# VPAS 3340.501 (81942)
# Writing in the Arts
# Fall 2020
# Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
# University of Texas at Dallas
# Arts & Humanities

**<u>Module 10 Mainframe Experimentalism, TVs, and Distributed Networks</u>**
**Thursday November 12 4 pm**

- Professor Lecture
- Reading: William Kaizen, “Computer Participator: Situating Nam June Paik’s Work in Computing,” *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 229-242.
- Questions and Discussion

## Module 10 Mainframe Experimentalism, TVs, and Distributed Networks 11/12/2020-11/23/2020

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- Professor Lecture
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- Questions and Discussion

**Monday November 16 10 am**

- Submit first draft of 500-word essay to peer-editor

**Thursday November 19 10 am**

- Peer-editor returns 500-word essay

**Monday November 23 10 am**

- Final polished 500-word essay due to professor

*The Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History invites you to attend*

UT DALLAS

THE EDITH O'DONNELL INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS

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For more information contact heather.bowling@utdallas.edu

# TV Charged Environments and Distributed Networks

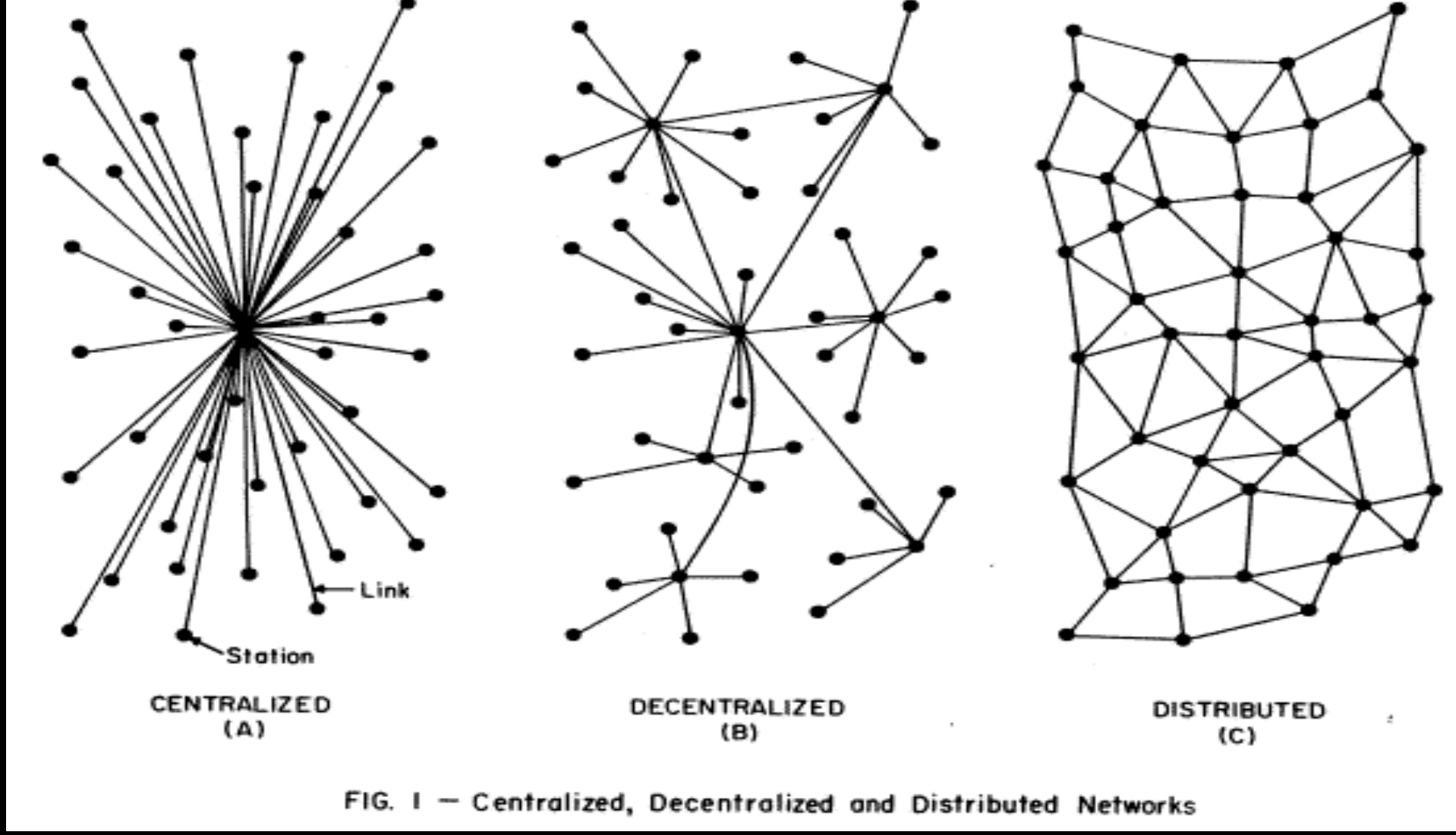


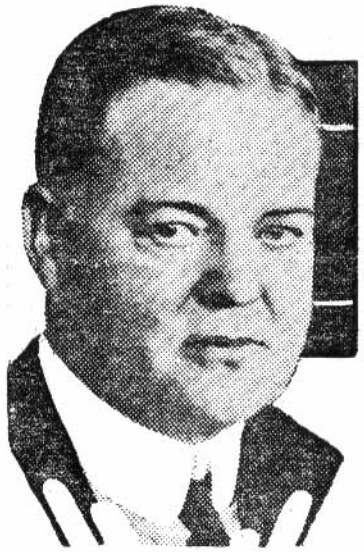

FIG. 1 — Centralized, Decentralized and Distributed Networks

Diagram of Centralized, Decentralized, and Distributed Networks from Paul Baran, *On Distributed Communications: I. Introduction to Distributed Communications Networks* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1964).

d Daily Sunday.) Friday - April 8, 1927 "The Troy Record", NY PRICE THREE CENTS

# Television Now Reality; Device Demonstrated

Secretary Hoover First to Make Use of Latest Scientific Achievement



HERBERT HOOVER.

## Image of Speaker is Carried by Phone and Radio.

## RESULT OF YEARS OF EXPERIMENT

## New York-Washington Tests Complete Success.

New York, April 7.—(AP).—Television, a scientists' dream ever since the telephone was invented half a century ago, became an actuality today when Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover spoke over the telephone in

**April 7, 1927**

Western Television 1929

TELEVISION: electrically transmitted images and pictures

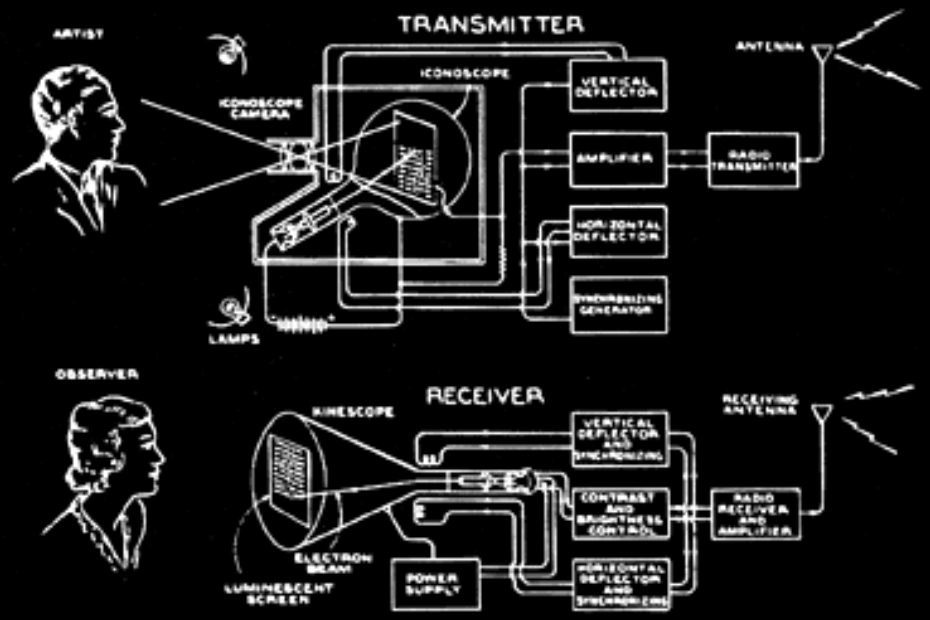
Paul Nipkow, German [1860-1940]

Charles Jenkins, American [1867-1934]

John Logie Baird, Scottish [1888-1946]

Alan A. Campbell-Swinton, Scottish [1863-1930]

Philo Farnsworth, American [1906-1971]




A complete RCA television system showing use of Iconoscope and Kinescope tubes.

# Television Now Reality; Device Demonstrated

Secretary Hoover First to Make Use of Latest Scientific Achievement

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*Image of Speaker is Carried by Phone and Radio.*

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First Public Demonstration of Inter-city Television Broadcasting
Picturephone
1927
Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, shown as he took part in the first public demonstration of inter-city television broadcasting. Mr. Hoover, speaking in Washington, was seen on television screens at Bell Telephone Laboratories in New York.

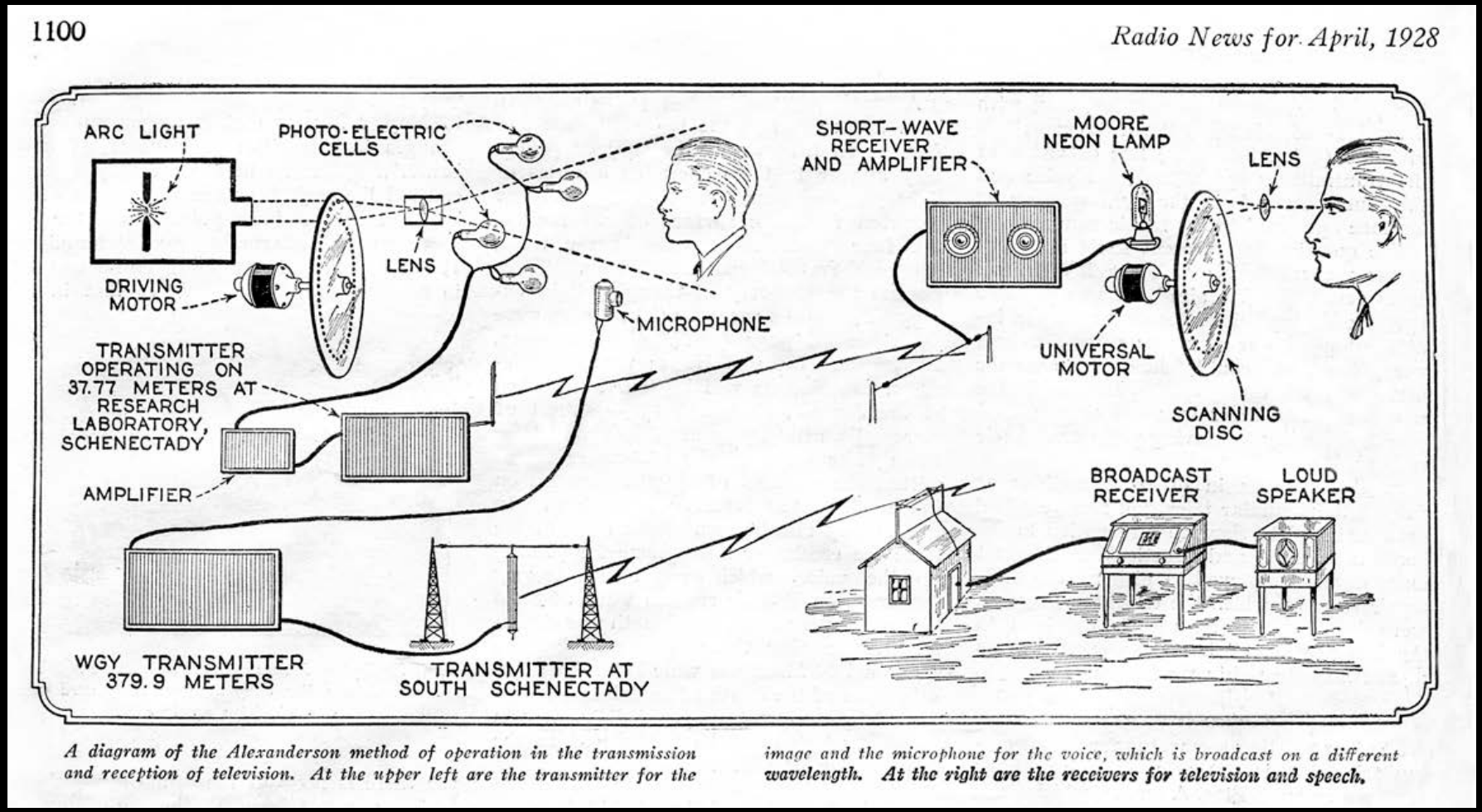
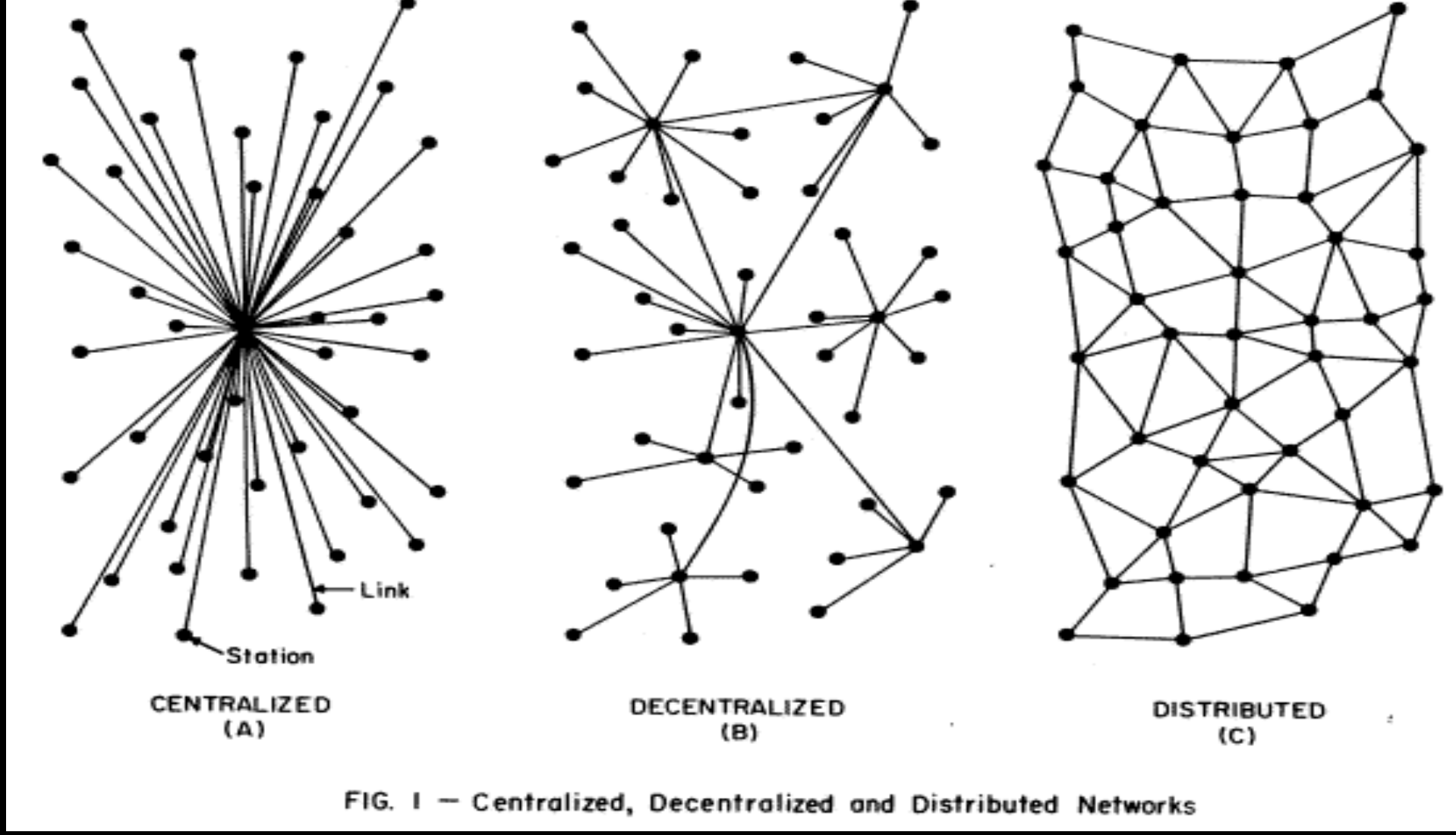



