

FROM PHOTOGRAPHY TO VIDEO

To summarise my work is difficult because the work itself is most often an attempt at a solution rather than the creation of an object. I work with video as a process; that is, as a way to explore ideas and to understand myself and things in relation to myself. This is the point at which others can enter. Our experiences of things - objects, individuals, systems - is firstly through ourselves as separate entities. To examine the expression of another's experiences can be a useful starting point. I am not suggesting that this understanding can be gained in isolation from social and political systems, but that these experiences can be understood as part of the same fabric.

3:4, The Distracted Driver, and The Chance Meeting have three major related themes in common: reality, perception, and representation. I have no intention of examining these ideas at length here, as this text must simply serve as a way of focusing the attention of the potential viewer. There is always the danger of writing about the work in such a way as to restrict any experience of that work. What I would like to do here is to give some guide to the viewer as to what it is they are watching, and give them some hint as to why the tapes are constructed in the way they are.

I started working with photographs seriously in about 1971 though, I had been using a camera since 1967. I wanted to take 'artistic' photos; images that did more than just document something. I went on trying to do this for some time. Interestingly enough, I tried to do this by taking photographs that really were documents. I was obsessed by the so-called 'straight print', and didn't believe in special printing techniques or filters - just very carefully composed arrangements of things. I suppose I was searching for a kind of poetry in ordinary reality.

As my images became more accomplished, they seemed to become increasingly obscure to those who saw them. I began to look for ways of contextualising my work, thus making it more understandable. This eventually led me to abandon individual images and to explore ideas based on the sequence. This work with sequences helped me to see that I needed additional levels of meaning to run in parallel with the images I was constructing. I worked with Slide/Tape and Film as well as B&W Video to develop these ideas.

More than any other medium, colour video seems to have brought me closer to the flexibility that I want. It allows control over the elements of sound, time and colour. The video tapes in this show are attempts at a total orchestration of these elements.

This brings me back to the themes I mentioned earlier. A medium such as video, working as it does through illusion and representation, masks issues relating to ways of seeing and thinking in that its image is an acceptable facsimile for reality. Its cultural acceptability renders it almost totally 'transparent' unless methods for its production are challenged. Normally TV relies on the perpetuation of numerous standards, ranging from what's news-worthy through to what's fashionable. The political implications of this are undeniable.

In its broadest sense, video contains all of the visual media. It is comparable to print in its scope. I am working in a very particular area within video. This area cannot ignore the experience of television, but it also cannot allow TV to define it. New developments will influence the way in which we understand ourselves, just as in the past, the photograph changed our view of everything.

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