

PERFORMATIVE VIDEO, EMBODIED VISION:
A HISTORY OF EARLY VIDEO, 1963-1975

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation traces a material and embodied history of 1960s and 1970s' early video. Art historical discourses focusing on medium-specificity have discussed video art primarily in terms of its psychological effects—whether promoting a narcissistic condition or debunking the ideological message of the consciousness industry (e. g., commercial television). However, works by artists Nam June Paik, Charlotte Moorman, Dan Graham, and Dara Birnbaum, and collectives Videofreex and TVTV addressed the body, its relationship with the camera and the moving image, and the particular sensory conditions of the 1960s and 1970s, when post-WWII nation-building, the Vietnam War, and protest movements deepened the question of how to bridge the widening gap between embodied experience and prepackaged spectatorial experience in the contemporary mediascape. Television's widespread influence over American society during these two decades accelerated the expansion of visual culture while reducing the body and sensorium to the eye and optical (in contrast to embodied and haptic) vision. Through the lens of a portable video/film camera, the artists and collectives demonstrated vision embedded in one's body, which simultaneously affects and is affected by others. The intersubjective vision renounced television's distanced, objectifying view and reductive tendencies that present the world in a facile image based on sets of semiotic binaries: subject/object, here/there, inside/outside, and us/them, for example. Moving with the newly portable camera, the artists *performed* a simultaneously reflective and reflexive act of seeing while also becoming visible objects (being seen) in the presence of others before the camera. The resulting videos present embodied and intersubjective vision that does not claim perceptual and intellectual mastery over the object seen. By doing so, the artists' videos offer concrete situations in which we explore an

affective relationship between subject, object, and the environment—beyond the confinement of the frame and yet grounded firmly in our lived-body.

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INTRODUCTION

“From TV to newspapers, from advertising to all sorts of mercantile epiphanies, our society is characterized by a cancerous growth of vision, measuring everything by its ability to show or be shown and transmuting communication into a visual journey. It is a sort of *epic* of the eye and of the impulse to read.”

—Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*

This dissertation aims to shed light on the embodied and performative aspects of 1960s and 1970s’ early video. If video held a transformative potential as an alternative to television, as many had expected at the time, it was not just because of its experimental forms, unconventional contents, or independent distribution networks. It was also the embodied visuality in some experimental videos that countered the distanced vision of television and Western visual culture in the tradition of Cartesian perspectivalism. By embodied vision, I mean an act of seeing with one’s lived body that contrasts with pure opticality. Optical vision assumes a disembodied, disinterested, and immobile viewing subject, who is at a distance from and out of touch with the viewed object. The embodied vision is inseparable from the process of being seen, touched, and affected by others. It is therefore inherently decentered and intersubjective.

Film and media theorists such as Laura U. Marks and Vivian Sobchack have discussed the moving image in terms of embodied vision and haptic engagement between subject and object, the viewer and the viewed. The scholars’ ideas offer a useful model for better understanding early video as embodied practice that is distinguished from existing art historical discourses on performance and body art, which tend to focus more on the artist’s body than on the relationship between the body and the moving image. With the then-new portable video or Super 8 film camera, artists Nam June Paik, Dan Graham, Dara Birnbaum and collectives

Videofreex and TVTV went into close proximity of the object. The images are often chaotic and even unidentifiable as the handheld camera constantly shifts, thus destabilizing the hierarchy between the viewer and the viewed and demonstrating the mutual nearness and reversibility of subjective and objective vision.

This dissertation takes a phenomenological approach to examine how the artists, as viewing subjects, experimented with various ways of seeing (and being), beyond trying to “read” the moving images as if decoding texts or sentences with a fixed subject-object relation. Many early video pieces resulted from performances or performative experiments with the medium. It is therefore crucial to think about video not just as moving images but also as embodied practice stretched between actual space-time and screen space-time. The videos are comparable less to spoken or written words than to phenomenological processes of making utterances that involve expressing and perceiving bodies, gestures, movements, and actions. In Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s terms, they are more akin to “speaking speech” than to “spoken speech.”¹ My approach is informed by Sobchack’s idea that the moving image is not merely a representation or record of past events. It is also a presentation of movement as an act of seeing, which the viewer perceives through her “sensing” body as well as through intellectual engagement, by “making-sense” out of the images:

The *moving picture* is a visible representation not of activity finished or past but of activity coming into being and being. Furthermore, and even more significant, the moving picture not only visibly represents moving objects but also—and simultaneously—presents *the very movement of vision itself*.²

¹ See Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 44-45.

² Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 146.

Sobchack's claim exclusively concerns film and she does not extend it to television, video, and other digital media; for they are only "quasi-embodied" or "diffusely embodied." However, the aforementioned artists and videomakers' work presents and represents a "concrete situation of viewing," in which the viewer's vision emerges in relation to the material conditions of both her own body and the artist and/or camera's body enmeshed in the moving image.³ The video vision (cinematic vision, for Sobchack) renders an embodied, intentional viewing subject within the moving image that is simultaneously a visible object to the viewer. As Sobchack argues, the moving image is a material expression of the filmmaker or videomaker's "perceptive and perceptible *intention* [italics added]" and therefore, it possesses "a lived-body" that simultaneously sees and is seen.⁴

Paik, Graham, Birnbaum, and the members of TVTV and Videofreex articulated particular social, political, and cultural circumstances that conditioned the human body and sensorium—especially the ways in which television objectifies the body and categorizes it into predetermined identities and signs, while attenuating the fullness of lived experience. The first chapter examines how the body and the performative gradually emerged and became tangible in American art and cultural spheres in the 1950s through 1970s, when the material body and direct action gained political significance during the Civil Rights movement and anti-Vietnam War movements. Highlighting the particular historical contexts, the chapter considers early video in phenomenological terms as an embodied act of expression and perception, rather than ascribing in to semiological and psychoanalytical approaches, two of the key interpretative methods that have been pivotal in theorizing video art.

³ Ibid, 151.

⁴ Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 166.

Chapter two focuses on Nam June Paik's 1963 exhibition *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, which featured the artist's first modified television sets. Paik had not yet begun working with a video camera but his emphasis on the body and embodied acts of expression and perception was already palpable throughout the show, as well as in his previous "action music" practice. Paik's TV sets encouraged the viewer to see not just visually but also through touch and sound. In doing so, the exhibition interrupted the perspectival linearity of social, political, and economical narratives that limited or even harmed the citizen's body during the Cold War era in West Germany and the Western Bloc. The chapter might seem to be an outlier in a sense that it veers the discussion to West Germany away from the U. S. and that it does not feature artworks using video technology per se but Paik's television pieces and other non-moving image works. However, such a detour is instrumental in laying the groundwork for contextualizing and historicizing Paik's embodied practice as well as for illuminating a performative strand in the genealogy of video art.

In chapter three, I discuss how Paik, Charlotte Moorman, Dan Graham, and Dara Birnbaum's video and film performances destabilized television's "culture of distance," which enables the medium's facile and sweeping (mis-)representation of the world in oversimplified semiotic categories. Paik and Moorman constantly switched their position as viewing subject or viewed object during the performances. By doing so, the artists negotiated the visibility, invisibility, and invisibility of their racialized and gendered body at the time of the civil rights and women's rights movements in America. Dan Graham's video and film camera performances capture the process of vision emerging through the performers' bodily action and movement. Graham presented vision that is embodied, heterogeneous, fragmented, and reversible (or rather, multi-vectoral), by creating a feedback loop between two or more performers and cameras in

physical proximity to one another. Dara Birnbaum experimented with the reciprocity and reversibility of vision with reference to gender, specifically to contemporary visual media's objectification of women. Birnbaum associated her female body with immobility and limited visual power, while other mobile (mostly male) collaborators with mobility and visual advantage. And yet, the artist demonstrated vision as a dynamic field of forces, where embodied subjects come to interact with one another through the act of seeing, rather than resorting to the semiotic binaries of male/female and seer/seen.

The fourth and final chapter focuses on haptic visuality and affective dimension is Videofreex and TVTV's work recording 1960s and 1970s' social and political events. The collectives' mobile, handheld vision delivers a sense of touch, grasping the "texture" of the tumultuous decades, rather than offering a single clear perspective. By moving with the camera to situate themselves *within* the event they were documenting, the video makers offer an embodied vision that directly contrasts the distanced and disembodied eye of television.

The artists and collectives worked in uncharted territory, while experimenting with the then-new medium and discovering its limits and potentialities along the way. They *performed* video as an embodied and intersubjective act of seeing that resulted varyingly in videotapes, installations, sculptural objects, and television broadcasts. The gestures and bodily actions, interwoven with the material artworks, came to shape "video art" as we know it.⁵

⁵ Before cultural institutions accepted video as art, filmmaker Hollis Frampton noted that video artists' creative activities were tantamount to "inventing" of the genre of video art: "... I have sensed a determination on the part of video artists to get down to the work of inventing their art, and corroborating their faith in good works."

Frampton, "The Withering Away of the State of the Art" in *The New Television: A Public/Private Art*, eds. Douglas Davis and Allison Simmons (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1977), 24.

CHAPTER 1: Videoing: An Embodied Act of Seeing (or a Way of Being)

“Where there is close vision, space is not visual, or rather the eye itself has a haptic, nonoptical function”
—Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*

Despite the common understanding of the medium of video as primarily visual (or audio-visual), many early videos, especially those produced in a performative setting, possess a haptic quality or invoke a sense of touch. I use the terms haptic and touch not in a narrow sense to only mean actual contact between skin and surfaces. In fact, touch has been integrated with vision—namely, haptic vision—and used in contrast to the optical by such thinkers and scholars as Walter Benjamin, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Michael Taussig, and Laura U. Marks; whom were informed by art historian Alois Riegl’s idea of the two different modes of perception—haptic and optic.⁶ Riegl contrasts the physical and mental distance between the perceiving subject and the perceived object in each case. While the haptic mode of perception occurs when they are in proximity to each other, the optic mode operates when the subject sees the object from a distance. In other words, “the former involves our tactile instincts and will to act; the latter encourages [...] [a] detached observation.”⁷ Building on Riegl’s concepts (haptic/near and optic/far) media art theorist Marks argues that,

⁶ See Benjamin, “One-Way Street,” in *Selected Writings* Vol. 1 (1913-1926), eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1996), 444-488; “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, [1969] 2007), 217-251; Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003); Deleuze and Guattari, *Ibid.*, 523-551; Taussig, *The Nervous System* (New York: Routledge, 1992); and Marks, *Touch: sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

⁷ Lucia Allais and Andrei Pop, “Mood for Modernists: An Introduction to Three Riegl Translations,” *Grey Room* 80 (Summer 2020), 14.

Optical visibility requires distance and a center, the viewer acting like a pinhole camera. In a haptic relationship our self rushes up to the surface to interact with another surface. When this happens here is a concomitant loss of depth—we become amoebalike, lacking a center, changing as the surface to which we cling changes. We cannot help but be changed in the process of interacting.⁸

Haptic visibility mediates an embodied, intersubjective relationship between beings. For Marks, it is therefore an alternative model to the objectifying, “mastering” eye that optical visibility necessitates. Western cultures have long favored optical visibility over the haptic counterpart since the Renaissance, and Marks seeks to revive the latter in the current era of digital electronic media, in which the body and embodied experience have been diminished.

Not only is there a willing subject to haptically perceive others and things, but also “haptic images” that draw a simultaneously embodied and implicated response from the viewer—encouraging “a bodily relationship between the viewer and the image” to form.⁹ Marks notes that artists’ videos offer abundant examples of haptic image. Many have explored the medium’s tactile qualities, pushing its boundaries beyond the given audiovisual features. Ultimately, haptic video images function as critique of instrumental vision, which places the object in “illusory depth,” rather than in touch with the viewing subject—thus allows the subject to give the object an arbitrary name, to linguistically define its meaning without experiencing the rich sensory qualities.¹⁰

While Marks’s discussion covers a wide range of moving images from film to videotape and digital media, I borrow her concepts of haptic visibility to examine the intersection of the body, performance, and video art in America during the 1960s and 1970s. It is not to suggest that the sense of touch is specific to the medium of video, in the way that formalist critics claim

⁸ Marks, *Ibid.*, xvi.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

flatness to be *the* inherent quality of painting. Instead, I argue that 1960s and 1970s' video was less a "narcissistic" medium than an *embodied* mode of exploring the relationship between self and others, which had become mediated and transformed by communication technologies, especially by television. Human senses had gradually been interwoven with the surrogate vision of the TV camera and other commodified, prepackaged media experiences. To watch the world on television at a distance "necessarily detaches the power of seeing from our experience as individuals who are situated in bodies."¹¹ Television steps in between the viewer and the world as a "surrogate of action and passion," rendering the former politically immobile.¹² As a result, in Guy Debord's words: "all that once was directly lived has become mere representation."¹³

The felt distance on television was reinforced by the programs' segmented formats and intervening commercial breaks. For British critic Raymond Williams, frequent commercial interruptions on American television were disorienting to the degree of having "some surrealist effects." In 1973, Williams wrote:

Advertising has crippled networks and local stations to an extent that is really astonishing, even when the fact is generally known in advance.... The news bulletins are also regularly interrupted for commercials. One night there were harrowing pictures of crippled men coming out of the tiger cages in Vietnam and the next pictures in the sequence were of children running in a New England garden to a song about a cereal.¹⁴

¹¹ Samuel Weber, "Deux Ex Media: Interview by Cassi Plate of the ABC," in *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media*, ed. Alan Cholodenko (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1996), 164, cited in Carrie Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 152.

¹² Marcus G. Raskin, *Being and Doing* (New York: Random House, 1971), xvi.

¹³ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books), 12.

¹⁴ Williams, "Impressions of U.S. Television," in *Raymond Williams on Television: Selected Writings*, ed. Alan O'Connor (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 25.

For many Americans, seeing the world through television's detached and fragmented view was especially frustrating during the Vietnam War. Television brought home the tragedies in Vietnam but the horrific images were quickly lost to the stream of commercials and other unrelated news stories. The mediated experience left the viewer with a sense of powerlessness. Schneemann attributed the root cause of her vexation to an overall decrease in direct, bodily experience in contemporary American society, which had increasingly become mediated by and dependent on electronic communication technologies:

What people really want is tactile confirmation, to be in touch with their physicality, to be able to communicate, and to grow, to touch one another and be touched. To get away from the somnambulism of contemporary life. We get all this information and there's absolutely no way to react.... So we're trapped with all these fears of real impotence.¹⁵

For artists Nam June Paik, Dan Graham, Dara Birnbaum, and collectives Videofreex and TVTV, video was more than a tool to record and represent an event. It was a means to practice an embodied and intersubjective way of seeing. Against the subject/object dualism ingrained in television's distanced view, the artists and video makers attempted to bridge the physical and psychological distance between their camera and the object before the lens—"to touch one another and be touched." For example, their use of a portable, handheld camera (primarily Sony's Video Rover, as known as portapak, and sometimes Super 8mm film cameras) was a tactical method for presenting embodied vision, which emerges in relation with objects and others. While the artist or the cameraperson was moving, the camera often went out of focus or out of synch with her field of vision, which was otherwise framed through the viewfinder. In those moments, the camera transmitted a "body sensibility" to the viewer and its primary

¹⁵ Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1970), 370.

function as a visual apparatus was attenuated. The resulting images are neither clearly identifiable nor legible. The viewer *senses* the images while trying to *make sense* out of them.¹⁶

The embodiedness of video was perceivable even when there was not a glitch or a lack of camera control. The artists and collectives presented and represented the body—its mundane gesture, movement, action, and performance—in attempts to “be in touch” with the world, beyond the televised images and the reduced sensory experience—to regain, in philosopher Brian Massumi’s words, the “excess of experience.”¹⁷ In the 1960s, American independent filmmakers chose to shoot with handheld cameras for a more engaged mode of filmmaking. Maya Deren, for example, suggested that the camera itself is less instrumental in filmmaking than the cameraperson’s body—“joints, muscles, and nerves”—and physical mobility.¹⁸ For documentary filmmaker D. A. Pennebaker, shaky or, not-so-strictly-controlled camerawork was a technique indicating that the “camera *is* hand-held, that it is an extension of the filmmaker’s bodily presence, his or her hand (and eye).”¹⁹ In this sense, the portable video camera was more than just a recording device. It was a vital component in the artists and video makers’ willful action to grasp what television’s disembodied vision does not show: that is, what lies between “here” and “there” on a TV set; processes arise from the material encounter between subject (behind the camera) and object (in front of the lens).

For Paik, Graham, Birnbaum and the members of Videofreex and TVTV, video was an opportune tool with which to practice an embodied mode of vision distinguished

¹⁶ Les Levine, “One-Gun Video Art,” in *Video by Artists*, ed. Peggy Gale (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1976), 185.

¹⁷ Massumi, *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011); *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

¹⁸ Deren, “Amateur Versus Professional” in *Film Culture* No. 39 (Winter 1965), 45-46.

¹⁹ William Rothman, *Documentary Film Classics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 294; cited in Keith Beattie, *D. A. Pennebaker* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 20.

from the distanced and powerless television spectatorship. Many of their works engage the viewer with the artist or the cameraperson's bodily movement—walking, running, rolling sideways with a handheld camera. The resulting images, whether live feeds or recordings, are not simply representations of what is (or was) there in front of the camera. The moving images are performative in that they register the artist's body and action as indispensable materials of their making. The embodied visuality encourages the viewer to engage in an affective relationship with the images through the sense of touch and to be touched.

The Performativity of Video

Philosopher J. L. Austin first developed the concept of “performative” in his speech act theory. Performative utterances do not describe or report anything, instead the utterances are “the doing of an action.”²⁰ Austin uses examples including: I bet ..., I promise ..., I name X Y, and I declare Z. Judith Butler expands Austin's idea by further emphasizing the body and the somatic dimension of speech acts. It is the body that simultaneously acts and is acted upon through speech. In Butler's construct, “speech is bodily, but the body exceeds the speech it occasions.”²¹ Building on Austin, Philip Auslander argues that, “an act of documenting an event as a performance is what constitutes it as such.” In other words, camera-based documentation not only results in images that show what happened, but also produces “an event as a performance.”²² If moving images can be compared to spoken words, and acts of video making to speech acts, video is not only what the artists' camera captures (representation), but also the

²⁰ Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), 5.

²¹ Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York & London: Routledge), 155.

²² Auslander, “The Peformativity of Performance Documentation” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* Vol. 28, No. 3 (September 2006), 5.

performative acts involved in the process of producing the images (doing)—such as walking, dancing, jumping, jolting, falling, and rolling. Especially the artists and collectives' work involving a handheld camera can be seen as an attempt to maintain the tangible relationship between the speaking body and the utterance—that is, the “videoing” body, in communication with others and the surrounding environment, and the images.

For media theorist Vilém Flusser, an artist or video maker's “gesture of videoing” is not “to produce a work whose subject is the maker but rather with one that attempts instead to produce an event in which the maker participates, even if he is controlling it.” In other words, video's embodied and participatory mode of experience is a gesture of practicing “a new way of being-in-the-world.” Flusser argues that a video maker is less prone to objectify others (and become a subject in return) than a photographer, because the former does not need to take a fixed position as the latter does. Instead, the video maker participates in an intersubjective relationship with others through a phenomenological process.²³

Paik, Graham, Birnbaum, and members of Videofreex and TVTV objectified not the other in front of their camera, but the very act of seeing. And the artist-camera's act of vision or video vision emerges in constant negotiation with the object. The artists and collectives often worked in a collaborative setting to address the intersubjective dynamics in their video experiments. Paik and cellist and avant-garde artist Charlotte Moorman, in their performance that began in 1964 and continued well into the late 1970s, explored the interface between the human body and video's scan lines. Moorman wore and performed with *TV Bra* (1969) and *TV Cello* (1971) [Figs. 1-3], wearable and playable objects Paik made for her consisting of TV sets. Moorman's performance was often accompanied by Paik's live video feed capturing not only the

²³ Flusser, *Gestures*, trans. Nancy Ann Roth (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 145-146.

performance itself but also the audience and the environment inside the gallery—the video images were then projected on the wall as well as on the monitors Moorman was wearing and performing with. Art historians David Joselit and Joan Rothfuss note respectively that the boundary between self and non-self becomes blurred in Paik and Moorman’s collaborative performances.²⁴ However, the dissolution of self is not to uncritically become one with the universe (the “oceanic feeling”), but to think ecologically about the mode of relationship between self and others—or, in Paik’s own words, “you AND me” instead of “you OR me.”²⁵

In his film and video experiments with various other artists including Birnbaum and Simone Forti, Dan Graham examined material and psychological space by juxtaposing images recorded by two cameras and two bodies (or more). For example, Graham’s *Helix/Spiral* (1973) [Fig. 4] was performed by Forti and Ian Murray each with a Super 8 camera: Forti placed the camera directly on the surface of her body and gradually moved it from eye to feet in a descending helix; meanwhile, Murray slowly walked toward her in spiral, aiming his camera at the lens of Forti’s camera. By displaying the resulting images together, Graham visualizes the ways in which subjective view and objective view or, seeing and being seen intersect each other and renders them as entangled. “The ‘self’ is not an atomistic entity,” the artist claims, “but is imminent in the network of interrelationships or environmental structure.”²⁶

Dara Birnbaum’s *Attack Piece* (1975) [Fig. 5] added a critical layer in terms of gender to the subject/object relationship. During the performative event, Birnbaum took photographs of her “attackers,” including Graham and Murray, while they were approaching her from different

²⁴ Joselit, *Feedback: Television Against Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007); Rothfuss, *Topless Cellist: The Improbable Life of Charlotte Moorman* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014).

²⁵ Nam June Paik Archive, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Box 2 Folder 21.

²⁶ Graham, *Two-Way Mirror power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham*, ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 87.

directions and filming her. Invoking the camera's aggressive, objectifying view of women on mass media, Birnbaum suggests that intersubjective mediations need to be considered in social and political terms.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Videofreex and TVTV produced video footage on various topics ranging from the counterculture movement to antiwar protest, women's rights marches, the Republican National Convention (1972), and local events for a small town in Catskills, New York. To challenge what Raymond Williams called television's "culture of distance" in which men and women are reduced to models, figures and the quick cry in the throat," the video makers work in close proximity to their subjects.²⁷ In Videofreex's unscripted interview of Abbie Hoffman and Fred Hampton, for example, the handheld camera shows the interaction between the figures and the cameraperson (and the rest of the Freex) as the conversation unfolds, instead of framing and objectifying them as types and characters as television cameras often did with the prominent leaders of the youth movement and of the Black Power movement respectively. The aforementioned artists and collectives turned their camera out, experimenting with an embodied, intersubjective mode of vision, rather than focusing on self with a solipsistic, narcissistic gaze as art historian Rosalind Krauss claims.

Video: The Medium of Narcissism

In her seminal essay "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism" (1976), Rosalind Krauss characterizes the medium of video as a mirror, in which the subject—whether an artist or a viewer—narcissistically collapses into the on-screen image of self. Between a video camera and a monitor, the subject becomes unaware of the feedback loop as an external object, thus unable

²⁷ Williams, 21.

to analyze its material and historical conditions. Krauss later acknowledges that her earlier medium-specific approach does not satisfactorily address late 1960s and 1970s' artistic experiments using plural media, for they are inherently heterogenous. Video art is a clear symptom of what she diagnoses as the "post-medium condition" we now inhabit. It is "a kind of discursive chaos" that cannot be neatly theorized under a single concept.²⁸ Yet, Krauss maintains her initial view that narcissism is inherent in the medium of video.

Krauss's critique of narcissism is based on the notion that subjectivity is constructed as though a linear narrative based on "time [that] is understood as a propulsion towards an end."²⁹ The subject is the center of a self-contained text whose meaning must be considered vis-à-vis the history of a given genre. When the subject's *body* is bracketed in a video feedback loop—"the parenthesis of camera and monitor"—she loses the thread, not only of her own story but also of the larger history of (video) art.³⁰ What remains within the parenthesis is "a frozen self" or a partial text bracketed out of the greater whole. The embodied subject in actual space, her body and senses are now absent or rather, reduced to syntax, which is composed in psychological space. Krauss sees video as a fundamentally immaterial medium that relies on human psyche as conduits of communication, not dissimilar to "the world of parapsychology: telepathy, extra-sensory-perception, and communication with an after-life."³¹ Though Krauss acknowledges the

²⁸ Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 31-32.

In 1977, one year after Krauss's essay "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism" was published, curator John Handhardt wrote of video art's heterogeneity and complexity: "Video as an art form [...] exists within the context of the contemporary, modernist, and post-modernist art scene. This means that video shares many concepts with painting, sculpture, music, performance, theater, film, and the recent mutations, permutations, and breakdowns of these traditional categories."

Handhardt, "Video Art," in *TV Book: The Ultimate Television Book*, ed. Judy Fireman, (New York: Workman Publishing Company, 1977), 34.

²⁹ Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," *October*, Vol. 1 (Spring, 1976), 60.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

body as a “central instrument” in most of the video pieces that had been produced up to the time of her writing (1976), she treats subjectivity as something that is inherently psychological. In Krauss’s essay, subjectivity is disembodied, irrespective of the subject’s breathing body and other non-visual senses.³²

Drawing from Jacques Lacan’s psychoanalytic concept of “mirror stage,” Krauss argues that the subject needs “an external object, an Other,” in order to break out of video’s narcissistic mirror reflection.³³ Krauss’s subject-object dichotomy is based on the assumption that the viewing subject (Acconci) can and must maintain a critical *distance* from the object (Acconci’s video image on the monitor) by completely separating herself from it.³⁴ The artist’s performing

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 57.

³⁴ Krauss writes, “The agency of reflection [in a video feedback loop] is a mode of appropriation, of illusionistically erasing the difference between subject and object.” The subject “illusionistically” identifies with her on-screen image, and, as a result, loses the sense of self, which Krauss understands as a text progressing along the linear order of time—past, present and future. In other words, video-mirror reflection traps the subject in “a collapsed present” and severs her from “a sense of text,” which otherwise would have carried on the linear narrative of self from past to present.

For Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, however, subjectivity is not an unchanging entity that one can reclaim or return to it as a reference point for distinguishing self from the Other. It is rather an assemblage in the constant process of becoming, which is non-linear and schizophrenic. The philosophers’ idea of the fragmented, multi-faceted subject resonates among other thinkers and scholars such as Vladimir Safatle. Against what he calls “the *ecological reduction of the subject*,” Safatle writes: “The ‘subject’ must not be taken to be a self-identical substantial entity capable of self-determination through reflexivity, an entity among whose fundamental predicates one would supposedly find potential autonomy of action and behavior (leading to the imputability of legal persons), coherent unity in both representations and personality, and the capacity for reflexive thinking. [...] Instead, the possibility ought to be entertained, and the consequences weighed, of applying the term ‘subject’ to the reflexive process of confrontation with the impersonal as manifested, in particular, in desire, in the body and in sexuality.”

Ernst van Alphen argues that Modernism’s emphasis on the subject’s authenticity and individuality is a critical practice is symptomatic of a “defensive subject,” who wishes to avoid overwhelming sensory stimuli in modern life. The particular mode of subjectivity shows traits such as “distanced observation, reserved intellectualism, scepticism and irony, and a pursuit of an authentic self.” Krauss, “Video: Aesthetics of Narcissism,” *October*, Vol. 1 (Spring, 1976), 50-64; Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, [1988] 2004); Safatle, *Grand Hotel Abyss: Desire, Recognition and the Restoration of the Subject* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2016), 246; Douwe Fokkema and Elrud Ibsch, *Het Modernisme in de Europese Letterkunde* (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers), 24, cited in van Alphen, “Configurations of Self: Modernism and Distraction,” in *Modernism*, vol.1, eds. Astradur Eysteinnsson and Vivian Liska (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2007), 344.

body and the viewer, who faces him only through the video from the past performance, are curiously absent in Krauss's linguistic and psychoanalytical formulation.

When the material dimension is considered, however, we see in the feedback loop not a partial narrative being severed from the whole, but a body that speaks and gesticulates. For Krauss, Vito Acconci's *Centers* (1971) [Fig. 6] is an epitome of video's narcissism, while the artist claims the video to be a point of contact with his viewers. Acconci writes, "Video monitor as one point in a face-to-face relationship: on-screen, I face the viewer, off-screen."³⁵ *Centers* is a videotaped performance in which the artist points forward with his arm stretched straight into the camera's lens. The seemingly simple action gets laborious as the performance lasts over twenty minutes, and Acconci struggles to maintain the pointing. In the resulting videotape, his index finger is directed at the viewer. Rather than a narcissistic self-reference, Acconci's pointing is a gesture driven by a desire to connect and communicate "face to face" with those off-screen, beyond the closed circuit of video.

Art historian Anne M. Wagner suggests that "Acconci's body actually seems to speak" to the viewer through his intense gaze and gesture, summoning the latter.³⁶ In fact, Acconci is so insistent that his pointing verges on aggression. The gesture "threatens to invade privacy's buffer zone" and demand the viewer's presence or, at least, her awareness of being summoned.³⁷ Heeding Acconci's call, the viewer becomes engaged with the artist—or rather, in Wagner's words, "actor and viewer are locked in a pas de deux. Or three, or four, or twenty."³⁸ Similarly, art historian William Kaizen also considers Acconci's bodily action a speech, in which the artist

³⁵ Acconci, "10-Point Plan for Video," in Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot (eds.), *Video Art: An Anthology* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 8.

³⁶ Wagner, *A House Divided: American Art Since 1955* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 222.

³⁷ Wagner, "Performance, Video, and the Rhetoric of Presence," *October* vol. 91 (Winter 2000), 69.

³⁸ Wagner, *A House Divided*, 223.

demands the viewer to acknowledge him and open a communication channel between them. If the phatic gesture can be vocalized, the viewer would hear Acconci blurting out “Hey!”³⁹ Building on Wagner and Kaizen, I argue that the embodied performance of “speech act” was no less significant in early video than the “spoken” message and its cognitive meaning.

Centers evokes a particular condition of late 1960s and 1970s’ performance art, in which artists often used mirrors and cameras to reciprocate or multiply the audience’s gaze. The audience becomes aware that she not only sees, but she is also seen by others.⁴⁰ Both the artist and the audience oscillate between subjective and objective positions: for example, between one who sees and one who is seen; or one who acts and one who is acted upon. Video and performance art emerged interconnectedly (if not symbiotically) in the 1960s and 1970s. For one thing, many conceptual and performance artists recorded their practice in the studio or performed live with a video camera in public. The two categories often overlapped, thus the boundary between them was flexible. The resulting tapes show the artists’ bodies, gestures, movements, and acts, rather than presenting a narrative or a symbolic meaning that needs to be read and decoded by the viewer. Many delivered a sense of physical proximity between the artist and the viewer—as evidenced by Wagner and Kaizen’s interpretative focus on Acconci’s body and the visceral response it evokes in the viewer.

Being and Doing

In the late 1960s and 1970s, performance and video art reclaimed the body and espoused embodied and engaged modes of experience, which had largely been absent from modernist art and formalist criticism. By doing so, artists shifted—or rather, expanded—the critical focus from

³⁹ Kaizen, 163.

⁴⁰ Wagner, *Ibid.*, 223.

pure opticality to the whole body and somatic experience, and from representation alone to both presentation *and* representation. According to art historian Kristine Stiles, artists perform by presenting and representing themselves “in the process of *being and doing*.”⁴¹ The body, in its dual mode of being and doing, was celebrated in postwar American art as in the examples of Jackson Pollock’s “action,” Allan Kaprow’s “happening,” Fluxus “event,” and the work by Judson Dance Theater dancers and choreographers.

The shift did not go unnoticed by modernist critics like Michael Fried, even when an artwork neither presents nor represents the body. Fried condemned minimalist sculptures’ overt physical presence in that they, not unlike “other persons,” “confront” him, thus make him aware of his own body in the gallery space.⁴² It is anathema to the critic because the bodily presence and awareness, perceived in temporal duration and spatial extension, belongs to the theater, not to visual art. While employing the body as an artistic medium and a site of creative process, performance and video reject formalism’s claim for “objectivity,” which is based on the latter’s assumed position as a disinterested spectator at a distance, removed from the everyday.⁴³ Such scholars as Stiles, Amelia Jones, and Rebecca Schneider point out that 1960s and 1970s’ performance and body art belie modernism’s presumed neutrality, by introducing heterogeneous

⁴¹ Kristine Stiles, “Performance,” in *Critical Terms for Art History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 75.

⁴² Fried, *Art and Objecthood: Essay and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

⁴³ Formalist critic Clement Greenberg argues that “Aesthetic experience *has* to be disinterested [...] If American society is indeed given over as no other society has been to purposeful activity and material production, the it is right that it should be reminded, in extreme terms, of the essential nature of disinterested activity.” Greenberg, “The Case for Abstract Art,” in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism* Vol. 4, ed. John O’Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). For critical examinations on the concept of “disinterestedness,” see Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); and Thierry de Duve, *Clement Greenberg Between the Lines*, trans. Brian Holmes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

gender, sexual and racial identities (as a lived, embodied experience, not as a mere discourse or representation) to the field.⁴⁴

The scholars consider Carolee Schneemann's *Eye Body: 36 Transformative Actions for Camera* (1963) [Fig. 7] one of the earliest examples that established the artist's body and specific identity as a primary building material for an artwork—bridging between the eye's function of seeing and the body's being, sensing, and doing. Schneemann constructed an environment in her New York loft with painted wooden panels, broken umbrellas, plastic sheeting, fur, and shards of glass and mirror—then she had her colleague Erró photograph it in which she embedded her “body/self.”⁴⁵ With a keen awareness of her dual role as artist and artwork, as embodied subject and photographic object, Schneemann wrote: “Covered in paint, grease, chalk, ropes, plastic, I established my body as visual territory. Not only am I an image maker, but I explore the image values of flesh as material I choose to work with.”⁴⁶

Nam June Paik's *Zen for Film* (1962) [Fig. 8] highlights the porous boundaries between presentation and representation, the material body and its mechanically (re)produced images. The piece itself is comprised of a clear filmstrip that creates a bright rectangular field of light when projected. On the occasion of the first *New Cinema Festival* in New York City, Paik performed in front of the imageless screen during the projection. The event was entitled “Nam June Paik: Electronic Video Recorders” (November 2, 1965). In it, the artist became a “film” by presenting his embodied self—instead of playing a role—to the audience. Remaining accounts of

⁴⁴ Stiles Ibid., and “Uncorrupted Joy: International Art Actions,” in *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979*, exhibition catalog, ed. Russell Ferguson (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998); Jones, Ibid.; Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁴⁵ I borrow the term “body/self” from Jones to emphasize the subject's embodiedness as an equally vital component of self-consciousness as introspection.

⁴⁶ Schneemann, *More than Meat Joy: Complete Performance Works & Selected Writings*, ed. Bruce McPherson (New Paltz, NY: Documentext, 1979), 52.

the performance are scarce but photographer Peter Moore's camera captured Paik in the midst of action [Fig. 9].⁴⁷ In one image, the artist is facing the screen and away from the audience. The intense beam of light coming from the projector casts his shadow in place of filmic images, dark and crisp on the screen. Another photograph [Fig. 10] shows Paik lying on the floor with his right arm raised, index finger pointing up, so that it barely creates a trace of image on the otherwise blank screen. The on-screen image (i.e., the shadow) bears an indexical relationship to Paik's body. Without his physical presence, there would be no cinematic images for the audience to look at—or rather, it would be left up to individual audience members to frame a cinematic experience on their own. For both Schneemann and Paik, the material body and its image are intertwined, thus they do not simply fall into the subject/object binary.

According to Jones, the body is supplementary to both a live performance and its documentation in video, film, and photography. The body is not the center of the work being performed or the physical origin of the artist's authorial subjectivity. Rather, it functions as "both the visible proof of the self and its endless deferral."⁴⁸ The body/self is contingent on a phenomenological, intersubjective exchange with others therefore it is constantly deferred from coinciding with the presumed essence of self, ad infinitum. One's subject position as a beholder is not fixed but only relative, temporary, and contingent—it can be reversed as soon as the object or the other looks back. Such intersubjective dynamics were at play in 1960s and 1970s' body art and video: the viewer was made aware of the simultaneity of seeing and being seen, and of being subject and object.

⁴⁷ Jonas Mekas, organizer of the festival, commented on the night's event as follows: "Paik's Program was perfectly designed, constructed, and executed. There was an almost classical simplicity and purity about it." Mekas, "Movie Journal," *The Village Voice* Vol. XI, No. 4 (November 11, 1965), 21.

⁴⁸ Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject*, 34-35.

The Social Body of an Artist

Early video practitioners inclined toward utopian ideals of positing themselves as a conduit in a democratic communication network and many of them “produce[d] an event in which the maker participates.”⁴⁹ Acconci’s *Centers* is one such example. In it, the artist positioned his body in front of the camera not as the origin of authentic subjectivity, but rather as a place where “[his] space and viewer space come together.”⁵⁰ The artist’s attempts to reach the viewer, however, might not always result in a meaningful connection. As Stephen Melville observes: “we are finally what Acconci can never quite touch, neither as we are forever exterior to him, one step beyond the circuit of self and self (however it be relayed through tapes and television), nor as he is continually interior to us, as our temptation, misreading, possibility.”⁵¹ Acconci’s reach “never quite touch[es]” the viewer, despite that the work creates a precarious intersubjective zone between the two. Wagner diagnoses that Acconci’s work and, more broadly, 1970s’ performance and video in general show the shared sense of anxiety among artists that they might lose the viewer to the powerful lure of television and advertising, to the “illusions of presence, intimacy, and belonging.”⁵²

In his influential book *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of Changing American Character* (1950), sociologist David Riesman defined the new American middle class that emerged after the

⁴⁹ Chris Salter points out that video technology allowed artists such as Acconci, Joan Jonas, Dan Graham, and Bruce Nauman to produce performative work while maintaining a distance from the theatre and its conventions.

