Re: Paik. On time, changeability and identity in the conservation of Nam June Paik's multimedia installations

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Chapter 5.

Changeability and Paik's Multimedia

My TV is not always interesting, but not always uninteresting. As nature, which is beautiful, not because it changes beautifully, but because it simply changes. Nam June Paik[53]

5.1 The Many Forms of Changeability in Paik's Multimedia Installations

Through the prism of conservation and in the broader context of material studies, if we were to search for one single designation for the multitude of multimedia installations, the notion of 'changeability' would certainly draw our attention. Changeability refers to an artwork's potentiality to change, to transform from one condition to another, from one appearance or constitution to a different one, and occurrences in time. I return to the issue of time in chapter 6. As opposed to traditional painting or sculpture, multimedia installations invite change through the cycles of their reinstallations and the heterogeneity of media assemblage involved, including the specificity of technology-based media and often the aspects of the participation and involvement of the viewer. In traditional painting or sculpture change is often negatively charged.[54] It can be said that a large number of multimedia installations invite changeability as a positive value; they inherit change as a fundamental constituent of their identity.[55] The acceptance of changeability may enhance our thinking about and reshape our attitudes towards these artworks.

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53   Nam June Paik, "Afterlude to the Exposition of Experimental Television," *fluxus cc fiVe ThReE* (June 1964), reprinted in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: a Sourcebook of Artists' Writings,* ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Howard Selt (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 432. See also the remark to the 'second nature' in chapter one.

54   Furthermore, it is often undesired and tolerated only when there is no alternative. Laurenson discusses irreversible and undesirable change in the traditional conservation framework in terms of damage or loss. Laurenson, "Authenticity, Change and Loss."

55   Changeability may also be extended to the phenomenological space of perception, where it could denote the shifting character of our experience of artworks dependent on environmental circumstances (light, exhibition architecture) and temporal factors (the historical distance to the creator, state of knowledge about the work, etc.). In her book *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* (2003) Martha Buskirk, for instance, addresses the issue of changing light conditions affecting the perception of Richard Serra's *Torqued Ellipses* (1996–1997). Martha Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 2003), 20.

Change may be extrinsic to an artwork (conservation-related issues, replacements due to the obsolescence of technology-based elements, unless such obsolescence is a part of its concept and any changes that are not intrinsic to the work) or intrinsic to an artwork (change that is 'built' into an open work, conceived to be different each time – like Cage's *4'33"*, in which sounds are never the same, or Paik's plant ensembles in *Arche Noah* and *TV Garden* or the process of gathering traces in *Zen for Film*). The conservator may become involved in all levels of the changeability of an artwork, allowing the artwork to change on the one hand (if the change is intrinsic to it), or, on the other, deciding the limits of change for it to remain the same artwork, ergo to maintain its identity. In cases when distinctions between extrinsic and intrinsic changes become blurred, conservation has to decide whether to allow for such change (Paik's relics such as *Random Access* for example).

A multimedia artwork's potentiality to change may refer to an obvious, physical change – palpable and macroscopically identifiable – and/or a more discrete one, distinguishable with the help of more precise optical devices and requiring profounder knowledge and greater time investment. This aspect links multimedia works of art with traditional art, the materials of which are subject to change often related to ageing and decay.[56] Under the assumption that in its entirety an installation consists of a number of components in interrelated systems of dependencies – a sort of cosmos enfolded in itself – the changeability of its constituents may involve a shift in the relation of the artwork's elements to one another. In the attempt to impute some kind of order, conservation wrestles with the changeability of materials immersing slowly but constantly towards an entropic end.

Yet the term I propose also refers to a fundamental change of a multimedia work of art, which finds evidence in historical practice. Moreover, changeability may go beyond the paradigm of variability – an extent to which a work can change within a set of rules defined in the score or instruction – which seems to imply sameness rather than difference, and be measured within a range of prescribed parameters with a reference to some kind of a mean value.[57] For instance, the way the term of variability was adapted by *Variable Media Network* assumes the continuation of artworks independently of the medium used originally.[58] This echoes the discussion of the historical instrumentalisation in the musical performance in chapter 3. Whereas a performance based on a score may vary within the limits provided,

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56   Aspects of chemical and physical change of materials have been widely discussed in conservation and will not be revisited here. In relation to plastics, for instance, which are subject to decay and alteration, and constitute a part of multimedia installations, see Friederike Waentig, *Plastics in Art: A Study From the Conservation Point of View* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2009).

57   In statistics, for instance, variability refers to how 'spread out' a group of scores is.

58   The VMN's variable media paradigm refers to a preservation strategy that aims at 'identifying ways that creative works might outlast their original medium.' It was employed for a collection of conceptual, minimalist and video art and encourages creators to 'define their work independently from medium,' which may enable the translation of the work once its medium falls victim to technical obsolescence. "The Variable Media Network," Variable Media Network, accessed February 12, 2013, http://www.variablemedia.net/e/welcome.html.

changeability in multimedia works of art allows a transgression of such limits. Changeability happens in time, and is often not reversible.

The concept of changeability may be criticised for mystifying as opposed to clarifying the change intrinsic to multimedia artworks, and conflating the 'possibility' of change with the 'desirability' of change. It may also run the risk of its interpretation as a term that encompasses all forms of change without specific limits and boundaries.[59] How can limits be established, then, and how can we know whether something is allowed or desirable? Conservation's engagement with the archive – both as drawing from and with regard to the permission of what enters it – establishes these limits as dependent on judgements related to a set of cultural, political, technical and economic factors that prevail in a given time and context. It will, as it were, render the limits dependent on the *cultures of conservation,* setting limits on what can be said or made, both with reference to the present, as well as to the past.

In the following sections, I address different forms of changeability in Paik's multimedia installations abstaining from their evaluation. I discuss Paik's works in relation to the shift in their conceptual level, the change from a participatory to a static artwork, aspects of the adaptation to the given space, and the obsolescence and upgrade of equipment. In questioning the limits of changeability, I also discuss the possibility of the further development of an artwork. A central role in the changeability of a wide range of multimedia installations is played by the practice of their reinstallation. This aspect links the reinstallation to iteration, which, in turn, is the matter of repetition and difference. This argument was put forward by Tina Fiske in relation to the reinstallation of *White Walls* by Andy Goldsworthy (2007) and based on the Derridian conviction that 'the structure of iteration … implies *both* identity *and* difference.'[60] Various iterations of installation may have a different degree of influence on the identity of the work. So, for instance, the iterations of *Zen for Film* may result in a conceptual shift in the artwork. They may also diverge due to the spatial setting in relation to *TV Clock* and *TV Garden* as discussed. Further, the artist's involvement in the decision to instigate change may become crucial: a significant change can take place posthumously involving the manipulation of a conceptual layer of a work (*Zen for Film*), or it may come from the artist himself and thus be understood as a further development of a work.