Diagram of an early mechanical television system. This technology was used in the first experimental television broadcasting stations in the 1920s and 1930s, before it was replaced by modern electronic-scan television systems in the 1940s. The television camera *(top left)* uses a spinning disk with a spiral pattern of holes, called a Nipkow disk, to sweep a narrow beam of light in a raster pattern across the subject. The reflected light would be picked up by a photoelectric cell whose electrical output would vary with the intensity of the light. This system was often called a ”flying spot scanner". The early photoelectric cells were not very sensitive so three or four would be used with the subject in a darkened booth. The television receiver received the video signal produced by the camera's photoelectric cell, amplified it, and used it to drive a neon lamp. In front of the neon light was another Nipkow disk with the same hole-pattern as the camera, spinning synchronized at the same speed. Each hole passing in front of the neon lamp produced a scan line of the image. The varying video signal from the photoelectric cell varied the intensity of the neon lamp. The result was a small fuzzy monocolor orange picture about 1.5 inch square of the remote subject. Typical systems produced 25, 48, and 60 line images at frame rates of 15 and 20 frames per second.

# TV Charged Environments and Distributed Networks

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# Paragone vs. Distributed Networks

Paragone
(meaning comparison)

**Which of the arts is best equipped to rival nature - painting or sculpture?**

Leonardo da Vinci, *Treatise on Painting*, notes compiled after his death, comparing painting and sculpture: Painting has universal truth because of its superior ability to mimic nature and sits at the top of the arts hierarchy.

Leonardo, Lady with an Ermine, 1489-90

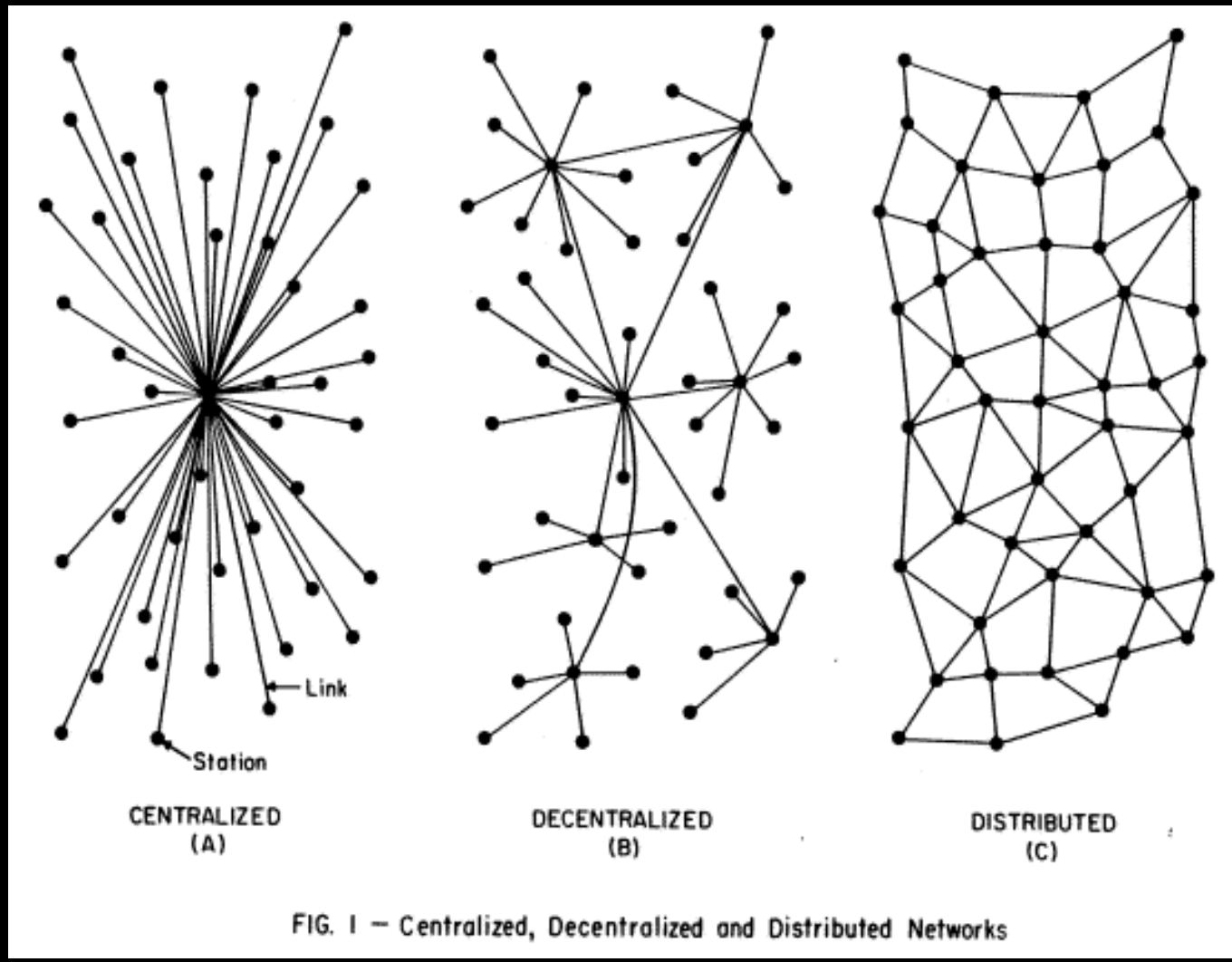
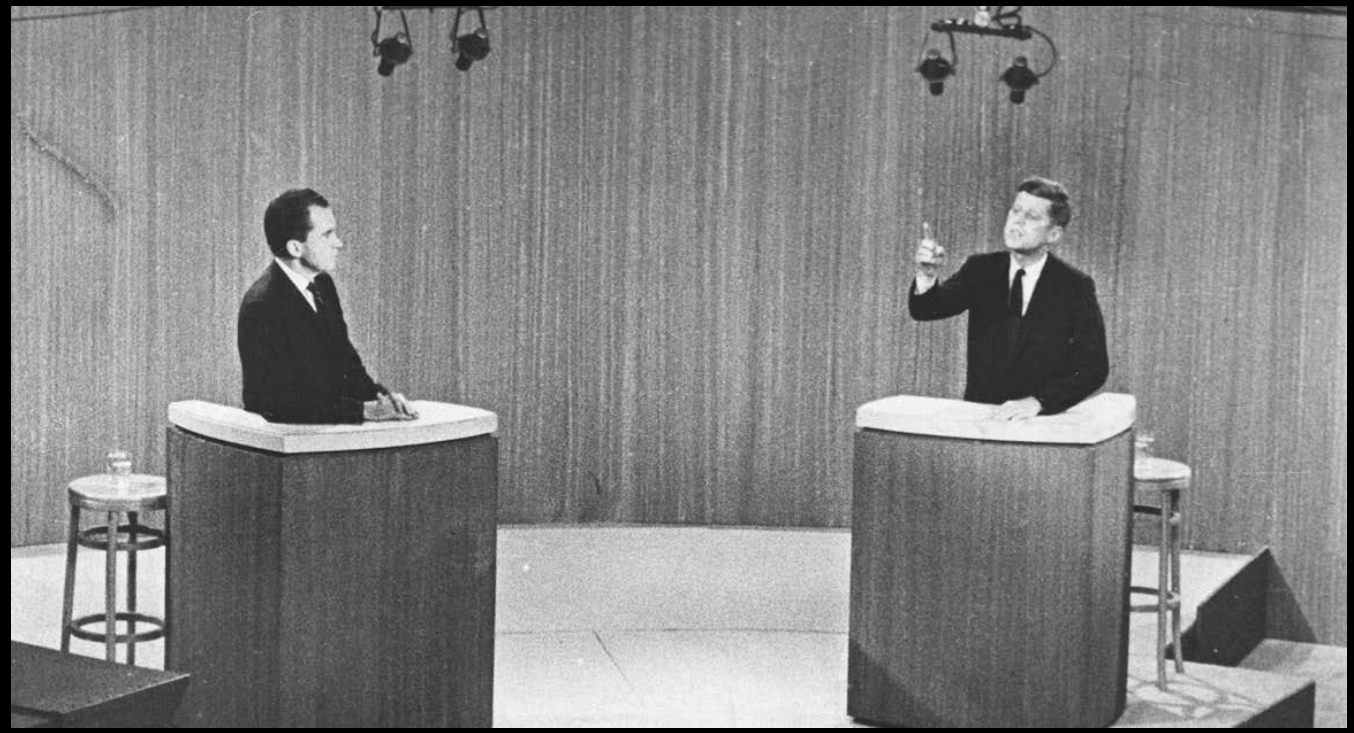