Salter, *Entangled: Technology and the Transformation of Performance* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), 116.

⁵⁰ According to Acconci, in 1971, he began producing works with the specific intent to address the viewer: “in 1971, the pieces started [...] to be more about ‘I’ meet ‘You,’ [...] what I was getting at were almost ways to say hello to a viewer, but make that ‘hello’ as difficult as possible.”

Martin Kunz, “Interview with Vito Acconci about the Development of His Work since 1966” in *Vito Acconci* exhibition catalog, eds. Marianne Eigenheer and Kunz, (Lucerne: Kunstmuseum Luzern, 1978).

⁵¹ Melville, “How Should Acconci Count for Us?: Notes on a Retrospect,” *October* Vol. 18 (Autumn, 1981), 89.

⁵² Wagner, “Performance, Video, and the Rhetoric of Presence,” 80.

Second World War as “other-directed,” opposed to the “inner-directed” character of the previous generation. The other-directed person strives to conform to her peers (others) by receiving signals from diverse sources far and near, rather than obeying parents or authorities and following a generalized goal set by the latter. Riesman notes mass media as one major source to which the other-directed person attends. In so doing, one’s relations with the world become increasingly mediated by the “flow of mass communication.” Riesman continues: “For the other-directed types political events are likewise experienced through a screen of words by which the events are habitually atomized and personalized—or pseudo-personalized.”⁵³ “A screen of *words*”—perhaps so, when the book was initially published in 1950. By the mid 1960, however, images from the Vietnam War reached American living rooms, on the TV set as well as on the pages of newspapers and magazines. Televised reports of the atrocities in South Asia contributed to an increase in antiwar sentiment and protests. Unprecedented in terms of extensive television coverage, the conflict is often referred to as “the first television war.” Thus, it would not be incorrect to say that it was a screen of *images* (more so than texts) that mediated Americans’ exposure to contemporary social and political events.

While traumatic memories of past wars (the Holocaust, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Korean War) remained still vivid, the American public observed suffering in Vietnam each night on television. Thousands of Americans marched in the streets for varying causes upheld by the Civil Rights, antiwar, women’s and gay rights movements, and the New Left. Images of social upheaval might largely be consumed as mere media spectacles—equally by sympathetic audiences and critics. However, elsewhere in the US, the actual physical body was tactically used to confront the injustice by making the oppressive institutions tangible and

⁵³ Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Have: Yale University Press, [1950] 2001), 21.

visible. Ordinary gestures and actions like sitting took on greater meaning at the lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina or on the bus in Montgomery, Alabama. In Berkeley, students put their “bodies on the gears” by sitting-in and lying-in on campus grounds to defend their free speech. A group of California youth stood on the railroad tracks and successfully stopped trains carrying GIs to the Oakland Army Base.

As Carrie Lambert-Beatty notes, artists in the 1960s worked with awareness of the sociopolitical conditions affecting the body and shaping embodied experience in both the everyday and the creative process.⁵⁴ In the avant-garde dance practice of Yvonne Rainer, for example, the artist’s bodily materiality contrasted the mediatedness of bodies and events seen on television. Resisting the detached view of the TV camera, artists like Rainer demonstrated the ambiguity of the body—simultaneously as material presence in the here and now (immediate) and as technological representation unbound by the spatiotemporal specificity (mediated). Similarly, art historian Elise Archias suggests that 1960s and 1970s’ dance and performance practices employed the body as a medium to bridge the widening gap between the concrete reality of everyday life and the abstract systems of modernism, capitalism, and mass media. Artists presented their body in a literal manner “as if the concrete particularity of everyday sensuous experience needed to be present inside the frame of art because the audience’s grasp of it everywhere else was slipping away.”⁵⁵

Taking cues from Lambert-Beatty and Archias, I argue that 1960s and 1970s’ videos can be understood in terms of the body, action, and embodied experience in real space—they were not just moving images on a screen, contained within the frame. During this time, the material

⁵⁴ Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008).

⁵⁵ Archias, *The Concrete Body: Yvonne Rainer, Carolee Schneemann, Vito Acconci* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 2.

body became interwoven with various social and political bodies on television. Paik, Graham, Birnbaum, Videofreex, and TVTV's "videoing" as an embodied mode of practice was carried out with an awareness of the , which was simultaneously far and near to their body and mind.

Against Ocularcentrism: Art as Embodied Practice

Video's etymological root is *vidēre*, the Latin verb meaning "to see," and *video*, its conjugation, means "I see." In the Cartesian sense, vision is the master sense that provides the bases for subjective rationality and "scopic regimes" of modernity.⁵⁶ The modern subject sees with the fixed, disembodied, and distanced eye as exemplified by the perspective grid in Renaissance art. Defining the particular mode of vision as "Cartesian perspectivalism," historian Martin Jay discusses how the idea is still associated with scientific rationality and modernity itself in the works of contemporary writers and scholars. For example, Guy Debord and Michel Foucault warned against the perils of ocularcentrism in the society of the spectacle and surveillance, respectively.⁵⁷ And for Jay, the real issue with "the abstract coldness of the perspectival gaze" lies in "the withdrawal of the painter's emotional entanglement with the objects."⁵⁸ It precludes other ways to mediate between the artist and the object, or the viewer and the viewed. Consequently, "the participatory involvement of more absorptive visual modes was diminished if not entirely suppressed, as the gap between spectator and spectacle widened."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ See Martin Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity," in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), 3-23.

⁵⁷ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995); Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1977).

⁵⁸ Jay, *Force Fields: Between Intellectual History and Cultural Critique* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 117.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Cartesian perspectivalism, however, was never a universal mode of viewing throughout European civilization. As art historian Svetlana Alpers theorized, there are palpable differences between Dutch “art of describing” and Italian Renaissance art of narrative, which was created and consumed in accordance with the system of linear perspective. Regarding their framing and treatment of the viewer, the contrast between Dutch and Italian paintings can be summarized as follows: “an unframed image versus one that is clearly framed; one with no clearly situated viewer compared to one with such a viewer.”⁶⁰ The mobile (not clearly situated) viewer then appears in the flesh, embodied, in Baroque art—as Jay puts, “the body returns to dethrone the disinterested gaze of the disincarnated Cartesian spectator.”⁶¹ When the Cartesian subject, who exists only as vision in the perspectival universe, regains the body and other senses “the fiction of an objective distance” between the viewer (the subject) and the viewed (the object) becomes unsustainable.⁶² Instead of “the disinterested gaze” from one side to the other, they would be in an intersubjective relationship embedded in the material world.

In Abstract Expressionist painting and postwar American art criticism, the Eye once again became the locus of subjectivity. Situating Jackson Pollock in the modernist painterly tradition since Édouard Manet, critic Clement Greenberg delineated a trajectory that had progressed toward the flatness of the surface. For Greenberg, visual art such as painting and sculpture should be exclusively created for and experienced by vision without any other senses involved. The critic wrote, “the human body is no longer postulated as the agent of space in either pictorial or sculptural art; now it is eyesight alone.”⁶³ However, the Greenbergian subject-

⁶⁰ Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 44.

⁶¹ Jay, “Scopic Regimes of Modernity,” 18.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶³ Greenberg, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), 143.

as-vision could inhabit and operate only within the white walls of art institutions and the systems' cold bureaucracy. Purified from sound, smell, and touch as means to understand and communicate with the world, the modernist eye adamantly refused to acknowledge the body and its "presence" in the exhibition space—as evidenced by critic Michael Fried's 1967 essay "Art and Objecthood." In it, Fried expresses his strong disapproval of minimalism: the anthropomorphic sculptures have "a kind of *stage* presence." Thus, the modernist subject (like Fried himself) feels as though the encounter is "not [...] unlike being distanced, or crowded, by the silent presence of another person."⁶⁴ It can be "disquieting," even. With its anthropomorphic presence, minimalist sculptures not only reciprocate the subject's eye, but also enter into or withdraw from the space around the subject—at least that is how Fried, as a viewer, feels as though he is "being distanced, or crowded" by the artworks. The critic considers the experience problematic because, when facing a minimalist sculpture, the viewer becomes aware of herself as an embodied subject and the artwork an external object. The distance (or rather, relationship) between subject and object is to be negotiated in the given situation, in the here and now. Conversely, in Fried's ideal, the art object engrosses the viewer and "eclipses" the latter's subjectivity, so that the subject-object divide is suspended in "continuous and entire *presentness*"—the subject is detached from the spatial and temporal specificities of her experience.⁶⁵

However, acknowledging the minimalist object's presence vis-à-vis one's own body unavoidably takes account of what exists between and around them—that is, the material conditions of the environment. While the experience addresses the actual space and the body within, it is also in itself a "process" that unfolds in time. Temporality, for Fried, is a feature

⁶⁴ Fried, *Art and Objecthood: Essay and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 155.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 167.

specific to the genre of theatre and, by the same token, it is incompatible with visual art. Though Fried's essay takes aim at minimalism, it is far from being the only guilty party that incorporates time and the body, moving, sensing, and thinking temporally, that undermine the modernist ocularcentric aesthetics and subjectivity. In the 1950s and 1960s, avant-garde artists in visual art, music, dance, and literature often collaborated in a performative setting, in which the work is inseparable from the material process of its making—time, space, and the body, of both performers and viewers, that together bring the piece close to life. For example, composer John Cage's *Untitled Event* (1952) at Black Mountain College and *4'33"* (1952) make the audience aware that they are part of the multisensory environment in which the performance takes place. The event featured disparate actions, which were loosely arranged through chance operations but not entirely predetermined: choreographer Merce Cunningham danced through the aisles along which the audience sat in four triangular sections; While pianist and composer David Tudor played piano, Robert Rauschenberg played old records on a phonograph; the latter's *White Paintings* were hung overhead "at various angles, a canopy of painting above the audience"⁶⁶; films were projected on the ceiling and a slide projector cast colorful lights and photographic images on the wall; Charles Olson and M. C. Richards read poetry on a ladder; and, on another ladder, Cage delivered a lecture on Zen Buddhism—some participants and witnesses remembered it otherwise, suggesting that the lecture was about Meister Eckhart, the Bill of Rights, or the Declaration of Independence.⁶⁷ Without a single central focus of the event, the vast array of actions was indeed meant to be perceived differently by each individual, as Cage

⁶⁶ Michael Kirby and Richard Schechner, "An Interview with John Cage," in *Tulane Drama Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Winter, 1965), 53.

⁶⁷ See, Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 228.

remarked: “[one’s] consciousness is structuring the experience differently from anybody else’s in the audience.”⁶⁸

Cage also composed *4’33”* during the summer at Black Mountain College. For the piece’s duration of four minutes and thirty-three seconds, the pianist sits silently on stage at the instrument, while sounds from the audience—whispering, coughing, or rustling the program—constitute “music.” When Tudor premiered it on August 29, 1952 in Woodstock, New York, the audience not only heard “the sound of wind in the trees” and “a patter of raindrops on the roof” but also “took over and added its own perplexed mutterings to the other ‘sounds not intended’ by the composer.”⁶⁹ Though Cage already had ideas about the silence piece as early as 1948, he claimed Rauschenberg’s *White Paintings* (1951) to be its immediate predecessor. The white monochrome paintings, not unlike blank screens, register ever-changing ambient light and shadow cast by the viewer in front, instead of displaying painted images, marks, colors, or any visual material one can look at. Similarly, by silencing the performer and the instrument as designated sources of music, *4’33”* transposes “the performance onto the audience members both in their utterances and in the acts of “shifting perception toward other sounds.”⁷⁰ In *4’33”* and *White Paintings*, one’s acts of speaking and “of shifting perception” constitute a phenomenological process that frames one’s aesthetic experience as an event. Music is heard and art is seen wherever the subject pays her mind or attention to.

“Mind,” according to philosopher John Dewey, “is primarily a verb. It denotes all the ways in which we deal consciously and expressly with the situations in which we find

⁶⁸ Kirby and Schechner, 55.

⁶⁹ Calvin Tomkins, *The Bride and the Bachelors* (New York: Viking Press, 1965), 119; quoted in William Fetterman, *John Cage’s Theatre Pieces: Notations and Performances* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996), 75.

⁷⁰ Douglas Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 166.

ourselves.”⁷¹ In fact, Dewey’s pragmatist philosophy provided a framework for Black Mountain College, where Cage and Rauschenberg first met and produced *4’33”* and *White Paintings* respectively. The artists were steeped in the school’s experimental spirit, which upheld the Deweyan idea of “art as experience.” In his writing, Dewey lamented the disconnection of mind not only from the body (and action) but also from “the objects and events, past, present and future, of the environment with which responsive activities are inherently connected.”⁷² If conventional art with a predetermined, fixed form or structure is compared to a noun referring to a particular object, *4’33”* and *White Paintings* can be seen as a verb that is performative and relational. A verb shows the subject’s action or mediates its relationship with the object. By framing and presenting the audience/viewer and their acts as part of the piece, both Cage and Rauschenberg’s works become a process rather than a final product.⁷³ In it, the subject engages herself with the environment, perceiving other beings, things, and sensory stimuli, and becomes aware of her connectedness with them—or, in Deweyan terms, “[deals] consciously and expressively with the situations in which we find ourselves.”⁷⁴

In his book *Silence*, Cage writes: “the composer resembles the maker of a camera who allows someone else to take the picture.”⁷⁵ One experiences *White Paintings* and *4’33”* as though taking a picture or performing music of her own. Through the subject’s embodied

⁷¹ John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1958), 263.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 264.

⁷³ For example, Kyle Gann considers that Cage’s *4’33”* “an act of *framing* [...] environmental and unintended sounds in a moment of attention in order to open the mind to the fact that all sounds are music.” Gann, *No Such Thing as Silence: John Cage’s 4’33”* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 11.

The explanatory text provided by the Metropolitan Museum of Art describes the piece as follows: “Never complete, *White Painting* is always in the process of becoming something other than what it was before.” <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/689655>

⁷⁴ Dewey, 263

⁷⁵ Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 11.

participation in the work and the performativity in the process, Cagean aesthetics directly contradict the purely optical experience, espoused by Greenberg and Fried, in which the artwork and the viewing subject are sealed together into a vacuum. Greenberg explains an ideal aesthetic experience as a mental exercise mediated by vision—based on Cartesian perspectivalism, in which the disembodied subject takes a distance for control and manipulation of the viewed object:

What is ordinarily meant by emotion is swallowed up in esthetic experience [...] It's as though the affect or state of cognitiveness contained emotion along with everything else—sensory experience and intellection and knowledge—and, in containing what it did, transcend it. Emotion, sense perception, logic, knowledge, even morality become known, felt, sensed from outside themselves, from a vantage point that controls and manipulates them for the sheer sake of consciousness. (“Distancing” enters in again.) The pleasure of esthetic experience is the pleasure of consciousness.⁷⁶

Greenberg's reductionism is symptomatic of modernity and its ideals, for example, objectivity, scientific reason, and mathematical abstraction, that have structured Western, industrialized societies, where embodied experience diminishes. In the US, electronic media, notably television and computers, became dominant modes of communication in the 1960s. The communicating body and its social relationship with others (or other bodies) were increasingly conditioned and framed by technological media—for example, the sense of immediacy and intimacy on television does not necessarily involve one's actual physical presence. Rather, it is mediated by creating an illusion of liveness.

As philosopher J. M. Bernstein points out, the general dismissal of the body and sensory experience as a way of being and knowing has been implemented into various institutions and,

⁷⁶ Greenberg, *Homemade Esthetics: Observations on Art and Taste* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 9.

consequently, it affected the lives of individuals: “Kantian conceptuality’s increasing independence from its sensory bearer is enacted, cognitively, in the mathematical explanations of modern natural science, and practically in the rationalization of the practices and institutions that legislate the shape and meaning of modern social life.”⁷⁷ In the same vein, Greenberg’s pursuit of optical purity as “the most efficacious, efficient, and economical” form in modernist art can be attributed to the rationalized procedures in midcentury America.⁷⁸ Art historian Caroline A. Jones argues that Greenberg’s exclusive emphasis on vision—at the expense of other senses and bodily presence—is a direct result of “bureaucratization of the senses.”⁷⁹ There was a palpable segmentation and specialization of sensory perception, as was the case for the governed citizens of bureaucracy, which is organized and run by multiple independent agencies. Technological advance in consumer electronics also accelerated the compartmentalization of the senses—for example, Jones mentions the widespread use of high-fidelity sound system among American consumers in the 1950s. Businesses and advertising industry targeted a specific sense—vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch—at a time. In the end, however, “eyesight was boss.”⁸⁰ Especially with the rise of electronic culture at the time, data and information visualization gained prominence. Greenberg emerged from the social and cultural environment where ocularity had dominance over other senses. Therefore, while the critic theorized abstract expressionist painting within high modernism, his formalist aesthetic and ocularcentrism can be contextualized in 1950s’ society and culture as well.

⁷⁷ Bernstein, *Against Voluptuous Bodies: Late Modernism and the Meaning of Painting* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 6.

⁷⁸ Greenberg, “Detached Observation,” in *Clement Greenberg: Late Writings*, ed. Robert C. Morgan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 69.

⁷⁹ See, Jones, *Eyesight Alone: Clement Greenberg’s Modernism and the Bureaucratization of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 419.

The 1960s saw the body's return not only to the art world but also to the larger social sphere and public awareness—both in unmediated and mediated ways. In critical response to Greenbergian formalism, artists blurred the boundaries between heterogeneous media and between art and life, as the aforementioned examples by Cage. Some of them worked directly with Cage or took up Cagean idea of composition as process, in which the composer incorporated the visual and the theatrical into music. When performing Cage's composition *26'1.1499" for a String Player* [Fig. 11] in September 1963, Charlotte Moorman pushed the piece toward "a full-blown visual and sonic spectacle."⁸¹ Moorman's play was interspersed with various actions—the cellist blew whistles, popped balloons, rubbed the sole of her shoe on a pan of sand, and at one point threw a cymbal to the floor. Cage's score does not list or direct the actions. They were in fact Moorman's own, liberal interpretation of the piece. Her bodily presence and actions overshadowed the music itself to the degree that Cage dismissed Moorman's rendition of the piece. Even some of their colleagues expressed unease about her pronounced onstage presence. Merce Cunningham, for instance, said he remembers not much about her performance apart from "the sight of her."⁸²

From Cage's 1957-1958 composition class at the New School for Social Research, students/artists such as Allan Kaprow, George Brecht, Al Hansen, Dick Higgins, Jason Mac Low, and Robert Whitman developed process-based, chance-operational work. Under the banner of Happening and Fluxus, their practice usually took the form of event, festival, environment, and performance, in which mundane action, multisensory perception, and "attention to contingent phenomenon" together constitute a work of art as an open-ended process, thus

⁸¹ Rothfuss, 76.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 77.

challenging the idea that an artwork is inherently a physical object to be looked at.⁸³ In his 1958 essay “The Legacy of Jackson Pollock,” Kaprow shifted the critical focus from painting to the painter’s “act of painting” such as “dripping, slashing, squeezing, [and] daubing” that transferred Pollock’s “diaristic gesture” onto the canvas. In a statement that sounds directly contradictory to Greenberg’s interpretation of Pollock, Kaprow claims that the latter’s painting turns the viewer’s attention to the outside of the frame, the everyday: “Pollock [...] left us at the point where we must become preoccupied with and even dazzled by the space and objects of our everyday life, either our bodies, clothes, rooms, or, if need be, the vastness of Forty-second Street.”⁸⁴

Happening and Fluxus pieces often included banal activities, including walking, crawling, touching, cooking, eating, sleeping, turning a lamp on and off, and moving furniture pieces—reflecting the artists’ utopian ideal of blurring the boundary between art and life, or rather, living and producing “artlike life and lifelike art.”⁸⁵ Art historian Hannah Higgins suggests that boundary-erasing aspects of Fluxus extend beyond that. Fluxus also destabilizes the subject/object dichotomy, which has been firmly upheld by Cartesian perspectivalism and

⁸³ Rodenbeck, *Radical Prototypes: Allan Kaprow and the Invention of Happenings* (Cambridge, MA: MIT press, 2011), 250.

Art historian Hannah Higgins defines “experience” in Fluxus as “[a] transactional, interpenetrative framework and its capacity to create a sense of continuity with the world. In this sense, experience is neither ahistorical nor uncontextual; rather, experience is simultaneously embedded in human consciousness and in the situation that makes a specific experience possible.”

Higgins, *Fluxus Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), xiv.

⁸⁴ Kaprow, “The Legacy of Jackson Pollock,” in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

⁸⁵ On Happening and Fluxus’s blurring of art and life, art historian Judith Rodenbeck writes, “Both happenings and Fluxus events were devised as critiques of the dealer-gallery-museum system and of notions of the art experience as grounded in anything but the everyday. Further, while both operated in the interstitial space so tidily carved out between art and life by Robert Rauschenberg, neither sought to meld the two. The legendary ‘blurring’ was precisely that: an indistinct domain of unclarity: artlike life and lifelike art.”

Rodenbeck, 251.

Greenbergian “distancing” for the sake of questionable “objectivity.”⁸⁶ Higgins writes, “Fluxus produces situations that, by staking out the physical side of cognition, erode the subject/object, form/idea division typical of Western metaphysics.”⁸⁷ However, individual experiences of Fluxus works or “situations” have been largely left out of art historical discourses defining the movement, quite reductively, as avant-garde. Higgins contends that our primary, physical experience is not separate from intellectual activity. Rather, the two are interwoven—hence “the physical side of cognition.” When direct sensations—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching—provide the basis for cognitive understanding of objects or others, the subject-object division, assumed on the basis of Cartesian epistemology, can be mediated or renegotiated by sensory experience. Drawing from philosophers Edward S. Reed and Hilary Putnam’s arguments that consider experiential knowledge an indispensable part of subjectivity construction, Higgins claims that Fluxus events and objects (namely, Fluxkits) offer us primary experience, which blurs the subject-object divide.⁸⁸

Ben Vautier’s *Total Art Match-Box* (1965) [Fig. 12] is a matchbox, on which the printed instructions read, “Use these matchs [sic.] to destroy all art [...] and as I Ben signed everything work of art—Burn anything—Keep last match for this match.” When we strike a match and smell the burning sulfur, wood, and “anything” that is on fire, our olfactory system—along with

⁸⁶ Thierry de Duve points out that Greenberg’s “objectivity,” after Kantian disinterestedness, is problematic—or even, “wrong,” in his own word—in that the modernist critic claims his subjective aesthetic experience to be universal: “Greenberg is not at all basing the maxim of broadened thinking on the mere transcendental idea that there ought to be *sensus communis* shared by all humanity, which would lead everyone exercising his or her faculty of judgment in an equally impersonal way to judge freely in agreement with him. Instead he seems close to confiscating the privilege of best representing the species for himself and the class of people who have sufficiently developed their taste.”

de Duve, *Clement Greenberg between the Lines*, 103.

⁸⁷ Higgins, 116.

⁸⁸ Fluxkit is a collection of various everyday objects and print materials assembled in a box. They often exist in multiple editions, rather than being one-of-a-kind objects.

vision and hearing— produces a direct understanding of the object: the smell can be perceived as either pleasant or unpleasant, depending on the individual; and it may also trigger varying memories in each of us. As the matchstick burns away, the fingertips feel the heat growing intense. Our subjectivity is, at least temporarily, entangled with the object through the experience. Between us and the matchbox, the Greenbergian distance becomes untenable. In order to claim the objectivity of aesthetic experience, Greenberg assumes an absolute subject-object division, which may be linguistically and semiotically feasible, but not experientially. Perhaps, Vautier aimed to prevent distancing from being a dominant mode of experience in *Total Art Match-Box*, and that is why he directed the viewer to rid of the piece by finally burning it after doing so with “all” the other artworks. When the objects are consumed by fire, leaving nothing to look at, the modernist distance between the subject “in here” and the object “out there” would vanish, but our direct, embodied experience of the object would remain.

Fluxfilms (1965) is a collection of Fluxus artists’ short films assembled by George Maciunas. Some of them, in the form of film loops, were included in *Flux Year Box 2* (1968) [Fig. 13], along with a small, hand-cranked projector, so the user can view the films at her will. In Maciunas’s words, the particular *Year Box* is for “events that are enacted by the reader automatically as he inspects the book or box.”⁸⁹ The boxed anthology of mixed media works contains seeds for the reader (or user) to sow and medicine to swallow, as well as Vautier’s aforementioned matchbox to burn.⁹⁰ Instead of sitting on a theater seat for the screening, one mounts a glossy film loop on the projector and cranks the projector’s metal arm to view the films. In doing so, the user performs the double-role of projector and viewer through touch and

⁸⁹ Maciunas, “Fluxus Newsletter” (March 1965); cited in Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex* (Detroit: Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, 1989), 122.

⁹⁰ The seeds are contents of Ken Friedman’s *A Flux Corsage* (1966) and the “medicines,” Shigeo Kubota’s *Flux Medicine* (1966).

vision. Watching John Cavanaugh's *Blink* (1966), the viewer also realizes the embodiedness of her eyes—as opposed to a God's-eye-view in the Cartesian tradition. The film loop, consisting of alternating black, grey, and clear frames, presents rapid flickering that quickly tire the viewer's eyes. Feeling fatigued, the viewer may slow down the play speed, carefully observing the limits of her eyes' capacity, rather than watching the disconcerting images per se. As Higgins rightly points out, what the viewer perceives in *Blink* (that is, the flicker or blob) is not what is actually shown in the film (the alternating film cells in monochrome). Yet, the sensory experience “in here” and the stimulus “out there” are inseparable from each other. The viewing subject and the external world intersect through the experience. Higgins writes:

Because it occurs in this interstitial location between objective and subjective, [*Blink*] works against the belief that experience is mediated by clearly delineated senders (objects) and receivers (subjects) of information, a duality that lies at the core of the Western philosophical tradition.⁹¹

Paik's *Zen for Film* (1962) is another example from the Fluxus film series that erodes the subject-object binary. The film itself is a clear film leader without any images registered on it—there is indeed no camera or editing involved in the film's production. When it is projected, the viewer sees a bright, round-cornered rectangle of light on the screen and hears the rhythmic clicking of the rotating film reel. Occasionally, dots and marks appear randomly on the screen due to the scratches and dust particles that the film has accumulated over time. The number of blemishes only grows as the celluloid strip deteriorates at each screening. Paik's Fluxfilm therefore never looks the same twice, though the differences may be subtle.

⁹¹ Higgins, 21.

Cage considers *Zen for Film* to be a cinematic equivalent to his composition 4'33" and Rauschenberg's *White Paintings*. Cage's piece, in his words, "becomes in performance the sounds of the environment" and the Rauschenberg paintings are "airports for particles of dust and shadows that are in the environment."⁹² For the composer, Paik's film has more of "the nature of the environment" than the monochrome paintings, in that, while they both register their own surroundings, the former does so with a more intense focus and deliberation than the latter, on which dust and shadows simply fall. When the viewer steps in between the projector and the screen where *Zen for Film* is shown, her moving body and the shadow become part of a cinematic event framed by the projected light. Devoid of any narrative or audiovisual contents, the film offers no immersive experience of an illusionistic world. By doing so, *Zen for Film* presents the immediate surroundings as a cinematic environment, in which the viewing subject simultaneously performs part of the film. According to the art historian Andrew V. Uroskie, "the exhibition of the film has itself become the event. It makes no sense to talk of the content of even the form of *Zen for Film* without first acknowledging its more foundational aspect as an event, the screening as itself a kind of performance."⁹³ Uroskie argues that postwar avant-garde artists and filmmakers became interested more in the "cinematic situation" or material conditions of the space, where their work is exhibited, and less in the formal qualities of images. In addition, due to the moving images' diffused, heterogeneous nature—in that they vary in type, format, and usage—the modernist paradigm of medium specificity cannot provide a useful interpretative model for a work like *Zen for Film*. In the following chapter, I further examine how Paik produced his first exhibition as a heterogeneous, multi-sensory environment in which the

⁹² Cage, "On Nam June Paik's *Zen for Film*," in *Electronic Art III: Paik-Abe Video Synthesizer with Charlotte Moorman* exhibition catalog (New York: Galeria Bonino, 1971).

⁹³ Uroskie, *Between the Black Box and the White Cube: Expanded Cinema and Postwar Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 30.

viewer's embodied action interrupts the linearity of political and historical narratives, as the viewer in *Zen for Film* does with the linearity of filmic narratives. The exhibition also debilitated the viewing subject/viewed object binary, which is based on a linear system of vision. The installed artworks instead mediated a haptic, intersubjective relationship between the viewer and artworks.

**CHAPTER 2: How to Practice Democracy:
Nam June Paik's *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television* (1963)**

In 1963, Nam June Paik produced his first modified TV sets for his solo exhibition entitled *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television* (henceforth *Exposition of Music*). Critics and historians have considered the pieces to be some of the earliest examples of video art: they were seen as at once a formal experiment and a critique on commercial television. And I argue that the TV sets created a televisual “situation,” in which the viewer’s act of seeing, rather than what the viewer sees on the monitor, becomes a focal question. The TV sets were more than art objects to be looked at. Paik designed them to be performed by the viewer like musical instruments so that the existing idea of “watching” television can be radically reimagined. Paik’s emphasis on the body and the performative is not just limited to his Fluxus years but extends to his later video art. The TV pieces, as well as other objects installed throughout the show, presented vision, or human sensorium as a whole, as a performative and political action. The chapter examines how Paik addressed the embodied viewership in the 1963 exhibition with reference to 1960s’ West German media, culture, and Cold War era politics.

Exposition of Music opened on March 11, 1963 at the Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal, West Germany. Having studied musicology and composition, Paik conceived and produced the exhibition as an experimental music project. In it, music was not precomposed, but to be “exposed” when the mobile audience explores the installed objects—hence the title, *Exposition of Music*.⁹⁴ The idea of exhibition-as-composition had a kinship with postwar experimental music, especially with German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen’s spatial music and American composer John

⁹⁴ New Oxford American Dictionary defines “exposition” as follows: “1. [music] the part of a movement, especially in sonata form, in which the principal themes are first presented; 2. A large public exhibition of art or trade goods.”

Cage's aleatoric composition. However, little has been discussed about the exhibition's close relationship with contemporary music. The majority of existing studies focus on Paik's 1963 exhibition primarily as one of the earliest showcases of video art. By the same token, *Exposition of Music* has often been discussed as a turning point in Paik's career: after the exhibition, he decided to give up composition to further experiment with television, which was then a new artistic medium.

Though the medium-specific approach is indispensable in contextualizing Paik's work within the larger history of art, it has left unexamined *Exposition of Music's* evident social and political components that are deeply rooted in the history of 1960s' West Germany and South Korea. At the forefront of the Iron Curtain, both nations were still grappling with the aftermath of the Second World War. West Germans and South Koreans alike strived for political, social, and economic stability by establishing capitalist democracy as their de facto system of government. Externally, they sought validation from the United States and other Western allies as able, fellow defenders of the free world against communism. In *Exposition of Music*, Paik decidedly made more direct visual references to contemporary sociopolitical events than he had done in previous "action music" performances. Paik's performance had been well known in the local avant-garde art circle in West Germany for its physical and emotional intensity. Some of the audience members, including John Cage, felt Paik's performance was violent, even frightening.⁹⁵ While performing *Etude for Piano*, his action music piece, in 1960, Paik went off the stage to Cage and surprised him and other audience members by severing his necktie with scissors [Fig.14]. Paik

⁹⁵ Cage commented that "Sometimes there's a kind of violence in Nam June's work. You find the same kind of violence in Zen—of the monk picking up a cat and a knife in one hand, saying, 'Quick! A word of truth, or I slit the cat's throat.' ... it frightens me." Nicholas Zurbrugg (ed.), *Art, Performance, Media: 31 Interviews* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 112.

then washed the American composer's hair with shampoo. On other occasions, Paik screamed, sawed off piano strings, and threw beans at the audience. The elements of "violence" in Paik's action music, media scholar Gunnar Schmidt suggests, were symptoms of his traumatic experience and memories of wartime. Born and raised in Korea during Japanese occupation (1910-1945), Paik and his family emigrated to Japan via Hong-Kong to flee the Korean War (1950-1953). Tragically, the war broke out less than five years after the nation had gained independence at the end of WWII and divided the Korean peninsula into two—both geographically and ideologically. At that point, Koreans had barely made a first step toward building a modern nation.

Nam June Paik in Postwar West Germany

Paik's graphic score *Sinfonie for 20 Rooms* (1961) [Fig.15] supports Schmidt's claim, which attributes the raw emotions or "madness (Verrücktheit)" in Paik's performances to the two nearly consecutive wars.⁹⁶ In one of the sixteen rooms that Paik sketched out on the sheet, the audience would be under attack from intense sensory stimuli ranging from "[lighting] as bright as possible" to "sine tone torture: high pitch as loud as possible," "smell bomb (vinegar smell)," and "very hot stove" all at once.⁹⁷ Upon entering other rooms, the viewer would hear aural reminders of recent history, including those of Germany's National Socialism. Among the various sound sources Paik chose to play in the rooms are "scream (male, female)," "Nazi song," "Hitler speech," and "national hymnes [sic]" of Germany, US, England, France, and Russia—a group of powerful

⁹⁶ Schmidt, *Klavierzerstörungen in Kunst und Popkultur* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2013), 91. Artist Mary Bauermeister also noted, "The fact that Paik, as a young, relatively shy person, was able to develop such madness, was able to develop such an intimidating aggressiveness in his pieces, for me, that was doubly revolutionary."

Susanne Rennert, "About Paik, with Paik: A Collage of Conversations Dating from 1992 to 2010" in Sook-Kyung Lee and Rennert (eds.), *Nam June Paik* (Liverpool: Tate Publishing, 2010), 215.

⁹⁷ Although Paik entitled the piece *Sinfonie for 20 Rooms*, the actual number of rooms on the graphic score is sixteen.

nations that held decisive roles in setting the course of WWII. By orchestrating physical and psychological discomfort, Paik attempted to sound a wake-up call to Germans' willful amnesia on the nation's war crimes.

When Paik studied and worked in West Germany in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the country's economy had rapidly grown since Year Zero and the rest of the world complimented their impressive rise, calling it the "Miracle on the Rhine." However, Paik observed the economic miracle's dark side—namely, "ignorance (Dummheit)" of the public intertwined with their diligence and hard work, which had fueled the growth.⁹⁸ Perhaps Paik aimed his remark at the general lack of critical reflections among Germans on what the economic miracle means to them beyond material wealth and comfort.⁹⁹ While West Germany industriously worked its way toward a great economic success, it was, politically and socially, yet to reach a mature level of democracy and civic engagement.¹⁰⁰ Before they cultivated new soil for liberal democracy, the Western allies, in close collaboration with West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer, transplanted free market economics in West Germany and facilitated its growth to weed out communism. The Allies also hurried to rearm West Germany by 1955 to defend Western Europe against the Soviet Union—of course, the recent Korean War gave the Western Bloc a legitimate reason to take a precaution

⁹⁸ "Zweite Satz ist eine Verwarnung zu den Wirtschaft Wunder der Deutschen, wo Fleißigkeit und Dummheit in Eins gebunden ist." (Second movement [of the symphony Paik had written] is a warning to Germany's economy miracle, in which diligence and ignorance are tied in one.)

In Paik's letter to Wolfgang Steinecke, quoted in Schmidt, 89; *Nam June Paik: Video Time - Video Space*, eds. Toni Stooss and Thomas Kellein (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 51-3, Exhibition catalog.

⁹⁹ "So laangweilig wie möglich: wie Proust, Palestrina, Zen, Gregorianische Choral, Missa, Pariser Café, Leben, Sex. und Hund, der in die Ferne blickt (As boring as possible: like Proust, Palestrina, Zen, Gregorian Chant, Missa, Parisian café, life, sex. and dog looking into the distance)." Paik's letter to Wolfgang Steinecke.

¹⁰⁰ It was the mid-1960s when Germany "fully entered the modern world, with the stabilization of the party system and the emergence of an astonishingly broad consensus on the main goals of social, economic, and increasingly also foreign policy."

Dennis L. Bark and David R. Gress, *A History of West Germany Volume 2: Democracy and Its Discontents, 1963-1988* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 29.

against another communist invasion. As a result, not only did the prospect of unified Germany grow dark. West Germany's economic and military programs also undermined the foundation of democratic ideals in the young republic by bringing power back to the hands of elites, many of whom were responsible for German war crimes of varying degrees. Ironically, the industrialists could turn the tables on their public image thanks to the Korean War (1950-1953), which was one of the main contributing factors to the economic miracle—namely, the Korea boom. The public found that the yesterday's guilty party suddenly became today's heroes, who salvaged the West German economy from the postwar crisis.¹⁰¹

From early on, Adenauer strived to draw consensus, unity, and stability in West Germany. As the chancellor adamantly pushed his agenda for national integration, however, his leadership created a sociopolitical culture that deterred diverse values and opinions from coexisting—as his 1957 election slogan declared, “No experiments (Keine Experimente!)”[Figs.16-17] With his power and executive authority, Adenauer allowed little room for opposition.¹⁰² The administration's anti-communist campaign imbued German minds with narrowly defined ideas of freedom and democracy—they are what communism is *not*—for example, Christian and

¹⁰¹ “The Korean War stimulated West Germany's economy—which had been struggling with deflation and high unemployment at the turn of 1959-50—and proved to be the priming of the ‘economic miracle.’ It was the industrialists' claim that the economic success of the ‘Korea boom’ was of their making that helped significantly to turn their public image from that of Nazi stooges and war criminals towards one of being the facilitators of West Germany's economic recovery.”

Armin Grünbacher, *West German Industrialists and the Making of the Economic Miracle: A History of Mentality and Recovery* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 24.

