

Video Tides

Sunday, June 22nd, 1986

10:40 p.m., FS 2

ORF-Videonale 86

Consecutively

Perfect Lives – An Opera for Television by Robert Ashley

Production John Sanborn

Part III: The Bank (Victimless Crime)

Witnesses at The Bank. Ed and Gwyn elope.

Video Tides

Topics, history, reference points and highlights of video art since 1965 are presented in this program. It can be enjoyed like a stroll through an exhibition. Subtitles and comments give information aimed at stimulating the viewers' fantasy. The main emphasis of this program, which lasts about 90 minutes, lies on tapes created by artists from the fine arts.

Excerpts of the individual works are presented in an associative chain.

The content of the tapes as well as their creative and formal elements represent the individual links of this chain of associations, not a chronological time sequence. The wavelike motion thus produced offers insight in aspects of different trends of the last two decades.

In this program the producers tried both to trace the intentions of the artists and to compile a complex presentation which permits the viewer to abandon himself to these video tides in contemplation.

The individual sections of the program deal with the relationship of video to other forms of art sculpture – extended by time, language, body language, sound, movement, narrative elements and poetry, or, in the case of minimal art, reduced to geometrical, mathematical, serial forms - this dominates the first part of the programme. In accordance also with an enlarged concept of art – which developed in the sixties and seventies of our century and for which video is one of the most suitable media – the space in which the sculpture is defined often is an electronical space or the space between sender and receiver.

Painting, photography, and light are the topics then following in the sequence of video tides.

With the electronic medium artists establish links to important works of art history such as the Mona Lisa by Da Vinci, the Venus by Botticelli or the report by Nam Paik from the Papal visit to New York in 1965.

The range of topics, at the beginning concerned with the clichés in public television, is concluded with those video works which analyze the specific language of the medium video. In this context videos were chosen for which not only the spontaneousness of this medium was decisive, but also its extraordinary pictorial possibilities and conditions.

Responsible for the program:

Kunst-Stücke team

Expert guidance: Grita Insam

Richard Serra:

Television Delivers People

1973, colour. 6'

This work is assigned to conceptual sculpture. This contribution critically points out the economic and sociological background of public television by means of words in television,

which is accessible to the general public.

In front of a blue background sentences written in white letters move from the top to the bottom of the screen. These are key statements of television criticism dealing with the political importance of the television monopoly of the broadcasting companies and in particular commercial television companies in the USA. Meaningless pop tunes are accompanied by statements such as: "Television delivers people to television industry." "Popular entertainment is basically propaganda for the status quo." "Through commercialism television teaches materialistic consumer habits." "Trading companies are not responsible." "Trading companies are not responsible to the government."

Ant Farm:

Cadillac Ranch – Media Burn

1974-75, colour, 16'

Media Burn documents a spectacular performance piece in which a customised phantom dream car, guided by a video camera in its tail fin, smashes through a wall of burning TV sets. The medium is burned in celebration of America's addiction to TV, and TV news crews homogenize the event for the home audience.

David Hall:

7 TV Pieces

1977, b/w, 15'/10'

A selection of works which in 1971 were specially developed to interrupt the regular Scottish television program. The concept was to insert individual sequences without previous notice into the context of the usual media expectations. The idea was not to transmit a series of isolated pieces of art but rather to demand a possibly different way of looking at television. In one of the sequences the viewer sees a water tap in one of the upper corners of the otherwise empty screen. It is turned on and the picture tube fills up with water. Then it is removed and the water drains off. The waterline however is not horizontal, but inclined. Then the screen is empty again – the usual programming continues, the illusion is restored.

Dara Birnbaum:

Technology/Transformation: Wonderwoman

1978-79, 7'

Wonderwoman is a typical example of Birnbaum's Investigations into television language. By the use of repetitive cuts she exaggerates and in turn reveals the structures lying behind the seductive imagery. Wonderwoman is analyzing and criticizing the contemporary TV myths, extracting gestures, bisecting narrative while still retaining the strange essence of TV entertainment.

