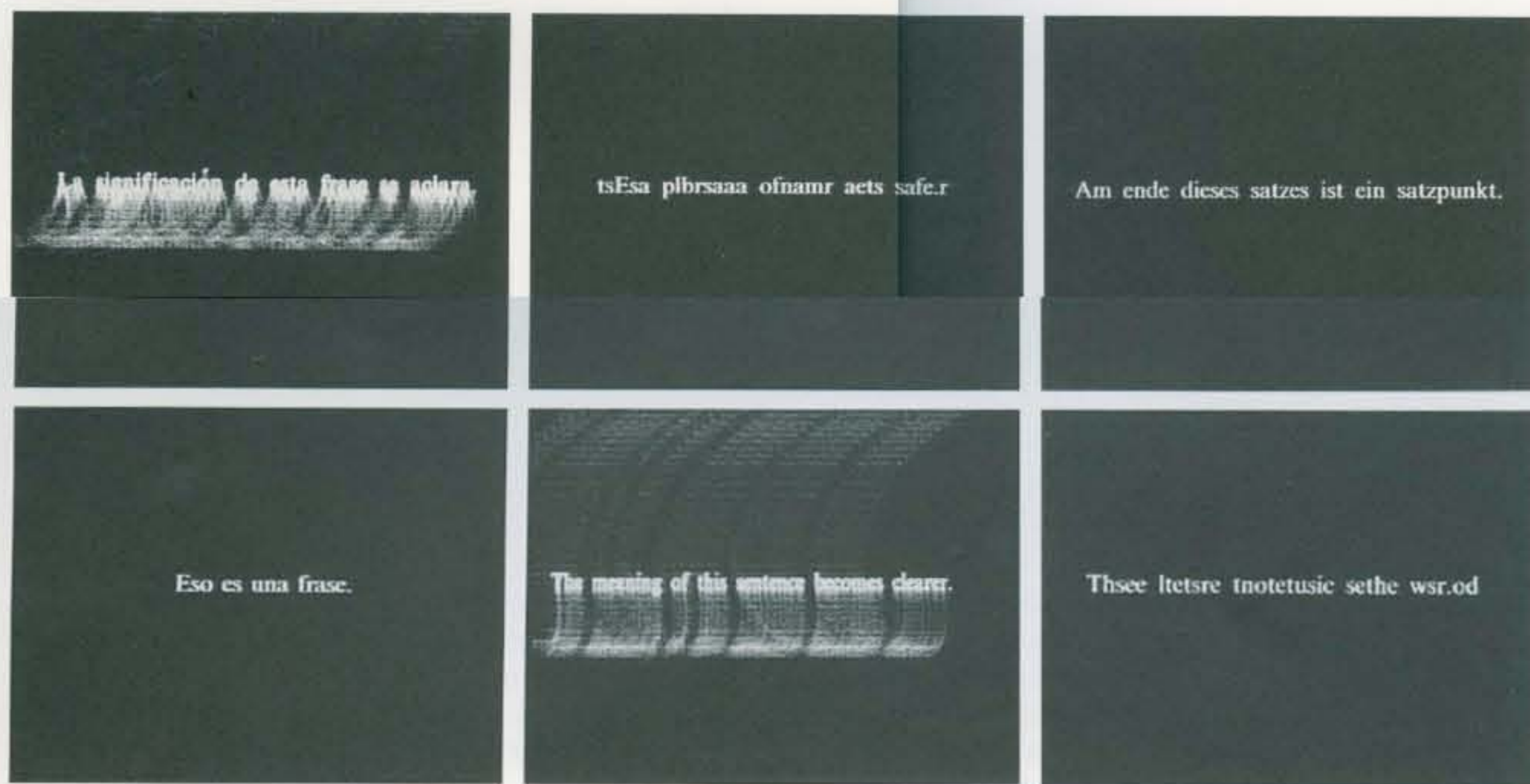


Stephen Partridge

Sentences, videotape, various lengths, 1988-1993, sound by David Cunningham.

Introduction.
Dr Ian Graham-Bryce,
Principal, University of Dundee,
10 February, 1999.



It is a privilege to be asked to write this introduction to the publication which accompanies Professor Partridge's Inaugural Exhibition and I do so with pleasure and enthusiasm.

Stephen Partridge studied Fine Art at Maidstone College of Art and the Royal College of Art from 1972-76. Since 1974 his principal medium has been video. After qualifying he lived and worked in London and was lecturer in charge of Video and Performance at the Centre for Media Studies at Coventry Polytechnic. In 1983 he moved to Scotland to seize the opportunity provided by Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design to establish a new type of Department within an Art College - one in which time-based art had its own status as a discipline, rather than a subsidiary area within fine art and design. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1991 and awarded a personal chair in 1997.

Working in a modern contemporary medium is undoubtedly exciting and that excitement is conveyed in

all Stephen Partridge's work. But it is also very challenging, not only because there are no artistic precedents, but also because it is necessary to overcome prejudices and to create opportunities for work to be made and exhibited. Professor Partridge has risen to these challenges with distinction.

The quality and significance of Stephen Partridge's pioneering work was recognised at an early stage. His creations were included in the Video Show at the Serpentine Gallery in 1975 - the first show of its kind in the UK. He has subsequently appeared in many major shows, for example those at the Tate Gallery, the Paris Biennale and the Kitchen in New York. His works for television include 'Dialogue for Two Players', 1984, commissioned by Channel 4. His work has been screened at major festivals and galleries around the world. Throughout his work he has set standards and challenged the limits of what can be achieved within the medium, mastering the underlying technical complexities.

But Stephen Partridge's contribution is by no means confined to his own personal works of art. He has played his full part in establishing his discipline and in developing innovative new approaches and courses. In his first lectureship at Coventry he established an experimental course in media art and designed facilities to support students working in video and related media. Subsequent achievements include, The School of Television and Imaging itself, The Television Workshop (a production agency for film makers and media artists) and 19:4:90 Television Interventions (a project to make short interventions in television schedules). The calibre and esteem of students and his many collaborations with colleagues testify to the success and importance of these initiatives.

A personal chair is the highest academic honour which a university can bestow on a member of staff. It is an honour which Stephen Partridge richly deserves as will be apparent from this exhibition.

List of Works in the Exhibition:

This is a Sentence.
1999.
Interactive CD-ROM.
A collaboration with David Cunningham.
Produced by Film and Video Umbrella.

Easy Piece.
1974-1996.
Installation.

Monitor 1.
1975.
10 minute B/W videotape.

...for one of your smiles.
1999.
Installation for two projectors.
Sound by David Cunningham.

Chimera
1998.
A four channel installation for four video projections onto suspended latex screens.
A collaboration with Elaine Shemilt.

Slap Movie.
1999.
Miniature interactive installation for mini-projector.

Intangible Bodies.
1999.
Limited edition of 10 in a series of 30 digital prints and etchings.
A collaboration with Elaine Shemilt.

Sentences.
1999.
Series of A4 Glass etched wall works.

The Ghost in the Machine

Opposite, ...for one of your smiles, installation, 1999.

John Calcutt is an art historian, critic and writer. He is lecturer in Historical and Critical Studies at Glasgow School of Art.

February, 1999.

On-line and off-centre, each of us a desiring machine, a disorderly system flowing through language and representation. A machine "functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and starts. It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks. [...] Everywhere it is machines... machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections."¹ We plug in, and are plugged into. Mouths, breasts, eyes, penises, tongues, vaginas. Body and mind. The unimaginably complex network of electronic connections with its promise of infinity and omnipresence is a delirious, fantastical externalisation of our neural system, a digital parody of human consciousness, an unfinished map of our desires. Switch on and interface.

"We have become mechanical. It is already a truism to talk about contact lenses and walkmans as prostheses that we have assimilated into our bodies. [...] The new virtual reality kits project tiny laser images directly into your retinas, a perfect 3D illusion. With the aid of a small, head-mounted camera, you can have the illusion of being exactly where you are."²

A new economy of body and desire is with us. Body as terminal, body as screen, desire re-routed. If pushed to name the pulse coursing through Stephen Partridge's recent work, I would offer desire: desire in the viewer, desire in the viewed, desire in the system of representation.

Notoriously abstract, impossible to define or precisely locate, desire is the fuel of the unconscious, of language and of representation. Desire to know, desire to invade, desire to possess, desire to complete. Desire cannot tolerate incompleteness. It wants to commandeer that which is unattainable, to incorporate that which is other, to restore that which is lacking; and yet it is condemned to failure and thus to futile repetition. This thwarted movement of desire towards its object is similar to that incomplete movement from sign to meaning within language. In fact, according to Lacan's formulation, the unconscious is structured like a language. Language, the unconscious and desire: an inseparable trinity.

Take a sentence. Any sentence. This is a sentence, for example. Its ability to signify anything beyond its sheer material presence as black marks on a white ground involves a dynamic of both delays and projections. Obviously, the sentence projects forward in time; we have to follow its linear sequentiality from opening capital letter to closing full stop. But as the sentence

progresses, so it is also engaged in acts of relay and re-collection. The full resonance - the 'correct' meaning - of each individual word is dependent upon the ghostly traces it harbours of those which have preceded it. By the same token, this semantic process involves anticipation. "I went to the bar..." The precise meaning of "bar" is suspended (an iron bar? a court room? a high jump bar? the hotel bar?), only to be revealed in retrospect. "To bend it", "to plead my case", "to jump it", "to have a drink": "Bar" is heavy with an anticipation which is only articulated retrospectively by "drink". "Drink", on the other hand, is pregnant with the precipitation of "bar" - the chances are it will be alcoholic.

This temporal, sequential aspect of the sentence's component elements (sometimes called their syntagmatic relation) is crucial. (Try changing the word order of any sentence and see how easily it collapses into unintelligibility.) There is, however another movement which operates alongside the syntagmatic. The syntagmatic structure of a sentence provides, in fact, the framework for a host of possible paradigmatic selections and permutations within its individual units (e.g. subject/verb/object) "Jim likes running", "Anne hates running", "Anne likes swimming", "Jim hates Anne", and so on. In fact, the network of implications opened up here is potentially infinite:

"Certain forces of association unite... the words 'actually present' in a discourse with all the other words in the lexical system, whether or not they appear as 'words'.³

Language's excessive, unruly proliferation is equally characteristic of desire, and both are marked by loss, by incompleteness:

"The disastrous separation of desire from its objects has already occurred. Such is the price that human beings unwittingly pay for their admission to language [...]. A wish can be fulfilled; desire cannot: it is insatiable, and it; objects are perpetually in flight."⁴

Now Stephen Partridge's work isn't, of course, in the business of providing academic demonstrations of structural linguistics or psychoanalytic theory. Nevertheless, spend some time exploring the labyrinthine passages of *This Is A Sentence*, 1989 (his interactive CD ROM, produced in collaboration with the artist/composer David Cunningham) and all of the above lie quietly in wait. The chase is on, each successive click opening a new field of possibilities; but there is no final destination. Not only do the

syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations of the written word slip out of control in this electronic maze, but seemingly endless sequences of unpredictable paradigmatic connections between the written and spoken word, visual imagery and music intensify the blind thrill of the desire-driven search. The effect is like that of the tumultuous cascade of delirious images released by the unconscious of the dreamer. Again the mouse is clicked. And again. The more desire urges us on, the more elusive its quarry becomes.

