

**Netochka Nezvanova/
Rebekah Wilson** NZ, 1975
No title

2001, performance with electronics, metal,
stones and video projection

Rebekah Wilson (Netochka Nezvanova) was artistic director at STEIM, Amsterdam from 2001 to 2003. Michel Waisvisz regularly invited artists and musicians as artistic director for a few years, to bring them into contact with new artistic impulses and expand the STEIM network. Wilson created a natural environment for the performance, containing kinetic sculptural instruments inspired by New Zealand sculptor and sound artist Len Lye. Over the entire back wall, she projected an atmospheric video of plants to enhance the electronic-organic quality of the sound. During the one-hour performance, Wilson used synthesizers and software and produced interactive sound with the sculptures present. Halfway through the performance, Wilson played some tapes and smoked a cigarette while listening to her own music.



TAKING CARE OF MEDIA ART IN THE NETHERLANDS: A BRIEF HISTORY

Gaby Wijers

In December 1992, *MonteVideo/TBA*, Amsterdam, started the first phase of a national video preservation project in cooperation with nine Dutch collections. This project would lay the foundation for media arts conservation in the Netherlands.¹

MONTEVIDEO

Since the 1970s, specialised distributors have emerged worldwide in response to the ever-evolving media arts – video art, media art, digital art – and other art forms not yet accepted by museums, festivals and other ‘mainstream’ art venues. As an alternative to the traditional gallery system, media art distributors came up with innovative structures in order to sell and distribute these artworks. From the start, conversations about building new communities around video, media art or digital art artists also included discussions on access and distribution.²

In 1978, the Dutch television producer René Coelho opened up his house in Amsterdam for artists, allowing them to showcase their work and receive assistance with production. In doing so he laid the foundation for the present institute.³ This initiative, baptized *MonteVideo*, quickly grew into one of Europe’s most prominent venues and distributors for experimental video and media art. Its growing production facilities became one of the most advanced in the art world. One should keep in mind that at that time equipment was rare and expensive; most artists still had little technical knowledge; academies did not yet teach video or media art, nor did universities. At the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s several institutions in the Netherlands dedicated to video art were founded.⁴ At the same time, museums acquired the first video artworks, and

¹ René Coelho wrote the memorandum, ‘De hoogste tijd. Notitie over de conservering van videokunst’, in 1991. This raised the problematic situation and highlighted the need to take action.
² *Video + Fernsehen: Ein Gespräch unter Fachleuten*, 11 March 1978, Neue Galerie – Sammlung Ludwig; Nan Hoover, Klaus vom Bruch, Ulrike Rosenbach.

³ Sandra Fauconnier, ‘Video Art Distribution in the Era of Online Video’, in *Video Vortex Reader II* (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 1991). See nimk.nl/nl/video-art-distribution-in-the-era-of-online-video.
⁴ For this history see, among others, Jeroen Boomgaard and Bart Rutten, *The Magnetic Era: Video Art in the Netherlands 1970–1985* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2003).

like this video art found its way into the museum.⁵ With their production, presentation, distribution services, the sharing of equipment and technical consultation, MonteVideo played a key role in the development of the artists and the genre, both nationally and internationally. Building a collection was an evident and necessary result. From the 1970s onwards, the collection contained artworks by, amongst others, Livinus van de Bundt, Marinus Boezem, Jan van Munster and Pieter Engels, Nam June Paik and Bill Viola. Over the following decades, works by Steina and Woody Vasulka (The Vasulkas), Bert Schutter, Peter Bogers, Matthew Schlanger, Oliver Laric, Melanie Bonajo, Constant Dullaart and many others were added to this collection. The organisation and its distribution service expanded activities to other or even newer media arts – not only single-channel video and installations, but also Internet-based, software- and hardware-based work.⁶ At this moment the distribution collection is one of the most important ones in Europe and consists of over 3,000 titles by more than 500 international artists. Works from the collection are rented out on a daily basis to art venues and festivals all over the world and are presented internationally. In 1993, MonteVideo (and its collection) merged with Time Based Arts (TBA). It was renamed to the Nederlands Instituut voor Mediakunst (NIMk) (Netherlands Media Art Institute) later. It soon became a key international player in the presentation and production of new media art, and of the preservation of media art in general. After this ended in 2012, due to budget cuts, LIMA continued distribution, presentation and preservation in a new form.

