The Problematic of Video Art in the Museum
(1968-1990)

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FIGURE 18. Present view of the AGNSW, Sydney. (Image courtesy of picasaweb.google.com/.../ZDN_PJ3xNvoW1bUVbW4laA).


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Abstract

This thesis discusses how museum structures were redefined over a twenty-two year period in specific relation to the impetus of Video Art. It contends that Video Art would be instrumental in the evolution of the contemporary art museum.

The thesis will analyse, discuss and evaluate the problematic nature and form of Video Art within four major contemporary art museums - the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, the Georges Pompidou National Centre of Art and Culture in Paris, the Tate Gallery in London and the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) in Sydney. By addressing some of the problems that Video Art would present to those museums under discussion, the thesis will reveal how Video Art would challenge institutional structures and demand more flexible viewing environments. As a result, the modern museum would need to constantly modify their policies and internal spaces in order to cope with the dynamism of Video Art.

This thesis first defines the classical museum structure established by the Louvre during the 19th century. It examines the transformation from the classical to the modern model through the initiatives of the New York Metropolitan Museum to MoMA in New York. MoMA would be the first major museum to exhibit Video Art in a concerted fashion and this would establish a pattern of acquisition and exhibition that became influential for other global institutions to replicate. MoMA’s exhibition and acquisition activities are analysed and contrasted with the Centre Pompidou, the Tate Gallery and the AGNSW in order to define a lineage of development in relation to Video Art.

This thesis provides an historical explanation for the museum/gallery’s relationship to Video Art from its emergence in the gallery to the beginnings of its acceptance as a global art phenomenon. Curatorial strategies, the influx of corporate patronage and the reconstruction of spectatorship within the gallery are analysed in relation to the unique problematic of Video Art. Several prominent video artists are examined in relation to the challenges they would present to the institutionalised framework of the modern art museum and the discursive field surrounding their practice. In addition, the thesis contains a theoretical discussion of the problems related to Video Art imagery with the period of High Modernism; examines the patterns of acquisition and exhibition, and presents an analysis of global exchange between four distinct contemporary art institutions.
Introduction

The designation “video installation” is not an accurate guide to what is undoubtedly the most complex art form in contemporary culture.\(^1\)

A history is often created as an act of preservation within specific social structures. [...] The role museums and art organizations have played in institutionalizing video (a medium that, one must add, artists originally perceived as antithetical to the art establishment) has significantly shaped the field.\(^2\)

Thesis Scope

This text is specifically concerned with examining the Museum of Modern Art’s influence that would stem from its own nationalistic preoccupations upon the practices of other major art institutions globally.\(^3\) These would include the Centre Georges Pompidou\(^4\) (est. 1977) including the Musée Nationale Art Moderne (MNAM), London’s Tate Gallery, (est. 1897) and the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) (est. 1874). In relation to their acquisition and exhibition of Video Art as a museum-based installation these four geographically distinct institutions have been selected to present a semblance of a global comparative analysis.\(^5\) The aim of this study is to investigate the extent of MoMA’s influence upon three globally distinct institutions in relation to video. The thesis will propose to define why each institution would deal with the problematics posed by the acquisition and presentation/exhibition of video in the manner that they did.\(^6\) The thesis looks at how two huge museums the Tate Gallery and the AGNSW would largely retain the classical museum framework as first defined by the Louvre while two others MoMA and the Pompidou through their initiatives for change would depart from this structure. The thesis intends neither to excoriate the situating of video art in the museum context, nor does it attempt to defend it. Rather, it will assess the museum’s treatment of the problematics posed by video as a form of installation art which proliferated in Modernity and through the postmodern period. Effectively, it does this via an examination of each of MoMA’s methods in conjunction with three other major art institutions’ unique methods, practices and priorities. In addition, this examination studies the presentational strategies and purchasing patterns of each museum in relation to video art specifically over the 1968-1990 period.\(^7\) In doing so, the thesis will attempt to reveal how/why art museums (which would include today’s contemporary art museums) fashion themselves in order to better accommodate the art of the period that would surround them -as the museum’s practices would mirror the art of the period. The unifying thread that centres the discussion in each chapter is the central theme of nationalism/colonialism as typified within each institution (and the relations between them).

From the beginning, the innovative nature of the Museum of Modern Art’s policies challenged the existing structure of the art museum. MoMA had been designed to exhibit avant-garde art from as early as 1929. MoMA’s first director, Alfred Barr, stated in 1954 that “Modern art is almost as varied and complex as modern life”.\(^8\) In relation to its importance for the development of the modern art museum through the methods and values it was committed to from as early as the 1930s, MoMA’s exhibiting and displaying of avant-garde art extended far beyond the time and place of its...
conception. Yet, rather than influence particular art movements MoMA, reacted to developments that were taking place in the art world within the period. Its redefining of the structural framework of the art museum from the “classical” to a more modern avant-garde, from as early as 1929, would bring about and help facilitate the right set of circumstances for the exhibition and imbrication of video art in mainstream art museums from the late 1960s to the present. Within this time frame MoMA’s commitment at this time to exhibit the avant-garde would help define a set of new aesthetic criteria for experiencing video art in museums in America (and across the world). Its innovations would influence the practices of other major art national institutions globally. Although MoMA would by no means be the only major art institution in New York within the 1968-1990 period to support video art (the Whitney Museum’s video art programme would also be significant) MoMA’s instigation of the avant-garde museum model would initiate video art through its avant-garde museum framework which provided the paradigm for contemporary art presentation within the institutional sphere globally.

MoMA, as well as the other institutions analysed within this study adopted a form of nationalistic showcase which extended the influence of contemporary American art to global stage. Historically speaking, the origin/concept of the art museum employed as national symbol can be traced back to the early period of the Louvre museum in Paris. As Duncan and Wallach have observed:

In the nineteenth century, when other nations began to feel that a public art museum was a pressing need, they naturally turned to the example of the Louvre. 9

Significantly, the circumstances surrounding the incorporation and display of video art in MoMA were engendered largely by MoMA’s institutional development and the transformation of the previous classic museum structure by restructuring information environments. 10 By varying the structure of the art museum (established by the Louvre), as a “traditional classical model” to an “avant-garde museum model”, MoMA would help to promulgate a paradigmatic shift which would effectively redefine the classic museum as typified by the Louvre. 11 Through new possibilities opened up principally by MoMA in 1929, art museums would be able to engage with various media such as video art as an “auratic” art. 12 This brought on the necessity for creating a new kind of exhibiting space that would be required for interactive or spatial installations of contemporary art. As such, exhibition spaces within museums would gradually be transformed towards total spatial environments suitable for constant modification and variance. 13 Developments of this nature would lead critical commentators to contend that many museums today, in a sense, function as “playgrounds” and “centres for entertainment”. 14 This thesis will argue that much of this was originally instigated through the procedural influence of MoMA in New York.

**Video Art: A Framework of Development**

From the outset, video art’s imbrication by art museums engendered specific problems in relation to acquisition and exhibition. For instance, although not of pressing concern to the artists/museums, who would first be attracted by video’s capacity to document present events the complexities and
problematics surrounding video art would be dominated by its non-archival form. Acquisitions would deteriorate with the passage of time and level of deprecation. As a result, preserving the original tape quality would be impossible thus presenting a largely unforeseen commercial problematic in terms of asset (in contrast with other traditional forms of relatively static art). As Sturken points out:

Videotapes made in 1973 … with their blurred, grainy images and muffled sound, seem like distant aesthetic antecedents to contemporary work. […] These early tapes also represent a time when preservation was simply not seen as a relevant issue and when image quality, as it is commonly defined today, carried less significance than the drama of capturing an event on camera.15

Through this, many of the fundamental tenets and strategies associated with museum practice (such as preservation and conservation as well as the practice of asset investment) would be challenged. This had presented problems which would be compounded through a basic and fundamental need for the works to be presented in contexts that were suitable and sympathetic to each piece. Specialised installation would need to be built into an environment that had been organised for purposes of reflection. As Morse would state, this “… process of installing suggests a temporary occupation of space, a bracketed existence enclosed by a matching process of breaking down the composition into its elements again and vacating the site”.16 For Rush, “Installation artists make environments for viewers to enter literally, thus creating a physical participation with the work. This in turn expands the perceptual and optical impact of the work”.17 For video art, often this would entail that it be separated from other works in a museum’s collection. As a result, within art institutions video works would often have to compete with more traditional forms of art. In some cases this would result in video-based artworks being awkwardly positioned/presented within the museum such as behind stairs or near public conveniences.18 Moreover, the durational form of these works would pose a pervasive dilemma for museums which found it necessary to consistently endeavour to re-establish and rearticulate the most effective mode of presentation.19 The durational movement of a museum’s patrons would rarely be considered.

MoMA’s commitment to the presentation of video-based works of art however would set an example for other institutions to replicate.20 This thesis explores MoMA’s methods and policies in order to analyse others as a base from which other contemporary art institutions can be assessed comparatively too.

**The Significance of Video Art**

Throughout the mid-1970s until the present, contemporary video art as a vehicle for social, cultural and political analysis has been a prominent element within global museum-based contemporary art exhibitions. For many, video art had stood for contemporary art. As stated by Rush:

… video art has experienced important shifts roughly every ten years with the introduction of new technologies (Portapak, Betacam, VHS, 8-millimeter cameras) and working methods amongst artists (installations and projections in the 1980s as
opposed to single channel in the 1970s), 1997 marked a sea change in the medium that altered it forever. In that year Sony Corporation, soon followed by Canon, introduced the first digital recorder in the United States, the DHR-1000. The previous year Sony had been the first to sell the Betacam SX, a sophisticated digital system for the broadcast industry, but the hand held DHR-1000, like the Portapak over thirty years before, made digital moving-image recording accessible to a broad consumer public, including artists.

Yet video, as a form of technology, would be relatively short-lived in the twentieth century. Historically it was contained between film and digital art. Artists would work with the medium of film from the dawn of cinema through to the present day. Periods of dramatic experimentation would proliferate in Europe during the inter-war years (WWI –WWII) and across the globe in the post-war WWII period. Digital means of production would be produced in the latter period of the twentieth century – its accessibility as a creative platform for artists would largely occur in the post 1990s. The short period in which video art would flourish would occur from the early 1960s to the middle of the 1990s when its means of production would be subsumed into the digital era.

The reasons for the deterioration of video art’s prominence as a contemporary form of art is that artists themselves would find that “… with digital technologies, the proper qualities of video itself which had been so attractive to artists of the 1970s were no longer considered as crucial”. Rather than video art being superseded by new technology or exhausted, there would be a cognitive interchange between technologies which extended from the formative pressure of video art developments. For Rush, video in:

… little more than thirty-five years of existence, has moved from brief showings on tiny screens in alternative art spaces to dominance in international exhibitions, in which vast video installations occupy factory-sized buildings and video projections take over the walls of an entire city block, as in Times Square, New York.

Video art’s origins, in the avant-garde tradition of film and art had originally stemmed from disenchantment with traditional and institutionalised manners of working. Originally employed as a subversive tool for artists in the 1960s involved in the counterculture, the history and nature of video art is both unique and complex. Its uniqueness lies in the specific properties of the medium. For many artists much of video’s attractiveness stemmed from its ability to provide a cheaper alternative and a much less craft dependent tool for moving image production than film, for instance. Video is a specific form of art that is distinguishable from other temporal forms used by artists. Unlike the cinema, contemporary video art would often involve sculptural aspects of presentation and apprehension. Video, when presented, has a “liveliness” that is direct and immediate. Unlike the visitor to a video art installation the spectator of a film is divided from the field to be observed and the machinery which is used to obscure the processes of illusionistic formation. Although the experience of video art as installation within the art museum has been conceptualised as “theatrical” it is distinct from other forms of art which assume a neutral spatial presence to the viewer. For Popper, “The difference between the cinema and video with respect to the spatial factor largely involves the field of projection”. As such, cinema viewing necessitates a confined “two dimensional” process of exchange between audience and film on the screen. By contrast, video when
presented possesses a “three dimensional” presence containing sculptural properties, which often facilitate a varied and disassociative or autonomous position for the spectator.25

From its early obscurity as an underground and marginalised medium, video art as a new way of producing images would become ubiquitous by the 1990s. The omnipresence and enshrining in today’s society of video art and its associative meanings is substantially reflected and evidenced by the fact that as a distinctive form of communication or expression it has been employed by artists globally as a “personal medium” of nearly every nationality as a way to increase their data of experience. As such, for us today, a history of the art museum’s relation to video art needs to be written in order to form an understanding of its relatively brief period as a distinct creative form. From its origins in the 1960s, until around the mid-to late 1990s video art’s presence and coexistence with other moving image media (such as film) would reflect and celebrate culture as a whole, overtaking other approaches to fine art practice via the moving image.26 Within this short life span video art would exist as a gauge of the zeitgeist.27 Within this period it would exemplify and reveal an enormous amount of technological change. Hence, as an art form and formulated sensory experience, it would straddle the fence between art and technology to become a commodity, which would “ … evoke the equivalent of decades of development in such diverse media as photography and painting”.28 I believe that an examination of the relationship between video art and the museum is unique. The procedural influence of MoMA would largely determine the institutional relation towards one of contemporary art’s most interesting forms. In order to attempt to evaluate an analysis of video art, one that outlines its relation with the art institution, three crucial aspects would need to be defined. Firstly, by video art’s “technological history” that is, the medium’s relationship with technology; secondly, by its relationship with the art institutions. Finally, a significant aspect is that of the corporate sponsorship of video art exhibitions which would provide major institutions with an incentive and facility to propagate, “museify” and legitimate video art as an art form. I believe that these three aspects are essential to constructing an examination of the museum’s relation to video art.

**Video Art (Pre-MoMA 1959-1968)**

Prior to MoMA’s museumisation of video, video art had generally been sited outside the art institution in a temporary position where its interactive quality and presence had been even more ephemeral and fleeting. Although “This new medium seemed to have a message of its own, proclaiming that it was everywhere” a cohesive attempt by mainstream institutions such as the Tate Gallery in London or the Pompidou in Paris to exhibit video art had not existed prior to MoMA’s imbrication of it in 1968.29 Prior to this the policies of MoMA as a powerful and influential institutionalised paradigm had often been opposed by artists who, as political activists had criticised it as being out of date and out of touch with the cultural value of a progressive society. For these artists, MoMA’s position as an institution which had firmly set the agenda in relation to what artworks it would or would not exhibit and for what would be acceptable in art and culture as a whole would be contested.
From around 1963, prior to video art’s incorporation by MoMA, the growth and increase in activity in the U.S. and in Europe relating to the public exhibitionism of video art had begun. The majority of these activities until 1968 would take place outside the art institution. Prominent amongst these would be Nam June Paik and Wolf Vostell who had both associated themselves with the Fluxus group. Early video exhibitionism would first take place in avant-garde art and cinema festivals along with various “happenings” and/or performative events. In Germany, at the Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal, Paik exhibited *Electronic TV* a piece containing thirteen monitors with distorted broadcast images. Similarly, Vostell presented his *TV De-Coll/age* at the Smolin Gallery, New York and at the Galerie Parnass in 1963.\(^\text{30}\)

In New York, the Annual *Avant-Garde Festival* featured works by Paik and Charlotte Moorman as well as other artists associated with Fluxus including the composer John Cage, John Lennon and Yoko Ono. From around 1965 video art would be shown as part of sculpture exhibitions, within cafes, underground meetings, parties and various other social gatherings.\(^\text{31}\) In addition, video companies were created and large funding organisations such as the Rockefeller Foundation began to take interest in funding the artist’s exploration of video art. Also occurring in New York would be the *New Cinema Festival 1* which had explored the use of mixed media production. Held at the Cinematheque it had included videotapes by Paik and Moorman.\(^\text{32}\) By 1966 Vostell was producing works that would appear and be a part of the “happenings” at Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany.\(^\text{33}\)

During the same year at the New York Film Festival at the Lincoln Centre a multi-channel installation with photographs by Bruce Davidson and music by Terry Riley was presented in the foyer.\(^\text{34}\) Other events would include *Nine Evenings: Theatre and Engineering* at New York 69th Regiment organised by Billy Kluver and EAT.\(^\text{35}\) The event had contained mixed media performance events with collaborations by 10 creative artists including Jasper Johns, John Cage, Andy Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg.\(^\text{36}\)

From around 1967 video festivals would begin to be staged internationally on a regular basis. An early event of video art presented in a gallery setting took place in 1967 when Paik had presented his *Electronic Blues in Lights in Orbit* at the Howard Wise Gallery. This installation in the spirit of Fluxus, had strongly encouraged viewer participation and interaction. During the same year in Varese, Italy Luciano Giaccari presented his videotapes at *Studio 971*.\(^\text{37}\) Additionally, Aldo Tambellini had organised screenings within “environment actions” employing video.\(^\text{38}\) Other exhibitions containing video art during 1967 had included work by Bruce Nauman at the Los Angeles County Museum and *Light/ Motion/ Space* at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis which had included works by Paik and others.\(^\text{39}\) Moreover, Bruce Nauman’s *Corridor*, a major sculptural work, would be installed at the Nicholas Wilder Gallery in Los Angeles.\(^\text{40}\) By 1967 it was clear that video art was establishing itself visibly in America. International developments would mirror the interest in America, as Rush would state:

By 1968, exhibitions of Video art had already taken place in Argentina, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States.\(^\text{41}\)
By 1967-68 it was clear that video art occupied a privileged position in contemporary art.

**Video Art: Origins**

While historians have attempted to situate video art’s origins at an earlier date its often iconoclastic expression is actually forty years old with its origins being formed within a time of political unrest, protests, activation, agitation, dissidence, alternative aesthetic practices and a search to find a sense of community. As such, the endeavour to enunciate live video work from which many artists would construct their own symbolic lexicon would be formed in the mid 1960s. The complex narrative of video art, formed from this time would represent within art’s history– an important historical rupture. Central to this would be the location of New York. As Mayer states:

> If photography saw the light of day in the Paris of 1839, the world as video art found it was the world of 1965 as seen from New York. [...] At the height of the wars against communism both hot and cold, we saw the full flowering of the anti-war, movements civil-rights, feminist, gay-liberation, and minority-rights movements, most with New York brain centers.

Technically speaking, video’s origins would arise out of US army surveillance use during the Vietnam war in the early 1960s. The visible unification of the form had also existed in broadcast television—a medium whose defining properties of dispersion, fragmentation and commercialism had been increasingly subject to political pressures, resulting in bias. As such, technological developments in television and electronic imaging from the 1960s would gradually be determined, as Sturken points out by the:

> … increased mobility of TV cameras and the massive push for a consumer market (the replacement of the Kodak Instamatic with the home video camera) were directly related to the desire to capture reality in “real time”.

As Marshall elaborates:

> … the video portapak … was underpinned by a vast investment in new commercial, military and managerial technology such as commercial information storage and retrieval, computer visual display units, internal television and video systems, data banking and military and commercial surveillance.

Although at first existing as an experimental form, the technological innovation of the video medium helped furnish a more accessible, affordable and practicable format than film. The foundations of a new form of logic and “realism” had steadily increased and evolved leading to its own specialised framework and a ceaseless variation that had signalled its ability for video to be both art and an information-based form of communication.

For filmmakers from the 1960s, an attractive feature of video art had been that it was less expensive and more versatile than film. For many, video was seen as “… another means to distribute information and a new educational tool [which] … allowed personal feedback, which in turn extended the mode of communication and control”. Its most attractive feature was its instantaneity. For instance, simple configurations could result in unique reflexive questions that would have
significant theoretical implications. As Bijvoet states “In video “feedback” is used to describe the process of returning a signal to its source, making video, as it were instantaneous”. 51

As a technology dependent medium, video would provide the conduit or vehicle for technical changes that would in effect be reflected, revealed in and lead to aesthetic changes. That is, artists employing video art reacted to a developing technology that would engender, control and determine their style and concerns. The progressive aspects of this would exist in tandem with increases in technological quality and innovation that further shaped their commitment. As Sturken states:

With every new technique or effect, such as slow motion or frame-accurate editing, attempts have been made to use those effects for specific aesthetic results. The aesthetic changes in video, irrevocably tied to changes in its technology, consequently evolved at an equally accelerated pace. 52

However, the positive attributes of video art’s capacity to produce a form of “realism” through the image would be constricted by its limitations. Heavily dependent and necessarily contingent upon its machinery running smoothly, the unreliability of the equipment would frequently cause problems during exhibition. This had meant that its reproductive or reproducing quality would be, to a large and varying extent, corrupted by loss of picture quality. (Video tapes would be ephemeral, fragile and sensitive to temperature “… moisture, trauma and vibration”). 53

In contrast to film, video “… cannot be held up to the light … or painted and scratched to produce an image”. 54 Sensitive to magnetic forces the camera in the very early years would often be set in a “fixed distant position” often too far from the subject itself. 55 Hence, its early insubstantiability and unpredictability had frequently resulted in much of the detail and defining properties of a filmed action or event being lost. Notwithstanding crudity, bad reception and poor depth of field tape disintegration would take less than 20 years. These problems had not dispelled its popularity as a new cost-effective alternative to film or artistic mode of expression from artists who had attempted to explore and utilise this creative form.

Existing and working on the “fringes” of society in the early 1960s, video art makers attempted to expose mainstream entertainment as well as “… the definitions and orthodoxies of traditional fine art practices …”. 56 Through their self conscious and almost romantic disposition they enabled the creation of an emergent mythology. Fuelled by a spirit of positive new energy, pioneering spirit and video’s simultaneity - what had been most exciting about video had been “… the instant access it provided to the image -something that film could not do”. 57 Hence, artists were compelled to express themselves through this new art form due to the framework created by the technology itself which instantaneously, for them, would transfer/transform information as “art” on to video tape. As a result of its various imperfections derived from its dimension, spacialisation and temporalities accomplished as a simultaneous act, a creative fusion would progressively develop through its quality of realism and liveliness in video art. As such, the authoritative immediacy and expressive potential which the new medium captured and articulated for many artists within any situation had
revealed it as an ideal medium and tool suited to this time and period. It did this while revealing its capacity to intersect with the art that would be produced during this time.

**Video Art: Institutional Challenges**

As with the interpenetration of pop art and mass culture, which initiated the final breakdown of high art and its historical avant-garde traditions, the U.S. and European movements of the sixties – Fluxus events, action events, happenings, performances – provided the context for the cross-currents of postmodernism which have emerged in direct relation to mass-media cultural forms and technologies.  

During the 1960s Minimalism and Conceptualism were the dominant trends in art and several major pioneering video art practitioners would emerge from this framework. These would include amongst others Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell, Dan Graham, Bruce Nauman, and Vito Acconci.

The interdisciplinary nature and visible unification of making art during this time had reflected video’s ability to instantaneously capture much that was in the culture. A new era of progressive art, much of which had been formed by an ideological fixity that had a sense of community to it, would be shaped by a myriad of live “happenings” events, and performances. As a result, the domination and dominion of the previously indefatigable aesthetic practices of both traditional painting and sculpture stagnated. For Elwes, during this time, “Artists rejected the mediating role of what they regarded as an obsolete art object”. This had meant a decisive shift in focus from “object” to the “idea”. As such, categories and boundaries employed to define art were blurred as new art forms, practices and technology pluralised fields resulting in various hybridisations which were related to “… media, technologies and performance disciplines”. With increasing interest and momentum, artists experimenting with progressive forms had defined themselves and their art by presenting a challenge to mainstream and traditional institutions of art. Established modern art galleries or museums such as MoMA which had previously been more interested in dealing with traditional historical works and contemporary static forms would now face the prospect of becoming disassociated from the progressive impetus of contemporary art. Significantly, artists within this new era would employ new technology in order to explore psychoanalytical and political conceptions of the subject. Through this they attempted to engage with and speak directly to the viewer in order to establish a more immediate, (or temporal-based) relationship and intimacy between the construction and the viewer. Utilising a popular communicative form opened the door for new types of relationships to be formed with the viewer. Conventional work during this time had been criticised for being presented in a way that had blocked or opposed the original intents of artists who had calculated that their work be shown to “… a newly receptive audience”. As Harrison and Wood state in relation to the implications of this:

> For others, removal of the privileged status accorded to painting and sculpture in the Modernist vein was to be the means to open the practices of art to a more relevant, more modern, social anthropology. According to the theories of Marshall McLuhan, for instance, Modern Man had been subject to so rapid an evolution in his cognitive capacities that the redundancy of painting and sculpture could be assumed.
By contrast with other conceptual art practices and artistic forms of expression associated with “high-art” (such as painting which had been reduced to a “blank canvas”), video art was understood to be a more direct form of expression. Yet, although video’s presence and entry into the art arena at this time had provided a new aesthetic sexuality and logic it would not be marked by a total separation or indifference from older more established art forms. As stated by Elwes, “although predominantly exploited as an agent of change, early video shared formal concerns with mainstream painting and sculpture, then dominated by Modernism and minimalism”. What had been especially significant about employing video as a new art form during this time was that artists had felt that they were employing a medium full of potential that would allow a certain premeditation, distance and empirical objectivity free from critical or discursive analysis, unlike the more established art forms of film, painting or sculpture. As a new art form while also participating and coexisting in one sense, with painting/sculpture/film/theatre video as art would enjoy a unique independence - free from associative or historical allegiance to traditional forms. That is, “video artists felt they were working on a clean sheet of paper”.

By contrast film, as an art form, had a long history that had been part of a wider and far more established discursive field linked to theoretical discussions and various historicises related to art. In its emergent position and effective penetration as a new tool of the avant-garde, video art’s effective incorporation into society and culture thus replaced the “gap” or void that had resulted from the popularity of traditional forms and methods of art within the progressive nature of contemporary culture. As such the new aesthetic sexuality and scripture of video art would bring together various elements of performance, sound and duration into documentaries (or fictionalised representations) of artistic events. Through this, video artists were able to employ the new art to critique the status quo. (The revolutionary attitudes of these filmmakers/artists had reflected a need to alter society by providing an alternative media – one that would vary from or be independent of mass culture). Mentioned previously, the art of video art making generally grew out of the artist’s involvement in performance art and other (often politically motivated or inclined) apposite ideological experiments. Exploiting the open and yet undefined parameters of the medium, artists working with video attempted to gather a fresh or critical perspective over the current live events of the age by capturing them on to tape. (A critique of mass popular culture would be inherent in the use of video). Video art would often be employed by artists in their attempts to deconstruct or expose the corruptions inherent in media representations and propaganda in order to initiate change. The Frankfurt School would prefigure many sentiments and attitudes of the early video artists - Horkheimer and Adorno had pointed out in 1944:

Under monopoly all mass culture is identical, and the lines of its artificial framework begin to show through. […] Movies and radio need no longer pretend to be art. The truth that they are just business is made into an ideology in order to justify the rubbish they deliberately produce. […] Even the technical media are relentlessly forced into uniformity. Television aims at a synthesis of radio and film, and is held up only because the interested parties have not yet reached agreement, but its consequences will be quite enormous and promise to intensify the impoverishment of aesthetic matter so drastically …
The opposition to mainstream culture (that would reflect the early video artists’ views) would also find an echo or parallel in Herman and Chomsky’s writing (later in 1988):

The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfil this role requires systematic propaganda.  

The attitudes expressed here reflect much that had existed for the early video artists. The initiatives of video pioneers to record contemporary, political and social events that would represent their personal and political faith had in many ways stemmed from a romantic vision of revolutionising art. This had included identifying themselves as a collective body in parallel with the separate idea of an individual artistic success. This bifurcation and seemingly paradoxical attitude had stemmed from a necessity to improve society by reshaping its future. To achieve this, the artist’s engagement with the new medium of video (seen as a social tool) reflected an endeavour to harness the tools of mass media in order “to awaken a new, alternative social and political consciousness”.

**Fluxism**

Arguably, the most important group of artists to initiate an attention to the possibilities of video art would be the Fluxus group active in NYC from the early 1960s. During the 1960s, as part of the counterculture revolution, a group of artists who would call themselves “Fluxus” would be important for much that would arise out of video art. Largely the Fluxus group would document their activities on video. Through its capacity to capture live events such as the Fluxist group shows on to tape, artists would use video as a tool to record live performances and other durational “happenings”. Well suited to theatrical events, video art’s status and function as an avant-garde art was provided the opportunity to become an active participant. The spirit correlated with this would form an essential part of future video art making.

The Fluxus group, as an ideology-based initiative would find a parallel in the foundations of Buddhism. A largely utopian movement, Fluxus artists had advocated and prescribed a world which encouraged artistic creativity to engender the maximum good for the maximum amount of people. The outlook of these artists had been strictly anti-elitist “as (the) intelligent premises for art, for culture and for long-term human survival”. The Fluxus group of artists had aspired to “erase the boundaries between art and life” by amalgamating both into a single or unified context. This attitude, which contained elements of performative communication was in accordance with much that was inherent in Pop art and “happenings” in general. This was also reminiscent in Dadaism. Artists such as John Cage, who had established a tradition of modifying and adapting musical instruments with calculated intent to subvert normative expectations and the status quo for musical production, would be influenced by radical and independent nineteenth century American writers (such as Henry David Thoreau who sought an alternative life style to the institutionalised paradigm).
Followers of Cage would include the Fluxus artist member and video art pioneer Nam June Paik and Fluxus artist Yoko Ono. Within the climate of Fluxus and “happenings”, Paik’s first video art experiments would begin adapting and modifying television sets to what he would call “Electronic Television” which would attempt to parallel innovative experiments made by musicians such as Cage and Terry Riley. In the spirit of Fluxus and “happenings” much of this art would be presented or performed in a live setting with audiences often asked/encouraged to participate in the event. Paik would later employ video art’s qualities in an attempt to comment upon, critique and subvert the dominance and ideological operations of television.

Performance artists involved in Fluxus and others would find video art’s qualities particularly useful. Due to the ephemeral quality of these “theatrical” performance events there would often not remain much of the performance after the event had ended. As Elwes states “… no object remained after the event to be collected, sanctioned and sanctified by the critics, historians and collectors controlling the art establishment”.  

Although the ephemeral nature of live performance events such as Fluxus and the “happenings” afforded much excitement due to their spontaneity, many 1960s artists had seen fit to keep the objects of their performance whilst attempting to distance themselves from the “object” in performance. (The remains of many of these events have, in fact, become “increasingly collectable” today). Seen as an idyllic expression by the artists that could provide the ultimate admixture of art and life fused into temporal-based events “performance art” was viewed by artists of this era as being analogous to video art’s capacity to capture the immediacy of these events through recording and presentation. These artists looked towards video as a tool for preserving or recording the “ephemeral” nature of the art inherent in the live events they had produced. Early performance tapes by artists employing the medium would emerge to become documents or residual results of the live performances. Often aesthetic quality came second to the way tapes could factually record time-based details of the events on tape. Through this, live performance and video became interlinked, as both would be concerned with forming an alliance between artist and audience as a “democratic encounter”. Through this, “live” video art became fashionably avant-garde. (Its success depended upon a kind of art that had not allowed for the existing of barriers between the artwork and audience. This quality would foster or emanate a shared experience between artists and audience).

Video’s capability to record long events such as the “happenings” or Fluxus events – (which in terms of capturing their linearity which otherwise could not be captured through photography, as photography would only document still images in broken stages) provided a useful and important function for artists within the period. As a result, from the mid-to late 1960s many artists began to use video as their main medium for expression. Included in this group of artists would be:

Eleanor Antin, Peter Campus, Linda Montano and Terry Fox … (in the U.S.) In Canada, Ian Baxter and the N.E. Thing Co., Gery Gilbert and Michael Snow were similarly enshrining their live work in moving image records. In former Yugoslavia, Abramovic and Ulay made performance to camera and in the UK, Stuart Brisley, Rose Finn-Kelcey and Gilbert and George all taped their work.
Significant others were Frank Gillette, Dan Graham, Joan Jonas, Bruce Nauman, Nam June Paik, Ira Schneider, Keith Sonnier and Bill Viola. Many of these artists would employ the TV set as a way to present their work.

**Video Art: Early Artists and the TV set**

From the early days of video art, the idea of the domesticity of the TV set had featured as a central proponent. Early video art experiments would be employed to critique television and other institutionalised structures. As pointed out, video art’s irrefutable attraction and conceptualisation for artists from the beginning (which served to rearticulate aesthetic practice for artists throughout its formative period) had emanated from its function as a new technology seen to be ideally suited for recording/capturing the cultural imperatives of the time. In its functioning role as a reproductive tool for mass communication early video was seen as way to counter the stereotypical and biased imagery proliferating in television and the mass media’s representation (particularly television’s) of the current issues which were employed as spectacle which artists saw as being designed to divert public attention from the real issues at hand. The undiversified, biased and systematic presentation or “monopolisation” of these “images masked as legitimate culture” had, for these artists resulted in the desensitisation, diversion, conditioning and “lulling” of the populace into a false consciousness through the propagation of certain various stereotypes. Therefore, it was no surprise that early video artists were themselves preoccupied with television. But the difference between television and video art was that from the early days of video, artists had filmed themselves and or others as part of the investigation of “… new meanings of time and identity or to create new definitions of space and perception in a gallery setting”. This had compelled them to create an alternative to television.

From the beginning, audience participation would be included in the experiment. By contrast with television, video art would position artist and/or audience at the centre. In 1959, Paik and Vostell initiated the partial annihilation and destruction of the television set from the domestic setting and situation which had been situated within and part of, the “… home entertainment and information display system to gallery artifact”. Vostell had been amongst the very earliest experimenters who had pioneered the medium of video –as a form of museum-based installation art. For Birringer:

… Vostell’s idea of “de-coll/age-aktionen, um die umgebung zu verandern” (decoll/age actions to change the social environment) was politically closer to Joseph Beuys’s conception of “social sculptures” as dynamic processes, or transformations of (in)organic material and consciousness, in order to peel away the ideological surface of organized and structured everyday experiences, which are pre-mediated by a centralized power and determining force such as television.

Yet it was not until the mid 1960s that the establishment of a monitor which “… could exhibit an external signal from a video player or camera” was able to be situated in the gallery. During the 1960s, Paik and Vostell developed works which employed the new medium of video to critique different forms of institutionalised practice. They placed special emphasis upon television as a mass communication vehicle. Much of this spirit of this art was interventionist in nature. As Paik had been
one of the earliest examples of an artist doing this that is, critiquing TV and Mass Media by placing video art within the public sphere, that is, in a gallery setting, he would provide a concrete example to others of the possibilities of the medium. Much of Paik’s inspiration for this had come from Marshall McLuhan who, as Bijvoet points out:

“… deserves merit for being the first author who created a conceptual framework for understanding the new electronic media. He was also among the first who recognised the impact that these media might have on our perceptual senses, as well as the implications this could have for the education system at large. Paik’s visions were congruent with McLuhan’s arguments in that the electric or electronic technology (McLuhan used both terms indiscriminately) and its consecutive automation techniques and computerization would bring about a major change in the concept of learning and knowing.” 85

Paik’s independent stance as an avant-garde artist led him to be one of the first to acquire the Sony portable recorder and camera. 86 His first work was achieved through his fortune of being in the right place at the time when the necessary equipment was becoming available. Paik’s working independent of the mainstream TV industry network and traditional Hollywood Cinema had been in direct contrast with the anonymity of those working in broadcast television. As Birringer points out, Paik’s work:

“… reflects the trajectory of video art from its subversive, dadaist beginnings, coupled with a Duchampian challenge to the status, value, and authenticity of the art object, to its gradually accepted versatility as a techno-aesthetic practice operating in a yet underdetermined space between the established arts, popular culture and social documentary.” 87

As an independent avant-garde artist, Paik’s reputation and status “… allowed him to take a strong moral and oppositional stand, by directly challenging the monopoly of mainstream media and what he saw to be the bourgeois values embedded in their programming”. 88 As Elwes states, “Paradoxically, he was only able to do this by calling on the privileged status of the artist and the singularity of vision, the lone voice of genius that was enshrined in post-war American art. In the context of fine art, he” (like early video artists) “was able to lay claim to what his camera saw as an autonomous, creative agent in defiance of the invisible, corporate forces that silence the individual whilst homogenising humanity into a narrow range of stereotypes for the television screen”. 89 For Elwes:

The video was proof that Paik, the irreducible individual, the free creative agent had been there and made an authentic record of what he saw … Paik’s seminal work was perfectly in keeping with the interventionist climate of the 1960s when young people across North America and Europe believed they could effectively oppose and transform existing social structures. 90

Overall, along with Paik, many other artists employing video art highlighted the monitor’s domestic origins, which recreated home interiors in the gallery. Due to its presentation on TV monitors from early on video art was known as “participation TV” - this was because video art was not clearly separable from television and the television screen as an all pervasive symbol of contemporary mass culture. Polemical from the outset Paik had stated in relation to video’s purpose “Television has been attacking us all our lives, now we can attack it back”. 91
Video Art: The Collectives

This thesis will not examine the formative influence of video collectives during the active period of video art. Whilst I acknowledge their importance, any reasonable reflective discussion is not possible within the scope of this thesis. Video collectives proliferated across the world during the 1960-1990 period. A number of these would be highly influential to the breadth of video art, and effective with altering the practises of major funding bodies, television production and broadcasting, higher education in the arts, as well as the exhibition/acquisition policies of those art institutions which are the focus for my thesis. There are elements which do illuminate latter discussions however and these will be briefly discussed here.

From the beginning, the spirit and purpose behind early video art or “participation TV” would manifest in the early video collectives. These groups have almost been written out of video art’s history due to video’s “museumisation” that is, its imbrication within the institutionalised museum paradigm. Video Collectives in the U.S. had included Ant Farm, Global Village, Optic Nerve, People’s Video Theatre in New York, Raindance, Video Free America and Videofreex. These were “encouraged … to enter the communication process, to become in a sense, co-producers of the communication product”. As video art pioneer Paul Ryan states in relation to the U.S. collectives and operatives:

The alternative video group Raindance was conceived of as a countercultural think tank—an alternative to the Rand Corporation. People’s Video Theatre had a popularist stance associated with the counterculture. Many of the Videofreex were former teachers who involved themselves in the counterculture. Two of the principals, David Cort and Parry Teasdale, met at the Woodstock Music Festival. At Woodstock they were introduced to Don West, then assistant to the president of Columbia Broadcast System (CBS). With the assistance of Don West, Cort and Teasdale, along with Curtis Ratcliff, organized the Videofreex to produce a portapak-style pilot tape for broadcast on CBS. The program was to render the Woodstock experience and the values of the counterculture.

In 1969, in Great Britain, John “Hoppy” Hopkins founded TVX within the auspices of the Robert Street Arts Lab which had been set up in London to encourage artists and filmmakers to produce videos. In addition the London Filmmakers Cooperative (LFMC) (an artists-led collective) would manifest its organisation at Robert Street. The filmmakers at the LFMC would interrelate with those experimenting with video. Similar initiatives would occur in Europe in the late 1960s. In France, by the early 1970s several groups with similar initiatives would also be established. These had included Video OO, Slon Video, Immedia, Video Out, and Les Fleurs. Moreover, in Australia Bush Video, MAVAM Co-op in Melbourne and Sydney Film Makers Co-op would be formed during this period.

Video art collectives were often intensely “spontaneous”. As Sturken points out “Collectivism was a life-style of the times; the prevalent ideology was one of sharing-living environments, work, information”. Much of the result would exist in the form of street tapes. Two main types (in the U.S.) Videofreex’s focus was “… on documenting the counterculture, and providing an alternative history through the television medium”. This had been established to provide an alternative to television reports covering political events during the age. The conception behind this had been to
employ video’s real time/real life properties and qualities to document current events in a direct and unbiased way. Much of the initiative behind this had stemmed from the artists’ reaction to the political upheavals taking place during the time. These artists would be involved on a grass roots level of documentation and reportage forming commentaries on the state of society. The artworks produced by collectives would often result in a sharp contrast to the museum-based works. This would lead to a form of reconsideration by both parties.

For museums, although historical group exhibitions of established past masters such as the Impressionists would be held, the practice of celebrating the works produced by contemporary “collectives” would be sanctioned in favour of the championing of the individual artist over others. For museums such as MoMA, the question of individual ownership of the tapes would be raised. This would be due to their belief that the concept of the “masterpiece” in Western society should be linked to the uniqueness of the individual’s creative output and oeuvre, (hence the idolisation of individuality present within the High Modernist period). As a result, the central ideal of group solidarity for the collective would later be eradicated once the art object became an institutional asset owned by the corporate body (museum). Major art institutions would frequently attempt to duplicate works in order to extend the breadth of commercialisation from works of video art. Discrepancies between ownership and authorship would provide conflicting forms of control over the works. The nature of instability of the medium provides a didactic example of the ethics of art collection – one which is peculiar to video art. In any case, many of these works after the 1960s and 1970s would be technically irretrievable due to the disintegration of tape quality.  

**Notes on Thesis Methodology**

The specific period this thesis text looks at in relation to this will be used as a paradigm through which to undertake a global assessment of the problems posed by video art. This period of avant-garde and contemporary art exhibition within the art museum’s more recent history charts the rise of video art’s prominence in the museum/gallery during the High Modernist period. To do this, this thesis examines the specific “flavour” of each institution and how that was altered during the video art period. It will, therefore, present a specific and explicit case study of four prominent public art institutions’ methods and mechanisms of operation in relation to the exhibition and acquisition of recent video art. In so doing, it is the telos of this thesis to examine a facet of institutionalised change through the example of a problematic form of contemporary art. As Popper points out:

In video performances, the televised image of mass communication and that of video, which made its mark in the early ‘70s, has profoundly influenced the world of the visual arts, theatre and literature. Video has succeeded in asserting itself in the field of performance where the dividing line between the fine and the performing arts is blurred.  

Comparisons within and between MoMA and other institutional methods of display are made within this thesis. Specific video-based works will be analysed in order to make an assessment of their presentation in the museum. Dan Graham’s video installations for instance, present us with a good
example which illuminates the tract of development between contexts – institutions and periods. His work is represented in the collections of both European and U.S. institutions. He has also had retrospective exhibitions at numerous institutions – including all four analysed within this thesis. Through an analysis of Graham’s various exhibitions I intend to illuminate the varied methods that would need to be utilised for their presentation and examine the problematic that this presented to the museum or gallery. (This would include Graham’s attempts at deconstructing/restructuring the viewer’s perception in gallery spaces. Through devices such as projections, surveillance, time delay, and mirrors, and other methods Graham would use that redefined viewer/construct relationships and spatial frameworks of the museum). In addition to Graham, the works of Bruce Nauman and Mona Hatoum will serve as other examples that will extend the breadth of discussion.

Finally, the use of the term “installation” (such as the phrase “video installation art”) in this thesis refers to any work created by the “…artists who critically engaged with the experience of human perception, who tested its limits and expanded its possibilities”. This definition is applied to the video artists whose works were installed for display in those institutions of which this study is concerned.

Because the research question is both broad and complex and focuses on museums and video art, I have chosen to focus on two specific methodologies in my examination. The first attempts to determine why art museums dealt with the display of video art as a form of museum installation in the way that they did. The second is concerned specifically with investigating how/why the problematic of video art influenced the art museum during the latter period of High Modernity. Video installation – as a distinct form of communication and art, presented unique problems related to its display and acquisition. Both of these premises/investigations will form a specific understanding towards the art museum’s relationship to video for the period studied in this thesis.

My method is to first define the kinds of museums that attempted to create a space for video art installations. In order to do this it seems worthwhile to examine the earlier museum models which will increase understanding of more contemporary museums and the manner with which the “classical” model was modified.

**Thesis Outline: Chapter Summaries**

In the first chapter, *Defining the Classical Structure of the Museum: From the Louvre to MoMA*, I will examine the significant aspects of MoMA’s general methods and practices which were responsible for establishing a foundation for the selection, acquisition and exhibition of video in the 1960s. In order to do this I will establish an historical field by examining the classical framework of the art museum and through a re-examination of the classical or “traditional” structure of the art museum MoMA’s innovations can be measured against more classical structures which were set by the Louvre. As the first public art institution the Louvre offers a clear instance via comparison through which to highlight the extent of MoMA’s innovations. The Louvre’s classical structure is
summarised via three main aspects: by setting up a connection between art institutions and art practice; it would propagate a system of presenting art as a narrative; as a public institution it was employed as a symbol of the French nation. Through this, the Louvre established the agenda in relation to how scores of museums would define their institutional priorities and practices. All three aspects would define the structure for later art museums. This section engages with the theories of J.J. Winckelmann and Immanuel Kant who both present valuable insights into the study of positioning art in museum structures.  

Following the discussion on the Louvre, Chapter 1 will examine the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which I believe exists as a link between the classical structure and the more contemporary model of MoMA. The Metropolitan would be built in an age of corporate capitalism and was developed and run through the support of private trustees. As such, the Metropolitan was run as a form of business enterprise establishing a bureaucratic model which pointed to the way in which many museums (such as MoMA) would be run in the future. Additionally, the Metropolitan’s devotion to many of the principles which reflect the classical/traditional structure of the art museum resulted in its negligence of contemporary and avant-garde artworks. This would establish MoMA’s initiation in 1929.

The rest of this opening chapter will reveal MoMA’s specific framework – it details the features which defined MoMA as a prototype for other contemporary art institutions around the world. It was not until the advent of the birth of MoMA in New York in 1929, that many museum practices formally popularised by the Louvre took on new shape and form as a completely new set of institutional priorities, concerns and objectives emerged in the early twentieth century. This examination of MoMA will include: MoMA’s specific and unique institutional framework offering a comparative analysis to earlier models presented in the chapter; a detailed emphasis of MoMA’s display and exhibition strategies with consideration given to its incorporation of new media such as film, photography and architecture in the 1930s – 1940s; explanation of why MoMA would later become so important for the valorisation of video art; discussion of MoMA’s role and function as a national symbol – that is, outlining similarities and contrasting differences with the Metropolitan and the Louvre. This is done to understand why MoMA functioned as national symbol and would operate in the way it did between 1968-1990. It therefore attempts to answer the American need to colonise cultural propagation in the post-WWII period.

Chapter 2 – The Problematics of Display. This chapter establishes a theoretical base to discuss the varied nature of institutional modification which video art prompted. Chapter 2 focuses specifically upon the problematics posed by video art display in museums/galleries (1968-1990). It begins with a comparative discussion and examination of MoMA and the Centre Pompidou’s internal architectural configurations and spatial arrangements. This is done as a way to reveal how mainstream museum frameworks for display would cope with video art’s/video sculpture’s multiple complexities. Following this, a set of video-based artworks that presented unique problems to the museum will be discussed. As an example, this chapter analyses video artworks displayed at the Tate Gallery’s 1976
Video Show. The Tate’s presentation of works by Steven Partridge (whose video installations were included in the show) will be examined. Partridge declared that the Tate failed to understand the work, stating afterwards:

This exhibition was curated by the exhibition department of the Tate Gallery rather than the main gallery team who had not yet, recognized video as a “legitimate” medium. They used their lecture theatre spaces – which although not ideal, served the purpose and gave exposure to the public for what was - at the time- a very new experience.

Video art in the museum is an art with a theatricalising emphasis on the staging of the work and the viewer’s experiential/ spatial encounter with it. These works are often displayed in the art museum in such a way as to place the spectator in a position where their own presence gives meaning to the work itself. In relation to this videographic gesture John G. Hanhardt states in the Introduction within Video Culture:

The strategy of turning the video camera onto a space and thus causing the viewer to perceive that space differently was part of a complex phenomenological inquiry into the ontology of materials and one’s own presence when viewing, experiencing, the aesthetic text.

Michael Fried’s famous essay Art and Objecthood, (1967) analyses the role of audience in relation to the presence of certain kinds of art within museum spaces. Written during a time when conceptual artists such as Sol LeWitt would diminish the importance of objecthood altogether within his aesthetic practices. Fried would object to the “degenerative theatricality” of an art which acknowledged the spectator’s presence as active participant in the construction of meaning from the work. Following the section on the Tate his views will be examined to discern a particular perspective of the “moving image” presented electronically within the “architectonics” of a gallery space. This section will be a critical re-examination and discussion of the role of the viewer’s presence within the art spaces containing video art. Through this, the thesis will also question the museum as a site for a form of institutionalised performative art.

The third and final section of Chapter 2: “Playgrounds of Disturbance: Graham, Nauman and Hatoum” will extend into more particularised relations between video and the theoretical impetus behind this art form discussed in Chapter 3. This discussion forms the heart of the thesis. This section places an emphasis upon the study of environmental video installation in the museum. The issues raised here will be examined in relation to the architectonics of a gallery space which includes a detailed examination of the relationship of the viewer to the artwork within the gallery. Here I will explore certain themes in relation to a discussion on the theoretical notions around institutionalised viewing space. For example, some of the themes discussed within the works shown at these institutions will be: the attempt of the “defamiliarisation” of everyday images; the address of popularised taboo subjects (such as the idea of self, the body, and the personal). These themes will be looked at in relation to their display within the architectonics of the gallery space and are discussed through an analysis of the morphology and language of video as installation art in relation to the gallery. In this section Dan Graham, Bruce Nauman and Mona Hatoum’s video art will be
discussed as exemplars of how video art’s problematic presence in a gallery space would necessitate the need for institutional modification.  

Chapter 3 – The Problematic of Video Art. This chapter discusses the relationship between corporate funds and the museums’ two core areas of activity: acquisition and exhibition. Although MoMA was originally set up to promote avant-garde art and discourse, by the mid- to late 1960s, it became a target for protest as critics and avant-garde artists felt it embodied institutionalised and dated traditional art attitudes. One of the many ways MoMA responded was through their acquisition and display of video art. Chapter 3 is subdivided into four sections. The first section focuses on video art acquisition as a problematic (asset deterioration would play a role in defining the history and specific typology of video).

The following section discusses the problems of video art exhibition and proposes to illuminate the machinations of MoMA’s influence. It is my proposition that a series of reactive patterns of duplicitous exhibitions would proliferate the exposure (and limits) of video art’s influence during the 1968-1990 period. The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age, which included video sculpture and interactive installations, had been MoMA’s first exhibition (1968) to contain video art. This proceeded exhibitions at the Centre Pompidou, the Tate Gallery and AGNSW. Within this exhibition was one of Nam June Paik’s “electromagnetic manipulations” of television sets - McLuhan’s Caged (1967). Interestingly, this work had been exhibited a week earlier overseas at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London at its Cybernetic Serendipity exhibition.  

A pattern, or “domino effect”, would begin to emerge for the exhibition of video works, from gallery to gallery, from country to country, around this time. From 1967, video art would play a central role in the various avant-garde art festivals that would be staged in the galleries around the world. MoMA’s show was its first devoted to kinetic art and was curated by the then Director of Moderna Museet in Stockholm Karl G. Pontus Hulten. Events such as these would eventually lead to video’s incorporation into the mainstream world of institutionalised art. Through this, much of the original impetus behind the creation of certain kinds of video art would be subsumed and eventually overrun by the late 1970s with newer forms of technology. This would be the case for artists such as Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell, Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, Nancy Holt, Peter Campus, Juan Downey, and Frank Gillette (all of whom were pioneers of video as an art form). With MoMA providing much of the impetus behind the shifting of the interpretative context of video, the shift from a radical avant-garde form of art to an institutionally bound commodity was created mainly through the changing attitudes/ policies of the art institutions themselves.

The third stage of Chapter 3: “The Discursive Field of Video Art” will detail the specific discourse that would surround video art in the 1960s and 1970s. This will be done as a way to chart the influence of the ideas and culture that projected video art to a global market. There are two aspects to this: the reaction of the institutions, and the responsiveness of the artists to engage discursive
texts. Conversely, the art institution’s relation to these temporal forms, which would inspire critical debate, is also addressed and examined.

The fourth section of this chapter examines the display and acquisition of video art in relation to corporate sponsorship (1968-1990). The relationship of corporate funding within each of the institutions and the level it was used to circulate and promote exhibitions of video art will be discussed.

Chapter 4 - *Institutional Frameworks*. The main objective of this chapter is to reach a fundamental understanding of why each selected institution would provide different contexts for video art acquisition and display. The examination of the contemporary art galleries in London, Paris and Sydney are evaluated by a thorough examination of each institution’s budget for acquisition, exhibition and presentation. This statistical information provides a forum of “empirical fact” upon which an analysis and commentary are formed. A summary of each institution’s relationship to the localised and global art situation will be provided in order to present a comparative framework.

Taking much from MoMA’s display of avant-garde art, these points are discussed in order to reveal the important issues which would create the specific structure of the institutionalised paradigm. This will include a scrutinising of each institution’s funding procedure for video art in order to examine its particular patterns of behaviour (in relation to its own ideological purpose and function). Therefore Chapter 4 examines the relationships which construct a pattern of associative behaviour between the four institutions. This analysis will attempt to discern the extent of MoMA’s influence over each Gallery’s views towards the display of video art. Once associative patterns have been determined the level of each institution’s support for video art will be summarised in relation to their various institutional structures and practices. A rough global framework will be presented through my examination of these globally distinct contemporary art institutions.

Chapter 5 – *The Critical Discourse of Video Art* is structured into two sections. The first, “Objective Neurosis”: “The Video Text” will address video as a problematic form of art within the High Modernist period and that video art was something that needed to be remembered with other video art in mind. Hence, it will discuss why/how a form of contemporary art had been unable to establish masterpieces due to its referencing of images from other video works (and texts in general). This section will therefore examine the video “text” by employing a social-cultural theoretical approach and Fredric Jameson’s writings on postmodernity - particularly in relation to his essay on video art in his book *Postmodernism Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991). This will be used to support an overview of the relevance of the proliferation of works which followed.

The second section: “The Commoditisation of Video Art” extends to a discussion of the culture industry’s behavioural need to commodify video art as material media. In order to thematically ground this summary Theodor Adorno’s and Max Horkheimer’s critique of the culture industry (in their essay *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*, 1944) will be employed as a theoretical foundation.
The Louvre would establish the fundamental framework for the subject of this thesis – my discussion will therefore commence with the Louvre and a discussion on the historical development of the “classic” museum framework.
Notes

3 These are examined and expanded upon within the thesis.
4 This includes the exhibition hall or Grand Gallery on the fifth floor of the Centre.
5 Video “installation” is a term that has come to refer to site-specific or environmental installation video. My usage of the term “installation” would include video artworks (“installed” and exhibited within a gallery space) such as single-channel video as well as “environmental” or “immersion” video artworks which suggest “… a temporary occupation of space, a bracketed existence enclosed by a matching process of breaking down the composition into its elements again and vacating the site”. (Morse, op. cit., p. 154). Thus, as Morse goes on to state, video art “… installation implies a kind of art that is ephemeral and never to be utterly severed from the subject, time, and place of its enunciation”. Morse, p. 154.
6 MoMA, in other words is the leader - the other institutions in relation to avant-garde and video art presentation were in many respects followers of MoMA – “MoMA’s children”. Therefore MoMA’s solving of some of the problems led to solutions which other institutions attempted to adopt.
7 My definition of “video art”, throughout this thesis does not include avant-garde film, which employs the materials of film rather than video tape, nor does it include “community video” or video tapes of traditional cinema, such as those found at the video store for domestic home viewing. Rather my definition of “video art”, throughout this thesis, will relate solely and very specifically to those experimental advance guard video artworks made from the 1960s by artists that would specifically utilise analogue video tape as a recording device “… through the use of cameras, monitors and tape recorders to build up “video sculptures”, “video environments” or “video installations” within the 1968-1990 period. These “video artists” would employ the photo-chemical process of magnetic tape for recording image and sound prior to the museum’s/gallery’s expanding interest in digital technology from the mid-1990s. Therefore, my definition of video art will parallel Frank Popper’s first and third categories of video art which is distinct from “guerrilla video” or any form of video art that would incorporate digital or computer technology. See specifically F. Popper, *Art in the Electronic Age*, London, Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1993, p. 55.
10 MoMA’s earliest video shows took the form of “information shows”. These would include early displays of video art. An example of this would be MoMA’s *Information Show*, which took place in 1970.
11 This would eventually point the museum towards creating a total environment or playground – which would come about through the presentation of new media forms such as video art through interactive display methods.
12 Refer to Noel Carroll’s book *A Philosophy of Mass Art*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press and Clarendon Press, 1988, p. 120 for a discussion of Walter Benjamin’s views on “mass art” (anti-traditional) in contradistinction to “auratic art” (which is marked by the presence of the original work-but is unique). As I argue various video art can be placed into both categories.
13 The exhibition spaces of the Centre Georges Pompidou are a good example of how this idea would be attempted. These spaces were designed as more open and user friendly in the way they attempted to encourage a “… new common ground in which the French could find itself”. R. J. DeRoo, *The Museum Establishment and Contemporary Art: The Politics of Artistic Display in France after 1968*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 168.
15 Sturken, in Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 103.
16 Morse, op. cit., p. 154.
At the Tate Modern’s *Uniliver Exhibition Series* (which I attended in June 2000) Bruce Nauman’s *Good Boy, Bad Boy* (1985) and other major video works were positioned in the corridor where visitors often walked straight past.

For instance, the Tate Gallery’s *Video Show* which opened in May of 1976 provides an example of the compromises often adopted by public art institutions.

