

Whitney Museum of American Art 73

New American Film and Video Series

The Howard Wise Gallery: TV as a Creative Medium, 1969

June 8–August 7, 1994

The 1960s witnessed the emergence of the first generation of artists who recognized video as a potentially new artist's medium, as a means to extend the visual and auditory language of art making through the electronic moving image. This movement had a significant impact in redefining the categories of sculpture, installation, narrative, and documentary art, as well as representational strategies and the language of abstraction. Video introduced a new dynamic, and a new set of intertextual possibilities for art making, at the very time when distinctions between media and materials were being erased, and the nature of the art object was being rewritten. While many developments were made possible by advances in technology, it was this generation of artists that first began to create new image-making tools. Over the past thirty years, the landscape of our visual culture has been fundamentally altered through the vision of artists utilizing the medium of video.

The early 1960s through the end of the 1970s was an extraordinary period in the history of independent video production. Artists were employing video as a means to engage the debates concerning aesthetics and the art object, as expressed in the work of Richard Serra and Bruce Nauman, the new image-processing and interactive projects of Nam June Paik and Eric Siegel, the collaborative and community-based cable initiatives of groups such as Raindance, and the new initiatives of public television. Within this range of practices and concerns, there were a few crucial consolidating projects. Individuals with vision created landmark events, transmitting to the public a new awareness of the present and sense of the future. The exhibition "TV as a Creative Medium" was one such seminal event.

Twenty-five years ago in New York City, Howard Wise organized an exhibition for his 57th Street gallery

Gallery Talk, Thursday, June 9, at 6:30 pm.
John G. Hanhardt will be present.



Howard Wise reads next to Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman's *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* (1969). Background: Earl Reiback's *Thrust* from *Three Experiments Within the TV Tube* (1969). Photograph: Tom McCarthy.

that was to give expression, and definition, to video as a creative medium. "TV as a Creative Medium" was the first gallery exhibition devoted exclusively to video as an art form, and it was a defining moment that attracted interest and attention, deeply influencing many individuals who would devote their future energies as artists, curators, critics, and writers to the form called "video art." The exhibition presented transformed video technology which transcended the vocabulary and logic of broadcast television: the use of multiple monitors to reconfigure the sequencing of images (Serge Boutourline's *Telediscretion*); interactive pieces that offered the viewer the opportunity to create new images and experience a new sense of time and image transmission (Nam June Paik's *Participation TV*; Paul Ryan's *Everyman's Moebius Strip*); multimonitor displays that used live action and time delay with closed-circuit and broadcast television

images (Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider's *Wipe Cycle*); a range of image-processing techniques that created an electronic field of movement, abstraction, and image transformation (Earl Reiback's *Three Experiments Within the TV Tube*; Eric Siegel's *Psychedelelevision in Color*; Thomas Tadlock's *The Archetron*; Aldo Tambellini's *Black Spiral*; and Joe Weintraub's *AC/TV (Audio-Controlled Television)*; as well as technical experiments with the medium as process (John Seery's *TV Time Capsule*); and the innovative metaphorical sculptures of Nam June Paik (Paik and Charlotte Moorman's *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*).

In recognizing the importance of "TV as a Creative Medium," we have selected works from the original exhibition by Earl Reiback, Eric Siegel, Aldo Tambellini, Nam June Paik, and Charlotte Moorman. In addition, the Film and Video Gallery has been configured to accommodate photodocumentation of the exhibition by Peter Moore, as well as video documentaries by Ira Schneider and Jud Yalkut. As a tribute to Howard Wise, Nam June Paik has created a new piece, *Virtually Wise*.

