LEA Catalog

FAR AND WIDE

By Lanfranco Aceti and Omar Kholeif
The Leonardo Electronic Almanac acknowledges the kind support for this issue of

This catalog is a LEA production with FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology). It follows the first major retrospective on Nam June Paik in the UK with an exhibition and conference organized by Tate Liverpool and FACT. The exhibition Nam June Paik, December 17, 2010 to March 13, 2011, was curated by Sook-Kyung Lee and Susanne Rennert.

LEA acknowledges and is grateful for the gracious support provided to this publication by the Estate of Nam June Paik. In particular special thanks go to Ken Hakuta, Executor, Nam June Paik Estate.

Also, special thanks go to Mike Stubbs (Director/CEO of FACT) for his support.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>The Global Play of Nam June Paik: The Artist That Embraced and Transformed Marshall McLuhan’s Dreams Into Reality</td>
<td>Lanfranco Aceti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Future Is Now?</td>
<td>Omar Kholeif</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>To Whom It May Concern: Nam June Paik’s Wobbulator and Playful Identity</td>
<td>Emile Devereaux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Data Materialism in Art Making</td>
<td>Tom Schofield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>The Electronic Representation of Information: New Relationships between the Virtual Archive and its (Possible) Referent</td>
<td>Gabriela Galati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Traveling at the Speed of Paik: An artist-researcher visits the Nam June Paik Art Center</td>
<td>Jamie Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>A Statement on Nam June Paik</td>
<td>Jeremy Bailey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Zen for TV? Nam June Paik’s “Global Groove” and “A Tribute to John Cage” (1973)</td>
<td>Richard H. Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>Introductions and John G. Hanhardt Keynote Speech</td>
<td>John G. Hanhardt Q&amp;A session chaired by Sarah Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>John G. Hanhardt Q&amp;A session</td>
<td>Roy Ascott Keynote Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>Ruth Catlow Speech</td>
<td>Roy Ascott in conversation with Mike Stubbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>Roy Ascott Keynote Speech</td>
<td>Anton Lukoszevieze performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>Introductions and John G. Hanhardt Keynote Speech</td>
<td>John G. Hanhardt Q&amp;A session chaired by Sarah Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>John G. Hanhardt Q&amp;A session</td>
<td>Roy Ascott Keynote Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>Ruth Catlow Speech</td>
<td>Roy Ascott in conversation with Mike Stubbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>Roy Ascott Keynote Speech</td>
<td>Anton Lukoszevieze performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>Introductions and John G. Hanhardt Keynote Speech</td>
<td>John G. Hanhardt Q&amp;A session chaired by Sarah Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>John G. Hanhardt Q&amp;A session</td>
<td>Roy Ascott Keynote Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>Ruth Catlow Speech</td>
<td>Roy Ascott in conversation with Mike Stubbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>Roy Ascott Keynote Speech</td>
<td>Anton Lukoszevieze performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 power of 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 content, can be defined as visionary as well as risky to the point of low 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. His work with Bell set the precedent for artists and musicians to start using technology creatively in a new way.

The construction of this hybrid book, I hope, would have pleased Paik for it is a strange construction, collage and recombination 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.

My fascination with the Laser Cone's re-fabrication in Liverpool was immediate and I wanted to reflect in the publication, albeit symbolically, the multiple possibilities and connections that underpin 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.

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. His work with Bell set the precedent for artists and musicians to start using technology creatively in a new way.

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.

My fascination with the Laser Cone's re-fabrication in Liverpool was immediate and I wanted to reflect in the publication, albeit symbolically, the multiple possibilities and connections that underpin 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 1966 piece Digital Experimentation 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.

The 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 1966 piece Digital Experimentation 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.

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 power of 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 content, can be defined as visionary as well as risky to the point of low.

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. His work with Bell set the precedent for artists and musicians to start using technology creatively in a new way.

The 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 1966 piece Digital Experimentation 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.
This catalog became a tool to mirror and perhaps ‘transmediate’ the laser installation “made of a huge green laser that [... ] corpore(ect) FACT with Tate Liverpool. Travelling 800 metres as the crow flies, the beam of light [...] made” a symbolic connection between the two venues of 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 2009 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

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.

