the TV screens for a while, you suddenly figure out that it is nothing but an aperture in the wall. Again, it is all about light. There is no object in Turrell's art, only scenery that contains and encapsulates light. The artist has figured out how to balance the colors and the intensity of light to make it look flat like a TV screen. We can call it simulation. An aperture mimicking the gentle curves of a television screen is cut into the partition dividing the space. The subtle color modulation and the benign shape of the screen seem at odds with this intrusive medium, reversing the usually passive experience of the television viewer. The work seduces you to approach, to reduce the distance between you and your television. It tempts you to touch and insert your hands into the wall. It is so natural for any TV browser to refuse to believe that there is nothing out there.

By using light, Turrell illustrates the dialectical materialistic relationship between the Bulk and the Empty, between the Real

and the Virtual. He creates bulks – places without fillings, without objects. The white wall is punched with two empty holes. Nothing exists beyond this virtual screen. The real TV set as an empty illusion box.

Turrell's work demonstrates how virtual spaces function as physical places and how real spaces function as virtual ones. It deals with the relationship between those two forms of existence."<sup>[3]</sup>

"When you can't see any object, your body loses its orientation.

Isn't this what some of Turrell's installations show? These are his own words about *City of Arhirit*, presented many years ago in Amsterdam and in New York. [...] When the eye can't focus and loses track, the bodily experience and self-experience becomes chaotic. This is what phenomenologists, from Husserl to Merleau-Ponty have studied under the title 'Kinaesthetic Experience'. [...]

What is Turrell's art about? About light and perception, one feels tempted to answer. Perhaps it would be more correct to say his art is light and perception. Turrell's works do not represent anything. They are themselves: light and darkness, space and perception.

[...] The visual purity of Turrell's installations removes us from the familiar, shared world. Faced with these light phenomena, we are alone, just as alone as we are when faced with the expanses of the desert or the infinity of the sky. This is not the light of the quotidian, but that of dreams and fantasy."<sup>[4]</sup>

... a looking into

"The space then, is emptied out to become a place of withdrawal and imminence concerning the gaze itself: a *looking into*,

as Turrell puts it, opposed to any vision in quest of an object is (*a looking at*). The unfilled space became an *espace blanc*, a chromatically white space but above all a *blank space*, to use a word that refers not to the simple suppression of colors but to *spacing* in general, to muteness, to depopulation, to definitive gaps. To pure virtualities. It is in this sense that one can speak of a desire, in Turrell's work, to deconstruct trivial spaces – where there is something visible to be discerned, recognized and named – in order to extract their pure and simple *power of luminous spacing*. It means eliminate all that the spectator could spontaneously call an 'object' and spontaneously situate as 'visible', orphaning the spectator of all that provides him with the usual conditions for visiting an art space 'filled with works', and for sensing and perceiving such a space. Turrell's works often begin by imposing an act of *closure* or *privation*. But the intent is always the gift of experience dispensed in light; and therefore the works allow, in the end, an act of *opening*."<sup>[5]</sup>

- [1] Peter Noever (ed.), *James Turrell, The other Orizon*, MAK, Wien, 1998, Cantz, p. 121.
- [2] James Turrell cit in Daniel Birnbaum, "Eyes & Notes for The Sun", in Peter Noever (ed.), *James Turrell, The other Orizon*, MAK, Wien, 1998, Cantz, p. 228.
- [3] Shirley Shor, *Simplicity, The art of the light*, James Turrell, Barbara Gladstone Gallery, NYC, 1998, on [shirleyshor.com/text/turrell.htm](http://shirleyshor.com/text/turrell.htm)
- [4] Daniel Birnbaum, "Eyes & Notes for The Sun", in Peter Noever (ed.), *James Turrell, The other Orizon*, MAK, Wien, 1998, Cantz, p. 227.
- [5] Georges Didi Hubermann, "The Fable of The Place", in Peter Noever (ed.) *James Turrell, The other Orizon*, MAK, Wien, 1998, Cantz, p. 46.



## Chris Marker

### *Zapping Zone [Proposal for An Imaginary Television]* (1990)

13 MONITORS, 13 PAL VIDEOTAPES, SOUND, COLOUR,  
7 COMPUTERS, 7 PROGRAMS ON COMPUTER DISKETTES,  
10 PHOTOGRAPHS ON ANTI-REFLECTIVE PLEXIGLAS,  
4 NEGATOSCOPES WITH 20 COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS;  
40 X 80 CM, 4 PANELS OF 80 SLIDES.  
COURTESY: CENTRE POMPIDOU, PARIS. MUSÉE NATIONAL  
D'ART MODERNE/CENTRE DE CRÉATION INDUSTRIELLE.

*Zapping Zone* comprises a certain number of photographs, computer programs and videotapes made by the author. The latter can be seen on some computers and monitors that are piled up or spread out in a circle in an obscure place, the “zone”. This concept is taken from the film *Stalker*, by the Russian film director Andrei Tarkovsky. The installation reproduces a hermetic space, complex and enigmatic, that only the initiated or those who so wish will be able to conquer. Chris Marker’s “Zone” is made up of extracts from this film, from television programmes, from documents filmed here and there, all of them unreleased, photographs taken on the ground during his countless journeys, once again scenes of television images and, in short, from active and interactive computers. Marker has thus composed new infographic images, he has modified others, reworking television images either by chance through the information via

the antenna or voluntarily. He has also inserted a fictional short in it made with synthetic animated images: *The Theory of Groups*. Some television images captured live have been mixed with the “manufactured” images.

The idea of zapping picks up on that habit of the eighties television viewer when faced with the profusion of sounds and images transmitted by our aerials, an idea very familiar to readers of Serge Daney. This open work is structured around various poles, which are enriched at each presentation of supplementary images: some geographical areas appreciated by the author, for instance Tokyo, San Francisco, Berlin; great figures, friends of his, like the painter Matta and the director Andrei Tarkovsky; his favourite animals, the owl and the cat called Guillaume in Egypt, etc. The work’s subtitle, *Proposal For An Imaginary Television*, reminds us that it is in fact a harsh critique of television, of its content, and also its system of production.<sup>[1]</sup>

#### **Where everyone can, if not find everything according to their needs ...**

To begin with, *Zapping Zone* was called *Software/Catacombs* and it consisted of entering the memory of the subterraneans in *La Jetée* or of Fellini’s *Roma* in the computer and finding *Sans Soleil* and the memory of Tarkovsky. In *Stalker*, the “Zone” is the opaque forbidden space that conceals at its core the house and, in this, a “chamber of desires” that nobody enters – not the Writer or the Wise Man, or the Stalker himself, the guide of both on the failed expedition, but to which the latter’s invalid daughter does perhaps have access, as she is capable of bringing objects to life just by looking at them. But the Zone is also a space different, random, located at once on either side of that magical religious core that art still is

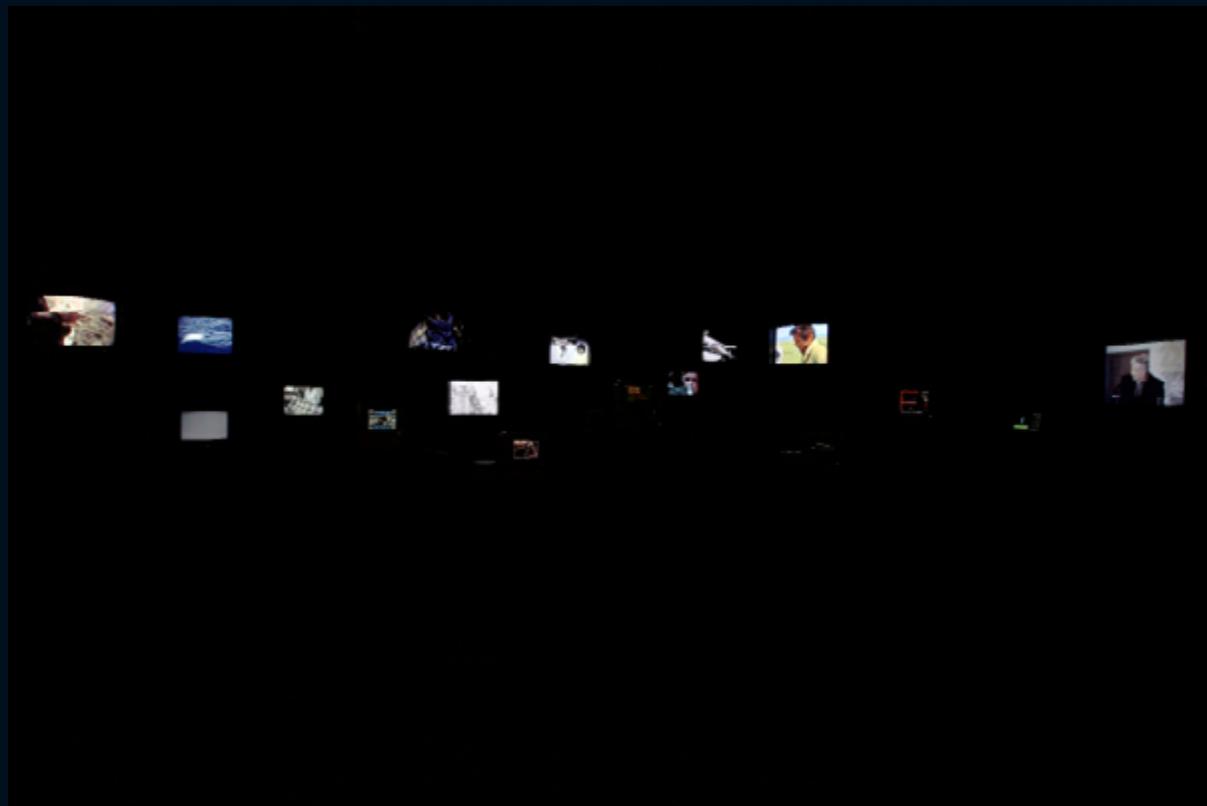
for the great Russian filmmaker. [...] The Zone is the universe of the obsessions par excellence, of the new obsessions born with “the question of technique”, against which we would have no resources if we lacked the ability to master techniques to continually produce – one of the ways of resisting – new metamorphoses. [...] *Zapping Zone* is, then, the space that makes it possible to zap in the zone; and zapping, in this case, means moving between the zones. [...] On a simpler level, *Zapping Zone* is a supermarket wisely disorganized, where everyone can, if not find everything according to their needs, at least see some of their desires represented. Since he has been filming, according to the principles of one of the most discreet but most varied and interesting lives there can be (that could be his condition), Marker has limitlessly used and mixed supports, filming techniques and sources: photography, cinema, video ... direct takes of views, a digital library, all sorts of animation ... archive documents and images obtained from friends around the world ... [...] All of this gives these zones a diversity that offers the visitor/passers-by, attentive and distracted, as many other forms of passage, between regimes and types of image and between themes (Japan, as always; Berlin, now; Tarkovsky and Matta, chosen figures and friends, film and painting, etc.). Zapping is merely the extreme (and, when all is said and done, pointless) form of passage. [...] There is also in the Zone a centre, secret and yet more open than the rest. For years Marker, an unrepentant traveller, has been going round his room incessantly in order to enter the Zone through a doorway that will take him to all the others, even to Hayao’s machine. At will he enters images of the photo-cinema-video chain in the computer, images he processes, that

he processes again and which he tries to mix with other images he conceives more directly through programs. The piles resulting from this subjective computing were, then, distributed around some zones, especially by computers with which the spectator is invited to enter the game. [...] Thus, today Marker (like Godard, Viola *et al* – each according to his needs) finds himself before a kind of writing station that *Zapping Zone* gives us some idea of and whose lens enables us to suppose the said work [...].

In someone like Marker, whose point of reference is directly literary, it is interesting (and he only speaks of guiding himself with a little attention and patience around its zones) to understand how far the promise of computing can help the man of images to return to what he hopes for as a writer, although he cannot be it without images: the conception of his own mythology.<sup>[2]</sup>

[1] [www.newmedia-art.org/cgi-bin/show-oeu](http://www.newmedia-art.org/cgi-bin/show-oeu)

[2] Raymond Bellour, “Zapping Zone”, in *Passages de l’image*, Paris, Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1990, pp. 169-170.



CHRIS MARKER. *Zapping Zone* (Proposal for An Imaginary Television)

# Judith Barry Ken Saylor

## *From Receiver to Remote ... channeling Spain 2010*

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AN INSTALLATION BY JUDITH BARRY/KEN SAYLOR WITH  
PROJECT PROJECTS.  
RESEARCHERS: MONTSE BONET BAGANT AND ORIOL  
VILANOVA.  
AN EXTENSION OF *FROM RECEIVER TO REMOTE CONTROL:  
THE TELEVISION SET*.  
FIRST PRESENTED AT THE NEW MUSEUM, NEW YORK, 1990.  
EXHIBITION DESIGN: JUDITH BARRY/KEN SAYLOR.  
CURATOR: MATHEW GELLER.  
MEDIA HISTORIAN: HILARY RADNER.  
COURTESY: JUDITH BARRY/KEN SAYLOR.

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In a series of more than 20 period rooms displaying period TV programming and advertising, this exhibition, installed throughout the entire New Museum, traced how television transformed the home from a site of production into a site of consumption between the years 1920-1990 (the dates of the exhibition). Showcasing television as both an object that has constantly evolved in relation to new uses within the home as well as an active force in the production of new forms of relationships throughout the home – among family members, and beyond – this exhibition sought to make visible the many ways television has revolutionized our concept of “What is home?”

*From Receiver to Remote Control: the Television Set* was one of the first exhibitions in a fine art museum to examine the invention and object-like status of the television set

as well as to explore the relationships that television and the entertainment industry induced among family members. E. Buk Antiques & Art, a well-known SoHo antiques dealer, amassed an enormous collection of vintage televisions which were generously loaned for our exhibition. These sets, totaling more than 200, showcased the evolution of the television set by providing a visual time-line and charting the metamorphosis of television as it mutated from radio (seeing by wireless), to the electronic television, through various “homemade” TVs produced from kits – DIY garage projects, to a variety of television inventions that never found a market, to the establishment of various types of broadcast networks, live television, early pre-recorded television and the development of new forms of television programming as well as new models of the television apparatus (See [www.tvhistory.tv](http://www.tvhistory.tv)).

