

## CAN'T REPEAT!

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FRANZ VILA

Video art was a phrase that referred to the art of artists, mostly in the '80s, who used video as a medium, due to the advent of accessible portable video gear, for expressing themselves and conveying meaning.

I consider video art the charcoal of the digital art era.

The exploratory process was characterized by an interest in the technical potential of hardware, software, and the process alike. The idea was not to do film in video, but to uncork personal and intimate evolutions that made the work look like public voyeurism or an imagination high as though on a psychedelic trip.

Nam June Paik pioneered the manipulation of hardware as a means to obtain visual results not yet reached at the time. I particularly enjoyed his *Wobulator* when I was given a residency to do my own work at the Experimental Television Center.

Some, like Juan Downey, devoted their interest to the quality and innovation of the image through editing and processing. While Gary Hill developed very sophisticated interactive pieces of great taste and elegance.

This kind of work found a niche in galleries and museums. But video art, as such, did not. Leo Castelli bought one of my music mini-docs, *Art on Balloons* (1983), in his joint effort with Sonnabend—the only known collection of video art at the time. It ended up in Danceteria, and I was amazed when I saw thousands of people dancing high, drunk, or excited while my piece was blowing their minds even more. Video has remained a frequent ingredient in my artwork—even as a surveillance item, as in a later joint installation with Shalom Gorewitz.

After-hours Monday/Wednesday/Friday Video Club (MWF) was the one establishment to collect the largest variety of video—and not only video art—in all its flavors, and that's how I ended up being one of its members and unconditional supporters.

While partnering with Dieter Froese, who specialized in video installations and fine video processing, I edited three pieces of video that became part of MWF. They are an example of the intimacy and boldness of video art, and my take on the hypocrisy of mainstream sex, where there is a fake division between the privacy of sex and the wide advertisement of porno.

Sex is an animal, mammal, biped human thing—the cling of joy and reproduction. Most people prefer the joy to the reproduction. Therefore, porno is the commercialization of the joy, but the joy itself cannot be criminalized. The crime is punishable, the addiction treatable; sex must be respected.

All of us use our genitals for peeing. Joy comes second, but for many people it is indistinct, and reproduction is last. We pee more often than we beget kids. The joy is political and religions are managers of that department. They penalize sexual joy and try to dismantle it, leaving sex as reproductive and excretory only.

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