6. 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), 180.

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

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 prominence 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 Plage, 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 hermatically 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 new awareness of their work as a part of a broader field and are inclined to explore the relationship between cybernetics 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 parallel, 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 aka “The Wobbulator” (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 organizational 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 yield.

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


The Future Is Now?

FA R AND WID E

CATALOG VOL 19 NO 5 LEONARDOELECTRONICALMANAC
The Future Is Now / Nam June Paik Conference / FACT and Tate Liverpool

JOHN G. HANHARDT

Q&A session chaired by Sarah Cook

This text is a transcription of a Q&A session from the Nam June Paik Conference titled "The Future Is Now: Media Arts, Performance and Identity after Nam June Paik" presented by FACT and Tate Liverpool.

Friday 18 February 2011

Sarah Cook: Thank you for your anecdotes about your experience of working on exhibitions with Nam June Paik. I think you also framed all the different kinds of exhibitions very well. I will just kick off this Q&A while you all formulate your questions (we have people with microphones ready to come and take your questions in a few moments.) I was wondering about whether or not we might call Nam June Paik a hacker as well as an artist? I think there is something about hacking and the way artists work today where they are very much led by the technology; sometimes they get a new piece of equipment and think, “What can I do with this?” I was talking to a colleague and he was curious about this question as to whether Nam June Paik was led by technology or if he was led by bigger ideas and then found the appropriate technology to investigate them? It is a bit of a difficult one to pinpoint.

John G. Hanhardt: That is a very interesting question. One of the things that really distinguished Nam June Paik and other artists of his generation as individuals was that new technology wasn’t leading what they were doing, but was enabling them…jumping ahead, remember in the 1980s when the big industries started producing the latest machine that has come onto the market. The future is now, times the process has to be more than just to break down the insides, he was anticipating the portable video camera that was developed by Sony and introduced to the market in 1964-1965. He immediately seized upon it, as did a lot of artists, but he knew immediately how this could be brought into his exhibition at the Gallery Bonin in 1968 and at the Howard Wise Gallery. Shuya Abe, with whom I talked a lot about this, never imagined the image processor, but he brought to Nam June Paik levels of expertise in working with electronics, and Nam June understood the electronics enough to say what he was looking for. Shuya Abe enabled a number of projects and pieces and helped to make the robot fully remote-controlled. Nam June Paik was very impressed with the ability to make that project remote controlled. Another example of what I’m talking about can be seen in Megatron/Matrix (1995), where there was a computer program with which Nam June Paik imagined infinite possibilities. I think that the creative process is both seeing what technology can do, but also knowing that it can realize something and not just remake something.

Sarah Cook: I think it is really significant, in relation to what you were saying about Paik being someone who wanted to interrupt the flow of broadcast, to think about artists today and how they seek to interrupt the flow of media. This is very important because technological innovation today is unrelenting in its flow, and it is interesting to see how artists interrupt that flow. Sometimes the process has to be more than just to break down the latest machine that has come onto the market.

John G. Hanhardt: He would love to be in this mix, engaging with the Internet and seeing the fulfillment of these practices. If you go back and look at the early 1970s and at how artists like Barry McGee and Mary Lucier would mask the TV monitor, building it into the wall so that the screen was flush with the surface: this was trying to make the television into a flat screen without the box. Of course we all know that is now not only possible but widely available. We see now what Nam June was talking about in 1973, about video being in most homes. That is why I was talking today about how these histories have to be brought into museums, that they must be seen as rich and complex alongside the other arts in terms of what they contributed to it and not just categorized and separated. That’s the excitement of a space like FACT, where you have new work being produced, where you have earlier work being shown and you have multiple screening and work spaces. Perhaps this is the museum and not the place over the way. In any case, this is the place where things are happening and I know that this would be where Nam June would want to be. Someone was talking about him as being an artist but he saw himself more as an individual and a creative person. He was thrilled by the fact that people were responding to him, and he enjoyed what the art world brought him, but at the same time he was constantly investing his work in new capacities and new projects.
Nam June Paik knew that he wanted to capture you, and the rhythm of the music, the popularity of the music, the anticipated hearing of the music in the piece was on one level a way to move things forward.