Initially, this exhibition was to consist of these 200 television sets and some vintage TV programming provided by Matthew Geller, the curator, who, in addition to being the curator for the exhibition is also a visual artist. Our strategy as exhibition designers has always been to work closely with the curator and the museum to tell the story of the exhibition. Hence, as exhibition designers we always work directly alongside the curator, often reshaping the exhibition and its checklist to better tell the story of the exhibition. Important questions for us as designers revolve around the issues of how the viewer will construct the meaning of the exhibition/curatorial intentions from what is actually on display within the exhibition. Hence, early in the schematic design phase we identified the need for the period rooms, a coherent time-line tracing the develop-

ment of the television and individual programming for each of the rooms. Additionally, to illustrate the complexity of the story without being didactic we produced graphic diagrams that enunciated the main topics of each room and parsed the connections between advertising, popular culture, technologies of various kinds and world events for each of the period rooms. These diagrams were not wall labels per se; instead they functioned as an easy to read, visual context for the period rooms. To produce these diagrams we worked closely with Hilary Radner, a media scholar. She provided vintage tear sheets, magazine articles, scholarly research and relevant current events for each period room. These elements provided another context directly within the exhibition that allowed the viewer to delve more deeply into this history. Unfortunately, none of this material was included in the catalog for the exhibition. Rather than produce fully built-out period rooms similar to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, we decided to employ photo blow-ups as backdrops for each of the rooms. As these photo blow-ups were already representations they could quickly telescope the context for each of these 20-plus rooms. Additionally, as the New Museum had an open plan and was relatively small, this strategy also allowed us to represent many more period rooms in the exhibition than if we had constructed discrete rooms while simultaneously allowing visual access throughout the museum. In this way the viewer could simultaneously see several rooms and more clearly understand the relationships between the televisual apparatus and the transformation of the home.<sup>[1]</sup>

In addition to the period rooms, there were also a number of interactive experi-

ences that the visitor to the museum could have during the exhibition. These included the following:

- \* A room to record your memory of your first television experience.
- \* A 1990's Living Room in the front window of the New Museum that allowed viewers to sit in this window on display to the pedestrians passing in front of the New Museum. As they watched appropriate television programming, they were simultaneously shot by surveillance cameras which transmitted their image throughout the museum on monitors strategically positioned within the museum.
- \* DIY video: Branda Millar, a video artist, operated a booth throughout the exhibition where the visitor could check out a video camera and shoot a video of the exhibition. Once a week, she offered free video editing classes at the New Museum.

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- [1] Here are some highlights from the exhibition:
- \* Pre-history of the television: A walk-in floor plan (suspended upright in the space. Inside were elements from a Victorian parlor including a Motorola and a wireless radio, circa 1923. Video: none. Sound: radio broadcast from that period.
  - \* Television Experiments: Some of the early 1920's and 1930's experimental television sets were inventions. These were located at the entrance to the exhibition along with photo blow-ups of some of the relevant ads. See the ad for one of them reproduced here. Video: replicated video showing what the experiments looked like. Sound: tuning devices
  - \* Garage TV: Various DIY television kits from the 1930's and 1940's. These sets, like the ham radio, could be built in the garage. We re-produced graphic signs and ads and displayed home-made sets on several work benches illustrating the tools of these eras. Video: several appropriate experimental TVs were retrofitted to show what programming would have looked like from that time period (mostly static).
  - \* From Parlor to Living Room: During the 1930's and until 1946 interior design evolved as the living room transformed first in relation to radio, and later as what was portrayed on television began to affect the design and configuration of the living

room. Video: appropriate programming playing on retrofitted televisions from those periods.

- The Birth of Home Theater: The introduction of planned obsolescence, labor-saving appliances and conspicuous consumption alongside the need to return working women to the home post WW2 in the late 1940's-1950's. The console television set, now furniture, occupied pride of place within the Living Room. Family life now included dressing up as though for an evening out, which was spent instead in front of the Home Theater as family life began to revolve around the television set in the living room. Video: appropriate programming of including "Show of Shows", and some of the early kinescope broadcasts.
- The Kitchen: Room installation of various television sets as the TV began to migrate into the kitchen, laundry area from the 1940's through the 1960's. Video: Appropriate programming for the time such as "I Remember Mama" as well as early television ads from the same period showing the housewife using the labor-saving appliances.
- The Hippie Room: A recreation of a sixties "pad" complete with all the attendant paraphernalia from that time period, roughly 1961-1977. This moment in US television history is the only time when television was explicitly political. Video: Programming included clips from Civil Rights movement, the Democratic convention in 1972 and the Vietnam War as covered by the networks and others. Also included were excerpts for TVTV, and other activist artist groups, alongside other network programming from the era.
- The 1960's Living room: This room completed the trajectory of design reflecting television programming. Late 1950's-1960's modernist furniture design was mirrored by the programming on the retro-fitted television which included "Laugh In", "The Smothers Brothers" and other era-appropriate programming.
- The Kids' Room: This room was a child's bedroom, circa 1985, in which every item from the sheets to toys were also advertised in some form on television. The items included Smurfs, various

Mattel toys – Transformers and action figures, clothing, books, bicycles, balls and so forth where the actual object was a product of television advertising. Video: the ads and television shows that comprise these items.

- Portable TV: The television goes into every room in the home. These vignettes were illustrated very partially, mostly as photo blow-ups with appropriate television programming on retro-fitted television sets. These included the Den, the Family Room, the Television and the Bedroom – parents and teenagers, among others. Video: a selection of current and historical television programming appropriate for the period, including some cable channels as well as MTV.
- PUP Tent TV: The television goes outside. Battery operated television became available in the late 1970's and the television could now go camping. Video: appropriate programming of nature shows and sporting events.
- Computer and television: This was a contemporary work station showcasing the failed marketing attempts to produce one apparatus that could function as both a computer and as a television set, circa 1990. This work station had some live programming and some pre-recorded programming to illustrate how the viewer might make use of this. It was designed to illustrate how the computer, as a home office, could return the home to a site of production rather than consumption.
- All Channels Room: This room was an array of 37 television sets which broadcast all the programming currently available in Manhattan during the time of the exhibition. The room was arranged like a mnemonic device (memory theater). The viewer, seated in an easy recliner, could channel surf. The viewer's selections would show up on a very large home theater television, circa 1990, which occupied the center of the room. In this way the viewer could absorb all the television programming then available in the space of a very few minutes.





CHAPTER 3

ICONOGRAPHY/  
TV/DIGITAL

A preliminary study about television iconography in the field of painting and photography, and a work between art and science to imagine another television in the digital world.

»» Notes on the  
»» Iconography  
»» of Television<sup>[1]</sup>

»» Gaia Casagrande

»» Barbara Goretti

The rapid transformation of the modern world in the course of the twentieth century is due above all to the phenomenon of the mass media, a radical change understandable that can be read in sociological, anthropological and aesthetic terms. The television set – as an object – redesigns, in homes, the décor and the family's habits, substitutes radio, becomes the focal point *in front of* which to gather: no more the circle around the fireplace, or crowding *around* to listen to the radio – instead the frontal nature of the reception of the pictures. The relationship created with the television set is direct, immediate. It therefore also acquires an identity as a household object; television becomes an instrument that shapes content and models on which to inspire oneself and be inspired, an element symbolic of the revolution in images. Artistic research is not excluded from this controversial and powerfully seductive potential, which together with the birth of television redefines its aesthetic criteria and investigates the value of a society of images.

In this context, the statement by Mario Schifano, “I feel like a media”<sup>[2]</sup> [*sic*], stresses the feeling of total participation of its aesthetic in a view perceived through the filter of technology. In his first works, and explicitly in the *Paesaggi TV* of the 1970s, it can be clearly seen how the painting is in itself a screen. The screen is understood as a means through which to look at reality and get close to the outside world, using a filter that could be, depending on the cases or the times, the camera or the television. What is

striking about Mario Schifano's poetry is the fantastic and wonderful nature of his art and the feeling of forceful mastery given off towards and with the technique in all its declinations. Television is expressed through the eyes of the artist as an inexhaustible patrimony of images, new iconographic material for the subjects of his paintings. The passage of Schifano's colours through the cathode-ray tube, the contact and the immersion in the alienating reality of the images broadcast on television, saturates and reinvents painting by redrawing its limits.

If, on one hand, for Schifano the surface is the screen on which an indeterminate image appears as if at the germination stage, if his view of the world is the framing (be it cinematic, televisual or photographic), on the other we have Fabio Mauri, who, starting from a strong interest in the cinema, began working on the screen at the end of the 1950s. The artist captures, in frames in relief covered with fragile paper, a white surface, which becomes a screen of blunt angles, an open field for collecting data and images. It becomes the message, as if it were the outline of a television set that the signals do not reach eliminated, just muffled. Mauri defines the field of the framing to restore the televisual medium's imaginary potential and at the same time denounces the exploitation of viewers.

Mauri and Schifano dissipate the fascination of the imaginative potential of the mass media, sense its seductive aspect, foreseeing also the dangers that the new relationship between the media and the viewers would rapidly cause from then on in Italian society. Indeed, television's enormous potential for creating masses, the perception of it as a tool of ideological manipulation, means that many artists developed the need to denounce it, to oppose it. The aesthetic experience of Wolf Vostell is aimed at the new media on which, since 1958, he has been concentrating his research, highly critical and challenging the dominance of television. Vostell uses real television sets, produces images taken from ordinary TV shows that he superimposes, distorts, takes apart and puts back together by using disturbance and interference, and involves the spectators with provocative “exercises”. Through happenings broadcast via the television set, the artist addresses viewers, ordering them to perform unlikely, almost coercive acts (“escape to your bedroom and repeat everything the television has said”), to underline the subjugation to the medium and to arouse the viewers' reaction, exorcizing, in a kind of ritual, their dependence on the screen.

The critical and controversial approach directed genuinely towards the sphere of politics developed during the 1970s in Spain with the research work of the group Equipo Crónica and of Joan Rabascall. Right from the start of the decade we see the consolidation of an ethical stance by artists with regard to the need for a profound change in the world: the works of Equipo Crónica ironically reinterpret the great classics of Spanish painting, openly taking issue with the Francoist cultural campaign based on the propaganda of Iberian greatness. In *La salita* (1970), belonging to the series “Autopsy of a Trade”, clearly inspired on Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, the royal family floats in the modern stereotype of a middle-class household, and the mirror in the original painting, the vehicle for the images hidden from the observer (in which the real copy of

[1] This text opens the research into the field of painting and photography that “TV/ARTS/TV” has only just begun to explore and which it presents as a preliminary survey.

[2] Aldo Forbice, *Artisti, mercato e società*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1991, p. 185-189.

what Velázquez is painting is reflected) and the essential point of a pictorial conception in which what seems to be the focal point is actually illusory, is replaced by the television set. If Velázquez diverts the flow of the images, of the Truth, moving the centre of the painting from the *Infanta* towards the painting-mirror on the wall, Equipo Crónica interrupts the flow of the illusions and replaces it with that of the reality of the mass media; the only deceit, playful, is the insertion of the portraits of the artists among the figures in the painting.

The representative of a pop aesthetic linked to the continent of Europe, Joan Rabascall is an observer of social reality and develops a poetry linked to a critical view of the world. The entire body of his artistic output can be interpreted as a phenomenological reading of the present and of the political and social history of Spain. The spectacle of society and the social and cultural changes in a nation are recorded and analyzed in his works. In particular, in the series *Spain is different* (1977), whose title is taken from a slogan of the Spanish Ministry of Information and Tourism, the themes of denunciation, such as the destructive danger of mass tourism and the stereotypes about the role of women, are related as if they were “broadcast” on television screens. The artist practises looking at the spectacle of contemporary society through the television screen which, like a lens, testifies faithfully to the social and active nature of art. The author relates to television – the manipulating element par excellence, an instrument of communication and the object of ideological criticism – from an iconographical point of view too; by considering that, indeed, it takes the place of the classic subjects of genre painting, like the landscape or the portrait.

The investigation of television also accompanies the linguistic research of more recent generations. Now that it is part of the domestic realm, an instrument through which to spread a reality similar in every way to ours, but diverse because it is not true, television becomes for artists the projection of a world at once desirable and rejectable. In the aesthetic of Mireia Sentís and Martin Parr both meanings are valid as television becomes the bearer of a subordinated idea of the role of women and mistakes the identity of the social differences. Specifically, Mireia Sentís’s poetry proposes itself as an observatory open to emerging trends that, through different areas of research, tackles social and cultural aspects to do with the mass media, using the media itself to denounce the problems it gives rise to. The artist performs actions-interviews broadcast on television, proposing, however, aesthetic and formal methods different to those typical of television contexts. The series of photographs *Máxima Audiencia* attests to the relationship between television and the body, the woman’s, used and exploited by the language of the media, capable of redefining its very social role. The female identity, the frustration, the preponderance of an erotic imaginary often an end in itself, efficiently anticipate what was to characterize television in the years to come. Photography understood as a means of representation, as a possibility of direct social research, characterizes in Parr’s work the tendency to mix up the different planes of reality and the imaginary, transforming the subject of the representation into a conceptual value. Raised as a child in the practice of bird watching, an activity needing

observation, concentration and patient waiting, Martin Parr harmonizes the gaze and thought at an expanded rate. His photos presuppose a time of waiting, a slow observation of the speed of the world, a solid image of what is happening. His study of the behaviour of the English middle class distances itself from an operation concentrating on taste, and focuses on photography and its capacity to represent what is real in a world in which reality and its image are becoming increasingly confused with one another. In the series *Home Sweet Home*, the photographs show interiors in which the turned-on television is tuned to a programme that reproduces images of Princess Anne during her marriage, with the complete royal family, in a game of role exchanges between the protagonists of the fable and the viewers who live in that domestic sphere.

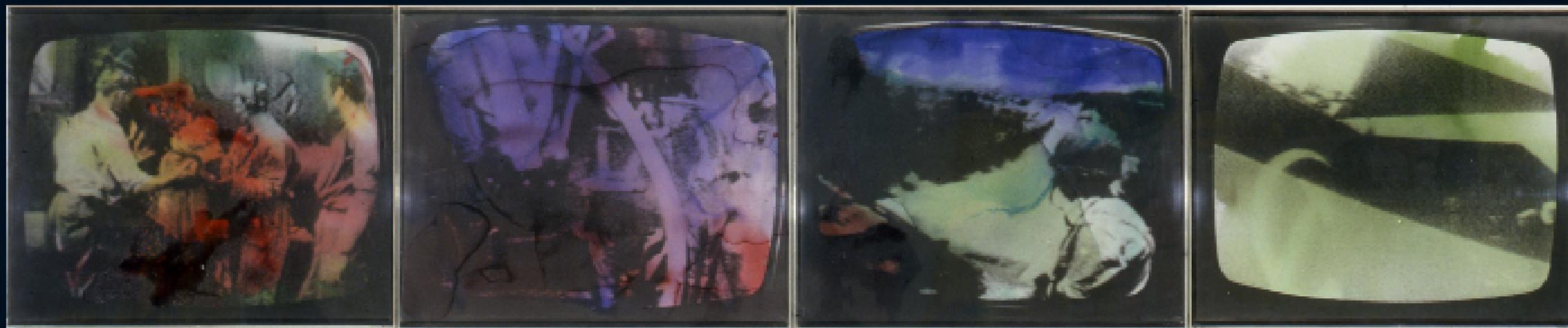
The presence of the television is also consolidated in family groups, not as a mere accessory but as a catalyzing element that reunites, makes people meet and meet again, in virtually a family setting, which it enters forcefully. In *Enterprise*, Joseph Beuys photographed, as if it were a sort of family portrait, a modern family watching *Star Trek*. A family that watches television and *is with* the television, as a part of the family union and the family relationships, already then the mirror of an anthropological revolution that still today attracts contemporary generations of artists. Among them, Marco Raparelli sketches an anthropological portrait of his own view of the world through this medium as well, renewing its conceptual and iconographical imaginary sixty years after it was invented. Through drawing, which multiplies with his swift, essential fresh hand, in major galleries, Raparelli creates “cataloguings” of human types and stereotyped situations in which the television is often inserted; sometimes isolated, or camouflaged in the kitsch décor of a vulgar house, the television is represented through screens full of interference on which only hypnotic signals dance around. Thus, a displaced dialogue with viewers is unleashed: the individual in front of the television that, probably, is all of us.