As a media art distributor, MonteVideo was already used to executing media artworks under different circumstances, on a large scale, and at different locations worldwide. As for instance in the travelling exhibition *Imago: Fin de siècle in Dutch Contemporary Art* (1990) and *The Second* (1997). Both exhibitions showed the state of Dutch media art at that time.⁷ Worldwide promotion and presentation of media artworks since the late 1970s brought a profound knowledge in transferring artworks to continuously changing displays and locations, often in intensive collaboration with the artists. It also succeeded in the development of documentation and installation methodologies and instructions, and an infrastructure to manage all these artworks, copies, and derivatives. And last but not least, distribution leads to a proactive involvement in artistic practices, new methods, technology and art forms. Here the knowledge – the technical, legal, promotional, organizational expertise – is coupled with a deep understanding of the material, as we hardly can find elsewhere. This leads to a practice in which not just the distribution, but also the conservation of media art works is of the greatest

5 The Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht organised the Video&Film Manifestatie in 1977. This event lasted five weeks and consisted of several parts, such as a video studio where video work could be made or viewed, an exhibition on technical reproduction and art and video productions by artists from five countries.

6 See Sandra Fauconnier, 'Video Art in the Era of Online Video', nimk.nl, July–August 2010, nimk.nl/nl/video-art-distribution-in-the-era-of-online-video.

7 *Imago: Fin de siècle in Dutch Contemporary Art* was a travelling exhibition funded by Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst (nowadays RCE) and organised by MonteVideo. Opening in Amsterdam during the sixth edition of KunstRai, *Imago* exhibited thirteen Dutch artworks ranging from video installations to computer-driven systems. From the early 1990s till late 1993, the exhibition visited nine countries in Europe and Asia. *Imago: Fin de siècle in Dutch Contemporary Art*, exh. cat., ed. René Coelho (Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst / Mediamatic, 1990). *The Second*, seven years later, consisted of seventeen time-based sculptures and premiered at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. *The Second: Time Based Art from the Netherlands*, exh. cat., ed. René Coelho (MonteVideo/TBA, Netherlands Media Art Institute, 1997). See also the contribution of Marga van Mechelen in this volume.

importance. All the knowledge invested so far will ensure that we can still access the work of these artists' work in the future.⁸

PRESERVATION

Since 1965 artists and activists used open-reel tape; this was common until in the 1980s cassette formats, such as U-Matic and Betacam, became the more common carriers. Since from the 1980s more institutions took video art into their collections, resulting in an institutional interest in revisiting and preserving the first works on tape from the mid-1980s onwards. The term 'video' covered an array of rapidly changing technologies, both in terms of the formats used for the artworks – how it should be stored, archived and displayed – and of the equipment used in its presentation. 'Because of technological fragility of the equipment, the different standards in playback and the aging and deterioration of tapes worldwide projects were starting to research how these works could be exhibited in the future. Artists, distributors, museums and specialized technical organizations started to execute tape preservation projects. And other institutions began to look toward actively preserving this material in their collections.'⁹ In the Netherlands, MonteVideo/TBA started to migrate video artworks and became the centre of expertise for media art preservation. Important artworks and video documentation of activist actions, performance and live art events held on tapes, which were threatened with erosion, were transferred to Betacam SP, in the context of the national Deltaplan Culture Conservation. Central questions were the status of the vehicle ('not the tape (object) is the artwork but the important work (information) on the tape'¹⁰), the significance of the material and the method chosen, and how to establish the best conditions for future presentation. NIMk shared its knowledge with other institutions and often worked closely with them. Under the auspices of the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (RCE) (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands), at the time of MonteVideo, it researched, coordinated and executed the preservation of multiple collections like those of De Appel, Lijnbaancentrum, RCE, Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, Van Abbemuseum and World Wide Video Center to name but a few. The archival sub-masters were afterwards stored and taken care of by MonteVideo. This approach laid the groundwork for all future conservation projects.¹¹ In 1996 I entered the field of media art preservation, with the task to research current preservation and digitisation techniques (by MonteVideo/TBA) and to coordinate the next phase for the Stichting Behoud Moderne Kunst (SBMK)

8 Helen Westerik, 'A Fly on the Distributors' Wall', li-ma.nl, 2017, li-ma.nl/lima/sites/default/files/Fly%20on%20the%20distributors%20wall%20(1).pdf.

