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Federal Republic of Germany – selected historiography of video events and works until 1980

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From the perspective of the emergence of video in Europe, Rhineland enjoys a status as one of the most significant regions. It was the location of the early or earliest exhibitions and events, video galleries, international survey exhibitions as well as the private video art collections and production facilities. An impressive series of events took place there, the high concentration of which was certainly due to the political situation in the then separated Germany. The emerging, soon to become vibrant art market in Rhineland and the neighborhood of (video-) artist centers in Belgium, Holland and France contributed to the fruitful fundaments for emerging video experimentations. Moreover, the world's first generation of "video (art) academics" was educated there: Ursula Wevers was the first head of a video department of the Arts Academy Düsseldorf (1976-1986), while Nam June Paik´s appointment at the academy in Düsseldorf (1978) contributed, on the other side, to the perpetuation of the already deeply rooted local Fluxus-tradition with its bias towards indeterminism and variability.

The first artistic experiments with the television medium took place in the context of the Fluxus movement. Wulf Herzogenrath recapped the nature of these experiments with the title of his article about the beginnings of video art in Germany and Europe: "Try to get rid of the damn box".[1] Indeed, the often-aggressive attitude towards the broadcast television (symbols) belonged almost to the "good manners", as it were, of the Fluxus artists. Already in 1958, Wolf Vostell produced an assemblage entitled "No. 1 TV-dé-collage", which included six TV devices that have been put behind the white canvas; the latter was zipped six times to reveal the TV-"snow" behind. The US-American Fluxus-artist George Brecht, who lived in Germany since 1970, produced in 1959 a concept for an interactive TV-installation supposed to consist of nine running TV-sets put together to form a video wall ("Television Piece"). Further on, on May 19th 1963, Wolf Vostell wrapped in a TV-set with barbed wire dug: "TV-burial" was the title of his happening staged on the farm of George Segal in Brunswick, New Jersey. On the same day, Vostell also first screened his 16mm-"Dé-coll/age"-film entitled "Sun in Your Head" (1963), showing distorted television images from a screen. The screening took place during the Yam Festival organized by the Smolin Gallery. Three days later, on May 22nd, the Smolin Gallery in New York City opened an exhibition by Wolf Vostell entitled "Television DÈ-Coll/age". It was the first U.S. environmental installation using (six) TV- set (s).

Wolf Vostell realized with his "Homage to Henry Ford and Jacqueline Kennedy" another "dé - coll/age"-installation as a conceptually immediate (1963), but technically deferred (1967) video-reaction to a world-wide televisual broadcasted assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963: Besides the used photos, canvas, microphone, car door, spaghetti and rubber hoses, Vostell applied 1967 also closed-circuit video.

„Wolf Vostell – Elektronisch" was the title of the exhibition by Wolf Vostell at the Neue Galerie im Alten Kurhaus in Aachen in 1970, which served as an argument in Vostell's proposal to found in Aachen, close to the borders of Flanders and Wallonia, a "laboratory to research intermedia phenomena between art and science". He realized there the video installation "Grashoppers" (1969/70), an assemblage containing a two-part photo collage (280 x 800 cm) showing a loving lesbian couple on one side and Russian tanks rolling into Prague tank during the "Prague Spring" in 1968 on the other. Above the photos were set the signs from a meteorological chart of the USA, and

below them the row of 20 TV-sets showing the live video footage of any viewer who happened to fall within the video camera's field of view. During the exhibition, the collector Peter Ludwig purchased this piece, which marked the beginning of the Neue Galerie-video collection. With this step, the Neue Galerie was the first museum in North Rhine-Westphalia to collect "video art".[2]

The Korean-born Nam June Paik lived in Germany during his early Fluxus-phase between 1956-1963. His subsequent "Exposition of Music. Electronic Television" (Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, 11th to 20th March 1963) stands for the first recorded public appearance of manipulated television sets in the artistic context in Germany. The arrangement with thirteen second-hand TV-sets was often (somewhat trivialized) referred to as the first exhibition of "video art".[3] One of TV-pieces was titled "Zen for TV" – a manipulated cathode-ray tube TV, turned on side and presenting a thin vertical "slit" with the TV-"snow". Another piece entitled "Participation TV I" (1963) consisted of another TV with a microphone on a stand in front of it; the viewer could observe and manipulate the "sparking patterns" of video signal on screen by using the microphone. The existing possibilities of spontaneous and intuitive manipulation of live electronic images and sounds were obviously in the focus of attention throughout the cited exhibition in Wuppertal. Throughout this fertile period, also known as "Action Music" (Edith Decker), Paik was essentially influenced by the Zen Buddhist approach of John Cage (mediated qua Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki) and his motto "Compose, without letting your ego to play!".

"Exposition of Music. Electronic Television" featured but a peak of Paik´s formation period in Germany, which begun in the "Gallery 22" of Jean-Pierre Wilhelm in Düsseldorf, on a Friday, November the 13th 1959, at 8 p.m.: In his performance "Hommage à John Cage – Music for Tapes and Piano", Paik used for the first time radio and magnetic (audio) tape as sources of noise and the overturning of a piano as a sound event. On October 6th 1960, he gave another, more famous "Hommage à John Cage" in Mary Bauermeister`s studio in Cologne, in which he, among other things, shampooed John Cage´s hair and cut his tie according to custom of the local carnival's "Weiberfastnacht". Paik´s engagement within the growing Fluxus-community continued as he met Joseph Beuys at the opening of the exhibition of the group "Zero" in the Galeria Schmela in Düsseldorf on 5th of July 1961.[4] The group "Zero" (Mack, Piene, Uecker) has left a lasting impression on Paik, just like their international counterparts "*Nouveau Realistes*" in France (Klein, Armand, Christo; Yves Klein was married with Günther Uecker of Zero"-Group). In the same year (26th of October through 6th of November), Paik took part in the performance of Karlheinz Stockhausen´s famous performance "Originale". Stockhausen again provided the connection to cellist and performance artist Charlotte Moorman, who founded New York´s Annual Avant Garde Festival in 1963: This was Paiks perhaps most important "bridge" to New York, where he continued to work intensively with Moorman and the American (Neo-) Avantgarde right after his Wuppertal exhibition closed and he moved (via Tokyo) to New York. After further participations in Fluxus-events in Düsseldorf and Wiesbaden, Paik performed again in Wuppertal, Aachen, Bochum, Berlin and at several other places in Germany.

In 1976, Wulf Herzogenrath curated Paik´s well-attended first European retrospective exhibition in Kölnischer Kunstverein in Cologne (with catalogue "Nam June Paik. Werke 1946-1976"). A year later, at the opening of "documenta 6" in Kassel, Paik´s first satellite TV-broadcast took place (together with Joseph Beuys and [also initiated by] Douglas Davis). In 1978, Norbert Kricke, the rector of the Düsseldorf Art Academy, appointed Paik as a visiting professor. Paik marked his arrival at the Academy (and his return to Germany) with two audio-visual and performative events: the video performance "Video Venus" (3rd and 4th July) and the piano duo with Joseph Beuys "Homage to George Maciunas" (7th of July) took place as actual "audits" for the subsequent professorship that shall last for the next seventeen years.[5] Paik´s critical distance to the technological optimism (not only) of the 1960s and his ideological distance to the critical cultural and social theories of that time ("1968"s) resulted in his quite unique and epidemic pragmatism and "futurology".

The Cologne artist Tomas Schmit – Paik´s important assistance in setting up his exhibition in Wuppertal in 1963 – has organized on 20th of July 1964 in Aachen the "Fluxus-Festival der Neuen Kunst", an "aniconic" event on a politically charged date, exactly 20 years after Stauffenberg´s failed assassination attempt on Hitler. The event underlined the nexus of Fluxus and so-called Aachen´s avant-garde: It featured, besides Paik and Schmit also Wolf Vostell, Joseph Beuys, Bazon Brock, Stanley Brouwn, Henning Christiansen, Robert Filliou, Ludwig Gosewitz, Arthur Köpcke, Ben Vautier, Emmett Williams and Eric Andersen. Not present in Auditorium Maximum was then 24 years old, Aachen-born Wolf Kahlen, who moved already in 1960 to study in Berlin. One of Kahlen´s first "television sculptures" consisted of the mirrored TV-tube, so that the viewer could see herself instead of a film or the usual television. First exhibited in the artist´s studio at Ehrenbergstraße 11 in West Berlin, "TV-Spiegel" (1969) can in retrospect be seen as a kind of "nature-analogous" predecessor of a live video installation, i. e. without the use of a video camera.

