

Unesco

Cultural Development

Documentary Dossier **25-26**

Artistic Creation and Video Art

Cultural Development

1309/15

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The purpose of these pamphlets is to disseminate documentation and data collected on certain aspects of cultural development in conformity with programme resolution 3.321 (c) of the Programme and Budget approved by the General Conference at its seventeenth session.

CLT.83/WS/3

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PREFACE

In the context of its programme designed to encourage artistic creation, Unesco is taking a very close interest in the pioneering experiments taking place in the plastic arts.

The three studies on video art presented in this volume of the series Documentary dossiers describe, using different methods of approach, the increasing importance of this new medium in areas such as visual communication and the history of art and in the realm of ideas.

These studies, which were discussed at the Third International Festival of Video Art (Locarno, Ascona, 6-15 August 1982), drew varied reactions from the participants. There was strong emphasis on the need to give profound thought to the definition of video art. In the view of René Berger, "video art is, above all, a paradox; it seems to be an extension of television and also of the plastic arts, but, at the same time, it is marginalized by television and the plastic arts". This marginalization, at both the aesthetic and the cultural level, obviously recurs at the economic, commercial and technical levels.

Two different methods of approach enable us to come to grips with the use of video in art and culture. René Berger, in his study "Video in the modern world", defines video as a means of "communication" in the broad sense of the term, i.e. a process which, whatever its nature - musical, literary, etc. - affects one or more people. This approach moves away from the purely aesthetic experience and deals with video art in relation to its technological and ideological characteristics.

An analysis of the specific methods used by video does indeed bring out the fact that each shot or sequence is absolutely independent, and that, at the same time, there is a discontinuity in the progression of the sequences. The contrast between the single unit (the sequence considered independently of the others) and the whole (the sequence of shots) reinforces and heightens the effect of continuity and discontinuity on which the visual language of video is built.

From the aesthetic point of view, it seems as if the brush and the chisel have ceased to correspond to the ideal of certain artists, as if these intermediaries between them and their work were becoming too intrusive, an encumbrance even. Already, the grasping hand, the nude body and the uneasy eye need to merge into the act of

creation. Pollock takes paint by the handful; the "happening" artist offers his body as canvas or colour. Thanks to video, the artist acquires a new language and breaks once and for all with the traditional media of art. Video art moves in the dimensions of time and space. Nam June Paik, one of the best-known video artists, used to say, when still a beginner, "One day, video will replace the aircraft". It is indeed true that a videotape can now be retransmitted from one end of the world to the other, using audio-visual techniques, without any need for an aeroplane.

Vittorio Fagone, who adopts the aesthetic approach to the video phenomenon in his paper entitled "Video in contemporary art", tries to trace back through history, the artistic experiments - in the plastic arts, the cinema and photography - proceeding from the visual mode of thought characteristic of video.

Lastly, Angiola Churchill puts video art in an educational context. This form of artistic expression is still only in its infancy and its application to learning has still not been clearly defined; the established educational system is based on rational thinking and is ignorant of the all-encompassing knowledge claimed by video art.

What is a video artist? A musician? A painter? A sculptor? A film maker? What is the training required? The authors try to provide answers to these questions.

A bibliography compiled by Vittorio Fagone completes this dossier. It will be a valuable guide for theoretical and experimental research in the field of video art.

INTRODUCTION

René Berger

Any civilization or society represents the deployment in time and space of a source of energy which combines the ability to transmit, disseminate and control.

In its broadest sense, the ability to transmit implies the generation of something which did not previously exist. It therefore involves the power of creation ("Let there be light and there was light") as well as that of production. In this wider definition, I draw no distinction between ideas, canned goods, symbols, make-up, myths, slogans, radio or television broadcasts, or video tapes.

The ability to disseminate and/or distribute refers to the process whereby the "products" are directed towards target groups forming either micro-networks, such as universities, sects, political parties or the art world, or macro-networks such as those now established by the mass media.

Similarly, in this definition I draw no distinction between missionaries, commercial travellers, distributors, or disseminators of information. The Vatican, Carrefour, the Messageries, Hachette, Europe 1, petrol stations and radio or television networks all have their respective publics, be they practising Catholics, customers, listeners or viewers.

The ability to control, in the American sense of the word, refers to the entire process whereby action may be directed towards the set objective. Here again, I do not differentiate between the technical monitoring or controlling of a turbine or an assembly line, religious domination or control (including the repression of heresy), the evaluation or control of knowledge acquired at school through the examination system, the verification or financial control of commercial enterprises, and frontier or police checks or control.

The deployment of social energy is thus structured in a series of clearly defined relationships which ensure, according to time and place, the predominance of a specific factor, whether religious, political, legal, economic or administrative ...

If a society ceases to exercise its control, it lapses into anarchy; if it ceases to disseminate or distribute, it breaks down; if it ceases to transmit (to procreate or produce), it perishes. If a society abuses its control, it lapses into totalitarianism, a phenomenon which can also arise - as we are just beginning to see -

as a result of excessive dissemination (the information over-kill to which the modern world is subjected) or over-production leading to economic imperialism.

The Western model

The combination of these three factors, which determine the structure, maintenance and security of any system, is based at the present time on a model of civilization which has spread throughout the world, the blue-print for which is to be found in Western and especially American society. The concept which generates, underpins, activates and directs this model is that of development - witness the universally accepted distinction between the developed countries and the Third World, whatever subtle distinctions may be drawn between industrial and post-industrial societies, between under-developed and developing countries. Further evidence, if required, is provided by the fact that despite these differences, all countries are evolving along similar lines, including China which, the sole exception prior to the death of Mao, is now following suit.

In structural terms, the Western model is based on three key factors, whose combined action has transformed the modern world: science, technology and economics.

Broadly speaking, after Galileo, science first introduced, then imposed experimental Truth. It gradually evicted all other forms of truth - religious, philosophical, even ethical - or reduced them to the level of subcultures. Despite their influence, Mahomet, Buddha and Jesus are regional phenomena, specific to certain areas of the world. Science alone is universal. There are no more American electrons than there are Chinese protons. Scientocentrism is a reality.

Likewise technology, the total sum of the principles, methods and processes arising from the techniques applied by industry, has dispensed with all forms of traditional activity, from the religious ceremony to the skill of the local craftsman, or has achieved the same result by romanticizing them in order to adapt them to its own needs: Europe 1 is heard in the remotest areas by the mere turn of a switch; the investiture of the Prince of Wales becomes a television extravaganza, like any other variety show; the Papal election is presented in the same way as the World Cup. Time is reduced to a technical factor. The transistor has replaced the tom-tom; Philips and Sony have colonized virgin forests and favelas. Aspirin has turned the medicine man into a museum-piece (to the continuing fascination of ethnographers). Technocentrism and scientocentrism go hand in hand.

Economics, as a discipline, has always existed, but never as the exclusive activity it now represents in our Western model.

Today there is nothing in East or West which is not convertible into an exchange value. Religious and moral values have been abandoned or set aside. At the very most, there is evidence of a certain resistance on the political front - or is this already a rear-guard action? There is no head of State who does not insist on the need to produce more and more, to export more and more, endorsing thereby the laws of the market place and heeding only the sole standard by which nations are assessed - the universal measure of Gross National Product.

Economicocentrism, scientocentrism and technocentrism converge to promote the only value which is currently acceptable - that of efficiency, under the aegis of the most ambiguous concept of all, that of development.

The concept of development maintains the illusion, until recently a reality, of a linear improvement (as distinguished from evolution), just as it maintains the illusion, also a reality until recently, that it could be identified with the notion of progress. Over the last few decades, however, the concurrent and exponential growth of science, technology and economics has given rise to consequences, the shortcomings and dangers of which have been clearly established - pollution, disturbances, unemployment, genetic manipulation, inflation, fluctuating currencies; even the satellite, designed for world-wide communication, now looks like a planetary supervisor.

And yet - paradoxically - politicians, scientists and experts still maintain that development is at the service of mankind, that it can be directed, accelerated or checked, as if, for some, it depended on rational thought, for others, on the authorities, for all of us, on our freedom to make good or bad use of it. The question of making good or bad use of it, however, has become increasingly irrelevant. The last few decades have shown that science, technology and economics are self-developing (or self-supporting) forces, each of which evolved in accordance with its own specific logic. Their approach is purely strategic, consisting of a series of goals to be reached; their sole aim is their own self-development, with no concern for other values.

This preliminary outline, however summary, may help to throw light on the question of the social energy represented by the mass media, especially the most powerful of them all, television, currently under pressure from, but also, if market trends are anything to go by, in collusion with the new media of video.

Chapter I

VIDEO IN CONTEMPORARY ART

Vittorio Fagone

1. Avant-garde and new communication

Man Ray, who had frequent recourse to photography and the cinema in the course of his avant-garde experimentation, wrote in a note published only recently: "Any form of expression has its purists. There are photographers who claim that their art bears no relationship to the art of painting. There are artists who scorn photography although it inspired and was used by many painters in the course of the nineteenth century. There are architects who refuse to hang a single painting in their buildings, insisting that their creations are complete works of art in their own right. Similarly, when the motor-car was invented, the horse was probably acclaimed by some as the very best means of locomotion. All these attitudes spring from the apprehension that one form may replace the other, whereas nothing of the sort has in fact occurred. There has been no attempt to do away with the motor-car, on the pretext that we now have the aeroplane". (1)

Twenty years or so after the entry of the art world on the video scene, it is arguable whether the purist view vis-à-vis this new form of expression has greatly changed. Although the potential applications of the new televisual technology were enthusiastically and unanimously welcome by artists in the late 1960s and early 1970s, they were viewed with a certain degree of scepticism by the 1980s.

Seen in this context, video art might appear as a phenomenon which only lasted until the first half of the 1970s. (2) However, this view, seemingly confirmed by recent attempts to rehabilitate subjectivist and neo-expressionist art, overlooks one essential factor. Video was and still is for many artists an instrument of research rather than a new genre or discipline. Their use of video techniques runs counter to the widely held belief that video is a media of mass

1. Janus, "La fotografia puo essere arte" in Man Ray, Tutti gli scritti, Feltrinelli, Milan 1980, p. 225. According to Janus, Man Ray's undated note was written after 1923.

2. In a paper on "La Télévision comme nouvelle forme d'expression visuelle" presented at the Premio Italia Congress (Milan,

communication; for them, video represents an effective means of establishing a new, often critical definition of the visible world, encapsulating sound and time in a process of composition and visual analysis. Viewed in this light, any appreciation of the creativity generated by the use of the televisual medium can be compared to the contemporary appreciations made of the use by the first and second avant-garde movements of photography and cinema in the field of twentieth century visual arts. Photography, cinema and television mark three turning points in the development of modern visual communication. The changes wrought by these revolutionary techniques lead to the establishment of systems for the distribution and dissemination of new forms of images. Photography, cinema and television also determine autonomous linguistic models of communication. The relationship between the visual arts and these new "image worlds" is a complex one.

Photography came into being as a result of the efforts of Western artists, over a period lasting several centuries, to devise machines (camera lucida and camera obscura) capable of producing a faithful and exact replica of the visible world in terms of perspective. The visual artists of the first avant-garde were enthusiastic in their reaction to cinematography. The 1916 manifesto entitled "Futurist Cinematography" declares: "Cinematography is an art form in its own right. It must therefore never imitate the theatre; essentially visual in character, it must seek to adopt the same principles as the world of painting - detachment from reality, from photography, from the prettily appealing and the solemn. It must seek to become anti-pretty, distorting, impressionist, synthetic, dynamic, free from the weight of words. Cinematography must be iterated as a means of expression so that it becomes the ideal tool in the creation of a new art form infinitely vaster and more flexible than all the others."

Richter, Man Ray and Duchamp were emphatic in their insistence on the visual character of the cinema, as opposed to its theatrical dimension, while Léger glorified the cinema as a moving, protagonist image. All these artists undertook to produce films

(Footnote 2 cont.) 1978), Gillo Dorfles comments: "I would hesitate to suggest that video as an art form is already on the wane, but there are now definite signs of disenchantment and distrust on the part of the public, following a period of overexposure and uncritical acceptance of highly dubious and ambiguous material. The fact remains that many of the original ideas as to the possibilities of this new art form have proved illusory ..." (Le arti visuali e il ruolo della televisione, Eri, Rome 1978, p. 125).

whose aim was to broaden the scope of the cinema and increase opportunities for the dynamic use of aesthetically determined images. After 1945, when several visual artists returned to the cinema, the work of the Dadaists and the Surrealists in France and Germany were once again accepted as a reliable reference.

The situation is more complex with regard to visual artists and television. The origins of television are linked with the development of radio from the technical viewpoint and in terms of linguistic composition. From its earliest days, television has been characterized by the predominance of sound, the importance attached to "real time" and its integration into an extensive social environment. Television was first developed in Great Britain and the United States in the late 1930s, and world-wide recognition of this new electronic medium as a revolutionary means of communication dates from the late 1940s or early 1950s. Compared with those dates, the interest shown by visual artists in the new media may appear as something of a delayed reaction. Nam June Paik, together with Wolf Vostell, first started working on the video image in order to redefine it at Wuppertal in March 1963; and in New York, in 1965, he produced a work using a portable video. Both dates are significant, even if it is the latter which is most frequently cited as the starting point of video art. The earlier date clearly situates the context in which interest for the new media arose: the period was influenced by the Fluxus movement which explored the field of modern communication, rejected conventional codes of representation and proposed new ideas for an open-ended and liberating approach. This led to the complex, non-formalistic dimension of artistic experimentation in the late 1960s, which no longer sought to rehabilitate Dadaist theories but seemed more concerned with establishing a new critical social exchange.

The date of Nam June Paik's work in New York is equally important, not only because it marks the perceptual definition of the environment of the new video art, as was already the case in Wuppertal, but also because it opened the way to the use of new, light technologies in the field of television. The relatively late arrival of the art world in the field of televisual experimentation is closely linked with the opportunities of access to the new techniques and their practicability. In this respect, Paik's assertion that it is his aim "to create a completely new image"⁽³⁾ would seem to echo Man Ray's comments on his first experience with a camera: "When I found myself in front of a camera for the first time, I felt really intimidated. So I decided to investigate the process. But I adopted a painter's approach, to the extent that I was accused of presenting

3. Cahiers du Cinéma, Paris, April 1979.

photography as if it were painting. It was not intended, it just happened that way because of my training and background. Years before, I had had the idea of doing a painting in the manner of a photograph. I had good reasons for doing so. I wanted to draw attention away from manual techniques, so that the fundamental idea predominates. There will of course always be somebody ready to scrutinize works of art to discover the "how", instead of applying his intelligence to imagine the "why". (4)

Under the influence of the new technique, the visual artist's imagination creates a new vision which has a profound effect on the intensification of perception; moreover, the new medium is completely compatible with one of the motivations of the new and old avant-garde movements: the need to show, in an anti-formalistic process, the "why" in preference to the "how" of any work of art with a view to eliciting spectator participation in an open and creative relationship.

2. Visual arts and cinematography

In 1933, Fernand Léger imagined a film entitled "24 Hours" in which an ordinary couple, doing an ordinary job, were subjected to the scrutiny of a penetrating, hidden eye for twenty-four hours. The film would have portrayed the couple at work, their silence and the banal intimacy of day-to-day living, their moments of love. Léger said: "Show the film in the raw, uncut, and you will then see the terrifying and disquieting impact of truth." Thirty years later, Warhol, rejecting all forms of excessive technical intervention, in fact carried out Léger's intentions to the letter: his showing of Sleep (1964) provoked the reactions predicted by Léger. As Leonardi points out, in Warhol's early films at least, it is the author's "insistent eye, fascinated and intensely contemplative, which examines the simplest and most unconscious acts of our daily life". (5)

It might perhaps be appropriate at this point to define what is meant by an experimental film. The experimental film discards the mechanical, if not passive, transfer of certain elements of visual research (images, situations, behaviour), it extends experimentation to include the composition and definition of the film. It is not documentary, explanatory or didactic (at least in terms outside the film itself). Here again there are obvious precursors. The scenario of Vita futurista (1916) reveals that distorting mirrors were used to obtain new images of reality through the cinema, that

4. Man Ray, op. cit. p. 226.

5. Alfredo Leonardi, Occhio mio Dio, Feltrinelli, Milan 1971.

the displacement of objects outside their usual context was used experimentally by the futurists and even more by the surrealists to create new relations and associations, and that the time of the image (what Dziga Vertov called "the sudden life") was broken down into speeds, slow motion, repetitions and equalizations, to give a new meaning to images which no longer function as mirrors but as conveyors of reality. In general, the experimental film enhances the perceptual characteristics of the cinematographic image - which is invariably an image removed from its context - and uses new criteria of composition instead of unfolding a narrative line. The spectator is invited to analyse the images and situations presented to him, to imagine, even before recognizing them, the elements of the film's cohesion and development, and to undergo a perceptive experience at a different level of awareness; ideally, the experimental film compels him to be more actor than spectator, precisely because it is more concerned with the composition of images and the possible structure of relations between them than with their "encoding".

Relations between the visual arts and the cinema occur at two levels. On the one hand, the cinema is influenced by certain aspects of a given artistic climate (it is now considered appropriate and correct to refer to the expressionist, cubist, futurist and surrealist cinema); on the other hand, with its techniques and dynamic impact, the cinema incites the visual sector towards specific lines of research.

This interaction extends the disciplinary horizon of artists' activities by encouraging them to become actively involved in modern communication techniques. It also makes possible an aesthetic specification of the possibilities of the cinema. Historically, the grammar of the cinema was built up along the lines of the language of images which emerged from avant-garde experimentation. It is therefore true to say that the works of Léger, Man Ray, Duchamp, Picabia, Richter, Eggeling, the early Bunuel and René Clair, belong as much to the history of experimentation in the visual arts as to the domain of the development and linguistic definition of the cinema.

This situation was repeated after 1945, when artistic research resumed a freedom of intervention extending beyond the conventional frame. Unlike the commercial cinema, this cinema of poets and artists was forceful and free in its expression (Jean Cocteau and Maya Deren). It is from this movement that came the Underground cinema, a phenomenon characteristic of the cultures in which the cinema has experienced the greatest industrial expansion. The experimental cinema continually explores the possibilities of the new medium in an effort to free the cinematographic image from the yoke of the narrative sequence. The artists working in this field

insist on a strong definition of the visual image, seek to extend the cinema beyond the screen itself and examine the structures which control the cinematographic image and its expression. This form of cinema rejects all spectacular effects and is more concerned with evoking an active perception of the possible interaction between the moving images. The virtuality of the cinematographic image also provides the opportunity for analysing movement and body divested of excessive materiality and presented as traces of a rapidly moving, illusory flow.

During the 1960s and 1970s the cinema was used by artists on a vast international scale. This trend was followed by artists who sought to pinpoint primordial forces in nature as well as those interested in individual behaviour and bodily attitudes (Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, Fred Morris, Keith Sonnier, Richard Serra, John Baldessari, Bas Jan Ader, Jan Dibbets, Marcel Broodthaers). (6)

The films made by these artists reject the process of cinematographic narration; they offer a series of images presented in an open continuum, a temporal dimension which, during those same years, was to be explored by a new televisual instrument and occasionally by the same artists. It should be noted that these films are never documentary: their aim is to create an image in natural relationship with the specific characteristics of contemporary artistic language. They are artistic productions freed from unitary and direct manual production constraints.

3. Experimental cinema and video

In 1966, the Fluxus movement produced a cinematographic programme, known as the Fluxfilm Program, with short films by Eric Andersen, Chieko Shiomi, John Cavanaugh, George Brecht, John Cale, Albert Fine, Robert Watts, Pieter Vanderbeck, Wolf Vostell, George Landow and Yoko Ono. With no sound track, in black and white and in colour, the programme, which runs for 93 minutes, is noteworthy for the extreme violence of the images - at once banal and over-stated - which, in keeping with the theories of the movement seek to disrupt the conventions of everyday communication and to block or deflect the immobilizing flow of conventional vision. As Dominique Noguez observed, this violence typifies the experimental cinema of the mid-1960s in Europe and the United States. (7) The techniques used by the experimental cinema to create this effect are

6. Vittorio Fagone, "Art et Cinéma, oeuvres historiques, documents et matériel actuels", in Catalogo della Biennale di Venezia, 1978, p. 241-243.

7. Dominique Noguez, Eloge du cinéma expérimental, Paris, 1979.

of two kinds: a series of commonplace images are juxtaposed in sequence but without a narrative line; and they are distorted in time by being speeded up or slowed down until the very threshold of perception of movement is reached. The distortion and extreme rapidity of these images, as well as their juxtaposition within an artificial time-scale, produces a striking new visual effect on the spectator. The lack of narrative line is counterbalanced in the work of some artists by the use of elliptical shots, moving through a series of isolated flash-backs (phantasies), thus enabling them to portray successfully the impulse of a highly aroused subjectivity.

Again, within the experimental cinema it was the artists who turned their attention to the possibility of composing and structuring images. The first experiments with video took into account the experiences of the experimental cinema and, in the mid-1960s, the diversity of languages peculiar to the two media led to a serious confrontation between cinema and video.

The fundamental difference between cinema and video, even at experimental level, lies in their respective treatment of the time factor. Video can and does represent real time which, in L ger's projects and Andy Warhol's research, emerges as a self-contradictory element. Hermine Freed has rightly observed⁽⁸⁾ that the question of time is crucial to the importance and meaning of video art and that it reflects the change over the last twenty years in our sense of time (and place). This change is so far-reaching that, today, visual sensation is inseparable from its temporal component. For Hermine Freed, who has carried out a detailed study of the concepts of time, memory and simultaneity in video, "It is not surprising that the content of a great deal of video art is time. Early video tended to be an exploration of those aspects of time which are unique to video-instantaneity resulting from the ability to play back a tape immediately without processing; time delay; the simultaneous use of several cameras or several monitors allowing the possibility of recording or playing back several images in the same place, or several images from different places all occurring at the same time. The possibilities are endless and the methodologies vary enormously."⁽⁹⁾ According to Hermine Freed, video has a greater attraction for the artist precisely because of the spontaneity and simultaneity it makes possible.

