

SLAVKO KACUNKO: Writing Samples

1) Marcel Odenbach. Concept, Performance, Video. Installation from 1975 to 1998. Marcel Odenbach as a Modell of an artistic development associated with the medium video and his role and importance for the integration of the time-related artforms in the art-historical context(s) Munich/Mainz: Chorus-Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft 1999 _____ **p. 2**

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1) Marcel Odenbach. *Concept, Performance, Video.*

Installation from 1975 to 1998. Marcel Odenbach as a Modell of an artistic development associated with the medium video and his role and importance for the integration of the time-related artforms in the art-historical context(s) [Chorus-Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft, Munich and Mainz 1999]

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2) Marcel Odenbach. *Head Over Heels; in: Rewind to the future (Exhibition catalogue), Kunstverein, Bonn / NBK, Berlin*

Editor's Foreword

Slavko Kačunko's dissertation represents the first monograph on one German video artist. In view of the utter rarity of examinations of this kind, an aim has consisted in elucidating a series of fundamental standpoints. Among them was the attempt to make the methods of art history productive for the medium of video, without neglecting the aspect of media aesthetics. This was the only way that would enable the author to take a third route, between the traditional art-historical approach on the one hand and the approaches of media theorists on the other, and to set as an absolute precondition the analysis of the individual work.

To have documented in such cogent - and comprehensive - a manner the significance of the video artist Marcel Odenbach and what sets his oeuvre apart, is in itself a considerable feat.

But the insights so gained go beyond his oeuvre and lay the foundations for a future, sound art-historical practice in

dealing with video or media art in general. Therefore this book deserves recognition as a pioneering contribution to an art history of video art.

Excerpt from the press-release DRUPA 2000 - PM No. 27 / May 2000

„Art history pioneer achievement in the field of video art. The 36-year old Duesseldorfer gained the award for his dissertation on „Marcel Odenbach. Concept, Performance, Video. Installation from 1975 to 1998“ ... Dr. Kacunko's thesis has wider parameters than its title may perhaps suggest. It not only explores Marcel Odenbach's creative output but structures the framework of video art in Germany and sets it in the context of art history, from its advent in 1970s to the present day. Albrecht Bolza-Schünemann welcomed this choice of topic: „In essence, Dr. Kacunko tackles an issue that has riveted the printing and media industry for years: how to deal with new media and make the most of their creative and technological potential.“ By examining Marcel Odenbach's works, Dr. Kacunko illustrates the vast creative sweep of video art, considering its cognitive, technical and aesthetic aspects.“

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**Marcel Odenbach. Head Over Heels; in: Rewind to the future
(Exhibition catalogue), Kunstverein, Bonn / NBK, Berlin**

The pictures in this video installation, which are characteristically smudged, overlaid and fragmentary, are a witness of the interpenetrating and an incessant transition between the „intimate“ and „general“ in Odenbach's art. Although his film collages should not be interpreted as mere insights of an uninvolved „chronicler“, the artist's encyclopédisme (R. Bellour) remains the strongest artistic effect in the context of his continued topicalization of one or more perspectives that are active in them.

Since he began working as an artist, the topic of (neo-)colonialism, racism and „otherness“ has for Marcel Odenbach represented an aspect of the more comprehensive problem of one's own identity and the identity of events in general.

The decisive impulses from Africa and from his own „ethnological“ interests during his studies of art history, architecture and semiotics became a continuous process of analysis in the second half of the 70s.

His strong interest in „otherness“ needs to be understood in the context of Odenbach's early and intensive examination of his own position as an outsider (a position which artist and/or homosexuals are „accorded“ in society). His friendship with Mike Sale, the British artist of Jamaican origin, allowed Odenbach to gain closed insights into circles which he previously had no access to and this was, along with the existential experience of German reunification and its consequences, an additional, topical impulse for his cycle of work in the early 90s.

The series which was created between 1989 and 1992, including the video installation „Head over Heels“ („Of Division and Reunion II“) was continued in Odenbach's „Fire Trilogy“

(1993-94), centering on the events in Rostock in 1992.

Transposing the things that are represented onto an ever more global and „incomprehensible“ level further went hand in hand with the artist's viewpoint, which only superficially seemed to be getting ever more subjective.

The video installation „Head over Heels“ consists of two videotapes, which are shown on two monitors, and the accompanying Brecht paraphrase, which is fixed to the wall. It's topic is the problematic relationship between different „races“, in particular between Blacks and Whites, which has in the 90s become more focal to Odenbach's artistic work than it has been in the past. The usually unreflected relationship towards foreign cultures and the fact that the relevant clichés are adopted and adapted can be seen in the example of Carnival in Cape Town and Cologne: the differences and what is „typical“ is underlined without granting the „transitional periods“ the least bit of space; the traditions and the economic conditions are reflected in the different ways in which Carnival is celebrated. The opportunity of being able to step into someone else's shoes once a year makes both sides seem ridiculous in their own way: on the one hand the fake spontaneity (Cologne), and on the other the happy-sad parody of „White“ stiffness that is presented as a tourist attraction (Cape Town). Skin colour, as a symbol of one's origin, serves as a background for the pictures and (perhaps remembered) visual moments.

Odenbach does not allow the two sides to coalesce: the distance separating the two monitors in the room reflects reality. The interpenetrating of the pictures of the respective „representatives“ and their own cultural surroundings (superimposition) shows the setting Brecht's mocking-sarcastic question („Wouldn't it be less complicated, if preachers would release the people/nation, and choose another one?") speaks directly to the addressee - politics which is „inspired“ by

prejudices and traditions.

Dieter Kiessling. *Closed Circuit Video 1982 - 2000*
(Nuremberg [Verlag für Moderne Kunst], 2001)

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1.2. Cumulative nature of time and its (ir)reversibility

A.N. Whitehead's interpretation of 'time', that definitive medium for apprehending and describing all conceivable processes by their cumulative and irreversible nature, furnishes the introductory subject of the book and is also something of an introduction and parallel to Dieter Kiessling's analogous explorations in his closed-circuit video installations. (...)

The phenomenon of the feedback loops demonstrates vividly the non-repeatability of forms, of their characteristic features and times, and it is there that a parallel to Whitehead's philosophy of process can be legitimately drawn. Its development becomes manifest in context with the concept of time in the philosopher's *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge* of 1919, and especially so in his critique of instantaneity. Once central thesis is the assumption that perception requires duration. Every perception reveals a continuity of existence, of experience - the precondition for understanding matter as something enduring, i.e. that an object will subsist within the space-time position of a system of references and can be consistently perceived. Since time lends the process of 'synthetic realisation' a direction, it does in a certain sense 'transcend the time-space continuum of nature'.

Apart from the irreversibility of time, Whitehead also stresses its non-linearity. It is the prior condition for the concept of duration. Even if time is not to be considered as a single linear sequence, it is still assumed 'that the temporal process of realisation can be dissected into a group of linear, serial processes. Each of these linear series is a time-space system' (*Science and the Modern World*, 1925). A moment in time can be seen as such a time-space-system in which a pattern becomes established.

Out of the repetition of patterns in successive events, time emerges. Every moment in time reveals the pattern that results in its complete form from the succession of moments in time.

(...)

Whitehead's critique of instantaneity (closed circuit technique still being generally known under the term of 'Instant Feedback' at the time) and his inferences of process philosophy, can, at least as an implication, be sensed in Dieter Kiessling's closed-circuit video installations. Some of the features there can be generalised with certainty and observed similarly in non-artistic feedback phenomena. The twenty pieces by this German artist as described above and completed over the past nineteen years, testify to his consistent and successful further development of his investigations begun in America, with the most filigree structures the medium can offer and his reciprocal rapport with the experience of time and aesthetic perception.

The critique of the instantaneity of time is by no means far removed from the critique discussed above, of the usual understanding of 'real time'. One of the consequences of these adjacent theoretical approaches has to be a critical evaluation of current theoretical trends that perceive in computerised 'real time'-processing programmes such as 'morphing', a substantially new and revolutionary development, and which would make a sharp distinction between this digital and other, 'analog' options.

(...)

The viewer is continually challenged to discover principles of order - in time, topology, technology and other spheres - thus confirming the artistic intention of reassessing not only these but also the relation between work and beholder; of providing that viewer with active access to the medium and retrospectively to his/her own 'mechanisms' including the personal constructs of reality.

Luhmann's operative systems theory thus co-incides with the 'structuralism' of Kiessling's closed-circuit video installations with their foundations of 'self-reference'. They seek to demonstrate to us viewers the 'idiosyncratic world of the world of apparatus' ('Eigenwelt der Apparate-Welt' - the motto at the 'Ars Electronica' show in 1992) - without losing sight of the circumstances that allow them to come to be in the first place. (...)

A longer quotation from Volker Riegas may serve as a parting shot, or rather, an 'operative-optimistic' insight.-

"No reason at all to favour the homeostasis model at the outset as opposed to the input/output model... As states //statuses appear as both arguments and values of the function, autoregulative constructions, for example (feedback loops etc.) can be modelled in this in such terms with great ease." (...)

What Kiessling calls the 'latently existing kinds of state' are evidently intrinsic to both of these worlds.

TAKAHIKO IIMURA: CLOSED CIRCUIT VIDEO 1972 - 2002

[Translated from the German by Caspar Stracke and Alena Williams]

In 1970, Roland Barthes declared Japan as a model for a kind of system liberated from any (Western) signification-overload, at an important moment in time when art in the West as well as in the East began forming an alliance with technology. Although, or especially because, the "author" and the "subject" were already dead or in the midst of dying, the art of that era happily began to receive new and vital impulses of a technological and intercultural nature. The emergence of the new video medium became symptomatically representative and jointly responsible for the changes that occurred. Its inherent function as an "electronic mirror" unfolded, not least of all through its direct cultural use: it remains a symbol in the West because it is still regarded as subject-loaded and therefore exposed to the reproach of narcissism, whereas the East regards it as a signifier for the emptiness of symbols-"The spirit of the absolute man is like a mirror," says Barthes quoting a Taoist master, "He does not hold onto anything but does not reject anything. He consumes, but does not hold."¹

The ability to receive and to give back at the same time, without absorption and without distortion, a Haiku ideal of exposition without comment, and the refusal of any interpretation, can be seen as the paradigm of zen. The negation of the difference between "interior" (uchi) and "exterior" (soto), and the overcoming of difference "as such" in the proximity/non-mediation of the "simple" present (presence), also becomes highly enjoyable: According to the interpretation of the

Buddhist Mikkyo school, the present, the "now," is described as the "ultimate pleasure."²

Even if the artistic work of Takahiko Iimura (1937) can be seen as adhering to the characteristically "Japanese way of art" it definitively cannot be reduced to such, neither can it be explained away by it: this becomes clear at the first glance at Iimura's artistic career. This artist, born in Tokyo and a member of the New York Underground scene in the 1960s, began his career as an experimental filmmaker. Iimura also received early acknowledgement in Europe for his films *Ai (Love)* (1962, with music by Yoko Ono) and *Onan* (1964). His connection to Fluxus and especially to the European structuralist film movement lead Iimura to undertake intensive artistic research in the processes foundational to meaning construction, as demonstrated in his work on the problem of identity (subject-object relationship), and often recorded by the semiotic and linguistic apparatus. In this regard, his investigations, which lead to the realization of an unsolvable connection between concept and experience, most clearly expresses itself practically and explicitly in terms of a space-time interpretation of the varying levels of "production" and "reception." These investigations were realized formally in the Japanese artist's film and closed circuit video installations and performances after 1968.

¹ Roland Barthes, *L'Empire Des Signes*, d'art Albert Skira S.A., 1970. p. 109.

² Kou Nakajima, *Video from Tokyo to Fukui and Kyoto*, Ed. Barbara London, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1986.

Iimura:

"The English words movie, motion picture, cinema, all stress movement; but if we go to Japanese, the word for motion picture is "eiga" which literally means "reflected picture" - emphasis is on the state of reflection rather than on the motion. Also the Chinese for cinema literally means "electric shadow picture" [...] I suppose this idea comes from the shadow theatre [...] So I am also doing a shadow picture presentation - myself sitting in front of the projector. This idea also comes from my desire to be the audience and performer at the same time, so I can look at what I am doing [...] So in this way I can present the structure of picture-viewing and use myself as an object as well as the subject [...] So I'm sitting, as you are and facing the screen, and in myself I have my own audience, and this is particularly suited for the video structure, for video has this simultaneous response [...] When I compare film and video, I see video as more like the nervous system than the muscles of the body, for you can always inter-act and feedback between yourself and the object which you are showing or taping."³

The available catalogue of his work focuses exclusively on Iimura's closed circuit video installations, which still play an critical role in his oeuvre. His first closed circuit video installation consisted of a feedback-producing arrangement of a video camera and a juxtaposed monitor. The participant (viewer) sits on a chair in front of a monitor with his back to the camera and is given the task of signing a piece of paper, while saying his or her name out loud.

³ Takahiko iimura, *From <Time> to <See You>*, Instituto Giapponese Cultura, Rome, 1997 [Cantrill Film Notes, No. 45/46, Melbourne, 1984], pp. 52, 53 [31, 32].

The title of the work consists of the noteworthy statement: *Register Yourself: Unless You Register You Are No Person* (1972), which exemplifies an ambivalent, almost polyfocal, semantic efficiency-exceeding the one-dimensional causal critique of the rules governing the (media) game.

Iimura combines a comparable ambivalence between the exposure of the participant to media and the rejection of perception simultaneously granted to him with the request, "*Project Yourself*," in a closed circuit video installation⁴ of the same name from 1973: The person sitting on the chair is asked to talk or perform something for one minute. Other visitors are able to look at the person and the live transmission simultaneously; however, the "performing" person cannot see him or herself. As in the installation described above, the transmission can be recorded and played back at some point in the future. The problem of "self-projection"/"world introjection" and the associated sketching out of identity are explored in an interesting fashion by Iimura, particularly in regards to his conclusion that not only the actions, but also the language of an individual especially, have a significant function in the shaping of identity, although language (and therefore, culture as well) are understood as idiomatic structures.⁵

In 1975-1976, Iimura attempted to analyze the visual and oral "elementary particles" in meaning production in his video trilogy, *Camera, Monitor, Frame* (1976), *Observer/Observed* (1975) and *Observer/Observed/Observer* (1976). The goal of the project was to create a "semiotics of video" that consciously supported the work of film semioticians like Christian Metz and film theorists and directors like Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov, while at the same time being dissociated from it.

"Video is still a young medium and has not yet received such analysis [...] While Metz's approach to semiology is concerned with (dramatic) film, I deal with video, which has certain elements in common with film, yet has its own unique system. I am particularly interested in the structure of video functioning as a system. My work [...] should be considered within the context of the image being manipulated through the entire system. In this way the structure of video as a closed circuit can then be comprehended".⁶

This analysis was anticipated by the formal precision of closed circuit video installations like *Face/Ing* (formerly: *Back to Back*) and *Front and Back* (both 1974), among others. In *Front and Back* Iimura juxtaposes a mirror with closed circuit video: A video camera on a tripod records the visitor, as he or she stands in front of it. This live image is visible on a monitor on the opposite wall. As a result, it also creates a feedback image on the monitor. Next to the monitor, an upright mirror of human scale is installed, whereby the viewer can watch him or herself in the monitor from the front and from the back at the same time. When the viewer approaches the mirror his or her reflection increases in size, while the image on the video monitor simultaneously decreases in size.

Although this work is similar to the first closed circuit video installation by Bruce Nauman, *Video Corridor for San Francisco* from 1969, it seems important to consider the

⁴ First shown: Akademie der Kunst, Berlin, 1973. Also shown in the Kölnischen Kunstverein, 1974.

⁵ Takahiko Iimura, *takahiko iimura at the Lux*, London Filmmakers Co-op, London, 1998, pp. 12 - 13.

⁶ *ibid.* p. 26.

total context of Iimura's investigation of the structural relations between language and video. Iimura, according to his own account, always approached it from the English, although he always had the Japanese in mind:

"Video is an unique system in terms of applying these studies of comparative linguistics, because you can record image and sound simultaneously. In a closed circuit system (referential) a camera (observer) is connected to a monitor (the observed) [...] this forms a structure similar to a sentence. Also in language I am not interested in a word as an object but in a sentence and its structure".⁷

With his conceptual approach, Iimura claimed a special position within the first generation of Japanese artists working with electronic media. Especially when considered in relation to the "Gutai" group's ideals of spontaneity, Iimura's art appears to be surprisingly "Western." This is ultimately because his art does not conform to the deterministic Western clichés of Japanese artistic knowledge.

As in the rest of the world, the continuous presence in exhibitions of media art was not yet established in Japan in the years between 1977 and 1989. In regard to the number and the notoriety of undertaken closed circuit video installations, it was more a time of stagnation. However, the "breakthrough" happened in the background instead-in the form of culminating theories and new insights into electronic media, which together with the commercial introduction and availability of digital computer systems, networks, and interfaces, gradually made a broader audience, as well as a broader art audience, aware. At the end of this period, the first worldwide exhibition of

"interactive art," *Wonderland of Science - Invitation to Interactive Art*, opened in Kanagawa, Japan (1989). It was an event which heralded the international institutional acceptance of this art form and was followed by an artistic hyper-production of proportions that - up until that time - had not been known. The combination of digital computer technology and visual interfaces (closed circuit video cameras) resulted in a global "Renaissance" of closed circuit video installations in the 1990s.

