FROM TELEVISION SIGNAL TO MAGNETIC STRIP:

AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION AND VIDEO

KNOWLEDGE

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation proposes a more adequate framework for thinking through a range of non-commensurable sites within which we find not a unified phenomenon, "Video Art," but a set of conceptualizations of video and electronic media that are heterogeneous, dispersed and institutionally variable. Taking as a model Michel Foucault's notion of an archaeology of knowledge, I have sought to analyze the stratified field of experimental television and video along two axes: along a diachronic axis, I trace debates in five institutional spaces—public broadcast television, experimental television centers, galleries and museums, the published record, and academic institutions—focusing on key disputes or "flash points" that mark significant shifts in the discourse on "video art;" while across the synchronic axis, I seek to map the discussions and theorizations of experimental television and video within these institutional sites that constitute the differential field of discourse on electronic, time-based media. By this means, I attempt to show that the ever expanding, institutionally dispersed field of electronic media practice cannot be grasped in the terms offered by the linear narratives that have until now shaped what has been labeled as the history of "Video Art." I maintain that the "archaeology" of video practice I outline is a prerequisite for any critical engagement with a field of practices that range from experimental performances employing live broadcast television to works using video and videotape. While an influential critical and curatorial discourse has sought to subsume these diverse practices under a single category of "Video Art," such homogenization elides the diversity of institutional sites and the incommensurable discursive frameworks that, in fact, have marked the development of

experimental television and video media. A more adequate perspective demands

engagement with the differential, discursive field and the various sedimentary strata

across which multiple and irreducible conceptions of the video medium have been

produced.

To Carol Culler and Shannon Culler

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1.

Introduction

This dissertation proposes a more adequate framework for thinking through a range of

non-commensurable sites within which one finds not a unified phenomenon, "Video

Art," but a set of conceptualizations of experimental television, video and electronic

media that are heterogeneous, dispersed and institutionally variable. Taking as a model

Michel Foucault's notion of an archaeology of knowledge,[1] I have sought to analyze the

stratified field of experimental television and video along two axes. Along a diachronic

axis, I trace debates in five institutional spaces—public broadcast television,

experimental television centers, galleries and museums, the published record, and

academic institutions—focusing on key disputes or "flash points" that mark significant

shifts in the discourse on "video art." Across the synchronic axis, I seek to map the

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dispersed field of electronic media practice cannot be grasped in the terms offered by the

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"Video Art." I maintain that the "archaeology" of experimental television and video

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[1] Michel Foucault, "Introduction," *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith
(New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

practice I outline is a prerequisite for any critical engagement with a field of practices

that range from experimental performances employing live broadcast television to works

using video and videotape. While an influential critical and curatorial discourse has

sought to subsume these diverse practices under a single category of "Video Art," such

homogenization elides the diversity of institutional sites and the incommensurable

discursive frameworks that, in fact, have marked the development of experimental

television and video media practices. A more adequate perspective demands engagement

with the differential, discursive field and the various sedimentary strata across which

multiple and irreducible conceptions of the video medium have been produced.[2]

        The primary objective of this dissertation, therefore, is to trace the emergence of a

concept of "video art" in a number of differentiated discursive and institutional spaces.

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[2] John Tagg makes a similar argument for photography in *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (1988), *Art History, Cultural Politics and the Discursive Field* (1992), and *The Disciplinary Frame* (2009). In *Art History, Cultural Politics and the Discursive Field*, for example, Tagg argues that in order to address the discursive field of photographic production adequately we must study the differential field of practices across which the "medium" is specified and defined differently. Tagg writes, "The potential field of photographic production was thus both demarcated and divided up in advance into specialised territories of practice and meaning which were congruent one with another only in their exercise of constraints on proliferation of photographic discourses and in their articulation of a discontinuous field beyond which there was only a declared non-sense. Across this field, the unity, integrity and continuity of photography was, from the beginning, only ever locally and discontinuously invoked." In *The Disciplinary Frame*, Tagg recalled this argument, which he made in *The Burden of Representation*. "In *The Burden of Representation*," he writes, "I examined the conditions under which the dangerously prolific field of photographic meanings came, in the course of the nineteenth century, to be marked out and segmented, so that a plurality of locally specified, adjacent, but contradictory *photographies* could be institutionalized—each claiming to ground its status on the fundamental character of the medium. It was, however, precisely this term, 'the medium,' that came under pressure. No longer could it denote an opaque material with the power to generate its own delimiting conventions, any more than it could signify a transparent vehicle—a mediating technology that might impose its own determinations but whose mechanical nature would continue to supply its epistemological guarantees. 'The medium' of photography was not given and unified. It was always a local outcome, an effect of a particular closure of the discursive field, a function of a specific *apparatus* or *machine*, in the sense in which Foucault used these terms. The 'medium' had to be constituted and it was multiply defined." John Tagg, *Art History, Cultural Politics and the Discursive Field* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 112; John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); John Tagg, *The Disciplinary Frame* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), xxviii.

This approach is necessary in view of the limitations and blindspots of the existing literature on "Video Art." As I will show, these limitations and blindspots stem from advancing the term "video art" as a catchall category for a multitude of forms and practices that employ television monitors, videotape cameras, image projectors and devices developed to modify electronic television/video signals, such as synthesizers.[3] The exorbitant range of work this catchall classification encompasses also further compounds the term "video art." Nevertheless, while the term may be convenient for artists, curators and historians, it remains problematic—especially when applied as an umbrella concept claiming to provide the foundation for a comprehensive historical perspective.

Therefore, in contrast to existing historical perspectives on "Video Art," I will not attempt to offer a survey of experimental television and what has been loosely categorized as "Video Art." I will not offer a definitive, comprehensive history of "Video Art" either. Instead, I will focus on the way the term "video art" emerges, operates, and is constricted in a range of institutional sites. By this means, I will seek to propose a more adequate framework for thinking about the decentered discursive field of "video and television," focusing on a uniquely American context. I will now layout the route of this dissertation and reasons for taking it.

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[3] The term "video art" has also been used to reference experimental (broadcast) television and image-processed video as electronic art forms, as well as a curatorial category for exhibitions and published documents.

The Layout of the Chapters

In Chapter One, I opened by stating what I will do in this dissertation and why it needs to be done in view of the limitations and blindspots of the existing literature on "Video Art." I will now layout the route of this dissertation, which I divided into two parts: in Part One, "Rethinking the Category of 'Video Art'" (Chapters Two and Three), I address the emergence of a homogenizing category of "Video Art" and offer a proposal for an alternative approach to mapping the discursive, differential field of experimental television and video practices; while in Part Two, "Mapping the Discursive Field of 'Video Art'" (Chapters Four through Eight), I map the conceptual framing of "video" in a series of differentiated institutional sites.

Chapter Two, "The Emergence of the (Homogenized) Category of "Video Art," commences Part One of this dissertation. In Chapter Two, I begin by addressing the television producer John Wyver's call for more "critical engagements with the whole history of video," which, as I show, derives from a common viewpoint and supports the homogenization of "Video Art" as a monolithic category.[4] While calls such as Wyver's have indeed born fruit, I argue that "engagements with the whole history of video" posit a unified object of study and fail to address the heterogeneous field of experimental television and video practices. I suggest that we need, instead, to ask at a more fundamental level how can one adequately address this field of study and how can one do so with historical specificity and conceptual clarity. The first step, which I take, requires unpacking the term "video art" and defining the very terms and concepts at stake: "television," "video" and "videotape." The next step, which is made in Chapter Three,

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[4] John Wyver, "Video Art and Television," *Sight and Sound*, vol. 57, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 121.

requires developing an alternative approach to mapping the discursive, differential field of experimental television and video practices.

In Chapter Three, "An Alternative Approach to Mapping 'Video Art' as a Category," I propose an alternative mapping of the conceptualizations of 'video' as it emerged heterogeneously in experimental television and video knowledge. In addition to presenting a different set of tools for thinking about the discursive, differential field, I introduce five major institutions—public broadcast television, experimental television centers, galleries and museums, the published record, and academic institutions—from which the concept of "video art" emerged, operated and was constricted. In turn, I argue that a totalizing concept or a whole history of "Video Art" could never properly address the discursive field of experimental television and video practices. This is because, as I argue, the field is institutionally dispersed and heterogeneous in character and, therefore, cannot be elided by appeals to some common "medium" or monolithic category.

Chapter Four, "Public Broadcast Television 1961–1993: 'Experimental' Programming and the Idea of 'Television as an Art Form,'" is the starting point for Part Two of this dissertation, which addresses the conceptual framing of "video" in five differentiated discursive and institutional sites. In Chapter Four, I focus on WGBH's role in developing experimental (broadcast) television programming and advancing the idea of "television" as an art form as early as 1961. In discussing key programs produced at the WGBH television studio—including *Jazz Images* (1964), *What's Happening Mr. Silver?* (1967-68), and *The Medium Is the Medium* (1969)—, I show that artists,

television producers, and technicians worked together to create new forms of cultural programming and to advance "experimental television" as an art form to a public television viewership. On the other hand, WGBH's television program *Video: the New Wave* (1973), which I address after the three aforementioned television programs, promoted thirty new ways in which artists and alternative television supporters advanced "video" as an art form.

The thirty works in *Video: the New Wave*, according to the program's narrator Brian O'Doherty, represent a "new wave" of artistic practices that coincided with the introduction of consumer-grade videotape cameras.[5] Yet, while consumer-grade video cameras and videotape recorders helped artists and alternative television supporters to expand the field of practice outside the television studio, they did not render institutional sites such as public television studios and experimental television centers obsolete. In fact, public television studios and alternative resource centers not only granted indispensable access to expensive production and post-production equipment but also provided vital economic, technical, and educational resources to artists. These resources, as I argue in Chapter Five, helped the Experimental Television Center in Owego, New York to advance the concept of "video image-processing" as a genre of "video art."

In Chapter Five, "Experimental Television Centers and Artists' Collectives 1966–2010: Alternative Production Resources and Image-Processing Art," I address the Experimental Television Center's role in advancing "image-processed video" as a genre of "video art" through educational workshops, artist-in-residence programs, and social

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[5] Brian O'Doherty, *Video: the New Wave*, directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston, Massachusetts: WGBH, 1973).

networking. I also discuss the Experimental Television Center's role in developing video image-processing devices and "manual" and "pre-programmable" control systems so that artist are able to work directly with television and video technology.

In Chapter Six, "Galleries and Museums 1963–2010: Exhibition Values and the Framing and Validating of 'Video Art,'" I focus on the role of galleries and museums in adapting formats for exhibiting artworks on television and videotape. In addition to addressing the way the concept of "video art" emerged and operated in galleries and museums, I address economic and technological demands that forced some gallery directors and museum curators to rethink models for exhibiting, selling, and distributing art on television and videotape. I argue that these economic and technological demands also forced some exhibiting and collecting institutions to work with new resource facilities, such as the Video Data Bank in Chicago and Electronic Arts Intermix in New York City. These resource facilities developed standards for archiving, distributing, and collecting art on analog videotape. Such standards, however, required collecting and exhibiting institutions to copy original masters (or secondary-masters) and screen exhibition copies—a practice necessitated by the tenuous nature of magnetic tape. Consequently, the focus of exhibiting and collecting institutions, which was on developing "Video Art" as a curatorial category during the late 1960s and the early 1970s, has shifted to advancing restoration and conservation methods. Some of these restoration and conservation methods are discussed in the published record, which I address in Chapter Seven, "The Published Record 1962–2010: The Invention of a Legitimizing Critical Language."

In Chapter Seven, I discuss the invention of a legitimizing critical language by covering seminal publications from 1962-2010. As I will show, these publications helped to invent a legitimizing critical language by covering the following topics: Fluxus and experimental television; experiments in public broadcast television and television as a creative medium; the alternative television movement and guerrilla television; the grammar of video and videotape; categories of video art; histories and genres of "Video Art"; and video art theory.[6] In reviewing these topics, though, it becomes apparent that "video art" is a contested concept, one that is claimed and reclaimed by various institutional viewpoints. It is for this reason that the literature review on experimental television and video practice does not appear at the beginning of this dissertation. Instead, the literature review is situated between Chapter Six, which discusses the framing and validating of 'Video Art" in galleries and museums, and Chapter Eight, which addresses practice, pedagogy, and the way in which an institution of a history of "Video Art" has been formed.

Finally, in Chapter Eight, "Academic Programs and Conferences: Practice, Pedagogy and the Institution of a History of 'Video Art,'" I follow up my discussion of the published record by looking at academic programs and conferences that developed spaces of practice and pedagogy and, by doing so, institutionalized a history of "Video Art." I also address the ways in which the reception of video and electronic media has been shaped by discussions within the professional and academic arenas. I do this by addressing the development of local forms of knowledge produced by (1) workshops and

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[6] I derived these topics in order from an exhaustive bibliography.

seminars, from public television stations and non-profit, alternative resource centers; (2) the sociology of media, from communications and media arts programs at universities; (3) film theory, from visual and cinema studies; and (4) historiography, from academic art history programs. By focusing on these local forms of knowledge, I show that the methodologies of each discipline provided the basis for developing an institution of a history of "Video Art" and, as a result, advanced the concept of "Video Art" across the conceptual borders in academia as an interdisciplinary phenomenon.

From this perspective, therefore, I am able to show that an archaeology of experimental television and video knowledge is comprised of a number of non-commensurable sites that produce a myriad of non-congruent, local forms of knowledge. What is generated, then, is not a unified knowledge of "video" as the literature often purports. Rather, as I argue, a mapping of the *institutional sites of discourse* on experimental television and video knowledge shows that there is a genealogical development of discourse, but it is not a linear one. The various strands of writing on video and the works they cover do not come from the same *institutional space* or fall within the same *genre of discourse*. Thus, the terrain of "Video Art" is shown to be neither homogeneous nor monolithic; the terrain is not a single object and, since the term is an inadequate signifier, it is not enough merely to pluralize it. A more adequate perspective demands engagements with the differential field and the various sedimentary strata across which the notion of a video medium has been produced. Before I can offer such a perspective, however, I must address the emergence of the (homogenized) category of "Video Art."

Part I.

Rethinking the Category of "Video Art"

2.

The Emergence of the (Homogenized) Category "Video Art"

In Chapter One, I provided a summary of goals and an explanation why these goals are important in view of the limitations and blind spots of the existing literature on "Video Art." My objective was to demonstrate not only that I found a gap in what has already been written on the history of "Video Art" but also to discuss how this dissertation will address this gap. In this Chapter, I will discuss the emergence of the (homogenized) category "Video Art" and define the very terms and concepts at stake. I will begin by addressing the television producer John Wyver's call for more "critical engagements with the whole history of video," which, as I will show, derives from a common viewpoint that supports the homogenization of "Video Art" as a category.[1]

In a 1988 article on video art and television featured in the film journal *Sight and Sound*, John Wyver argued that "critical engagements with the whole history of video…are lamentably few, and there is an urgent need for further writing and analysis if we are to understand and appreciate more fully the achievements and potential of video."[2] Though the remark appears in a postscript to his article, it recognizes not only that, from the point of view of this television producer, there is an urgent need for additional writing

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[1] John Wyver, "Video Art and Television," *Sight and Sound*, vol. 57, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 121.

[2] Ibid.

and analysis but also that the author's view of the interactions between video art and television is limited. Acknowledging the inadequacies of his article, Wyver concedes:

> There are many aspects of this relationship [between video art and television] not touched on here, not least the social documentary and political action strands of independent video which also developed in opposition to the broadcast media, and which more recently have found their own accommodations with television.[3]

Wyver admits, therefore, that his discussion is shaped by a personal bias that underpins the institutional perspective from which his article addresses twenty years of "intense experiment[ation] and exploration into the potential of the cathode ray tube."[4] His survey, he concedes, omits "a long and important tradition of video installations" and equally important practices that investigate notions of race, gender, ethnicity and, I would add, queer, lesbian, and transgender politics—all pertinent avenues of exploration sought out by media artists.[5] Even so, Wyver's brief survey does acknowledge a pressing want of "critical engagements with *the whole history of video*"[6] and reminds us that such a history cannot neglect the various institutional viewpoints and practices from which its material derived.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Wyver admits that this bias is "a personal prejudice," because it only concerns videotapes created and exhibited in the United States. He notes "it also reflects the greater support which video has enjoyed from funders and from museums there over the past twenty years." Ibid., 116.

[5] At the end of his article Wyver writes "there are many significant elements within the history and current state of video which are inappropriate to include within a discussion of video and television, but which are equally, and perhaps even more, worthy of attention." He gives the two following examples: single-channel pieces and video installations. Additionally, Wyver's comment in his article that there are "many significant elements within the history and current state of video which are inappropriate to include within a discussion of video and television" is a puzzling, since single-channel pieces and video installations also are part of the history that he is surveying. Ibid., 121.

[6] Ibid. (My emphasis)

Since the publication of Wyver's article and its reflective postscript, many in the field have echoed Wyver's call for a more critical engagement with the history of video.[7] Yet, while we see today that such calls have indeed born fruit, we still need to amend Wyver's vision of what needed to be done, since even attempted "engagements with the whole history of video" posit a unified object of study and fail to address the heterogeneous field of experimental performances using television and videotape cameras. We need, therefore, from the outset, to ask at a more fundamental level how can one adequately address this field of study and how can one do so with historical specificity and conceptual clarity?

In this dissertation, I will take a critical look at the literature addressing "Video Art" in order to develop an approach that offers an alternative to linear historical narratives, which remain the focus for industry professionals, artists, curators, and scholars who seek to establish a continuous line of descent from the first experimental performances using live broadcast television to more recent work employing videotape.[8] Therefore, in contrast to existing historical studies on this subject, I will not attempt to offer a survey of experimental television, videotape technology and what has been loosely categorized as "Video Art," conceived as a single, homogeneous medium.

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[7] For example see Martha Rosler's "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment," *Block*, no. 11 (1985/1986): 33. In the second part of her text, Rosler notes that there are inconsistencies in the historical accounts covering video's past. For instance, some look at the distorted "prepared TV" sets of the late 1950s and early 1960s as the starting point, while others prefer the introduction of lightweight, portable videotape cameras, such as the Sony Portapak, in the late 1960s. In response to these inconsistencies she writes, "the consensus appears that there is a history of video to be written—and soon." Calls that are more recent include David Carrier's review of Michael Rush's book *Video Art*. In the review he writes, "what is missing here a conceptual framework, some productive definition of the essence of video." David Carrier, review of *Video Art*, by Michael Rush, *caa.reviews*, February 27, 2004, http://www.caareviews.org/reviews/619 (accessed May 7, 2010).

[8] I recognize that this methodology has produced a wealth of information to which I am indebt.

Rather, I will focus on a number of relevant flash points in the history of the multifarious practices using television and videotape cameras. In doing so, I will seek to propose a more adequate framework for thinking about the decentered discursive field of "video and television," focusing on a uniquely American context.

Following Michel Foucault's conception of an archaeology of knowledge,[9] I will organize the multi-layered and stratified discursive field of experimental television and videotape practices along two axes.[10] Along a diachronic axis, I will trace key disputes from five major institutional vantage points: public broadcast television studios; alternative media and experimental television centers; exhibition spaces; the published record; and academic institutions. Along the synchronic axis, I will map the discussions and theorizations of experimental television and video practices at each of these institutional sites and consider their role in defining what comes to be thought as the field of "video art." By tracing key disputes in specific institutional sites across a topography of major institutional vantage points, I will seek to show that the field of video and experimental television practice is both institutionally dispersed and heterogeneous in character. A critical engagement with this differential field cannot therefore be adequately encompassed by the linear narratives that have till now dominated attempts to write the history of "Video Art."

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[9] Michel Foucault, "Introduction," *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 3-17.

[10] See the appendix for a conceptual mapping of the discursive field of experimental television and video knowledge.

The Notion of Video Art

> *"Video Art" is a phrase widely used these days, yet there are probably as many meanings intended as there are users of the term.*
>
> – Howard Wise[11]

What is "video art"? In 1977, Howard Wise, the founder and first director of Electronic Arts Intermix, asked this very question in order to convey what those in the field had in mind when they referred to "video art."[12] Since then, the term has been used as a catchall category for a multitude of forms and practices that employ television monitors, videotape cameras, image projectors and devices developed to modify electronic television/video signals, such as synthesizers. The term has also been used to reference experimental (broadcast) television and image-processed video as electronic art forms, as well as a curatorial category for exhibitions and published documents. While the term may be convenient for historians, curators, and artists, it remains problematic—especially when applied as an umbrella concept claiming to provide the foundation for a comprehensive historical perspective.

Historical perspectives inevitably involve a selection process that necessarily includes and excludes material. Those writing about video art, however, often include more than they exclude. This is partly a consequence of the ambiguous nature of works packaged as "Video Art" and the lack of critical criteria for excluding superfluous material.[13] But it is also compounded by the exorbitant range of work this catchall

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[11] Howard Wise, "What is Video Art?," *Cablelibraries*, vol. 5, no. 6 (June 1977): 1.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Not all works packaged as "Video Art" were made using videotape cameras. For example, Eric Siegel created *Einstine* (1968) (figure 2.2) by synthesizing live broadcast television. Moreover, not all works distributed today on videotape or DVD, including *Einstine*, used analog videotape or digital formats in their

classification encompasses. Wise's question about the defining characteristics of video art is as pertinent today as it was in 1977. For this reason I propose to amend Wyver's call by posing the following question: how can one construct a historical analysis without it being diluted and, in consequence, falling short of offering an adequate account. Before I can do this, however, I have to address and unpack the very term at stake in all these histories: "video art."

Two principle concerns arise from the definitions that have been offered: first, the associative terms that come to be collapsed into "video" and, second, the historical boundaries. Certain histories, for example, have posited the "prepared TV" sets of the late 1950s and the early 1960s as the starting point for a history of video. Others have favored the introduction in the late 1960s of lightweight, consumer-grade videotape cameras, such as the Sony Portapak. These two starting points are no doubt historically relevant. Nevertheless, the very terms and concepts of "television," "video," and "video art" need to be defined in their specific historical contexts, precisely in order that disabling generalizations that erase the real historical problems not be perpetuated.

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production. Many of these works were not recorded on videotape initially because the technology was either too expensive or not available to artists.

Videotape is not Television: The Making of a Distinction

In 1968, the academic journal *Media and Methods* featured an article by Paul Ryan that

sought to analyze "what is videotape as a medium."[14] Sensing a need to define terms and

to make fundamental distinctions, Ryan announced:

> VT is not TV. If anything, its [sic] TV flipped into itself. Television, as the root
> of the word implies, has to do with transmitting information over distance.
> Videotape has to do with infolding information…Especially with the ½" battery
> operated portables one can sculpt time-space in accord with the contours of
> experience. Information can be infolded to enrich experience.[15]

In all probability, this was not the first time this crucial differentiation was made.

However, the article is one of the earliest to address videotape as an expressive medium

and to seek to define its distinctive grammar as distinct from television's.[16] At the time

of the publication of his essay, Ryan had just completed a ten-month period of study and

research with Marshall McLuhan at Fordham University, where Ryan experimented with

portable videotape equipment in a variety of situations, most notably those connected to

education, and, in distinguishing videotape from television, he sought to isolate the

constituent elements that made videotape so promising in the area of social media,

especially as an educational technology.[17] McLuhan's and Ryan's research findings had

far-reaching consequences for the sociology of media in the late 1960s. In this, however,

they also coincided with parallel discussions and experiments involving artists and

scholars at the same time.

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[14] Paul Ryan, "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium," *Media and Methods*, vol. 5, no. 4 (December 1968): 36-41.

[15] Ibid., 38.

[16] In "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium," Ryan discussed the grammar of videotape as consisting of the ability to take part in one's own audience participation, offer instant image and sound feedback, partake in the real-time processing of information, and manipulate time and space electronically. Ibid., 36-41.

[17] Ibid., 41.

Two years after Ryan's publication, the film historian and theorist Gene

Youngblood also reminded readers of his book *Expanded Cinema* that videotape is not

television. The reminder comes in a chapter devoted to essential definitions of "cathode-

ray tube videotronics" and to a discussion of "television as a creative medium."[18]

Borrowing from Howard Wise's first exhibition devoted to artistic experiments in

television, Youngblood argued that "it is essential to remember that VT is not TV:

videotape is not television though it is processed through the same system."[19] Yet, while

videotape and television are technologically distinct, they are also inextricably bound

together. Television receivers and video cameras may have different functions and

produce different results, involving signal storage and transmission (videotape) as

opposed to signal translation and projection (television), but their particular technologies

still process coded, electronic signals through the same system.

Inside every television set and videotape camera are photoconductive tubes that

scan photosensitive elements and transmit signals. As Youngblood explained:

> According to how much light is focused onto the surface of the photocathode
> screen, each tiny photosensitive element becomes electronically charged, building
> up a "charge pattern" across the screen proportional to the lights and darks of the

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[18] Youngblood wrote his text using his knowledge of film, and like many film theorists and historians, he compared and contrasted film and video. In one instance he wrote, "since present television studio equipment was not made for the purpose of aesthetic experimentation, artists have been forced to work within the parameters that amount to video imitation of cinematic techniques: electronic equivalents of cinematic wipes, fades, superimpositions, and traveling mattes." I would argue that artists were resourceful during their early experimentation with television. They were not, however, restricted to imitating cinematic techniques as Youngblood claimed in 1970. On the other hand, film was the closest relatable medium that scholars could look at to make sense of new electronic art practices using video and television. Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: E. Dutton and Co., 1970), 257 and 265.

[19] "TV as a Creative Medium" took place from May 17 to June 14, 1969, at the Howard Wise Gallery, New York. Ibid., 281.

televised scene. This charge pattern is swept across, or "read," by a beam of electrons emitted from a cathode gun in the camera tube. The beam neutralizes each picture element on the photocathode screen as it sweeps across, producing a varying electric current that corresponds to the pattern of light and shade in the televised scene.[20]

For cameras equipped with videotape recording technology, magnetically charged film made it possible to record the rapid and continuous process of electrons across the photocathode screen while, in television, it was the receivers that picked up the signal produced by the camera and translated it into a picture on a screen. Youngblood spelled out the processes involved:

> [In] cathode-ray tubes in television receivers [or "kinescopes"]…, a cathode gun like the one in the camera tube sprays the phosphor-coated screen with a beam of electrons synchronized with the exploratory beam in the studio camera. The phosphor coating glows in the path of the beam as it scans the picture tube. Horizontal and vertical "sync pulses" keep the two beams in step. A beam of constant strength would produce a white rectangle of fine horizontal lines, which is called a "raster" and is the basic field of the picture. But if the beam's strength is varied, the trace-point brightness is varied also. When the video signal is made to regulate the picture tube's beam, a pattern of light and shade can be built up on the screen's phosphor corresponding to the distribution of lights and darks focused through the camera lens—thus a duplication of the televised scene. This picture fades and is continually replenished by the rapidly-scanning beam so that we see a clear, complete image.[21]

For Youngblood, these detailed explanations provided of "cathode-ray tube videotronics" enabled him to be much more specific about what artists were doing with television receivers and videotape cameras in the late 1960s. While his technical jargon might well seem more appropriate for a manual on television broadcasting, the technical

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[20] Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema*, 265-266.

[21] Youngblood addresses black-and-white television receivers in this explanation. The same basic principles are involved in color receivers and cameras. The difference is that four camera tubes are located inside the camera instead of one; they include one for each of the basic colors (red, blue, and green) and one black-and-white tube. For color television receivers, there are three cathode-ray guns instead of one for scanning the photocathode screen. Ibid., 266-267.

details give his account a specificity that offers crucial insights into the way certain art works are made, making it clear that discussing television and video as interchangeable is deeply problematic. Videotape is not television. Yet, because videotape and television are processed through the same system of scanning photosensitive elements and transmitting signals and since both were often used in tandem in the making of countless works labeled "video art," discussions continued to conflate the technical processes. In response, I would like to take a step back to address how precisely it was that television had played a significant role in the development of practices categorized as "video art."

It has become an established contention in scholarship that experiments in television predated those using videotape.[22] The idea persists even among those who advocate for the superiority of video work. Around the same time videotape became readily available, the artist and art critic Douglas Davis asserted that "half-inch videotape represents the first authentically electronic form that art can take," whereas "the appearance of the television set as an image in painting and as an element in sculpture (in constructions and multimedia environments) was a preliminary step, nothing more."[23] Davis's primary concern was video art, yet he still inadvertently conceded that television could not be ignored. In dismissing television as a preliminary step for "the first authentically electronic form that art can take,"[24] Davis nevertheless underestimated the importance of the television receiver and the real-time, artistic experiments made with it

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[22] I acknowledge that describing artworks as "experimental" might promote the idea that they are preliminary. However, this is not my intention.

[23] Douglas Davis, "Video Obscura," *Artforum*, vol. 10, no. 8 (April 1972): 67.

[24] Ibid.

for the development of video practice. Works by artists experimenting with broadcast television were, in fact, as innovative as video practices and, one could argue, early modifications to television sets were one of the principle means of subversion that broke down barriers and opened up new spaces for aesthetic experimentation and exploration.

Videotape opened up new possibilities and made it feasible for artists to capture performances and exhibit fully realized video works as electronic documents. From this point of view, Davis is correct to see magnetic tape as one of the first "electronic form[s] that art can take."[25] Yet, one can also argue that television was equally an electronic form, even though artworks created with television receivers are "temporally-specific" in the sense that they are viewed at one time. The difference lies in videotape's ability to capture and document a transmitted signal for later use. Nevertheless, both videotape and television involve viewing with a television receiver. In playing back videotape too the electronic source or signal is non-tangible and ephemeral. It may have the capacity to record signals on film but it too has a short shelf life since image and sound quality erode over time and use. The television signal, on the other hand, does not undergo the same process of erosion, though its inherent nature involves a process of erasure, as the cathode-ray gun sweeps across the screen.

In early experimental work in television, this broadcast signal became the source of intense experimentation and exploration. Using various image processing techniques and synthesizers, artists created works that consciously opposed commercial broadcast

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[25] That is, by having the capability of documenting signal modifications and replaying them later as artworks. Ibid.

transmissions. Works such as Nam June Paik's *Magnetic TV* (1965) (figure 2.1) and Eric

Siegel's *Einstine* (1968) (figure 2.2) set out to deconstruct the commercially-appropriated

technology as a way to achieve new effects. Such pioneering artworks were innovative,

yet economically and technologically restricted.[26] Nonetheless, ongoing experiments in

television drew on successive advances in broadcast television technologies in the 1960s.

As a result, artists were able to use more and more advanced equipment, such as portable,

battery-operated cameras, custom-built video synthesizers, and image projection devices.

Indeed, artistic experiment in television was forever changed with the introduction of the

cheaper lightweight cameras that became available to U.S. consumers by 1967. The

history appears to follow a single line of development from real-time television art to art

documented on videotape yet, as I will argue, the multiplicity of institutions from which

artists were working and the countless technological advances and economic

opportunities render such a linear historical perspective problematic. In the next Chapter,

I will propose an alternative approach to mapping "video art" as it emerged

heterogeneously by addressing these institutions from which this term has been claimed.

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[26] This is because videotape and post-production/editing equipment was expensive and, even if one had
access to this equipment, they were still limited. For instance, the television producer and director Fred
Barzyk recalled that while Paik was a Rockefeller Artist-in-Residence he complained that "his small grant
[was] disappearing without any major creations." He explained, "we tried small…video experiments, but
Paik was frustrated because using WGBH's television studio, crews, etc. was very expensive." For more
see Fred Barzyk, "Paik and the Video Synthesizer," *Fred Barzyk: The Search for a Personal Vision in
Broadcast Television* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2001), 73.

2.1. Nam June Paik, *Magnet TV*, 1965. 17-inch black-and-white television set with magnet, 28 3/8 × 19 1/4 × 24 1/2 in. The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

2.2. Eric Siegel, Two stills from Einstine, 1968. VHS, 19:11 minutes, color, music by Rimsky-Korsakov. Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.

3.

**An Alternative Approach to Mapping "Video Art" as a Category:
An Archaeology of the Conceptualizations of "Video" as it Emerges
Heterogeneously in Experimental Television and Video Knowledge**

In Chapter Two, I addressed the emergence of the homogenized category of "Video Art"

and defined the very terms and concepts at stake in its history. In this Chapter, I will

propose an alternative approach to mapping "video art" as it emerged heterogeneously by

introducing five major institutions from which the concept has been claimed. By using

Michel Foucault's conception of an archaeology of knowledge, I will show that the

discursive field of experimental television and video is institutionally dispersed and

heterogeneous in character and, therefore, cannot be elided by appeals to some common

"medium" or monolithic category.

In the introduction to his seminal text, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel

Foucault questioned the traditional historical analysis with its narrative of linear

succession.[1] In it Foucault proposed another type of historical project, one that

specifically aims to reveal and "distinguish various sedimentary strata,"[2] like an

archaeologist digging and sifting through layers of earth on a gridded site, seeking

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[1] Michel Foucault, "Introduction," *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 3-4.

[2] Ibid.

relative knowledge of a given culture or society. Unlike the traditional analysis, this

specialization of analysis turns away from notions of origin, derivation and development

towards a new conception of the historian's task:

> The old questions of the traditional analysis (What link should be made between
> disparate events? How can casual succession be established between them?
> What continuity or overall significance do they possess? Is it possible to define a
> totality, or must one be content with reconstituting connexions?) are now being
> replaced by questions of another type: Which strata should be isolated from
> others? What types of series should be established? What criteria of
> periodization should be adopted for each of them? What system of relations
> (hierarchy, dominance, stratification, univocal determination, circular causality)
> may be established between them? What series may be established? And in what
> large-scale chronological table may distinct series of events be determined?[3]

These new questions signal a radically different historical perspective: one that is no

longer interested in tracing an evolving totality, but rather maps the emergence of

practices and conceptual frameworks across a spatial terrain of sedimentary strata. In

utilizing this methodology, emphasis shifts from a temporal perspective to a spatial one,

which now is concerned with the "system of relations" between strata and the "distinct

series of events" defined within these relations.[4]

Following Foucault's "archaeology" would entail a spatialized conceptualization

of the field of experimental television and video knowledge, and a mapping of the

various *sites of discourse*, the "system of relations" between them and the "distinct series

of events" elaborated within them. Such a project clearly differs from linear,

chronological descriptions of the field. By contrast, a Foucauldean approach discloses a

terrain of experimental television and video practices that is heterogeneous in character

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

and institutionally dispersed. It is, to draw a parallel with John Tagg's work on the

discursive field of photographic production, a field of production "demarcated and

divided up in advance into specialised territories of practice and meaning which were

congruent one with another only in their exercise of constraints on proliferation

of…discourses and in their articulation of a discontinuous field beyond which there was

only a declared non-sense."[5] It is this decentered field that I will try to define and, across

it, I will then trace key disputes from each of the institutional sites that I have mapped. In

citing these institutional sites, I will show how the development of this rich body of work

and the discourse invested in it was made possible economically and technologically.

So, how is such an archaeology of experimental television and video knowledge

to be constructed? My first strategy has been to select key, paradigm-shaping texts from

an exhaustive chronological bibliography, which address the conception, development,

and defining characteristics of a body of work that has become known as "Video Art."[6]

What becomes evident, however, is that these texts, graphed on a diachronic axis, are not

homogenous but rather, across a synchronic plane, have to be seen as institutionally

dispersed.[7] This synchronic plane defines a series of *sites of discourse* that are

constituted both as *institutional spaces* and as the sites of distinct *genres of discourse*.

The sites I have identified are (1) public broadcast television studios; (2) experimental

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[5] John Tagg makes this argument for photographic production. John Tagg, *Art History, Cultural Politics and the Discursive Field* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 112.

[6] These texts are located in the bibliography section "A Chronology of Published Writings on Experimental Television and Video Media, 1962-2010."

[7] This is because the discourse comes from artists, scholars, and technicians working in distinct institutions.

television centers (set up for the advancement of alternative media); (3) exhibition and curatorial spaces; (4) the published record; and (5) academic institutions.

The five key institutional sites and the genres of discourse I have isolated are not, however, discrete and self-enclosed—that is, the conceptual borders that distinguish these institutions are not closed. Instead, they are fluid and, thus, interact with one another via their "systems of relations" and "distinct series of events" defined by these relations; for instance, public broadcast television studios interconnect with alternative media centers and exhibition/curatorial spaces because their participants (who navigate through these sites) share and explore similar objectives. What differentiate these sites are their distinct contributions and their means of transmission (of discourse and knowledge). While the conceptual boarders are established in this study for the sake of historical specificity and conceptual clarity, the ultimate aim here is to gravitate away from notions of a unified "Video Art" toward a differential field of heterogeneous practices. The following institutions helped to develop this differential field and contributed to making the tools of television accessible to artists.

I.   **Public Broadcast Television**

This study begins with public broadcast television for two reasons. First, this site helped to make the tools of television accessible by offering workshops, economic resources, and artist-in-residence programs. Second, public television studios, which devoted some resources to experimental programming, produced some of the first broadcasts presenting

the idea of television as a viable art form.[8] *What's Happening Mr. Silver?* (1967-68), *The Medium Is the Medium* (1968), and *Sorcery* (1968) are some examples of the types of experimental programs made possible by educational, economic, and technological resources at public television studios.[9] The tools of television, however, were not always available to the public. Before the 1960s, the commercial broadcasting industry predominantly owned and controlled the technological resources and the telecommunications infrastructure needed for producing, editing, and broadcasting television content. In addition to possessing economic capital, they also enjoyed a growing viewership that participated in one of the largest, most advanced socio-global networks of information exchange—one that also benefited from the immediacy of television and its ability to relay information live. However, the commercial broadcast industry was not the only institution involved in producing, disseminating, or regulating television content. In fact, the Public Broadcasting Corporation, community access television, and governmental agencies, such as the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), also participated in regulating and shaping the industry. At the same time, each of these institutional sites played distinctive roles. For their part, commercial broadcasting companies, such as CBS and ABC, possessed the capital to purchase, store, and maintain costly and cumbersome equipment vital for the creation and distribution of broadcast television programming. Governmental agencies such as the FCC, however, had the authority to regulate interstate and international communications over radio, television,

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[8] Producers and participants working in (public) broadcast television also published some of the first texts on the subject. For some early examples see the following: John Margolies, "TV—The Next Medium," *Art in America*, vol. 57, no. 5 (September/October 1969): 48-55; George Stoney, "Mirror Machine," *Sight and Sound*, vol. 41, no. 1 (Winter 1971/72): 9-11; Robert de Havilland, ed., "Designing for TV," *Print*, vol. 26, no. 1 (January/February 1972).

[9] *What's Happening Mr. Silver?* and *The Medium Is the Medium* were produced at WGBH, Boston. Loren Sears and Robert Zagone created *Sorcery* at KQED, San Francisco.

cable, and satellite. So they too had a role to play if independent productions were to develop.

The main forms of writing on the potentialities of the television medium within the broadcast industry are government reports, internal public television documents, trade/technical reports, and journal articles by public television producers and participants. While commercial broadcasting companies produced internal reports concerning trade, technology, and commercial programming, the FCC published government reports to standardize and regulate the growing industry.[10] For example, in 1972, the FCC and the United States Congress passed an act of legislation (the FCC Report and Order of 1972) requiring all cable franchises to include at least one public access channel. Although public television stations and public access channels existed before 1972, there were only a few; the most notable public television stations in the United States were WBGH-TV in Boston, WNET-TV in New York, and KQED-TV in San Francisco. The FCC's ruling had an impact on the emergence of new spaces of practice. It did not democratize television, but it did help to make accessible the tools of television for those interested in alternative programming. This in turn led to the production and dissemination of discourse, works of art, and programs across the fluid, institutional boundaries that also saw an economically motivated migration of artists, engineers, technicians, and scholars. Most often, those participating or contributing gravitated toward production and post-production centers, such as the Experimental Television Center in upstate New York and the Electronic Kitchen in New York City.

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[10] The Communications Act of 1934 and its provisions, including the Public Television Broadcasting Act of 1967, also regulated the industry.

II.   Experimental Television Centers and Video Collectives

The emergence of the alternative television movement in the United States occurred across three distinct institutional sites: equipment centers, experimental television centers, and public access and television studios. In contrast to the commercial broadcasting industry, these three sites sought to open a space for alternative television production by and for the community. Equipment that was once available only to a few technicians working in the industry was now available to the public; though, access was still limited, even into the 1980s. Nevertheless, by the early 1970s, equipment resource centers—such as the New York Media Equipment Resource Center (M.E.R.C.) and the New Orleans Video Access Center—began offering services to artists and individuals interested in alternative television production.[11]

Alternative television centers, such as the Experimental Television Center, which Ralph Hocking incorporated in 1971, and the Electronic Kitchen, founded in 1971 by Woody and Steina Vasulka, also provided vital resources for those interested in experimenting and creating works of art using electronic projection devices, videotape cameras, and audio and video synthesizers.[12] These centers were established as production and post-production studios for artists and technicians who would not otherwise have access to costly equipment. In addition to providing access to production

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[11] The New York Media Equipment Resource Center (M.E.R.C.) and the New Orleans Video Access Center were established in 1971.

[12] Ralph Hocking incorporated the Experimental Television Center in 1971. It was the successor of Student Experiments in Television, established in 1968 at the State University of New York, Binghamton, and the Community Center for Television Production (C.C.T.V.P.).

and post-production facilities, they also offered training, workshops, and artist-in-residence programs. Such services and facilities were not, however, exclusive to alternative television and video centers. Indeed, a number of public television stations at this time also began workshop series and residence programs. In 1967, for instance, KQED-TV in San Francisco initiated an experimental television workshop series and WGBH-TV in Boston started an artist-in-residence program. Since work created at these stations rarely found its way onto the commercial television market,[13] public television stations also served as a viable site of transmission (via broadcast), televising material produced at sponsored workshops and artist-in-residence programs.[14] Unlike experimental television centers, however, public broadcast television stations were shared sites with shared interests; experimental programming on the televisual arts was negotiated and mediated by public broadcast television producers and directors who were required to work on other programs and projects with different interests.

As is the case with public television, those participating in the alternative or experimental television movement also produced distinct *genres of discourse*. These include the following: (1) "how-to" trade manuals, such as Videofreex's *Spaghetti City Video Manual* (1973); (2) counter-histories on alternative television practices, including *Guerrilla Television* by Michael Shamberg (1971); (3) technical reports; and (4) alternative, independent journals, such as *Radical Software* (1970-1976). While these

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[13] In 1969, the Videofreex and the producer Don West created *Subject to Change* for CBS. However, it was never televised.

[14] One example is the television program *The Medium Is the Medium*, which WNDT/Channel 13 aired on March 23, 1969. It features works produced at WGBH by Allan Kaprow, Nam June Paik, Otto Piene, James Seawright, Thomas Tadlock, and Aldo Tambellini.

writings were institutionally motivated, it must be stressed that the conceptual borders

between the sites specified in this dissertation are not closed as their participants also

migrated to where the opportunities were. These include galleries and museums.

III.   Galleries and Museums

Participants interested in alternative television also began to exhibit in galleries and

museums. In 1973, for example, the Whitney Biennial showed *Tape Project* by Jaime

Davidovitch, the founder of the Artists' Television Network (A.T.N.) in New York

City.[15] Already by this time, a number of distinct institutional spaces that exhibited and

screened works using television, video, and/or videotape had emerged. These include

three main domains: (1) galleries, museums, and databanks; (2) festivals and

performative sites; and (3) neo-avant-garde spaces.[16]

As is the case with the other sites, those participating in institutions associated

with exhibiting or screening also generated discourse on experimental television and

practices using video and videotape. However, unlike the former sites, museums and

galleries had a greater visibility. This was due to an influx of exhibitions (from the late

1960s onward) and their respective publications, which circulated across disciplines. As

a privileged site, galleries and museums helped artists and collectives gain greater

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[15] There were eight works at the Biennial that used videotape. They included the following: *Baldessari Sings Lewitt* by John Baldessari; *Kiva* by Peter Campus; *Tape Project* by Jaime Davidovitch; *Sapphos* by Joan Jonas; *Sax* by Richard Landry; *Untitled* by Robert Morris; *Mat Key Radio Track* by Keith Sonnier; and *Selected Works* (1972) by William Wegman. By 1975, the Whitney Biennial had quadrupled the number of artworks that incorporated the videotape medium.

[16] Neo-avant-garde spaces are sites where neo-avant-garde sanctioned activities took place. Examples include the 1963 Fluxus "Exposition of Music: Electronic Television" (Wuppertal) and the *Annual New York Avant-Garde Festivals* in New York City (1963-1980). Other sites include private settings, such as artist studios and lofts.

exposure. At the same time, artists, curators, and scholars—especially those invested in emergent electronic art forms—began contributing to gallery and museum literature. These include (1) curatorial historiographies and catalogues, (2) advertising brochures, (3) critical reviews, (4) technical reports, and (5) neo-avant-garde statements. The first category of writing consists of opening statements and curatorial overviews of exhibited works. The second grouping is comprised of promotional items, which are not always informative, except in rare cases such as the 1964 brochure accompanying Nam June Paik's exhibition at the New School for Social Research. Exceptional documents, such as Paik's 1964 exhibition brochure or Howard Wise's promotional manifesto titled "At the Leading Edge of Art" (1973), represent significant source material from a period when few informative writings existed on the subject.

