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Art vs. TV



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A Brief History of
Contemporary Artists'
Responses to Television

Francesco Spampinato

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*To my father, Santi, for his
unconditional support, with love*



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Introduction

Prolegomena to the Study of the Relationships Between Art and TV

Downgraded and “expanded” since the mass diffusion of digital technologies and the internet, television in the twenty-first century has lost the predominant position it held, roughly from the 1950s through to the turn of the millennium, as the most authoritative and persuasive mass medium. If television cannot be declared dead yet, then it has certainly mutated in a drastic way, having been forced to abdicate in favor of a new ungraspable media scenario governed by on-demand criteria and user-generated content, distributed by video-sharing platforms and streaming media services. Most of the content that circulates online today, even that resembling traditional television formats, is, in fact, indicative of an epochal change not just in terms of media production but mostly of their fruition, as media are accessed through portable computers and pocket-size devices by users belonging to increasingly atomized, globalized, and nomadic societies.

The power that television acquired and maintained for about half a century originally came from the vertical dynamic it established with viewers, chiefly enacted by the positioning of the actual TV set in the home: the way it reinforced the temporal structuring of daily life with its schedule; and its role as a “talking head,” on a human scale, that did not give viewers a right of reply. Viewers would passively absorb whatever television broadcast, their only form of control being the possibility of changing channels, and ultimately turning the set off. Experiencing television was primarily an act of physical indoctrination: a metaphorical procedure of imprisonment of the viewers’ body that turned the home into another of those power systems that Gilles Deleuze—tracing an evolution from Michel Foucault’s

idea of disciplinary societies to his own concept of contemporary societies of control—called “environments of enclosure.”¹

In his seminal book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison* (1975), Foucault described the society that formed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a disciplinary society: that is, a social order based on a program of disciplining individuals enacted through power systems, such as the family (and by extension the home), the school, the factory, the prison, and so on, that indoctrinate the citizens in physical terms through the mechanization of their activities and surveillance. The primary aim of the disciplinary society was to produce individuals that would obey and adhere to a determined status quo. A pioneering example identified by Foucault of how disciplinary societies refer to “the body as object and target of power [...] the body that is manipulated, shaped, trained,”² were the new protocols, adopted since the seventeenth century, for training soldiers to coordinate with one another with the precision of a mechanical instrument. From there through to his more famous discourse on the architectural model of the “panopticon”—a circular prison where inmates are constantly surveilled by a watchman at the center—Foucault pointed out to what he defined as “docile bodies,”³ or the embodiment of the disciplinary logic.

The major shift that Deleuze identified from disciplinary to control societies coincided with the rise of neoliberalism in the global market from around the 1970s. This, in turn, produced a new social order in which people are no longer kept docile through confinement within enclosed spaces, such as homes, factories, and prisons, but on a more subtle level, being controlled as they embrace the new virtual open-ended networks brought forth by the mass diffusion of computers and the internet. It is perhaps no coincidence that Deleuze wrote his essay in 1990, the same year that Tim Berners-Lee set up the World Wide Web. As the numerical language of control—made up of codes—replaced discipline, the body rhetoric mutated. From mechanized bodies controlled through confinement to environments of enclosure, we now have individuals who “have become ‘dividuals,’ and masses, samples, data, markets, or ‘banks.’”⁴

The citizens of this interconnected, technological, globalized, and surveilled world are deluded of being freer than before, when, in fact, each single action they perform is instantly transformed into a pack of data. Compared to the television age, the new mediascape is certainly based on more horizontal dynamics into which viewers have apparently acquired an

¹Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” *October*, Vol. 59, Winter (1992): 3.

²Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 136.

³Ibid.

⁴Deleuze, 5.

active role. However, as Deleuze had already anticipated in a lecture he delivered at FÉMIS film school in Paris in 1987: “Control is not discipline. You do not confine people with a highway. But by making highways, you multiply the means of control. I am not saying this is the only aim of highways, but people can travel infinitely and ‘freely’ without being confined while being perfectly controlled. That is our future.”⁵

As the mass medium par excellence of the late twentieth century—although not addressed specifically by either Foucault or Deleuze—television incarnates elements from both disciplinary and control societies. Its transformation from the domestic “fireplace” to a multifunctional apparatus with attached peripherals and internet connectivity is testament indeed to the metamorphosis of the role of the viewers and the definition of their body. The transformation from the docile, torpid body sinking into a sofa to the athletic body of the new, always-on-the-move “prosumer,” is also exemplary of the shift from nuclear to atomized families and, as a consequence, of the lifestyle migration from houses to increasingly smaller apartments. At the same time, television prefigured the electronic highway Deleuze talked about, offering a fictional reality—specular to factual reality—to which the viewer was irresistibly attracted, and into which he or she was deluded to be immersed, only now surfing in cyberspace while the body stayed put.

The Body Split to Travel in Space

This book aims to map and condense the history of contemporary visual artists’ responses to television during the half century or so in which television maintained its position as society’s quintessential mass medium. The study will take into account video artworks, installations, performances, interventions, and television programs made by artists as forms of resistance to, and appropriation and parody of, mainstream television. Apart from a few interventions in major TV channels, most of the works discussed herein are intellectual productions destined for the art world, small television networks, or the internet, that oppose, simulate, or make fun of television in the attempt to expose the mechanisms through which the mass medium influences our perception of both reality and ourselves: the way we mold our identity, how we relate to one another, and how we develop certain preferences and make certain choices in life. Aside for a few case studies from Argentina, former-Yugoslavia, and Japan, most of the artists discussed

⁵Gilles Deleuze, “What Is the Creative Act?,” 1987 in *Gilles Deleuze: Two Regimes of Madness—Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 322.

are from the United States and Europe. The reason is not only that most researches for this book have been conducted in the United States and Europe but also to highlight the predominant role of television in Western societies from an insider perspective, having lived in Italy most of my life and in the United States for almost a decade.

The many works surveyed in this compendium are manifest forms of opposition to television genres, languages, formats, and phenomena. Moved by the utopian desire to develop alternative forms of cultural production that would potentially affect larger and more generic audiences, the artists that realized these works are prompted by an irreverent poststructuralist approach to television, either in literal or in figural terms, in an attempt to reveal its subliminal power or to exorcise our saturated media existence. In both cases, these works and phenomena elicit a tension between art and television, exposing an incongruence; an impossibility not only to converge but at the very least to open up a dialogical exchange. Indeed, even the television programs made by artists end up exposing the coercive nature of the medium itself, and the fictional apparatus on which its very *raison d'être* is based. In other words, every artistic commentary on television configures itself as an act of challenge to television itself.

What emerges, in particular, is that while functioning as a window into another virtual reality that supposedly replicates surrounding reality, television also produces a sensation of physical displacement in the viewer; the perception of being at home one minute and immersed in whatever televisual space is broadcast the next. A parallel can be traced to the neurophysiological syndrome of the so-called phantom limb, which manifests when an amputee feels sensations in a limb that no longer exists. For the TV viewer it is not a question of perceiving physical feelings such as touch, temperature, pressure, vibration, and so on (an effect that can be achieved, instead, during more immersive media experiences such as virtual or augmented reality) but of having the illusion that his or her whole body has actually travelled in space or, vice versa, that the body on screen has travelled through space and entered the living room to talk with the viewer.

One of the most acute thinkers to have discussed media in relation to aesthetics, American literary critic and philosopher Samuel Weber condensed his thoughts on television in the essay "Television: Set and Screen" (1996), which revolves around the presupposition that the specificity of television as a medium is that it allows the viewer to "see at distance"—a function epitomized, after all, in the very combination of the terms "tele" and "vision." However, unlike other devices whose noun incorporates the prefix "tele," and which allow to overcome distance (such as the telegraph, the telescope, or the telephone), with television it is not distance per se that is overcome but the body itself. If a body is defined by the determinate extent

of the space it occupies, and the fact that it can occupy one place at a time, according to Weber:

Television thus serves as a surrogate for the body in that it allows for a certain sense-perception to take place; but it does this in a way that no body can, for its perception takes place in more than one place at a time. Television takes place in taking the place of the body and at the same time in transforming both place and body.⁶

Weber identifies three places where television occurs: where the images and sounds are recorded, where they are received, and the place in between, or else the ether through which they are transmitted. All three converge in the TV set. “What it sets before us, in and as the television *set*,” continues Weber, “is therefore split, or rather, it is a *split* or a *separation* that camouflages itself by taking the form of a visible *image*.”⁷ By standing between the viewer and the viewed, the television screen is the materialization of this split between these three locations which also constitutes a triple split of the body. Various science fiction movies have also played on the idea of the TV screen as a window or door into another dimension—a liminal boundary through which bodies from both factual and televised reality can pass. This happens to Max Renn, the protagonist in David Cronenberg’s *Videodrome* (1983), whose surrounding reality is affected by the actions performed in a television program (with the same title as the film) that induces hallucinations to such a degree that as he approaches to kiss a mouth on the screen, his entire body is eaten up and transported to the other side.

Following Weber’s reasoning then, one can assume that, much more than being a device, “tele-vision” is, in fact, a scopic system that, while allowing the viewer to see at distance, simultaneously reiterates and negates the very idea of visual perception as being that sense that allows one to detect and interpret visual information so as to build a representation of the surrounding reality. If the only sense that proves reality as being factual is touch, more than the amputee who feels a non-existent phantom limb, the TV viewer perceives a reality that is both visible and audible, yet is not properly there. This ambiguity is proven by the fact that, unlike Max in *Videodrome*, the viewer who will try to interact physically with the televised reality will be confronted with the screen: no warm lips to await, only a dusty, cold, and hard surface. Therefore, as Weber concludes, what is placed in front of the viewer is, after all, the very power of vision to create a representation of reality.

⁶Samuel Weber, *Mass-Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 117.

⁷*Ibid.*, 120.

Art Reflecting Tele-Vision

Voluntarily confined in the environment of enclosure, chiefly the home, the viewer opens up, through the television set, to a phantom reality. While his or her body relaxes in a comfortable seat, sensory processing is stimulated and altered by increasingly advanced systems of audiovisual reproduction, be it high-definition screens able to display information that the human eye wouldn't otherwise see or Dolby Surround audio systems giving the enhanced impression of being truly immersed in whatever manufactured reality is being broadcast at the moment. For the viewer is not only disinterested in confronting the idea of "tele-vision" as a scopic regime but is also totally unaware of the implications that television as a system of representation may have on his or her psyche, and how it can influence his or her individual and social life.

As for Max, the degree of mimesis of factual and televisual reality is so high that the viewer might even decide to stand up at one point, approach the TV set, and decide to interact with the person on the screen. Now, for many that would certainly be ascribed to a pathological condition, but how many Maxes wouldn't kiss someone on the screen in the privacy of their own living room where nobody can see them? A recent example of mimesis gone wrong, albeit not in such literal terms, occurs in a scene of a popular Italian TV series based on the story of Rosy Abate—a fictional ex-mafia queen who tries to change her life. A character who plays the role of a criminal hands the protagonist a note with his telephone number in open sight. This doesn't seem strange, except for the coincidental fact that it happened to be the real phone number of a carpenter from Domodossola, whose Sunday night turned into a nightmare as viewers kept calling and threatening him to leave Rosy alone.

To display a real phone number in a television show was certainly an oversight by the production team, but who would ever have thought that viewers would bother to take down the number, call it, and, most of all, think they were talking with the TV character in question as if he were a real person? Well, an artist definitely would—and that is when art joins in the game. Being itself a system of representation, art has proven to be a privileged context in which to measure the psychological impact of television and rethink its social role. Since the dawn of civilization, art has traditionally performed a social function, be it to serve as décor or illustrate hierarchical power structures under the commissions of kingdoms, governments or religious orders. Of course, that did not stop artists from treating art as a free expression of human intellect and spirit, using metaphor and allegory as instruments to develop subliminal commentaries on life, politics, or culture itself. By embracing these rhetorical figures, art became independent from the "functional" constraints of society—be they ethical or political—and

began to serve “as a mirror held up to nature,” as Arthur Danto wrote in an influential essay, “to catch the conscience of our kings.”⁸

Allegory, in particular, has proven to be an efficient avenue to expose the misconduct of a given social order. As industrial production and the economic interests it gained became a state’s priority along with traditional geopolitical concerns, art has employed allegory as a proper weapon to expose, criticize, or challenge the anti-democratic and coercive nature of the new disciplinary societies that formed with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. This explains why artists started to imitate the language of mass consumerist culture, overidentifying the work of art with an industrial object, both through acts of literal appropriation—from Marcel Duchamp’s readymade through to collages and simulation—and through the adoption of techniques and tools proper of industrial production, such as the screenprint, video technologies, and, more recently, computer software and web applications.

Along with traditional mediums, such as painting, drawing, and sculpture, artists adopted and learned how to use a new array of mediums through which they could elaborate more subtle and efficient commentaries, and sometimes even assaults, on society and its “kings.” Being power systems at the core of disciplinary and later control societies, mass media became a recurring subject—and sometimes also the medium itself—for artists who could now fight their enemies on equal terms, so to speak. This is particularly true of video art, which arose in the 1960s and developed initially in open opposition to television. If early visual technologies, from the camera obscura to photography, allowed to measure and so reorganize reality in the form of an image, their development in film and television allowed to recreate reality. Just as artists began to challenge the film industry as soon as they had access to the technology, so too with the emergence of video technology on the market, or through collaborations with TV networks, television became their prime target.

Video art’s confrontational approach to television is well summed up by Philippe Dubois when he argues:

It is not a question of simply *turning over* the television, but of *reflecting* it, of staging (in image and in device) the image *and* the device that it is. The video can thus appear not as another form (the form of the other)—the anti-television, but as the very form of a thought *of* the television. Something like an analytic metalanguage. Video is the formal and intellectual material in which reflection on/from/with television flows, or even better: which generates it, which invents it, which gives it body and

⁸Arthur Danto, “The Artworld,” *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 61, No. 19 (October 15, 1964): 584.

ideas. There is a kind of ‘power of thought’ in and through the image, which seems to me at the heart of the video form. ‘Video’ would be, in this sense, quite literally, a form that thinks, that is to say, a thought of the image. In general, not just of television.⁹

Artists as Prosumers

Dubois’ discourse confirms that video art is the artist’s favorite genre when it comes to reflecting upon television, and the sensation of body split that it produces. When used to address television, however, video is rarely employed by artists as a technology that only reproduces vision; rather, it is often in reference to the body—be it the body of the television viewer, the body represented on screen and its social implications, or the body of the visitor or beholder of the artwork the moment it is displayed or performed in an exhibition space or other venues. Therefore, it is the body, more than video, which is employed as a proper medium, while video subordinates to performance either as a mere tool for documentation or as a referent in relation to or against that which a performance is structured on. This also includes real-life events—that is, public or TV interventions, or proper TV programs directed, hosted, or featuring artists, and thus automatically transformed, or at least seen as works of art in their own right.

The artists discussed in this study belong to different generations: those emerged in the 1960s in association with art movements such as Pop Art, Fluxus, and Happening—whose work explored the implications of television becoming a ubiquitous presence in all homes; those emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s in association with video and performance art practices, as well as counterculture and Conceptual Art, who employed video as a mirror—either in psychoanalytical or in social terms; those appearing on the scene in the 1980s, whose work aimed at deconstructing media representation in line with postmodernist theories; those emerged in the 1990s, who reacted to the coeval convergence of art and entertainment, politics and spectacle; those arriving in the 2000s, an era in which, through reality shows and the Internet, anybody could potentially become a media personality; and finally those emerged in the 2010s, whose work reflects on how old media like television has definitively vaporized through the electronic highways of cyberspace (borrowing a retrofuturistic vocabulary from the age when personal computers entered our homes, notably the 1980s).

⁹Philippe Dubois, *La Question Vidéo: Entre Cinéma et Art Contemporain* (Crisnée, Belgium: Éditions Yellow Now), 109, my translation.

The most popular television genres and formats to be targeted through artistic acts of resistance, appropriation, and parody include: news, commercials, sitcoms, soap operas, talk shows, children's and youth programs, music videos, reality and talent shows, edutainment, and TV series. While endeavoring to chart a diachronic development, the present study has also been structured by areas of interest, into which some of the aforementioned TV formats have been referred to as connecting threads; to group and compare works that would otherwise have been looked at from a distance, since they often pertain to different tendencies or moments of contemporary art practice. Although contemporary art is the main field with which they are associated, some of the works discussed also come from parallel and occasionally tangential spheres, such as cinema, music, design, activism, and television itself.

Far from being willing to reinforce obsolete distinctions between disciplines—not to mention establishing hierarchies between high and low culture—the various techniques or tools employed, and the works and phenomena taken into consideration are approached from an expanded, transversal, and transdisciplinary perspective. After all, being homologous to the evolution of television and its role in society, they reflect not only a change in terms of contents and production, but mostly of distribution and fruition. As noted before, a determining element to signal the passage identified by Deleuze, from disciplinary societies to societies of control, is the user's new approach to media since the advent of digital technologies. Exemplary of this change, the term "prosumer" was coined to denote the shift from consumers into producers; a groundbreaking transformation that began in the 1960s with the diffusion of portable video cameras, and which continued over the decades with the introduction and development of the computer market, advanced digital technologies, and later the internet; the latter allowing anyone without proper expertise to produce media products.

The introduction in the 1960s of portable video cameras, such as the Sony Portapak, triggered the rise of bottom-up video productions as well as video art practices, but it also signaled the beginning of the story of the relationships between art and television that is about to be outlined. When it comes to "reflecting" and reflecting upon television, both artists and prosumers embraced video technologies with a similar metalinguistic approach, which resulted in works that ultimately exposed—even though inadvertently for the most part—the very ontology of vision and the mechanisms of image-making and distribution. More than in art historical terms, the examination of these works will be undertaken from an expanded approach to visual culture; one that, as Andrea Pinotti and Antonio Somaini argued in their primer on the topic, assumes that "images and vision are not abstract and supra-historical entities. On the contrary, they are always something concrete and historically conditioned. They are material images and incarnate looks that circulate in a context whose coordinates are defined

by a whole series of factors at the same time technological and media, social and political.¹⁰

Therefore, along with contemporary art history and visual studies, both standing as the main disciplines of reference, the works to be taken into account will also be of interest to such academic fields as media studies, cultural studies, and critical theory, as they are forms of artistic expression that comment on the tectonic cultural shifts brought on by the social role of images and the mass diffusion of visual technologies. Television may no longer be society's quintessential mass medium, but it certainly continues to exert a huge amount of power even in today's cross-media scenario. Its long-lived authority does not depend only upon its omnipresence, now moreover global, but by having worked as the bridge that transported viewers from disciplinary societies to societies of control. Apparently, prosumer technologies and the internet allow viewers to develop more horizontal and transparent relationships with media, but dynamics of control, mechanization, and stereotyping are still at stake. Initially perfected by television, these dynamics have simply transmigrated to the new media as a reminder that, after all, although feeling emancipated from television, many of us grew up as docile viewers in front of it.

Synopsis by Chapter

The first chapter sums up the theoretical substrate through which artists and thinkers shaped the discourse on television as an aesthetic and cultural form in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The first part, charting the period between the 1920s and the 1950s, presents the pioneering ideas of László Moholy-Nagy, Dziga Vertov, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Rudolf Arnheim, Sergei Eisenstein, Martin Heidegger, Theodor W. Adorno, and Lucio Fontana. The second focuses on the 1960s and 1970s media theories of Marshall McLuhan, Guy Debord, and Umberto Eco. The third expounds the postmodernist ideas of Raymond Williams, Jean Baudrillard, Eco, and Fredric Jameson. The last one encompasses the main sociological viewpoints of the 1980s and 1990s: Neil Postman, Karl R. Popper, Pierre Bordieu; the illuminating theory of Samuel Weber; the thoughts on TV in relation to immaterial labor by Maurizio Lazzarato and Jonathan Beller; and considerations on the internet breakthrough by Lev Manovich, Henry Jenkins, and Hito Steyerl.

The second chapter revolves around the idea of TV as a mirror, beginning with pioneering acts of manipulation of the TV Set by Wolf Vostell and Nam

¹⁰ Andrea Pinotti and Antonio Somaini, *Cultura Visuale: Immagini, Sguardi, Media, Dispositivi* (Turin: Einaudi, 2016), XIV, my translation.

June Paik. It then moves on to early utopian artists' TV programs: *Black Gate Cologne* and Gerry Schum's *Fernsehgalerie* in Germany, and KQED, WGBH, WNET, and KGW in United States. The second part looks at the first exhibition of "television art," *TV as a Creative Medium* (1969); the TV-related works by American conceptual artists Dan Graham, Bruce Nauman, and Richard Serra; the psychoanalytical dimension of Andy Warhol's *Outer and Inner Space* (1965); and the works discussed by Rosalind Krauss in her seminal essay *Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism* (1976). The third part presents various speculations on the TV set as a domestic living organism, and artists' attempts to break the television flow through metalinguistic commercials and programs. The final part explores the allegorical impulse of Pictures Generation women artists Judith Barry, Gretchen Bender, and Dara Birnbaum, as well as of James Coleman and Stan Douglas.

TV news is the theme of the third chapter, which opens recounting the genesis of the guerrilla television movement, an offshoot of the 1960s American counterculture—from the early street tapes to either its professionalization (e.g., TVTV) or the development of community television projects (e.g., Videofreex). The legacy of guerrilla television is the topic of the second part, which looks at Paper Tiger Television, AIDS-related TV productions and videos, and the subsequent uses of camcorders in the name of social justice. The third part centers on the forms of representation of war, with a focus on US-driven conflicts (i.e., the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and the War on Terror), encompassing the work of artists and writers, including J.G. Ballard, Harun Farocki, Sanja Iveković, Jon Kessler, John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Susan Sontag, Paul Virilio, and Peter Weibel. The last part centers, instead, on works investigating how news manufactures reality, as in Johan Grimonprez's sampling of TV reports of airplane hijacks, and the Yes Men's prank live on the BBC—the most successful ever act of artistic intervention in the TV apparatus.

The fourth chapter explores how TV reinforces stereotypes of the artist as an eccentric, outsider, or troubled human being through caricature or degrading representations. The first part examines the cases of Salvador Dalí, John Cage, Andy Warhol, Charlotte Moorman, and Cindy Sherman, all of whom variously employed self-parody to expose television's stereotyping mechanism. Unlike them, Chris Burden, Mathieu Laurette, Christian Jankowski, and Tracey Emin (discussed in the second part) enacted metalinguistic forms of intrusion, ranging from violent through to disrespectful to zany, which ultimately overturned media entertaining logic—pushing the audience to confront the very meaning of art. The third part focuses on the 1980s TV programs through which New York-based artists emphasized the blurring of art and life, as in Colab's *Potato Wolf* and Glenn O'Brien's *TV Party*. The last part is devoted entirely to Andy Warhol's approach to TV, from his early filmic proto-reality shows to his own TV programs of the 1980s—*Fashion*, *Andy Warhol's T.V.*, and *Andy*

Warhol's Fifteen Minutes—through which the artist elicited a metalinguistic exploration of celebrity culture.

The fifth chapter focuses on entertainment, the TV genre that most often becomes the subject of artists' acts of resistance, appropriation, and parody. The first part investigates the music video, both as a commercial art form and as a field to which artists have contributed, either through commissions or by embracing this format in their work. The second part examines TV's negative influence on children and teenagers as it emerges from the work of Mike Kelley and Alex Bag, as well as an array of artists who have depicted dysfunctional youth and associated symbols in their films, videos, and animations. The third part looks at how absurdist humor, pioneered on TV by Ernie Kovacs, informs video performances by the likes of David Lamelas and Michael Smith, as well as some 1980s TV programs by East Village artists like Jaime Davidovich or those associated to Club 57. The final part focuses on forms of appropriation of the soap opera genre by artists including Joan Braderman, Mel Chin, Julian Rosefeldt, and Richard Phillips, through to the postcolonial views of Bruce and Norman Yonemoto, and Phil Collins.