¹⁰² Adenauer, for example, rejected the Weimar era multi-party system in the parliament. Instead, the chancellor formed a coalition between his Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its sister party Christian Social Union (CSU), and succeeded in winning majority support in parliament throughout his terms (1949-1963). The CDU-CSU subjugated small coalition parties, while excluding their major opponent the Socialist Democratic Party (SPD) from a government coalition. The SPD remained the opposition during Adenauer's chancellorship and until 1966, when they formed a grand coalition with Kurt Georg Kiesinger's CDU.

bourgeois, as Adenauer himself. The chancellor's hardline anti-communist programs sometimes even verged on violating the citizens' rights to information and freedom of expression.

Nevertheless, a majority of West Germans quietly accepted Adenauer's autocratic government. They did not, for instance, protest the chancellor's problematic handling of former Nazi officials: to pardon, free, and even reinstate them, despite that the "continued activity of the old National Socialists is a fundamental affliction of the inner constitution of the Federal Republic," as philosopher Karl Jaspers observed.¹⁰³ Or rather, the public welcomed Adenauer's let-the-past-rest approach, partially because "they now wanted to consume" the fruit of the economic miracle, but "not reflect."¹⁰⁴ For artists and intellectuals, the Adenauer era was when "the mind was paralyzed, the climate limp, the morals ambiguous, the mentality provincial."¹⁰⁵

Paik's observation on postwar West German "ignorance" was likely to be motivated by his personal experience in Japan, to which he was previously a colonial subject and later a migrant. Paik was critical of Japanese people's reluctance to acknowledge their crimes and eventual defeat

¹⁰³ Jaspers quoted in "From Dictatorship to Democracy: The Role Ex-Nazis Played in Early West Germany," *Der Spiegel* (March 6, 2012).

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/from-dictatorship-to-democracy-the-role-ex-nazis-played-in-early-west-germany-a-810207-3.html>

¹⁰⁴ "Adenauers Popularität schadete es nicht, dass er die Vergangenheit ruhen ließ. Im Gegenteil: die Mehrheit der Deutschen wollte an die Nazi-Diktatur gar nicht erinnert werden. Viele waren selbst verstrickt, die meisten hatten mitgemacht, nur wenige Widerstand geleistet. Jetzt wollten sie konsumieren, nicht reflektieren. Sie waren froh, den "Führer" los zu sein, auf autoritäre Führung aber mochten sie nicht verzichten. Deshalb akzeptieren sie Adenauers eigenwilligen Regierungsstil."

Hartmut Palmer, "Im Anfang war Adenauer," *Der Spiegel* (special 1/2006), 76.

Similarly, in 1947, Karl Jaspers observed that Germans "do not like to hear of guilt, of the past; world history is not their concern. They simply do not want to suffer any more; they want to get out of this misery, to live but not to think. There is a feeling as though after such fearful suffering one had to be rewarded, as it were, or at least comforted, but not burdened with guilt on top of it all."

Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 21.

¹⁰⁵ "Die meisten empfanden die Ära Adenauer als eine Epoche, in der 'der Geist lahm, das Klima schlaff, die Moral zweideutig, die Mentalität provinziell' geblieben waren, wie der Schriftsteller Horst Krüger 1979 rückblickend feststellte."

Palmer, 76.

in the Pacific War, while highlighting their own victimhood in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In his essay on Hi Red Center, a Japanese avant-garde art collective, Paik wrote favorably of their *War Defeat Anniversary Dinner Party* performance, while condemning Japan's questionable framing of the history:

[T]he crux of their events was giving a dinner party celebrating the ending of World War II. Generally, the Japanese make a big press event on Hiroshima/Nagasaki day, when their victimhood is clear. But on Pearl Harbor Day or VJ Day (Koreans call it Liberation Day), they are rather quiet. If they mention it, they call it 'War Ending Day.' Hi Red Center challenged this 'hypocrisy.' Why don't we call it as it is, that is, 'War Defeat Day'?¹⁰⁶

In West Germany as well in Japan, Paik saw troubling ambivalence about the nation's recent past.¹⁰⁷ He was also keenly aware of the political turmoil in South Korea under the president Syngman Rhee's dictatorial leadership (Paik had asked his brother back home to send him Korean newspapers). Some of the works in *Exposition of Music* can be seen as his criticism of Germany and Korea's authoritarian governments, whose policies were often implemented at the expense of civil liberty and freedom of the press. I will return to this point later in the chapter.

At the end of the 1950s, voices of dissent began to emerge in West German society.¹⁰⁸

Students and the opposition Socialist Democratic Party (SPD) condemned Adenauer

¹⁰⁶ Paik, "To Catch Up or Not to Catch Up: Hijikata and Hi Red Center" in *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, ed. Alexandra Munroe (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 80.

¹⁰⁷ For example, Paik considered Germany and Japan in parallel when he discussed the war generation's mental and moral escapism, in which they had retreated to the gloom of certain postwar art and literature, rather than having a serious conversation or discussion.

¹⁰⁸ Adenauer was under pressure, both domestically and internationally, to take action against the country's National Socialist past when two young men desecrated a synagogue in Cologne with swastikas on December 24th, 1959, and numerous other anti-Semitic acts followed the incident all over West Germany (though the East German government was behind the majority of the criminal acts as part of their propaganda campaigns against West Germany). Subsequently, university students organized discussions and demonstrations to challenge and reject the continuation of the perpetuation of the Nazi past. Also in 1959, Adenauer's Minister for Refugee Affairs Theodore Oberländer resigned after an East German newspaper reported his participation in the massacre of Jews and Polish intellectuals in 1941 and

administration's reinstatement of ex-Nazis in various government positions.¹⁰⁹ The trial of Adolf Eichmann, chief executioner of the Holocaust, followed in April 1961. Newspaper, radio, and television, which was then a relatively new medium, closely reported the court proceedings. The trial was broadcast internationally over the span of four months and gripped audiences in 37 countries. As Adenauer had feared, the Eichmann case brought the Nazi past back into the public realm in West Germany. Yet, it was not until the summer of 1967 that West German students rose to protest against the authoritarian government and called for change on a national level.

“How Much Does Freedom Cost?": The *Spiegel* Affair

Paik's 1963 exhibition took place between the West German youth's initial rise against authoritarianism in 1959 and the full-blown student movement in the late 1960s. Though the dominant political atmosphere at the time was hostile to experiments of any kind—as “No Experiments!” was the chancellor's motto—artists, musicians, writers, and filmmakers, who grew up during the Third Reich, struggled to find a new artistic language detached from the past—that is, unburdened by the guilt of their parents' generation. For example, members of the Zero group, Darmstadt School, Group 47, and New German Cinema (the Oberhausen group) emerged as a voice of the postwar generation along with the student movement.¹¹⁰ While living in Germany

the information stirred a public uproar in West Germany. “All those events” wrote Charles Williams “had been unthinkable only a few years earlier.” Williams, *Adenauer: The Father of the New Germany*, (Wiley, 2001) 479.

¹⁰⁹ Most notably Hans Globke, who co-authored the Nuremberg race laws in the Third Reich, served Adenauer as his senior state secretary. Adenauer brushed off criticisms against Globke by saying “I don't know of anyone who could replace Globke.”

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/from-dictatorship-to-democracy-the-role-ex-nazis-played-in-early-west-germany-a-810207-2.html> (accessed October 4, 2018)

¹¹⁰ Some scholars consider that postwar avant-garde art such as Fluxus influenced the 1968 student movement in West Germany.

Stephan von Wiese writes that: “Fluxus war ja das Vorbeben der späteren internationalen Studentenbewegung. Zwei auf den ersten Blick so verschiedenartige Phänomene wie Anarchie und Technologie hat Paik in die Düsseldorfer Kunstszene hineingeschmuggelt.

from 1956 to 1963, Paik joined the vibrant network of avant-garde artists, specifically experimental music composers in Düsseldorf and Cologne, as well as Fluxus. Paik's work at the time not only demonstrated avant-garde experimentalism, but also conveyed his critical responses to contemporary social and political events. He listed *Exposition of Music's* sixteen themes on the poster, including "HOMAGE à Rudolf Augstein," "Memory of the 20th century (Erinnerung an das 20. Jahrhundert)," and "A study of German Idiocy" [Fig.18]. The three phrases show that Paik situated the exhibition in a particular time and place: West Germany in the mid-twentieth century. More specifically, his homage to Rudolf Augstein, the publisher of newsmagazine *Der Spiegel*, referred to one of the biggest political scandals in postwar German history: namely, the *Spiegel* affair.

The affair began with the cover story of *Der Spiegel's* October 8, 1962 issue, which reported that West German military forces were insufficient for defense against foreign attacks. The article provoked a harsh reaction from defense minister Franz Josef Strauss, who accused Augstein and the writers of high treason for publishing state secrets. Strauss's claim was later

(Fluxus was an early sign of the international student movement. Paik smuggled anarchy and technology, which are, at first glance, two different phenomena, into the Düsseldorf art scene.)"

Similarly, political scientist Wolfgang Kraushaar remarked: "the Fluxus movement [...] brought forth or at least influenced such widely differing innovators as Charlotte Moorman, John Cage, Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell and Yoko Ono. The genre of happenings alone was a dynamic form that attracted international attention and broke through the customary borders between artists and actors on the one hand, and visitors and participants on the other. It was able to quickly advance into the political sphere and continue exerting influence there. In this regard a great deal happened that could be considered a sub-form of protest within art, yet art also frequently affected and altered the formal principles of protest movements themselves."

von Wiese, "Fluxus an der Akademie Düsseldorf auf der biographischen Landkarte von Nam June Paik"

<http://www.cultd.eu/paik/text/wiese.htm>; Ege Tufan, "The DNA of Protest Movements" in *Schirn Magazin* (Frankfurt am Main: Schirn Kunsthalle, April, 2018).

https://www.schirn.de/en/magazine/interviews/2018_interview/wolfgang_kraushaar_interview/

rejected at a federal court and none of the accused were convicted of treason. Still, the authorities' course of action throughout the affair angered the public.¹¹¹

Not only did the state violate the journalists' civil rights, but also freedom of the press. Protests erupted in support of *Der Spiegel* all over West Germany. Demanding Strauss's resignation, demonstrators marched with handwritten placards that read "Save democracy (Rettet die Demokratie)," "No democracy without press freedom (Ohne Pressefreiheit Keine Demokratie)," and "The press is free, the editors are under arrest (Die Presse ist frei, Die Redakteure sind verhaftet)" [Fig.19]. Along with the pickets, some marched holding up recent issues of *Der Spiegel*—including ones with a life-size headshot of Strauss on the cover—for they considered purchasing and reading the magazine as acts of protest.¹¹² Tellingly, the sales of *Der Spiegel* soared as a result of the scandal. Strauss resigned in the end, albeit reluctantly. Adenauer also suffered a backlash for backing Strauss throughout the affair that eventually led to his early resignation in 1963, two years before the official end of his term.

The whole affair revealed the patriarchal nature of the Adenauer government to the public eye and proved that the grip of authoritarianism had not actually loosened in West Germany since 1945.¹¹³ Some of the protestors even compared the Adenauer administration's prosecution of *Der*

¹¹¹ For example, Strauss had resorted to unlawful measures when he personally arranged the arrest of Conrad Ahlers, the article's main author, though the minister initially denied his involvement in the matter altogether. Before Augstein voluntarily presented himself to the authorities, the police detained and questioned innocent citizens who they had misidentified as Augstein. Also, investigators raided and occupied *Der Spiegel* offices for a month.

¹¹² "To buy Spiegel then was a political demonstration," a former colleague of Mr. Augstein's said. Circulation rose through the nineteen-sixties from 330,000 to its current level of about 900,000" Craig R. Whitney, "The West German Press: Magazines for Scandal, Newspapers for 'serious' News" *The New York Times* (January 7, 1974), 10.

¹¹³ John Gimbel, "The 'Spiegel Affair' in Perspective" in *Midwest Journal of Political Science* Vol. 9, No. 3 (Midwest Political Science Association, August 1965), 286.

Spiegel to Nazi censorship and media control.¹¹⁴ In fact, public resistance to the government's violation of press freedom was considered "a symbol of the redemocratization of the German media after World War II."¹¹⁵

In *Exposition of Music*, Paik scattered various newspapers, magazines, a mandolin, and a breakfast cereal box on the floor and entitled the piece *Mementos of the 20th Century (Erinnerung an das 20. Jahrhundert)*. A photograph of the installation shows a copy of *Der Spiegel* dated November 7, 1962 lying at the center [Figs.20-21]. The cover features a photograph of Augstein and another man, taken after the publisher's arrest. Next to the *Spiegel*, Paik placed a portrait photo of Adenauer and the magazine *Kontraste*, whose cover bears Hitler's image with a caption "How much does freedom cost (Was kostet die Freiheit)?" [Fig.22]¹¹⁶ *Mementos of the 20th Century* might appear as though Paik had randomly scattered the print materials and objects on the floor rather than arranging them, however the proximity between the images of Augstein, Adenauer, and Hitler suggests otherwise. There were also two female nude photographs overlapping the images of Adenauer and Hitler placed in such a way that the women's heads point to—thus leading the viewer's attention to—the two men respectively. The juxtaposition of the images delivers a sense of irony. The anonymous female bodies, bare and languid, seem to defy the current and former German leaders' authoritarian public personae.

Near the *Spiegel* magazine, *Bild-Zeitung* screams "WAR (SIEG)" in the headline reporting the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. The issue also featured an article about Augstein's

¹¹⁴ Protestors made pickets that compared Augstein to journalist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Carl von Ossietzky (1889-1938), who was incarcerated and tortured by the Nazis due to his unflinching criticism of Nazism.

¹¹⁵ Mona Krewel, "Spiegel Affair," *Encyclopedia of Political Communication*, eds. Lynda L. Kaid and Christina Holtz-Bacha (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008).

¹¹⁶ To promote the Cold War ideology, the particular issue of *Kontraste* drew a parallel between the Third Reich and the contemporary communist Soviet zone and contrasted them with the democratic West.

arrest. The right-wing tabloid's owner Axel Springer was a staunch anti-communist and strong supporter of Adenauer. For many, his name was "synonymous with all that has gone wrong with the post-war German Press."¹¹⁷ Paik specifically accused *Bild* for warmongering in a manifesto, which he distributed during his actions in Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Originale (Originals)* in 1961. According to Arthur C. Caspari, the director of the musical theater (musikalisches Theater), Paik played the first few bars of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata," before crawling under the Steinway grand piano and trying to lift it up "with all his strength and anger." The shock Paik triggered among the audience, Caspari writes, "put an end to [their] institutionalized *Bild-Zeitung*-style. It is wonderful to use it in such a way that any war will be impossible for the future."¹¹⁸ Springer's following statement provides a clue to what Caspari meant by "*Bild-Zeitung*-style": "Since the end of the war I have been convinced that the German reader wanted to avoid doing one thing above all, namely to reflect. I built my newspaper [i.e. the '*Bild-Zeitung*'] on this principle."¹¹⁹ Critics of *Bild* point out that the tabloid paper transforms "a consciously thinking and acting citizen into a fearful, hateful, and sentimentally lamenting object" by imbuing the reader with its biased opinions rather than providing her with information.¹²⁰ The *Spiegel*, in the issue Paik selected for *Mementos of the 20th Century*, responded to various national and international newspapers' reactions to the *Spiegel* affair. To *Bild*, the unnamed *Spiegel* writer mockingly offered editorial help and access to

¹¹⁷ J. Sandford, *The Mass Media of the German-Speaking Countries* (London: Oswald Wolff, 1976), 31, quoted in Peter J. Humphreys, *Media and Media Policy in Germany: The Press and Broadcasting since 1945*, 2nd ed. (Oxford and Providence: Berg, 1994), 92.

¹¹⁸ Arthur C. Caspari, "Etwas zu Paiks Mitwirkung in den *Originalen*," in *Nam June Paik: Fluxus/Video*, eds. Sabine Maria Schmidt and Anne Buschhoff (Bremen: Kunsthalle Bremen, 1999), 39, Exhibition catalog.

¹¹⁹ Cited in F. Brüseke and H. M. Grosse-Ötringhaus, *Blätter von unten; Alternativzeitungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Offenbach: Verlag, 1981), 11, quoted in Humphreys, *Media and Media Policy in Germany*, 94.

¹²⁰ Jochen Staadt, Tobias Voigt, and Stefan Wolle, *Feind-Bild Springer: Ein Verlag und seine Gegner* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 101.

their archive, referring to the former's style of reporting that verges on unfounded statements rather than news.¹²¹

It is likely that Paik juxtaposed the *Bild* and the *Spiegel* to contrast not only the different approaches to journalism, but also the types of readership implied in their names: the German nouns “das Bild” and “der Spiegel” mean the picture and the mirror, respectively. Whereas pictures in mass media enforce and reinforce particular perspectives on the viewer's mind, mirrors can offer a moment of conscious reflection (with the exception of narcissism). “How much does freedom cost?”—so asked Paik in *Mementos of the 20th Century* and urged the viewer to reflect on the plight of democracy and press freedom at the time of the *Spiegel* affair.

In February 1963, about a month before *Exposition of Music*'s opening, Augstein was released from prison. Paik placed a mandolin over the copy of the *Spiegel* as if to set a celebratory tone for the journalist's release, paying “HOMAGE à Rudolf Augstein.” Perhaps the pairing of the news magazine and the instrument implicates Paik's desire to make music relevant to the tumultuous sociopolitical climate of the day. For him, “WHEN to be played, is equally important as WHAT to be played.... on the Krystal Nacht [sic.] (November the 9th) and/or on the Spiegel Nacht (November the 23th [sic].)”¹²² Paik also wanted to expand Cagean concept of indeterminacy through *Exposition of Music*. To do so, he let the audience “act and play by itself”—undoing the *Bild-Zeitung*-style—in the Galerie Parnass. Paik filled the three-story venue with various objects and materials, including modified pianos, record players, TV sets, toys, mirrors, and tin foil.¹²³ The mobile, active audience was essential in realizing his idea of “random access”

¹²¹ “Das Ansehen der Staatsführung steht auf dem Spiel’: Pressestimmen zur Aktion gegen den *Spiegel*,” *Der Spiegel* No.44 (November 7, 1962), 44.

¹²² Excerpt from Paik's event score, *Symphonie No. 5* (1965).

¹²³ Paik, “About the Exposition of the Music,” in *Décollage* No. 3, ed. Wolf Vostell (Cologne: December 1962), n.p.

that resists a linear, forward-moving understanding of time, history, text, and music. For example, the viewer randomly accesses the fragments of modern history in *Mementoes of the 20th Century*—as an alternative to a chronological narrative. While shuffling and reshuffling the mementoes with their hands, as though rummaging through remains at a ruined place, the viewer could create new associations between them that refute the state’s official narrative of change and progress from fascism to democracy. When placed side by side, for example, the Führer, Adenauer, and Augstein’s photographic images visualize a paradigmatic relation between authoritarianism of the past and the present.

Physical Music: Toward Non-Linear Music, Time, and History

Piano Intégral, a group of prepared pianos, is another example that encouraged the viewer to randomly access the artworks within *Exposition of Music*. In the Galerie Parnass’s foyer, Paik displayed three modified pianos and another lying on the floor, with its front panels removed to reveal the strings and hammers [Figs.23-24]. Paik prepared the three by adding everyday objects, such as a rake, spoon, toy car, alarm clock, barbed wire, eggshells, and coins. Some of the keys were electronically wired—when pressed, they triggered a motor, light bulbs, fans, sirens, and even film projectors to go on and off. Fluxus artist Tomas Schmit, who assisted Paik with the exhibition, recalled,

If I press the C#5, a transistor radio is heard; it is silent again as soon as I take my finger off the C sharp key.... If I press F2, then an electric motor (!...) screwed to the soundboard starts to vibrate... If I press C3, a hot-air fan starts up, blowing hot air onto my legs; the switch that turns it off is hidden beneath the A4.... One key switches off the lighting for the entire room (and back on again, if you can find the key again in the dark).¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Tomas Schmit, “Exposition of Music,” in *Nam June Paik: Exposition of Music, Electronic Television, Revisited*, eds. Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien and Susanne Neuburger (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2009), 131.

Art historian Ina Blom considers the modified pianos to be based on the same principles of random access as the experimental television sets at *Exposition of Music*, which I discuss below. The instruments no longer fulfill their original function of rendering notes and melody, which constitute the basis for a musical composition progressing towards a definite ending. Instead, Paik's pianos exemplify "the 'electronic' principle of random access at the touch of the hand."¹²⁵ The keyboards now convert the viewer's touch—rather than piano playing skills—into an unexpected flash of light or gust of wind, just as the body in the age of television has become, in Blom's words, a "light body."¹²⁶ The viewer's bodily presence extends across multiple times and spaces through her electronic reach and touch. By doing so, the linear structure of historical time collapses and two remote perspectival points meet in the perceptual present.

Not only do Paik's modified pianos offer a multisensory combination of touch, sound, light, and air, but also multiple interfaces, through which the viewer can "play" the instruments in various other ways than using the keyboard [Figs. 25-26]. One of the pianos' keys could not even be pressed, since Paik fastened a board underneath its keyboard—as if to tacitly encourage the viewer to explore alternative ways to use the piano and to produce new sounds. For instance, the viewer could directly strum or pluck its exposed strings. The piano lying on the floor, according to Schmit, "can be played with the feet, as you walk over it" [Fig. 27]. Joseph Beuys, then an obscure artist and professor at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art, took it to the extreme: he smashed the piano into pieces with a hammer [Fig. 28]. Beuys's spontaneous action shocked those at the exhibition. Elsewhere, Paik called the incident a "piano performance" by Beuys. *One for Violin*

¹²⁵ Blom, "The Touch through Time: Raoul Hausmann, Nam June Paik and the Transmission Technologies of the Avant-Garde" in *Leonardo* Vol. 34, No. 3 (2001), 213.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 214.

Solo(1962), his own action music piece, involved the simple action of demolishing a violin.[Fig.29] Paik performed the piece to open the *Neo-Dada in der Musik*, a proto-Fluxus event he organized with George Maciunas on June 16, 1962, at the Kammerspiel in Düsseldorf. Facing the audience, Paik picked up the violin on the table, with his hands holding its neck. Gradually, he raised the violin over the span of five minutes, then struck it forcefully against the table. Rather than generating sounds through the instruments' given interfaces (i.e., the piano's keyboard and the violin's four strings and a bow), Paik highlighted performative action under the mantra of "random access."

Perhaps John Cage's "prepared piano" was a direct inspiration for Paik and his Fluxus colleagues to modify musical instruments to produce sounds beyond the limitations of structural harmony and traditional scale of pitches. First in *Bacchanale* (1940), which he composed for Syvilla Fort's eponymous dance piece, Cage altered the piano's sounds by placing screws and bolts between and under the strings. Thanks to the prepared piano, the composer could avoid repetition in his music and leave it to chance and indeterminacy—each performance would be unique if the piano was prepared differently.

Paik pushed the Cagean idea of indeterminacy gradually toward performance and visual art from music—a trajectory shared among many artists in Happening and Fluxus. It is plausible that Paik began thinking about modifying musical instruments, while working with American composers Phillip Corner and Benjamin Patterson during Fluxus's formative years (1962-1966). Paik's violin performance and modified pianos show affinities with Corner's *Piano Activities: Piece for Many Pianists* (1962) and Patterson's *Variations for Double Base* (1961). The two composers' verbal scores use piano and double bass's various parts as playable interfaces, which a performer presses, rubs, scratches, slaps, and knocks to perform—not unlike how Schmit walked

over the piano strings instead of playing the keyboard and Paik smashed the violin rather than bowing the strings. Corner and Patterson also instructed players to use a comb, feather duster, plastic butterflies, fork, glass, and sandpaper as tools to produce new sounds that are different from the instruments' intrinsic sonic qualities. Sections of *Piano Activities* read: "Drop objects on strings or other parts of piano or draw chains or bells across" and "Bring objects producing their own noises in contact with parts of the piano." And *Variations for Double Bass*: "place a number of wooden and plastic spring-type clothespins on strings ... in such a manner that they rattle and/or produce odd tones" and "pull 'chain' (previously prepared) of various threads, cords, strings, ropes, shoelaces, plastic, insulated electric wiring, and/or old rags out of bass through f-hole."

Paik and Patterson performed *Piano Activities* with Corner, Maciunas, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Wolf Vostell, and Emmett Williams during the Fluxus International Festival of the Newest Music (Fluxus Internationale Festspiele Neuester Musik) at the Museum Wiesbaden in September 1962 [Fig.30]. Corner's score "for many pianists" instructs each performer to focus on one part—keyboard, pedals, strings, or "underside of piano"—at a time and to act in relation to one another: they may "ignore and relate to other players; enhance, and destroy or transform their actions." While Corner was initially concerned with exploring new sound in the piece, the performance turned out to be rather theatrical than musical. Corner's Fluxus colleagues took a great degree of interpretative freedom in performing their role as a "pianist"—for example, dropping a rock over the strings, slapping them with a kettle, smashing the keys with a hammer, and sawing off the panel. At the end of the performance, the grand piano was completely destroyed. When Beuys smashed the piano at Paik's Wuppertal exhibition the following year, his action was likely a direct response to the particular performance of *Piano Activities*—though, unlike Corner, Paik had not provided any instructions for the viewer in *Exposition of Music*. While Cage, Corner,

and Patterson had maintained the customary division between the stage and the audience, Paik blurred the line between an active performer and a passive audience. To open up his work to a greater degree of chance, indeterminacy, and variability, Paik let the viewer roam around and play (or rather, play with) the various instruments and objects in the gallery—in do-it-yourself style. Or, to put in his own words: “I have resigned the performance of music. I expose the music.”¹²⁷ And then Beuys responded with his surprising “piano performance.”

In his essay “New Ontology of Music,” Paik wrote: “In the normal concert, the sounds move, the audience sit down. ... In the Music Exposition, the sounds sit, the audience plays or attacks them.”¹²⁸ Music was no longer just about sound that lasts in a given amount of time. By the time of his first exhibition, Paik considered music to be an event that occurs in actual space *when* the audience acts through her body, or an object changes its material state. In other words, “*when* is music?,” instead of *what*, became a central question in his work.¹²⁹ Paik coined the term “physical music (or, space-music)” to encapsulate his new musical ideas. Physical music takes a material form—so sound “sits” on the gallery floor— and is contingent on the performer’s spontaneous action in the here and now. It has less to do with formal innovations of music than exploring a “new ontology,” questioning when music comes into being in the actual, social space. By the same token, recorded music—whether commercial or experimental— is seen as antithetical

¹²⁷ Paik, “About the Exposition of Music,” in *Décollage* No. 3, ed. Wolf Vostell (Cologne, December 1962), n.p.

¹²⁸ Paik, “New Ontology of Music,” in *Postmusic: The Monthly Review of the University for Avant-garde Hinduism* (1963); reprinted in *Videa 'n' Videology, 1959-1974*, ed. Judson Rosebush (Syracuse: Everson Museum of Art, 1974), [3].

¹²⁹ Susanne Neuburger, “Terrific Exhibit: ‘Time Art’ alias Music in the Exhibition Genre,” in *Nam June Paik: Exposition of Music, Electronic Television, Revisited*, eds. Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien and Susanne Neuburger (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2009), 32; Ina Blom, “‘And Follow It’: Straight Lines and Infrastructural Sensibilities,” in *Critical Inquiry* 45 (Summer 2019), 861.

to the new musical ontology. Playing only in one-directional, linear time progression, recorded sound is bound for repetition without any spatiotemporal specificities.

For Paik, one-way time, both in music and in life, meant a serious offense against one's freedom: "freedom must have more than two ways, directions, vectors, possibilities, of time," otherwise it would inhibit her from fully appreciating a musical piece or living in full awareness.¹³⁰ In *Mementos of the 20th Century*, as discussed earlier, Paik disjointed the Adenauer administration's narrative, which claimed that West Germany had made a linear progress from totalitarianism to liberal democracy. The viewer could access to the past decades' history from multiple directions and consider various interpretative possibilities, while rummaging through the pile of newspaper and magazine pages. History (or physical music) remains indeterminate until the viewer's hand places the remnants of the past in context. By tactically juxtaposing the Führer and Adenauer's photographs—that is, by refusing to accept the linear narrative—Paik protested the government's violation of freedom of the press and denounced its bungled attempt to suppress the citizens' right to information.

To dismantle one-directional time, Paik also made recorded sounds freely accessible from multiple directions. *Random Access* is an installation piece consisting of a web of audiotape strips glued on Galerie Parnass's basement wall and a tape head connected to speakers [Figs.31-32]. There were also two stretcher-like objects made of wood, metal, and fabric, to which unspooled tapes were attached lengthwise—at least one of them was motorized so that the fabric part moved like a conveyor belt. As the title suggests, the viewer can "randomly access" the recorded sounds by moving the magnetic tape head over the strips. Since the tape strips were cut and placed out in space, they were playable from multiple directions. The viewer could move, for example, from left

¹³⁰ Paik, "About the Exposition of Music."

to right, backward, and then switch to a different tape piece, contrary to a tape recorder's design intended.

Next to *Random Access* was *Record Shashlik*, featuring vinyl records skewered with two poles (like shashlik) atop a radio [Fig. 33]. As the poles rotated, the viewer could play the records, using the attached tonearm. It produced a collage of various sounds and noises, which can be heard together only through the viewer's action. Not everyone was satisfied with the outcome, like the disgruntled journalist from a local newspaper who tried *Record Shashlik* and wrote: "When invited to play a record, croaking and whistling could be heard, instead of the expected articulate sounds, that are as ugly as a grimace."¹³¹

Even when the tonearm did not produce any audible or desirable sound, however, it is one's conscious, subjective action in space constituted physical music. Another reviewer of the exhibition seems to have understood the point: "A rotating rod with damaged or glued records, which one tries to play in vain with a tonearm, as well as a collage of tapes make sure that *our place of existence becomes music* [emphasis added]."¹³² While working with Stockhausen in the late 1950s, Paik became interested in the materiality of space regarding music's new ontology. The German composer's *Groups for Three Orchestras* (*Gruppen für drei Orchester*) (1957), for example, places three orchestras to the right, left and front of the audience in the middle of the room. For Paik, Stockhausen's "attempt to introduce spatiality into music, a time-based art," was

¹³¹ "Wenn eine Schallplatte zum Abspielen aufforderte, so hörte man statt der erwarteten artikulierten Laute Krächzen und Pfeifen, häßlich wie eine Fratze."

"Viel Klamauk—wenig Einfälle," in *Wuppertaler Stadtmachrichten* (March 15, 1963).

¹³² "Eine sich drehende Stange mit beschädigten oder verklebten Schallplatten, die man mit einem Tonarm vergeblich zu spielen versucht, sowie eine Kollage aus Tonbändern sorgen dafür, daß unser Daweinsort zu Musik wird."

John Anthony Thwaites, "Der Philosoph und die Katze," in *Deutsche Zeitung* (September 4, 1963), 10.

significant in that it had expanded ontological possibilities of music: music can be physical action in real space, and vice versa.¹³³

Stockhausen had sought ways to utilize space as an equal measure as time in composition, in an effort to subvert the linear temporal order and implement a new awareness of time focusing on the present moment. For the composer, “a given moment is not merely regarded as the consequence of the previous one and the prelude to the coming one, but as something individual, independent, and centered in itself, capable of existing on its own.”¹³⁴ Past and present moments do not have fixed positions in history, rather a performer or a listener can create new associations between them in the here and now. The now moment is figured “as if it were a vertical slice dominating over any horizontal conception of time.”¹³⁵

In *Originale (Originals)* (1961), Stockhausen experimented with moment form by applying it to a stage setting instead of a conventional concert hall. The piece was conceived as “musical theater” that presents “the action of producing sound as a theatrical event.”¹³⁶ The score lists roles including pianist, violinist, singer, poet, painter, fashionable lady, newspaper seller, child, and actions, in which Paik performed various improvised action music sequences. Action music refers to a series of Paik’s compositional experiments he began around 1958 with emphasis

¹³³ Paik, “Music of Chance,” in *The Liberal News* (January 6-7, 1959), trans. Kunsu Shim and Gerhard Stähler, republished in *Nam June Paik: Fluxus/Video*, eds. Sabine Maria Schmidt and Anne Buschhoff (Bremen: Kunsthalle Bremen, 1999), 22-23.

¹³⁴ Stockhausen, “Momentform: Neue Zusammenhänge zwischen Aufführungsdauer, Werkdauer und Moment,” in *Texte zur elektronischen und instrumentalen Musik*, Vol. 1 (Köln: Verlag M. DuMont, 1963), 199, quoted in Seppo Heikinheimo, *The Electronic Music of Karlheinz Stockhausen*, trans. Brad Absetz (Helsinki: Acta Musicologica Fennica, 1972), 120.

¹³⁵ Stockhausen’s 1961 notes on *Kontakte*, published in Karl Heinrich Wörner, *Stockhausen Life and Work* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 46.

¹³⁶ Jonathan Cott, *Stockhausen: Conversations with the Composer* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), 66.

on the physicality of performance, rather than sound per se—in opposition to the European tradition of music.¹³⁷

When *Originale* was first staged at the Cologne Theater am Dom (October 26–November 6, 1961), many of the cast members were Stockhausen’s artist-colleagues who performed the given roles as themselves. In addition to Paik performing himself as an action composer, poet Hans G. Helms played the Poet, painter and Stockhausen’s partner Mary Bauermeister, the Painter, and Stockhausen’s son Markus Stockhausen (and daughter Christel, on alternate days), the Child. One of Stockhausen’s instructions for Paik read: “Paik performs silently up to 42' 30", then freely composes his [action] piece. If possible, Paik should perform his performance all by himself without a sound technician, lighting technician or cameraman.”¹³⁸ With the authorial freedom, Paik varied his action repertoire every day: he read out a manifesto denouncing *Bild*, rebuked the director Caspari for not playing the pianos in a proper manner, and drew on paper with the tip of his necktie dipped in ink. In Stockhausen’s account, Paik, in quick actions, threw beans at the audience, sobbed softly into a roll of paper, played his pre-recorded sound collage (of women’s screams, radio news, children’s noises, fragments of classical music, and electronic sounds), smeared himself with shaving cream and poured flour over his head, dived into a tub full of water, played a sentimental salon music on the piano, and finally, hit the keyboard several times with his head [Figs.34-35].¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Peter Moritz Pickshaus (ed.), *Nam June Paik* (Köln: Verlag Buchhandlung Walther König, 2009), 39–40, cited in Kim Hee-young, “Indeterminate Temporality Embedded in Nam June Paik’s Early Experiments from 1959 to 1963,” *Journal of TFAM* No. 34 (<https://www.tfam.museum/Common/editor.aspx?ddlLang=en-us&f=sys&id=224>).

¹³⁸ Stockhausen, “Originale,” in *Texte zur elektronischen und instrumentalen Musik*, Vol. 2 (Köln: Verlag M. DuMont, 1963), 119.

¹³⁹ Stockhausen, “Fußnoten zu Originale,” in *Texte*, Vol. 2, 128.

A heated debate ensued between advocates and opponents of the performance among the audience, meanwhile some thought the argument was also a planned act for the program. The audience was indeed made aware that they were part of the multi-vector performance. For example, they could see themselves in the mirrored surfaces surrounding the stage area. There were also moments when the performers on stage silently looked into the eyes of individual audience members for approximately two minutes, and the entire cast took flash photographs of the audience.¹⁴⁰ In addition to the multi-vectorial dynamics in space, time became poly-directional and complex as the audiovisual media, such as photographs and audiotapes, wove the past and future into the now time of the performance. Taking photographs and being photographed alluded to the future: the resulting images would have depicted the moment as a past event. And Paik's pre-recorded audio called up the sounds of the past in the present. Likewise, sound recording and filming of *Originale*, which were tasks assigned respectively to the "Sound Engineer" and the "Cameraman" roles in the score, were simultaneously a real-time stage performance and document for the future.

Originale presented multidirectional space and time, blurring the boundaries between music and theater, performers and audience, and the linear order of past, present, and future. For both Stockhausen and Paik, giving music a visual and physical form was crucial in that it would allow the body to be an active agent in the present moment. Stockhausen situated the body at the center of one's experience of time, stating that:

people in general occupy a certain middle position in time, from which they judge what is fast and what slow, and this middle position is determined basically by the body, by the breathing, the heartbeat, the speed with which the limbs—including the fingers—can be moved, the tongue, lips, head and so on. All these limits

¹⁴⁰ Robin Maconie, *Other Planets: The Complete Works of Karlheinz Stockhausen, 1950-2007* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 200.

determine a middle range of speed, and everything that is faster or slower we judge from this standpoint. ... [W]ith the arrival of modern transport, our context of experience has changed a lot: in everyday life we can experience many different time perspectives. If I am driving in a car, and I see someone walking past, and there is an airplane passing overhead, the airplane can be very slow compared to the person walking ... So in real life we may change time very quickly, and modern man has to change his time perspective just as quickly, and if he doesn't he gets sick, or even dies, because the degree of change is just too much.¹⁴¹

The acceleration of time in contemporary life could take its toll on the human body. Similarly, oft-changing tempi of modern music do not give the listener the same sense of security as traditional music does. Stockhausen thus claimed that one has to be able to change her speed and direction swiftly and “become the sounds.”¹⁴²

Stockhausen's idea of time as a subjective, bodily experience was echoed by Paik in *Exposition of Music*—but in a different tone. While Paik was also aware of the growing gap between what he called “human time” and “machine time,” his survival tactics was to create a rift in machine time through the body's own tempo, rather than making an effort to constantly adjust himself to the speed of technology. In his book *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects* (1958), Gilbert Simondon made a similar observation on the relationship between human life and modern technology. For the philosopher, the body, action, and work are more important than ever, for humans need to operate as tool bearers. Simondon wrote: “There is work when man cannot entrust the technical object with the function of mediation between the species and nature, and must fulfill this function of relation himself, through his body, his thought, his action.”¹⁴³ Lest humans be alienated by technology—or, overwhelmed by machine time—Simondon continued,

¹⁴¹ Stockhausen, “Four Criteria of Electronic Music” in *Stockhausen on Music: Lectures and Interviews*, ed. Robin Maconie (London: M. Boyars, 1989), 99-101.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁴³ Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, trans. Cécil Malaspina and John Rogove, (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2017), 247.