Vito Acconci:

Theme Song

1973, 30'

Acconci challenges the video barriers, attempting to penetrate through the hymen of the video screen to reach another space; private/public art/life; the aggressor and the seducer.

Douglas Davis:

Austrian Tapes

1974, 17'

This tape is an attempt to motivate the TV audience to a two-way communication. The viewer is invited to press hands, chest, feet, etc. against the TV screen. This work is a critique of the medium television, which pretends to alleviate isolation while in reality it is an illusion.

General Idea:

Teststube

1979, colour, 28'

Participation in Documenta 1977 and 1984, Venice Biennale 1984. In 1984 and 1985 an exhibition toured the European museums, Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven, Kunsthalle Basel, etc. which was accompanied by a catalogue containing comprehensive information about the artists.

The Canadian artist group General Idea was founded by AA Bronson, Felix Partz and Jorge Zontal in 1968. The group works are collectively in the fields of video, performance and other media.

One of the themes frequently recurring in their works is the myth of the artist as individual genius. The artists themselves never work individually but aim at a kind of collective vision, which only develops when working together for a long time. Here a completely different creative situation evolves.

Nam June Paik:

Global Groove

1973, colour, 30'

Jaime Davidovich:

Artists Television Network, Promo Tape

1983, colour, 15'

"SOHO TV MAGAZINE" by Jaime Davidovich

Cable Soho TV was founded in 1976 to place artist video on Manhattan Cable Television on a regular weekly basis. Their aim is to see the production and distribution of quality television programs for the audience interested in art in its more innovation forms. At the same time the goal is to bring television to the artist as a tool of expression giving the artist another medium in which to reach a wider audience.

Peter Weibel:

The Endless Sandwich

1969, b/w, 3'

THE ENDLESS SANDWICH tele-action (i)

Between the TV set and the viewer there is a function, namely: the user switches the apparatus on and off. This function is illustrated and made the subject of the program itself. Sandwich-character of the real process and the illustration process, of reflection and action. On the screen a succession of viewers sit in front of TV screens. The innermost screen is experiencing technical difficulties so that the next viewer has to get up to adjust the screen. This causes malfunction on the screen of the next viewer. The malfunction ripples outward until it reaches the real TV set so that the real viewer also has to get up to fix his TV. Time delay: the real process is the endpoint of the reproduced process.

Ingo Günter:

Rotorama

colour, 7'

Daily torrents of pictures burst in on us via television. Indiscriminately, selection is hardly possible. The collected pictures rotate, take on rhythm, become brittle, annoying like the pictures that evolve if one turns in a wheel, made real.

Hans Weigand:

Stations of a heavy drinker

1985, colour, 7'

The tape and the objects were made at the same time. All sequences were attached to the numbers of a roulette (37 sequences). The order among the sequences, the editing, the sound and the length of all sequences were determined by a random system of a hundred throws in roulette.

Marcel Odenbach:

The Distance Between Myself and My Losses

1983, colour, 9'

"But yet, incredibly more terrifying, if she had been born into the world as Peter Keurten ... to live every moment of her life as Peter Keurten."

"But the realization that somebody had to be Peter Keurten made it impossible for her to be content to be herself."

Terry Fox:

Children's Tapes

1973, b/w, 30'

11 short videos showing simple physical phenomena in a playful way. The same objects are used repeatedly: a candle, a fork, a spoon, a bowl, a piece of cloth, etc. The individual objects are combined in always new constellations. A candle, for example, is set into a bowl filled with water and a bottle is placed over the candle; the flame of the candle consumes the oxygen, the water rises in the bottle and extinguishes the candle. Or a spoon with ice and an overhanging piece of cloth is balanced on the bend of a fork. The ice melts, the piece of cloth absorbs the water and changes the balance between the two objects, etc. These pieces were specially invented and conceived for children, as a counterpart to the usual children's program of the public television companies which merely entertain instead of stimulate.

Peter Weibel:

Water Sculpture

1969, b/w

The action you are seeing here is not the work of art itself, it is the preparation, the sketch.