■ Gaia Casagrande has a degree in the History of Modern Art. She was an assistant curator at the MACRO in Rome (2002-2005) and at the Castello di Rivoli (2006-2008).

■ Barbara Goretti has a degree in the History of Contemporary Art. She has been a didactic curator and a scientific assistant at the GNAM in Rome (2000-2003) and the MACRO in Rome (2002-2008).



JOSEPH BEUYS. *Enterprise*, 1972  
Studio d'Arte Contemporanea Pino Casagrande, Roma



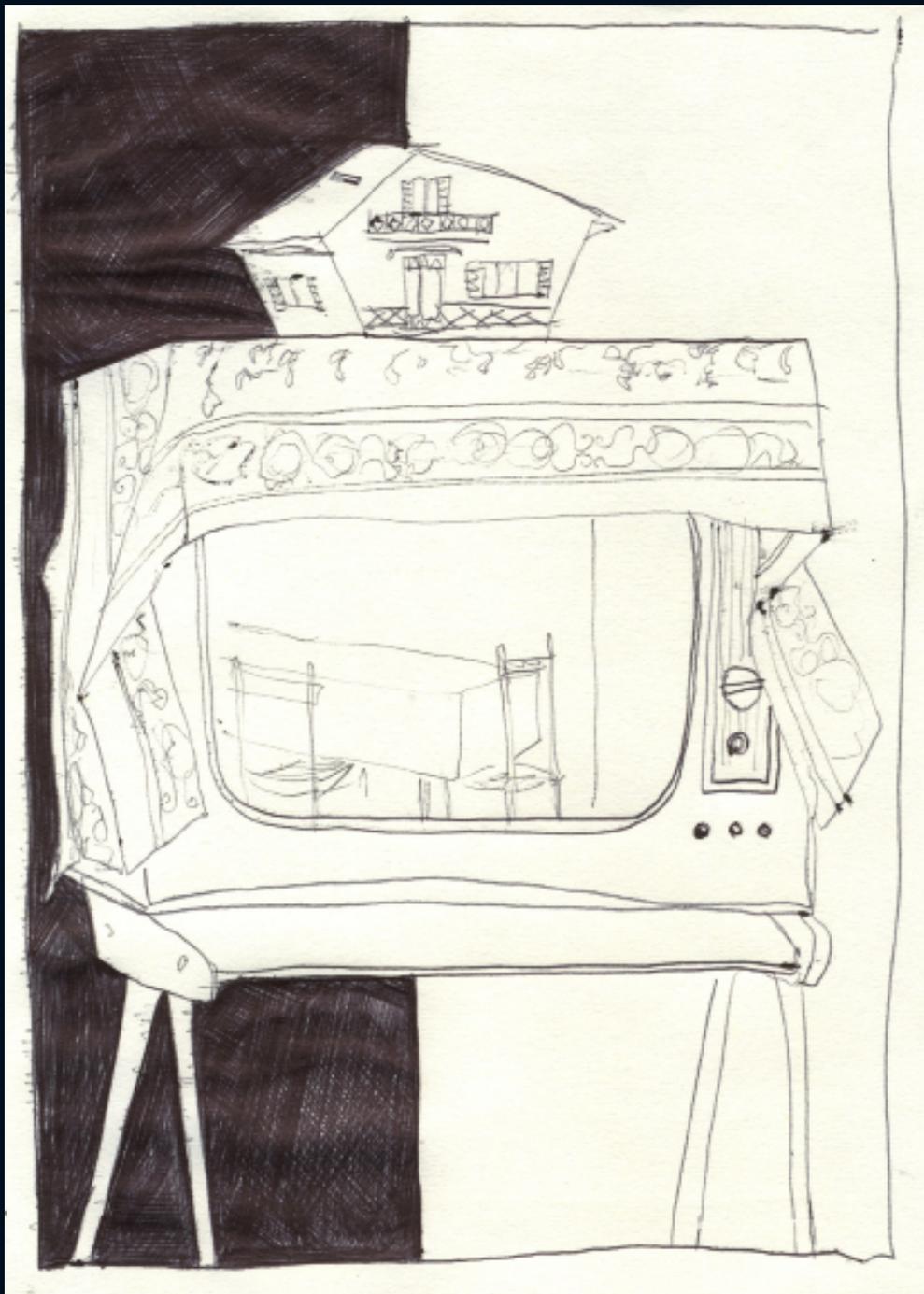
MARIO SCHIFANO. *Paesaggio TV*, 1970  
Fondazione Giò Marconi, Milano



JOAN RABASCALL. *La voz de su amo*, 1973  
Rafael Tous collection, Barcelona



FABIO MAURI. *Schermo (Una tasca di cinema)*, 1958  
Studio Mauri, Roma



MARCO RAPARELLI. *No Fun*, 2010  
Artist collection, Roma



MIREIA SENTÍS. *Máxima Audencia*, 1982  
Artist collection, Barcelona



MARTIN PARR. *Home Sweet Home Series*, 1979  
Martin Parr/Magnum Photos/Contrasto and Forma Galeria

»» Inter-university  
»» Workshops  
»» on Art and Technology

»» Iván Marino

The pieces on show in this section are the result of a series of inter-university dialogues in which artists, theorists and technicians linked to the art and technology degree courses of different Latin-American faculties took part. The aim of the conferences, held in the course of 2010, was to produce a series of essays and works that rethought the themes dealt with by certain paradigmatic artists of the 1970s (Wolf Vostell, Nam June Paik, Dan Graham, among others) to do with art and television. Following the general criterion of the show, the team proposed to focus its research and production work on two main lines: the symbolic use of the televisual object/appliance in the field of art (video-sculptures, video-installations) and the rhetorical dimension of the con-

tent produced for television (the aesthetic, syntactic and conceptual framework).

When it began researching the group was confronted by a tricky question: what is television today? Certain words get worn out by use over time until they disappear or are diluted in new expressions. When Lumière's cinematograph "developed" pre-cinematic devices, the word "cinema" displaced "praxinoscope", "zootrope" and "phenakistoscope". Some word created in the field of telematics may be performing at this precise moment a cunning silent task, pushing the term "television" slowly and inexorably towards the attic of disused words. The very mechanism<sup>[1]</sup> of television seems to have broken into countless technological fragments ("PDA/Personal Digital Assistant", "Smartphones", "Tablet computer") that multiply its resources, broaden its phantasmal horizon and question the appropriateness of a single word to refer to such diverse complex phenomena.

At the production stage the team tried to answer other troublesome questions: can technology be interpreted as an element essential in the drift of contemporary artistic production? Is it an end in itself or is it a pathological excuse by certain artists to bear their obsessions and excite the art market? Is technology an accidental choice of the author, who chooses any material in order to mistreat it, deform it and represent his/her own obsessions with a greater or lesser degree of skill (like Paik distorting elec-

tronic images, Vostell throwing manure over televisions or mounting a camera in the head of a goat)?

The tools used by the members of the project to communicate with each other (video-conferences, email, telematic messages) are, at the same time, the scope for reflection and the raw material of the works produced for this show. In a certain way, it could be said that the ethereal dialogue of the artists, theorists and technicians who are part of these meetings has been the work in itself, and the pieces that are exhibited here (computerized installations, streamed projections, roboticized objects) are a sort of intellectual remainder, an account of the disagreements and agreements reached by a working party immersed in an impassioned debate, which has tried to work out unsolvable riddles, sterile but enchanting at the same time, like the inventions of *Bouvard and Pécuchet*.<sup>[2]</sup>

<b>Inter-university Workshops on Art and Technology</b>	<b>Development and production of works</b>	<b>In collaboration with Consell Nacional de la Cultura i de les Arts</b>
<b>Idea and direction of project</b>	Julián Bonequi Cipriano González	<b>With the support of</b>
Iván Marino	Miguel Grassi Joana Moll Riubrogent José Carlos Neves	Arts Santa Mònica Departamento de Cultura y Medios de Comunicación Generalitat de Catalunya IDEC-UPF/Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, España MELAC/ Museo Extremeño e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporáneo, Badajoz, España UAB/Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; GRISS/Grupo de Investigación en Imagen, Sonido y Síntesis; InCom/Instituto de la Comunicación ULHT/Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologías, Lisboa, Portugal UNTREF/Universidad Nacional 3 Febrero, Buenos Aires, Argentina
<b>Management and production of content</b>	Daniel Pacheco Mariana Pierantoni Ernesto Romeo	<b>Project website</b>
Laia Munar Lorenzo	Heliodoro Santos Sánchez Alejandro Schianchi Marcelo Terreni Santiago Villa	<a href="http://www.tvarts.net">http://www.tvarts.net</a>
<b>Direction of the works exhibited</b>	<b>Coordination of texts and publications</b>	
Marcelo Dematei Iván Marino Marcello Mercado José Carlos Neves Mariela Yeregui	José Gomes Pinto Eugenio Tisselli Mariela Yeregui	
<b>Direction of online projects</b>	<b>Editorial collaborators</b>	
María Laura Piaggio	José A. Bragança de Miranda Marcelo Dematei Paulo Viveiros	
<b>Coordination of teams</b>	<b>Coordination of panels and round tables</b>	
Marcelo Dematei (IDEC/Universitat Pompeu Fabra-Barcelona) José Gomes Pinto (Universidade Lusófona-Lisboa) Eugenio Tisselli (IDEC/Universitat Pompeu Fabra-Barcelona) María Teresa Soto (GRIS-UAB/Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) Mariela Yeregui (Universidad Nacional 3 de Febrero-Buenos Aires)	José Gomes Pinto Laia Munar Lorenzo	
	<b>Production</b>	
	E-dumedia Soluciones	

Iván Marino, an Argentinian based in Barcelona, works in artistic production, research and teaching in Latin American universities.

[1] "Perhaps this is the most elementary definition of *mechanism*: a machine that produces an *effect*, in the strict sense of a 'magical' effect for the senses, of an event that produces a break between it and simple bodily materiality. A mechanism would be, then, that which explains the production of an 'illusion'. Slavoj Žižek, "Cyberspace, or the Suspension of Authority", in: *Lacrimae rerum. Essays on modern cinema and cyberspace*, Barcelona, Debate, 2006.

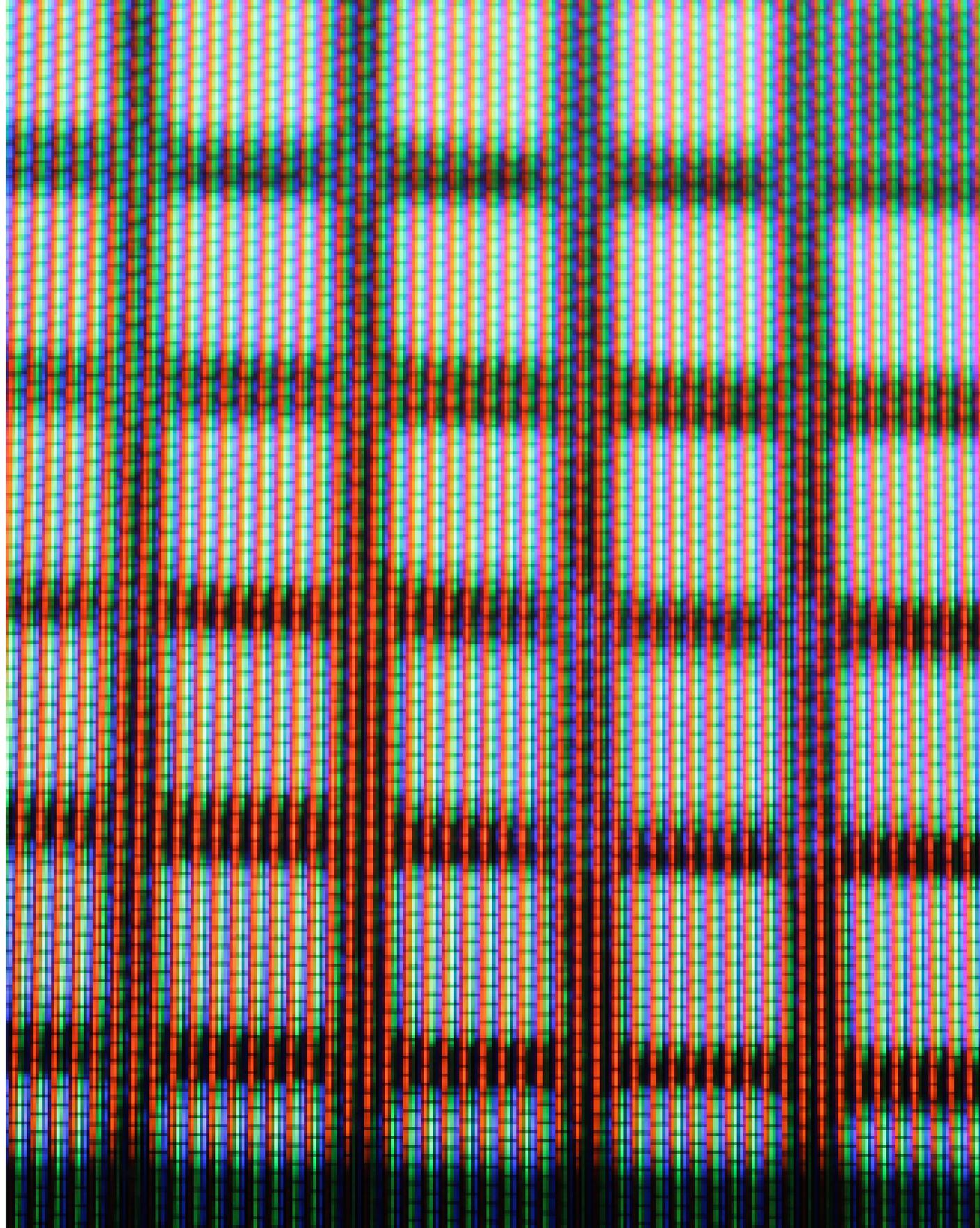
[2] Gustave Flaubert, *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, Barcelona, Tusquets, 1999.



CHAPTER 4

TV/VIDEO/TV:  
SINGLE-  
CHANNELS  
TAPES  
EXHIBITION

A selection of significant video works of the relationship between video and television in a period of time going from the late nineteen sixties to the dawn of the new century, regrouped by authors and subjects: artists' programmes, community and guerrilla television, genre parody, media landscape. It illustrates how artists have decoded and parodied television genres, languages and worlds forged by television; how they have designed and made different models of television.





