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THE GLOBAL PLAY OF NAM JUNE PAIK
THE ARTIST THAT EMBRACED AND TRANSFORMED MARSHALL MCLUHAN’S DREAMS INTO REALITY

What else can be said of Nam June Paik and his artistic practice that perhaps has not been said before? My guess is not very much... and while I write my first lines to this introduction I realize that it is already sounding like a classic Latin ‘invocatio,’ or request to assistance from the divinity, used by writers when having to tread complex waters.

Nam June Paik and Marshall McLuhan are two of the numerous artists and authors who inspired my formative years. If one cannot deny Paik’s love of play and satire imbued in popular culture and used to disguise a real intellectual and conceptual approach to the artwork, neither can easily be discounted McLuhan’s strong advocacy of the medium as a powerful tool that technology can be, so powerful that is able to obscure and sideline the message itself in the name of the medium.

‘Marshall McLuhan’s famous phrase ‘Media is message’ was formulated by Herbert Wiener in 1948 as ‘The signal, where the message is sent, plays equally important role as the signal, where message is not sent.’\(^\text{1}\)’

The construction of this hybrid book, I hope, would have pleased Paik for it is a strange construction, collage and recollection, of memories, events, places and artworks. In this volume collide present events, past memories, a conference and an exhibition, all in the name of Nam June Paik, the artist who envisaged the popular future of the world of media.

Paik remains perhaps one of the most revolutionary artists, for his practice was mediated, geared towards the masses and not necessarily or preeminently dominated by a desire of sitting within the establishment. He also challenged the perception of what art should be and at the same time undermined elitisms through the use, at his time, of what were considered non-artistic media. Some of the choices in his career, both in terms of artistic medium and in terms of content, can be defined as visionary as well as risky to the point of bravery or idiocy, depending on the mindset of the critic.

That some of the artworks may be challenging for the viewer as well as the art critic is perhaps obvious – as obvious was Paik’s willingness to challenge the various media he used, the audience that followed him and the established aesthetic of his own artistic practice. Taking risks, particularly taking risks with one’s own artistic practice, may also mean to risk a downward spiral; and Paik did not seem to shy away from artworks’ challenging productions and made use of varied and combined media, therefore re-defining the field of art and placing himself at the center of it.

In the following decades, Paik was to transform virtually all aspects of video through his innovative sculptures, installations, single-channel videotapes, productions for television, and performances. As a teacher, writer, lecturer, and advisor to foundations, he continually informed and transformed 20th century visual culture.

Therefore, it seems limited to define Paik as ‘the father of video art’ when his approaches were to resonate in a multiplicity of fields and areas.

Paik’s latest creative deployment of new media is through laser technology. He has called his most recent installation a “post-video project,” which continues the articulation of the kinetic image through the use of laser energy projected onto scrims, cascading water, and smoke-filled sculptures. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Paik’s work shows us that the cinema and video are fusing with electronic and digital media into new forms of expression and forms of appearance. The end of video and television as we know them signals a transformation of our visual culture.\(^\text{2}\)

When Mike Stubbs and Omar Kholeif approached me to create this book, the challenge was to create a structure for the material but also to keep the openness that characterizes so many of Paik’s artworks and so many of the approaches that he has inspired.

I found the best framework in one of Paik’s artworks that was presented for the first time in the United Kingdom, at FACT, in Liverpool, thanks to the efforts of both Stubbs and Kholeif.\(^\text{3}\)

My fascination with the Laser Cone’s re-fabrication\(^\text{4}\) in Liverpool was immediate and I wanted to reflect in the publication, albeit symbolically, the multiple possibilities and connections that underpinned the Laser Cone’s re-fabrication and its medium, as well as Paik’s and McLuhan’s visions of the world to come, made of light, optics and lasers.