SARAH COOK: We should take some questions from the audience.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I am quite interested in Nam June Paik’s relationship with music, specifically with rhythm in images and the notion of speed. Quite a lot of his stuff is really fast and unrelenting, moving in a constant stream. Could you elaborate a bit on that?

JOHN G. HANHARDT: Yes, that is very interesting. We know about his relationship to new music, to his performance work with smashing violins, working with audio tape, remaking and scratching records in live performances during the 1960s. There was also his relationship with Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels, bringing his pop songs into the mix. Ryder, and this and that. That was part of the idea, that change, to bring you into the work, and that’s why I think humor and play was a very important part of his work. He wanted to bring you in and then suddenly say “a-ha.” TV Chair is a version of it with a closed-circuit camera. I cannot see my image looking down on it but if I sit on the chair I can’t see my image because I’m sitting on the monitor, which is in the base of the chair. Suddenly your point of view and your relationship to the TV set shifts. We see this again in Zenith TV, which is a brilliant work in the exhibition, where the cathode ray tube is taken out and a closed-circuit camera is placed inside the set. When you look into the monitor, you are looking into the eye piece and pointing out of the window, because television is framing a small part of the larger world. We often talk about television as a window onto the world, but it is a window onto the world of corporate television, which is a very significant in terms of looking at his later video-image works, both the record piece and the magnetic tape piece on the wall, as very significant in terms of looking at his later video-image editing. I think it was definitely the deconstruction of linear composition that he really had in mind, because that also really came through in his video editing. There was a certain quality to the rhythm in relation to the music that he was using and to all the poetry reading he was using. I think the way he was approaching those things was quite musical and I feel that those early experiments, with Random Access especially, really indicated a new way of understanding the visual image. This understanding is perhaps also slightly different from one artist from a visual background might have developed. That early musical understanding probably helped him to realize something quite distinctive from other practices of the time.

JOHN G. HANHARDT: I would just like to pick up on Sue’s point that music is a temporal medium and is important in terms of its relationship to video and to time. On the other hand I do see Random Access and this interaction with sound as related to the interaction with the television. Two abstract scenarios are created through two different modalities of working with sound and a television set. I do think that he worked with sound as he advanced into video, that he pursued this enlarged range of musical reference as he widened his relationship to dance then he is definitely syncopating the two and animating it through his image processing. So there’s the rhythm, the beat that goes forward and the dancer is moving in relationship to it but that image is being distorted, not only in the front image of the dancer but also in the field in which the dancer is playing. He’s taken the dancers from the studio, mixing them into a virtual surface of video. So there are multiple dimensions of movement that are playing off the sound and its rhythm. Am I getting closer to answering your question or at least responding to it if I cannot answer it?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, yes, I am getting the sense that he has a very distinct feeling of rhythm in the flow of the image.

JOHN G. HANHARDT: There is a short analysis of Global Groove done by a German scholar, which is available in the catalogue that we did for his last show at the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin. It is a very good piece to look at, the way the video is edited is different, but it is a very interesting piece to look at in terms of the variety of flows that were happening within it.

SARAH COOK: I think we can pass the microphone to Susanne Rennert.

SUSANNE RENNERT: Just in addition to John’s explanation, I think my understanding of the rhythm of the video image editing was really related to his audio experiments as well. I see the Random Access works, both the record piece and the magnetic tape piece on the wall, as very significant in terms of looking at his later video-image editing. I think it was definitely the deconstruction of linear composition that he really had in mind, because that also really came through in his video editing. There was a certain quality to the rhythm in relation to the music that he was using and to all the poetry reading he was using. I think the way he was approaching those things was quite musical and I feel that those early experiments, with Random Access especially, really indicated a new way of understanding the visual image. This understanding is perhaps also slightly different from one artist from a visual background might have developed. That early musical understanding probably helped him to realize something quite distinctive from other practices of the time.

JOHN G. HANHARDT: I am quite interested in Nam June Paik’s relationship with music, specifically with rhythm in images and the notion of speed. Quite a lot of his stuff is really fast and unrelenting, moving in a constant stream. Could you elaborate a bit on that?