[1]



[2]



[3]



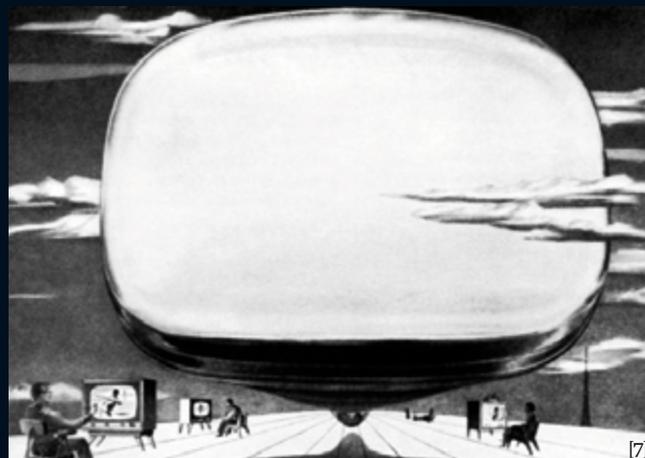
[4]



[5]



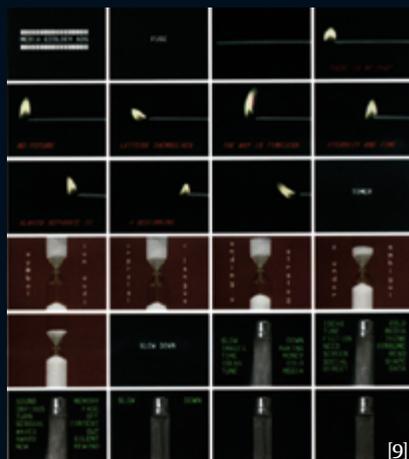
[6]



[7]



[8]



[9]



[10]

- [1] Alexander Kluge, *10 vor 11*
- [2] Alterazioni video
- [3] Cipri and Maresco
- [4] Jean-Luc Godard, *Don't go showing every side of everything*
- [5] General Idea, *AIDS (Ultramarine Blue)*
- [6] Gorilla Tape, *Zygnosis*, 1991
- [7] Guerrilla Television, "You are Information", 1971
- [8] Joseph Beuys, *Filz TV*, 1970
- [9] Antoni Muntadas, *Watching the Press-Reading Television*, 1981
- [10] Nam June Paik, *Global Groove*, 1973



**TV/VIDEO/TV:  
SINGLE-CHANNELS TAPES EXHIBITION**



**AUTHORS**



**Alterazioni video**

*Disinformation*, 2006, 2'19", colour, sound.  
*Resistance*, 2007, 3'37", colour, sound.  
*Aspettando lo Tsunami*, 2007, 2'59", colour, sound.  
*Intervallo*, 2009, 3'37", colour, sound.  
*Artists' serial killer*, 2008, 12'24", colour, sound.

**Ant Farm**

*Media Burn*. Ant Farm: Chip Lord, Doug Michels, Curtis Schrier, Uncle Buddie, 1975-2003, 23'02", colour, sound.  
*Eternal Frame*. Ant Farm and T.R. Uthco, 1975, 22'19", b&w and colour, sound.

**Dara Birnbaum**

*Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman*, 1978-79, 5'50", colour, sound.  
*Pop-Pop Video*, 1980, 9', colour, sound.  
*Kojak/Wang*, 1980, 3', colour, sound.

**Cipri and Maresco**

*El Sentimiento Cínico De La Vida*, (parts of "La televisione di Cipri e Maresco"), 1986-2007, 90', b&w, sound.  
*A Silvio, ovvero Berlusconi secondo Cipri e Maresco*, 30', b&w, sound, 2006.

**Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville**

*Six fois deux/Sur et sous la communication*, 1976, 360', colour, sound.  
*Histoire(s) du cinéma*, 1988-1998, colour, sound, total: 240'.  
 1a *Toutes les histoires*, 51'; 1b *Une histoire seule*, 42'; 2a *Seul le cinéma*, 26'; 2b *Fatale beauté*, 28'; 3a *La Monnaie de l'absolu*, 26'; 3b *Une vague nouvelle*, 27'; 4a *Le Contrôle de l'univers*, 27'; 4b *Le Signes parmi nous*, 38'.

**Antoni Muntadas**

*Transfer*, 1975, 19'11", colour, sound.  
*Liège 12/9/77*, 1977, 18', colour, sound.  
*On Subjectivity (About TV)*, 1978, 53', colour.  
*Watching the Press/Reading Television*, 1981, 11'20", colour, sound.  
*Media Ecology Ads*, 1982, 12'22", colour, sound.  
*Credits*, 1984, 27'02", colour, sound.

*Cross-Cultural Television*, Muntadas in conjunction with Hank Bull, 1987, 35', colour, sound.  
*Video is Television?*, 1989, 5' 34", colour, sound.

**Nam June Paik**

(and Jud Yalkut), *Waiting for Commercials*, 1966-72, 1992, 6'41", colour, sound.  
 (and Jud Yalkut), *Video Tape Study No. 3*, 1967-69, 1992, 4'01", b&w, sound.  
 (in collaboration with Douglas Davis, Jud Yalkut and Shigeko Kubota), *Suite 212*, 1975, re-edited 1977, 30'23", colour, sound.  
*Good Morning Mr. Orwell*, 1984, 38', colour, sound.

**Wolf Vostell**

*Sun in Your Head*, 1963, 7', b&w, sound.  
*Starfighter*, 1967, 7', b&w, sound.  
*20 Juli 1964 Aachen*, 1967, 7', b&w, sound.  
*Notstandsbordstein (Emergency Sidewalk)*, 1969, 7', b&w.  
*Disastres*, 1972, 45', colour, sound.  
*Derrière l'arbre (Behind the Tree)*, 1976, 45', colour and b&w, sound.

**Andy Warhol**

*Fashion 1979-1980*, 10 episodes, videotape, colour, sound, 30' each. Conceived by Andy Warhol. Produced by Vincent Fremont. Directed by Don Munroe. Executive Producer: Andy Warhol. Production Manager: Sue Etkin.  
*Andy Warhol's TV 1980-1982*, 18 episodes, videotape, colour, sound, 30' each. Manhattan Cable TV Channel 10. Conceived by Andy Warhol. Produced by Vincent Fremont. Directed by Don Munroe. Executive Producer: Andy Warhol. Production Manager: Sue Etkin.  
*Andy Warhol's TV 1983*, 9 episodes, 1' videotape, colour, sound, 30' each. Madison Square Garden Network. Conceived by Andy Warhol. Directed by Don Munroe. Produced by Vincent Fremont. Executive Producer: Andy Warhol.  
*Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes 1985-1987*, 5 episodes, 1' videotape, colour, sound, 30' each. Andy Warhol TV Productions for MTV Network. Conceived by Andy Warhol. Directed by Don Munroe. Produced by Vincent Fremont. Executive Director: Andy Warhol.  
 Three Spots for *Saturday Night Live*, 1' each, colour, sound. Directed by Don Munroe. Produced by Vincent Fremont. Starring: Andy Warhol. MTV, USA, 1986.

**William Wegman**

*Selected Works: Reel 2*, 1972, 14'19", b&w, sound.  
*Selected Works: Reel 3*, 1973, 17'54", b&w, sound.  
*Selected Works: Reel 4*, 1973-74, 20'57", b&w, sound.  
*Selected Works: Reel 6*, 1975, 18'35", b&w and colour, sound.  
*Gray Hairs*, 1976, 5'10", colour, sound.

**ARTISTS' PROGRAMMES**



Individual works, series or real programmes with an established cadence, made by artists, in a group or individually, and broadcast by television channels and/or produced and rebroadcast by television channels, including cable and satellite TV.

**Charles Atlas** (in collaboration with mime artist Bill Irwin)  
*As Seen on TV*, 1988, 24'39", colour, sound (episode of "Alive From Off Center").  
*Video: The New Wave*, 1973, 58'27", b&w and colour, sound.  
 Written and narrated by Brian O'Doherty.

**Carmelo Bene**  
*Quattro momenti su tutto il nulla*, series of four TV episodes, 105', colour, sound.  
 Made by Carmelo Bene, recorded in 2001, broadcast in 2004, Rai Due Palcoscenico/Rai Sat & Sacha Film Company Srl.  
*Momento 1. Linguaggio. Momento 2. Conoscenza/ Coscienza. Momento 3. L'Eros. Momento 4. Arte.*

**John Cage**  
*Water Walk*, in TV Programme *I've Got a Secret*. 1960, b&w, sound.

**Joseph Beuys, Douglas Davis, Nam June Paik**  
*Documenta 6 Satellite Telecast*, 1977, 30', colour, sound.

**Salvador Dalí**  
*Chaos and Creation*, 1959.

**Dike Blair, Dan Graham, MICA TV, USA**  
*CASCADE/Vertical Landscapes*, 1988, 6'30", colour, sound.

**WGBH and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, USA**  
*Video Variations*, 1972, 57'53", colour, sound.

**Jaime Davidovich**  
*Qube Project*, 1980, 10', colour, sound, Soho TV, USA.  
*The Live! Show*, ending on 18/2/82, 1982, 28', colour, sound.  
*Saludos Amigos*, 1984, 21', colour, sound.

**Douglas Davis**  
 TV Lab at WNET/Thirteen (VTR series), USA.  
*Douglas Davis: Video Against Video*, 1975, 28'50", b&w and colour, sound.

**Jan Dibbets**  
 WDR 3 (Germany).  
*TV as a Fireplace*, 1969, 23' (8 x 2'45"), colour.  
**Stan Douglas**  
*Television Spots*, 1987/1988.  
*Monodramas*, 1991, ten 30- to 60-second videos.

**Valie Export**  
*Facing a Family*, 1971, 4'44", b&w, sound.

**Marco Giusti**  
 Rai Tre, Italy.  
*Pino Pascali o le trasformazioni del serpente*, 2003.

**Gorilla Tapes**  
 Channel Four (United Kingdom).  
*The Media Show*, 1987, Channel Four (United Kingdom).  
 Gorilla Tapes, commissioned by the producers.  
*Stardust 1*, 1987, 2'14", colour, sound.  
*Fleet Street Blues*, 1987, 2'30", colour, sound.  
*Decline and Fallout*, 1987, 2'40", colour, sound.  
*Hot Kisses*, 1987, 14", colour, sound.  
*Invisible Television (IVT)*, 1987, 52', colour, sound.

**Gusztáv Hámos**  
 MTV, USA.  
*1989 The Real Power of TV*, 1991, 58'25", colour, sound.

**Allan Kaprow, Nam June Paik, Otto Piene, James Seawright, Thomas Tadlock and Aldo Tambellini**  
 WGBH, USA.  
*The Medium is The Medium*, 1969, 27'50", colour, sound.

**Alexander Kluge**  
 RTL, private channel, Spiegel TV, cultural magazine (Germany).  
*10 vor 11, Die Stunde der Filmemacher*.  
 After *10 vor 11* and *Die Stunde der Filmemacher*, the TV programmes made by *Blider ohne Worte*, 1989, 24', colour sound.  
*Der Zirkus brennt*, 1989, 24', colour, sound.  
*Zeitenwechsel* (series), 1988, 24', colour, sound.  
*Die Maus und andere Geschichten*, 1988, 24', colour, sound.  
*Gegen die Tyrannei des Realen – El Lissitzky*, 1989, 14', colour, sound.  
*Antiquitäten der reclame*, 1989, 14', colour, sound.

**Richard Kriesche**  
 ZDF arts programme "Aspekte", Germany.  
*Painting Conceals, Art Reveals*, 1977, 3'12", colour, sound.

**Nam June Paik**  
 TV Lab at WNET/Thirteen (VTR series), USA.  
*Nam June Paik: Edited for Television*, 1975, 28'14", b&w and colour, sound.  
**Nam June Paik, Jud Yalkut**  
 WGBH, USA.  
*Video Commune (Beatles Beginning to End)*, 1972-92, 8'36", colour, silent.

**Pier Paolo Pasolini**  
 Broadcast by the Rai, 1983 (Italy).  
*Comizi d'amore*, 1964, 89', b&w, sound.

## Gerry Schum

SWF/ARD, November 1970, Germany. *This 'Il Fernsehausstellung* ("TV Exhibition II"), a sequel to Schum's earlier "Land Art" broadcast.

### Land Art:

Marinus Boezem, *Sand Fountain*, 1969, 4'12", b&w, sound.

Walter De Maria, *Two Lines Three Circles in The Desert*, 1969, 4'46", b&w, sound.

Jan Dibbets, *12 Hours Tide Object With Correction of Perspective*, 7'33", b&w, sound.

Barry Flanagan, *Hole in The Sea*, 1969, 3'44", b&w, sound.

Richard Long, *Walking a Straight 109 miles Forward and Back Shooting Every Half a Mile*, 1969, 6'3", b&w, sound.

Dennis Openheim, *Timetrack Following The Timeborder Between U.S.A. and Canada*, 1969, 2'7", b&w, sound.

Robert Smithson, *Fossil Quarry Mirror With Four Mirror Displacement*, 1969, 3'12".

### Identifications:

Giovanni Anselmo, 1970, 1'10", b&w, sound.

Joseph Beuys, *Filtz TV*, 1970, 11'25", b&w, sound.

Alighiero Boetti, 1970, 2'05", b&w, sound.

Stanley Brouwn, *One Step*, 1970, 1'57", b&w, sound.

Pierpaolo Calzolari, 1970, 2'12", b&w, sound.

Gino De Dominicis, *Tentativo di volo*, 1970, 1'55", b&w, sound.

Gino De Dominicis, *Quadrati cerchi*, 1970, 6', b&w, sound.

*Gilbert & George*, 1970, 1'25", b&w, sound.

Gary Kuhen, 1970, 1'25", b&w, sound.

Mario Merz, *Lumaca*, 1970, 1'20", b&w, sound.

Klaus Rinke, 1970, 50", b&w, sound.

Ulrich Rückriem, 1970, 55", b&w, sound.

Reiner Ruthenback, 1970, 3'40", b&w, sound.

Franz Erhard Walther, 1970, 2'05", sound.

Lawrence Weiner, 1970, 50", b&w, sound.

## Steina and Woody Vasulka

WNED (USA).

*Vasulka Video*, 1978, 173', b&w and colour, sound.

## Bill Viola

New Television Workshop at WGBH TV (USA).

*Reverse Television-Portraits of Viewers (Compilation Tape)*, 1984, 15', colour, sound.

## Robert Wilson

ZDF, Germany.

*Video 50*, 1978, 51'40", colour, sound.

## COMMUNITY AND GUERRILLA TELEVISION



Under this name we have grouped together an important selection of collective authors (artists, independent video producers, programme producers and social activists) who from the seventies, in protest against the business, made available means of production and the wherewithal for a task of counter-information through video programmes made by social groups (media made by the community).

### Deep Dish TV

*Mediums Well Done, Re-making Pop Culture*, 1986, 58', colour, sound.

*Getting A Grip On Access*, 1986, 58', colour, sound.

*Kids Play Back*, 1986, 58', colour, sound.

*Alternative Media in the Bay Area*, 1991, 28', colour, sound.

### Downtown Community Television Center (DCTV), USA

VTR: *Downtown Community Television Center*, DCTV (Jon Alpert, Yoko Maruyama, Keiko Tsuno) and VTR, 1975, 29'08", b&w and colour, sound.

### Doug Hall, Chip Lord and Jody Procter

*The Amarillo News Tapes*, 1980, 25'52", colour, sound.

### Media Bus

*Probably the World's Smallest TV Station*, 1975, 60', b&w and colour, sound.

### Paper Tiger Television (PTTV), USA

*Paper Tiger at The Whitney: Youth and the Media;*

*Escape From Tom and Jerry*, 1985, 28', sound.

