



KATE MONDLOCH

the range of ways in which art spectators both construct and are constructed by their interactions with media screens. To this end, I emphasize noteworthy conditions present in certain, but by no means all, moving-image installations to give a sense of the full range of possibilities.

The book is organized into five thematic chapters, each of which explores the operative mechanisms of screen spectatorship through two or more case studies of paradigmatic artworks. This thematic structure addresses the overall significance of the body–screen interface in media installation; the specific case studies allow a comparative analysis of individual screen-reliant artworks assessed in their material specificity. It begins by investigating the idea of the screen itself, then focuses on the qualitative, temporal, and spatial dimensions of media screen-based viewing in contemporary art.

Chapter 1, “Interface Matters,” introduces the category of screen-reliant installation art as a way both to produce and to critique gallery-based media art since the late 1960s. Artists have critically reevaluated the screen and its functions by redeploying media technologies within the institutional context of the visual arts. The chapter begins by examining two experimental film works created by Paul Sharits—*T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G* (1968) and *Soundstrip/Filmstrip* (1971–72)—and considers the diverse models of spectatorship proposed in each as emblematic of the differences between experimental film and film installation. Next, I discuss Michael Snow’s well-known film environment *Two Sides to Every Story* (1974). In this piece, two versions of a single film are projected onto opposite sides of a rectangular aluminum screen suspended prominently in the middle of the gallery space. The work’s projected images operate cinematically, drawing the spectator into the film’s illusionist space and theatrical mode of viewing. However, the installation’s mode of presentation—two films of the same event projected onto opposing sides of a single screen that hovers mid-air in the center of the room—works to quite different effect, complicating and confounding theatrical cinematic spectatorship. Like *Soundstrip/Filmstrip*, this work proposes a dynamic interaction between the place of the viewing subject, the film apparatus, and the representations on the screen. These gallery-based media works are ongoing screen-based material objects open to manifold readings, not simply at the level of the moving imagery but also in response to the real presence of the art objects in space. As such, they exemplify the strand of post-1960s media art examined in *Screens*.

“Body and Screen,” chapter 2, scrutinizes the screen’s decisive role in orchestrating the spectator’s physical interaction with sculptural screen-based works. How do these media objects and their customary viewing regimes actively define the relationship between bodies and screens? This chapter complicates the notion of an inherently progressive, liberatory “spectator participation” that is celebrated in many accounts of installation art by detailing the ways in which media screens are also capable of generating oppressive viewing conditions that strictly delimit the viewer’s interaction with the work. As in everyday life, screens and their illuminated moving images can offer a sort of siren song—calling spectators to largely involuntary behavior, entreating them to look and pay attention and to discipline themselves and their bodies in the process.

The chapter analyzes a series of influential closed-circuit video installations that intentionally explore the “architectures” of media spectatorship, including Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider’s pioneering *Wipe Cycle* (1969), Bruce Nauman’s video corridor works (1969–72), and Dan Graham’s *Present Continuous Past(s)* (1974). Considering each of the projects in turn, this chapter analyzes how these early video installations fuse two seemingly incompatible processes. Artists underscore the coercive nature of screen-based viewing by varying the arrangement of cameras and monitors, combining live and prerecorded feedback, inverting viewers’ images, divorcing cameras from their monitors, introducing time delays, and so on. Simultaneously, however, the technological apparatuses themselves arguably impose precise kinesthetic and psychic effects on their audiences.

“Installing Time,” chapter 3, assesses how time is used as a material in more recent film and video installations and to what critical end. It extends the previous chapter’s analysis of the charged relationship between bodies and screens by drawing attention to an aspect that remains undertheorized—the multiple and sometimes contradictory temporal impulses at work in the presentation of spatialized moving images to moving bodies. This section evaluates attempts to “install time” in space, and thereby put time itself on display, in influential pieces by Eija-Liisa Ahtila (*Consolation Service*, 1999), Doug Aitken (*electric earth*, 1999), Douglas Gordon (*24 Hour Psycho*, 1993), and Bruce Nauman [*Mapping the Studio I (Fat Chance John Cage)*, 2001]. Investigating the overlapping and even conflicting durational conditions—artistic, institutional, individual—that structure the ambulatory museum visitor’s experience with these screen-reliant works, this chapter proposes that the generally individualized, exploratory duration of