Following a diachronic criterion, the sixth and final chapter focuses on artistic responses to TV genres emerged from the 1990s to the late 2010s; a time frame characterized by the emergence of reality TV and the internet. Reality shows are the subject of the works discussed in the first part, by artists like Phil Collins, John Miller, Christoph Schlingensiefel, Francesco Vezzoli, and Gillian Wearing. After a discussion on the 1998 movie *The Truman Show*, the second part explores how artists embraced video performance to enact identity search processes, as in the cases of Bjørn Melhus, Shana Moulton, Ryan Trecartin, and Kalup Linzy. The third part looks at the impact of reality TV on the art system, including discussions on TV-related participatory art projects, talent shows for artists, artists' establishment of TV channels in art venues, and the adoption of edutainment in self-representational videos. The chapter closes with the examination of art projects that reflect on the transformation of TV in today's interconnected mediascape, with considerations on such issues as sharing economy, biopower, social networking, and "accelerationism," through the work of such artists as Tauba Auerbach, Keren Cytter, Simon Denny, Michel François, Melanie Gilligan, Ken Okiishi, Cally Spooner, and Hito Steyerl.

TV in the Postmedia Scenario

To introduce what he defines as today's "postmedia condition," Italian media scholar Ruggero Eugeni recounts the television commercial with which

Apple launched the Macintosh computer on the market. Scheduled for maximum impact, it was aired in United States on January 22, 1984, during the live Superbowl telecast—the most watched media event in America’s broadcast calendar—to an estimated audience of over 77.6 million viewers. Filmed by acclaimed *Blade Runner* (1982) director Ridley Scott, the one-minute ad—which depicts a sci-fi dystopia, loosely based on George Orwell’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949)—proved prophetic of what media were deemed to become with the diffusion of personal computers. Set in a grayish industrial complex, it opens with a line of uniformed workers-cum-prisoners with blank expressions, marching in unison through a tunnel punctuated by television screens, transmitting the speech of a Big Brother-like figure. The group converges in what looks like a cinema theater filled with hundreds of other seemingly lobotomized “slaves,” all sitting dazed in front of a giant screen broadcasting the same speech, whose content is epitomized in the homologizing statement: “We are one people, with one will, one resolve, one cause.”¹¹

In plain contrast with the brainwashing atmosphere, typical of a disciplinary society, a blond woman athlete in colored sportswear runs from a group of guards in riot gear. As she approaches the talking head, she hurls a big hammer against the screen that explodes in a blinding flash, releasing a gust of white smoke, which sweeps across the faces of the gobsmacked “viewers.” At that point, a portentous voice-over, reiterated by a scrolling text, announces: “On January 24th, Apple Computer will introduce Macintosh. And you’ll see why 1984 won’t be like 1984.”¹² Clearly, the commercial ironizes upon Orwell’s dystopian prediction, by promoting the end of the social order imagined in the novel: one in which media were employed by a totalitarian regime as tools of both propaganda and surveillance. As Eugeni notes, the object of the commercial, the computer, is not even shown, but is “represented only metaphorically through the young athlete who breaks into the cinema theater and shatters the screen. One thing, however, is clear: the moment it appears on the court of nineteenth and twentieth century media, the computer decrees their destruction. Not, mind you, an economic destruction but mostly a cultural and political vaporization.”¹³

Symptomatic of these vaporizations are the last works discussed in this study, in which TV sets and television images are treated almost as relics from a previous civilization—as with the arrival of prosumer technologies and finally the internet, media as we knew them underwent processes of

¹¹Apple commercial introducing the Macintosh personal computer, directed by Ridley Scott, 1983. Retrieved from YouTube, accessed April 24, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0q7iX0QWaTg>.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ruggero Eugeni, *La Condizione Postmediale: Media, Linguaggi e Narrazioni* (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 2015), 9, my translation.

remediation, rematerialization, and abstraction. Ultimate indicators of this postmedia condition can be found in the recent installations by New Zealander artist Simon Denny and German artist and theorist Hito Steyerl. Denny challenges the illusionistic dynamic of television by displaying rows of freestanding printed canvases reproducing TV sets, thus reducing the televisual illusionism to a bulk of still frames serving as collapsible props. In contrast, Steyerl's futuristic theaters are faux stages in which mesmerizing videos display sampled media according to a logic that the artist defined as "circulationist"¹⁴—or else, an artistic act of acceleration to investigate and eventually expose processes of image-making and circulation in today's postmedia scenario.

In presuming a type of viewer who interacts with the surrounding mediascape only through screens that he or she is deluded to be in control of while in fact ignoring their codes, works like these warn about the dangers of today's postmedia condition as being symptomatic of what Deleuze called societies of control, or else another Orwellian dystopia. As this might be the subject of a possible follow-up investigation—also in light of the impact of the recent Covid pandemic and its related crisis—this study has focused instead on the phase that ushered in the current postmedia condition: one in which television was society's most essential mass medium, a phase whose genesis is exemplified in the works highlighted and the types of viewers they implied. Just as the athlete in the Apple commercial challenges the unilateral power system of a media-based Big Brother regime through a physical act of rebellion, many of the artists surveyed, whose work has been discussed, have enacted a performative dimension too—either through performances, events, and installations or in conjunction with the use of video technologies, as in video works and the TV programs they produced, hosted, or appeared in.

Organized as confrontational acts that challenged the coercive nature of television, these artistic forms of resistance, appropriation, and parody may not have always achieved the instant success of a hammer shattering a screen, but they have certainly contributed to a slow and efficient process of demystification and deconstruction of television as a scopic regime. If it is true that video, as noted by Dubois, has been employed by artists as a form to rethink vision, and so "reflect" television, then it is also true that performance has been employed as a complementary practice to investigate the effects of media on the psychology of the viewer. By often using their own body as a medium or offering audiences the chance to rethink their role as spectators, artists have explored the uncanny feeling of displacement

¹⁴Hito Steyerl, "Too Much World: Is the Internet Dead?," *e-flux*, No. 49 (November 2013). Accessed April 24, 2021, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/49/60004/too-much-world-is-the-internet-dead/>.

produced by tele-vision. Indeed, what the examined works attempt to overcome is precisely that split between the factual and televised bodies that Weber indicated as the specificity of television, which is also a split between reality and representation.

Seen from today's perspective, that is, from an era in which media are accessed on mobile devices as body appendages by users in their atomized and nomad existences, television is increasingly regarded as an obsolete medium. Likewise, in comparison with the subliminal media dynamics enacted today by governments and corporations—harder than ever to be distinguished by users—the retrofuturistic appeal of television is often the subject of mockery or of nostalgic views of a bygone collective unconscious. That doesn't mean that the power television held for around half a century should be underestimated. On the contrary, a study such as the one that has been conducted here aims to show precisely that some dynamics perfected by television have, in fact, transmigrated to and have been reinforced by new media. If the artistic commentaries on television have some reactionary power, it is to reveal to viewers that television offers no more than an illusionistic travel in space in exchange for our docile immobility: a physical condition from which derives our implicit consensus to a given status quo.



1

Historical and Theoretical Frameworks

1.1 1920s–1950s

The 1920s: The Age of Radio-Television

Most technological inventions destined to change human civilization were initially met with a sense of wonder and optimism by some while provoking fear and opposition in others. When television began to be “imagined” in the late nineteenth century—largely as a consequence of the invention of the telephone developed between the 1850s and 1870s—these mixed reactions emerged from some futuristic illustrations that visualized television decades before the first receiver was actually built. Paradigmatic is *Le Journal Téléphonoscopique* (1883) by French illustrator and novelist Albert Robida, which shows a shocked family watching a proto-TV news program broadcasting images of a distant war on a screen in their living room¹ (Figure 1.1).

From Robida’s sci-fi speculations on the Téléphonoscope—as much an early concept of the videophone as television—through to Karl Ferdinand Braun’s 1897 invention of the cathode-ray tube and up to John Logie Baird’s early demonstrations of televised images in motion in the mid-1920s, before

¹The illustration, originally featured in Robida’s book *Le Vingtième Siècle* (1883), was referred to among other “startling predictions” by American media historian Erik Barnouw in his *Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 4. The book, one of the earliest accounts of the history of television in the United States, condensed Barnouw’s writings on television previously published as three individual volumes: *A Tower of Babel* (1966), *The Golden Web* (1968), and *The Image Empire* (1970).

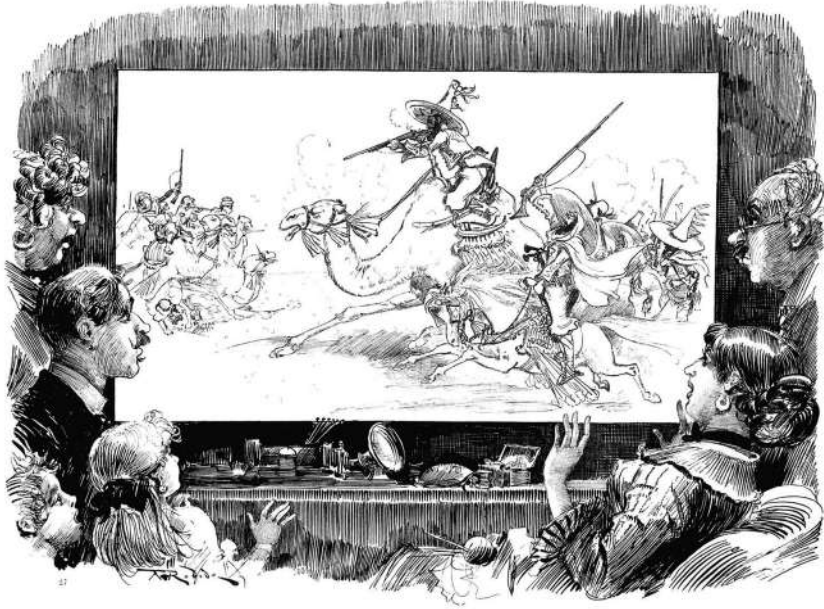


FIGURE 1.1 Albert Robida, *Forecast: Watching a War*, illustration, 1882.

the first regular broadcasts started in Germany in 1935 (followed by the UK, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States), television was already one of the most speculated upon and longed for technological innovations in history. And as it has always happened with the arrival of technology, artists and intellectuals were among the first to fantasize about it.

The earliest discourses on television that are fundamental from the viewpoint of the history of art and cinema were raised by the historical avant-gardes with two essays, both published in 1925, by Bauhaus professor László Moholy-Nagy and Constructivist filmmaker Dziga Vertov. Neither used the term “television,” though. Rather, they talked about images transmitted through radio waves; the primary reason being that in the 1920s television was seen as an extension of radio, which was already entering the domestic space, and for the first time had begun introducing its growing mass of listeners to the concept of a daily program schedule. Fascinated by the possibility of bringing images simultaneously to thousands of people, the two artists suggested two different approaches.

Moholy-Nagy did so in the book *Malerie Fotografie Film (Painting Photography Film)*—originally published in 1925 as the eighth volume of the *Bauhausbücher* (Bauhaus Books, 1925–30) series, it is considered a cornerstone of media studies today. The most groundbreaking idea

expressed therein by the Hungarian painter, photographer, and writer was to use technology, “which has so far been used solely for purposes of reproduction for productive purposes,”² to create original content made of sensible forms (aural, visual, and audiovisual) able to expand the sensorial capacities of human beings and educate them to interact with an environment totally transformed by technology. He mainly referred to photography and the gramophone but also mentioned film and a new device he called *Radiobilderdienst*, literally a “radio picture service”; although when the first English version of the book came out in 1969, the term was loosely translated as “television (Telehor).”³

Based on the rejection of the idea of art as autonomous from society, Bauhaus and Constructivism—two avant-garde movements active respectively in Germany and Russia from the late 1910s to the early 1930s—advocated not only the integration of all the arts but also that of the arts and industry. In Russia this integration led the artist, who so far had traditionally practiced painting, sculpture and crafts, to assume the role of visual communicator—so to speak—who variously embraced photography, design, advertising, urban planning, and cinema: any medium, with a penchant for new technologies, that would facilitate spreading the socialist message, while at the same time documenting how society was being positively transformed by it.

As a film director in postrevolutionary Russia, Vertov’s task was to make proletarian workers aware of the improvements brought to their living conditions by the new Bolshevik state. Through the idea of the *Kino-Glaz* (Film-Eye)—which considered the camera lens as an extension of the human eye and referred to the epistemic potential of a “non-acted cinema”: a cinema without actors and clearly separated from any literary or theatrical tradition—Vertov promoted a cinema of fact: of “life caught unawares”⁴ in the streets and the factories of 1920s Russia. In his 1925 text *Osnovnoe*

²László Moholy-Nagy, *Painting Photography Film*, trans. Janet Seligman (London: Lund Humphries, 1969), 30.

³With the word “Telehor,” Janet Seligman, who translated *Malerei Fotografie Film* into English in 1969, forced a retroactive association of Moholy-Nagy’s use of the term *radiobilderdienst* with the name of the only issue of the magazine *Telehor*, a term of Greek origin meaning television. Published by Czech architect and graphic designer František Kalivodathat in 1936, *Telehor* was entirely devoted to the work of Moholy-Nagy, who treated it as an artist’s book. However, despite the name, the book didn’t contain specific references to television. “Telehor” was also the name of a television technology developed in Germany since 1919 by Hungarian inventor Dénes Mihály, who established a company called Telehor AG, with which Moholy-Nagy was familiar.

⁴Dziga Vertov, “From the History of the Kinoks,” in *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O’Brien (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 94.

Kino-Glaza (The Essence of Kino-Eye), he expanded his idea of “non-acted cinema,” prefiguring that

radio-broadcasting images, just recently invented, can bring us still closer in our cherished basic goal—to unite all the workers scattered over the earth through a single consciousness, a single bond, a single collective will in the battle for communism. This objective of ours we call kino-eye. The decoding of life as it is. Using facts to influence the workers’ consciousness.⁵

The 1930s–1940s: Utopia or Dystopia?

Following a chronological path, the next historical reference to television within the avant-gardes dates back to “La Radia: Manifesto Futurista” (The Radia: Futurist Manifesto), co-signed in 1933 by Italian writer, poet, and theorist of Futurism Filippo Tommaso Marinetti together with poet and playwright Pino Masnata. They both speculated on a new imaginary device, listing a series of things that the *radia* (a further feminization of the word “radio,” which is already a feminine noun in Italian) “should not be,” “abolishes,” and “will be.”⁶ For example, the *radia* should not be cinematographic because “the filmmaker is already on his deathbed,” they stated, for a series of reasons, including “the inferiority of reflected light to the self-emitted light of radio-television.”⁷

The idea of “radio-television” was really popular in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in Italy, where the Fascists glorified the myth of Guglielmo Marconi, who had invented radio in 1894. However, aside from mentioning “radio-television,” it is the whole idea of the *radia* that could be interpreted as a premonition of television. In being neither theater nor cinema, neither book nor radio—at least in a traditional sense—and abolishing space, time, and narrative, the *radia* would offer “the possibility of receiving broadcast stations situated in various time zones,” Marinetti and Masnata wrote, and shall be “the synthesis of infinite simultaneous actions.”⁸ As such, it incarnated two crucial characteristics of future television: “ubiquity” and “simultaneity.”

Two years after “La Radia” was published, the German art theorist and Gestalt psychologist Rudolf Arnheim wrote *A Forecast of Television*, which

⁵Dziga Vertov, “The Essence of Kino-Eye,” in *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O’Brien (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 49.

⁶Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and Pino Masnata, “The Radia: Futurist Manifesto,” in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. Lawrence Rainey, Christine Poggi and Laura Whittman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 293.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

is not only one of the earliest theoretical accounts on television but also the first to warn about its possible dangers. Echoing the author's concerns for medium-specificity as a *conditio sine qua non* for art expression, the text begins with a reflection drenched in wonder but also bewilderment: "The new gadget seems magical and mysterious. It arouses curiosity: How does it work? What does it do to us?"⁹ Arnheim was skeptical about television because unlike silent cinema (based exclusively on motion pictures) and radio (based exclusively on sound), it stimulated different sensory spheres (eyes and ears), whilst at the same time leaving the viewer "isolated... in his retreat."¹⁰

To conclude this brief panorama on the references to television in relation to the historical avant-gardes in the first half of the twentieth century, another influential Russian film director should be mentioned, that is, Sergei M. Eisenstein. Although Eisenstein's cinema privileged narrative structures, with a penchant for drama and its heavy use of theatrical features, he found himself aligned with Vertov in producing and theorizing on a new role of montage to increase the ideological power of film to aid the cause of the communist party. In his *Notes of a Film Director* (1946), Eisenstein asserted that television could produce a "synthesis of arts"¹¹—something that "has not yet found its full solution"¹² in cinema. He also wrote how the "miracle of television—a living reality staring us in the face"—was "ready to nullify the experience of the silent and sound cinema."¹³

At this point it is necessary to mention that although television had been associated to other media in various forms during its infancy, it soon began to distinguish itself from them; the first case in point being the telephone, followed by radio and cinema. Unlike cinema, which was born essentially as photography in motion, television's specificity lay in its being a simultaneous medium—its capacity to transmit reality in progress. As two distinct cultural forms of representation, Vertov first, and Eisenstein later, fantasized about television as a more direct medium to achieve their revolutionary purposes. As suggested by Antonio Somaini, for Eisenstein, television appeared to be "the 'extreme embodiment' of an 'urge' toward a 'real communion'

⁹Rudolf Arnheim, "A Forecast for Television," (1935) in *Film as Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 188. The essay was originally published on *Intercine*, the journal of the Istituto Internazionale di Cinema Educativo (IICE) (International Institute of Educational Cinematography), Rome. Active from 1928 to 1937, the IICE was the first major international forum for the discussion of the educational role of documentary filmmaking, that included among its members such figures as Arnheim and Moholy-Nagy.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Notes of a Film Director* (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1948), 6.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

with historical events (*real'noe soprichastie c sobytiem*): events that the Dionysian mysteries remembered through performed reenactments, that cinema could record and re-present as a form of 'dynamic mummification,' and that television could instead transmit in real time, allowing the highest form of direct participation."¹⁴

Following Roland Barthes' famous theory on photography—wherein he argues that “in the Photograph, what I posit is not only the absence of the object; it is also... the fact that this object has indeed existed and that it has been there where I see it,”¹⁵—cinema, as a photography-based medium, presents a reality that was in the past. On the contrary, as a simultaneous medium, television, for Eisenstein at least, could broadcast the present “live” and serve to commemorate the revolution as the founding yet distant event—as the regime had attempted to do with reenactments and celebrations after the storming of the Winter Palace in 1917. Nevertheless, Eisenstein's utopian beliefs on television would soon be fated to contradiction.

The 1950s: Reality and Its Duplicate

In the first half of the twentieth century most of the thinkers and artists who referred to television were in favor of the new medium. The only one that sounded skeptical and even concerned was Arnheim, but he didn't remain alone for long. In the 1950s, two other seminal German thinkers, Martin Heidegger and Theodor W. Adorno, joined him. In his lecture titled “The Thing,” given at the Bayerischen Akademie der Schönen Künste in Munich in 1950, Heidegger used the analogy of a handmade ceramic jug to build an argument around the limits between reality and the way we perceive it in an era of increasing shrinkage of time and space due to technology.

“Man now reaches overnight, by plane, places which formerly took weeks and months of travel,”¹⁶ he said. “The peak of this abolition of every possibility of remoteness is reached by television, which will soon pervade and dominate the whole machinery of communication.”¹⁷ A consequence of this uniformity of reality, of being “neither far nor near,” provoked a kind of “void” or “vessel,” according to Heidegger, which could be considered a metaphor of the ether itself, because “no representation of what is present,

¹⁴Antonio Somaini, “Cinema as ‘Dynamic Mummification,’ History as Montage: Eisenstein's Media Archaeology,” in *Sergei M. Eisenstein: Notes for a General History of Cinema*, ed. Naum Kleiman and Antonio Somaini (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 101.

¹⁵Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 115.

¹⁶Martin Heidegger, “The Thing,” in *The Craft Reader*, ed. Glenn Adamson (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 404.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 405.

in the sense of what stands forth and of what stands over against as an object, ever reaches to the thing *qua* thing.”¹⁸

Slightly younger than Heidegger, Adorno was, alongside Max Horkheimer, a leading member of the Frankfurt School of critical theory. Other associates included such influential thinkers as Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer, all of whom analyzed modern culture advocating social change. Active since the 1920s as a musician and composer first, and lecturer in philosophy and writer later, Adorno left Nazi Germany in 1941, relocating with fellow German émigrés (including Horkheimer, Bertold Brecht, and Arnold Schoenberg) to Los Angeles. There he faced an increasingly consumerist society where entertainment (embodied in Hollywood cinema) and advertising (displayed on billboards and in the press) would soon be integrated and intensify their persuasive power through television.

Adorno was not new to television when he moved to southern California. Although a far cry from the commercial nature of American television, Germany was the first country to begin a regular television service in 1935, although most of the 1,000 or so receivers present in the German territory at that time were concentrated in *Fernsehstuben* (television parlors), where crowds of people could watch live broadcasts of such events as the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics. The main reason the Nazis preferred radio over television was that its diffusion was more capillary.¹⁹ Most of Adorno’s writings are from after the Second World War and concern music, literature, and philosophy, but his most influential contribution to critical theory is the definition of “culture industry,” a category against which, like Nazism, he set himself firmly against.

Adorno defined “culture industry” with Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, a book they cowrote and published in 1944, wherein they suggested with a simple yet radically anti-capitalist take that popular culture goods, like movies, radio programs, and magazines, rendered individuals docile and turned them away from the real political and economic issues of society, transforming them into an unthinking mass. Moreover, they were worried that the adoption of an assembly-line approach to the commercial marketing of culture could contaminate high art forms; a concern that echoed American art theorist Clement Greenberg’s 1939 warning to distinguish avant-garde art (by exploring its self-defining medium-specificity) from kitsch.²⁰

As a boosted integration of various preexisting forms of modern culture industry, television became one of the phenomena most discussed by Adorno in the early 1950s, while he was scientific director at the Hacker Foundation

¹⁸Ibid., 408.

¹⁹The role of radio and sound in Nazi Germany is addressed thoroughly in Carolyn Birdsall, *Nazi Soundscapes: Sound, Technology and Urban Space in Germany, 1933–1945* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012).

²⁰Clement Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” in *Art and Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 3–21.

in Santa Monica: notably in the essays “Prologue to Television” (1953), “Television as Ideology” (1953), and “How to Look at Television” (1954). “As a combination of film and radio,” he wrote in the first one, “[television] falls within the comprehensive schema of the culture industry and furthers its tendency to transform and capture the consciousness of the public from all sides.”²¹ He then continued talking about televised reality as “a copy satisfying every sensory organ, the dreamless dream,”²² a “duplicate,” or else a virtual substitute for what Heidegger defined the “thing *qua* thing,”²³ which is reality itself.

The 1950s: Television and Spatialism

Adorno’s idea of the televised image as a “copy” of reality is close to that of the “void” suggested by Heidegger; that is, the space through which the “duplicate” decomposed image of reality is transmitted through electromagnetic waves, or else the ether that the human eye cannot see and that therefore we offhandedly dismiss as immaterial; a void that calls into question the ontology of the word “medium” itself; that is, the material space through which signals, waves, or forces pass. Indeed, our primordial fascination for, and passive submission to, television could be ascribed precisely to the fact that we perceive a reality that is not in front of us: a “magical and mysterious”²⁴ phenomenon, as Arnheim had called it, that leaves us amazed and speechless.

