

# Video telepathies

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I first got involved in performance art because it couldn't be reduced to its material existence. You can't touch a performance, you can't own it or collect it. Although I had worked with film, I soon moved on to video because it had the same intangible quality that had attracted me to performance. Video doesn't exist until you plug it in. By contrast, film is concrete – you can hold it up to the light, physically cut it and join it back together. It's like the difference between sculpture and painting. Sculpture is the thing you trip over on the way to the painting. Film has a material reality and demands a physical projection space to be experienced while video has the abstract qualities, the two-dimensional, once-removed illusionism of painting. The digital has made video even more abstract, even farther removed the physical. You don't even handle the cassette. It could almost be telepathic.

I couldn't work with film now. It would be like making a sculpture in a bucket, sending it off to the foundry and waiting for it to come back already fixed to the floor. With video, there is no delay. As in performance, you work in the present. You have direct access to the image with video feedback, live through a camera to a monitor or generated digitally on a computer. With film you wait for the postman to bring you something you made in the past, something you haven't seen for two weeks, something that's dead. Film is like a clockwork version of the computer. It is mechanical in its construction and its transmission. It is fundamentally theatrical, creating a group or mass

experience restricted to a specified time and place. Video can be experienced at a more individual level. It facilitates a less sensory, more cerebral exchange with the image.

Video is ideal for an abstract mind that doesn't want to deal with physical things. This fits in with the Darwinian notion of moving away from the physical towards the cerebral, the intellectual. The box of the computer containing digital information becomes a perfect reflection of the box of abstract thoughts that is my head. The communication between the two is instantaneous, almost telepathic.

Paradoxically, video remains the more democratic medium. Anyone can use it, and anyone can access it on the web. It is now even more integrated with other technologies and systems of distribution. It is less dependent on an industrial structure than film. It is a domestic as well as a mass medium. In performance art, the performer occupied the place of convergence between the artist as an individual, his experience of making art and, through it, a direct contact with the audience. Video is the contemporary medium of convergence where the artist's ideas find immediate expression and, through the Internet, can instantaneously reach an audience. Individual members of the audience are then free to respond through the same electronic system.

Video is a sexy medium, telepathic almost.