The *Projects* exhibition series began in 1971 and included works by Keith Sonnier, Peter Campus, Shigeko Kubota and Bill Viola. In 1974 the Museum established an on-going video art exhibition program in a specifically designed gallery. By 1977 the Museum had begun the *Video Viewpoints* lecture series. The talks by artists in this series have been transcribed and are available at MoMA’s Video Study Center. At approximately the same time, the Museum began an acquisition program, purchasing artists’ videotapes. The Video Study Center at MoMA was opened in 1984, and available to scholars by appointment. It includes exhibition catalogues, periodicals and journals, artist films, rare ephemeral materials and documentation about the earliest video activities internationally. The Video Study Collection contains more than 800 titles. The Department of Film and Video Preservation Center is located off-site and houses the collection in ideal storage conditions. Refer to Barbara London, ‘Museum of Modern Art Video and Film Program’, *Video History Project*, <http://www.experimentaltvcenet.org/history/groups/gtext.php3?id=52>, 1984 (accessed 29 August, 2005).

By contrast to the aesthetic distance a viewer would have towards viewing television in the home for example, in the art gallery video would take on the status of art. Thus in the gallery as Morse points out “The recorded-video art installation, can be compared to the spectator wandering about on a stage, in a bodily experience of conceptual propositions and imaginary worlds of memory and anticipation”, See Morse, op. cit., p. 159.

For an interesting discussion of the interrelationship between video and film within the High Modernist period refer to J. Hoberman, ‘After Avant-Garde Film’, in B. Wallis (ed.), *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, New York and Boston, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York and David R. Godine Inc., 1984, pp. 72-3. Here Hoberman states that within the High Modernist phase video would grow “… increasingly important to the production of an avant-garde cinema. […] While certain video artists such as Bill Viola and Barbara Buckner represent a postfilm manifestation of the New American Cinema, video … offers other models for the scrambling and derangement of mass culture-and thus the perpetuation of a postmodern avant-garde. Video art would reflect the zeitgeist by recording it within its simulative dimension.

For Marc Mayer “… video belongs to the sequence of innovations in mechanical reproduction that began in 1839 with the invention of photography, or more precisely, two years later with the patent for the calotype negative process that allowed for multiple prints”. M. Mayer, *Being and Time: the Emergence of Video Projection*, New York, Buffalo Fine Arts Albright Knox Art Gallery, 1996), p 16.
In 1965 in New York, with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation the Korean-born artist Nam June Paik had purchased one of the first portable video recording units available on the market in America. Refer to Rush, op. cit. p. 213.

In relation to this Mayer states that “At the very beginning of the historical sequence that ends with video, the aesthetic anxiety that met the invention of photography set in motion an uninterrupted transformation of the Western notion of art that has become categorical, seen from this end. It set art on a dynamic course of reinvention, reform, and redefinition, which ultimately resulted in the current climate of radical inclusiveness, or what other commentators have understood as art’s “pluralism”. Video has also roused its own aesthetic anxieties, extraordinary conceptual problems that a future generation of art historians will have to unravel”. Mayer, op. cit., p. 18.


See Elwes, op. cit., p. 3.

Elwes, ibid., p. 3.

Sturken, in Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 103. As a result, technology itself would determine and define the whole way the “consumer market” for video would expand. As Marita Sturken states, “This changing technology has been fuelled not only by the consumer market but also by advances in industrial equipment resulting from broadcast news’s increased reliance on electronic news gathering and the integration of video editing systems with computer technologies. This technology has advanced with a speed that is unprecedented in the history of the imaging arts”. Sturken, op. cit., p. 103.


Ibid. In fact, Elwes states that “In terms of audience reception and manipulation, video offered both advantages and disadvantages. As far as the working practices of moving image artists were concerned, the most revolutionary aspect of the technology was the instant access it provided to the image – something that film could not do. With the camera hooked up to the monitor and feeding back what it saw, an artist could work directly with the image, arranging elements in the picture frame to its satisfaction before committing anything to tape”. […] “The beauty of the first video recordings was that they could disappear without a trace, discretely disposing of many false starts”. See Elwes, op. cit., p. 16.

Sturken, in Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 103.

Elwes, op. cit., p. 18.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 10.

Ibid., p. 4.

Ibid., p. 16.


Elwes, op. cit., p. 6.

Rush is citing the critic Lucy Lippard’s discussion of art within this period. See Rush op. cit., p. 61.

Elwes, op. cit., p. 7.

Ibid., p. 6.


Elwes, op. cit., p. 2.

Ibid. p. 6.

It would be in some ways ironical that as a medium first employed to critique TV, video itself would wind up as an incessant and common feature used on TV (in news reports by journalists, reporters as well as the MTV music industry) and therefore would be subsumed into that which it had set out originally oppose.


Elwes, op. cit., p. 5.


Ibid., p. 247.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 6.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 10.

Ibid., p. 7.

Ibid., pp. 9-10.

Rush, op. cit., p. 36.

The conception of incorporating or intersecting the public art and private realm into a gallery space had of course been established and achieved much earlier in 1913 through Marcel Duchamp’s infamous gesture of relocating a urinal from a domestic space to a public one. This had generated a whole industry of art based on found objects.

Elwes, op. cit., p. 141.

Birringer, op. cit., p. 154.

Elwes, op. cit., p. 141. Elwes points out that from this time in a gallery space “The artist could now use the flickering “fourth wall” as a sculptural object as well as a monitor to artistic activity and creative imagination”, p. 141.

M. Bijvoet, op. cit.

Elwes, op. cit., 4.


Elwes, op. cit., 4.

Ibid., pp. 4-5.

Ibid., p. 5.

Mick Hartney points out that “This was the declaration Nam June Paik used in 1965 to announce his video tape screenings in New York – generally acknowledged to be the first anywhere by an artist – and it became a slogan for the emerging independent video culture in North America and Europe. Refer to Hartney, in Knight (ed.), op. cit., p. 22.

Rush, op. cit., p. 16.


Sturken, in Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 113.

Ibid.

This issue would later be resolved by digital technology and the transference of platform the works reside upon.

Popper, op. cit., p. 60.

Other retrospective exhibitions of Graham’s video installations have taken place at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Holland; Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, England; The Renaissance Society, University of Chicago; Kunsthalle, Berne, Switzerland; and the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; and his video works have been represented internationally in group exhibitions at Documenta 7, Kassel, Germany; Art Institute of Chicago; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; P.S. 1, New York; American Film Institute National Video Festival, Los Angeles; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York, among other festivals and institutions. Refer to Electronic Arts Intermix, Dan Graham: Biography 1997-2007 <http://www.eai.org/eai/biography.jsp?artistID=403>, (accessed 3 August, 2005).


J.J. Winckelmann (1719-1768) is especially responsible for the invention of a categorical system that enables artworks to be read as objects to be studied within certain formal categories. He is therefore relevant to an understanding of the rise of historicism which led to the birth of the system of the display narrative in Western European art museums in the mid-eighteenth century. Kant’s Critique of Judgement is especially referred to in this chapter.

103 Partridge, S., ‘8x8x8 Tate Gallery 1976’,

106 From its earliest days video art exhibitionism would be inextricably linked with Performance Art. For an example refer to Nam June Paik’s (with Charlotte Moorman) video work Concerto for TV Cello and Videotapes. 1971.
107 Although not discussed in this doctoral thesis, there would be many other significant artists whose video artworks would chart new directions in museum installation and exhibition during the 1968-1990 period -among these, in addition to Graham, Nauman and Hatoum would be Peter d’Agostino, Lynn Hershman and Graham Weinbren. In addition, the ideas and creative practice of Richard Foreman, Ken Jacobs and Anthony McCall would have a collective impact on contemporary museum exhibition practice.
109 Gloria Sutton, ‘The Museum and New Media’,
110 Ibid. Hulten would go on to become Director of France’s MNAM, which by 1977 would be relocated to combine to form the Centre Georges Pompidou.
Chapter 1
Defining the Classical Structure of the Art Museum: from the Louvre to MoMA

The museum embodies the nation state while at the same time providing it with a place in the general scheme of things. “A national heritage is a nation’s umbilical cord” - a metaphor employed by Assogba of Benin. […] Within this perspective the national museum assumes a quite particular symbolism and meaning for the nation and the national state. This transcendental quality, embodying the order of things and embedding the nation within it, is peculiar to the museum - it is a quality not shared by the artistic productions of the national theatre or the daily politics of the national parliament.1

The Louvre is the largest and most influential of the universal survey museums, the prototype for scores of national galleries and municipal art museums.2

The Louvre museum’s imperialist and nationalist imperatives born of the French Revolution reflect a political hegemony, one clearly defined by the state (resulting in it as entelechy) which would establish the prototypical model for nineteenth century art institutions globally. As the first real public art institution, from the outset, it would endeavour chiefly to provide prestige for the state by symbolising the French nation. Leading by example, this quintessence of the Louvre as the prototypical model would establish the foundations of the classical structure of the art museum. By influencing art museums particularly in nineteenth century America, it would thus provide a model for New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art’s own presentation strategies. As Einreinhofer observes, “… galleries of both the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum would welcome art exhibited in a progressive historical order”.3

The Louvre’s chief function as both a museum and a government institution would achieve the creation of new knowledge4 which resulted from establishing a connection between collection, display, the art market and art practice for art museums.5 The display of French art (positioned at the Louvre’s nucleus and surrounded by masterpieces from all over the world), would reflect the French government’s strategy to symbolise and embody the wealth, status and democratic aspirations of the French nation.6 Under the guise of reason and rationality this was established through the Louvre’s categorisation and display of art history presented as a narrative or story of progress. By mapping a route for the museum visitor, which it structured by situating foreign art objects as lineal descendants within a rigorously formularised hierarchisation of “knowledges” that had also included French art, the knowledge of the French nation would be powerfully symbolised and experienced. This system, which incorporated the many different civilisations and cultures of the world that would comprise the Louvre’s paradigm, would make things appear as if France’s capital was the official repository and true heir to each of them. This dominant and demonstrative presentation, had effectively produced the linchpin and defining characteristic that had established and set the Louvre apart as the most influential and powerful institution of its kind. As the first substantive national public art institution, these methods and practices of the Louvre had been influenced by the Enlightenment
concept of “reason” comprising rationalism, the importance of democracy, classical beauty, harmony, proportion and order. By attempting to symbolise and convey “reason and rationality” as a fundamentalist ideology, the Louvre would perpetrated its “authority” as a form of irrefutable truth.

Tied to the birth of a new nation the opening of the Louvre’s doors to every strata of society in 1793 had been timed to coincide with the beliefs which had emanated from new democratic principles in France. These had arisen through a revival of classical values during the Enlightenment period. These values would lead to the creation and formation of a citizenry which had facilitated the possibility of a new Republic in France. Bennett points out (in his discussion of the nineteenth century museum):

… the museum -in its conception ... aimed not at the sequestration of populations but, precisely, at the mixing and intermingling of publics - elite and popular - which had hitherto tended towards separate forms of assembly.

The development of the Louvre’s status as the most powerful and influential museum in the civilised world would be revealed through a monumentality largely constituted through the collection and display of the world’s finest artworks. Later this would be paralleled through the commissioning of artists and craftsmen to work on the building for purposes of enhancing its overall prestige and character. Through this, “reason” and “rationality” became the servant of power.

The following chapter will discuss three main ways employed by the Louvre that led to the establishing of this structure. This will be shown through a discussion of the museum’s setting up a connection between art museums and art practice, the display of art as a form of “narrative”, and through the French government’s initiative of employing the museum as a national symbolic display centre. My purpose will be to show why, and how the Louvre set the framework/standardised operation for the classical art museum until it was superseded by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1929. Following the discussion on the Louvre, I will examine the specific history of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, which would represent the beginnings of the corporate structure while retaining many of the features related to the earlier classical model. This will be followed by a discussion of the salient features of MoMA, (which would be the most significant paradigm for modern museums in relation to the display and acquisition of video art). My discussion in this chapter will begin with why and how the Louvre initiated and established a connection (for museums as an institutional entity) with art practice.
The Louvre in the Age of Louis XIV


From as early as the mid-seventeenth century, there existed a common nexus between the art museum and art practice. It may be interesting here to recount the Louvre’s particularised behaviour patterns within the reign of King Louis XIV. While the Louvre, prior to the mid-seventeenth century, had existed solely as a Royal Palace, it began from the mid-seventeenth century to function differently. The radical disjunction from its previous role as Royal Palace had raised an opportunity for a whole set of decisions taken by Louis XIV that would relate to educating artists and the public. A major function of the Louvre was to educate and liberate the general public in relation to the visitor’s exposure to high forms of culture.

Additionally, from 1670 to the start of the French Revolution in 1789, the Louvre became the state cultural and learning centre for artists in residence. From 1673, the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture (originally founded in 1648 and already holding its biannual exhibitions) was installed in the Louvre and by 1681 many of Louis XIV’s paintings were exhibited in the Louvre in front of a “semi-public audience”. This resulted in aspiring artists who previously would have had to seek out a “master” in order to be instructed in the techniques of fine art practice educating themselves by finding crucial inspiration from studying the many masterworks on display.
A point I wish to make here and which I will often return to throughout this thesis is that public art institutions are shaped largely by their acquisitions and presentational strategies. By the 1770s in France much attention had been given to buying quality French art for the purpose of displaying it in the Louvre alongside many important foreign masterpieces which it had acquired and would continue to acquire. This had stemmed from Louis XIV’s strategy to fastidiously display French art of the highest quality at the Louvre as a way to raise its credibility and status. In fact, many of these French works were bought at sales and auctions.\textsuperscript{10} McClellan points out that between 1775 and 1789 over two hundred French paintings were acquired for the Louvre, paintings which can still be seen to this day.\textsuperscript{11} In order to deal with this, a group of three staff (one of them a picture dealer) was assembled to inspect unsolicited pictures, review sales, and travel abroad in search of constantly good buys.

By the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, under the centralising effects of the Napoleonic regime (1800-48) the specific role of art museums (along with schools, hospitals and prisons) were established. In order to achieve the reforms many royal buildings were “disestablished” by France’s new government and reinvented as Neoclassicism became the dominant official style which was enforced through strict and rigorous official patronage.\textsuperscript{12} The new architecture which sprang up in place of the old would be made to reflect and symbolise the state’s increasing authority. Owing to Napoleon I’s successes, which had brought many new riches to be stored up in the Louvre (a great deal functioning as military trophies), its first director began to further reorganise and remodel it.\textsuperscript{13} During this period, as Bennett observes:

\begin{quote}
… the emergence of the art museum was closely related to that of a wider range of institutions - history and natural science museums, dioramas and panoramas, national and, later, international exhibitions, arcades and department stores.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

From 1789, (after the demise of the monarchy with the execution of Louis XVI in 1793), the state’s initiative to expand the Louvre Palace for the purpose of providing prestige and distinction for the Napoleonic regime had led to the commissioning of artists as well as architects to aesthetically enhance various sections of the building by rebuilding it in a manner to parallel the newly acquired classical works on display. (Through this, boundaries dividing interior and exterior had often been blurred).\textsuperscript{15} From 1793, many areas of the Louvre “affected” a sober classicism. As Bartz and Konig state:

\begin{quote}
A sober classicism took over, which covers the smooth walls with surfaces of colored stone, which favors the arch and, whose bareness accords with the classical works of art displayed here since that time.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

The style, which attempted to preserve the values of ancient Greece and Rome, mainly through contemporary philosophical discussion and writings was associated with beauty, truth, justice and freedom -all symbols of “reason” and “rationality”. It is important to understand that for the Louvre, the revival of classical styles was an attempt to reflect the “moral earnestness” which had become embedded in late eighteenth century attitudes and echoed the idealistic high-minded seriousness of
much Enlightenment philosophy. During this time: “The cult of reason … found its perfect expression in Neoclassicism and its values of logic, harmony and proportion.” As the first government museum dedicated entirely to art, the Louvre’s interior was made to embody the idea of beauty, truth, justice and democracy. As Sir Isaiah Berlin states, the French Revolution was dedicated “… to the creation or restoration of a static and harmonious society, founded on unaltering principles, a dream of classic perfection …”. Within this, Neoclassicism was simply referred to as the “true style”. Critics referred to it “as a revival of the arts … conceiving it as a new Renaissance, a reassertion of timeless truths and in no sense a mere mode of fashion”. As part of the Louvre’s effort to collect and display an increasing collection of art from 1805 until 1810 the main gallery was divided up into nine new sections with the instalment of columned arches and skylights “… in the large bays nearest to and furthest away from the midpoint of the gallery”. The process of aestheticisation of these integrative and integral formal features within the building coupled with work on the exterior would substantially assist in the transformation of the Louvre from Royal Palace to a public museum. As a result, the former Louvre Palace was able to display an enormous amount of art from all over the world to its public. Through its commissioning and displaying of art – that is, either for the aesthetic enhancement of its interiors via remodelling, or through its presentation of paintings, sculpture, and various art treasures, the transformation from a palace to a museum would establish an important nexus between art institutionalisation and art production.

One of the Louvre’s most effective and influential strategies for displaying art would occur during the period of the French Revolution (1789-1799). Within this period, the Louvre’s displaying of art as a “narrative of progress” in its newly built Neoclassical environments would arise through the French government’s establishing of an organised set of codes in the Louvre which could function as a pedagogical and cultural praxis for France’s citizens. Under the guise that collapsed (or vanished) civilisations of the world would be provided with newfound resonance through the Louvre’s displaying of its art as a “narrative of progress” this situated French art within these narratives at its capital Paris-(France’s central vortex, axis and seat of power). The French state therefore ordered and propagated the culture of other civilisations as knowledge for political purposes and to advance their own agendas.

The following section examines how a form of display would become an operational standard for art museums. This will be done by tracing the origins of the narrative of progress which would be perpetrated by the Louvre from 1793 onwards.
Establishing a System of Display: Origins of the Display Narrative

The French state, within the period of the French Revolution attempted to reflect the beneficial effects of liberty on art to propagate the wealth of the nation as a way to inspire its people under its new rationalism. From 1793, under the guise of “reason” and “rationality”, French art would be singled out and positioned (often in separate rooms) in the Louvre in order to form or construct an evolution of civilisations which was determined and organised through a chronological narrative of foreign masterpieces and French national schools of art. Through this fundamentalist ideology, Enlightenment reason and rationality became the servant of power. The qualifying of the Louvre’s collection through its systematic display in this manner, can be traced back to the age immediately preceding the birth of the Louvre as a public museum in 1793. (This would mark a time when the historical periodisation of art in museums would be made to act as a concrete specificity for the public at large). In order to better understand this it would be useful to present a brief outline of the nature of political, ethical and moral thought, within the period immediately prior to the incorporation of this form of display of the Louvre. I will begin by outlining the period known as the “Enlightenment”, which spans from approximately 1715 to the advent of the French Revolution in 1789, and discuss the relation to the influence upon practices within the Louvre.

Central to the practice of classifying and displaying art as a narrative during the Enlightenment was the concept of “progress”. The Louvre’s practice of codifying art by cataloguing and classifying it to form a system that could reveal human achievement chronologically in the museum had initially largely stemmed from increases of faith in the concept of progress within the social and scientific discourse of the period. This had arisen predominantly from the replacement of tradition and custom with the inculcation of reason and rational thought within the Enlightenment. Amongst the thinkers who had influenced Enlightenment thought and would assist in the promulgation of these ideas throughout the period was English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), whose *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) had proclaimed that governments were essentially trustees for the people. Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), another influential figure, had attempted to understand the world through scientific investigation. Both men’s writings apportioned new authority upon the individual for the purpose of shaping the “data of man’s experience” through information environments. In his aforementioned essay, Locke would examine the nature of the human mind and would argue that ideas and perceptions of things were not innate but were derived through sensory experience. This had led the followers of Locke to insist that man would be responsible for his own creativity as well as destiny. The subsequent inculcation and assimilation of the concepts in France (where the most eloquent criticism and denunciation of the old order would take place), would lead many French intellectuals to argue that all men were capable of reaching an understanding of the “truth” through their own abilities of critical and practical reason.

Voltaire (1694-1788), among the most decisive and influential of these, had secularised the field of history by concerning himself with a new ontological and epistemological law founded upon a prejudice for combining art and history with a thoroughgoing scientific and rational explanation.
For Maurois, “Everywhere he sees laws established to preserve what is essential to the human species, what prevents its total ruin”. As Maurois has stated, “By describing English institutions he undertook to make the French reconsider their religious and political ideas”. Voltaire’s view, - would define human accomplishment as historical knowledge -justifiable and verifiable through “reason” and “rationality”. This had meant that history itself would be calculated, codified and articulated as a law, or narrative, of established “facts”. (Following Voltaire, history would be defined by how men viewed and categorised it). As a result, the representation of human accomplishment through art would be historicised and recorded through a chronological story of progress which reflected the current objective social reality. Narratives of art based on this idea would form a vital constituent and discipline in the Louvre’s display practices particularly after 1793. Voltaire’s ideas were augmented by Diderot (1713-1784) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). Rousseau would write *The Social Contract* in 1762, in which he would state rather polemically “Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains since no man has a natural authority over his fellows and force creates no right, we must conclude that conventions form the basis of all legitimate authority among men”. Rousseau’s thoughts were important amongst those who would influence the way the history of art would manifest itself as a cultural praxis through its representation in the Louvre.

Within this increasingly hierarchising and modernising world of the mid-to late eighteenth century discussions of this nature had stimulated the implementation of new ideas and practices in relation to the meaning and connoisseurship of art and aesthetics, particularly in Germany. Around this time the connoisseurship and meaning of art began to be discussed as a form of religion. This had provided the study of art for others with new interpretative depth.

In addition to the ideas generated by English and French intellectuals, the German philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), as well as the scholarship of J.J. Winckelmann (1719-1768) would be important for the formation of the Louvre’s displaying of art through its narrative of progress. Kant’s significance would derive from his rational examination of beauty. His capacious attempt to develop his own epistemological theories had led Kant to study aesthetics as a new philosophy (“philosophical aesthetics”). The implications and residual effects of this theory would influence people/the art cognoscenti to think differently about beauty in relation to art. Kant had believed that man’s appreciation of beauty was not just a product of the physical brain; rather it was arrived at “directly via the senses”. Consequently, he held that man’s appreciation of beauty had always existed as a basic human function that is, as something natural, and that acknowledging it was not a “low-ranking” use of the mind. In his *Critique of Judgment* (1790), his interest in “the question of judgment and beauty” had suggested that human beings each have a number of separate and distinct capabilities and competences existing within the mind – “… the cognitive, the ethical, and the judgmental”. (Kant did not believe that the quintessence of beauty in the object (prior to its being viewed) already existed in the mind as idea; nor that beauty itself would be fixed permanently within the object. Rather, he posited that beauty exists as a product of an inter-change or “transaction”-that is, as a mechanism in man’s soul that would create a direct intuition) -which takes place
simultaneously as the object is being viewed. For Kant, man’s ability to judge aesthetically in this way would constitute a creative and imaginative process which, when combined with the cognitive, ethical and moral - the rational part of the brain, has the capacity to understand and “… make sense of the world”. This theoretical reasoning would help to canonise and fuel a new social and philosophical relation, discourse and dimension; its associative meanings necessitating and culminating in the accentuation and elevation of the connoisseurship of art to high status as beauty. This concept, under the Louvre’s nationalist and imperialist auspices, was brought under the rationale of reason. After Kant, the heightened status of beauty was put to the service of the state and promoted by the Louvre’s authority as a categorical imperative through the domain of reason and rationality.

Additionally, an important theoretical influence upon the Louvre’s institutionalisation of art and its conditions of representation were the writings of the German philologist, archaeologist, historian and author of The History of Ancient Art (1764) Johann J. Winckelmann. Winckelmann would provide a more direct influence upon the Louvre’s structuring of its display narratives as works in the Louvre would, after Winckelmann, be arranged by “school and chronology”. In terms of his influence upon the theory and history of art, Winckelmann is a key figure responsible for the rise in historicism and the categorisation of knowledge in specific relation to art theory in the eighteenth century. Many of his ideas would be central to the implementation of display practices in museums as an ideological fixity. As Honour states, “He is to be regarded as one of those who, in the sphere of art, have known how to initiate a new organ of the human spirit”. By engendering a new historical awareness, aesthetics and criticism, Winckelmann’s writings would contribute greatly to eighteenth century debates surrounding what could be identified as the supreme artistic culture. Many of his ideas and conceptions had developed from gazing back at antiquity and the classical age of Greece and Rome. His specific interpretive point of view of the art of the past had been that if man could adhere to the application of a rigorous set of principles insofar as suggested through an intense appreciation of “high art”, that is, classical art, he could ennoble himself and improve society. As Honour points out:

Winckelmann by contemplation of the ideal works of the ancients, received a sort of inspiration, through which he opened a new sense for the study of art.

Winckelmann’s influence on art history is evidenced in the practice of categorizing art by periods and schools rather than by artists. Winckelmann’s beliefs helped to shape the direction of debates which gave birth to literary discussion on the rise and fall of art within an historical framework which became cited as a “reliable index” - (relating to broader cultural debates which were a very complex area consisting of many delicate shades of estimation -of the general levels of Western European society). Winckelmann’s ideas and prescriptive historicist doctrine would influence the Louvre from the late eighteenth century and remain central as ineluctable law within both traditional and Modernist museum structures. Winckelmann adopted a belief that “… history moved in cycles of growth and decay, he conceived the history of ancient art as an organic process, dividing it into
four periods, each with its own style”. For Winckelmann, this would be defined to proceed from the early or archaic style (before Phidias), through the sublime or grand (Phidias and his contemporaries), the beautiful (Praxiteles to Lysippos); and the long period of imitative style which lasted until the fall of the Roman Empire. As part of an ongoing debate that had centred around the determining of supreme artistic cultures, his theories would raise questions regarding whether the “Cycle of Culture” would in fact be considerably weakened by current European art and culture as civilisation transformed itself from its “antique origins”. For Winckelmann, contemporary or current art produced within his time, would relate to an art which had already reached the end of its cycle and was in a moment of decay. Winckelmann’s ideas would be influential with regard to the initiation and implementation of hierarchical spaces (by which to increase connoisseurial desire under the auspices of the state) for art display at the Louvre and would form a new understanding of art and art historicism from the mid-to late eighteenth century. After Winckelmann, the Louvre would situate:

… the French school at the Salon end of the Grand Gallery, followed by the Northern and Italian Schools. Within the schools, artists were grouped in chronological order. This system of display … was enthusiastically embraced by nineteenth-century Americans.

Due to Winckelmann’s influence, fascination with displaying objects as specimens for classificatory purposes within an historical situation and framework had prevailed after the Enlightenment period. (Its popularity had resulted in a decisive shift for museum and gallery presentation). Previously galleries such as the Luxembourg Palace had, as Einreinhofer states:

… juxtaposed works by different artists and of different genres. […] This system probably derived from a theory developed by Roger de Piles in 1708 which held that a painting contained the four elements of colour, design, composition, and expression and that one could best study painting by comparing each individual element. This would best be achieved by the juxtaposition of artists, styles, and subjects, thus allowing the viewer continuous contrast.

With theories such as those of Winckelmann’s being propounded and perpetrated prior to the birth of the Louvre as a public museum, various galleries in Western Europe would begin developing a new set of practices for displaying art historically. This resulted in those galleries previously designed and organised to reveal the wealth of “princely rule” becoming occluded or “superseded” from the mid-eighteenth century. (For instance, within Vienna’s Imperial Gallery, in the 1780s, its ornate baroque gallery was transformed into the first historical survey museum). Paintings belonging to different schools would be separated from each other as new aesthetic categories based on a progressive chronological order were formed. All work belonging to an individual artist would be demarcated and distinguished from other artists in the group accordingly. One of the earliest examples of this would take place in a gallery in the Luxembourg Museum from 1750. Influenced by the art historical theories of Roger de Piles (1635-1709), the Luxembourg Museum in Paris invited visitors to participate in:
… a comparative mode of viewing that revealed the strengths and weaknesses of chosen artists and the schools to which they belonged through calculated juxtaposition of different paintings. 49

Through their juxtapositioning, artworks were not presented chronologically but were classified and displayed by “style” and “national school”. 50 Further, due to the creation of new taxonomies, and the rise in historicism, these methods were then replaced in the latter half of the eighteenth century by a system of hanging paintings designed to reveal the “… historical evolution within national schools”. 51

When examining the specificities and postulating variations of the Louvre’s curatorial practices after the Enlightenment, we find that rather than fully adopt Winckelmann’s cycle/theory-(that had charted art’s history from a state of healthy youthfulness towards maturity, decadence, old age and death) in its entirety it would adjust it to form a theory of progress so that it could display the collection as a series of accomplishments. These would be constituted linearly in a chronological series of rational progressions - a “narrative of progress”. In this way, art in the Louvre’s collection would be made to ascend in quality and artisanship and culminate in perfection and true artistic achievement. This was established to comparatively present human achievement as an historical development, through a newly devised and authoritative “history of art”. It had meant that Classical art, (which began an historical evolution of art within the Louvre as a major accomplishment, from which to begin a trajectory of progress) was incorporated at the beginning of the narrative. In addition, French art would be prominently situated at the other end of the narrative, that is, at its highest point and at the centre or apex of the museum as a monument for the French nation. This was achieved by structuring its internal spatial arrangements so that no matter which route were traversed by the visitor they would be led back to a central position in the gallery where French art would be displayed. If the Enlightenment represented Modernity, the Louvre would provide some of the latest classifications in conjunction with the symbolising of its authority as people and resources had to be evaluated. This dynamic balance of the display narratives in the Louvre (whose coherence would exude a pre-arranged harmony) would perform a vital function to influence the nation’s taste through their appreciation of the seductive charm and extensive histories of the multitudinous master artworks displayed from various civilisations of the world. By monopolising much of the world’s art and culture in this way from the late eighteenth century, the French government would employ the public art institution as keeper and guardian of the nation’s heritage, an instrument of instruction and symbol of French nationalism.
During the nineteenth century the idea of national schools created by governments would put museum collections as a vital resource for instilling civic virtues. After the demise of the monarchy of Louis XVI, and the birth of a new government in 1793, the museum continued to offer training in the fine arts. The dismantled Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture was reconstituted as the Ecole de Beaux-Arts and the Class of Fine Arts which would reside in the Louvre from 1795-1807. From this period, both schools in the Louvre had the advantage of being located in the best position to examine and study many of the world’s greatest masterpieces (many of which had been confiscated by Napoleon). When the Ecole des Beaux-Arts moved into new premises beyond the museum in 1807 students would continue to use the Louvre for drawing instruction - regularly copying the masterworks on display.

By 1795, a new salon was built into the Louvre to glorify the new French art produced through the first national painting competition (Concours of 1794) that had taken place. As Quatremere de Quincy observed:

Thus was born, with the Museums and Galleries of Art, the custom of commissioning such works of art, first to add to those collections, later to show in public exhibitions.

This form of political and social reform would also occur in the case of the Victoria and Albert Museum later in the nineteenth century in London. As Mackenzie states, in relation to the birth, growth and early exhibitions of the nineteenth century South Kensington museums in London, which among others paralleled, and were redolent of certain important aspects of the Louvre:

… the supremacy of the West could be celebrated through the progressivist power of a transformatory science and technology. In its vision, the natural world is conquered and, above all, transcended.

Thus, the creation of National Schools of Art by the French government through the Louvre would function to transform the world through the categorising of its values. Through the Louvre’s discursive representation of the nation’s art they had “… anticipated modern national museums in which the rhetoric of collective ownership and the fostering of national pride remain crucial”. The potential of this mechanism and its centralising and governing impetus which would reach its peak during Napoleonic regime, whether positive or negative, would exist as a form of state control.

Against these doctrinaire prescriptions for art, many during the age had alternative opinions. Rather than support the museumisation of art a number of artists and writers had rather antithetically envisaged a creative and spiritual freedom derived more from the data of human practical experience than from an institutionalised pedagogy which, for them, was seen to exist as an historical limitation. Critical theories and prescriptive historicist doctrines such as those of Winckelmann, (which had nominated that art’s history be a history of styles rather than of artists) were retracted, abrogated and
had existed as anathema for those not wishing to be judged by the standards of a supposedly superior race. In regard to this humanist thesis, writers from Quatremere de Quincy to Theodor Adorno would intransigently develop their criticisms and analysis of the museum’s and “culture industry’s” overdetermined institutionalisation of art as a way to sidestep it. Quatremere in particular, castigating the Louvre as existing as a paradigm of alienated art had condemned the French Revolution and Napoleon’s iconographic nationalism through the imbrication of statues. These would epitomise barbarity as they functioned to displace and dislodge the archetypal open-air museum of ancient Rome which had possessed the “universal knowledge” belonging only to antiquity. For Quatremere, “the continuity of Rome as the archetypal art museum” had been broken down by Napoleon’s displacement of the treasures of antiquity, which had existed previously in its vastness as the “universal knowledge” of the world. These art treasures for Quatremere, when incorporated into the Louvre, would exist as “fragments” separated from the totality of Rome. For him, the French government’s assembling and institutionalisation of foreign cultures would limit the scope of the works and create artificial emotions artlessly deviating from the true meaning of the artwork or object. As such, Quatremere’s resonant objections would exist to interrogate the inadequacy of the Louvre’s structuring of its display narratives which he thought of as an attempt to monopolise, canonise and falsely construct a set of foreign objects within a pyramidal, nationalised and pseudo hierarchical view of art’s history. In a similar vein to Quatremere, Adorno would view the museum as a tomb, stating:

Museum and mausoleum are connected by more than phonetic association. Museums are like family sepulchres of works of art. They testify to the neutralization of culture. Art treasures are hoarded in them, and their market value leaves no room for the pleasure of looking at them.  

However conclusive these abrogations may appear to be, one might also argue that they overlook “… the museum’s potential to stimulate the historical imagination” via their juxtapositioning of artworks as in-situ installations which would bestow the art with a newly found aura as museum masterpieces. In this way, the Louvre’s ever-increasing stature as a national “encyclopaedia of art and knowledge” would reflect France’s wealth while providing a strong example to the world of its cultural superiority. Within the early nineteenth century, a number of museum directors from various countries visited this prototypical paradigm of the classical art museum and “… and were greatly influenced by what they saw”. In the years immediately following the turbulence of the Napoleonic wars, an ever-increasing quantity of people from abroad visited France. Many of them would have almost certainly have come to Paris to visit its cultural institutions of which the Louvre would exist as a dominant attraction for those with a connoisseurial desire and rationalism to experience much of the world’s art, culture and civilisation.

By the late nineteenth century, the Louvre’s influence as a symbol of culture and wealth would be found in America. Its cultural and political imperatives (and methods) would in many ways be emulated by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, initiated in 1872. Established by wealthy individuals who had attempted to create more wealth for themselves, the Metropolitan
Museum of Art, from its inception, had as its model the European art museum born of Revolution. In a desire to emulate “Old World” palaces (such as the Louvre) the Americans constructed a museum which could house treasures similar to those found in the great museums of Europe.

Much like the Louvre, the interior spaces of the Metropolitan were constructed to be as elaborate and impressive as the enormous exterior form of the building which was designed to perpetuate the notion of art and knowledge as being central to American culture as well as wealth and riches. For the Metropolitan’s collection, huge sums of money provided by private individuals would be spent on acquiring a large amount of highly sought-after American and European art. For this purpose, many private collections were targeted. This had reflected the Louvre’s policy to augment the status of French art by surrounding it with important foreign masterpieces. As such, the intentions of the Metropolitan’s trustees had been to:

… group together the masterpieces of different countries and times in such relation and sequence as to illustrate the history of art in the broadest sense, to make plain its teaching and to inspire and direct its national development.

The Metropolitan did this in a way which would follow the classical certainty of the Louvre, that is, by displaying its collection chronologically in a sequence, which told of the development of the history of art in the form of narratives. In a similar way to the Louvre, which positioned French art strategically within its walls surrounded by foreign masterpieces which could affirm the French nation’s art at the “pinnacle” of high culture and refinement, the Metropolitan’s founders attempted the equivalent with American art. As Einreinhofer states in her discussion of the Louvre “… it was that the symbolic meanings of art and the art museum, described and defined in Paris during the period of the French Revolution, were appropriated by the American nation and made concrete first in the form of the Metropolitan Museum”. Yet, although redolent and emulative of the Louvre in certain respects, the Metropolitan in America, would be run differently. As one of America’s first art museums, it would synthesize old practices with new ideas and, as such, is situated between two eras within the history of art museums - reflecting the past whilst pointing progressively toward what would come next (MoMA). As a privately owned entrepreneurial initiative, the Metropolitan’s establishment in the age of the forming of America’s first major corporations would point the way forward for more modern American museums in the early twentieth century such as MoMA to further the development of the art museum as a corporation and as ambassador for the American nation.
American Nationalism and Capitalism Entwined: New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art

As public institutions, museums have often functioned as “instruments” employed to inspire and instil a sense of national unity and hope and pride in a nation. In America, with the victory of the North over the South making it clear that the United States would prove a powerful new entity, the outcome of the American Civil War (1861-1865) had resulted in a need for it to exclaim a form of socio-cultural unity. In nineteenth century America, the founding of a national public art museum had embodied the aspirations of its people who had felt that they had much in common with France and its struggles for freedom during the French Revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During this time, much of American society had wanted to emulate French art and culture. Due to an affinity many Americans felt they had with France after the American Civil War Americans sought to rebuild their nation by attempting to echo the processes inherent in the unification of France after the French Revolutions. All over America, in many major cities, Americans celebrated France’s newly found freedom. In New York, speeches and celebrations took place amongst hundreds of immigrants newly arrived from Europe who rejoiced in the outcome of the French Revolutions.

Much of this spirit was celebrated in the American literature of the period as well as being reported widely in the American newspapers. Moreover, there was a literary culture dedicated to French and European politics, culture and thought. For American writers, the French Revolution of 1848 in particular was of great interest. Many writers either had visited or lived in Europe during this period. Influential American literary figures such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Hermann Melville, Walt Whitman and Henry David Thoreau (among others suggesting the need for the founding of an American museum) found much inspiration in the spirit and values that the French Revolutions had for them appeared to embody. In their writings these writers all expressed support for what was going on in France. By the 1850s in the U.S. opportunities had arisen for entrepreneurs to construct great industrial and capitalist empires. Many of these financiers/capitalists saw it their duty to benefit the public in some way whilst making money during the period when America would strengthen its industrialisation. What characterised this period in American history was America’s emergence as a world power in conjunction with the prevailing philosophy of rugged individualism as a means by which free enterprise could create wealth. As a natural corollary of this, private industry was allowed to develop for the benefit of the nation. Uppermost for many American citizens during this time was their “… right to life, liberty and property”. Moreover, many entrepreneurs and architects had sought to mask their capitalist enterprises through ideals embedded in the American Renaissance (app. 1850-55), which would flourish from the belief that America was the true heir to Greek democracy, Roman law, and Renaissance humanism. As Craven points out:

The American Renaissance was the mantle of culture that cloaked American materialism, industrialism, capitalism and even imperialism.
Much of this would be reflected through the creation of a Neoclassical architectural style which had paralleled what previously had occurred in Paris during the Napoleonic regime from the late eighteenth century.

However, within the immediate post-Civil War period, New York (in particular) had been in a state of decay, depravity and poverty. As Tweed explained:

This population is too hopelessly split up into races and factions to govern it under universal suffrage, except by the bribery of patronage and corruption.\textsuperscript{76}

For Tomkins:

George Templeton Strong, the diarist and barometer of his time, concluded during the period that “to be a citizen of New York is a disgrace”. Worse still, New York seemed to be merely a reflection of the entire nation’s moral and spiritual decay.\textsuperscript{77}

In a spirit not wholly dissimilar to the way the Louvre and other national art institutions are employed -more than just an attempt to rejuvenate the decaying city of New York the Metropolitan’s founders endeavoured to restore America’s lost soul by founding a national museum which could help reunite the nation and instil civic virtues. Moreover, in order to emulate and evoke the symbol that the Louvre provided for the French nation, the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s founders took the Louvre as an example of a way to promote their nation’s unity and wealth.

The Metropolitan’s founders were a curious mixture of financiers, capitalists and materialists. Yet although strong echoes of the Louvre’s paradigm would be manifest in the Metropolitan’s architectural design and narratives of display, the Metropolitan Museum would be founded by a group of private wealthy individuals whose imperatives and enumerative practices had been to run an art museum as a business venture and corporate enterprise. While many of the Metropolitan’s early trustees had believed that a collection of past masterworks would be the best overall strategy to build up the museum’s stature, others however operating within the museum would believe that more recent and contemporary artworks would make the museum more popular. In America, in the 1880s, there was a trend to acquire Renaissance art and increasingly, the most active buyers in the art market had been Americans.\textsuperscript{78} This was due largely to the emergence of the new professional American scholar whose interest in art pointed towards the Italian Renaissance. During this time, Renaissance art prices had soared.\textsuperscript{79} In an article written during the period for the Metropolitan Museum Bulletin, the Metropolitan’s Assistant Director Roger Fry would make clear his intention to acquire masterpieces of the Renaissance of which the museum had none. From 1904, the Metropolitan would purchase paintings by Goya, Guardi, Lotto, and Murillo.\textsuperscript{80} In time, foreign masterpieces by Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Giotto, Mantegna, Michelangelo, Raphael, as well as Veronese’s Mars and Venus United by Love (purchased from Christies in London for £8,000 in 1910)\textsuperscript{81} would be bought by the museum.\textsuperscript{82} Other foreign art purchases by the museum’s trustees had included five panels by Jean Honore Fragonard for $310,000, which had been bought in 1899.\textsuperscript{83}
In addition, a collection of over two thousand very fine Chinese porcelains earlier on loan to the Metropolitan was purchased by a private art gallery for $500,000. As soon as was possible, this collection was purchased by the Metropolitan’s trustees and financiers. In addition to purchasing these works of the aforementioned kind, the Metropolitan’s trustees’ policy (perhaps as a response to a growing awareness and interest in contemporary art) had been to “supplement” its collection of “exquisite” historical masterpieces with purchases of more contemporary European artworks considered good but not quite yet in fashion. This signifies an attempt to lead with the valorisation of works not considered to be masterpieces on the day.

By the late 1920s, the proliferation of various new movements in art, which had required a new approach to cataloguing and classification would result in serious problems for the Metropolitan’s collection and display policies irrespective of its various attempts to supplement a historic collection with contemporary artworks from the Modernist period. The Metropolitan had overall, strongly reflected the classical outlook inherent in museums such as the Louvre. (As a more traditionally-based “classical” mainstream museum, this had resulted in a certain amount of diversion or entropy for many of its original investors and founders). Irrespective, Renoir’s *Madame Charpentier and Her Children* (1878) was purchased in 1905 by the Metropolitan and in 1913, Cézanne’s *La Colline des Pauvres*, (1890-1895). Cézanne’s work was purchased as the Metropolitan thought it might be popular. This would be the first Cézanne “… to enter a public collection in America”. From this time, an assertion was made that a new museum devoted solely to modern art in New York would be needed. As MoMA’s co-founder, and first director Alfred Barr had stated:

> For the last dozen years New York’s great museum-the Metropolitan-has often been criticized because it did not add the works of the leading “modernists” to its collections.  

Discussions such as these would result in the envisaging of a museum of modern art to be established in New York. For Tomkins:

> The most distressing tendencies in American painting and sculpture- the abstractions and “distortions” that the Metropolitan’s trustees had sought most earnestly to ignore-reflected what appeared more and more to be the dominant trends in modern art in general.

Primarily due to the growing perception and view that the Metropolitan had lacked the necessary interest and affinity with most American and international modern and contemporary art MoMA was inaugurated in New York in 1929. As further justification for the need for MoMA’s initiation and founding, Alfred Barr had observed that other traditional art institutions with historical collections (such as the Louvre or London’s National Gallery) functioned more successfully and more legitimately precisely because contemporary artworks can be held at other galleries within the nation that each museum was situated within. As Barr had stated:
… the Luxembourg for instance, exhibits most of the French national accumulation of modern art, a collection in a state of continual transformation . . . all works of art in the Luxembourg are tentatively exhibited. Ten years after the artist’s death they may go to the Louvre; they may be relegated to provincial galleries or they may be forgotten in storage. In this way the Louvre is saved the embarrassment of extending its sanction to the works of living artists.90

MoMA’s intention to situate New York ahead of other major European cities (such as Paris, Berlin or London) in terms of existing as a beacon and guiding light for displaying and promoting the finest art and culture is articulated by the following statement made by Barr in 1929:

It is not unreasonable to suppose that within ten years New York, with its vast wealth, already magnificent private collections and its enthusiastic but not yet organized interest in modern art, could achieve perhaps the greatest modern museum in the world.91
FIGURE 2. Present exterior view of MoMA, Manhattan, New York.

A gallery is constructed along laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church.⁹²

It is in the area of presentation that we see the influence of modernism, democracy, and capitalism quite clearly.⁹³

The alleged innate neutrality of museums and exhibitions ... is the very quality that enables them to become instruments of power as well as instruments of education and experience.⁹⁴

Departing radically from the nineteenth century museum model first established by the Louvre, MoMA’s emergence in 1929 had marked a determinate moment and sea change (almost apocalyptic) which heralded the beginning of an entirely new era for global art institutions. From the outset, it would act as a precursor to “new art” for art institutions and thus introduce the “problematic art” into the art museum. The final stage in this introductory chapter will reveal how MoMA in New York would redefine the art institution through the creation of a new institutionalised paradigm and museum framework - one that opened the doors to a whole range of possibilities for galleries and art museums that would display modern art.
As North America’s first mainstream museum devoted solely to bringing modern and non-traditional art forms which had previously existed outside of a mainstream gallery framework to the general public, MoMA would be directly responsible for pioneering new methods in modern museum practice. Its celebration and marketing/promotion of modern and contemporary European and American art forms, new media and alternative aesthetic practices displayed through an intellectualisation of amusement would provide the mechanism and trigger for video art’s acceptance, imbrication and live enunciation within modern art institutions. Its new distinctive multi-dimensionality and unique and dynamic “exhibitionism” would set it apart from other museums throughout the world. This would be manifest through its specialised methods of display (previously inaccessible in mainstream art museums) and extended to the ways in which it would run its exhibitions which went through a uniquely devised process of cataloguing and classification.  

As a business corporation, MoMA would reflect the Metropolitan’s plan to exist as a privately owned enterprise. While MoMA’s annual and biennial reports would contain schematic diagrams charting the income and sales of its publications and number of visitors, for Grunenberg, “Its administrative structure resembled those of public companies, including a president, board of trustees, director and executive director, and a large number of committees”. As such, its multifarious activities and attempts to monopolise modern and contemporary art would be enabled through, and stimulated by, an efficiently run business, which gradually would create enormous wealth for many of its founders and investors. Through this, (along with the Metropolitan), MoMA would be largely responsible for contributing to a shift in the relation of the art capitals from Paris to New York. According to Irving Sandler, MoMA’s significance was:

The switching of the art capital of the West from Paris to New York … [which] coincided with the recognition that the United States was the most powerful country in the world.  

Also making a significant contribution in New York would be the Whitney Museum (est. 1930) and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (est. 1939). Both would share a singular devotion to the propagation of modern and contemporary art and would similarly be tied to, and influenced by corporate funding. With corporate funding aiding the expansion of its exhibition spaces, the Whitney, during the 1980s would establish “branch” museums in the foyers of various corporations; in addition to its New York premises, the Guggenheim would establish museums dedicated to modern and contemporary art in Tokyo, Salzburg, Venice and Bilbao. Originally devoted to American art of all periods the Guggenheim would alter its policy from 1974 to only present contemporary American art; by the 1980s, it would promote itself as being fully representative of contemporary American culture. Through competition with one another and MoMA these private museums would combine to form a synthesis of policies resulting in a propaganda that would see the globalised exploitation of modern and contemporary American art. As Elizabeth Brown points out:

Many museums dedicated to American art – at the Pennsylvania Academy, the Smithsonian, the Butler Institute, the New Britain Museum, the Addison Gallery, the
Defining the Classical Structure of the Art Museum

Whitney, the Amon Carter – were founded in a confluence of national pride and cultural anxiety to trumpet the news that America had an art worthy of notice. However, MoMA’s overall dominance over these museums (particularly from the 1940s) would only serve to increase and clarify America’s overall importance for modern art. As Wolff argues:

After the Second World War, the Museum of Modern Art story was not only the dominant one; it was, at least in educated circles in the art world, the only story. The Whitney’s belated subscription to this version of the cannon, and to the aesthetic which upheld it, had the practical corollary of consigning a good deal of the work of the Whitney Studio Club members to storage.

MoMA, the Louvre and the Metropolitan

As the Metropolitan had accomplished before, the particular impetus for MoMA’s policies would stem from a mission to devote itself to the specific task of promoting both European and American art on behalf of the American Nation. MoMA’s objectives from the outset had been to modify European Modernism in parallel with the culture, politics and economics of America. Through its advanced marketing, publicity strategies and relations with various corporate sponsors (in advance of other art institutions in terms of its imbrication and propagation of new kinds of European and American art) it would promote and market European and American Modernism as a commodity. As both a privately owned enterprise and “national” institution, MoMA’s plans would be to function as a permanent museum of modern art, which would acquire and display to the public “… a collection of the best modern works of art.” This would be outlined in a brochure issued by the museum entitled A New Art Museum (issued in August 1929). This would set forth the museum’s overall mission which had been to encompass and penetrate all aspects of contemporary art and had thus proved to be particularly timely since mainstream art institutions (such as the Louvre and the Metropolitan) were beginning to appear dated. In relation to the Louvre, the French writer Paul Valery, in his essay Le Probleme des Musees (1923) had firmly criticised some of the Louvre’s more moribund curatorial practices. Valery’s attack had stemmed from his observations of the “mixed display” of masterpieces in the Louvre’s Salon Carre in particular, which had been established during the era of Napoleon III to provide a “treasure trove” of major works for the public. As Bartz and Konig point out in relation to Valery’s antithetical writings on the Louvre in 1923:

Lippi’s work, Barbarordi, was placed inexplicably above the door; Veronese was in conflict with Van Dyck, and so forth. Nowhere, as Paul Valery castigated in his 1923 essay Le Probleme des Musees, were the problems of museums and the lack of circumspection when evaluating the old masters more evident than here. As far as the writer was concerned, the paintings were competing jealously for attention, and he remarked that the ear would not tolerate ten orchestras playing at once, and it was therefore unreasonable to assault the eyes in similar fashion.

By the late 1920s the Metropolitan had fallen into a state of disrepair. As Tomkins states:

The Metropolitan was showing its age. […] No major addition or improvement had been undertaken for seventeen years, and the physical plant was showing signs of deterioration. […] Throughout the museum stretched gallery after gallery whose
exhibits were badly presented, badly labelled, and badly lit. […] Attendance had been declining for a decade.  

With mainstream classical museums failing to provide the successful transmission of stimulating and reasonable artistic standards by the early twentieth century private museums would, through competition, force MoMA into a position of solidifying its resident display of contemporary art.

MoMA’s Modes of Display: the White Cube Paradigm

From the beginning, MoMA had distinguished itself by the extent of its analytical and scholarly attitude towards art, which would be manifest through its uniquely discursive representations. By displaying and labelling artworks in a didactic and demanding manner, MoMA attempted to promote a new degree of understanding in relation to the crucial accentuations and particularised and associative meanings inherent in the new art of the time. Many of these practices would stem from the scholarly influence of Alfred Barr. Before becoming MoMA’s director, Barr had undergone rigorous training in the discipline of art history having had “first-hand” experience of studying the European avant-garde while still a student at Princeton and Harvard. Inspired by readings of Bauhaus concepts and ideas, and a subsequent visit in 1927 to the Bauhaus in Dessau, Barr later admitted that this would have a decisive influence upon his plan for a museum of modern art to operate as a multi-departmental structure. In contrast to the Metropolitan’s practices, Barr had insisted that New York’s modern art museum should not function solely as a repository for an art of the past (as the Metropolitan for the most part had done). As such, MoMA set about becoming both a repository – (kunstmuseum) as well as a specific venue for the display and propagation of contemporary and modern artworks – (kunsthalle).

By 1936 MoMA’s initiative to understand and find the best way to present a new style of painting known as Abstract Expressionism had led to the establishing of the paradigmatic “White Cube”. As part of MoMA’s invitation for the public to experience art by following formal interpretations governing the doctrine of art history - (as a topic for study, through various movements, styles and genres situated within chronological narratives) it would display and actively promote “Modernism” as an academic discipline which could arouse the public’s interest.

Hence, owing to its attempt to form a “neutral” gallery space, art would be constituted and presented “intellectually” under Barr’s instruction. In order to achieve this, MoMA’s galleries were divided up in such a way as to coerce visitors to follow a specific path which would form a unique narrative based upon a qualified and specific contemporary academic understanding and interpretation of the subject matter. MoMA would design visitor movement through art by mapping out its own certain art historical paths within spaces based upon contemporary and recent criticism and writing in the field rooted in an academic understanding of Modernism.

This compelled visitors to fastidiously view each art Modernist “style” or “classification” with an art historical significance. In this way, visitors were “… subjected to a compulsory course in recent art
history” which followed “… the development of modern art in a clear logical sequence”\textsuperscript{110} (By doing this, MoMA openly and publicly promoted modern European and American non-conventional forms of art as being worthy of critical scrutiny and examination which defined for its visitors a new critical framework and understanding of Modernism. This would strongly inspire a whole new kind of experience in the museum for the visitor and scholars alike.

Much of this was achieved by displaying artworks on plain white walls.\textsuperscript{111} This policy had stemmed from an impetus to create neutral spaces for art display. Small rooms devoted to a particular and individual artist’s work in this environment would be designed to create an intimate experience for visitors who would be encouraged to respond to the artworks in a personal way without confusion with the environment it was held. Its minimal and vacuous settings would be made to reflect the homes of private collectors closely associated with the museum.\textsuperscript{112} As an example, MoMA’s new gallery paradigm would influence many of the design specifics for programming the internal symmetry in modern gallery structures in the following ways: the outside world must not pervade the confines of the museum. Gallery walls and windows would be mostly painted white or sealed with ceilings which provide the room’s only light source resulting in the room becoming a form of spiritual place. The floor is usually wooden or carpeted and a feeling of the clinical or sterile should usually pervade. Room size should exist as multiple variants providing flexible and oblique angles designed as part of the room’s overall plan, thus contributing as Grunenberg states, “… to a sense of dynamic modernism”.\textsuperscript{113} As such, art in rooms should attempt to give the appearance that it exists beyond time or outside of time – that artworks could be viewed in a context of almost isolation.

MoMA’s discriminate elimination of the nineteenth century model, through its “White Cube” paradigm would result from the positioning of single paintings at eye level (or just below it) which had been designed to compel visitors to stand in a fixed position in order to examine individual artworks as unique specimens (rather than as wallpaper).\textsuperscript{114} This method would contrast uncompromisingly with the method employed by traditional nineteenth century museums, which displayed their paintings by filling the wall space from top to bottom with pictures.\textsuperscript{115} This created a mosaic effect covering most of the museum wall.\textsuperscript{116} In more “traditional” museums, art usually considered most important was positioned at eye level with those works deemed less important arranged above and below. By contrast, the visitor’s experience on approaching MoMA’s sparse exterior anticipated the almost “clinical” interior which attempted to suspend the artworks within a decontextualised environment. Thus MoMA’s attempt to form a neutral discourse within its exhibition spaces would raise new questions relating to representation and ontology for the art it would present.\textsuperscript{117}

In addition to MoMA’s instigation of the “White Cube” paradigm, rather than just providing a specific kind of art gallery (as the Louvre or the Metropolitan had done), MoMA’s real innovation and dynamic influence for modern art institutions would lie in its creation of a museum “exhibitionism”, which had arisen from the lack in its formative years of possessing a permanent collection. While exhibition design had first been an important feature of aesthetic practice within
the European avant-gardes of the 1920s, from its inception MoMA had presented dramatic and creative installations and continued to do so long after this activity had waned in Europe. Although first existing in exploratory mode, MoMA’s practice of “exhibitionism” (which would include a powerful promotion of the art itself) would, become an operational standard for most mainstream and national museums and galleries dealing with modern and contemporary art in the years to come.

Nationalism and Colonial Propagation: MoMA’s Exhibitionism

Culture-specific re-interpretations may occur also for the institutions themselves. [...] Museums, realising the ‘world’ in their modes of ordering, are actively involved in globalization.¹¹⁸

A great and significant number of museums are national institutions strongly political in relation to their own policies and agendas. One of MoMA’s display policies akin to the Metropolitan’s (which can also be traced to the Louvre’s strategies of displaying French art) had been to situate American artworks at the forefront of its agenda. This form of colonial propagation and coercive propaganda would be accomplished through the promotion and display of modern and contemporary European artworks in tandem with American. MoMA’s early policy toward contemporary American and European art is revealed in a statement written for the opening of the institution by the President of the Board of Trustees and sent to one of the museum’s three founders stating that it was the museum’s intention:

... to hold a series of exhibitions during the next two years which shall include as complete a representation as may be possible of the great modern masters-American and European-from Cézanne to the present day.¹¹⁹

Although Alfred Barr, as director, (and subject to a certain extent to MoMA’s trustee’s demands) had thought European art superior, he had believed that American modern architecture, photography and film to be on a par with its European equivalent. As such, American film, photography and architecture would be positioned at the forefront of MoMA’s agenda in relation to the practices of selection, acquisition and exhibition of modern art at MoMA. This had established the pattern and climate for American avant-garde and non-traditional art forms to be valorised alongside their European counterparts in the museum.¹²⁰ MoMA’s opening shows were both of European and American art which had been part of the museum’s “two-pronged” approach to exhibiting art and central to its propagandistic policy. From the beginning, this specific policy had ordered that artworks by living American artists could not be sold by the museum unless it was replaced by an artwork from the same artist.¹²¹ The situating of art from different nations within a framework employed to propagate the art of America was one way that MoMA ensured that American art would be accepted on both a national and international basis. Each year its exhibitions of modern European art would be interspersed with exhibitions devoted to modern and contemporary American art.

