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Jean-Paul Fargier

Jean-Paul Fargier, Professor of Cinema Studies, lives and works in Paris as a video artist and television producer. Fargier is also an author and journalist, as well as an art and cinema critic.

When I began making activist (political) videos in 1969 inspired by Jean-Luc Godard, there were only five or six artists in Paris really interested in that new medium. A few years later, when I started writing about video – around the time Nam June Paik finished *Global Groove* (1973) – there were a dozen video artists in France. In five years, the number of artists had doubled. I knew all of them personally. We formed a small circle hoping that video art would expand further. In fact, we were confident that one day video art would flourish everywhere. And it sure did.

Today, there are hundreds of video artists in France and thousands of artists around the world working with electronic, digital images. My objective is to discover at least ten new video artists every year, thus I visit museums (where one tends to see the same artists over and over), galleries (less closed ranks), and particularly video festivals (places of genuine surprises). Presently, I could quote at least fifty names of people who seem to dig the same channel (one meaning of the polysemous word groove) Paik superbly opened and endlessly travelled: that of post-television.

When dealing with video, many critics fail to connect with television. Thus, they are entirely missing the point. “Relational aesthetics” disconnected from television, a “post-medium condition” overlooking a “post-television era” cannot understand the forty-year explosion of video art as artistic force. As for me, it is exactly the linkage between video and television Paik’s works revealed, that makes me continue to explore and unfold video art. I have not yet found a better definition of that link than the statement I made in 1975, “video is a self-awareness of television”. This could also be the definition of Paik’s *Global Groove*. But where does that awareness come from? My Sartre-inspired statement could lead one to believe that awareness could spring from video

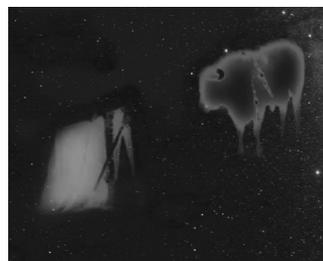
itself whereas television only produces “unawareness”. Television, however, is nothing more than the unconscious. That necessitates the modification of my first statement. Thus, in the 1980s I created the statement, “every video phenomenon is a TV effect.”

If I were to provide three examples of post-television artists, working in France to diversify the TV effects of video, I would cite: Alain Bourges, Lydie-Jean-Dit-Pannel, and Laurent Millet. However, their work cannot be presented in just one phrase.

Under the title “Esquisses taumachiques/ Bullfighting Sketches”, presented for the first time in Marseille at Instant Videos (www.instantsvideo.com) in November 2008, Alain Bourges carved five brilliant series from passes of bullfights - probably from different bullfights but presented as a synthesis of one mythical bullfight. The synthesized work shows all phases required in a bullfight - entrance of the bull, analysis by the cape, stabbing, wielding with muleta or red cape, stabbing the bull to death - with a particular and profound exploration of colors. The colors passing from bright, irradiant, solar, nocturnal, to fuliginous denote each special moment similar to how a painting colors its scenes. The splendor of the digital palette is here at its peak of poetic vibrations. Bourges demonstrates with bullfighting what Paik did with the Korean dance: a videozation of post-television.

For ten years, Lydie Jean-Dit-Pannel is in the process of realizing a summary of the world under the title **Panlogon**. In its polished, brilliant, and dazzling images, **Panlogon** is one of the most overwhelming answers to the globalization of images portraying a technological power similar to Paik’s **Global Groove**. Lydie Jean-Dit-Pannel manages to materialize a global link in gathering thousands of tattooed arms creating a chain in which she is just a mere link and filmed them in one shot.

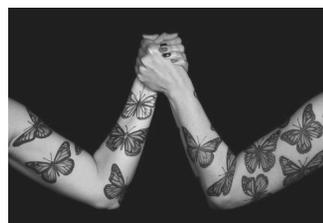
La constellation des choses/Constellation of things by Laurent Millet raises questions on how to articulate the world. Millet became involved in video work five years ago. His video shootings are dependent on sheer luck framing animals and human beings in their quest to survive. After editing the film, he tries to translate these activities into a layout compelling the images to reveal more than what they show. The film ends with a succession and entanglement of points - just



Alain Bourges
Esquisses taumachiques, 2008 (still images).
Courtesy of the artist



Lydie Jean-Dit-Pannel
Nothing, maybe, 2008.
Video, 60'
Courtesy of the artist



Lydie Jean-Dit-Pannel
Auto- arm wrestling, 2007.
photo by David Brunel
Courtesy of the artist

like the sharpness of pixel points. Writing images with everything light retains, taming granular sparkles, putting them into order and making them to stand out: this is the intended, complex, productive obsession that leads Millet in his work as a photographer of eternal moment and as a video artist of instant eternity.

These are three beautiful anthropological and artistic journeys related to Paik and yet there are other exciting ones to come. If you are open to it, that is.