The word laser is actually an acronym; it stands for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation. Nam June Paik undertook a residency with Bell Labs, who were the inventors of the laser. It was here that he created his 1956 piece Digital Experiment at Bell Labs, exploring the stark contrast between digital and analogue and his fascination with technology in its material form. His work with Bell set the precedent for artists and musicians to start using technology creatively in a new way.\(^\text{5}\)

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This catalog became a tool to mirror and perhaps ‘transmediate’ the laser installation “made of a huge green laser that [...] corpse(ed)” FACT with Tate Liverpool. Travelling 800 metres as the crow flies, the beam of light [...] made a symbolic connection between the two scenes of their joint exhibition of video artist, pioneer and composer Nam June Paik. Artist Peter Appleton, who was behind the laser which joined the Anglican and Metropolitan cathedrals in Liverpool during 2008 Capital of Culture, was commissioned by FACT to create the artwork, Laser Link, which references Nam June Paik’s innovative laser works.

The catalog is in itself a work that reflects the laser connections, the speed of contacts, the possibility of connecting a variety of media as easily as connecting people from all parts of the world. In this phantasmagoria of connections it almost seems possible to visualize the optic cables and WiFi that like threads join the people and the media of McLuhan’s “global village” and the multiplicities of media that Paik invited us to use to create what I would like to define as the contemporary “bastard art.”

Lanfranco Aceti
Editor in Chief, Leonardo Electronic Almanac
Director, Kisa Gallery

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF

For me personally this book represents a moment of further transformation of LEA, not only as a journal publishing volumes as in the long tradition of the journal, but also as a producer of books and catalogs that cater for the larger community of artists that create bastard art or bastard science for that matter.

ENDNOTES AND REFERENCES

7. Art as a bastard is interpreted, in this passage, as something of uncertain origins that cannot be easily defined and neatly encapsulated in a definition or framework. “Art is often a bastard; the parents of which we do not know” Nam June Paik as cited in Florence de Meredieu, Digital and Video Art, trans. Richard Elliott (Edinburgh: Chambers, 2005), 118.
The Future Is Now?

Far and Wide: Nam June Paik is an edited collection that seeks to explore the legacy of the artist Nam June Paik in contemporary media culture. This particular project grew out of a collaboration between FACT, Foundation for Art and Creative Technology, and the Tate Liverpool, who in late 2010-2011 staged the largest retrospective the artist’s work in the UK. The first since his death, it also showcased the premieres of Paik’s laser work in Europe. The project, staged across both sites, also included a rich public programme.

Of these, two think tank events, The Future Is Now Media Arts, Performance and Identity after Nam June Paik and The Electronic Superhighway: Art after Nam June Paik brought together a forum of leading artists, performers and thinkers in the cross-cultural field together to explore and dissect the significance of Paik within broader culture.

This programme was developed by a large group of collaborators. The discursive programme was produced by FACT in partnership with Caitlin Page, then Curator of Public Programmes at Tate. One of our primary research concerns was exploring how Paik’s approach to creative practice fragmented existing ideological standpoints about the visual arts as a hermetically sealed, self-referential canon. Drawing from Bruno Latour, Norman M. Klein and Jay David Bolter, among many others — our think tank and, as such, this reader, sought to study how the visual field has proliferated across disciplines through the possibilities that are facilitated by technology. At the same time, we were keen to examine how artists now possess a unique form of agency — one that is simultaneously singular and collective, enabled by the cross-embedded nature of the current technological field.

These positions are explored throughout the reader and our programme and in this special edition of the Leonardo Electronic Almanac. Here, the artist who goes by the constructed meme of the “Famous New Media Artist, Jeremy Bailey” tracks Rosalind Krauss’s influence and transposes her theoretical approach towards video art to the computer, examining the isolated act of telepresent augmented reality performance. Roy Ascott gives a nod to his long-standing interest in studying the relationship between cybertexts and consciousness. Eminent film and media curator, John G. Hanhardt honours us with a first-hand historical framework, which opens the collection of transcripts, before further points of departure are developed.

