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Video Art

Jan Debbaut
Belgian Video Art

Peggy Gale
Video Art in Canada

Roselee Goldberg
NY Video Art and Cable TV

David Hall
British Video Art

Sue Hall and John Hopkins
The Metasoftware of Video

Wulf Herzogenrath
Video Art in West Germany

Mark Kidel
British TV and Video Art

Richard Kriesche
The State of Austrian Video

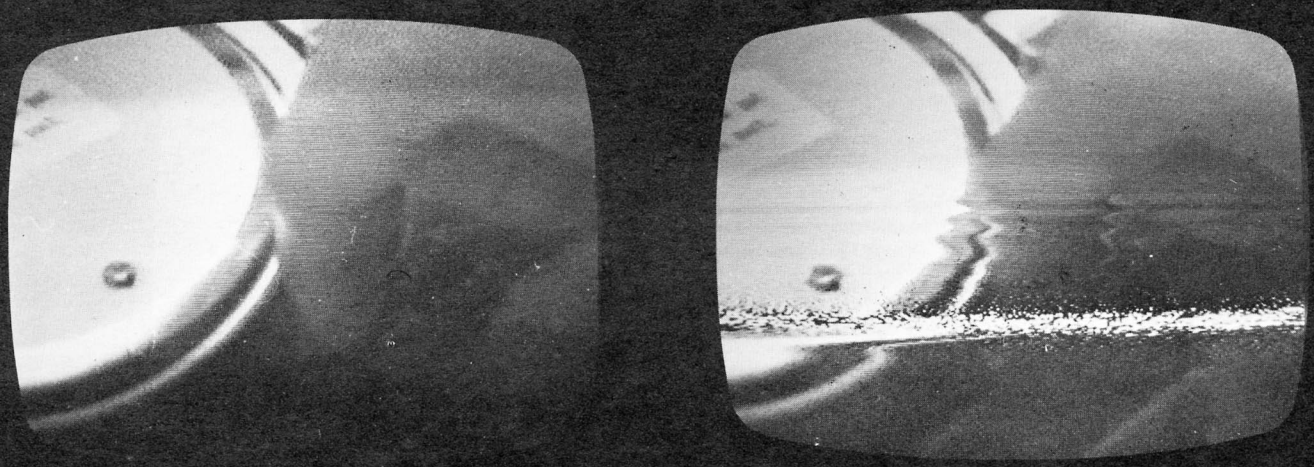
Stuart Marshall
Video Art, The Imaginary and the Parole Vide

Hein Reedijk
Video in the Netherlands

David Ross
Artist's Television in the US

Contributions from: Barnard, Bauermeister, Byrne, Campus, Hall, Hoey, Krikorian, Lange, Leggett, Marshall, Partridge

Mike Leggett



From the videotape *Porter Pack:* direct intervention, non-technical.

Considerations on the Subject of Interference

Fidelity of the Image is crucial in the maintenance of any illusion which seeks to replace primary and experiential reality with secondhand and representative experience. The immediate acceptance (and therefore desirability) of an image resolved with 625 equally spaced lines makes the image which is inconsistently scanned or interrupted, unacceptable and disruptive in that context.

The question of what constitutes unacceptable fidelity on the monitor screen is one that has been rarely considered by users or viewers alike; the precedents set by the Film Industry and Broadcast Television are well-assimilated by both groups. Research conducted at the London Film-Makers Co-op into film as a materialist and non-illusionist phenomenon questions much of what is assumed during the experience of being in a darkened room with a light projector and reflective surface(s). Film and its photographic fundamentals, being less tactile in their operation and requiring greater experience in their immediate use than video, remain essentially a direct, organic and chemical process. Possibilities for intervention at various stages of the photographic processes' function alone are many, quite apart from the essentially environmental nature of projection.

Video is very much part of the post-war technology, and being essentially inorganic and electronic restricts a similar intervention to the hands of a minority of engineering specialists. Its environmental additive effect, of light emission from a monitor face without the observed 'means', can cause videotape to become a mystifying object in the eyes of the majority of its users and beholders. It is regarded in the same light as the home movie exposed in a black box and returned via the letter box seven days later, and upon projection reaction is often centred on the loss of fidelity to that original occasion. Ironically, the conclusion drawn invariably is that the operator was/is at fault, though what has occurred has usually been an intervention in the convention generally accepted, though not understood, by audience and operator alike. Rather than being regarded as an experiential norm, it is instead rejected as an inferior 'error', correctable only by professionals and other high priests.

The acceptance of the convention produces the problems implied; the dominant value system subsumes the credibility of the attempted communication. The more specific the statement and its originator's design, the less chance for the beholder to grasp its essential realness. Without the response it is invariably intended to stimulate, contact between one and the other becomes threatened, causing throwback to the demands of that value system which nevertheless remains, the illusion of the articulate.

The solution lies not in the acquisition of hardware, in an attempt to reach Fidelity parability with established aesthetic values owned by advanced/regressive (broadcast) television groups whose moral values have been declared 'out of order' by most independent video users. More of our considerable energies should be devoted to the isolation of the dominant aesthetic and its accompanying technicalities, so that we can establish worthwhile and relevant research into the real nature of the medium, employing *adequate* resources which the subsidy bodies must be persuaded to provide on a basis more realistic to that function.

From the videotape *Porter Pack:* indirect intervention, technical. The transcript at this point reads: 'The process of editing can be employed unobtrusively to add or subtract material such that you are unaware of this happening; likewise for example any added material, sound and vision, either separately or together can be selected precisely, usually such that it represents rather than records the actual moment . . . I have selected a four-minute section from that tape which I will edit onto this tape ten seconds from the word EDIT, at a time when the three tapes and the necessary equipment can be assembled together. Five, four, three, two, one . . .'