“one would have to bring the aspect of work, of effort, of concrete application implying the use of the body.”¹⁴⁴

While Stockhausen suggested that individuals become sound or sound-like, Paik held fast to the materiality of the body. In his essay accompanying *Sinfonie for 20 Rooms*, Paik mentioned Stockhausen’s idea of moment form, in which “each single moment becomes independent.”¹⁴⁵ Searching for a new compositional method to demonstrate variability in music, Paik was convinced that moment form would be an effective way to highlight qualitative differences among heterogenous components. Still, a question remained: “how can one arrive at variability without losing intensity? ... this physical dimension.” Not to sacrifice intensity for variability, Paik interpreted moment forms into rooms in actual space—first in the graphic score *Sinfonie for 20 Rooms* and later in the exhibition *Exposition of Music*. In both cases, the viewer’s body is at the center of her direct experience of sonic, musical space. One viewer’s experience of the *Sinfonie* can vary significantly from another’s depending on the sequence of her movement between the sixteen rooms. She might begin with the room equipped with wood pieces, stones, earth, metal fragment, and metal sheeting and “enjoy sounds and tactile feeling,” then switch to the adjacent room where Paik installed tape recorders playing the sounds of bird, water, wind, rain, baby babbles, and school children playing. Meanwhile, another viewer could first enter the room of a “free orchestra made up of bad players,” then proceed diagonally to the completely dark room and hear recordings of Cage’s piano concerto, Stockhausen’s *Drei Gruppen*, or Hitler’s speech. Not only would the temporal structure of their experience be different from each other, but also the spaces carved out by the individuals’ bodily movement. Though Paik used sixteen grids to sketch

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 256,

¹⁴⁵ Paik, “To the ‘Symphony for 20 Rooms,’” in *An Anthology of Chance Operations*, eds. La Monte Young and Jackson Mac Low (New York, 1963), n. p.

out the graphic score, each viewer's action and interaction with various sensory stimuli engender subjective experience of space, which is neither fixed nor measurable.¹⁴⁶

Grids and boxes define pure, rational spaces of modernism devoid of human activities and heterogeneous space-time. As Paik did in the *Sinfonie* and *Exposition of Music*, some neo avant-garde artists imbued grids and boxes with a “multisensory life.”¹⁴⁷ Hanna B. Higgins observes that the boxes in two Fluxus works, Eric Andersen's *Opus 90* (1990) [Fig. 36] and George Brecht's *Repository* (1961) [Fig. 37], counter “the modernist box as a container and rationalizer of abstracted space.”¹⁴⁸ In both pieces, the viewer moves or touches the boxes and the contents: including everyday objects such as a toy, key, glass, and stuffed animal in the Andersen; and pocket watch, thermometer, various balls, and plastic persimmon (to name only a few) in the Brecht. Unlike minimalist sculpture that does not let the viewer in, or Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box* (1964) that preordains the viewer as consumer, the Fluxus boxes are open to the human body and activity. The viewer experiences and understands them through her senses—touching, looking, and hearing. Therefore, the boxes are no longer abstract and absolute but concrete and relational. Higgins also argues that the relativity destabilizes the ideas of space and time as inherently geometric and linear. In the Fluxus boxes, space and time are containers of multisensory experience. And the containers' shape and duration would be “determined by those who use them.”¹⁴⁹

In *Exposition of Music*, the viewer can control the speed of music that emerges through her gestures, movement, and action, without having to keep up with the accelerated pace of everyday

¹⁴⁶ Milla Tiainen and Jussi Parikka, “The Primacy of Movement: Variation Intermediality, and Biopolitics in Tero Saarinen's *Hunt*,” in *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a “New Materialism” through the Arts*, eds. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 210.

¹⁴⁷ Hannah B. Higgins, *The Grid Book* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 229.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 277.

life. Fast and slow— running the tape head over the strips of audiotape in *Random Access*, the viewer plays music that directly responds to her body’s movement. The sound’s pitch and speed change according to her motion. The resulting bleep and bloop sounds are distinguished from how the audiotapes would have originally sounded if played on a tape recorder. The viewer is unbound by the linear temporal order of the music on the tapes, since Paik cut them into multiple pieces and randomly strewed them in the Galerie Parnass’s basement. The viewer further diverts the already stalled narrative progression, by spontaneously moving around the tape head—to and fro, here and there. Linear time becomes visually as well as sonically disjointed in *Random Access*. While the viewer navigates in the web of heterogeneous temporalities, however, a different experience of time or temporal sensibility emerges through the body, where the relationship between past, present, and future is constantly renegotiated.

Erin Manning postulates that “space and time are qualitatively transformed by the movements of the body. The body does not move *into* space and time, it *creates* space and time.”¹⁵⁰ Touch, in particular, is a crucial function for the body to negotiate spatiotemporal particularities and to individuate oneself. Without sensing through touch, “bodies become stabilized within national imaginaries in preordained categories, such as citizen, refugee, man, woman, homed, homeless.”¹⁵¹ In *Mementos of the 20th Century*, the viewer could create and see the rupture in the Adenauer administration’s narrative of seamless, linear progression toward political and economic success. Rummaging through the pile of “mementos,” the viewer grasps the history “against the grain,” as Walter Benjamin urges historians to do. Benjamin writes,

¹⁵⁰ Manning, *Politics of Touch: Sense, Movement, Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xiii.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, xv.

Articulating the past historically does not mean recognizing it ‘the way it really was.’ It means appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger. [...] There is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is never free of barbarism, so barbarism taints the manner in which it was transmitted from one hand to another. The historical materialist therefore dissociates himself from the process of transmission as far as possible. He regards it as his task to brush history against the grain.¹⁵²

For Benjamin, historical time is lived experience in the here and now—or “now-time (*Jetztzeit*),” in his own words. And it is antithetical to a mere temporal continuum, which is “homogeneous, empty time” sans active agents of history.¹⁵³ In his 1959 essay, Paik echoes Benjamin’s concept of history—that history’s relevance depends on the subject’s conscious experience in the now-time.

The question "Is there any meaning in a thing itself or in history?" is a difficult problem for which one can hardly find a solution until death; a problem that caused neglect, hierarchical thinking, and material worship by which people have suffered. [...] Possibly the thing or history in itself has no meaning, but the subjectivity of the human being, which cuts something out of the "nothing."¹⁵⁴

Perhaps, one possible way to cut something out of “nothing,” or to break out of “empty time” during the Adenauer era was to dissociate oneself from the official narrative of “progress”: maybe then, one could recognize that the barbarism of the previous decades was very much alive in the present.

¹⁵² Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” in *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940*, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al., eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 2003), 391-392.

¹⁵³ “History is the subject of a construction whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled full by now-time [*Jetztzeit*].”
Ibid., 395

¹⁵⁴ Paik, “Music of Chance,” 23.

Cold War Politics, National Identities, Borders, and Misaligned Bodies

Throughout his term (1949-1963), Adenauer actively used newsreel and PR films in order to widely advertise his administrative policies as successful and therefore good. The government-controlled PR films were also designed to create a “new collective postwar identity,” which would help the administration “reorient Germans in a number of sociopolitical and economic contexts from the mentality of an occupied and defeated country between 1945 and 1949, to one of a confident member of the cultural West.”¹⁵⁵ However, ordinary citizens could hardly keep up with the “incredible speed” of the nation-building process, for institutional and policy change was not immediately relatable to their everyday experience, let alone understandable.¹⁵⁶ The significant gap between the leadership and the citizens, or the fast and the slow, was not meant to be closed through civic education and political participation. Whereas the Allied newsreels and films intended to reeducate Germans into democratic citizens by explanation, the Adenauer production tended to advertise the benefits of his policies in an entertaining narrative. In the West German PR films, detailed information about the policies and political processes were largely absent. The chancellor became a “projection screen,” on which West Germans projected their unfulfilled desires, rather than reflecting on the films’ “grotesquely exaggerated” narratives.¹⁵⁷

It was not only the images of the strong, successful leader that helped West Germans recover from the injured citizenship and memories of the defeat and occupation (1945-1949). Boosted by the Economic Miracle, the nation became a mature consumer society between 1957

¹⁵⁵ Jan Uelzmann, *Staging West German democracy: Governmental PR Films and the Democratic Imaginary, 1953-1963* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 39.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Uta Schwarz, *Wochenschau, westdeutsche Identität und Geschlecht in den Fünfziger Jahren* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002), 360, quoted in Uelzmann, 45; 301.

and 1967.¹⁵⁸ Consumer products on display in shop windows, trade fairs, or in advertising—images of abundance—contributed to the building of a “consumerist national identity.”¹⁵⁹ Images became indispensable in picturing West German identity—as anti-communist, free-market consumer, and cultural citizen of the West. As historian David Schoenbaum put, “the word ‘image’ itself found its way into the language of Goethe.” In 1961, for the first time in Germany, American-style consumer researchers were hired to create winning images of the federal election candidates in various media ranging from posters to billboards, and television.¹⁶⁰

Built in 1961, the Berlin Wall became a visual marker of West German identity. The border between two Germanies physically separated what had previously been an ideological divide. For Paik, a nation divided by a physical border and two opposing ideologies was something he was already familiar with: the cease-fire line between North Korea and South Korea. Paik even juxtaposed the two national borders in *Fluxus Island in Décollage Ocean* (1963) [Fig. 38], a humorous and yet thought-provoking map of a fictional island. At the center of the image, Paik drew a sidelong cross, in which the vertical line of “the glass wall à la Berlin” intersects the horizontal line of “the transparent plastic walls à la Ghetto.” On its right, the “38 parallel,” the initial border between North and South Korea (1945-1950), runs across the island from top to bottom—not north-south because the two compasses on the map tell different directions. According to one, the 38 parallel divides the island’s north and east, whereas the other south-east and west-?.

¹⁵⁸ S. Jonathan Wiesen, “Miracles for Sale: Consumer Displays and Advertising in Postwar West Germany,” in *Consuming Germany in the Cold War*, Ed. David F. Crew (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003), 156.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 168.

¹⁶⁰ Schoenbaum, *The Spiegel Affair* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), 17.

Rather than demarcating and enforcing a homogeneous national identity as the actual borders do, Paik's fictional borders deliberately confuse and deconstruct it. Without *the* compass, there is no way to refer to the other side of the border as "them," which is necessary for inventing a community of "us." On the bottom left side of the island, Paik located the "ministerium [department] of mixing the enemy-race" to make peace between "USA and Cuba, China and USSR, Korea and Japan, German + Jew." Near the "Berlin wall," there lies the "temple of united religion" constituted by Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, sadism, Zen, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, masochism, homo-sexualism, and cannibalism. Even on the seemingly peaceful island of coexistence, however, Paik marked the presence of the "secret political police, with & without TORTURE" by the 38 parallel. Interestingly, his initial writing was "the ruin of secret political police, with & without TORTURE," but he eventually crossed out "the ruin of": that is, the secret police is still present. Perhaps those who do not conform to the national ideology—either capitalist democracy or communism—would be put under surveillance, followed, captured, and possibly tortured.

In the Galerie Parnass's bathroom, Paik put a mannequin in the bathtub full of water. The submerged upper body lacks both arms and is disjointed from the lower body, jutting uncomfortably out of the tub [Fig. 39] and missing one foot. Having lived in West Germany's avant-garde art community for over six years by then, Paik had likely seen and been inspired by Dada and Surrealist works using mannequins. However, the broken, grisly body in the water had a *double* elsewhere: the body of Kim Ju-yeol, a sixteen-year-old high school student murdered by South Korean riot police. In March 1960, then-president Syngman Rhee and his Liberal Party gave "secret instructions to the police to falsify election returns. The aims would be to see that Dr. Rhee

was elected overwhelmingly.”¹⁶¹ The octogenarian despotic leader had been in power for twelve years. Instead of building and strengthening the new republic’s political and economic infrastructure, the US-backed Rhee administration focused heavily on anti-communist campaigns. Over the years, he and his party had repeatedly violated the law and betrayed democratic principles to remain in power. As Rhee’s unlawful practices, involving stuffed ballot boxes, mobsters, and political assassinations became widely known to South Koreans, the youth—first high schoolers and later college students—began demonstrating in the streets. Kim went missing during the protest in Masan on election day, March 15, and his body was found in the ocean on April 11. The cause of death: a tear gas canister shot by the riot police pierced the boy’s head through the right eye. Local newspaper *Pusan Ilbo* first published a harrowing photograph of Kim’s upper body floating in the water at the scene of discovery and other newspapers soon followed [Figs.40-41]. The image became a catalyst for the April Revolution, nationwide protests against the authoritarian government. Rhee denounced the demonstrations as “communists instigated outbreaks” to undermine the movement’s legitimacy and justify the militarized government crackdown on civilians.¹⁶² On April 26, however, the president reluctantly announced his resignation due to mounting pressure from both inside and outside South Korea.

Though he was away in West Germany during the political turmoil, Paik must have paid due attention to news from home. His primary sources included South Korean newspapers his brother sent him, some of which Paik used to print flyers for *Exposition of Music* [Fig. 42]. Among the newspaper-based flyers, there were pages of *Kyunghyang Shinmun* dated April 27, 1960, the day after Rhee resigned. The newspaper devoted most of its editorial space to covering the

¹⁶¹ “Election Stirred Korean Violence: Reports of Beatings, Vote Rigging Led to Growing Agitation by Opposition,” *The New York Times* (April 26, 1960), 2.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

aftermath of the April Revolution and paid tribute to the young protestors who had sacrificed their lives for democracy. Paik allegedly made a special request to his brother to acquire multiple copies of the particular issue. April 27, 1960 was also the day *Kyunghyang Shinmun* resumed printing since the Rhee government shut it down on April 30, 1959. The paper published an anonymous op-ed on February 4, 1959.¹⁶³ Alluding to Rhee and the Liberal Party's unlawful interference in the previous year's parliamentary election, the author contended that electoral democracy cannot truly represent a majority opinion unless election integrity is protected. "When the electoral system is incapable of representing the true majority," he warned, "it could result in majority rule by means of violence, and I would call it a revolution."¹⁶⁴ The government responded by bringing wrongful charges against the *Kyunghyang* and related personnel of misinformation, defamation, and instigating violence.¹⁶⁵

When the *Spiegel* affair broke in West Germany two years later, Paik probably noticed its staggering similarity with the Rhee government's persecution of *Kyunghyang Shinmun*. Did the memories of authoritarianism, violation of press freedom, and fight for democracy "flash up" to Paik in yet another moment of danger? Likely so. Both in Germany and Korea, the ideological lines along with the physical border delimited, controlled, and penalized the mind and body of the

¹⁶³ The writer later turned out to be Yo Han Chu, a member of the opposition Democratic Party and the National Assembly. On February 27th, 1959, Chu was indicted along with Chang-woo Han, the publisher of the *Kyunghyang Shinmun*.

¹⁶⁴ Yo Han Chu, "餘滴 (Yeojeok)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun* (February 4, 1959).

All Korean translations are mine, unless noted otherwise.

¹⁶⁵ The government cited Ordinance 88 of the former US Military Government of South Korea (enacted 1946), rather than South Korea's National Security Law (1948).

Criticizing the Rhee government's move to close the *Kyunghyang*, the US ambassador Walter C. Dowling wrote, "the intent of the American Military Government in promulgating Ordinance 88 in 1946 was clearly to curb Communist subversive propaganda which threatened Korean internal security at that time."

U. S. Embassy "Opposition Paper Closed in Korea; News Falsification Charged—Shutdown Protested by U. S. Embassy," *The New York Times* (May 2, 1959), 4.

citizenry, “with & without TORTURE.” About a dozen people were shot to death or died in a fatal accident while trying to cross the border in 1961 alone after East Germany began building the Berlin Wall in August. South Koreans who protested for democracy and against the Rhee administration were falsely accused of cooperating with the communists on the other side of the border and murdered by the government forces. Whether East or West, and North or South, the line drawn by authoritarianism injured and killed those who did not conform.

“Draw a Straight Line and Follow It”

In August 1962, during the Fluxus International Festival, Paik performed La Monte Young’s *Composition 1960 #10 (to Bob Morris)*, which consists of a simple instruction: “Draw a straight line and follow it.” Paik’s interpretation of the open-ended score was to turn himself into a paint brush—first dipping his hand, then necktie, and finally head in a bowl of ink mixed with tomato juice and drawing a line on the paper scroll on the floor [Figs.43-46]. Consequently, the line Paik drew lacks the cold exactitude and orderliness of a straight line. It is instead fuzzy and messy with numerous, accidental inkblots and uneven “brushwork”—that is, Paik’s handprints and lines drawn with his tie and head. By doing so, Paik’s performance contrasts starkly with Young’s own: in his earliest performances of *Composition 1960 #10* in 1961, Young used a plumb bob and a yardstick to draw a chalk line on the floor as straight as he could. Composer Michael Nyman considers the fundamental difference between the two iterations to be whether the performer attempted to vary his drawing action: “Paik’s performance ideal was ‘variability as a necessary consequence of intensity’—an intensity he shared with La Monte Young, who, however, was

totally unconcerned with variability since he seemed to spend the whole of 1961 trying to perfect the art of drawing straight lines.”¹⁶⁶

When Young performed the piece with choreographer Robert Dunn at Yoko Ono’s New York City loft on May 19 and 20, they drew thirty straight lines, according to Cage, “in the manner somewhat of surveying.”¹⁶⁷ After the first, each line was drawn carefully over the previous one, leaving a single line at the end of the performance. While Cage praised their performance to be “beautiful,” not everyone was as appreciative of Young and Dunn’s thoroughness and the amount of time devoted to the repetitive task.¹⁶⁸ By the time the duo finished the performance on the first night, the entire audience had already left and Dunn was exhausted. Accordingly, they shortened the next day’s program simply by drawing shorter lines—which still took three hours.

Ina Blom contends that Young composed and performed *Composition 1960 #10* in awareness of “a straight line’s implicit challenge to human bodies.”¹⁶⁹ A human hand can never draw a perfectly straight line. Since the early 20th century, however, Henry Ford’s assembly line and Fred W. Taylor’s accelerated machine time had aligned the body and senses with standardized measurements and units such as lines, right angles, and grids for maximum efficiency. Consequently, “the body would literally *be* the movement of the straight line and the force it exerted.”¹⁷⁰ While Young’s piece evokes the particular reality of the human body in modern technocratic society, it breaks with the linear, teleological time and rushed rhythm by conflating

¹⁶⁶ Nyman, “Nam June Paik, Composer,” in *Nam June Paik*, ed. John G. Hanhardt (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1982), 80, Exhibition catalog.

¹⁶⁷ Cage, letter to David Tudor, [May, 1961], Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California, David Tudor Papers (940073), box 13, folder 2; cited in Branden W. Joseph, *Beyond the Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage (A “Minor” History)* (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 111-112.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁶⁹ Blom, “And Follow It,” 859.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 873.

drawing and following (i.e., before and after) in the now. The performance's temporal mode is not a progression toward the future, but a multi-layered and multi-vectorial present. Young and Dunn's thirty straight lines cannot be spliced together for a longer narrative sequence. Rather, the performance exemplifies "a thick sensory present," which is "a coming-together or synchronization of a range of different cultural and technical 'timescapes.'"¹⁷¹

When Paik performed *Composition 1960 #10*, the line's formal qualities—straightness, thickness, and length, for example—were clearly of less concern than the performative action itself. The resulting scroll bears raw, indexical marks of Paik's bodily movement and the performance's process, in which the artist switched his drawing tools from the hand to the necktie and the head. The varying marks on the scroll are comparable to a musical concert recorded live on tape: the scroll and the tape both register sensory information—one visual and the other aural—produced by the performer's bodily actions. By doing so, they function as material evidence of the ephemeral event. Paik's particular rendition of the Young piece became known as *Zen for Head*. Though Paik stated on multiple occasions that Cage had kindled his interest in Zen Buddhism and philosophy as artistic principles, the exact origin of the title remains unclear. However, it is plausible that Paik, who was multi-lingual, might have played with different pronunciations of the Chinese character “禪,” which are “seon” and “zen” in Korean and Japanese respectively. There is a homonym of “seon (선),” which means a line in the Korean language. Perhaps it is not coincidental that Paik's other “zen” works *Zen for TV* (1962-1964) [Fig. 47], *Zen for Walking* [Fig.48], and *Zen for Film* (1965) [Fig. 49] also involve a single line, “seon”: a bright, whitish straight line across the dim TV monitor; a violin attached to a string like a pull toy for young

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 883.

children; and, finally, a cut strip of clear film leader. When played on a projector, *Zen for Film* casts a bright plane of light on the screen so that everything between the projector and the screen becomes part of the “film.” [Fig. 9] Or, as Hanna B. Hölling puts, “the projection of the film becomes a performance,” in that the film leader collects dust particles and scratches while being played and the viewer cannot experience the same “cinematic performance” again after the moment.¹⁷² The viewer becomes attuned to the material reality of the here and now rather than immersed in cinematic illusion, since *Zen for Film* does not present any narrative or spectacle. While a national border and an assembly line impose absolute spatial and temporal orders on the human body from outside, the lines in the Paik works are open processes: in *Zen for TV*, the line on the TV monitor is a stream of oscillating electrons; *Zen for Walking* draws a line as the ambulatory viewer pulls and drags it around; and in *Zen for Film*, the linearity of a filmic experience is interwoven with the viewer’s presence and movement. For Paik, a straight line cannot be a standard measure for various human activities. The breathing body, gestures, and actions leave a trace that is thick with a vibrating complex of heterogeneous moments, which are not to be reduced or synthesized into a single line. The trace is not quite straight. Rather, it is messy, fuzzy, and complex like the “straight line” Paik “performed” in *Zen for Head*.

In Paik’s construct, television airwaves should be multidirectional for a free, democratic exchange of ideas and information. Television broadcasting signals can cross national borders and ideological divides, as was the case with East and West Germany. In *Fluxus Island in Décollage Ocean*, Paik wrote “ministerium [department] for developing the electronic television” across the “38 parallel.” If both sides of the border simultaneously watch the same television, Paik pondered,

¹⁷² Hölling, *Paik’s Virtual Archive: Time, Change, and Materiality in Media Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017), 70.

it may “eventually punch a hole in the Iron Curtain.”¹⁷³ However, Paik’s concept of simultaneity was not a naïve dream about reunification of the two Koreas, nor did he mean to promote a homogeneous experience across the political spectrum. Paik viewed simultaneity as a way to break with linear time and narrative structure. In *Sinfonie for 20 Rooms*, for example, Paik equipped each room with various music and sounds so the viewer could “perceive SIMULTANEOUSLY the parallel flows of many independent movements” and make “non-causal connections” between them.¹⁷⁴ If the graphic score itself is seen as a whole, all the different sensory stimuli laid out in the sixteen rooms can be considered synchronous, “parallel flows.” In this sense, music, time, and history are not to be *understood* in linear order, but to be *perceived* through one’s subjective, sensory experience of heterogeneous moments in the here and now—the idea that resonates with Benjamin’s “now-time” or Stockhausen’s “moment form.”

Nam June Paik’s Modified TV Sets

In *Exposition of Music*, Paik’s experiment with simultaneity culminated in the twelve television sets as parallel flows of disparate movements [Figs. 50-51]. Paik modified the inner workings of the TV sets so that television picture appears distorted or turns into abstract patterns. Each set displayed different images from one another, even though they were all tuned to ARD, which was at that time the only television channel in West Germany. According to art historian Edith Decker-Phillips, two of the sets were damaged while being transported to the gallery: interestingly, *Zen for TV* was one of them. The single line across the monitor was a chance

¹⁷³ Grace Glueck, “A Video Artist Disputes Orwell’s ‘1984’ Vision of TV,” *The New York Times* (January 1, 1984).

¹⁷⁴ Paik, “Afterlude to the Exposition of Experimental Television” in *Fluxus CC Five Three* (June, 1964); reprinted in *Videa ‘n’ Videology, 1959-1974*, ed. Judson Rosebush (Syracuse: Everson Museum of Art, 1974), [6]; On the *Exposition of Music* poster, Paik wrote “Synchronisation als ein Prinzip akausaler Verbindungen [synchronization as a principle of non-causal connections].”

occurrence. The remaining ten receivers were displayed in three separate groups. In the first group, the images were “negatively inverted” or “distorted by sine-wave vibrations.”¹⁷⁵ The TV sets in the second group were connected to either a radio or a tape recorder: the image became bigger or smaller depending on the sound’s volume. The third featured a set connected to a microphone and a foot pedal that captured, amplified, and converted the viewer’s audio input into a burst of light on the monitor.

Art historians John G. Hanhardt and Wulf Herzogenrath have written and publicized that *Exposition of Music* was the first occasion for Paik to show his work using television, before he began experimenting with a Portapak video camera in 1964. Decker-Phillips views the exhibition as a “milestone in the history of video art.”¹⁷⁶ Since their scholarship established *Exposition of Music* in the genealogy of video and new media art, art historians have proffered varying interpretations on the twelve modified TV pieces. David Joselit suggests that Paik’s work destabilized commercial television networks by “infecting” commodities on the airwaves (or, the airwaves as commodities) and recirculating them in the larger social sphere. By distorting the incoming broadcasting signal, the 1963 TV sets captured the images of the previously unrepresentable network—in other words, “[in the prepared TVs,] the ‘dematerialized’ mobility of the network was stabilized as an object of spectatorship. The wave migrated to the screen as an image.”¹⁷⁷ Meanwhile, Christine Mehring demonstrates that postwar European abstract art, by K. O. Götz and Lucio Fontana in particular, paved the way for Paik’s *Exposition of Music* and television art.¹⁷⁸ On the one hand, the indeterminacy in Paik’s modified TV sets revealed the

¹⁷⁵ Decker-Phillips, *Paik Video* (New York: Barrytown, Ltd., 1988), 36.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁷⁷ Joselit, *Feedback: Television against Democracy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 13.

¹⁷⁸ Mehring, “Television Art’s Abstract Starts: Europe circa 1944-1949,” *October* 125 (Summer 2008), 29-64.

television medium's artistic potential through the dots, lines, shades of light, and immediacy of moving images. On the other hand, the indeterminacy is limited by the social conditions of television broadcasting. Lastly, William Kaizen argues that Paik attempted to elevate television to the level of a fine art—in a formal language informed by abstract painting, surrealist collage, and concrete music. The 1963 pieces were “proto-musical instruments,” Kaizen rightly points out, while discussing *Exposition of Music*'s musical origin.¹⁷⁹

More often than not, scholars have examined *Exposition of Music* predominantly as an art exhibition, and Paik's first twelve TV sets as some of the earliest examples of video art. Consequently, there remain questions that have been largely unexamined: how the TV pieces were embedded in the sociocultural history of early 1960s' West Germany; and how they functioned in relation to other works in *Exposition of Music*, which was an organic environment rather than a traditional museum display.

While West Germany's social, political, and cultural history is largely absent from many studies concerning Paik's early works, Mehring notes that West Germans had only one television channel ARD, until the second channel ZDF began broadcasting on April 1, 1963—twelve days after *Exposition of Music* closed. By doing so, Mehring interprets Paik's modified TV sets as a means to introduce Cagean indeterminacy and variability to the single-channel broadcast. Mehring writes, “If indeterminacy had broader historical relevance for Paik, it lay in the opportunity indeterminacy provided to intervene at the site of reception for this gathering power of television, most poignantly at a moment when the German viewer had no choice whatsoever of what to watch.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Kaizen, *Against Immediacy: Video Art and Media Populism* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2016), 44.

¹⁸⁰ Mehring, 49.

It is noteworthy that the West German broadcasting system was markedly different from fully commercialized American television in the 1950s and 1960s. The only channel was collaboratively run and regulated by a decentralized body of regional broadcasters (their broadcasting councils, to be more specific) in the federal republic's sixteen states—lest another totalitarian power seize and abuse the medium. The broadcasting system was a strictly public-service organization designed to “manufacture pluralism.”¹⁸¹ While broadcasting on the single channel due to technical and financial limitations, the West German system promoted pluralism internally so that it represents “all democratic views and opinions held throughout society.”¹⁸² Committed to the public-service mission, West German television barely sold any airtime to advertisers. In stark contrast to the American counterpart, which had been deeply intertwined with corporate sponsorship since its inception, West German television programs were well protected from advertisers' interest. On weekdays, advertising could not exceed a daily average of twenty minutes and was prohibited after 8 p.m. No advertising was allowed on Sundays or national holidays.¹⁸³

Politically, the public broadcasters pledged to promote pluralist democracy by actively monitoring the political system, presenting multiple viewpoints, and fostering the formation of public opinion. During the *Spiegel* affair, the political program *Panorama* “created an electronic public sphere that amplified the nationwide mass protests against the Adenauer administration's censorship of a critical print publication.”¹⁸⁴ On February 11, 1963, *Panorama* also aired a critical report on the newspaper *Bild*'s yellow journalism:

¹⁸¹ Humphreys, *Media and Media Policy in West Germany*, 295.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁸³ Hans Brack, *German Radio and Television: Organization and Economic Basis* (European Broadcasting Union, September 1968), 43-44.

¹⁸⁴ Michael E. Geisler, “Television,” *Encyclopedia of Contemporary German Culture*, ed. John Sanford (London: Routledge, 1999), 596.

[*Bild-Zeitung*,] they don't want to teach or educate the readers. They want to sell. Presentation is more important than content. And the presentation only depends on what the reader likes or should like. [...] *Bild* seeks closeness to the reader, it forms a community with him. *Bild* stamps the normal reader for *Bild*-people. *Bild* does not think much of the readers' judgment, [rather] it gives them no opportunity to form their own judgment.¹⁸⁵

Bild fired back through colorful headlines and subtitles: "Television Terror!"; "*Panorama*-Business for [East German leader Walter] Ulbricht!"; and "*Bild* readers are bitter like never before! No means against television terror?"¹⁸⁶ An embittered reader wrote to the editor asking whether the broadcast was coming from the East.¹⁸⁷ Since *Panorama* did not shy away from criticizing the Adenauer administration, disgruntled CDU officials demanded that television be "detoxified."¹⁸⁸ In hopes of directly addressing the public, Adenauer motioned to establish a new television channel controlled by the federal government, first in 1953 and again in 1957. It was clear from the beginning that the second channel would be "Adenauer TV" if the chancellor's proposal was approved.¹⁸⁹ In 1961, however, the Federal Constitutional Court ruled against it, citing that broadcasting should remain in the public-service domain in order to uphold pluralism.

In "Afterlude to Exposition of Experimental Television," a postscript to his 1963 exhibition, Paik stated that the twelve TV sets present "the parallel flows of many independent movements" to be perceived simultaneously. At the time in West Germany, one's body and mind were forced to align with the Cold War ideological lines and pressed to catch up with the accelerating speed of socioeconomic life. The national narratives left little room for reflection and

¹⁸⁵ Quoted in Anja Reschke, *Die Unbequemen: Wie Panorama die Republik verändert hat* (München: Redline Verlag, 2011), 145.

¹⁸⁶ Anastasius Grün, "Terrorama," *Der Spiegel* No. 9 (February 27, 1963), 74.

¹⁸⁷ "Panorama: P. und P.," *Der Spiegel* No. 12 (March 20, 1963), 34.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Brack, 159-160.

experimentation—that went hand in hand with the behavioral pattern of unreflective *Bild-Zeitung* readership.

Paik broke open the unidirectional flow of time by laying out its fragments (or moments) in the exhibition space. The twelve modified TV sets presented images of different ideas and opinions in the viewer’s now-time—materializing television’s “electronic public sphere.” If the clear picture of single-channel broadcasting is compared to a clean, straight line, the distorted, abstract images are comparable to the “straight line” in *Zen for Head* that is variable, indeterminate, and heterogeneous. Paik continued in the “Afterlude”: “according to Sartre, our consciousness (cogito) is always ‘l’etre pour soi’ [being-for-itself], a kind of being, which cannot unify with itself. We are condemned to think and that means we are condemned to ask.”¹⁹⁰ Thinking and asking, or conscious reflection and action, became necessary skills for the democratic citizen-consumers at a time when images increasingly served to create a seamless façade of national unity, postwar progress, and economic prosperity.

¹⁹⁰ Paik, “Afterlude to the Exposition of Experimental Television,” [6].

**CHAPTER 3: Bodies Out of Focus:
Nam June Paik, Charlotte Moorman, Dan Graham, and Dara Birnbaum's
Video Performance, 1969-1975**

“I looked at the TV screen for a moment and then found myself in a chair about a foot away from the set, watching intently. I could not tell what was happening on the screen and it didn't seem to matter. Sitting that close all I could perceive was that meshed effect, those stormy notes, but it drew me in and held me as if I were an integral part of the set, my molecules mating with those millions of dots.”

—Don DeLillo, *Americana*

“Semiotics, one of modernity's great achievements in abstraction, has separated the world of signs from the world of bodies.”

—Hans Belting, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body*

Charlotte Moorman, a Juilliard-trained cellist and avant-garde artist, wore an electronic garment and interacted with illuminated screens long before today's wearable computers and touchscreens. Nam June Paik tailored electronic sculptures for her including *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* (1969) [Figs. 1; 53] and *TV Cello* (1971) [Fig. 54], comprised of large and small TV sets. Moorman and Paik utilized these artworks throughout their many collaborations, in which Moorman wore the “bra” or played the “cello,” and processed audio-visual signals via the eccentric TV objects. Though the cheeky title *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* referred to Moorman herself as a sculpture, her role in the piece was multi-layered and complex. Some of the existing art historical discourse views Moorman and Paik's performances, which married the body to devices, as unsuccessful attempts to humanize technology; and Moorman's wearing of *TV Bra* is seen as a troubling objectification of women. In her essay “Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment” (1985), artist Martha Rosler writes of Paik: “oh yes!—he is a man. The hero stands up

for masculine mastery and bows to patriarchy, if only in representation. The thread of his work includes the fetishization of a female body as an instrument that plays itself.”¹⁹¹

Rosler admittedly notes that her observation about Paik’s “male mastery” over his female collaborator may be the case “only in representation.” Perhaps it is a telling example that illustrates challenges of writing retrospectively about past performances based on photographic documentation. Rosler’s reading encodes Paik and Moorman dualistically and semiotically as male/female, artist/instrument, hero/no-name, and technology/nature (she does not mention Moorman’s name, but refers to her reductively as “a female body”). However, some of the most widely publicized photos of *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* or *Concerto for TV Cello and Videotapes* performances [Fig. 55] do not feature Paik but only Moorman in the midst of performance—even though, Paik usually worked beside her, producing the video feed that appeared on the TV sets constituting the electronic undergarment and instrument. For Rosler, who likely only saw photographs of the performances, the absent creator of the contraptions thus exercised his mastery and control over Moorman through his electronic technology and its effects—electromagnetic waves, rays, and light that surround her body. In other words, it is not Paik’s masculine dominance per se, rather the eccentric technological objects that seemingly took over Moorman’s body. The critic’s unease with the duo’s collaborative performances might be, at least partially, due to the explicit amalgamation between human and technology and flesh

¹⁹¹ Rosler, “Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment,” in *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, eds. Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (New York: Aperture, 1990), 45.

Rosler’s voice resonates among other critics. See below for example.

“[Paik’s] very attempt to reconcile the difference between man and machine often only exacerbated it, sometimes at the expense of Moorman [...] Certainly, *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*, in which two cameras, focused on her face, were reflected in two circular mirrors worn on her breasts, can be seen as an objectification of woman more than as an eroticization of technology.”

Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Benjamin Buchloh, *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* Vol. 2 (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 560.

and scan lines. But was Moorman and her living body really consumed by the TV sets' flickering lights and turned into mere spectacle? Was there (not) any room for Moorman's agency, as she operated the video object and performed Paik's pieces?

The first section of this chapter aims to answer these questions in relation to the postwar American culture and politics of mass media, communication, and information technology. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Big Three television networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) significantly grew to become a major source of leisure and of news for everyday Americans. Subsequently television industry established what art historian Carrie Lambert-Battie calls "a particular culture of spectatorship," in which the audience adapted themselves to "spectatorial multitasking, submission to particular temporal patterns, objectifications of bodies, and above all dialectics of distance and mediation."¹⁹² In it, the body came to be understood in a complex dialectic between embodied spectator (subject) and body images (object) as seen through televisual mediation. Yet, no matter how close the spectator might feel to the other bodies on the TV screen, there was an irreducible distance in their relations. As Samuel Weber notes, the distanced spectatorship also meant an isolation and separation from one's own body and senses.¹⁹³ The television culture, especially during the decades of major social movements and political turmoil (especially the Vietnam War and antiwar protests), deepened skepticism and anxieties about the body, presence, immediacy, and direct experience.

Avant-garde performances at the time including Happenings, Fluxus, body art, and performative video responded varyingly to spectatorial culture and its effects—that is, the

¹⁹² Lambert-Beatty, 11.

¹⁹³ Weber, *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media*, (ed.) Alan Cholodenko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 161.

mediated contact between self and world, and the alienation of embodied experience.¹⁹⁴

Happenings and Fluxus were concerned with incorporating art into life or, as artist Allan Kaprow puts it, practicing art as lived experience with “an ultimate existential commitment.”¹⁹⁵ Body art and performative video addressed newly emerging concerns about the body’s entanglements with commodities and media images, especially those manufactured, circulated, and promoted by television and advertising industries.