Researchers Jamie Allen, Gabriella Galati, Tom Schofield, and Emile Deveraux used these frameworks retrospectively to extrapolate parallels, dissonances and points of return to the artist’s work. Deveraux and Allen focus on specific pieces Deveraux discusses Paik and Shuya Abe’s Raster Manipulation Unit Ltd.eo “The Weburator” (1970), while Allen surveys a series of tendencies in the artist’s work, developed after he was invited to visit to the Nam June Paik Center in South Korea. Galati and Schofield stretch this framework to explore broader concerns. Schofield considers the use of data in contemporary artwork, while Galati explores the problematic association with the virtual museum being archived online.

It is worth mentioning at this stage that there were many who joined in contributing to this process, who did not partake formally in this reader or the public programme. Dara Birnbaum, Tony Conrad, Yoko Ono, Cory Arcangel, Laurie Anderson, Ken Hakuta, Marisa Olson, all served as sources of guidance, whether directly or indirectly through conversations, e-mails, and contacts.

Still, there remain many lingering questions that are not answered here, many of which were posed both by our research and organisational processes. The first and most straightforward question for Caitlin and I was: why is it so difficult to find female artists who would be willing to contribute or speak on the record about Paik’s influence? It always seemed that there were many interested parties, but so very few who were eager to commit to our forum.

The second and perhaps more open-ended question is: what would Nam June Paik have made of the post-internet contemporary art scene? Would Paik have been an advocate of the free distribution of artwork through such platforms as UbuWeb and YouTube? Would he have been accepting of it, if it were ephemeral, or would he have fought for the protection of licensing? This question remains: could an artist charged with bringing so much openness to the visual arts, have been comfortable with the level of openness that has developed since his death? There is much that remains unanswered, and that, we can only speculate. Far and Wide does not offer a holistic biography or historical overview of the artist’s work or indeed its authority. Rather, it serves to extract open-ended questions about how far and wide Nam June Paik’s influence may have travelled, and to consider what influence it has yet to wield.

Omar Kholeif
Editor and Curator
FACT, Foundation for Art and Creative Technology

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MOSCOW
NAPLES
NEW YORK
INTRODUCTIONS 

and

JOHN G. HANHARDT

KEYNOTE SPEECH

This text is a transcription of a speech from:

Nam June Paik Conference

The Future Is Now: Media Arts, Performance and Identity after Nam June Paik presented by FACT and Tate Liverpool

Friday 18 February 2011

Mike Stubbs: My name is Mike Stubbs and I am the chief executive of FACT. I am also a sort of dormant artist who was heavily influenced by the work of Nam June Paik in the late 1970s. I placed one of my video cassettes on the LVA’s shelf in 79 Wardour Street next to the Global Groove tape that was sitting there, so this is of personal interest to me. We have got some great speakers here with us today. Our chair is Dr. Sarah Cook from the University of Sunderland, who has also been moderating the conversation we have been having on the CRUMB Curating New Media website and news list, JISC over the last six weeks or so. I will be introducing her in a moment, but first I have a few people to thank. Most importantly I have to thank Mr. Yong So Hu from the Tate’s Asia Acquisitions Committee, as it was his funding that made this conference today possible. Likewise, the Tate has a strong interest in innovation and we both share very strong educational programs. As Mike said, I am based at the University of Sunderland so I do have a personal interest to me. We have got some great speakers here with us today. Our chair is Dr. Sarah Cook from the University of Sunderland, who has also been moderating the conversation we have been having on the CRUMB Curating New Media website and news list, JISC over the last six weeks or so. I will be introducing her in a moment, but first I have a few people to thank. Most importantly I have to thank Mr. Yong So Hu from the Tate’s Asia Acquisitions Committee, as it was his funding that made this conference today possible. FACT holds collaboration at its heart, evidenced by our long-standing collaboration program. Likewise, the Tate has a strong interest in innovation and we both share very strong educational programs. We can’t talk about Nam June Paik without thinking about him as an artist who made collaboration a practice. Nam June Paik, from my understanding, was an artist who didn’t really want to be an artist, and it is these kinds of artists that I am strongly attracted to: people who don’t want to live up to that image of being an artist. We also know to some extent, as Jeremy Bailey demonstrated in contemporary fashion, that the spirit of today should be a bit of fun. This isn’t an academic conference; this is a symposium to celebrate the work of Nam June Paik, and I hope that during the day we will learn a lot about him.