Critical reviews and technical reports cross all the domains delineated in this section. However, in contrast to exhibition reviews on the subject, technical reports were rarely circulated—published examples include the 1964 brochure accompanying Nam June Paik's exhibition at the New School for Social Research and Dan Graham's "Two Consciousness Projection(s)."[17] Critical exhibition reviews in major Contemporary art journals—including *Afterimage*, *Artforum*, *ARTnews*, and numerous others—are more abundant and promote greater visibility for those in the field. Neo-avant-garde statements, such as Nam June Paik's "afterlude to the EXPOSITION of EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION," however, were not circulated widely. Instead, they

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[17] Nam June Paik's technical notes are published in the exhibition catalogue for *Videa 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik, 1959-1973*. See Judson Rosebush, ed., *Videa 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik, 1959-1973* (Syracuse: Everson Museum of Art, 1974). Dan Graham's "Two Consciousness Projection(s)" appeared in the December 1974 issue of *Arts Magazine*.

were included in limited publications, including the Fluxus journal *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen* and the newspaper *fLuxus cc fiVe ThreE*.

IV.   The Published Record

The published record represents a kind of knowledge base from which a legitimizing critical language has invented frameworks for thinking about electronic forms of art using television, video, and videotape. While this knowledge base is comprised of material that is derived from a variety of institutions, a chronological study of the published record yields some surprising information concerning various areas of inquiry, changing roles of cultural institutions and audiences, and the impact of innovative technologies on cultural production and creative expression. My criteria for selecting material from this record has been to locate key, paradigm-shaping texts from an exhaustive chronological bibliography, which address the conception, development, and defining characteristics of a body of work that has become known as "Video Art." Although this material is global in scale, for the purpose of this study I selected texts that address the field in a uniquely American context. By examining the way this literature addresses the emergence of a concept of "Video Art," I will be able to substantiate one of the principal arguments of this dissertation—that a totalizing and monolithic history of video art is problematic.

V.   Academic Institutions and Conferences

If the aforementioned sites have defined the topography of the landscape across which video practice has emerged, then the reception of that practice has been powerfully shaped by discussions within the academic arena. Such discussions have crossed the

disciplines of art history, film and visual studies, communication and media arts, and educational studios and workshops. What they have produced is a discourse drawing on the following methodologies: historiography, from art history; theory, from film and visual studies; sociology of media, from communication and media arts; and analyses of the technical aspects of video, from academic studios and workshops.

Like those working in public broadcast television, alternative media centers, and museums and galleries, academics began writing exhibition reviews and articles, participating in panel discussions, and curating exhibitions. They also used their disciplinary frameworks for thinking about electronic art forms. The various frameworks adapted, however, were not always adequately suited for thinking through this emerging interdisciplinary work. As a result, materials informed by academic disciplines (for example, Film, English, and Art History) were institutionally specific and therefore heterogeneous.[18] With the emergence of new theoretical perspectives in the 1970s and 1980s, though, newer interdisciplinary approaches were available, which in turn, helped to shape a distinctive knowledge base—one that did not belong to a single academic discipline and, thus, moved freely across the conceptual borders in academia.

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[18] For example, Gene Youngblood, George Stoney, and Robert Arn applied film theory, whereas Marshall McLuhan and Paul Ryan applied social media theory. Intervening discussions have most frequently stemmed from the theory and sociology of media. The earliest examples include Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964) and *The Medium Is the Message* (1967), and Gene Youngblood's *Expanded Cinema* (1970). Examples that are more recent are Sean Cubitt's *Timeshift: On Video Culture* (1991) and *Videography: Video Media as Art and Culture* (1993). Technical reports from academic research facilities, workshops, and studios have also been a source of information on the state and potential of experimental television and video practice. Examples include Paul Ryan's 1968 essay on research conducted at Fordham University, titled "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium," and Eric Cameron's "The Grammar of the Video Image," which covers the structure of video-recording at Nova Scotia College. These texts, however, remain only a fragment of a larger body of knowledge.

What is noticeable across all academic sites is a marked dissatisfaction with the present state of the literature on "Video Art." This literature tends to treat this category as homogeneous. In addition to forming a monolithic conception of the field, some historical perspectives concentrate on offering a unified chronological history of "Video Art." What these accounts fail to grasp is that the field is diverse and differential. By contrast, I propose to distinguish the sites and genres of writing on practices using television, video and videotape without assuming that they all refer to a common object of knowledge. These practices are indeed shown to be radically heterogeneous in ways that must be addressed and cannot be elided by appeals to some common "medium." I will now discuss the non-congruent forms of local knowledge that the non-commensurable sites have each produced, starting with public broadcast television.

Part II.

Mapping the Discursive Field of "Video Art"

4.

Public Broadcast Television 1961-1993: "Experimental" Programming and the Idea of "Television as an Art Form"

In Chapter Three, I offered a different set of tools for thinking about the differential field of "video art." I will now focus on the way the term "video art" emerges, operates, and is constricted in a range of institutional sites. My primary purpose is to map the discursive field of "video art" by tracing its emergence as a concept in a number of differentiated discursive and institutional spaces, beginning with public broadcast television and its role in cultivating experimental (broadcast) television programming and promoting the idea of television as an art form.

The Communications Act of 1934 and Public Broadcast Television

During the 1960s, television producers at several American public television stations helped to develop the idea of (broadcast) television as an art form and, in the 1970s, the concept of "video art." However, before "video art" emerged as a concept in public television, the United States Congress and the Federal Communications Commission established regulations that made it possible for public television stations to endorse experimental television as part of their cultural programming.[1] The Communications Act

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[1] The Communications Act has been updated to include amendments and provisions, such as the establishment, operation, and funding of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in 1967. U.S. Congress, Senate, *Communications Act of 1934*, 47th Congress, 151, 1934.

of 1934 (and its provisions), the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, and the FCC Report and Order of 1972 represent the principal legislation that established these regulations and helped to shape services provided by public broadcast television and community access television.[2]

In 1934, public broadcasting meant radio. With the development of television in the late 1940s and 1950s, however, it became necessary to amend the initial Act, extending its provisions to the increasingly important television medium. It is at this point that policies crucial for the development of experimental television were laid down. The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, which extended the provisions of the 1934 Communications Act, contained a very significant "declaration of policy" asserting that "it is in the public interest to encourage the growth and development of public radio and television broadcasting, including the use of such media for instructional, educational, and cultural purposes."[3]

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[2] Public broadcast television and community access television are two different institutions. Unlike community access television, however, public broadcast television had a greater visibility. This is because, as early as 1967, public broadcast television studios began offering workshops and artist-in-residence programs to invited artists. Other conditions include the following: (1) public television studios possessed economic capital for promoting experiments in television and telecommunications technologies (from governmental and privately funded grants); (2) they owned production and post-production facilities, which enabled their participants to record, edit, and produce works in television; (3) they were backed by crucial governmental regulations and provisions promoting public telecommunications policies and services locally and nationally; (4) and they participated in debates in the literature, which concerned television's unrealized possibilities, the potentiality of television as a creative medium, and alternative methods and non-commercial modes of production. For these debates see John Margolies, "TV—The Next Medium," *Art in America*, vol. 57, no. 5 (September/October 1969): 48-55; Jonathon Price, "Video Pioneers: The Fascinating Future of TV as Visual Art," *Harper's Magazine*, vol. 244, no. 1465 (June 1972): 87-92; Robert de Havilland, ed., "Designing for TV," *Print*, vol. 26, no. 1 (January/February 1972); and Fred Barzyk, "TV as Art as TV," *Print*, vol. 26, no. 1 (January/February 1972): 20-29.

[3] The declaration policy includes the following conditions: "(1) it is in the public interest to encourage the growth and development of public radio and television broadcasting, including the use of such media for instructional, educational, and cultural purposes; (2) it is in the public interest to encourage the growth and development of nonbroadcast telecommunications technologies for the delivery of public telecommunications services; (3) expansion and development of public telecommunications and of

The "declaration of policy" also enforces a number of conditions on public television stations. First, the policy encourages the development of public telecommunications services for those interested in experimenting with broadcast television equipment and videotape cameras. Second, it promotes instructional, educational, and cultural programming and encourages public broadcast television stations to take creative risks.[4] Third, it declares that "it is in the public interest to encourage the growth and development of *non-broadcast* telecommunications technologies for the delivery of public telecommunications services."[5] Fourth, it calls for the local and national expansion and development of public telecommunications services, nurtured by diversity, freedom, imagination, and initiative. Finally, the "declaration of policy" in the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 underscores the necessity for "the Federal

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diversity of its programming depend on freedom, imagination, and initiative on both local and national levels; (4) the encouragement and support of public telecommunications, while matters of importance for private and local development, are also of appropriate and important concern to the Federal Government; (5) it furthers the general welfare to encourage public telecommunications services which will be responsive to the interests of people both in particular localities and throughout the United States, which will constitute an expression of diversity and excellence, and which will constitute a source of alternative telecommunications services for all the citizens of the Nation; (6) it is in the public interest to encourage the development of programming that involves creative risks and that addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences, particularly children and minorities; (7) it is necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to complement, assist, and support a national policy that will most effectively make public telecommunications services available to all citizens of the United States; (8) public television and radio stations and public telecommunications services constitute valuable local community resources for utilizing electronic media to address national concerns and solve local problems through community programs and outreach programs; (9) it is in the public interest for the Federal Government to ensure that all citizens of the United States have access to public telecommunications services through all appropriate available telecommunications distribution technologies; and (10) a private corporation should be created to facilitate the development of public telecommunications and to afford maximum protection from extraneous interference and control." U.S. Congress, Senate, *Communications Act of 1934*, 47th Congress, 396, 1934, 207.

[4] Pioneering producers and directors interested in experimental programming at WGBH, WNET Thirteen, and KQED supported such risks.

[5] The Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer is an example of a non-broadcast technology, which Nam June Paik and Shuya Abe built with funds from WGBH. U.S. Congress, Senate, *Communications Act of 1934*, 47th Congress, 396, 1934, 207. (My emphasis)

Government to complement, assist, and support a national policy that will most effectively make public telecommunications services available to all citizens of the United States."[6] It stresses that such services are seen as valuable resources for local communities.

Community access to public television studios, however, proved not to be the first priority. The first emphasis for providing "a source of alternative telecommunications services" was on expanding cultural programming that took creative risks with the new medium. At the same time, however, management put pressure on producers to ensure the production of broadcastable material from in-house attempts to expand the boundaries of television. As a result, three prominent public television stations—WGBH in Boston, KQED in San Francisco, and WNET in New York City—began offering workshops for invited participants as early as 1967.[7] Where they looked for a model of creative risk taking was to the world of experimental fine art, already institutionally framed as an index of American cultural vitality. Thus, in 1967, WGBH inaugurated an artist-in-residence program with financial help from a Rockefeller Foundation grant.[8] That same year, KQED initiated their short-lived Experimental Television Workshop, which they

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[6] Ibid.

[7] In 1967, for example, WGBH director Fred Barzyk invited David Silver to develop *What's Happening Mr. Silver?* In 1969, WGBH invited six artists "to find new ways of using television as an electronic art form" by collaborating with television engineers. Ed Dowling, unpublished press release for *The Medium Is the Medium* from the Public Broadcasting Laboratory, March 11, 1969, Box D04449, WGBH Archives, Boston, Massachusetts.

[8] The media critic Marita Sturken noted, "WGBH was actually the first of all three stations to support television and video experimentation, receiving funds from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1967 and, under the guidance of producer Fred Barzyk, producing several early experimental shows, including an innovative 1967 series, 'What's Happening Mr. Silver?' and the seminal 'The Medium Is the Medium' (1969)." Marita Sturken, "Private Money and Personal Influence," *Afterimage*, vol. 14, no. 6 (January 1987): 8-15.

renamed the National Center for Experiments in Television (NCET) in 1969.[9] In 1972,

following WGBH's example, WNET Thirteen established a Television Workshop also

for artists and began publishing reports on experimental television and video practices.[10]

While these programs started at different times, they had similar aims: to make

production and post-production equipment and facilities accessible specifically to artists,

to help advance the expressive potential of experimental television.

Experimental Programming at WGBH-TV, Boston

> *You must remember, we* [i.e., directors, producers, and engineers at broadcast
> television stations] *were like a closed society. No one had TV cameras except TV
> stations. They were just too big and too expensive. We were like a fortress
> surrounded by a moat, and no artist was allowed to cross over. So we, those on
> the inside, had to put a break in the structure.*
>
> – Fred Barzyk[11]

As one of the leading public broadcasting stations in the United States, WGBH played an

important role in developing the idea of experimental (broadcast) television as an art

form. Between 1959 and 1993, WGBH directors and producers also sought new

approaches to television programming. In 1961, for example, director Fred Barzyk began

working on an experimental television series titled *Jazz Images* (figure 4.1). Barzyk

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[9] Most of KQED's funding for the National Center for Experiments in Television came from the
Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for the Arts.

[10] The director of the National Center for Experimental Television (NCET) Paul Kaufman and his
participants published a series of reports. They include Stephen Beck, "Video Feedback, Direct Video";
Paul Kaufman, "Reflections on Values in Public Television"; Richard Moore, "Communication,
Organization and John Stuart Mill"; Brice Howard, "About Television Reality and Performance"; Paul
Kaufman, "Television and Reality"; Marvin Duckler, "Talking Faces, Eating Time and Electronic
Catharsis"; Richard Stephens and Don Hallock, "Suggestions Toward a Small Video Facility"; Bill Gwin,
"Reflections on Media"; and Brice Howard, "An Ancient Gift."

[11] Fred Barzyk, "Paik and the Video Synthesizer," *Fred Barzyk: The Search for a Personal Vision in
Broadcast Television* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2001), 73.

claimed the series resulted from "an aesthetic argument" that he had with his senior

producer about WGBH's coverage of the Boston Symphony.[12] He recalled:

> Why couldn't the cameras paint pictures instead of showing old men blowing
> horns and bowing violin strings? Not possible, not at WGBH. I finally convinced
> a group of engineers and camera people to stay late a couple of nights and we
> created what is supposed to be the first video art experiments, *Jazz Images*.[13]

While *Jazz Images* was not the first to explore broadcast television artistically, it was the

first program at WGBH to do so. However, Barzyk produced only five short tapes,

which feature television experiments accompanied by jazz music. This is because the

management at WGBH wanted Barzyk to develop broadcastable material.[14]

Nevertheless, early experimental programs, such as *Jazz Images*, inspired WGBH

to establish the Rockefeller Artist-in-Residence Project (1967-1970)—the precursor to

the WGBH Project for New Television (1971-1973) and the New Television Workshop

(1974-1993). Susan Dowling, the second director of the New Television Workshop,

explained that the artist-in-residence project (1967-1970) and the workshop phases

(1971-1993) sought to make the tools of television accessible to artists working in a

variety of disciplines.[15] She noted that the New Television Workshop in particular

"operate[ed] from a firm and unchanging philosophical base: the creation of innovative,

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[12] Ibid., 72.

[13] Five short tapes were made in the series. They were co-produced by Fred Barzyk and David Sloss, and were made with help from Peter Hoving, Bill Aucoin, Mark Stevens, and Bill Cosel. Ibid., 72-73.

[14] The management at WGBH did not fully support Barzyk's *Jazz Images* series. Keith Luf (Archives Manager, WGBH), in discussion with the author, October 10, 2007.

[15] This access to the tools of broadcast television was unprecedented. Susan Dowling, "History of the WGBH New Television Workshop," n.d., Box D00730, WGBH Archives, Boston, Massachusetts.

experimental programming produced in collaboration with independents."[16] For Dowling

and Barzyk, it took the "continuing advantage of the medium's unexplored potential to

present material of technical and creative excellence in entirely new ways."[17] This was

made possible by grants awarded to WGBH by the Rockefeller Foundation, which

Barzyk and Dowling used to bring artists to WGBH to develop programs promoting

experimental television as an art form.[18]

One of these experimental programs made possible by a Rockefeller Foundation

grant was the television series *What's Happening Mr. Silver?*. From 1967 to 1968, the

English professor David Silver hosted the television program at WGBH.[19] The thirty

episodes in the series established a new television format, which Barzyk called "video

collage" in an article discussing WBGH's role in advancing experimental television as

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Dowling's use of the term "medium" here is problematic; although, I believe she is referencing broadcast television. In fact, the New Television Workshop at WGBH promoted the use of videotape cameras, synthesizers, mechanical and electronic devices, optic machines, and manipulated television sets. Ibid.

[18] Fred Barzyk, "TV as Art as TV," *Print*, vol. 26, no. 1 (January/February 1972): 21. For information on grants obtained by the WGBH Educational Foundation see Marita Sturken, "Private Money and Personal Influence," *Afterimage*, vol. 41, no. 6 (January 1987): 14-15. In "Private Money and Personal Influence," Sturken indicates that the WGBH Educational Foundation received $275,000 toward the cost of an experimental workshop in 1967, $300,000 toward the cost of an artist-in-residence at the Project for New Television in 1970, and $250,000 toward the cost of the New Television Workshop in 1974. Additional funding was received for the development of the New Television Workshop. Bruce Kurtz notes in "Artists' Video at the Crossroads" that the Television Workshop at WGBH provided production facilities, crews and stipends to artists. He also explains that "on a June-to-June calendar, between 50 and 60 tapes were produced in 1974-1975 with a production budget ranging from $50 to $5,000 per artist." From 1975-1976, only eight tapes were produced, mainly due to the production costs. The production budget in 1975-1976 was about $7,000 to $10,000 per artist. In 1977, only Peter Campus was working with a production budget of about $30,000. For more see Bruce Kurtz, "Artists' Video at the Crossroads," *Art in America*, vol. 65, no. 1 (January/February 1977): 38.

[19] David Silver was an English Professor at Tufts University.

art.[20] In a review of one of the episodes titled "Madness and Intuition," Jonathon Price

noted that Barzyk's "video collage" technique "brought television into the age of

collage."[21] Price lauded the innovative technique, which "experimented with non-

narrative, nontalk barrage, as Barzyk and his collaborators tried to move more sparkle,

more contrast, [and] more exciting images onto the screen."[22] Addressing Barzyk and

Silver's experimental approach, Price wrote:

> Borrowing some ideas from jazz and from composer John Cage, Barzyk brought
> in thirty-odd video inputs, film clips, live action, purposely nonrelevant tapes,
> slides, newspapers, photographs, street interviews, and abstract video imagery,
> swirling a collage around some nominal topic, such as witches, warlocks, or
> William F. Buckley.[23]

This approach also involved a collaborative editing process. Using a Surrealist tactic

similar to the *cadavre exquis* exercises of André Breton and his colleagues, Barzyk

instructed a number of people to enter the control room where they were told to "cut from

one source to another whenever [they] felt like it."[24] Barzyk explained the objective:

> The overall objective was simply to present segments of experience from a wide
> spectrum of everyday life, and to do so in a manner which respected the viewers'
> ability and willingness to judge and find significance in aspects of ordinary
> existence which they may not have recognized before.[25]

"Artists, actors, technicians, crewmen, directors and engineers," he wrote, "were all

asked to step out of their normal functions and assume whatever role struck them as

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[20] Fred Barzyk, "TV as Art as TV," 21.

[21] "Madness and Intuition" is an episode from the television series *What's Happening Mr. Silver?*.
Jonathon Price, "Video Pioneers: From Banality to Beauty: TV as a New Form of Visual Art," *Harper's Magazine*, June 1972, 88.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Fred Barzyk, "TV as Art as TV," 21.

pertinent at a given time."[26] What resulted was an improvisational and experimental

"video collage," one juxtaposing images and sounds with David Silver's face as a visual

constant on the television screen.

Barzyk and Silver juxtaposed unrelated image and sound sequences in *What's*

Happening Mr. Silver? to develop "experimental criteria" for promoting the idea of

television as an art form.[27] By juxtaposing images that viewers were accustomed to

seeing on television with those that they were not used to seeing, Barzyk and Silver

produced "a sense of surprise and the unexpected."[28] Price wrote that this made "the

familiar [that is, television] here [seem] foreign, and therefore curious: Barzyk had found,

in juxtaposition, a technique that brought television into the age of collage."[29] This

method of image juxtaposing, as Barzyk explained, helped "to expand the role of

accidental possibilities in the act of creating for television."[30] By adding real-time

improvisation based on John Cage's theory of chance, Barzyk and Silver produced

"video collages" that advanced (broadcast) television as a new electronic art form.

Barzyk's next project, *The Medium Is the Medium* (1969), expanded on "experimental

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[26] Ibid.

[27] "Experimental criteria" is Barzyk's terminology. It consists of techniques and practices that augment the standard television and analog video signals for artistic purposes. Ibid.

[28] Ibid. In "Madness and Intuition," for instance, the constant image of David Silver's face represents what viewers had been accustomed to seeing on television. However, the juxtaposing of "thirty-odd video inputs, film clips, live action, purposely nonrelevant tapes, slides, newspapers, photographs, street interviews, and abstract video imagery," which establishes a type of non-narrative, makes television foreign and, therefore, unlike what viewers had been used to seeing on television. Jonathon Price, "Video Pioneers: From Banality to Beauty: TV as a New Form of Visual Art," 88.

[29] Jonathon Price, "Video Pioneers: From Banality to Beauty: TV as a New Form of Visual Art," 88.

[30] Fred Barzyk, "TV as Art as TV," 21.

criteria" developed in *What's Happening Mr. Silver?* when WGBH invited six artists to their television studio to explore the artistic potential of broadcast television.

***The Medium Is the Medium*?: Television and Video as New Electronic Art Forms**

In 1968, Ann Gresser and Patricia Marx proposed an experimental television program titled "The Medium Is the Medium: An Experiment by Artists Using Television Itself as a New Electronic Art Form" to David Oppenheim, the director of cultural programming at the Public Broadcast Laboratory (PBL).[31] After Oppenheim approved the proposal, Gresser and Marx recruited Fred Barzyk, who was known for producing experimental programs thanks in part to a *Newsweek* article written by the art critic Douglas Davis on *What's Happening Mr. Silver?*.[32] Once Barzyk joined Gresser and Marx, the producers invited six artists to create collaborative artworks with technicians and engineers at the WGBH television studio. They instructed Aldo Tambellini, Thomas Tadlock, Allan Kaprow, James Seawright, Otto Piene, and Nam June Paik "to find new ways of using television as an electronic art form."[33] Having already experimented with mechanical

[31] Ann Sperry, "Experimental TV; The Credits Corrected," *The New York Times*, April 16, 2000, Arts and Leisure Desk, section 2, 4. The second half of the title was omitted from the production version.

[32] Ann Sperry, "Experimental TV; The Credits Corrected," 4; Fred Barzyk, "TV as Art as TV," 21. Barzyk noted that David Oppenheim convinced the national educational television executives of the need to experiment with the television medium. See George Fifield, "The WGBH New Television Workshop," *Fred Barzyk: The Search for a Personal Vision in Broadcast Television* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2001), 62.

[33] Ed Dowling, unpublished press release for *The Medium Is the Medium* from the Public Broadcasting Laboratory, March 11, 1969, Box D04449, WGBH Archives, Boston, Massachusetts.

and electronic devices, each artist had one day to make a seven-minute tape at the

studio.[34] Barzyk remembered the day Nam June Paik arrived at WGBH:

> Nam June arrived on his day with a small truck loaded with old TV's. He set
> them up in the studio and put on a pair of rubber gloves and a huge pair of rubber
> boots—supposedly to prevent shock. Then he began manipulating the sets from
> behind, sparks flying, as the most amazing images appeared on the screens. And
> the entire time he was doing this, he'd be instructing the cameramen, "O.K., get
> this! Get this!"[35]

Later that day, Paik edited these abstract images with videotape recordings of a naked

dancer, Richard Nixon delivering a campaign speech, and three strangers invited into the

WGBH television studio.[36]

The collaboration among artists and technicians at WGBH, which the producers

described in a press release as "six avant-garde artists tak[ing] over the television

medium," was pioneering.[37] Douglas Davis hailed *The Medium Is the Medium* as "a

landmark NET [National Educational Television] show that first attracted attention to

television's avant-garde."[38] It was, as described by its producers, "the result of good

coordination between artists and the most advanced electronic communication

technology."[39]

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[34] D.C. Denison, "Video Art's Guru," *The New York Times*, April 25, 1982, Magazine Desk, section 6, 54.
Also, some of the artists had works in the highly acclaimed "TV as a Creative Medium" exhibition at the
Howard Wise Gallery.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Miles Unger, "Art/Architecture; A Boston TV Party in Aid of a Video Revolution," *The New York Times*,
April 2, 2000, Arts and Leisure Desk, section 2, 43.

[38] Douglas Davis, "Television's Avant-Garde," *Newsweek*, February 9, 1970, 60.

[39] Ed Dowling, unpublished press release for *The Medium Is the Medium* from the Public Broadcasting
Laboratory, March 11, 1969, Box D04449, WGBH Archives, Boston, Massachusetts.

The Medium Is the Medium was also considered informative when it was first

broadcast in 1969.[40] In addition to David Oppenheim's narration, the television program

addressed how artists at WGBH contributed to advancing the idea of television as a new

electronic art form. During his introduction, however, Oppenheim constricts the way one

understands how the six artists actually created artworks for the program.[41] This occurs

at the beginning of the program when he asks the following questions: "what happens

when artists explore television as a personal medium of expression" and "what happens

when artists take control of television."[42] In response, he explains, "they change and

expand our vision of the medium."[43] In setting up the parameters of the program by

asking these specific questions, Oppenheim frames the six artworks as examples of artists

taking "control of television" as "a personal medium of expression."[44] I would like to

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[40] WNDT/Channel Thirteen aired The Medium Is the Medium at 8 p.m. on March 23, 1969.

[41] Even this material did not fully conceptualize what it was that these artists were doing. An adequate framework for thinking about what these artists were actually doing had yet to be formulated. While only a few extant publications covered this material at the time, none addressed the multiplicity of forms and practices used to create The Medium Is the Medium. For examples of these forms and practices see the following texts: Elsa Tambellini, "Electromedia: A Movement," Artscanada, no. 114 (November 1967): 3-4; Douglas Davis, "Art & Technology—The New Combine," Art in America, vol. 56, no. 1 (January/February 1968): 28-37; Paul Ryan, "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium," Media and Methods, vol. 5, no. 4 (December 1968): 36-41; and John Margolies, "TV—The Next Medium," Art in America, vol. 57, no. 5 (September/October 1969): 48-55.

[42] The program begins with Oppenheim asking, "what happens when artists explore television as a personal medium of expression, their electronic palette?" In response, he explains, "they change and expand our vision of the medium." After a brief introduction covering the program's production credits, Oppenheim then asks, "what happens when artists take control of television?" The Medium Is the Medium, directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston, Massachusetts: WGBH, 1969).

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

examine this statement, however, by questioning whether these artists actually "took control" of television as "a personal medium of expression."[45]

In a press release the producers explained that "the six artists who made 'The Medium Is the Medium' have not yet taken over the management [who control the daily operations of the station, including its television programming] of any stations, but…did take over the technical facilities of WGBH-TV Boston, the videotape machines, the sound recorders and the editing machines."[46] Oppenheim does mention that the participating artists used "mechanical and electronic devices, optic machines and kinetics, and multimedia [to create] videotapes" for the television program.[47] However, he does not specify that the six artists borrowed the tools of television production to create artworks using "the standard television signal" and "analog video" as new electronic art forms.[48] Instead, Oppenheim describes *The Medium Is the Medium* as artists taking "control of television" as "a personal medium of expression" and, consequently, generalizes the program's significant contributions toward expanding television and video as art forms.

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[45] This will allow for a more accurate description of the artworks in *The Medium Is the Medium*, which, as I will show, actually expanded the ways in which television and video could be used to make art. Ibid.

[46] Ed Dowling, unpublished press release for *The Medium Is the Medium* from the Public Broadcasting Laboratory, March 11, 1969, Box D04449, WGBH Archives, Boston, Massachusetts. There is some question as to whether the WGBH studio engineers really allowed the invited artists to take control of the technical facilities.

[47] *The Medium Is the Medium*, directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston, Massachusetts: WGBH, 1969).

[48] While the producers' main goal was to promote broadcast television as a new electronic art form, the six artworks, which also used video and videotape, were actually advancing both "television" and "video" as art forms.

So, instead of asking "what happens when artists take control of television," I would like to ask a more productive question: what were these artists doing that was different from what commercial television producers had been doing for decades? By asking this question, one can argue that the artists of *The Medium Is the Medium* did not take control of television as a personal medium of expression literally. Instead, the six artists created unconventional, innovative imagery using a variety of electronic devices and skillful techniques and, by doing so, expanded "television" and "video" as art forms.[49] At the same time, television producers and artists of *The Medium Is the Medium* saw the role of television differently, which might account for Oppenheim's limited description of the program. For the six artists, the television set functioned as an electronic transmitter for displaying video image-processing, live feeds from video cameras, and/or pre-recorded content magnetically fixed on videotape. For the producers, the broadcast format used to transmit the television program enabled them to deliver a product to public television viewers.

Oppenheim's general use of the term "medium" and his description of the six artworks as "artists using the medium as their medium" also constricts the way one understands how *The Medium Is the Medium* contributed to advancing television and video as new electronic art forms.[50] In both instances, Oppenheim's general use of the term "medium" belies the heterogeneous practices from which the six artworks were created. Even if he was implying that the participating artist were using the broadcast

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[49] I will address the details of the "experimental criteria" developed in *The Medium Is the Medium* when I address the six artworks respectively.

[50] Ibid.

television medium in their own way—that is, as a personal medium of communication—, this interpretation does not account for the fact that television was not the only medium used. In fact, the six artists used a variety of practices—employing videotape cameras, synthesizers, mechanical and electronic devices, optic machines and kinetics, multimedia, manipulated television sets, film, and slides—to produce their artworks for broadcast television purposes.[51]

To understand the role of each artist in advancing the idea of "television" and "video" as new electronic art forms, I will now discuss the six artworks in *The Medium Is the Medium*, starting with Aldo Tambellini's *Black* (figure 4.2). Tambellini, an intermedia artist and co-founder of New York's Black Gate Theater, used optic machines, electronic devices, slides, films, television monitors and videotape cameras to create *Black*, a work that explores the concept of blackness as a social experience. In *Black*, Tambellini recorded thirty African American children interacting with one thousand slides and seven 16-millimeter films projected in the WGBH television studio. The work begins with circular black-and-white images appearing on the television screen. Voices from children in the studio, noise from automobile traffic and the pulsing sound of feedback accompany these images as other abstract designs emerge slowly and fade into street scenes and black silhouettes. At intervals, images from live television feeds are superimposed and switched with images from projected slides and films—the artist used keying and switching as image-processing techniques to superimpose and switch imagery

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[51] One is reminded of this in the introduction to the program when Oppenheim states that the six artists used "mechanical and electronic devices, optic machines and kinetics, and multimedia [to create] videotapes." *The Medium Is the Medium*, directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston, Massachusetts: WGBH, 1969).

from one camera to another.[52] A loud siren initiates a shift in the keying and switching of abstract images with close-ups of African American children in the studio. At this moment, the children in the studio begin discussing what black people are called. One of the boys responds to another by saying, "they call the black people Negros."[53]

Tambellini edited this real-time social experiment, along with imagery recorded live from three television cameras in the studio, onto one tape. At first, the video collage seems chaotic. However, as the work advances the artist's skilled keying and switching of images and the corresponding sounds reveal a carefully edited sequence. The significant interplay between images and sounds becomes more noticeable, especially when an emergency vehicle siren goes off and the African American children in the studio begin to talk about what they have heard black people called.

Tambellini's *Black* is demanding, requiring a level of concentration that goes beyond the act of casually watching television. Its imagery was made possible by image-processing techniques (i.e., keying and switching) used during its production and post-production phases. Thomas Tadlock, a member of the intermedia project at NYU School of the Arts, also employed image-processing techniques in his contribution *Architron* (figure 4.3). Instead of using keying and switching, however, Tadlock used an electronic optic machine of his own invention to create kaleidoscopic patterns of light and color. He created these patterns by feeding a comedy spy series through his optic machine,

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[52] Keying allows one to superimpose imagery from one camera into another. Switching permits several video sources to mixed or manipulated. Both are image-processing techniques.

[53] *The Medium Is the Medium*, directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston, Massachusetts: WGBH, 1969).

which scrambled the colors and the pulses to make a series of changing abstract

designs.[54] These designs are distinctive, which Tadlock described in one of WGBH's

internal documents on the program: "Instead of free-flowing abstract imagery…the

Architron (meaning 'creator of archetypes') produces…patterned, teleidoscopic effects

after receiving black-and-white signals and feeding them through a color monitor."[55] The

imagery is also linked to the length of the Beatles' song *I Will*. While the song does not

control the kaleidoscopic patterning, it does provide a beginning and end to Tadlock's

piece.

Following *Architron* is Allan Kaprow's "telehappening" *Hello* (figure 4.4). In

Hello, Kaprow utilized five television cameras and twenty-seven monitors to reach

people in various locations throughout Boston and Cambridge instantaneously. Unlike

Architron, which demonstrates live image-processing of the standard television signal,

Hello documents a real-time social experiment—one that networked people from various

sites using the most advanced electronic communication technology from WGBH's

television studio. *Hello* employs similar tactics that Kaprow developed in his

happenings. However, in using live television, the work takes on a new dimension that

fuses time and space electronically. Using elaborate closed-circuit inputs, Kaprow

instructed his participants to respond to the live feed displayed on the television monitors

at each location. At one moment, you can hear participants call out "hello" and "I can

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[54] Dorothea Weitzner commissioned the Architron. It was used in New Age Rituals at the Aquarian Republic, Inc., New York "as a prophecy, meditation and healing machine." John S. Margolies, "TV—The Next Medium," *Art in America*, vol. 57, no. 5 (September/October 1969): 52.

[55] Unpublished internal document titled "The Medium Is the Medium – March, 1969," March 1969, Box D04449, WGBH Archives, Boston, Massachusetts.

see you" while searching for familiar faces amid several television monitors—WGBH

producers David Atwood and Fred Barzyk are seen along with Allan Kaprow, Alvin

Lucier, Nam June Paik, David Silver, Gus Solomons, among others.

Kaprow made use of WGBH's direct closed-circuit inputs at four locations in the

Boston area—these included inputs at the WGBH television studio, a classroom, and a

hospital. He also expanded the potential of television networking as a social experience.

"His idea, his wiring," as Jonathon Price notes, "paralleled the way we get together in this

distance-jumping culture."[56] The only information transmitted, "as he said himself

[Kaprow], was 'oneself in connection with someone else.'"[57] Kaprow also described the

event as a collective experience:

> Everyone was a participant, creating, receiving and transmitting information all at
> once. That information was not a newscast or lecture, but the most important
> message of all: oneself in connection with someone else…We had fun. We
> played. We became something else, transformed by audio-video images that
> eliminated distance and shifted us to a totally new non-place, the TV realm of
> electronic bits.[58]

Here the artist explained that the normal space-time continuum of "oneself in connection

with someone else" is "transformed by audio-video images that eliminated distance."[59]

For Kaprow, this elimination of distance established a "new non-place," which could be

augmented artistically in a variety of ways.[60]

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[56] Jonathon Price, "Video Pioneers: From Banality to Beauty: TV as a New Form of Visual Art," 89.

[57] Ibid.

[58] John S. Margolies, "TV—The Next Medium," *Art in America*, vol. 57, no. 5 (September/October 1969): 51.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

Many of the artists who contributed to *The Medium Is the Medium*, including

James Seawright, explored this "new non-place" of "electronic bits."[61] Like Tambellini

and Tadlock, Seawright developed distinct image-processing techniques to create

Capriccio (figure 4.5).[62] In *Capriccio*, however, Seawright synthesized negative and

positive images of Mini Garrard and Virginia Laidlow dancing "by [first] shooting the

dancers in negative color, then superimposing those images [over] a reversed image."[63]

By shooting the dancers with three television cameras, each recording them in one of the

three primary colors, then delaying one of the tapes, Seawright was able to show two

images of the same dancer seen performing the same action in different colors and at

different stages.[64]

 Capriccio marries live performance and video image-processing. Another

contribution that synthesizes performance and image-processing is Otto Piene's

Electronic Light Ballet (figure 4.6). Unlike *Capriccio*, *Electronic Light Ballet* used only

two sources of imagery. One source came from moving lights situated behind a

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[61] Ibid. These artists experimented with what the art historian James Meyer calls a *functional* site, which is a space where "the functional work refuses the intransigence of literal site specificity." It is a site that operates as "a process, an operation occurring between sites." James Meyer, "The Functional Site; or The Transformation of Site Specificity," *Documents* 7 (Fall 1996): 24-25.

[62] At the time he made *Capriccio*, James Seawright was a technical supervisor at the Columbia/Princeton Electronic/Music Center. For more on Seawright's method of manipulating the electronic signal, see Fred Barzyk "TV as Art as TV," 23.

[63] Unpublished internal document titled "The Medium Is the Medium – March, 1969," March 1969, Box D04449, WGBH Archives, Boston, Massachusetts.

[64] Ibid.

perforated board and recording the effects with an analog camera on the other side.[65] The

other source was a videotape titled *Manned Helium Sculpture*, which documented a live

performance that Piene orchestrated while he was a Fellow at MIT's Center for

Advanced Visual Studies.[66] The videotape of *Manned Helium Sculpture* features a girl

being raised forty feet in the air with eight hundred feet of polyethylene tubing filled with

helium.[67] Piene recorded the event, which he later superimposed with the other source

intermittently. The result presents a stunning interplay between a light show and pre-

recorded performance of *Manned Helium Sculpture*.

Also visually striking is Nam June Paik's *Electronic Opera #1* (figure 4.7), which

is the last artwork in *The Medium Is the Medium*. Like the previous two contributions,

Electronic Opera #1 synthesizes image-processed video and live performance onto one

tape.[68] Unlike the other works in *The Medium Is the Medium*, however, *Electronic Opera*

#1 addresses the viewer specifically, providing prefaced instructions on how to watch the

work and an afterword signaling the end of the piece and the television program.

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[65] Barzyk likened the imagery to "sperm-like circles." Jonathon Price, "Video Pioneers: From Banality to Beauty: TV as a New Form of Visual Art," 89.

[66] Unpublished internal document titled "The Medium Is the Medium – March, 1969," March 1969, Box D04449, WGBH Archives, Boston, Massachusetts. This event was performed at night in WGBH's parking lot.

[67] The participant is Susan Peters, the daughter of an employee in the public relations department at WGBH. Ibid.

[68] In *Electronic Opera #1*, Paik manipulated videotapes of a topless dancer, three strangers invited into the WGBH studio, and Richard Nixon using a Moog Audio Synthesizer and image-processing techniques.

At the beginning of Paik's work the narrator states, "this is participation TV" and

"please follow instructions."[69] Following these introductory comments, Paik exhorts his

viewers at specific moments to close their eyes, open their eyes, three-quarters close their

eyes, and two-thirds open their eyes. Sound bites of a presidential campaign speech

delivered by Richard Nixon finally interrupt Paik's instructions. Lastly, the artist

converses with a colleague, who says, "I don't know, I am getting awfully bored," to

which Paik responds, "thank god it is the last one…"[70]

It is fitting that Barzyk and his colleagues end *The Medium Is the Medium* with

Paik's work, especially since during the last few seconds of the program, the viewer is

instructed to turn off their television set—a command echoed by the picture fading to

black. This not only signaled the end of the original broadcast but also the end to an

experimental program featuring six examples of artists advancing broadcast television,

video, and multimedia as new electronic art forms. The next project worked on by

WGBH producers was the television program *Video: the New Wave*. Unlike *The Medium

Is the Medium*, however, the purpose of *Video: the New Wave* was to show public

television audiences that, by 1973, various categories of "video" as art had emerged.

Video: the New Wave **and Framing Video as Art**

Before *Video: the New Wave* (1973), programs produced by public broadcast television

stations had not offered a conceptual framework for thinking about the various categories

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[69] Nam June Paik, *Electronic Opera #1*, from *The Medium Is the Medium*, directed by Fred Barzyk
(Boston, Massachusetts: 1969).

[70] Ibid.

and practices based on artists using the tools of television, videotape cameras, and electronic projection devices. Although producers presented *The Medium Is the Medium* as six examples of "video visionaries" taking "control of television" as "a personal medium of expression"[71]—consequently, offering experimental broadcast television as one category—it is evident that the six artists used more than just television to achieve distinctive results. Indeed, television producers and artists who created *The Medium Is the Medium* had different interests, which were dictated by their respective job roles. For the producers of the program, as well as others working in the field, the primary aim was to develop successful television programming, which could be transmitted to a diverse audience. Broadcast television, which was seen as a "museum for millions,"[72] capable of penetrating enclosed structures, domestic home fronts, and other private/semi-private spaces equipped with television sets and antennas, was the primary medium for transmitting television content. For the six artists, however, the goal was to expand broadcast television by using mechanical and electronic devices, optic machines, and video cameras.

Nevertheless, the six artworks in *The Medium Is the Medium*, which were documented on videotape, represent two early modes of practice that expanded the idea of television and video as art forms. These include video image-processing and video performance recorded on videotape. The videotape documents, which were eventually

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[71] *The Medium Is the Medium*, directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston, Massachusetts: WGBH, 1969).

[72] In *The Medium Is the Medium*, David Oppenheim explains that the artists and producers all saw in television "an immediate way in reaching a vast audience and creating a museum for millions." Wolf Vostell promoted this concept in the late 1950s in works such as *TV-Dé-collage Events for Millions* (*TV-Dé-collage Ereignisse für Millionen*) (1959-67). In *TV-Dé-collage Events for Millions*, Vostell created a television broadcast in which its audience actively participated.

televised and archived at WGBH (and later distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix),

characterize a body of work that had been realized in part by technological and economic

resources provided by public broadcast television stations and grants from the

Rockefeller and Ford Foundations and the National Endowment for the Arts. By the

early 1970s, a number of public television stations, which received additional grants for

experimental television programming, began producing programs that contributed to

advancing categories of "video" as art. One such program was *Video: the New Wave*,

which categorized "video" into experiments in television and analog video, alternative

television programming, and video performances documented on videotape.

   The producers at WGBH created *Video: the New Wave* in order to offer

educational programming and highlight new developments in the television and video

arts.[73] On May 20, 1973, the Public Broadcasting Service aired the one hour-long

special. Directed by Fred Barzyk, and written and narrated by Brian O'Doherty, *Video:

the New Wave* addressed the expanded field of artistic practices using television and

videotape cameras (as it existed in 1973). The program features segments from

approximately thirty different experimental artworks documented on videotape. These

range from documentary-style interviews and socio-political features to feedback

experimentations and video performances by Peter Campus, William Wegman, and Joan

Jonas. The thirty works, according to O'Doherty, represent a "new wave" of artistic

practices that used consumer-grade videotape cameras and electronic projection devices.

O'Doherty argued that this "new wave" began in 1965, with the Sony Corporation's

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[73] At the time, Michael Rice, the former program director and station manager, showed a lot of interest in experimental programming and television.

introduction of its first consumer-grade video camera (CV-2000) (figure 4.8).[74] This

statement, however, is problematic as the artists of *Video: the New Wave* probably used a

later model of the Sony camera—specifically the Sony Portapak (CV-2400) (figure 4.9),

which was released and marketed in the United States in 1967.

Nevertheless, the artworks from *Video: the New Wave* are characteristic of what

artists could do with new advances in portable videotape technology inside and outside

the television studio. These works also demonstrate the inextricable link between

television and video, which artists explored using new consumer-grade video cameras

that were now accessible to the public.[75] This accessibility also brought people to

television and videotape cameras to new places. Angel St. Nunez's videotape *Bedford

Stuyvesant Kids* (1969) (figure 4.10), which commences the hour-long program, is a case

in point. St. Nunez's videotape, which captures "street life" in Bedford-Stuyvesant, was

shot using a Sony Portapak that the artist borrowed from the Student Experiment in

Television (S.E.T.) center at the State University of New York, Binghamton. The tape

documents a robbery-in-progress at a Brooklyn clothing store from the viewpoint of

several children at the scene. As the children report the event into St. Nunez's

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[74] Brian O'Doherty, *Video: the New Wave*, directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston, Massachusetts: WGBH, 1973).

[75] Television was not replaced by video as the narrator suggests in the program. Instead, "video's frightful parent [television]," which wastes away in an arid landscape in the introduction and ending of *Video: the New Wave*, adds to an expanding field featuring new modes of exploring television and video as art forms. I am borrowing David Antin's phrase "video's frightful parent," which he uses in "Television: Video's Frightful Parent, Part I," *Artforum*, vol. 14, no. 4 (December 1975): 36-45.

microphone, the police arrive. At that moment, the screen fades to black as one of the children announces, "well, I gotta split."[76]

As demonstrated by St. Nunez, the Sony Portapak was relatively portable and easy to use. Although the early versions had limited functions—for instance, the Sony CV-2400 Portapak used a proprietary videotape format that was not interchangeable with other devices, the recording time was limited to approximately twenty minutes, and a separate unit was required to playback the half-inch tape—, they still granted unprecedented access. Together with the Videocorder recording unit, the camera could be taken to the unlikeliest places and passed along to almost anyone. Moreover, its portability allowed one to capture unorthodox footage, which helped to develop a live, documentary-style mode of coverage that countered commercial television's live news broadcasts.

Two examples in the program include Fred Simon's *Bobby the Fife*, which documented a conversation with a young drug addict on the Boston Commons, and Top Value Television's (TVTV) coverage of the 1972 Republican Convention titled *Four More Years* (figure 4.11). In the former, a drug addict discusses his use of speed and his imminent death. In the latter, Top Value Television documents one of alternative television's triumphs: an unconventional viewpoint of the Republican Convention bought and syndicated by Westinghouse TV.

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[76] Brian O'Doherty, *Video: the New Wave*, directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston, Massachusetts: WGBH, 1973).