"While the movement of water in nature has passed with time, TV makes it possible to capture this movement in space. The volume taken up by the water in the air which I am tracing with my drawing tool produces an imaginary water sculpture which can be seen and noted only on the TV screen. TV as a time-space switch." Peter Weibel, 1969

Douglas Hall:

Prelude to Tempest

1985, Farbe, 15'

Creating a pastiche of images of nature, industry and the artist himself, Hall elaborates on the themes, techniques and style of the songs of the 80's. Structured on the central metaphor of the tempest, the tape alludes to the crises of contemporary society, the individual's struggle for equilibrium, and a foreboding premonition of upheaval.

Bruce Naumann:

Lip Sync

1969, b/w, 30'

William Wegman

"The Best of William Wegman"

1970–1978, b/w, 20'

William Wegman sings an original song from his reoriented image of vocal anatomy. The privacy and immediacy that the medium video allowed artists is used in a most advantageous way in this early tape by Wegman.

His special bizarre humour has a charm that reminds you of something you may have forgotten.

Ide Hintze:

Act in A and AH

1985, colour, 3'

The camera lies on my abdominal wall, I look with it in the direction of the TV screen. I have

fed the signals A, H and ? into the camera via insert circuit, which then appear on the screen. I begin to groan rhythmically with sound A. In doing so the movements of my abdominal wall are transmitted directly to the camera, causing it to move in an up-and-down rhythm. As I increase the volume of my voice the camera movement also becomes more intense. Finally, at the orgasm-like climax of my voice, the camera slides away from the center of the screen and the picture explodes.

"ACT IN A AND AH" is an electronic example of sound poetry and concrete poetry in one.

Valie Export:

Finger Poem

1974, b/w

With the type of finger language developed by school children, the artist writes the words "I show the signs with the signs of showing".

Helmut Mark:

Snapshot

1985, f/w, 2.45'

A multileveled copulation in a "Snapshot". Signals, signs, gestures, architectural symbols, computerized structures and the background, grey (black and white) screen of photographic identifications (the hand).

Eric Lanz:

Orphee

1985, colour, T

This tape is part of a larger group of 26 pieces (one for each letter of the alphabet) either tapes or video installations. Other works already completed in this series: "V/Venus" (tape), "S/Sisyphus" (video install.), "G/Gorgones" (video install.), "P/Pygmalion" (tape)

Daniele & Jacques Louis Nyst:

J'ai la Tête qui Tourne

1984, colour, 16'

Edward Rankus:

Naked Doom

1983, colour, 17'

Edward Rankus's elegant black and white "Naked Doom" takes us into an intensely dark inner world. The visual elements remind us of clues in a mystery story: dark corridors, half revealed bodies, a throw of the dice. The signals increase to imply an abstract narrative, the drama element is heightened with the soundtrack.

Bob Snyder:

Trim Subdivisions

1981, colour, 6'

Bob Snyder's work is a sophisticated exploration of the formal properties of image and sound. Trim Subdivisions uses video keys and wipes to express the two-dimensionality and architectural redundancy of suburban neighborhoods.

Silvio & Chérif Defraoul:

Cartographie de Contrées à venir

Video-Collage, 1979, colour, 15'

Installation in the Armenian archives of San Lazzaro Island near Venice: A film is projected onto a table on which a crystal ball is standing. The picture-maps are covered and uncovered, some of them produce short actions or scenes.

Robert Cation:

Charles Postales

A succession of postcard-like images of Rome, Algiers and Lisbon. The stills are suddenly being disturbed in a mainly humorous way by the introduction of a brief movement that creates a perverse relationship with the soundtrack. The passage through movement from one equilibrium to another is a reflection on the aesthetics of photography.

Vito Acconci:

The Red Tapes

1976, h/w, 140'

"He presents and explores subject/object, absence/presence, private/public, art/life; he investigates language and learning, and the interdependence between art and exhibition space. Concepts from formal systems of knowledge such as sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis are intergrated with borrowings from popular movies, rock, punk, and New Wave music into visual-verbal pieces that suggest positive complexity through poetic ambiguity." (excerpt from catalogue essay "Vito Acconci A Retrospective: 1969–1980" by J. R. Kirshner). "...The main body of my work, then and now, is sculpture, or at least work in three-dimensional space ... The current work has been like architecture, more like furniture ..." (Acconci, 1986).

