

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY

The Photographers' Gallery Limited 5 & 8 Great Newport Street London WC2H 7HY England Telephone: 01-240 5511/2

NOTES ON THE VIDEOS II

The programme on this machine is made up of four separate works and the total running time is 46 minutes.

ROOM WITH A VIEW by Christopher Andrews 12 Minutes

Christopher Andrews writes about his work as follows:-

"All the Video tapes I have made have three major related themes: reality, perception and representation. I would like to give some guide to the viewer as to what it is they are watching, and some hint as to why the tapes are constructed in the way they are.

I started working with photographs seriously in 1971. I wanted to take 'artistic' photographs; images that did more than just document something. I went on trying to do this for some time. Interestingly, I tried to do this by taking photographs that really were documents. I was obsessed by the so-called 'straight print', and did not believe in special printing techniques or filters - just very carefully composed arrangements of things. I suppose I was searching for a kind of poetry in ordinary reality.

As my images became more accomplished, they seemed to become increasingly obscure to those who saw them. I began to look for ways of contextualising my work, thus making it more understandable. This eventually led me to abandon individual images and to explore ideas based on sequence. This work with sequence helped me to see that I needed additional levels of meaning to run in parallel with the images I was constructing. I worked with Slide/Tape and film as well as black and white videos to develop these ideas.

More than any other medium, colour video seems to have brought me closer to the flexibility that I want. It allows control over the element of sound, time and colour. The video tapes are attempts at total orchestration of these elements.

This brings me back to the themes I mentioned earlier. A medium such as video, working as it does through illusion and representation masks issues relating to ways of seeing and thinking in that its image is an acceptable facsimile for reality. Its cultural acceptability renders it almost totally 'transparent' unless methods for its production are challenged. Normally TV relies on the perpetualisation of numerous standards, ranging from what's news-worthy to what's fashionable. The political implications of this are undeniable.

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In its broadest sense, video contains all the visual media. It is comparable to print in its scope. I am working in a very particular area within video. This area cannot ignore the experience of television, but it also cannot allow TV to define it. New developments will influence the way in which we understand ourselves, just as in the past the photograph changed our view of everything."

AN AMERICAN ROMANCE by Marty St. James and Anne Wilson 6 Minutes

This piece was made by Marty St. James and Anne Wilson with reference to a diary they kept during a recent trip to the States and encompasses references to the nuclear threat.

CAPTURES/ECRAN Dominique Belloir, France, 1982

At the beginning of Captures/Ecran we see an old man looking through a hole in an old blank wall as if looking at a peep show, after which the images fill with holes. The next shot shows a street in Paris followed by a zoom in on a demolished building. Furniture and photos are still present - the ruin is then isolated. Faces and fragments of faces and fragments of subtitles, often detailed and recorded from a TV screen, rampage through the city. "Pourquoi ... Helas ... Aimer ... C'est Vrai ..." a violinist: television pictures loom through his music stand. Television seems to be everywhere and sometimes with vengeance. This work reveals a powerful use of the specific characteristics of video.

(from catalogue World Wide Video Festival, Kijkhuis, The Hague, 1983)

THE NEWS, 1980 by Ian Breakwell 18 Minutes

Ian Breakwell has exhibited in numerous exhibitions in the U.K. and other countries, in addition to several one-man exhibitions of his work in a variety of media in London, Paris and Buenos Aires. His works are represented in public and private collections. His best known works are his Diaries, the collection of writings and visuals on which he has worked since 1965. He has made several short films which have been shown in international festivals. His work has also been presented in the theatre and on television. In addition from 1976-1980 he was artist consultant with the Department of Health. His writings have appeared in publications in many countries. From 1980-81, he was Artist-in-Residence at Kettles Yard, Kings College, Cambridge.

The News 1980 - A television newsreader recounts the minutiae of small-town life with due solemnity, but reveals a disturbing element of anarchic behaviour amongst the town's old-age pensioners.

All these films are available from London Video Arts.