To illustrate the changeability at the conceptual level of the work, I will revisit the example of *Zen for Film* in the following section and reinforce it by referring to a discussion on change that took place in *Zen for TV*. Whereas in *Zen for Film* the change is discernible, the example of *Zen for TV* confronts us with a more discreet change in the conceptual layer and to a degree loses its significance in the many instantiations produced over the span of four

59   I am indebted to Renée van de Vall for her support in clarifying these aspects.
60   Fiske, "*White Walls*: Installations, Absence, Iteration and Difference," Jacque Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," in *Limited Inc*., ed. G. Graff (Evanstone: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 53 quoted in Fiske, ibid., 235. This has also been taken on in Steetskamp, "On the Performativity of Documentation and the Preservation of Video Installations."

decades. Similarly, this concealment of change in the conceptual strata occurs in *Moon is the Oldest TV*. What is different in these three examples is the aspect of the involvement of the artist. In section 5.3, the issue of change affecting the participatory character of Paik's works will be addressed in relation to *Random Access*, *Magnet TV* and *Record Schaschlik*. Here, although in different ways, the installations share a common fate in their afterlife as static artefacts and relics. Furthermore, changeability in relation to site-specificity will be explored using the example of *TV Clock, Moon is the Oldest TV* and *TV Garden*. Changeability related to artworks' manipulations in the process of migration, on the other hand, will involve revisiting *Zen for Film* and *Moon is the Oldest TV*. Finally, and reaching the limits of changeability, I will re-examine the examples of *Zen for TV, TV Clock* and *TV Buddha* while exploring simultaneously the idea of the further development of an artwork.

5.2 Changeability Related to the Conceptual Level of an Artwork

Looking at the change occurring in multimedia installations, there seems to be a divergence in relation to the conceptual layer of the works and their material embodiment. Let us look again at *Zen for Film* in this context. The work, as we have noticed, is bound to its display apparatus, which determines its behaviour resulting in a visual performance in which alteration, in the form of a contingent trace, plays a considerable role. Now, when the display apparatus takes a different form – the form of a digital projector displaying a digital file with a recording of *Zen for Film* in a static condition – the entire logic of the work appears to be betrayed. Additionally to the physical change, and because of it, what happened to *Zen for Film* was a change in its conceptual layer. Here, the decisive factor was that this critical conceptual change occurred in the absence of the artist, posthumously. Rather than in a projection of an empty film leader, Paik was interested in the performance of the clear filmstrip run through a projector, and – as I showed in the previous chapter – based his idea on the entire conceptual load of the decade and inspiration by the work of his fellow artists. Like no other cinematic work, Paik's film inhabits the filmic essence of a translucent medium, making the process of the passage of light through it explicit, and the distinction between other analogue and digital film projections evident. Therefore, due to the nature of the change of the projection undergone, and the medium described in the previous chapter, the changeability in *Zen for Film* may have more substantial consequences than just a physical shift from one display apparatus to another.

Changeability in relation to the conceptual level of an artwork may be observed in another of Paik's installations – *Zen for TV* (1963, Fig. 5.1). It would be rather superficial to perceive *Zen for TV* as a simple manipulation of a cathode ray tube. The discrete change in *Zen for TV* took place at the level of visual information; I will shortly explain why. It is not quite correct to allege that *Zen for TV* was conceived for Paik's Parnass show in 1963 in a literary sense. Rather,

it was an outcome of Paik's creative handling of a breakage – a superlative chance operation in Cagean terms and a parallel to Duchamp's *Large Glass* – that apparently occurred during transportation of the equipment from Paik's retreat in Bensberg-Refrath to the venue in Wuppertal. In fact, two monitors arrived broken at the Jährling's villa. One of them was named after the make of a monitor that was available during its 1976 reconstruction – *Rembrandt Automatic* (private collection in Bremen). The other, lost in 1967 and reconstructed by Paik for the collector Wolfgang Hahn in 1975, was *Zen for TV* (part of the MUMOK collection in Vienna, among others).[61] Paik's acceptance of the coincidence that arose led to *Zen for TV's* existence as a work; it was created by adaptation of the given results of a situation, yet not (pre) conceived of, at least in a conventional sense. As opposed to the traditional understanding of how works are developed through a creative process towards the end result, *Zen for TV* was created as in effect of determination of a contingent event. Here, the creative process is contingent, and, retroactively, affirmed as determined. Rather than going from the beginning to the result, as in traditional art based on skill and knowledge of fabrication technique, the result becomes the outset of a determination and a point of departure to the origin. Paik's technique of determination of contingency is thus retroactive – he uses contingent chance process and goes back over it as a subsequent decision that affects the status of contingency.[62] In this form of the creative process, there are aspects that are controlled such as turning the monitor at a ninety-degree angle and aspects that are not such as the chance incident that led to the creation of a line.

In effect of the breakage, the vertical deflection ceased to function, and a horizontal line came to life. What Paik needed to do was complete what became one of the most telling examples for the reduction and stillness so characteristic of Zen aesthetics: he turned the monitor on its side. What could have signified a non-functionality, a certain death of vision, was recomposed by Paik and assigned with new meaning, creating a new life based on chance incident. The death, an epic translation from *Entrance to Exit,* from point zero to an acceptance of it as an aesthetic message, echoes somewhat in Brecht's most poetic score two years later, which, in its reduced Fluxfilm version addresses the relationship between life and death.[63] It can be said that, from then on, instead of pointing to a horizontal separation reassembling the western division between good and bad, heaven and hell, the line occurred as electronic vertical Zenga, the Zen style of painting, which uses quick, expressive brush

61   The Vienna version of *Zen for TV* carries the label of the original and was a basis for the creation of two further replicas. See Nam June Paik's notes, 1983, in Jon Hendricks, ed., *Fluxus etc. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection / Addenda II* (Pasadena CA: California Institute of Technology and Baxter Art Gallery, 1983), 285 quoted in Ammer, "In Engineering There is Always the Other – The Other," 57.

62   Comparable with Duchamp's *Large Glass*.

63   Georg Brech, *Entrance to Exit*, Fluxfilm No. 10 (1965).

strokes following intuition and immediacy.[64] Zen's singular brush stroke in which the entire content of the artistic message is entailed became expressed in the electronic sign, Zen's serenity in its stillness and Zen's openness to chance in contingency of this gesture. The line, as the Zen calligraphy, portrays the 'heart of thing,' a concentrated image ready to enfold its compressed energy. It is a source of spiritual power, meditation and teaching, which somewhat echoes Barnett Newman's 'Zip Paintings' (starting from the 1940s) that provided the viewer with a full experience, a certain totality. In Paik's *Zen for TV*, the straight line may stand for an enlightenment as a sudden, immediate flash of intuition reached by breaking with the restrictions of conventional ways of thinking so central to Zen Buddhism. This enlightenment, the concentrated line of compressed electronic light, became a statement of the very bare minimum of existence of form expressed through electronic media.