In the same year, during a residency at the Villa Romana in Florence, Kahlen presented under the title "Moon TV / Enlightenment" (1969), a television set placed on a stone pedestal in the garden of the villa in such a way that the viewer saw the full moon in the sky directly above the screen. The television program showed the moon landing live, allowing viewers to simultaneously see the moon in the sky and the camera image of the astronaut exiting the landing pod.[6]

"Young Rock" (1971), another early "video sculpture" by Wolf Kahlen, may be set in the contexts of ambivalent artistic relationship towards the (institution of) television: A slab of granite was placed on top of a TV set and glued fragment of the same slab on the screen. The silent TV picture was reduced to a pale grey flickering.

In addition to the already outlined circumstances, the specialized video production and distribution facilities contributed significantly to the process of emergence of video art in West Germany. In 1971, "Video Forum" was initiated by Wolf Kahlen in the Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (NBK) and became the first collection of video art in Germany. Kahlen first realized the video performance series "Seven Reversible Processes"[7] in summer of 1971 in "Haus am Waldsee" in Berlin.[8] The credits at the end of the tape show „Videothek des neuen Berliner Kunstvereins", which makes indeed the year 1971 the founding date of today´s "Video Forum". In 1972, Wolf Vostell joined to the project, and the first inventory catalog was published.[9] By early hosting of Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell and Wolf Kahlen, NBK in Berlin established a tradition of both theoretical and practical nexus of video art and the Neo-Dada and neo-avant-garde movements, which in part resembles the mentioned circumstances from Rhineland. Also in West Berlin, Mike Steiner (1941-2012) opened in 1970 his "artist hotel", followed by foundation of a private studio gallery (*Studiogalerie*) for video and performance.[10]

As early as 1975, Kahlen received his first solo exhibition in the house on Lützowplatz in Berlin with 25 (!) video works, which is a quite unique historical reference to the artist´s intensive preoccupation with the electronic medium already during the first half of the 1970s. In his video tape and the installation „S.C.H.A.F.E."[11], the main element became the behavioral manipulations, when Kahlen documented the process of accumulation and dissolution of a structure caused by 106 sheep: The video camera successively recorded a group of sheep gathered in a meadow. The food was distributed in the form of the letters SHEEP, so that the animals formed the corresponding letters with their bodies before the group of animals broke up again after a certain time.[12] Kahlen realized this work in the summer of 1975 during his first stay in Poland, as he also did some of his graphic works, which brought the German artist the prize of the International Graphic Biennale in Kraków.[13] The video tape „S.C.H.A.F.E." was then finalized during the first German-French symposium on "Foto-Film-Video" in Neuenkirchen (Nord of Northrhine-Westphalia) between 31st of May and 21st of June

1975. The symposium was a result of the projects regularly conducted in the 1970s by the Neue Galerie in Aachen and the German-French Youth Association, focused on working artistically with technological media.[14]

In the second half of the 1970s in particular, Kahlen expanded his artistic commitment through several visits and exhibitions in Poland, which were followed by invitations from Polish artists to Berlin and West Germany. Hence, Kahlen´s work has a special relevance in the context of the emergence of video art in the then divided Europe. On 8th of December 1976, Wolf Kahlen gave one of the first video performances by an artist from Western Europe in Poland during the "Offerta 76" Festival in Lublin. The live video installation and performance entitled "Noli me videre" (1976) problematized the relationship between the (one´s own) body and the invisible "live field" of a video camera: The artist´s attempts to move outside the field of view of the camera and thus avoid surveillance[15] could be "read" on several semantic levels – as references to the surveillance regimes on both sides of the "iron curtain" of the time; as a formal exercise in the sense of his earlier group of works; as the artist´s existential self-awareness – or also with regard to the religious connotation contained in the title and elaborated conceptually and performatively.[16] The event was important in the context of German-Polish exchange in the field of artist´s video and performance art.

The tendency to reflect on the tension between the electronic transmission and the recorded natural elements or animals was explored even more intense in the live video installation "Dog Territory", realized for the first time in August 1977 in the Haus am Waldsee in Berlin.[17] In a subsequent series of video installations and performances, collectively titled "I Can Do What I Want" (1977-1980), Kahlen included bees, flies, and snails, respectively, by communicating the animals´ material presence directly with the "intangible" medium video. The process character of the respective performance or installation was significantly influenced and displayed by the life cycle of the animals in the artificially "medialized" environments with audience participation.[18]

The live video installations summarized here and their exhibition locations by Wolf Kahlen make it clear, that a considerable proportion of his exhibition activity – not least because of the then still isolated position of West Berlin and its art scene – took place outside Germany: in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Poland or also in the USA. Kahlen was also the first West German artist to disregard the usual cultural-political practice by realizing the first video performance in East Berlin in Jürgen Schweinebraden´s gallery together with the East German painter A. R. Penck. In this respect, he is regarded as the first West German artist to have realized a work with video in East Germany.[19]

Back in Rhineland, an important event related to the cultural-political practice of the broadcast television took place with the piece "Black Gate Cologne" (1968/69, 47 min), a live-TV-show with audience participation by Otto Piene and Aldo Tambellini. The artists "appropriated" the television studio and exploited it in an artistic action. This event is considered to be the first television show realized by visual artists. A 23-minute version was broadcasted on WDR on January 26th 1969.

A historical importance in the artistic appropriation of the television as a distribution medium belongs, however, without doubt to Gerry Schum. He founded the so-called "Fernsehgalerie Gerry Schum" in Berlin in 1968 (closed in 1970): The both television "exhibitions" (screenings) entitled "Land Art" (1969) and "Identifications" (1970) were created in cooperation with Ursula Wevers and broadcasted on the West German public television stations.[20] The private distribution of video art went on with "videogalerie Schum" which Schum opened together with Ursula Wevers on 8th of October 1971 in Ratingerstrasse 37 in Düsseldorf (closed in 1973). Ursula Wevers opened shortly after her divorce from Gerry Schum on September 2nd 1972 the gallery "Projection" in the Roonstrasse 38 in Cologne. It was the first gallery in Germany whose program mainly consisted of

videos and artist films. From July 1974, Wevers formed a gallery community with Rolf Ricke, who again helped Harald Szeemann a couple of years earlier with his "Kassler networks" to become the curator of "documenta 5" in 1972.

In 1972, there were still, as it seems, only six exhibition halls in Germany that possessed video equipment: the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum in Krefeld, the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne, the Städtisches Museum in Mönchengladbach, the Museum Folkwang in Essen, the Institut für moderne Kunst in Nuremberg and the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart. Facing this situation, on October 1st of 1974, Ingrid Oppenheim Studio in Cologne opened – a video production studio with a gallery. In 1980, the Video Collection of the Kunstmuseum Bonn was founded due to the permanent loan from Ingrid Oppenheim: Some 400 works by pioneers of video art were included.[21]

In November of 1973, Video cooperation of the European Cultural Institutes (VIDEO COOPERATION EUROPÄISCHER KULTURINSTITUTE [VCEK]) has been founded at a conference at Museum Folkwang in Essen. The goal was to tackle together all the subject-specific, material, and technical problems emerging out of introducing and using video technology in the institutions and their activities, as well as to begin joint production based on the guidelines set out by a program committee. The Folkwang Museum was in this time already in possession of a fully equipped editing studio for video: It was set up there already in 1969, which made it the first German museum to also be a location for producing video.[22]

Just like the specifically close relationship of the production, reception and distribution of the emerging video art, so belonged also the interpenetration of video performance, video tape and video installation to the specifics of early video works in Germany. "Calling to the Point of Exhaustion" (1972) was the first videotape by Jochen Gerz (German artist, that lived from 1966-2007 in France, thereafter in Ireland) that serves well as a prominent example of a piece that functions both as a video performance-, -tape and one channel installation. The video is showing the recordings of a performance in the open countryside where the artist, standing 60 meters away from the camera, keeps shouting "Hallo" until he goes hoarse and breaks off the performance.[23]

As outlined above, the decisive video artists followed a seemingly paradoxical conceptual or perceptual, however non-visual line[24]: Narration, interaction and process joined often in "one act", although being "stretched in time". A good and well-known example is Imi Knoebel´s only videotape "Projektion X" (1971-2, b&w, without sound, 39:30 min). It was one of few works made in 1970-71 that were based on outdoor projections. During a nocturnal drive through the sleeping city of Darmstadt, a large, luminous "X" was projected from the vehicle onto the walls of buildings. The tape was one of the few productions of Gerry Schum, specifically geared towards the video medium.[25]

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Video art in West Germany and Europe was formed in the artistic context of the contemporary (neo-) avant-garde tendencies including the Concept- and Land Art, Arte Povera, Body- and Process art, and the more noticeable climate of the Fluxus movement and Neo-Dada. The Swiss curator Harald Szeemann (who helped Schum already with his "Fernsehgalerie") curated in 1969 the exhibition "Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form"[26] at the Kunsthalle Bern with close involvement of Konrad Fischer, a gallerist from Düsseldorf, who was in charge for several important exhibitions of artists working with video. "When Attitudes Become Form (Works – Concepts – Processes – Situations – Information) travelled soon to Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld (9th of May through 15th of June 1969). Paul Wember, the director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum and Krefeld Museums (Haus Lange and Haus Esters) not only brought both Szeeman´s exhibition to Krefeld, but he was also decisive for building up the museum´s video collection with Gerry Schum and Ursula Wevers, making the first purchase already in 1971.[27]

The "Live in Your Head"-show was also regarded as a preparatory milestone to the "documenta 5" (1972), in which Szeemann has put the special emphasis to performance, happening, video and photography under the motto "Befragung der Realität – Bildwelten heute". The actual causalities were however a bit slightly more complex: Shortly before Szeeman´s exhibition "When Attitudes Become Form", another important exhibition, "Op Losse Schroeven. Situaties en cryptostructuren" was organized by Edy de Wilde and Dieter Honisch and it took place first in Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, (15th of March through 27th of April 27 1969), before it was subsequently shown at the Museum Folkwang in Essen under the title "Hidden Structures". The exhibition contained basically the same team of artists and the same attitude like Szeeman´s "Attitude"-exhibition, but the flair of the characters was not the same. In retrospect, the "Attitude"-exhibition in Bern (and Krefeld etc.) is considered more important, not least because an accompanying catalog was published. However, according to Wulf Herzogenrath, it is quite possible that the effect and importance of the parallel shows in Essen and Amsterdam were actually much greater.

