

Video Positive '89 marks a watershed in the history of British video art. It is the largest international video festival yet held in Britain, and its very existence demonstrates the increased status of video in the art world. The festival marks the end of a decade which has seen this young art-form reach a high degree of aesthetic and technical maturity, although its relationships with fine art institutions and television broadcasting remain largely unresolved.

This catalogue, like the festival itself, charts the past, present, and possible futures of video art.

The past is outlined in a series of introductory essays to the various parts of the festival. The catalogue introduction gives a general history of video art from its birth in the 1960's. Other contributions map out the history of video in art galleries, the importance of feminist video art, video art on Merseyside, and the changing role of video production in all sectors of education.

The present is represented by the entries for the festival exhibits and screening programmes, which give full biographical notes on the artists, as well as statements about their work. There are also entries describing the practical, community-based activities that are running in conjunction with the festival, and evaluating their contribution to this ostensibly fine art, gallery-based event.

The future of video art is discussed in the conclusion to the catalogue, which gives a range of views from artists, critics and technicians. This section considers the decade ahead in the light of the next round of technological development — such as interactive video — and in the context of the changing financial framework around video art, caused by cuts in arts' subsidy and the re-regulation of television broadcasting.

Illuminating and informative, this catalogue is both an essential guide to the festival, and the most comprehensive history and discussion on video art yet published in Britain.

Video Positive '89

Merseyside Moviola

Merseyside's International Video Festival

Video Positive '89

Installation/ Performance

The Closet Media Company

Bluecoat 15-16 February 8pm
Commission
'These are bodies'

'These are bodies' takes its central concept themes which have appeared in earlier works. For example: the total destruction of human individuality at the hands of systematic repression, the subsequent development of a scarred spiritual and emotional psyche pushing the individual further and further into a rarefied netherworld of deviant survival instinct leaving them to flounder' delight in a cesspit of their own making (CMC)

'These are bodies' is a video installation incorporating performance which creates a latter-day amphitheatre, whose tiered structure reflects the hierarchy of repressive power.

Victims flounder in a pool of water in the bottom of the arena, as the instigators of repressive force preside over the performance from the highest level. Their instruments of power, in the form of a circle of twenty monitors, are situated one tier down from the top. Those on the top level enforce the dynamic of the piece, the video tape symbolises violent intention, and those at the base remain ensnared.

The Closet Media Company is a collaboration between Liverpool-based artists, Julian White and Michael Hurst.

Julian White was born in 1966. He studied fine art at Liverpool Polytechnic. He has worked in theatre, stage design, photography, performance, video and television production, mainly in and around Liverpool.

Michael Hurst was born in 1961. He studied at Liverpool Polytechnic. He has done some photography and stage design, and has been active in many different aspects of video, from creating video backdrops for concerts to working on programmes for television broadcast.

Julian White and Michael Hurst were both involved in 'The Invention Of Tradition' performance for the opening of the Tate Gallery in Liverpool. As the Closet Media Company, they have collaborated on 'The Big Bang', a video installation and performance piece for the National Review of Live Art at London's Riverside Studios in 1987. In May 1988, they performed 'The Closet's Occupants', a video installation performance at the Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool.



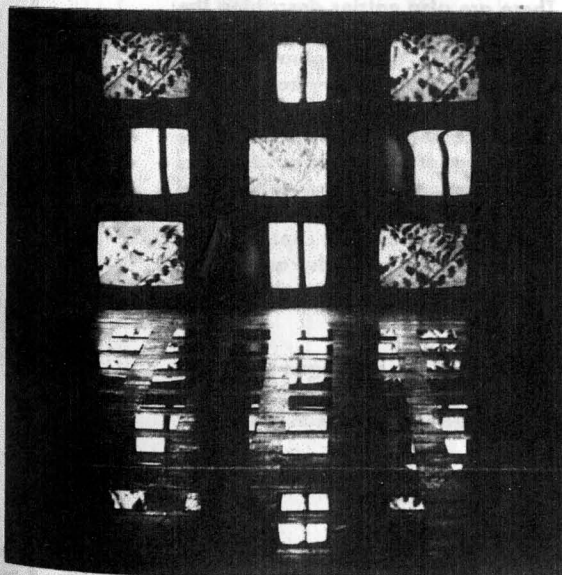
'Beyond Colour' was first shown as part of the 'Scanners' exhibition, at London's AIR Gallery.

The installation uses 2 video tapes, 9 monitors arranged as a single square bank, and a mirrored floor. The tapes were made from images found in the landscape — from billboards and neon signs to bridges and wildlife, and parts of the clothed human body. Sometimes the whole image is used, but more often the camera records in close up, dissecting the environment: emphasising the unfamiliar parts of the familiar, and concentrating on colour, texture and contrasts. The sound was made using a simple thumb piano.

There is no narrative content in 'Beyond Colour'; Mineo Aayamaguchi's work is concerned primarily with light, colour, movement and composition, and aims to unite images through these qualities.

'Creating an almost church-like quality, 'Beyond Colour' was an installation that invited the viewer to linger, even to wallow in its sensuousness'.

Jeremy Welsh 'Kaleidoscope' Catalogue, ICA publication 1988



Installation

Mineo Aayamaguchi

Williamson 12-25 February
Re-staged Installation
'Beyond Colour'

Mineo Aayamaguchi was born in 1953 in Gunma, Japan. He studied at St Martins School of Art and has lived and worked in Europe since that time. Mineo Aayamaguchi has worked in many aspects of the visual arts, including photography, drawing, installation and performance, often translating the same subject into different media. His most recent work was 'Kaleidoscope', shown at the ICA, London in 1988. Mineo Aayamaguchi's work has been shown in Tokyo, Ottawa, New York and Paris, as well as all parts of Britain. He has performed in the USA, Portugal, France, Canada, Germany, Holland, Japan and Britain.

Performances: Space 1980/1, Here-Now 1980/82, The Chair 1979/81, Cross 1981, There-Then 1982, Nine Bricks 1982, Landscape 1983, Inner Colour 1984/5, Outer Inner Colour 1985/87.

Photography: Landscape 1983, Inner Colour 1984/85.

Installations: Cross 1981, Landscape 1983, Outer Inner Colour 1984/87.

Video Tapes: There-Then 1982, Landscape Pictura and Feet 1983, Inner Colour 1984, Outer Colour 1985, Outer Colour, Beyond Colour 1986, Kaleidoscope 1988.

Video Installations: Landscape 1983, Feet 1983, Beyond Colour 1986/88, Light/Water (with Jeremy Welsh) 1986, Kaleidoscope 1988.