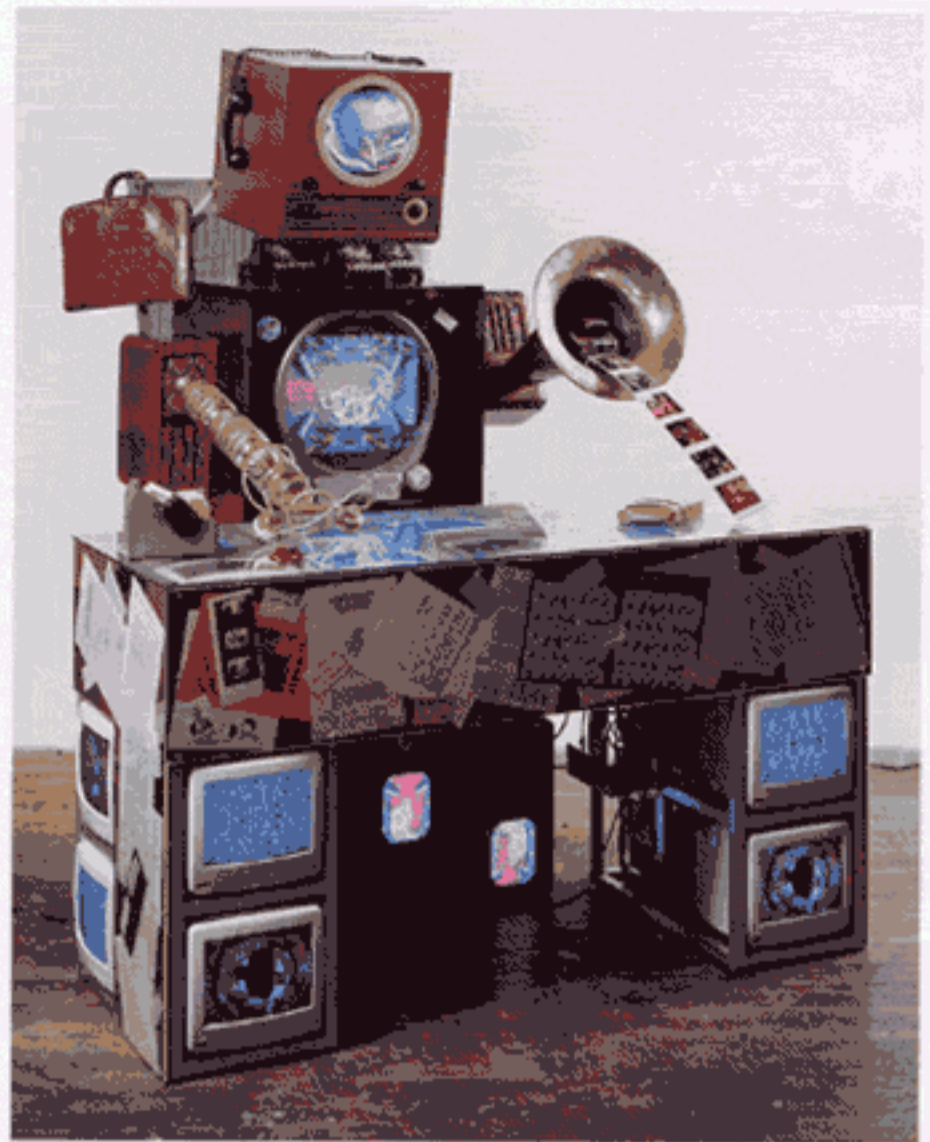
Howard Wise (1903–1989) was an innovative gallery owner who became a founding figure in the history of video art through this ground-breaking exhibition, and also through his establishment, in 1970, of Electronic Arts Intermix, now the largest distributor of artists' videotapes. Howard Wise's projects defined and embraced a vision of video as a new art form.

With "The Howard Wise Gallery: TV as a Creative Medium, 1969," the Whitney Museum of American Art's Film and Video Department not only recognizes a key event in contemporary art history, but also honors the accomplishments of Howard Wise through his insightful and profound understanding of the possibilities of video. This exhibition also inaugurates a series of historical projects in which the Film and Video Department will be presenting the work of artists drawn from the past thirty years of video art's history. Thus in future one-artist and group exhibitions, we hope to feature artists presented in the original "TV as a Creative Medium" whom we could not include in the current exhibition. We will also invite outside curators and scholars to work with us so as to offer new insights into the history of video art.

We could think of no better place to begin looking back to video art's origins and history than Howard Wise's seminal and singular effort on behalf of video artists in "TV as a Creative Medium."

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

Matthew Yokobosky
Assistant Curator, Film and Video



Nam June Paik, *Virtually Wise*, 1994.

Biography of Howard Wise

Howard Wise was born in November 1903 in Cleveland. He studied at the University School, Cleveland, and Le Rosey, Switzerland, and later graduated with honors in history and constitutional law from Cambridge University, England (BA, 1926). Upon his return to Cleveland, he joined his family's Arco Company—a manufacturer of industrial paints and finishes. After twenty-five successful years, during which time he became president, Wise sold Arco Company.