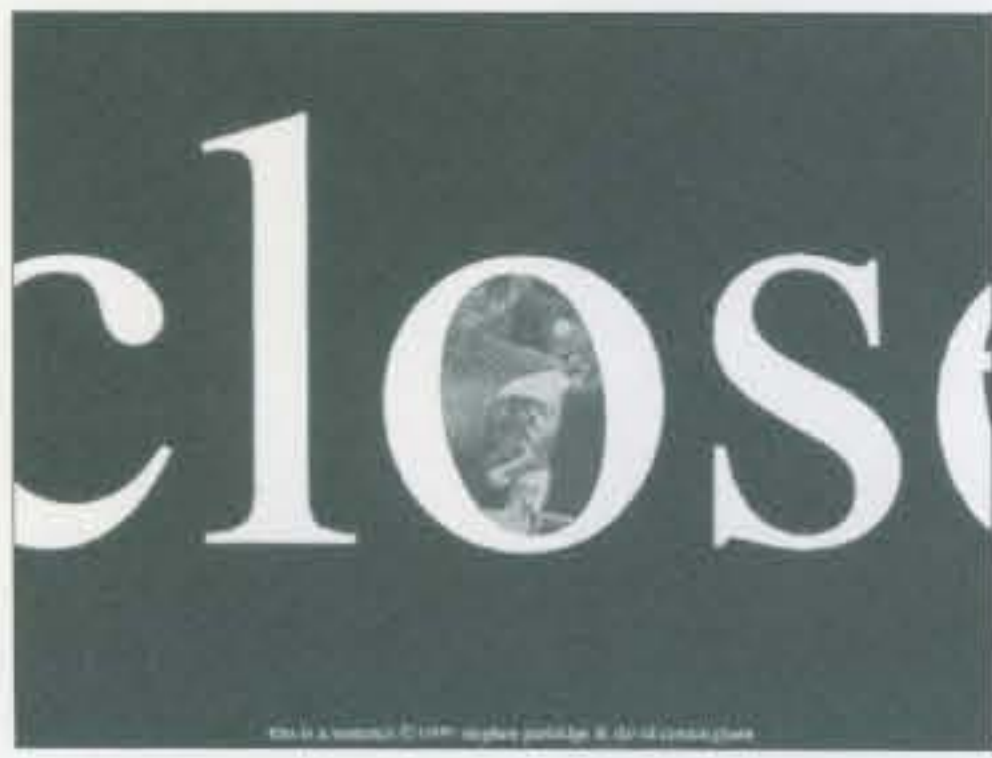
"Words and rocks", said Robert Smithson, "contain a language that follows a syntax of splits and ruptures. Look at any word long enough and you will see it open up into a series of faults, into a terrain of particles each containing its own void."⁵

My preceding account of language is now revealed as itself lacking. The underlying principle of language - and any other signifying system - is, in fact, radical difference and the "splits and ruptures" which this entails. The crucial aspect of the sign is not its inherent properties, but its capacity to differentiate itself at every level of its structure from all other signs. Language is thus an anti-architecture of spaces, gaps, distances, voids. Absence, not presence, is its fissured field.

It is a peculiarly modern(ist) idea that sight and language are utterly distinct. In fact, the linguistic inhabits the visual, just as imagery pervades the fabric of language. Furthermore, sight, in common with language, is driven by desire; sight, to take this further, is saturated with language and desire. The senses are not pure and innocent.

"Describing the child's difficult journey into adult sexual life, [Freud] would take as his model little scenarios, or the staging of events, which demonstrated the complexity of an essentially visual space, moments in which perception founders (the boy child refuses to believe the anatomical difference that he sees) or in which pleasure in looking tips over into the register of excess [...] Each time the stress falls on a problem of seeing. The sexuality lies less in the content of what is seen than in the subjectivity of the viewer, in the relationship between what is looked at and the developing sexual knowledge... The relationship between viewer and scene is always one of fracture, partial identification, pleasure and distrust. [...] [O]ur sexual identities as male or female, our confidence in language as true or false, and our security in the image we judge as perfect or flawed, are fantasies."⁶

These words constitute this sentence.



Left, This is a Sentence,
CD Rom and publication, 1999.
A collaboration with David Cunningham.

- 1 G Deleuze & F Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, Athlone Press, 1984, p.1.
- 2 S Cubitt, 'Photography and the sin of Onan', in A. Angus (ed) *(Re)visions of Sex*, Fotofeis Ltd, Edinburgh, 1997, p.53.
- 3 J. Derrida, *Dissemination*, Athlone Press, 1981, p.129-130.
- 4 M. Bowie, Lacan, Fontana, 1991, p.10.
- 5 R. Smithson, 'A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects', in N. Holt (ed) *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, New York University Press, 1979, p.87.
- 6 J. Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*, Verso, 1989, p.227.
- 7 R. Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, Blackwell, 1990, p. 9-10.
- 8 S. Cubitt, op cit, p.51-52.
- 9 R. Barthes, op cit, p. 7.

A great deal of Partridge's recent work deals with issues of sexuality and representation, but my aim here is not an extensive analysis of these pieces, rather to offer some general observations in their direction. My purpose is to suggest that they each, in their own way, deal with many of the issues outlined above.

The centrality accorded by Freud to the role of "little scenarios, or the staging of events" in the development of sexuality has already been noted, and it is precisely such "scenarios" and "stagings" of sexuality which feature prominently in *Intangible Bodies*, 1999 (a collaboration with artist and printmaker Elaine Shemilt). Slices of manicured nature (soft focus or finely detailed) and exquisitely lit interiors (grandiose or intimate - but always highly tasteful, highly "desirable") provide the fantasy-laden sets for Partridge's series of digitally manipulated photographic images. Within these time-locked scenarios the intricate sculptural forms of women's garments float shadowlessly, like the recently abandoned shells of some exotic species. The original source images were intended for a Japanese market, and the structures of desire and sexuality exposed by their "grammar" is revealing of the culture-specific aspects of fantasised sexuality. Ultimately, however, the series seems to be a morbid reflection upon absence, upon loss and, paradoxically perhaps, upon the very impossibility of the male's access to his sexualised fantasy object. The disappearance of the women's bodies - their removal from the field of sight - recalls the anxiety noted by Freud in relation to the boy's visual registering of sexual difference - the female's supposed "lack". The erotic impulse to see, to reveal, is matched by the horror of revealed nothingness and a consequent desire to conceal. Frequently the inability to deal satisfactorily with the perceived sexual difference of the female may divert the male's sexual drive into an attachment to an object - garments in these instances - which has a tangential (paradigmatic, perhaps) relation to the female body. Fragments, incompleteness and gaps are the mechanisms of desire here.

"Is not the most erotic portion of a body where the garment gapes? In perversion (which is the realm of textual pleasure) there are no "erogenous zones"...; it is intermittence... which is erotic: the intermittence of skin flashing between two articles of clothing...; it is this flash which seduces, or rather: the staging of an appearance-as-disappearance."⁷

But the body in pornography is reduced to a commodity, and the commodity conceals a void at its heart, an inability, as Frederic Jameson observed, to act as a conductor of psychic power. Gratification of the male's sexual desire is further hindered by the very medium Partridge uses:

"Caressing the screen with the cursor, touching its nodes with the tip of its pointer, clicking its pixels into close-up, the mouse is a fleshless finger touching a glass body without orifices. Leaving the wet chemistry of the darkroom as it forsakes the moist entrances of a

permeable body, digital manipulation is dry. [...] The digital image, locked away in its paradise of numbers, has learnt to escape the life and death of images by remaining untouchable... The most valuable part of a silicon photograph is the glass, the severe and impenetrable barrier..."⁸

It is in this context that Shemilt's delicate series of etchings become so effective. By offering a pictorial contradiction to Partridge's manipulated images (they dispense with "staging," they are monochromatic, the images have been impressed into an absorbent substrate, the process of image generation is additive rather than subtractive, they retain evidence of the artist's hand, etc.) they draw our attention to the inadequacy and sheer relativity of the male discourse on female sexuality.

In the video installation *Chimera*, 1998, Partridge and Shemilt offer yet another deconstruction of male desire as it manifests itself in the representation of the female. The structure of the installation, in terms of both its individual elements and their relation to each other, might be thought of as embodying a linguistic model of the kind considered earlier. Each of the projected images, for example, extends syntagmatically through time, and their refusal of narrative resolution parallels the infinite deferral of meaning in language. Certain of the images - waves on the pebbly beach, say - could almost seem to suggest the repetitive, frustrated surge of desire through language and vision. Alongside the mechanisms of anticipation, recollection and repetition which these anti-narrative elements employ, there are further dimensions of recollection and repetition at play: many of the images are themselves a 'reworking' of Shemilt's earlier work. (A similar retrospective element occurs in the CD ROM *This Is A Sentence*, 1999.) Equally, the relation of these constituent elements to each other - to the overall ensemble of the work - could be thought of as paradigmatic (they present themselves simultaneously, rather than sequentially, as options). The principles of montage and juxtaposition which inform the installation (images abutting on a physically split screen; the relations between the various images on the different screens) might also be read figuratively as symptomatic of the cuts and gaps through which language and desire erupt. "Pleasure," claimed Roland Barthes, "is always achieved by cutting. What pleasure wants is the site of a loss, the seam, the cut, the deflation, the dissolve which seizes the subject in the midst of bliss."⁹ Uniting this economy of discontinuities is a continuous voice-over, a screen of language through which all the visual projections are filtered. Whispered and withdrawn, the female voice utters fragments (again, fragments) from a range of disparate discourses - sociological, poetic, philosophical, psychoanalytic, medical - but one phrase repeats: "The body of a woman is colonised, appropriated, mystified, defined by male fantasy." *Chimera*, however, works to undercut the ambitions of this fantasy. If the female body was absented, cancelled in *Intangible Bodies* - returned to the digital ether of cyberspace - here it is everywhere, before and around us - and yet by its polymorphous presence

(pregnant, naked, clothed, symbolised, speaking) it remains largely elusive, refusing to be an "it," a singular vessel onto/into which the male can project his possessive desires. This refusal operates not only on the level of the ensemble, but also within some of the individual images, especially those which are hard to decode, difficult to "read." Once recognised, however, the fetishistic aspect of these images kicks in as they magnetise sexual desire in the same gesture which displaces and deflects it.

We are desiring machines whose every gesture is wired-in to those integrated circuits of language, vision and desire. Thus a smile is both a statement in body language and a remote control interface with another desiring machine. But smiles, like gifts, often conceal a darker intent - they imply a subtle aggression, an unspoken demand that they be returned. They put the recipient in a position of obligation. There is desire in the language of a smile: there is also power. With this in mind it is apparent how ... for one of your smiles, 1999 is aligned with Partridge's recurrent concerns. Two images, each projected onto facing walls, two images of mouths (one male, the other female) slowly breaking into smiles against David Cunningham's droning soundtrack. The resonance of the mouth as an erotic site needs no explanation (a primary inlet for the desiring machine), but its ambiguous, ambivalent relation to the interiority and exteriority of the body should not be overlooked (both inlet and outlet for the desiring machine, it refuses the finality of either/or distinctions), nor its fundamental relation to speech - often thought of as so material that profane or obscene speech could actually contaminate the mouth ("now wash your mouth out ...").

The seductive smiling images of... for one of your smiles share these ambiguities. Analyse them in enough detail and, like Smithson's rocks and words, they disintegrate into atomic complexity. The technology which allows these images to be slowed down is based upon pixellation, the mapping and re-mapping of those bits of electronic information concerning the abstract values of hue and illumination. And the pixels themselves are promiscuous; they carry no commitment or responsibility to the image they are called on to produce. By reorganising the bit-map, pixels can be made to shift willingly and effortlessly from one frame base to another, from one moment in the image-generation process to another. Beneath the smooth flow of the mounting smiles lie the pixels' own busy micro-systems of repetition and combination, of multi-directional time, "a terrain of particles each containing its own void."

Wired-up and plugged-in, we are desiring machines, switching points in the circuits of language, desire and visual representation. There is no beyond to these circuits, no escape. We are all connected in, coupled. Walk over to *Slap Movie*, 1999. Bend down so that you can see the screen - so that the eye of your desiring machine can plug in to its screen. Take the rubber bulb in your hand. Does it feel at all familiar? More sensual than a button or a switch? Now squeeze it. The moment is abrupt and unexpected, but in that momentary flash the circuits of the desiring machine are opened. Squeeze it again, just to make sure.