Several modern artists dedicated their practice to the investigation of the ether as a medium, an issue discussed in depth by American historian of art Linda Dalrymple Henderson.²⁵ Let us think, for example, about the series of abstract paintings that the Futurist Giacomo Balla began in the 1910s called *Compenetrazioni Iridescenti* (Iridescent Inter-Penetrations), which seemingly decomposed reality into electromagnetic waves, or about the “rayographs” that Man Ray began in the 1920s, realized by placing daily objects on photosensitized paper and exposing to light. In this lineage one can also fit Lucio Fontana’s *Spatial Concepts*: a series of monochromatic paintings started in the late 1940s, characterized by holes and later by *tagli* (slashes).

²¹Theodor W. Adorno, “Prologue to Television,” in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 49.

²²Ibid.

²³Heidegger, 408.

²⁴Arnheim, 188.

²⁵Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. Reprint, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013). This book is recommended as a general primer to the idea of a fourth dimension in art.

Fontana presented them as metaphorical attempts to go beyond the surface, to show the viewer that painting could overcome its representational nature only through a material break of the canvas, a break of that suspension of disbelief that painting had started producing since Leon Battista Alberti systematized, in the book *De Pictura* (1435), the rules for the depiction of a three-dimensional scene on a two-dimensional support—also known as perspective. To achieve this task Fontana even went beyond the painting practice per se. In 1947, he founded Spatialism, an art movement that produced various manifestos prefiguring new experiential forms of multimedia art—halfway between happenings and installations—conceived as ephemeral manifestations of abstract forms in space through neon lights, projections, and even television.

The group mentioned television in the first and second Spatialist manifestos of 1947 and 1948, as a new medium for art expression, while their sixth manifesto, released in 1952, was devoted entirely to television. Signed by Fontana and sixteen other Spatialists (including Alberto Burri and Roberto Crippa), the “Manifesto del Movimento Spaziale per la Televisione” (Manifesto of the Spatial Movement for Television) declaimed:

For us, television is a means that we have been waiting for to give completeness to our concepts It is true that art is eternal, but it was always tied down to matter, whereas we want it to be freed from matter. Through space, we want it to be able to last a millennium even for a transmission of only a minute.²⁶

The manifesto was launched on a “live” television program broadcast on May 17, 1952, by the Italian state television Rai (Radiotelevisione Italiana), during which Fontana was supposed to read it out aloud; although this didn’t happen in the end. According to art historian Paolo Campiglio, the program consisted of a projection of light through some of Fontana’s paintings and drawings onto the walls of a Rai studio—“points of light in the dark to draw a kind of galaxy, not unlike the spiral hollowing of the holes of the early *Spatial Concepts* on paper or canvas of 1949, which indeed were used by the artist for those projections.”²⁷

Campiglio also mentioned that the only available documentation of the event are two photographs published alongside a short review of the event written by architect Luigi Moretti in the architecture magazine *Spazio*, for which he served as editorial director (Figure 1.2). That first experiment was followed by two more, in October 1952 and then February 1953,

²⁶Lucio Fontana, “Television Manifesto of the Spatial Movement,” *Medien Kunst Netz*, accessed April 24, 2021, <http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/source-text/70/>.

²⁷Paolo Campiglio, “Lucio Fontana: Il Manifesto del Movimento Spaziale per la Televisione (1952),” *COMBO*, No. 0, (Summer 2007): 7, my translation.

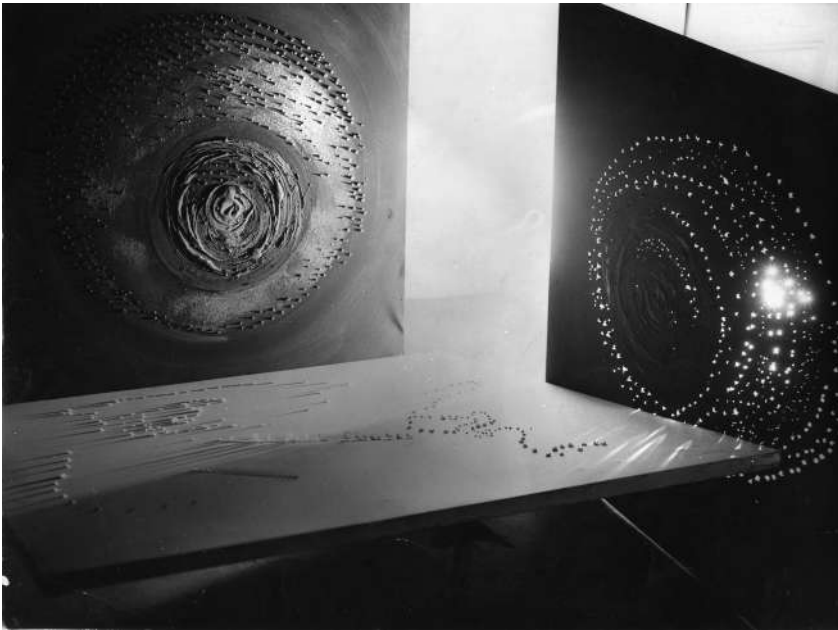
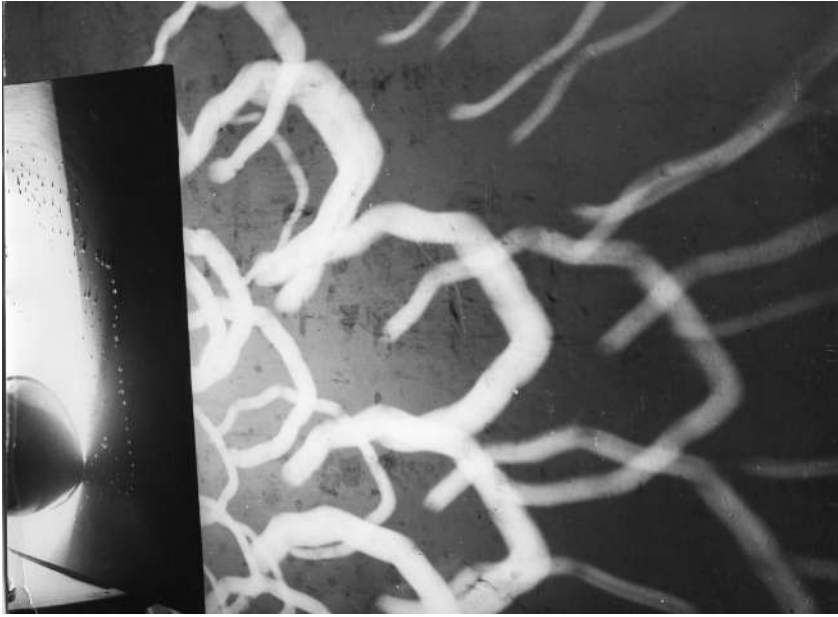


FIGURE 1.2 Lucio Fontana, *Moving Luminous Images*, video stills, 1952. Related to the television experiment, Rai TV, Milan, 1952. Photo: Attilio Bacci. Courtesy of Fondazione Lucio Fontana. © Fondazione Lucio Fontana by SIAE 2020.

although no documentation of either event is known. Despite passing almost unnoticed in Italy at that time (also considering that Rai, the first television network in Italy, only began a regular service in January 1954), and despite the naïve, technophilic dimension of the manifesto, Fontana's television event was not only the first television program ever realized by an artist but also functioned as a visual essay illustrating the materialization of a theory.

1.2 1960s–1970s

The 1960s: Television as an Extension of Man

During the Second World War (1939–45), those countries in possession of television technology halted its advancement to focus on developing weapons, but production resumed at the end of the war and television became relevant again, and an ever-greater priority for those who intended it as an instrument of geopolitical consolidation. The mass diffusion of television in the 1950s and 1960s ushered in a new era of the so-called Information Age, characterized by the shift from traditional industry to an economy based on information. Since computers—a core tenet of the Information Age—would only begin to see a proliferation in the late 1970s, it would be the role of television to start turning information into a commodity.

The thinker who provided the most defining theories to understand television in the moment of its mass expansion was the Canadian sociologist and philosopher Marshall McLuhan. Like Adorno, McLuhan approached television as a manifestation of the larger “culture industry.” Although there is no mention of television yet, in his first book *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of the Industrial Man* (1951) he stated that movies, radio programs, and magazines invented—through their entertaining content and advertising—forms of representation that had the power to produce stereotypical models with which people identified, thereby giving up their individuality in the name of mass consumerism.

McLuhan addressed television more explicitly in his following book, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962), wherein he contextualized the culture industry within a lineage that had begun with Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the movable type in 1450. The main concept that emerged from the book was that of the “global village,” often regarded as a prophecy of the internet. According to McLuhan, print, together with perspective, allowed man, from the Renaissance onward, to measure and then to represent space in cultural terms, favoring the

predominance of the visual over the aural. As the quintessential medium of the early information age, television activated a process of retribalization of society fostering, through its ability to transcend time and space, the formation of a global and collective identity.

References to television are also featured in McLuhan's following and most popular book, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), which reinforced the idea of "technological determinism," or else that technology affects the social structure and the cultural values of society. The first important consideration expressed therein is that media determine society regardless of its content, or if it has content or not, from which derived his famous maxim: "the medium is the message." A light bulb affects the way we live as much as television, although a light bulb doesn't have any content. Rather, what distinguishes media is the degree of participation they require to their users, which depends on the level of definition of the messages they transmit.

According to McLuhan, radio, film, and photography are "hot" media because they transmit lots of data and consequently do not demand a high degree of participation. On the other side, comics, magazines, and television are "cool" media because their low-definition content (unlike high-definition television of today) needs to be complemented by the user's active (although unaware) participation. Moreover, McLuhan stated that media were extensions of man. Borrowing the myth of Narcissus, whose "extension of himself by mirror numbed his perceptions,"²⁸ McLuhan argued that, "By continuously embracing technologies, we relate ourselves to them as servomechanisms,"²⁹ that is devices merely used to correct the performance of a larger mechanism by means of feedback.

McLuhan discussed television throughout his lectures, articles, and following books like *The Medium Is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (1967), where the term "massage" implies the "soft" effect that media have on the human sensorium. A collaboration with graphic designer Quentin Fiore, and one of the key works of the late 1960s countercultural movement, the book was conceived as a collage of images appropriated from mass media, interspersed by McLuhan's always acute thoughts such as: "Television completes the cycle of the human sensorium... Television demands participation and involvement in depth of the whole being. It will not work as a background. It engages you. Perhaps this is why so many people feel that their identity has been threatened."³⁰

²⁸Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 41.

²⁹Ibid., 46.

³⁰Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 2001), 125.

The 1960s: Situationism and the Society of the Spectacle

While McLuhan seemed at times optimistic for the future of society, the coeval output of the Situationists, notably of their leader Guy Debord, expressed concern through belligerence. Active from 1957 to 1972, the Situationist International (SI) organization challenged television as part of a larger oppositional approach to culture industry informed by Karl Marx's critique of the capitalist mode of production. What distinguished the SI from CoBrA and Lettrism (the postwar avant-gardes whose schism the movement originated from) was its adoption of artistic forms of visual and literary expression to reinforce radically anti-capitalist ideologies, thus, redefining the social role of art as a weapon of political resistance. Therefore, more than arts and visual culture, the SI's abecedary of tactics inspired future social movements and subcultures, from the late 1960s student revolts through to punk, to the anti-globalization movement, and today's internet-related acts of plagiarism and parody.

At the core of the group's ethos lay the concept of "spectacle," which Debord defined in his 1967 disruptive treatise, *The Society of the Spectacle* (*La Société du Spectacle*), as "capital accumulated to the point that it becomes an image,"³¹ where the term "image" stands for those forms of representation in which advanced capitalism incarnated: that is, commodities disguised as entertainment and advertising circulating through the means of the culture industry. Determined to dismantle the spectacle, the Situationists developed a series of techniques animated by a sense of play such as the psychogeographic approach to the urban landscape and the *détournement* (literally deflection), a satirical variation of appropriated media like maps, comics, press clippings, and found footage.

Before Situationism was born, in 1950 a small group of Lettrists dressed as Dominican monks entered the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris during Easter mass, reached the altar and declared that God was dead in front of the cameras broadcasting the event live on television. Although Debord, who had already joined Lettrism by then, was not involved, some aspects of this action resonated in his "Report on the Construction of Situations" (1957), the founding manifesto of the SI. Here, he talks about "transforming everyday life"³² through organized collective labor and "the invention of a new species of games,"³³ but also proposed to produce "live televisual

³¹ Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (London: Rebel Press, 1983), 17.

³² Guy Debord, "Report on the Construction of Situations and on the Terms of Organization and Action of the International Situationist," in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*, ed. Tom McDonough (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 42.

³³ *Ibid.*, 45.

projections of some aspects of one situation into another, bringing about modifications and interferences.”³⁴

Television is more explicitly addressed—and contextualized within a larger set of indoctrinating power structures—in another key text of the SI, Raoul Vaneigem’s “Comments Against Urbanism” (1961). “The chief attraction of the spectacle is the planning of happiness,”³⁵ claimed Vaneigem. “The pollster is already conducting his inquiry; precise surveys establish the number of television viewers; it is a question of developing real estate around them, of building for them, without distracting them from the concerns that are being fed to them through their eyes and ears.”³⁶ No wonder that Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* and Vaneigem’s *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (also from 1967) inflamed the late 1960s student revolts in France, which arose precisely as a protest against capitalism, consumerism, and authority.

Debord echoed Marx’s theory of alienation when mentioning television in the twenty-eighth paragraph of *The Society of the Spectacle*: “From automobiles to television, the goods that the spectacular system *chooses to produce* also serve it as weapons for constantly reinforcing the conditions that engender ‘lonely crowds.’”³⁷ And for his eighty-eight-minute film version of *The Society of the Spectacle* (1973)—the fourth of seven films he directed—made exclusively of found footage, Debord interspersed clips from Soviet and American movies of the 1920s to the 1940s with “lifestyle” television commercials (e.g. a fancy couple watching television in a minimal space-age interior), industrial films, still photographs and broadcasts of historical events (e.g., the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, and Mao Zedong meeting Richard Nixon), while his voice-over reads excerpts from the book as well as texts from the likes of Marx, Machiavelli, and the 1968 Occupation Committee of the Sorbonne (Figure 1.3).

Borrowing Marcel Duchamp’s idea of the readymade, and pioneering the cinematic use of collage, Debord appropriated found footage in order to expose the mechanism of media representation and critique the role of industrial production and its alienating effects on modern society. As he stated: “The spectacle has deported real life behind the screen. I have tried to “expropriate the expropriators.”³⁸ Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben put it in other words:

By placing repetition at the center of his compositional technique, Debord makes what he shows us possible again, or rather he opens up a zone

³⁴Ibid., 48.

³⁵Raoul Vaneigem, “Comments against Urbanism,” in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*, ed. Tom McDonough (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 120.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 15.

³⁸Guy Debord, “Note on the Use of Stolen Films,” in *Guy Debord: Complete Cinematic Works*, ed. Ken Knabb (Oakland: AK Press, 2003), 223.



FIGURE 1.3 Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, film still, 1973.

of undecidability between the real and the possible. When he shows an excerpt of a TV news broadcast, the force of the repetition is to cease being an accomplished fact and to become, so to speak, possible again.³⁹

The 1960s: Early Application of Semiotics to TV

As previously mentioned, after the hiatus imposed by the Second World War, television had resumed its evolution at full speed—becoming a crucial instrument for the geopolitical consolidation of Western postwar societies—starting with the decision taken at the 1947 International Radio Conference in Atlantic City to officialize the term “television” (from now on also abbreviated as TV) and distribute the electromagnetic frequencies available in the ether. In

³⁹Giorgio Agamben, “Repetition and Stoppage—Debord in the Field of Cinema,” in *In Girum Imus Nocte et Consumimur Igni—The Situationist International (1957–1972)*, trans. and ed. Stefan Zweifel, Juri Steiner and Heinz Stlhut (Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2006), 37.

1952, only 4 percent of households in the United States had a receiver, but this number increased to 48 percent in 1956, and 89 percent by 1960.⁴⁰ By the time McLuhan and Debord had elaborated their thoughts, television had already become a “mass medium,” and the most powerful one at that, although with a few distinctions between the American and European situations.

While in the United States the commercial dimension of television predominated from the outset, in many European countries television was controlled by the state and considered to have a cultural and even pedagogical function. In Italy, for example, which had only become a unified country in 1861, and where most citizens still spoke exclusively in regional dialects, television contributed to promoting literacy to large portions of the population. Paradigmatic of this process was the program *Non è Mai Troppo Tardi* (It Is Never Too Late). Broadcast throughout most of the 1960s, it was supported by the Ministry of Public Instruction and hosted by Alberto Manzi, a real school teacher. Until as late as 1976 the only network in Italy was Rai, which expanded from one to three channels, all in the hands of the state. And it is from this peculiar situation that Umberto Eco emerged. Along McLuhan and Debord, Eco was one of the most original voices to discuss media and television in the moment of its mass diffusion.

With the exception of some experimental programs, including the aforementioned one by Lucio Fontana in 1952, Rai commenced a regular television service in January 1954. The same year the network hired a small group of young and promising intellectuals including Eco, Furio Colombo, and Gianni Vattimo, soon to be dubbed the *corsari* (corsairs), who contributed to various TV programs until the end of the decade. For Eco, who had just graduated in philosophy, the experience at Rai had a deep impact and resonated in many of his future writings, starting with “La Fenomenologia di Mike Bongiorno” (The Phenomenology of Mike Bongiorno) (1961), featured in his 1963 collection *Diario Minimo* (Misreadings).

The essay was not only the first application of semiotics to television; that is, a semiotic analysis of the Italo-American host’s vocabulary and gestures, but it also elucidated one of the main characteristics of television; namely, that it offered the audience a model of mediocrity. “Television does not propose *superman* as an ideal with which to identify it proposes *everyman*,”⁴¹ Eco claimed, alluding to Mike Bongiorno, who was then the most popular game show host on Italian television. Whilst offering a model of sociological investigation, with this and his following essays on television Eco has also provided a model of cultural and aesthetic analysis, contributing to the development of media studies as a distinctive field.

⁴⁰Data retrieved from Enrico Menduni, *Televisioni: Dallo Spettacolo Televisivo alle Piattaforme Multimediali* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009), 34.

⁴¹Umberto Eco, “The Phenomenology of Mike Bongiorno,” in *Misreadings*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1993), 157.

Crucial to understanding Eco's trailblazing impact on the television discourse in the 1960s, is a chapter from his seminal book *The Open Work* (1962), entitled "Chance and Plot: Television and Aesthetics." Here, he examines the live broadcast claiming it was a genre through which television did not offer a "mirror image" of an event but "an interpretation of it," thanks to the montage of different points of view. While on one side Eco insisted that in offering an interpretation of an event the live broadcast could be considered a proper artistic genre, on the other he acknowledged that the public "not only wants to know what is happening in the world but also expects to hear or see it in the shape of a well-constructed novel, since this is the way it chooses to perceive 'real life'—stripped of all chance elements and reconstructed as plot."⁴² Television was certainly a creative medium but also one that fictionalized reality.

Eco elaborated this point further in "Towards a Semiotic Inquiry Into the Television Message" (1965), in which he suggested that television involved its public on a subliminal level through a series of codes (iconic, linguistic, and audio) and subcodes, applied to the television message according to the cultural references that constitute "the receiver's patrimony of knowledge: his ideological, ethical, religious standpoints, his psychological attitudes, his tastes, his value systems, etc."⁴³ Among countless other thoughts by Eco on television, worthy of note is the lecture "Towards a Semiological Guerrilla Warfare" (1967)—to be taken into account in the third chapter as a founding text of the guerrilla television movement—and "TV: Transparency Lost" (1983)—to be discussed in the following section of this chapter dedicated to television in the postmodernism era.

The 1960s–1970s: The Birth of Video Art

As outlined in the introduction, the purpose of this first chapter is to present the framework of ideas expressed throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century about television, in order to provide a context for the analysis and interpretation of those forms of artistic expression that will be discussed in the following five chapters: artworks and projects that have either used television as a theme or reference, notably video works, installations, and performances; or as a medium, in the form of programs, interventions,

⁴²Umberto Eco, "Chance and Plot: Television and Aesthetics," in *The Open Work*, trans. Anna Cangoni (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 118.

⁴³Umberto Eco, "Towards a Semiotic Inquiry into the Television Message," in *Television: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies Vol. II*, ed. Toby Miller (London and New York: Routledge, 1972), 13.

or clips made by artists for experimental or cable TV channels. With the exception of the purely philosophical text by Heidegger, all the other cited works refer to cinema, art, or media. What clearly emerges is a shift from the utopian feelings of its early evolution to increasingly skeptical interpretations of television that started surfacing in the 1960s.

In 1925, while television technology was in its infancy and still tied to radio, Moholy-Nagy proposed a productive use of a “radio picture service” he called *radiobilderdienst*,⁴⁴ and Vertov imagined that a “method of radio-broadcasting images” would one day unite “all the workers scattered over the earth through a single consciousness.”⁴⁵ While in 1933 Marinetti and Masnata speculated on a new technology called *la radia*, which would produce “the synthesis of infinite simultaneous actions,”⁴⁶ in 1935 Arnheim argued that television was “a mere instrument of transmission, which does not offer new means for the artistic interpretation of reality—as radio and film did.”⁴⁷ Indeed, Arnheim could be considered the first voice in history to mistrust television, though it would be another two decades before others would begin to align with his critical views.

After the Second World War, some artists and thinkers kept approaching television with a positive attitude. In 1946, Eisenstein wrote about television as something that could produce a “synthesis of arts,”⁴⁸ which is precisely what Fontana tried to achieve in 1952 through his Spatialist television programs. But the more concrete and pervasive television became in society, the more artists and thinkers settled themselves in opposition to it. In the early 1950s Adorno declared that the “dichotomy between autonomous art and mass media”⁴⁹ could not be taken for granted, and in the 1960s the writings of Debord, Eco, and McLuhan inspired an emerging generation of artists and activists to dismantle the “spectacle.”

Seen from this perspective, the documents discussed so far, dating from the 1920s to the 1960s, could be considered founding material for what today we call media studies, and its subcategory of television studies, but also for the emergence of video art. Not to be confused with experimental cinema or art film, video art has distinguished itself for being based, like television, on a specific type of electronic image consisting of a two-dimensional composition of pixels, and on its instant playback capability. Since the 1960s, video has been employed in a variety of ways by artists, such as to document scripted performances and improvised actions, to appropriate preexisting moving images, or to create new narratives.

⁴⁴Moholy-Nagy.

⁴⁵Vertov.

⁴⁶Marinetti and Masnata.

⁴⁷Arnheim, 194.

⁴⁸Eisenstein.

⁴⁹Theodor W. Adorno, “How to Look at Television,” *The Quarterly of Film Radio and Television*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (Spring 1954): 214.

Although practices emerged in the late 1960s, the first theoretical essays setting the genre's paradigms emerged in the 1970s. One of the earliest was Gene Youngblood's seminal book *Expanded Cinema* (1970), in which the American media theorist presented new tools and genres—special effects, computer art, holography, and so also video art—that were mutating and expanding cinema into new forms of moving images. In the fifth chapter of the book titled “Television as a Creative Medium,” Youngblood claimed: “Like the computer, television is a powerful extension of man's central nervous system”⁵⁰ and at the base of “a completely new video environment and image-exchange lifestyle”⁵¹ that he called the *videosphere*. To reinforce this anthropological interpretation, Youngblood discussed some newly introduced devices that would affect both communication and artistic practice, including Community Antenna Television (CATV), Bell Industries Inc.'s Picturephone, videotape recorders (VTR), video synthesizers, and postproduction techniques such as Chroma keying.