Douglas Hall:

Songs of the 80's

1983, colour, 17'

Staina Vasulka:

South Western landscape, Photographic Memory

1982, colour, 5.25'

An aetheric study of the colours and surface of the landscape of the Southwestern United States.

Naoko Fujibala Kurotsuka:

Between Daydream and ...

1983, colour, 8'

"Between Daydream and ..." is a sensitive dialogue concerning the study of the human form and related landscape form. Carefully framed images are delicately poised in almost static freezes set for contemplation.

Nan Hoover:

"Returning to Fuji"

1984, colour, 7'30"

Nan Hoovers minimalist works celebrate video as a rich palette of colour slowly transforming to indulge in the expressions of temporal paintings. Hoover allows subtle changes of hue and texture to create optical ambiguities as she manipulates surfaces before the camera.

Her formalist approach is extended to an enigmatic creation of landscape using light, shadow, and real-time. In "Returning to Fuji", Hoover creates the perception of a mountain swathed in misty clouds through subtle changes of shifting light and shadow, and evocative sound.

Hoover explores the tension between realistic camera images and abstraction.

Friederike Pezold:

Toilette

1977-79, h/w, 93'

Friederike Pezold is sitting in front of a monitor and doing her make-up. She can see everything she does on her monitor by means of a video camera. Each part of her body is carefully treated and made up so that in terms of their importance all details of her body are in a balanced relationship to one another.

Inge Graf + ZYX:**Museum of Private Arts**

When the transclassical machine of art and technology is used, aesthetic messages and information are no longer produced as a duplicate of classical originals. They are rather obtained by technical realization of an electronic system which may be designed extra for this purpose.

Art as the freedom of being able to set original starting points acquires new dimensions by the use of this art machine, in which supermodern aesthetic realities are being integrated into the program as categories of mind.

Preference is given to unusual elements. Scenic motives, theatrical representations of the self, and contemporary elements of style are taken from the sphere of everyday life to the sphere of controversialness, while the type of reality which nourishes itself from nostalgia is abandoned. With the help of technology, all these elements are stripped of their making sense in a trivial way and are transformed into new bizarre shapes and systems of signs and signals. By permuting this defined and coded set of signs, a multimedia language field is produced within a stochastic system. Within this language field, synthetic forms and concepts are tested for the possibility of new meanings and conventions.

From the physical viewpoint, this system is a simulation model which makes use of electronic and photo-optical media in order to project a new sensualness. The system-output is characterized by audiovisual moments, "siren-like sound structures, chromatic distortions and stimuli obtained by aesthetic surprises at the perceptible pain limit".

Gerd Belz:**Portrobot**

1983, colour, 7'

A self portrait in the form of an electronic first ascent to the upper part of the body and to the head, carried out with the help of a video camera. "Portrobot" is a French word and means a rough drawing or sketch of a wanted person, a cursory type of composite picture.

Gábor Bódy:**Phylo Mythos ...**

Lyricclip, 1984, colour, 7' 10"

The strong audio component intensifies even further the dense atmosphere of this tape. Laser beams flash past, defining a silhouette of a man wandering through, perhaps, his self-made world. Mystical and alchemical, overtones ring through, as the historic representation of man's proportions continually hammers in, cutting through the pulsating rhythm.

Rom Scheffknecht:**Directions**

1984, colour

Supernatural light, light nourishes, illuminates, burns, irradiates, and enlightens. Light is the first condition for life. We see the light of the world.

Tsuneo Nakai:**Artificial Paradise**

1983, colour, 11' 20"

The basic technology that determines the aesthetics of this video is a computer controlled cutting technique which makes the overlapping of images possible. Images blur one into another, the rhythm in fast staccato acoustically intensifies this pulsating tape of light and announces individual visions of the artist.