While both examples represent alternative television as a category in *Video: the New Wave*, *Four More Years* is the most prophetic example of guerrilla television featured in the program.[77] Instead of covering Richard Nixon's orchestrated Presidential re-nomination in the style of the major television networks, the producers of *Four More Years* videotaped demonstrations lead by Vietnam Veterans Against the War, convention participants chanting, unsolicited comments from network news correspondents, and behind-the-scene forays of Young Republicans and party fundraisers at work. This type of alternative coverage of the convention helped to set the stage for a series of unique *vérité* documentaries subsequently made by Top Value Television participants. It also proposed documentary video as a category of art.

The next category consists of works based on a type formal and "technological utopianism."[78] Unlike the previous works, which demonstrate what could be documented with portable videotape cameras, the short excerpts by Otto Piene, Douglas Davis, Dan Sandin, Jim Wiseman, Richard Teitelbaum, William Etra, Willard Rosenquist, Bob Lewis, Stan VanDerBeek, and Rudi Stern feature what was being done with feedback, synthesizers, and "computer-generated continuity" devices.[79] This mode of operation, which becomes known as video image-processing in the 1980s (to the dismay of many of its proponents), was innovative—especially since it produced an infinite array of images

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[77] Guerrilla television advocates believed that they could enact social change and exchange by employing portable video cameras and new systems of communication at the local, community level.

[78] Brian O'Doherty, *Video: the New Wave*, directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston, Massachusetts: WGBH, 1973).

[79] Ibid.

never seen before.[80] The possibilities also seemed endless. For example, feedback, which occurs when a video camera is pointed at a television monitor, produces a never-ending visual array of abstract images that can be modified a number of ways. The shape and duration of the feedback is respondent to variations made in tilting, moving, or adjusting the camera lens. These fine-tuned adjustments often included an added layer of processing, such as feeding the electronic signal into video synthesizers and colorizers. This allowed artists to expand the possibilities of television and video. It also enabled them to experiment with the properties of video.

While some artists experimented with feedback in *Video: the New Wave*, others used "found television" footage, prepared television sets, photographs, and live performances. The final category of works in the program focuses on the latter. They include documented video performances by William Wegman, Eugene Grayson Mattingly, Frank Gillette, Steina Vasulka, Peter Campus, Joan Jonas, and Ed Emschwiller.

Consumer-grade video cameras and videotape recorders enabled these artists to record live performances that fragmented space and time. However, this type of work, which involves interrogating conditions inherent in video loop,[81] has been criticized by

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[80] I will discuss the derogatory connotation of the term image-processing in Chapter Five.

[81] A true video feedback loop involves pointing a video camera directly at a television monitor to which it is connected. In "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," Krauss argues that, in Acconci's *Centers* (1971), the camera is replaced by Acconci's gesture of pointing at a video camera attached to a television monitor. For Krauss, this gesture, which the artist maintained for the entire length of the performance, signifies a "sustained tautology" based on a line of sight that commences at the artist's plane of vision and ends at the eyes of his mirror image on a television receiver. The tautological nature of *Centers*, as Krauss indicates, "typifies the structural characteristics of the video medium," and as a result, demonstrates Acconci's use of

some scholars, including the art historian Rosalind Krauss, who dismiss video

performances by artists as narcissistic self-regard.[82] On the contrary, I would argue that

the camera lens and television screen are not mirror-like devices that simply reflect

narcissistic self-regard on the part of the performer. Although the video loop may be

seen as a tautological process, the active sites-in-between[83] and the ambiguous spatial

conditions established by the lens/screen reveal fractures in what is otherwise considered

a seamless television picture. The physical buffer of the "camera-lens" and "television-

screen," which separates the artist/performer and the television viewer, fragments the

"seamless picture" further. The result establishes a sense of dislocation and

fragmentation, which can be seen in Joan Jonas's contribution *Left Side Right Side* (1972)

(figure 4.12).

In Jonas's *Left Side Right Side*, the disorientating condition of the video loop is

demonstrated and exposed. In her orchestrated performance, Jonas dictates her actions

while creating a series of inversions; she does this by splitting her image using video

cameras, television screens, and mirrors. The spatial ambiguity created by Jonas's use of

mirrors, lens, and screens reveals a visual engagement with herself and her mirrored-self.

For instance, as she points to her right eye while saying, "this is my right eye," the viewer

understands that she is specifying an action in front of the camera. However, Joan's

mirrored actions problematize the viewer's understanding of space and reality; especially,

the monitor as a mirror. Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," *October*, vol. 1 (Spring 1976): 50, 52.

[82] Three years after *Video: The New Wave* aired, Rosalind Krauss theorized video as narcissism in her famous essay "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism" (1976).

[83] Kaprow called this a "new non-place" of "electronic bits." John S. Margolies, "TV—The Next Medium," 51.

when one's understanding of where the event is taking place does not correspond with the mirrored result on videotape. In other words, the viewer sees the action as flipped and contradictory to Joan's narration of the event.

Three Transitions (1973) (figure 4.13) by Peter Campus is also indicative of this type of performative skewing. However, unlike Jonas, who used the video loop to interrogate the normal time and space continuum, Campus used the chroma-key technique to superimpose footage shot with two videotape cameras. In *Three Transitions*, Campus composed a series of visual passages using deadpan humor and self-introspection. In the first sequence, for example, he passes through an incision that he made in a paper wall; though, it appears that he cuts into his back and passes through his body.

Left Side Right Side and *Three Transitions*, like the other works in *Video: The New Wave*, are as much about expanding television as they are about using video cameras to achieve distinctive results.[84] Therefore, the act of relegating the television set to an arid wasteland, which one can see at the beginning of the program and during the closing credits, is premature.[85] Even if the producers wanted to foreshadow the future of the projected image by showing a television set covered by sand in a desert, television's role

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[84] During the early 1970s, television and video were inseparable. This would change in the 1980s when small viewing screens were incorporated into lightweight cameras.

[85] At the beginning and end of the television program, a television set is shown being covered by sand in a desert.

in shaping the "video-vanguard"[86] during the 1970s was still germane. The program's

narrator, though, focused on the potential of portable video recorders and new video

synthesizers. He referenced the "video-vanguard" by chronicling "video as the new

wave." This "new wave" came in a variety of forms: (1) videotape documents and *vérité*

documentaries; (2) synthesized and image-processed video; and lastly, (3) video

performance documents that alter the natural order of time and space. The result was an

early categorization of "video art," broadcast by public television as an informative and

educational program, which addressed a "new wave" of television and video production

in the early 1970s.

Public Television's Legacy

In 1978, the New Television Workshop at WGBH gave up its studio space, donating

most of its equipment to the Boston Film and Video Foundation (BFVF). The New

Television Workshop, which continued to operate until 1993, grew out of early,

experimental television programming produced by Fred Barzyk and David Silver and

artist-in-residence projects and workshops. Since 1967, these artist-in-residence projects

and workshops made the tools of television accessible to artists working in a variety of

disciplines. Under the directorship of Barzyk, early television programs, such as *Jazz

Images* (1964), *What's Happening Mr. Silver?* (1967-68), *The Medium Is the* Medium

(1969), and *Video: The New Wave* (1973), also helped to advance innovative,

experimental programming and, consequently, television and video as art forms.

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[86] These are O'Doherty's words. Brian O'Doherty, *Video: the New Wave*, directed by Fred Barzyk
(Boston, Massachusetts: WGBH, 1973).

In 1969, the pioneering program *The Medium Is the Medium* presented for the first time on American public television the idea of television as a viable art form. While the broadcast medium was nothing new to television viewers, the novel experiments in television were. As I argued, however, the program introduces a few conceptual problems. The narrator's use of the term "medium" to refer to the six artworks as examples of artists using "the medium as their medium," for instance, belies the heterogeneous activities from which these artworks were created. Even if the statement was meant to imply that the artists were using broadcast television as a personal medium of expression, it still does not account for the fact that television was not the only medium used. Instead, I argued that the broadcast medium enabled producers to televise artworks using electronic devices, television monitors, optic machines, videotape cameras and multimedia.

Nevertheless, *The Medium Is the Medium* lived up to its "philosophical base": to create "innovative, experimental programming produced in collaboration with independents."[87] This type of freedom, which demanded economic and technological resources, was possible in part because governmental legislation and public television producers made the tools of broadcast television accessible. By the late 1960s, though, a new device hit the consumer market and its introduction allowed artists to expand television and video as art. In 1973, WGBH and its partners highlighted the various ways in which artists used new consumer-grade video cameras in *Video: The New Wave*. Unlike *The Medium Is the Medium*, however, *Video: the New Wave* did not bring artists

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[87] Susan Dowling, "History of the WGBH New Television Workshop," n.d., Box D00730, WGBH Archives, Boston, Massachusetts.

into the WGBH television studio to produce and edit their works. Instead, Barzyk and

O'Doherty culled together several categories featuring video practices from a number of

institutions. Their objective was not to define television as an art form. This had been

done already in *The Medium Is the Medium*. Rather, their goal was to propose an

armature for thinking about the various art forms using new portable video cameras and

synthesizers. Indeed, this compartmentalization gave us useful categories in 1973, and

the terrain sketched out by O'Doherty still proves useful today. However, the added

benefit of seeing this differential field with critical distance reveals a more expansive

terrain, with multiple layers—represented by several institutional vantage points, socio-

political motives, and advancements in telecommunications technologies. In the next

Chapter, I will take a close look at another equally important institutional site:

experimental television centers. As was the case in this Chapter, the next will give an

equally important account—one that also made the tools of television and video

accessible and, consequently, helped to develop the idea of video image-processing as a

genre of "video art."
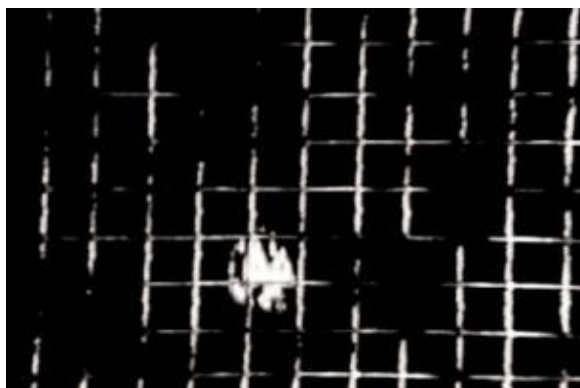
4.1. Fred Barzyk, Peter Hoving, Bill Aucoin, Mark Stevens, and Bill Cosel, Two stills from *Jazz Images*, 1961. VHS, produced by Fred Barzyk and David Sloss (Boston: WGBH). Courtesy of WGBH.

4.2. Aldo Tambellini, Two still from *Black*, 1969. VHS, from *The Medium Is the Medium*, produced and directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston: WGBH, 1969). Courtesy of WGBH.
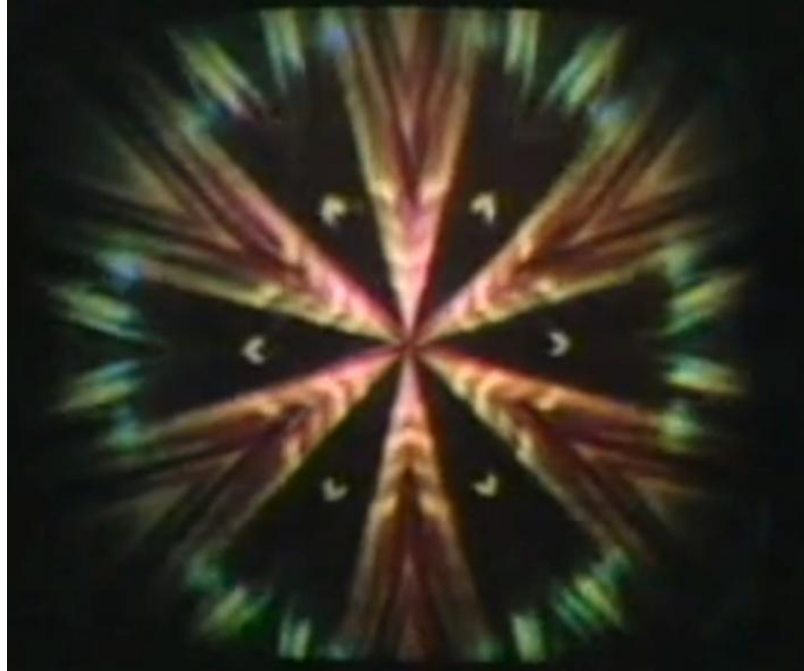
4.3. Thomas Tadlock, Still from *Architron*, 1969. VHS, from *The Medium Is the Medium*, produced and directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston: WGBH, 1969). Courtesy of WGBH.

4.4. Allan Kaprow, Still from *Hello*, 1969. VHS, from *The Medium Is the Medium*, produced and directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston: WGBH, 1969). Courtesy of WGBH.

4.5. James Seawright, Still from *Capriccio*, 1969. VHS, from *The Medium Is the Medium*, produced and directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston: WGBH, 1969). Courtesy of WGBH.
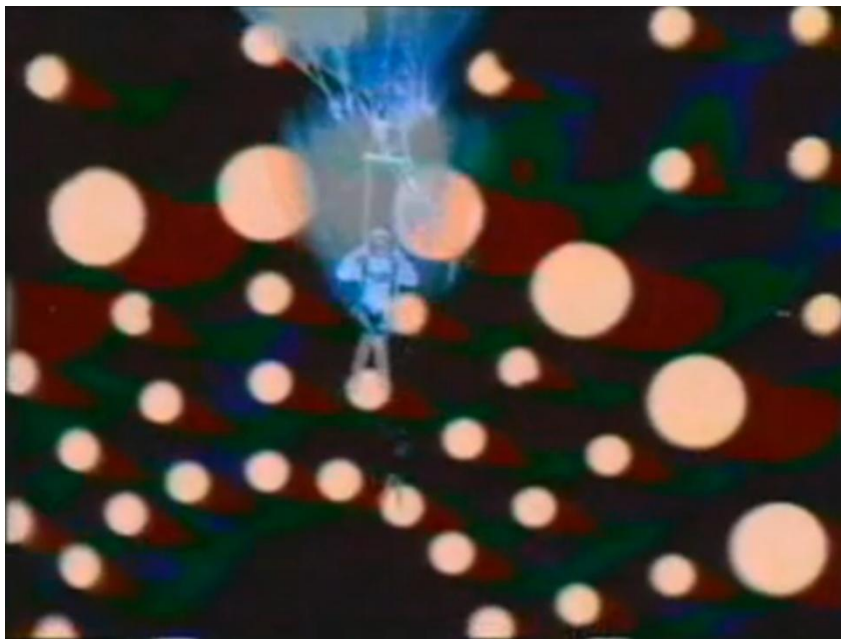
4.6. Otto Piene, Still from *Electronic Light Ballet*, 1969. VHS, from *The Medium Is the Medium*, produced and directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston: WGBH, 1969). Courtesy of WGBH.

4.7. Nam June Paik, Three stills from *Electronic Opera #1*, 1969. VHS, from *The Medium Is the Medium*, produced and directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston: WGBH, 1969). Courtesy of WGBH.

For more versatile usage of the Videocorder, Sony has developed its video camera which is included in the VCK-2000 Video Camera Kit. Using this Kit, any event can be taped with sound for immediate replay on the Videocorder screen. Therefore, a home tape library of important events can be built; Athletes, actors, singers or musicians can record their own performances and study them for improvement. Parades, celebrations and other public events can be recorded on tape for showing at any time in the home. Any family activity such as parties, anniversaries, or weddings can be permanently recorded and stored in the home tape library.

Video Camera Kit

- Comes complete with camera, standard lens, camera cable, microphone, tripod, AC cord and extension cord—all in one portable case.
- Operation of the camera is simple.
- Camera is compact in size.
- Telephoto and wide angle lenses can be used.
- Videocorder screen can be used as a monitor when recording.
- Camera is solid state—maintenance free.
- Operates on regular household AC current.

Complete Camera Kit
VCK-2000, $350.00

Video Camera gives you an easy way to record family events for immediate playback

The **Videocorder** is not to be used to record copyrighted works.

4.8. Sony Corporation of America, Sony Advertisement for the CV-2000 Video Camera Kit, n.d.

PORTABLE
VIDEOCORDER KIT

DVK-2400

4.9. Sony Corporation of America, Picture from the Sony DVK-2400 Portable
Videocorder Kit Owner's Instruction Manual, n.d.

4.10. Angel St. Nunez, Still from *Bedford Stuyvesant Kids*, 1969. VHS, in *Video: the New Wave*, produced and directed by Fred Barzyk and Brian O'Doherty (Boston: WGBH, 1974). Courtesy of WGBH.

4.11. Top Value Television (TVTV), Still from *Four More Years*, 1972. VHS, in *Video: the New Wave*, produced and directed by Fred Barzyk and Brian O'Doherty (Boston: WGBH, 1974). Courtesy of WGBH and Electronic Arts Intermix.

4.12. Joan Jonas, Still from *Left Side Right Side*, 1972. VHS, in *Video: the New Wave*, produced and directed by Fred Barzyk and Brian O'Doherty (Boston: WGBH, 1974). Courtesy of WGBH and Electronic Arts Intermix.

4.13. Peter Campus, Still from *Three Transitions*, 1973. VHS, in *Video: the New Wave*, produced and directed by Fred Barzyk and Brian O'Doherty (Boston: WGBH, 1974). Courtesy of WGBH and Electronic Arts Intermix.

5.

Experimental Television Centers and Artists' Collectives 1969–2010: Alternative Production Resources and Image-Processing Art

In the previous Chapter, I focused on WGBH's role in developing experimental

television programming and advancing "television" and "video" as art forms. In this

Chapter, I will address an institutional space where artists and television engineers built

image-processing devices and developed "image-processed video" as a genre of "video

art." I will focus on the Experimental Television Center (E.T.C.), whose pioneering

contributions to the field established social networks and video collectives, community

research and screening centers, and a production and post-production studio built

especially for artists. Before I discuss the Experimental Television Center's role in

advancing the idea of "video image-processing" as an art practice, however, I need to

address some myths about video art, which is essential for any discussion seeking to trace

the emergence of a concept of "video art." These myths include anecdotal accounts that

have led some to mythologize Nam June Paik as the first artist to use and advance

"video" as art.

Addressing Myths: Nam June Paik, the Sony Portapak, and Video Art

> *Myth becomes a basic constituent of linguistic meaning and of the process of both personal and social "remembering." Each of these mythic icons is in effect a construction of tremendous economy and compression and a mnemonic device*

capable of evoking a complex system of historical association by a single image or phase.

– Richard Slotkin[1]

Anecdotal accounts that perpetuate myths about artists are common in the literature. Indeed, major Hollywood production companies also have helped to perpetuate myths about artists, including the idea of the mad genius. One sees this, for example, in Kirk Douglas' portrayal of one of the most celebrated so-called "mad geniuses" from modern times: Vincent Van Gogh. *Lust for Life* (1956), which is Vincente Minnelli's filmic adaptation of Irving Stone's biography of the artist with the same title, romanticizes Van Gogh as a tormented visionary. The film perpetuates the myth that Van Gogh's artistic prowess was a product of his mental instability and inner torment. In a productive rebuttal, however, the art historian Griselda Pollock debunked this myth.[2] By offering a more productive analysis based on historical specificity and close visual inspection of primary sources, Pollock avoided perpetuating a myth that confuses the artist's actual contribution to the history of painting.

Another artist whose contribution to the history of art is often confused by myths and anecdotal accounts is Nam June Paik. Instead of perpetuating the mad genius myth, however, several anecdotal accounts have led some to propose Paik as the first video artist and/or the "George Washington of Video Art."[3] While it is true that Paik was a

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[1] Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 5-6.

[2] Griselda Pollock, "Artists, Mythologies, and Media: Genius, Madness, and Art History," *Screen*, vol. 21, no. 3 (1980): 57-96.

[3] Ben Portis cites Calvin Tomkins referring to Paik as the "George Washington of Video Art." Ben Portis, "The Fulcrum: TV as a Creative Medium," n.d., http://www.eai.org/kinetic/ch1/creative/doc/Creative_Medium_Essay.html (accessed July 10, 2010); Calvin

visionary at the forefront of promoting new electronic devices, such as video

synthesizers, he was not alone in producing alternatives to broadcast television and

advancing the concept of "video art." In fact, Paik had a lot of help developing and

engineering video synthesizers and studio "control systems"[4] that made his work

possible. Many historical accounts covering Paik's contribution to "video art," however,

overlook the technological and economic resources that enabled the artist to expand the

boundaries of television and video. Instead of addressing these resources, many accounts

highlight mythic events, such as the one marking the first time an artist used a "Sony

Portapak" video camera outside a television studio to make the first "video art" tape.

As recounted by several authors, Paik bought a "Sony Portapak" in October 1965

from the Liberty Music store on Madison Avenue and, while riding in a taxicab, used the

camera to videotape Pope Paul VI in a New York City parade.[5] According to these

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Tomkins, "Video Visionary," *The Scene: Reports on Post-Modern Art* (New York: Viking Press, 1976), 196. Other variants can be found in John G. Hanhardt, *The Worlds of Nam June Paik* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2000), 237, and Suzanne Muchnic, "Free-Spirited Video Artist Broke Radical New Ground," *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 2006.

[4] Sherry Miller Hocking uses the term "control systems" to refer to "manual" or "pre-programmable" controls integrated into studio hardware at the Experimental Television Center—for example, knobs and switches found on the Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer (manual) and the image 'grabber' or frame buffer function in a Z-2 8-bit microprocessor (pre-programmable). Sherry Miller Hocking (Assistant Director, Experimental Television Center, Owego, New York), in discussion with the author, October 6, 2010.

[5] For example, Deirdre Boyle wrote: "In 1965 the Sony Corporation decided to launch its first major effort at marketing consumer video equipment in the United States. The first 'consumer' to buy this still rather cumbersome equipment was Korean artist Nam June Paik, who produced the first publicized video documentary while riding in a taxi cab in New York City." See Deirdre Boyle, "A Brief History of American Documentary Video," *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, Edited by Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (New York: Aperture in Association with the Bay Area Video Coalition, 1990), 51. In another example, Marita Sturken alluded to the mythic event by saying "it is said that Nam June Paik was the *first*—while driving home with a new portapak, he shot tape of the pope's visit to New York, which he showed that night at Café à [sic] Go Go." See "Paradox in the Evolution of an Art Form: Great Expectations and the Making of a History," *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, Edited by Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (New York: Aperture in Association with the Bay Area Video Coalition, 1990), 105.

authors, Paik's videotape of the Pope represents a *first* time account of an artist using a "battery-operated" Portapak video camera. Yet, there is one major problem with this account. In 1965, Paik did screen a videotape of the papal visit at Café Au Go Go in Greenwich Village, as evidenced in a flyer promoting the event (figure 5.1). However, he did not record the papal visit using a "Sony Portapak" (CV-2400 model).[6] This is because the Sony Corporation did not sell the Portapak, which was the first "battery-operated" video camera (CV-2400), and its portable Videocorder kit (DVK-2400) (figures 5.2-5.3) until 1967. Moreover, because the Portapak was first sold in the United States, Paik could not have obtained the device in a different commercial market before 1967.[7] It is possible that the artist had access to a Sony CV-2000 video camera (figure 5.4), but this particular model required an AC power outlet to operate.[8]

Nevertheless, my primary aim here is not to focus on the particular camera model that Nam June Paik used to record Pope Paul VI's visit to New York City; though, discussing a major problem with the account does provide an opportunity to dismiss a

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[6] This tape is considered lost.

[7] In 1967, the Sony Corporation introduced its consumer-grade CV-2400 video camera and portable Videocorder kit (DVK-2400) to North America. The product literature advertised the technology as "a new dimension in sight and sound recording…achieved with a miniaturized Videocorder, now able to be carried over your shoulder…and a solid state TV Camera that is hand-held, trigger-ready to shoot 'live' action, indoors or outdoors." In comparison to earlier studio-based models, such as the CV-2000 (figure 5.4), which was released in limited commercial markets in 1965, the battery-operated CV-2400 camera and Videocorder was groundbreaking. Unlike the CV-2000 model, for example, the portability of the innovative battery-operated equipment enabled consumers to record material outside the television studio without requiring an AC power outlet. The product literature (i.e., owner's manual and advertisement brochure) for the Sony battery-operated Videocorder Model DVK-2400 and hand-held video camera ensemble Model VCK-2400 recommends the following required components to access all features of the technology: a VCK-2400 Camera Kit (20 lbs.); a CV-2000 Videocorder (49 lbs.) for editing; and, any television monitor made for the CV-2000 series Videocorder for playback. Other components include an AC adaptor and battery charger. Sony Corporation of America, *Sony Battery Operated Videocorder Model DVK-2400 and Hand-Held Video Camera Ensemble Model VCK-2400*, Product Advertisement Literature, n.d.

[8] It is more likely that Paik obtained a power source from a building located on the parade route.

common misconception in the literature—i.e., that Sony's 1965 video camera (CV-2000) was "battery-operated" and/or "portable." Instead, I want to dispel myths that propose Paik as the first video artist or the first person to advance "video" as art, which some authors who mention Paik's videotape of the papal visit suggest. My reason is twofold. First, I want to address the inaccuracies of these myths before I discuss the many factors that made alternative video production possible for artists and, consequently, advanced the concept of "video art."[9] Second, in addition to arguing against a monolithic history of "Video Art," I want to debunk the notion that the concept of "video art" emerged as a direct result of Sony's introduction of its first consumer-grade video camera (CV-2000) and Videocorder in 1965. In its place, I will discuss alternative production resources that institutions, such as the Experimental Television Center, made available to artists. I will also address the Experimental Television Center's role in developing viable "control systems," which enable artists to work directly with television and video technology and to develop the idea of "image-processed video" as a genre of "video art."[10] Before I address the way the term "image-processed video" emerged and operated at the Experimental Television Center, however, I need to define the terms "video image-processing" and "control systems."

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[9] As I will show, one of these factors was a large social network of engineers, artists, academics, museum and gallery curators, television producers and directors that helped artists, including Paik, make profound advances in experimental television and video art. Other factors include technological and economic resources provided by alternative production resource centers, such as the Electronic Kitchen and the Experimental Television Center. Also, those at alternative resource centers, including the Experimental Television Center, the Kitchen, Portable Channel, and Media Bus, encouraged social networking and information exchange. On May 15, 1975, for example, representatives from various organizations participated in the first "Tele-Techno" phone conference where they discussed maintenance issues and modifications to "Porta-pak" technology and new circuit board designs.

[10] These control systems enable artists to work directly with television and video technology, which make them less dependent on television engineers. Sherry Miller Hocking explained that this expanded the role of the artist as worker, rather than the artist as television director. Sherry Miller Hocking (Assistant Director, Experimental Television Center, Owego, New York), in discussion with the author, October 6, 2010.

Expanding "Image-processed Video" as Art: Subverting and Building Control Systems

> *Alternative television also meant creating images that looked different from the standard T.V. Thus, "image processing" as we know it grew out of an intensive period of experimentation that for some, in a vague way, was seen visually to subvert the system that brought the Vietnam War home every night.*
>
> – Lucinda Furlong[11]

In "Electronic Video Image Processing: Notes Toward a Definition," the Assistant Director of the Experimental Television Center Sherry Miller Hocking defined electronic image-processing as using "art-making material" whose "properties [are] inherent in the medium of video."[12] In her text, Hocking explained that in image-processing

> Artists work at a fundamental level with various parameters of the electronic signal, for example frequency, amplitude, or phase, which actually define the resulting image and sound. Electronic tools are the instruments with which the signal is created and then altered. These signals carry the image in an electronic coded form. These coded structures are what the artist actually works with when creating an image-processed work. When these signals are decoded by a television monitor, the images and sound are displayed.[13]

Hocking's description here of the mechanics of electronic image-processing not only explains a technical process that uses "properties inherent in the medium of video" as "art-making material" but also discusses what artist do to "time-based and time-dependent" signals in order to create artworks for television.[14] As a technique, image-processing involves manipulating the various parameters of the electronic signal, including frequency, phase, and amplitude, which, as Hocking noted, "actually define the

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[11] Lucinda Furlong, "Notes toward a History of Image-processed Video: Eric Siegel, Stephen Beck, Dan Sandin, Steve Rutt, Bill and Louise Etra," *Afterimage*, vol. 11, nos. 1-2 (1983): 35.

[12] Sherry Miller, "Electronic Video Image Processing: Notes toward a Definition," *Exposure*, vol. 21, no. 1 (1983): 22.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., 22-23.

resulting image and sound."[15] Artists working with these parameters are able to change

the electronic configuration of the standard television signal by feeding it through raster

manipulation devices, colorizers and mixers, and/or audio and video synthesizers. This

type of practice advanced what Hocking and others see as a distinct *genre*, known as

"image-processed video," within "video art."[16]

In principle, then, "image-processing" appears to be an appropriate term for

describing this type of work. However, many artists and scholars argue that the term is

misleading. This is because, as Lucinda Furlong noted, the term may be used to

reference all works on television containing synthesized imagery, including music videos

created for commercial television networks, such as MTV, and time-based correction

procedures employed by broadcast television engineers.[17] For this reason, Furlong

considers the concept of "image-processed video" pejorative and misleading.[18] She

explained in "Tracking Video Art: 'Image Processing' as a Genre" that, in addition to its

use as "a genre and a catch-all phrase for every technical process in the book," the term

"image-processing" "conjures up a number of very specific—often pejorative—

stereotypes: densely layered 'psychedelic' images composed of soft, undulating forms in

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[15] Sherry Miller Hocking defined electronic image processing as using "those properties inherent in the medium of video" to generate art-making material. She continued by explaining that "artists work at a fundamental level with various parameters of the electronic signal, for example, frequency, amplitude, or phase, which actually define the resulting image and sound." Sherry Miller, "Electronic Video Image Processing: Notes toward a Definition," 22.

[16] Ibid., 22. Also see Lucinda Furlong's "Tracking Video Art: 'Image Processing' as a Genre," *Art Journal*, vol. 45, no. 3 (1985): 233-237.

[17] Furlong wrote that many video artists, including Barbara Buckner, reject the label "image-processed video" because it conjures up specific stereotypes. Lucinda Furlong, "Notes toward a History of Image-processed Video: Eric Siegel, Stephen Beck, Dan Sandin, Steve Rutt, Bill and Louise Etra," 35.

[18] Lucinda Furlong, "Tracking Video Art: 'Image Processing' as a Genre," *Art Journal*, vol. 45, no. 3 (1985): 233.

which highly saturated colors give a painterly effect, or geometric abstractions that undergo a series of visual permutations."[19] For many artist using image-processing tools and techniques, these characterizations, which focus on television engineering, are "superficial and belie the range of concerns that fall within the image-processing umbrella."[20] Nevertheless, many artists continued to develop new electronic devices and image-processing techniques and, in doing so, advanced the idea of "image-processed video" as art.

The idea of "video image-processed art," according to Furlong, germinated out of "an intensive period of experimentation that for some, in a vague way, was seen *visually* to subvert the system that brought the Vietnam War home every night."[21] Artists—including Stephen Beck, Bill and Louise Etra, Steve Rutt, Dan Sandin, Eric Siegel, and Steina and Woody Vasulka—not only used image-processing to subvert commercial television programming but also to explore "the electronic signal as a plastic medium, a material with inherent properties that can be isolated."[22] For instance, Steina and Woody Vasulka used custom-made equipment to isolate and construct video frames individually.

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[19] Ibid.

[20] One of the major concerns is that "video image-processing" is not taken seriously as a legitimate artistic practice. Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 234.

[22] The "material" that Hocking is referring to is actually de-material; that is, it is immaterial and non-tangible. Ibid. On another note, all of these artists were involved in developing new video synthesizers and control systems.

This formalist approach was one example, among numerous others, that turned out to be "central to the development of what became the image-processing aesthetic" for artists.[23]

It is clear then why many artists see "video image-processing" as an inadequate term. That the term could compromise the integrity of artworks and, thus, problematize the validation and legitimization of electronic video image-processing as an innovative art genre is key to understanding why so many reject it. As Furlong suggests, however, this anxiety did not hinder the advancement of the idea of "image-processed" video art at alternative resource centers, public (access) television stations, galleries, and museums during the 1970s and 1980s—nor did it stop scholars and artists from using the term in academic texts or alternative production manuals.[24] A determination to expanded television and video as art forms led artists and technicians, who wanted to challenge commercial television programming, to develop an "image-processing aesthetic" and establish a visual language unique to "video art."

One of the primary ways that artists advanced this new visual language was by using pioneering "control systems" and image-processing devices developed at the Experimental Television Center. These "control systems," which directors Ralph and

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[23] Lucinda Furlong, "Tracking Video Art: 'Image Processing' as a Genre," 234.

[24] Lucinda Furlong, "Notes toward a History of Image-processed Video: Eric Siegel, Stephen Beck, Dan Sandin, Steve Rutt, Bill and Louise Etra," *Afterimage*, vol. 11, nos. 1-2 (1983): 35-38; "Notes toward a History of Image-processed Video: Steina and Woody Vasulka," *Afterimage*, vol. 11, no. 5 (1983): 12-17; and "Tracking Video Art: 'Image Processing' as a Genre," *Art Journal*, vol. 45, no. 3 (1985): 233-237.

Sherry Miller Hocking define in a Funding Report (1980-1981), are "either manual or pre-programmable in operation."[25] In the Funding Report, they explain that

> the adjustment of a knob setting by hand to change hue, for example, is the simplest example of *manual control*. This is primarily a gestural and reactive process and although the apparent result is an alteration of the compositional element color, the artist is actually manipulating specific parameters of the electronic video signal which defines the change in the image. The analog control device generates waveforms which can be used as image and sound and as control signals. With this method of control, the manual adjustment is replaced by a preconceived and structured signal voltage which causes the change in the compositional element. The computer control system provides to the artist methods of *pre-programming* the image changes; the result is the codification and, therefore, the precise repeatability of the process.[26]

Whereas "manual control systems" involve a process that is "gestural and reactive"— requiring a time-dependent, manual adjustment of a knob for example—a computer control system offers "pre-programmed" options that process a signal internally. For example, in using the image 'grabber' or frame buffer function in a Z-2 8-bit microprocessor, one can capture a video image and convert it into discrete blocks of sixteen shades of gray.[27] Hocking explains that in addition to being able to reorganize or group the gray levels in the original image, "this computer system can control pre-defined image changes, for example color, and can also translate camera or other input images into digital code, buffering the image and operating on the signal code to define the image in terms of gray levels."[28]

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[25] Ralph and Sherry Miller Hocking, Funding Report 1980-81, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

[26] Ibid. (My emphasis)

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

Integrating analog and digital video image-processing devices into the

Experimental Television Center's studio and building "manual and pre-programmable

control" systems to control them was only part of what was needed to enable artists,

educators, and members in the community to produce artworks and advance "image-

processed video " as art. The other component was pedagogical. In a report discussing

workshops available at the Experimental Television Center between 1972 and 1981, the

directors of the Center emphasized their commitment to educating the public by offering

courses, such as "Basic Video," "Video Post Production," and "Image Processing and

Video Art," for free.[29] These courses provided instruction on topics that were

unavailable to the public at other institutions.[30] They also expanded Ralph Hocking's

idea for developing a space, which offered television and video production resources to

artists. This idea began in 1969, when Hocking founded Student Experiment in

Television (S.E.T.) at the State University of New York, Binghamton and continued in

1970 and 1971, when he established the Community Center for Television Production

(C.C.T.V.P.) and the Experimental Television Center respectively. I will now discuss the

Experimental Television Center's role in advancing the idea of "image-processed video"

as art. My goal is to show how the Center's contributions to establishing social networks

and video collectives, community research and screening centers, and production and

post-production studios helped to advance the concept of "video art."

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[29] Sherry Miller Hocking, "History of the Experimental Television Center and SUNY: Workshops," n.d.,
Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

[30] Ibid.

The Experimental Television Center: Advancing Alternative Production Resources, Artist Collectives, and Electronic Video Imaging Systems

The Experimental Television Center's role in building studio "control systems" and providing educational resources to the public was extensive, beginning officially when Ralph Hocking applied for charted status as a non-profit educational corporation in 1971.[31] Hocking incorporated the Center so that he could apply for grants, which could help finance the rising cost of maintaining and acquiring equipment, purchasing parts and supplies, and paying rent and employees.[32] Grants received from the New York State Council on the Arts (N.Y.S.C.A.) and the National Endowment for the Arts (N.E.A.) also enabled the Experimental Television Center to offer alternative television production resources to students and faculty at the State University of New York at Binghamton and community organizations throughout New York and Pennsylvania; develop a research program for advancing new electronic image-processing devices and expanding the boundaries of television and video production; and establish an artist-in-resident program at the Center.[33]

Once incorporated, the Experimental Television Center began to make the tools of television and video production accessible to artists and educators from local organizations and post-secondary schools in the community. In order to do this, however, the Experimental Television Center developed an in-house research program

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[31] At the time Hocking applied for charted status, the Center was known as the Community Center for Television Production (C.C.T.V.P.).

[32] Sherry Miller Hocking (Assistant Director, Experimental Television Center, Owego, New York), in discussion with the author, October 6, 2010.

[33] The Experimental Television Center's operating budget for 1970-1971, which totaled $52,372.67, was offset by a $50,000 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. 1970-71 Operating Budget, 31 May 1972, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

that promoted "the design and construction of [new] electronic image generation and control devices" and provided "significant new methods of image formation" using audio and video synthesizers.[34] Directors Ralph and Sherry Miller Hocking explained that the philosophical orientation of the research program was to nurture "an interactive and practical relationship between the arts and sciences."[35] Ralph and Sherry Miller Hocking's efforts in promoting collaborative projects among artists, educators, and electrical engineers helped them to design a studio at the Experimental Television Center, incorporate "manual and pre-programmable control" systems that were fully accessible and user-friendly, and built advanced versions of existing electronic devices, such as the Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer (figure 5.5).[36]

In 1972, the Experimental Television Center incorporated a new version of a Paik/Abe Synthesizer into its television studio and established an artist-in-resident program. The new version expanded on one built earlier for WGBH by integrating a digital computer and manual "control systems."[37] In a proposal request for further

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[34] Ralph and Sherry Miller Hocking, Funding Report 1980-81, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

[35] Ibid.

[36] According to Sherry Miller Hocking, this was the second Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer constructed by Shuya Abe under the direction of Nam June Paik and the E.T.C. The first was built for the television Lab at WNET. Ultimately, three were made at the Center. Sherry Miller Hocking (Assistant Director, Experimental Television Center, Owego, New York), in discussion with the author, October 6, 2010.

[37] Hocking commissioned Nam June Paik and Shuya Abe to expand on an earlier version of the Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer at WGBH, which Nam June Paik used during his residency at the public television station. The WGBH version was not easy to use. Ralph Hocking to Nam June Paik, 10 July 1970, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York; Sherry Miller Hocking (Assistant Director, Experimental Television Center, Owego, New York), in discussion with the author, October 6, 2010; and Ralph Hocking and Nam June Paik, Proposal Request for "Further Development of the Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer" and Itemized Budget, n.d., Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York. In Hocking's letter to Nam June Paik, he wrote that he was "most impressed" with the Paik Video Synthesizer (i.e., the Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer) and would like to place an order for one of the

development of the synthesizer, Paik and Hocking reasoned that "the incorporation of a [digital] computer into one of the Paik/Abe Video Synthesizers" was needed in order to "produce a system [that could] be made available immediately to artists throughout the State who work at the center."[38] The new features, which included a colorizer offering video feedback options, magnetic scan modulation, and non-linear mixing, enabled the Experimental Television Center to provide artists and educators with a device specifically built for artistic experimentation.[39] At this point, the Center also began to offer an artist-in-residence program based on personalized instruction, unfettered access to analog/digital image-processing equipment, and a distinctive image vocabulary—all of which benefited residency recipients Peer Bode, Barbara Buckner, Gary Hill, Ken Jacobs, Shigeko Kubota, Nam June Paik, Aldo Tambellini, and many others.

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machines. He continued, "I hope it will be ready in the near future since our Center has an immediate need for creative tools for the video artist."

[38] In a request for assistance letter, Paik wrote: "Actually I have done some computer research at Bell Labs as a Residential Visitor in 1967/68 under the guidance of Michael Noll. However I did not incorporate a digital computer into the design of the Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer at WGBH in 1969 because at that time most computers were not movable, and time sharing through telephone lines made the output speed inadequate for on-line operation. However the rapidly advancing computer technology made the introduction of a digital computer into video art quite plausible and economically and artistically viable." In the last paragraph, Paik ended by noting the following: "The Experimental Television Center in Binghamton presents a favorable place for this investigation because the Center has two highly qualified people, Don McArthur and Walter Wright, who have had considerable experience with computers and computer programming. The incorporation of the computer into one of the Paik/Abe Video Synthesizers will produce a system which will be made available immediately to artists throughout the State who work at the Center." Ralph Hocking and Nam June Paik, Proposal Request for "Further Development of the Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer" and Itemized Budget, n.d., Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

[39] Subsequent versions of the device incorporated a sync generator, which allow various camera signals to be synchronized. In a May 11, 1974 letter to Ralph Hocking, Shuya Abe enthusiastically explained that the new video synthesizer to be made for the Experimental Television Center would included several extra facilities, such as a three to five audio generator, one keying circuit, two mixers and switchers, a sync generator, and a voltage controlled variable delay line. Shuya Abe to Ralph Hocking, 11 May 1974, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

In addition to collaborations between artists and engineers, the Experimental

Television Center also encouraged social networking as a way to advance new methods

of "video image-processing" and the concept of "video art." Dave Jones and Don

McArthur were among those at the Experimental Television Center, who like Nam June

Paik and Ralph Hocking, understood the value of social networks, video collectives, and

collaborations between artists and engineers. On May 15, 1975, for example, Jones and

McArthur participated in the first "Tele-Techno Conference," which brought together

representatives from Media Bus, Portable Channel, MERC, Innervision, and the

Experimental Television Center to discuss Portapak maintenance issues, modifications to

editing and transfer systems, and new commercial hardware and experimental

equipment.[40] Parry Teasdale of Media Bus, who typed out the agenda and subsequent

notes, recalled that

> the call lasted 81 minutes and had to be ended before the complete agenda had
> been taken up. This was due partly to the time taken by introductory niceties and
> partly to the time necessary to cover such subjects as porta-pak maintenance tips
> which shouldn't take as long in the future.[41]

At the end of the conference call, the group decided to reconvene on June 13 to

address those items on the May 15 agenda that were not covered due to time

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[40] The Tele-Techno notes (dated June 4, 1975) are not transcribed from the audiotapes made during the telephone conference. These, as Parry Teasdale of Media Bus wrote, "are my notes from the first Tele-Techno Conference held Thursday, May 15. They aren't a transcription of the audio tapes made at the time and I haven't used those tapes in the preparation of these notes (in fact, we had…'technical difficulties' here and erased some of the tape but between Dave Jones in Binghamton, and us, the whole tape could probably be put together if anyone really needs it)." Participants included Parry Teasdale, Chuck Kennedy, Chuck Heuer, Kevin Kenney, Carl Geiger, Dave Jones, and Don McArthur. Parry Teasdale, "Tele-Techno Notes: From the telephone conference of 5/15/75," 4 June 1975, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

[41] Parry Teasdale, "Notes on Second Tele-Techno Conference: June 13, 1975," 17 July 1975, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

constraints.[42] During the June 13 conference, participants talked about computer/video

interface systems, experimental equipment designs, and issues with new hardware.[43] In

order to share ideas about esoteric hardware and test equipment more effectively,

Teasdale called for a "test equipment pool" to be circulated among the participants.[44]

The goal was to cull test equipment inventories from each organization and share

information on locating hard-to-find items.[45] Although there is some question as to the

success of the test pool, since Teasdale's letters indicate little participation, the initial

lack of response was not carried over to the conference meeting.[46] Rather, the success of

the actual phone conversation, which is evident in Teasdale's conference notes, led the

group to replace the third scheduled telephone conference on October 3 with an actual

meeting at the Maple Tree Farm on October 10 and 11, 1975—an event referred to as the

"Lanesville Techno-Conference."[47] Unlike the conference calls, this event enabled

participants to pool their resources in person and start work on the design of a

standardized plug-in circuit board and power supply.[48] The collaborative project was

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] In his notes on the second Tele-Techno Conference, Parry Teasdale wrote that he had yet to receive test equipment inventories and schematics to duplicate and circulate. In a letter dated October 5, 1975, he indicated that he received some, but that participants of the third Conference meeting should bring them to be exchanged in person. Parry Teasdale, "Notes on Second Tele-Techno Conference: June 13, 1975," 17 July 1975, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York and Parry Teasdale to Tele-Techno Conference participants, 5 October 1975, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

[47] Parry Teasdale, "Notes on Second Tele-Techno Conference: June 13, 1975," 17 July 1975, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

[48] Parry Teasdale, "Summary of Conference Topics and Conclusions, 12 December 1975," Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

intended to help facilitate exchange, as Teasdale explained in his Lanesville Conference

notes:

> Such a circuit board/powersupply system would provide all those people working
> with that system a way to exchange entire experimental circuits through the mail.
> It is hoped that by thus standardizing certain fundamental design processes
> experimental circuit development will be accelerated. Ken Jesser, who presented
> the idea, is persuing [sic] the project.[49]

Other major attempts at standardizing equipment and facilitating information

exchange took place at the Experimental Television Center, which, by the 1980s, had

become nationally recognized for its pioneering research and artist-in-residence

programs. The Experimental Television Center tailored its research and artist-in-

residence programs to provide unfettered access to image-processing devices and control

systems in its studio. While offering personalized instruction, the Experimental

Television Center always insisted that artists and educators experiment, explore, and

develop "image-processed video" as a personal form of communication and expression.