Zen for TV underwent a number of physical changes: it was exhibited in the form of many devices that could well serve as a resource for an inquiry into the aesthetics of television sets based on cathode ray tube technology beginning in the 1960s and continuing to the present day (Fig. 5.2). Yet, contrary to this obvious visual shift in the sculptural appearance of the work, a concealed change took place at the level of the image. The line is a compressed image folded into itself by the lack of the deflection stretching it into the actual size of the tube. If this is an image, we ought to ask: What does it show? Or, more aptly, what does it conceal that we do not see? In other words, and from a contemporary perspective: What did it cease to show in reference to its initial occurrence? During the Parnass gallery show in 1963 and as a number of other manipulated devices in Paik's ground breaking exhibition, *Zen for TV* was transmitting an analogue TV broadcast in Germany, the only one available in private houses at that time (the second public channel, ZDF, began airing on 1 April 1963).[65] In the compressed line the broadcast was still present. 'The TV is not really broken, there is still a picture collapsed in there' explains Garrin.[66] Only a few know about a simple trick to enfold the picture: while rapidly moving the head to the left and right while watching the line, the image reappears again – the line is being deflected by the viewer. And although the manipulation in *Zen for TV* is concealed, the temporal translation of the artwork using the

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64   For further reading on Zen painting techniques and its philosophy of art making, see Clare Pollard and John Stevens, eds., *Zen Mind Zen Brush: Japanese Ink Paintings From the Gitter-Yelen Collection* (Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2006); and Albert Lutz, ed., *Mystik. Die Sehnsucht nach dem Absoluten* (Zürich: Scheidegger and Spiess, 2011).

65   Dieter Daniels, "Television – Art or Anti-Art? Conflict and Cooperation Between the Avant-Garde and the Mass Media in the 1960s and 1970s," Media Art Net, accessed January 27, 2013, http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/themes/overview_of_media_art/massmedia/29/.

66   Garrin, discussion.

present day TV broadcast is rendered impossible.[67] Bearing in mind the many manifestations of *Zen for TV* that were produced after the Parnass show, the idea of a compressed image can still be crucial to the work. It is hard to say, however, how many of the later versions displayed a TV broadcast, which must have changed over the course of time and with regard to the geographical location. The instruction created by Paik for the Silverman acquisition does not disclose any details about a TV channel that must be played.[68]

A similar form of extrinsic change affecting the conceptual strata of an artwork can be seen in the installation *Moon is the Oldest TV* (Fig. 5.3). Like *Zen for TV*, the manipulation here takes place rather discreetly at the visual level. Its basic compilation of twelve monitors emerged from the concept realised on one monitor in 1963 in Parnass, mainly due to economic reasons. Let us shortly recall the technical modification that led to the emergence of *Moon is the Oldest TV*. The different phases of the electronic moon were generated mechanically by manipulating the picture tube scanner, which was moved to the back. The image of the moon was thus a picture evoked by this distortion, which, together with magnets applied on the tube's neck, created the image. This manipulation was concealed in the casing's inner life and was therefore not noticeable by viewers. *Moon is the Oldest TV* employed the internal logic of the apparatus to create the image and was discretely, yet closely amalgamated with its serving technology. Later rearrangements of the sequence of the monitors, as I described, were related to the physical setting of the work in a gallery space, and lacked a larger impact on the conceptual plane. This was, perhaps, with the exception of the symbolic number of the monitors suggesting the twelve months of the year, lost in the twenty-monitor compilation piled for the German Pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 1993 (Fig. 5.4). The discrete conceptual change took place when Paik made the decision to film the images of the lunar sphere with the assistance of Garrin.[69] The implications of this transfer are far-reaching. What was gained was an installation that was visually unaltered but operating technologically on an entirely new playback system (for a later version played back from a DVD, see Fig. 5.5). What could

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67   Paik was, however, convinced that the technical manipulations were fully recoverable. With reference to his manipulation of the sinus waves of the TV sets in the Wuppertal exhibition, Paik contended 'Ich hatte nur eine Diode in die entgegengesetzte Richtung gebracht und erhielt ein '"wellenförmiges," negatives Fernsehbild. Wenn meine epigonen denselben Trick anwenden, wird das Ereignis vollkommen dasselbe sein' (I have only changed the direction of the diode to the opposite direction and received a 'wavy,' negative image. If my imitators use exactly the same trick, they will achieve the same result'). Nam June Paik and Edith Decker, *Niederschriften eines Kulturnomaden: Aphorismen, Briefe, Texte* (Köln: DuMont, 1992), 103-109 quoted in Jesus Muñoz Morcilla, "Überlieferung von Medienkunst und digitale Nachlassverwaltung," in *Neues Erbe: Aspekte, Perspektiven, Konsequenzen der digitalen Überlieferung*, eds. Caroline Robertson-von Trotha and Robert Hauser (Karlsruhe: Karlsruher Institut für Technologie, 2011), 124.

68   For the instruction, see Hendricks, ed., *Fluxus etc.*, 285 – 288.

69   Garrin, discussion. In this context, it is interesting to note that Herzogenrath recalls Paik considering whether digitised versions of his manipulated TVs would generally be more suitable for permanent presentation in a museum. Herzogenrath, "What is the Original in Video Art," 30.

be classified as a loss was the significance of the playful manipulation of the cathode ray tubes, which created the form of a visual narrative and which were related to the historical medium embedded in the technological relations of time.[70]

What *Zen for Film, Zen for TV* and *Moon is the Oldest TV* have in common is the degree of conceptual change that they all underwent. Unlike in *Zen for Film*, the change in the *Moon is the Oldest TV* and *Zen for TV* was triggered by the artist himself, who responded to increasing requests for his installations and the pragmatism involved in their handing. The conservation of these works thus faces a multitude of various instantiations – both authorised and unauthorised by the artist – and struggles with the question of which of the many occurrences of the works should be preserved. As I will show in chapter 6, the prioritisation on the basis of the sequential understanding of time is not adequate to approach changeable artworks.

5.3 From Interactivity to Relics: Changeability and the Participatory Artwork

The musealisation of Paik's early examples of participatory art in electronic media such as *Magnet TV* (1965) and *Random Access* (1963) had a crucial impact on their identity. The form of manipulation that they underwent may be classified as a variant of extrinsic changeability related to the artwork's conceptual level. It was evoked by the impossibility of maintaining their aesthetic integrity (by 'preserving them from being used') while sustaining their 'used' values – as pieces to which the audience contributed through participation or manipulation, according to the participatory tradition of Fluxus events as an extension of Duchamp's dictums that a viewer completes the work of art. The participatory aspects of these works is not an inheritance of the twentieth century, but were, as the German art historian Inke Arns puts it, anticipated by Mallarmé's notion of process-based art and become programmatic in the form of open work for the avant-garde art movement.[71] The idea here was to depart from the 'static object to dynamic process, from contemplative reception to active participation.'