Monitoring Partridge

David Hall, 7 TV Pieces, 1971.

Opposite, Interrun, videowall, 1989.
Sound by Lei Cox.



Al Rees

writes and lectures about film. He was head of Time Based Media at Maidstone College (KIAD) from 1988-1996. His 'History of Experimental Film and Video' is published by the BFI in March 1999. He is Senior Research Fellow in Film at the Royal College of Art.

The major historian of the American film avant-garde, P. Adams Sitney, once remarked that the crucial moment in an artist's career is the state of their chosen artform when they make and exhibit their first work. In this respect, Stephen Partridge was there at the right time. He made his early videos in the 1970's under a propitious sign, and in a unique constellation, when artists were turning to film, video, sound, performance and installation. This revolution took place twenty years before the more recent second-wave explosion of the 1990's when yet again British artists embraced these new (but how new?) media in similarly controversial ways.

Among the roots and seeds of British postmodernism, in its first phase, were a number of cultural shifts in the late 1960's. The London Film Makers' Cooperative, an early offshoot of the international (but US-inspired) underground film movement, organised by Guy Deleury, the Co-op was effectively taken over by artists who turned it from a distribution centre (on the New York model) to a production workshop. Most of them wanted to extend contemporary painting - with its emphasis on surface, system and procedure - into the new medium. Malcolm Le Grice built a printing machine which gave artists a new hands-on freedom to explore film material directly. The first works of Le Grice, Peter Gidal, Annabel Nicolson, David Parsons and many others exemplified the artisanal British craft-based tradition of making art. It gave this generation optimum control over all stages from shooting the film, to processing and manipulating the print and then to projecting it on one, two or many screens. This was about as far away from commercial cinema as you could get, reinserting film into the agenda of contemporary art from which it had largely lapsed, at least in the UK, since the days of Fernand Léger, Man Ray and Hans Richter back in the 1920's.

That so much of this activity took place in and around art schools was no accident. The late 1960's, when the British film avant-garde was formed, were also the years in which the art schools were being shaken up and opened out by the famous 'Coldstream-Summerson Report'. Sir William Coldstream, perhaps not so coincidentally, had edited films such as 'Night Mail' for the tempestuous Scots pioneer of radical film in the 1930's, John Grierson. Under Coldstream's aegis at the Slade School in London, a small but volatile outpost of film culture was forged by the historians Thorold Dickinson and James Leahy. Its research students included such key voices of the 1970's as the documentarist Lutz Becker and critics/animateurs like Deke Dusinberre, Simon Field and Annette Kuhn. St Martin's School of Art, also in London, became a base for

new ideas in conceptual art and for questioning the foundations of modernism (giving another first run for the conceptualist art often associated with the yBa twenty years later). At St Martin's, Peter Kardia and his associates radically dematerialized the art-object with their famous 'lock-ins', in which students had to make work over several days with no given materials and without leaving the building. Among Kardia's co-tutors was David Hall, who already had a major reputation for heavy metal sculpture on the lines of Anthony Caro and David Smith. He abandoned and renounced this direction, much to the surprise of his contemporaries, first in order to make films and then - even worse - turning to the low-key and then primitive medium of video. While Le Grice built his 'Film Action' Group at St Martin's, with students such as William Raban, Chris Welsby, Gil Eatherly and Marilyn Halford, a different direction (in which film played a less specific role) was explored by Hall at Maidstone College of Art in Kent.

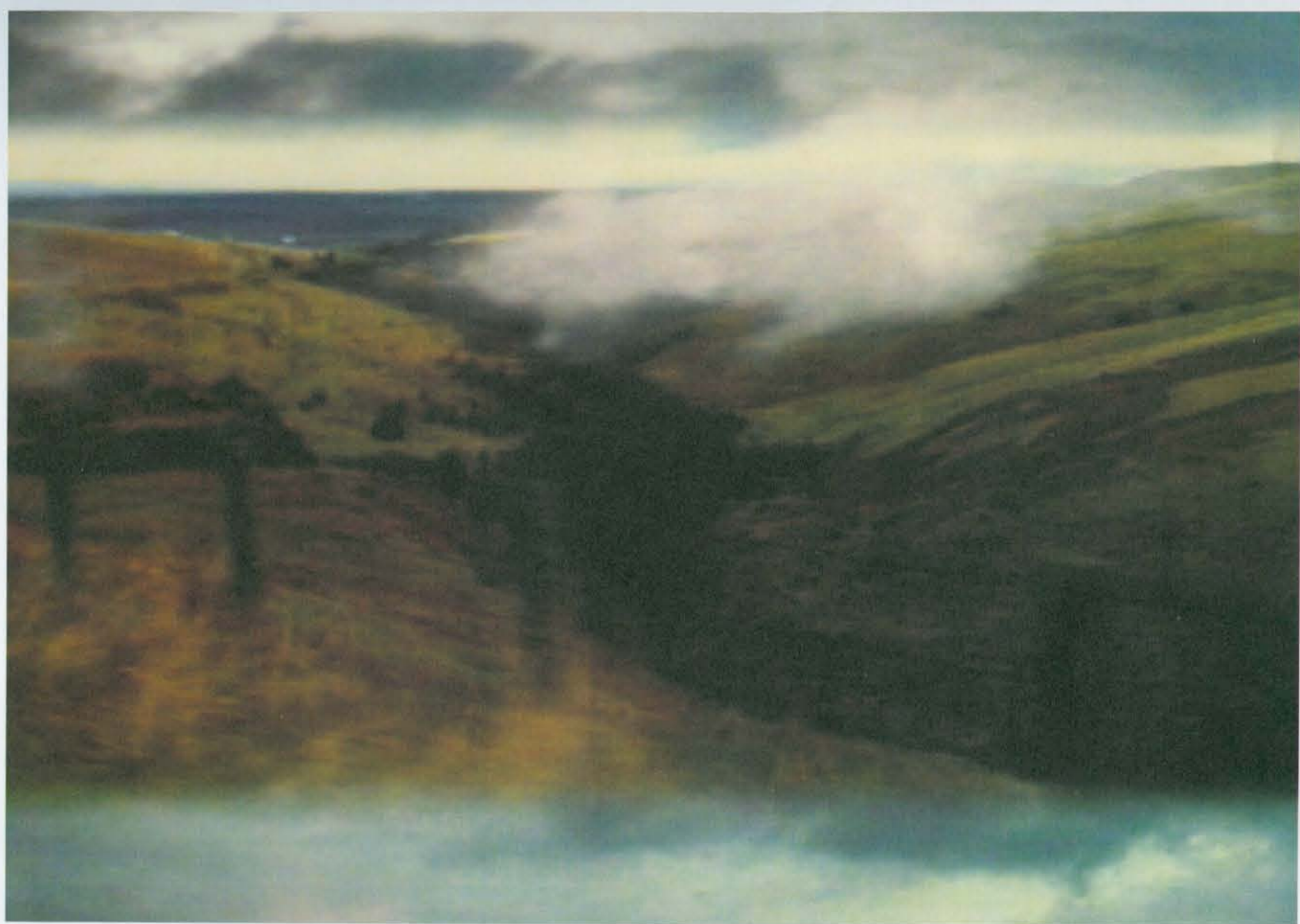
It was here, at a particularly exciting time for new modes in art, that Stephen Partridge encountered both David Hall and indeed a host of fellow students who were to be significant in his career, some of them to the present day. After a year, Partridge had stopped painting and was working within Hall's first improvised attempts, on the fringes of the Sculpture Department, to establish a new area of practice. This area was finally dubbed 'time-based media', in which video was unusually privileged as a means of making art - by contract to most courses, in which video (as sometimes it is even now) was the poorest of relations. It is likely that Hall was attracted to video for the very reason that so many rejected it, for it had no associations with high art. Video was quite literally post-modernist; the avant-garde of the 1920's had made a few (and important) films, but obviously video was unknown to them or to any artists until the well-known 'Portapak' experiments of Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell, John Hopkins ('Hoppy') and Hall himself in the 1960's. Although artists had worked with early electronic imaging, notably the Whitney Brothers and Mary Ellen Bute in the States from the 1940's onwards, video itself was a product of the contemporary age and as yet was unexploited by artists, another point of proleptic encounter with the 'Blimey!' generation of the 1990's who were attracted by much the same thing when it came to making art.

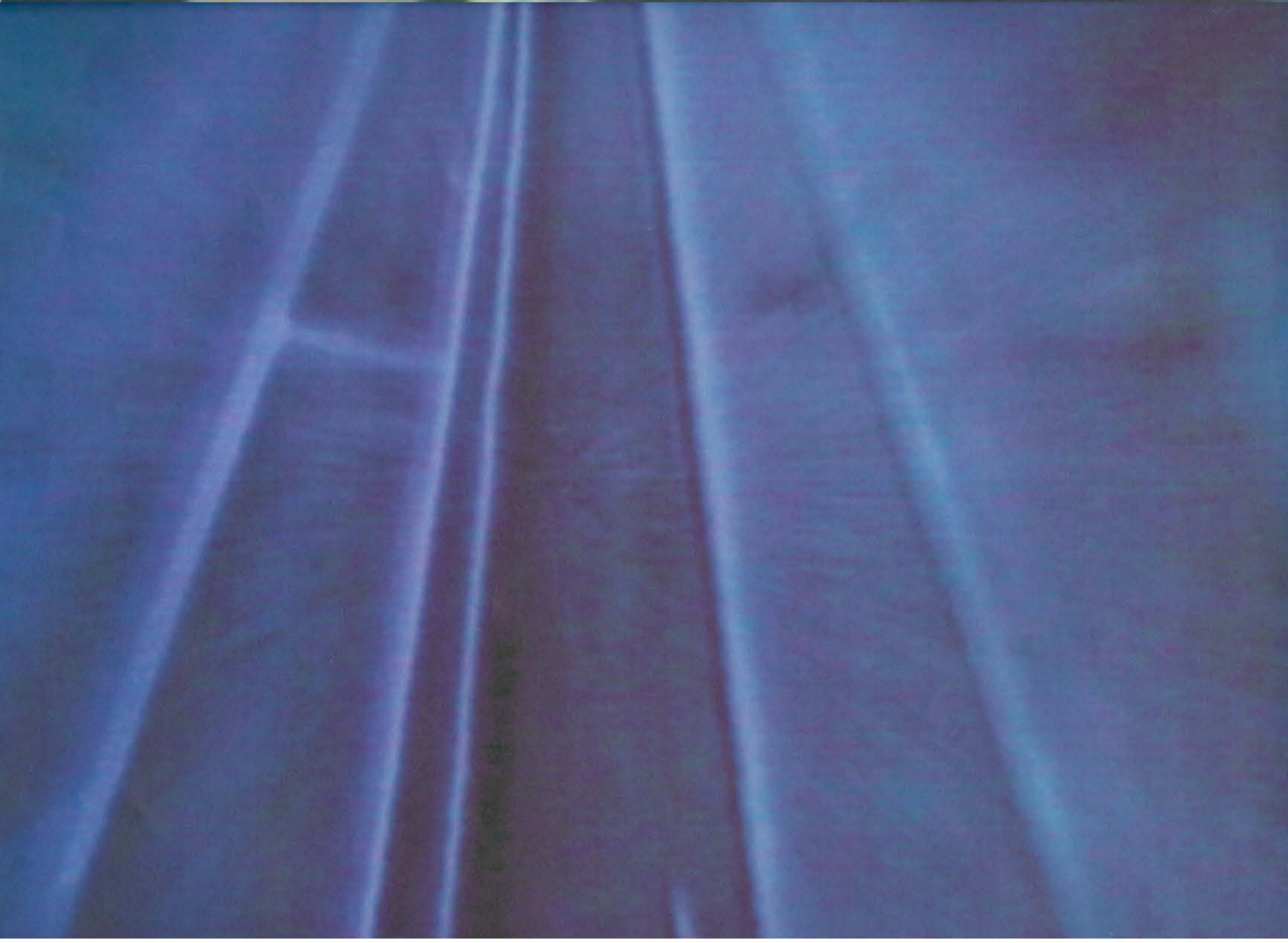
By all accounts, it was a lively time. In 1974, in the middle of his degree course, Partridge met his long-time collaborator, David Cunningham, then a Foundation student. Rob Gawthrop, and Jane Rigby were there at the same time, making video, film, sound and installation