Ralph and Sherry Miller Hocking's mission to promote a kind of investigatory process,

which allow artists the chance to discover the potential of "manual and pre-

programmable" control systems integrated into the Experimental Television Center's

television lab, is evident in the Center's DVD anthology—a five disc set of one hundred

artists who have worked at the Center's studio from 1969 to 2009. Rather than

promoting contrived television production methods, the directors of the Experimental

Television Center encouraged experimentation and exploration, using, as Ralph Hocking

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[49] Ibid.

noted, its studio "as a learning place and not a production house."[50] In this way, artists

and educators could expand the boundaries of television and, consequently, the idea of

"image-processed video" as a genre of "video art."

In this Chapter, I discussed the Experimental Television Center's role in

developing video image-processing devices and "manual and pre-programmable" control

systems, which, as I have shown, were vital to the success of the Center's research and

artist-in-residence programs. The success of these programs at the Center also depended

on alternative production resources, such as grants, social networks, community research

and screening centers, and production and post-production studios. These resources were

especially crucial for artists who relied on non-commercial technologies, such as the

Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer, to advance the idea of "image-processed video" as a genre

of "video art." In the next Chapter, I will address the reception of "video art" by gallery

directors and museum curators. In doing so, I will show how museums and galleries

framed and validated the concept of "Video Art."

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[50] Ralph Hocking and Sherry Miller Hocking, "Radical Learning, Radical Perception: The History of the Experimental Television Center," *ETC: The Experimental Television Center* 1969-2009 (Newark Valley, New York: Experimental Television Center, Ltd., 2009), 12.

NAM JUNE PAIK

ELECTRONIC VIDEO RECORDER

Cafe Au Go Go • 152 Bleecker • October 4 & 11 1965 • World Theater • 9PM

(a trial preview to main November show at Gallery Bonnino)

→ Through the grant of J D R 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 to the past decade
of electronic music

**Variablity & Indeterminism is underdeveloped in optical art as parameter
Sex Is underdeveloped in music.

***As collage technic replaced oil-paint, the cathode ray tube will replace
the canvas.

****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, Under-
ground Movie-only TV stations etc. etc. etc.

5.1. Nam June Paik, Artist statement to a trial preview at Café Au Go Go to main show at Gallery Bonnino, New York, October 4 and 11, 1965. Reprinted in Judson Rosebush, ed., *Videa 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik, 1959-1973* (Syracuse: Everson Museum of Art, 1974).

5.2. Sony Corporation of America, Sony Videocorder Systems Advertisement for the
Ensemble Model VCK-2400, n.d.

The world's most advanced
Battery-Powered VIDEOCORDER
and hand-held
TV VIDEO CAMERA

5.3. Sony Corporation of America, Sony Videocorder Systems Advertisement and Product Literature for the Ensemble Model VCK-2400, n.d.

SPECIFICATIONS: VIDEOCORDER® DECKS
MODELS CV-2000 AND CV-2000D

ELECTRONIC

Circuitry ——————————————solid-state
Recording signal ——————2:1 interlaced composite signal based on American TV standards, including industrial sync.
Signal recording method...Double-sideband FM recording
Horiz. Resolution ——————————Greater than 200 lines
Video signal-to-noise ratio ——————Greater than 40db.
Video output ——————1-4V (P-P), sync negative, 75 ohms
Video input ——————1-3V (P-P), sync negative, 75 ohms
Camera input ....For Sony CVC-2000"
Microphone input..Low impedance, −60db unbal., 600 ohms
Audio frequency range ——————80 to 10,000 Hz
Audio signal-to-noise ——————————Greater than 40db
Audio aux. input ——————High impedance, 20db balanced
Audio output to line ——————High impedance, 0db unbalanced

GENERAL

Recording system ——————Rotary two heads helical scanning
Servo system ——————————————Electro-magnetic
Recording time ——————60 min. continuous (with V-32 tape, 2,370 ft.) 30 min. continuous (with V-31 tape, 1240 ft.)
*For use with TV cameras other than Sony CVC-2000 refer to Bulletin P.E.T.I.-3

Rewind/fast forward time——————————Within 7 minutes
Motor ——————1 single-phase hysteresis synchronous
Audio-control head ——————————Stationary, (PP-30-2102C)
Video head ——————————————Rotary two heads
Erase head ——————————————Full-track (EP-51-21)
Tape speed ——————————————————7.5 ips
Tape ——————————½-inch, Sony "V" series or equiv.
Reel ——————————————Max. diameter 7 inches
Meter ——————Audio level, video level, AC line voltage
Operating position ——————————————horizontal
Operating temperature ——————0-40° C (32-104° F)
Power req. & consumption—117 VAC, 60 Hz ± 0.4, 80 watts

PHYSICAL

Dimensions ——————18⅛ x 11⅞ x 15¾" (CV-2000)
19¼ x 9⅞ x 15½" (CV-2000D)
Weight——————46 lbs. (CV-2000); 42½ lbs. (CV-2000D)
Case ——————Leatherette covered plywood (CV-2000); walnut finish (CV-2000D)

ACCESSORIES SUPPLIED

V-30, Sample Tape; RH-7V empty reel; Head cleaner set; Sony OL-1K lubricating oil; Splicing tape; 8-pin connector; 2-pin connector.

ACCESSORIES AND AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT

VCK-2000 Camera Ensemble ....To record "live" action (TV camera, microphone tripod, extension cables)
CVM-2300U 22-inch (measured diagonally) receiver/monitor....................To be used for viewing by large groups
CVM-51UWP 8-inch (measured diagonally) receiver/monitor——To be used as TV receiver screen
CVO-1 Dust Cover ——Clear, provides access to controls when Videocorder is operating
*Refer to Technical Bulletin P.E.T.I.-3

CVO-2 Dust Cover——————Tinted, permits operation of Videocorder, but not controls
V-31 Video Tape ——————7-inch reel, ½ hr., 1,240 ft.
V-32 Video Tape ——————7-inch reel, 1 hr., 2,370 ft.
RH-7V Tape Reel ——————————————7-inch reel
VMC-Branch Cords (VMC-1, VMC-1B, VMC-1D, etc.)**——To feed additional monitors

COMPLETE VIDEO TAPE TV STUDIO

CV-2000   Microphone   CVC-2000   CVM-2300U   CVM-51UWP

SOLD BY:

SONY CORPORATION OF AMERICA, 47-47 VAN DAM STREET, LONG ISLAND CITY, N.Y. 11101

Showroom: 585 Fifth Ave., N.Y.C., **Regional Offices**: 500 W. Florence Ave., Inglewood, Calif. 90307 / 5551 N. Milton Parkway, Rosemont, Ill. 60018. Sony and Videocorder are registered trademarks of the Sony Corporation. The Videocorder is not to be used to record copyrighted material. Printed in U.S.A.   8CV-167.

5.4. Sony Corporation of America, Product Literature for Sony's Videocorder Models CV-2000 and CV-2000D, n.d.

100

5.5. Three versions of the Paik/Abe Video Synthesizer (with the first built on top and last on the bottom). Courtesy of Olivia Robinson and the Experimental Television Center.

6.

Galleries and Museums 1963–2010: Exhibition Values and the Framing and Validating of "Video Art"

In Chapter Five, I discussed the Experimental Television Center's role in developing

video image-processing devices and "manual" and "pre-programmable" control systems

and, thereby, making alternative production resources available to artists and educators. I

also discussed the Experimental Television Center's objective to advance "image-

processed video" as a genre of "video art" through educational workshops, artist-in-

residence programs, and social networking. In this Chapter, I will also look at the way

the concept of "video art" emerged and operated. But instead of addressing alternative

production resources, which made the tools of television and video production available

to artists and educators, I will focus on the way galleries and museums established

exhibition values and framed and validated "Video Art" as a curatorial category. I will

not do this by covering in chronological order major exhibitions in the United States

(from 1963 to the present).[1] Instead, I will address two paradigmatic moments, which are

characterized by analog and digital methods of artistic production and reproduction, in

two sections.

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[1] See the appendix for a chronology of major exhibitions.

In the first section of this Chapter, I will focus on the role of galleries and

museums in adapting exhibition formats for artworks on analog television and videotape.

In addition to looking at the way the concept of "video art" emerged and operated in

galleries and museums, I will address economic and technological demands that forced

some gallery directors and museum curators to rethink models for exhibiting, selling, and

distributing art on television and videotape. As I will show, these demands also

necessitated new types of exhibition venues and resource facilities, including screening

and distribution centers such as Electronic Arts Intermix in New York City and the Video

Data Bank in Chicago. In the second section of this Chapter, I will discuss the

consequences of using analog videotape as an archival medium. I will argue that what

has been collected and exhibited by galleries and museums are videotape documents,

which have been transformed by copying original masters (or secondary-masters) and

screening exhibition copies—a practice necessitated by the short shelf life of magnetic

videotape. In recent years, though, high quality digital formats (optical disc storage) have

replaced older analog formats (videotape storage). Seeing an opportunity to save their

analog videotape collections, exhibiting and collecting institutions, such as museums and

distribution centers, have begun employing archivists and conservationists to re-master

and digitize artworks on videotape.[2] Today, these institutions are hosting major

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[2] A case in point is the recent digitization of one hundred works on videotape by artists who had residencies at the Experimental Television Center from 1969 to 2009. Conservationists are also dealing with another problem, which has to do with maintaining, preserving, and fixing old analog devices in museum collections. One resent symposium "Nam June Paik and the Conservation of Video Sculpture - Symposium and Exhibition," for example, addressed restoration and conservation methods for time-based sculptures—such as Nam June Paik's prepared television sets—that have fallen in disrepair. The School of Art at the University of Cincinnati hosted the symposium on April 15-16, 2011.

conferences and leading discussions on restoration and conservation methods.[3] As a

consequence, the focus of exhibiting and collecting institutions, which was on developing

"Video Art" as a curatorial category in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, has shifted to

advancing restoration and conservation efforts. Before I discuss some of the reasons for

this shift, I need to address an earlier moment when artists using analog television and

video technology began exhibiting in galleries and, later, in museums.

**Early Gallery Exhibitions: Demonstrating Television's Potential as a Creative
Medium to Framing and Validating of Television and Video as Art Forms**

From the late 1960s to the mid-1990s, artists used analog technology and production

methods to transcend the limits of commercial television programming and advance

television and video as expressive art forms. This was a period, according to museum

curators Chrissie Iles and Henriette Huldisch, when many "moving-image" works on

television and videotape were not intended for "institutional display" or "conventional

collecting."[4] Even so, as early as 1963, galleries started to embrace unconventional

artworks that demonstrated television's potential as a creative medium. Other "moving-

image" works included film and video installations, which, during the 1960s, were also

considered "indifferent, or conceived in opposition, to the values of collectability,

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[3] In 1991, for example, the Museum of Modern Art in New York hosted a symposium on video
preservation. It was organized by Media Alliance and the New York State Council on the Arts.

[4] Iles and Huldisch wrote that "it was in the 1990s that private collectors and museums began collecting
moving-image installations in earnest. In the flurry of selling and collecting that followed, an often
contradictory array of arbitrary procedures emerged. Works were sold on VHS videotapes—sometimes
signed by the artist—on specially edition laser discs and, later, on DVD…." "The long-term implications
of what they had bought," as Iles and Huldisch point out, was only thought about years later. Chrissie Iles
and Henriette Huldisch, "Keeping Time: On Collecting Film and Video Art in the Museum," *Collecting the
New: Museums and Contemporary Art*, Edited by Bruce Altshuler (Princeton: Princeton University Press,
2005), 65-66.

immutability, and objecthood" by museums.[5] Before film and video installations

appeared in museums, however, artists were demonstrating television's potential as a

creative art form at non-traditional exhibition venues and traditional gallery spaces. In

1963, for example, Nam June Paik and Wolf Vostell participated in two events outside

the traditional gallery system. These events, which demonstrated television's potential as

a creative medium, included the "Exposition of Music: Electronic Television" show

(March 11-20, 1963) at Rolf Jährling's private residence in Wuppertal, West Germany

(figure 6.1) and Vostell's "television dé-collage" happenings at George Segal's farm in

New Jersey (figure 6.2).[6] That same year, the Smolin Gallery in New York City, which

was a more traditional exhibiting space, showed Vostell's modified television sets in

"Wolf Vostell & Television Dé-collage & Dé-collage Posters & Comestible Dé-collage"

(figure 6.3). Two years later, Paik had his first solo exhibition "Electronic Art" at the

Galeria Bonino (figure 6.4) and, in 1967, the Howard Wise Gallery included Paik's

Electronic Blues (1966) piece in "Lights in Orbit" (February 4-March 4, 1967) (figure

6.5). By 1969, however, exhibiting and collecting institutions began to shift their focus

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[5] These "moving-image" works include "sculptural media…us[ing] film as one of many media with which to expand the parameters of sculpture and physical space" and artworks using video cameras and videotape equipment "to record performative actions, sometimes in relation to live feedback." Iles and Huldisch reference Robert Morris, Dan Graham, Richard Serra, Lawrence Weiner, Ana Mendieta, Dennis Oppenheim, Walter De Maria, and David Lamelas as working with "film as one of many media with which to expand the parameters of sculpture and physical space." They reference Marina Abramović, Vito Acconci, Peter Campus, Joan Jonas, Bruce Nauman and Hannah Wilke as using video cameras and analog videotape equipment "to record performative actions, sometimes in relation to live feedback." Iles and Huldisch also added in an endnote that this body of work is "largely distinct from what is most often termed avant-garde or experimental film, whose historical relationship with the museum has taken a very different course…" Ibid., 66 and 82.

[6] Paik included his participation television experiments and prepared television sets in the "Exposition of Music: Electronic Television." Vostell's "television dé-collage" happenings took place alongside his solo exhibition "Wolf Vostell & Television Dé-collage & Dé-collage Posters & Comestible Dé-collage" (May 22, 1963) at the Smolin Gallery in New York City. The Smolin Gallery sponsored two events: Vostell's gallery exhibition, which encouraged visitors to participate in do-it-yourself *dé-collage* performances, and the Yam Festival, which featured one of Vostell's "television dé-collage" happenings.

from demonstrating television's potential as a creative medium to advancing and

validating "television" and "video" as legitimate art forms. The Howard Wise Gallery

exhibition "TV as a Creative Medium" (May 17-June 14, 1969) (figures 6.6-6.7) is a case

in point.[7]

"TV as a Creative Medium" was one of the first gallery exhibitions dedicated

entirely to framing and validating television and video as expressive art forms.[8] The

exhibition, according to gallery owner and director Howard Wise, legitimized television

and video as expressive art forms at a time when a new generation of artists "brought up

on TV" began reading "'do it yourself' books on how to make radio and TVs" and

"repairing the neighbor's broken [television] sets."[9] These artists, he wrote in the

exhibition catalog, "work[ed] with TV because they were fascinated with the results they

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[7] The exhibition catalog to "TV as a Creative Medium" also discusses the idea of "video" as an expressive medium. Electronic Arts Intermix, "TV as a Creative Medium" Exhibition Catalog, n.d., http://www.eai.org/kinetic/ch1/creative/pdfs/exhibitionbrochure.pdf (accessed October 3, 2010).

[8] Three unpublished documents suggest that Wise was thinking about ways to frame and validate television and video art. They include the following documents: Electronic Arts Intermix, "TV as a Creative Medium" Exhibition Catalog, n.d., http://www.eai.org/kinetic/ch1/creative/pdfs/exhibitionbrochure.pdf (accessed October 3, 2010); Howard Wise to the friends of the gallery, 16 December 1970. Electronic Arts Intermix, New York, New York; and Howard Wise, "What is Video Art?," *Cablelibraries*, vol. 5, no. 6 (June 1977): 1.

[9] In the introduction to the exhibition catalogue Wise wrote, "Why has not art been affected by this pervading influence [of television]? Perhaps quite simply, because, up until now the time was not right. Perhaps it had to await the maturing of the generation who were in their sub-teens in the 1950's, those who were 'brought up' on TV. They read 'do it yourself' books on how to make radio and TVs. They earned pocket money repairing the neighbor's broken sets. Or they were trained in the technology while they were in the armed forces. As in every generation, some were artists. These have been at work for two, three, five and even more years, scrounging around second hand shops for parts, working with TV because they were fascinated with the results they were able to achieve, and because they sensed the potential of TV as the medium for their expression." Electronic Arts Intermix, "TV as a Creative Medium" Exhibition Catalog, n.d., http://www.eai.org/kinetic/ch1/creative/pdfs/exhibitionbrochure.pdf (accessed October 3, 2010).

were able to achieve, and because they sensed the *potential* of TV as the medium for their expression."[10]

While "TV as a Creative Medium" gave the participating artists an opportunity to demonstrate the "*potential* of TV as the medium for their expression," it also enabled the artist to validate television and video as expressive art forms in a gallery context.[11] Exhibition standards included exceeding the limits of commercial television programming and expanding the boundaries of television and video production. Participating artists expanded television and video in "TV as a Creative Medium" by using custom-built image-processing devices, multiple monitor displays featuring live video camera feeds and closed-circuit time delays, and half-inch videotape recording equipment.[12] By using expensive television and video equipment, though, the artists in the exhibition also placed new technical and economic demands on the Howard Wise Gallery. Wise's solution to meeting these demands was to close his Gallery in 1970, and, in 1971, open Electronic Arts Intermix, a non-profit center offering technical assistance

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[10] Ibid. (My emphasis)

[11] Ibid. (My emphasis) While the catalogue to "TV as a Creative Medium" frames the exhibition as artists using television as a creative medium, another document suggest that Wise saw the exhibition as an opportunity for artists to transcend the limits of commercial television programming by using television and video in new ways. See Howard Wise, *The Electronic Hokkadim* Exhibition Address (Presentation, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., June 12, 1971). In author's possession. Replicated at http://www.eai.org/kinetic/ch1/gallery/by_about_hw.html (accessed July 11, 2010).

[12] They were Serge Boutourline, Frank Gillette, Charlotte Moorman, Nam June Paik, Earl Reiback, Paul Ryan, John Seery, Ira Schneider, Thomas Tadlock, Aldo Tambellini, and Joe Weintraub. The exhibition included Boutourline's *Telediscretion*, Gillette's and Schneider's *Wipe Cycle*, Paik's *Participation TV*, Paik's and Moorman's *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*, Reiback's *Three Experiments Within the TV Tube*, Ryan's *Everyman's Moebius Strip*, Seery's *TV Time Capsule*, Siegel's *Psychedelevision in Color*, Tadlock's *The Archetron*, and Tambellini's *Black Spiral*.

and economic resources to artists interested television and video as art forms.[13] Unlike

the traditional gallery space, Wise believed that such a center would not limit artists from

realizing the full potential of television, video, and other electronic media.

The Howard Wise Gallery, Exhibition Limitations, and Electronic Arts Intermix

Even after mounting successful exhibitions that framed and validated television and

video as creative art forms, such as "Lights in Orbit" (February 4-March 4, 1967) and

"TV as a Creative Medium" (May 17-June 14, 1969), Howard Wise found the traditional

gallery space limited artists from realizing the full potential television, video, and other

electronic media.[14] So, after his last gallery show, "Three Sounds" by Howard Jones

(December 1970), Wise announced in a letter that he was closing the Howard Wise

Gallery in order to "contribute to the realization" of projects using television and video.[15]

"The most important considerations which have impelled me to make this decision," he

wrote,

> are that many artists, among them some of the most adventuresome, are focusing
> their energies on works of such scope that these can only be hinted at in the
> Gallery, and cannot be shown or realized here. These artists are going out of the
> Gallery into the environment, the sky, the ocean, even into outer space. Others
> are seeking imaginative ways of utilizing modern technology to humanize people
> instead of for commercial or destructive purposes, which dehumanize us all.[16]

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[13] Wise incorporated Electronic Arts Intermix in 1972. As indicated in the Certificate of Incorporation,
Wise's determination letter is dated January 20, 1972. Electronic Arts Intermix, "Certificate of
Incorporation," n.d., http://www.eai.org/user_files/supporting_documents/incorporation.jpg (accessed
October 3, 2010).

[14] While Wise may have thought about the restrictive nature of his gallery before 1970, I have not come
across any written evidence of this until December 16, 1970. See Howard Wise to the friends of the
gallery, 16 December 1970. Electronic Arts Intermix, New York, NY.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

Wise concluded:

> Furthermore, as modern technology becomes more sophisticated, artists who use its products as their medium are producing works of increasing complexity, with result that it becomes increasingly demanding of the Gallery's resources to mount exhibitions of those who are exploring in depth the potentials of scientific development.[17]

As the letter indicates, Wise felt that the traditional gallery space impeded the realization of projects that expanded the artistic capacity of television and video. Wise's solution was to establish a center, known as Electronic Arts Intermix, which could better assist those exploring in depth "the potentials of…electronic media as a means of expression and non-commercial communication."[18] Electronic Arts Intermix did this by helping artists gain access to telecommunications equipment and economic resources, which were not fully available at exhibiting and collecting institutions in the early 1970s.

Electronic Arts Intermix also assisted artists "in making an increasingly significant contribution to the development of non-broadcast television" by providing a number of services.[19] These services, which intended to develop, promote and encourage the advancement of "electronic media as a means of expression and non-commercial communication," are spelled out in Electronic Arts Intermix's Certificate of Incorporation, which states:

> Its exclusively charitable and educational objects and purposes are soliciting, maintaining and accumulating a fund or funds and applying the interest and/or principle thereof to engage in, promote, encourage and assist in the advancement and development of the arts and artist, especially, but not limited to, those artists

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Howard Wise, "At the Leading Edge of Art," 1973, 8. Electronic Arts Intermix, New York, New York. In author's possession. Replicated at http://www.eai.org/kinetic/ch1/gallery/by_about_hw.html (accessed July 11, 2010).

[19] Ibid.

and groups of artists working in electronics media and with electronic and communications devices and technology; to develop, promote and encourage awareness and understanding on the part of the general public, students, educators, art critics and historians of the artists and their work in electronic, technological and communications media by means of exhibitions and demonstrations and by dissemination of information concerning these subjects; to help artists to secure information, materials and financial grants and assistance to enable them to carry out their artistic ideas and projects; to provide information and advice and the assistance of professional and technical specialists in various fields to assist artists and groups of artists in the technological, administrative and fiscal aspects of their projects.[20]

As defined by the Certificate of Incorporation, Electronic Arts Intermix's charitable and educational objectives include soliciting, maintaining, and accumulating funds and applying the interest to the advancement and development of electronic and communications media.[21] Additional grants awarded by the New York State Council on the Arts also enabled Electronic Arts Intermix to provide important services to students, artists, educators, curators, art critics and historians, and the general public.[22] Such services included disseminating information on electronic and communications media and providing advice to artists, collectives, and organizations in "the technical, administrative and fiscal aspects of their projects."[23]

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[20] Electronic Arts Intermix, "Certificate of Incorporation," n.d., http://www.eai.org/user_files/supporting_documents/incorporation.jpg (accessed October 3, 2010).

[21] Ibid.

[22] By incorporating Electronic Arts Intermix as a non-profit charitable and educational corporation, Wise was able to apply for grants not available to for-profit galleries. Also, electronic Arts Intermix's first grant application to the New York State Council on the Arts confirms that another principle interest was "to assist projects undertaken by groups and non-for-profit enterprises working to explore the potentials of…electronic media as a means of expression and non-communication." Electronic Arts Intermix, Organization and Program Information and New York State Council on the Arts Grant Application, 1971, http://www.eai.org/kinetic/ch2/mission/documents.html (accessed October 3, 2010).

[23] Electronic Arts Intermix, "Certificate of Incorporation," n.d., http://www.eai.org/user_files/supporting_documents/incorporation.jpg (accessed October 3, 2010). Howard Wise, "At the Leading Edge of Art," 1973, 8. Electronic Arts Intermix, New York, New York. In author's possession. Replicated at http://www.eai.org/kinetic/ch1/gallery/by_about_hw.html (accessed July 11, 2010).

Another way Electronic Arts Intermix assisted artists in expanding the artistic

capacity of television and video was through its sponsored programs and events. In fact,

during its first two years in operation, the center sponsored a cablecast by the video

collective Perception, the Ninth Annual Avant Garde Festival in New York City (1972),

and electronic video events and workshops at The Kitchen.[24] Other programs, such as the

first Women's Video Festival (1972) and the Open Circuits Conference (January 23-25,

1974), ensued and, by 1973, Electronic Arts Intermix began an Artists' Videotape

Distribution Service. The distribution service, which dealt with analog formatting issues

and archival procedures, addressed ways to disseminate works on television and

videotape outside the conventional gallery system. Along with its sponsored programs,

the center's distribution service met Wise's initial objective to "contribute to the

realization" of the full potential of television, video, and other electronic media—an

objective that he realized in 1970 was not possible at galleries and museums.[25]

Public Broadcast Television as an Alternative Exhibition Venue

While Electronic Arts Intermix advanced television and video as art forms and provided

vital services, such as an Artists' Videotape Distribution Service, a few individuals began

to think about alternative exhibition venues for artworks using analog television and

video technology. In the introduction to *The Medium Is the Medium* (1969), for example,

David Oppenheim promoted public broadcast television as an alternative to exhibiting at

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[24] Ibid.

[25] This objective originates in Wise's letter announcing the closing of the Howard Wise Gallery. Howard Wise to the friends of the gallery, 16 December 1970. Electronic Arts Intermix, New York, NY.

galleries and museums. Oppenheim explained in the introduction to the television

program that artists, directors, and producers at WGBH, Boston saw in broadcast

television "an immediate way in reaching a vast audience and creating a museum for

millions."[26] Those working at WGBH, though, were not the only professionals thinking

about public broadcast television's potential as an alternate exhibition venue. Indeed,

while directors and curators were developing ways to exhibit electronic media in galleries

and museums during the late 1960s and the early 1970s, art dealers Gerry Schum and

James Newman were using public broadcast television to advance the concept of a

"broadcast television gallery" as an alternative exhibition venue. Schum and Newman,

though, developed their concept of a "broadcast television gallery" with different

interests at stake.

In Düsseldorf, West Germany, Schum advanced his version of a "broadcast

television gallery," which he called "*Fernsehgalerie*," in two television programs. These

programs, which were based on "the current trends of international art production,"

included "Land Art," which Sender Freies Berlin (SFB) aired on April 15, 1969 (figure

6.8), and "TV-Exhibition II: Identifications," which Südwestfunk Baden-Baden (SWF)

televised on November 30, 1970 (figure 6.9).[27] James Newman, on the other hand, saw

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[26] *The Medium Is the Medium*, directed by Fred Barzyk (Boston, Massachusetts: WGBH, 1969).

[27] Gerry Schum, introduction to the "LAND ART" broadcast by Sender Freies Berlin (SFB), April 15, 1969. Schum's first TV-Exhibition, "LAND ART," presented works by (in order of appearance) Richard Long, Barry Flanagan, Dennis Oppenheim, Robert Smithson, Marinus Boezem, Jan Dibbets, Walter de Maria and Michael Heizer. "TV-Exhibition II: Identifications" featured works by Joseph Beuys, Daniel Buren, Hamish Fulton, Gilbert & George, Klaus Rinke, Ulrich Rückriem, Reiner Ruthenbeck and others. For more on Schum's *Fernsehgalerie* project see Ian White's "Who is Not the Author? Gerry Schum and the Established Order," *Afterthought: New Writing on Conceptual Art*, Edited by Mike Sperlinger (London: Rachmaninoff's, 2005), 69. Also see Gerry Schum, introduction to the "TV-Exhibition II: Identifications" broadcast by Südwestfunk Baden-Baden, November 30, 1970; published in *Gerry Schum*, exhibition

in broadcast television a way in which to promote television and video artists to a public

television audience. Expanding on this idea, Newman produced the Dilexi Series in 1968

for the San Francisco public television station KQED. The television series, which

advanced public broadcast television as an alternative exhibition venue for television and

video artists, was not intended "to sell objects but to move…the experiential information

of aesthetic design and concept."[28] Newman did this by developing the Dilexi Series into

a twelve-part weekly series, which KQED-TV began airing on March 19, 1969 with

Music with Balls by Terry Riley, Arlo Acton, and John Coney (figure 6.10).[29] Yet, as it

was the case for Schum, Newman did not receive subsequent commissions from public

television stations to advance his concept of a "broadcast television gallery" further. This

was due in part to competing interests at public broadcast television stations, which, by

the early 1970s, looked for other sources of viable cultural programming. At the same

time, public television's role as a sustainable exhibition/screening venue was supplanted

by several competing intuitions, which began to exhibit and collect artworks on television

and videotape. They were museums and galleries. Yet, as I will argue, the unique nature

of these works presented new challenges to collectors, museum curators, and gallery

directors. These included problematizing conventional collection procedures and

challenging traditional exhibition standards. Like other expanded forms of artistic

catalogue (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1979). Here Schum wrote, "I would like to quote what Richard
Long said in Land Art: 'My work should be shown the way I made it. If explanations are necessary, then
the work is no good.'" Working from this quote, Schum noted, "the transmission of the television gallery
is not an art-critical broadcast. It is first and foremost a disinterested presentation of art, not a
comprehensive report, not an evaluation nor an explanation."

[28] Gene Youngblood, "Part Five: Television as a Creative Medium," *Expanded Cinema* (New York: E.
Dutton and Co., 1970), 292-293.

[29] The Dilexi Series featured works from Terry Riley and Arlo Acton, Edwin Schlossberg, Frank Zappa,
Philip Makanna, Ann Halperin, Robert Nelson and William Wiley, Julian Beck, Yvonne Rainer, Andy
Warhol, Kenneth Dewey, Robert Frank, and Walter De Maria. *Music with Balls* was composed by Terry
Riley and mixed by John Coney. It also features the work of Arlo Action.

production at the time, experimental television and video changed the way institutions

collected and exhibited works of an ephemeral nature.

Issues with Exhibiting "Video Art" and Collecting Television and Videotape

If collecting television and videotape and exhibiting "Video Art" became a major focus

for museums in the 1970s and the 1980s, than a fundamental reassessment of the

mechanics of "institutional display" and "conventional collecting," which had been

developed by major Western institutions such as the Altes Museum and the Museum of

Modern Art in New York City, was an absolute necessity for curators. During this

period, museum curators Barbara London and David Ross recognized this need as they

began to adapt traditional gallery spaces in order to accommodate electronic, time-based

artworks. As they began to exhibit artworks on television and videotape, London and

Ross were also confronted by economic and technical demands, which shifted their focus

from developing a curatorial category to addressing formatting issues and equipment

needs. These demands included possessing the necessary hardware for showing

videotapes of various formats; devising appropriate archival systems for videotapes and

equipment; developing a strategic plan for increasing the longevity of audiovisual

equipment and replacing broken electronic components; and keeping up with advances in

technology—all of which were extremely costly, as London and Ross recall in their

papers delivered at the 1974 "Open Circuits" Conference at the Museum of Modern

Art.[30]

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[30] These papers are published in Douglas Davis and Allison Simmons, editors, *The New Television: A Public/Private Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1977).

In her paper "Video in the Museum of Modern Art," London hinted that the Modern Museum of Art was "aware of the design significance of some audiovisual equipment" as early as its 1968 exhibition "The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age" and "acquired its first video hardware in 1970."[31] However, as London and her colleagues began to realize, possessing the necessary audiovisual equipment was only part of what was needed in order to mount a successful exhibition. In fact, their first year of exhibiting works on television and videotape presented a whole range of unforeseen problems, which forced curators at the Museum of Modern Art to develop new strategies for exhibiting works using the tools of analog television. London recalled one instance during the Museum of Modern Art's first year of exhibiting video when a "major disturbance was caused by air conditioning pumps located one floor below the video gallery."[32] She wrote that

> Periodically the pumps emit an electrical charge, which caused extraneous color to permeate the corners of the monitor screen. A lead plate installed beneath the monitor does not appear to arrest this electrical interference. Unfortunately, the video exhibition space cannot be changed for some time.[33]

Although the electrical disturbance cited by London was an isolated instance, it is still indicative of the types of unforeseen problems experienced by museum curators who were exhibiting works using analog television and videotape. Other major issues, which London and Ross recalled in their conference papers, had to due with developing sustainable methods for exhibiting electronic, time-based works and acquiring the

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[31] London mentioned three television sets designed by Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper that the Museum of Modern Art acquired. They included the Doney 14 (circa 1958), the Algol 14 (1965), and the Black 201 (1970). Barbara London, "Video in the Museum of Modern Art," *The New Television: A Public/Private Art*, Edited by Douglas Davis and Allison Simmons (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1977), 119-121.

[32] Ibid., 121.

[33] Ibid.

necessary equipment in order to show works documented on various videotape formats.

David Ross, the second director of the video department at the Everson Museum of Art in

Syracuse, New York, discussed equipment issues in his contribution to the Open Circuits

Conference, which he titled "Video and the Future of the Museum."[34]

In "Video and the Future of the Museum," Ross addressed two problems

concerning the television and video technology used by artists. These concerns, which

Ross singled out, include "the short life expectancy of…consumer-grade equipment" and

the problem with old equipment becoming obsolete.[35] He explained:

> there seems to be an interesting sense of dissatisfaction with the shoddy
> workmanship and short life expectancy of the consumer-grade equipment that
> came out of this technical revolution. Many community programs started with
> high hopes and energy and have died as the result of outrageous hardware
> maintenance costs. Also, the hardware producers have continually used the
> consumer as a test market—often making old equipment obsolete within as little
> as two years from release.[36]

Ross's concern here indicates that advances in consumer-grade equipment also meant

that collecting and exhibiting institutions would have to deal with obsolete equipment and

various hardware issues, thus, making it harder for museums to exhibit works on

television and/or videotape. Moreover, expensive hardware, maintenance costs,

incompatible videotape formats, and technological advancements made it more difficult

for exhibiting and collecting institutions to frame and validate "Video Art" as a curatorial

category. Nevertheless, several museums—including the Everson Museum of Art, the

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[34] The Everson Museum of Art established their video department in 1971. It ends in 1981.

[35] David Ross, "Video and the Future of the Museum," *The New Television: A Public/Private Art*, Edited
by Douglas Davis and Allison Simmons (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1977), 117.

[36] Ibid.

Museum of Modern Art, the Rose Museum of Art, and the Long Beach Museum of Art—

were able to frame and validate television and video as legitimate art forms in the 1970s.

As London indicated in her conference paper, these museums often employed

institutions, such as Electronic Arts Intermix, to address technological constraints,

equipment limitations, and incompatible videotape formats. London cited incompatible

video formats as a major problem for museums, especially when European works entered

American collections and curators began exhibiting them.[37] She noted that "the

expensive Sony 'switchable' (50 to 60 cycle) cassette deck, which plays both American

and European tapes, is one solution."[38] However, as the Museum of Modern Art did not

have a switchable deck at the time London wrote her "Open Circuits" conference paper,

its staff had to pay some else to transfer the tapes before they could be exhibited.[39]

    While institutions such as Electronic Arts Intermix were addressing technological

constraints, equipment limitations, and incompatible videotape formats, exhibiting and

collecting institutions were collecting artworks on analog television and videotape with

no archival or collecting standards. By the 1990s, as museum curators Iles and Huldisch

noted,

> private collectors and museums began collecting moving-image installations in
> earnest. In the flurry of selling and collecting that followed, an often
> contradictory array of arbitrary procedures emerged. Works were sold on VHS
> videotapes—sometimes signed by the artist—on specially edition laser discs and,
> later, on DVD (which was mistakenly interpreted as a medium in its own right).
> Film loop works were acquired often with no clear agreement regarding

[37] In order to show European videotapes, American museums and galleries needed to transfer them so that they could be played on NTSC video equipment. Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

preservation, access to the original negative, or the potential migration of film to video.[40]

"The long-term implications of what they had bought," as Iles and Huldisch pointed out, was only thought about years later when VHS videotapes were replaced by optical disc storage as a more sustainable storage medium.[41] The introduction of digital video formats and optical disc storage in the mid-1990s, which replaced analog videotape technology, changed the way television and video artists produced artworks. Digital video formats and optical disc storage also changed the way museums and galleries exhibited and collected electronic, time-based media. By the late 1990s, exhibiting and collecting institutions understood the urgency to re-master and preserve works on videotape.

In principle, the migration of analog videotape to digital video meant that works on VHS videotapes could be saved from deteriorating further. However, in saving a videotape document by digitizing it, one is destroying an inherent condition of the analog videotape medium, which is not permanent or static but, instead, temporal and un-fixed. This inherent condition of videotape, however, contradicts one of the major objectives of museums, which is to collect and preserve artworks. It is for this reason that exhibiting and collecting institutions have shifted to advancing restoration and conservation efforts, even if it means that original works on analog videotape will no longer be experienced as they were intended. As I will show, recent exhibitions on video and performance art

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[40] Chrissie Iles and Henriette Huldisch, "Keeping Time: On Collecting Film and Video Art in the Museum," 65-66.

[41] Iles and Huldisch also noted that during the late 1990s, "as museums and collectors began to turn their attention to the long-term implications of what they had bought, confusion ensued. Signed 'unique' VHS tapes had been lent to exhibitions without taking into account that a VHS tape is a fragile, low quality, throwaway format, which would be destroyed by repeated showings." Ibid.

failed to recuperate this aspect of analog technology. Instead, these exhibitions emphasized "video art" as collected documents and, thus, skirted the true nature of "video" as art dematerialized and temporally specific.

Video Art and Recent Exhibiting Strategies

> *At its esthetic core video is art dematerialized. Its organic physical qualities are confined to the loop tape, the cartridge cassette, or live broadcast through the air. Therefore the result is political and esthetic at once: swift, intense communication, not possession.*
>
> – Douglas Davis[42]

Two exhibitions featuring time-based, electronic media demonstrate the variety of ways from which curators have dealt with dematerialized and performance-based artworks recently. These exhibitions are "100 Years (version #2, ps1, nov 2009)" in conjunction with "45 Years of Performance Video from EAI" at P.S.1 (figure 6.11) and "Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present" (March 14–May 31, 2010) (figure 6.12) at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

"100 Years (version #2, ps1, nov 2009)" was an ambitious endeavor that would excite any enthusiast interested in video and performance art. Organized by P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center and Performa, a non-profit interdisciplinary arts organization based in New York City, "100 Years" presented over two hundred facsimiles of documents, photographs, film, video and audio materials relevant to the history of performance art. The exhibition, which also celebrated the third Performa performance biennial held from November 1 to 22, honored the one-hundredth anniversary of the Futurist Manifesto and exhibited a cornucopia of information proffered as an archive for

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[42] Douglas Davis, "Video Obscura," *Artforum*, vol. 10, no. 8 (April 1972): 71.

students, researchers, and enthusiasts. In collaboration with a special presentation of "45 Years of Performance Video from EAI," the exhibition offered what the organizers called "a snapshot style, example-based overview of some of the most significant art movements, happenings and performances of the past hundred years."[43]

The "snapshot style, example-based overview" conformed to the refurbished spaces on the third floor of the once abandoned P.S.1 public school building constructively and the Center's general labyrinth-like orientation did not encroach on the seven gallery rooms that housed the exhibition. Apart from the three possible entryways, the chronologically-oriented exhibition wrapped fittingly around a main gallery featuring eight projected videos of *Nine Evenings: Theater and Engineering* (1966) and a site-specific floor-based installation by Christian Marclay, titled *2822 Records (PS1)* (1987-2009). The third floor main gallery was also the site of P.S.1's Saturday Sessions, a program presenting emerging artists and their live performances to New York audiences. As a multi-functional space, claimed by artists performing at Saturday Sessions and reclaimed by *Nine Evenings* and *2822 Records (PS1)*, the main gallery fit nicely into what the organizers called a "living exhibition" of documentation—one that they expect will grow as it travels to other venues.[44]

Following the exhibition chronologically, one is first introduced to a room surveying the Russian Avant-Garde and Futurism (1911-1945), Dada and Surrealism in Germany and France (1915-1930), a brief history of the Bauhaus and Oskar Schlemmer's

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[43] "100 Years (version #2, ps1, nov 2009)," P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, New York.

[44] Ibid.

theater, and early performances from the United States. The first room offered such

highlights as *Le Ballet Mécanique* (1924), the Futurist Manifesto (1909), and a television

monitor showing the documented live performance of Yves Klein's *Anthropometries of*

the Blue Period and Fire Paintings (1960). Upon entering the second gallery, the

exhibition took on another format, which tied textual documents affixed to gallery walls

and projected films and videos on television screens along a loosely woven timeline. Its

resemblance to a survey is no coincidence. RoseLee Goldberg's historical perspective,

chronicled in her book *Performance Art from Futurism to the Present*, provided the basis

of the linear chronology and conceptualization of the exhibition.

This loose chronological time-line and associated ephemera provided the base

from which the rest of the exhibition follows, save the fourth room, which features a

special presentation surveying "45 years of performance video from EAI." The

organizers of the exhibition included thirty-eight works from Electronic Arts Intermix's

extensive collection of artists' performances on videotape. These ranged from

conceptual-based exercises by Bruce Nauman, Dan Graham, and John Baldessari to

performance narratives by Vito Acconci, Chris Burden, Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelly.[45]

The curator's inclusion of "45 years of performance video from EAI" was meant

to underscore the inextricable link between the histories of performance art and video art,

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[45] They include Bruce Nauman's *Slow Angle Walk* (1968), Dan Graham's *Past Future Split Attention* (1972), John Baldessari's *Walking Forward-Running Past* (1971), Vito Acconci's *Theme Song* (1973), Chris Burden's *Big Wrench* (1980), and *Family Tyranny (Modeling and Molding)* (1987) by Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelly.

with special emphasis on their "rich cross-fertilization."[46] In principle, then, one can

assume that Electronic Arts Intermix's collaboration was successful, especially since the

highlighted videotapes complement the types of performance-based artworks surveyed by

P.S.1 in the other galleries. Moreover, one can argue that these artists used the tools of

television and video as another dimension in which to stage their performances.[47]

However, unlike Joan Jonas's real-time performance of *Organic Honey's Visual*

Telepathy (1972), which included her documented videotape of *Vertical Roll*, the thirty-

eight works on tape only function as documents. Indeed, one can sit and watch the

recorded/documented performances. However, the layout, which includes four television

monitors and a digital projection on the wall, and the 393-minute run-time falls short

from providing an accurate picture of "45 years of performance video from EAI." The

following question, which Howard Wise alluded to in his 1970 letter, remains: how can

one exhibit electronic, time-based media without imposing limitations that inhibit their

full realization, especially if those works exhibited as documents are only traces of the

initial performance site? By using video and videotape, performance artists are

submitting themselves to the restrictive temporal factors inherent in the media. In other

words, while video and videotape allow performance artists to add another dimension in

which to stage their performances, the recorded performance functions only as a

document in the form of magnetically recorded electronic signals.

Exhibiting ephemera and live performance-based artworks present a precarious

venture for curators, especially when the works are packaged as documents once

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[46] "100 Years (version #2, ps1, nov 2009)," P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, New York.

[47] Ibid.

removed from their performance-based origins. In the case of "45 years of performance video from EAI," the risky undertaking is compounded by an overwhelming amount of information, which, while functioning as "a snapshot style, example-based overview of some of the most significant art movements, happenings and performances of the past hundred years," does not provide a way for viewers to experience performance art with historical specificity or conceptual clarity.[48] Recent performance art retrospectives, such as "Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present" at the Museum of Modern Art, can also have this effect.

Indeed, blockbuster exhibitions, such as "Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present," have more resources than smaller institutions. That the Museum of Modern Art was able to hire live performers to recreate pivotal performances in Marina Abramović's career, which they did throughout the gallery in framed boxes, does not account for the fact that many of these performances were intended for "institutional display" or "conventional collecting." The same argument can be made for "100 Years (version #2, ps1, nov 2009)" in conjunction with "45 Years of Performance Video from EAI." Except "100 Years" inevitability conveys a feeling of *horror vacui*.