The dimension to which Freed refers is a complex structure of composition and awareness of visual processes. The research of

8. Hermine Freed, In Time. Of Time, Arts Magazine, New York, June 1975.

9. In Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, Video art, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1976, p. 211.

artists working in the cinema, the extension of time, for instance, in the rigorously structured filmwork of Michael Snow - can be linked to this heightened awareness characteristic of the modern artist.⁽¹⁰⁾ The complexity of the equipment designed by Pierre Abbeloos for the shooting of De La Région Centrale (1970-1971), which enabled Snow to portray the grandiose solitude of novel landscape through a series of repeated and varied itineraries, reveals a new approach to the association of the visual and the temporal. On completion of the film, the same equipment was used to advantage in a video installation to solicit direct spectator participation (De La) - a symbolic interchange of equipment, techniques and results between the experimental cinema and video.

A further difference between the cinema and video involves the field of projection. The confined bidimensional nature of the cinema is overcome by increasing the number of screens in use simultaneously (Carole Schneemann and Snow), by contrasting simultaneously the physical representation and the virtuality of the cinematographic image (Valle Export, Birgit and Wilhelm Hein), by dividing the screen into several areas in which images are regrouped in a series of combinations, matching or contrasting (Keith Sonnler), and finally by analysing the very mechanisms of the basic projection process (Antony McCall).

Cinema and television screens differ considerably. Consider the conditions in which a film is shown, as compared with those under which a television programme is viewed, the complete darkness of the cinema as compared with the semi-obscurity of television and the respective dimensions of the screens. The cinema screen is rectangular, whereas the television screen has no angles. The larger dimensions of the former allow wide-angled vision of high optical resolution and panoramic views of great complexity. The electronic screen has not yet achieved an optical definition to compare with that of the cinema, still less an equivalent chromatic quality. The television set resembles a domestic appliance in terms of its size and function. Films are generally shown in public cinemas or theatres outside the home. Television is often viewed by an audience of one, a rare occurrence in the cinema. These factors are confirmed objectively by the kind of shots used most of the time by the cinema and by television. Television favours close-ups, contact with the person speaking from the screen; it focuses on detail and prefers a continuous, unabridged treatment of time. The cinema is based on images, action, the rapidly significant contraction of time.

10. Regional Cornwell, Snow Seen, The Films and Photographs of Michael Snow, BMA Books, Toronto 1980, p. 122.

These features of the cinema and television screen are also significant at experimental level. The televised image reflects a faithful image of the physical world; action and movement are meticulously observed and simply stated. A mirror may reflect distorted images, a factor which brings into play a logic of distortion and deformation which stems directly from the futurist theories of the experimental cinema already mentioned. Another difference between cinema and video concerns the element of direct subjectivity to which many artists resort in the process of narration. Evidence of cinematographic subjectivity, self-confessed and exaggerated in the work of many artists can be seen (in the New American Cinema, for example), in the cruel, banal images, in the choice of specific, non-essential, symbolic incidents. Through their subjective narration, artists working in video endeavour to get around reality, to give unreal colours to the images and to force them towards disintegration by only occasionally contracting observed and experienced time to the point of exhaustion.

The last difference between the cinema and experimental video involves visual presentation. In recent years, video has been characterized by a specific visual presentation of the videographic image, as a result of the possibilities which electronics now afford for using computers to analyse and recompose the image.

Finally, it should be noted that it is possible to transfer any cinematographic work to video and vice versa. The co-existence of both processes - and artists such as Paolo Giolo have devoted many years to exploring the frontier between the languages and resources of the two media - in no way affects the specificity of the research undertaken in the fields of video and the experimental cinema. On every occasion, in both domains, there is a redefinition of the status of the cinematographic and televised image, with a rigorous appraisal of the conventional use of these images and a real extension of their possibilities in terms of expression and communication.

This analysis of the relationship between the experimental cinema and video would be incomplete without taking into consideration, apart from the predominance of the time element already mentioned, the importance of sound in video. When an artist working experimentally in video decides to cut the sound, he does so to extol silence, as an entity of sound, devoid of the spoken word.

4. Video research and television

"It is essential to remember that VT is not TV; videotape is not television though it is processed through the same system. The teleportation of audio-visual information is not a central issue in the production of synaesthetic videotypes; rather, the unique properties

of VTR are explored purely for their graphic potential. An important distinction must also be made between synaesthetic videotapes and videographic cinema; the video artist has no intention of transforming his work into film", (11) Gene Youngblood clearly outlined in this way the video artist's field of action as compared with conventional television and also stressed one difference, now shown to be particularly significant, between those who use the camera to produce a film and those artists who turn to video with a view to exploring its possibilities and visual qualities. In this context, there would seem to be a wide gap between television as a means of mass communication and video experimentation or video art, a wider gap than that between video and the experimental cinema. However, if one accepts the distinction drawn by René Berger between mega-, meso- and micro-television(12) by comparing audience changes with the different forms of messages and also with the various distribution possibilities, experimental video work by artists can testify to the active and creative processes of micro-television. Moreover, artistic video experimentation cannot be completely dissociated from a circuit of users specific to any instrument of communication. Diametrically opposed in terms of their possible applications, the new-style conventional video of the mass media and experimental video, which explores the internal capabilities of video, exert a reciprocal influence on each other, and a beneficial dialectic has been established between them. Nam June Paik and Dan Graham, two of the leading exponents of experimental video, have often used television messages, changing their images to create a series of visual distortions (Paik) or a succession of de-structuring lapses in time (Graham). In mass-media television, there is a tendency, noted by numerous communications experts, to form models of communication which are loosely defined and readily accessible. In this sense, the everyday world as portrayed by television has been compared with Plato's cave in which the prisoners can only recognize the shadows of reality and not reality itself. (13)

Furthermore, television is trying to increase slowly its potential in images: station identifications, special news flashes, advertising spots are now often based on the videographic research which characterized the experimental work of video artists in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Mass media television now has recourse to

11. Gene Youngblood, Expanded Cinema, Studio Vista, London 1970, p. 281.
12. René Berger, La Télé-fission. Alerte à la télévision, Casterman, Brussels 1976.
13. Jean Cazeneuve, L'uomo telespettatore. Armando, Rome 1976, p. 103-104.

computer experimentation, multiple vision techniques and Chroma-Key. The basic difference between television and video lies in those elements of the ritual process of world-wide communication which are continually filtered and contradicted by a different form of creative communication, those aspects of the sound and time of the conventional televised image which are altered, distorted and intensified to form a new profile.

It should also be noted that, in addition to the profound differences between the television screen, a light source, and the cinema screen, a field of projection, experimental video has made it possible to combine several images in the same space, at the same point, thereby involving the spectator in a previously unknown spatio-temporal dimension. It is in this respect that experimental video most differs from mass media television. At this level, the perceptual structures established by mass media television are expanded to form a critical approach which redefines the language of televisual communication.

In this age of mass media television, which influences not only the visual arts but all forms of communication from literature to the theatre, video has one very specific feature. A different and very particular network has emerged where experimental video has found its niche and its public, a network consisting of galleries, museums and videotheques, places where there is an interested and motivated public for experimental video. One question remains unanswered despite several attempts in this direction: can the highly specific productions of the electronic media reach the mass public of television viewers? Admittedly, only a few artists maintain that experimental video and television are radically different. It is probable that, if exposed to the mass communication media, experimental video might retain its powers of redefinition, might stimulate the pale screen of television and put an end to stereotypes. The future development of experimental video might conceivably lie in the field of mass communication, especially in countries where cable television makes it possible to identify consumer and demand.

5. Visual arts and video

The cultural history of the second half of the twentieth century has been marked by the advent of television and its rapid diffusion throughout the world. The transition from the age of Gutenberg to the electronic era has brought far-reaching changes in social and individual behaviour and laid new emphasis on the role of the image, which has again become a primary instrument of communication. In this context, the relationship between the visual arts and television is a somewhat paradoxical one.

The relationship between television and the diffusion of the

heritage of images belonging to the history of civilization is a complex matter; there are difficulties of linguistic transmission, a tendency towards a difference in intensity (witness the grandiloquence with which images from the historic and artistic field are presented and commented).⁽¹⁴⁾ Douglas Davis went so far as to speak of a real incompatibility, a state of war, between televised communication and the visual arts.⁽¹⁵⁾ I, myself, have often called attention to the inadequacy of the mass media television's interventions in the field of the visual arts; television generally shows no interest in the creative participation of artists, who are thought to be incapable of appealing to the mass public of television viewers and thus, paradoxically, as incompatible with this media.

In terms of the arts, the relationship between the visual arts and television can be divided into weak and strong relations. The weak ones are those which relate to the possibilities of transferring images created in a different context to the mass media channels because of the objective limits of the definition of the televised image, the theatricality with which all arts programmes are presented and which often runs counter to the specific request for the showing of the visual work of art and the temporality implied. The strong relations are those which are based less on the concept of television as a means of mass communication than as a video medium.

Since the mid-1960s there has been a dematerialization of artistic processes. There were two reasons underlying this phenomenon: the rehabilitation of the artist's role as innovator of new aesthetic and social attitudes, and the creation of a new universe which challenges the everyday universe while assuming its very appearance in a series of novel relationships and interpretations of meaning. Also of importance is the change in the social environment of the artist's intervention, i. e. the conviction that art is not exempt from the process of critical development required by post-industrial society. The mass movements of students and radical European culture in 1968 found an exact equivalent in numerous artistic experiments which attempted to open up a social environment for artistic activity. Frank Popper observes that "the accent is no longer on the object but on the dramatic confrontation arising from the state of perception experienced by the spectator himself". The change concerns the context, the environment of the work of art. In the new definition, according to Popper, this environment is

14. Emilio Garroni, Il linguaggio audiovisivo per la divulgazione del patrimonio artistico, XXXII Premio Italia, Siena, 1980.

15. Douglas Davis, "Television and Art: The Circle and the Triangle" in Le arti visuali e il ruolo della televisione, op. cit. p. 20.

characterized in three different ways: "first of all, it has been conceived with quite different criteria in mind - mainly as a 'social' space or environment in which the many different aspects of the life of a modern community can take place. Secondly, such an 'environment' is 'real' in the sense that its 'artistic' space or the artistic/aesthetic environment which is created is unambiguously three dimensional and non-illusory. And thirdly it can be considered more 'human' since it can be penetrated by one or more people in such a manner that a free polysensorial activity and exchange can be developed in it", (16)

In this artistic environment, the artist gives free rein to his creativity. He determines itineraries and behavioural patterns, points of view capable of releasing energies directed towards the creative act in the sense of a free aesthetic production. A happening, a performance, corporal art, places, are all the expression of a new artistic climate in the world of art.

It was in the late 1960s that experimental art went farthest beyond the conventional frontiers of art and that, in the processes of conceptualization and reflexion on the artistic "act" (conceptual art), it also achieved a maximum of concentration - an atmosphere of considerable freedom which commits artists to define a new world of meaningful images.

Video research faithfully reflected these tendencies by recording, in the temporal dimension specific to the medium, the varying aspects of this development. It must qualify as forming a strong tie between the visual arts and video. It was during this period, in a climate favourable to the dematerialization of works of art and to the rejection of their fetishistic accumulation and exchange within the market networks, that video art came into being, not only as an expression of the adaptation of art to the new possibilities afforded by visual technologies - as had happened in the case of photography and the cinema - but also as a means for producing original images governed by an inner plastic code.

6. Video art

The term "video art" has often been described as vague and ambiguous. It refers in fact to the original production of works created specially for video: the recording, often in real time, of acts, performances and events; the juxtaposition within the same space of several video structures, video sculptures and environments; the cross-media combination of heterogeneous material - transparencies,

16. Frank Popper, Art-Action and Participation, Studio Vista, London 1975, p. 9-10.

films, plastic images, and objects (installations); and the multi-media amalgamation of televised productions with other techniques and art forms (theatre, dance, etc.). It has often been suggested that the term 'video art' should be applied exclusively to videographic work, but in practice its meaning has already been extended to cover a less specific and more complex area. Today "video art" embraces all utilizations of the medium in the context of artistic production. Within the framework of video art, recordings of performances are not documentaries, but recognizable, living outlines of actions carried out in time. The creation of new images, in many cases through the use of synthesizers and with no external reference, represents the other intensely creative aspect of video art. However, the most recent works in this art involve contact with other media in addition to the spatial arrangement of the different sources of televised images which was the original inspiration of video research.

Let us now examine each of these different aspects.

7. Videographic production

The video image takes many different forms: the biographical image, the exploration in continuous time of visual details; the juxtaposition of expanding geometric forms; differently angled distortions of a meaningful image; temporal narration and analysis. Each of the examples given, corresponding to specific videogrammes, is profoundly marked by the personal intervention of the artist.

Recordings

Mention has already been made of the importance attached, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, to the search for dematerialized forms of art, to research into the visual and social perception of the environment, to the identification of primordial energies, forces and forms in natural space, and to the body as the producer and vehicle of language. Video recordings have fixed on tape a living image of this situation, one of the most innovative and productive in modern art, an image which, it must be repeated, is not only documentary but a part of the creative moment implying as it does a visual and temporal extension of the phenomenon observed. It is no coincidence that, in many cases, the artist himself directs and signs the video recording of his work.

Video sculptures and environments

As we know Marshall McLuhan stressed the polysensory quality of the video image and its tactility. These characteristics are highlighted in video sculptures, complex productions in which the video

Image is led through several monitors and a complex visual structuration that reacts to the immediate surroundings. In video environments the spectator is invited to move as though along a path to be explored. Ambient relationships are explored with finesse, in the sense that the artist offers a series of comparisons between different points of view and images and displaces the spectator's conventional field of vision, compelling him to seek out different routes and constantly to compare shifting moments of vision. The works of Nam June Paik and Ira Schneider inevitably spring to mind in this context.

Video installations

Video installations involve the spectator's participation and also the use of different media. Films, slides, soundtracks and objects are used in conjunction with each other, creating a complex and polymorphic plastic image; the interplay between the separation and juxtaposition of images from different media produces a series of positive divergences. Video installations currently represent one of the most productive developments in video art, even if they are often in the form of fragile structures.

Performances

The televised image of mass communication and that of video which made its mark in the early 1970s, has profoundly influenced the world of visual arts, the theatre and literature. Video has succeeded in asserting itself in the most typical field of the contemporary art world, that of the performance, where the dividing line between the 'fine arts' and the performing arts is blurred. A common practice among performing artists today is to turn attention to the television screen, which acts as a mirror, a signal of recognition and an element of the optical scale for every feature or movement and, above all, as a time machine. The new theatre in the United States and Italy also resorts to the televised image to produce a multimedia effect which makes the stage more complex, more sophisticated and more recognizable. From the televised image of mass communication are derived the stage lighting, the stereotyped acting, and the fragmented and brilliant aspect of the vision offered. The televised image also has its place on the stage as a point of reference, counterpoint, reflection or escape. This multimedia dimension is probably the one that demonstrates most effectively the influence of television on the contemporary image and, by virtue of its flexibility, it succeeds in transcending it by moving more quickly along the same routes.

8. The development of video research

In the years between the late 1960s and the 1980s exchanges of experience between Europe and America in the field of video research developed at a speed unequalled in any of the other traditional art forms. The ease with which video productions can be disseminated made possible the rapid exchange of these experiences, beginning with those of Paik and Vostell, already mentioned, and made them known to German, British, American, Canadian, Japanese and Italian artists. (17) The golden age of video art was the early 1970s. At that time, the works of video artists managed to find their way into the mass media channels in the form of experimental broadcasts, while the producers of lightweight video recording equipment encouraged research by the artists, who were themselves well disposed towards the new media as a result of the special climate then prevailing in art circles, as already noted.

Towards the mid-1970s, when the first videotheques and the first video art departments in museums were opened, there was a sudden drop in the production of video art work, which was abandoned even by those artists who had achieved notable results in this field of research.

A tentative explanation for the sudden misfortune and rapid decline of video art may be advanced. The technical and aesthetic manipulation of a new instrument of visual communication appealed to the new avant-garde artist of the 1960s. In the avant-garde philosophy the artist must innovate and this is something, apparently that video enables him to do. It represents a brand new tool of inexhaustible (and as yet inexhausted) potential. It is easy to see that the image modifications are truly innovatory, well adapted to the specificity of the new media. The technical quality of some early video experiments now appears defective. The technical virtuosity seems naive and superfluous, the subjectivity obvious and deceptive. However, such an appraisal must not overlook the undiscerning reception given to the new works (the ten CAYC⁽¹⁸⁾ meetings organized by Jorge Glusberg in Europe, South America, Japan and the United States always claimed to be open) because of the immense possibilities of experimentation afforded by the new medium. The enormous output, however, was not matched by an adequate system of diffusion and distribution. Art galleries showed little interest in the diffusion of video art (Gerry Schun, Castell, Sonnabend, Cardazzo were about all), although they rightly showed more interest

17. In this context cf. the bibliography (Chapter IV, Section B) at the end of this work.

18. CAYC. Centro de arte y Comunicación (Buenos Aires).

in its production. The new video art was exhibited in only a limited network of outlets, in the specialized departments of certain well-known museums of modern art, a very small number of institutions devoted to the diffusion of video and a few artists' cooperatives and groups which are much more prevalent and active in the United States. International meetings and major exhibitions brought a very special dimension to the dissemination of video art by presenting to the public a vast quantity of video material not easily absorbed even by the most attentive and motivated spectator. However, such meetings are still essential today for comparing the different experiments being undertaken. But they need regulating in order to avoid the presentation of already familiar work and a mass of videotapes and productions lacking technical even more than aesthetic homogeneity.

Towards the 1980s, the climate in which video research was undertaken changed in many respects. In a detailed analysis of fifteen years of video research in the United States, Barbara London writes: "In the late 1970s, video activity (in the United States) declined slightly. This was only partly due to the recession; some artists were frustrated showing their work repeatedly to the same local closed audience, while others became discouraged when their video tapes or their larger installation pieces did not sell. After working with portable equipment, some artists wanted to produce technically better images, but could not afford the best cameras and most sophisticated editing facilities. In order to maintain greater control over their imagery, a number of artists stopped working with video. Peter Campus, for example, is currently working in photography. Joan Jonas is concentrating on performance, and Beryl Korot is developing a linear, temporal kind of painting that is integrated with weaving." (19)

It should be noted that Campus, Jonas and Korot produced some of the most interesting work in experimental video to emerge in the early 1970s. Anne-Marie Duguet observed a similar decline in European video art (20), even though the relative vitality, at least compared with other Western countries, of the video research currently underway in France and Switzerland, cannot be overlooked.

The prevailing climate of artistic research is central to an appraisal of the present-day situation. The myth of the eternally innovative avant-garde has become an anachronism. The degree of (technical) innovation of a work of art has ceased to be a basic criterion. The prevailing climate is not a favourable one for artistic

19. Barbara London, "Independent Video" in Artforum, New York, September 1980, p. 39-40.

20. Anne-Marie Duguet, Vidéo, la mémoire au poing. Paris, Hachette, p. 24-27.

experimentation; it is a cold climate. The use of televisual media fails to arouse the enthusiasm of critics avid for novelty nor does it appeal to the fashionable galleries. The artist engaged in video research does so either because he is stimulated more directly and compellingly by an inner drive or out of curiosity. The quality of the video work of artists has, of course, improved as a result of technological advances and the refinement of individual techniques.

9. Future prospects

Is it possible at this juncture to predict the future development of video research? The network of institutes, museum departments, artists' cooperatives and specialized bodies interested in this medium, is growing stronger. While the main emphasis today is on organizing and putting in order the material already produced rather than encouraging new works, the network exists and remains fairly stable.

The work of the last twenty years must not be lost. The material involved is fragile, precarious even in some cases, but it is invaluable testimony to the whole artistic climate of fifteen years of international art, the starting point of research which, despite the present chilly climate, seems to have put down solid roots. There are two parallel movements in current video research. One is centred on a more detailed analysis of the image, in its temporal dimension, in contrast to the sound, following the most original lines in video research. The other uses electronic technology with great flexibility in order to grasp directly everyday reality in its minutest, most fleeting and secret details. This movement is also of long standing, dating back to the first half-inch black and white video tapes filmed in 1968 in the streets and universities.

What has radically changed is the prevailing climate and the opportunity which experimental video now has of finding a public. In the text already quoted⁽²¹⁾, Douglas Davis maintains that, beyond Marshall McLuhan's usually rather optimistic predictions, the mass television public, thirty years after the "planetary" extension of such television, deserves reappraising. It is incorrect to think of it as a completely passive public, incapable of demands or reactions, particularly in the case of the generations which, having grown up in a television culture, should have been the most strongly conditioned. The new cable transmission techniques and above all the advent of the video-disc undoubtedly open up new prospects for the dissemination of video art and video research in general. More

21. Douglas Davis, "Television and Art: the Circle and the Triangle", in Le arti visuali e il ruolo della televisione.

specifically, two possible developments may be envisaged for the near future outside the context of the art world and its public. The first is based on the assumption that the video disc, by virtue of its improved technical manageability and its lower cost, will find a much wider market than the video cassette, thereby bringing video production within the range of the individual and giving it a domestic dimension more approaching that of other discs and books, and, more importantly, facilitating control of the artist's copyright, now the victim of widespread piracy.

The second development touches upon the fundamental element of the relationship between video and television. When video artists and their more attentive commentators said they had nothing more in common with mass media television (I have already quoted Youngblood's dogmatic declarations on this subject), they were guilty of a pride which the advances of video and television may well prove unfounded. The widespread and diffuse television culture makes it possible now to appreciate the important attempts at redefinition embarked upon by the first video researchers. It also makes possible the introduction into the mass communication channels of the in-depth studies made by video artists, the expansions of the imaginary based on complex technological apparatus. The last few years probably represent only the preparatory stage of a new phase of communication through images, the first beginning of the development of a visual language open to specifications and diffusion of equal force.