Klaus vom Bruch:**The West is Alive**

1983/4, colour, 4'

The erotic game of a man and a woman which has its climax in the fight for a kiss. Maybe it is even a fight against one another. The representation of an emotional relationship merges with the image of a locomotive speeding along. The impulsive force of the connecting rods pushing back and forth has a Freudian overtone. The hissing sound that accompanies these images jumps from the right to the left and back again, which has the effect of an additional emphasis on the man-woman antagonism.

Dan Reeves:

Sabda

1984, colour, 15'

"Sabda is an experimental video poem inspired by the poetry praise written by the North Indian poet Kabir and other mystical poets. All of the imagery and sound we gathered on an extended trip through India. The synthesis of sound and image with a strong subtext of written poetry attempts to push through the world of events and appearances." (Dan Reeves)

Shikego Kubota:

Duchampiana, Video Installations

1978, colour, 42'

In this series used mainly for installations, the artist makes reference to the importance of the work of Marcel Duchamp. His "Nude, Descending a Staircase" is dissolved in time by means of video. It is easy to perceive the relation to futurism which tries to capture time in painting.

Marina Abramovic and Ulay:

City of Angels

1983, colour, 20'

The two artists have been working together since 1976; this is their first work which has been produced exclusively as a videotape. It consists of almost static images which are framed by an introduction and a final image. The camera slowly passes over a group of people who are lying or standing almost without movement. The images have been composed almost like paintings, with a certain tension between two and three dimensionality. The intensity of light is increased by the vivid glow of electronic colours. Silent signals, like lifting a frock, make time visible.

In their work, Marina Abramovic and Ulay approach limits of human existence. For many years they have travelled all continents and in great respect for other cultures they have integrated themselves into these cultures with their work.

Toshio Matsumoto:

"Mona Lisa"

1973, colour, 3'

"My video works have not only aesthetic sensitivity but also conceptual structure. In recent years specially, I have pursued the mechanism and process of generating new relational space-time by de-construction and re-construction on the familiar objects. It is not the static shape but the dynamic spectacle of structuralization."

(Toshio Matsumoto)

Ulrike Rosenbach:

Don't Believe that I am an Amazon

1975, b/w, 15'

Don't Believe that I am an Amazon. This is the title of the video of a performance held at the 1975 Biennale des Jeunes in Paris. On the tape we can see how Ulrike shoots 15 arrows at a reproduction of Stephan Lochner's "Our Lady in the Rosary" (1451). However, the shooting artist and Our Lady are images mounted one above the other, so that the arrows hit both Our Lady and the artist.

By identifying with both characters at the same time, the artist lets us know that for her a

simple exchange of parts is no solution. Both characters have their negative aspects: the Amazon is a caricature of the aggressiveness of men and Our Lady represents weakness, self-sacrifice and overrated maternity. However, both of them have their positive aspects as well: the strong Amazon who defends herself and the tender, caring and understanding Madonna. Ulrike Rosenbach makes a plea for a new conception of women which should not permit the formation of clichés. On the contrary, this conception should be capable of uniting traits which formerly were considered to be in opposition to each other in one individual.

Patrick Prado:

Some Gioconda (Mona Lisa)

1981, colour, 4.20'

Variations on an archetype of art: La Gioconda. The computer lets it pass through all stages of art history, from realism to abstraction. And yet she says (with a male and sad voice): I am happy.

Madelon Hooffias & Else Stansfield:

Vi Deo Volente

1985, colour, 28'

"(VI) DEO VOLENTE" – as God wills it – is a videotape with a spiral form similar to that of a storm.

It indirectly refers to three historic moments: 1945: Hiroshima, 1965: The reference to Paik's video tape of the crowds that came to welcome Pope Paul VI on his visit to New York, the first video art work created. 1965; the visit of Pope Paul to Amsterdam and the video images filmed by Hooikaas and Stansfield in homage/memory of Paik's initiation of the medium.

The main force of the work circles disasters and violence in tidal cycles, these forces originating from both man-made and natural sources via the representation through television.

Zbigniew Rybczinski:

The Day Before

1984, colour, 39"

In "The Day Before", Rybczinski again displays his mastery of special effects to create spectacular surreal distortions and reveals an amusing portrait of a drunken Russian cosmonaut.