I was fortunate in September 2009 to go to the Nam June Paik conference, held at the Nam June Paik Center just outside Seoul, and I was just re-reading some of the proceedings from that conference. Paik is an extremely eclectic, broad, and prolific practice and we are only going to skim the surface, today anyway. We do, however, have some real experts here who are going to share some of their knowledge. I am now going to turn it over to Sarah Cook, our chair for today, and thank you all for coming.

Sarah Cook: Thank you Mike. I am really glad to be here today to host this conference. As the chair, I am the person you should talk to if you have questions that are not being answered throughout the day, so I can ferry them across to our panelists and speakers.

As Mike said, I am based at the University of Sunderland so I do have a bit of an academic role, but I am also a practicing curator; so I’m really excited that we’ve got presentations and performances by artists throughout the day. It was great to have such a fun start to the day with Jeremy Bailey at 5 am in Toronto. As Mike said, this day is experimental in the spirit of Paik; it is very much about interspersing some good scholarly research and some really interesting information from our speakers and mixing that up with these performances. Although Marisa Olson can’t be here we might get a chance to show some of her work on screen this afternoon, so she will be physically present on the screen in a different way to Jeremy Bailey. I think that what’s significant about the way that this exhibition is structured, and so therefore how this conference has come together, is the real sharing between Tate Liverpool and FACT. The conference is really brought together with the efforts of both of those organizations. Not only that, but the way the exhibition is spread across the two venues is really significant, with some of the more historical works at Tate Liverpool and then some of the more experimental work here, including new commissions that were made specifically for the FACT space. I think that it is great to be able to bring artists in to work in the spirit of Paik and to be able to include their work in this way.

On the discussion list that Mike mentioned, we have been talking about that from the point of view of the curator. What is the distinction between producing a more museum-based historical exhibition and then working in the very living spirit of Paik? I am hoping that today’s conference will address how Paik was not only influential to contemporary media artists but also in prefiguring the way that we interact with media today. I’m thinking particularly of the social side of media, prefiguring things like the blog, YouTube and video file sharing, those kinds of working methods; so let’s hope that kind of thread also comes up. Please do not be afraid to ask questions that aren’t so much about art, but also about what it is like to live in this world and to think about media in a more expanded way. I think that questioning was what Paik was really about in his work.
So I am going to introduce John Hanhardt, who is our first speaker today. We are very glad that he has joined us from New York. It was a nice surprise to connect with John in that he set up the film and video community in the Walker Art Center, and when I worked at the Center in Minneapolis a few years ago we had just that, at that point, established a new media study collection. This idea of a study collection as being something that somehow aren’t yet quite legitimate enough to be allowed in a permanent collection is a nice one. They are reference copies and things you go back to again and again, inform how you think about a permanent collection in a museum. I was really pleased to have that little connection because I think the film and video study collection there is really important. John has also done work for both the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Guggenheim, and right now he is the Senior Curator for Media Arts in the Paik Archives at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. He also does some curating for Madison Square Park, which is a great space in New York City showcasing outdoor installations. I think that his combination of understanding historically important work, what needs to be seen in museums and galleries, and what is happening out on the street brings a fantastic range of curatorial experience to the discussion.

We are really lucky that we have John here today and I am going to ask him to come up and present now. Please keep your questions for after the talk.