*Operation Storm the Media*, 1991, 28', colour, sound.

*Subverting the Media: A Guide To Low Tech Information*

*Activism*, 1998, 25', colour, sound.

*Paper Tiger Reads Paper Tiger TV*, 2007, 46', colour, sound.

### Raindance

*Raindance: Media Manual*, 1971, 55'41", b&w, sound.

### Richard Serra

*Television Delivers People*. Richard Serra and Carlotta Fay Schoolman, 1973, 5'55", colour, sound.

### Top Value Television (TVTV)

*Four More Years*, 1972, 61'28", b&w, sound.

*Gerald Ford's America: Chic to Sheik*, 1975, 28', b&w and colour, sound.

*Gerald Ford's America: WIN*, 1975, 28', colour, sound.

### Videofreex

*CBS-Lily and Cleaver Tapes*, 1971, 16', b&w, sound.

*Process Video Revolution*, 1971, 23'30", b&w, sound.

*Lanesville Overview I*, 32'18", 1972, b&w, sound.

Parry Teasdale, *Videofreex: America's First Pirate TV Station*.

*Lanesville TV Edit-Catskill Game Farm*, 1972, 18'45", 1972.

*Trashing and Gassing in Miami: The 1972 Republican Convention*, 1972, 33", b&w, sound.

## GENRE PARODY



### Robert Ashley

*Perfect Lives*, 1983 3hrs 30mins, 7 episodes, 30' each, colour, sound, Channel 4. Directed by John Sanborn. Script: Robert Ashley.

### Alex Bag

*Gladia Daters*, 2005, 30', colour, sound.

### Klaus Vom Bruch

*Das softiband*, 1980, 19'11", colour, sound.

### Chris Burden

*The TV Commercials 1973-1977, 1973-77/2000*, 30'46", colour, sound.

### Doug Hall

*This is the Truth*, 1982, 3'30", colour, sound.

### General Idea

*Test Tube*, 1979, 28'15", colour, sound.

*Shut the Fuck Up*, 1984, 14', colour, sound.

### Chip Lord

*Chip Lord: Selected Works*, 1977-84, 25'35", b&w and colour, sound.

### Martha Rosler

*Semiotics of the Kitchen*, 1975, 6'09", b&w, sound.

### Zbig Rybczynski

*Steps*, 1987, 35mm/video, 26', colour and b&w, sound.

## MEDIA LANDSCAPE



The works included in this voice have in common the way of representing the world through the images produced by the mass media, recycling the iconography of pop culture, with the aim of deconstructing its syntax and language.

### John Adams

*Sensible Shoes*, 1983, 11'10", colour, sound.

### Lyn Blumenthal

*Arcade*, 1984, 9'30", colour, sound.

### Dara Birnbaum, Dan Graham

*Local TV News Analysis*, 1980, 61'08", colour, sound.

### Lynda Benglis

*Enclosure*, 1973, 7'28", b&w, sound.

### Johan Grimonprez

*Dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y*, 1997, 68', colour / b&w, sound.

Note: Besides using bibliographical sources and online sites (cf. websites), the research has been carried out with the archives of the Electronic Art Intermix (EAI), New York, the video database (VDB) of Chicago, the Medien Kunstet experimental television centre, the MoMA, the Lincoln Center's Department of Media and the Performing Arts and the Caixa Fòrum media library, Barcelona.

## »» Artists Make and Unmake TV

»» Antoni Mercader

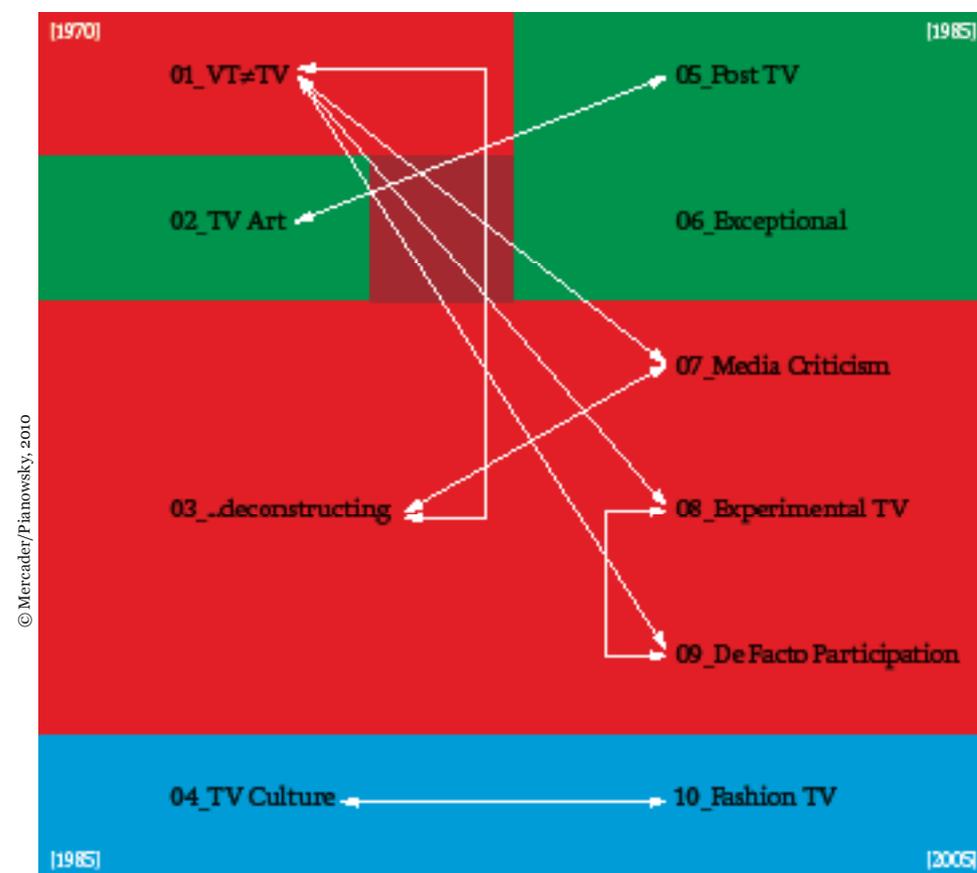
Everything would surely be very different if, now, when sitting down to compose this historical note about what has been going on between art and television in this country over the last forty years, relations between artistic production and televisual communication were different, without the predominance of Internet and the social networks.

It is quite clear that I have approached and constructed this contribution from the point of view of the problems of the present day, and of our obsessions and desires. An approach that is, then, a contemporary proposal of outstanding episodes, from the early seventies to the present day, of the relationships between the artistic and the televisual. The condition of having been close to some of the events listed also affects the impression that you now have before you in the form of this text and of the choice of works to view and/or consult.

It all started in the late seventies. VT≠TV, TV Art, Media Criticism, ... deconstructing, TV Culture, Post TV, Exceptional, Experimental TV, De Facto Intervention, Fashion TV would be the epigraphs; brief indications that we could apply to a review of the relations past and present between the practice of art and the mediation of television in Catalonia and Spain up to the present day.

Looking at the diagram below, you immediately see that the ten stations (in chronological order) on which we have worked are organized into three areas (red, green, blue) with different conceptual and operational dynamics of their own that are maintained over the forty years of the study, and we also see that close relationships are established inside each one. These three areas correspond firstly to:

A (red area) of manifest social involvement, related to the strong ideological opposi-



tion that endures throughout all these years between video and television, between the micro-, meso-, and macro-televisual concepts.

Secondly, B (green) of artistic expression, relative to the contributory, experimental contributions and innovations which have been made by art to audiovisual language, on the way to a syntax of its own of the visual and auditory images, of the texts and diagrams and data.

And finally: C (blue) of aesthetic and cultural references, according to how and in what way there has been an articulation of the audiovisual creators reflected in the gradual advent of a television culture.

Five of these stations, i.e. of the important productions with which I have constructed this visualisation, correspond to what we might call the pioneer period (1970-1985, column one) and to later generations (1985-2000, column two). I should point out the different size of the three areas dominated by the former and the non-presence in this selection – which aims to be representative of a long period of Spanish and Catalan production – of works centred on the exploitation of the domestic domain with relation to the television screen. I believe this absence to be sufficiently indicative of the few existing proposals we know of, which contrasts with the fact that in other geographical and cultural areas there have been plenty of them.

## CHRONOLOGICAL STATIONS

### **01\_VT≠TV** *The genesis and development of a long-lasting conflicting approach* (03, 07, 08, 09)<sup>[1]</sup>

Intent on creating open opposition to all that was the one-directional nature and the hierarchization of institutionalized mass communications by governments and the groups of economic power brokers, a minority social movement that we might call video activism was perfectly in tune with the non-conformism of the events of May 1968 in Paris. A series of initiatives related to the cultural context of change and to the ideas of freeing consumer society generated among young people – students in the main – acted as an indicator of the desire to transgress the status and rank of communications and most particularly the unidirectional and centralized stance of television. These individuals, mobilized by the protests, called upon by collective initiatives linked to the centres of artistic training, are attracted by the new tool, never before seen, from which, without specific training, documentation services and the diffusion of images and sounds can be achieved. A tool, which, given that it is electronic and audiovisual, could supplant the all-powerful television and therefore become, in a certain way, an alternative to the prevailing TV broadcasting.

In Barcelona, the formation of *Video Nou* (1977-1983), a group with mixed backgrounds, led the spirit of video activism that began to take root after a video workshop at the Sala Vinçon and the experience *Cadaqués Canal Local* (Muntadas, 1974) and more specifically after the holding of a workshop with Margarita d'Amico and Manuel Manzano in 1977. One of the first jobs was *Vaga de Benzineres* (Petrol Station Strike, 1977), a vast amount of information collected and monitored closely over four days of conflict between the workers and management of this service sector.

### **02\_TV Art** *With the insignia of artistic expression* (05, 06)<sup>[2]</sup>

Above and beyond confrontation, formulas for collaboration between art and television by way of expression were quite soon established. Since 1968 there had been some broadcasts prepared and made by artists. I shall mention two important examples: *Black Gate Cologne*, by Otto Piene and Aldo Tambellini, on WDR Cologne, and the production *The Medium is the Medium*, in 1969, on WGBH in Boston with the participation of the two authors mentioned, of Paik and Allan Kaprow, among others. The part that these programmes played in the development of the new videographic medium was decisive.

WDR (West Deutsche Rundfunk) was where Josep Montes-Baquer (Barcelona, 1935) worked, a musician trained in Catalonia who moved in the intellectual and artistic circles of the city of Cologne. He was to achieve extraordinary audience ratings as a director and producer of cultural programmes on the second German state channel, as the director of the music television department. *Percussion Solo* (1980) is the most rep-

resentative of these works at the limit of the possibilities for audiovisual research that the “channel twos” of the time allowed. The recognition of and interest in artistic television did not become obvious until the beginning of the 1980s; it was reinforced with the irruption of video clips and contributions like the one we are talking about, giving the television made by television itself, with experimental savoir faire, cultural and artistic cachet.

### **03 ... deconstructing** *“Disruption” of the televisual specific?* (01, 07)

A critical attitude arising from the standpoint of media ecology was to approach the phenomenon of television with the aim of “disrupting” it. Very soon, in the eighties, interpretations appear of the social stereotypes derived from the domination of general broadcasting, above all myths, clichés and especially, emerging power values. Authors like Antoni Muntadas (Barcelona, 1942) approached the analysis derived from the media's sign system with the aim of showing up the multiplicity of interpretations generated by dissent in the form of a particular way of interpreting audiovisual communication. An unmethodical analysis, falling within what Derrida called a certain baggage to make a deconstruction of the language of television, above and beyond the intentions of its authors and producers. This is how *Credits* (1984) emerged with a visual logic based on the analysis of the meanings of the productions of the entertainment-based television channels on the American media scene. A broad generous collection, a powerful appropriation of the most varied ways of presenting the credits on the highest-rating programme grids in the USA in those years.

### **04\_TV Culture** *Without taking any of its original magical attraction away* (10)

The late seventies, early eighties is the time when the iconic tastes of an aware minority begin turning towards the dirty, undefined but immediate image of video and television. It is a new concept: the video image or image generated by electronic means, that sets out on its journey of consolidation. It is when video becomes more or less established within the reach of artists and art, music and architecture groups.

From the point of view of contemporary art, in the many expressive aspects existing at that time one can recognise a certain, “glamorous” attraction towards the more popular and kitsch aspects of television programmes. And this is how Antoni Miralda and Jordi Torrent formulate a discourse in the typical style of television to be viewed (on a large monitor) precisely as a “moving gem” from the engagement ring of the statues of Columbus in Barcelona and Liberty in New York. *TV Ring* (1986) is the name of the piece that heightens the fascination for the television set and the magical environment created around it.

### **05\_Post TV** *Breaking moulds* (02)

Continuing with the open spirit of contributions by art to television and in tune with the ambition to experiment, Eugeni Bonet (Barcelona, 1954) makes five videos under this perspective with a marked innovatory intention for subjective documentary and

[1] The two-digit number referring to the chronological order of the ten works chosen for the viewings of the show and which serves to establish links between them as can be seen in the diagram above.

[2] The digits in bold indicate that it is a two-way interrelationship.

the didactic content that a serialized production on a cultural and artistic subject may contribute. Breaking with the established way of doing things on television, in each of the videos on the figure and the work of the art critic and poet Juan Eduardo Cirlot, he establishes the ideas and context through an introduction in the form of a prologue and a token conclusion as an epilogue. In the first, he makes use of polyphonic interviews with five people close to the poet. Audio – in *Lectures de Cirlot: Cristo Cristal* (1986-1987) in this case music by Eduardo Polonio played by Barbara Held – text and visuals harmonize with the refinement of Cirlot's aesthetic thinking. Are we looking at a videographic reinterpretation of sequential combinations that “would have shaken up” any television channel's conventional idea of artistic and cultural programmes, a Post TV?

#### 06\_ Exceptional *There was a high point* (06)

Spanish video production in the early nineties was encouraging. It was possible for “video art sessions” to be made on the Basque and Catalan autonomous television stations (with *Estoc de Pop* and other programmes) and the state television station Televisión Española; there was even a certain degree of acceptance by the television powers that be of the videographic suppositions that up to then were inspiring artistic production. So it was that José Ramón Pérez Ornia was commissioned to make a fourteen-episode series on the up-and-coming phenomenon of video art. *El arte del vídeo. Veinte autores españoles. Cap. 14*, devoted wholly to Spanish video creation, is an authentic exception for celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of experimental video.

“The protest, as if it were yet more 20<sup>th</sup> century avant-garde, the innovatory nature of the language and the formal experimentation, over and above the dominant conventionalisms.

Experimental video is the other side of television, the artistic side, and contributes to establishing a different way of making and watching television. Through the eyes of art and with the attitude of the avant-garde.”<sup>[3]</sup>

By wishing to emulate the subject of the series, the production, given to a TVE professional, made the formal – not the conceptual – result excessive. The team of national and international scriptwriters, very competent, pointed to an original effort for each episode. The fourteenth was given to Muntadas. *¿El vídeo es televisión?* (Is Video Television? 1989) bears witness to the challenge facing the team given the job of creating the content.