FIG. 1 — Centralized, Decentralized and Distributed Networks

H-65

Nixon-Kennedy Debates
1960



# TV + ART = NEO-DADA

Dada

Neo-Dada

Post-Neo-Dada/Conceptualism

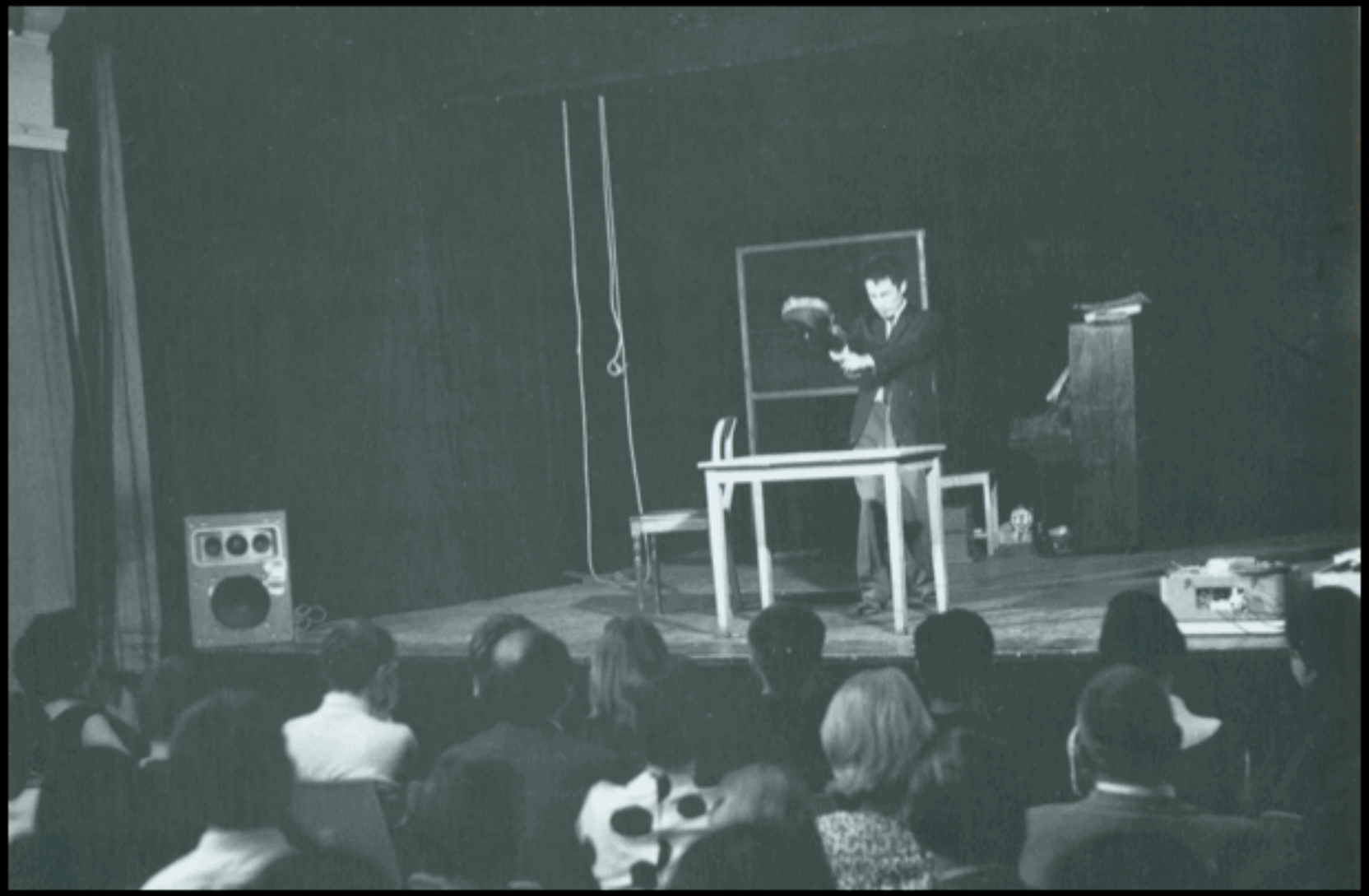
# Dada

Raoul Haussman, Spirit of Our Time, 1919

Nam June Paik [1932-2006]

FLUXUS = NEO-DADA/POST-NEO-DADA/CONCEPTUALISM

- Nam June Paik (1932-2006) had a unique role in  transforming the nascent medium of video into a contemporary art form
- ‘father of video art’ to the ‘George Washington of video’
- His work made television an interactive and artist-empowered instrument rather than simply a one-way conduit of received programming.
- South-Korean-born American artist
- particularly noted for his video art
- Paik studied music history, art history, and philosophy at the University of Tokyo
- He graduated with a dissertation on Arnold Schoenberg
- He went to Germany in 1956 to continue the study of music history at the University of Munich
- In Germany he met composers Karlheinz Stockhausen  and John Cage, who inspired Paik to go into electronic art
- Paik worked with Stockhausen in a studio for Electronic Music.
- Involved with Fluxus
- He began working with modified television sets in 1963
- Bought his first video camera in 1965, returning to Japan to conduct experiments with electromagnets and color television alongside electronic engineer Shuya Abe.
- With Abe he constructed his first video synthesizer while artist-in-residence at WGBH, the Boston public broadcaster
- He was known for using rapid cuts and fast motion in his videos.
- He also claimed to have coined the term ”information superhighway" in a paper written in 1974.



Nam June Paik, One for Violin Solo, 1962

Nam June Paik, Simple, Wiesbaden, 1962

In the performance “Simple,” Paik did the following scripted act: 1.) threw peas into auditorium; 2.) smeared shaving cream on his body; 3.) put rice in shaving cream; 4.) slowly unwound a roll of paper; 5.) went into a pool of water; 6.) came back and played piano with baby doll in mouth.

Nam June Paik, Zen for TV, 1963

# TELEVISION, COMPUTERS, AND VISUAL POETRY

https://vimeo.com/49988167

**Nam June Paik, Participation TV, 1963-66**

In 1963, “Participation TV I” passed the qualifying rounds at the “Exposition of Music—Electronic Television” exhibition in Wuppertal [where, in the case of a few devices, acoustic signals already determined the television image]. “Participation TV I” concerns a purely acoustic-oriented type of “Participation TV,” with an integrated microphone. The later version serves a television showing in the middle of its screen a colored bundle of lines which explosively spread out to form bizarre-looking line formations the moment someone speaks into the microphone or produces any other type of sound. Depending on the sound’s inherent quality or volume, the signals are intensified by a sound-frequency amplifier to produce an endless variety of line formations which never seem to repeat themselves or be in any way predictable.

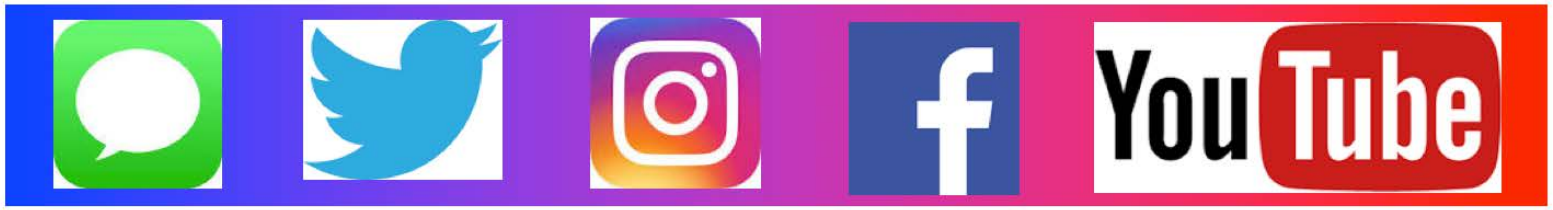
The medium is the message.

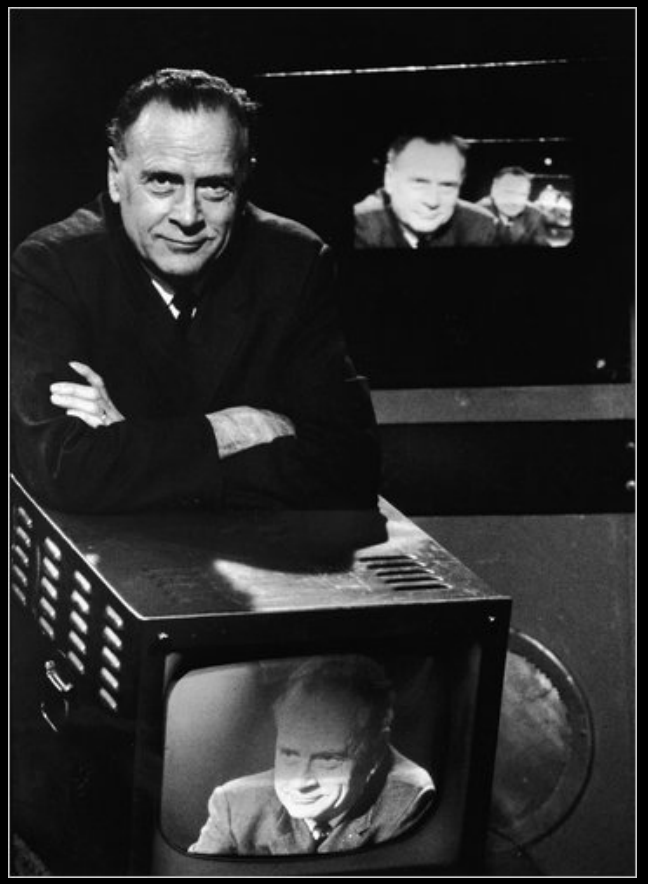
Marshall McLuhan (1964)

...the mass media

McLuhan developed an idea of media based on "temperature." Temperature here is not a matter of touch but a participatory feedback loop.

| Cool Media | Hot Media |
| --- | --- |
| Less information, low resolution: Participants have to do work to complete the picture, fill in gaps, and be familiar with genre conventions | More information, high resolution: Participants are being given the full picture, there's little uncertainty to resolve about what's being communicated |
| Examples: Telephone, Comics, Group Chat Texting, Twitter | Examples: Movies, Newspapers, Email Facebook, YouTube |



Media theorist Marshall McLuhan with TVs – an example of "recursion" or the technological nesting of images

Afterlude of the Exposition of Experimental Television [1964]

Nam June Paik Paik published a brochure for an exhibition in Wuppertal, 1963, with the first theoretical statement on his works with TV sets. The “Afterlude”, whose first part is reprinted here, continues this reflection. Originally published in: Fluxus cc five Three, 1964, reprinted in: Gregory Battcock (ed.), *New Artists Video: A critical anthology*, New York, 1978.

[1]
My experimental TV is
not always interesting
But
not always uninteresting
like nature, which is beautiful,
not because it changes beautifully,
but  simply because it changes.
The core of the beauty of nature is that the limitless QUANTITY of nature disarmed the category of QUALITY, which is used unconsciously mixed and confused with double meanings.
character
value
In my experimental TV, the word *Quality* means only the CHARACTER, but not the VALUE.

A is different from B
but not that
A is better than B

Sometimes I need red apple
Sometimes I need red lips

(2)
My experimental TV is the first ART (…) in which the ‘perfect crime’ is possible…I had put just diode into opposite direction, and got a ‘waving’ negative television….

My TV is NOT the expression of my personality but merely a ‘PHYSICAL MUSIC’…

….

(4)
INDETERMINISM and VARIABILITY is the very UNDERDEVELOPED parameter in the optical art, although this has been the central problem in music for the last ten years (just as parameter SEX is very underdeveloped in music, as opposed to literature and optical art)…

Nam June Paik, Magnet TV, 1965

Nam June Paik, TV Clock,  1963 (1989 version)

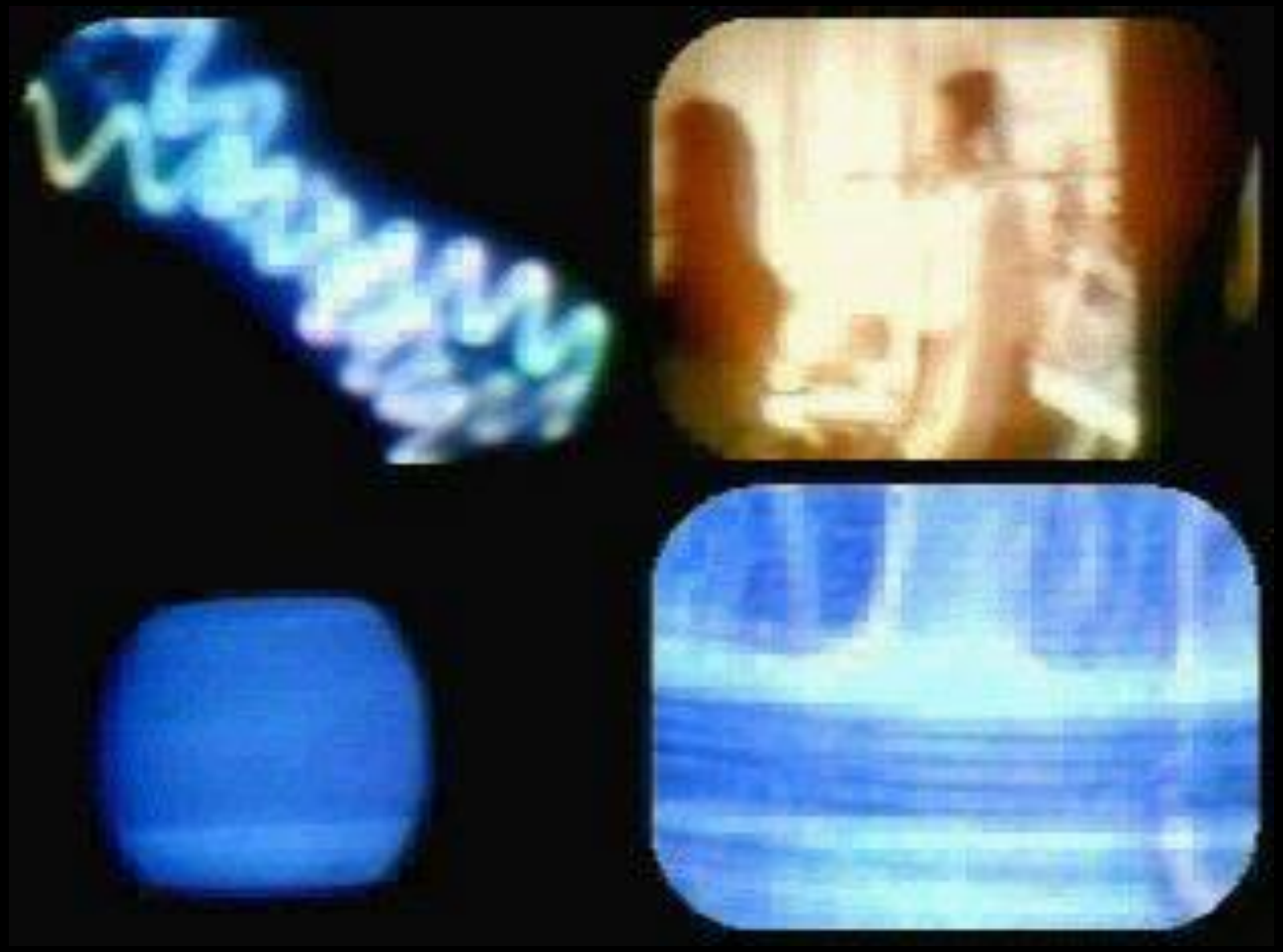
*TV Clock* consists of 24 color televisions mounted upright on pedestals that are arranged in a gentle arc and displayed in a darkened space. Paik created each electronic image by manipulating the television to compress its red, green, and blue color into a single line against a black background. Called a "fixed-image television" by Paik, each TV does not involve a videotape, disc, or computer chip but an image the artist created by ingenious manipulation of electronic elements. Read in sequence, each static line tumbles into the next to form a dynamic yet elegantly spare rhythm that resembles a universally recognized way to measure time.