Two more factors are worth noting when considering the future prospects of video art. Firstly, the gap between the physical and optical quality of the chemical, photographic and cinematographic image and that of the electronic, televisual image will gradually narrow, which means that the use of the television camera for cinematographic production is bound to expand, improve and produce significant and original results in aesthetic terms. (22)

The second factor concerns the communicating power of the televisual image which, like that of the visual image, could influence our world of expression. When Marshall McLuhan stressed that the great changes brought about by new technology are at first, in fact, only minor changes, since they tend to reproduce in the new technique the conditions prevailing earlier, he was perhaps describing

22. On this subject cf. the Records of the Congress held at the University of Turin from 24 to 26 May 1981, "Il nuovo mondo dell'immagine elettronica" (papers presented by G. Aristarco, G. Dorflès, V. Fagone, C. Maltese) in course of publication. Not only video research but also the classic experiments of J. L. Godard and M. Antonioni are discussed at length.

what has so far happened in the case of television.

As video research has shown more than once, the televisual machine not only reproduces images at a distance, but also establishes an ordering in time of the images of reality which rapidly move towards a new artificial density in which image, time and sound are evenly balanced and which occurs in the compass of a continuous interflow between the centre and the periphery - the compass of modern communication.

Chapter II

VIDEO IN THE MODERN WORLD

René Berger

I. TELEVISION: FROM ONE FORM TO MANY

The market and technology in this field have changed so rapidly that a distinction must be made, if only as a precaution, between:

(1) Macrotelevision or mass-television, apt to be known as official or national television in Europe,⁽¹⁾ and free or commercial television in the United States⁽²⁾ (terms which demonstrate the extent to which terminology is dependent upon its politico-economic context). This form of television uses radlowaves for its dissemination.⁽³⁾

(2) Megatelevision, or satellite television, which is already in use for certain specific purposes but which, because by definition it oversteps the boundaries of national sovereignty, has encountered political opposition. Here two options are possible; either direct public access to the satellite by means of special equipment, or indirect access via cable hook-up to a national retransmitter.⁽⁴⁾

(3) Mesotelevision, or local/regional television, also called community television, carried via cable (CATV - Community Antenna Television - in the United States).⁽⁵⁾

(4) Microtelevision, or individual or group television, which uses portable video equipment as its instrument.

This differentiation reveals not only quantitative and technical differences but more importantly, and less apparent, the different structures used in communication and in social relations. The rapid development of the media over the past decade must be taken into account as well. Therefore, the following remarks do not aim to delimit the scope of a field which is constantly changing; they are only intended to establish what we might call "trend models".

Macrotelevision

Regardless of the type of authority under which it falls, or the ends to which it is put - be they profit, culture or propaganda - it may be said that on the whole macrotelevision is essentially characterized by its desire to reach at all costs the largest possible number of viewers and by its use of all possible means to attain this objective. Multitudes of individual receivers are linked to a powerful

transmitter, and the programme, emanating from a central point and unidirectional, is ruled by a strict hierarchy. The power of the politico-economic authorities increases in proportion to audience size.

Owing to its macrostructure and its dependency on the authorities, macrotelevision tends to operate according to formulae designed to ensure efficient regulation in the form of as homogenous a product as possible. The classic aims of information, education and entertainment are pursued within a set of limits defined both within the programme schedule and even the "genre" (news programmes, dramas, variety shows, games, etc.). Thus news programmes, which might be thought to be governed by the unpredictability of news, in fact conform to a ritual which balances news reporting in an imperceptible yet masterly way; sensational news stories first, followed by the more soothing items, such as exhibitions, cultural events, sports and racing results. Hence, too, the liturgical style today of televised debates everywhere; and the TV hostesses with their dual role of comforting mother and older sister. Roles are assigned and are rarely deviated from. Thus the system operates according to a homeostatic model: variations from within or without must not threaten the maintenance of this balance. Control is maintained through audience surveys which, all-powerful in the United States, are considered only relatively so in Europe or at least according to official statements. "New programme" research is usually left to a research department whose suggestions are systematically ignored; programme content, in whatever category (information, education, community or cultural affairs) is only accepted if it fits into the pre-established framework. Similarly, the education category, whether termed higher or continuing education, tends to become synonymous with teaching, on the lines of institutionalized courses; continuing education is confused with instruction, encyclopaedic knowledge being preferred to the training of the critical faculties. At best, a few privileged directors are allowed - within limits - to play the role of franc-tireurs in order to assuage the conscience of the system, whose standards, however flexible, are not to be infringed.

Mesotelevision

This form of television is not widespread enough, especially in Europe, to be analysed in a complete and relevant manner. (6) Nevertheless, based on Canadian, American and European experience, it can be said that a new "trend model" has appeared, creating an entirely new type of social relations.

One of the more decisive changes, as yet not fully understood, is the fact that the roles institutionalized in macrotelevision are

subject to permutations. Instead of the strict division between transmitter on the one hand and receiver on the other, the citizen can be alternately in front of the screen, at the microphone, or behind the camera. Permutations of this kind have a definite effect, as they can progressively destroy the concept of roles and the logic underlying them, and cause radical structural changes. These changes establish a relationship between new partners whom I will call "interactors". Therein, the division of labour institutionalized by macrotelevision is invalidated, as is the distinction between professionals and amateurs, although in this case there is an obstacle in the form of the inveterate public bias in favour of the former. Mesotelevision is unique in that no one works for it in a professional status. Producers, directors, journalists and film editors are no longer considered specialists, and the rhetoric, drama and scenography characteristic of macrotelevision are challenged.

But things do not happen quite so easily. Experience has shown that the vast amount of creativity available to mesotelevision, instead of being apparent to those involved, seems to them at first a handicap. Thus, these interactors first base their behaviour on the macrotelevision model, as if it were a matter of competing with professionals. For their part, viewers are just as wrong in demanding - accustomed as they are to macrotelevision - that local programming resemble what they consider to be "real" television. An appropriate parallel would be that of photography and film making, which both began by imitating painting. New techniques always take their inspiration from their predecessors, which serve as models. It is only with experience that the specific potential of the new technique affirms itself to become, after the fact, a new form which in its turn becomes a recognized genre.

But the public must also learn, however gropingly and hesitantly, especially as too often those persons reputed to be the most alert prove themselves to be strangely reactionary, downplaying innovative experiments or branding them as "awkward" without realizing that this very awkwardness is itself a promise of fruitful experimentation. Therefore, if a certain amateurism, or at least what is generally perceived as such, is inherent in mesotelevision, we would probably gain by examining this particular facet of the experience, instead of criticising it in the name of a concept of professionalism inherited from macrotelevision.

Therefore mesotelevision, still in its infancy, should not be expected to throw off its imitative tendencies and immediately define its own inventive modes, of which only a few have been explored thus far. However, the most rewarding community experiments - especially those featuring live broadcasts - have already revealed that the classic triad of information, education and entertainment⁽⁷⁾ change, as do the concepts of "schedule", "programmes", and

"genre" associated with them, which lose their value as categories at the same time as the division between professionalism and amateurism disappears. Mesotelevision reveals that variety shows, news, dramas, sports and cultural programmes, are only classified as such on the basis of a set of production conditions inherent in the macrotelevision structure, which itself derives from a particular form of socio-cultural and political organization. Televised debates, for instance, which are as privileged a "genre" as any, since they bring together the most eminent authorities on all subjects and from which we could expect truth to spring (is it not reputed to spring from the "meeting of minds"?), have in fact proved to be governed by rules as strict as those of any game: opinion must be evenly divided, with equal numbers "for" and "against". The host is not a referee but a programme-keeper who must at all costs prevent any excessive sharpness or digressions which might abort the debate and upset its precisely scheduled duration. He must also ensure that the programme is sufficiently "entertaining" to guarantee viewer satisfaction, whatever the topic examined and regardless of its outcome. This is not the case with mesotelevision. Ordinary citizens, who generally know each other, sometimes very well, feel no need to make stars of themselves or to force an often scanty oratory talent. It is the weight of their conviction that counts, which leads them, instead of attempting to win the debate through reasoning or effects, to seek support by creating an image of personal commitment, the decisive factor for the community. Without seeming to, and by its very "awkwardness", the debate "genre" becomes a discussion. A new type of creativity appears, no longer obliged to compete with macrotelevision models, which tend to stand in its way. Rhetoric gives way to exchange.

Microtelevision

Basically, microtelevision, thanks to its lightweight and relatively inexpensive equipment, makes it possible for almost anyone to produce and edit his own programme. Its fundamental interest, therefore, is not just that it gives a new meaning to the ideas of education, democratization, lifelong training and even information, but that it encourages creativity itself, so that culture ceases to be something passively received and becomes a form of action in which one participates, which one creates. The relationship is no longer that of transmitter to receiver, or even that of "interactors", but what I would call "inter-operators". Insofar as reality, even if regarded as sacred, does not exist independently of the communication process, but through collective techniques which involve specific social, economic and political conditions that are never sacred, to say the least, but social, (8) it becomes clear that video, by virtue of the

fact that it is accessible to all, breaks with pre-established patterns and is capable of creating completely new structures. This possibility of dissociation and innovation is such a new phenomenon that it has been overlooked by Japanese, American and European manufacturers, who continue to base their advertising campaigns solely on the reproduction qualities of the medium, when in fact they have marketed the most revolutionary instrument of all, Video in hand, the camera operator is in a position to decolonize established communications systems, challenge the establishment at its very core, and resolve the confusion existing between the natural and social orders. Nor is it just a question of insurrection; in the broadest sense, video allows one to challenge the most subconscious mental mechanisms in order to liberate creativity.

Unlike the homogenized space of macrotelevision and the multidirectional space of mesotelevision, it is difficult at the present time to speak of a space unique to microtelevision. At best we might speak of an ever-increasing number of cells which, unlike television channels or static cinemas, are most often mobile and even include the videobus; a cell on wheels. Thus microtelevision differs from the homeostatic operation of macrotelevision, or even the cybernetic operation of mesotelevision, and more closely resembles the operation of open systems whose interactions cannot be dissociated from those of the environment. (9) Thus, video reveals itself to be one of the best tools for producing "néguentrophy", as described by Schrödinger and Brillouin, (10) or even the inventiveness we attribute to children. Just as mesotelevision has brought back the communications biotope, video would seem to have rediscovered the road to creativity and above all to provide the medium for expressing it.

Unfortunately, things are far from having happened in this way. As we will see, video was very quickly put to serve more profitable interests than those of creativity. Nevertheless, there are artists ("Indians" I would call them) who have not lost their faith in the media. Before examining their situation, I would like to clear up a point which tends to add confusion to all issues.

Communication and dissemination: a matter of scale

Mass media, as the term would indicate, are considered to be a means of communication. However, experience has shown that macrotelevision, which is broadcast unidirectionally from a powerful transmitter to a multitude of consumer-receivers, is less an agent of communication than an instrument of dissemination, not to say dissemination apparatus. Information sent out via the antenna is directed not so much to consumers as to target receivers who suffer the impact of the messages rather than choosing the content.

It is thus a gross misconception to call television a means of mass communication. Ballistic information is more concerned with hitting its target than with establishing communication, which implies exchange.

This point takes on special significance as the mass media have made us discover a hitherto unnoticed limit and, through their very extension, have brought it into full daylight. Technological progress, however prodigious it may be, has in no way changed the fact that we are and remain, in the words of Leroi-Gourhan, "living fossils". (11) Nothing has changed since our accession to human status. Is the "global village" foreseen by McLuhan just an illusion? For electronics to take on a human quality, they must respond to the limited conditions of our state, for which meso- and micro-television could furnish the yardstick. Not that macrotelevision is disproportionate but that, without our knowledge or with our complicity, it may have alienated us by extending our horizons beyond their normal limits. This is a hypothesis which has yet to be tested, but which may allow us to understand better why the progress of macrotelevision does not seem to have extended our consciousness, as we might have expected and hoped, but on the contrary has produced a glut of information whose cancerous effects are now quite clear. Although appearing late on the scene, meso and microtelevision could provide the means for returning to that stage which macrotelevision went through prematurely and which megatelevision is unfortunately preparing to abolish. This is a challenge to the Nation-State as it comes up against the new communication structures: hence, the resistance, the stonewalling, the prompt repression, in any case the active distrust.

While macrotelevision (and the approaching megatelevision to an even greater extent) is directed towards the "statistical being" that man has become in mass society, paradoxically associating the most advanced abstractions and the most intimate impulses, mesotelevision aims at restructuring human relations at the community level (region or city), within the boundaries of that limited area in which we move daily, surrounded by those we can still call "our own".

Microtelevision, for its part, aims at rediscovering in us the primary driving force that has existed ever since man first began to think and make tools since creativity is nothing more than imagination at work with the aid of a controlled technique. It allows us, or can allow us, in the electronic age, to restructure human relations at the level of the community which consists of individuals united in a group, the primary social nucleus.

Meso- and microtelevitions show up what our technological society seeks to hide or suppress: namely that the media expand, the less real communication there actually is, replaced as it is by

dissemination. Communication is above all a matter of scale, and certain limits cannot be overstepped with impunity.

This affords me the opportunity to pay tribute to those video artists I have, with good reason, referred to as "Indians", for it is they who blazed the trail before being placed in "reserve" (or on "reservations").

II. VIDEO ART, THE UNKNOWN

It must be said that video art is not easy to get to know. Yet the video artist works with videotape which, by definition, enjoys the privilege of universality. Nothing can top the electronic image for speed - provided that reception standards are compatible, which is not always the case. These standards remain inconveniently ethnocentric, with the Japanese, Americans and Europeans jealously guarding their respective shares of the market. Rumours of an agreement between the major producers in these countries have recently been denied. Provided, too, that the tape can be shown (something so obvious that we tend to forget its importance), which implies the possession of equipment which, though much less expensive today than in the past, is still far from being within the reach of all. Provided also that the equipment is operating satisfactorily, which almost always requires - for programmes of any importance - the presence of technicians or even engineers. Provided, finally, that video productions have access to (and this is far from being the case) premises and equipment specially designed for their presentation. How would painting and sculpture have evolved if they had not found in museums, palaces and salons the organized places where the public and private image of art could take shape?

Video art, outside of a few museums, cultural institutions, universities, occasional exhibitions and galleries, exists almost exclusively in the homes and studios of artists who make their own tapes and have the equipment to show them. In contradiction to the hasty and hence specious analogy with television, it is not easy to see video art; even though the videotape is shown on the television screen, it has no direct connection with television. The latter organizes the programme, the broadcast and the reception. Video art, notwithstanding a few spectacular breakthroughs (Nam June Paik), is still in the troubadour era, which means in the Middle Ages.

Paradoxically, the latest electronics technology - at least in terms of the artistic usage to which it is put - requires the artist to move or, in parallel and complementary fashion, requires the amateur to travel. (12)

There is another, no less paradoxical, difficulty. How do we come to know modern art? Through exhibitions. But it must be

admitted that much of our information comes not so much from direct contact with the originals themselves as from reproductions, often chanced upon, in reviews, press, articles, magazines, or even rumour or hearsay; second, or third-hand knowledge which we need not go into here. On the other hand, it is important to recall that the reproduction of a painting gives one an idea of the original work, as does the reproduction of a sculpture, despite the lack of a third dimension. Thus, to a certain extent, an isomorphic relationship, or at least a credible resemblance, exists between the plastic work of art and its printed reproduction.

The characteristic of video, however, is its shift in emphasis from space to time as the privileged dimension. Hence its incompatibility with typographical reproduction. In dealing with video, printed materials like books, magazines and newspapers are therefore obliged to select images and freeze them, in other words to treat them in a manner which runs counter to their kinetic nature.⁽¹³⁾

My purpose in speaking of these problems, however summarily, is because unless we take them into account we get a wrong picture of video art, on the basis of which some people consider themselves qualified to be both critics and experts. As in all things, what is important is experience. I do not think it is too much to say that there are probably only a few hundred people in the world today who have sufficient experience to guarantee the necessary relevance of their views. Knowledge of the subject remains partial in all cases, including mine. This is in part due to the fact that the conditions of the art market make it rather difficult to obtain.

Art and the system

Unlike the plastic arts, which benefit from organized networks whose main agents are the art dealers, galleries, collectors, museums, critics, art festivals, auctions etc., in other words all those who ensure the circulation of art works, there are few outlets for art videotapes. Although some galleries, such as Castelli and Sonnabend in New York, have taken an interest in this field (but only occasionally), as have Anna Kanapa and, notably, Howard Wise, who has attempted to set up a permanent rental service; and although some museums have already installed videocassette machines (the Everson Museum in Syracuse, USA, was the first), it is to be wondered whether in fact this preparatory phase will be followed by a second, which would require the creation of an organized distribution network.

Why does the market, which could be the driving force behind video art, seem so hesitant? Works of art - or at least some - may appreciate in value enormously. Originals, as well as limited edition prints, are goods with a market value based on their "rarity".

Whereas a videotape which, by definition, may be reproduced indefinitely and may even be pirated, defies the concepts of both rarity and ownership.⁽¹⁴⁾ With financial interest lacking, it is hardly surprising that the video art market is having trouble getting off the ground; in fact, the question is whether it ever will. Certainly, the major art festivals, following an initial infatuation with video art, quickly returned to "marketable products" such as paintings, sculpture and prints. Moreover, reticent as the art market may seem, the art press is no less so. Without going so far as to say that lucrative interests govern information, it is noticeable that information tends to concentrate on art that sells and to ignore that which does not. Information concerning video art therefore is still sporadic and only really surfaces at international video festivals.

One unexpected consequence must be mentioned in passing: video, unintentionally, shows up the ambiguity of the plastic arts in their dual role of objects of aesthetic value and merchandise!⁽¹⁵⁾ We thus find unsuspected convergences between video art, body art, ecological art, social art, etc., all of which operate, if not outside the market, then at least on the fringes.

There is yet another point which deserves thinking about. Whether we like it or not, and even when we buy solely for visual pleasure, most amateurs, including those who disclaim any idea of future appreciation, cannot help but think of paintings, sculptures, serigraphs and lithographs in terms of their place on the wall or in the living room. In short, at the risk of raising eyebrows, I would say that our typical attitude is to regard a work of art as above all an ornament. Witness the number of collector's homes open to the public.

Video art differs in this respect not in degree, but in nature. Walls, living rooms or gardens no longer enter into the question. The videotape is seen on a television screen and "exists" only for the duration of its projection. Despite the word "art", video art does not entirely correspond to what is normally understood by this term. It thus follows that we do not and cannot get to know it in the same way and through the same means. Contemporary art has not, over the years, entirely escaped economic considerations. Without going so far as to say that it is tied to the market, it seems clear that aesthetic value and commercial value often go hand in hand. This ambiguous relationship has become commonplace today.

It is difficult to study video art without "artifying" it by patterning it after our customary behaviour and practices. To try to meet this challenge, let us first briefly review the history of video art: who first thought of using a videotape recorder as a creative instrument? In what circumstances? For what reasons? For whom?

On the threshold of video art

From a purely provisional viewpoint⁽¹⁶⁾, we should first mention the role played from 1950 on by WGBH Television in Boston, with its resolutely experimental orientation.

In 1964, WGBH broadcast the series "Jazz Images", which was the first programme to seek to break with the traditional portrayal of a band - whether in documentary or poetic form - in order to invent abstract imagery appropriate to the music. One year later, in 1965, Nam June Paik, the Korean-born artist, used the first portable VTR to record scenes from his taxicab, and showed them in a Greenwich Village coffeehouse: "Café à Go Go, 152 Bleecker, October 4 and 11, 1965 ... Five years, old dream of me. The combination of Electronic Television and Video tapes recorder is realized."⁽¹⁷⁾

The tone of this note indicates that the event is the culmination, as well as the beginning, of a long search, which is illustrated by the now famous statement of the same artist: "As collage techniques replaced oil painting, the cathode ray tube will replace the canvas".

Nam June Paik's work was exhibited that same year at the Bonino Gallery in New York. In 1967, the Rockefeller Foundation granted WGBH-TV in Boston a subsidy of \$275,000 to encourage artistic creation in television, which led pioneers such as Fred Barzyk to produce, with artists like Paik, Tambellini, Pione, Padlock, Seawright, Kaprow, Stan Vanderbeek and Douglas Davis, the series entitled The Medium is the Medium, broadcast in 1969. That same year, the first video art exhibition was organized in New York, by the Howard Wise Gallery under the title TV as a Creative Medium,⁽¹⁸⁾ with the participation of Serge Boutourline, Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider, Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman, Earl Reiback, Paul Ryan, John Seery, Eric Stegel, Thomas Tadlock, Aldo Tambellini, and Joe Weintraub.

Paul Ryan, introducing his videotape "Everyman's Moebius Strip", put forward a striking analogy: "A moebius strip is a one-sided surface made by taking a long rectangle of paper, giving it a half-twist and joining its ends. Any two points on the strip can be connected by starting at one point and tracing a line to the other without crossing over the boundary or lifting a pencil. The outside is the inside. The inside is the outside. Here the power of Video Tape Recorder (VTR) is used to take in our own outside. When you see yourself on tape, you see the image you are presenting to the world. When you see yourself on tape, you are seeing your real self, your 'inside'."

In 1968, Sony marketed a portable VTR deck, called Portapak in the United States, which was to become the instrument of all pioneer video artists. Beginning with its first issue in 1970, the

magazine Radical Software, edited by Beryl Korot, Ira Schneider, Frank Gillette, Juan Downey and others, featured critical, philosophical and technical articles by those artists which represent the most remarkable reflexions on this subject. In 1970, too, Gene Youngblood published Expanded Cinema and Nam June Paik invented the video synthesizer. Douglas Davis, for his part, devoted his attention and enthusiasm to the development of this phenomenon in a series of articles, while Michael Shamberg made known his thoughts on the subject and his experience in a work entitled Guerilla Television, published in 1971.