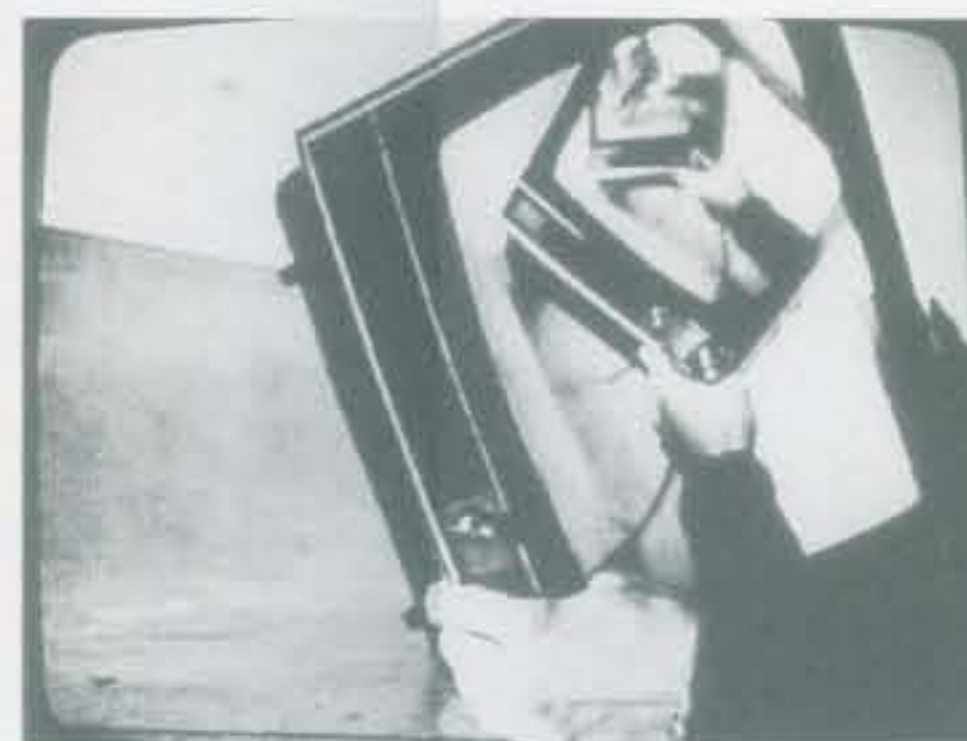
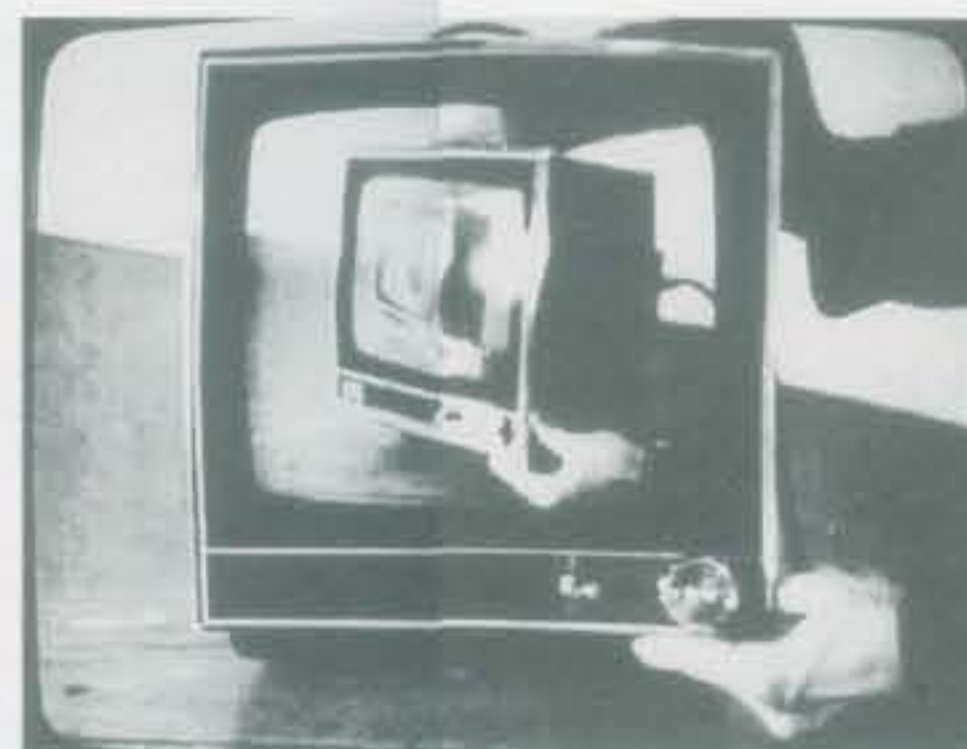
work in Hall's new subject area with Tony Sinden and Paul Gillieron as co-tutors, later aided by the invaluable technical assistance of Colin Smith. Over the next decade the tutors included Stuart Marshall, Tamara Krikorian, Bruce McLean, Stuart Brisley, Paul Gillieron and (via the painting studios) Michael Upton. Hall and Sinden had just finished a series of five experimental films and had embarked on gallery pieces like '60 TV Sets' (1972, Gallery House) and '101 TV Sets' (1974, Serpentine), in which the receivers were randomly tuned or detuned to the then three channels of live broadcast TV. From 1975-6 video was featured by the Serpentine Gallery, the Tate, 'Studio International' magazine and the BBC's Arena arts programme, the highpoints of video art's first wave. In 1976, Partridge participated in founding video's equivalent to the Co-op, London Video Arts (later London Electronic Arts) with a nationwide orbit despite its name.

The Maidstone climate was famously abrasive and demanding. Concept and confrontation ran together, breeding passionate loyalties and conflicts. It was at its best a flourishing centre of free experiment, but braced up for debate and critique. Argument was as vigorous as the times, which attracted a host of new-style hardline illustrators and designers as well as tough-minded fine artists. In his sometimes entrenched centre of video art, Hall was carving out space between the then-dominant avant-garde film tradition and the increasing use of new media by gallery artists. For him - even though he still had a foot in both these camps - the video medium was unexplored territory for artists, its codes yet uncracked. He argued that video art was integral to television and not just its technical by-product. TV - and its subversion - was where video's vital core was located, well beyond the ghettos of film co-ops, arts labs and art galleries. This view opened an unusual space, somewhere between high art formalism (which it resembled) and the mass arts (which it didn't). Anti-aesthetic and anti-populist - conceptual art with a looser, dada streak - the sinews of this approach stretched back into the European heartland of politicized, video post-avantgardism, especially to Germany, Poland and Yugoslavia.

The tone of the seventies, including the now quaint but then furious stand-offs between film and video makers over the artistic claims of their chosen media, had a long underground incubation. In retrospect, it forms a distant and ambient background to the earliest work in the current exhibition. At that time, the art schools - some, like Maidstone, still 'free-standing' outside the larger







Opposite, Sound Tapes, videotape, various lengths, 1982.

Left, Monitor, videotape, 10 minutes, 1975.

polytechnics and universities - made room for composers as well as visual artists: Gavin Bryars, Brian Eno, Michael Nyman, Cornelius Cardew, David Toop and Michael Parsons taught variously at Portsmouth, Leicester, Nottingham and Maidstone. Structural film, associated with Le Grice and Gidal, had taken root in the colleges, by way of systems art and post-painting, and was to peak at the end of the decade, somewhere between the rise of punk and the election of Mrs Thatcher in 1979. Concept art promoted 'ideas' over 'objects'. Language in art ceased to be a dirty word, a turn announced by the influential group called, precisely, 'Art & Language'. Perhaps above all, the ethos was collaborative rather than individualist, and many strong egos were thus tempered in a form of group practice which had been first tried out, astringently so, by Kardia and Hall at St Martin's. In the same democratic spirit, young video makers like Partridge showed work in public on equal terms with their tutors, as had Malcolm Le Grice's 'Film Action' group in London only shortly before, in 1973. This substantially challenged and exploded the patriarchal roles which Le Grice and Hall were felt by some to adopt.

Partridge's own experience of Peter Kardia's mixed-media postgraduate course at the Royal College of Art (dubbed 'Environmental Media') was short-lived. After an ultimately frustrating year he left in 1976, to make his own way. Teaching at Coventry, he pioneered video-based art at a time of rapid technological expansion. Among his own students was Steven Littman, who later carried the torch back to Maidstone in the final years of Hall's regime during the later 1980's. He continued his collaboration with Cunningham, who had stayed on at Maidstone to take his fine art degree with a final show unusually made up entirely of work in sound - no visuals. This collaboration expanded after Partridge moved to effectively found the media and digital arts courses at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design. Cunningham by then was a key figure in the burgeoning world of new music, as well as a lead member of the proto-punk group 'The Flying Lizards'. He worked with Michael Nyman and Peter Greenaway, Peter Gordon and John Greaves, as well as composing music for feature films and making soundtracks for artists such as William Raban, Sam Taylor-Wood and Gillian Wearing. An early version of his installation, *The Listening Room*, was developed at the Arts Lab, DJCAD, in 1995. Recently featured at the 1998 Biennale of Sydney, this work is a minimalist sound sculpture in a large space, activated by its audience.

This unusual collaboration, which covers almost twenty-five years, contrasts with those artistic duos - Fischli-Weiss and Gilbert & George, for example - in which the tandem defines both the work and its joint authorship. Partridge and Cunningham offer a unique twist. These two individuals often work independently of each other, as solo artists, and also collaborate with many others in a variety of contexts which span the contemporary arts. Far from yoked together, their collaboration has largely been carried out at long-distance, much of their joint work being made while the one lived in Scotland and the other in various bits of London. Their creative partnership is thus not exclusive, which gives the work they do make together a special edge. Furthermore, their work doesn't break down into a neat division of sound by one and image by the other, or rather, and more unusually in our moving-image culture where sound is added and dubbed to the picture at a late stage in production, Cunningham's sound and Partridge's images often swap the conventions and merge the roles. In their *Soundtapes*, 1982, for example, the viewer would be hard pressed to detect whether it is the sound-impulse or the image-shift which generates and cues the montage. Which comes first? Is it either? It's a small but effective challenge to the standard media hierarchy of the eye and the ear, and an icon for the equalising of audio-visual space in their work as a whole.

Hierarchy in general was challenged from the first, signalled in the fact that Partridge was one of the first younger video artists to take up this medium directly. If the film bug (or fetish) bit him, it didn't show. Electronic video not only led logically to digital art, it provoked a new understanding of the audio-visual domain. While sound is almost always added to film, and is technically a distinct process from shooting the picture, video records sound and image in the same electronic stream, on equal terms. Unlike the pictorialist film tradition, with its 'camera-eye' privilege of vision, video is neutral in the word-and-image war; on the monitor, text and picture hold the same status.