Peter Campus:

Three Short Tapes

1973/74, colour

Peter Campus uses electronic video language in an analytical way: The second part shows the artist rubbing some material onto his face and how by this his face is turned black by colour filters. In the third part, he lights a photograph before the camera which makes his own face visible.

Adrian X:

Surveillance

1981, b/w

SURVEILLANCE

The little camera to which we have all become accustomed to being installed in banks, bars, shops and the subway have extended public space to include those darkened chambers where cathode ray ghosts of living passers-by flicker anonymously on rows of monitors. Images in this new public space have as little individual meaning as the abandoned tram tickets collected by Kurt Schwitters for his collages 60 years ago.

But, while Schwitters' collaging of "found" objects into artworks is not useful as method (treating "found" electronic material, his discovery that), hanging the context of these bits of industrial/commercial rubbish, political, social and cultural statements could be made as

relevant as ever.

This project therefore sets out from a formal promise that electronic system in public spaces (video surveillance systems being only one of many), can be treated as "found" objects in the sense of Schwitters "MERZ (Kommerz) Kunst". But in order to develop the social/political statements which form the content of this kind of work, a form must be found that will generate the necessary contextual transformation. With electronic media this seems only to be possible when using the medium in which the material is discovered ... for example with computer communications for data processing or video for video surveillance systems. My intention in this project was to have the images from the monitors of the central monitoring chamber of the Vienna subway system broadcast live during the pauses between programs in the evening television program extending the public space of the subway system to the living rooms of the million or more people watching the second channel of the Austrian national television network (ORF/FS 2).

The broadcast took place on June 16, 1981 but with two changes demanded by the ORF (Austrian Radio/Television). 1) At the beginning of each transmissions a title was played over the image for about ten seconds and 2) I was required to appear on the evening news program (zehn vor zehn) and discuss the project. These compromises interfered with the content of the piece.

**Zelko Wiener:
Schirm Bilder**

1985, colour, 7'

This video from Zelko Wiener refers to three levels of video screen images. Home video, computer graphics/games and direct television. He brings these different visual languages together to create a shifting dialogue of the separate screen realities. "Schirm Bilder" portrays the wide spectrum between the extreme functions of a television monitor, one that can be so personal and sentimental through to the distanced information of a fighter jet.

**David Hall:
TV Fighter – Camera Plane**

1977, b/w, 10'

As the TV monitor, displaying images of an aerial bombardment and screeching out the sounds of devastation, is slowly painted with the target lines of a gun sight in David Hall's "TV CAMERA PLANE", we are asked to consider the contradictory impulses of the new medium. This early gesture of resistance, taken up by many later videomakers, confronts the idea that the uses of technology are inevitably repressive and pre-determined. It may suit surveillance, but there are many other options, too.

**Ghislaine Gohard:
Ciao**

1985, colour

In this tape Gohard investigates the medium of video and television. The prototype car chase is analytically "inserted" in a way that only video is capable of doing. Fast forward and search.

**Peter Weibel:
Intermezzo**

1984, colour, 15'

1st Intermezzo of the Media Opera produced by the 1984 Ars Electronica. "Electricity is an artificial form of light, but also an humane form. Electronics is the artificial will of man. The artificial will conquers the universe" "three dots ... " "guitar amplifiers are emotion amplifiers. Volume as stimulation. Electrical warriors of emotion. The E-guitar as a symbol of E-society. The myth of the electrical guitar replaces the piano as a metaphor. Three more dots" (Quotation from "The Artificial Will" Art Forum International, volume 7.)

Ulrike Rosenbach:

Reflection on the Birth of Venus

Performance, 1976–78, colour, 15'

Ulrike Rosenbach slowly turns around her own axis for 15 minutes in the light of Botticelli's Birth of Venus which is projected on a wall in full size. Her leotard is white on the front side, black on the back. So the projection cannot be seen when she stands with her back towards the light. On the floor there is a triangle of salt and in it a shell containing as a pearl a small monitor. On this screen tidal waves and the foam of the sea can be seen. This performance is accompanied by Bob Dylan's song Sad-eyed Lady of the Lowlands.