The mass proliferation of portable cameras in the late 1960s brought an increasing number of artists to embrace them, finally putting into practice fifty years of intellectual speculations on the use of television as an artistic medium. Video art developed as a distinctive art genre, but during the early phases of its evolution, in the 1960s and 1970s, television remained a constant reference. American poet and critic David Antin wrote in 1975 that the “relation between television and video is created by the shared technologies and conditions of viewing,”⁵² a relation that early video art practitioners investigated through artworks and projects that will be discussed in the second and third chapter: from Wolf Vostell's and Nam June Paik's early manipulations of TV sets to the involvement of artists in TV networks like WGBH in Boston; from closed circuits-based installations to the Guerrilla Television movement.

1.3 1970s–1980s

The 1970s: The Flow

Video art represents a significant aspect of the historical relationship between art and television; a history that has unfolded since the 1960s but that also encompasses performances, participatory projects, and experiments at the boundaries of art and technology—and events that blur the distinction

⁵⁰Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: P. Dutton & Co., 1970), 260.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 264.

⁵²David Antin, “Video: The Distinctive Features of the Medium,” in *Video Culture: A Critical Investigation*, ed. John G. Hanhardt (Rochester: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1986), 162.

between art and life. While this history will be articulated and examined in detail in the following chapters, this chapter will continue to follow a historiographical approach, presenting the founding texts in relation to art produced within that field, which would now become known as “television studies”—a hybrid academic discipline born in the 1970s as a subgenre of the newly established media studies.

A cornerstone publication of the early phase of television studies is considered to be *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1974) by Raymond Williams. When the book was published, the Welsh academic, novelist, and critic was already considered an influential figure of the New Left (a movement mainly active in the 1960s and 1970s) to which he had contributed by updating ideas originally developed by Frankfurt School thinkers like Adorno, notably through his early books *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961), both of which focused on the concept of “culture” at large. Also a founding figure of “cultural studies,” Williams proposed the idea that culture is distinctive of a given human society and developed by its members as a whole of common meanings and directions.

The critical success of *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* was due to the fact that it not only provided a series of illuminating interpretations of key features of television but that it also posed itself in clear opposition to McLuhan, whose theories Williams accused of formalism. More specifically, Williams rejected the idea of “technological determinism” proposed by McLuhan, which was founded on the presupposition that media shaped society. In contrast, he insisted on “the radically different position in which technology, including communication technology, and specifically television, is at once an intention and an effect of a particular social order.”⁵³ In other words, according to Williams television has not determined society; rather, it was a particular type of society—one born out of the Industrial Revolution—that developed television, within a lineage of telecommunications, as an instrument to reinforce its specific culture.

In relation to television studies as a discipline, Williams’ most influential contribution to have emerged from the book is the concept of “flow,” which he presented as “the defining characteristic of broadcasting, simultaneously as a technology and as a cultural form.”⁵⁴ Before broadcasting, we experienced reality and communication as made of discrete items, while radio and then television accustomed us to the idea of a sequence, or set of sequences of various events, as in the program schedule. Williams mentioned that earlier forms of culture industry emerged in the eighteenth century were already

⁵³Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 131–2.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 86.

miscellaneous: for instance, dramatic performances that included musical interludes, or even magazines and newspapers made of articles, illustrations, photographs, and advertisements.

Yet, he reminded us that “until the coming of broadcasting the normal expectation was still of a discrete event or of a succession of discrete events. People took a book or a pamphlet or a newspaper, went out to a play or a concert or a meeting or a match, with a single predominant expectation and attitude.”⁵⁵ In the beginning, broadcasting borrowed this habit. However, very soon a “significant shift” occurred, “from the concept of sequence as *programming* to the concept of sequence as *flow*.”⁵⁶ According to Williams, this was mainly attributed to the increasingly pervasive presence of commercials interrupting the broadcasting of “news programs, plays, even films that had been shown in cinemas as specific whole performances.”⁵⁷

Although presented as “intervals” or “interruptions,” commercials have, in fact, worked as connecting threads, bending the whole content of the broadcast to their own rules. With the advent of the “flow,” the distinction between high and low is lost, as well as that between reality and entertainment, information and advertising, and the idea of history and of the present. As the term postmodernism describes both an era and a movement born out of human sciences and the arts as a departure from modernism, Williams’ conceptualization of the “flow” was the result of a postmodernist approach to culture—one that considered mass media as instruments used by the ruling class to reinforce its power by transforming reality into fiction, or rather into a “spectacle,” as announced by Debord.

The 1980s: Hyperreality

The introduction of the videotape in the late 1950s, and its mass diffusion a decade later—which prompted the emergence of video art practices—was born out of the interest of TV networks to create more articulated forms of “flow” through the montage of different prerecorded fragments. A key trope of postmodernism, fragmentation is also at the base of intertextuality, which is a literary device that creates interrelationships between different texts through the use of appropriationist techniques such as citation, plagiarism, pastiche, and parody. If we move from literature to visual culture, since the late 1970s intertextuality was used as an oppositional tactic in visual arts, architecture, fashion, and design, while advertising and television employed it to reinforce society’s dominant structures and codes.

⁵⁵Ibid., 88.

⁵⁶Ibid., 89.

⁵⁷Ibid., 90.

What characterized postmodernism the most was the distrust toward the grand narratives of history, ideologies, authority, and the idea that objective reality and an absolute truth exist. Postmodernist thinking suggested that history and knowledge were products of dominant systems: fictional constructions developed by industrialists and lobbies at the head of Western nation-states, as a means to geopolitically control both their citizens and underdeveloped countries. Within this scenario, imbued of a certain paranoid fascination for conspiracies, television was increasingly seen as a persuasive instrument used to produce political consensus, induce consumerism and reinforce the status quo.

Among the philosophers who provided the founding theories of postmodernism—often loosely associated with deconstructivism or post-structuralism for their critical approach to the relationships between text and meaning—Jean Baudrillard has been a key figure in the discourses on technology, media, and television therein. At the core of his thinking lies the idea that, following the collapse of the great narratives, the dominant structures of society have employed mass media, particularly television, to replace reality with its simulated version, or what he defined as “hyperreality.” As a fictional image, hyperreality is made of “simulacra”—a Latin word meaning copies (of persons or things) that have lost the originals.

The French thinker expressed his earliest ideas on television in *Requiem for the Media* (1971), a text born out of a response to German author Hans Magnus Enzensberg, who raised the basic question of how to interact with media and liberate them from the capitalist control? Although the Guerrilla Television movement emerged in the late 1960s had already proved by then that forms of interaction, decentralization, and ecology were possible (as will be discussed later), Baudrillard stated that mass media were “anti-mediatory and intransitive. They fabricate non-communication—this is what characterizes them, if one agrees to define communication as an exchange, as a reciprocal space of a speech and a response, and thus of a responsibility (not a psychological or moral responsibility, but a personal, mutual correlation in exchange).”⁵⁸

In his previous books, *The System of Objects* (1968) and *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (1970), Baudrillard had observed—following a Marxist approach via the Frankfurt School and Debord—that the commodities produced by consumerism had become mirrors of the subjects to whom they belonged. A little more than a decade later, he claimed in “The Ecstasy of Communication” (1983) that with media the situation had changed drastically: there was no longer a reflective mirror but “a nonreflecting surface, an immanent surface where operations unfold—the

⁵⁸Jean Baudrillard, “Requiem for the Media,” in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. Charles Levin (Saint Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1981), 169.

smooth operational surface of communication.”⁵⁹ It is on this smooth and glossy surface—the television screen, and also the early personal computer monitor—that reality was simulated, becoming hyperreal, or else obscene or pornographic: “more-visible-than-the-visible.”⁶⁰

The same year, Baudrillard wrote again about television in *Simulations* (1983), his most seminal book. Here he used the example of *An American Family*, a 1971 TV documentary that is considered to be the first reality show in history—a phenomenon which Baudrillard would go back to in one of his last essays, *Telemorphosis* (2001)—which will be discussed in the last chapter. With references to Debord’s idea of the “spectacle” and McLuhan’s refrain of “the medium is the message,” Baudrillard claimed that with television, “There is no longer a medium in the literal sense: it is now intangible, diffused, and diffracted in the real... dissolution of TV in life, dissolution of life in TV.”⁶¹

The 1980s: Neo-Television

Along with Baudrillard’s idea of hyperreality, another groundbreaking concept that acknowledged the transformation of television in the 1980s, and its relevance in characterizing the postmodernist era, was that of “Neo-Television” (or Neo-TV), developed by Umberto Eco in 1983 in contraposition to “Paleo-Television” (or Paleo-TV). According to Eco, Neo-TV had “lost transparency,” meaning that it no longer showed reality but created a synthetic one: enacting a self-referential mechanism of legitimation. In Eco’s own words, Neo-TV “talks less and less about the outside world (which Paleo-TV used to do, or pretended to do). It speaks of itself and the contact it is establishing with its audience.”⁶²

The first sign of this change is in the new behavior adopted by hosts, news anchors, and actors of commercials, who all of a sudden seem to be speaking directly to the audience through the way they look and talk to the camera. There are only a few cases in which the person being filmed does not look into the camera, such as the protagonists of an incident being filmed, the participant in a debate, or the actors in a fictionalized program. According to Eco, the reason is that television “represents” them. Unlike them, the person looking and speaking into the camera signals that he or she is personally addressing the viewer to the point that—as the author reiterates—there

⁵⁹Jean Baudrillard, “The Ecstasy of Communication” in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983), 127.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 131.

⁶¹Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext[e], 1983), 54–5.

⁶²Umberto Eco, “TV: Transparency Lost” (1983) in *Telegen: Art and Television*, trans. and ed. Dieter Daniels and Stephan Berg (Munich: Himer Verlag GmbH, 2015), 207.

have been cases of viewers contacting the networks and asking if the person looking and speaking into the camera was really addressing them.

According to Eco, this dynamic of communication showed “that *what is at issue is no longer the truth of what has been stated*, namely its adherence to the facts, but rather *the truth of the act of stating*.”⁶³ Or, in other words, “it matters less and less whether or not television is telling the truth; what really counts is *that it is true* that television is really speaking to the audience.”⁶⁴ Reality per se is left out of this equation. In its place, the audience member finds himself or herself confronted with a hyperreality (to connect to Baudrillard), of which he or she is deluded to be both a protagonist (by the way TV addresses him/her) and a producer (through increasingly accurate audience-rating systems).

Neo-TV provided its audience with this illusion, no longer showing just facts but the “*apparatus for the production of facts*”⁶⁵—that is, a series of features and instruments used for creating reality; an apparatus that Paleo-TV kept hidden. For instance, Eco suggests that by exposing the microphone and the TV camera, it was as if television was saying, “I am here, and this *I am here* means that in front of you is reality, namely television filming reality.”⁶⁶ Eco also mentioned various new uses of the telephone in TV, like the one by the news anchor to communicate with the control room, and the live phone calls through which the audience could participate in a live TV program from home.

Eco went on to expand the idea he had originally introduced in *The Open Work* (1962), that live broadcast provided an interpretation of reality but, more deeply than in the 1960s, it was now able to create a *mise-en-scène*—an expression normally used to describe how scenography in theatre and film increases the fictional elements of the story told. Eco claimed that certain events no longer unfolded in a natural way but were constructed for being filmed by TV cameras, whose very presence influenced their course. Cases in point he took into consideration were soccer games, and the royal wedding of Charles and Diana in 1981, for which the whole city of London “had turned into a studio, like a backdrop made for TV.”⁶⁷

It is only in the last part of the essay that Eco makes evident the fact that Neo-Television was a consequence of the privatization of television in Europe, although he didn’t make explicit references to the peculiar Italian situation characterized by the duopoly between the public television broadcaster Rai and later Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s constitution in

⁶³Ibid., 210.

⁶⁴Ibid., 211.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., 214.

replicates the models and codes of mass media. The more these “sculptural theaters,”³⁰ as Trecartin calls them, increase the confusion between audience and performing selves, precoded social life and staged reality, the more the viewer is confronted with his or her own complicated relationship with media reality. The frustration deriving from the lack of identification with it produces a profound sense of bewilderment in the viewer, just like the one felt by the overactive characters in Trecartin’s hallucinatory masquerades—suspended in a dangerous limbo between fact, fiction, and imagination.

Identity Politics and the Melodrama: Kalup Linzy

Born and raised in a small African American community in Central Florida, Kalup Linzy moved to New York in the mid-2000s and came to prominence with his humoristic video performances inspired by soap operas and R&B music acts—highlighting issues of celebrity, community, family, religion, race, and gender. Linzy, who often performs in drag, uses performance—in video and sometimes live—to emulate the forms of popular entertainment that affect his life, though more as a fan rather than assuming a critical stance. Being an African American and a queer, two identities long ignored or stereotyped by mainstream media, Linzy’s impersonations are exemplary forms of artistic investigation on identity politics. In terms of race issues, he aligns with African American artists like Hank Willis Thomas or Kara Walker. His camp style, like that of Trecartin, harks back to the films of Warhol, Smith, and Waters. In cultural and aesthetic terms, his videos are close to the aforementioned public access programs by Sondra Prill, Alex Bag, and Jaime Davidovich, not to mention *El Chow De Faustina*, a mid-1990s talk show by Puerto Rican drag performer Fausto Fernós.

Linzy’s domestic melodramas, not unlike Phil Collins’ cinematic soap opera *soy mi madre* (2008), are built around passionate stories, intrigues, tragedies, and betrayals, in which the artist usually impersonates more than one female character. Sometimes other nonprofessional actors are featured. “Soap operas were a part of life. Every house you went to had the soap opera on... People would talk about the characters as if they were real people. There was so much pride in them,”³¹ confessed Linzy in an interview about the role TV has played in his growth. “When I was a small child, my aunts would go, ‘Kalup, how does so and so act?’ And I would imitate them. I’ve had that in me, and it was nurtured, watching these soap operas and thinking that I wanted to be in them someday.”³²

³⁰Ryan Trecartin. In conversation with Francesco Spampinato, 2011.

³¹Kalup Linzy. In conversation with Nick Stillman, *BOMB*, No. 104 (Summer 2008): 47.

³²*Ibid.*



FIGURE 6.9 Ryan Trecartin, *I-Be Area*, video stills, 2007. Courtesy of Fondazione Prada.



The artist's take on the soap opera is epitomized in the series *Conversations Wit de Churen* (2002–06) and *Melody Set Me Free* (2007–12). The former is made up of five episodes, each with different plots but all featuring characters interacting through phone calls. In “Ride to da Club” (2002), the first five-minute episode, Nina and Misha discuss options of borrowing a car to go to a club, nothing more mundane. “All My Churen” (2003), the second and longest episode (almost half an hour), revolves around Nucuazia's emotional response to her lover JoJo's murder, epitomized in her dramatic phone conversations with her family members, all played by Linzy. While these early episodes echo the artist's background in Florida, the following ones reflect his new life in New York. “Da Young & da Mess” (2005) and “As da Artworld Might Turn” (2006), the third and fifth episodes, respectively recount a telephone interview of an aspiring diva, and the anxieties of the emerging artist Katonya.

Popular American actor and filmmaker James Franco, whose recurring ventures in the art world brought him to collaborate with Linzy on several projects, so described his first encounter with *Conversations Wit de Churen*:

I was immediately struck by the pared down, do-it-yourself aesthetic and the underplayed humor... But, on top of this blunt presentation, there was something else that was unusual about these performances—there was something undermining the straightforward mimesis of the portrayals, something besides the cheap sets, wigs, and costumes.... He had prerecorded all the voices on his own and the actors had lip-synched to Kalup's recording. So, while the actors were giving earnest portrayals with their facial expressions and body language, ‘their’ voices were signifying something else: Kalup's own, very personal expression.³³

Indeed, the lip-syncing on prerecorded dialogues elicits a tension between Linzy's own self and the various characters performed. Thus, Linzy's artistic process—screenwriting, audio recording, performing in front of a camera, and video editing—is more like a psychoanalytic search for identity based on the contrast between the human types he represents as an African American and a queer, and the various media selves performed. In *Melody Set Me Free*, the distinction between life and performance blurs even more. The series follows a group of wannabe pop stars longing for fame through the various stages of an *American Idol*-type talent show (Figure 6.10). By self-producing his soap operas, highlighting

³³James Franco, “Kalup Linzy” (2010). Text written for the exhibition *Fantasies, Melodramas, and a Dream Called Love*, LTD Los Angeles, September 20–October 23, 2010. No longer available online.



FIGURE 6.10 Kalup Linzy, *Melody Set Me Free: KK Queen and Patience*, video still, 2007–12. Courtesy of the artist and David Castillo, Miami, Florida.

the lo-fi dimension of costumes and sets, and playing on the exaggerated modulation of visual and aural components, Linzy reveals the artificial structure underlying media fiction.

Invited by Franco, in 2010 Linzy appeared in the long-running American daytime TV soap *General Hospital* playing the R&B singer Kalup Ishmael, an unconventional character for the series but nothing comparable with the artist's televisual parodies. Among various collaborative works, the two also realized the psychedelic music video for Linzy's song "Rising" (2011), a commentary on celebrity culture based on intercuts of Franco's grinning face and Linzy's romantic performance on a fiery sunset as it appears from behind a backstage through an elementary Chroma key effect. Unlike his pseudo-soap operas though, when Linzy performs as an R&B pop star, there is no intent of parody; these are more like karaoke-style impersonations. As argued by American performance studies scholar Tavia Nyong'o: "Like those singer-songwriters, Linzy shares his feelings, but on terms that are not quite confessional. Instead, through a series of stage personae that almost imperceptibly shade into each other, Linzy slowly and deliberately produces across the surface of his body an intimate presence that evades, in its roving and restless appetites, its capture as spectacle."³⁴

³⁴Tavia Nyong'o, "Brown Punk: Kalup Linzy's Musical Anticipations," *TDR: The Drama Review*, Published by The MIT Press, Vol. 54, No. 3 (Fall 2010): 72.

6.3 Art After Reality TV

TV and Participatory Art

The establishment of reality TV as a form of primetime media entertainment in the 1990s coincided with the rise of participatory practices in the art world. The origins of participation in art go back to the historical avant-gardes when, in parallel with paintings and sculptures, various Futurists, Dadaists, and Surrealists also produced performances, installations, and events that stimulated the audience to interact and sometimes participate. In their wake, after the Second World War, neo-avant-gardes, such as Situationism, Happening, Fluxus, Tropicália, and Radical Architecture, put relational dynamics at the core of their practice. Since the 1960s, audience participation has also become a key goal of performance art, counterculture, and various experimental types of theater and dance. Participation became a primary element again in art practices during the 1990s, both in what Nicolas Bourriaud termed “relational aesthetics”—which presented the work of art “as a period of time to be lived through”³⁵—and those that addressed social and political issues outside the museum’s walls through community projects, street events, and real-life interventions.

Partly attracted by the democratic potential of reality TV, and partly moved by an inner desire to critique mass culture, various artists have developed participatory events based on television. As early as 1992, a collective of Austrian and German artists and technicians called Van Gogh TV (formed in 1986 at Hannover’s Ponton European Media Art Lab) produced the participatory television project *Piazza Virtuale* at documenta 9. For 100 days, the visitors of the contemporary art quinquennial could broadcast themselves live via videophones and surveillance cameras installed in Kassel. People could also participate from home, live or by sending videos, pictures, music, or animations on specific topics, via phone, fax, or modem (for the few who already had one). The program was broadcast nationwide in Germany via satellite, and in sparse areas of Europe, Japan, and the United States. By applying the idea of the square as a place for public discourse, *Piazza Virtuale* proposed a “new communicative structure, which designs an alternative to the ideas pursued by industry,”³⁶ Roberto Ohrt and Ludwig Seyfarth suggested in the catalogue: an experimental model of cooperative

³⁵Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 15.

³⁶Roberto Ohrt and Ludwig Seyfarth, “Van Gogh TV—Piazza Virtuale: 100 Days of Interactive Art-Television,” in *Documenta IX—Vol. 3: Artists L-Z, Appendix L-Z*, ed. Roland Nachtigäller, ed. Nicola von Velsen, Documenta GmbH (Stuttgart: Edition Cantz, 1992), 250–1.

television that transformed people into active producers, foreshadowing the bottom-up potential of the internet as a networking and democratic tool.

Based on similar premises, in 1995, French artist Pierre Huyghe contributed *Mobil TV* to the group exhibition *Aperto 95* at the Institut d'Art Contemporain in Villeurbanne, Lyon. The project consisted of a fully functioning television station installed in the museum's auditorium, which the artist put at the disposal of visitors, as well as various artists and intellectuals. The installation also featured some videos filmed by Huyghe that mimicked coeval forms of reality TV, including street interviews that focused on the public's attitude toward collaboration, and the casting for a dance show. In addition, the artist also broadcast a series of "filmed events,"³⁷ as Australian art historian Amelia Barikin called them—realized over the days preceding the opening—featuring himself in dysfunctional everyday activities; ironic tutorials, such as "how to roll a joint"; and comic skits involving contemporary art works from the museum's collection.

According to Barikin, more than making fun of television technology, Huyghe was "interested in displacing the site of the exhibition itself. The content of his work was visibly elsewhere, with only the apparatus for production illuminated in an empty space."³⁸ Bourriaud too—for whom Huyghe was a paradigmatic figure in articulating his discourse on "relational aesthetics"—puts the accent on the renewed role of the exhibition space in creating "free areas, and time spans whose rhythm contrasts with those structuring everyday life, and it encourages an inter-human commerce that differs from the 'communication zones' that are imposed upon us."³⁹ In other words, by inventing new forms of sociability, both the Van Gogh TV collective and Huyghe transform the exhibition space into a liberated time frame where viewers can reinvent the traditional power dynamics of mass media, notoriously based on the dichotomy of user-producer.

Emerged in the 1980s, in association with the Pictures Generation, American artist and writer David Robbins explores the overlaps of art and entertainment, producing a humoristic form of institutional critique that targets the very meaning and social role of art and artists. His longstanding project *The Ice Cream Social* (1993–2008) consisted of a series of gatherings where people of different ages and backgrounds were invited to eat cakes and ice cream—a small-town tradition turned into social observatory. Over the years the participatory events have also taken the form of installations, performances, books, relational sculptures, and even a TV pilot—realized in 2003 on the occasion of a competition for new TV series sponsored by the TV channel of the Sundance Film Festival (Figure 6.11). The eight-minute

³⁷ Amelia Barikin, "Broadcast Piracy: On Pierre Huyghe's *Mobil TV*," in *Parallel Presents: The Art of Pierre Huyghe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 33.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 16



FIGURE 6.11 David Robbins, *Ice Cream Social: Sundance TV Pilot*, video stills, 2003. Courtesy of the artist.

pseudo-variety show features a community of people in pink clothing as they eat cakes and ice cream while socializing, participate in amateur dance choreography, and listen to a poetry reading and a live rock band. In the catalogue, published by the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville in Paris (where *The Ice Cream Social* pilot was screened in 2004), Robbins argued: “The artistic context is just another communication context, characterized by its strengths, inadequacies and institutionalized habits of thought.”⁴⁰

As a further point of interest, in the early 2010s two artists, Christian Jankowski and Marinella Senatore, developed projects based on the idea of casting, which threw into crisis the spectacular dynamics of reality TV. With *Casting Jesus* (2011), already mentioned in Chapter 4, Jankowski ironizes upon the unethical propensity of television to turn even religion into a show—all with the complicity of real Vatican members who play the jury appointed to select candidates for a new media role of Jesus. Instead, for Senatore, the mode of casting is an excuse to explore and stimulate the inner artistic spirit of everyday people. *Variations* (2011), for example, was a participatory

⁴⁰David Robbins, “Note Sur The Ice Cream Social,” in *Art, Télévision et Vidéo*, ed. David Robbins and Olivier Bardin (Paris: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville, 2004), unpagged.

project that involved around 200 residents of Manhattan's Lower East Side neighborhood, to whom the Italian artist (having ascertained their abilities through the casting) assigned various roles for a film production. Adopting the format of reality TV, Senatore turned a film production into a full-scale cooperative workshop. Not unsurprisingly, the project documentation is not the film that was made but alternates between scenes of the casting, interviews with the jury, and the actual making of the film.