MoMA’s didactic exhibition technique was made clearly evident in the Vincent Van Gogh exhibition of 1935 which had been influenced by what Alfred Barr had seen earlier at the Folkwang Museum in
Essen, Germany. As Phillip Johnson, curator of MoMA’s architectural department from 1932-1934 had stated:

Alfred Barr and I were very impressed with the way exhibitions were done in Weimar Germany—at the Folkwang Museum in Essen especially. That’s where they had beige simple walls and the modern was known there. It wasn’t known in this country at all. For instance, here all our museums had wainscoting. Of course, that’s death to a painting. It skys the painting. That was the big battle in hanging paintings….The Metropolitan got used to skying pictures because of those idiotic dados.\(^\text{122}\)

In MoMA’s Van Gogh exhibition, “pictures were hung in logical sequence depending on style and period” and labels containing bits from Van Gogh’s letter to his brother were placed on plain white walls near the paintings.\(^\text{123}\) In general, this system of classification within the exhibition had not been entirely dissimilar to what had been initiated at the Louvre and derived from the Enlightenment and Winckelmann, namely, a programme and policy of presenting art in a prescriptive logical sequence which can be traced back to the influence of Winckelmann upon the Louvre.

MoMA’s 1936 exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition, presented the diversity of much that had already taken place within exhibitions of the international avant-garde. MoMA’s *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* exhibition (also 1936) would attempt to convey the works as timeless. Around this period MoMA would enunciate the presentation of the works to be controlled by academic scholarship which could be reinforced through its formalised and didactic wall labelling. By attempting to present and articulate the development of the *Cubism and Abstract Art* and *Surrealism* exhibitions in the most accurate and informative way, MoMA created instructive diagrams which were “…reproduced on the jacket of the original edition of the catalogue …”.\(^\text{124}\) MoMA’s didactic approach can be best illustrated with the 1949 exhibition *Timeless Works of Art and the Objects of Everyday Life* which had attempted to present “the concept of affinity”.\(^\text{125}\) The exhibition would be radical in its displaying of objects which were spotlighted in galleries that had been darkened in order to make “stylistic comparisons”.\(^\text{126}\) These display strategies would be especially influential for modern and contemporary art museums in these years to come. Running concurrently in the museum to these exhibitions would be its shows devoted to the art of the nation.

From the 1940s, MoMA would set the pattern for what would be an ongoing and continual propagation of American art through a parallel promotion of European Modernism. A good example of this were Dorothy Miller’s “Americans” shows. From 1942-1963 Miller would organise six exhibitions devoted to American artists and their art.\(^\text{127}\) MoMA’s inventiveness in devising different methods of presentation in connection with the American shows curated by Miller characterised the ways in which museums formed their priorities for art display. As Roob points out:

Eschewing the usual large group show in which dozens of artists are each represented by one or two works, Miller limited her choices so that each artist was given a separate small gallery. Her influential “New American Painting” toured Europe in 1958-59 and firmly established the Abstract Expressionist artists abroad.\(^\text{128}\)
The establishing of these enormously successful exhibitions exemplify MoMA’s nationalist and imperatives and concerns, which substantially helped to contribute to the establishing and situating of New York as the centre of the contemporary art world. Mirroring the imperatives of the Metropolitan Miller’s shows (which valorised individual artists) communicated the enthusiasm MoMA felt for the previous two decades of American contemporary art:

… through a series of living visual events that steered spectators, both sophisticated and naïve, through the most uncharted and thrilling seas the New York art world has ever known.  

This type of show was presented as an alternative for those normally going to see “… the annual salons mounted by other national institutions” and had often occupied very similar, or sometimes the same, rooms in the museum displaying modern contemporary or historical masterworks from Europe. In this way American artworks were interspersed with European ones. MoMA’s 1940 *Picasso’s Seated Nude: A Visual Analysis of a Cubist Painting* exhibition was followed in the same year by *Modern Masters from European and American Collections*, and then the *Italian Masters* exhibition in the same year. Then came *Four American Travelling Shows: The Face of America; 35 Under 35; Mystery and Sentiment; Prints by Jennie Lewis; Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art and Portinari of Brazil*.  

The pattern of staging both European and American art exhibitions, in parallel, together, or one following the other attempted to foster the public’s fastidious appreciation of modern art whilst insuring a capital investment for MoMA and the America nation globally. Through this, MoMA would attempt to establish the credibility of U.S. contemporary art and culture. As such, highly valued and widely recognised European masterworks by Balthus, Braque, Chagall, Dali, de Chirico, De Stijl, Kandinsky, Klee, Leger, Matisse, Miró, Modigliani, Mondrian, Monet, Munch, Picasso, Tanguy, Toulouse-Lautrec, Van Gogh and Vuillard would be acquired or exhibited. In addition, exhibitions such as the *15 paintings by French Masters of the 19th Century* on loan by the Louvre and the Museums of Albi and Lyon, would be exhibited at MoMA whilst American artists were also shown during this period.  

By 1942, exhibitions devoted to 90 American artists including Calder, Demuth, Feininger, Shahn, Kelly, Kline, Rauschenberg, Rosenquist, Rothko, Stella, Still and Watkins would take place. Similarly exhibitions such as *Americans 1942: 18 artists from 9 States, U.S. Army Illustrators of Fort Custer, Michigan, American Realists and Magic Realists, Religious Folk Art of the Southwest, Modern Cuban Painters, Georgia O’ Keeffe and Fourteen Americans* would be interspersed between several exhibitions of European art.  

Through pioneering events and programs such as these MoMA raised an appreciation for American art whilst also championing European Modernism. Moreover, MoMA’s supporting publications highlighting details of exhibitions promoted an active discourse around European and American contemporary artworks.
During the 1950s MoMA would widen the breadth of its exhibitions. In 1954, the exhibition *Ancient Art of the Andes* continued MoMA’s attempts to decontextualise art with a group of ethnographic artefacts. Between 1950-1955, the museum would also run a series of design shows calling them *Good Design*. Reflecting their competitiveness with other museums around the world these ran once each year and were part of a series of design competitions which had existed due to the partnership between the museum and the Chicago Merchandise Mart. Essentially these exhibitions would display the latest designs in modern functional furnishings. In 1955 MoMA would stage the legendary photographic exhibition *The Family of Man* (sponsored by the Coca-Cola Company) which was described as the “greatest photographic exhibit of all time”. A reported 250,000 visitors viewed the exhibition.

From the 1950s MoMA would hold a series of thematic curatorially driven exhibitions which would initiate and exemplify a diverse set of innovative installation practices. For instance, the *Family of Man* exhibition would employ themes such as “the individual” and “humanity” (which it had addressed previously in earlier years) and contextualised the work with Christian values. In the exhibition, photographs were installed on walls at different levels within each section and based upon a variety of separate themes which flowed from one to another as visitors traversed MoMA’s exhibition spaces. Themes within one section of the exhibition included “religious expression, loneliness and compassion, aspirations, hard times, famine, inhumanities, revolt, teens, human judgments, voting, government, faces”. The themes were all intended to capture much of what was taking place within America during the 1950s. The presentation of the photographs would critique American life yet celebrate America’s social values and individualism. As Staniszewski would state, “The Family of Man offered a portrait of humanity that acknowledged, in order to domesticate and tame, all of the great and common fears of an era”.

MoMA’s 1957 architectural show *Buildings for Business and Government* featured work by six leading architects and utilised dramatic spotlights (used first in MoMA’s 1949 exhibition *Timeless Works of Art and the Objects of Everyday Life* mentioned previously). The use of theatrical – stage effects such as “massive photomurals, models, and simulated building fragments” would be employed to create a monumental dramatic display for the museum visitors. Many of these shows had introduced different viewing environments for the presentation of art to the public. While viewers were invited to inspect MoMA’s artworks as specimens, each exhibition had been differently constructed to create a separate and distinct framework which reflected the curatorial theme governing the display. By defining modern art through MoMA’s institutionalised framework in this way an inevitably rigorous and formalised *raison d’etre* would be put upon the artworks.

**Imbricating the New Art: MoMA from the 1960s**

In the 1960s and early 1970s, a radical shift would take place in the nature of the relationship between the artist and the museum. In its role as the tacit representative model for modern art institutions MoMA:
Previous to this period, MoMA’s exhibitions had frequently attempted to establish a dialogue between the artwork in the gallery and the world outside – external to the museum. However, the new art exhibitions of the 1960s and 1970s would frequently consist of work that directed criticism towards the very institutional conventions and practices of art museums. This would exist as part of the artist’s attempt to reassess “… the limits of aesthetic institutions”. During this period conceptual artists would challenge the fundamental notion of an art museum - ironically, such works would foster a reaction whereby the museum would attempt to be seen as neutral, apolitical and autonomous space. As a response, MoMA began to consciously move away from curatorial insistence and rigid contextualising of works by allowing some of its exhibitions to be governed by “… ideological, historical, economic and political” considerations. Unlike the exhibitions that had taken place during earlier decades the exhibition design and techniques of display during the 1960s and 1970s would, attempt to eliminate much of MoMA’s didactic and instructive approaches. As a result, MoMA’s exhibition “… techniques were reconfigured in the actual form and substance of Conceptual art”.

MoMA’s Information Show in 1970 in a sense encapsulated much that had happened in the late 1960s - (an era in which the museum was forced to exist within a new political paradigm due to the artists’ protests which had been due to the nature of the new conceptual based works and the artists’ reluctance to fashion work along traditional forms). What set this show apart from previous exhibitions was that artworks were not chosen by the museum’s curators but were, to a large degree, controlled by artists who were invited by the museum to submit ideas for the exhibition. This had provided visitors with a series of installations which compelled them to interact much more directly with the works on display. The curator’s function was minimal, the installation space was kept neutral and beanbag chairs were positioned for visitors to spend long hours in the gallery. The Olivetti Visual Jukebox (1970) designed by Ettore Sottsass (and loaned to MoMA via the Olivetti Company) was an example of corporate involvement in the exhibition. Existing as an “information machine” it was comprised of forty viewing booths where more than forty films were screened. Also in the show were works by Vito Acccone, Hollis Frampton, Yoko Ono, Michael Snow and Andy Warhol. The conceptual artwork One and Three Chairs by artist Joseph Kosuth (1965) consisted of a real chair, photograph of a chair and the dictionary definition of “chair” reproduced through a wall statement. Kosuth’s piece was an invitation for the visitor to observe the installation without sitting on the actual chair. Especta (1969) by Group Frontera was unusual, due to the way it addressed the visitor. The work, built as an environment within the gallery walls was an invitation by the artists for the visitor to “complete the work” through their active participation. Consisting of a recording booth which invited visitors to enter and sit on furniture whilst being videotaped as they
were asked a set of questions relating to power, sexuality and everyday actions, the piece was later played back on a set of video monitors in a section of the gallery nearby.

Other interactive works had included *Barracao Experiment 2* (1970), a work by Helio Oiticica in which “Visitors could actually climb up to rest and sit in …” which, like Group Frontera’s work had employed a variety of mixed media such as telephones and tape-recorders to hear messages and poems by various poets, writers, composers and artists. The show had opened one and a half months after the “city-wide artists strike” had taken place, and only one month after the *Protest Photographs* exhibition had closed at MoMA. Visitors were acknowledged further still by an invitation by the Museum to participate in the creation of “art” by leaving their own text or images on two blank pages of the show’s catalogue. The *Information Show* in 1970 would be part of MoMA’s strategy to support and encourage the new forms of conceptual art being produced. Site-specific artworks included “… represented something new: a new breed of “artist-worker” who wrote texts as would critics, installed shows as would curators, printed publications as would publishers, and sold and distributed their work as would dealers”. From this, artists would use the opportunity within the exhibition to question and examine “… the frameworks within which aesthetic meaning and value are generated and maintained”. As a result this procedure altered the way modern art museums were run globally as the traditional function of curators, critics, art dealers were challenged. This kind of show would set the pattern in coming years for artists who became the new breed of “cultural producers”. This would extend into the next decade and would entail a constant revision of the museum’s function and suitability.

With the reestablishment in 1986 of MoMA’s *Project Series* exhibitions, artists would continue to use the museum as a site in order to analyse and reconfigure installation design within. For instance, Louise Lawler’s installation, *Enough* (1987), presented three identical photographs of a visitor’s bench in front of a view of a MoMA gallery. This work “… visually displaced an element of the Museum’s collection within a work by an individual artist”. In the same year, the artist Barbara Kruger was invited by the museum’s curator of photography to create an exhibition which represented and addressed an aspect of the museum’s collection. Kruger chose to create an installation which questioned the museum’s valorising of white male artists, most of whom were not alive. This indictment of the practices and beliefs of MoMA as Staniszewski points out “… raised questions regarding the usual presentation and reception of exhibitions without altering the institutional practices of the Museum”.

Many of MoMA’s practices would be emulated by other institutions around the world, these museums would adhere to the paradigmatic shift for museum structures from classical to avant-garde facilitated through MoMA (which had countermanded the example that had been set by the Louvre). In the next chapter, I will look at how the modern museum environment and framework as defined by MoMA would need to alter due to the problematic posed by the display of new forms of installation such as video art.
Notes

3 Einreinhofer, op. cit., p. 22. (In general, this would not change until the initiation in 1929 of the Museum of Modern Art in New York). MoMA’s redefining of the classical structure of the art museum would in turn influence the museums that would follow.
4 Via its encompassing of all cultures and all peoples for all time (culminating metonymically in the development of a new “art history” which would be discussed and re-enforced in books), the Louvre’s paradigm rationalised the experience of art for its visitors. Moreover, through the Louvre’s displaying of distinct objects linked sequentially to show that life is not a haphazard affair it would provide a material basis for the scientific study of heritability, inheritance, resemblances, assemblage (of qualities or parts).
5 The setting up of a correlation between collecting, the display of art, the art market and art practice would, by example establish the visible unification, defining properties and particular structure for mainstream and national art museums globally. By collecting and displaying its purchases and confiscations of art openly to the general public as a way to symbolise the wealth of the French nation, the Louvre would become the prototypical national art museum. Through this, it would act as a precursor to mainstream European and American art museums. As Einreinhofer observes “The influence of the Louvre was felt across Europe and across the Atlantic Ocean to the shores of America. It was seen as a symbol of the triumph of democracy, equality, and freedom: the world’s first great public museum, a palace filled with the world’s art treasures, open to all the people. The architecture and the encyclopaedic contents were powerful symbols of intellectual, moral, and democratic progress and inspired the patrons of the Metropolitan Museum to strive to build a collection of similar status”. Einreinhofer, op. cit., p. 28.
6 The nation’s art played an extremely important role in reminding visitors to the Louvre how important French culture was. Many national galleries such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the National Gallery in London would follow the example established by the Louvre for displaying their national art and culture.
9 Einreinhofer, op. cit., p. 23.
10 McClellan, op. cit., pp. 64-5.
11 Many of which would be masterpieces. For example, included were Diana Hunting, ca. 1550-1560, (First School of Fontainebleau); Gabrielle d’Estrees and one of her Sisters, ca. 1594, (Second School of Fontainebleau); Portrait of Cardinal Richelieu, ca. 1639, by Phillipe de Champagne (1602-1674); The Inspiration of the Poet, ca. 1630, by Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) and The Disembarkation of Cleopatra at Tarsus, (1642/3), by Claude Lorrain. Many of these works were held by the Louvre from the time of the Revolution onwards. French works in the Louvre surrounded by masterpieces from past ages such as: Venus, offering Gifts to a Girl accompanied by Graces, ca. 1484-1486, by Sandro Botticelli (1444-1510); Mary with Christ Child ca. 1474-1480, by Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449-1494) and The Virgin with Christ Child and St. John known as The Virgin of the Rocks, ca. 1483, by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) provided much material to inspire the nation’s artistic classes and helped to shape and thus determine French and foreign attitudes to the nation’s art as a whole. Moreover, the Louvre’s possession of the nation’s art as well as foreign masterpieces promoted France’s position and cultural significance internationally. Refer to G. Bartz and E. Konig, *Art and Architecture Louvre*, Cologne, Tandem Verlag GmbH, 2005.
13 The origins of the Louvre’s diversity in terms of its holdings arose largely from a keen and growing interest in antiquarianism which took place during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For many French people during this time, the ideas associated with antiquity had reflected a fresh new vision. (Although, one should point out, that the influence of antiquarianism on the French mind was not entirely new and the idea of the antique was not freshly studied during this time). In France, its influence was felt early in the seventeenth century. Poussin had been mainly responsible for this and his work reflecting this was inducted and brought forward into the Royal Academy. In fact, French philosophers within the Enlightenment age had been deeply immersed in...
the study of and spirit of the antique through which the seeds of secularism were sown. Refer to H. Honour, *Neo-Classicism*, Middlesex, Penguin Books Ltd., 1968, p. 43.

14 Bennett, op. cit., p. 59.

15 For instance, artist and architect Pierre Lescot (1510-1578) had been responsible for transforming the hall of the old Louvre Palace into a gallery for displaying artworks. Before Lescot’s work, the hall had contained “mannerist” Caryatids, sculpted female figures created in 1550, by the sculptor Jean Goujon (1510-1565). These had originally been used as architectural supports for a rostrum for musicians. Later Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554), and Andrea Palladio (1508-1580), added a royal tribune comprised of … “two timberwork sections supported by pillars, and spanned by an arch”, adding to the hall recently transformed into a new gallery by Lescot. In addition, in 1639, Lescot’s wooden roof was replaced by Jacques Lemercier (1585-1654) and the playwright Moliere (1622-1673) was soon able to stage plays there. (Ibid.). An extremely important event for the Room of the Caryatids and for the Louvre occurred in 1795. This was the founding of the “Institute de France” which had incorporated the French Academies including the Academy of Painting as well as various important other foundations. These were all based in the Louvre until 1806. Refer to Bartz and Konig, op. cit., pp. 184-5.

16 Ibid., p. 38. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries under the centralising effects of the Napoleonic regime the role of art museums along with schools, hospitals and prisons was established: “… the emergence of the art museum was closely related to that of a wider range of institutions - history and natural science museums, dioramas and panoramas, national and later, international exhibitions, arcades and department stores …”. Bennett, op. cit., p. 59. As such, in France, many royal buildings were “disestablished” by the new government and reinvented, as Neoclassicism soon became the dominant official style which was enforced through strict and rigorous official patronage. Many newly built buildings were carefully controlled by other architects - agents of the state, the *commissaires voyers*, so that their work set off the public monuments. The style attempted to preserve the values of ancient Greece and Rome, which, mainly through philosophical discussion and writings, had come to be associated with beauty, truth, justice and freedom - all symbols of democracy. The new architecture, which sprang up in place of the old reflected the state’s growing authority based upon reason. Refer to D. Van Zanten, *Building Paris*, New York: Oakleigh, 1994. Reflected in the exteriors and interiors of many Napoleonic institutions such as in the Louvre the Neoclassical style was employed by the state to project the notion that it would provide a better new world administered by incontrovertible laws. As Van Zanten states, “An unusually broad span of buildings fell under direct government control: besides political monuments and social institutions, theatres because of censorship, churches in Gallican tradition, historic monuments, even thermal baths”. See Van Zanten, sup., p. 1.

17 Blaney-Brown, op. cit., p. 9.

18 J. Berlin quoted by Honour, op. cit., p. 13.


21 McClellan, op. cit., p. 199.

22 Later Cellini’s Mannerist work the *Nymph of Fontainebleau* (1543/44) “… was replaced in 1849 by a painted plaster cast by the animal sculptor Antoine - Louis Barye, because the architect Hector Lefuel needed the original as a focal point for the staircase leading to the Pavillon Mollien”. Moreover, a new staircase serving both museum and salon was constructed, and the Grand Gallery was modified considerably. Refer to Bartz and Konig, op. cit., 185.

23 By 1811, the Grande Gallerie of the Louvre would hold almost 1,200 paintings. See Einreinhofer, op. cit., p. 27.

24 In a sense, the work of artists and architects Lescot, Goujon, Serlio, Lemercier, Pierre Fontaine and Andrea Palladio and others who had been commissioned to create art in the Louvre by which to raise the museum’s status and distinction as a national institution can be paralleled by video artists Nam June Paik, Dan Graham, Bruce Nauman and Mona Hatoum (to name a few), who from the 1960s would be commissioned/invited by various museums/galleries to do likewise for these institutions. (These would include MoMA, the Centre Pompidou/MNAM, the Tate Gallery in London and the Art Gallery of New South Wales among others from the 1970s who would display these works via their own narratives or modes of display).

25 For the new citizens of France knowledge of their nation state could be found in the new Louvre. In this way, the Louvre was able to establish itself as a prime educator for its citizens. By buying up as many French paintings as possible the state exerted a tight control over this form of knowledge.
Here I examine the origination of the museum’s “display narratives” of art (by which I mean the setting up and ordering of art to be positioned in a sequence by which to tell a story or present a particular idea via art’s display for public consumption).

The intentions behind this had been “… to create a secular conception of progress”. Previously it had been the Church and organised religion that had been the most powerful influence over man’s beliefs. See E. Wright (ed.), *History of the World: The Last Five Hundred Years*, Middlesex, Viscount Books, 1984, p. 161. In fact, the Louvre, adopted many of the concepts generated via the various ethical, moral and political discourses taking place during the so-called “Enlightenment age”. These concepts had already been “in the air” for some time (that is, within the “pre-Enlightenment age”) before they became widely accepted - (partly due to the Louvre’s dissemination of them). For instance, these were: the idea of progress; the idea of historicism; the idea that man was responsible for his own state of being and that one need not look to the State or to God to provide support or explanation for his existence and that man’s reason and rational thought supplied salvation. Before the Enlightenment, authority and tradition commonly dominated institutions, which in turn were supported and sanctified through religious doctrine. Many of the ideas postulated during the Enlightenment had appeared earlier. These thoughts had belonged to only a few intellectuals appearing in the 1680s. (Wright, sup.). For the people of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, it had not been enough to induce a Reformation - what they had wanted was to “topple the Cross”. (D. Roche, *France in the Enlightenment*, Cambridge, (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 579).

Scientific discovery helped change people’s understanding of the nature of man’s existence which was explained by science rather than by God and religion. Criticism and “skepticism” gained new ground as belief in the present replaced the past. Religious indifference, - then hostility finally led to secularism. (See Roche, sup., p. 587). The new faith which replaced belief in God with “reason” gave birth to belief in progress and man’s accomplishment. After 1715, the thoughts and speculations of a few began to exert influence over large numbers of people. (See Roche, sup., p. 579). Influence in connection with the transformation from the old faith (which had valued religious beliefs above all else) to a secular conception of progress also came from the French *philosophe* Jean Jacques Rousseau whose pamphlets impacted strongly upon religion as well as politics revealing that it was possible to think in a new way -to think differently. See Roche, sup., pp. 585-89.

As Bertrand Russell states “… Locke … maintained that civil government is the result of a contract, and is an affair purely of this world, not something established by divine authority”. B. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, London, Routledge, 2001, p. 606.

French high society in the eighteenth century had manifested as the intellectual capital of Europe and had become particularly conducive to the diffusion of Enlightenment ideas. Ibid., p. 162.

For Voltaire, history recorded the accomplishments and developments of civilisation which had arisen through man’s progress which became “redefined in terms of a secular chronology”. See Roche, op. cit., p. 77.


The manifestation of this “transaction” would be something the writer Michael Fried in 1967 would object to in relation to the display of Minimalist artworks which attempted to minimise the “objecthood” of the works- through this, a “transaction” between the artwork and spectator would occur. This would take place through numerous exhibitions in which video as installation art would create “environments of immersion” for museum visitors. Much of this will be discussed in later chapters of this thesis.

Minor, op. cit., p. 98.

Einreinhofer, op. cit., p. 22.

Hegel quoted by Honour, op. cit., p. 61.

Ibid.

Honour, op. cit., p. 59.
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42 Ibid.
43 Although Winckelmann remains arguably the most significant and influential, as McClellan points out: “Men like Count Francesco Algarotti, Louis Petit de Bachaumont, Chretien de Mechel, Nicholas de Pigage ... and others formed an international network of advisors who ushered the new taxonomy and set a standard no enlightened collector could ignore”. Refer to McClellan, op. cit., p. 4.
44 Einreinhofer, op. cit., p. 22.
45 Dominating “European cultural life” during most of the eighteenth century were the ideals of the Enlightenment period. Within this period it was generally thought that increases in knowledge, obtained via “… objective, rational observation and experiment, would bring about sustained improvement in the human condition. They might even deliver perfection”. Blaney-Brown, op. cit., p. 9.
47 Refer to McClellan, op. cit., pp. 3-4.
48 Ibid. p. 4.
49 Ibid. p. 3.
50 Ibid. pp. 2-3.
51 Ibid. p. 3.
52 During the 1770s, King Louis XVI had attempted to employ the Louvre as a symbol of the incorrosible strength of the monarchy via its large collection of foreign masterpieces. Prior to the start of the French Revolution (pre-circa 1789 and prior to the narratives of progress being established in the Louvre), Louis XVI had given the responsibility to the Director-General, Comte d’Angiviller of purchasing the best works from around the world for the Louvre. Additionally, much attention was placed upon the buying of quality French art for the purpose of displaying it in the Louvre alongside foreign masterpieces. The situating of the nation’s art in this way would reveal the French state’s initiative to provide much material to inspire the nation’s artistic classes and help shape and determine French and foreign attitudes to the French nation. For more regarding this see McClellan, ‘D’ Angiviller’s Louvre Project’, in ibid., pp. 49-90.
53 Ibid. p. 7.
55 As Boime points out, “Through every step in the training of an artist the practice of copying played a paramount role: he began by reproducing engravings and prints, and later, when he advanced to painting, he was assigned to copy heads after the old masters or the work of his patron. Pupils were further advised to visit the Louvre regularly and to make croquis of great works in their notebooks. With the exception of this last practice, elementary copying in the above applications took the form of manual exercises. In the academic curriculum the copy qua copy had a greater significance as a self-contained object charged with two quite specialized purposes. First, the practice of copying aimed at developing the pupils’ power of invention by the study of the old masters’ compositions, and second it aimed at familiarizing the pupil with the technical procedures of the old masters”. Boime, ibid., p. 42.
56 The artistic patron being the state and governing body - it was the first time that a competition of this kind had been held in France. Never before had art depicting contemporary events been used in this way. The concours of 1794 reveals a time when the governing body of France enlisted the arts fully into its service. This would mark the beginning of the state’s almost total control of art. For a further discussion of this refer to W. Olander, ‘French Painting and Politics’, in A. Wintermute (ed.), 1789: French Art During the Revolution, New York, Colnaghi, c1989, p. 29.
59 McClellan, op. cit., p. 7.
60 At this point its seems worthwhile to point out that prior to the advent of the French Revolution and the Louvre’s initiation as a full-fledged public museum with the general public, the concept of “citizen” had not yet existed. What had occurred in late eighteenth century France would be paralleled by a mechanism whose presence and coexistence would operate in England simultaneously. In Ian Hunter’s discussion of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century government attitudes towards governing the populace, the individual’s welfare began to be of great concern to the English government. For Hunter “It was the individual as the member of a population
whose health, literacy, criminal tendencies, private sentiments and public conduct had been constituted as objects of a new kind of government attention”. I. Hunter, *Culture and Government: The Emergence of Literary Education*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1988. p. ix. Hunter refers to a list of things to which the individual became inextricably and inescapably bound as part of society. These factors were dealt with via the state’s “administrative apparatus”, (that is, government institutions would be used as the instruments of the state’s imperatives in conformation with their intentions to enable its citizens to putatively determine and map their own destiny and sense of self-worth via various state-run institutions). As Hunter points out “Perhaps this list, with its mix of personal and social attributes, gives sufficient preliminary identification of this new form of government: drawing on an administrative apparatus aimed at reshaping the attributes of whole populations, but operationalised through forms of conscientiousness which permitted individuals to govern themselves”. (See Hunter, sup., p. 587). Moreover, in parallel with this, as the government in England in the nineteenth century attempted to form its citizenry via its institutions – the ruling body of France looked to influence its people by building up their own. During the French Revolution, the governing body of France as a mechanism would unite France through the creation of a patriotic set of people. In order to achieve this, the state would attempt to form a citizenry largely via its institutions. This would occur through its development of a national culture that would largely depend upon art (and valuable historical relics).

62 McClellan, op. cit., 201.
63 Ibid., p. 200.
64 See Einreinhofer, op. cit., pp. 24-5.
67 Einreinhofer, op. cit., p. 31.
68 See the American Constitution written by Jefferson and co.
70 This is discussed throughout Reynolds, ibid.
71 Major American writers such as, Fuller, Hawthorn, Melville and Whitman had shared and expressed through their writings a common attitude that was in support for what was going on in France. Images of war, and of the fight for freedom, became commonplace in much of their work. Refer to Reynolds. (Ibid., p. 25). For these, the French Revolution of 1848 had been of great interest and many of them would visit or live in Europe during this period. As Reynolds states, “Of all the revolutions that occurred in 1848, the French revolution made the greatest impression upon the American public and American writers”. (Ibid., p. 5). Included in the affinity they had felt would be support for the French Revolutionary poet Lamartine who was known to them as a peacemaker: “To many Americans … Lamartine seemed, especially after the Red Revolution, a heroic man of peace, a living part of heaven (like the sky-hawk of Moby Dick), too divine for the world of men”. (Ibid., pp. 97-8). In fact, the American writer James Russell Lowell had paid Lamartine a tribute in his ode *To Lamartine, 1848*. (See ibid., pp. 98-100). Although Lamartine came to be regarded generally as a failure for the French (for not restoring peace) this had not been how many Americans had felt. As well as the French’s political struggles earlier, what these writers had all celebrated was faith in liberty and human rights which had been seen by them to have been acquired by this time by the French. As such, “The writer T.B. Read penned “France is Free”, which appeared in numerous periodicals and revealed how revolutionary events quickly became literary material”. (See ibid., p. 10). By the 1850s, French ideology; reasoning and political thought had become embedded in American society.
72 Ibid., p. 5.
73 This point is discussed throughout Reynolds, ibid. See especially ibid., p. 53.
74 Ibid., p. 555.
77 Tomkins, ibid.
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78 See ibid., p. 104.
79 An example had been the sum of £4,500 paid in 1899 for Botticelli’s *Madonna of the Eucharist*, and £20,600 pounds in 1896 paid for Titian’s *The Rape of Europa*. Both of these purchases had been bought by wealthy collectors. See ibid.
80 Ibid., p. 106.
81 Ibid., p. 169.
82 Paralleling the Louvre’s purchasing methods staff working for the Metropolitan would continually go abroad in search of the masterpieces they could purchase for the museum. See Tomkins, op. cit. pp. 151-82.
83 Ibid., p. 180.
84 Ibid., p. 99.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid., p. 168.
87 Barr, in Sandler and Newman (eds.), op. cit., p. 70.
88 Tomkins, op. cit., p. 303.
89 As Tomkins points out “The Museum of Modern Art had been born, in a sense, as a result of the Metropolitan’s negligence; if the older museum had not disdained to notice modern art, there would have been no need for it”. Tomkins, op. cit., p. 266.
90 Barr, in Sandler and Newman (eds.), op. cit., p. 70.
91 Ibid., p. 72.
93 Einreinhofer, op. cit., p. 194.
95 Much of this would stem from its pioneering of the creation and development of new departments related to film, photography, design, architecture and furniture within modern museum systems. In addition to organising these, MoMA from early on had planned to have a “filmotek” film library. In aid of this a separate film library was established in 1935. (Refer to C. Grunenberg, ‘The Politics of Presentation: The Museum of Modern Art, New York’, in M. Pointon (ed.), *Art Apart: Art Institutions and Ideology across England and North America*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, c1994, p. 195). It is important to stress that MoMA would be one of the most significant advocates and promulgators of video art as a pervasive cultural form and commodity. Through its global influence, “video” would become “video art”. MoMA’s support, valorisation of (and relativised interactionism) with new media such as video art (as a ubiquitous communications technology) through a unique “exhibitionism” strategy -acting as a stimulant - (MoMA was a pioneer of the “blockbuster show”), would assist intrinsically in shaping and preserving the cultural continuum. Through its heterogeneous practices of media use, MoMA would operate as a significant advocate for the communicated message itself, which would be frequently transposed through the indeterminate life of the video artworks it would exhibit, accession and propagate from the late 1960s.
96 Refer to Grunenberg, ibid., p. 197.
97 Ibid.
98 MoMA’s department store would be an important instrument in this.
99 Sandler, in Sandler and Newman (eds.), op. cit., p. 43.
100 See Einreinhofer, op. cit., pp. 138-47.
102 J. Wolff, in Carbonell, ibid., p. 487.
103 As Irving Sandler pointed out “The roots of Barr’s conception of a museum can be found in several contemporary movements, notably Dutch De Stijl, German Bauhaus and Russian Constructivism”, Sandler in Sandler and Newman (eds.), op. cit., p. 8.
104 Barr, in Sandler and Newman (eds.), ibid., p. 69.
105 Bartz and Konig, op. cit., p. 267.
106 Ibid., pp. 266-7.
107 Tomkins, op. cit., p. 265.
108 For Modern art and even contemporary art no other thing signifies it better than the conception of a white room sealed off from the outside world. Often when we think of modern art it is usually of the image of the white room more than any particular work. The white room/cube or “box” as a
system provides us with a set of conventions associated with only itself and other similar spaces. Within these spaces similar codes and values are maintained. In this setting, works on display become art within a space filled with powerful ideas about art. Through this, the works themselves become the medium for these ideas.

110 The field of Modernism itself had not been publicly formularised nor determined on a scale like this in an art museum previously. Ibid., p. 203.
111 In the very early days at MoMA this had been a plain beige background which had been borrowed from the Folkwang museum, Weimar in Germany -although white as a background would be MoMA’s invention. See M. A. Staniszewski, The Power of Display, A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art, The MIT Press, Massachusetts and London, 1998, pp. 64-5.
112 Moreover, the installing of decorative plants assisted in further evoking the atmosphere of the interiors of the New York residences. See Grunenberg, in Pointon (ed.), op. cit., p. 204.
113 Ibid., p. 203.
114 Or as floribund mosaic.
115 In this Barr departed from traditional display methods of treating paintings as room décor and presenting them “skied,” in salon-style installations. See Staniszewski, op. cit., pp. 64-5.
116 The Louvre and Metropolitan had both done this as well as many others including the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and the National Gallery in London for instance.
117 MoMA’s policies for modern art presentation would subsequently be adopted globally in modern art museum and gallery structures -both national and privately owned - and would continue to play an extremely important and complex role in modern and contemporary art presentation within modern public art institutions in general. This would include various presentations of video art in museums from the late 1960s.
119 L. Zelevansky, ‘Dorothy Miller’s American’s’, in J. Elderfield (ed.), The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century: At Home and Abroad, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1994, p. 62. In fact, MoMA’s nationalistic spirit can be traced back to its early trustees’ ideas of democracy. MoMA’s early trustees were very patriotic in their choices of art for the museum. The first painting to enter MoMA’s collection had been Edward Hopper’s House by the Railroad (1925) which was given to the museum soon after it was inaugurated in 1929, and in 1936, one of MoMA’s co-founders Abbey Aldrich Rockefeller gave the museum 36 oils and 105 pastels from her collection, most of them would be artworks by living U.S. artists. Sup.
120 These nationalistic imperatives/initiatives had not been a new thing for museums. As we have seen, the Louvre and Metropolitan had both perpetrated this system for propagating their art earlier. However, it would be the extent of MoMA’s overall “dynamic promotion” (that is, its “blockbuster exhibitionism”) of both U.S. and European art that would be different.
122 Ibid., p. 64.
123 Ibid. This labelling would preface the need for evidence and documentation.
124 Ibid., p. 75. For a look at Barr’s didactic “Chart of Modern Art”, see Barr, in Sandler and Newman (eds.), op. cit., p. 92.
125 Ibid., p. 128.
126 Ibid.
127 Roob, Art in America, op. cit., p. 29.
128 Ibid.
129 R. Rosenblum quoted in Roob, Art in America, op. cit., p. 29.
131 All these exhibitions would be presented in 1940. Refer to R. Roob, in Elderfield (ed.), op. cit., pp. 200-4.
132 Ibid., p. 203.
133 Roob, Art in America, op. cit., p. 29.
136 Ibid., p. 173.
137 See ibid., p. 170. Much of this -in relation to its subject matter had taken place earlier in various showrooms and in the front windows of American department stores such as the Organic Design display at Kaufmann’s Department Store in Pittsburgh in 1941.
138 Staniszewski, op. cit., p. 235.

139 This proved very popular at the time with a reported 35,000 visitors during the show’s first two weeks. Ibid.

140 Ibid., p. 244.

141 Ibid., p. 250.

142 Ibid., p. 199.

143 Ibid., p. 263.

144 Ibid., p. 281.

145 Ibid.

146 Ibid., p. 280.

147 Ibid., p. 270.

148 Ibid., p. 281.

149 Ibid., p. 282.

150 Ibid. p. 278.

151 Ibid.

152 Ibid.

153 Ibid.

154 MoMA’s Project Series had begun mainly as a set of video presentations in the late 1970s which was discontinued in 1981. Refer to footnote 5 in “Chapter 6, Conclusion” in Staniszewski, op. cit. p. 341.

155 Staniszewski, op. cit., p. 298.

156 Ibid., p. 302.
Chapter 2
The Problematics of Display

Within the period of High Modernism video art’s interactive and time-based presence in a gallery space would prompt a need for institutional modification. Many Modernist video installation artists’ works worldwide would act as catalysts which effected changes in the conception of the environment within the history of the museum/gallery. By attempting to position into the gallery’s fixed framework new in-situ artworks which challenged the architectonics of the gallery video artists would crucially encourage an inexorable need for greater flexibility and a new museum framework. As such, the style of the past for art museums would be difficult to maintain. This would be revealed by the gradual creation of “non-hierarchical”, “non-Modernist” or “non-categorical” museum spaces which would, in a sense, affirm the impetus behind the creation of works which would be to critique prevailing boundaries existing in society. This had meant that MoMA’s “White Cube” would be replaced by a new museum paradigm, one perhaps best defined by the innovations at the Centre Pompidou.

This chapter will examine MoMA’s influence in relation to the treatment of the problematic of video art as a museum based installation. Through this it will establish a theoretical base to discuss the varied nature of institutional modification which video art stimulated in the proceeding years. This discussion will investigate why the avant-garde qualities of video art installation -that is, those which relate to its functionality and specificities as a “live”/moving image medium involving elements of performance and interactivity -had not initially suited particularised and specific museum structures and environments.

In order to understand the narrative of this change, the first section of this chapter outlines changes that would take place during the 1970s, specifically looking at how the Pompidou’s environments would present a challenge to MoMA’s fixed framework for video art display. This discussion will furnish the reader with a view of the environs in which video art would be situated. Following this, the discussion will analyse the problematic video art would pose for the Tate Gallery’s Video Show in 1976. This exhibition presents a good example of the problematic video art posed at this time to the Tate Gallery and is discussed in order to reveal how/why video art as a museum-based installation would not be commensurate within the “classical temple” model of an art institutional framework. Following this, the works of Dan Graham, Bruce Nauman and Mona Hatoum will be discussed as their work provides indicative examples of the kinds of in-situ video that would pose a challenge to Modernist and traditional museum structures within the period.

By employing viewers as participatory subjects within the institutional space of the art museum Dan Graham’s installation video works would explore the extent of the viewer’s perceptions within different kinds of viewing environments within museums. Confronting the viewer with the use of mirrors and tape delays Graham’s time-space-movement-image-relationships would present a
continuous dislocation of time and space which would involve the viewer while also demanding that they recognise and critique. In the galleries of MoMA, the Centre Pompidou, the Tate and AGNSW Graham’s interest in manipulating and exploring the architectural spatial relationships and arrangements through private/public aspects (and the space in between the two) would exemplify the types of video installation works that would encourage institutional modification as these galleries would need to contain areas analogous to the experience of being inside the cinema. (Graham’s specific interest in immediacy and intimacy would help shape his interest for simultaneous projection in the gallery). In addition to Graham, Bruce Nauman would employ video art in a way that would reveal the manipulation of his body as “a piece of material”.¹ His psychological examinations which were invested through the medium of video installation would also, like Graham, interrogate viewer perceptions within the specific environments contained within an art gallery. Like the aforementioned artists, Mona Hatoum’s video installation art would also employ the human body to make political statements which would often result in the revelation of an alienated and displaced individual. Art of this type which would attempt to theatricalise gallery space for the visitor would stem from the artist’s attempts:

… to create environments in which, through the combined use of image, sound and physical elements, art can immerse the viewer on emotional, intellectual and physical levels.²

However, before going on to discuss these particular artists’ challenge to the conventional gallery space I will begin first by analysing MoMA’s space for video and then contrast this with the others in this study.

The conditions through which all of these video artists would impose a reconfiguration of the gallery space is the foundation of the discussion in this chapter. MoMA would establish the basis for video art’s impetus to alter spatial frameworks – this will then be contrasted by an examination of the Pompidou, the Tate and the AGNSW.
Changing Art Museum Paradigms within the Period of High Modernism

MoMA’s Sacred Sanctuary

Museums are essentially compromises...Their weakness is that they are necessarily homogenized-emptied of all connotations other than art. And that is, finally, an artificial situation.³

The analogy of the museum as the cathedral of the 20th century has become a given. But instead of evoking the church’s role in life the museum turned instead to an association with death: the museum as mausoleum. The white cube’s “limbo” soon became the “graveyard” deplored by earlier critics.⁴

Much of the museum’s need to separate art from the world exterior to the gallery would derive from the fact that mainstream national museums from the time of the Louvre have made it their purpose to promote space as “information environments” that embody what would constitute “culture” as such. As Duncan observes in relation to MoMA’s iconographical programme for display:

... the museum promotes the idea that the gallery space exists for the pictures. But the space is the thing and the pictures both articulate the meaning of the space and are given their meaning by their location within the sequence.⁵

As will be discussed in the next chapter, mainstream art museums (such as MoMA, the Pompidou, the Tate and AGNSW) would institutionalise video art through various endeavours to construct an independent yet correlated video history which would effectively undermine the original impulse
behind many video art practitioners’ intentions. Over time, due to a need to enunciate the specific properties of the “video text” itself, the medium’s arrangement in different ways in a gallery space would participate in the gradual transformation of modern museum structures away from MoMA’s “White Cube” – an almost religious, or sacred space, museum model. This would prompt the need to evolve the gallery into modifiable environments -suitable for constant reconfiguration. Although video art would not be solely responsible for this, video art, would in a sense, almost paradoxically affirm its countercultural (or anti-institutional impulse) as it would gradually break down the process of institutionalised categorisation found in the classical museum model.

Much of this had accorded with criticism of the “White Cube” model that had occurred during the 1960s at MoMA. Historically speaking, the fashioning of a sacred space by separating art (and placing it on a pedestal away from every day existence) had been predicated on preoccupations for art display which had emanated from a period prior to the Enlightenment. This compulsive practice, which had best fit the ideas of the small chapel or church, had originated in an historical period when art had been of a “reverential” kind and had needed to be separated and kept at a distance in order to inspire awe in the visitor. Following this, as pointed out in the first chapter, the French government’s schemes from the time of the French Revolution to utilize the Louvre’s spaces for art propagation had also resulted in the assemblage of a symbolic and ritualised space for the French nation. This was criticised as providing a graveyard for the artworks which it separated from the world outside of its confines. As Newhouse points out:

Many critics felt that removing works of art from their original religious or civic settings was equivalent to burying them. [...] Relocation in the 19th century from palaces like the Louvre to structures conceived solely for exhibition purposes compounded the problem: museums increasingly divorced art from a lived experience and elevated it to the status of a secular religion in what I refer to as the Museum as Sacred Space.6

For MoMA, while it had been particularly innovative in various practices from 1929 by the 1960s its propagation of a sacred space that separated art from the world outside was seen by many as outdated. As such, its reputation would begin to wane. This was unfortunate as it had attempted over the years to make itself more accessible through a series of expansions and refurbishments. For example, Phillip Goodwin’s and Edward Durrell Stone’s endeavours in 1939 to create a more flexible gallery space through the introduction of movable walls or panels within the museum, which had furnished it with over 56,000 square feet of space and over 25,000 square feet of exhibition space, had resulted in MoMA’s exhibition spaces virtually maintaining their determinate and institutionalised rigidity.7 This had even been so despite the crucial fact that many of its rooms had been modified to let in more daylight with the installing of outsized windows which could furnish access to the world outside. Its 1951 and 1964 refurbishments created “… a seven-story wing for offices, classrooms and a gallery … added on the site of a townhouse west of the museum”8 and a Phillip Johnson extension which had furnished it with “… its first large free-span exhibition spaces” anticipated for more contemporary art would move it from an intimate to “impersonal institution”.9 Due to this, “… MoMA became a pastiche of its former self and the prototype of the deadly white
cube”. Much of the overall lack of change in its structure (as Newhouse suggests) can be attributed to the fact that its programming “… and presentation of art … was too good an investment to part with preempted experimentation”. In this fixed *milieu*, frozen in time, artworks would continue to be alienated almost religiously from the society they had originally endeavoured to critique:

> Over twenty years ago, the critic Brian O’Doherty […] applied the indelible label “the white cube” to spaces that exert a two-fold alienation: depriving art of an architectural context and isolating it in what he described as a “timeless, limbo-like gallery constructed along laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church”.

For many, this observation would typify the art institution’s failure to adjust to the new issues and dimensions necessary for displaying new forms of cultural production (such as video art). MoMA’s celebration and positioning of video within its special gallery in 1974 - while also repositioned and recontextualised away from other works in a separate area in the gallery presence - would only reinforce a Modernist pedagogy and hierarchy which would categorise, classify and separate, (as the Louvre had done). Hence, while MoMA would proclaim itself as the creator of art’s history, for Duncan:

> That history is a history of progressive dematerialization and transcendence of lived, historical experience.

Following MoMA’s *Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age* exhibition, their *Information Show* in 1970 (as mentioned in the previous chapter) continued with the new technology-art relation which would further emphasise the artists’ need to determine specific viewing environments. In the show the Argentinean collective Group Frontera would present an interactive video installation that would invite the participation of the visitor to “complete the work”. This show would also incorporate work by Dan Graham as well as Victor Burgin – the exhibition would be significant for the history of contemporary art due to the introduction of an interactive component within the neutrality of a museum context. As Staniszewski states:

> The Information show’s exhibition design departs significantly from those of MoMA’s laboratory years; it was shattered into a plurality of individual sites and installations that were, in a sense, inscribed within the signatures of the artists. The framework for the artists’ work expanded, both in its physical space and in its ideological domain. The installation design, previously the responsibility of the Museum as an institution, was now incorporated within the creative dimensions of the artists’ pieces.

The *Information Show*’s “White Cube” environment would be characteristic, and virtually analogous with MoMA’s presentation of Minimal art, the need for interactive spaces would present a problem for galleries. This would be due to the fact that the show would include video. Although MoMA had always endeavoured to promote its theoretical acuity through a discourse of newness, it had initially presented single-channel video works on television monitors in environments that would be similar to those it used to present Minimal art in the 1960s and 1970s.
Due to the frequent banality and repetitive quality within these works, Minimal art was frequently best explained via phenomenology. Phenomenology, according to the French philosopher Merleau-Ponty (via Archer) can be defined as something which “… characterizes the reciprocal nature of the process whereby individuals come to an awareness of the space and objects around them: Space is not the setting (real or logical) in which things are arranged, but the means whereby the position of things becomes possible”. Owing to this environmental circumstance in the gallery video art’s inherent properties would exist as a problem when mixed with other objects (such as other more traditional static forms in the gallery). The spatio-temporal problematics presented by video-based works would demand a revision to the habitual silent contemplative spaces within the museum.

Problematics of Display

Often by employing closed-circuit television sets video art’s quintessence would comprise a unique temporal presence in the gallery which, when placed into normative gallery viewing conditions, -that is, Modernist or traditional gallery environments, or alongside more traditional art forms, - video works would present a “rupture” of sorts to the viewing environments. As the Pompidou’s curator of video art Van Assche states:

The monitor and video projector are linked to the camera that films a live recording of the spectator and re-transmits a distorted version of the image (inversion, shift, time and space delay, etc.). From then on the image is neither shot, mounted nor pre-recorded – it exists only in the presence of or when activated by the spectator. “When the observer sees his or her image immediately projected and incessantly repeated on the screen in this infinite temporality,” writes Dan Graham, “it creates connection between his or her own perceptions and mental state. [...] The recurrence creates a process of permanent knowledge and a subjective sense of extendable time.”

Van Asshe goes on to state:

Various works are linked to this field of perception: Going Around the Corner Piece (1970) by Bruce Nauman, Interface (1972) by Peter Campus from the same period and a work conceived in 1974 by Dan Graham […] Present Continuous Past(s). The first two lure the spectator into a spatial, perceptive experience and the third work into a temporal, spatial experience. Nam June Paik made various versions of TV Buddha, small installations comprising a Buddha, a surveillance camera filming the statue and a monitor in which the Buddha stares at himself.

Works such as these in gallery settings, which would be inspired by MoMA’s “White Cube”, would see video’s real time presence be manifested as an “anachronistic” object whose disassociative positioning and dislocation for the spectator would often challenge and even contravene the visitor’s preconceived attitudes or perceptions of the art viewing process. The phenomenological circumstance of positioning a temporal-spatial form of art within the “White Cube” of a mainstream traditional gallery framework can be more fully understood through the operational codes of the art institution.
Institutions all have a group of specific temporal rules and operational codes which governs the viewing of presentations within. When a viewer enters spaces of this nature, certain expectations, which relate to the duration of time of the event, how it unfolds and how much control over it one has will arise. Expectations such as these are often based upon past experiences of similar spaces. For example, time in a museum is something that one usually controls in a self-guided way through the museum space. In the museum/gallery, visitors pick and choose the amount of time they will spend looking at an object because traditional forms of art are relatively static and mute (inviting contemplation). By disturbing the rhythms for viewing art inherent within a Modernist gallery space, the simultaneity and interchangeability of video art’s multi-dimensional imagery (“with its unique time-space-movement-image-relationships”) would result in the introduction of another kind of time into the gallery. Hence, due to video art (whether it would be in the form of a television set or closed-circuit, monitor-object, darkened-room-projection or multiple projections when “recontextualised” into the gallery, the normative viewing conditions (or interpretative distance) needed to view art in the gallery would be transformed.

Through this, video art’s dislocation of time and simultaneous projection in a gallery space would, bring about the need for a new “temporality” or new temporal agenda within the static architectural confines of traditional museum space. By contrast with traditional forms of art which “… becomes displaceable and freely exchangeable” video art’s success as a form of museum installation would then, due to its unique temporal-spatial properties need to depend upon the moment of viewing. This would exist as the medium’s moment of “enunciation”. A new form of “theatricality” would be exacted from this relationship between the viewer and the construction within the museum/gallery. Interpretation would become an integral element which each institution would attempt to control.

The suggestion that art would take on a theatricality (not to be confused with drama as an art form) in the art museum due to inspiring in the viewer a greater “… awareness of the space and objects around them” had previously been pointed out as a problem by Michael Fried. In his 1967 essay *Art and Objecthood* he would discuss the “objectness” or “objecthood” of minimal art sculptures by Frank Stella and Donald Judd (whose works had been exhibited by MoMA in the 1960s). Fried’s position towards works of this nature, which he had called a “literal art,” had, for him, meant the disintegration and degeneration of the subject as it “approaches the condition of theatre” resulting in shifting the derivation of meaning of the artwork normally from subject to viewer. Fried’s apparent resistance to this would sit in opposition to the greater significance placed on the viewer’s interpretative gaze as the individuated relationship between viewer and construct became increasingly important in the late period of High Modernity.

Thus, the presentation of video art’s way of drawing in the viewer through the camera’s close penetration of the subject would therefore need to depend upon the museum’s ability to create temporalised spaces that would permit interaction. As such, video art’s credibility and legitimacy in...
a gallery space would need to be legitimated by the “space-in-between” the viewer and work. As Morse points out:

The spectator thus enters a charged space-in-between, taking on an itinerary, a role in a set in which images move through different ontological levels with each shift in dimension, in a kinesthetic art, body art, an image art that is rather an embodied conceptual art.24

Single-Channel Video Works

Particularly in the early days “single-channel” video works in their cuboid containers in the galleries of MoMA, the Centre Pompidou, the Tate Gallery and AGNSW would bring a domesticity of relations into the gallery environment. Single-channel video as the early dominant form of video art, would bear a closer resemblance to television in which its meaning would be more closely linked to the notion of mass communication albeit on a more exclusive scale. For the viewer of this form of video art in the museum context, as well as the gallery curator, issues relating to how it should be viewed or read would often be raised. For example, would it need to be interpreted as television as sculpture, as furniture? In fact, for many artists working with the medium, video would be regarded as “Artists’ Television”.25 Single-channel works, narrowcast within the context of a gallery would set the foundation for an intimate and individuated relationship between the viewer and the artwork. For the most part this relationship would not present a radical realignment of the viewer/object formed with traditional viewing patterns towards static forms of art. The temporal and often aural nature of the works would nevertheless present acute problems for the gallery in terms of situational contexts with other works. As Wiegand would state:

It is essentially sculpture-sometimes environmental, sometimes a sculptured object. But it is also sculpture with sound (often), and it is sculpture with time, because the work’s static elements are part of the temporal event unfolding on the screen. Finally, the video image creates another, entirely different space for the three-dimensional configuration that sculpture normally inhabits. The room, the hill, the desert on the monitors are of another dimension than the one as a work as a whole occupies, and so the work extends into the room, the hill, the desert even as it remains in the space.26

It became an attribute of the form itself which would cause institutions to position video-based artworks apart from more traditional forms in their collections. They would often be placed awkwardly behind stairs, near toilets with electrical cables adding to the mess due to the need for a power supply. Rather than finding an optimal position in the gallery this would often result with video artworks being passed by visitors in the museum. This would prove particularly difficult when galleries in the early days would be searching to find the best position for works in the existing spaces of a gallery. The viewing situation of single-channel works, or video art contained within monitors would evolve within museum spaces into “video lounges” a replica of domestic television viewing arrangements (usually a comfortable chair or lounge in front of the monitor) within the gallery.
Coupled with single-channel video art, the videowall system of displaying video (increasingly prominent from the mid-1980s onwards) would often present a fresh set of problems in a gallery space. Although this method of displaying video art would help to eradicate notions of domesticity raised by single-channel pieces through an adherence to a program more in keeping with the codes and conventions of traditional cinema, larger spaces in the gallery which could also accommodate enough space and increasing numbers of viewers would be needed. As Hall and Fifer state:

… video installation is a form whose strategies of time and uses of space lead the viewer to a kinaesthetic experience that is of an order different from either looking at traditional sculpture or watching television. With video installation, we move among the images, sharing their space, becoming performers in the work. According to Morse, the art form is no longer just the images on the monitor, as it would be in single-channel works, but more important, it is their relation to the body of the visitor, which she terms the “space in between”.

Due to video art’s tendency in the gallery to invite the viewer to involve themselves in a kinaesthetic experience coupled with its introduction of a new kind of temporality within Modernist structures (such as MoMA’s or more traditional ones such as the Tate’s) it would frequently be reduced to mere decoration. Often its positioning in a gallery setting would rupture the temporal-spatial properties previously inherent in the museum/gallery experience and engender a need for greater concentration in the viewer. This would result in many works being repeatedly watched by viewers – the durational breadth of works, and the complexity of fixing comprehension into strict temporal frameworks would often demand more than one viewing. Because of these problems, the overall redrawing of boundaries for viewing art in the gallery would occur through MoMA’s pioneering recontextualization of video art into a new museum context by initiating its separate area for video exhibition in 1974. By doing this, MoMA would position itself to chart and promote the current social-artistic practices of the age in a secure situation apart from, yet within the overall framework of its collection. At the forefront of reconfiguring the contextual relationship between video and other forms of art, MoMA had essentially distinguished video art as a unique entity prior to other global institutions. In effect, video art at MoMA held a privileged position.