9 Peter Oleksik, 'Rewind', VoCA Journal, 29 March 2018, journal.voca.network/rewind.

10 *De houdbaarheid van videokunst = The Sustainability of Video Art* (Amsterdam: Foundation for the Preservation of Modern Art, 2003), nimk.nl/eng/preservation/pilot-project-preservation-in-video-art.

11 Interview with Ramon Coelho (NIMk), Nederlands Instituut voor Mediakunst, Amsterdam, April 23, 2009, scart.be/en/content/interview-ramon-coelho-nimk.

(Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art). Around that time the transfer to Digital Betacam, working in close cooperation with artists, and additional documentation were seen as best practice. Authenticity and uniqueness of 'the manifestation', as it was called, was, as always, a theme of debate. 'Preservation of modern art, but particular of such a relatively new medium as video art is almost virgin territory. It was noticed that the traditional codes of the visual arts, such as uniqueness of the physical manifestation were not applicable to video art. The work of art is certainly unique and authentic but its tangible form as such is not. Video is a technical reproducible medium.'¹² However, it needs an apparatus to 'come to life'; this apparatus changes over time. Unlike museums and galleries, for which the uniqueness of the original as well as the practice of keeping the number of editions small, served as a founding economic principle. NIMk, as distributor, was mindful of the technological medium's inherent potential for reproduction, which dismantles the value relationship between the original and its copy. The participating institutions, collected the originals (masters or sub-masters), and various generations of copies (copies of copies for viewing or presentation copies), identical copies of the same work (editions), not (identical copies (versions)) all on different formats in stock. The works were preserved, choosing the best possible technical source depending on the work of each artist. The joined application of the master tapes to preserve one work to be used by many owners was agreed on.

'What to preserve?' was and still is the fundamental question in media art conservation. In order to answer this question it is important to understand the essential characteristics of the work that must be retained over time and which are needed to keep it accessible and meaningful. During the intake of the work the core and concept of the work, its function and the external characteristics and aesthetics, are documented, together with as much information as possible one can get from the artist.¹³ Conservation is a lifelong process and a series of actions as well. Next to preservation and digitisation activities, conservation is also planning for updates, treatment, maintenance, management and storage of the works, with the aim of making a collection available for use and reuse. All active preservation interventions are in principle subject to the current conservation ethics and techniques requiring reversibility, transparency and full documentation. This documentation forms the necessary frame of reference for future presentation and preservation and is needed to determine which preservation strategy is best.

¹² Ibid., 10.

¹³ For this purpose interview protocols and intake forms have been set up; see also *The Artist Interview: For Conservation and Presentation of Contemporary Art Guidelines and Practice*, ed. Lydia Beerkens et al. (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2012).

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

The multiple character of media art (versions, variations and editions) was emphasised, and paradigms were brought forth by the Variable Media Network that was founded in 2001: 'the physical fragility and the ever changing media, the interactive experience of the Internet, the expansion of digital media: a rapidly transforming, mutating media environment challenges us as we seek to maintain a fundamental intention – preserving the integrity of an artwork, the Immaterial.'¹⁴ A whole new mind-set, based on behaviours instead of materials and objects, and new vocabulary was introduced; one that gave a name to the Network: variable media. In order to preserve the functioning of the artwork, it is accepted that the artwork itself is irrevocably subject to change. Such changes are intrinsically associated with this type of artwork, so in contrast to traditional art forms, concepts such as 'authenticity' or 'originality' are less important. The works are multimedia, interactive, live-generated, and make use of multiple interconnected networks. They no longer form an unchanging end product, but are increasingly divergent: they are variable, many versions exist, side by side, and can be compiled by different people at different times and platforms (both online and offline). From here on four leading conservation strategies for media art have been extensively described and revised in recent years:

1. *Storage*: storing the original hardware and software.
2. *Migration*: 'updating' the work to a new standard.
3. *Emulation*: simulating the original technical environment on a new computer.
4. *Reinterpretation*: to carry out the work over and over again (whether or not based on documentation).¹⁵

Which preservation strategy is most appropriate depends on the work and can change over time.