Talent Shows for Artists

A few years before starting *The Ice Cream Social*, Robbins made the photographic installation *Talent* (1986), a series of eighteen portraits of contemporary artists, including himself, all associated to the Pictures Generation and the coeval so-called Neo-Geo art tendency—the moment they were becoming established (Figure 6.12). The roster included the aforementioned Gretchen Bender, Robert Longo, and Cindy Sherman, but also Jeff Koons, who in those years also portrayed himself as a popular school teacher, or in sex acts with his then wife, the porn actress Cicciolina. Similarly, in *Talent*, Robbins highlighted these artists' telegenic features, fashionable haircuts, and self-confident gazes and smiles, to elicit a tension between their role as cultural producers and as protagonists of an art world increasingly regulated by show business logic. "I wanted to make a picture of this entertainment context that artists share with one another regardless



FIGURE 6.12 David Robbins, *Talent*, 18 gelatin silver photographs, 1986. Courtesy of the artist.

of which medium they use or which context they represent—the context of a specific public life,” argued Robbins. “To do this I had to take the point of view of the audience.”⁴¹

By assuming the audience’s point of view, Robbins’ *Talent* presented the contemporary artist as just another entertainer of the society of the spectacle. The critical dimension of this work resides in the fact that it appropriated, and decontextualized in an artistic context, a mode of self-promotion proper of mainstream media and corporations, in the same way the Pictures artists appropriated and recontextualized stereotypes manufactured by the film, television, and advertising industries. What guarantees the intellectual integrity of a work of art is, after all, the fact that it is displayed in an art context; a logic notoriously invented by Marcel Duchamp with the “readymade” and reinforced over time as a *conditio sine qua non* for the work of art to be legitimated as such, and the artist as someone entitled by a self-regulating community—the art world—to create it. No matter how similar to the original it is, what allows us to read appropriated media in allegorical terms is their presence in the art context in which artists displace them.

Now, if we consider how the mechanism of reality TV influenced this logic, we can get a sense of how mass media and market dynamics affected the meaning and role of art and the artist in society. An early example of a talent show whose aim was to discover and promote new artists was the Japanese program *Takeshi no dare demo Picasso* (*Takeshi’s Anybody Can Be a Picasso*, 1997–2009), broadcast by TV Tokyo and co-hosted by Takeshi Kitano as a juror. Critically acclaimed internationally, both as actor and director of crime dramas, such as *Hana-bi* (1997), *Zatoichi* (2003), and the *Outrage* trilogy (2010–17), Kitano is also popular in Japan as a comedian, TV personality, and host of various TV shows. *Takeshi no dare demo Picasso* adapted the extreme nature of a peculiar Japanese postwar avant-garde, such as Gutai—notorious for its absurdist use of the body and everyday objects as artistic tools—to “create a ‘televisual event’ in which the barriers of every genre of ‘taste’ have long since collapsed,” argued by Marco Senaldi, “according to the dictates of an avant-garde which in the meantime has become truly ‘mass.’”⁴²

Despite the attempts to legitimate the artists discovered and launched by dedicated talent shows through prize exhibitions in galleries or even museums—such as the Tokyo’s Bunkamura Museum in the case of *Takeshi no dare demo Picasso*—the intellectual component is irredeemably lost,

⁴¹David Robbins. In conversation with Susan Morgan, “Write When You Get Word: Susan Morgan Interviews David Robbins on his installation *Talent*,” *Artscribe International*, (September–October 1987). Retrieved from David Robbins Artist, accessed April 24, 2021, <http://www.davidrobbinsartist.com/comedies/talent/>.

⁴²Marco Senaldi, *Arte e Televisione: Da Andy Warhol al Grande Fratello*, my translation 111.

assuming there was one in the first place. The same is true also for the various talent shows for artists that proliferated in the late 2000s in the wake of programs aimed to discover and promote talented creative people such as new singers, dancers, fashion designers, or chefs. However, seen a posteriori, only in a few instances has television opened up a successful career for a creative person who didn't deserve it. In most cases—this being particularly true of the talent shows for artists—these programs simply created a new genre of wannabe professional-cum-celebrity, peculiar of the age of reality TV and the internet.

In 2005, the New York art dealer and promoter Jeffrey Deitch, together with MTV producer Abbie Terkhule, the artist Christopher Sperandio, and the emerging art dealer James Fuentes, produced *Artstar* for the cable channel Gallery HD (Figure 6.13). A jury composed of renowned New York critics and curators, such as RoseLee Goldberg, Carlo McCormick, David Rimanelli, and Debra Singer, selected eight artists from an open call of over 400 applicants, to participate in a group exhibition at Deitch Projects, which back then was one of the world's most influential contemporary art galleries. The resulting program consisted in eight forty-five-minute episodes that documented the casting, the making of floats and costumes for Deitch's annual *Art Parade*, and the unscripted interaction of the eight candidates with established artists, including Jon Kessler, Jeff Koons, and Kehinde Wiley. None has become a celebrity yet, but at least two of them (Abigail DeVille and Zackary Drucker) have started a discreetly successful career since being launched by *Artstar*.

Artstar was not only the first reality show involving artists but also pioneered the “observational” genre of reality TV, a decade before its popularization. On the contrary, its epigones followed a typical talent show format presenting the “art assignment”—a core component of art school education—as just another competitive activity, where talent and vision bend to media and market dynamics. It is also the case of *The School of Saatchi* (2009), a four-part BBC series made to discover the new genius of British art under the tutelage of YBAs' patron Charles Saatchi and the guidance of *ex-enfant terrible* Tracey Emin. Another instance is *Work of Art: The Next Great Artist* (2010–11), produced in the United States by Sarah Jessica Parker for Bravo TV, and featuring popular art critic Jerry Saltz as a mentor. “Through their quasi-educational settings and scenarios,” according to Maeve Connolly, these two shows “emphasize the overarching significance of professional networking, while also suggesting that traditional modes of legitimation (such as the award of an exhibition in a public museum) may be determined by institutional requirements for media coverage and publicity.”⁴³

⁴³Maeve Connolly, *TV Museum: Contemporary Art and the Age of Television*, 243.



FIGURE 6.13 Line at the casting and group photo of *Artstar* participants, Deitch Projects, New York, 2005. Courtesy of Jeffrey Deitch.

Live from the Art World

What is most striking about these talent shows for artists are the long lines that form at the casting sessions, featuring ranks of amateurs carrying their paintings in the hope of finally being appreciated, and extravagant characters whose idea of art is subordinated to a sensationalistic behavior or a carnivalesque aspect, à la Salvador Dalí to be clear. On the one hand, we have artists who attend art schools with enthusiasm and commitment, and then retreat to their studios to labor their whole life, in most cases without getting proper recognition. On the other hand, we have artists excited by the possibilities offered by media and the market to have their work exposed and sold to the best bidder, and be themselves consumed as any other celebrity produced by the society of the spectacle. More than Warholian superstars, indeed, who embodied a critical model of representation and were somehow really famous in their own circles, albeit arty or underground, the artists “produced” by dedicated talent shows are like any other media personality—famous for being famous.

In parallel with, and in contrast to, the talent shows in which artists were subjected to media and celebrity dynamics, other artists opted to approach reality TV from a different perspective: as producers. More than talent shows, a generation emerged in the 2000s and 2010s that includes the duo K8 Hardy and Wynne Greenwood, the collective LuckyPDF, Alex Israel, and Casey Jane Ellison, all of whom appropriated traditional TV formats such as news, the talk show, and the variety show to rethink the role of art institutions and venues—museums, galleries, biennials, and art fairs—in shaping the personality of the contemporary artist, and filtering the presentation and interpretation of art through a series of collateral activities, notably publicity. What distinguishes these artists from those who line up for the casting of a talent show is a certain metalinguistic impulse that allows us to interpret their work as an ironic form of institutional critique, more in line with some of the participatory art projects discussed before, like Huyghe’s or Robbins’.

Unlike historical figures of institutional critique like Hans Haacke or Daniel Buren, who adopted an iconoclastic approach that denounced either the presence of hierarchical structures or economic and political interests behind art institutions, these artists move more in the wake of Andrea Fraser, Martin Creed, or Maurizio Cattelan, who invented new playful ways to critique or expose the art world’s functioning. Setting aside for a moment her longstanding *Tracy + the Plastics* art-rock venture, Wynne Greenwood joined forces with K8 Hardy (another feminist artist) for two collaborative projects about television. In *Lip Synch* (2002), they lip synch to various daytime TV programs marketed toward women, such as the *Oprah Winfrey Show* and a soap opera; while in *New Report* (2005–07), they play two radical feminist news reporters from the fictional station WKRH, discussing

various issues related to the feminist and lesbian communities. The identity politics project assumed a polemic twist when, in 2007, they broadcast live from London's Tate Modern to coincide with the group exhibition *Media Burn*. In this context WKRH expanded the discussion to power systems, such as colonialism, slavery, capitalism, and so also art—with Tate inevitably pointed at as a scapegoat.

LuckyPDF is a London-based multimedia art collective formed in 2009 whose work explores new modes of networking and cultural production in reference to the internet, based on customized forms of media entertainment, ranging from TV shows to musicals. “LuckyPDF projects aim to push new ways of displaying art and the physical and social spaces it can exist in,”⁴⁴ they claimed. One such case is *Live From Frieze Art Fair this is LuckyPDF TV* (2011) made for Frieze Projects, a program of artist's commissions at London's international art market gathering (Figure 6.14). The project



FIGURE 6.14 LuckyPDF, *Live From Frieze Art Fair this is LuckyPDF TV: Episode 1*, installation and performance, Frieze Art Fair, London 2011. Photo: Linda Nyland. Courtesy of the artist.

⁴⁴LuckyPDF. Interview with Francesco Spampinato, in Francesco Spampinato, *Come Together: The Rise of Cooperative Art and Design* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2015), 136.

consisted of a live daily broadcast from a fully functioning TV studio set up amid the fair's corridors—later condensed into four one-hour episodes—featuring around fifty likeminded, technology-savvy artists, such as Cory Arcangel and Rafael Rozendaal, involved in interviews or performances, either live, via internet, or prerecorded. Each segment was separated by music interludes and wrestling matches, dangerously improvised among the fair's booths.

While LuckyPDF's TV project used an art fair as both content and broadcasting platform at the same time, Alex Israel chose his city, Los Angeles, and its quintessential culture industry, Hollywood show business, as the focus of his internet series. *AS IT LAYS* (2011–12) consisted of thirty-three interviews—filmed at Freeway Studios in the Pacific Design Center, and occasionally at the interviewees' home or office—conducted by the artist in a suit, sunglasses, and a deadpan tone reminiscent of Warhol's TV programs, with culture industry professionals, the likes of Paul Anka, Bret Easton Ellis, Jamie Lee Curtis, Marilyn Manson, Christina Ricci, and Oliver Stone. After being released online, the series was presented by the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles, in a special one-night screening at Charlie Chaplin's famed Jim Henson Studios, where Israel recorded three new interviews in front of a live audience, one of them with the actress Melanie Griffith. Displaced into an artistic context—that being a MOCA-sponsored event—and set in a famous film studio, on that occasion Israel's pseudo-talk show definitively revealed itself to be a metalinguistic commentary on celebrity culture and its influence on contemporary art.

What for Israel was a kind of mirror held up to Los Angeles' media and art worlds, for Casey Jane Ellison, also from LA, the talk show format is a tool to reflect upon the very reasons and modes of artistic creation. A multimedia artist and stand-up comedian, Ellison came to prominence with the all-female web series *Touching the Art* (2014–15) produced by Ovation TV. The fourteen episodes (each around ten minutes long) are structured around basic art-related topics, such as postmodernism, the internet, education, criticism, and the market. Shifting from arrogant to malicious and satirical, the artist poses generic though serious questions, which address the fundamental values of art, such as: "Is art for everyone?... Should art be entertaining?... Who decides what is art?" Her interviewees are made up of artists, curators, and critics like Andrea Bowers, Lauren Cornell, K8 Hardy, Marilyn Minter, Catherine Opie, Kembra Pfahler, and Jennifer Rubell. Interestingly enough, the first season was filmed at the Los Angeles galleries Regen Projects and Night Gallery, while the second was filmed at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York (as Ellison's contribution to the museum's triennial in 2015), which, that year, was aptly titled *Surround Audience*.

Video Art and Edutainment

A recurring concern for artists developing projects about TV is the way they are misrepresented by mass media and, by extension, in society. Chapter 4 of this study was dedicated to forms of self-representation of artists on TV: some reinforced media clichés of eccentricity as in the cases of Salvador Dalí, John Cage, Charlotte Moorman, and Andy Warhol; some tried to control TV's mechanism by turning their participation in TV programs into a work of art, like Chris Burden, Mathieu Laurette, and Christian Jankowski; and yet others invented their own TV heterotopias as the East Village artists of the 1980s did thanks to public-access channels. The latter tendency survived in the age of reality shows and the internet as in the projects by LuckyPDF and Casey Jane Ellison. What motivated them was to offer viewers a truer portrait of the artist as a cultural producer, in contraposition with the stereotypical caricature of the artist as an outsider.

As art goes increasingly hand in hand with entertainment, it is becoming more and more difficult to grasp the critical dimension of some of the TV-related artists-centered projects produced in the 2000s and 2010s—a particularly ambiguous case being that of talent shows for artists which, as discussed before, situate on the brink of art, education, and entertainment. Similar ambiguities characterize those video artworks made in the 2010s that mimic edutainment, a media genre whose aim is notably to educate through entertainment, epitomized in the format of the documentary. One example, Matthew Day Jackson's *In Search of... Eidolon* (2010), presents the artist as an object of quasi-scientific exploration, suggesting convergences of art with history, mysticism, and nature, and following a mode and language typical of science documentaries.

The American artist, whose multimedia production revolves around the dichotomy of beauty and horror through references to science and mythology, conceived *In Search of... Eidolon*—one of a series of four videos—as a kind of self-portrait, presented as a remake of the popular American TV series *In Search Of...* (1977–82), originally hosted by Leonard Nimoy (who played the character of Spock in the sci-fi saga *Star Trek*) and devoted to mysterious phenomena. “The history of man is the history of the pursuit of his own reflection,”⁴⁵ recites a voice-over while stock clips echoing history, religion, nature, and everyday life alternate on the screen. Among explorations of fossils and mild philosophical speculations on extra-terrestrial realities, one story tells of the imaginary disappearance of the artist Matthew Day Jackson. By also featuring Caspar David Friedrich's famous painting *Der Wanderer*

⁴⁵Matthew Day Jackson's *In Search of ... Eidolon*, 2010. Retrieved from a file courtesy of the artist.

über dem Nebelmeer (Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog, 1818), Jackson associated the fictional mysterious disappearance of himself to the German romantic tradition of the *wanderlust*—that irresistible desire to explore the world.

One of the values exalted by German Romanticism was that of the “sublime,” often associated with the Kantian concept of self-reflection, and the exploration of nature as a form of self-exploration—a process pursued by philosophers and artists in the romantic era. As far as the story goes, Jackson disappears during a similar journey in search of himself, as an elusive fictional article from the *New York Times* reports. The assemblage of photographic finds, notes, and personal objects he left in his van, and are shown by his parents, are reminiscent of the artist’s installations. Jackson inserts the fake story of his disappearance into a caricatured media cauldron, demonstrating how the image of the artist in society could also be subjected to mysterious conjectures, and often associated with mystical or supernatural phenomena. His search for himself is also the metaphoric search for the social identity of the artist, which would be impossible today without acknowledging the media power of edutainment in eliciting that tension between known and unknown, reality and fiction.

Similarly, in *Video Art Manual* (2011), Israeli artist Keren Cytter enacts a metalinguistic form of reflection on the mechanism through which edutainment fictionalizes reality, implicitly pointing at video art as an antidote against media fantasies (Figure 6.15). The fifteen-minute video is built around the news that a change in the activities of the sun could interfere with the electric field of the planet Earth, causing the end of our communication systems. Found footage from TV and low-resolution clips from the internet are accompanied at times with the voice-over of a presenter, and at other intervals with subtitled phrases in overlay, one openly critical of media being: “By mixing fictional stories with documentary language, the viewer can’t distinguish what’s true and what’s false. As a result, the viewer doubts the truth in documentation and the lies in fiction.”⁴⁶ Looped images of Clark Kent transforming into Superman (a clear homage to Dara Birnbaum’s *Wonder Woman*), or throwing a “villain” against the giant Coca-Cola light sign in Times Square, are followed by the announcement that solar tsunamis could actually turn out to be an extraordinary fireworks display for the human race.

The blurring of art, education, and entertainment is a defining feature of the multidisciplinary activities developed by DIS, a New York-based art collective formed in 2010 by Lauren Boyle, Solomon Chase, Marco Roso, and David Toro. The group operates both as a networking hub for

⁴⁶Keren Cytter, *Video Art Manual*, 2011. Retrieved from Vimeo, accessed April 24, 2021, <https://vimeo.com/28508769>.



FIGURE 6.15 Keren Cytter, *Video Art Manual*, video stills, 2011. Courtesy of the artist.

online projects and occasionally as a curatorial team, as in the case of 9th Berlin Biennale (2016). Their main focus is on the conventions of image-making and circulation today: that is, how and with what purpose media manufacture “pictures.” References to television have appeared in various projects the group commissioned for their former web platform DIS Magazine. One example, *Hooper Place* (2010–12), a three-episode series by Grant Worth and Patrick Sandberg, parodied the popular 1990s soap opera *Melrose Place*, follows a group of young ambitious New Yorkers employed in the immaterial labor fields of fashion and advertising. Edutainment is also the main focus of DIS.ART, the streaming channel DIS launched in January 2018, which once a week hosts a diverse range of content, such as a cooking

show, by Will Benedict and Steffen Joergensen; a nature program, by Korakrit Arunandochai; a cartoon, by Amalia Ulman; new videos by Ryan Trecartin; and a new talk show, by Ellison on mother–daughter relationships.

6.4 Remediation, Rematerialization, Abstraction

Artists' TV Series, Sharing Economy, and Biopower

As the present study draws to a close, the last section in this final chapter focuses on works that are paradigmatic of how television has undergone a massive process of remediation, rematerialization, and abstraction since the proliferation of the internet and prosumer technologies. Television will not disappear any time soon, but as both a noun and referent, it is rapidly mutating. This is evident through the rise of edutainment programs, reality shows, and new forms of storytelling—expanding to countless channels and platforms (thanks to the video-sharing possibilities offered online and to on-demand services like Netflix and Amazon Prime) and migrating outside the home (thanks to smart phones and other mobile devices). As usual, artists have been among the first to take note of these changes and explore how this transmuted cross-media scenario affects our perception of reality.

Along with edutainment, another quintessential TV genre in the age of what Henry Jenkins has called “convergence culture” is that of the TV series, a format based on stories that unfold through numerous episodes grouped and broadcast in “seasons,” usually separated by long breaks. According to both media scholars and the audiences, TV series are a new form of cinematic entertainment that fascinates the viewer mainly because, thanks to the dilution over time, they are able to develop more in-depth and empathetic characters and stories. As with edutainment, no sooner did TV series become a form of mass entertainment than artists got hold of them. The first examples of artists' videos based on TV series date back to the early 2010s. British artist Nathaniel Mellors was one of the first to incorporate into his work elements coming from the new forms of storytelling on which TV series are based. *Ourhouse* (2010–present), his ongoing and most comprehensive work to date, comprises six thirty-minute videos and a series of hyperrealistic animatronic sculptures reproducing some of the characters' faces.

Set in a dilapidated English country house, the plot revolves around the disruptive arrival of a middle-aged man in sportswear in the life of a family consisting of Charles “Daddy” Maddox-Wilson, his younger wife “Babydoll,” their sons “Truson” and “Faxon,” Charles' brother “Uncle Tommy,” and the Irish gardener “Bobby.” The mysterious man, labeled

“The Object” or “Thingy,” is involved in a series of surrealistically abject actions, such as ingesting books. The work makes references to mystery, dark humor, and TV drama series, from *Twin Peaks* (1990–91) to *Six Feet Under* (2001–05). According to Maeve Connolly, it “reiterates the emphasis on television as site of the articulation of cultural and class difference,”⁴⁷ notably through Babydoll’s affair with Bobby, but it also adopts the multi-episode structure proper of mainstream entertainment to highlight a change in the means of artistic production and distribution, in that it develops over time and through multiple collaborations and installations in various exhibition spaces.

After *Video Art Manual* (2011), Keren Cytter continued her exploration on the pervasive power of media entertainment with the eight fourteen–eighteen-minute episodes of *Vengeance* (2012–13). The plot revolves around the betrayal, harassment, and retribution conducted in the name of power, money, and success, by a group of ambitious women coworkers at an advertising agency—an obvious reminder of the coeval TV series *Mad Men* (2007–15). According to British art writer Melissa Gronlund, *Vengeance* “investigates how different styles of acting and direction can be used to intensify the action—how an everyday interchange can be given thrums of foreboding and suspense, but also the ways in which melodrama (and perhaps even reality TV), with its finite stock of plot points, accommodate both the shrilly over-dramatic as well as the numbingly banal.”⁴⁸ Through the occasional replacement of dialogue with music and voice-over, the amateurish acting, and the employment of overlays and split-screens, Cytter produces a dysfunctional narrative that exposes the superficiality of the lifestyle promoted by mass media—epitomized in the convergence of the dialogues with the commercial slogans manufactured at the agency.

While Cytter appropriates a television format to show how cynicism migrates from media to the real life of a group of immaterial workers, Melanie Gilligan borrows the fast-paced syntax of sci-fi thriller TV series à la *Black Mirror*, to explore issues of biopower in connection with technology and the internet. In the five ten–fifteen-minute episodes of *Popular Unrest* (2010), the Canadian artist allegorizes the much-debated issue of “big data”: voluminous complexes of information collected here by a technological system named “World Spirit” to increase market profits. Set in a futuristic London, the story revolves around a cast of characters who, while being inexplicably pushed to come together in “groupings,” also become the targets of mysterious murders. Intercut with CGI and imaginary ads, the narrative unfolds around the dichotomy of media as utopian versus

⁴⁷Maeve Connolly, *TV Museum: Contemporary Art and the Age of Television*, 83.

⁴⁸Melissa Gronlund, “Mean Girls: Keren Cytter and ‘Vengeance,’” *Art Agenda*, Dossier #2, (December 17, 2013). Retrieved from No Gallery, accessed April 24, 2021, <http://www.nogallery.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Art-Agenda-17.12.13-vengeance.pdf>.

dystopian tools. Ultimately, their passive condition as mere data providers prevails over the cooperative potential as active producers, as the group agrees to become the object of a scientific research.