A bit later (6th of November 1970 through 6th of January 1971), Harald Szeemann curated the exhibition "Happening und Fluxus – Materialien 1959-1970" in the Cologne art association ("Kölnischer Kunstverein"), which not only brought a huge debt to the local institution, but which also helped the curator to realize that an exhibition based on happenings could not be a concept for a 100-day "documenta 5". It was hence a kind of a trial run, so he then came up with a completely different concept for the "documenta 5". This, later quite mythologized "documenta" (especially through its pseudo "re-make" in 1997 with "documenta 10"), received actually quite horrible critiques at the time. It was a circumstance, which made its curator Harald Szeeman quasi-unemployable for 3 or so subsequent years; this again brought him to "turn a table" and propose that he wouldn´t need an institution, and that he can curate freely. It is an irony of history, that this very case of the mythicized figure of a "free curator" was (mis-) used three decades later, a year before "documenta 10", when Paul O´Neill´s proclaimed "curatorial turn".

Back to video: "The People´s documenta" was the title of six hours of raw documentary footage showing visitors to the "documenta 5" being questioned by the video group "Telewissen" (founded in 1970) from Darmstadt (not far from Kassel in Hessen) – the place, where Nam June Paik participated in the 13th International Holiday Courses for "New Music" back in 1958 (with Wolfgang Fortner, John Cage, David Tudor, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Mary Bauermeister). The simultaneous playback possible with the video equipment, then still unfamiliar to the general public, was a productive aid in stimulating communicative situations in the public domain. The German video group "Telewissen" followed up its activities by participating in "Projekt '74" (Cologne) and "documenta 6" in 1977.

The emerging video practice in Germany took place in an obvious constant exchange with contemporary (inter-) national events: the conference "Open Circuits: An International Conference on the Future of Television" in the Museum of Modern Art in New York (January 1974) was quite an important one, as it was the first international conference to explore the cultural potential of television and resulted in the first important book on the video medium as an art form.[28] "Projekt '74 – Aspekte internationaler Kunst am Anfang der 70er Jahre"[29] was an exhibition that took place in several institutions in Cologne from 6th of July through 8th of September 1974. This was the first comprehensive video art exhibition in Europe, based in part (with 62 artists) on the exhibition "Circuit: A Video Invitational" held at the Everson Museum in 1973. The exhibition supplemented another 40 German and European artists, including the works of Claus Böhmler, Heinz Breloh, Rebecca Horn, Ulrike Rosenbach, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Group "Telewissen" and "Video Audio Medien (Futurekids)". The production-group of "Lijnbaancentrum" in Rotterdam was issued also a 60-minute catalogue as video tape.

Claus Böhmler for example developed five video installation concepts for the exhibition in Cologne,

including closed circuit video installations that aimed to explore a wide range of possibilities for using the appropriate media technology in a "space-expanding" manner. However, as early as 1970 Böhmler realized a live video installation ("Union Jack"/ "Video-Object"), which created a "spatial construction" or "spatial drawing" of the British flag with the help of a live video camera, a connected monitor and two mirror surfaces. It found its pendants in numerous spatial mirror and video constructions by Peter Weibel, Joan Jonas, David Smithson and later also by Carles Pujol, Buky Schwartz and many other artists until today.

Heinz Breloh, also present in Cologne 1974, used the element of the permanently panning closed circuit video camera as an essential part of his video installations, which he realized in 1974/75. In "Unknown" ("Covering a Room with Two Video Cameras", 1974), Breloh had suspended one video camera from a freely swinging cable, capturing images of the surroundings, while another camera shooted this swinging camera. The footages from both cameras could be seen simultaneously on a monitor; according to their different positions, they showed a rapidly changing and abstract or a clear and static imagery. A similar use of electronic recording devices for "scanning" of the environment, which resulted in part in a "panoptic" vision, was shortly before demonstrated by Michael Snow or Steina Vasulka, however in an outwardly controlled form and speed. Breloh combined his interest in "machine vision" with a more controlled data acquisition also in the video installation "Black-Grey-White" (1974).

A decisive role for creating a video department, a real video exhibition section within the "Projekt '74" in Kölnischer Kunstverein in Cologne played the then freshly (end of 1972) appointed director Wulf Herzogenrath. Coming from the Museum Folkwang in Essen, Herzogenrath found the situation in Kunstverein with over 100.000 Deutsche Mark debt, inherited due to Harald Szeeman´s mentioned exhibition "Happening und Fluxus" in 1970-71. In any case, Herzogenrath´s colleagues and co-organizators of "Projekt ´74" happened to throw the entire videotape section out of the catalogue because they somehow found it "unworthy", not least because of such small illustrations and videotapes. The video installations were instead found "okay".[30]

At the same time, and successively, the rubrics of some early video exhibitions in Germany showed clearly a shifting the emphasis from video performances and video tapes to video installations: "Projekt ´74" in Cologne (program of finished tapes, video installations, video activities), "documenta 6" in Kassel 1977 (video installations / sculptures, video library), "Videowochen Essen '79"[31] (video tapes, video performances, video demonstrations, video installations), "Video art in Germany 1963-1982 in Cologne et al. (video tapes, video installations, video objects, video performances). The video installation and video performances as well the videographic recordings and live videos (closed circuit) advanced ever since to the central techniques and (video-) "genres" of contemporary art "itself".[32]

Among the curators of that period (who were by no means "free" from firm institutional appointments like it is the case today), Wulf Herzogenrath contributed decisively to the establishment of video art as a new artistic medium in Germany. Apart from his contribution to "Projekt ´74" and the Paik-retrospective in 1976, he was also responsible for the section "Video art installations /sculptures" of the "documenta 6" 1976 in Kassel (curated by Manfred Schneckenburger), which, not least because of video-contributions, became a nickname "Medien-documenta". Shown were video installations by Vito Acconci, Peter Campus, Dan Graham, Rebecca Horn, Joan Jonas, Beryl Korot, Richard Kriesche, Antonio Muntadas, Nam June Paik, Friederike Pezold, Ulrike Rosenbach and Bill Viola, i. e. five US-American, two German, two Austrian, one US-Spanish and one US-Korean artist. This was accompanied by a much more extensive video tape program.

Like the current research on video art, also the research related to the body, sexuality and gender is characterized by theoretical and methodological diversity, always including both essentialist and non-foundational approaches. Germany's role and meaning in this context became increasingly evident from the mid-1970s onwards. Ulrike Rosenbach is an outstanding representative of feminist (video) art and one of the first German artists to consistently deal with the medium of video.[33] As a student in Joseph Beuys' master class at the Düsseldorf Academy, Rosenbach (previously allied with Gerry Schum and later with Klaus vom Bruch) was encouraged to start working on her own with videos at the exhibition "Project '71" in the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in 1971, when she first experienced the then actual American video works. Her first videos were created already in 1972. They were usually shorter pieces dealing intensively with her own role as a woman in society and should be understood as (partly ironic-sarcastic) self-portraits.

In "Wrapping with Julia" (1972), the artist tied herself and her daughter together with transparent gauze bandages, accompanied by the musical sounds of breathing; in "Drawing Hood", another video tape from the same year, Rosenbach documented the work process with the video camera, whose footage could be instantly inspected on the monitor and then altered. In "Sorry Mister", a video tape made during the "Prospekt 74" exhibition in Cologne, we see Rosenbach´s hand continuously slapping a thigh to produce an angry red mark on the skin over the course of the performance. During this brief but important autobiographic phrase, Rosenbach developed a critical and historic awareness, which is soon to be reflected in her video actions.