JOHN G. HANHARDT: Yes, that is very interesting. We know about his relationship to new music, to his performance work with smashing violins, working with audio tape, remaking and scratching records in live performances during the 1960s. There was also his relationship with Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels, bringing his pop songs into the mix. Ryder, and this and that. That was part of the idea, that change, to bring you into the work, and that’s why I think humor and play was a very important part of his work. He wanted to bring you in and then suddenly say “a-ha.” TV Chair is a version of it with a closed-circuit camera. I cannot see my image looking down on it but if I sit on the chair I can’t see my image because I’m sitting on the monitor, which is in the base of the chair. Suddenly your point of view and your relationship to the TV set shifts. We see this again in Zenith TV, which is a brilliant work in the exhibition, where the cathode ray tube is taken out and a closed-circuit camera is placed inside the set. When you look into the monitor, you are looking into the eye piece and pointing out of the window, because television is framing a small part of the larger world. We often talk about television as a window onto the world, but it is a window onto the world of corporate television, which is a very significant in terms of looking at his later video-image works, both the record piece and the magnetic tape piece on the wall, as very significant in terms of looking at his later video-image editing. I think it was definitely the deconstruction of linear composition that he really had in mind, because that also really came through in his video editing. There was a certain quality to the rhythm in relation to the music that he was using and to all the poetry reading he was using. I think the way he was approaching those things was quite musical and I feel that those early experiments, with Random Access especially, really indicated a new way of understanding the visual image. This understanding is perhaps also slightly different from one artist from a visual background might have developed. That early musical understanding probably helped him to realize something quite distinctive from other practices of the time.

JOHN G. HANHARDT: I would just like to pick up on Sue’s point that music is a temporal medium and is important in terms of its relationship to video and to time. On the other hand I do see Random Access and this interaction with sound as related to the interaction with the television. Two abstract scenarios are created through two different modalities of working with sound and a television set. I do think that he worked with sound as he advanced into video, that he pursued this enlarged range of musical reference as he widened his relationship to dance then he is definitely syncopating the two and animating it through his image processing. So there’s the rhythm, the beat that goes forward and the dancer is moving in relationship to it but that image is being distorted, not only in the front image of the dancer but also in the field in which the dancer is playing. He’s taken the dancers from the studio, mixing them into a virtual surface of video. So there are multiple dimensions of movement that are playing off the sound and its rhythm. Am I getting closer to answering your question or at least responding to it if I cannot answer it?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, yes, I am getting the sense that he has a very distinct feeling of rhythm in the flow of the image.

JOHN G. HANHARDT: There is a short analysis of Global Groove done by a German scholar, which is available in the catalogue that we did for his last show at the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin. It is a very good piece to look at, the way the video is edited is different, but it is a very interesting piece to look at in terms of the variety of flows that were happening within it.

SARAH COOK: I think we can pass the microphone to Susanne Rennert.

SUSANNE RENNERT: Just in addition to John’s explanation, I think my understanding of the rhythm of the video image editing was really related to his audio experiments as well. I see the Random Access works, both the record piece and the magnetic tape piece on the wall, as very significant in terms of looking at his later video-image editing. I think it was definitely the deconstruction of linear composition that he really had in mind, because that also really came through in his video editing. There was a certain quality to the rhythm in relation to the music that he was using and to all the poetry reading he was using. I think the way he was approaching those things was quite musical and I feel that those early experiments, with Random Access especially, really indicated a new way of understanding the visual image. This understanding is perhaps also slightly different from one artist from a visual background might have developed. That early musical understanding probably helped him to realize something quite distinctive from other practices of the time.
view of television. The videotape and video essays that I just men-
tioned were also places where he used music extensively. Living
with the Living Theater is a fantastic tape: you see people listening
to information, how they hear it and how it is then processed into
tapes. That work hasn’t really been charted fully.

SARAH COOK: We’ve still got time for questions.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Question for curators please: catalogs. Usual-
ly when you produce a catalog, you make a book to sell for around
20 pounds that features pictures of paintings or other visual
work included in a show. With Paik that doesn’t work: you need a
video catalog. Is there chance that galleries could produce some
of those? This is a big retrospective exhibition and I would love to
see a video catalog of it. Could it be done?