Following the Information Show MoMA’s establishing of an ongoing video art exhibition program in a specifically designed gallery devoted to the generic field of video art would prompt a more consistent program of video art exhibitions. The first of these would be its Projects: Video exhibition series, begun in May 1971, which would appear on an annual basis throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This exhibition would include works by Keith Sonnier, Peter Campus, Shigeko Kubota and Bill Viola and was curated by Riva Castleman in 1971. Out of the 18 Project exhibitions taking place in 1974 at MoMA, 8 would be devoted exclusively to the propagation of video art. As MoMA’s biennial report states in relation to its propagation of video art:

From May 1971, to date, 59 Projects exhibitions have offered varied perspectives on recent developments in contemporary art. In addition to gallery installations, which are created specifically for gallery spaces on the first floor, a continuous program of video presentations in the Auditorium Lounge has been part of Projects since 1974.
With video art presented in a separate gallery MoMA could continue forging its assemblage of the history of video art in America – a selective dissection of current developments in video art. By 1977 initiation of MoMA’s pedagogical Video Viewpoints exhibition series would, as MoMA’s annual report observes explore the “… current trends in video through presentation and discussion of invited videomakers”. Curatorial selection would promote MoMA’s perspective on the form itself, and they would seek other methods to promulgate their selectivity. As MoMA’s curator of video programmes Barbara London would later relate:

As video continues to be a versatile and challenging form for artists, the collection of videotapes and video installations at the Museum will grow. The video exhibition and lecture programs are being expanded, and more viewers are coming to the Museum specifically to see independent video. This art-oriented audience is visually literate about video, having been exposed for many years to television, video recorders, video games and computers at home. To encourage the public’s understanding of independent video, the Museum hopes to sell artists’ video on one-inch [sic] cassette in its shop, along with video and film publications.

However, MoMA’s distinguishing out video works by displaying them in a separate gallery away from its Modernist iconographic programme in a sense, would, further alienate video art from other forms. The paradigm within which video art would be permanently contextualised would be one based upon this separation by MoMA during the 1970s. The display of video art, often problematic for each institutionalised museum space, would initially be established by MoMA.

By the mid-1970s, MoMA’s fastidious adherence to its original programme for art display would exist in contrast with new developments in contemporary museum practice. These developments would provide a replacement for the conception and practice of a sacred gallery space paradigm by building into the museum the concept of entertainment. In order to achieve this “non-hierarchical” spaces for displaying art would be designated in institutional structures, such as the Pompidou, to enunciate the new nature of electronic technology communication, for which Modernist (or more traditionally-based museums) had originally not been built. Gallery space would be refashioned via “non-sequential” approaches to art display, creating greater flexibility for the new in-situ video artworks which needed to be displayed in ways which would take into account their interactive presence and architectural requirements in a gallery space. As a result, the art institution’s rationale and function from around the mid-1970s would engender the transformation of the quiet contemplative almost sacred (or “church-like”) “White Cube” spaces initiated by MoMA as museums became playgrounds for entertainment/information. By building new spatial environments that would be designed to integrate video art as a new media technology resulting in a “… broadening of the definition of a museum exhibit” this development in museum architecture would mark a shift for the contemporary art museum from Modernist hierarchical model towards the creation of a gesamtkunstwerk (or total work of art). That is, a new “non-hierarchical” model. As Montaner and Jordi Oliveras point out, during this time:

A whole new series of spaces and equipment became essential: cinema, video rooms, audio-visual rooms … museum programmes have diversified and there is a demand
for a clear spatial structure to enable the public to choose which rooms they want to see or which services they want to use.35

Indicating the crucial emergence of one of the first examples of this within this period prior to the Pompidou would be the Municipal Museum in Mönchengladbach, Germany (1972-1982). As Montaner and Jordi observe:

In this museum designed by Hans Hollein, the man behind the museum - its first director Johannes Cladders – played a crucial role. He believed that the container of works of art, i.e. the museum, interpreting \textit{ad hoc} container and works within, should aspire to being a total work of art.36

For Cladders:

... the museum should not be an abstract and uniform place but a great stage – set and a valuable area of synthesis in which each work has its place in one complete work of art – the museum itself.37

Because of the emergence of this new kind of museum, by the late 1970s there would be three types of museum in existence: classical, Modernist, and flexible temple. The latter type, celebrated by the Pompidou would attempt to exist as commensurate with the artworks contained within it to comprise a total work of art, which could showcase a new space for culture as entertainment which could be propagated on behalf of the French nation. This epic digression from MoMA’s paradigm would result, as Newhouse suggests, to the pleasure principle of the first private Renaissance museums.38

The following discussion on the Pompidou’s innovations will detail this more specifically.

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Present view of the interior of the Georges Pompidou National Centre of Art and Culture, Paris.}
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The Pompidou’s Centre for Entertainment

*With its expansion to a variety of media that includes installation, video and performance, art has become theatre, a development paralleled by the emergence of the Museum as Entertainment.*

... instead of a museum, the architects were asked for a “kunsthalle”.

By contrast with MoMA, through its random and non-sequential approach to art display contravening MoMA’s hierarchical and categorising iconographical programmation, the Pompidou’s instigation of its particular internal spatial arrangements would provide a new spatial domain for art display which could “envelope” or “encapsulate” a set of spatial ideas for modern museum design. Crucially intrinsic to comprising the Pompidou’s paradigm would be its grand scale, flexibility and spatial innovation. This would be designed to short-circuit conventional parameters to provide a “museum of entertainment” for the masses that would allow for the planning and manipulation of its interior spaces and viewing conditions in response to its own needs. By contrast with MoMA’s 1964 refurbishment and expansion project (which had furnished it with 63,000 square feet and over 16,000 square feet of exhibition space), the Pompidou’s total 1,000,000,000 square feet, comprising 183,000 square feet of exhibition space, would be employed to furnish its temporary installation schemes with a “scenography” that would provide video art installation for which its “exposed coloured ceiling ducts and beams would” provide a flexible “visual framework”. In contrast with MoMA, the Pompidou’s variable interior planning would be established to “encapsulate” rather than “define” or set parameters for art installation. Newhouse states that the Pompidou’s interior spatial dimensions would be comprised of a:

... 23-foot ceiling height, which has been criticized as insufficient for floor spans equivalent to two football fields laid end to end (with beams and ducts taking up the top 10 feet).

In order to propagate its immense space as “culture” above all else and to emphasise “… the museum’s decisive importance as entertainment” for the masses, four levels would be built underground and five levels above ground. Located on the top floors would be the MNAM (from 1977-1981) which would propagate a permanent collection of modern art. On other floors of the Centre, wide-open spaces with moveable walls and panels would be situated to randomly articulate many of its temporary exhibitions of modern and contemporary art (such as video). By establishing itself as a “pleasure-house” and “flexible temple” its large built environment designed to disavow boundaries, categorisation or any hierarchical view of knowledge (unlike the Louvre or MoMA), the Pompidou would attempt to incorporate video art to particularly encourage a freer experience of modern and contemporary art –that could be more directly experienced through the public’s senses. Lacking the pretence of hierarchy, the Pompidou’s quintessence, would be directed towards making the public’s experience of contemporary art more linked to experiences of everyday life. Through this, the Pompidou would attempt to eradicate the conventions embedded in traditional art.
presentation. As an architectural achievement, Montaner and Jordi compare the Pompidou’s design with the past structures of art museums (from the Louvre to MoMA) by stating:

If we take as an example a nineteenth-century museum conceived solely as a series of rooms, galleries and rotundas, we can appreciate just how new this contemporary programme is and how difficult it would be to remodel and modernize a traditional museum without significant spatial transformations.

Yet, while the Pompidou would appear to have contravened MoMA’s Modernist paradigm for art propagation in its attempts to “package” or “envelope” culture in a more flexible space, from time to time, it would revert to some of MoMA’s Modernist features. For example, within the Pompidou’s flexible “playground environment” purpose-built permanent rooms such as the Salle Garance (as mentioned in the previous chapter) would be built specifically for video installation art. Moreover, while the Pompidou had from the beginning, (contrary to MoMA’s doctrinaire focus, which had necessitated the use of wall labels that explained artworks) promoted itself on the basis that the artworks should speak for themselves, it would by 1979 find it necessary to furnish didactic wall labels that could prescribe a meaning to the artworks for the public in ways which would analogise MoMA’s own Modernist convention. In some of its areas visitors would be encouraged to resort to plastic information sheets and audiovisuals for the conveyance of information related to its exhibits. In relation to this about face, the Pompidou’s president Jean Millier at the time would state, “For the most part the public is curious, but it has inadequate culture….They should be helped toward an understanding of contemporary art”. Coupled with the Pompidou’s mirroring of MoMA’s policy, in 1981 its fourth floor galleries would be renovated through Gae Aulenti’s reorientation of the gallery’s internal spatial arrangements towards producing a feeling of greater permanence through the incorporation of a more sequential and traditional fixed framework and programmation. This transformation of the Pompidou’s exhibition spaces would hence modify it into something more in keeping with MoMA. In connection with these alterations to Piano and Rogers’ vast open 1977-1981 free plan for the Pompidou which had consisted of “overhead beams” Newhouse states that in 1981:

… Aulenti placed six-foot-wide cross corridors under each of the twelve largest transverse beams and crowned the walls with pedimented glass ceilings. The corridors, which run into a broad interior street almost spanning the length of the building, left the loftiest areas for rooms of various sizes and shapes; their 15 foot-high walls are topped by inward-tilting panels that partially mask the ceiling ducts and uniformly deflect light. Aulenti also used the structure’s ability to adjust exterior space to create three sculpture terraces.

By 1985 additional refurbishments would see parts of the Pompidou further adopt the tendencies of a more traditionally-based museum for modern art. As Montaner and Jordi point out:

The plan for the interior remodelling of the third floor of the Pompidou Centre (1985) to make it into a Museum of Modern Art, being carried out by the Gae Aulenti Group, returns to the idea of specific works of art. … the last milestone in a very short elliptical process – just over ten years – in the history of museum design, and shows the need to return to some of the elements of the traditional museum.
These refurbishments would go some way towards undermining the Pompidou’s original non-sequential and non-hierarchical approach to art display since they had been brought in to create spaces that would evoke the idea of permanence more in keeping with the ideological function of MoMA’s interior spatial arrangements.

Overall, however, while the Pompidou’s cross-circulation plan would be initiated within a period of High Modernity to encourage visitors viewing one facility to wander into others (by comparison with MoMA’s calculated and prescribed route for visitors), the Pompidou’s concept for randomly ordered entertainment as spectacle would generate a setting that would position artworks in environments often indistinguishable with the experience of other works on display. Hence as a mechanism and functionary of the “culture industry”, with the Pompidou’s presentation of a cross-section of art in this way, video’s positioning as entertainment would be made categorically inexorable and inseparable from the other kinds of art shown. This homogenisation of art as various kinds of “culture” would within this environment, produce a kind of “distraction” that would be similar to the proliferating publicity in the mass media in which repetition and distraction contribute to form essential elements of the spectacle. Consequently, artworks would be subsumed into one “pick and mix” of a commodity spectacle.

Although the Pompidou would initiate a new paradigm for art display, it would be founded on the conception to institutionalise art and artists. Yet, although it would endeavour to reflect something wholly integrated with culture and society -(something more human and personal in contrast to MoMA’s sacred spaces), for some, “the high-flying technocrats” that would run it “… were never to come up with anything but an exiguous non-theory, that of the “amalgam of all the arts”, which they reduced to caricature: the Unity of place”.55

To make clearer this we need to understand the Pompidou’s original purpose for propagating art, or more specifically its space. The Cultural Affairs Committee of the Parti Socialiste Unifié’s observations in specific relation to the Pompidou’s prescriptions for art throws some light upon the subject matter. As they point out in relation to the incorporation of art into the Centre:

On one condition: it must all take place inside the “box”, insides the limits of the institution; nothing must spill over into the trivial reality of social practice. Let the artist stay in his museum like the child in its playpen. By its very existence, its massive presence, the institution is there to reinforce the conception of culture as a specialized entity, an activity that is specific, parenthesized: a sublimely gratuitous game.56

As the Cultural Affairs Committee of the Parti Socialiste Unifié state in relation to the Pompidou’s imperatives from the beginning:

On the political level, the initial objective was, as has been said, national prestige: to beat the Americans at their own game.57
Hence, while MoMA’s institutionalisation of video art (due to its ideology to instruct by separating it from every day life would thwart much of video art’s original countercultural impulse) video artworks such as Vito Acconci’s *Remote Control* (1971) Valie Export’s *Space Seeing Hearing* (1974) or Mona Hatoum’s *Measures of Distance*, (1988) for example when promoted as almost pure entertainment in the Pompidou’s environment would also deconstruct much of their original purpose. In this environment, video art (and the artists that would create it) would be used to propagate the institutionalised space of the Pompidou. As the Cultural Affairs Committee of The Parti Socialist Unifie observe:

> On the one hand, the super-centralized museum institution, like Beaubourg, lends its incomparable resources and prestige to the large-scale promotion of the stars of the art market. On the other hand, it ensures that these stars will conform: In other words, that they will be kept to the exact standard that bourgeois culture requires from the product and the producer.\(^{58}\)

In a sense like MoMA, which at first had given life to the new art but later (like the Louvre) had been labelled a “mausoleum”, much of the Pompidou’s quintessence and influence would be found in new museums (such as the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao), whose existence as a container for art would, as Perl points out relate to the concept of the death of the museum/art as we recognise it.\(^{59}\)

The innovations at the Pompidou become all the more pertinent when compared to the Tate. Indicative of this, an examination of the Tate’s *Video Show* which would take place in 1976 will furnish the evidence that video art (with its live sound and interactive and architectural dimension) would be problematic within the Tate Gallery’s particularised and traditional gallery environment.
The Tate’s Traditional Framework

FIGURE 5. Recent view of the Duveen Gallery, (southern end), Tate Gallery, Milbank, London.

The Tate Gallery’s 1976 “Video Show”

The Tate’s Video Show, organised by its Education Department (“the experimental showcase of the Tate”) in 1976, would reveal the challenge posed by video art practitioners to the Tate’s fixed viewing environments. The exhibition would also pose the first real challenge for the Tate to position, display and institute this form of contemporary kinetic art as an interpretative category. By focusing directly upon the video artworks of six British artists (in pairs) over a three week period (Roger Barnard, David Hall, Brian Hoey, Tamara Krikorian, Stuart Marshall and Steven Partridge) the Tate would mirror an awareness of the medium’s developing global presence in Modernist museums such as MoMA. Yet this awareness did not mean unequivocally that video art in England, (which had previously been largely neglected in Britain) would be furnished with the equivalent attention given by MoMA. David Hall would point out:

... the additional fact that the show was not given the full-blown approval and treatment in the main galleries by the Exhibitions Dept and was instead put on downstairs by the Education Dept. in their lecture theatre may also have been a contributory deterrent. The significance here seems to be that the upstairs shows are invariably of artists well-known in the private gallery system, whereas those organised by Education (mostly film and now video) involve artists who have little dealing with such concerns.
By positioning the show in their basement the Tate would reveal its initiative and purpose to propagate its own space “through its packaging of culture” over video art exhibition. This would perhaps stem from its interest to follow localised hegemonic perceptions of what would constitute a legitimate form of art (mentioned previously). Due to video art’s perceived “avant-garde” positioning the Tate’s traditional commitment (as a classical temple of art) towards mainstream art would position the video art exhibition in the basement (below the main exhibition galleries). As a result, the Tate’s classical temple environment would furnish video initially within a problematic setting. This would be in stark contrast with MoMA, who had realised video art’s significance and had utilised this art form to propagate its internal space. Indeed, the Tate’s Video Show would present works that would confront viewers with a sharp critique of internal spatial frameworks.

Central to the artists’ strategies in the Tate’s show would be an endeavour to employ video art’s interactive potential by inviting viewers to participate in a two-way interactive exchange. In this setting, the video installation artists, as aspirant prestidicators or conjurors, would position their installation experiments as sculptural objects within the architectonics of the Tate’s lecture rooms. The exhibition curated by David Hall,63 (Terry Measham and Simon Wilson from the Tate’s Education Department) included several works that would use the properties of video art to signpost a “crisis of representation” including Hall’s video installation Vidicon Inscriptions (1974-75).64 This particular focus would be carried out as a way to fuel and engage the visitor’s attention by simultaneously filming and immersing them as subject (or active participant), in the objectification of each video installation/film. Through this, the artists had hoped to scrutinise and invigilate the viewer’s perceptions with regard to the objectification of experience that is, through a phenomenology of viewing within a particular viewing environment. In this environment, video would be used as “… a conduit for subjects to enact their self-conscious self”.65

Hall’s work consisted of a single TV monitor, video camera and mirror, which endeavoured to trace the passage of time in a gallery space. Both monitor and camera lens facing the viewer (the camera lens placed immediately behind and above the monitor) would be positioned on a table in the Tate’s lecture room downstairs in the basement of the Education Department. Hall’s installation had been an attempt to register the pristine objectivity of the “real time” movement of the viewer. This would be attempted by employing a clear polaroid shutter to capture at intervals the viewer’s movements which would be transformed as images “… onto the camera’s vidicon signal plate” which would then be emitted via the television monitor moments after the recorded movement.66 In this way, Hall’s video art installation would endeavour to explore through the viewer “… the progressive recession of his own tracks through space”.67 (Reproducible in real time via technology). Through all of this, the artwork would be dependent upon the particular use of a single monitor which would simplify the construction into a pointed dissection of process.

In addition to Hall’s work would be Stephen Partridge’s video installations which would also pose a challenge to the spatial environment of the Tate’s lecture room space as it also attempted to confront and control viewers through their involuntary associations with the camera. In this environment
Partridge installed a live video camera feed for his work 8X8X8 (1976) that would present viewers (as subject) who would be made to see only the side of their heads each time they looked at the monitor. In this ecstasy of denial, and simulative dimension, within the Tate visitors would be obliged to vertiginously redouble their efforts in order to confront an objective representation of themselves as they passed the apparatus of Partridge’s construction.

Partridge in an Artists’ Statement published in the seminal Studio International (May/June 1976) International Video Art Special Issue revealed the intention behind the work:

I programmed it to anticipate the reaction of a person confronted by the view of the back and side of their head, which I correctly anticipated would mean they would turn to see if they could see their face, a sensor would pick up on this and speed up the process of switching so that they were frustrated.

Partridge’s attempt to manipulate ideas rapidly through a video installation that was designed to depict “meticulous reality” had employed eight monitors and eight cameras. As Cork described it at the time:

… Partridge’s absorbing installation … positioned around the spectator in order to involve him in an eight-minute cycle. Using a specially devised automatic video switcher, which is programmed to switch our reflected image from camera to camera, and dissolve, wipe and fade it all in real time, Partridge assailed us with a multi-angled analysis of our own positions in the room.

The aesthetic value of Partridge’s proposition would reflect yet another endeavour within the Tate’s show to expose and analyse the viewer’s self and their relationship to the diegetic space of the gallery. Other video art installation works presented in the Video Show would be comprised of pre-recorded tapes (and other materials) which would situate particular attention upon the presence of the monitor in space. For instance, as Cork points out Stuart Marshall’s installation Orientation Studies (1976) would repeatedly show quick sequences, which alternated and changed direction revealing “waterfalls and more gently flowing streams”. These would endeavour to challenge the viewer’s balance, cognition and perception as they were forced to step over each monitor within the Tate’s basement in order to see the other side of the platform containing the other monitors all of which were linked in tandem. As Cork stated “… all the artists demanded an active, questioning response to the monitor.”

By utilizing the spectatorial space of the gallery as a way of producing diegetic space for the camera, these artworks would reveal the challenge posed by British video artists to the traditional fixed viewing environment of the Tate. Each viewer of the exhibition would be confronted with the representational ruptures concomitant with video technology. Hence, the aesthetic value of these works would endeavour to be metonymic of the commitment of all the video artists represented in the exhibition to expose and analyse the viewer’s position and relationship within an institutionalised space.
In relation to these experiments, the artists’ overall attempts to investigate human perception and sensory experience - (that is, in relation to the individual’s conception of bodily existence within the world through their perceptual faculties) through the time-based medium of video art is related to the notions of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. An understanding of Merleau-Ponty’s view of perception is useful for underpinning the meaning of the qualities inherent in the video art installations that formed the Tate’s 1976 show. Merleau-Ponty’s existential enquiry into human perception in relation to that which encompasses an analysis of space -as well as viewing conditions, states of mind and bodily perception- had attempted to explore and elucidate the connection between the object, subject and self in relation to the world in contradistinction to the variously existent dualism or dichotomies in order to ascertain what it is to be human. Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy concerns itself “… with refuting what he saw as the twin tendencies of Western philosophy - empiricism, and what he termed intellectualism …”.

In the Phenomenology of Perception Merleau-Ponty’s ontology posits that we are all bodies wherein detachment of subject and object (or mind or its perception from the body) cannot be asserted as being “true”. Seen in this way, there is no separation between the two as human existence cannot subsist or be reduced to a formalised or particular paradigmatic structure. The visible unification or reification of these ideas would be revealed by the artists’ video installations whose defining properties would reveal their endeavours to explore this as a phenomenon in the gallery. This would form a new systematic body of propositions for the gallery/museum. Through this, the video installations would endeavour to expose, countermand or overturn an a priori knowledge which related to certain expectancies within the field of vision and perceptual faculties of the viewer.

In this regard, Stephen Partridge’s video installation work at the Tate’s Video Show of 1976 would consist of a platform of two steps for viewers to climb, only to find that they would be looking down upon eight monitors which created a disorientation that presented a challenge to the viewer who would normally expect to view a more horizontal than vertical view in the gallery. Position of view and the perceptual effects of that position would be central to Partridge’s work for sometime - his presentation 8x8x8 would be amplified by the compressed environment of the Tate’s basement. In effect, Partridge, similar to other artists within the Video Show of 1976 would amplify the political aspect of positioning the exhibition within the Tate’s basement.

These conceptual art practices would raise issues that had been previously debated in relation to the specific kinds of artworks shown earlier in the fixed viewing environments of MoMA. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the late 1960s the writer Michael Fried had criticised the theatricalisation of museum space by the new forms of minimalist art in relation to its overall effect in a “White Cube”/box gallery setting. As Rosalind Krauss points out (in regard to Fried’s view of the kind of art that invited participation from the viewer which, according to Fried would impart questionable meaning and significance to the artwork):
At the same time, he was responding specifically to recent installations of work in white cube or warehouse-type galleries, where it was displayed without the mediation of frame or pedestal, and impinging on the viewer in a directly physical way.  

Yet this was exactly the kind of art that video installation \textit{in situ} would be that is, one which would need the viewer’s active involvement. Unfortunately, viewing conditions for the viewers at the Tate in 1976 had been a claustrophobic lecture room which disavowed any sense of freedom or autonomy. Hence, by contrast with MoMA, video art’s quintessence had not, by 1976, prompted or stimulated any realised attempts at institutional modification or reconstructive objectivity for video art display within the Tate. By displaying video art in this way, the Tate would compromise the potentiality and new creativity of these unique installation works to have any significant interpretive depth for the audience. As Elwes states in relation to the way monitor-based video installation art had been viewed elsewhere:

\begin{quote}
When video installation was monitor-based, viewers were indeed free to walk around and among the sets or could observe them from above or below. \footnote{55}
\end{quote}

As Cork stated at the time (in the ‘London Art Review’ for \textit{The Evening Standard}), “The upshot is that a show which cries out for –and fully deserves–a maximum amount of public participation has been tucked away downstairs in the Lecture Room”
\footnote{76}. Although the video art here would be presented on sets of television monitors “… as a primary medium rather than as a secondary means of documentation alone” visitors to the show had spent only a few minutes to visit them as a totality as if they all represented a single work. \footnote{77} While these experiments would be meant to demonstrate the capacity and properties of video installation to instantly reveal the construction/process of creating imagery in real time the sculptural properties of dimension would largely be compromised. As Cork stated at the time:

\begin{quote}
The Tate’s current exhibition, well organised as it has been by Simon Wilson with the technical assistance of Cliff Evans, is an oddly limited affair. \footnote{78}
\end{quote}

Stephen Partridge would similarly state that:

\begin{quote}
This exhibition was curated by the exhibition department of the Tate Gallery rather than the main gallery team who had not yet, recognized video as a “legitimate” medium. They used their lecture theatre spaces - although not ideal, served the purpose and gave exposure to the public for what was – at the time – a very new experience. Interestingly a PhD student was undertaking some research on audience participation at the time and asked if he could incorporate the Video Show in his project. His results showed that the average time spent looking at a painting or sculpture was 3-4 seconds but with the video show it was 3-4 minutes – unless the viewer was a practicing artist – in which case it was 0-2 seconds or, in other words – video – no way! \footnote{79}
\end{quote}

From this, it would appear that for the Tate, the dominance and ideological operations of television could not be disassociated from video installation as a museum-based art. Hence the artists’ attempts to explore the phenomenology of viewing as a process in the \textit{Video Show} would reveal the Tate’s
operations to be something artlessly dominated by broadcast quality television which as Antin states “… haunts video exhibitions the way the experience of movies haunts all films”. 80

Although the Tate’s decision to exhibit video art had made it clear that it recognised that video art had belonged to the “art world” it would still be perceived by the Tate as a “phenomenon” more closely related to the idea of television that is, as a form of television modification.

By positioning the video art in their basement the Tate would disclose their insubstantiality and lack of prescience in identifying video installation art as an art form worthy of being furnished with the same treatment with other modern artworks which had been exhibited in its proper galleries. This may have been due to the possibility that the Tate was not yet ready to accept the relation of new art with technology (as MoMA had done from 1968 and as the Pompidou would do from 1977).

Thus, the Tate’s sanctioning of this contemporary form of art from more traditional artworks in its collection would not achieve much critical success. By situating the show downstairs at the end of the Gallery, which could only be reached by visitors via a tour of the historic British collection, video installation art for much of its audience would serve as mere kinetic decoration –virtually achieving the effect of being a kind of “side-show” to the “main event”. This exhibitory logic would foreshadow the contingency that in order for video installation art to be successfully displayed the art museum would need to reconfigure or transform own internal dimensions.

The *Video Show* of 1976 would expose the indecisiveness and inability of the Tate towards video art exhibition. By the late 1980s, the Tate’s programme for video art would be more contemplative, largely due to the examples set by institutions such as MoMA and the Centre Pompidou. By 1979, due to the need to develop parts of the Tate Gallery to fit in with its imbrication of new art, large scale preparations for a new extension at the northeast quadrant would take place. This would reveal the influence of MoMA’s Modernist model for contemporary art presentation. By attempting to echo or form a semblance with many of MoMA’s “White Cube” design specifics, the Tate’s new area for video and contemporary art in general would be modern in character and meaning, consisting of white pale walls echoing MoMA’s spaces.81 In this emulation, closed ceilings, partitions and all cladding would be removed as different areas in the Gallery increasingly echoed MoMA’s more intimate neutral spaces.

The Tate’s development would be mirrored by the AGNSW’s gradual restructuring of their viewing environments in Sydney. By the late 1980s the AGNSW would attempt to accommodate the viewer’s physical need to interact directly with the video work in specific areas used for video presentation. The 1988 gallery extension would be used to facilitate the display of contemporary art - white lower ground floors (in darkened and separated galleries) which would be established for video installation and film presentation. Through this, it would create environments by which to embody an art that it would constitute as “culture” as being elemental and contemporary.
The establishment of specifically designed environments to showcase video works explicitly recognised different tiers of perception – via the positioning of the body in space (as viewer) and that relationship to the object (or construction). As such, the displaying of video art in Modernist gallery spaces would help propound a shift in museum structures. Because the art museum’s propagation of their gallery spaces would be paramount, during the period of High Modernism the new requirements inextricably bound up with the critical practices of in situ video installation artists would often lead to the unprecedented modification of architectural conventions within the gallery space which would include the installation of rooms, corridors or large rectangular boxes. To achieve this, artists’ works would frequently use sound and employ the human body as sculpture or use it as a material for art in some new or unique way within the filmed and projected video installation work itself in order to captivate or interrogate the viewer within a gallery space. By inventing a new channel of communication within the gallery the tendency of these artists would be to install into a space staged areas of performance. In order to provide the specific logistical and architectonic requirements concomitant with this, a gallery would need to develop environments to suit the work itself. These modifications, built and reset each time for each video installation would help to redefine new parameters for the artists’ conceptual operations. As a result, the limitations of traditional gallery space for video would be stretched away from their traditional and Modernist gallery structures as the blurring of boundaries between art and entertainment would ensue. This process would eventually lead to the move from a “White Cube” to “black box” for the contemporary art museum.

The central impetus that would steer this transformation would emanate from the video artists’ dynamic endeavours and exploratory mode of practice to contemplate the meaning of space which would result in innovative new imaginative customs for examining the meaning of the gallery’s spatial dimensions.

While artists such as Robert Smithson (and others) would posit their works external to the gallery, the gallery’s exhibition of video art by Graham, and Hatoum’s (for example) would provide an unwavering confrontation to the fixed framework of the Modernist gallery space. The following section will discuss this specifically.
As a result of constituting their repertoire of video as a way to critique urban space via analytic dissection of the psychological space in the gallery, each of the aforementioned artists would contribute to a need for institutional innovation and adjustment.\(^8^3\) The accessibility of video technology to artists by the mid-1970s was less than a decade old. The process of commodifying the form of video art had progressed in earnest by the major institutional galleries largely from the late 1960s, yet the ability of these galleries to reconfigure their spatial flexibility would take some time. Central to the urgency of meeting their commitments to commodify the form as a legitimate form of contemporary art would be the critique of gallery structures by the artists themselves. The galleries wanting to incorporate this work lacked the ability largely to accomplish this. Yet while these three video artists’ artistic developments and approaches would differ from one another, much of their video art would share a common interest in the “divide”, a psychic and physical barrier concerned with the division between private work space and public space. All three video artists would create works for galleries that would contain “indexical signs” that would attempt to comment or form a critique of both the world within, and external to, the gallery space. One of the most significant challengers to Modernist gallery space conventions in this regard would be Dan Graham.

**Dan Graham**

While the art institution on the whole would endeavour to expose the public to art, Dan Graham’s pioneering polemics in the gallery from the 1970s, would push the frontiers of Modernist art institutional innovation to explore and deconstruct the essential differences between private and public space. Often by filming the viewer’s bodily presence with hidden cameras in a gallery space, which would scrutinise and interrogate, Graham’s experiments in spatial organisation would attempt to restructure the time, space and spectatorship relationship by developing specific environments in a gallery space to be decoded, demystified and delegitimised by the viewer’s themselves. By building new environments in the gallery as a way of opposing traditional conventions of space which would invite viewers to experience a theatrical examination of their representations within the gallery, Graham’s frameworks would often necessitate altering the viewing conditions of a gallery space. Through his employing of video installation to order a new and imaginative spatial organisation in ritual sites of authority in mainstream Modernist and traditional gallery spaces Graham’s art would endeavour to furnish a psychological explanation for what would construe the accessibility or non-accessibility of space external to the gallery. Included in this would be his employing of audience, artist and mirror as a way to form a “single, double or triple space” in the gallery.\(^8^4\) Graham’s main interest/intention in architecture/urban spaces and its “overlapping” relationship to art history would result in a development of art as a social-psychological model to critique various systems and codes related to the social, ideological and historical functions of culture. His attempts to disentangle those
elements would allow for a study of space which would focus on critiquing hierarchical and “non-
hierarchical” elements in Modernist and traditional gallery settings. By intrinsically challenging the
viewing conditions of institutionalised gallery space in this way, Graham’s video works would
virtually form metaphorical links in the gallery interiors that would exist as analogous symbols or
parables for society. As Pelzer, Francis and Colomina would point out:

Graham’s video installations produce specific forms of spatial organization, which
redistribute visibility and invisibility, access and non-access. These installations
demonstrate that in the architectural ordering of space and in the views and
accessibilities resulting from that order these are privileged places. That is, a hierarchy
is created, resulting in prioritized spaces and a sense of subordination - more or less
internalized – in the visitor.85

In order to incorporate Graham’s video art the galleries who wanted to exhibit his works would be
made to reconsider their internal symmetry and spatial arrangements. During the 1970s and 1980s,
Graham’s video installations would endeavour to fictionalise the present and would often produce
“… the simultaneity of two time levels: internal time and an extended present” within a fixed
environment.86 By concentrating on the “phenomenal body” his employing of videotapes, mirrors,
performances, installations, sculptural and architectural designs, would integrate audience
participation in a way which would develop into a vehicle for metonymically transmitting his
contemplations on the constructed paradigms of space in society. In regards to this, his Time Delay
Room series of video installations (beginning from the 1970s) would pioneer the analysing and
sculpting of time-space relationships within a fixed gallery environment. As a result of these works,
other video artists would follow Graham’s example. As Lageira points out during 1974, Graham:

... produced some ten installations globally called Time Delay Room, which have in
common a proposal, using different devices, to show live recorded images which are
then retransmitted on monitors with a slight time lag. Present Continuous Past(s),
initially shown in Cologne, is the first work in the genre and, what is more, the model
for most works which present space-time interpenetrations in rooms partly lined with
mirrors, in which the viewer is simultaneously subject and object of perception.87

Graham’s Present Continuous Past(S) continually presents on a video monitor a filmed image of
everything which takes place in a room with an 8 second delay between the point of recording and
presentation. Within a purpose-built room with mirror walls the viewer is continuously filmed by a
live hidden camera and then forced via video playback to observe themselves as they appear on a
monitor in the past tense.88 Held in this way, and by observing themselves in intervals in a fixed
gallery framework, the participants would be made to simultaneously contribute to the processes of
meaning of the video installation work as they are made to feel trapped in a state of perpetual
surveillance under the persistence of the camera’s gaze. By evoking the intertwining of objectivity
with incarnate subjectivity within the viewer’s perceptual field this intricate reordering and
reorganisation of space would create a continuous dislocation within Modernist or
traditional/classical mainstream galleries such as MoMA, the Tate and AGNSW which would
“integrate” viewers to become involved in different or varied layers of participation. Through this
Graham would draw the viewer-participant into questioning “… the mechanism of surveillance, intrusion and alienation” and into the question of who is in control, the actor or audience?89


Graham’s video art installation Yesterday/Today (1975) would also use video to subvert the conventional frontiers and perspectival conditions of viewing objects within a fixed gallery space. This would be accomplished by revealing an “… intersection and displacement between two institutional spaces: the exhibition room and the semi-private world of the gallery owner”.90 In this video installation work, Graham would place a live camera in an office and simultaneously transmit its live image to a monitor positioned within the gallery exhibition space within the same building. To the live image on the video monitor in the exhibition space he attached a loudspeaker. As a result, the live image would be presented in the gallery’s exhibition space as a “simultaneous” or parallel environment with incidents occurring in the same evolving time framework. Graham would blur the boundaries of two separately ideologically constructed areas in the gallery and discursively undermine the division between the gallery as a contemplative and constructed space - Graham would collapse the hidden office of the gallery’s operation with its public showcase. The reordering of the gallery’s fixed space which would challenge the conventional gallery parameters of MoMA’s “White Cube” paradigm within a period of High Modernism and other more traditional frameworks would also be provided by Graham’s Public Space/Two Audience (1976), Performer/Audience/Mirror (1977) Pavilion Sculpture (1981) and Public Space/Two Audiences. As Pelzer, Francis, and Colomina point out:
Public Space/Two Audiences is a pivotal work. It presents the first architectural model in Graham’s output, as he left installation behind and opened up the white cube. He began to realize that the cube, already transformed by the mirror, could be further transformed if the white wall in the second room were removed and turned into a window. His idea, “to open up one, the white side and make that into a glass sliding door” became a kind of architectural displacement.91

The origins and aetiology of video art experiments like these would be rooted in experiments that had taken place in the North American education system in the 1960s, and were grounded in Graham’s critical interest for studying the meaning and definition of architectural codes constructed by urban society. Within this period, the use of portable video installation equipment had become popular at universities for instruction particularly by sociologists and anthropologists. In this milieu, video installation feedback had been employed to instruct psychologists and social workers in how to interact with their patients. Video installation “replay” of this kind would first be employed by Graham to teach and execute his experiments, social commentaries and investigations in North American art schools, which he then extended to the art gallery. In this context, Graham created and staged live events/actions/performances which were captured “… specifically for the video installation camera and monitor”.92 As Elwes states, “These live video-performances combined the role of video as a recording device with its participation as an essential component of the work itself”.93

Through the employing of mirrors and the camera which filmed a live audience Graham’s works would present themselves as anomalies within the almost sterile conditions of mainstream spaces of museums to instigate an unprecedented type of interactive space in the gallery. The viewers would feature as participants observing themselves (and each other) whilst simultaneously being recorded and narrowcast. For this, Graham would develop a closed-circuit time-based video installation system often within a clearly delineated and well-defined architectural set of requirements. Graham’s quest to explore the “… conceptual framework of viewing and being viewed in video installation”- (he would be one of the earliest artists whose application of video installation would attempt this in the gallery/museum) - is regarded by Rush as “serious playfulness”.94

In relation to the phenomenology of viewing and spectatorship in society, by using video art in this way, Graham would formulate and structure a kind of feedback loop of objectification within the gallery in which viewers could view themselves as contributors to the compositional imagery on the monitor produced by the camera. Galleries showing his video art would become environments in which diegetic space is produced and reproduced in the gallery. As a result, Graham’s gallery installations would be revealed as a kind of cinematic psychodrama or “staged theatre” in which viewer-participants (an idea inherited from the stage –“happenings”, Fluxist events and critical discourse of the 1960s) would be made to form a new understanding of their relation to life and psychology within an architecturally defined environment. As Baumgartner states:

… Dan Graham in many installations, allows the viewer ... to examine the architectural structure of a cinema auditorium and observe the behaviour patterns of
the other viewers in the cinema. The individual in the end becomes aware that he belongs to the group sharing this urban space – the cinema auditorium.95

Through his evocation of audience receptivity in a fixed environment Graham would critically examine and polemicise the notion of private/public space, which by extension would reveal how different perceptions of space can be experienced and interpreted. By positioning the viewer as subject of the artwork itself through the concept of surveillance Graham’s video installations would short-circuit traditional perceptions related to experiencing art within the museum environment.

By tackling space in this way, experiments such as these would initiate a frontier for theatricality into the gallery that would assist in the rearticulation, preparation and restructuring of its institutionalised paradigm into a new viewing environment. As a result of challenging the logical and spatial conventions of gallery spaces in this way entire areas of the gallery would need sufficient spatial adjustment. By pioneering video installation as a form of “social script”, Graham would engender a whole offspring of video installation practitioners who would present their work within galleries/museums. Yet problematically, Graham’s artworks would be put up on a pedestal by galleries as a way for them to propagate their spaces as embodying culture. The proliferation of these spatial spectacles in galleries would deconstruct the critique of institutional space. In so doing, these works’ original polemical purpose would be promoted by the culture industry in galleries that would make them appear as if they were part of their cabinet of curiosities – that is, enclosed within the ideology of their institutionalised frameworks. With each installing of these works they would take on new levels of importance derived from being shown by galleries such as MoMA and the Pompidou. The cabinet of curiosity of Graham’s propositions in the gallery would reflect earlier treatments by art museum/galleries – as Newhouse observes:

In one of the museum’s earliest incarnations, the Cabinet of Curiosities, natural and art objects were jumbled together on the walls and ceilings, cupboards and drawers of one or two rooms. Their purpose was to surprise and delight: viewers had to find the special objects that attracted them and make their own connections, interacting with the art in much the same way that artists were to advocate in the 20th century.96
Another artist whose video installations would be integrated into the gallery spaces of mainstream institutions and would question the potentialities of the viewing environment in relation to viewer perception and spectatorship would be Bruce Nauman.

**Bruce Nauman**

During the 1960s and 1970s, by contrast to the lack of visible presence of technology in mainstream broadcasting, the video art image as a mechanism for unveiling the processes of performance art documentation would define the central and significant conceptions inherent in much of Bruce Nauman’s linguistically and existentially complex art practice. In his critique of different kinds of space, Nauman’s earlier video installation artworks at MoMA, the Pompidou would reveal the dramatic vulnerability and individuality of the artist conceived through the three dimensional presence of the monitor as a “prison of the technology”. In a sense, this challenge to the fixed viewing conditions of the gallery (within the period of High Modernism) would have much in common with Dan Graham’s mirrored audience participation-based installations. Both artists would examine the role of viewing and of being viewed within institutionalised space and both would form a kind of interactive cinematic (or theatricalised) psychodrama in Modernist and classical gallery structures that would challenge their spatial and logistic realms. Yet through Nauman’s video work, the fields of sculpture performance, theatre, live poetry, and dance along with the exploration of the body in space would be situated within the art museum.
Nauman’s conceptual quest to question the process of art making would turn gallery space into a performance space/workshop for seducing the visitor into the actors’ role. By creating environments reminiscent of an “entertainment arcade” which goes back to Victorian times, Nauman’s video art installation works would often challenge the conventional “White Cube” gallery setting. By positioning and employing the body as a material Nauman’s propositions in the gallery space would scrutinise the body to create ambiguous interplay between useful and futile individual action.98 Within this, he would incorporate and employ the immediacy of theatre with the intimacy of cinema spectatorship as a way to entice viewers to act as a “collaborator” or to form the subject of the work itself. This escalation of the human/bodily element would reorder the logical and spatial realms of a gallery. Through this, he would mount a curious yet innovative interplay and challenge to the sculptural realm of the gallery.99

Due to video installation such as Nauman’s the interior spaces of the modern art museum/gallery would in a sense become “re-sculpted” so that they could incorporate his works. Often by shifting emphasis between object and idea Nauman would import into the art institution elements related to the “happenings” events which had also taken place often in large halls, auditoriums and external environments. By critically questioning or polemicising the individual’s role and position in (and relationship to) society, Nauman’s video performance installations would convert the museum into a space for intrigue, mystery, and threat. As a result of focusing on the body of the viewer Nauman’s work would evoke “… high involvement on the part of the watcher”.100 His video works, which focused on spatial disjunction, when situated in the gallery would often be purposefully calculated and constructed to fashion environments that would make the viewer uncomfortable.

For example, in *Performance Corridor* (1968-70) Nauman developed a claustrophobic passageway or tunnel comprised out of two wooden “floor-to-ceiling” parallel walls in a gallery space, which would be designed to confront the viewer-participant with their own filmed image from a surveillance camera. At one end of this theatrical apparatus, two monitors (showing the length of the corridor space) would be used to entice the viewer-participant to traverse the space in between. By developing video productions such as these and installing them in galleries such as MoMA, the Pompidou, the Tate and AGNSW, Nauman would crucially blur the boundaries and architectural parameters related to the meaning of space in the gallery. By subverting the normative spectatorial positions in a gallery space, Nauman’s works would force galleries to consider relationships of creating internal environments - many of Nauman’s video tapes would focus on a similar theme.101

For Van Bruggen, Nauman:

… has always been curious about the effects of physical situations on human beings, such as the uncomfortable feeling of being in too compressed or too large a space.102


Museum installation such as Nauman’s (which would play upon the notion of public/private space) containing surveillance elements harks back to the origination of video installation as a security aid and can be linked to the employing of the camera akin to the “Big Brother” aspect of George Orwell’s *1984*. For *Going Around the Corner Piece* (1970) the gallery itself would again develop into a space for surveillance, as viewer-participants would be enticed into a game of “hide and seek”
by using their bodily presence within Nauman’s specially constructed space while being simultaneously filmed.

With the stress placed upon anticipation (by leading the viewer around the corner of a white rectangular box repeatedly), a playground of sorts would be inserted directly into the gallery. Comprising this, surveillance cameras encouraging the viewer-participant’s self-scrutiny were hung at the top of a closed rectangular box. Within this scenario, viewer-participants would be provoked into playing both interrogator and the one interrogated simultaneously. As Hartel points out, in this work, “… hang four cameras, like vultures keeping an eye on their prey”. For the viewer-participant of this work, a work such as this would particularly reveal to them the restrictions of a “White Cube” fixed space as they, experiencing the work within the physical conditions of the gallery would be invited to actively critique the external framework of the “cube”. In order to install a work such as this, mainstream museums would need to contour their viewing environments and internal symmetry into a space for play, which would contravene the exhibitory logic of pedagogy in more Modernist and traditional display environments.


Although not posing a direct physical challenge to the architectural parameters of the Modernist gallery paradigm in quite the same way as Performance Corridor and Going around the Corner Piece, Nauman’s Stamping in the Studio (1970) would again employ the idea and practice of surveillance to form an articulate critique of a fixed space. The work, best shown in a darkened environment of a gallery space, questions the boundaries of normal behaviour and scrutinises the
artist’s agency within a closed room/gallery. In Nauman’s “videotext”, the artist presents himself on the monitor as a medium of performance and documentation which shows as part of a habitual rhythmic act in an enclosed and fixed environment the artist’s repetitive “prowling the studio” activity.

Appearing as a caged animal trapped and isolated under the compulsive surveillance of the outside world the work reveals itself as empty and lacking the structure and formularised expectancy of a narrative that proceeds in time. This characteristic would make public Nauman’s minimalist preoccupations with bare performance as a real life tape action showing the artist in a state of theatrical performance as the notion of the past is made visible as viewers in the gallery space watch it in their present tense. By presenting this work in a gallery space, Nauman’s inner vision and private world would be made public. Peripherally for the viewer of this work, this would simultaneously appear as a kind of staged realist theatre while also giving the impression of a man caged in the progressive temporal space of the present. Through the compositional imagery in video installations such as these (which often appear to be inspired by “Becketian” existential angst, alienation and desolation) Nauman would highlight how certain kinds of urban space (including gallery space), would be capable of evoking claustrophobia, separation and alienation. Although they would differ from one another, other works by Nauman that can be said to fit into this category include *Floor Positions* (1968) and *Good Boy, Bad Boy* (1985-86). By challenging the fixed Modernist frameworks of art museums Nauman’s interiors in the gallery took on characteristics of the cinema, as they became oneiric spaces and places to dream and contemplate. During the 1980s Nauman would continue to confront gallery environments by creating imaginative spaces that would prefigure much of the video artwork he would do during the 1990s. By 2000/01, his video installations as a result of their sculptural properties would further modify and sculpt the gallery’s space through his installing of ceiling-to-floor screens which would need to modify gallery/museum space into an intensive immersive darkened or “black box” theatrical experience, often with chairs positioned for viewers to sit and watch as though they were viewing a film in a cinema.

Video installation artworks as performance installations displayed as “wall-sculpture” would facilitate and bring the artist’s need of the intimacy and immediacy of the human body to the forefront of experimentation. Another artist that employed video art which would pose a problem for the gallery’s fixed framework would be the political artist-activist, Mona Hatoum. Along with Graham, and Nauman, Hatoum’s interest in the separation between public and private would lead to unique video installations works which would investigate psychic and physical barriers and the psychological factors within the gallery’s framework.
Mona Hatoum

The body was always very much the focal point. Originally, when I did performance, I used the body – my body – as a metaphor for social systems. Now I’m trying to set up situations where the viewer has a direct physical experience with the installation and becomes completely implicated by it.107

Hatoum’s performative and cinematic video installation/films would consist of performances often filmed live and presented as live work represented within a gallery space. Through these, she would extend the conception of Nauman’s gallery as a theatre for confrontation and alienation into a thought-provoking questioning and exploration of her own body. Influenced by the Austrian Valie Export, Hatoum’s performance video installations, would be based upon self-portraiture – the subjective artist as the site for representational activity. In fact, Export was pre-occupied with installations and films which she referred to as “expanded cinema” – (events which would posit her body as the pivot to several unique representational investigations).108 Like Export, Hatoum’s art installations would continue a trajectory which had begun in the mid-1960s with composer John Cage, Fluxus artist Dick Higgins, filmmakers Michael Snow and Hollis Frampton. This also would include Lygia Clark, Yoko Ono, Friederike Pezold, Adrian Piper, Ulrike Rosenbach and Carolee Schneemann. These artists all would influence the kinds of work Hatoum would be part of. As such, like the video art of Joan Jonas (in works such as Organic Honey’s Visual Telepathy, 1974), Hatoum’s works would actively perpetrate a new sculptural environment that would often need to be presented in darkened environments challenging the formulaic “White Cube” gallery setting.109

While many of her artworks and performance video installations (often concerned with the physical and psychic divide between two distinctly separate cultures) would be situated as an idea (almost antagonistically) in her surroundings through her endeavours to imbue the gallery space with her consciousness she would challenge the Modernist/conventional gallery frameworks. By implementing videotape as her principle medium during the 1980s Mona Hatoum’s works would actively attempt to engage the viewer in a direct physical encounter or experience with the work by introducing the dimension of live performance which would frequently include elements of live sound in a gallery space. In contrast to the involvement of the viewers within the objectification of activity, Hatoum would situate herself and extend from that the interactivity of the viewers. As a result of a self conscious re-enactment of the processes within her consciousness, her video installations would confront the fixed internal symmetry of the “White Cube” paradigm. This would be achieved through the re-enactment of the drama and the dramatic events in her life. Through this, Hatoum’s video installation works would, in a sense, metonymically convert the Modernist gallery space into something of an “operating theatre”. By employing video art to explore the physical, metaphysical and psychological aspects of her life experience, she would form a lexicon of unrest in the museum/gallery.

Much of this would be achieved by bringing narrative and theatrical elements into the gallery space which would be particularly present in video artworks such as *So Much I want to Say* (1983) and *Changing Parts* (1984). Hatoum’s video installation and performance video installations which would be used as a tool for expressing her anxiety of the individual existing on unstable ground between two cultures (Western Judeo-Christianity and the Islamic faith of the Middle-East) would focus on political oppression and the displacement of the human body as located in the relations between the two. Best viewed with the video monitor placed in a darkened setting within the gallery environment Hatoum’s *Changing Parts* (1984) would reveal a work which intercut imagery of her parents’ house. In this video, which documents Hatoum’s performance she herself appears to be trapped behind a grey fog in which she appears to struggle to be set free. The work’s ambient presence would necessitate the kind of viewing environment in a gallery space which would need to lend itself to its oneiric and immersive quality.
In addition to the aforementioned video artworks, Hatoum’s evocative preoccupations with memory in her video work *Measures of Distance*, (1988) which would be shown at the Tate in 1988 would construct both intimate and immediate elements analogous to cinematic viewing perceptions in a gallery environment.\(^{110}\) Designed to be shown in a gallery setting the work’s immediacy, intimacy and sexuality is both political and personal. This work would thus expose gallery visitors with the private made public which plays paradoxically upon two levels of meaning: presence and distance and thus evokes a cinematic quality in this regard. The videotape shows footage of Hatoum’s mother showering while an intimate narration is played over it. As Benzra points out:

… the work focused on a series of images the artist made of her mother during a visit to Beirut in 1981 and on the subsequent letters that they exchanged.\(^{111}\)

This video installation best presented in a darkened enclosure within a gallery space would be among many video installation artworks in mainstream museums that would prompt and invite radical changes to their system of display. In effect, Hatoum’s displacement of the cinematic “black cube” into an interactive public showcase would demand an inversion of the neutral gallery interior.

Concluding remarks
Overall, due to their initiative and purpose to propagate their space over other galleries the institutions would need to incorporate new kinds of video installation art. Through the creation/production of video works that invite a new kind of “psychological space” the gallery would
be used as playgrounds which would disturb and interrogate while enticing the viewers to engage and participate in the construction. By stretching the parameters/boundaries of gallery spaces these works would initiate a modification of the art display environment of the gallery as well as a redefinition of their viewing public. This would therefore engender a need for museum modification as life was put “… into the sculptural space by means of original and almost ritual bodily motor functions”.

Through the museumisation of video installation art the concept and practice of installing viewer environments (which would depend upon interactivity with art and technology) would be incorporated into museum structures. In order to prevent gallery lighting reflecting on the monitor screens and to show the power of the image on the monitor museums would begin to attempt to create the best environment by darkening separately set aside or specialised rooms for the presentation of video art which would introduce the beginnings of a transformation or shift in the institutionalised paradigm of the art museum model. The displaying of many of these works would transform the gallery space into a form of “operating theatre”.

Due to video installation, the art museum became a place where its visitors could delve into their own unconscious wanderings as they traversed the screen space in video installation art. Video installation art as a museum-based installation therefore participated in the evolutionary development of the art museum from pristine clinical Modernist spaces towards becoming museums as playgrounds for participation and interactivity. As a result, a new category would be necessitated due to existing categories within museum structures being broken down by this new kind of art which would be positioned as television/cinema/theatre/technology and sculpture. Through this, the theatrical and live quality of much video installation art in the museum/gallery would be made to actively establish the proscenium arch of theatre or the cinema’s contemplative environment within the gallery. As Kirshenblatt-Gimbett observes:

> In situ-installations, no matter how mimetic, are not neutral. They are not a slice of life lifted from the everyday world and inserted into the museum gallery, through this is the rhetoric of the mimetic mode. On the contrary, those who construct the display also constitute the subject, even when they seem to do nothing more than relocate an entire house and its contents, brick by brick, board by board, chair by chair.

Hence, these changes to museum environments would in turn alter the kinds of video art being produced as it developed and incorporated technological developments and possibilities. This would accelerate and spread the range of video art during the 1980s. This would lead artists to develop works that sought more extensively controlled environments within the gallery, or (alternatively) external to it. In parallel, artists would develop works which would exclusively be situated within particular “options” presented to them by the institutionalised galleries.

In the next chapter I will examine how the nature of the specific medium of video art and the impetus behind making these works would collide with the institutional/corporate agendas for harnessing and promoting it for their own gain within the period 1968-1990.
Notes

4 Newhouse, ibid., p. 49.
6 Newhouse, op. cit., p. 9.
7 Ibid., p.148.
8 Ibid., p. 151.
9 Ibid., p. 153.
10 Ibid., p. 50.
11 Much of the reason for this would stem from the fact that it would be more interested in promoting its space as being more significant than the works in it. See ibid., p. 149.
12 Ibid., p. 49.
13 Although MoMA had endeavoured to upgrade its space for art from as early as 1939 this had only reinforced its Modernist paradigm. While MoMA’s immutable compulsion and purpose to propagate its space above all else would see it undergo a series of expansion projects which had altered its proportions and furnished it with more ceremonial space for displaying its permanent collection, this had only emphasized its didactic and Modernist rule, overall conceptualisation and attempts to prescribe an historicist doctrine. As a result, its internal symmetry would only become more austere and appear more abstract.
15 Previously mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis.
16 Staniszewski, op. cit., p. 276.
19 Ibid.
20 See Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 20.
21 Morse, op. cit., p. 154.
22 ‘Enunciation” as M. Morse terms it.
23 Archer, op. cit., pp. 59-60. In relation Fried’s use of the term “theatricality” Alex Potts states that, for Fried “The term was not one that had any particular currency in art critical circles at the time, but he obviously meant to convey something more precise than a simple striving for theatrical effect. His particular understanding of the term derives from Stanley Cavell’s anti-Brechtian discussion of the difference between good and bad theatre, between real theatre as it were and the constant threat of theatricality. Theatre, according to Cavell, works compellingly when we feel ourselves to be in immediate contact with the scene being enacted before us and at the same time situated physically in a sphere apart, and thus undisturbed by the compulsion to respond to the actors as we would were we to feel we existed in the same space as them. Theatricality intervenes in this experience when we have the sense that the actors might recognise our being present, and so the question arises for us as to whether the scene taking place is real or illusory”. A. Potts, The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000, p.188.
24 Morse, op. cit., p. 163.
27 Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 20.
To achieve this, the Pompidou’s “columnless” floors would reflect part of a “spatial solution” that had been designed to handle the unpredictability and multiple variants of contemporary art as a way to reflect, embody and highlight the nation’s cultural superiority.

Yet the Pompidou’s interest to create a new social dimension by providing a centre for entertainment had not been wholly original. As Newhouse observes “In competing with other forms of entertainment, museums are looking to the architecture and techniques of theme parks, themselves an outgrowth of the 19th-century International Exhibitions that figure prominently in the Pompidou’s lineage. The Groninger Museum in Holland and Richard Meier’s Getty Museum in Los Angeles both recall this precedent”. See Newhouse, op. cit., p. 11.

However, this attempt to “democratise culture” would see fragmentary attendances to many of its exhibits with many visitors attending only certain programmes offered and ignoring others. In addition due to many different kinds of entertainment aimless wandering for the undecided occurred. Although the huge amount of visitors to the Centre would at times be overwhelming with many wandering around with no precise agenda or particular aim, others intentionally visit a specific fraction/part of the establishment. See N. Heinich ‘The Pompidou Centre and its Public: The Limits of a Utopian Site’, in R. Lumley (ed.), The Museum Time-Machine, London and New York, Routledge, 1988, pp. 204-9.

In relation to this, Pontus Hulten would state, “I’ve never been against the pedagogical aspect; I’m just not for imposing it on the public”. C. F. Paul, ‘Beaubourg: A Magnificent Toy Tries to Define Itself’, Art News, January, 1979, p. 51.

For a comparison of the Centre Pompidou’s internal spatial programming “pre-Aulenti – post-Aulenti” see images in Newhouse, op. cit., pp. 197-8.

Newhouse, op. cit., p. 197.

Montaner and Oliveras, op. cit., p. 10.

For a comparison of the Centre Pompidou’s internal spatial programming “pre-Aulenti – post-Aulenti” see images in Newhouse, op. cit., pp. 197-8.

Montaner and Oliveras, op. cit., p. 10.

