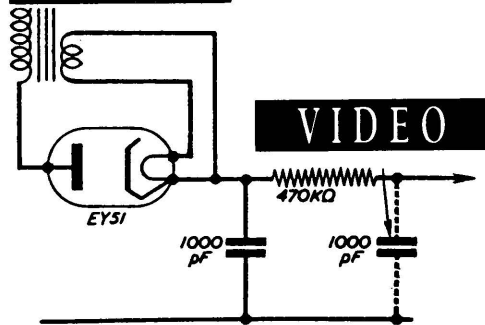


PERT

REVIEW



SCANNERS IS AN important exhibition in two senses. One, the 'Video Postcard' compilation tape of selected works, all 3 minutes or less in duration, acts as a condensed primer for interested parties, mapping out many of the current directions and concerns in contemporary video art; Two, the exhibition in total accounts for installation works, often marginalised in the arena of video art, and the activities of foreign tape makers, here Japanese medianiks.

A less successful aspect of the exhibition is the 'Video Windowbox' where nine monitors stacked three in a row sit in the gallery window facing onto the Rosebery Avenue pavement. Here often complex series of images flash across the screens creating different relationships between each monitor as the specially commissioned works whirl and tumble around the grid of screens. The problem here is that most passers by glance only fleetingly at the stacked TV's, catching only a fragment of works. Given this, it's the Duvet Brothers piece, flashy and vivid, which seems most effective whilst other, less dramatic, works, function less well as 'attention grabbers'.

Inside, in the warmth of the lower gallery, the 75 minute compilation of 'Video Postcards' is screening 23 selected works. As a comprehen-

sive package of contemporary works this snappy programme has 'scratchers' alongside more abstract works, political texts nudging slyly humorous pieces. *Close That Deal*, from Mike Jones/Graham Ellard, stands out as a concise, pointed tape. A textbook point-of-salesmanship gets wryly deconstructed. Catherine Elwes' underplayed *Baby Work*, where a child's cries underline a problem page text, is also particularly effective. Brief mention too for Mike Stubbs' hardnosed overview of South African repression, *Greetings From The Cape Of Good Hope*, and a jazzy, neon-lit sketch of Soho offered up by Phillip O'Shea.

Adjacent to the 'Video Postcard' lies Kevin Atherton's *Television Interview* where Atherton, sited in one monitor talks to a facing monitor transmitting a carefully doctored *Coronation Street*. Atherton is directing his questions about broadcast TV to Elsie Tanner and company but there is only vague response from 'The Street'. It's a clever and, seemingly, simple idea both funny and direct in style.

Upstairs a more formal, abstract aesthetic is at work as Mineo Aayamaguchi's *Beyond Colour*, nine monitor installation operates around notions of colour, texture and formal relationships. With a reflective grid of small squares

SCANNERS

Scanners Video Exhibition, Air Gallery

laying on the gallery floor to echo the shifting crisscross pattern of the monitors, *Beyond Colour* has an almost sculptural feel undercut by the frenetic soundtrack. It's a busy, complex work but apart from a sort of formal admiration I have to say I didn't feel fully engaged by the piece. This same feeling informed my response to the 'Video Art From Tokyo' compilation tape, showing in a separate corner of the gallery space. My impressions here were underlined by the selectors comment that 'Japan is undergoing a glorious media transformation' as techno trickery impacted with multi-layered images of the landscape. A concern with composition and fractured perspective is evident here but it's a very cool sort of art which left me largely unmoved. Warmer somehow was John Goff's *Alop* piece. A fluid, hypnotic work constructed simply around the play of light on water. Calm and meditative the piece deserved more time than I had to give it.

Finally 'Scanners' was a varied and sprawling summation of video art which deserved attention if only because it acted as an audiovisual comma in the increasingly frantic story of video arts upwardly mobile strategy. All thanks to the LVA for letting the 'Scanners' transmit. ●