#### 07\_Media Criticism *Criticism is made from a stance of media ecology* (01, 03)

With the coming of the communicative domination of television a state of opinion or of ideological positioning began to be created with respect to the media landscape that we usually refer to with the English expression ‘media criticism’. It is a phenomenon that very well illustrates how far the involvement of art in the area of media communication generated important expectations that subsequently had the corresponding repercussions that defined the art of the mid-eighties. An attitude that had already

been present in the first works of intervention in macro-television and in the very first videographic compositions, but which heightened as we entered the seventies.

From this state of affairs we can retain the combative nature of the artistic communication that spread everywhere and the creation of a breeding ground that later had direct consequences in the shaping of the ideas and attitudes of contemporary art and, to a lesser extent, was to affect certain particular aspects of communication in general. This is how appropriationist works came about like *WSB Hassan Sabbah* (1998), in which two young authors of that time converge, Toni Serra and Joan Leandre, co-founders in 1992 of the OVNI archives devoted to research, investigation and programming.

*WSB Hassan Sabbah* are the words of Hassan expressed by W.S. Burroughs which mixed up with images from television news bulletins, as the maximum expression of permanent conflict of the media reality, champion an ecologist thesis in the face of the quasi-absolute dominion of institutionalized audiovisual news.

#### 08\_Experimental TV *Live, active ... and everywhere* (01)

In the wake first of video activism and then of the independent local community television stations, we come across continuist initiatives rooted in those sets of ideas that are wholly valid. One of them is the case of *NeokinokTV*. It is an artistic project of live experimental television. It is highly charged with performance action linked to the artistic field in which the group coordinated (since 1998) by Daniel Miracle moves, together with the call for a plural public service to be recovered in the face of the current social conflict.

“*NeokinokTV*'s proposal for experimental television sets out to show there are other ways of watching and making television, like interaction with the community and the participation of the audience, which ceases to be passive and becomes active. The *Neokinok.tv* project is constructed from different layers, going from artistic audiovisual production to media analysis, from popular participation to interactivity with the audience, from electronics to programme design.

The production, automatic editing and ENG systems mixing images in real time make it possible to make programmes in which the producer is actually the audience, programmes that deal with general subjects that get the viewers, the specialists, observers and the general public to participate. The message is more varied. The thinking is not blinkered but open-minded. Each viewer is invited to express his/her own opinion and even to create his/her own TV channel.

In this project we include diffusion via Internet using open-code protocols and programming.”<sup>[4]</sup>

#### 09\_De Facto Participation *Taking advantage of the democratizing plus factor* (01)

Since 1999 the Fundación Rodríguez's *Intervenciones TV* has been proposing the medium of television as a support for audiovisual creation projects by authors from Euskal

[3] José Ramón Pérez Ornia, *El arte del vídeo*, Madrid, RTVE/Serbal, 1991, p. 7.

[4] www.neokinok.tv (14-04-2010).

Herria (The Basque Country), first, and then from Spain and other countries. The involvement of local television (at the beginning Canal Gasteiz), made it possible to include the work of various artists in the televisual flux.

“Thoughts on the language of television, advertising or experimental spots, the questioning of the medium and of its message inserted by surprise, with no advance warning, in the usual programmes ...”

Interventions in television like “Al asalto”, recalling once again the intense relationship of “VT with TV”, (video with television), looking back once more to that period in which media activism moved smoothly into the field of art.

The versatility of the proposal offered a response mechanism, a way of responding to the whole torrential flow of images.

“A political attack on the media system through the distortion of the message, the dislocation of the programming structure and the strategic diversion of the attention towards other content, the spots that the project proposes become creative manoeuvres with added value.

In this project the term ‘intervention’ has had many meanings, as many as the authors that have circulated through the editions, because everyone’s creative discourse is able to offer many varied responses arising from reflection on the phenomenon of television, all eventually coinciding in the idea of ‘shaking up’ the passive attitude of the viewer or ‘short-circuiting’ the current message.”<sup>[5]</sup>

#### 10 Fashion TV Serious aesthetic mischief (04)

In recent years contemporary art circles have dealt exhaustively with the world of teenagers and young people and have devoted their efforts to phenomena like dance music, fashion, trends, clubbing, incipient and questioned sexuality, the iconography of the fan, adolescent fears and worries. And, why not, a renewed aesthetic formulation of television. This is how Carles Congost (Olot, 1970), from an ironic and mischievous angle, tackles the loss of his own innocence, his own career and wonders about the mechanisms for producing meaning in which television, the televisual aesthetic, plays a key role.

*That’s My Impression* (2001) is a documentary, a parody of the stereotyped discourse of art theorists, imitating their way of talking and acting. The piece ends up being an acid critique of the ideological and financial paraphernalia that currently surrounds the spontaneous act of creation.

The encounters between high and low culture that are captured in artistic expressions from design to music and from fashion to youth cultures or the advertising industry trying to make the creations coherent, usually use vacuous, stilted and stereotyped language that in the long run leads to the banalization of the concepts presented and to the uniformization of the ideas.

#### By way of conclusion

The situation today is not so different from the way things were forty years ago between artistic production and communication. Although there are thirty years between them, the periods of video art and net art touch. Let’s see how the suppositions and surely many other things prevail.

Returning to the diagram, we realise what the repercussions of the equation VT≠TV (01, 03, 07, 08, 09) have been; how labels have passed from one generation to another (02, 06); the articulation of phenomena years after the specific stances and critical behaviour (03, 07); the exceptional nature of a specific situation at the end of the eighties (06); the simultaneous appearance of initiatives related to taking advantage of the net’s specificity (08 and 09). We also see that the interrelationships are in some cases two-way, if we look at the careers of the authors in each of their areas of production. As it is not a question of square centimetres, the orange area (that of the ideological and social mood) is the one that comes out the winner in this historical approach to what our artists did and undid – do and undo? – in relation to television.

#### SELECTION OF VIDEOS

##### 01. VT≠TV

New Video (SVC). *Vaga de Benzineres*, 1977 (2h23’).  
The development of a conflicting approach.

##### 02. TV Art

Josep Montes Baquer. *Percussion Solo*, 1980 (29’).  
Experimental *savoir faire* from the institution of television.

##### 03. ... deconstructing

Muntadas. *Credits*, 1984 (27’).  
An attitude of disruption of the specific.

##### 04. Culture TV

Antoni Miralda and Jordi Torrent. *TV Ring*, 1986 (14’).  
Fetishist (diamond).

##### 05. Post TV

Eugeni Bonet. *Lectures de Cirlot: Cristo Cristal*, 1986-1987 (11’).  
Breaking with the model.

##### 06. Exceptional for an extraordinary moment

Cap. 14 *El Arte del Vídeo*. Televisió Espanyola, 1988-1989 (30’). Idea by Manuel Palacio. Includes Antoni Muntadas’ production *¿El vídeo es televisión?*  
Documentary, informative (with aesthetic return).

##### 07. Media Criticism

T. Serra and J. Leandre. *WSB Hassan Sabbah*, 1983 (3’).  
A critical, appropriationist attitude.

##### 08. Experimental TV sur place

*NeokinokTV*. Group coordinated by Daniel Miracle since 1998.  
[www.neokinok.tv/](http://www.neokinok.tv/)  
Artistic project for experimental television.

##### 09. De Facto Intervention

*Intervenciones TV*. Fundación Rodríguez, since 1999.  
[www.rdz-fundazioa.net/intervencionestv/castellano/index.htm](http://www.rdz-fundazioa.net/intervencionestv/castellano/index.htm)  
“Al asalto”, of video with television.

##### 10. Fashion TV

Carles Congost. *That’s My Impression*, 2001 (7’30”).  
A question of aesthetics.

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[5] [www.rdz-fundazioa.net/intervencionestv/castellano/index.htm](http://www.rdz-fundazioa.net/intervencionestv/castellano/index.htm) (14-04-2010).

## »» Nothing Special. Andy Warhol, Television »» and the Becoming Public of the Present

»» Giulia Palladini

In 1975, on the second page of *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*, Warhol declared that his life's unfulfilled ambition was to have his own television show, which he would have called *Nothing Special*.<sup>[1]</sup> Four years later, this ambition was partly satisfied by the making of his first programme for a cable TV channel in collaboration with Don Munroe, artistic director of the video section of Bloomingdale's, and Vincent Fremont, Warhol's right-hand man during the last fifteen years of his life. The programme, *Fashion*, was the first in a series of shows made by the artist and his collaborators between 1979 and 1987, which would go on to include *Andy Warhol's TV* and *Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes*.<sup>[2]</sup>

In all three instances, the format chosen was the "video magazine". Each thirty minute episode presented a cross-section of a particular New York, chosen by the artist as something to be *shown*. In selecting episodes for the exhibition "TV/ARTS/TV" I have aimed to restore the multi-faceted quality of these cross-sections: from the world of fashion, as portrayed in the first programme *Fashion*, to the worlds of film<sup>[3]</sup>, rock

[1] Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*, New York, Harvest Books, 1977, p. 6.

[2] Warhol made three television series between 1979 and 1987, a total of 42 episodes, shown by private cable TV stations Manhattan Cable TV, Channel 10 (*Fashion*, 1979-1980, and *Andy Warhol's TV*, 1980-1982), Madison Square Garden Network (*Andy Warhol's TV*, 1983) and MTV Network (*Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes*, 1985-1987). Warhol was in charge of the design and the executive production of all the programmes, while Don Munroe was the director and Vincent Fremont the producer.

[3] Warhol's programmes include the mainstream cinema of the Hollywood film stars and the independent films of Ron Link and John Waters. One of the episodes that are presented in this exhibition contains a long interview with the director of *Pink Flamingos* and with the undisputed star of his films, the transvestite Divine (episode 9, *Andy Warhol's TV*, 1983).

music (Debbie Harry<sup>[4]</sup>, The Ramones and Duran Duran), contemporary art (Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring) and performance art (Eleanor Antin and Cindy Sherman), which were covered in later shows.

Andy Warhol's programmes are television pure and simple: they were broadcast as part of a TV schedule, they ran for the length of a "season", and they had nothing to do directly with art but rather with the people who make it. They deal with the arbiters of style and the creators of the languages of pop culture, and go to the places where these styles and languages are celebrated (the famous Studio 54 discotheque, fashion shows, the streets covered in graffiti by Keith Haring). Rather than the art world, these programmes seem more obviously to inhabit the world of publicity.<sup>[5]</sup>

Indeed, publicity appears to be the essential code towards which Warhol's work in the last fifteen years of his life is directed, coming full circle almost to the beginnings of his career as a commercial artist in fifties New York. However, "publicity" is a term that can be understood in many ways, aside from the obvious sense of promoting a product. It is etymologically linked to the word "public", suggesting that Warhol's entire career – from the shop windows and the fashion illustrations to the ads of the eighties<sup>[6]</sup> – converges in the artist's wish to *make himself public*. Or, more precisely, that it is shot through with a continual obsession to *make public his own present*.

Alongside the large-scale production of film in the 1960s, Warhol developed the obsessive habit of recording voices and images, matching an interest in accumulating presentness with his need to fix it and grant it duration. Especially in the movies Warhol made leading to *Chelsea Girls* (1966), everything he shot was shot – so to speak – in the present moment, in real time, using a field recording technique that is characteristic of video. On these lines, then, it is possible to identify in Warhol's work a tendency towards the ontology of video that precedes his actual use of this medium. Indeed, as Maurizio Lazzarato points out, a distinctive property of video in the post-Fordist peri-

[4] Debbie Harry, the famous singer of the band Blondie, is a constant presence on Andy Warhol's shows: she appears in almost all episodes of *Andy Warhol's TV* and is the presenter of *Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes*.

[5] Andy Warhol's TV shows received critical attention only some years after his death. The first retrospective exhibition of Warhol's video work (also including the TV work) was in 1991, part of The Andy Warhol Film Project, curated by John Hanhardt (see John Hanhardt, *Andy Warhol's Video & Television*, exhibition catalogue, New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1991). There is currently renewed interest in Warhol's TV shows, which have been included in several international shows: "Tele[visions]", curated by Joshua Decker at the Kunsthalle in Vienna (2001); "Warhol's World: Photography and Television", curated by Anthony D'Offay at the Hauser & Wirth Gallery in London (2006); "Other Voices, Other Rooms", curated by Eva Meyer-Hermann at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus (OH) and The Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London, in 2008 and 2009; "Andy Warhol's TV", curated by Judith Benhamou-Huet at the Maison Rouge, Paris (2009); "Changing Channels: Art and Television 1963-1987", curated by Matthias Michalka at the Museum Moderner Kunst in Vienna (2010).

[6] On the advertising work done by Warhol during the nineteen fifties and sixties see the catalogue of the extensive exhibition curated by Eva Meyer-Hermann in organizational collaboration with The Andy Warhol Museum, entitled *Other Voices, Other Rooms*: see Eva Meyer-Herman (ed.), *Andy Warhol: A Guide to 706 Items in 2 hours and 56 minutes*, Rotterdam, NAI Publishers, 2009. With regard to Warhol's relationship with the world of fashion, also in terms of reciprocal influence, see the catalogue of the exhibition "The Warhol Look. Glamour, Style, Fashion", organized by The Andy Warhol Museum: see Mark Francis-Margery King (ed.), *The Warhol Look. Glamour, Style, Fashion*, Minneapolis, Bulfinch Press, 1997.

od is that “time is not given in an image but it is constructed in a *situation*. [...] *An ordinary situation*.”<sup>[7]</sup> All Warhol’s films, before he got into video, are *ordinary situations*; they are the world become film in a way that cinema can hardly bear.

During the seventies a further and more radical inflection of this practice arises from the possibilities for uninterrupted recording offered by the video camera, as shown by *Factory Diaries*, collected on 300 tapes recorded from the moment the artist bought his first portable video camera in 1970.<sup>[8]</sup>

The video diaries gather an enormous archive of material from Warhol’s life – from portraits of personalities who visit the studio (David Bowie, Brigid Berlin, Candy Darling) to home movies of the Kennedy children – but in no particular order of importance; an archive full of insignificant events organized in a series of episodes. Significantly, the perception of his own present as a succession of images on a TV screen takes on, for Warhol, a precise meaning in relation to the medium of TV, which adds to the specific properties of video a particular quality of *transmission*, and seems to mark a clear distinction from the properties of film images. It was no coincidence that in the 1970s Warhol wrote:

“I wake up every morning. I open my eyes and think: Here we go again. [...] I never fall back to sleep. [...] It seems like a dangerous thing to do. A whole day of life is like a whole day of television. TV never goes off the air once it starts for the day, and I don’t either. At the end of the day the whole day will be a movie. A movie made for TV.”<sup>[9]</sup>

It is interesting to point out how Pasolini too, in his writings of the sixties,<sup>[10]</sup> proposed a comparison between cinema and life, but placed the emphasis on editing, attributing to it the same function that death exerts over life: that of making a choice and restoring meaning to a finished work. Warhol’s cinema, on the other hand, has no conception of montage: discarded takes are treasured for their insignificance and treated as “stars”, insofar as he can multiply the image through reproduction in the media, making it public, *making publicity out of it*. Comparing the editing of a film with the operation that death performs in the continuum of life, Pasolini holds that the possibil-

ity of meaning can only be produced by the temporal gap effected by editing, that is to say by the interruption of the present on occasions when “the times are condensed and the insignificant falls.”<sup>[11]</sup> In his view, therefore, Warhol’s films, despite being “cinema in a pure state”, can only be seen as “life reports”, witnesses to the suffering of the passage of time. They do not contain “the death of the author” but rather show the author by means of an eternal, subjective, point-of-view shot.