As Perl points out “On the twentieth anniversary of Pompidou’s creation, the funhouse mentality produced its first great building, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Frank Gehry’s fascinating invention in titanium, glass, and stone. Thomas Krens, the director of the Guggenheim and Gehry’s partner in crime, has perfected a kind of megalomaniacal populism that makes hash of the modern museum as a center for the collection, study, care, and exhibition of the best of twentieth-century art. In this regard, Krens is a direct descendant of Pontus Hulten, the dominant figure in the early years of the Pompidou Center, organized a triumvirate of exhibitions there –“Paris-New York,” “Paris-Berlin,” “Paris-Moscow”—that pioneered the art show as multimedia extravaganza, and set the stage for globalism and all the other buzz words of the ‘90s”. See Perl, op. cit.


Partridge, op. cit. These experimental processes would also be akin to Peter Campus Interface and the video installations of Bruce Nauman and Dan Graham as a pioneering kind of video art influenced by earlier video surveillance practices.

In fact, Robert Smithson’s practice would attempt to refashion the whole idea of display space by extending this out of the gallery while video artists by contrast in MoMA, Pompidou, Tate and AGNSW would influence the refashioning of gallery space by extending/altering viewing conditions in the gallery. Smithson had been one of many who had viewed the museum as a tomb that exists to “congeal” our past memories as a basis for reality. Smithson for example, created works from as early 1967 such as the ‘non-site’ series which challenged the notion of the gallery’s fixed framework. For example see Smithson’s Spiral Jetty (1970).
93 Ibid.
94 Rush, op. cit., p. 79. For Archer, “Graham was interested in the links between architectural, built space and its phenomenal treatment in Minimalism”. Archer, op. cit., p. 99. The relation with Minimalism would be shared by others – most notably Bruce Nauman and Richard Serra.
95 F. Baumgartner, in Van Assche (ed.), op. cit., p. 151
96 Newhouse, op. cit., p. 9.
97 See Elwes, op. cit. p. 11.
98 For further discussion of this refer to Rush, op. cit.
99 As Rush points out, “For Nauman, video installation was an extension of his sculpture”. Rush, op. cit., p. 72.
100 Day, op. cit., p. 37.
101 See for example, Nauman’s video tape *Walk with Contrapposto* (1969).
102 Van Bruggen, op. cit., p. 18.
104 This suggestion or reflection of “existential angst” is relatable to the emotional and psychological states often portrayed by characters within plays by Samuel Beckett.
109 Jonas’ works would employ video and film within her live performances. As Rush states in relation to Jonas “Her poetic, non-narrative presentations – complete with cones, masks, chalk drawings, taped images, and sounds – to this day express the artist’s close connection to the earth and mythology. See Rush, op. cit. p. 87.
111 Benzra, op. cit., p. 50.
114 In addition to the Centre Pompidou, other galleries/museums that would provide environments from the late 1970s onwards more specifically tailored to individual artworks would include for example, the Whitney Museum (New York); the Lingotto Exhibition Spaces (Turin); the Guggenheim (Bilbao); Kolnischer Kunstverein (Cologne) and the Groninger Museum (Netherlands). “Black Box” museums/galleries or, museums/galleries that would provide significant space within their confines for moving image exhibition/installation within darkened environments would include among a continually increasing group, The New Museum of Contemporary Art (New York); The Matthew Marks Gallery and The Paul Morris Gallery (New York); The Max Protetch Gallery (New York); Postmasters Gallery (New York); Julia Friedman Gallery (New York); The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (Washington); The Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art (PBICA) (Florida); Matt’s Gallery (London); The Lisson Gallery (London); The Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT) (Liverpool); The ZKM Museum of Contemporary Art (Karlsruhe); Kunsthalle Bern (Switzerland); The Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) (Melbourne) and The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) (Sydney).
Chapter 3
The Problematic of Video Art

... it is a paradox that institutions are the primary historical interpreters of a medium that initially developed outside of and in opposition to the established art work and still considers itself not to have gained full acceptance in that world.¹

Overall increases in the acceptance of video art as a viable and exciting creative form would permeate from MoMA and the Pompidou through to the Tate and the AGNSW. (All existed as institutionalised purveyors and conveyers of the fundamental direction of cultural progression) and each would reveal the strategically crucial role and essential difference that the corporate sponsorship of video art exhibition would play within them as national systems. Through this, it would contribute to the sculpting of a new global awareness and towards, McLuhan’s “global village”.

Corporate sponsorship would be an essential element that would allow museums to propagate video art. In particular from the mid-1970s, with the advent of MoMA’s Projects Video exhibition series, there would be an enthusiasm towards video art which propelled the medium toward the epicentre of contemporary art globally - especially evident within the period of High Modernism. Due to corporate support, the museum’s underlying continuity, coherence and significance with regard to the relation and function it would furnish society, would be validated and legitimated. Initially, the campaign for video art would be spearheaded by the Rockefeller Foundation in New York through MoMA - a museum with a global outlook - from as early as 1967/8. Various National Arts Councils in the U.S. (such as the National Endowment for the Arts) would also be largely responsible for shaping video art’s transformation from a lesser-known radical avant-garde form of art into a widely recognised and popular vanguard form. Yet in terms of its exhibition, this would often require that the art form be separated from other artworks in the gallery which would result in problems for video art presentation. Through this, the structural dynamics of art museums would be altered. Moreover, the corporate sponsorship of video art exhibitions would lead to a kind of “formulaic and profit-making agenda” which would often undermine the original intentions of those creating the works. MoMA’s Information Show (1970) marks a defining moment when corporate sponsorship began to “underwrite” art exhibitions.

This chapter will discuss the impact and significance of corporate sponsorship and institutional funding support upon the proliferation of video-based works of art. It will also discuss how this would shape the institutional agenda within each art museum and their prescriptions for contemporary art. This chapter will argue that the corporations themselves would often determine the practices of selection, acquisition and exhibition due to the condition it would furnish the institutions. The conditions would then lead to the sanctioning and separation of specifically determined video art installation areas in the museum located under the aegis of the company name. Moreover, this chapter will suggest that the influence of the corporations would undermine the...
original intents and countercultural impulse of the artists themselves. However, this chapter will first outline the problems of video art acquisition for these museums which would result from the paradox between the limitations of durability in relation to the museum’s need to acquire art objects as an investment and accruable asset. It will then examine the problematics related to video art exhibition as a museum-based installation. It will then go on to detail, “The Discursive Field of Video Art” which looks back on the emergence of a specific discursive field during the 1960s and 1970s which surrounds video art – that is, specific to practice. This discussion will address the anti-conformity of Marcel Duchamp who had inspired many artists into speculative practices that questioned formative associations between traditional and avant-garde practices. This section will discuss artists such as Robert Rauschenberg and Alan Kaprow (whose involvement in the “happenings” had influenced the emergence of a specific critical discourse utilised by video art). By drawing their inspiration from theorists such as Marshall McLuhan and Guy Debord, who, in a sense had functioned as catalysts for a new set of anti-institutional ideas, video artists would create an art which, although anti-institutional would, be subsumed as video art was promulgated into the wider social context by the museum and gallery.
The Problematics of Acquisition

As discussed previously, the Pompidou, Tate and AGNSW would increase their engagement with video art over the (1980-1990) period. Yet, while this would typify their commitment to propagate the medium, a selective process would transpire towards specifically selected video artworks that would be acquired. Through this, each would endeavour to fashion an independent yet propagandistic (or nationalistic) history of video art which would exploit some works while excluding others not deemed suitable. Unlike any other form of art, the acquisition of video-based works would be problematic due to several issues.

A central concern for institutions would be the impermanence of the materials from which video would be made. (Videotape acquisition would be expensive. Although less expensive than film, it would actually last for a shorter period of time). Overall, with the quality of early videotapes being particularly crude and unrefined many would be rendered non-archival for galleries which would demand some permanence. (With these tapes not lasting, the original and unique work cannot be properly maintained or archived for longevity in any traditional sense). For national mainstream museums, such as the Pompidou, the Tate and the AGNSW, which would opt to propagate and emphasise their public video collections in varying degrees, many tapes would be subordinated out of existence and relegated to a position of perpetual inferiority due to their physical disintegration. As Elwes observes:

> Analogue video is capable of an apparently unassailable realism in spite of the crudity of the image in the early days, its harsh contrasts and its myopic, poor depth of field. However, this fugitive image doesn’t materially exist other than as a series of invisible electronic impulses encoded on a magnetic tape that will disintegrate within 20 years or less.

Due to this, one of the museum’s most central functions would be contravened by the form itself. Since artworks as commodities are fundamentally acquired by museum/galleries for the purpose of enhancing their value as cultural/historical artefacts and/or assets, video art’s relative impermanence and temporal disintegration would result in the denial of art as an appreciable asset. This would radically compromise the fundamental process and promises inherent in their cataloguing and classification programme. Due to this, unlike other valuable artworks held in more traditional museum representations, some video artworks would tend to not be articulated permanently as a categorical imperative that could form part of a discursive representation of artefacts within the museum’s collection.

For instance, going back to the Louvre as a classical art museum paradigm, artworks as material objects had always been acquired for these purposes. Since then, the preservation of artefacts as specimens of human culture had remained central as an ineluctable function and operation of the museum’s purpose. Artworks would be celebrated for their historical value and sought after as commodities of excellence by museum agendas. For Pearce, “Museums are by nature institutions which hold the material evidence, objects and specimens, of the human and natural history of our
planet". 4 As Hall and Fifer would observe the “… institutions’ agenda for connoisseurship, therefore, must be differentiated from their agenda for historical preservation” 5

By contrast with more traditional art forms it would be difficult for video art to be canonised in equal measure within the museum’s permanent collection. The very act of connoisseurship which had always been inextricably correlated to one of the museum’s most central functions, – that is, to preserve the past through a collection of precious historical material objects would face a conundrum when those works would reside upon a “temporary” substrate that would deteriorate over time. Many works would be regarded as highly significant to the progression of contemporary art, yet very few would be incorporated into historical records or collections.

Secondly, although museums would respond to videotape deterioration by developing video preservation centres, which, due to the temperature necessary would often be located off-site in different storage conditions, preservation itself would be a selective process resulting in many works being discarded. As Hall and Fifer would observe:

Only a few tapes can be afforded the privilege of being revived and archived by the institutions. Countless tapes will be lost once they are omitted from institutional selection. […] Sometimes connoisseurship and preservation work in sync, so that tapes selected for archiving represent a broad history of early video. Many times, however, they do not. If the actual videotape no longer exists, the historical record remains frozen in time, making later evaluations of that work impossible. 6

For museums, this would result in a selective history of video being constructed through expediency. Because of the art institution’s prioritisation and stipulation of certain videotapes over others many were neglected within the overall pantheon of video art’s history. As Hall and Fifer observe “… work lost in its own time has no chance of emerging for revaluation in a later one”. 7 Sturken suggests that this may be one of the reasons that video art is conscious of its history. 8 Due to these encumbrances, Sturken noted that, “Bill Viola recalled “In 1974, people were already talking about history, and had been for a few years…. ‘Video may be the only art form ever to have a history before it had a history’. Video was being invented, and simultaneously so were its myths and culture heroes”. 9 Much of this would be attributed to the art institution’s indecisiveness towards a coherent and full historical collection of video art.

Thirdly, owing to the need for converting the instantaneous encoded information from original to duplicate, these problems would be extended by the challenge to the institutions to duplicate or copy original works. The quality of the duplicate would often contain the potential to mirror the original only through resemblance too closely, which would (in varying degrees) thwart or undermine the prestige of the original video artwork held by the gallery. Unlike other forms of art video-based works could be easily copied and distributed. The effect however would be readily evident – some crude copies would often be accepted as indicative of the original form. Although the institution would attempt to uphold and keep intact the historical “record” of the work video art’s effortless reproducibility would diminish the potential value, stature, historical depth and essence for the art
By acquiring the video work, (although it would be a failure of sorts for the museum due the aforementioned problems) MoMA, the Centre Pompidou, the Tate Gallery and the AGNSW would all participate directly in the commercialisation and commoditisation of culture. Overall, these institutions’ acquisition of video art would be motivated by propagandistic incentives to systematically employ the medium as a vehicle for controlling public perceptions which, as a result of this, could raise the public’s appreciation for each institution on behalf of their respective nation. For this purpose, these institutions would employ video art as a short-lived but commercially dynamic and marketable commodity -a globalised exploitation employed to bring in revenue through its exhibition and to emblematise and reflect their respective nation’s ability to be at the forefront of contemporary art. Each institution would come to realise the potentiality and capability of video art to situate “… specific figures and events within a larger context”. As Hall and Fifer would note:

... video’s impermanence represents a denial of art as a precious object. It also provides a medium for challenging art institutions because it is reproducible and because it deviates from art institutional agendas dedicated to the protection and display of unique artifacts.

To a varied extent, driving MoMA’s influence over other institutions would be its pedagogical and doctrinaire focus delivered by its national and international dominance. Through its endeavours to keep up a mission to inculcate and educate the public with what it would regard as relevant, increasing amounts of North American video art would be acquired during the period up to 1980. From the 1980s MoMA would acquire works from artists around the world and exhibit these works in context with their increasing collection of North American works. But while responses from the early 1980s to acquire more international video art may reflect a global contest between institutions (such as the Pompidou which would from 1977 be acquiring much French video art among an enormous amount of foreign video art from all over the world), MoMA would be continuing on a tradition for museums to position local art with selected foreign works as a vehicle of valorisation. The Pompidou would generate this in much the same manner as MoMA, yet to a lesser degree. Competing with the acquisition of American works by MoMA, the Pompidou would acquire works by Dan Graham (Present Continuous Past(s) (1974) (first acquired by the Pompidou in 1976), Bruce Nauman (Going Around the Corner Piece (1970), Nam June Paik (Video Fish (1979) (acquired in 1980) (Moon is the Oldest TV (1965) (acquired in 1985), Vito Acconci (Remote Control (1971), Body Building in the Great Northwest (1975) and American Gift, (1976) and others. All of these would have been recognised as significant works of video art due to their exposure via MoMA previously. On the other hand, the Pompidou would only acquire works by lesser-known French artists which would then be articulated into the collection as a form of “comparable” example (such as Martial Raysse’s Identite (c1967). Together, through this form of selection, both institutions would set a pattern for the museum’s selective history of video art which, would provide the pattern
for other institutions (such as the Tate and AGNSW) to work with (and from). As the Pompidou’s Van Assche proclaims:

In the course of the 1980s, not only did a second generation of artists take over from the pioneers, but also critics, art school and university professors, curators and museum directors became more assiduous in their attention to form an expression in Europe, as well as in North America and certain Latin-American countries. Thus, the first installations of James Coleman, Gary Hill, Thierry Kuntzel, Mike Kelly and Tony Oursler, Marcel Oldenbach and Bill Viola were able to become part of the collection before the market became saturated with them during the 1990s. The museum nevertheless persevered within its acquisition policies and continued to acquire installations from a younger and, henceforth, more European generation of artists such as Douglas Gordon, Pierre Huyghe, Aernout Mik, Steve McQueen, Julia Scher and Ugo Rondinone, but these days the collection is more international with works from the Middle East, Asia and South America, too.  

By contrast with the agenda set by MoMA and the Pompidou, the Tate and AGNSW would lag behind. In fact, while the Tate’s acquisition of a work by Dan Graham’s (not video) in 1974 would echo interest in North American conceptual art and links with MoMA as well as video works by Gilbert and George in 1972 which would represent its interest in British contemporary art many works would be left out. Similarly, while the AGNSW five years later would acquire video art by New York-based artist Les Levine (in 1977) its overall acquisition of the kind of video art propagated by MoMA and the Pompidou would fall significantly short of being recognised as representative of developments within the field. In sum, with MoMA leading the way the acquisitions of video art by other museums would be highly selective and uneven in relation to each other. The acquisition of video-based works would often preface, or be an effect of, an exhibition of works. As problematic as the acquisition would seem (in relation to traditional patterns of collection), the exhibition of video-based artworks would present a more immediate situational problem for the museums.

The Problematic of Exhibition

The fact that museums recontextualize and interpret objects is a given, requiring no apologies. They should, however, be self-aware and open about the degree of subjectivity that is also a given. Museum professionals must be conscious about what they do and why, and they should inform the public that what it sees is not material that “speaks for itself” but material filtered through the tastes, interests, politics, and state of knowledge of particular presenters at a particular moment in time.

From the beginning, video art would engender a need for interactivity in the gallery which would disenfranchise and interfere with the contemplative manner needed for viewing more traditional forms of art (such as painting and sculpture). Due to this, MoMA’s founding conception, as an institutional “time line” museum for Modernism would be contested. The situation would be acknowledged and an attempt to rectify the situation would be made in 1974 when MoMA would develop a specific gallery for video art exhibition, within the ritual and ceremonial spaces of its Modernist paradigm. The following will discuss MoMA’s introduction and imbrication of video
technology as an art as it first entered the ceremonial and ritual spaces of its institutionalised framework. Following this, it will go on to discuss why video art would be a problematic presentational form of art to exhibit for each of the galleries under discussion.

MoMA’s Early Exhibition of Video

MoMA would address the criticism directed towards it by presenting the exhibition *Machine Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age* (1968). Generally, artists were reactive against the institutionalised habits of the museum and their Modernist principles. By referencing Walter Benjamin’s 1935/6 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* through its title, this exhibition would initiate the forging of an independent history and typology of video which would provide an exemplar for the Pompidou, Tate and AGNSW.  

Although the notion of linking art with technology had not been entirely new, during the late 1960s in the U.S., the newfound art-technology relation as a concept would be uniquely consolidated, articulated and made viable through MoMA. (Other exhibitions in the U.S. would be held at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Concoran Gallery, Walker Art Center, Nelson Gallery, and the Jewish museum). In advance of the Pompidou, the Tate and the AGNSW, this exhibition would be MoMA’s first to contain video art and it would forge a new and vital connection between art and technology as a concrete specificity within the mainstream art museum context. By affirming video art within this exhibition, which could be furnished within a traditional museum context, MoMA would reify within a very specific political and artistic climate a certain critical stance or prevailing discourse to “humanise technology”. As Shanken points out:

This discourse was clearly historicized in the great number of exhibitions on art and technology that took place internationally from between 1966-72. During this time there were at least ten major museum exhibitions on this theme in the US alone.

Overall, MoMA’s 1968 show had correctly reflected what many artists during the period had perceived - advocating a relationship between progressive art and technology. For instance, artists Jean Tinguely and Jasper Johns had begun collaborating with the engineer and laser researcher Dr. Billy Klüver in 1967; whilst Klüver and Robert Rauschenberg had collaborated on a declaration for the November issue of *EAT News* that expressed the “… urgency we feel about the new awareness and sense of responsibility regarding the relationship between art and technology and the long-range goals of EAT” John Cage believed that “… the artist was the progenitor of a revolutionary heritage who, through collaborations between artists and engineers, would transfer this revolutionary element to the technical servants of commerce and industry”. Cage had wanted to employ technology and turn it towards something useful such as for aesthetic or more practical purposes. As Shanken states:

… artists like Cage, sought to counteract what they perceived as the deleterious effects of technology – such as the destructiveness of war and industrial pollution – by appropriating it for beneficent aesthetic purposes which would infiltrate engineering and reform industry.
Cage’s relatively radicalised view would stimulate the thoughts of conceptual artists such as Nam June Paik who, through video art, would endeavour to challenge the individual’s perceptual capabilities of those agendas set by the institutions. Much of Paik’s inspiration would arise out of the attitudes of then contemporary social theorists (such as Marshall McLuhan) whose vision of the positive aspects of new electronic media technologies and communications would herald a new way towards shaping and changing the world’s future. As Elwes observes:

Following Marshall McLuhan’s vision of global communication, Paik and his contemporaries believed that they could harness the tools of mass media to awaken new, alternative social and political consciousness.23

In McLuhan’s Understanding Media of 1964 the author would state:

The aspiration of our time for wholeness, empathy and depth of awareness is a natural adjunct of electric technology. The age of mechanical industry that preceded us found vehement assertion of private outlook the natural mode of expression. Every culture and every age has its favourite model of perception and knowledge that it is inclined to prescribe for everybody and everything. The mark of our time is its revulsion against imposed patterns. We are suddenly eager to have things and people declare their beings totally. There is a deep faith to be found in this new attitude – a faith that concerns the ultimate harmony of all being.24

(Following on from this Paik would employ his video art as a vehicle of protest that would attempt to challenge “mainstream media”).

In MoMA’s Machine Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age, by 100 diverse artists, the curator Pontus Hulten would reveal his support for video art pioneers Dan Graham and Paik -both of whom would harness and employ the newest technology to create video artworks based upon the foundations of a new logic summarised and categorised by Pontus Hulten and MoMA. On the final page of the exhibition catalogue Hulten would proclaim:

From the mid-fifties on … (artists) have devoted themselves to an attempt to establish better relations with technology. Standing astonished and enchanted amid a world of machines, these artists are determined not to allow themselves to be duped by them. Their art expresses an optimistic view toward man, the creator of machines, rather than toward technology as such. They lead us to believe that in the future we may be able to achieve other, more worthy relations with machines. They have shown that while different aspects of our relations to machines may conflict, they are not necessarily contradictory. Not technology, but our misuse of it, is to blame for our present predicament.25

In the catalogue Pontus Hulten, the first director of the Centre Pompidou’s MNAM from 1977 (yet Director of Moderna Museet, Stockholm at the time), encouraged a connection between major technological advances which correlated to major art movements chronologically. As Shanken observes:

The Machine represented the historical intersections of art and technology, from Leonardo DaVinci’s drawings of visionary flying machines (c. 1485-90) to a commissioned competition amongst contemporary artist-engineer collaborations,
publicized and overseen by E.A.T. By endorsing this independent history with MOMA’s seal of approval, Hulten sought, in part, to overcome popular prejudices against the use of technological media in art.  

By positioning itself as a mainstream museum at the centre of global developments by showing such works, MoMA would initiate the formation of its own narrative of video art in order to proclaim itself the chief representative and central and indispensable affiliate of the medium. The exhibition would contain Paik’s *McLuhan Caged* (1967) “... a pun on the ideas of Marshall McLuhan” and his *Lindsay Tape* (1967) an installation using a tape loop. By promulgating these works the exhibition would reveal MoMA’s endeavours to establish a new dialogic between artists and gallery - one that would maintain its ethos to deliver a discourse of progression through avant-garde propagation. By acknowledging the prevalent relation of art-technology, MoMA would identify as an active participant on the current discourse and present its ownership upon the progressive art of the period. From this it would go on to build its reputation as a showcase for the highest levels of video art. As MoMA’s curator of video, Barbara London would later state:

> It was in the late 1960s that the Museum first responded to independent video activity and began exhibiting artists’ experimentations with early portable video cameras and image processors. As artists’ video has developed in direct relation to technology’s advances, the Museum’s Video program had expanded within the Department of Film to include independent as well as commercial productions. Through the ongoing video exhibition program and the “Video Viewpoints” lecture series, over 350 videotapes and 10 installations by independents from 20 countries have been shown. […] The Museum’s video collection consists of over 150 videotapes by independents from the United States and abroad. It also includes approximately 300 broadcast works, such as award-winning commercials, made-for television films, and programs with noted figures from the art world, such as Frank Lloyd Wright in an interview with Hugh Downs.

Yet, while MoMA’s show would rightly reflect that many artists during the period perceived and supported a relationship between art and technology by presenting them within the ideology of their gallery spaces it would institutionalise these ideas in an environment of pedagogy. As MoMA’s biennial report for 1967-69 observes:

> During the exhibition “The Machine Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age” the International Study Center sponsored a series of four lectures devoted to special aspects of the exhibition, and a program of five events including electronic music and performances of a light-sound machine.

By imbricating Paik’s video from early on for example, institutions that would follow MoMA’s example to imbricate video art’s technology such as the Pompidou, Tate and AGNSW would also institutionalise much of the countercultural impetus and spirit behind it. As a result, a “museum-made” typology of video art would be formed.
The Pompidou

For the Pompidou, while its display frameworks would contravene MoMA’s monastery ambience and present video art as a large-scale commodity spectacle, they would separate the art from the everyday. The Pompidou would develop its *Salle Garance* in 1984 specifically for video presentation and its employing of other gallery areas in which it mixed different genres of contemporary art freely. The Pompidou would present a manifestation and reflection of culture whose exaggeration within the gallery context would subsume other works in the museum while separating them from the outside world.\(^{31}\) In relation to the positioning of art into art institutional structures Preziosi argues that museums separate art from the historical present which detaches it from the world outside - stating:

> Museums do not simply or passively reveal or “refer” to the past; rather they perform the basic historical gesture of *separating out of the present* a certain specific “past” so as to collect and recompose (to re-member) its displaced and dismembered relics as elements in a *genealogy* of and for the present.\(^{32}\)

Hence, although MoMA’s ethos would be to educate, while the Pompidou’s would be to entertain, both institutions would “package information” by distinguishing it from the social everyday. As Vogel points out, “The fact that museums recontextualised and interpret objects is a given, requiring no apologies”.\(^ {33}\) Macdonald observes:

> Another way in which museums differ is in what they do with their information or, to resort to current jargon, how they *package* information. Education and entertainment may be viewed as two forms of packaging.\(^ {34}\)

Much again can be said for the Tate’s and the AGNSW’s traditional or classical exhibition frameworks in which video works would be presented in a way that would also detach them from the every day (such as Judith Goddard’s *Who Knows the Secret* (1984) and Nam June Paik’s *TV Buddha*).\(^ {35}\) This would be set against the video artists’ intentions which would be to break down categories, genres and styles that had been more in keeping with previous Modernist perspectives.

Moreover, due to the exhibition strategies of the above institutions, criticism of the moving image in culture would ensue. Although this would also include MoMA, for art museums’ particularly such as the Pompidou, whose perception and optimism in relation to their promulgation or reinterpretation of the electronic image through their exhibition of the particular kind of imagery found in video art would be critiqued by cultural commentators such as Jean Baudrillard. Baudrillard’s pessimism in 1976 (in regard to the effects of new media in society) would posit a critical stance that would oppose the pervasive promulgation of electronic images and technology which he believed would rely on “the meticulous reduplication of the real” resulting in the reckless proliferation of a “pseudo reality” or “hyperrealism”. For Baudrillard, this would lead to a non-existent reality:

> A possible definition of the real is: *that for which it is possible to provide an equivalent representation*. […] In fact, we must interpret hyperrealism inversely: today, *reality itself is hyperrealistic*. The secret of surrealism was that the most banal
reality could become surreal, but only at privileged moments, which still derived from art and the imaginary. Now the whole of everyday political, social, historical, economic reality is incorporated into the simulative dimension of hyperrealism; we already live out the “aesthetic” hallucination of reality.36

And as Barker states specifically in relation to the Pompidou’s separating out culture and propagating it as a spectacle:

… it can be acknowledged that the popular success of the Pompidou Centre points to the implicit dangers of the marketing of art and culture as spectacle.37

Hence, while the exhibitioning of video art would be supported by the ideological standpoints of each of these four museums, conversely many video artworks would not be exhibited by them. Under MoMA’s banner of pedagogical significance many imaginative and creative works would be selected, propagated, interpreted and deposited into a separate gallery, many important video would be excluded and unrecognised until after 1990. Similarly, the Pompidou, the Tate and the AGNSW’s video art exhibitions would also ignore many other important video works which they would eventually claim in the post 1990 period. By contrast with MoMA, the Tate, for example, by 1974 without a separate area for video art would be exhibiting mainly British video artists such as David Hall and excluding much foreign video art. Through this, the Tate would perpetrate a specific history of video art, one which would mainly be British. Vogel observes:

The Museum must allow the public to know that it is not a broad frame through which the art and culture of the world can be inspected, but a tightly focused lens that shows the visitor a particular point of view.38

As a result, works not included within the institutions of high culture would be excluded from the consciousness of mainstream global culture. Hall and Fifer make an interesting observation in relation to this:

The plurality of intentions behind early work is ignored while works that conform to formalist interpretations are celebrated. More important, works that meet an institutional agenda for connoisseurship are preserved and become the focus of analysis in art history while other works are marginalized.39
The following section will discuss-outline the discursive field of video art prior to its global popularity in the 1980s -much of which had arisen due to its imbrication in the late 1960s by museums such as MoMA.

The Discursive Field of Video Art

Crucial to the beginning of the museumisation of video art from the late 1960s had been its rise in the smaller galleries (particularly in New York). By the late 1960s in New York, an increasingly video community of networks - comprised of co-operatives, collectives and production companies - had been supported by the Howard Wise Gallery. As Davidson Gigliotti, an original member of the New York video collective The Videofreex states:

Wise discovered video in the late sixties. You might say that was unusual - he was himself in his mid-sixties; not an age when people of his generation were usually susceptible to new ideas. But Wise was engaged in the events of the time. Deeply concerned about societal issues, keenly disturbed by the Vietnam War and the prospect of nuclear annihilation, he saw his video artists as involved with the same issues he was, and saw their work as directly concerned with questions of cultural change. The artists whose work he supported include Nam June Paik, Frank Gillette, Ira Schneider, Juan Downey, Eric Siegal, and ultimately quite a few others. He at once understood that gallery exhibitions were not a medium that suited the work of many artists and he closed his uptown gallery and founded Electronic Arts Intermix, a tape distribution and editing facility.

Although MoMA had held its exhibition Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age in 1968
particularly significant for video art’s rise and acceptance in the museum had been the Howard Wise Gallery’s exhibition *TV as a Creative Medium* (1969). This exhibition had been a response to the surge of “video as a new form of television” experiments happening around this time in New York. Much of the significance of the exhibition lay in the fact that it had attempted to expose and clarify the essence behind video as an art form which was embedded in viewer participation. The exhibition had been the first dedicated solely to television/video and had highlighted and promoted many of the experimental video artworks being made at this time setting the pattern for more video art to be shown in galleries and museums. *TV as a Creative Medium* presented an array of ways of restructuring television sets while some of the “other works had focused on the potential to incorporate art into commercial television and the consumer environment*. Included had been the premiere of both Paik’s *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*, with Charlotte Moorman and *Participation TV*, and included *Wipe Cycle* (1969), by Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider. As Sturken pointed out in 1984:

On May 17, 1969, a show which was to become the seminal exhibition of video art in the U.S. opened at the Howard Wise Gallery in New York City. That exhibition, “TV as a Creative Medium,” effectively pointed to the diverse potential of a new art form and social tool. Subsequently, the show became renowned for the inspiration it provided for many artists and future advocates of video. The artists represented in the show, a few of whom are still involved in the medium today, came from varied backgrounds-painting, filmmaking, nuclear physics, avant-garde music and performance, kinetic and light sculpture-and their approaches presented a primer of the directions which video would soon take. Theoretically, they variously saw video as viewer participation, a spiritual and meditative experience, a mirror, an electronic palette, a kinetic sculpture, or a cultural machine to be deconstructed. Ripe with ideas and armed with a heady optimism about the future of communications, these artists used video as an information tool and as a means of gaining understanding and control of television, not solely as an art form. In “TV as a Creative Medium” alternative television was presented as a stepping stone to the promised communications utopia.

The spirit of this early and important video art show was made clear by Howard Wise, who had written in 1973:

In television, the “medium is the message,” that is, the mechanics of TV (the hardware) are inextricably intermixed with the content (the software). For this reason, some video artists have concerned themselves with the development of new components and the modification of existing ones in their attempt to realize the potential of the TV system.

Video artists working in this area have already developed important devices including video synthesizers of several types which by electronic means permit the creation of images directly on the TV screen or the modification of images seen by the camera.

Other video artists are attempting to generate a language for television utilizing those aspects of TV technology which are unique to the medium, and are not derived from film or any other informational medium. Television registers a continuous flow of imagery as sensed by the camera and transmitted on to the TV screen in a manner akin to that in which the human eye registers reality, the image of which is conveyed by the nervous system to the brain and thus to our consciousness. Because of this similarity, TV is especially suitable for use by the artist as a means of creative expression. 43
In addition to MoMA and the Howard Wise Gallery another catalyst crucially important for video art’s rise to prominence had been the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York which began to offer support for video art and film also in the late 1960s and 1970s. As Gigliotti states:

The Castelli Gallery was, for a time, one of the lone exceptions. As the 70s rolled on, Leo Castelli and his staff were willing to show video art by artists known to them, who had reputations in other media. Under Joyce Nereaux and Pat Brundage, Castelli-Sonnebend Tapes and Films was formed and an interesting group of conceptual and performance artists got their video showcased and distributed - Bruce Nauman, Keith Sonnier, Vito Acconci, Dennis Oppenheim, Joan Jonas, and several others. Castelli-Sonnebend was always careful to refer to their product as “artist’s videotapes” rather than video art, the implication being that these artists were mostly busy making art, and sometimes had the time to make the odd videotape or two, which might be of interest to collectors. Black and white, reel-to-reel, they were still an awkward sell. Most of Castelli-Sonnebend’s tape business was in rentals to institutions. The videotapes themselves were often astonishing, and good; Richard Serra’s still relevant “Television Delivers People”, Vito Acconci’s chaotic “Red Tapes”, Dennis Oppenheim’s haunting “Bar Time”, “Organic Honey’s Vertical Roll” by Joan Jonas was an inspired utilization of certain aspects of early reel-to-reel video by a extraordinarily talented video, film, and performance artist.

In other parts of the world however, in places such as Paris, unlike the situation in New York (and other parts of America) video in the 1960s and early 1970s had predominantly been employed not as an art form, but rather as a tool for information. Whilst this had contrasted the American example, in 1970 the Arts Council of Great Britain would organise the New Multiple Art exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London which had featured works by Joseph Beuys, Robert Fillou and Bruce Nauman. This had preceded any video art being shown at the Tate by approximately three years and the New Multiple Art exhibition would run for two months. The show would also be held at two separate international exhibitions partly devoted to video art - the Expo ’70 in Osaka and the Sixth Tokyo Biennale. In Britain, the attitude embedded in early video art practice had been similar to those in the U.S. and France in which in the 1970s the influence of McLuhan media theory would form the centre of strong critical debate, which discussed that technology was responsible for producing specific effects upon society. As Marshall points out:

The revolutionary politics of Britain in 1968 tended to focus upon confrontation with the practices, power structures and ideologies of the educational institutions. Significantly for the development of British independent video practice, it was in the art schools that the voices of dissent were most clearly heard. The alternative radical press flourished as new and specific cultural groups sought representation, self-recognition and affirmation.

By 1971, David Hall’s TV Interruptions, which comprised a group of ten works, was broadcast on Scottish television and exhibited at the House Gallery (1977). The exhibition A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain in 1977 would also include Hall and Tony Sinden’s 60 TV installation amongst the “expanded cinema” and film-based events which comprised much of the exhibition. This show had also included films, performances and conceptual artworks. Also in 1972, the International Carnival of Experimental Sound (ICES-72) in London had been shown all over the UK. The show had been discussed in the art and technology journal Leonardo and, according to John Holloway,
had featured “… the use of films, video, electronics, lasers computers and many other techniques”. In addition, in 1973 the Arts Council of Great Britain would present Identifications: A Video Exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in London which had been advertised in The Burlington Magazine.

In New York in 1973 the artists Steina and Woody Vasulka (through the assistance of Howard Wise) established the Kitchen Center for Video, Music, Performance, and Dance for the purpose of presenting, producing, and distributing art and in particular, video art. This had been a time when Howard Wise had initiated the Electronic Arts Intermix, which had been set up to fund organisations such as the Kitchen Center and the annual New York Avant-Garde Festival especially for video art projects which had by 1973 begun distributing videotapes. Other video art events occurring around this time were motivated through people such as Douglas Davis who were showing video in New York at the Everson Museum, Syracuse, along with Paik’s and Moorman’s Concerto for TV Cello/TV Bra.

Much of the critical impetus behind video art making during the 1960s and 1970s had stemmed from the video artists’ endeavours to position the individual at the centre of society’s consciousness (as both object and subject) as a way to critique and/or displace institutional authority and power. From the 1960s, (along with other tendencies such as body art, conceptual art, kinetic art, land art, minimal art, performance, pop art, process art, and spatial art), video art was established as a way to actively disentangle the aesthetic conventions which had previously governed more traditional art forms and practice. Its avant-garde purpose, like other art forms, had initially operated as a way to transform all aspects of the status quo.
Central to providing the method for this had been the live performances and actions of the body artists who had used video by representing themselves in the first person within the ritual site of the museum and gallery in an attempt to stimulate a new dialogic between the artwork and the viewer. By employing the body “… as a subject and linguistic instrument” spectators were invited to participate in shows which had often “… manifested with a certain violence in spectacular and provocative actions and performances”. As Parmesani observes in relation to these body artists:
Their actions were presented in museums and galleries, in live performances, filmed in video, or photographed. They wanted to involve the spectator in an action that, although it was intimate and private, required the presence of another person in order to be understood and confirmed. The spectator therefore becomes an accomplice in an event, participating in it emotionally.  

Influential body artists in this group had included Marina Abramovic, Vito Acconci, Stuart Brisley, Gary Hill, Joan Jonas, Tony Oursler, Bruce Nauman, Nam June Paik, Gina Pane, Robert Rauschenberg Martha Rosler, Carole Scheming and Bill Viola (and many others). These artists had taken inspiration from “happenings”, Fluxus and the activities of other anarchic groups in the 1960s and 1970s. In North America, Vito Acconci’s work used the body in his video art as performance, whilst in Europe, Marina Abramovic used her body as an instrument for self-expression and along with Valie Export and the Viennese Actionists would push the boundaries of expression and mutilation by lying down in the centre of a fire in such sound installation works such as “Rhythm 5” (1974) while retaining the central theme of performance “… with equal involvement on the viewer’s part”. This avant-garde practice had also related to earlier work from Austria by Arnulf Rainer and later by Export’s partner Peter Weibel. In addition, the British body and conceptual artists Gilbert and George’s satirical parodies of the middle–class within an avant-garde context had also provided an example through their living body sculptures. By making their own bodies the artwork and merging the suggestion of the middle-class with the world of the avant-garde their video artworks had emanated in contrast to the formative artist Anthony Caro whose students at St. Martin’s School of Art had included Gilbert and George, Bruce McLean, John Hilliard, Richard Long and Jan Dibbets. As the pair stated:

… to be living sculptures is our vital blood, our destiny, our history, our disaster, our light and life.
Incorporated into the new avant-garde approaches and tendencies that would influence video art had been the experimental films of Andy Warhol. Warhol’s iconic status and reputation as an artist coupled with the direction and style of his filmmaking had been particularly influential upon video art. His film experiments during the mid-1960s, which merged film with video, had provided an example of a direction which would become embedded and inculcated in the discourse that would surround video art. In 1965, for his “underground” tapes, which he presented beneath the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, Warhol would show his “… videotapes of conversations with one of his favourite actress/collaborators, Edie Sedgwick”. These tapes would be emblematic of much of what would characterise video art in the years to come. Warhol’s approach to making films as Morrissey states had been:

… to be completely detached, not offer any direction, and therefore stylise by indirection.
Although Warhol had wanted to exploit the uses of television in his work – Rush would state that Warhol:

… synthesized video and film technologies to great effect in works like Bartlett’s OFFON (1967), described by Gene Youngblood as the “first videographic film whose existence was equally the result of cinema and video disciplines”.64

Moreover, Warhol’s employing of video was praised in the discursive journals and the global popular press during the period. By 1971, Warhol’s OFFON had been discussed in Film Quarterly as possessing “hallucinatory” properties not commonly found in conventional filmmaking. As Callenbach had stated:

It may be that imagery of this sort is properly nameable as hallucinatory: vision in which the heuristic or biological function of sight is subsumed to an introspective, purely “visionary” function: one in which we no longer see in order to learn or act, but in order to enjoy seeing itself.65

For video artists during the period, Warhol’s casual approach to filmmaking and video making revealed a method akin to making a home movie. By adopting a more informal and hybrid modus operandi to video and avant-garde filmmaking in general Warhol, as “… an icon of the art world” produced examples of what video art making could be.66 As Morrissey noted:

Basically Andy always felt his films are an extension of home movies, you know, a record of friends, either a record of your family or a record of friends or record of your travels.67

Also intrinsic to a new criterion of aesthetic creativity for artists which surrounded video art practice had been theoretical discussions posited by conceptual artists such as Sol LeWitt and Joseph Kosuth who had both actively endeavoured to endorse an art that could be more open to everybody. Self-referential and based on studies of language, philosophy and structuralism their prescriptions for conceptual art would thread together ideas and debates which helped to shape an artistic climate that had surrounded early video art production during the 1960s and 1970s. The discussion they had prescribed was that the artist, rather than the art institution, should be responsible for establishing a context for their work “… as much as to make the work itself”.68 As LeWitt had stated:

When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair.69

Similarly Kosuth had stated that art should have a particular intention and functionality over an ability to be beautiful declaring, “… art is art and refers only to itself and its own language”.70 The origins of this view can be traced back to as early as 1913 when Marcel Duchamp had redefined the role and function of the art exhibit by placing “idea” above all else.

Duchamp’s expressions had initiated a set of cognitive and intellectual discourses which had profoundly inspired a new aesthetic continuum of creativity, calculation of probabilities and
philosophical treatise on art that were reapplied as a way to challenge the institutional structures of galleries from the 1960s. Heralded by the Dadaists, who fastidiously fashioned their ideas similar to his anarchistic, political bite and acutely aware of the significance of the space around the work in the gallery, Duchamp’s ready-mades from the early part of the twentieth century were calculated to link the creation of the aesthetic value and meaning of the art produced to the environment and context in which it would be seen. As Smith would point out, Duchamp was more interested in the concept behind the construction, as he would take:

… an ordinary urinal, signed it “R.Mutt” and entered it as a piece of sculpture titled Fountain in an exhibition he was helping to organize in New York. His colleagues rejected this work and in doing so helped make Duchamp’s “Readymade” (as he called it), perhaps the quintessential “proto-Conceptual” artwork.  

By doing this, Duchamp’s art practice altered the direction of meaning grounded within, and extending from a work of art – basically from objective appearance to ideas. This initiated a particular tradition and praxis within contemporary art making. For artists working in the 1960s and 1970s and beyond, Duchamp’s epic digressions and gestures prescribed a new maxim and programme (or paradigm), which saw that the idea inherent within the construction of an art object could exist as being more important than the finished product. After Duchamp art was open to be made out of any substance – to incorporate any idea or notion. As Smith points out in relation to Duchamp’s influence, much would come from his implication:

… that art could exist outside the conventional “hand-made” media of painting and sculpture beyond the considerations of taste; his point was that art related more to the artist’s intentions than to anything he did with his hands or felt about beauty. 

As such, Duchamp’s gestures redefined a new context for artistic expression that raised issues for the way art was situated within the museum environment. Duchamp would almost single-handedly redefine the essence of meaning in art during the 1960s and 1970s, and his influence on video art in the gallery and the discussions that would surround the conceptual artists who had situated their art in galleries in the 1960s and 1970s would be enormous. As Smith states:

After Duchamp’s Readymade, art was never the same again. With it, he reduced the creative act to a stunningly rudimentary level: to the single, intellectual, largely random decision to name this or that object or activity “art”. “ … Duchamp posited his Ready-mades (art as idea), or what one writer has called “his infinitely stimulating conviction that art can be made out of anything”.

After Duchamp, what became important was demolishing art’s separation from everyday life so that art could exist in the same form of immediate experiential relationship with the viewer.

During the 1950s, Robert Rauschenberg’s Neo-Dadaist proto-conceptual gestures and acts (which centred on the destruction of art as an institution) had reactivated and validated the quintessence of Duchamp’s conceptual practice. By highlighting as a new faith that art could be justified on the sole basis of an “idea” as reality, objects from nature and everyday life were taken, transported and
recontextualised into the sphere of art. During the early 1950s, Rauschenberg’s activities, along with composer John Cage -whose ritualistic actions had reconceived time-space-movement-image-relationships within the field of music introduced video technology into the realm of live artmaking in a show he put on at Black Mountain College in North America in 1952. In this show, with Cage, Oldenburg and the choreographer Merce Cunningham, Rauschenberg combined painting, music and dance into one heterogeneous event which, through its endeavour to communicate with a live audience, would typify the era of “happenings”. The Fluxus events in the 1960s and 1970s would follow much of the immediacy of intuitive performance activity that would surround video art. Reflected in Alan Kaprow’s Assemblages, Environments and Happenings – (largely written in 1959, finished in 1960, and revised in 1961) Kaprow’s 1959 18 Happenings in 6 Parts presented at the Reuben Gallery in New York had established a schedule for art to spontaneously “happen” in a gallery in a way that had been analogous to the historical avant-garde Dada acts that previously occurred during the early twentieth century at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich. Kaprow’s event constructed an abstract theatre that had, as its main target and field of enunciation, the art institution and gallery. Like abstract theatre, this scheme had openly encouraged spontaneous audience participation as “professional actors performed or improvised simple, elementary actions, declaiming sentences or just words as sounds and noises interacted without any pre-arrangement”. In the happening events:

Words and things intermingled with noises and gestures in the same plane where nothing prevailed, and all the elements converged to search for a language that was open to any and all possibilities and interactions.

In France, a similar attitude against art’s institutionalisation had also prevailed. In Paris and concomitant with Kaprow, Guy Debord’s “Situationist” writings had advocated a scheme for lively group participation which attempted to relocate the Modernist notion, function and existence of the individual hero as a way to dislodge the mass spectacle being created through the media. In the International Situationist Bulletin established by the Situationist International Organisation formed in 1957 of which Debord was a member, Debord had written that revolutionary action be taken by artists to create “situations” against capitalism and the mass spectacle. Debord would state:

The construction of situations begins on the ruins of the modern spectacle. It is easy to see to what extent the very principle of the spectacle – nonintervention – is linked to the alienation of the old world. Conversely, the most pertinent revolutionary experiments in culture have sought to break the spectator’s psychological identification with the hero so as to draw him into activity by provoking his capacities to revolutionize his own life. The situation is thus made to be lived by its constructors. The role played by a passive or merely bit-part playing “public” must constantly diminish, while that played by those who cannot be called actors but rather, in a new sense of the term, “livers”, must steadily increase. So to speak, we have to multiply poetic subjects and objects – which are now unfortunately so rare that the slightest ones take on an exaggerated emotional importance – and we have to organize games of these poetic objects among these poetic subjects. This is our entire program, which is essentially transitory. Our situations will be ephemeral, without a future; passageways. The permanence of art or anything else does not enter into our considerations, which are serious. Eternity is the grossest idea a person can conceive of in connection with his acts.
Functioning as a call to arms, Debord’s manifestoes along with Kaprow’s writings had promoted much of the spirit of protest for the artists of the 1960s and 1970s which had encouraged a heterogeneous artistic climate for experimentation against institutions and popular culture. Following this, live manifestations and avant-garde protests which had used art as a mouthpiece had occurred in North America and Europe.

**Participation-Based Television**

As part of the discussions of this nature, around this time broadcast television had been targeted by artists beginning to use video art in Europe. Within this, television as the conveyer and conduit of popular culture - which many believed was distorting reality through the promulgation of stereotypes and biased reporting was targeted by conceptual artists Nam June Paik and Wolf Vostell who, as early as 1959, had begun interrogating “… broadcast pictures distorted by magnets”. This gesture reflected the commencement of a new utopianism where communications and new theories of art were employed as an interventionist and alternative way to give art power. Through this, video artists would attempt to execute their role as social critics. By 1964, the publication of McLuhan’s *Understanding Media* encouraged video artists that the utopian concept of a global village was possible through the social application of the new technology which was just becoming available to the public and artists. Coupled with the theories of Debord and Kaprow (amongst others) this had an enormous impact on the discursive impetus behind video art globally due to its discussion that emergent technology could transform perception and the social communicative status quo.

A year after the publication of *Understanding Media*, and three years before MoMA’s first exhibition to contain video art, Paik had aligned himself with the New School for Social Research where he had presented his video artwork *Robot 456* and other *Colour TV experiments* in 1965. With a Rockefeller grant, Paik purchased a Sony portapak from which he constructed “… a tape accompanied by a text entitled Electronic Video Recorder at the Café Au Go-Go in New York, where live art performances had often taken place. Another video performance of this nature had taken place at the Rene Block Gallery around this time in Berlin where Vostell had participated. Also, the 3rd Avant-Garde Festival and the New Cinema Festival in New York had featured Paik’s ongoing modifications of the television signal. These public exhibitions gradually increased video art’s popularity and a critical awareness of it which formed in the underground art scene and would soon be incorporated into the mainstream gallery. In 1966, the filmmaker Stan Vanderbeek in support of video art promoted video art’s potential in the *Tulane Drama Review*. As Vanderbeek would write:

> I propose the following:
> That immediate research begin on the possibility of a picture-language based on motion pictures.
> That we combine audio-visual devices into an educational tool: an experience machine or “culture-intercom”.
> That audio-visual research centers be established on an international scale to explore the existing audio-visual devices and procedures, develop new image-making devices,
and store and transfer image materials, motion pictures, television, computers, video-tape, etc.
That artists be trained on an international basis in the use of these image tools. 87

In 1966 the radical and innovative Nine Evenings: Theatre and Engineering show held at the 69th Regiment Armory in New York had featured works by Robert Rauschenberg and had as part of the show incorporated video art into a live and theatrical setting. 88 As Rush states about the inclusion of video in this event:

It featured several electronically manipulated art objects as well as a video projection of infra-red images of volunteers in Rauschenberg’s own performance during those evenings. Technology of all kinds was introduced with a bang, so to speak, into the creation and presentation of art. 89

At this time, radical shows such as these which were more akin to “happenings” or Fluxus events were paralleled by others such as Down by the Riverside: The USCO Show which had been held at the Riverside Museum, New York and the New York Annual Avant-Garde Festival in which video had been part of from 1967. By 1968, while video art had been presented at MoMA, it was also being exhibited globally in various art centres, theatres and film festivals. 90 Argentina in fact had seen the creation of the Centro de Arte y Communicación (CAYC) in 1968 in Buenos Aires, which was established for distributing video art internationally. 91 There had been a thorough analysis in The Drama Review of a video art performance work by Marta Minujin in Argentina which had taken place in 1966 in a theatre at the DiTella Institute. 92 The review revealed the sense of community and collaboration that early video artists from different parts of the world shared for displaying their video art publicly from the beginning. As Kirby observed in relation to the Buenos Aires performance which had taken place:

The piece which eventually became Simultaneity in Simultaneity was originally conceived as part of an intercontinental presentation. At the same time that Minujin’s work was being done in Argentina, Allan Kaprow in the United States and Wolf Vostell in Germany were to do performances. The three had talked of making use of the telstar communications satellite to transmit video material from one part of the performance to another, of flying performers from one country to another so that they could appear in person in more than one “section”, etc. This original plan was not carried through when Kaprow and Vostell failed to realize their segments, but it determined some of Minujin’s imagery, and, eventually provoked an interesting juxtapositioning of “truth” and “falsity” in art. 93

By 1972 in New York, Paik and Joan Jonas’s video art were both being analysed and discussed in a number of influential art journals. Paik’s increasing importance was highlighted in Leonardo magazine in which his “… videotronic distortions of the received signal, closed circuit teledynamic environments …” were discussed as “sculptural pieces such as a near nude cellist whose music is input to the two TV sets she wears as a bra”. 94 During the same year, video pioneer Joan Jonas’ innovative video artwork Organic Honey’s Visual Telepathy was shown in 1972 at the Lo Giudice Gallery (New York); Festival of Music and Dance (Rome); Ace Gallery (Los Angeles); San Francisco Art Institute and the California Institute of the Arts. In 1973 it would be shown at the Leo Castelli Gallery (New York); Festival d’Automne; Musee Galleria (Paris) and Galleria Toselli,
The Problematic of Video Art

(Milan) and was reviewed and analysed as piece of high art repeatedly during this period. As The Drama Review had written in 1972:

Joan Jonas uses video TV as an image maker and conjures herself. Working alone in the studios with a camera, the TV is her toy and her other. She plays with it and constitutes with it. As a form of play, the TV is a fixation. Fascinated by her image on the monitor, she locks into it. Playing with it, she explores the black and white image, relating it to objects and materials … her accumulated special effects. […] The performance is live video activity and live video transmission and protection. On the set, a video camera continuously selects and transmits parts of the live activity.

Another example of video art’s increasing importance was published in the Art Journal in 1974 in an article entitled Epistemological TV. In this article the video art of Peter Campus was analysed and discussed in detail, the author stating that through Campus’ works “The viewer’s vision of space is transformed relative to the actions in that space”. By 1975, a review of the book The History of Magnetic Recording was published and in the same year in the article Seven Years in the March issue of The Drama Review Joan Jonas discussed her video art in depth with the well-known art critic Rosalind Krauss. In 1976, critic Richard Kostelanz had aligned himself with the spirit of video art by promoting it over broadcast television:

Literary video differs from other video in its base of a text whose language is enhanced, rather than mundane-a text that is conceived within the traditions of literature and a contemporary sense of verbal possibilities. […] Literary video is destined for an audience that is ideally both sensitive and literate; television for an audience that is neither.

Moreover, Rosalind Krauss’s article Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism in the art journal October by 1976 featured a thorough analysis of the work of many crucially important artists and pioneering artists producing video at the time - such as Vito Acconci, Lynda Benglis, Peter Campus, Nancy Holt, Joan Jonas, Bruce Nauman, and Richard Serra. Through this, Krauss situated video art as an extremely important art form of the time. From this point forward video art would become ubiquitous and can be seen as the “index to the zeitgeist” during the High Modernist period. Much of this had been due to the fact that after MoMA’s first exhibition to contain video art in 1968 by the late 1980s copious amounts of video art had been exhibited in nearly every gallery/museum globally.

In summary, video art was a very specific form of production that had been stimulated by an increasing critical interest in its form and practice during 1960s and ‘70s. Initially, this critical interest had manifested from a series of brief critical articles on video art in America. As more journals became available within the period articles such as these would be followed by others which would increasingly fuel a growing depth of critical interest in video art. In turn this stimulated more theoretical exhibition and discussion of video art which had resulted in further reviews/articles. In Britain for example, during the early 1970s, the art publication Studio International had been “… the first art publication in Britain to give any significant space to a discussion of video art”. The International Video Art Special Issue was entirely devoted to video and was published concurrently with the Tate Gallery’s Video Show which ran during May – June in 1976. The publication in Europe
would be increasingly important to the exhibition of video-based works during this period – *Art Monthly, Independent Video, Screen, Undercut, Sight and Sound* to name but a few. The increase in discourse would stimulate the artists further which in turn would affect the way the institutions would recognise video art as something contemporary and commodifiable.

**The Problematic of Corporate and Institutional Support**

*In a medium that by its very nature could not fit into the support system of the art world, the role of funding institutions is an immensely influential one.*

*... institutions can thwart resistance to their power and privilege by incorporating video into their collections. They justify the acquisition of video by promoting its formalist qualities that, as previously described, displace its political messages.*

*From the beginning, public televisions and art institutions became the primary arbiters of taste, deciding what was worth producing and worth watching.*

It can be generally accepted that corporate involvement in cultural pursuits would be self-seeking. Although corporations and funding institutions would be brought in to assist and support the art institutions’ propagation sponsorship would generally be applied to projects that would either mirror, parallel or enhance their corporate goals. In many instances, these corporations would sponsor art in order to bestow upon themselves the values that they would seek to be associated with.

Yet although corporate and institutional support would assist in the medium’s promulgation of video art this situation would be a problem due to its hindering or reshaping of the creative and original impulses of the artists making works. Moreover, the corporation’s involvement would strongly shape the production and selection process which would result in many works being excluded by the museums. This would, in turn, create vacuums within the progressive aegis of a technology-based form of art.

While the corporate sponsorship of video art would often be essential for projecting and propelling specifically selected works into the wider contemporary art arena via the art institution, to a certain extent this involvement would tend to stem from self-seeking interest, while attempting to appear committed to the values of the period. By involving themselves in this way, they would emphasise and enhance their status in the wider world, often ennobling themselves through the latest forms of art as a way to be regarded publicly as preserving the artistic values of society. Through this, corporations would endeavour to be seen as being both humanistic and avant-garde while “… possessing the characteristics that the work of art represents”. As Martorella points out, “By patronizing a high-brow aestheticism, corporate images and a given class structure within the corporate hierarchy are reinforced”.108
For art institutions such as MoMA, who would continue to want to be regarded and treated as “neutral paradigms”, this would be problematic since the corporation’s involvement (due to their own particularised agendas) would determine and shape the manner with which art was presented to the wider community. Martorella suggests that corporations would sponsor art:

… to reinforce a view of reality devoid of human struggle, human feelings, or human concerns, and stresses either an idealized reality employing motifs from nature or a rational order employing abstract or geometric shapes that are expediently adjusted to elicit messages of esteem, power, wealth, and class.¹⁰⁹

While video art acquisition and exhibition would lead museums to shape an independent history of video art, corporate sponsorship and institutional funding support would be extremely influential in the shaping of that history. This would be due to several causes.