The West Coast was equally active and productive in this area. In 1967, KQED-TV in San Francisco started the first video workshop and launched an experimental programme under the joint direction of Brice Howard and Paul Kaufman. From this came "Music with Balls" by Terry Riley, "Sorcery" by Loren Sears, "West Pole" by Robert Zagone, as well as the breath-taking and unexpected "Homage to Descartes" by the poetess Joanne Kyger. James Newman, for his part, aware of the importance of television, reorganized his art gallery in December, 1968. In conjunction with KQED-TV in San Francisco, he launched "Open Gallery", a series of televised programmes featuring artists such as Robert Frank, Ken Dewey, Walter de Maria, Yvonne Rainer, Anne Halprin, Julian Beck and The Living Theater, Robert Nelson, Frank Zappa, Ewin Schlossberg, Terry Riley and Phillip Makanna. The success of the series when broadcast in 1968 owed much to the work of producer-director John Coney. (19)

Some of America's most active galleries began to feature video art: Bykert, Leo Castelli, Fishbach, Bonino, Gibson, Sonnabend, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, and Howard Wise. The Kitchen was to play a decisive role in New York; a place for meetings and experimentation, it is one of the only places where one can watch videotapes almost everyday. (20) In 1971, the Finch College Museum of Art, in New York, at the instigation of its dynamic director, Mrs. John Varian, held one of the first video festivals to take place in a museum. Thus the new video art form continued to emerge with the participation of Les Levine, Vito Acconci, Dan Graham, Dennis Oppenheim, Steve Reich, Eric Siegel, Peter Campus, Robert Whitman, Michael Netter, Tsai Wen-Ying, Constantine Manos, Jackie Cassen, Russel Connor, James Seawright, Stephen Beck, Richard Felciano, David Dowe, Keith Sonnier, Bruce Nauman, etc. (21)

Video art caught on very quickly in Canada. In fact, it has perhaps developed the most in this country, especially in connection with cable television, which is not my topic here. I will limit myself to the project which is generally considered to be the most original, and which, under the name videograph, offers videograms, "made

by citizens for citizens". Founded in 1971 on the initiative of Roger Forget, the videograph, which receives fairly heavy funding from the Canadian National Film Office, had produced some 140 projects by March 1973, having turned down over 300 others. At 1604, rue St. Denis in Montreal, the videothéâtre seats 100 and features a circle of suspended multi-screens. Each new videotape is introduced by its author, and the discussions held each evening allow participants not only to exchange critical points of view, but to create a new type of relationship, as anyone can become a producer. The videograph is designed neither to create "artists" nor to launch artistic careers; it is a community and political service. However, the distinction is not all that easy to make. It seems more and more difficult to classify videotapes in any of our existing categories. Videotapes produced in the context of the videograph, for instance, cannot be classified as civic, social or political purely because they pursue one of these objectives - just as video art tapes are not purely aesthetic simply because they are made by artists.

Despite all attempts video art has a paradoxical and disconcerting tendency to escape any strict historical definition. This is no doubt due to the fact that the electronic medium entails changes, not only in relation to dates and contents, but also in terms of the principles and methods to be followed, those which we have inherited from our literary culture having proved inadequate in this respect. Reasonable as it is to want as precise information as possible on the subject of video art, we find that it varies, often to a considerable degree, according to whether we look for it in the United States, Canada, Japan or Europe; and this applies to an even greater extent if we include "pre-video" research, such as that presented in 1963 at the Parnasse Gallery in Cologne by Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell and Joseph Beuys, or that of Luciano Glaccari at Studio 971 in Varese in 1968, (22)

In the absence of a history spanning barely twenty years, whose elements are scattered throughout catalogues too numerous to mention, the main difficulty resides in the fact that video art only really surfaces at international or national events or exhibitions. Thus, unlike the plastic arts (as I have already pointed out) there is no permanent "display" of video art in an appropriate setting where the public could get to know it, as it gets to know painting and sculpture.

Video art and its orientations

This problem is encountered once again when we try to establish a system of classification. (23) Based on the familiar categories of literature, we could attempt to establish a distinction between video performance, video theatre, video chronicle and video epic (and why not? Some videotapes, such as those made by the Italian artist

Barucchello, run for over twelve hours!) We could also speak, more broadly, of realist video, of lyric video, of tragic and comic video (as illustrated by Totologies by Michel Jaffrenou). Nor are analyses based on film criticism any more relevant. It is difficult to align video art with the established practices it has continued to defy for the twenty-odd years of its existence. So instead of differentiating between movements, trends and schools, I will confine myself to pointing out a few of the directions it has taken and which, we may be sure are already changing.

"My body, this unknown" is the path taken by many artists, once it was discovered that the electronic camera allowed for immediate reproduction and practically costless and unlimited production (erase and start over!). Video is open to everyone and offers one the possibility to explore any subject, free of cost, for videotapes on end. The wonder of being able to examine at leisure ones own face, nose, hands, feet, arms, legs, forehead, neck, tongue, hair . . . a continent without a visa and without limits! And we can understand how grimacing, a ridiculous exercise in our eyes, but so important for children, inspires so many artists eager to bring us back into the game - and thus our childhood - in the twofold sense of playing and freedom of movement. Bruce Nauman, Keith Sonnier and Les Levine, after exploring parts of their bodies move on to the elementary movements - eating, putting food into one's mouth, chewing, swallowing - and then to such basic activities as walking, climbing and jumping, which Marcel Mauss once studied from an ethnographic point of view under the title of body techniques. Painting ends at the portrait. Video seizes on the movement both from within and without. Unlike film, which tends to focus on certain objects and is thus selective, video has the power and the luxury not to have to choose, but to give itself up "body and soul".

In a second direction - "I, this unknown" - works by Peter Campus, Gerald Minkoff, Peter Weibel and Gene Otth among others, address the subject of perception. Long ago we were taught to mistrust our senses (the famous optical illusion of the stick that breaks in the water, for example). For a long time philosophy, and for much longer mythology, and more recently science, have taught us to mistrust appearances. It is unfortunate that they have not taught us to do this in the same way, nor on the basis of the same principles, and even less for the same purposes. Hence the antagonism which results in mutual rejection, each discipline claiming to hold the key to the truth; to the point that with each of them - philosophy, mythology and science - one finds oneself plunged into entirely different realities. Does the stick really break? It cracks, in any case.

Video, for the first time, or at any rate to such an extent, allows us to see and feel how our senses operate, the images we form, how we form (and deform) them, and how we put them together. Interface,

by Campus, is a case in point. Two images appear on a large glass panel: one is your reflected image, the other your video image. When you move, the two images move in opposite direction. Which is the truest image? Just as television showed us for the first time in history men in a state of weightlessness - which is radically different from an explanation of the phenomenon - so video reconstructs the experience in which one is oneself participating.

A third path proposes developing the interface at the environmental level. The natural environment first; thus Gilbert and George, who as living sculptures remain motionless for minutes on end, with only very rare and restrained movements (The Nature of our Looking). An absurd proposition, if it were not for a significant reversal for the viewer. Rather than the human figure detaching from its environment and hence from nature, as is our usual experience, here it is the environment which detaches itself, or rather, the terms changing in their turn, it is a branch, a leaf, a bush, moved by a slight wind, which become the "actors", while Gilbert and George are gradually conventionalized into a double commemorative medal, to end as petrified as fossil prints.

Again at the level of the natural environment: the act of love which is almost always soiled in the pornographic species, finds its opposite in the videotape made by Les Levine (I have never seen another like it): a couple, through the video recorder, discover their own caresses, movements and murmurs, without breaking their intimacy, or turning the act into an exhibition. Only video seems able to respect the special nature of lovemaking, the other media invariably reproducing desire and, in reproducing it, commercializing and distorting it. Forsaking the "product", spurning the idea of merchandise and discouraging the voyer, video in this case combines eroticism and modesty.

In this same "loving" vein - I use this term carefully - are included such other experiments as Frank and Laura Cavestani's work with Indians, which we might at first be tempted to call ethnographic studies were it not that video allows them to avoid both the aims and dissertations of ethnography in order to take the approach of the "other-and-I" (I use hyphens intentionally). Show, see, observe, deduce, and infer, presuppose a distinction between object and subject. Linguist terms sanctify this division. What happens when ethnocentrism, even in the name of science, has discretionary powers and gives common currency to such concepts as "primitive", "savage" and "civilized"?

Along the same lines, Shirley Clarke, with the aid of one or more portable monitors, creates a veritable affective environment, establishing a relationship with the monitor she holds in her arms like a child, we might be tempted to say. Is the machine, as the object of human tenderness, the portent of electronic maternity?

We are all familiar with the joke that Europeans condescendingly tell of American children and their three parents: father, mother and television set. And yet it is true that we have entered a new age, the age of the media (300 million television sets, more than one to one and a half billion viewers, representing a third of the population of the world) and that we must tame these media as our ancestors tamed wild animals. In fact, with the advent of community television, for instance, it is no longer absurd to speak of domestic media.

Douglas Davis and Ira Schneider have participated in this undertaking in their own way. In a work completed in 1975, Schneider built a video environment in the shape of a map of Manhattan - hence the title Manhattan is an Island - comprising twenty-five monitors on which six videotapes show scenes taken from various places in New York, from the excursion boat circling the island, from a helicopter flying over the city, and so on. It is in no way a model, a game, and least of all a gadget. As I "watched" (is this verb still appropriate?) Manhattan is an Island, I was struck by the presence in the middle of these images and sounds of several young people who, squatting, kneeling or lying down, chatted calmly as if the megalopolis, paradoxically reduced by video to the dimensions of its inhabitants, had regained a human, and most importantly, welcoming dimension. No mock-up, this, but simultaneity, as if the gesture, having too long been adulterated, commercialized and corrupted, sought to purify itself through the video screen in order to become once again fraternal, the alliance which it was originally.

Along these lines, which we could perhaps call "The world and us", Frank Gillette, a contributor to Radical Software has developed a philosophical and poetical ecological research which also combines cybernetics and long personal meditation. (24) At his exhibition at the Everson Museum in Syracuse (1973), a series of environments entitled Subterranean Field, Terraquae, Gestation/Growth, for example, forced us to participate in the life of plants and animals, and even the live birth of hundreds of baby chickens. This piece challenges our observation and diametrically opposed to the documentary, undertakes to create a sympathetic biotope.

The directions I have indicated here should be considered as itineraries taken rather than categories. Can I be more specific? The task is particularly difficult because video touches on all possible uses which the artist, in the absence of established aesthetic criteria, may choose to make of VCR for purposes of which he alone is aware (I will return to this subject later). Nevertheless, it might be useful to draw a few distinctions of an instrumental nature.

The videotape that the artist creates and which is intended to be shown either on a monitor or a television screen, I call monovideo. It is the most widespread form of production up to the present.

However great the diversity of the subject matter, the situation involved in monovideo is relatively simple: on one side the videotape projected onto a screen, on the other side, the viewers. The relationship is thus bipolar, as in the theatre, cinema, or in front of the television. Here I only speak of the topography of the situation, not taking the value or diversity of the contents into consideration. (25)

The advantage of monovideo lies in the fact that the cassette is easy to send and that if the receiver has the technical equipment necessary, the tape can be viewed on the spot. Thus, many museums today have video booths for video viewing. There are either set programmes (specific days, hours, artists, tapes) or, in the case of a few of these institutions, the viewer can select the work he would like to see, inserts the cassette into the recorder himself and turns it on and off as he pleases.

Monovideo lends itself to the creation of video libraries which, materially at least, are obviously very much like the traditional library: cassettes are arranged on shelves, and a catalogue or card index is available for public consultation. All things considered, the behaviour of the video librarian and that of the reader/viewer is similar. This situation, as we have seen during the last two decades, has been especially conducive to the organization of video festivals, which have increased in number throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. With adequate technical equipment - and technicians on hand, in case of technical failure or difficulties - the contributions of the guest artists can be presented to the public as at an exhibition of paintings.

I have already referred, in speaking of video's early years, to the need almost immediately felt by artists to broaden their experience. These more or less complex video environments draw upon a spatial relationship which modifies the viewers' behaviour. Breaking with the bipolar relationship of monovideo, multivideo, as I call it, offers a multipolarity which involves audience participation. This is not a multi-screen spectacle, but an arrangement in which the intervals themselves are called upon to contribute, as demonstrated by artists as different as Steina and Woody Vasulka, Muntadas, Les Levine, Peter Campus, Gerald Minkoff, Gene Otth and others, not to mention the time-lapse environments of Frank Gillette and Dan Graham.

Used in this manner, video acquires a power of embodiment which reorganizes our perception of space and time and marks a further step in the break with macrotelevision, with its purely entertainment-oriented function.

Video environments, however, have a serious drawback in that they require a great deal of expensive equipment. Unlike monovideo, which relies on cassettes easily sent anywhere at low cost,

environments pose transportation problems and must be set up anew at each presentation site. They are therefore almost only found at institutions which have technical and financial means at their disposal, and this tends to restrict their distribution.

As for installations, another form of multivideo, these utilize not only a group of screens, but different media, objects even, and occasionally the direct participation of the artist. An example of this which comes to mind is the piece by Veronique Mōri, presented in Geneva in 1981 in the context of Video Mix-Media. Two television sets face each other on the floor. In the thirty centimetres between them there is a houseplant, a pointsettia to be exact, whose flowers spread like leaves, except that they are red. On the two screens the double face of the artist winks, turns, or moves aside. A guillotine basket? But the head is alive, as if, having rolled to the ground, almost knocking into the plant, it comes back to life, not real life but the ghost-like existence given it by the video image. And suddenly, intuitively, it seems that the electronic iconography in which we like to see the very image of reality is perhaps only an ectoplasmic emanation emitted at eye-level by a ceaseless, endless screen. The fact that the television set can come down from its stand on to the floor and, instead of being isolated in the middle of the living room, mix with plants or other objects, challenges our very concepts of the world and our bodies.

At the crossroads of topics

When examining a painting in a museum, I place myself in a typical situation which consists (to reduce it to a few characteristics only) either in identifying the painting, or evaluating its contribution to art, or situating it in an historical context, or simply admiring it. However, in order to examine, study and analyse the work, one must choose an appropriate "place" neither too near nor too far away. This "place" also involves a time element: the length of time needed to examine the work. The situation of the "painting spectator" is determined by spatio-temporal conditions and cultural rules which permit and establish appropriate behaviour. This could be illustrated, to remain in the area of painting, by the social ceremony of varnishing day at an art exhibition, when crowds of people invade the gallery or museum, eating, drinking and talking (often all three at once) without bothering to look at the paintings, whereas it would be considered scandalous to turn up the following day, drinks and snacks in hand. Contexts assign roles according to the conditions and purposes which make up the typical situations and relationships of our social practices.

Taking a broader view, we might say that all social behaviour, stemming as it does from communication, i. e. involving interactions

between people and techniques, is based on topics which, through repetition, become the norm.

It is precisely this "normality" that all video artists, almost without exception, attack, either as in the early works of Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell and Jean Otth, by intentionally deforming television images or establishing absurd connexions between the television set and other objects, (26) or by introducing, through mono- or multivideo, atypical relationships which "pervert" (in the etymological sense) the normal functioning of the media. This is the first effect of video art, which I call the dislocation effect. Nothing is stranger than comparing a television programme with a videotape. Willingly or not, it is difficult to avoid a feeling of strangeness. Why does video function so differently? In fact, as video experiments multiply, it is surprising to realise that all videotapes depart from standard television material. This observation is even more surprising when one considers the number of similarities existing between the two. Video uses the same apparatus as TV, a set which is turned on and off, the manual operations are the same and the electronic signals are identical. Videotapes project on the screen what we are accustomed to seeing on television: images organized in sequences, in black and white or colour, accompanied by sounds, speech or noises. In other words, there is nothing technical to distinguish video from TV; yet despite the technical similarities, we could not have a stronger impression of being confronted with two fundamentally different phenomena.

This is because in television the various genres, subjects, schedules, programmes are regarded as "natural"; more openly, the hostesses, presenters, journalists; more secretly, the administrative, political and technical departments - in short, all that constitutes in the broad sense the organization of the TV discourse, which is the result of the "topic" established between the producer on the one hand and the receiver-audience on the other. This correspondence might appear to be a happy coincidence (pre-established?) of interests if it did not stem simply from a progressive assimilation of the medium's logic by the audience.

As long as a medium prevails, its hegemony makes it the privileged model of communication. This has been confirmed for over five centuries by linguistic communication, which has made the book the leading authority (as it still is in the classroom). This has also been confirmed for almost fifty years by audiovisual communication, which has made television the privileged moderator of our everyday lives. In fact, any medium is an arbitrary and complex production which appears less so owing to our familiarity with its operation (witness the use we make of television today).

We can therefore better understand why video artists are so intent on effecting a caesura with television to restore the issue of

communication to the production level, which is its proper place. In attacking the nature of the image, as they often do, these artists disclose one of the strictest imperatives of television and the basis of its very topic: realism. All television pictures must be clear and sharp; their credibility depends on their reliability. Fuzziness and approximation are tolerated only exceptionally, when production conditions are hazardous, as in wartime, for instance. In all other cases it is television's duty to create a feeling of "you are there"; the power of the medium is dependent on its capacity to compete with our powers of perception. Can one imagine an impressionist or cubist style news programme? Viewers would immediately complain or think there had been a breakdown. Realism requires that the image identify with the reality (in linguistic terminology: the sign as the referent). Yet this coincidence is always an illusion, for the simple reason that an image is never real. This is revealed by many video artists when they attack the self-assigned authority of the screen, which is always only the expression of an image that, if not manipulated, is at least processed. Thus genres are challenged - news broadcasts, variety and sports programmes, dramas, etc. - in other words, the dramaturgy and rhetoric of the most powerful media in existence today. In this video criticism there is a considerable blend of irony and humour, but beyond the satire it shows that television, which tends to take itself as the natural order of things, is an order founded on technology and the social relationships which govern it. By emphasizing subjectivity - sometimes to an exasperating extent - video artists show us that the authority invested in television is a matter of power. In so doing, they refuse to permit any media to be "the voice of France" as George Pompidou termed French television; the beginning and end of all communication is the person engaged in it as its subject. Outside the field of polemics, although it occasionally indulges in it, video criticism sheds light on one of our basic problems: the individual is not lost in the mass to which the mass media tend to reduce individuals. The individual's voice, just as his identity, must remain inalienable; the effect of mass reality should not be mistaken for reality.

In addition to the dislocation effect which I have briefly described above, video, as used by video artists, tends to relocate; that is, it aims at showing us places or networks of places which, regardless of their apparent bizarreness, fit in with our own profoundest experiences. The latter, whether they be on the conscious or subconscious level, are not immediately communicable, but mediately communicable. Every medium is therefore the place and the means by which the field of our shared experience and interpersonal relationships is established. Psychoanalysis has revealed much of the subconscious, and has brought its innermost workings

to light. However, analysis (as the term would indicate, and as Freud insisted time and time again) proceeds in a rational manner through the organization of rational discourse. That is to say that the discourse, whatever its object may be, applies to it the logic of the concepts on which it is based. As linguists have pointed out, the structure of a language affects the thinking it expresses; it moulds it to its own forms. This is true even for philosophy itself, which is dependent upon the mode of linguistic expression in which it is expressed.

When a video artist like Naumann devotes a videotape to the painstaking examination of his face and grimaces, we could draw a seemingly outlandish analogy by saying that he is only visualizing what Descartes conceptualized when he decided to pretend that all things entering his mind were no more real than the illusions of his dreams. In proceeding in this manner, Descartes did not use discourse to increase or verify his knowledge, but to discover, within the concepts of which it is composed, the confirmation of his own thinking substance. The conviction of "I think therefore I exist" is based on the very process of communication - in this case conceptual - that Descartes uses to formulate his experience.

Similarly, a video artist like Naumann (and this is only one example) does not use mobile images and sounds in order to say something about his state of health, his aesthetic appearance or his mood (as when one looks in the mirror or when shooting a film). The images he records are less informative or scenic than they are heuristic: they constitute the artist's process of communication - in this case audiovisual - through which he discovers his identity during the experience he visualizes on the video screen. Just as with Descartes concepts and discourse ceased to be mere auxiliaries designed to establish or preserve conceptual knowledge, so for Naumann mobile images and sounds cease to be mere auxiliaries designed to establish or preserve visual knowledge. Just as the concept for Descartes was no longer used only to serve a purpose, but became the experience of his thinking activity, so Naumann's mobile images formulate the possibility of an audiovisual identity which discloses itself in the very course of projecting the videotape. However slender a chance it might offer, video could well become, as the mass media close in on us, a new form of "electronic cogito". At the crossroads of the topics sanctified by our social practices, particularly those relating to communication, video feeds a doubt which, like that of Descartes, has the virtue of posing a question.

Similarly, at the opposite end of the spectrum, video allows us to plumb the depths of the subconscious. Some may object that this is the subject of psychoanalysis and that Freud's entire work, as well as that of all those who followed the master's path with varying degrees of fidelity, has tracked down even its most secret

mechanisms. However, whatever is involved - impulse, unconscious acts, Freudian slips, plays on words, dreams, everything in short that constitutes the obscurest side of our being - the analysis is always conducted in the light of rational discourse. It seems to me that monovideo, and multivideo even more, often delve as deep into the subject, but do so using a radically different approach. In lieu of analysis through rational discourse based on concepts, video proposes configurations of images, sounds, objects and movements which appeal to our emotions more than our intellect. It is as if the artist, through his work (and the expression "artist's work" could be equated with "dream work") visualizes that which analysis limits itself to conceptualizing. Installations, environments and video sculptures take on the appearance - with the help of the third dimension - of models of our subconscious, while analysis remains on a linear level. The audiovisual is not merely an extension of linguistic communication: it introduces an entirely new space. But while the audiovisual almost everywhere, because of television, has taken on the image and force of a superego, video art has the capacity to explore, among other things, the ego and the id, which is a stumbling block for most topics, particularly those of the media.