In the meantime, Takahiko Iimura continued his "semiotics of video" and produced some of his most impressive and elegant works: *Face to Face* (1977) consisted of two closed circuit video cameras on tripods and two monitors, each pair juxtaposed with the other.

⁷ "It is my view that it is not the visuality of the characters but the structure of Japanese which differentiates it from Chinese and makes it an unique communication system. We say in Japanese "I You see" (Watakushi wa ANATA o miru) so far the order of the words is concerned; in English we say "I see YOU." The difference in the position of the object indicates the priority in communication: in Japanese, the object "you"; in English, the verb "see." In Japanese the subject is linked to the object directly, whereas in English it is necessary to have a predicate in advance of the object. If we take the subject as "I," as in the above sentence, it is in English the ego must be set up at a distance from the object. This is in opposition to Japanese, where the syntagmatic contiguity of subject and object (unmediated as it were by the predicate) makes for the assumption of a pre-established ego. In English it is the subject that is most strongly emphasized; this is not so in Japanese."

- Takahiko Iimura, "The Visuality in The Structure of Japanese Language," *Takahiko Iimura Film and Video*,

Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1990 [*Art and Cinema*, New York, December, 1978], p. 40 [16].

Comparable forms or expression can be found in other Indoeuropean languages, i.e. in French (je te voi) in Croatian, Serbian (ja te vidim) etc.

Camera 1 recorded Camera 2 and vice versa, displaying the live image on the opposite monitor, so that each particular camera and its image on the monitor were situated beside one another. Likewise in the closed circuit video installation, *Topological Space* (1979), two video cameras and monitors were juxtaposed, similar to the set up of *Face to Face* (1977) with the only difference being that the camera which recorded the monitor facing it was connected to it by a cable. This resulted in the creation of feedback images on both screens. Next to this ensemble, a comparable face-to-face situation was installed with two 16mm film projectors. Projector 1 projected an endless film loop onto its opposing wall, casting its beam upon Projector 2, which was placed on a pedestal in front of the wall; by virtue of this arrangement, a white picture with a black right angle at the center of the lower portion of the frame (as well as the moving film strip, hanging down from above) was created. Projector 2 was not projecting film at all, but was instead projecting pure light on its corresponding wall, thereby casting exactly the same shadow as Projector 1.

However, the popularity of these two "classic" examples of Iimura's "Tautological Iconoclasm" in the art world was exceeded by *I=You=He/She* (1979), and by *This is a Camera Which Shoots This* (1980) in particular. In the latter work, two video cameras on tripods and two monitors on pedestals stand opposite one another at eye level. It is similar to the situation also called for in *Face to Face* (1977) with the same cable connection. Camera 1 records Camera 2 and displays its live image on the opposite monitor, so that each camera and monitor and its corresponding live image are standing next to each other. Upon the adjacent wall in between the camera-monitor pairs is affixed the following inscription:

**THIS IS A CAMERA WHICH SHOOTS THIS
IS A CAMERA WHICH SHOOTS THIS**

This statement is meant to be equivalent to the "endless video sentence" that is created by the mutual recording of both cameras. In this virtual feedback process, the existing subject-object relationship "prescribed" by elementary logic becomes relativized. In Iimura's words, "an endless structure as the object 'this' turns into the subject of the next sentence."⁸

A similar situation with two closed circuit video cameras standing opposite one another was employed yet again in probably the most well-known closed circuit video installations of Takahiko Iimura, *As I See You You See Me* (1990): Before the viewer is permitted to explore the installation, a 20 minute-long performance is enacted: the artist moves in-between the cameras and monitors, uttering the words "I" and "You" in English, Japanese, and the appropriate language of the particular guest country. After ten minutes the performance concludes with a verbal interpretation of the artist/performer on the videotape, which plays back the first half of the performance that has just been recorded. Peter D'Agostino saw in both of Iimura's above mentioned works a confrontation between the topics of language and semiotics, as well as of the theory and practice of transmission and reception:

"That is, they break down the fundamental aspects of communication, of sending and receiving - precisely, concisely, and incisively - to the point of tedium, boredom and revelation".⁹

On the one hand, the semantic meaning of verbal and visual statements have become neutralized to the point of boredom, while on the other hand, they must be understood - and this should be seen as their purpose - in terms of their diachronic potential for expansion, in that their endpoint is at the same time the starting point of an imaginary and experiential cybernetic/natural Moebius strip. Iimura compares the dialectics of images and language, live video image and the viewer, as well as the "subject" and the "object" to the complex Yin/Yang principle, which is perhaps the most concentrated expression of the "tautological" in the Japanese artist's work. This principle reveals itself most clearly in the "dialogical" works like *Self Introduction* or *Video Talking: Back To Back* (both 1982), yet the most "pointless" of them, *This is a Camera Which Shoots This* (1980), reflects, in an unsurpassed way, Iimura's cultivated transnational "postmodernity" at the same time that they radiate the traditional Japanese aesthetic concepts of wabi (= simplicity, silence) and sabi (= unobtrusive elegance).

To conclude this short outline of Iimura's oeuvre of closed circuit video works, we should mention Daniel Charles's sophisticated comparison of Iimura's and Paik's artistic practices.

"In short, with all his virtuosity, Paik has situated himself in the undecided... He places himself between tradition and modernity, but his art remains epidemic. In this sense, one could place him in opposition to an artist like the film and

⁸ Iimura 1997 [1990], p. 68 [68]; German Translation: DAAD, Berlin, from *Takahiko Iimura Film and Video*, Anthology Film Archives, New York.

⁹ D'Agostino 2001 [1993], p. 46 [14].

video maker Takahiko Iimura, whose work - imprinted with what Paik himself defines as "Japanese perfectionism" - makes use of postmodern ambiguity in that he chooses not only to live it, but to make of it a theory, and this in his works [...] One could say in this sense that Kegon Buddhism's logic, long ago apprenticed to John Cage by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, grows in depth - a depth not reached by Nam June Paik's TV-Buddha - in Iimura's art."¹⁰

Apart from this judgment (which ought not to speak compellingly for Iimura within a non-dualistic value system, not concerned with depth), the distinction remains to be pointed out, which places Iimura's "gradualist non-dualism" and Paik's "paradoxical 'subitism'"¹¹ in a relation which makes it possible for us to avoid the adjective "tautological," as it appears less differentiated, and in certain cases, often not appropriate.

Just as in the rest of the world, and in particular, as in Europe, also in Japan in the 1990s, a revival of the artistic preoccupation with the complex topic of the "subject-object" relationship is notable in the context of media art. "Narcissistic" video experiments already known from the 1960s and in particular from the 1970s, which utilize media self-reflexivity, have returned in manifold variations with the beginning of the 1990s. Usually they possess an important "structural" difference: Most closed circuit installations were computer aided, and take advantage of the extended possibilities for the precise manipulation visual imagery. Instead of the effects generator, the video mixer and the analog/digital synthesizer, which stood between the input and output device, are computer hardware and software. Thus, artistic definition and practices have been extended in many cases by components of

programming.

In a culture, which has not been shaped historically by the Cartesian separation of body and mind of Western society, the treatment of the "subject" - "object" relationship also in regard to media art may not be taken for granted. However, this complex problem has been a tradition in the work of Japanese filmmakers and media artists for decades, constantly recurring as a topic of interest, and makes reference to cultural distinctions, and also to the possibility of transgression. The subtle works of film and closed circuit video installations of Takahiko Iimura - an artist who, with his "semiotics of video" took another practical and theoretical approach towards the intersection of Japan with the West - takes a special position in this context. Also in the 1990s, Iimura consistently and successfully carried out further investigations, incorporating media-specificity in his use of digital storage media such as CD-ROM and DVD.¹²

¹⁰ Daniel Charles, "Narcissism and Post Modernity (Notes on Takahiko Iimura)", translated by Eleanor Mitch, *Reviews of Takahiko iimura*, Tokyo, 2001, ["Narcissisme et postmodernite (Notes sur Takahiko Iimura)," takahiko iimura "Seeing," Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999], p. 53 [12].

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 55 [16].

¹² See CD-ROM, *Observer/Observed and Other Works of Video Semiology*, Takahiko Iimura Media Art Institute, Tokyo, 1999, and DVD, *Seeing/Hearing/Speaking*, Takahiko Iimura Media Art Institute, Tokyo, 2002.

,Campus` Closed Circuit', in exhibition catalogue Peter Campus. Analog + Digital Video + Photo 1970-2003, Kunsthalle Bremen, Bremen 2003, pp. 84-93

In order to arrive at an impartial view of media art that derives its pertinence from the spheres of both media theory and art history, it is essential to overcome the emphatic opposition between what is 'specific to media' and what 'has become historical'.

A future history of media art will have to counter 'post-historical' apocalyptic paranoia and fantasies of abolition with a thesis of continuity which does not construct 'pre-established harmonies' in reverse gear, but develops tools for the registration and reproduction of both the new and the old. The necessity for a fresh apprehension of history develops not least from the need for permanent debate with new technologies.

Within art history, the directness of aesthetic experience - although tried and tested 'archaeologically' - is liable to pass over the historicity of art. The revelation of the 'innocent eye'¹, a myth of the modern age, involves the risk of a radical shift in the focus of research towards the historicity of art institutions - which is an important component of, but ultimately not a replacement for the analysis of works.

The supposed opposites of 'involvement' and 'reflection' in practice, and of data acquisition and processing in theory are reflected in prevalent art-historical practices located between an hermeneutic context aversion and a semiotic context euphoria.

As we all know, the writing of history - like 'directness' - is a construct. A discourse about the 'directness' of media from an art-historical perspective may illuminate the conflux of technical and human viewpoints and weigh up the

opportunities and the dangers brought about by their convergence, even their mutual penetration.

The attempts made during the early period of video art to differentiate it from other media of technical reproduction were based largely on the assumption that the specifics of video art coincided exactly with the technical specifics of the video medium. Similarly motivated attempts to found a special aesthetics of video aimed at the serious recognition of 'video art' were thus clearly restricted from the outset. The possibility of feedback existing in video technology can be viewed, with certain reservations, as the specific quality, permitting the simultaneous recording and showing of images, sounds and movements. Peter Campus' closed-circuit video installations based on this principle offer a suitable experimental field for corresponding theses and historical conclusions.

'Closed-circuit' describes a live transmission of audio visual signals resembling the method facilitated by radio and television: the direct 'closed-circuit' connection between apparatus for recording and broadcasting (loudspeaker or monitor/projector) arises by means of auditory or visual feedback, which is, in turn, the basis for an amplification of the signal. In this way, live broadcasts and their manipulation are made possible, even between distant locations. For the recipient, the direct presence of his own live video image and the relevant 'medium of reflection' is the most remarkable and at the same time the most disconcerting feature of the basic technology.

Closed-circuit video installations, initially due to their temporal and spatial effect, were a stimulating field of artistic activity from the beginning of the 1970s. The primary focus was on their temporal directness and their site-specific, 'telecommunicative' character.

As a consequence, closed-circuit video installations, performances and all other 'unstable' art forms questioned the

status of the traditional 'image', which - as a result of new technologies such as video and holography - had been 'set in motion' not only metaphorically and psychologically, but also physically and with respect to media. Parallel to the efforts of video collectives and other group movements, at the beginning of the seventies there was a continuation of the experiments made by individual artists such as Paik, Nauman, Kaprow, Levine, Sonnier and artists in the E.A.T. circle. Fluxus, happenings, performance, Concept Art, new music and experimental film were among the artistic origins leading to most of the closed-circuit video installations at that time.

Peter Campus was one of those artists who worked outside the group dynamics of the early video collectives. However, his closed-circuit video installations already had a powerful influence on his own and the younger generation of artists at the time of their making.

In 1974 Campus described video as the 'function of reality' and saw an 'extension of reality' as the medium's fundamental potential². His interest in spatially related work with video emerged, according to the artist, from - among other things - his study of the American Indians' temple architecture, in which there are special visitors' paths as 'instances of spatial experience'. The almost static electronic images conceived by Campus and completed by the viewer contributed to a breakdown in the culturally traditional mind-body dichotomy, which was manifest in the interplay between the viewer and his 'double'.³

Peter Campus' 'apprenticeship' as an artist took place relatively late. After having graduated in experimental psychology (1960), completed studies in film and worked for commercial television, Campus began his career as an artist at the age of thirty. The decisive contemporary artistic influence on Campus was Bruce Nauman, whose works he saw for the first time in an exhibition in the Castelli Gallery in uptown Manhattan during 1969.

Campus recognised a correspondence to his own reserved, precise repertoire of forms in the (post) minimalist, repeated movements of Nauman's studio performances. Nauman's video tape *Lypsinc*, according to Campus, made a stronger impression on him than the famous corridor installations.⁴

Only a few blocks away from the Castelli Gallery was the Bykert Gallery - now closed down - where Campus showed his closed-circuit video installations for the first time in individual exhibitions during 1972, 1973 and 1975. In his video tapes *Double Vision* and *Dynamic Field Series* (fig. xxx) from the year 1971, Campus already used the possibilities of superimposing images and virtual shifts of space which were also presented in his installations from this period. As well as the medium's technical features and the ensuing connotations of video feedback, during the early 1970s Campus primarily investigated the potential of the 'blue-box process'⁵. His video tape *Three Transitions* dating from 1973 (fig. xxx) is considered a classic example of the use of this technique.

However, Campus saw the decisive potential of the video medium in an extension of reality, which can come about by means of a direct transmission of the video signal:

"If we are to avoid the problem of creating a visual system that will reduce the capacity of the eye, it is necessary to disassociate the video camera from the eye and make it an extension of the room [...] instead of limiting the amount of visual information coming to the eye-brain by replacing the natural field of vision with an abstracted one, it is possible to include the video information in the viewer's field of vision, increasing the potential of the visual situation."⁶

The implications of the quintessence of a possible theory of 'augmented' or 'virtual reality' *avant la lettre* included in this were to determine Campus' artistic experiments between 1971 and 1976. During this period of almost six years, Campus

produced eighteen closed-circuit video installations whose simple, clear and precise arrangements made them into early examples of their genre and now classic works of video art.

The closed-circuit installation *Interface* (fig. xxx), first presented in the Bykert Gallery, New York in September 1972, is perhaps the 'most classic' of all.⁷ The use and arrangement of the apparatus, and the 'location' of the viewer and his life-size video and mirror images tally with such ease and clarity that it is impossible to conceive of the artist's intense preparation work using smaller models and his experiments with different semi-permeable materials. The viewer is confronted by three 'realities' of his self: first the material presence of his own body, secondly its reflection in a pane of glass and thirdly the closed-circuit video image of his body. In the project drawing for this work, the artist postulated the simultaneous coexistence of at least three spaces (fig. xxx).

However, these sections of reality exhibited beside and overlapping each other do not serve physical or mental 'immersion', but far more a 'corporeal thinking' and a simultaneous 'mental touching' of the extended segment of reality (pictorial space), whose levels do not however melt into one, but permanently interlock. The differences in colour between the glass reflection and the black and white video image also contribute to the balance of the installation.

In 1974, Peter Campus gave a retrospective show of his work to date in the Everson Museum in Syracuse, N.Y.. The exhibition included seven closed-circuit video installations.

Among the works conceived especially for this show was the installation named *Shadow Projection* from 1974 (fig. xxx). This was a work in which Peter Campus oriented his activity most obviously on one of his earlier examples, Bruce Nauman, and also - indirectly - on Marcel Duchamp. Campus summed up the 'form-content' of this installation with the following words: 'obscuring the image by lightening the object'⁸. In this

installation, the closed-circuit video camera and the strong reflector light are placed one behind the other on the same line. In this way, the person standing in front of them throws a shadow onto the projection surface in the middle of the room and is also the motif of the simultaneous live image projection. The 'filling of the shadow' by the live video image is decisively dependent on the position of the body between the input and output apparatus. The artist's interest in the balance between extremely divergent standpoints is evident in the corporeal experience of the individual viewer here. He/she is certainly able to take up different positions in space, but the visitor who enjoys experiment is always led back to his/her predestined place 'between input and output': the psychological and 'existential' implications are brought into play by the mutual exchangeability of the Cartesian categories of 'subject' and 'object'. Other postulates of the occidental cultural sphere are relativised in the same way.

Peter Campus succeeded in securing his outstanding position among video artists with his third individual exhibition at the Bykert Gallery in New York. The artist now reduced the extent of the live camera field to the visitor's upper body and thus further restricted his/her freedom of movement within the installation. By means of weak light, concentration on the essentials was heightened - the image of the viewer amidst the 'emptiness' and the 'nothingness' of darkness.

With its expressiveness, the format of the projected image in the installation *mem* (1974/75) underlined the 'low key' light conditions using optimally adjusted light sources (fig. xxx). As a result of the narrow, corridor-like field of view of the camera, which - like the projector - was mounted up against the wall in a sloping position, the projection surface converged slightly in the direction of the camera. If a person moved along (the camera's field of view) the invisible "corridor", he/she caused either the enlargement or reduction

in size of his/her own live image in congruence with the distortion of the projection surface.

In two individual exhibitions during the next year, at the Castelli Gallery in New York and the Hayden Gallery at the M.I.T. in Cambridge, Campus drew further consequences from his search - in itself not without contradictions - for the perfect video-graphic human image. The central focus was now on the face of the participating viewer, as demonstrated primarily by the works *cir*, *sev* and *bys*, in which the very bright projection surface had 'shrunk' to 120 cm and the 'live corridor' was very narrow indeed.