Although corporate sponsorship would facilitate the incorporation of much video art into these museums its assistance to video makers would create a schism within the video community which would encourage artists away from their original intents. As a result, much of the spirit behind video art’s “countercultural” impulse would be subsumed while “video art” as such, would be invented as a new eminence that could be packaged into new information and marketed as a high form of cultural/national production. This system would engender competition within the video community that in turn would foster a schism which would contravene the centralising impetus and spirit behind video art production. Under the influence of the funding corporations, the sentiment behind making video would be altered into something more materialistic. Corporate sponsorship of video would thus temper and shape the natural impetus and creative sentiment of the video makers by placing them in competition with each other to acquire better tools or opportunities. Hence video art and the video community was changed by the extent of financial support available. Sturken points out the situation in New York during the late 1960s:

The influx of a significant amount of funding from both NYSCA and the Rockefeller Foundation (funding that, it should be noted, has not increased proportionally to the growth in the field) radically changed the video community. There was a lot of “new” money to be fought over in the beginning, which inevitably had a fracturing effect on the nascent video community. […] This was responsible in part for causing the split in what had been diverse yet somewhat coexistent intents among videomakers, in widening the schism that had existed between the two worlds. Irrevocable distinctions were soon made at the institutional level between those who saw video as a social tool and those who saw it as a new art form.¹¹⁰

The Rockefeller Foundation’s support would enable MoMA’s overall commitment for forming an independent history through its establishing of a typology of video which it would select and label as the latest in avant-garde art production. The video artist, Paul Ryan would point out that the New York State government’s financial support had increased “… from 2 to 20 million dollars in one year”.¹¹¹ This substantial increase would be provided as a result of Nelson Rockefeller’s position at the time and his charter which would govern the New York State Arts Council (the first of its kind in America). The Rockefeller Foundation would award the first video fellowship in 1967.¹¹²
Through Rockefeller’s support video as a new form of contemporary art would have its status and position elevated significantly within the major art institutions in America. By furnishing state money to major cultural institutions (such as MoMA) Rockefeller would endeavour “… to win reelection support from his traditional and wealthy supporters”\(^{113}\) As Ryan states:

> As the person who originally mediated the Rockefeller Arts Council money into precedent–setting video grants, my glee at getting the money allocated was balanced by a nagging doubt that perhaps modern art was merely a process whereby the pain of the poor becomes the perceptions of the rich. The rich need these perceptions to maintain their power because they are out of touch with the shifting sentiments of the majority of the people.\(^{114}\)

From the 1970s, due to corporate influence however, video in the museum would evolve into video as an institutionally acceptable form of art. By the mid-1970s, in New York, the redirection away from funding community-based video projects by the Arts Councils (such as NYSCA and NEA) towards a more corporate and institutionally supportive form of “video art” would devolve the countercultural impetus, and institutionally critical works. This would reveal that anti-art and anti-art market movements (such as video art) would eventually become museified and subsumed as concrete and marketable entities. This had been proven to be the case with other counter-institutional ventures such as conceptualism and performance. Nelson Rockefeller had been on the Board of Trustees for MoMA when the NYSC would redirect their generative funding model away from the individual artist to the organisation. This would have a dramatic deleterious effect on video artists. As Sturken points out:

> The Rockefeller’s Foundation’s decision to explore artists’ television and to fund postproduction centers, and the fact that NYSC can, by law, only fund organizations and not individuals were major factors in shaping the video community as it evolved.\(^{115}\)

This would result in individual artists becoming inextricably tied to the museum/gallery institution (and the prerogatives of that institution). The “benefactors” of video art would establish a system that would be ordered to include works more suitable for gallery presentation and comply with institutional parameters that would concur with their own supportive structures.\(^{116}\) This would position imperatives upon the form which hadn’t previously existed - as Sturken points out:

> Throughout the 1970s, this kind of funding structure not only served to influence what kind of tapes were made, it also served to establish the increased demand for production values.\(^{117}\)

Hence, the NYSC and the Rockefeller Foundation’s role in supporting video would directly determine the exposure and eventually the hierarchy of video art in America.

Within this framework, the NYSC would “… provide support for experimental work in a new art medium that had not yet developed a market for its products”.\(^{118}\) Through this, corporate and institutional influence-the kind that would shape or meld the centralising impetus behind video art’s
artistic production before it would be created to fit institutional agendas, would be greatly assisted by grants from the NEA and NYSC. Within this circumstance, during the 1972-73 period, MoMA’s six project exhibitions would be supported in part by grants from the NEA and would rely a great deal upon corporate sponsorship.\(^{119}\) This would in turn influence the production values and the direction of future exhibitions seen at MoMA throughout the 1970s such as its *Projects: Video and Video Viewpoints*. MoMA’s curator of video art Barbara London points out, that the financial support of video art:

… had often appeared as a welfare system that would make possible some career support for many artists who found video a useful tool for artistic/social expression. As video was the mirror and vehicle for social change this revealed how these support systems would align themselves in the public eye with social change. Moreover, due to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) awarding MoMA a purchase grant the museum was able to purchase a videocassette deck and two monitors.\(^{120}\)

The second determining factor would be corporate support and influence. A further way that the corporation would influence the museum’s forming of its own history of video art would be that video’s “commodity” status, created through corporate funding and promotion would be distinguished and separated into separate departments. Although this would assist the corporations in maintaining their control over the art institutions, it would increasingly estrange and alienate video art from other forms of art in the gallery. This would often lead to the sanctioning and labelling of specific areas in galleries with corporate names prominently attached to exhibitions and programs within. As Sturken points out:

In order to receive funding, museums and art organizations segregated the medium of video into departments separate from the other media. This segregation has meant that most exhibitions of video have been presented in a solitary context, rarely in the context of film, painting, or other media. The prevalent nonacceptance of this new medium in the art world has caused video curators and critics to reemphasize video’s properties constantly and to defend its inclusion in their exhibitions and in museum contexts in general. Within the modernist conventions that have governed these institutions, a medium that deserves curatorial attention is defined by its properties and most importantly through its development or history.\(^{121}\)

While museums such as MoMA, the Pompidou, the Tate and the AGNSW would be enabled to present video art installations through the financial support of corporations and funding institutions, the kinds of video works being influenced by this would be gradually transformed into something glossier, more spectacular and much more commercially pliable. Propelled by corporate sponsorship and influence, the exhibition of video art in the museum and its overall manifestation and multi-media spectacle would often be the result of large sums of money provided by corporate sponsorship. As a result, the manifestation of institutional agendas that would propagate the spectacle would initiate the rise of video art as “video art installation”. By receiving funding support from the aforementioned councils, departments and foundations from the early 1980s, corporately sponsored video art exhibitions would see “corporate video” or “video installation art” inspire artists towards creating larger-scale or more extensive productions of video (such as the videowall for example). This would be revealed through the corporations who would furnish their funds for
expensive video production which would highlight the corporation’s more costly forms of video art display within galleries. For example, Paik’s video extravaganza’s *Tricolour Video* (1982), and *Good Morning Mr Orwell* (1984) (both of which would be co-produced with WNET/Thirteen television Laboratory in New York respectively in 1982 and 1984) would permit an unprecedented elevation of video art’s status from the simple monitor to an all-encompassing corporate and institutional spectacle.

Yet a great deal of this would become manifested in opposition to the intentions and conceptual basis of the artist. Many works by video artists such as Nam June Paik - (although Paik would be very much involved in specifically creating his works for the gallery), Bill Viola and Dan Graham would become subsumed under corporate influence. Although video had initially begun as a non-commodified form of art, its commoditisation by the institutions involved which would often pander to each of the various corporations’ specified ideologies and marketing stratagems would remove it “… far from video’s philosophical origins”.122 As Elwes states in relation to the spirit behind the originations of making video art for the artists involved:

> How could one offer a critique of society based on reports of individual experiences or marginalised subjectivities when the very notion of authenticity, so long enshrined in video recording, was called into question?123

Ironically, while many large-scale video art exhibitions would need to be provided with funding support from corporations and institutions, in many instances this would lead the video art being produced by artists to become subsumed by the kind of culture that had initially been the objective of their critique. The use of an increasing amount of technology needed to put on these shows would often be radically opposed to the origins and beliefs of video artworks. For example, while video artist Dan Graham’s involvement with the medium, particularly with such works as his various “Time Delay Rooms” which would be exhibited at MoMA and the Pompidou for example, had originally stemmed from what he would see as its potentiality to restructure “space, time and spectatorship in a deconstruction of the phenomenology of viewing”124 the corporate sponsorship of many of his video experiments would detract from, or counter his original intentions. Advertised, promoted and reproduced endlessly through the blockbuster exhibition under the guise of a spectacle, Graham’s works would often be experienced by visitors as parodies of themselves within the institutional frameworks they occupied.

While Graham’s works had initially intended to push the boundaries of the medium’s abilities to increase and challenge human perception, corporate ideology would mask the visitors’ experiences by altering their perceptions prior to encountering the work. Through the influence of advertising, the works would often merely exist as a commercialised representation of the artists’ stature and importance which would mould their preconceptions and thus eradicate or eliminate an opportunity to directly or fully engage experiential perceptions in the museum.
Another example would be Bill Viola. Viola, whose works would be exhibited at MoMA, the Pompidou, the Tate and the AGNSW would often explore different aspects of spirituality through the questioning of perception, human consciousness and self-reflection. Viola’s works had originally sprung from an impetus to analyse technology and its so-called “advances” for society and the environment. As Rush points out, “Viola’s earliest tapes challenged the notion that technology is necessarily good, but he did so through exploration of the self …”. For Elwes:

… Bill Viola … turned the camera onto the landscape in the spirit of 1960s environmentalism and used technology to reveal the destruction for which technological advance was largely responsible.

While as Heartney states, “Early practitioners of video art lauded its egalitarian bent, its anti-commercial essence and its potential for political commentary” the corporate sponsorship of video art exhibition in particular would result in the manipulation, transformation, erasure and effacement of the medium’s countercultural impulse and original conceptual operations. While Viola would be assisted by the Sony Corporation its influence on the way exhibitions would be presented at MoMA would turn its show into an advertising campaign which would shape the way works such as Viola’s would be presented in the gallery.

For one of the main video art pioneers Nam June Paik, whose video art would be included in exhibitions at MoMA, the Pompidou and the AGNSW and whose attraction to video art had stemmed from its potential to provide a vehicle for directly engaging in the critiques of popular culture Paik would critique the saturation of images by the media and television in culture which corporate sponsorship, by helping to fund advertising for the museum spectacle would increase ten-fold. (Although Paik would create works that would comment upon the reproductive capacities of the media, the corporate sponsorship of his work would problematise it since much of Paik’s video art production would be devoted to exploring identity issues in relation to the individual within the electronic communication age). Through the marketing of Paik’s work, which resulted in images being multiplied and parodied by the culture industry’s advertising, Paik’s endeavours to furnish a critique of what mass media had been doing in terms of its promulgation, propagation and manufacturing of images in contemporary society would to a large extent frequently be subsumed through stereotypes engendered in the media and through the institution and the culture industry’s dalliance with Paik’s work itself. This would run counter to the artist’s original intents.

Because of the result of the promotion of video works through blockbuster spectacles the work’s unique quality and “aura” – (due to the video artwork being reproduced through advertising and promotion as mass media spectacle) would be radically sidelined. This would especially be true since many of the video artists (especially the pioneers of video art) had initially attempted to employ video art as a tool to question human perception and as Elwes states to “… challenge the pursuit of originality in a world dominated by networks of interchangeable information, circulating in pre-packaged forms”. This world of reproducibility would banish the auralic properties of the unique artwork and would “… erode the notion of both the individual and the primacy of the art
object” since, as Elwes points out, video art had originally set out to offer “an independent vision against television’s tendency to homogenise and package human subjectivities into a bland pabulum of pick ‘n’ mix stereotypes”. Regarded in this way, the corporation’s promotion of the video art exhibition would enable and facilitate the mass media’s complexity via advertising and through their own forms being endlessly reproduced in video art. Hence, “When the event in its reproduced form becomes socially more important than its original form, then the original has to direct itself to its reproduction”. This would herald the introduction of the death of the sign in/for society. As Elwes states:

> If an artistic image is merely a simulation in a network of simulations of an event staged for effect, it has no basis in reality and need not be bound by the ethics and laws governing direct action and other forms of representation.

Because of this, many artists would “… grant themselves a licence to recycle the most sensational images already in circulation”. In this way, video art would be gradually (particularly from the 1980s) directed towards mainstream commercial culture. Established to make money for its sponsors and art institutions such as MoMA, the Pompidou, Tate Gallery and AGNSW the video art exhibition would furnish a form of mass entertainment.

The effects of MoMA’s pervasive and procedural influence upon these institutions (which would stem from its treatment and propagation of experimental (or avant-garde) video as a creative enterprise) would thus transform it into “video art”. As a categorical imperative and legitimised art form the museum would conjure and control the effects of global exposure to video within the wider community. Through the mediatisation and commoditisation of the medium visitors interested in seeing video art would be coerced into going from one exhibit to another in an effort to maximise the spectacle. As Sturken states, “That video would despite its fringe status, be institutionalized and absorbed by the art world was perhaps inevitable. After all, most of the anti-art market movements … lost their anti-art establishment status”. All of this would lead to the devaluation of video art images within the 1990s which can be traced to the gradual mass promotion and growing commercialisation of the work by corporate and institutional sponsorship.

In the following chapter - Institutional Frameworks I will analyse and discuss the Centre Pompidou/MNAM, the Tate Gallery, London and the AGNSW through a history of acquisition and display of art during the 1968-1990 period. An examination of their specific institutional frameworks will reveal their capacity to respond to the initiatives of artists active in an increasingly globalised creative community. In doing so it will discuss these institutions’ reactions to MoMA’s influence for contemporary art and look at their increasing interest to acquire and exhibit video art within the period 1969-1990.
Notes

2. Elwes, op. cit., p. 17.
3. Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 15.
5. Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 15.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
13. C. Van Assche, op. cit., p. 16.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
27. Bijvoet, op. cit.
29. Ibid.
35. Paik’s work would be presented at the AGNSW in 1976. Goddard’s work would be exhibited in the *Elusive Sign* exhibition of 1987 at the Tate.
39. Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 16.
42 Ibid.
45 By contrast in France much activity linked with video art had begun to spread in the form of communications technology workshops which were used to produce information and political or guerrilla video for communities and individuals. See Reperes, *Reperes Historiques Annees 70*, <http://www.newmedia-art.org/english/reperes-h/70.htm>, n.d. (accessed 10 April 2006).
48 Ibid.
50 Reperes, *Reperes Historiques Annees 70*, op. cit.
51 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Archer, op. cit., p. 108.
61 Parmesani, op. cit., p. 86.
62 Rush, op. cit., p. 52.
64 Rush, op. cit., p. 52.
65 E. Callenbach, ‘Recent Film Writing: A Survey’, *Film Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 3, Spring, 1971, p. 31.
66 Ibid., op. cit., p. 52.
67 Morrisey, op. cit.
68 Archer, op. cit., p. 112.
69 Ibid., p. 69.
70 Parmesani, op. cit., p. 81.
72 Ibid., p. 257.
73 Ibid.
74 Parmesani, op. cit., p. 59.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid., p. 58.
77 Ibid., p. 59.
79 As we have seen in the previous chapter, Nam June Paik’s Duchampian challenge to art’s status had resulted in his employing of video art to ironically mirror and comment upon the mass imagery and spectacle of television through the creation of massive video spectacles or “situations” at the Centre Pompidou particularly in the 1980s. See ibid., p. 693.
80 Ibid., p. 695.
With video beginning to be mentioned in education journals as a tool for education from as early as 1960 the formative experiments of the early video practitioners had been followed by the active endorsement of engineers and television station managers who, following the spirit of Fluxus, and a new realist sensibility had begun to feel that it would be valuable to explore video’s new potential language. See S. Lipson, “Airborne Television: An Educational Experiment”, in, Education Research Bulletin, vol. 39, no. 6 September, (1960), pp. 141-47.

Ibid.

Reperes, Reperes Historiques Annees 60, op. cit. While the first Sony Portapak video recording would go on sale in North America it would not be sold in France until 1967.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Rush, op. cit. p. 66.

See Reperes, Reperes Historiques Annees 60, op. cit.

Ibid.


Ibid.

P. Cowen, ‘Review (untitled)’, Leonardo vol. 5, no. 3, Summer, 1972, pp. 272-3. (This was a review of Expanded Cinema by Gene Youngblood.


Ibid., p. 133.

See J. R. Moszynski, “Review (untitled)”, Technology and Culture vol. 16, no. 1, January, 1975, pp. 106-7. (This was a review of The History of Magnetic Recording by Roman Wajdowicz).


Such as Art News, Art in America, Media and Methods, Artforum, Art International.

Knight, op. cit., p. 2.

Sturken in Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 111.


Sturken in Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 112.


Ibid., p. 184.

Ibid., pp. 182-3.

Sturken, in Hall and Fifer, op. cit., pp. 111-3.

Ryan, op. cit., p. 42.

Rush, op. cit., p. 213.

Ryan, op. cit., p. 42.

Ryan, ibid.

Sturken, in Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 112.

As Martorella states in her discussion of corporate funding agendas: “The important sociological question that remains involves the investigation of corporate influences in selections of particular artistic products and styles. Within the performing arts area, corporations do not award to lesser-known or experimental groups. Performing arts organizations that have traditionally attracted large audiences and whose organizations are stable and economically sound have been supported by both granting agencies and corporations”. Martorella, Corporate Art, op. cit., p. 18.

Sturken, in Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 112.

Ryan, op. cit., p. 42.

121 Sturken, in Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 104.
123 Elwes, op. cit., p. 162.
124 Electronic Arts Intermix, *Dan Graham Biography*, op. cit.
125 Rush, op. cit., p. 129.
126 Elwes, op. cit., p. 126.
127 Heartney, op. cit., p. 94.
128 Elwes, op. cit., p. 36.
129 Ibid.
131 Ibid., p. 162.
132 Ibid.
134 Sturken, in Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 113.
Chapter 4
Institutional Frameworks

MoMA’s strong challenge to intrinsically reflect modern art’s relation to everyday life through its initiation of the avant-garde art museum model in 1929 would mark a defining moment that would result with the situating of New York at the centre of the art world. The cumulative effect would prefigure the corrosion and sublimation of France’s previous claim to cultural superiority. As an art institution which had promoted video art as a new art form to a wider audience and public in 1968, MoMA’s general acuity during the late 1970s would be challenged in regard to its ability to reflect institutional innovation anterior to its operations. This challenge would result from the modification of the avant-garde art museum paradigm by major national art institutions such as the Georges Pompidou National Centre of Art and Culture in Paris in 1977. Yet, while the Pompidou would extend MoMA’s particular framework for avant-garde art presentation, in some ways it can be seen as a “child of MoMA”. Similar to MoMA’s earlier capitalist initiatives, which had established and promulgated a library, bookshops, and multi-departmentalism, the Centre Pompidou as an accessible national institution would persuade its visitors to select from wide-ranging options for experiencing many different kinds of information, culture and technology. Through this, the Pompidou would exhibit a history of Modernism along with samples of more recent and contemporary art to the French nation and the world. This would be aided through its amassing of an enormous permanent collection of this kind of art within a very short period of time.

By contrast, London’s Tate Gallery’s political allegiances and curatorial policies would reflect a deeply rooted conservatism. These had become grounded in a set of antiquated principles paralleling those of Winckelmann’s “Classical ideal”. Reconsidering this in the 1970s, the Tate would attempt to propagate its contemporary significance for the wider public by addressing the historical limitations of its own classicising outlook. This would be revealed through an ongoing endeavour to develop from classical to more avant-garde museum model. Yet the Tate’s attempts would be hindered by the British government’s idée fixe of the Tate as the British nation’s guardian of traditional art, which would result in the Tate’s difficulty to furnish the steady flow of funding required from the British government for the acquisition and exhibition of contemporary art. As a consequence, the Tate’s collection of contemporary artworks would be deficient by contrast with MoMA’s more authoritative representation. In order to counter the lack of public funds, from approximately the mid-1970s the Tate would seek and accept the sponsorship of various corporations and funding institutions for the acquisition and exhibition of contemporary art.

The AGNSW in Australia, while distinct in many ways from these other institutions during the 1970s, would generate a new interest for contemporary visual art and culture. Opting to display the kind of artworks initiated by MoMA, the AGNSW’s curatorial operations would from time to time reveal the extent of the U.S. model’s pervasive global influence. By contrast with MoMA, its...
particularly unique character would stem from a combination of factors: its location; its collection of nineteenth century art (which first and foremost had reflected colonial propagation and nationalist imperatives including the recognition of strong ties with the United Kingdom); as well as an increasing interest in twentieth century art (including video from 1973). All of which would produce an interesting and unusual hybridisation and admixture of display and acquisition policies at the AGNSW.

In order to detail and assess the aforementioned art institutions in relation to MoMA’s overall influence over video art between the period 1968-1990 this chapter will discuss and present a comparative relationship between the Centre Pompidou, Tate Gallery and AGNSW. In particular, it will examine their relations to the local and global rise of video art and their responsiveness to acquire and exhibit this form of contemporary art.
Basic Post-War Developments

The Centre Pompidou


The Pompidou Centre was a multi-use cultural institution in a funhouse package with a plaza that almost immediately became a permanent carnival.\(^4\)

At first it may seem strange that Paris, a city that by the 1970s was almost universally agreed to have outlived its relevance as an art capital, should have become the cradle of a new kind of museum.\(^5\)

The integration of a range of cultural resources within one transparent and dynamic container was intended to bring about a democratization of culture, breaking down conventional boundaries between high and low.\(^6\)

From its inauguration, the Pompidou would be faced with strong competition from MoMA. During the Pompidou’s first year (1977) MoMA’s “… exhibition program produced nearly 90 exhibitions, representing the efforts of its curatorial departments” which began with *The Natural Paradise: American Exhibition 1800-1950*.\(^7\) At this time, one of MoMA’s most popular exhibitions would be *Cezanne: The Late Work*, which would attract 500,000 visitors.\(^8\) Another of these would be
European Master Paintings from Swiss Collections which “… offered the New York public the opportunity to view rarely exhibited master works from public and private collections in Switzerland”. Yet in spite of this, there had not been an avant-garde museum model in France to dispute MoMA’s extensive influence for modern art propagation until the Pompidou in Paris. Formed as “… part of a complex of cultural institutions that was named the Pompidou Center” from the outset, it would as a national institution, endeavour to establish a reputation which could capture the imagination of the public in relation to contemporary art.

The Centre Pompidou would arise from the French government’s initiatives in 1971 to fastidiously reposition the French capital at the centre of culture and information. The Pompidou, as a new “ceremonial monument” for the French nation, would be fashioned to pose a direct challenge to time-honoured and sophisticated institution frameworks for modern art propagation such as MoMA which had established itself as the showcase for global Modernism. Named after, and directly inspired by former French President Georges Pompidou, who in 1969, had stated “I passionately wanted for Paris to possess a cultural center like those that the United States has sought to construct” the Centre’s origins would reflect “… the importance of renewing a French cultural centre to establish the prominence of France on an international art scene that was dominated by the United States”.

By contrast with MoMA’s specialised academic iconographic programme, which had prescribed a strict “pedagogical” purpose, the Pompidou would instead opt to display its art within a framework that would pioneer and modify the parameters of the modern art museum into becoming a place of fun which could appeal to the public:

... in order to spark its interest in art, rather than considering the public’s interest and respect art’s mere due. To this end, instead of seeing the center’s mission as teaching the appropriate academic background for art and cultivating viewers’ cultural sensibility, planners instead tried to strike a much less didactic tone.

In relation to the Pompidou’s institutional strategies which contrasted sharply with MoMA’s DeRoo would observe:

While high art was shown, the curators downplayed the scholarly background that was necessary to understand it to make it seem accessible to all. Free exhibitions were designed with an eye to amusement and interaction.

As a result, the overall flexibility that would be built into the Pompidou’s curatorial programme - with movable walls and panels which made the interiors flexible - broke with previous conventions and procedures first established by MoMA’s more intimate small room spaces and fixed viewing environment. Thus the Pompidou’s overall organisation would be constructed to dissolve “… borders between the street and museum”. By contrast, MoMA’s more scholarly apparatus had been designed to separate art from life by encapsulating the viewer through a labyrinthine ritual.
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comprised of a designated prescribed journey through the museum. As Duncan and Wallach would state, in the Pompidou:

> The modifiability of the spaces was intended to make the museum not “dead” or frozen in time but “living” and “adaptable to the interests of the public.”

Through this the Pompidou would attempt to analogise everyday life into “… popular entertainment, mass media, and commodity culture” so that this could be “… seen as the new common ground in which the French audience could find itself”. As DeRoo observes:

> To this end the planners constructed the building as an entertainment center: the museum’s exhibitions leaned heavily on the familiar images of Pop Art; its entrance halls dazzled visitors with dynamic art displays that riveted the attention of all who entered.

Thus, by contrast with MoMA’s ongoing purpose as a disciplinary apparatus, for the Pompidou, “The experience of art was thus rendered part of a broader complex of spectacular leisure activities and opportunities for consumption.”

Yet despite the Pompidou’s break with tradition, and almost contiguous with the criticism that MoMA’s enculturation would receive from artists in the 1960s, who had criticised it for functioning as “a mausoleum”, the Pompidou would maintain a relationship with museum’s from the past. The Musee Nationale Art Moderne (MNAM) situated within the Pompidou and its structure would retain a more conventional focus towards traditional art. Together, the MNAM and the Georges Pompidou would form the Centre Pompidou. As DeRoo states in relation to the MNAM’s function and operation:

> ... the museum’s structure was indeed more traditional than that of the other institutions within the Pompidou, but the center’s layout was supposed to compensate for it.

Overall, while the Pompidou’s framework would furnish a new strategy for art display, some of the MNAM’s exhibition strategies within the Centre would echo MoMA’s earlier ones. One of these would be to propagate local artworks alongside international artworks. (By doing this previously, MoMA had reflected the archetype examples of the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum of Art). Yet this would also be revealed through some of the MNAM’s early shows within the Pompidou for which in some cases MoMA would be invited to loan some of its works to the Pompidou. As MoMA’s biannual report 1976-78 observes:


These exhibitions by the Pompidou would form part of a two-year objective to promulgate large international shows such as Paris-New York, Paris-Berlin and Paris-Moscow. Yet, while the
MNAM’s director Pontus Hulten would promote the museum by pointing out that Paris-Berlin’s 375 artworks had encompassed, “… the German avant-garde, as seen through architecture, graphics, literature, industrial design, theatre, cinema and music, as well as painting and sculpture” it is worthwhile to note that MoMA had essentially done this previously. As early as the 1940s MoMA had held Modern Masters from European and American Collections which had promoted and characterised its reputation internationally, by indoctrinating European Modernism with American art. MoMA from its inauguration and throughout the 1950s and 1960s unlike the Pompidou had continued to indoctrinate within a ceremonial and secularized museum space new genres of art to a wide public such as Cubism, Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism. In fact, MoMA’s Projects series of exhibitions would serve as a platform to present carefully selected contemporary artworks as a form of “survey” of current developments. As Perl points out:

There is very little in the way of multimedia exhibitions, attention-grabbing alternatives to painting and sculpture, or institutional self-promotion through high-end architectural projects that the Museum of Modern Art has not done, and done decades ago. The current emphasis – at Tate Modern, at the Pompidou Center, at Guggenheim Bilbao on design, architecture, film, and their interaction are venerable modern concerns that were in fact first given prominence in the museum on West 53rd Street.  

Hence, by promoting a connoisseurial taste for prevailing styles and genres of art the Pompidou would habitually emulate some of MoMA’s previous exhibition practices. During the 1980s, MoMA’s Primitivism in Twentieth-Century Art exhibition (1984) which had sought to create links between Western and primitive art would (due to its theme) foreshadow the Pompidou’s Les Magiciens de la Terre (which had displayed artworks from all over the globe and had “… aimed to show something of the heterogeneity of art …” while “… also answering charges of Eurocentrism by bringing together “primitive” art and Western new art”. Coupled with this, the MNAM’s would mirror MoMA’s curatorial policy to rotate a modern masterpiece collection, which would require that artworks go on loan to other museums or be purchased by them. This would be aimed at serving as a way to “catch up” with what France had been missing and with what the U.S. had already in terms of international recognition and success. Similar to the practice whereby artworks deemed unsuitable for the Metropolitan could go to MoMA (and vice versa), the Pompidou’s MNAM would collaborate with various French government art institutions (such as the National Fund for Contemporary Art –NFCA), which had originally been formed in 1968 for assistance with the acquisition of artworks. As Hulten stated in 1977:

… we are not the only body in Paris that buys contemporary art. There is another government body in Paris of which I’m a member, called the National Fund for Contemporary Art.  

Although there would be no official “systematic division” in operation, both the Pompidou and the NFCA would (from 1977) operate in tandem to complement one another insofar as one would purchase artworks found unbefitting for the other. (In this regard, the Pompidou’s curatorial policy would follow the tradition which had been established since the Louvre by both privately owned and
national museums to pass on to other museums/institutions works they did not want). Yet the Pompidou would differ from the Louvre, since it would not exist as part of France’s national museum system (as would the Louvre for instance), rather it would come under France’s cultural affairs bureaucracy – as a public establishment (“établissement public”).

During the 1980s, by comparison with MoMA’s preset pattern for modern art propagation, the Pompidou would consolidate its various adopted roles, responsibilities and cultural and social applications through its various divisions which were made to function almost autonomously – each by drawing a separate public. Comprising four distinct institutions: the Centre for Industrial Creation (CCI, first floor), a public library (BPI, first, second and third floors), the Institute for Musicale Research (IRCAM, second floor) and the MNAM (fourth floor) with contemporary art exhibitions taking place on the first and fifth floors the Centre Pompidou – as DeRoo would state:

… was the first and most ambitious wide-ranging cultural program that France had undertaken since the maisons de la culture were established under Malraux in the 1960s. Unlike those institutions, which had as their mission the democratization of a restricted vision of French artistic excellence, the Pompidou Center was intended to respond to the 1968 vision of a different kind of democracy, one that engaged with the everyday politics of the street and the people.

By comparison with MoMA’s cognitive rationalism and direct disciplinary focus towards art presentation, the Pompidou’s endeavour to “democratise culture” in this way would result in criticism for the fragmentary visits to its exhibitions and directionless wandering which led to the international press focusing on the notion that the French government had delivered a strange unusual building without a clear purpose. As Paul points out, “The impracticability of the building was immediately questioned, in particular the space designated for exhibitions, which lends them all the ambience of a supermarket”. Compounding this would be criticism of the Pompidou’s specific location and overall presence which did not sit well with many Parisians due to the fact that it had been built into a working-class area (originally a slum) rather than the more upper-class residential areas of other established museums in Paris (such as the Louvre). As Silver observes “It was rather an overt, almost shattering contrast with the city around it, whose effect-like that of the medieval cathedrals-depended on the city’s never becoming like it”. In fact, as Silver points out, “The newspapers on the whole were not sure whether to cover Beaubourg as political news, urban feature, or cultural criticism”. For Jean Baudrillard the excesses of the Pompidou in particular represented the death of culture. By contrast with MoMA’s operations:

Hulten favored staging activities and sensational events, as well as multiplying the number of exhibitions, in order to draw in large (and especially young) audiences, to integrate the museum into its urban environment, and to desacralize the idea of culture.

Irrespective of the debates which occurred with its inception, the Pompidou would endeavour to promote modern and contemporary art, culture and information through the collaborative efforts of its various divisions which unified and presented itself as a new form of national institution. By
contrast with MoMA’s almost monastic devotion to promote its art as “high art” the Pompidou would promote a “popular culture” measured by the number of people visiting its spectacles. As a result, by contrast with MoMA:

… the measure of the Center’s success became quantitative – with the government boasting about the number of people who entered the building, whatever their purpose – rather than qualitative – focused on the content of their experience.

The Pompidou’s imperatives would not altogether ensure prevalence over MoMA’s historical significance and seductive charm for modern and contemporary art propagation; it would nevertheless furnish France with a powerful and unique international institutional framework for progressive contemporary art.
The optimism that had accompanied developments in the arts during the 1960s waned as a period of affluence gave way to the economic crises of the 1970s. In the wake of the collapse of the fixed exchange rate, the take-off of inflation, the rise in oil prices, a world recession, growing unemployment and an increase in industrial unrest, there followed a period not of expansion but restraint.\footnote{41}

In contrast to the Pompidou, the circumstances that would surround the Tate Gallery would be markedly different. Yet both institutions would in different ways divulge their liability to their US predecessor. By comparison with MoMA, the Tate would be rooted in the past and exist as a “classical temple” for art. Under Wilson’s Labour government and the economic difficulties of the late 1960s and ’70s the Tate began to substantially increase its engagement with international contemporary art. This development would emanate from the sharp and distinctive rises in the amount of critical discourse in the 1960s within London (mirroring the discursiveness of other centres of art around the world). Due to this, and a new historical awareness, the Tate from the early

FIGURE 17. Present view of the Tate Gallery, Milbank, London.

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1970s would gradually move progressively towards adopting more of MoMA’s imperatives towards the acquisition and display of contemporary art. In effect, the Tate would emulate MoMA more closely and gradually position itself as a major “player” for contemporary art.

Yet the Tate’s attempt to cumulatively assess and emulate much of MoMA’s iconographic programme and enculturation would be made problematic since state patronage for the development of contemporary art in Britain would often remain limited. Much of this would stem from the fact that in Britain state patronage influenced by trustees whose interests in maintaining the values of past tradition would shape the Tate’s selective processes on art rather than “traditional” or “urban” intellectuals. As Brighton in 1977 pointed out:

The art world is that section of this market in which traditional intellectuals are decisive in establishing the status, the estimation of value, of an artist’s work. In the form of art (sic) historians and critics, artists and museum staff, traditional intellectuals are an integral part of the process by which an artwork accumulates value. […] In Britain there is no tradition of a strong indigenous art world. Unlike the European or American rich, the wealthy in this country have not in sufficient numbers affected or accepted the values and evaluations of the traditional intellectuals so far as painting and sculpture are concerned. Immutable values are seen to reside more with the way of life of the country gentry than with the sophistication of the urban intellectuals.42

As an integral element of the art world in Britain, the Tate’s trustees (appointed by the government) would determine much of what would be shown and acquired. The residual conservatism at the Tate in relation to contemporary art would be the result of its cumbersome administrative structure – as Brighton states:

At first glance it might be thought that the Tate Gallery is not in the hands of the art world, for control of the gallery rests in the hands of its trustees, and the professional staff can only make recommendations to them via the Tate’s Director. No work can enter the gallery’s collection without the approval of these trustees, who are individually appointed by the Prime Minister.43

In addition to this (and perhaps inextricably part of it) the Tate’s more avant-garde contemporary art choices would be criticised by various cultural cognoscenti and the tabloids in Britain, many of whom would reveal their ongoing disapproval of its endeavours to partition its environment into two: one specifically for British art, the other to accommodate an increasingly international modern art collection which stemmed from the challenge to develop from a classical to more avant-garde museum of twentieth century art.44 Although the Tate had opened up its foreign art galleries as early as 192645 holding the exhibition Modern Art in the United States (1956) as well as a Marcel Duchamp retrospective (1966), this criticism would highlight the certainty that throughout the 1970s and 1980s as Spalding observes, “The opportunity to experience Blake and Matisse in the same building continued to be a vital, if eccentric, aspect of the Tate”.46

By 1979, while MoMA would be undergoing the required expansion of its spaces, the Tate would inaugurate an extension devoted to improving its overall relationship to modern art. Spalding points out that the Tate from this point:
… suddenly doubled in size and now presented its collection in such a way that it seemed twice as rich.\textsuperscript{47}

Although this national art institution would increase its international exhibitions of modern art over a period of time such as those that had been previously presented by MoMA, it would continue to undergo strong criticism for building a collection too closely aligned with a predetermined theory and history for modern art whilst ignoring more local developments in contemporary art. For example, the Tate’s Dali exhibition in 1980 had been on loan from the Pompidou which was a scaled down version of the Pompidou’s 1979 show which had proven “A run-away success …”.\textsuperscript{48} David Hockney’s visit to the Tate’s new extension for modern art would result in “… lambasting Gallery officials for trying to find work to fit in with their theories instead of looking at what is being done” in an article in the Observer.\textsuperscript{49}

Such condemnation of the Tate’s exhibitory programme indicative of ongoing criticism would reveal that the museum’s endeavours to follow MoMA’s iconographic programme which “… assumes that art has a history which is sufficiently hermetic and self-propelled that it can be coherent of itself” would not always be found relevant for a national British art institution.\textsuperscript{50}

Despite the lack of overall Government support, the Tate’s pretensions to become more modern and American would be undeterred by the criticism it faced. By the mid-1980s, in order to further its endeavours the Tate would be assisted by trust funds, corporate sponsorship, gifts and donations. The “Patrons on New Art” would be established in 1982 to specifically subsidise the Tate’s more modern and contemporary art choices.\textsuperscript{51} Much of the gradual development for modern and contemporary art at the Tate would be due to the foresight of the Tate’s director Alan Bowness. Spalding states:

… whereas there was a general feeling that Palumbo wanted to turn the Tate Gallery into an American-style museum of modern art, supported by rich patrons, it was Bowness who went some way towards achieving this by establishing in 1982 the Patrons on New Art.\textsuperscript{52}

In terms of its curatorial policy, the Tate’s insistence to increasingly focus on the “middle-ground” of Modernism would stem from a crucial need in its overall development to accept an orthodoxy which had greatly been formed by the influence of MoMA’s prescriptive histories. As Brighton states:

The Tate’s modern collection is underpinned by the art world interpretation of 20th-century art; the assumptions of this underpinning are revealed by examining the Tate’s publications, its hanging arrangements and by what it accepts and excludes from the collection. Perhaps the major objection to this interpretation is that it is presented not as an interpretation but as the necessary outcome of past art.\textsuperscript{53}

By contrast with MoMA’s pioneering institution framework for modern art, the Tate’s ambivalent regard to institute an historical continuity within its collection and more contemporary art within a
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more classically-based institution framework would result in an increasing amount of modern and contemporary art being exhibited each year. By 1990 the direction the Tate had taken would be revealed in its Past, Present, Future exhibition which attempted to reflect changes within the Tate’s more recent history by displaying artworks from its modern and more traditional art collections. It would do this by approximating MoMA’s ceremonial “White Cube” programme. As Spalding states, the Tate’s new method of display for the exhibition was that:

… the numbers of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century paintings had been slightly reduced, to make possible a slight increase in the amount of twentieth-century work on show. [...] The hanging was spacious, the decoration did not pander to any desire for historical reconstruction, and each work was given its full weight and dignity.

While the way in which the Tate’s collection would be hung and displayed would lead it to appear more instructive or didactic, by contrast with MoMA’s the Tate’s exhibitory process one of imitation and eclecticism for modern art, would reveal its overall deficiency and bifurcation. As a purpose-built “classical temple” for art, the Tate’s ambivalent regard and commitment to present a coherent narrative of twentieth century art would not be fully or coherently emblematised. While its motive to offer “a series of arguments, rather than simply a collection of pictures” had not been on the Pompidou’s agenda it certainly had been on MoMA’s from the outset, propagated through its “White Cube” avant-garde gallery paradigm. As such, the Tate’s pretensions of unifying a collection of traditional, modern and contemporary art would result in an uneven overview of Modernism and contemporary artworks by comparison to MoMA. As Brighton states:

The Tate Gallery claims to “survey” historically modern art and to be a “comprehensive” collection of British painting. In the light of such claims the Tate can clearly be seen not only to be conferring artistic status but also denying it.

Overall, the Tate’s endeavours to evolve into a more contemporary-style museum over the period had been problematic. With restrictions placed upon it due to a shortage of funds which emanated from a backward view by those who would control its overall operations, the Tate would continually struggle to match MoMA’s powerful and comprehensive propagation of contemporary art. By comparison with MoMA, this would result in a limited and uneven selection of the kind of wide-ranging modern and contemporary art acquired and exhibited by MoMA within the 1968-1990 period.
The AGNSW

FIGURE 18. Present view of the AGNSW, Sydney.

The more radical developments in artistic expression that have evolved in the recent past, particularly those involving modes of expression outside the general accepted confines, such as performance and video, not only opened up new and vastly broader avenues in terms of both content and expression, but also required critical skills and attitudes of a more adventurous and innovative nature to interpret them.\(^5^7\)

The AGNSW is another example of an art institution whose increasing wave of interest with avant-garde propagation would lead it to develop a progressive interest in contemporary art. The AGNSW which, by comparison with MoMA, the Pompidou (and even the Tate) would not generally be surrounded by such high artistic immediacy from the outset.

By comparison with MoMA’s long history of engagement with international and US modern/ contemporary/ avant-garde art, the AGNSW as a national museum in Sydney and rooted in the style and ideology of a “classical temple” similar to the Tate would react slowly on international trends in contemporary art. Much of the AGNSW’s indolence during the 1960s and early 1970s (which previously impeded its development and scope for modern and contemporary art) would stem from its overall radical disjunction and dislocation, manifested primarily from its geographical isolation. Due to new critical discourse from the mid-to late 1970s, which would stem from various influences emanating from major international art capitals it became incumbent upon the AGNSW to heed the radical influx of international developments in art. The promise offered by other international
institutions in varying degrees (at least in terms of their mapping a way forward for the promotion of new art) would encourage the local public and some local art makers within Australia to steer away from their own parochialism and towards a stronger acknowledgement of international achievements in the avant-garde, experimentation and theoretical discussion.

Unlike the institutions discussed previously the AGNSW (within the period 1968-1990) would expose the cultural community of Australia to radical contemporary developments which had previously only appeared in broadcast and print media. The following will detail this more specifically.

During the late 1960s in Australia, attitudes toward the development of contemporary local art would reflect the view that the avant-garde aesthetic practice had generally failed to:

... meaningfully fully engage the world other than as the excluded or as voyeur, [which] invited censure on the part of a new generation of artists.

As such, while an appreciation of traditional/classical art had been maintained since the earliest days of colonisation in Australia, the commencement of a receptive interest in contemporary art as a legitimate form of material culture would generally not commence until the early 1970s. This situation would differ radically from New York, (Paris and London), due to the fact “… that it lacked a tradition of “analytic” art or [extensive vehicles of] discussion, or that of a radical avant-garde until the seventies”. In fact, prior to this, the cultural and artistic context in Australia had reflected an overall decree by artists to:

... interpret culture as a set of “givens” and creatively intervene by means of bricolage: the strategies of juxtaposition, framing, fragmentation, re-contextualization, collage, quotation and staging.

One way the AGNSW would endeavour to counterpose their limitation and bring itself into closer context with the art institutions of New York, Paris and London would be to introduce into Australia contemporary foreign artworks from overseas. In many ways the AGNSW was compelled to do so in order to satiate the interests of its patrons. Doing this would also bring with it the discourse surrounding the works. From 1976, under the auspices of the Sydney Biennale, the AGNSW’s exhibitioning of foreign contemporary artworks would be celebrated and disseminated in a way that would challenge much of the Australian nation’s previous cultural conservatism. The Biennales in Sydney would work in much the same manner as the “Project Shows” (MoMA) and the Paris-New York/Berlin/Moscow exhibitions (Pompidou). The latest contemporary artworks from Australia would be intermingled with a carefully selected assortment of international works. The Biennale initiative at the AGNSW would originate from private patronage and corporate support, as Latos-Valier would summarise:

The Biennale of Sydney was created in 1973 as an international showcase for contemporary art conceived, invented and financially supported by Franco Belgiorno.
Nettis, it grew out of the Transfield Art Prize for contemporary Australian art, an acquisitive prize which reached its peak in the 1960s. It operated for about twelve years before Transfield decided to transform what was a local initiative into an international exhibition. From the beginning of his association with contemporary art, Belgiorno-Nettis aimed to encourage creativity, as well as change the attitudes of Australians towards recent art. He felt that the inventiveness in new art would energise the broader community and encourage innovation and creativity. The Biennale of Sydney, which he modelled on the successful Venice Biennale, was a way of opening up Australia to the world at a time when it remained relatively unknown. His aims were to encourage communication and dialogue as well as build links between Australia and other countries.62

In contrast to MoMA, which had always been incorporating into its program and collection contemporary international artworks the Biennales from 1976 would be organised to confront the acute “cringe factor” within local cultural attitudes. As such, many of the artworks in these shows would be selected because it was thought they had an “… ambience of experimentation that would suit Australian attitudes to sculpture and art generally”.63 The Second Sydney Biennale in 1976 at the AGNSW would consist of eighty artworks by artists from ten countries and would be the first time “... a clearly articulated curatorial theme …” (which was realised by one director, T. G. McCullough) had been presented.64 Although particular emphasis would be placed upon work from the Pacific Rim it would also include the effective incorporation of artworks from Europe such as Britain, France, Germany, Holland and Italy. These artworks “… explored new forms in sculpture including video, performance and mail art, each of which tested the basic definition of sculptural form”.65 Australian and artists such as Tony Coleing, Clive Murray-White and Stelarc for example, would exhibit new works under the curatorial rubric of Recent International Forms in Art. Lacking the breadth of source material as other international countries, the Sydney Biennales would explicitly foreground Australian art on a global stage. By 1979, as a way to further expose contemporary art to an Australian public the Sydney Biennale (titled European Dialogue organised by the Pompidou’s MNAM director Pontus Hulten) would aim to exhibit and institutionalise at the AGNSW a form of comparative communal assortment of artworks that other institutions had been propagating for some time. The 1979 Biennale would coincide with the inauguration of the AGNSW’s Contemporary Art Department and would occur in the same year as both MoMA’s and the Tate’s expansions mentioned previously. With over 130 artists from 19 countries exhibiting their artworks within the fields of recent European drawing, photography and video art many major European artists’ artworks would be seen, experienced and explored by the Australian public in a mainstream museum. The exhibition would also question the assumption that New York served as the international centre for contemporary art.66 Similar to many Sydney Biennales to come, the 1979 exhibition would initiate an array of reactions from the Australian cultural community -as Waterlow would state:

The 1979 Biennale caused quite a stir and it made people sit up; there were even demonstrations. Contemporary art became a very hot item. There were great expectations then, because not much work from the rest of the world was seen in Australia, and the anticipation was extraordinary.67

By 1981 another counter-measure designed to encourage interest and exposure for local contemporary art would be deployed in Australia. This would be the first national survey of recent
Australian art, otherwise known as Perspecta. Held biannually at the AGNSW between Biennales the centralising impetus for putting on these shows would stem from interest in initiating a comprehensive survey of Australian art which could include a wider assortment of local artists and works excluded by the Biennales. As such, the Australian Perspecta shows would be seen as being necessary for allowing the vision of local contemporary artists to make sense within a recognisable context through which their work could be fathomed. The first Perspecta (in 1981):

... would include works of 65 invited artists … to survey the most recent, and often challenging, forms of art evolving in Australia today.\textsuperscript{68}

With each Biennale directed towards a singular curatorial theme which predominantly focused upon foreign international artworks the AGNSW would expose Australia to the world of international contemporary art. Alongside this, and in tandem, the Australian Perspectas situated between the Biennales would encourage and promote contemporary local Australian works. Together, these shows would contextualise Australian art within an increasingly international framework within the AGNSW. By doing so, the curator’s framework would present a singular concept which invited discursive propagation.

As a result of the increases in the AGNSW’s propagation of more modern and contemporary art via shows such as these from the mid-to late 1970s, Australian artists and public previously confined to refuting the quality and validity of foreign contemporary art would voyeuristically begin to experience a wide range “… of cultural expressions …” to which they had at first reacted by deconstructing what had existed as being fully formed in terms of an accepted style and direction.\textsuperscript{69} In this regard it would reflect the level of Australia’s interest and understanding for the kind of art that had first been propagated by MoMA. The following section will attempt to comparatively assess how the Pompidou, Tate and AGNSW in competition with MoMA would fund their acquisition and exhibition of artworks within the period 1968-1990.

**Summary Budgets**

**The Centre Pompidou**

In 1977 MoMA would receive approximately $1.2 million from the US government while the Pompidou in its first year would be provided nearly “… 10 percent of the national cultural budget” for its cumulative operation.\textsuperscript{70} This would present the Centre with an acquisition budget for artworks established at nearly $2 million per year.\textsuperscript{71} Yet while this sum would divulge the French government’s support as decidedly competitive US government support would comprise only a fraction of the total funds MoMA would receive yearly.\textsuperscript{72}

During 1980, for the Pompidou approximately $1.6 million (US) would be spent on its acquisitions of art with approximately $1.4 million (US) on exhibitions.\textsuperscript{73} The same amount would be spent in
the subsequent year by the Pompidou. By contrast, total New York state governmental support for MoMA in 1980 would amount to approximately $1.1 million (US) which had been a reduction on 1979’s approximate figure of $1.3. Yet a great deal of MoMA’s funding would not only arrive from New York state and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) but from the Rockefeller corporation and other corporations.

For the Pompidou, in an attempt to be as competitive as possible, there would be a sharp rise in the budget provided with just under $3.7 million (US) being spent on acquisitions in 1982. This would be around a 250% increase on the Pompidou’s 1977 figure. Yet in the same year the Pompidou’s budget for exhibition would only reveal an increase of 7.5% from $376,749 to $407,296 (US). The total amount at the Pompidou would only be around 17% of what MoMA would spend for the period. By 1983 the Pompidou would spend almost $4 million (US) on acquisitions which would increase to over $4 million (US) in the following year. This would mark a time when the Pompidou would be presenting some of its biggest and most popular exhibitions such as Jackson Pollock (which received over 233,000 visitors) and a double exhibition of Braque’s works (which received over 209,000 visitors). Other major Pompidou exhibitions during this time would include Recent Acquisitions of the MNAM (1905-1960); Takis and Walter de Maria in 1982.

By comparison, during this period although MoMA would employ a great deal of its overall funds to support the completion of its expansion project in 1984 this would not impact greatly upon its acquisition and exhibitions budget. This would be because:

Major grants were received from several corporations, foundations, and trusts, and from the National Endowments from the Arts. By the end of June 1983, the campaign totalled $65,184,114, an 18% increase over the preceding year; by June 30, 1984, the total had reached $72,061,941, up 11% from 1983.


However, by 1987 the sum of almost $6 million (US) spent on the Pompidou’s acquisitions would reveal a significant rise in its budget. During 1987 (the year of the Pompidou’s tenth anniversary) over $5 million (US) would be spent on acquisitions with over $10 million (US) going to the MNAM that resulted in 448 artworks being purchased during the year. In contrast, MoMA’s income allocated from its endowment funds would only be $4.415 million in 1985. In fact, New York state government support for MoMA’s “operations and exhibitions” would only be $995,500 with over $4.758 million being spent by MoMA on “curatorial and related support services” for 1984-85.

By 1989, the MNAM’s total expenditure would reach almost $12 million (US) with a little over half ($6.5 million US) spent on acquisitions during this time. Its major temporary exhibition Les Magiciens de la Terre (which had compared and contrasted works from Western and non-Western
artists) would cost about $4.5 million (US) in 1989. During this time major temporary exhibitions or “spectacles” presented by the Pompidou would include Jean Tinguely, the retrospective photography exhibition Invention d’un art, and Bram Van Velde. Other major and important exhibitions would include Joseph Beuys, Plight 1985 and Hans Haacke, Ed Rusha and Ed Paschke, Thomas Huber and Richard Artschwager all of which would be presented in the Centre’s Contemporary art galleries.

While these figures for the Pompidou would reveal it to be fairly competitive with MoMA they do not take into account MoMA’s full wealth. For example, in 1987 government support would only provide 3.9% of MoMA’s total annual funding with $966,400. The rest would be provided by other forms of support such as membership 17% (over $4.3 million), Annual Fund contributions 11.1% (over $2.7 million) grants and subsidies 14.5% (over $2 million), exhibition fees 3.5% ($868,200), income from auxiliary activities 4.6% being over (12 million). This would amount to over $22 million in total. Furthermore, these figures for MoMA would continually increase over the late 1980s. By contrast the Pompidou at its wealthiest (in 1989) would spend around only $16 million (US) for administration of the whole centre.

Perhaps because the Pompidou did not have as large a budget for acquisition and exhibition as MoMA it would be forced to be as imaginative and innovative as possible in regard to its curatorial programme. As such, numerous spectacles and manifestations of art would be designed to draw in the largest crowd as possible at the Centre - particularly from the 1980s onwards. Through its exhibitionary logic the Pompidou would present and propagate modern and contemporary art as popular culture, which in a sense would turn the museum into a total work of art in itself.

The Tate

The same fundamental contradictions in society which shape the official assumptions and policies on social and economic matters also shape those on art.

By contrast with most financial support for the Pompidou’s acquisition and exhibition being provided by the French government, the Tate as a national art institution and state functionary would continue to labour in order to obtain a steady flow of funding for purchasing modern and contemporary art. By contrast with MoMA, it would receive insufficient funding support for what it had been trying to achieve.

From 1967-1969 MoMA’s income would increase significantly from many sources. Receipts from admissions increased and purchases at June 30, 1969 would total $47,223,551. Curatorial activities and education programs 1968-69 would total $3,310,900. As the MoMA’s 1967-69 biennale report would observe:
Since July 1967, the Museum has acquired 4,514 works of art (items in series acquired under a single count as one). This brings the size of the collection to 22,950 works. We have loaned 1,068 objects to 217 borrowers in the same period.\footnote{102}

During 1968 many of MoMA’s trustees - for example, Walter N. Thayer (President of Whitney Communications) would also be partners in corporations such as the Whitcom Investment Company, publishers of “Art in America”, “Interior Design” journals and the International “Herald Tribune” from 1961-1966.\footnote{103}

By comparison with MoMA’s wealth, (with MoMA’s curatorial and education expenditure for 1968 being $3,310,900)\footnote{104} the Tate’s endeavour to accept an existing history of Modernism would leave out many notable contemporary art acquisitions as even they would be difficult, if not impossible to subsidise. During the late 1960s, while the British government would readily contribute around $435,000 (US) towards a ceiling painting by Tiepolo it would abstain from providing enough funds for more modern artworks such as Picasso’s Still Life 1914.\footnote{105} There was a prerogative given to the Tate that resulted in quite definite obligations by the British government in order for it to continue to receive public funds. For instance, by contrast with MoMA, the Tate, as the state’s nominated “custodian of social order” would in order to receive any real semblance of state patronage need to:

\begin{quote}
… arrange about one major exhibition every two years devoted to a British artist or sphere of art in the period covered by the historic British collection – \textit{circa} 1500-1900 - and more rarely of a foreign artist whose work is especially relevant to an understanding of British art in the same period.\footnote{106}
\end{quote}

This imperative, moreover, would often reflect the hegemony shaped by “… a particular professional community and the official enshrinement of its orthodoxy”.\footnote{107} The Director of the Tate’s Board of Trustees, who had been a political appointee of the government, would appoint Trustees to oversee the operations of the Tate. The opinions of the Trustees would thereby reflect the aegis of the government of the time. Overall, this would limit the number of contemporary art purchases by the Tate and lead to the enlisting of financial support from various trust funds since the purchase of some contemporary artworks (such as Carl Andre’s \textit{Equivalent VIII}, circa 1966 in 1972) would be widely criticised.\footnote{108} In fact, Andre’s work, previously exhibited and brought to prominence by MoMA in 1966 when it had been just completed, had been lampooned by the British press as the acquisition price of approximately $4.5 million (US) essentially bought “ … a set of bricks” for the Tate.\footnote{109} By 1974, only receiving around $1.6 million (US)\footnote{110} for the year which would reflect a shortfall; the Tate had asked the British government for over $3 million (US). The Tate would enlist the support of the Knapping Fund and Gyntha Trust\footnote{111} -yet these would only provide $14,218 (US) and $6,022 (US) respectively.\footnote{112} These amounts, along with variously sized donations would be employed to assist with the Tate’s overall acquisitions and exhibitions budget.

By contrast with the Tate, MoMA in 1974 would receive more than double the government support than it had the previous year.\footnote{113} This had meant that out of the $34.1 million allocated for the Arts in general $740,000 would go to MoMA towards general curatorial expenses.\footnote{114} Moreover for MoMA,
funding aid would continue to be provided by the National Endowment for the Arts with separate
grants for specific exhibitions totalling $190,903 in 1974 which would provide an increase of 10% 
over the prior year. Further, the NYSCA (New York State Council on the Arts) would provide 
$132,000. For MoMA, exhibitions and related projects would total $544,876 with curatorial 
department total expenditure over $1 million from 1973-74. In addition to this $1.5 million would 
be provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Inc. By contrast with these figures the Tate’s 
Trustees would point out how short of funds for purchasing artworks they would be:

Special grants towards important works of art – not only for those threatened with 
export – were never readily forthcoming but in recent months the Treasury has let it be 
known that they will become virtually unobtainable. Instead, they point hopefully to 
the modest supplement from the extra £1m for the arts – a supplement already more 
than swallowed up by the continued rise in prices of works of art over the last 3 
years.

The Tate however was reaching out for additional funds from a variety of sources. By 1977 the Tate 
would accept assistance from the Stubbs Appeal this would only total $59,294 (US). In addition it 
would receive around $59,945 (US) from the Pilgrim Trust and $39,960 (US) from the National Art-
Collections Fund. (For further money for the year the Tate would be assisted by separate and 
unique funds, trusts, donations and aid from the alliance between the Tate and the British Sporting 
Trust).