Interface: Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman’s intersubjective performance

At the intersection of body art and video, Paik and Moorman explored the interface between the body and the sensory environment within the contemporary culture of television, media, and information. At the same time, the artists’ use of the body as a polymorphous tool shows a close connection to 1960s and 1970s’ performance and body art in that they intentionally broke down or loosened the distinction between subject and object—which was widely explored and celebrated as a postmodern artistic strategy for decentering the Cartesian subject by artists such as Vito Acconci, Yayoi Kusama, Ana Mendieta, Adrian Piper, Carolee Schneemann, and Hannah Wilke. Paik and Moorman presented subject/object relationships as flexible and interchangeable: for example, in addition to Moorman performing as a “living sculpture” in the TV Bra and with the TV Cello, Paik stepped in as a “human cello” for Moorman during her idiosyncratic performance of John Cage’s *26’1.1499” for a String Player*

¹⁹⁴ “Performative video” has been used for both a videotaped performance in which the artist performs *for* the camera and a live performance where the artist performs (along) *with* a video or film camera, often handheld. Though they often overlap, I use the term to discuss examples that are closer to the latter category.

¹⁹⁵ Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, (ed.) Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 21.

(1955) [Fig. 56].¹⁹⁶ Stripped to his waist, Paik crouched down in front of Moorman with a string stretched taut across his back. Locked in an intimate embrace with the living, flesh-and-blood instrument, Moorman bowed and plucked the string and occasionally slapped the body of the human cello. It is not only Paik's self-presentation or posing as a musical instrument, but also Moorman's bodily, "cellist" actions that transformed Paik into a cello. Their bodies, postures, gestures, and movements came to the fore, even before musical sounds. As a result, according to art historian Sophie Landres, "[Paik and] Moorman's perfunctory body mechanics materialize when they should fade into the invisible substrata from which sounds arise."¹⁹⁷

For Paik's *Variations on a Theme by Saint-Saëns*, Moorman often sat on the back of one man on all fours and placed her cello's endpin in another man's mouth [Fig. 57]. The two collaborators served as human chair and human endpin stopper respectively. In the middle of performing *The Swan*, the 13th movement of Camille Saint-Saëns's *Carnival of the Animals* (1868), Moorman paused and took a dip in a drum full of water, embodying—instead of signifying or representing—the waterbird. The dripping wet cellist then returned to play the rest of the piece. Rather than playing a character as in the theater, Paik, Moorman, and their collaborators switched their modes of being, between subject and object and human and non-human, through their embodied actions.

However, the two artists' particularized—gendered and racialized—bodies could not be erased, ignored, or masquerade as something else. Or rather, they were indispensable for the

¹⁹⁶ Cage's original score does not include the human cello. The composer's emphasis on indeterminacy leaves much to be decided by each player on how to perform the piece (and also his other works). First conceived as Paik's action piece, *Human Cello* became part of Moorman's realization of *26'1.1499 for a String Player* in 1964. For detailed accounts about Moorman's performances of the piece without the human cello component in 1963, see: Joan Rothfuss, "Chapter 5: 6 Concerts '63," *Topless Cellist: The Improbable Life of Charlotte Moorman* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 67-80.

¹⁹⁷ Landres, "The First Non-Human Action Artist: Charlotte Moorman and Nam June Paik in *Robot Opera*," in *PAJ* Vol. 40, No. 1 (January 2018), 19.

intersubjective play because the body simultaneously functions as a “locus of a ‘disintegrated’ or dispersed ‘self’” and “elusive marker of the subject’s place in the social,” as Amelia Jones argues.¹⁹⁸ Paik and Moorman, whose bodies were deeply embedded in social and political contexts, performed against the status quo which had conditioned, defined, and limited their body/self.

The Korean artist’s Asian body and its otherness could not be disregarded or neutralized as he performed among predominantly white colleagues and audiences. His action music performances in West Germany and other European countries in the late 1950s and early 1960s were often labeled as “shocking.” In chapter one, I discussed the intensity and surprise of Paik’s early work in relation to the state violence against West German and South Korean citizens in the postwar era. Paik was also keenly aware of his own otherness in the western European art world to declare himself to be “yellow peril.” Kaiser Wilhelm II of Imperial Germany coined the term in 1895 to describe what he perceived as a threat from the East to the West, specifically “Europe’s existence and culture.”¹⁹⁹ But Paik’s ironic self-identification with the troubling racial caricature was far from a sign of acquiescence. He was motivated instead to challenge the stereotype by causing an implosion from within. According to art historian Mari Dumett, Paik destabilized the type through his performative self-presentation in “unpredictable, montage-style action music,” which precluded a claim for totalizing knowledge of the Other. Paik was “at once violent and docile, erotic and cerebral, rational and irrational, virile and effeminate, animalistic

¹⁹⁸ Jones, *Body Art/ Performing the Subject*, 13.

¹⁹⁹ William II, *The Kaiser’s Memoirs, Wilhelm II, Emperor of Germany, 1888-1918*, (trans.) Thomas Russell Ybarra (New York: Harper, [1922] 2008), 79.

and sophisticated, aggressive and weepy, devious and forthright, Eastern and Western”—thus destabilizing the stereotype of perilous enemy.²⁰⁰

After studying and working in West Germany for seven years, Paik arrived in the US and began collaborating with Moorman in 1964—which would have been impossible if not the Immigration and Nationality Acts of 1952 and 1965 that gradually overturned America’s harsh immigration restrictions on non-white, non-Northwestern European emigrants. Opponents of the Acts in Congress cited potential “communist infiltration,” and worried that “unassimilated aliens could threaten the foundations of American life.”²⁰¹ The German emperor’s fear resonated with white American xenophobia of the Cold War era. With the rise of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, however, America’s racial reckoning created a conflicting—yet equally problematic—stereotype of Asian populations in the country—namely, a “model minority.” The sweeping generalization of one race was propagated by the media and used against African Americans, another minority group. For example, William Pettersen wrote in a 1966 article for the *New York Times* entitled “Success Story, Japanese-American Style” as follows:

For all the well-meaning programs and countless scholarly studies now focused on the Negro, we barely know how to repair the damage that the slave traders started. The history of Japanese Americans, however, challenges every such generalization about ethnic minorities [...] Every attempt to hamper their progress resulted only in enhancing their determination to succeed.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Dumett, *Corporate Imaginations: Fluxus Strategies for Living* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 231.

²⁰¹ “The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (The McCarran-Walter Act),” Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, United States Department of State.
<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/immigration-act>

²⁰² Pettersen, “Success Story, Japanese-American Style,” *New York Times Magazine* (January 9, 1966), 21.

Petterson’s view was echoed by another newspaper article (this time about Chinese American success) published in December: “At a time when it is being proposed that hundreds of billions be spent on uplifting Negroes and other minorities, the nation’s 300,000 Chinese Americans are moving ahead on their own with no help from anyone else.”

Meanwhile, Beat Generation writers including Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg and avant-garde composer John Cage popularized Zen Buddhism in the late 1950s and 1960s' American cultural sphere. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, members of counterculture looked to Eastern philosophies and religions for an alternative to Western Society's individualism and materialism. Clear-eyed about the disparities in the political and cultural discourses and his renewed minority status in the US, Paik pleaded against both cultural appropriation and damaging stereotypes:

Please, don't idealize the [sic] Asia! But please, don't despise the [sic] Asia! The latter leads to imperialism. The former camouflages imperialism.
I answered to Allen Ginsberg: "Perhaps my 'minority complex' as an Asian or a Korean drives me to compose the very complicated cybernetic arts."²⁰³

Minority complex aside, Paik attempted to design his television and video work—"cybernetic arts"—as corrective feedback to the one-sidedness of communication channels that permeated American society—perpetuating the myths of yellow peril, model minority, and Zen monk as products of ideologies and ignorance rather than knowledge gained from lived experience. In a 1968 interview with *New York Times* arts reporter Grace Glueck, Paik emphasized again his efforts to mediate communications between different individuals, societies, and nations: "better communication among peoples is so much more important than putting men on the moon." Paik's comments might appear hyperbolic, but his observation was not mere

"Success Story of One Minority in the U.S.," *U.S. News and World Report* (December 26, 1966), 73-78; cited in Robert G. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 151.

²⁰³ It is unclear whether there was a previous exchange between Paik and Ginsberg that led to Paik's "answer."

Paik, *Pensée 1965*, Box 19, Folder 11, Nam June Paik Archive, Smithsonian American Art Museum.

speculation: The US claimed victory in the Space Race as Apollo 11 successfully landed on the moon on July 20, 1969 before the Soviets; however, by April 1969, the US combat death in Vietnam exceeded the number of casualties (33,629) in the Korean War. Don Luce, an American journalist and antiwar activist who worked with South Vietnamese civilians for fifteen years, argued in his 1969 book that “American failures in Viet Nam have been, essentially, failures in communication and understanding. Too few, if any, Americans have understood what the Vietnamese were thinking and feeling.”²⁰⁴ Writing a proposal for an unrealized book project, Paik cited Luce’s words on the cover.²⁰⁵ If published, the book would have juxtaposed American and Japanese newspaper and magazine cartoons from the WWII years, introducing Japanese war experience to the American public. Paik wanted to generate feedback between East and West, which he believed to be relevant to better understanding the current crisis in southeast Asia. Paik and Moorman’s embodied performances took aim at the closed systems of communication, which acknowledged neither the Asian body nor the female body as information—i.e., processed and organized signs, codes, types, and patterns—but as noise.

Charlotte Moorman performed in a sheer gauze dress on *Originale*’s opening night and soon began performing semi- or nearly-full-nude. She came under fire from multiple directions: criticized by feminists for being submissive to her male colleagues Paik and Allan Kaprow (as exemplified in Rosler’s writing above); while condemned for indecency by conservative critics. Even avant-garde artists like John Cage disapproved of Moorman’s iteration of his piece at times—such as *26’1.1499” for a String Player*—because the composer felt the cellist’s conspicuous display of her body overly distracted the audience from sounds. That was, however,

²⁰⁴ Luce and John Sommer, *Viet Nam: The Unheard Voices* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 304.

²⁰⁵ Paik, “American failures in Vietnam have been, essentially, failures in communication and understanding,” undated, Box 14, Folder 27, Nam June Paik Archive, Smithsonian American Art Museum.

precisely the effect Moorman aimed to achieve by emphasizing her performing body, because she acknowledged when putting on a sheet of gauze that “her body and her instrument were not just tools for making music but powerful visual elements,” as art historian Joan Rothfuss notes.²⁰⁶

On February 9, 1967, Moorman was arrested while performing topless in Paik’s *Opera Sextronique*. She was subsequently jailed, tried, and found guilty of indecent exposure—though the sentencing was suspended. Public nudity in New York City was in fact a contentious issue at the time. In November 1966, the presence of two topless waitresses at a midtown nightclub caused a public uproar and Mayor John Lindsay promised to ban such nudity that held “nothing of artistic or cultural value.”²⁰⁷ However, the Mayor reversed his position the same month by permitting the dancers in Les Ballets Africains, a traditional Guinean dance troupe, to perform toplessness. Moorman knew of the case and thought that she too could perform Brahms’s “Lullaby” topless in *Opera Sextronique*, which she (and Paik) believed to be unquestionably serious art. Moorman planned to perform her part in the mixed media *Opera* by playing her cello in various attires: “electric bikini,” which was actually three triangle-shaped fabric pieces, each bearing fifteen small light bulbs; two battery-powered propellers on her naked breasts; and finally, a football jersey and helmet (but bottomless). Policemen who had sat in the audience up to that point finally interrupted the performance. In addition to the costumes, Moorman also wore a gas mask, and green, blue, and pink plastic masks. The cellist played her instrument using various objects in place of traditional bow, such as a violin, yardstick, fresh and plastic flowers.

²⁰⁶ Rothfuss, 102.

²⁰⁷ Seth S. King, “Lindsay Assails Topless Attire and License Official Follows Up,” *New York Times* (January 14, 1967), 17; cited in Rothfuss, *Ibid.*, 176.

Aside from Moorman's contribution, the mixed media program also included: Bell Labs engineer Max Matthews's *International Lullaby*, a computer music piece; James Tenney's electronic composition *Phases (for Edgard Varèse)*; Takehisa Kosugi's *Organic Music*; and screening of *Cinema Metaphysique*, a film by Paik and Jud Yalkut. The event's complexity and heterogeneity notwithstanding, the Assistant District Attorney denounced *Opera Sextronique* as "'sick' art and a 'cheap publicity stunt.'"²⁰⁸ Milton Shalleck, the presiding Judge at Moorman's trial, opined: "I doubt if Pablo Casals would have become as great if he had performed nude from the waist down." For Shalleck, Moorman's performance was plain "lewd" and therefore, the only possible explanation for her nudity was an intention "to attract individuals eager for a forbidden look." In her written argument, Moorman criticized the judge's inability to grasp the idea that her female body—whether clothed, topless, or nude—was as instrumental to the piece as her cello:

My performance on February 9 *was not traditional music* and should not be confused with such; it was *Mixed Media*. [...] *Opera Sextronique* cannot be played by a male; only a female cellist who has a complete understanding and feeling for mixed media can perform this work. [...] Our century is spaceships, computers, nuclear energy, Telestar, laser beams, mixed media, etc. The laws and the interpretations of the laws should progress with our growth!²⁰⁹

By categorizing mixed media art together with advanced technology, Moorman highlighted not only the judicial system's conservatism but also the outdated system's inability to process the complexity of new information—that the performing female body can function simultaneously as subject *and* object, and as artist *and* instrument in the age of computers and mixed media. All it could do was to censor the unidentifiable noise out of itself—as Moorman was trying to figure

²⁰⁸ Paik, undated, Box 14, Folder 1, Nam June Paik Archive, Smithsonian American Art Museum.

²⁰⁹ Moorman, "An Artist in the Courtroom" in *Nam June Paik: Video Time-Video Space*, (eds.) Toni Stoos and Thomas Kellein (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 55.

out how she could “communicate” with the court because she felt that now “the courtroom is the performance auditorium” for her work.²¹⁰ Moorman became acutely aware that her female body and sexuality, not just her persona and performance as cellist, were at stake. Her body was, after all, a subject of state regulation and censorship of citizens’ bodies.

Moorman’s wearing of the TV Bra after the agonizing experience may be deemed regressive—especially seen against the backdrop of the contemporary women’s rights movement, whose members were falsely and pejoratively portrayed as hysterical “bra-burners” [Fig. 58].²¹¹ However, when her “natural” female body came to communicate with Paik’s electronic bra and cello in a feedback loop, it presaged what Donna J. Haraway would later term as “cyborg” in 1985. “A cyborg is,” Haraway writes, “a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction.”²¹² Suggested as an alternative to Marxist and socialist-feminist strategies against Western patriarchal capitalism, Haraway’s idea calls for a shift of focus from the “integrity of natural objects” to “boundary conditions and interfaces.” A human subject as an organic whole is reconfigured as a hybrid of fractured identities, transgressing dualisms such as “self/other, mind/body, culture/nature, male/female [...] maker/made, active/passive.”²¹³ Becoming a cyborg is a renewed strategy for socialist feminist struggles in a postindustrial, cybernetic society where

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ The myth of “bra-burning” stemmed from a *New York Post* article that covered the 1968 feminist protest against the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City where the protesters disposed of (but not burned) “bras, mops, girdles, pots and pans” into the “Freedom Trash Can.” The Post reporter compared the women’s act of protest to draft-card burning and flag burning by anti-Vietnam war demonstrators. Nell Greenfieldboyce, “Pagenant Protest Sparked Bra-Burning Myth” *NPR* (September 5, 2008) <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=94240375>

²¹² Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 149.

²¹³ Ibid., 177.

a service-based economy and information system replaces manufacturing and supply chains of the machine age.²¹⁴ It is no longer clear who acts and who is acted upon in human/machine relationships, as Haraway states: “The machine is not an *it* to be animated, worshipped and dominated. The machine is us, our processes, an aspect of our embodiment. We can be responsible for machines; *they* do not dominate or threaten us. We are responsible for boundaries; we are they.”²¹⁵

In this sense, Haraway contends that developing control strategies for the boundary condition, surface, and interface between heterogeneous beings—including humans, machines, and animals—is crucial to challenge the myth of autonomous subjectivity. The goal of cyborg politics is to intercept “perfect communication” by generating “noise” and “pollution.” Uninterrupted—therefore “perfect”—communication is enabled by an all-encompassing language or a universal code, which recognizes any differences as noise and pollution and purges them from the homogenous system. By doing so, it creates and sustains the façade of coherent self.

Art of Entropy (or “Positive Randomness”)

Paik and Moorman’s performing bodies were means to introduce noise—or, in Paik’s words, “positive randomness”—into the closed circuits of commercial television, media, and the

²¹⁴ The term “postindustrial society” was coined by socialist Daniel Bell in his book *The Coming of Post-industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (1973). While using Bell’s phrase, Haraway puts emphasis on ecological, feminist, and ethical dimensions of the socioeconomic change brought by computers and information technology: “The new machines are so clean and light. Their engineers are sun-worshippers mediating a new scientific revolution associated with the night dream of post-industrial society. [...] Ironically, it might be the unnatural cyborg women making chips in Asia and spiral dancing in Santa Rita jail whose constructed unities will guide effective oppositional strategies.” Haraway, *Ibid.*, 153-154.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 177-180.

culture industry. According to literary critic N. Katherine Hayles, “randomness tears holes in pattern, allowing the white noise of the background to pour through.”²¹⁶ Taking cues from cybernetics, systems thinking, and communication theories by figures such as Norbert Wiener, Claude Shannon, Buckminster Fuller, and Marshall McLuhan, Paik understood contemporary art and culture in terms of information ecosystems in which individuals are not considered separate entities but symbiotic organisms. He saw randomness, noise, entropy, and chaos as subversive forces that can benefit communication systems by increasing their diversity and complexity. However, such positive interpretation of entropy was certainly not universal. Norbert Wiener opposed entropy against information in his influential books *Cybernetics; or, Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (1948) and *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society* (1950)—if information is a message, entropy is noise that hinders the message from being successfully communicated. Wiener explained, “As entropy increases, the universe, and all closed systems in the universe, tend naturally to deteriorate and lose their distinctiveness, to move from the least to the most probable state, from a state of organization and differentiation in which distinctions and forms exist, to a state of chaos and sameness.”²¹⁷ During the Vietnam War, head of the Department of Defense Robert S. McNamara relied heavily on systems analysis for military intelligence to distinguish stability from instability, and civilians

²¹⁶ Paik, “American failures in Vietnam have been, essentially, failures in communication and understanding,” undated, Box 14, Folder 27, Nam June Paik Archive, Smithsonian American Art Museum; N. Katherine Hayles contrasts “randomness” against “pattern” in information organization. However, their relationship is not a total opposition but rather, “a powerful paradox” in which “each helps to define the other; each contributes to the flow of information through the system.” By doing so, the system can be reorganized “at a higher level of complexity.”

Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 25; 248.

²¹⁷ Norbert Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*, 2nd ed, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954), 12.

from the North Vietnamese Army.²¹⁸ Entropy would have been deadly at the Pentagon. Contrary to Wiener, Claude Shannon identified entropy with information. Entropy is a “set of possibilities”—as opposed to uncertainties and probabilities in Wiener’s system. In Shannon’s view: “the more unexpected (or random) a message is, the more information it conveys.”²¹⁹ The message for Wiener thus becomes cliché which in itself does not have much informational value.²²⁰

Although widely known for his eccentric television and video pieces, most of Paik’s works were not simply driven by formalist interests or by naïve techno-utopianism. He was deeply interested in the social, political, and economic aspects of information production and circulation, and discussed issues ranging from the Vietnam War to the 1970s energy crisis and racial bias on American media in multiple essays and correspondences.²²¹ His writings suggest that the common cause of these and other problems was imbalanced communications between

²¹⁸ “During the Vietnam conflict, McNamara wanted to know what was actually happening in individual hamlets and provinces overseas. DoD therefore initiated several social and political information-gathering programs and information system development projects, based on the belief that this information, properly quantified and analyzed, would point decision makers toward the military strategy that best matched their aims. [...] [T]heir report described the political ‘system’ in cybernetic terms. [...] [and the] ‘analyses often had direct impact on the Washington decision process, notably on issues of whether the attrition strategy could succeed, on the impact of our bombing, and on how US withdrawals might best be conducted.’”

Jennifer S. Light, *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 41-42.

²¹⁹ Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), 20; N. Katherine Hayles, 102.

²²⁰ “Just as entropy is a measure of disorganization, the information carried by a set of messages is a measure of organization. In fact, it is possible to interpret the information carried by a message as essentially the negative of its entropy, and the negative logarithm of its probability. That is, the more probable the message, the less information it gives. Clichés, for example, are less illuminating than great poems.”

Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings*, 21.

²²¹ For example, see “Global Groove and Video Common Market (1973),” reprinted in *Nam June Paik: Videa ‘n’ Videology, 1959-1973*, exhibition catalog, (ed.) Judson Rosebush (Syracuse: Everson Museum of Art, 1974), n.p.; and “Media Planning for the Post-Industrial Society (1974),” reprinted in *We Are in Open Circuits: Writings by Nam June Paik*, (eds.) John G. Hanhardt, Gregory Zinman, and Edith Decker-Phillips (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019), 154-165.

the sender/receiver, subject/object, inside/outside, and the US/enemy. For example, America's failure in Vietnam was due in part to the staggering lack of understanding about the country and its people, that had been continued from the time of bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The information gap in America's one-way communication system—without feedback from the East—paved the way for unnecessary wars, because it created and circulated “abstract fear, inflated anxiety, or vibration and reverberation of paranoia and *maladie imaginaire*” about the Other.²²² It was ironic considering that the US war effort intended to pacify communist guerrillas in South Vietnam by winning the “hearts and minds”—WHAM, for short. Yet most American soldiers arrived in the country without basic knowledge about the language, culture, or people.²²³ For Paik, American television was to blame:

How can we teach about peace while blocking out one of the few existing examples from the screen? Most Asian faces we encounter on the American TV screen are either miserable refugees, wretched prisoners or hated dictators. But most middle-class Asians are seeing essentially the same kind of clean-cut entertainment shows on their home screens as most American Nielsen families. Did this vast information gap contribute to the recent tragedies in Vietnam? [...] [T]hose accused GI's are also victims of monistic TV networks to a certain extent.²²⁴

²²² Paik, “American failures in Vietnam,” 3.

²²³ George C. Herring, “How Not to ‘Win Hearts and Minds,’” *New York Times* (September 19, 2017). <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/19/opinion/vietnam-war-americans-culture.html>

²²⁴ Paik, *Global Groove and Video Common Market*, n.p.

Paik's observation is corroborated by a report by US Commission on Civil Rights, published in 1977: “The depiction of Asian Americans illustrates the offensive way in which minorities were cast in some of [Hollywood films broadcast on television]. Hollywood portrayed the Asian American male in two ways. Irvin Paik, a filmmaker who has studied the image of Asians in the media, writes, ‘with rare exceptions, Asians are always portrayed as waiters, laundrymen, cooks, villains, warmongers.’ [...] Primarily, they were shown either as Fu Manchu-type villains operating with cunning slyness and inscrutability or as Charlie Chan, who was a supergood, superwise, self-effacing detective. [...] Asian women have traditionally been portrayed in two stereotyped ways. According to Asian Americans for Faire Media, they appear as ‘docile, submissive, and sexless’ or as ‘exotic, sexy, and diabolical.’” United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Window Dressing on the Set: Women and Minorities in Television* (August 1977), 7-8.

For his part, Paik's solution was to create entropy in his work by allowing space for indeterminacy and unexpectedness. When realized, entropy or positive randomness "resembles a TV picture or wire photo, in which numerous halftone dots make one picture and sometimes it resembles a creative chaos of John Cage, in which rash judgement [sic] is sacrificed for an honest cognition."²²⁵ On one hand, he found randomness in technologically transmitted images and, on the other, in Cagean actions. While Cage reserved indeterminacy exclusively for sound, Paik and Moorman (to Cage's chagrin) expanded his idea to include performance itself as a visual and material presentation of music. The duo's embodied actions using live video transmission on *TV Bra* and *TV Cello* can be seen as a way to generate randomness. In doing so, they rejected the spectatorial desire for mastery and control—through perfect communication—that was shared between the military intelligence and television spectatorship.

Contesting existing readings of Paik's work as technocratic idealism and his collaboration with Moorman as objectification of the female body, more recent scholarship suggests different ways to interpret the relationship between Moorman and Paik's technological objects. For example, art historians David Joselit (2007) and Joan Rothfuss (2014), and musicologist Benjamin Piekut (2011) and Holly Rogers (2013) consider Moorman to be an active agent and interpreter of these playable artworks.²²⁶ Drawing upon the aforementioned scholars' work, I examine how Moorman and Paik's performances created an alternative interface between a human subject and the sensory environment. Through the interface as a process of subjectification, they negotiated their relationship to contemporary television culture and technology. Paik's video objects were part of the whole event rather than self-sufficient,

²²⁵ Paik, "American failures in Vietnam," 25.

²²⁶ Joselit, *Feedback*; Rothfuss, *Topless Cellist*; Piekut, *Experimentalism Otherwise: The New York Avant-Garde and Its Limits* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Rogers, *Sounding the Gallery: Video and the Rise of Art-Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

enclosed objects. Moorman played the role of a DJ or remix artist in co-orchestrating Paik's video objects.

Paik made four video sculptures for Moorman—*TV Bra* (1969), *TV Cello* (1971), *TV Glasses* (1971), and *TV Bed* (1972). According to curator and leading Paik scholar John Hanhardt, “the four works can be considered independently as sculptural objects, but they are best viewed when modeled and used by the person they were created for.”²²⁷ *TV Cello* looked quite different to those who visited Paik's *Electronic Art III* exhibition in 1971 at the Galeria Bonino in New York, than it now does in various contemporary exhibitions. On the exhibition's opening day, Moorman and Paik debuted *TV Cello*. The instrument consists of three stacked TV sets, all removed from their original casings and inserted respectively to three Plexiglas cubes that form the body, to which a fingerboard and a wire were added to resemble an actual cello. While Moorman bowed and thumped over the instrument, the three screens alternately showed TV broadcasts, pre-recorded video footage, and a live videocast capturing Moorman, Paik, and the audience.

A review in the January 1972 issue of *ARTnews* magazine notes that the footage of Janis Joplin and John Cage shown on *TV Cello* was projected simultaneously on the wall behind Moorman. Likewise, *TV Glasses*, which was originally made to accompany the *TV Cello* performance, synced its display with the instrument. The multiple moving images created a lush and colorful video environment inside the Galeria Bonino. Paik-Abe Video Synthesizer (1970) [Fig. 59], another major piece at the exhibition, enriched the multisensory environment by modulating images in the closed circuit between a video camera and four television sets. Designed and constructed in collaboration with Japanese engineer Shuya Abe, the Synthesizer

²²⁷ Handhardt (Ed.), *Nam June Paik* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1982), 95.

received and processed signals from seven different input sources at the same time. Since each source was adjusted to export the video signal in one single color, the synthesized images displayed lush layers of the seven different colors. The machine featured a button for real time video mixing and a dial for color variations from infra-red to ultra-violet.²²⁸ It was not only a piece of video editing equipment but also an instrument for live performance, in which the user could electronically generate and modify the moving images—not dissimilar to a music synthesizer, but with video instead of sound. Paik allegedly encouraged visitors in the gallery to perform in front of the camera, then to mix their own footage with other images and change its colors using the Synthesizer. As artist and critic Douglas Davis recalled, “the content [of Paik’s Bonino exhibition] was the audience, mugging and frowning to see itself distorted on television.” The audience became part of the video environment through the Synthesizer, thus rendering the exhibition “intensely physical.” Davis also observed that the Paik/Abe Synthesizer was “very different” from other video synthesizers, developed by artists Stephen Beck and Eric Siegel respectively, in that the former “uses the outside world extensively.”²²⁹ While Beck and Siegel’s designs do not involve video cameras—although Siegel’s EVS (Electronic Video Synthesizer) can be connected to them when desired—the Paik/Abe Synthesizer’s primary function is to process live camera feeds, that is, signals coming in from outside the system.

Paik conceived of the Bonino show as a kind of environment, where a figure and ground relationship is constantly reconfigured. He discussed this concept in the exhibition catalog in a virtual correspondence with John Cage: Cage’s featured essay considered Robert Rauschenberg’s *White Paintings* (1951) [Fig. 60], his own composition *4’33”* (1952), and Paik’s

²²⁸ For more detailed information about the Paik/Abe Synthesizer, see Edith Decker-Phillips, *Paik Video*, (trans.) Marie-Genviève Iselin, Karin Koppensteiner, and George Quasha (Barrytown, NY: Barrytown, Ltd., [1988] 1998), 152.

²²⁹ Davis, “Video Obscura,” *Artforum* Vol. 10, Issue 8. (April 1972), 71.

Zen for Film (1962-1964) to be an environment, respectively in painting, music, and film. Paik, in return, suggested that “TV (its random movement of tiny electrons) IS the environment of today.” Paik’s remarks were symptomatic of the American television ecosystem, in which electronic images were gradually thought to have an ontological status affecting the audience in actual space. They were no longer objects of visual epistemology contained safely inside a TV box. The sense of immediacy and intimacy television evoked in the audience’s mind blurred the boundary between the real and the televised. In his 1969 essay, for example, journalist Max Lerner wrote,

What matters here, and what gives TV its greater impact as compared with press and radio, is its immediate and its total quality. ... [I]t is not disembodied print you see, or someone’s voice you hear, but the whole scene and the total person, through a total assault on all the senses. This combination of immediate and the total is what gives TV its power as a medium: by giving it an almost existential sense of the authentic moment.²³⁰

Unlike press and radio, television images have a nearly existential status of the actual person and event they represent and can affect the audience through “all the senses.” Similarly, some of the contributors to Horace Newcomb’s 1976 book *Television: The Critical View* acknowledge that television is no longer a mere living room fixture enclosed in a wooden box, but an environment, which envelops the audience and the world in its two-way cybernetic system.²³¹ One contributor, Aubrey Singer wrote that television is humankind’s “new environmental surrogate,” and in order to use it one needs to risk “submerging his humanity and becoming a digit in a socio-cybernetic system.” Such submergence of humanness is precisely what came into play in *TV Bra* and *TV Cello* performances. Moorman and Paik purposefully put their “humanity” at risk while

²³⁰ Lerner, “But Above All the Greatest Force for Democracy,” in *TV Guide* (March 8-14, 1969), 9.

²³¹ For example, Aubrey Singer, “Television: Window on Culture or Reflection in the Glass?” (1966), 124-136.; David Sohn interviews Jerzy Kosinski, “A Nation of Videots” (1975), 137-152.

exploring the interface between a human subject and the “surrogate,” television. Paik explained the idea behind the production of *TV Bra* was “to humanize technology.” How to humanize television? For Paik, the answer was to find a healthy balance of the television ecosystem through an alternative human-machine interface. In a 1974 interview, Paik commented on the interface between Moorman and the artworks as follows: “What was most interesting was the intercourse (les rapports) between the body of Charlotte Moorman and the TV set. When two Americans like Moorman and TV make love together, you can’t miss that.”²³² In Paik’s mischievous construct, the man-machine interface is an inter-subjective communication process, like lovemaking, between two agencies. The machinic other is not simply an object for the human subject to control, but to affect and be affected at the same time.

TV Bra and *TV Cello* by themselves might not be examples of humanized technology; and one might even say the video objects overwhelmed Moorman’s subjectivity. Yet we should not overlook the interface between Moorman and the devices during the performances—i.e., how Moorman used the video objects, and how the performative process affected both the human and the machinic entities, and also the audiences during the events. According to media theorist Alexander Galloway, “Interfaces are not simply objects or boundary points. They are autonomous zones of activity. Interfaces are not things, but rather processes that affect a result of whatever kind.”²³³

In the 1971 Bonino exhibition, *TV Cello* and Paik-Abe Video Synthesizer prompted such “autonomous zones of activity” to open. The gallery environment’s sensory condition changed constantly as Moorman improvised with sound and image on *TV Cello*. The abstract sounds were

²³² Irmeline Leeber, “Entretien avec Nam June Paik,” *Chroniques de l’art vivant* 55 (February 1975), 33.; Cited in David Joselit, “No Exit,” *October* Volume 119 (Winter, 2007), 44.

²³³ Galloway, *The Interface Effect* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), vii.

amplified through a pickup microphone to distort the images on the TV sets. Moorman might have used the same techniques and motions while playing her Stradivarius, however, they gained a new meaning with *TV Cello*: Her performance revealed what *TV Cello* can be, and what it can do. Writer and critic William Wilson defined such operations of musical instruments or objects as “operational music.”²³⁴ A performer’s operations with sounds define the instruments, not the other way around. Such operative mode of performance was already latent in Moorman’s rendition of Cage’s *26’1.1499” for a String Player* in the 1960s, in which she focused on carrying out various operations—including playing Paik as Human Cello in 1965—rather than the time structure.

TV Cello’s working interface had not been specifically defined until Moorman began playing it. Paik thought at least until 1976 that he was still “learning” how to operate *TV Cello*. Moorman’s operations revealed the instrument’s functions and effects to a fuller extent—such as its real-time video modulation and unique sound, which the cellist endearingly called “TV tone” or “*TV Cello* sound.” Also, *TV Cello*’s loosely defined interface required extra effort from the performer if it was going to play like an actual cello: The instrument originally had only one string, which was not wound on a peg, so Moorman stretched it with her left hand while playing the bow with right hand. Moorman and Paik kept modifying *TV Cello*’s functional parts in the following years and revised the original design in later versions made respectively in 1973 and 1976. Their collaborations were largely improvisational and the artists spontaneously exchanged ideas even *during* performance. Perhaps such changes, in turn, affected the ways in which Moorman played the video object to make her “TV tone” or “*TV Cello* sound.” In this sense, the relationship between Moorman and Paik’s transposed TV sets was sustained and supported by

²³⁴ William Wilson, “Operational Music,” in *Breaking the Sound Barrier: A Critical Anthology of the New Music*, (Ed.) Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1981), 90-93.

both parties. Bodily practices, for N. Katherine Hayles, play a decisive role in shaping technology and discourse and vice versa:

When changes in incorporating practices take place, they are often linked with new technologies that affect how people use their bodies and experience space and time. Formed by technology at the same time that it creates technology, embodiment mediates between technology and discourse by creating new experiential frameworks that serve as boundary markers for the creation of corresponding discursive systems. In the feedback loop between technological innovations and discursive practices, incorporation is a crucial link.²³⁵

Meanwhile, sociologist Andrew Pickering posits that such codependence in human-machine relation becomes discernable only when we actually use a machine. Pickering writes,

Just as material contours and performativity of new machines have to be found out in the real time of practice, so too do the human skills, gestures, and practices that will envelop them. [...] Gestures, skills, and so on—all these aspects of disciplined human agency come together with the machines that they set in motion and exploit. [...] They are intimately connected with one another, reciprocally and emergently defining and sustaining each other.²³⁶

Through Moorman's "skills, gestures and practices," *TV Cello* functioned as an exemplary coping mechanism for the contemporary American audience to whom television had become a new life environment. They had become surrounded by a dizzying array of electronic images as living organisms of the television ecosystem.

²³⁵ Hayles distinguishes embodiment from the body: "In contrast to the body, embodiment is contextual, enmeshed within the specifics of place, time, physiology, and culture, which together compose enactment. [...] Whereas the body is an idealized form that gestures toward a Platonic reality, embodiment is the specific instantiation generated from the noise of difference. Relative to the body, embodiment is other and elsewhere, at once excessive and deficient in its infinite variations, particularities, and abnormalities." Hayles, 205; 196-197.

²³⁶ Pickering, *The Mangle of Practice Time, Agency, and Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 16-17.

In the mid-1960s, Marshall McLuhan noted the ascendancy of television pictures in North American media culture. For McLuhan, the moment when advertisers began actively seeking business opportunities on the networks was President John F. Kennedy's funeral in November 1963. The broadcast drew the entire world to their TV sets, and since then the distance between the audience and television had been virtually non-existent. McLuhan wrote, "In television, images are projected at you. You are the screen. The images wrap around you. You are the vanishing point. This creates a sort of inwardness ..."²³⁷ McLuhan saw that this inwardness would cause the audience members to implode, and therefore a "countervailing balance of natural and physical laws" is much needed in "the new video-related media" world. Contemporary politicians knew all too well the value of television audience as a projection screen of political theater. President Richard Nixon's speechwriter William Gavin, for example, proposed a TV advertising strategy for his 1968 presidential election campaign: "Wrap the subject around, envelop the audience in a kaleidoscope of impressions; this is three-dimensional. This may be the key: enveloping the audience, bringing it in, entwining it."²³⁸ Every night, television told the American audience to believe, "And that's the way it is" through the mouth of anchorman Walter Cronkite, then referred to as "the most trusted man in America."

To illustrate the narrowing gap between television and audience, Paik and Moorman brought electronic images close to the surface of the body. Critic Gregory Battcock commented on *TV Cello* that in the performance, "televisions were on Moorman," instead of her being on television.²³⁹ To be exact, she was on, off, and around television at the same time. When Paik or an audience member captured Charlotte with the video camera, she was surrounded by her own

²³⁷ McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1994), 337.

²³⁸ Gavin, "Memorandum" in *The Selling of the President 1968*, Joe McGinniss (New York: Trident Press, 1969), 208.

²³⁹ Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1981), 90-93.

image narrowcast live on *TV Cello*, *TV Glasses*, and the wall behind. Wielding the bow over the live video images of herself shown on the Cello, Moorman became the instrument. The synchronization between the performer, her images, and the artwork, however, differed inherently from McLuhanesque “implosion,” since there was no definite inward or outward direction between the three. I suggest visualizing it as a Möbius strip, in which the distinction between inside and outside and subject and object becomes untenable. The feedback loop involving Moorman, her images, and *TV Cello* was constantly reconfigured in itself and also through others’ participation in the performance.

