

SEANKELLY

London, Barbara, Skye Sherwin and Olive Basciano. "From Warhol to Steve McQueen: a history of video art in 30 works." *The Guardian*. October 17, 2020.



Video art emerged in tandem with experimental film during the 1960s, as lively, open-ended alternatives away from the centre. Practitioners with contrarian agendas and backgrounds in disparate fields – music, performance, literature, visual art and the moving image – took to experimenting with audiovisual configurations. Feeling unconstrained, they explored consumer tools alone in their studios, or in the supportive environment of artist-run, nonprofit spaces.

During this early phase, contemporary art museums concentrated on concrete, commodifiable forms, namely painting and sculpture. Many considered the moving image anathema, horrified by how sound would invade adjacent sacrosanct white-cube spaces. Yet by the late 1990s, museums were finally contemplating video and media as exhibitable art forms.

The moving-image artworks featured here demonstrate how video and film evolved and became contemporary art. Artists have continued to thrive, inspired by media's open-endedness. Rather than be pigeonholed by labels, most practitioners favour the simple term: artist. This suits their approach to creating an artwork that might materialise as an installation, a performance, a virtual reality environment or a downloadable file. More than ever, media art belongs to the here and now, as it evolves with technology, the times, and its users.

The future of media art appears bright. Post-Covid-19, such public spaces as Piccadilly Circus are commissioning site-specific projections by artists as significant as Ai Weiwei. Museums such as Tate Modern are welcoming back viewers to experience trailblazing artists, such as Bruce Nauman's formidable survey now on view.

During lockdown, artists have remained active, using social media for the distribution of their work. New forms of expression will soon be unveiled. Pay

Last updated: 10 December 2020

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attention! Groundbreaking ideas will appear out of the blue, with little fanfare.

Johan Grimonprez | Dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y, 1997

Do terrorists shape our culture more than writers? That is the controversial central question to this explosive documentary tracing the history of aeroplane hijacks through archival material, amateur footage, science fiction and disaster movies, all overlaid with excerpts read from Don DeLillo's media theory-heavy novels Mao II and White Noise.

Last updated: 10 December 2020