



REWIND | Artists' Video in the 70's & 80's Interview with Mineo Aayamaguchi

Interview by Dr Jackie Hatfield, Saturday 16th July 2005

JH: Which of your works do you consider to be the most important and why?

MA: The video work piece *Beyond Colour*, as a video installation, is always important for me. Also, an important videotape work is *Outer Colour*. That piece was the starting point for my video work. Not many people have seen *Outer Colour*. It didn't get much critical attention, and it didn't get funding. But for *Beyond Colour*, I got more attention abroad and good critical feedback. *Beyond Colour* was my starting point towards becoming a video artist.



JH: How was *Outer Colour* produced if you didn't have funding?

MA: It was produced on a very small budget. I funded it myself. At weekends I was hiring video equipment and rushing, with the three days to make it. I also had a very short time to edit but it was quite a straightforward edit. I quite like that piece.

JH: Did you process the works yourself? Are you part of the production process with the editing?

MA: Yes that's right. I just throw myself into it. With *Beyond Colour* I got funding from London Video Arts.

JH: What made you start to work with videotape?

MA: I used to do performance art, and when I did performances, sometimes I recorded my performance. When I looked at the performance video, sometimes I would just see it as a performance, but I became quite interested in making video for performance, for video itself. That was a start point for using video. It was in 1976, when I was a student at Saint Martins. The Serpentine Gallery had had the *Video Show*. It was quite an interesting show. But at that time I was a sculpture student. I was interested in video but didn't have any access or any point of starting video. In 1978, when I went to Portugal and met a Portuguese art student working in performance and video. I was very influenced by him. Sebastian Pistana.. In Porto. So in the late 70s to early 80s, I was closer to working with video, than performance art. The first one is *Inner Colour* and next *Outer Colour* and then *Beyond colour*. It's three series of colour. *Inner Colour* is more cross performance. *Outer Colour*, I was shooting outside landscapes and certain things. The image looks like a landscape. It's quite interesting how you speed your camera, and focus on some point of the landscape. Some of the landscapes become quite interesting effects when looked at through a video screen. In some of the early performances, I collected objects and put them together in the performance. With *Inner Colour* I used a slide projector. I took photographs of landscapes, and with

two slide projectors, I made one screen. So there was a double image. There were two different landscapes, and when you stood up the shadow become one image appearing, and one image disappearing through the work.

JH: In terms of the structuring process of the images that you collected, how did that work?

MA: First of all I would shoot quite an interesting image or colour object or landscape. When I look at the image, I draw every image bit by bit. So when I look at the small drawings, and the type of image, I check which images are quite interesting.

JH: So you structured by drawing?

MA: Yes

JH: Was there a difference for you in the shift from the performance and the existential physical act of performing, and that shift from that process to putting the sculptural artworks in the gallery space?

MA: Yes, because performing is just through myself and through movement. But, to be doing video installation, people come and see an image and walk around the space. It becomes interesting as other people look and walk in the landscape. You follow walking in their space or your own space, and then look at the image and look at different parts of the space.

JH: So the performance shifts to the audience?

MA: Yes that's right. My first work was more close to performing. So my video work was performance related and related to the 'sensory'. I was interested in the object, in a landscape, in stone or cloud, or wood, or any kind of form. Then I become interested in colour. I was interested in colour as a tool. It was colour from someone wearing clothes. Then it was from colour to light. When darker or bright sunlight, changes the same colour, that effect is in my work too. The early work was more straightforward. I would just take an image and bring a tape. I would look at the tape and locating the work. But the later works were more complicated. It was necessary to organise the image and not one single screen, three screens. So there were three different screens to have synchronised, and to construct a different image. So I made storyboards. Recently I haven't made video, I've been working more with the computer image to make the work. So I don't go and shoot with a video camera, I just use the computer itself to make the image and make a moving image. The good thing about video was that it was different from film. Film requires a team, which can be quite difficult. Some people could make work on their own but then there is the processing time. But with video you can have access to the image immediately. If you don't like it, you can record it again. The image quality compared to film is not great but with that poor image quality, at that time, there were quite interesting effects you could make.

JH: Then there's another piece called *Feet*, from 1983. Was that a performance?

MA: That's right. But I like *Feet* very much. That is my conceptual piece, because I was wearing the monitor. Where does each object or colour come from? *Feet* is what I did at a very early stage, just walk in the screen, and you can find the point where the

image changes. I like it very much. It's a sweet but very simple work. It was the beginning of my work in consciousness and the monitor screen. But at that time I didn't get much feedback. Most of the people at that time were more story based. I didn't know if my work was good or not, I just tried to continue some idea.

JH: The tradition of abstraction in the cinema has a very respectable and traditional history, so it's interesting that your work merges the performative, and the sculptural and the abstract.

MA: I just felt that this was I wanted to make at that time, and it was my only possibility to make. I wasn't interested in another medium. I was interested in video. Now video has become more popular, and there is more access for people. But at that time, there were just a few people interested. Not a huge number. Now is a time that applying for those sorts of things, most video work gets shown. But at that time there were not so many people paying attention to video work. There were some communities or some people interested in video work but not like now, where most people see video work. It's time. It is just time running and it is like fashion, for what people are interested in. Each time has people interested in things. Now, people realise video art or moving image is interesting so more people pay attention to that kind of art and artists. But in the 1970s it was conceptual art and in the 1980s it was painting or installation.

JH: And what's your next project?

MA: I don't know yet, but I must have a project and I must see colours.



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