Campus achieved a high point with his last three closed-circuit video installations *aen*, *lus* and *num* (all 1976) by employing slight alterations to the picture format and its orientation: the projected video image, turned 90°, now had the rather 'unstable' vertical format and its content - the viewer's head - was made to 'stand on its head' by turning the camera 180°. The gigantic heads arrived at by using such simple mechanical means were then 'shaded' or given correspondingly brighter or darker backgrounds by precisely positioned infrared lights. A comparison of Peter Campus to a grisaille painter⁹ may - in face of the 'minimalist' means and resulting psychological effect - be extended to include a direct association with Paolo Uccello and his grisaille work.

The 'drama' of these latter, closed-circuit video installations is reflected once again in their 'internal contradiction': "The drama of these effects is countered by the fact that the pieces, more than any others, bring you to an absolute, almost regimented, standstill [...]"¹⁰

In a catalogue text dated 1974, Campus expressed his opinion concerning the general qualities of the video medium and of closed-circuit video installations in particular: "In a closed-circuit video situation one is no longer dealing with images of a temporary finite nature. The duration of the image becomes a property of the room."¹¹

This statement does not only reveal the interdependence of real body and virtual image which may continue for unlimited time, but also shows that Campus reduced the location of viewer participation to an extremely limited space. After 1976 Campus drew the only logical consequence from this spatial 'constriction' of the viewer and 'banned' him/her from the image entirely.

Campus realised several more video installations between 1976 and 1979, but these no longer included live images. In 1979 he abandoned his work with video, thus beginning eighteen years of abstinence that still applies to live video. Wulf Herzogenrath, who organised a Campus retrospective at the Kunstverein in Cologne during the same year, wrote in the exhibition catalogue then that "the clarity and precision of his works mean that they visualise possibilities for an artistic use of video in an exemplary way."¹² It should be added that what we see in Campus' work is a strategic limitation of the possibilities of interaction with the public, and this strategy is not inherent in video alone, any more than its potential for interaction. This insight may also be applied, without restriction, to other electronic media including the 'meta-medium', the computer.

The message to be drawn from this is simple, yet it is still frequently overlooked: it is true that technology provided the necessary preconditions for interactive media art - the conditions that make it possible - but technology in itself is not 'sufficient reason' (Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz) for its emergence.

With respect to the closed-circuit video installations by Peter Campus, it may be said in conclusion that their ultimate formal precision could only be achieved through a literal narrowing down of their 'space to move'. Under the preconditions of his own strict notions of form, the artist's efforts in his work with 'confrontational imagery'¹³ finally led - via the exclusion of any interactive potential - to the

logical abandonment of the artistic medium in question. Together with Les Levine, Dan Graham and Bill Viola, Peter Campus is one of the most prominent and influential artists in the USA who experimented intensively with closed-circuit video installations until 1976. All the artists mentioned abandoned this form of art work after that point in time.

Campus' art of relations - in which formal conditions (surface, size) and dimensions (place and time) are 'submerged' into simultaneity although they are exhibited statically and in isolation - should not only be interpreted in the spirit of 'experimental epistemology'¹⁴, but also as a *participating* commentary on that *condition humana* which is evident in the symbolic and physical nothingness, the darkness of his installations. Campus' own associations and interpretations¹⁵ point to the paradigmatic and the eschatological, even though a certain proximity (in the spirit of Nauman) to Duchamp's artistic strategy of 'the here and now' cannot be entirely ruled out.¹⁶

Robert Pincus-Witten saw Campus' outstanding achievement precisely in his early recognition of the "transmutability of the historical processes": "Recognizing that painting and sculpture were now actualizing their viability as species through their introduction of issues of temporality, Campus reversed priorities. He imposed a static vision of painting and sculpture, one might say a Formalist vision, upon issues of technology and temporality by which video art had previously identified itself".¹⁷

In face of this, approaches to Peter Campus' art describing it in connection with the 'video art' of the 1970s as 'Narcissistic' are too restrictive. Generalisations of this kind concerning closed-circuit video installations and performances have also been uncritically adopted by some current theories concerning (interactive) media art.¹⁸

Ultimately, a demarcation between the earlier installations and their digital pendants from the 1990s can

only be assured by means of an impermissible reduction of the former to their 'self-reflecting' character, but precisely the closed-circuit video installations themselves offer evidence of the impermissible nature of such reductionism. Both their wealth of form and their extremely wide spectrum of employment in present-day media art are indicative of this.¹⁹

However, in discussions on the genealogy of today's (interactive) media art, the dominant voices are those recognising the true significance of these early installations. Even Itsuo Sakane, a prominent champion of digital media art, acknowledged - in the catalogue of his first exhibition of 'Interactive Media Art' *Wonderland of Science Art - Invitation to Interactive Art* (Kanagawa, Japan, 1989) - the early closed-circuit video installations as the first generation of 'interactive' media art.

Even though 'interaction' does not belong to Campus' art theory any more than it does to that of Nauman, Bill Viola or Paik, it must be established that Campus has made an important artistic contribution to the history of closed-circuit video installations. This contribution may be compared, in relation to the history of closed-circuit video installations, with the part played by the latter in today's computer-aided media art: it is impossible to grasp the one without the other.

Campus' closed-circuit video installations have left a lasting impression and influenced his contemporaries such as Bill Viola, Douglas Davis, Noel Harding, Eric Cameron, Bart Robbett, James Byrne, Leticia Parente and also theoreticians and historians including Gerald O'Grady. With respect to Peter Campus' complete oeuvre, an investigation into the dynamics of artistic influences, examples, spheres of influence and art historical causalities remains one of the challenges for future media art history.

*Video meliora, probaque,
Deteriora sequor.*²⁰

Notes:

¹ Compare e.g. "The Innocent Eye" by Herbert Read (1932).

² In: Campus 1974, no.pag.

³ Compare Herzogenrath 1994 and Krauss 1976. Campus: "I'm getting to the point where I'm interested in eliminating movement, and there's just a transformation of energy...I think my installations...they eliminate the mind-body dichotomy, the Cartesian flaw, because you are thinking with your body in those pieces- well, not exactly; you are thinking with your mind/body. They don't make that separation..." (Peter Campus in: cat. exhib. 1992, p.86)

⁴ Campus, in an interview with the author, Patchogue October 2001.

⁵ Compare remarks by Anja Osswald in this catalogue (p...)

⁶ Campus, Peter, *Video as a function of reality*, in: Campus 1974, no.pag.

⁷ The curator was Klaus Kertess.

⁸ Syracuse-Catalogue 1974

⁹ Wulf Herzogenrath in: exhib. cat., Cologne 1979, p. 8

¹⁰ Smith 1977, p. 87.

¹¹ Peter Campus in: Campus 1974, no. pag.

¹² Wulf Herzogenrath in: exhib. cat., Cologne 1979, p. 8

¹³ Peter Campus in an interview with John Hanhardt, Campus 1999, p. 68: "[...] They continued that idea of confrontational imagery and it just became too much for me, I had to stop [...]."

¹⁴ Compare Ross, 1976, in: Battcock 1978, p. 161.

¹⁵ In his description of *sev* (see Campus 1976), Campus raises comparisons and associations that include Cézanne, Rothko, Reinhard, also Manet, Goya, Neolithic cave painting and Navaho sand painting. The references even extend to the fourth dynasty in Egypt and pre-Columbian art.

¹⁶ Compare e.g. his titles, which came about through auditory puns, such as *num*, lacking in feeling and *aen*:

associations with lust and easy. See exhib. cat. Cambridge, Mass. 1976

¹⁷ Pincus-Witten 1974, p. 12

¹⁸ Compare Krauss 1976, in: Battcock 1978, p. 63.

¹⁹ See the following publication in preparation: Slavko Kacunko: Closed-Circuit-Videoinstallationen: Zur Geschichte und Theorie der Medienkunst, ZKM Karlsruhe, planned in spring 2004 by Hatje Cantz

²⁰ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VII 20. ("I see the right, and I approve it too / Condemn the wrong - and yet the wrong pursue")

**Closed Circuit Video Installations. A Contribution to the
History and Theory of Media Art**

Keywords: Media Art, Media Art History, Media Theory,
Video, Installation, Components of an Artists-Encyclopedia
Language: German

- *Reviews (some Excerpts)*
- *Brief Description*
- *Outstanding Features*
- *Apparatus*
- *Table of contents: see the attached PDF- full version*
- *Sample chapter*

Review-Excerpts

'Closed Circuit Installations have been a major innovation in the evolution of art: The observer became visually and acoustically part of the system he observed. The inclusion of the viewer in the viewed image was a radical transformation of the image and was one of the revolutionary beginnings of participatory, interactive, immersive and virtual environments. This book that you hold in hand is the pivotal source book about this heroic period.' (**Prof. Dr. Peter Weibel, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Chairman**)

'[...] Slavko Kacunko has seen the gaping discrepancy between most authors' ambitions to erect a theoretical superstructure and their lack of familiarity with the material, and [...] has done a fundamental job, a service to the individual pieces which he refuses merely to harness as illustrations for a theory. [...] Kacunko has created a link between art theory and media theory, and so rendered a highly valuable benchmark - [...] with] to the best of my knowledge,

nothing to match it within the past few years.' (**Prof. Dr. Wulf Herzogenrath, Kunsthalle Bremen, Director**)

'Kacunko strives to develop a perspective out of the substance [of his subject] itself, a 'trans-disciplinary' perspective and method [...] an encyclopaedia has come about, lexical in approach, that in its striving for the highest historical accuracy and its clarity in citing its sources, most certainly sets standards. (**Dr. Christiane Fricke, Bonn, Art Historian and Journalist**)

'[...]to express my heartfelt thanks, but also to congratulate you thoroughly on a brilliant piece of work. With this 'opus magnum' you have without doubt set a milestone in the entire history of media art to date.' (**Prof. Richard Kriesche, Media-Artist, Professor, Curator and Author**)

'[...] the guide [...] will be standard reference for the coming decades, not just because of its scale.' (**Andrea Domesle, Critic, Camera Austria**)

Brief Description

The book focuses on one of the most important aspects of the history of the media art - "live"-Videoinstallations. Unlike the few attempts to date to present a survey of the diversity and notably the quantity of international media art, the book is the first to consider the global context in which the sphere of (interactive) media art is developing.

From the historical perspective, links between Europe and the USA, Australia and Asia, Eastern Europe, and South America are highlighted, with no sacrifice at all of 'depth of focus' on regional, national and individual achievements.

The book look in detail at the salient individual artistic approaches in the multifarious context of space and time, and it includes a description and record of 1100 works and 650 artists. This and the notes on further reading and viewing will enable deeper explorations of the material in a way not unlike the open "hyper-text"- structure.

In recent years, theoretical debate has diagnosed with some precision where the electronic video image stands between analogue and digital codes, or again, between media "representation" and "presentation"; but that position has hardly ever been subjected to examination against the pertinent examples.

An art-historical descriptive approach, i.e., comprehensible and well-founded individual examinations and thus the working out of the subjects' context, is apt to bridge that gap to the satisfaction of both research disciplines, that of art history and that of media sciences.

Extant media theory inferences regarding the medium of video as well as the latest digital art forms, can then be examined with the aid of such results and elucidated in historical terms.

Video technique makes it possible to simultaneously record and reproduce images, sound and sequences of motion; that potential can be seen as a specific characteristic of the medium. The *closed-circuit video installations* based on it represent the attest field of experiment for the assumptions on art and the theory and history of the medium that it might lead one make.

The prospect at least, of a gradual introduction of the electronic arts into the art history and media sciences syllabus will be brought a deal closer thanks to such individual and at the same time general investigations.

Outstanding Features

- The scope of the text and the number of the profound researched artists and their works
- The number of the documented works (over 13.000 digitalised images on DVD-ROM)
- The profound art- and mediatheoretical inview, that is usually not present in the (art-) historical books
- The historical precision, based on the first-source information: clear and profound descriptions of works, while avoiding the usage any kind of subjective "art of description" or polemical style & Co.
- Not a confrontative, but integrating philosophy and style, that should bring the "media-" and "art-" sciences to the dialogue by showing, how the both could make a considerable profite, when choosing a transdisciplinaire approach as in this book
- First historical overview of the situation in Japan and East Europe, viewed in the global context

Apparatus

The book includes glossary, bibliography, and references. The Catalogue-part with all the Installation-descriptions and documentation is put on DVD, which means, that the printed book will include no images, and as such it will still have a scope of 1182 pages.

2. Audience:

The prospect at least, of a gradual introduction of the electronic arts into the art history and media theory syllabus will be hopefully brought a deal closer thanks to such individual and at the same time general investigations. At the same, thanks to the DVD-data base with thousand of images, the publication will be also interesting for the students,

professionals, educators, but also for the lay public - there is a possibility to use the DVD-part as a Lexikon or Encyclopedia, using a non-linear search by artists, keywords etc.

For the artists presented here, to have previously (for the most part) widely scattered facts on their own and their fellows' work at their disposal as a relevant research data bank accessible by both linear and non-linear channels, should prove helpful not least in enabling them to compare their work on an international plane. It should make for a markedly better self-assessment and enable them to pursue a further enhanced and extended 'polylogue' with comparable artistic stances past and present.

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Sample chapter

I am quite sure that the translated pages given here are *not* the most representative for my book: there are a lot of quotations on English and no (or not much) theoretical overview, as well as no example of the approach to the individual artist and his/her work, to the socio-political, technological & other contexts etc. But at the same time, there is at least the definition of the problem, of "Closed Circuit Video Installation".

II. CLOSED-CIRCUIT VIDEO INSTALLATION:

A GEO-HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Towards a Definition: an overview

In what follows, the category definitions and points of departure for discussion, as proposed above in general terms, are expanded in an extension of the field of enquiry. Before I introduce the definition to be employed here for cc-video

installation, I outline several related academic standpoints, in which the relevance of this issue as seen from different perspectives is reflected.

In equating "closed-circuit", "*geschlossenenem Kreislauf*" (= "closed-circuit") and closed loop with the term "feedback", one risks giving the misleading impression, that the term applies only to those cc-video installations, which generate a fed back image:

"Closed-circuit or feedback - term for an installation, in which the result of its production is simultaneously its point of departure, for instance, a camera, whose video image is filmed by a monitor" (Schwarz 1997, p. 187 (Glossary))¹

and:

"[...] Closed-Circuit - feedback, "*geschlossener Kreislauf*". Usually understood today as the feeding back of visual signals, particularly in video installations; term employed for the process of recording a monitor image with a camera, which has just produced that monitor image. The first artistic closed-circuit video installation was produced in 1968 by Les Levine with his work, "Iris". (Donga 1998, p. 227)²

¹ "Geschlossener Kreislauf oder Rückkoppelung - Bezeichnung für eine Installation, in der das Ergebnis gleichzeitig Ausgangspunkt seiner Erzeugung ist, beispielsweise eine Kamera, die das von ihr erzeugte Videobild von einem Monitor abfilmt."

² "[...] Closed-Circuit - Rückkopplung, geschlossener Kreislauf. Heute meist für die Rückkopplung visueller Signale, insbesondere in Videoinstallationen, verwendeter Begriff für das Verfahren, ein Monitorbild mit der Kamera aufzunehmen, die eben jenes Monitorbild erzeugt. Die erste künstlerische Closed-Circuit-Videoinstallation realisierte Les Levine 1968 mit der Arbeit "Iris"."

In fact, video feedback is determined by the input-output relationship between input and output devices, which are the technical prerequisites for a live video image, and the constituent elements for a cc-video installation. It is insignificant whether a fed back *image* is thus produced or not.

Gene Youngblood dedicated a chapter of his book, "Expanded Cinema" (1970), to this theme, entitling it, "Closed-Circuit Television and Teledynamic Environments". Youngblood defined cc-video installation as a "teledynamic environment" and even termed it the "only pure television art":

"The self-feeding, self-imaging, and environmental surveillance capabilities of closed-circuit television provide for some artists a means of engaging the phenomenon of communication and perception in a truly empirical fashion similar to scientific experimentation.

This approach to the medium may in fact constitute the only pure television art, since the teleportation of encoded electronic-signal information is central to its aesthetics. The actual transmission of information across space/time is not an issue when video equipment is used only for aesthetic manipulation of graphic images as in synaesthetic videotapes and videographic film. I use the term teledynamic environment to indicate that the artist works directly with the dynamic of the movement of information within physical and temporal parameters. The physical environment is determined [...] by the characteristics of the closed-circuit video system. The artist is concerned not so much with what is being communicated as with how it's communicated and the awareness of this process. Thus television becomes the world's inherently objective art form." (Youngblood 1970, pp. 337/339).

Jud Yalkut has adopted Youngblood's definition of cc-video installation as "teledynamic" video space and has highlighted

"self-visibility", instantaneousness and a televisually deconstructive aesthetic as its most important characteristics and as being indicative of its artistic potential:

"Video, unlike its pre-packaged older brother, television, which is controlled by economic and political exigencies, is accessible to all. It can be related most directly to the human condition by means of its self-visibility. It offers opportunities as an alternate information source, free of particular external determining motives; and is able to convey in real-time an instantaneous simultaneity of events, which can merge man's inner and outer perceptions in a total Gestalt experience.

Artists, engaged in a revitalisation of television in its incarnation as the new video medium, have explored closed-circuit TV systems. They have modified and totally distorted the network's flood of clichéd iconography, and have turned towards portable video equipment, and the creation of environmental tele-dynamic video spaces." (Yalkut 1974, p. 3).