**John Hanhardt:** I just wanted to say, first of all, what a pleasure it is to be here. I was fortunate enough to be at the opening of the exhibition in December, and I also saw the Nam June Paik show during its run in Düsseldorf. It is very interesting to see all the different spaces and different representations of the work. There are all curatorial issues in terms of how to represent an artist and how to describe the range of his achievements. I would just like to express my appreciation to Sook-Kyung Lee here at Tate Liverpool and to Susanne Rennert at the Kunstdpalast in Düsseldorf, the co-curators of the exhibition. I’d also like to acknowledge the challenge they had to represent, as I said, this extraordinary artist.

I want to pick up on this issue of collaboration, both institutional and in the way that artists practice. My presentation is also going to stress the issue of process: how Nam June Paik created and worked through different materials and methods. As I said, this occasion to be here at FACT is, I think, a very important illustration of institutional differences and breakdowns. I think, too, that the representation of the videotapes here is very important, as they are core to Nam June’s work. We know a great deal about his installations, sculptures, and other materials but these tapes are very important and need to be integrated into this picture, so I am delighted to see them here.

To understand Nam June Paik, one really has to understand that he embraced a narrative and multi-faceted view of media. I want to suggest that all that he achieved and all that he accomplished in this range is an extraordinary example, a challenge and an inspiration to a new generation of artists in today’s large, diverse, and complex media culture.

Let me give a brief outline of Nam June Paik’s story and his early interest in music, which began at his birthplace in Korea. Paik is a truly global artist, from his birthplace, to his university studies in music theory in Japan, to his time working in New York. I think this trajectory, music is very important to his participation – which is very prominent – in the avant-garde music exhibitions and performative world of Fluxus, as well as in the happenings of the 1950s and 1960s in Germany, to his treatment of film in such works as Zen for Film (1964), to his incorporation of the television set and electronic moving image into his landmark exposition of music and television in 1965, he sought to literally overcome the institution of the television, and to transform the apparatus of the television set by using the technique of decollage to break the stream, or the flow, of television broadcast coming into the TV. Going inside the TV and tearing it apart was really an effort to remake the cathode ray tube as a new channel of reception but explicitly as a means of open communication, which was central to the way he thought about his medium. His move to New York City in 1954 was an important step. There, over the next forty years, he pursued these goals, incorporating the latest developments in technology into his art practice, as well as fashioning his own means to further remake and bring new image making capacities to these technologies. That is very much the breadth of what he accomplished. We talk a lot about technology, and we talk about media, and we talk about these materials, but he was never satisfied with what he could buy “off the shelves” so to speak. How he could anticipate and remake it himself, as well as adding onto and changing these technologies, is exemplified by the Paik-Atlee video synthesizer. I wish Paik had had access to this technology earlier, and how that could have informed the way he approached media, and what a complex and, speaking about him personally, charismatic figure he was. He sought out ideas and opinions and he always followed current events: whenever I would visit him in his study, he always had the television on and newspapers from everywhere. He was always reading and writing, speculating about history, as well as science and technology. We found a large text in his archives that he had written about the history of China. He was a really inquisitive and radical transformer of thoughts and ideas. His collected writings are central in locating the process in which he worked out his thinking and his actual reframing of the technology and making of art works.