2. Body and Screen The Architecture of Screen Spectatorship

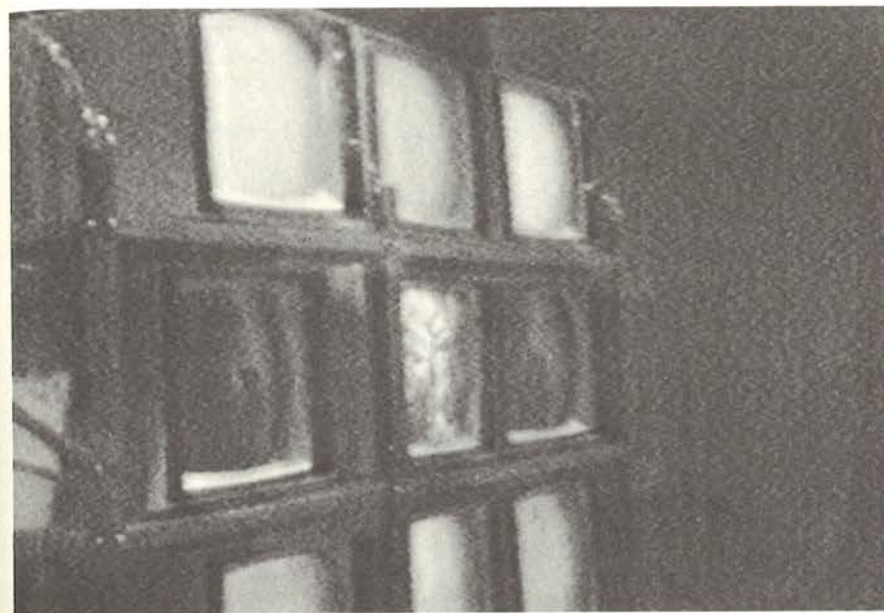
Spectacle is not an optics of power, but an architecture.

—JONATHAN CRARY, *Suspensions of Perception*

What we need is respite from an entire system of seeing and space that is bound up with mastery and identity. To see differently, albeit for a moment, allows us to see anew.

—PARVEEN ADAMS, "Bruce Nauman and the Object of Anxiety"

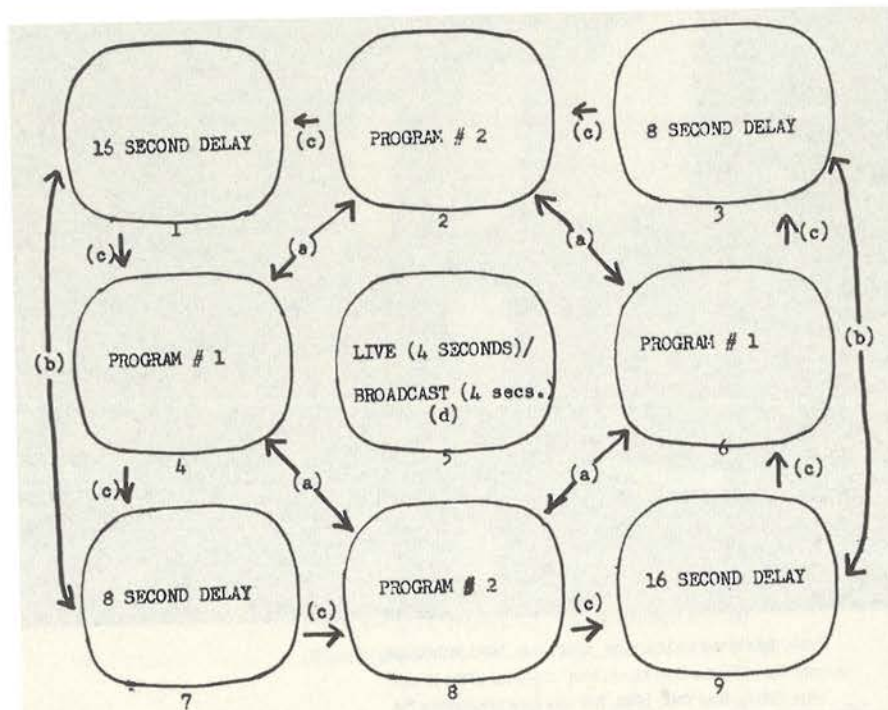
Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider's *Wipe Cycle* (1969) greets viewers with flickering black-and-white electronic images that rotate through a grid of nine stacked televisions. Commonly lauded as the first work in the field of video installation, *Wipe Cycle* also numbers among the first to incorporate live feedback by employing closed-circuit video technology. The television sets are arranged in rows of three—an illuminated tic-tac-toe board displaying continuously shifting arrangements of live and prerecorded footage interspersed with images of the work's viewers themselves. Observers stand entranced before the glowing sculptural environment, studying the intricate shifting combinations of pictures, including their own likenesses. Gray light impulses, or "wipe cycles," periodically brush across the stacked surfaces, temporarily canceling all imagery. This seemingly haphazard visual display instead follows a detailed script: live playback depicting the viewers' images always appears in the center monitor, for instance, while the videotapes and television feed wander between bordering screens in one of four programming sequences interspersed with time delays of between eight and sixteen seconds. In the art critic's rush to examine the various scenarios played out on the multiple monitors, however, one might neglect a more basic question: how, precisely, do viewers look at screen-reliant sculptures?



Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider, *Wipe Cycle*, 1969. Installation view from "TV as a Creative Medium" exhibition at the Howard Wise Gallery, New York, 1969. This side view emphasizes the objecthood of the screens that compose the closed-circuit video environment. Courtesy of Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider.

How might the terms of engaging media installations differ (or not) from observing other art objects?

The moving images and illuminated surfaces of screen-reliant works provoke a different kind of attention from other art objects, both psychologically and physiologically. On the most basic level, moving and illuminated imagery insistently solicits the observer's gaze and in so doing disciplines his or her body. Here I am less concerned with distinctions of the degree of attention various media screens presumably demand—such as the "gaze" conventionally associated with cinematic viewing, in pointed contrast to the "glance" supposedly characteristic of television viewing—than with the fact that illuminated media screens tend to immediately draw the spectator's attention in any context, if only for an instant.¹ Attention, observes art historian Jonathan Crary in his *Suspensions of Perception*, is the feature of perception that enables subjects to focus on portions of their surroundings and delay or neglect the remainder. The viewer's shifting attentive



- CYCLE (a) Monitors 2, 4, 6 and 8: Programmed change cycle, Program No. 1 alternating every eight seconds with Program No. 2.
- CYCLE (b) Monitors 1, 3, 7 and 9: Delay change cycle, Nos. 1 and 7 and 3 and 9 alternating (exchanging) every four seconds.
- CYCLE (c) Monitors 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9: Wipe cycle, grey "light" pulse, moving counterclockwise every two seconds.
- CYCLE (d) Monitor 5: Live cycle, four seconds of live feedback alternating with four seconds of broadcast television.

Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider, *Wipe Cycle*, 1969. Artist's diagram of the installation's complex video-programming cycles. Courtesy of Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider.

conduct with screen-based technologies, then, has weighty consequences for media art spectatorship.

Although this chapter will investigate the cultural foundations for this behavior—why and how viewers focus on media screens, whether inside or outside of the art gallery—physiological explanations are equally note-

worthy. Scientist Christof Koch, for example, in an important neurobiological study of consciousness, explains how the viewer's focus on certain objects is essentially involuntary. "Some things don't need focal attention to be noticed. They are conspicuous by virtue of intrinsic attributes relative to their surroundings," he writes. "These salient objects rapidly, transiently, and automatically attract attention." Screens, he points out, aggressively and inexorably claim a certain amount of concentration. Tellingly, the ubiquitous video screen is Koch's first concrete example: "It takes willful effort to avoid glancing at the moving images on the TV placed above the bar in a saloon."² Koch's account is helpful in explaining the observer's obedient posture in front of flickering images such as those in *Wipe Cycle*, even if, as rehearsed in the previous chapter, the viewer's experience with screens employed in sculptural installations can be considerably more complex. As we shift from the saloon to the salon, Koch's point about how certain salient objects unavoidably influence viewing subjects remains pivotally important for theorizing the operative conditions of screen-based art spectatorship.