The concept of an artwork as an "environment", as was developed in the sixties, incorporated the idea of a viewer, who was supposed to "inhabit" the "work", instead of confronting it in a passive manner. It relates to the visual arrangement of space, as was the case, for instance, in the site-specific works of Robert Smithson. It can, however, equally imply acoustic "environments", as had already been developed by John Cage or Robert Rauschenberg (see Oxley 1994, p. 33). In 1973 in a critical evaluation of videotapes, Allan Kaprow described tapeless cc-video installation as the "only interesting video art":

"[...] But in contrast, the closed-circuit, environmental videographers are trying to make use of what in the medium is not like film or other art. Their most experimental feature,

it seems to me, is the emphasis upon situational processes, that than upon some act canned as a product for later review [...] In the last analysis, environmental (tapeless) video, the kind whose only product is the heightening of consciousness and the enlargement of useful experience, seems to me the only interesting video art. Yet, at this time, it is still a lavish form of kitsch. Like so much arttech of recent years, video environments resemble world's fair "futurama" displays with their familiar 19th century push-button optimism and didacticism. They are part fun house, part psychology lab [...]." (*sic*) (Kaprow 1974, p. 95).

In a résumé dating from the beginning of the nineties, Wulf Herzogenrath drew attention to the fact, that, since the seventies, cc-video installations had also become a dominant feature of everyday life, whether as a means of surveillance in banks and public places or in the electronics trade. The unity of time and space, and of reality and image contributed to the viewer's metamorphosis into a "*Doppelgänger*", and demonstrated,

"that this direct involvement of an individual viewer can lead, in the complex technology of mass communication, to an individualisation in these art works of a single person. The structure determined by the artist is only completed on the entry into the proceedings, and in the complicity, of the individual viewer. His own experience, existential questions about his own image, about the "true" reality of the image and of the shadow become the theme here." (Herzogenrath 1994, p. 11).³

³ "wie diese direkte Einbeziehung des einzelnen Betrachters die komplexe Technik der Massenkommunikation auch zur Individualisierung des Einzelnen in diesen Kunst-Werken führen kann. Erst der einzelne Betrachter vollendet durch sein Eintreten und Mitmachen die vom Künstler gesetzte Struktur. Das eigene Erlebnis, die existentielle Frage nach dem eigenen

In her description of the characteristics of cc-video installation, Edith Decker limited herself to thematically rather neutral, television-like real-time productions and compared them with "thematically variable" multi-monitor installations.¹ Nonetheless, there is consensus to date about the "primacy" of cc-video installation and performance as far as the artistic application of the video medium is concerned:

"The camera and monitor, as [...] employed in closed-circuit installation and performance, are considered to be the first (and thus emphatically the original) video-specific tools, [...] only in second place comes their narrative relationship to film or television." (Frieling 1999, p. 12)⁴

M. Rush also laid stress, in reference to early video practice, on the difference between the "immediacy" of cc-video installation and the application of pre-produced videotape:

"[...] For [...] early practitioners of video art [...] [it] was video's capacity for instantaneous transmission of image that [...] was most appealing, in addition to its relative affordability [...] the spontaneity and instantaneity of video were crucial. Video recorded and revealed instant time, whereas film had to be treated and processed. According to Graham, "Video feeds back indigenous data in the immediate,

Abbild, der "wahren" Wirklichkeit des Bildes und des Schattens wird hier thematisiert."

⁴ "Kamera und Monitor gelten als die ersten (und damit im emphatischen Sinne ursprünglichen) videospezifischen Arbeitsmittel, wie sie in den Closed-circuit-Installationen und Performances [...] eingesetzt wurden [...] erst in zweiter Linie dagegen die narrativen Bezüge zum Film oder Fernsehen."

present-time environment. Film is contemplative and "distanced"." (Rush 1999, pp. 83/84).

An emphasis on methods of video application appropriate to the medium in the sense of real-time transmission is also found in the writing of Wolf Kahlen:

"Only here in the face of the cult of the instant experience, which one wants to relate to us, does this process as such become clearer. This cult can only be justified, when we speak of video experience, which has been processed physically or mentally in closed circuit, and has been conveyed via that medium, the transmission of which has been reacted to by a participating individual. Thus a video performance or installation is appropriate to the medium only when it makes sensible use of the effects of perception. All other uses are just superimposed additions or recordings, unless they fulfil other narrative or formal functions [...]" (Kahlen 1980, p. 11).⁵

David Ross, the first head of a museum video department and curator of several important early video exhibitions in the USA, depicted the early appearance of "video art" as:

"the perfect manifestation of the myth of avant-garde artistic practice [...] de-materialized artmaking was an

⁵ "Nur hier, vor dem Kult des Instanterlebnisses, den man uns erzählen will, wird dieser Prozess als solcher deutlicher. Dieser Kult hat nur seine Berechtigung, wenn wir von Videoerfahrung sprechen, die im geschlossenen Kreis (closed circuit) von physisch oder mental handelnden, über das Medium vermittelten und auf diesen Transfer reagierenden Teilnehmern stattfindet. (Darum ist eine mediengerechte Videoperformance oder -Installation nur eine solche, die diese Wirkungen der Perzeption sinnvoll nutzt. Alle andere Nutzung bleibt aufgesetzte Zutat, Auf-Zeichnung, es sei denn, sie erfüllt andere narrative oder formale Funktionen [...])."

explicit challenge to the hegemony of the modern museum [...]” (Ross 1995, p. 433).

In reference to the antagonism between B. Nauman and N.J. Paik, Ross went on to describe the polarisation, which also characterised the early “video community” from the start:

“Those seeking an electronic palette for the creation of a glowing, digitalized painting technique were sadly mistaking the name of the thing for the thing itself, and were clearly blinded to the critically distinctive properties of the medium: immediacy, the ability to reconstruct the notion of a time-based audience, and the ability to faithfully create fully credible representations of real time.” (*ibid*, p. 437)

Cc-video installation proved to be a field of activity highly interesting for artists not only because of its capability of conveying time-related and space-occupying effects - which included, above all, instantaneousness and site-specificity.

In a text entitled “Video, Art of the Cultural Difference”, Juan Downey describes the impact of an experience of cc-video, which he witnessed among the Yanomami Indians, who live in a remote area of the Amazon, completely cut off from the rest of the world:

“Video, as process or as instrument, impresses the Yanomami no more than an outboard motor, a shotgun, or a flashlight. From the point of view of the Indians, television is simply yet another thing that the “strangers” make, as desirable as any other consumer goods [...] Closed-circuit or live television appeared to them no more surprising than a mirror, and the fact that the videotape requires no developing did not interest them, for the simple reason that they do not know about the cinema and its slow laboratory processing. The closed circuit and the freedom from processing, then, are

advantages not inherent in video but rather in comparison with cinema; a catalyzing process in our culture, but not in the Yanomami's [...]. (Downey 1980, p. 5).

Eugeni Bonet has provided a narrower definition of cc-video installation in reference to live signal transmission channels:

"The case of the closed circuit installation presents certain peculiarities which differentiate it from other types of installations/objects. Firstly, in the closed circuit as such, the process of video-recording does not necessarily intervene, and for this reason its inclusion in the specific category of video work is relatively problematical and contradictory [...] In addition, we must not forget the full form of the term: closed circuit TV. This means that the signal recorded by the camera is not emitted by the air, but remains "closed" in the cable which transports it to the terminal-screen [...] it is logical that the use of the closed circuit began with mirroring and visual control operations [...]." (Bonet 1980, p. 29).

Bonet also correctly portrayed the analogous time delay as one of the most important achievements of early cc-video installation.²

As far as the definition of cc-video installation presented here is concerned, it is not seen as definitive whether video signals and data are transmitted via cable or microwave emission, or, indeed, via other means of broadcasting. What is key is whether it is a question of "point-to-point" transmission, that is, and not merely of a one-way "broadcasting" to many transmission points or households from a central point (see above the excursus on "Broadcasting" in the section "Immediacy".)

This definition is based on "closed-circuit television's" original 1950's technical and institutional context dating. In the glossary of a book, which describes the history of the electronic camera of this period, the following definition is given:

"CLOSED CIRCUIT. A television program not broadcast but confined to the studio. May be recorded if need be." (Abramson 1974 (1955), p. 200)

By contrast Douglas Davis represented a standpoint, which distinguished itself in its comparatively critical attitude towards (technically more narrowly conceived) cc-video installations:

"Although [...] opportunities exist to broadcast, most artists [...] prefer to act only in terms of closed-circuit or installation space [...] The proper revolutionary function of a videotape is in broadcast, where it reacts [on] an audience in one instant many times larger [...] I ask for a closer correlation between personal ethics and public rhetoric, based on the simple fact that we can change the world only in the present tense." (Davis 1977, pp. 21/22).

The critical moment in the field of cc-video installations, around which theoretical discourse and artistic practice *in* and *about* the medium diverge, was analysed by Stuart Marshall as early as 1976:

"If the elementary artist/video equipment confrontation results in the medium acting as its own object, the most obvious re-deployment takes the form of the medium acting as a feedback system enabling the artist to become an object of his/her own consciousness [...] The artist's theory of video has therefore frequently developed into an examination of the

notions of consciousness and selfhood, an area readily associable with psychoanalytic theory. From the viewpoint of this theory, the work suffers from being at the same time the discourse of the medium and discourse about the medium. This is not necessarily to criticise the works as art works but rather as theoretical bases. The confusion of logical typing or meta-levels that this work displays gives rise to a neuroticism in the works as theory, in that the theory serves to disavow [...] aspects of the art works." (Marshall 1976, p. 243).

At the beginning of the nineties the concrete achievements and the developmental potential of cc-video installation were interpreted afresh with the aim of finding the common denominator it may have shared with the new media art:

"The sixties and seventies turned into the high school of artistic self-neutralisation. In unremitting flights of fantasy, the Fluxus, happening and closed-circuit movement developed fluid transitions between chance and art forms, artists and non-artists [...] in order to break out of the art-world cage by means of an interplay between iconoclasm and boundary dissolution. [...] If so-called interactive art and closed-circuit installation can be said to have a common denominator, then it is that they constantly question the other bodily senses in an ecstasy of the virtual and in televisual pixel storms. With varying aims in mind, a profusion of "interactive" artworks have dedicated themselves to the disjuncture between visual representation and the loss of the body. (Bredenkamp 1995, pp. 7/8).⁶

⁶ "Zur hohen Schule der künstlerischen Selbstaufhebung wurden dann die sechziger und siebziger Jahre. In unablässigen Phantasieschüben entwickelte die Fluxus-, Happening- und Closed Circuit-Bewegung fließende Übergänge zwischen Zufalls- und Kunstformen, Künstlern und Nichtkünstlern [...] um in einem Wechselspiel von Ikonoklasmus und Entgrenzung aus dem Käfig der

In the initial search for an interactive media art, as propounded by Söke Dinkla in the second half of the nineties, cc-video installation proved to be the stumbling block on the way to a strict division of new computer-aided artworks from their respective precedents. The hidden presence and structural meaning of cc-video cameras in computer-led installations - in other words, the survival of cc-video installation within "interactive media art" - had to be conceded, despite questionable classification:

"In what follows, a distinction is made within interactive art between two forms: installation and environment. Interactive environments take greater account of surrounding space than do interactive installations. Whilst in the latter, access is achieved to audio-visual occurrences via instruments, such as the joystick, the mouse, touch-sensitive monitors, etc., collaborators in environments are generally involved in a hidden manner via video cameras or sensors." (Dinkla 1997, p. 10).⁷

In this context a demarcation between earlier cc-video installation and its digital counterparts from the nineties

Kunstwelt auszubrechen [...] Wenn die sogenannte interaktive Kunst und die Closed Circuit-Installationen einen gemeinsamen Nenner haben, dann den, dass sie im Rausch des Virtuellen und der televisiven Pixelstürme erneut nach den übrigen Sinnen des Körpers fragen. Mit unterschiedlicher Zielsetzung haben sich in den letzten Jahren eine Fülle "interaktiver" Kunstwerke dem Zwiespalt zwischen visueller Repräsentation und Körperverschwendung gewidmet."

⁷ "Im folgenden wird innerhalb der Interaktiven Kunst zwischen zwei Formen unterschieden: den Installationen und den Environments. Interaktive Environments beziehen den umgebenden Raum stärker [mit ein] als interaktive Installationen. Während in letzteren der Zugang zum audiovisuellen Geschehen über Instrumente wie Joystick, Maus, berührungsempfindliche Monitore u.ä. erfolgt, werden die Rezipienten in den Environments meist versteckt über Videokameras oder Sensoren involviert."

could only be finally ensured by means of an inadmissible reduction of the former to its "self-reflective" variants:

"The cybernetic circle, in which the user involuntarily finds himself, permits reflection on his own role, going beyond the mere self-mirroring of closed-circuit installations of the seventies." (Dinkla 2001, p. 87).⁸

Despite this, computer-aided cc-video installations by M. Krueger , D. Rokeby and L. Herschmann are repeatedly invoked as key examples of "interactive media art".

The role and significance of cc-video installation in/for "interactive media art" is also occasionally highlighted:

"A further factor is decisive [...] in the development of interactive art: the principle of the visual closed-circuit installation, which was also introduced to the exhibition context [...] at the end of the sixties. [...] The technical constellation of closed-circuit structural organisation, in which the camera is trained on to the visitor, fulfils one of the most important aims in the striving for participation of Cage and Kaprow, which they themselves could never entirely achieve. Without any introduction, it allows the unprepared visitor to become a protagonist. The viewer is spectator and actor at one and the same time [...]." (Dinkla 1997, pp. 38/40).⁹

⁸ "Der kybernetische Zirkel, in dem sich der User unwillkürlich befindet, ermöglicht eine Reflexion der eigenen Rolle, die über die bloße Selbstbespiegelung der Closed-Circuit-Installationen der siebziger Jahre hinausgeht."

⁹ "Für die Entwicklung der Interaktiven Kunst ist [...] noch ein weiterer Faktor entscheidend: das Prinzip der visuellen Closed-Circuit-Installation, das Ende der sechziger Jahre [...] auch im Ausstellungskontext eingeführt wird [...] Die technische Konstellation der Closed Circuit-Anordnung, in der die Kamera auf die Besucher gerichtet ist, erfüllt eines der wichtigsten Ziele der Partizipationsbestrebungen Cages und Kaprows, das sie selbst nie vollständig erreichen konnten: Sie lässt

A. Hünnekens also wrote about the "principle of closed-circuit installation", which, interestingly, he discussed in the same breath as "database" work on videodisc. (see Hünnekens 1997, p. 22).

In discussions about the genealogy of today's (interactive) media art, however, the majority clearly emphasises the crucial role of cc-video installation. Heinrich Klotz states:

"Attached to the history of video art is the parallel history of technical invention, such as, for instance, closed-circuit installation, with which it became possible to incorporate the approaching viewer into the video image - at first with a slight delay, but before long in real time as well - such that the world of the art work could apparently be identified with the real space of the viewer. (Klotz 1997, p. 22).¹⁰

In the course of the eighties, a merging of the electronic "eye" and "brain" took place, as video and the computer increasingly began to demonstrate combined possibilities until then barely researched.³ The significance of cc-video technology for the construction of later VR immersion rooms meanwhile had not been forgotten:

den unvorbereiteten Besucher ohne Anleitung zum Handelnden werden. Der Rezipient ist zugleich Zuschauer und Akteur [...]."

¹⁰ "An die Geschichte der Videokunst knüpft sich parallel eine Geschichte technischer Erfindungen, wie z. B. die Closed Circuit Installation, mit der es möglich wurde, den herantretenden Betrachter - zunächst mit leichter Verzögerung, bald aber auch in Echtzeit - mit in das Videobild hineinzunehmen, also die Welt des Kunstwerks mit dem Realraum des Betrachters scheinhaft zu identifizieren. Damit war ein bedeutender Schritt getan hin zur Interaktion, die die Videowelt verändert hat."

"It is television that first raises the problem of constructing full-fledged parallel visible worlds and the linking them with our own [...] More completely interactive and immersive technologies are not different in kind - they are simply better informed about where you physically are in material space and, we might add, social space [...] Ongoing surveillance by machines is then a corollary of the feedback of data from interaction with machines [...]." (Morse 1998, pp. 6/7).

In this one can see an anticipation of later strategies aimed at examining those aspects of (re)-presentation which relate to cognition theory, such as those which are a feature of new developments in media art and result from the disintegration of artistic and media "genre boundaries". (see Hanhardt 1997, p. 15).

K.R. Huffman was even firmer in her according to cc-video technology the pioneering role in the history of today's interactive multi-media art:

"Video was a rejection of the frozen moments in time most familiar to artists [...] In the earliest actual practice, video was used in the same way as surveillance devices are today, it was employed to keep watch over and to observe reality [...] video's ability to document experience in real time. Towards these goals, many artists created sophisticated settings in which a prepared physical environment was integral to the understanding of the electronic space being created with video technology. This act - creating electronic territory and involving the viewer in it as a physical entity - is a direct predecessor to contemporary, interactive multimedia art, and immersive technology. Installation artists introduced strong concepts of both psychological and physiological territory, and advanced an awareness of extended boundaries, and an

electronic ability to define space, time, and energy."
(Huffman 1996, pp. 203/204).