It was above all the live video performances "Don´t Believe I´m an Amazon" (1975) and "Reflections on the Birth of Venus" (1976) – both re-designed later for video tape –, which brought Rosenbach international acclaim. In the former work, she is seen shooting 15 arrows at a reproduction of "Madonna im Rosenhang" by Stephan Lochner. The artist's face is also recorded with a second camera and is crossfaded so that the arrows also "hit" her simultaneously on the video tape. The latter "Venus"-work used a life-sized projection of Sandro Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* as a background in front of which the artist turns around on own axis in a black and white leotard, at times merging visually with the artwork. The formal solution of the interlocking and crossfading of one's own body with specifications and examples from art history is one of the means of film and video language that is continuously used by artists. The specific context of feminist art and the inherent work with the distribution of gender roles is also found at the same time in the works of for example Valie Export or the American Hermine Freed (born 1940) (*Art Herstory*, 1974), both of which Rosenbach was aware of early on from her travels to the United States.[34]

A quite famous series of gender-related video-taped performances / performances for video was publicly presented by Serbian artist Marina Abramović and her German partner Ulay (Frank Uwe Leysipen) in Galleria Comunale d´Arte Moderna, Bologna: "Imponderabilia", "Expansion in Space", "Light/Dark", "Relation in Movement", "Relation in Time".

In 1975, the first pirate TV-station in Cologne was founded by the video artists Ulrike Rosenbach, Marcel Odenbach and Klaus vom Bruch. "ATV" (Alternative Television) transmitted the self-produced video programs within a distance of just a few hundred meters. The(ir) early "video activism" went hand in hand with the adjusted conceptual working and production methods developed by the emerging video artists, and they excelled above all in the field of video installations. It led to a relatively new type of artist, designer and "entrepreneur", whose imagination took place initially in theoretical statements and rather abstract[35] To the early temporary mediation projects belongs also the important video tape edition or video art magazine "Infermental", founded by Gábor Bódy and Veruschka Bódy Baksa-Soós in 1980 (Budapest and Cologne, 1980-86). They were consequently co-responsible for several publications on video art as well.[36]

The often jointly exhibiting "trio" Rosenbach, Odenbach and vom Bruch may be regarded as the first internationally recognized German video artists of their generation. The role of curator Wulf Herzogenrath cannot be overestimated in this context. Marcel Odenbach´s early video performances, -tapes and -installations were shown internationally and supported through the transnational European programs right from their emergence. His earliest video tapes mostly consisted of a single shot (frame), and technical manipulation was usually limited to a few zooms and moves of the camera; time was structured essentially by the use of the soundtrack, not least because that was practically the only plane upon which it was technically possible to "compose" at that period – but also because the resulting aesthetic was what the artistic concept demanded. By showing not the whole but only parts of the body, such as the hands, works like "The Eternally Creative Hands, or For all Art Historians" (1977) and others anticipated the incomplete vision of the beholder that would become a major theme in later pieces using more advanced technology. Odenbach´s video tapes "Consumption-Communication" (1976-7), "Just like that, like every evening, and then suddenly different after all (1977), "Keeping up one's good mood, or the Spoilsports (1977) and "Artists´ City, or Sit back and have some Tea (1978) were all produced without a video editing unit. That the technical prerequisites then were not yet given, does not seem to have presented Odenbach with any insurmountable obstacles in the development and re-alization of his artistic concepts (Odenbach profited production-wise from Ingrid Oppenheim Studio in Cologne). Out of the depths of his then coalescing artistic disposition, a critical, polemical and "dialogic" structure was crystallizing, and this found its first expression in the simple time structure of the early tapes. Precisely elaborated concepts involving "parallel montage" were realized by means of what is best termed "camera editing". Out of such "dichotomic" structure evolved then many two-monitor- or two-projector-video installations.

Odenbach addressed in that phase the current political affairs and events for the first time. The RAF (Red Army Fraction) kidnapping of Hanns Martin Schleyer in Cologne or of Peter Lorenz in Berlin, visibly referred to in photographs of the "Keeping up one's good mood, or the Spoilsports" (1977), that was produced in Studio Oppenheim in Cologne.[37] In the following year, Odenbach gave a video performance with the same title in the then new opened international center for performance "De Appel" in Amsterdam (7th of June 1978 at 8.30 pm), using the mentioned video tape. In 1977, also Klaus vom Bruch referred with his „The Schleyer Tape" to the abduction and murder of the German industrialist Hanns Martin Schleyer through RAF terrorists; the video tape was made up almost exclusively of TV footage, referring also to the death of several terrorists in dubious circumstances in Stammheim prison in Stuttgart.

Raymond Bellour[38] emphasized as one of the authentic characteristics of video art in Europe in distinction to its American counterpart, its profound inspiration by the (cinema) film. Should that property apply, then Odenbach counts as one of the typical representatives of European video art. The Hitchcock-quotes had already become a significant point of reference for him between 1979 and 1982, when Odenbach was intensely preoccupied with cinematic structures in the video-editing context. But even more significant – along with his continuous international presence as German video artist since the late 1970s – is the early and uninterrupted production of video installations since the mid-1970s. In this respect, Odenbach represents rather a prominent exception that confirms the rule: Video installations remained a "genre" of video art, which rarely brought commercial success to their creators. Apart from dozens of not-realized concepts, Odenbach realized until 1980 seven video installations: "Consuming my own criticism" (1976-78)[39], "The border" (1977-78)[40], "The untruth of reason" (1978-79)[41], "Stealing the other person's time or not using buzzwords" (1978-79)[42], "The lostness of the player or the contradiction of memories" (1979-80)[43], "Like I'm constantly talking to walls" (1980)[44], and "From the Tower of Babel on the banks of the Rhine" (1980).[45]

The emergence of video art in Europe should be after all conceived as an important cultural process that justifies a thorough examination on its own. However (or hence), the diversity of impacts that this emergence still generates requires (re-) consideration of transatlantic networks - in both directions. In the exhibition catalogue "The Second Link. Viewpoints on Video in the Eighties" (1983), the editor Lorne Falk insinuated another (often-quoted and -accepted) specific difference between the video art in Europe and in North America: „In Europe, the determination of the video artist continues to reside primarily within the art context; in North America, there is a blurring between video for art's sake and video for broadcast situations."[46] This or such opinion may help us sometimes to make our specific point, not although, but because it is a simplification.[47] In a similar manner, the two "inaugural" events related to the public usage of television tools in Germany or by German artist clearly confirm the relevance of the transatlantic link: The first appearance of an artistic installation using- and focused primarily on television sets (Vostell´s exhibition in New York in May 1963) and the first appearance of "prepared" and partially manipulable television sets in the artistic context in Germany (Paik´s exhibition in Wuppertal in March 1963).

Just one example of a German expat in the US should suffice to underline the two-way influence in the transatlantic link: Dieter Froese (1937-2006) made an early contribution to the formal-technical investigations of complex multimedia installations and performances and can be regarded as a pioneer of the problem of surveillance in video art. His influence on Bill Beirne, Tony Oursler, Julia Scher, Willoughby Sharp, Francesc Torres, Alexander Hahn and many other New York and US-video artists has been confirmed by them many times. Froese studied painting in Berlin before he emigrated to the United States in 1969. His basic interest in the possibilities of artistic-analytical intervention in the socio-political conditions first manifested themselves in his early video performances and installations, in which the "media volatilities" were the focus of interest. Froese researched the processes at the events – some of which lasted several hours – that usually involved also participants.

The first two sets of works "Media Transient" and "Re-Stage" were among the fundamental ones artistic investigations of this kind: "Media Transient Performance", performed on 15th of May 1973 at 112 Greene Street Gallery in New York, included an activity that was videotaped and then transposed from one to the other media. The monitor image was photographed with a Polaroid camera, the photos were projected onto a drawing board, on which a hand drawing was made, to be finally interpreted verbally by a critic. Not only the media "transposition", but also its potential (observed in stages) simultaneity and "immediacy" were subjected to analytical observation.

The "Re-Stage" group undertook more human behavior than "Media Transient" group by engaging engaged in the re-enactments of certain gestures. One of these works was the closed-circuit video installation entitled "TV/tv (a Re-action)", which Froese realized on 30th December 1975, at the meanwhile historical 3 Mercer Street Gallery in New York. Dieter Froese´s exhibitions, events and video installations made guest appearances in the most important museum institutions, as was the case with the first execution of his live video installation "Stefan Loop Re-Stage" at the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, in February 1975. The re-enactment of human behavior (putting on a hat in this case) and transposing it through different media was also reflected in some of Froese's other works from this period, such as "Induction-Convention", or three other video installations from the same series, "90 Degree Loop Re-Stage" (1974/76) and "Surveillance, Re-Stage" (1976).