The international connections and collaborations on modern art conservation in the museum field started with the groundbreaking project, symposium and book *Modern Art: Who Cares?* in 1997, where the conservation of media art was embedded in conservation models for non-traditional material. These models came from a number of renowned international scholars, from the academic field and museum sector.¹⁶ A little later the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA), was born.

¹⁴ Alain Depocas, Jon Ippolito and Caitlin Jones, eds., *Permanence Through Change: The Variable Media Approach* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2003). variablemedia.net/e/preserving/html/var_pub_index.html.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *Modern Art: Who Cares?*, ed. Ijssbrand Hummelen and Dionne Sille (London: Archetype Publications, 2005). *Inside Installations: Theory and Practice in the Care of Complex Artworks*, ed. Tatja Scholte and Glenn Wharton (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011).

From here on a keen interest in media art preservation was noted and case-based research on video art, installations, performances, films and documentation was carried out nationally and internationally in various partnerships.

The other impressive and groundbreaking European project, *Inside Installations* (with a symposium and book, *Contemporary Art: Who Cares?*) was a direct outcome. All initiated and hosted by the RCE and SBMK. In 2003, NIMk, in cooperation with Hardware Medienkunstverein (HMKV), Dortmund, Germany and C3 Hungary, started a new research project offering a public platform that stimulated further conversations about these topics. '404 Object Not Found: What Remains of media art' peaked as a four-day international congress in June 2003 in Dortmund. It represented the first major European research project and congress that focused on the preservation of media art at large and brought together a large number of interested and specialised individuals, institutions, artists, critics, conservators and others. The symposium spurred active engagement in conservation. Documentation and emulation of digital art were researched in projects: besides *Inside Installations* (2004–2007), *Inside Movement Knowledge* (2009–2010), *OASIS* (2004–2007) and *Obsolete Equipment* (2009–2011) are among them. All were working together on an international scale on case study-based projects from different perspectives: contemporary art, dance and technology/equipment. Next to these projects, NIMk was an advisor to the museums while also evaluating the research done by Active Archives and *Capturing Unstable Media*. The case studies carried out by NIMk and partners from the end of the 1990s onwards concerned complex installations, computer-based artworks and emulation. Distribution became digital around 2002 and since then the third phase of preserving media art (2010–2012) all went digital.¹⁷

LIMA, SBMK, Kröller-Müller Museum and Gemeentemuseum Den Haag (now Kunstmuseum Den Haag) researched the work of Peter Struycken in the project *Transformation Digital Art* (2014–2016).¹⁸ The reason to choose several works of this artist is twofold: Struycken is one of the best known living Dutch artists today and many museums hold his work in their collections. This broadly shared base means that many institutions can benefit from this research. Second, Struycken was a pioneering artist working with the computer as an artistic medium as early as the 1970s (see the contribution of Darko Fritz), and the problems that are faced today in preserving his work provide valuable insights into what could be expected for other software-based artworks in the future. Overall, the case studies help to refine a generic workflow for the preservation of software-based artworks. However, when digital artworks are not taken into museum

¹⁷ See the project *Payout and publication 'Content in Context: New Technologies for Distribution'*, nimk.nl/nl/publicatie-content-in-context; and the project *Conservation Media art Collection Netherlands 2010*, sbmk.nl/en/projects/conservation_media_art.

¹⁸ See li-ma.nl/site/article/transformatie-digitale-kunst-peter-struycken.

collections, when the work is owned by the artist rather than by an institution, who is responsible for its preservation? How can artists preserve their work and make it sustainable and thus available for (museum) presentations? These questions were explored with Geert Mul through the experience of making the retrospective exhibition *Match Maker* (2007) on show at the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam.¹⁹ The exhibition contains a diverse selection of works by Mul, including nine interactive and generative system works. Over the last twenty to twenty-five years, Mul has made sculptures, projections and generative and interactive audiovisual installations for numerous locations in the Netherlands and abroad. A main part of his work is interactive and database driven. Existing images often sourced online are reworked into new combinations with the help of image analysis software and are accessible via interfaces using the movement of the human body. His research revolved around the development and testing of scripts and the documentation of steps needed for the reinstallation and recreation of interactive media artworks. Based on the *Future Proof Media Art* (2016–2017) LIMA research project, the *Artwork Documentation Tool* was developed in order to support artists in archiving their own work.²⁰