Even a great champion of digital media art, Itsuo Sakane, in the catalogue to the first exhibition, organised by him, on "interactive media art", "Wonderland of Science Art - Invitation to Interactive Art" (Kanagawa, Japan 1989), deemed early cc-video installation to be the first generation of "interactive" media art:

"There are a number of reasons why interactive art is gaining popularity. There is, first of all, an essence of reconsideration on art itself in the background. This reconsideration is directed on the loss of simple and original interaction in art caused by authoritarianism. In line with this, we must not neglect the fact that, due to the rapid progress of electronics in the last 40 years or so, feedback from viewers can be easily blended into expressions of art. It has become possible to instantaneously feedback the response from the viewers to the works thanks to video cameras, sound and optical sensors (detecting devices), interfaces giving access to information, and mostly to computers which enable high-speed data processing. The use of information engineering terms, such as "feedback" and "cybernetics", in the first-generation interactive art emphasizes the inclination of the artists in those days towards new technology [...]" (*sic*)
(Sakane 1989, p. 4).

In her plea for an art of intense bodily experience, M. L. Angerer also makes reference to early cc-video installation:

"A review of the recent history of media art demonstrates, that especially in the field of video art [...] - even at the end of the 70s - a focus was placed on the body in space, the

body as space, the body and its ego lost in space." (Angerer 2001, p. 177)¹¹

and

" [...] I would suggest speaking about a new intensity in the experience of the body and beginning with the numerous examples in video and installation art, so that one can see the continuities and the new elements within this experience in the field of New Media Art." (*ibid.*, p. 182).¹²

In the example relating to screen development given in a genealogy of the "new media" by L. Manovich, it is particularly apparent that there had been no radical break with the past:

"In my genealogy, the computer screen represents an interactive type, a subtype of the real-time type, which is [a] subtype of the dynamic type, which is a subtype of the classical type." (Manovich 2001, p. 103).

The "real-time screen" should be seen in this context as the output-side of the cc-video system, whereby screen technology is explicitly introduced as a pre-requisite for VR, "telepresence" and "interactivity". (*ibid.*, p. 94). Above all, it is its manipulation of real time, which makes this technology so remarkable for Manovich:

¹¹ "Ein Blick zurück auf die jüngere Geschichte der Medienkunst zeigt, dass insbesondere im Bereich der Videokunst [...] bereits Ende der 70er Jahre - auf den Körper im Raum, den Körper als Raum, den Körper und damit sein Ich lost in space fokussiert wird."

¹² " [...] würde ich vorschlagen, von einer neuen Intensität der Körpererfahrung zu sprechen und mit den zahlreichen Beispielen aus der Video- und Installationskunst zu beginnen, um die Kontinuität und das Neue dieser Erfahrung im Bereich der NMK [Neue Medien Kunst] zu sehen."

"What is new about such a screen is that its image can change in real time, reflecting changes in the referent, whether the position of an object in space (radar), any alternation in visible reality (live video) or changing data in the computer's memory (computer screen). The image can be continually updated in real time. This is the third type of screen after classic and dynamic - the screen of real time [...]" (Manovich 2001, p. 99)

If it is rounded out with its input component - the cc-video camera - this genealogy indeed describes the achievement of visual interface technology as an indispensable element of many of today's computer-aided media installations.

The definitions and remarks quoted here with regard to the role and significance of cc-video installation should not be taken as an attempt at an historical reduction of media art to the field of "video art". Likewise, the following definition does not seek to create a lineage for today's digital media installations from cc-video installation.

Suggestion for a Definition

All media installations can be classified according to their referencing of space either in the category of "sculpture", or "architecture" or "environment". The key difference between them lies in their physical accessibility. Characteristic examples of the first category are represented by the numerous "video-sculptures" by the Korean artist, Nam June Paik, which he has created since 1974 under the title of "TV-Buddha": in principle none of them is physically accessible. A typical example of the second category is the architectonic environment "Live/Taped Video Corridor" (1970) by the American artist, Bruce Nauman, which is conceived around its accessibility. Media installations can also be assigned to one of two categories according to their

referencing of time. The first includes all of those installations, which use audio-visual material recorded earlier; the second includes "live" installations, as represented by both of the previously mentioned examples by Nauman and Paik. The subject of the present book is limited to closed-circuit video installation (cc-video installation). The term "closed-circuit" describes a live transmission of audio-visual signals, such as was originally permitted by the media of radio and television. A direct - "closed-circuit" - connection between recording and transmission equipment (microphone-loudspeaker or video camera-monitor) is achieved by means of audio or visual feedback, which in turn is the basis of an intensification of the signal. By these means live transmission and the manipulation of audio-visual signals even between varying places and moments in time are made possible.

The cybernetic terms "input" and "output" are best suited to the description of feedback and the closed-circuit relationship: they unequivocally characterise the recording device (microphone or video camera = "input") and the transmitting device (loudspeaker or television monitor or video projector = "output"). An audio or visual recording device can be allied to a suitable transmitting device, so that not only can a live image or sound be broadcast, but the current footage of a video camera can also be employed merely as a noise or as music. Conversely, the recording of a microphone can be used to produce or influence a current television image.

The crucial element in our definition of CCI within the context of audio-visual art is the decision to exclude the latter possibility⁴. Equally, pure audio installations (with audio "inputs" and "outputs" alone) cannot be given consideration here. With this focus in mind, the following table demonstrates the options:

Input	Output
AUDIO	AUDIO
AUDIO	VISUAL
VISUAL	AUDIO
VISUAL	VISUAL

Both of the chosen terminological pairings delineate the combinations characteristic of cc-video installation. From these is drawn the only necessary and sufficient pre-requisite for cc-video installation (one that is neither trivial nor metaphorical, but rather media-generic in the narrowest sense) - that is, the inclusion of a visual "input", of a functioning electronic camera.

In order to complete this "cumulative" outlining of the present subject of research, it will be necessary to explain the already often used, but not explicitly defined term: "installation".

The spatial and temporal division of the media installation into "sculptural" and "architectonic" categories, as well as into those in which "live" or previously recorded material is exclusively used, turns in each case on the relative, and potential, parameter of the "viewer" and on his spatial or temporal positioning within/outside the time-span of the installation. If one follows the same principle with reference to relative size, installations can only be determined in relation to their spatial or temporal scope; otherwise they may be defined in reference to the accretion of any kind of material elements. Every individual case is measurable in terms of space, but the installation(s) or its/their positioning cannot be accorded absolute size *a priori*. It is equally the case that an installation cannot be "understood" in terms of its absolute duration. Sometimes it is a question of a permanent installation. Installations in a gallery context today generally last between one and four

weeks, whilst in the seventies, for instance, the duration of an installation was often confined to a few hours - and thus was reduced to a kind of demonstration. For this reason a general definition of the term "installation" within an artistic context has to be based on the unique, particular configuration of any given installation and its relative duration. Because in most cases the presence of the public is irrelevant for an installation, or cannot be ascertained in advance, its duration has to be determined from its performative component. It is thus that an "installation in an artistic context" can be more precisely distinguished from related artistic forms, as long as one does not overlook transitional manifestations or "borderline cases". If the performative component (which includes amongst other things performances by performance artists, theatre performers, participants in happenings, actions or events, dancers, etc..) of a situation or "installation" as a whole only features during part of the period of time that the live camera(s) is/are switched on, then this should be classified as an "installation" (in the broadest sense, with performative elements).

If the performative, as described above, lasts longer than the "performance" of the live camera or is congruent with it, then this should be classified as a performance in the broadest sense, such as, for instance, those, which are employed in the English language for theatrical or dance performances. Examples from this latter category as a general principle will not be considered here in conjunction with cc-video installation; the relevance of each performance may be ascertained from each individual artistic contribution. It is apparent from many historical examples, that only the particular relative duration of a performance, as defined by the relative proportion of the performative element, can determine the "status" of a processional work. Performances in the broadest sense, for example, can last considerably longer

than installations, especially than those of a "demonstrative" nature. An example: video-theatre performances by the German artist, Kain Karawahn, in which the live camera is often put into an extreme environment or extreme circumstances, as a rule last longer (being in part made up of several acts) than his cc-video installations. Thus the "installation" itself (in which no further performative interventions by the artist are undertaken) lasts only as long as the camera is able to transmit live pictures to the cc-connected monitor/projector.

The final introductory terminological explanation concerns the relative temporal and spatial range of the live signal. The "live" element of the video signal accords temporally with our conception and reception of "synchronism". Here it is admittedly a question of "subjective values", which, nonetheless, go to describe the sphere of the "present continuous" which is of approximately 3 - 8 seconds duration (in the theoretical section of this book a more detailed report on the physical, neurological and philosophical aspects of this problem is given). As was the case with the above-mentioned attempts at clarification and delimitation, the spatial range of the live signal will not be accorded absolute limits within the context of a definition of cc-video installation. Following this conclusive decision, such a definition becomes almost "semiotic" or arbitrary in nature, since relative size in the case of the range of the signal or of the cc-"radius" as an electronic closed circle (circuit) can only then be determined from the method of employment of the medium. Television and video as media can, for instance, only be distinguished arbitrarily one from another by means of an extra-media (political) consensus about their methods of employment. Television as a medium can be interpreted as a disseminating medium in the sense of one-way broadcasting; this is predominantly the case world-wide. In contrast to a so-called "open circuit", the same technology can be used for a bilateral or multilateral exchange of information, such as

is the case in the "closed-circuit" relationship between "input" information and "output" information. Both technical terms respectively encompass the antithesis of their actual usage of the interactive potential of the medium: whilst the technological "open circuit" implies a closed, non-interactive system, the technologically self-contained "closed circuit" makes reference to the open, interactive system resulting from the feedback between participating elements. Between the two extremes there exist several hybrids, such as "site-casting" - which is actually cc, although usually disposed over shorter distances within a community - or "narrowcasting"/"cablecasting", which equally involves a not very extensive distribution network, that nonetheless also demonstrates indisputable "broadcasting" characteristics (see above).

There are considerable parallels between the ambivalent nature of the media of television and video and that of the Internet. The opportunity of also using this world-wide network for the purposes of communication does exist, even if the largest proportion of the world-wide web in fact functions as a commercial marketplace and as the site of information and ideological dissemination. For this reason all art projects, which exist exclusively within the parameters of the Internet, will not be under consideration here in this history of live installations, despite their use of live cameras (web-cams). Such is also the case for artistic projects, which involve a live transmission by a television broadcasting station.

Hybrid and relevant parallel forms in the work of individual artists or artist groupings will, on the other hand, of course be considered here.

The use of pre-produced videotape and the possibility of live transmission of the video image are given in the previous chapter as the main criteria for all manifestations of video-based media art. The temporal components, which are the basis of these main criteria, will be extended to include

corresponding spatial aspects in the case of most of the space-referencing work, with the result that the criteria for a classification of a video installation must be sought in the structuring of its temporal elements. Video installations can be sub-divided into single channel and multi-channel installations and they take the form of the single or multi-monitor type and/or the single or multi-projection type. (A multi-monitor/projection video installation can also take the form of a single channel installation.) When one brings the second criterion - the "partial category" - (the spatial component) to bear, a distinction can be made amongst multi-channel installations between "video-sculptural form" and "video-architectural form". The first is characterised by its fundamental non-accessibility in physical terms to the visitor. Conversely the second is accessible, and the gap between them has an organising and substantial role to play. (see Bonet 1986, p. 102.)

When one brings the first criterion (the time component) to bear, all video installations, which incorporate pre-produced images or sound information transmitted live, can be sub-divided into "live/feedback" or "taped" installations (or a combination of the two.)

On Structure and Groupings

The above geo-historical view is founded on an attempt to record individual works as precisely as possible, in order to analyse better the achievement and significance of artists and groups of artists within their respective contexts. The precision of the - explicit and implicit - appraisal is a result of the multiplicity of known horizontal (geographical: local, national, regional and international) and vertical (historical/chronological) inter-relationships. It does not yet permit - as indicated in the introduction - any definite, qualitative individual statements. It does, however, provide a

temporary classification from the viewpoint of the inter-connecting complex of art and media theory-related problems, which result: "subject"- "object" relationships; constructions of reality; systems models and behavioural blueprints; game concepts and learning processes; data collation and checking; and telecommunication.

These related "substantive" problem areas arise from the discursive history of media art - and are comparable to the historical media context. They do come up for implicit discussion occasionally in the rest of this text, but in the immediately following passage they are employed explicitly to clarify interconnections which have become evident in the course of this enquiry.

The vertical/chronological division into three "decades" (from c. 1966 to c. 1976; c. 1977 to c. 1989; and c. 1990 to 2002) is structured around the many socio-political, scientific, technological, theoretical, artistic and other ruptures, which are perceived as stations along the path of continuous, historical continuity.

This vertical structuring is made relative or confirmed by the horizontal/geographical division into the three politically, economically and culturally related areas of the United States of America, Europe and the Pacific. They are intended to reflect the opportunities and limits of their respective artistic production, reception and dissemination practices.

Based on the notion of an evident interdependency between chronology and topology, potential national and regional implications are in their turn only given credence in relation to the historical "axis of time". This general task of disclosing continuities and interactions in technological and artistic developments will be the focus in what follows, particularly in reference to cc-video installation.

Carrying out this general task requires that certain methodological steps be taken. Firstly, there should be a

recognition of the positions of the "spectator" and the "interpreter" within the context of reception theory and art history. Secondly, there should be a consideration of the media-determined production standards for works to be investigated within their respective historical and technological contexts. Thirdly, an attempt should be made to comprehensively describe relevant phenomena, and where possible to "reduce" findings to a simple "formula". This attempt is founded on the aim of fully dissecting highly complex phenomena in order to contrast an incalculably large amount of illegible data with an extremely vivid, even if at times "poorly defined" or "inconsistent", record of possible viewpoints.

¹ "Whilst closed-circuit installations are able to show the recorded object via a live camera at the same time as a monitor image, and thus in their depiction of real-time are mostly reminiscent of television in its role as a transmitter of current events, installations with several monitors, presenting one or more videotapes, are more variable due to technical factors." ["Während die Closed-Circuit-Installationen mittels einer Live-Kamera das aufgenommene Objekt fast gleichzeitig mit dem Monitorbild erscheinen lassen und so durch die Darstellung der Realzeit meist an das Fernsehen in seiner Funktion als Übermittler von gleichzeitigen Ereignissen erinnern, sind Installationen mit mehreren Monitoren, die ein oder mehrere Videobänder zeigen, aufgrund der technischen Gegebenheiten thematisch variabler."](Decker 1994, p. 14)

² "Time delay [...] The distance between the two video recorders (or, more exactly, between the recording head of the first and the playback head of the second) determines the time lapse. The use of this technique leads us, thus, to the formal simultaneity of present and past, and to new. More complex perceptions which are only possible through the use of video technology [...]." (Bonet 1980, p. 30)

³ "[...] something extraordinary is occurring today, in the 1980s, which ties together all these threads. The computer is merging with video. The potential offspring of this marriage is only beginning to be realized [...] After all these years, video is finally getting "intelligence", the eye is

being re-attached to the brain [...] We are proceeding from models of the eye and ear to models of thought processes and conceptual structures in the brain: "Conceptual Art" will take on a new meaning. (Viola 1982, in: Packer/Jordan 2001, pp. 293/ 294)

⁴ One of the first installations by Nam June Paik featuring a television set, "Participation TV (I)" of 1963, for instance, had to be sacrificed to this decision.

On the Observation of Observation. Media art between the private and public spheres (Ken Feingold, David Rokeby, Niels Bonde) in: in exhibition catalogue EMAF - European Media Art Festival „Transmitter“, Osnabruck 2004, pp. 80-99

I.

The collection and verification of signals and data comprise a variety of contemporary theoretical notions that include a critical examination of the subject of "surveillance" in the media-related, artistic and socio-political context. "Data collection and verification", viewed as an integral part of the history of media art, must be perceived primarily as a cross-disciplinary field. The task involved in treating this subject includes addressing the relationship between the "public/collective" and the "private" spheres and dealing with those problems that are important in terms of media theory and at the same time closely linked to ethnic and political conditions, and relating these problems to media art.

There are numerous questions that arise in connection with the question of "surveillance"¹ and the legality (and

¹ The term "surveillance" is derived from the Latin word *vigilia* and means "vigilance", "to watch over", "wakefulness" and "the fourth part of the night". The French verb *surveiller*, meaning "to observe", "to supervise" and "to check", appears in the title of one of the most-quoted books on the subject, *Surveiller et punir* by Michel Foucault (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), and shortly thereafter in the English translation it experienced a considerable shift in meaning under the title *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Pantheon, 1977). The "rationalist agenda" of "panoptic" societies, conceived of and analysed by Foucault and symbolised in the model prison of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), has since the middle of the 1970s become one of the important targets for numerous (media) artists, stemming from an

illegality) of continually overstepping the hardly definable boundary between the public and private spheres. The consequences of collecting and verifying data on individuals and groups, information which is of a political, psychological and physical nature and which also has relevance to civil law, are the subject of extensive studies that since the 1950s have provided, among other things, concrete facts about the most recent state of affairs. At this point, of course, we can not even take a brief glance at the artistic agendas relevant here.

II.

The following observations and reflections on "interactive" media art are focused on three important artists whose works are presented at the EMAF exhibition this year: Ken Feingold, David Rokeby and Niels Bonde.