-- Santa Barbara Museum of Art

Since the date when it was produced in 1965, this work by Nam June Paik has appeared in different versions, passing in particular from the dozen black-and-white monitors used at the start to the addition of colour television sets. But to this day they are still being put on view in a room plunged into darkness and silence that also contains a magnet placed on a cathode tube, which interferes with the electronic signal before every transmission of recorded images, which show differing stages of the progression of light and darkness on the Moon's surface, as it can be seen from Earth. In its material form, forever advancing and evolving, the installation is a response to the different lunar phases presented to us, as if following a cycle of differences and repetitions.

-- New Media Encyclopedia

Nam June Paik, The Moon is the Oldest TV, 1965



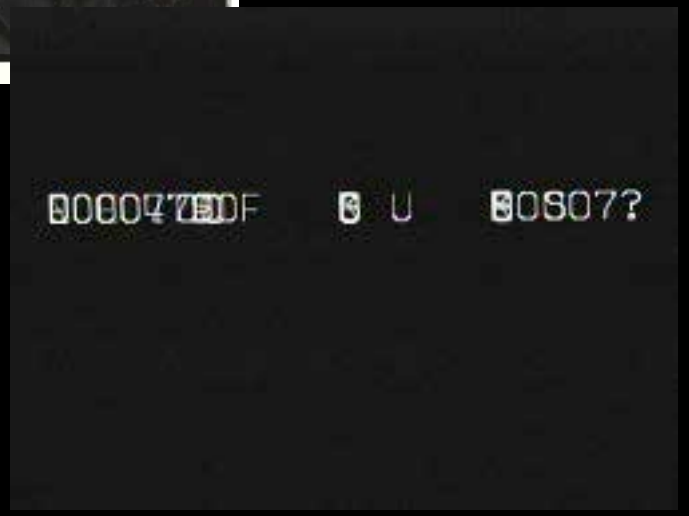
**Nam June Paik and Jud Yalkut, Video-Film Concert, 1966 – 1972**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEAUjFLSqXY

Video Synthesizer: mixing and manipulating the colors and shapes from different images…

"This will enable us to shape the TV screen canvas as precisely as Leonardo, as freely as Picasso, as colorfully as Renoir, as profoundly as Mondrian, as violently as Pollock and as lyrically as Jasper Johns .”

-- Nam June Paik

Nam June Paik arrived in  New York as an immigrant in 1964. He had recently completed his studies in music and had become an enthusiastic champion of technology and electronics for use in performances and art making. New York offered rich territory in the communications industries, ground ripe with new technologies. Paik had previously studied western music in both Japan and Western Europe before moving to the United States. He had been formally trained in the arrangement of orchestral scores, actions in a script, and instrumentation. They were programs. The practical and conceptual relationships between compositions for music and code for computer programs are sound, so to speak. In 1966, Paik was invited to Bell Labs and introduced to FORTRAN computer programming by James Tenney and Michael Noll. He was well prepared and by 1967 Paik was a "Resident Visitor".

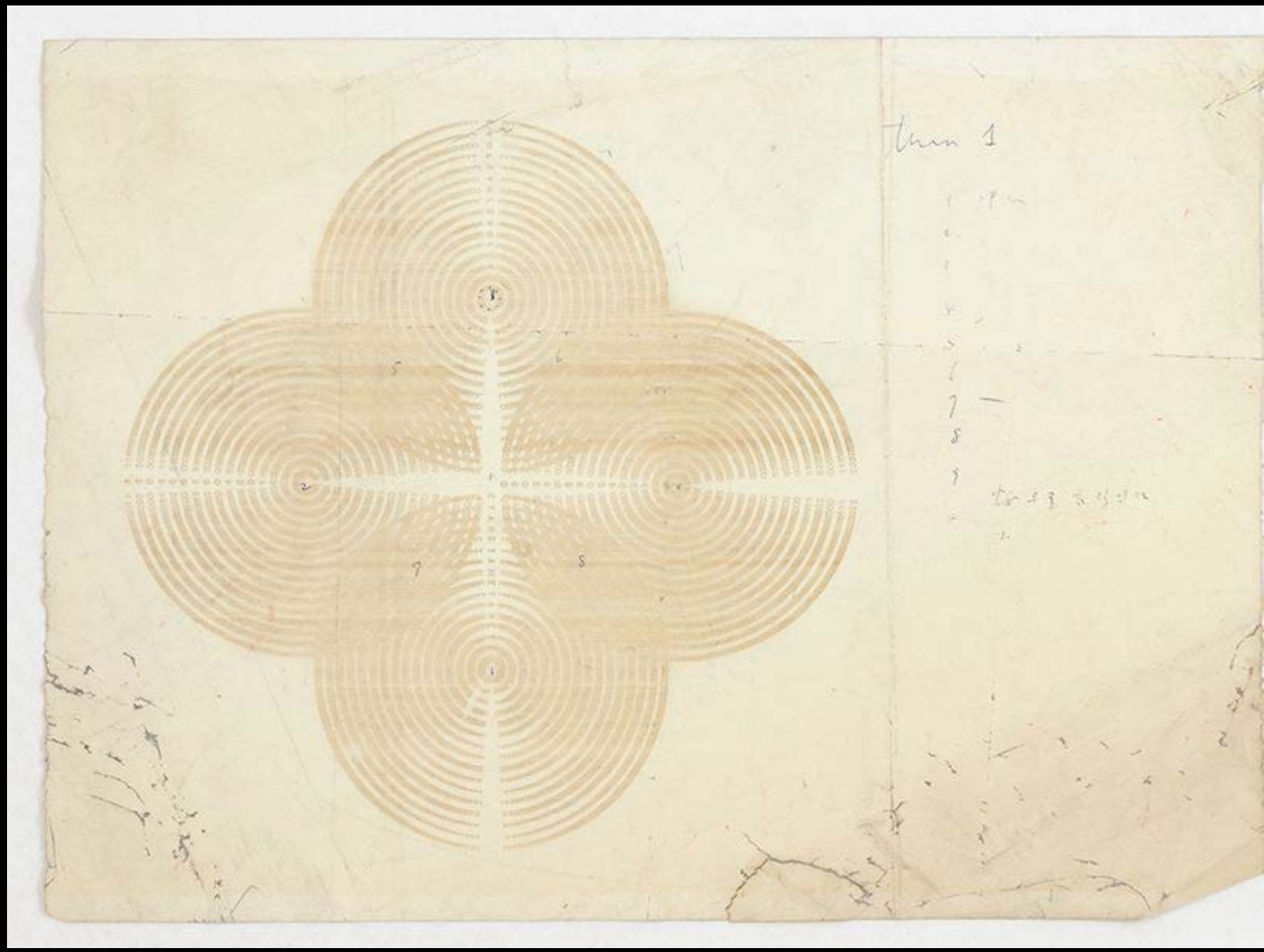


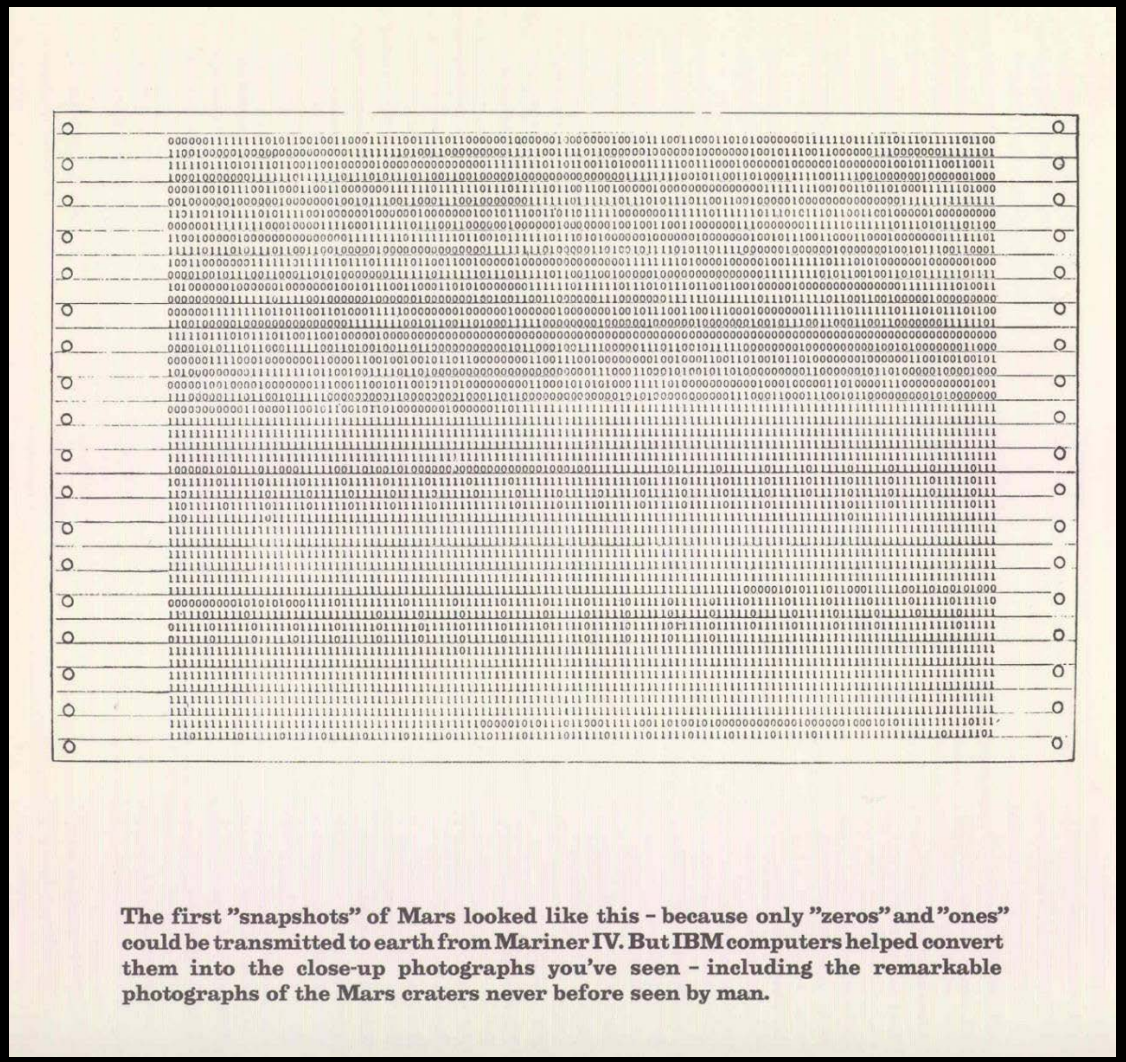
In his research at Bell Labs, Paik produced videos, graphics, computer punch cards, negatives and continuous feed printouts, all compiled from the FORTRAN programming language. Three distinct programs leading to computer-generated media reveal his work with both moving and static images. *Digital Experiment at Bell Labs* is a starkly minimal video recording of the computer screen, marking a gesture toward the origins of computer imaging. [*Digital Experiment at Bell Labs*] shows a dot (a single pixel) that jumps randomly along a diagonal line. There is text that appears at the end, but that most likely is some sort of data dump from the computer and was not programmed by Paik. The word HEAD flashes at one point; the plotter would have created it to indicate the beginning of a movie strip of film.