8

In what has been said so far, we deal here with a historically extremely relevant period, that took place, however, *before* the first retrospective exhibitions and academic works focusses on video art occurred. For example, the retrospective exhibition on video art in Germany took place in 1982 in Cologne and in Hamburg: "Videokunst in Deutschland. 1963 – 1982. (Videobänder, Videoinstallationen, Video-Objekte, Videoperformances)"; the first anthology in German tongue concerned with the international development of "Art and Video" ("Kunst und Video", edited by Bettina Gruber and Maria Vedder) was published only in 1983; the first dissertation on video art in Germany (a Nam June Paik-monograph) was defended by Edith Decker only in 1985 and published (in German) in 1988; the first international large-scale retrospective on video art in the world took place in 1989 in Cologne, Berlin and Zurich ("Video-Skulptur – retrospektiv und aktuell", conceived, curated and edited by Wulf Herzogenrath and Edith Decker).

In his early and rather programmatic text "Video as an Artistic Medium" (1974), Wulf Herzogenrath presented three areas of the medium of video for discussion with a view to its media-specific advantages: 1. the immediate control of the picture, 2. the numerous electronic possibilities and 3. the image display on monitors. As an outstanding achievement were particularly presented the direct inclusion of reality, communication and participation in the artistic process that emerged through the closed-circuit video installations.[48] Besides, there are three main areas the artistic use of video, in which video was used "media-appropriate and artistically": 1. "Video as a mirror", 2. Video as a medium of documentation and 3. Video as an electronic medium.[49] The importance of (self-)reflective "mirror function" of the medium was fed for the historiographers of video art not least from the interdisciplinary interest in this problem. Following the early curatorial, systematizing and historicizing approaches, arose in the further course of the disciplinary diversification, there arose meanwhile broad-based research focused on the media-, theater and performance-, image-, art and cultural studies-premises, manifestations and consequences of "closed circuit", "liveness", (re-)mediation up to "immediation".[50]

The attempts to explore a special video aesthetic have always been shaped by the corresponding video politics, ethics, epistemology and ontology. They have, again, always been characterized by at least ideologically tinged meta-debates. Therefore, this problem must also be reflected upon critically, also as a political issue. What is meant by this is the policy of disciplinary diversification, in which the medium of video and video art have remained historiographically slightly underexposed despite or because of their current ubiquity. The labeling of video as "hybrid" and video (art) research as "transdisciplinary" confirm the fact (*ex negativo*) that we are still in the beginnings of a transdisciplinarity regarding the video research.

The pioneers of German-speaking video art research such as Wulf Herzogenrath, Peter Moritz Pickshaus, Friedemann Malsch and Helmut Friedel shared in their texts from the 1970s and especially the 1980s their reluctance to theorize or deeper historize video art, which can certainly also be justified by practical curatorial and other educational priorities of the times.[51] Nevertheless, a certain theoretical skepticism persisted also after that period, which is perhaps most clearly manifested in the work of Dieter Daniels – now for a good three decades. The question he asked back in 1987 – "What keeps the provisional video art in this state of limbo?" – can be explained functionally by the attempts at demarcation that were virulent at the time (video film, video computer) and genetically by the historical fact that video art – especially in Europe – experienced its "breakthrough" at about the same time as architectural and artistic postmodernism.[52] A quarter of a century later, Daniels offered a retroanalytic explanation, recurring in various texts, which ultimately confirmed the early theoretical skepticism, but which itself became theoretically more specific by historiographically explaining the "unspecificity" of the medium of video. "Indeed," says Daniels, "there is no video theory equivalent to the video practice of the 1970s/80s/90s in the sense that there is radio theory, photo theory, or film theory. In the arts (i. e. in the context of visual arts, film, performance, theatre) video is not deciphered as a medium, but mostly taken for granted with its properties."[53] Although

Daniels attested some contours of a "video theory" including insights into the technical and cultural specifics of the medium of video – the processuality and reflexivity emphasized by Yvonne Spielmann – in the academic research of recent years, "the concept of 'video' remains more relevant in the current situation than ever unspecific."[54] This question cannot be reviewed here.[55] However, we are convinced that the projects such as "Emergence of Video Art in Europe (1960-1980): History, Theory, Sources and Archives" shall become valuable cumulative sources for future explorations.

[1] Herzogenrath, W (1982), „Versuche, die verdammte Kiste abzuschaffen – oder: die Anfänge eines Kunstmediums in Europa". in *Videokunst in Deutschland 1963-1982. Videobänder Installationen Objekte Performances* (ed. by W Herzogenrath). Stuttgart: Verlag Gerd Hatje 1982, pp. 26-29, 27.

[2] This is but a one successful example of integrated work of artists and audiences as well as institutions and collectors involved in the video art circuit at the time of its emergence. Another example was a studio exhibition with artists from the Liège gallery "Yellow Now" has took place at Archive of the "Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst in Aachen" (14th of January through 8th of February 1972). Some of the participants like Jacques Lizène or Jacques-Louis Nyst used video and played an active role during the emergence of video art both in Wallonia and North Rhine-Westphalia.

[3] Although video technology (video camera and recorder) was yet to be employed, Paik's first-ever presentation of his manipulated televisions, distorting the image of the screened television program, is today often referred to as the "birth" of video art.

[4] Beuys had apparently seen Paik's performance at Galerie 22 Düsseldorf in 1959, but Paik did not then realize who Beuys was.

[5] Nam June Paik´s appointment as a professor at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (1978) helped to the reception of the emerging video art in Germany as well. Although being officially chair of sculpture, he was in practice teaching video and what he referred to "art market" and "art politics". – To the regularly held video meetings and discussions about video in Rhineland belonged among others "Das Bermuda-Dreieck der Kunst. Ein Gespräch unter Fachleuten am 17. März 1979" in the Neue Galerie – Sammlung Ludwig in Aachen (March 17th 1979) with featured artists Barbara and Michael Leisgen, Jochen Gerz and Ulrike Rosenbach, as well as gallerists Philomene Magers, Rudolf Zwirner and Wolfgang Becker.

[6] The time of the first TV-broadcast from the Moon was Monday, July 21st 1969, 1:45 CET; the departure of the astronauts at 3.56 CET / USA: 23.00 ("prime time"). A black-and-white video camera was installed on the Eagle lunar capsule, while a color video camera was installed on the Columbia. The well-known color images of the moon, on the other hand, were film images and they mostly came from the later Apollo missions.– Kahlen took up the same theme again in 1973 and realized a video sculpture of the same name whose media-critical and media-analytical approach was on a conceptual level comparable to that of contemporary artists in Great Britain, for example. During this time, Kahlen´s younger contemporary Ian Breakwell also realized a live video installation entitled "One" (1971), in which a fictitious walk on the moon was presented.

[7] 16-mm-Film and U-Matic, 26 Min., s/w, silent.

[8] In the second self-experiment, the artist turned frontally to the camera, whose naked upper body had a long and narrow vertical stripe along the chest hair. The shot of the immobile man was faded out several times by similar shots – without shaved chest hair, so that the "impression" or the awareness of the time continuum arouse on the conceptual level.

[9] Cf. Kahlen, W (2019), „*Denken mit der Kamera – Video ist Präsenz im Präsens oder: Wie ich zum Mitbegründer des heutigen Video-Forums wurde*") (Thinking with the camera - video is presence in the present tense or: How I became the co-founder of today's video forum) (lecture at NBK, Berlin) – The catalogue referred, according to Kahlen, incorrectly to 1972 as the year of foundation. The same applied thus, according to Kahlen, also to the appearance of Vostell as the co-founder of the "Video Forum". – While the first "real" videos in the collection came from Friederike Pezold and Nan Hoover, the founding of the collection left went back to the local events and guest stays of some video pioneers as part of the Berlin artist program of the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service). Cf. Schauer, L (1999), *Ende und Wende. Kunstlandschaft Berlin von 1945 bis heute*. Regensburg: Lindinger + Schmid Verlag GdbR.

[10] Cf. https://www.mike-steiner.de/.

[11] Length: 40 min. From the series „Adjustments" (*Angleichungen*), Nr. 12.

[12] Cf. *Tracing a Diagonal* (1972) by Francesc Torres.

[13] Kahlen, W (1981), „Polnische Verhältnisse. Die bildnerische Avantgarde Polens im Kontext meiner eigenen Ausstellungen in Polen 1975-80". in: *Jahresring 80-81: Polen*. Munich: Literatur und Kunst der Gegenwart.

[14] Besides Kahlen, the participants were Fritz Schwegler, Timm Ulrichs, Fabrizio Plessi and the French trio Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, and Jean-Paul Thenot as *Collectif d'art sociologique*. Produced were besides „S.C.H.A.F.E." also „Passage" by Edmund Kuppel, „Abdeckung der Fernsehnachrichten" by Sacha Sosno and "Baumkunst-Kunstbaum" by Manfred Saul. – In 1978, there followed a symposium and an exhibition "Aachen – Grenze" (June 16th -July 30th) at the Neue Galerie in Aachen, which was analogous to the symposia in Neuenkirchen and Bordeaux: This third artists' symposium included French, German, Dutch and Belgian artists, selected by Wolfgang Becker.