Yet even with corporate support by contrast with MoMA’s purchasing power for modern and 
contemporary art, the Tate’s own, on many occasions would in fact be almost insignificant. 
However, by 1978 the Tate’s annual purchase grant would be increased by the Labour government 
by 77% to just over $2 million (US) which would put its acquisition budget comparable with the 
Pompidou. This figure for the Tate would be raised yet again by another 55% in the following 
year to just over $3 million (US) and by the end of 1980 would rise again to over $3.7 million 
(US). Due to rises of this sort, money would be extrapolated from its government grant to pay for 
some of its contemporary purchases. Yet many of these would too often still prove extremely costly. 
For example, Andy Warhol’s *Marilyn Diptych* acquired in 1980 by the Tate for $395,299 (US) 
would “swallow up” 10% alone of the government purchase grant for the period.

In order to help its financial position from the early 1980s corporate sponsors such as Mercedes 
Benz (U.K.) Ltd. would donate money for purchasing a Modernist artwork by Max Beckmann. 
Bequest and financial assistance would also be provided for the Tate’s *Landseer Exhibition* from S. 
Pearson and Son, and the Tate’s *John Piper* exhibition in 1983-84 would be sponsored by Mobil 
Oil.

In 1984 the Gallery’s finances would be temporarily boosted by a large British government grant of 
just over $4 million (US) which temporarily would elevate the Tate’s purchasing power placing it 
above the Pompidou. Spalding observes that:
This sum of money would make the Tate the envy of several world-class museums, including the Pompidou Centre in Paris. With regard to acquisitions, Bowness’s aim was two-fold: to increase the historical breadth of the collection – especially in relation to British art – and to acquire major works of art in the modern field. He believed there was still time to emulate New York’s Museum of Modern Art in making a comprehensive collection of twentieth century art. This notion was shared by the keeper of the Modern Collection, Ronald Alley, who had for many years persistently and knowledgeably argued for accessions that would fill gaps.130

Interestingly, the Pompidou in the following year would receive a significant rise in its budget to almost $6 million (US) going towards acquisitions. Comparatively, during the mid-to late 1980s the Tate’s $3.5 million (US) annual government grant would remain unchanged until 1991 which would not be enough for the Tate’s endeavour to become a major player for contemporary art by comparison with MoMA or the Pompidou.131

In general, while the level of the Tate’s funds would fall far short of MoMA’s, the Tate’s increasing dependence upon corporate sponsorship (particularly for its exhibitions) would in this regard share a commonality with MoMA and the Pompidou. In fact modern art exhibition at MoMA would be heavily supported by this form of funding. Although MoMA had been aided by corporate sponsorship from as early as the 1950s, the 1970s would mark a dramatic surge in this form of support for the arts in New York. This would continue to position MoMA far above the Tate’s capacity to acquire and exhibit the latest in foreign and international contemporary artworks.

The AGNSW

With a far smaller budget than MoMA and the Pompidou during the 1968-1990 period the AGNSW’s funding patterns for exhibiting and acquiring modern and contemporary art would mirror the Tate’s. Since the AGNSW incorporated an increasing amount of modern and contemporary art it would need subsidies from sources outside state patronage. While basic funding would be provided by the N.S.W. government, the Sydney Biennales and other international contemporary art exhibitions would utilise assistance from donations, trusts funds and corporate sponsorship. Perhaps as a means of support for the AGNSW’s interest in foreign art the N.S.W. government grant would be increased significantly in the early 1970s. The AGNSW’s expenditure for local artworks in 1969 would be around $21,790 (US) with only $6,056 (US) spent on international art.132 By contrast, in 1973 only $12,599 (US) would be spent on local art while $62,681 (US) would go towards foreign artworks.133 Although these amounts would be miniscule in comparison to MoMA’s expenditure, the AGNSW’s expenditure in 1973 on international art would be more than ten times the corresponding figure from 1969.

In 1973 the AGNSW’s budget would be raised to $84,000 (US) and they would use almost all its funds to pay off a self-portrait by Bonnard.134 This would mark a time of the Gallery’s increasing interest to exhibit foreign contemporary art within its main entrance gallery providing the space for Gilbert and George’s Living Sculpture which:
... required the extreme height of the entrance gallery’s side wall for one of Gilbert and George’s drawings; Antoni Miralda’s ‘Coloured Bread’ was installed amongst the permanent collection for a fortnight. By 1974, although it could not compete with MoMA, to assist with the Australian tour of *Some Recent American Art* (an exhibition prepared by MoMA’s International Programme) $50,398 (US) and $36,959 (US) would come from the Visual Arts Board of the Australian Council to the AGNSW. Their *Paul Klee* exhibition would be jointly organised by “Pro Helvetia, Zurich, and the Visual Arts Board at a cost of $30,000 …” - (app. $25,199 US). These events would increase the AGNSW’s popularity within the local community and position it as a vital show of contemporary art in Sydney. Its *Modern Masters, Manet to Matisse* (on loan and organised by MoMA), would attract “… an unprecedented number of visitors to the Gallery” in 1975. While from 1976 the Sydney Biennale programme would be sponsored by Transfield – (an Australian construction and investment firm) *American Bi-Centenary Heritage, Master Drawings from the Albertina and British Paintings* would be supported by the Australia Council through the Australian Gallery Directors Council and Visual Arts Board of Australia. These would be supplemented “… by an additional admission charge for these exhibitions”. By 1977 the Art Gallery Society would assist with the AGNSW’s modern and contemporary art acquisitions such as Frank Stella’s *Khurasan Gate Variation II* (1970) valued at around $25,199 (US) app. By 1979 the AGNSW’s state grant being $187,316 (US) more than the regular amount of supplementary funding would be provided by the Visual Arts Board grant with around $21,188 (US) being provided.

During the 1980s many notable European acquisitions of art from the Modernist period would be acquired by the AGNSW such as Vasily Kandinsky’s watercolour study *Painting with White Border* in 1983. In 1984 all departments at the Gallery would receive “… at least 1 major work”. *Moderns* (a major exhibition on loan from New York’s Guggenheim Museum) would be supported by the American multinational oil company Esso. In addition, the purchase of formative Modernist works, such as Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s *Three Bathers*, (1913) was purchased by the Gallery for approximately $917,431 (US). The AGNSW was clearly pursuing an agenda of increasing its holdings of contemporary works during the 1970s and 1980s.

In 1985 the AGNSW would receive a $278,456 (US) endowment from the N.S.W. government it clearly could not compete with MoMA (or the Pompidou) as its total expenditure on acquisitions would only be around $598,135(US) for the year. Comparatively MoMA would spend $1,802,702 (US) and the Pompidou $6,990,207 (US). In effect the AGNSW would be forced to be more discerning with acquisitions and exhibitions than either of the aforementioned institutions. Specific exhibition expenditure would only be around $167,906 (US). With new extensions to the Gallery the state government would continue its support. For example, in 1989:

The Gallery again received substantial financial support from the State Government and from the private sector. [...] Revenue from all sources totalled $22,654,078 including $9,269,423 for capital works. [...] The State Government’s contribution to the Gallery’s operations totalled $15,822,269 representing 70% of all revenue.
By comparison with MoMA’s and the Pompidou’s established propagation of contemporary art the AGNSW (generally at first more interested in traditional, indigenous, Australian and international pre-twentieth century art) would gradually parallel the Tate’s endeavour to develop from the “classical temple” model towards a more inclusive collection with a substantial program of acquiring and exhibiting modern art. By contrast with the Tate, the AGNSW’s transformation during the 1970s and 1980s would not be as problematic since contemporary, traditional and modern art would increasingly be harmoniously hybridised within their collection and indeed within the emerging works from the Australian creative community. As such, from the mid-to late 1970s, and hitting unprecedented heights in Australia during the mid-1980s the AGNSW’s increasing internationalism would equip Australia with a greater correlation to the rest of the world. In contrast with MoMA’s enormous financial position the AGNSW although receiving funding from various trust funds, bequests, donations the AGNSW Society and N.S.W. government could not replicate MoMA’s influence. In fact, by comparison with MoMA neither the Pompidou nor the Tate operate on a similar level. MoMA, because of its position and resources were able to speculate on exhibition content and in their acquisition patterns. To a certain extent they were in a position to “incorporate” relative new contemporary artists into their idiom. The Pompidou, to a lesser extent, would have the opportunity to access the European works much more readily than any of the other institutions (except for the Tate) and position itself as a unique showcase for contemporary art due to its innovative viewing spaces. The Tate, and to a lesser extent the AGNSW, would be limited by their own administrative and bureaucratic structures and the level of influence that a dependency on public funds would engender within each gallery. The Tate and the AGNSW would therefore be positioned as “conduits” for “selective” exhibitions (and acquisitions) of contemporary art which would largely be propagated via the enormous influence of MoMA.

The following section will examine how the Pompidou, the Tate and the AGNSW in relation with MoMA would fund their acquisition and exhibition of video art from 1968-1990.
Summary Budgets: Video Art


The Centre Pompidou

By comparison with MoMA, the Pompidou as a national institution would be much more reliant upon government support than its American counterpart. Much of this would stem from the fact that through the Rockefeller Foundation, US corporate support for video art at MoMA in contrast to the corporate sponsorship of video art at the Pompidou would be more assured from early on. In fact, in MoMA’s case NYSC and NEA funds alone would often surpass the French government’s financial support of the Pompidou. (This would regularly occur even though MoMA’s status as a non-governmental institution would be private through corporate influence, large grants, donations, sales of merchandise, various memberships dues, film rental and exhibition fees).

In 1969 over $500,000 (US) had been allocated out of the New York state budget to fund video art alone. Paul Ryan relates that in New York this source would continue to be the:

… prime source of stable funding for video through the seventies and into the eighties. As a state arts council, the institution developed an alliance network that included television stations, museums, universities, small experimental video groups and individual artists working in video.

This clear rise in the development for video art in the US which would lead to its presentation on a regular and unvarying basis at MoMA had resulted in its “pedagogical” Projects: video and this “survey” of new developments would become an annual fixture at MoMA from 1971. In fact, so crucial had video art become in New York that by 1974 MoMA, as America’s most prominent and wealthy avant-garde museum, would create a specific gallery for the presentation of video art. With only minor exceptions MoMA’s Projects series would endure throughout most of the 1970s and 1980s (along with its “pedagogical” Video Viewpoints series initiated in 1977). Hence by 1976, through ongoing assistance from the Rockefeller Foundation, MoMA would declare its aim to further educate the public’s interest in its video art programs:
Many artists have begun using video to experiment with environmental installations as well as making tapes dealing with conceptual and performing arts, documentation, and computer generation. More than 85 tapes by artists from the world over have been presented in the Museum under the direction of Barbara London. Awarded a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Museum is exploring ways to extend the scope of its video program.153

Directed by six members of MoMA’s staff from various departments (including Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, Photography, and Prints) the Projects exhibitions during 1976-78 would be presented in the Museum’s first floor galleries.154 These would be largely supported via a specific grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. The Projects series would supply a fundamental role for providing disclosure for the (“crème of the crop”) of video artworks exhibited at MoMA throughout the 1970s. As MoMA’s biannual report observes:

… the Projects exhibition series continued to present new and younger artists, and Projects: Video continued to offer a sampling of American and foreign work in this developing medium.155

In addition, the Video Viewpoints series of exhibitions (begun in 1977) would reinforce MoMA’s didactic and scholarly role for contemporary art propagation. As Barbara London points out:

The ongoing video exhibition program expanded, and we started “Video Viewpoints”, the lecture series where the artists come to show and discuss their new work. I organised installation shows with such artists as Nam June Paik, Laurie Anderson, Terry Fox, Shigeko Kubota, Gary Hill, and Bill Viola. We also started to acquire videos by artists from North America, Japan, Latin America, and Europe.156

MoMA’s overall budget for acquisition and exhibition would be $1,257 million in 1977, with around $453,000 coming from the NEA and $647,000 from New York State.157 In order to compete with MoMA’s more concretely supported programmes the Pompidou would progressively hold more “blockbuster” shows that would parallel MoMA’s agency and spirit for video. These exhibitions would present video art as a spectacle and multi-media extravaganza. In this regard, the Pompidou’s Paris-Moscow exhibition in 1979 would engage film, video and seven audio-visual assemblies.158 The following year the Pompidou would exhibit two of Catherine Ikam’s gigantic video installations—one of which would consist of 16 video monitors.159 The Pompidou’s initiative towards video art during this period would escalate and would prove to be increasingly popular with its patrons.

While MoMA’s ongoing and powerful “pedagogical” video art programmes would continue and increase throughout the 1980s by 1982 the Pompidou would invite Nam June Paik (who had first exhibited his McLuhan’s Caged (1967) at MoMA in 1968) to fashion and install the magnum video opus and spectacle Tricolour Video in 1982.160 This coercive and propagandistic exercise to capitalise on the work’s resonance and “aura” to inspire a stronger sense of national identity by the Pompidou would be displayed prominently in the main Forum of the Centre for an entire three months.161 Originally conceived for the Pompidou Paik’s 384 video monitors were (as Bijvoet would relate):

Institutional Frameworks
Institutional Frameworks

... laid out in a square on the floor, in twelve rows of eight. These rows were divided in three, one color from the French flag dominating each section of four rows; blue, white and red respectively. To complicate matters, Paik had designed an image programme with 8 videotapes running diagonally. ¹⁶²

In display of competitive spirit, the Pompidou's publicity machine would make a point that no greater video art sculpture had been created thus far and that it was held in Paris. ¹⁶³

By 1984 continuing its propagation of video art as a “spectacle” the Pompidou would present the Tate-Pompidou (co-relation) Anglo-French Video Exchange that would be presented initially at the Pompidou, then at the Tate Gallery and LVA in London. It is important to note that the exhibition would be initially staged at the Pompidou in Paris before London.

Late 1984 and 1985 would see the Pompidou continue to propagate video art on a large and extravagant scale. As one of the most noteworthy video pioneer’s Nam June Paik’s television programme and spectacle Good Morning Mr Orwell (1984) – (a co-production with WNET/Thirteen television Laboratory in New York) would link the Pompidou with a WNET-TV studio in New York. As Bijvoet observes, “The program consisted of live performances by (avant-garde) artists and pop-rock musicians.” ¹⁶⁴ The way in which these enormous blockbuster exhibitions would be marketed and presented through a powerful promotion of the spectacle would institute a pattern for the manner of cultural propagation that would result in the Pompidou’s pioneering of the art exhibition as “multimedia extravaganza”. ¹⁶⁵ These particularly proactive curatorial programmes at the Pompidou as Perl states would, “… set the stage for globalism and all the other buzz words of the ’90s”. ¹⁶⁶ Interestingly, MoMA would also present a video art exhibition of works produced at WNET/Thirteen Television Laboratory during the same year. ¹⁶⁷

In 1985, the Pompidou would continue with its multi-media extravaganzas – presenting Thierry Kuntzel’s nine-monitor video art Nostos II (1985). ¹⁶⁸ Large-scale installation with a large component of video technology in 1987 with L’Epoque, la Mode, la Morale, la Passion would be exhibited on the Centre’s third and fifth floors for three months. ¹⁶⁹ This exhibition would include numerous works by major American-based video artists such as Dan Graham, Nam June Paik, and Bill Viola whose video art had been shown earlier by MoMA. ¹⁷⁰ Furthering its propagation of these over-sized video art exhibitions, the Pompidou’s Video Telegramme a “retrospectacle” of video artworks would be comprised of a hundred short programs presented on twenty-five video monitors and five different sources of images shown in its Grande Foyer in 1985. This historical survey exhibition would include Time for Merce, a video installation by Charles Atlas based upon the choreographies of Merce Cunningham. ¹⁷¹ Yet although the Pompidou’s video exhibitions would go on to increase in size and frequency on an annual basis by contrast, MoMA would be continually expanding its video art programme thematically and pedagogically with such exhibitions and reinforcing the national origins of other global exhibitions such as America Documentary Video: Subject to Change. ¹⁷²
By 1990 while MoMA would be putting video art programmes such as *Video Viewpoints, Video and Language, Video and the Computer, Video and Dream* and *Icon* which would be classified within MoMA’s doctrinaire focus the Pompidou would promote and present the French video artist Chris Marker’s enormous *Zapping Zone* (1990) installation, which would be assembled in its first version for its enormous *Passages de l’image*. Marker’s work would be composed of 13 monitors showing 13 PAL videotapes, on 7 computers, 7 programs on computer disks, 20 black and white and colour photographs and 4 blocks of 80 slides. It could be argued that until Marker the French could not securely claim a video artist in the same calibre as Paik, Graham or later Viola. Indeed the 1990 *Zapping Zone* installation of Marker’s at the Pompidou can be seen as a formative indication that European video art was competitive with the level of American video art which had historically held prominence during the 1968-80 period. Supported predominantly by the French state and presented in the Grande Foyer would be *Videodanse 90* (an exhibition of works based around themes of dance similar to MoMA’s earlier *Time for Merce* theme) and along with this, various debates and symposia on video, film and art would take place during the *Second Biennale of International Film Art*.

In particular, the Pompidou’s ability to propagate video art in this way would be facilitated and enabled by the size and flexibility of its institutionalised framework for art presentation. This exhibitory practice would form the foundation of the Pompidou’s challenge to MoMA’s authoritative propagation of the contemporary video art paradigm. Due to extravaganzas such as these, the Pompidou while criticised as a supermarket of “culture”, would nevertheless help shape global perceptions of video art into something more akin to an entertainment spectacle. By producing video exhibitions in this manner the form would be seen differently and regarded in a more popular (yet strangely exclusive) set of terms than other forms of contemporary art endeavour.

It was clear that Centre Pompidou could not compete with the pretext of MoMA’s capacity to propagate video art on a global scale. However, the Pompidou’s initiative to stage video art as extravagant exhibitions during the 1980s would take video installation into a peculiar new area. This would be exemplified by its exhibition of video art as a mass spectacle.
To a certain extent video art was viewed as a non-traditional form infused with counter-cultural impetus by the Tate. As a result, throughout the 1970s (and into the 1990s) the Tate would have a problematic relationship with video art. This would contrast sharply with the support by the Rockefeller Corporation for video art in the US, or the Pompidou’s government funding (from 1977) for contemporary art propagation. Despite the fact that by the 1970s video art would be seen in Britain as a legitimate form of art worthy of being supported with public funds the Tate’s exhibitions of video art would be few and far between. While the Tate’s first acquisition of video art which would consist of three black and white video tape recordings by English conceptual artists Gilbert and George: (In the Bush (1972), The Gordon Makes us Drunk (1972), and A Portrait of the Artist as Young Men (1972) this acquisition would be supported through the Tate’s annual state Grant-in-Aid. Irrespective of this purchase there is no evidence to suggest that the Tate would form, or pursue a particular imperative to acquire or regularly present video artworks. The Tate would not stage a full-fledged video-based exhibition until 1976 (Tate Video Show) and it would be 1981 before they would stage a major exhibition of video art (Film, Video, Performance, Installation). Although video art would proliferate in Britain during the mid-to late 1960s the problem of funding the medium at the Tate (by contrast with MoMA and the Pompidou) would be summarised by Marshall:
In Britain, avant-garde video never fully identified itself with, or was courted by, the traditional institutions of the commercial art world. Its first practitioners were the very artists who had instigated the development of alternative exhibition spaces. Video technology became available at the moment when traditional categories and definitions were being most forcefully challenged.\(^{179}\)

The Tate would appear to be largely disinterested in the wealth of English video art during the 1968-1980 period. As such, many artists using video in Britain “…began to work outside the commercial gallery structure”.\(^{180}\) Due to this, “the state - in the form of the Arts Council of Great Britain – took on an increasing important role providing financial generative support of alternative aesthetic practices”.\(^{181}\) As Marshall points out:

> The two most significant new committees were the short-lived Special Projects Committee and the Artists’ Film [& video sub-] Committee, which was set up in response to increasing pressure from artists working in film for a specialist body apart from that of the visual arts.\(^{182}\)

Yet while funding institutions such as the ACGB would assist with production costs for video art, rather than support or acquire international video, the national councils in Britain would provide the money that would aid British artists to create rather than exhibit video artworks. These subsidies for mainly a British programme of video art would exist in sharp contrast to MoMA’s ongoing and active propagation of international and US based video art which would be boosted by the collaborative efforts of foreign corporate sponsorship. For example, in 1989 MoMA’s *Video: New Canadian Narrative* exhibition of recent narrative video art from twenty-six artists from all over Canada would receive subsidies from the Government of Canada, the Province of Quebec, Sony Corporation of America, JVC and J. Walter Thompson USA, Inc. and take place between September and November.\(^{183}\) The Tate in contrast would not actively seek corporate or composite forms of financial support for exhibition initiatives of video art.

In addition to MoMA’s more adept agency for promulgating international video, the Tate’s overall attitude towards contemporary art in general would not always be steady which saw it not always being propagated as forcefully as MoMA due to what early British video pioneer David Hall discussed in 1977 as hegemonic pressure from small elite pressure groups. Unlike MoMA, or the Pompidou whose presentation of video art would be almost continuous, the Tate’s exhibition of video would be sporadic resulting in very few video art exhibitions taking place at the Tate over the 1968 – 1990 period.

By contrast with MoMA’s imbrication of video in 1968 (which presented Paik’s formative *McLuhan’s Caged*) the Tate’s first screening of video art would take place within the *Art Without Objects* exhibition held in 1973.\(^{184}\) Presented as part of a series of lectures on Land Art and Conceptual Art by the Education Department the show would feature performances and recordings by Joseph Beuys and Gilbert and George.\(^{185}\) Following this, normal screenings at the Tate’s Education Department of documentaries on art and artists from the Tate’s collection would be interrupted in May 1974 for three weeks for an exhibition of David Hall’s entire video and film
oeuvre (which was again an initiative of the Education Department).\textsuperscript{186} Funding for artists such as Hall that would exhibit video art at the Tate would be supported by the ACGB and BFI with additional support provided by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.\textsuperscript{187} Hall and other artists living and working in Britain would receive funding support from the British Arts Council grants scheme which had been established for those artists wanting to exhibit their works overseas.

By 1975 by contrast with MoMA’s Projects series (which would include video works by such major artists as Vito Acconci, Robert Morris, Richard Serra and Bill Viola made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts)\textsuperscript{188} the Tate would present a show of films and video art by Penny Croft, Tony Hill and Chris Welsby, which would include Park Film, Floor Film and Wind Vane.\textsuperscript{189} In 1976, the Tate Video Show (organised by the Gallery’s Education Department which had appeared earlier in 1975 at the Serpentine Gallery) would include “… work by virtually all of Britain’s first generation of video artists”.\textsuperscript{190} By contrast with MoMA (which had by 1974 already established a purpose-built facility/gallery for video art), the Tate’s exhibition would be held in the lecture room of its Education Department in the basement not in an exhibition space normally used for exhibiting contemporary art.\textsuperscript{191} As video artist David Hall had pointed out:

\begin{quotation}
... the Education Dept is fast becoming the experimental showcase of the Tate, supporting – on a comparatively minuscule budget.\textsuperscript{192}
\end{quotation}

The Education Department at the Tate, under the leadership of Terry Measham, would provide a much needed position of video works within the hierarchy of exhibition spaces available for new video works in London. However Measham would leave by 1980.

\begin{quotation}
… the artists themselves found it necessary to arrange and seek funding for exhibitions, screenings and the creation of new work if it was to survive.\textsuperscript{193}
\end{quotation}

Yet by contrast with MoMA’s almost continuous promotion of video there would not be any major exhibitions devoted specifically to video art held at the Tate until Performance, Installation, Video exhibition in 1981. The show which had been supported through the ACGB funding, would display British video art by Kevin Atherton, Stuart Brisley and Ken McMullen, Phillipa Brown, David Critchley, Tina Keane, Tamara Krikorian, Mick Hartney and Ian Brown, David Hall, Richard Layzell.\textsuperscript{194} Many of these British artists had also shown their work at the Tate’s Video Show five years earlier in 1976.

By 1984, MoMA, would be exhibiting video exhibitions such as Selections from the Circulating Video Library, Video and Ritual, WNET/Thirteen Laboratory: A Survey, Video from Vancouver to San Diego, and Video: Recent Nonfiction.\textsuperscript{195} During the same year The Tate-Pompidou (co-relation) Anglo-French Video Exchange exhibition would be held at the Pompidou, London Video Arts and the Tate Gallery. The exhibition would include video art by Teresa Wennberg who had shown her video art in the late 1970s at the Pompidou.\textsuperscript{196} The Tate (on the other hand) would stage a series of British-based video works exhibited at the Anglo-French Video Exchange (Tate-Pompidou co-
relation) exhibition after the screening in Paris (and in conjunction with the LVA). In relation to this exhibition, the Tate’s biannual 1984-86 report would observe:

> With London Video Arts and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris we took part in an “Anglo-French video Exchange”; from the Arts Council we took “Surrealist Traces”, a substantial package tracing the influence of Surrealism on avant-garde cinema. Very recent extensions of the Surrealist tradition were evident in the British Film Institute/Arts Council season “Of Angels and Apocalypse” of films by the distinguished artist-film maker Derek Jarman, who came to discuss his work. The Education Department’s audio-visual section was heavily involved in the Tate Gallery’s season of performance and video installation art in the main exhibition galleries, providing technical help and an integrated programme of film and video material in the lecture room. Programmes of documentary film and video were run with all major and some minor exhibitions during 1984-86.197

By 1985 further exhibitions of British video art would be held at the Tate. British Film and Video 1980-1985: the New Pluralism a major retrospective would be supported by the British Film Institute and ACGB198 curated by Michael O’Pray would include works by Tina Keane, John Adams, Catherine Elwes, David Finch, Sandra Goldbacher, Susan Hiller, Tamara Krikorian, Margaret Warwick, Jeremy Welsh, Mark Wilcox, Graham Young and others.199

By 1987 a similar retrospective of British video art would be held at the Tate with The Elusive Sign. Organised again by the ACGB the exhibition would comprise a major retrospective of British avant-garde film and video art from 1977-1987 by some of those who had been supported by the BFI scheme.200 This would be an exhibition designed to reveal the importance of British video art which had perhaps been a way of making amends for the video art it had not been showing. To further propagate video art at the Tate and to extend its global influence in competition with other major national mainstream institutions as MoMA and the Pompidou an international tour of the show would be organised by Tamara Krikorian and Catherine Lacey and would be supported by funds provided through the ACGB/British Council International Tour. Included in this show would be video art by Catherine Elwes, Sera Furneaux, Judith Goddard, David Hall, Mona Hatoum, Steve Hawley, Tamara Krikorian, David Larcher, Jayne Parker and Christopher Rowland. Interestingly, this exhibition would also take place as a major video art exhibition at the Pompidou and just after a major video art exhibition had taken place at MoMA. Artworks were selected by Michael O’Pray, Tamara Krikorian and Catherine Lacey.201 On the initiative of O’Pray (largely in concert with David Curtis at the ACGB) The Elusive Sign exhibition would circulate globally over a three-year period. This exhibition, which only included the Tate initially, would establish the peculiar theoretical complexities of British video artists in relation to others around the world.

By comparison with MoMA, which in 1989 would receive total government support for $1,136,200 yet would spend $3,316,100 on exhibitions (which would include Video Viewpoints) The Arts for Television, and Revision would take place at the Tate.202 Arts for Television, and Revision -a major international touring exhibition of artists’ television would be initiated by the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and include video tapes by David Hall203 and the Video Positive organised by Moviola – a film equipment manufacturer based in the U.S.204 Video Positive, a travelling exhibition would
visit the Tate, Blue Coat Gallery and Williamson Art Gallery in Liverpool. Curated by Eddie Berg and Steve Littman and sponsored partially by the ACGB as well as the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) it would include video installations, performances, projections and talks. This would present a familiar pattern within many exhibitions in Britain that would position video art with other temporal forms (such as film and performance).

Yet by comparison with MoMA within the period 1968-1990, video art’s history at the Tate would mostly be seen as British which would exist in contrast to MoMA and the Pompidou who would both propagate local and foreign video art. Hence, the Tate’s sporadic video art exhibitions would not, by any means furnish a full account of video art’s history. Much of this had stemmed from the way video art was funded through the Arts Councils in Britain and in contrast with the Tate’s lack of support to propagate non-traditional forms of art. The Tate, during the 1968-90 period would largely retain a reluctance to acquire and exhibit video art and would only accept packaged programs (such as the *Elusive Sign*) should they be initiated externally and arrive with subsidy.
Due to not having as clear an imperative, or dedication towards propagating video art as MoMA the AGNSW would exhibit much less video art (largely a result of levels of funding but also via the problematics presented by geographical distance). Yet by contrast with the Tate, which would mainly put on display British video artists through their Education Department (during the 1970s) and through the ACGB (which would chiefly provide grants to artists already in Britain), corporations such as Transfield in Australia would facilitate the AGNSW’s growing internationalism with regard to video art. In addition, the Visual Art Board of Australia would provide some form of support of the exhibition of video art at the AGNSW. Much of the video art exhibited at the AGNSW would receive these forms of support and initiatives for various exhibition themes which would follow a similar trajectory as those at the Tate.

In contrast with MoMA, the AGNSW would be slow to furnish much foreign competition for video art propagation. From the late 1970s, the AGNSW’s programmes and incentives for showing more video art would grow with each Biennale, Perspecta and Australian Video Festival eventually forming a more coherent yet less continuous pattern for video art propagation.

By contrast with MoMA’s funding from the Rockefeller Foundation of the original Project series in 1971, the AGNSW’s Project exhibitions would accept national funding support from the Visual Arts Board. This series of exhibitions at the AGNSW would be suggested by Francis McCarthy (an assistant curator of Australian Art), after her studies at MoMA in 1974. The AGNSW’s 1975...
Projects would comprise Film, Documents, Video in which the “… artists concerned gave lectures and showed additional films”. By contrast with the cost of the series at MoMA the AGNSW’s seven Project exhibitions in total would only cost around $4,478 (US). This would include video art with the Visual Arts Board of the Australian Council contributing around a third $1,734 (US).

Some of the video works previously shown at MoMA (such as those by Nam June Paik) would later be presented as part of the AGNSW’s Projects series in 1976.

By comparison with MoMA’s much larger propagation of video, Sydney’s second Biennale in 1976 would provide the vehicle for the AGNSW to present a small amount of video art that would be supported through funds from participating countries as well as from the Transfield Company (which would continue to support these events from the time of their initiation in 1973). Yet often these shows would not be provided with enough financial assistance. As the Artistic Director of the 1982 AGNSW Biennale would state:

Apart from Transfield’s continuing sponsorship throughout its 27 years of existence, the Biennale of Sydney has been consistently restricted due to inadequate local support. For years it was bolstered by support from the participating countries (often up to 60%) and consistently it had to survive on below 5%, now nearer 10%, of the operating budgets of Venice, San/Sao Paulo, Kwangju and other peer events abroad.

By the 1980s, although the AGNSW had increased the size of its international Biennale exhibitions particularly and exhibitions of Australian video art (with Perspecta and the Australian Video Festivals) its overall funding by contrast with MoMA would be far less. In 1980 video art exhibitions put on by the AGNSW would also include within the same year as the Pompidou’s presentation of video art by Australian video artist Peter Campus the AGNSW’s Project 30: Some Recent Australian Videotapes which would be supported by the Visual Arts Board of the Australian council since it would be part of the AGNSW’s Projects series. Further programmes at the AGNSW such as the Australian Perspectas (from 1981) would continue to be supported mainly through the state government. However, the first Perspecta show would comprise four video art installations from two local Sydney artists, Peter Callas and Stephen Jones.

By contrast with the AGNSW during the 1980s, MoMA would point out the importance of “… the International Business Machines Corporation, the Robert Wood Johnson Jr. Charitable Trust, and the National Endowment for the Arts” which would present MoMA with the resources to fund initiatives. Assistance from large corporations such as these would contrast with the support provided by the Australian Visual Arts Board and Transfield Biennale. Other exhibitions including video art at the AGNSW would include the Contemporary Art Department’s British Show in 1985 which would be supported by the British Council, the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council and corporate support via John Kaldor Fabric maker. From 1986 the Australian Video Festivals would accept funding support from the Australian Visual Arts Board and would be organised by the AGNSW, Electronic Media Arts Australia, Artspace Visual Arts Centre, the Australian Centre for...
Photography and the Sydney Powerhouse Museum. This would present an assorted mixture of publically funded organisations.

Other examples of different funding bodies that would assist the AGNSW would include for example those which would be employed for the 1988 Biennale, From the Southern Cross: A View of World Art c1940-1988 presented from May to July 1988 would feature Chasing Skirt an interactive video art installation by Severed Heads. This show would be sponsored by the Visual Arts Board, the Australian Film Commission, and Costain Australia Limited among others. By 1989, Australian Perspecta held at the Gallery continued to be supported almost exclusively by state Government funding.

By comparison with MoMA these institutions (the Centre Pompidou, the Tate Gallery and the AGNSW) would, to a large extent, contemporaneously arise as the ultimate respondents to MoMA’s prestige. Through their emulation of MoMA’s avant-garde art propagation, the other institutions would initiate and enunciate an overall public interest for video art as a contemporary art form. Each institution would reveal a unique and specific flavour and each would approach the emergence of video art differently. Each would be influenced by the other’s increasing interest in the medium. The Pompidou would approach the challenge of video art quite differently to MoMA – initially as a circumstance of resourcing, yet later as a presentational difference. In contrast to MoMA’s presentation of video as more as a doctrine, the Pompidou’s generally more spectacular exhibitions of video art – often created by the size of the video exhibition and the area they would be exhibited in very often exceeded the size of MoMA’s, the Tate and AGNSW’s video exhibitions. This helped to put forward the Pompidou’s reputation as a centre for entertainment. By situating video art within a context of an entertainment and spectacle the Pompidou by contrast in a sense “pedestrianised” it and repositioned the pedestal that MoMA would place video art upon. Although the Tate and AGNSW never really becoming major international players within this arena for video, they would however be extremely effective and influential within their respective nations.

In the next chapter I will discuss how several previously discrete paradigms (or intellectual areas of inquiry) and a concern towards the proliferation of forms/strategies in the mass communication industry, would collide.
Notes

1 As Vernon Hyde Minor points out “Winckelmann obviously objected to the nonnormative, the eccentric and strange, the highly expressive and strained”. Minor, op. cit., p. 91.
2 In order to counter criticism at least locally, attempts by the Tate would by 1976 lead to its employing of extra staff to ignite the British public’s connoisseurship of its British and modern European collections. 24 guide-lecturers would be invited to be trained Education staff to encourage the public’s interest in its collection. Spalding, op. cit., p. 193.
3 Between 1975 and 1976 the Tate would receive one million visitors. By 1977 the Tate’s attendance figures would drop by 19.5%. By the following year it would be brought back to over the one million mark. Ibid., p. 193.
4 Perl, op. cit.
5 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 DeRoo points out that “In 1969, no less a figure than the President, Georges Pompidou, declared the importance of renewing a French cultural center to establish the prominence of France on an international art scene that was dominated by the United States. See DeRoo, op. cit., pp. 167-8.
11 My use of the phrase “ceremonial monument” follows Carol Duncan’s point that museums spaces are all secular ritual spaces. See C. Duncan, “Museums and Citizenship”, in Karp and Levine (eds.), op. cit., p. 90.
12 DeRoo, op. cit., 168.
13 Ibid., p. 176.
14 Ibid., p. 175.
15 Ibid., p. 173.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., 168.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 See ibid. p. 173. As DeRoo states in relation to the Pompidou’s design “To more progressive critics and members of the art world, this new design had not managed to break out of the museum-cemetery model”. (Sup.). Compounding this would be specific criticism of its appearance and size which did not sit well with the people of Paris due to the fact that it was built into a working-class area (originally a slum) rather than residential as were other museums in Paris such as the Louvre. As such, on opening day the Pompidou would be criticised in the Liberation newspaper for being badly planned. Moreover, in Britain it would be called “hideous” by the art critic of the Guardian; and in the US it would be discussed by the press as a “temporary art museum” that had been designed to re-instate Paris as the centre of painting and sculpture. As Nathan Silver discusses, “It was easier to talk about the state of society than to settle on the question of whether Beaubourg was a misunderstood darling, or a juvenile delinquent”. See N. Silver, The Making of Beaubourg, a Building Biography of the Centre Pompidou, Paris and Cambridge, (Mass.), The MIT Press, 1994, p. 174.
22 Ibid.
25 Ibid., p. 49.
26 Perl, op. cit.
27 As Archer points out it would be “ … an enterprise that aroused much criticism for its assumptions that art was a Western phenomenon feeding off the exotic and primitive it found elsewhere. The rationale for the MOMA exhibition maintained the notion of Primitivism as the otherness to be found exclusively outside Western culture. It was if the debates on racism, feminism and politics of the 1970s had never taken place, and as if the maturing of these discussions and their extension into other areas of social marginalization …”. See Archer, op. cit., pp. 198-9.
As Archer states “In spreading its curatorial net around the globe Magiciens de la Terre tried to present otherness as the stuff of a more equitable ideological exchange between cultures … […]” The American critic Thomas McEvilley considered ‘PC’, the acronymic sign of late-1980s good behaviour, to stand for post-colonialist rather than political correctness. He wrote critically of ‘Primitivism’ in 1984, and much more supportively of Magiciens: ‘All the criticism of the show that I have seen fails to confront the monumental fact that this was the first major exhibition consciously to attempt to discover a postcolonialist way to exhibit first- and third-world objects together. It was a major event in the social history of art, not in its aesthetic history.’ […] ‘The paintings of Zairean Chéri Samba (b. 1956) defined the size of the problem, their ironic texts remarking on Zaire’s continuing economic dependency on France: ‘Paris is clean thanks to us immigrants who don’t like looking at piss and dog shit.’ Le Sida (AIDS) (1989) suggested that while the threat from AIDS might be a global one we can neither afford to ignore the cultural traditions of the various places in which it occurs, nor pretend that the release of resources to combat it is triggered by humanitarian feeling and not political expediency”. Ibid., pp. 199-200.

P. Hulten in E. C. Baker, op. cit., p. 100.

Ibid.

Ibid.

See Paul, op. cit., p. 50.

This would result in diverse groups of visitors following their own specific and individual interests. Due to the various institutions within the Centre Pompidou visitors would participate in different kinds of activity. Heinich has observed that “These activities [would] range from study to merely browsing around, from having a drink in the café to learning about contemporary artistic creation, from tourism to research, from cinema-going to computing. Naturally, these different activities attract differing quantities of visitors: the latest surveys show that around 47 per cent of visitors went to Beaubourg to use the library, some 17 per cent for the art gallery, and about 10 per cent to see the major exhibitions on the fifth floor (though this figure varied by between 3 and 20 per cent).” See Heinich, op. cit., pp. 204-5.

DeRoo, op. cit., 169.

Paul, op. cit., p. 49.

Silver, op. cit., p. 186.

Ibid., p. 173.

Ibid., p. 178.

Ibid., p. 181.

Ibid., p. 180.


Ibid. Influential to the Tate’s agenda would be the Saatchi family. As Haacke points out “How far the Saatchis in London will get in dominating the Tate Gallery’s Patrons of New Art – and thereby the museum’s policies for contemporary art – is currently watched with the same fascination and nervousness as developments in the Kremlin. […] In addition to his position on the steering committee of the Tate’s Patrons on New Art, Charles Saatchi is also a trustee of the Whitechapel Gallery”. H. Haacke, ‘Museums: Managers of Consciousness’, in D. Preziosi and C. Farago (eds.), op. cit. p. 408.

See Spalding, op. cit., p. 256. Spalding discusses Nicolas Serota’s refurbishment of the Tate’s galleries during the late 1980s.


Spalding, op. cit., p. 155.


Ibid. p. 215.

Ibid., p. 199.

Brighton, op. cit., p. 43.

Spalding, op. cit., p. 221.

Ibid.

Brighton, op. cit., p. 43.
In Australia, audiences within the period were increasingly becoming fascinated by American and European art and culture. Awareness of foreign contemporary artworks by colourful personalities such as Andy Warhol (who would appear in the popular press frequently) would ignite and raise local audience expectations for the kind of contemporary art already being shown in galleries overseas. Much of this would emanate due to the availability of journals such as *Studio International*, *Art and Text* and *Art and Australia* and others which would create an expectation and demand for this kind of work to be shown at the AGNSW.


Ibid., pp. 19-20.


See Latos-Valier, op. cit.

T. G. McCullough, (Artistic Director of the 1976 Sydney *Biennale*), in Latos-Valier, ibid.

This would be the first *Perspecta* held at the AGNSW.

See Latos-Valier, ibid.

The AGNSW’s show had, as Latos-Valier states, explored … the influences and links between Europe and Australia, and questioned the predominance of New York as the international art centre. Some of the Australian artists along with European and British artists presenting their works had included Marina Abramovic, Tom Arthur, Stephen Buckley, Daniel Buren, Louis Cane, Rosalie Gascoigne, Howard Hodgkin, Peter Kennedy, Laszlo Lakner, Nickolaus Lang, Mike Parr, Gerhard Richter and Ulrike Rosenbach. Ibid.

N. Waterlow (Artistic Director of 1979 Sydney *Biennale*) in ibid.

*Australian Perspecta 1981*, op. cit., p. 3. The first *Perspecta* to be held at the AGNSW in 1981 would include the video artworks of Peter Callas whose work would come to be represented in the both the permanent collections of MoMA as well the AGNSW.

Taylor, op. cit., p. 51.


Hulten in Baker, op. cit., p. 100. This would be allocated for various “sought-after” modern art masterworks such as those by Magritte, Mondrian and Miro. In addition, substantial funds from this amount would also be employed for the purchase of more recent contemporary art. Supplementary financial support would be provided by the Centre’s exhibition admission charges (except on Sundays) as well as numerous donations of artworks with the sales of merchandise contributing powerfully to the overall revenue.

For example, in 1978 MoMA’s total income would be $7,208,869. Out of this amount, it would spend $1,472,074 on its curatorial departments, $896,263 (Curatorial support services), and $639,172 on exhibitions. The Museum of Modern Art, ‘MoMA Biennale Report, 1976-78’, op. cit., p. 6.


In 1980, contributions to MoMA would be $11,877,400 (US) and income from its investments would be $5,480,00 (US). See ‘MoMA Annual Report 1980-81’, op. cit., p. 46. By contrast, the Pompidou’s total resources from outside the French government would be $2,557,278 (US). This would be less than 15% of MoMA’s total non-governmental funding support for the same period. Refer to Centre National d’art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, *Rapport d’Activite 1980*, op. cit., p. 16.

Ibid., p. 63.


See ibid., pp. 27-31.


Ibid. p. 72. For MoMA, this would reveal around a 450% increase on the 1982-84 period.


This had included many by Victor Brauner (18 works from 1931-1964), Duchamp, Magritte, and Picabia as well as two sculptures by Donald Judd, 144 Tin Squares by Carl Andre and works by Bruce Nauman. The Pompidou’s 27 exhibitions for the year would include its first Biennale of international art films as well as installations by Picasso, Brancusi and Breton and major exhibitions of artworks by Fontana, Oldenburg, Gehry as well as avant-garde artworks from Japan. Exhibitions in the Centre’s Grand Galerie in 1987 would include L’epoque, la mode, la morale, la passion: aspects of today’s art, 1977-1987, which would present works by 60 artists with extra financial support provided by Air France. Other exhibitions presented in the Forum of the Pompidou would include Parade Pour Parade, Volume Virtuel De Soto, Cartes Blanches, Amis du Centre- (16 foreign and French artworks supported by friends of the Centre). See ibid., pp. 2-99.


Ibid., pp. 15-6.


For more figures see ibid., pp. 30-2.


Brighton, op. cit., p. 41.

The Government grant for two years April 1972-March 1974 would be around $1,038,814.46 (US). In addition to this, a special grant of around $88.203 (US) would be made by the government towards the purchase of traditional works. Moreover, the amounts from the Knapping Fund and Gyntha Trust would be approximately $15,887 (US) and $8.994 (US) respectively. Refer to the Tate Biennial Report, 1970-72, p. 227.

In fact, from 1967-1969 income for MoMA would increase significantly from many sources. Receipts from admissions increased, purchases at June 30, 1969 being $47,223,551. (‘The Museum of Modern Art Biennial Report 1967-69’, op. cit., p. 52). Curatorial activities and education programs 1968-69 would total $3,310,900. (Ibid., p. 53). As the MoMA’s 1967-69 Biennial Report would observe: “Since July 1967, the Museum has acquired 4,514 works of art (items in series acquired under a single count as one). This brings the size of the collection to 22,950 works. We have loaned 1,068 objects to 217 borrowers in the same period”. (Ibid., p. 33).


Ibid., p. 53.
102 Ibid., p. 33.
103 Ibid., p. 53.
104 Ibid.
105 See Spalding, op. cit., p. 156.
107 Brighton, op. cit., p. 42.
108 With the Tate aided by the support of the trust funds some important modern artworks would be purchased such as Brancusi’s Maiastra, Dali’s Autumnal Cannibalism and Metamorphosis of Narcissus, Malevich’s Dynamic Suprematism, Gorky’s Waterfall, Magritte’s The Reckless Sleeper; as well as artworks by Beckmann, Kirchner, Dubuffet, Ernst, Miro, Picabia and more recent works of Baselitz, Salle and Schnabel would be acquired. Braque’s Clarinet and Bottle of Rum on a Mantelpiece, George Grosz’ Suicide and Max Ernst’s Celebs would also be acquired. Spalding, op. cit., pp. 186-7.
109 Ibid., p. 182.
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid. Spalding points out that “… despite the continuing gap between the sum asked and that given, the government was now listening and responding to the Tate Gallery’s arguments”. Spalding, op. cit., p. 156.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid., 35.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid., p. 6.
120 Ibid., p. 13.
121 Ibid.
122 Ibid., p. 8.
123 Spalding, op. cit., p. 192.
124 Ibid.
125 Other purchases would be Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s Bather at Moritzburg, Duchamp’s Coffee Mill, Picasso’s Nude Woman with a Necklace and Leger’s The Acrobat and his Partner and works by Brancusi, Joan Miro, Ernst, Dali, Paul Delvaux, Andre’ Derrain, Oscar Kokoschka, Jacques Lipchitz and artworks by artists associated with multi-national group, Cobra. (See Spalding, op. cit., p. 204). British works acquired included works by Blake, Collinson, Gainsborough, Millais, Ramsay Wilson and Constable. These would be obtained by the Friends of the Tate Gallery as well as the National Art-Collections Fund which would contribute towards the Constable and a work by Max Beckmann. In fact the Tate’s Government grant would be around $3,697,724 (US) for 1980-81 and $3,511,743 (US) for 1981-82. For this, contributions from the Knapping Fund would be around $16,393 (US), from the Gyntha Trust around $17,387 (US) and from the Abbot Fund around $3,833 (US). See The Tate Gallery, ‘The Tate Gallery Illustrated Biennial Report 1980-82’, London, Tate Gallery, 1982, p. 11.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
128 Spalding, op. cit., p. 216.
129 Ibid., p. 204.
130 In addition to its modern and contemporary art purchases the Tate’s acquisition and display of British art would, in general, continue to remain high on its agenda. Works by Blake, Collinson, Gainsborough, Millais, Ramsay Wilson and Constable would be added to build on its historical
British collection during this period. This would be augmented further by British 20th century 
additions including Mark Gertler’s *Merry-Go-Round* and David Hockney’s *A Bigger Splash.*

132 The Art Gallery of New South Wales, ‘Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South 
133 The Art Gallery of New South Wales, ‘Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of 
New South Wales: Report Covering the Period January-December, 1973’, Sydney, Parliament of 
New South Wales, 1973, p. 28.
134 Ibid., p. 4. Government funding support for 1973-74 would be raised from around $65,507 (US) 
to approximately $87,343 (US). Ibid. Of the 105 works acquired 51 would be from gifts (plus 1 
bequest). Ibid., p. 5. The year’s budget expenditure for exhibitions would be approximately $37,920 
(US). Ibid.
136 By 1974, the AGNSW’s purchases of artworks would be around $191,506 (US). This had 
included Australian art $85,953 (US) along with overseas art $105,565 (US). Purchases for the work 
of contemporary Australian artists would be $41,917 (US). Gifts and bequests received in 1974 
would amount to around $10,480 (US). In addition the AGNSW received around $700 (US) in 
donations for art purchases and the Thea Proctor Memorial Fund received approximately an extra 
$510 (US) bringing the total gifts to this purchase fund to approximately $5,442 (US) for 1974. The 
Gallery’s total expenditure for exhibitions for this period would be $33,264 (US). Most of this would 
come from N.S.W. Government funds. […] Additional funding would be provided by various 
corporate sponsors. As the AGNSW’s report would state: “… the exhibition programme was made 
possible by financial support from … the Peter Stuyvesant Trust paid all costs of its own exhibition, 
Hommage a Lucrat. The Crafts Board of the Australian Council for the Arts paid $5,000 to assist in 
the assembly and packing of *Australian Ceramics* an Australian Gallery Directors Conference 
exhibition which began its Australian tour in Sydney. But the Visual Arts Board of the Australian 
Council for the Arts was an important for the exhibition programme. […] The two most import 
exhibitions of 1974 received even larger funding from the Visual Arts Board. *Some Recent American 
Art*, an exhibition prepared by the international Programme of the Museum of Modern Art, New 
York, with the aid of U.S.A. $60,000 from Mr and Mrs … received $44,000 from the Visual Arts 
Board of the Australian Council for the Arts for its Australian tour. Paul Klee, exhibition would be 
jointly organized jointly by Pro Helvetia, Zurich, and the Visual Arts Board at a cost of $30,000 …”. 
Refer to The Art Gallery of New South Wales, ‘Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of New 
138 The Art Gallery of New South Wales, ‘Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South 
during 1975 the government grant would be $67,517.47 (US) with $51,531.48 (US) going to local 
and only $6,406.18 (US) going towards international art. Exhibition expenditure would be 
139 During 1976, 33 temporary exhibitions would take place at the AGNSW in 1976. Some of these 
would include: *Form and Freedom* - (an exhibition focusing on North American Indian artifacts from 
the USA); *Sculpture of Thailand; Léger*, an exhibition of works by the French artist arranged by the 
International Council of the Museum of Modern Art, and *Magdalena Abakanowicz – (woven 
sculptures from Poland)* for which the Crafts Board of the Australia Council would provide financial 
assistance. (See The Art Gallery of New South Wales, ‘Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of 
New South Wales: Report Covering the Period January-December, 1976’, Sydney, Parliament of 
New South Wales (1976/8), pp. 9-10). For the period 1976-1977, the AGNSW’s government grant 
would be approximately $161,517 (US). From this sum, the total amount spent during the year on all 
acquisitions would be approximately $131,129 (US). (From this period the AGNSW’s Reports 
would no longer state separate budget figures for its expenditure on Australian art and International 
art. Instead it would group them as one). Overall exhibition expenditure would be around $112,168 
(US). Refer to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, ‘Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of 
New South Wales: Report Covering the Period January-December, 1977’, Sydney, Parliament of 
140 Ibid., p. 5.
141 The Art Gallery of New South Wales, ‘Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South


Many gifts and other sources of funding continued to be received by the Gallery. The Gallery trustees would state “The Trust reserves increased by $963,258 or 102% during the year due mainly to the Horton Bequest of $890,000”. The Art Gallery of New South Wales, ‘Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales for the Year Ended 30 June, 1984’, Sydney, Parliament of New South Wales, 1984, p. 5. Its budget for purchases of works of art provided by the Australian government would be $694,840 and $601,405 for exhibition. As the Art Gallery of New South Wales Report observes: “Expenditure from all sources totalled $5,181,093, of an increase of 32% over the previous year. ‘At the close of financial year the “Foundation capital (would be) $3.3 million and a further $3 million was committed. Expenditure on acquisition of works totalled $694,840.143”. Moreover, “… funding from the State Government, included matching contributions to private donations to the Art Gallery of New South Wales Foundation, and … an increase of $919,000 in the area of Donations, Bequests and Grants. The sum of $890,000 would be received from a bequest ...’. However, the majority would be provided by the State Government that is, $3,930,835 or 64% of the total”. See ‘Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1984’, p. 5.

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Moderns, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1984, p. 4.


‘The Museum of Modern Art Annual Report 1984-85’, op. cit., p. 54. This amount refers to what MoMA would spend out of its government Endowment and would not take into account the total MoMA would spend which would be far greater. In fact, MoMA’s total funds balance for 1985 would be $131,690,100. Sup., p. 53.


See Reperes, Reperes Historiques Annees 80, op. cit.

Bijvoet, op. cit.


Bijvoet, op. cit.

See Centre National d’art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Archives des Manifestations 1980-82, <http://www.centrepompidou.fr/Pompidou/Manifs.nsf?ReadForm RestrictToCategory=8082>, 2007 (accessed 11 April 2006). In addition, Paik’s Videotapes (30 minutes each, colour) with selections from: Global Groove (1973), Suite 212 (1977), Guadalcanal Requiem (1977-79) and Lake Placid ’80 would also be presented in the Centre’s main Forum. (Bijvoet, op. cit.). Other video presented at the Pompidou in 1982 would include Marie OJ Lafontaine’s Round around the Boxing Ring, Erika Magdalinski’s Environment Video, Michel Jaffrennou-Patrick Bouquet’s Hommage a Nam June Paik and Piotr Kowalski’s Performance by Satellite with Canada - a videographic exploration of time would be all presented at the Centre. In addition, the first annual Videodanse program, (showing a season of films, videos, experimental video art on dance) organised by Michèle Bargues would be presented during the same year. See Centre Pompidou, Archives des
This very large exhibition would include videos by Robert Ashley and John Sanborn, Dara Birnbaum, Jonathan Borofsky and Gary Glassman, Stefaan Decostere and Chris Dercon, Ed Emshwiller, Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville, Peter Greenaway, Gary Hill, Michael Klier, Thierry Kuntzel, Joan Logue, Meredith Monk, Jacques-Louis Nyst, Marcel Odenbach, Tony Oursler, Shigeko Kubota, Michael Smith, William Wegman, and Robert Wilson. Also taking place would be Paris Premiere Video Art presented at the Centre’s IRCAM presented in the CCI Gallery Valis by Tod Machover and Catherine Ikam. See Reperes, Reperes Historiques Annees 80, op. cit.


The exhibition would also include video art by Dennis Adams, Robert Adams, Geneviève Cadieux, Roberta Friedman, Jean-Louis Garnell, Dan Graham, Bill Henson, Gary Hill, Thierry Kuntzel, Suzanne Lafont, John Massey, Marcel Odenbach, Michael Snow, Bill Viola, Jeff Wall, and Grahame Weinbren (12 September-18 November). In addition, the second series of the Pompidou’s Passages of the Image would present a retrospective of Daniel Spoerri as well as works by Marina Abramovic and Ulay. See Centre National d’art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Rapport d’Activite 1990, ibid., pp. 11-2. Furthermore, Disturbances (among the jars) by Gary Hill with Jacques Derrida as one of the readers would be presented. See Peter Krapp, Bibliography of Video and Audio Material: Jacques Derrida, <http://www.hydra.umn.edu/derrida/media.html>, 2004 (accessed 11 June 2006).

As Stuart Marshall recounts, “Video was by then recognisable as a fundable practice by the Arts Council of Great Britain …”. Refer to Marshall, in Knight (ed.), op. cit., p. 68.

S. Marshall, op. cit., p. 66.


Knight, op. cit., p. 354.
187 P. Donebauer, in Knight (ed.), op. cit., p. 93.
190 Knight, op. cit., p. 2.
191 Ibid., p. 356.
194 Knight, ibid., p. 360.
200 Knight, op. cit., p. 367.
202 Sutton, op. cit.
204 Reperes, Reperes Historiques Annees 70, op. cit.
205 Maziere, op. cit.
206 Ibid.
207 This was first proposed to the ACGB as a “National Videowall Project” in 1986, by British video artist Stephen Littman and eventually became the centrepiece for Video Positive ’89. As Littman himself points out “From a total of 26 submissions four – by Judith Goddard, Simon Robertshaw/Mike Jones, Katherine Meynell, and Stephen Partridge – were selected and funded by the British and Scottish Arts Councils, with myself providing a fifth (underfunded) piece. See Littman, in Knight (ed.), op. cit., p. 182.
209 Ibid., p. 12.
211 Ibid., p. 23.
212 The show would exhibit video artworks by Paik. As Stephen Jones states in relation to this: “The first video event that I saw in the AGNSW was the visit to Australia by Charlotte Moorman and Nam June Paik, in April 1976. […] Paik designed and had built a number of what in those days must have seemed totally whacky video devices, such as a cello made up from three monochrome TV screens built into a perspex case to emulate the shape of a cello, with a cello neck, bridge and strings attached so that Moorman could play it. Moorman then performed with this and other of Paik’s devices to the delight of the Australian audiences”. […] “We later saw Les Levine with his videotapes which introduced the political analysis of the image and the media. Antfarm from the west coast of the US also visited in 1976 and brought us the more humorous side of America’s indulgence in its own media image, e.g. the videotape documentation of an event called ‘Mediaburn’, in which a wall of old TV sets is destroyed by the high-speed crash of a pseudo-futuristic car loaded with video cameras and fire. Thus was international video introduced to art audiences in Sydney”. (See S. Jones, in J. Scott (ed.) op. cit., p. 26). As part of the 1976 Biennale Processes Paik and Moorman was show at the AGNSW in April 1976 following its appearance at the Adelaide festival. These Biennale exhibitions held from 1976 at the AGNSW would all contain video art and would be sponsored by the Visual Arts Board, the Aboriginal Arts Board, and the Theatre Board of the Australia Council, the New South Wales Government, and the Sydney City

212 See W. Wright, (Artistic Director of the 1982 Sydney Biennale), in Latos-Valier, op. cit.

213 As the Gallery’s annual report for the period observes this would consist “… of a selection of videotapes made in 1979 by Stephen Jones and Bernice Murphy for tour of the United States under the auspices of the AGDC, in 1979. The presentation was such that, whereas videotape presentations are usually of no great interest to many people, the exhibition can only be described as being a great success in terms of public interest. The tapes were made by the following: Ariel, Glen Lewis, Michael Glasheen, Gill Leahy and Pam Brown, Dave E. Penny, Bruce Tolley, John Fisher and Michael Jawo, Melliu Collective, Jim Jughes, Mary Grounds and Paul Photers, Shaun Gray, Malcolm Ellis and Bob Pollack, Miles Green, Mike Parr, Arthur Wiles, Sophia Turkiewicz, Jenne Pritchard and Louie Pelissier, Dasha Ross and Alex Hines, Kim Randall and Carole Skalan, Stephen Jones and Dagan Uni”. (See The Art Gallery of New South Wales, ‘Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales for the Period 1 January, 1980 to 10 July, 1980’, Sydney, Parliament of New South Wales, 1981, p. 11). In addition, Some Recent Australian Videotapes would later be shown at the Venice Biennale in 1980. Prior to this, these artworks had been shown at The Kitchen, New York, Los Angeles ICA, video Free America, San Francisco and video Inn, Vancouver, Canada. (Refer to S. Jones, Activities and Employment, <http://www.internationaldigitalart.com/IDAA/2005IDAAStats/stephenJones.htm>, n.d. (accessed 15 April 2006). The AGNSW’s Project 28 exhibition would be the only Project exhibition in 1979. This would feature artworks by Ken Unsworth which had consisted “… of drawings, static and animated sculptures, photographs, video tapes”. Refer to ‘Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales: Report Covering the Period January-December, 1979’, op. cit., p. 13.