The FORTRAN program to create this movie would have been quite short. A subroutine would be used to give a random number within a specified range. A fixed number would be added and the result used as the X and Y coordinates of the point to be plotted. All this would be repeated within a couple of DO loops, with each frame sent to the Stromberg-Carlson SC-4020 microfilm plotter to create the movie.

https://americanart.si.edu/blog/computers-and-art

A second piece is *Confused Rain* (1967; below), a computer generated print that results from randomly placed letters spelling out C O N F U S E, suggesting a "mix of real rain and simulated rain in the computer." The third complete work is *ETUDE*, a previously unknown computer composition from 1968. In *ETUDE* (right), Paik wrote a computer program to create four concentric, intersecting circles displaying the somewhat irreverent text LOVE HATE GOD DOG, each repeating word composing its own diameter.  While in residence at Bell Labs, Paik wrote in a letter, "it is my ambition to create the first computer-opera in music history."





The first "snapshots" of Mars looked like this - because only "zeros" and "ones" could be transmitted to earth from Mariner IV. But IBM computers helped convert them into the close-up photographs you've seen - including the remarkable photographs of the Mars craters never before seen by man.

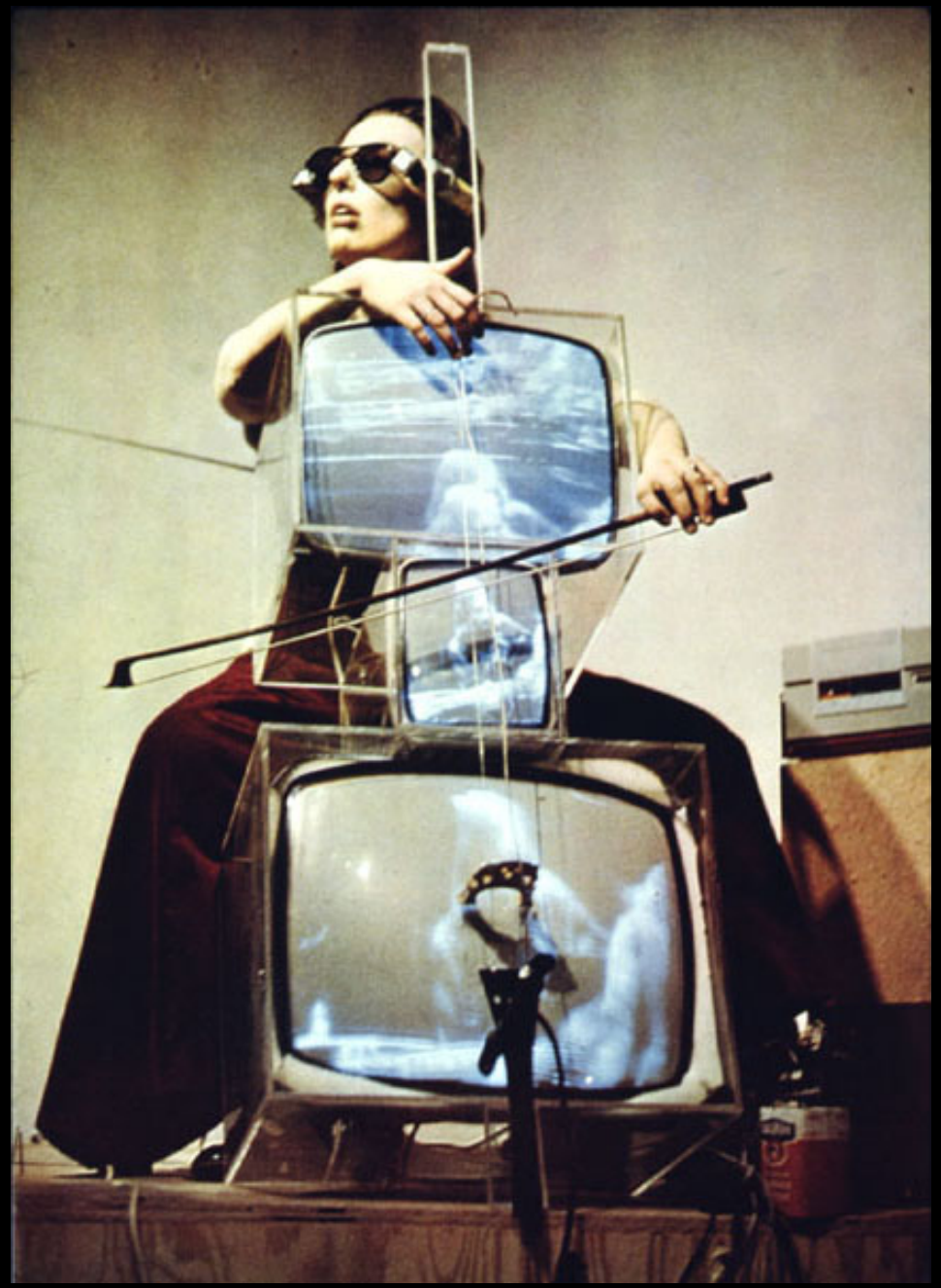
The First "Snapshots" of Mars (1966), a lithograph that Paik made just before his residency at Bell Labs consists of a page of zeros and ones from printouts sent back to Earth from Mariner IV of the surface of Mars. These were the first images from a planet long hoped to harbor extraterrestrial life. The decoding of these images would reveal a desiccated surface utterly devoid of life. Rather than give the viewer the disappointing image of barren craters that had been circulating in the media, Paik shows a section of their binary code, the raw data that made its way through space before being translated by machine into a form fit for human vision. He presents an image of a picture designed for machine consumption, its content utterly meaningless for humans in the symbolic form in which it exists...revealing the disjunction betwen mann and machine. (Kaizen,  232)

Left: Vin Grabill, *Charlotte Moorman performs Nam June Paik's* TV Bra for Living Sculpture *on the roof of her loft, 62 Pearl Street, New York, July 30, 1982*. © Vin Grabill. Courtesy of Grey Art Gallery, New York University; Right: Charlotte Moorman performing Jim McWilliams's *Ice Music for Sydney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1976

Charlotte Moorman
(1933-1991)

Paik met Charlotte Moorman in New York in 1964, where she was organizing the performance of Karlheinz Stockhausen's 'Originale' ('Originals'), a piece in which Paik had been cast in Cologne in 1961. From that time on, they appeared together in numerous performances for which Paik developed his first video objects.

https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-the-topless-cellist-charlotte-moorman-finally-finds-her-place-in-art-history



Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman, Cello Performance with TVs, 1971

'TV-Bra for Living Sculpture' – the photo was taken in 1970 during a performance in the 'Happening & Fluxus' exhibition in Cologne – is composed of two miniature cathode ray tubes which Charlotte Moorman wears instead of a bra. Paik's intention is "to humanize electronics and technology. By using TV as bra, the most intimate belonging of human being, we will demonstrate the human use of technology, and so stimulate the viewers NOT for something mean but stimulate their phantasy to look for the new imaginative and humanistic ways of using technology.'
http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/tv-bra/

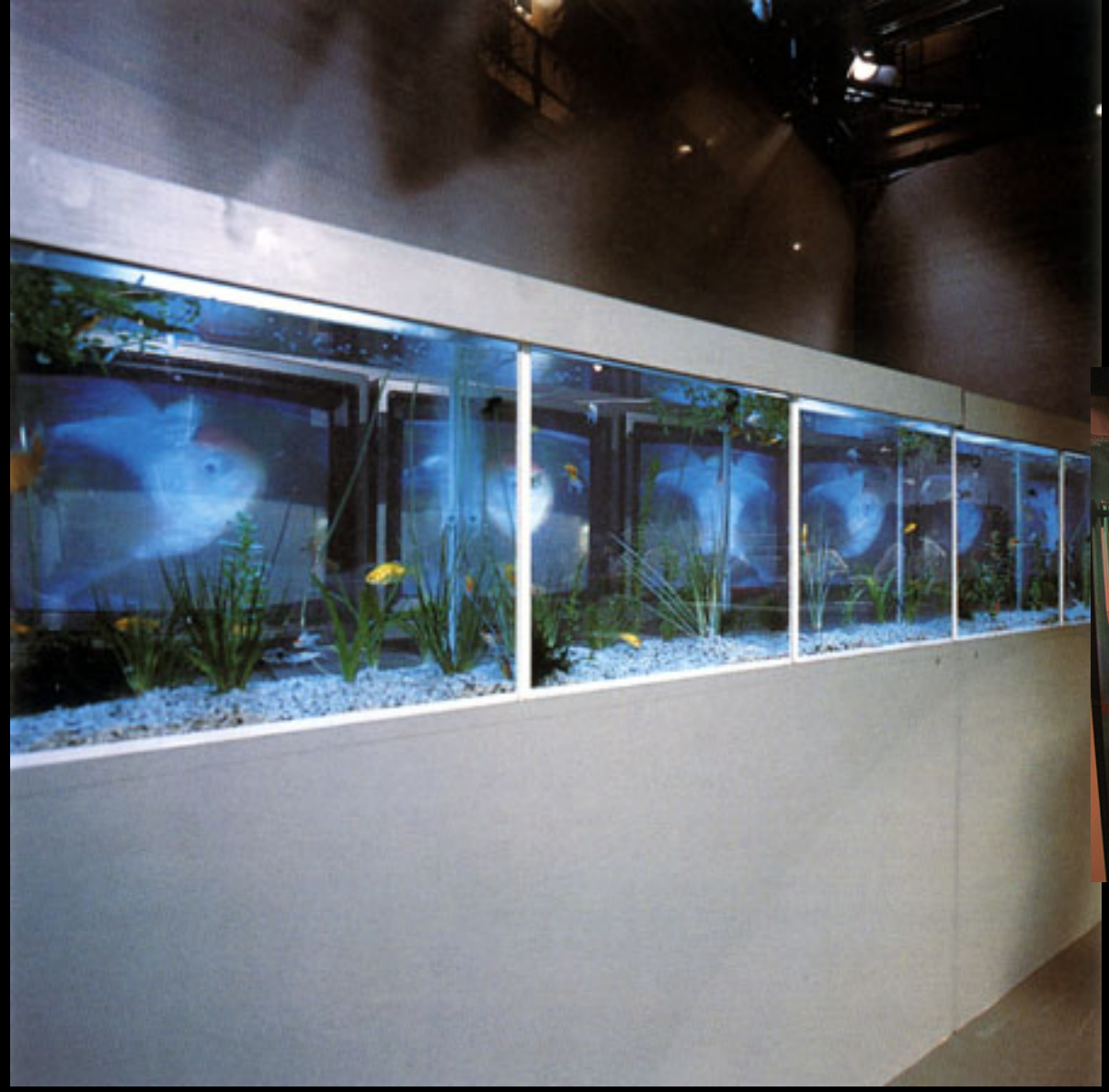
Nam June Paik / Charlotte Moorman - TV Bra for Living Sculpture (1969) and Chamber Music (1969):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3G3XomkkTPY

Nam June Paik, TV Garden, 1974
(2000 installation)

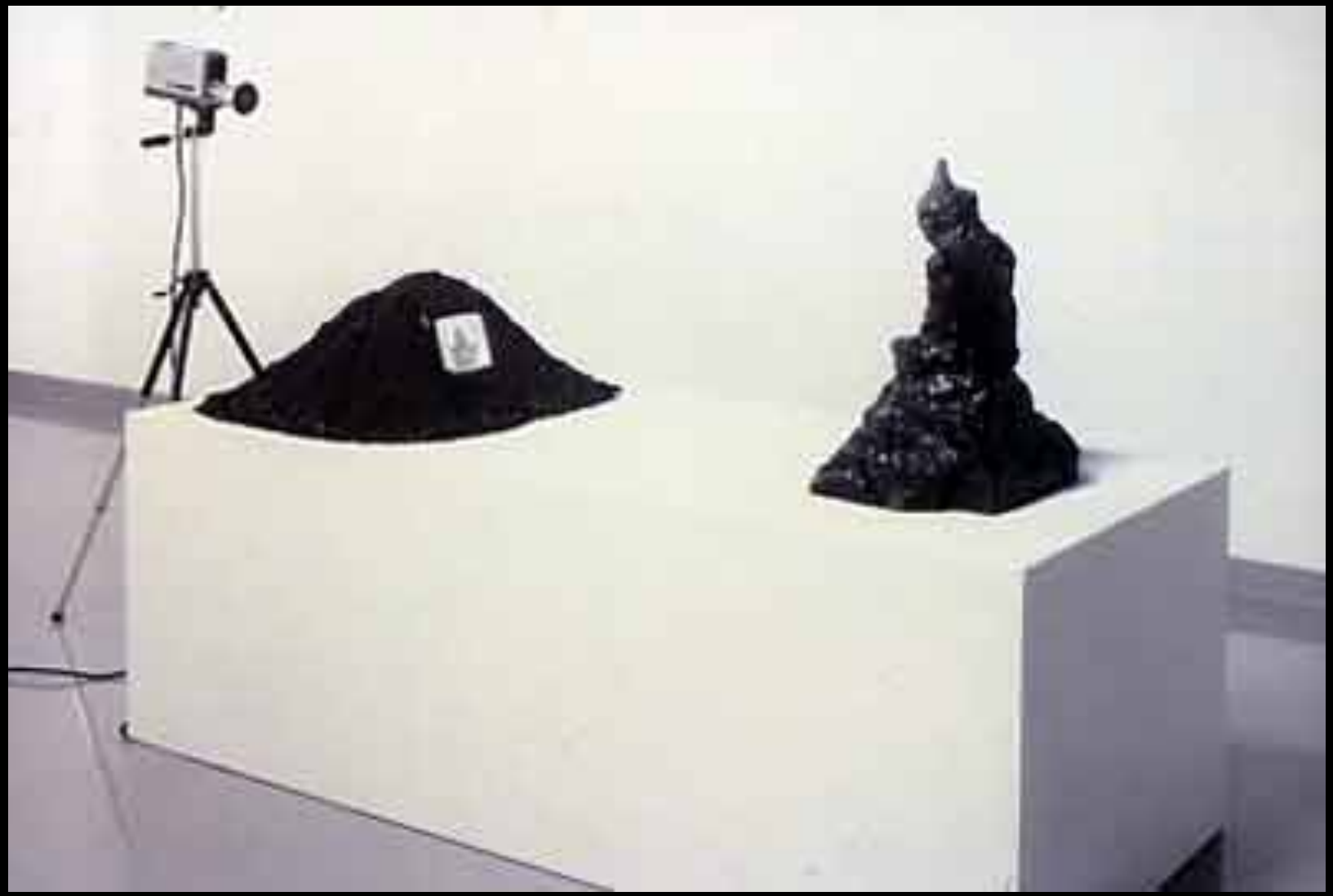
The TVs play the artist's 1973 collaboration with John J. Godfrey, *Global Groove*, which montages performers from around the world into a gyrating visual mix, and the videotape's soundtrack serves as musical and spoken counterpoint to the monitors' flickers of light.