Since 1970 **Ken Feingold** (b. 1952) has made a great number of 16mm films, film installations, videotapes and computer-aided installations. Feingold is an important representative of the second generation of media artists, and his work is a splendid example of the continual cross-media development of film and video and includes digital forms of expression. In this regard a parallel can be drawn to his counterparts of the first generation, Steina and Woody Vasulka as well as Nam June Paik. Feingold's interest in the possibilities of representing the self and others in the media by means of non-linear narrative strategies was reflected earlier in semiotic and psychoanalytic theories, inspired not least of all also in examples from art history such as Duchamp and surrealism, Jasper Johns, but also in audio-visualisation devices from the

unerring instinct for the danger to one's own self-awareness and right to exist in a society imbued with the norms of audiovisual representations (Jennifer Riddell, "The Whole World is Watching", in *The Art of Detection: Surveillance*, Cambridge: MIT Visual Arts Center, 1997, p. 3.)

early twentieth century. Influences from eastern Asia, gathered during his extensive trips there, also mark Feingold's conception of himself and his art. Together with David Rokeby in Canada, Toshio Iwai and Masaki Fujihata in Japan, Bill Spinhoven in the Netherlands and Jim Campbell in the US, Feingold represents a generation of media artists who at the end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s contributed considerably towards helping media art to gain acceptance internationally. Through their independent development of hardware and software components in connection with visual interfaces—live video cameras—these artists succeeded with their solutions for closed-circuit video installations in getting the advantages and inherent features of real-time, feedback-capable analogue and digital media to interpenetrate. The transition from analogue "video art" to digital "media art" was thus completed, and together with this the "wave of interaction" in the media art of the 90s had been ushered in.

As a result of further developing his art on both a formally technical and technological basis, in the 90s Ken Feingold's outwardly "hermetic" closed-circuit video and audio installations, which were inspired by psychoanalysis, went through a surprising "change" externally—although not a paradigmatic shift, and this manifested itself primarily in his computer-aided robot installations. In his computer-aided closed-circuit video installation entitled *Where I can see my house from here so we are* (1993-94) Feingold combined for the first time his conception of interaction with the "streaming" video technology and applied it to the highly ambivalent metaphor of ventriloquist dummies, whose appearance in the form of mobile robots seems to act as a mediator between the "internal" and the "external", both in the psychological sense as well as in the duality of "technology" and "biology".² (Ken

² The installation of a room with mirrors was set in a darkened room. This consisted of three honeycomb-shaped elements put together and each one with

Rinaldo & Amy Youngs, Graham Smith & Toronto-Media Art Scene, M. Fujihata etc.)

In his lecture "The Interactive Art Gambit" ("Do not run! We are your friends!") of 7 April 1997 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, Ken Feingold put forward several interesting theories concerning the cultural and historical significance and scope of digital systems for interaction: In his view, video games, simulators and similar commercial and military applications are often interpreted in a monocausal way as the only predecessors of "interactive" media art, which actually only affects the technological aspect of the total problem complex surrounding "interactivity". According to Feingold at this point the context of art must be taken into consideration much more strongly, and he presents several examples from the early twentieth century up to the 70s that not least of all incorporate the psychological side of the problem (Duchamp, the surrealists, Jasper Johns); even examples taken from experimental cinema and the early "video art" of the 60s and 70s are used by this American artist to determine precisely his own position:

a hexagonal outline. They were open at the top, and all the interior walls of the room, which was put together along an open edge of each of these three parts, were completely covered with a surface of mirrors. Three robot dummies were moving around inside, each bearing a mask-like head above a functional, rollable pedestal. One eye of each of the robots was the lens of a camera installed in the head module; the sections of the dummies' mouths were also moveable. The walls of the room were high enough so that the robot-cameras could not look over them, but allowed visitors to view the scene from above. The visitors, who controlled the operation of one of the robots, could move it around in its cage and have it communicate with the other robots or with its mirror image reflected in one of the mirrored walls. In another variation the robots were connected to the Internet, by means of which visitors could receive pictures and sound.

Ken Feingold voices his unambiguous opposition towards the supposed interactive forms of media art that we have become familiar with in science museums and similar contexts:

[...] much of what is called "interactive art" or techno-art borrows or derives from this science museum demo-aesthetic. Push a button, something happens. Put in the money, out comes the candy bar [...] also, I wanted to be quite clear that I was not offering people "choices", "menus", or any of the other fare well known at that time from commercial kiosk applications and training videodiscs. (ibid)

In the same context Feingold mentioned an important point in his view of art and in his conception of interactivity in media art when he announced his departure from the possibilities of "control" and goal orientation in this process. There is apparently a big contradiction here with regard to the definition that Norbert Wiener gave to the term "cybernetics" in the 1940s, in which control constitutes the decisive element. At the same time Feingold does not depart from the digital computers structured accordingly and the technologies based on them. On the contrary, he puts forward a notion which includes the cybernetic, biological and psychological "control circuits", thus describing the possibilities of an "open", unpredictable interaction in the context of media art:

Interacting with an unpredictable artwork is something far more unknown than interacting with a well-oiled functional machine. While the computer-driven work is not truly unpredictable, in fact, mathematically, it is the opposite—the subjective experience of it is that it is unpredictable, complicated, mysterious [...] Using computers to control works is not simply a more advanced form of what has come before. (ibid)

The integration of video feedback in computer-assisted installations, in the sense of an instable flow of signals that only can be controlled with great difficulty, must be pointed out as a particular feature in connection with the work of **David Rokeby**. The reason is that this is not just a reference to the historical significance of early "analogue" close-circuit video installations, but it is also evidence of artistic notions of interaction advanced in media art during the last years of the twentieth century.

If a language cannot be reduced to logic and logic cannot be reduced to arithmetic, then instable forms of interaction, such as those called for by media artists like Simon Penny, Ken Rinaldo, Seiko Mikami, Horst Prehn and others, must be viewed as a highly promising direction of development in media art in the coming years.

The fixation on *visible* interfaces and the *visual* presentation found in standard solutions are abandoned in numerous artistic media installations, including those presented here, in favour of *invisible* interfaces and the *non-visual* presentation. The VN System (*Very Nervous System*) by David Rokeby from the 1980s, which has now become a "classic", can also be cited here as a good example: a computer-aided closed-circuit video installation with *invisible visual* interfaces/inputs (live video cameras) and mostly just audible output (computer-generated sound), which in the 90s was followed by dozens of media installations with comparable "natural" or rather "intuitive" interfaces (mostly hidden live video cameras).

David Rokeby (b. 1960) is one of the pioneers of computer-assisted interactive media art. His artistic position exemplifies the investigation into open, interactive systems with the aid of closed cycles: The closed-circuit video installations developed by Rokeby in the 80s also became the

best examples of the theoretical starting points of and the conclusions drawn by the Canadian artist:

2Interactive systems invariably involve feedback loops. The limited representation of the user is inevitably reflected back to the user, modifying their own sense of self within the simulation [...] Interactive systems inherently involve feedback. The system responds to your actions, and you respond based on its responses and your desires. In *Very Nervous System*, I constructed tight real-time feedback loops with complex behaviours which illustrated several interesting characteristics of interactive feedback.³

Unlike the stabilising and balancing negative feedback systems, which as a rule are suited to and used for controlling and maintaining the status quo, *Very Nervous System*, the closed-circuit video installation conceived by Rokeby, is a classic example of positive feedback,⁴ within which the "output(s)", the audiovisual effects, can develop their full potential only by increasing the "inputs". In order to "cut" these technological possibilities to the scale of human dimensions and—to put it better—to develop them out of the scale of human dimensions, Rokeby especially focused his attention on interface solutions in the scope of his cybernetic model and the conception of his art.

In the spring of 1986 Rokeby developed the third generation of his interactive installations from the previous one, and in the same year he exhibited the first version of it under the title *Very Nervous System* in the exhibition "Arte, Technologia e Informatica" at the Biennale in Venice.⁵ The work

³ Rokeby. In Martina Leeker (ed.), *Maschinen, Medien, Performances. Theater an der Schnittstelle zu digitalen Welten*, Berlin: Alexander Verlag, 2001, pp. 64, 70.

⁴ This is actually a combination, which will be emphasised below in a quotation by the artist.

⁵ In 1988 the installation was still entitled *Body Language* (Dunlop Gallery, Regina, Canada).

was installed not only in conventional exhibition halls but also outdoors in public areas. It was used as well in the framework of several performances and is variable with regard to the number of components and the arrangement of them.⁶ Over the years *Very Nervous System* has undergone some technical modifications,⁷ which to a certain extent can also be regarded as the products of a continuous "interactivity test" initiated by the artist: With his attention artistically focused on the possibilities and limitations of interaction and on its psychological effects and those of society as a whole, Rokeby developed and discarded numerous interface solutions that are considered to be exemplary for media art today.⁸

⁶ The basic principle appears here as follows: Anywhere from one to three closed-circuit video cameras record images of the room, and a system of processors made by the artist digitises the images produced by the cameras. A computer gathers information from these data on the movements in the room by means of software written by the artist, which can calculate and extrapolate the people, locations and movement vectors and determine the locations with the greatest activity. This information is used to control a synthesiser, whereby the volume and tone of the sound coming from two loudspeakers is related to the movement of the visitors.

⁷ Since the end of 1988 Rokeby has been using the specially developed "IntAct" software, and since 1989 an enhanced image processor ("Rokebytizer") for an even more complex image analysis. Cf. Dinkla, 1992, p. 78.

⁸ His approach, which is orientated towards the analysis of the practical situation, can be shown using his participation in the Siggraph Art Show in 1988 as an example:

Many attendees entered my installation to "test" it using what I've come to call the "First Test of Interactivity". The test involves determining whether the system will consistently respond identically to identical movements. (Note that an intelligent agent will probably fail this test.) They would enter the space, let the sounds created by their entrance fade to silence, and then make a gesture. The gesture was an experiment, a question to the space; "What sound will you make?". The resulting sound was noted. Second and third gestures were made with the same motivation, and the same sound was produced. After the third repetition, the interactor decided that the system was indeed interactive, at which point they changed

His specific, practical-analytical approach, also exemplified in the variability and flexibility of *Very Nervous System*, is connected with the Notion of Unpredictability, mentioned above, and was summarised by the artist in the following way:

"Because the computer is purely logical, the language of interaction should strive to be intuitive. Because the computer removes you from your body, the body should be strongly engaged. Because the computer's activity takes place on the tiny playing fields of integrated circuits, the encounter with the computer should take place in human-scaled physical space. Because the computer is objective and disinterested, the experience should be intimate."

And he continues by saying:

"The language of this encounter is initially unclear, but it evolves as one explores and experiences. The installation is a complex but quick feedback loop. The feedback is not simply "negative" or "positive", inhibitory or reinforcing; the loop is subject to constant transformation as the elements, human and computer, change in response to each other. The two interpenetrate until the notion of control is lost and the relationship becomes one of encounter and conscious involvement."

The exemplary development of computer-assisted and at the same time open interaction systems from the possibilities offered by audiovisual closed-circuit feedback loops is clearly expressed in the quotation cited above and for this reason deserves special attention.

With his closed-circuit video installation *Very Nervous System* and his theoretical writings on interaction, David

the way they held their body and made a gesture to the space, a sort of command: "Make that sound" (Rokeby URL)

Rokeby fulfils the qualifications for being referred to as a key figure in the area. His criticism of the way in which we relate to simulation technologies continues to be rather harsh:

"But we're spending more and more time amongst our simulations, and we're in danger of losing sight of the fact that our models and ideas of "reality" are drastically simplified representations. If we do lose this awareness, then our experience of being will be significantly diminished. Simulations offer us formerly unimaginable experiences, but the foundations of these simulations are built up from a relatively narrow set of assumptions about the structure and parameters of experience [...]"

The "simulated complexity" of such "closed systems" (ibid), including, for example, pseudo random generators, is not capable of generating anything really new, accidental or unforeseeable. The entertainment, infotainment, edutainment systems and other similar ones functioned beyond the interface-content congruence, and as such they lay no claim to the adjective "interactive" in the sense described by Rokeby. In this regard the Canadian artist explicitly had an "interaction component", namely "responsibility", which was understood as an irresolvable, conscious ambivalence and tension between "freedom" and "control", and is meant rather literally as a ability to respond.

With their built-in positive feedback they must be viewed as structurally unpredictable both in their behaviour as well as in the result, whereby the "result" must not be compared with a "end" but rather with one of the great many different intermediate stops. Rokeby's *Very Nervous System* is an early practical manifesto of this perception, which appears historically at the transition from analogue to digitally assisted media art and which confirms in every respect the notion of continuity in (media) art since the Sixties.

Moreover, *Very Nervous System* demonstrates "closed-circuit" as an "open system" and defines "interaction" as a end concept that (beyond the preconceived, algorithmic or other kinds of designations) can only be aimed at and experienced step by step and in the context of *proxemics*.

In the course of the second half of the 90s the critical examination of the manifestations and causes of the surveillance paranoia reached one of its preliminary climaxes with the closed-circuit video installations of the Danish artist **Niels Bonde** (b. 1961) – the probably most-known of them, with the title *I never had hair on my body or head* (1995) – we are able to experience in the actual EMAF exhibition.

Bonde's close-circuit video installation *I never had hair on my body or head* (1995)⁹ effected a paranoid vision in which the seemingly peaceful surroundings of an "archetypical home" is a furnished apartment filled with teddy bears, indoor plants and a cradle among other things, and in each of the objects mentioned a potential instrument for carrying out surveillance might be hidden: There are live video cameras actually hidden there, and the visitor can assure himself of this by looking at the surveillance monitors and also viewing himself from the perspective of a teddy bear.

Bonde's intimations and unmitigated dilemmas of among other things a political, ethical and technological nature (in 1998 he created a more general metaphor with his closed-

⁹ Bonde on the title of his work: "'I never had hair on my body or head' The statement is excerpted from a test administered by Nordvang, a psychiatric hospital in the suburbs of Copenhagen. The patient has to answer 'yes' or 'no' [...] This allows the doctors to make a simple assessment of the type of patient they are dealing with [...] I know about the test because there was a time when nearly all my friends were more or less (mentally) disturbed and half of them were in psychiatric hospitals." (Bonde, 1997, p. 27)

circuit video installation *An interactive tragedy*) found expression in concentrated form in his "surveillance works", and among these especially in his closed-circuit installations. The reciprocity of observing and being observed as a possible mirror of the relationship between power and seduction, taking control and resource, continues to be among the urgent questions of the present day. In the last few years Bonde's interest in data collection and verification has expanded in his *Flowcharts & Diagrams*, installations and Web projects that analyse the parallelism of streams of information in thoughts and in data processing with the goal of, among other things, interpreting the conditions and resources of the Internet. The psychoanalytical and power-political driving force, motives behind and effects of surveillance on the individual and collective perceptions and conceptions of the self extend in both a horizontal-global as well as in a vertical-historical direction through the consciousness and subconscious of human beings, additionally reflecting the division between the new and the old in the development of the media. Just as with Ken Feingold and David Rokeby, the art of Niels Bonde develops from this relationship of tension in which "transmission" and "interaction"—in the best tradition of media art—can be reduced to a common denominator.

Do we have an Image-Problem?

Performance and Media Art within the current picture/image discussion eds. Dawn Leach & Slavko Kacunko, Berlin: Logos-Verlag 2007

- Preface

The attention of German speaking discourse is more than ever before driven to conceptualise the picture/image as medium, and performance. Studies in art, media, theatre, performance and picture theory guided by these efforts all vie for superiority. Their manoeuvres seem for the outsider motivated by a fear of falling into the status of secondary disciplines, where insufficient funding loom on the horizon as a result. The present popularity of this discourse on the iconic and pictorial media makes the accompanying discussion of the possibility, expedience, and the viability of an interdisciplinary picture science with its special significance for the sciences and society at large particularly interesting.

The present volume should focus the discussion of the role and importance of performance and media arts caught between art- and pictorial sciences' contribution to the contended field. At the centre of this are the time- and action-based arts seen before the backdrop of a general concept of the pictorial. These contributions also throw a light rich in contrast when the entirety of the picture science debate spreads before our view. Their mixture of perspectives and discursive affiliations provide current readings for this area of scholarly study.

The majority of the contributions collected in this volume originated in May 2006 at a conference of the Department of Culture and Geo-Sciences of the University of Osnabruck, that was devoted to questions of performance and media art within the

context of the current discussion of the picture /image science. The theoretical, practical, and technical discourse on media arts' assumptions, effects, and possibilities still take place at the margins of media festivals and media exhibitions, hard- and software fairs, and particularly within the framework of internet based "communities". The few specialized production and training centres offer a very manageable number of docents and students, while the discontinuity in funds supporting research projects hamper consistent theoretical efforts.

The conference was an attempt to alleviate the suppression of media arts' practice, theory, and history from university contexts and brought together competent media experts, junior research staff and the interested public.

The present collection of texts begins with **Dawn Leach's** brief discussion of the image and text issue, image differences, and systematisation attempts. Special attention is paid to the notion of picture anthropology and the age old image of man question, as currency in the German debates. This sets the stage for some comparisons between North American and German efforts in this field and is rounded off with brief mention of new evolving agendas as well as concluding remarks concerning possible changes in academic fields at university level.

Slavko Kacunko devotes his essay to a generation of 1947 born "prophets" and "slanderers of prophets" that will be sixty come 2007. A characterisation of this generation, which here is called the *Generation of Eighty-three* furnishes the pretext for historicizing "prophecy" in the age of its topicality. The focal point of his characterisation is the programmatic text published in the *biopolitical year of birth* of the Eighty-three-ers, Peter Sloterdijk's *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft* (1983; in English as *Critique of Cynical Reason* [Minnesota, 1988]), flanked by the

postdoctoral thesis Beat Wyss completed in 1983, *Trauer der Vollendung (Hegel's Art History and the Critique of Modernity*, Res Monographs in Anthropology and Aesthetics series, Cambridge [UK] and New York, 1999) and, again dating from 1983, Hans Belting's inaugural lecture in Munich on the end of art history.

