

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

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for immediate release

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VIDEOART/BROADCAST TV: "READING VIDEO" AT MoMA

READING VIDEO, an exhibition of 18 videotapes by many of video art's most active practitioners, examines the broadcast television medium through the perceptions of independent videomakers. The tapes in this show all refer to and comment on conventional TV, by parody, analysis, or formal revision.

READING VIDEO will be on view in the Video Gallery from October 28 through December 7.

Video art now has its own twenty-year history. Many artists, who began their work by reacting against commercial conventions, have become interested in studying these antecedents, examining broadcast television as a tremendously influential form of popular culture and politics. Artists from Dublin, London, Barcelona, New York and California are included in the selection.

The television newscast is a particular focus of scrutiny by the tapes in READING VIDEO. One of the best-known is the ANT FARM's Media Burn, in which a tail-finned '50s Cadillac drives head-on into a wall of flaming TV sets; extensively covered by TV news programs, the performance became the "ultimate media event."

Amarillo News Tapes, by DOUG HALL, CHIP LORD, and JODY PROCTOR, weaves documentary news footage of violently destructive tornadoes and fires with the artists' stylized electronic reportage of the events. DARA BIRNBAUM and DAN GRAHAM examine a newscast in Local TV News Analysis, cutting between the station's control booth and a family living room while the newscast plays in both locations. In The Speech and This Is The Truth DOUG HALL satirizes the imperious pomposity of the televised presidential address.

Both TONY RAMOS and NAM JUNE PAIK were themselves subjects of TV newscasts; Ramos, who was imprisoned for draft evasion, was interviewed on the occasion of President Carter's amnesty, and in About Media he tapes the taping of the news segment, contrasting his experience of the interview with the final TV news version. Nam June Paik, in Channel 7's Good Morning America, subjects the tape of his own appearance on that show

to such Paikisms as causing the blue-clad bodies of himself and his interviewer to disappear into a colorized blue background.

Other television conventions are subjected to similar examinations. DARA BIRNBAUM's Kiss The Girls: Make Them Cry edits together game-show clips; if the talking head defines TV news, the grinning head must be its game-show correlative. JAMES COLEMAN and STUART MARSHALL adopt the mannerisms of BBC dramas in their respective works. Coleman's So Different... And Yet condenses a convoluted plot, which could furnish the narrative for a months-long series, into 43 minutes of recitation by a seductive actress and a piano-playing actor; the performance, on an empty set drenched in colored light, strips the Masterpiece Theatre ethic to its barest bones. Marshall's The Love Show, Parts One, Two and Three, employs a BBC-style introduction, dragged to absurd length, for a drama comprised solely of stock sound effects in Part One, acted out in Part Two, and related again in news-interview format in Part Three; the 'drama' shifts from a cliché romance to an analysis of sexual stereotyping.

WILLIE BOY WALKER confronts television morality in Prurient Interest, in which a watchdog committee of civic-minded volunteers screen film to determine its degree of serious artistic value and/or prurience. Walker's approach is comic, while RICHARD SERRA, in Television Delivers People, is didactic; a rolling-type text, with a Muzak soundtrack, expounds the theory that all broadcast television 'delivers' people to the advertisers' profit motives.

Performance artist CHRIS BURDEN actually bought prime-time advertising minutes to broadcast, unannounced, his TV Tapes and Full Financial Disclosure. The latter, in the spirit of post-Watergate honesty, details Burden's gross income and expenditures, leaving him with a net income of slightly over \$1,000 in one fiscal year.

ANTONIO MUNTADAS, in Watching The Press/Reading Television, uses images from TV and print media to deconstruct political implications; in Media Ecology Ads, he examines the subliminal frustration of the viewing experience by rolling a text -- slightly too fast to keep up with -- over a diverting image: an egg-timer, a running faucet, a burning fuse.

PETER D'AGOSTINO's TeleTapes uses a similar deconstruction of TV tricks -- effects such as dissolves and fades and the visual and aural language of television -- to analyze the manipulative qualities of TV and their effects upon the viewer.

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Perhaps the most accessible videotape in READING VIDEO is MICHAEL SMITH's It Starts At Home, the tale of a bewildered cable-TV subscriber who discovers that his life is being broadcast to millions of entranced viewers. Urged on by a fast-talking producer in the guise of a living fur-piece ("You'll make the Mandrell Sisters look like lint!") Mike's dreams of TV celebrity turn nightmarish.

From political analysis to spoof, the videotapes in READING VIDEO provide an alternative perspective on the structure and content of the commercial television medium.

MoMA's Video Program is directed by Barbara London, Assistant Curator in The Department of Film. Video programs are made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts.

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COMPLETE SCHEDULE ON VERSO -----

For information, the public may call The Museum of Modern Art, (212) 708-9500.

For further press information, please contact Alicia Springer, Film Press Representative, (212) 708-9752, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, NYC 10019.

READING VIDEO: Schedule
October 28 - December 7, 1982

- PROGRAM I: MONDAYS

JAMES COLEMAN - So Different...and Yet (1979) 43 mins.

- PROGRAM II: SUNDAYS

ANT FARM - Media Burn (1975) 25 mins.

DOUG HALL, CHIP LORD, JODY PROCTOR - Amarillo News Tapes (1980) 28 mins.

- PROGRAM III: FRIDAYS

STUART MARSHALL - The Love Show, Parts 1, 2 & 3. (1980) 46 minutes.

- PROGRAM IV: SATURDAYS

PETER D'AGOSTINO - TeleTapes. (1981) 28 mins. A WNET/TV Lab Production.

MICHAEL SMITH - It Starts At Home (1981) 20 mins. Produced by Michael Smith and Mark Fischer (Mike & Mark Productions)

NAM JUNE PAIK - Good Morning America (1982) 9 mins.

-PROGRAM V: THURSDAYS

ANTONIO MUNTADAS - Watching the Press/Reading Television (1981) 10 mins.
Media Ecology Ads: Fuse; Timer; Slowdown. (1982) 9 mins.

DARA BIRNBAUM - Kiss The Girls: Make Them Cry (1979) 7 mins.

DOUG HALL - The Speech. (1982) 3 mins. This Is The Truth (1982) 3 mins.

CHRIS BURDEN - TV Tapes: Through The Night Softly; Poem for L.A.;
Chris Burden Promotion (1976-77) 5 mins. Full Financial Disclosure (1977) 39 seconds.

DARA BIRNBAUM and DAN GRAHAM - Local TV News Analysis (1980) 13 mins.

RICHARD SERRA - Television Delivers People (1973) 6 mins.

- PROGRAM VI: TUESDAYS

WILLIE BOY WALKER - Prurient Interest (1974) 20 mins.

TONY RAMOS - About Media (1977) 30 mins.

Each program plays continuously during MoMA hours on scheduled day of the week in the Video Gallery, Second Floor, West Wing.

MoMA's entrance is located at 18 West 54th Street. Closed Wednesdays.
Open 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.; Thursday open till 9:00 p.m.

SOUND:

Dolby Sound System

3 loudspeakers behind screen

2 surround speakers in rear wall

Full-synchronous tape playback; cassette or reel-to-reel

(over)