I am working on an exhibition ‘Nam June Paik: Global Visionary’ at the Smithsonian American Art Museum that will connect his ideas to his creative process and to his artworks themselves. These ideas and processes will be very much at the center of that exhibition. Thinking a bit about his writing in 1950, in an essay entitled Global Groove in the Common Market, he speaks to a practice and sets as its goal an open and free flow of information through media. Three years later he produced Global Groove, which began with the statement: ‘Imagine a future where the TV guide will be as thick as the Manhattan...
Anyone here who met or worked with Nam June Paik experienced an inquisitive mind, and I will return to this inquisitive and demanding nature. Nam was deeply involved in those initiatives and helped shape the nation’s alternative space movement for video production and exhibition. He was very active in supporting the development and access to the television studio in the early 1970s, as well as for artist residences. He was very active in supporting the development of public access for cable television in the United States, giving anyone access to a channel on television, and of course the alternative space movement for video production and exhibition. He was deeply involved in those initiatives and helped shape the national, local, and foundation funding for the arts. As an artist he was working to shape a community of artists. It was not just about Nam June Paik, it was about the whole group, about how he could enable, how he could intervene, and how he could support them. As I said, he had a really fine sense of video’s future; he told me many years ago about the future of video installation. We were talking about it in the early 1970s in the Whitney, and he said, “John, we will win!” He saw the future of advancing this medium which he understood as central to the transformation of late 20th century art. I just want to make a short correction to the performance this morning, when Jeremy talked about Nam June having a Sony Portapak in the 1970s; it was actually in the mid-1960s. The advance of these technologies was beginning very early and proliferated throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Nam June Paik was also a utopian thinker. Interestingly, I found a German copy of Ernst Bloch’s The Principle of Hope (Das Prinzip Hoffnung) among his papers in the archives. He was acquisitively reading a variety of discourses, philosophies, as well as a lot of trade journals about new media, television, and technology. As much as he was a utopian thinker, he was a decidedly pragmatic one, realistic in his approach and working methods. He imagined big, I mean on an enormous scale, and brought in key people to realize his projects. How else could he have accomplished so much? He created a new kind of storytelling that I think is really important to look at: new ways of shaping narrative in his video essays and forms of expression with the variety of shapes that his sculptures and installations took. After a brief sampling, I’m just going to go through some of the things that are in the show. His videotapes Alpha’s Complaint and Living with the Living Theater; I think, are core video essays. They really need to be looked at in terms of the way he mixed images and texts and the way he explored dialogue and performance, as well as of the treatment of history, identity, art history, and politics. They are also a good educational resource for looking at his ideas and thinking. Of course there are also the global telecasts Good Morning Mr. Orwell and Rap Around the World, which he produced by linking, through satellite transmission, multiple sites around the world to create events that were produced for the television viewer. Live transmission, and live performance were mixed, and all the chance of things that would happen and not happen was part of the kinesis for his viewer. His installations range from small works like Video Flag to the large-scale Fin de Sécle Tour; in which he had hundreds of monitors on a wall mixing multiple channels of video with new computer-assisted techniques to remake the surface of the moving image. We can see some of this illustrated documentary work on the first floor of the exhibition.

There are also his public art works like The More the Better, constructed out of more than a thousand televisions creating an enormous sculpture in the National Museum of Korea. His multiple re-fashioning of televisions into sculptures can also be seen in the Film of Robots, Buddha TV, the Close Circuit works, Candle Projection, TV Chair, and the interactive piece Random Access. There has been a lot of talk on the blog about Random Access and the examples that are on view in the galleries, but there is also one in the Guggenheim collection in which he would place the strips of audio tape directly on the wall. There would be these strips of audio tape and, in order to release the sound, you would rub the head of the broken audio player directly on to the tape. Both your interaction with the technology, and the idea of breaking the technology, are fundamental to what we see with Magnet TV. This work is an innovative reconstruction of the apparatus, but also a deconstruction of the meaning of these instruments and the instrumentality of these media and technologies. He also brought an array of rhetorical forms; from metaphor to irony, to inform his transformation of the medium. He had the goal of humanizing technology as well as expressing both television and video’s explosive growth, and the centerpiece of this idea is TV Garden, on view in the galleries.