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70   According to conservator Joanna Phillips, *Moon is the Oldest TV* was played from a DVD during the Guggenheim exhibition in 2000. Joanna Phillips, "Kunstmaterial oder Elektroschrott?," in *Wann stirbt ein Kunstwerk*?, ed. Angela Matyssek (München: Verlag Silke Schreiber, 2010), 118. In addition to a colour version, a thirteenth monitor was added presenting a bird with a moon. The thirteenth-monitor version of the *Moon is the Oldest TV* at the Nam June Paik Art Center plays Beethoven's *Mondscheinsonate*.

71   Inke Arns, "Perception, Participation, Interaction – From Receptive to Active Participation," Media Art Net, accessed December 25, 2012, http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/themes/overview_of_media_art/communication/. See also Dieter Daniels, "Strategies of Interactivity," in *Media Art Interaction: The 1980s and 1990s in Germany*, eds. Dieter Daniels and Rudolf Frieling (Vienna and New York: Springer, 2000), 170-197.

[72] It also recalls the movement already suggested towards the extended authorship divorced from the demagogy of authorship, which Barthes demolished in *Death of the Author*.[73]

The change that occurred on the participative level over the course of time in *Magnet TV* and *Random Access* disabled the artworks from being activated by the viewer and rendered them static objects of contemplation. Let us now turn to some practical examples. *Magnet TV* results from Paik's engagement with the manipulation of the inner life of cathode ray tubes and follows a number of earlier experimentations manifested in his Parnass exhibition, which included an early version of *Magnet TV*. A strong horseshoe-shaped magnet and a degausser both interfere with the flow of electrons in the tube creating baffling forms with the magnet's gravitation field. In the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, for conservation reasons – in a sense to prevent the destruction of the monitor and the magnet – *Magnet TV* is presented without the interference of the viewer (Fig. 5.6). And, although less dynamic, the distortion caused by the magnet placed statically on the casing of the monitor is still viewable. In this solution, which, from a conservation standpoint, is as legitimate as it is contradictory to the artwork's nature, the work is deprived of its initial function, and becomes a semi-static artefact displaying a kinetic image.

Paik's interest in 'time art' has its roots in his *Exposition of Music – Electronic Television*. This resulted in his idea to involve visitors, encouraging them to press pedals, push buttons and become physically engaged in the installations. Paik claims: 'As the next step towards more indeterminacy, I wanted to let the audience (or congregation in this case) act and play by itself.'[74] This method of creating a space of activity for the viewer, thereby dismantling the passive one-way delivery system, was manifested in *Participation TV*, a term coined by Paik in the 1960s. The concept of *Participation TV*, 'the one-ness of creator, audience, and critic' may be seen as an expression of Paik's intent to reactivate the role of the recipient and a precursor for further developments in efforts to 'humanize technology.'[75] 'Television has attacked us for a lifetime, now we have to strike back' proclaimed Paik.[76] 'Communication means two-way communication. One-way communication is indoctrination' he later continued.[77] His radical thinking about media corresponded with the reception of the Frankfurt School critical theory according to which the manipulation by mass media – as a consciousness industry – rendered

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72   Ibid.
73   Barthes, *Death of the Author*. For the aspect of participation in art, see also Eva Fotiadi, *The Game of Participation in Art and the Public Sphere*, (Maastricht: Shaker Publishing B.V., 2012).
74   Nam June Paik, "About the Exhibition of the Music."
75   Nam June Paik, "Video Synthesizer Plus," in *Radical Software* 1/2 (1970), accessed August 25, 2012, http://www.radicalsoftware.org/volume1nr2/pdf/VOLUME1NR2_0027.pdf.
76   Paik quoted in Stooss and Kellein, *Nam June Paik,* 12.
77   Nam June Paik, as quoted by Heinz Peter Schwerfel, *Kunst-Skandale: Über Tabu und Skandal, Verdammung und Verehrung zeitgenössischer Kunst* (Köln: DuMont, 2000), 147.

the public passive and experience regressive.[78] *Random Access* consisted of audiotapes attached directly to a wall (the 1978 version is rendered on a panel), which viewers could activate by using the sound head detached from a tape recorder to produce their own auditive output.[79] The intensity and sequence of such compositions were left to the creative capacity of the viewer. Similarly, *Record Schaschlik* offered the viewer the option to explore random musical access. The work involved four stacks of skewered vinyl and a stylus of a phono pick-up that enabled the viewer to play the music in the preferred sequence. In the form of the proposed accessibility, *Random Access* might be seen as a forerunner of later technologies of retrieving digital information, whereas *Record Schaschlik* might be a predecessor of mixing decks known from DJ and clubbing culture.

     Random Access may serve as an instance of Paik's participatory vision for arts, which, like *Record Schaschlick*, represented his ambition to seek new ways to retrieve information (Fig. 5.7).

> Human beings have not really learned how to structure time-based information in recording and retrieval very well, because it is new. No one says that the Encyclopedia Britannica is boring … because you can go to any page of the encyclopedia, to A or B or C or M or X, whereas when you watch videotapes or television, you have to go A, B, C, D, E, F, G. While the comparison is simple, the difference is very big. … until electronic information conquers the random access problem.'[80]

Against the sequentiality of access dictated by media such as video and television, Paik aimed at revising issues pertaining to participation, indeterminism and chance.

> 'INDETERMINISM and VARIABILITY is the very UNDERDEVELOPED parameter in optical art, although this has been the central problem in music for the last 10 years, (just as parameter SEX is very underdeveloped in music, as opposed to literature and optical art.)'[81]

It is also one of Paik's works that visualises not only the randomness of the output, but also the very inner life of the device and its functionality (most technology-based art conceals its playback mechanism). Instead of 'thinking outside the box,' as the artists and curator Jon

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78   In the book *Dialectic of Enlightment* (1944), the German Frankfurt School philosophers Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer coined the term 'cultural industry' arguing the resemblance of mass culture with a factory producing standardised cultural goods such as film, radio programmes and magazines, used to manipulate society into passivity and obedience without a possibility of replay. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 94-95.

79   In its 1978 remake, *Random Access Music* (1957/1978) consisted of a Plexiglas box with playable audiotapes attached to it; in the box Paik's score for 'string quartet,' Freiburg im Breisgau, 1957.