Nevertheless, "100 Years" presents the history of performance art by using documents that are removed from their original site. While video performances, such as Acconci's *Theme Song*, were never performed in front of a live audience and, thus, were meant to be viewed on a television set, the original performance in real-time is still part of the art process. In many ways, this process of performing in real-time is ultimately

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[48] Ibid.

lost in "100 Years (version #2, ps1, nov 2009)" in conjunction with "45 Years of Performance Video from EAI." As it stands, "100 Years" is a large archive, containing documents, or traces, of performance from the last 100 years. However, one cannot forget that the archive does not replace the original time-based actions that played an integral part in advancing 100 years of performance art. Moreover, a review of the published record in Chapter Seven will show that art on television and videotape was seen as more than just a document. In Chapter Seven, I will also discuss the way the term "Video Art" emerges, operates and is constricted in the literature.
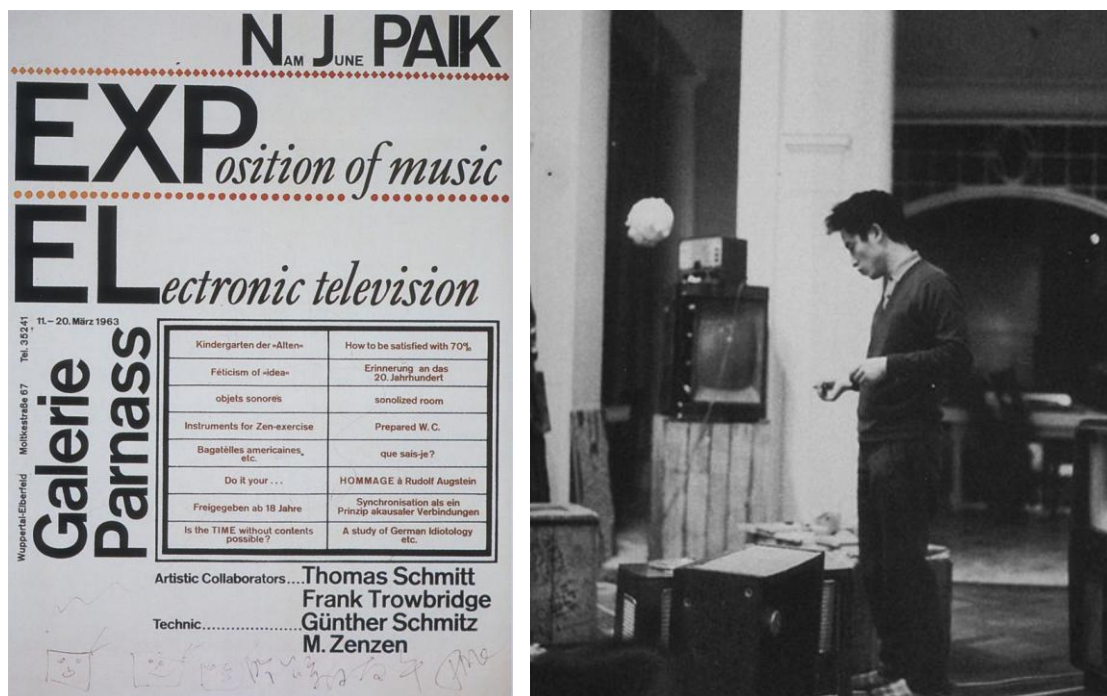
6.1. Exhibition poster for the "Exposition of Music: Electronic Television" and installation view of Nam June Paik with his prepared television sets, photograph by George Maciunas, March 11-20, 1963, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany. Reprinted in John Hanhardt, *The Worlds of Nam June Paik* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2000).
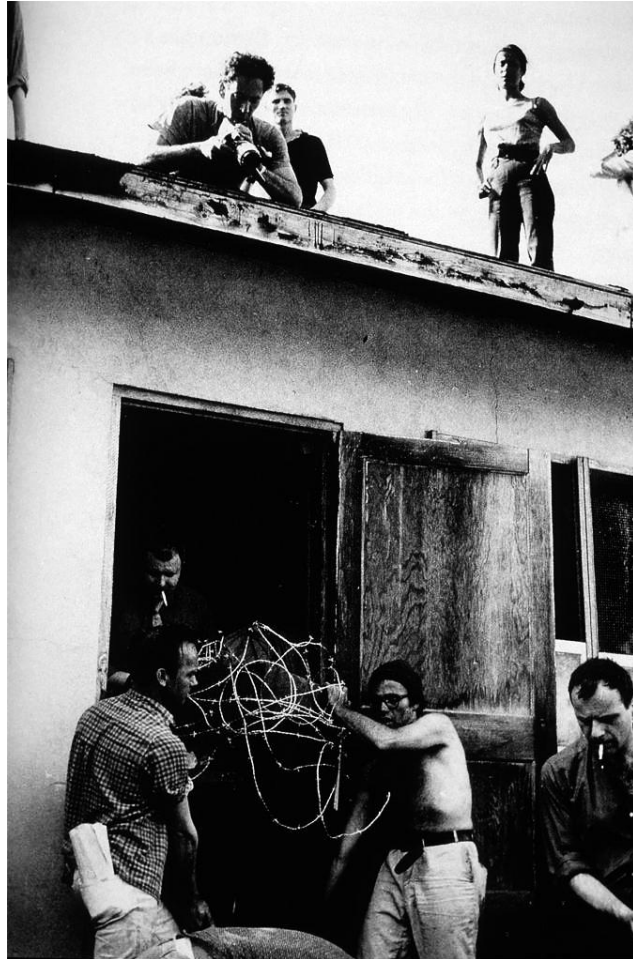
6.2. Wolf Vostell, Dé-collage Performance Happening at the Yam Festival, South Brunswick, May 19, 1963, George Segal's Farm near South Brunswick, New Jersey.

6.3. Wolf Vostell, Two installation views of "Wolf Vostell & Television Dé-collage & Dé-collage Posters & Comestible Dé-collage," May 22, 1963. Smolin Gallery, New York.
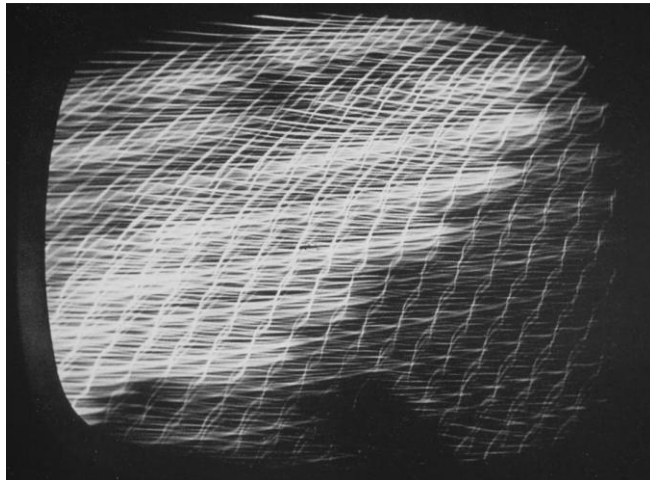
6.4. Nam June Paik, Double-yoke Experiment and Prepared Television Set, 1965, "Electronic Art," Galeria Bonino, New York.
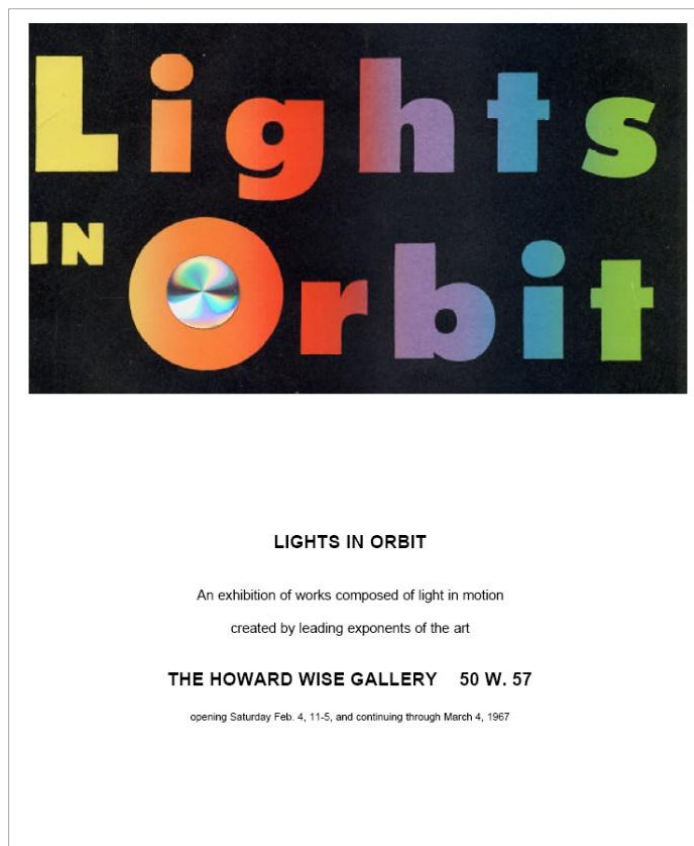
6.5. Howard Wise, Cover to "Lights in Orbit" exhibition catalogue, 1967. Electronic
Arts Intermix Online Archives, New York, July 11, 2010,
http://www.eai.org/user_files/supporting_documents/LIO_Catalogue.pdf. Courtesy of
Electronic Arts Intermix.
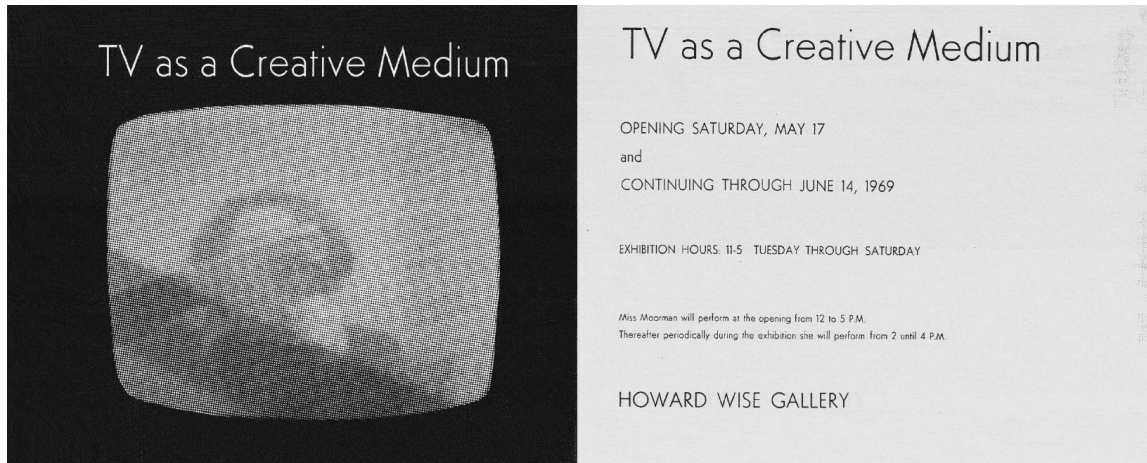
6.6. Howard Wise, Cover and second page to "TV as a Creative Medium" exhibition catalogue, 1967. Electronic Arts Intermix Online Archives, New York, July 11, 2010, http://www.eai.org/kinetic/ch1/creative/pdfs/exhibitionbrochure.pdf. Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.
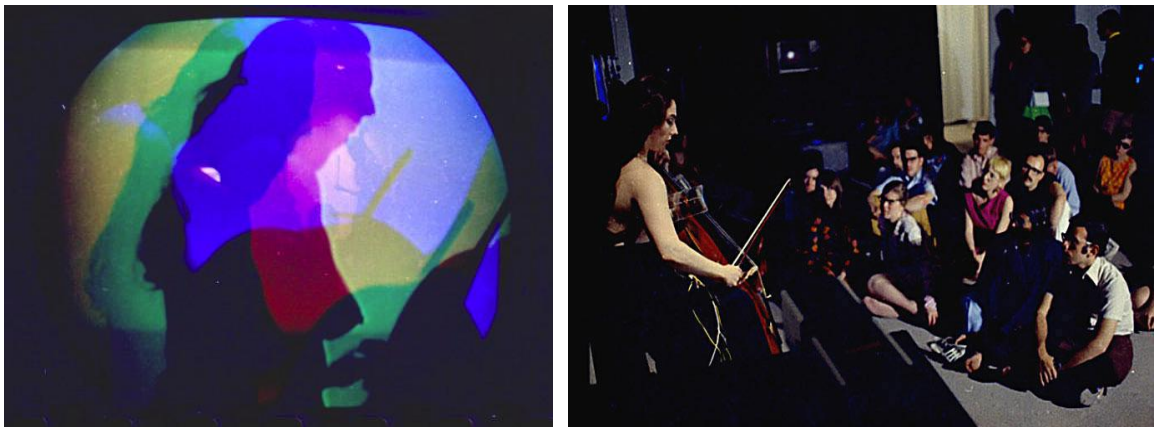
6.7. Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman, Still and Installation view of *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*, 1969. Electronic Arts Intermix Online Archives, New York, July 11, 2010, http://www.eai.org/kinetic/ch1/creative/images.html#. Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.

6.8. Gerry Schum, Poster for "Land Art" (Fernsehgalerie Berlin Gerry Schum) (broadcast at 10:40 p.m. on Sender Freies Berlin (SFB)), April 15, 1969. Reprinted in Ulrike Groos, Barbara Hess, and Ursula Wevers, eds., *Ready to Shoot: Fernsehgalerie Gerry Schum* (Köln: Snoeck, 2004), 63.
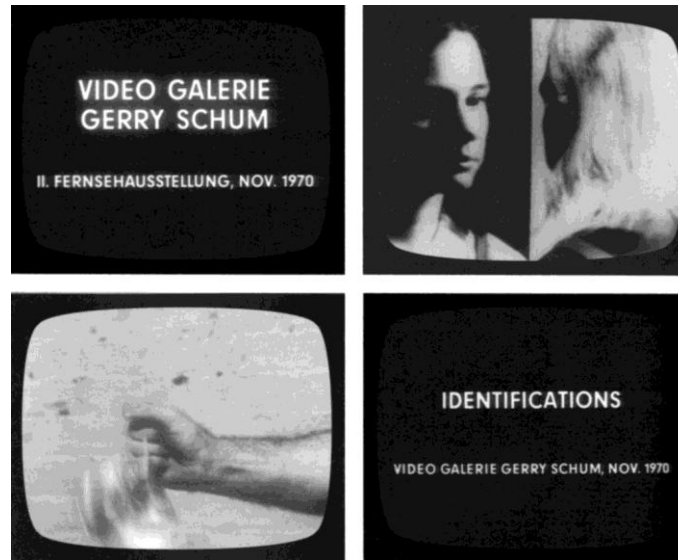
6.9. Gerry Schum, Four stills from "Television Exhibition II: Identifications" (broadcast at 10:50 p.m. on Südwestfunk Baden-Baden (SWF)), November 30, 1970. Top right: Keith Sonnier, *Untitled*, 1970. 16mm film, 2:15 min., black and white, silent. Bottom left: Richard Serra, *Untitled*, 1968. 16mm film, 2:48 min., black and white. Reprinted in Ulrike Groos, Barbara Hess, and Ursula Wevers, eds., *Ready to Shoot: Fernsehgalerie Gerry Schum* (Köln: Snoeck, 2004), 158, 197, and 198.

6.10. Terry Riley and Arlo Acton, Still from *Music with Balls*, 1969. From the *Dilexi Series*, commissioned by the Dilexi Foundation (San Francisco: KQED, 1969).

6.11. Installation views of "100 Years (version #2, ps1, nov 2009)" and "45 Years of Performance Video from EAI" (November 1, 2009–May 3, 2010). P.S.1, New York.
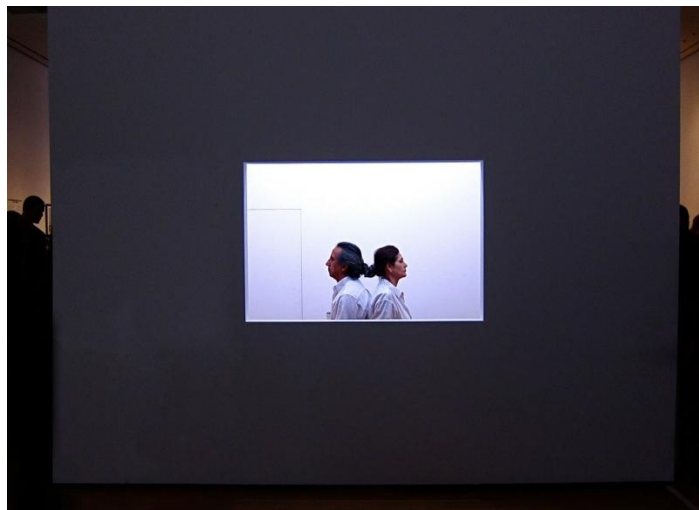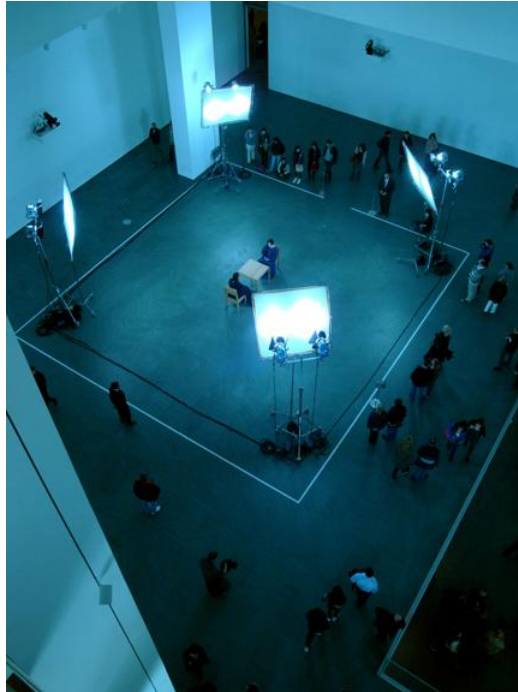
6.12. Installation views of "Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present" (March 14–May 31, 2010). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

7.

The Published Record 1962–2010: The Invention of a Legitimizing Critical Language

In the previous chapter, I addressed the role of galleries and museums in framing and validating "Video Art" as a curatorial category. I will now discuss the way the term "Video Art" emerges, operates and is constricted in the literature. My criterion for selecting material from this literature has been to locate key, paradigm-shaping texts that address the emergence and advancement of "Video Art" as a concept.[1] As I will show, these texts helped to invent a legitimizing critical language by covering the following topics: Fluxus and experimental television; experiments in public broadcast television and television as a creative medium; the alternative television movement and guerrilla television; the grammar of video and videotape; categories of video art; histories and genres of "Video Art"; and video art theory.[2] By addressing the way in which these topics were discussed in the literature, I will be able to substantiate one of the underlying arguments of this dissertation: that a totalizing concept and monolithic history of "Video Art" is problematic. I will begin by covering the cross-pollination of Fluxus activities in West Germany and New York City, which advanced the idea of "experimental television" as a neo-avant-garde mode of aesthetic production in the early 1960s.

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[1] Although this material is global in scale, I will focus on texts that attend to a uniquely American context.

[2] I derived these topics in order from an exhaustive bibliography.

Fluxus and Experimental Television

Writing on experimental television as an expressive art form first emerged in West Germany during the late 1950s and the early 1960s. It was during this period that a loosely formed collective, known as Fluxus, organized intermedia performances and published texts on experimental television.[3] In June 1962, for example, Fluxus artists Nam June Paik and Wolf Vostell published two texts on experimental television in the first issue of *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen* (figure 7.1).[4] Included in this issue was the definition of "*dé-coll/age*" (followed by *décolorer*), which contextualized the group's use of the term "*dé-coll/age*" as a motif and a technique: the former, referencing an aircraft ascending from the ground and, the latter, referring to the physical act of detaching, cutting, and striping away something that is glued.[5] Inside the first issue, Vostell, who joined the group while coordinating the Wiesbaden Festival with Paik in 1962, elaborated on "*dé-coll/age*" as a subversive technique used to deconstruct television sets.[6]

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[3] *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen* (1962-1969) and *fLuxus cc fiVe ThreE* (1964) include texts on experimental television.

[4] The first issue of *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen* includes artist statements, theoretical writings on Fluxus and the intermedia neo-avant-garde, comments about experimental music and television, and descriptions of Fluxus performances. It also contains eight folding segments, each page allocated to one of the following artists: Arthur Köpcke, George Maciunas, Benjamin Patterson, Braun, Nam June Paik, Pera, Wolf Vostell, and La Monte Young.

[5] Vostell wrote that he selected the definition of "*dé-coll/age*" from the 1952 edition of the Langenscheidt French-German Dictionary. See Wolf Vostell, *Dé-coll/age Happenings* (New York: Something Else Press, 1966), 90.

[6] The theory and practice of *dé-coll/age* entered Video Art's written history of much later, whereas primary source material (such as *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen*) was limited in print form. See John G. Hanhardt, "Dé-collage/Collage: Notes Toward a Reexamination of the Origins of Video Art," *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, Edited by Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (New York: Aperture in Association with the Bay Area Coalition, 1990), 70-79; John G. Hanhardt, "Dé-collage and Television: Wolf Vostell in New York, 1963-64," *Visible Language*, vol. 26, no. ½ (1992): 107-124; John G. Hanhardt,

While the first issue of *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen* does not report on

the historical origins of television as an artistic medium, it does offer insight into how

Vostell subverted commercial television programming and used the *dé-coll/age* technique

to advance television as an art form in the late 1950s and the early 1960s.[7] During this

period, Paik was also writing about experimental television as an art form. In the June

1964 issue of *fLuxus cc fiVe ThReE*, for example, Paik published an "afterlude to the

EXPOSITION of EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION," which he wrote immediately after

the "Exposition of Music: Electronic Television" show at the Galerie Parnass in

Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963) (figure 7.2).[8] In the Fluxus literary

tradition (developed in *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen*), the artist addressed

aesthetics, philosophy, television, ecstasy, and Zen. Paik also described his

"experimental TV" project reconfiguring the electronic components of thirteen television

monitors:

> 13 sets suffered 13 sorts of variation in their VIDEO-HORIZONTAL-
> VERTICAL units. I am proud to say that all 13 sets actually changed their inner
> circuits. No Two [sic] sets had the same kind of technical operation. Not one is

"Dé-collage/Collage: Anmerkungen zu einer Neuuntersuchung der Ursprünge der Videokunst," *Video-Skulptur: Retrospektiv und Aktuell 1963-1989*, Edited by Wulf Herzogenrath and Edith Decker (Köln: DuMont, 1989), 12-23; and Glenn O'Brien, "TV Guide: Wolf Vostell Reconsidered," *Artforum International*, vol. 39, no. 8 (2001): 115-118.

[7] Vostell advanced the concept of *dé-coll/age* in his exhibition "Wolf Vostell & Television Dé-collage & Dé-collage Posters & Comestible Dé-collage" (May 22, 1963), which was held at the Smolin Gallery in New York City. The Smolin Gallery sponsored two events: the exhibition mentioned above, which encouraged visitors to participate in do-it-yourself *dé-collage* performances, and the Yam Festival, which featured one of Vostell's performance-oriented Happenings.

[8] Nam June Paik, "afterlude to the EXPOSITION of EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION," *fLuxus cc fiVe ThReE*, no. 4, section 2, June 1964; Judson Rosebush, ed., *Videa 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik, 1959-1973*, Edited by Judson Rosebush (Syracuse: Everson Museum of Art, 1974).

the simple blur, which occurs, when you turn the vertical and horizontal control-button at home.[9]

The "technical operation" to which Paik referred involved electronic interference, which the artist used to create "various 'FEED BACKS'" on the television screen.[10] Like Vostell, Paik was interested in manipulating the standard television signal. Unlike Vostell, however, Paik used custom-made electronic devices in order to create various feedback patterns on the television screen. Paik explained in his 1964 afterlude that he was able "to change the phase of waves" by using "various generators, tape-recorders and radios" to create distinct feedback patterns on the television screen.[11]

In his New School for Social Research exhibition brochure (January 8, 1965) (figure 7.3), Paik described in more detail how he created feedback patterns on the television screen. In the exhibition brochure, Paik also discussed "the aesthetical aspect of…electronic TV experiments and its relation to electronic music."[12] These "electronic TV experiments" originated from experiments conducted by Paik in Tokyo between 1963 and 1964 with electrical engineers Shuya Abe and Hideo Uchida.[13] The New School exhibition included examples of the Tokyo experiments, which Paik described in his essay "ELECTRONIC TV & COLOR TV EXPERIMENT":

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Paik went to Cologne and worked at the Electronic Music Studio at West Deutscher Rundfunk (WDR). There he got involved with the Fluxus group and began to work with television. Paik's original statement comes from an essay printed in an invitation for his January 1965 show at the New School for Social Research in New York. A facsimile of the unpublished exhibition brochure is reprinted in Judson Rosebush, ed., *Videa 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik, 1959-1973* (Syracuse: Everson Museum of Art, 1974).

[13] Ibid.

I COLOR TV EXPERIMENT
A Three taperecorders [sic] are added to the convergence-circuit, so that convergence-circuit is modulated over the waves from the taperecorders [sic]…Any black & white image gets random picture. (Point A.B.C. at circuit diagram)
B Three TV cameras are fed to each Kathode [sic] of red, green, blue electro-guns of color picture tube shows three different images of three colors at one time. The brightness of the three images is controlled by the amplitude of three taperecorders [sic] at the reversed phase. (Point E.F.G.)
II BLACK & WHITE TV EXPERIMENT
A The picture is changeable in three ways with hand switches. Upside-Down; Right-Left; Positive Negative.
B The screen can become larger and smaller in vertical and horizontal dimensions separately according to the amplitude of the tape-recorder.
C Horizontal & Vertical deflection of normal TV is changed into the spiral-deflection. Any normal square image is varied into a fan-form. (Special Yoke-ossilator-amplifier [sic] is made for it.)
D A TV screen (negative) in match-box size.
E TV picture is "disturbed" by [a] strong demagnetizer, whose place and rhythm give rich variety.[14]

This excerpt, which appears in Paik's New School for Social Research exhibition brochure, is indicative of the technical writing done by electrical engineers—especially in patent diagrams and descriptions.[15] The excerpt also indicates how Paik altered the electronic circuits of several television monitors in the exhibition and advanced the idea of "experimental television" as an art form. In his "COLOR TV EXPERIMENT" section, for example, Paik fed three video cameras to each cathode-ray gun of a color picture tube so he could show on one monitor "three different images of three colors at one time."[16] To document how this was achieved electronically, he included a circuit board layout in the brochure. The diagram alongside the technical report is not only

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Albeit, patents such as Eric Siegel's Video Abstract Synthesizer (Jun 26, 1973) are more complex and thorough.

[16] Judson Rosebush, ed., *Videa 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik, 1959-1973*.

informative but also revealing. It signifies the artist's need to explain his early television experiments and reveals his use of electrical engineering diagramming to do so.

At this time, Paik thought of the possibilities of experimental television in terms of the manipulation of commercial television sets. This perspective, however, was not exclusive to him. Many others were researching and publishing ways to alter the standard television signal, including Karl Otto Götz, Dan Sandin, Eric Siegel, Skip Sweeney, and Aldo Tambellini. For example, Karl Otto Götz's 1961 essay "Elektronische Malerei und ihre Programmierung" in *Das Kunstwerk* discussed the possibility of feeding computer generated signals into the cathode ray tube. However, this was not possible at the time, as Paik reminds us in his 1965 New School essay. In his 1965 New School essay, Paik explained that even if Götz could get a computer, it would not be fast enough "to send 4 million points in each one 50th second."[17] Even so, Paik's early writings were not concerned with computers in particular but, instead, with the development of new image processing tools (such as video synthesizers) and portable electronic video recording. Paik addressed portable electronic video recording in a flyer promoting a trial preview of his "Electronic Video Recorder," an infamous show held at the Café Au Go Go on October 4 and 11, 1965 (figure 5.1).

In the promotional flyer Paik spoke of his "video-taped electro vision," the cathode-ray tube, and video synthesizing.[18] He proselytized that "as the collage technic [sic] replaced oil-paint, the cathode ray tube will replace the canvas" and "someday

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[17] Ibid.

[18] A facsimile of the promotional flyer/essay is in the exhibition catalogue. Ibid.

artists will work with capacitors, resistors & semi-conductors as they work today with brushes, violins & junk."[19] These proclamations, however, were far from future predictions by Paik, who, already by the spring of 1965, began to realize the potential of experimental television, video and audio synthesizing, and portable electronic videotape recording.

While Paik was advancing television and video as art forms by 1965, other artists, including Vostell, were still creating experimental television projects (e.g., Fluxus Happenings) and writing about them. In fact, several of Vostell's Fluxus Happenings were scripted and subsequently published in *Dé-coll/age Happenings* in 1966.[20] *Dé-coll/age Happenings* also contains a statement about Vostell's *dé-coll/age* happenings (written on September 11, 1965), a postscript to the 1965 statement (1966), found texts from 1964 to 1966, and a number of earlier scripts such as Vostell's *Television Dé-coll/age for Millions* (1959) and a companion "do-it-yourself" *dé-coll/age* script created for the artist's Smolin Gallery opening of "Wolf Vostell & Television Dé-collage & Dé-collage Posters & Comestible Dé-collage" (May 22, 1963) (figure 6.3).

In most of these aforementioned texts, Vostell elaborated on the Fluxus mode of *dé-coll/age*, which he first wrote about in the first issue of *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen*, and established a critical language for thinking about Fluxus Happenings and

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Wolf Vostell, *Dé-coll/age Happenings*, Translated by Laura P. Williams (New York: Something Else Press, 1966). This is a rare book published in limited quantity by Dick Higgin's Something Else Press. It was issued in a wooden case with a plexiglass slipcover and a photo of Vostell affixed to the back inside. It contains a comprehensive collection of instructive texts and artist statements on the practice of *dé-coll/age* and a portfolio of drawings.

deconstructing commercial television sets.[21] For instance, in *Dé-coll/age Happenings*,

the artist reprinted the definition of "*dé-coll/age*" from the 1952 edition of the

Langenscheidt French Dictionary—i.e., to un-paste, tear off, or an airplane ascending—

and, in Fluxus prose, he used the term to describe his *dé-coll/age* happenings in his

September 11 statement.[22] There Vostell explained that his Happenings were "the

inclusion of the total environment in the form of experiences in my work," which, as I

addressed earlier, involved the physical act of deconstructing television.[23] They were, as

Vostell put it, "dé-coll/age happenings" that also offered viewers and participants a new

type of performance-based experience.[24]

In his *Television Dé-coll/age for Millions* script, for example, Vostell wrote that

the event was "planned as a television program in which the televiewers take part to be

performed alone in front of the tv screen in a closed room."[25] In the introduction, the

artist stressed the participatory dimension of the piece, which forces "televiewers" to

"recognize the questionable and absurd influence of communications media on the

masses."[26] Following the introduction, Vostell gave a set of instructions for the reader-

participant:

imagine a maze of possible directions in your room

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[21] These are available at The Gerald and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit and New York.

[22] Wolf Vostell's *Dé-coll/age Happenings*, 90.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Vostell's "dé-coll/age happenings" include *Television Dé-coll/age for Millions* (1959), a "do-it-yourself *dé-coll/age* created for the opening of his 1963 Smolin Gallery exhibition, and *TV begraebnis* (*TV Funeral*), which he performed at the Yam Festival in 1963. Ibid.

[25] Wolf Vostell, *Dé-coll/age Happenings*, 12.

[26] Ibid.

> choose one path for each action
> the program begins without commentary
> it is unclear for three minutes…it can be assumed that millions
> of persons are fumbling with their tv sets trying to get clear
> reception…they don't realize that there is nothing wrong
> with their sets during these three minutes[27]

The text continues to instruct participants to "kiss a person on the screen," "prick yourself with a needle," "feed the television set a tv dinner," and "open up a current magazine and find a whiskey ad [and] tear the bottle out of the ad."[28] By instructing participants to disrupt of the one-way mode of watching television, Vostell reframed the conventional mode of television consumption. He also advanced the idea of "*dé-coll/age*" and experimental television as distinct art practices.

Electromedia, Experiments in Public Broadcast Television, and Television as a Creative Art Form

So far, I have addressed early texts by artists who worked from a neo-avant-garde, interdisciplinary perspective and promoted a particular type of "total-art-experience." As primary source material, this literature provides significant information on an intermedia movement that would help to advance electronic art forms and create discursive spaces for artists interested in using the tools of television. Other literature from this moment, such as Elsa Tambellini's 1967 article "Electromedia: A Movement," covered the development of a similar intermedia movement in North America.[29]

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] The journal *Artscanada* featured this article in "Artscan: Electromedia in Montreal," a column devoted to discussions on new electronic art forms. The article also proclaimed that readers of the column "Artscan: Electromedia in Montreal" would be able to "catch a glimpse of the new concepts behind Electromedia" and read up on the latest ideas coming from the vanguard—including interviews, statements, and tapes by

In "Electromedia: A Movement," Tambellini addressed what she saw was a new

movement in the creative arts—one distinguished by the use of kinetics, electronics, and

light.[30] She called this movement "Electromedia" and characterized works by

electromedia artists as "interweaving media" that "dissolve[ed] old boundaries" and

"expand[ed] new ones."[31] Like Fluxus artists, electromedia artists, who were part of an

expanded field of film, theater, dance, music, painting and sculpture,[32] focused on

subverting conventional forms of art making and manipulated electronic equipment—

such as television sets, projectors, transformers, and amplifiers—in order to promote

electromedia as an art form.[33] Electromedia artists, according to Tambellini, also sought

to stimulate their audience's senses by using electronic devices such as television

monitors and video cameras in their performances.[34] Some of these artists, including

Otto Piene, were introduced to television and video by public broadcast television

initiatives that sought out new forms of experimental television programming. These

initiatives began as early as 1967, when a few public television stations across the United

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artists in the field. Elsa Tambellini, "Electromedia: A Movement," *Artscanada*, no. 114 (November 1967): 3-4.

[30] Ibid. Howard Wise's gallery exhibition "Lights in Orbit" featured this type of work.

[31] Ibid., 4.

[32] Tambellini emphasized the interdisciplinary nature of electromedia and mentioned several artists, including Stan Vanderbeek and Takahiko Imura (film); Ken Dewey (theater); Takeshisa Kosugi (music); Beverlie Schmidt and Mary McKay (dance); and Robert Rauschenberg, Aldo Tambellini, Otto Piene and Jackie Cassen (painting and sculpture). Ibid.

[33] Aldo Tambellini, a principle proponent of the Electromedia movement, proclaimed the rise of electromedia and the dematerialization of the art object. He declared that "Electromedia is our era…We must get to the heart of the medium, to its tube, its filament, its energy…We must produce visions from the stuff which media are made of." Ibid.

[34] Tambellini explained that electromedia environments were enhanced by "instantaneous multiple stimulation and the bombardment of the senses caused by electronic equipment." Ibid.

States began to offer technical and economic resources to artists interested in advancing experimental television as an art form. Some of these resources came in the form of experimental television workshops, which John Margolies discussed in his 1969 article "TV—The Next Medium."

In "TV—The Next Medium," John Margolies discussed public broadcast television's role in promoting the idea of "experimental television" as an art form. Margolies also argued that television at this moment was "clearly ready to be recognized as an educational device and an artistic medium of great influence."[35] He explained that this was because "the generation which has grown up with television and other sophisticated media has evolved a new perception in processing information."[36] Margolies called this "new perception in processing information" the "process-level perception," which he defined as "a new attitude" that "relies more on visual and aural sources than on printed information which imposes longer and more concentrated demands on the attention span."[37] Next, Margolies theorized "the process-level analysis" as "a way of experiencing…*how* one sees rather than *what* one sees" in moving-image works on television and film.[38] Margolies advanced his "process-level analysis" concept further by suggesting that the medium is not the message—that is, "the medium is not an

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[35] John Margolies was a member of the executive committee of the Architectural League of New York. John Margolies, "TV—The Next Medium," *Art in America*, vol. 57, no. 5 (September/October 1969): 48.

[36] Margolies, "TV—The Next Medium," 50.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Margolies referenced the following examples: "happenings, performance and street events; multi-projection films (where the spectator has to choose from any number of simultaneous images in order to determine his[/her] own 'content'); and architecture considered as broad, interdisciplinary design." Ibid. (My emphasis)

end in itself, but is rather a means."[39] It is in this statement that Margolies wanted to

propose "a revision of the concept of 'message' or content."[40] He explained:

> The new content is the traditional content inextricable combined with the medium
> or process. It is an idea along with its means of dissemination in various
> proportions, the end result of which is determined by the audience. The artist's
> intention in his concept does not necessarily matter at this level. This end result
> or content, and value judgments based on this content, can be as diverse as the
> individual members of the audience.[41]

In addition to theorizing a "new perception in processing information" and

experiencing electronic media, Margolies surveyed five types of experimental television

that advanced the idea of "television" as an art form.[42] These types included the

following: (1) television broadcasting (citing *The Medium Is the Medium* as an example);

(2) television and/or video art received in galleries and theaters; (3) television and/or

multimedia performances, such as *Nine Evenings—Theater and Engineering* sponsored

by E.A.T.; (4) television distortion (e.g., Paik's experimental television); and lastly, (5)

television in assemblages, collages, and graphic works (e.g., Tom Wesselman's 1963

collage-assemblages exhibition, which used a series of functioning television monitors

with their vertical and horizontal holds skewed).[43]

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[39] Margolies is referencing Marshall McLuhan's famous statement "the medium is the message." Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., 48-55.

While Margolies argued that during the early 1970s television was "clearly ready to be recognized as an educational device and an artistic medium of great influence,"[44] Robert de Havilland, who was invited to guest edit a special journal issue of *Print* on television in 1972, claimed that the artistic capacity of television had hardly been realized.[45] De Havilland, who specialized in data about television and advertising, along with the editors of the journal, explained that the journal issue sought to show "what could be done with the medium but isn't (except experimentally), and [that] what is begin done but isn't being done in sufficient quantity."[46] Following this message, de Havilland wrote in his editorial that "television has not been invented yet," a conclusion that he derived from a correspondence he had with a writer of an underground newspaper paper.[47] De Havilland noted that he was perplexed by the writer's following question: when was television born (to the exact hour and date).[48] Indeed, the television set owed its conception to Karl Braun's invention of the cathode-ray tube in 1897 and Julius Elster and Hans Geitel's invention of the photoelectric cell in 1905.[49] Vladimir Zworykin also played a central role in the invention of television in 1920, alongside Philo Farnsworth, who filed a television patent in 1927.[50] Nevertheless, de Havilland responded to the

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[44] Ibid., 48.

[45] Robert de Havilland, editor, "Designing For TV," *Print*, vol. 26, no. 1 (January/February 1972).

[46] Ibid.

[47] Robert de Havilland, "Television Has Not Been Invented Yet," *Print*, vol. 26, no. 1 (January/February 1972): 19.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Roy Armes, *On Video* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 58-59.

[50] Ibid.

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writer by asking "what kind of television."[51] The writer replied, "What about television-

television?"[52] De Havilland ended his editorial by noting,

> And so we told our friend, the writer: 'We're sorry. You've called our bluff.
> Television has not been invented yet.' He thought that was amusing. So did we.
> But we're much more serious about the matter now. Because it's *still* true:
> Television has not been invented yet.[53]

De Havilland referred to this anecdote in his editorial to argue that the television

medium had hardly been realized.[54] In arguing that "television had not been invented

yet," the editor explained that "what we have been seeing [on television] are varieties of

video-radio and *video-theater* and *video-movie-product* and even, on some TV screens,

video-publishing."[55] According to de Havilland, though, there were signs that the artistic

potential of television was being advanced, citing examples from Gene Youngblood's

book *Expanded Cinema*.[56] Other contributing writers to the *Print* issue on television,

including the public television producer and director Fred Barzyk, covered other signs

that explored the artistic potential of television.[57]

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[51] Robert de Havilland, "Television Has Not Been Invented Yet," 19.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Fred Barzyk, "TV as Art as TV," *Print*, vol. 26, no. 1 (January/February 1972): 20-29. Other texts include the following: Sheldon Satin's "Learning to Live with and Love the New Technology," 30-33; Rose DeNeve's "Elinor Bunin: Another Opening, Another Show," 42-47; and Michael Shamberg's "Guerrilla Television," 56-61.

In "TV as Art as TV," Barzyk suggested that "the medium that gave us 'Beverly Hillbillies'" could provide the basis of a creative art form and cited a number of examples produced at WGBH-TV, Boston.[58] Barzyk credited the advancement of experimental television programming to artist-in-residence programs at public television stations in San Francisco (KQED), Boston (WBGH), and New York (WNET). Barzyk also noted that the extension of "the proposition of the medium as an art form," fell to "the public broadcastings system, rather than commercial television networks."[59] He explained that the reason,

> of course, is obvious: Costs, [since] Experimental Television, even on a rudimentary basis, doesn't come cheap. A television studio, complete with technicians and crew, costs $4000 a day or more [and] a video synthesizer can run from $15,000 to $30,000.[60]

According to Barzyk, public television stations were able to advance the idea of "experimental television" as a creative art form, because they did not depend on commercial advertising or a sizable viewing audience. He explained:

> As things stand today [the author is referring to the year 1972], commercial networks on the whole refuse to foot multi-digit bills without assurance of a sizable viewing audience. No experimental television program, of course, can offer such assurance. Indeed, they are not intended to do so (although "What's Happening, Mr. Silver?" was an eminently successful series in terms of numbers of viewers). Thus, for the time being, private and governmental funding constitute [sic] the life-source of experimental television, and dedicated radicals serve as its practitioners.[61]

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[58] Ibid., 20.

[59] Ibid., 25.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

Nevertheless, Barzyk was advancing the artistic potential of "experimental television" in the literature as a television producer with institutional insight and specific interests at stake.[62] His concerns, which were major obstacles for individuals interested in experimental television during the early 1970s, included the cost of developing custom-built video synthesizers and producing experimental television programming. Until it became "as cheap to produce a show as it is to Xerox a piece of paper," wrote Barzyk, artists would have to rely of public broadcasting studios and systems.[63] This argument, however, did not take in consideration the alternative television movement, which, by 1970, began to advance the concept of "guerrilla television" in the literature.

The Alternative Television Movement and Guerrilla Television

> *Those of us making our own television know that the medium can be much more than "a radio with a screen" as it is still being used by the networks as they reinforce product oriented and outdated notions of fixed focal point, point of view, subject matter, topic, asserting their own passivity, and ours, giving us feedback information rather than asserting the implicit immediacy of video, immunizing us to the impact of information by asking us to anticipate what already can be anticipated—the nightly dinnertime Vietnam reports to serialized single format shows.*
>
> – Beryl Phyllis and Korot Gershuny[64]

During the early 1970s, several how-to manuals, technical reports, and journal articles covering alternative television practices and documentary style "street tapes" were published. By this period, several video collectives promoting alternative television had also formed. Video collectives, such as Ant Farm (1968-1978), Land Truth Circus

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[62] John Wyver, "Video Art and Television," *Sight and Sound*, vol. 57, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 121.

[63] Fred Barzyk, "TV as Art as TV," 29.

[64] Beryl Korot and Phyllis Gershuny, eds., "The Alternative Television Movement," *Radical Software*, no. 1 (1970).

(1968-1972), Commediation (1968-1969), and the Raindance Corporation (established in 1969), began pooling technical and economic resources, facilitating advances in television and video as tools for social and cultural mobilization, and exchanging ideas in print form. The Raindance Corporation, in particular, helped to compile and disseminate some of these ideas in their large-format journal *Radical Software* (1970-1976).[65]

Influenced by Gregory Bateson, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Buckminster Fuller, Marshall McLuhan, and Norbert Wiener, the producers of *Radical Software* aimed to connect individuals and collectives who had been working with experiments in television, alternative broadcasting, and the videotape medium.[66] In the editorial to their first issue, editors Phyllis Gershuny and Beryl Korot explained that

> some of us…got the idea for an information source which would bring together people who were already making their own television, attempt to turn on others to the idea as a means of social change and exchange, and serve as an introduction to an evolving handbook of technology.[67]

In short, the "information source" featured in *Radical Software* was intended to function as an alternative television forum that promoted social change and exchange—an objective that was clearly indicated in the "feedback" section of *Radical Software's* first issue, "The Alternative Television Movement" (1970) (figure 7.4).

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[65] In a supplementary text from the fifth issue of *Radical Software* (1972), the editors noted that "the first issue appeared in the summer of 1970 and was initially mailed free to about 700 names we'd compiled." By 1972, however, the editors passed on the production and distribution jobs to the Gordon and Breach publishing company. See "The Future of Radical Software," *Radical Software*, no. 5 (1972).

[66] The production team included Phyllis Gershuny, Beryl Korot, Linda Nusser, Ira Schneider, and Michael Shamberg.

[67] Their working title was *The Video Newsletter* before it was replaced by *Radical Software*. The information gathered was acquired from a questionnaire. The questionnaire was included in the first issue. Beryl Korot and Phyllis Gershuny, eds., "The Alternative Television Movement."

In "The Alternative Television Movement" issue, the editors published essays and a "feedback" section from thirty-two groups and individuals.[68] In one "feedback" submission, the Raindance Corporation publicized that they were "setting up a video information network which will be as highly accessible as possible—i.e. Alternative Television: two-way, interactive, [and] decentralized."[69] In another submission, members from the Videofreex advertised that they

> are involved in television technically and artistically, intellectually and emotionally. Technical labors bring us together. We are in a web of video/audio energy flows. We are caught in the act of electronic fucking. And we sure like to fuck. Contact us at 98 Prince Street, NYC.[70]

Like Videofreex's advertisement, most "feedback" entries reflect an interest in sharing information, promoting access to the tools of television, and advertising services. In addition to being "committed to the process of expanding television," the feedback entries also encouraged what the editors hoped would create "exchanges and interconnections necessary to expedite th[e] process [of expanding television]."[71] This included advancing the concept of "guerrilla television" as an expanded form of alternative television production, a concept that Michael Shamberg helped to advance in 1971.

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[68] The first issue included (among other contributions) the following: excerpts of Gene Youngblood's *The Videosphere* and *Video Cassette Image Publishing* and Richard Kahlenberg's *Film and TV Cartridges: A Preliminary State of the Art Report*; Frank Gillette's "Is EVR a Good or Bad Thing?"; Paul Ryan's *Cable Television: The Raw and the Overcooked*; Paik's *Expanded Education for the Paperless Society*; Dorothy Henaut and Bonnie Kline's *In the Hands of Citizens: A Video Report*; and Buckminster Fuller's "Pirated transcription of interview videotaped by Raindance Corporation."

[69] The Raindance Corporation, "Feedback: Raindance Corporation," *Radical Software*, no. 1 (1970): 19.

[70] Videofreex, "Feedback: VIDEOFREEX," *Radical Software*, no. 1 (1970): 19.

[71] To encourage "exchanges and interconnections" among alternative television producers, the editors noted that they created a "symbol of an *x* within a circle," which "is a Xerox mark, the antithesis of copyright, which means *DO* copy." Beryl Korot and Phyllis Gershuny, eds., "The Alternative Television Movement."

In 1971, Michael Shamberg, co-founder of the Raindance Corporation and supporter of alternative television networks favoring decentralized and interactive forms of electronic communication, wrote *Guerrilla Television* (figure 7.5).[72] In *Guerrilla Television*, Shamberg culled the ideas of his colleagues Frank Gillette, Paul Ryan and others associated with the Raindance collective into a two-part handbook: a "meta-manual," which includes a distillation of their ideas about alternative television and videotape, and a "manual," which contains practical information about theory, tools, activist tactics, networking, community video, and cable television (among numerous other topics).[73] Shamberg also explained his use of the term "guerrilla television" in a section he labeled "process notes."