[15] In the exhibition space, white partition walls created a cube open at the top with an edge length of about 2.50 m, in which a performance first took place, the components of which then remained as an installation. Inside the cube was a

small video monitor that lay face up on the floor. A video camera mounted under the ceiling and directed downwards covered the entire interior of the cube and sent its signal to the monitor located on the floor in the center of the cube, facing upwards.

[16] On December 4th 1976, Wolf Kahlen also realized a live video installation in Lublin entitled *Zwastowanie* (Annunciation).

[17] Haus am Waldsee, Berlin, August 1977 / Galeria Repassage, Warschau Oktober 1977. Employed were two adjoining rooms – one for the dogs and one for humans. The room intended for the dogs was prepared with eight different (invisible) scent markers; a video camera was mounted about 20 cm above the floor in such a way that it could cover the room and the dogs as completely as possible. The live recording without sound was visible on a tiny black-and-white monitor in the second room – the waiting room for the dog owners – who were, however, physically and olfactorily denied direct access to the actual "dog happening" in the gallery.

[18] Kahlen´s video performances and video sculptures often created a tension between the "immaterial" medium and the elements of nature. In the video performance "I can see what I want" (Neue Galerie Bochum 1977, 30 min.), for example, snails covered an entire television screen and were confronted with the image of the artist in a closed-circuit relationship. – In the case of the latter works, a comparison with some video installations of the time, which had been realized by current "stars" of the international video art scene in the leading institutions, is inevitable. This applies not least to the live video installation "Life Cycle" (1971) by Juan Downey and "Terraquae" (1973) by Frank Gillette, to name just the earliest and most prominent. In the interpretation of Wolf Kahlen (in contrast to Downey, Gillete and other proponents of the cybernetically trained ecological optimism of R. Buckmister Fuller), the processual character of the performative and installative contexts was interpreted by an uncompromising and at the same time meticulously staged collision of the real and medial, the natural-biological and artificial level, however, superficially used in a media-critical manner, throwing the "observer back on herself", as it were.

[19] Here is a description of the artist: "The unauthorized private gallery of Jürgen Schweinebraden, was of course a delicate space. The action: Wolf Kahlen moved a camera without viewfinder across people, objects, the room in an endless sway, while – closed circuit – the flowing images were shown at TV. At the same time, Penck assisting Kahlen drummed endless rhythm and Freudenberg played chaotic melodies on the saxophon, until Kahlen periodically cried out: ACHTUNG AUFNAHME, which was meant not to start, but to stop action, freeze it, freeze people as well. The frozen image on the screen was photographically documented, Penck stood up and painted on a glass pane, put in front of the TV, with the structure of the image or against it or covering it [...] Then the moving camera and the moving music continued for the next freeze, 16 times. The impact of the action lies in the game in front of reality on the street and even within the room". – "Of course the event can be found in the STASI-papers under many names of the participating artists and visitors. In this video piece Kahlen talks modestly to the scrutinized and anyway almost lost video material. The gallerist made secretly and forbidden a portfolio of the photos and the, silkscreend on transparent fiber; overpaintings by Penck, Ranft, Monden, Böttcher. This portfolio, smuggled to the west is used in the tape to 'color' the action, years after. 23 min." Wolf Kahlen, e-mail to the author on April 8th 2002. – In fact, Marcel Odenbach had an exhibition with performance and slide projections in the same gallery in East Berlin already in 1979 (3rd through 30th of March). At that time, despite the artist´s expressed wish, it was not possible for the gallery owner Jürgen Schweinebraden to obtain the necessary video equipment for a video installation. In a letter to Odenbach dated 14th of May 1978, the gallery owner regretted this fact.

[20] The "Fernsehgalerie Gerry Schum" (Berlin / Hanover, 1968-1970), "videogalerie schum" (Düsseldorf, 1970-1973), and in particular the two "television exhibitions", the programs "Land Art" (SFB (Sender Freies Berlin), 1st program, 04/15/1969, 10:40 p.m.-11:27 p.m.; repeated on 09/06/1973 in the 3rd program of WDR Cologne and "Identifications" (SWF, Baden-Baden, 1st program, 11/30 1970, 10:50 p.m.-11:32 p.m.; repeated in the 3rd program of WDR Cologne on June 28, 1973, 9:00 p.m.) – In 1970, Joseph Beuys provided a contribution to Gerry Schum´s "Identifications", with his video piece "Felt TV": This Fluxus-like, TV-critical artistic statement stood apparently quite in contrast to the positive technological attitude of Piene and Tambellini. Beuys adapted his action previously staged for a live audience at a Happening festival in Copenhagen in 1966 for television and it was the only Beuys action executed specifically for the camera. It showed Beuys sitting in front of a running TV set, having its screen covered by felt; Beuys performed with knife, blood sausage and boxing-gloves.

[21] In 1974 she opened her rooms in the Galeriehaus in Cologne with an adjoining video studio. Works by Klaus vom Bruch, Michael Buthe, Christof Kohlhöfer, Klaus Mettig, Sigmar Polke, Marcel Odenbach and Klaus Staeck were produced and presented there until 1979.

[22] Director of the video studio was Willfried Litke.

[23] Between 1972 and 1975, Jochen Gerz realized his "Six Pieces on Language", which used the medium video to reveal its limits by setting bulky images against the seduction of the electronic image. Cf. Frieling, R (1997), „VT ≠ TV – Die Anfänge der Videokunst". in *Medien Kunst Interaktion – die 60er und 70er Jahre in Deutschland* (ed. by R Frieling and D Daniels). Vienna, pp. 115-121. Available online at: http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/quellentext/63/.

[24] Apart from its importance in terms of media, art and image theory, as well as its history and aesthetics, historiographical research is currently faced with the task of redefining the (inter)cultural role of the video medium. In addition, it must not be forgotten that video does not only denote the area of the image and the process of seeing or visualizing. Rather, it fulfills the multiplicity of meanings its original Latin etymology. (Lat. *video*, *vidi*, *visum*. 1) see, notice, recognize 2) live at the same time as somebody, experience 3) observe, consider, visit, take care of something 4) feel, understand, comprehend, have in mind, consider, think 5) know, deal with, intend, aim. – The elements of cognition, of (cultural) experience and concrete action are hence absolutely essential. The video art appears with regard to its forms of appearance and required conditions

of perception, as has often been noted by the theorists, hence also as an essentially non-visual phenomenon. This multimodal or multivalent nature of the audiovisual medium whose name only suggests the visual, but eludes "mere" visual perception, was interpreted differently by artists right from the start. The relationships between art, technology and identity can probably not be found in any other medium so consistently and examined with such a critical awareness.

[25] Sol LeWitt still used the two terms in his 1967 "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" as irreconcilable opposites: „Art that is meant for the sensation of the eye primarily would be called perceptual rather than conceptual. This would include most optical, kinetic, light, and color art […] Since the function of conception and perception are contradictory (one pre-, the other post fact) the artist would

mitigate his idea by applying subjective judgment to it." Cf. Online-version oft he article: https://monoskop.org/images/3/3d/LeWitt_Sol_1967_1999_Paragraphs_on_Conceptual_Art.pdf. – Even if Lewitt's vocabulary may seem a bit confusing in today's supposedly "post-factual" age, the programmatic opposition of his "pre-factual" conceptual and "post-factual" perceptual art can be productively put into a new perspective. – In a three-step process, from perspective to montage to process, the latter first appears as a model case of process-related aesthetics at the interface between perception and concept. The conceptual and the perceptual are to be seen again as phases of a process, in the middle of which the aesthetic-reflective phase emerges in a dynamic connection between concept and perception.

[26] Those involved in the exhibition included Carl Andre, Giovanni Anselmo, Joseph Beuys, Michael Buthe, Hanne Darboven, Walter De Maria, Jan Dibbets, Ger van Elk, Hans Haacke, Eva Hesse, Yves Klein, Jannis Kounellis, Bernd Lohaus, and Mario Merz , Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Franz Erhard Walther, and Lawrence Weiner.

[27] In addition to the referred institutions in Germany, which also include the collections in the Lembachhaus and the collection Goetz (both in Munich), the mentioned early video collections in Aachen and Krefeld were of particular importance: Already in 1971, the first purchase of video works for the video collection at the Kunstmuseum Krefeld took place with the video works by Klaus Rinke and Ulrich Rückriem as well as the two "TV-exhibitions" from Gerry Schum and Ursula Wevers (produced on 16mm film and later transferred to video). In the late 1970s, further video works for this institution were acquired from the Galerie "Projektion" in Cologne, operated by Ursula Wevers.