Based on multiple case studies, and together with DullTech (Constant Dullaart), Rhizome and other (inter)national artists and collaborators, LIMA is currently testing dedicated storage and hosting services for net art, as well as developing the preservation workflow that is needed to support these tasks. This, for example, includes monitoring and managing changes and versions of the artworks.²¹

Over the years, artistic practice based on technology, divergence and change has increased. With the development and emancipation of the art form and its practice, reflection and perception has changed. The mind-set for conservation of media artworks is changing as well, but more slowly. It is clear nowadays that all re-installations, re-enactments or reinterpretations of media artworks suggest translation and a kind of fidelity. Without change and representation there will be no future access, no awareness of the digital pioneers and no (future) presentation in the form of exhibitions (professional presentation), or research. Managing all content in a digital form provides the opportunity and challenge for online access.²²

The first three preservation strategies described in this essay have become familiar in the meantime to anyone working in digital art and media art preservation. The

¹⁹ See li-ma.nl/site/article/future-proof-media-art.

²⁰ See li-ma.nl/site/article/artwork-documentation-tool.

²¹ See li-ma.nl/site/article/art-host.

²² At the grand opening of the Netherlands Media Art Institute in 1998 the first interface to the collection of MonteVideo/TBA presented was named CYCLOOP; an online version including moving image fragments was presented shortly after. LIMA, RCE, Van Abbemuseum and Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam launched Mediakunst.net in June 2018.

development of reinterpretation is however still in an early state. 'To what extent can we mediate the core or the concept of the work through reinterpretation?'²³ This is an emerging question. Re-installation and reinterpretation asks artists and collection managers to view the work as a conceptual and performative entity, not as an object, and to recognise that digital artworks are re-executed. If we think further ahead, beyond the technology, the development of a re-installation script is probably the best option in the long run. This implies that the execution, other than a reproduction, will be far different from the work in its original manifestation. Reinterpretation is an artistic strategy and a practice that has been common in music, dance and theatre for centuries, and is used at art schools and in workshops, but is practically not done on a professional level in the field of digital art preservation. Reinterpretation tells us a lot about the work itself and opens itself up to creativity. It keeps the work alive in a completely different way. Therefore we need to ask questions such as 'How can we visualize, contextualize, document, analyse, understand and ultimately transfer creative digital work processes in production and presentation, between artists and the public, in the context of digital culture and the larger cultural field?' Again: 'What is the core and production method of a work?' 'How to do it yourself?' 'How do you keep a work alive?' 'How do we translate this technology, artistic practice and knowledge to the next generation?' Here we arrive at a different core of the digital artwork. Reinterpretation ensures continuity; this tradition becomes an alternative conservation strategy in the visual arts. Indeed, from the initial question posed at UNFOLD – an ongoing research project initiated by LIMA in 2015, which was: 'Can reinterpretation as a creative act be seen as preservation strategy?' – we have perhaps arrived at its inversion: Can preservation be understood as a creative act and therefore include reinterpretation as one of its strategies? We are not objective or passive in the conservation of media art; we are actively constructing and reconstructing at least an idea of the authenticity of the work based on our understanding of the work and conservation dogmas. Next to the object, technology, context, preservation and presentation principles as well as the role of conservators and museums will change over time. Authenticity in the digital world is not an original condition; it is a dynamic process.

²³ See li-ma.nl/site/article/unfold-mediation-reinterpretation.

Mediatheek MonteVideo/
Time Based Arts, **Spuistraat Amsterdam**
1994

Geert Mul NL, 1965
Shan Shui
2013, interactive video projection with sound, a sensor for interaction with the audience and software for image selection from an image database.