In his "process notes," Shamberg explained the term "'guerrilla' in conjunction with media" was first used (as far as he knew) by Paul Ryan, when he coined the phrase "cybernetic guerrilla warfare."[74] Shamberg wrote that

> [The term] was then picked up in a lame article on alternative television by New York Magazine entitled "The Alternative Media Guerrillas," and subsequently

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[72] The book was designed by the west coast video collective Ant Farm and published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston. The publisher Holt, Rinehart and Winston was one of three companies that made book offers to Shamberg. The other two publishers were Doubleday and Outerbridge. In the "process notes" to his book, Shamberg wrote that the publisher Holt, Rinehart and Winston was able to meet his "specifications that the book be published as quickly as possible and that it sell for as little as possible." Michael Shamberg, "Process Notes," *Guerrilla Television* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971). In an issue of *Radical Software*, Beryl Korot and Phyllis Gershuny noted that the Raindance Corporation "did not have the money to publish and distribute it [i.e. Shamberg's book] ourselves so we chose a straight publisher (Holt, Rinehart and Winston)." For more on their publishing efforts see *Radical Software*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Summer 1971), 27.

[73] For more on this section, see Shamberg's manual contents in *Guerrilla Television* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 3.

[74] From Michael Shamberg's "Process Notes" *Guerrilla Television* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971). The editors of *Radical Software* published an essay by Paul Ryan with the same title in their third issue. See Paul Ryan, "Cybernetic Guerrilla Warfare," *Radical Software*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Spring 1971): 1-2.

was used straight "Guerrilla Television," as a heading on an equally distorting Newsweek article.[75]

A brief discussion of this distorted coverage by popular magazines provided a launching

off point for Shamberg, who deemed it necessary to address the term's genealogy before

defining it as an alternative television practice. Shamberg also wanted the term "guerrilla

television" to serve as a type of bridge between old forms and new ones, as a device "to

lure people from an old context (the political) into our own."[76] By using the term "as a

type of bridge between old forms and new ones" Shamberg could introduce effective

tools for subverting commercial television programming. This included Ryan's concept

of "cybernetic guerrilla warfare."

In his essay "Cybernetic Guerrilla Warfare," Ryan theorized cybernetic guerrilla

warfare as an effective tool for subverting commercial television's one-dimensional,

restrictive, and centralized hold on electronic communication structures. There he argued

that

> Traditional guerrilla activity such as bombings, snipings, and kidnappings complete with manifestos seem like so many ecologically risky short change feedback devices compared with the real possibilities of portable video, maverick data banks, acid metaprogramming, Cable TV, satellites, cybernetic craft industries, and alternative life styles.[77]

Rather than calling for "bombings, snipings, and kidnappings complete with manifestos,"

Ryan proposed cybernetic guerrilla warfare as a more effective alternative television

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Paul Ryan, "Cybernetic Guerrilla Warfare," 1.

practice.[78] According Ryan, guerrilla television advocates could enact social change and

exchange by employing portable video cameras and new systems of communication (i.e.,

unconventional data banks, satellites, cybernetic craft industries, and alternative life

styles). But this required having "the people" fully involved, as Ryan explained:

> Inherent in cybernetic guerrilla warfare is the absolute necessity of having the
> people participate as fully as possible. This can be done in an information
> environment by insisting on ways of feeding back for human advancement rather
> than feeding off people for the sake of concentration of power through capital,
> pseudo mythologies or withheld information.[79]

By insisting on feedback methods for human advancement, instead of feeding off people

for the sake of concentrating power, Ryan defined a different type of guerrilla activity—

one that he and others believed could break the commercial broadcasting system that

benefited only a few.[80] For him, portable video, which he argued is a cybernetic

extension of man,[81] was the most effective tool for subverting commercial television's

one-dimensional, restrictive, and centralized hold on electronic communication

structures.

Like the *Radical Software* publication, *Guerrilla Television* offered constructive

and instructive solutions to what was considered a restrictive, autocratic, and capitalistic

form of communication. The text was intended to be informative, intervening, and

innovative—unlike Abbie Hoffman's text *Steal This Book*, which Shamberg noted had a

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[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid. He wrote, "*Cybernetic guerrilla warfare*…because the tool of portable video is a cybernetic
extension of man and because cybernetic is the only language of intelligence and power that is ecologically
viable."

small subsection titled "Guerrilla Television" that only deals "with one fringe use of the medium (breaking broadcast-TV signals with your own transmitter) and offers no suggestion on how people can build their own support system instead of ripping off others."[82] Instead of "physically subverting systems," or ripping them off, Shamberg and Ryan promoted new "open and non-physical, or process, information tools" that best served artists and engineers interested in developing innovative devices and support systems for alternative television production.[83] These "open and non-physical, or process, information tools," according to Shamberg and Ryan, were advanced by consumer-grade video and half-inch videotape.

The Grammar of Video and Videotape

In addition to inventing a critical language and advancing alternative television practices, alternative television supporters created works that built onto old forms (i.e., broadcast television) new ones (e.g., documentary style "street tapes"). New portable video cameras and half-inch videotape recorders introduced in the late 1960s made this possible and, as artists and scholars started to experiment with this equipment, they also began to write about the grammar of video and videotape. However, as indicated in the December 1968 issue of *Media and Methods*, which featured Paul Ryan's article "Videotape— Thinking About a Medium," it was "difficult to think about the nature of the new medium."[84] Indeed, scholars at this moment had access to literature that defined

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[82] Michael Shamberg, "Process Notes," *Guerrilla Television*.

[83] Ibid.

[84] In the table of contents, the editors inserted a brief passage about Ryan's article. They wrote that "'Videotape—Thinking About a Medium'…fills a long standing need in literature on educational

television, video and videotape.[85] But, as artistic media, television, video and videotape came to signify much more than just a technical process, as Gene Youngblood indicted in his book *Expanded Cinema*.

In *Expanded Cinema*, Youngblood surveyed the ways in which artists, public broadcast television producers, and alternative television supporters used television, video, and videotape to advance "Cathode-Ray Tube Videotronics," "Synaesthetic Videotapes," "Videographic Cinema," and "Closed-Circuit Television and Teledynamic Environments."[86] Artists, public broadcast television producers, and alternative television supporters, according to Youngblood, also developed a unique grammar of video by using "video synthesizing" techniques such as de-beaming, keying and chroma-keying, feedback, videotronic mixing, switching, and editing.[87] The grammar of video and videotape was, however, not exclusive to "video synthesizing," as Paul Ryan showed in "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium"—one of the first articles in a scholarly journal to address videotape as a social medium.[88]

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technology: what is videotape as a medium. Hardly anybody discusses that because it is difficult to think about the nature of the new medium." *Media and Methods*, vol. 5, no. 40 (December 1968).

[85] As I showed in Chapter Two, by 1970, Gene Youngblood and Paul Ryan had already defined these terms in the literature. Paul Ryan, "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium," *Media and Methods*, vol. 5, no. 4 (Dec. 1968): 38; Gene Youngblood, "Part Five: Television as a Creative Medium," *Expanded Cinema* (New York: E. Dutton and Co., 1970), 265-67, 281.

[86] Gene Youngblood, "Part Five: Television as a Creative Medium," 257-344.

[87] Youngblood discussed examples of experimental television and video by public television directors (Fred Barzyk), artists (Tom DeWitt, Allan Kaprow, Les Levine, Loren Sears, among others), and alternative television activists (Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider). Ibid.

[88] In the section titled "Videotape in the Classroom," Ryan argued that "classroom cultures can be revolutionized by VT." Paul Ryan, "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium," *Media and Methods*, vol. 5, no. 4 (Dec. 1968): 40.

In "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium," Ryan posited a number of social scenarios—such as "Participating in Your Own Audience Participation," "Videotaping: Infolding Information," and "Strategies for Schools: Feedback Process"—as a way to promote videotape usage in the classroom.[89] According to Ryan, portable videotape systems had the capacity to change the role of students from one-way consumers of information to two-way problem solvers using feedback structures inherent in video technology.[90] Equipped with new, consumer-grade videotape technology, students could take an active part in the processing and feeding back of information, which Ryan noted, could "be infolded [with videotape] to enrich experience."[91] For Paul Ryan and Marshall McLuhan, the feedback capacity of video made its use in the classroom particularly effective. As others argued, however, the mirror immediacy of the video feedback loop had one major drawback: the ease to which one could engage in narcissistic self-regard. Before concluding his article, though, Ryan argued that "the mythology and the use of mirrors deserves [sic] serious study by the users of videotape" and that such a study would require getting "beyond the gadget lover stage with videotape."[92] A "serious study" would also entail addressing the various characteristics that make up the grammar of video and videotape rather than collapsing the range of possible applications into a one-dimensional mode of "self-worship" or "narcissistic self-regard." George Stoney,

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[89] Ibid., 36-41.

[90] The system includes a camera, a playback/tape recorder, and a television receiver. Ibid., 38.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ryan concluded that "as we grow more willing to contemplate 'what's happening' this [i.e. a closed system of self-regard] need not be the case with videotape." Ryan also noted that McLuhan's chapter on narcissism in *Understanding Media* "is extremely important if we are to get beyond the gadget lover stage with videotape." Ibid., 40-41.

the filmmaker and first director of New York University's Alternative Media Center, published such a study in "Mirror Machine: Videotape and Cable TV."[93]

In "Mirror Machine: Videotape and Cable TV," Stoney discussed the advantages of using half-inch videotape technology to produce community programs such as *Challenge for Change* (1968).[94] Unlike film, videotape's accessibility, immediacy, and relatively cheap cost met Stoney's need for "a faster, cheaper means to do the job."[95] He recalled in one particular instance that

> The other day two of us from New York University's Alternative Media Center making programmes for Cable Television met some…Indians in front of the Museum of Natural History, shot for an hour and looked at our "answer print" on the subway going home. It was played back via the same 3 lb. camera and 18 lb. deck we used to record it. No lab was needed; no synchronization of picture and sound. We edited in the camera.[96]

For Stoney, videotape's accessibility, immediacy, and relatively cheap cost made it an excellent tool for turning television into "a stimulus for action as well as repose."[97] As for those interested in community access television, the ability to broadcast recorded footage in minutes and re-record on the same videotape meant that the public could be actively involved in the process of making tapes.[98] As Stoney acknowledged, however,

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[93] George C. Stoney, "Mirror Machine: Videotape and Cable TV," *Sight and Sound*, vol. 41, no. 1 (Winter 1971/72): 9-11.

[94] Stoney noted that he was first introduced to half-inch videotape at the National Film Board of Canada, while working as a guest Executive Producer for the television program *Challenge for Change*. The television program was designed to use film and portable videotape systems as catalysts for promoting social change within communities. Ibid., 9.

[95] Stoney was persuaded that videotape could lower production costs for *Challenge for Change*. Ibid.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid., 9 and 11.

[98] Ibid., 9.

in some instances, video's "facility for instant feedback has stretched the possibilities for self-worship far beyond innocent distractions known to Narcissus."[99] While Stoney was addressing the pornographic market in particular, some scholars have argued that video artworks of artists performing in front of the camera also represent a kind of narcissistic looking.

In "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," for instance, Rosalind Krauss argued that Vito Acconci's *Centers* (1971) (figure 7.6) demonstrates an instance of narcissistic self-regard, which she noted is "so endemic to works of video" that she found herself "wanting to generalize it as *the* condition of the entire genre."[100] In *Centers*, Acconci recorded himself pointing directly at the camera lens.[101] For Krauss, Acconci's gesture (which is maintained for the entire length of the work) signifies a "sustained tautology": a line of sight that commences at the artist's plane of vision and ends at the eyes of his mirror image, which is projected on a television receiver.[102] The tautological nature of *Centers*, as Krauss indicated, "typifies the structural characteristics of the video medium" and, as a result, demonstrates Acconci's use of the monitor as a mirror.[103] According to Krauss, what makes Acconci's gesture narcissistic is the psychological shift that forces the voyeur—in this case, the artist himself—to "withdraw attention from an external object—an Other [or a recorded, physical instance of self-regard]—and invest it in the

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[99] Ibid.

[100] Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," *October*, vol. 1 (Spring 1976): 50.

[101] The record documents the original site of the performance.

[102] Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," 50.

[103] Krauss wrote that the monitor "re-projects the performer's image with the immediacy of a mirror." Ibid., 50, 52.

Self [or the psychological condition of looking at oneself]."[104] In other words, the

condition of self-reflexivity, which points back to the object in modernist art, now points

to the central subject of video, the *artist-practitioner*, and the psychological condition of

the medium, *narcissism*.

Yet, Krauss's argument generalizes the grammar of video, because works such as

Centers call attention to other conditions experienced by the artist and viewer. For

instance, Acconci wrote that the documented performance of *Centers* "turns the activity

around…a pointing away from myself, at an outside viewer—I end up widening my

focus on to passing viewers (I'm looking straight out by looking straight in[to the camera

lens])."[105] In this regard, Krauss's argument fails to address one of the fundamental

reasons for Acconci's sustained gesture. On the one hand, the gesture is said to be an

overt recognition of the artist looking and pointing at his projected double: a self-regard,

which demonstrates Acconci's conceptual use of the pixilated screen as a mirror. On the

other, the gesture acknowledges that the video loop is comprised of physical barriers

inherent in the technology. Thus, while Acconci attempts to draw the viewer into the art

process—the video loop—he anticipates people watching him point straight out of the

monitor by pointing straight into the camera lens. It is this type of sustained action that is

paradigmatic of the psychological condition of Acconci's video performances.[106] In this

regard, emphasis shifts to social issues of interaction: first, he wants his viewers to

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[104] Ibid., 57.

[105] Vito Acconci quoted by Lori Zippay in *Electronic Arts Intermix: Video* (New York: Electronic Arts Intermix, 1991), 12.

[106] These include *Centers* (1971), *Theme Song* (1973), *Undertone* (1972), among others.

recognize the video loop process through an instance of perceived self-referentiality; and, second, his gesture acknowledges the lens and screen as physical boundaries.[107]

I bring up this debate for three reasons. First, that video artworks of artists performing in front of video cameras demonstrate narcissistic self-regard, which was for Krauss "so endemic to works of video" that she found herself "wanting to generalize it as *the* condition of the entire genre," belies the idea that such works involve other socio-spatial conditions that have nothing to do with falling in love with one's mirror image.[108] Second, the argument that the psychological condition of video is narcissism could predetermine the meaning of video art performances that feature the subject looking into the camera lens, even when they are engaged in complex spatial interactions and/or interrogations that are not representative of narcissistic self-regard. Lastly, the argument problematizes the range of possible applications of video feedback and videotape that Paul Ryan, Marshall McLuhan, George Stoney and others were promoting in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Nevertheless, while scholars, artists, and curators were cognizant of the narcissism argument, most believed that portable video cameras and half-inch videotape recorders could be used to create new socio-spatial conditions and experiences

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[107] Acconci is able to control the mechanics of viewing. Also, there are two modes with which Acconci's video presentations operate: (1) the site of the live performance and (2) the documented performance, which is archived by a videotape camera for subsequent viewing. These two important sites should be considered while thinking about *Centers*.

[108] While Krauss acknowledged that there are "three phenomena within the corpus of video art which run counter to what" she was arguing, "or at least are somewhat tangential to it," she still worked in the concept of narcissism. The three examples that she gave are: "1) tapes that exploit the medium in order to criticize it from within [e.g., Richard Serra's *Boomerang*]; 2) tapes that represent a physical assault on the video mechanism in order to break out of its psychological hold [e.g., Joan Jonas's *Vertical Roll*]; and 3) installation forms of video which use the medium as a sub-species of painting or sculpture [e.g., Peter Campus's two companion pieces *mem* and *dor*]." Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," 50, 59.

without involving narcissistic tendencies.[109] This is evidenced the 1973 "Video Art"

issue of *Artscanada*.

> The editors of *Artscanada* framed the special issue on "Video Art" by stating:

> We did not conceive of the issue as an historical survey of work in this medium
> since its first burgeoning in 1967 nor as a comprehensive analysis of its current
> florescence. What we wish to do was to present, with essential focus on Canada,
> a cross section of activities, an open-ended discussion of the aesthetics and
> politics of video, and the challenge that video art offers to broadcast television.[110]

Instead of offering a historical survey of video art "since its first burgeoning in 1967" or

"a comprehensive analysis of its current florescence," the journal's contributors

published texts on the evolving grammar of video, a cross section of activities from

Canada, Japan, and the United States, and the challenges video art posed to commercial

television programming.[111] The first article, Robert Arn's "The Form and Sense of

Video," addressed the formal properties of video as an art form and the evolving

grammar of video.

> In "The Form and Sense of Video," Robert Arn opened by establishing the

following important distinctions:

> Television is no more like film than Punch and Judy is like theater. Sadly,
> broadcast television presents us with the spectacle of Punch dropping his brickbat
> and delivering Hamlet's soliloquy. No wonder the audience turns away in

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[109] For instance, Paul Ryan promoted the use of video feedback in the classroom and Kas Kalba addressed the notion that "video environments" could raise electronic consciousness, engage two-way participation and feedback and, thus, democratize video as a medium. Ryan, Paul, "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium," *Media and Methods*, vol. 5, no. 4 (December 1968): 36-41; Kas Kalba, "The Video Implosion: Models for Reinventing Television," *The Electronic Box Office, Humanities and the Arts on the Cable*, Edited by Richard Adler and Walter S. Bau (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 94.

[110] From the editorial in "the Issue of Video Art," *Artscanada*, vol. 30, no. 4 (October 1973).

[111] Ibid.

boredom. Each art has its own formal necessities which it ignores at peril. Film was boring while it imitated the conventions of the proscenium arch stage; and television remains trivial while it imitates film. Artists and innovators signal their break with such trivial use of television by calling their uses "video." Video rejects the conventions of both film and broadcast television and attempts to discover the unique formal necessities of its electronic processes. Video is finding the conventions suitable to such necessities; and we now have an electronic visual art form to complement electronic music—Video Art.[112]

In this passage, Arn referred to a particular type of art video that explored the formal properties of "video" through "feedback" and "synthesis." It is this type of "video" that Arn was referencing when he wrote, "video rejects the conventions of both film and broadcast television and attempts to discover the unique formal necessities of its electronic processes."[113] Existing formal descriptions of film, according to Arn, were not suitable for reaching an adequate formal description of video (or television) as an art form.[114] Arn argued that "the responses we bring to film are inadequate and deceptive in relation to video" and, if one is to examine in depth the formal properties of video, then one has to address its space/time mechanics instead.[115] Arn addressed video's space/time mechanics in a subsection to his article, titled "One dot only: the space/time mechanics of video."

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[112] Robert Arn, "The Form and Sense of Video," *Artscanada*, vol. 30, no. 4 (October 1973): 15.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Arn gave the following example: "…for a long time I thought that the apparent clumsy editing of video pieces was a mere function of the mechanical difficulties of editing with existing equipment. The low-cost ½" and 1" tape recording equipment used by most artists does display its instability particularly in editing. But I now suspect that I have been applying expectations derived from film, where spatial graphic continuity determines editing, to video whose space/time structure makes such criteria meaningless." Ibid., 16-17.

In "One dot only: the space/time mechanics of video," Arn addressed video's space/time mechanics in order to present a "functional formal description" of video. According to Arn, a "functional formal description" of video "must deal with what *is* actually there from moment to moment," which he argued is not the resulting picture one sees on a screen but, instead, the *dot*—or "a phosphorescent trace left by an electronic beam hitting the phosphor covered surface of the tube."[116] To explain the difference between the space/time mechanics of film and video, Arn likened film to press printing and video to the act of typing on a typewriter. In film, as in press printing, the information is impressed (or registered) simultaneously whereas, in video, as with the process of typing, each bit of information (or "dot") is registered sequentially from left to right.[117] This differentiation enabled Arn to offer a "functional formal description" of video and to define "feedback" and "synthesis" as video art techniques. "Feedback," Arn explained, is "a balance of purely electronic forces below the threshold of perception."[118] It is what results when a camera pointed a television screen feeds the image back into the same display—a process known as a video loop.[119] Image synthesis, on the other hand, is specific to a branch of video that is "achieved by manipulating the basic electronic forces

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[116] For more on the space/time mechanics of video see Arn's subsection "One dot only: the space/time mechanics of video." Ibid., 19.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid., 21.

[119] Feedback imagery is constructed by altering the position of the camera and changing the focus on the lens.

at work in video cameras and displays."[120] These basic forces are not tangible forms but, instead, electronic units of energy.[121]

According to Arn, the manipulation of "electronic units of energy" in early television and video art involved two modes of production: (1) "direct synthesis," which creates distorted patterns by a direct alteration of time without the use of external inputs; and (2) "indirect synthesis" or "image-buffered synthesis," which modulates input from an outside source.[122] In direct synthesis, machines are used to switch the electronic beam intensity in varying time intervals in order to create basic geometric patterns on the television screen, as seen in Stephen Beck's *Video Weavings* (1976) (figure 7.7).[123] In indirect synthesis, video synthesizers equipped with deflection amplifiers (such as the Rutt-Etra Scan Processor) are used to modulate the picture size, shape, tonal structure, and spatial distortion, as evidenced in Woody Vasulka's *C-Trend* (1974) (figure 7.8).[124]

For Arn, these two modes of production—"direct synthesis" and "indirect synthesis"—advanced the idea of "video" as an art form at a time when many artists and scholars were still writing about the grammar of the video image. Eric Cameron was among those who continued to write about the grammar of the video image.

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[120] Robert Arn, "The Form and Sense of Video," 21.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid.

In 1974, the editors of *Arts Magazine* invited Gregory Battcock to guest edit a

special "Video Issue." The "Video Issue" included Eric Cameron's "The Grammar of the

Video Image," which, unlike Arn's article "The Form and Sense of Video," focused on

artworks that explored "the structure of video-recording."[125] Using videotapes produced

by students and faculty of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design as examples, Cameron

discussed the inextricably link between the "grammar of the video image" and the

mechanical process of video-recording.[126] Cameron explains,

> The only actual movement in videotape is that of the tape through the machine
> and of the resulting light impulses across the screen, and the only time is the time
> it takes these things to happen. The time of the subject, like its form, is an
> illusion, and likewise admits of both misinterpretation and manipulation.[127]

As Cameron suggests, the "grammar of the video image" is bound to the process of

videotape moving through a video-recording machine in real-time. The language of

videotape, on the other hand, communicates action or a movement that "is subject to the

perspective of the camera," whereas "the time of the subject"—or the time of the video

image—is an illusion on the television screen.[128] However, as David Ross reminds us in

the same journal issue, the "grammar of the video image" at this time was also dependent

on "a set of activities involving a specific technology directed primarily towards the

manipulation of ideas."[129] Such activities included video synthesizing, which enabled

Nam June Paik and John Godfrey to create *Global Groove* (1973) (figure 7.9). These

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[125] Eric Cameron, "The Grammar of the Video Image," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 49, no. 4 (December 1974): 49.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., 50.

[128] Ibid., 49.

[129] David Ross, "Douglas Davis: Video Against Video," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 49, no. 4 (December 1974): 60.

activities, as I will show, were constantly expanding the field of video and, consequently, the categories of video art.

Categories of Video Art and the Distinctive Features of Artists' Video

In the early 1970s, artists, scholars, and curators began to categorize the proliferation of video art practices. In "Video Is Being Invented," for example, Bruce Kurtz categorized video art as videotapes seen on a television monitor, video environments as art, and video taped documentaries.[130] Gregory Battcock, on the other hand, wrote in "Explorations in Video" that the "various explorations into the mechanics, aesthetic and process of video…will lead to the establishment of new video *genre*."[131] In both texts, Battcock and Kurtz acknowledged that they only addressed a fraction of the video art practices from this period.[132] Battcock, however, recognized that the field of video could be "broken down [further] into numerous *genre*."[133] Battcock explained that

> it has become apparent that the broad field of video has already broken down into numerous *genre*, just as, in painting say, *genre* serve as convenient categories. And, as in painting, the video *genre* are constantly changing and shifting their boundaries. There are *mini-genre* which are *genre* within *genre* and there are fluid *genre* which are definable at one moment and become elusive the next. We find that the new, expanding field of cinema/video (for who, at this stage, can separate the two?) is bursting out into a wide range of *genre*.[134]

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[130] Kurtz's title is based on Robert de Havilland's 1972 editorial "Television Has Not Been Invented Yet." Robert de Havilland, editor, "Designing For TV," *Print*, vol. 26, no. 1 (January/February 1972); Bruce Kurtz, "Video is Being Invented," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 47 (December/January 1972-1973): 37, 43 and 44.

[131] Gregory Battcock, "Explorations in Video," *Art and Artists*, vol. 7 (February 1973): 22.

[132] Gregory Battcock, "Explorations in Video," 26; Kurtz, "Video is Being Invented," 44.

[133] Battcock also understood that identifying what he termed "the new cinema/video *genre*" was "a risky venture." Gregory Battcock, "Explorations in Video," 22.

[134] Ibid.

Battcock understood that "the broad field of video" was constantly changing the criteria for what constituted "video art." His discussion of the "various explorations into the mechanics, aesthetic and process of video"[135] took this in consideration and, for the first time, "video art" was theorized as an expanding field with many genres.[136] This field and its genres, according to David Antin, were constantly developing in the 1970s, as artists explored the distinctive features of video.

Before addressing the distinctive features of video, Antin questioned the signification of the term "video art" in his article "Video: The Distinctive Features of the Medium":

> VIDEO ART. The name is equivocal. A good name. It leaves open all the questions and asks them anyways. Is this an art form, a new genre? An anthology of valued activity conducted in a particular arena defined by display on a cathode ray tube? The kind of video made by a special class of people—artists—whose works are exhibited primarily in what is called "the art world"—ARTISTS' VIDEO?[137]

That Antin considered the term "video art" equivocal at this moment is no surprise. As a burgeoning field, its definition remained unfixed as technological advancements, innovative applications, and different institutional approaches were introduced to the published record. Antin was aware that the field of video was developing. Therefore,

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[135] Ibid.

[136] In his conclusion, Battcock used the term "video art." Also, Battcock's address of the expanding field of video predates most historical perspectives on video art by almost a decade. Historical perspectives on video art were not published until the early 1980s. Until then, the literature continued to address the distinctive features of video, the proliferation of video art practices and activities, and the concept of "Video Art." This literature included David Antin's "Video: The Distinctive Features of the Medium," Jeff Perrone's "The Ins and Outs of Video," and Jonathon Price's "Video Art: A Medium Discovering Itself." Ibid., 26.

[137] David Antin, "Video: The Distinctive Features of the Medium," *Video Art*, Edited by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 174.

rather than addressing the term "video art" directly, Antin discussed the distinctive features of artists' video and the unique properties of video as an art form in two sections of his essay.[138]

In the first section, Antin addressed a type of "video" activism influenced by communication theory and "McLuhanesque media talk." In the second section, he examined the unique properties of art video. Antin argued that artists explored the unique properties of art video in order to create works distinct from commercial television programming.[139] These properties included the condition of being boring or long, which, according to Antin, were not value judgments made in comparison with paintings or sculpture but, instead, with commercial television programming and its standard of time.[140] This standard of time, as Antin argued, was based on "the social and economic nature of the industry itself, and ha[d] nothing whatever to do with the absolute technical and phenomenological possibilities of visual representation by the cathode ray tube."[141] Therefore, as a commodity in the service of the commercial television industry, the standard of time established a television programming standard, which, contrary to artists' video, was not seen as "boring" or "long." These properties, which were unique to art video, were produced by consumer-grade video and half-inch videotape technology. As Antin pointed out, though, artists had to wait for this technology to be introduced to the consumer market.

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[138] Antin originally wrote the essay for the exhibition catalogue to *Video Art*, an exhibition organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia. His discussion involved the works in that exhibition. Ibid.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid., 178.

[141] Ibid.

Because the electronic industry was tailoring technological advances to fit the needs of the commercial television industry, artists had to wait for the electronic industry to expand its market into special institutional and consumer domains.[142] This occurred when relatively inexpensive portable video cameras and half-inch videotape recorders were introduced to consumers in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Consumer-grade video equipment, as Antin explained, helped artists to develop the distinctive features of art video. Unlike commercial television editing equipment, however, artists who used half-inch video equipment had to contend with crude and restrictive editing features. Antin explained that in video editing

> If you want to place once sequence of images right after another that you've already recorded onto the second tape, you have to join the front edge of the first new frame to the final edge of the other, which means that motors of both machines have to be synchronized to the thirtieth of a second and that there must be a way of reading off each frame edge to assure that the two recorded sequences are in phase with each other. Half-inch equipment is not designed to do this, and the alignment of frame edge with frame edge is a matter of accident.[143]

Therefore, a seamless alignment of a specific frame edge with another in half-inch videotape technology is almost impossible. The frame edges do not meet up seamlessly and, as a result, the edited videotape is marked with a noticeable "momentary breakup or instability of the image."[144] This distinctive feature of art video is another characteristic

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[142] Ibid., 178, 181.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

that Antin distinguished as homemade, cheap, direct, and honest, which, according to Jeff

Perrone, was "a sign of honesty."[145]

In "The Ins and Outs of Video," Perrone wrote that the "momentary breakup or

instability of the [video] image" in half-inch video editing was "a sign of honesty,"[146]

where the illusion of the seamless television image is interrupted by noticeable edits and

the general understanding of the language of television is challenged. Like Antin,

Perrone was also interested in isolating the distinctive features of artists' video. Unlike

Antin, however, Perrone argued that art video was "confronted with the need to define

immediately its individual, inherent characteristics."[147] "With Cage on one side, and

Greenbergism on the other," Perrone wrote, "video started out on its road toward a self-

inflicted definition."[148] Perrone explained:

> The determinism of formalism, which wreaked havoc with painting, driving it
> into continually more limited realms of internal problem-solving, dictated video's
> history, but in a very backhanded way. Teaching that the only important things
> about an art form were its "parameters," what separated this art form from that
> one, what it deemed it "essential," modernist thought cornered video into an
> incredibly early self-consciousness about its essence.[149]

Even so, artists explored video's inherent properties—a process that Perrone likened to

Greenbergian formalism—and, by doing so, developed a unique category of "video

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[145] David Antin, "Video: The Distinctive Features of the Medium," 174; Jeff Perrone, "The Ins and Outs of Video," *Artforum*, vol. 14, no. 10 (June 1976): 53.

[146] Jeff Perrone, "The Ins and Outs of Video," 53.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Ibid.

art."[150] These inherent properties of art video included low-definition quality, crude edits, grainy close ups, feedback, and poor contrast ratios. They were, as Jonathan Price noted in "Video Art: A Medium Discovering Itself," what helped artists to create original work and writers to draw important distinctions.[151]

In "Video Art: A Medium Discovering Itself," Price wrote that "video is video is video"; it is not film or conventional television, but television equipment doing what it does best in the hands of artists.[152] In addition to maximizing the expressive potential of video and exploring the inherent properties of video, artists were, according to Price, doing "more than any other group to define exactly what the medium d[id] best, and they…carried this research far beyond mere experiment to produce a 'second generation' of tapes and performances that prove[d] that video [wa]s a medium worthy of art."[153] By the late 1970s, however, video's legitimacy as a viable art form was no longer the subject of discussion. Artists, curators, and scholars now addressed the broad-based development and history of "Video Art."

Histories and Genres of Video Art

In the 1980s, artists, curators, and scholars—including John Hanhardt, Barbara London, Paul Ryan, Christine Tamblyn, and Lorraine Zippay—began writing historical perspectives on "Video Art." In "Independent Video: the First Fifteen Years," for

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[150] Perrone wrote that "art video had its eye on art history, because it was, above all, trying to convince us that it was really art." Ibid.

[151] Jonathon Price, "Video Art: A Medium Discovering Itself," *Artnews*, vol. 76, no. 1 (January 1977): 41.

[152] Ibid.

[153] Ibid.

example, Barbara London surveyed the broad-based development of video as an artistic medium and claimed that "during the '70s the nature of video activity changed, along with work in other mediums."[154] Before covering this broad-based development, however, London acknowledged that the term "video art" was an inadequate signifier. She wrote that

> From the beginning, there has been great diversity in video art. Because video has been consistently related to the other disciplines (painting, sculpture, photography, film, music, and literature), video genres and their terminology have tended to evolve from these traditional forms. Thus video works have been categorized as conceptual or idea-oriented, perceptual, narrative, autobiographical, performance, graphic, or documentary. While today these categories are not necessarily appropriate or even adequate, they will be used until they are replaced by terms more specifically suited to the medium.[155]

Instead of addressing what she saw were inadequate categories of "Video Art," London surveyed the broad-based development of video as an artistic medium and the major contributions made by pioneers in the field—such as Fred Barzyk, Douglas Davis, Nam June Paik, Paul Ryan, and Steina and Woody Vasulka. London also discussed technological advancements, institutional contributions, and notable exhibitions during the first fifteen years (1965-1980) and, by doing so, offered one of the first histories of video as an art form from a variety of perspectives.

Museum curator John Hanhardt also began to address the history of "Video Art" in his 1982 article "Video/Television: Expanded Forms." Taking a different approach than London, Hanhardt focused on the emergence of video art and its development into

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[154] London explained that the term "'video' signifies the medium—the cameras, videotape recording, and editing devices" and "'Television' is used to signify the industry surrounding the broadcasting and cablecasting of live, videotaped, or film materials during transmission." Barbara London, "Independent Video: the First Fifteen Years," *Artforum*, vol. 19, no. 9 (September 1980): 39.

[155] Ibid.

"expanded, multi-media forms." [156] Hanhardt wrote that the future of these "expanded, multi-media forms" dependent not only on advances "in the cathode ray tube of today's television set" but also on new screen surfaces and projection methods that changed exhibition and home viewing spaces.[157]

Hanhardt's analysis of video as an art form and its incorporation into expanded, multi-media installations, environments, and activities marked a significant shift in the way scholars and curators thought about the discursive field in the 1980s. The concept of "expanded art forms," however, was not new to the published record. In 1967, for instance, Elsa Tambellini wrote that Electromedia art was "dissolving old boundaries and expanding new ones."[158] In 1970, Gene Youngblood wrote that experimental television and video artworks expanded cinematic practices and, in 1973, Gregory Battcock wrote that the various types of video activities lead to an "expanding field of cinema/video."[159] Hanhardt's theorization of the discursive field, on the other hand, problematized the concurrent conceptualization of "video art" as a category and offered a more adequate classificatory structure for thinking about television and video as expanded art forms.

During the 1980s, artists, curators, and scholars identified some of these expanded art forms as "genres" of video art. For example, Sherry Miller Hocking defined image-

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[156] John G. Hanhardt, "Video/Television: Expanded Forms," *Video 80*, no. 5 (1982): 44, 46. Also see John G. Hanhardt, "Video Art: Expanded Forms, Notes Towards a History," *Het Lumineuze Beeld. The Luminous Image*, Edited by Dorine Mignot (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1984).

[157] Ibid., 46.

[158] Elsa Tambellini, "Electromedia: A Movement," 3-4.

[159] Gregory Battcock, "Explorations in Video," 22.

processed video as a genre of video art in 1982.[160] One year later, Lucinda Furlong wrote

two case studies on the development of image-processed video as an art form.[161] These

case studies were the basis for Furlong's 1985 article "Tracking Video Art: 'Image

Processing' as a Genre," which Sara Hornbacher included in "Video: The Reflexive

Medium," *Art Journal's* first issue on video art.[162] Hornbacher, who edited the video art

issue of *Art Journal*, included London's article as a way "to suggest [part of the] the

scope of video art's brief history and to isolate particular theoretical issues, without

recourse to a totalizing principle."[163]

Historicizing video art "without recourse to a totalizing principle,"[164] however,

was (and still is) a challenge for historians. This is because, as Martha Rosler reminds us

in "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment,"

> Video's past is the ground not so much of history as of myth. We can all recite
> together like a litany the "facts" underlying the development of video art. Some
> look to the substantive use of a television set or sets in altered or damaged form in
> art settings in the late 1950s or early 1960s. Others prefer the sudden availability
> of the Sony Portapak in the mid-60s, or the push supplied by Rockefeller capital
> to artists' use of this new scaled-down technology.[165]

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[160] Sherry Miller, "Electronic Video Image Processing: Notes toward a Definition," *Exposure*, vol. 21, no. 1 (1983): 22.

[161] Lucinda Furlong, "Notes toward a History of Image-processed Video: Eric Siegel, Stephen Beck, Dan Sandin, Steve Rutt, Bill and Louise Etra," *Afterimage*, vol. 11, nos. 1-2 (1983): 35-38; Lucinda Furlong, "Notes toward a History of Image-processed Video: Steina and Woody Vasulka," *Afterimage*, vol. 11, no. 5 (1983): 12-17.

[162] Lucinda Furlong, "Tracking Video Art: 'Image Processing' as a Genre," *Art Journal*, vol. 45, no. 3 (1985): 233-237.

[163] Sara Hornbacher, ed., "Video: The Reflexive Medium," *Art Journal*, vol. 45, no. 3 (Autumn 1985).

[164] Ibid.

[165] Martha Rosler, "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment," *Block*, no. 11 (1985/1986): 42.

According to Rosler, a more adequate history of video needed to be written.[166] As Rosler

indicated, though, some deeply seeded myths about video art needed to be addressed

before such a history could be written.[167] Such myths included the idea that Nam June

Paik "laid all the groundwork, touched every base, in freeing *video* from the domination

of corporate TV"[168] or the notion that artists democratized television and video by using

portable videotape cameras as two-way communicative devices. Indeed, McLuhanesque-

inspired discourse and individual contributions to the field have a special place in video's

history. Yet, as Rosler hinted, the institutionalization of "video art" by galleries and

museums has shown that there was a history far richer than any myth-base perspective

given during the 1980s.[169] Other sources that substantiated this claim included Christine

Tamblyn's "Video Art: An Historical Sketch" and Roy Armes's *On Video*.[170] These texts

demonstrated, as Gregory Battcock mentioned fifteen years prior to Armes's exhaustive

history, video's flexibility as a medium and "its continual technological development

[which made] it increasingly difficult to pin down a fixed identity."[171]

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[166] Rosler wrote that "the consensus appears to be that there is a history of video to be written—and soon." Ibid.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid., 36.

[169] Rosler cited the following genres: "documentary, personal, travelogue, abstract-formal, image-processed—and now those horrors, dance and landscape (and music) video." Ibid., 39.

[170] In "Video Art: An Historical Sketch," Tamblyn wrote that video installations extended sculptural formats, live and pre-recorded video performance, and image-processed video art. Roy Armes, on the other hand, wrote about the relationship between video technology and society and explored the connection between production and communication. Christine Tamblyn, "Video Art: An Historical Sketch," *High Performance*, no. 37 (1987): 34; Roy Armes, *On Video* (New York: Routledge, 1988).

[171] From Roy Armes's "Introduction: The Need for a New Perspective," *On Video* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 1. Battcock wrote that contextualizing "the new cinema/video *genre*" was "a risky venture" because the field was constantly developing and changing. Gregory Battcock, "Explorations in Video," *Art and Artists*, vol. 7 (February 1973): 22.

Pinning down video art's fixed identity was also difficult because there were a variety of institutional viewpoints that covered its history. A case in point is John Wyver's 1988 article "Video Art and Television," which, from the point of view of a television producer, examined public broadcast television's role in advancing video art during the 1980s.[172] Yet, as I noted in Chapter Two, Wyver admitted that his discussion was shaped by a personal bias that underpins the institutional perspective from which his article addresses twenty years of "intense experiment[ation] and exploration into the potential of the cathode ray tube."[173] Wyver also admitted that his article referred mostly to white men, even though there were "enormously rich currents of works by feminist artists, and by African and Asian image-makers, both in this country [the United States of America] and abroad."[174]

During the 1990s and the 2000s, a number of broad historical perspectives, which covered some of these rich currents on video art, were published. These included curatorial studies, such as David Dunn's *Eigenwelt der Apparatewelt: Pioniere der Electronischen Kunst* and Chris Hill's *Rewind: Video Art and Alternative Media in the United States 1986-1980*, and historical surveys, such as Michael Rush's 2003 book

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[172] Wyver also addressed practices developing on a global scale, surveying examples from the United States, Germany, France, Scotland, and the Netherlands. John Wyver, "Video Art and Television," *Sight and Sound*, vol. 57, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 116-121.

[173] Wyver admitted that this bias is "a personal prejudice" only concerned with videotapes created and exhibited in the United States. He noted "it also reflects the greater support which video has enjoyed from funders and from museums there over the past twenty years." Ibid., 116, 121.

[174] For examples see Martha Gever, "Video Politics: Early Feminist Projects," *Afterimage*, vol. 11, nos. 1/2 (Summer 1983): 25-27; Martha Gever, "The Feminism Factor: Video and Its Relationship to Feminism," *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, Edited by Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (New York: Aperture in Association with the Bay Area Coalition, 1990), 226-241; and Coco Fusco, "Ethnicity, Politics, and Poetics: Latinos and Media Art," *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, Edited by Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (New York: Aperture in Association with the Bay Area Coalition, 1990), 304-316. Ibid.

Video Art.[175] Indeed, historical surveys such as Rush's book are informative. As evidenced in *Video Art*, however, a critical analysis of the concept of "video art," which would provide a productive conceptual framework for thinking about video and electronic media as heterogeneous, dispersed and institutionally variable, is lacking. What is given in its place is a chronological, linear, and artist-based overview of "Video Art" from 1965 to the present.

Nevertheless, when I began writing this dissertation Rush's text was one of the first book-length projects to address the history of "Video Art." Since then, several books on the history of video art practices have been published. Two examples include Catherine Elwes's *Video Art, A Guided Tour* (2005) and Yvonne Spielmann's *Video: the Reflexive Medium* (2008). In the former, Elwes offered "a guided tour of the [video] medium," which she proffered as "an appropriate travelling companion to the reader's own discovery of video art."[176] While still generalizing the concept of "Video art," Elwes's "guided tour" does acknowledge video's proliferation into various sub-types— such as feminist narratives, explorations into sexual identity, and socio-political mobilizations.

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[175] David Dunn, ed., *Eigenwelt der Apparatewelt: Pioniere der Electronischen Kunst* (New Mexico: The Vasulkas Inc., 1992); Chris Hill, "Attention! Production! Audience!: Performing Video in its First Decade, 1968-1980," *Surveying the First Decade: Video Art and Alternative Media in the U.S*, edited by Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (Chicago: Video Data Bank, 1995), 5-36.; and Michael Rush, *Video Art* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003).

[176] Catherine Elwes, *Video Art, A Guided Tour* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2005), 1.

Alternatively, Yvonne Spielmann's book *Video: the Reflexive Medium* addresses video as a reflexive, electronic medium with distinctive features. "Video," Spielmann wrote,

> is an electronic medium. This means its origin depends on the electronic transfer of signals. Video consists of signals that are kept in constant movement. Video signals are generated inside a camera and can circulate between recording and reproduction equipment (closed circuit). They can be variously modified by processors and keyers and transmitted both auditively and visually. Video is the first audiovisual medium that, in contrast to film, does not generate images as a unit and does not display the materiality of a film strip, which makes use of one track for images and one for sound. Thus differentiated, the electronic signal processing realizes—in recording, transmitting, and projecting—unstable states of pictoriality, which are variable in terms of their scale, form, directionality, and dimensionality. In addition, the audiovisual idiosyncracy of video consists in the fact that sound signals, which may have been generated by an audio synthesizer, are transformed into image signals so that audio signals govern the way video looks and, vice versa, the information contained in the video signals can be broadcast visually and audibly at the same time. The way the electronic signals are processed and transformed alternately into audio and video denotes the media-technical conditions for realizing a medium, whose forms of display derive directly from these electronic signal processes.[177]

Spielmann's thorough definition of video here informs her historical perspective, which she lays out in three parts. In the first part of her book, Spielmann addressed the specificity of art video in relation to film, television, and new media. In the second part, Spielmann discussed the reflexive processes in video and investigated "how the articulation of the electronic vocabulary and the institutional establishment came about" in what she categorized as five historical groupings: an experimental phase, guerrilla television, artistic video, experimental video, and video cultures.[178] The direction of the book shifts in the third section. Like many historical perspectives from this period, the third section offers several case studies of artists' video with headings such as

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[177] Yvonne Spielmann, *Video: The Reflexive Medium*, Translated by Anja Welle and Stan Jones (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2008).

[178] Ibid., 71-129.

"Apparatus, Self-reflection, and Performance: Vito Acconci and Dennis Oppenheim,"

"Video/TV: Nam June Paik and Dara Birnbaum," and "Video Installation: Eija-Liisa

Antila, Chantal Akerman, and Gillian Wearing."[179] From these case studies, Spielmann

was able to offer a "typology of the hybridization" of video, which, according to her,

defined "the multiplicity of video aesthetics" and "the cultural uses of the medium" more

accurately.[180] Theoretical perspectives on video as a cultural medium, as I will show,

were also important for Spielmann and others.

Toward a Theory of Video

> *Capitalism, and the modern age, is a period in which, with the extinction of the*
> *sacred and the "spiritual," the deep underlying materiality of all things has*
> *finally risen dripping and convulsive into the light of day; and it is clear that*
> *culture itself is one of those things whose fundamental materiality is now for us*
> *not merely evident but quite inescapable. This has, however, also been a*
> *historical lesson: it is because culture has become material that we are now in a*
> *position to understand that it always was material, or materialistic, in its*
> *structure and functions. We postcontemporary people have a word for that*
> *discovery…and this is…the word medium, and in particular its plural, media, a*
> *word which now conjoins three relatively distinct signals: that of an artistic mode*
> *or specific form of aesthetic production, that of a specific technology, generally*
> *organized around a central apparatus or machine; and that, finally, of a social*
> *institution.*
>
> *   – Fredric Jameson*[181]

During the 1990s, several theoretical perspectives on the concept of video as a cultural

medium were published.[182] In 1993, for example, Sean Cubitt published *Videography:*

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[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid., 16-17.