The current image-theory debate is interpreted as one of the by-products of the '83 ideology - an outlook formed out of the criticism that raged against the generation of '68 and which is proving increasingly to be a stumbling block on the onerous path toward a fitting scholarly treatment of more recent developments in art and the media.

Lena Bader reminds us of the dual function of photography at the inception of art historical study as both subject and medium with a view to defusing polemic tendencies to either postulate continuity at the expense of iconic differences, or to stylise historiographic shifts into a complete rupture with the past. Her new /old instrument of choice is the comparative analysis, which she believes can accommodate both consideration of pictoriality and mediality.

Katja Hoffmann is critical of historical efforts aimed at an "all-inclusive-concept" since it produces generalities at the expense of differences. She does place symbolic actions at the core of her exemplification, but hopes to show by means of memory and context how the interpretive approach can produce more than levelling results.

Verena Kuni's agenda is different from Lena Bader's and Katja Hoffmann's since her specialist concern with web based art prompts her to a differentiated account of the state of disrepair in documenting her subject and already foresees the detrimental effects on future historical treatment. The context of the web, she argues, is a complex one that can only be insufficiently

emulated. Kuni sees the reflexive re-enactments of several artists as a possibility for sharing creative efforts that would otherwise be totally lost.

Marga van Mechelen's project relates the first directorship of De Appel (1975-1983) to the question '*Is the medium still a condition of art?*' Van Mechelen shows that the idea of the essential qualities of a medium and the many forms of artistic production more properly placed within Rosalind Krauss' idea of the post-medium condition were realised within the framework of De Appel. She argues, that the De Appel programme went far beyond the medium condition and explains this paradox by discussing some of the better known projects that were realized in this framework.

Petra Missomelius is concerned with narration in the spatial organisation of digital environments. She brings a "topological turn" into play. The concept of narrative works introduced into participatory aesthetics offers the active viewer new modes of comprehending the spatial. She argues that our spacio-temporal experience of the architectonics of contact, the active negotiation of possible and actual space can be read as narrative structuring. Social interaction in "third spaces" (Bhabha 1994), she says, engages imaginary faculties, facilitates new, tentative, alternating identities, and creates hybrid cultural communities.

The storytelling and prototype development in interactive systems which **Daniela Reimann** is involved in as interdisciplinary didactic researcher represents a shift from Missomelius' perspective. Not only conceived as teaching instrument, these practice oriented co-operations are equally instructive for teachers, specifically art instructors. Performative aspects and robotic systems stimulate different links to the spatio-temporal experience that instil imaginative outlets and make fit for

creative output in a new environment.

"In Between" is an excellent example for **Gabriele Schmid's** critical observations concerning the short reach of aesthetic reception theory when faced with the holographic experience. Her arguments go beyond the specific example, but are strongly supported by its force. The noncontemplative, embodied reception is of course argued in all forms of digital based art defence, but the holographic medium has received far too little attention and is worthy of far more attention as Schmid cogently argues.

With **Jens Schröter's** contribution we are invited to rethink our scopic regimes and he has good grounds to argue his transplanar perspective. Like Schmid he invites us to reconsider our discursive efforts on an individual work: Marcel Duchamp's *TUM*. But his reconsideration proves that our blind spot has implications. He identifies three types of transplanar images:

1. the stereoscopic, 2. the holographic, 3. the virtual interactive i.e. volumetric images. The "third spaces" that Missomelius introduces turn into a scientific re-evaluation of our scopic regimes with the purport of new genealogies that Spielmann wishes us to recognize in the differences between the media of moving images.

Yvonne Spielmann's insistence here on medium specificity, grounded as it is in technical differences, prompts her to argue that these considerations must preface and inform any interdisciplinary approach to visibility. Even if we agree with Mitchell's verdict that strictly speaking there are no visual media, since our perception encompasses more than the visual, we can not ignore, says Spielmann, research into the structuring of multi-sensory reception of multimedia artefacts. She offers an exemplary taxonomy of the filmic, videographic and digital forms of presentation meant to contribute to intermedia investigation of the reflexive participation of the recipient. The contribution

of media studies, in her view, would entail employing cultural semiotic tools in media historical comparisons.

The fact that our guests from Poland (Prof. Dr. **Ryszard Kluszczyński** und Dr. **Maciej Ozog**) made no reference to picture science debates (which is why their texts are unfortunately not included) made clear, that the general discussion revolving around a picture science, is first and foremost of relevance for German speakers. Not the least reason to prompt seven of the eleven authors to choose to write in English with a view to generating more scholarly exchange bearing on these issues.

The structuring presented here is not grouped into sections devoted to exemplary interpretative practice, to critique of methodological approaches and to theoretical concepts as was provisionally done at the conference, but rather in simple alphabetical order. Thus avoiding thematic and methodological pre-established harmonies. The prepending position of the editors' contributions make no claim to comprehensively introducing or presenting all issues and aspects on the subject of performance and media arts caught between art and visual cultural studies or bracketed by a picture science.

Our thanks go first to all authors. We would also like to express our appreciation for the support we received from the innovation funds of the University of Osnabruck and its friends, whose financial backing made our conference possible. Last but not least, our thanks go to Professor Dr. Martin Lang and Professor Claude Wunschik for their support and to Janine Arndt, Martin Böckmann, Björn Brüggemann, Kerstin Fischer, Verena Heber, Lucy Knollmeyer, Cem Kozcuer, Tabea Lurk, Kathrin Mayr, Tobias Nehren, Stephen Reader and Toni Walz, who all helped make the conference a success.

M.A.D. Media Art Database(s)

and the Challenges of Taste, Evaluation, and Appraisal

forthcoming in: Leonardo Journal 2008/2009

ABSTRACT: *The considerations of the digital appraisal provide a good opportunity for comparing the actual challenges of the academic disciplines that are traditionally devoted to the appraisal in general with the attempts of writing and rewriting of Media Art Histories. The essay is seeking the possible mutual benefits that different disciplines like Art History, Media Studies, Computer Science etc. might have in their specific efforts in formulating needs and strategies of the appraisal of records and data, scientific and other concepts, related to the Media Art in its widest sense. In this context, the core concept of the M.A.D. Media Art Database-project is presented as an information system at the disposal of media art, its history, theory and as a networking interface between the archived material and knowledge, with its proposed networking bottom-up structure to be the decisive motive force in assembling potent aggregates of knowledge and expertise.*

1. APPRAISALS and DISCIPLINES Some preliminary Remarks

The considerations of the digital appraisal provide a good opportunity for comparing the actual challenges of the academic disciplines that are traditionally devoted to the appraisal in general. The question of estimation, judgment and selection are within the archival sciences unmistakable related to the continued preservation of archival material.¹ Some other disciplines claim their genuine competences in evaluating important artefacts of the cultural heritage like the artworks and other aesthetic objects (art history), whereas the philosophical aesthetics for instance, engrosses its qualification in judging the philosophical and historical concepts of appraisal 'as such', understood as "taste" or "discriminative faculty".² (The recent attempts to include the cognitive sciences into this circle should be mentioned either, although they can not be discussed here).

Being aware of that, the present essay is seeking the possible mutual benefits that the mentioned disciplines might have in their specific efforts in formulating needs and strategies of the appraisal of records and data, scientific and other concepts. One of the task force members of the InterPARES Project for the Long-term Preservation of Authentic Electronic Records, Terry Eastwood, have rightly summarized that "efforts to provide universal guidelines or criteria for appraisal have failed".³ In this context, the "anomalies of the digital world"⁴ should presumably not be blamed, just as well as the 'analogue' concepts of appraisal regarding separately. Because the questions of appraisal in the digital world can not be posed adequately as an either-or-question, the answers should probably either not be sought in reducing the complexity on the simplified situation-diagnoses in the terms of the 'old wine in a new bottle'.

As a matter of fact, some mutual academic attitudes like the faith in authenticity make the archival- and art historical disciplines especially comparable to each other and therefore fruitful for a transdisciplinary discussion on appraisal. In this context, I would like at first to confine my attention on the two 'appraisal'-disciplines *par excellence*, Art History and Aesthetics, and secondly, I will have to focus the attention on the especially challenging contemporary part of it, on the Media Art and its History.

The Art History appeared as an academic discipline during the Victorian Age, an age of the ascending of historic disciplines with their sometimes romantic rooted archeology and its cousin archival science, accompanied by the positivist theories as improved within the praxis of the industrial societies.

The 'Aesthetics' as a scientific discipline for the perceptual (as opposed to the cognitive) appraising of the world came into use after the first usage of the notion in the Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's Master Thesis from 1735⁵.

However, this rather clumsy attempt to propose scientific rules of sensual appraisal was then motivated by the rather sprawling French discussion on 'goût' in the late 17. and 18. century, being followed and accompanied with the similar attempts in Scotland and England, as known by John Dennis, Anton Ashly Cooper (Earl of Shaftesbury), Joseph Addison, Alexander Gerard, Henry Home - and finally culminating by David Hume and his Scottish - East Prussian-follower Immanuel Kant with his 'critical turn', as completed in the "Critique of Judgement" from 1790.

For that reason, the archival' problem of value-considerations, based on the requirements of authenticity appear at least from the historical perspective as inseparable from the art historical and aesthetic considerations. Within the context of the 'analogue' and 'digital' appraisal, the Media Art History might have sufficient potentials to bridge some existing semantic, technical as well as socio-political gaps in appraisal-discussion by putting the question of the so-called 'functional analysis' on the more pragmatic grounds, but without disregarding related traditions and genealogies. On the other hand, the different schools of Media Art Histories as practiced today should strive after increasing- and cumulative exchange of the experiences in the digital preservation and dissemination strategies with the distinguished experts in the fields of archival sciences and other disciplines.

From my point of view, however, the Media Art History should not obstruct its efforts with the image appraisal only, since the Media Art is no longer dealing exclusively with images of a temporary finite nature. Actually, the Media Art covers all kinds of material like sound, installation, performance, architecture, telecommunication tools - up to the digital code itself. The Media Art is consequently and essentially a time-based art and it thus demands specific sensibility for the appraisal-, description- and presentation

practices of this kind of analogue as well as digital records and data. This essay covers therefore a brief overview of the actual diversity of Media Art, based on the diversity of its historical origins, which would - as a conclusion - have to involve some adequate considerations of the existing as well as not-yet-existing standards for the appraisal, preservation and dissemination in this specific field.

As a time-based art *per definitionem*, the Media Art concerns - as the last preliminary theoretical reference to be given here - fundamentally the problem of the so-called 'Liveness'. Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio have pointed out, that:

„For technophobes who blame technology for the collapse of the public sphere, liveness may be a last vestige of authenticity - seeing and/or hearing the event at the precise moment of its occurrence. The unmediated is the immediate. For technophiles, liveness defines technology's aspiration to simulate the real in real time. This skepticism [about truth] aids, to a degree, these artists' desire to tease the distinctions: to undermine the authority of „live“ overmediated experience and to collapse the two into an indeterminate unity“. Here we have to go on without physical and epistemological, as well as philosophical considerations on this essential issue.’⁶

With other words: the answer on the question, whether the liveness can cover the concept of authenticity or not depends on the related concept of the medium. If medium would be described as a storage (device), it appears suitable to the conception of the authenticity from the traditional archivists' point of view; but if the notion 'medium' would be taken literally and etymologically as "the middle" or a kind of highly unstable entity, then the liveness should be regarded as an authenticity-guarantee either, but not (yet) compatible to the traditional archivists', storage-based definition of authenticity.

2. MEDIA ARTS Ontologies and Epistemologies

With regard to the Media Art, we have therefore obviously to deal primarily with the unsustainable media projects within the unsustainable - analogue as well as digital - media environment. As in other disciplines, there are no common rules within the Media Art Studies existing, upon which the diversity of Media Art may be diagrammed universally. The displayed content-related categorisation⁷ represents the general 'fields of inquiry', founded on a geo-historical view and an attempt to record individual works as precisely as possible, in order to analyse better the achievement and significance of artists and groups of artists within their respective contexts.

Diversity of the Media Art (according to: Kacunko, 2004)⁸

1. Subject - Object Relationship
Medium: Mirror; Metaphor: Narcissus; Material: Machine
Vision
2. Constructions of Reality
Reality and Virtuality: Fragment and Superposition
Reality and Virtuality: Model and Construction
Reality and Virtuality: Narration and Interaction
3. System Models and Behavioural Patterns
Silicon meets Carbon: Animal, Human, Robot and beyond
4. Game Concepts and Learning processes
Games - Rules - Learning: ludistic Aspects of Media Art
5. Data Collection and Monitoring
On Watching of Watching: Media Art between the private and common space
6. Telecommunication
From Slow Scan-TV, Closed Circuit-TV, and Satellite to Telerobotics via Internet, WiFi-, Mobile Phone etc.

The favourable characteristics of this kind of approach to the general variance of the media arts today lies not least in the precision of the - explicit and implicit - description and

appraisal of the individual 'works' or 'projects', accompanied by the multiplicity of respected geographical and chronological inter-relationships. It still does not permit any definite, qualitative individual statements, but it does, however, provide a temporary classification from the viewpoint of the interconnecting complex of art and media theory-related problems.

On the other side, some other categorisations of the Media Art⁹ subordinates the media art fields of inquiry almost exclusively of the research institutions and the academic curricula:

Diversity of the Media Art (according to Wilson, 2002)

1. Biology: Microbiology, Animals and Plants, Ecology, and Medicine and the Body
2. Physics, Nonlinear Systems, Nanotechnology, Materials Science, Geology, Astronomy, Space Science, Global Positioning System, and Cosmology
3. Algorithms, Mathematics, Fractals, Genetic Art, and Artificial Life
4. Kinetics, Sound Installations, and Robots
5. Telecommunications
6. Digital Information Systems/Computers

And if we compare some of the best known and generally accepted *historical origins* of the Media Art with their academic Curricula and their Preferences, then we may easily understand, how the priorities of the Media-, Cultural-, Critical Studies, Art History and other disciplines were and still are focused mostly on those Origins of the Media Art, that are death with their academic curricula:

Historical Origins of the Media Art

New Music / New Dada / Fluxus /
nouveau realisme [since `50s]
E.A.T. Experiments in Art &
Technology
[since 1966]
Video Collectives [since ca. 1968]

Media Theatre / Jeux de
communication [since ca. 1963]

Post-minimalist tendencies [since
ca. 1967]

Videofeedback-/-Synthesizer Art
[since ca. 1968]

Luminal-kinetic Art [since the
'50ies]

...

Academic Curricula and their Preferences

Musicology, Art History

Media Studies, Art History

Cultural Studies, Critical
Studies, Art History

Theatre Studies, Media
Studies

Art History, Theatre
Studies

Image Science, Computer
Science

Informatics, Mathematics

...

This kind of a contemporary praxis of appraisal, archiving and dissemination of Media Art makes it not necessarily representative for the further conclusions, simply because they do not arise from the discursive *history* of (analogue as well as digital) media art and are therefore not being made comparable to the complexity of the *historical* media contexts as well.

The wish to 'overcome' the mentioned patterns and curricula- as well as institutional-driven problems related to media art may admittedly appear quite naïve, because of apparently disregarded fact, that the joint information gathering- and sharing systems seem not to be very welcome within the exclusivity-driven concepts and contexts. Some disciplinary driven Media-, Art-, and Culture-Theories see in the comprehensive and generally accessible Information Platforms indeed a kind of stumbling block on their way to the scientific or economic canonisation.

But with the facing the increasing relocation of the knowledge from the Offline-World into the Online-World, the concept of „intellectual property“ loses quite natural more and more of its value within the electronic environment, as 'The Limits of Intellectual Property', the theme of the Ars Electronica Festival 2008 has shown. The concepts of exclusivity seem to yield progressively to the concepts of inclusiveness. The issues of Copyright, Creative Commons, Science Commons and other contemporary concepts of utilisation of records and knowledge within an electronic environment are already considered within the different disciplines, including archival science and art history.

3. DECISIONS Emphatic Oppositions and 'Fragile Conitinuities'

The different Wiki-, rating- and tagging-websites are the examples of including of an immense human-, time- and attention resources into the work of the limited administration resources on the institutional level. At the same time, the notions like tagging, appraisal, and curating become to the core issue of the media art itself. Today, in the context of the creative handling with the media technologies we are not dealing primarily with the colourful pictures and fancy flash animations: As a matter of fact, it is the *conceptual* approach of the digital media artist, especially with the so called Net-Artists and Designers, as well as Curators, that put the question of Taste, Evaluation and Appraisal in the centre of their work, which means, that the *decision processes* in the context of archiving became to the core of the creative media praxis and theory - additional to the considerations within the scientific-, politics- and business communities. We are actually facing a blurring the

boundaries between them within the recent media art theory and praxis.

For Example, the projects like "Kurator Software. Version Beta 1.0" from 2007 includes a team of programmers, artists, and curators, that work on an open source software application designed as an online system for curating source code itself. The curatorial function of appraisal, understood as an abstract subjective potential is therefore completed with the potential of the binary code, which is itself - as opposed to the most commercial search machines practices - displayed as a transparent entity.¹⁰

Before I come to my point, let me add an another example: Similar as in "Kurator Software" (Support of the University of Plymouth, UK) many other media-art-curating projects like the TAGallery (Austria)¹¹ have tried to include the Web 2.0-features like open source and tagging, not least in order to improve their potentials within the curatorial processes and (also:) the long-time archiving.