The biopolitical aspect of the sharing economy is also the topic of *The Common Sense* (2014). Here Gilligan manufactures another sci-fi dystopia, this time based on the diffusion of a device called “The Patch”: a transmitter that, when installed on the palate, allows users to exchange thoughts and emotions via brainwaves. Sold to promote a more empathetic society, “The Patch,” in fact, reveals itself to be a tool of biopower, providing users with intense connective experiences in exchange for alienation, surveillance, data collecting, and the reduction of their emotions to commodities. Through an articulation typical of TV series, the three seasons—of five six-minute episodes—recount the dramatic break in the system that leaves people disoriented and isolated as they have forgotten natural ways to communicate. The feeling is recreated for the viewer through a rhizomatic installation comprising various screens in sparse order and position, and all connected to each other (Figure 6.16). The main target of the artist’s critique is clearly social networks and mobile devices, which seem to increasingly absorb users. However, the adoption of a mode of storytelling proper of contemporary TV series is an acknowledgment that television still has a major role within this mutated and expanded mediascape.



FIGURE 6.16 Melanie Gilligan, *The Common Sense Substitution*, installation view, Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien, Graz, 2016. Courtesy Galerie Max Mayer, Düsseldorf.

TV, Accelerationism, and EDM

Gilligan's works leverage on the peculiar appeal of science fiction to speculate on the future to elicit insights on the present. As reminded in Chapter 1, many sci-fi stories are built around the brainwashing role of mass media, notably television. Such is the case of classic novels that allegorize the role of television as a propaganda machine in the hands of totalitarian governments like in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1931), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). A new wave of dystopian sci-fi stories speculating on the role of television emerged in the 1980s when popular movies, such as Tobe Hopper's *Poltergeist* (1982), David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1983), and John Carpenter's *They Live* (1988), reinforced the idea of TV as a tool of biopolitical control—definitively demystifying McLuhan's idea of media as extensions of man being a symptom of techno-utopianism.

When McLuhan's ideas of technological determinism spread during the 1960s, two conflicting interpretations of his theories arose from the countercultural movement. On the one side, his speculations on the Third World War as a guerrilla information war inspired the rise of the guerrilla television movement, aimed at decentralizing the communication system. On the other side, in reaction to McLuhan's unbiased position, others started to highlight the dangers of technology and invoke the need for media ecology. Such is the case of the architects, designers, and artists associated with the Radical Architecture movement, interested in exploring the impact of media and technology on life and society. A crucial commentary on television was provided at that time by Austrian architect Walter Pichler's *TV-Helmet* (1967), a futuristic submarine-like white helmet that isolates the viewer while producing an immersive experience of television viewing (Figure 6.17). Similarly, in 1998, Italian architecture collective LOT-EK presented *TV-TANK*, an installation of floating cabins, cut from a petroleum trailer tank, suitable for lounging in, and equipped with TV screens.

Pichler's futuristic devices, like various coeval speculations by figures associated to the Radical Architecture movement (e.g., the collectives Ant Farm, Haus-Rucker-Co. and Superstudio), exposed the dangers implicit in technology, as far as to anticipate the future tendency of media and software industries to produce devices that would alienate users from their surroundings. Let us think, for example, of those devices sold to manage stress and sleep disorders—sleep masks emitting glows and the like—or wearable tech based on biofeedback mechanisms, such as the much-debated smart glasses of the Google Glass project. All promise to enhance the human sensorium while in fact they induce users to forms of machinic enslavement. Based on the same premise as Radical Architecture, of revealing the dangers of technology, “accelerationism” is a loosely defined contemporary idea with

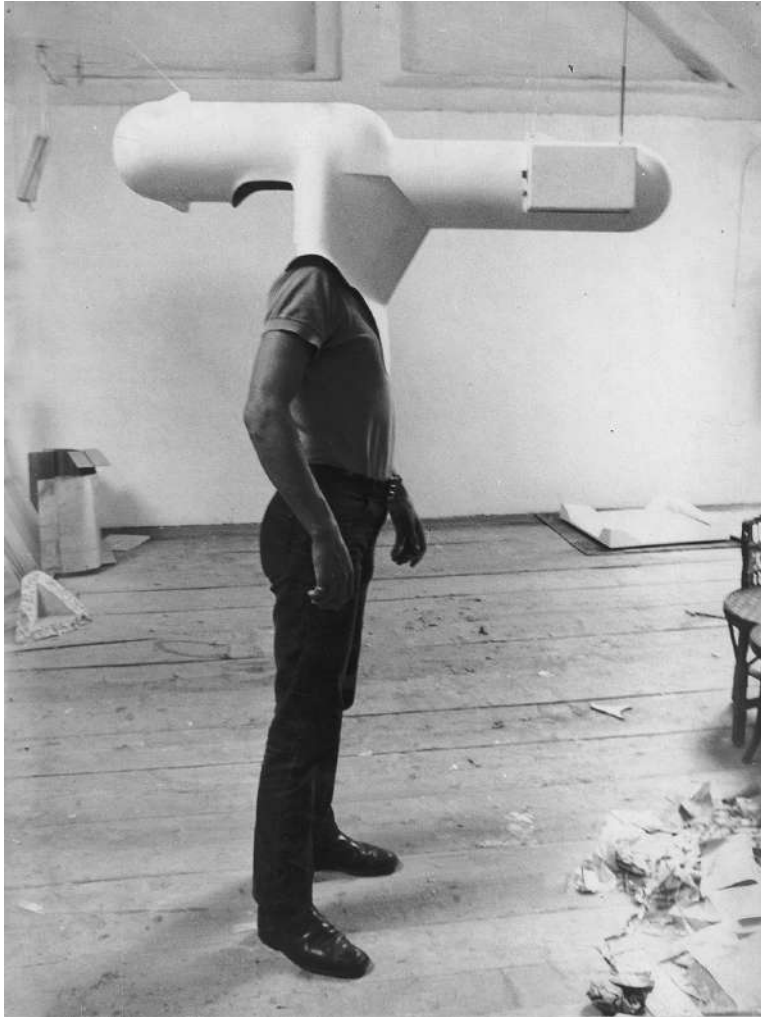


FIGURE 6.17 Walter Pichler, *TV-Helmet (Portable Living Room)*, wearable technology, 1967. Courtesy of Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman Innsbruck/Wien. © Nachlass Walter Pichler.

roots in Marxism, which advocates for the “acceleration” of the language and aesthetics of capitalism in order to expose its negative impact.

Although the editors of the seminal anthology *#Accelerate: The Accelerationist Reader* (Urbanomic, 2014) contextualized the concept in a historical perspective—also containing texts by Kark Marx, J.G. Ballard, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari—it was in the 1990s that accelerationism took shape as a distinct idea, in connection with the cyberpunk subculture,

and thus with frequent references to sci-fi and rave culture. A pivotal figure of a controversial right-wing accelerationism path, English philosopher Nick Land has drawn inspiration from sci-fi movies like *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Terminator* (1985), which, according to another crucial exponent of accelerationism, the late English cultural theorist Mark Fisher, “made his texts part of a convergent tendency—an accelerationist cyberculture in which digital sonic production disclosed an inhuman future that was to be relished rather than abominated. Land’s machinic theory-poetry paralleled the digital intensities of 90s jungle, techno and doomcore, which sampled from exactly the same cinematic sources.”⁴⁹

A major element of rave culture—a youth movement born in the 1990s around parties organized either illegally in woods and abandoned factories or in nightclubs—was its psychedelic visual component, epitomized in the flyers, record covers, and videos (prerecorded or live) projected to accompany DJ sets encompassing a variety of genres of electronic dance music or EDM, including techno, house, trance, hardcore, drum and bass, jungle, and goa. While cinematic sci-fi foreshadowed the integration of human life with machines or alien types, television was recurrently echoed as a symptom of the everyday consumerist daily culture club-goers and ravers searched to escape from. German artist Daniel Pflumm, for example, filled Elektro—the landmark techno club he founded and ran in Berlin in the early 1990s—with TV screens broadcasting hypnotic video loops sampling TV news, ads, and corporate logos, which created a synesthetic feeling when combined with the pulsating techno beats of the records spinning on the turntables.

Something similar happened in Italy when, in 1998, Krisma—an experimental music duo at the forefront of the Italian post-punk scene since the late 1970s—established themselves as occasional resident DJs at techno club Cocoricò in Riccione, performing live EDM acts accompanied by live footage and disorienting prerecorded video loops of samples from a variety of sources, distorted through fisheye filters and other lysergic editing techniques. Thanks to Eutelsat Communications, Krisma had the opportunity to turn the show into a proper TV program broadcast randomly by a dedicated satellite channel aptly named Krisma TV, active until 2002 when new commercial interests led satellite TV to withdraw any experimentalism. As accelerationism became a staple of cultural theory and art and music circles in the 2010s, a peculiar new convergence of electronic music and television emerged from vaporwave: an audio-visual tendency championed by figures like Daniel Lopatin aka Oneohtrix Point Never and James Ferraro that explored the nostalgic nature of contemporary digital culture through a surrealist recontextualization of the sounds and aesthetics

⁴⁹Mark Fisher, “Terminator vs. Avatar: Notes on Accelerationism,” 2012 in *#Accelerate: The Accelerationist Reader*, ed. Robin Mackay and Armen Avanessian (Famouth, UK: Urbanomic, 2014), 344.

of 1980s consumerist culture—soft rock, new age, library music—with a penchant for the fading atmospheres of TV ads and the retro-techno-utopian appeal of the early personal computer age.

The TV Stage Abandoned

The works discussed in this last section of the chapter treat television as an obsolete but still major actor in a media scenario that has drastically mutated since the mass diffusion of prosumer technologies and the internet. In their own way, each acknowledges the persisting influence of television on life and society, but at the same time explores how new media and the internet have changed the role of viewers and their perception of both television and external reality. One thing that emerges is that television is no longer absorbed passively but is increasingly approached with skepticism by the viewers, who now have the chance to know what is behind the TV screen. Indeed, thanks to reality TV, viewers now understand how the mechanism of the spectacle works and how to become part of it. And thanks to the internet, they also have a better and more direct understanding of facts and news before TV actually presents them.

As a consequence, in the 2000s and 2010s, many artists have referred to the TV studio not as a site of production but as a space that has been abandoned and sometimes reappropriated for unconventional activities. One such example is *Monitor* (1998–2003), a series of twelve mesmerizing pictures by German photographer Caroline Hake, which present the TV stages of popular German shows “photographed in the studios under the original lighting conditions from the location of a TV camera during a break.”⁵⁰ In Hake’s shots, the stages become abstract configurations that, through the artist’s penchant for neon lights, polished surfaces, and minimalist props, look more like the futuristic sets of a sci-fi movie. Devoid of human life, and transposed onto the flat surface of a print installed in an exhibition space, these stages expose all their cheap artificiality and ephemerality as backdrops of a *mise-en-scène* that has lost its appeal.

While in Hake’s photographs it is clear that the spectacle machine is about to start again any time soon, the TV studio filmed by Belgian artist Michel François in *Fox* (2005) seems to have been truly abandoned. Indeed, the artist shot the four-minute video at night as if he was a thief, a stalker, or a saboteur sneaking into the facilities of a Fox Television studio. The shaking single shot opens with a close-up of a circular test pattern and then zooms

⁵⁰Caroline Hake, “Monitor: Information.” Retrieved from Caroline Hake, accessed April 24, 2021, <https://carolinehake.com/work/#monitor>.

out to the space, while a TV set strangely left on broadcasts an episode of Fox legal drama *The Practice*, whose dialogues resonate in the studio devoid of human life (with the exception of the intruder, of course). The feeling of doing something forbidden is reinforced by the visual juxtaposition between a side of the space occupied by turned-off cameras, ladders, and wires, or else the backstage, and a long minimalist blue and white bench from which TV news is usually delivered, with a printed skyline as backdrop. François then focuses on the control room and finishes with a fading close-up on a commercial interrupting *The Practice*.

An empty TV studio is also the set of the second part of British artist Cally Spooner's *And You Were Wonderful, On Stage* (2013–15). The work, commissioned by Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum, consisted of a scripted performance featuring an all-female cast: some sing harmonies *acapella*, while others perform simple choreographies. While the first part was a live performance at the Stedelijk (later reenacted at London's Tate Britain), the second adopted the format of a TV variety show and was set in 2015 at EMPAC studio in Troy, New York, for a live web broadcast, then edited as a five-channel video installation (Figure 6.18). In the typical style of Spooner, whose work elicits a tension between the mechanization of life and the cooperative and open-ended possibilities offered by art, the performance is based on a free-form reinterpretation of a series of media events from 2013, such as Beyoncé's "scandalous" lip-synching of the American national anthem at the presidential inauguration, and cyclist Lance Armstrong's apologizing on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* after doping allegations.

Shot by six cameras in one single take, the video zooms in and out from a production team filming and coordinating the event to the performing crew. The chorus starts whispering gossips, such as those about Beyoncé and Armstrong, which gradually evolve into proper songs in the style of a Broadway musical. The lyrics are the result of the guidance the artist received from an advertising agency with whom she discussed a TV ad campaign for a fictional corporation based on its employees' personal aspirations. Rather than a cinematic experience, the immersive five-screen installation gives viewers the impression of a live event, more like a rehearsal though than an actual theatrical piece. As the title suggests, a major role is played by the stage itself, a dark environment punctuated by white-taped areas on the floor reminiscent of Lars von Trier's Dogme 95⁵¹-influenced

⁵¹Dogma 95 was a filmmaking movement initiated in 1995 by Danish directors Lars Von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg. The movement was based on two manifestoes, which listed a set of strict rules to create filmmaking, such as shooting on location or using handheld cameras. Fellow Danish directors Kristian Levring and Søren Kragh-Jacobsen later joined them, forming the Dogme 95 Collective or the Dogme Brethren. A series of thirty-five films by various directors of many nationalities, produced from 1995 to 2005, are officially listed in a dedicated website as belonging to the Dogme 95 movement. Although not on the list, Von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark* clearly echoes the style of Dogme 95 and conforms to many of its rules.



FIGURE 6.18 Cally Spooner, *And you were wonderful*, on stage, film still, 2013–15. Courtesy of the artist, gb agency, Paris, and ZERO, Milan.

musical film *Dancer in the Dark* (2000) starring Björk. However, unlike the aforementioned works by Hake and François, here the TV stage looks less as if it was abandoned than reappropriated to an artistic performance that would hardly fit into a real TV schedule, one which allegorizes TV as that space in which subjectivities are manufactured and sold like any other commodity.

The work of emerging Italian artist Adelita Husni-Bey shares many similarities with Spooner's, in particular for the collectivist and open-ended nature that makes her performances more akin to workshops. Drawing from her parallel activity as a pedagogue, the artist's work often explores forms of unconventional grouping and alternative education. *La Luna in Folle* (The Moon in Neutral, 2016), presented as her participation in a group exhibition for the Premio MAXXI (a prize awarded to emerging Italian artists by the MAXXI museum in Rome), was a performative installation that consisted of a hand-painted rotating stage, surrounded by a circular dolly track, onto which various local theater groups were invited to reinterpret popular Italian TV shows for the duration of the exhibition. Political debates, talk shows, and reality shows become, in the hands of these performers, allegories of the still massive influence that television plays on Italian society, while acknowledging its demise from a pedagogical tool (as it was at its inception in the 1950s) to a machine that fictionalized reality, driven by pure economic and political interests.

Television and Abstraction

At its core, television is an abstract phenomenon. When in 1925 John Logie Baird gave a demonstration of his television prototype at Selfridges department store in London, what the audience saw were grainy silhouette images in motion. Things haven't changed so much over time. Throughout its evolution, television has remained on the brink of low and high-definition, reality, and imagination. Even today's digital television networks are not immune from losses of frequencies, which manifest in the form of annoying glitches, reminding viewers how the televised image is, in fact, a pure phantasmagoria. A reminder of the abstract nature of television are the test cards—black-and-white or multicolored abstract pattern configurations used for the calibration and alignment of the cameras—a technical tool that even most audiences are familiar with as they used to be broadcast when a channel stopped its schedule at night.

Associated to the Young British Artists group, Angela Bulloch explores the abstract nature of media through videos and installations based on systems and patterns configured as sequences of geometric units referred to as pixels. The smallest visible element of a digital image, the pixel is

often pointed at as a metaphor of how in the era of computers reality has become increasingly immaterial. Through numerous installations of three-dimensional pixels—cubes softly changing in pulsing colors reminiscent of Minimalism—Bulloch tries to make immaterial reality tangible again while acknowledging the impossibility of restoring its original recognizable form. Television is the topic of *TV Series* (2002), a group of 50 cm pixels inserted in modules reminiscent of flat TV sets, each based on an RGB light system controlled by a software that transforms film and television footage into a spectrum of 16 million colors. The narrative information of the talk shows and TV news the artists processed are irredeemably lost. In their place, viewers are immersed into a purely abstract space into which television has regressed to its primary form—a magical emission of light.

The clash of television with the internet is well summed up by Hito Steyerl in her writings and video installations: “Around 1989, television images started walking through screens, right into reality,” she argued in one of her most seminal essays. “This development accelerated when web infrastructure started supplementing TV networks as circuits for images circulation. Suddenly, the points of transfer multiplied. Screens were now ubiquitous, not to speak of images themselves, which could be copied and dispersed at the flick of a finger.”⁵² In her immersive video installations, such as *Liquidity Inc.* (2014) and *Factory of the Sun* (2015), Steyerl reinforces the links between the mass proliferation and dissemination of images and the global economic and political interests. With open references to sci-fi for highlighting the role of images in our current cyberspace, and by theorizing upon the idea of “circulationism,” or else “postproducing, launching, and accelerating [an image],”⁵³ Steyerl set the paradigms for a new conceptual genre of image-making based on acts of “acceleration”: that is, over-identification with recurring symbols of power systems blamed for reducing users to mere consumers and data providers.

While Steyerl’s circulationist practice results in an audio-visual amalgam—mixing TV footage, CGI, and original films—that through immersive installations invoke the ephemerality of the cyberspace, others have developed different forms of “circulationism” with regard to television. American artist Tauba Auerbach, for example, addressed television in *Static* (2008–11)—a series of prints based on photographs the artists took of her television displaying static, or white noise produced when no transmission signal is obtained by the receiver. In line with her explorations of the mechanization of information through the emphasis on pattern variations—

⁵²Hito Steyerl, “Too Much World: Is the Internet Dead?,” *e-flux journal*, No. 49, (November 2013), accessed April 24, 2021, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/49/60004/too-much-world-is-the-internet-dead/>.

⁵³Ibid.

with a penchant for optical geometries—the resulting sequences that appear on screen look as if a ghostly presence has actually infiltrated the transmission. The further processes of scanning, editing, and printing do nothing but accelerate the lysergic nature of the malfunctioning, harking back to the video synthesizer practices of the psychedelic era with a dystopian view of media as it emerged from 1980s sci-fi movies like *Videodrome* and *They Live*—a retrospective look at the early electronic age in the vein of vaporwave and other contemporary accelerationist practices.

Obsolete technologies are also at the core of New Zealander artist Simon Denny's sculptures, installations, and publications. By accelerating signs and symbols of corporate media and governmental organizations, they explore the role of image-making in today's convergent media scenario. Denny first addressed television in *Deep Sea Vaudeo* (2009), a video installation comprising TV sets from different eras, all broadcasting non-synchronized footage of an aquarium. Through a series of prints on the walls, reproducing ads, and user guides of the actual TV sets on display, the work elicits a tension between illusionism and the actual mechanics of television. The



FIGURE 6.19 Simon Denny, *Deep Sea Vaudeo Multimedia Double Canvas*, installation view, 2009. Courtesy of the artist and Petzel, New York. Collection of Julia Stoschek. Photo: Lothar Schnepf.

effect is reinforced by a second part of the installation, made of rows of freestanding printed canvases reproducing the TV sets (Figure 6.19). The artist adopted the same tactic in other installations, such as *Introductory Logic Video Tutorial* (2010), *Corporate Video Decisions* (2011), and *Analogue Broadcasting Hardware Compression* (2013). Through the contrast between working hardware and its printed replica, they highlight the rematerialization of old media into new open, dispersed, and more ephemeral media.

Now that analog transmission technology has become obsolete and television as we knew it is on the verge of extinction, television sets are increasingly used only as screens: either at home, connected to online platforms based upon on-demand criteria, or in exhibition spaces to display video artworks. One last original “circulationist” approach to television is that made by American artist Ken Okiishi, who uses flat TV screens as vertical canvases in the series *gesture/data* (2013–14), which consist of abstract brushstrokes on an ever-changing broadcast of TV footage recorded by the artist on VHS since the 1990s. By reintroducing a performative element, Okiishi imagines the artistic relationship with television in the internet era in physical terms, as an ultimate, primitive, concrete act of action painting. Surprisingly, painting and performance (the oldest forms of artistic expression) are recombined here to fight the dehumanizing and alienating effects produced by digital technologies and the internet, harking back to the taped memory of television on such an obsolete analog format as VHS, to trigger a process of retrospection that would eventually lead to a more transparent distinction between reality and fiction.