Shan Shui represents Chinese landscape paintings and shows us the relativity of perception, of looking at 'the other'. While the classical Western representation of the landscape focuses on the spatial (horizontal) aspect, the classical Oriental representation focuses on dynamic aspects, 'the elements' that construct nature. Every time a visitor enters the exhibition space, a motion sensor triggers the display of a vertical waterfall of digital images. The speed of the images and sound is affected by the behaviour of the visitor in the space. Although the viewer activates new paintings, she cannot control them because the software chooses them randomly. The installation was shown in the solo exhibition *Geert Mul: Matchmaker 25 Years of Media-art*, at the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam in 2017, among other places. In collaboration with LIMA, Amsterdam the script was prepared for future presentation and the work was preserved accordingly.
Source: li-ma.nl





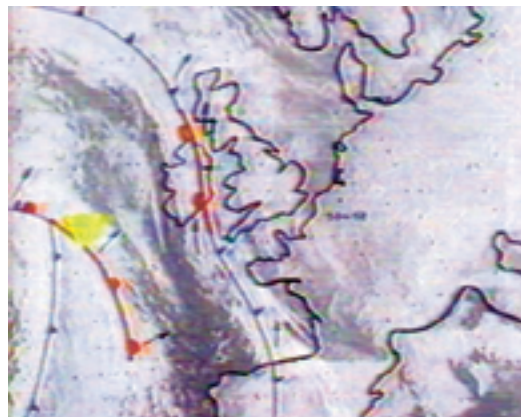
Bill Spinhoven NL, 1956
Alberts Ark: A Glance into the Fourth Dimension
 1990, interactive close circuit software based installation

Albert's Ark was created for the occasion of the exhibition *IMAGO: Fin de siècle in Dutch Contemporary Art*. At that time it was described as a cross between a large sundial made of stone and a modern 'video clock' of which the monitor does not show the time but the impact of time on space. The large round sundial of 270 cm in diameter and a height of 50 cm is completed with a slanted pole that rises up about 200 cm. Between the three pie-shaped segments a TV monitor is built in. It functions within a closed circuit with a camera, which is housed in the upper end of the slanted pole. Through a mirror the camera has a view of everything that passes in front. By interacting with *Albert's Ark* the viewer becomes part of the work. The work is representative of the technological advancement of the 1980s and early 1990s, which rapidly became obsolete. This was the first version in color of his *Time Stretcher* from 1988, that he built from existing computer components. It became an interesting preservation case study in 2007 in the framework of the *Inside Installation Project*.



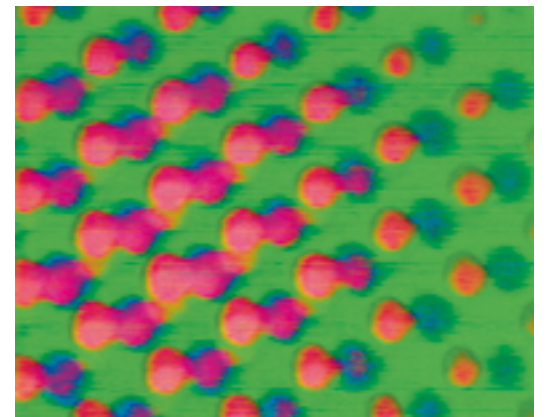
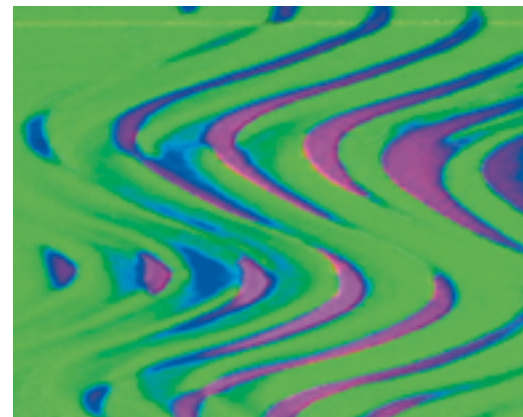
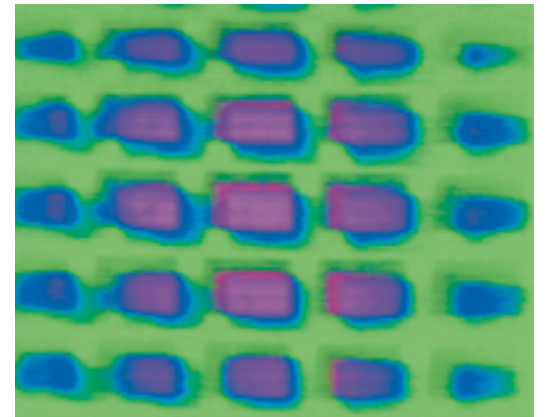
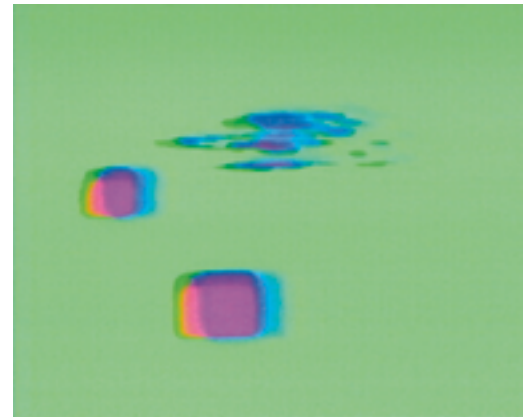
Stansfield/Hooykaas
Madelon Hooykaas NL, 1942
Elsa Stansfield SCT, 1945–NL, 2004
Outside/Inside
 1989, video sculpture