-- Guggenheim Museum



Nam June Paik, Video Fish, 1975

This piece consists of twenty monitors each with a fish tank placed in front of them, playing footage ranging from flying planes and fish to Merce Cunningham dancing.

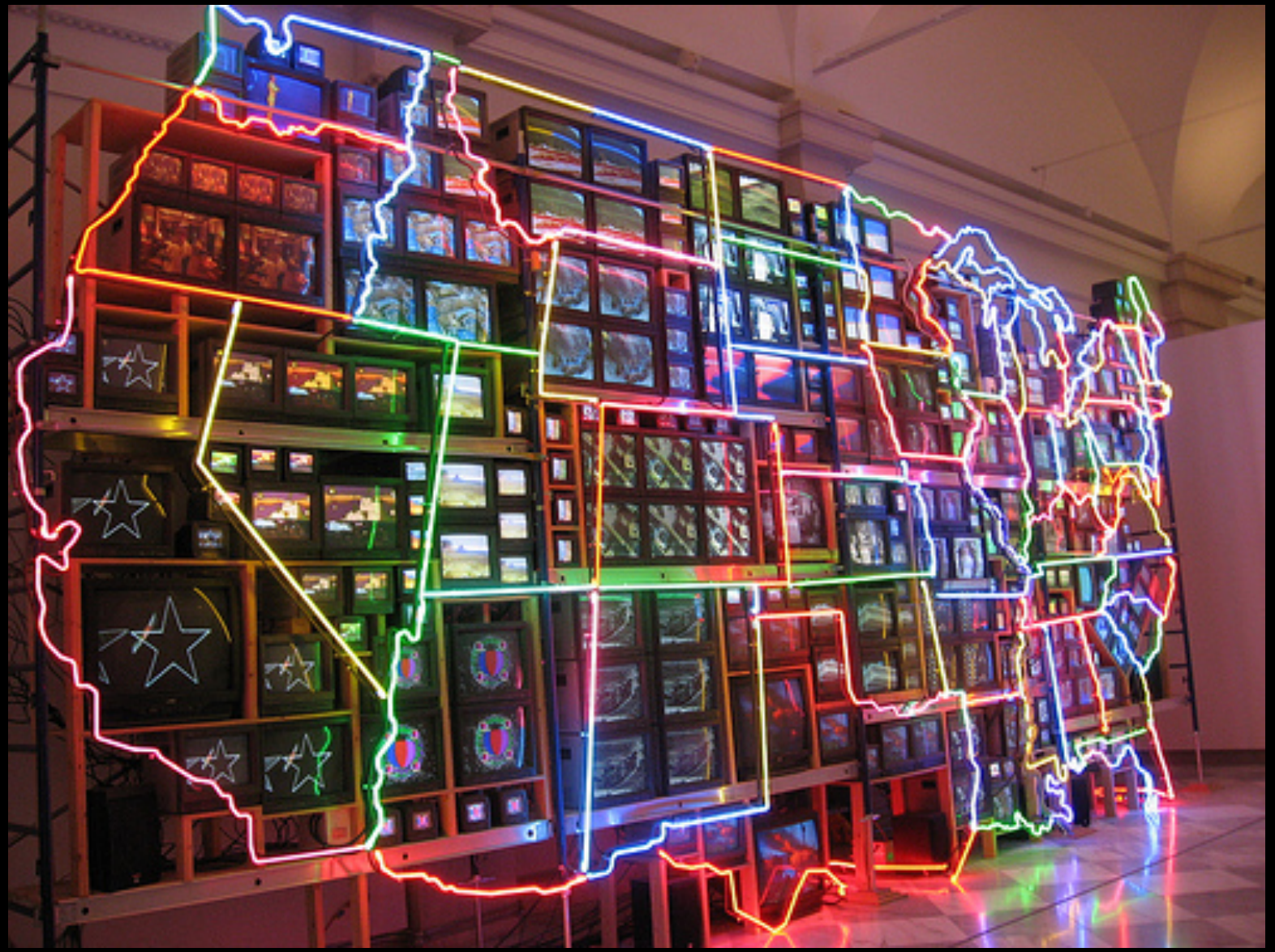


Nam June Paik, Video Buddha, 1981

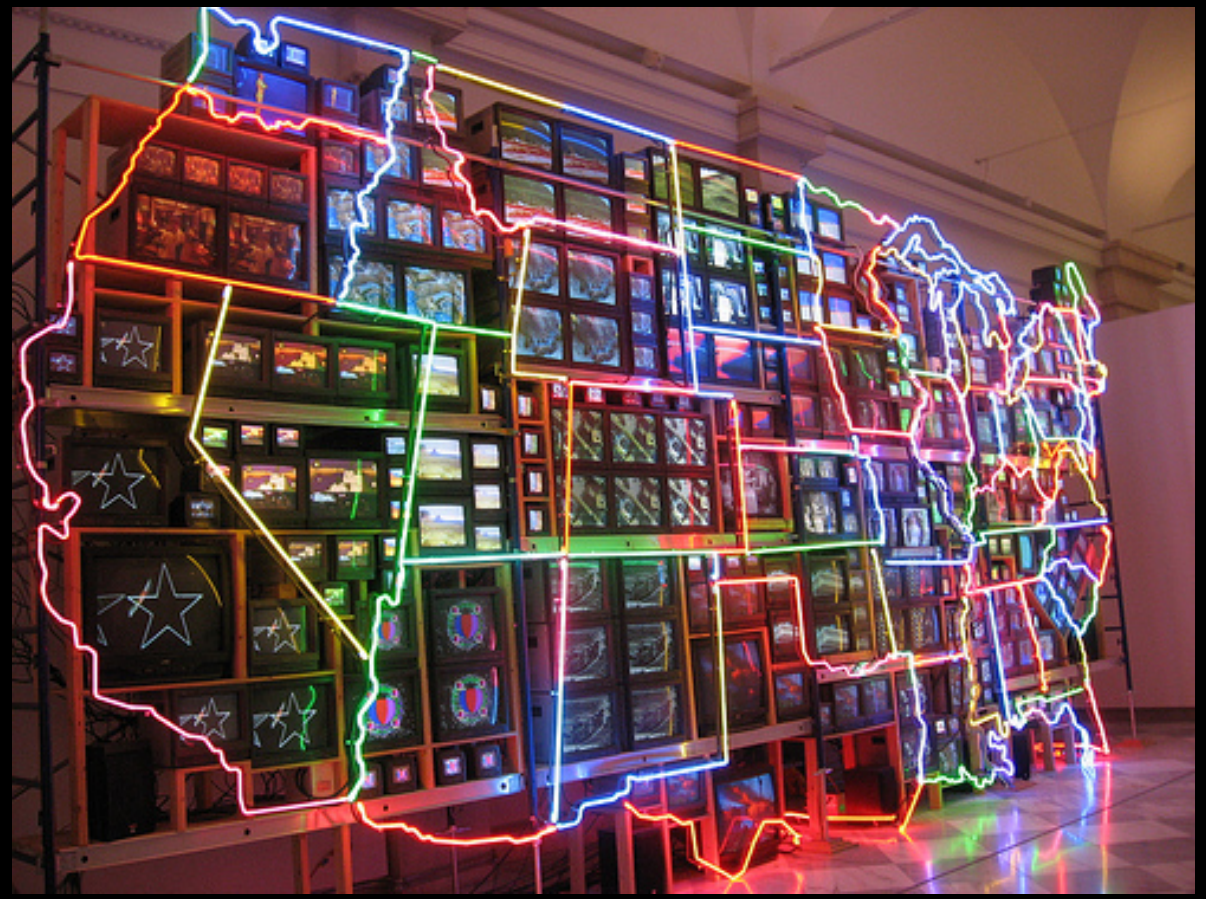
Nam June Paik, Reclining Buddha, 1993-94

Titian, Venus of Urbino, 1538

Nam June Paik, Reclining Buddha, 1993-94



Nam June Paik – *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*, 1995, fifty-one channel video installation (including one closed-circuit television feed), custom electronics, neon lighting, steel and wood; color, sound, approx. 15 x 40 x 4 ft., at the Smithsonian American Art Museum



Nam June Paik, Electronic Superhighway, 1974-95

- Paik's idea of the US states
- Each state is represented through a video clip that conveys his understanding of it. Paik shows how our concept of the different states has been formed by film and television. While some states are represented by popular TV series or books, he uses his personal connections to depict some states.
- Kansas is represented by the Wizard of Oz.
- Oklahoma is all about potatoes
- John Cage represents his idea of Massachusetts
- Arkansas shows footage by performance artist Charolotte Moorman
- Washington shows choreographer Merce Cunningham
- Missouri plays the movie Meet Me in Saint Louis
- Kentucky scenes from the Kentucky Derby
- Indiana scenes from the Indy 500
- In Iowa, the observer can see politicians campaigning during the Iowa caucuses
- Illinois shows rapid scenes of Chicago with an occasional photo of Lincoln
- Colorado plays amateur sports,
- Mississippi scenes from the civil rights movement
- Rhode Island only has a little tiny television
- Scene from South Pacific are shown for Hawaii
- Alaska is represented by ice and snow
- South Dakota displays George McGovern

Nam June Paik, *Megatron/Matrix*, 1995, eight-channel video installation with custom electronics; color, sound
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHGS42Hl95U

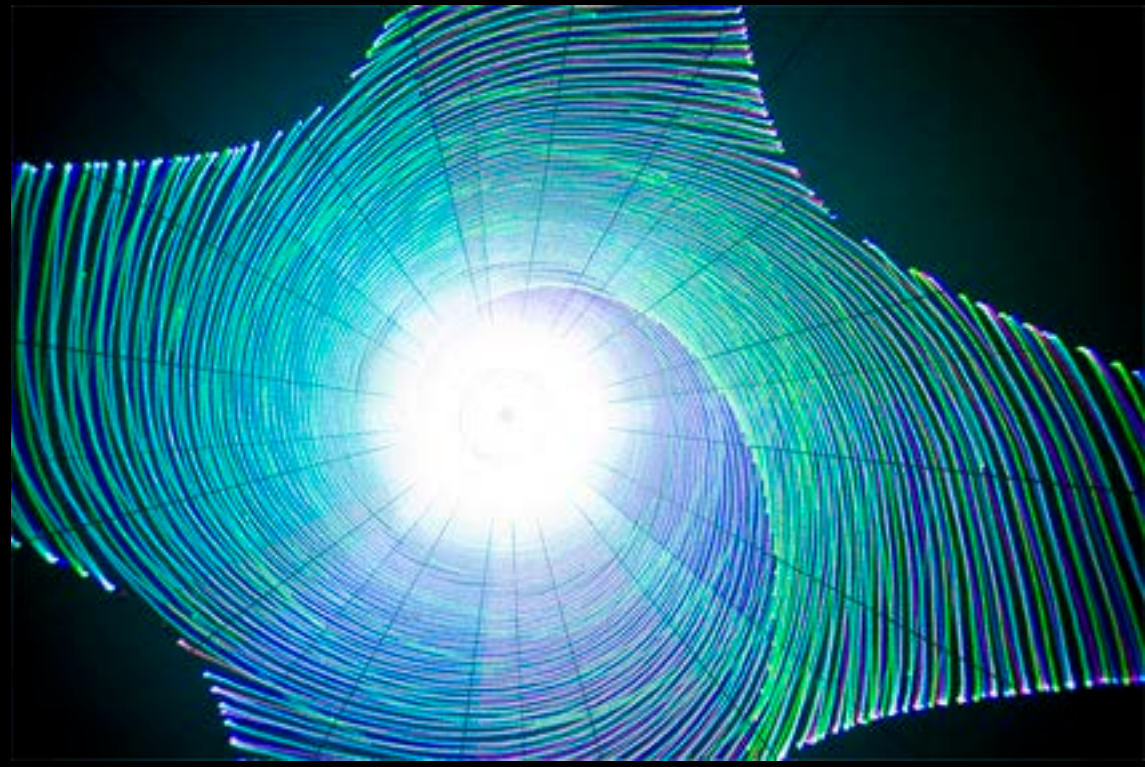
Enormous multimonitor works, such as Megatron/Matrix from 1995, realized his conception of cathode-ray walls using computers to help randomly switch images as they traveled from screen to screen or contracted and expanded across multiple screens. In direct opposition to two-way information flow, these works exaggerate the pleasures and terrors of one-way information flow. While utilizing his early ideas of scanning, mixing, and the archive, these works limit viewer participation to watching…They are designed to cause a not-unpleasurable lizard-brain reaction in viewers preconditioned by years of channel surfing to enjoy disjunctive information as long as it's brighly colored and highly varied. That they reduce participation to watching, offering little understanding of the social or economic structures making such information flows possible, is botha capitulation to these systesm and a putting on display of their conditions of pleasusre. (Kaizen, 238)