The question to be posed here is: How could we use such personal associations of anyone for the high-hierarchical structures of the commercial institutions like museums, archives, or distribution organisations? This is one of the issues that the DCC- Digital Curation Center is also dealing with, where we may find the statement on the essential role of appraisal in this context, also within an joint effort together with the UKOLN, a centre of expertise in digital information management, based at the University of Bath (UK). The text about UKOLN strategy for 2007 - 2010 refer in this context to the Steve Museum, "a collaborative research project exploring the potential for user-generated descriptions of the subjects of works of art to improve access to museum collections and encourage engagement with cultural content".¹²

The digital Media producer and curator Ela Kagel from Berlin, stated 2006 that "thie initiative of the Steve Museum clearly has its roots in the realm of Net Art [and that] this

could be an important contribution to close the semantic gap between audience and curators."¹³ I think that such initiatives - in spite of the still existing lack of transparency - are very important for all of us interested in a more inclusive - instead of exclusive - access to the art, and especially to the media art resources. That means - and therewith I am finally reaching my objective - that we need to find out how to involve such Web 2.0 -tools like (social) tagging in our appraisal-and archiving work and at the same time - how to keep an immense human- and time-ressources in the Internet within such projects - how to motivate them. According to my experience, the essential question of motivation in this case can be answered only with a maximizing of transparency - with stretching the Web 2.0 tools even into the curatorial processes within the hierarchic business-models of the museums, archives, and so on.

The business-world has of course discovered the considerable commercial potentials of the folksonomy, especially of tagging, but I personally think that the art- and cultural- as well as educational institutions, including archives and private collections - could reach even higher level of transparency, and I think also, that the experiments and considerations in this direction could finally help them (and all of us) to include the enormous human and financial resources, that would otherwise not be available.

4. CONSCIOUSNESS '*Evil Necessities*' and Good Will

Let me now come back to the already named problem of the (not-)compatibility between the comprehensive and ambitious Media Art Databases and the institutionally-driven academic curricula. We should and probably could do something about that. The 'Top-level networking' in media art history and theory (Leonardo, ISEA etc.) demands a transparent and

universally accessible information system that does justice equally to the work done by the sites of production, distribution and data archiving and by the individuals engaged in the provision and scholarly processing of information on media art. Previous experience world wide has shown that the laborious, but for the survival of that information system crucial task of compiling such a database is at odds with the hitherto customary top-down structures. The signs are that in the longer term, there will be no real alternative but that media theory and practice must meet at eye level.

With the M.A.D. Media Art Database(s) project¹⁴ we therefore propose also the networking bottom-up structure to be the decisive motive force in assembling potent aggregates of knowledge and expertise. That should be the forum whence both are delegated/constituted, the 'distributed editors' and an 'advisory board' responsible for development and co-ordination.

And that brings us inevitably again to the question of appraisal. Traditionally, or at least within the realm of the archivists' sciences, the appraisal is described or implied with an inescapable, "evil necessity" in striving after objective criteria for preservation of the records. The institutional and conceptual apperceptions and differences between the single-organisation archives and the "delegated archives"¹⁵ are the facts, that the archivists and (media-) art historians have traditionally to deal with; I think that the involvement of the digital materials produced also by individuals as we proposed within the M.A.D. Media Art Database(s) - project doesn't have to cause such a turbulences within the traditionally institution-based archives and art historians, as they seemingly do at the present moment. The projects like M.A.D. Media Art Database(s) have good chance even to release the existing archives and their short personal and other resources.

While the appraisal of the electronic records, and moreover, the 'appraisal of appraisal' have to be continually discussed and developed by the archivists, the question of the appraisal of data, or metadata requirements should be discussed with regards to the related media and the specific characters of the related disciplines. A blessing and an anathema of the archivist and the (media) art historian at the same time lies in the fact, that they are dealing (and have to deal) with a wide range of important data and information, whose specifics can not be properly in - as less as in the workflows, as we know them from the different recommendations and reference models. The conventional Offline-institutional structures and the booming new curricula remain the major keywords in these processes.

Again, if we make a strong distinction between 'folksonomy' and 'resources for appraisal' in our context, that implies that of folksonomies aren't taken as seriously as they should be. The similar misconceptions can be observed, when we are opposing the (strong business-model of) folksonomy to the 'business issues' or to the 'maintaining of what is digested / digitized' or to the questions of 'who is going to sustain the stuff' etc. I think that exactly the questions of sustainability do have to include the quite quick growth of 'stuff' on all levels, which of course includes the question of reorganizing some institutional premises, as we know them from our 'offline'-world. Accordingly, our 'analogue', 'manually' and paper-based methodologies and thinking within the archiving-, archeologically- and historical oriented disciplines are covering the scientific theories institutional and academic practices as well. However, sometimes they prevent us from growth within the societies, where the growth is usually used as a synonym for maintenance, and preservation!

5. INSTITUTIONS Closed Circuits and Open Systems

The good news within an institutional milieu is that we do not have to reinvent neither our main goals nor the already existing technical tools, nor the already functioning services; the bad news is - for some of us at least - the need for reinventing the self-conception(s) and giving up monopolies as well as rethinking the outdated institutional structures and workflows. With the point of departure in our comfortable offline world, we need to start with strong exercises in testing the - apparently of factually - more transparent and flat structures of the online world. I believe, that this may become a reality not before the gradually generation changes have been carried out.

In order to arrive at an impartial view of media art that derives its pertinence from the spheres of media theory, art history, archaeology- and archiving sciences and other disciplines, it is essential to overcome the emphatic opposition between what is 'specific to media' and what 'has become historical'.

Within art history, the directness of aesthetic experience - although tried and tested 'archaeologically' - is liable to pass over the historicity of art. The revelation of the 'innocent eye', a myth of the modern age, involves the risk of a radical shift in the focus of research towards the historicity of art institutions - which is an important component of, but ultimately not a replacement for the analysis of works / projects, which makes the question of verbal *description*, 'tagging', and the conscious multimedial (re-)presentation techniques so important.

At the same time, some parallels between our considerations and some more general standards and recommendations should be drawn here. They should show, that (firstly) the Media Art isn't that specific at all and could even serve as a model for the description of all possible

kinds of real and virtual objects. Secondly, the M.A.D. Media Art Database(s) -project requires some specific considerations concerning the appraisal-strategies that may also link our attention onto some incompatibilities between the usual institutional business-models, archivist's approaches and the needs of the Media Art and -science community. These remarks may, again, deliver some further motivation for the discussion about the meaningful involvement of the both top-down as well as the bottom-up-methods in an appraisal and preservation of the digital material in general.

The Consultative Comitee for Space Data Systems with its Reference Model for an Open Archival Information, known as OAIS (January 2002) includes a very well known and at the same time very general and brief descriptions of the recommended needs for the long-term preservation and archiving of the digital objects.

Accordingly, the structural OAIS business model appears rather simple: within an OAIS Environment, an archive is defined as an object placed between the production (producer), reception (consumer), and distribution (management), as we know them from the traditional business-concepts. If we regard the scope of the largest part of it - the administration - it appears actually all the more familiar, because it is huge, and its costs are immense. I am not sure if this very general scheme really provides a model also for a small business, for start ups and another similar opportunities for the institutions and private persons to contribute to the world wide project of preservation, archiving, and dissemination of digital information in an effective way - especially since we in the meantime all have made some experiences with the Internet tools and services from the so called Web 2.0, and even Web 3.0 -domains.

6. CATEGORISATIONS Metadata, Quotability and Scientific Record

That is the first reason why we believe that the Business Model of M.A.D. Media Art Database(s) should slightly differ in its emphasis from the OAIS Environment. At the same time, I believe that DCC Digital Curation Manual, where the taxonomy of information object classes used by OAIS is explicitly mentioned, doesn't make it incompatible with the M.A.D. Media Art Database(s) project in at least some of their mutual notified goals.

The second reason for the required discussion about the OAIS-recommendations, its basic structure and the problems of its implementation in the Media Art Databases lays is the nature of the production, reception, and distribution of media art, with its progressive convergences between those three elements, where the artist, researcher, curator and mediator as well as a distribution institution - are often all the same person. And that's why the tools and services around our preservation efforts should be understood as a constituent part of our core attention, still concentrated on contents and their contexts.

Luis Silva, a Portugal and Spain-based curator and author dedicated specially to the problems of appraisal in the digital media art stated recently that 'the most important feature of social bookmarking lies in the *categorization* of these resources by the users themselves.'¹⁶

Within the M.A.D. Media Art Database(s) project we however do not try to replace the top-down approach exclusively with the bottom-up-approach of tagging- and appraisal. We try to analyze and to understand the necessities of the future transparent and therefore credible approach to this issues, related to the Media Art.

The analyses of the Archival Information Package (AIP) within the OAIS-recommendations and the ERPANET (Electronic

Ressource Preservaton and Access Network - erpa Guidance - Ingest Strategies from September 2007 show the strong emphasis of the needs for descriptive information at almost every level before, during and after ingest of the digital material. The descriptive information convert actually the 'data' into the 'information' by making the related record readable.

That is because the M.A.D. Media Art Database(s) project places particular emphasis on gathering substantial, precise descriptions - a resource hitherto given only little attention - in spite of the fact, that the production and gathering of so called meta data are the critical nodes on almost every place - not only within the general OAIS Reference Model. From our point of view, the extant descriptions of individual objects are to be open to supplementation with a series of data which in turn will form a reliable and quotable resource of as yet impartial 'meta-data' for the compiling of new 'sources', scholarly texts, critiques, and so on: Without transparent displayed appraisal-practices and without making the descriptive, content-related meta data quotable, we can not really talk of a sound research approach to Media Art.

But what actually means: making a Media Art(work/project) quotable? Let me take as an example one of the main categories from the M.A.D. preliminary Categorisation, the Media Installation: As opposed to the traditional art history, where the most of the objects/artefacts (paintings or sculptures) are to be defined as 'only-output'-devices, the Media Art Installations have always at least three elements, that have to be 'tagged' to the piece as a basic assumption - a objective quotable - piece of information: Input / Output / between (Control unit).¹⁷ The cybernetic terms 'input' and 'output' seem to be best suited to the description of any kind of electronically audiovisual feedback, because they unequivocally characterise the recording device (microphone or video camera as an input) and the transmitting device (loudspeaker or television monitor or video projector as an

output). An audio or visual recording device can be allied to a suitable transmitting device, so that not only can a *live* image or sound be broadcast, but the current footage of a video camera can also be employed merely as a noise or as music. Conversely, the recording of a microphone can be used to produce or influence a current television image etc.

This cybernetic model enables a more systematic approach and ultimately a peaceful correlation between the analogue and digital, between continual and discrete, between signal and data, as it appears in different models of the media materialism.¹⁸ We can not immerse here in the questions of decomposition and resolution-principles of the analogue and the digital, neither can we discuss the general signal-data-dialectic in their historical dimension, as discussed by Nipkow ('Bildzerleger', 1883), by George Carey (1875), by T.A.Edison, by Nikola Tesla, nor can we reflect the terminology of Timothy Binkley (for instance) with his dialectic of converting and transcribing. But I would like at least to indicate, that the pragmatic of 'ars digitalis' (N.M.Schmitz) is some times accompanied with the ahistorical constructions, that can not necessarily be founded in what really happened within the field of art and science, and technology over the course of the years.

To me, this general problems are reflecting at the same time the mentioned media-dialectic of the Storage and Transmission. I am focusing here on transmission and 'liveness' because it can show quite easily, how the mentioned 'emphatic oppositions' may be replaced by the concept of 'fragile continuities' on historical, theoretical, and also technical level, not to mention the political and the economical one.

If we take a look at the photographic documentation of the media installation *Zerseher*¹⁹ from the Berlin-based collective 'Art+COM' for instance, we may probably be able to understand, that within the real piece, we happen to disintegrate the

image by looking at it with the help of an eye-tracking technology.

By simple denotation of the input-, output- as well as the in-between (controlling, analogue or digital) device we *begin* with adding the basic categories to the record or data. They generate the objective parameters of description that may or may not be accompanied by the subjective appraisal of the 'trusted instance' (some still call them 'Connoisseurs'). Such or similar actually developing description standards that go beyond the Dublin Core, MPEG 7, MPEG 21²⁰ and similar known standards (and still not to be subordinate under the 'macro' or 'micro'-appraisal-categories) are to enable the gradual growth of a more transparent system of information that does justice in equal measure to the work of production, distribution and data archiving sites and of individuals occupied with the creation, archiving and scholarly processing of information on and the theory of media arts.

That applies to the related sources too: In spite of the usage of both popular tagging and the scientific texts at the same time, the M.A.D. Media Art Database(s) shall be able to put them together and to keep them apart at the same time, so that the user can use benefits of both origins of the particular sources.²¹ Praxis and Theory come together without possible disadvantages of their dogmatic amalgamation.

The important initial steps so far taken by media creators, curators and thinkers could continue in a more constructive, joint and non-dogmatic way for any of the interest groups mentioned (and not mentioned) above.

References

- ¹ See Appraisal Task Force Report at:
http://www.interpares.org/book/interpares_book_e_part2.pdf. Accessed on November 22, 2007.
- ² The Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford, 1933: TASTE. III. 6. Mental perception of quality; judgement, discriminative faculty. 7. The fact or condition of liking or preferring something; inclination, liking FOR: appreciation. 8. The sense of what is appropriate, harmonious or beautiful...discernment and appreciation. Webster's Ninth New College Dictionary. Meriam-Webster Inc. Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A., 1983: TASTE. 7 (b) manner or aesthetics quality indicative of such discernment or appreciation.
- ³ Terry Eastwood, Digital Appraisal: Variations on a Theme (Keynote Address for the Conference on Appraisal in the Digital World, Rome, 15.-16. November 2007), p. 3.
- ⁴ Eastwood, p. 10.
- ⁵ „Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus“.
- ⁶ As quoted in: Stephen Wilson, "Information Arts", MIT Press, Cambridge 2002, p. 578/579. More about the subject in my essay "Das (Medien-)Kunstwerk im Fokus der Genie-, Werk-, Rezeptions- und Interaktionsästhetik, in: Werke im Wandel. Zeitgenössische Kunst zwischen Werk und Wirkung (ed. by Lars Blunck), Verlag Silke Schreiber, Munich 2005, p. 125-152.
- ⁷ See my "Closed Circuit Videoinstallationen. Ein Leitfaden zur Geschichte und Theorie der Medienkunst mit Bausteinen eines Künstlerlexikons, Logos-Verlag, Berlin 2004.
- ⁸ „Closed Circuit Videoinstallationen. Ein Leitfaden zur Geschichte und Theorie der Medienkunst mit Bausteinen eines Künstlerlexikons“, Logos Verlag, Berlin 2004. The complete version as a PDF file is available at: <http://www.slavkokacunko.com>
- ⁹ See Stephen Wilson, "Information Arts", MIT Press, Cambridge 2002.
- ¹⁰ See: Joasia Krysa / Duncan Shingleton, Kurator Software: Version Beta 1.0 (2007), in: Circulating Contexts. Curating Media / Net / Art (ed. By CONT3 XT.NET (Sabine Hochrieser, Michael Kargl, Franz Thalmair), Vienna 2007, p.25 - 32.
- ¹¹ CONT3 XT.NET (Sabine Hochrieser, Michael Kargl, Franz Thalmair).
- ¹² <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/ukoln/strategy/>. Accessed on November 24, 2007.
- ¹³ Ela Kagel, as cited in: CONT3 XT.NET, TAGGALLERY-Meta /Collections of Meta/Data in: Circulating Contexts. Curating Media / Net / Art (ed. By CONT3 XT.NET (Sabine Hochrieser, Michael Kargl, Franz Thalmair), Vienna 2007, p.43.
- ¹⁴ The referred M.A.D. Media Art Database(s) project is in the process of forming, having over 8.200 listed media artists and authors, and should be going online in Autumn of 2008 through the initial support of the German Research Foundation. At the same time, we are continually striving for additional funding on the international level.
- ¹⁵ See Eastwood, p. 5.
- ¹⁶ Louis Silva, TAGallery_006_I tag you tag me: a folksonomy of Internet Art, in: Circulating Contexts. Curating Media / Net / Art (ed. By CONT3 XT.NET (Sabine Hochrieser, Michael Kargl, Franz Thalmair), Vienna 2007, p. 46.
- ¹⁷ Feedback-systems which have the specific quality to use a part of the output-signal as an input-signal, are still representing such important and actual concepts like bio-feedback. Earlier important concepts include the representatives of radical constructivism such as H. Maturana (bio-epistemology) and von Glasersfeld (psychology), the representatives of the systems theory (von Foerster), neuropsychology (D.H. Dubel and T. N. Wiesel), Gestalt psychology (Metzger) and psychochemistry (H. Schwegler) as well as physics (James P. Crutchfield).
- ¹⁸ See writings from F. Kittler or N. Bolz from the 1990s.
- ¹⁹ See the images and the descriptions/reviews at:
http://www.artcom.de/index.php?lang=de&option=com_acprojects&id=24&page=6
- ²⁰ See the useful and up-to-dated portal at: <http://www.multimedia-metadata.info>.

²¹ The usage of the different filters and especially crawler modules can not be discussed in this paper.