In 1957, he opened the Howard Wise Gallery of Present Day Painting and Sculpture in Cleveland. Exhibitions included "8 Painters of the Galerie Arnaud, Paris," "Selections from the 1958–59 Whitney Annual," and "Movement in Art." By 1960, he expanded operations to New York, and opened the Howard Wise Gallery at 50 West 57th Street. Over its ten-year history, the Howard Wise Gallery exhibited the Abstract Expressionists Milton Resnick and George McNeil, and presented the groundbreaking exhibitions "On the Move" (1964), "Lights in Orbit" (1967), "TV as a Creative Medium" (1969), and his final exhibition "Three Sounds" (1970).

In 1971, Wise founded Intermix, soon renamed Electronic Arts Intermix, to financially assist artists and organizations working within the emerging video art movement. Support was extended to, among others, the Electronic Kitchen at Mercer Arts Center (later renamed The Kitchen), Charlotte Moorman's "Avant-Garde Festivals," The Museum of Modern Art's conference "Open Circuits," and the early video artists' group, Perception (founding members included Eric Siegel, Frank Gillette, and Steina and Woody Vasulka). By 1973, Electronic Arts Intermix expanded its support to provide much-needed videotape distribution services, and affordable editing facilities for artists. Today, Electronic Arts Intermix is the oldest existing and still leading distributor of videotapes by artists and independent videomakers. Howard Wise died in Wellfleet, Massachusetts in 1989.

Checklist

Dimensions are in inches; height precedes width precedes depth.

PETER MOORE

Untitled photograph of Nam June Paik testing *TV Bra* for his collaboration with Charlotte Moorman, *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*, 1969
Black-and-white photograph, 11 x 14
Collection of Barbara Moore

Untitled photograph of Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman's *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* (detail), 1969
Black-and-white photograph, 11 x 14
Collection of Barbara Moore

Untitled promotional photograph of Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman's *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*, 1969
Black-and-white photograph, 11 x 11
Collection of Barbara Moore

NAM JUNE PAIK

Participation TV (No. 2), 1969; reconstruction, 1994
Modified television, tape recorder, 2 amplifiers, 2 microphones, dimensions variable
Collection of Nam June Paik

Virtually Wise, 1994

24 video monitors; 2 antique radios; 6 antique television cabinets; antique brass telephone; speaker horn; 3 telephones; Howard Wise's personal items: Polaroid camera, Polaroid prints, rolodex, briefcase, wallet, papers, buttons, etc.; chair and desk; sintra, plexiglass, aluminum, and plywood; 4 laserdisc players; 4 laserdiscs; 82 x 66 x 66
Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

TV Bra for Living Sculpture (Replica), 1992

2 video monitors, plastic, laserdisc player, laserdisc, dimensions variable
Collection of Nam June Paik

NAM JUNE PAIK and CHARLOTTE MOORMAN

TV Bra for Living Sculpture, 1969
2 televisions, microphone, amplifier, plastic
Collection of Nam June Paik

EARL REIBECK

Suspension from Three Experiments Within the TV Tube, 1969
Modified color television, 20 x 28 x 21
Collection of Earl Reibeck

Thrust from Three Experiments Within the TV Tube, 1969

Modified color television, 20 x 28 x 21
Collection of Earl Reibeck

IRA SCHNEIDER

TV as a Creative Medium, 1968; edited 1984
Videotape, black-and-white, sound, 12 minutes
Videotape distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York

ERIC SIEGEL

Psychedelelevision in Color, 1969
Video monitor; videotape player. 3-part videotape: *Einstine* (1969) color, sound, 6 minutes; *Symphony of the Planets* (1969), color, sound, 10 minutes; *Tomorrow Never Knows* (1968), color, sound, 3 minutes
Videotape distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York

ALDO TAMBELLINI

Black Spiral, 1969
In collaboration with Tracy Kinsel and Hank Reinhold
Modified black-and-white television, 30 1/4 x 26 x 18
Collection of Aldo Tambellini and Sarah Dickinson

JUD YALKUT

TV as a Creative Medium from *Meta-media*, 1970
16mm film-to-video transfer; color, silent, 6 minute excerpt
Courtesy of Jud Yalkut

Selected photographic documents of the original exhibition "TV as a Creative Medium" were provided by The Estate of Howard Wise.

Exhibition Design: Matthew Yokobosky
Assistant Curator, Film and Video

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