Such a task is particularly difficult because video art is not widespread and receives only limited attention from the public and critics, so that the artists run the risk of losing themselves in an idelect unintelligible to the others. One has only to watch visitors at a national or international video art exhibition to notice that very few watch tapes from start to finish, and that most devote only a limited period of time to each piece, or just wander from screen to screen. In the best of cases, through chance circumstances or the obstinancy of an organizer, (27) video art attains the status of a dialect, by which I mean the medium of expression common to certain groups. But nowhere has it succeeded in affirming itself as a common, widely used language on a par with painting and sculpture. This situation, can, of course, be interpreted as a weakness; but I am convinced that it can also represent a strength in that, in face of the hegemony of the mass media, it remains, however precariously and at times inadequately, the source of that "untamed thinking" which is our guarantee of freedom.

III. THE COMING MARKET; NEW PRODUCTS (NEW FORMS OF COMMUNICATION?)

All things considered, and at the risk of playing the prophet with all the suspicion attaching to the term, I will say that the same thing is happening and will go on happening, with video as happened with the automobile. Who would have dreamed that the automobile, now barely one hundred years old, would so transform our traditional environment as to make it unrecognizable? Yet it is a fact that a product as simple as the automobile, a temporary mobile residence on wheels, has imposed a new physiognomy on our cities in order to meet the demands of traffic and has convulsed our countrysides by replacing the old roads and paths with a straightjacket of motorways; in short, nothing in our styles of living, working or thinking has not been affected by it. Video is very possibly in the process of doing for communication what the automobile has done in the field of transportation and means of locomotion (for better or worse is not to question). Whether in public or private transportation, the automobile has added individual technolocomotion to our original two legs. Similarly, at the communication level video has added to the public communication of TV a private means of communication which, while not replacing the postal or telephone systems, is in the process of fundamentally changing our communication relationships. In the case of the automobile these changes only came about once the mass market as we know it today had been organized.

The organization of the video market is still in its early days, but all signs point in a similar direction. Publicity, one of the more significant signs, is a case in point. Publicity forges that alliance between producers and distributors, on the one hand, and consumers on the other, which testifies to the existence and vitality of a market. Today, there is no newspaper, magazine, advertising spot or prospectus which does not give a place of honour to the new communications equipment, video.

In the abundant publicity we can discern the outlines of the "magnetic field" of the new product, whose strong points - the selling points - are roughly nine: (1) the specific characteristics of video, (2) its many uses, (3) its performance, (4) reliability, (5) feasibility, (6) economy, (7) adaptability to future needs, (8) price, and (9) the promise of "Videoland" (as one speaks of Disneyland).

I do not have time here to elaborate on each of these points, only a few of which require further explanation in our particular context. It is understandable, for instance, that manufacturers should emphasize the fact that their equipment is becoming increasingly compact and lighter in weight; that it is easy to operate ("a child can use it" is a popular theme); that it can record for hours

on end and be programmed at will (each new feature is heralded as a victory); and that technological progress ensures its efficient, economical performance, which means competitive prices that bring these products within the reach of all. Of most interest from the point of view of our study is the emphasis placed on the specificity of video. Video not only adds a new communications machine to those already existing, but introduces a new type of communication - perhaps even, as I will show later, a new type of communication environment. Like the other audiovisual media, it breaks away from the demands of writing and books and moves outside the realm of linguistic communication by developing images, sound and movement. Unlike the fixed photographic image, it captures movement, as indeed the film had already done; but its magnetic recording, doing away with the need for film development and allowing for unlimited erasing and rerecording, gives video a considerable economic advantage. Moreover, the situation has so evolved that new uses are being prepared for the electronic image, some sporadically in course of development, still at the planning stage. It is therefore not surprising that manufacturers should emphasize something of what this evolution portends: "Enter the videoworld of Sony(28) and discover the sixth sense", announces the firm of the same name with solemn assurance. Without a doubt it is "videoland" and "videoworld" which are beginning to appear on the horizon. (29)

Having said this, what are the main uses of the video now on the market or about to be marketed?

(1) The possibility of recording in parallel: while watching one programme, another one, shown at the same time, may be recorded for future viewing on videotape (a solution to family arguments). The VCR can also be programmed a day or several days, or even weeks, in advance to record a programme which is to be shown during one's absence. With this feature, much touted by the manufacturers, video is considered an instrument which allows one to a certain extent to escape the disadvantages and limitations of television. There are also a few clever features in their own right: freeze-frame, speed up and slow-motion controls, (30) "A la carte television", as it is called: everyone makes up the menu they want. We must remember, however, that each item on the "menu" is created, prepared and served up by TV alone!

(2) Secondly, the video market has led to the production of audiovisual cassettes - like music cassettes - whose field of application is virtually limitless. In principle, videocassettes could (will?) form the equivalent of current day libraries; in principle too they can become the depositories and the vehicles of human knowledge, instruments made even more extraordinary by the addition of the visual to the conceptual dimension. Providing, of course, that there are publishers to produce them, distributors to distribute them and customers to buy them.

What does the videotape market look like today? Four major trends - of varying importance - predominate in video catalogues.

The first includes cassettes offering films (i. e., adventure, burlesque, comedy, musicals, drama, classics, horror, crime thrillers, science fiction, westerns, etc.), which are categories I have taken from Sony's latest catalogue, Sonyscope. This selection is in keeping with the desire of many people (a desire which, when lacking, is created or encouraged by the manufacturer/publisher) to have "films at home" instead of having to go out to the cinema.

The second, and not the least important trend, comprises the burgeoning production of "X-rated" cassettes (in other words, pornography). (31) Libertine or licentious literature has existed throughout the ages; pornography, a more recent phenomenon, owes much to progress in colour reproduction. With cassettes, however, it has made a real breakthrough. The market for it is all the greater in that the contents, however repetitive and stereotyped, correspond in all countries to the same repetitive and stereotyped drives, and need no translation. (32)

The third trend covers an eclectic selection of cassettes ranging from sports to variety programmes and concerts, which can be grouped under the general heading of entertainment.

A fourth trend is made up of "how-to" cassettes (how to learn to sail, play golf, cook, etc.). (33)

Judging from the early days of the mass video market which, it will be recalled, is barely five years old, it is clear that video-cassette recorder usage remains linked to that of television, even if it claims to be liberated to a certain extent from its constraints; and that the cassettes marketed are mainly mass-consumption cultural products, as can be seen from a brief glance at catalogues distributed by the publishers. As for video art, I can find no mention of it in these catalogues, which well shows its marginal status. More surprising is the absence of the plastic arts, which would be thought to have an important role in video. This is again proof that the producers, with their market imperatives, care little for the specific possibilities of the medium; they only produce what is likely to sell on a large scale. This may only be a temporary phenomenon, but as things stand it has to be recognized that "electronic" culture is subject to the law of the market place.

(3) Electronic games. The popularity of these continues to grow. The market has therefore already introduced, in addition to those sold separately in the trade, cassette video games which can be inserted directly into a videocassette deck. Thus "the Atari Cassette Library today comprises thirty-seven games programmes: games of skill (e. g. Space Invaders), of strategy (chess), sports (football, Pelé), of chance (casino) and educational (basic maths). A total of over 1,500 different games which will provide hours and

hours of exciting entertainment, either alone, or with family and friends. This collection grows each month with the addition of new games programmes ...". The use of the videocassette recorder for games (which I do not have time to analyse here), varies considerably from the traditional games of which Piaget, among others, demonstrated the importance in his essays entitled Genetic Epistemology. The replacement of manual activities, which activate the child's body as well as his mind, by purely entertainment-oriented activities, which relate only to the sense of sight - itself reduced to binary logic - is bound to have considerable influence on the child's development.

More broadly it is video in the classroom (or video instead of the classroom?) that is being challenged. (34)

(4) Personal Television, as it is called in a Nordmende advertisement (The Vision of the Future): "... it is more than home television! More than the mere recording, playing back or slowing down of the offerings of official channels or prerecorded cassettes!

"Personal television means going out and making your own TV!
"To do so, don't take just any videorecorder - take the two-unit Nordmende 350. Strap the recorder over your shoulder (it weighs under 12 pounds), grab the Nordmende C225 video camera, and you're off!

"At home that evening, simply hook up the recorder, turn it on, and you have truly personal television. (Preferably on Nordmende's unique stereophonic colour television). The 350 model is then seen to be a perfectly "normal" home videocassette recorder ...

"Only with many more possibilities ..."

This use of the VCR, still embryonic, is in fact an extension of family photography and "home movies". Now anyone (provided they possess the necessary equipment (whether Nordmende or another brand!) can record his children at play, his vacation in the mountains or at the seaside, birthdays, and his wife's charms (which can always be erased in the event of divorce, and the cassette left blank for a future spouse). (35) It matters little that this type of recording becomes stereotyped fairly rapidly, as does most home photography, the important thing being that the sale of equipment and cassettes should follow a rising curve. Alongside Kodak, Polaroid, Yashica, Nikon and Cannon, new empires have appeared: Sony, Matsushita (JVC, VHS), Philips, Thomson and Ampex. The camera has already become an individual "medium" in our industrial society; video is now in the process of taking its place.

(5) "Industrial" television (videocommunication for professional use) enables institutions and communities - universities, businesses, unions - to produce videograms devoted primarily to information, training and promotion. Although it may be an in-house service exclusively, its production has been increasing steadily. (36) How to rationalize the job of a service-station attendant? How to welcome

a new bank customer? How to react in a dangerous situation? How to display a product? How to be a floorwalker? The videogram is much more effective in many situations than a verbal or written explanation. Even dating services use it, since the advertisement can now be accompanied by a videocassette, which converts the anonymous concepts of handsome, tall, nice, affectionate, romantic, rich, etc., into seductive (?) - or at least credible-images addressed to prospective partners.

This is only a brief overview of video applications, since video is still in its early days and the organization of the mass market dates back only a few years. Its development is dependent on an increase in production and sales. While demand was slow at first, it has become so great that the Japanese have scheduled production of some 20 million VCRs for 1982. (37) By all indications, this trend will continue, stimulated by the development of videotex and tele-matic systems at the personal, community and professional levels. (38)

Video communication is tending to become an audiovisual environment fed by an ever-increasing number and variety of sources (television, cassettes, satellites, telephone, databanks, computers, industrial and personal videograms). Another no less significant indicator is the advent of video clubs, (39) on the lines of book clubs. The number of video magazines and reviews, which has been growing steadily over the past few years, is yet another indication of the vitality of this phenomenon. Their aim is summed up in the strident slogan of one of them (40) "Video concerns you". Conscious of the importance of this trend, the manufacturers have not stood idly by. For the more clairvoyant of them (and are they not bound to be so, since the world market is at stake), the home videocassette recorder, even equipped with a personal video camera, is only a beachhead. They are therefore trying to build up around the videocassette recorder a whole series of related products, on the lines of hi-fi speaker equipment. The video environment is therefore no metaphor; it is in process of becoming both a technical reality and a fact of civilization. The Thomson-Brandt Group, among others, has observed this, and "to celebrate worthily the inevitable marriage of video and sound ... offers the first system designed for the home audiovisual environment". In addition to the monitor and electronic selector, the system features "an outlet configuration allowing for the hookup of two videocassette recorders and a camera, as well as a video-disc player and a personal computer". This firm looks boldly into the future in saying: "The audio-amplifier-projector allows all existing hi-fi system equipment and future innovations (41) to be interconnected, but it can also take all sound channels from the television-video part of the system. Thomson-Brandt has envisaged the video system in the broadest and most evolutive sense of the

word by anticipating our future "audiovisual happiness" (satellite, cable, videotexts, etc.),"

Without going further into this rapidly developing situation, it is fair to predict or at least imagine, that just as the automobile revolutionized our environment, so audiovisual systems are in the process of revolutionizing communication. (42) Video mediation is preparing to conquer all fields and all publics. It should be examined with a view both to clarifying the type of relationship it creates and establishing the place of video art which, with all its originality, is a part of this evolution but is not restricted to the dictates of the market.

IV. A NEW RELATIONSHIP - VIDEO MEDIATION

For thousands of years, communication has mainly been effected through linguistic and iconic messages. In the former, linguistic symbols serve as intermediaries, in the latter images or more broadly, representations. To be transmitted, linguistic and/or iconic symbols need to be reproduced, represented orally, in writing, painting, sculpture, or by any other means of reproduction. However, reproduction requires a space, which provides the support in appropriate material form, forms to fill the space, rules to order it, and finally a certain stability; in other words, representation is impossible without a certain fixity of the message, which alone ensures the length of life - whether long or short is of little importance - which it needs to serve its message-relaying purpose. These structural elements which make communication possible have taken on a myriad of forms throughout history: tombs, palaces, cathedrals, paintings, frescoes, statues, utensils and tools; in short, the world of images has been traditionally characterized by an infinite variety of forms, techniques, materials, dimensions and functions.

With the new audiovisual media, particularly television and video, a fundamental change has taken place. The key operation is no longer representation, but transmission. The viewer, instead of reactivating stabilized forms, is drawn into the movement of the image-messages. The screen, by definition, excludes all representation and even all possibility of representation, as it only functions if one image gives way to the next. (43) Based for thousands of years on the polymorphous spatialization of images, iconic communication tends increasingly to make the video screen the omega of all communication. This radically new mediation, which today extends throughout the world and to which we are all subject without even noticing it, affects the very basis of our behaviour (44) by producing effects which video artists are perhaps the first to have perceived.

From before recorded history to the dawn of the twentieth

century, man called upon incandescence to produce the light he needed, whether it was in the form of a wood fire, torches, candles, or the white heat of a filament enclosed in a vacuum-tight bulb. The electronic image, however, comes from fluorescence, in which free electrons generate luminous photons. Unlike incandescence, in which light is linked with heat, fluorescence allows matter to be energized without generating heat. Hence the term "cold light" given to it by the German scientist Wiedemann in 1888. An image is thus produced by the impact of electrons on the luminescent powder on a screen. This endows video with characteristics not possessed by the other media, even the cinema: "... the cinematic image is created by transforming variations in the intensity of light at the level of the object perceived (the object-scene filmed by the optical camera) into chemical variations at the level of the film-support, which relays through a projector these chemical variations in the form of an image on the screen. The production of a TV image involves more complex relays: light variations are transformed - or 'analysed' - into electronic variations at the level of the picture-taking tubes (electronic cameras); these produce electromagnetic variations at the level of the recording heads (videotape recorders) and the magnetic tape which has received and recorded these variations sends them back in a symmetrically opposite process in the form of electronic variations and then the light variations which constitute the TV image. (45)

The electronic signal comes from invisible rays which are suddenly made visible by a flow of electrons; the empty screen is at once filled with a moving flow of images, which from non-existence come into existence instantaneously. This is a radically new experience, for hitherto we have always perceived images, even in photography and films, in outline or printed form. Today, these images appear with no indication of their source and with no apparent means of retaining them, combining immediacy and fugitiveness. (46)

Without going into details, we must remember that, unlike the optic nerve, which has hundreds of thousands of tracts, the video screen has only a single one. This means that there is never more than one point on the screen, which may seem as unlikely as it is incomprehensible. In fact, the electronic image is created through rapid scanning and the phenomenon of retinal persistence. Unlike architecture, painting, sculpture or the other media (print, photography, film), in which there is always something of a material nature that we can perceive to a certain extent in the first degree, the electronic image is created by the paradoxical course of a single point of light which is perceived in the second degree. It is an imaginary image constructed from the "frozen" path of a bodyless point; hence its ghost-like character, without past or future. Arriving without any perceivable vehicle (electrons escape perception through

their size, number and speed), for the electronic image everything is possible; its capacity for metamorphosis is infinite, (47) As in the act of creation in the Book of Genesis, the screen creates forms, beings and figures out of electronic chaos, apparitions having neither physical life nor remains. Fingers stretched toward the screen will touch, feel and encounter nothing but the crackling of static electricity. A book, on the other hand, an abstract medium if ever there was one, leaves its presence and the actual weight of its pages in the hands of the reader, even when he interrupts his reading. (48)

Video mediation is thus much more than a means of communication. In the form of the audiovisual environment for which it is being prepared, and which Thomson-Brandt assures us will guarantee our future "audiovisual happiness", it tends to become the most popular, and even exclusive, form of mediation. It is as if the Screen, instead of bringing us together in a cosmogony, as masks and idols once did, sets itself up as the purveyor of our every need: information, entertainment, education, games, as well as the most domestic of activities (one can already shop for groceries via video, without money changing hands; accounts are debited or credited (automatically)). Video mediation has moved from the sectoral to the universal and permanent. Our behaviour is being affected, and will be increasingly affected by it in the future. Piaget's epistemology was based on the idea that our actions precede our thought patterns and that the progressive interiorization of these actions results in the system of operations which we ultimately use - an irreversible system, unstructured at the outset, having a reversible balance as man grows from childhood to maturity.

Video mediation, through its holistic extensions, has tended increasingly to produce a referential illusion. Every language and every medium is characterized by the fact that there is always a gap between the sign and the reality it designates. Thus, the word ox is not the ox itself, but refers us back to the animal known by this name. On the other hand, the video image as it appears on television, especially in live broadcasts, does not merely designate an event, but gives the viewer the feeling, the sensation even, of "being there", of participating directly in the event. To a certain extent, video mediation does not reproduce events in the same way as the other media: it creates the very presence of reality, which in fact it produces. Hence, the feeling of "illusion-reality" which is its typical feature and makes it so omnipotent, (49) This is probably the first time in history that a phenomenon of this sort has occurred on such a large scale. The danger is all the greater because the "ghost-like" fascination of the electronic image is open to every use, every treatment (50) and every manipulation.

Where is the "audiovisual happiness" looming on the horizon of the new technology going to take us? A recent Unesco study gives

us one answer where television is concerned, (51) Its most striking conclusion is that: "There are unwritten laws which make for a structural similarity between broadcast schedules". This means that, regardless of the size of the country or its political regime, there is an international programming probability which can be observed in the form of common genres (news broadcasts, sporting events, dramas, news magazines, etc.), in similar scheduling and in the design and treatment of programmes. (52)

The unearthing of these implicit rules reveals two things: it first demonstrates that they stem from the transmitters, not from the viewers, and that they are therefore the work of the production apparatus; and, outside the field of television itself, it shows the way the video market is going. Very probably it will adopt unwritten rules of its own which will make both audiovisual equipment and products look alike (53) and, much like the driving code for motorists, will increasingly impose their regulations, including sanctions, on the circulation of image-messages. The social energy of the media in closed circuit!

And Video Art?

After what I have just said, it is to be wondered whether there can still be a question of video art, or even whether I was wrong to give it such importance at the beginning of this study.

Video art is in fact in a doubly precarious position: first, it uses electronic technology which, as we know, the market aims to monopolize; and second, video art, as we have seen, is not just a simple addition to painting or sculpture, which in fact it challenges on several points.

Until recently, art seemed to be both the favoured expression of a civilization and, for us, the favoured means by which we could learn about that civilization. Palaces, tombs, sculpture, paintings, triumphal arches, churches, cathedrals, stained glass windows were all "monuments" (as etymology attests) which preserved the collective memory by assigning it an identity of its own. Today, the electronic image, of which television remains the main purveyor, tends to replace this "monumental" memory.

This is no mere substitution; the very nature of our memory is in process of changing. So long as memory was backed by stable materials (even the pages of a book), it proceeded by a slow process of sedimentation during which it retained those elements necessary to establish and maintain a certain unity: hence the gods, and later the kings, princes, and military leaders, whose majesty or glory gave meaning to the community. But who today pays any attention to the statues scattered throughout our cities, the heritage of only a recent past, which the motorist passes without seeing or merely

takes advantage of an empty space around them to park his car. Gone are the days when heroes' features were cast 'n bronze, carved in stone, or painted. Long-term memory deteriorates when, as is the case today, durable materials are no longer used. The new memory - should we call it "short-term" memory, present memory (the very terms are contradictory - is the one generated by the audiovisual media, and "the news" has become its supreme form. The video screen must be "up-to-date", or nothing at all; hence its voraciousness. But all media are based on signs, and it is no mere word-play to add that they are accustomed to separating the "signal" (worthy of the dignity of being signified) from that which is not (undignified and insignificant becoming synonymous here), ac-
ording to its own logic, we might add.

The place and role sought by video artists in the new, yet already worldwide, phenomenon of electronic image production is easy to guess. As we have seen, in accepting the challenge of the mass media they attack the code of those media as well as of the market. Moreover, they explore what the mass media consider insignificant, of no value, and which they ignore, dismiss or neglect. Video artists thus live an interstitial adventure conducted through established filters, aware that it is in the "inter-regions" that will emerge or appear - not truth - but the unveiling of meaning; whereas the code knowing no meaning, merely ordains. In so doing, video artists adopt the fruitful scientific approach taken by Norbert Wiener, father of cybernetics, when he wrote "... the most fruitful areas for the growth of the sciences were those which had been neglected as a no-man's-land between the various established fields. (...) It is these boundary regions of science which offer the richest opportunities to the qualified investigator, (54)

Is this reason enough to devote one's interest to such marginal an activity as that of the video artists? It is as if democracy periodically felt the need to invent its own Socrates to rid itself of the assurance of the sophists, whether man or media, (55)

There is always the hope, however remote, that if communication changes hands it may not only change its language, but its objectives as well. This seems to be happening in video art today. It is for this reason that I attach so much importance to the artists who, let me repeat one last time, are not content to add yet another means of expression to the arts, but who are moving fearlessly into the electronic environment, despite the manufacturers' claim that they alone can ensure our "audiovisual happiness". Researchers, fighters too, and guides in any case, these artists remind us that happiness, while it can be helped by technology, is first and foremost the affair of men and that meaning, all too often constricted or misused by the powers that be, can only be revealed by respecting differences. Which is precisely the purpose served by art and artists.