[28] The concept of the "open circuit" was first articulated in an early manifesto by Nam June Paik. Wolfgang Becker was invited and gave a talk at the first panel discussion. Also the international festival "EXPRMNTL" in Belgian Knokke-le-Zoute (December 1974) played a certain role; founded in 1949 by Jacques Ledoux, "EXPRMNTL" was the first event of its kind, dedicated to experimental film, which also became a meeting place for avant-garde artists. For the fifth and last edition in 1974, also the video art entered the program in an empty casino between Christmas and New Year, with Nam June Paik visiting the Belgian coast to present his installation "TV Buddha". Also included were Peter Campus, Ed Emschwiller, Ernest Gusella and Steina and Woody Vasulka.

[29] The exhibition took place in Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Kölnischer Kunstverein and Kunsthalle in Cologne, and it was organized by Evelyn Weiss, together with Wulf Herzogenrath, Horst Keller, Manfred Schneckenburger, Albert Schug and Dieter Ronte.

[30] Cf. https://cafedeutschland.staedelmuseum.de/gespraeche/wulf-herzogenrath#wulf-herzogenrath-fn-45.

[31] This international exhibition featuring video art (with catalogue) was curated by Zdenek Felix, with dozens of international video artists, including following German artists and groups: "Planstudio Siepmann", Clemens Golf, "Telewissen", Marcel Odenbach, Rainer Ruthenbeck, Dieter Froese, Christina Kubisch, Klaus vom Bruch, Ulrike Rosenbach, Lucas Rahm, Peter Kolb, Wolf Kahlen, Barbara Hammann and VA Wölfl.

[32] A brief glance at the early mediation of "genres" in video art should put the artistically demonstrated dynamics in the perspective and to suggest how the institutional integration efforts and the art-historical canonization of video art "genres" took place. The early attempts to historicize and systematize the main video-"genres" took not least the technical triad of video art (camera-recorder-monitor) as a starting point, in which the category "video sculpture" proposed by Wulf Herzogenrath was often taken into account. In 1984, in his case study on the "Video Class" at the Düsseldorf Art Academy, Georg F. Schwarzbauer presented an inventory that was also clearly defined because of its restriction to the genre of video tapes revealed interesting aspects of a "media reflection" developed closely to the material. The video-theoretical generalizations and recommendations were made in particular in a critical dialogue with the positions presented in 1982 by Herzogenrath ("Videokunst in Deutschland 1963–1982") and in 1983 by Gruber and Vedder. – Gruber, B & M Vedder (eds.), *Kunst und Video. Internationale Entwicklung und Künstler*. Cologne: DuMont 1983, p. 8. – While Amine Haase put in her catalog contribution on video art in Germany 1963-1982 video art in the earlier avant-garde context of the actions, of theater and performance art, Edith Decker addressed in her Paik dissertation (1988) the expanded art historical contexts of the (Neo-) Avant-garde and its theoretical foundations as well as technological development. Her work was already oriented towards the triad of genres (videotape, video performance and video installation) with a special focus on the video installations. – Cf. Haase, A (1982), "Kunst als Möglichkeit des Lebens. Aktionen: Theater, Performance, Video". in *Videokunst in Deutschland 1963-1982. Videobänder Installationen Objekte Performances* (ed. by W Herzogenrath). Stuttgart: Verlag Gerd Hatje 1982, pp. 30-43. – At the beginning of this discourse, which was gradually becoming more acute, there were a few early exhibitions whose concepts gave rise to the first forms of the genre-related discussion. In the catalog for "Videowochen Essen '79" (1979), Georg F. Schwarzbauer took the following stance with regard to the video performance: "Two different levels meet in the video performance […] What is presented in reality is confronted with what is recorded and conveyed on the monitor [...] Under such aspects understood, the video performance claims a mediating value. It keys the two other large groups of video art. For both that in seclusion the tape produced by the artist's studio as

well as the installation set up in public space, which in most cases can only be experienced when the viewer looks at it decides to own activity are only recognizable in their basic structures, if one analyzed the personal intentions of the producer [...] In contrast to the development trends predicted by Vera Horvat- Pintarić, the video performance has by no means turned to an alternative analysis. The 'understanding of the medial structuring of reality' is less shaped by those counter-ideas that one could still observe in general at the beginning of the 1970s." Schwarzbauer, G F (1979), „Zweierlei Wirklichkeiten. Anmerkungen zum Demonstrationsvorhaben der Videoperformance". in exhib. cat. *Videowochen Essen '79*, pp. 26-27.

[33] Although she did not realize any "medium specific" closed circuit-video installation per se, her most famous works could neither have been planned nor realized without this technology; as such they serve as prime examples of the efficiency of its implementation.

[34] The self-portrait as the probably "most intensive image of society, in which it was produced" became for Ulrike Rosenbach a radical concept of dealing critically with both history and the present. The consciously detailed and slow recording processes in her videos was also a reaction to the usual custom associated with the medium television of fast "information" exchanges and an accompanying deluge of images.

[35] Reception considerations played an equal role both during conception and during of execution or presentation. They occurred not least with the content moments in an interaction and formed a kind of meta-level, which a work both co-constituted and was addressed by it. – On the distribution-technical side, the "open work"-principle was expressed in many earlier works in the "open-ended" videotapes, later theorized in the context of "loops". Videos of this "open-ended" kind, and above all, those that integrate a regular television program, should be seen, too, in the context of the artist's then intense considerations of and commitment to the introduction of cable television (Odenbach provided a huge number of examples).

[36] In videotape "The Dialog between East and West" (1978), Hungarian artist Gabor Bódy "communicated" with Marcel Odenbach by producing saliva bubbles. (3,37 min., b/w, sound, ½ inch-tape.)

[37] „Sich selbst bei Laune halten oder die Spielverderber" (1977, 12,50 min., color, sound, ¾ inch NTSC; Studio Oppenheim Cologne (then only „camera-edited"); thereafter, in 1985 new edited.

[38] Bellour, R (2013), "The Form My Gaze Goes Through". in S Kacunko and Y Spielmann (eds.), *TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT. Marcel Odenbach. Anthology of Texts and Videos*. eva - edition video art #2. Berlin: Logos, pp. 185-200. – The text was originally published in *Afterimage*, Vol. 16, no. 4, November 1988, pp. 4-6, translated from the French by David Jacobson and Berenice Reynaud. It first appeared as "*La forme ou passe mon regard*" in Marcel Odenbach exhib. cat. Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou, 1986.

[39] Two video tapes, two monitors, objects. Kunstausstellungen Gutenbergstraße Stuttgart 1978; Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten Marl 1981.

[40] Three TV-programmes, three TV-sets. Neue Galerie, Aachen 1978; Städtisches Kunstmuseum Bonn 1978; CAPC Bordeaux 1978.

[41] Two video tapes, two monitors, text. Kölner Kunstverein / Marlis Grüterich Köln 1979; Künstlerhaus Stuttgart 1979; Folkwang Museum Essen 1979; Galerie ak Frankfurt 1983.

[42] One video tape, one monitor, two texts. Kölnischer Kunstverein 1979-80.

[43] Two video tapes, two monitors. Galerie Stampa, Art 11´80 Basel; Hoschschule St. Gallen 1981; Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus Munich 1981.

[44] Two video tapes, two monitors. Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn 1980; Städtische Kunsthalle Recklinghausen 1980.

[45] Two video tapes, two monitors, two texts. Kölnischer Kunstverein 1980.

[46] *The Second Link. Viewpoints on Video in the Eighties* (exhib. cat.), ed. by L Falk. 1983: Walter Phillips Gallery & The Banff Centre School of Fine Arts, Banff, Canada.

[47] Several authors noted that the emergence of video art in West Germany is only understandable in connection with a certain hostility to the electronic technology. Such a "basic attitude" of German artists with regard to video technology also played a formative role in the early video concepts, which in some cases were judged to be fundamentally different from that of their American colleagues. In this respect, the estimations of the above quoted US-author Lorne Falk and Wulf Herzogenrath stood quite close. Cf. also Wevers, U (1982), „Arbeitspapier für ein Akademieprogramm". in: *Videokunst in Deutschland 1963-1982. Videobänder Installationen Objekte Performances* (ed. by W Herzogenrath). Stuttgart: Verlag Gerd Hatje 1982, pp. 92-93.

[48] Wulf Herzogenrath in his contribution to the "Open Circuits" conference in 1974. Cf. Herzogenrath, W (1977), "Notes on Video as an Artistic Medium." in *The New Television: A Public / Private Art. Essays, Statements, and Videotapes* (Based on "Open Circuits: An International Conference on the Future of Television," organized by Fred Barzyk [et al.] for the Museum of Modern Art, New York City), ed by D Davis, A Simmons and F Barzyk (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977), 88.