80   Original spelling. Nam June Paik, "Random Access Information," *Artforum* 19 (September 1980).

81   Nam June Paik, "Afterlude to the Exposition of Experimental Television."

Ippolito puts it, Paik creatively renders its innards exposed and delivers the participant a hands-on experience of how a record player 'feels.'[82]

So what impact does the withdrawal of the participatory element have on the way the artwork is perceived? During the aforementioned Tate retrospective of Paik's in Britain, the works were presented in a deactivated, relic-like form (Figs. 5.8 and 5.9). Relics are conventionally associated with religious cult and signify objects remaining as a memorial of a departed saint.[83] They are often parts of a once-living body, and have power and are treated with the deepest veneration. The issue of the elevation of performance props and leftovers to the status of a relic – performative objects – resembles the religious cult practices by the way they find their destination as artworks in a museum vitrine or/and on a pedestal.[84] Importantly, not all props become relics and not all relics derive from performance. Lowenthal ascribes to relics a 'felt remoteness' and posits that it is precisely 'their lack of consequence for the present that lends preserved things much of their charm' – clearly exemplified by the deactivation of Paik's works.[85] As I have shown in the previous chapter, this shift from object used in a performance to objects as relics is precisely what links performances with performative objects. This association derives from the conceptual vicinity of media artworks to performances not only in relation to their time structure, but also through Paik's musicological bias. It also stipulates thinking about fragmentation and fetishisation of the object as a process oriented towards stasis, a certain stoppage in time, which I will discuss further in chapter 6. An interesting insight into the fragmentation of exhibition objects proposes the realm of ethnographic presentations, where objects raise issues of artifactual integrity and autonomy. Similarly to leftovers, ethnographic artefacts are created by the virtue of the manner in which they have been detached and defined.[86]

The preoccupation with the future existence of these objects seems to impose their withdrawal from the participatory aspect in museum displays and from the possible destruction caused by viewers. But the drawback of this strategy is necessarily the depravation of the objects' initial function. Whereas *Magnet TV*, despite the absence of the participative factor, still maintained its semi-active appearance, *Random Access* appeared to lack its

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82   Jon Ippolito, "The Art of Misuse," accessed August 21, 2012, http://telematic.walkerart.org/overview/overview_ippolito.html.

83   *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, s.v. "relic," accessed December 2, 2012, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12734a.html.

84   For the relics and performance leftovers, see: Eric Mangion, *Not to Play with Dead Things* (Zürich: JRP Ringier, 2009), 19-20. For the status of relics in relation to performance art, see Hanna Hölling, "On the Afterlife of Performance," De Appel Arts Centre, The Manifold (After)lives of Performance, November 13 – 15, 2009, accessed January 10, 2012. http://www.deappel.nl/dox/exhibition_docs/22/ontheafterlifeofperformancehannaholling.pdf

85   David Lowenthal, "Material Preservation and its Alternatives," *Perspecta* Vol. 25 (1989): 67-77.

86   Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Ethnography," in *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 386-443.

essential material and conceptual element – the random actions of the viewer.[87] Deprived of its participatory moment, *Random Access* so evidently based on chance and indeterminism, becomes something different than it was, a document of a past performance of sorts.[88] The intermittence of an artwork, its on and off quality, opens up the question of its identity and results from a concept of time that has been radicalised. The 'switched off' status of media installations is of much interest in the debate on the sustainability and continuity of artworks and will be addressed here in the section devoted to the concept of ruin (7.5). Yet may this deactivated condition be 'reversed'? On the occasion of an exhibition devoted to Cage entitled *The Anarchy of Silence* at Schunck in Heerlen, the Netherlands, among other participatory installations, *Random Access* could be experienced in a reconstructed form (Fig. 5.10). [89] The reconstructions made by Saueracker allowed the viewer the opportunity to revive the character of interaction, in a way activating the spirit of the performance at the Parnass show. Although such a copy provides the viewer with an experience of the work from the point of view of its material authenticity, it also opens up a discussion about reconstructions in participatory works.[90] Although, for spatial constraints, I will not venture into the legal and ethical issues of reconstruction, in part III, I will discuss the issue of the reconstruction of artworks on the basis of documentary material and tacit knowledge drawn from the archive.

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87   In an unpublished interview conducted at MoMA by the conservator Glenn Wharton with Jon Huffman, Paik's former assistant and a current curator of the Nam June Paik estate, Huffman maintains that *Random Access* can be shown, just as *Record Schaschlik*, without function and still remain 'an interesting exhibition object.' Jon Huffman, interview by Glenn Wharton, March 13, 2012, transcript of the interview, archive of the conservation department, MoMA.

88   For further discussions on Tate's exhibition of Paik's deactivated works, see "December/January theme on CRUMB: Nam June Paik."

89   *The Anarchy of Silence: John Cage and Experimental Art*, Schunck Heerlen, 9 February – 9 May 2010. According to the wall caption, the exhibition objects stem from Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig in Vienna, 2009.

90   The derogatory value of the notions of *replica*, *copy*, or *pastiche* point to their negation of the criterion of originality of art, which, often, and especially in the present day, considers the importance of the master's hand – a derivate of nineteenth century romanticism. The issue of replication, authorisation and the different roles of artists and stakeholders was a focus of the workshop "Inherent Vice: The Replica and its Implications in Modern Sculpture," *Tate Papers*, 8 (2007), accessed December 12, 2012. http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/issue-08. For further discussion on replication see Leo Koerner, "Copies Creating Originals," in *Coping With the Past: Creative Perspectives on Conservation and Restoration*, eds. Pasquale Gagliardi, Bruno Latour, Pedro Memelsdorff (Fondazione Giorgio Cini Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2010), 1-16; and Wolfgang Ullrich, *Raffinierte Kunst: Übung vor Reproduktionen* (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 2009).

5.4 Changeability and the Artwork's Adaptation to Space [91]

Can changeability be dictated by spatial circumstances? If we compare, for instance, *TV Garden*'s various instantiations focusing exclusively on its temporary displays, the spatial compositions appear strikingly different. Whereas its Whitney Museum installation was located in an enclosed space, the later Guggenheim embodiment was draped around the ramp of the museum's rotunda. Similarly, the arrangement of the work at the Kunsthalle Bremen involved an elevated platform that provided the viewer with an elevated position from which to overlook the garden, whereas the Charleloi version in Belgium was presented as a terraced pyramid, to which the viewer might have gained access to the *TV Garden* by climbing the stairs.[92] When examining the architectural setting of *TV Garden* in the three permanent collections (Guggenheim Museum in New York, K 21 Collection North-Rein Westphalia in Düsseldorf and Nam June Paik Art Center in Seoul), it might be observed that the changeability is not only limited to the *TV Garden*'s singular presence in the collection, but might also vary within one institution according to different exhibition concepts, as was the case, for instance in the Guggenheim exhibitions in 2000 (draped around the rotunda) and in 2003 (cumulated in an enclosed space). A similar situation occurs with regard to *Moon is the Oldest TV*, the spatial arrangement of which shifted considerably from its initial, linear, slightly spherical version to an expanded block of monitors piled upon one another in the side room of the German Pavilion in Venice (1993). Similarly, *Arche Noah* was enhanced with green office plants during the exhibition in Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona in 1992, where Paik decided to interfere with the topology of the space in relation to the installation by allowing his assistant to add the green plants. Site-specific factors and financial constraints were decisive for the change that occurred in *TV Clock*, resulting in its twelve and, later 24-monitor version, the latter also being an outcome of a further development of the artist's concept. The changeability that relates to the questions of space is dependent on conceptual and economical factors dictated by the institution, often by the exhibition curator. According to Paik: '… The video curators in the next and subsequent generations will re-interpret and install them every time new in their anpassendes Place. …'[93] So both in conceiving of the exhibition context and concepts, the curators and conservators but also the artist and his assistants are responsible for shaping the spatial occurrences of multimedia installations. In museums, it is often the work's earlier documentation that is consulted before a decision about site-specific adaptation is made. The

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91   Although, due to spatial constraints, I cannot venture into this, multimedia installations may be regarded as site-specific or site-sensitive works. For installations defined in relation to their site-specificity, see Carol Stringari, "Installations and the Problems of Preservation," in *Modern Art: Who Cares?*, eds. Ijsbrand Hummelen and Dionne Sillé (London, Archetype, 1999), 272-281.