NOTES

1. In the Eastern European countries, television is a service provided by the State. In Western countries, it professes to be a public service, but the monopoly system, with which only Italy has broken, makes it clear that the authorities are not yet ready to loosen the reins, however relaxed their actual grip may be. It may thus be said that the monopoly principle operates in various ways throughout Western Europe.
2. Briefly it may be noted that, although in the United States there is no monopoly, all broadcasting licences are issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).
3. Although radio waves remain the main method of transmission for the time being, cable use is continuing to develop and, with the advent of fiber optics, will most probably become predominant. This technological development offers the advantages of improving picture reception, increasing the number of channels available to the viewer, and controlling broadcasting - which represents a definite advantage for the authorities.
4. At the last Consumer Electronics Show (CES), which is reserved for the entertainment electronics trade, several dozen manufacturers displayed satellite television reception equipment. This equipment is becoming increasingly less expensive, and an entire system can cost as little as \$ 500. According to Vidéo Actualité No. 19 (April - May 1982): "Already inaugurated, or about to be inaugurated, are the "Penthouse" (12/81) and "Eros" (1/82) channels broadcasting, as their titles might imply, adult programmes; family programmes (HTN 1/82), women's programmes ("Daytime" spring '82), and jazz with "Black Music Service" (8/82) and "Nashville Service". At the risk of generalizing, this development can only be regarded as revealing. For an overview of the satellite TV issue, see Science et Vie, No. 776, May, 1982.
5. Extensive documentation is available on this subject, which may seem paradoxical given the relatively limited number of cable installations so far authorized in Europe. On the other hand, the United States and Canada have been experimenting heavily in this field, and their systems are highly diversified. (See Footnote 6).
6. I do not refer to those cable systems, which are content to relay the national programmes with the occasional addition of other programmes. By mesotelevision I am speaking of cable television at the community level, which only too rarely rejects the "ready-made" or "ready-to-watch" programme.
7. The order to these terms may be inverted, especially as the

effects of an anaesthetizing ideology make us forget that macro-television in fact involves not a trilogy but a tetralogy, its advertising mission being as important as the others, if not more so.

8. "Proclamations from the magisterium, even if they be dogma in the strictest sense of the word, are in need of reinterpretation", Cardinal Doepfner, Archbishop of Munich, stated at the 1969 symposium at Coire attended by some 115 bishops, "And even if, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, they contain a truth which transcends time, in other words, a truth which is objectively valid for all time, they formulate it in temporal language. They are always proclamations subject to historical conditions, imprisoned in concepts conditioned by a given period of time or a given system and resulting from certain concrete situations or a specific event. This is why they always express the truth inadequately, from a given standpoint, in piecemeal fashion, taking into account certain aspects and with a specific audience in view. Thus, to understand them, one must be well acquainted with those conditions". (Le Monde, 9 July 1969).
9. Ludwig Bertalanfy, Théorie Générale des systèmes physiques, biologie, psychologie, sociologie, philosophie. Paris, Dunod, 1973, pp. 38-39.
10. Erwin Schrödinger, Qu'est-ce que la vie? (translation by Léon Keffler), Paris, Club Français du Livre, 1949, "Sciences" series No. 3. Léon Brillouin, Vie, matière et observation, Paris, Albin Michel, 1959.
11. André Leroi-Gourhan, L'Homme et la matière and Milieu et technique, Paris, Albin Michel, Coll. "Sciences d'Aujourd'hui", 1971.
12. Thus I made a "video pilgrimage" to the United States, Canada and Japan as well as to some European countries (only a few of which have video artists), to China (where there are none), to Africa (where I did not meet any either), and to South America, where at least two countries - Brazil and Argentina - have a few video artists. In other words, not only did I travel, but I was forced to travel, although information at this stage of my explorations remains incomplete.
13. This is the same "strangeness" we note in all illustrated film magazines, although in this case it is tempered a great deal by our familiarity with this art form. On the other hand, isolated images of video art not only furnish us no clue as to its nature, but by artificially equating it with painting, often give it - the ultimate absurdity - the appearance of a bastardized version of Monet, Rodin or Picasso.
14. See René Berger Art(s) et Pouvoir(s). (Unpublished).
15. This concept of property deserves to be discussed here. The

plastic arts - painting, sculpture and engraving - are unique in that they are dependent on a material support. Unlike other arts, such as theatre, ballet, concerts or poetry, which take place over time, they are by nature like chattels which can be bought and sold. These articles must, however, be of such a size and weight as to be easily transportable. The black market in stolen art is proof of this. As far as I know, operas and ballets have never been stolen in the material sense of the word. Similarly, insofar as the plastic arts are concerned, it is impossible to steal a cathedral or church; on the other hand, there is a thriving market in stolen paintings and sculptures. The theft of art work defines the scope of the art market and the concept of property.

16. A history of video art has yet to be written. Information remains scattered in different locations, and is most often found in video art festival catalogues. However, in the special issue of Cahiers du Cinéma entitled "Video Art Explorations", Hors Série - 10, Dominique Belloir offers an extremely interesting typology based on the technical possibilities of the medium. See also: Anne-Marie Duguet, Video, la Mémoire au Poing, Paris, Hachette (Coll. L'Exchappée Belle), 1981.
17. Nam June Paik, Videology, exhibition catalogue, Syracuse.
18. Howard Wise subsequently closed his gallery to devote his energy entirely to organizing the distribution of videotapes.
19. Cf. San Francisco, KQED-TV, Gene Youngblood, p. 281.
20. I attended the first women's video festival there in 1972.
21. An historical overview of video art in the United States is provided by Barbara London in "Independent Video: the First Fifteen Years" in Art Forum, vol. XIX, No. 1, September, 1980, pp. 38 to 41.
22. In this connection, I am tempted to mention the course that I presented at the University of Lausanne in 1969, entitled Esthétique et Mass Media, at which were presented such innovative works as those of René Bauermeister, Gerald Minkoff, Jean Otth, Fred Forest and others. Cf. A. Willener, G. Milliard, A. Ganty, Vidéo et société visuelle, Paris, Tema, 1972. It was Guy Millard, an assistant at the Lausanne Institute of Sociology, who showed us the first examples of the sociological applications of video.
23. Cf. Dominique Belloir, Cahiers du Cinéma, "Video Art Explorations", Hors série - 10, op. cit.
24. Frank Gillette, Video: Process and Meta Process, Syracuse N. Y., Everson Museum of Art, 1973, exhibition catalogue. Cf. Frank Gillette, Between Paradigms, The Mood and its Purpose, New York, Gordon and Breach, 1973, an "Interface" book.

25. The connection with "established" art forms such as the theatre, cinema or television is generally facilitated by the existence of explicit or implicit "genres", save in the area of purely experimental art. Video relates more specifically to the latter.
26. Wolf Vostell: "When I associate a sickle or a pile of shoes with a television set, I am not complying with a formalist principle in order to create a moving plastic object taking up space, but am seeking a psychological truth which is dependent on the fact that the sickle or pile of shoes only take on their real significance to the extent that they are situated in the context of a television programme. The result is the creation both of a plastic reality (a sculpture-event) and a psychological revelation closely tied to the programme being televised". Quoted by Dominique Belloir in "Video Art Explorations" Cahiers du Cinema, Hors série - 10, p.27.
27. Such as Jorge Glusberg, director of the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAYC) in Buenos Aires, who for ten years has been organizing video exhibits regularly in the United States and Europe, as well as Japan.
28. My underlining.
29. With the genius characteristic of some Japanese businessmen, the president of Sony, speaking of the Walkman, which was practically ignored by Sony's competitors at the time but whose subsequent rapid worldwide success is known to all, said: "Our competitors are wrong to think that we market new products. What Sony is interested in is the creation of new patterns of behaviour." (I quote or paraphrase this from memory, which in no way detracts from the "divinatory" character of the statement, which is applicable to video as well). Technology is only a production process if it is confined to the marketing of products; it becomes a factor of civilization (I reserve my judgement on this point for the moment) when, as Mr. Aiko Morita says, it addresses our behaviour patterns, and thus our imagination. It is the very problem of the new culture emerging from technology which is raised in essence here.
30. One example among hundreds: "JVC, champion of the video world" is the title. The text reads as follows: "Mundial '82. Behind the technical prowess of the world's greatest soccer stars, it's an important game for JVC video cameras and videocassette recorders as well. JVC, the official Mundial audio and video equipment supplier, inventor of the VHS standard (accounting for over 80% of all sales in France), is right up there with the champions. In order not miss a single play, even if you've not at home, you need a JVC videocassette recorder. With our special "programming feature", it will record the game for you. All of them. And you'll be able to

relive the "goal of the century" as often as you like. Or study it by speeding up, slowing down or stopping the picture. All of this at the touch of a finger, or by remote control. JVC equipment, from the basic model to the tri-standard Pal, Secam and NTSC international model, are disconcertingly easy to use. A child can easily programme the latest front-loading JVC7600S model for a two-week recording period. And behind JVC technology, JVC selection and JVC dynamics, lies JVC maintenance: over 700 JVC video specialists in France alone. Long live video entertainment! From the Mundial to Molière: that's tele-liberation!"

31. To give the reader an idea of one of the more distinguished (!) advertisements of this sort, I quote: "THE STARS. The three most extraordinary X-rated video cassettes, Barbara Streisand and Jayne Mansfield in HOLLYWOOD SPECIAL, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION and 2 plus 2, with Miss France 1980". Under the suggestive photo is marked: "mail order: 320 francs apiece" and the address, which I do not feel obliged to repeat here.
32. There are many publishers specializing in the production of X-rated cassettes. Other firms, such as Sony, whose catalogues are more varied, endeavour to distinguish between "eroticism" and "X-rated films". (Does this distinction exist outside of these catalogue headings?)
33. In this broadly cultural area are to be noted the laudible efforts of some publishers, such as Vidéo Encyclopédies, whose video magazine Globe aims, with its ethnological and other serious documentaries, to provide a high-quality encyclopedia. On the other hand, how should we classify tapes like that of the Princess of Wales, alias Lady Di? For a few pounds, a video-cassette offers the English view a "slice of the life" of the fiancée and then the wife. An hour of pictures, interviews, discreet emotion and even a few tears, and comments by her friends and even suppliers. The next cassette will be devoted to the baby". (Cf. 24 heures 15-16 May 1982).
34. This problem will undoubtedly be the subject of extensive studies, studies, which have only just begun. I will limit myself to one example here; a fictional scenario appearing in Video International M2899-11 September 82, whose tone is apparent in these few lines: "... Rémi walks over to his television and video set, which are sitting on his desk. He selects a cassette. This morning's programme is to be "French History: the Hundred Years War" featuring his favorite actors Mickey, Donald, Goofy and Pluto who set out on a crusade and are pursued by the mean Wolf Brothers ...".
35. "Your son is well-behaved for the first time in his life: it's his

first communion.

Your baby gleefully pokes his chubby fingers into your husband's eyes.

Your enemy is being buried.

So many unforgettable moments that you would like to keep forever. There's only one solution: the video camera.

You manage to stay on your windsurf board for two minutes.

Your picnic is a huge success.

You give your grandfather a pair of roller skates for his seventieth birthday.

So that your friends will believe you, and to remember Grandpa's face as he opens the package, there's only one solution: Your portable video equipment.

Finally, if Nostradamus was wrong and you're celebrating your twentieth wedding anniversary, there's only one solution: video games."

Cf. VIDEOTECH, vol. 1 "Caméras et dérivés."

36. "In 1969 alone, ITVA International Industrial Television Association members produced 75,000 industrial videograms which represented 25,000 continuous viewing hours, or more than all broadcast television in the United States!" (Charles A. Sibley, Médias électroniques).
37. An estimated 10% of all households in Japan and 5% in the United States already owned VCRs in 1981. In France there were only half a million of these machines (the Secam standard and 33.33% VAT constitute serious handicaps).
38. Two French examples from among the hundred-odd experiments being carried out throughout the world: "Today, 2,200 individuals equipped with terminals share the 157 services offered by Télétel 3 V (from the names of the three communes involved in the experiment: Vélizy, Versailles, Villacoublay). The press, publishing, radio, TV, business and administrative and public organizations each offer roughly twenty different services (practical information, programmes, prices, ordering services, a guide to legal rights and procedures)." Le Monde, 27 April 1982, "La Nouvelle Communication I. - Trois visages du vidéotex", by Richard Clavaud.
In Nantes, "Télem has four thousand pages of information classified under nine headings, which range from municipal proceedings to senior citizens' services, and include social services, education, transportation, postal and telephone services, housing, leisure time activities and culture. As a start, fourteen terminals have been installed in various public places throughout the city; this number will soon be increased to thirty. Citizens of Nantes have free access to these terminals".

"Parallel to interactive videotex, France has developed a

videotext system broadcast on micro-waves. Broadcasting authorities prefer to use the term "teletext" (not to be confused with Teletex, which is a transmission system using the telephone to transmit pages recorded on a word processor). Teletext and videotext are both considered to be part of what is called "videography". The French teletext system has been christened ANTIOPE (acquisition numérique de télévisualisation d'images organisées en pages d'écriture)" (Le Monde, 27 April 1982, p. 13, "Les magazines ANTIOPE").

39. "Enter the Sony world of prerecorded cassettes" urges the Sony Video Club, which already has close to 100 outlets in France. The Video Charm Club, on the other hand, proclaims itself - unafraid of the bad pun - the first "videocassex club" and offers a magazine, Vidéo Privé, in addition to its catalogues.
40. VIDEOREVUE, a Swiss magazine scheduled for publication in 1982: "... at a time when everything, or virtually everything, happens on the screen, video has become a modern necessity." The text of this advertisement should surely put the "cultural" community on the alert!
Cf. Radio Je Vois Tout, 6 mai 1982.
41. My underlining.
42. "The Festival of Sound and High Fidelity became this year (Paris, 1982) the Audio and Video Image Festival". Le Monde commented on this as follows: "The sound festival is dead; long live the peritelevision festival. To open an article like this is surely to be told by the organizers that I am exaggerating. They are probably right. But perhaps it is only running the risk of being right too soon.
"In any case, a characteristic feature of the advertising is that this year's Festival has not been given a number. Last year, the Palais des Congrès welcomed the twenty-third International Festival of High Fidelity Sound. This year it welcomes, from 7 to 14 March, the International Audio and Video Image Festival. The eye has entered the kingdom of the ear in force, an entry accepted with poor grace by the latter. French television's Channel 1 (TF1) has taken the spot traditionally reserved for Radio France. This evolution was no doubt inevitable". Le Monde Dimanche, 7 March 1982.
43. The still-frame feature is a convenience which in no way changes the nature of the phenomenon. Moreover, all images, whatever their source and whatever form they take, become "standardized" into electronic images to fit the screen.
44. To quote Videorevue publicity: "... at a time when everything, or virtually everything, happens on the screen, video has become a modern-day necessity". Americans, who spend an average of five to six hours in front of their screens each day,

- have for long been aware of this. Indeed, today, most people cull their world news and entertainment from electronic images. Neil Armstrong's landing on the moon, which was seen live by almost one billion viewers, is perhaps the first "monument" of this new reality, which is echoed by the "divinatory" advertising for the 1982 World Cup: "Our goal is to bring all World Cup goals into your home." Video Magazine has already taken over from the news programmes: for example, "1981, L'ANNEE CHOC" the first video news review, in fifty-six minutes covered the main stories of that eventful year, month after month, combining short sequences of world news with brief human interest features. Among the 120 events covered were the El-Asnam earthquake, the attempted assassination of John-Paul II and Reagan, the IRA suicides, the release of the American hostages, Borg at Roland Garros, etc.
45. Roger Dadoun, Le plus-que-parfait du cinéma et l'imparfait de la télévision, in Revue L'ARC No. 50, Aix-en-Provence, Gutenberg, pp.32-40.
 46. Unlike the other media, and what is traditionally called art, videograms and TV broadcasts only exist when viewed on the screen; materially, the tape or cassette furnishes no idea of the image, perception is indissociable from the technical operation.
 47. Computers are already being used to generate images which have nothing to do with reality. This activity has been further developed through synthesizers, and will find even more applications with the advent of the digital image.
 48. At most, one could compare video with the cinema, whose images have no more physical presence on the screen than do video images. But the cinema and the video "situations" are quite different. The former implies an occasional decision which involves leaving the house, while the latter is a part of our domestic scene and a familiar element in our daily lives.
 49. It has often been observed that American children, by constantly watching television, are becoming increasingly unable to distinguish between information and fiction, even accepting commercials as reality.
 50. For example it was impossible to distinguish during the moon landing broadcasts, between what was actually happening and the explanatory sequences which were indicated as such by the word "simulation" printed on the screen.
 51. Three weeks of television, Unesco (Cultural co-operation series), Paris, 1982, p.47. A team of researchers studied the television programmes broadcast during a three-week period in seven developed countries as varied as Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Hungary, Italy, and Japan.
 52. I stated this myself in LA TELEFISSION: Alerte à la Télévision,

- Paris, Casterman, 1976. The Unesco study confirms my statement. (Cf. Roland Cayrol, Le Monde, 13 May 1982).
53. As already demonstrated by the prerecorded videocassette market and what is known of the programmes being prepared for television satellites.
 54. Norbert Wiener, Cybernetics, or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine. Paris, Hermann, 1958, pp. 8-9.
 55. This aspect has been studied at the political level in particular by Anne-Marie Duguet in Vidéo, la Mémoire au Poing, Paris, Hachette, 1981, l'Echappée Belle series. Therein, the author describes a number of experiences, so there is no need for me to do so here. It is surprising, however, that this work ends with an "unconditional" condemnation of video, which it accuses of having let itself be taken over by the "petite bourgeoisie". This is an easy pessimism, no doubt confirmed by what we have seen of the market, but I still refuse to give in to it (a profession of faith?). I might add that although Socrates was condemned, Plato's Dialogues live on.

Chapter III

TRAINING OF THE VIDEO ARTIST - EXPERIENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Angiola Churchill

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Video Art

"Now video art is at the stage that photography was at in the 1930s and the 40s," Nam June Paik, perhaps the best-known of the video artists, recently told a reporter for the New York Times Magazine, explaining the cultural climate for his exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. "At that time (photography) was recognized as an art form by many, but high art collectors had not been found. So photographers worked in the commercial area. Many video artists are also working in the commercial area now, but I think that could change in the future."(1)

Paik's observation serves not only to identify the uncertain status of video art in the 1980s but also to provide us with a general working definition of video art - quite simply any form of video that is not made for commercial broadcast.

That we are in the midst of a revolution in the dissemination of information has become a commonplace of social and economic analysis. That we are in the midst of a revolution in the dissemination of information as it involves and informs art has not yet entirely impinged on our cultural consciousness.

Thus, although video art has been championed by major European and American museums and galleries, its position as an art form remains ambiguously unclear. This lack of focus may be attributed to an absence of "masterpieces" and the critical canon such a designation represents or it may simply be a part of the general resistance to accepting any of the technological media as art forms, viz, the century-and-a-half struggle of photography for recognition, recognition that has come reluctantly in the past decade.

Video is indeed recognized as a major medium of exploration and expression - perhaps in advance of any real accomplishment. The real analogy, then, is not necessarily with the critical acceptance of photography or its place in the art market but rather with the emergence of a whole new area of notation such as the adoption of perspectival drawing, at the beginning of the Renaissance, replete with all its technical, scientific and philosophical assumptions.

Teaching video art is far from relaying a tradition - but instead the development of possibilities within a new medium: Video art is not art made for video but video used as a material or form for the creation of art.

I. VIDEO AS A GENRE

The purpose of this paper is to explore the emergence of video as a visual arts genre; how it seems to operate in much the same way as the dream in approaching our shared unconscious; what the current context of video is and how that context is shaping video; and what makes the video artist.

The major topic is the role of video art in education, most notably art education; what film, television and video studies contribute to the university curriculum; how we see the education of the video artist; the proposed Master's in Video Art at New York University; how video art can be understood and taught; the aesthetic criteria involved in video, the climate for video as an intellectual and artistic discipline; how teaching video art teaches the audience; the new importance of "self" in video art and the future of video in education.

The tension between video-as-art and television thus far has been largely a question of content. The video artist has felt free to explore the technical and aesthetic properties of the new medium while commercial television has felt the constraints of not only winning an audience but also satisfying the needs of commercial sponsors. Until fairly recently, the disparity between the two forms might have been one of seriousness - art-for-art's sake versus entertainment.

However, with the advent of cultural cable, this apparent difference has almost disappeared. Cultural cable has taken over many of the stylistic effects of video art to broaden the range and impact of its images. (The immediate analogy perhaps would be the appropriation of the Expressionist vocabulary by The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari with all its reverberations within post-World War I German and later cinema.)

The consequences of this wedding of style and medium is particularly evident in the spots made for cable by the major recording companies in visual versions of their favorite song lists. The idea is not a new one since it stretches back to the advent of sound and

includes shorts made for "juke boxes" in the forties and fifties. A shrewd combination of advertising, video art and conventional television, these spots are willing to exploit every aspect of the video message for a young, modish highly affluent audience.

The concomitant commercialization and aestheticization of the media has been characteristic of middle class society since the invention of the printing press. Certainly the paradigm for films, and probably for television (since both seem to be well-suited to the narrative form) has been the transformation of the novel. Begun as a pseudo-diary or series of letters, the novel was expanded and enriched to reflect every aspect of the human experience from poetry to philosophy while the earliest forms - romance and adventure - persist as the most popular variants of the genre.

Video as a Dream

'The work which transforms the latent dream into the manifest one is called the dream-work. The work which proceeds in the opposite direction which endeavours to arrive at the latent dream from the manifest one, is our work of interpretation. This work of interpretation seeks to undo the dream-work.'

Sigmund Freud

Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis

The content of television has appeared to be far less important than its form. Action - the violence of sport or war - has seemed better suited to the small screen than other more subtle visual explorations.