In the work of Stansfield/Hooykaas nature and its relation to the medium of video is a recurrent theme. *Outside/Inside* consists of a weather vane, camera and microphone, installed on the roof of an exhibition space, and four monitors in a carré in the exhibition space that corresponded with the direction of the wind. The pre-recorded images (clouds in water / weather maps / tree leaves and water and reed) are displayed on the four monitors, whereby one of the channels is overruled by the camera image. When the camera is made to rotate by the wind, the live image shifts to another monitor. Live sounds are mixed with a pre-recorded soundtrack of a woman's voice saying the wind directions in an alternatingly loud and soft manner. Initially teletext images were used, which later had to be replaced by pre-recorded images of a weather satellite map.



Livinius van de Bundt NL, 1909–1979
Jeep van de Bundt NL, 1951
Moiré
 1970–1975, video, 6'12"

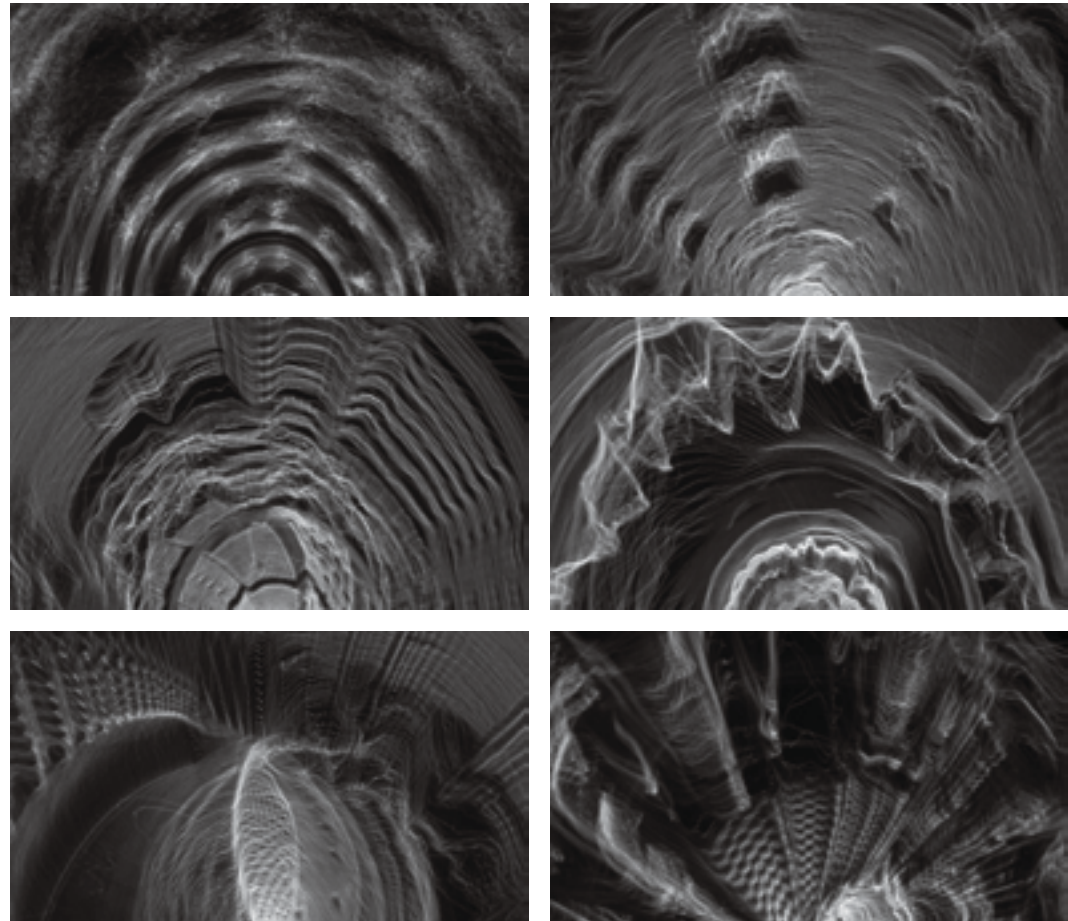
Van de Bundt was the first Dutch video artist, who created in cooperation with his son, Jeep van de Bundt, abstract images with video. 'Video graphics – the ultimate pictorial art,' is the concise statement emanating from the Van de Bundt's works. *Moiré* is a video work with electronic music, devoid of narrative and figuration. He did not judge the possibilities of the medium in the context of the institution of television and its frames of reference, but rather on its own specific graphic potential. With the purpose of painting electronically with light, movement and sound without definitive form or colour. Therefore he built his own image synthesiser and generator, which marked the early beginnings of Dutch video art.