92   Decker-Phillips, *Paik Video*, 97-98.

93   Original spelling, see section 3.1. Paik, "Artificial Intelligence vs Artificial Metabolism." For site-specificity of Paik's installations in relation to Western aesthetics, see Kim, *Nam June Paik: Videokunst in Museen*, 102-103.

documentation of a work's display shapes its future reinstallations – the cycle ends where it began.[94] Once again, the starting point and the destination will be the archive.

5.5 Upgrade of Display and Playback Formats

The upgrade of display and playback equipment and data formats is an extrinsic form of change and involves intentionality, whether of artist, curator or conservator. It does not necessarily have to result in a conceptual shift, as was discussed in the case of the presentation of *Zen for Film* or *Moon is the Oldest TV* in a digitised form described in section 5.2. For the uninformed viewer, if the playback equipment is concealed and the data serves only to play back visual content, the migration of the data format and the equipment does not affect the artwork's perception.[95] The processes of migration and emulation of data are only seldom explicated on a wall caption; rather, they take place backstage and are concealed from the viewer's eyes. And although digitisation may affect the concept, which is based on what one knows about the installation rather than what one perceives, this was not the case for *Arche Noah*.[96] The initial playback equipment in *Arche Noah* – laser disc players – were replaced by CF players. As a rule, Paik's early works ran on diverse video formats, such as ¾ inch tape and U-matic, and migrated to a more reliable and 'state of the art' technology of laser disc player in the 1990s.[97] In this light it is relevant to recall the certificate that Solway issued in 1990s. Preoccupied by the difficulties that some collectors signalled in relation to the playback equipment in Paik's installations, Solway designed a certificate that authorised the modification of his work in the future:

> I, Nam June Paik, the artists of the above listed work, grant my permission for the owner of this work to make the following types of modifications to this work to maintain the continued operations of the work in the future days. I state that these modifications do not change the authenticity of this work as an original work by me.
> 1. Television sets may be replaced with newer model hardware, by the same or different manufacturer, with substantially the same television screen size.
> 2. Laser disc players may be replaced with newer models or newer technology to play the software. The software may be converted to be compatible with any new technology.

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94 On the other hand, it would be wrong to underestimate the role of installations in shaping exhibition space. The material and technical aspects of installations cannot be divorced from spatial aspects and thus have an impact on the architecture of an exhibition gallery. For performative aspects of exhibiting, see Katharina Amman, *Video Ausstellen: Potenziale der Präsentation* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009).

95 The difference of the medium may be seen in its degradation process. For instance, digital video will show pixilation of the image and 'lossyness' in repeated de- and compression, whereas an analogue video can experience drop outs, scratches, noise, image blur and oscillations, to name but a few. The spatial and temporal distortions in digital video may occur to a large degree when the digital signal is disrupted, while analogue video degrades in a more continuous, gradual way.

96 It could also be argued that what is being perceived is affected by what is known about the work, and complicated by the lack of pure perception.

97 Solway, discussion; Patsfall, discussion.

3. Any supporting interior or exterior framework for the television sets may be modified, or re-fabricated, as required, to accommodate a replacement television set or sets, provided that the modification of framework does not substantially alter the visual design intention of the work.

4. If a television set is replaced in work where the design intention requires matching identical screen size and cabinet appearance, then the replacement of one such television with a model of different dimension or appearance requires the replacement of all identical matching sets.[98]

Preoccupied with the future of formats prone to obsolescence, Solway commissioned Paik to sign not only one, but many of these documents. What is striking about this is that it seeks a generic solution for a problem of a larger number of Paik's heterogeneous installations. Additionally, the involvement of a subjective judgement in the process of the alteration of a work's appearance may become problematic. Interestingly – and what brings us back to the discussion of musical implications in Paik's art – these documents may also be seen as an act of freeing the artwork from its dependence on certain physical equipment, a prescribed instrumentalisation (see section 3.4).

Due to a resemblance to *Zen for Film* and the type of change it underwent, I will shortly recall the installation titled *Art Make-Up* by Bruce Nauman (1976). The interview conducted by then Tate conservator Laurenson reveals that on the occasion of an exhibition at the Walker Art Center, the initially filmic work employing 16mm film was digitised and operated from a DVD player.[99] Yet Nauman decided to stick to the original audible element of the film projector by recording it and playing it back with the digitised version. '… No sound is also different – silent projection – and because it is a reproduction of the original rather than the original, it's an odd thing to think about. I wasn't particularly interested in having ... the projector [visible] on the DVD, that wasn't part of the piece necessarily.'[100] Here, the importance of the conceptual underpinnings assigned to the value and performance of the playback equipment became manifest with the change in the relationship between the aesthetic output (a projected film) and the presence of the sounds of the running playback machine (projection apparatus). The audible supplement of a recorded film projector draws attention to its loss in digitisation and renders Nauman's piece something reflexively about remediation (addressed extensively in the chapter *Heterotemporalities*).

At the time of writing this thesis, there are virtually no works by Paik in a functional condition on display with their initial playback equipment. All installations in the ZKM collection have been upgraded to digital display formats and many museums are running projects in order to find reliable solutions for future presentations. For instance, the playback

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98   Software is metonymically used to describe the data transformed by a playback device to a visual form of a moving image of video. Archive of Carl Solway, Cincinnati.

99   Laurenson, "Authenticity, Change and Loss."

100   Ibid.

equipment of *Untitled* (*Piano*) from the MoMA collection is scheduled for upgrade. Although I discuss this extensively in section 9.5, it will suffice here to mention that the visible playback equipment plays an important role in visual apprehension and has already been changed from U-Matic to laser disc with the approbation of the artist. As I will show, even with Solway's certificate, decisions in relation to upgrading formats are not easy to make in the absence of the artist, especially when the apparatus, rather than being hidden, puts both the problem and itself, on display.