In doing so, Moorman’s body, action, and gesture formed a tactile interface. Art historian David Joselit notes that when Moorman performed with Paik’s video objects, “[t]he boundary between self and non-self is no longer marked by the skin, but distributed throughout the body as a hybrid surface of flesh and scanning.”²⁴⁰ Joselit’s point is echoed by Joan Rothfuss. In her analysis of the 1971 *TV Cello* performance, Rothfuss writes: “Moorman’s flesh-and-blood corpus accomplished the liberation Paik had predicted: her skin became a projection screen and her eyes [wearing *TV Glasses*] both received images and transmitted them.”²⁴¹

As noted, Paik and the audience intermittently joined the webbing of Moorman’s body and the scan lines by operating the video cameras—transmitting and transforming their own images alternately with the cellist’s. They became part of the video environment as “both immersive and hypermedial environment,” within which the two artists, the video sculptures, the synthesizer, and the audience collaboratively participated in creating and transforming the shared sensory condition.²⁴² Moorman and Paik turned the gallery space into a microcosm where

²⁴⁰ Joselit, 44.

²⁴¹ Rothfuss, 267.

²⁴² Holly Rogers, *Sounding the Gallery* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 175.

heterogeneous entities—human and machine, subject and object, and inside and outside—interacted in symbiosis. Paik saw his Paik-Abe Synthesizer as a tool to balance the human-machine interface in the contemporary infosphere: “The key point of today is how to strike the best balance in the INTERFACE of man/machine, or software/hardware. It has been a basic philosophy behind the design of videosynthesizer.” Together with *TV Cello* and the Paik-Abe Synthesizer, Moorman and Paik explored the interface, visualizing the interrelatedness between beings and things in the ecosystem on the TV sets. Charlotte Moorman, for Paik, was an indispensable collaborator in the art of interface: for “you AND me” instead of “you or me.”²⁴³

Outside the gallery, the US Military at the time began developing and implementing the human/machine interface on various sensors, which would detect enemy bodies even in the densest jungles of Vietnam. Initiated by General William C. Westmoreland, the computer-based “electronic battlefield” program was expected to help the Army gain effective control over an increasingly chaotic war. The equipment—“shaped like twigs, jungle plants, and animal droppings”—collected multisensory information such as “the noises of truck engines, body heat, motion, even the scent of human urine” for surveillance.²⁴⁴ While the military computers transformed human bodies and movements into abstract information to be stored and processed in the system, Vietnamese anti-war protestors used their own bodies to infiltrate global communication networks. On June 11, 1963, Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc immolated himself in protest of the ongoing war and the Diem government’s oppression of Buddhism in South Vietnam. Notified by monks that “something big was going to happen,” foreign

²⁴³ Nam June Paik, undated, Box 2 Folder 21, Nam June Paik Archive, Smithsonian American Art Museum.

²⁴⁴ Paul N. Edwards, *The Closed World: Computers and Politics of Discourse in Cold War America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 3.

correspondents gathered at the scene and recorded the event as it unfolded [Fig. 61].²⁴⁵ The horrific images—both still photographs and film footage—reached America the following morning: published on the frontpage of multiple newspapers and broadcast on network television. The unwavering monk sat cross-legged in a main street of Saigon and gave himself to the flame without the slightest movement or sound. Thich Quang Duc’s embodied protest created an interface between the war-torn lives of Vietnamese people and American media and audience just as he intended. Acknowledging the images’ affective power, scholar Nora M. Alter argues that:

The image [of Thich Quang Duc] is situated—or si(gh)ted—at the interface between pretechnological ‘human’ Vietnam and technological ‘inhuman’ America. As a televised image, it implicates the mass media, but it also represents an event—a human action—that dramatically supports the goals of the anti-war protest. [...] The burning monk serves to condemn the entire American society run by information stored in a supercomputer.²⁴⁶

More Buddhist monks, veterans, and activists followed suit and immolated themselves well into the mid-1970s, protesting America’s seemingly unstoppable war machine and Diem’s South Vietnamese government. On September 14, 1974, the *New York Times* reported that six people had immolated themselves in public in the previous four months; and a seventh protestor was extinguished by the police and survived.²⁴⁷ The same year, Paik produced *TV Buddha* [Fig. 62], a closed-circuit video installation piece, in which a Buddha statue silently watches his own real-time image on a TV set as transmitted by a video camera behind the set. When he showed the

²⁴⁵ Patrick Witty, “Malcom Browne: The Story Behind the Burning Monk,” *Time* (August 28, 2012). <https://time.com/3791176/malcolm-browne-the-story-behind-the-burning-monk/>.

²⁴⁶ Alter, *Vietnam Protest Theatre: The Television War on Stage* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 94-95.

²⁴⁷ James M. Markham, “South Vietnam: New Martyrs, New Paupers and New Friends,” *The New York Times* (September 14, 1974), 2.

piece in the *Projekt '74* exhibition (1974) in Cologne, Paik sat in place of the Buddha statue, facing his on-screen image [Fig. 63]. His embodiment of “living Buddha” simultaneously invoked the spectacular transformation of Thich Quang Duc’s body into images (and ashes) and the worldwide television audience who watched the elderly monk’s resolute protest at a distance.²⁴⁸ By inserting himself into the feedback loop, Paik created a boundary condition for both “you AND me,” self/other, and inside/outside. “And” is one of the most widely used conjunctions in English language. According to philosopher Franco “Bifo” Berardi, “a conjunction is a creative act; it creates an infinite number of constellations that do not follow the lines of a pre-conceived pattern.”²⁴⁹ Video performances by Paik, especially those he realized with Moorman, were conjunctive acts that engendered noise disturbing television’s established patterns of information and spectatorship. Their intersubjective collaborations operated mostly on a local level and did not directly challenge American television’s commercialism per se; however, Paik and Moorman demonstrated that the contemporary television culture cannot be thought to only affect the mind but also the body and senses. Their embodied video performances showed different ways to navigate the media environment, by conjoining self with others outside of the (TV) box at the interface between the image world and embodied beings. “Conjunction is,” Berardi writes:

the provisional and precarious syntony of vibratory organisms that exchange meaning. The exchange of meaning is based on sympathy, the sharing of *pathos*. Conjunction, therefore, can be viewed as a way of becoming other. Singularities change when they conjoin, they become something other than what they were before.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Paik’s letter to Wulf Herzogenrath, reprinted in *Nam June Paik: Fluxus/Video*, (eds.) Sabine Maria Schmidt and Anne Buschhoff (Bremen: Kunsthalle Bremen, 1999), 186.

²⁴⁹ Berardi, *And: Phenomenology of the End; Sensibility and Connective Mutation* (South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 2015), 13.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

According to Berardi, artists speak a language of conjunction in which the viewer can renegotiate and transform an existing relation between sign and meaning into something else—that is, a different relation, pattern, or constellation. Artists bring about new “semiotic pattern[s] that our mind projects onto the world and the model for the generation of external objects.”²⁵¹ And our *skin* is an interface that perceives these new patterns, because conjunction is primarily a “bodily investigation of meaning.”²⁵² The body and senses—especially tactile perception—provide indeterminate ways of contacting, touching, and being in conjunction with others. The pattern transformation then occasions the creation of a new sensibility, with which we process visual (non-verbal) signs differently than existing capitalist modes of signification. In opposition to conjunction and its indeterminacy, linguistic “connectivity” links sign and meaning based on a recognizable “pre-existing format.”²⁵³ The epidermis, for Berardi, refers not only to that of the biological body, but also of the social and technological body. Informed by Marshall McLuhan’s idea that electronic communication networks became extensions of human nervous system, Berardi argues that the channels of advertising, television, and the Internet are conduits conveying “semiotic flows of capital” to us—directly affecting not only our consciousness but also our bodies, senses, and sensibilities.²⁵⁴

²⁵¹ Ibid., 264.

²⁵² Irmgard Emmelhainz, “On Eros, Communication, Desire and Semiocapitalism: An Interview with Franco Berardi,” *Scapegoat: Architecture/Landscape/Political Economy* 9 (2016), 15.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Berardi defines the relation between sense and sensibility as follows: “Sensibility is the sense-driven creation of conjunctions, and the ability to perceive the meaningfulness of shapes once they have emerged from chaos. This does not happen by way of recognition, in the sense that such forms would be compatible with others that we would have seen before. It occurs because we perceive their aesthetic correspondence, their accordance, and conformity with the expectations of the conscious, sensitive, and sensible organism.”

Berardi, *And: Phenomenology of the End*, 13-14.

In the 1960s and 1970s, many artists and curators embraced the McLuhanesque view of information as primarily sensory data and began thinking about an artwork and its production, distribution, and reception in terms of information and communication process. Notable exhibitions organized around the idea at the time include *The Machine as Seen at the End of Mechanical Age* (1968) and *Information* (1970) at the Museum of Modern Art; *Cybernetic Serendipity* (1968) at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London; *Software: Information Technology; Its New Meaning for Art* (1970) at the Jewish Museum, New York; and *Art and Technology* (1971) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Kynaston McShine, curator of MoMA's *Information* stated that artists had become interested in finding "ways of rapidly exchanging ideas," echoing the "sense of mobility and change" in the information age. Rather than working their ideas through objects, some artists "extend[ed] themselves into their environment" and some chose to work with their own bodies, "questioning and observing of sensations."²⁵⁵ One such example in the exhibition is Dan Graham's *March 31, 1966* [Fig. 64]. The typewritten text demonstrates the idea that the artist himself is a piece of information, rather than a creator of an art object, and a distributor of information within various systems—such as the Gregorian calendar, solar system, cartography (or rather, Global Positioning System), anatomy, and the art world—which intersected through Graham's body in the process of typing and producing the piece.

Art "In-formation": Dan Graham's Intersubjective Video and Performance

In the late 1960s and 1970s, Graham worked with various media such as text, photography, film, video, television, and architecture; exploring intersubjective relations

²⁵⁵ McShine (ed.), *Information*, exhibition catalog (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 139.

between the artist, the artwork, and the viewer. He became interested in the intersubjective communicability of art by way of minimalist sculpture. During his brief stint running an art gallery (named John Daniels Gallery) on Madison Avenue in New York, Graham showed works by artists such as Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Smithson. Minimalism eventually motivated him to begin making art himself. Graham specifically took issue with minimal art, claiming that “there is no inter-subjectivity” in the process of its production and reception: Andre, Judd, and LeWitt’s works treat “viewing subject as object-ground; just as the artist, in placing the material grounds for viewing, *is in /places the object in a prop position to their functioning. The artist and viewer are read out of the picture.*”²⁵⁶

When encountering a minimalist sculpture, the viewer experiences the artwork in “instantaneous present time.”²⁵⁷ The temporality resembles the serial logic of industrial production and commodity consumption—“one thing after another.”²⁵⁸ Judd’s opaque plexiglass box and LeWitt’s hollow cube construction reject any internal narrative or subjective meaning. Instead, the viewer perceives the minimalist sculptures’ whole presence, its “objecthood,” in the here and now.²⁵⁹ By doing so, time is perceived only in relation to the artwork, while the experience remaining external to the viewer’s self. In Rosalind Krauss’s words, minimalist

²⁵⁶ Graham, “Subject Matter,” *End Moments* (New York, 1969); reprinted in *Rock My Religion: Writings and Art Projects, 1965-1990 / Dan Graham*, (ed.) Brian Wallis (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 40.

²⁵⁷ Dan Graham and Can Altay, “Social Spaces,” *Frieze* Issue 147 (May 1, 2012), 172.

²⁵⁸ Donald Judd, “Specific Object,” *Arts Yearbook* Vol. 8 (1965); reprinted in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings 1959-1975; Gallery Reviews, Book Reviews, Articles, Letters to the Editor, Reports, Statements, Complaints* (Nova Scotia, Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 2005), 184.

²⁵⁹ Graham wrote about the separation between subject and object (artwork) in Judd’s sculpture: “With one of Judd’s objects, the observing subject is separated from the ‘object.’ As neither spectator nor artist projects meaning onto these objects, what is encountered has the appearance of an open phenomenal world; this are as they (simply) appear to be. [...] there is no interior core of meaning.” Graham, “Subject Matter,” 38.

sculpture formulates "a notion of the self which exists only at that moment of externality within *that* experience."²⁶⁰

Contrary to the externality, Graham explored spatiotemporal experience lived by the body vis-à-vis an artwork. The mirrorized, human-scale (six-foot-tall) cylinder he constructed for *Body Press* (1970-1972) [Figs. 65-67], a performance piece, housed two naked performers inside; its mirrored interior became integral part in both actual and filmed interactions between the performers, each holding a hand-held film camera. Graham precluded the cameras from taking the Cartesian spectator's objectifying view (or the "Renaissance instantaneous perspective," in his own words) by having the performers position the cameras directly on the surface of their bodies, on the bare skin.²⁶¹ Further interrupting the "objective" view was the curved mirror wall that distorted the reflected images and the subsequent filmed view of the performance. In addition, the performers switched their film cameras in the middle of their action: each performer rotated the camera upward and downward in a spiral motion along the body's vertical axis. When the two cameras faced each other, the performers swapped them—which further discouraged a mastering view to claim universal, objective knowledge of the event and the bodies. By doing so, Graham wrote: "the performers are to concentrate on the coexistent, simultaneous identity of the camera describing them and their body. (The camera may or may not be read as an extension of the body's identity)."²⁶² When exhibited, *Body Press* is projected on two separate screens on two opposing walls facing each other. The piece, according to curator Chrissie Isles, is experienced in a "double triangulation":

²⁶⁰ Krauss, "Sense and Sensibility: Reflection on Post '60s Sculpture," *Artforum* Vol. 12, No. 3 (November, 1973), 50.

²⁶¹ Graham, "The Early Show," in *Dan Graham: Beyond*, exhibition catalog, (eds.) Jane Hyun and Elizabeth Hamilton (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2009), 59.

²⁶² Graham, "Body Press (1970-1972)," in *Two-Way Mirror Power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham on His Art*, (ed.) Alexander Alberro (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999) 89-90.

[T]he first in the actual performance—two figures triangulated by the mirror reflections (an architectural stand-in for the spectator)—and the second in the two opposing projections (stand-ins for the two performers), triangulated by the spectators present in the gallery. Another kind of Möbius strip emerges, in which the skin of each performer is merged into a single surface within the celluloid filmstrip.²⁶³

The cylindrical construction, performers' bodies, and moving images come together to form a "Möbius strip," which also incorporates the viewer and her bodily position between the two screens in the gallery where the films are shown. According to Graham, the cameras capture both inside ("the mind's eye") and outside of the performers, who appear simultaneously as subject and object; here, the cameras' identities might become part of the performers. The devices' "movement and orientation in space, constitute the media channel between the performer[s]' presence and the spectator's perception." In other words, the performers are mediated by the cameras with the viewer's perceptual process in the gallery. The "media channel" does not simply transmit visual information. Rather, it links the performers' bodies with the viewer's body. Responding to the two performers' filmed actions, the viewer's attention shifts in tandem with her "body's muscle/skeletal systems," which determine her orientation in the space.²⁶⁴ Informed by James J. Gibson's theory of visual perception, Graham understood a self as a process that emerges in the multi-sensory experience of the environment. Vision is not separate from the body's other functions, especially the kinesthetic. Rather, seeing and moving are interwoven in the body's circulatory system—which Graham equated with a cybernetic feedback system.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Iles, "You are the Information: Dan Graham and Performance," in *Dan Graham: Beyond*, 66.

²⁶⁴ Graham, "Film and Performance/Six Films, 1969-1974," in *Two-Way Mirror Power*, 84-85.

²⁶⁵ See Gibson, *The Perception of the Visual World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950); and Graham, "Subject Matter," 44-45.

In comparison, the relationship between Richard Serra's *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)* (1969) [Fig.68] and the viewer is mediated in the space between them, which is external to both parties.²⁶⁶ The artist constructed the sculptural object with four 48×48×1" lead plates, which he propped against one another to balance without extra support. According to Serra, the viewer "could see through [*One Ton Prop*], look into it, walk around it." Yet, there remains subject/object and inside/outside dualisms, since the viewer stays outside the space marked out by the lead walls.

Resisting the stability of minimalism's closed forms—which was also Graham's aim—Serra emphasized the process of his art making. Between 1967 and 1968, he created *Verblast* [Fig.69], a handwritten list of verbs, as a lexicon for his creative action and process in the studio. It includes, for example, "to roll," "to rotate," "to swirl," "to surround," "to encircle," and "to modulate." They could well be used to describe intersubjective actions in *Body Press*: for example, the performers rotate the cameras on their bodies' surface; the cameras swirl around them; the cylinder surrounds the periphery of the performance; and the viewer in the gallery modulates him or herself in regard to the camera views, which shift with the performers' physical movements. Unlike the Graham piece, however, Serra's use of the verbs assumed that the artist is the only subject who performs all of the listed verb actions on the material as object. For *One Ton Prop*, Serra's statement would have been that "I prop the lead plates up against one another." Once the piece becomes freestanding, it props itself up, being both subject and object of its own action. The process of *One Ton Prop* places the viewer outside its closed system.

²⁶⁶ For Krauss, "externality" is a key concept that links minimalism and Serra's practice: "With different forms and varying strategies, Judd's and Andre's and Flavin's works are similarly involved in discrediting the persistence of Cartesianism and in positing meaning itself as a function of external space. That sense of coalescing in experience and of a realization of the self as it achieves externality is evident in the Prop Pieces that Serra began to make in 1969." Krauss, *Ibid.*

Hand Catching Lead (1968) [Fig. 70], a black-and-white film, is another example that grew out of Serra's *Verb List*—"to grasp." The three-minute film shows the artist's hand repeatedly catching or missing pieces of lead falling from above, outside the frame. It is at once "process" of grasping action; minimalist "seriality" against composition; and modernist "self-reflexiveness," in which the falling can be read as a reference to the filmstrip running through the projector.²⁶⁷ According to art historian Douglas Crimp, *One Ton Prop* is self-referential because "its frame of reference still remained modernist sculpture."²⁶⁸ Graham also noted that due to its self-referentiality, Serra's work remains to be an external object in the viewer's perceptual process:

Serra's works can be described by a simple verb action performed on the material by the artist. [...] A specific activity performed upon a specific material is available to the viewer as residue of an in-formation time (the stage of the process described in applying the verb action to the material). [...] The residue still remains in its own self-enclosed frame of reference despite the shifting interaction as the viewer walks about the object.²⁶⁹

For Graham, the artist, the artwork, and the viewer are all part of a shared environment where they interact with one another in an ongoing process, which he refers to as "in-formation." The communication environment is figured as a Möbius strip, as exemplified in *Body Press*. In it, both modernist subjecthood (disembodied and disinterested) and minimalist objecthood (embodied yet non-interacting) are discouraged. Neither the performers nor the viewer can claim "objective" knowledge on the other because the subject position can be reversed and he or she can become an object—being seen, touched, and affected by the other—in the intersubjective

²⁶⁷ Krauss, "Richard Serra/Sculpture," *Richard Serra/Sculpture*, exhibition catalog, (ed.) Laura Rosenstock (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 17-18.

²⁶⁸ Crimp, "Richard Serra: Sculpture Exceeded," *October* Vol. 18 (Autumn, 1981), 72.

²⁶⁹ Graham, *Ibid.*, 42-44.

feedback loop. By tactically employing heterogeneous viewpoints and multi-vectorial bodily movements, Graham's piece promotes noise and entropy and calls for a "bodily investigation of meaning" to renegotiate existing relations between signs and meanings.

In *TV Camera/Monitor Performance* (1970) [Fig.71], Graham further explored the intersubjective process of "in-formation" between the performer and the camera and between the performer and the viewer. Whereas *Body Press* was Graham's direct response to minimalism and post-minimalism, this performance piece was his social critique on the workings of commercial television. Graham tried to create an ecological media environment beyond television's one-way transmission of capitalist semiosis, by blurring the subject/object boundary. Not only does television propagate predetermined subjectivities and identities through representations and significations (notably in commercials); it also uses the audience as its "input/output elements" or "simple relays for transmitting information" in the mechanics of broadcasting. Sociologist Maurizio Lazzarato explains the former as "signifying semiotics" and the latter as "a-signifying semiotics." Television operates both ways. In the first sense, television "provides us with a subjectivity and assigns us to a specific process of individuation (via categories such as identity, gender, profession, nationality, etc.) so that everyone is implicated in a semiotic trap that is both signifying and representative." The process of social and political subjection undermines the body and embodied, pre-verbal expressions—such as "dance, mime, music, a somatization disorder, nervous breakdown, a fit of tears, intensities, movements, rhythms." The second, a-signifying function of television directly influences the body and "its affects, its desires, its emotions and perceptions." Lazzarato calls television a "sign machine" that generates and

perpetuates the “cycle of fear, anxiety or panic”—thus impacts the bodies and affects—in the surveillance society.²⁷⁰

TV Camera/Monitor Performance's setup challenges both signifying and a-signifying functions of television. Graham conceived and performed the piece at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, where he taught as a visiting artist, and considered it a “learning exercise” for the students and himself alike. Graham lied on a platform with his feet stretched toward the audience and repeatedly rolled back and forth on his side. While holding a Portapak camera, he aimed the lens at a TV set placed behind the audience and when they lined up, the monitor showed a pattern of “image-within-image-within-image-feedback.” The audience could see on the TV set what Graham saw through the viewfinder, which he identified with his “mind’s eye” or his “subjective view.”²⁷¹ Between the live performance in front and the real-time video feedback in the rear, they viewed Graham’s exterior body and interior mind respectively—though not simultaneously. Face forward, they saw Graham’s live performance but instead missed the real-time video transmission. When turned toward the TV set, the audience saw the back of their own heads and others’ faces momentarily appeared then disappeared on the monitor. There was a spatial and temporal distance between the two events that the viewers could not overcome. Art historian William Kaizen argues that Graham’s piece gave the lie to the myth of television’s immediacy. Kaizen wrote: “*TV Camera/Monitor Performance* makes one of the general limit conditions of televisual liveness available to the audience: that even when live, what it represents is always at a virtual distance. On television, an event can appear in two places

²⁷⁰ Maurizio Lazzarato, “Semiotic Pluralism and the New Government of Signs: Homage to Félix Guattari,” (trans.) Mary O’Neill, European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (June 2006). <https://transversal.at/transversal/0107/lazzarato/en>

²⁷¹ Graham, “TV Camera/Monitor Performance (1970),” *Dan Graham: Video-Architecture-Television; Writings on Video and Video Works, 1970-1979*, (ed.) Benjamin H. D. Buchloh (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1979), 2.

simultaneously but only in relation to a spatial and/or spatiotemporal delay.”²⁷² In his 1967 essay “Dean Martin/ Entertainment as Theater,” Graham discussed the illusion of liveness, immediacy, and intimacy on television. Centering on the *Dean Martin Show*, a popular variety show at the time, the artist wrote:

This dumb-show is clearly fake. At first perception, it appears to eliminate all pretense, all ‘distance,’ but in fact it makes the spectator all the more aware of the conventionalization of television’s image of ‘intimacy’—that the ‘real’ Dean Martin (his television persona) is just a media fabrication. [...] we are made aware of the pseudo-intimacy of the medium, its multilevels of ‘distancing.’²⁷³

Perhaps Graham’s shaky camera view in *TV Camera/Monitor Performance* was a purposeful interruption to prevent a media persona from taking shape, and to make the viewers aware of the distance between an event and its media(ted) image.

Graham’s rolling motion created transient and disorienting images that are not clearly identifiable with the individuals his camera captured. Here, television’s “signifying semiotics” could not function as usual due to the lack of signifiers (i.e., distinct images of the bodies) to which it would otherwise attach predetermined concepts and ideas. Graham’s simple and repetitive action did not directly refer to existing “rhetorical, moral, and affective conditions” therefore it can be considered “doing,” as opposed to “acting.” Scholar Alice Rayner relates “doing” to raw data, which is yet-to-be signified: “Doing, even in its recorded form, whether annals or images, resists the intelligibility of the act. It does not create a narrative form for knowledge, judgment, and comprehensibility because it occurs in a kind of temporal collapse as

²⁷² Kaizen, “Steps to an ecology of Communication: Radical Software, Dan Graham, and the Legacy of Gregory Bateson,” *Art Journal* (Fall 2008).

²⁷³ Graham, “Dean Martin/ Entertainment as Theater,” in *Rock My Religion*, 63.

raw data.”²⁷⁴ Graham deliberately avoided producing readily legible images in his video environment, rather than complying with conventional broadcasting standards. Instead, he allowed raw data—the uncoded bodies, gestures, and movements—to proliferate. By doing so, Graham’s embodied feedback loop came off the grid, off the grips of television’s “a-signifying semiotics.’ The indeterminacy of the artist’s rolling body and the audience’s split attention cut into a “linear movement and conventional progression of meaning.”

Philosopher Brian Massumi terms such interruptions in signifying processes as “jerks.”²⁷⁵ Mass media in the late-capitalist system affect the audience’s body and mind through its jerky imagery and rhythm: “Think of the cuts from TV programming to commercials. Think of the cuts across programming and commercials achievable through zapping.”²⁷⁶ However, jerkiness and its affective potential can also offer us useful modes of resistance against mass media’s effects, which significantly delimit our subjective potential to predetermined subjectivities and identities. To make this claim, Massumi turns to Walter Benjamin’s utopian view of film, the then-new medium of mass entertainment in the early 20th century. Benjamin saw film’s revolutionary potential, believing that its hurtling images—their “insistent, jerky nearness”—would directly affect the audience’s bodies and senses and subsequently awaken their affective power to touch and to be touched.²⁷⁷ The moving images, for Benjamin, were not only visual but also tactile. In this sense, Graham’s jerky body and hurtling video images can be understood as “learning exercises,” in which one could examine how television aims to manage the audience—not only through their minds but also through their bodies, senses, gestures, movements, and

²⁷⁴ Alice Rayner, *To Act, To Do, To Perform: Drama and the Phenomenology of Action* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 26.

²⁷⁵ Brian Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” *Cultural Critique* No. 31 (Autumn, 1995), 102.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 103-104.

²⁷⁷ Benjamin, *One-Way Street, and Other Writings*, (trans.) Edmund Jephcott, F. N and Kingsley Shorter (London: Verso, 1997).

affects. Media scholars Milla Tiainen and Jussi Parikka suggest that a jerky body can be an opposing force, albeit temporary, against the capture of late capitalism:

A jerky body is a changing and thus an un-decidable body. It is precisely this undecidability that the media technologies and related creative industries of societies of control [...] purportedly eagerly tap into. [...] [A] key target of the operations of biopower in relation to contemporary informational and communicative technologies and capitalism is the management of sensations, perceptions and memories—that is, of the incorporeal and virtual of bodies.²⁷⁸

Graham's jerky movements, video images, and the audience's shifting, multi-vectorial attention together created discursive paths in the linear, one-way structure of the capitalist television system.

Dara Birnbaum's *Attack Piece* (1975): Television's Gendered Dynamics

One of Dan Graham's collaborators at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design was artist Dara Birnbaum. Many of her works provide feminist critique on television's aggression toward female subjectivity, *Attack Piece* [Figs.72-73] being one of the earliest examples.

Whereas Graham often treated the relationship between television and the audience as neutral, Birnbaum focused on the power imbalance between the two due to the gendered, masculine view of television cameras and the one-way broadcasting structure. Even Graham's video camera in *TV Camera/Monitor Performance* and other performances was considered phallic with a "threatening penetrative potential" by art critic Donald Kuspit.²⁷⁹ Birnbaum addressed the threatening potential of cameras in her 1975 piece, which was produced in collaboration with

²⁷⁸ Milla Tiainen and Jussi Parikka, "The Primacy of Movement: Variation, Intermediality and Biopolitics in Tero Saarinen's *Hunt*," in *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a 'New Materialism' through the Arts*, (eds.) Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 224.

²⁷⁹ Kuspit, "Dan Graham: Prometheus Mediabound," *Artforum* Vol. 23, No. 9, (May 1985), 80-81.

Graham as well as David Askevold, Cyne Cobb, Ian Murray, and Christina Ritchie. The artist assumed the role of “defender” and others as her “attackers.” Performed on an open grassy field, Birnbaum defended her ground by snapping still photographs of the attackers as they approached her one at a time from various directions, each holding a Super 8 film camera. She had written instructions for each attacker detailing their movement, distance, and pace. For example, her instructions for Graham read, “a series of running attacks—pulling back slightly then running in to hover over [...] buzzing in—a plane zooming in to bomb.” Birnbaum originally planned to blindfold herself but instead attempted to keep her eyes closed during the performance. In doing so, the artist placed herself into a further disadvantaged position against the mobile attackers and their film cameras, whose moving images overpowered Birnbaum’s still photographs. The film cameras’ aggression over Birnbaum’s camera was further highlighted by the soundtrack when the piece was later installed in the gallery: the films and photographs were projected on two separate screens facing each other; and the images were accompanied by loud sound effects of film projectors and of slide projectors. Art historian Michael Newman suggests that *Attack Piece*’s mise-en-scène evokes Graham’s *Body Press*. However, Birnbaum made clear the “gendered implications of the technology,” in contrast to the Graham piece where the female and the male performers and their cameras became interwoven with one another in the anamorphic mirrored environment.²⁸⁰ Newman also points out that the cameras in *Attack Piece* were not merely technological means of representation, rather they became part of the performance—the sense of aggression, tension, and fear was felt in the affective images rather than read through representations or significations. The images deliver the performers’ bodily movements and

²⁸⁰ Newman, “Dara Birnbaum: Exploding the Image,” in *Dara Birnbaum: The Dark Matter of Media Light*, exhibition catalog, (eds.) Karen Kelly, Barbara Schröder, and Giel Vandecaveye (Ghent: Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, 2009), 52.

rhythms, accentuated by the soundtrack, that touch the viewer positioned between the two projection screens.

Television became part of the everyday and made its way into living rooms across America—its force was especially palpable during the Vietnam War. Touched by the light and sound of television—or rather, by its forces, intensities, and rhythms— artists like Nam June Paik, Charlotte Moorman, Dan Graham, and Dara Birnbaum examined the gradually blurring boundary between the body and the scan lines.

CHAPTER 4: Videofreex and TVTV's Haptic Video

"I know that I am not a category. I am not a thing—a noun.
I seem to be a verb, an evolutionary process—an integral function of the universe."
—Buckminster Fuller, *I Seem to Be a Verb*

"Video is a verb moving you through flesh; communities; a vehicle of touch, a medium of exchange between your family and ours [...] Flesh is the medium of Spirit, video a transmission.
[...] Learn to move with yr camera; how to shape with yr tools. Stay light, mobile & free."
—Loren Sears, "Tribal Videography"

We are thrown into a scene captured in shaky, black-and-white footage: a group of young people stand in the middle of a busy four-lane street, others roll oil drums into traffic. One motorist violently revs his engine, shoves one of them to the ground and drives away, leaving behind the injured person. Suddenly, the handheld camera view gets shakier and it is almost impossible to tell what is happening until a baton-wielding police officer appears in the frame and strikes the camera person. The camera is jarred violently, as are we—the viewers. This scene is from videographer David Cort's *Mayday Realtime* (1971) [Figs. 74-77], a video verité documentary. Cort was a founding member of Videofreex, a New York-based video collective whose members joined and recorded extensive footage at the Mayday anti-Vietnam War protests in Washington DC (April 24 – May 7, 1971).

To commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Kent State shooting, Mayday co-organizers or the "Mayday Tribe" (National Peace Action Coalition, People's Coalition for Peace and Justice, War Resisters League, and Vietnam Veterans Against the War) planned nonviolent civil disobedience to disrupt government functions by blocking traffic at the city's major bridges and intersections, and access to government buildings. They intended to hinder federal employees' rush hour commutes. The protestors' message was loud and clear: "If the

government won't stop the war, we'll stop the government." Eight independent video groups including Videofreex jointly formed the Mayday Video Collective to "provide video services to the people participating in the spring offensive." Specifically, they aimed to inform demonstrators of the Mayday organizer's strategies through a live video feedback system and, by doing so, "to help bring form and unity to an essentially amorphous gathering of people."²⁸¹

However, it was an improbable ambition to "bring form and unity" to the more than 45,000 individuals and allied factions thereof—Poor People's Campaign and the women and gay liberation groups rallied for their own causes in addition to the shared anti-war efforts. In other words, the Mayday Tribe was "decentralized and leaderless."²⁸² Even within Videofreex, members had different ideas about how to participate in the Mayday action. One member, Davidson Gigliotti, wrote in his journal: "April 30. David [Cort] is anxious to plug in—make a big noise—be a part. He tries too hard. We're a part because we're here." Unlike his eager colleague, Gigliotti felt they were already part of the movement just by being present. But the mood soon changed after their unsuccessful attempts to set up a video transmission system to share various aspects of the Mayday event with demonstrators camping in West Potomac Park: "May 1. We came to this event basically unprepared. We were not prepared [...] to function as part of the

²⁸¹ The anonymous author then confesses that "because of a lack of discipline and experience, we were forced to abandon this plan and to function as video reporters collecting impressions of the life on the 'Land' and the actions in the streets"

"May Day Collective," in *Radical Software* Vol. 1, No. 4 (Summer 1971), 31.

²⁸² Noam Chomsky, "Mayday: The Case for Civil Disobedience," *The New York Review of Books* (June 17, 1971), n. p.

<https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1971/06/17/a-special-supplement-mayday-the-case-for-civil-dis/>

L. A. Kauffman also argues that Mayday's decentralized structure was what set it apart from previous demonstrations: "Mayday wouldn't be a standard protest rally, where a series of speakers [...] would lecture to a passive crowd. It wouldn't be a conventional protest march, where demonstrators would trudge along a route that had been pre-arranged with the police, shepherded by movement marshals controlled by the protest leadership. [...] The most novel aspect of Mayday, though, was its organizing plan. Unlike any national demonstration before it, this action was to be created through a decentralized structure based on geographic regions."

Kauffman, *Direct Action: Protest and the Reinvention of American Radicalism* (London: Verso, 2017), n. p.

system.”²⁸³ Mayday Video Collective had to drop their original plan for a live video feedback system for the demonstrators and instead decided to document actions in the streets.

Video’s Haptic Visuality and the Texture of History

The Mayday Collective’s videotapes captured the texture of the 1971 mass demonstration as well as that of 1960s and 1970s’ counterculture and the New Left, rather than offering clear images or predetermined meanings of the particular event and the larger social movements. For instance, a viewer watching protestors fleeing tear gas could sense the mace was choking the air, because it was woven into the video images through the camera operator’s frantic movements and protestors’ teary eyes and covered noses and mouths. The footage is shaky, blurry, and confusing, in stark contrast to *The Whole World is Watching* (1971), a color film produced by DC’s Metropolitan Police Department. This film attempts to tell the administration’s version of the story, portraying the use of tear gas as minimal and only when necessary. The police film plays up disruptions caused by the protestors, then briefly shows a gas masked officer launching tear gas upward in a tight frame—thus shielding the viewer from seeing his target [Figs. 78-79]. This action sequence is then minimized to one-quarter of the frame and juxtaposed with other images of traffic jam, which was quite an inconvenience for the “silent majority,” and marching national guard troops dispatched to the capital to enforce “law and order.”

The Whole World clearly presents a pro-government narrative constructed with multiple edited shots and takes, while the Mayday Collective’s raw videos almost always show an event’s

²⁸³ Gigliotti, “April 29, May 7,” in *Radical Software* Vol. 1, No. 5 (1972), 61.

Parry Teasdale writes about Videofreex’s original plan as follows: “If it worked, we planned to put TVs at strategic locations around the encapmeent and broadcast helpful information, political diatribes, old tapes, whatever.” Teasdale, *Videofreex: America’s First Pirate TV Station & the Catskills Collective That Turned It On* (Hensonville, NY: Black Dome, 1999), 31.

unfolding in long takes which allow the viewer to grasp it in context. In addition, the videos' low-resolution and unsteady framing require viewers to "work to constitute the image, to bring it forth from latency," by using bodily senses as if trying to navigate clouds of noxious tear gas with limited visibility.²⁸⁴

Calling such images "haptic images," Laura U. Marks proposes embodied spectatorship and the materiality of images, and of those who are represented within, as grounds to challenge Cartesian ocularcentrism, in which the viewing subject is distanced from the other (the viewed) and claims mastery over the latter based on "objective" visual knowledge. For Marks, viewing film or video cannot be understood as a distanced, unidirectional relationship between disembodied viewer and immaterial images; instead it is an intersubjective exchange between "an embodied self-in-becoming (the viewer) and its embodied intercessor (the cinema)."²⁸⁵ The viewer and the moving images touch each other, in a sense, but the exchange is mediated by what she terms as "haptic visuality" rather than actual physical contact between skins or surfaces. "In Haptic *visuality*," according to Marks,

the eyes themselves function like organs of touch. [...] Haptic visuality is distinguished from optical visuality, which sees things from enough distance to perceive them as distinct forms in deep space: in other words, how we usually conceive of vision. Optical visuality depends on a separation between the viewing subject and the object. Haptic looking tends to move over the surface of its object rather than to plunge into illusionistic depth, not to distinguish form so much as to discern texture. It is more inclined to move than to focus more inclined to graze than to gaze.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 193.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 150.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 162.