Looking back over his work we can see how he reuses images, pieces of music and favorite shots and transforms them in an ongoing practice. This is central to his methodology, to his working. He had favorite pieces of music that he would remix and replay, favorite film sequences from other artists that he would bring into his mix, working with them and transforming them, creating all kinds of continuities and differences through his work. I think the way he worked with these pieces is important evidence of the way that Nam June would constantly look for ways to rethink his body of work. Now, Nam June would look for ways to express his appreciation and loyalty to friends. This was another point I wanted to make, the importance and the value he attached to collaborators: for example, to Shuya Abe, with whom he developed the Paik-Abe video synthesizer; to the artist and scholar, historian and philosopher, Allen Ginsberg, and to his unique creative partnership with the celebrated avant-garde cellist Charlotte Moorman. This is central to his work, along with his professional and personal collaboration with his wife, the video artist Shigeko Kubota. All these factors I think are important, and I want to reflect on them now.

If we look at Nam June Paik’s working method in relationship to today’s changing and expanding media technology, we see that the practice of people linking in multiple ways to develop and create projects was also central to his working method. I think this idea of community, of communities from around the world that share ideas as well as differences and realize dreams, is something we see today in social media. It was expressed early on in Nam June Paik’s art and his ideas. Once again, his writings are an extraordinary source for insights into understanding this broad range of concepts. They are an insight into his understanding of the importance of media to institutions, his ways of teaching and theories of communicating, his coin of the term “cybernetic superhighway” in a paper for the Rockefeller Foundation in 1974, his exploration of computer networks as a body of theory, working with and developing com-
Nam June Paik had total understanding of the nature of the fluid movement within the electronic image. There was also the interactive component that we see with Magnet TV, which was a part of the transmission.

Nam June Paik had suffered a stroke in 1996, and he was physically less mobile, but he poured his ideas into this container to create a piece that he entitled Mediation in Sync, a commission that transformed the rotunda into what he called a “post-video space.” He talked about this as he was making his sketches and determining his plans. This is a seven-story waterfall that lands in what had been a covered pool in the museum. There, a laser is being projected you can only see the laser when it goes through a material or strikes a surface, so you see that energy, that power as it goes up. Here is a bed of multiple channels of his videotapes. You can also see how different installations were placed in the bay around the space. As I say, he called this a post-video space but it was also a return to laser, which he had written about in the early 1970s as a means of transmission, such was the power and the capacity that he saw for laser. He also collaborated with other artists, working again with Horst Baumann, a German laser artist who he worked with in the 1970s and 1980s. It was with Baumann that he created the laser installation that was part of his Whitney retrospective in 1982. In that case, just as an aside here, Horst Baumann had a system where he could...
project, by laser, Nam June Paik's video moving images. But Nam June Paik said, "I want to take this further," and he had that laser go through a crystal thus dispersing the energy of the laser and the moving images throughout the space. One of the powers of laser is that wherever it is struck there is no distortion, so essentially he was able to get rid of the television by creating this entire surface of video moving images.

In this work, made in collaboration with Norman Ballard, he was fashioning a new presence for this invisible laser beam. As we saw with the waterfall, he also projected from the floor up, moving patterns of lasers that he very much saw as evoking, or echoing, his earlier experiments with image processing. Here is the display of projections on the sides of this rotunda. Again, here is a piece from his television works. This is the view looking down from above, down at the monitors. With these images you can see how the whole space looked. The idea was that the array of monitors, the projections, the sounds and music filling the space, the water rushing down, would work to create an ambient environment; an entire space that connected the spectator to his sculptures and installations in the bays as they walked up and down through the exhibition. But he is also imagining something beyond what he was looking at his own life and the range of the working methods of all the ways he had worked. There was a kind of spatial dialectics: a fusion or modulation of the various elements that were synthesized into a new media environment, a post-video space. As Nam June Paik looked back, he mapped the various ways of working with video, imagining a new television and a post-video space. As Nam June Paik looked back, he mapped the development of television and video in the mid-20th century, to the invention of the cinema at the end of the 19th century, to the deconstruction of the media environment of museums, perhaps the post-museum environment. Thank you very much!