Warhol, on the other hand, compares life to “a movie made for tv” and his mode of recording anticipates the concept of “field recording”, so central to his cinematographic practice, and which would be taken up not only in video practice but constitute a key element of the reality show genre. It is not insignificant that the first reality show made in America (*An American Family*, produced by PBS in 1973) devoted its second episode to a cross-section of the New York protagonists of so many of Warhol’s films. Based on the life of the Californian Louds family, *An American Family* followed the mother’s visit to her son Lance, who was staying in the Chelsea Hotel, the same hotel where a few years earlier Warhol had set *Chelsea Girls*.<sup>[12]</sup> Andy Warhol and his “scene” thus made their entrance onto the small screen.<sup>[13]</sup>

Again, in *Philosophy*, with reference to the attempt on his life in 1968, Warhol wrote:

“Before I was shot, I always thought that I was more half-there than all-there. I always suspected that I was watching television instead of living life.”<sup>[14]</sup>

On that occasion Warhol was declared dead for about three minutes. He later recovered and returned to work, but the episode coincides with a change in the way he made movies. After the attack, the artist decided never again to show the films made before 1969, those in which the “natural” time of life was allowed to extend without a termination being imposed by the editing.<sup>[15]</sup> A few years later, with *Interview* magazine<sup>[16]</sup>, Warhol made a much more deliberate approach to the world of fashion and mainstream advertising. *Interview* managed to bring together an obsession for re-

[7] Maurizio Lazzarato, *Videofilosofia. La percezione del tempo nel postfordismo*, Roma, Il Manifestolibri, 1996, p. 111.

[8] In 1965 a video magazine lent him a video camera and a Norelco tape recorder in order to publish an article afterwards on the use the artist had made of it. Warhol used the equipment in the mid-sixties to make one of his most explicitly experimental films in the series dedicated to Edie Sedgwick, *Outer and Inner Space* (1965), in which Edie appears as a presence and as an image on a television monitor. Throughout the Seventies, in collaboration with Vincent Fremont, the artist made different attempts to realize programmes in episodes for television, such as *Vivian Girls* (1973), about a group of models and drag queens; *Phoney* (1973), based on telephone conversations (a constant feature in Warhol’s work), and *Fight* (1985), looking at the story of a married couple who are always arguing. In the same years the artist had an authentic studio set built in a place on Broadway, reproducing the inside of a house at the back of which Warhol began filming a series of interviews that increasingly ceased to be done off-screen and incorporated the participation of the artist. For the videos made by Warhol and Fremont in the seventies and eighties see John Hanhardt, *Andy Warhol’s Video & Television*, op. cit.

[9] Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, op. cit. p. 5.

[10] Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Empirismo Eretico*, Milano, Garzanti, 1972.

[11] Ibid, p. 247.

[12] The episode of the show includes an extract from the show *Vain Victory: the Vicissitudes of the Damned* at the La MaMa E.T.C. theatre, written by and starring Jackie Curtis, Warhol’s famous superstar. It also presents images of the Chelsea Hotel: already familiar to spectators of Warhol’s movies, it introduces to mainstream TV audiences a fragment of gay subculture after the Stonewall riots.

[13] Nearly ten years later, not by chance, Warhol himself tried to contact PBS to propose broadcasting Andy Warhol’s TV, which was first seen in 1980 on Manhattan Cable Television.

[14] Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, op. cit., p. 91.

[15] The personality of Paul Morrissey was to play a decisive part in the films shot subsequently and Warhol figured in them chiefly as producer.

[16] *InterVIEW* was founded in 1969 as an underground cinema magazine, and its title clearly played with the fact of placing itself in a space of interaction between the audience and the film. Some years later, the magazine was re-launched with the name *Interview* and shifted its focus principally to the world of fashion, the cinema and mainstream gossip. The publication’s standard formula was the interview, accompanied by extensive photographic and graphic material. It also included a constant account of the habitual activities of Warhol and his circle. In relation to *Interview* see the text by Bob Colacello, a collaborator of Warhol in the seventies, along with Vincent Fremont and Fred Hughes, and the main man behind the magazine: Bob Colacello, *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*, New York, HarperCollins, 1990.

ording the most mundane details of his present with a fascination for the images of pop culture, producing a format that was to be an important precedent for both fashion advertising and the development of several TV shows, such as those broadcast by MTV, which incidentally produced Warhol's last TV show, *Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes* (1985-1987).

Warhol's approach to the TV medium involved an embrace of its more orthodox languages, reiterating a long-held *modus operandi* of his, which, rather than pursuing a dialectical relationship with the technological medium, allowed the latter to replace the author's subjectivity. Television, in fact, enabled Warhol to take to extremes his non-stop subjective gaze and his exclusive focus on the present moment, through the un-relinquished business of making public.

The encounters and televisual portraits that appear in Warhol's TV offered to viewers a series of personalities grasped in their pure presence. The standard formula is the interview, as in his sixties recordings and, of course, on the pages of *Interview*. But Warhol himself appeared rather silent and removed and, increasingly often in his programmes, especially in the last years, he is shown in the act of recording, observing, listening. Almost as if this were the artist's signature, in the same spirit in which Hitchcock would appear fleetingly in a single scene of any of his films.<sup>[17]</sup>

Warhol presented himself as the viewer of his own programmes, just as he had been of his films earlier; just as even earlier he had been a viewer of the Hollywood movies that began to be shown on TV in the sixties. Thus, the presence of the author/viewer physically entered the subjective shot. In the same period, Warhol posed in a series of photographs (both art photography and publicity shots), placing his body in the centre of a studied media reproduction, channelled towards the definitive public construction of his own identity.<sup>[18]</sup> In the eighties his status as a TV personality was consolidated: this is seen in the use of his image in TV commercials<sup>[19]</sup> and, especially, his appearance in the series *The Love Boat* (1985), where the artist played himself.<sup>[20]</sup>

Through television Andy Warhol's body, which by this point had almost completely collapsed onto his familiar white-haired image, becomes the star of those *ordinary situations* that make up his video programmes. In this way Warhol recovers actuality, organizing it as if it were an archive of insignificant images, juxtaposed not through a narrative montage, but through a constant effort to "create faces", as is clear in *Andy*

*Warhol's Fifteen Minutes*, whose title refers to the famous Warholian remark according to which there is a precise duration for the "being public" of the present: a maximum of fifteen minutes.

This practice is to some extent homogeneous with the very nature of television: TV is obsessed with actuality, because – as Lazzarato suggests – it has to duplicate it with its images, covering it with a "layer of memory-images."<sup>[21]</sup> Warhol, however, abandoned his own "subjective shot" so as to enter the subjective shot of the television, subjecting himself to a process of editing that, unlike in his films, retrospectively restores the insignificant in so many thirty-minute sequences. The ordinary situations recorded in his TV programmes will be memory-images of a specific present, even while that present offers itself as *nothing special*. The title of this never-realised project [*Nothing Special*] – almost a ghost project – seems to haunt those episodes in which Warhol is involved directly in the creation of programmes for television, but reveals an aspect of his gaze that runs throughout all of his work.

In 1986 Warhol agreed to be immortalized in three one-minute TV commercials for *Saturday Night Live*, shot by Don Munroe and Vincent Fremont. The word "immortalized" is not fortuitous: two years after these videos were made, Warhol died and his funeral marked the last episode of *Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes*. In one of these commercials Warhol's body is reduced to a face that, while he is being made up, mirrors itself and speaks about the meaning of death, before disappearing in a thick grey mesh of pixels. This may be considered a true death mask of Warhol, very similar to the Hanako masks painted by Rodin around 1908. The subject of the portrait, in the case of this video, is offered through a point-of-view shot that incorporates Andy Warhol's gaze in a marvellous "disappearing self-portrait": it is the POV shot of Warhol himself, presenting to the general public his disappearance as a body.<sup>[22]</sup>

According to Jonathan Flatley, throughout Warhol's work one can find a certain tendency towards "prosopopoeia", which the author defines etymologically as the property of creating (*poeia*) a face (*prosopon*).<sup>[23]</sup> In this sense, all the images recorded by Warhol – whether through his own technical craft or mediated through technology – do not "reproduce" faces, they literally "produce" them, insofar as they fashion a public identity from these images and "immortalize" them:

[17] Don Munroe, the director, said that the fundamental premise of *Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes* (1985-1987) was that the artist should be present in the act of watching, zapping, channel hopping, in front of a TV.

[18] In 1979 Warhol began working for the advertising agency Zoli Management Inc., and later for the Ford Model Agency. Both signed Warhol as a model (some of the artist's ads are those made for Japanese television manufacturer TDK in 1982, or for the insurance company Drexel Burnham in 1986). It is worth mentioning the numerous photos of Warhol's body taken during the 1970s by the lenses of famous New York photographers like Richard Avedon or Christopher Makos.

[19] Warhol lent his image for the commercials of Japanese television manufacturers TDK (1983), for Diet Coke (1985), and for a New York car manufacturer, Tri-State Pontiac (1986).

[20] Warhol appears in episode 200 of *The Love Boat, Pictures of the Past*, written by Laura Levine, directed by Richard Kinon and produced by Douglas S. Cramer in association with Aaron Spelling Productions, Inc.

[21] Maurizio Lazzarato, p. 114.

[22] Marco Senaldi, in the chapter of his book dedicated to Andy Warhol, makes clear the same association between these commercials and the theme of death, so recurrent in the last period of the artist's work. Senaldi proposes considering the disappearance of Warhol's face on the TV screen as one of the high points of the artist's work, since it marks the moment of "the eclipse of the star", the star that Warhol became also thanks to television. In Marco Senaldi, *Arte e televisione. Da Andy Warhol al Grande Fratello*, Milano, Postmedia Books, 2009.

[23] Jonathan Flatley, "Warhol Gives Good Faces: Publicity and the Politics of Prosopopoeia", in Jennifer Doyle, Jonathan Flatley, José Muñoz, *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1996, p. 106.

“Warhol saw that the poetics of publicity were also those of mourning. To become public or feel public was in many ways to acquire the sort of distance from oneself that comes with imagining oneself dead. The ‘self-negativity’ that we experience by imagining oneself as ‘public’ might be seen as something like attending your own funeral. You got to see yourself reified, eulogized, coherent, whole – and you get to see other people recognizing you.”<sup>[24]</sup>

The way in which Warhol “created faces” – in both his artwork and the film portraits and movies of the seventies – is therefore the expression of a “fantasy” of identification that presents its subjects not so much in the present of their appearing, but rather in a public and posthumous projection of that appearing. At the moment when Warhol, in his TV programmes, entered his “economy of prosopopoeia”, he delivered up his own face and became a star of the small screen: finally, in the form of a public elegy produced as a commercial break for *Saturday Night Live*, a very popular TV show. The last episode of *Andy Warhol’s Fifteen Minutes* – the last piece in this exhibition – broadcast the artist’s funeral, which had taken place a few days before, and which closes the circle by offering the television audience the definitive disappearance of Warhol’s identity. Once again, the artist’s signature is deposited in the work through Warhol’s (no longer existing) body being made public. Thus, the “death of the artist” comes about not from an editing of his life’s recording, but rather inhabits the gaze of his television, even while it transmits images of his coffin and the death of the body of a certain white-haired star.

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[24] Jonathan Flatley, *ibid.*, p. 105.



The way that Jean Gimpel, in *Contre l’art et les artistes* (1968), refers to the dispute that initially pitted painters against photographers is most instructive:

“Painters [ended up] feeling threatened by the offensive undertaken by photographers to have their technique acknowledged as one of the fine arts. [...] The most comical thing is that the painters reproach the photographers for the same insult, ‘manual and mechanical work’, that the men of the liberal arts, up to Marsilio Ficino, have reproached painters for ... Introduced in the arts, now the fine arts, painters and sculptors have made it a club out of bounds to all newcomers. Thus, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century access was barred to photography, as was the case a century later with the cinema, radio and television.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Gimpel concludes his pamphlet surprisingly by stating:

“Television is one of the most notable techniques of expression in all the long history of mankind. [...] If Shakespeare were born again he would either be working in television or he wouldn’t be Shakespeare!”<sup>[2]</sup>

Moreover, for a Gimpel who thinks of television as the true art of the future (just as Panofsky considered that the cinema was the “popular” art of the twentieth century),

[1] Jean Gimpel, *Contre l’art et les artistes*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1968.  
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

there are others, for example the great Arnheim, who end up sustaining superficially that it is no more than a simple informative instrument with no aesthetic value, given that “television is a close relative of the motorcycle and the aeroplane; a cultural means of transport. In truth, it is a mere instrument of transmission that offers no new means for the artistic interpretation of reality.”<sup>[3]</sup>

The specific merit of the artists who have confronted the medium of television, however, lies not in confidently diving headfirst into it, as Gimpel proposed, nor in refuting it a priori, as Arnheim suggested, but in highlighting the “media specificity”.

Each of the arts mentioned by Gimpel has, in effect, a specific group of characteristics that make it unique and unlike any other: for example photography has “a specific of its own”, which in the words of Barthes is the capacity to “mechanically reproduce any number of times that which has taken place just once.” The cinema, on the other hand, through filming and editing, has the possibility to recreate a “diegetic” world that other spectacular and sophisticated forms, like the theatre, cannot achieve.

Television also possesses its own specific that clearly distinguishes it from the cinema. None the less, the television specific does not so much consist in a vague “cold”, dematerialized, aesthetic, as McLuhan theorized, as in the capacity to communicate by inverting the broadcaster-receiver relationship – in other words, by transforming the communication into a circuit that distorts and inverts the very meaning of the message transmitted. And it does so live, in what P.P. Pasolini, in the 1970s, defined as “a gigantic happening”.

It is therefore no surprise that in 1958 the inventor of the happening, John Cage, in Italy at the time, should have been a contestant on one of the most important and watched programmes of the newly created Italian television, *Lascia o raddoppia*, whose format followed, moreover, the pattern of the American classic *The \$64,000 Question*.<sup>[4]</sup> The recording of Cage’s appearance has been lost, but the transcript of it has survived.<sup>[5]</sup> Also, something even more important has been saved: an appearance, dating back to 1960, on *I’ve Got A Secret*, an American quiz show of the day in which Cage himself performs his piece *Water Walk*.

However, many have upheld that the reason for Cage taking part in the Italian quiz show was due to the need to find the necessary funds to continue with his musical research, so the reason for these appearances was purely financial. Nevertheless, Cage’s behaviour, and above all the fact that this appearance was repeated shortly afterwards, forces us to rule out this reassuring interpretation.