Perceiving haptic images through multiple senses, the viewer uses his or her own memory and imagination to compensate for blurriness or obscurity. In this way, haptic images promote “yielding-knowing” as opposed to claiming knowledge over the object. They offer the viewer a “way of speaking not about, but nearby, [the] object.”²⁸⁷

Marks adds that haptic properties are common to video and film: for example, the images’ graininess, changes in focus, and both sonic and visual noise that a videotape or film accumulates with gradual decay. Such qualities discourage the viewer from identifying or reading the images as indices and instead encourage him or her to perceive them in a “tactile, kinesthetic, and proprioceptive awareness”—as if the screen surface is a “woven fabric.”²⁸⁸

Without the depth and detail of film, many videos offer haptic images and activate haptic vision in the viewer.²⁸⁹ Marks’s point is convincing when we examine differences between the Mayday Video Collective’s tapes and *The Whole World is Watching*. The police’s film camera served two main purposes: to surveil the demonstrators and to control the narrative, while the Collective tried to relate and engage themselves with the Mayday event and participants through unedited video. For example, an aerial surveillance sequence in *The Whole World is Watching* shows the crowds in West Potomac Park then freezes as though the film camera took a photograph. In the next scene, a police-photographer carefully examines photos from the Mayday protests with a magnifying glass—a voiceover narration states that the police were forced to revoke demonstrators’ permits and order them to vacate the area, citing health hazards, overcrowding, and destruction of public property [Figs. 80-83]. A camera with a mounted viewfinder appears on the lower edge of the frame and the lens is directed at the police-photographer. In so doing,

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 191.

²⁸⁸ Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 8; and Ibid., 168.

²⁸⁹ Marks, *Touch*, 3.

the film places the viewer in the position of a surrogate surveillance photographer: the film camera's surveilling eye is extended through the photographer's camera lens and finally to the magnifying glass, which is inclined more to "focus" and "gaze" than to "move" and "graze."

In 2017, Skip Blumberg (Videofreex), Eddie Becker, and Joan Yoshiwara (Mayday Video) released *Mayday 1971 Raw*, a sixty-six-minute-long video edited from the Collective's forty hours of footage. The collective recorded scenes from inside West Potomac Park: the crowd at the rock concert and rally on Saturday night (May 1) and the police raid to clear the protestors' campsite that began at six o'clock on Sunday morning. The multiple camera angles and feeds wove a multifaceted image of the demonstrators that counters the police film's one-dimensional portrait of them as either juvenile, hedonistic, and self-indulgent "hippies" or spiteful and violent "militants." Barely moving (but only panning or zooming in and out), the police's film camera focused on the stereotypes separated from the larger context. Contrastingly, the Mayday crew's handheld cameras moved *with* the protestors—with whom at least three Mayday Video members were swept up in mass arrests and taken to the District of Columbia jail or outdoor detention facilities. The Collective's videos captured the emotions expressed through the demonstrators' bodies, gestures, and movements.

The demonstrators were perhaps as naïve and immature as the authorities portrayed them; however, they were also frustrated and angry—the Vietnam War had become personal to many of them who faced the draft order or who were already veterans. The anti-war protests were serious and yet cheerful—the participants continued chanting, singing, and dancing whether they faced arrest during a sit-in demonstration or were stuck in an overcrowded jail cell. *Mayday Tactical Manual*, a leaflet distributed by the co-organizers, explained that their nonviolent civil

disobedience meant “creativity, joy, and life against bureaucracy and grim death.”²⁹⁰ Their tactics were informed by previous demonstrations in which protestors used their bodies as means of intervention—including the Greensboro lunch counter sit-in (1960) and Abbie Hoffman’s guerrilla theater in which he threw dollar bills staged inside the New York Stock Exchange (1967). The Mayday demonstrations also attempted to “oppose a state with their bodies,” as a reporter from National Public Radio noted—“For these young Americans, today was a major test of their commitment to the ethical code of the young and the angry. It was their freedom ride—their Selma march—their May Day.”²⁹¹ Their anti-war message was performed through their living bodies—being-in, sitting-in, marching, running, and dancing—rather than communicated through linguistic or visual signs, in words or images.

Similarly, for the Mayday Video crew, “being there” was as important as documenting the demonstrations. They did not always limit themselves to the confined perspective of viewfinder: some members either kept both of their eyes open or did not use the viewfinder altogether to see things as they happened around them, in connection with the environment. According to Blumberg, “You get used to handling the equipment. Then you can shoot without looking through the viewfinder of the camera. Then you can make eye contact with the interviewee and you don’t think about the camera.”²⁹² The Mayday videos’ images and sounds encourage the viewer to *sense* the texture or atmosphere of the tumultuous 1971 event—woven in the videotapes through the protestors and the camera crew’s bodies and movements—rather than attempting to *make sense* of the mishmash of images or to create a neatly-framed, whole

²⁹⁰ Mayday Collective, *Mayday Tactical Manual* (1971), [4].

²⁹¹ “All Things Considered,” National Public Radio (May 3, 1971).

²⁹² Risa Akita, Interview with Skip Blumberg, Davidson Gigliotti, and Nancy Cain, *Heaps Magazine* (March 26, 2019)

<http://heapsmag.com/videofreex-documented-counter-culture-from-inside-society-culture-politics-influence>

picture. Blumberg spoke of the collective's camera work in relation to the resulting tapes' visceral effects on the viewer: "Our videos are experiential with long clips of the tape rolling and recording as confrontations explode around us. So viewers can viscerally feel the actuality of the social change movement for themselves."²⁹³

Art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson argues that the affective dimension of "work" is as important as effort or process, in that it leads to the "production of social emotion." On May 1, 1971—coinciding with the Mayday event in DC— Art Workers' Coalition protested the cancellation of Hans Haacke's show and the Guggenheim Museum's subsequent firing of curator Edward Fry [Fig. 84]. Reason for the cancellation: the museum director considered Haacke's appropriation of investigative journalism in *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971* [Fig. 85] to be journalism and thus non-art. The piece indeed featured information the artist gathered from painstaking investigative research on real estate data, along with photographs of corresponding buildings. The demonstrators, led by dancer Yvonne Rainer, danced in a conga line up the museum's iconic spiral. Bryan-Wilson discusses that "the bodily motion, with its own delights and sensuous pleasures" in the protest's "excess, illogic, and free form" contrasted the refined, charted, and organized information in *Shapolsky*. The artist-protestors reminded us that the affective register of their work—whether in the form of artistic labor or ludic protest—is worthy of critical attention.²⁹⁴

Sociologist Todd Gitlin wrote, "What is hard to convey is the texture of shock and panic" that he experienced firsthand as a founding member of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)

²⁹³ "We're All Videofreex Now: An Interview with Skip Blumberg," School of Visual Arts, New York City (March 28, 2013).

<https://videofreex.tumblr.com/post/46526875684/were-all-videofreex-now-an-interview-with-skip>

²⁹⁴ Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 207.

in the 1960s; while the news media ironed out the “texture” of the antiwar movement and the New Left, reducing the complexity of their ideas and identities into headlines and stereotypes. Public memory of the tumultuous decades is oversaturated with selected iconic images: including those capturing the moments of state violence on peaceful demonstrators in the streets of Birmingham, Selma, and Chicago and on the campus of Kent State; the injured, burned, and murdered men, women, and children in Vietnam; the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Malcom X, Martin Luther King Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy. Gitlin writes that such media spectacles amplified the sense of shock in the public mind:

Public life seemed to become a sequence of ruptures, shocks, and detonations. [...] The world was in shards. [...] The *texture* of these unceasing shocks was itself integral to what people felt as ‘the 1968 experience.’ The sheer number, pace, volume, and intensity of the shocks, delivered worldwide to living room screens, made the world look and feel as though it was falling apart. It’s fair to say that if you weren’t destabilized, you weren’t paying attention. A sense of unending emergency overcame expectations of order, decorum, procedure.²⁹⁵

The images created a composite picture of “America at war with itself” which was only abstract and superficial without capturing the complex texture of heterogenous events, actions, ideas, and individuals.²⁹⁶ Television news, in particular, tended to heavily flatten out irregularities or discrepancies by oversimplifying stories and creating stereotypes. When words and images did not match, producers inserted a news anchor or correspondent’s voice-over narration. Gitlin points out that stereotyping on television was due in part to their shortage of time. For example, Walter Cronkite’s *CBS Evening News* was expanded from fifteen to thirty minutes in September 1963, but the actual broadcast was only twenty-two and a half minutes to leave time for

²⁹⁵ Gitlin, “1968: Year of Counter-Revolution,” *The New York Review of Books* (May 8, 2018). <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/05/08/1968-year-of-counter-revolution/>

²⁹⁶ Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, [1987] 1993), 243.

commercial breaks. In addition, stereotyping was a deliberate choice in the control room to make “transmitting and manipulating bits of information” easy enough for producers and editors to shuffle them around even at the last minute. The orderly format—a seamless stream of uniformly packaged, two-to-three-minute segments—made reality seem still manageable despite the reports of disorder and unrest. It promoted social stability as upheld by authoritative agencies.²⁹⁷

Unlike television networks, stability of images and narratives was clearly not what concerned Videofreex (and other members of the Mayday Collective) most when documenting the Mayday protests. In *Mayday Realtime*, Cort’s handheld camera is constantly unsteady and often goes out of focus. The analogue, black-and-white video images are fuzzy and grainy—not to mention the dirty lens spotted with dust particles—and different shots are not stitched or edited together to deliver an illusion of reality as it was routinely practiced in the television industry and Hollywood. Editing techniques for video at the time were rudimentary and editing equipment was often inaccessible to many videographers. In 1971, video was still a young medium and many who encountered the Mayday crew’s portapak cameras in Washington DC—protestors, residents, policemen alike—did not exactly understand what video was or what it did, so they were less self-conscious and acted more themselves than they would with a television or film camera. “People on camera were unthreatened and not guarded in their behavior or statements,” according to Videofreex member Skip Blumberg.²⁹⁸ At the time, artists including Nam June Paik, Vito Acconci, Bruce Nauman, and Dan Graham incorporated the medium primarily in their performances, either live or recorded, and also in installation and sculptural pieces. The artists did not produce video documentary as direct social commentary; however, in

²⁹⁷ Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 265-266.

²⁹⁸ Melanie La Rosa, “Early Video pioneer: An Interview with Skip Blumberg,” *Journal of Film and Video*, Vol. 64, No. 1-2 (Spring/Summer 2012), 34.

video's early years between 1968 and 1971, "there were no clearly defined factions of art versus social change"—partially because it was a time when artists, videographers, and activists began experimenting with video and discovering the medium's potential. Some of them also shared opportunities to show their works together in an exhibition setting: for example, *TV as a Creative Medium* (1969) at Howard Wise Gallery in New York City; and *Vision and Television* (1970) at Rose Art Museum of Brandeis University.²⁹⁹ Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman performed *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* at both exhibitions. Videofreex participated in the 1970 exhibition by showing their videotape documentaries under the title *Freex Out* and producing footage of the exhibition (they recorded Paik and Moorman's performance). Using their whole production unit including three cameras, special effects generator, and TV projector, the collective aimed to "electronically relate the exhibition to student activities on campus" and help the viewer see him or herself "in relation to others in the Museum, on the campus, in Vietnam."³⁰⁰

Videofreex members considered their tapes to be "a means of communication for counterculture" because mainstream media, particularly television, did not show "what was really going on" or what they believed to be worth documenting and disseminating: "At the time there were only three television stations in America, NBC, ABC, CBS. [...] We were recording the counterculture and none of their cameras were there. [...] we were inside the counterculture."³⁰¹ Even when television networks' film crews did report from the Mayday protests, for example, they showed the same event from a different perspective than the

²⁹⁹ Two recent exhibitions were devoted to Videofreex: *Videofreex: The Art of Guerrilla Television* (2015) at Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art in New Paltz, NY; and *Data Report: Processing Activist Images* (2017) at Treize Gallery in Paris, France. In 2018, The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired Videofreex's tape, Fred Hampton: Black Panthers in Chicago (1969) in the permanent collection.

³⁰⁰ Russell Connor, *Vision & Television*, exhibition catalog (Waltham, Mass.: Rose Art Museum, 1970), [15]; [2].

³⁰¹ Melanie La Rosa, 40; Pascaline Morincôme and Sibylle de Laurens "Interviews of the Videofreex" (2014-2016), n. p.

<https://videofreexsite.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/treize-interviews-videofreex.pdf>

collective's video. A local NBC station's news coverage of the 7,000 mass arrests on May 3 featured aerial footage of the mass detention facilities and a reporter speaking directly into the stationary camera, while the protestors detained behind the fence were shown in the background. Other stations reported on the demonstrations through the mouths of representatives and sympathizers of the two opposing sides: Rennie Davis, Mayday organizer and one of the Chicago Seven vs. police chief Jerry Wilson; and senator J. William Fulbright (D, Arkansas) vs. senator Robert Dole (R, Kansas). They were, of course, shown in the usual talking-head format.

In contrast to television's distanced, objectifying view, mediated by the reporter as an impartial third person, Videofreex and Mayday Collective's cameras were "inside" the demonstrations, the paddy wagons, and the jail cell/temporary mass arrest site. They wove heterogenous perspectives, ideas, actions, and voices together in the videotapes that demand the viewer's prolonged engagement and delayed judgment through haptic perception—in order to perceive the intensity of the anti-war struggle without defining it as either "success" or "failure," which were the only two criteria applied by the media to discuss Mayday. In fact, a majority of newspapers and television news outlets quickly denounced the Mayday action as a failure and disregarded their call to end the war—because, in the eyes of many media professionals, "such demonstrations were no longer news. They had happened before."³⁰²

Nevertheless, the Mayday protests brought a "sense of urgency" to Congress, even if the demonstrators did not actually shut down the government—which was a main reason for the media to call Mayday a failure. The mass demonstration came at a time when popular pressure on Washington seemingly decreased. It suddenly turned the nation's capital into a "simulated Saigon with the choppers flying all over, the armed men everywhere, and the fear that at any

³⁰² Chomsky, "Mayday: The Case for Civil Disobedience," n.p.

moment something worse, something bloody might happen.”³⁰³ The Nixon administration staged a dramatic counter-event at the Washington Monument where Chinook helicopters landed and Marine troopers emerged from the loading ramp [Figs. 86-87]. The protest deeply shook Nixon and his staff, though the president asserted on television that “the Congress is not intimidated, the president is not intimidated.”³⁰⁴

Mayday Collective’s videos deliver tense emotions that were pervasive in Washington DC during the early summer days of May 1971. Watching the shaky, grainy, and black-and-white videos, the viewer wonders whether the high-spirited protestors, despite being teargassed, beaten, and detained in overcrowded jail cell, were able to mount pressure on the government to end the war [Figs. 88-89]. The videotapes themselves do not present a narrative or interpretation of the Mayday demonstration. However, some viewers might be touched by the young protestors’ perseverance as a sympathetic journalist was at the time:

Packing 10 to 14 people in 5-by 1-foot jail cells and leaving them there for 24 hours to live on an occasional baloney sand-which [sic] [...] If that’s what it costs to give peace a chance, they’ll pay, pay by present discomfort and dangers and risking futures, life-long blackballing. They do it and the tepid and tardy editorialists, who realized years too late the stupidity of Vietnam, chide them. [...] They chide them for naivete, for not understanding politics like Muskie and Fulbright and McGovern and the other powerful men who’ve been so effective in ending the conflict in a timely fashion. But if peace does ever come, it will be the smelly, obtuse, stridently non-comprehending freaks who will have won it for us.³⁰⁵

According to historian L. A. Kauffman, Mayday was simultaneously the last big national antiwar demonstration and the first one to experiment with decentralized, guerrilla-style

³⁰³ Nicholas von Hoffman, “Washington: On the Ropes,” *The Washington Post* (May 5, 1971), C1.

³⁰⁴ Kauffman, *Ibid.*, n.p.

³⁰⁵ Nicholas von Hoffman, “Who Else Will Stop It?,” *Boston Globe* (May 10, 1971), 15.

nonviolent obstruction. But the spring offensive has largely been forgotten in history because it was “too messy or perhaps too unsettling to be part of popular understandings of the Vietnam War and the movements that opposed it.”³⁰⁶ The Mayday Video Collective’s “messy” and “unsettling” videos captured and preserved the textures of the amorphous Mayday protests that are missing from *The Whole World Is Watching*, television news, and newspapers.

Videofreex: *Subject to Change* (1969)

In 1969, David Cort, Mary Curtis Ratcliff, and Parry Teasdale founded Videofreex at a loft in lower Manhattan. Cort and Teasdale had met each other at the Woodstock Music Festival the previous summer while videotaping “what was going on.” Their footage included various attendees and volunteer medical staff but not the music. Seven others soon joined the group—Skip Blumberg, Nancy Cain, Bart Friedman, Davidson Gigliotti, Chuck Kennedy, Ann Woodward, and Carol Vontobel. *Subject to Change* (1969), the group’s first major project was, ironically, an assignment for Don West, a CBS producer who wanted to put the counterculture on television. Videofreex traveled around the country and produced videos on various contemporary events and figures, including Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin of the Youth International Party (Yippies) and Fred Hampton of the Black Panther Party.

The Vietnam War was one of the central issues that concerned the members of Videofreex. Ratcliff considers the Vietnam War to be “the real motivation” behind their work.³⁰⁷ Teasdale shares Ratcliff’s view: “without understanding the dynamics of the war in Vietnam and what that did to society I don’t think you can understand video.” Even before he began working with video, Teasdale says he was “involved in just being a body in the anti-war marches and

³⁰⁶ Kauffman, *Ibid.*, n.p.

³⁰⁷ Interview with the author at Ratcliff’s studio in Berkeley, CA (December 24, 2018).

feeling very strongly about that.”³⁰⁸ Video artist and media theorist Paul Ryan echoes Teasdale’s words on “being a body” in antiwar protests: “An electronic wall in Vietnam [by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara] is an attempt to make new technology do the job of the old,” but “peace marching is as contradictory a strategy as the electronic wall. To march is to match the movements of the military, to become what you behold.”³⁰⁹ In late 1960s and 1970s, for many, video was not just a tool to record the antiwar movement and the counterculture. It was also a way to be part of the larger social and cultural change by putting their bodies on the line: Videofreex members often travelled around the country in their Volkswagen minibus to document various rallies, protests, concerts, festivals, and performances; and to teach students, educators, and museum professionals how to use video technology.³¹⁰ They took advantage of video camera’s portability, which was considered revolutionary at the time along with its instant playback feature.³¹¹ The group’s identity as a mobile media collective also reflects the romanticized countercultural lifestyle—a free, democratic community on a “trip”—among the youth in America at the time. Influential models include, for example, the Hog Farm commune, the Beatles Magical Mystery Tour Bus, and Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters’ cross-country trip on a school bus which was famously documented in Tom Wolfe’s nonfiction book *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968).

³⁰⁸ “Parry Teasdale: Interviewed by Chris Hill (with comments by Deedee Halleck),” (May 1995).

<http://vasulka.org/archive/Contributors/ChrisHill/InterviewParryTeasdale.pdf>

³⁰⁹ Paul Ryan Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 3; cited in Peter Sachs Collopy, “The Revolution Will Be Videotaped: Making a Technology of Consciousness in the Long 1960s” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2015), 207-208.

³¹⁰ Videofreex members considered their videotapes to be counter programming against commercial television, though it was not until March 1972 that they had a regular audience for their videos. Shortly after Mayday, the collective moved to upstate New York and started Lanesville TV (1972-1977), a small pirate TV station, in the seventeen-room boarding house where they lived and worked together.

³¹¹ David Cort interview, *Here Comes Videofreex*, directed by Jon Nealon and Jenney Raskin (2015; New York: iTunes, 2017), online streaming.

Elsewhere, Cort also said “I was overwhelmed by the lightness of the portable video camera, the intimacy of I, the way you could talk from behind the camera to people, and they could talk to you.”; cited in Deirdre Boyle, *Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 6.

Videofreex is one of many cultural producers in the 1960s and 1970s who embraced direct action and democratic participation as *modus operandi* and saw their work as a catalyst for social change. In the 1960s, documentary Filmmakers in North America—including Robert Drew, Richard Leacock, Albert and David Maysles, and D. A. Pennebaker—also began using a lightweight handheld camera (though the film camera and production cost were still significantly higher compared to video). Freed from a cumbersome camera, boom microphone, or tripod, they could take the role of a close observer or a fly-on-the-wall approach to their subjects—a style that came to be known as Direct Cinema. The film’s narrative came to depend on the subjects themselves and their words, and the filmmakers relinquished interpretative control as in past documentary films through the “voice of god” or the distanced “god’s eye-view.” Drew’s *Primary* (1960), for example, closely followed John F. Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey during their campaign for the 1960 democratic presidential primary in Wisconsin. The handheld camera documented things as they happened around the candidates rather than focusing on their prepared speeches and performances, and by doing so, the viewer could perceive Kennedy and Humphrey through a spectrum between their natural self and carefully constructed political personas. The film often delivers a sense of touch, for example, when the camera became too close to Humphrey’s face, showing only his cheek, nose, and mouth from the side or when it followed right behind Kennedy through the cheering crowd. We feel as though we are gently moved and pushed with the candidate by approaching supporters who enthusiastically stretch their arms out to shake hands with him.

Filmmaker and scholar Angela J. Aguayo argues that Direct Cinema anticipated the emergence of activist video makers including Videofreex, Top Value Television (TVTV), and Raindance Corporation. Their works have largely been excluded from historical discourses on

(documentary) film—presumably due to the differences in the medium, distribution system, and the audience. Aguayo, however, situates the collectives’ videos along with Direct Cinema within “the second wave of social change documentary,” which was a “reaction against industrial documentary production closely tied to corporate sponsorship and interests.”³¹² Videofreex’s video functioned as “an axis of collaboration” in that the group’s production process brought together diverse communities through participatory practice.³¹³ The Freex member David Cort believed that “video could involve people by making them active participants in the ‘video environment’ rather than passive viewers of network TV fare.”³¹⁴

Abbie Hoffman and Fred Hampton were willing participants in Videofreex’s *Subject to Change* who hoped to spread their pro-revolution and anti-war messages to the wider public. During the Days of Rage (October 8-11, 1969), Videofreex members travelled to Chicago to interview various figures affiliated with resistance movements including Hoffman (Yippies), Hampton (Black Panther Party), Tom Hayden (Students for a Democratic Society), and members of the Weather Underground. For Hoffman, it was indeed the first “television” interview, although he had previously staged guerrilla-style theatrical events for the press, through which he became a countercultural celebrity: most notably, in protest of the Vietnam War, Hoffman and the Yippies nominated a piglet named Pigasus as a presidential candidate during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The Yippie leader also used his own body as an agitprop by wearing a shirt with patterns that resembled American flag; he was promptly arrested for “desecrating” the flag [Fig. 90]. Art historian David Joselit points out that Hoffman’s successful

³¹² Aguayo, *Documentary Resistance: Social Change and Participatory Media* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 37.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 40.

³¹⁴ Boyle, *Ibid.*

media tactics relied on his shrewd manipulation (or reversal) of figure and ground relationship.³¹⁵

In his book *Revolution for the Hell of It* (1968), Hoffman wrote:

The commercial is information. The program is rhetoric. The commercial is the figure. The program is the ground. [...] It's only when you establish a figure-ground relationship that you can convey information. [...] Our actions in Chicago established a brilliant figure-ground relationship. The rhetoric of the Convention was allotted the fifty minutes of the hour, we were given the ten or less usually reserved for the commercials. We were an advertisement for revolution.³¹⁶

The agent provocateur succeeded in breaking into the closed system of commercial television, however, Hoffman and the Yippies soon lost control over their own images on the media. Far from being oppositional figures on the airwaves, they became mere stereotypes of radicalism to be exploited as foils by media executives and producers. Gitlin's reflection provides a useful insight into the fraught relationship between 1960s and 1970s' media and social movements: "Movement leaders could not have become stars so easily. Unless the movement's structure permitted it; in turn, the cults of personality administered by the mass media increased the movement's vulnerability."³¹⁷ The media spotlight, in the end, was detrimental not only to the celebrity leader but also to the movement itself.

Hoffman's stardom is significantly downplayed by Videofreex's immature yet experimental style; or rather, the video captures the lack of structure and instability in the Yippie organization. The ceaselessly shifting camera—anticipating the nauseating camerawork on MTV in the coming decades—shows Hoffman from various angles, as if thoroughly examining his figure: looking up at his face from the floor, looking down on his head from the back, and

³¹⁵ Joselit, *Feedback: Television Against Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

³¹⁶ Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, [1968] 2005), 133.

³¹⁷ Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching*, 156.

zooming in on his face in extreme close-up. Instead of taking the typical interview approach, where an interviewer asks questions and an interviewee answers, the Freex mostly documented the conversation between the Yippies and occasionally joined in. The collective's dismissal of the traditional interview format is based on Cort's ambition to break down the barrier between "the people behind the camera and those in front."³¹⁸ By doing so, Videofreex relinquished control of the videotape's content and narrative, letting their camera roll and record the unfolding of events. Videofreex' handheld camera candidly shows the Yippies from inside, rather than attempting to produce an objective portrait of them.

The Yippies' conversation is cheerful yet rather chaotic. They talk about a variety of topics: from how they should see Yippie buttons; to how they would attract public attention to their fundraising event for the upcoming Chicago Seven trials; whether they would invite a rock band—if so, which one would that be; and if Ken Kesey could possibly help them to contact the Grateful Dead. Their discussion never bears a clear, productive conclusion just as Videofreex's whirling camera does not compose a neatly organized narrative. Gitlin points out that Hoffman and Jerry Rubin "used media to invent an 'organization' out of high spirits and whole cloth, and formulated the theory of organizing *through* media."³¹⁹ And Videofreex's interview tape seemingly corroborates the claim: inside the Chicago Yippie headquarters, Hoffman could not stand out as a "figure" without the "ground" or backdrop for his sensational pseudo-events. In Videofreex's constant close-up shots, his image appears to be flat and occasionally blends into the background [Figs. 91-92].

³¹⁸ Boyle, *Ibid.*, 20.

³¹⁹ Gitlin, *Ibid.*

Beyond the Figure-Ground: Carolee Schneemann and Andy Warhol's Media Tactics

In 1967, before Hoffman solidified his status as de facto counterculture icon, Carolee Schneemann and Andy Warhol experimented with the figure-ground relationship by merging their bodies into a flood of moving images in a series of multimedia performances. In contrast to Hoffman's simple reversion of the existing figure-ground relationship to the media, Schneemann's *Snows* (1967) [Fig. 93] posited the body as an agent that flexibly navigates the divided territories between the embodied self and media images. During the performance, Schneemann projected *Viet-Flakes* (1965), a film collage of photographs showing atrocities in Vietnam, as well as a newsreel film compilation of chaotic moments including a riot, volcanic eruption, snowstorm, car crash, and explosion. Schneemann projected the films from various angles and the moving images enveloped her and other performers' bodies. She produced *Snows* in response to the taxing situation in the 1960s up to the mid-1970s when American audiences felt simultaneously angry and powerless, watching the Vietnam War on television night after night. Schneemann wrote, "The cultural discrepancies were constantly in mind: our inability to act directly on a situation where we humanly wanted to intervene, to make a difference."³²⁰ Elsewhere, the artist talked about the jarring experience of reading a newspaper and realizing the vast gap between the reality in Southeast Asia and her everyday life. According to art historian Pamela M. Lee, Schneemann's emphasis on the materiality of body was part of her strategy to challenge the contemporary visual environment in which the body and senses came under assault by a ceaseless stream of images—of commodities and prepackaged identities. "On the one hand," Lee writes, "Schneemann's work provided a means to interrupt the system of images; on

³²⁰ Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy: Complete Performance Works & Selected Writings* (New Paltz, NY: Documentext, 1979), 130.

the other, that interruption itself underscored the mediation of the body by visual environment.”³²¹

In the Exploding Plastic Inevitable (EPI) [Fig. 94], Andy Warhol’s multimedia project featuring the Velvet Underground and Nico, the Pop artist purposefully obscured the boundaries between the body and images. The EPI staged a series of events between 1966 and 1967, in which the performers and audience were engulfed in an overwhelming sensory environment created with multiple film projectors, slide projectors, strobe lights and colored light projection. Occasionally, film projectors cast images of the Velvet Underground directly onto the band members playing music on stage, thus obscuring the figure-ground relationship. The example suggests that there was a constant switching between “performing oneself and becoming an image” throughout the event. In other words, Warhol kept the figure-ground relationship flexible and thus avoided being trapped in a picture—which Hoffman did not seem to foresee when he turned himself into an icon of revolution.³²² Branden W. Joseph goes a step further and argues that the EPI’s sensory overload split open the participants’ subjectivities as existing signifiers, thus provided them an opportunity to construct new ones. Warhol’s multimedia environment “was not simply a bricolage of existing signifiers, practices, and codes. Rather, it formed a multiplicitous situation or ‘image’ in which the possibilities of subjective transformation were opened to forms of political appropriation.”³²³

During the Chicago Conspiracy Trial (September 1969 – February 1970), one CBS news producer gave Hoffman and Rubin significantly more coverage than the five other defendants because he thought they were “the most colorful and symbolic” icons among the Chicago Seven,

³²¹ Lee, *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 212.

³²² Joselit, 120.

³²³ Joseph, “‘My Mind Split Open’: Andy Warhol’s Exploding Plastic Inevitable,” *Grey Room* No. 8 (Summer 2002), 97.

even though they were not the most eloquent spokespersons for the anti-war movement and counterculture.³²⁴ Don West, the CBS producer who commissioned Videofreex, probably expected to see the Yippies' colorful personas dominate the scene in Videofreex's exclusive footage—which would have been the first television interview of Hoffman. However, the CBS executives not only cancelled *Subject to Change*, West's program in the making, but also dismissed West after watching the edited footage at the premiere in Videofreex' loft/editing room. The network producers said the final video was too “experimental” to be broadcast on television. In it, “segments [were] not tied together with a host or omniscient narrator” which was unacceptable on commercial television where clarity and simplicity are most essential. Oversimplification and stereotyping were the norms.³²⁵

It did not require seasoned television executives' judgment to notice that Videofreex's videotapes were not meant to deliver contents in a straightforward manner. In December 1970, Videofreex and other video collectives (Raindance Corporation and People's Video Theater) screened their works, including footage from *Subject to Change*, for a local audience at the Raindance loft in New York City. One reviewer wrote after the event: “To some extent the crudity of video technology is its own esthetic limitation, but the fault lies, also, in the obsession of video freaks with the technology, with the process of communicating, at the expense of the content of that they're communicating.”³²⁶ Fortunately, the “process of communicating” was extended to the audience members at the screening and the videos created a communicative environment in which they interacted with one another:

³²⁴ Gitlin, *Ibid.*, 174.

Others included Rennie Davis, David Dellinger, John Froines, Tom Hayden, and Lee Weiner. The seven activists were arrested for their anti-Vietnam War protests during the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Between September 1969 and February 1970, they were tried on charges of conspiracy and incitement to riot.

³²⁵ Teasdale, 18.

³²⁶ Sami Klein, “Global Christmans Party: No-sleep,” *The East Village Other*, Vol. 6, Issue 6 (January 5, 1971), 17.

Focusing on video's unique capabilities for interaction with and setting up interactions between tape "performers" and tape viewers, the program combined a little "video vérité," a little Feedback, and a little documentary, to create an exclusively Video experience. Reinforcing the concept of interaction as it unfolded on screen, was the interaction among viewers, encouraged by the set-up of the Raindance loft. Divided by perpendicular plywood boards into open sections, somewhat maze-like, each with its own monitor, the loft creates a total people environment, [...] where viewers face each other at numerous angles. In this way they participate in each other's responses to the medium and to the setting.³²⁷

Raindance artists and videographers, including Frank Gillette, Michael Shamberg, and Ira Schneider, attempted to construct a "people environment" or network with video, against commercial television and for a free exchange of information and democratic communication. The screening at their loft was also organized on the same principle. Promoting interactions between audience members in the material space was no less important than disseminating information on videotapes. Many video artists and collectives at the time shared a view that people *are* information and not just senders or receivers on either end of a communication channel. Thus, it was necessary to explore video's "unique potentialities of feedback [...]" as facilitator in encouraging play between people in pursuit of new life styles [sic] and/or as examination of the transformation of the director/actor relationship implicit in video."³²⁸ This excerpt appeared on an editorial page of Raindance's video journal *Radical Software*, in which Videofreex and the Mayday Video Collective's writings occasionally appeared along with texts or images by artists such as Nam June Paik and Dan Graham.

In the same issue, Top Value Television (TVTV) published a report on *Four More Years* (1972), their video coverage of the 1972 Republican National Convention in Miami Beach,

³²⁷ Ibid., 16.

³²⁸ *Radical Software*, Vol. 2, No. 1, [1].

Florida. The group was a joint effort by a number of videographers including members of Videofreex (Blumberg, Caine, Friedman, and Kennedy), Raindance, and Ant Farm. Many expected the 1972 Republican convention to lack the usual energy and excitement of a nomination event, since Nixon, seeking reelection, did not face competition. As one journalist cynically observed, “as everybody knew all along—there wasn’t much of a story there. Who else did you think they were going to nominate? Ronald Reagan? Pete McCloskey?”³²⁹ That was perhaps how the convention appeared on television, however TVTV’s army of mobile video cameras covered both in and outside the convention, capturing interactions between diverse individuals, interest groups, and protestors. We see the Nixonettes, young supporters of the president, preparing for “simultaneous” action before the big moment in front of television cameras; first daughter Tricia Nixon proudly calling her father a “peace maker”; Walter Cronkite, “the most trusted man in America,” telling Skip Blumberg that “We can’t cover the news in a half-hour every evening [...] People shouldn’t rely on TV alone for all the news.” Toward the end, Vietnam War veterans shout “stop the bombing!” but the scene is soon replaced by another showing ecstatic Nixon-Agnew supporters clapping and chanting “four more years!” TVTV members strived to “make sense as tape” and set out clear ideas of what and how to tape before they arrived in Miami—so they would not repeat Videofreex’s mistakes in *Subject to Change*.³³⁰ Deidre Boyle argues that *Four More Years* provided more “objective” coverage of the event than network television.³³¹ When the video documentary was broadcast on San Francisco public television station KQED, the audience response was enthusiastic. According to an article published in *San Francisco Chronicle*: “These kids, crawling around with their hand

³²⁹ John Burks, “Convention and Reality,” *San Francisco Examiner* (September 27, 1972).

³³⁰ TVTV, “Four More Years,” *Radical Software* Vol. 2, No. 1, 13.

³³¹ Boyle, 62.

cameras, did such a fantastic job that in New York, a top CBS exec called a meeting of his convention staff to grump ‘Our network spent more on coffee than these kids did [...] and they did a better job.’³³² TVTV actively engaged with others at the convention and documented the interactions between people—and this was what they thought “Porta-Paks do” and “TV doesn’t do.”³³³ By *moving* around in their bodies with their cameras, instead of focusing on objects, the video collective captured the texture of reality, not a picture.

³³² Herb Caen, “It Takes All Kinds,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 1972); cited in TVTV, *Prime Time* (1973),

n. p.

³³³ TVTV, *Ibid.*

CONCLUSION

In her influential book *Body Art / Performing the Subject*, art historian Amelia Jones observes that there was a general shift away from the body in 1980s' art world. Jones writes,

By the late 1970s, artists had generally moved away from the relatively modest, raw staging of themselves in body art projects. Body art mutated into either performative photographic work, such as the 'film stills' of Cindy Sherman, or large-scale, ambitious, and at least seminarrative performance art practices such as Laurie Anderson's theatrical, proscenium-bound *United States*.³³⁴

Similarly, 1980s' video art gravitated toward large-scale, multi-monitor video walls and installations and videotapes presenting filmic narratives. Artists generally moved away from the rawness of handheld video vision, which I have associated with an embodied act of seeing. The body appears to be diffused across the moving image, without much of the material and haptic qualities that marked 1960s and 1970s' video art. For example, Dara Birnbaum's *Rio VideoWall* (1989) [Figs. 95-96], installed at a shopping mall in Atlanta, captured the silhouettes of pedestrians with two surveillance cameras and keyed them into the wall of twenty-five monitors in real time. The images then became interlaced with digitally produced footage of nature and live satellite transmissions from CNN. In her proposal for the piece, Birnbaum suggested that "the outline of pedestrian bodies will become the 'key-hole' which allows for a hole to be cut into the news."³³⁵ By doing so, Birnbaum showed that the body in a capitalist and hypermediated society can no longer be considered a natural or essential being but a complex web of commodities, media, and information.

³³⁴ Jones, 21.

³³⁵ Birnbaum, "Project Proposal: Video Installation, Rio Shopping Mall," *Public Art Goes to the Mall: The Digital Preservation of the Rio VideoWall* (1989), Digital Integrative Liberal Arts Center at Georgia Tech <https://riovideowall.lmc.gatech.edu/the-rio-videowall/birnbaums-proposal/>

Nam June Paik's *Good Morning Mr. Orwell* (1984) also points to a scattered mode of seeing and being in the age of global satellite television. The piece was a major media event, broadcast live on New Year's Day, 1984 to multiple countries in East Asia, Europe, and North America via intercontinental satellite transmission. The total estimated audience of twenty-five million people watched the hour-long program in real time. The program featured live and pre-recorded performances by Paik's artists colleagues including Laurie Anderson, Joseph Beuys, John Cage, Charlotte Moorman, Merce Cunningham, and Allen Ginsburg, to name only a few. The segments were interlaced with popular music performances, comedy sketches, and a fashion show. Paik had long been interested in simultaneity of live television that connects separate geographic locations. In the early 1960s, he conceived an unrealized piano concert in which a pianist in San Francisco plays the left hand part, while another in Shanghai plays the right hand part. Quite contrary to his earlier video performances with Moorman, where the moving image is enmeshed with the performative body that sees/is seen, Paik's later work such as *Mr. Orwell* demonstrates the body and sensory experience as fragmented, dispersed, mediated, and constructed by communication technologies.