Partridge's first works, which still hold good today, and continue to inspire new generations who see them, were essentially performance pieces. This was before the age of edit-suites, when crude splicing was the only option to straight duration and when all video-pictures were grey and visibly 'degraded'. The image-word pulsing of *Easy Piece*, 1974, was made by fading in and out the key word of its title - 'Easy' - spoken on the soundtrack by a woman's voice. Again, video's real-time recording and instant playback - which most evidently made it not film

- impelled the still stunning manipulations of *Monitor*, 1975, with its deep regress of angled tv's in a sequence of chinese boxes, frames within frames. This was live art underscored by basic playback. Like much of the work to come, both pieces assert their modernist origins. The flat picture-plane of *Easy Piece*, with its printed word as visual icon, telescopes a fifty-year history from cubism and abstract art to postwar dada. *Monitor* goes further as it de-realizes the object - the monitor itself - on which the viewer (and the maker as performer) is watching the work. An active diagonal line across the framed space, repeated in the chain of monitors, is now dynamic rather than assertively flat. The logic of tautology or self-embedded system is at the core of both pieces, but this philosophical weight is carried with ease - not least by mapping such formal concerns onto the viewer's activity and space.

When Partridge began to explore the then new-fangled edit-suite in the late 1970's, he incorporated all these elements and added to them the montage film tradition (suitably altered) at a time when extreme duration and the single take were still seen as defining the nature of video as against cinema. This was far-sighted in staking out the artist's claim to, so to speak, cut and paste videotape well ahead of its commercial exploitation in advertising and television. *Episodes Interposed*, 1979, whose denotative title affirms montage as an act of cutting into time and action, is a good example.

Punctuated by a series of 'Preambles', which both structure and ironize its minimalist sequences, this video opens with a communicative act - a ringing telephone seen from back, front and sideways views - which gradually breaks down the symmetry of sound and image. A second sequence of a walking woman (a key theme in art from Duchamp to Giacometti and Michael Snow) asserts actual space, here an art school corridor, and then depicts closely-related staggered shots of a woman repeatedly crossing her legs until a final glimpsed moment of voyeuristic revelation. An 'Intermission' of clouds of steam set against a cloudy sky takes us away from these intense interiors and also provides a natural metaphor for the passage of time. The final sections create colour patterns from men's shirts which then become 'colour checks' as a woman describes colour associations based on the light primaries of red, blue and yellow. The broken sounds which open the video here become continuous and echo-like, akin to the live feedback words of *Boomerang*, 1974, by the US sculptors and video pioneers, Richard Serra and Nancy Holt. Woman as object of the gaze here

Background, Episodes, Interposed, Intermission,
videotape, 30 minutes, 1979.

Opposite, Easy Piece,
videotape, 7 minutes, 1974.

becomes speaking subject, guiding the viewer's institutions within the formal scheme of the work.

Cutting the image down into rhythmic clusters, isolating the fragment from its original real-time context and remixing it, Partridge pushed against the time barrier which he further broke in such large scale pieces as *Interrun*, 1989, a decade later. In some ways, he was in parallel with Cunningham's own fusion of live and recorded sound, devising ways of sampling long before the technology was available or even named.

Interrun is a 34 monitor video wall (with sound by Lei Cox), in which angles and planes of the Scottish landscape sometimes make up a whole image dispersed over all the monitors, and at other times break down into successive distinct shots and sub-grids. In one sense, and akin to the cut-up videos of the later-seventies and beyond, this piece takes up the complex language of film montage, recalling Eisenstein's notion of 'montage within the frame' but here in a new media context.

As a pure example of 'landscape video' in Partridge's output, *Interrun* is in the larger tradition of landscape art - and on the grand scale. It also shares the radical revisioning of landscape pioneered by such structural filmmakers as Chris Welsby and William Raban, but is more specifically preceded by a Partridge-Cunningham landscape video made with singer and performer Mary Phillips, *Vide Voce*, 1986. Coincidentally, structuralists like

Raban and Welsby also questioned the ecological and political aspects of landscape in their films of the 1980's and thereby took their earlier work beyond their original goal of pure observation. Similarly, this videowall offers an 'eye-scaping' challenge to the ideology of neutral vision.

The logistics of structure are also key to the Partridge-Cunningham Soundtapes, 1982, but more abstractly so. Apart from their intriguing link back to procedural or systems film, these elegant pieces transform human voices into soundworks. Speech as metaphor for communication in Partridge's earlier videos here becomes used as song and system. Soundtapes comprises three sections. In the first, a receding perspective of rail tracks is punningly cut and matched with changes on the vocalized soundtrack to create rhythms and variations. This piece is closest to the classical film. In the second section, perhaps echoing Duchamp's famous painting of 1912, a woman endlessly ascends and descends a spiral staircase. The final section is a multiple close-up portrait, in which a woman's face is duplicated and varied in the monitors beside or behind her. In this short trilogy, the classic genres of landscape, life-model and portrait are renewed by the devices of audiovisual sampling and montage. Cunningham's score also echoes another tradition, in fusing music and the visual arts.

Speech returns, but still highly manipulated, in Partridge tour-de-force 1001 Boy's Games, 1984, a video-vision of

John Yeaton's chanted poem, recited by Yeaton, Tom McGrath and Partridge himself. Graphic text, line drawing and video image counterpose each other. The wit of the poem inspires the complex counter-rhythms of the video. Just as Yeaton's relentless and quasi-logical categories echo Partridge's own taste for philosophical equations (as in the line 'Boys called John: Boys not called John', for example). The tellingly titled *Dialogue for Two Players*, also 1984, moves into quasi-dramatic space. In which the seemingly spontaneous reactions of the two actors, a man and a woman discussing relationships are revealed not just as a constrict but also as a complex puzzle. It implicitly comments on and critiques the 'confessional' modes of video and its illusion of real presence. It thus rejects what was at the time a dominant style in artists' video, turning on its head the simpler versions of the slogan that 'the personal is political'. At the same time it is a political work in a different sense, questioning the popular TV format of the in-depth personal interview which it ironizes. As such, and with Partridge himself playing the part of interviewer/director, it is his most overt 'intervention' into documentary drama even as he subverts it.

Many strands unite in *The Sounds of These Words*, 1990, a piece made - and shown - for tv broadcast as another kind of 'intervention', but which demands repeated viewing. Its portrait head is 'a speaking likeness' in the realist tradition, but streams of text and sampled sound are used to digitally rescore the typographic revolution of



EASY

EASY PIECE

the early modernists, from Marinetti to Cage and concept art, for the age of audiovisual technology and semiotics. The fact that the speaker is audibly a Scot gives the work a precise location and context. It was made for the Glasgow Festival of that year by an artist long resident in Scotland). The fact that the speaker is a woman is also central to the meaning of the video, splitting the logic of the male maker's gaze and passing the work into the diverse and gendered community of viewers who are its audience.

Some of these ideas are drawn out in their purest form by the Sentences series, 1988-93, in various languages and formats. The hints of linguistic philosophy, its word-games and literalness, which permeate the earlier works, are here centred on screen. The sentences in the cycle are self-referential tautologies, near-complete propositions which encompass all their elements - including graphic signs such as full stops. The digital play of letters is complemented by a pop-mix soundtrack, so that the austerity of the printed word enters a more demotic or popular sound-space. Taking up the post-Fluxus word-play format of artists like Paul Sharits and Michael Snow, but here stripped down to bare statements rather than expanded by word association, the Sentences ramify out in later pieces. The format of the CD-ROM, which Partridge and Cunningham issue this year, is founded on them, as the user soon discovers when clicking along the on-screen text taken from this work. Some of these hot-spots eventually lead to Cunningham's *This Moment*, 1993, a

one-minute TV work, in which shifting sounds and letter-forms in the phonetic alphabet finally spell out the title of the work as an index of its own duration.

The CD-ROM is a free anthology of the makers' video and sound work from the 1970's through the 1990's. Interspersed with quotes, games, shouts, groans, sighs, re-mixes, out-takes and variants. The collaborators have themselves collaborated, so that a variety of other voices - some identifiable, many not - can be heard on the soundtrack. At this level, it does what CD's do best, which is to access information. Along another strand, it presents its contents directly as art in a new format, notably when its clips are played in programmed time so that the user becomes - again - a viewer. It is at these points, when the clip plays without interference, that the CD becomes an independent art work. Cut against this insistence on the time-base is the user's freedom to move through overlapping paths, to reach the last sentence - if there is one.

This exhibition, which honours one of the UK's and now Scotland's leading contemporary artists and educators, allows for the first time a coherent review of a prodigious body of work which should have the widest recognition. Conceptually and firmly grounded, Partridge has kept pace with the changing times by rooting his work in a powerful visual tradition. The formal language of the abstract avant-garde is echoed in his awareness of screen space and topology, while the work never loses grip on

the codes of representation. At the same time, the work is never as self-enclosed as the formal devices and languages which often underpin it - it is open to the viewer's interaction, both as a challenge and as a possibility. An instance of this is his long struggle to turn the technical device of the screen-saver into a viable option for art; a seemingly frustrating but quite typical battle with a recalcitrant material which (if it is ultimately successful) will drag yet another chunk of everyday experience into aesthetic life. Like much contemporary work, this looks to uncolorized zones of experience as potential spaces for art. In its day, video had the same problem - but, three time-based Turner prizewinners later, the picture has radically changed, not least by the efforts of the pioneer video-maker who preceded the achievements of the middle 1990's. Similarly, by joining a squeeze of the hand with the gaze of the eye in his recent *Slap Movie*, 1999 (another tellingly punning title), as well as by digging deep into the primary pixilated codes of the digital image in the installation... for one of your smiles, 1999, Partridge continues to explore two of his abiding concerns - the contrast in form between the real and the apparent image.

Down among the pixels

Opposite.
The Sounds of These Words,
a Fields & Frames Production
for Channel 4, 1990.

Anna Ridley pioneered the idea of 'Artists' Works for Television' through her production company, Annalogue, formed in 1982. Commissions for artists were secured from Channel 4 Television and MTV and these series of works have been screened at international festivals, exhibited in galleries and are represented in public collections.

February, 1999.

The inauguration of Stephen Partridge as Professor of Media Art is a significant moment. Not only has he been recognised as a seminal artist and prime mover in the development of this art form but also that the form itself has come of age. Unlike other art forms such as painting, sculpture and installation for example, a single screen work can be exhibited in a number of ways with no alteration as to how it may be perceived because it is of the medium, whether broadcast on television, viewed via a video cassette or on-line through the Internet. However the advantage of being able to reach a potentially vast audience direct, an important factor to a number of artists, has been offset by the less than enthusiastic response from the art establishment. In fact this art is wayward; it can crop up at any moment: on the TV screen as did the 1990 series of TV Interventions, 19:4:90 for Channel 4, conceived by Stephen Partridge (this series referred back to David Hall's 7 TV Pieces of 1971, broadcast by Scottish Television); it can appear in a shop window on the high street - Stephen Partridge's 15 TV monitor piece, Display-Displaced, in Birmingham in 1981; or disrupt your post Sunday lunch snooze in front of the telly - his Dialogue for Two Players, Channel 4, 1984.

Having been involved in the development of this work since the beginning myself whilst working within the TV Industry at the same time, it seemed obvious to me that artists should be brought into the arena of broadcast TV and all its subsequent offshoots. I have worked to achieve that aim and it could be said to be my passion. The history of this work is not widely known and since it directly parallels Stephen Partridge's development as an artist, I will refer to some of the important stages as I go along.