JOHN G. HANHARDT: I cannot speak for the Tate, but conceptually
I can say yes. I think there is, on one hand, value in a book docu-
menting different textual material, representing an installation, but
videotapes are highly under-represented. I remember when I did
Paik’s catalogue in 1982, we got access to the Polaroid lab to cre-
ate high-quality still images from his videotapes, so we could show
them in sequence in the back of the book. At the time, this was a
breakthrough in representing this work, but now of course we can
plant discs in books. I do think that the idea of books-on-demand, of
being able to print out the book that you want, is of value. I do think
that there are ways that we should be able to connect to the moving
image and integrate it into catalogs. Essentially, what you are talking
about could be done on a disc, so in answer to your question: Yes!

AUDIENCE MEMBER: It’s a question about legacy. Nam June Paik’s
legacy as an artist is extremely well understood, well documented
and in many ways quite clear, but I’m really interested in the TV
experiments. My question is what kind of relationship do you
think that those experiments have with mainstream broadcast
media? He was working in those environments where his work
was being disseminated to a lot of people at the same time. Do
you think there is anything that has really carried on from those
experiments into that stream rather than into what I would con-
sider an art stream?

JOHN G. HANHARDT: There is, historically you can definitely see the
techniques with the processor used in Global Groove, where the
figure rotates and disappears, for example, moving into American ad-
vertising. It was reported back then that one of the most active rent-
ers of films from the Film Makers’ Co-Operative in New York was
Madison Avenue, so there was definitely a movement. Paik’s work I
know you can trace back to some adverts that happened on televi-
sion, that were incorporated into television. Also, I remember when
MTV first came on and the notion of the music video was something
very new, the idea of MTV was essentially 24 hours of visual radio.
Of course, this is before it became reality television thanks to the
influence of British reality TV, but I’m not going to elaborate on that!

I remember when FACT TV and its notions of real time, that is also located in the history of
showing from Paik and a lot of artists who were actively working with
video and the migration of that into the music video industry. Many
of them worked in both, so I think there are a number of connec-
tions. Also, a lot of artists worked to get their work onto television. It
dealt to some influence in terms of documentaries. If you look at reality
TV and its notions of real time, that is also located in the history of
film. If you look at the famous Seven Day series on a particular family
in the States, that became a television program in the 1970s, you will
discover that there are these models one can see advancing.

MIKE STUBBS: I’d chip in from FACT’s perspective. This series of in-
terviews and talks is being recorded and they will appear in a linear
fashion on the FACT TV website. So we do have an IPTV channel
at FACT: we can upload content to that which you can then search
and watch at your leisure. Of course in the 1980s there was a sort of
proliferation of experiments with DVDs being included in the back
of catalogs. That was fantastic at the beginning, but it takes a lot of
time to watch linear moving image material or to listen to podcasts
because we are over-proliferated by moving image and audio con-
tent. So it really comes down to choice and to economy. Can I ask
you how much would you pay for a video catalog?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: A paper catalog is 20 pounds, so I certainly
would be willing to pay that.

MIKE STUBBS: Okay so perhaps you could leave your address after-
wards and we can see what we can do. Likewise, if anyone else is
interested they can do the same.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I actually was quite struck by the discus-
sion at the beginning about links to contemporary practice and
technology. But Paik strikes me as someone distinctly analog
in a lot of ways. I would be really interested, John, just to hear your
thoughts on what, in terms of his practice, is about an analog mo-
ment? In some ways I think that links to our discussion on music,
but maybe you disagree?

JOHN G. HANHARDT: No, I do think that. Obviously in terms of media
there was something of an analog moment, but when I look at the
image processor and the ways that Nam June Paik was able to imag-
nine the flow and the change that is deposited in there, I see some-
thing else: I think it transcends that in a close reading of the work. If
you look at the whole body of work and the fluidity of his thinking it
becomes something where I think – just as he talks about this post-
video space, which I think is a really interesting position. It is also look-
ing at it as digital. I am convinced that he straddled both.

SARAH COOK: If you could all join me in thanking John Hanhardt
for his excellent keynote.