215 The video artworks shown at the AGNSW would comprise Peter Callas’ Singing Stone (1980), b/w videotape, ¾ U-matic cassette, mono sound, 7 mins, Our Potential Allies (1980), two colour videotapes, to be played simultaneously on 2 VTR monitors, ¾’ U-matic cassettes, mono sound, 18 mins. In addition, there would be video artworks by Sydney artist Stephen Jones such as S.P.K. (1979), colour videotape, ¾” U-matic cassette, stereo sound, 25 mins. (Courtesy of the artist). And Eva (1979-80)-colour videotape, ¾” U-matic cassette, stereo sound, 25 mins. (Courtesy of the artist). See Australian Perspecta 1981, op. cit.


218 It would be selected by the curators, Tony Bond and Bill Wright on three trips to Britain between 1983 and 1984 and would represent the first such exhibition to be assembled in Australia.


220 Jones, Activities and Employment, op. cit.

221 Representing video art at the Australian Perspecta 1989, at the AGNSW would be video by Geoff Weary in collaboration with Mark Jackson such as Passion of the Outside, (1989). This would be a video art installation (with sound): ¾” U-matic video series of Silver gelatine photos, each 50.8 x 61 cm. Ibid., p. 121.
Chapter 5
The Critical Discourse of Video Art

As stated previously, the multifarious experiments employed by the video artist’s dynamic practices in the gallery would lead to a transformation of the existing institutionalised paradigm prompting institutional modification. Yet this emanated from its largely problematic nature. As the central or dominant aesthetic paradigm of the High Modernist age, video art’s global indexical presence and significance had been the result of the culture industry’s marketing of video art as a commodity, which would be harnessed and assimilated into its narrow paradigm to maintain its status quo. This would include receiving revenue for its overall promotion and was due to its “material” nature which was harnessed as a form of material media commodity.

Fuelling this had been the increasing amount of critical discourse that would surround the production and reception of contemporary art from the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Through writing in journals that were becoming increasingly available artists would become aware of the latest attitudes and theoretical positions that were being circulated. Increasingly these discussions would be reflexive ones – the discussions surrounding video art would interest makers and viewers alike. As a result, institutions such as MoMA would respond by presenting the works in their attempts to fuel interest and discussion of the works on display.

This chapter is comprised of two parts. The first of these corollaries “Objective Neurosis”: “The Video Text” discusses the video text as being a problematic form of art which was paradoxically highly stylised suitable for the High Modernist phase within the history of art and culture. This had been because the total flow of imagery in society during this period was commensurate with that embedded in the video text - much of which would be formed out of the mediatisation and mechanization of culture by the “consciousness industry” which was ubiquitous. For Jameson this would result in the written text losing its significance and domination whilst paradoxically the concepts available for analyzing all kinds of study would become almost only linguistic in the way they work. This would lead to the necessity of the enlargement of the language itself which would be widened “… to include nonverbal-visual or musical, bodily, spatial-phenomena; but it may equally well spell a critical and disruptive challenge to the very conceptual instruments which have been mobilized to complete this operation of assimilation”.

The second part of this chapter, “The Commoditisation of Video Art” discusses the “culture industry’s agenda” to commodify this form of contemporary art and inculcate it into its narrow paradigm. This section attempts to reveal why and how the art institutions, as part of the culture or “consciousness industry”, situated these works within a discursive arena. This imbrication would be nuanced by the museum as a temple of high art and would be legitimised via the institutionalised paradigm they promoted.
The discussion in this chapter will begin with an interrogation of the “video text” as a problematic form of material culture within the age of High Modernism.
“Objective Neurosis”: “The Video Text”

In his discussion of video art Fredric Jameson identifies the prominence and significance of media commodification within the age of High Modernism. He points out in *Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (in 1992), that material media commodification is ubiquitous and inescapable pointing out that culture itself had always been “… a matter of media …” throughout history which had existed as the “objective neurosis of that particular time and place”. 3 For Jameson what had led to the “mechanization” and “mediation” of culture had begun with the “intervention of the machine” which had given birth to the Modernist age. This had led to a rise in material media which would create the “extinction of the sacred” and of the “spiritual” materiality of all things or a continuous dislocation which cannot be avoided. As he points out:

> It is because we have had to learn that culture today is a matter of media that we have finally begun to get it through our heads that culture was always that, and that the older forms or genres, or indeed the older spiritual exercises and meditations, thoughts and expressions, were also in their very different ways media products. 4

For Jameson literature and film would present themselves as genres in this discussion of culture and that the existence of media would conjoin:

> … three relatively distinct signals: that of an artistic mode or specific form of aesthetic production, that of a specific technology, generally organized around a central apparatus or machine; and that, finally, of a social institution. These three areas of meaning do not define a medium, or the media, but designate the distinct dimensions that must be addressed in order for such a definition to be completed or constructed. 5

Following this definition, the “medium” can thus be seen to act as a vehicle or conduit by which culture can travel or pass through – that is, it acting as a contributor to culture and material media.

Discussed as existing as the index to the *zeitgeist* for the High Modernist period – (approximately 1968-1990) by Fredric Jameson, video art had manifested/existed as an indistinct medium that would fit well as the dominant aesthetic paradigm of the period. For Jameson, the new narrative provided by video had replaced literature and film within an age in which they both could no longer be seen as a “reliable” index to the *zeitgeist*. Much of its indefinability and undetermined quality had been due to what can be described as a seamless circulation - multidinous or randomised plurality of fleeting images which would exist as a perpetual program within its content, which frequently had appeared to defy the existence of what constituted the real of the previous era. As a result, the video text would appear to exist without fixed meaning as all semblance of the real was effaced within the High Modernist period. This can be discussed in terms of video art’s content often comprising an “open-ended text”.

For Jameson, what had made the concept of video art a worthy extension of film as an index within the High Modernist age is that by contrast with most traditional modern aesthetic concepts designed for (analysing) written texts, video art had needed to be regarded as consisting of “… multiple dimensions of the material, the social, and the aesthetic”. 6
For Jameson, the singular video artwork as a conceptual operation and entity negated the possibility of a fixed text existing or being fully developed from a set of impermanent and shifting values. This had been due to the ever changing system of elements (exemplified by the fleeting nature of elements to be often found in the bulk of the video artwork’s compositional imagery), which would be commensurable to a wider field of total flow of randomised images within any definable social period. As Birringer points out:

Even if we could accurately trace the technological history of video over the past three decades, video-making in the current context of transnational multimedia transmissions cannot be adequately captured, documented, or explained in a single language since the information on video is always a process potentially intermingling a plurality of image/sound repertoires which can be infinitely reprocessed and re-sited.

Because of the multiplicity of unquantifiable and randomised imagery which had formed its compositional and constituent parts problems had often arisen for viewers trying to extract a singular fixed interpretation from video works. This had been due to its being made up of a variety of “indexical” signs which, in Benjaminian terms can be described as “monads” existing side by side within a constellation of other “indexical” signs which are freely exchangeable for any other sign at random. As such, no single sign in this process would take precedence over any other sign within the video text. As Jameson states in relation to this “… as a topic of the operation … it is subject to change without notice … our two signs occupy each other’s positions in a bewildering and well-nigh permanent exchange”. As such, the video text points to signs in a shifting temporary constellation (or system of ephemeral meaning) in a constant state of shifting. Within this, the video image presents us with glimpses of messages. As Jameson points out:

The videotext under consideration here, however, does not allow us to formulate such issues as problems, since its very formal logic – what we have called the ceaselessly rotating momentum of its provisional constellations of signs – depends on effacing them.

In this way, the compositional imagery of the video text in the video artworks shown in galleries had eradicated its own signals. This would be made evident by the fact that signals embedded in the content of the video text pointed to signs within past or present culture that are not separated from other signs within the text, nor within the wider cultural field for that matter. As Jameson states:

The matter grows more complicated, however, when we realize that none of these elements or new cultural signs or logos exists in isolation; the videotext itself is at virtually all moments a process of ceaseless, apparently random, interaction between them.

For Jameson the imagery that comprises a single video text:

… is a ceaseless rotation of elements such that they change place at every moment, with the result that no single element can occupy the position of “interpretant” (or that of primary sign) for any length of time but must be dislodged in turn in the following instant (the filmic terminology of “frames” and “shots” does not seem appropriate for
this kind of succession), falling to the subordinate position in its turn, where it will then be “interpreted” or narrativized by a radically different kind of logo or image content altogether.11

With the object as subject video exists as both object and subject due to its machinery which depersonalises subject and object alike. Seen in this way, the video work as a “non-text” is comprised by a total flow of imagery which is spewed forth or emitted and as such any attempt to analyse its single or fragmentary elements in motion is unattainable. This is due to the imagery too closely referencing elements of other video texts in other video artworks. As a result, viewers of “video time” are often helpless, neutered “mechanically integrated”.12 Thus existing not as a traditional text but as an “ephemeral text” viewing video by itself in the way one would view a painted masterpiece from an earlier period is problematic since video texts are linked by their commonality of total flow. As Jameson points out:

To select - even as an “example” - a single videotext, and to discuss it in isolation, is fatally to regenerate the illusion of the masterpiece or the canonical text and to reify the experience of the total flow from which it was momentarily extracted. Video viewing indeed involves immersion in the total flow of the thing itself, preferably a kind of random succession of three or four hours of tapes at regular intervals.13

If one is to view a video work one must participate and involve and immerse themselves “…in the total flow of the thing itself”.14 This had therefore engendered a need for viewers to watch other works as well and to make relations between unique artworks contained within specific/solitary discursive paradigms. Through this, the video text would see the critical distance of Modernism extirpated. As a result, the singular video artwork had not easily been thought of as an entirely separate text, that is, as an individual work (or masterpiece) but rather as sequential elements within a progressive development. Rather, specific video artworks were often thought of in conjunction with other video works and were usually viewed with other video artworks in mind. Writing on video art within the High Modernist age Jameson points out that:

… there are no video masterpieces, there can never be a video canon, and even an auteur theory of video (where signatures are still evidently present) becomes very problematical indeed.15

As a result, a single video work’s imagery embedded in and extracted from the total flow would homogenise with others in a way which has too much relation with other video and the imagery in previous art. This would arise from the fact that video art had contained traces of elements and ideas/imagery from other works/texts from before its time in addition to images taken from the evolving present. In this way, the video artwork had not referenced the substantiated but rather, randomised moments, which had already existed in some form within a culture that was inherited from the past. For Jameson, the imagery in video art “… no longer features or elements of a form but signs and traces of older forms”.16 In this way, the video art within High Modernity had contained signs, ideas and fragments related to those of past/earlier art and society. As Jameson states:
We must remember that those older forms are still included within the bits and pieces, the bricolated material, of (the) text ... [...] At this most attenuated point in the sign system the signer has become little more than a dim memory of a former sign, and indeed, of the formal function of that now extinct sign.17

Despite this, the video text had addressed a new field – a new theory and critical discourse within a new era. This definition of video art’s properties would indicate the medium’s capacity to represent the (new) zeitgeist from the 1960s through its ability to depersonalise or distance both the subject and object while drawing in the viewer’s gaze towards its “total flow” of imagery.

The conception of “total flow” would be central to Jameson’s account of the High Modernist phase of capitalism. While the critical distance of Modernism which had characterised and formed a central part of the cinematic apparatus and the process of film watching which had become (almost) obsolete, the experience and presence of video watching by contrast had extended to the “whole” or “total flow” experience.

The experience of total flow would exist as an essential and necessary constituent or aspect of consumerist society, which had seen literary texts lose much of their significance as electronic media pervaded its consciousness. As part of this, television commercials had not been intermissions but “… fleeting opportunities to visit the bathroom or throw a sandwich together …”18

This experience would reflect an age “without the sacred and the spiritual” whilst a “materiality” which had been made to relate to everything had been ever present. Seen in this way for those watching video art the connection to realism, and representation had been effaced by video art’s impermanence. As Jameson remarks:

The problem of reference has been singularly displaced and stigmatized in the hegemony of the various poststructuralist discourses which characterizes the current moment (and along with it, anything that smacks of “reality,” “representation,” “realism,” and the like – even the word history has an “r” in it); only Lacan has shamelessly continued to talk about “the Real” (defined, however, as an absence).19

Much of the reason for this had stemmed from the fact that video would exist as a “non-fictive” form of art. In relation to previous forms of art such as literature or film, for example, video art as a temporal art would exist as a “non-fictive” art that is, that it “… does not project fictive time”.20 Instead, it would operate in “real time”, unlike film or the cinema (excluding film in its documentary form). The notion of “real time” manifest in video art as Jameson defines it:

... is objective time; that is to say, the time of objects, a time subject to the measurements to which objects are subject. Measurable time becomes a reality on account of the emergence of measurement itself, that is, rationalization and reification in the closely related senses of Weber and Lukacs; clock time presupposes a peculiar spatial machine – it is the time of a machine, or better still, the time of the machine itself.21

Significant to a defacing of reality from a past age would be that in video watching the memory is often dissolved as few after-images are left in contrast with fictive (or traditional) cinema. Since the
mind needs a certain amount of critical distance to establish meaning it would often be difficult to remember the particularities of what had been seen in the work afterwards as a memory which “… haunts the mind ….”. For Jameson, this exclusion of memory (is in a sense) built into the structure of video art. Through this, video art in a sense had created its own theory by being itself, that is, as a subject of itself. As Jameson puts it, “… the mind’s deeper currents often need to be surprised by indirection, sometimes, indeed, by treachery and ruse …”. Unlike film or literature this was often absent from video art as the new replacement paradigm since it was not held together by “… conventional restraints …”. Yet, although video art’s imagery would possess an almost limitless range of “possibilities and potentialities”, in terms of variety and variability, its length in terms of duration when presented had needed to be short by contrast with earlier forms due to its lack of a conventional structure which the viewer would expect to structure the experience of viewing due to it not being “fictive” or, presenting “fictive time”. Through this, video art’s qualities would anticipate elements of postmodernism within the age of High Modernism.

Hence, this technology as the emergent media of the period had employed language in a new way. In terms of video art having existed as a predominant art paradigm for society, during the period, literary texts by contrast had been subsumed by the continuous information of new media which would (rather paradoxically it would seem) simultaneously permit the “philosophical priority of language …”. While linguistic and semiotic priorities may have paradoxically existed, the very “conceptual instruments” as Jameson describes them had been challenged within this new cultural paradigm of which Jameson describes. The way video addresses a new field – a new critical discourse and new era a new theory is that it:

… ceaselessly reshuffles the fragments of preexistent texts, the building blocks of older cultural and social production, in some new and heightened bricolage: metabooks which cannibalize other books, metatexts which collate bits of other texts-such is the logic of postmodernism in general, which finds one of its strongest and most original, authentic forms in the new art of experimental video.

As Jameson points out, capitalism “… can be periodized by the quantum leaps or technological mutations by which it responds to its deepest systemic crises,” in this regard Jameson would designate video art as being the “… art form par excellence of late capitalism” which should be regarded as the dominant art form within capitalism’s High Modernist phase. This view would be stipulatively defined by the fact that video, would include “… its twin manifestations as commercial television and experimental video, or “video art”. This had differentiated it from film theory and critical standpoints as video’s “… specific features demand to be reconstructed afresh and empty-handed, without imported and extrapolated categories” meaning that video art defies boundaries and categories which had made it problematic. Hence, capitalism can therefore be described in three phases: video would represent its second phase that is its High Modernist phase, with film being tied to the first, computer generated art to the third.
Yet although a problematic form of art (in terms of its imagery and commodified presence) the art institution’s perpetual program of incorporating video art formally legitimised the medium as way of legitimating themselves as important and “necessary” functionaries within the totality of the culture industry. Playing a major role had been these major art institutions whose relationship to the culture industry would exist as both complex and problematic and the corporate sponsors of art who, through their strategies to monopolise culture via the art museum who would gradually utilise video art as a marketing tool. The nationalistic and competitive traits of the major art institutions would engender this as an inevitable outcome.

**The Commoditisation of Video Art**

... if, in other words, there are no more masterpieces, let alone their canon, no more “great” books (and even the concept of good books has become problematic)—if we find ourselves confronted henceforth with “texts,” that is, with the ephemeral, with disposable works that wish to fold back immediately into the accumulating detritus of historical time—then it becomes difficult and even contradictory to organize an analysis and an interpretation around any single one of these fragments in flight.

Whilst Fredric Jameson had evaluated the content of the video artwork as existing as material media without a specific fixed framework Horkheimer and Adorno would analyse elements within the culture as having been constructed and propagated by the culture industry. For Horkheimer and Adorno, the totality of the culture industry would kill Modernist categories of genre and hierarchy. As an important part of the culture industry, the open-ended video text had operated to eradicate a fixed system of signs which would normally be inclined to belong to earlier Modernist artwork. This would occur due to the repetition of signs and ideas embedded in the bulk of its total flow of imagery which would often be something vague and unverifiable. The repetitive tendency within video art’s imagery forms a central element of the video text’s ability to almost instantaneously reproduce recorded images which had provided the imitative quality often concomitant with the operations and ideology of the culture (or “consciousness”) industry’s machine. Due to this, video art was harnessed into its narrow paradigm. As Horkheimer and Adorno state:

Industry is interested in people merely as customers and employees, and has in fact reduced mankind as a whole and each of its elements to this all embracing formula. According to the ruling aspect at the time, ideology emphasizes plan or chance, technology or life, civilization or nature.

For Horkheimer and Adorno, this ideology is unclear and therefore discourages a well-balanced or astute judgements of things. As he points out:

Language based entirely on truth simply arouses impatience to get on with the business deal it is probably advancing. The words that are not meant (sic) appear senseless; the others seem to be fiction, untrue. Value judgments are taken either as advertising or empty talk. Accordingly ideology has been made vague and non-committal, and thus neither clearer nor weaker.
For Horkheimer and Adorno the lack of clarity, or specific direction and lack of commitment, annihilates other attempts to create and establish meaning. They go on to state that:

Its very vagueness, its almost scientific aversion from committing itself to anything which cannot be verified, acts as an instrument of domination. It becomes a vigorous and prearranged promulgation of the status quo.\textsuperscript{34}

As such, during the High Modernist age museums as functionaries of the culture industry, would display video art as a form of “amusement goods”. The governing impetus behind this had stemmed from their need to employ video art as a way of maintaining their status quo - that is, via material media commodification. As Horkheimer and Adorno state:

… mechanization has such power over a main leisure and happiness, and so profoundly determines the manufacture of amusement goods, that his experiences are inevitably after- images of the work process itself.\textsuperscript{35}

Seen in this way, amusement and revenue had been the ideal goal to reach which had been supported by the corporations’ publicity and advertising campaigns which would surround the exhibition. In this way:

Amusement itself becomes an ideal, taking the place of the higher things of which it completely deprives the masses by replacing them in a manner even more stereotyped than the slogans paid for by advertising interests.\textsuperscript{36}

Often within this context, amusement is superficial, ephemeral and temporary and dissipates because appreciation of the work is forced and imposed upon the public as a whole as no individual choice is made. Hence less intellectual input is required from the audience to think independently or critically about what is exhibited. For Horkheimer and Adorno in this situation:

Pleasure hardens into boredom because, if it is to remain pleasure, it must not demand any effort and therefore moves rigorously in the worn grooves of association. No independent thinking must be expected from the audience: the product prescribes every reaction: not by its natural structure (which collapses under reflection), but by symbols.\textsuperscript{37}

The collapse of technology-based works – such a video art – into large scale “spectacles” (such as those at the Pompidou) would popularise the context of the art as an entertainment complex – as Horkheimer and Adorno would state:

The fusion of culture and entertainment that is taking place today leads not only to a deprivation of culture, but inevitably to an intellectualization of amusement.\textsuperscript{38}

As a result, although a great deal of video art’s imagery had in a sense been ephemeral (lacking a fixed direction) it would however, be marketed as having a fixed relevance to progressive contemporary art. This had been achieved as a way to fuel and maintain the culture industry’s necessary significance and status. Within the culture industry, video would be linked to part of a
“system of non-culture, to which one might even concede a certain “unity of style”. Due to its lack of a fixed style the imbrication of video art would be welcomed as a suitable vehicle through the culture industry to order and manipulate the cultural and societal paradigms of society. As Horkheimer and Adorno observe:

In the culture industry the notion of genuine style is seen to be the aesthetic equivalent of domination. Style considered as mere aesthetic regularity is a romantic dream of the past.

What provided (and would continue to provide the culture industry) with so much power is that it is formed out of the participation of major industrial nations which could give licence to the authorities to help maintain its status.

Within each, an unwritten consensus appears within art institutions that would exist as corporations (such as MoMA) and whose aspiration for wealth and prominence had led them to influence other art institutions that would fuel the culture industry’s commodification of various material media (such as video art). For Horkheimer and Adorno:

Significantly, the system of the culture industry comes from the more liberal industrial nations, and all its characteristic media, such as movies, radio, jazz, and magazines, flourish there. Its progress, to be sure, had its origin in the general laws of capital. Gaumont and Pathe, Ulstein and Hugenberg followed the international trend with some success; Europe’s economic dependence on the United States after war and inflation was a contributing factor.

However, the museums legitimised themselves by “defending society” which was done through distraction and desensitisation through which business and amusement would be interwoven and intertwined. Amusement promises freedom from thinking:

As employees, men are reminded of the rational organization and urged to fit in like sensible people. As customers, the freedom of choice, the charm of novelty is demonstrated to them on the screen or in the press by means of the human and personal anecdote. In either case they remain objects.

Yet the art museum had persuaded the public that they provide pleasure:

But the original affinity of business and amusement is shown in the latter’s specific significance: to defend society. To be pleased means to say Yes. It is possible only by insulation from the totality of the social process, by desensitization and, from the first, by senselessly sacrificing the inescapable claim of every work, however inane, within its limits to reflect the whole. Pleasure always means not to think about anything, to forget suffering even where it is shown. Basically it is helplessness. It is flight; not, as is asserted, flight from a wretched reality, but from the last remaining thought of resistance. The liberation which amusement promises is freedom from thought and from negation. The effrontery of the rhetorical question, “What do people want?” lies in the fact that it is addressed – as if to reflective individuals – to those very people who are deliberately to be deprived of this individuality.
Through this, the art institutions as representative constituents of the culture industry, that represent authority would be established. Their propagation of ideas and methods has the mark of “irrefutable” knowledge and truth:

The culture industry tends to make itself the embodiment of authoritative pronouncements, and thus the irrefutable prophet of the prevailing order. It skilfully steers a winding course between the cliffs of demonstrable misinformation and manifest truth, faithfully reproducing the phenomenon whose opaqueness blocks any insight and installs the ubiquitous and intact phenomenon as ideal.  

Art institutions such as MoMA, the Pompidou, the Tate and the AGNSW for example, maintain their purpose by maintaining and propagating a kind of existence – permeated by the culture industry – which is “… itself a substitute for meaning and right”. As Horkheimer and Adorno posit:

Everybody is guaranteed formal freedom. No one is officially responsible for what he thinks. Instead everyone is enclosed at an early age in a system of churches, clubs, professional associations, and other such concerns, which constitute the most sensitive instrument of social control.

The pattern of mass reproduction of imagery is central to the system of the culture industry – within this, “pseudo innovation” forms part of a system. Mass reproduction of images/signals would be employed for advertising in the case of exhibitions of video art during the period 1968-1990. A great deal of this would rely upon the art institution’s support and competition with other art institutions in relation to video art. Yet in the case of video exhibition, the artist and viewer would be confused as the exhibition of video within the gallery “… also affords the viewer access to a two-way machine confusing the relationship between the maker and the consumer of art”. The culture industry’s apparent “innovations” only reflects their methods to reinforce their system of mass reproduction. Through this, audience and society are directed towards the novelty of type (for example, by a label or well-packaged cultural commodity) rather than the contents of the individual work:

It is with good reason that the interest of innumerable consumers is directed to the technique, and not to contents - which are stubbornly repeated, outworn, and by now half-discredited. The social power which the spectators worship shows itself more effectively in the omnipresence of the stereotype imposed by technical skill than in the stale ideologies for which the ephemeral contents stand in.

In this way, MoMA, the Pompidou, the Tate Gallery and the AGNSW would jostle for position within the system – spectacular exhibitions of video art would focus attention on one institution or the other as each attempted to claim primacy.

Moreover, museums would employ their methods to reflect the position of the accomplished individual or citizen as visitor. Through this, “The standard of life enjoyed corresponds very closely to the degree to which classes and individuals are essentially bound up with the system”. In this way, the museum performs a function of “legitimation of social differences”. Directors/curators at these institutions (such as MoMA etc.) as the arbiters of taste for society would purport to be responsible for the legitimation of what constitutes or separates their art from non-art or mass art. In
this way culture becomes synonymous with administration. While this decision-making process seems to be largely arbitrary, the museum through this would define class structure in society. As Bourdieu points out:

Thus, nothing more rigorously distinguishes the different classes than the disposition objectively demanded by the legitimate consumption of legitimate works, the aptitude for taking a specifically aesthetic point of view on objects already constituted aesthetically – and therefore put forward for the admiration of those who have learned to recognize the signs of the admirable.\(^{52}\)

Although the art is homogenised and tacitly accepted by the public it is in the end rejected by an insatiable public:

Criticism and respect disappear in the culture industry; the former becomes a mechanical expertise.\(^{53}\)

Horkheimer and Adorno concur that:

Culture is a paradoxical commodity. So completely is it subject to the law of exchange that it is no longer exchanged; it is so blindly consumed in use that it can no longer be used. Therefore it amalgamates with advertising. The more meaningless the latter seems to be under a monopoly, the more omnipotent it becomes. The motives are markedly economic. […] Advertising is its elixir of life.\(^{54}\)

Much of video art’s popularity had been created by corporate involvement in its promotion by museum infrastructure, support and through advertising. Horkheimer and Adorno point out that:

The triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them.\(^{55}\)

MoMA, the Centre Pompidou, the Tate and the AGNSW’s ideological and political functions would play a significant role in the promotion of the idea of the work through their advertising of exhibitions. Through this, certain video art deemed and promoted as popular had taken precedence over quality, content and meaning. This would be indicative of a culture industry that is concerned with effect as:

… it crushes their insubordination and makes them subserve the formula, which replaces the work. […] The whole inevitably bears no relation to the details - just like the career of a successful man into which everything is made to fit as an illustration or a proof, whereas it is nothing more than the sum of all those idiotic events.\(^{56}\)

In relation to the propagation of these institutions to show video – (this would be all part of the business of culture) – as Horkheimer and Adorno would state:

In the culture industry this imitation finally becomes absolute. Having ceased to be anything but style, it reveals the latter’s secret: obedience to the social hierarchy. […] If the need for amusement was in large measure the creation of industry, which used the subject as a means of recommending the work to the masses – the oleograph by the
dainty morsel it depicted, or the cake mix by a picture of a cake – amusement always reveals the influence of business, the sales talk, the quack’s spiel.\textsuperscript{57}

In this way, the culture industry would set its own standard via the assigning of values, by which all levels of culture/art are made into one. As Horkheimer and Adorno state:

… Benny Goodman appears with the Budapest string quartet, more pedantic rhythmically … while the style of the Budapest players is as uniform and sugary as that of Guy Lombardo. […] The culture industry did away with yesterday’s rubbish by its own perfection, and by forbidding and domesticating the amateurish, although it constantly allows gross blunders without which the standard of the exalted style cannot be perceived. But what is new is that the irreconcilable elements of culture, art and distraction, are subordinated to one end and subsumed under one false formula: the totality of the culture industry.\textsuperscript{58}

Since the entire social process and experience of culture is set by the culture industry the art museum, it can be stated, exploit the status quo by maintaining a market for it “… since all the trends of the culture industry are profoundly embedded in the public by the whole social process, they are encouraged by the survival of the market in this area”.\textsuperscript{59} Driven by nationalism and capitalism, the larger art institutions wield a great deal of power to shape the audience-consumer’s consciousness and by extension their needs as part of their program to maintain the status quo within the totality of the culture industry of which art institutions are a significant part:

The stronger the positions of the culture industry become, the more summarily it can deal with consumers needs, producing them, controlling them, disciplining them, and even withdrawing amusement: no limits are set to cultural progress of this kind.\textsuperscript{60}

Within this, at the lower echelons of the social hierarchy due to their need to conform to a yardstick and in competition with one another which measures their success the masses insist that the status quo – (indiscriminately promulgated and maintained by the authorities) is necessary:

Not to conform means to be rendered powerless, economically and therefore spiritually – to be “self-employed”. […] As naturally as the ruled always took the morality imposed upon them more seriously than did the rulers themselves, the deceived masses are today captivated by the myth of success even more than the successful are. Immovably, they insist on the very ideology which enslaves them. The misplaced love of the common people for the wrong which is done them is a greater force than the cunning of the authorities.\textsuperscript{61}

No doubt culture has a commercial character, which causes it to become inseparable from daily experience. This is done to create a new reality which “… becomes its own ideology through the spell cast by its faithful duplication”.\textsuperscript{62} To do this, it forces together realms of high and low art into a culture for mass consumption. In the case of video art, with repetition and distraction being the central stylistic ingredient of advertising, the imagery containing elements of the same had made video art analogous to the vehicle while the culture industry reiterates its process. Yet, although video art had developed out of the artists’ wish to question the traditional foundation of art (and art viewing), different galleries all over the world had gradually been compelled to display it. Most of this would occur after 1968 after MoMA’s first exhibition of video art.
Notes

1 See F. Jameson, Postmodernism Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, London, Verso, 1991, pp. 70-4.
2 Ibid., p. 68.
3 Ibid., p. 67.
4 Ibid., p. 68.
5 Ibid., p. 67.
6 Ibid.
7 Birringer, op. cit., 145-6.
8 Jameson, op. cit., p. 87.
9 Ibid., p. 89.
10 Ibid., p. 86.
11 Ibid., pp. 90-1.
12 Ibid., p. 74.
13 Ibid., p. 78.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., p. 83.
18 Ibid., p. 70.
19 Ibid., pp. 93-4.
20 Ibid., p. 75.
21 Ibid., pp. 75-6.
22 Ibid., p. 71.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 As Jameson points out “Everything can now be a text … (daily life, the body, political representations), while objects that were formerly “works” can now be reread as immense ensembles or systems of texts of various kinds, superimposed on each other by way of the various intertextualities, successions of fragments, or, yet again, sheer process (henceforth called textual production or textualization)”. Ibid. p.77.
26 Ibid., p. 68.
27 Ibid., p. 96.
28 Ibid., p. 76.
29 Ibid., p. 69.
30 Ibid., p. 70.
31 Ibid., p. 78.
32 Horkheimer and Adorno, op. cit., p. 88.
33 Ibid., p. 88.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid., p. 82.
36 Ibid., p. 86.
37 Ibid., p. 82.
38 Ibid., p. 86.
39 Ibid., p. 76.
40 Ibid., p. 77.
41 Ibid., p. 79.
42 Ibid., p. 88.
43 Ibid., pp. 86-7.
44 Ibid., p. 88.
45 Ibid., p. 89.
46 Ibid., p. 90.
47 Hall and Fifer, op. cit., p. 15.
48 Horkheimer and Adorno, op. cit., p. 81.
49 Ibid., p. 81.
50 Ibid., p. 90.
52 Ibid., p. 40.
53 Horkheimer and Adorno, op. cit., p. 98.
54 Ibid., p. 97.
56 Ibid., p. 75.
57 Ibid., pp. 78-86.
58 Ibid., p. 81.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., p. 86.
61 Ibid., pp. 79-80.
Conclusion

To a large extent MoMA’s imbrication of video art in 1968 had engendered problems in other mainstream museums within the period of High Modernism. Following MoMA, the Tate’s and the AGNSW’s institutionalised frameworks had been challenged by the video artists that had been part of a wider movement of avant-garde artists of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, many of whom had intentionally attempted to break down the conventions instigated by major influential and established art institutions. Much of this had emanated from the artists that initially sought to oppose the institutionalised structures and operations in Modernism. The Pompidou on the other hand would present a more flexible avenue for video art to develop within site-specific and spectacular assemblages which would result from that flexibility.

Initially, during the first and second decades of video art’s rise in the museum what the video artists had wanted to repudiate were the Modernist paradigms which art institutions (such as MoMA) emblematised through their separation of art from reality by the artists. Since the 1960s, the purpose of art had taken a turn to function as a criticism of the myths, tenets and ineluctable laws of Modernism. This had been done to dismantle the past and to dissolve the ideas of the great masters. Through this, new kinds of art were produced out of much crossing over of different categories of architecture, art, film, music, painting, performance, popular culture and sculpture which would result in a gradual shift away from the rigid categories and hierarchy created by Modernist ideology. This led to a new style and implications in contemporary art which was based upon the critical discursive framework which surrounded and emanated from it. As Wallis states:

Indigenous transformations in American art and criticism in the 1970s were fuelled by the introduction of new translations of European critical theory, particularly the works of the Frankfurt School, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Continental feminist theory, and British film theory.¹

Taken collectively, the influence of these theories had “… shifted attention away from the master works towards the operations of Modernism itself, and from the established divisions of traditional culture toward an interdisciplinary examination of the dynamics of representation”.²

Historically, while MoMA had developed a new framework for the propagation of avant-garde art it, in a general sense, would parallel the Louvre’s spirit for categorising art for the purpose of instruction on behalf of the nation it attempted to represent. In this, both MoMA (from 1929) and the Louvre (from 1793) can be regarded as Modernist enclaves. Hence, as an art that emerged from a criticism of Modernist structures, classification and systems of thought, video art’s time-based presence, which would crucially depend upon a lack of classification, codified sequencing or dogmatic hierarchy for its display, had been constrained by MoMA’s doctrinaire institutionalisation which had remained virtually unchanged since 1929. From this, the rethinking of the laws governing representation led to the discovery that classification – which reflected the beginning of Modernist
ideals which were embedded in the Enlightenment was in itself, a construction, fashioned to provide “the criteria for differentiation”. For the early video artists this had been exposed as a fictional methodology that had supplied the codes for the way art would be commodified and perceived, and as such, historically prescribed/recorded. The focus in general terms for the video artists of this period would be a dissection and revision of the traditional framework of art. The discovery that these systems of thought (engendered by the hierarchising world of Modernist classification and representation) had been critically formulated had therefore meant that they were ruled by biases which had brought with them their own set of overdetermined exclusions and limitations. At the centre of this, representation itself, which asserted its meaning as natural facts, had been regarded as a false power which obscured the mechanisms of institutional power -as Wallis states:

Considered in social terms, representation stands for the interests of power. Consciously or unconsciously, all institutionalized forms of representation certify corresponding institutions of power. 

This process would increase video art’s separation from other forms of contemporary art in the gallery spaces controlled by the institutions. Concomitant with this, the institutions as purveyors of the consciousness industry (which commodified video art as material media) had their frameworks stretched as the general outgrowth and popularity of video art’s dynamic field of specific practice which spanned from the late 1960s, would be increasingly established throughout the 1980s and 1990s. As such, the exhibiting of Thierry Kuntzel’s Nostos II (1985) for example, or Paik’s Moon is the Oldest (1965-1992), and other video art associated with the tendency to increase in size over the period was concomitant with the transformation of the museum’s viewing environments during this period. By 1996 Barbara London would point out:

In recent years video installation and video sculpture have emerged as the most fertile forms of video art. By releasing the image from a single screen and embedding it in an environment, artists have extended their installations in time and space. The works envelop the viewer, who moves around and through them.

The museum’s need to promote exhibitions of video art on a larger and often more extravagant scale (which could also incorporate/encourage an immersive/interactivity) reshaped MoMA’s paradigm. As my discussion in this thesis has attempted to reveal, video art’s specific properties within this period had needed to be better understood and enunciated within the galleries. While there had been many kinds of art that had contributed to a need for art museums to redefine their spaces, function and design, video art’s time-based presence in particular assisted in modifying the art museum for the twenty-first century from the “White Cube” to “black box”.

With MoMA and the Pompidou setting a pattern for video art propagation, two museum paradigms for video art display existed concomitantly side by side and in competition with each other. This perpetrated a complex public perception of video art as they experienced it as both a serious form of critical contemporary art and as media-based entertainment. From 1977 the Centre Pompidou’s prototypical framework (it can be stated) created non-hierarchical spaces for video art exhibition.
which reorganised and redefined the normative spectatorial positions defined initially by MoMA’s system for avant-garde art presentation. By lessening the interpretative distance of Modernism through free-flowing (or non-hierarchical) viewing environments the Pompidou’s ability to pose a challenge to MoMA had arisen from its repeated presentation of video art as a large-scale spectacle within its confines. Through this, the Pompidou’s almost continuous display of video art, which mixed distinctions between high and low culture provided an intrinsically different perceptual experience towards art in the museum. This promoted a new relationship to the avant-garde through which video art’s materiality would be encountered –as Pearce would state, “The materiality of objects means that they occupy their own space, and this is how we experience them”.

In London, the Tate’s responses to the escalation in video art exhibition and production (by contrast with the Pompidou) reflected attempts to respond to MoMA’s insistence towards video as an important form of contemporary art. In attempting to keep pace with MoMA’s Modernist classification of video art, the Tate’s classical institutional framework had been largely problematic. As discussed, the Tate’s 1976 Video Show had revealed that video art’s time-based and frequently positioned interactive form had not been suitable for their environment nor their understanding of relevance. By the 1980s, the Tate’s viewing environments were gradually modified towards becoming something that could attempt to parallel MoMA’s “White Cube” structure for the display of contemporary art. Examples of problems such as these helped influence a different kind of museum paradigm for the period after 1990 –the AGNSW would mirror the Tate’s relevant modification of its viewing environments. Through changes in the institutional structure of the Modernist museum the seemingly naïve assumptions or teleology of video artists’ that their works would be vindicated as video art’s historical trajectory through the art museum from 1968-1990 would help reshape the paradigmatic model for avant-garde art propagation. Whilst this would begin in the period discussed within this thesis full articulation of more flexible viewing environments would not become fully realised until the digital era (post 1990).

There would be a number of salient problems that the art institutions discussed in this thesis would experience. The institutionalisation of video art would make it more accessible to a wider audience, its global exploitation by institutions such as MoMA, the Centre Pompidou, the Tate Gallery and AGNSW which regarded video art as a commercially dynamic commodity removed it from its original utilitarian and ideological function. Video art, from its inception would oppose and reconfigure the traditional structures inherent in Modernism and the homogeneity of mainstream media form. Videotape disintegration and the institution’s subsequent establishing of preservation centres for video art, encouraged a typology of video art that was created by positioning the artists as participants within an institutionalised assemblage of history. Moreover, since tape preservation would be costly the selectivity of video art by the institutions would be limited by their preferences for what they determined commercially dynamic (or as historically significant). This resulted in many video artworks being lost, discarded or forgotten as the processes of time would disintegrate the recordings. Similarly, as technology progressed formats and hardware necessary for exhibition would become redundant and unavailable.
As “channelers” of the consciousness industry were often run by wealthy trustees as political institutions whose world was often dominated by fiscal demands, corporate sponsorship of video art exhibitions via the blockbuster, which was an attempt to draw large crowds for the exhibition had resulted in many cases in video art becoming something far more homogenised than the artists had intended. As Haacke has pointed out:

Ambitious exhibition programs that could not be financed through traditional sources led museums to turn to corporations for support. The larger, more lavishly appointed these shows and their catalogues became, however, the more glamour the audience began to expect.10

While much of video as a participation-based sculptural form remained at the core of these works, over time, it gradually morphed from the single-channel monitor narrowcast in a gallery to spectacular installation forms heavily reliant upon complex equipment. This change had particularly arisen during the 1980s when corporate sponsorship assumed a much more prominent level within the major institutions of art. By promoting video art through blockbuster exhibitions and larger corporate shows, the art museums promoted their selectivity and the global appeal of mainstream media art whilst disenfranchising themselves. This paved the way for the medium’s mass appeal as a more mainstream media art within a great deal of the cruder forms emerging from the wider cultural community. The corporate approval and promotion of certain artists would be obscured as a form of institutional charity for the artists. As Ritter states:

A few years ago companies thought sponsoring the arts was charitable. Now they realize there is also another aspect; it is a tool they can use for corporate promotion in one form or another.11

Haacke would reiterate and elaborate:

Corporate public relations officers know that the greatest publicity benefits can be derived from high-visibility events, shows that draw crowds and are covered extensively by the popular media; these are shows that are based on and create myths – in short, blockbusters. […] The adjustments that museums make in the selection and promotion of works for exhibition and in the way they present them create a climate that supports prevailing distributions of power and capital and persuades the populace that the status quo is the natural and best order of things. Rather than sponsoring intelligent, critical awareness, museums thus tend to foster appeasement.12

MoMA’s enormous wealth would be provided by a large variety of wealthy corporations, trustees, and financiers in addition to state and national government agencies. MoMA would perfect its “White Cube” model and incorporate a segregated viewing space for video art within its institutional framework. The Centre Pompidou’s propagation of video art from 1977 in contrast would be focused upon establishing the spectacular. Rather than follow MoMA’s overall policy and programme for classification within a hierarchical and doctrinaire focus on art history the Pompidou would opt to blur distinctions between high and low art by exhibiting video art in non-hierarchical environments.
In contrast to MoMA and the Pompidou, the Tate Gallery within the period 1968-1990 had not positioned video art as central to its agenda. This had been due to consistent shortages of funding and an overall disregard towards the significance of the contemporary avant-garde. Whilst the other venues had incorporated international video art as an important element within the aegis of contemporary art, the Tate’s infrequent displays of the medium had been situated in a classical museum structure and set of relations which had not been conducive to video art’s specific objectives. By contrast with this, and although not in the same league as MoMA or the Pompidou, the AGNSW had exhibited more international developments in video art than the Tate due predominantly to its Biennale programmes from 1976. These had brought more money to the gallery via increased corporate and government funding over the period examined within this thesis. However, it is arguable that rather than promoting the gallery internationally (on the scale of MoMA and the Pompidou), the AGNSW’s exhibitions of video art would expose Australia to foreign developments while local artists were provided with an opportunity to participate upon a notable national stage.

Critically however, many commentators within the period 1968-1990 had regarded the proliferation of imagery/video art negatively. With so many video artworks displayed in, and propagated by the institutions, new questions had been raised by theoreticians regarding the moral, political and economic effects of technology in culture/society questioning the culture industry’s raison d’etre. While the preponderance of video art (which continued to increase from the 1960s) would challenge the institutional structure of the art institutions (and in turn be shaped by them), the overabundance of imagery being projected upon society within the period would assume a primary position of focus. The exploitative nature of the culture industry would embody the corporate greed of a commodity-based culture. Hence, the public’s gadget fetish of technology would spark institutional interest in alternative forms of media-based art. For Stuart Marshall, “Many galleries adapted their marketing strategies to recuperate these works as saleable commodities”.

Cultural theorists such as Fredric Jameson who would lay the foundations of the discursive field around video art would point out that video art had replaced film and other forms of art (painting and sculpture) identifying it as the index to the zeitgeist. As discussed in Chapter 5, the elements in the video text were seen as almost incomprehensible due to an abandonment of narrative structure and disassociative imagery which had made it vague and difficult to comprehend as a traditional “text”. For those that would follow this view the creation and display of video art in museums within the period would contribute to the loss of fixed constructs of meaning and singular renderings of culture. This loss had been defined by theorists such as Jean Baudrillard, Jurgen Habermas and Francois Lyotard who described the era as pointing towards postmodernity. For Baudrillard the overabundance of imagery in society had equalled mass art spectacle.

Part of what had helped to add or create the circumstances by which to ignite Baudrillard’s argument had been the propagation of electronic images by the culture industry in which video art had been incorporated. For Baudrillard, video artists with the assistance of the major museums would be
responsible for adding to the calamities inherent in the new age of the postmodern, criticising the
proliferation of images arguing “… that history has “gone into the reverse”. The complexity of
new sciences and technologies out of which exist new models “… to understand the world have
become more real, more sophisticated and accurate than reality itself”. For Baudrillard, this
stimulated the exchange of information to such an extent and had lead to the historical or grand
narrative of Modernism “… to become so overdetermined by competing meanings, explanations and
appropriations that they can no longer be subsumed within a particular system or grand narrative”. Nevertheless, the major institutions of art preservation and exhibition would be governed by a
philosophical duty to construct cultural narratives since the Louvre.

While video artworks were frequently constructed as a critique of the media’s multiple use of
imagery and “… explosion of multiple sources and channels of competing interpretations, each of
which strives to be the fastest, most accessible and enticing for the public …” the major art
institutions had been the vehicle for the overloading of images into culture and society. The
proliferation of these images would reveal their close relation to much of the technological and
information processes that would be criticised within wider society. Information technology’s
proliferation and dominance has resulted in an age where the existence of meaning was subsumed
into a new postmodern consciousness that lacked significance:

… a world of images whose referents have disappeared, a play of surfaces and effects
as the media compete for the sexiest, most up-to-the minute “real-time” reports, a
playful and depthless world that has lost critical distance from its sources in the
pastiches and ironies.

While video would form part of the technology information age Baudrillard’s view is that a pseudo
reality had been created via images such as those represented in video art and would appear to
contravene the progress of history which, as Hegel argues “… is the development of a rational grasp
of reality”. Baudrillard had posited that progress, as such, has ended. It has come to the end of its
course as the new age (dominated by technology – information) which would cancel out reason itself
which is not part of the postmodern universe that video art had in a great sense introduced and
encouraged. In the current “post-postmodern” age reason itself cannot be employed to “map” or
ascertain, explore or examine what is real due to it existing within the Modernist paradigm.

Raymond Williams would point out that “… the relation between 20th century communications,
technology and society are accounted for by the strong argument of “technological determinism”
which referred to “… a newly developed technology as being abstracted from society …”. Francois Lyotard had posited that the proliferation of imagery perpetrated by the institutions led to
“… developing authoritarian technocracy” which resulted in the death of the author and the recipient
of no specific addressee which created a change in narrative legitimation. In his expression of this
shift, Lyotard argued that the nature and status of knowledge move beyond past structures
legitimating knowledge as they “… lose their power and stability”. This account of the artist as
philosopher can be seen to relate directly to the art of the video artists such as Paik, Graham,
Nauman, and Hatoum whose creations for writers such as Jameson along with commercial video would exist as the dominant aesthetic of the postmodern or late capitalist age.

Video art’s true impulse to kerb, temper or challenge mass media would never occur to any great extent. Yet video art would participate in influencing the reshaping of Modernist museum ideologies. From around the mid-1990s, with the advent of new digital experiments and computer-based art the presence of video art would start to be subsumed/diminished into other technological definitions.

As early as 1991 John Wyver would question the relevance of video art asking why should there be a continuance of video art exhibitions and festivals when TV would often be as “… distinctive, as intellectually provocative and as progressive as most works of art?”. In this catalogue, video is regarded as a “revolution” comparable to the photographic revolution of around the 1840s. The video revolution would stem from an “analogue-based” culture, transmogrified into “digital-based” culture, which stores all information in their purest form turning them into electronic impulses, which are then manipulated and stored in various other formats without loss. Wyver refers to a “digital-based” culture which now links and converges distinct industries such as telecommunications, publishing and computing, together with film, television, video and all elements of contemporary moving image culture. For Wyver, unlike digital culture video art does not allow other elements from other image-making cultures into its own. For Wyver, although video “… was defined by the medium, video became to be defined against TV”. Critics such as Wyver had believed that television was never as powerful or biased as video artists had believed it to be. Through video art’s struggles to be taken seriously by the art world, (since its beginning through to the present) a “superstructure” or “connected network” had evolved of “distributors, festivals, critics, curators and … funders” which had been extremely important for the promotion of its forms. Through this, video became “… increasingly professionalised” which had resulted in “… an exclusive definition of video” that argued for it to be taken seriously and independently from other forms of art/creative endeavour.

By 1990 video art had become synonymous with the gallery and/or museum. At the same time media and advertising would become synonymous with fashion and popular music. As a result, an increasing amount of artists wishing to explore video as a fine art practice within community-based artist-run spaces were established. While this was taking place art institutions such as MoMA, the Centre Pompidou, the Tate Gallery and AGNSW would continue with their propagation and promulgation of video art. As Elwes observed:

Those state-funded galleries that showed video installation in the early 1980s maintained their patronage and international film and video festivals … continued to flourish.

Moreover, not only did large art institutions maintain their propagation of video art but they also had refined their methods of support. In this, they had followed the support of powerful advertising
tycoons, such as Charles Saatchi, who had begun to invest in video-based artworks. Commercial galleries would concur with the process and further commodify a broader scope of video artworks which had previously been “… infinitely reproducible and effectively uncollectible”.  

Much of the increase in video art’s popularity during the 1980s may have been comprised of fashionable interest in commodifying its forms coupled with the capacity of video art to be used within spectacular configurations (commensurate to the proportions of cinema). In effect by late ’80s and early 1990s there was a tendency in video art to articulate the façade of mass culture and a propensity to:

… recycle popular culture made it more accessible to a wider, non-specialist audience.  

Major art institutions would imbricate younger artists working with video into the constructed narrative of the early period. To the names of Paik, Nauman, Hall, Viola, Hill, others such as Gordon, Lucier, Muntadas, Ovalle, Oursler and Rist would be added into the more flexible framework of “media-based art”. As such, without any opposing factors or currents video art’s commercialisation came to reflect what Peter Kardia has called a “collectivisation of consciousness”. This had emanated with much video art often drawing from popular imagery in the media thus circumnavigating, yet perpetuating a totality in the flow of imagery within culture. Yet, although the art form after 1990 would proliferate even more strongly during the 1990s video art would appear to lose its direction as it became commodified and incorporated into mainstream media and culture. This was exacerbated by the institutions who had increasingly become business empires “… that nominated video as the ideal medium on which to display its wares”. In other words, video with the sharp escalation in technological advances was utilised by the institutions as an illustrative vehicle to promote their spaces as being culturally unique. Video art would be subsumed into other technological forms and, as such, into evolving cultural paradigms. The position of video art within the grand narrative structures of institutional art would dissipate as digital technology would shape the practice and discourse of video art –interestingly, the early works and installations of video art would retain their notoriety within the history of Modernity as artefacts.

Video art is unique as it had been contained by technology determined within a very specific period in time 1968-90. As a result, the form itself retains the imprint of this technology and specific mode of production which is inextricably linked to a specific time in which it was produced. Its mechanics which could be seen on monitors or screens in gallery spaces within 1968-90 period had the capacity to spatially displace present representations of time and structures of exhibition practice which summarised cultural values. Through this, it would create its own specific and unique discourse that secures it to a particular period of time. While many other museums (not mentioned in this study) would exhibit video art it would be the mainstream museums’ involvement and presentation of it (particularly MoMA’s) which would control the development and discourse around its form. MoMA would be followed by the Centre Pompidou which offered an alternative reading and experience of
video art. Following these exemplars museum paradigms would be altered in more traditional gallery frameworks (such as the Tate and AGNSW) to imbricate video art on a global scale. The museums in New York, Paris, London and Sydney would generate a global interconnectivity to the propagation of video art from which it became a widely acknowledged form of contemporary art that would preface the new relationship between art and technology. As a result, video artworks can be seen as specific historical artifacts within the cultural showcases of the world.

The opening and closing of a parenthesis is a pertinent explanation for my discussion of video art’s history within the art institution as a form that would become an “index to the zeitgeist” by the early to mid-1990s. Due to the mainstream museums which popularised it, video art (as Jameson pointed out) became ubiquitous in society and culture. The cause of this presence was greatly stimulated by the mechanisms of a culture industry which represented advancement within the mainstream museums in this study. While video art had rallied against the institutionalisation of art during the 1960s, conversely by the late 1980s it had reflected a period when “old faiths and oppositional practices in video diminished”. 32

Initially my fascination with video art had stemmed from encountering a set of video monitors within an exhibition at the Tate Modern in 2000. The incongruity of the monitor within the gallery for me was particularly pronounced – looking out of place and awkward. 33 Yet interestingly the work (Nauman’s in this particular case) dominated and fascinated me over many other works within the gallery. The contradiction of “values” which were experienced at the time would lead the author into this thesis.

This study of MoMA, the Centre Pompidou, the Tate Gallery and the AGNSW as museums has attempted to help the reader understand how the phenomena of experimental video art gradually spread globally becoming as prominent in art galleries as any other type of contemporary art within the 1968-1990 period. From the 1960s video art as a unique cutting edge form of contemporary art led to a proliferation of form and engendered it within the upper echelons of institutional art. This would propel the development and application on more accessible and articulate developments in creative electronic image production. For one, this study of video art in relation to MoMA, Pompidou, Tate, and AGNSW has attempted to expose the paradox and explain the significance of the form within a specific moment of art. While I have also attempted to show the contrast between the nations it outlines and reveals the peculiarities of a period when video art’s anti-institutional stance had become integrated within the institutionalised sphere of art.

Through an examination of four distinct and geographically separated art institutions a discussion on the mechanisms and priorities circulating around the proliferation of video art reveals the nature of its institutionalised evolution. This in turn, reveals aspects of each institution regarding their own histories, objectives and processes. Each of the four museums (examined in this thesis) would apply their own distinctive traits upon a form of contemporary art that can be viewed as problematic to traditional habits/processes of exhibition and acquisition and acquisition. The form, technological or
sculptural, of video art would force a reconsideration of those habits within each of the institutions discussed. The impetus behind the imbrication of video art within each would extend from the enthusiasm of the artists working with spatio-temporal forms as well as the viewing public. There can be little doubt that exposure of video art – albeit driven by MoMA and the American artists it would privilege - would initiate an attention to specific local communities surrounding each institution. This would then incorporate specificities of approaches and concerns of many British, French/European and Australian video artists into the discursive paradigm of video art (particularly in the late 1980s).³⁴

Whilst this thesis is unable to contain a full discussion of the video art period in relation to the problematics it would present to the institutionalised sphere of the art museum the author hopes that the examples examined within this thesis will assist the reader into securing an informed understanding of the main issues involved.
Notes

1 B. Wallis (ed.), *Art After Modernism*, op. cit., p. xiii.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid. p. xiv.
4 Ibid., p. xv.
6 This shift been part of an overall attempt to redefine museum space as particularly from the 1960s many artists operating had “… defied conventional museum installation and, in many cases museum politics”. By the 1970s particularly in Europe many artists had been determined “… to go beyond the museum’s walls”. For example, see the *Beyond the Limits Project*, 1971. Newhouse, op. cit., 109.
7 See Perl, op. cit.
8 Pearce, op. cit., pp. 15-6.
10 Ibid., p. 409.
12 Haacke, ibid., pp. 410-411.
15 Ibid., p. 94.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., p. 94.
18 Ibid., p. 95.
19 Ibid., p. 93.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., pp. 317-8.
27 Elwes, op. cit., p.159.
28 Ibid., p.159.
29 Ibid.
30 Cited in ibid., p. 161.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., p.159.
33 It so happened that this first-hand experience of video art in the gallery took place concurrently with a course of study I was undertaking at the University of Reading, England titled “Modernism, Postmodernism and Late 20th Century Sculpture”.
34 This would relate to artists such as Catherine Elwes, Martial Raysse, Karl Hartmut Lerch & Claus Holtz, Stephen Jones and Peter Callas for example.
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