Indeed, Cage’s 1958 TV appearance took place just a few years after the first happening (*Untitled Event*), produced in 1952 by Cage and others at Black Mountain College. One of the characteristics of the happening that should not be underestimated (beyond the

well-known elements of randomness, improvisation, the mixture of different arts, the convergence of art and life, and so on) is the fact that this should be inserted in all the other daily activities without a clear separation. To think, then, that when Cage goes on television he does so naïvely would in turn be naïve: in actual fact Cage is performing precisely inside what is a model of contemporary “experience” – in order to introduce to it, from within, the imponderable inversion of the “event”.

Cage inserts the happening event, the art event, in the television event. The *event of the event* takes things back to the beginning: it reveals the falsely transparent ideology of the medium, re-transforms television as (*pseudo*) *medium of communication* (something it wants to pass itself off as) into *communicator of mediations* (thanks to art).

It is for this reason that, in his musical exhibition, Cage uses household objects (a blender, a bath full of water, a radio turned on, etc), at the limits of banality, paradoxically, almost like the ready-mades, making them react against the backdrop of the supposed “shared taste”. This backdrop is however totally essential for it – without it the “event” would have no scene to stand out against; it obtains its meaning through a dialectical confrontation. In the television appearance of the 1960s, which we can see in its entirety, this aspect is even more accentuated. The host places Cage inside the televisual flux exactly as if he were a comedian or just another light entertainment act – in fact you have to make an effort to realise that this is a happening and not an eccentric inventor of useless machines. Nevertheless, this detail is very important: unlike the traditional interpretations that see in the happening a form of multimedia event that is “exceptional”, “festive”, groundbreaking, heralding spectacular revolutionary practices, it is necessary to confirm that, on the contrary, the happening has a Zen-like sobriety and also a vein of irrepressible common-sense humour, not far from the Surrealist humour of a Jacques Tati.<sup>[6]</sup> As a result, television “normality” turns out, in contrast, to be hysterical, out of place, excessively cheerful and fundamentally contrived; on the other hand, the artistic event, in its affectation, shows itself to be almost comically “unconstructed”, naïve, but marvellously “authentic”. It is in the ability to provoke this contrast where the extreme importance of Cage’s television appearance lies. In the following years Cage’s “lesson” was not forgotten. On January 14<sup>th</sup> 1972, Chris Burden, an artist famous at the time for his performances, agreed to give an interview on a local cable TV station to talk about *Shoot* (a performance in which he was shot) to television presenter Phyllis Lutjeans. Burden turned up at the studio with his team; he had vaguely warned Lutjeans that he was thinking of making her “perform obscene acts” and had asked for the interview to be broadcast live. But the truth is that no one could imagine that, in reply to the question about the works he had planned, Burden got up, put a knife to the presenter’s throat and threatened to kill her if the

[3] R. Arnheim, *Film as Art*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1957, p. 194 (but the article quoted on the aesthetic value of television is from 1935 – the year before the television broadcasts in Germany for the Berlin Olympic Games).

[4] See A. Grasso, *Enciclopedia della Televisione*, Milano, Garzanti, 2006, p. 365.

[5] See monographic issue of *Sonora* dedicated to Cage, 1992.

[6] It is no coincidence that the films against the prevailing modernity characteristic of the themes of Tati should be virtually contemporary to Cage’s television appearances and happenings: think of *Les vacances de Monsieur Hulot* (1953) and *Mon Oncle* (1958). Further proof of Cage’s humour is in the video *I’ve Got a Secret*, when Cage, in answer to the host who warns him of the possibility that some members of the studio audience might laugh at his performance, says, “Of course, I consider laughter preferable to tears”.

station did not broadcast the event live. That this act, which has gone down the history of art with the title *TV Hijack*, was not meant as a joke was confirmed twenty years later by Lutjeans herself in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, in which she said she had been “completely terrified” – understandable if we place the event in its proper historical context, a time when the technique of the terrorist kidnapping, the televised gesture, exceptional or due to mythomania, were the order of the day. Just in the USA, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King had been assassinated four years earlier; Warhol had suffered a similar attack and John Lennon would be murdered for the same reasons in 1980. Even more interesting is the fact that Burden did not keep the video but he destroyed it, and not to erase the evidence of a hypothetical “crime”; possibly, on the contrary, it was to almost ritually erase the marks of a sign of unexpected power over his own image.

A few years later, Burden would return to the same argument of the power of the media (or as he aptly put it “the spiritual power”), by purchasing at least 30 minutes’ advertising time on five American channels. The ads were varied: one simply featured the names of the great artists that statistically were considered as such by ordinary people, like Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Van Gogh and Picasso, followed by that of Chris Burden. In another, Burden declared the exact amount of money he earned, as it was money coming mostly from activities sponsored by the NEA and government bodies (“I wanted to be the first artist to make a complete tax declaration”). Naturally the TV stations tried to stop these ads going out, but the space was already paid for and they therefore had to award the artist a broadcasting bonus.

*TV Hijack* is an unprecedented and unrepeatable inversion of the parts, whereby the medium of TV is used effectively for what it is, “the drama of live broadcasting”, which is also the live broadcasting of drama. It was almost a premonition of the first full media “event” that would take place on all American TV screens sometime later, in August 1972, the famous bank robbery by John Wojtowicz, on which Sidney Lumet’s 1975 film *Dog Day Afternoon* was inspired, which in turn inspired the video *The Third Memory* by Pierre Huyghe (2002). With *TV Hijack* Burden shows us what TV desires more than anything else: the event as such, the *pure event*.

Moreover, there have also been attempts of a very different kind made to tame the TV “monster”. Two years before Burden’s first performance, Joseph Beuys had made *Filz TV* (1970), an “action” that consisted of covering a television set with felt, a material that in Beuys’ poetic vision indicates that which heals, calms, pacifies (famous in this respect is the performance *I Like America and America Likes Me* [1973], in which the artist came face to face with the totemic American wild animal, the coyote, and tried to tame it by wrapping it in a felt blanket). In the video that records the action, the wild animal, the result of culture and not nature, is called television, a ferocious beast that in some way is calmed or, rather, unplugged. This reaction, obviously, would be inconceivable in the field of the cinema; we cannot think of a “Filz cinema”, because the cinema in any case has been used by the avant-garde as an active medium of alternative communication, whereas the artistic reaction is a full-frontal attack. Also, the situationist critiques of

television, the fact of creating counter-spectacular situations in everyday life, are clearly reactions to shy away from the predominant interpassivity of television shows. Nonetheless, little importance has been given to Beuys’s other kinds of television performances. Without actually putting his head in the lion’s mouth as Cage had done twenty years earlier, in 1985 Beuys made a music video clip in which he sings an anti-American song, *Sonne stat Regen*, whose easy-listening rock tune has something of the sublime about it. The title, which alludes to President Reagan’s atomic policy (the title translates as Sunshine Instead Of Rain, but in German *Regen* is pronounced more or less like ‘Reagan’), is merely a pretext for a video exhibition quite similar to the one in which we see Warhol appearing as an unlikely waiter in *The Cars*’ video clip – with the difference that here Beuys is the group’s standing voice. Moreover, we should remember that when Beuys went to the United States for the second time in 1980 and visited a building in SoHo occupied by Group Material, which had just formed, his presence was recorded in the media (with photos and interviews) – thus confirming the difficult “tameability” of TV when it really functions, as well as the indisputable rule of what in advertising is called the (perhaps involuntary) “testimonial” of Beuys himself and his “charisma”.

In both cases, Beuys’ activism seems to be almost inverted in the interpassivity typical of television, while the exaggerated passivity of Andy Warhol seems – in comparison – an almost surprising gesture.

Once again, an attitude halfway between Duchamp-esque recovery and direct intervention *à la* Cage is represented by the work of Francesco Vezzoli. *Comizi di non amore* (2004) is presented as a piece of television, an authentic ready-made. None the less, despite it being a real programme made along the lines of the classic talent show, *Comizi di non amore* shows itself as a work of art in an exhibition space, only visible there and never broadcast on television.

*Comizi di non amore* is inspired, of course, on Pasolini’s *Comizi d’amore* (1964), the famous film-survey about the love lives of the Italians in the period of the boom, and therefore both present a far from obvious national portrait. Adherence to the national-catholic fabric is guaranteed by the fact that Vezzoli places the production in the hands of a major TV production agency, Einstein Multimedia, so that audience, assistants, lights, graphics and even contestants (apart from big stars like Jeanne Moreau, clearly a retro touch), everything, in short, turn out to be perfectly televisual, “natural”, not a parody, with prime time potential. But can a simple television reality show really become a work of art? Warhol had shown us that it could, but with Vezzoli the product is repackaged in another context, the artistic. This shying away from the context avoids it confronting its own opposite, which here is assumed by the distance. The opposite, the medium of television, is transported to the exhibition space and is here given a different identity, the work of art. As it is not broadcast, the reality show lacks the acid test of its opposite: it remains, therefore, as a sort of handwriting copying exercise, an authentic remake, but still not able to criticize the system of television communication “from within”.

Having the productive capacity to make a whole episode of a real show and able to afford the incredible luxury of not broadcasting it, *Comizi di non amore* once again produced the illusion that art had won the media game. But *Comizi di non amore* shows a real intrinsic problem, besides that of examining the impossible path of the “change of context”, which is above all that of not being able to live alone – the fact of having to place it next to *Le 120 sedute di Sodoma* and *La fine di Canterbury*, that is, the installation of 120 Mackintosh chairs embroidered with the faces of actors and Pasolini himself, plus a screen with the word *Fine* (The End) from the last frame of Pasolini’s *Canterbury* superimposed on it. Placing them side by side, although they are conceived as a reinforcement, achieves the opposite, as often happens; it radically weakens the strength of *Comizi*: the television aesthetic having been revealed – with a subtle trick of inversion – it is “re-normalized”, stressing *ad abundantiam* that it is not just “vulgar” television, but noble contemporary art. *This stressing is in itself truly kitsch* – not in the formal, exterior, sense, but it is an authentic defeat of theoretical taste. Basing ourselves on this loss of taste – or rather, on those “slip ups” (the term that Vezzoli uses most often to define his own work), it turns out that his work is “effectively” what it seemed to begin with: the work of a talented cultural remixer – a definition that, moreover, the artist claims for himself: “I feel like an editor of visual language ... like a remixer, a remasterer of languages.”<sup>[7]</sup> Paradoxically, it is also Vezzoli who, having the courage to take into consideration the aesthetics and the ideology of today’s TV, displays at heart a fundamental indecision – confronting television in a radical way.

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[7] Interview with G. Celant, *Francesco Vezzoli*, Milano, Fondazione Prada, 2004, p. 104.

CHAPTER 5

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John Timothy O'Connor, Benjamin Liu, *Unseen Warhol*, Rizzoli International Publications, New York, 1996.

John Hanhardt, *Andy Warhol's Video & Television*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1991.

Victor Bockris, *Andy Warhol: The Biography*, Frederick Muller/Century Hutchinson Ltd., London, 1989.

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## LIST OF WEBSITES

This is a list of the websites consulted for the research relative to the project "TV/ARTS/TV" (curated by Giuseppina Vignola).

[www.biennale-de-lyon.org/](http://www.biennale-de-lyon.org/)  
Official website of the Lyon Biennale, international festival of contemporary art.

[bombsite.com/](http://bombsite.com/)  
Official website of the historic *Bomb Magazine*.

[www.centrepompidou.fr/](http://www.centrepompidou.fr/)  
Website of the National Museum of Modern Art, Ina and Centre Pompidou, Paris.

[www.newmedia-art.org](http://www.newmedia-art.org)  
Produced jointly by the National Museum of Modern Art (Paris), the Ludwig Museum (Cologne), the Centre for the Contemporary Image (Geneva), the Constant Association (Brussels) and the National Foundation of Contemporary Art (Paris).

[www.cinema.ucla.edu/](http://www.cinema.ucla.edu/)  
Website of the University of California, film and television archive.

[davidsonsfiles.org/index.html](http://davidsonsfiles.org/index.html)  
Texts and descriptions of the first exhibitions of video art, curated by Davidson Gigliotti.

[www.eai.org](http://www.eai.org)  
Official website of Electronic Arts Intermix, one of the most important distributors in the international field of video and media arts.

[www.experimental-tvcenter.org](http://www.experimental-tvcenter.org)  
Official website of Experimental Television Center.

[www.guggenheim-bilbao.es](http://www.guggenheim-bilbao.es)  
The permanent collection of the R. Guggenheim Foundation.

[www.hamacaonline.net/default.php](http://www.hamacaonline.net/default.php)  
Hamaca, Spanish distributor of media and video.

[www.mecad.org/net\\_es.htm](http://www.mecad.org/net_es.htm)

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; the role of the networks of groups and independent spaces; arts and technology festivals; centres and media libraries.

[www.mediaartnet.org/](http://www.mediaartnet.org/)  
A curators' network presents a variety of approaches and contexts.

[www.moma.org/](http://www.moma.org/)  
Website of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

[www.museoreinasofia.es/index.html](http://www.museoreinasofia.es/index.html)  
Website of the National Museum Arts Centre, Madrid.

[obrasocial.lacaixa.es/nuestroscentros/english/caixaforumbarcelona/caixaforumbarcelona\\_en.html](http://obrasocial.lacaixa.es/nuestroscentros/english/caixaforumbarcelona/caixaforumbarcelona_en.html)  
Website of the La Caixa Foundation, Barcelona.

[papertiger.org/history](http://papertiger.org/history)  
Website of the group of the same name, active since 1981.

[www.radicalsoftware.org/](http://www.radicalsoftware.org/)  
Website of the historic magazine, founded by the Raundance group.

[www.stedelijk.nl/](http://www.stedelijk.nl/)  
Official website of the Stedelijk Museum of modern and contemporary art in Amsterdam.

[www.tate.org.uk/](http://www.tate.org.uk/)  
Website of four galleries: Tate Britain, Tate Modern, Tate Liverpool and Tate St. Ives.

[www.vdb.org](http://www.vdb.org)  
Founded in 1976, Video Data bank is one of the main resources for videos d'auteur.

[www.zkm.de/](http://www.zkm.de/)  
Website of ZKM, Centre for art and media.

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Agenzia Contrasto, Andy Warhol Museum, Acconci Studio, Corporació Catalana de Ràdio i Televisió, Col. Fundação Serralves - Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, MNAC/CCI, Donald Young Gallery, Dusseldorf Kunst Museum, EAI, Electronic Art Intermix, FilMOTECA de Catalunya, Fondazione Giò Marconi, Fondazione Mudima, Galeria David Zwirner, Galleria Massimo Minini, Gary Hill Studio, Goethe-Institut Barcelona, Hamaca, John Cage Trust, Marian Goodman Gallery, MELAC, Museo Extremeño e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporáneo, Moca The Museum of Contemporary Art, Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Museum Moderner Kunst, Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Museo Vostell Malpartida de Cáceres, Nam June Paik Archive, Smithsonian American Art Museum, NJP Art Center, Giheung-gu Yongin-si, Prodimag, Studio d'Arte Contemporanea Pino Casagrande, Studio Mauri, Tate Gallery, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, UPF/Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Universidad Lusófona de Lisboa, Universidad Nacional 3 febrero de Buenos Aires, Dipartimento Arti e Scienze dello Spettacolo, Facoltà Scienze Umanistiche, Università, "La Sapienza", Roma, Video Data Bank, Chicago

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