



Merce Cunningham filmed by Nam June Paik

Nam June Paik: Magnetic Memory

TATE MODERN
LONDON, UK

After the ten minute silence that Yoko Ono requested to mark John Lennon's death in 1980 she issued a statement, the last line of which was, "I SAW ALL OF US BECOMING ONE MIND". Similar sentiments, one suspects, were behind the 12 hour screening that memorialised the passing of the radical video pioneer (and Ono's Fluxus contemporary) Nam June Paik, who died in January this year. First taking place at Electronic Arts Intermix

(EAI), New York, in February and repeated at Tate Modern in June, *Magnetic Memory* featured more than 40 predominantly dazzling and occasionally absurd works, shown in reverse chronological order – a timewarp back from death to birth, to when video was a genuinely new form, and satellite television twinkled like an avant garde star on the horizon.

At EAI, the video art distributor with whom Paik was closely associated, there was the humility of immediacy, a disparate group of artists, friends, workers, shuffling in and out of the room, sharing a drink... Paik's videos glistened. The electro-fantastic arabesques of

Global Groove (1973) actually describe a vocabulary we cannot imagine ourselves without. Never let Charlotte Moorman leave us, the classically trained cellist who was Paik's frequent collaborator, often bare-breasted and strapped to her 'TV Cello'. The broadcasts, the experiments, the video gardens, *Electronic Opera* (1972) and works with John Cage, Laurie Anderson... It's time not only to remember but in some way to forget everything we think we know so that we can rediscover, remember again what makes Paik's miraculously free work so utterly vital.

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