While gradually working less with video, Dan Graham furthered his interest in presenting vision as an embodied action and intersubjective process through pavilions such as *Public Space/Two Audiences* (1976) and *Two Way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube* (1981/1991) [Fig. 97]. By using two-way mirror, the artist created an environment where ambulatory viewers' experience unfolds in a phenomenological process between transparency and reflection. The viewers not only see others through the two-way mirror but also see themselves seeing (reflected on the surface) and being seen by others.

By 1980, both Videofreex and TVTV disbanded. The collectives' handheld vision and

unrefined vérité style were soon appropriated by reality TV shows on commercial networks. As historian Deirdre Boyle notes, “guerrilla television’s discovery that ordinary people are fascinating subjects for television programming was twisted into the exploitation of ‘ordinary people’ on cheap shows that appeal to sadomasochistic audience interests.”³³⁶ Boyle, however, observes that in the 1980s, a new generation of grassroots activists and organizations picked up a video camera to address various political issues including homelessness, environmental threats, and AIDS.

Videofreex and TVTV’s works have been acknowledged as predecessors of AIDS activist videos.³³⁷ The collectives’ affective approach to others through embodied, haptic vision was shared by the activists, though their videos might not grapple with the same issues that concerned the latter. Disregarding complexities of the issue, mainstream media tended to unfairly portray individuals with the disease in mere stereotypes: “the white gay man wasting away from AIDS, the innocent victim and the drug abuser of color.”³³⁸ The media’s objectification of people with AIDS (PWAs) perhaps enabled figures like William F. Buckley Jr., who infamously proposed “the AIDS tattoo” to publicly express hostility toward their bodies and humanity.³³⁹ Between the late 1980s and mid-1990s, there was an outpouring of AIDS activist videos that sought to fight the grave misrepresentation of HIV and PWAs by the mainstream media. Handheld vision frequently appears in the videos that brings us close to those in front of the camera.³⁴⁰ We become acutely aware of their breathing bodies and the experience unfolds in an

³³⁶ Boyle, 205.

³³⁷ Jim Hubbard, “A Short History of AIDS Activist Video,” AIDS Activist Videotape Collection (1985-2000), New York Public Library.
<https://archives.nypl.org/mss/3622#overview>

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Buckley, “Crucial Steps in Combating the AIDS Epidemic; Identify All the Carriers,” *The New York Times* (March 18, 1986), A27.

³⁴⁰ See, for example, Barbara Hammer’s *Snow Job: The Media Hysteria of AIDS* (1986) and Peter Friedman’s *Silverlake Life: The View from Here* (1988-1992).

intersubjective and affective relationship. Of course, examining how AIDS activist videos and films present embodied and affective visuality is a question that merits a separate book-length project and it is beyond this dissertation's focus. Despite that, I refer to AIDS activism because it was a rare example in 1980s' American media and cultural landscapes that brought the lived body back into the public eye and consciousness—both in the streets and on the screen. In addition, the activists' bodies and embodied vision were precisely meant to challenge first their invisibility then the mainstream media's detached, objectified vision.

Perhaps, early video practitioners in the 1960s and 1970s did not foresee that a great number of individuals would carry their own portable video camera on the cellular phone as we do today. What they also did not anticipate is that video technology could contribute to a culture of disembodied and impersonal communication, rather than creating a situation for affective relationships.

FIGURES

CHAPTER 1



Fig. 1. Nam June Paik, *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*, Mixed media, 1969, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

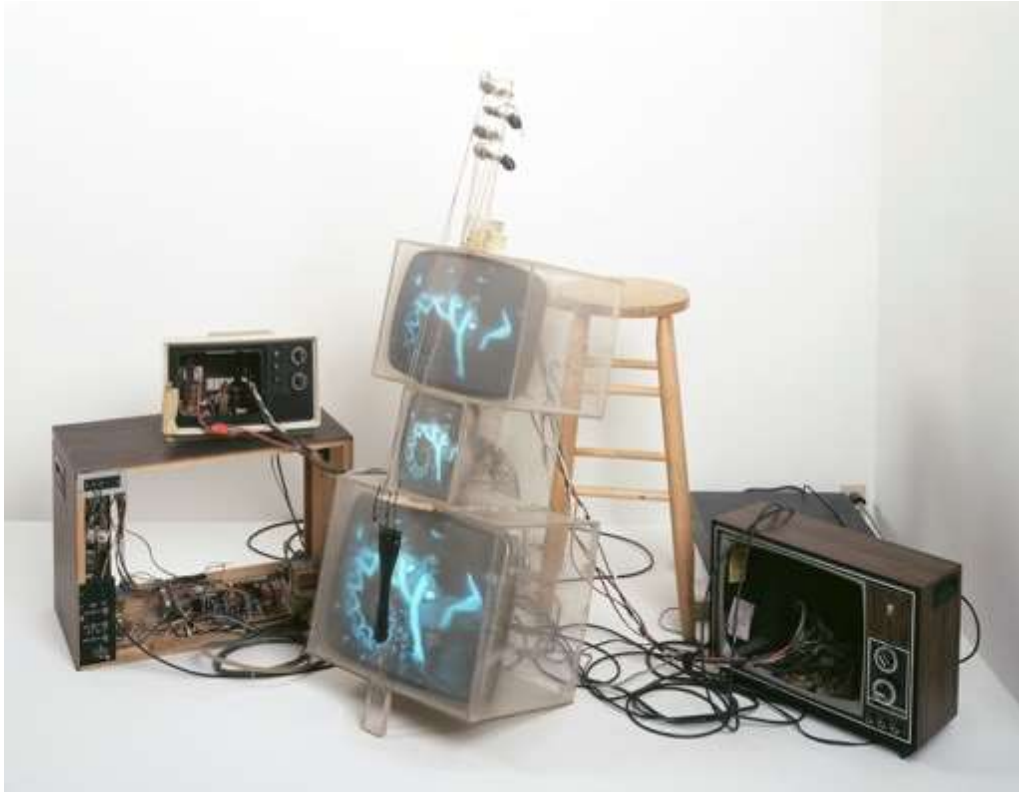


Fig. 2. Nam June Paik, *TV Cello*, Mixed media, 1971, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.



Fig. 3. Charlotte Moorman performs Nam June Paik's *TV Cello* wearing *TV Glasses*, Galeria Bonino, New York City, 1971.

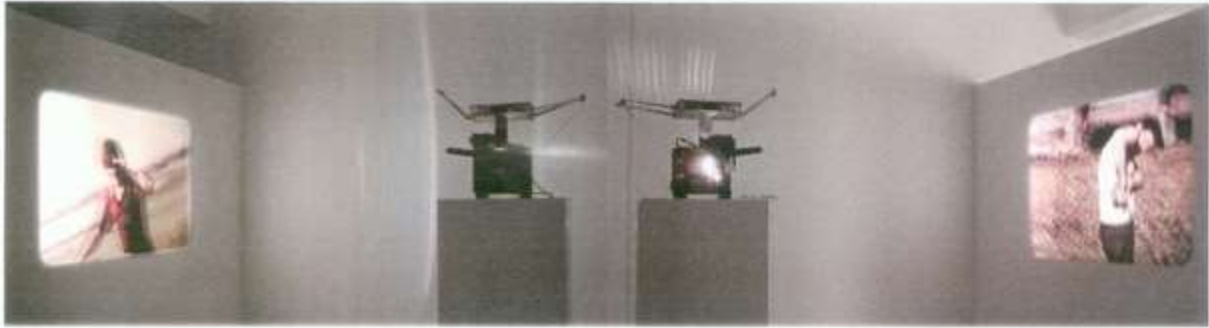


Fig. 4. Dan Graham, *Helix/Spiral*, Two Super 8mm films transferred to 16mm film (color, silent, 5min., 26 sec.), 1973, Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 5. Dara Birnbaum, *Attack Piece*, Two-channel Video: Super 8mm Film and 35mm slides (black and white, sound, 7min., 40sec.), Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.



Fig. 6. Vito Acconci, *Centers*, Single-channel video (black and white, sound, 22min., 28 sec.), 1971.



Fig. 7. Carolee Schneemann, *Eye Body #4* from *Eye Body: 36 Transformative Actions for Camera*, Gelatin Silver Print, 1963, Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 8. Nam June Paik, *Zen for Film* from *Fluxkit*, Plastic box with offset label containing film loop, 1965, Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 9. Nam June Paik performing *Zen for Film*, *New Cinema Festival I*, Astor PL. Playhouse, New York City, (November 2, 1965), Photo by Peter J. Moore.



Fig. 10. Nam June Paik performing *Zen for Film*, *New Cinema Festival I*, Astor PL. Playhouse, New York City (November 2, 1965), Photo by Peter J. Moore.



Fig. 11. Charlotte Moorman performs John Cage's *26'1.1499" for a String Player* with Cage (still from the Movietone News film *Avant-Garde Music* (1963), film, ITN Source).



Fig. 12. Ben Vautier, *Total Art Matchbox* from *Flux Year Box 2*, Carboard matchbox with offset label, 1968, Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 13. Various artists, *Flux Year Box 2*, Mixed media, 1967, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

CHAPTER 2



Fig. 14. Nam June Paik performing *Étude for Pianoforte*, Atelier Mary Bauermeister, Köln, West Germany (October 6, 1960), Photo by Klaus Barisch.

Sinfonia for 20 Rooms (first sketch 1968 Spanish Colony) (1961-1962)

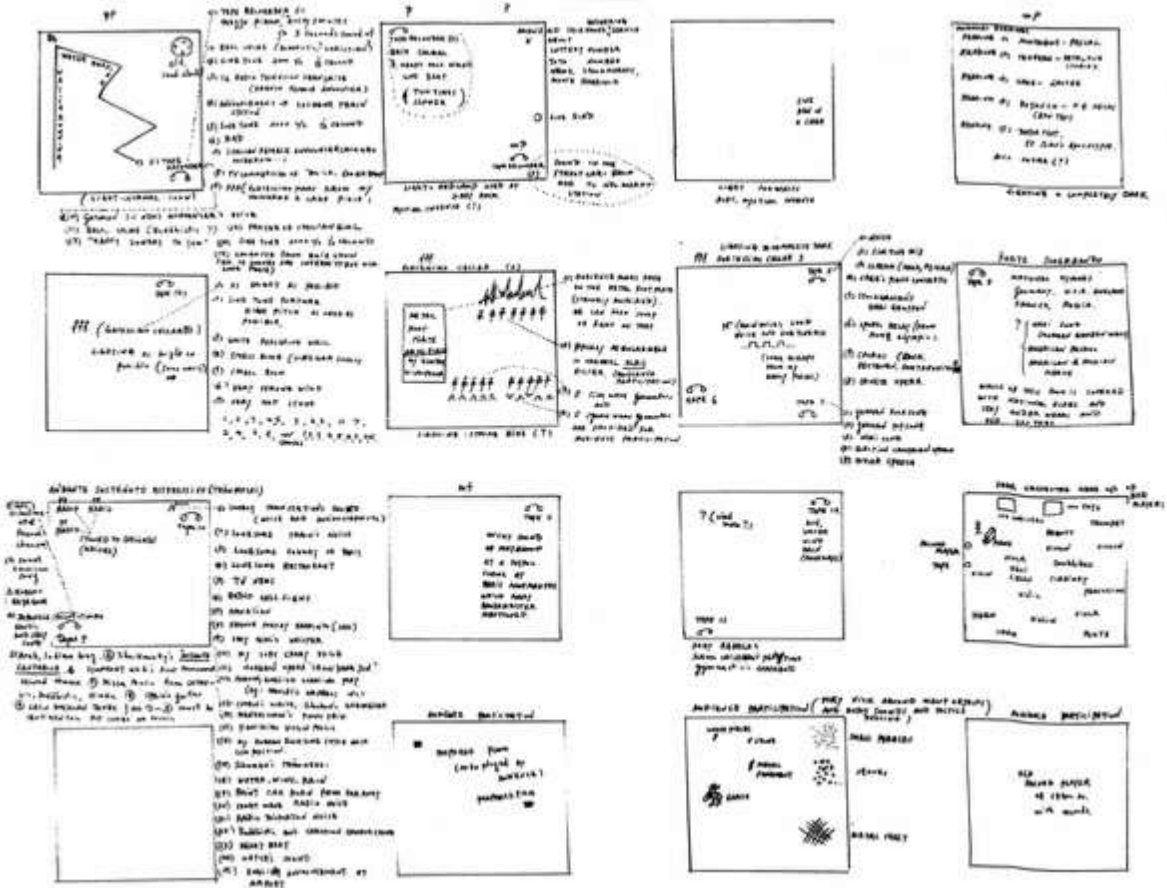


Fig. 15. Paik, *Sinfonia for 20 Rooms*, 1961.



Fig. 16. CDU poster featuring Konrad Adenauer for the Federal Election, West Germany, 1961.



Fig. 17. CDU and SPD election posters, 1961. Photo courtesy of Das Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, Germany.

N AM J UNE PAIK

EXP *osition of music*

EL *ectronic television*

11. - 20. März 1963

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Galerie Parnass

Kindergarten der »Alten«	How to be satisfied with 70%
Feticism of »idea«	Erinnerung an das 20. Jahrhundert
objets sonores	sonolized room
Instruments for Zen-exercise	Prepared W. C.
Bagatelles americaines etc.	que sais-je ?
Do it your ...	HOMMAGE à Rudolf Augstein
Freigegeben ab 18 Jahre	Synchronisation als ein Prinzip akausaler Verbindungen
Is the TIME without contents possible?	A study of German Idioteology etc.

Artistic Collaborators....**Thomas Schmitt**
Frank Trowbridge
Technic.....**Günther Schmitz**
M. Zenzen

Fig. 18. Exhibition poster for *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963).



Fig. 19. Students protesting against the government reaction to the *Spiegel* Affair, Frankfurt am Main, West Germany (October 30, 1962), Photo by Heinz-Jürgen Göttert.



Fig. 20. Paik, *Mementos of the 20th Century* installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Rolf Jährling.



Fig. 21. Cover of *Der Spiegel* No.45 (November 7, 1962).



Fig. 22. Cover of *Kontraste: Eine Illustrierte für junge Menschen* (1960).



Fig. 23. Paik, *Piano Intégral* (1958-1963) installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Montwé.



Fig. 24. Paik, *Piano Intégral* (1958-1963) installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Montwé.



Fig. 25. Joseph Beuys playing *Piano Intégral* (1958-1963) installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Leve.



Fig. 26. A visitor playing *Piano Intégral* (1958-1963) installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Montwé.



Fig. 27. Visitors playing *Piano Intégral* (1958-1963) installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Montwé.



Fig. 28. Joseph Beuys destroying one of Paik's *Piano Intégral* (1958-1963) installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Leve.



Fig. 29. Paik performing *One for Violin Solo* (1962) during Neo-Dada in Music at Kammerspiele, Düsseldorf, West Germany (June 16, 1962), Photo by George Maciunas.



Fig. 30. Phillip Corner performing *Piano Activities* with Emmet Williams, George Maciunas, Benjamin Patterson, Dick Higgins, and Alison Knowles during Fluxus International Festival of the Newest Music at Hörsaal des Städtischen Museums, Wiesbaden, West Germany (September 1, 1962).



Fig. 31. A visitor demonstrating *Random Access* installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Montwé.



Fig. 32. A visitor demonstrating *Random Access* installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Montwé.



Fig. 33. A visitor examining *Record Shashlik* installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Montwé.



Paik, Caspari

Fig. 34. Paik and Carlheinz Caspari performing in Stockhausen's *Originale*, Theater am Dom, Köln, West Germany (October 26-November 6, 1961).



Fig. 35. Paik performing in Stockhausen's *Originale*, Theater am Dom, Köln, West Germany (October 26-November 6, 1961).



Fig. 36. Eric Andersen, *Opus 90* (1990) installation view, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark.

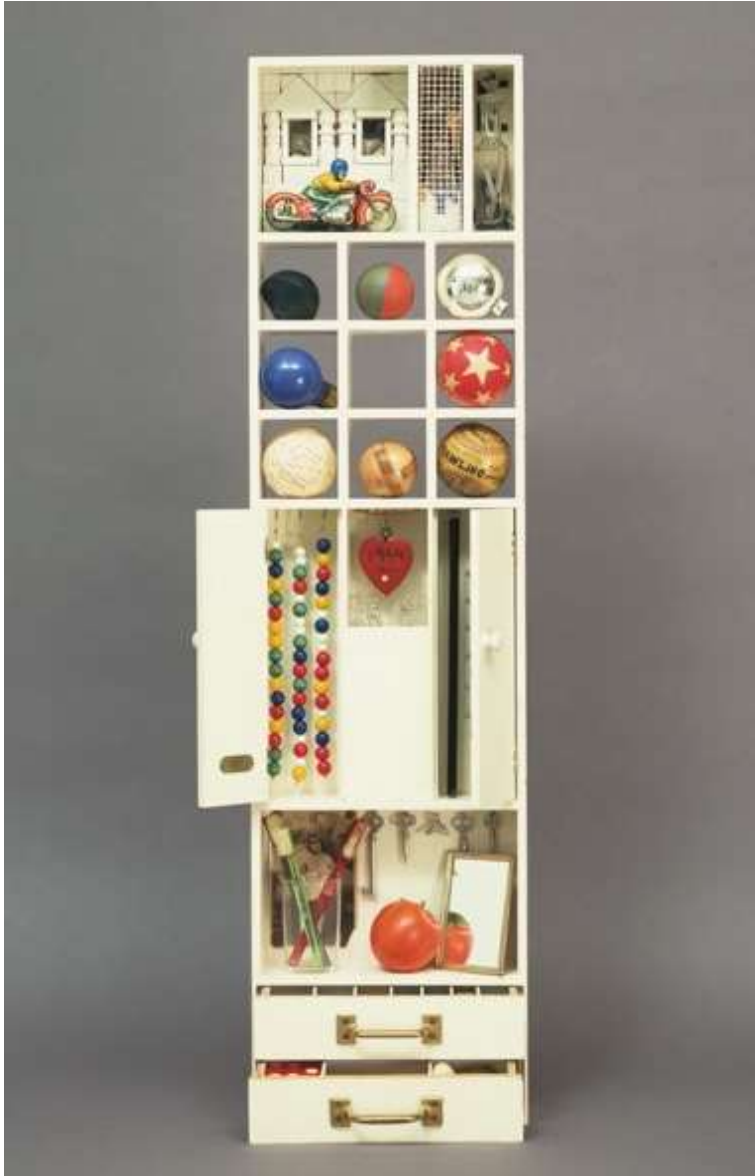


Fig. 37. George Brecht, *Repository*, Mixed Media, 1961, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

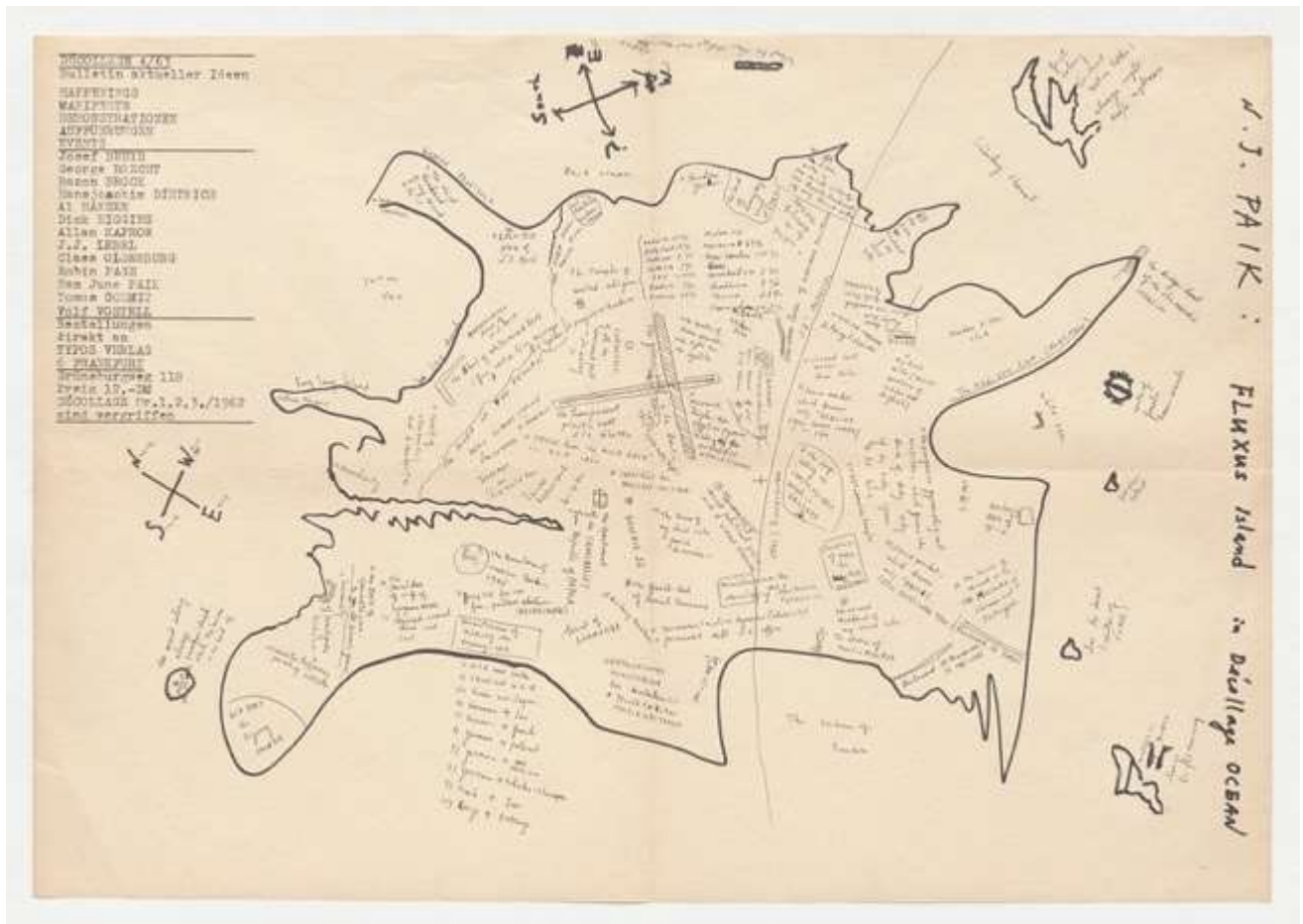


Fig. 38. Paik, *Fluxus Island in Décollage Ocean*, Ink on Paper, 1963, Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna, Austria.



Fig. 39. Mannequin in the bathroom, *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Montwé.



Fig. 40. Heo Jong, *The Body of Kim Ju-Yeol*, Photo on paper, 1960.



Fig. 41. *Pusan Ilbo* reporting the discovery Kim Ju-Yeol's body (April 12, 1960).



Fig. 42. Flyer for *Exposition of Music*, Offset print on newspaper (*Kyunghyang Shinmun*), *Exposition of Music*, *Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963).



Fig. 43. Paik performing Zen for Head during Fluxus International Festival of the Newest Music at Hörsaal des Städtischen Museums, Wiesbaden, West Germany (September 1, 1962), Photo by Hamut Rokort.



Fig. 44. Paik performing Zen for Head during Fluxus International Festival of the Newest Music at Hörsaal des Städtischen Museums, Wiesbaden, West Germany (September 1, 1962), Photo by Hamut Rokort.



Fig. 45. Paik performing Zen for Head during Fluxus International Festival of the Newest Music at Hörsaal des Städtischen Museums, Wiesbaden, West Germany (September 1, 1962), Photo by Hamut Rokort.



Fig. 46. Paik performing Zen for Head during Fluxus International Festival of the Newest Music at Hörsaal des Städtischen Museums, Wiesbaden, West Germany (September 1, 1962), Photo by Hamut Rokort.



Fig. 47. Paik, *Zen for TV*, TV set, 1963-1975, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, Austria.



Fig. 48. Paik demonstrating *Zen for Walking*, *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Montwé.

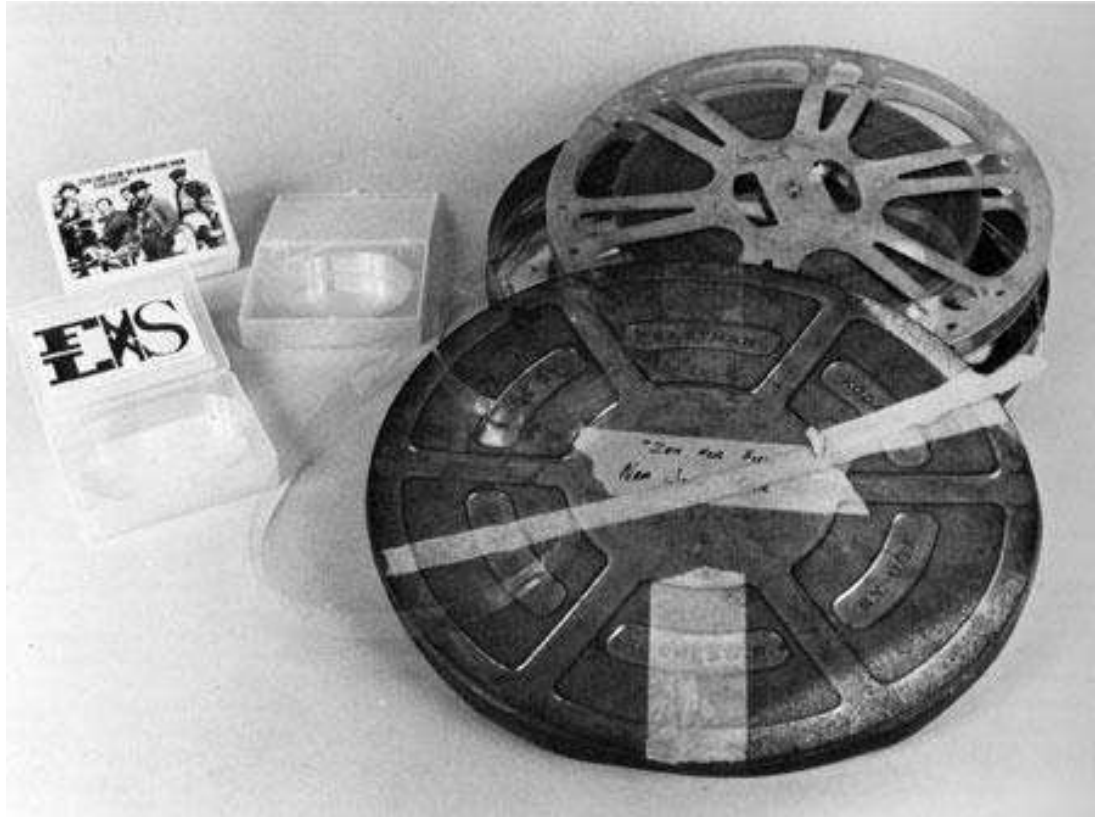


Fig. 49. Paik, *Zen for Film*, clear 16-mm film leader, 1964.



Fig. 50. A group of modified TV sets installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Peter Brötzmann.



Fig. 51. A group of modified TV sets installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Montwé.



Fig. 52. *Kuba TV* installed in *Exposition of Music, Electronic Television*, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, West Germany (March 11-20, 1963), Photo by Manfred Montwé.

CHAPTER 3



Fig. 53. Charlotte Moorman performs in *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*.



Fig. 54. Charlotte Moorman performs with Nam June Paik's *TV Cello*.



Fig. 55. Charlotte Moorman performs on Nam June Paik's *TV Cello*, wearing *TV Glasses*, New York City, 1971, Photo by Takahiko Imura.



Fig. 56. Charlotte Moorman plays “Human Cello [Nam June Paik],” 1965, Photo by Peter Moore.



Fig. 57. Charlotte Moorman performs Nam June Paik’s *Variations on a Theme by Saint-Saëns*, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1966, Photo by Lars Hansen.



Fig. 58. A protestor disposing of a bra at the Miss America pageant demonstration in Atlantic City, New Jersey, 1968, Photo by William Sauro.

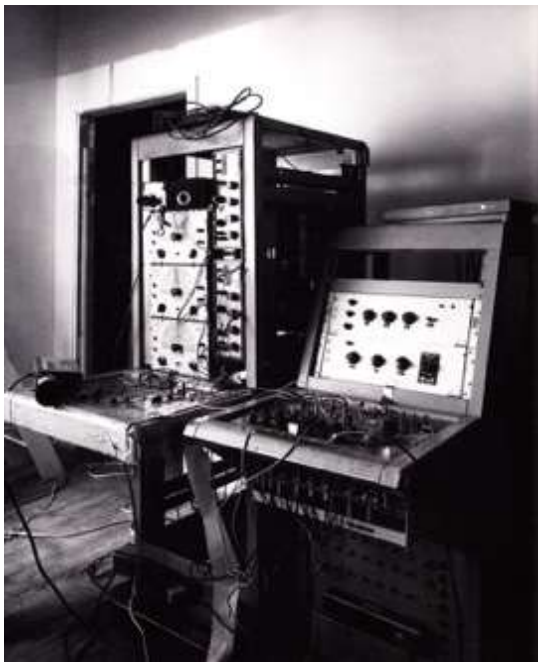


Fig. 59. Nam June Paik and Shuya Abe, Paik-Abe Synthesizer, 1970.



Fig. 60. Robert Rauschenberg, *White Painting* [three panel], Latex Paint on Canvas, 1951, SFMOMA.



Fig. 61. Malcom Brown, "The Burning Monk [Thick Quang Duc]," 1963.



Fig. 62. Nam June Paik, (Installation view) *TV Buddha*, Video installation, closed-circuit, 18th-century Buddha statue, 1974, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Photo by Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.



Fig. 63. (Installation view) Nam June Paik performs *TV Buddha*, *Projekt '74*, 1974, Cologne, Germany.



Fig. 66. *Body Press* production photo, 1970-1972.



Fig. 67. Dan Graham, stills from *Body Press* (with Susan Ensley and Ed Bowes), 16 Film (color, silent, 8min. [loop]), 1970-1972.



Fig. 68. Richard Serra, *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)*, Lead antimony, 1969-1986, Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 69. Richard Serra, *Verblast*, pencil on paper, 1967-1968, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

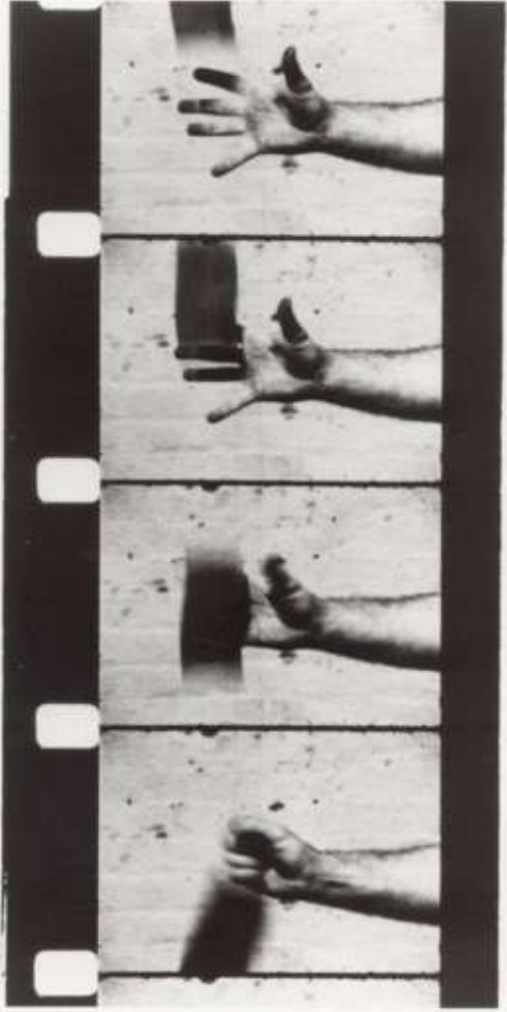


Fig. 70. Richard Serra, *Hand Catching Lead*, 16mm film (black-and-white, silent, 3min., 30sec.), 1968.



Fig. 71. Dan Graham, Photographs from *TV Camera/Monitor Performance*, 1970.



Fig. 72. Dara Birnbaum, *Attack Piece*, Two-channel Video: Super 8mm Film and 35mm slides (black and white, sound, 7min., 40sec.), 1975, Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.

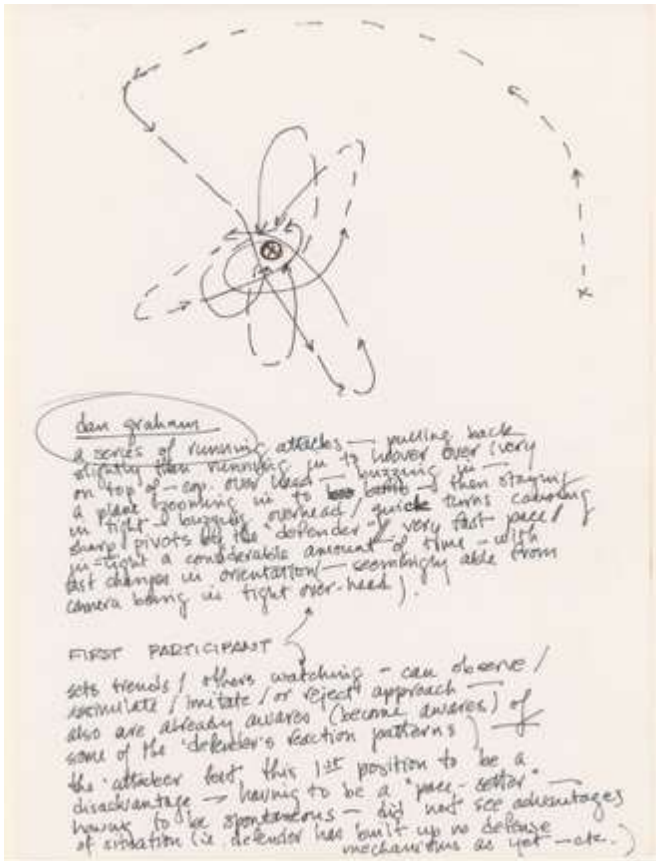


Fig. 73. Dara Birnbaum, analysis sketch for *Attack Piece*, 1975.

CHAPTER 4



Fig. 74. Still from David Cort, *Mayday Realtime*, video (black & white, sound, 59:45 min.), 1971.



Fig. 75. Still from David Cort, *Mayday Realtime*, video (black & white, sound, 59:45 min.), 1971.



Fig. 76. Still from David Cort, *Mayday Realtime*, video (black & white, sound, 59:45 min.), 1971.



Fig. 77. Still from David Cort, *Mayday Realtime*, video (black & white, sound, 59:45 min.), 1971.



Fig. 78. Still from Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, DC, *The Whole World Is Watching*, film (color, sound, 28:10min.), 1971.



Fig. 79. Still from Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, DC, *The Whole World Is Watching*, film (color, sound, 28:10min.), 1971.



Fig. 80. Still from Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, DC, *The Whole World Is Watching*, film (color, sound, 28:10min.), 1971.



Fig. 81. Still from Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, DC, *The Whole World Is Watching*, film (color, sound, 28:10min.), 1971.



Fig. 82. Still from Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, DC, *The Whole World Is Watching*, film (color, sound, 28:10min.), 1971.



Fig. 83. Still from Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, DC, *The Whole World Is Watching*, film (color, sound, 28:10min.), 1971.



Fig. 84. Art Workers' Coalition protest at the Guggenheim Museum after the cancellation of Hans Haacke's show, May 1, 1971.



Fig. 85. Hans Haacke, *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings*, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971.

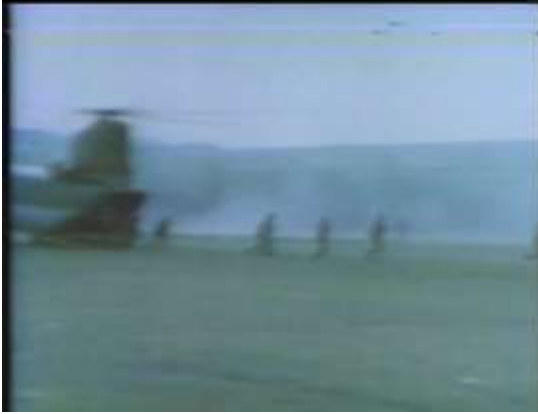


Fig. 86. Still from Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, DC, *The Whole World Is Watching*, film (color, sound, 28:10min.), 1971.



Fig. 87. Still from Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, DC, *The Whole World Is Watching*, film (color, sound, 28:10min.), 1971.



Fig. 88. Still from Mayday Video Collective, *Mayday 1971 Raw*, video (black & white, sound, 66 min.), [2017].



Fig. 89. Still from Mayday Video Collective, *Mayday 1971 Raw*, video (black & white, sound, 66 min.), [2017].



Fig. 90. Police arrest Abbie Hoffman during a meeting of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, Washington, DC, October 1968, Bettmann/COBRIS.



Fig. 91. Still from Videofreex, *Subject to Change*, video (black & white, sound), 1969.



Fig. 92. Still from Videofreex, *Subject to Change*, video (black & white, sound), 1969.



Fig. 93. Carolee Schneemann performs *Snobs*, Martinique Theatre, New York, 1967.



Fig. 94. Stills from Andy Warhol, *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*, mixed media, 1967, photo by Ronald Nameth.

CONCLUSION



Fig. 95. Dara Birnbaum, *Rio VideoWall*, 1989, Rio Shopping/Entertainment Complex, Atlanta, Georgia, Photo courtesy of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, NEA Birnbaum Collection.



Fig. 96. Still from Dara Birnbaum, *Rio Videowall*, 1989, Rio Shopping/Entertainment Complex, Atlanta, Georgia, Photo courtesy of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, NEA Birnbaum Collection.



Fig. 97 Dan Graham, *Two Way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube*, Two-way mirror glass and stainless steel, 1981/1991, Photo courtesy of Marian Goodman Gallery

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