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ORF-Videonale 86 – Another Vision in Television

The ORF-VIDEONALE 86 is an undertaking which need not avoid any comparison with similar projects abroad. Never before has a television company opened so enthusiastically become a forum for artists. The first introduction of this project is still fresh in my mind and also the doubts as Wolfgang Lorenz was telling me that a week long program dedicated to artists video will be realized in association with the Ars Electronica. With each meeting the certainty and enthusiasm for this challenge grew along with the team work involved in the fostering of the structure.

On a tour of the centres of the video world I collected a range of works to be shown on the nights broadcasting: June 21st – a live program around the video pioneer Nam June Paik, June 22nd – a historical survey and June 24th a long evenings broadcast of uncut tapes.

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Hundreds of videos flooded into the ORF Zentrum Vienna where they were again reviewed and considered and woven into the program concept.

There were certain selection principles adhered to in the process, but in many cases the editorial staff responded subjectively in final decisions of broadcast. By no means was a tape selected for its TV Entertainment value, but insistantly on its artistic quality and merit. This process can be closely compared to the organization of any visual arts exhibition. The concept principles and criteria for the selection were established: The program series should deliver a comprehensive survey on the art form video and to arouse the viewers interest. There was a conscious decision to limit the broadcast to works that were specifically designed for single monitor presentation, the obvious thinking behind this refers to the medium of a television terminal, this excluded video installations. In a few very exceptional cases videos made as commercial productions were selected to reveal different qualities in independent video productions made by artists. Also excluded were tapes made as documentation of art processes and performances that refered to another art form.

We attempted to make an international balance and contacted artists and organizations in Australia and Eastern European countries but these contacts did not bring the results hoped for by the editorial deadline. However, the program is a realistic subjective survey of Europe, USA and Japan.