During the latter half of the '60's in this country, many artists were unhappy with the vested interests of the art market and the art establishment which they believed placed unwelcome constraints on how they wished to make and exhibit their art. So they literally took to the streets, staged performances, made huge sculptures, created bill boards and produced art objects as 'Multiples' to be sold in supermarkets at affordable prices, to name but a few activities. Some artists even focused on the dematerialisation of the object - what, nothing to sell! At the end of the decade the first light weight video equipment became generally available. Although it was black and white and of low resolution it opened up territory which had been the exclusive preserve of the broadcast television networks. Just as the 8mm portable cine cameras had liberated film-making (artists were already using film as a fine art medium), this video

equipment created more opportunities for artists to explore the potential of sound and moving images in a medium with unique properties quite distinct from film. It was also easy to set up the equipment for an audience to view: a TV monitor, video player and electricity being the only requirements.

Although the term 'video art' was coined to establish its independence and singularity and distinguish it as being apart from the dominant form of mass communication, a number of artists recognised that their potential audience were unlikely to divorce a viewing of the work from their expectations, largely shaped by television regardless of any previous experience of art practice. What could not be anticipated then was the rapid and far reaching developments in electronic technologies and means of communication. Artists are now provided with almost limitless possibilities. The on-going search for a descriptive title for the work is, in a sense, a measure of its evolving nature.

In 1972 Stephen Partridge became one of the first students in the newly formed department of Film, Video and Sound within Fine Art at Maidstone College of Art (now known as the Kent Institute of Art and Design), which was conceived and set up by David Hall, himself an artist who had moved through sculpture to photography, film and video. Unlike other established art forms, video/TV came with little baggage and was, in effect, a blank screen. Partridge took up the challenge and launched himself into the unknown to explore the possibilities of this new medium. He characterises his early work as a search for a syntax and formal language; the first available video/TV equipment was crude but, paradoxically, this afforded a freedom to push the boundaries and capability of its systems and processes. In so doing his understanding of the physical properties and the underlying technology became finely tuned and laid the foundation of his art practice. For Partridge the technical realisation is intimately related to the idea and aesthetic, the one informing the other in an interdependence which remains a primary characteristic of his work. Monitor, a piece he made in 1975, is an early example of those characteristics where, as he puts it, "My first videotapes were 'structuralist' in nature, overtly formalised in time scale and non-narrative."²

At first video art was received enthusiastically as a truly new phenomenon. In addition to the broadcast of David Hall's 7 TV Pieces mentioned previously, BBC 2's arts series Second House broadcast Peter Donebauer's Entering via a micro-wave link in 1974. Recognising its growing

importance, the Serpentine Gallery staged the first major international video show in London in 1975 including a piece by Partridge. Access to the airwaves had already been established by John Hopkins (Hoppy) and TVX whose independently made programmes, also produced on the new video equipment, were first included in the BBC 2 arts magazine series, Late Night Line Up, in 1970. Until the early '80's only 3 TV channels were in existence and audiences were measured in their tens of millions. People around the country were united in a shared experience through watching television, which had superseded newspapers and radio as the most common means for people to receive the news and current affairs. Video artists were not only alert to this but were also very conscious of how the means of presentation was selective and manipulative through the editing of both content and form. Although programme-makers are required to exercise 'balanced' reporting, artists were aware that the process of producing a compelling and watchable programme was subjective.

In 1976 I persuaded Mark Kidel, then editor of the BBC 2 Arena series, to devote a whole programme to video art. I was involved with its production and the selection of existing video art pieces by British and US artists. The programme was prefaced by a specially commissioned work, made at the BBC, This is a Television Receiver by David Hall, and Peter Donebauer was also commissioned to make Struggling. But I felt strongly that, ideally, this work should be broadcast in its own right, not as a compilation package or part of another programme, and a regular TV spot should be made available as it would be for any series of programmes. Then Channel 4 burst on the scene and its first Chief Executive was the maverick Jeremy Isaacs. He declared that he wanted "programmes that look like no other" and so the opportunity for artists and radical programme-makers finally arrived.

In commissioning Annalogue to produce what I termed 'Artists Works for Television', Channel 4's Paul Madden also agreed to some terms and conditions: the artists could choose to make a one-off or a series, each of these would be of their own duration, would not necessarily fit a prescribed slot and the artists would have access to the same technical facilities as any programme-maker. It was an added and unexpected bonus that I was able to sit down with the programme scheduler to plan when these works would be transmitted. On this basis Partridge conceived Dialogue for Two Players, 1984³ and we collaborated to produce the finished work. In 1978 he had created an installation for the Air Gallery, London entitled Dialogue for Four Players. Four monitors

THE MOWBROOK ROAD 2 HAVERT



UNDER



displayed tight close-ups of a woman's mouth but each monitor played a different tape. The composer, David Cunningham, who has collaborated with Partridge on a number of works over the years, observed "Dialogue is an extension of the instant / real-time properties of video, but rather than reiterate these in mirror phase structuralist fashion, the work depends on these properties and therefore assumes their existence but does not actually depict the activity relevant to what the viewer sees."⁴

Dialogue for Two Players was created specifically for the context of broadcast TV. Instead of the production process being hidden, Partridge went further in his objective of revealing the dialogue and interplay between the two players, this time a man and a woman. Here the process is exposed as he describes "Multi screen digital techniques are used to reveal the relationship between the two participants and the structural manipulations which are occurring both within the original recording and its post-production (editing)." ... "The artist's presence is, at first, ambiguous as he is also present on screen, but his manipulations both on screen (directions to the cameras and actors), and off (obvious editing and juxtapositions of the material) gradually reveal his role."⁵ Partridge deliberately used the classic interview set up, familiar to any TV viewer, but within a few minutes that convention was broken down as the interviewer (Partridge) did not lead the discussion, as one would expect, and said very little. The two players had the freedom to say or do whatever they wanted, only receiving cues to start and stop. It says much for the power and influence of TV that the two players, for the most part, abided by its conventions. As this work unfolds, its complexity becomes evident, as a series of images from different parts of the recording, are shown together on screen.

The manipulation of the material is made clear as these images are variously re-wound, slowed down, frozen or played in fast forward as well as played in real time, an interaction with TV itself. In all I produced four series and four single artists works for this commission.

Despite video art gaining some ground within the art community, it often fell to the artists to negotiate and organise exhibition of the work. Partridge organised Video Art '78 for the Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry and selected UKTV - Videotapes by British Artists for screenings at The Kitchen, New York in 1978 where he was commissioned to make an installation: Study in Blue, 1978. Earlier, in 1976, his installation No.1 was included in the Third Eye Centre Show, Glasgow (organised by artist Tamara Krikorian with Lindsay Gordon). Later that same year, artists Brian Hoey and Wendy Brown set up an annual event in Washington, Tyne and Wear, the first being headed: Artists Video - An Alternative use of the Medium. In addition, Partridge was a founder member, along with other artists, of London Video Arts (now LEA), which launched its distribution catalogue of artists tapes and installations at the Air Gallery in 1978. But the Tate Gallery's first presentation of video work, (which included Partridge's installation 8 x 8 x 8, 1976) in the Video Show, also in 1976, was tentative to say the least. In his review for the London Evening Standard, Richard Cork remarked: "it might be imagined that British Video Art is receiving vigorous support from the institutions which have neglected this new medium in the past. But we should be wary of false optimism..." it has been allowed in only through the good offices of the Education Department and granted the status of a side-show politely but firmly removed from the space normally occupied by important exhibitions."

In 1980, somewhat belatedly, the Arts Council of Great Britain set up its Video Artists on Tour scheme which continued only until 1986. By comparison Continental

Europe, particularly France, Germany and Holland, embraced this new art form whilst, in this country, the art establishment still wavered. A number of video festivals in Europe had started to make their mark screening a selection of video works from around the world together with, in some cases, installations by invited artists. Two such: the World Wide Video Festival in the Hague and the International Video Week in Geneva (a biannual) were impressed with the calibre of British work but due to a lack of home support, funding and consequent visibility, the festival directors found it difficult to locate and view the work unless it was put forward by the artists or by people like myself, who were involved with its production and distribution.

By the end of 1984 Partridge's plans for the newly formed department of Video and Computer Graphics at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design (DJCAD) were well underway. He had been hesitant about taking a full time lectureship but the fact that his responsibilities extended beyond his input into the academic courses, to include setting up of the pre-requisite sound and video facilities, proved too tempting. Technological developments had significantly broadened the array of tools: Digital Video Effects (DVE) and especially Quantel's Paintbox sent ripples of excitement through the creative community. Partridge, being keenly aware of the difficulties faced by artists in getting access to this (then) expensive technology, set up the Television Workshop at DJCAD in 1985. This workshop operates on a number of levels but, most importantly, it actively encourages artists to come and use the facilities. I think it is true to say that it kick-started the production of independently made work in Scotland which had enjoyed even less support and opportunities than across the border.

But what of television? Fuelled by the irreverence and outrageous behaviour of the punks, a new generation of artists arrived on the scene. Scratch Video illegally plundered material recorded off-air from the TV networks and re-worked it to make their own political and entertaining statements. This was the stuff that enlivened the burgeoning clubland circuit and in 1986 a pirate TV station, Network 21, hit the airwaves around London. Showing an eclectic mix of artists films, videos, Scratch and re-cycled material supplied by sympathetic programme-makers in mainstream TV, this channel was perfectly in tune with many people for whom TV had little relevance. Although only operational for 6 months, Network 21 proved highly influential as programme-makers, ever live to new ideas, recycled them for their own use: Janet Street Porter's Network 7 springs to mind.

The principle of showing artists' work in its own right on TV, whatever its genre, was not taken up. TV executives still observed the conventions of packaging work under an umbrella title to fit neatly into the programme schedule. Some producers used the work to further their own ends and were out of sympathy with the aims and objectives of the artists whose work they compiled into 'wacky' series. Although Partridge came up against BBC Scotland's constraints when he negotiated Not Necessarily in 1990, he was able to win several commissions for artists to make new work for the series, a showcase for Scottish work made both at DJCAD and independently.

The series of TV Interventions, 19:4:90, was a different matter all together. Inspired by David Hall's 7 TV Pieces of 1971, Partridge came up with the idea of making short works to celebrate Glasgow as Europe's Cultural Capital in 1990. In the same way as the TV Pieces appeared on Scottish Television in 1971, these would crop up within the stream of programming and be repeated as many times as possible. Channel 4 seemed the obvious place. Although Jeremy Isaacs had left for the delights of Covent Garden, Mike Bolland, whom he had appointed

originally as commissioning editor for youth, now held high position. I had worked with Mike whilst at the BBC and knew that he was still a bit of a renegade. The fact that he was also Scottish no doubt helped. We were greatly encouraged when Mike agreed to the principles of the idea and the commission went ahead. Unfortunately Mike left soon after and the project was taken over by Waldemar Januszczak, the arts commissioning editor. Whilst the individual works received no interference, Waldemar insisted that the series be introduced overall and each work prefaced by a graphic to be used for all the Glasgow celebration programmes. Imagine our glee when Waldemar's introduction 'fell' off the air and had to be re-scheduled.

The Sounds of These Words, 1990 was Partridge's four minute intervention. For this new work Partridge used another TV convention - the talking head - one of the most ubiquitous images on television. Here some of the statements made by the woman shown are displayed on the screen as text which is then animated and manipulated. An extreme close-up of her mouth speaking is slowed down, almost to a stop, and then speeded up to a fast rate so that the appreciation of the lips forming the words is heightened. The play between the spoken word, the animated text and the act of speaking are brought together with an assured and telling touch. The English language is capable of great subtlety and we have many and various way of expressing what we wish to say compared with other languages. We measure our words carefully not always just to be truthful (or not) but to shape them according to how we think they may be received. For me The Sounds of These Words brings these questions into sharp focus.