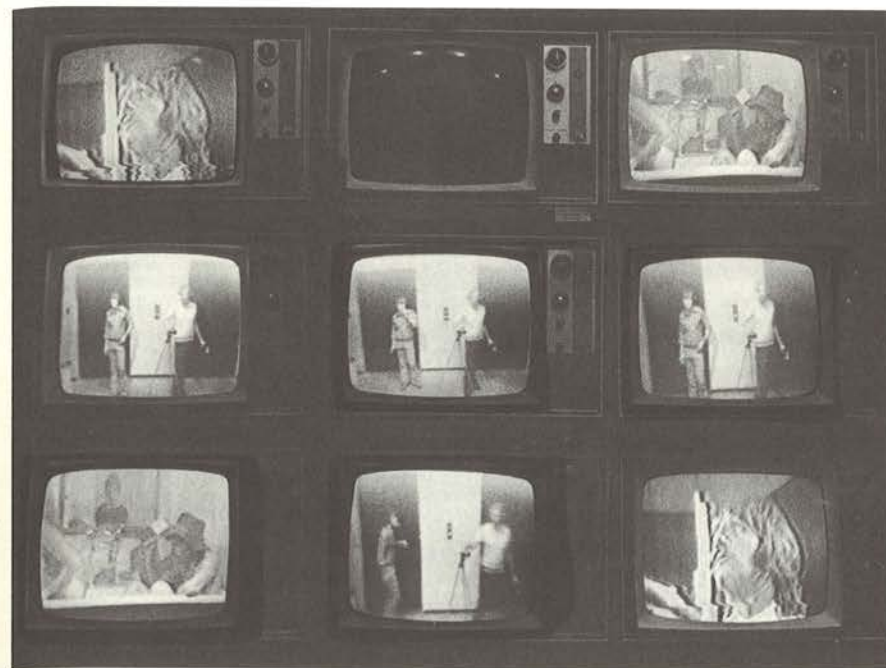
Made You Look

The prevailing trends of media installation art criticism that seek to account for the role of the viewer can be divided essentially into two groups. On the one hand, critics celebrate the supposed spectatorial empowerment and liberation associated with audience participation (more recently described as "interactivity"). On the other hand, in an apparent contradiction, scholars condemn the observer's allegedly passive and uncritical experience observing mass media screens as reflective of the technological structures and control mechanisms of late capitalism.³ It is not so much the active participation and/or passive viewing associated with these works that requires critical exploration, however, but rather the multifaceted and ambivalent relationship between a self-consciously embodied spectatorship and the disciplinary aspects of screen-based visuality. While critical accounts written since 2005 or so have developed more nuanced theories of attentive regulation and control as potential sites of cultural contestation,⁴ the majority of these critiques also fundamentally fail to appreciate what one might call media installation's "architecture of spectatorship": the defining role of the screen apparatus in managing the interactions between viewing subjects and media objects.⁵

Any artwork proffering the seductive glow of an illuminated screen is reasonably entitled to the schoolyard taunt "made you look." Closed-circuit

video installations such as *Wipe Cycle*, however, make you look even closer—because *you* are literally in the picture. “The most important function of *Wipe Cycle*,” recalls Schneider, “was to integrate the audience into the information.”⁶ For Schneider, the work’s live feedback system disrupts normative television viewing by integrating the viewer’s image into what is typically considered to be a one-way flow of information. Art historian David Joselit observes how works such as *Wipe Cycle*, although sited in the relatively controlled environment of the gallery, proved generative for other forms of video activism in the 1970s; guerrilla television’s production of politically engaged documentaries on cable, for example, shared the aspiration for what Gillette describes as “a symbiotic feedback between receiving and broadcasting.”⁷ While Joselit’s larger argument about video experimentation will be taken up in what follows, for now it suffices to note that these influential early video installations also offer a particularly useful way to understand the disciplinary and attention aspects of screen-based art spectatorship. By focusing on these pioneering examples, in which viewers’ bodies are unambiguously implicated in the work via feedback, one can extrapolate the ways in which media art environments impose particular physical arrangements upon their audiences in less obvious cases. Thus, while the early video installations of the late 1960s and early 1970s offer the best examples, the mode of spectatorship they promote persists in much current media art production as well.

Through case studies of seminal video art projects, including Bruce Nauman’s corridor pieces created between 1969 and 1972, and Dan Graham’s *Present Continuous Past(s)* (1974), this chapter scrutinizes not only the ways in which media objects and their customary viewing regimes actively define the relationship between bodies and screens, but also how certain closed-circuit video works intentionally underscore the coercive nature of screen-based viewing. That is, through an assortment of techniques, such as varying the arrangement of cameras and monitors, combining live and prerecorded feedback, inverting viewers’ images, divorcing cameras from their monitors, and introducing time delays, these artworks demonstrate how the viewing regimes associated with technological apparatuses assert precise kinesthetic and psychic effects upon their audiences. This chapter proposes that certain video installations can generate critical moments of rupture from within established forms and techniques of screen-based control: while these screen-reliant works oblige attention and discipline viewers’ bodies, the subjective effects of those requirements are remarkably unfixed.



Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider, *Wipe Cycle*, 1969. Installation view from “TV as a Creative Medium” exhibition at the Howard Wise Gallery, New York, 1969. This view demonstrates how images of the viewers observing the work are captured by closed-circuit cameras and represented in the center and bottom screens. Courtesy of Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider.

Get in Line: Bruce Nauman’s Video Corridors

Considerations of “active” or participatory spectatorship have been intimately related to the discourse surrounding installation art since its inception. Indeed, the viewer’s involvement with the work is often taken to be the defining feature of the art form. In her 2000 monograph on installation art, art historian and curator Julie Reiss emphasizes that “the spectator is in some way regarded as integral to the completion of the work” and goes so far as to propose that “the essence of installation art *is* spectator participation.”⁸ Contemporary art practice and criticism, profoundly influenced by Marxist critiques of alienation, phenomenological critiques of Cartesianism, and poststructuralist critiques of authorship, conventionally understands the spectator’s active participation to be progressive for purportedly engendering an empowered, critically aware viewing subject. Installation

body images spread out in eight-second intervals. Whereas *Wipe Cycle* and the video corridors present viewers with only one unruly representation at a time, Graham's installation superimposes several moving images of its audience. This produces a peculiar, decentering effect for gallerygoers as they move cautiously throughout the space, struggling to come to terms with seeing multiple versions of themselves in "continuous pasts." This arrangement is made increasingly complex by the fact that, as in *Wipe Cycle*, multiple viewers can engage *Present Continuous Past(s)* concurrently. Viewers are asked to consider how their bodies (virtual or otherwise) are placed in relationship to other members of the audience. While self-conscious viewers may long to step back and observe from afar, they are obliged to actively participate in the sense that competing multiple images of their bodies and those of other participants will be visible on the mirrored walls and video screen no matter what they do.²⁶

If the mirrored walls return the viewer's real-time image, the images on the video display follow a different logic. Graham has carefully considered the difference between the viewer's perceptual experience with mirrors and screens: "Mirrors reflect instantaneous time without duration," he explains in a 1975 interview with critic RoseLee Goldberg. "They totally divorce our exterior behavior from our inside consciousness, whereas video feedback does just the opposite; it relates the two in a kind of *durational time flow*."²⁷ While mirrors can be employed to produce curious *spatial* displacements in their viewers, video screens have the potential to generate novel *spatial and* temporal experiences. Indeed, Graham's spectators find their bodies simultaneously immersed in a morass of screen-reliant temporalities: the recent past (on the monitor), the present (in the mirror), and the idea of a future time (spectators not only see the actions that they recently performed, but also know that what they do subsequently will soon become visible on the screen as what they have just done).

Gilles Deleuze's writings on Bergson and the cinema offer a useful comparison here.²⁸ In his profoundly influential book *Matter and Memory*, Bergson proposes that it is artificial to separate what happened in the past from the present or the future, since memory effectively combines them in unending, dynamic movement.²⁹ Although Deleuze invokes the cinema as the ideal metaphor for demonstrating Bergson's thesis that "peaks of present" and "sheets of past" meet only in the brain (or, in the case of Deleuze's cinema example, on the screen), the superimposed time images on the screen in *Present Continuous Past(s)* arguably offer an even tidier example of the amalgamation between past and present, virtual and actual.³⁰ Immersed



Dan Graham, *Present Continuous Past(s)*, 1974. Mirrored wall, video camera, and monitor with time delay. This installation view shows a spectator observing a time-delayed image of herself on the monitor adjacent to the mirrored walls. Reproduced from *Video-Architecture-Television: Writings on Video and Video Works, 1970-1978 / Dan Graham*, edited by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1979). Courtesy of Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.

simultaneously in (at least) three competing temporalities, Graham's viewers experience time as a constantly shifting process.

Joselit too theorizes the relevance of the destabilizing and shifting spatio-temporal experience central to early video installations such as Graham's. For Joselit, this is especially significant due to the way in which these artworks call attention to the subject's relationship to dominant uses of video technology in everyday life, namely commercial television. In his recent book, *Feedback: Television against Democracy*, Joselit contends that by breaking open the closed system of television, video practitioners in the 1970s, such as Graham and Nauman but also Peter Campus, Joan Jonas, and Vito Acconci, were able to reveal and critique televisual discipline. Graham, he argues, "brilliantly maps commercial television in reverse by acknowledging the political atomization and impotence it masks."³¹ For the art historian,