

partly because the anti-modernist critics (who seem to need a market-place in which to react) and the commercial puppets, of course, showed little interest and made virtually no comment.

Given a little more attention it would have been seen that whilst early work was primarily influenced by minimalism, conceptualism, structuralism, etc., developments over recent years by a number of video artists indicate a significantly critical approach. The core of video art is analytical, with decidedly political implications. But its analysis has nothing to do with the short-circuited self-referentiality that has led much modern art into a cul-de-sac, nor with the formless naive political sloganising that has emerged of late in other quarters; rather it is a careful reassessment of the vocabulary of the televisual phenomenon, of the implications inherent in the tools of this new-found medium, and (most important) of its overwhelming popular counterpart – broadcast television. As with any progressive art, video seeks to explore perceptual and conceptual thresholds; but clearly implicit in this recent work is the decoding and consequent reading of the conditioned expectations raised by that narrow convention known as television – principal communication device of the Establishment. Video is cautiously (but with a minimum of compromise) attempting to extend its scope beyond the insular boundaries of the art market and its attendant wranglings.

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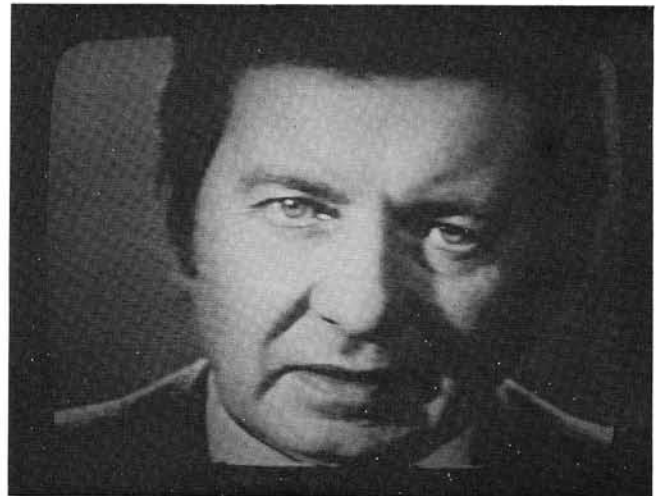
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**The critical approach adopted by video, youngest of the time arts, struck David Hall as especially significant.**

As resurgent political conservatism gathered strength in the 70s, the social and cultural context became unchallenging and uninspired, if not oppressed. Ironically the conservative trend in the visual arts ran riot. This was due, above all, to the confusion and paranoia left in the wake of an onslaught against modernism launched by pseudo-Marxist writers, some of whom never understood the basic problems (confusing art with art market). They left destruction in their wake with no practicable alternative. The few theories that did emerge were difficult to apply to the traditional media to which they were by and large addressed, and misinterpretation brought the old reactionaries out in strength.

Nevertheless the decade also saw the rapid growth of time-based art such as performance, sound, film and video. Video Art was the last addition, and came of age in this country after *The Video Show* at the Serpentine in 1975. In spite of this, the organisation of subsequent and significant shows, and what literary debate there was, more often than not was initiated by the artists themselves – partly because the nature of such work rarely provides a marketable product, and



David Hall. Two stills from a colour videotape, *This is a television receiver*, commissioned by and broadcast on BBC TV on 10 March 1976.