[181] Fredric Jameson, "Surrealism Without the Unconscious," *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 67.

[182] Before the 1990s, John Hanhardt's popular anthology *Video Culture: A Critical Investigation* was the primary source for theoretical perspectives on video culture. John Hanhardt, *Video Culture: A Critical*

Video Media as Art and Culture.[183] In *Videography: Video Media as Art and Culture*,

Cubitt advanced a materialist understanding of video media and addressed existing

theories in art history, film and television, and sound media in order to "unpack the useful

and the impractical elements of theoretical systems, and test them against the demands of

video culture."[184] Although Cubitt offers a theoretical framework for thinking about

video media as art and culture, he does not address the heterogeneity of practices and

institutional viewpoints that helped to formulate a concept of "Video Art" and to

legitimize a critical language of video as artistic and cultural forms of expression.

Indeed, this was not his objective. Even so, Cubitt's theoretical perspective, which is one

of the first to propose a distinct theory of video, reminds us that artistic and cultural

forms of video are not specific to a particular discipline or medium. Other theoretical

perspectives that also recognized video's heterogeneity at this time included Fredrick

Jameson's "Surrealism Without the Unconscious" and Rosalind Krauss's *Voyage on the*

North Sea': Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition.

In "Surrealism without the Unconscious," Jameson argued that a completed or

constructed definition of experimental video must address the various signals from which

it partially owes its existence.[185] These signals, according to Jameson, included "that of

an artistic mode or specific form of aesthetic production, that of a specific technology,

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Investigation, Edited by John G. Hanhardt (New York: Visual Studies Workshop, 1986).

[183] At the time he was writing *Videography: Video Media as Art and Culture*, Cubitt was a Reader in Video and Media Studies at Liverpool John Moores University, England and a member of the editorial board of *Screen*. Sean Cubitt, *Videography: Video Media as Art and Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

[184] Ibid., xviii.

[185] Fredric Jameson, "Surrealism Without the Unconscious," 68.

generally organized around a central apparatus or machine," and that of a social institution.[186] However, Jameson also argued that "these three areas of meaning do not define a medium, or the media, but designate the distinct dimensions that must be addressed in order for such a definition to be completed or constructed"[187] According to him, these signals informed the defining characteristics of the logic of postmodernism's "strongest and most original, authentic forms": the art of experimental video.[188]

In a different direction, Krauss wrote in *"A Voyage on the North Sea:" Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* that video was a postmodern phenomenon "that could not be theorized as coherent or conceived of as having something like an essence or unifying core."[189] Krauss cited Marcel Broodthaers's *Museum of Modern Art, Eagles Department, Section des Figures* (1968-72) (figure 7.10) and Richard Serra's *Television Delivers People* (1973) (figure 7.11) as examples and argued that these works aided in the disappearance of the traditional arts as medium-specific and the emergence of "differential specificity."[190] Krauss explained that the emergence of "differential specificity" occurred when a new generation of artists began to work outside the borders of reductivist modernism and to create artworks no longer specific to a particular

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[186] Ibid.

[187] Ibid., 68, 96.

[188] Ibid.

[189] Rosalind Krauss, *"A Voyage on the North Sea:" Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 31-32.

[190] Ibid., 9, 30.

medium.[191] She noted that these works included television and video activities, which she described as "hydra-headed, existing in endlessly diverse forms, spaces, and temporalities for which no single instance seems to provide a formal unity for the whole."[192] These practices, according to her, "shatter[ed] the notion of medium-specificity," expanded the field of sculpture, and advanced a "post-medium condition."[193]

In *"A Voyage on the North Sea:" Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, Krauss also advanced her theory of the "post-medium condition," which, as she argued, represented the disappearance of medium specificity and the emergence of an expanded field of practices no longer specific to a particular medium. She explained that

> If modernist theory found itself defeated by such heterogeneity [of endlessly diverse forms, spaces, and temporalities for which no single instance seems to provide a formal unity for the whole]—which prevented it from conceptualizing video as a medium—modernist, structuralist film was routed by video's instant success as a practice. For even if video had a distinct technical support—its own apparatus, so to speak—it occupied a kind of discursive chaos, a heterogeneity of activities that could not be theorized as coherent or conceived of as having something like an essence or unifying core. Like [Marcel Broodthaers's] eagle principle, it proclaimed the end of medium-specificity. In the age of television, so it broadcast, we inhabit a post-medium condition. [194]

In Krauss's description of the "post-medium condition" here, one has a more productive way in which to address "a heterogeneity of activities that could not be theorized as coherent or conceived of as having something like an essence or unifying core."[195] From

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[191] Ibid. Also see Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October*, no. 8 (Spring 1979): 31-44.

[192] Ibid., 24, 30 and 31.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Ibid., 31-32.

[195] Ibid.

this perspective, one is able to establish a more adequate framework that demands engagements with the differential, discursive field of video and electronic media and the various institutions across which multiple and irreducible conceptions of video have been produced. As I will show in the next Chapter, however, discussions within the professional and academic arenas did not approach the concept of "Video Art" from this perspective.

The purpose of Chapter Seven was two-fold. First, as a review of the published record, it isolated important debates that helped to invent a legitimizing critical language. These debates included advancing the following concepts: *dé-coll/age* and experimental television; experimental television programming and television as a creative medium; alternative television and guerrilla television; the grammar of video and videotape; categories of video art and the distinctive features of artists' video; histories and genres of "Video Art"; and video art theory. Second, by actively working through these debates, which I derived from an exhaustive chronological bibliography, I have been able to show that the critical language of video and electronic media is heterogeneous, dispersed and institutionally variable and, thus, cannot be elided by appeals to some common "medium" or monolithic category. In the next Chapter, I will address how the reception of video and electronic media has been shaped by discussions within the professional and academic arenas. I will also focus on academic programs and conferences that developed pedagogy and, thereby, institutionalized a history of "Video Art."

7.1. Cover of the first issue of *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen*, June 1962, by Pera, Arthur Köpcke, Benjamin Patterson, La Monte Young, Wolf Vostell, George Maciunas, and Nam June Paik.

afterlude to the   EXPOSITION   of   EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION   1963, March, Galerie Parnass.   nam june PAIK.

(1)

My experimental TV is

      not always interesting

        but

      not always uninteresting

like nature, which is beautiful,

      not because it changes beautifully,

but simply because it changes.

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

  1)   character
  2)   value.

In my experimental TV, the words "QUALITY" means only the CHARACTER, but not the VALUE.

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

    Sometimes I need red apple
    Sometimes I need red lips.

(2)))

2   My experimental TV is the first ART (?), in which the "perfect crime" is possible................ I had put just a diode into opposite direction, and got a "waving" negative Television. If my epigons do the same trick, the result will be completely the same (unlike Webern and Webern-epigons).............. that is.............
My TV is NOT the expression of my personality, but merely

  a "PHYSICAL MUSIC"

optical and semantical event, In Nineteen-sixties. The beauty of distorted Kennedy is different from the beauty of football hero, or not always pretty but always stupid female announcer.

b) Second dimension of variability.
13 sets suffered 13 sorts of variation in their VIDEO-HORIZONTAL-VERTICAL units. I am proud to be able to say that all 13 sets actually changed their inner circuits. Nu Two sets had the same kind of technical operation. Not one is the simple blur, which occurs, when you turn the vertical and horizontal control-button at home. I enjoyed very much the study of electronics, which I began in 1961, and some life-danger, I met while working with 15 Kilo-Volts. I had the luck to meet nice collaborators: HIDEO UCHIDA (president of UCHIDA Radio Research institute), a genial avantgarde electronican, who discovered the principle of Transistor 2 years earlier than the Americans, and SHUYA ABE, allmighty poli-technican, who knows that the science is more a beauty than the logic. UCHIDA is now trying to prove the telepathy and prophesy electromagne-tically.

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

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

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

GRASP the Eternity.

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

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

This uncessant EX-TASIS (to go out of oneself) is the "NORMAL" character in the normal situation of our consciousness. The word "Ecstasy" (ex=tasis) is used here, almost as an antonym to the first case (xx). In xx) our consciousness is UNIFIED with it-self. It has synthesized the dualism of our conscious-ness. But in zz), this dualism, or the dialectic evo-lution of our esprit is kept precious as the proof of our freedom,...

      ))) 6 (((

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

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

    --- 7 ---

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

7.2. Nam June Paik, Excerpt of Paik's "afterlude to the EXPOSITION of EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION," *fLuxus cc fiVe ThReE*, no. 4, section 2, June 1964. Reprinted in Judson Rosebush, ed., *Videa 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik, 1959-1973* (Syracuse: Everson Museum of Art, 1974).

7.3. Nam June Paik, Installation view of "ELECTRONIC TV & COLOR TV EXPERIMENT," invitation for Paik's exhibition at the New School for Social Research, and circuit-board layout, New York, January 8, 1965. Reprinted in Judson Rosebush, ed., *Videa 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik, 1959-1973* (Syracuse: Everson Museum of Art, 1974).

7.4. Beryl Phyllis and Korot Gershuny, editors, Cover of "The Alternative Television Movement" Issue, *Radical Software*, no. 1, 1970.

7.5. Ant Farm, Cover to Michael Shamberg's book *Guerrilla Television*, 1971. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971).

7.6. Vito Acconci, Still from *Centers*, 1971, VHS, 33:17 minutes, black and white, silent. Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.
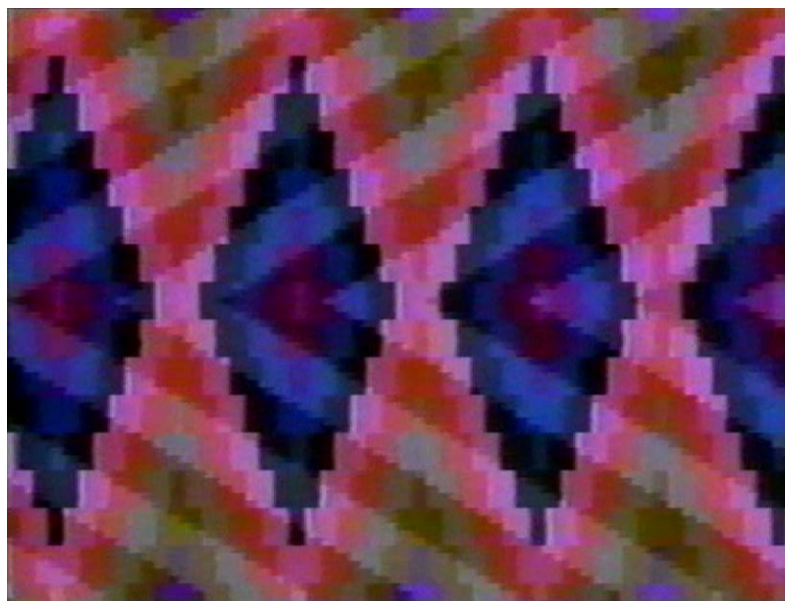
7.7. Stephen Beck, Still from *Video Weavings*, 1976. VHS, 26:32 minutes, color, sound. Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.
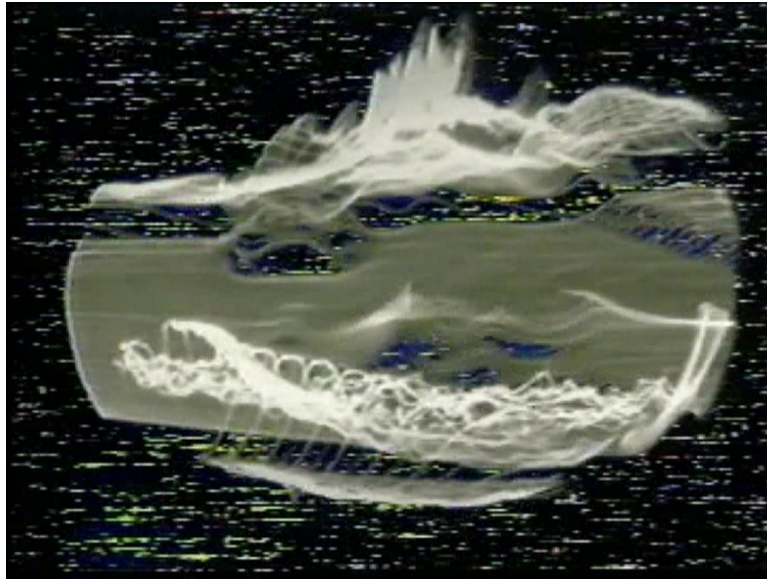
7.8. Woody Vasulka, Still from *C-Trend* (Rutt-Etra Scan Processor example), 1974.
VHS, 9:03 minutes, color, sound. Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.

7.9. Nam June Paik and John Godfrey, Still from *Global Groove*, 1973. VHS, 28:30
minutes, color, sound. Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix.

7.10. Marcel Broodthaers, *Museum of Modern Art, Eagles Department, Section des Figures, (The Eagle from the Oligocene to the Present)*, 1972. View of the installation at the Städtlische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf. Reprinted in Rosalind Krauss, *"A Voyage on the North Sea:" Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 20-21.
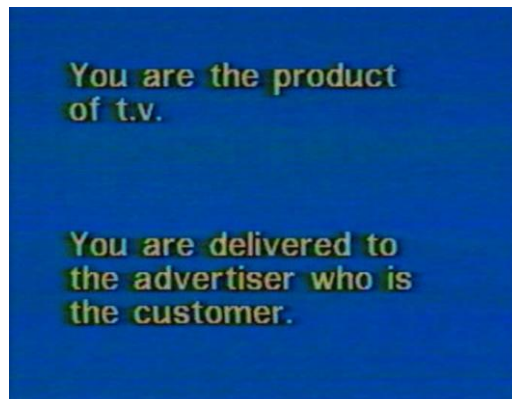
7.11. Richard Serra and Carlotta Fay Schoolman, Still from *Television Delivers People*, 1973. VHS, Program 7: "Critiques of Art and Media as Commodity and Spectacle," from *Surveying the First Decade: Video Art and Alternative Media in the U.S. 1968-1980*, produced by Kate Horsfield (Chicago: Video Data Bank, 1995). Courtesy of the Video Data Bank.

8.

Academic Programs and Conferences: Practice, Pedagogy and the Institution of a History of "Video Art"

In Chapter Seven, I discussed the way the term "Video Art" emerged, operated and was constricted in the literature. I also showed how this literature invented a legitimizing critical language by addressing the following associative concepts: *dé-coll/age* and experimental television; experimental television programming and television as a creative medium; the alternative television movement and guerrilla television; the grammar of video and videotape; categories of "Video Art" and the distinctive features of artists' video; histories and genres of "Video Art"; and video art theory.[1] By addressing the way in which these concepts were discussed in the literature, I showed that a totalizing, monolithic history of "Video Art" is problematic. In this Chapter, I will focus on academic programs and conferences that developed pedagogy and, by doing so, institutionalized a history of "Video Art." I will also address how the reception of video and electronic media has been shaped by discussions within the professional and academic arenas.

If public broadcast television studios, experimental television centers, galleries and museums, and the published record have defined the topography of the landscape

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[1] I derived these major concepts from an exhaustive bibliography.

across which video art practices have emerged, then the reception of these practices has been powerfully shaped by discussions within the professional and academic arenas. Such discussions have crossed the disciplines of art history, film and visual studies, communication and media arts, and studio-based workshops and artist-in-residence programs. What they have produced is a discourse drawing on the following: historiography, from art history; theory, from film and visual studies; sociology of media, from communication and media arts; and analyses of the technical aspects of video, from academic programs and workshops.[2] As new theoretical perspectives emerged in the 1970s and the 1980s, however, newer interdisciplinary approaches became available, which, in turn, helped to shape a distinctive knowledge base that did not belong to a single academic discipline and, thus, moved freely across the conceptual borders in academia.

In this Chapter, I will focus on four sites from which pedagogy, practice and the institution of a history of "Video Art" developed. I will not offer an all-inclusive historical perspective or deliver a definitive chronological account. Instead, I will address the development of local forms of knowledge produced by (1) workshops and seminars, from public television stations and non-profit, alternative resource centers; (2) the sociology of media, from communications and media arts programs at universities;

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[2] For example, Gene Youngblood, George Stoney, and Robert Arn applied film theory, whereas Marshall McLuhan and Paul Ryan applied social media theory. Intervening discussions have most frequently stemmed from the theory and sociology of media. The earliest examples include Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964) and *The Medium Is the Message* (1967), and Gene Youngblood's *Expanded Cinema* (1970). Examples that are more recent are Sean Cubitt's *Timeshift: On Video Culture* (1991) and *Videography: Video Media as Art and Culture* (1993). Technical reports from academic research facilities, workshops, and studios also covered the state and potential of experimental television and video practice. Examples include Paul Ryan's "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium" and Eric Cameron's "The Grammar of the Video Image."

(3) film theory, from visual and cinema studies; and (4) historiography, from academic art history programs. By focusing on these local forms of knowledge, I will show that the methodologies of each discipline provided the basis for developing an institution of a history of "Video Art" and, as a result, advanced the concept of "Video Art" across the conceptual borders in academia as an interdisciplinary phenomenon. I will begin by addressing the spaces of practice that offered educational resources to alternative television supporters and artists during the late 1960s. Before I do this, however, I need to address an earlier moment when a few Fluxus artists not tied to a particular institution (e.g., public broadcast television) or space of practice began to create works using television.

Practice: Workshops and Seminars on Television and Video Production

From the late 1950s to the early 1960s, Fluxus artists began experimenting with television sets in order to investigate the artistic potential of television and to advance the idea of "experimental television" as an art form. It was during this time that Wolf Vostell produced *TV fur Millionen* (1959-66) (figure 8.1) and Nam June Paik created a "prepared television set" (1963) (figure 8.2), two works that explored the expressive potential of malfunctioning television sets and exposed commercial television as a one-dimensional mode of communication. Using the *dé-coll/age* technique advanced in *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen* (figure 7.1),[3] Paik and Vostell deconstructed the television set's static function as a commercial apparatus and, by doing so, created something new and foreign, a prepared television monitor, out of something old and familiar, a commercial

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[3] Pera, Arthur Köpcke, Benjamin Patterson, La Monte Young, Wolf Vostell, George Maciunas, and Nam June Paik, *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen*, no. 1 (June 1962).

television set. They did this before institutions (such as public broadcast television) or

spaces of practice (such as alternative resource centers) were made available to artists.

However, as advances in consumer-grade video technology were made, new spaces of

practice, such as public broadcast studios and experimental television centers, were

opened to artists. These spaces of practice developed resources that further advanced an

image vocabulary specific to electronic, time-based art and offered educational resources

to artists and alternative television supporters during the late 1960s. They included the

public television studio at WGBH, Boston and the Experimental Television Center in

Owego, New York.

From 1967 to 1993, WGBH played a large role in developing spaces of practice

in the form of artist-in-residencies, experimental programming projects—such as *The

Medium Is the Medium* (1969)—and experimental television workshops, all of which

focused on advancing new forms of cultural programming for public broadcast

television.[4] These spaces of practice were supported by WGBH's Rockefeller Artist-in-

Residence Project (1967-70), the WGBH Project for New Television (1971-73), and the

New Television Workshop (1974-93) respectively. The artist-in-residencies and

workshops, though, did not include a rigorous pedagogy in broadcast television

production and post-production. While technical assistance was available to artists-in-

residence and workshop participants, WGBH directors focused instead on developing

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[4] These economic resources were made possible by Rockefeller Foundation Arts Grants in
Television/Video/Film. In 1967, for example, the WGBH Educational Foundation received $275,000
toward the cost of an experimental television workshop and, in 1970, $300,000 toward the cost of their
Artist-in-Residence Project. For a detailed list of Rockefeller Foundation Arts Grants in
Television/Video/Film recipients (1965 to October 1986) see Marita Sturken's "Private Money and
Personal Influence," *Afterimage*, vol. 14, no. 6 (1987): 14-15.

creative programming for broadcast television and comprehensive distribution systems

for the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) and foreign broadcast markets; for non-

broadcast venues such as educational institutions, festivals, media centers, and museums;

and for commercial cable and consumer video markets.[5]

For educational resources, on the other hand, artists and alternative television

supporters had to go to alternative resource centers such as the Experimental Television

Center. Like at WGBH, artist-in-residencies and workshops at the Experimental

Television Center provided access to television and video technology.[6] Unlike at

WGBH, however, the Experimental Television Center integrated pedagogy in their artist-

in-residence programs and yearly workshop series, offered personalized instruction at its

studio, advanced research and development initiatives, and consulted on the design of

non-commercial technologies[7] The Experimental Television Center also developed

educational workshops catered to artists, educators, and community organizations.[8]

These workshops, which included "Basic Video," "Video Post Production," and "Image

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[5] Dowling wrote that an "important mandate of the New Television Workshop and the Contemporary Art Television Fund (a co-venture between WGBH['s New Television Workshop] and The Institute of Contemporary Art)" was "to develop comprehensive, international distribution systems for artists' work." Susan Dowling, "History of the WGBH New Television Workshop," n.d., Box D00730, WGBH Archives, Boston, Massachusetts.

[6] However, technological resources available at WGBH were more extensive.

[7] During this time, the Center was located in Binghamton and called the Community Center for Television Production (C.C.T.V.P.).

[8] Sherry Miller Hocking, "History of the Experimental Television Center and SUNY: Workshops," n.d., Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

Processing and Video Art," were free and provided instruction unavailable elsewhere at the time.[9]

The Experimental Television Center also invited requests for workshops from literary, performing and visual arts programs in the State University of New York system.[10] The offices of the University Wide Programs in the Arts worked with the Experimental Television Center to bring alternative television workshops to various campuses in the State University of New York system and, between 1972 and 1981, the Center conducted daylong workshops at campuses in Albany, Auburn, Brockport, Broome, Buffalo, Columbia-Green, Courtland, Delhi, Jamestown, Monroe County, Orange County, Stony Brook, and Sullivan County.[11] The purpose of these daylong workshops was to advance new ways for using portable video and half-inch videotape technology. Some of these uses included

1. understand[ing how] video equipment [operates], including portapak, playback, special effects generator and keyer, and the Paik-Abe Synthesizer;
2. collect[ing] and distribut[ing] information and interpretation of data;
3. produc[ing] motivational tapes for specific subject areas;
4. [using video equipment] as a tool for reflection of social interaction and group behavior;
5. [using video equipment] as a tool for analysis and criticism of performance and behavior;
6. increas[ing] self-awareness;
7. [and using video equipment] as a therapeutic aid.[12]

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ralph and Sherry Miller Hocking, Report on "Groups and Agencies Using E.T.C. Resources," 1970-72, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

With the help of the Experimental Television Center, other new ways for using new portable video and half-inch videotape technology were explored at Hartwick College, the State University of New York at Albany and Binghamton, Syracuse University, the University of Buffalo, and the University of Rochester. In the Cinema department at the State University of New York at Binghamton, for example, Nicholas Ray and his film production classes interfaced film and video through the Paik/Abe Synthesizer and used the Center's studio space as a classroom and production area.[13] Students at the University of Buffalo and the University of Rochester, on the other hand, used video synthesizers, film-video interfacing systems and Sony Portapaks to create documentary tapes, and graduate students on the Albany campus of the State University of New York explored innovative ways to interface music and video.[14]

In addition to working with university programs, the Experimental Television Center increased its community involvement. During the 1970s, for example, the Experimental Television Center gave workshops in Broome County Catholic Schools, public schools from local districts, and the regional Broome-Tioga Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).[15] Community participation was extensive and, during the 1976-1977 fiscal year, over 1600 people participated in the workshop program.[16]

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] According to the funding report from 1976 to 1977, approximately 10% of these people met regularly for a minimum of five weeks and 15% were involved in workshops that met at least three times. The workshops consisted of a five-week introduction to video and a five-week advanced seminar. Ralph and Sherry Miller Hocking, Funding Report 1976-77, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

Additionally, individual workshops were given throughout the year at the Center's studio. These workshops provided personalized instruction and covered topics such as sound generation for the electronic image and employing microprocessors in the arts.[17]

Emphasis in personalized instruction was also carried over to the Experimental Television Center's artist-in-residence program, which, since its inception in 1972, provided residencies to countless artists. In addition to receiving instruction on the "control systems" in the Experimental Television Center's studio, artists in the residency program were given full artistic and technical control over the production of their works.[18] They were also encouraged to use what they learned during their residencies in their studio programs at their respective institutions. This type of networking, which was also encouraged in communication and media studies programs, advanced innovative ways in which to use portable video cameras and half-inch videotape equipment and promoted video as a tool for social mobilization.

The Sociology of Media: Video as a Tool for Social Mobilization

While a pedagogy of practice was being developed at a number of alternative television centers, video was being promoted as a tool for social mobilization at a number of communication and media studies programs. Using social theories—such as cybernetics, ecological anthropology, and synergetics—, which were advanced by Gregory Bateson, Buckminster Fuller, Marshall McLuhan, and Norbert Wiener, these programs developed

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Sherry Miller Hocking (Assistant Director, Experimental Television Center, Owego, New York), in discussion with the author, October 6, 2010.

a space of practice for exchanging ideas using video feedback, facilitating advances in

television and videotape as tools for social and cultural mobilization, and employing

consumer-grade videotape technology reflexively in the classroom.

In his 1968 article "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium," for example, Paul

Ryan published research on the potential uses of portable videotape equipment in the

classroom.[19] In the article Ryan advanced new methods for enhancing "participatory

education" through image and sound feedback and argued that "classroom cultures can be

revolutionized by VT [videotape]," because "students can take a much larger part in the

processing of information" through video recording.[20] Ryan also argued that the

pedagogical capacity of portable video and half-inch videotape equipment enabled

students and teachers to take a much more active part in their education.[21] This

equipment, according to Ryan, enabled information to be infolded in order to enrich

experience.[22]

This type of experiential learning was not exclusive to Fordham University, where

Paul Ryan worked as an assistant to Marshall McLuhan. Indeed, other university

programs were also exploring the potential of television and portable videotape

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[19] Paul Ryan published this research in *Media and Methods*, which in its December 1968 issue addressed methods that promoted participatory education. Paul Ryan, "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium," *Media and Methods*, vol. 5, no. 4 (Dec. 1968): 36-41.

[20] Ibid. Ryan also promoted the feedback capacity of videotape as a powerful cybernetic tool in an article published in *Radical Software* in 1971. See Paul Ryan's "Cybernetic Guerrilla Warfare," *Radical Software*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Spring 1971): 1-2.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

equipment as educational tools during the late 1960s and the early 1970s. One of the

earliest instances occurred at the State University of New York, Binghamton in January

1969. On the Binghamton campus, Ralph Hocking, who was initially employed at the

university as an assistant for learning resources, coordinated "Independent Study

Projects" and other activities in order to promote a type of "underground space" for

students.[23] In a memorandum dated February 10, 1969, the Master of Hinman College

Christian P. Gruber emphasized the need for such a space, explaining that Hocking's

"effort [wa]s really directed at securing a base within our system for these free spirits

(who will always be a minority) so that they will have some accepted place to operate."[24]

Gruber wrote that

> Mr. Hocking [wa]s beginning to make significant person to person contact,
> because of his anomalous position outside our normal university structure, with
> many students, often creative and usually anti-system, who have sought
> intellectual, artistic, and personal fulfillment outside "the system' while "going
> through the motions" within it.[25]

At the time this memorandum was written, Hocking was developing a Program of

Individualized Curricula (PIC) for students at Harper College.[26] Hocking was also

beginning to draft a series of revisions to "a proposal for the use of television as an

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[23] Independent Study Projects proposal and Minutes of the Meeting of the Masters' Council, 15 January 1969, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York; Christian P. Gruber, Memorandum: "The Underground Space for The Underground," 10 February 1969, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York. These documents are some of the earliest that belong to the development of Student Experiment in Television (S.E.T.) at the State University of New York at Binghamton.

[24] Christian P. Gruber, Memorandum: "The Underground Space for The Underground," 10 February 1969, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Independent Study Projects proposal and Minutes of the Meeting of the Masters' Council, 15 January 1969, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

educational medium," which was projected to be implemented in the fall of 1969.[27]

Although there was some discussion about other projects, including "'guerrilla' or free

theatre, free university, free artist colonies, [and] free or underground movie operation,"

by the summer of 1969, the development of an educational television program became

Hocking's focus.[28]

On October 9, 1969, Student Experiment in Television (S.E.T.) was suggested as

the title for Hocking's new "educational television" program.[29] At this time, Hocking

had made several connections with individuals at other institutions, including Nam June

Paik at WGBH. Hocking also participated in an emerging social network, which the

editors of *Radical Software* helped to bring together in their first issue, "The Alternative

Television Movement."[30] In this issue, Hocking submitted the following "feedback

response" in *Radical Software's* "Feedback" section:

> Students at the State University of New York in Binghamton are receiving
> expense money to document their environments with portable VT cameras. The

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[27] Ralph Hocking, Memorandum: "Revision to 'a proposal for the use of television as an educational medium…to be implemented in the fall of 1969,'" 28 July 1969, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

[28] Christian P. Gruber, Memorandum: "The Underground Space for The Underground," 10 February 1969, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York; Ralph Hocking, Memorandum: "Revision to 'A Proposal for the Use of Television as an Educational Medium…To Be Implemented in the Fall 1969,'" 28 July 1969, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York.

[29] Ralph Hocking, Memorandum: "Revision to 'A Proposal for the Use of Television as an Educational Medium…To Be Implemented in the Fall 1969,'" 28 July 1969, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York; Hugh Hunter, Memorandum: "Mr. Hocking's Proposal for the Use of Television as an Educational Medium," 1 August 1969, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York; and Hugh Hunter, Memorandum: "Program Title," 9 October 1969, Experimental Television Center Archives, Newark Valley, New York. Hocking initially proposed "Experimental Center for Educational Technology" as the title. However, it was felt that the title was too broad and all encompassing. "Experiment for the Non-professional Use of Low Cost Television" was proffered instead, but "Student Experiment in Television" was ultimately chosen after being suggested in a memorandum from Hunter to Hocking on August 1, 1969.

[30] Ralph Hocking, "Feedback: Students," *Radical Software*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Spring 1971): 19.

program is less than a half-year old and will expand to a university network in the fall. Tapes produced include anti-war demonstrations in Washington and Buffalo, and a portrait of two teen-age junkies shooting up in New York City while imploring the cameraman not to do likewise.[31]

Hocking's promotion of the Student Experiment in Television program in *Radical Software* functioned on two levels. First, the feedback response situated the program within a larger social network of people and institutions, including Fred Barzyk, the Raindance Corporation, Ant Farm, Buckminster Fuller, Paul Ryan, Videofreex, Global Village, and Gene Youngblood. Second, the feedback response promoted alternative television production at the university level and demonstrated one way in which video equipment was being used as a tool for social mobilization.

By 1971, however, Hocking realized that there was a need for a different space, one that offered artist-in-residence programs and workshops, advanced research and development initiatives, designed of non-commercial technologies, and developed educational programs for community organizations. Recognizing this need, Hocking established the Community Center for Television Production, renamed the Experimental Television Center after its incorporation as a non-profit educational corporation. Even though the Center moved out of the university, it remained an important resource for students and faculty who in its participated workshops.

It would take another decade until video became fully integrated into studio-based cinema and communication arts programs at many academic institutions. Even so, early experimental research conducted by academics helped to open up the potential of

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[31] Ibid.

television and video as educational tools for social mobilization and participatory learning. Moreover, since many supporters of alternative, experimental television developed programs and courses at universities, they helped to create and advance an image vocabulary for academic programs such as Media Study at the University of Buffalo (by Gerald O'Grady, Woody Vasulka, and Peter Weibel) and the Expanded Media program at Alfred University (by Peer Bode, Barbara Lattanzi, and others).

Investigating the Grammar of Video: Developing Curricula on the History and Theory of "Video Art"

As early as the 1970s, scholars analyzed the constituent characteristics of film as a way to derive a video art vocabulary for academic programs. In 1970, for instance, Gene Youngblood, who taught in the film and video program at California Institute of the Arts, used film theory in order to expand the conventional language of film and what he saw as "some new technological extension[s]" in television and video for his book *Expanded Cinema*.[32] In *Expanded Cinema*, Youngblood elaborated on these "new technological extension[s]" in television and video, defined the mechanics of television and video, and formulated some of the first theoretical distinctions between film and experimental television.[33] However, Youngblood also compared film and video techniques (e.g., cinematic matting and keying), which, as I argued in Chapter Seven, did not advance a

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[32] Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: E. Dutton and Co., 1970), 42.

[33] In his preface, Youngblood explained his use of the term "expanded cinema." He wrote, "When we say expanded cinema we actually mean expanded consciousness. Expanded cinema isn't a movie at all: like life it's a process of becoming, man's ongoing historical drive to manifest his consciousness outside of his mind, in front of his eyes. One no longer can specialize in a single discipline and hope truthfully to express a clear picture of its relationships in the environment. This is especially true in the case of the intermedia network of cinema and television, which now functions as nothing less than the nervous system of mankind." Ibid., 41.

distinct grammar of experimental television or video.[34] For a distinct grammar of experimental television or video, I referred instead to Robert Arn's 1973 article "The Form and Sense of Video."

In "The Form and Sense of Video," Arn used his knowledge about film to derive a distinct grammar of experimental television and video based on "feedback" and "synthesis," two concepts he argued that are not linked to film but, instead, to video.[35] Arn also stated that "video rejects the conventions of both film and broadcast television and attempts to discover the unique formal necessities [i.e., properties] of its electronic processes."[36] He argued that in order to derive a distinctive grammar one must move away from discussing film and video comparatively, since video involves a different technical process of production and transmission. Nevertheless, by the 1980s, a distinctive grammar of experimental television and video had been developed and published in the literature. With a distinctive grammar on hand, a number of academic programs began to develop curricula on the history and theory of "Video Art." Among these academic programs was the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, New York.[37]

While maintaining an extensive archive, advancing a pedagogy on film and video practice, and inviting artists, curators and scholars to give lectures, the Visual Studies Workshop provided a staging ground for developing historical and theoretical

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[34] Ibid., 268.

[35] Robert Arn, "The Form and Sense of Video," *Artscanada*, vol. 30, no. 4 (October 1973): 20-21.

[36] Ibid., 15.

[37] In 1973, the Visual Studies Workshop established a media center and, in 1974, it purchased video equipment.

perspectives on "video art." In the 1980s, for example, the Visual Studies Workshop

invited John Hanhardt, a pioneering museum curator of film and video, to develop two

seminars on the history and theory of video art.[38] What resulted from Hanhardt seminars

on video art was *Video Culture: A Critical Investigation* (1986), the first anthology to

bring together critical, historical, and theoretical writings on film, television, and video.[39]

While other anthologies dedicated to "video art" were already in circulation at this time,

Hanhardt's anthology promoted the idea that media theory could inform video art history

and enabled artists, students, and educators "to reexamine video art today."[40]

Other texts that help artists, students, and educators to reexamine the history of

"video art" can be found in two consecutive issues of the *AFI Educational Newsletter*

(1980). They include James Hindman's "A Survey of Alternative Video I" and "A

Survey of Alternative Video II," two sources featured in the newsletter's "Course File"

section on model syllabi.[41] Yet, as noted by the journal editors of the *AFI Educational

Newsletter*, these syllabi are "in no way…meant to be definitive or prescriptive."[42]

Instead, they are intended to "represent the work of experienced educators in the field"

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[38] John Hanhardt, editor, *Video Culture: A Critical Investigation* (New York: Visual Studies Workshop, 1986). He also was invited to teach at Middlebury College during the Winter Term in 1984.

[39] Ibid. Hanhardt acknowledged that it was Nathan Lyons, the director of the Visual Studies Workshop, who suggested that he turn his reading list into an anthology. He also credited Joan Lyons, the Director of the Visual Studies Workshop Press, for leading the project.

[40] Ibid. Anthologies published prior to Hanhardt's include the following: Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, eds., *Video Art: An Anthology* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976); Peggy Gale, ed., *Video by Artists* (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1976); and Gregory Battcock, ed., *New Artists Video: A Critical Anthology* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1978). Most of these texts present articles and essays written by artists and those associated with the field.

[41] James Hindman, "A Survey of Alternative Video I," *AFI Educational Newsletter*, vol. 4, no. 2 (1980): 5-8 and "A Survey of Alternative Video II," *AFI Educational Newsletter*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1980): 5-8.

[42] James Hindman, "A Survey of Alternative Video I," 5.

and to help academics extend critical perspectives on alternative broadcast television, community-based activities, and uses of video and videotape by artists.[43] They are, as Hindman noted, "designed to present a concise overview of the enormous range of contemporary alternatives in television" and video production.[44] For more adequate source material on the heterogeneity of experimental television and video, on the other hand, one must look to texts on postmodernism and the expanded field of sculpture.

Historiography and Postmodernism: The Institution of a History of "Video Art"

Unfortunately, there are no publications providing a historiography or sufficient conceptual framework on the institution of a history of "video art." Even so, there are a number of texts on postmodernism and the expanded field of sculpture that are useful for thinking about the discursive, differential field of experimental television and video art. This literature, as I have argued in Chapter Seven, provides a more accurate conceptual mapping of post-medium specific practices, including experimental television and video media. While video by itself can be proposed as medium-specific, video art practices and production methods are, in fact, institutionally dispersed and heterogeneous in nature. It is for this reason that texts on postmodern cultural production—including Fredrick Jameson's *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), Margot Lovejoy's *Postmodern Currents: Art and Artists in the Age of Electronic Media* (1997), and Rosalind Krauss's *Voyage on the North Sea': Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (1999)—are useful for thinking about the multi-layered and stratified discursive field of experimental television and video.

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

The two aforementioned texts by Jameson and Krauss are especially significant. This is because they do not isolate "video art" from its socio-cultural, political, and technical contexts, which, as I have argued, shape the distinctive histories of electronic, time-based media. Instead, they consider, as Krauss insightfully noted, the fact that "television and video seem Hydra-headed, existing in endlessly diverse forms, spaces, and temporalities for which no single instance seems to provide a formal unity for the whole."[45] This type of plurality, along with the added social, technological, and aesthetic signals, which Jameson argued would need to be addressed in order to arrive at an informed definition of the logic of postmodernism's "strongest and most original, authentic forms" (i.e., the art of experimental video),[46] is what makes the differential field so difficult to pin down. That they do not necessarily address the historicity of video art specifically is not as much an issue here.[47] That they help those who are interested in examining the institution of the history of "video art" more effectively is what makes their insightful texts so important.

On the other hand, a more productive parallel can be drawn with John Tagg's work with the discursive field of photographic production. Unlike Krauss and Jameson, Tagg addresses the differential, discursive field of photographies and calls attention to the problematic use of the term "medium" in reference to photographic practice. Tagg

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[45] Rosalind Krauss, *"A Voyage on the North Sea:" Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 31.

[46] Fredric Jameson, "Surrealism Without the Unconscious," *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 67.

[47] However, a text that addresses the historiography of video art is still needed.

argues that in order to address the discursive field of photographic production adequately we must study the differential field of practices across which the medium is specified and defined differently.[48] Tagg writes,

> The potential field of photographic production was thus both demarcated and divided up in advance into specialised territories of practice and meaning which were congruent one with another only in their exercise of constraints on proliferation of photographic discourses and in their articulation of a discontinuous field beyond which there was only a declared non-sense. Across this field, the unity, integrity and continuity of photography was, from the beginning, only ever locally and discontinuously invoked.[49]

In *The Disciplinary Frame*, Tagg recalled this crucial argument, which he made twenty year earlier in *The Burden of Representation*. "In *The Burden of Representation*," he writes,

> I examined the conditions under which the dangerously prolific field of photographic meanings came, in the course of the nineteenth century, to be marked out and segmented, so that a plurality of locally specified, adjacent, but contradictory *photographies* could be institutionalized—each claiming to ground its status on the fundamental character of the medium. It was, however, precisely this term, "the medium," that came under pressure. No longer could it denote an opaque material with the power to generate its own delimiting conventions, any more than it could signify a transparent vehicle—a mediating technology that might impose its own determinations but whose mechanical nature would continue to supply its epistemological guarantees. "The medium" of photography was not given and unified. It was always a local outcome, an effect of a particular closure of the discursive field, a function of a specific *apparatus* or *machine*, in the sense in which Foucault used these terms. The "medium" had to be constituted and it was multiply defined.[50]

And just like photography, video was also "multiply defined" by various institutional viewpoints. Moreover, social networks, which brought together individuals from distinct disciplines, further developed an institution from which a history of "video art' was

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[48] John Tagg, e-mail message to the author, August 2, 2011.

[49] John Tagg, *Art History, Cultural Politics and the Discursive Field* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 112.

[50] John Tagg, *The Disciplinary Frame* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), xxviii.

derived. Indeed, numerous institutions also helped to promote interdisciplinary

collaborations. These included the published record, where authors participated in

discussing terms, concepts, histories and theories, and conferences, which were not

institutionally specific. Conferences, such as "Open Circuits: An International

Conference on the Future of Television" (1974), "Video and the Museum," (1974) and

"Television/Society/Art" (1980), not only helped to promote innovative non-commercial

uses of small format videotape equipment but also established ways to talk about video

during a moment when "video [wa]s no longer the province of a few pioneers."[51]

Experimental television and video were expanding as new technology helped to shape the

field of electronic, time-based media.

Even so, an archaeology of experimental television and video knowledge, which

is comprised of a number of non-commensurable sites that produced a myriad of local

forms of knowledge, can be specified. Such an archaeology, I would argue, produces a

more adequate framework for thinking about expanded forms of electronic, time-based

media. By sketching out four sites from which pedagogy, practice and the institution of a

history of "Video Art" developed one is able to see that the discursive field of video art

was interdisciplinary from the beginning—for example, neo-avant-garde groups such as

Fluxus brought together individuals from a variety of disciplines. As a result, an

institution of a history of "Video Art" developed as an interdisciplinary composite—one

that was contested, fluid, and expanding.

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[51] Douglas Davis and Allison Simmons, editors, *The New Television: A Public/Private Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1977). "Video and the Museum" took place at the Everson Museum, "Open Circuits" at the Modern Museum of Art, and "Television/Society/Art" at the Kitchen in New York City.
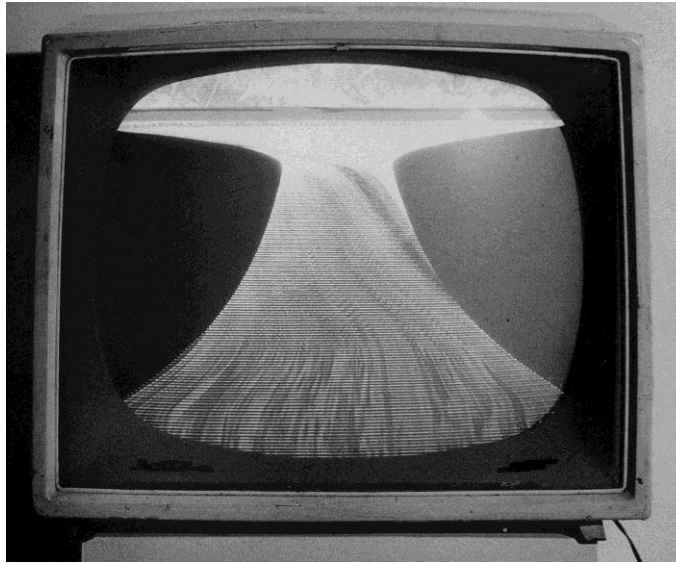
8.1. Wolf Vostell, *TV fur Millionen* (TV for Millions), 1959-66. Manipulated black-and-white television set. Reprinted in John Alan Farmer, *The New Frontier: Art and Television, 1960-65* (Texas: Austin Museum of Art, 2000), 50.

8.2. Nam June Paik, Installation view of a "prepared television set," "Exposition of Music: Electronic Television," March 11-20, 1963, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany. Reprinted in John Hanhardt, *The Worlds of Nam June Paik* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2000).

9.

Conclusion: Framing "Video Art" as Electronic, Time-based Media

In a 1988 issue of *Sight and Sound* the television producer John Wyver argued that

"critical engagements with the whole history of video…are lamentably few, and there is

an urgent need for further writing and analysis if we are to understand and appreciate

more fully the achievements and potential of video."[1] Since the publication of Wyver's

article, many in the field have echoed Wyver's call for a more critical engagement with

the history of video.[2] Before such a critical history can be produced, however, scholars

need to address the heterogeneous practices and diverse institutional perspectives that

have defined concepts of "Video Art."

In this dissertation, I proposed a different methodological approach for addressing

the concept of "Video Art" and developed a critical framework for thinking about

experimental television and video as heterogeneous art forms. My archaeological map of

experimental television and video practices from 1960 to 2010 provided the structural

framework.[3] This framework turns on a close analysis of the *institutional sites* and

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[1] John Wyver, "Video Art and Television," *Sight and Sound*, vol. 57, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 121.

[2] Douglas Davis, "Video Obscura," *Artforum*, vol. 10, no. 8 (April 1972): 65-71; Martha Rosler, "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment," *Block*, no. 11 (1985/1986): 27-39.

[3] This map has been converted to fit the book format of this dissertation. See the appendix for a scaled down version.

genres of discourse across which debates about experimental television and video developed. Such an analysis or "archaeology" is an absolute prerequisite for any "genealogical" discussion that seeks to address the development of the discursive, differential field of "Video Art." As is, the category of "Video Art" conveys an inadequate characterization of the expanded field of electronic, video-based media. A more adequate perspective demands engagements with the differential, discursive field and the various levels of sedimentary strata across which the notion of a video medium has been produced.