Some ten years ago Stephen Partridge wrote "So what of the future? Artists must be involved in television directly, negotiating the right circumstances, approach and level of support."⁶ How things have changed! Apart from a fifth TV channel and cable and satellite, we now have ON digital, the BBC in partnership with Flextech - UKTV, a collection of digital channels, (some commercial), and, of course, the Internet. None of these can operate without programming and one might think that amongst these thousands of viewing hours per week there would be a space for artists work - a channel even. But the absence of risk-taking is even more evident than it was ten years ago. Channel controllers and commissioning editors know that even more change is around the corner, especially when our TV set becomes merely a carrier of many different forms of communication. Viewing habits are changing but they have no idea what the end result will be. Everyone is hedging their bets and few, if any, TV executives are prepared to make decisions or be adventurous. In the meantime we'll have more of the same: programmes to change our homes, our gardens, our cooking, the way we look - but not many to change our minds.

- 1 See 'Diverse Practices' edited by Julia Knight. The Arts Council of England and University of Luton Press.
- 2 Catalogue for 'Video Artists on Tour', 1980. The Arts Council of Great Britain.
- 3 An Analogue production for Channel 4 Television, produced by Anna Ridley.
- 4 David Cunningham, 1978, from unpublished essay. Stephen Partridge Website, 1999.
- 5 Channel 4 Television Press Release, Stephen Partridge 1985, Stephen Partridge Website, 1999.
- 6 Stephen Partridge, 1989. Original publication unknown. Stephen Partridge Website, 1999.

Talking Heads

Opposite, Dialogue for Two Players,
an Analogue Production for Channel 4, 1984.

Hugh Stoddart

was director of the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, 1978-81. He showed, amongst other work by Steve Partridge, a newly commissioned piece titled Display-Displaced, 1980. It was positioned in front of large retail-style windows facing out on to John Bright Street, then the gallery's location. Hugh is now a screenwriter and an art critic; what follows is an agreed text taken from his recorded conversation with Steve Partridge.

H: Let's just pick up where we left off eighteen years ago! I left the Ikon partly because the arrival of Channel Four offered hope of survival for someone like me writing screenplays within the (then) quite small sector of independent film production. It also seemed to offer new opportunities for people coming from a fine art background such as yourself. Were those opportunities fulfilled?

S: There were flowers in the desert, if I can put it like that. Some interesting things happened, but finally, the answer is really 'no'. I think a lot of us hoped - perhaps naively, in retrospect - that things would be different. But television is the great consumer itself: it consumes people, ideas, events. It assimilates everything very quickly. And we're not different in that sense - we the artists were just another subject, to be offered up to the audience and consumed. We didn't want our work on television, we wanted to make television. That's a crucial distinction. We wanted to be originators of programming. There were, and still are, isolated individuals who understand that distinction - but by and large, what we're talking about remains, even after all this time, an alien concept to the broadcaster.

H: In 1981 there were three channels and then a fourth arrived; in 1999 we're poised to receive dozens of channels. With the breakup of TV in that sense, with it ceasing to be an authoritative structure - is that going to open things up for artists like you? Or is it all going to be too driven by commerce?

S: Speaking more as a political animal rather than as a professional, I've been in favour of these changes; I welcome them. There have been predictions about the end of broadcast TV for a long time; the beast has been a long time dying. Along with other people, I do have fears as to where the demise of public service broadcasting might leave us, but the change needed to happen, access needed to happen. It all goes together, whether all this is driven by the technology, or by commercial imperatives, or by cultural shifts. There's a larger question, and that's to do with changes across the whole medium. There's a jargon surrounding that: 'convergence'. Drama and films have always been very expensive, but in other areas of television that needn't be the case. That's been so for quite a long time: broadcasters have used a sledgehammer to crack a nut. They've been very slow to take up new, cheaper and more flexible technologies - partly because of inertia within the system. So a lot of developments have happened outside that system. It's the same with the Internet. It was around for quite a long time, not really understood by the public - indeed, often not by journalists

either. There were all these worries about security and pornography, for example. But for people working with it creatively, the question to answer is what can they do with the damn thing? Whenever a new medium comes along, it tends to ape the forms of the past: television apes film, it apes theatre. Theatre apes the story-telling tradition. Eventually a medium finds its own form, its own syntax, its own language. That's what we were trying to do back in the 1970's with video: to help television create those fundamentals.

H: In 1980, there was a lot of talk about a 'third area' and "time-based art." It had to fight for access to art galleries which were still dominated by painting and sculpture. It seems to me that now artists move much more readily between media than they did then. Is that your impression?

S: I think it's a bit of an illusion; the artists who do that are very much in a minority. In the last few years, since video has been part of the mainstream, the people who are using it have positioned themselves cleverly - and properly - as simply artists. It's a political stance: they don't call themselves video artists, they don't go to video art festivals, they're not part of that milieu. I admire that and in some ways I envy it... but it's difficult, once you've been labelled. In other words, this isn't just about the medium you use, it's about context, about where you come out from...

H: Are people like the 'yBa's' reaping the benefit of what people of your generation did? Are they wary of being labelled as 'video artists' because they don't need to be? Museums are buying video art in the same way as they're buying paintings.

S: Well, I welcome the change, but I wonder whether it's more subtle than that, or rather maybe it's not as firm as that. I think it might be a fashion: the museum world will move on and it'll be just as difficult as it always was to work in that area; those artists who do will be deemed to be old fashioned. Painting goes in and out of fashion all the time. That's a very frustrating thing for an artist no matter what medium he or she is working in.

H: Do you think the web might offer similar opportunities which seemed to be offered by TV?

S: Music often leads things - whether it's pop, avant garde or whatever - and some of the most interesting things happening on the web at the moment are about sound. There's new software and hardware allowing people to

download with very high quality and it's changing the way at least the more progressive bands are thinking. The record companies are frightened because they see it undermining profits, but the fact is it's changing the whole means of distribution and dissemination of the work. To use the dread word - and this is where it can be used absolutely applicably - there's a new paradigm happening there with music.

H: Music has been a very important part of your work. Firstly, in the obvious sense of your collaborations with David Cunningham but also, it seems to me, because you work so much with rhythm - percussion would perhaps be a better term. Is music, you know, that thing you never did but would like to have done?

S: I guess that's true. Like a lot of people, I was in a band when I was young, I played bass - but I'm not a gifted musician. I listen to a lot of music, but yes, it's one of those regrets. I mean, it's not just about playing... David Cunningham is a composer. I do use a lot of sound in my work, and where I've done it entirely on my own, I see it as very much analogous to the vision side of it - cutting, blocking, pasting and things like that.

H: You think of music visually?

S: Yes. You may remember from the Ikon, I do often put 'scores' into shows of my work - editing presented visually.

H: Art historians tend to write collaboration out of the story when they write about artists - I think that's partly coming out of the notion of the individual genius. This interests me because film is a collaborative process. David Cunningham has said the aim is to create a situation that makes him do something that otherwise wouldn't have occurred to him. It's a process of action and reaction, which is how it is with me as well.

S: Absolutely. People tend to exaggerate what collaboration means. It might just be where an artist is working with a group of other artists and just getting feedback - there's a sense of common purpose, no more than that. But I've always enjoyed collaboration, and that's happening now with Elaine Shemilt.

H: In the text I wrote in 1980, I referred to an involvement in education as a necessity because of the technical resources you need. You've put a huge amount of time and energy into building up the School at Duncan (of Jordanstone College of Art and Design. Is that

Europe and North America by Marine Ambramovic, Nan Hoover, Ulrike Rosenbache, Bill Viola and Peter Weibel.

Inaugural Screening of London Video Arts: AIR Gallery, London (October).

First screening of a selection of international tapes to launch LVA's first distribution catalogue, listing details of tapes and installations by British and international artists. From early 1979 shows were also held at the Acme Gallery, Covent Garden, London.

The Acme and AIR Galleries were two fairly active venues and showed experimental film and video works from about 1978 onwards. One show in August 1979 was a joint show of a film installation – Ambient Vision by myself – and a video installation – Pieces I Never Did by David Critchley. At that time the rift between experimental film-makers and artists working with video was exceptionally deep in the UK, and this was the first time film and video installations were shown together. (Jane Rigby).

1979
Study in Blue: The Kitchen, New York, USA (September).

Four channel installation by Steve Partridge, commissioned by The Kitchen. Partridge also curates U.K.TV – Videotapes by British Artists for screening at the same venue the following month.

1980
Video Artists on Tour: Arts Council of Great Britain (February).

Set up to extend the Film-makers On Tour scheme and to promote the showing of artists' video, the ACGB meet partial costs of artists presenting a programme of their work. Before its demise in 1986 the scheme supports any video artist eligible for support from the Artists' Film and Video Committee.

First Bracknell Video Festival: South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell (October).

Annual festival of video art and community-based video work. Among the British artists whose tapes were screened in this inaugural year were: Peter Anderson, Chris Andrews, David Critchley, David Hall, Mick Hartney, Tamara Krikorian, Steve Littman, Stuart Marshall, Alex Meigh, Marceline Mori, Stephen Partridge and Vida. David Hall's video installation A Situation Envisaged: The Rite was also staged.

David Hall's This is a Television Receiver was ludicrously shown via a video projector! (Mick Hartney).

About Time: Video, Performance and Installation by Women Artists: Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (October/November) and Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol (December).

Curated by Catherine Elwes and including works by Elwes, Rose Finn-Kelcey, Rose Garrard, Roberta Graham, Susan Hiller, Tina Keane, Alex Meigh, Marceline Mori and Jane Rigby.

1981
Display-Displaced: Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (January).

Retrospective of video tapes and installations by Stephen Partridge, curated by Hugh Stoddart, alongside a newly-commissioned work Display-Displaced and a first UK showing of Study in Blue (1979).

1982
In January the Video Workshop (later Media Centre) at South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell starts publishing Independent Video (Independent Media from 1986). Produced monthly, it is Britain's only publication devoted to alternative forms of video production and distributes its coverage equally between campaign/community video and video art. Until its demise in 1991, editors (later publishers) Barrie Gibson and David Stewart are assisted by writers (some later Contributing Editors) like Steven Bode, Sean Cubitt, Philip Hayward, Nik Houghton, Julia Knight and Past Sweeney. In 1987 the ACGB fund a regular 16 page artists' film and video section edited by Michael Maziere and Houghton.

Channel 4 (November)

Britain's long-awaited fourth television channel goes on the air with a charter to encourage independent production. The Workshop Declaration, an agreement made between the Channel and the TV technicians union ACTT, allows the establishment of franchised workshops to make film and video productions for broadcast outside usual union agreements.

1983
Film and Video Umbrella (FVU) founded (August).

An organisation initiated by Michael O'Pray to tour specially compiled programmes of film and video to cinemas, galleries and other venues across the country. One of its first initiatives is to find regional venues for Recent British Video, a programme originally curated by Stuart Marshall for The Kitchen in New York earlier in the year and including work by John Adams, Ian Bourn, Catherine Elwes, David Finch, Sera Furneaux, Mick Hartney, Steve Hawley, Tina Keane, Richard Layzell and Jeremy Welsh.

1984
Stephen Partridge and Jane Rigby move to Scotland.

Artists Works for Television: Channel 4 TV (April-December).

Various artists' works produced by Anna Ridley, including the influential Ian Breakwell's Continuous Diary (a series of 21) and Dadarama series, with work by Rosemary Butcher, David Cunningham, Rose Garrard, John Latham, Michael Nyman and Paul Richards, and Stephen Partridge. These are transmitted at various times rather than being promoted as a single arts package or series.

I felt that TV was the most apposite means of exposure for artists to reach the public direct. After the Arena programme in 1986, I had hoped that this might spark off a regular spot but it wasn't until the creation of Channel 4 that this hope was realised. Breakwell's work and Dadarama were all part of the proposal I made to Paul Madden at Channel 4 for Artists Works for Television where both the medium and context were of equal importance. (Anna Ridley).

LVA publish their second distribution catalogue.