Peter Wood points out that television resembles a dream more than any other medium. (2) Television and dreams are essentially visual, symbolic and involve a high degree of wish fulfilment - fantasies, hallucinations, nightmares. Yet both involve an extraordinary amount of trivial and ephemeral material, charged content that is quickly repressed and highly topical materials drawn from recent experience.

Wood sees television as the collective dream life of our culture - linked to a larger consciousness, a "collective subconscious" that includes both the creators and the viewers. "A T. V. society purposefully and unconsciously creates its own video world and then reacts to it." This dream life is made real through dramatization that is often telegraphed to the viewer with little or no prior exposition and contains a multitude of highly ambiguous verbal and visual symbols that latently point to a world that is more surreal than real - our unconscious world of drives, needs and desires.

The actual content, the narrative line, is of little or no real

significance in such an analysis. Of real importance, according to Wood's interpretation, is the latent content - the disguising of a culture's needs and wishes in an acceptable television format. By using a conventional plot formula, we can plant these shared manifestations in our collective dreamlife, and like a dream we feel reassured and even comforted when we awaken.

What is interesting about Wood's speculations is that they take us into an area of the imagination that is beyond art - the water stains that fascinated da Vinci, the metamorphosis of the clouds that occupied Shakespeare or the phenomenology of fire that has obsessed mankind through the ages. What intrigues us then with television is not any traditional imagery but television's amorphous analogies with the subconscious or the dream. Wood's criteria move us away from questions of worth in discussing video art and open out on the larger issues of television in our society.

Video in context

Video art began in the sixties then, not so much as a reaction against television but as a part of the reaction of artists against the making of objects. The ready availability of video made it possible for them to work in a form that could not be bought or sold in the conventional sense and freed them from the irrationalities of the art market.

Because of the variety of new forms that emerged in the sixties, we must also note the ability of video to synthesize these forms whether by performance or other mechanically reproducible forms such as film or photography. The virtues of video were its relatively small cost and its ability to be repeated again and again. Moreover, at a moment when there was great debate among artists over documentation and abstraction, video could be abstract or realistic in its imagery.

Certainly, much of the early video work was environmental. Small, closed-circuit environments were set up that allowed anyone who entered the environment to explore its potential. Perhaps, some criticism of the conventional television format was implied but the larger significance of this phase seemed to underline the essentially democratic propensities of the medium rather than confront the limits of its programming.

A remark by Andy Warhol, made in the late sixties, and often misquoted and misinterpreted, characterized the goals of many of these early video artists: "In the future", Warhol said, "each of us will be a star on TV for fifteen minutes". Warhol, who had plunged into movies after his initial success as a pop painter, was underlining the extraordinary possibilities of video to transmit the image of each of us to an audience that was made up of, unlike the art

audience, not hundreds or thousands but literally millions.

Video became a prop for the avant garde on all fronts. The popularity of video has been foreshadowed by its use in the large-scale spectacles staged at the 37th Street Armory by E A T under the direction of Dr. Billy Kluwer and Robert Rauschenberg, when images of dancers were projected, simultaneously, onto mammoth screens suspended from the Armory ceiling. After those events, the use of video became ubiquitous. A small number of galleries and museums hired curators and began to form small collections of tapes.

In 1969, Howard Wise put together the first major video exhibition in his 57th Street gallery. "Television as a Creative Medium" allowed artists who were only peripherally aware of the possibilities of the medium to see what other artists were doing. As part of the general interest in the relationship between science and art, Wise had put on a series of technologically based exhibitions and eventually left the commercial art world to become a distributor of artists' video tapes.

One artist emerged from this milieu whose career deserves to be treated in some detail since the experiences it embodies are indeed, in large measure, the curriculum for the creation of a video artist.

The Making of a Video Artist

Nam June Paik, the Korean artist who now works in New York, initiated "video art" in 1962 when, after a year of experimenting with a complement of 13 TV sets in a Cologne loft, he put together the first video show at the Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal, Germany, using the doctored sets to splutter and spew a series of unprecedented images. (3)

A refugee with his parents from the Korean War, Paik saw, at twenty, his first television set in a Tokyo department store in 1952. A student of Arnold Schönberg's work, Paik had immersed himself in Western music in Seoul and later in Tokyo. In 1956, he began to work with Karlheinz Stockhausen and his electronic music lab in Cologne. There, he met John Cage, the American composer, who told him electronic music was finished and that the future lay in performance.

"I saw the limits of electronic music", Paik said, "and I wanted to expand electronic music to include electronic visions".

His subsequent musical performances were often absurd, intended to shock. Cage wrote that Paik's "work, conversation, performances, daily doings, never cease by turn to amaze, delight, and even terrify me".

Cage's imprimatur allowed him to push his experiments even

further after his arrival in New York in 1964. These performances were a melange of technology, including Paik's Robot K-456, and nudity, largely in the person of Charlotte Moorman, a young cellist who agreed with Paik's plan to bring sex to music.

Paik's exhibition this spring at the Whitney - one of the first American museums to feature video - was in a sense anti-climatic. Paik has seldom finished any of his video pieces - instead revising them at whim. His influence has been due more to surprise than any innovation he has introduced, since he seems persistently unwilling to stick with any one idea.

As an outsider, Paik has perceived a whole new attitude underlying Western civilization. His insights are equal parts of Zen and technology. Flipping on the seventeen sets suspended from his ceiling, Paik said in his inscrutable Korean-English accent, "Ceiling, I think, is the last undeveloped interior space in Manhattan".

Such aphorisms, often improbable, seldom unsilly, at times profound, have given him the reputation of a sort of media guru. What is difficult is the degree to which his work is about the medium, criticism rather than creation. To identify his position, he recently drew a diagram for a reporter to explain why he felt video art was half in the art world and half out. Paik outlined two overlapping circles in pencil, marking one "ART" and the other "INFORMATION". Pointing to their common area, he told the writer, "I think I am here".

As Paik so graphically indicated, the dilemma for the video artist is not the choice between art and video but the larger problem of the seeming opposition between art and information. Inasmuch as the video artist may perceive this problem as central to his or her work, the problem extends much beyond the usual boundaries of the artist and the artist's work. As we shall see, the split between art and information makes it difficult to reconcile the presence of video art not just in the larger world of communications but in the smaller and more limited world of the university as well.

II. VIDEO ART AND EDUCATION

Does video indeed belong in the art curriculum or should it be left to the school of communications or journalism? Is Nam June Paik an artist or a media maverick whose work should serve as a footnote to network executives Roone Alredge or Grant Tinker?

These questions, difficult as they may be to answer, are central to any discussion of video art and its new role in art education. Television, because of its social baggage, has not yet been squarely faced by the public schools of higher education. Because it is a mass media, we have seemed reluctant to analyze or interpret it, much less discuss its past or aesthetic underpinnings. We have not

yet developed a systematic approach to television, even of the sort we devised for literature or film, both of which were tardily and uncomfortably fitted into our curricula. For the sake of humanistic studies, literature did have its author and film, although a team effort, eventually acquired an author.

Is there a video artist or is television yet another form of mass manufacture, a product of a particular version of the assembly line? Video art implies the radical notion that an individual artist is indeed at work and all the theories, history, and analysis that we have built up about the visual arts in the past five centuries might effectively and profitably be applied to this new medium and those who work in it.

Those of us who teach courses in the history, criticism, and production of video art are astonished by the amount of knowledge and sophisticated judgment that our students bring to the studio and classroom. They are far more willing to handle the touchy subject of television, than we are. What they are waiting for is a deep and abiding analysis that is possible only when an adequate vocabulary and history are established. Behind the camera, they are deeply involved in the why of what they are doing as well as the how.

For this reason, video art is becoming a subject of humanistic study on every level - from the public school classroom where it is probably the most ready and accessible of the visual arts to the most advanced study by the critic and artist.

What I am most concerned with then, is not the teaching of a new approach to television - although video art is certainly that - but the consequences these courses will have on all levels in the use and appreciation of television. Studio art, particularly video art, is not taught without reference to the rest of the curriculum, how teachers are trained, and finally how individuals will use that new knowledge. The intellectual, moral and political responsibility is enormous not just because we are helping to formulate a new form but a new form that for the first time in the history of the visual arts has a potential audience of millions.

The crisis, then, for educators is not just the introduction of a new medium, but a whole new approach to the dissemination of information in which the information becomes its own communication. Television already threatens the old knowledge banks - the museum, the library and the university. In the past, knowledge was fragmented, the sacred precinct of experts and authorities. Those experts decided how that information would be dispensed and who would receive it. Institutions grew up around this process - centralizing the experts and the information they hoarded. The computer emerged as the last, most advanced version of this process - still a library of sorts. Cable and narrowcasting have irrevocably revolutionized this process. Potentially, all data can be accessible to everyone.

Because television is a visual medium, for the first time, information will be available to the illiterate, even to those who are economically deprived or do not speak a dominant language. Even more pervasively than McLuhan predicted, the verbal or written word is being replaced by the visual image.

What I would like to argue is that we concentrate large portions of our resources into training individuals who are critically and historically alert to both the limits and accomplishments of television. Some of those we train will become artists, others critics and teachers, but the vast majority will make up the audience. Who can say that such a discerning audience will not have its important and lasting effect. We have already witnessed the worldwide benefits of increasing literacy. Surely, such visual literacy will have its equal if not surpassing benefits.

Film Television and Video Studies in the United States

In 1980, in the United States, there were an estimated 7,648 courses offered in film, television or media. (4) This figure included 3,991 film courses, 2,532 television courses and 1,125 other media courses. In film, 2,770 courses were offered for undergraduates, 335 for graduates and 886 for both undergraduates and graduates. In television, there were 2,018 undergraduate courses, 178 graduate courses and 336 courses open to both graduates and undergraduates. In the area of interdisciplinary media courses, there were 774 undergraduate courses, 205 graduate courses and 176 courses open to both levels.

At the institutions surveyed, there were 3,126 faculty members teaching in the area of film, television and media. Of these teachers, 2,034 are full-time faculty members while 1,092 teach courses in film or television on a part-time basis.

Again, in 1980, 16 schools offered doctoral level work in film, 76 offered programmes at Master's level, and 227 offered bachelor's degrees. Twenty-eight schools offered associate degrees in film. In television, 12 schools offered Ph. D. degrees, 71 granted Master's degrees, 252 bachelor's degrees and 60 associate's degrees.

In addition, many schools in the United States granted degrees in related or interdisciplinary areas such as media, mass communication, education technology, etc., which involved the study of film and television. Among the schools surveyed, indicating that they offered related degrees, 17 awarded doctorates, 38 Master's, 81 bachelor's and 33 associate's degrees. 209 of the schools surveyed offered film and/or television courses but no degrees in either of these areas. Students were able to major in a related area and minor in film or television.

Thus, in 1980, 44,183 students were pursuing degrees in film

or television or in a closely related area. Television students accounted for 23,356 of these, film majors, 12,526 and students majoring in related fields, 8,301. Approximately, 200,000 students as non-majors were taking courses each semester.

Relatively few of these courses were offered by art departments and virtually none were offering video art courses as such. None offered degrees in video art. New York University's video art courses were unique but the proliferation of general film and video courses within the university at large was not. At New York University, film-as-art courses are offered, but both the Institute for Interactive Telecommunications and the Department of Communications do not involve themselves with cultural programming. Video art, now a staple of Soho galleries and alternative spaces, is taught only by the Department of Art and Art Education. But even then, what video art means and intends needs to be more carefully defined.

Educating the Video Artist

I am the chairperson of an extraordinarily heterodox department in one of the largest private universities in the world. Our emphasis is on art education in all its aspects and we have made our studio courses the core curriculum for all the areas in which we now work.

We have found that emphasis on practical work produces far greater autonomy in our students than any other method. The versions of this technique we use may now take on exceedingly subtle variations in regard to video: for research in folk art and other living traditions, we may duplicate the process of a craftsman to understand a particular artifact or use video or photography to record our research. Or we may (in the museum field) learn to "forge" or copy techniques or styles to understand better conservation and preservation, again using video or photographic documentation. In art therapy, we may record on video the work of a child or a group session. Students who are learning to develop audiences for galleries or museums may put together video advertising spots. This is part of what we call "video literacy". We want our students to have it but it is not video art.

In our art education courses, we emphasize the use of visual resources outside the classroom to develop greater awareness among children of the world around them. Video has proved to be a primary tool in revealing to them all aspects of the environment. We were the first to offer a visual information systems course to those who are involved in all areas of visual arts management. Video-tapes and discs were obvious tools for such information management. We have sponsored workshops demonstrating how video and other visual media can be used to interpret the programmes of museums and other institutions. We have worked to get the ideas of artists

and other members of the international art world on tape. Recently, our students put together a series of fifteen programmes for public access television to show the impact of the visual world on the urban environment. The Invisible City focused on how the city is a collaborative work of art in which we all participate. Video programming plays an important part in our curriculum but again it is not video art.

We offer a range of experimental courses that impinge on projects that various artists have undertaken in Soho and Tribeca - our "campus". In one of our environmental design seminars, the seminar looked at video as architecture. Video has been an important adjunct to the various meetings and symposia Jorge Glusberg has put together for our International Center for Advanced Studies in Art. Anna Canepa, one of the first international dealers in video uses a wide range of videotapes in her survey of video art. Video is an important component of our modern art seminars. Analysis and criticism of video is central to our teaching but once again, not video art.

Video art as video art became a specific part of our offerings two years ago when it was first taught as one of the courses in our Venice programme. Venice has always seemed privileged among our programmes because for the student it so successfully brings together past and present, with all the freedom of a summer school. Our Venice programme is limited in enrolment. The courses offered range back and forth over the entire history of art and studio concentrations, including glasswork. The emphasis of the Biennale on new art made Venice a fine setting for young artists wanting to work in video. The more relaxed atmosphere and the fact that we were virtually always in school, made it possible to give far more individual care and direction to each of the student-artists. Moreover, because of the direction of the programme, they understood the overlap in what they were doing in painting and sculpture.

However, another dimension of Venice proved to be equally significant - the city itself. Venice is an extraordinary orchestration of light, and through the use of video, the students began to recognize and depend upon this studio-city not just as a source of inspiration but as the content of their work. They saw, as the Venetians have, from the beginning, the suggestive power of the "city-as-performance". Nothing stops in Venice. Even moments of silence are filled with the play of light.

These "sketches" of video were brought back to New York to be refined and edited. The acceptance of the programme and the work that came out of it, resulted in the careful evolution of a video art programme that could be offered in Manhattan. The programme was designed to be a "terminal" one in the sense that the M.A. degree represented a full mastery of the technique and that a Ph.D. was not

offered. Here then is a description of this degree with details of each of the proposed courses:

M. A. in Video Art

The following programme has been structured for a student with a typical B. F. A. or for an advanced student who has already acquired some professional experience. Particular attention is paid to prerequisite undergraduate studio work and courses in art history and criticism. A portfolio for videotape viewing is required. The curriculum plan is divided into four areas; Background courses; core courses in video art; tool courses using video art skills and techniques; and electives and internships to enrich the video art studio concentration.

Background Courses:

Modern Art Seminar
History of Photography
Movievision
Survey of Cultural Broadcasting
Documentary Photography and Film
Survey of Contemporary Photography and Ideas

Core Courses:

Art Video I
Art Video II
Advanced Art Video
History of Video as Art

Tool Courses:

Documentation of the Visual Arts
Visual Arts Programming and Broadcasting
The Artist's Career
Information Systems
Visual Arts Markets

Electives and Internships

Background courses were created to provide students with a thorough-going background in the history and issues of modern art and the role of video art in it and the mass dissemination of culture through broadcasting.

Modern Art Seminar deals with newly emerging issues in the visual arts. This seminar allows video artists the opportunity to see the conflicts in their area in terms of similar conflicts in painting and sculpture.

History of Photography explores the aesthetic and the scientific ideas that shaped photography in terms of the work of major artists. Students are encouraged to work with early techniques and "copy" the images of the figures discussed, as well as produce a critical paper.

Movievision approaches the history of film exclusively from the standpoint of the visual concern of the director, art director and cameraman. The visual trademarks of the major studios and eras are covered in depth.

Survey of Cultural Broadcasting traces the spread of ideas since the invention of the printing press to the popularization of high culture by television. This survey discusses the question of "high" and "low" culture and the role of television in popularizing the arts. Examples are shown from Omnibus, Playhouse 90, and the Firestone Hour, etc., and the point-of-view, and broadcasting techniques are analysed.

Documentary Photography and Film discusses the relationship between social ideas and the use of photography and film to prove or establish certain facts from the manipulated Civil War photographs of Matthew Brady to doctored Viet Nam news footage. The history of graphic documentation is carefully covered, highlighting the contributions of Muybridge, Darwin, Benedict and Strand and their unique contributions.

Survey of Contemporary Photography and Ideas deals with the great wealth of new techniques and thinking as photography has become more widely accepted as an art form. This and the other courses in film and photography indicate one major aspect of the background and development of video art.

Core courses centre on the actual specialization of video art. The studio courses can be repeated and emphasize increasing levels of skill and sophistication in video art.

Art Video I introduces the most primary skills in the use of video - how the camera works and how the image is received on the T. V. set, problems in making live recordings and the use of editing to produce coherent video statements.

Art Video II provides skills in the use of synthesizers, generators and computers in creating abstract images. The differences between film and video art are emphasized.

Advanced Art Video allows the student to work on specific projects with the guidance of the instructor. Studio critiques are given by artists, curators and dealers. Finished tapes are aired on public access television and presented in the university galleries.

History of Video as Art revolves around critical theories that have emerged with the widespread use of video art. This course is usually taught by a video critic or contemporary art historian.

Tool courses have been developed to provide specific support and information for our graduate students who are seeking professional careers in the visual arts.

Documentation of the Visual Arts introduces the various techniques that are used to record the arts, from slides and transparencies to video-discs. The student acquires rudimentary skills and professional standards.

Visual Arts Programming for Broadcasting with its workshop format is open to both studio and non-studio majors and offers training in both broadcasting and narrowcasting. The purpose of the course is to provide visual arts students with enough experience to plan effective and informative programmes, especially for public service and public access television. Video art graduate students often serve as producers and directors for the programmes generated in this course. (This course may also be repeated).

The Artist's Career provides prototypes for the various stages of development in the artist's work life along with information about legal questions, tax laws, health hazards, and housing problems.

Information Systems and the Arts demonstrates how various forms of the new technology can be used to widen and deepen the public's awareness of art from word processors to highly complex interactive systems that both inventory and interpret museum collections.

Visual Arts Markets presents marketing statistics and techniques for the visual artist, showing how publicity, promotion, and advertising can be used to capture the art market. The focus is on the artist as a small businessman/woman and the entrepreneurial skills needed for the future.

Internships. We place great store on internships. Four internships are required for video graduate students - internships that are geared to strengthen and complement already existing skills. Students may choose to serve as apprentices for video artists or other visual artists or they may decide to learn about commercial broadcasting or acting as a representative for video artists. Internships with more than 300 organizations, individuals and institutions are also available.

Because of its size and the amazing spread of its offerings, New York University also provides an extensive choice of electives that

are well supplemented by lectures, symposia, and panels. More than 500 students attended a recent cross-disciplinary seminar on "Cable and the Future of Culture" that brought together top-level museum people, network executives, independent producers, and visual arts administrators. The next day, another crowd filled Vito Acconci's lecture on his work with long excerpts from his video-tapes.

The outline of our proposed courses in video art, a curriculum parallel to our other Master's programmes in studio art, indicates the range of our concerns - the intersection in video art, as Paik pointed out, of art and information.

III. UNDERSTANDING VIDEO ART

For the past thirty years, commercial television has made popular culture available to audiences around the world - audiences that most often had not been initiated into the vocabulary of twentieth century arts, even by the mass distribution of films. In the 1960's when portable cameras were first put on the market, commercial television was freed from the studio and could move easily into the street and battlefield, and artists began to produce their own works using a sensibility that was derived more from the world of galleries and museums than the commercial tube. As we have seen, there was widespread experimentation in all the arts, and technology seemed to be the banner under which every area of the arts could move forward. We have been speaking mainly of images but we must also remember the sounds and other effects generated by synthesizers and computers.

The critical and intellectual basis for video art did not grow out of commercial television but rather found its roots in conceptual art. The language that video artists used, came out of ideas that had sprung up in Minimalism and emphasized thought and thought-in-action. Four major areas emerged in the early years of video art - areas that defined these forms of art in terms of content rather than style. Documentary video grew directly out of the Minimal interest in documentation, usually photographic, that gave the document the actual status of the work of art. Documentary video, with traditional film and photography as its antecedents, was characterized by its emphasis on facts and a clean-cut focus on people, places, and events.

Performance video, on the other hand, took a far more subjective approach to its subject matter - a direct extension of the techniques and aesthetics of the early sixties "happenings". These performances were often presented in a conventional narrative form or were perhaps framed by an autobiographical "I" through which the

activities of a person or group were seen. Synthesized videotapes, often computer-generated, relied almost entirely on effects produced electronically. Their imagery - ranging early on from Op Art to electronic games - referred most directly to video-as-medium.

Perceptual video reflected the most advanced cybernetic theories and how they related to the human nervous system. This form of video seems to have concentrated almost entirely on the personal and public environment, investigating the interaction of the self and society.

These four approaches to video form the basis of our video art studio curriculum. All four forms depend on the same basic television technology: electrons bombard the television screen and appear as a carefully programmed series of dots spreading across the screen in alternate lines to form the image. This is the fundamental brush-stroke of video art as the electron "gun" rapidly fires dots down the standardized 525 lines of the American screen - a scanning process that takes only one fifteenth of a second to complete two sweeps down the alternate lines.

The technology of video is also very different from that of film. The individual frame of the film is exposed and the image is developed chemically. There are no images visible on a videotape until they are played back on a machine.