Instead of offering a conventional history of "Video Art," I took a different approach. Seeking to unravel extant generalizations and offer effective analytical tools for addressing the expanded field of electronic, time-based media, I proposed a different historical perspective for thinking through a range of non-commensurable sites, which, as I have argued, do not produce a unified knowledge of "video," but rather a genealogy of knowledge that is heterogeneous and institutionally dispersed. It is from this perspective that I covered a number of key debates or "flash points" from five major institutional sites that contributed to the expansion of the discursive, differential field of experimental television and video practice. These institutional sites included public broadcast television studios, alternative resources centers, museums and galleries, the published record, and educational institutions. As I argued, these institutions not only assisted in expanding the field or electronic, time-based media but they also helped in developing an institution of a history of "Video Art."

Yet, the concept of "Video Art" is already outmoded; it has had its moment now that advances in media-based technologies now offer artists new expressive forms. And yet, as advances in digital and computer-based technologies extend the range of possibilities, television and video are still part of the advancement of the expanded, differential field today. It should also be noted that analog television and video do not signify a preliminary step toward a more advanced "electronic form that art can take."[4] I am reminded of Douglas Davis's argument that "the appearance of the television set as an image in painting and as an element in sculpture (in constructions and multimedia environments) was a preliminary step" for "the first authentically electronic form that art can take": "half-inch videotape."[5] This statement, as I argued in Chapter Two, is problematic. Video, like television before, represented new possibilities for artists and now digital media is doing the same. While analog video allowed one to capture performances and record material for post-producing a final product, it also added to the many ways from which artists could transmit and document performance-based actions.

Today, emerging media and new digital art forms are changing the multivalent character of the field. However, unlike the 1980s, when some of the first historical perspectives on "Video Art" were being offered, we now have conceptual and theoretical tools that are more adequate for addressing heterogeneous art practices. Yet, using these tools will require the same perspicacious attention and, as long as these practices remain interdisciplinary, institutionally diverse and ever expanding, the task of elucidating such a history (or histories) will be challenging. Nevertheless, it is my intention to offer a

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[4] Douglas Davis, "Video Obscura," *Artforum*, vol. 10, no. 8 (April 1972): 67.

[5] Ibid.

pragmatic, historically specific, and conceptually sound framework, not in order to

produce a definitive history of "Video Art" but, instead, to address the discursive,

differential field of experimental television and video practices more adequately. Such

an address, of course, demonstrates that there is still a need for historical and theoretical

perspectives on electronic, time-based media—including digital video, projective

installations, and multimedia environments.

Appendix

Appendix I: Selected Chronology

1961

Public Broadcast Television:

- Fred Barzyk, *Jazz Images* (WGBH, Boston) (1961-1964)

1962

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- Wiesbaden Festival, West Germany

1963

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Exposition of Music Electronic Television," Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20)
- Wolf Vostell, "Wolf Vostell & Television Dé-coll/age & Dé-coll/age Posters & Comestible Dé-coll/age," Smolin Gallery, New York (May 22-)

1965

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- Nam June Paik, "ELECTRONIC TV & COLOR TV EXPERIMENT," the New School for Social Research, New York, January 8, 1965.
- Nam June Paik, "Electronic Art," Galeria Bonino, New York (Paik's 1st U.S. exhibition)
- "New Cinema Festival I" (Expanded Cinema Festival), The Film-Makers Cinematheque (organized by John Brockman) (explores mixed-media projection)

Important Events:

- The Sony Corporation releases its first consumer-grade half-inch CV-2000 video camera and Videocorder (in limited markets)
- The Rockefeller Foundation begins funding artists to experiment with television and video

1966

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.), New York (founded by Billy Klüver *et al*)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- *9 Evenings: Theater and Engineering*, 69th Regiment Armory, New York (organized by Billy Klüver (E.A.T.))

1967

Public Broadcast Television:

- Experimental TV Workshop established (KQED, San Francisco)
- Rockefeller Artist-in-Residence Project (1967-70) (WGBH, Boston)
- *What's Happening, Mr. Silver?* (hosted by David Silver and produced by Fred Barzyk) (WGBH, Boston)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Light/Motion/Space," Walker Art Center, Minneapolis in collaboration with the Howard Wise Gallery, New York
- "Festival of Lights," the Howard Wise Gallery, New York (the Rockefeller Foundation awards 1st video fellowship)
- Nam June Paik, *Electronic Blues* in "Lights in Orbit," the Howard Wise Gallery, New York

Important Events:

- The Sony Corporation releases its CV-2400 video camera and Videocorder

1968

Public Broadcast Television:

- *Black Gate Cologne*, WDR Fernsehen
- Loren Sears and Robert Zagone, *Sorcery* (KQED, San Francisco)

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- Black Gate Theater and Gate Theater, New York (founded by Aldo Tambellini)
- Ant Farm, San Francisco, California (founded by Chip Lord and Doug Michels) (ends in 1978)
- Land Truth Circus, San Francisco, California (experimental video collective founded by Doug Hall, Diane Hall, and Jody Proctor) (renamed Truthco in 1972 and T. R. Uthco) (ends in 1978)
- The Electronic Eye, Santa Clara, California (video collective founded by Tim Barger, Jim Mandis, Jim Murphy, Michelle Newman, and Skip Sweeney) (ends in 1970)
- Young Filmmakers/Video Arts (training organization directed by Roger Larson)
- Commediation (video production group founded by Frank Gillette *et al*) (ends in 1969)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- Aldo Tambellini, *Black: Video* in "Some More Beginnings," Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York (organized by Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.))
- Nam June Paik, "Electronic Art II," Galeria Bonino, New York
- "The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age," the Museum of Modern Art, New York
- Les Levine exhibits *Iris*
- "Cybernetic Serendipity: The Computer and the Arts," the Corcoran Gallery, Washington D.C. (directed by Jasia Reichardt)

1969

Public Broadcast Television:

- National Center for Experiment in Television (N.C.E.T.) established (KQED, San Francisco) (funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for the Arts) (ends in 1976)
- WGBH, Boston produces *The Medium Is the Medium*
- Channel One, New York City Video Theater program established (directed by K. Shapiro and E. Siegel)
- *Subject to Change* (produced for CBS by the Videofreex) (never televised)

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- Global Village (video collective with information and screenings) (becomes a media center devoted to production with emphasis on video documentary)
- Raindance Corporation (collective for experimental production) (becomes the Raindance Foundation in 1971)
- Student Experiment in Television (S.E.T.), Binghamton, New York (established by Ralph Hocking)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "TV as a Creative Medium," the Howard Wise Gallery, New York (May 17-June 14, 1969)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- Center for Advanced Visual Studies established, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Massachusetts
- Elaine Summers Experimental Intermedia Foundation funds projects at C.W. Post College, New York

Important Events:

- The Film Program of the New York State Council on the Arts (N.Y.S.C.A.) becomes the Film and Television Program (begins accepting applications for electronic media projects and expands support for schools and community workshops)

1970

Public Broadcast Television:

- Stan Vanderbeek, *Violence Sonata* (WGBH, Boston)
- The New York State Council on the Arts (N.Y.S.C.A.) commissions Jackie Cassen to develop Artists' Television Workshop at WNET/13, New York

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- People's Video Theater, New York City (alternative video journalism collective)
- Electronic Arts Intermix (founded by Howard Wise after he closes his gallery) (incorporated in 1971)
- Video Free America (video production/post-production group with screening program founded by Arthur Ginsberg and Skip Sweeney) (directed by Joanne Kelly and Skip Sweeney)

- Media Access Center, Portola Institute, Menlo, California
- The New York State Council on the Arts (N.Y.S.C.A.) funds the Community Center for Television Production (C.C.T.V.P.), Binghamton, New York (established by Ralph Hocking) (precursor to the Experimental Television Center (E.T.C.))

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- Les Levine, *A.I.R.*, 18 monitor installation, Jewish Museum, New York City (curated by Jack Burnham)
- Keith Sonnier, *Vision & TV*, "Castelli Warehouse Show"
- "Body Works," the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Francisco, California (one of the 1st exhibitions on the west coast) (organized by Willoughby Sharp)
- "Information," the Museum of Modern Art, New York (curated by Kynaston McShine)
- "Vision and Television," the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Massachusetts (organized by Russell Connor)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- "The First Gathering: Alternative Media Project," Goddard College Conference, Plainfield, Vermont
- Synapse Video Center, Syracuse University, New York (formerly University Community Union Video) (directed by Lance Wisniewski and Henry Baker) (ends in 1980)

Important Events:

- Creative Artists Public Service (C.A.P.S.) awards fellowships in video
- The New York State Council on the Arts (N.Y.S.C.A.) forms the Television/Media Program

1971

Public Broadcast Television:

- WGBH Project for New Television established (1971-73) (WGBH, Boston)
- WNET/13 TV Lab established and the Artists' Television Workshop commences, New York
- Douglas Davis, *Electronic Hokkadim I*, the Corcoran Gallery of Art and WTOP, Washington D.C. (included a live broadcast piece with 2-way communication established using a telephone)
- Open Channel forms an organization for the development of public access (ends in 1976)

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- The Electronic Kitchen and the Mercer Arts Center, New York City (screening and performance arts center founded by Woody and Steina Vasulka and Andres Mannik)
- The Experimental Television Center (E.T.C.) established, Binghamton, New York (moves to Owego in 1979)
- Ithaca Video Projects, Ithaca, New York (directed by Phillip Mallory Jones) (media resource facility providing workshops in photography, video, animation and graphic design, along with equipment loans and access to post-production facilities)
- Raindance Foundation (devoted to research and video as a creative communications medium with screening program) (founded by Frank Gillette *et al*)
- Perception (video collective founded by Eric Siegel and Steina and Woody Vasulka) (ends in 1973)
- T.P. Video Space Troupe, Experimental Workshop (founded by S. Clarke) (ends in 1977)
- Women's Interart Center, New York (begins in 1972 as a post-production center and establishes workshops, a production center, and an artist-in-residence program)
- Videopolis, Chicago (video resource and teaching center) (ends in 1978)
- Media Bus, Lanesville, New York (founded by the Videofreex) (moves to Woodstock in 1979, and opens a post-production facility, establishes a distribution and consulting service, and a production program)
- Media Equipment Resource Center established (M.E.R.C.)
- New Orleans Video Access Exhibitions and Festivals, New Orleans, Louisiana (N.O.V.A.C.)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- Alternative Media Center, New York University, New York (1st directed by George Stoney)
- Satellite Program of the National Center for Experiments in Television (N.C.E.T.), Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- The Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York establishes a video department (directed by J. Harithas, D. Ross, and R. Simmons) (ends in 1981)
- "Tapes from All Tribes," Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley, California (organized by Video Free America) (included over 100 videotapes)

- "The Television Environment," the University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, California (produced for Telethon by W. Adler and J. Margolies) (circulates through the American Federation of Arts)
- "8th New York Avant-Garde Festival," 69th Armory, New York (directed by Charlotte Moorman) (November 19)
- Nam June Paik, Shuya Abe, and Charlotte Moorman, "Electronic Art III," Galeria Bonino, New York
- Keith Sonnier, "Projects: Keith Sonnier," the Museum of Modern Art, New York (begins "Projects" exhibition program)
- "A Special Videotape Show," New American Filmmakers Series, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (organized by David Bienstock)
- "Ten Video Performances," Finch College Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (organized by Elayne Varian)
- Woody and Steina Vasulka present *Transmitted Environment* at the Experimental Television Center, Binghamton, New York

Important Events:

- The National Endowment of the Arts establishes Public Media Program (directed by Chloe Aaron and Brian O'Doherty) (becomes the Media Arts Program in 1977)

1972

Public Broadcast Television:

- WNET/13 begins the Television Workshop, New York (directed by David Loxton and Carol Brandenburg) (1st year artists-in-residence included Shirley Clarke, Douglas Davis, Ed Emshwiller, and Nam June Paik)
- Ed Emshwiller, *Scape-mates* (WNET/13, New York)
- Stephen Beck, *Electronic Notebooks* (KQED, San Francisco)
- Ron Hays creates *Music Image Workshop* using the Paik/Abe Synthesizer (WGBH, Boston)
- Douglas Davis live "Talk Out!" telecast with WCNY, Syracuse, New York (in conjunction with an exhibition at the Everson Museum)
- *The Very First On-the-Air Half-Inch Videotape Festival Ever: People Television* (live studio event produced by Becton, Barzyk, and Chiesa) (WGBH, Boston)

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- Electronic Arts Intermix establishes an editing/post-production facility (establishes an Artists Videotape Distribution Service in 1973)
- Media Study, Buffalo, New York (center for videotape production and exhibition) (directed by Gerald O'Grady and exhibitions curated by john Minkowsky)

- Downtown Community Television Center (D.C.T.V.), New York City (educational and production organization founded by Jon Alpert and Keiko Tsuno)
- Fifi Corday Productions (organization to assist artists' production founded by Carlota Schoolman)
- Survival Arts Media established (video collective)
- Portable Channel, Rochester, New York (video resource center with workshops)
- Double Helix, St. Louis, Missouri (media center with production/post-production facilities and audio/video workshops)
- Optic Nerve, San Francisco, California (documentary production collective) (ends in 1979)
- Top Value Television (TVTV) (ends in 1977)
- Woodstock Community Video, New York (production center and resource for community video) (begins Artists' TV Lab and moves to Rhinebeck 1976)
- Woodstock Video Expovision (festival of New York state artists founded by Ken Marsh) (ends in 1978)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- Peter Campus show at Bykert Gallery, New York
- "First Women's Video Festival," The Kitchen, New York
- "9th New York Avant-Garde Festival," Alexander Hamilton Hudson Riverboat, New York (directed by Charlotte Moorman)
- "First St. Jude Invitational of Video Art," de Saisset Gallery and Art Museum, University of Santa Clara, California (organized by David Ross)
- Douglas Davis, "Douglas Davis: An Exhibition Inside and Outside the Museum," the Everson Museum of Art in collaboration with WCNY-TV's "Talk Out!" telecast, Syracuse, New York
- Nam June Paik, "Nam June Paik" with Charlotte Moorman, the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York
- The Experimental Television Center with Shigeko Kubota exhibition, the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York (September 30)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- *First Annual National Video Festival*, Minneapolis College of Art and Design and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota (organized by Tom Drysdale) (workshops, screenings, panel discussion) (participants included Emshwiller, Paik, Rose, Schneider, Stoney, Tambellini, and Youngblood)

Important Events:

- FCC Report of 1972 (requiring all Cable franchises to provide at least 1 public access channel)
- Dan Sandin builds his Image Processor

1973

Public Broadcast Television:

- *Videola* created at KQED-TV (N.C.E.T.) for the San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, California

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- University Community Video, Minneapolis, Minnesota (devoted to independent production) (begins exhibition and distribution service in 1981)
- Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, New York (establishes media center with production facilities and an exhibition space) (begins *Afterimage*)
- Cable Arts Foundation (production and distribution services founded by Russell Connor)
- Visual Resources - Distribution/Info Service (directed by Eva Kroy) (publishes *Art & Cinema* and covers video)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "1973 Whitney Biennial," the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1st time videotapes were included)
- "William Wegman," Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California
- "International Computer Arts Festival," The Kitchen, New York
- John Reilly and Stefan Moore, *The Irish Tapes*, The Kitchen, New York
- "10th New York Avant-Garde Festival," Grand Central Station, New York (directed by Charlotte Moorman)
- "Circuit: A Video Invitational," the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York (curated by David Ross) (traveling exhibition with 65 artists)
- Frank Gillette, "Frank Gillette: Video Process and Meta-Process," the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- Dan Sandin and Tom DeFanti start video/computer graphics courses at the University of Illinois at Chicago

Important Events:

- John Simon Guggenheim Foundation awards 1st video fellowship

1974

Public Broadcast Television:

- The New Television Workshop established (1974-1993) (WGBH, Boston)
- WGBH, Boston produces *Video: The New Wave*
- Jon Alpert and Keiko Tsuno create *Cuba: The People* for the Public Broadcasting System (P.B.S.) (1st documentary on half-inch color videotape equipment)
- WXXI, Rochester, New York establishes the Television Workshop (directed by Ron Hagell, Pat Faust, and Carvin Eison) (ends in 1981)

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- Inter-Media Art Center, Bayville, New York (production/post-production facility, workshops, and exhibitions directed by Michael Rothbard)
- Anthology Film Archive, New York begins video program and includes exhibitions, screenings, preservation, and videotape archive (directed by Jonas Mekas) (video curators included Shigeko Kubota and Bob Harris) (begins publication of *Video Texts* in 1983)
- Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (A.I.V.F.) begins publishing *The Independent* (establishes the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (F.I.V.F.) as an educational organization in 1975)
- Anna Canepa Video Distribution (service of artists' videotapes)
- The Kitchen Center for Video, Music and Dance (formerly the Electronic Kitchen) relocates to Broome Street and begins daytime exhibition program
- Electronic Movers, Providence, Rhode Island (video art collective with exhibition space, equipment resources, workshops, and visiting artist series) (ends in 1980)
- La Mamelle, Inc./Art Com artist space opens, San Francisco, California

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- Nam June Paik, "Nam June Paik: Videa 'n' Videology 1959-1973," the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York (curated by David Ross) (January15-February 15)
- "First Annual Ithaca Video Festival," Ithaca Video Projects, Ithaca, New York (begins touring in 1976)
- "Collector's Video," Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California (organized by J. Livingston)
- "New Learning Spaces and Places," Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Peter Campus and Joan Jonas, "Projected Images," Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Nam June Paik, "Electronic Art IV," Galeria Bonino, New York
- "Projects: Video," the Museum of Modern Art, New York (curated by Barbara London)

- "Video Performances," 112 Workshop, 112 Green Street, New York (included work by Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, and Chris Burden)
- "Video and the Museum," the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York (conference and exhibition organized by David Ross)
- "Art Now '74: A Celebration of the American Arts," the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington D.C.
- Long Beach Museum of Art begins video exhibition program (curated by David Ross, Nancy Drew, and Kathy Huffman) (starts production center with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1976)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- "Open Circuits: An International Conference on the Future of Television," the Museum of Modern Art, New York (January 23-25)
- "Video and the Museum," the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York (conference organized by Jim Harithas and David Ross)

1975

Public Broadcast Television:

- WNET/13, New York produces *Video and Television Review (VTR)* from the TV Lab (yearly broadcast series of tapes from the United States and Europe)

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- Real Art Way, Harford, Connecticut (arts center with video exhibition and library)
- Independent Cinema Artists and Producers (I.C.A.P.), New York City (represents independent film and video artists to cable systems)
- 80 Langton Street independent space opens, San Francisco, California (later renamed the New Langton Arts)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- T.R. Uthco and Ant Farm, *The Eternal Frame* (reenactment of the J.F.K. assassination)
- "Southland Video Anthology," Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, California
- "Americans in Florence, Europeans in Florence," Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, California (organized by M. G. Bicocchi and D. Ross)
- Global Village, "First Annual Video Documentary Festival" (initiated by the Video Study Center)
- "1975 Biennial Exhibition," the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (includes 18 artists)

- "Video Art," Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania (exhibition documenting the development of video art through videotape and installations) (traveling show)
- Ant Farm, "Media Burn," San Francisco's Cow Palace Stadium, San Francisco, California (July 4)
- "Moebius Video Show," San Francisco Art Festival, San Francisco, California (1st exhibition of video in festival)
- Peter D'Agostino, "Walk Series," 80 Langton St., San Francisco, California (alternative space sponsored by the San Francisco Art Dealers Association)
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York begins collecting artists' videotapes

1976

Public Broadcast Television:

- *Video Art*, LA Theta Cable, Long Beach Cablevision, and Santa Barbara Cable TV, California (cable series produced by Some Serious Business and Long Beach Museum of Art) (ends in 1979)
- *Cable Soho* is established, New York (executive produced by Jaime Davidovich) (becomes the Artists' Television Network in 1977)

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- Boston Film/Video Foundation, Boston, Massachusetts (screenings, education, and equipment resources)
- The Video Data Bank, Chicago, Illinois (distribution and research center directed by L. Blumenthal)
- New York City Asian CineVision, New York (media center in Chinatown)
- Donnell Library Center, The New York Public Library, New York (establishes collection of videotapes by artists)
- Franklin Furnace, Brooklyn, New York (alternative exhibition space, archive, and performance program)
- Independent Film and Video Preview Network, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (founded by Sally Dixon and Robert Haller) (ends in 1980)
- San Francisco Bay Area Coalition, San Francisco, California (production/post-production center with workshops and exhibition space founded with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation) (Gail Waldron was the founding director)
- Image Union, Independent Production Company forms to offer alternative coverage of the Democratic National Convention

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- T.R. Uthco and Ant Farm, "The Eternal Frame" exhibition at the Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, California

- "Commissioned Video Works," the University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, California (organized by Jim Melchert)
- "Changing Channels," Museum of Fine Arts and School Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts (exhibition of videotapes from WGBH, WNET, and KQED)
- "Video Art: An Overview," the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California (organized by David Ross) (33 videotapes by 29 artists)
- "New Work in Abstract Video Imagery," the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York (curated by Richard Simmons)

1977

Public Broadcast Television:

- WNET/13, New York establishes the Independent Documentary Fund
- WNET/13, New York Satellite Performance at "Documenta VI" (curated by Wulf Herzogenrath) (broadcast internationally from Kassel, West Germany)
- *The Satellite Arts Project* (live broadcast by Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz between California, Maryland, and Washington D.C.)
- *Send/Receive Satellite Network* between New York and San Francisco (coordinated by Liza Béar and Keith Sonnier with support from Public Interest Satellite Association (P.I.S.A.) and N.A.S.A.)
- WNET/13, New York establishes the Independent Documentary Fund at the TV Lab

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- Image Film/Video Center, Independent Media Artists of Georgia, Atlanta, Georgia (media center, screenings, workshops, and equipment access) (started the Atlanta Film and Video Festival, now the Atlanta Film and Video Festival)
- Southwest Alternative Media Project (S.W.A.M.P.), Houston, Texas (organization associated with the Rice Media Center at Rice University) (media center with education program, lecture series, and production/post-production technical assistance) (conducts Southwest Film and Video Tour artist-in-residence program)
- Locus Communications, New York (equipment access center with workshops, technical production services, cable programming, and screenings)
- Port Washington Library, Port Washington, New York (begins visiting artist program with exhibitions and presentations)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Documenta VI," WNET/13 satellite performance and international retrospective of videotapes and video installations (Joseph Beuys, Douglas Davis, and Nam June Paik)

1978

Public Broadcast Television:

- Tom Weinberg, *Image Union* (WTTW, Chicago)
- Artists' Television Network initiates Soho Television (directed by Jaime Davidovitch) (regular programming of artists' tapes and performances, includes "The Live! Show")
- *Potato Wolf* artist television series for cable

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- Chicago Editing Center, Chicago, Illinois (production/post-production facility with education and exhibition program directed by Cynthia Neal and Joyce Bollinger) (becomes the Center for New Television in 1980)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Vasulka: Steina—Machine Vision, Woody—Description," Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York (curated by Linda L. Cathcart)
- Frank Gillette, "Aransas, Axis of Observation," The Kitchen, New York
- "Video Viewpoints" (beginning of yearly lecture series by independent videomakers)
- Some Serious Business, "Videonight," Venice, California (weekly video screening series)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- National Media Alliance of Media Centers (N.A.M.A.C.) holds 1st conference (hosted by Pittsburgh filmmakers)
- "Chinsegut Film/Video Conference" (founded by Charles Lyman and Peter Melaragno)

1979

Public Broadcast Television:

- *Produced for TV*, La Mamelle and KTSF-TV San Francisco, California (live broadcast of performance art)
- WNET/13, New York produces *Non-Fiction Television* (broadcast series from the Independent Documentary Fund)
- Public Interest Video Network (independent production company financed by the Urban Scientific and Educational Research (U.S.E.R.))

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- The Media Alliance, New York (New York state organization to coordinate resources and promote work from the independent video community)
- Communication Update, Center for New Art Activities (organized by the World Administrative Radio Conference (W.A.R.C.)) (reporting on artists series for cable dealing with political and communications issues)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "N/A Vision," weekly circulating video screening series at the Long Beach Museum of Art, Foundation of Art and Resources (F.A.R.), and Highlands Art Agents, Long Beach, California
- "Re-Visions: Projects and Proposals in Film and Video," the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (curated by John Hanhardt)
- "Videotapes by British Artists," The Kitchen, New York (curated by Steve Partridge)
- "Video from Tokyo to Fukui and Kyoto," the Museum of Modern Art, New York (curated by Barbara London) (traveling exhibition)
- "Everson Video Revue," the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York
- P.S.1 begins Video Exhibition Program with emphasis on installations (video curated by Bob Harris)
- The University Art Museum institutes regular weekly programming, University of California, Berkeley, California (organized by David Ross) (ends in 1981)

1980

Public Broadcast Television:

- Live Satellite Projects: *Three Artists on Line in Three Countries* (3-way slow-scan transmission by A. Tambellini in Cambridge, T. Klinkowstein in Amsterdam, and B. Bartlett in Vancouver)
- KTCA-TV, Minneapolis-St. Paul produces *Minnesota Landscapes* series
- Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz, *Hole-in-Space* (live interactive satellite project between Los Angeles and New York)
- *Love Tapes in New York*, live interactive installation and tapes exhibited with selections shown on cable television and WNET/13, New York

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Video About Video: Four French Artist," the University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, California and Téléthèque-Alliance Francaise, New York
- "Installation: Video," Hallwalls Gallery, Buffalo, New York
- "Art at the Olympics 1980 Winter Games" (videotapes and installations)

- "California Video," Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, California (curated by Kathy Huffman)
- "Love Tapes in New York," live interactive installation and tapes exhibition with selections shown on cable television and WNET/13, World Trade Center, New York
- Alternative Spaces, Hudson River Museum, New York (exhibition series using planetarium)
- "First Annual San Francisco Video Festival," San Francisco, California (publishes *Video 80*, now *SEND*)
- "Survival Information Television," New Orleans Video Access Center (N.O.V.A.C.), New Orleans, Louisiana (installation in local Welfare Office with social issues program)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- "Television/Society/Art," The Kitchen, New York (organized by Ron Clark and Mary MacArthur) (colloquium presented by the Kitchen and the American Film Institute) (participants include B. Buchloh, J. Burton, N. DeMartino, S. Heath, F. Jameson, R. Krauss, M. Nash, R. Sklar, M. Rosler, H. Schiller, A. Sekula, and P. Wollen)
- "Artists' Use of Telecommunications" (organized by the Center for Advanced Visual Studies, MIT) (collaborative interactive slow-scan television conference link between Cambridge, New York, San Francisco, Long Beach, Toronto, Vienna, Tokyo, and Vancouver)

1981

Public Broadcast Television:

- Douglas Davis, *Double Entendre* (satellite telecast performance)
- Paper Tiger Television (organized by D. Augusta, Pennee Bender, Skip Blumberg, and Shulae Chang) (series that examines communications industry via the print media, and serves as model for low-budget, public access programming)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Everson Video Revue," Museum of Contemporary Art, La Jolla, California
- "First National Latin Film and Video Festival," El Museo del Barrio, New York
- "Visual Studies Workshop: From the Academy to the Avant-garde," Center for Art Tapes, Halifax and Center for New Television, Chicago (guest curated by Richard Simmons) (traveling)
- "1981 Biennial Exhibition," the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (installation by Frank Gillette and Buky Schwartz)
- "Stay Tuned," The New Museum, New York (organized by Ned Rifkin)

- "Video Classics," Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (curated by Roselee Goldberg)
- "National Video Festival," American Film Institute, Washington D.C. (sponsored by the Sony Corporation)
- Pittsburgh Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute expands film and video section and opens video gallery, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Douglas Davis, *Double Entendre*, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and the Pompidou Center, Paris, France (satellite telecast performance)

1982

Public Broadcast Television:

- *The Artist and TV: A Dialogue Between the Fine Art and the Mass Medium*, A.S.C.N. Cable Network (interactive satellite telecast connecting artists, critics, curators, and educators in Los Angeles, Iowa City, and New York)
- *Disarmament Video Survey*, New York (collaboration by over 300 independent producers all over the world to compile one-min interviews with people about their views on nuclear arms and disarmament. Survey shown on cable TV and presented as installations at American Film Institute National Video Festival in Washington D.C.)
- *The Video Artist*, produced by E. Trigg, Electronic Arts Intermix, and S. Shapiro (16-part series on major video artists broadcast nationally over USA Cable Network)
- WXXI-TV, Rochester, New York closes the artists' editing program

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- The Media Project, Portland, Oregon (expands to include video) (media organization for distribution of independent work, includes workshops and state-wide directory of media services, and acts as a liaisons to cable networks)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Special Interest Group in Computer Graphics" (S.G.G.R.A.P.H.), conference includes computer-generated video art in its juried art show (organized by Copper Giloth)
- Alan Moore and Terry Mohre, "Ersatz TV: A Studio Melee," Hallwalls Gallery, Buffalo, New York (curated by Kathy High) (included installations of 6 studio sets from artists' television series "Potato Wolf," with live cameras and videotape screenings)
- "Video/TV: Humor/Comedy," Media Study, Buffalo, New York (curated by John Minkowsky)

- Nam June Paik, "Nam June Paik" (the Whitney Museum of American Art retrospective) travels to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois (curated by John Hanhardt)
- "4th Annual United States Film and Video Festival" (expands to include video)
- "Art and Technology: Approaches to Video," Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York (curated by Nancy Hoyt) (3-part exhibition of installations)
- "National Video Festival," American Film Institute, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington D.C.
- Boston Institute of Contemporary Art begins video program (directed by David Ross)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- Special Interest Group in Computer Graphics (SGGRAPH), annual conference includes computer-generated video art in its juried art show (organized by Copper Giloth)

1983

Public Broadcast Television:

- *Shared Realities* Long Beach Museum of Art, California (curated by Kathy Huffman) (series on local cable station of work produced by artists at the Station/ Annex, programming about the museum, and local cultural programming)
- Robert Ashley, *Perfect Lives* (television opera produced by the Kitchen in 7 parts)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "1983 Biennial Exhibition," the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1st touring video show of Biennial through the America Federation of Arts (A.F.A.))
- "Video Installation 1983," the Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, New York
- "Video as Attitude," Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, and University Art Museum, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Mabou Mines, "Hajj," California Institute of the Arts, California
- "Electronic Vision," Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York (curated by J. Minkowksy)
- "The Second Link: Viewpoints on Video in Eighties," Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, New York and the Modern Museum of Art, New York (organized by Lorne Falk and the Walter Phillips Gallery at the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts) (curated by P. Gale, K. Huffman, B. London, B. McNevin, D. Mignot, and S. Nairne)
- "The Electronic Gallery," State University of New York at Binghamton, New York (curated by Maureen Turim) (March 2-25)

- "Image/Process II," The Kitchen, New York (curated by Shalom Gorewitz)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- "The Media Arts in Transition" Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota (organized and sponsored by the Walker Art Center, National Alliance of Media Arts Centers (N.A.M.A.C.), Minneapolis College of Arts and Design, University Community Video, and Film in the Cities) (conference programmers include J. Lawson, J. Minkowsky, and M. Ward)
- "The Intersection of the World and the Visual Image," Women's Interart Center (colloquium with screenings on the relationship of language to the moving image, alternative narratives, and the transformation of literary, historical, performance, and visual works to video)
- "Changing Times, Changing Needs" annual conference, Media Alliance

1984

Public Broadcast Television:

- The Institute of Contemporary Art and WGBH-TV in Boston collaborate to create the Contemporary Art Television Fund

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- The Video Data Bank, "The Science of Fiction: The Fiction of Science" (produces the first Video Drive-In in Grant Park, Chicago) (September 7-8)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Revising Romance: New Feminist Video," American Federation of Arts and The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (traveling exhibition)
- "Global Village 10th Annual Documentary Festival: The National Tour," New York
- "Electronic Visions," Hudson River Museum, New York (curated by John Minkowski)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- Video 84: International Video Conference of Montreal (included festival, symposium, publication, and installations)

1985

Public Broadcast Television:

- "New Television" series of artists' videotapes inaugurated at WNET/13, New York

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Global Village 11th Annual Documentary Festival," Global Village, New York
- "1985 National Video Festival," The American Film Institute (September 19-22)
- "Difference: On Representation and Sexuality Videotapes," New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (December 8, 1984-February 10, 1985) (traveling exhibition)
- "Emerging Expression: The Artist and the Computer," Bronx Museum of Art, New York
- "Art and New Technology," Bronx Museum of Art, New York
- "Retrospective from E.T.C.: 1971-1985," The Kitchen, New York
- "Alternating Currents," the Alternative Museum, New York (June 15-July 6)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- Media Alliance Annual Conference, The Kitchen (September 12-14)

1986

Public Broadcast Television:

- WGBH, Boston becomes co-producer of WNET/13's "New Television" series, New York
- Start-up season of Deep Dish Television, New York (providing satellite transmission of community video to cable stations and public television nationally)

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- Squeaky Wheel Media Center established, Buffalo, New York (director Julie Zando)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "TechnoBop III" at Anthology Film Archives, New York (curated by Sara Hornbacher)
- 1986 National Video Festival, The American Film Institute

- "Video in the Park Festival," New York (curated by Carlota Schoolman) (August 4-13)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- "Premiere: First Conference on Film Exhibition" (co-organized by New York State Council on the Arts (N.Y.S.C.A.) Film Program and the Crandall Library, Glens Falls)
- 9th Annual international Public Television Screening Conference, Montreal

1987

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- Bill Viola, Bill Viola retrospective, the Modern Museum of Art, New York (curated by Barbara London)
- "Video as Art," Cortland Arts Council Gallery, Courtland, New York (curated by Sherry Miller) (March 1-27)

1988

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Video Art: Expanded Forms," the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (curated by John Hanhardt) (February 18-March 30)
- "Untamed Video: Artists' Tapes from the ETC," University Art Gallery, State University of University at Binghamton, New York (curated by Sherry Miller) (September 29-October 30)
- "Post Currents: A Gallery of Electronic Arts," University of Buffalo, Buffalo, New York (curated by Neil Zusman)
- "Infermental 7 1988: A Travelling Exhibition of World Video" (organized by Ars Electronica, Festival of Art, Technology and Society)

1989

Public Broadcast Television:

- "arTVideo" begins as a cable series program by the New York Foundation for the Arts

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "American Documentary Video: Subject to Change," the Museum of Modern Art, New York (curated by Deirdre Boyle) (traveling exhibition)
- "After Collapse: Rebuilding Expressive Media Post Currents 1989," University Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York (curated by Neil Zusman)
- "Icono Negro: The Black Aesthetic in Video Art" (curated by Philip Mallory Jones)

1990

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "From Receiver to Remote Control: The TV Set," The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (September 14 –November 25)

1991

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Out of Control 91," Ars Electronica, Austria
- Shigeko Kubota, "Shigeko Kubota, Video Sculpture," the American Museum of the Moving Image, New York

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- Symposium on Video Preservation (hosted by the Museum of Modern Art and organized by Media Alliance)

1992

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- Amiga Workshop, Media Ithaca, Ithaca, New York (taught by Mona Jimenez) (Fall 1992)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Video Pioneers," Ars Electronica, Austria (curated by Woody and Steina Vasulka)

1994

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Set in Motion: The New York State Council on the Arts Celebrates 30 Years of Independents"

1995

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- The Bay Area Video Coalition opens the first non-profit remastering facility for half-inch open reel tape, San Francisco, California (directed by Luke Hones)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Video Spaces: Eight Installations," the Museum of Modern Art, New York (curated by Barbara London)

1996

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "25 Years of the Experimental Television Center," Art in General, New York (curated by Ann-Sargent Wooster) (November 8-January 25)
- "American Film and Video: Whitney Biennial," the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (John Hanhardt, "Models of Interaction: Film and Video in a New Media Age")
- "New York State Media Festival," Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York (April 12-13)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- "Playback 1996: Video Preservation Roundtable" (organized by the Bay Area Video Coalition with assistance from Media Alliance) (March 29-30)

Important Events:

- Study on the Preservation of Television and Video hearings held in March (the Library of Congress holds hearings in Los Angeles, New York and Washington D.C. for the Study of the Preservation of Television and Video, conducting a national needs assessment and resulting in a set of recommendations in areas such as cataloging cleaning and remastering, education, and storage)

1997

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Animating the Static -Experiments in Video 1965-1980" (tapes from the Yale University Libraries videotape collection)
- "Steina and Woody Vasulka: Machine Media," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California (catalog edited by Marita Sturken)

1998

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Landscape: Mediated Views," Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, New York (January 30-April 3)
- Bill Viola, Bill Viola retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (February 12-May 10) (travels to Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Stedelikj Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago)
- "Pioneers of Digital Photography," Open Space Gallery, New York (July 8-August 11)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- "Video History - Making Connections" Conference, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York (sponsored by the Experimental Television Center and organized by Pamela Susan Hawkins, Peer Bode, and Steina Vasulka) (included the "Tool Room," which displayed early analog and digital tools)

1999

Alternative Television Centers and Video Collectives:

- Independent Media Arts Preservation (I.M.A.P.) established (support from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Rockefeller Foundation)

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "Transmission: Exhibition," Bakalar and Huntington Galleries at the Massachusetts College of Art, Massachusetts (January 25-February 27)
- "Motion: An Exhibition of Essentialist Film and Video," the 58th Exhibition of Central New York Artists exhibition at Munson Williams Proctor Institute, Utica, New York

2000

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- "The Worlds of Nam June Paik," Guggenheim Museum of Art, New York
- "Black Box Video Shorts," the College Art Gallery, College of New Jersey (exhibition of early Video Art)
- Shigeko Kubota, "Sexual Healing," Lance Fung Gallery, New York (March 2-April 1)
- "Not Still Art Festival 2000," the Micro Museum, Brooklyn, New York (a historical retrospective with works by Jud Yalkut, Carol Goss, Bill Etra, and others) (April 29)

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- "TechArcheology: A Symposium on Installation Art Conservation," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California (organized by the Bay Area Video Coalition) (January 5-6)

2001

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- "Preserving the Immaterial: A Conference on Variable Media"

2002

Academic Programs and Collectives:

- "Looking Back/Looking Forward" Symposium at the Downtown Community Television Center (organized by the Experimental Television Center in association with Independent Media Arts Preservation (I.M.A.P.), the Bay Area Video Coalition, and the Electronic Media Specialty Group of the American Institute for the Conservation of Artistic and Historic Works (A.I.C.) (May 31-June 1)

2009

Exhibitions and Festivals:

- *45 Years of Performance Video from EAI*, part of *100 Years (version #2, ps1, nov 2009)*, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, New York

Appendix II: A Chronology of Published Writings on Experimental Television and Video Practices, 1962-2010

1962

Pera, Arthur Köpcke, Benjamin Patterson, La Monte Young, Wolf Vostell, George Maciunas, and Nam June Paik. *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen*, no. 1 (June 1962).

Christo, György Ligeti, Pera, Henry Flynt, Frank Trowbridge, C. Caspari, Nam June Paik, Franz Mon, Jed Curtis, and Wolf Vostell. *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen*, no. 3 (December 1962).

Paik, Nam June. "Exposition of Music." *Dé-coll/age*, no. 3 (December 1962): unpaginated.

1963

Bonk, Siegfried. "Über dem Eingang ein blutiger Ochsenkopf: Nam June Paik in der Galerie 'Parnass.'" *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, March 16-17, 1963, 10.

Paik, Nam June. "Exposition of Music Electronic Television." Exhibition brochure. Wuppertal, West Germany: Gallery Parnass, 1963. (Facsimile reprinted in *Nam June Paik, Werke 1946-1976: Musik—Fluxus—Video, 79.* Edited by Wulf Herzogenrath. Exhibition catalogue. Cologne: Kölnischer Kunstverein, 1976.)

Schön, Wolf. "In Neo-Dadas Kindergarten: Erste Begegnung mit der Kunst aus der Mülltonne." *Rheinischer Merkur*, March 16, 1963, 21.

Thwaites, John Anthony. "Der Philosoph und die Katze." *Deutsche Zeitung*, April 9, 1963.

Zett. "Absurder Klamauk am Abgrund: Eine 'Musikausstellung' in Rolf Jährling's 'Parnass.'" *Westdeutsche Rundschau*, March 15, 1963.

1964

Brecht, George, Tomas Schmit, Stanley Brown, Allan Kaprow, Dick Higgins, Bazon
Brock, Nam June Paik, Robin Page, Wolf Vostell, Frank Trowbridge, Claes
Oldenburg, H. J. Dietrich, Jean-Jacques Lebel, and Al Hansen. *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin
aktueller Ideen*, no. 4 (1964).

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York:
McGraw-Hill, 1964.

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fLuxus cc fiVe ThreE, no. 4, section 2, June 1964. (Facsimile reprinted in *In the Spirit
of Fluxus*, 166. Exhibition catalogue. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1993.)

Turok, Paul. "Music Note: More Torso Than Playing." *New York Herald Tribune*,
January 9, 1964.

1965

Paik, Nam June. "Electronic TV & Color TV Experiment." New York: New School for
Social Research, January 8, 1965. (Unpublished Exhibition Brochure. Facsimile
reprinted in Rosebush, Judson, ed. *Videa 'n' Videology: Nam June Paik, 1959-1973*.
Syracuse: Everson Museum of Art, 1974.)

_____. *Nam June Paik: Electronic Art*. Exhibition catalogue. New York: Galeria
Bonino, 1965.

1966

Vostell, Wolf. *Dé-coll/age Happenings*. Translated by Laura P. Williams. New York:
Something Else Press, 1966.

1967

Baker, Russel. "Observer: Seated One Day at the Cello." *The New York Times*, Sunday,
May 14, 1967, 10E.

McLuhan, Marshall and Quentin Fiore. *The Medium is the Massage*. New York:
Random House, 1967.

Paik, Nam June. "Untitled." *Flykingen Bulletin* (Stockholm) (1967).

Shirely, David L. "Art Is Light." *Newsweek*, February 20, 1967, 101.

Tambellini, Elsa. "Electromedia: A Movement." *Artscanada*, no. 114 (November 1967): 3-4.

Yalkut, Jud. "Electronic Zen: The Underground TV Generation." *Westside News*, August 10, 1967, 6.

1968

Davis, Douglas. "Art and Technology—The New Combine." *Art in America*, vol. 56, no. 1 (January/February 1968): 28-37.

Ryan, Paul. "Videotape—Thinking About a Medium." *Media and Methods*, vol. 5, no. 4 (December 1968): 36-41.

Vostell, Wolf. *Miss Vietnam, and Texts of Other Happenings*. Translated by Carl Weissner. San Francisco: Nova Broadcast Press, 1968.

Yalkut, Jud. "Art and Technology of Nam June Paik." *Arts Magazine* (April 1968): 50-51.

1969

Burnham, Jack. "Real Time Systems." *Artforum*, vol. 8, no. 1 (September 1969): 49-55.

Chandler, John. "Art in the Electric Age." *Art International*, vol. 13, no. 2 (February 1969): 19-25.

Heubach, Friedrich Wolfram. "Wolf Vostell: Elektronischer Dé-coll/age Happening Raum, 1959-1968." *Dé-coll/age: Bulletin aktueller Ideen*, no. 7. Frankfurt: Typos Verlag, 1969. (Documentation of works for the exhibitions "Von der Collage zur Assemblage," Institute für Moderne Kunst, Nuremberg, and "Linee della ricerca: Dall'informale alle nouve strutture," XXIV Biennale di Venezia.)

Harrington, Stephanie. "TV: Awaiting a Genus." *The Village Voice*, May 29, 1969, 29.

Glueck, Grace. "Art Notes: T-Visionaries." *The New York Times*, May 25, 1969, D42.

Gruen, John. "Art in New York." *New York*, vol. 2, no. 23 (June 9, 1969): 57.

Margolies, John. "TV—The Next Medium." *Art in America*, vol. 57, no. 5 (September/October 1969): 48-55.

Mekas, Jonas. Untitled. *The Village Voice*, May 22, 1969.

Rose, Barbara. "Television as Art, 'Inevitable.'" *Vogue*, August 15, 1969, 36.

Schwartz, Joseph. "TV Success, Failure in Exhibition." *The Jersey Journal*, June 12, 1969, 29.

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Wise, Howard. "Kinetic Art Light." *American Home* (October 1969): 32.

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Yalkut, Jud. "TV as a Creative Medium at Howard Wise Gallery." *Arts Magazine*, no. 44 (September 1969): 18.

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_____. "Guerrilla Television." *Newsweek*, December 7, 1970, 57-58.

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Diaman, N.A. "The Alternate Television Moment." *Zygote* (September 16, 1970): 45.

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Graham, Dan. *Performance 1*. New York: John Gibson, 1970.

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Sharp, Willoughby. "Nauman Interview." *Arts Magazine* (March 1970).

Smiley, Logan. "TV Film/Tape in the '70s." *Print*, vol. 24, no. 1 (January 1970): 76-77.

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Smith, Ralph Lee. "The Wired Nation." (Special Issue.) *The Nation*, vol. 210, no. 19 (May 18, 1970): 582-606. Also printed as *The Wired Nation. Cable: The Electronic Communications Highway*. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

Toffler, Alvin. *Future Shock*. New York, Bantam Books, 1970.

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Tucker, Marcia. *Robert Morris*. New York: Praeger Publishing for the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1970.

Willis, Domingo. "Downey at Howard Wise." *Arts Magazine*, vol. 44, no. 6 (April 1970): 62.

Yalkut, Jud. "Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider: Parts I and II of an Interview." *Radical Software*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 9-10.

Youngblood, Gene. *Expanded Cinema*. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1970.

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