[49] Herzogenrath, W (1974), „Video als kunstlerisches Medium". in *Video-Bänder* (exhib.-cat. *Projekt 74, Aspekte Internationaler Kunst am Anfang der 70er Jahre in der Kunsthalle Köln und dem Kölnischen Kunstverein*, 6. Juli bis 8. August 1974), ed. by W. Herzogenrath, p. 4. – On the problem of the (video) mirror, closed circuits and "doubles", cf. also Herzogenrath, W (1979), "Picture of People". in *Peter Campus. Video-Installationen, Foto-Istallationen, Fotos, Videobänder* (ed. by W Herzogenrath). Cologne and Berlin: Kölnischer Kunstverein / Neuer Berliner Kunstverein.

[50] Cf. Kacunko, S (2018), "Immediation (Cultures of Immediacy): Liveness and immediacy in creative and everyday media praxis." *Artnodes*, Vol. 21, pp. 154-176. [https://doi.org/10.7238/a.v0i21.3154] – Cf. also Kacunko, S (2017), „Das im Entwichen Erwischte: Videokunst an der Dusseldorfer Kunstakademie 1976-1996 – Ausbildungskontext und technische

Rahmenbedingungen." in *Blickränder. Grenzen, Schwellen und ästhetische Randphänomene in den Künsten.* (ed. by. W Windorf and A Lang), Düsseldorf: Lukas Verlag, pp. 121-134. – This reappraisal, which started relatively late, was long overshadowed by the media studies research that was launched at the end of the 1980s and focused on video recorders – i.e. on storage and not on transmission – especially through contributions by Kittler and Zielinski, also pulled through across media history approaches. Cf. Kacunko, S (2018), „Theoretikerinnen der Videokunst im deutschsprachigen Raum: Aspekte einer Annährung." in: *Theorien der Videokunst. Theoretikerinnen 2004-2018* (ed. by S Kacunko). eva - edition video art #4. Berlin, Logos, pp. 11-85, 62, note 207.

[51] Cf. Pickhaus, P M 1982, „Kleiner Unterschied, großes Missverständnis. Zum Verhältnis Film/Video/Fernsehen". in: *Videokunst in Deutschland 1963-1982. Videobänder Installationen Objekte Performances* (ed. by W Herzogenrath). Stuttgart: Verlag Gerd Hatje 1982, pp. 68-70, 68.

[52] Daniels, D (1987), „Video als Kunst oder die Notwendigkeit des Provisorischen." in: *Neues Video aus der BRD* (exhib.-cat.). Basel: Museum für Gegenwartskunst, pp. 8-18, 8. – Fredric Jameson dedicated one of the only two newly written chapters of his book "Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (1991) to this problem and argued for video as a medium of the third or late phase of capitalism. The third chapter entitled "Video: Surrealism without the Unconscious" (pp. 67-96) contains the following passages: „medium I have in mind as the most likely candidate for cultural hegemony today […] is clearly video, in its twin manifestations as commercial television and experimental video, or ‚video art'." (68) […], „It is nevertheless clear that experimental video, whether we date it from the work of the ancestor Paik in the early 1960s or from the very floodtide of this new art which sets in the mid-1970s, is rigorously coterminous with Postmodernism itself as a historical period." (72), „If we are willing to entertain the hypothesis that capitalism can be periodized by the quantum leaps or technological mutations by which it responds to its deepest systemic crises, then it may become a little clearer why and how video – so closely related to the dominant computer and information technology of the late, or third, stage of capitalism – has a powerful claim for being the art form par excellence of late capitalism." (75)

[53] Daniels, D (2012), „Video – das unspezifische Medium." in *Bilder gegen die Dunkelheit. Videokunst aus dem Archiv des imai im KIT*. Düsseldorf, pp. 31-46, 34.

[54] Ibidem.

[55] Daniels´ own retroanalytic theorization of video took as its premise the failure of a number of theoretical approaches. This included Kittler´s media materialism as well as "Visual Studies with an American influence", the "fringe zones between photo, film and television theory" as well as the "Iconic Turn of Art History" and "Baudrillard's simulation theses". In addition, with the establishment of videographic art forms in contemporary art since the 1990s and in the online context since the 2000s, the term "video art" has become increasingly blurred. Ibidem. (34, 38). – What is meant are the practice, theory and discipline-spanning contexts in which video still has an effect, and to an increasing degree. Daniels referred to the frequently quoted position of Rosalind Krauss, who, as early as 1976, subjected the early examples of video art to a post-structural and psychoanalytically inspired interpretation and assigned the medium in question to an aesthetic of narcissism. Daniels saw it as a typical 1970s attempt to legitimize video art through media specifics, which, however, increasingly lost importance over the course of the 1980s and 1990s. With the establishment of the video, increasing suitability for art and everyday life as well as its online and offline omnipresence, the media-specific pressure to legitimize was finally replaced by a media-unspecific existence of video. For this reason, so Daniels, "video seems to have largely escaped academic analysis precisely because of its unspecificity". And it is precisely this non-specificity of video art that makes it an "exemplary art form of postmodernism", it is an "essential guarantee of its future viability, beyond all attempts at categorization or canonization". Cf. Daniels (2012), 33, 38. Daniels wrote about the answer to the question "What is a video?" the following: "As part of digital multimedia, video is only a file format and no longer a single medium. Therefore, the term 'video art' is increasingly used as a historical term and the so-called 'video artist' seems to belong to an extinct species." Daniels, D (2013), „Videokunst gestern ... heute ... morgen?". in *Videokunst seit 1963* (ed. by M Babias, K Becker and S Goltz.

n.b.k. Berlin, vol. 4. Berlin, pp. 82-86, 86. – At this point, the inner turmoil between the "dissident" and "established" as well as the negative and affirmative modes of video theory and practice in question was revealed. It calls for a cumulative pre-understanding a theory formation that examines both the "canonical" video art and the "canonical" texts relating to it for their current suitability. In the case of Rosalind Krauss' text, for example, the intended goal was less the media-specific interest and more the exposure of a "media-unspecific" – poststructuralist and postmodernist – theoretical approach. – In this respect, the theories of video art may have moved less against, but parallel to, Rosalind Krauss' principles. This is substantiated also by Krauss´ later analyzes and, in particular, by her involvement in the important organ of post-structural and post-modern art theory, "October". Exactly two decades after its founding and Krauss´ video essay from 1976, Krauss published a special "October" issue in 1996, in which a first critical review of the then emerging Visual Culture Studies appeared in the form of a questionnaire; two more decades later, in 2016, there was another questionnaire in "October", this time on the subject of so-called Speculative Materialism (Object Oriented Ontology etc.), which in turn encapsulated the whole ("October"´s favourite) "anti-foundational" and "correlationalist" theory and philosophy and declared it as finished. The often exemplary position of video in theory formation between the mentioned milestones around 1976, 1996 and 2016 and vice versa also runs tendentiously like a red thread also through this historiographical volume and proves the insight gained from this into a fragile continuity: It has always been one of the most important tasks of video art to create a demand for which the hour has not yet come for its full satisfaction. This paraphrase of one of the most memorable sentences in Benjamin´s "Artwork"-essay aims at the historically verifiable breaks between the theories, practices and historiographies of video art in Germany. The continuity of these breaks and shifts reaches up to the present and it gives

the related theorizing video a special dynamic. The above mentioned "video-agnostic" line of thought believes in a transdisciplinary bridging of the impasse between the digital media convergence on one side and the video, characterized by "a constant divergence development" on the other. Cf. Daniels, D and J Thoben „Preface". in *Video Theories. A Transdisciplinary Reader* (ed. by D Daniels and J Thoben). INTERNATIONAL TEXTS IN CRITICAL MEDIA AESTHETICS, Vol. 14. New York et. al.: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc. 2022, pp. XVI-XXXVI, XVI. – Cf. further on: "Video technology was born from an amalgamation of various media: the monitor was familiar from television, magnetic tape from audiotape and computers, the camera from surveillance and again from television. These were combined at the end of the 1960s for a new, marketable product named "consumer video." The components for recording (camera), storage (videotape), and playback (monitor) remained physically separate for more than twenty years. Only in the 1990s, with the camcorder, were these elements integrated in a single apparatus." (Ibid., XX) – While it is true, that it "has never been possible to reduce video to a discrete media-technological entity", a flat denial of any (not even "composite", i.e. "recording / camera – storage / recorder – playback / monitor") media specificity is a *non sequitur* – certainly so, if the conservative position of Jacques Derrida is used as a litmus test. (Ibid, XXII.) The call for a comparative theorization of video must – like any other comparison – assume a *tertium comparationis*, which in our case implies kinds of media specificity to be compared between each other. The so called "instantaneity of the video image" (although the "image" would be really a wrong term in case of video), described in Derridaian "relations and differences" offers in our perspective neither an alternative to the historical and retroanalytical, dynamic approach to the media specificity, nor it offers a general historiographical defense against pitfalls of essentialism. (Ibid, XXVII.)