Nam June Paik, A selection from 32 cars for the 20th century play Mozart's Requiem quietly, 1997

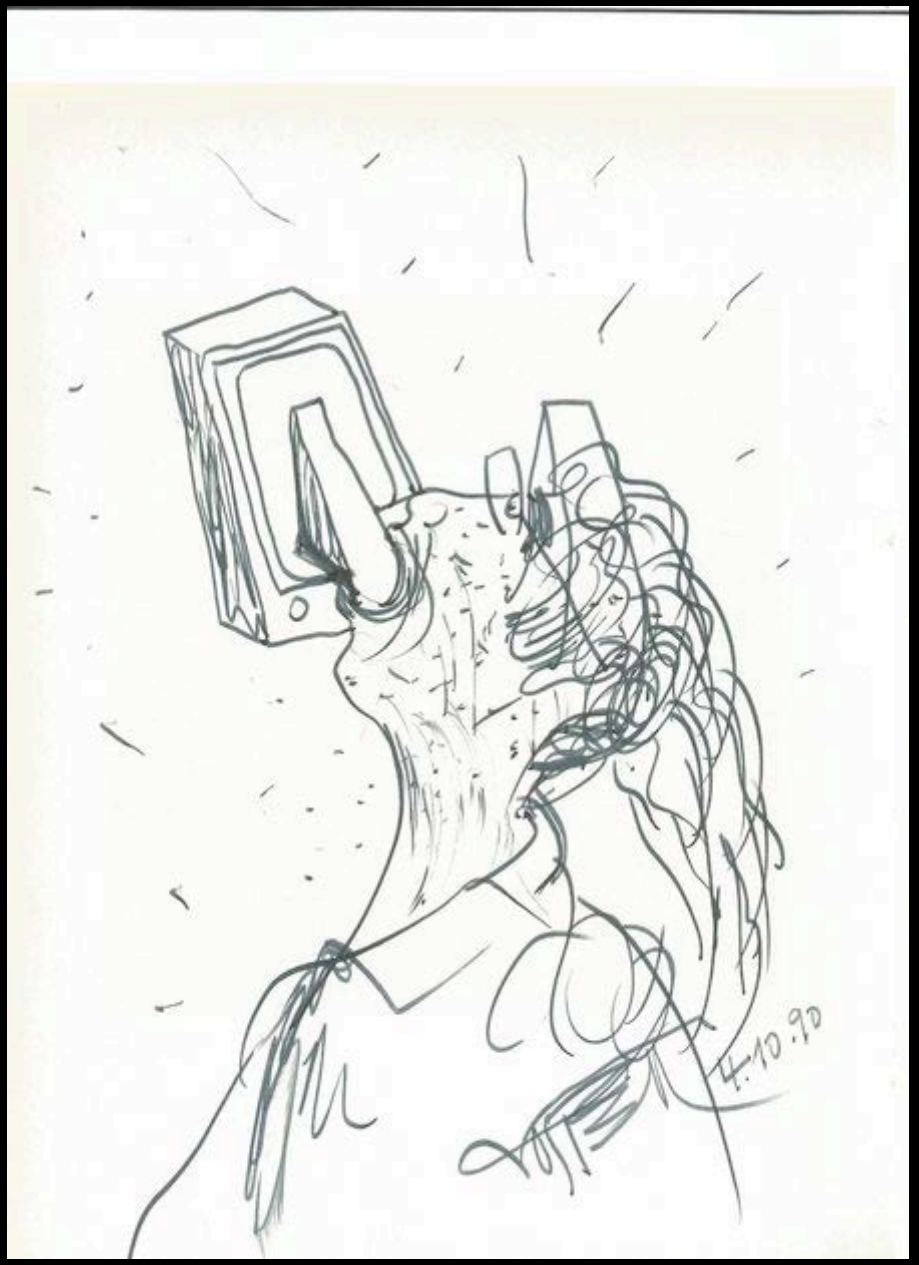
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cky1Eu1s9GE

Nam June Paik, and Norman Ballard, Laser Cone, 2001/2010

An immersive work



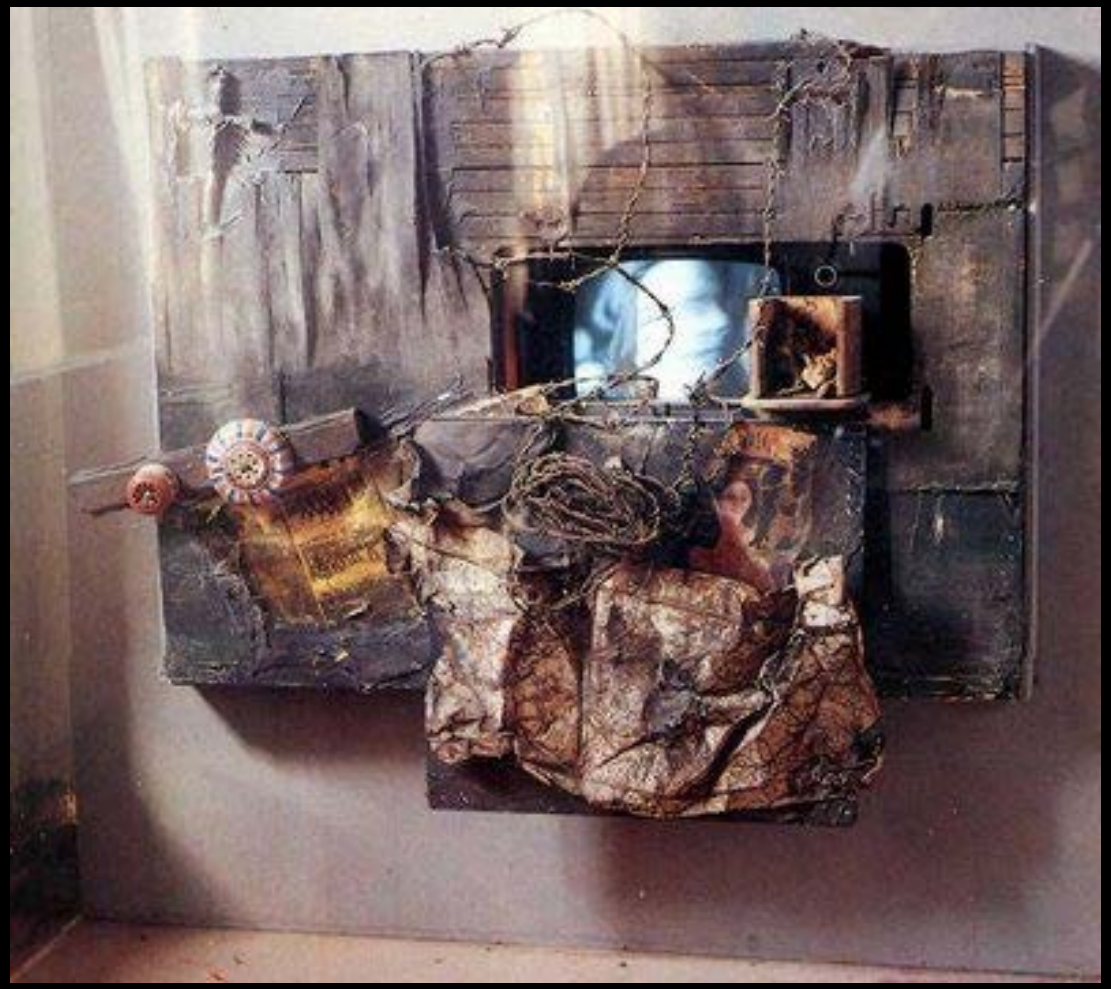
Wolf Vostell, German View from the Black Room Cycle, 1958-63
DÉCOLLAGE



Wolf Vostell [1932-1998]

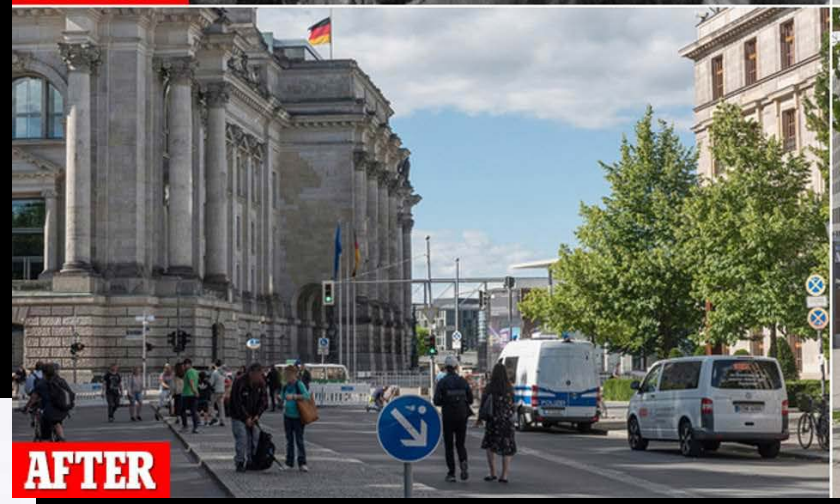
- After an apprenticeship as photolithographer Wolf Vostell studied at the Wuppertal "Werkkunstschule" from 1954 to 1955.
- He traveled extensively and in 1954 Paris developed the concept of "décollage" made from torn billboards, which subsequently also determined his later oeuvre.
- After further studies at the Paris École des Beaux-Arts and a disappointing return to the Düsseldorf academy, the artist decided in 1958 that art must take place in the street and integrated the audience in his first happenings.
- Together with Maciunas and Paik, Wolf Vostell was one of the first members of Fluxus in 1962, fighting for an identification of life with art.
- Vostell's prints, videos, environments and installations such as "Fluxus-Zug - das mobile Museum Vostell" (1981) were always influenced by socio-political motives and must be understood as a form of his commitment to the design of public spaces.

Top: Wolf Vostell, Beton-TV/ Concrete-TV, 1980
Bottom: Wolf Vostell, Stationary Traffic, Cologne, 1969

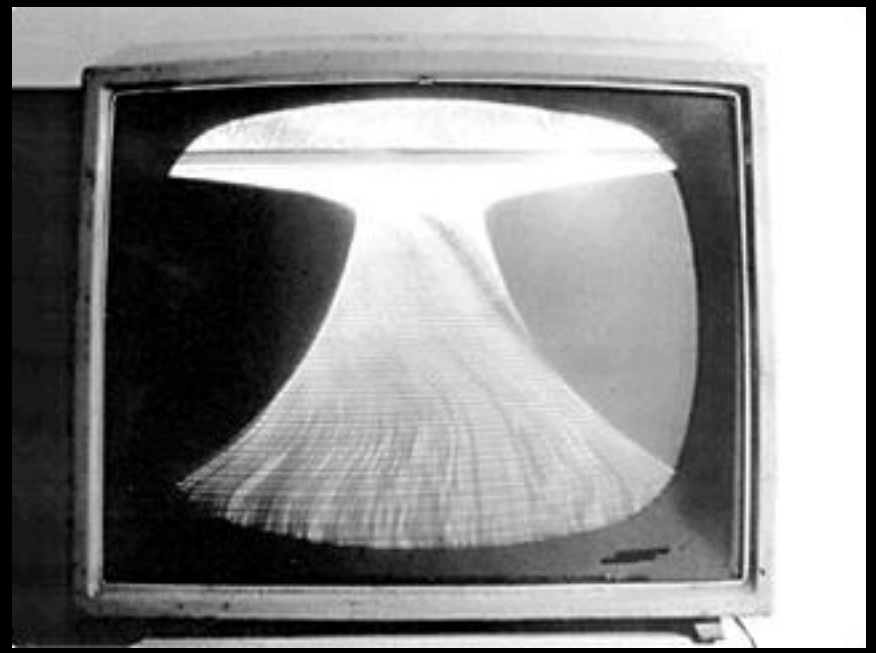


A burnt piece of wood with barbed wire, and newspaper cuttings about the Soviet Army and the military organization of the East German police force evokes associations with the political situation of the time and the existence of two German states. The 'Black Room' series is made up of three object montages. The 'German View' section features a built-in TV set with program running, as well as barbed wire, newspapers, bones and a children's toy.