5.6 Beyond the Limits: The Artwork's Further Development

Although it clearly transgresses the notion of changeability within a singular artwork, the last aspect to be addressed in the realm of Paik's media installations is the possibility of their further development, which might be seen as a result of the creative handling by Paik of his own ideas on the basis of the already realised works. The emerged artworks are often further stages of the initial manifestation of other works and the ongoing reworking and reshaping of the concept on their basis. As a result, the related works that are being conceived can – but do not necessarily have to – demonstrate similarities or a resemblance to the initial work. If there is a close resemblance of the manifestation of a work to its prototypical realisation, we could speak about a series (for instance the series based on the Buddha or Rodin statue facing a monitor). The artist continues to conceive the work further while the work's prototype is realised and released into its life.[101]

Whereas in chapter 3 I show how Paik's works may vary within one concept comprised in a score or instruction, this section explores artworks that are a preparation for, or a development of, other works that can be traced directly or by circuitous pathways. In the next chapter and in section 7.6 I discuss their relationship with the phenomenological terms of pro- and retention. Virtually every one of Paik's works invites us to adopt a particular perspective on all other works by providing quotations or references to the past. As mentioned, *TV Garden* was previously exhibited at the Gallery Bonino in New York in 1974 as *TV Sea* – an installation designed to present the video *Global Groove* on multiple screens. Only later did it become a techno-organic garden.[102] On the grounds of its visual resemblance, it could be argued that the re-usage of plant arrangement in the later *Arche Noah* is nothing else than an adaptation of the techno-ecological garden from the ensemble of *TV Garden* (fruit metaphor). Surprisingly, *TV Garden* may also take the form of a singular 1940s

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101   Elsewhere, in relation to computer-based art, I address this type of development of an artwork using the tree metaphor. Hanna Hölling, "From Recovery to Remediation. Conservation Practices in Computer-Based Art on the Example of *I/Eye* (1993*)* by Bill Spinhoven van Oosten," in *Memoria del Presente. Introduction to the Preservation of Contemporary Art,* ed. Paolo Martore (Rome: Castelvecchi Publishers, forthcoming).
102   Glueck, "About Nanda Bonino," 53; Decker-Phillips, *Paik Video*, 96.

Motorola cabinet equipped with watchmen and silk plants in 1986. Likewise, it is striking that the classical example of early video art – the video *Global Groove* produced in 1973 in cooperation with John J. Godfrey – was re-modelled and developed numerous times, finding its destination, eventually, in diverse installations such as *TV Garden* or its Guggenheim version entitled *Global Groove 2004* (2004) created on the occasion of an eponymous exhibition at the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin in 2004.

In the manner of the continuous re-invention and resurrection of his already realised works and by pushing the possibilities of the medium further, Paik conceives of *TV Clock* as a continuation of *Zen for TV* (Figs. 5.11 and 5.12). The making of *TV Clock* follows the logic of *Zen for TV*, only that the yoke related to the movement of the electronic beam has been turned on its head. The inclination of the line takes place gradually on each subsequent monitor, so that the line reassembles the hand of the watch on an axis. As a spatial extension of the twelve-monitor version of *TV Clock* and in effect of a further reshaping of the concept, the installation was extended to a 24-monitor compilation comprising, respectively, twelve black-and-white monitors and twelve colour monitors.[103] The contrast of day and night also responds to the contrast of hot and cold. *TV Clock* refuses to display any accurate time measure, but rather, in a poetical, minimalist, but also static way visualises the mode of time measurement on a watch face.

Paik's enjoyment and the playful handling of the realisation of *Zen for TV* spawned another adaptation. If we look more closely into the *Untitled* (1968, *TV Sculpture*) created in cooperation with German artist and a member of the group *ZERO*, Otto Piene, we encounter the same type of manipulation of the tube. The monitor – Symphonic Model TPT 800 – is encrusted with silver grey plastic pearls; it displays a diagonal line obtained following the same principle as the earlier *Zen for TV* and *TV Clock*, with the yoke turned at a forty-five degree angle (Fig.5.13).

It was *TV Buddha* (1974) – a closed-circuit video ensemble – where Paik's internalised idea of recreation reaches the zenith of artwork's potentiality for serial realisations and provides

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103   The date of the creation of *TV Clock* in 1963, indicated, for instance, by Hanhardt (Hanhardt, *The Worlds*, 134-135) does not correspond with the fact that in the Wuppertal show in 1963 only the precursor of *TV Clock* – *Zen for TV* – was presented. It would also contradict the fact that the Wuppertal show consisted only of twelve (or thirteen) TV sets, each demonstrating a distinct form of manipulation. Nevertheless, during the course of its life, according to Paik's wish, *TV Clock* should have been created for each continent – Asia, America and Europe. I was able to retrace *TV Clock* at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, SBMA in California (built for the show in San Francisco in 1989), *TV Clock* in private hands in Europe (build for his show in Germany and Switzerland in 1992), *TV Clock* designed for the Venice Biennale (1993) and *TV Clock* at the Nam June Paik Art Center. Although Edith Decker-Phillips holds that in 1977 at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, *TV Clock* was presented as a twelve-monitor version due to space and financial constraints (Decker-Phillips, *Paik Video*, 143), my research has revealed that the 24-monitor version was a later development.

us with another example for the further development of an artwork (Fig. 5.14).[104] In what is perhaps one of Paik's most evocative ensembles, an antique statue of Buddha gazes at its own image transferred to a monitor by a video camera in real time.[105] *TV Buddha* was initially conceived of as a gap-filler for Paik's exhibition at the gallery Bonino. Kubota recounts that Paik loved to spend money on junk and antiquities on Canal Street – the Buddha being an example – while she was concerned with their worrisome financial situation. Fortunately, *TV Buddha* soon paid off – it was the first of Paik's closed-circuit installations to enter a public collection (Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam), and the first to be sold.[106] On the occasion of its acquisition in 1977 by the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the museum requested that the acquired piece be unique. Paik responded: '… Needless to say, I will not make a multiple or something like that.. I have too many new ideas to devote my time for the repetition of an old work.'[107] Needless to say, and symptomatically to his understanding and orchestrating of ideas most consistent with his musical background, *TV Buddha* spawned perhaps the largest series of works in Paik's oeuvre (Fig. 5.15).[108] An early instance of it might be seen already in Paik's contribution to *Project '74* exhibition in Cologne (1974), where the artist took the place of the statue symbolically representing the antithesis of transcendentalism and technology in his own presence.[109] *TV Buddha* also spawned the realisation of *TV Rodin* (1976–78, Fig. 5.16). There, the Buddha was replaced by a miniature statue of Rodin's *Thinker*, echoed further in a realisation of a Rodin sitting on a Watchman as a part of the outdoor ensemble *Something Pacific* (1984), (discussed in section 7.5). Another example of such materialisation might be the minimalist ensemble *Buddha* (1989, collection ZKM). This installation lacks the monitor and the video image – the Buddha is gazing at a burning candle placed in empty monitor casing. However, of more significance is the sculpture of the Buddha itself. No longer is it

104   Hans Belting refers here to a 'variation to a theme.' Hans Belting, "Beyond Iconoclasm. Nam June Paik. The Zen Gaze and the Escape From Representation," in *Iconoclash. Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion, and Art*, eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe: ZKM; Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 2002), 410. For further discussion in relation to Paik's *Candle TV* see also van Saaze, "Doing Artworks," 86.