1985
Stephen Partridge directs a series of mini-dramas for the playwright Tom McGrath.

1986
Ghosts in the Machine: Channel 4 TV (January/February).

Six part series, produced by John Wyver/Illuminations, featuring American video art and artists' television pieces by Max Almy, Peter Campus, Spalding Gray, Joan Jonas, Les Levine, John Sanborn, William Wegman and others. The success of the series represents a significant moment in which video art starts to permeate a broader public consciousness, and particularly opens the eyes of producers and creatives in the television and advertising industries.

John Wyver became the first Briton to actually do well out of video art. And we didn't even need to make it! (George Barber).

Events Space 1: Transmission Gallery, Glasgow (February).

Exhibition (and the first video installation show in Scotland for nine years) curated by Stephen Partridge, Malcolm Dickson and other artists, and featuring video (and film) installations, videowall pieces, performances and screenings. Installations by Jo Goslan and Cammy Galt, Tony Judge, Steve Littman, Stephen Partridge, Pictorial Heroes. Video performances by Kevin Atherton and Zoe Redman.

Channel 6: Institute of Contemporary Arts, London/AIR Gallery/ London Film-makers Co-op (November).

Screenings of new British and international tapes, and a retrospective survey of British video art selected by Tamara Krikorian.

1987
The Elusive Sign: British Avant-Garde Film and Video 1977-1987, Tate Gallery, London (December).

Organised by the ACGB and the British Council, selected by Michael O'Pray, Tamara Krikorian and Catherine Lacey, and including video work by George Barber, Ian Bourn, Catherine Elwes, Sera Furneaux, Judith Goddard, David Hall, Mona Hatoum, Steve Hawley, Tamara Krikorian, David Larcher, Jayne Parker, Christopher Rowland, Mark Wilcox and Graham Young. Later tours internationally.

1988
Ghosts in the Machine: Channel 4 TV (starting February).

A second series of the ground-breaking video art showcase produced by John Wyver/Illuminations, this time featuring 20 new video and film works for television, eight of which were commissioned from British artists such as Terry Flaxton, Akiko Hada and the Japanese American Toy Theatre of London, Tony Hill, George Snow and Graham Young. A package of the work commissioned for the series is subsequently toured, under the title of Art for Television, by the ACGB/FVU.

Down the Tube: City Art Gallery, Manchester (May)

Touring video package, together with Mineo Aayamaguchi's installation Kaleidoscope and selected tapes by Catherine Elwes, Sven Harding, Marty St. James and Anne Wilson, Marion Urch, Vulture Video and others.

London's MOMI opens in August and includes a selection of British and international video work, chosen by George Barber, as permanent exhibit.

Nam June Paik: Video Works 1963-1988: Hayward Gallery, London (September-December).

Major gallery show of video sculptures and installations (including TV Buddha and Family of Robot) by pioneering video artist, together with presentations of talks at Hayward and Riverside Studios.

National Review of Live Art: Third Eye Centre, Glasgow (October).

Installations by Mineo Aayamaguchi, Lei Cox, and Chris Rowland, plus single screen programmes, curated by Stephen Partridge.

Video at the London Film Festival: MOMI (November).

Seven videos are screened at the LFF, including international selections, new television and a new FVU touring package, Electric Eyes. Curated by Jeremy Welsh, Electric Eyes provides a summary of trends in British Video Art at the end of the 1980's. It includes works by Catherine Elwes, David Finch, Judith Goddard, John Goff, Mona Hatoum, Tina Keane, David Larcher, 9am, Liz Power, Sankofka, Stakker and Graham Young, and subsequently tours extensively to regional venues.

Channel 4 and the ACGB launch a new scheme, The 11th Hour, for commissioning experimental film and video. Renamed Experimenta in 1992, the scheme runs until 1994.

The Arts Council has played a part in bringing the work to the screen via its co-operative schemes and co-funding with both Channel 4 and the BBC but the tendency is to package and compartmentalise which sometimes defuses the power of the work it aims to serve. (Anna Ridley).

1989
Video Positive: Bluecoat/Tate/Williamson Art Galleries, Liverpool (February).

Organised by Moviola, curated by Eddie Berg and Steve Littman, and including video installations, performances, screenings and conference. First national videowall commissions by Judith Goddard, David Hall, Steve Littman, Kate Meynell, Stephen Partridge, Simon Robertshaw and Mike Jones; and installation commissions by Mineo Aayamaguchi, Zoe Redman, Daniel Reeves, Chris Rowland, Marion Urch and Jeremy Welsh. The staging of the festival is marked by Granada TV's documentary

Celebration: In the Belly of the Beast, presented by John Wyver and directed by Terry Flaxton.

It was interesting how long it took for something like Video Positive to happen. It could have happened years before if only the vision had existed amongst some of these 'Video Prevention Officers'. (Brian Hoey).

Video Art: Midnight of the Century: Variant Video Magazine, Glasgow (Autumn).

Compilation video publication, edited and produced by Malcolm Dickson, and including artists' work made at Dundee's Duncan of Jordanstone School of Art and Design, together with interviews in issues relating to electronic imaging.

The National Review of Live Art: Third Eye Centre, Glasgow (October).

Organised by Stephen Partridge and including installations by Mineo Aayamaguchi, Paul Green, Daniel Reeves and Jeremy Walsh.

1990
19:4:90 Television Interventions: Channel 4 TV (April-June).

Conceived by Stephen Partridge and produced by Jane Rigby and Anna Ridley to celebrate Glasgow as Europe's cultural capital. Short works commissioned for TV, transmitted between scheduled programmes and including pieces by Robert Cahen, Rose Garrard, David Hall, Steve Littman, David Mach, Bruce McLean, Pratibha Parmar, Stephen Partridge and Pictorial Heroes, together with retransmission of four of Hall's 1971 pieces. Exhibitions of the work, curated by Partridge and Rigby, were later staged at Glasgow's Third Eye Centre and Birmingham's Ikon Gallery.

The idea for this was predicated to some degree upon the earlier historical models of Gerry Schum's TV Gallery and David Hall's TV Interruptions, and the 19 works were intended to go out with no warnings, titles or introduction. In the event Waldemar Januszczak (the new commissioning editor for arts at that time) insisted upon mediating the works by recording his own introduction. (Jane Rigby).

MOVE: Cornerhouse/Film and Video Umbrella, Manchester Festival (June/July).

Commissioned videowall pieces by Susan Collins and Julie Myers, Mike Jones and Simon Robertshaw, Tina Keane and Keith Piper, together with video portrait by Marty St. James and Anne Wilson. Shown at the Granada TV Studios and subsequently as single screen works at Manchester's Cornerhouse.

The Umbrella have been a major mover and shaker and very active, especially in video and new technology since Steven Bode went there in 1990. (Jane Rigby).

The Dazzling Image I: Channel 4 TV (July).

Videos and films made with Arts Council/BFI/Channel 4 funding, produced by Jane Thorburn for The Eleventh Hour and including work by Catherine Elwes, Cerith Wyn Evans, Gorilla Tapes, Isaac Julien, Sandra Lahire, David Larcher, Cordelia Swann and Graham Young.

Channel 4 has become more conservative with changes in the executive and commissioning editors but one has seen the influence of the work on BBC2 which has been acknowledged by Michael Jackson, the Channel Controller. (Anna Ridley).

The National Review of Live Art: Third Eye Centre, Glasgow (October).

Curated by Stephen Partridge and offering a retrospective of the previous ten years.

Signs of the Times: A Decade of Video, Film and Slide-Tape Installations 1980-1990: Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (October-December).

A major retrospective of British video, film and slide-tape installation, curated by Chrissie Iles in collaboration with the British Council (who subsequently tour the exhibition to mainland Europe). Video installations by Cerith Wyn Evans, Rose Finn-Kelcey, Judith Goddard, David Hall, Susan Miller, Tina Keane, Tamara Krikorian, Stuart Marshall and Jeremy Walsh.

Video Portraits: National Portrait Gallery, London (November-January).

Marty St. James' and Anne Wilson's video portraits of Julie Walters, Duncan Goodhew and Sally Burgess are the Gallery's first video commissions/purchases to form part of the permanent collection.

BBC2 TV/ACGB start jointly commissioning one minute films and videos for the first time for inclusion in The Late Show. This One Minute Television initiative continues until 1991 and includes work by Judith Goddard, Tony Hill, Amanda Holden, Sandra Lahire, Phil Mulloy, William Raban and John Smith.

Our 1990 TV interventions were also a direct influence upon the setting up of the one minute pieces by ACGB with the BBC for The Late Show. The Arts Council put some development and experimental funding into the interventions, and their knowledge of the project possibly acted as a catalyst for the idea of The Late Show pieces. (Jane Rigby).

1991
Video Positive: Tate/Bluecoat/Open Eye and Walker Art Galleries, Liverpool (April/May).

Second major international festival of installations and single screen tapes, including work by Simon Biggs, Lei Cox, Catherine Elwes, Clive Gillman and Judith Goddard.

I think Eddie Berg and the Video Positive idea was good in that it needed someone to just concentrate on that issue of a major international installation exhibition. (David Critchley).

Not Necessarily: BBC2 TV Scotland (June).

Eight ten-minute programmes, a co-production between BBC and the Television Workshop at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, including specially commissioned work by Doug Aubrey, Lei Cox, Judith Goddard, Kate Meynall and student work from DJCAD's Electronic Imaging Course.

1992
School of Television & Imaging at DJCAD re-opens in new £2m refurbished facility.

New Visions International Festival of Film and Video, various locations, Glasgow (April).

Mainly single screen tapes featuring work by British and overseas artists, including a retrospective of film, video and TV works by David Hall, organised by Malcolm Dickson, Doug Aubrey and Events Space. This becomes a biennial event.

Dazzling Image II, Channel 4 TV (June/July).

1993
Second series of visually based experimental work produced by Jane Thorburn, including work by Louise Forshaw, Jamie Parker, Keith Piper, Andrew Stones and Cordelia Swann.

Video Positive 93: Tate/Bluecoat/Walker and Open Eye Galleries, Liverpool (May).

Third biennale of video and electronic media art, including video installations by Jon Bewley, Lei Cox, Shirley MacWilliam, Simon Robertshaw, Andrew Stones, Jonathan Swain and Richard Wright.

In Light of the Other: MOMA, Oxford/Tate Gallery, Liverpool (November/December).
Installations by Gary Hill, together with a three programme retrospective of his tape work. One of two major video installation shows this year, the other being Bill Viola's Unseen

Images at the Whitechapel in December, which significantly boosts video's profile in the UK arts scene.

1994
Stephen Partridge appointed as Head of the School of Television & Imaging, DJCAD.

TV Interruptions 1993: MTV Networks (from early Spring).

Six works by David Hall, commissioned by MTV in 1993 and produced by Anna Ridley, are transmitted repeatedly throughout the year between scheduled programmes with rights to broadcast for three years.

It has been a refreshing relationship with Peter Dougherty of MTV who not only encourages creative freedom by also accommodates the way in which the work should be scheduled and broadcast as far as he is able. (Anna Ridley).

Field and Frames Touring Programmes (Spring).

Jane Rigby and Stephen Partridge's independent production company Fields & Frames launch four video art compilations aimed at UK-wide venues and designed to raise the European profile of video artists working in Scotland.

Raising the profile within Europe (and the States/Canada etc) of UK artists working in video and new technology is a major problem – to such a degree that various of us involved in the area as curators etc., have got together informally to see what can be done to address this issue. (Jane Rigby).

V-topia: Visions of a Virtual World: Tramway, Glasgow (August/September)/Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool (October/November).

Exhibition of interactive video and computer installations, curated by Eddie Berg, Steven Bode and Charles Esche and including work by John and Paul Butler, Susan Collins, Graham Ellard and Stephen Johnstone, Clive Gillman and Richard Land. Plus first UK stagings of interactive works by US artists Lynn Hershman and Grahame Weinbren.