CHRONOLOGY OF EXHIBITIONS ON ART AND TELEVISION

Title: *TV as a Creative Medium*

Venue: Howard Wise Gallery, New York, United States

Date: May 17–June 14, 1969

Curator: Howard Wise

Catalogue: Howard Wise Gallery, 8 pages

Title: *Visions and Televisions*

Venue: Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, United States

Date: January 21–February 22, 1970

Curator: Russell Connor

Catalogue: Rose Art Museum, 14 pages

Title: *From the Academy to the Avant Garde*

Venue: The Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY, United States

Date: 1981

Curator: Richard Simmons

Catalogue: The Visual Studies Workshop, 22 pages

Title: *TV Generations*

Venue: LACE Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibition, Los Angeles, United States

Date: February 21–April 12, 1986

Curators: John Baldessari and Bruce Yonemoto

Catalogue: LACE Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibition, 72 pages

Title: *Television's Impact on Contemporary Art*

Venue: The Queens Museum, New York, United States

Date: September 13–October 26, 1986

Curator: Marc H. Miller

Catalogue: The Queens County Art and Cultural Center, 49 pages

Title: *The Arts for Television*

Venue: Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, United States; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands (the exhibition toured in 11 other museums)

Date: September 4–October 18 and October 6–November 15, 1987

Curators: Kathy Rae Huffman and Dorine Mignot

Catalogue: Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and Stedelijk Museum, 104 pages

Title: *From the Receiver to the Remote Control: The TV Set*

Venue: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, United States

Date: September 14–November 25, 1990

Curator: Matthew Geller

Catalogue: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 144 pages

Title: *The New Frontier: Art and Television, 1960–65*

Venue: Austin Museum of Art, Austin, United States

Date: September 1–November 26, 2000

Curator: John Alan Farmer

Catalogue: Austin Museum of Art, 104 pages

Title: *The Search for a Personal Vision in Broadcast Television*

Venue: Patrick and Beatrice Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, Milwaukee, United States

Date: September 7–December 2, 2001

Curator: Fred Barzyk

Catalogue: Patrick and Beatrice Haggerty Museum of Art, 98 pages

Title: *Tele[visions]*

Venue: Kunsthalle Wien, Vienne, Austria

Date: October 18, 2001–January 6, 2002

Curator: Joshua Decker

Catalogue: Kunsthalle Wien, 312 pages

Title: *Satellite of Love*

Venue: Witte de With, Rotterdam, Netherlands

Date: January 26–March 26, 2006

Curator: Edwin Carels

Catalogue: Witte de With, 62 pages

Title: *Television Delivers People*

Venue: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, United States

Date: December 12, 2007–February 17, 2008

Curator: none

Catalogue: none

Title: *Broadcast*

Venue: Contemporary Museum Baltimore, Baltimore, MD, United States (the exhibition was produced by the organization Independent Curators International, New York, and has toured in four other museums from 2007 to 2011)

Date: April 17–November 17, 2007

Curator: Irene Hofmann

Catalogue: none

Title: *Broadcast Yourself: Artists' Interventions into Television and Strategies for Self-Broadcasting from the 1970s to Today*

Venue: Hatton Gallery, University of Newcastle, Newcastle and Cornerhouse, Manchester, United Kingdom

Date: February 28–April 4 and June 13–August 10, 2008

Curators: Sarah Cook and Kathy Rae Huffman

Catalogue: none

Title: *Changing Channels: Art and Television 1963–1987*

Venue: MUMOK Museum of Modern Kunst, Vienna, Austria

Date: March 5–June 6, 2010

Curator: Matthias Michalka

Catalogue: Cologne, Verlag Der Buchhandlung Walther König, 296 pages

Title: *TV/ARTS/TV: The Televisions Shot by Artists*

Venue: Arts Santa Mònica, Barcelona, Spain

Date: October 15–December 5, 2010

Curator: Valentina Valentini

Catalogue: Barcelona, La Fàbrica, 160 pages

Title: *Channel TV*

Lieu: Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof, Hamburg, Germany; cneai= (centre national de l'édition et de l'art imprimé), Paris, France; Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg, Germany

Date: October 29–December 19, 2010; October 19–December 19, 2010; November 20–January 16, 2010

Curators: Sylvie Boulanger (cneai=), Marie Luise Birkholz and Britta Peters (KVHBF), Hannes Loichinger (HfK Lüneburg)

Catalogue: special issue of the quarterly journal *MULTITUDES: Art TV Clash*, Paris, Éditions Amsterdam, 240 pages

Title: *Are You Ready for TV?*

Venue: MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani, Barcelona, Spain

Date: November 11, 2010–April 25, 2011

Curator: Chus Martínez

Catalogue: digital catalogue, 116 pages, available online for free https://issuu.com/macba_publicacions/docs/ready4tv_eng

Title: *Experimentelles Fernsehen der 1960er und 70er Jahre*

Venue: Deutschen Kinemathek—Museum für Film und Fernsehen, Berlin, Germany

Date: May 19–July 24, 2011

Curator: Gerlinde Waz

Catalogue: none

Title: *Forbidden Love: Art in the Wake of Television Camp*

Venue: Kölnischer Kunstverein et Kunstverein Medienturm, Graz, Germany

Date: September 25–November 27, 2011

Curator: Sandro Droschi

Catalogue: Cologne, Verlag Der Buchhandlung Walther König, 182 pages

Title: *Vidéo Vintage*

Venue: Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

Date: February 8–May 7, 2012

Curator: Christine Van Assche

Catalogue: Centre Pompidou, 64 pages

Title: *Remote Control*

Venue: ICA Institute of Contemporary Art, London, United Kingdom

Date: April 3–June 10, 2012

Curator: Matt Williams

Catalogue: none

Title: *Amuse Me*

Venue: Mestna Galerija Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Date: June 27–September 22, 2013

Curator: Alenka Gregorič

Catalogue: Mestna Galerija Ljubljana, 152 pages

Title: *This is Television*

Venue: Daadgalerie, Berlin, Germany

Date: September 7–October 19, 2013

Curator: Judy Radul

Catalogue: Berlin, Sternberg Press, 240 pages (2018)

Title: *Telegen: Art and Television*

Venue: Kunstmuseum, Bonn and Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Germany

Date: October 1, 2015–January 17, 2016 and February 19–May 16, 2016

Curators: Dieter Daniels and Stephan Berg

Catalogue: Munich, Hirmer Verlag GmbH, 352 pages

Title: *Revolution of the Eye: Modern Art and the Birth of American Television*

Venue: Jewish Museum, New York

Date: May 1–September 27, 2015

Curator: Maurice Berger

Catalogue: New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 172 pages (2015)

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A&SP and NASTYNASTY©

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Ant Farm

Media Burn, 1975, happening and video, color, sound, 23 min. 02 sec.

ANT Farm and T.R. Uthco

The Eternal Frame, 1976, video, color, sound, 22 min. 19 sec.

Michael Asher

Via Los Angeles, Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Portland, Oregon, January 8–February 8, 1976, 1976, video, color, sound, 30 min.

Tauba Auerbach

Static, 2008–2011, series of 19 c-prints, variable dimensions.

Alex Bag and Patterson Beckwith

Cash from Chaos/Unicorns & Rainbows, 1994–1997, weekly cable TV series, New York, United States, color, sound, 30 min.

Alex Bag

Coven Services, 2004, video, color, sound, 14 min. 40 sec.

His Girlfriend Is a Robot, 1996, video, color, sound, 14 min.

Untitled (Project for the Andy Warhol Museum), 1996, video, color, sound, 22 min.

Gladia Daters, 2005, video, color, sound, 30 min.

Untitled (Project for the Whitney Museum), 2009, video, color, sound, 38 min.

John Baldessari

Blasted Allegories, 1978, series of c-prints, variable dimensions.

Judith Barry

Casual Shopper, 1980–1981, video, color, sound, 28 min.

Judith Barry and Ken Saylor

From Receiver to Remote Control: The TV Set, 1990, installation, variable dimensions, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York.

Stephen Beck

Illuminated Music II & III, 1972–1973, video, color, sound, 29 min. 36 sec.

Gretchen Bender

Wild Dead, 1984, two-channel digital video installation, transferred from videotape, number of screens variable from 27 to 33, color, sound, 1 min. 41 sec.

Total Recall, 1987, eleven-channel digital video installation, transferred from videotape and 16 mm, 24 screens and 2 projections, color, sound, 18 min. 02 sec.

Will Benedict and Steffen Joergensen

The Restaurant, 2018, web series for DIS.ART, video HD, color, sound, variable length.

Lynda Benglis

Now, 1973, video, color, sound, 11 min. 45 sec.

Joseph Beuys

Filz-TV, 1970, performance and video, black and white, 10 min. 08 sec.

Sonne Statt Reagan, 1982, video, color, sound, 2 min. 42 sec.

Dara Birnbaum

Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman, 1978–1979, video, color, sound, 5 min. 50 sec.

Kiss the Girls: Make Them Cry, 1979, installation, two-channel video, color, sound, 6 min. 50 sec.

Pop-Pop Video: General Hospital/Olympic Women Speed Skating, 1980, video, color, sound, 5 min. 30 sec.

Pop-Pop Video: Kojak/Wang, 1980, video, color, sound, 3 min.

Animation for the series *Artbreaks*, 1987, MTV, United States, video, color, black and white, sound, 30 sec.

Dara Birnbaum and Dan Graham

Local TV News Program Analysis, 1978–1980, video, color, sound, 61 min. 08 sec.

Gregg Bordowitz

Fast Trip, Long Drop, 1993, video, color, sound, 54 min. 04 sec.

Joan Braderman

Joan Does Dynasty, 1985, video, color, sound, 31 min. 40 sec.

Olaf Breuning

Cris Croft, 1999, video, color, sound, 5 min. 29 sec.

King, 2000, video, color, sound, 9 min. 24 sec.

Ugly Yelp, 2001, video, color, sound, 5 min.

Angela Bulloch

TV Series, 2002, installation, variable dimensions.

Chris Burden

Shoot, 1971, performance, F Space, Santa Ana, California, United States.

TV Hijack, 1972, performance, California, United States.

TV Ad: Through the Night Softly, 1973, video, color, sound, 30 sec.

Poem for L.A., 1975, video, color, sound, 30 sec.

Chris Burden Promo, 1976, video, color, sound, 30 sec.

Full Disclosure, 1977, video, color, sound, 30 sec.

Peter Campus

Three Transitions, 1973, video, color, sound, 4 min. 53 sec.

Ensemble de Télévision, 1961, installation, welded painted sheets, TV on Plexiglas, castors, 166 × 76 × 50 cm.

Mel Chin and The Gala Committee

In the Name of the Place, 1995–1997, series of interventions in the TV series Melrose Place, Fox, United States.

In the Name of the Place, 1997, video, color, sound, 15 min. 35 sec.

TOTAL PROOF: The Gala Committee 1995–1997, 2016, installation, Red Bull Studios, New York.

Daniele Cipri and Franco Maresco

Cinico TV, 1992–1996, TV series, video, black and white, sound, variable length.

Larry Clark

Untitled series of photographs published in the book *LC*, Groninger Museum, Groningen, NL, 1999.

Colab

Potato Wolf, 1979–1984, cable TV series, New York, United States, color, sound, variable length.

James Coleman

Clara and Dario, 1975, installation, 2 slide projectors (35 mm.), black and white, sound, 46 min. 25 sec.

Phil Collins

the world won't listen, 2004–2007, three-channel video installation, color, sound, 56 min.

soy mi madre, 2008, 16 mm, color, sound, 26 min.

the return of the real, 2007, video, color, sound, 64 min.

This Unfortunate Thing Between Us, 2011, two-nights performance at the theater Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin, broadcast live on the channel ZDFkultur, Germany.

This Unfortunate Thing Between Us (TUTBU TV), 2011, video, color, sound, 60 min.

Bruce Conner

REPORT, 1963–1967, 16 mm, black and white, sound, 13 min.

TELEVISION ASSASSINATION, 1963–1995, installation, Bolex film projector, 8 mm film, Zenith television set with painted screen, film reel, electric cord, black and white, silent.

Keren Cytter

Video Art Manual, 2011, video HD, color, sound, 14 min. 43 sec.

Vengeance, 2012–2013, video HD, color, sound, 8 episodes from 14 to 18 min.

Salvador Dalí

Painting for the cover of the magazine TV Guide, June 8–14, 1968.

Jaime Davidovich

The Live! Show, 1979–1984, cable TV series, Channel J, Manhattan Cable, New York, United States, color, sound, variable length.

Paul B. Davis

Video Compression Study II, 2007, video, color, sound, 1 min. 31 sec.

Deep Dish TV

The Gulf Crisis TV Project, 1991, cable TV series, New York, United States, color, sound, variable length.

Guy Debord

The Society of the Spectacle, 1973, 35 mm, black and white, sound, 88 min.

Simon Denny

Deep Sea Vaudeo, 2009, multimedia installation, Sprengel Museum, Hannover.

Introductory Logic Video Tutorial, 2010, multimedia installation, Artspace, Sidney.

Corporate Video Decisions, 2011, multimedia installation, Friederick Petzel Gallery, New York.

Analogue Broadcasting Hardware Compression, 2013, multimedia installation, Venice Biennale.

Jan Dibbets

TV as a Fireplace, 1969, video, color, sound, 23 min. 48 sec.

The Diggers

Death of Hippie, Son of Mass Media, 1967, performance, San Francisco, United States.

DIVA TV

Target City Hall, 1989, video, color, sound, 28 min.

Like a Prayer, 1990, video, color, sound, 28 min.

DIVA TV and Deep Dish TV

Be a Diva, 1990, video, color, sound, 58 min.

Cheryl Donegan

Head, 1993, video, color, sound, 2 min. 49 sec.

Stan Douglas

Television Spots, 1987–1988, video, color, sound, 12 videos from 15 to 20 sec.

Monodramas, 1991, video, color, sound, 10 videos from 30 to 60 sec.

Casey Jane Ellison

Touching the Art, 2014–2015, web series, video HD, color, sound, 14 episodes from 8 to 10 min.

Mothers and Daughters, 2018, web series for DIS.ART, video HD, color, sound, variable length.

Harun Farocki

Ein Tag im Leben der Endverbraucher, 1993, video, color, sound, 44 min.

War at Distance, 2003, video, black and white and color, sound, 54 min.

Deep Play, 2010–2011, eight-channel video installation, sound, 135 min.

Omer Fast

CNN Concatenated, 2002, video, color, sound, 18 min. 17 sec.

Fausto Fernós

El Chow De Faustina, Années 1990, cable TV series, color, sound, variable length.

Maurizio Finotto

ARTISTAR, 2009, video, color, sound, variable length, from 30 to 180 min.

Oskar Fischinger

An Optical Poem, 1938, 35 mm, color, sound, 7 min.

Lucio Fontana

Untitled, event and installation, Rai, Turin, Italy, May 17, 1952.

Valie Export

Facing a Family, 1971, video, black and white, sound, 4 min. 37 sec.

Lee Friedlander

The Little Screens, 1961–1970, series of photographs, variable dimensions.

Rainer Ganahl

Iraq Dialogs: Arab Dialog with Ghazi Al Delaimi, CNBC, *Make It Your Business*, *Back to the Gulf*, 2002–2003, painting on ceramic tiles, 80 × 100 × 1 cm.

General Idea

Pilot, 1977, video, color, sound, 28 min. 56 sec.

Test Tube, 1979, video, color, sound, 28 min. 15 sec.

Shut the Fuck Up, 1985, video, color, sound, 14 min.

Karl Gerstner

Auto-Vision, 1965, boxed TV set on Miller foot, six lunettes, variable dimensions.

Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider

Wipe Cycle, 1969, multimedia installation, 9 screens, video, black and white, sound, Howard Wise Gallery, New York.

Melanie Gilligan

Popular Unrest, 2010, video HD, color, sound, 5 episodes from 10 to 15 min.
The Common Sense, 2014, video HD, color, sound, 3 seasons of 5 episodes of 6 min., total length 97 min. 05 sec.

GMHC

Living With AIDS, 1987, cable TV series, New York, United States, color, sound, variable length.

Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville

Six Fois Deux/Sur et Sus la Communication, 1976, TV series, FR3, France, 12 episodes from 40 to 55 min., total length 600 min.

Nan Goldin

The Ballad of Sexual Dependency, 1985, installation, slide projector, sound, variable number of slides, variable length.

Dan Graham

Project for a Local Cable TV, 1970, performance, Nova Scotia College of Arts and Design, Halifax, Canada.

TV Camera/Monitor, 1970, performance, Nova Scotia College of Arts and Design, Halifax, Canada.

Present Continuous Past(s), 1974, closed-circuit video installation, 1 black-and-white camera, 1 black and white screen, 2 mirrors, 1 microprocessor.

Paul Graham

Television Portraits, 1989–1995, series of photographs, variable dimensions.

Rodney Graham

How I Became a Ramblin' Man, 1999, 35 mm, color, sound, 9 min.

A Little Thought, 2000, 8 mm, color, sound, 3 min. 54 sec.

Phonokinetoscope, 2002, 16 mm, color, sound, 5 min.

Wynne Greenwood and K8 Hardy

New Report, 2005, video, color, sound, 12 min.

New Report, 2007, performance and live broadcast from Tate Britain, London, variable length.

Johan Grimontprez

dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y, 1997, video, color, sound, 68 min.

Michel François

Fox, 2005, video installation, color, sound, 3 min. 51 sec.

Gran Fury

Kissing Doesn't Kill, 1990, video, color, sound, 4 episodes of 40 sec.

Caroline Hake

Monitor, 1998–2003, series of 12 photographs, 120 × 160 cm.

David Hall

TV Interruptions: Interruption Piece, 1971, video, black and white, sound, 2 min. 20 sec.

TV Interruptions: Tap Piece, 1971, video, black and white, sound, 3 min. 31 sec.

Richard Hamilton

Just what is it that makes today's home's so different, so appealing?, 1956, collage, 26 × 25 cm.

Kent State, 1970, screenprint on paper, 67 × 87 cm.

Keith Haring

Untitled, 1980, performance for Acts of Live Art, Club 57, New York.

Untitled, 1983, Sumi ink on paper, 182.9 × 335.3 cm.

Abbie Hoffman

Action in Washington D.C., October 9, 1968.

Adelita Husni-Bey

La Luna in Folle, 2016, three-channel video installation and series of performances, MAXXI, Rome.

Pierre Huyghe

The Third Memory, 2000, two-channel video installation, color, sound, 9 min. 32 sec.

Mobil TV, 1995, multimedia installation and performance, Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne, Lyon.

Isidor Isou

La Télévision Déchiquetée ou L'Anti-Crétinisation, 1962, installation, cut black Canson paper, TV set, black and white, 48 × 68, 5 × 39 cm.

Alex Israel

AS IT LAYS, 2012, web series, video HD, color, sound, 33 episodes, variable length.

Sanja Iveković

Slatko Nasilje (Sweet Violence), 1974, video, black and white, 6 min.

Personal Cuts (Osobni Rezovi), 1982, video, color, sound, 3 min. 43 sec.

General Alert (Soap Opera), 1995, video, color, sound, 5 min.

Matthew Day Jackson

In Search of ... Eidolon, 2010, video HD, color, sound, 25 min.

Cameron Jamie

The Neotoma Tape (1983–95), 1995, video, color, sound, 58 min.

Christian Jankowski

Telemistica, 1999, video, color, sound, 15 min. 52 sec.

The Holy Artwork, 2001, video, color, sound, 16 min. 30 sec.

Kochstudio, 2004, video, color, sound, 97 min. 26 sec.

Kunstmarkt TV, 2008, video, color, sound, 45 min. 15 sec.

Casting Jesus, 2011, two-channel video installation, color, sound, 60 min.

Ben Jones

The Problem Solverz, 2011–2013, animated television series, Cartoon Network, United States, color, sound, 2 seasons of 13 episodes of 11 min.

Wolf Kahlen

Mirror TV, 1969–1977, installation, mirror applied to a TV set, dimensions unknown.

Young Rock, 1971, installation, TV set, red granite in two parts, 65 × 60 × 43 cm.

Allan Kaprow

Hello, 1969, video, black and white, sound, 4 min. 23 sec.

Mike Kelley

Banana Man, 1983, video, color, sound, 28 min. 15 sec.

Jon Kessler

The Palace at 4AM, 2005, multimedia installation, variable dimensions.

Harmony Korine

Trash Humpers, 2009, video, color, sound, 78 min.

Ernie Kovacs

Three to Get Ready, 1950, NBC, United States, video, black and white, sound.

Time for Ernie, 1951, NBC, United States, video, black and white, sound.

Ernie Kovacs in the role of Eugene, “Library Bit,” *Ernie Kovacs Show*, 1956, NBC, United States, video, black and white, sound.

Silent Show, January 19, 1957, NBC, United States, video, color, sound, 30 min.

Richard Kriesche

Blackout, December 12, 1974, performance live on the program *Impulse 16*, ORF, Austria.

Twins, 1977, multimedia installation and performance, Documenta 6, Kassel, Germany.

Nationalfeiertag, October 26, 1978, performance live on the channel ORF, Austria.

David Lamelas

The Office of Information About the Vietnam War at Three Levels: The Visual Image, Text and Audio, 1968, multimedia installation, Venice Biennale.

The Hand, 1976, video, color, sound, 37 min. 08 sec.

The Dictator, 1976, video, color, sound, 15 min. 22 sec.

Mathieu Laurette

Apparition: Tournez Manège, March 16, 1993, performance live on the channel TF1, France.

Apparition: The Today Show, NBC, 31 December 2004, 2004, performance live on the channel NBC, United States.

Mobile Information Stand for Moneyback Products (International Version), 1999, video, color, sound, 25 min.

John Lennon and Yoko Ono

Bed-in for Peace, March 25–31, 1969, happening, Hilton Hotel Amsterdam.

Bed Peace, 2017, video, color, sound, 70 min. 55 sec.

Rape, 1969, 16 mm, color, sound, 75 min. 33 sec.

Jørgen Leth

Andy Warhol Eating a Hamburger, 1981, 35 mm, color, sound, 8 min.

Les Levine

Iris, 1968, multimedia installation, 6 screens, dimensions unknown.

Kalup Linzy

Conversations Wit de Churen I: Ride to da Club, 2002, video, black and white, sound, 05 min. 06 sec

Conversations Wit de Churen II: All My Churen, 2013, video, color, sound, 29 min. 14 sec.

Conversations Wit de Churen III: da Young & da Mess, 2005, video, color, sound, 16 min. 56 sec.

Conversations Wit de Churen V: As da Artworld Might Turn, 2006, video, color, sound, 12 min. 10 sec.

Melody Set Me Free, 2007, video, color, sound, 15 min. 16 sec.

Kalup Linzy and James Franco

Rising, 2011, video, color, sound, 3 min. 53 sec.

LOT-EK

TV-TANK, 1998, multimedia installation, Deitch Projects, New York.

LuckyPDF

Live From Frieze Art Fair This Is LuckyPDF TV, 2011, installation and program broadcast live from Frieze Art Fair, London, variable length.

Ann Magnuson and Tom Rubnitz

Made for TV, 1984, video, color, sound, 15 min.

Chris Marker

Zapping Zone: Proposal for an Imaginary Television, multimedia installation, 14 video monitors, 13 laser disc players, 13 loudspeakers, 13 video recorders, 7 programs on floppy discs, 10 black-and-white photographs, 4 projectors with 20 slides, color, sound, variable dimensions, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Fabio Mauri

Il Televisore che Piange, 1972, performance live on the program *Happening*, Rai 2, Italy, black and white, sound, 2 min. 41 sec.

Paul McCarthy

WS, 2013, multimedia installation, Park Avenue Armory, New York.

Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelley

Family Tyranny, 1987, video, color, sound, 8 min. 8 sec.

Bjørn Melhus

Far Far Away, 1995, 16 mm on video, color, sound, 39 min.

Out of the Blue, 1997, video, color, sound, 6 min. 27 sec.

Blue Moon, 1997, two-channel video installation, color, sound, 4 min.

The Oral Thing, 2001, video, color, sound, 8 min.

Primetime, 2001, three-channel video installation, 28 screens, 1 projection, 5 video cubes, color, sound, 10 min.

Captain, 2005, two-channel video HD installation, color, sound, 14 min. 20 sec.

Deadly Storms, 2008, three-channel video HD installation, color, sound, 7 min.

Nathaniel Mellors

Ourhouse, 2010–2018, video HD, color, sound, 6 episodes from 20 to 35 min.

John Miller

Sans titre, 1998, series of paintings, variable dimensions.

The Lugubrious Game, 1998, installation, Le Magasin, Dijon, France.

Everything is Said, 2009–2012, series of paintings, variable dimensions.

Profile, 2013, series of paintings, variable dimensions.

Here in the Real World, 2015, series of paintings, variable dimensions.

Marta Minujín

Simultaneidad Envolvente, 1966, multimedia installation, Instituto Torcuato di Tella, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Shana Moulton

Whispering Pines, 2001–2010, video, color, sound, 10 videos of variable length.

Feeling Free with 3D Magic Eye Poster Remix, 2004, video, color, sound, 8 min. 13 sec.

Detached Inner Eye, 2014, projection and performance, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

Body + Mind + 7 = Spirit, 2009, performance, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich.

Donald Moffett

Call the White House, 1990, photograph on light box, 102.9 × 153.7 × 17.1 cm

Antoni Muntadas

Media Ecology Ads: Fuse, Timer, Slow Down, 1982, video, color, sound, 14 min.

Takeshi Murata

Monster Movie, 2005, video, color, sound, 3 min. 55 sec.

I, Popeye, 2010, video HD, color, sound, 6 min. 05 sec.

OM Rider, 2013, video HD, color, sound, 11 min. 39 sec.

Bruce Nauman

Live-Taped Video Corridor, 1970, installation, wallboard, video camera, two video monitors, video recording, and video playback device, variable dimensions.

Not Channel Zero and Deep Dish TV

The Nation Erupts, 1992, video, color, sound, 58 min.

Glenn O'Brien

TV Party, 1978–1982, cable TV series, New York, United States, color, sound, variable length.