Joost Rekveld NL, 1970
#67
2017, video, 17' 01"

Since the early 1990s, Joost Rekveld has worked on a series of experimental films and installations that explore, in an abstract and medium-specific way, the technological culture and history of film, new media, light and sound. For these works Rekveld often developed his own tools and methods for image generation, using algorithms to control mechanical and optical processes. As a tribute to *Reminiscence* (1974) and *Telc* (1974) by Steina and Woody Vasulka, this analogue HD video work is guided by the concept of 'reaffference', a term that refers to the perceptual changes and sensory stimulation caused by movements of the body.

In #67, we take a stroll through the electromagnetic worlds of machines and humans, structured by the fundamental frequency of power lines and the analogue video signal. This work was commissioned by LIMA Amsterdam as part of *Unfold*, a project that investigates reinterpretation as a strategy for the preservation and activation of media art works.



RESEARCH IN TECHNOLOGICAL ART AT V2_

Arie Altena

TECHNOLOGY, ART AND SOCIETY

V2 (at that time without an underscore) was founded in 's-Hertogenbosch in the early 1980s by a group of artists, amongst whom were the late Alex Adriaansens (director of V2_ until 2018) and Joke Brouwer (adjunct director to date).¹ They painted, played in bands, made videos and films, did performances, and experimented with technological devices such as television monitors, radios and electric motors. At the time, both Brouwer and Adriaansens became fascinated with the possibilities that technology offered of bringing communication into a work of art and helping to shape the interaction between the work and the public. The impact of technology on society and technology as a designing principle for the world quickly became the core of their artistic interest. In those years, working with new technology was like a breath of fresh air for young artists. A world in which everything was still possible opened up to them. V2_ first became internationally renowned with its *Manifest voor de Instabiele Media* (Manifesto for the Unstable Media). The first version from 1986 was accompanied by the *Manifesto[o] Exhibition* (3–17 January 1987) in 's-Hertogenbosch with work by artists such as Anne-Mie van Kerckhoven, GX Jupitter-Larsen and Vivenza, and performances by bands such as Selektion Optik and Die Tödliche Doris, amongst others. The second version of the Manifesto for the Unstable Media from October 1987 states:

We strive for constant change; for mobility. We make use of the unstable media, that is, all media which make use of electronic waves and frequencies, such as engines, sound, light, video, computers, and so on. Instability is inherent to these media.

¹ Almost all information in this text has been sourced from the V2_ website, which contains an archive with descriptions of all events since 1981, a large number of texts, festival brochures. See v2.nl. Other literature includes Arjen Mulder and Maaikje Post, *The Book for Electronic Art* (Amsterdam: V2_/De Balie, 2000); Anne Nigten, *aRt&D: Research and Development in Art* (Rotterdam: V2_, 2005); Arjen Mulder and Joke Brouwer, *Interact or Die!* (Rotterdam: NAI010 Publishers, 2007).