The Video Aesthetic

"... Innovations in technique clearly are symptoms of some kind of shift in consciousness. In that sense, technical invention does function as an early warning system to alert us to the probability that a new kind of content is forcing, or permitting, or suggesting, new processes by which to express it."

Rosalind Krauss

"Magicians' Games, Decades of Transformation".

But what comes first, the technology or the consciousness - or does it matter? Is it possible that they are inextricably linked and the riddle is unresolvable?

What did the advent of video cassettes and cable portend? Today, still only a small percentage of the population own video cassette recorders. In the U.S.A., 30 million homes have television but only 3 million own video cassette recorders. Twenty-one million homes are wired for cable TV. Video art has the potential to be marketed and to have entry to the home but it is being pre-empted by the explosive growth of new cable networks offering erotic entertainment.

"Of all prerecorded video cassettes sold, between 21% and 50% are ex-rated, according to industry sources. When a separate network devoted to sexually oriented films has been offered through a cable television system or as a late night addition to a subscription television service, the percentage of subscribers, willing to pay the extra monthly charge, regularly exceeds 50%, and has reached as high as 95%. "(5) There is general agreement in the industry that cable television will eventually be the largest and most financially advantageous outlet for sexual entertainment in the American home - the video dream, an erotic one?

The artist making video art will have some more competition - perhaps even more than he has had from the commercial TV of present years. However, because the question of public access to cable television emerged in cities across the country, local franchise agreements required cable systems to make available a certain number of channels at minimal charge to anyone who requested them. These channels have provided the video artist with the first real contact with a sizable public.

The video aesthetic, then, will apparently be closely shaped by the demands of the market. Video history will more closely parallel the emergence of film than television - early experiments by Edison and Méliès were not unlike Palk and his confrères. The film aesthetic, unlike television, was not shaped by popular response but by the taste of the distributor.

Japanese experts have found that the effectiveness of the mass media has, in the last decade, been declining rather precipitously. Certainly, American television has lost some of its most influential and affluent viewers but it is unclear whether cable has captured them. A Nollan system has not yet been devised for cable.

The content of video, the shape of video, are still basically inchoate. The video aesthetic must take into account not just the highly experimental technical phase that Palk inflated in 1962 - twenty years of manipulating the new medium for avant-garde goals - but also the newly acquired role of video-as-entertainment and information on cable.

Certain aesthetic qualities seem to hold true in both uses of video:

Fluidity: Video can treat space and time, in a dynamic, heterogeneous way, to indicate the open organic, unpredicative character of life. Once synthesized with sound, space and time offer a total range of experience.

Time: In video, the action unfolds in an order which is controlled by the artist and each part is allowed the weight the artist wants to accord it.

Sound: Human voice, music, real sounds underscore the mood. The sense of hearing augments that of sight and sound.

Participation: The fourth dimension of our experience added to video creates the intimate world in which, through viewing, we become involved as participants.

Thus, the means for making an imaginative statement of the multidimensionality of modern life experience exist in the medium of video.

Life is used to record events and situations without editing to suggest the actuality of life.

Technical explorations, video's visual vocabulary: Obviously, many devices are possible with film. The difference is the inherent difference between film and video. Video differs from film because it is tape and can be used again. The video aesthetic depends upon the use of the TV surface - blurred, fuzzy, always breaking up into its components. The high degree of quality of detail possible in film is not possible in video. A middle shot is as far back as one can go; long shots fall apart; close-ups are best. The great flexibility of video lies in the following special effects which may take months of effort in a film:

- a highly detailed face dissolves into a blur of phosphor at the twist of a dial,
- inducing the viewer's eye to dart from here to there and thus build relationships and meanings through associations, much as in a collage,
- pausing for close inspection
- scanning as in a panoramic view
- catching transitory glimpses
- racing or speeding up the film
- slow motion
- seeing an act backwards
- blurring passages
- zoom shots
- blow-ups
- tilting for odd angles
- distortions
- use of stroboscopic effects
- photo-montages of super-imposed or contingent images
- kaleidoscopic effects
- disjointed sequences
- fade in/fade out
- cut (an abrupt change of image)
- the wipe - pushing the image off the screen by another
- double-exposure
- split-screen
- lapsed-time photography

The video artists' materials are light and colour; space, time and sound. Space and time can be altered by editing a series of

shots in sequence. Through editing, a succession of images can be composed and contrasting and harmonious relationships established at will.

Video is primarily a pictorial rather than a verbal medium. It can, therefore, communicate in a truly visual manner, in a concrete non-rational way directly to the human sensibilities. It operates as in real life in five dimensions simultaneously: vertical, horizontal, space, time and sound. Because it is a medium with the greatest potential for reproducing life, it is appropriate that its subject matter be reality. But ultimately, since films/tapes are taken by individuals, the work is the result of each person's perceptions and thus imagination - choice arbitrates the real.

The works of the avant-garde video artists depart from traditional narrative methods and become intense expressions of personal attitudes, psychic states, different subject matter, abstract explorations. Many are wary of an over-emphasis on techniques. Some let the camera "do its own thing" - opening the lens and leaving it. Others hold the camera, carefully selecting images.

The Video Climate

Until this year, in the United States, there were not many outlets for video art either on broadcast or narrowcast channels. But now another phenomenon has set in, with cable corporations across the country allotting up to four channels per community for public access. This will mean that for the first time outside galleries and museums, there will be a chance for an extended public to see the work of a vast range of video artists. David Ross, one of the most influential of American video art critics, has observed that "video works created with an understanding of the audience, often seem out of place in the context of an art gallery - the works become filmic (in delivery) and their original intention is perverted,"(6)

Public access channels will do much to clarify this "intention" by providing video art with its greatest possible exposure. Clearly, works made specifically for television, pure experimentation, highly subjective performance and communication, and video environments will assume extraordinarily different significance when they have moved from the relative privacy of the art world to the public arena.

Two radically different and clearly opposing points of view have emerged in video art criticism. One sees the medium as a fully appropriate one for artists to work in and emphasizes the electronic and technological nature of video art. Such a narrow focus in terms of language and the video event have produced little in the way of significant writing or criticism. "With a lack of references, history or shared objectives", Stuart Marshall remarked about this

phenomenon, "... it is predictable that artists begin from the deceptively benign artist/video equipment confrontation, not only in an attempt to discover what they can do with the medium but also to discover what the medium does to them."(7)

Such an approach, we found in our years of teaching video art, does not work. Naïve and simplistically dangerous, self-involved video neither recognizes the strong aesthetic element in visual design and its link to history, nor does it seek to use the communications function of video, as well. Beyond the "nuts-and-bolts" level, space and time are far more the materials of video art than the mechanistic breakdown into points of light, etc.

This approach to the "how" of video art may also conceal a highly important "why"; Sue Hall and John Hopkins have asked the video artist to consider the question "shouldn't democratization of culture, and in our case the liberation of communications technology for public access, be an integral part of our actual art activity?"(8) The widespread use of public access television has given this question far more relevance. Yet, what seems most pressing in these concerns is the recognition that the politics of video art have not been imposed from the outside but are part of the medium itself.

The following are some of the questions we are mulling over with regard to video art: Who owns the images? To whom does information belong? In the communications process does the audience relate to the artist, the medium or the score of the broadcast i. e. the cable, channel or other exhibitor? What does video art have to say about the traditional elite in art? What is the major function of video art as art or information? The answers to these questions have already been touched upon here but their relevance continues.

Because video art is an art form in creation, the terms of its analysis and its formation are inextricably linked. One of the most powerful images of video art remains Nam June Paik's Video Buddha, the image contemplating itself - thousands of years of introspection subsumed and informed by technology.

What is the preponderant effect of the video image - the electronic function of the equipment or the human interference?

- Are the images abstract or concrete?
- Is the screen overloaded with images or is there a minimum of information?
- Is the time real or created?
- What shapes the content - editing or the length of the tape?
- What role does the past play in the tape?
Has it been imposed or edited in, or is it simply referred to?
- Is the tape open or closed in the sense of the audience's access to it?
- Are we involved in the process or in the product?

Beyond the immediate questions, there are also the implied

questions about the future's understanding and apprehension of video art. Jam June Paik has suggested that the video art of the future takes on more the character of music a non-consecutive series of images that can be turned in at random.

Video Art, Video Audience

Video art does not exist until it is being watched. Teaching video art must proceed on the premise that the video artist and the video audience are being created simultaneously - one cannot be educated without the other. The various levels at which video can be taught and the methods for teaching video art are the subjects for another paper. Video art can be used with every age group and at every level of sophistication.

Here are some suggestions for techniques that might be used to introduce video art outside the usual studio situation. Portapak has become a widespread part of public education, as well as of museums and galleries. The basic black and white portapak makes one technique easily available and multiple cameras and a special effects generator widen the range of experimental effects. However, don't limit your experiments to the technological. Use the camera and screen directly as expressive instruments. Tricky effects are easily obtained but what opens video up is the expression of any personal feelings or attitudes. These expressions may seem awkward at first, but their sincerity will cause the audience to receive the message that is being transmitted.

By using the following readily recognized techniques, the student video artist can utilize video in new ways as a highly expressive art form:

- Try some tricks with perspective; play with shadows and volumes in new juxtapositions; learn about the rhetorical power of angles in setting up shots.
- Make a totally abstract tape that does not contain any recognizable natural forms.
- Contrast performances that are contained entirely within the framing screen. Perhaps initial work should be done with a puppet stage. Experiment with lighting to differentiate or combine the performance with the background or set.
- Use the performers as visual elements rather than actors.
- Photograph related patterns and orchestrate them into visual music.
- Search out unseen but common sights in the environment. Again, this may be a matter of angles. Look up. Look down.
- Try to suggest other senses than sight through images - taste, touch, smell.
- Assemble a visual autobiography to be told in images rather than words.

- Visualize a favorite song or poem,
- Suggest a whole experience, such as sorrow or happiness, with a few objects,
- Project the spatial component of ideas and feelings,
- Study a place or building with the camera to understand its changing atmosphere, the emotions suggested by light and shadow,
- Create visual collages that relate either abstractly or concretely,
- Orchestrate a piece of music with visual images. Then, change the "meaning" of the piece with a whole new set of images,
- Use the generator to produce a tape of abstract images that are related to subjects in nature such as the change of seasons,
- Use the body as a landscape and photograph it carefully, revealing the totality only at the end,
- Trick the eye with details that are taken out of context, either greatly magnified or greatly reduced,

The concepts that these projects represent are fairly sophisticated ones but the lessons they teach will, with practice, point to a keen understanding of the possibilities of video as art.

The Self as Video Art

The performance aspect of video art has opened up an area that has great relevance to art education in general. The presentation of the self has played an integral role in all modernist art. This theme with its many splendid variations, its many levels of complexity and meaning, is accessible to all ages. Although the techniques differ, the insights and experiences from such projects will carry over into every area of art.

One of our first experiments in this area was a modern art seminar, "Yo, Self Portraits and Autobiographies", that explored the use of the self in the art of this century from Picasso (whose self-portrait Yo earned 5.3 million dollars, the highest sum ever paid for a twentieth century painting) to Vito Acconci (whose art has been almost totally self-absorbed). Introductory lectures covered the various aspects of the depiction of self, and seminar participants made presentations on the use of autobiography in the work of various artists.

Their seminar project was to produce a self-portrait on videotape to be viewed in the last sessions. The approach to these autobiographies was fairly well divided between documentaries, performances, and abstract statements. The students participating ranged from painters and sculptors to liberal arts majors. The

relative ease of the video technique allowed them to experiment with great flexibility.

A similar approach underlies the core curriculum for Advanced Video Workshops designed by International Arts Network, New York, and is reprinted here in extenso. This format can be expanded or simplified and the twenty or so video artists working with the Network feel free to improvise, change or add, according to their needs. The International Arts Network, partially funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, was begun in 1976 because of the lack of video art courses, per se. Douglas Davis, video artist and cultural journalist, is the group's artistic director. "Our emphasis is on software", said Jane Bell. "What we're looking for is the idea rather than the technology". (9)

IV. ADVANCED VIDEO WORKSHOP

Concept

The video camera is a pencil. Though it has its own inherent virtues and vices, as does the tiny screen upon which it is seen, the camera can be used by any one of us for any reason, aesthetic or personal. The TV screen is indeed a blank sheet of paper, to continue the metaphor. We invite each artist, each student (young, old, trained in studio art, art history, film, engineering, philosophy, experienced in video or not) to make it his own. We do not share the completely understandable conviction that "video" is a hermetic art with its own unique language and mystical implications. It is rather an involved, engaged art - involved in the development of contemporary art and engaged, finally, in the immediate needs of whoever is using or watching it. Every known form of art can find expression in video - conceptual, performance, narration, even pattern painting. Video is a tool, a means to an end, however extraordinary.

The workshops are not obsessed with technology or technique. They are obsessed instead with ideas. We insist on reading and research as well as exercises with the camera. We try - in the early meetings - to acquaint the students with some of video's peculiar characteristics, much as a master printer would delineate the differences between lithography, etching and silkscreening. We also try to show videotapes that illustrate these characteristics, produced either by well-known artists or by students previously enrolled in the workshops. But gradually the emphasis begins to shift toward exercises performed by the student himself/herself. We try to discover what the student's objectives are, as opposed to the medium's.

In the last few weeks, the workshop is totally involved in thinking about and preparing for the broadcast or cablecast. The student is asked to "draft" his final tape for this work, both on paper and via

the camera. When the visiting artist and the class jointly agree on the shape and nature of this "last" work, the workshop ceases to exist. Each student works on his own - for several weeks or a month. The broadcast is produced and directed by the students themselves. The visiting artist returns for the broadcast itself and a post-modern session in which the students (hopefully) reach conclusions about the meaning of broadcasting and the relationship of their work to that meaning. (10)

Syllabus

The most practical way of explaining how Workshops have been conducted by Douglas Davis in the past is to show you an actual syllabus prepared for the recent highly condensed one-month "short semester" at SUNY Purchase. The visiting artist is by no means ordered to follow this schedule. We expect and hope that each teacher will bring his or her own unique emphasis to the teaching of each workshop. But it is highly advisable to insist that some basic issues be covered in each workshop, such as: Time, lived and taped . . . the difference between the private, or home perception of a broadcast videotape as opposed to the public, gallery perception . . . the presentation of the self before the camera, as opposed to the unself preferred by the networks . . . Douglas Davis announced himself willing and ready to discuss these decisions with any visiting artist at any time.

Advanced Video Workshop Schedule (specific dates subject to later change)

<u>Classes</u>	<u>Preparation</u>
Jan. 8 Introduction	
Jan. 12 <u>The Message Is The Medium</u>	<u>The Unseeing Eye</u> Brecht on Radio (1932) Enzensberger, "The Politics of Liberation" in <u>The New Television</u>
Jan. 15 <u>The Private Space</u> Begin to talk about scores/proposals	"Filmgoing/Videogoing" in Art culture, Vito Acconci in <u>The New Television</u>
Jan. 19 Face the Camera/Live in the Screen. Studio exercises	

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| Jan. 22 | <u>Play first student tapes</u>
<u>The Public Space; In-</u>
<u>stallation and Gallery</u>
Assign second tape and
proposal | FIRST TAPES DUE (Indoor-out-
door, 3 min. each), Ingrid Wiegand,
"Video-space" in <u>New Artists</u>
<u>Video</u> , ed, Battcock, Selected
artists checked in contents of <u>Vi-</u>
<u>deo Art</u> , ed, Schneider and Korot. |
| Jan. 26 | <u>Time, Live and Taped</u>
Discuss tapes and/or
proposals | Proposal for second tape or tape
itself. Reading to be assigned on
1/22 |
| Jan. 29 | Optional class: Open
for tape viewing only or
<u>Self/Unself</u> | Second tape due
Option: Rosalind Krauss, "The
Aesthetics of Narcissism" in <u>New</u>
<u>Artists Video</u> |
| Jan. 31 | Discuss individual
broadcast proposals and
structure of entire pro-
gramme | Proposals for broadcast due |

February

A joint class visit to the studio where final production of some tapes will take place, in order to understand what technical possibilities (from split screens to live performance) are open to us.

Final work completed on the broadcast tape or performance by March 1. (Feb. 15 in the case of those who want to work with the rented Sony 1610 color camera at Purchase; that's when it goes away, like Cinderella).

March

The Broadcast takes place (probably on Manhattan CATV)

EXERCISE ON JAN. 19. Stand before the camera with a large plexi-glass screen between you and one monitor beside the camera, another beside the screen, faced toward the right-hand wall (this latter may not be available at Purchase). Look at yourself in the monitor and think about the relationship (if any) of this image to the mirror image ... find the edges of the screen with your finger ... look at yourself in profile (if possible without the second monitor) ... facing the camera, try this time to see (in your mind's eye) someone beyond the screen, on the other side ... whisper something intimate to him/her ... make contact with this person, SOMEHOW.

Your performance can be taped or not, as you prefer. I hope we will have some tapes to look at later.

Suggested Reading List

Arteculture: Essays on the Post-Modern, by Douglas Davis (Harper and Row, 1977). Cf. "Filming/Videoging" and "Post-Modern Form."

Illuminations, by Walter Benjamin (Schocken Books, 1969). Cf. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction".

New Artists Video, edited by Gregory Battcock (Dutton, 1978).
"Radio as an Apparatus of Communication", by Bertolt Brecht (1932), Xerox available from Douglas Davis.

Raids and Reconstructions, by Hans Magnus Enzensberger (Pluto Press, London, 1976). Cf. "The Industrialization of the Mind", and "Constituents of a Theory of Media".

The New Television, edited by Douglas Davis and Allison Simmons (MIT Press, 1977).

"Video: Aesthetics of Narcissism", by Rosalind Krauss, October, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1975.

Video Art, edited by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot (Harcourt, Brace, 1975).*

V. THE FUTURE OF VIDEO ART EDUCATION

Video art, then, becomes not just a timely adjunct to studio courses already being offered, but a core of experiences and ideas that open out on every area of the visual arts. Because of the possibility of instant playback, students are able to analyse and digest issues that might otherwise have taken years of training and thinking. Video art is an excellent tool for teaching critical thinking, and because it touches upon so many areas in all the arts, it has something to say to everyone no matter the level of their education.

Finally, video art reintroduces with great force the whole question of the role of the individual in art. Perhaps in no other field of expression are the ethical and aesthetic issues of this century so entwined. Video art graphically demonstrates the impact the individual vision can have. But video art also embodies the ongoing conflict between society and the artist and how much of the artist's vision can be shared. Because of public access television, for the first time in the history of mankind, the mind, heart and eye of the artist can have its immediate impact on the total environment, can have the potential attention of millions of viewers.

Because video art is not a part of the art market, because its worth cannot be irrationally inflated and it can be duplicated and re-broadcast at will, it has a radically new status as the product of the

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artist. Moreover, because video art is so highly subjective both in its content and format, the role of the artist has been profoundly and inalterably changed by its presence.

Art education now begins an entirely new epoch. The video artist becomes both a teacher and a visionary in a culture that has unexpectedly uncovered a whole new abundance of imaginative riches. What the video artist does with this new power will have consequences for the rest of human history that we cannot envisage or predict. The cave paintings are a fragile and tenuous link with the past. The contents of all the world's museums are a small legacy compared to the promise of video art. Never before have we been so close to such an extraordinary and continuing harvest of mankind's experience.

Each artist wants his work to contain more information, more meaning, than is readily comprehensible through "looking". In video where there may be "real" objects and "real time", the major as well as the peripheral information we receive can be substantial and yet it adds up to more than the parts. Reactions are immediate and emotional but connections can be timeless.

For all these reasons, I believe that the place of video in our schools and universities is not solely in departments of journalism and communications or as a hybrid of film studies. Video art is in the distinguished and generous tradition that from the beginning has cherished, preserved and passed on the personal vision.

NOTES

1. D. C. Denison, "Video Art's Guru", The New York Times Magazine, April 25, 1982, p. 62.
2. Peter H. Wood, "Television as Dream", in Television as a Cultural Force, edited by Richard Adler and Douglas Cater (New York: Praeger, 1976), pp. 17-35.
3. Video Denison, pp. 54-62.
4. This information is derived from The American Film Institute Guide to College Courses in Film and Television, seventh edition, (Princeton, New Jersey: Peterson's Guides, 1980).
5. Tony Schwartz, "The T. V. Pornography Boom", New York Times Magazine, September 21, 1981.
6. David Ross, "A Provisional Overview of Artist's Television in the US", Studio International, May/June, 1976, p. 264.
7. Stuart Marshall, "Video Art, The Imaginary and the Parole Vide", Studio International, May/June, 1976, p. 243.
8. Sue Hall and John Hopkins, "The Metasoftware of Video", Studio International, May/June, 1976, p. 264.

9. For further information about activities and offerings of the International Arts Network write Douglas Davis, 80 Wooster Street, New York, New York 10012 (212) 431-6585.
10. I should add that we always give each student options as to the form his "final work" will take. The production of a tape for broadcast, or a live performance for same, is preferred, and highly popular. But we do not object to any of the following as substitutes: performance itself in a gallery or theatre space documented by videotape for inclusion in the broadcast; an object or installation, dealt with in the same manner; a theoretical paper, portions of which might be read on the air or which could be offered free of charge to viewers who phone or write the host institution; a drawing, print, photograph ("flat art," that is related in some way to video).

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Chapter IV

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(compiled by Vittorio Fagone)

The following bibliography is necessarily incomplete, but will serve as a reference to the extensive material on the subject of the relationship between the visual arts and video which has been published over the past twenty years.

It comprises three sections: the first (A) includes general works and manuals dealing with the tools of mass communication (television in particular) and with video research. The second section (B) includes catalogues from exhibitions and festivals which have taken place in Europe and the United States; and the third section (C), features essays on various aspects of the relationship between the visual arts and television published in the specialized press, monographs, and reports on the activities of individual artists. This list should be considered as a preliminary inventory, which may be used for a general census of the vast amount of literature published on this subject.

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