Ken Okiishi

gesture\data, 2014, series of installations, Chroma key, paintings on flatscreen TV sets, variable dimensions.

Oneohtrix Point Never

Memory Vague, 2009, DVD, produced by Root Strata, color, sound, 33 min. 21 sec.

Orfeo TV

Orfeo TV, 2002, pirate TV station, Bologna, Italy, number of episodes and length unknown.

Yoko Ono

Sky TV, 1966, installation, TV set and video camera, variable dimensions.

Nam June Paik

Exposition of Music. Electronic Television, 1963, multimedia installation, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany.

Kuba TV, 1963, modified TV set, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany.

Participation TV, 1963–1966, TV set with attached microphone, dimensions unknown.

Magnet TV, 1965, TV set modified with a magnet, 98.4 × 48.9 × 62.2 cm.

TV Bra for Living Sculpture, 1969, performance by Charlotte Moorman for the exhibition *TV as a Creative Medium*, Howard Wise Gallery, New York.

Concerto for TV Cello and Videotapes, 1971, performance by Charlotte Moorman, Galleria Bonino, New York.

Global Groove, 1973, video, color, sound, 28 min. 30 sec.

TV-Buddha, 1974, Buddha statue and TV set, variable dimensions.

Good Morning Mr. Orwell, 1984, video, color, sound, 38 min.
Dadaikseon (The More the Better), 1988, installation, 1003 monitors, The Seoul Museum of Modern Art, Seoul, Korea.

Nam June Paik and Otto Piene

Untitled, 1968, modified TV set and plastic pearls, 22.9 × 33 × 25.4 cm.

Paper Rad

Trash Talking, 2006, DVD, produced by Load Records, color, sound, 60 min.

Paper Tiger Television

Herbert Schiller Reads the New York Times, 1981, video, color, sound, 28 min.
Martha Rosler Reads Vogue, 1982, video, color, sound, 25 min. 22 sec.
Donna Haraway Reads the National Geographic, 1987, video, color, sound, 28 min.

Philippe Parreno and Douglas Gordon

Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait, 2006, two-channel video HD installation, color, sound, 90 min.

Raymond Pettibon

Cracks in the Sidewalk, 1980, record cover, SST Records, 1980.
Untitled (KILL), 1982, ink on paper, dimensions unknown.

PFFR

Wonder Showzen, 2005–2006, TV series, MTV 2, United States, video, color, sound, 2 seasons of 13 episodes of 21–23 min.
Xavier: Renegade Angel, 2007–2009, animated television series, [adultswim], United States, video HD, color, sound, 2 seasons of 10 episodes of 11 min.

Richard Phillips

Sasha Grey, 2011, video HD, color, sound, 1 min. 30 sec.
Lindsay Lohan, 2011, video HD, color, sound, 1 min. 37 sec.

Walter Pichler

TV Helmet, 1967, helmet with integrated TV set.

Otto Piene and Aldo Tambellini

Black Gate Cologne, 1968, happening and TV program on the channel ZDF, Düsseldorf, Germany, black and white, sound, 23 min.

Sondra Prill

Nasty Boys, late 1980s, video, color, sound, 3 min. 47 sec.
Pump Up the Jam, late 1980s, video, color, sound, 3 min. 47 sec.

Richard Prince

Artbreaks, 1985, MTV, United States, video, color, sound, 20 sec.

Gerhard Richter and Konrad Lueg

Leben mit Pop—Eine Demonstration für den Kapitalistischen Realismus,
October 11, 1963, happening, interior design store Bergers, Düsseldorf,
Germany.

Pipilotti Rist

I'm Not the Girl Who Misses Much <Ich bin nicht das Mädchen, das viel vermisst>,
1986, video, color, sound, 7 min. 46 sec.
You Called Me Jacky, 1990, video, color, sound, 4 min. 02 sec.

David Robbins

Talent, 1986, 18 gelatin silver photographs, 25.4 × 20.3 each.
Ice Cream Social: Sundance TV Pilot, 2003, video, color, sound, 7 min. 43 sec.

Albert Robida

Forecast: Watching a War, 1882, illustration on paper.

Julian Rosefeldt

Global Soap, 2000–2001, four-channel video installation, color, sound, 22 min.
Global Soap: Mnemories/Samples (nr. 1–16), 2000–2001, series of Lamda prints,
variable dimensions.

Martha Rosler

If It's Too Bad to Be True, It Could Be DISINFORMATION, 1985, video, color,
sound, 16 min. 26 sec.

Kenny Scharf

Having a Television Pizza Party, 1979, acrylic on canvas, 45.7 × 55.9 cm.
Club 57, 1980, logo of the club.
Untitled, 1983, decorated TV set, dimensions unknown (under the pseudonym of
Van Chrome).

Christoph Schlingensief

Talk 2000, 1997, TV program, Kanal 4, Germany, 8 episodes, variable length.
U3000, 2000, TV program, MTV, Germany, 8 episodes, variable length.
Bitte liebt Österreich (Please Love Austria), June 9–16, 2000, performance, Vienna
International Festival, Vienna, Austria.
Freakstars 3000, 2002, video, color, sound, 6 episodes, total length 75 min.

Gerry Schum

Land Art, 1969, black and white, sound, 32 min.

Marinella Senatore

Variations, 2011, event and video HD, color, sound, 21 min.

Richard Serra

Television Delivers People, 1973, video, color, sound, 6 min.
Prisoner's Dilemma, 1974, performance and video, black and white, sound, 45 min.

Richard Serra and Nancy Holt

Boomerang, 1974, video, color, sound, 10 min.

Cindy Sherman and MICA-TV

Cindy Sherman: An Interview, 1980–1981, video, color, sound, 10 min. 20 sec.

Eric Siegel

Psychedelelevision in Color, 1968, video installation, color, sound, dimensions and length unknown.

Michael Smith

Down in the Rec Room, 1979, performance, Artists Space, New York.

Secret Horror, 1980, video, color, sound, 13 min. 19 sec.

Go For it Mike, 1984, video, color, sound, 4 min. 41 sec.

MIKE, 1987, video, color, sound, 3 min. 35 sec.

Cally Spooner

And You Were Wonderful, On Stage, 2015, video, color, sound, 46 min.

Hito Steyerl

Liquidity Inc., 2014, video HD installation, color, sound, 30 min.

Factory of the Sun, 2015, video HD installation, German Pavilion, Venice Biennale, 23 min.

Thomas Tadlock

Archetron, 1969, video installation, dimensions and length unknown.

Temporary Services

Framing the Artists: Artists & Art in Film and Television, 2005, artist's book and video, color, sound, 40 min. 27 sec.

Ryan Trecartin

A Family Finds Entertainment, 2004, video, color, sound, 42 min.

I-Be Area, 2007, video, color, sound, 108 min.

P.opular S.ky (section ish), 2009, video HD, color, sound, 43 min. 51 sec.

Center Jenny, 2013, video HD, color, sound, 53 min. 15 sec.

Any Ever, 2009–2010, video HD, 3 hours 55 min.

Ryan Trecartin and Lizzie Fitch

Any Ever, 2011, installation, MoMA PS1, New York.

(As Yet Untitled Sculptural Theater), 2016, installation, Berlin Biennale, Berlin.

Whether Line, installation, Fondazione Prada, Milan.

TVTV

The World's Largest TV Studio, 1972, video, black and white, sound, 59 min. 04 sec.

Four More Years, 1972, video, black and white, sound, 61 min. 28 sec.

Lord of the Universe, 1973, video, black and white and color, sound, 58 min. 27 sec.

Adland, 1974, video, black and white and color, sound, 58 min. 25 sec.
TVTV Looks at the Oscar, 1976, video, color, sound, 59 min.
TVTV Goes to the Superbowl, 1976, video, color, sound, 46 min. 50 sec.

Günther Uecker

TV, 1963, TV set, nails, glue, 120 × 100 cm.

Stan Vanderbeek

Violence Sonata, 1969, happening produced for the TV channel WGBH, Boston, video, color, sound, 51 min. 34 sec.

Van Gogh TV

Piazza Virtuale, 1992, multimedia installation, Documenta 9, Kassel.
Piazza Virtuale, 1992, video, color, sound, 32 min. 30 sec.

Francesco Vezzoli

Greed, 2009, directed by Roman Polanski, video HD, color, sound, 1 min.
Comizi di Non Amore, 2004, video, color, sound, 63 min.
TV 70: Francesco Vezzoli Guarda la Rai, 2017, exhibition curated by Francesco Vezzoli, Fondazione Prada, Milan.

Videofreex

The Woodstock Tapes, 1969, video, black and white, sound, 46 min. 50 sec.
Lanesville TV, 1971–1974, series of programs for the channel Lanesville TV, Lanesville, NY, United States, number and length of programs unknown.

Bill Viola

Reverse Television—Portraits of Viewers, 1983, video, color, sound, 15 min.

Wolf Vostell

German View from the “Black Room” Cycle, 1958–1959, installation, decollage, wood, barbed wire, tin, newspaper, bone, TV set with cover, 115,5 × 130 × 30,5 cm.
Sun in Your Head, 1963–1972, 16 mm transferred on video, black and white, sound, 5 min. 30 sec.
Electronic Dé-collage, Happening Room, 1968, installation, Venice Biennale, variable dimensions.
Concrete TV Paris, 1974, sculpture, 170 × 81 × 50 cm.
TV Burying, 1983, happening at the farm of George Segal, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Andy Warhol

TV \$199, 1961, acrylic and oil on canvas, 172.7 × 132.7 cm.
Outer and Inner Space, 1965, installation, double projection, 16 mm, black and white, sound, 33 min.
Underground Sundae, 1968, video, color, sound, 1 min.
Screen Tests, 1964–1968, 16 mm, black and white, sound, number and length variable and unknown.
Soap Opera or *The Lester Persky Story*, film stills, 1964.

- Factory Diaries*, 1965, video, black and white, sound, 11 videos of 30 min.
Factory Diaries, 1971–1978, video, black and white and color, sound, number and length variable.
Interview, 1969–2018, magazine.
Moonwalk, 1987, screenprint, 96,5 × 96,5 cm.

Andy Warhol and Vincent Fremont

- Vivian's Girls*, 1973, video, black and white, sound, 10 videos of 30 min.
Phoney, 1973, video, black and white, sound, 23 videos of 30 min.
Fashion, 1979–1980, TV program, Manhattan Cable Television, New York, video, color, sound, 11 episodes of 30 min.
Andy Warhol's T.V., Season 1, 1980–1982, TV program, Manhattan Cable Television, New York, video, color, sound, 18 episodes of 30 min.
Andy Warhol T.V. on Saturday Night Live, 1981, videos for the program *Saturday Night Live*, NBC, United States, video, color, sound, 3 videos of 1 min.
Andy Warhol's T.V., Season 2, 1983, TV program, MSGN (Madison Square Garden Network), New York, United States, video, color, sound, 9 episodes of 30 min.
Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes, 1986–1987, TV program, MTV, United States, video, color, sound, 5 episodes of 30 min.

Gillian Wearing

- Secrets and Lies*, 2009, video HD, color, sound, 53 min.
Family History, 2006, video HD, color, sound, 35 min. 32 sec.

Peter Weibel

- TV Aquarium (TV Death 1)*, 1970–1972, video, black and white, sound, 1 min. 27 sec.
The Endless Sandwich (Tele-Aktion I), 1969–1972, video, color, sound, 4 min. 07 sec.
Time Blood, 1972–1979, performance live on TV channel ORF, Austria, video, color, sound, length unknown.
TV News (TV Death 2), 1970–1972, video, black and white, sound, 5 min. 47 sec.

Tom Wesselmann

- Still Life #31*, 1963, acrylic and collage on wood and functioning TV set, 122 × 152 × 28 cm.

David Wojnarowicz

- A Fire in My Belly*, 1986–1987, 8 mm, color, sound, 20 min. 55 sec.

Grant Worth and Patrick Sandberg

- Hooper Place*, 2010, web series for DIS magazine, video HD, color, sound, 3 episodes, variable length.

The Yes Men

- George W. Bush Project*, 2000, website.
Bhopal Project, 2004, action on the program BBC World, BBC, International, 5 min. 30 sec.

The New York Times Project, 2008, 80,000 copies of a fake edition of the issue of July 4, 2009 of the New York Times.

Bruce and Norman Yonemoto

Garage Sale, 1976, 16 mm, color, sound, 85 min.

Based on Romance, 1979, video, color, sound, 24 min. 15 sec.

An Impotent Metaphor, 1979, video, color, sound, 42 min. 54 sec.

Green Card: An American Romance, 1980, video, color, sound, 79 min. 15 sec.

Made in Hollywood, 1990, video, color, sound, 56 min. 12 sec.

Bruce and Norman Yonemoto and Mike Kelley

Kappa, 1986, video, color, sound, 26 min.

Music Videos

Laurie Anderson

Laurie Anderson, *O Superman*, 1983, music video, Warner Bros. Records, video, color, sound, 8 min. 21 sec.

Laurie Anderson, *Sharkey's Day*, 1984, music video, Warner Bros. Records, video, color, sound, 4 min. 30 sec.

Doug Aitken

LCD Soundsystem, *Someone Great*, 2007, music video, DFA Records/EMI, video, color, sound, 6 min. 27 sec.

Gretchen Bender

Babes in Toyland, *Bruise Violet*, 1992, music video, Southern Records, video, color, sound, 2 min. 52 sec.

Bruce Conner

David Byrne and Brian Eno, *America Is Waiting*, 1981, music video, Sire/Warner Bros. Records, video, color, sound, 3 min. 53 sec.

Martin Creed

Martin Creed, *Thinking Not Thinking*, 2012, music video, Telephone Records, video, color, sound, 1 min. 39 sec.

Martin Creed, *You Return*, 2014, music video, The Vinyl Factory, video, color, sound, 4 min. 36 sec.

Chris Cunningham

Björk, *All Is Full of Love*, 1997, music video, One Little Indian/Elektra, video, color, sound, 4 min. 50 sec.

Aphex Twin, *Windowlicker*, 1999, music video, Warp, video, color, sound, 10 min. 33 sec.

Michel Gondry

Chemical Brothers, *Let Forever Be*, 1999, music video, Virgin/Astralwerks, video, color, sound, 3 min. 40 sec.

Derek Jarman

Marianne Faithfull, *Broken English*, 1979, Island, 8 mm and 16 mm transferred on 35 mm, black and white and color, sound, 12 min.

The Smiths, *The Queen Is Dead*, 1986, Rough Trade, 8 mm and 16 mm transferred on 35 mm, black and white and color, sound, 13 min.

Stephen R. Johnson and David Byrne

Talking Heads, *Road to Nowhere*, 1984, music video, Sire, video, color, sound, 4 min. 19 sec.

Bruce Gowers

Queen, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, 1975, music video, EMI/ Elektra, video, color, sound, 5 min. 55 sec.

Wynne Greenwood

Tracy + the Plastics, 1999–2006, music videos, self-produced, video, color, sound, variable lengths.

Damien Hirst

Blur, *Country House*, 1995, music video, Food/ Virgin, video, color, sound, 3 min. 57 sec.

Richard Kern and Judith Barry

Sonic Youth and Lydia Lunch, for *Death Valley '69*, 1986, music video, Homestead Records, 8 mm transferred on video, color, sound, 5 min. 20 sec.

Robert Longo

Megadeath, *Peace Sells*, 1986, music video, Capitol Records, video, color, sound, 4 min. 03 sec.

New Order, *Bizarre Love Triangle*, 1986, music video, Factory Records, video, color, sound, 4 min.

R.E.M., *The One I Love*, 1987, music video, I.R.S., video, color, sound, 3 min. 17 sec.

Russell Mulcahy

Buggles, *Video Killed the Radio Stars*, 1979, music video, Epic, video, color, sound, 2 min. 49 sec.

Takashi Murakami

Kanye West, *Good Morning*, 2008, music video, Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam, video animation, color, sound, 3 min. 15 sec.

Yoshitomo Nara

R.E.M., *I'll Take the Rain*, 2001, music video, Warner Bros. Records, video animation, color, sound, 5 min. 51 sec.

Tony Oursler

Sonic Youth, *Tunic (Song for Karen)*, 1990, music video, DGC, video, color, sound, 6 min. 17 sec.

The Residents and Others

The Residents, *One-Minute Movies*, 1980, series of 56 music videos of 1 min., Cryptic Corporation and Ralph Records, 8 mm, 16 mm and video, black and white and color, sound, 56 min.

Mick Rock

David Bowie, *Space Oddity*, 1972, video, color, sound, 5 min.

Rocky Schenck

Devo, *Post Post-Modern Man*, 1989, music video, Enigma, video, color, sound, 3 min.

David Shrigley

Blur, *Good Song*, 2003, music video, Parlophone, video animation, color, sound, 3 min. 10 sec.

Wolfgang Tillmans

Goldfrapp, *Lovely Head*, 2000, music video, Mute, video, color, sound, 3 min. 41 sec.

Andy Warhol T.V. Productions

Walter Steding, *Secret Spy*, 1981, music video, Earhole Productions, video, color, sound, 3 min.

Walter Steding, *Dancing in Heaven*, 1982, music video, Elektra, video, color, sound, 3 min. 16 sec.

Miguel Bosé, *Fuego*, 1983, music video, CBS, video, color, sound, 3 min.

The Cars, *Hello Again*, 1984, music video, Elektra, video, color, sound, variable length from 4 to 5 min.

Curiosity Killed the Cat, *Misfit*, 1987, music video, Mercury Records, video, color, sound, 4 min.

Ai Weiwei

Ai Weiwei, *Dumbass*, 2013, music video, Zuoxiao Zuzhou, video, color, sound, 5 min. 13 sec.

Ai Weiwei, *Laoma Tihua*, 2013, music video, Zuoxiao Zuzhou, video, color, sound, 4 min. 52 sec.

Appearances of artists in TV programs**Arpiani e Pagliarini**

Uomini e Donne, Canale 5, Italy, 1997.

Forum, Rete 4, Italy, September 1998.

John Cage

Lascia o Raddoppia?, Canale 5, Italy, January 29, 1959.

Performance of *Water Walk* on the program *I've Got a Secret*, CBS, United States, January 1960.

Salvador Dalí

The Name's the Same, ABC, United States, January 19, 1954.

What's My Line?, CBS, United States, January 27, 1957.

Licor Veterano Sabor, commercial, Spain, 1965, 15 sec.

Chocolat Lanvin, commercial, France, 1968, 15 sec.

Alka Seltzer, commercial, United States, 1974, 30 sec.

Tracey Emin

The Death of Painting, Channel 4, United States, 1997.

Paul Emin auctions a work of his sister, the artist Tracey Emin, *Four Rooms*, Channel 4, United States, 2011.

Kalup Linzy

Kalup Linzy in the role of Kalup Ishmael in the series *General Hospital*, ABC, United States, 2010.

Andy Warhol

The Merv Griffin Show, CBS, United States, October 6, 1965.

Braniff Airline, commercial, United States, 1969, 27 sec.

TDK Videotape, commercial, Japan, 1983, 30 sec.

Diet Coke, commercial, United States, 1985, 30 sec.

Andy Warhol as himself in the series *Love Boat*, season 8, episode 200, ABC, United States, 1985, 50 min.

Andy Warhol interviewed in the program *WWF WrestleMania*, United States, 1985.

The Yes Men

BBC World, BBC, International, December 3, 2004.

TV programs and events

First demonstration of the video technology Ampex of CBS Television City in Hollywood, November 30, 1956.

Non è Mai Troppo Tardi, 1960–1968, hosted by Alberto Manzi, Rai, Italy, program of elementary education, number of episodes unknown, 30 min.

Assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, November 22, 1963, filmed by Abraham Zapruder, Dallas, Texas.

TV program of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1964, hosted by Aline Saarinen, NBC, United States, program on modern art.

Playboy After Dark, 1969, CBS, United States, variety program, 52 episodes of 48 min.

Ways of Seeing, January 1972, created and hosted by John Berger, BBC Two, United Kingdom, program on art, 4 episodes of 30 min.

- An American Family*, 1973 (filmed in 1971), PBS, United States, 16 mm, program documenting the life of an English family, 12 episodes of 60 min.
- The Family*, 1974, produced by Paul Watson, BBC, United States, 12 episodes of 30 min.
- The Shock of the New*, 1980, created and presented by Robert Hughes, BBC, United Kingdom, program on modern art, 8 episodes of 60 min.
- Dynasty*, 1981–1989, ABC, United States, TV series, 9 seasons, 220 episodes of 45 min.
- Mister Fantasy*, 1981–1984, created by Carlo Massarini, Paolo Giaccio, and Stefano Pistolini, hosted by Carlo Massarini, Rai 1, Italy, program dedicated to music videos, number of episodes unknown, 50 min.
- Launch of MTV, August 1, 1981, MTV, United States.
- Artbreaks*, 1985, MTV, United States, series of commercials made by artists.
- Cops*, 1989–ongoing, Fox Broadcasting Company, United States, TV programs halfway between documentary and reality TV, number of episodes unknown, 30 min.
- Bagdad under bombings, 1990, CNN, United States/International.
- Twin Peaks*, 1990–1991, ABC, United States, TV series, 48 episodes from 46 to 50 min.
- Beating of Rodney King, March 3, 1991, filmed by George Holliday.
- Melrose Place*, 1992–1999, Fox, United States, TV series, 7 seasons, 226 episodes of 45 min.
- Beavis and Butt-Head*, 1993–1997, animation series, MTV, United States, 200 episodes from 5 to 11 min.
- Takeshi no dare demo Picasso*, 1997–2009, TV Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan, talent show for artists, number of episodes and length unknown.
- Krisma TV*, 1998–2002, created by Krisma, Eutelsat Communications, Europe, TV channel dedicated to visual experiments made by Krisma, number of episodes and length unknown.
- Two airplanes crash on the towers of the World Trade Center, September 11, 2001, CNN, United States/International.
- Artstar*, 2005, filmed in the gallery Deitch Projects, New York, broadcast in 2006 by Gallery HD, United States, talent show for artists, 8 episodes, 46 min.
- Sky Arts, 2007–ongoing, TV channel dedicated to the arts, Europe.
- Mad Men*, 2007–2015, AMC, United States, TV series, 7 seasons, 92 episodes of 47 min.
- The School of Saatchi*, 2009, BBC, United Kingdom, talent show for artists, 4 episodes of 30 min.
- Work of Art: The Next Great Artist*, 2010–2011, Bravo TV, United States, 10 episodes of 40 min.
- Black Mirror*, 2011–ongoing, Netflix, United States, TV series of science-fiction, 22 episodes from 40 to 90 min.

Films

- Minnie the Moocher*, 1932, United States, produced by Fleischer Brothers, animation film, black and white, sound, 8 min.
- 42nd Street*, 1933, United States, directed by Busby Berkeley, 35 mm, black and white, sound, 89 min.

- Dumbo*, 1941, United States, produced by Walt Disney Productions, animation film, color, sound, 64 min.
- Singin' in the Rain*, 1952, United States, directed by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, color, sound, 103 min.
- Comizi d'Amore*, 1964, Italy, directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini, black and white, sound, 89 min.
- Yellow Submarine*, 1968, United Kingdom, directed by George Dunning, animation film, color, sound, 87 min.
- Poltergeist*, 1982, United States, written by Steven Spielberg, directed by Tobe Hopper, color, sound, 120 min.
- Videodrome*, 1983, United States, directed by David Cronenberg, color, sound, 89 min.
- They Live*, 1988, United States, directed by John Carpenter, color, sound, 94 min.
- The Truman Show*, 1998, United States, written by Andrew Niccol, directed by Peter Weir, color, sound, 103 min.

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