Wolf Vostell, German View from the Black Room Cycle, 1958-63
DÉCOLLAGE



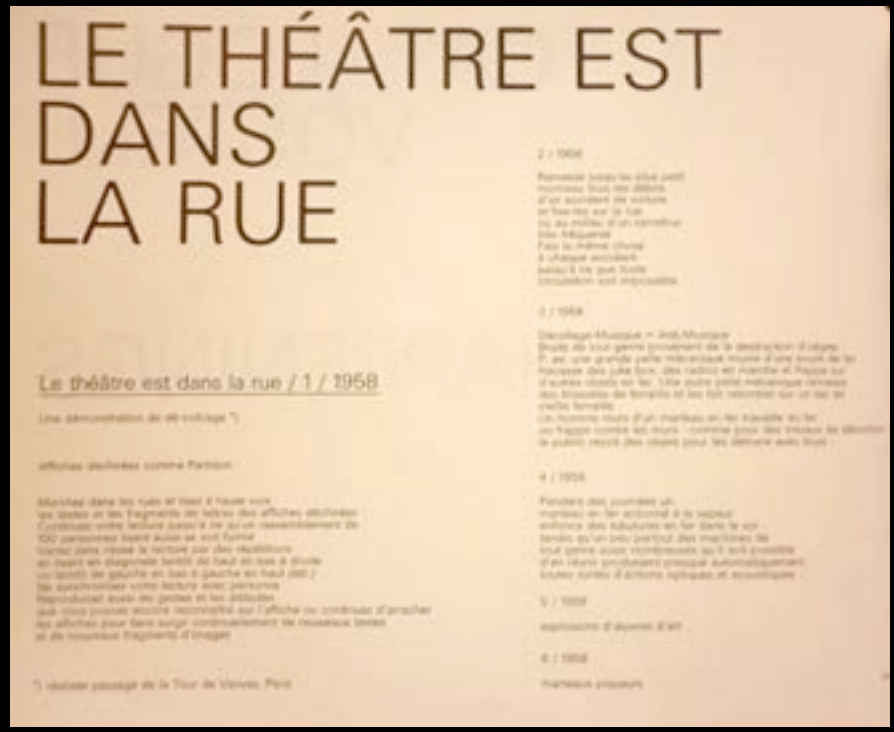
Top Left: Dresden post WW2
Bottom Left: Berlin post WW2
Above Right: Berlin various stages with and after wall, after WW 2 and today



Wolf Vostell, TV for Millions, 1959 – 1967

Vostell wrote a score in 1963 based on TV-Dé-collage Events for Millions. It was a project planned for a TV broadcast in which the TV audience participates and acts. The events; images; words; recommendations or commands are aimed to rouse in the viewers active participation, involvement, and thoughts and actions running parallel to the broadcast.

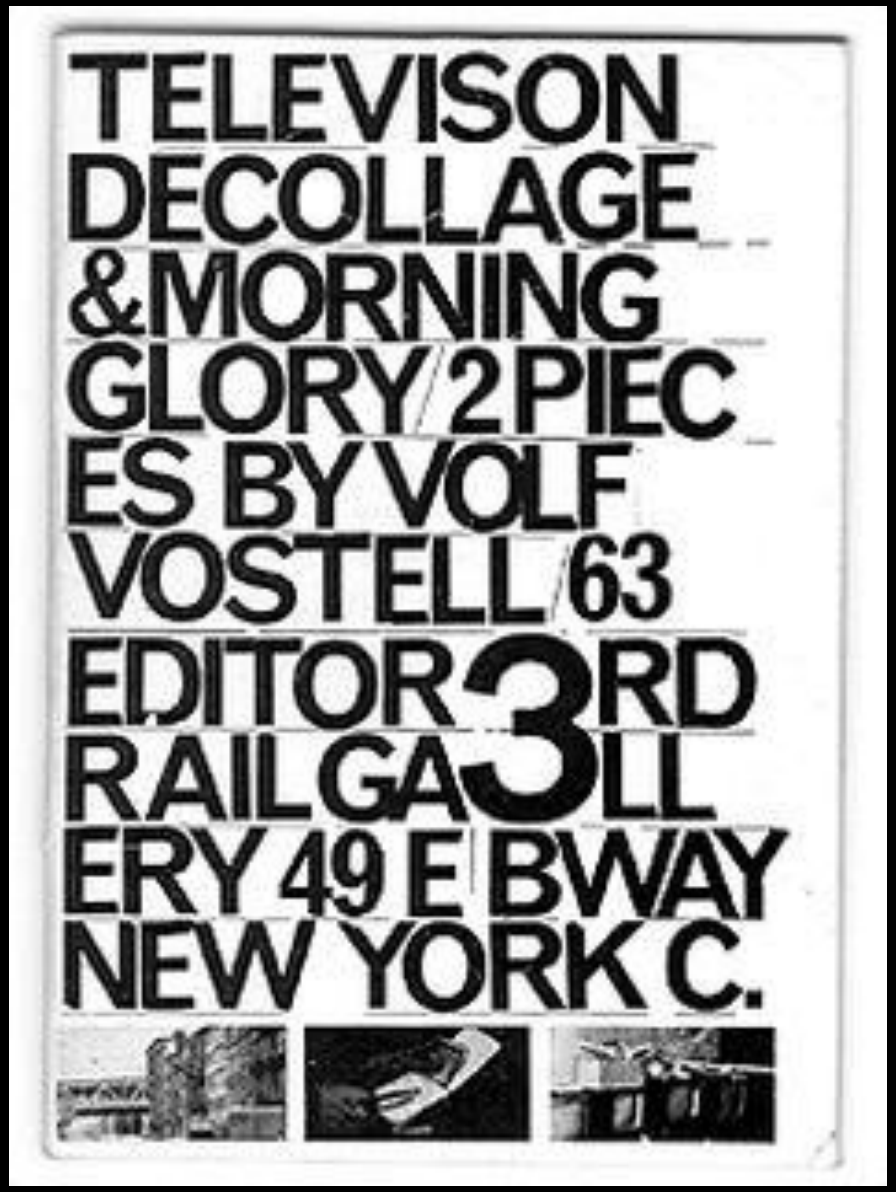
Wolf Vostell, Theater Is in the Street, 1958, documentation of the Happening/Rue de la Tour de Vanves, Paris, photograph on emulsified canvas




Text of the performance *Theater Is in the Street*

BABE
PARIS

AUTOMNE



Wolf Vostell, Television Décollage, 1963

Vostell's large-scale happening '9 Nein Décollagen' ('9 No – Dé-coll/ages) took place on 14 September 1963 in nine different locations in Wuppertal, and was organized by the Galerie Parnass. The audience was ferried by bus from location to location, including a cinema that screened 'Sun in your head' while people lay on the floor. The film transfers to the moving image Vostell's principle of 'Décollage'. While up to then Vostell had altered TV pictures as they were being broadcast, he was now able to compose the temporal sequence. Since no video equipment was available in 1963, Vostell instructed camera-man Edo Jansen to film distorted TV images off the TV screen. The film was re-edited and copied to video in 1967.

Wolf Vostell, Sun in Your Head (Television Décollage), 1963
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJcOQ5FAlGw

http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/sun-in-your-head/

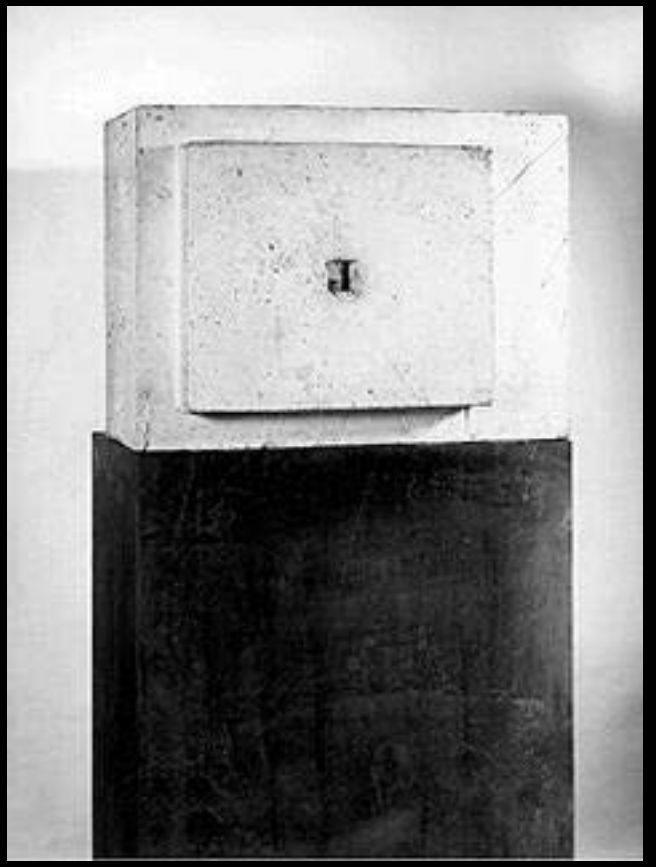
Wolf Vostell, Electronic Décoll/age, Happening Room, 1968

by WolfVostell
...INSTEAD OF BOMBS
.....AMERICAN PLANES IN VIET NAM
.....SHOULD DROP...

TV DINNERS LOLLIPOPS RICE BROMO-SELTZER LIPSTICK SUBWAY TOKENS BREAD HARDWARE BAGELS COCA-COLA FIELD GLASSES SAFETY PINS GAS MASKS BATMAN MASKS NYLON SHIRTS HARPER'SBAZAAR EAU DE COLOGNE KETCHUP BEANS BUTTERMILK

NEW YORK
MARCH 1966

Wolf Vostell and Peter Saage,
Electronic Décollage/Happening Room
(Homage à Dürer), 1968



Left: Vostell, TV from Endogen Depression, 1974-1980

Right: Vostell, Concrete TV Paris, 1974-1981
A functioning TV set has been embedded in concrete. One tiny hole reveals a glimpse of the screen. From 1969, Vostell recurrently worked with concrete.

Vostell, Endogen Depression, Beton TV (Concrete TV), 1974-1980

There have been approximately nine versions of *Endogen Depression,* a work that Vostell started in roughly 1974-75 at the Hannover Art Museum, Germany. This installation consists of approximately forty objects; including tables, dressers and tube televisions that together bring up references of a traditional domestic home. All the televisions are half embedded in concrete and about ten of them will be turned on. In the original installation, all of the televisions were turned on with the sound turned very low. And while many of the earlier versions (pre 1980) included a group of dogs, another version included a group of live turkeys that were left to wander about the space. The turkeys bring up references to classic American themes, especially in relationship to the purely American holiday, Thanksgiving.

Vostell, Concrete Traffic, 1970

Concrete Traffic is a large-scale outdoor public sculpture consisting of a 1957 Cadillac, which, save for its undercarriage and whitewall rubber tires, is encased in several tons of concrete.

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*Wolf Vostell's "Concrete Traffic" being transported to the University of Chicago, June 1970. Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago Library and Archives. /Photo: Jean-claude LeJeune*

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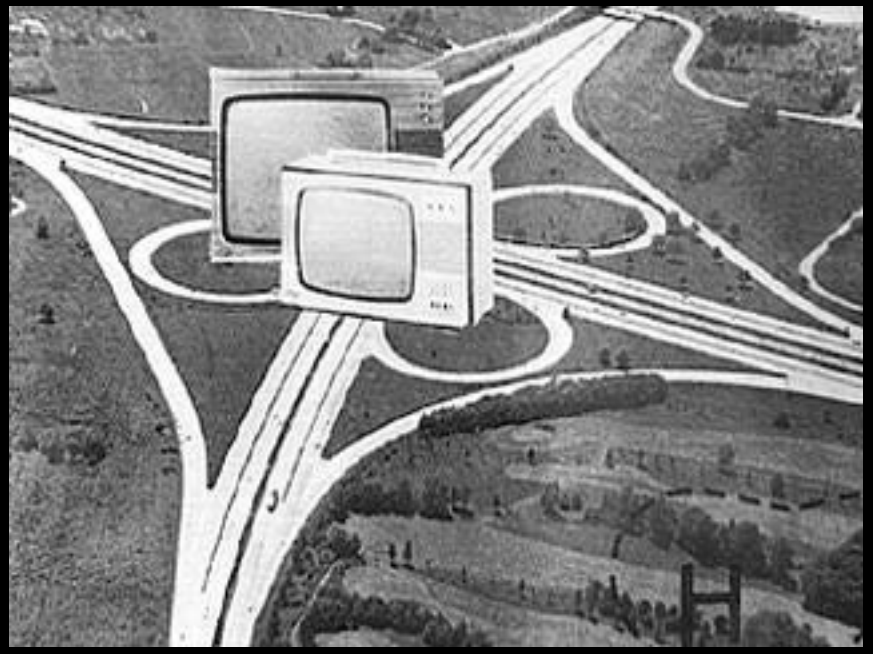
**Wolf Vostell, "Project for a Drive-in Museum," 1970**

A museum in the form of two huge television sets on a motorway junction. Vostell's notes state: "On Screen 1, c. 50x50 m, one art-work will be projected each day. Interior: hotel, with library and video service available in all rooms. Screen 2 shows a West German TV program according to choice. Interior: film and TV museum, & art and science laboratory."