105   *TV Buddha* is – according to Walter Smith – Paik's most 'Eastern' work. Walter Smith, "TV Buddha as Buddhist Art," *Religion and the Art* Vol.4 /3 (2000): 359-373.

106   Shigeko Kubota, in discussion with the author, December 2010. See also section 3.2.

107   Paik's letter to the former director of the Stedelijk in Amsterdam, Edy de Wilde (September 25, 1977). Archive of the Stedelijk Museum. See also Kim, *Nam June Paik*, 215-216. Ironically, especially in relation to its later multiple existence, the piece proved to be unsalable in the 1960s. When Bonino finally found a collector interested in acquiring *TV Buddha* with the intention to donate it to the MoMA, the museum refused it. The assumption that this piece was Paik's first major sale to the museum contradicts with the sale of *Participation TV* to collector David Bermant made through Howard Wise (Gallery), the later founder of EAI (1971). Glueck, "About Nanda Bonino," 52.

108   Van Saaze discusses the seriality of *TV Buddha* in connection with another of Paik's work, *One Candle* (1988). Van Saaze, "Doing Artworks," 86-93.

109   Nam June Paik, "TV-Buddha," *Medienkunstnetz* accessed August 18, 2012, http://www.medienkunstnetz. de/works/tv-buddha/.

an antique statue, but Paik's own sculptural work, [110] which, in conjunction with his Cologne performance, might result in the assumption that Paik not only made the Buddha, but it embodies Paik himself.

5.7 Broadening Horizons Through The Acceptance Of Change

The changeability of Paik's multimedia artworks expressed in many forms that I have discussed challenges the common assumption of thinking in terms of a singular object or a sequence of performances and broadens the way the identity of these works may become conceptualised. This chapter, in addressing the phenomena of Paik's changeable works and unfolding a variety of embodiments and forms that they may take, has questioned the limits of what may still be regarded as an 'acceptable' manifestation of an artwork.

So how, in conclusion, does changeability help in conceiving of artworks such as *Zen for Film* and others? First, I believe that under the condition of the acceptance of change, changeability may ensure the artwork's continuation to the future. Yet not all change is welcomed. Survival for its own sake is not necessarily desirable if the object becomes something else. I will return to this point shortly. Second, instead of thinking of the artwork in relation to the number of changes that it has undergone – and additionally to the *kind* of change addressed in this chapter, one could conceptualise it in relation to the degree of changeability. In this sense, and independently from its form, the degree of changeability of *Zen for Film* would be greater than that of *TV Clock*, while the changeability of *Arche Noah* would be less that of *TV Garden*. This may also apply to the components of installations. Hypothetically speaking, in *Zen for Film,* the degree of changeability of the filmstrip is greater than that of the projection apparatus. Third, changeability enables us to step back and examine artworks beyond the conventions (of conservation) and paradigms (of variability and such), encouraging reflection not only at the ontological level, but also on the culture and context laid on the conservation's grounds.

I will now summarise *Zen for Film* succinctly in the light of the types of changeability discussed in the previous sections. *Zen for Film*'s analogue film projection, a relic of 16mm film reel, an 'object' in the form of a filmstrip from the Fluxus kit and a digital projection all carry the same title and yet are distinct. Whereas the creation of a filmstrip for the Fluxkit must have taken place upon the acceptance of the artist – and in response to Maciunas' politics of distribution of Fluxus editions – the display of the film reel as a relic and later

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110   Dieter Daniels, "Nam June Paik: Buddha, 1989," in *Contemporary Art: ZKM Center for Art and Media Karsruhe*, ed. Heinrich Klotz (Prestel: Karlsruhe, 1997), 204. Further examples of the expansion of the concept of *Buddha-TV* are *TV-Buddha III: Mc Luhan's Grave* (1984, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal), *TV-Buddha – Shigeko Kubotas Buddha* (1986, Museum Ludwig Cologne), *Buddha Duchamp Beuys* (1989, private collection), *Lächelnder Buddha* (1992, Staatliches Museum Schwerin*), *Buddha eine Kerze betrachtend* (1992, Block Collection, Berlin).

as a digital projection was effected by (historical) exhibition practice. Hypothetically, both the film reel and the strip may still be projected, but, in fact, never are. Are the film reel, the analogue projection and the digitised variant 'parts' of the work or rather distinct works? Independently from a certain autonomy they might have acquired – a result of historical practice – I would argue that they are material evidence of the changeability of *Zen for Film* – changeability that is welcomed by the *Zen*'s very nature, and the catalyser of which may be sought in its potentiality for transition and the cumulative evidence of historical practice.

Changeability underlies evaluation dependent on context linked with the set of ruling values. From the perspective of our conservation culture – which, interestingly enough, seems in this case to diverge from the culture of curating – the display of *Zen for Film* as a digital projection is regarded as problematic. Assuming that, hypothetically, Paik would be around to approve of the digital projection, which would not be surprising due to his welcoming attitude towards new technologies, would we, for the sake of acceptance of the artist's intention, not have to accept his decision?

The judgements made during the decision-making process are dependent on context. The adaptation of *TV Clock, Moon is the Oldest TV*, *Arche Noah* and *TV Garden* to spatial conditions may be acceptable for some, but just as well unacceptable for others. Similarly, the changeability related to the upgrade of the equipment reflects the state of knowledge and set of ruling values that allows its migration and emulation in some cases but prohibits it in others. But was LCD not banned from the technological garden and yet became a part of *TV Garden* in Seoul? Did *Arche Noah* without plants not present an entirely distinct picture from that of *Arche Noah* with plants? – The artist was not directly involved, but his assistant, similarly to the EnBW venue on the occasion of which *Arche Noah* was presented without the animals. This, again, formed part of a historical practice that changed the work, not aligned with the ruling conservation culture, yet somewhat functioning within another logic – it being a different cultural approach (Seoul) or a necessity dictated by economic conditions (Karlsruhe). Furthermore, what is the relation of the static artworks such as *Radom Access, Magnet TV* and *Record Schaschlik* to the interactive installations they once were? Again, this is a subject of judgment – the acceptance or disapproval of an embodied historical practice – which yet does not restrain them from remaining *Random Access, Magnet TV* and *Record Schaschlik.* The aforementioned presence of exhibition objects manufactured by Saueracker seems to bridge the desirability of experience on the one hand and the desirability of a relic on the other, rendering it difficult to discern which should prevail. To be sure, within the ruling values and Western conservation culture, it is not possible for an exhibition object to became a surrogate of an artwork. Still, during the course of my research, I encountered surrogates of *Zen for Film* that endowed me with the most telling experience of it. I cannot help but invite the question of the limits of conservability that are dictated precisely by the boundaries of what is accepted and what is disapproved of in conservation. In other words: What can we

conceive of as changeable, and what transgresses common sense? So, rather than mystifying how we conceive of the identity of that which we conserve, understanding artworks through their changeability opens up horizons of conservation towards grasping both the nature of its artworks and its own decisions as necessarily contextual.